



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## Report to the Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: September 8, 2016 REPORT NO. HRB-16-059

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board  
Agenda of September 20, 2016

SUBJECT: **ITEM #5 – Uptown Community Plan Update**

APPLICANT: City of San Diego

LOCATION: Uptown Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Review and consider the Uptown Community Plan Update as it relates to historical and cultural resources for the purposes of making a recommendation to the City Council.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to the City Council adoption of the Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey (Historic Survey); the Historic Preservation Element of the Uptown Community Plan update (HPE); and the final Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) related to Historical Resources.

### BACKGROUND

A Historic Survey consisting of a historic context statement and a detailed reconnaissance survey identifying potential historic districts and individual resources was prepared for the Uptown Community Plan Update (UCPU). The information in these documents, along with the Cultural Resources Report (AECOM 2015) was used to identify locations in Uptown that may contain significant historical resources. In addition, these documents were used to shape the historic preservation element of the UCPU, and inform the Land Use and Urban Design elements of the plan.

### DISCUSSION

The Uptown community is one of the older areas of the City, characterized by its location on a mesa top above the San Diego River. Steep canyons that lead to Mission Valley to the north and San Diego bay to the west were probably used prehistorically by Kumeyaay inhabitants and their ancestors as travel routes in to the valley areas, much as they are today. The completion of a transcontinental rail line in 1885, was a catalyst for the first notable wave of development in Uptown. At the time, speculation still abounded, but a substantial number of homes were constructed near the southern border of Uptown, in present-day Park West.

Over the next two decades, new development shifted north towards present-day Hillcrest and University Heights, due in large part to the construction of several public transit lines. Development activity accelerated once more in anticipation of the much awaited 1915 Panama-California Exposition. By the 1920s, both Park West and Hillcrest were almost entirely developed, and the more distant communities of University Heights and Mission Hills were nearly built out by the 1930s. Following the Great Depression and World War II, Uptown was the target of several redevelopment efforts and witnessed a considerable amount of physical change. Despite being bisected by Interstate 5 and State Route 163, Uptown still contains cohesive blocks of historic structures, especially in Park West, Hillcrest, and University Heights. In addition, Mission Hills has retained its historic fabric and contains a sizable concentration of single family homes dating from the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s.

In support of the UCPU, a records search revealed 14 cultural resources within Uptown that have been recorded by the South Coastal Information Center – one prehistoric lithic scatter, one prehistoric habitation area, eleven historic refuse deposits, and one historic structure. As of the completion of the most recent Historic Survey draft in May 2016, Uptown is home to 12 historic resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 343 individually designated properties listed in the City of San Diego Register of Historic Resources, and two locally designated historic districts – Mission Hills and Fort Stockton Line, which contain a total of 234 contributing resources.

### **Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Resources Survey**

The Historic Survey prepared by the City of San Diego (Attachment 1) provides a project overview; discusses the project methods, including the survey approach, evaluation criteria, and public outreach efforts; provides a historic context addressing the themes significant to development of the plan area and the property types that reflect those significant themes; and identifies potential individual resources and potential historic districts which may be eligible for designation based upon the historic context.

#### Historic Context

The Historic Context Statement presents an overview of the history of Uptown, with a specific emphasis on describing the historic themes and patterns that have contributed to the community's physical development. It presents the history of Uptown's built environment from pre-history to the present in order to support and guide identification and evaluation of historic properties throughout the community, as well as to inform future planning decisions. The following themes were identified in the Historic Context:

- Prehistory
- Early History: 1769-1885
- The Railroad Boon and Early Residential Development: 1885-1909
- The Panama-California Exposition and Streetcar Suburbs: 1909-1929
- Great Depression and World War II: 1929-1948
- Postwar Development, Suburbanization, the Automobile & Modernism: 1948-1970
- Neighborhood Revitalization and the LGBTQ Community: 1970-Present

#### Detailed Reconnaissance Survey

A reconnaissance-level survey, as defined by the National Park Service, is a "once over lightly" inspection of an area. In contrast, an intensive-level survey includes a detailed inspection of the survey

area in order to identify “precisely and completely” all historic resources in an area. The historic resources survey for the Uptown Community Plan Update is substantially more detailed than a reconnaissance-level survey, but without the degree of documentation required for an intensive-level survey. The purpose of this survey is to identify potentially historic properties within the community plan area for consideration in the community plan update process, and for possible future designation. This includes the verification of previously-identified potential historic districts and individual resources, as well as the identification of new potential historic districts and individual resources.

Work on the Uptown survey began in 2001-2002, when the City commissioned a historic survey consisting of the *Uptown Historical Context and Oral History Report* and a reconnaissance-level survey, both of which were completed by IS Architecture. The survey, which was conducted from 2004-2006, recorded and identified both cultural landscape resources and architectural resources built prior to 1961. Surveyors identified properties that appeared eligible for individual designation, as well as geographically-definable areas that appeared eligible for designation as historic districts. Although the survey effort initially wrapped up in 2007, historic resources staff and the California Office of Historic Preservation identified some issues with the historic context and the assignment of some Status Codes, which are used to summarize the historic status of a property once it is surveyed.

The commencement of the Uptown Community Plan Update in 2008 provided an opportunity, through additional resources and outreach to the community, to address the issues identified and utilize the relevant information and data. To accomplish this, a new historic context statement was prepared by City Planning staff, and the Status Codes were revised. Additionally, the information provided in Appendices C and D of the Historic Survey, which identify potential historic districts and multiple property listings, respectively, was updated to reflect current City Policy on the designation of historic districts and application of the City’s designation Criteria. For a detailed discussion of the issues and revisions, please refer to the Methods section of the Historic Survey report.

Based upon the historic context statement and the reconnaissance-level survey, the City of San Diego identified 19 potential historic districts; three Multiple Property Listings (MPLs); and 2,134 properties that may be eligible for individual listing (this number includes 389 properties identified in the various MPLs). The 19 potential historic districts include:

- Arnold & Choate’s Historic District
- Dove Street Historic District
- Heart of Bankers Hill Historic District
- Horton’s Addition Historic District
- Inspiration Heights Historic District
- Inspiration View Historic District
- John Sherman Historic District
- Marine View Historic District
- Marston Family Historic District
- Marston Hills Historic District
- Mission Hills Historic District Expansion Areas
- North Florence Heights Historic District
- Northwest Mission Hills Historic District
- Park Boulevard Historic District
- Park Edge North Historic District
- Presidio Hills Historic District

- Robinson Place Historic District
- Second Avenue Historic District
- West University Heights Historic District

In addition, the Uptown Community Plan Area Historic Survey identified three MPLs, the Bungalow and Apartment Court MPL; the Kate Olivia Sessions MPL; and the Victorian Era MPL. A MPL is a group of related significant properties with shared themes, trends and patterns of history. Such properties are typically grouped within a general geographic area, but not necessarily in a sufficient concentration to form a historic district. A MPL may be used to nominate and register thematically related historic properties simultaneously, or to establish the registration requirements for properties that may be nominated individually or in groups in the future. The City does not have a process in place for establishing MPLs, and such procedures are not being proposed in conjunction with the CPU.

The Historic Survey also identified 2,134 properties as potentially significant individual resources (including 389 properties within the MPLs that would be evaluated as individual resources). These include 1,247 single family homes, 794 multi-family properties, 196 commercial buildings, and 10 civic and institutional buildings. Thematically, the resources identified are distributed as follows:

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Theme</b>
3	Early History: 1769-1885
256	The Railroad Boom and Early Residential Development: 1885-1909
989	The Panama-California Exposition and Streetcar Suburbs: 1909-1929
489	Great Depression and World War II: 1929-1948
523	Postwar Development, Suburbanization, the Automobile & Modernism: 1948-1970
6	Neighborhood Revitalization and the LGBTQ Community: 1970-Present

Substantial public outreach with the Uptown Planning Group, regional and local preservation groups, and members of the community occurred throughout the development of the Historic Context and completion of the survey. This information was considered and often incorporated as appropriate into the results and recommendations of the survey.

Following distribution of the Draft Survey Report, City staff conducted additional outreach with these groups to identify any resources not previously included in the survey by the consultant which the community believed to be historically significant. Based on the results of this outreach and review by qualified City staff, additional resources were identified as potentially significant, requiring further site-specific evaluation. Individual resources and bungalow courts identified by the community were also incorporated into the survey results. In addition, four new potential historic districts were identified, Allen Terrace Historic District, Avalon Heights Historic District, Hillcrest Historic District, and San Diego Normal School/San Diego City Schools Education Complex Historic District.

While the initial survey work conducted did not identify these areas as potential historic districts, qualified City staff reviewed these potential historic districts and conducted a windshield survey on foot to confirm that these areas appear to contain a sufficient concentration of resources and the physical integrity required to be eligible for local listing. However, potential contributing and non-contributing resources were not specified. These four potential historic districts were also incorporated into the results of the survey as community-identified resources. In order to bring these districts forward for designation, additional, intensive-level research would be required to

evaluate the district and define a precise boundary, period of significance, significance criteria, and contributing and non-contributing resources.

Included with the CPU package is a draft work program that includes a schedule for the processing of all 34 potential historic districts identified across the North Park, Golden Hill, and Uptown planning areas over the next 11 years (Attachment 2). This work program was developed using prioritization factors that included input from the Community Planning Groups.

### **Historic Preservation Element**

The Historic Preservation Element (HPE) of the UCPU (Attachment 3) guides the preservation, protection and restoration of historical and cultural resources within the community plan area. The element includes goals and policies for addressing the history and historic resources unique to Uptown in order to encourage appreciation of the community's history and culture. The policies within the HPE fall within two general categories, 1) identification and preservation of historical resources, and 2) educational opportunities and incentives related to historical resources. Broadly, the goals and policies of the HPE include protection of potential historic districts; future intensive level survey of potential historic districts; implementation of the identified MPLs; outreach to the community and property owners; identification and protection of archaeological and tribal cultural resources; and promotion of educational and interpretive programs and heritage tourism opportunities. The policies were informed by the results of the Historic Survey and developed in collaboration with the community. Along with the General Plan policies, the CPU would provide a comprehensive historic preservation strategy for Uptown.

### **Amendments to Historical Resources Regulations**

Amendments to the Historical Resources Regulations are proposed to provide additional protections for potential historic districts identified by Council, as described in Staff Report No HRB-16-063 for the North Park Community Plan Update. The Land Development Code (LDC) amendments required to establish the supplemental regulations for potential historic districts are part of the package for the North Park Planning Area, and will be considered by the HRB on September 14, 2016. If the amendments are adopted by the City Council, they will also apply to the potential historic districts within the Uptown CPU that are identified by the City Council during the action on this CPU. Because the LDC amendments are included in the North Park CPU package and considered by the Board as part of that CPU, they are not discussed here or included in the Board's recommendation on the Uptown CPU.

### **Environmental Analysis of Historical Resources**

A Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) was prepared and includes a CEQA-level analysis of potentially significant impacts to Historical Resources (prehistoric, historic archaeological, tribal cultural and built environment resources) and is detailed in Section 6.7 Historical Resources section of the PEIR (Attachment 4). Although the proposed Uptown CPU and associated discretionary actions do not propose specific development, future development could result in the alteration of historical resources as defined in the Land Development Code (e.g. historic building, structure, object, or site.) The mitigation framework provided in the PEIR (HIST-6.7-1 and HIST 6.7-2) would be required of all development projects with the potential to impact significant historical resources. A complete copy of the Final PEIR, that includes responses to comments on historical issues, is provided on the City's website through the link at the end of this report.

## Public Input

The City has received input from the public on the Historic Survey and the Historic Preservation Element. Wherever appropriate, the City has worked to incorporate public comment and feedback into the various documents. Attachment 6 includes staff responses to several issues which were submitted during public review of the documents.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the information provided in the historic context and survey report has been incorporated into the planning process for the Uptown CPU and is reflected in the goals and policies of the Historic Preservation Element. In addition, the PEIR includes a mitigation framework for cultural and historical resources that would reduce impacts anticipated from future projects, although not below a level of significance. Therefore, staff recommends that the HRB recommend to the City Council adoption of the Uptown Community Plan Update Historic Resources Survey (Historic Survey); the Historic Preservation Element of the Uptown Community Plan update (HPE); and the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) related to Historical Resources analysis and mitigation.



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### Attachments:

1. Uptown Community Plan Historic Resources Survey (under separate cover)
2. Draft Work Program for Processing Potential Historic Districts (under separate cover)
3. Uptown CPU Historic Preservation Element (under separate cover)
4. Uptown Program Environmental Impact Report (available online at: <https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/ceqa>)
5. Uptown PEIR Section 6.7, Historical Resources (under separate cover)
6. Planning Department Responses to Historic Resources Issues (under separate cover)