Miramar Theatre and Bowling Alley

Historic Structures Report

For the City of San Clemente Community Development Department

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Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope of Work

The purpose of this architectural and structural survey of the Miramar Theatre and Bowling Alley is to create a report that the property owner and City of San Clemente can utilize to aid in the identification of options for the successful rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the historic structures.

Specific objectives for the scope of this report include:

- Examination of the historic significance and construction methods for the structures.
- The identification of significant character-defining features and spaces.
- Provide existing condition drawings of the theater and bowling alley.
- Evaluate alterations to the original structures.
- Identify a plan for maintenance.
- Recommendations for proposed work related to the adaptive reuse of the property.
- Conceptual drawings for proposed improvements and adaptive reuses.

Image 1-1: Aerial view of the North Beach area of San Clemente with the Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center highlighted. 2013.

Image 1-2: Site Context – Adjacent Historic Resources:
A. Miramar Theatre
B. Bowling Alley
C. Ichibiri Restaurant
D. Ole Hanson Beach Club
E. CHI Institute – Former Casino San Clemente
F. Private Residence

1.2 Site Description

The Miramar Theatre and Bowling Alley are located in the North Beach area of the City of San Clemente, in Orange County, California (see Image 1-1). The site consists of the block located on the south side of North El Camino, between West Avenida Pico and Boca De La Playa with a street address of 1700-1724 North El Camino for the Miramar Theatre and 150 West Avenida Pico for the Bowling Alley (see Image 1-2). The site includes approximately 0.6 acres of private property.

1.3 Identified Structures

1.3.1 Miramar Theatre

Located at 1700 North El Camino, the Miramar Theatre was designed by architect Clifford Balch in 1937 and opened to the public as the San Clemente Theatre in 1938 (see Image 1-3). The Spanish Colonial Revival styled concrete walled structure consists of approximately 8200 square feet with the majority of that space (5250 sq. ft.) being the stage and audience chamber space.

The exterior of the Miramar Theatre is dominated by the 44-foot tall tower that marks the building entrance. Exterior detailing includes the use of ornamental balconies, rough-hewn timber beams with wrought-iron accents, and arched openings arranged over a façade primarily covered with a lightly textured cement plaster stucco. Exposed roofing elements are clad with a red tapered-barrel clay tile. The low barrel roof over the main theatre is surrounded by a parapet and is generally not visible from street level.

The Miramar Theatre is on the City of San Clemente's Designated Historic Structures List and is considered eligible for an individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places as well as a possible historic district that will be discussed in *Section 3*.

1.3.2 San Clemente Bowling Center

Located at 150 West Avenida Pico, the San Clemente Bowling Center was built and opened to the public in 1946. The 5200 sq. ft. structure was also built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style but with a much more minimal approach to ornament than the neighboring theatre (see Image 1-5 and 1-6).

The building's barrel roof was originally

Image 1-3: Main entrance at Northeast corner of Miramar Theatre. 2013.

Image 1-4: Miramar Theatre tower detail. 2013.

Image 1-5: Main entrance at West facade of Bowling Center. 2013.

covered in a red rolled asphalt roofing material that has since been layered with red asphalt shingles. The main entrance to the bowling alley is highlighted by a stepped parapet clad in clay tile as well as a simple arched entry canopy.

The Bowling Center is on the City of San Clemente's Designated Historic Structures List and is considered eligible for a possible historic district that will be discussed later in *Section 3*.

Image 1-6: South façade of Bowling Center. 2013.

2.0 RESEARCH AND METHODS

2.1 Methodology

The methodology to prepare this report consisted of two major areas of focus. First, the research and review of available documents and resources pertaining to the history of the structures, site, and surrounding area of San Clemente. A comprehensive list of the documents and resources available can be found in the *References* section at the end of the report.

The second area of focus was the onsite investigation undertaken by representatives of both Westlake Reed Leskosky and Lawson-Burke Structural Engineering. Access was obtained to enter both structures and perform a non invasive analysis investigation over multiple site visits. This information is used to update existing condition assessments as well as provide a new assessments for portions of the site that had not been previously examined.

It should be noted that this investigation did not test for any evidence of asbestos, mold, or other hazardous materials. Termites and other pest damage was noted when seen but was not examined in any comprehensive way.

2.2 Survey Documentation

Initial survey documentation consisted primarily of field notes and photo documentation. Measured sketches were completed to allow for the creation of dimensionally accurate floor plans of both structures (see *Appendix A*). These plans are intended to be used as tool to both help examine adaptive reuse potential and document existing conditions.

3.0 Historic Context

3.1 Historic Context Overview

The historic context provided here examines the history of the Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center with a focus on the immediate vicinity and events that had the most direct impact on the physical aspects of the site. A much more holistic examination of the historic context for the entire San Clemente area has been completed by the Historic Resources Group and included under *Appendix C* for reference.

Image 3-1: View of Miramar Theatre, 1938. Source: San Clemente Historical Society.

San Clemente was founded in 1925 by real estate developer Ole Hanson. Hanson envisioned San Clemente as a "Spanish Village by the Sea." Hanson's concept was a new approach to development that would even require all building plans to be submitted to an architectural review board in an effort to ensure that future development would retain the Spanish-style influence that Hanson desired. The City was officially incorporated in 1928.

Image 3-2: View of Miramar Theatre, circ 1940s. Source: San Clemente Historical Society.

Before the completion of the San Diego Freeway in 1960, El Camino Real was San Clemente's main thoroughfare, with visitors arriving from the North along the Pacific Coast Highway. Visitors would be greeted by views of the Miramar Theatre, the San Clemente Beach Club, the Casino San Clemente, the Ichibiri Restaurant Building, and the San Clemente Bowling Center acting as a visual gateway to San Clemente (see Image 1-2). This cluster of historic buildings have been studied as the core of a possible historic district (see *3.2 Historic Significance* below) that would serve to protect the historic resources while providing a more coherent approach to the defining the area's role as a gateway to San Clemente.

3.2 Historic Significance

Opened to the public in 1938 as the San Clemente Theatre, the theatre's history would become deeply intertwined with the City of San Clemente itself. With a planned seating capacity of approximately 750 (per the original 1937 solicitation for construction) the Theatre was built as a "modern Mediterranean style structure" that included an evaporative cooling system for the patron's comfort. Perhaps best known for his Art Deco theatres, prolific theatre architect Clifford Balch adapted easily to San Clemente's Spanish Colonial Revival design

standards.

Adjacent to the theatre, the San Clemente Bowling Center open to the public in 1946. The history of the two structures and the site itself present a surprisingly complex history of the retail and entertainment trends in San Clemente (see *3.3 Timeline*).

The Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center are both considered significant under California Register Criteria 1 for their association with the development of San Clemente in the 1930s and 1940s. Specifically, Criteria 1 includes structures that are "Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States." (State Historical Resources Commission – Criteria 1). Additionally, the Miramar Theatre is also considered architecturally significant under Criteria 3 for its connection with architect Clifford A. Balch, builders Strang Brothers, and its use of the Spanish Colonial Revival style required in San Clemente. Specifically, Criteria 3 includes a structure that "Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values." (State Historical Resources Commission – Criteria 3).

For purposes of this report the period of significance for the Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center has been defined by the parameters set forward as part of the 2006 Cultural Resources Technical Report's examination of the structures as part of a proposed historic district. Specifically, under the Spanish Colonial Revival Historic Thematic District with a period of significance set between 1925 and 1949.

> This Survey Update identified a potential local historic district comprising 207 properties. For the purpose of this district, historic significance was based on architectural, historic, or cultural association with the Ole Hanson / Spanish Village by the Sea or San Clemente in the 30s and 40s periods of significance, from 1925 through 1949. Contributors to this potential historic district include those properties built during one of the above periods of significance, that retain good to fair material integrity, and that are designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. (Historic Resources Group 2006:49)

3.3 Timeline:

The following timeline highlights some of the major events in the site's history that may have implications for the desired adaptive reuse of the historic structures.

1928 - San Clemente Incorporated.

1938 - San Clemente Theatre opens to the public.

1946 - Bowling Center opens to the public.

Pre-1947 – Theatre Fountain Lunch Café opens in adjacent building sharing the Theatre's North wall.

1947 – Texaco gas station opens on parcel of land to the North of the Bowling Center.

1959 - Theatre Fountain Lunch Café changes ownership and name.

1961 – Demolition of the Theatre Fountain Lunch Café to allow for construction of an Orange Julius restaurant on a smaller footprint.

1963 – An import gift shop moves into the former Texaco gas station building.

1969-1970 – A newly redecorated “Miramar Theatre” opens to the public under new ownership, Herb Copland.

1971 – An addition is built at the former Texaco and gift shop location to house a produce market.

The Bowling Center is closed and opened as the El Torro Frame company.

1972-1992 – The former Bowling Alley spends time as a Home Furniture Store, an Elks Lodge, the Dana Point Sail Makers, a mental healthcare facility, the ESA South County Center, Big City Scuba, the Episcopal SVC Alliance, and eventual vacancy.

1980 – Herb Copland retires, ownership of the Theatre passes to Mike and Ann Madigan. The Miramar Theatre hosts it first live music performances.

1988 – 1989 - Miramar Theatre changes ownership and opens briefly before closing.

1990 – Miramar Theatre reopens with plans to focus more on live entertainment.

1992 – Plans to renovate the theatre and bowling alley fail to materialize as the theatre is closed again.

1998 – Richard Lee purchase the Theatre and Bowling Alley, redevelopment plans fail to materialize.

2004 – Castillo del Mar Development purchase the property. Various redevelopment plans are ongoing.

2005 – The Theatre suffers fire damage in the lobby doing an estimated $50,000 in damage.

4. STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT

4.1. Bowling Alley

4.1.1 Structural Description

The permit for the original construction of the bowling alley was issued in January 7, 1946. Construction was completed and the bowling alley was opened in 1947. The original building was about 130 feet long by 40 feet wide by approximately 14 feet high. The exterior walls were wood frame with 1x diagonal sheathing on the end walls and straight sheathing on the side walls. The roof of the building is constructed of arched trusses supporting 2x rafters at 24 inches on center and sheathed with straight 1x6. There are two bays of diagonal rod bracing in each bay between the trusses. These extend from the front wall to the rear wall at the lower level of the trusses. There is a square tower and narrow sloped roof above the entry at the northerly end of the building.

There was a wood floor system in the bowling alley end of the building. It extends from the offices (Third roof bay from the entry) to the rear wall of the building, beyond the concrete slab on grade at the offices. To the best of our knowledge, the foundations are all continuous reinforced concrete with concrete stem walls where they are at the wood floors. The entry and office floors are unreinforced concrete slab on grade. At some time in the past, suspended ceilings were added at the front office area.

4.1.2 Structural Assessment

In general, the overall building appears to be in a condition to be expected considering its age, location, type of construction, and an evident lack of any preventive maintenance since the 1980s. The lack of an appropriate weatherproofing system as well as appropriate drainage has caused the structural materials to exhibit the damage attributable to this deficiency.

The moisture penetration has resulted in mold and dry rot of the wood floor system to the extent that is unsafe for even minor vertical support. This moisture is also pervasive in the exterior walls and roof system. At the exterior walls, the moisture penetration may have created a problem. It was not possible to fully observe the condition, but my educated guess is that some of the studs at the sill have experienced dryrot conditions. Where the framing and sheathing can be observed, there is a “wet” condition, but it does not seem to have resulted in terminal mold.

The wet condition also applies to the roof framing. It is definitely unprotected, but does not seem to have resulted in a terminal condition. It is probable that at least a number of the rafters and some areas of the sheathing have been affected, but the overall condition appears sound. Lastly it should be noted that all of the observable steel members and connection exhibit oxidation (rust). The degree that this occurs does not appear to be to an extent that will result in imminent failure.

4.1.3. Structural Recommendations

- We recommend that the applicable provisions of the California Historical Building Code be used to provide a lateral force analysis of the building

structure. Where questions arise regarding existing materials, the provisions of this code should be applied as necessary to maintain visual integrity of the existing facility.

- OSB or plywood shear panels should be added to the front (entry) and rear walls. Hold-downs will be required at the front wall door jambs.
- If the exterior finish is removed from the sidewalls, it is recommenced that they are sheathed with OSB or plywood prior to installation of new finishes.
- It was discussed that opening up one sidewall with windows was desired. The windows would begin approximately 18 inches above the floor to approximately eight feet high. No truss supporting columns would be removed. At least twenty feet of remaining wall would be sheathed with ½" Struct1plywood as well as the wall above and below the windows. Full length Simpson coil straps would be added above and below the windows.
- Modifications which do require new materials and systems must comply with the applicable provisions of the 2010 California Building Code as currently adopted by the City of San Clemente.
- The damaged framing members at the roof of the bowling alley should be replaced with members of the same exact size as those damaged by dryrot. The damaged straight sheathing should be replaced as well. In addition, we recommend that a plywood diaphragm be installed above that sheathing to distribute horizontal loads and provide a substantial surface for reroofing.
- When the roof diaphragm plywood has been installed and inspected it may be re-roofed.
- Any damaged studs, wall framing and its sheathing should be removed and replaced as necessary. The end walls should be sheathed with plywood to provide the needed lateral support as noted above.
- All horizontal framing adjacent to and attached to the existing concrete walls should be reconstructed to provide appropriate lateral and pull-out capacity. Plywood should be added to the exterior walls of the entry structure to provide additional lateral support.
- All of the wood framing at the ground floor must be removed. Replacement will be based upon the design requirements of the intended future use as well as the applicable provisions of the building code.

4. STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT

4.2. Miramar Theater

4.2.1. Structural Description

A portion of the materials presented below are based upon information obtained as a part of an original review and assessment by Thomas Burke and Marcella Opie of LBSE on June 8, 2010.

The permit for the original construction of the theater was believed to have been issued in 1937. Construction was completed and the theater was opened in 1938. The original building was 100 feet long by 60 feet wide by approximately 20 feet high. The exterior walls were reinforced concrete whose thickness varied from 12 inches to 8 inches. The exterior grading of the southerly concrete wall of the building is approximately 4 feet lower than the theater floor because of the sloping grade. The roof consists of wood bowstring tresses at 20 feet on center supporting 2x10 rafters at 24 inches on center.

Originally the building had a 16 foot wide by 64 foot long by 15 foot high adjacent structure constructed on the north/El Camino Real side of the building. Walls and roof of this adjacent structure were wood frame. To the best of our knowledge, foundations are all continuous reinforced concrete. All floors are unreinforced concrete slab on grade. The floor for the projection room and offices are on the upper level above the concession stands. These floors are wood frame but are of indeterminate configuration and size. The sloped roofs on the east side of the building are framed with 4 x 6 rafters at 16 inches on center. The signature 16 foot square tower at the northeast corner of the building was a part of the original construction in 1937. The interior and upper levels of the tower have exposed wall and roof framing. All roofs are sheathed with 1x6 douglas fir spaced sheathing. The framing for all of these elements appear to be consistent with 1930s wood frame details. At the theater entry, the sloping roof is 2x8 rafters at 16 inches on center with 1x sheathing above. Roofing is constructed on the sheathing.

On September 20, 1961, a 16‘-4”x40’ remodel on the north/El Camino side of the building was issued a building permit. This permit included the demolition of 32 feet of the original café addition structure on that side of the building as well as the remodel of the remaining structure. Horizontal framing for this edition was 2x8 rafters at 16 inches on center. The permitted plans for the Orange Julius addition and the building refurbishment of 1969 are on file at the city of San Clemente Community Development Department.

October 30, 1969 the building permit was issued to refurbish the theater including the women’s restroom at the southeast corner of the building and the men’s restroom at the center of the north wall the building. Finally on December 14, 1969, a building permit was issued for a freestanding pylon with a 162 ft.² sign with an overall height of 25 feet. The base of the sign structure is concrete with brick veneer. The foundation is unknown, but based upon the timing of its construction, it is probable that a drilled concrete caisson was used.

In 2005 a fire of moderate size was discovered in the entry area of the theater on the ground floor. The actual fire damage created was limited to a few members in the direct area of the fire. In fighting the fire, the fire department opened two significant holes in the

theater roof at either end of the building. The firemen's equipment severely notched and severed a number of the existing framing members. These holes and the involved members have been temporarily repaired by city staff.

4.2.2. Structural Assessment

In general, the overall building appears to be in a condition to be expected considering its age, location, type of construction, and an evident lack of any preventive maintenance since the 1980s. The lack of an appropriate weatherproofing system as well as appropriate drainage has caused the structural materials to exhibit the damage attributable to this deficiency.

At the southeast corner of the theater building, the moisture penetration has resulted in mold and dry rot of both the horizontal and vertical framing members. The increase of moisture in this corner of the building has also created a noticeable settlement problem in the foundation at that area of the building. This unchecked moisture penetration has also pervaded the roofs of the northerly addition and the entry canopy. The horizontal framing members in those have had significant visible deterioration due to dry rot and mold. In addition, the exterior vertical supports at the northerly addition have been severely compromised as well.

There are two minor but significant full height vertical cracks in the southerly concrete walls. They are slightly more pronounced at the top of the wall than at grade. This is an indication that there has been differential settlement from the corners of the wall to the cracks. It is nominal (1/2"+) at this time, but should be addressed as a part of any rehabilitation. Finally, the destruction caused by the firemen has damaged framing members of the theater roof so that they are no longer simply repairable.

The overall condition of the theater building should be considered good at this time. The "Orange Julius" northern addition should be considered poor to bad. The sign pylon should be considered unusable because of a lack of definitive construction documents.

4.2.3. Structural Recommendations

- We recommend that the applicable provisions of the California Historical Building Code be used to provide a lateral force analysis of the building structure. Where questions arise regarding existing materials, the provisions of this code should be applied as necessary to maintain visual integrity of the existing facility.
- Should modifications be made which require new materials and systems, they must comply with the California Building Code as currently adopted by the City of San Clemente.
- The foundations at the corners of the southerly concrete wall should be underpinned with concrete piers embedded into acceptable soil materials as determined by a licensed geologist/soils engineer. This also applies to the existing foundation that appears to have experienced settlement at the southeast corner of the theater entry/lobby. Note, the foundation work and underpinning work that facilitates it will happen below grade and have no visual impact on the façade.
- The damaged framing members at the roof of the theater should be replaced with members of the same exact size as those damaged by the firemen. Kiln dried

materials are recommended to prevent the effects of shrinkage in those members.

- The damaged straight sheathing should be replaced as to complete the visual appearance of the roof framing.
- An appropriate OSB or plywood diaphragm should be installed above the existing sheathing to distribute horizontal seismic/wind loads and also provide a substantial surface for reroofing.
- All theater framing that has been damaged by rot or mold should be replaced with equivalent sizes and connections. This also applies to sheathing on the floors and the stage system. Kiln dried material is recommended for replacement framing members.
- All horizontal framing adjacent to and attached to the existing concrete walls should be reconnected to provide appropriate lateral and pull-out capacity.
- Plywood should be added to the exterior framed walls of the entry structure to provide additional lateral support.
- It is our recommendation that the “Orange Julius” northern addition should be removed to the slab/foundation system. If that part of the building is to be deleted completely, then removal of the slab and foundations is recommended. Should it be replaced, new vertical and horizontal modern materials should be used. Plywood diaphragms on all walls and the roof of this addition are required by the building code. Note, the “Orange Julius” northern addition has no structural bearing on the theatre building and its removal will have no impact.
- The base for the pylon sign (erected in 1969) and the top of its foundation should be removed so that there will be no temptation to reuse this undocumented construction element.

Image 5-1: Panoramic view of Theatre and Bowling Alley façade along North El Camino Real. 2013.

5.0 Architectural Assessment

The Architectural assessment has been arranged by significant character-defining features and spaces starting on the exterior and moving towards the interior. The organization of the exterior features are grouped by facades, with the primary facades (North and East) being the facades presenting the most public face of the building and showing the most elaborate level of architectural detailing. The secondary facade (South) shows a considerable reduction in the amount of architectural detailing, materials, and craftsmanship presented to the public. In addition to the reduction of quality in detailing, the tertiary facades (least public) are also partially obscured by physical orientation of their neighboring structure

Individual recommendations are grouped with the specific element in question while the overall approach to the building assessments are provided in *Section 5.5 Recommendations*.

Per discussions in *Section 3.0 Historic Context*, the period of significance for both structures falls within the period of 1925 through 1949.

Image 5-2: Partial North and East façade along North El Camino Real. 2013.

Image 5-3: Damage at decorative balcony. 2013.

5.1 Miramar Theatre - Exterior

5.1.1 Primary Facades: North and East Façades

With a primary focus on the entry at the Northeast corner of the structure, the North and East façades provide the prime examples of the features that define the Spanish Colonial Revival style. While the features will be listed individually below, it is important to understand that it is the relationship of these features taken together as a whole that provides the architectural integrity and significance on these façades. As such, these two façade are also the most critical to protect as any restoration or adaptive reuse efforts move forward.

Tower: At approximately 44 feet tall, the tower is the most iconic element of the theatre façade. The simple clay tiled hip roof is topped with the extremely deteriorated base of what was most likely a decorative spire or flagpole that would need to be reconstructed.

The decorative tower window openings are only partially secured from bird and moisture penetration. The sheet metal rain shields and bird screens built on the interior of the tower are in very poor condition and would need replacement.

Early theatre photos indicate that the tower's North wall was covered with a large mural as part of the theatre's signage (Image 3-1), that mural has since been painted over. An additional painted decorative band is also visible just under the roofline on the North façade in the same photo before being subsequently painted over in the early 1940s. A paint conservator should examine this location to verify if the mural and decorative painting is viable for possible restoration beneath the existing layers of paint.

Roofing and stucco issues will be handled as separate issues below.

Image 5-4: Damage at decorative wood corbel. 2013.

Image 5-5: Decorative brick column with plaster molding at entry portico. 2013.

Image 5-6: Various brick elements at entry portico. 2013.

Wood Elements: A variety of wood grilles, corbels, and braces are utilized as design elements. Deterioration has been caused by a mix of dry rot, termites, and vandalism. Condition of individual features ranges from serviceable to extremely deteriorated or lost or missing entirely. Sufficient original material remains to provide adequate templates for the reconstruction and replacement of missing materials. While the majority of wood elements are currently painted white, examination by a qualified paint conservator should be able to easily determine the original finish for restoration purposes.

Brick Elements: The original brick work and brick columns (see Image 3-1) at the entry are decorative with wood columns on the interior providing the actual support for the entry portico. Since construction, failures in the footings and interior columns have led to deterioration in the structural supports (see *Section 4.0 Structural Assessment*). Baring additional unforeseen structural issues, the damage should be repairable without any major deconstruction of the brick columns. The brick columns and brick wall elements themselves require only re pointing and replacement of broken or missing bricks.

Plaster Elements: Existing plaster moldings at column capitals and entry locations are generally serviceable with only minor repairs needed at cracked and chipped locations.

Portico Chandelier: The chandelier will need to be fully cleaned and refurbished with new wiring and lamps. The current suspension system is non original will need to be reconfigured. Due to the chandelier's location and lack of security, it is recommended to take the chandelier down and store it in a secure manner on site until it can be fully restored.

Pavers: The majority of exiting original

Image 5-7: Wrought iron and ceramic chandelier. 2013.

Image 5-8: South façade along Calle Deshecha.. 2013.

pavers beneath the entry portico are in good condition and would only require cleaning and minor repair to make them fully serviceable. Pavers outside the portico area appear to be of a variety of more recent vintages and do not fall within the period of significance.

Chimneys: Existing non functional chimneys should be restored and be put back into service as necessary.

Orange Julius Addition: The Orange Julius addition replaced the larger Theatre Fountain Lunch Café (1947) with a smaller structure in 1961. The addition is a non conforming structure that falls outside the theatre's period of significance (1925 through 1949). The addition was never accessible from the interior of the theatre.

The extremely poor construction materials used for the Orange Julius building and the overall condition are discussed in Section 4.0 Structural Assessment. The overall approach to addition will be discussed in *Section 5.5 Recommendations*.

Wall Buttresses: A major visual feature on all facades of the theatre are the expressed concrete buttresses that support the theatre walls. These buttresses have been capped with barrel tile at North, East, and West facades while left less ornate at the South façade. The conditions of the concrete and footings is discussed in Section 4.0 Structural Assessment.

Image 5-9: West theatre façade showing theatre egress path. 2013.

5.1.2. Secondary Façade: South Façade

Facing the historic Casino San Clemente, the major visual feature on the South façade are concrete buttresses similar to those on the other facades but without the barrel tile cap used at the other facades. The façade itself presents a very clean visual image with minimal embellishment that fits well with the Spanish Colonial Revival Style. Beyond structural concerns, minimal restoration work

would be needed beyond basic exterior plaster repair work.

5.1.3 Tertiary Façade: West Façade

The West Façade is similar to the South façade in detailing but is partially obscured by its close proximity to the Bowling Center. The grading, retaining walls, stairs, and path of egress from the theatre is of special concerned in this area and will require a comprehensive approach to the overall site work to assure modern egress and drainage requirements are met.

5.1.4 Roofing

Main Barrel Roof: The existing layers of built up roofing membrane are in very poor condition and need removal and replacement. This should be done in conjunction with the necessary upgrades needed for roof decking and insulation. Existing roof drains are undersized and should be replaced and supplemented with additional roof drains. The new roof color should match the original red roofing materials and clay tile to the fullest extent possible.

Clay Tile Roof: Many sections of the original tile roof have experienced patching alteration over the years utilizing a variety of replacement roof tiles. The tile underlayment, metal counter flashing and mortar work are all in poor condition. Tiles should be removed and salvaged for reinstallation of all serviceable tiles. New tile underlayment, flashing, and counter flashing should be installed. Matching clay tiles to infill where original tiles are not available for reinstallation.

Orange Julius Flat Roof: The addition's roof and supporting deck is completely unserviceable and would need total reconstruction.

5.1.5 Exterior Plaster

The theatre plaster system shows signs of

Image 5-10: Damage from a 2005 fire in the Lobby. 2013.

Image 5-11: Fire damaged door to act as template for reconstructed doors. 2013.

Image 5-12: Interior of audience chamber and stage. 2012.

deterioration, cracking, and water infiltration on all elevations. The underlying causes include foundational settlement, poor maintenance, inadequate drainage, and that the age of the plaster has simply exceeded its expected lifespan. The conditions are numerous enough that it indicates the need for the replacement of the existing plaster system.

5.2 Miramar Theater - Interior

5.2.1 Lobby

The lobby and associated office area show the bulk of the fire and smoke damage from 2005. While the finishes have been heavily damaged the original configuration of the lobby remains largely intact and should remain in its current configuration. With proper conservation techniques, some decorative wood beams and trim elements could be restored or reconstructed. The floor tile also appears to be mostly serviceable if properly cleaned and repaired where needed.

5.2.2 Audience Chamber

The primary interior significant space consists of the Audience Chamber and Stage. The basic configuration of the stage, proscenium, and seating still exists in their original configuration, although with several modifications. Non original seating, sound platforms and a stage extension have been added at various times. The stage surround's original lancet (pointed) arched exit openings, decorative wood elements, and ornamental ceiling beams all remain intact without major damage and are suitable for restoration work. Keeping the integrity of the Audience Chamber's major elements should be a primary focus of any adaptive reuse proposal.

Most of the damage to the audience chamber has been cause by water infiltration of varying degrees. Mold and water marks are visible on many of the interior plaster

Image 5-13: Decorative box beam and concealed grill for original air conditioning system. 2012.

Image 5-14: Tarps used in the theatre attic space in an attempt to reduce water infiltration. 2013.

Image 5-15: 1 of 2 original chandeliers still extant. 2013.

surfaces. In some locations, water damage has dry rotted ceiling members to the point where the plaster lath has delaminated from the ceiling. Above the ceiling, attempts to prevent water damage by laying tarps across joist has proved inadequate. Much of the interior plaster work would need replacement while areas with decorative painting could be conserved in place.

Two original chandeliers remain and are suitable for both restoration and to act as a template to recreate the missing fixtures. Existing wall sconces are not original and only a partial remnant of the original wall sconces remain. With research, the original sconces could be recreated.

5.2.3 Secondary Spaces

Existing restrooms, offices space, attic space, second floor projection and mechanical rooms are considered to be less historically significant than the major interior and exterior features listed above. While all integral to a functioning theatre, their "back of house" nature and/or heavy modification over time has left them as more flexible spaces capable of supporting the changing needs of a modern theatre. However, care should be taken that modifications to secondary spaces will not have an adverse impact on the more historically exterior or significant interior spaces.

5.3 Bowling Center - Exterior

5.3.1 Primary Facade: West Facade

The entry façade of the Bowling Center exhibits a modest approach to the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The façade presents a clean cement plaster entry façade with stair stepping parapets with tile details, a non-ornate entry with a simple arched canopy, and two original windows located at the outer edges of the façade. The simplicity of this façade actually plays a major role in its character and should be respected through the process of restoration or adaptive reuse.

Image 5-14: Southwestern view of Bowling Center from across Avenida Pico. 2013.

Image 5-15: Typical roofing condition of Bowling Center at East Facade. 2012.

Image 5-16: Main Bowling Alley interior space looking West. 2012.

5.3.2. Secondary Façades: North and South Façades

While the architecturally unadorned North façade currently figures prominently in the view afforded of the Bowling Center to pedestrian and vehicular traffic, it is important to bear in mind that the North façade has been historically obscured by a variety of commercial structures *(see Section 3.0 Historic Context)* and was never intended to provide a strong architectural focus. The South façade is similarly unadorned. Both facades display the remnants of numerous modifications to the layout of windows and doors over the building's history. The flexible nature the Bowling Center's non-load bearing wood framed walls makes these modifications easily repairable while providing the same flexibility to possible adaptive reuse efforts.

Image 5-17: Main Bowling Alley space looking East. 2012.

5.3.3 Tertiary Façade: East Façade

While providing the mirror image to the West façade's stair stepping parapet, the view of the East façade is heavily obscured by its proximity to the Theatre.

Image 5-18: Remnant of original bowling lane flooring. 2012.

5.3.4 Roofing

Similar to the Miramar Theatre's main roof, the Bowling Center's primary roof consists of arched roof clad with multiple layers of rolled roofing material and asphalt shingles. However, the barrel roof is not obscured by a parapet, making it a much more pronounced design feature. As with the Theatre, the existing layers of built up roofing membrane and shingle are in very poor condition and need complete removal and replacement. This should be done in conjunction with the necessary upgrades needed for roof decking and insulation.

5.3.5 Exterior Plaster

While the overall plaster condition has the expected areas of water damage and cracking, the overall appearance of the plaster is that the majority is repairable and would not need wholesale removal and

replacement.

5.3.6 Neighboring Structures

Neighboring commercial structures directly to the North of the Bowling Center have all been razed over time. Currently, nothing but remnants of multiple building foundations remain. For a list of the known commercial uses of the neighboring parcel of land see *Section 3.0 Historic Context.*

5.4 Bowling Center – Interior

5.4.1 Bowstring Trusses

The major character defining feature of the Bowling Center interior is the exposed bowstring trusses that support the roof using wood columns located inside the perimeter wall cavity. These trusses are in surprisingly good shape considering the poor condition of the roof (see *Section 4.0 Structural Assessment* for a more complete description of their condition.) With proper restoration and structural upgrades, these trusses should remain as the major architectural focus of the space.

5.4.2 Bowling Lanes

A few remnants of the bowling lanes themselves remain in a variety of conditions. While the likelihood of a bowling alley being reopened in this location is extremely unlikely, the remaining lane's wood deck should be surveyed before any wholesale demolition takes place. The possibility that a portion of the lanes could remain as a remnant or that the material might be salvaged for use on site should be examined once the removal of debris allows for a more complete inspection of existing conditions.

5.2.3 Secondary Spaces

Existing office spaces, storage areas, and restrooms are in extremely poor condition and have experienced multiple alterations over time. These areas are not considered historically significant.

Image 5-19: Bowling Alley office space corridor looking East. 2012.

Image 5-20: Theatre entry being used as a shelter for the homeless. 2012.

5.5 Recommendations

As with many historic structures, the recommendations for maintenance and restoration need to be made within the consideration of a specific mitigating factors. The recommendations below each include a description of the relevant risks, concerns, and timeframes associated with the recommendation.

Security

As a general recommendation, the importance of security should not be understated. What might be considered a minor act of vandalism in a contemporary structure can do irreparable damage in historic structures. Where historic theatres were built to resist fires, the same blaze in the wood framed construction of the Bowling Center would have proved catastrophic.

Regardless of whether a major adaptive reuse or restoration moves forward, a comprehensive look at overall security should be undertaken. Recommendations include:

- Reconstruction of physical barriers to control entry for both people and pests (primarily pigeons).
- Improved site lighting to deter the site from attracting vagrants.
- Documentation and removal of loose materials that could fall or be an easy target for vandalism. This item could include the removal of small items such as roofing tiles or badly damaged wood corbels and as large as the removal and storage onsite of the portico chandelier.
- Increased vigilance by local police or private security organizations.

Mothballing

> *"When all means of finding a productive use for a historic building have been exhausted or when funds are not currently available to put a deteriorating structure into a useable condition, it may be necessary to close up the building temporarily to protect it from the weather as well as to secure it from vandalism. This process, known as mothballing, can be a necessary and effective means of protecting the building while planning the property's future, or raising money for a preservation, rehabilitation or restoration project. If a vacant property has been declared unsafe by building officials, stabilization and mothballing may be the only way to protect it from demolition." (Preservation Brief #31 – National Park Service)*

Should adaptive reuse or restoration not be forth coming in the next two years the process of "mothballing" the structures should be considered. The process is described more fully in the National Park Service's Preservation Brief 31 but can be abbreviated to the following steps:

Documentation

- Document the architectural and historical significance of the building.
- Prepare a condition assessment of the building.

Stabilization

- Structurally stabilize the building, based on a professional condition assessment.
- Exterminate or control pests, including termites and rodents.
- Protect the exterior from moisture penetration.

Mothballing

- Secure the building and its component features to reduce vandalism or break-ins.
- Provide adequate ventilation to the interior.
- Secure or modify utilities and mechanical systems.
- Develop and implement a maintenance and monitoring plan for protection.

Rehabilitation and Adaptive Reuse

An initial distinction should be made between the Miramar Theatre and the Bowling Center, specifically, where the theatre provides an excellent opportunity to retain its historical use as a theatre, it is extremely unlikely that the Bowling Center could ever be returned to use as a modern bowling alley due to its small size. Instead of being seen as a negative, this economic reality can be seen as providing an element of flexibility that could prove beneficial to the overall project. Seen programmatically as a more flexible historic building type such as a warehouse structure, the Bowling Center can provide space for the type of support spaces needed by modern theatre operations, spaces that would be extremely difficult and expensive to provide within the existing footprint of the Theatre without risking its architectural integrity with a major addition.

The Orange Julius addition, while not contributing itself, replaced an earlier addition that lends precedent to the North Theatre façade being the logical location for a modestly scaled addition that could remain within the historic footprint of the Theatre's earliest supporting retail construction. Similarly, the long history of various retail and commercial enterprises located to the North of the Bowling Center points to the importance of the prominent corner's location in relation to the overall San Clemente commercial and retail development for the entire North Beach area.

This approach of encouraging more flexibility with the Bowling Center, Orange Julius Addition, and overall site should allow for a more successful application of the NPS Standards for Rehabilitation to the overall project. Several concepts showing the potential for adaptive reuse of both structures and the surrounding site have both been provided in *Section 7 – Architectural Conclusion*s.

6.0 Architectural Conclusions

6.1 Adaptive Reuse Potential

Bringing buildings back to life through adaptive reuse revitalizes neighborhoods and cities by preserving our heritage and creating economic opportunities. The long list of commercial and retail uses that have utilized both the Miramar Theatre and the Bowling Center over the years can attest to the important role they have played in helping keep San Clemente vibrant (see Image 6-1 above).

Image 6-1: Initial concept rendering illustrating adaptive reuse potential.

The City of San Clement Community Development Department has realized that adaptive reuse is an essential element in the future planning of San Clemente. As such, in addition to examining existing conditions, this historic structures report provides a variety of options to illustrate the adaptive reuse potential of the Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center.

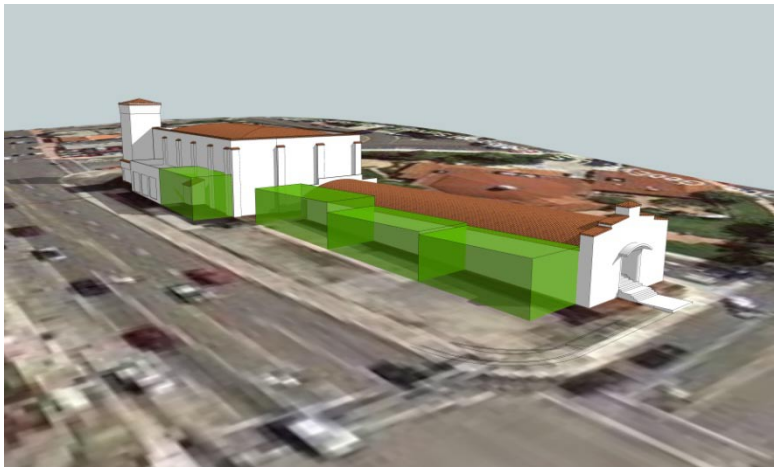


Image 6-2: Site massing study showing zones of retail activity that have existed on the site spanning from 1946 to the present.

6.2 Concept Drawings

The recommendations have been split into three specific options illustrated on the following pages. Larger scale images of renderings and options are available in the *Appendix A.*

6.2.1 Option 1a - Dinner and A Movie

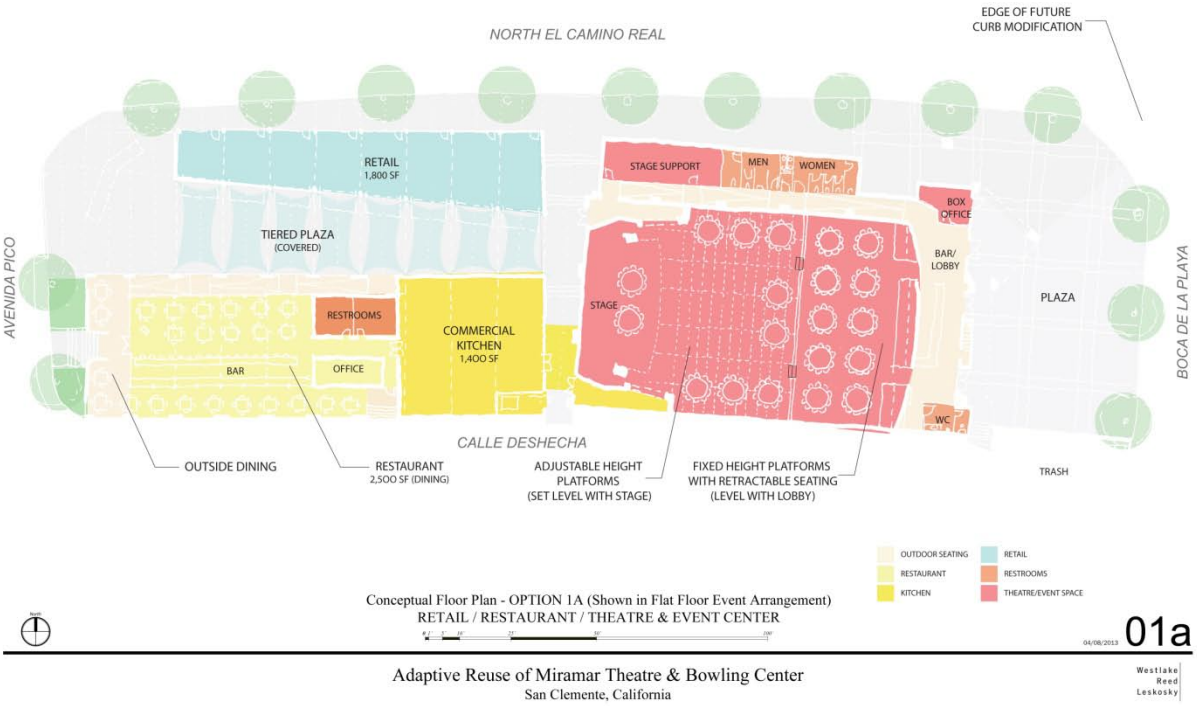


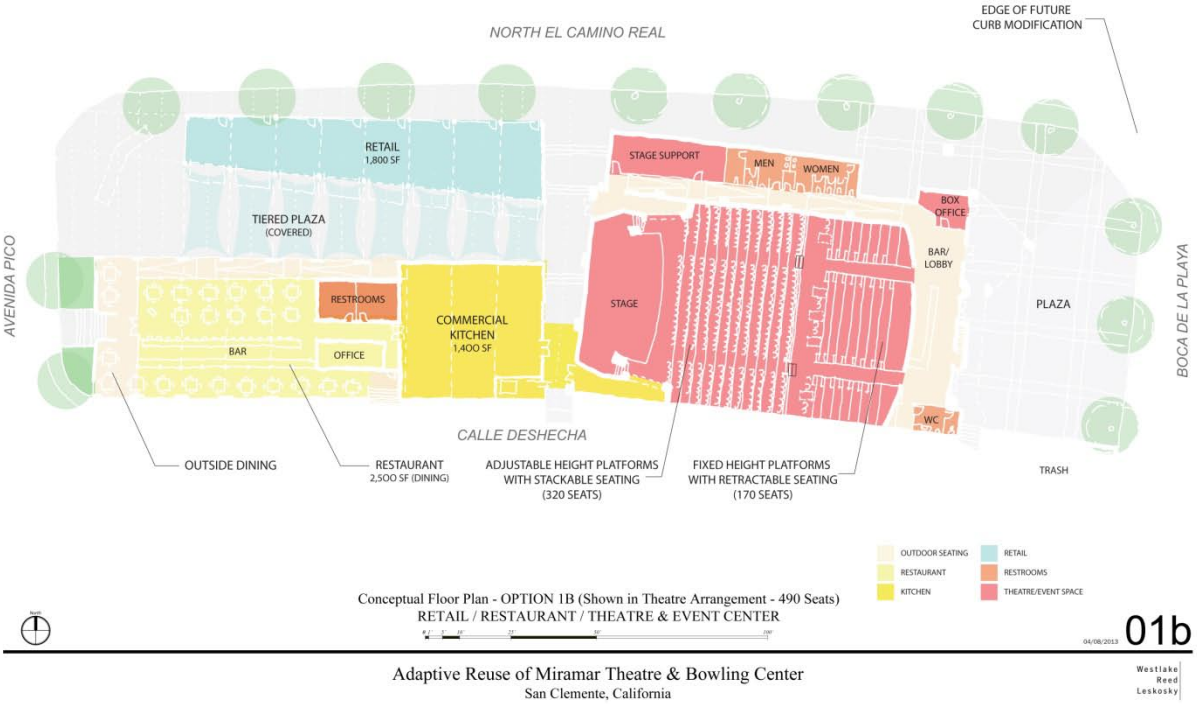
Image 6-3: Concept rendering illustrating the creation of a new retail plaza to the North of the Bowling Center.

Option 1a presents the Miramar Theatre reopened as a modern film/restaurant concept. The historic theatre retains its original use with a new tiered platform floor system allowing for both a variety of dinning and viewing configurations and ADA accessibility.

Steeper retractable seating at the rear of the theatre would also provide flexible seating options while offering improved viewing. New accessible restrooms and support space is provided in an addition that fits within the footprint of the original Theatre Fountain Lunch Café that stood on the site before being replaced by the current Orange Julius building.

The Bowling Center provides space for the theatre operations kitchen as well additional space for retail and restaurant use. The lot to the North of the Bowling Center shows the addition of a new retail building and plaza. The retail use would continue the parcel's long history of retail and commercial use while integrating a plaza that speaks to the corner's prominent location and desire to engage the neighborhood with a public space.

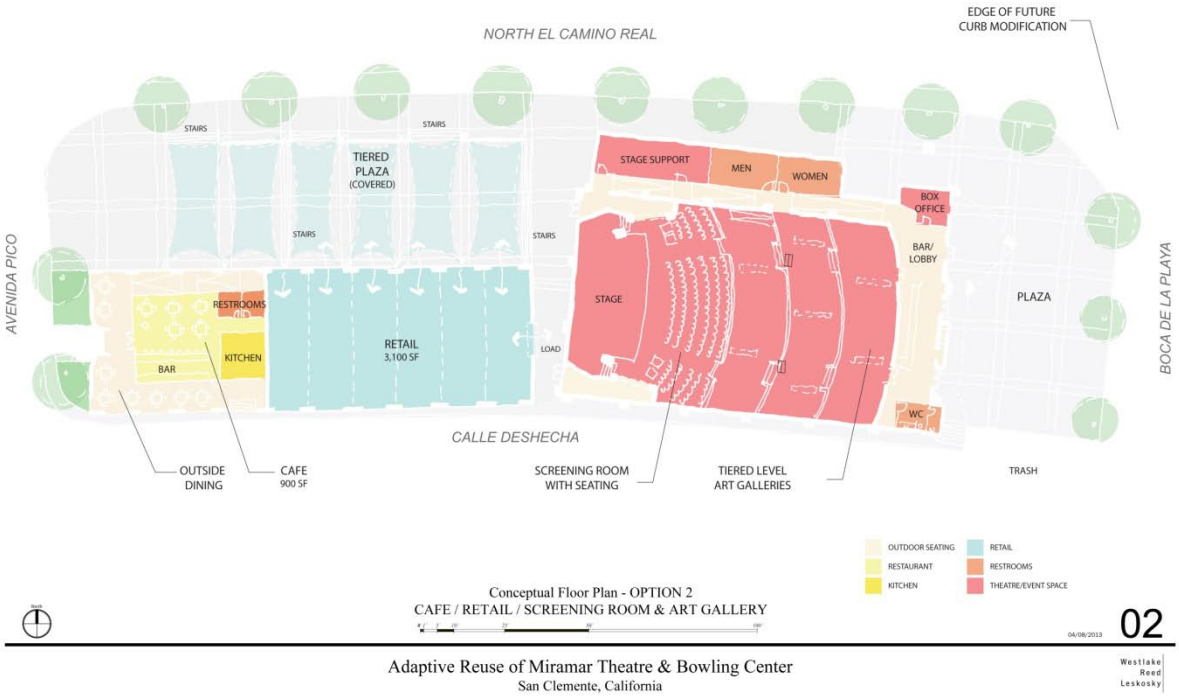
6.2.2 Option 1b – Screening Room and Café



Option 1b illustrates the theatre tiered in a similar method but with a focus towards increasing the number of patrons. Here the tiers are arranged to allow for larger audiences (490 seats) at screenings and events. Support spaces, ADA accessibility and restrooms are similar to Option 1a. Flexible seating configurations would allow for a variety of dining options.

The Bowling Center is shown with the same retail approach used in *Option 1a*.

6.2.3 Option 2 – Art House and Public Plaza



Option 2 illustrates the theatre tiered in a similar method as other options but with a less traditional focus. Here the tiers are divided with partial height flexible dividers that allow the tiers to be utilized as flexible gallery spaces. The front of the theatre will be focused as a smaller scale art house screening room that could be expanded for larger showings. Support spaces, ADA accessibility and restrooms are similar to the other options but without the need for large kitchen support.

The Bowling Center has been subdivided into smaller retail spaces and a café that take advantage of a new public plaza at the Northwest corner of the site.

6.3 Conclusions

In many ways historic theatres are woven into the memories and aspirations of the communities that surround them. Theatres such as the Miramar speak to the spirit of a place, helping tell the unique story of San Clemente and its inhabitants. Generations of patrons hold these cherished memories close to their hearts and are willing to make great efforts to assure that the physical touchstone to these memories, the theatre itself, is not lost.

In is not surprising that cities often look to theatres to become the cornerstone of an active urban destination that brings a sense of vibrancy to neighborhoods because they have served just that purpose in cities across the nation. While the technical requirements to support a modern theatre have only increased over time, the Miramar Theatre is fortunate enough to be paired with a second historic resource, the San Clement Bowling Center. The Bowling Center's

ability to alleviate many of the technical challenges and support requirements that historic theatres often face is a tremendous advantage.

Revitalizing the Theatre and Bowling Center will have a profound impact on the City of San Clemente. Providing a unique destination that improves the City's quality of life can spur the revitalization of an entire area. The planning options presented above provide a variety of configurations for public, theatrical, and retails spaces that can accomplish these goals. With determination, the Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center will be an important part of the community for generations to come.

Image 6-4: A view towards the Ocean as San Clemente works to assure a vibrant future by protecting its past. Source: City of San Clemente.

APPENDIX A: Existing Reference Drawings

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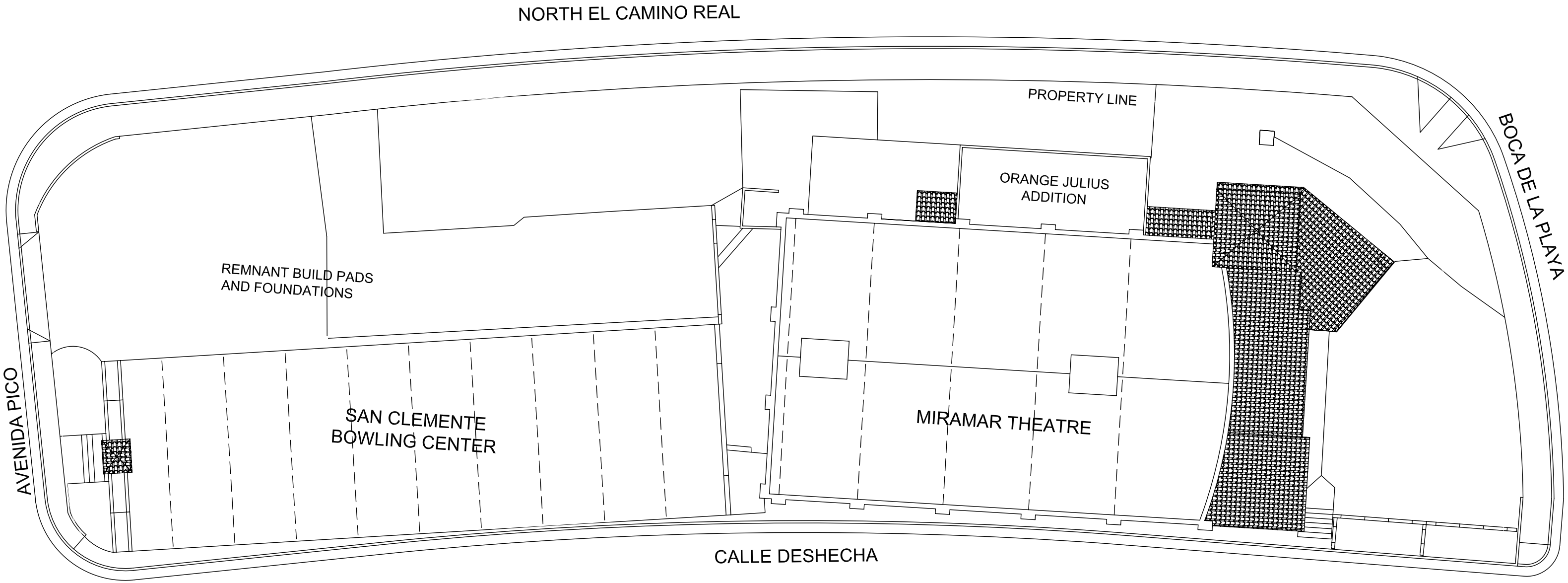

Miramar Theatre and Bowling Center - Existing Site Plan

0 10 20 40 80

The City of San Clemente
March 22nd, 2013 - DRAFT

Scale: 1" = 20'-0"
Westlake Reed Leskosky

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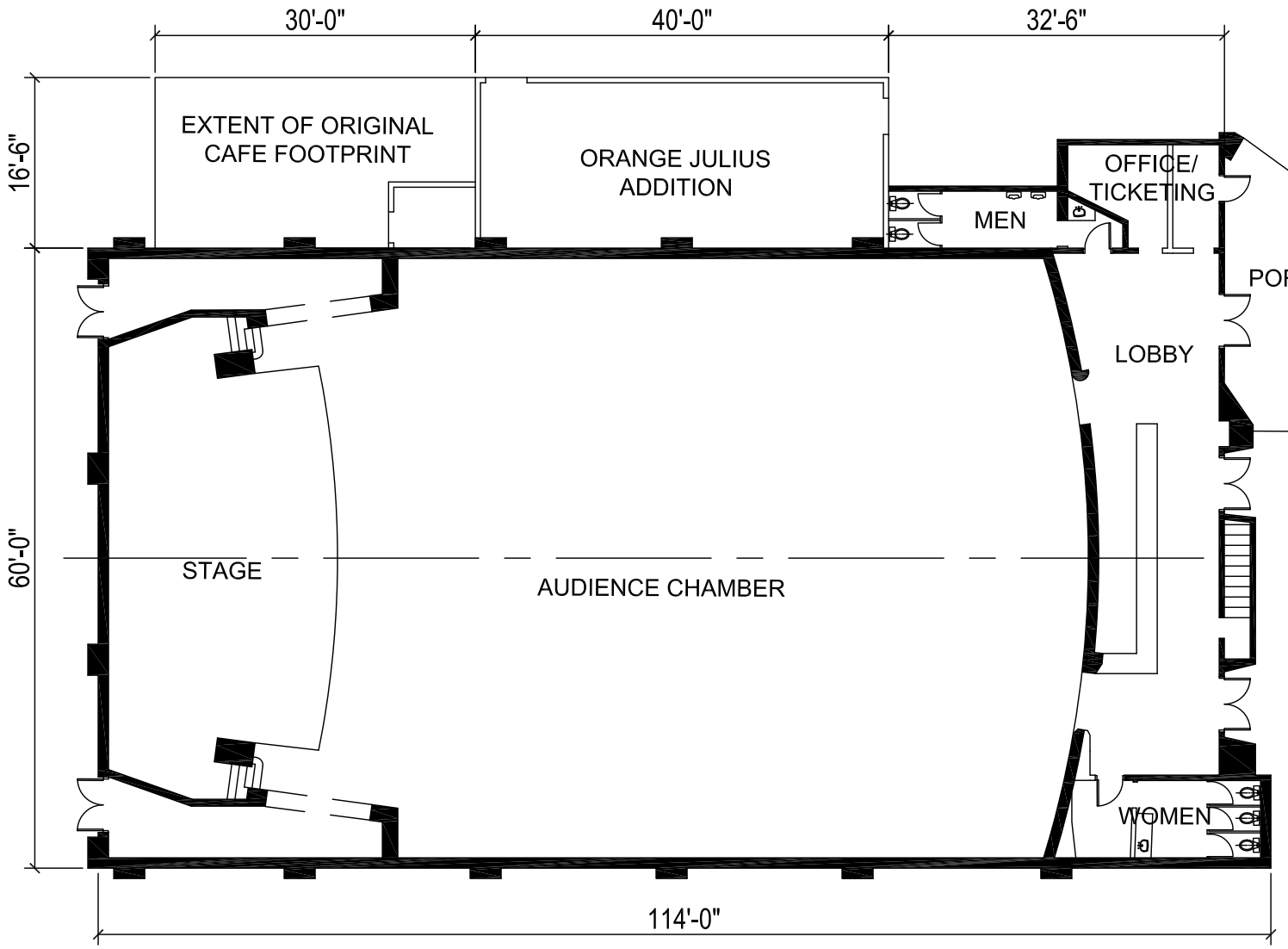
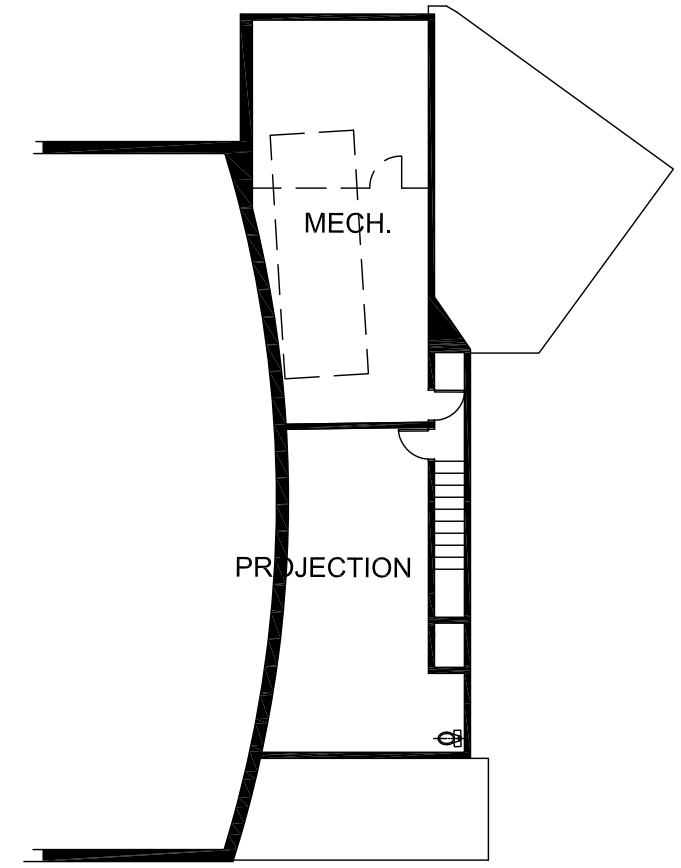


FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

Miramar Theatre Existing 1st and 2nd Floor Plan

0 8 16 32 64

The City of San Clemente
March 22nd, 2013 - DRAFT

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"
Westlake Reed Leskosky

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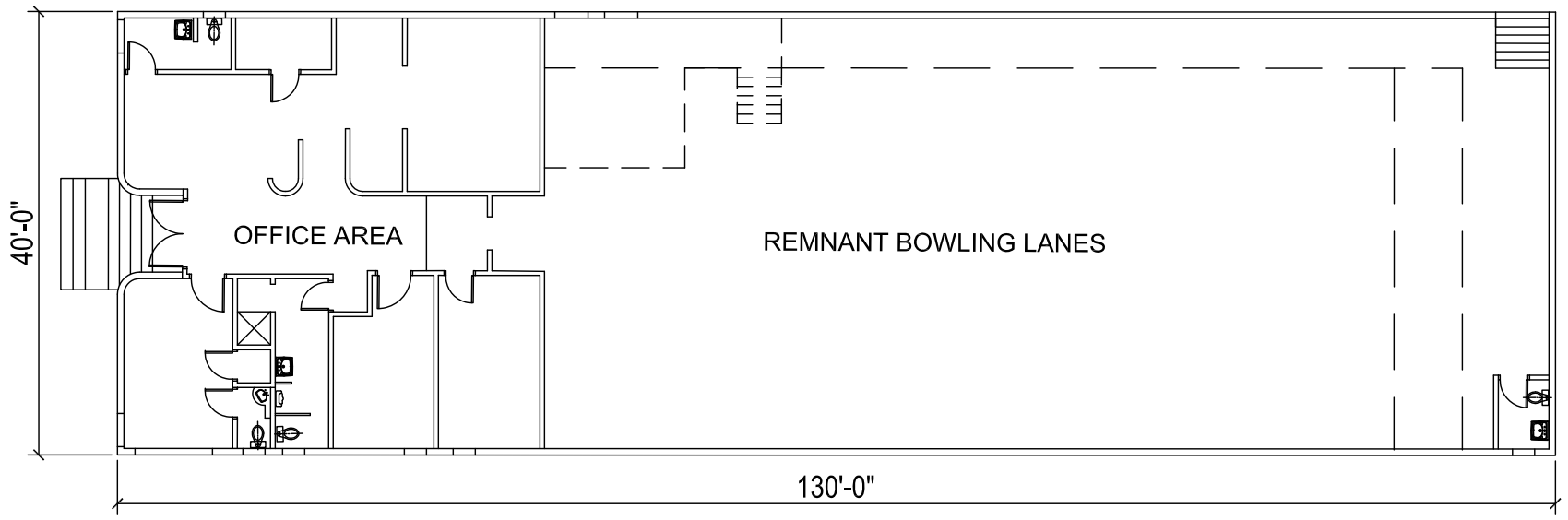

FIRST FLOOR

Bowling Center Existing Floor Plan

0 8 16 32 64

The City of San Clemente
March 22nd, 2013 - DRAFT

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"
Westlake Reed Leskosky

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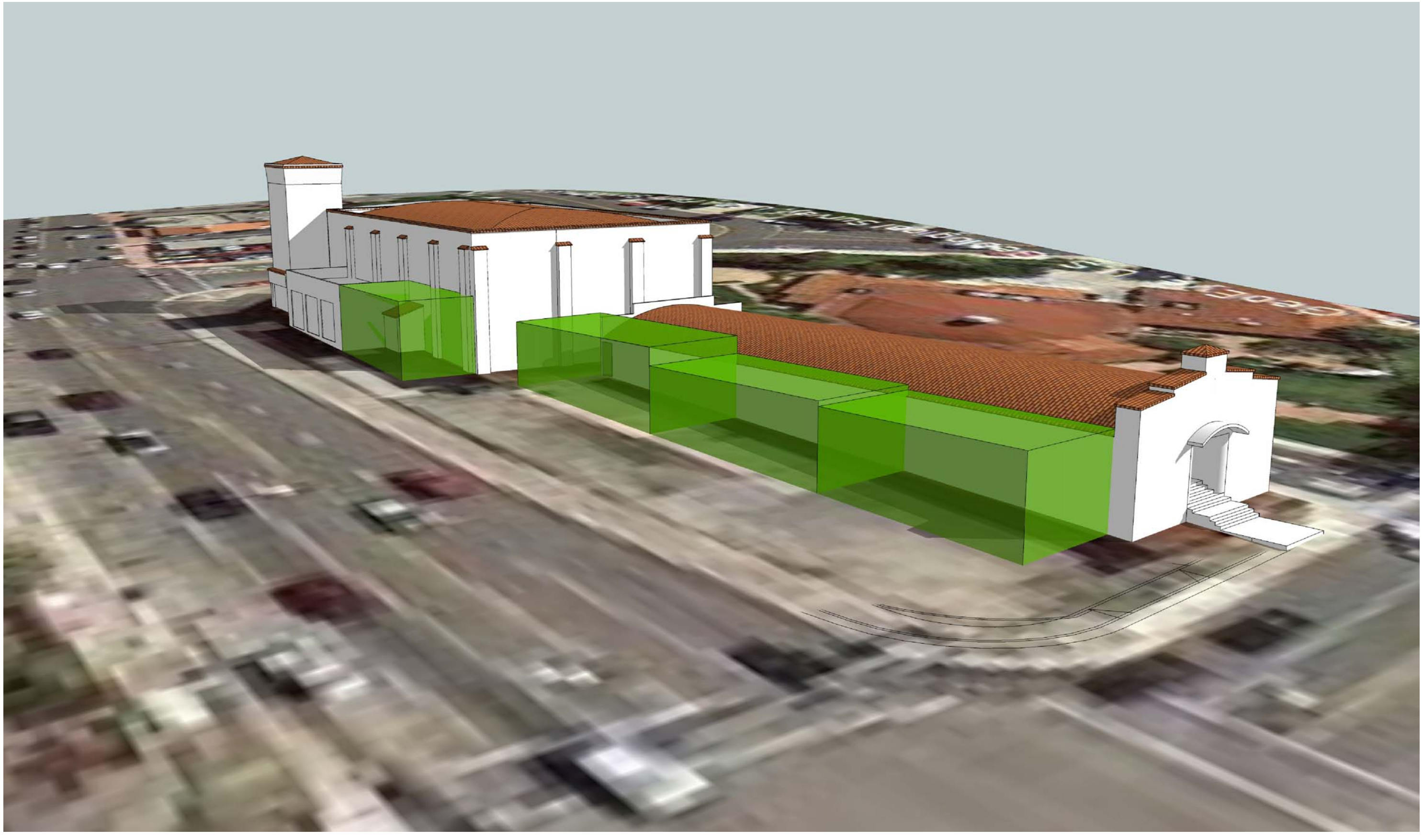

Site Massing Study Showing Historic Retail Zones

The City of San Clemente
March 22nd, 2013 - DRAFT

Scale: NTS
Westlake Reed Leskosky

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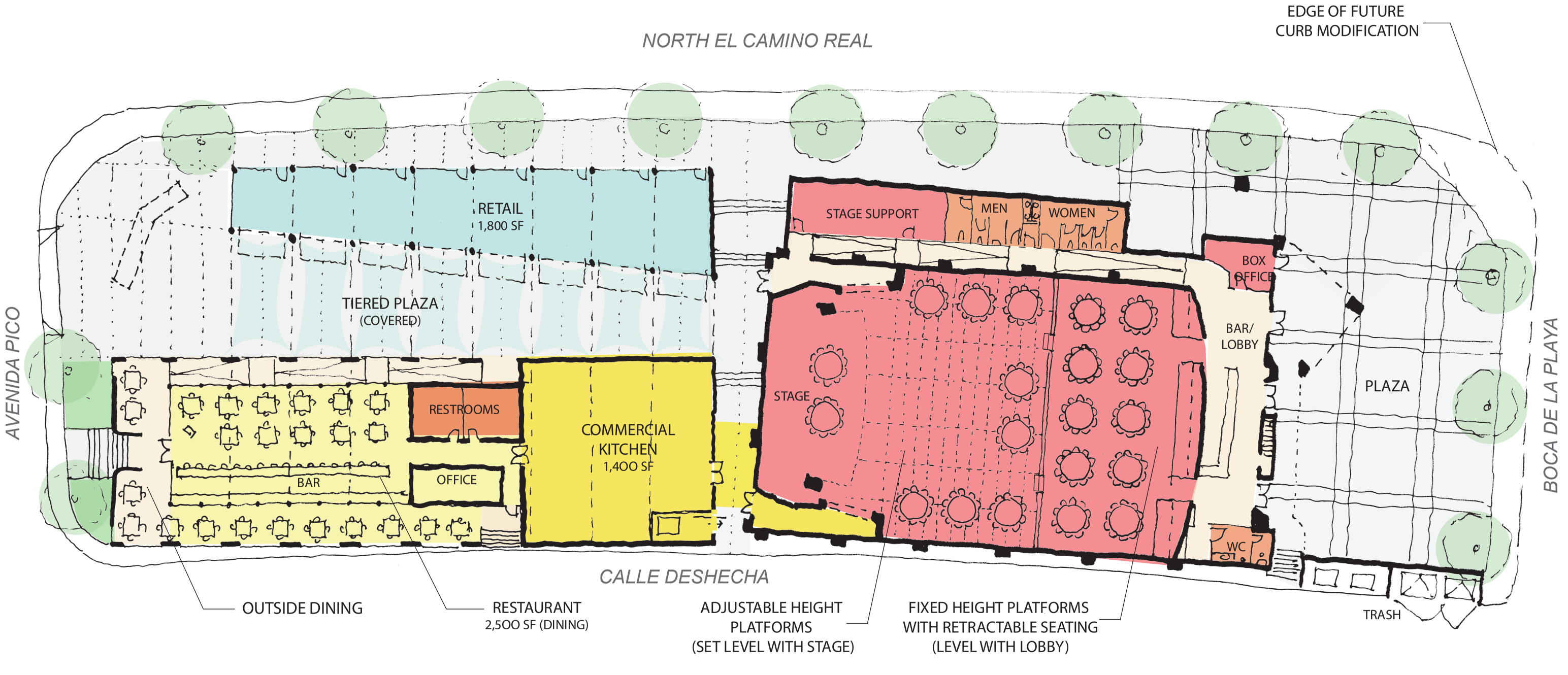

OUTDOOR SEATING
RESTAURANT
KITCHEN
RETAIL
RESTROOMS
THEATRE/EVENT SPACE

North

0 1' 5' 10' 25' 50' 100'

Conceptual Floor Plan - OPTION 1A (Shown in Flat Floor Event Arrangement)
RETAIL / RESTAURANT / THEATRE & EVENT CENTER

04/08/2013

01a

Adaptive Reuse of Miramar Theatre & Bowling Center

San Clemente, California

Westlake Reed Leskosky

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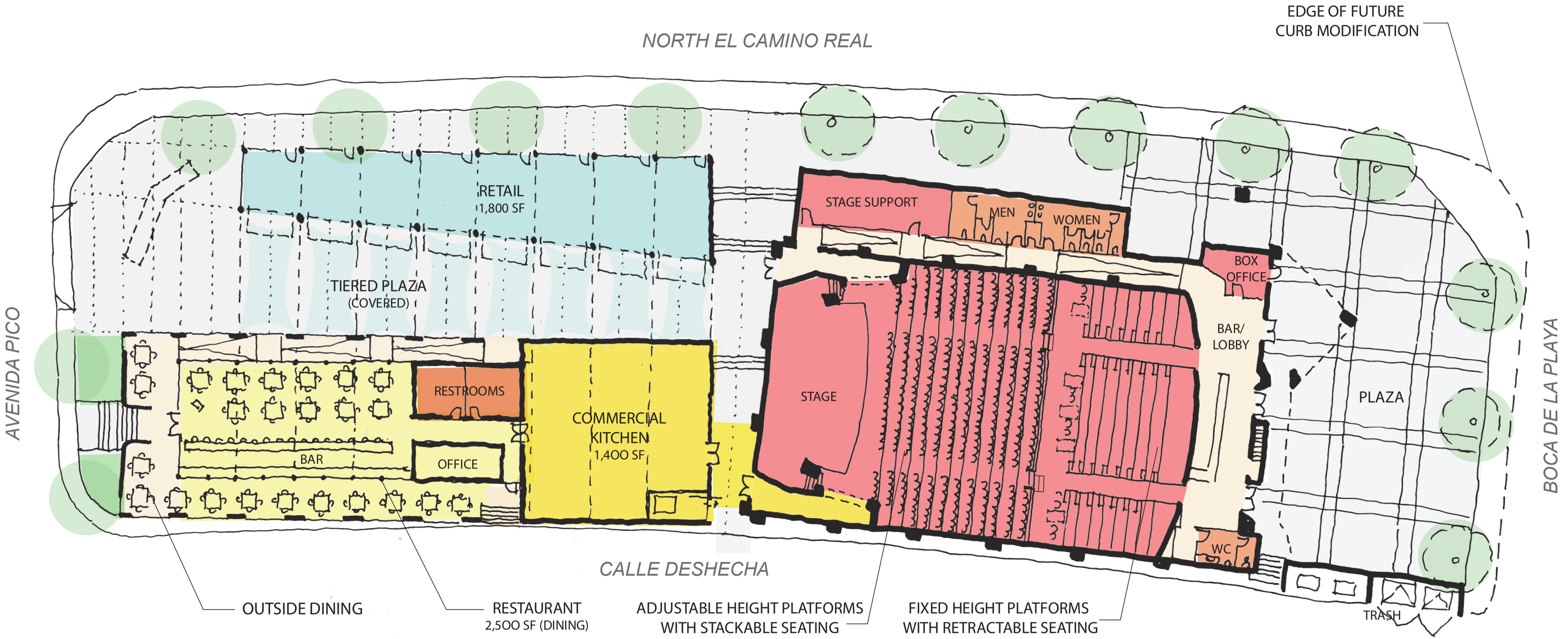

Conceptual Floor Plan - OPTION 1B (Shown in Theatre Arrangement - 490 Seats)
RETAIL / RESTAURANT / THEATRE & EVENT CENTER

North

0 1' 5' 10' 25' 50' 100'

04/08/2013 **01b**

Adaptive Reuse of Miramar Theatre & Bowling Center

San Clemente, California

Westlake Reed Leskosky

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NORTH EL CAMINO REAL

EDGE OF FUTURE CURB MODIFICATION

AVENIDA PICO

BOCA DE LA PLAYA

STAIRS

STAIRS

TIERED PLAZA (COVERED)

STAIRS

STAIRS

STAGE SUPPORT

MEN

WOMEN

BOX OFFICE

BAR/ LOBBY

STAGE

PLAZA

RESTROOMS

KITCHEN

BAR

RETAIL
3,100 SF

LOAD

WC

CALLE DESHECHA

OUTSIDE DINING

CAFE
900 SF

SCREENING ROOM WITH SEATING

TIERED LEVEL ART GALLERIES

TRASH

OUTDOOR SEATING

RESTAURANT

KITCHEN

RETAIL

RESTROOMS

THEATRE/EVENT SPACE

North

Conceptual Floor Plan - OPTION 2

CAFE / RETAIL / SCREENING ROOM & ART GALLERY

0 1' 5' 10' 25' 50' 100'

04/08/2013

02

Adaptive Reuse of Miramar Theatre & Bowling Center

San Clemente, California

Westlake Reed Leskosky

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APPENDIX B: National Park Service Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

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APPENDIX C: San Clemente City-Wide Historic Context

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TECHNICAL REPORT

Playa del Norte, San Clemente Historic Resources Analysis

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Purpose

An historic context statement analyzes the historical development of a community according to guidelines written by the National Park Service and specified in *National Register Bulletin 16*. The Bulletin defines an historic context as "a body of information about historic properties organized by theme, place, and time." An historic context statement is linked with tangible built resources through the concept of "property type," a "grouping of individual properties based on shared physical or associative characteristics."

An historic context statement is not a comprehensive history of an area. Rather, it is intended to highlight trends and patterns critical to the understanding of the built environment, and to act as a framework for the continuing process of identifying historic, architectural, and cultural resources in San Clemente. The purpose of a context statement is to serve as a guide for citizens, planners, and decision-makers to identify and evaluate historic resources with their community.[1]

Introduction

The following city-wide historic context statement was developed by Historic Resources Group for the San Clemente Historic Resources Survey Update, completed in 2006. The primary category of extant historic resources in San Clemente includes those that were built during the original *Ole Hanson/Spanish Village by the Sea* period, between 1925 and 1936, and are Spanish Colonial Revival in architectural style. A second period of significance encompasses those buildings built from 1937 to 1949. Although the buildings in the latter category post-date the City's mandatory architectural restrictions, these buildings are now 50 years of age or older and continue the tradition of the Spanish Colonial Revival style in San Clemente.

Information included in this context statement was compiled from many sources, including published local histories, the San Clemente Library collections, the San Clemente Historical Society archives, the Los Angeles Public Library California Index and photograph collections, city building permits, county tax assessor records, tract maps, Sanborn fire insurance maps, field work, as well as discussions with long-time residents and community groups.

Development History & Associated Property Types

Native American Inhabitants

Prior to European settlement, the coastal region of Southern California was characterized by rolling hills covered with coastal sagebrush. The region's first human inhabitants were members of the Shoshone Native American tribe. These early residents occupied small villages of dome-shaped huts called "kiitcas," sustained by hunting, gathering, and fishing.[2] One of the largest Native American settlements discovered in Orange County, consisting of several hundred people, was located just five miles north of San Clemente near the mouth of San Juan Creek, overlooking Capistrano Bay.

There are no built resources in San Clemente from this period, though much archaeological evidence of these first inhabitants has been recovered.

European Settlement (1542-1924)

San Clemente, Promotional Sales Brochure, 1920s.

As is the case throughout California, the introduction of Europeans to the Capistrano Bay region came with the establishment of the Spanish Missions and Mexican ranchos. In 1542, Portuguese navigator Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo led an expedition for Spain to explore the California coast, making him the first European to arrive in Alta California. On October 3 of that year, he sited what was the southernmost of the eight California Channel Islands, and named it for his vessel, the "Vitoria."

Some sixty years later, Spanish merchant Sebastian Vizcaino sailed the same area, coming upon the island on November 23rd, 1602, the feast day of Saint Clement. Known for ignoring the discoveries of his predecessors, Viscaino renamed the island "San Clemente," in honor of the martyred Roman pope, a common practice among explorers at that time.[3]

King Carlos III of Spain eventually acquired a great expanse of land along the California coast, and sought to establish a chain of missions to protect the land from invading Russians. In 1769, Captain Gaspar de Portola volunteered to lead an expeditionary force north from Mexico through Alta California. Portola left the small village San Diego on July 14th, reaching what would later become the San Clemente town site on July 22nd. It was on this date that the first recorded baptism took place in California, as two dying Native America infant girls were christened by Fathers Juan Crespi and Francisco Gomez. Over the next thirty years, twenty-one Franciscan missions and various military presidios and pueblos would be established along El Camino Real ("The King's Road") from San Diego to Sonoma.

The Mission at San Juan Capistrano, located just six miles north of what would become San Clemente, was the seventh mission to be established in Alta California. Initially founded by Father Fermin Lausen in 1775, it was short-lived due to Native rebellion at the first mission in San Diego.[4] The following year, however, it was re-established by Father Junipero Serra. The mission held vast expanses of surrounding land which it used for agriculture and grazing cattle. The holdings of Mission San Juan Capistrano stretched

as far south as Mission San Luis Rey, including the land that would later become San Clemente.[5]

Following Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, the Californios became the region's ruling class, many of whom were first generation descendents of the Portola expedition.[6] Pio Pico, the last Mexican Governor of California, ordered all of the Missions secularized in 1834, and soon began awarding generous land grants to prominent businessmen, officials, and military leaders. One of the largest parcels, Rancho Mission Viejo, was awarded to John Forster, an English seaman who had come to California in 1833 and later married one of Pico's sisters.

When Pico was forced to leave California and return to Mexico, Forster acquired Rancho Santa Margarita. Rancho Los Desechos, a coastal property that comprised most of the land that would become San Clemente, was granted to Felipe Carrillo, a member of one of California's earliest families. In 1883, some 1,500 acres of the old Rancho Los Desechos came to be owned by John Forster's son, Marcus, a portion of which comprised what would later become the Hamilton H. Cotton Estate and municipal golf course at southern tip of San Clemente. Marcus would also take ownership of Rancho Boca de la Playa, which makes up part of what is now San Clemente. In 1887, John Forster acquired the remainder for the Rancho Los Desechos property. Eventually, father and son would own some 300 square miles of the former ranch lands.[7]

In 1906, Los Angeles distillers and winemakers Max and Herman Goldschmidt formed a partnership with Cornelio Echenique, husband of John Forster's granddaughter, making the brothers half owner of some 10,500 acres of the Forster's land.[8] Eventually the property was divided, with the Goldschmidts taking the coastal grazing lands, including the present town site of San Clemente. With the advent of Prohibition in 1919, the Goldschmidts fell into financial troubles and their land was acquired by a syndicate headed by Los Angeles millionaire Hamilton H. "Ham" Cotton.

Santa Fe Steam Train in what would become San Clemente State Park, 1920. (Robert Kutcher Collection. Walker, 57).

The completion of Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, and its eventual extension to Southern California 1876, led to the founding of hundreds of new towns in the region. While population and building booms were taking place in Los Angles and San Diego in the 1880s and 1890s, the land that would become San Clemente remained unimproved. It was traversed first by stagecoach route which followed El Camino Real, California's main travel route until the arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad in 1888, which linked the region to San Juan Capistrano to the north and San Diego in the south.[9]

As with the Native Americans before them, Spanish and Mexican settlers left little evidence of their presence in the area that would become San Clemente. There are no known built resources in San Clemente from this period, though archaeological resources may be present. However, two significant sites are memorialized with historical markers. The La Cristianita Monument (California Historical Landmark #562) at the San Clemente Civic Center commemorates the first Christian baptism in Alta California.[10] Also, El Camino Real is marked by Mission bell markers throughout the State of California, including in San Clemente.

Ole Hanson and the Spanish Village (1925-1936)

The physical character of San Clemente is largely attributable to the vision of a single individual, a real estate developer and sometimes politician named Ole Hanson. Between 1925 and 1936, Hanson and his supporters worked to carry out this vision for a "Spanish Village by the Sea."

Ole Hanson

Ole Hanson was born in Racine, Wisconsin on January 6, 1874, to Norwegian immigrant parents.[11] An advanced student, he passed the Wisconsin Bar Exam at the age of 19. Prevented from practicing law until age 21, he left Racine, traveling throughout the United States selling druggist supplies. While on the road in March 1903, he was the victim of a railroad accident in Texas that killed one of his young daughters and left him partially paralyzed.[12] To recuperate, he moved west to Seattle with his wife and remaining children.

San Clemente founder Ole Hanson. (Walker, 66).

Hanson soon became active in local politics, getting elected to the Washington state legislature in 1908 by an overwhelming majority. After a single term in the Legislature, he turned his attention to real estate, becoming involved in the successful development of a waterfront property on the north shore of Lake Washington called Lake Forest Park.[13] His departure from politics was short-lived, however. On March 5, 1918, he became mayor of Seattle, running on moral issues such as ending police corruption and eliminating the city's red-light district.

January 21, 1919, a wage dispute in Seattle's shipbuilding industry lead to the first general strike in American history. Credited with breaking the strike, Hanson emerged as a national figure.[14] Later that year, he resigned as mayor to travel the United States, writing and lecturing about his political views. Hanson was an early and outspoken opponent of the Socialist movement in Russia. In 1920, he published a book on this topic entitled "Americanism Against Bolshevism."[15] During this time, he also traveled throughout Europe, relating his impressions of "home life in the old world" in a column that was syndicated in thousands of newspapers.[16]

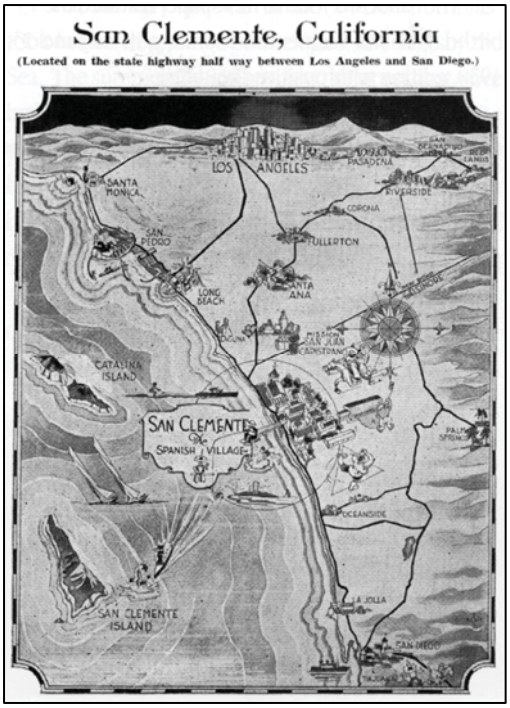
Hanson made a great deal of money in Seattle real estate during World War I, owning a significant amount of land around the Puget Sound Naval Yard. With the economic downturn that followed the war, he lost his fortune and closed his offices, saying that "war-made money is stained with blood."[17] Heavily in debt, Hanson left Seattle for Mexico. While in Mexico, he gained fifty percent ownership in 52,000 acres of oil fields worth half a million dollars. But when the oil market took a sudden dive, his land became virtually worthless.[18] He returned to the United States to start over yet again.

Hanson's first California real estate venture was the development of the Slauson Avenue Tract in Los Angeles. Hanson purchased the tract in November 1921 and built some 2,000 homes, all with red tile roofs and white stucco walls. His next project was the Potter Hotel in Santa Barbara. Hanson was part owner of the luxurious hotel when it was destroyed by a severe earthquake in 1925.[19] The quake destroyed much of the city, in

fact, allowing Santa Barbara to be rebuilt in a planned and deliberate manner, and in the Spanish style. Witnessing the transformation of Santa Barbara surely inspired Hanson and his own vision for a Spanish village by the sea.

It was at about this time that Ole Hanson was contacted by his longtime business associate, millionaire financier and oil man Hamilton Cotton. Cotton was heading up a syndicate of bankers and businessmen to purchase the land that would become San Clemente. Hanson saw his opportunity and became the largest investor in the syndicate, owning 2,000 acres of land.

Cotton had been associated with Hanson in several real estate ventures in the past, and knew of his friend's dream of developing the perfect seaside community.[20] Hanson had articulated his vision for a Spanish-style planned city in these words:



1920s Promotional Sales Brochure. (Walker, Doris I. The Heritage of San Clemente). p. 131.

I vision a place where people can live together more pleasantly that any other place in America. I am going to build a beautiful city on the ocean where the whole city will be a park; the architecture will be of one type, and the houses will be located on site where nearly everyone will have his view preserved forever. The whole picture is very clear before me. I can see hundreds of white walled homes bonneted with red tile…I can see gay walks of red Spanish tile and streets curving picturesquely over the land. I want plazas, playgrounds, schools, clubs, swimming pools, a golf course, a fishing pier and a beach enlivened with people getting a healthy joy out of life.[21]

Hanson had first seen this area of the California coast years earlier on a train trip from Los Angeles to San Diego. In fact, he had paid John Forster a deposit for Capistrano Beach but later changed his mind, determining that the site was not ideal for his new town.[22] However, Hanson soon found another stretch of coastline in the region that he determined to be perfectly suited for the building of his dream city. Located exactly midway between Southern California's two great cities, the property was linked to Los Angeles and San Diego by the main line of the Santa Fe Railroad and El Camino Real.[23] Yet its relative isolation had protected the land from any uncontrolled development. Additionally, the site was unique on the Southern California coast, consisting of rolling hills that sloped gently down to the ocean, as opposed to the high cliffs that characterized much of the region's coastline.

City Founding

On November 8, 1925, the *Los Angeles Examiner* announced the founding of the new city this way:

Completing one of the largest purchases of land in the Southland in recent months, Ole Hanson, subdivider and town builder, yesterday announced the founding of a new city to be known as San Clemente, the Spanish Village. Site for the new town comprises 2,000 acres between the state highway and the ocean six miles below Mission San Juan Capistrano…Extensive plans for development were worked out while purchase of the property was being negotiated, according to Mr. Hanson, and are now being carried out.[24]

In the summer of 1925, the last of the cattle had been herded off the former rancho lands and a fence erected around the tract so that the engineering could begin.[25] Hanson had hired aviators to photograph the site from the air, engineers to begin laying out the streets, and surveyors to subdivide the tract into lots. He insisted that the streets follow the natural contours of the land, and that each home site have an ocean view. By the time of the *Los Angeles Examiner's* announcement, the streets were being graded and paved, and construction of a restaurant and office building at the intersection of El Camino Real and Avenida Del Mar was imminent. The article went on to mention that "within a few days…work will be started on a clubhouse, residences, store buildings, a park and bridle trails."[26]

El Camino Real at Avenida Del Mar, 1927. (First American Title Co. Walker, 73).

Reaction to the announcement was mixed, with many, particularly those involved in real estate, openly questioning the wisdom of establishing a new town some 66 miles from Los Angeles or San Diego. According to Hanson's biographer, Homer Banks, some referred to plan as a "hair-brained scheme," while others said Hanson himself was "just plain crazy."[27]

Not easily dissuaded, Hanson set up a sales tent at El Camino Real and Avenida Del Mar, which would become the town's central crossroads. He named longtime friend and Seattle real estate man Thomas F. Murphine as tract sales manager, and his son, Ole Hanson Jr. as director of sales. However, the son was soon convinced his father was the only man who could sell his idea to the people, and that he should do so *en masse*: "If everyone who talks with you believes in your plan, why not talk from the platform to thousands, instead of wasting your energy and your vitality on a few?"[28]

The elder Hanson agreed and from that point would be intimately involved in every aspect of the property's promotion and development, from delivering impassioned sales pitches, writing the copy for newspaper ads and marketing brochures, accompanying prospective buyers to available lots, assisting with the design of the buildings, and selecting the precise placement of the home on each lot.[29]
On November 23, 1925, Ole Hanson officially christened his town "San Clemente," after the island that was so named exactly 323 years before. Two weeks later, on December 6th, the first lots in San Clemente went up for sale. Lot prices started at $300, with the prime lots costing up to $1,500.[30] Despite San Clemente's reputation for having the best climate in the world, opening day was a rainy one. Hanson provided a free hot lunch to anyone who would listen to his sales pitch. By noon, some 600 people had arrived at the site, traveling an average of 60 miles.[31] By the end of the day, land sales totaled just over $125,000.[32] By the end of the year, foundations were being laid for the town's first buildings on El Camino Real.

In the first six months, a record 1,200 lots were sold for $1,250,000. The first 125-acre tract was completely sold out in eight months, and a second tract of 330 acres was being offered. By the start of 1928 Hanson had formed a second syndicate with Cotton and the Goldschmidts to develop an additional 1,200 acres.[33] Total land sales had surpassed $5 million, and would be double that after just three years.

On February 28, 1928, the San Clemente incorporated as an independent city. Thomas F. Murphine became its first mayor and sat on the first City Council, along with Ole Hanson Jr., contractor Oscar F. Easley, builder Leroy M. Strang, and Earl Von Bonhorst. At the time of its incorporation, the City had a population of 500. A year later, it would have over 1,000 residents and 500 buildings.[34] Sanborn maps from March 1929 indicate services in the town included a grocery, drug store, cobbler, bank, plumbing shop, bakery, auto repair shop, beauty shop, billiard hall, two restaurants, and three hotels.[35]

Immediately following the opening of the first tract, the syndicate commenced construction of three buildings: an office building, a community clubhouse, and a grammar school. The Administration Building, which served as Ole Hanson's office, still stands at the northwest corner of El Camino Real and Avenida Del Mar, appearing much as it did when it was originally constructed in June 1926. The cornerstone for the Community Clubhouse was laid on July 31, 1926, and by the following January it was hosting dances on Saturday nights.[36] The original structure was almost completely destroyed by fire in 1970, with the exception of the Ole Hanson Room. The Community Center as it exists today is largely a rebuilt and expanded version of the original. The San Clemente Grammar School, which opened in 1927, was demolished and replaced by Las Palmas Elementary School in 1971.

This building, at El Camino Real and Avenida Del Mar, was erected as Ole Hanson's administrative offices. (Frasher Foto Postcards Collection).

By February 1927 the City had a complete water system, including a three-tiered reservoir that supplied San Juan Creek water to residents. In 1928, a hospital was opened at S El Camino Real at Avenida Barcelona, with appointments so impressive that it became known as a "hotel for sick people." This building has since been demolished and replaced by a Ralph's shopping center. The City's first religious building, St. Clement's Episcopal Church (202 Avenida Aragon), was completed in October of 1930 and continues to serve its local congregation. A city yard occupied a large site between Avenidas Miramar and Palizada and originally included a fire station, police station, and city jail. A blacksmith shop, warehouses, and maintenance shops were added later. The site served as a city maintenance yard until 1974 when it was converted into a shopping plaza.[37]

In addition to providing facilities required for any successful town, Hanson wanted San Clemente to be a "paradise for the lover of sport."[38] Taking full advantage of the region's ideal climate, the syndicate spent thousands of dollars on a wide variety of first-rate social and recreational facilities, many of which continue to serve the City of San Clemente some 80 years later.

As early as 1926, Ole Hanson deeded 3,000 feet of accessible beachfront to the people of San Clemente, and soon constructed a 1,200-foot fishing and pleasure pier at a cost of $75,000. The $100,000 Community Clubhouse (100 N Calle Seville) opened in January of 1927. Plaza Park was developed adjacent to the grammar school. Renamed

Max Berg Plaza Park, it opened in May of 1927 and was given to the people of San Clemente.

On May 27, 1928, the San Clemente Beach Club (105 Avenida Pico) was dedicated on the northern edge of town. Now known as the Ole Hanson Beach Club, its Olympic size swimming pool was considered to be one of the finest and most completely equipped in the United States, and hosted the tryouts for the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics.[39] A baseball diamond was constructed across from the Beach Club. Also considered one of the best in the country, Hanson offered use of the facility to his hometown Seattle Indians of the Pacific Coast League for spring training.[40]

A municipal golf course, complete with an elegant clubhouse, was constructed at the southern end of town. Designed by renowned California golf course architect William P. Bell, it was touted as the only all-grass course between Long Beach and La Jolla.[41] The clubhouse was subsequently demolished to make room for an apartment building, but the golf course is still in use today. Additional recreational facilities included barbeque pits, tennis courts, and 17 miles of bridle trails which ran along the beach and into town and the hills above, costing $70,000.[42]

The Hotel San Clemente was erected in 1927. (Frasher Foto Postcards Collection).

All of these amenities were publicly owned without encumbrance, as they were sold to the City for $1 each. Each home deed included a share of ownership in the beach, Beach Club, Municipal Pier, Community Clubhouse, Plaza Park, Municipal Golf Course, tennis courts, grammar school, and the hospital.[43] With the exception of the grammar school, tennis courts, and the hospital, all of these facilities are extant in San Clemente today. In addition, Hanson also provided the City with eight miles of paved streets, sidewalks, curbs and street lights.

A *Southern California Magazine* article of the time declared San Clemente "one of the few cities of the nation under 1,000 population that has public property within its borders to the value of more than $2,000,000." The article continued:

> *Nation-wide attention has been centered on San Clemente due to its recreational advances and facilities. The National Recreational Association has…informed city officials that the Spanish Village is one of the most fortunate and far-sighted cities in the United States in playground and recreational advancement.*[44]

As a result of Hanson's comprehensive vision for his City, and his generous gifts to its people, by 1928 San Clemente was recognized as the richest city per capita in the United States.[45] The following year, *Sunset Magazine* would refer to San Clemente, as a "dream city on the Pacific."[46]

Commercial Development

Among the city's first commercial buildings were the Taylor Building, the Latham Building, the Bartlett Building, and the Hotel San Clemente, all located in the 100 block of Avenida Del Mar. The Taylor (104-108 Avenida Del Mar), Latham (101-103 Avenida Del Mar), and Bartlett (100 S El Camino Real) buildings were all constructed in 1926. The latter, built by local contractor Edward R. Bartlett, housed the town's first general

store, *La Tienda*, as well as the offices of its first newspaper, *El Heraldo de San Clemente*.[47] The 60-room Hotel San Clemente (114 Avenida Del Mar) opened in November 1927, touted for being "100 percent electrically equipped."[48] Many of the hotel's first guests were families awaiting the completion of their new homes.[49]

Business District in the 1940s, looking east on Avenida Del Mar. (First American Title Co. Walker, 160).

At the top of Avenida Del Mar stands the Spanish/Moorish-designed Easley Building (101 S El Camino Real). Built by Oscar F. Easley in 1929, it was the home of the newly established Bank of San Clemente, later the Bank of America. In the 1930s, the building served as the City Hall, containing the judge's office and city jail. Today its tenants include the San Clemente Historical Society Museum.[50]

Residential Development

Among the earliest residential properties to be developed in San Clemente were the private mansions of city pioneers Hamilton Cotton, Ole Hanson, Adlai Goldschmidt, and Thomas Murphine. With the exception of the Murphine residence, which was destroyed in 1933, these elegant homes continue to represent the finest examples of Spanish Colonial Revival residential architecture in San Clemente. Characterized by their high-quality materials and craftsmanship, they feature hand-made roof and decorative tile work; thick wood-pegged doors and hand-carved furniture, hand-stuccoed walls, imported hardwood floors, and locally-forged wrought iron accents.[51]

The Cotton Estate (4100 Calle Isabella) originally occupied a 110-acre site at the southernmost tip of San Clemente, overlooking the ocean at San Mateo Point (now known as Cotton's Point). The main house was designed in 1926 by renowned European architect Carl Lindbom. Lindbom had a thriving historical revival practice in Los Angeles in the 1920s, and had recently designed the new Santa Barbara City Hall. His designs for the Cotton Estate were based upon a country house in San Sebastian, Spain.[52] The residence is square in plan with rooms opening onto a central outdoor courtyard. In addition to the expected clay tile roof and white stucco walls, details include rough-hewn beamed ceilings, tile wall murals, a tiled central fountain in the patio, and a wood-paneled library turret with panoramic ocean views.[53]

Additional structures on the property included a guest house, detached card room, and the La Brea Stables and half-mile training track for Cotton's thoroughbred racing horses.

The Card Room is of particular interest, occupying a circular structure some 200-feet from the main residence overlooking the railroad tracks at the base of the bluffs. During the 1930s, Franklin D. Roosevelt would visit his close friend Ham Cotton, enjoying a game of poker along with Ole Hanson. The Cotton Estate would also host many Democratic fundraisers, often with thousands of guests.[54]

Cotton died in 1952 at the age of 71. His widow remained in the house until 1969 when it was purchased by Richard M. Nixon and renamed "La Casa Pacifica." In 1943, 62 acres of the original estate were sold to J. J. Elmore, who used the property as a horse farm. In 1976, his land would be subdivided and developed as the gated community of Cypress Shore, where original elements of the Cotton estate remain extant today. The Spanish-style stables serve as a recreation center for homeowners, and the estate's gardens and trout pond as the community's private park.[55]

Main entrance to Ole Hanson's bluff-top residence, Casa Romantica. (Walker, 101).

Ole Hanson's own bluff-top home (415 Avenida Granada) was built in 1928. Known then only as "the house," this sprawling 5,800 square foot building was constructed for Ole Hanson, his wife, and eight younger children. Also designed by Carl Lindbom, it contains fifteen rooms arranged around a central courtyard overlooking the Municipal Pier. Architectural features include thick white stucco walls and red clay tile roofing, hardwood floors and redwood ceilings, hand-painted Mexican floor tiles, Spanish wall murals, Italian marble fountains, multiple fireplaces, and a crystal chandelier. The main entrance is defined by a Moorish keyhole arch with a solid wood door and bronze hardware.[56]

Ole Hanson lived in the residence until 1933, when financial troubles caused the bank to foreclose on the property and the family to vacate. The home stood empty until it was purchased by Lambert Schuyler in 1945 and renamed Casa Romantica. The house had several more owners until 1989 when it was purchased by the City of San Clemente for $2.5 million. In 1991, an anonymous donor contributed $1.25 million for the rehabilitation of the property and the creation of an endowment for a cultural and arts center. Now the Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens, the property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The home of Adlai Goldschmidt (243 Avenida La Cuesta) was designed by Los Angeles architect Paul R. Williams in 1928. Williams had designed a number of residences for the Goldschmidt family over the years, including homes for brothers Max and Herman in the Holmby Hills and Hancock Park neighborhoods of Los Angeles. Williams was one of Los Angeles' premiere architects from the 1920s through the 1950s, and undoubtedly the most successful black architect of his day. He is responsible for some of that city's most recognizable landmarks, including the Beverly Hills Hotel and the Theme Building at Los Angeles International Airport. But he is perhaps best known as the "architect to the stars," designing elegant Period-style mansions for the Hollywood elite, including Frank Sinatra, Cary Grant, and Lucille Ball.[57] The Goldschmidt House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The home of San Clemente's first mayor, Thomas F. Murphine, is no longer extant. This lavish two-story residence featured multiple terraces, balconies, and circular tower study with panoramic views. On March 10, 1933, the Long Beach earthquake opened a large fissure in the home site above Avenida De Los Lobos Marinos. After two months of on-

going creaking the home finally collapsed into the fissure with only the rooftop left visible.[58] San Clemente sustained no other significant damage from the quake, and it is believed that unstable soil and the irrigation of the lavish gardens contributed to the structure's demise. A surviving portion of the Murphine residence was relocated to San Clemente State Beach.

A Local Architecture

From its inception, San Clemente was intended to be Spanish in character. Each sales contract mandated strict adherence to the Spanish Colonial Revival style, including uniform handmade red tile roofing and whitewashed stucco walls. No deviation from the Spanish style was permitted, regardless of use, and a tile factory and wrought iron foundry were established in town to meet the needs of the rapidly growing community[59]

It was further mandated that all building plans be submitted to an Architectural Committee for approval. The first architectural committee consisted of Hanson, Thomas Murphine, and Edward Bartlett. Every new building was reviewed and a signed building approval certificate issued prior to construction.

Ole Hanson-era residences exhibit typical Spanish Colonial Revival elements, including white stucco walls, hand-made clay roof tiles, wood-frame windows, and wrought-iron ornamentation. (Walker, 77).

Especially popular from the late 1910s through the 1930s, the Spanish Colonial Revival style emerged from a conscious effort by architects to emulate older Spanish architectural traditions. The style first received wide attention at the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego and the designs of the prominent architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. Well suited to Southern California's warm dry climate, the Spanish Colonial Revival style's exotic appearance and a sense of historic depth appealed to many Southern California residents, particularly those relocating from other locales across the country.[60]

The Spanish Colonial Revival style is most easily identified by its red clay roof tile and white stucco exterior wall surfaces. Other typical features of the style include asymmetrical facades, recessed windows and doors, arched openings, wrought iron balustrades and grilles, tapered stucco chimneys with decorative tops. As manifest in San Clemente, the Spanish style typically employs low-pitch gable and hip roofs, exposed rafter tails, conical towers, open patios defined by stucco garden walls, and three-light wood casements, often hung in pairs.

Ole Hanson set the stylistic tone early on by engaging Santa Barbara architect J. Wilmer Hershey to design San Clemente's public buildings. At this time, Hershey was already a very accomplished young architect, having been retained by the City of Santa Barbara to oversee its reconstruction in the Spanish style following the 1925 earthquake. Hanson hoped Hershey would do the same in San Clemente.

In poor health when he first began doing sketches for San Clemente, he partnered with fellow Santa Barbarans Richard Sears and W. E. Hill. Together, they developed designs for Ole Hanson's Administration Building, the Community Clubhouse, and the grammar school.[61] Several major buildings were under construction on Avenida Del Mar and El Camino Real when Hershey died at the age of 32.[62]

After Hershey's death, architect Virgil Westbrook was brought in from Santa Barbara to continue Hershey's vision. It would be Westbrook who ultimately would have the greatest influence on San Clemente's built environment during its first decades.[63] Westbrook was involved in the design of San Clemente from its inception, and nearly all of his buildings were erected prior to 1930. He is responsible for some of San Clemente's most distinctive structures, including the Ole Hanson Beach Club (1927), the Easley Building (1929), and Saint Clement's Church. In addition, there are approximately two dozen extant residences attributed to Westbrook, as well as several other commercial structures.

Even more prolific in San Clemente's early years was Strang Brothers Construction Company. Strang Bros., and later Strang-Smith, was responsible for a great deal of the pubic, commercial and residential buildings erected in San Clemente in its first two decades. LeRoy and Arthur Strang promoted themselves as "builders of distinctive homes" in their book *Spanish Bungalows*, which contained sketches and plans for dozens of modest Spanish-style residences. Homes are five to six rooms, averaging between 1,000 and 1,500 square feet. In addition to being a prolific home builder in town, LeRoy Strang sat on the first City Council, and served as the first Commissioner of Fire and Police.

In the 1920s, Strang Bros. collaborate with Virgil Westbrook to realize the Ole Hanson Beach Club, the Easley Building building, Saint Clement's Church, and dozens of private residences. The builders remained active in San Clemente through the 1940s, also erecting the Casino San Clemente (1937), the San Clemente Theater (1937), and the Beachcomber Motel (1947).

A Planned Community

Ole Hanson was not merely a real estate developer, but a community builder. His vision for his *Spanish Village by the Sea* was more than meandering streets and white stucco houses with red tiles roofs. Hanson's idea was comprehensive – an independent community complete with schools, churches, parks, shopping, and an array of recreational amenities to be enjoyed, free of charge, by everyone in town.

Park Plaza's original 1928 design included a pond and other water features. (San Clemente Online).

San Clemente was built on unimproved land. Before erecting a single structure, Hanson and his associates had surveyed the entire site, laid out a complete system of roads, and subdivided the land into lots. Eight miles of improved streets were provided, including paved roadways, red-tile sidewalks, concrete curbs and gutters, a sewer system, and street lighting. Certain sites were designated for the development of public amenities, to be designed and constructed at the expense of the land syndicate. The remaining property was divided into commercial and residential lots available for purchase.

Hanson promoted his comprehensive vision in his sales brochures: "At San Clemente, you have a modern well planned city with a natural and cultural background."[64] Similarly, the *Los Angeles Times* reported in 1927 that after just 22 months, San Clemente "is today a complete modern community."[65] As such, San Clemente is considered to be one of the earliest master planned communities in Southern California.

The idea of a comprehensively planned and architecturally homogenous community was not a new one. Rather, its implementation in San Clemente represented an evolution of late 19th century and early 20th century planning ideals.[66] One such ideal was the "Garden City" movement.

Conceived by Englishman Ebenezer Howard, the Garden City incorporated strict building, landscape, density, and growth requirements into an economically self-sufficient city surrounded by a greenbelt. Inspired by Howard, American businessmen soon began planning garden suburbs, one of the most notable being Forest Hills, New York, designed by eminent landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr. Olmstead and others promoted respect for natural topography in their schemes for parks, subdivisions, and cities.

In Southern California, the evolution of city planning coincided with a new appreciation of the region's Hispanic heritage. By the early 20th century, it was not uncommon for new towns to incorporate the ideals of the Garden City movement, while at the same time appropriating the architectural traditions of Old Spain.

The effect of these parallel trends in architecture and planning can been seen in the seaside community of Palos Verdes in southern Los Angeles County. In 1922, a group of investors formed the Palos Verdes Project to develop a model suburban community on the hillsides of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The two project members that would have the greatest influence on the new town were Fredrick Law Olmstead, Jr. and preeminent Pasadena architect Myron Hunt.

Olmstead and Hunt were involved in the Palos Verdes Project from its inception and helped to establish the design guidelines that would largely determine the architectural character of the community. Hunt, in particular, sought to establish an architecture for Southern California that both responded to the region's mild climate and evoked its Hispanic past. In the 1920s, Hunt became a great proponent of the Mediterranean Revival style, noted for white stucco walls and red clay roof tiles. Much of Palos Verdes displays this architectural style today.

In the years following a severe 1925 earthquake, tremendous efforts were made to transform the city of Santa Barbara with Spanish architectural imagery. Design controls were implemented by a Board of Architectural Review during the intensive rebuilding immediately following the temblor. The town of Ojai partially accomplished a similar metamorphosis through the unofficial efforts of a single property holder. A third approach was tried in the San Diego County town of Rancho Santa Fe in 1922. The town plan reflected garden suburb principles, and an architectural advisory committee was formed to ensure strict conformity to the Spanish style.

Economic Downturn

The Stock Market Crash in October of 1929 had a devastating effect on the young city of San Clemente. As the economy began to slow in the months leading up to the crash, construction in San Clemente virtually ceased. No new subdivisions were recorded from

end of 1931 until 1946.[67] Lacking any other substantial industry, most of the city's middle class residents lost their jobs and their homes, and were forced to move elsewhere for work. Between 1930 and 1940, San Clemente's population dropped from 1,200 residents to 479, a decline of 60 percent in a single decade.

Many of San Clemente's wealthiest citizens left town as well, often returning to their primary residences in Los Angeles. Among those who were forced to leave was Ole Hanson himself. His entire fortune had been tied up in the development of his "dream city." When the bank foreclosed on his house in 1932, he was forced to vacate the property and left San Clemente altogether.

As local residents left in large numbers, the City lost its tax base and was on the verge of bankruptcy. Eventually Bank of America, which had become the primary lending institution in town, would own much of the City's privately developed and undeveloped parcels.[68] Because the City's public amenities were gifts to the City from Hanson and were owned outright, they escaped repossession. By 1935, City announced that it could no longer pay its officials and was about to close down.[69]

Believing that the architectural restrictions imposed upon development in San Clemente would make lots harder to sell, the Bank of America petitioned the courts to remove the clause from future sales agreements.[70] This request was granted in 1937, bringing an end to the assurance that the City would develop in accordance with Ole Hanson's vision of a Spanish Village, and ushering in a new period in San Clemente's history.

A City in Transition (1937-1949)

Unlike Ole Hanson, Hamilton Cotton had sufficient personal financial resources to preserve his property through the Depression years. Among those resources were Cotton's productive oil interests, sound investments, and strong political clout, especially with U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.[71] Cotton worked closely with the Bank of America through a slow revitalization process that saved San Clemente from complete financial ruin.

While Cotton was working to revitalize the seaside community, Ole Hanson and his son were in the Southern California desert developing a new model town. The community of Twenty-Nine Palms was established in 1937, and the project restored much of Hanson's personal fortune. However, his health began to decline and on July 6, 1940 he died of a heart attack at the age of 66.

The Casino San Clemente drew dancers from throughout Southern California in the late 1930s. (Walker, 130).

The late 1930s saw America beginning to rebound from its economic crisis. During this time, local entrepreneurs sought new ways to attract visitors, and ultimately new residents, back to San Clemente. The two most striking extant examples of this effort are the Casino San Clemente (140 W Avenida Pico) and the San Clemente Theatre (1700 N El Camino Real).

On July 31st, 1937, some 5,000 dancers turned out for the much-anticipated grand opening of the Casino San Clemente, complete with Hollywood-style search lights.[72] The occasion was widely publicized and attracted visitors from throughout Southern California. Built by the Strang

Brothers at a cost of $75,000, the Casino San Clemente featured a cocktail bar, a circular floating ballroom illuminated by changing lights, a state-of the-art sound system, and air conditioning. On the exterior, the unique circular building was accented by a giant silver dome.[73]

The Casino San Clemente soon became a popular entertainment destination, renowned for its name talent, such as Judy Garland, and live orchestras, including Sterling Young's Columbia Network Orchestra, Bert Smith and the NBC Orchestra, and Dean Holt and his Trocadero Orchestra.[74] The Casino also hosted live radio broadcasts six nights a week. Over the years, the facility would serve as a private gambling hall and a Moose Lodge, ultimately being reborn after World War II as Sebastian's West Dinner Theater.

The San Clemente Theater, designed by prolific theater architect C. A. Balch, opened in May 1938. (San Clemente Historical Society).

Less than a year after the Casino's grand opening, San Clemente inaugurated another impressive entertainment venue just next door. The San Clemente Theatre, later renamed the Miramar Theatre, first opened its doors on May 12, 1938. At the time, it was touted as "one of the most elaborate developments of the kind on the south coast."[75] Advertisements for the theater noted its modern heating and air conditioning system, as well as its innovative seat design that permitted patrons to recline rather than sit upright.[76] It was also said that the seats were placed farther apart than in any other theater in Southern California. It would remain the City's only movie theater until the 1990s.

The San Clemente Theatre was designed by prolific theater architect Clifford A. Balch. Balch designed dozens of elaborate movie theaters throughout Southern California during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. Of the San Clemente Theatre's interior appointments, he noted: "Seats, draperies and furniture have been carefully chosen for comfort and beauty, each element serving to create an intimate, restful atmosphere in keeping with the purpose of the building."[77] He described its exterior design as "an attempt to embody the informal lines and mass of early California buildings in a modern structure whose shape is generally set. The use of the typical tile roofs, hewn wood beams and textured plaster has created an effect in keeping with the natural setting." The San Clemente Theater's striking tower feature would become a visual icon of the San Clemente landscape, marking the City's northern entrance on El Camino Real.

On June 13, 1938, the *Santa Ana Journal* remarked of San Clemente: "Today, with a smart new dance casino and theater, as well as dozens of new homes and plans for many more, the city has weathered severe financial storms and seems riding toward success and prosperity."[78] Although Hanson's architectural restrictions were no longer in effect, both buildings were designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, embracing the founder's stylistic vision for San Clemente. The Casino San Clemente and San Clemente Theatre represent a period of transition in the development of San Clemente, responding to the architectural tradition of the community, while helping to usher in a new era of economic prosperity and growth.

By the early 1940s, the United States was gearing up for war. At this time, both the Army and Marine Corps were in search of a suitable location for a large military training base. In April 1942, it was announced that some 126,000 acres of the former Ranchos Santa Margarita and Las Flores would soon be transformed into the largest Marine Corps

base in the nation.[79] On September 25th of that year, President Franklin D. Roosevelt attended the official dedication of Camp Pendleton, named for Major General Joseph H. Pendleton, who had long advocated for the establishment of a West Coast training base.

San Clemente's economic recovery benefited greatly from the new military presence located just south of the City limits. The base provided a steady stream of customers for local businesses, and fostered the City's beach tourism.[80] During World War II, some 50,000 Marine and Navy personnel were stationed at Camp Pendleton.[81] At its peak, as many as one in six students at San Clemente's Las Palmas Elementary School were military dependents.[82]

The 1947 Beachcomber Motel is recommended for designation as a local landmark.

Following the war, many who first came to San Clemente as a result of their military service chose to stay and raise their families, a pattern that was repeated in cities throughout Southern California. Those who were attracted to the City's Spanish charm often continued that tradition in the design of their own homes. However, with the abolition of mandated architectural restrictions that prescribed the City's looks in previous years, some opted for a looser translation of the Spanish style. The residence at 304 Avenida Cabrillo, for example, employed the customary red tile roofing, but traded the white stucco walls for adobe brick. Its simple horizontal form references the modest tract houses that were being constructed by the thousands in other cities like Los Angeles during the same period.

In the late 1940s, motels and apartments began appearing in the area around the Municipal Pier as tourists were drawn to the beach in larger numbers.[83] In 1947, William Tepper built a low-slung apartment court on the bluffs overlooking the Pier. The Tepper Apartments, later renamed "The Beachcomber" (525-535 Avenida Victoria), contains twelve units. Each unit includes its own kitchenette and covered porch, and was available for rent by the day or week. In contrast to its contemporaries in other cities, this unique example of roadside architecture in San Clemente embraced the Spanish Colonial Revival style, including red roof tiles, smooth white stucco wall, and simple wood porch supports.

By 1950, San Clemente's population had surpassed 2,000, more than double its size prior to the Crash of 1929. This increase would mark the beginning of a period of gradual and sustained growth that would continue for several decades.

Postwar Growth and the Nixon Years (1950-1980)

During the 1950s, San Clemente grew significantly, from 2,000 residents in 1950 to 8,500 in 1960.[84] The City was also experiencing a new wave of commercial development free of architectural restriction, particularly on Avenida Del Mar and North El Camino Real. On Avenida Del Mar, previously undeveloped lots were filled in with boxy commercial storefronts featuring flat roofs, smooth stucco walls, and floor-to-ceiling glazing on the street façade. One of the most striking examples occupies the northeast corner of Avenida Del Mar at North Ola Vista. This building (166-176 Avenida Del Mar) is enhanced by a flat projecting canopy which shades the sidewalk and is perforated to accommodate four palm trees. Today, it is this combination of mid-century modern buildings and the City's earliest Spanish Colonial Revival structures that characterize San Clemente's historic business district.

Nixon and Brezhnev sign a Strategic Arms Limitation agreement at Casa Pacifica in June of 1973.

El Camino Real contains some of the City's most whimsical buildings. The dynamic designs of the current Chamber of Commerce building (1100 N El Camino Real) and Pedro's Tacos (550 N El Camino Real) both reflect the postwar optimism that characterized much of the commercial architecture of the 1950s.

The completion of the San Diego Freeway (Interstate 5) through San Clemente in 1960 ushered in a new period of expansion in San Clemente. This improvement made San Clemente more accessible to surrounding communities and longer work commutes became more commonplace. The City's population swelled from 8,500 residents in 1960 to 17,000 a decade later, and the demand for housing increased dramatically. As a result, many of the original Ole Hanson-era homes were lost, replaced by newer, often higher-density buildings.[85]

Just as important, the freeway changed the orientation of the City. For the first time in its history, El Camino Real was no longer the main thoroughfare through town, and the hills above opened for town for new tract development. The 500-residence Shorecliffs development, constructed between 1963 and 1965, was the first of what would be many large-scale housing tracts in San Clemente.[86]

For many around the country and around the world, San Clemente is known as the home of President Richard Nixon's "Western White House." In 1969, the Nixons purchased the former Cotton Estate at the southernmost edge of town for $340,000. The property was rehabilitated and renamed "La Casa Pacifica." Part of the rehabilitation included the construction of a 1,500-foot long, 8-foot tall red-tile topped wall around the perimeter of the property for added privacy, as well as a gazebo at each corner for Secret Service.[87] The street leading to the house was renamed "Del Presidente."

During President Nixon's residency, the estate hosted numerous heads of state, diplomats, and other distinguished guests, including South Vietnamese President Thieu and Prime Minister Sato of Japan. Without question the most significant official visit took place in June of 1973, when President Nixon and Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev signed a Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement (SALT) on front lawn, averting nuclear war.[88]

In August 1974, Richard Nixon resigned the Presidency and returned home to San Clemente with his family. The Nixon family remained at La Casa Pacifica until 1980, when they sold the property and returned to the East Coast to be near their daughters and grandchildren.

San Clemente Today

Today San Clemente remains a thriving coastal community. The City's long-time residents and retirees tend to live in the original Ole Hanson-era tracts, while more recent residents occupy newer housing in the "backcountry" east of the San Diego Freeway, often commuting to employment centers in other parts of Orange County.

Selected Chronology

The following chronology is not a comprehensive history of the area. Rather, it is intended to highlight activities and events important to the understanding of the built environment within the City of San Clemente from the earliest settlement through the Nixon residency.

1542 On October 3rd, Portuguese navigator Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo sites an island off the coast of Alta California and names it for his ship, the "Vitoria."

1602 On November 23rd, the feast day of Christian martyr Saint Clement, Spanish explorer Sebastian Vizcaino encounters the same island and renames it "San Clemente."

1769 Gaspar de Portola leads an expedition of Alta California for Spain.

The first Christian baptism in Alta California occurs in nearby Cristianitos Canyon on July 22.

1776 Spanish missionary Father Junipero Serra establishes a permanent mission at San Juan Capistrano.

1834 All California missions are secularized and Spain's vast land holdings are granted to Mexican rancheros.

1850 California becomes the 31st state of the Union.

1874 Ole Hanson is born in Racine, Wisconsin.

1876 The Transcontinental Railroad, completed seven years earlier, is extended to Southern California.

1888 The Santa Fe Railroad links San Juan Capistrano and San Diego.

1901 A coastal railroad between San Francisco and Los Angeles is completed.

1915 The Panama-California Exposition in San Diego popularizes Spanish architecture in California.

1925 An early morning earthquake on June 29th destroys much of Santa Barbara, allowing the City to rebuild itself as a Spanish town.

In a November 8th article in the *Los Angeles Examiner*, Ole Hanson proclaims his vision for his own "Spanish Village" in San Clemente.

Nearly $125,000 worth of land sales are made on the first day.

1926 In eight months, the first tract is sold out.

1927 The town of San Clemente boasts a post office, Chamber of Commerce, and a local newspaper, *El Heraldo de San Clemente*.

1928 San Clemente incorporates as a city on February 28th.

Municipal Pier is donated to the City by Ole Hanson.

1929 San Clemente is home to some 500 buildings and 1,000 residents.

El Camino Real was paved as Highway 1 through San Clemente.

The stock market crashes, ushering in the Great Depression.

1930 San Clemente has 1,200 residents.

1932 Having lost his fortune, Ole Hanson leaves San Clemente.

1933 A 6.3 earthquake centered in Long Beach is felt throughout Orange County, and leads to the collapse of Mayor Murphine's mansion.

1934 The Ortega Highway opens, connecting San Juan Capistrano with Riverside County.

1937 The architectural restrictions established by Ole Hanson are abandoned.

On July 31st, some 5,000 dancers turn out for the much-anticipated grand opening of the Casino San Clemente.

1938 On May 12th, the San Clemente Theatre opens, touted as "the most elaborate theater development on the entire south coast."

1940 On July 6th, Ole Hanson dies of a heart attack at age 66.

San Clemente's population has dwindled to 479 residents, a decline of 60% in a single decade.

A new 1,277 foot Municipal Pier opens on July 1st, just eight months after the original Pier was destroyed by severe storms.

1941 The Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor on December 7th, and the United States enters World War II.

1942 On September 25th, President Franklin D. Roosevelt attends the official dedication of Camp Pendleton.

1946 The San Clemente Bowling Center opens immediately adjacent to the theater.

1950 San Clemente's population rebounds, surpassing 2,000 residents.

1960 On November 7th, Interstate 5 is completed through San Clemente, replacing El Camino Real as the community's main thoroughfare.

Approximately 8,500 people live in San Clemente.

1965 San Clemente High School opens.

1968 The San Onofre Generating Station (SONGS), the world's largest nuclear power plant, is constructed just two miles south of San Clemente.

San Clemente begins development of a General Plan, preparing for a future population if 75,000 or more.

1969 President Richard M. Nixon purchases the Cotton Estate for $340,000, renaming it "La Casa Pacifica."

1970 San Clemente's population is over 17,000.

The San Clemente Theater reopens as the Miramar Theatre.

1971 President Nixon signs a bill giving the State of California 2.5 miles of beach from San Clemente to San Onofre, opening up the famed Trestles surfing spot.

1972 After a fire destroyed much of the Community Clubhouse, the rebuilt and expanded community center is dedicated on February 27th.

1973 President Nixon receives Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev at the Western White House.

The San Clemente Historical Society holds its first meeting at the library on Avenida Granada.

1974 Nixon resigns the Presidency and returns to San Clemente with his family.

1980 San Clemente's population surpasses 27,000.

The Nixons leave San Clemente.

1981 San Clemente reinstates architectural design review in the business district and the Pier Bowl areas, and for designated historic structures.

2000 San Clemente's population of approaches 50,000 as the City celebrates the 75th anniversary of its founding.

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