

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Element is to establish a comprehensive set of policies to identify and preserve historic resources in San Juan Bautista. Historic preservation is not only an important part of San Juan's character, it is vital to the City's future economic prosperity. The City's rich sense of history and architectural legacy draw hundreds of thousands of visitors to town each year. These visitors sustain local businesses and provide sales tax dollars to City government.

Although this Element is not required by State law, the importance of historic preservation to San Juan Bautista has been recognized since at least 1935. That year, at the urging of the San Juan Preservation League, the California State Parks Commission designated the Mission Plaza, the Plaza Hotel, the Castro Breen Adobe, and other nearby buildings as a State Historic Park. The San Juan Bautista Historical Society was chartered in 1965, but it was not until 1979 that a Local Historic District and Preservation Ordinance was officially adopted. The City initiated its first formal Historic Preservation planning program in 1978. That effort spanned several years and resulted in a General Plan Historic Preservation Element, as well as a thorough inventory of the City's historic and archaeological resources.

The need for historic preservation was expressed again during the 1998 General Plan Update. There was agreement that the previous Historic Preservation Element, now nearly 20 years old, should be updated to reflect the City's more recent experiences as well as current practices in the preservation field. Although this Element establishes a strong policy framework for preservation, it is only one step toward an effective preservation program. Implementation programs are identified to ensure that the City's historic and archaeological resources are protected for future generations.

The Element begins with a short history of San Juan Bautista and a synopsis of the major building styles of each period. It identifies historic and archaeological sites in the City and the status of local preservation efforts. The Element then looks ahead to 2015, focusing on the benefits that will be provided by a continued emphasis on historic preservation. Goals, policies, and programs are included.

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AT THIS POINT IN TIME...

History of San Juan Bautista

Native Americans were the first people to have sealed in the San Juan Bautista area, arriving in Central California at least 10,000 years ago.

When Spanish expeditions arrived in the San Juan Valley in the late 1700s, an

Ohione tribe known as the Mutsun inhabited the present site of San Juan Bautista. Archaeological evidence also suggests the Mutsun dwelled at the mouth of San Juan Canyon.

Franciscan fathers, interested in establishing missions to save the souls of the Native Americans, accompanied the Spanish explorers. When the Mission San Juan Bautista was established in 1797, it was the fifteenth of the 21 missions built in California. Between 1797 and 1831, the Spanish and Mexican settlers and Mutsun built 128 adobe buildings, including the Mission and other dwellings. Surviving buildings from this period include the Casa de Aura, Theophile Vache, and Pico-Boronda (Native Daughters of the Golden West) Adobes. Additional surviving adobes outside the City limits include the Breen Adobe on Nyland Drive and the Angel Castro Adobe at the mouth of San Juan Canyon. The only known wood-frame building pre-dating statehood is the Crane House at Second and Polk Streets.

After periods of Spanish and Mexican rule, the Mission came under American rule when California joined the union in 1850. The California gold rush marked the start of a two decade-long boom in San Juan Bautista. The City was located along the El Camino Real and was an important stagecoach stop between Los Angeles and San Francisco. The opening of the New Idria silver mine in 1854 was a financial boon to the City. By 1860, the population reached 3,000.

The buildings of this period tended to be simple wood-frame structures, some reflecting East Coast traditions and others reflecting the unique styles of the American West, incorporating “false front” facades, or Greek Revival and Italianate details. Most of the buildings have been lost to fire and demolition, but some remain. The building at the southwest corner of Third and Mariposa (the Watering Trough Saloon) exemplifies a Western False Front facade. Glad Tidings Church (Third and Muckelemi) is probably the best example of the Greek Revival Style, while the Texas Lodge (407 Second Street) is a Carpenter Italianate building.

San Juan’s era of prosperity was short-lived. A fire and smallpox epidemic in the late 1860s halted the town’s growth. About the same time, the railroad chose Hollister rather than San Juan Bautista for its station. Although San Juan Bautista incorporated in 1869, the presence of the railroad in Hollister ensured that it, rather than San Juan, became the county seat in 1874. By 1900, the



City's population had declined to about 400 people. A few stone buildings were constructed during this period, including the A. Taix Building on Third Street. Houses still standing from this period include the Mariposa House (at Fourth and Mariposa) and the Lavagnino House (Fourth and Washington), both examples of the Queen Anne style.

San Juan's fortunes were revived in 1906 when a cement plant was established near the mouth of San Juan Canyon. By 1907, a narrow gauge railroad connected San Juan Bautista to the major rail lines. A large number of bungalows were built during the ensuing period, many of which are still standing today. In 1929, the depression forced the closure of the cement plant and railroad spur. While the plant re-opened after the depression, other factors began to shape the City's growth. In 1931, Highway 101 opened two miles west of the City, leaving San Juan isolated from the state's main north-south artery.



The Plaza Hotel is one of the signature buildings of the San Juan Bautista Historic Park, dedicated in 1935.

With the establishment of the State Park in 1935, San Juan Bautista's role as a tourist center was born. The City's population has grown steadily during the last 60 years, but the town has been bypassed by the growth shaping neighboring Hollister, Gilroy, and Salinas. In part due to its slow growth, the City boasts an impressive array of architecture from the 1930s and 1940s, including Mediterranean and Spanish Revival buildings like the JACL Community Hall and City Hall.



Historic Designations

Table 9-1 shows the various historic building, site, and district designations in San Juan Bautista. The table lists 10 buildings, three districts, five archaeological sites, and a historic trail. As the table indicates, the status of some of the listings is unclear and requires follow-up action. In addition to the listed buildings, a local historic inventory conducted in 1981 identified 125 buildings, sites, and community design features with historic and architectural importance. A ranking system was used to indicate whether the buildings were “landmarks” or “contributing” depending on their significance. About one-third of the buildings and sites were listed as “landmarks.” At the end of this chapter, Figure 9-1 indicates the location of the historic resources identified in Table 9-1, as well as those catalogued by the local survey.

Status of Local Preservation Efforts

The legal basis for historic preservation in San Juan Bautista dates to 1979, when the City Council adopted Ordinance 188. Like the Residential Development Control Ordinance passed the same year, this local legislation has shaped local land use and community design policy for nearly two decades.

Ordinance 188 established a Cultural Resources Board, to be advisory to the City Council on preservation issues. The five-member appointed Board was given the responsibility to conduct a historic survey, adopt specific guidelines for designating landmarks, maintain a historic register, adopt standards to evaluate applications to modify landmarks, investigate funding sources, and review environmental documents. One of the Board’s earliest efforts was the proposal of a local historic district. The district was finally created in the mid-1980s after many years of debate over which properties were to be included and excluded.

By the late 1980s, a new Ordinance (206) superseded Ordinance 188, attempting to clarify the role of the Cultural Resources Board. One of the main changes effected by the Ordinance was that design review was limited to “officially-designated” resources rather than “all” cultural resources. The residency requirements for Board membership were amended to allow two (rather than one) of the five members to live outside the City limits. This was later changed in 1989 to require all members to live within the City.

In 1994, the Board was disbanded and its duties and responsibilities were ceded to the Planning Commission. The merger was intended as a cost-saving measure and a means of establishing consistency in land use and development decisions. As a result of the change, the Planning Commission now conducts design review for properties within the historic district. Other duties originally assigned to the Cultural Resources Board, including updating of the historic register, nomination of properties to the State and National registers, preparation of design guidelines, and pursuit of grants, have received less attention.





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LOOKING TOWARD 2015:

An important part of San Juan Bautista's future lies in preserving its past. Looking toward 2015, the City will develop an active historic preservation program that brings economic and social benefits to the community. These benefits are embodied in this Element's goals and are summarized below.

The Chamber of Commerce estimates that 275,000 people visit San Juan Bautista annually. These visitors support San Juan's stores, hotels, and restaurants, and are the lifeblood of the local economy. Sales tax returns comprise about 23 percent of the City's General Fund and bring more than \$136,000 a year to the City coffers alone. Many of the City's fairs and festivals commemorate historic events and celebrate local history and culture. The City has reaped economic benefits from its preservation activities and will continue to do so in the future.

In addition to its community-wide economic benefits, preservation can benefit individual property owners. Owners of officially designated historic buildings can take advantage of flexible building codes, income tax deductions, and in some cases, reduced property taxes. A property owner may also increase the value of his or her historic property by protecting and enhancing its physical condition. Preservation can significantly enhance real estate values, both on an individual and citywide level. The City will support programs and activities which provide such benefits to historic property owners, and will emphasize flexibility in the way it applies design and construction standards.

Historic preservation provides cultural as well as economic benefits. San Juan Bautista's older buildings give identity, character and continuity to the City. They provide a context for understanding and appreciating the past. Many place names, works of particular architects, and sites associated with important events or people have been preserved in San Juan Bautista and should continue to be preserved in the future. These features give the City a strong sense of identity and create a sense of belonging. Historic resources provide one of the strongest elements of the small town, rural character that residents want to protect.



GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

GOAL HP-1: HISTORIC RESOURCE PROTECTION

Maintain the integrity of local historic resources.

Achieving this goal requires a combination of preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The intent is not to preserve all historic structures exactly “as is” but rather to encourage alterations and infill development that respect and enhance the City’s historic ambiance. New buildings adjacent to historic structures and in the “gateway” areas along The Alameda and Muckelemi Street should be sensitive to the character of adjacent development and incorporate architectural elements and designs that contribute to San Juan’s strong sense of history.

POLICY HP-1:

Ensure that the remodeling and renovation of historic buildings respects the character of each building and its setting.

For the purposes of this policy, a historic building is defined as any building that appears on the City’s local historic register, including both landmarks and contributing structures, and any structure appearing on the State or National historic registers.

POLICY HP-2:

Ensure that new projects on sites in the Historic District are compatible with the area’s image and are harmonious with adjacent historic buildings.

POLICY HP-3:

Where appropriate, promote the rehabilitation of historic buildings for contemporary uses.

San Juan Bautista’s architectural heritage can be preserved by adapting older buildings for new uses rather than tearing them down and replacing them. This not only provides a living reminder of San Juan’s history, it also helps maintain the scale of the city’s neighborhoods and business district. Rehabilitation provides the added benefits of making efficient use of land and buildings, and providing a potential resource for affordable housing on the upper floors of Downtown buildings.

Policies C-4, C-7, C-12, and C-13 in the Community Design Element also emphasize the importance of designing new development to blend with the old.



See also Safety Element Program S-4 on upgrades to unreinforced masonry buildings.

Policy HP-4:

In the event of an earthquake, fire, flood, or other similar event affecting historic properties, take all reasonable steps to promote rapid repair and restoration. In the event a historic building is damaged beyond repair, require the replacement building to respect the former building’s architectural style.

The City was fortunate to lose only one commercial building in the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989. Other cities, such as Santa Cruz and Watsonville, experienced substantial damage and lost many of their historic buildings to quick demolition following the disaster. San Juan Bautista will strive toward rapid restoration and repair of damaged historic structures following future disasters. Demolition should be viewed only as a “last resort” and should not be done in haste.

PROGRAM HP-1:

Adopt the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for the treatment of historic properties, including definitions for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

These standards are listed on the following page.

The Texas Lodge on Second Street is an example of the Carpenter Italianate style popularized in the 1860s and ‘70s



Secretary of the Interior's Definitions of Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction for Historic Properties.

Preservation maintains the form, materials and features of the historic property as it has evolved over time, acknowledging its growth, loss, and change.

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including the preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses on the on-going maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate.

Rehabilitation retains the historic as it has evolved by maintaining and repairing historic features, while allowing additions and alterations for contemporary and future uses.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration depicts an appearance that existed during the historic property's most significant period by removing later additions and rebuilding or replanting earlier features.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular time by means of removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional, is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction re-creates a vanished or non-surviving historic property with new materials.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.



GOAL HP-2: INCREASED RECOGNITION

Recognize historic and cultural resources as an essential part of the City's Heritage.

The City will support and encourage wider recognition of its history and its historic resources in the future, promoting public awareness of places and events and encouraging the designation of additional properties as landmarks. The following policies and programs are intended to attain this goal.

POLICY HP-5:

Maintain an updated inventory of local historic resources.

An effective preservation program requires a good inventory of historic properties. The City's historic resources survey is now 15 years old and has never been updated. Some of the buildings listed have been demolished and others have been replaced without being recorded. Many of the business names noted in the survey have changed. The survey also suffers from several inconsistencies, including the terminology used to describe buildings.

POLICY HP-6:

Maintain a local "Historic District" encompassing the City's most significant historic sites and buildings.

The City has had a designated Historic District since the mid-1980s, although its precise boundaries are unclear. The District should be continued in the future and expanded to include the State Park and Mission.

POLICY HP-7:

Ensure that the legal basis for the City's historic preservation programs meets state and national standards.

PROGRAM HP-2:

Resolve the issue of whether the Planning Commission can effectively serve as the Cultural Resources Board for purposes of applying for state and national historic preservation funding. In the event it cannot, restore a Cultural Resources Board to review historic preservation issues.



PROGRAM HP-3:

Update the 1981 Cultural Resources Inventory and formally adopt it as a local historic register. All projects on this register, including those outside the Historic District, should be subject to the City's Historic District design review provisions.

A number of buildings in San Juan Bautista are listed on the National Register of Historic Places but are not within the City's Historic District. The City should take the necessary steps to ensure that alterations to these structures are subject to the same level of review as alterations within the Historic District.

There are additional historically significant structures that are not included on the local register because they are outside the current City limits. These include the Breen Adobe, which may be eligible for National Register status. Such structures will not be added to the City's register unless and until they are annexed to San Juan Bautista. The City encourages their preservation and restoration until that time.

PROGRAM HP-4:

Expand the boundaries of the Third Street Historic District to include the Mission San Juan Bautista and the State Historic Park.

The boundaries of the existing and proposed expanded district are shown in Figure 9-2. The expanded District is about triple the size of the existing district. Most of the properties to be added are owned by the Church or State and may be exempt from local land use controls, including design review. The inclusion of the State Historic Park in the District, though largely symbolic, will reinforce the importance of historic resources to the City and boost tourist appeal by emphasizing the large extent of the City's historic area. Visitors do not distinguish between who has jurisdiction over what and are interested in all of the cultural resources within the City.

PROGRAM HP-5:

Establish an archive of existing local historical records, including all records and minutes of the Cultural Resources Board's meetings, at the San Juan Bautista Public Library.

Part of the library storage room should be used for this purpose, with limited public access provided. At some point in the future, it may be necessary to build a library addition to house local historic records and collections. If obtainable, copies of old town maps should be included in these archives.

The updated Cultural Resources Inventory should resolve inconsistencies in the original inventory, revise and clearly describe the system used to rate properties, and develop criteria to add or remove properties.



San Juan Bautista's Historic District should include its most noteworthy landmarks, including the Mission and the State Park.



PROGRAM HP-6:

Seek certification of the local historic register with the State Historic Preservation Office. Clarify the legal status of those landmarks which are assumed to be on the State or National Registers.

PROGRAM HP-7:

Install signs or markers delineating the boundaries of the Historic District.

Signs along Second, Third, Muckelemi, and other major City entryways could read “Entering Historic District” at the appropriate locations. Within this District, the National Historic District surrounding the Plaza might be further highlighted with different treatment of road surfaces, sidewalks, and paths.

GOAL HP-3: FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Create financial incentives to encourage historic preservation.

Preservation incentives include interest-free or reduced interest loans, tax incentives for preservation, such as Mills Act preservation contracts, reduced permitting and processing fees; grants and awards; and use of the State Historic Building Code, which contains more flexible development standards. Use of these incentives should encourage greater property owner acceptance of Historic Property designations and the accompanying design standards.



POLICY HP-8:

Support financial incentive and tax relief programs to promote historic preservation, including the Main Street program and the Certified Local Government Program.

The California Main Street program is designed to revitalize traditional commercial centers based on Historic Preservation principles. It has been used in Hollister and other jurisdictions in Central California to revitalize historic downtown areas.

A number of tax relief programs also are available. Under the Mills Act, the owner of a designated historic property and a local government can enter into an agreement which effectively freezes the value of the property prior to restoration. The local tax assessor is directed by law to adjust the assessed value of the property downward, even as the market value increases. Other tax programs include Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits for designated historic buildings and income tax deductions for donation or dedication of facade easements.

POLICY HP-9:

Allow use of the State Historic Building Code for officially designated historic buildings.

Since 1985, use of the State Historic Building Code has been mandatory for all jurisdictions in California with designated historic buildings. The Code allows flexibility in the way that requirements for repairs, alterations, and additions are applied to designated historic buildings. Use of the Code can lessen the cost of rehabilitating historic buildings.

POLICY HP-10:

Use flexibility when applying zoning regulations to historic sites and buildings.

Exceptions for lot coverage, setbacks, and other zoning standards should be considered for historic buildings undergoing rehabilitation or expansion. These should be developed during the revision of the Zoning Ordinance.

PROGRAM HP-8:

Develop a historic preservation resource section at the San Juan Bautista Public Library. Obtain free publications from the State and federal governments and non-profit organizations to create and supplement this collection.

The resource section should contain brochures, pamphlets, guidebooks, and other materials for homeowners, business owners, and developers interested in rehabilitating historic buildings. Information should address construction and



architecture as well as financing sources and tax relief programs. As resources allow, the reference library should also include design guidelines or manuals from other cities in California with large numbers of historic buildings.

PROGRAM HP-9:

Apply for grants and other funds to support historic preservation.

GOAL HP-4: ARCHAEOLOGY

Protect archaeological resources in the San Juan Bautista area.

Native American artifacts in the San Juan Bautista area are most likely to be found around the Mission and near the mouth of San Juan Canyon. A former Neophyte Family Housing Area dating from the Spanish Colonial period has been identified at the north end of Franklin Street and a potential Native American village site exists two miles east of the City. The location of archaeological resources is shown in Figure 9-3. Although the presence of archaeological remains does not preclude development, it does require that care be taken to preserve or remove artifacts if and when development takes place. The following policies and programs ensure that this goal is achieved and support additional research on the Native American heritage of the San Juan area.

POLICY HP-11:

Ensure that City or County actions do not result in the displacement or loss of significant archaeological resources. Where development occurs in areas of known archaeological sensitivity, require investigations of archaeological remains prior to construction. If remains are discovered, make every effort feasible to recover resources before proceeding.

The California Environmental Quality Act requires that any archaeological resources on development sites be identified and protected. Resources that are unique, as defined by State law, must be protected by relocating them or by siting development away from the most sensitive areas.

POLICY HP-12:

Encourage exhibits, displays, and markers identifying significant archaeological sites.



PROGRAM HP-10:

Encourage the State of California to construct visitor improvements, including parking and educational/interpretive displays at the archaeological site at the north end of Franklin Street.

The 2.5-acre Neophyte Family Housing Area was acquired by the State and is included in the State Park boundary. Many of the original artifacts on the site have reportedly been removed and the site is being used as a storage and staging area, closed to the public. The City supports use of the site in a manner that would provide greater public benefit, as well as recognition of its historic significance.

PROGRAM HP-11:

Ensure that all known archaeological sites within the San Juan Bautista Planning Area are catalogued with the Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University.

PROGRAM HP-12:

Clarify the precise location and significance of archaeological resources in the San Juan Canyon and Mission Vineyard areas, including the DeAnza Trail and Indian's Corners.

San Juan Canyon was recently proposed as a California Point of Historical Interest. That designation would likely result in a historical marker or plaque placed in the vicinity of Mission Vineyard and San Juan Canyon Roads. The area includes Indian middens, burial grounds, and archaeological remains, although the precise location of most artifacts has not been published. Continued research in this area should be supported and final recommendations could be included in the Specific Plan for the area south of San Juan Hollister Road.



GOAL HP-5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Use historic preservation to foster tourism and local economic development.

An on-going economic development program should incorporate speaking engagements by City officials; walking tours, house tours, and brochures; and fairs and festivals that commemorate City history. Coordination with the Mission and State Park is critical to local tourism development programs.

POLICY HP-13:

Recognize the value and importance of San Juan Bautista's historic resources as an economic development tool. Promote workshops, exhibits, programs, and events which celebrate the City's heritage and history.

POLICY HP-14:

Coordinate City historic preservation activities with the Mission, the State Park, the local Chamber of Commerce, the Historical Society, San Benito County, other interested groups and individuals, and state and federal agencies.

POLICY HP-15:

Encourage walking tours, house tours, commercial building tours, signs, public art, and visitor attractions which showcase the City's history.

PROGRAM HP-2:

Work with the groups listed in Policy HP-14 to revise the walking tour of the City so that it includes a larger geographic area. Promote wider distribution of the walking tour at local attractions and businesses.

