



Historic Preservation Element

Purpose and Intent

To guide the preservation, protection and restoration of historical and cultural resources so that a clear sense of how the City gained its present form and substance can be maintained. Preservation of important historical resources enhances the quality of life in San Diego. It improves the quality of the built environment, encourages appreciation for the City's history and culture, maintains the character and identity of communities, and contributes the City's economic vitality.

Plan Issues

- ◆ Preservation of the City's important physical connections to the past.
- ◆ Protection of extant historical and cultural resources.
- ◆ Restoration of damaged or deteriorated historical sites, buildings, structures, and objects.
- ◆ Balancing the principles of historic preservation with the need to provide adequate housing, social institutions, and economic development for the benefit of all San Diegans.
- ◆ Inclusion of meaningful consultation with all cultural, ethnic and racial groups that are represented in the City's historical record of development from prehistoric time through Euro-American colonization to present day.
- ◆ Enjoyment of the benefits of historic preservation through an increased historic tourism economy and reinvestment of individual property tax savings into historical properties.

Introduction

No city can hope to understand its present or to forecast its future if it fails to recognize its past. For by tracing its past, a city can gain a clear sense of the process by which it achieved its present form and substance. San Diego's rich and varied historical and cultural resources include buildings, structures, objects, landscapes, districts, archaeological sites, and traditional cultural properties that possess historical, scientific, architectural, aesthetic, cultural, or ethnic significance. Although not always easily distinguishable, these resources, with their inherent ability to evoke the past, represent important aspects of the history of San Diego from the time before and during European contact with Native Americans of this area, through boom and bust



periods of development of the City's core, to early transportation routes and the spread of development outward, through both world wars and the continued military presence, the advent of the automobile, increased leisure time, and the recent past. The identification, evaluation, registration, and protection of these resources and thereby the preservation of San Diego's past for its current and future residents are the essential components of San Diego's historic preservation program.

Legal Basis for Historic Preservation

Federal Law

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), enacted in 1966, established the National Register of Historic Places, authorized funding for state programs with participation by local governments, created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and established a review process for protecting cultural resources. The NHPA provides the legal framework for most state and local preservation laws. The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. It is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources.

The NHPA was amended in 1980 to create the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, administered through the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). This program allows for direct local government participation and integration in a comprehensive statewide historic preservation planning process. Cities and counties with CLG status may complete for preservation funds allocated by the Congress and awarded to each State.

State Law

The California Register of Historical Resources was established in 1992, through amendments to the Public Resources Code, as an authoritative guide to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected from substantial adverse change. The California Register includes resources that are formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register, State Historical Landmarks numbered 770 or higher, Points of Historical Interest recommended for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC), resources nominated for listing and determined eligible in accordance with criteria and procedures adopted by the SHRC, and resources and districts designated as city or county landmarks when the designation criteria are consistent with California Register criteria.



With establishment of the California Register and the SHRC, the State Legislature amended the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to define historical resources as a resource listed in or determined eligible for listing in the California Register, a resource included in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting certain requirements, and any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be significant. Generally, a resource is considered to be historically significant if it meets the criteria for listing on the California Register. However, a lead agency is not precluded from determining a resource is significant that is not listed in or determined eligible for listing in the California Register, not included in a local register, or identified in a historical resources survey is a historical resource, as defined in the Public Resources Code.

CEQA was further amended to clarify that a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. While demolition and destruction are fairly obvious significant impacts, it is more difficult to assess when change, alteration, or relocation crosses the threshold of substantial adverse change. The State CEQA Guidelines provide that a project that demolishes or alters those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance, (i.e., its character-defining features), can be considered to materially impair the resource's significance. However, a project that conforms to the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* can generally be considered to be a project that will not cause a significant impact.

Certified Local Government

The City of San Diego became a CLG in 1986 under the provisions of the NHPA. CLGs must comply with five basic requirements:

- Enforce appropriate state and local laws and regulations for the designation and protection of historic properties, including adoption of a historic preservation plan or inclusion of a historic preservation element in the General Plan;
- Establish an historic preservation review commission by local ordinance;
- Maintain a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties;
- Provide for public participation in the local preservation program; and
- Satisfactorily perform responsibilities delegated to it by the state.

The benefits derived from being a CLG include the prestige and credibility of associating the local preservation program with time-tested state and national preservation programs; technical assistance offered by knowledgeable staff at OHP and other statewide CLGs; ability to compete for annual Historic Preservation Fund grants; direct participation in the nomination of historic



properties to the National Register; and ability to perform other preservation functions delegated by the OHP under the NHPA. These may include the responsibility to review and comment on development projects for compliance with federal and state environmental regulations, including such activities as Section 106 reviews, review of National Register nominations, and review of rehabilitation plans for projects seeking Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit.

San Diego Register of Historical Resources

Any improvement, building, structure, sign, interior element and fixture, feature, site, place, district, area, or object may be designated a historical resource by the HRB if it meets one or more of the following designation criteria:

- a. 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;
- b. is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;
- c. 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;
- d. is representative of the notable work or a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman;
- e. is listed or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or is listed or has been determined eligible by the State Historical Preservation Office for listing on the State Register of Historical Resources; or
- f. 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.

The first site designated as a historical resource by the City of San Diego is Balboa Park's El Prado in 1967. AS of 2006, more than 750 buildings, structures, objects, districts, cultural landscapes, and archaeological sites have been designated by the City's Historical Resources Board (HRB). The HRB authority, appointment and terms, meeting conduct, and powers and duties; the designation process including the nomination process, noticing and report requirements, appeals, recordation, amendments or rescission, and nomination of historical resources to state and national registers; and development regulations for historical resources are found in Chapters 11, 12 and 14 of the Municipal Code. The purpose of these regulations is to protect, preserve, and, where damaged, restore the historical resources of San Diego.



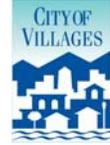
San Diego History

The history of a region provides the context for the identification, evaluation and management of historical resources. The history of San Diego begins, more than 12,000 years ago, with 10,000 years of prehistoric occupation by Native American people, followed by several hundred years of initial and on going contact between these local Native Americans and European clergy, militia, and settlers, governance by Mexico, and several hundred years of growth from a small town to one of the largest cities in the country. A detailed discussion of San Diego's history can be found on the Planning Department's website. The following timeline is offered as a concise reminder of the long history of San Diego and the cultural diversity that is at the center of our history and continues to enrich our City today. Several representative examples of each period have been designated by the HRB. A few of those examples are highlighted below.



TABLE HP – 1 Regional History

<p><i>Prehistoric Period (8500 BC to AD 1769)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native American people lived throughout San Diego continuously • Subsistence changed from nomadic hunting to a focus on coastal marine and inland food sources with native plant gathering to a more sedentary lifestyle with limited horticulture • Significant time markers include changes in stone tools and the introduction of pottery 	<p><i>Representative Designated Historical Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village of Ystagua • Spindrift Archaeological Site • Gordon-Hooper Archaeological Site • Ocean Beach Gateway Archaeological Site
<p><i>Spanish Period (1769 to 1821)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival of Spanish missionaries and explorers • Mission San Diego de Alcalá established by Father Junipero Serra • Spanish occupation and mission system profoundly changed lives of the Kumeyaay people • Early house lots and garden plots in what would become Old Town 	<p><i>Representative Designated Historical Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Guijarros • Franciscan Garden Site • Old Mission Dam and Flume
<p><i>Mexican Period (1821 to 1846)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mexico wins independence from Spain and San Diego becomes part of the Mexican Republic • Rancho system of large agricultural estates • Secularization of the San Diego Mission • Mexico granted San Diego official pueblo (town) status • Native American population continued to decline 	<p><i>Representative Designated Historical Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson-Taylor Adobe • El Cuero Adobe • Casa de Machado-Stewart • Fort Stockton • Old Spanish Cemetery • San Pasqual Battlefield
<p><i>American Development (1846-Present)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americans assumed formal control with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 • Alonzo Horton arrived in 1867 and helped San Diego develop into an active American town • Expansion of trade brought an increase in the availability of building material • Active African-American and Chinese communities lived and worked downtown • Development spread from downtown based partly on availability of potable water and transportation corridors • Chinese, German, Swiss, Italian, Portuguese, and other immigrants owned businesses and worked throughout San Diego, as do their descendants today 	<p><i>Representative Designated Historical Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davis-Horton House • Rosario Hall • Villa Montezuma • Sunnyslope Lodge • El Prado at Balboa Park • El Cortez Hotel • Wheeler J. Bailey Library • Conrad-Arrington House • Oxley House • Salk Institute • Chicano Park



Examples of every major period and style remain in San Diego, although few areas retain substantial neighborhood-level architectural integrity due to several major building booms, when older structures were demolished, prior to preservation movements and stricter regulations regarding historic structures. Among the recognized architectural styles in San Diego are Spanish Colonial, Pre-Railroad New England, National Vernacular, Victorian Italianate, Stick, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Shingle, Folk Victorian, Mission, Craftsman, Prairie, French Eclectic, Italian Renaissance, Spanish Eclectic, Egyptian Revival, Tudor Revival, Modernistic and International. Research interests related to the built environment include San Diego's railroad and maritime history, development in relationship to the automobile, the role of recreation in the development of specific industries, as well as the design and implementation of major regional planning and landscaping projects, the role of international fairs on architecture, landscape architecture and city building; the development of industrial and military technologies between the two world wars; the relationship between climate, terrain, native plant material and local gardening and horticultural practices, planning and subdivision practices from the turn of the century to the present day and the post-war period of suburbanization.

Goals

- ◆ Integration of historic preservation planning in the larger planning process.
- ◆ Identification of the historical resources of the City.
- ◆ Historical preservation incentives as an important component of the overall program.
- ◆ Creation of opportunities for historical resources sponsorship.
- ◆ Foster public education in the importance of historical resources.
- ◆ Increased opportunities for cultural heritage tourism.

Discussion

The City of San Diego has a long history of historic preservation planning and has made significant achievements in terms of protecting its historic and cultural heritage. In 1965, San Diego created the Historic Sites Board and adopted its first ordinance to identify, designate, and preserve properties that are historically and architecturally significant to the community. The ordinance was amended in 1971 to allow a review of demolition or substantial alteration of historic sites and a delay prior to issuance of a demolition permit. In 1979, City of San Diego Progress Guide and General Plan was adopted containing a Cultural Resources Management Element. San Diego was one of only a few cities to include a separate element addressing historic preservation at that time. The General Plan identified short falls within the existing ordinance and historic preservation program and stated as a major goal, the enactment of local



regulations that would ensure effective protection and management of historical resources.

A comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan consisting of four elements (Inventory, Education, Incentives, and Ordinance) was developed in 1991; all elements except the ordinance were adopted. With much input from the public, new historical resources regulations and guidelines were adopted as part of the comprehensive zoning code update process in 1999. These regulations and guidelines helped achieve effective protection and management of historical resources in San Diego. The continuing challenge is integrating effective historic preservation into the larger planning process. As future growth in San Diego shifts attention from building on open land to a focus on reinvestment in existing communities, historical and cultural resources will be increasingly viewed as sites with opportunity to redevelop both in the Centre City area and surrounding older communities.

The backbone of any historic preservation program is an understanding of the number, location and significance of historical resources. A comprehensive inventory that identifies those resources and can be updated as new information is developed is critical to this understanding. Historic contexts are often prepared as part of the survey effort to organize information based on a cultural theme and its geographical and chronological limits. They describe the significant broad patterns of development in an area that may be represented by historical and cultural resources. The evaluation of historical resources is closely tied to how the resource relates to the context statement. In addition to identifying important individual historical resources and potential historical districts, a survey can identify conservation areas that retain original community character in sufficient quantity and quality that warrants review prior to demolition or substantial alteration of individual properties or attention to the retention of certain established characteristics or attention to the retention of certain established characteristics.

The City's commitment to historic preservation through maintaining CLG status results in multiple economic benefits beyond the opportunity to compete for CLG grants. It is widely recognized that where preservation is supported by local government policies and incentives, designation can increase property values and pride of place. Revitalization of historic downtowns and adaptive reuse of historic districts and buildings conserves resources, uses existing infrastructure, generates local jobs and purchasing, supports small business development and heritage tourism and enhances quality of life and community character. Rehabilitation Tax Credits provide a 10 or 20 percent rehabilitation tax credit for income producing properties on rehabilitation spending for historical buildings eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Facade and conservation easements offer income tax deductions for the donation of a specified portion of a designated historical or cultural resource. The Mills Act provides property tax relief to help rehabilitate and maintain designated historical resources. The California Cultural and Historical Endowment was created to administer Proposition 40 funds dedicated to preservation of historical and cultural resources. These funds are available to government and non-profit organizations through a competitive grant application process.



Policies

HP-1: Strengthen historic preservation planning.

- a. Fully integrate the consideration of historical and cultural resources in the larger land use planning process.
- b. Promote early conflict resolution between the preservation of historical resources and alternative land uses.
- c. Update the Historical Resources Regulations and Guidelines of the Land Development Code as needed to maintain adequate protection of designated historical resources.
- d. Consult with California Native American tribes prior to the adoption or amendment of the general plan or specific plan for the purpose of preserving, or mitigating impacts to, cultural places located on land within the city's jurisdiction that is affected by the proposed plan adoption or amendment.
- e. Encourage the consideration of historical and cultural resources early in the development review process.
- f. Make the results of historical and cultural resources planning efforts available to land use planning agencies, the public and other interested parties to the extent legally permissible.
- g. Maintain Certified Local Government (CLG) status ensuring San Diego's direct participation in federal and state historic preservation programs.
- h. Utilize benefits of the CLG program including grant funding available from the California Office of Historic Preservation.
- i. Update the Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. The plan is intended to guide, with specificity, historic preservation efforts in future years, including implementation measures, inventories, incentives, education and regulations.
- j. Participate in regional efforts to strengthen historic preservation planning.

HP-2: Actively pursue a program to identify, document, evaluate, designate and preserve the historical and cultural resources in the City of San Diego.

- a. Develop Context Statements specific to areas being surveyed.
- b. Complete a comprehensive citywide inventory of historical and cultural resources in conformance with state standards and procedures.
- c. Pursue the use of identifying conservation areas at the community plan level, based on historical resources surveys, to maintain community character and provide a buffer area between designated historical districts and areas expected to redevelop at higher densities. Additional discussion and policies on conservation areas can be found in the Urban Design Element.
- d. Require that all city-owned designated historical resources be maintained in a manner that is consistent with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.



- e. Support state-of-the-art research designs and analytical approaches to historical, archaeological and cultural resource investigation.
- f. Support requirements for the permanent curation of archaeological artifact collections.

HP-3: Promote the maintenance, restoration and rehabilitation of historical resources through a variety of financial and development incentives. Continue to use existing programs and develop new approaches as needed. Encourage continued private ownership and utilization of historic structures through a variety of incentives.

- a. Encourage owners of historical resources to utilize Federal incentives including Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits, façade and conservation easements and others.
- b. Encourage owners of historical resources to utilize incentives offered by the state of California including the Mills Act, the California Cultural and Historical Endowment, as well as any other available incentives. Use of the Mills Act tax reduction may be allowed in Redevelopment Areas, in conjunction with other financial incentives.
- c. Create incentives to encourage the protection and preservation of important archaeological sites in situ on privately owned property.
- d. Use the flexibility provided in the California State Historical Building Code Title 24 in meeting code requirements for historically designated buildings.
- e. Encourage the use of Transfer of Development Rights to preserve historical and cultural resources in situ, particularly in areas zoned for high density development.
- f. Take advantage of the conditional use permit (CUP) process for historical resources, to gain flexibility in the application of some development regulations.
- g. Foster preservation and adaptive re-use of designated historical buildings and structures by allowing retention of non-conforming setbacks without requiring a variance or hardship finding. Use of a Neighborhood Development Permit with a finding that the proposed re-use does not adversely affect the community plan or general plan that call for preservation would be beneficial in this regard.
- h. Create an architectural assistance service to help owners design rehabilitation and/or adaptive re-use plans, or feasibility studies for historically designated buildings.
- i. Continue to provide design assistance for owners of historical resources through the Historical Resources Board.

HP-4: Develop a historic preservation sponsorship program.

- a. Create a historic preservation fund that provides a monetary source for local preservation incentives such as an architectural assistance program and archaeological site protection plan. The fund may be supported through grants, private or public donations, or other sources.
- b. Create a “receiver site” program that provides relocation sites for historical resources (buildings, structures or objects) that cannot be preserved onsite. Receiver sites should be located within the community in which the resource was originally located and should maintain a context and setting comparable to the original location.



- c. Establish an “adopt a resource” program that encourages the public and local businesses to become involved in the protection and preservation of historical and cultural resources by sponsoring preservation of individual properties, which may include archaeological sites to the extent legally permissible.
- d. Create a sponsorship program to encourage the public and local businesses to become involved in curation of existing archaeological artifact collections that have no current funding mechanism.

HP-5: Foster greater public participation and education in historical and cultural resources.

- a. Encourage public attendance at monthly Historical Resources Board meetings.
- b. Encourage the participation of the City's rich diversity of ethnic groups in efforts to preserve historical and cultural resources.
- c. Engage the public when creating “context statements” by adopting an oral history component of historical survey work.
- d. Participate in National Historic Preservation Week and California Archaeology Month. Each year in May recognize those individuals, groups or businesses that have made a significant contribution in the preservation, protection or restoration of historical or cultural resources.
- e. Foster educational opportunities using designated historical and cultural resources, including placement of plaques as a way to identify important historical resources throughout the City.
- f. Encourage the involvement of educational institutions in preservation programs and activities.
- g. Promote the use of local history themes in public art projects.
- h. Encourage active community involvement in preservation efforts through resource sponsorship programs.

HP-6: Increased opportunities for cultural heritage tourism. Additional discussion and policies can be found in the Economic Prosperity Element.

- a. Collaborate with other public, private and non-profit entities to create a sustainable cultural heritage tourism program within the overall travel industry.
- b. Promote the history of San Diego and the many designated historical buildings, structures, districts, and landscapes to attract cultural heritage travelers.
- c. Focus the development of cultural heritage programs on quality and authenticity.