



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

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AMENDED BY HRB ON AUGUST 28, 2000
AMENDED BY HRB ON APRIL 25, 2002

HISTORICAL DISTRICT POLICY ON ESTABLISHING HISTORICAL DISTRICTS

1. DEFINITIONS

"A historical district means a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are united historically, geographically, or aesthetically by plan or physical development and that have a special character, historical interest, cultural or aesthetic value, or that represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City." (San Diego Land Development Code Section 113.0103)

The City of San Diego Historical Resources Board will consider designating the following five types of Historical Districts consistent with the definition above:

GEOGRAPHIC/TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL DISTRICT: This type of District is the long standing traditional type that includes a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way and within a geographically definable area which have related character, architectural styles, interrelationships, and physical proximity and association. Contributing sites in the Geographic/Traditional District are designated at the discretion of the Historical Resources Board.

THEMATIC HISTORICAL DISTRICT: This type of District includes a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way by a common theme related to historical context, architectural style, development period, or other characteristics, where visual continuity is not significant and sites are not necessarily located within a geographically definable area.



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VOLUNTARY/TRADITIONAL DISTRICT: This type of District includes a group of resources which are part of a finite number related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way with related character, architectural styles and physical proximity and association within an area that is geographically identifiable, but where the contributing site nominations are voluntarily made at the discretion of the property owner. Contributing site designations are made at the discretion of the Historical Resources Board from those volunteered by the property owner.

EMERGING HISTORICAL DISTRICT: This type of District includes a group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way with related character, theme, architectural styles, development period, or other characteristics within a geographically identifiable area which could one day cumulatively develop sufficient concentrations to bring it the level of a Geographic/Traditional or Thematic Historic District.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISTRICT: This type of District includes groupings of archaeological resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way with related character, theme, style, development period, culture, or other characteristics. Archaeological Districts are those that would have significant known or suspected concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites with subsurface archaeological or historical information in the form of site function, structures, objects, or features. Archaeological districts are the places where remnants of a past culture survive in a physical context that allows for the scientific interpretation of those remains. The archaeological remains usually take the form of artifacts (fragments of tools, ceramic vessels, or animal remains) features (remnants of walls, cooking hearths, or trash mittens) or ecological evidence (pollens, soils, fossils, old riverbed, shorelines and other natural indicators of cultural setting). An Archaeological District may be prehistoric, historic, or contain components from both periods. Additionally, historical archaeological properties may include standing or intact structures or other features that have a direct historical association with the subsurface remains. (Source:NRB#36)

Archaeological Districts may also be geographic, thematic or emerging: Geographic Districts are those where archaeological features are located or concentrated within an identifiable and continuous geographical area. An example would be a pre-Hispanic settlement. Thematic Districts are those where archaeological features or information is related through multiple sites, but the locations are scattered over a wide area. An example may be a series of sites related to one particular ethnic group of the same era, with perhaps different functions, (gathering, manufacturing, disposal sites) summer and winter camps, etc. Emerging Districts are those where one or more sites of significance have been found, and where evidence points to additional sites and features which could be identifiable in the future as more areas are investigated.

2. CRITERIA

The following criteria will be utilized in determining the significance of an area proposed for district designation:

- a. Common Heritage: An area associated with groups of existing or former residents who, because of their common employment or heritage have contributed significantly to the City's development. Such an area will usually contain structures of architectural interest identified with common heritage and traditional functions.
- b. Traditional Activity: An area or district associated with traditional activity, such as a central market, an educational or transportation facility, wharves, or warehousing. Such an area may also be remarkable for the particular architectural styles or method of construction associated with its original or traditional activity. Often a traditional activity has significantly shaped the history of the community which it served adding to its historic significance. If the traditional function exists in the present, it serves to illustrate the similarities and differences between past and present.
- c. Rare Past: A district which was once representative of common existence during a specific historic era but is now rare or unusual. Such as: an example of architecture, artistry, or design once common, now rare, or a function or use once common, now rare.
- d. Development Progression: Neighborhoods or districts illustrating the progressive development of style and changes in architectural and cultural taste.
- e. Consistent Plan: Districts illustrating the development of coherent or consistent planning and design, or innovations in planning philosophy.
- f. Public Works: Districts which illustrate the development of public works and other significant engineering achievements. During all historical periods structural aspects have been important, but after 1850, systems or construction employing steel and masonry contributed greatly to the evolution of commercial, industrial, and public buildings and therefore take a large part in the study of architecture of late periods.
- g. Features of Daily Living: Districts which illustrate the details of daily living during a previous period. Equipment or mechanical devices such as call bells, speaking tubes, dumbwaiters, fans, or similar systems are examples.
- h. Industrial Evolution: Districts which illustrate the evolution of an industrial era and its effects on humanity. Examples include company towns, glassworks, factories, manufacturing processes, and marketing developments. Aspects of these which have been instrumental in changing modes of work, altering working conditions, improving living standards, and generally affecting the social order may also manifest significance.
- i. Craftsmanship: Examples of workmanship, craftsmanship, artistry, or design which would today be economically infeasible or difficult to reproduce and/or are of benefit to the contemporary community as significant reminders of the past.

- j. Building Groupings: Building groupings where the significance and importance of the individual structures is increased because of their relationship to a grouping or row of other significant structures, which may or may not be of a similar period or design style.
- k. Landmark Supportive: District of quality buildings or sites, often made up of individual landmark structures supported by other structures of somewhat lesser importance. Such districts are normally easily definable and have a significance over and above the sum of the values of each historic site because of the total historic environment.

3. OBJECTIVE

The objective of a District is to maintain the scale and basic character of the subject district and other designated historic districts through:

- a. Protection and preservation of the basic characteristics and salient architectural details of structures insofar as these characteristics and details are compatible with the historical district, as defined by the Board in the Statement of Significance adopted for each district.
- b. Affording the widest possible scope for continuing vitality through private renewal and architectural creativity, within appropriate controls and standards. The Board intends to foster a climate in which each district may continue to exist as a living, changing neighborhood and not a static museum.
- c. Encouraging development of vacant property and redevelopment of incompatibly developed properties in accordance with the character of the area.
- d. Encouraging continuous research into San Diego's human past and culture for the benefit of future generations.

4. DOCUMENTATION

Information required for the establishment of historical districts:

GEOGRAPHIC/TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL DISTRICT

Geographic Boundaries: Specific geographic boundaries are established to encompass the historically significant area, sites and features.

A Statement of Significance: A statement is provided to establish the historical significance of the district based on Board Criteria.

Site Surveys: All properties within the district boundaries are evaluated and identified as contributing to the historical significance of the district, or as non-contributing sites. State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Forms (DPR-523 Forms) are provided for all properties within the District boundaries.

Contributing Sites: Contributing sites are those that meet the significance characteristic of the District and are specifically designated historical resources. These sites shall be eligible for all the benefits and responsibilities of historic designation, including the application of the Historical Building Code, Tax Code Incentives, and US Secretary of Interior Standards for development. Generally a Geographic Historic District should have a minimum of 50% contributing sites, and ideally 65% or more (source: State Historic Preservation Office).

Non-contributing Sites: Non-contributing sites are those that have been substantially modified so that they no longer contribute to the historical integrity of the district, or sites that were developed subsequently and have no inherent historical significance or features. These sites are not eligible for benefits resulting from historical designation, except if the owner subsequently restores original historic fabric and features making it a contributing site to the district. In these cases, the Board shall hold a public hearing where the status of the site from non-contributing to contributing can be assessed and approved.

Vacant Parcels: Vacant parcels within the boundaries of a District will be deemed to have significance if they relate to the quality and character of the district, otherwise they will be classified as non-contributing sites. Alteration of vacant sites will be reviewed in a manner consistent with the applicable historical district's approved development guidelines.

District Features: The Board will determine upon designation of a Historic District those features and characteristics deemed essential to the maintenance of the district's architectural and/or historic integrity.

Development Guidelines: If deemed necessary to maintain the historical and/or architectural integrity of a historical district the Board will prepare and adopt a set of development guidelines to be used in development project review for contributing and non-contributing sites, and other district features such as streets, etc., to provide an appropriate context for the application of US Secretary of Interior Standards.

Demolition and Alteration: Alteration to a contributing site within a historical district must comply with the applicable provisions of the San Diego Land Development Code. For example, a Site Development Permit is required for substantial alteration within historical districts and a recommendation of the Historical Resources Board is required prior to Planning Commission decision on a Site Development Permit. Furthermore, if a deviation for demolition or removal of a contributing structure within a historical district is approved, the applicant must obtain approval for new development before the issuance of a Demolition/Removal Permit. (San Diego Land Development Code sections 126.0502, 126.0503, 143.0250, and 143.0260(c)).

Inter-Department and Agency Support: Participation of appropriate City departments will be sought to assist with the preparation of a historical district. Upon designation of a historical district, actions of Departments which could affect said district, including proposed changes in land use, changes in traffic patterns and street closing, public improvements, encroachment permits, etc. should be forwarded to the Board for review and recommendation, consistent with the applicable historical district development guidelines and Section 111.0206d(4) of San Diego Land Development Code which empowers the Board *“To adopt standards and guidelines to be used by the Board in reviewing applications for development permits involving designated historical resources.”*

THEMATIC HISTORICAL DISTRICT

Geographic Boundaries: District significance is based on historical theme features not contained within identifiable geographic boundaries. Typically, a Thematic District boundary would be the whole, or a large portion of the City’s jurisdiction.

A Statement of Significance: A statement is provided to establish the historical significance of the district based on Board Criteria.

Site Survey: Only properties associated with the District’s theme are evaluated and identified as contributing sites. DPR-523 Forms are prepared for contributing sites only.

Contributing Sites: Contributing sites are deemed historical resources. These sites shall enjoy all the benefits and responsibilities of historic designation, including the application of the Historical Building Code, Tax Code Incentives, and US Secretary of Interior Standards for development. Generally this type of district should contain 100% contributing sites within the area identified (source: State Historic Preservation Office).

Non-contributing Sites: Criterion is not applicable since there typically is no geographic boundary within which non-contributing sites would be identified.

Vacant Parcels: Vacant parcels may be included in a Thematic District if they contribute to the significance of the district’s theme. Included could be sites such as open yards, parks or open space areas that provide context and setting that contribute to the historical theme of the district. Vacant parcels with these features may be identified as contributing sites.

District Features: The Board will determine upon designation of a historic district those features and characteristics deemed essential to the maintenance of the district’s thematic integrity.

Development Guidelines: If deemed necessary to maintain the historical and/or architectural integrity of a historic district the Board may prepare and adopt a set of development guidelines to be used in development project review.

Demolition and Alteration: Alteration to a contributing site in a Thematic District must comply with the applicable provisions of the San Diego Municipal code. For example, a Site Development Permit is required for substantial alteration within historical districts and a recommendation of the Historical

Resources Board is required prior to Planning Commission Decision on a Site Development Permit. Furthermore, if a deviation for demolition or removal of a contributing structure within a historical district is approved, the applicant must obtain approval for new development before the issuance of a Demolition/Removal Permit. (San Diego Land Development Code Sections 126.0502, 126.0503, 143.0250, and 143.0260(c).

Inter-Department and Agency Support: Participation of appropriate City departments will be sought in assisting with the preparation of a thematic district program. Upon designation actions of Departments which could affect a thematic district, including proposed changes in land use, changes in traffic patterns, public improvements, and street closing, should be forwarded to the Board for review and recommendation consistent with the applicable thematic district guidelines per Section 111.0206d(4) of the San Diego Land Development Code.

VOLUNTARY/TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL DISTRICT

Geographic Boundaries: Specific geographic boundaries are established to encompass the historically significant area, sites and features based on the historical survey completed.

A Statement of Significance: A statement is provided to establish the historical significance of the district based on Board Criteria.

Site Surveys: All properties within the district boundaries are evaluated and identified as contributing to the historical significance of the district, or as non-contributing sites. DPR-523 Forms are provided for all properties within the District boundaries.

Potentially Contributing Sites: Potentially Contributing Sites are those that meet the significance characteristic of the District. These sites shall be identified as eligible for designation as contributing sites in the district's survey.

Contributing Sites: Contributing Sites are Potentially Contributing Sites which are volunteered by their owners for designation and are specifically designated historical resources. These sites are eligible for all the benefits and responsibilities of historic designation, including the application of the Historical Building Code, Tax Code Incentives, and US Secretary of Interior Standards for development. In order to establish a Voluntary/Traditional District, a minimum of 51% of the known Potentially Contributing Sites shall be the minimum considered for the establishment of this type of District. When more than 85% of the Potentially Contributing Sites have been designated, the Board shall proceed to establish a Geographic/Traditional based Historical District (See Geographic/Traditional Historical District section for process and requirements).

Non-contributing Sites: Non-contributing sites are those that have been substantially modified so that they no longer contribute to the historical integrity of the district, or sites that were developed subsequently and have no inherent historical significance or features. These sites are not eligible for benefits resulting from historical designation, except if the owner subsequently restores original historic fabric and submits it for historical designation as a contributing site to the district. In these cases, the

Board shall hold a public hearing where the status of the site from non-contributing to contributing can be assessed and approved.

Vacant Parcels: Vacant parcels within the boundaries of a District will be deemed to have significance if they relate to the quality and character of the district, in which case they may be volunteered for designation. Otherwise they will be classified as non-contributing sites.

District Features: The Board will determine upon designation of a District those features and characteristics deemed essential to the maintenance of the district's architectural and/or historic integrity.

Development Guidelines: Development activity for the District's Contributing Sites will be subject to the US Secretary of Interior Standards. Potentially Contributing Sites more than 45 years old will be regulated by the City of San Diego Land Development Code Section 143.0250.

Demolition and Alteration: Demolition or alteration to a contributing site shall conform with Section 143.0201 et sec. of the Land Development Code. Demolition or alteration of a potentially contributing site within a historical district must comply with the applicable provisions of Sections 143.0212, 143.0220, and 143.0250 of the San Diego Land Development Code.

Inter-Department and Agency Support: Participation of appropriate City departments will be sought to assist with the preparation of a historical district. Upon designation of a historical district, actions of Departments which could affect said district, including proposed changes in land use, changes in traffic patterns and street closings, public improvements, encroachment permits, etc. should be forwarded to the Board for review and recommendation, consistent with the applicable historical district development guidelines and Section 111.0206d(4) of San Diego Land Development Code, which empowers the Board *"To adopt standards and guidelines to be used by the Board in reviewing applications for development permits involving designated historical resources."*

EMERGING HISTORICAL DISTRICT

Geographic Boundaries: District significance is based on a sampling of historical features or sites contained within an identifiable neighborhood or community of the City.

A Statement of Significance: A statement is provided establishing the historical significance of the district based on Board Criteria and representative samples of development that meet historic district criteria.

Site Survey: Only properties submitted for evaluation that are associated with the District's theme are evaluated and identified as contributing sites DPR-523 Forms are prepared for contributing sites only.

Contributing Sites: Contributing sites are deemed historical resources. These sites will enjoy all the benefits and responsibilities of historic designation, including the application of the Historical Building Code, Tax Code Incentives, and US Secretary of Interior Standards for development. Generally volunteered sites should make up no less than 10% and no more than 40% of the potentially contributing

sites. If volunteered sites are more than 40% of the potential contributing sites within the geographic area, then a Geographically based district should be pursued (per State Historic Preservation Office recommendation).

District Features: The Board will determine upon designation of an Emerging District those features and characteristics deemed essential to the maintenance of the district's architectural and/or historic integrity, such as zoning, revitalization activity, etc.

Demolition or Alteration: Alteration to a contributing site in an Emerging District must comply with the applicable provisions of the San Diego Land Development Code. For example, a Site Development Permit is required for substantial alteration within historical districts and a recommendation of the Historical Resources Board is required prior to Planning Commission decision on a Site Development Permit. Furthermore, if a deviation for demolition or removal of a contributing structure within a historical district is approved, the applicant must obtain approval for new development, before the issuance of a Demolition/Removal Permit. (San Diego Land Development Code Sections 126.0502, 126.0503, 143.0250, and 143.0260(c).

Inter-Department and Agency Support: Participation of appropriate City departments will be sought in assisting with the preparation of an Emerging District program. Upon designation of an Emerging District, the Board will request that actions of Departments which could affect contributing site in an Emerging District, including proposed changes in land use, changes in traffic patterns and street closing, be forwarded to the Board for review and recommendation consistent with Section 111.0206d(2) of the San Diego Land Development Code.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISTRICT

Boundaries: Boundaries are established to encompass the known or potential archaeologically significant area, based on published scientific reports identifying sites and features. Defining the perimeter of an archaeological site is often difficult, because its definition depends on an exhaustive scientific research which may often take many years and even a lifetimes. Defensible boundaries are required in that the boundaries chosen have to be justified. Boundaries, however, may change over time as a result of ongoing research.

A Statement of Significance: A statement is provided to establish the significance of the district based on Board Criteria.

Site Survey: Properties within the district boundaries are evaluated as the opportunity allows, and individual sites are identified whenever scientific data is available, as contributing or non contributing to the historical significance of the district. DPR-523 Forms are provided for all properties within the District boundaries.

Contributing Sites: Contributing sites are those where specific archaeological resources are known to exist, and are therefore deemed historical resources. These sites shall enjoy all the benefits and responsibilities of historic designation, including the application of the Historical Building Code, only to the degree it preserves the resource, Tax Incentives, and use of US Secretary of Interior Standards for development impacting subsurface areas.

Potentially Contributing Sites: Potentially contributing sites are those that have yet to be studied in detail and which once analyzed have a high probability of containing significant resources to be the cultural character of the district.

Vacant or Unsurveyed Parcels: Vacant or unsurveyed parcels within the boundaries of an archaeological district will be deemed to have significance (contributing site) if they relate to the quality and character of the district. Until site research proves that a site cannot provide future archaeological significance, any subsurface alteration will be reviewed and subject to archaeological monitoring unless and until, the site is found to be a non-contributing site. Sites may be removed from the district, or may be identified as non-contributing based on ongoing research results.

Non-contributing Sites: Non-contributing sites are those that have been studied with no archaeological information found. Typically these are substantially disturbed or modified, so that the site no longer is known to contain any archaeological value, and therefore does not contribute to the historical integrity of the district.

District Features: The Board will determine upon designation of an Archaeological District those features and characteristics deemed essential to the maintenance of the district's archaeological integrity.

Development Guidelines: All subsurface development will be required to undergo archaeological monitoring. In special cases where the quality of the built environment may be critical to the future integrity of the Archaeological District the Board may prepare development guidelines to be available for project review.

Demolition and Alteration: No permit for the alteration of subsurface areas shall be issued without review and recommendation by Board consistent with Section 126.0503, 126.0504, and 143.0201 et sec. of the Land Development Code.

Inter-Department and Agency Support: Participation of appropriate City departments will be sought in assisting with the preparation of an archaeological district program. Upon designation actions of Departments which could affect an archaeological district, including proposed subsurface construction and grading will be forwarded to the Board for review in a manner consistent with the applicable archaeological district program as provided by Section 111.0206d(4) of the City of San Diego Land Development Code.

5. BOARD ACTION

The following actions are required for the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board to establish a historical district:

- a. **Designation request:** Any organization, or individual can bring forth a request for historical district designation. The request should also include a petition endorsed by a substantial number or a majority of the affected property owners, or in the case of Emerging and Voluntary/Traditional Districts by all affected property owners. If the request is brought forth by the City, based on comprehensive historical studies available to the City, staff shall include

information showing the extent of community support and involvement in the preparation of the Historic District Document.

- b. **Historical Report:** The request shall include a Historical Report with information about the proposed historical district, including a Statement of Significance, boundaries or area of effect, DPR-523 Forms as required for the type of district sought, and Development Guidelines as needed. Information will be submitted to staff of the Historical Resources Board for review.
- c. **Volunteered Sites:** For Historical Districts that are voluntary based (Voluntary/Traditional and Emerging districts) a listing shall be provided of all owners who have expressed an interest in having their sites/properties designated within the District. The listing of voluntary properties shall be provided to the Board for review.
- d. **Board Review:** Two meetings of the Board are required to establish a historical district. Upon receipt of a complete historical district designation package, the Historical Resources Board staff shall schedule the item for review by the Board. At this time the Board shall evaluate the completeness and adequacy of the information submitted establishing the significance of the proposed historical district at a regularly scheduled Board meeting. If the information submitted is found adequate, a second noticed public hearing shall be scheduled for the next available Board hearing.
- e. **Noticing:** Notices will be mailed as required by the San Diego Land Development Code Section 123.0202 (b) to all affected property owners, and community planning groups, neighborhood associations, historical societies, and other interested parties.
- f. **Site Visit:** Historical Resources Board members are required to physically visit the district area and view the sites within the district's boundary before taking any action.
- g. **Board Hearing:** The Board will hear public testimony on the establishment of the historical district, and take appropriate action. The action of the Board to designate a historical district may be appealed to the City Council as established by the San Diego Land Development Code Section 123.0203.
- h. **Implementation:** Upon Board designation of a historical district the boundaries of said district shall be transmitted to all affected City departments so they may be aware of the Board's interest and involvement in any actions that could potentially affect the historical integrity and significance of the district. The Board shall review any development request affecting a significant historical resource as established by the various sections of the City of San Diego Land Development Code, to provide the appropriate recommendations to the decision maker. Additionally, contributing sites within a historical district shall be eligible for the Mills Act Program provided they meet the standards of the program.