Designating Historic Resources and Landmarks

A property may be nominated for historic designation at the direction of the City Planner or by the filing of an application by the property owner or his/her agent. Staff evaluates the property to determine if it meets the criteria for designation. The Cultural Heritage Subcommittee then reviews the staff report and provides a recommendation to the final hearing body. The Planning Commission is the final authority on amendments to the City’s Designated Historic Resources List while the City Council is the final authority on amendments to the City’s Landmark List.

Historic Resources

A Historic Resource can be any place, site, building, structure, object, or improvement, whether manmade or natural, in its natural setting that has historical or cultural significance and is worthy of protection under this section. In order to be designated a Historic Resource, a property must be found to have historical, cultural, or special character or interest for the general public.

The criteria used to determine historical, cultural or special character or interest are that the property is at least fifty (50) years old, or less than fifty (50) years old with exceptional importance, integrity of location, design, setting materials, and workmanship; and meets one (1) or more of the following:

A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City, State, or Nation.
B. Is associated with persons significant in the history of the City, State, or Nation.
C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction. Of primary importance to San Clemente is the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.
D. Exemplifies the best remaining building type or architectural style in a neighborhood.
E. Is essential to the integrity of another landmark.
F. Is integral to maintaining a natural or cultural landscape that strongly contributes to the well-being of the people of the City, State, or Nation.
G. Has a unique location, singular physical characteristic(s), or is a landscape, view, or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or of the City.

Landmarks

To be designated as a Landmark, the property, manmade or natural, must be found to have special historical, cultural, architectural, archeological, social, or aesthetic character or value inherent to the City, State, or Nation.

The criteria used in determining special historical, cultural, architectural, archeological, social, or aesthetic character or value is that the Landmark must be on the Designated Historic Resources List and meet one (1) or more of the following criteria:

A. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of the history of the City, State, or Nation.
B. Is associated with persons significant in the history of the City, State, or Nation.
C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction. Of primary importance to San Clemente is the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.
D. Exemplifies the best remaining building type or architectural style in a neighborhood.
E. Is essential to the integrity of another landmark.
F. Is integral to maintaining a natural or cultural landscape that strongly contributes to the well-being of the people of the City, State, or Nation.
G. Has a unique location, singular physical characteristic(s), or is a landscape, view, or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or of the City.

(Continued on Back Panel)
Historic Preservation
San Clemente
Historic Resources and Landmarks

Introduction
San Clemente is a coastal city rich in history. Founded in 1925 by Ole Hanson, the Spanish Village by the Sea is located in the southernmost part of Orange County, comprising of approximately 18 square miles.

The historic City is largely characterized by low-rise residential and commercial development along meandering streets that follow the natural contour of the hillsides.

El Camino Real remains the City’s major commercial thoroughfare, and Avenida Del Mar its historic commercial main street.

In October 2007, City Council amended the City’s Zoning Ordinance regarding historic preservation including new incentives, a clarified process, and a higher level of Historic Resources called Landmarks with its own criteria and designation process.

In 2005, San Clemente was designated a Preserve America Community recognizing the City’s continued protection and celebration of our heritage. The City is also recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Both are federal programs that provide grants and other assistance for historic preservation projects.

Historic Resources
With the demolition in the late 1970’s of many original resources from the Ole Hanson Era, the San Clemente Historical Society and local resident Marion Moon prepared the first list of historic resources, called the Inventory of San Clemente Historic Places.

This inventory was first amended in 1992 to reflect property relocations and demolitions.

To help preserve its history, the City administers a historic preservation program. This program promotes the identification, evaluation, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic resources.

City Planning Staff is responsible for administering the program, in conjunction with the Cultural Heritage Subcommittee (CHSC). The CHSC is comprised of three planning commissioners who serve as an advisory board to the final hearing body, Planning Commission or City Council.

With the creation of a Landmarks Task Force in 2005, the historic preservation program has further developed.

In 2007, the most recent Historic Resource List was adopted. Currently, the Historic Resource List contains 203 resources, 22 of which are designated local Landmarks. The City’s resources include structures, sites, landscapes, and objects.

Landmarks
Landmarks are City-designated properties that are significant at the local level as unique in the development of the City. Examples include St. Clement’s Church, the Oscar Easley Building, and the Administration Building.

National Register Properties
Sites and historic places listed in the National Register of Historic Places are individual properties and groupings of properties that have been determined to be historically significant at the local, state, or national level and have been officially listed in the National Register by the National Park Service. San Clemente has six National Register properties examples include Casa Romantica and San Clemente Beach Club.