



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: August 18, 2011 REPORT NO. HRB-11-057

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of August 25, 2011

SUBJECT: **ITEM #12 – Historical Resources Board District Policy**

APPLICANT: City of San Diego, Development Services Department

LOCATION: City-wide

DESCRIPTION: Consider an amendment to the Historical Resources Board District Policy 4.1.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the proposed amendment to the Historical Resources Board District Policy 4.1.

BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with San Diego Municipal Code Section 111.0206(d)(3), which allows the Board to adopt specific guidelines for designating historical resources, including historical districts.

The City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (previously the Historical Sites Board) adopted its first policy on historical districts on January 7, 1977. The original policy did not distinguish different district types and provided twelve guidelines that were to be used in assessing a district's historical significance. The policy was updated on August 28, 2000, and it was at this time that districts were first separated into distinct categories. These categories included Geographic, Thematic, and Emerging. In addition, an Archaeological District concept was introduced, but not adopted. The Geographic district was not a significant departure from the original policy, however the Thematic and Emerging districts were. The Thematic District was established in response to national guidelines which had begun to identify thematic properties and districts since the establishment of the original district policy in 1977. The Emerging District was established in response to community concerns regarding demolition of properties within potential districts that had not yet been surveyed. On April 25, 2002 the district policy was revised again to include the Archaeological District and the Voluntary/Traditional Historical District, which was designed to be similar to the Geographic District with the exception of the requirement of owner consent to designate.

Development Services Department

1222 First Avenue, MS 512 • San Diego, CA 92101-4155
Tel (619) 235-5200 Fax (619) 446-5499

Since the policy revision in 2002 that resulted in five district types, several issues with the district policy have been identified. Among these issues are the confusion created by different district types; the difficulty in regulating the various district types with the existing Historical Resources Regulations; the difficulty in establishing some district types; the difficulty in preserving the integrity of other district types; and the fact that the existing policy accommodated too many varying levels of community support and degrees of research and survey work. In addition, while the City is permitted to adopt its own district policy based on local preservation needs, the existing policy varied significantly in some aspects from State and National Register district policies and procedures.

As a result of these issues, substantial amendments to the District Policy were proposed in 2006 that included reduction in the number of district types as well as detailed procedures for establishing historic districts. However, a lack of general consensus on some of the proposed revisions, along with limited staff availability to continue processing the amendments halted the process. In the interim, to address questions related to preparing and processing nominations submitted by members of the public, staff developed *Guidelines for Preparing a Historic District Nomination in Consultation with Staff* in 2008 (Attachment 2).

The recent adoption of the North Park Dryden Historic District has again highlighted the issues and confusion created by the existing district policy. In July of this year, staff reviewed the policy with a more modest goal of reducing the number of district types consistent with State and National standards and accepted preservation practice, and clarifying the criteria used to establish the significance of a district.

ANALYSIS

The proposed amendments (Attachment 1) would eliminate the Voluntary/Traditional, Emerging, Thematic and Archaeological district types, thereby reducing the district types from five to one, a standard geographic historical district. This is consistent with State and National Register practices. Resources that are thematically related but not located within a geographically limited and defined boundary shall be addressed through a Multiple Property Submission, consistent with National Park Service Bulletin 16B, *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form*. Archaeological districts will now be processed as a standard geographical historic district under the amended policy as is done for listings on the California and National Registers.

All but one of the existing districts were established or amended as standard geographic districts, meaning they were confined to a defined geographic area, and all identified contributing properties were designated at the time the district was established. This amended district policy will not impact the way these districts are regulated. However, the Ocean Beach Cottage Emerging Historical District was established with only a context statement, period of significance, and a few contributing properties that were eligible for designation under HRB Criterion F. An intensive survey was never completed, and therefore all eligible contributing properties are not known. Owners of properties which fall within the context statement and period of significance may bring their properties forward for designation as contributors to the

district and only those properties volunteered as contributors are designated. Only those properties identified and designated as contributors are currently regulated.

Because of the limitations of the Ocean Beach Cottage District, conversion of this district to a standard geographic district is not feasible. In addition, the district's long history as a historic district precludes conversion to a Multiple Property Submission. Therefore, the district will continue to be regulated under the prior policy. Property owners may continue to bring properties forward for designation under the established context and period of significance, and the district shall remain voluntary in nature. However, no new districts will be processed under this district type.

Initially, the proposed amendments left the District significance criteria "a" through "k" intact, but added information regarding HRB Designation Criteria A-F and how those criteria worked together with the district criteria a-k. However, when the draft amendments were reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee on July 11th, concern was raised over the confusing relationship between the district criteria and the Board's adopted designation criteria. To eliminate this confusion the district criteria a-k were changed to "Research Considerations" for use in establishing a historic context and significance under adopted designation criteria, and the "a"- "k" lettering was removed. With this revision, as well as other minor clean-up items, the Policy Subcommittee forwarded the amendments on to the Board for consideration.

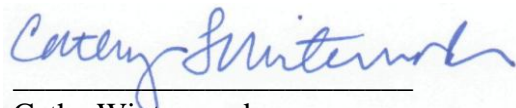
Following the Policy Subcommittee meeting, staff sent a copy of the draft amendments, including the revisions recommended by the Subcommittee, to the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) for review and comments. OHP staff found that the policy as amended is now consistent with State and Federal policies.

CONCLUSION

At this time staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed amendment to the Historical Resources Board District Policy 4.1, which will greatly simplify and clarify the existing district policy and bring the City's policy into conformance with State and Federal policy and accepted preservation practice.



Kelley Stanco
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

KS/cw

Attachment(s):

1. Proposed Amendments to the Historical Resources Board District Policy
2. *Guidelines for Preparing a Historic District Nomination in Consultation with Staff*