

CHAPTER H

CITY OF CORONADO

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT

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City of Coronado General Plan Historic Preservation Element

Foreword

The City of Coronado recognizes the unique and valuable resources within the community reflecting its cultural and historical heritage. In an effort to preserve those attributes, which enhance the community character, and to develop awareness of the City's historical resources, the City of Coronado has chosen to incorporate a Historic Preservation Element into the General Plan Policy Document.

State legislation does not require cities to adopt a Historic Preservation Element as part of the General Plan. Section 65303 of the Government Code states that the City's general plan may include...

“a historical preservation element for the identification, establishment, and protection of sites and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, or cultural significance, including significant trees, hedgerows, and other plant materials. The historical preservation element shall include a program which develops actions to be taken in accomplishing the policies set forth in this element.”

Coronado's historic preservation element identifies the goals and objectives of its historic preservation program, how it can be encouraged and supported, the process which should be used to designate structures, sites, parks, and other resources as historic, and the regulations and benefits for resources which have been designated historic.

Coronado's Historic Preservation element is intended to energize a Coronado Historic preservation system that responds to the needs of individuals and the community at large, and to assist in enriching the community environment with reference to its past, its present and its future.

Related to the Historic Preservation element is the Conservation Element of the General Plan. State law requires this element. The Conservation element addresses the natural resources within Coronado that deserve conservation, how these resources should be conserved or developed, and how the City can encourage the preservation, enhancement and/or utilization of these natural resources.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Coronado is over 100 years old. The City's history and development is represented in part through the architecture of its buildings. Historic Preservation is a valuable concept which the City of Coronado can utilize to identify and maintain those resources within the community that provide a link to its architectural, cultural or developmental history.

It is important to retain as much as possible these links to the City's architectural past to avoid the loss of community character. Historic Preservation will become increasingly important to Coronado as more pressures are brought to demolish and replace older, outmoded structures with more modern and usually larger and bulkier replacement development. Redevelopment pressure in the R-3 and R-4 zones where Craftsman style, Spanish bungalow, or other architecturally significant single family residences are demolished and replaced with condominium development is an additional reason for the depletion of the city's architectural or cultural history.

The establishment of a Historic Preservation program within Coronado is intended to foster community awareness of the resources within the city, the value which they serve, and encourage the retention of these historical resources. The primary way preservation may be achieved is through an official historic designation process. The historic designation process is outlined in a Historic Preservation Ordinance. While the City currently has an ordinance adopted in 1986, revisions will be necessary to carry out the policies set forth in this element. The preservation of resources within the community will be based upon primarily a voluntary process. Since the process is primarily voluntary, a key component to the effectiveness of the historic preservation program will be the incentives or benefits to the property owner for having the resource designated historic.

The historic preservation program is intended to help protect resources and the heritage they represent through incentives that encourage rehabilitation, appropriate maintenance, sensitive additions or remodels, and ultimately preservation. The program will not, however, unduly retard or halt development and improvement of the community. The establishment of a historic preservation program will make for a better community by retaining positive community attributes. The Historic Preservation Element is intended to invite citizens to help protect and enhance those aspects that first attracted them or continues to keep them here -- the historic character or distinct charm of the community. Adoption of a Historic Preservation Element is a positive step taken to benefit the general welfare of Coronado, its residents and its visitors.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS

Key to any Historic Preservation Element is the identification of a City's goals, policies, and objectives. The overall goal of the City of Coronado's Historic Preservation Element is:

To develop and implement a historic preservation program that energizes the citizens of Coronado to actively rehabilitate and preserve important historic resources within the community. Historic Resources include objects, buildings, structures, sites, landmarks, areas or places that are historically or archaeologically significant, or are significant in terms of architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military or cultural history.

Additional community goals, objectives, and policies are presented below in six categories: (A) Inventory of Designated Historic Resources, (B) Private Historic Resources, (C) Public Historic Resources (D) Design of Alterations and New Construction, (E) Government Functions, and (F) Public Information.

(A) Inventory of Designated Historic Resources

Objective: Establish and maintain an inventory of important historic resources and their settings and retain information contributing to their understanding and preservation.

Policies:

1. Maintain an inventory of those resources that have been designated as "historic resources" through the Federal, State or City designation process.
2. Identify and recognize the importance of sources of information on Coronado's architectural, economic, cultural and social history.
3. Protect information of importance, which provides a historical understanding of Coronado's built environment and sites.

(B) Private Historic Resources

Objective: Encourage the designation, protection and preservation of privately owned historic resources.

Policies:

1. Encourage the preservation of historically important buildings and sites recognized by the Federal, State and City programs.
2. Encourage the maintenance of buildings and sites that have been designated resources through Federal, State and City programs.

3. Encourage rehabilitation and continue to use or support adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
4. Encourage the preservation and maintenance of significant historic landscaping, gardens and open spaces, which are part of the environment and establish visual interest, human scale and a historic context for viewing buildings.
5. Encourage the preservation and maintenance of historic signs.

(C) Public Historic Resources

Objective: Recognize, designate, protect and preserve publicly owned historic resources.

Policies:

1. Demonstrate leadership through preserving and rehabilitating publicly owned historic resources.
2. Preserve and maintain historic street features such as light fixtures, sidewalks, hardscape elements and monuments from damage and removal. Encourage replacement of missing objects when appropriate.
3. Preserve significant historic landscaping, gardens and open spaces that are part of the street environment which contribute to the setting or context of important buildings, places, or neighborhoods.

(D) Design of Alterations and New Construction

Objective: Ensure that changes in the City's urban form respect the character and cultural heritage of the City.

Policies:

1. Apply Secretary of the Interior's standards for restoration, rehabilitation, alterations or additions to designated historic resources.
2. Provide zoning code exceptions for modifications or additions to historic structures, which retain or promote the structure's architectural significance.
3. Designate historic districts when appropriate.
4. If historic districts are designated, develop and apply standards and guidelines for historic districts to assure the compatibility of infill development with the character and cultural heritage of the district

(E) Government Functions

Objective: Encourage historic preservation through federal, state and local policies and programs.

Policies:

1. Encourage use of government grant, loan and tax mechanisms for preservation of important resources.
2. Assure that municipal regulatory policies are conducive to preservation.
3. Develop and implement programs that encourage preservation activities in the City.

(F) Public Information

Objective: Foster public awareness and appreciation of the City's historic resources through the development of a historic information/recognition program.

Policies:

1. Provide information to the public concerning the importance of historic preservation, the location of historic resources, and the benefits associated with preservation.
2. Provide support to public recognition programs through plaques, awards, newsletters, etc. acknowledging historically designated/renovated resources.

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Coronado's Historic Preservation Program will involve the establishment of a historic resource inventory, the establishment of a historic resource ordinance, the formulation of a Historic Resource Commission, and the development of a public awareness program.

(A) Historic Resource Inventory

An important component of a successful Historical Preservation Program is the establishment of a historic resource inventory. The City currently has an inventory of those resources within the community that have been designated historic through the local designation process. The resources have been designated historic based upon criteria such as age, condition, and historical (architectural, cultural and/or developmental) significance, and at the request of property owners. The present inventory should be maintained and updated by the Community Development Department as additional resources are designated following public hearings and the process set forth in Chapter 70.20 and 70.22 of the Municipal Code.

The Coronado Historical Association also has an inventory of approximately 80 homes/sites that the Association locally dedicated in the 1970's. In the future, the City may want to evaluate the incorporation of these homes or other homes into the Historic Resource Inventory with or without the property owner's consent.

(B) The Historic Preservation Ordinance and Historic Resource Commission

A second important component of an effective Historic Preservation Program is for the community to adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance. A Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted by the Coronado City Council in 1986. The ordinance resulted in the addition of two chapters to the Municipal Code. One of the chapters is titled "Historic Resource Review" and sets forth the procedures for designation of structures, criteria for historic designation, and criteria for alterations to designated structures. The second chapter is titled "Historic Resource Commission" and sets forth the procedures for creation of the legislative body to oversee the historic review process.

The ordinance should be amended to implement the policies and goals identified in this element; mainly, an incentive and benefits package to energize citizens of Coronado to participate in the historic preservation program. It should clearly state the purpose and goals, and incentives and benefits of the program. The ordinance should also (1) provide procedures for officially designating a structure or district as historic; (2) provide the criteria to be used for evaluating a structure or district for potential designation; (3) identify the incentives and benefits available to property owners with structures designated historic (4) provide procedures and criteria for reviewing potential alterations or demolitions of, structures once they have been officially designated as historic; and

(5) create a legislative body to oversee the process. The existing legislative body overseeing historic resource applications should be modified or expanded to include individuals with cultural, architectural, or historical backgrounds. An enforcement section could also be added to the ordinance to ensure resources are maintained at a level to be valuable to the community.

(C) Public Information and Recognition Program

Public awareness of the value of historic preservation and recognition for actions taken to preserve valuable community resources are important components of a successful Historic Preservation Program. The community will only become aware of the benefits of historic preservation and City's efforts towards historic preservation through community outreach efforts.

A public information program should be developed by the City to educate citizens about current historic resources and benefits of preservation. Information should be disseminated through publications, local newspapers, slide presentations, walking tours, special events or other media. Technical information relating to the preservation, and rehabilitation of historic resources as well as locations or organizations where additional historic data could be obtained should also be provided. As part of this program, a pamphlet guide should be prepared to include information on the advantages and responsibilities associated with the historic designation process such as tax incentives and financial opportunities, building code advantages, basic historic preservation techniques, and additional permit requirements and California Environmental Quality Act review for properties designated historic.

The program should also provide a means to honor those individuals who have contributed to the community by preserving, restoring, renovating, or rehabilitating designated historic resources of the community. Formal ceremonies should be conducted to recognize individuals, and plaques could be provided to those structures and places designated as historic resources within the community. Special awards should also be given for notable historic preservation achievements on an annual basis.

The combination of education and recognition can foster individual and community pride for local preservation efforts. Community recognition when combined with local incentives can become a strong tool for promoting Historic Preservation. The public information and recognition program is an important component in implementing the goals of the historic preservation element.

INCENTIVES AND BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In order for a Historic Preservation Program to be successful in Coronado, there must be sufficient interest in promoting the goals of preservation. The level of interest will be most directly determined by the amount of individual and community-wide incentives and benefits which are available. The individual citizen who owns a structure potentially worthy of historic designation should be provided with sufficient incentives to pursue the historic designation of his or her property. The community as a whole should also be made aware of the increasing importance of historic preservation and the numerous benefits that can result.

The key components to the success of any Historic Preservation Program are incentives, benefits and recognition. A resource must first be designated as a historic resource before receiving the incentives, benefits, or recognition. The items outlined below will promote and encourage community involvement and pride for the City's Historic Preservation Program.

(A) Incentives:

1. Flexibility in Land Uses and Adaptive Reuse - Permit varying uses on lots with designated historic structures to encourage retention of historic resources. Permit a variety of uses in designated historic buildings while aiding in the preservation of their facades or characteristic profiles. With the same aim, encourage and permit adaptive reuse of designated buildings.
2. Mills Act - Adopt a process for use of the Mills Act to provide property tax reductions for designated historic resources. (see Appendix "A")
3. Parking, Landscaping and Access Permissiveness - Relax parking, landscaping and access requirements for designated historic buildings in commercial or residential zones that cannot easily conform to present-day requirements to encourage retention rather than demolition.
4. Zoning Regulations - Relax setback, height, floor area ratio, density and other regulations for additions/modifications of designated historic resources (so long as architectural significance is replicated) to encourage retention of buildings.
5. Building Permit Fees - Reduce or eliminate City permit fees for upgrading, rehabilitation, landscape improvements, etc to designated historic resources.
6. Low Interest Loans - Identify low interest loans for improvement and restoration of designated historic resources through cooperation from private consortiums, banks or City revolving fund.

7. Grants - Identify grants in aid from private foundations, professional groups, and public grant sources for rehabilitation projects to designated historic resources.
8. Federal Assistance Program - Encourage the use of the Federal facade easement program which provides a one-time tax relief for designated historic properties which maintain their architectural/historical significance. (see Appendix "A")
9. Tax advantages - Investigate State and Federal tax codes for measures that recognize historic preservation and provide reduced taxes. (see Appendix "A")

(B) Benefits:

1. Community Pride - The image of the community can be greatly enhanced by preserving its historically significant resources. The presence of such resources (which contain styles, materials and tastes of the past) exemplifies the history of the community, demonstrates a cultural richness, and enhances visual and architectural design variety which would otherwise be permanently lost.
2. Community Ambiance - The distinctive character of a community is often determined by the historically significant resources found there. A community's effort towards encouraging and recognizing historic resources will assist in the preservation of the community character and enhance its appearance.
3. Commercial Vitality - Tourists and visitors are usually attracted to communities and sites which offer an opportunity to view historic or architecturally significant resources or to experience the ambiance of the past.
4. Property Values - Individual property designated as historic, or contained within a historic district may be more valuable (due to increased maintenance, prestige and distinction) than properties without such a designation which would then be reflected in a higher resale value.
5. Government Revenues - The maintenance, rehabilitation or restoration of older structures in residential areas can both stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods favorably impacting the tax base. Tourism to the City may increase resulting in increased revenues to businesses and government.
6. Flexible Code Requirements - Officially designated historic structures are eligible to follow the more flexible State Historic Building Code. This Code has been officially adopted by the City and applies to renovation or rehabilitation of historically designated structures.

7. Conservation of Scarce Resources/Cost-Effectiveness - Historic resources often contain irreplaceable materials as well as examples of craftsmanship which cannot be duplicated without tremendous cost. The restoration or rehabilitation of historic structures is increasingly viable alternatives to the construction of new, more costly homes.

The City will need to continually monitor other cities for innovative approaches and flexibility in zoning practices to promote preservation of the city's heritage. The City will also need to monitor state and federal funding sources for historic preservation programs.

APPENDIX A: TAX INCENTIVES AND CREDITS
(As of January 1998)

Federal Level:

The only tax credits available for rehabilitation of historic structures are for Federal Income Tax (not offered for State Income Tax). To qualify, the structure must be an income producing (i.e., commercial or rental residential) property. (Note that owner occupied single-family dwellings are not eligible.) The structure must also fall into one of three categories:

- A. Be listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places; or
- B. A structure certified as contributing to a historic district that is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; or
- C. A structure that has been certified as contributing to a certified local historic district.

In addition to meeting the above criteria, the rehabilitation work has to meet Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements for "substantial rehabilitation" (with qualified expenditures exceeding the greater of \$5000 or adjusted basis of the building). Plans for rehabilitation must be approved by the National Park Service (NPS) and comply with the Secretary of Interiors' Standards for Rehabilitation.

The only Federal Income Tax Incentive available for single-family, owner-occupied homes is for conservation (facade) easement deductions. The Federal Income Tax Incentive is available to single family homeowners and provides a charitable contribution deduction for the value of a conservation "facade" easement donated to a qualified nonprofit organization and granted in perpetuity. The homeowners receive a reduction in income taxes equal to the value of the easement and also a possible property tax reduction.

Local level:

At the local level, property owners can take advantage of the Mills Act. The Mills Act allows for property tax reductions on buildings that have been designated historic at the local, State, or National level. Once a building has been designated historic, the property owner may enter into a formal agreement with the City, generally known as a Mills Act contract. The contract is executed for a minimum ten-year term and is automatically renewed each year, and transferred to new owners when the property is sold. Property owners agree to preserve, maintain, restore or improve the property depending upon how the contract is structured. Periodic inspections of the property by city or county officials ensure proper maintenance of the property. At the end of the 10-year period, the contract continues unless a "Notice of Intent" is filed with the Assessor. If one is filed, the property is re-appraised in accordance with Article 1.9 Revenue and Tax Code. A city does not have to enter into a contract with a property owner and a policy could be established as to what type of properties is eligible.