

# Chapter 9. Cultural Resources

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## Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are remains and sites associated with human activities and include the following:

- Prehistoric and ethnohistoric Native American sites
- Historic archaeological sites
- Historic buildings
- Elements or areas of the natural landscape with have traditional cultural significance to the citizens of the City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, the State of California, the foothill region or the nation

### 9.1. Requirements

A Cultural Resources Element is an optional general plan element. However, because cultural resources must be addressed as part of the environmental review process pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et seq.), many local governments include a Cultural Resources Element as part of the general plan.

California Public Resources Code Sections 21002(b), 21083.2 (Archaeological Resources), and 21084.1 (Historical Resources Guidelines) address the evaluation of environmental impacts on historical resources. The California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) has been adopted as the state's authoritative guide to the state's historical resources and to which properties are to be considered significant for the purposes of CEQA.

Pursuant to Section 21084.1 of the Public Resources Code, a project that may cause a substantial adverse change to in the significance of an historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. The State CEQA Guidelines define an historical resource as:

- Listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources
- Historical resources included in a local register of historical resources as defined in subdivision (k) of Section 5020.1
- A resource deemed significant pursuant to subdivision (g) of Section 5024.1
- The fact that a resource is not listed in or determined eligible for listing pursuant to any of the preceding does not preclude a determination that the resource may be an historical resource

## 9.2. Purpose

One of the primary purposes of this cultural resources element is to inventory, evaluate and identify those resources in the City of Sonora which may be eligible for the California Register and provide guidelines for their management in accordance with CEQA.

In addition, the City of Sonora recognizes the economic benefits of preserving cultural resources which encourages cultural heritage tourism (see glossary). Visiting historic sites and museums is the third most popular vacation activity for U.S. travelers (*Heritage Tourism, Benefits of Heritage Tourism*, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, undated). Cultural heritage travelers spend an average of \$623 per trip (excluding transportation) versus \$457 for other U.S. travelers (*The Historic/Cultural Traveler*, Travel Industry Association and Smithsonian Magazine, 2003).

Cultural heritage tourism provides multiple benefits, including:

- Creating jobs and businesses
- Increasing tax revenue
- Diversifying the local economy
- Creating opportunities for partnerships
- Attracting visitors interested in history and preservation
- Increasing historic attraction revenues
- Preserving local traditions and culture
- Generating local investment in historic resources
- Building community pride in heritage
- Increasing awareness of the site or area's significance

Source: *Heritage Tourism, Benefits of Heritage Tourism*, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, undated

## 9.3. Historical Overview<sup>37</sup>

The following is a condensation of a *Historical Overview of Sonora*, by Carlo M. De Ferrari, included in the *Sonora Historic Resources Inventory*, by Marvin et al., 2003, prepared for the City of Sonora. The overview is supplemented by materials from the "*Contextual History of Tuolumne County*" by Davis-King et. al., 1994, prepared for Tuolumne County.

<sup>37</sup> Derived from *Contextual History of Tuolumne County* Davis-King, et. al.; 1994 for the County of Tuolumne. *Time Line of Events in Tuolumne County Through 1930* by Carlo De Ferrari

### 9.3.1. Prehistory

Current knowledge of the prehistoric past in Tuolumne County is largely the result of major studies in Yosemite National Park, Stanislaus National Forest, and those conducted for water development projects. The studies at New Melones (Moratto, et al., 1988) indicate that:

*Over a span of millennia this part of California witnessed the ebb and flow of human populations, the emergence of an acorn-based subsistence economy, increasing sedentism, a diversity of settlement modes, expansion of trade networks, introduction of the bow and arrow, evolution of complex socio-political organization, and the advent of distinctive cult/ceremonial systems. Archaeology here sheds light on the transitions from early Holocene nomadic hunting and foraging to the protohistoric semisedentary village life of hunter-gatherers [Goldberg et al. 1986:iii]*

Studies at New Melones indicate that human presence in the general vicinity of Sonora dates from 8000 to 5,500 years before present.

Approximately 600 years ago, changes in the archaeological record suggest that a new group of people infiltrated the area. These people are generally considered to be the precursors of the Me-Wuk with cultural traits defined by acorn processing in bedrock mills, and more permanent (or recognizable) settlements.

Since the advent of the Me-Wuk, the history of human settlement until the Gold Rush may be characterized as follows:

*...as a result of Ibero-American incursions and pressures, Indians from western California sought refuge in the Sierra... after A.D. 1770. ... the epidemic of 1833 devastated foothill Indians and left many of their villages deserted forever...The Gold Rush of circa 1848-1860 severely disrupted settlements in the Mother Lode country and often triggered the relocation of entire villages. ...Finally the establishment of...reservations...further coalesced Indian groups, reduced their numbers, and accelerated cultural and social changes.*

### 9.3.2. 1848-49 The Gold Rush and the Founding of Sonora

The “modern” history of Sonora was sparked by the discovery of gold on January 24, 1848, in California on the South Fork of the American River.

Among the first miners to reach Tuolumne County were recently discharged veterans of the Mexican War and miners from the State of Sonora, Mexico, commonly referred to as “Sonorians.” While references to “the great camp of the Sonorians,” are found in early Gold Rush literature<sup>38</sup>; it is believed that this early “camp” was actually located in today’s Jamestown.

In the early days of the Gold Rush, most gold miners left the Tuolumne County gold placers as winter approached in fear that they would be cut off from supplies by

<sup>38</sup> Alcalde Colton, *Three Years in California*, 1852

oncoming storms. Most miners wintered in Stockton, San Francisco, or in coastal communities extending to Southern California. Among those miners who left in the late Autumn and early winter of 1848-49 were the Sonoranian miners who returned to their homes in Mexico.

*“There they inflamed their relatives and friends with stories of the abundance of gold in the newly discovered placers in California, and urged that they return with them to the diggings so that they would be on hand to share in the golden harvest when the winter storms had subsided. Little coaxing was required once the proof of their golden tales was displayed in the bags of dust and nuggets many had brought home with them.”*

Upon returning to Sonora, the Sonorians established a camp named Santa lago approximately a half mile above Jamestown.

In 1848 there had been some friction between the Americans and the Sonorians and other Spanish-speaking miners, but at that time, the gold seekers were few and the virgin placers extensive. Upon the occasions that the Americans forced Hispanic miners from their rich finds, Hispanic miners simply moved to other sites. In the spring of 1849, this occurred once again.

This time, however, the newly ended Mexican War was fresh in the minds of the American miners, and they considered California to be conquered territory in which the Americans should have exclusive right to exploit its golden riches. As the number of miners increased rapidly, the Sonorians were forced from their Santa lago diggings by this sentiment. The Sonorians decided to move to rich placers upstream-- this time, however, they intended to keep their find a secret from the Americans. On March 17, 1849, the Sonorians quickly vacated their camp and moved to the new diggings before miners downstream became aware of their departure. The new camp was on Wood’s Creek at the site of today’s Sonora High School grounds and extended upstream along present Columbia Way to the bridge crossing the creek. The new camp of Sonora was born.

It was a few days before the Americans became aware that nearly all of the Sonorians had suddenly disappeared. Knowing of their reputation for locating placer deposits, the Americans began an immediate search and soon found the new camp. While in the area, the Americans did some prospecting themselves and uncovered equally rich diggings along the branch of Wood’s Creek that subsequently became known as Sonora Creek. An American camp soon came into existence along the creek in the area of today’s Coffill Park expanding the boundaries of what would become the City of Sonora.

For a short time, the American camp was called “Scott Town,” probably in honor of Charles G. Scott, a former soldier of the First Regiment of New York Volunteers in the Mexican War. The camp was soon engulfed by more numerous Sonorians and others of Hispanic origin and became known as the Sonoranian Camp, later shortened to Sonora.

Thousands of eager gold seekers made their way to the new diggings discovered by the Sonorians bringing with them merchants with a wide variety of tools and supplies, butchers, bakers, mule packers, teamsters, those aiming to open

restaurants and lodging houses, liquor dealers, gamblers, black legs, and speculators who were not particular about how they acquired their gold.

The largest foreign group was that of the Sonorians themselves who were joined by Chileans (Chilenos), Peruvians, and a few Argentines. All were attracted to the camp not only because of gold, but because it was known as a mining center where the Spanish language was spoken and the Catholic religion and familiar Latin customs were widely observed.

Newcomers made their camps on unoccupied land lying along the sides of an old Indian trail extending from Sonorian Camp on Wood's Creek down a dry ravine called Senorita Gulch to the American settlement along Sonora Creek. This trail later became today's Washington Street, the center of business activity for the mining camp and later, for the City of Sonora.

### **9.3.3. 1850s: Sawmills, City Incorporation, Miner's Tax and Depression**

#### Sawmills

In August, 1850, the erection of a steam sawmill, by Henri Charbonelle & Co., changed the appearance of the camp and surrounding hills. The mill, located near today's intersection of Washington and Church Streets, immediately began to produce rough lumber sawed from the pine and cedar logs dragged down to the mill from the hillsides by oxen. The abundance of local lumber at a reasonable price followed by the erection of competing sawmills made lumber readily available for building. By early 1852, Sonora had assumed a cosmopolitan appearance with architecture reflecting the tastes of its American, European, and New World Hispanics far more than most of the other mining camps of the era.

*I arrived at Sonora, the largest town of the southern mines. It consisted of a single street, extending for upwards of a mile along a sort of hollow between gently sloping hills. Most of the houses were of wood, a few were of canvas, and one or two were solid buildings of sun-dried bricks. The lower end of the town was very peculiar in appearance as compared with the prevailing style of California architecture. Ornament seemed to have been as much consulted as utility, and the different tastes of the French and Mexican builders were very plainly seen in the high-peaked overhanging roofs, the staircases outside the houses, the corridors round each story, and other peculiarities; giving the houses—which were painted, moreover, buff and pale blue—quite an old-fashioned air alongside of the staring white rectangular fronts of the American houses. There was less pretence and more honesty about them than about the American houses, for many of the latter were all front, and gave the idea of a much better house than the small rickety clapboard or canvas concern which was concealed behind it. But these facades were useful as well as ornamental, and were intended to support the large signs, which conveyed an immense deal of useful information. Some small stores, in fact, seemed bursting with intelligence, and were broken out all over with short spasmodic sentences in English, French, Spanish, German, covering all the available space save the door, and presenting to the passer-by a large amount of desultory reading as to the nature of the property within and the price at which it could be bought. This, however, was not by*

*any means peculiar to Sonora—it was the general style of things throughout the country.*

*The Mexicans and the French also were very numerous, and there was an extensive assortment of other Europeans from all quarters, all of whom, save French, English and "Eyetalians," are in California classed under the general denomination of Dutchmen more frequently "d----d Dutchmen," merely for the sake of euphony.*

*J.D. Borthwick, Englishman, 1852*

### City Incorporation

California passed legislation dividing California into 27 counties and designating a seat of government for each county in February, 1850. While the residents of Sonoranian Camp, or Sonora, as it was increasingly being called, were satisfied with their camp being designated as the county seat, they were incensed to discover that the name Sonora had been changed to Stewart in honor of an assemblyman representing them. A petition signed by the camp's leading citizens and business owners was filed with the legislature, and that body responded by passing an amendatory act on April 15, 1850, naming Sonora as the county seat of Tuolumne County.

With statehood on September 9, 1850, the California Legislature approved the incorporation of the City of Sonora on May 1, 1851.<sup>39</sup> The first city election was held May 19, 1851, to elect the common council in which 400 votes were cast to elect Mayor Charles F. Dodge and aldermen A.F. Chatfield, Abraham Tuttle, Israel P. Yaney, Hiram W. Theall, R.S. Gladwin, H.T. Fuller and Lewis C. Gunn.

At the first meeting of the common council, the first city officers were appointed: Leander Quint, city recorder; Daniel Sayre, city treasurer; Ethan Allen, city assessor; James F. McFarland, city marshal; and Alexander W. Luckett, city clerk.

### Foreign Miner's Tax and Depression

Two days prior to naming Sonora as the county seat, the legislature adopted the foreign miner's tax. The law was titled "An Act for the better regulation of the Mines, and the government of Foreign Miners." The act required each foreign miner to pay a monthly license fee of \$20 to mine for gold in California. The avowed intent of the law was to raise revenue for the infant state, but also had the object of reserving for American miners as much of the gold fields as possible.

Unable to afford the monthly taxes, thousands of foreigners, principally Mexicans, departed from the mines with a bitter hatred for the Americans. Their departure triggered a massive local financial depression in Sonora and the other county gold camps. It also greatly affected the supply center of Stockton economically, as well as the teamsters and pack train owners who moved supplies between the two points. Funds were raised by affected local business interests, and an attempt was made to have the law declared unconstitutional; but the damage was done, and it was not

<sup>39</sup> Sonora Historic Resources Inventory, City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, California; Foothill Resources, Ltd. With Historical Overview by Carlo M. De Ferrari, Tuolumne County Historian; November, 2003.



until a year later that the miners' tax act was repealed and then replaced with another in which a more moderate and reasonable tax was prescribed.

#### 9.3.4. 1860s-1870s: Civil War and the Chinese

By the 1860s, the loss of population due to the exhaustion of the vast surface placer gold deposits that had sustained her for many years sent Sonora into an economic decline. The Civil War also had its effect as some men left to serve in the armed forces.

During the late 1860's and early 1870's, thousands of Chinese miners came once they were free to work unmolested in the abandoned placers to extract the remaining gold dust deposits. Many of the Orientals remained to enter other fields of work, usually menial, and resided in the area east of Stewart Street, lying generally between Lyons and East Bradford streets. Originally, this section had been occupied by Mexicans and Hispanics and was known as the "Tigre." Towards the end of the century, as Orientals became more numerous, it became Sonora's "Chinatown."

Well into the 1880s, the city's economy was based primarily upon nearby farming and ranching, some gold mining, lumber production and a slowly growing tourist trade, as visitors to the Calaveras Grove of Big Trees passed through Sonora en route to the Yosemite Valley; however, the future prospect for most residents was not encouraging.

**Figure 23:** Monument Commemorating Sonora's Chinatown of the 1860s and 1870s, Stewart Street



### 9.3.5. 1880s, 1890s and the Turn of the Century: the Second Gold Rush

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, there was a sudden and tremendous revival of prosperity accurately named the “Second Gold Rush” which transformed the county and brought it into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with a booming economy and restored confidence.

With the availability of strong wire, rope, or cable, and improved machinery and milling processes, together with underground mining techniques developed in the Comstock Lode of Nevada, it became physically and financially possible to open many quartz gold mines and begin the era of hard-rock mining along the Mother Lode.

Captain William A. Nevills pioneered the way with his famous Rawhide Mine (located west of Sonora). He displayed his success at the 1894 mid-winter fair in San Francisco, thereby ignited a fire for quartz mining which resulted in investors pouring money into the development of known claims as well as prospecting for new veins.

Much of that activity took place in Tuolumne County where the population grew rapidly, and the assessed value of property on the county’s tax rolls increased several fold, fed by the erection of new quartz mills, installation of hoisting machinery and the establishment of new businesses as well as the construction of homes to house the workers. This activity was further spurred by the arrival of the Sierra Railway and the birth of giant lumbering industries in the mountains to the east of the Mother Lode. It resulted in a quarter-century of prosperity for both Tuolumne County and its center of business activity, the City of Sonora.

Sonora itself had experienced brief gold excitement about two decades previously when several huge quartz vein deposits of gold, known as “pockets,” were uncovered in the depth of the Bonanza Mine at the northern edge of the city. This strike had benefited principally only the owners; yet, evidence of some of that wealth, approaching a million dollars it is said, is still displayed locally in the Nicol Mansion at 313 South Stewart Street which was erected in 1887 by Julia Nicol, widow of Charles Clark, one of the three Bonanza Mine partners.



**Figure 24:** Nicol Mansion  
Constructed 1887, 313  
South Stewart Street



Some of the wealth extracted from the Bonanza mine also went into the erection of Sonora's Opera Hall on South Washington Street, now restored and playing an active role in community life.

**Figure 25:**  
Sonora's Opera  
Hall, Constructed  
1885, 150 South  
Washington Street  
Formerly the Star  
Flouring Mill



The increased tax revenues also brought about the construction of a long-needed county hospital in 1887, and within two years, the decrepit 1853 wooden courthouse was razed and replaced with a handsome new yellow pressed brick building that presently graces the center of the city.

Nor was education neglected. For the first time, local students could remain at home and receive a high school education in a new school erected at the northern edge of the city. Shortly later, a similar structure was provided for the city's elementary school students. Commonly known today as "The Dome," it stands overlooking the city on Barretta Street.

**Figure 26:** The Sonora "Dome", Constructed 1909, 251 South Barretta Street



There were also private investments in other buildings during those prosperous times. In 1896 Mrs. William A. Nevills erected the city's finest hostelry, the Victoria Hotel. Remodeled in the late 1920s and renamed the Sonora Inn, it still serves the traveling public. A second building born of that era is the 1903 brick Bradford Building at the southwest corner of Bradford Avenue and South Washington Street.



**Figure 27:** Bradford Building, Constructed 1903, 42 S. Washington Street

### 9.3.6. World War I to the Present

By World War I, most of the mines in Tuolumne County were again idle and many people moved away to work in the war-related industries in the San Francisco Bay Area. With the advent of the automobile and truck transportation, many agricultural products and manufactured items were imported rather than being produced locally. The Depression in 1929 sounded the death knell for most major industries including agriculture and timber, and the county slumbered along with the rest of the United States during the following decade.

Due to the increase in the price of gold and low operating costs during the Depression, a small mining boom occurred again during the mid-to-late 1930s (the nearest to Sonora to reopen being the Harvard Mine located between Sonora and Jamestown). World War II effectively put an end to any major mine reopenings and, with few exceptions, the mines of Tuolumne County were closed in 1942.

The centennials of the gold discovery in 1948 and statehood in 1950 brought a renewed interest in the gold country. Books were published, photographic and art exhibits mounted and tourists came in droves to see where it had all happened. The quaint towns with their narrow streets and frame buildings from another century were now a destination and Sonora was no exception.

At the height of the Gold Rush in 1852, the population of Tuolumne County is estimated to have numbered 17,000 individuals—a figure which was not reached again for 110 years when the 1963 population of the county again reached 17,000.

Additional information regarding milestones in Sonora's history, the city's newspapers, fire history and prominent people may be found in *General Plan 2020 Appendix 9K*.

### 9.3.7. Cultural Resource Studies

Many of the cultural resources of the city have been documented in the following studies:

- *Sonora Historic Resources Inventory, City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, California*; Foothill Resources, Ltd. With Historical Overview by Carlo M. De Ferrari, Tuolumne County Historian; November, 2003 (Sonora, 2003)
- Historic Inventory City of Sonora-Central Sierra Planning Council, Tuolumne County Historical Society, 1983

Sonora's Historic Resources Inventory recorded 209 properties within the study boundaries identified in *General Plan 2020 Appendix 9A* including those constructed prior to 1945 and excepting those so drastically altered that they lacked potential for future restoration. The 2003 inventory provides a good indication of the nature and extent of resources within the city:

### 9.3.8. Resource Types

**Table 97:** 2003 Historic Resources Inventory Resources by Type

(Does not equal 209 properties inventoried due to multiple uses of some buildings)

Type of Property	Total Number
<b>Commercial (93)</b>	
Industrial	1
Hotels	5
Commercial (including offices, stores, shops, restaurants, saloons)	66
Banks (Including express offices)	5
Transportation (Including Stables, Garages, Yosemite Transit Company)	10
Communication (Including newspaper, telephone, telegraph offices)	5
<b>Service (18)</b>	
Government	1
Churches	2
Lodges	4
Hospitals	2
Social (Including a church, social hall, scout hut, libraries, private club, opera hall, theatre and memorial hall)	9
<b>Residential (125)</b>	
Single-Family	120
Multi-Family	5

## 9.4. Architectural Styles <sup>40</sup>

The architectural history of Sonora strongly reflects the availability of construction materials and the ability of the city's inhabitants to use those materials.

The architectural style of the dwellings of the first inhabitants of Sonora is unknown. Descriptions and illustrations of the structures of the Me-Wuk, who resided in the central Sierra foothills at the time of the Gold Rush, included conical brush and bark shelters held together with grapevines and a central fire for warmth. Other structures included ceremonial roundhouses, sweat lodges, and acorn granaries. None of these structures remain in the City of Sonora.

The discovery of gold brought tent cities with tents of white canvas and log cabins. The Sonorans from Mexico built brush houses where miners left their families during the week.

The Sonorans also brought their expertise in adobe construction and numerous adobe cabins, homes and businesses were built in the earliest years of the Gold Rush. Three buildings with adobe portions remain in the city today:

- Central portion of the Gunn House, Inventory No. 57, built 1852
- Portion of the Sugg-McDonald House, Inventory No. 155; constructed 1857
- South wall of the City Hotel, Inventory No. 119, built 1852

**Figure 28: Sugg-McDonald House, Constructed 1857, 37 Theall Street**



The original portion of the home was built from adobe-type bricks made on the property by William Sugg, a Negro. The home was expanded to two stories in size as the family grew and later became a boarding house. Sugg's descendants owned and occupied the home for over 120 years (*Sonora...A Guide to Yesterday*, Tuolumne County Historical Society)

<sup>40</sup> This architectural History of Sonora is a summary of that included in the *Sonora Historic Resources Inventory, City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, California*; Foothill Resources, Ltd. With Historical Overview by Carlo M. De Ferrari, Tuolumne County Historian; November, 2003.





**Figure 29:** Gunn House, Constructed 1852, 186 South Washington Street, A Sonora adobe – Believed to be the oldest building in Sonora, Served as the county hospital in 1852 and later as Bisordi's Rosa Italia Hotel



Prefabricated Frame Houses/Greek Revival

With the advent of sawmills, came prefabricated frame houses, usually in the Greek Revival style and shipped from the east to San Francisco. The Cady House is an excellent example of this era. The home came around Cape Horn in the 1850s and its numbered pieces were reconstructed in Sonora.

**Figure 30:** Cady House, 72 North Norlin Street



Neoclassical (*California Rustic*)

The first frame homes in Sonora were simple, one-story vernacular Neoclassical, also referred to as *California Rustic*. The homes had a basic Neoclassical study with gable roofs, horizontal siding, surrounding porches, central entries flanked by multi-paned windows, and a shed-roofed kitchen at the rear. The style remained one of the most popular in Sonora from the Gold Rush to the early 1900s.

After the loss of numerous buildings to the fires of 1852, 1853 and 1861, affluent merchants began to introduce the use of brick and stone in their structures and iron shutters for protection from both fire and thievery. The Italian and French stonemasons, experienced in the use of stone in construction from their homeland, built the majority of stone structures in the California foothills. The first substantially stone building in Sonora was the City Hotel, completed in 1853.



**Figure 31:** City Hotel, Constructed 1853, 139-145 South Washington Street, One of Sonora’s first substantially stone buildings

By the mid-1860s, brick and lime kilns using local supplies of clay and limestone produced Neoclassical buildings with gable roofs, false fronts with simple corncing, brick and stone relieving arches over the windows and doorways. Examples remaining today include:

- Linoberg Building, Inventory No. 109, constructed 1856 (front), 1900 (rear)
- Servente's, Inventory No. 40, constructed 1856



**Figure 32:** Servente's Constructed 1856, 64 S. Washington, The only remaining building in Tuolumne County with an iron storefront ( by Sutler Iron Works). Formerly Charles Freidenberg Dry Goods; Haag's Cigars & Groceries; Presently Servente's Groceries & Liquors.

**Figure 33:** Linoberg Building, Constructed 1856, 87 South Washington Street, Building by Emanuel Linoberg as a Wells Fargo Office



Italianate, Eastlake, Queen Anne

Commencing in the 1880s and extending through World War I, Tuolumne County saw a second Gold Rush based on hard-rock mining. With this boom in mining, came numerous false-front commercial and Italianate, Eastlake and Queen Anne residences. Two of these, designed by architect C.W. Ayres, include the Street-Morgan Mansion and the Bradford-Rosasco residence.



**Figure 34:**  
Street/Morgan  
Mansion, C.W.  
Ayres, Architect,  
An example of  
Sonora's Queen  
Anne  
architecture

**Figure 35:**  
Bradford/Rosasco  
House, C.W.  
Ayres, Architect,  
An Example of  
Sonora's Queen  
Anne Architecture





Romanesque

Tuolumne County did not readily embrace the Romanesque style of the early 1900s. The county courthouse, designed by William Mooser of San Francisco, is one of the few constructed in this style.

**Figure 36:** Tuolumne County Courthouse - William Mooser, Architect



Craftsman

Following World War I, numerous Craftsman bungalows were constructed and a number of examples of this style remain today. Most Craftsman structures appear to have been built by local carpenters from style books produced by architects such as Greene and Greene, Gustav Stickley and others.

**Figure 37:** The Webster-Meuli Home, 173 W. Bradford St., One of Sonora's Craftsman Bungalows



Mission Revival/Spanish Eclectic

In the 1920s and 1930s, romantic nostalgia for the Hispanic culture culminated in the development of the Mission Revival and Spanish Eclectic styles used for both commercial and residential architecture. The style generally made use of brick or stucco, with colonnades, arches, pillars, tile roofs, decorative tile work, flooring and metalwork.

**Figure 38:** Masonic Hall, Spanish Eclectic, Built 1858, Remodeled 1929, 16 South Washington Street

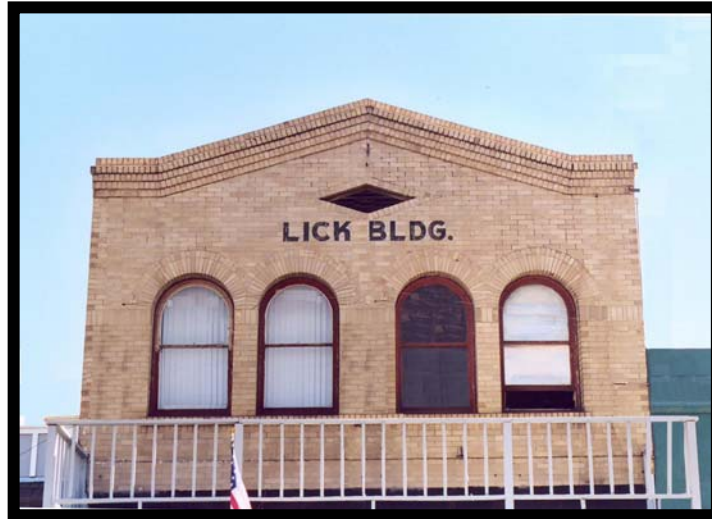




Art Moderne/Art Deco

The Lick Building of the 1930s provides an example of the city's Art Deco era.

**Figure 39:** Lick Building, Constructed 1930s, 157 South Washington Street



Colonial Revival



**Figure 40:** Veterans Memorial Hall, Constructed 1933, 9 North Washington Street, An example of Sonora's Colonial Revival Architecture

Architects

Few homes in Sonora were designed by architects; the Segerstrom home on Knowles Hill in Sonora (1927) was designed by Stockton architect Davis Pearce. The Tuolumne County Courthouse was designed by San Francisco Architect William Mooser. Craftsmen style structures in Sonora appear to have been built by local carpenters from style books produced by architects such as Greene and Greene, Gustav Stickley and others.



**Figure 41:** Segerstrom Home, Knowles Hills House, 1927, Designed by Stockton Architect, Davis Pearce

**Table 98:** 2003 Historic Resources Inventory by Architectural Type

Architectural Style	Total Number
<b>Commercial/Religious/Social (84)</b>	
Neoclassical/Classical Revival	43
Neoclassical with Spanish Eclectic Facades	11
Spanish Eclectic	6
Art Moderne/Art Deco	11
Gothic Revival	2
Craftsman	3
Queen Anne	7
Half-dugout	1
<b>Residential (118)</b>	
Neoclassical/Classical Revival	31
Neoclassical with Spanish Eclectic Facades	11
Neoclassical w/Art Deco Facades	7
Italianate	0
Eastlake	1
Queen Anne	28
National Folk	2
Folk Victorian	3
Colonial Revival	0
Craftsman	29
Mission Revival	0
Spanish Eclectic	0
Tudor Revival	2
Art Moderne/Art Deco	1
Minimal Traditional	0
Barn/Stable	3

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## 9.5. Goals, Policies and Implementation Programs

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### Identification & Evaluation of Resources

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**Goal:**

- 9.A Preserve and promote the City of Sonora's cultural heritage through the identification and evaluation of its cultural resources.

**Policies:**

- 9.A.1 Survey, record, inventory and evaluate the significance of cultural resources in the city to assist in guiding cultural resources management activities.
- 9.A.2 Prepare cultural resources inventories consistent with the standards and guidelines of the State Office of Historic Preservation.
- 9.A.3 Identify the city's important individual cultural resources and districts so that they may be preserved.
- 9.A.4 Provide consideration for the rights of private property owners within the city's cultural resources management programs.
- 9.A.5 Recognize the importance of heritage tourism to the economy of the city.

**Implementation Programs:**

- 9.A.a ***Adopt a Priority Plan for Future Historic Resources Inventories***  
Adopt a priority plan for identifying and evaluating historic resources within the city which have not yet been identified and evaluated. Priorities will consider, at a minimum, the age of resources and the level of threat posed to each group of resources. *General Plan 2020 Appendix 9B* provides guidance for establishing a priority plan.
- 9.A.b ***Establish Professional Standards***  
In conjunction with preparation of a Cultural Resources Management Ordinance, (**Program 9.B.a**) include a provision requiring that cultural resources studies be conducted by qualified professionals as established in *General Plan 2020 Appendix 9C*.



9.A.c ***Adopt Cultural Resources Study Standards***

In conjunction with preparation of a Cultural Resources Management Ordinance (**Program 9.B.a**), include standards for preparing cultural resources studies as established in *General Plan 2020 Appendix 9D*.

9.A.d ***Prepare a Supplement to the 2003 Sonora Historic Resources Inventory***

Enlist a qualified professional (**Program 9.A.b**) to prepare a supplement to the 2003 Sonora Historic Resources Inventory by adding California Register eligibility designations (*General Plan 2020 Appendix 9J*) for identified resources 50 years of age and older identified in the *Sonora Historic Resources Inventory, City of Sonora, Tuolumne County, California*; Foothill Resources, Ltd. with Historical Overview by Carlo M. De Ferrari, Tuolumne County Historian; November, 2003 (Sonora, 2003). These designations will assist the Sonora City Planner, the City of Sonora's Special Programs Department (e.g., for housing rehabilitations) and other city staff in performing environmental evaluations conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act; Section 106 evaluations; and implementation of the programs contained in this element.

In addition, the supplement will include recommendations for boundaries and contextual themes to guide the city in the formation of an historic district or districts.

9.A.e ***Establish a Sonora Register of Cultural Resources***

Establish a Sonora Register of Cultural Resources for the purposes of implementing incentive programs pursuant to the Cultural Resources Management Ordinance (**Program 9.B.a**). The register will include properties:

- i. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- ii. Listed on the California Register of Historical Resources
- iii. Properties contained within cultural resources inventories prepared by the city which have been or are assigned a California Register designation (*General Plan 2020 Appendix 9J*) or National Register designation of 1 (listed on the National Register), 2 (determined eligible for listing by formal process involving federal agencies), 3 (appears to be eligible for listing in the judgment of the person completing the form), 4 (might become eligible for listing) or 5 (ineligible for listing, but of local interest and eligible for the Sonora City Register)

Inclusion in the Register will require zoning to: H (Historic Combining) as described in **Program 9.A.g** and property owner consent as described in **Program 9.A.f**.



- 9.A.f ***Prepare a Contextual History of Sonora***  
Prepare a contextual history of Sonora emphasizing buildings, structures and archaeological resources 50 years of age or older including, but not limited to, the following themes: Gold Rush I&II Remains; Ethnic Affiliations; Technological Innovations; Major Periods of Historic Architecture, Transportation, and Tourism. The Contextual History will provide guidance to city in evaluating the significance of cultural resources within the city.
- 9.A.g ***Address Property Owner Consent***  
Address requirements for property owner consent prior to zoning property to the :H (Historic Combining) District and requiring consent of a simple majority of property owners for designation of an Historic District.  
  
Related Programs: Chapter 9 (Cultural Resources) -Implementation Programs 9.A.g and 9.A.h
- 9.A.h ***Amend the Existing Historic (:H ) Combining District***  
Amend the city's Design Review/Historic Zone to create a separate Historic (:H) Combining District. The :H district will be used to identify, at a minimum, those resources listed on the Sonora Register, California Register of Historical Resources, and National Register of Historic Places.
- 9.A.i ***Establish an Historic District (:HD) Combining District***  
Amend the municipal code to create the Historic District Combining District to encompass groups of cultural resources, including vacant parcels within historic districts, and to ensure appropriate management of collected resources and their contextual setting.
- 9.A.j ***Update the City's Historic District Boundaries***  
As the city completes historic inventories and evaluations, enlist a qualified professional to provide the city with recommendations for establishing historic districts within the city. When community support is forthcoming, pursue Historic District (:HD) zoning.
- 9.A.k ***Include Inventoried Properties in an Electronic Database***  
To facilitate the use of the city's cultural resources inventories, establish an electronic database, tied to parcel, which includes information pertaining to cultural resources on individual parcels. It is recommended that the city incorporate inventory data for individual parcels using the city's Geographic Information System (GIS) Database.

9.A.1 ***Encourage Interpretive Programs***

Identify funding sources for and establish programs to identify and promote the city's cultural resources. Plaques or similar identifying structures installed on buildings or structures pursuant to interpretive programs within the historic district will be subject to design review.

## **Resources Management**

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**Goal:**

- 9.B Maintain the City of Sonora's cultural heritage, through the enlightened management, preservation, use, enhancement, restoration and study of its cultural resources.

**Policies:**

- 9.B.1 Assist in retaining the special character of historic buildings, structures and districts and promote compatible development within historic districts by providing flexible development standards to encourage preservation of historic buildings, structures and districts.
- 9.B.2 Emphasize the provision of incentives to encourage the retention, reuse and restoration of historic structures.
- 9.B.3 Seek the expertise of qualified professionals in evaluating potential impacts of proposed projects on cultural resources.
- 9.B.4 Manage the city's cultural resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines.
- 9.B.5 Establish the tools necessary for the city to pursue, to the maximum extent feasible, funding sources and incentive programs essential to the preservation of the city's cultural resources.
- 9.B.6 Recognize and use cultural resources management as a tool for achieving other goals and implementing other programs of *Sonora General Plan 2020*.
- 9.B.7 Recognize the importance of cultural resources management to the economic development of the city's downtown.
- 9.B.8 Recognize the importance of cultural resources management to the character and livability of the city's neighborhoods.

## Implementation Programs:

### 9.B.a ***Prepare a Cultural Resources Management Ordinance (CRM)***

Prepare a Cultural Resources Management Ordinance (CRM) using the guidelines provided by the State Offices of Historic Preservation (OHP) for format and content of a Cultural Resources Management Ordinance (*General Plan 2020 Appendix 9F*). It is anticipated that the CRM will address, but not be limited to, the following:

- i. Voluntary preservation incentives (See **Program 9.B.b**)
- ii. Demolition and relocation criteria for buildings, structures and archaeological resources 50 years of age or older (See **Program 9.B.f**)
- iii. Guidelines for rehabilitation or restoration of historic structures (See **Program 9.B.g**)
- iv. Review procedures for projects involving cultural resources (See **Program 9.B.h, 9.B.o.**)
- v. Establishment of an Historic Resources Committee (See **Program 9.B.h**)

### 9.B.b ***Provide Historic Preservation Incentives***

Adopt an incentive program for those properties including, but not limited to:

- i. Properties designated :H
- ii. Properties listed on the Sonora Register
- iii. Properties listed on the California Register
- iv. Properties listed on the National Register
- v. Projects consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Financial incentives which may be considered for historic preservation, depending upon the availability of funding, are included in *General Plan 2020 Appendix 9G*.

Equivalent Program: Chapter 10 (Cultural Resources) - Implementation Program 10.A.p

9.B.c ***Maintain a Façade Easement Program***

Maintain a façade easement program allowing the city, or appropriate nonprofit to purchase, or to accept through donation, easements on building facades.

Related Program: Chapter 10 (Economics) - Implementation Program 10.A.n

9.B.d ***Allow Modified Development Standards***

Allow modified development standards with a determination that waiver or reduction of the development standard furthers the intent and purpose of this element. The program will consider allowing eligibility for expanded uses in residential zones.

Modified development standards shall not alter conformance requirements of appropriate building, construction or fire codes (e.g., State Historic Building Code, Uniform Building Code, Uniform Fire Code, Uniform Code for Building Conservation). City building officials and fire officials are encouraged to liberally construe pertinent portions of the codes in furtherance of this element to the extent that interpretations do not endanger health and safety.

Related Program: Chapter 3 (Housing) - Implementation Program 3.C.a

9.B.e ***Establish Criteria for CEQA Exemptions for Projects Involving Cultural Resources***

Adopt the following standard for exempting projects involving cultural resources:

Projects undertaken within any cultural /historical resource, site or district shall be considered categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) so long as such work is in compliance with the provisions of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation

9.B.f ***Adopt Demolition and Relocation Procedures for Buildings and Structures 50 Years of Age and Older***

Adopt demolition and relocation procedures for structures 50 years of age or older. Procedures may address, but not be limited to:

- i. The necessity for a building permit or site development plan for a replacement structure or other project be issued prior to demolition and relocation
- ii. Health and safety
- iii. Economic hardship criteria
- iv. Demolition stays for significant historic resources (the definition of “significant” to be defined in the enabling ordinance)
- v. Acquisition of a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to demolition or relocation
- vi. Review procedure for considering Certificates of Appropriateness (see **Program 9.B.h**)

9.B.g ***Design Review and Design Assistance Program for Historic Structures***

Establish a procedure for reviewing restorations, alterations or additions to historic structures. Design review procedures for historic structures will consider the following:

- i. Preparation of illustrated Sonora Historic Design Guidelines
- ii. Review process for alterations, rehabilitations or additions to significant historic resources (See **Program 9.B.h**)
- iii. Criteria for staff approval of certain alterations
- iv. Design Assistance Program. Provide advisory design assistance for historic properties 50 years of age or older which are otherwise not listed or designated as eligible for listing on or for the National Register of Historic Places, California Register, Sonora City Register, or which are not otherwise zoned :H, or :HD
- v. Adopting the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation Projects as a guide for evaluating development proposals including, but not limited to, restoration, alteration of, and additions to existing historic structures (*General Plan 2020 Appendix 9G*)
- vi. Adopt design criteria for landscaping, lighting and the design of new buildings and structures located within an historic district or located outside of an historic district, adjacent to a cultural resource.



9.B.h **Consider Establishment of an Historic Resources Committee**

Consider establishment of an Historic Resources Committee (HRC). It is anticipated that the HRC will:

- i. Include members meeting the criteria for designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG) if the city decides to proceed with seeking CLG designation (See **Program 9.B.i**)
- ii. Review and provide input to the city for Certificates of Appropriateness for demolitions and relocations
- iii. Review and provide input to the city for development proposals involving significant historic resources
- iv. Coordinate preparation of grant applications for funding available through the CLG Program to further the cultural resources objectives of this element, if the city pursues CLG Designation
- v. Oversee the preparation of cultural resources inventories and evaluations of the city's cultural resources and maintain that system for the survey and inventory of historic properties
- vi. Enforce appropriate state and local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties
- vii. Provide for adequate public participation in the local historic preservation program, including the process of reviewing and recommending properties for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, California Register and Sonora City Register
- viii. Other duties as assigned by the city

9.B.i **Pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) Designation**

Investigate the pros and cons of seeking city designation as a Certified Local Government (CLG) consistent with the standards established by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (*General Plan 2020 Appendix 9I*). Provide a report to the Sonora Planning Commission and Sonora City Council with the findings of the investigation and recommendations. If the city proceeds with seeking CLG designation, then membership of the HRC (**Program 9.B.h**) will reflect the membership requirements of a CLG.

9.B.j ***Adopt the Mills Act***

Adopt the Mills Act for implementation in the City of Sonora in compliance with California Government Code, Article 12, Sections 50280-50290 for the reduction of property taxes through historic preservation (*General Plan 2020 Appendix 9G*).

Related Program: Chapter 3 (Housing) - Implementation Program 3.C.h

9.B.k ***Encourage Pursuit of Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives (aka 1986 Tax Reform Act)***

Prepare a list of properties in the City of Sonora, as inventories are completed, which could benefit from the 1986 Tax Reform Act and notify and assist property owners with information for taking advantage of this Act which provides federal income tax credit for income producing properties on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (*General Plan 2020 Appendix 9G*).

9.B.l ***Review of Projects Involving Federal Assistance (Section 106)***

Maintain a procedure for city review of projects for consistency with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).<sup>41</sup> Designate the Historic Resources Committee (**Program 9.B.h**) as the appropriate advisory agency for these reviews if the city pursues Certified Local Government Designation (**Program 9.B.i**).

9.B.m ***Notify Property Owners of Available Incentives***

Upon completion of cultural resources inventories, provide participating landowners with a copy of property evaluation and listing of incentive programs available for the property if listed on the Sonora Register, California Register of Historical Resources or the National Register of Historic Places.

9.B.n ***Procedures for Addressing Unanticipated Cultural Resources***

Include, for projects with conditions of approval related to the management of cultural resources, a requirement for preconstruction meetings with project contractors, the developer, or his representative, Native American representative, the project's qualified cultural resources professional, the Planning Department and other agencies responsible for overseeing the construction phase of a development project (including demolitions) to review procedures as required pursuant to CEQA should cultural resources be discovered during the construction process.

<sup>41</sup> These include projects in which federal assistance is provided either through the provision of federal funding or the issuance of a permit from a federal agency.

9.B.o ***Integrate Cultural Resources Management Goals and Recreation Goals***

Emphasize the historic nature of recreational resources (e.g., ditch and creek trails) as a means to enhance funding opportunities, in particular, funding through the Transportation Enhancement Act (TEA). Potential recreational facilities with cultural resources value will be made a priority for development pursuant to both the Cultural Resources Element and the Recreation Element of *Sonora General Plan 2020*.

Related Programs: Chapter 2 (Circulation) - Implementation Programs 2.E.f and 2.E.g

9.B.p ***Integrate Affordable Housing Goals and Cultural Resources Goals***

Emphasize the historic nature of resources which may be rehabilitated for use as single and multi-family housing for low and very-low income households as a means to enhance funding opportunities, available tax credits and other incentive programs.

9.B.q ***Review Telecommunications Facilities***

Amend the municipal code to require a conditional use permit for telecommunication facilities within the city's designated historic districts to minimize their effects on the city's historic character.

Related Program: Chapter 10 (Economics) - Implementation Program 10.A.i