

**HISTORICAL
RESOURCES**

SECTION 9: HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Whittier General Plan Historic Resources Element provides guidelines for the designation and preservation of historic structures in the City. The Element contains a listing of structures identified by different agencies as suitable candidates for preservation, criteria for evaluating historical significance, and programs to minimize the alteration and prevent the destruction of significant structures or sites.

The Historic Resources Element is an optional element that specifically meets the historic preservation needs of the City. As an element of the *Whittier General Plan*, it takes on the same force of law as the mandatory elements, once adopted. The Element promotes public awareness of the City's past by providing a discussion on the different historic sites and landmarks, known archaeological sites, and paleontological resources in the City.

Goals and policies in the Historic Resources Element provide needed direction in balancing development pressures with preservation efforts. In order to preserve the historic character of certain neighborhoods, it is necessary that historic structures are preserved, new structures are designed to be compatible with existing architecture and the surrounding elements, and historic structures are maintained in their original form. The historic preservation programs in support of the Element will be effective in preserving the City's historic character.

The known historic resources of the City of Whittier have been identified in the Historic Resource Element Background Report. The main findings of the report are summarized below.

- The City of Whittier is one of the oldest cities in Los Angeles County. Cultural resources in the area include numerous historical structures and sites and the Puente Hills are rich in archaeological and paleontological resources.
- Whittier has a large number of structures built more than 50 years ago. Many of these are historically significant in terms of past residents, use, architecture, religious association, or artistic value. A number of surveys have identified the historic resources of the City. While the list is not comprehensive, it serves as a strong starting point for future studies. Historic districts have been designated within the City, providing an avenue to prevent demolition of older structures until their historical significance has been determined. By identifying and providing standards for future development and potential demolition in areas where the most historically significant structures and landscaping are found, Whittier can preserve more of its cultural resources.
- The archaeological resources in the area are associated with Gabrieliño Indians and their settlements. The banks of the San Gabriel River near the Pio Pico mansion is believed to have been a site of an indian village. Site surveys, prior to

Section 9: Historic Resources Element (continued)

construction in areas having a high cultural sensitivity, will allow preservation of archaeological resources throughout the planning area.

- Fossils of early animals may be found within the soil layers of the region. These paleontological resources provide educational, cultural, and scientific values to the community. In Whittier, the hillsides have yielded paleontological resources and more are like to be discovered in the future.
- Historic resource programs in Whittier have slowly developed over time. In the future, the City intends to develop standards for historic districts and structures in a more rapid fashion, to initiate programs to encourage preservation and adaptive reuse, and to develop procedures to promote rehabilitation instead of demolition.

HISTORIC RESOURCES GOALS AND POLICIES

The three major components of historic and cultural resources preservation include resource identification, historic preservation, and public awareness. The goals and policies below are structured around these issues. They were developed to coordinate preservation efforts in the City and to provide a focused direction for public and private actions.

Issue: Historic Resource Identification

The first step to preservation is the identification of sites and structures to preserve. A number of sites, objects (such as trees), and structures in Whittier have gained recognition through State and City programs. However, there are many other structures that have been demolished, destroyed, or neglected because their historical or cultural significance was not recognized early. Also, unknown sites and structures may be uncovered during excavation and grading activities associated with new construction. In order to successfully preserve cultural resources in the City, priority should be given to resource identification.

Goal 1 Determine the nature and extent of Whittier’s physical and cultural heritage.

Policy 1.1 Identify buildings, sites, objects, neighborhoods, landscaped areas, and gardens which have special significance to the history and/or character of Whittier.

Policy 1.2 Require investigations for new development during the environmental review to evaluate the potential for archaeological and paleontological resources.

Section 9: Historic Resources Element (continued)

Issue: Historic Preservation

Historic preservation deals with the various ways to prevent destruction, disturbance, and neglect of cultural resources, and at the same time promote the study, enjoyment, and understanding of Whittier's past.

Goal 2 Develop an historic resources preservation program, recognizing that effective utilization of the City's historic resources supports community identity and appeal, social and economic vitality, and neighborhood stability.

Policy 2.1 Update the City's historic resources ordinance as needed to protect identified historic buildings, sites, trees, gardens, and neighborhoods.

Policy 2.2 Establish Historic Districts, as appropriate, to protect Whittier's historic neighborhoods, and to preserve and enhance the distinctive visual and functional image of Whittier.

Policy 2.3 Encourage new development near historic structures, sites or districts to be compatible with the existing significant structures in scale, material, and character.

Policy 2.4 Encourage the preservation of open areas around historic buildings.

Issue: Public Awareness

The City of Whittier is particularly proud of its cultural heritage and the following goal and supporting policies seek to promote public awareness of the resources that represent its history. Public awareness will increase cooperation and support for preservation efforts and programs.

Goal 3 Promote public awareness of Whittier's history and heritage.

Policy 3.1 Promote, encourage, and assist, as appropriate, efforts to educate the public about the history, heritage, and resources of Whittier.

Policy 3.2 Provide information to the public on tax incentives and financing available for historic preservation activities.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Historic resource preservation may be achieved through a number of interdependent programs and actions. Table 9-1 provides the specific measures that will implement the Historic Resources goals and policies. A discussion of each measure is provided in Section 10.

Section 9: Historic Resources Element (continued)

TABLE 9-1 HISTORIC RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION		
Goals	Policy	Implementation Measure
1. Nature of Whittier Cultural Heritage.	1.1 Identify buildings, sites, objects, and neighborhoods with historic significance. 1.2 Investigate the presence of archaeological and paleontological resources prior to development.	Comprehensive Survey Environmental Review Site Investigations & Surveys Cultural Resource Preservation Methods
2. Historic Resources Preservation	2.1 Historic Resources Ordinance. 2.2 Review feasibility of establishing Historic Districts. 2.3 Encourage new development to be compatible with existing historic structures. 2.4 Encourage preservation of open areas around historic buildings.	Site Investigations & Surveys Cultural Resource Preservation Methods Demolition Notice Incentives for Historic Preservation Standards for Adaptive Reuse State & Federal Preservation Laws Environmental Review State & Federal Preservation Programs Historic District Designation Design Standards within Historic Districts Environmental Review Design Standards within Historic Districts Environmental Review
3. Promote public awareness.	3.1 Promote efforts to educate the public of Whittier's history. 3.2 Provide information on tax incentives & financing for historic preservation.	Public Awareness of Significant Cultural Resources Whittier Historical Collection Incentives for Historic Preservation Historic Resource Promotion

HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The cultural resources of the City of Whittier consist of archaeological, paleontological, and historic resources found throughout the planning area. By identifying and preserving these resources, there will be greater understanding and appreciation of the area's past. The City hopes

Section 9: Historic Resources Element (continued)

to achieve the goals of the Historic Resources Element through a number of programs that will maximize the City's benefit from the presence of cultural resources. The Cultural Resource Management Plan developed for these resources involves cultural resource identification, preservation, and public information components.

Historic Resource Identification

There have been a number of studies and surveys that have been completed which identify archaeological, paleontological, or historical resources in the City. The Background Report documents resources that have been identified. This has led to a growing interest and curiosity about the extent of these resources. Some development has also led to the destruction and neglect of many historical and archaeological resources. The concern for the preservation of cultural resources can be seen in various public and private efforts to determine the historical significance of structures and objects before they are destroyed.

Historic resource identification efforts will be accomplished through a comprehensive survey of historical resources in the City. While comprehensive surveys of archaeological and paleontological resources may not be practical, starting a database of all surveyed areas and the results of these surveys will provide a better sense of the sensitivity of certain areas. Once historical significance and sensitivity have been determined, preservation programs can be established to preserve these resources.

Historical resources may be found in areas with older developments and where the town center was historically located. Areas located along the San Gabriel River have the potential for archaeological resources, as associated with the Gabrielino Indians. Paleontological resources have been found in the Puente Hills. Surveys and studies prior to development will determine with greater accuracy the presence or absence of these resources.

The criteria for establishing historic resource significance in the City will be as follows:

- The site or structure is associated with an event or person of recognized significance in City, California, or American history, or recognized scientific importance in prehistory.
- The site or structure has the potential to provide information which is of public interest, value to scientific research, or historical or archaeological insight.
- The site or structure has physical qualities as determined by its age, size, example, style, or uniqueness.
- The site or structure has stratigraphic integrity of at least 100 years old.

Section 9: Historic Resources Element (continued)

- The site or structure has potential for answering important research questions relating to history, archaeology, or paleontology.

The following criteria are designed to guide the state and federal agencies, and the Secretary of the Interior in evaluating potential entries (other than areas in the National Park System and National Historic Landmarks) for the National Register. These criteria should be used for determining if state or national designation should be pursued for significant historic resources in the City.

The major criteria for determining historic significance is related to quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture; and the integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Other criteria are listed below:

- Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- Association with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- The distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that posses high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- The presence of or likelihood of potential information important in prehistory or history; or
- Association with significant architects or architectural styles.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years *shall not be considered eligible* for the National Register. However, such properties *will qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria of if they fall within the following categories:

- A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

Section 9: Historic Resources Element (continued)

- A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life; or
- A cemetery which derives its primary significance from age, distinctive design features, graves of persons of transcendent importance or from association with historic events; or
- A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
- A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or
- A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

Cultural Resource Preservation

The City of Whittier has established historic resource standards and guidelines for the establishment of historic districts. These standards should be expanded to include the preservation of archaeological and paleontological resources, as well. Preservation methods available to the City include:

- Keeping the area undeveloped, as park or open space;
- Covering the site with fill;
- Developing the site as a cultural center or museum;
- Moving the resource to another site;
- Adaptive reuse of the structures with minimal modification;
- Rehabilitation of structures for continued use, emphasizing the preservation of those elements contributing to the historic significance; and
- Requiring moving, demolition, or excavation monitoring programs.

Because different resources require different preservation methods, the City of Whittier shall establish individual preservation measures according to the significance, need, and available support.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural resources provide opportunities for recreation, education, and scientific inquiry. The City of Whittier can promote pride in its residents through the knowledge of its history and cultural resources. Public awareness and acknowledgement of the City's cultural resources will also lead to increased preservation of existing resources. The public information program for cultural resources includes the promotion of existing resources in the City, the encouragement of private preservation efforts, and the development of community identity.

The Historic Resource Management Plan will help decrease the destruction of cultural resources in the planning area. While the Plan cannot prevent the destruction of yet unknown resources, it protects all identified cultural resources from neglect. By using all avenues and creating opportunities for preservation, the City of Whittier will keep its historic resources available for future generations to enjoy, learn from, and be proud of.