



**Planning & Building Department  
Historic Resources Advisory Board**

Mitch Postel  
John Edmonds  
Deke Sonnichsen  
Robert Schoeppner  
Elizabeth Bogel

Nancy Oliver  
John Dixon  
Mike Bursak  
Robert Crow

County Office Building  
455 County Center  
Redwood City, California 94063  
(650) 363-1837

**DATE:** March 14, 2007

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission

**FROM:** John Edmonds, Chair, Historic Resources Advisory Board

**SUBJECT:** Request to conduct historical survey for select residences in El Granada and select buildings in downtown Pescadero.

**HRAB REQUEST**

At their meeting of October 18, 2006, the Historic Resources Advisory Board (HRAB) voted unanimously to send a memorandum to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission requesting that: (1) a historical structure survey be done for a list of select houses in the residentially-zoned El Granada area and of the various buildings in the downtown Pescadero area, and (2) no demolition permits be issued for the buildings in either area until the surveys are completed.

This request was triggered by several El Granada residents who approached the HRAB and asked for consideration of some additional degree of historic recognition and protection for El Granada as a unique subdivision, including many old houses that represent those remaining from the subdivision's earliest years. This group of residents had also recently pushed for preservation of the "Burnham Strip," a remnant portion of which is currently zoned "COSC" and was under consideration for rezoning as part of the LCP amendment package that the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors reviewed. Additionally, the group expressed concerns over the recent demolition of one of these old houses as part of a Design Review approval for a new house. The HRAB had reviewed the old house but did not believe that it met the necessary criteria to recommend that it be preserved.

In making the motion for this request, the HRAB added that a similar survey be done for the buildings located in downtown Pescadero. Their reasoning was that while most of those buildings are already protected on either County, State or Federal listings, the last survey completed was in the early 1980s; an updated survey would be warranted if Pescadero's downtown merchants and property owners follow through with their desire to designate the area as a County Historical District.

## **HRAB PURPOSE**

The HRAB was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1977. The County Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted in 1984. An update in 1986 stipulated that the role of the HRAB is to serve as an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, as well as the Planning and Building Department and other appropriate County departments on matters pertaining to implementation of the County General Plan's "Historic and Archaeological Resources" element, and on all matters pertaining to the recognition, acquisition, preservation, designation and alteration of historic resources in the County.

While the Historic Preservation Ordinance mandates the designation of County historical landmarks and districts, the General Plan mandates the compiling and maintenance of a comprehensive Historic Resources Inventory. This inventory presently includes 128 listed resources, including the El Granada subdivision, buildings within the subdivision that were formerly train stations and one residence. The Inventory also includes several buildings in the downtown Pescadero area, many of which are also State and Federally listed landmarks. Any proposed modifications or demolitions to the resources listed on this Inventory must first be reviewed by the HRAB.

## **BACKGROUND**

El Granada. This unique community was designed Daniel Burnham, a prominent architect and city planner in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Burnham was the chief architect of the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which is considered the impetus for the "City Beautiful" movement in this country. Burnham designed the El Granada subdivision for the Ocean Shore Railway Company in 1906, in the Beaux-Arts design of radial and semi-circular streets and wide, divided landscaped boulevards. The subdivision is unique to the County but also represents one of the few subdivisions designed by Burnham that ever got built. The Ocean Shore Railroad, stretching from San Francisco and intended to connect to Santa Cruz, provided direct access for vacationers who wanted to purchase coastside lots in the town of "Granada." The Railroad intended for the beach resort to rival Atlantic City, Long Beach, Santa Cruz and Coney Island.

Upon the subdivision's recordation in 1908, many modest homes were built. However, the combination of railroad reconstruction costs (due to the 1906 Earthquake and subsequent coastal bluff failures), unrealistic speculation and unfulfilled lot sales resulted in the Ocean Shore Railroad going bankrupt.

The local group of residents who have urged the HRAB to make this request have submitted a tentative list of 33 houses that remain – allegedly close to their original form – and represent the last of the first houses that were built between 1908 and the early 1920s.

Pescadero. Downtown Pescadero was established in the mid to late 19th century to serve a growing community developed around agriculture and logging. The County Historical Resources Inventory already includes ten buildings located in and around downtown

Pescadero along Pescadero Creek Road and Stage Road. Of those, several are additionally listed as State or Federally listed landmarks. In the event the downtown area is designated as a County Historical District, it would be prudent to complete an updated historic survey on buildings already listed as well as others in the downtown area that could be included in such a district designation.

If you have questions as to this request, please contact Dave Holbrook, Senior Planner and the HRAB's staff liaison, at 650/363-1837.

JE:DJH/kcd - DJHR0255\_WKO.DOC

cc: Lisa Grote, Community Development Director  
Jim Eggemeyer, Deputy Director  
John Edmonds, Chair; HRAB  
Mitch Postel, Director; County Historical Association  
Merrill Bobele, Resident  
Chuck Kozak, Midcoast Community Council