

Historic Resource Assessment Report 1224 Harper Avenue, City of Redondo Beach, Los Angeles County, California

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June 27, 2025



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Abstract

Chronicle Heritage was contracted by Westlake Apartment Development LLC and the property owner to prepare a Historic Resource Assessment report (HRAR) for a single-family residence and detached garage at 1224 Harper Avenue, Redondo Beach, Los Angeles County, California (APN 4161-014-022; subject property). The subject property was identified as a "B" ranked property as a result of the 1986 Historic Resources Survey and the 1995 update of that survey. Windshield surveys were conducted for the 1986 and 1995 surveys, which did not include site-specific research and an intensive evaluation. This HRAR was prepared to support an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the property from the City's Historic Resources List. This HRAR was prepared by Carrie Chasteen, M.S., who meets the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification standards in the fields of History and Architectural History (36 CFR Part 61).

Chronicle Heritage staff obtained and reviewed the building permits for the parcel from the City. Additional research included a review of dates of construction and subsequent alterations determined by the building permit record as well as through additional resources such as the field inspection, Sanborn maps, oral history, and historical aerial photographs. Chronicle Heritage conducted a field inspection of the subject property on May 12, 2025, to ascertain the general condition and physical integrity of the buildings thereon. Digital photographs were taken during the site inspection. Field notes were made.

Because the subject property does not meet one or more eligibility criteria and does not possess integrity, it is not eligible for listing in federal, state, or local historical registers. Therefore, the subject property should be removed from the City of Redondo Beach's List of Historic Properties.

¹ City of Redondo Beach, "The City of Redondo Beach Historic Context Statement."

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Introduction

Chronicle Heritage was contracted by Westlake Apartment Development LLC and the property owner to prepare a Historic Resource Assessment report (HRAR) for a single-family residence and detached garage at 1224 Harper Avenue, Redondo Beach, Los Angeles County, California (APN 4161-014-022; subject property; Figure 1 and Figure 2). The subject property was identified as a "B" ranked property as a result of the 1986 Historic Resources Survey and the 1995 update of that survey. Windshield surveys were conducted for the 1986 and 1995 surveys, which did not include site-specific research and an intensive evaluation. This HRAR was prepared to support an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to remove the property from the City's Historic Resources List. This HRAR was prepared by Carrie Chasteen, M.S., who meets the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification standards in the fields of History and Architectural History (36 CFR Part 61).

² City of Redondo Beach.

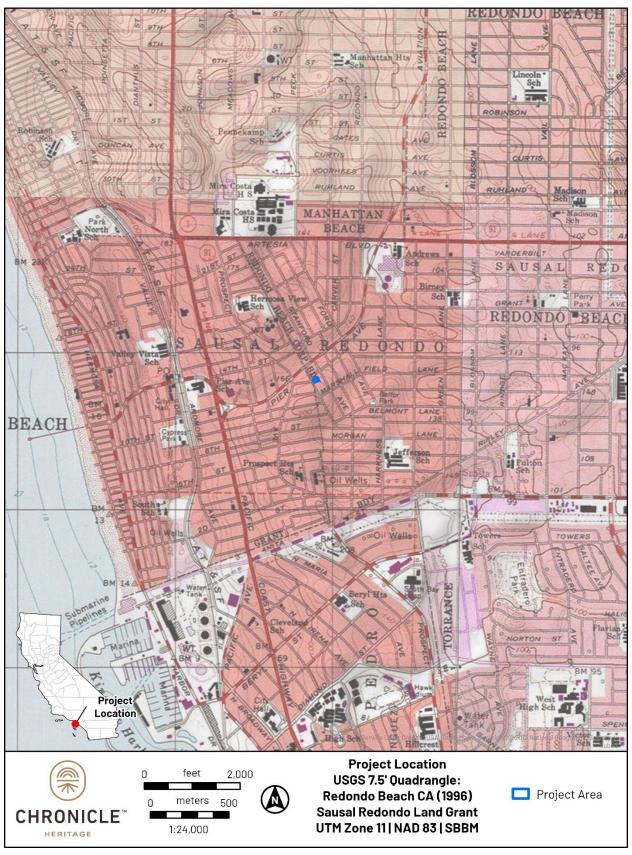


Figure 1. Subject property location map.



Figure 2. Subject property sketch map.

Methods

The assessment methodology consisted of research and field inspection of the building on the subject property and on neighboring properties.

Research Conducted

Chronicle Heritage staff obtained and reviewed the building permits for the parcel from the City. Additional research included a review of dates of construction and subsequent alterations determined by the building permit record as well as through additional resources such as the field inspection, Sanborn maps, oral history, and historical aerial photographs.

Field Methods

Chronicle Heritage conducted a field inspection of the subject property on May 12, 2025, to ascertain the general condition and physical integrity of the buildings thereon. Digital photographs were taken during the site inspection. Field notes were made.

Regulatory Framework

The buildings associated with the subject property were evaluated to determine if they constitute as a historical resource as defined by CEQA, using the eligibility criteria for listing in applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.

Federal

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, defines the criteria to be considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP):

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master or that possess high artistic value; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (36 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Section part 63).

According to *National Register Bulletin No. 15*, "to be eligible for listing in the [NRHP], a property must not only be shown to be significant under National Register criteria, but it also must have integrity." Integrity is defined in *National Register Bulletin No. 15* as, "the ability of a property to convey its significance." Within the concept of integrity, the NRHP recognizes the following seven aspects or qualities that in various combinations define integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

State of California

Section 5024.1(c), Title 14 CCR, Section 4852 of the California Public Resources Code defines the criteria to be considered eligible for listing in the CRHR:

³ National Park Service [NPS], "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation."

A resource may be listed as an historical resource in the CRHR if it meets any of the following criteria:

- 1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- 2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- 3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction; represents the work of an important creative individual; or possesses high artistic values; or
- 4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Section 4852(C) of the California Code of Regulations⁴ defines integrity as follows:

Integrity is the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Historical resources eligible for listing in the [CRHR] must meet one of the criteria of significance described in section 4852(b) of this chapter and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance. Historical resources that have been rehabilitated or restored may be evaluated for listing.

Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It must also be judged with reference to the particular criteria under which a resource is proposed for eligibility. Alterations over time to a resource or historic changes in its use may themselves have historical, cultural, or architectural significance.

City of Redondo Beach Landmark and Historic District Designation Criteria

§ 10-4.201 Designation Criteria

For the purposes of this section, a historic resource may be designated a landmark, and an area may be designated a historic district pursuant to Article 3 of this chapter, if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- (a) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, or architectural history; or
- (b) It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history; or
- (c) It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
- (d) It is representative of the notable work of a builder, designer, or architect; or⁵

⁴ California Office of Historic Preservation, "California State Law and Historic Preservation: Statutes, Regulations and Administrative Policies Regarding Historic Preservation and Protection of Cultural and Historical Resources," 4853 (c), 66.

⁵ City of Coronado California Historic Resource Code, "City of Redondo Beach, CA," art. 2.

(e) Its unique location or singular physical characteristic(s) represents an established and familiar visual feature or landmark of a neighborhood, community, or the City.

§ 10-4.311 Removal of a Property from the Potential Historic Resource List

The owner of a property identified by the City as a potential historic resource may request that the property be removed from the list if he or she provides specific written and verifiable documentation refuting that the property meets the criteria for designation as a landmark as described herein. An example would be that documentation is discovered that an unknown architect designed a property that was thought to have been designed by a famous architect, or the structure has been altered to an extent that the historic integrity has been lost. The Commission shall review the request for removal following the same procedures identified in Sections 10-4.306, 10-4.308, and 10-4.309 herein.

Record Search

In accordance with current policies and procedures of the California Historical Resource Information System, an equivalent record search was conducted by reviewing the Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) for Los Angeles County, available from the California Office of Historic Preservation (updated September 23, 2022), historical U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute series topographic maps, and aerial photographs for the Project site and adjacent properties. In addition to official maps and records, published registers and reports for the geographic area were reviewed:

NRHP: Listed (2025)

CRHR: Listed (2025)

California State Historical Landmarks (1996 and updates)

California Points of Historical Interest (1992 and updates)

The subject property is listed in the BERD with a status code of 7R, or "Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated." The subject property was identified as a "B" ranking in the 1995 Redondo Beach Historic Resources Survey. Surveys are valid for 5 years to allow for change of circumstances or new information [California Public Resources Code Section 5024.1(g)(4)]; therefore, the subject property must be re-evaluated using current professional standards and criteria. The subject property has not been otherwise previously evaluated.

Historic Context

The following historic context statement is quoted from the 1995 City of Redondo Beach Historic Context Statement.⁷

Most people think of Southern California as a region with only a recent heritage. It was, however, explored and claimed by Spain within the same time frame as the

⁶ City of Coronado California Historic Resource Code, art. 3.

⁷ City of Redondo Beach, "The City of Redondo Beach Historic Context Statement."

English colonists' establishment of their footholds on the Atlantic Coast. In fact, while the American Revolution raged on the East Coast, Spanish Friars worked in the Los Angeles basin to establish missions and introduce European agricultural and architectural practices. The City of Los Angeles, which dates from 1781, preceded efforts to settle the southern portions of the east including areas which today constitute the states of Tennessee, Kentucky and Arkansas. By the 1830s, contact between Americans traveling by ship from Boston and the owners of Southern California's large ranchos had been established. Despite these initial contacts, however, the "American West" in the early 1840s still meant the area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, a region that included much of the present-day Midwest. Today, Southern California's historic sites and traditional names bear testimony to the long period of Spanish and Mexican rule as well as the settlement of America's frontier.

THE PASTORAL PERIOD: 1834 - 1887

The fifty-year period from approximately 1834 to 1887 is usually called the Pastoral Period in Southern California because it was characterized by a blend of Mexican and Anglo ranching life. Rancheros, or ranch owners, raised cattle and horses on vast open plains. Before the gold rush of the 1850s, the cattle were raised primarily for their hides - California dollars which were sold to seafaring merchants in exchange for finished goods and supplies from places as far away as Boston. Romantics have pictured this period as one of leisure and plentitude, but, in truth, it represented the frontier living of a European society.

The pace quickened and life became more complex for the rancheros at the conclusion of the Mexican War in 1849. In this year, the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceding much of the Mexican north (the American Southwest), including California to the United States. The following two decades were marked by turmoil for the Mexican ranchers who made and lost fortunes from cattle sales to feed northern California miners during the great gold rush of the 1850s. These ranchers borrowed heavily from Americans to finance their efforts to prove land claims or meet other obligations, and faced with foreclosure, often lost large portions of their ranchos to satisfy comparatively small debts.

Finally, their wealth was decimated by a series of natural disasters, and by the mid 1860s it had become clear that the rancheros were unable to continue ranching in the style of their forbearers. Land sales mounted and American settlement increased. By the 1880s, the era of the ranchos was over. While the Mexican owners' losses were tragic, they meant that incoming Americans could acquire large tracts of land for a comparatively small price. Small farms dotted the plain between Los Angeles and the coast, and towns developed on the open land a full decade before the founding of Redondo Beach.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF REDONDO BEACH: 1887-1888

Except for the small section sold to the Pacific Salt Works Company, the Dominguez property remained intact until the mid 1880s when it was divided among surviving family members. Three Dominguez daughters shared in the section which fronted on Santa Monica Bay. Charles Silent, president of the Redondo Beach Company, purchased 1,000 acres from them according to an August 1887 agreement. The property included the 400-acre section called "Ocean Tracts" and

approximately 600 acres from the tracts immediately east of the Ocean section, called the "Dunes Tracts." He and his partners, including N. R. Vail and Dan McFarland, began to promote and create a new city on the bay. William Hammond Hall, California State Engineer, prepared the original site map for the town.

Carlson and Peck's "Redondo Villa Tracts"

The development of the approximately four square miles of land currently located in north Redondo Beach began in 1905 when W. H. Carlson became the managing land agent for George Peck and his entire Redondo Villa Tract. Peck had originally purchased the property in the late 1880s and in response to the announcement of Henry Huntington's investment in neighboring Redondo Beach, entered into an agreement with Carlson to develop his property.

Under their agreement, Carlson made all arrangements for the sub-division and marketing of the property. Purchasers of the property paid Carlson directly who in turn paid Peck \$20 for each lot sold. Upon receipt of this payment, Peck agreed to release the deed for the lot to its new owner.

The first section subdivided and marketed by Carlson opened in 1906. Generally referred to as the "Redondo Villa Tract," its boundaries are today defined by Ripley Avenue, Artesia Boulevard, Slauson Lane, and Prospect Avenue. One year later, Carlson subdivided an additional 160 acres within the "Redondo Villa Tract B." Today half of this tract falls within Redondo Beach and the other, to the west, within the City of Manhattan Beach. In both areas, Carlson selected street names which made direct reference to the leading industrialists of his era, and which created an illusion of wealth for the area's barren and gently rolling hills. Names such as Morgan, Stanford, Vanderbilt, Carnegie, and Rockefeller today offer testimony to Carlson and his hopes of future prosperity. Carlson also constructed a magnificent three-tiered, mission-style gateway marking the entrance to his sub-division, a small mission-style office structure and at least one large residence.

Carlson's plans for the Redondo Villa Tracts placed heavy reliance upon Huntington's large capital investment in order to define and establish the marketability of his development. Once Huntington laid the necessary rail connections and invested in local civic and infrastructure improvements, Carlson moved quickly to take advantage of the resulting land boom as well as Huntington's well-financed publicity blitz. While paying homage to Huntington as "Southern California's greatest financier, capitalist, and captain of industry," Carlson took full advantage of Huntington's capital investments by offering free rides to Redondo Beach and his property every day on Huntington's Red Cars. Offers of free passage appeared in advertisements throughout 1906 and 1907.

Unlike Huntington who promoted town lots, Carlson planned for a mixed-use development characterized by small resident-occupied farms. Within the Villa Tract, suitable lots could be had for as little as \$4.00 down and \$90.00 total. This approach was in keeping with advice offered by the era's agricultural leaders who encouraged people with little investment capital to purchase small farms and produce specialty crops. In particular, investors were encouraged to investigate the potential for poultry and dairy production as well as dry farming techniques. Through the careful selection of products, small farmers in the area could be provided with a reasonable level of assurance for future profitability. This was

especially true for the farmers of the Redondo Villa Tracts located within easy transport distance to the large Los Angeles market. Advertisements placed by Carlson emphasized the close proximity between his Redondo Villa Tracts, Los Angeles, and neighboring Redondo Beach. Carlson's selection of a rural development plan proved to be very successful. It also set into motion a pattern for an agricultural economy in the north Redondo area which continued well into the 1940s and 1950s.

In 1907 Carlson expanded his holdings through the purchase of property in Hermosa Beach, Shakespeare, and Manhattan Beach. This purchase extended his development site from the western edge of the Redondo Villa Tract to the ocean shore. While all of this land lies outside current-day Redondo Beach, this segment of Carlson's purchase was important in that it reflected the beliefs and aspirations which defined this period of Redondo's history. Like his contemporaries, Carlson aggressively promoted all aspects of the area's growth potential while at the same time working to establish a strong hold over at least one section of property which extended from the ocean front, inland. In one 1907 interview Carlson stated, I believe in the future of Los Angeles and in the fact that it is closely connected with Redondo, Hermosa, and the beach places in this district and it will be only a short time before that seashore is a portion of the Greater Los Angeles.

One year after making this statement, Carlson made a bold and financially risky move to link his entire holdings through the construction of an intra-development electric rail line. Within three months of the announcement of these plans however, came word that Carlson's Los Angeles Securities Company was experiencing serious financial difficulties. Immediately, creditors moved to place attachments on every article of value that could be located within the Villa Tracts. Hermosa authorities also moved to stop construction on the railway. By early 1909, however, Carlson had reached a tentative agreement with the city of Hermosa and announced the opening of his Port Orient Railway. All residents living within his Villa Tract rode for free. Unfortunately for residents of the Redondo Villa Tract who relied on Carlson's Port Orient Railway as their primary link with surrounding communities, the railway lasted little more than a year.

Redondo Villa Tract Residents Work to Define Their Community

While Carlson struggled to provide assurance to his creditors, residents of the Redondo Villa Tracts moved quickly to secure their interests in their property. For most, this meant the immediate payment of \$20 for each lot held. As middle-man between George Peck and the individual purchasers of lots, Carlson had failed to pass on to Peck the \$20 down payment paid by each lot holder. As a result, residents of the Redondo Villa Tracts found themselves paying the \$20 twice in order to secure title to their land. Immediately following this drain on resources came the announcement that the area's main supplier of water, the Hermosa Water Co., planned to increase rates by 300 percent. These early economic disruptions led to the formation of a cohesive community identity within the Redondo Villa Tract area at a very early stage in its development. Unlike the residents of neighboring Redondo Beach who continued to rely on support from absentee investment interests in the selection of community direction, residents of the Redondo Villa Tract area organized themselves into a cooperative stock company in

an attempt to identify alternative water sources and specialty crops which would prosper in the coastal environment.

The cultivation of the "Spineless Cactus" as an inexpensive cattle feed offered one such opportunity. In 1910, advertisements for the "Ocean Villa Intensive Farming Colony" began appearing in local newspapers. Carved out of the original Carlson holdings near Belvedere in the Grant School district, the colony specialized in the growing of spineless cactus, herbs, chrysanthemums and gladiolus. Aggressive promotion of the colony's principal product (spineless cactus) as well as its land holdings leant a unique and exotic aspect to this project and to the entire community. Early advertisements highlighted numerous positive features of the Colony including its close proximity to Los Angeles, its oiled road, and the fact that each lot came with a pre-drilled and active well. Lots could also be purchased preplanted with choice varieties of spineless cactus and gladiolus. Project developers quaranteed that cultivation of the cactus alone would pay back the purchase price of any lot. House plans were also available for the construction of a modest residence ranging in price from \$45 to \$75. Advertisements stressing the ingenuity and economy of the Colony's house plans noted the combination sleeping porch and living room. Purchasers of Colony property also had the option of either marketing their crops themselves, or joining the Colony's co-operative partnership which helped members market their product in return for a fifty percent share of profits.

Civic Development and Community-based Promotion

The construction of a school house within the Villa Tract "Grant" district in 1908 served as one of the clearest physical indications of an emerging cohesive community identity within the north Redondo area. By 1911, the Grant district, today defined by Artesia Avenue and Aviation Boulevard, had begun to emerge as the center for the Redondo Villa Tract community. Within the area defined by the junction of these two major streets could be found Grant School as well as the community's principal business district. Residents of the neighborhoods in this area were the first to form organizations which promoted the community's interests.

In 1912, for example, residents formed the Redondo Villa Tract Improvement Association. Officers for the new organization represented local community builders and businessmen. While similar to the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce which formed four years earlier, the Improvement Association expanded its focus to include, in their words, "the forging of a prosperous future, making every necessary improvement relative to the community's welfare and building up the Villa Tract in every way possible."

Like the men, the wives of Improvement Association members also expressed concern over the conditions and future of their young community. At the urging of both the Association and the editors of the Redondo Reflex, the women formed the Ladies' Circle which sought ways of voicing their newly acquired right to vote in a "positive and progressive manner." Immediately following World War I two new community booster organizations formed. The first to form was the Grant District Civic Society, which represented the interests of those residents who hoped to help their district move away from its rural economy toward a more urban future.

This was followed by the formation of the Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce which represented the area's expanding commercial and real estate interests.

As additional property sold for rural development, residents of north Redondo approved a series of bonds for the construction of three schools on the Grant site, each larger than the one it replaced. After World War I, the community founded its first Parent Teacher Association which aggressively pursued a community building program. As a result, the school district added an auditorium and classrooms in 1919, and a free-standing building in 1922. The expansion of the Redondo Villa Tract community and its relatively prosperous state was also evidenced in the dedication of the Grant Community Church. This appears to be the area's first church and like the school, was located within the Grant district.

The continued sale of property within the Redondo Villa Tract area led to an organized movement toward annexation of the area in 1913. Four years later, in 1917, the issue formally went before the voters. Calls for annexation originated from both members of the Improvement Association as well as members of the Redondo Beach booster community. Leading the crusade against annexation, however, were the combined interests of the area's larger land owners. This group ultimately succeeded in squashing the Association's efforts by successfully promoting their argument that annexation would result in increased taxation. Residents of the original Redondo Beach townsite expressed annoyance over the Villa Tract's decision to reject annexation since many believed that ties with their northern neighbors would not only strengthen the entire community, but would also provide an expanded revenue base for the maintenance of the Redondo Beach harbor.

Despite its continued growth, the rural composition which characterized the Redondo Villa Tract remained essentially unchanged during the first two decades of the twentieth century. As a result, local boosters found it difficult to gain widespread support for their plans to modernize and partially urbanize their community. Community improvements during this period were limited to the resurfacing of the infamous "Hermosa wash-board" on Camino Real (Pacific Coast Highway) and the construction of a community club house on a lot owned by the newly formed Chamber of Commerce, adjacent to the Redondo Villa Tract arch. This trend continued until the early 1920s and the discovery of oil.

On the 27th of February 1920, J. D. Millar of the Interstate Realty Company of Los Angeles announced his purchase of 2,300 acres within the Villa Tract for the purpose of oil exploration. Within a year of Millar's development of his "Redondo Oil Lots," practically all land from Riverside Boulevard (190th) south to San Pedro Boulevard and from Redondo to Torrance had been leased for oil exploration and production. News articles from the period report that most of these leases were held by large companies. The first promising signs occurred on December 9, 1921 when Santa Fe well No. I began to flow. Located at the far southeastern corner of present-day north Redondo, this well offered strong incentive for the purchase and sale of property located within the eastern section of the Redondo Villa Tract. These two oil production projects began a sporadic land boom which continued over the next ten years and resulted in the further subdivision and settlement of the area.

Physical Evidence - Original Townsite

There are numerous pictures of the massive recreational structures which dominated the waterfront during this period. Unfortunately, like those of the earlier period, they were removed during the renewing of the harbor. One business structure, in particular, does remain and is on the locally designated list of historic landmarks. This is the Classic Revival Redondo Van and Storage building at 321 Diamond Street. Another private structure devoted to public service is the California Water Service Company Utility Building at 403 South Irena. Several homes from this period are also on the local landmarks list. These include representatives of Colonial Revival styles such as the Sweetser home at 417 Beryl Street and a group of Craftsman and California Bungalows. Once again, many of these are modest homes, reflecting the working-class families who populated the community. The Original Townsite Historic District/Gertruda Avenue Historic District, contains one- and two-story shingle homes which were owned by many of the city's professional men. Some of the other public buildings constructed in this general period include the First Methodist Church at 243 South Broadway and the Woman's Club (1922), which has been named to the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1913, Redondo Beach annexed the western portion of Clifton-by-the-Sea. At the time of annexation, a few homes had been constructed by Huntington and his investors. However, much of the property remained vacant. Various development schemes were advanced over the years, most of which involved the construction, relocation or enlargement of the area's golf course. Today, Huntington's original Clifton development is easily identified in the "L" shaped street pattern created by Avenues A through I (which form the lower or western portion of the "L" and are in the vicinity of Catalina Avenue, the Esplanade, and the ocean) and Avenues A through D (which form the upper segment of the "L" to the east and are perpendicular to Catalina Avenue and the Esplanade).

When first laid out, Huntington set the eastern avenues of his development aside for future rural/residential sites where lots were to be at least a half acre in size. This meant that new home construction was concentrated in the area closest to the ocean. As a result, housing in the eastern portion tends to be more recent than that located within the first two blocks bordering Catalina. Within the center of the "L" which defines the original Clifton site, is an area composed of parallel, curved streets surrounding Palos Verdes Boulevard. Although annexation records are not completely clear, this area appears to have been annexed to the City some time between 1913 and the early 1920s. Beginning in the late 1920s, at least a portion of this area served as the Redondo Beach Community Golf Club. Today, modern apartment houses now occupy the gentle terrain of the former golf course.

In the late 1920s, Avenues J through M of Huntington's Clifton-by-the-Sea were purchased by Clifford Reid and integrated into his Hollywood Riviera sub-division. To facilitate the development, the City of Redondo Beach voluntarily vacated its street easement rights. Today, very little remains of either the Huntington or Reid developments. A small portion of Avenue J is still visible although renamed Avenida Del Norte. Few if any residential sites exist in Redondo Beach since the majority of 1930s Mediterranean homes were constructed on the hills which lay within the city of Torrance. As a result, the Redondo Beach portion of the Hollywood Riviera

development is composed of commercial structures located in the "Village" centered on Catalina A venue.

Between the time of its original subdivision in 1905 and the early 1920s, numerous structures were constructed in the north Redondo area. Unfortunately, few if any non-residential buildings remain to remind us of Carlson's original Redondo Villa Tract development. Most notable was the Grand Gateway to the tract with a central arch wide enough to accommodate at least five carriages placed side by side. The small mission-style office building is also gone. Other buildings important to this area's development include the Grant Community Church located at 1908 - 1910 Mathews Avenue and the Chamber of Commerce community club house once located adjacent to the Grand Gateway. Some structures may still remain from the early business district which began around Artesia and modern Aviation as early as 1911. If these structures exist, they may not be easily recognizable because of subsequent remodeling. Homes constructed as a part of the Ocean Villa Intensive Farming Colony ("Spineless Cactus Colony") may still exist. All would be modest residences and not immediately apparent for their architectural significance. One outstanding landmark, the Bissen (Fisk) House, located at 2604 Fisk Lane and constructed in approximately 1905, is an example of the farm houses constructed in the north Redondo area.

During the 1920s, the small commercial area centered around Grant School and the intersection of Artesia and Aviation boulevards continued to develop. One article published in the Redondo Daily Breeze noting this expansion trend stated:

In addition to home building activities the Riverside-Redondo blvd. (Artesia) promises to be a coming business section and the past few months have seen the establishment of several new gasoline stations, stores and at least one new industry. Lots on the Boulevard have doubled in value in the past six months and realty experts see further phenomenal advances in the value of the boulevard lots.

A variety of factors lay behind the area's commercial growth. Many of the businesses established during this period, especially the gasoline stations and eateries, relied upon the expanded use of personal automobiles as increasing numbers of people made the trip between Los Angeles and Redondo Beach by private car. The area's expanding population also played a significant role as housing tracts began to replace the area's single-family farms which had previously defined this northern area.

The establishment of housing tracts in the Redondo Villa community during the early 1920s was directly related to the exploration of oil. While exploration continued in the area's northeastern section, interest in the western portion of the Villa Tracts suddenly erupted as word of oil "pouring" from beneath the cap of a Hermosa oil site spread. This shift to the west resulted in yet another localized land boom as news articles perpetuated images of real estate agents "lining up to buy every available tract in the district." Paralleling the increased efforts in oil exploration came a demand for new home construction in almost every section of the Villa Tract. One news article joyfully referred to this period as the "new era of activity."

Civic Developments

The expanding population in north Redondo also led to calls for a variety of civic improvements. By 1926, for example, the Hermosa-Redondo Water Company experienced serious difficulty meeting the growing demand for residential water service. Only by installing new lines and a pumping facility capable of handling greater volumes of water was the company able to briefly stay abreast of demand. The water company's success was short-lived however.

The improved water service had raised property values which in turn led to an enlarged building program as land owners either subdivided previously rural or vacant land. The area's growing population also meant an increased need for educational facilities. As attendance at Grant School approached 200 in 1923, the community joined in the approval of a community-wide \$195,000 bond issue for the construction of new school facilities in their district as well as in Redondo Beach, Hermosa, Manhattan and Perry school districts. Community leaders also joined Redondo Beach in a partnership which led to the widening of Redondo (Aviation) Boulevard between Grant School and Pier Avenue.

The expanding population led to renewed efforts by the Redondo Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce to create a more urban environment. The Chamber's first major success in this direction occurred in 1926 when it convinced the County Board of Supervisors to reverse its decision to issue a permit to a large hog-raising operation which had received permission to establish in the north Redondo area. Immediately following this victory, the Chamber formed an annexation committee to once again pursue the annexation of the Villa Tract and Grant district, this time to the city of Hermosa Beach. Those in favor of annexation argued that it would encourage new development in the area and would give the Villa Tracts "an identity of real value." Those opposed countered with claims that annexation would lead to increased property taxes. In the end, this latter argument proved more persuasive and annexation efforts failed by a vote of 185 to 15.

ANNEXATION OF NORTH REDONDO - GROWING TOGETHER: 1927 - 1939

One year after its failed attempt to annex to the city of Hermosa Beach, the Villa Tract Chamber of Commerce joined forces with several leading organizations in Redondo Beach and organized yet another annexation drive. Behind this new effort lay the threat of a million-dollar street paving program proposed by Los Angeles interests who owned 37 percent of area's property. Chamber representatives argued that the proposed program was a blatant attempt to recoup lost profits from unproductive oil land, rather than a genuine attempt to modernize the community. This argument succeeded, and on September 20, 1927, voters approved the annexation of the Redondo Villa Tracts to the city of Redondo Beach by a slim margin of thirteen votes.

More than 90 percent of the eligible voters cast their ballots. At the time of its annexation, the north Redondo area served as home for more than two thousand residents. "It is by far the greatest thing that has ever happened to this city," declared Henry Froude, president of the Redondo Beach Chamber of Commerce. Not all considered the annexation in such a positive light, however. In 1928, several Los Angeles commercial interests filed suit seeking a reversal of the annexation decision. These suits were followed by yet another in 1930. Finally in 1931, the last

legal obstacle to the complete and definite annexation of the Villa Tract had been removed.

Residential Development

Although the sub-division forces which were apparent during the early 1920s subsided somewhat during the Depression era, residential tract development continued in north Redondo. Most notable was the Shore Acres sub-division created by the Home Extension Association. Located near the junction of Mathews Avenue and Phelan Lane, this housing project attempted to strike a balance between the original rural identity associated with the Redondo Villa Tract and the more recent identity of residential sub-division. Included as a part of this housing project plan was a co-operative market site where residents of Shore Acres sold produce raised on their property. Each Saturday residents sold flowers, fresh vegetables, fruits, eggs, chickens and even canaries to the surrounding communities from the community's market house. A parking area adjacent to the market house was also provided by the Home Extension Association in an effort to attract customers from the surrounding communities of Torrance, Manhattan Beach, Inglewood and Hermosa Beach.

In 1937, the Redondo Beach City Council formally recognized the increasing residential nature of north Redondo in its acceptance of a Planning Commission recommendation that the area known as Villa Tract No. 2 be rezoned from unlimited industrial to suburban uses. Since its subdivision as rural farm land in 1905, north Redondo had experienced several shifts in its economic identity. The first shift occurred in the early 1920s when the land originally subdivided by Carlson for rural development suddenly became popular for its oil producing potential. The annexation of the area in 1927 and its identification as the city's future industrial site, resulted in yet another shift. Following annexation, almost the entire eastern section of the original Villa Tracts was zoned for industrial purposes. The construction of the Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing Company on property adjacent to Villa Tract No. 2 in 1928 appeared to confirm this industrial trend. By the early 1930s, however, dreams of unlimited oil production had faded and speculators who had purchased land during the oil boom were seeking opportunities to subdivide their property into residential sites. This move marked the third shift in the area's economy and set into motion a struggle between those seeking residential development and those who sought to perpetuate an industrial economy.

Physical Evidence - North Redondo

A number of civic improvements occurred in north Redondo during this period as the community moved away from its original rural economy toward the establishment of industrial Today, this tract is defined by Inglewood, Vail, Robinson and Artesia avenues.

One notable addition to the area was Villa Tract Pump Station No. 12, constructed in 1930. Site selection and building design were performed by the Public Works Engineering Corporation. William 0. Wilkins of Redondo Beach served as contractor. Although small, great care had been taken in the attention to architectural detailing. Ornamental green scroll work and three large flower boxes

adorned this small Mission-style building. Inside, plumbing equipment moved water through newly-laid lines from Hermosa reservoir to the surrounding community.

The construction of a new fire station at 2021 Redondo Beach (Artesia) Boulevard also reflected the expansion of north Redondo. Tentative sketches for the station were approved by the Redondo Beach City Council in 193 5. The building itself required a total city expenditure of \$1,500 for materials – an important consideration for a city suffering the restraints imposed by the Depression. Construction labor was provided through the Federal PWA program. The new station opened for business in December of 1938.

The Romanian Society club house, located at 2215 Grant Avenue and the North Redondo Community Hall offered residents a much needed opportunity to socialize. Both were located within the Grant district, in the center of the community's greatest residential settlement.

Residents of the Shore Acres sub-division met in the Community Hall regularly in order to attend Improvement Association meetings. Both served as important gathering sites for numerous organizations throughout the Second World War. Demand for the Community Hall became so great in fact, that prior to the construction of a new hall in 1940, the City Council had to intervene in order to settle scheduling disputes.

Tract housing construction occurred during this period despite the economic pressures of the Depression era. Most notable was the Shore Acres sub-division located near the junction of Mathews Avenue and Phelan Lane. Plans for this sub-division included a co-operative market house where residents could sell produce raised on their property. This development marked the community's transition from its earlier rural environment to the modem tract housing system.

The Manny House (1934), one of the City's historic landmarks, is an outstanding example of the many private residences constructed during this period. Undoubtedly others exist which merit equal recognition. Oil field structures tend to be ephemeral. Most disappear shortly after production was over, but here again, there could be concrete platforms or even vestiges of aging pumper rigs nestled into an otherwise unremarkable landscape.

WORLD WAR II EXPANSION

On the night of February 9, 1940 the southeastern section of the north Redondo community seemed to explode in a glorious display of fireworks. That night and for weeks afterward, people came in droves to see the accidental destruction of the Golden State Fireworks Manufacturing Company. They parked in all the vacant lots, in residents' driveways and in the open wheat fields. "The experience was beautiful, exciting and scary, and I will never forget the night of the blazing skies and red rockets," stated one resident. Although the company reopened on its original site during World War II and produced more than one hundred million artillery shells, prospects for its continued operation grew dim as the north Redondo community moved to fully embrace its post-war suburban identity.

A striking element of the residential growth in north Redondo following World War II were the tent communities which began to appear as veterans returned from the war. Faced with an acute shortage of rental property, veterans began purchasing

vacant lots on which to build their future homes. As an immediate answer to their families' housing needs and as a means of safeguarding valuable lumber, many veterans erected large tents as temporary shelters. As increasing numbers of tents began appearing in north Redondo, neighboring residents demanded that the City Council ban all forms of temporary housing.

Within two years of the Council's eviction of tent residents, property owners in north Redondo organized to boost building area minimums from 480 to 750 square feet. This debate, which eventually led to modifications in the district's building code, illustrated the significant changes which had occurred in north Redondo following World War II. Slowly at first and then more rapidly, a strong community of suburban residents had replaced the earlier sparse rural community which typified this area through the early 1940s. As increasing numbers of veterans and their families chose to settle in Redondo Beach and purchased the newly-constructed homes in and around north Redondo, the demand for a more urban setting and conveniences increased.

The Redondo Hills tract, north of Robinson Avenue, between Inglewood and Vail avenues was the first to develop. Following that, Safeway Homes offered property and houses adjacent to Redondo Hills. After fraud charges were proven against Safeway, a second concern completed the project. Another company, Security Construction Company of Los Angeles developed individual home sites throughout the area.

The increased demand for residential housing eventually culminated in the adoption of a re-zoning ordinance banning all poultry, rabbits, milk cows, horses and other domestic farm animals from the north Redondo area. Long-term residents strongly opposed this rezoning effort on the grounds that North Redondo had developed as a rural community. Many had invested their life savings in the purchase of small acreage in order to raise their own domestic animals and be somewhat self-dependent. Referring back to statements made by the original 1927 Annexation Committee that there would be no restrictions against local farming efforts except those already excluded by the County Health Department, some long-time residents attempted to block the zoning change. Unfortunately, the regional wave of sub-division combined with the tax advantages offered the city by real estate development companies were against such grass-root efforts to retain the rural environment.

Physical Evidence - North Redondo

The ten-year period between 1940 and 1950 brought many changes to the north Redondo area. Civic improvements, commercial development, and residential construction merged to reshape the community. The following offers a partial listing of these changes and related structures.

In 1940, the Redondo Beach city council approved plans for a new and expanded North Redondo Community Center to include a civic auditorium and a library. Preliminary drawings, plans and elevations were prepared by Walter 0. Wurdeman of Wurdeman and Becket, a Los Angeles architectural firm. Following approval by the council, the city prepared an application for WPA Federal Aid to construct the project. These plans were placed on hold however by the entrance of the United States into the Second World War in 1941.

Immediately following World War II, residents of Redondo Beach voted with an overwhelming majority to modernize and expand their school system in the northern areas of the City. With the issuance of a new bond and the receipt of \$55,000 from the federal grant program, Redondo Beach began construction on the Lincoln School located on Vail Avenue between Farrell and Plant avenues. Three years later, additional rooms were added to accommodate the increasing number of students.

In 1948, the City began negotiations with the owners of a ten-acre site located on Lilienthal and Ripley avenues for the construction of a new elementary school. This effort was designed to alleviate over crowding at Grant and Beryl schools. In 1945, J.H. Kitchin and his wife expanded their Novelty Manufacturing Studio located at 1935 Redondo Beach Boulevard. The couple also owned the Southwest Souvenir Company which was located at the Pier. The Kitchins had established their manufacturing company on Redondo Beach Boulevard prior to the war. Here they manufactured abalone pearl, agate and moonstone jewelry which they sold in their store on the Pier. By the end of the war only the Kitchin's novelty company and one other remained in Redondo Beach area out of an original eighteen such operations. The Kitchins' novelty shop had been able to survive the war years using a large stock of gold wire, moonstones and abalone pearls. In 1945, as supplies became available once again, the Kitchins expanded the operation by adding a retail gift shop to the factory. Here, they sold costume jewelry, Laguna Pottery, watches, etc.

Announcements for the large Redondo Hills subdivision containing 145, five and six-room houses appeared in 1943. Constructed on land purchased by Mrs. May Isabel Campbell Johnson, Redondo Hills represented 70 acres located north of Robinson Avenue, between Inglewood and Vail avenues. Plans included the paving of streets and the laying of sidewalks.

The initial ten homes were constructed on Pinkard, May and Timothy Avenues. Later in 1947, an additional 97 homes were completed on Perkins Lane and the surrounding streets which included Barkley Lane, the 2900 block of Gibson Lane, Blaisdell avenue, Carlsbad Street, Faber Street and McBain Street.

In 1948 plans to complete North Redondo's "New Tract" were announced by Safeway Homes Limited. Located within the remaining triangular section of the tract bordering the Redondo Hills development, Manhattan Beach Boulevard and Inglewood Avenue, the new Safeway sub-division offered promises of 150 new, two-bedroom homes set in a fully restricted site.

A second major developer who began work in North Redondo in 1948 was the Security Construction Company of Los Angeles. Rather than purchase and develop a single large tract, this housing construction company purchased individual 54 individual lots through out the area on which they constructed 40 homes which sold for \$4,000 and fourteen homes with sold for \$3,200. Advertisements for the project stated that all homes constructed would have three rooms and a bath and would be planned so that two additional rooms could be added without disturbing the original floor plan. A full list of all addresses is provided in the article entitled "\$200,000 Permit Value for 50 Small Homes On Scattered No. Redondo Sites."

Today, Redondo Beach remains a vibrant community focused that is fully developed with civic, institutional, and residential development.

1224 Harper Avenue

Description

The subject property includes a two-story single-family residence constructed in 1914 and an ancillary building. The residence is of wood construction and built in a rectangular footprint on a raised concrete base. The building is vernacular with elements of the Craftsman style (Figure 3). The building features a front-gabled roof with a moderate pitch sheathed in composition shingles. The building appears to be sided in horizontal clapboard throughout that was recently installed according to the property owner whose family has owned the property since the 1970s.

The primary façade has been substantially altered since the current owners purchased the property in the 1970s (Figure 4). The window and window openings have been altered, the original entry porch and primary entrance have been altered, and the primary façade has been substantially altered with ground and second floor porches.



Figure 3. Overview of the primary residence, facing north.



Figure 4. Primary façade, circa 1974.

The building's primary (southwestern) façade features a partially enclosed porch accessed by two steps and enclosed by wood balustrades and supported with wood columns (Figure 5). The primary entrance features a wood door inset with a stained glass window and flanked by wood multi-pane casement windows on either side. The door with stained glass is not original to the building according to the property owner. The original sleeping porch was enclosed and converted to living space at around this same time according to the property owner. The porch and entrance are covered by the second-story balcony deck, both of which were installed in 1983. Similar to the ground floor, the second-story balcony is enclosed by wood balustrades. The second floor appears to have two separate wood doors inset with multi-pane windows, each covered by an awning (Figure 6).

⁸ City of Redondo Beach. Permit No. LG-8351517. Issued November 21, 1983.



Figure 5. Porch on primary (southwestern) elevation, facing east.



Figure 6. Second-story deck, facing southeast.

The northwestern elevation features a chimney with a metal chimney cap (Figure 7). The northwestern elevation features only windows and no entrances. According to the property owner, an entry vestibule was located on this façade but was removed when the extant siding was installed. Windows include three vertical sliding vinyl units on the second story, two horizontal sliding vinyl units on the ground floor, and one original wood multi-pane unit flanking the chimney. The chimney has been enclosed with a modern vinyl siding with metal flashing.

Similar to the northwestern elevation, the southeastern elevation features only windows and no entrances. The southeastern elevation, however, includes a small attached wood cabinet that houses mechanical equipment and is clad in clapboard (Figure 8). The second floor includes three vertical sliding vinyl windows, whereas the first floor includes a single vertical sliding vinyl window and a horizontal sliding aluminum window. Aside from the single wood-frame window adjacent to the chimney, all windows have been replaced with modern vinyl and aluminum doors.



Figure 7. Northwestern elevation, facing southeast.



Figure 8. Southeastern elevation, facing north.

The rear (northeastern) elevation features a partially enclosed and covered porch. The porch was rebuilt and expanded when the current owners purchased the property in the 1970s according to the property owner. The rear porch is accessed by a five-step wood staircase flanked by wood railings on either side (Figure 9). The porch is enclosed by a wood balustrade and supports a wood awning above the porch. The wood awning is relatively flat and exhibits exposed rafters. The rear porch also includes a wood trellis underneath the deck. The rear elevation includes a single wood door inset with a window. Windows on the rear elevation include a pair of vertical sliding vinyl windows that flank the rear entrance and a pair of vertical sliding vinyl windows on the second story (Figure 10). The residence is in good condition overall.

The rear of the property includes a detached shed constructed of wood on a concrete base. The shed is rectangular in shape and exhibits a gambrel roof sheath in composition shingles with a minor overhang (Figure 12). The shed is sided in horizontal tongue-and-groove wood and exhibits wood doors on the primary (southwestern) elevation. The shed is in fair condition. The rear of the property also includes a manicured lawn, mature trees, and various flowers situated across multiple flowerbeds (Figure 13). According to the property, a smaller secondary residential building was previously in the rear of the property but was subsequently demolished (Figure 14).



Figure 9. Rear (northeastern) elevation, facing southwest.



Figure 10. Rear elevation, exhibiting entrance and windows.

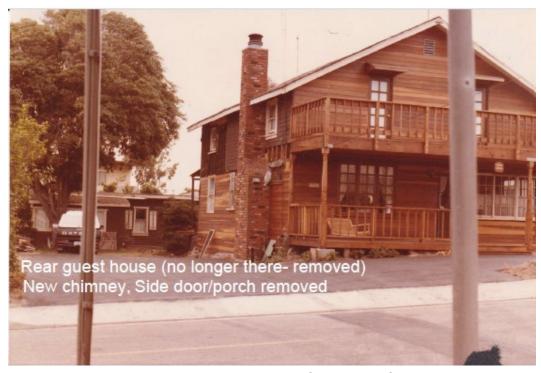


Figure 11. View of secondary residence, left of frame (demolished). Note original brick chimney and new siding and primary façade alterations under construction.



Figure 12. Detached shed, facing east.



Figure 13. Rear yard of property, facing northwest.

The interior of the subject property features a variety of flooring materials including wood, carpet, and linoleum. Siding on walls include wooden siding, stucco, brick, and wallpaper. The primary entrance leads into a small foyer, which is not original according to the property owner (Figure 14), that continues into the kitchen and dining room (Figure 15). The kitchen features modern appliances and wood cabinets (Figure 16). Most notably, the interior features a brick hearth and fireplace for the chimney (Figure 17). One bathroom features a stand-in shower (Figure 18), whereas the other includes a bathtub (Figure 19). The second story is accessed from a staircase near the rear end of the property. The staircase that leads up to the second story includes a single wood rail against the wood and is flanked by bedrooms on either side upon approaching the second story (Figure 20). The interior is in fair condition.



Figure 14. Primary entrance and foyer, facing southwest.



Figure 15. Kitchen and dining area, facing southwest.



Figure 16. View of kitchen.



Figure 17. View of hearth and fireplace.



Figure 18. Bathroom exhibiting stand-in shower.



Figure 19. Bathroom exhibiting bathtub.



Figure 20. Interior staircase, facing northeast.

Construction History

The original permit for the building is not available. The original architect, if any, and builder are unknown. The only permit received from a public records request was for the porch work on the primary façade. According to the property owner other alterations include:

- New siding
- Replacement of nearly all windows and several openings altered
- Replacement entry doors
- Chimney reclad
- Removal of secondary entrance and associated vestibule
- Reconstruction and expansion of rear porch
- Enclosure of original sleeping porch with replacement door with stained glass
- Demolition of secondary residence
- Interior alterations impacting circulation

Ownership History

Due to the sparsity of public records, a comprehensive ownership history could not be compiled.

Evaluation

The building has no known association with a specific event marking an important moment in history nor does it reflect an important pattern of events. The building is within the Redondo Villa Tract and was improved in 1914, 8 years after the tract was established. Based upon a review of the tract map and current size of the parcel (0.17 acre), the lot was not sold as a small farm. Based upon a review of historical topographic maps, this area of Redondo Beach was not noted for development until 1930, and no orchards or other types of agricultural lands are noted on the maps. Therefore, the subject property is not associated with the early agricultural development that spurred the residential development of Redondo Beach. Based upon a review of the City's historic context statement, the subject property is not noted for an association with a demonstrably significant event or pattern of events. The subject property has been substantially altered as described above and therefore does not convey an association with the early development of Redondo Beach.

No persons who made demonstrably significant contributions to the history of the nation, state, or region are known to be associated with the subject property.

The subject property is vernacular and does not reflect a style of architecture. Although the building reflects vestiges of the Craftsman style of architecture that was popular at the time the subject property was improved, they are common and do not reflect high artistic value. Due to substantial alterations, the subject property does not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. The primary residence on the subject property has been substantially altered and does not retain integrity of design, materials, and craftsmanship.

⁹ City of Redondo Beach, "Permit No. LG-8351517."

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The subject property was graded during construction, and there is no reason to assume the subject property would yield important information in prehistory or history.

Because the subject property does not meet one or more eligibility criteria and does not possess integrity, it is not eligible for listing in federal, state, or local historical registers. Therefore, the subject property should be removed from the City of Redondo Beach's List of Historic Properties.

Findings and Conclusions

Because the subject property does not meet one or more eligibility criteria and does not possess integrity, it is not eligible for listing in federal, state, or local historical registers. Therefore, the subject property should be removed from the City of Redondo Beach's List of Historic Properties.

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