

# 5. Historic Context and Archaeology

## 5.1 HISTORIC SETTING AND HISTORIC SITES

This section summarizes findings of the *Draft Mission Valley Community Plan Historic Context Statement* prepared by Heritage Architecture & Planning (2015).

### Historic Setting

The San Diego River, as a source of fresh water, has attracted people to Mission Valley since prehistoric times. The first people known to inhabit Mission Valley are the Kumeyaay Indians. Archaeological findings of Cosoy, an ancient Kumeyaay village, have been located near the base of Mission Valley’s Presidio Hill.

Spaniards arrived in Mission Valley in the late 1700s. Originally, the Spaniards located the Mission San Diego de Alcalá, for which Mission Valley was named, near Cosoy. The Spaniards began cultivating the Valley for agricultural use, and then moved the Mission to its present location in the 1770s. Agriculture was a major land use in the Valley until the mid-1900s.

Anglo-American settlement of Mission Valley began in the mid-1800s, with the arrival of the Mormon Battalion in 1847. Sand and gravel extraction was introduced into the area in about 1913, and began in earnest in about 1923. Primary sources were the sands along the San Diego River and Murphy Canyon.

Major urban development began in the mid-1900s, primarily catalyzed by the construction of U.S. Highway 80 (now known as I-8). Development accelerated with the completion of U.S. Highway 395 (now SR 163) and I-805.

Auto-related industries also began in areas along Camino del Rio within high visibility of the I-8 commuters. The 1950s saw a total of seven “garden motels” develop along the freeway corridor in close proximity to the attractions of Mission Bay Park. These motels and hotels were one and two stories in height and were comprised of several buildings typically laid out in L or U shape and integrated modern architectural styles of the time.

### Historic and Potentially Historic Resources

One historic resource within the Planning Area is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as having historical significance: the Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

Development from the 1950s and 1960s is now potentially eligible for listing on the city, state, and national registers. The Historic Context Statement completed for this analysis identifies one potential historic district along Hotel Circle. Resources that contribute to this potential historic district are hotels and motels built in the 1950s to early 1960s that are one or two story in height and offer amenities such as swimming pools, including Town & Country and Mission Valley Inn (see Table 5-1).

Preservation of certain historic properties through rehabilitation and/or reuse can contribute to the future character of the community. The precise criteria that will be applied to determine if a property is eligible for historic listing depends on whether the property is evaluated for eligibility for the National Register for Historic Places, the California Register of Historic Places, or San Diego’s Register of Designated Historical Resources.

To qualify for the National Register, a resource must have integrity and satisfy one of the following criteria:

- It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- It is associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- It has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in history or prehistory.



Mission San Diego de Alcalá

Table 5-1: Potential Garden-Hotel Historic District

Name of Potential Historic Resource	Address	Year Built
Town & Country	500 Hotel Circle North	1953-54
King’s Inn	1333 Hotel Circle South	1959
Vagabound Inn/Hotel Iris	625 Hotel Circle South	1959
Del Webb’s Hiwayhouse/Travelodge	1201 Hotel Circle South	ca. 1960
Mission Valley Inn	875 Hotel Circle South	1956

Source: Heritage Architecture & Planning, 2015

To qualify for the California Register, a resource must meet very similar criteria. The main distinction is that the resource may be significant to California or national history; the resource may be associated with important local and/or California events, people, or history.<sup>1</sup>

Any resource designated on the National or California Register is eligible for listing on the San Diego Historical Resources Board. In addition, a resource is eligible for listing if it is significant to San Diego or a community's history; a resource is eligible if it has integrity and meets one or more of the following criteria:

- It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's, or a neighborhood's, historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping or architectural development;
- It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;
- It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;
- It is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman;
- It is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood containing improvements which have a special character, historical interest or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

Properties that are designated as historic resources may be eligible for certain financial incentives, such as tax reductions and credits. Also, environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) may be required if a historic resource may be impacted by a project.

## 5.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

This section summarizes findings of the *Draft Cultural Resources Constraints Analysis for the Mission Valley Community Plan, San Diego County, California* prepared by Tierra Environmental Services (2015).

As the San Diego River Valley has been a source of fresh water for thousands of years, Mission Valley represents a prehistorically and historically active environment. The potential for intact cultural deposits at depth is probable at many locations in the river valley. An archival and literature search conducted at the South Coastal Information Center identified 49 known cultural resources within Mission Valley.

Mission Valley has been extensively developed, and there is no doubt that numerous prehistoric and historic resources have been disturbed over the years. However, any remaining undisturbed soils up to several feet deep anywhere in Mission Valley have the potential to contain cultural resources. In the western end of Mission Valley, the high sensitivity is particularly due to archaeological evidence of extensive prehistoric use of the area, which is also supported by ethnohistorically recorded villages, such as the ancient Kumeyaay village of Cosoy. The far eastern end is considered sensitive due to the existence of the Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

As the location of archaeological sites is restricted by the federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) in order to prevent looting, vandalism, and destruction of archaeological resources, their location is not provided in a table or figure.

<sup>1</sup> To qualify for the California Register, a resource must have integrity and meet one of the following criteria:

- It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States
- It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history;
- It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or
- It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the U.S.



Properties such as King's Inn, built in 1959, may now potentially be eligible for listing as a historic resource.



Town and Country