

Laguna Beach



Historic Resources Element

CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

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CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH

HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

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**CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH
HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT**

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PURPOSE OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

The Historic Resources Element provides the foundation for the protection and preservation of historic structures in the City.

A defining feature of Laguna Beach is its variety and number of older homes and buildings. If the positive and inviting image of Laguna Beach as a pedestrian community with a unique village atmosphere and significant aesthetic amenities can be retained, the City will continue to enjoy prosperity and increased property values.

The loss of numerous older buildings due to the escalating coastal real estate market and changes in the housing sizes and styles was the catalyst for the original Historic Resources Element adopted by the City in 1983. The City Council of Laguna Beach recognized the importance of enacting measures to protect its numerous historic buildings. The Historic Resources Element provides guidelines, goals and policies that assist the City of Laguna Beach in preserving its historic and cultural resources. It establishes a broad framework for both public and private efforts and outlines an implementation program of both financial and planning incentives to promote long-term appreciation and preservation of historic resources.

Through the Historic Resources Element and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City incorporates historic preservations as a major component of its local planning process and recognizes its importance to maintaining the quality of life of its residents, as well as promoting its attraction to visitors.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

The Historic Resources Element is not a state-mandated element of the General Plan. Even though this element is optional, it follows specified procedures developed for mandatory elements in terms of content, style and process. The Historic Resources Element is composed of three main components: 1) Introduction, 2) Issues, Goals and Policies, and 3) The Implementation Plan. The Issues, Goals and Policies section provides a description of the major issues related to preservation and protection of historic resources. Goals, which are overall statements of the community's desires, are comprised of broad statements of purpose and direction. Policies are action statements presented to address these issues. Implementation measures explain how the goals and policies will be achieved and implemented.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The State of California General Plan Guidelines discusses the need for internal consistency among elements of a general plan. The goals, policies and implementation measures are consistent with the applicable elements of the City's General Plan, specifically the Land Use and Housing Elements. Throughout the preparation of this document, consistency and coordination has been maintained, not only with the General Plan, but also with other plans, such as the Vision Laguna Strategic Plan.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Vision Laguna Strategic Plan

In the spring of 1999, the Laguna Beach City Council appointed the Laguna Beach Vision Steering Committee to oversee and manage the Vision Laguna Strategic Plan. The mission of Vision Laguna 2030 was to generate a consensus about the future direction of Laguna Beach. The Vision Laguna 2030 process required gathering a database, identifying a shared vision, developing a strategic plan, and planning for implementation. This update to the City's Historic Resources Element has incorporated pertinent historic preservation goals and projects from the Vision Laguna Strategic Plan.

Downtown Specific Plan

Downtown Laguna Beach was one of the first areas of the City to be extensively developed in the early 1900's. The downtown presence and character distinguishes the community from most of the surrounding cities. The policies established in the Downtown Specific Plan are for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing this unique character.

Historic Preservation Ordinance

The provisions of the City of Laguna Beach Historic Preservation Ordinance provide a tool for implementing the Historic Resources Element. The Ordinance promotes voluntary implementation and provides incentives for adding to and modifying historic structures while ensuring preservation of the original architectural integrity of the structure. The incentives include fee waivers, setback flexibility, parking reductions and a property tax reduction (Mills Act) for qualified historic structures.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the state legislature in response to a public mandate for thorough environmental analysis of any projects that have the potential to affect the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedures are described in the CEQA Statutes and the CEQA Guidelines. Implementation of CEQA ensures that during the decision-making stage of development, City officials and the general public will be able to assess the environmental impacts associated with private and public development projects to historic, archaeological and paleontological resources.

Certified Local Government

The 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provided for the establishment of a Certified Local Government (CLG). This program allows for direct local government participation and integration in a comprehensive statewide historic preservation planning process. Certified Local Governments are eligible on a competitive basis for special matching grants from a pool of money representing at least 10 percent of California's annual grant from the National Historic Preservation Fund. Although it is a federal program, the CLG program is administered by the Office of Historic Preservation in California. A local government that agrees to enforce state and local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties, maintains a review board, maintains a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties and provides public participation in the local historic preservation process.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historic Resources, enacted in 1992, is an authoritative guide to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources. The California Register program encourages public recognition of architectural, historic, archaeological, and cultural significance resources; identifies historical resources for state and local planning purposes; and defines threshold eligibility for state historical grant funding. Individuals or local governments may directly nominate properties to the California Register. Local public agencies may assist in the nomination of properties and may comment on nominations, which originate from private groups or individuals within their jurisdiction. Property owners must be notified and provided an opportunity to comment upon the nominations.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's cultural resources worthy of recognition and preservation. It is a federal program maintained by the National Park Service and administered by the Office of Historic Preservation in California. Properties qualify when they (a) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, (b) are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, (c) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction or (d) have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Any individual or group may prepare a National Register nomination. Completed applications are submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation.

Although there are 38 properties eligible, only two properties in Laguna Beach are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places; one is Villa Rockledge (c.1918-1921), a Spanish Mediterranean house designed by noted architect Arthur Benton, designer of the Mission Inn Hotel in Riverside, CA. Villa Rockledge is located at 2529 South Coast Highway. The other property listed on the National Register is the Cathedral Chapel of St. Francis By-the-Sea (American Catholic Church, c.1933), with eclectic architecture and built from the rubble of the Long Beach earthquake. The Cathedral Chapel of St. Francis by the Sea is located at 430 Park Avenue. Photographs of these two structures follow this section.

List of Properties Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

411 Arroyo Chico	2191 Ocean Way
820 Catalina Street	2192 Ocean Way
1559 Catalina Street	162 South Coast Highway
372 Center Street	335 South Coast Highway
339 Cleo Street	425 South Coast Highway
550 & 556 Cliff Drive	901- 913 South Coast Highway
305 Forest Avenue	976 South Coast Highway
384 Forest Avenue	1009 South Coast Highway
412 Glenneyre Street	1183 South Coast Highway
1166 Glenneyre Street	1289 South Coast Highway
571 Graceland Drive	1316 South Coast Highway
310 Hawthorne Road	1450 South Coast Highway
770 Hillcrest Drive	1464 South Coast Highway
445 Linden Street	2241 South Coast Highway
390 Magnolia Drive	2475 South Coast Highway
758 Manzanita Street	155 Sunset Terrace
139 Moss Point	2683 Victoria Drive
212 North Coast Highway	290 Wave Street
308 North Coast Highway	South Laguna:
1280-1284 North Coast Highway	31172 Ceanothus Drive
1991 Ocean Way	40 North La Senda

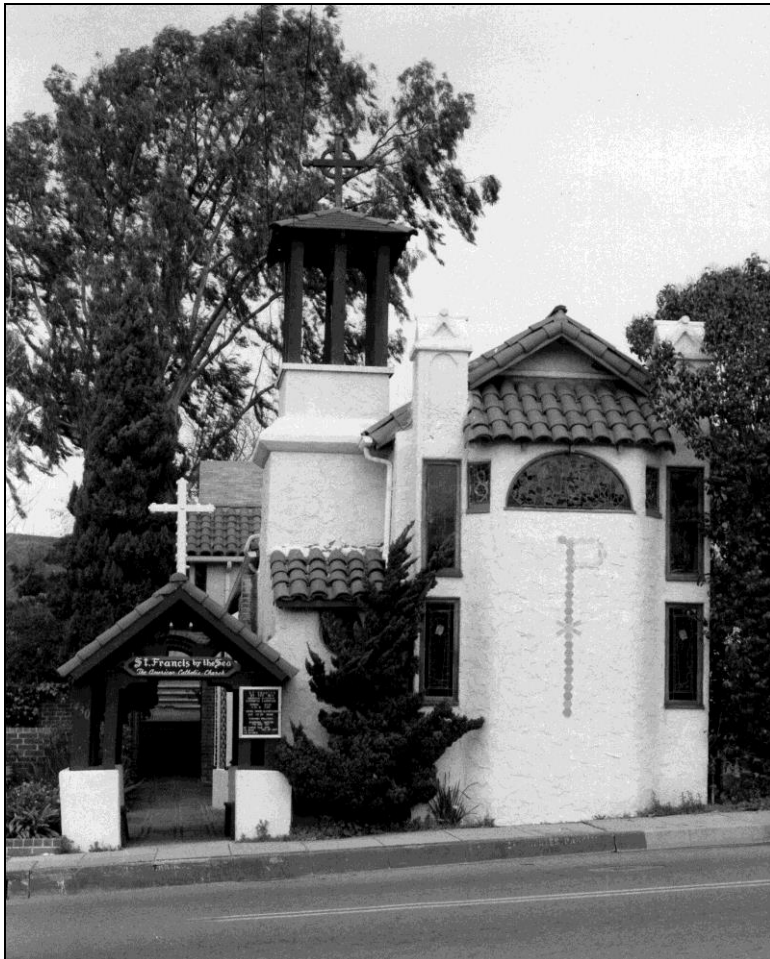
Since 1981, 22 of these properties listed above have been designated on the City's Historic Register, to of which are on the National Register. One property was demolished before the adoption of the historic preservation Ordinance in 1981. The remaining 19 properties listed below shall be evaluated for historic status as part of a development review application:

Address	Description	Year Built
411 Arroyo Chico	Relocated Victorian House	1884
1559 Catalina St	Hamaker House	1930
339 Cleo St	Reginald Enwood House	1932
384 Forest Av	Laguna Beach Lumberyard	1919
361 Jasmine St (390 Magnolia)*	Spots Cottage	1907
445 Linden St	Kyle Cottage	1918
758 Manzanita Dr	Anneliese's Preschool	1927
212 N. Coast Hy	El Solano Hotel Apartments	1928
535 N. Coast Hy (550/556 Cliff Drive)*	Early Settlement Beach Cottages	1907
160 (162) South Coast Hy	South Coast Theatre	1935
425 S. Coast Hy	Hotel Laguna	1930
976 S. Coast Hy	Ray Family Mortuary (Chakra Shack)	1929
1001 (1009)* S. Coast Hy	Laguna Motor Werks	1938
1191 (1183)* S. Coast Hy	English Garden	1937
1460 (1450)* S. Coast Hy	Brayton Laguna Pottery (Main Street Bar)	1928
1476 (1464)* S. Coast Hy	Salanee's Steakhouse	1937
139 Moss St/ 2241 S. Coast Hy	Moss Point Houses	1905/1917
31172 Ceanothus Dr	Haliburton House	1937

*As noted in previous Historic Resources Element, but not consistent with current City addressing records



Villa Rockledge as viewed from the front and above.



The Cathedral Chapel of St. Francis by-the-Sea.

A Short History of Laguna Beach

by
Karen Turnbull

Reprinted from: *A Hundred Years of Yesterdays: A Centennial History of the People of Orange County and Their Communities*. Edited by Esther R. Cramer..., et al. Sponsored by the Orange County Register. Santa Ana: The Orange County Centennial, Inc., 1988.

Additional material and minor editing by Belinda Blacketer, Jane Janz, Anne Frank, Kathy Les and Norm Grossman

Steep cliffs, water-etched coves, rolling hills, and deep canyons surround a small, flat basin where vacationers used to come in the summer to escape the inland heat. In what is one of the most desirable and expensive communities in Orange County today, it is difficult to believe that at one time land was free to those willing to cultivate and farm it and that oceanfront lots were assessed for about \$5 apiece.

Before 1880

Although the North Laguna area was originally part of the San Joaquin Rancho, downtown Laguna and South Laguna were never part of a Spanish or Mexican land grant. This meant that these areas remained available for government sponsored homesteading. The Timber Cultures Act of 1872 was designed to encourage migration to the “Golden West” by granting 160 acres of land to anyone planting 10 acres of trees. Families began to arrive and stake out their 160-acre claims and plant the requisite trees, which in Laguna meant the Australian eucalyptus. The groves planted in the 1880's helped form the character of Laguna and added much needed shade, although as lumber they were virtually useless. The groves grew so prodigiously that in the 1910's trees had to be cut down by the dozens to carve out space for the growing community.



1920's view of Main Beach from St. Ann's Beach.



Sleepy Hollow in 1920's. Cleo Street and South Coast Highway before paving.

In 1871, Eugene Salter, the first American settler of South Laguna, claimed part of Aliso Canyon. He soon left and George and Sarah Thurston claimed his 152 acres and one-room shack. George Thurston raised vegetables and melons and sold them in Los Angeles, which required a five-day trip by wagon. Their son, Joseph Thurston, chronicled the family's life and times in *Laguna Beach of Early Days*. The family name is memorialized in Thurston Intermediate School, Thurston Street, and Sarah Thurston Park in Laguna Canyon.

The Brooks brothers, William and Nathaniel, arrived and settled in 1876. Both are referred to as the "father of Laguna" depending on the source cited. William Brooks came to Laguna from Downey on a hunting trip, following the old Indian trail through Laguna Canyon. He claimed 169 acres at Arch Beach (now the Diamond Street area) and laid out a subdivision. He was also Laguna's first stagecoach driver. Nathaniel Brooks brought water from Bluebird Canyon through a series of pipes and tunnels to Arch Beach. They temporarily sold out to another pioneer, Hubbard Goff (remembered in Goff Street and Goff's Island). In 1886, Goff opened the first hostelry in Laguna, the Arch Beach Hotel.

In 1878, John Damron homesteaded 528 acres near the mouth of Laguna Canyon, including Temple Hills and the "flats" above Arch Beach. The downtown was later purchased by George Rogers for \$1,000 and subdivided into individual lots. The Rogers home stood on the site of the present city hall. He and his daughter Elizabeth are credited with planting the prominent pepper tree that stands in front of city hall. Rogers built a one room school house adjacent to his home for his eight children and hired a teacher. Several other children attended as well, marking this as Laguna's first significant attempt at public education.

1880 – 1900

By 1888, there were about 15 permanent families living in Laguna. By then, the area had gained a reputation as a lovely seaside resort ideal for summer camping and vacationing. During the summers, rows and rows of canvas tents were pitched by seasonal vacationers.

During the Southern California real estate boom of the 1880's, Arch Beach was a separate village. It was granted a post office in 1889, two years before Laguna received one on May 15, 1891. Laguna Beach was then called "Lagona," a corruption of the Spanish word for lagoon until September 17, 1904, when the residents petitioned the government to change the name to Laguna Beach.



1910 Forest Avenue from the intersection with South Coast Highway.

The first postmasters were Oliver Brooks at Arch Beach and William Brooks in Laguna. South Laguna opened a post office in 1933 under the name "Three Arches," with Mrs. Grace Powers as postmistress. The following year residents voted for a new name. "South Laguna" won by a write-in vote.

In 1888, the Mormons who settled near the intersection of El Toro Road and Laguna Canyon Road built a school for their children. The school was used until 1892 when the land boom ended and most of the Mormons moved to El Toro, taking their houses with them. In 1893, this building was moved to the corner of Canyon Acres and Laguna Canyon Road, then to Legion and Through Streets, where it became a church and later the art studio of Joseph Kleitsch. Building materials were scarce and most buildings were recycled in the early days.

Always a tourist town, Laguna Beach opened its second hotel in 1889. It was built by Henry Goff and purchased by Joseph Yoch for \$600. Yoch also bought the defunct Arch Beach Hotel. He had it cut into three sections, moved it into town, and joined it to his hotel, creating a massive establishment of thirty bedrooms and two bathrooms. This hotel was condemned in 1928 and the present Hotel Laguna opened the following year on the same site.



1940's Hotel Laguna with neon sign on top. The sign, which was removed in the 1960's, was considered a Landmark. In the foreground, the Isch Building, a Mediterranean Revival built in 1927.

The next vacation retreat was the Brooks House, built in 1892. It was a red two-story Victorian structure located on the present site of the Isch Building, the building directly south of and adjacent to Main Beach Park. Unfortunately, the hotel burned down before the paint was completely dry.

Other early residents included Oscar Warling and Fred Trefren who operated a stage line to El Toro and Santa Ana which ran daily from 1884 to 1901. John Nicholas Isch ran the livery stable (on the site of the present Isch Building). He also ran a grocery and was one of the early postmasters. Known for his trusting ways, he never locked up when he went fishing. Customers came in, helped themselves to groceries, picked up their own mail and could pay the next time they came in. For a number of years, the only telephone in town was in the store. The phone was connected with the Irvine ranch house, and messages could be relayed from there to the outside world.

In South Laguna, the Egans, Shrewsburys, Andersons, and Goffs were homesteaders raising beans and melons. South Laguna had several close calls with commercialism. In 1889, the Santa Fe railroad purchased Goff's Island, (now the Montage Resort and Spa) and planned a depot and resort. When the tracks were laid inland instead, those plans failed. The Depression of the 1890's saved South Laguna from an urbanized future.

1900-1920

Elmer Jahraus came to Laguna from Santa Ana in 1903 to open a cigar factory and curio shop in the lower floor of the Yoch Hotel. In 1912, his son, Joe Jahraus, started a lumberyard on upper Ocean Avenue, which enabled the community to grow at unprecedented rates. Prior to the lumberyard, construction materials were hauled by mule down Laguna Canyon, or were floated in on the tide from boats - usually the schooner *Emma*.

The third school was built on Park Avenue in 1908 on the site of an old cemetery. This two-room school was still in use in 1926, when it was moved down the hill to its present location on Legion Street, where it is used as Legion Hall.



1920's looking down South Coast Highway and Ocean Avenue. Shown in the foreground are Lewis Blacketer and Doc Mallow.

North Laguna was originally called Laguna Cliffs. This area was developed by Howard Heisler, L.C. McKnight and the Thumb Brothers. In 1905 they purchased the land north of Laguna Creek to Emerald Bay from the Irvine Ranch Company. They subdivided and laid out the only streets in Laguna that ran perpendicular to one another. Water was piped in from Laguna Canyon and this was the first neighborhood offering water with every lot. Wells had been used for years and water was hauled in barrels from Laguna or Aliso Canyons to town.

Artists Discover Laguna Beach

The first important artist to arrive was Norman St. Clair, who in 1903 reached Laguna Beach by train from Los Angeles and stagecoach from El Toro. He made numerous sketches of the surf, hillsides and lagoons. His fellow plein air artists in San Francisco were so impressed with his work and his praise of the weather that they began to move to the area and a tradition was born.

As news of the picturesque village spread, the artists came in droves. They included such notable artists as Frank Cuprien, Gardner Symonds, William Wendt, William Daniell, Anna Hills, and William Alexander Griffith. Many of these artists banded together in 1913 and rented a small wooden building next to the Hotel Laguna. Under the leadership of Edgar A. Payne, the artists refurbished the building and held their first exhibition in August 1918. Three hundred people attended the first day and two thousand the first month. This showing was the beginning of the Laguna Beach Art Association and the present Laguna Beach Art Museum.



1950's 200 block of Forest Avenue looking towards the ocean.

1920-1940

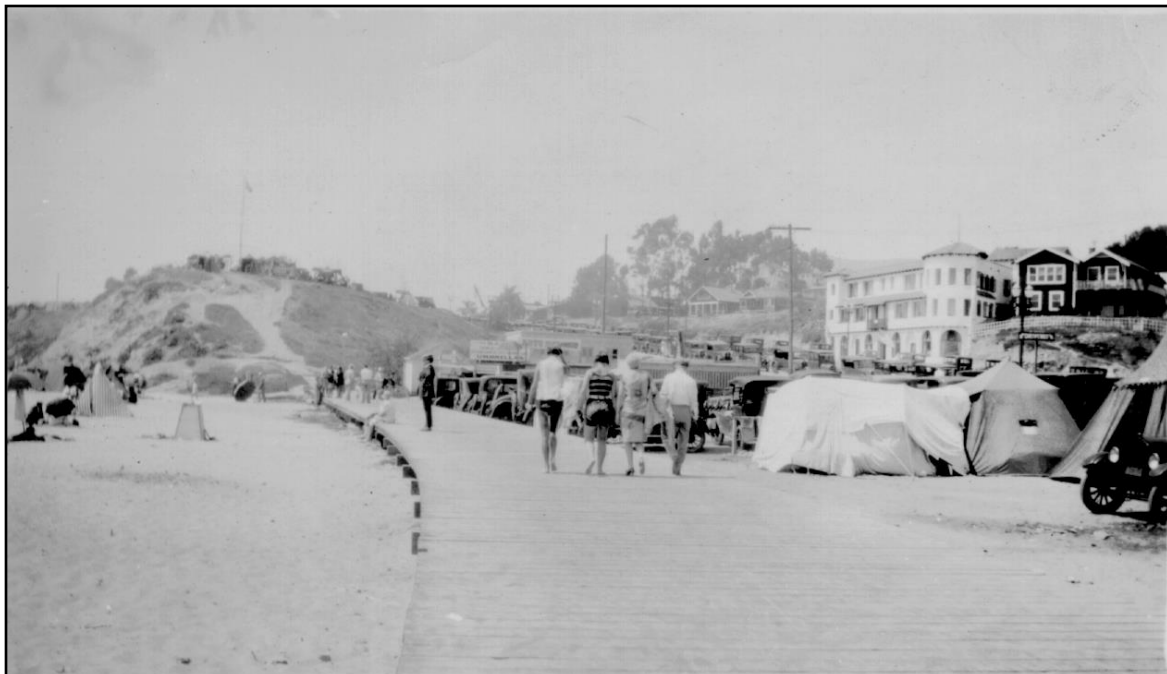
The opening of Pacific Coast Highway on October 9, 1926 was a major stimulant for growth in both Laguna Beach and South Laguna. Famous Hollywood actress, Mary Pickford, accompanied by equally famous husband Douglas Fairbanks Jr., cut the inaugural ribbon. Opening up the coast route brought in not only tourists and film celebrities, but more permanent residents. Finally, with a population of 1,900, Laguna Beach was incorporated as a city on June 29, 1927.

Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters

The first pageant ever held in Laguna was in 1923, as an Indian pageant promoted by Isaac Frazee. It was called *Kitshi Manido* and was held in the large eucalyptus grove in Sleepy Hollow (corner of Catalina and Arroyo Chico streets). The second *Kitshi* was held in 1927 in Laguna Canyon on the Boys Club property. In 1932, Roy M. Ropp conceived of the idea of a pageant and art festival. El Paseo (a little street by Hotel Laguna) was used as the site. Booths were set up and a stage was built on which people posed against painted backdrops to recreate great works of art. In 1935, Ropp took over the presentation of the “old masters,” and he designed and directed what is now the Pageant of the Masters. The citizens of Laguna Beach passed a park tax in 1940 and bought the Irvine Bowl Park to house the festivities from then on.

Today

Laguna’s “village character” remains in spite of growth and commercialism. No small part of this charm is due to the shaggy eucalyptus and one of a kind architecture. Also, the relative isolation in which Laguna exists, surrounded by mountains, ocean, and greenbelts, keep the town a little different from neighboring cities. This geography makes it unlikely that Laguna will ever be absorbed in a major urban continuum. Concerned citizens work hard to acquire land just to leave it alone. Other groups work hard to promote ordinances to keep the city's charm. The artistic spirit prevails and it seems likely that Laguna’s charm will be here for a long time to come.



1920's Main Beach boardwalk looking north.

Architectural Background

The earliest dwellings and buildings built by homesteading families like the Thurstons, Brooks, and Rogers were of a rudimentary construction and have long since disappeared. Typically they were a board and batten box plan dwelling with a gabled roof and some type of entry porch. Economy and lack of elaborate building materials meant ornamentation was kept to a minimum. Only a handful of these pre-1900 Victorian-era homes remain in Laguna. Because of their age in relationship to the rest of the City's housing stock, they take on special historic importance.

By 1910 Laguna Beach was still a rather rustic and isolated village, but still popular as a seaside resort. There was no electricity in town, cooking and lighting were still performed by kerosene, and only a few homes had hot water from the old well up the canyon.

The early beach houses of Laguna were basically a permanent replacement of the early tent shelters. They were built as country cottages for weekend retreats from the "city." Utilitarian in design, these cottages were often constructed without foundations and were usually single-wall construction. The only reason that some of these cottages still exist is that they were built entirely of redwood, a termite's nightmare. Beach cottage architecture is not unique to Laguna; the style was also prevalent in Newport Beach and other beach communities.

By 1920 Laguna Beach had gained distinction as an art colony and popular vacation spot. The building boom that took place in Southern California in the 1920s hit Laguna as well. Laguna also became a destination point for the movie industry. This created a demand for hotel lodging for film crews and actors, and some of the stars even bought homes for themselves in Laguna Beach.

With the increase in summer visitors, the demand for permanent residents to provide services for vacationers also increased. More and more beach cottages began to be built, and those who had previously been seasonal residents began to make Laguna Beach their permanent home. All manner and style of housing began to be erected in what was almost an "anything goes" atmosphere with very lax building requirements.

During this period, the Craftsman style, was very popular around the region and was utilized in all sizes of construction. The Craftsman style was a derivative of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which spread across Europe and the United States. It was a back-to-nature life-style movement resulting from a reversion from the Machine Age and the Industrial Revolution. The Craftsman style of architecture was an organic design intended to visually anchor homes to the ground and to create a design that was harmonious with the natural setting, much like a mushroom popping out of the ground. The vast majority remaining are in the mid-sized bungalow category, which are humble interpretations of the Craftsman bungalow style set forth by the architects Charles and Henry Greene of Pasadena. The Bungalow style was derived from housing constructed for British residents in India, designed to maximize comfort in a hot climate.

Almost every house built in Laguna Beach prior to 1927 had its roots in the Craftsman tradition. Greene and Greene designed large Craftsman style houses for the very wealthy, but the designs for a wide variety of smaller, more affordable craftsman homes were readily available in catalogs throughout the country. Those, however, which were built economically and had the least

resemblance to a prevailing architectural trend, were simply beach cottages. So many of these structures still exist today that they make up an architectural category in and of themselves.

Unlike most cities whose older buildings are concentrated in one area near the city center, people who came to Laguna Beach had a preference for the seclusion offered by the wide open spaces. Since the vast majority of the early homes were built strictly for summer usage, they were constructed in various scattered locations away from the mainstream of activity.

The influence of artists and movie people of the 1920s led to individualized architecture, which formed good replicas of styles popular in other continents. Thus, Laguna Beach architecture illustrates the personality that results from one-of-a-kind interpretations of styles, as well as strong European influences in the desire to emphasize the village quality. Beginning in the late 1920s and lasting through the mid-1930s, most of the homes and commercial buildings were constructed in the Period Revival styles. This architectural line of thinking sought to recreate the architecture of Europe, in particular, along the Southern California coast. Many of the stylized or whimsical homes that were built for the movie people were designed by stage or set designers. They often designed from pictures of European mansions, but with reduced scale to accommodate the smaller lots in Laguna. The result was an intimate, very low, and human scale of development that contributes to the village atmosphere.

Although people from the movie industry did influence local stylistic trends, most of the “revival” architecture became popular due to events like the Chicago World’s Fair and the Pan American Exposition, the latter of which introduced Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture to Southern California. Most popular were the Spanish-Mediterranean and the Provincial Revival styles. There are examples of many other “revival” styles in Laguna, including Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and English Tudor Revival. The pre-1940 commercial buildings which remain in Laguna are largely those in the Period Revival styles.

Art Deco, and the spin off Streamline Moderne, were styles that became prevalent during the Depression. In contrast to revival styles, these styles were more future looking and intended to give a sense of hope during difficult times. Although both styles are considered modern styles that feature cerulean forms, Art Deco typically has a vertical emphasis and angular features, while Streamline Modern is characterized by very curvilinear, robust and horizontal features.

South Laguna is similar to Laguna Beach in that the structures were built in a variety of architectural styles during roughly the same time period (1920- 1940). The development of Tract 849 (South Laguna Village) and Three Arch Palisades (Three Arch Bay) was shepherded by Edward G. Chatham, his son, Lesley G. Chatham, and his brother-in-law, Lewis Lasley. After the opening of the Pacific Coast Highway in 1926 lots were actively promoted for sale in both South Laguna Village and Three Arch Bay. The first home in Three Arch Bay was constructed at 17 South La Senda in 1927. The Three Arch Bay Association was formed in 1936 and policies were developed to oversee the overall architectural character and to deal with governmental agencies. These policies have resulted in the small scale private community that Three Arch Bay is today.

Infill development has occurred in the post-World War II years and the majority of lower Laguna Beach below High Drive on the north and Temple Hills Drive on the south contains a mix of old

and new housing. The scale and character of the housing styles and overall density of the neighborhoods follows today a precedent set by those who came to Laguna Beach in the 1920s. About 25% of the city's housing stock in lower Laguna Beach contains pre-1940 housing, which retains its original architectural integrity. These units establish the clear preference for human scale homes constructed in natural materials with a custom design; houses built in harmony with the natural bends of the terrain, and the use of yard space which is both amply and generously landscaped.

The fact that the railroad never had tracks to Laguna Beach and that, still today, only two roads lead in and out of the city, has caused Laguna to remain a somewhat isolated and self-contained village. The village quality has continued to be perpetuated particularly through the local architecture. Today Laguna Beach contains a myriad of residential and commercial building styles all with the mark of charm and individuality that has been popular in the city through the decades. Many of these one-of-a-kind houses are simply referred to as the Eclectic style. The individuality of existing (or newer) homes in Laguna resulted from the general lack of large tract development. Most houses built in Laguna, were designed and built one at a time. The result is a very diverse collection of architecture without large concentrations of one particular style found in other South Orange County Communities.

The older homes and buildings in the city form both an important part of the local history and serve as an important setting component of the quality and character of Laguna Beach. For this reason, it is important that the City of Laguna Beach implement programs which protect and prolong the life of these older buildings.

The following excerpts are from a Historic Resources Report prepared by Environmental Coalition Orange County, November 1980.

Craftsman Style **1910-1930**

The Craftsman style was the first architectural trend since the founding of the United States to have its roots in the West, rather than the East Coast. Craftsman architecture evolved out of anti-industrial movement which emphasized the importance of craftsmanship, as well as a relationship to the terrain on which the structure was sited.

Craftsman homes are informal in character, horizontal in their massing and incorporate an abundance of landscaping. The style utilizes a variety of woods, with accents provided by brick and stone. The consummate Craftsman house is the Gamble House in Pasadena, designed by the Greene brothers, the foremost pioneers of the style.

The Craftsman houses were built both at a very large scale by the rich and at a smaller bungalow scale by the middle class. The gospel of the Craftsman movement was individuality, so these houses tended to be one of a kind. More than any other style, Craftsman is difficult to generalize about the appearance and features. Usually shingles and clapboard, often in combination, are used to side the exterior of these homes. A certain complexity in appearance is derived from the presence of several gables, each embellished with decorative exposed rafters and ornamentation in the gable face. A front porch is almost always present and is framed with large picture windows further emphasizing the relationship between the interior and outdoor spaces.

The Craftsman style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Horizontal massing
- Asymmetrical with large front porch
- Usually two stories in height

Materials

- Exterior clapboard and/or shingle siding

Windows and Doors

- Windows have horizontal emphasis
- Windows in twos and threes
- Doors and windows often have stained or beveled glass

Roof

- Low pitched with gables on several levels
- Extended eaves
- Exposed rafters



Additional Features

- Gable venting
- Common use of bricks or boulders

Bungalow Style 1900-1930

By definition, a bungalow is any small cottage-like dwelling. The Bungalow started in California and spread to other parts of the country and in response to the need for inexpensive homes. The Bungalow style is based on the Craftsman tradition. Homes were one-story and usually had a large porch or veranda. A variation in the style is called the California Bungalow. This type of style features double gables and there was always a front porch. The exterior was usually sided in clapboard or shingles and the chimney was often made of stone. The highest concentrations of these Bungalows are in the Aster Street neighborhood.

The Bungalow Style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Asymmetrical with large front porch
- Horizontal massing
- One to one and a half stories
- Similar to Craftsman house, except smaller

Materials

- Exterior walls of clapboard or shingles
- Occasionally use brick, concrete, boulders, or stucco

Windows and Doors

- Windows have horizontal emphasis
- Windows grouped in threes
- Windows occasionally have stained or beveled glass

- Doors often have glass panes

Roof

- Low pitched
- Extended eaves
- Exposed rafters
- Occasionally a dormer

Additional Features

- Tapered porch columns (sometimes)
- Brackets in gable
- Porch is focal point for embellishments



Beach Cottage Style 1910-1940

Hardly part of a nationwide or even a region-wide movement, these cottages are more of a product of a local beach culture than of any larger architectural style. This style is indigenous to Laguna Beach and South Laguna. There is no national architectural style called “Beach Cottage.”

The building boom of the 1920’s, which hit not only Laguna Beach but all of Southern California, made many inland residents wealthy and provided them with extra money for a second home. Typically, these cottages were a family project with everybody contributing to the project in any way they could.

Construction was simple with board and batten being the most common exterior siding. These cottages usually started as a single story basic box with a slightly gabled roof, but were very often enlarged and most transitioned into a full time home.

The local beach cottages were more a derivative of the Craftsman style than anything else, and therefore, when it could be afforded, were embellished on a simple scale like the Craftsman houses. These embellishments included decorative porch treatment, exposed rafters and decorative shingles. This is the most prevalent architectural style in South Laguna.

The Beach Cottage Style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Simple box or rectangular plan
- Usually asymmetrical
- Originally one story

Materials

- Board and batten, shingled and overlap siding

Windows and Doors

- Windows regularly shaped
- Windows and doors simply framed

Roof

- Low pitched
- Extended eaves
- Sometimes exposed rafters

Additional Features

- Porch or patio
- Brackets under eaves



Period Revival Styles 1928-1940

The infiltration of the film industry into the lives of Americans in the 1920's brought with it a profound change in residential architectural styles. The glitter of Hollywood coupled with a time of renewed prosperity encouraged the feeling that life in the movies was better than life in the real world.

The style that we now term as Period Revivals were the beginning of a kind of fantasy architecture, which has come to stay in Southern California. Designers began to look beyond the native California style. Instead, residential styles were heavily influenced by architecture from other places and other times. Most popular were the Spanish Mediterranean and the Provincial Revival styles.

Mediterranean homes and commercial buildings were modeled after the architecture of Italy, Spain and North Africa along the Mediterranean Coast. Easily identifiable by their red tile roofs and white stucco walls, these buildings offered the comfort, casualness and fantasy of life along the Mediterranean. Providing a neat and tidy appearance, the Spanish Mediterranean Revival style typically includes arched windows, doors and porch openings with a Spanish quality.

The Provincial Revival style, coming from an altogether different part of the globe, became popular at the end of W.W.I. Having a definite idyllic quality, Provincial Revival homes and buildings are characterized by a steep pitched roof, reminiscent of the English and French villages.

The Mediterranean Revival style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Rectangular plan with horizontal massing
- Asymmetrical with front porch
- Arcades with arched openings
- One to two stories in height

Materials

- Exterior stucco walls
- Occasional usage of dark stained wood in porch or eaves

Windows and Doors

- Both are frequently arched
- Windows deeply recessed, giving appearance of thick walls

Roofs

- Low-pitched roof covered with tiles, or flat roof with extended parapets



Additional Features

- Arched openings
- Sometimes use of wrought iron
- Patterned tiles

The Provincial style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Rectangular plan with vertical massing
- Entry is focal point
- Entry often gabled or turreted

Materials

- Stucco often with half timbering
- Occasionally some brick or stone

Windows and Doors

- Usually prominent picture windows, often arched
- Steeply pitched dormers
- Door often of heavy wood with castle entry quality

Roof

- Steep pitched
- Sometimes with decorative composition shingles

Additional Features

- Decorative chimney
- Sometimes patterned brick highlighting door
- Often small ventilation windows



Moderne Styles 1930-1940

In the 1930's there arose a fascination with technology and the industrial power of man. Unlike the similar trend toward the celebration of technical progress under the reign of Queen Victoria, the Moderne style buildings of the 1930's emphasized simplicity rather than heavy ornamentation. The style manifested itself in two very different varieties, the Art Deco Moderne and the Streamline Moderne. A major characteristic of the Art Deco style is the emphasis on verticality through the use of stepped pilasters, parapets and other decoration. Streamline Moderne buildings have sleek, rounded corners and broad, smooth planes.

The only structure in South Laguna in the Moderne style is the Halliburton house, 31172 Ceanothus, which is described as "Moderne with a brutalist influence." Here the functional and forthright use of materials is essence of design. Historical references and superfluous detailing are absent. This house built of cast-in-place concrete fits well visually into its setting on the gray concrete-like San Onofre Breccia cliffs of Aliso Canyon. The material is also an appropriate functional response to the surrounding area, which is surrounded by fire prone chaparral.

Art Deco Moderne Style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

Square or rectangular in plan
Vertical emphasis through the use of
pilasters and massing

Materials

Stucco or concrete

Windows and Doors

Many regularly spaced windows
Simple treatment often separated by
pilasters

Additional Features

Sunbursts or zigzag pattern decoration
Prominent, accented entry



Streamline Moderne Style is typified by the following features:

Structural Form

Horizontal in massing
Broad and slick in overall treatment

Materials

Stucco or concrete

Windows and Doors

Many regularly spaced windows and often of glass brick
Common use of portholes
Windows curved with rounded corners of building

Additional Features

Horizontal banding to emphasize horizontal quality

Rounded corners



Eclectic Style 1915-1940

The eclectic style represents that category of housing in Laguna Beach for which there is no other architectural trend that fits the whimsical and imaginative ways in which some houses have been constructed. These unusual and extraordinary houses are generally ample in scale and complex in appearance. Many of them take their roots in the Mediterranean and Provincial Revival trends and others derive more specifically from the English Cotswold mold. Most combine a flair for the fanciful with one or more of these base styles.



ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The Heritage Committee is advisory only and does not possess the authority to approve or deny alterations to historic structures.

1. The streetscape of older Laguna is changing in terms of size, scale and character of housing.
 - Escalating land values discourage rehabilitation and encourage demolition of older structures.
 - Demolition of older structures, located on multiple lots, is changing the density and the character of the neighborhoods increasing the number of building sites and homes.
 - Extensive remodeling of older homes and buildings that are not listed on the Historic Register is altering the original architectural integrity and changing the character of the streetscape.
 - The streetscape of predominantly older neighborhoods is sometimes compromised by new construction of greater bulk and height than existing residences.
2. There is an insufficient awareness of the community's historic resources and the economic and cultural benefits of their preservation.
 - There is a lack of awareness and appreciation of local historic architecture.
 - There is a lack of knowledge of compatible rehabilitation techniques and approaches.
 - There is not sufficient knowledge of the benefits of placing historic structures on the Historic Register.
3. During construction, deviations to approved plans for projects involving historic structures occur without City approvals.
 - Key architectural elements are removed and replaced during construction.
 - There is no "follow-up" oversight to Design Review Board approved modifications to historic structures.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The effectiveness of the preservation of historic resources in the City of Laguna Beach is dependent on the establishment of attainable goals and policies. Goals are direction-setting statements. Policies reflect the attainment of specific ends, conditions or steps in achieving goals. They are specific statements that guide decision-making.

Goal #1:

Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of historic significance in Laguna Beach. Assure that neighborhoods which have a preponderance of older homes and which greatly contribute to the village atmosphere be maintained as cohesive neighborhood units through consistency of size, scale and character.

Policies

- 1.1 Implement an outreach program to promote the listing of historic structures on the Historic Register and improve the City's recognition program for owners of listed historic structures to acknowledge exemplary maintenance and preservation efforts.
- 1.2 Protect historic buildings through the implementation and expansion of incentive programs specifically designed to encourage rehabilitation and preservation. Incentive programs could include flexible development standards, fee waivers and property tax reductions.
- 1.3 Expand the Mill's Act Contract program to include all Historic Register structures.
- 1.4 Provide a process for the City to initiate rescission of registered structures that have been illegally modified so that they no longer meet the criteria for a historic resource.
- 1.5 Continue the current City policy to discourage the demolition of historic resources by providing incentives for relocation.
- 1.6 Ensure the preservation of historic homes by requiring the owners to record a document acknowledging their obligation and responsibilities.

Goal #2:

Continue and expand programs practices that encourage an appreciation of history and historic preservation in Laguna Beach.

Policies

- 2.1 Require Heritage Committee review when design review is required for modifications to a historic resource.
- 2.2 Support the requirement that the Design Review Board emphasize compatibility, including historic character and context within deliberations of new or remodeled structures.
- 2.3 Provide specific guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic structures, including “how-to” and pictures or illustrations of successful projects.
- 2.4 Foster community pride through identification and aesthetic improvement of historic sites and areas, such as plaque programs and historically relevant brochures.
- 2.5 Require the City to identify and list all eligible City-owned structures on the Historic Register.
- 2.6 Prepare a manual showing techniques of preservation to help property owners understand what to expect during remodeling/restoration process and to provide information on how preservation can be accomplished within local ordinances.
- 2.7 Disseminate information on the provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- 2.8 Promote the use of the State Historical Building Code.

Goal #3:

Promote community awareness of local history and historic architecture and enhance recognition of the City’s historic role as an important art colony and seaside resort.

Policies

- 3.1 Increase awareness and appreciation for Laguna Beach’s cultural and historic heritage through activities and events, such as designating May, as the City’s Heritage Month.
- 3.2 Appoint a City staff person to monitor remodeling activity of historic homes to ensure compliance with approvals.
- 3.3 Appoint a City staff person as a “Historic Preservation Administrator,” to act in an advisory role to the Heritage Committee and Design Review Board.

- 3.4 Identify specific City owned vacant properties where historic buildings could be relocated when threatened with demolition.
- 3.5 Encourage property owners to seek listing for appropriate properties on the National Register of Historic Places and the California State Register of Historical Resources.
- 3.6 Work with local Historic Preservation groups to develop a program that informs new buyers of historic homes of the benefits and responsibilities of owning a historic resource.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS AND POLICIES	CITY	OTHER PUBLIC ENTITY	COMMUNITY GROUPS	PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL
Goal #1 Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of historic significance in Laguna Beach. Assure that neighborhoods which have a preponderance of older homes and which greatly contribute to the village atmosphere be maintained as cohesive neighborhood units through consistency of size, scale and character.				
Policies				
1.1. Implement an outreach program to promote the listing of historic structures on the Historic Register and improve the City’s recognition program for owners of listed historic structures to acknowledge exemplary maintenance and preservation efforts.	●		●	
1.2. Protect historic buildings through the implementation and expansion of incentive programs specifically designed to encourage rehabilitation and preservation. Incentive programs could include flexible development standards, fee waivers, and property tax reductions.	●			
1.3. Expand the Mill’s Act Contract program to include all Historic Register properties.	●			
1.4. Provide a process for the City to initiate rescission of registered structures that have been illegally modified so that they no longer meet the criteria for a historic resource.	●			
1.5. Continue the current City policy to discourage the demolition of historic resources, by providing incentives for relocation.	●			
1.6. Ensure the preservation of historic homes by requiring the owners to record a document acknowledging their obligation and responsibilities.	●			●
Goal #2 Continue and expand programs and practices that encourage an appreciation of history and historic preservation in Laguna Beach.				
Policies				
2.1. Require Heritage Committee review when design review is required for modifications to a historic resource.	●			
2.2. Support the requirement that the Design Review Board emphasize compatibility, including historic character and context	●		●	

GOALS AND POLICIES	CITY	OTHER PUBLIC ENTITY	COMMUNITY GROUPS	PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL
2.3. Provide specific guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic structures. Include “how-tos” and pictures and illustrations of successful projects.	●			●
2.4. Foster community pride through identification and aesthetic improvement of historic sites and areas, such as plaque programs and historically relevant brochures.	●	●	●	●
2.5. Require the City to identify and list all eligible City-owned structures on the Historic Register.	●			
2.6. Prepare a manual showing techniques of preservation to help property owners understand what to expect during remodeling/restoration process and to provide information on how preservation can be accomplished within local ordinances.	●		●	●
2.7 Disseminate information on the provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.	●		●	●
2.8. Promote the use of the State Historical Building Code.	●			
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GOALS AND POLICIES	CITY	OTHER PUBLIC ENTITY	COMMUNITY GROUPS	PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL
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3.6 Work with local Historic Preservation groups to develop a program that informs new buyers of historic homes of the benefits and responsibilities of owning a historic resource.	●		●	●