



# Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division  
800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1740 • (805) 654-2478 • [www.vcrma.org/divisions/planning](http://www.vcrma.org/divisions/planning)

## Cultural Heritage Board

Established in 1966, the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) serves to promote the economic and general welfare of the County. The CHB *works to preserve and protect public and private historic, cultural, and natural resources* of special historical or aesthetic character or interest. When necessary, the CHB also works to preserve, relocate or recreate such resources. These resources can be used for educational purposes, public viewing, and/or kept as their original use.

### Members

The CHB is composed of seven members; one representing each of the five County Supervisorial Districts, and two “at large” members selected by the five CHB members.

### Responsibilities

The CHB is responsible for *developing and enforcing guidelines* for local Historic Districts, Landmarks, Points of Interest, Sites of Merit and potentially eligible historic resources. These guidelines provide direction in preserving the unique historic character of each area, while providing the framework for neighborhood revitalization. The CHB (§1364-1) is also responsible for the *establishment and evaluation* of potentially eligible Cultural Heritage Sites.

### Review Process

The Board’s mission is enforced through a review process for all *maintenance, alteration, restoration, rehabilitation, remodeling, additions, change of use, demolition, relocation, or subdivision* of a designated Cultural Heritage Site or potential site. The CHB has jurisdiction over all buildings, sites, structures, and districts within a Historic Resource Survey Area or designated as a Local Landmark, a Site of Merit, or a Point of Interest. It reviews the proposed work to those properties to ensure that the significant *architectural and historical features are not adversely affected*. The CHB’s objective in reviewing applications for approval is the preservation of historic fabric and enhancement of those features which caused the historic area or property to be designated.



Queen Anne Victorian Architecture  
George Washington Faulkner House in Santa Paula, CA

### Eligibility

The CHB views each building and site within an historic area as unique. It also recognizes that the value of each site equals the sum of its individual parts, both new and old. For this reason, *all existing buildings and all new development* are deemed to contribute to the architectural character of the area and all are subject to the review process.

### Preservation Incentives

Along with promoting the economic benefit of Historic Preservation, various economic incentives are available. Depending on the type of historic designations applied to the property, the structure may be eligible for: State Historic Building Code, Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits, Historic Preservation Easements, Property Tax Reductions such as the *Mills Act Historical Contract*, Preservation Grants, Marks Historical Rehabilitation Act, Transfer of Development Rights, and Zoning Deviations. The Mills Act Historical Property Contract Program allows qualifying owners to receive a potential *property tax reduction* and use the savings to help rehabilitate, restore and maintain their buildings.

### Contact

CHB website:  
<https://www.vcrma.org/cultural-heritage-board>

<p>County of Ventura April 25, 2022 Cultural Heritage Board Meeting Item 8a Attachment D – Public Outreach Publications</p>	<p>Jillan Murray, Program Planner (805) 654-5042 <a href="mailto:jillan.murray@ventura.org">jillan.murray@ventura.org</a></p>
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## Certificate of Appropriateness

A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is issued by the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) or support staff in accordance with criteria adopted by the CHB. A COA indicates that the *proposed maintenance, alteration, restoration, rehabilitation, remodeling, additions, change of use, demolition, relocation, or subdivision* of a designed Cultural Heritage Site *will not adversely affect* its cultural heritage values, or unduly compromise the eligibility of a potential site to become a designated Cultural Heritage Site.



Neo-Classical Architecture  
Carnegie Library in Oxnard, CA

it appeared during its period of historic significance. Contributing or non-contributing structures located within a historic district or on a cultural resource site are reviewed through the same process as work on designated historic buildings. This ensures that any proposed changes to a structure *do not have a negative impact on themselves or the surrounding area.*

COAs are required for the following site categories and issues: Landmark, Point of Interest, Demolition of Sites of Merit, Demolition of Potential Sites, and Designated Cultural Heritage Sites seeking a Planned Development Permit or Conditional Use Permit pursuant to Sections 8107-37 through 8107-40 of the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

## Certificate of Review (COR)

A Certificate of Review (COR) is issued by the CHB or support staff in accordance with criteria adopted by the CHB (§1364-12) which indicate that the proposed construction, change, alteration, modification, remodeling, or removal *significantly affects* any Designated Cultural Heritage Sites or those potentially eligible for such designation. CORs are required for properties that are potential or eligible Cultural Heritage Sites.

## How is a COA/COR Approved?

Depending on the type of work proposed and its potential impact upon the historic resource, COAs/CORs are approved in two different ways: *Administrative Review and Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) Approval.* Most COAs/CORs require approval by the CHB; however, the CHB delegated staff review can approve some minor types of modifications, such as reroofing using like-materials, rear yard fences, and patios and wood patio covers not visible from the street. General information on these two types of approval is on the following page.

## Historic Resource Categories

Buildings, structures, objects, and sites within a historic district or other cultural resource site are normally divided into two categories: *contributing* and *non-contributing*. Broadly defined; a building or structure is classified as *contributing, if it adds to the historic character or integrity of a cultural resource site/district.* It is considered *non-contributing, when it does not add to the historic character or integrity of the cultural resource site/district.* Generally, any building or structure less than fifty years old is considered to be non-contributing. Even though the primary concern of the CHB is to protect historic buildings, changes to more recent buildings can have a significant effect on the character-defining features of the historic district and the character of the resource as

## Administrative Review - Staff Approval

- No public meeting or public notice is required.
- Required documents include an application, site plan, floor plan, elevations, photos and any additional information deemed necessary with required fees to CHB staff. (See the Checklist for Filing a COA)
- The Administrative COA/COR review is complete when CHB staff determines that the proposed work complies with the CHB Ordinance, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, also known as The Standards, and CHB Resolution No. 2009-1.1. Staff may set any conditions on an approved application to ensure compliance with the adopted Ordinance and Standards. If the proposed work is approved, an Administrative COA/COR will be issued, generally within one to three business days.

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## Cultural Heritage Board Review - Requires Public Hearing

- Meetings are conducted on the second and fourth Mondays of every month at 1:15 pm in Room 311 (Santa Cruz Conference Room) located on the 3rd Floor of the County Government Center, Hall of Administration (date and location are subject to change).
- It's recommended that applicants schedule an appointment with CHB staff to discuss the project before submitting an application. Required documents include an application, site plan, floor plan, elevations, photos and any other documentation staff determines necessary with the required fees. (See the Checklist for Filing a COA) Applications must be submitted with all pertinent documentation, at least fifteen calendar days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting. Written comments and recommendations for action will be prepared by CHB staff. Staff reviews may be routed through other departments to request comments pertaining to other regulations or ordinances which might apply.
- Copies of the staff report may be sent to applicants, neighborhood associations, and any interested parties prior to the public hearing.
- The applicant is advised to attend the CHB public hearing to present information to the CHB members.
- If the applicant is unable to attend the meeting, a representative may be sent to present information and answer questions.
- The CHB may approve, deny, or continue the project to a future public hearing.

If it is determined that an application does not with the CHB Ordinance, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, also known as The Standards, and CHB Resolution No. 2009-1.1. staff shall provide technical assistance to the applicant to ensure compliance. If an applicant is unwilling to make changes to the submitted proposal, the application shall be forwarded to the CHB for consideration in accordance with the procedures for Board members' review.

- The owner or applicant obtains any other necessary ministerial permits.
- Certificate expires in one year but may be renewed, if necessary.
- Contact CHB staff immediately if plans change during construction. Changes are often accommodated by staff.

- If the CHB or staff find that the application is inadequate to take appropriate action on a case, the application shall be returned to the applicant. CHB members may request an applicant to provide any additional information they find necessary to make a fair and equitable decision.
- If an application is denied, the CHB shall state its findings for denial. These findings shall be provided to the applicant in writing. Reconsideration requests on any case denied by the CHB shall be accepted no later than six months from the date of CHB action. Such requests for reconsideration must be submitted in written form.
- If an application is approved, a COA shall be issued. The CHB has the authority to set any conditions on an approved application to ensure compliance with the adopted guidelines and The Standards.
- The owner or applicant shall obtain any other necessary permits.
- COA and COR expire in one year but may be renewed, if necessary.
- Contact CHB staff immediately if plans change during construction. Changes are often accommodated by staff.

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## Contact

CHB website:

<https://www.vcrma.org/cultural-heritage-board>

Dillan Murray, Program Planner

(805) 654-5052

[Dillan.Murray@ventura.org](mailto:Dillan.Murray@ventura.org)

# Finding Hidden Gems

## *Researching the History of Your Historic Property*

Each historic property, no matter how insignificant, has a story to tell. History is not always about the biggest homes or the wealthiest people, it is about family, a community, a nation. A little hard work and research can help you *unearth the hidden gem in your community!*

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### Getting Started

The first step in *historical research* is almost always *documentation*; that is, tracing the history of the building or other historic resource of interest. Whether your goal is to pursue a nomination to the Register of Historic Places, to place a historical marker at a site, or simply to satisfy your curiosity about something important to the history of your community, you might need a *few tips on where to begin* your research and on what types of sources are available. Though these tips focus on buildings rather than other types of historic resources, many of them are applicable to all types.

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### The Building

Start with the building itself. Examine it carefully, both inside and out. Take precise notes on its current appearance: the building materials, style, and shape, as well as the number and *style of windows and chimneys* and the *appearance and material of the roof*. Some basic roof types can be seen below. All of these features may be clues to the *date of construction*.



*Gable*



*Hip*



*Offset Gable*



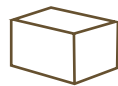
*Truncated Hip*



*A-Frame*



*Pyramidal*



*Flat*



*Gambrel*

# The Occupant

Another preliminary source of information is the people that have lived, worked, gone to school, or worshipped in or around the building. Talk to the *owners* or *occupants*, both current and former, and ask them questions. Who built it? Why? Who was the *architect* or builder? Have there been any *alterations*? When and why did they occur? Ask to see and make copies of any old *photographs*, papers, etc. that will assist you in determining the history of the building.

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### The Documents

Many types of documents can help you *trace the history of the building* - from deeds and tax records in the County Recorder's Office to printed maps in the County Public Works Agency Survey and Mapping Division, and published city directories in libraries and archives. Begin with those outlined below.

#### *County Recorder's Office*

County Recorder's Office can provide you with a chain of title to establish the history of ownership of the property. You will need the name of the current owner and the current address to begin your search. Don't be afraid to ask for help. For very old properties, you may be end up the county of state archives. Other types of documents that you may be able to locate at the County Recorder's Office, include wills and probate records; these can also be of assistance if you have a break in the chain of title. Building permits did not exist until the late nineteenth century, but if you are researching a twentieth century property, these can be valuable. County Assessor's Records are also valuable when determining the estimated age of a building. Most, importantly, take good notes. Knowing where you got a piece of information, down to the book and page number, will come in handy later.

#### *Plans and Permits*

Architectural plans, like building permits, are probably not available unless you are working with a relatively recent and sophisticated building. But if they do exist, they can be a marvelous resource, showing detailed floor plans, measurements and even placement of windows and doors.

## *Maps*

Maps can be particularly useful when researching historic buildings. From the 1870s to about 1950, the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company periodically issued maps detailing the buildings in cities and towns. These color-coded maps show street names and addresses and provide information about the size of a building, its construction materials, and even details about plumbing and electrical systems. Start with the most recent map for your area and work backward; if your building is on one map, but not on the map previously issued, there is a strong possibility it was built in the years between the publication of those two maps. These maps are available at the Museum of Ventura County, located at 100 East Main Street, Ventura CA 93001.

## *City and County Directories*

City and County directories list the names, addresses, and occupations of adult residents of a political subdivision in which that person, business, etc. was located and usually list businesses and addresses as well. Directories usually are organized both alphabetically by last name, as well as addresses by street, so the history of a property can be traced through its address, not just through its owner. Note that addresses change over time, 123 Main Street may not be at the same location as it was 75 years ago. Microfiche city directories can often be found in county libraries and historical societies.

## *Published Histories*

Published town or county histories, though of widely varying quality, often provide valuable information on the development of a city, town, or county. The typical county history will rarely address a particular building unless it was significant to the community as a whole, such as a courthouse, railroad depot, church, or school. Such histories can often be found in county libraries.

## *United States Census*

The United States Census, available for every year ending in "0" from 1790 to 1940 (except 1890), provides information about individual households, including the head and size of the household and also (beginning in 1850) information about every individual living in a household, including his or her birthplace, occupation, education, and amount of property owned. Slave schedules for 1850 and 1860

provide information on the numbers of slaves an individual owned. Agricultural and industrial schedules for 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 list the types of crops, livestock, and products produced on a farm or plantation and the number of employees and types of products manufactured by a business.

## *Newspapers*

Newspapers can provide rewarding information if you have the time and patience to review them. They usually are not indexed, however, and you may spend a great deal of time reading the newspaper for little to no information directly related to your search. They are most useful if you can identify a very small period of time to research or a specific date, such as the death date of an individual, whose obituary may be a valuable source. They provide information related to the owner or occupant of a building, the construction and opening of public buildings, churches, or businesses, or major events, such as floods, fires, hurricanes, or other local disasters that might have changed the built environment. Newspapers are usually available in county or university libraries, and local archives or historical societies, often on microfilm. The Oxnard Public Library also has a large newspaper collection. Research of the Oxnard Press Courier newspaper (and its earlier names) is available on the following online historical newspaper site:

<https://sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite/Home/usa>

## *State Office and University*

The South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at California State University Fullerton is one of twelve regional information centers that comprise the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS). CHRIS works under the direction of the State Parks Office of Historic Preservation and the State Historic Resources Commission to supply information on historic resources (e.g. location, age, size, age, etc.) and surveys within Ventura, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties per CHRIS standards. Information about historical resources is maintained in various forms such as 7.5 USGS Quadrangle Maps, historical resource records and reports, and computerized data. The SCCIC website is:

<https://anthro.fullerton.edu/sccic>

A fee is charged for maintaining the information and any assistance provided.

*Content adapted from the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office Document titled, "Finding Historic Gems: Researching the History of Your Historic Property" (2012)*