

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

DRAFT

Historic name: North Beach Historic District

Other names/site number: San Clemente Amusement Center

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: Roughly bounded by N El Camino Real, Avenida Estacion, and Boca De La Playa

City or town: San Clemente State: California County: Orange

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/restaurant

RECREATION/sports facility

CULTURE/music facility

CULTURE/theater

SOCIAL/clubhouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/restaurant

RECREATION/sports facility

CULTURE/music facility

CULTURE/theater

SOCIAL/clubhouse

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS:

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Stucco, red clay tile, glass, wood, wrought-iron, ceramic tile, timbers, board-formed concrete, and brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

North Beach Historic District is located at the northernmost end of the City of San Clemente. North Beach refers to a roughly triangular area where El Camino Real, the city's primary east-west commercial corridor, curves northward and runs parallel with the coastline. The topography of the district is generally flat, with a noticeable slope from the northeast corner of the triangle towards the coastline. The street pattern is curvilinear to account for the contours of the landscape. In addition to the previously listed San Clemente Beach Club (later Ole Hanson Beach Club), the district includes four contributing buildings: Aquarium Café (later OC Fresca), Casino San Clemente, San Clemente Theatre (later Miramar Theatre) and San Clemente Bowling Alley. The contributing buildings are all one- and two-stories in height and Spanish Colonial Revival in style. The four post-period of significance noncontributing resources are three commercial buildings along North El Camino Real and a pump station at the south corner of Avenida Estacion. All of the contributing buildings have an east-west orientation such that they are visible by people approaching from the coastline by rail or from inland by car, as was the case historically. Most of the resources include surface parking lots and landscaped open space

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with a common palette of plant material. The district is further united by wide colored concrete sidewalks. The district as a whole retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The contributing buildings are substantially unaltered and the noncontributing buildings have the same commercial use and small scale as those that existed historically in the same locations.

Narrative Description

Located along North El Camino Real, North Beach Historic District occupies a prominent location at what was historically the northernmost tip of the City of San Clemente. Since its construction in 1928, El Camino Real, a segment of the Pacific Coast Highway (Highway 1), was San Clemente's main thoroughfare, and for many years the only route available for those traveling by car. The completion of the San Diego Freeway (Interstate 5) in 1960 changed the orientation of the city such that later development occurred further inland, around on and off ramps, and since functions as the main route through San Clemente. For those taking the more scenic route, North Beach remains a prominent visual marker and point of entry into the original city limits of San Clemente.

The triangular area that makes up the historic district is bound on the north by North El Camino Real, on the southwest by Avenida Estacion, and by Boca De La Playa on the southeast. The district includes the National Register listed San Clemente (later Ole Hanson) Beach Club located at the south corner of the triangle, Casino San Clemente, San Clemente (later Miramar) Theatre, and San Clemente Bowling Alley located at the northeast corner; a restaurant, OC Fresca (historically the Aquarium Café) south of the short stretch of North El Camino Real; and other small businesses southeast of the intersection of North El Camino Real and Avenida Estacion at the northwest corner. Two small streets traverse the district. Calle Deschecha is a narrow, one- and two-way road¹ that crosses the north end of the triangle, south of North El Camino Real. North Avenida Pico intersects North El Camino Real, crosses Calle Deschecha to the south, and curves west to intersect with Boca De La Playa. The seemingly vast areas between the buildings are comprised of meticulously landscaped open spaces, surface parking lots, and sidewalks.

Though the area is relatively flat, the east side slopes up dramatically to the level of the Beach Club, which is situated on a knoll to take advantage of views of the ocean. Historically, the flat area of land west of the Beach Club was an open space between the Beach Club, Aquarium Café, and adjacent motel (demolished). A 1947 aerial photograph shows an open grassy lawn bordered by a few small trees and shrubs and several footpaths running across the area. The National Register nomination for the Beach Club suggests that this space may have been occupied by handball and squash courts. This portion of the space is used as a surface parking lot, with a capacity of 106 cars. The parking lot is paved with asphalt, and several islands in the lot are planted with shrubs and palm trees. An additional thirteen parallel parking spaces are located along Calle Deschecha.

¹ Calle Deschecha is a one-way road southeast of its intersection with East Avenida Pico and becomes a two-way road to the northwest of East Avenida Pico.

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A grass lawn planted with palm trees is located to the east of the parking lot, where it slopes up towards the Beach Club. Rows of palm trees border the properties along Avenida Pico, Calle Deshecha, Avenida Estacion, and along the stucco wall surrounding the Beach Club pool. A subterranean flood control channel runs through the area, discharging into the ocean to the south. Several non-historic utilitarian structures are located throughout the district. One noncontributing structure, a sewage lift/pump station enclosed by white stucco walls, is located at the southeast corner of the district, behind the Beach Club property. A small, concrete wall trash enclosure topped by a wood roof structure is in the northwest corner of the parking lot, not counted as a resource due to its unsubstantial size and impermanent nature.

The district is a visually cohesive area, distinguished from its surroundings by changes in topography and differences in the scale and density of the surrounding built environment. To the southwest, a public beach and Metrolink railroad track, which runs along the coastline, is on the opposite side of Avenida Estacion. Further north to the southwest is the San Clemente Metrolink Station. Avenida Estacion ends at a narrow, rectangular-shaped beach parking lot, located at the south side of the Beach Club approximately twenty feet below at the beach level. To the southeast, Boca De La Playa ends in a cul-de-sac, twenty feet above the beach-level parking lot. On the opposite side of Boca De La Playa from the Beach Club there is a relatively densely developed neighborhood of single- and multi-family residences. Other than a few, small intermittent commercial buildings along the north side of El Camino Real, the topography turns into sparsely developed meandering hills consisting of various parklands with natural vegetation, a stark contrast to the manicured lawns, landscaped sidewalk, and parking lot improvements within the district.

Landscaping is harmonious and consists of various types of palm trees, large succulents and tropical plants such as birds of paradise, and expanses of grassy lawns. Sidewalks vary from plain concrete to various types of red clay tile and scored red-tinted concrete. There are two types of streetlights in the area, a taller cobra head with a single lamp and a shorter goose neck with double lamps. While they are compatible in design and scale with the historic character of the area, these 1992-1994 improvements were identified as part of the landscape and not counted as resources.² Vacant parcels and surface parking lots within the district boundaries were also not counted as resources. The large parking lot northwest of the Beach Club was historically open space and should remain as such.

CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

1. San Clemente Beach Club (1928) Individually Listed Building
Known as Ole Hanson Beach Club
105 West Avenida Pico (primary); 112 Boca De La Playa (secondary)
Architect: Virgil Westbrook and Paul McAlister; Builder: Strang Brothers

² City of San Clemente Community Development Department Application No. 5-93-386, California Coastal Commission Staff Report, January 25, 1994.

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The Spanish Colonial Revival style Beach Club is a one- and two-story, wood-frame building. It was the first building constructed in North Beach and was individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. The wood frame building is irregular in plan. The two-story portion has a side-gabled roof with a corner tower on the northeast and a tall, round chimney stack on the southwest. It is flanked by one-story wings on the north and south with flat roof balconies surrounded by a tall parapet. The multiple roofs are clad in red clay tile and the exterior walls are clad in smooth stucco with ornamental tile work, wrought-iron window grilles, and timber trellises.

The primary entrance is centered on the south elevation of the two-story portion, articulated by a portico with shed roof supported by timbers and large square columns at the outer corners. Fenestration primarily consists of tripartite windows with large, single lights flanked by multi-light casements. There are also groupings of double-hung sash windows and occasionally porthole windows. The building occupies the center of a large, irregularly shaped parcel and is surrounded by expansive, manicured lawns with tiled walkways. On the north, the building partially encloses an outdoor Olympic-size swimming pool, oriented toward the beach. A stucco wall completes the enclosure of the pool.

Alterations

In 2016, the building and pool were comprehensively rehabilitated. The building exterior retains all aspects of integrity. The exterior retains its primary character-defining features from the period of significance.

2. Aquarium Café (1931)

One Contributing Building

Known as OC Fresca, 1814 North El Camino Real
Architect: L.C. Smith; Builder: Strang Brothers

The former Aquarium Café was constructed in 1931 and designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style by architect L.C. Smith.³ This one-story, wood-frame commercial building has an irregular plan and a complex roof with gabled, hipped, and shed portions. The main portion of the building has an octagonal shape, reflected in a centered, octagonal turret that rises above the roofline. There are multiple hexagonal roof towers, two of which are the most prominent: one on the northwest and the other on the southwest portion of the roof. The roofs all have flush eaves and are clad in red clay tiles. The exterior walls are clad with smooth stucco.

The main entrance is located on the northwest side of the building and is covered by a projecting hipped roof supported on each end by square stucco columns. Fenestration consists of various groupings of wood, multi-light windows. There are also glazed portholes, evenly spaced on each side of the hexagonal tower south of the entrance.

³ "\$50,000 Café Scheduled for San Clemente," *Santa Ana Register*, September 30, 1930, 8.

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On the south elevation, partially glazed multi-light floor to ceiling window and doors overlook a rear patio. It is enclosed on the south along Calle Deshecha by a glass wall with glass gate accessed from the street by tiled steps.

Alterations

When originally constructed as the Aquarium Café, the building featured saltwater aquarium displays. The building has been occupied by various restaurants including the Anchor Inn, Margarita's Village, and the Ichibiri Restaurant. Historic photographs indicate alterations occurred to the primary (north) façade. The original main entrance appears to have been through an arched opening fronting on North El Camino Real. This entry was closed off in 1982 and is behind the half-octagonal addition that extends to the sidewalk on El Camino Real. A projecting hipped roof was subsequently added to the building on the northwest corner, and the main entrance was relocated to this area.

Historic photos indicate an original, recessed side entry with multi-light French doors facing the parking lot and centered under the gable roof element. This entrance was infilled and replaced with five rectangular, single-light windows, evenly spaced across the elevation. Two wood, multi-light hopper transom windows were retained. The building was rehabilitated in 2019. During this time, the non-original picture windows were infilled and replaced with two, smaller multi-light windows where the original French doors would have been located beneath the transom windows. The glass wall enclosure of the rear patio was added and rear entrance doors and windows were also reconfigured.

Although the building has been altered multiple times for different tenants, the building retains its overall character in terms of scale and massing and materials and retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the district. The exterior retains its primary character-defining features from the period of significance.

3. Casino San Clemente (1937)

One Contributing Building

140 West Avenida Pico

Architect: Charles A. Hunter; Builder: Strang Brothers

Casino San Clemente was originally constructed as a music hall. It is a one-story building, irregular in plan with wood-frame construction. It was designed by Charles A. Hunter and constructed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.⁴ A parasol roof clad in asphalt shingles covers the main portion of the building, crowned by a tall cupola with arched vents. South of the main portion is a rectangular wing with cross-gabled roof clad in red clay tiles. There is also a small rectangular projection with a shed roof clad in asphalt shingles. The primary (west) elevation includes a low-pitched, front-gabled roof clad in red clay tile. The exterior walls are clad in smooth stucco. The main entrance is centered on the west elevation, consisting of a three-bay entrance porch sheltered by a shed roof also clad in clay tiles. The entrance bays are separated by two square columns and are accessed by brick steps. Fenestration consists of multi-light folding

⁴ Architectural Resources Group, *Casino San Clemente 140 W. Avenida Pico, San Clemente, California: Historic Structures Report & CEQA Analysis* (San Clemente, CA: City of San Clemente, August 20, 2007), 8.

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casements throughout the building. The building occupies an irregularly shaped parcel that includes a landscaped yard and a masonry wall defining the perimeter.

Alterations

The Casino was sold in the 1950s and became a Moose Lodge. Although the Lodge offered dancing as part of its social program, the building was primarily operated as an assembly hall. By 1976, the building was operating as Sebastian's West, a 360-seat dinner theater offering Broadway musical productions and theater. Luminaries such as Mickey Rooney, Vera Miles, Caesar Romero, Martha Raye, and Ann Miller starred in the many Broadway musicals performed there. The China Healthways Institute assumed ownership of the building circa 2000. The building has been occupied by offices, a science museum, and a private conference center for a medical device marketing company. Alterations made to the interior to adapt the building to its new use are compatible with the historic character of the property.⁵

Several early views of the Casino indicate the parasol roof was originally light in color (described in one source as silver), not the red composition shingles that clad the roof. All early photographs located thus far also illustrate the brick bases of the columns on the entrance porch were originally painted to match the stucco as opposed to the unpainted brick.⁶ The southern portion of the building was adapted into a restaurant space in 2011. Window and door openings were added on the south and east elevations, along with a new wheelchair ramp and entrance.

The building exterior retains integrity and contributes to the district. The exterior retains its primary character-defining features from the period of significance.

4. San Clemente Theatre (1937) One Contributing Building
Known as Miramar Theatre, 1700 North El Camino Real
Architect: C.A. Balch; Builder: Strang Brothers

The reinforced, poured-in-place concrete building was constructed in 1937 as the San Clemente Theatre and designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The large, two-story commercial theater is rectangular in plan. The north and east elevations feature multiple shed roofs and a three-story tower with hipped roof at the northeast corner of the building, also clad in red clay tiles. The auditorium portion of the building to the rear is covered by a barrel-shaped roof with a parapet clad in red clay tiles. The exterior walls on the north and east are clad in lightly textured stucco and the south and west elevations are board-formed concrete. The main entrance is located on the primary (east) elevation. It is punctuated by the forty-four-foot tall, square tower that visually dominates the building's exterior and rises above the half-height, shed roof entrance canopy supported by a trio of square, brick columns and timber lintels. The entrance canopy is used as a marquee and is oriented toward the northeast corner of the parcel, facing the intersection of North El Camino Real and Boca de la Playa.

⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁶ Ibid., 19-20.

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The north, south, and west elevations also feature evenly spaced pilasters capped with red clay tiles just beneath the roofline. Two battered stucco chimneys are located at the east-facing end wall. Fenestration is limited to the primary elevation and tower. There is a combination of recessed, rectangular, and arched openings. The windows and doors are concealed behind plywood and are not visible.

The property also includes a bowling alley building (described separately), located west of the theater building. A narrow, open concrete breezeway separates the rear elevations of the two buildings.

Alterations

A one-story addition on the north elevation was constructed in 1961 for an Orange Julius.⁷ Between 1969 and 1970, the building was renamed the Miramar Theatre and the interior was redecorated.⁸ Renovation plans drafted and approved in October 1969 indicate the restrooms were remodeled; the interior and exterior were repainted, and the concession counter, box office, seats, curtain, and screen were replaced.⁹ The brick veneer was sandblasted to remove paint. The main entrance received a new aluminum door and openings on either side were refitted with aluminum frames. The door on the east elevation (south of the main entrance) was sandblasted to remove paint and the original wood was re-stained. A steel column with brick veneer was installed as a sign pylon to hold a double-faced sign. The theatre lobby was damaged by a fire in 2005.¹⁰ The windows and entrance openings are boarded and windows have been removed. The openings all appear to be original. Despite the visible amount of deferred maintenance, the building has sufficient integrity to contribute to the district. The exterior retains the majority of its primary character-defining features from the period of significance.

5. San Clemente Bowling Center (1946)
150 West Avenida Pico
Builder: Strang-Smith Land Co.

One Contributing Building

The bowling center is a long, one-story commercial building, rectangular in plan. The wood-frame building was designed in the Spanish-Colonial Revival style. It has a barrel-vaulted roof clad in red asphalt shingles and a stepped clay tile clad parapet on the primary (west) elevation. A four-sided cupola with a hipped roof caps the center of the parapet. The exterior walls are clad with lightly textured stucco. The main entrance is centered on the primary elevation within a recessed opening beneath a projecting arched hood with two inset windows on either side. The main entrance is accessed by a set of concrete steps paved in red tiles. Several irregularly spaced openings, including what appears to be a secondary entrance on the north elevation, interrupt

⁷ Westlake Reed Leskosky and Lawson-Burke, *Miramar Theatre and Bowling Alley Historic Structures Report* (San Clemente, CA: City of San Clemente Community Development Department, May 17, 2013), 3-3.

⁸ Historic Resources Group, *North Beach Historic District Historic Assessment & Planning Analysis* (San Clemente, CA: City of San Clemente, May 2009), 18.

⁹ Historic Resources Group, *Draft Cultural Resources Technical Report for the Proposed Miramar Plaza Project* (San Clemente, CA: City of San Clemente, August 2006), 16.

¹⁰ Westlake Reed Leskosky, 4-3.

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what are essentially unadorned side elevations. All of these openings are covered with plywood and the window and doors are not visible.

Alterations

The bowling center was closed and re-opened as the El Torro Frame Company in 1971. Between 1972 and 1992, it changed occupancy multiple times; various uses included an Elks Lodge, Dana Point Sail Makers, mental healthcare facility, ESA South County Center, Big City Scuba, Episcopal SVC Alliance, and eventual vacancy.¹¹

Despite the frequent owner/occupant turnover, the building is minimally altered, except for the roofing, the main entrance doors and the absence of an original “Bowling” roof sign, removed at an unknown date.¹² The original entrance doors were replaced with wood slab doors. The roof was originally covered in a red rolled asphalt material that has since been layered with red asphalt shingles.¹³ The windows have been removed and the openings are covered with plywood. Additionally, the window openings on the north and south elevations have been modified various times over the building’s history. The building retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the district. The exterior retains its primary character-defining features from the period of significance.

NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

6. Commercial Building (circa 1965) One Noncontributing Building
1844 North El Camino Real
Architect and Builder Unknown

The one-story commercial building, Mid-Century Modern in style, was constructed between 1961 and 1967 according to historic aerial photographs. The original building permit was not found. The building is located on the far southeast corner of its irregularly shaped parcel and is oriented toward a surface parking lot and another small building on the northwest corner of the same parcel at the intersection of North El Camino Real and Avenida Estacion. The building is rectangular in plan and has a low-pitched front-gabled roof with wide, overhanging eaves. The three street-facing elevations (north, west, and south) are covered with plywood and are not visible. The east elevation is concrete block, utilitarian in design without any openings.

The building was a service station before it was remodeled with a new façade for use as a real estate office in 1979.¹⁴ In the 1990s, the building was converted for use as a restaurant. The building was most recently occupied by Kaylani Coffee Co., since 2003, and featured a floor-to-ceiling glass storefront with small porch entry on the northwest corner of the building.¹⁵

¹¹ Westlake Reed Leskosky, 3-3.

¹² Historic Resources Group, *Draft Cultural Resources Technical Report*, 14.

¹³ Westlake Reed Leskosky, 1-3.

¹⁴ “Action of the Architectural Review Board,” City of San Clemente, May 22, 1979.

¹⁵ City of San Clemente, Certificate of Occupancy for 1844 North El Camino Real, August 8, 2003.

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7. Flowers and Friends (circa 1991)
1844 North El Camino Real
Architect and Builder Unknown

One Noncontributing Building

The small, pentagonal-shaped building was constructed in 1990-1991.¹⁶ It is located on the far northwest corner of its irregularly shaped parcel and is oriented toward the intersection of North El Camino Real and Avenida Estacion. It is separated from an adjacent building located on the same parcel by a surface parking lot to its southeast. The steeply sloped, hipped roof is clad in composition shingles with clay tiles along the ridge lines. Shallow, open eaves have exposed rafter tails. Openings on each elevation consist of hollow wood slab doors. A metal frame awning extends from the northern elevations, sheltering a stepped, wood flower stand.

8. 7-Eleven (1973)
1802 North El Camino Real
Architect: Ronald W. Martin and Assoc.

One Noncontributing Building

The one-story commercial building, rectangular in plan with a flat roof, is oriented to the east, overlooking a surface parking lot with driveway access from North El Camino Real on the north and Calle Deshecha on the south.¹⁷ A large, overhanging parapet clad in shingles above lightly textured stucco accentuates the roofline above the east elevation storefront. The exterior is clad in textured brick. On the primary elevation, the main entrance is centered within the storefront opening and consists of partially glazed, metal double doors. There are no openings on the north, south, or west elevations.

9. Pump Station (1980)
APN 057-192-19
Engineer: Alderman, Swift and Lewis

One Noncontributing Structure

At the southeast corner of the large parking lot in the district is a main wastewater pump station, constructed by the City of San Clemente in 1980 according to plans prepared by the engineering firm, Alderman, Swift and Lewis.¹⁸ Rectangular in plan and constructed into the sloping hill behind the Ole Hanson Beach Club, the pump station is enclosed by white stucco walls with brick coping. A small projection with shed roof clad in red clay tile is on the west elevation of the structure with a hollow metal slab door on its north wall. Flanking stairs with metal pipe railings lead to metal gates that provide access to the utilities enclosed by the structure.

¹⁶ Amber Gregg, "Minor Cultural Heritage Permit (MCHP) 14-257, Flowers and Friends Kiosk Remodel and Addition," San Clemente Zoning Administrator Staff Report, October 22, 2014, 1; Jerry Ambrose, "CUP 90-154 Flowers and Friends," San Clemente Planning Commission Meeting Minutes, March 5, 1991, 1.

¹⁷ City of San Clemente Building Department, Building Permit No. 12865, January 31, 1973.

¹⁸ Alderman, Swift and Lewis, *Main Wastewater Pump Station, Gravity Sewers and Pump Main*, September 4, 1980, Architectural Drawing Set.

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Integrity

The district retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Location: The district retains integrity of location. The resources that contribute to the district remain in their original locations.

Design: The district resources are essentially unchanged from when they were originally constructed. The four contributing buildings and one previously listed building are Spanish Colonial Revival in style and continue to display the characteristic features of the style, including irregular plans, asymmetrical facades, multiple roofs, tower features, arcades, and decorative details of wood, brick, and tile. Thus, they retain integrity of design, as originally intended by Ole Hanson and contribute to the historic character of North Beach. Public improvements, including the street and sidewalk paving, landscaping, and street lighting, are all compatible with the historic character of North Beach, consistent with development of the area in design.

Setting: The district is a visually distinct area, cohesive within its boundaries in terms of size and scale of the buildings and open spaces that characterize the area and create many vantage points from within its boundaries. The relationships between the contributing resources remain unchanged. The street pattern in and around the district also remains largely unchanged with the rail line extant along the southwest boundary. The area immediately surrounding the district developed gradually from the 1920s, with commercial buildings along El Camino Real and residences on the hillsides on the opposite side of Boca De La Playa. Nearby buildings are compatible in overall scale and massing, and several are designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Thus, the district retains integrity of setting.

Materials: The contributing resources are largely intact, particularly with regard to exterior materials, including stucco wall cladding, red clay roof tiles, and decorative details of wood, brick, and tile. Alterations to the contributing buildings have been in keeping with this palette of materials and materials beyond repair have been replaced in kind. The Casino, Theater, and Bowling Center have experienced varying degrees of interior modification, and each retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic association with the district as a whole. Thus, the district retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship: The contributing resources continue to convey the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style that defined the city during the period of significance. The majority of the materials characteristic of the style have been preserved. Examples include steel, hand troweled stucco walls, smooth Mission finish, and slight undulations and bull-nosed corners and edges, including archways with no control/expansion joints. The level of workmanship has been maintained through rehabilitation work. Therefore, the district retains integrity of workmanship.

Feeling: The district retains integrity of feeling. It conveys a strong sense of place from its original period of development in the 1920s and 1930s. The contributing resources retain their

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historic relationship as elements of the city's amusement center, with public access to the beach and ocean views. The three noncontributing buildings and one noncontributing structure do not detract from the historic character of the district. While the three buildings were constructed outside of the period of significance, their use, size, scale, and massing are not a departure from the properties that originally occupied these parcels. The structure is also designed in such a way that it blends into its surroundings, tucked into the hillside and clad in white stucco with brick and red clay tile accents.

Association: The district retains integrity of association as the northern gateway to San Clemente and as the heart of the community. North Beach continues to possess a sense of arrival to the city for those traveling by rail or automobile. For visitors and residents, the district continues to function as a gathering place for commercial, cultural, and recreational activities.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1927-1946

Significant Dates

1927

1928

1931

1937

1946

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Westbrook, Virgil

McAlister, Paul

Hunter, Charles A.

Balch, C.A.

Strang Brothers

Strang-Smith Land Co.

Smith, L.C.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

North Beach Historic District is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation. Founded in 1925, San Clemente was one of the first new master planned towns in California. Located at the northern entrance to San Clemente on El Camino Real, by 1947, the resources comprising the district were referred to as the amusement center. Taken together, they reflect city founder Ole Hanson's intent to develop a beachside community that promoted social welfare with unique public amenities such as generously sized open spaces and a variety of recreational facilities, aesthetically modeled on a romanticized version of California history. In order to create the atmosphere he envisioned, the architecture of San Clemente was restricted to the Spanish Colonial Revival style. The period of significance extends from the year Ole Hanson published his plan for the community in 1927, to the completion of the last major building in North Beach in 1946.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Introduction

The historic character of San Clemente is largely attributable to the vision of real estate developer and founder Ole Hanson. Hanson had long dreamed of developing a model seaside community, what he called a "Spanish Village by the Sea." In a letter to a friend, Hanson described his ideal city:

I vision a place where people can live together more pleasantly than 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.... I can see sidewalks 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. I want people to have more than a piece of land; I want them to have location, environment, development.... This will be a place where a man can breathe! I have a clean canvas and I am determined to paint a clean picture. Think of it as a canvas five miles long and one-half mile wide.¹⁹

In 1925, Hanson partnered with a longtime business associate, millionaire financier and oil man Hamilton H. Cotton. Cotton was heading up a syndicate of bankers and businessmen to purchase the land that became San Clemente. Hanson saw his opportunity and became the largest investor

¹⁹ Doris I. Walker, "Ole Hanson's Dream," *The Heritage of San Clemente: Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Spanish Village by the Sea, 1925-2000* (San Clemente, CA: The Heritage of San Clemente Foundation, 2000), 4.

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in the syndicate, backed by forty-five others, owning some 2,000 acres of land.²⁰ The city was laid out by engineers Horace Taylor and William Ayer.²¹ When the Orange County Board of Supervisors rejected his first plat plan out of fear of the untested concept of master planning an entire municipality and dedicating public streets where there was yet no city, Hanson instead filed the city map as a surveyor's map and retained ownership of the roads himself.²² On December 6, 1926, the first lots in San Clemente went up for sale. By the end of the month, foundations were being laid for the town's first buildings. In the first six months, 1,200 lots were sold for \$1,250,000; a record in real estate sales of the type by Los Angeles realty dealers at the time.²³

San Clemente as a Master Planned Community

Ole Hanson was not merely a real estate developer, he was a community builder. From the beginning, Hanson had a clear vision of shared community facilities and social welfare programs that he wanted to provide for the people of San Clemente. He stated, "I feel that my past success in real estate will assure them of future prosperity here, and I feel that by giving a chance to live intelligently and artistically, I may possibly influence other builders to help."²⁴ In addition to providing facilities required for any successful town—such as roads and streetlights—Hanson wanted the residents of San Clemente to have "more than a piece of land."²⁵

In order to create the atmosphere Hanson envisioned, the architecture of San Clemente was restricted to the Spanish Colonial Revival style.²⁶ His vision for the Spanish Village by the Sea was more than meandering streets and white stucco houses with red tile 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. As such, San Clemente is considered one of the earliest master planned communities in California.

Other examples are Torrance and Palos Verdes Estates, neither of which were fully realized and differ from San Clemente. Torrance was designed by Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. in 1911. The town was divided into three distinct areas for commercial, residential, and industrial development. A chief architect for the town, Irving Gill, was retained to oversee and approve all development plans, and was tasked with designing model homes to jump start development. Only ten of the homes were constructed and were not well received by buyers. Development was

²⁰ Jennifer A. Garey and the San Clemente Historical Society, *Images of America: San Clemente* (San Francisco, CA: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 9.

²¹ Garey, 8.

²² Garey, 9. Hanson paid taxes on the streets himself for the next three years until the City of San Clemente was incorporated in 1928, at which time he sold the streets to the City for \$1. Walker, 75.

²³ Walker, 76.

²⁴ Walker, 77.

²⁵ Walker, 76.

²⁶ Walker, 72; Hanson inserted a clause in the agreement of all property purchased in San Clemente that "(a)ny house, building or structure to be erected ... in said tract shall be of Spanish type." This idea may have been influenced by the Spanish Colonial architecture that dominated Santa Barbara, where Hanson had lived before establishing San Clemente.

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further stymied by World War I. Public buildings were not constructed until after the city incorporated in 1921 and development picked up after oil was discovered in the area.²⁷

Palos Verdes Estates was designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead Jr. and city planner Charles H. Cheney in 1914. The original plans included grand estates, parks, clubs, and three model villages; they were interrupted by World War I.²⁸ Olmstead and Cheney were brought back to develop a master plan for the community, which envisioned trails and parkways weaving through the natural topography. Three major business centers and recreational facilities were planned, and only some were constructed.²⁹

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 nineteenth century and early twentieth century urban planning ideals. During the 1900s and 1910s, the focus of the profession was on adopting zoning ordinances and developing comprehensive plans for existing cities to manage future development. The opportunity to create new suburbs and towns occurred during the economic boom of the 1920s, particularly in Florida and California. These efforts were largely advanced by the private sector for a middle and upper class population. Although void of any relation to broad public policy, some exemplified best practices in town planning by preserving natural features, arranging land uses, managing transportation, and providing community facilities.³⁰

Many of the new suburbs and towns developed in the United States were rooted in 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.³¹ Two notable examples of garden suburbs are Forest Hills in the Borough of Queens in New York City and Mariemont near Cincinnati. While neither were the self-sustaining communities envisioned by Howard, both were architecturally cohesive and included well planned infrastructure and public amenities.

In southern California, the evolution of urban planning coincided with a new appreciation of the region's Hispanic heritage. While Forest Hills and Mariemont used the Tudor Revival style to create an idealized English village, the towns of southern California were embracing the Spanish Colonial Revival style, which largely originated in the architecture of the Spanish missions. In 1922, the Community Arts Association of Santa Barbara began a campaign to increase public awareness of its Spanish Colonial and Mexican past. After the earthquake of 1925, much of this vision was realized in the rebuilding of State Street, which became closely associated with Santa

²⁷ Charles Moore, Peter Becker, and Regula Campbell, *Los Angeles: The City Observed, A Guide to its Architecture and Landscape* (Santa Monica, CA: Hennessey + Ingalls, 1988), 282-285.

²⁸ Mel Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 232.

²⁹ Kevin Starr, *Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 200-203.

³⁰ Scott, *American City Planning Since 1890*, 232.

³¹ Historic Resources Group, *Historic Resources Survey Update, City of San Clemente, California* (San Clemente: City of San Clemente, August 2006), 34.

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Barbara's architectural identity.³² Design controls were implemented by a Board of Architectural Review during the intensive rebuilding immediately following the tremblor. The nearby 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.

From its inception, San Clemente was intended to be Spanish in character. Hanson engaged Santa Barbara architect J. Wilmer Hershey to design the 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. Additionally, 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.³³ It was further mandated that all building plans be submitted to an Architectural Committee for approval. Every new building was reviewed, and a signed building approval certificate issued prior to construction.

As the land was subdivided, certain sites were designated for the development of public amenities, to be designed and constructed at the expense of the Ole Hanson Organization (OHO). OHO spent thousands of dollars on a wide variety of first-rate social and recreational facilities to take full advantage of the region's ideal climate. Each charter lot deed in San Clemente included shared ownership of these amenities which were spread across the city, including the 3,000 feet of accessible beach front, a beach club, a 1,200-foot pier for fishing and pleasure, community clubhouse, plaza park, public golf course, tennis courts, elementary school, hospital, baseball diamond, and seventeen miles of bridle trails.³⁴ The shared ownership of amenities was much closer to Howard's concept of a garden city than most new towns in the United States that were mostly capitalistic enterprises.³⁵

As a result of Hanson's concept for the city and generous gifts of publicly owned amenities to its people, when San Clemente incorporated as an independent city in 1928, it was declared the "wealthiest city per capita in civic adjuncts in America."³⁶ The following year, *Sunset Magazine* referred to San Clemente as a "dream city on the Pacific."³⁷ *Southern California Magazine* declared:

³² Paul Gleye, *The Architecture of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles, CA: Rosebud Books, 1981), 88-90.

³³ "San Clemente's History," City of San Clemente, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://www.san-clemente.org/about-us/city-information/history>.

³⁴ *The San Clemente Story*, 2nd edition, rev. L. W. Smiser and Ray Benedictus (San Clemente, CA: San Clemente Historical Society, 1999), 15.

³⁵ Scott, 90. "The garden city corporation held the entire town site in trust for the benefit of the residents."

³⁶ Walker, 94-95.

³⁷ *Sunset Magazine*, May 1929.

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San Clemente is 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.... 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.³⁸

At this time, Hanson publicized his intentions to develop additional cultural and recreational facilities in San Clemente, including a theater, opera house, art gallery, studios, and outdoor amphitheater. A looming financial crisis interrupted his plans.

The stock market crash in October 1929 had a devastating effect on the young city of San Clemente. Construction virtually ceased and, absent any other substantial industry, most of the city's middle-class residents 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 sixty percent in a single decade.³⁹ Eventually Bank of America, which had become the primary lending institution in town, owned much of the City's privately developed and undeveloped parcels.⁴⁰ Many of the larger lots, such as the open space west of the Beach Club, were subdivided into smaller lots. Believing that the architectural restrictions imposed upon development in San Clemente would make lots harder to sell, Bank of America had the clause removed from future sales agreements starting 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 the history of San Clemente.⁴¹

The late 1930s saw America rebounding from its economic crisis. During this period, local entrepreneurs sought new ways to attract visitors, and ultimately new residents, back to San Clemente. In so doing they returned to Hanson's original plan for North Beach as the cultural and recreational hub for the community. Among the attractions added to the area were a dance hall, theater, and bowling alley. The success of these facilities contributed to the growth of San Clemente's tourism industry and residential population in the 1940s and 1950s.⁴²

Development of North Beach

As part of his plan for the community, Hanson envisioned North Beach as a recreational and cultural district, with both outdoor and indoor amusements. A map published in the local *El Heraldo De San Clemente* newspaper on November 25, 1927, labeled "Plan for Proposed Development of Entrance to San Clemente, California," depicts the North Beach area of the

³⁸ Walker, 88.

³⁹ Historic Resources Group, *Historic Resources Survey Update*, 14.

⁴⁰ Leslie Heumann & Associates, *Draft Final Survey Report, San Clemente Historic Resources Survey* (San Clemente, CA: 1995).

⁴¹ Heumann.

⁴² Architectural Resources Group, "Historic Background: North Beach Development," *North Beach Project Draft Historic Resources Evaluation* (San Clemente, CA: Ed Almanza & Associates, August 2008), 8-9.

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city.⁴³ It shows a beach club with an outdoor swimming pool located in the middle of a park with expansive lawns, landscaped with trees and meandering walkways. A dance pavilion is proposed at the opposite side of the street. “Business houses” are shown on the site between the dance pavilion and El Camino Real. Rows of trees line El Camino Real and the various side streets. Over the next twenty years, the area was developed in the spirit of Hanson’s 1927 plan.⁴⁴

The Beach Club was the first building to be realized according to Hanson’s original plan for North Beach. Funded by Hanson and designed by Virgil Westbrook, the visually prominent, Spanish Colonial Revival building was dedicated to the city and completed by 1928, featuring an Olympic-size pool. Swimming was promoted by Progressive reformers during the 1910s. Municipal swimming pools were constructed all over the country. In urban areas, tenements lacked adequate bathing facilities, so pools provide both opportunities to improve personal hygiene as well as exercise. By the 1920s, the focus shifted to recreation with swimming contests and bathing suit competitions.⁴⁵ When it was constructed, the Beach Club was considered to be one of the best swimming facilities in America.⁴⁶ The pool was purposefully situated to provide bathers direct access to and from the beach.⁴⁷ The Beach Club was selected for the United States’ Olympic swimming team tryouts the year it was built.⁴⁸ As the first building constructed within the historic district, it set the tone for the future development of the area.

Historically, travelers approaching from the north were greeted by the Beach Club. Its distinctive round tower would likely have been the visual marker for those arriving from the north, whether by car or by rail. The Santa Fe Railroad completed the link between San Diego and Orange Counties in 1888. It was called the Surf Line because of its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, in some place as close as 100 feet. At Hanson’s behest, a Santa Fe Depot (demolished 1964) was constructed at North Beach in 1928.⁴⁹ By this time, the automobile was beginning to surpass the train as the primary mode of transportation. Henry Ford’s Model T made the automobile affordable to the working class.⁵⁰ Special interest groups like the Southern California Automobile Club soon formed and advocated for the construction of roads and highways. The popularity of the automobile led to auto touring as a recreational activity in and of itself. As early as 1904, the route from Los Angeles to San Diego was advertised as the most picturesque within

⁴³ Map, “Plan for Proposed Development of Entrance to San Clemente California,” *El Heraldo De San Clemente*, November 25, 1927.

⁴⁴ Architectural Resources Group, “Historic Background: North Beach Development,” 8.

⁴⁵ Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

⁴⁶ Susan Tebo, “National Register of Historic Places Nomination: San Clemente Beach Club, San Clemente, CA,” April 8, 1980, 3.

⁴⁷ V. Westbrook, *Beach Club, Block 5-Tract 821, San Clemente, CA “The Spanish Village,” Ole Hanson, Builder*, July 15, 1927. Sheet 2.

⁴⁸ Tebo, 3.

⁴⁹ The San Clemente Santa Fe Depot at North Beach, constructed in the Spanish-Colonial Revival style, was closed in 1938 due to lack of ridership during the Great Depression, Walker, 95; “San Clemente, CA (SNP),” The Great American Stations, Amtrak, accessed March 25, 2020, <https://www.greatamericanstations.com/stations/san-clemente-ca-snp/>.

⁵⁰ The Ford Model T cost approximately \$890 when it was first introduced in 1908 and is credited with making automobile ownership accessible to most Americans.

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the United States.⁵¹ However, the roads were treacherous and nearly impossible to cross. The completion of El Camino Real, a segment of the Pacific Coast Highway, was completed in 1928 and became San Clemente's main thoroughfare and only route available for those traveling by car. The automobile incited the construction of a vast array of recreational buildings, as well as motels and service stations, for the multitude of tourists who traveled by car throughout the state.

By 1929, the scenic city of San Clemente became a popular tourist destination. The development of the North Beach area over the next few years reflects the increasing tourism industry as hotels, restaurants, and other small businesses were constructed along El Camino Real on part of the proposed park lands surrounding the Beach Club. Hanson most likely would not have anticipated the growth of the tourism industry as a result of the increasing number of automobiles. Although tourism-oriented development deviated from Hanson's original community plan, much of the resulting uses were not out of character from his original proposed uses, such as the proposed park at the northwestern portion of the triangle, which remained open space as a bucolic gateway to the city.

The last businesses constructed before the onset of the Great Depression included Roy Larson's service station (demolished), the Spanish Village Motor Inn (demolished), and the Aquarium Café (later OC Fresca).⁵² The Aquarium Café was constructed in 1931 by the Strang Brothers for then-owner and new restaurateur J. Servus of Los Angeles.⁵³ The restaurant catered to both locals and tourists and provided a unique form of entertainment:

Dining tables surrounded a central dance floor enclosed by walls filled with decorative live fish—swimming within four salt and freshwater tanks made from 240 square feet of plate glass. Two large towers atop the restaurant stored the necessary water supply for the aquariums. One captured rainwater that was fed into the freshwater tanks, while sea water was pumped from the ocean into the other tower to supply the saltwater tanks.

Development came to a halt during the Great Depression, and in 1936, Hanson's architectural restrictions were abandoned. By the end of the decade, however, North Beach became the site of two important investments bringing new, positive attractions to the city: the Casino San Clemente and San Clemente Theatre. An article written in 1974 reflected on these developments and stated:

It was San Clemente's way of striking back at the deep throes of the Great Depression... [The Casino] and the San Clemente Theatre were built in 1937 as a promotion to attract renewed interest in what was hailed as the "Sun-Tan Village-By-The-Sea."⁵⁴

⁵¹ "Auto Record Along Coast," *Los Angeles Times*, May 8, 1904, B3.

⁵² The Aquarium café became the Anchor Inn by the 1940s.

⁵³ Walker, 125.

⁵⁴ "New 'Casino' Playhouse Has Swinging Heritage." *Sun-Post News*, 1974.

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By 1940, North Beach was rejuvenated with additional tourist and auto-oriented development along El Camino Real, including a new motel (demolished) and a restaurant, Boyd & Frances (demolished), constructed in 1937.

On July 31, 1937, some 5,000 dancers turned out for the much-anticipated grand opening of the Casino San Clemente, complete with Hollywood-style search lights.⁵⁵ The occasion was widely publicized and attracted visitors from throughout Southern California: “The year was 1937 and Ole Hanson’s seaside Spanish village had withered following the nationwide financial collapse of 1929. People sought an outlet—like ballroom dancing and swinging big bands. And San Clemente sought something to revitalize what had once been a very promising community. The posh \$75,000 Casino San Clemente was born.”⁵⁶

Built by the Strang Brothers, 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 building was accented by a giant silver dome. The Casino soon became a popular social and cultural 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.⁵⁷ The Casino also hosted live radio broadcasts six nights a week. Over the years, the facility served as a private gambling hall and a Moose Lodge, ultimately reborn following World War II as Sebastian’s West Dinner Theater.⁵⁸

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. It was designed by Southern California theater architect Clifford A. Balch and built by the Strang Brothers for \$75,000.⁵⁹ Perhaps best known for his Art Deco theatres, prolific theatre architect Clifford Balch adapted easily to San Clemente’s Spanish Colonial Revival design.⁶⁰ The theater was touted as “one of the most elaborate developments of the kind on the south coast.”⁶¹ 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.⁶² It was also said that the seats were placed farther apart than in any other theater in Southern California.

In a twenty-four-page opening day program, the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce remarked on the role it hoped the new facility would play in the community:

The [theater] building is a fitting tribute to the progress of San Clemente. Its modern architecture, beauty of design, utility, and spaciousness indicate a faith in

⁵⁵ Walker, 131.

⁵⁶ “New ‘Casino’ Playhouse.”

⁵⁷ Walker, 131.

⁵⁸ Walker, 132.

⁵⁹ Walker, 131.

⁶⁰ Westlake Reed Leskosky and Lawson-Burke, 3-1.

⁶¹ “San Clemente Project Told,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1937.

⁶² Newspaper reprint in Walker, 133.

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the future growth and development of this community which we know will be justified.⁶³

The 1947 edition of the local City Directory advertised the theater as “one of the most beautiful theaters in California, the home of beautiful movie houses.”⁶⁴ The San Clemente Theatre remained the City’s only movie house until the 1990s.

Although Hanson’s architectural restrictions were no longer in effect, both the casino and the theater were designed in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, embracing the founder’s stylistic vision for San Clemente. The two buildings 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 growth. On June 13, 1938, the *Santa Ana Journal* remarked: “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.”⁶⁵

The Bowling Alley was constructed in 1946, as indicated by a building permit issued January 7 of that year. The permit lists the owner as Steve Chorak, and the contractor as Strang-Smith Land Co. No architect is identified. The 1947 City Directory produced by the San Clemente Chamber of Commerce advertises the new six-lane bowling alley as the “San Clemente Bowling Center” located in the City’s “amusement center,” which also included the San Clemente Theatre, the Casino San Clemente, and plunge at the San Clemente Beach Club.⁶⁶ The San Clemente Bowling Center was advertised in the 1947 edition of the San Clemente City Directory, published by the local Chamber of Commerce: “The six brand-new bowling alleys with the latest photo-eye scoring and pin setting equipment have popularized the game in this cool seaside community. Tournaments are run throughout the year.”⁶⁷

As the newest of the four facilities in 1947, it is not surprising that the Bowling Center promoted its location in relation to other well-established amusement facilities nearby. Rather than providing a street address in its advertisement, the location of the Bowling Center is listed simply as “between Theater and Casino and Plunge.”⁶⁸ Perhaps more telling, the Beach Club, which had been established nearly twenty years earlier, similarly promotes its proximity to more recent attractions. An advertisement in the same 1947 publication describes the Beach Club as being “on the ‘Ocean Side’ of Casino, Bowling Center and Theater.”⁶⁹

⁶³ “San Clemente Theatre,” Opening Day Program, May 12, 1938. Reproduction. San Clemente Historical Society, 2003, 2.

⁶⁴ *The City Directory, San Clemente By-The-Sea, Orange County, California* (San Clemente, CA: San Clemente Chamber of Commerce, 1947), 7.

⁶⁵ Walker, 132.

⁶⁶ *The City Directory, San Clemente By-The-Sea*, 8.

⁶⁷ *The City Directory, San Clemente By-The-Sea*, 4.

⁶⁸ *The City Directory, San Clemente By-The-Sea*, 8.

⁶⁹ *The City Directory, San Clemente By-The-Sea*, 13.

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In the case of the “Amusement Center,” listing a facility’s location in relation to nearby familiar landmarks was more than a convenient shorthand; it was a promotional strategy that sought to associate the four attractions as a single recreational destination. Advertisements described the Beach Club as “adjacent to the Casino for dancing, fine foods, drinks, bowling and movies.” Similarly, the Bowling Center is described as just one of several amusements in the area: “You can bowl while the family attends the theater[,] or swim in the pool.”⁷⁰

Conclusion

Derailed by the Great Depression, Hanson’s plan for San Clemente was not fully realized. Nevertheless, it represented an important precedent for the development of new towns, especially in Southern California. As historian Kevin Starr observed:

In 1928 Hanson had sold more than \$7 million in lots and some 1400 residents were pursuing the Southern California dream in a seaside environment exclusively Spanish in design. In San Clemente, moreover—white, affluent, beach-oriented, a socially controlled daydream of sun, surf, sand, Spain, and safety—the eventual culture of coastal Orange County was dramatically anticipated.⁷¹

North Beach’s proximity to the Pacific Coast Highway meant the buildings in the area were highly visible to travelers, fulfilling Hanson’s plan for the area as the gateway to the city. The distinctive round tower of the Beach Club and squared tower of the theater served as visual markers of arrival to San Clemente for visitors and residents alike. While the construction of the casino, theater, and bowling alley all postdate San Clemente’s initial period of development, the three buildings are representative of Hanson’s plan for the area as the amusement center for his Spanish village by the sea. Spanish Colonial Revival architecture had become so engrained into the culture of the community the style was used in the design of the buildings even though the restrictions had been lifted.

⁷⁰ *The City Directory, San Clemente By-The-Sea*, 4.

⁷¹ Starr, 204.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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General Acknowledgements

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

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Name of repository: City of San Clemente Building Department; San Clemente
Historical Society; San Clemente Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.427778 Longitude: -117.63139

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

North Beach Historic District is a triangular area bound on the north by North El Camino Real, on the southwest by Avenida Estacion, and by Boca De La Playa on the southeast. The district boundary follows the curb lines surrounding all of the contributing and noncontributing resource parcels, from curb-to-curb and encompasses sidewalks within the public right-of-way where they exist. The boundary does not extend into the surrounding streets of El Camino Real, Boca De La Playa, or Avenida Estacion.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

North Beach Historic District is a visually distinct area with low-density commercial, entertainment, and recreational development south of El Camino Real, adjacent to the coastline to the west and a cliffside of residential development to the east that generally corresponds to an area originally planned by city founder, Ole Hanson, in 1927 as the north entrance to San Clemente.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Audrey von Ahrens, Architectural Historian II and
Teresa Grimes, Principal Architectural Historian
organization: GPA Consulting
street & number: 617 S. Olive Street, Suite 910
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90014
e-mail: audrey@gpaconsulting-us.com; teresa@gpaconsulting-us.com
telephone: (310) 792-2690
date: May 2020; Revised July 2020

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: North Beach Historic District
City or Vicinity: San Clemente
County: Orange
State: California
Photographer: Audrey von Ahrens
Date Photographed: February 28, 2020

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 28 North El Camino Real at Avenida Estacion, looking east along north boundary depicting Flower and Friends (center foreground), OC Fresca (center middle ground) and Miramar Theatre (left distance), camera facing east
- 2 of 28 North El Camino Real along north boundary toward OC Fresca (center middle ground), camera facing east
- 3 of 28 North El Camino Real along north boundary showing north elevation of OC Fresca, camera facing west
- 4 of 28 North El Camino Real at East Avenida Pico, west elevation of San Clemente Bowling Center (center foreground) and Miramar Theatre (center distance), camera facing east

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- 5 of 28 Calle Deshecha at Boca De La Playa, showing east and south elevations of Miramar Theatre (foreground), south elevation of San Clemente Bowling Center (center distance) and rear yard of Casino San Clemente (left foregrounds), camera facing west
- 6 of 28 Boca De La Playa at Avenida Pico, east and south elevations of Casino San Clemente, showing OC Fresca in distance, camera facing northwest
- 7 of 28 Avenida Pico, south elevation of Casino San Clemente (center foreground), west and south elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center (left distance), and Miramar Theatre (center distance), camera facing north
- 8 of 28 Boca De La Playa at Avenida Pico, showing southeast and northeast elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (foreground), and south elevation of OC Fresca (distance), camera facing west
- 9 of 28 Boca De La Playa along southwest boundary, showing southeast elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (left of center), and south elevation of Casino San Clemente (center distance), camera facing north
- 10 of 28 Avenida Estacion, showing southwest elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (center), and multi-family housing outside of boundary (distance), camera facing east
- 11 of 28 Avenida Estacion, looking east toward pump station (center foreground), Ole Hanson Beach Club (center distance), and San Clemente Bowling Center (left distance), camera facing east
- 12 of 28 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Estacion, looking southeast along southwest boundary depicting OC Fresca (left middle ground) and Ole Hanson Beach Club (right of center in distance), camera facing southwest
- 13 of 28 Northwest elevations of Flower and Friends and vacant building at 1844 North El Camino Real, camera facing southeast
- 14 of 28 Northwest elevation of OC Fresca, camera facing southeast
- 15 of 28 East and north elevation of 7-Eleven, west elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club in distance, camera facing southwest
- 16 of 28 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Pico showing south and east elevations of OC Fresca and portion of 7-Eleven (right), camera facing west

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- 17 of 28 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Pico, showing west and south elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center (left foreground), Miramar Theatre (center distance) and Casino San Clemente (center foreground), camera facing east
- 18 of 28 North and east elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center, camera facing southwest
- 19 of 28 North and west elevations of Miramar Theatre, camera facing southeast
- 20 of 28 East elevation of Miramar Theatre, camera facing southwest
- 21 of 28 East elevation of Casino San Clemente, camera facing east
- 22 of 28 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Pico showing north and east elevations of Casino San Clemente and south elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center (right foreground) and Miramar Theatre (right distance), camera facing east
- 23 of 28 Landscaped median at north corner of surface parking lot from Calle Deshecha and East Avenida Pico, showing Ole Hanson Beach club in distance, camera facing south
- 24 of 28 North elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club, camera facing south
- 25 of 28 Northeast elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (center distance) from parking lot, showing trash enclosure (foreground) and north elevation of pump station (right distance), camera facing south
- 26 of 28 West lawn of Ole Hanson Beach Club, showing north elevation of pump station in distance, camera facing south
- 27 of 28 Rear elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club from surface parking lot, camera facing east
- 28 of 28 Surface parking lot from Avenida Estacion, south elevation of pump station (right foreground), south elevation of OC Fresca (center distance) and southeast elevation of vacant building at 1844 North El Camino Real (left distance), camera facing northwest

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Location Map

Latitude: 33.427778

Longitude: -117.63139



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Site Map



CONTRIBUTING

- 1. San Clemente (Ole Hanson) Beach Club
- 2. Aquarium Café (OC Fresca)
- 3. Casino San Clemente
- 4. San Clemente (Miramar) Theatre
- 5. San Clemente Bowling Center

NONCONTRIBUTING

- 6. Vacant Commercial Building
- 7. Flowers and Friends
- 8. 7-Eleven
- 9. Pump Station

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

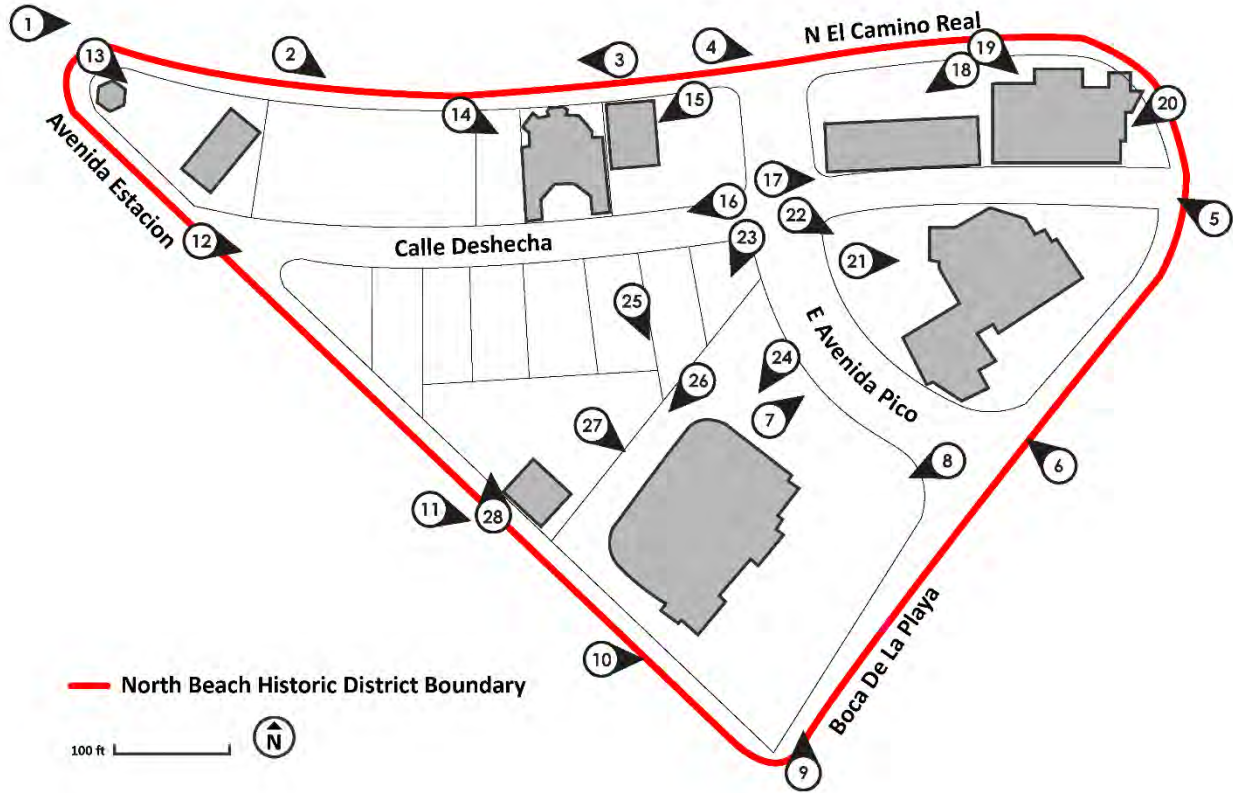
- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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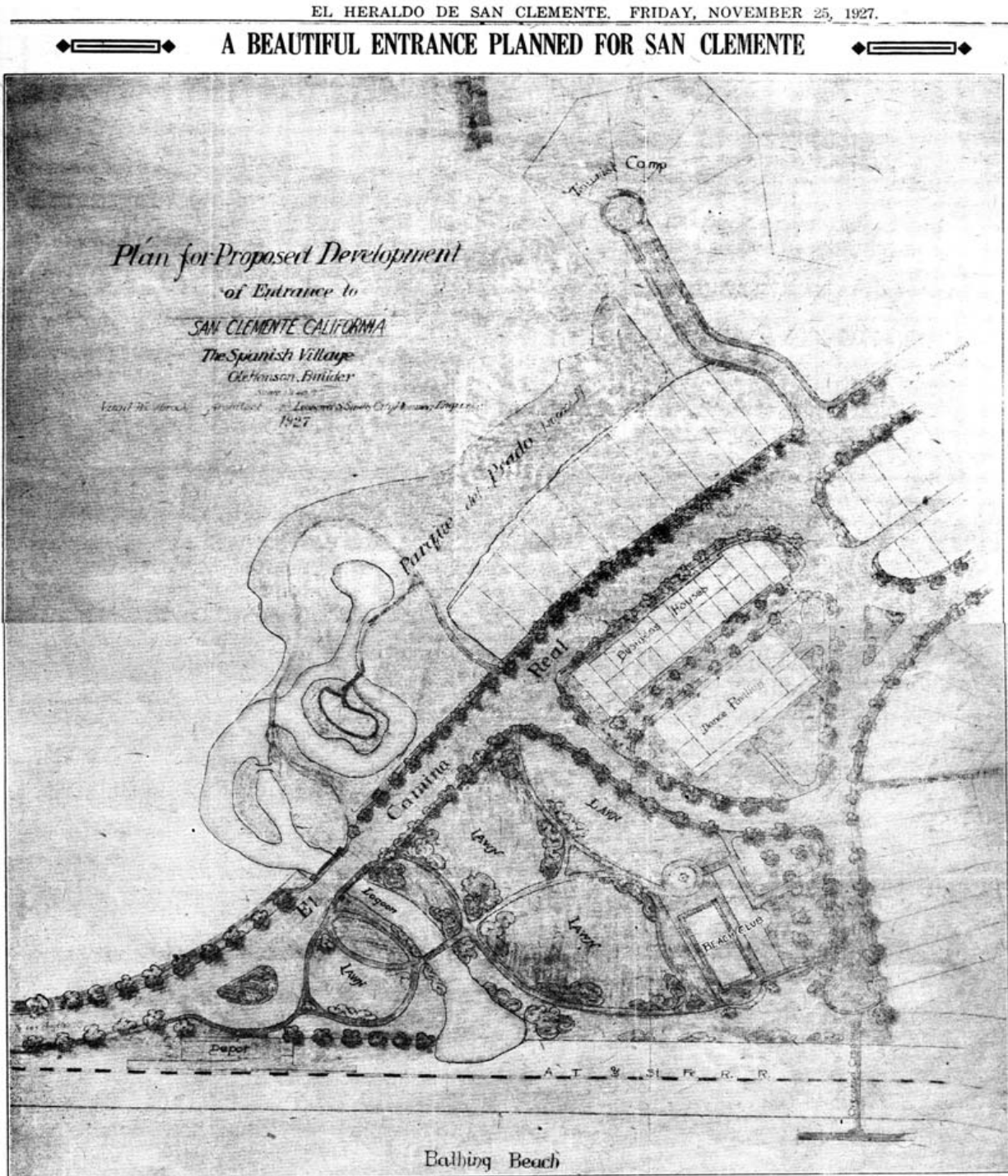
Sketch Map/Photo Key



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Figure 1 Plan for Proposed Development of Entrance to San Clemente, 1927; San Clemente Historical Society



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Figure 2 Aerial photograph of North Beach Historic District, 1938; UC Santa Barbara



Figure 3 Aerial photograph of North Beach Historic District, 1941; UC Santa Barbara



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Figure 4 Aerial photograph of North Beach Historic District, 1960; UC Santa Barbara



Figure 5 San Clemente Beach Club, south elevation, looking northwest, circa 1927; San Clemente Historical Society



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Figure 6 San Clemente Beach Club, north elevation, looking southeast. 1930; California State Library



Figure 7 Parking area and open space looking northwest from the Beach Club, circa 1927; San Clemente Historical Society



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Figure 8 Casino San Clemente, north elevation and interior views, circa 1938; San Clemente Historical Society



Figure 9 San Clemente Theatre (Miramar Theatre), south and east elevations, circa 1938; The Huntington



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Figure 10 San Clemente Bowling Center, north and east elevations, circa 1947; City Directory, San Clemente By-The-Sea, Orange County, California



BOWLING CENTER

The six brand-new bowling alleys with the latest photo-eye scoring and pin setting equipment have popularized the game in this cool seaside community. Tournaments are run throughout the year. Located in the amusement center, you can bowl while the family attends the theater or swim in the pool.

The six brand-new bowling alleys with the latest photo-eye scoring and pin setting equipment have popularized the game in this cool seaside community. Tournaments are run throughout the year. Located in the amusement center, you can bowl while the family attends the theater or swim in the pool.

Figure 11 View of North Beach Historic District, looking northwest, circa 1947; Orange County Public Library



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Photo 1 North El Camino Real at Avenida Estacion, looking east along north boundary depicting Flower and Friends (center foreground), OC Fresca (center middle ground) and Miramar Theatre (left distance), camera facing east



Photo 2 North El Camino Real along north boundary toward OC Fresca (center middle ground), camera facing east



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Photo 3 North El Camino Real along north boundary showing north elevation of OC Fresca, camera facing west



Photo 4 North El Camino Real at East Avenida Pico, west elevation of San Clemente Bowling Center (center foreground) and Miramar Theatre (center distance), camera facing east



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Photo 5 Calle Deshecha at Boca De La Playa, showing east and south elevations of Miramar Theatre (foreground), south elevation of San Clemente Bowling Center (center distance) and rear yard of Casino San Clemente (left foregrounds), camera facing west



Photo 6 Boca De La Playa at Avenida Pico, east and south elevations of Casino San Clemente, showing OC Fresca in distance, camera facing northwest



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Photo 7 Avenida Pico, south elevation of Casino San Clemente (center foreground), west and south elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center (left distance), and Miramar Theatre (center distance), camera facing north



Photo 8 Boca De La Playa at Avenida Pico, showing southeast and northeast elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (foreground), and south elevation of OC Fresca (distance), camera facing west



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Photo 9 Boca De La Playa along southwest boundary, showing southeast elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (left of center), and south elevation of Casino San Clemente (center distance), camera facing north



Photo 10 Avenida Estacion, showing southwest elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (center), and multi-family housing outside of boundary (distance), camera facing east



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Photo 11 Avenida Estacion, looking east toward pump station (center foreground), Ole Hanson Beach Club (center distance), and San Clemente Bowling Center (left distance), camera facing east



Photo 12 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Estacion, looking southeast along southwest boundary depicting OC Fresca (left middle ground) and Ole Hanson Beach Club (right of center in distance), camera facing southwest



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Photo 13 Northwest elevations of Flower and Friends and vacant building at 1844 North El Camino Real, camera facing southeast



Photo 14 Northwest elevation of OC Fresca, camera facing southeast



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Photo 15 East and north elevation of 7-Eleven, west elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club in distance, camera facing southwest



Photo 16 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Pico showing south and east elevations of OC Fresca and portion of 7-Eleven (right), camera facing west



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Photo 17 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Pico, showing west and south elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center (left foreground), Miramar Theatre (center distance) and Casino San Clemente (center foreground), camera facing east



Photo 18 North and east elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center, camera facing southwest



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Photo 19 North and west elevations of Miramar Theatre, camera facing southeast



Photo 20 East elevation of Miramar Theatre, camera facing southwest



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Photo 21 East elevation of Casino San Clemente, camera facing east



Photo 22 Calle Deshecha at Avenida Pico showing north and east elevations of Casino San Clemente and south elevations of San Clemente Bowling Center (right foreground) and Miramar Theatre (right distance), camera facing east



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Photo 23 Landscaped median at north corner of surface parking lot from Calle Deshecha and East Avenida Pico, showing Ole Hanson Beach club in distance, camera facing south



Photo 24 North elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club, camera facing south



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Photo 25 Northeast elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club (center distance) from parking lot, showing trash enclosure (foreground) and north elevation of pump station (right distance), camera facing south



Photo 26 West lawn of Ole Hanson Beach Club, showing north elevation of pump station in distance, camera facing south



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Photo 27 Rear elevation of Ole Hanson Beach Club from surface parking lot, camera facing east



Photo 28 Surface parking lot from Avenida Estacion, south elevation of pump station (right foreground), south elevation of OC Fresca (center distance) and southeast elevation of vacant building at 1844 North El Camino Real (left distance), camera facing northwest

