

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

(Action Items Displayed in Italics)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025 — 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Chair Skorpanich, Vice Chair Sarkis, and Commissioners Chinn, Gossett, Harrell, Johannes, Moodian, Remnet, Richonne, Senft, and Yauger were present. Commissioner Thoms was absent.

I. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At this time, members of the public may address the Commission on items of public interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission and are not contained in tonight's agenda.

No comments were received from the public.

II. CONSENT CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A)

The following item(s) on the consent calendar will be approved by one motion unless a Commissioner requests to pull a specific item.

A. APPROVE COMMISSION MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 3, 2024 MEETING

*Motion: Commissioner Richonne
2nd: Vice Chair Sarkis
Approved 11–0*

III. STAFF UPDATE (ITEM(S) A)

A. CULTURAL RESOURCES OPERATIONS FACILITY UPDATE

Staff will give an update on the recent happenings within the Cultural Resources Operations at historical facilities.

Dennis Shaffer, OC Parks Operations Manager, provided a brief report on the current status of the HVAC project at the Old Orange County Courthouse, including the expected completion date. He also provided an update on the Skylight Repair Project for the Courthouse, relayed the precautionary steps being taken at OC Parks Facilities due to a Red Flag Warning, and invited the Commission to attend the upcoming USA250 Event at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library. The Commission was also informed about the upcoming SoCal PAPA Exhibit, to be installed in the Old County Courthouse Gallery and that a ribbon cutting will follow sometime before March 2025.

IV. DISCUSSION CALENDAR (ITEM(S) A–F)

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
(Action Items Displayed in Italics)
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025 — 10:00 a.m.

A. COMMISSION CHAIR REPORT

The Chair will give an annual report to discuss goals and objectives for the calendar year 2025.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file.

Item was received and filed.

B. DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF COMMISSIONERS ROLES

The Chair will lead a discussion of the vacant roles available to Commissioners.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. If a Commissioner volunteers to serve in a role, appoint the Commissioner to the role for which they volunteered.
2. The Chair will assign a role to Commissioner without a role.

No action taken aside from discussion of the roles.

C. ANNUAL NETWORKING EVENT DEBRIEF AND SUGGESTIONS

The Chair will lead a discussion about plans for the 2025 Annual Networking Event. Discussion will focus on previous networking events and potential changes for the next networking event.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file.

Item was received and filed.

D. ANNUAL NETWORKING EVENT AD-HOC COMMITTEE

To manage the planning and organization of the 2025 Annual Networking Event, the Commission will discuss the creation of a limited-duration ad-hoc committee.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Recommend that the Chair establish the 2025 Annual Networking Event Ad-Hoc Committee with a dissolution date on or before December 31, 2025, or 30 days after the event, whichever is sooner.

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025 — 10:00 a.m.

2. Recommend that the Chair select up to three Commissioners to serve on the 2025 Annual Networking Event Ad-Hoc Committee until the designated dissolution date.

Motion to recommend that the Chair establish the 2025 Annual Networking Event Ad-Hoc Committee consisting of Commissioners Gossett, Johannes, and Senft.

Motion: Commissioner Richonne

2nd: Commissioner Senft

Approved 11–0

E. HISTORICAL COMMISSION WEBSITE INFORMATION

The Chair will lead a discussion about what information can be utilized online, through the website, in order to capture a bigger audience with a more robust digital presence.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

1. Commissioners will discuss the current state of the Commission's website.
2. Commissioners will recommend changes to the Commission's website to increase public outreach efforts.

No action taken aside from recommendations for improving the Commission's communications with the public.

F. COMMISSIONER ROLES REPORTS

Commissioners will provide updates on the latest developments or request input from the Commission in their assigned roles.

1. Administrative — Vacant
2. Arden: Helena Modjeska — Harrell

Commissioner Harrell informed the Commission of the upcoming native plant restoration event.

3. Cooper Center — Gossett

No report.

4. Grants — Remnet

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Commissioner Remnet discussed how, and if grants could be sought after in order to provide funding for oral history and other Commission activities.

5. Heritage Hill — Vacant

6. Historic Preservationist — Chinn

No report.

7. OC Archives — Gossett

Commissioner Gossett informed the Commission of wanting to work with OC Archives.

8. Oral History — Gossett

Commissioners Remnet, and Gossett discussed the importance behind interviewing local historical figures who have been involved with the development of Orange County and/or the Commission. A list first needs to be created, and then outreach efforts can begin, since time is of the essence due to the ageing community.

9. Plaque Program — Thoms

No report.

10. Publications — Richonne

No report.

11. Public Events — Johannes

No report.

12. Treasurer — Senft

Commissioner Senft expressed interest in being the Treasurer again.

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Receive and file.

Item was received and filed.

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
(Action Items Displayed in Italics)
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2025 — 10:00 a.m.

V. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND REPORT

At this time Commissioners may comment on agenda or non-agenda matters, provided that no action may be taken on off-agenda items unless authorized by law.

VI. ADJOURNMENT *11:39 a.m.*

ORANGE COUNTY PARKS
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NO.: 7.2.301

TITLE: Historic Site Plaque Program

Effective: December 10, 1999
Revised: June 6, 2017

I. PURPOSE

To establish uniform guidelines for identifying and evaluating sites of historic significance for the placement and dedication of plaques.

II. POLICY

The County's Historical Site Plaque Program is administered by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) under authority of the Board of Supervisors. The program's purpose is to place plaques containing historical data at selected sites in order to identify their location and significance and to promote their preservation and use.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Site Identification and Evaluation

Proponents of a historic site plaque submit an application (Attachment A) to OCHC. The application should include an authorization and approval statement prepared by the owner of the site. A member of OCHC visits the site and reports to the Plaque Committee, which evaluates the application based on criteria of significance (Attachment B) and reports to the OCHC.

Within 90 days after receiving the completed application, OCHC will notify the applicant of its decision to approve or disapprove the application. The applicant has the right to appeal an adverse decision to the Board of Supervisors.

B. Property Owner and Sponsorship Organization Agreements

Property Owner Agreements (Attachment D) and Sponsorship Organization Agreements (Attachment C) are executed with appropriate parties. The Director of Orange County Parks (OC Parks) or designee shall sign for the County of Orange.

C. Plaque Wording and Mounting

1. The plaque proponent submits proposed plaque wording which must focus on historical site data pertinent to the significance of the site. Plaque size limits wording to 400 characters, including spaces (Refer to Attachment E). Any revisions of plaque wording by the OCHC are submitted to the proponent prior to final approval by OCHC. Final OCHC approval is announced within 60 days after receipt of final approval by the applicant, if possible.

Funding credit for the plaque may be included at the end of the text. The plaque becomes property of the County of Orange.

2. Plaques shall be mounted on the concrete or masonry portion of a building or structure, or on a monument to be provided by the plaque proponent. Plaques must be mounted in publicly visible places. The property owner is responsible for provision of and

maintenance of the monument. A sketch showing the proposed design and location of the monument or building mount is submitted to OCHC for approval along with the proposed plaque wording.

D. Coordination with OC Parks

After approval by OCHC, selection of the plaque manufacturer and processing the purchase order are coordinated through OC Parks. Under special circumstances, by vote of OCHC, the Commission or OC Parks may assist in funding the manufacture of the plaque or the monument.

E. Dedication Ceremony

A dedication ceremony shall be arranged in cooperation with the Board of Supervisors, OCHC, the plaque proponent, OC Parks, and other parties as appropriate.

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
13042 OLD MYFORD ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92602-2304
(714) 973-6609

HISTORIC SITE

PLAQUE APPLICATION FORM

The Board of Supervisors has authorized the Orange County Historical Commission to administer the placement of plaques commemorating sites of historical significance in Orange County. This form along with the Sponsoring Organization Agreement (Attachment C) and the Property Owner Agreement (Attachment D) must be completed to nominate any site that the applicant believes merits recognition. This form may be copied and additional sheets attached, as long as the form's content and format are retained.

Name of Site Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center

Address of Site 8471 N. Coast Highway City Laguna Beach

Year of Original Construction 1934

Original Use Japanese Language School and Community Center

Architect (or Design Engineer) Mr. Saburo

Builder (or Prime Contractor) Unzo and Juzo Honda

Present Owner Crystal Cove State Park

Address of Owner 8471 N. Coast Highway

City Laguna Beach State CA Zip Code 92651 Phone 949-494-3539

Current Use Community and special events center

Applicant's Name <u>Diana Chang</u>	Date <u>11/16/2023</u>
Address <u>8471 N. Coast Highway</u>	City <u>Laguna Beach</u>
State <u>CA</u>	Zip code <u>92651</u> Phone <u>949-494-3539</u>
Sponsoring Organization <u>Crystal Cove State Park</u>	

PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION

Ownership	Category
<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Building
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> District
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object

DESCRIPTION

Describe the site's historic appearance and present physical condition, noting any major changes from its original appearance.

SIGNIFICANCE

Describe the historical significance of the site. For criteria, refer to Attachment B.

A. Documentation

Provide photographs with the application that show both current views and historic setting (where available). Prints should be black-and-white glossy format, maximum 8" x 10", minimum 5" x 7". Identify the source, credit and the date of each photograph.

B. Sources

List the books, documents, historic surveys, and interviews used to document the historic significance of the site.

PLAQUE WORDING AND MOUNTING

A. Wording

Please enter proposed wording for the plaque, including the name of the site and historical data pertinent to its significance. See Attachment E for the format and size of the plaque.

B. Mounting

The applicant must provide a mounting for the plaque in a location accessible to the public – either on a monument on the masonry foundation of a building. A sketch showing the proposed design and location of the plaque and its mounting shall be submitted with the application.

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
13042 OLD MYFORD ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92602-2304

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES
(Adopted 1972 and Revised 1999)

A. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Are the properties, sites, and structures connected with significant in cultural, political, economic, military or social history?
2. Were the properties or places related to significant activities of notable people?
3. Do the sites or groups of structures represent the development patterns of historic eras such as early settlement, agriculture, seaports, railroads, and pre-1940 highways?
4. Do the sites represent a historic business or activity?
5. Have the properties or sites yielded or are they likely to yield significant information in cultural or natural history?

B. ARCHITECTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Do the structures represent the work of architects or builders who have made major contributions to the history of architecture, engineering or building technology?
2. Is the structure one of the few remaining examples in the county of a particular architectural style or period?
3. Is the structure a unique architectural curiosity or does it represent a unique or indigenous building style or form?
4. Does the structure retain the integrity of the original design or has it been substantially altered?
5. Is the structure part of a concentration of higher quality landmark buildings where its presence, even though it is of lesser quality, is still necessary to support the architectural composition?
6. Is the building a good representative example of a particular architectural style or period?
7. Is the structure an outstanding example of workmanship or materials?
8. Has the structure been moved from its original site?
9. Is the property a visual landmark that establishes and embellishes the county's image?

C. SITE CONSIDERATIONS

1. Is the property a visual landmark that establishes and embellishes the county's image?

2. Does the property identify a neighborhood?
3. Are the properties or buildings significant and important because they form a building grouping which, because of its collective impact, becomes more significant to the site or area?
4. Are there significant plant materials such as a row of boulevard trees, or specimen plantings of exceptional size or beauty?
5. Is the property a fixed work of art, commemorative sculpture, wall mural, graphic or an item of street furniture such as clocks, lamp posts, etc., that depict an era of the county or give it distinction?
6. Is the property or structure easily viewed by the public?
7. Do(es) the structure(s) form an important visual and aesthetic background and scene for a noted gathering place, square or plaza?
8. Is the site important because of the presence of a significant cultural or natural object?

HISTORICAL PLAQUE PROGRAM
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION AGREEMENT

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ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
13042 Old Myford Road  
Irvine, California 92602-2304  
(714) 973-6609

With reference to Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center historical plaque authorized by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) and the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the undersigned hereby understand and agree to the following conditions:

- 1. To obtain the property owner's signature on the Historical Plaque Program Property Owner Agreement;
- 2. **Optional condition:** With the assistance of an OCHC member, to take the responsibility for the preparation of an application for the historical site as a State Point of Historical Interest. The application will be submitted to the State through OCHC and the Board of Supervisors;
  - I agree to apply for State designation.
  - I choose to apply for an OCHC designation only.
- 3. To participate in arranging a dedication ceremony for the plaque in cooperation with the OCHC Board of Supervisors, the property owner, County Public Information Office, and other parties as deemed appropriate by OCHC.

Dated: 11/16/2023

Diana Chang, Sr. Park Aide  
Name and Title

Crystal Cove State Historic Park  
Organization

8471 N. Coast Highway  
Address

Laguna Beach, 92651, 949-494-3539  
City, Zip Code & Telephone Number

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
County of Orange

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
13042 Old Myford Road  
Irvine, CA 92602-2304  
(714) 973-6609

**The undersigned hereby understand and agree to the following conditions with reference to the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center historical plaque as authorized by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) and the Orange County Board of Supervisors.**

- 1. That said plaque shall remain the property of the County of Orange and shall be returned to the County of Orange upon demand.**
- 2. That if said plaque is to be placed on a monument, provision and maintenance of monument shall be the responsibility of the property owner. Monument design shall be subject to the approval of OCHC.**
- 3. That said plaque shall be mounted in a publicly visible location.**
- 4. That property owner shall notify in writing the County of Orange in the event of a sale of the property, change of possession or any other occurrence which may cause said plaque to be lost or destroyed.**

**DATED:** 11/16/2023 Crystal Cove State Historic Park  
**Property Owner**

**DATED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Property Owner**

## HISTORICAL SITE PLAQUE FORMAT AND SIZE

**The body of the text is to be no more than 400 letters and spaces and must contain historical date pertinent to the historical significance of the site. Dimensions to be 20" x 14". Drawing below is not to scale.**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TITLE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| BODY OF<br>TEXT Built in 1934, the Japanese community of Crystal Cove constructed a community center, the Laguna Beach Beach Japanese Language School. Local children attended Japanese language classes. This farming community thrived from 1927 to 1942 until the forced removal and incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Japanese characters in the interior roofboards reveal its history. |
| SEAL OF THE<br>COUNTY OF ORANGE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Historical Site No. _____<br>Orange County Board of Supervisors<br>Orange County Historical Commission<br>Donated by _____<br>Placed <u>2###</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## **Orange County Historical Commission: Historic Site Plaque Application Form**

### Attachment A: Description

Please refer to the following documents:

#### **1993\_1999\_Ind\_Bldg\_Eval\_34 - description of Language School**

This document is an Individual Building Evaluation form of Building #34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center. It provides descriptions of the site's appearance including alterations and character-defining features for the exterior and interior of this building.

### Attachment A: Significance - A. Documentation

Please refer to the following documents:

#### **Rehabilitation Plan Photos 2003**

This report provides the west elevation and east elevation photographs of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center

#### **Rehabilitation Plan Photos 2003 North Elevation**

This report provides the north elevation and west and south elevation photographs of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center

#### **REAN Cottage 34\_1980\_Page 26 - 1980 photograph**

This photograph was taken of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center in 1980.

#### **#34 West Elevation\_2021**

This photograph depicts the west elevation of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center in 2021.

#### **#34 South Elevation\_2021**

This photograph depicts the south elevation of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center in 2021.

#### **#34 North Elevation\_2021**

This photograph depicts the north elevation of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center in 2021.

#### Attachment A: Significance - B. Sources

Please refer to the following documents:

#### **Japanese Hist Proj + GRAPHICS**

This report was created for the Cultural Stewardship Project: Fiscal 2004-2006 Final report for the Japanese History Project, Phase I and II. Alexa Clausen, State Historian II submitted the report. Jim Newland, Cultural Resource Supervisor of the Southern Service Center was the project manager. It lists the books, documents, historic surveys, and interviews used to document the historic significance of the site.

#### **Japanese Farm Proj ATTACH + Graphic**

This report is an attachment to the aforementioned report submitted by Alexa Clausen. It lists the books, documents, historic surveys, and interviews used to document the historic significance of the site.

#### **CarverRestricted Distribution**

This report is an attachment to the aforementioned report submitted by Alexa Clausen. It lists the books, documents, historic surveys, and interviews used to document the historic significance of the site.

#### **Japanese Farmsites id USGS by Miyada**

This USGS Topo map was provided along with the aforementioned report submitted by Alexa Clausen. It depicts farm sites identified by Don Miyada and additionally, Emiko Sakamoto Sugiura.

#### **Japanese farm Aerial Map by Miyada**

This aerial map was provided along with the aforementioned report submitted by Alexa Clausen. It depicts farm sites identified by Don Miyada on November 1, 2005.

#### **Aerial After May 1942**

This photograph depicts an aerial view of the Crystal Cove Historic District and the Laguna Beach Language School and Community Center.



### **Crystal Cove\_ CA Landmark\_Final\_2013**

This report contains the application for California Historical Landmark registration for Crystal Cove Historic District. Details of the historic significance of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center can be found on pages: 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 34, and 35.

### **1979\_CCHD\_Nat Reg Nom\_79000514**

This report contains the nomination form for the National Register of Historic Places Inventory for Crystal Cove Historic District. Details of the historic significance of Cottage 34, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center can be found on page 4.

#### Attachment A: Plaque Wording and Mounting - A. Wording

Built in 1934, the Japanese community of Crystal Cove constructed a community center, the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School. Local children attended Japanese language classes. This farming community thrived from 1927 to 1942 until the forced removal and incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Japanese characters in the interior roofboards reveal its history.

#### Attachment A: Plaque Wording and Mounting - B. Mounting

The plaque will be mounted on a rock monument in a memorial garden located in the north elevation of the Laguna Beach Japanese Language School and Community Center which is currently accessible to the public.









TRAIL ↑





ORANGE COUNTY PARKS  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NO.: 7.2.301

TITLE: Historic Site Plaque Program

Effective: December 10, 1999  
Revised: June 6, 2017

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I. PURPOSE

To establish uniform guidelines for identifying and evaluating sites of historic significance for the placement and dedication of plaques.

II. POLICY

The County's Historical Site Plaque Program is administered by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) under authority of the Board of Supervisors. The program's purpose is to place plaques containing historical data at selected sites in order to identify their location and significance and to promote their preservation and use.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Site Identification and Evaluation

Proponents of a historic site plaque submit an application (Attachment A) to OCHC. The application should include an authorization and approval statement prepared by the owner of the site. A member of OCHC visits the site and reports to the Plaque Committee, which evaluates the application based on criteria of significance (Attachment B) and reports to the OCHC.

Within 90 days after receiving the completed application, OCHC will notify the applicant of its decision to approve or disapprove the application. The applicant has the right to appeal an adverse decision to the Board of Supervisors.

B. Property Owner and Sponsorship Organization Agreements

Property Owner Agreements (Attachment D) and Sponsorship Organization Agreements (Attachment C) are executed with appropriate parties. The Director of Orange County Parks (OC Parks) or designee shall sign for the County of Orange.

C. Plaque Wording and Mounting

1. The plaque proponent submits proposed plaque wording which must focus on historical site data pertinent to the significance of the site. Plaque size limits wording to 400 characters, including spaces (Refer to Attachment E). Any revisions of plaque wording by the OCHC are submitted to the proponent prior to final approval by OCHC. Final OCHC approval is announced within 60 days after receipt of final approval by the applicant, if possible.

Funding credit for the plaque may be included at the end of the text. The plaque becomes property of the County of Orange.

2. Plaques shall be mounted on the concrete or masonry portion of a building or structure, or on a monument to be provided by the plaque proponent. Plaques must be mounted in publicly visible places. The property owner is responsible for provision of and

maintenance of the monument. A sketch showing the proposed design and location of the monument or building mount is submitted to OCHC for approval along with the proposed plaque wording.

D. Coordination with OC Parks

After approval by OCHC, selection of the plaque manufacturer and processing the purchase order are coordinated through OC Parks. Under special circumstances, by vote of OCHC, the Commission or OC Parks may assist in funding the manufacture of the plaque or the monument.

E. Dedication Ceremony

A dedication ceremony shall be arranged in cooperation with the Board of Supervisors, OCHC, the plaque proponent, OC Parks, and other parties as appropriate.



ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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HISTORIC SITE

PLAQUE APPLICATION FORM

The Board of Supervisors has authorized the Orange County Historical Commission to administer the placement of plaques commemorating sites of historical significance in Orange County. This form along with the Sponsoring Organization Agreement (Attachment C) and the Property Owner Agreement (Attachment D) must be completed to nominate any site that the applicant believes merits recognition. This form may be copied and additional sheets attached, as long as the form's content and format are retained.

Name of Site Palisades Gazebo Park

Address of Site 26401 Palisades Drive City Dana Point

Year of Original Construction 1928

Original Use Park

Architect (or Design Engineer) None identified

Builder (or Prime Contractor) None identified

Present Owner City of Dana Point

Address of Owner 33282 Golden Lantern

City Dana Point State CA Zip Code 92629 Phone 949-248-3591

Current Use Park

|                         |                                      |          |                         |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Applicant's Name        | <u>City of Dana Point</u>            | Date     | <u>November 6, 2024</u> |
| Address                 | <u>33282 Golden Lantern</u>          | City     | <u>Dana Point</u>       |
| State                   | <u>California</u>                    | Zip code | <u>92629</u>            |
|                         |                                      | Phone    | <u>949-248-3591</u>     |
| Sponsoring Organization | <u>Dana Point Historical Society</u> |          |                         |

PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION

| Ownership                                        | Category                           |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Building  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> District  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public-state            | <input type="checkbox"/> Site      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public-federal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Structure |
|                                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Object    |

DESCRIPTION

Describe the site's historic appearance and present physical condition, noting any major changes from its original appearance.

Palisades Gazebo Park is located at 26401 Palisades Drive (APN:123-081-39); and is number 20 on the City of Dana Point Parks & Facilities list. The park was constructed in July, 1928 by The Capistrano Beach Company under the direction of Ned Doheny. In the late 1970s, it was restored by the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District, which added new wooden beams and gardens, celebrated in a dedication ceremony on Sunday, February 12, 1978. The landmark overlooks Doheny and Capistrano Beaches, providing panoramic views extending north to the Dana Point Headlands, harbor and Catalina Island and south to the San Clemente pier. Today this small but beautiful ocean view park is popular as a daily viewing spot for local residents and visitors. It also serves as a small but stunning wedding venue.

SIGNIFICANCE

Describe the historical significance of the site. For criteria, refer to Attachment B.

This gazebo is significant for its association with Dana Point's earliest development patterns and for reflecting the vision of early subdividers. Tract features such as these were integrated into Dana Point's residential neighborhoods to ensure that the community assumed a cohesive architectural character and identifiable sense of place. The gazebo appears to have local significance and may not meet National Register or California Register eligibility criteria. See Attachments 1 and 3 for additional information.

## A. Documentation

Provide photographs with the application that show both current views and historic setting (where available). Prints should be black-and-white glossy format, maximum 8" x 10", minimum 5" x 7". Identify the source, credit and the date of each photograph.

See Attachment 2 for photographs of the site.

## B. Sources

List the books, documents, historic surveys, and interviews used to document the historic significance of the site.

Sources are listed as Architecture Resources Group (ARG) as Attachment 1 and those listed in Attachment 2

PLAQUE WORDING AND MOUNTING

## A. Wording

Please enter proposed wording for the plaque, including the name of the site and historical data pertinent to its significance. See Attachment E for the format and size of the plaque.

*PALISADES GAZEBO PARK AND VIEWING GARDEN, WERE ERECTED CIRCA 1928 BY THE CAPISTRANO BEACH COMPANY OWNED BY EDWARD L. "NED" DOHENY JR. (1893-1929). SUBSEQUENTLY, THE DOHENY FAMILY DONATED THE PROPERTY TO THE PUBLIC. THE PARK WAS RESTORED BY CAPISTRANO BAY PARKS AND RECREATION DISTRICT IN 1978, CURRENTLY OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY CITY OF DANA POINT.*

B. Mounting

The applicant must provide a mounting for the plaque in a location accessible to the public – either on a monument on the masonry foundation of a building. A sketch showing the proposed design and location of the plaque and its mounting shall be submitted with the application.

See Attachment 3 for a description of the plaque mounting and location.

Attachments:

1. Architectural Resources Group Historic Evaluation
2. Dana Point Historic Society Supportive Information and Images for Pines Park and Palisades Gazebo Park
3. Plaque Mounting Information.

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
13042 OLD MYFORD ROAD  
IRVINE, CA 92602-2304

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES  
(Adopted 1972 and Revised 1999)

A. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Are the properties, sites, and structures connected with significant in cultural, political, economic, military or social history?
2. Were the properties or places related to significant activities of notable people?
3. Do the sites or groups of structures represent the development patterns of historic eras such as early settlement, agriculture, seaports, railroads, and pre-1940 highways?
4. Do the sites represent a historic business or activity?
5. Have the properties or sites yielded or are they likely to yield significant information in cultural or natural history?

B. ARCHITECTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Do the structures represent the work of architects or builders who have made major contributions to the history of architecture, engineering or building technology?
2. Is the structure one of the few remaining examples in the county of a particular architectural style or period?
3. Is the structure a unique architectural curiosity or does it represent a unique or indigenous building style or form?
4. Does the structure retain the integrity of the original design or has it been substantially altered?
5. Is the structure part of a concentration of higher quality landmark buildings where its presence, even though it is of lesser quality, is still necessary to support the architectural composition?
6. Is the building a good representative example of a particular architectural style or period?
7. Is the structure an outstanding example of workmanship or materials?
8. Has the structure been moved from its original site?
9. Is the property a visual landmark that establishes and embellishes the county's image?

C. SITE CONSIDERATIONS

1. Is the property a visual landmark that establishes and embellishes the county's image?

2. Does the property identify a neighborhood?
3. Are the properties or buildings significant and important because they form a building grouping which, because of its collective impact, becomes more significant to the site or area?
4. Are there significant plant materials such as a row of boulevard trees, or specimen plantings of exceptional size or beauty?
5. Is the property a fixed work of art, commemorative sculpture, wall mural, graphic or an item of street furniture such as clocks, lamp posts, etc., that depict an era of the county or give it distinction?
6. Is the property or structure easily viewed by the public?
7. Do(es) the structure(s) form an important visual and aesthetic background and scene for a noted gathering place, square or plaza?
8. Is the site important because of the presence of a significant cultural or natural object?

HISTORICAL PLAQUE PROGRAM  
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION AGREEMENT

~~~~~

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
13042 Old Myford Road
Irvine, California 92602-2304
(714) 973-6609

With reference to Pines Park historical plaque authorized by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) and the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the undersigned hereby understand and agree to the following conditions:

1. To obtain the property owner's signature on the Historical Plaque Program Property Owner Agreement;
2. **Optional condition:** With the assistance of an OCHC member, to take the responsibility for the preparation of an application for the historical site as a State Point of Historical Interest. The application will be submitted to the State through OCHC and the Board of Supervisors;
 I agree to apply for State designation.
 I choose to apply for an OCHC designation only.
3. To participate in arranging a dedication ceremony for the plaque in cooperation with the OCHC Board of Supervisors, the property owner, County Public Information Office, and other parties as deemed appropriate by OCHC.

Dated: November 25, 2024

John Ciampa, Planning Manager

Name and Title

City of Dana Point

Organization

33282 Golden Lantern

Address

Dana Point, 92629, CA. 949-248-3591

City, Zip Code & Telephone Number

Dated: _____

County of Orange

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
13042 Old Myford Road
Irvine, CA 92602-2304
(714) 973-6609

The undersigned hereby understand and agree to the following conditions with reference to the Palisades Park historical plaque as authorized by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) and the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

- 1. That said plaque shall remain the property of the County of Orange and shall be returned to the County of Orange upon demand.**
- 2. That if said plaque is to be placed on a monument, provision and maintenance of monument shall be the responsibility of the property owner. Monument design shall be subject to the approval of OCHC.**
- 3. That said plaque shall be mounted in a publicly visible location.**
- 4. That property owner shall notify in writing the County of Orange in the event of a sale of the property, change of possession or any other occurrence which may cause said plaque to be lost or destroyed.**

DATED: November 25, 2024


Property Owner

DATED: _____

Property Owner

HISTORICAL SITE PLAQUE FORMAT AND SIZE

The body of the text is to be no more than 400 letters and spaces and must contain historical date pertinent to the historical significance of the site. Dimensions to be 20" x 14". Drawing below is not to scale.

TITLE
BODY OF TEXT _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
SEAL OF THE COUNTY OF ORANGE
Historical Site No. _____ Orange County Board of Supervisors Orange County Historical Commission Donated by _____ Placed <u>2###</u>



2016 Historic Inventory Update (Draft) Evaluation of Palisades Gazebo Park

LOCATION

Palisades Drive (between Coast Hwy and Doheny Pl, south side of street)

CURRENT NAME/DESCRIPTION

Palisades Gazebo Park

HISTORIC NAME

Palisades Gazebo

YEAR BUILT

c. 1928

RESOURCE TYPE

Structure

MAJOR ALTERATIONS

None visible

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Early Subdivision and the Emergence of Community, 1923-1932

HISTORIC THEME

1920s and '30s Residential Development, 1923-1932

HISTORIC CRITERION

Criterion 1

HISTORIC STATUS CODE

Appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation (5S3)

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This gazebo is significant for its association with Dana Point's earliest development patterns and for reflecting the vision of early subdividers. Tract features such as these were integrated into Dana Point's residential neighborhoods to ensure that the community assumed a cohesive architectural character and identifiable sense of place. The gazebo appears to have local significance and may not meet National Register or California Register eligibility criteria.

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PLAQUE APPLICATION

**Historic Doheny Parks of Capistrano Beach
City of Dana Point**

Submitted by Toni Nelson

Founder, Capo Cares

In conjunction with the Dana Point Historical Society

February, 2021

**ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
PLAQUE APPLICATION**

**Historic Doheny Parks of Capistrano Beach
City of Dana Point**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
DESCRIPTION	
Pines Park	3
Palisades Gazebo Park	3
SIGNIFICANCE and HISTORY	
The Doheny Development in Capistrano Beach	4
Pines Park	5
Palisades Gazebo Park	7
ASSESSOR'S MAPS	9
PHOTOGRAPHS...THEN	
Pines Park	10
Palisades Gazebo Park	14
PHOTOGRAPHS...NOW	
Pines Park	17
Palisades Gazebo Park	22
TIMELINE	25
SOURCES	27
SUGGESTED PLAQUE WORDING	28
SUGGESTED PLAQUE MOUNTING	28

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

PLAQUE APPLICATION

Historic Doheny Parks of Capistrano Beach City of Dana Point

DESCRIPTION

The community of Capistrano Beach in the City of Dana Point is home to two beautiful and historic landmark parks that trace their beginnings to the original development of Capistrano Beach by Edward L. “Ned” Doheny Jr., beginning as early as 1926.

Pines Park consists of two lots (123-401-02, 03); is located at 35009 and 34905 Camino Capistrano. This popular ocean view park offers panoramic coastal vistas, a playground, picnic tables, barbecues, memorial benches and, true to its namesake, many beautiful mature pine trees. The park, formerly known as “Doheny Pines Park” or “Pines Bluff Park” has four distinct areas due to the natural canyon topography as well as fill from early development. The largest central park area, often used for weddings and public events, is at street level. A lower “bowl” area is located directly below the central park, down a steep incline toward a bluff edge facing Pacific Coast Highway and the beach beyond. The original “Bowl Gardens” once contained an attractive wooden gazebo and walking trail. Unfortunately, the gazebo deteriorated and was demolished by the County of Orange in the early 1970s and the area remains undeveloped today. Lower still is a western level which contains playground equipment and picnic facilities. The fourth area, a lot to the east of the central park, was purchased as open space by the City of Dana Point in 2004. It consists of a narrow street-grade lot containing two viewing benches, and a deep canyon descending to Pacific Coast Highway. The canyon is not considered safely navigable and is enclosed by fencing.

The park’s craggy bluff top location and scenic canyons and vistas make it a highly popular local destination, attracting many local residents and tourists. It is the site of several annual City of Dana Point events including a Veterans’ Day ceremony, an Easter Egg Hunt, a community Christmas party, and numerous private events. Pines Park is in great demand as a wedding venue due to the panoramic ocean view, stately pines and large grassy area. It is a beloved community gathering place, enjoyed by local residents and visitors on a daily basis.

Palisades Gazebo Park consists of two lots (123-081-38 and 39); is located at 26401 Palisades Drive; and is number 20 on the City of Dana Point Parks & Facilities list. This beautiful little park was constructed in July, 1928 by The Capistrano Beach Company under the direction of Ned Doheny. Photographs from the period show a gazebo that today, is substantially unchanged from the 1920s structure. In the late 1970s, it was restored by the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District, which added new wooden beams and gardens, celebrated in a dedication ceremony on Sunday, February 12, 1978. The popular landmark overlooks Doheny and Capistrano Beaches, providing panoramic views extending north to the Dana Point Headlands,

harbor and Catalina Island and south to the San Clemente pier. Today this small but beautiful ocean view park is popular as a daily viewing spot for local residents and visitors. It also serves as a small but stunning wedding venue.

SIGNIFICANCE and HISTORY

The Doheny Development in Capistrano Beach

Pines and Palisades Gazebo Parks are Capistrano Beach landmarks that are as old as the community itself. Edward “Ned” L. Doheny Jr. along with his wife Lucy’s twin brothers, Clark and Warren Smith, established The Capistrano Beach Company in 1926. That same year, they purchased 1,000 acres of palisades and beach to the west of Ole Hanson’s “Spanish Village by the Sea”, now San Clemente. The palisades portion, which included both parks, began at Estrella Mall (today’s intersection of Camino Capistrano and Camino De Estrella) and extended westward to encompass what today are known as the Palisades and Doheny Village areas of Capistrano Beach. Luther Eldridge, a college friend of Ned Doheny, was hired as chief contractor and Roy Kelley as architect. He soon constructed the first of 28 tile-roofed, Spanish colonial homes, 21 of which survive today and are listed as “Doheny Houses” on the 1997 Aegis Historic Architectural Resources Inventory prepared for the City of Dana Point and adopted in 2001.

“Palisades House No. 1”, known as the “Doheny mansion” although never occupied by the immediate family as a permanent residence, still sits at that same intersection, now lovingly restored. This beautiful home was frequently visited by Edward L. and Estelle Doheny over the years. Ownership remained with the extended Doheny family until 1946. From the bluff top house and elaborate gardens, a still existing stone staircase led to the beach below, where a compound of four more homes was constructed along the shores of Capistrano Bay. The crowning touch was the adjacent Capistrano Beach Club, which included a three-story Spanish colonial tower, dining facilities and a 100-foot swimming pool as key amenities. A free membership to the \$125,000 Capistrano Beach Club was offered to all homeowners of Doheny’s Capistrano Beach palisades development.

Tragedy struck in February, 1929 when Ned Doheny was shot to death in Los Angeles in a murder/suicide involving Hugh Plunket, his closest confidante and business associate. Soon after, Edward L. Doheny Sr. visited his son’s dream development and, succumbing to its charms, retained ownership for several years. Title was transferred from the Capistrano Beach Company to Doheny–controlled Petroleum Securities Company one week after Ned’s death. In 1931, Petroleum Securities Company gifted 41.4 acres of land to the State of California as a memorial to Ned Doheny, where the family name lives on at Doheny State Beach. In 1938, three years after Edward L. Doheny Sr.’s death, the Capistrano Beach properties were bequeathed to his widow, Estelle Doheny, Ned’s widow Lucy Smith Doheny Battson, and other heirs of Edward L. Doheny Sr. through various trusts including the Los Nietos Land Company created in 1928 for Doheny’s grandchildren. By 1946, almost all of the properties owned by the Doheny family, its heirs and trusts, had been sold to private parties.

The Doheny family had a lasting impact on the community, which was briefly renamed “Doheny Park” in 1931, but the name chosen by Ned Doheny, *Capistrano Beach*, was restored in 1948. In her book, *Home Port for Romance*, Doris Walker makes a statement that captures the significance of the Doheny family and its historic sites and structures: “...along the whole California coast, “Doheny” is a household word for “beach.” Today, the community of Capistrano Beach retains its identity and a separate 92624 zip code, and is a proud district within the beautiful City of Dana Point. Residents of the Palisades continue to enjoy panoramic coastal views over the site of the original Capistrano Beach Club (now County-owned Capistrano Beach Park) as it stretches west and joins Ned’s namesake Doheny State Beach.

Pines Park

Pines Park was constructed when early developers partially filled a craggy coastal canyon to the west of Ned Doheny’s 1920s Doheny house #1. It is a stunning landmark which overlooks the breathtakingly beautiful Capistrano Beach coast. The park once known as “Pines Bluff Park”, or “Doheny Pines Park” was located directly above the focal point of the 1920’s Doheny development - the stately Capistrano Beach Club, which was lost to history in 1969.

A portion of the stone retaining walls supporting an original serpentine trail that led down the east side of the bluff is still visible today along the eastern portion of the lower “bowl” area of the central park. An early photo refers to the area as “Bowl Gardens”. The path led down the canyon to a flat lower terrace. This in turn led to a staircase to an elevated area that was graced by a beautiful viewing gazebo. The construction of the stone retaining walls is identical to an existing but deteriorated staircase built in 1928 directly down the bluff to Pacific Coast Highway below Palisades House No. 1. The aging foundation of a circular outlook area at the east end of the park is constructed of the same original stone and concrete materials used along the trail and staircase. A remnant of early stone construction can also be seen on the east end of the park surrounding a drain outlet.

For several decades, Pines Bluff Park had little to no public oversight and fell into disrepair. Local residents, led by the Capistrano Beach Community Association, held pancake breakfasts and periodic cleanups to supplement public efforts, removing large mounds of pine needles shed from the prolific namesake trees. Finally, the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District was established in 1965 to levy taxes to maintain this and other Dana Point parks. The levy was apparently 10 cents per \$100 of assessed value, which yielded the grand sum of \$14,000 for parks maintenance throughout the area.

Unfortunately, by the late 1960s, the gazebo, which was constructed of wood framing and wire encased in stucco, and had been neglected for decades, began to rot from within, a victim of termites and wood rot. Vandals and graffiti artists damaged what nature had not, and the County finally razed the structure due to safety concerns. Remnants of the old gazebo were apparently bulldozed off the side of the bluff and were visible for years until they were buried beneath layers of dirt and coastal brush. The staircase, a five-foot mound that had hosted the

gazebo, and a wooden walking path that had surrounded it, were leveled and lost to history. Today the formerly lovely Bowl Gardens is a flat, undeveloped plot with a panoramic view. The area is fenced off for safety reasons, but is often infiltrated by squirrels and rabbits, and sometimes, local kids who breach the fence to ride dirt bikes or race remote-controlled cars across the dirt lot.

The last of the original Doheny Palisades properties had been sold to private parties by 1946. The exact lineage of the Pines Bluff parcel is uncertain, but in 1969, the District issued a quit claim deed to the park when a developer purchased it with the intention of building several view homes along the bluff. According to long term residents, one house was constructed along the west side of the park on Doheny Place. This ignited nearby residents who convinced the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District to sue the developer and return the park to public use. Several homeowners apparently had clauses in their deeds referring to Pines Bluff Park as a plot reserved by the Doheny's for the use of palisades residents. The District's attorney, noted environmental advocate William Wilcoxon, embarked on a suit on behalf of the District that lasted two years and went all the way to the California Supreme Court. The court refused to hear the developer's appeal and the park was returned to District ownership, allowing Pines Park to be officially dedicated in 1972. County historian Eric Jessen refers to the case, where the lower court "unanimously ruled on the perpetuity of the intention of the original dedication by the Doheny family of Pines Bluff Park", allowing the Park to revert to public ownership.

In 1989, upon incorporation of the City of Dana Point, including Monarch Beach and Capistrano Beach, a mock "shotgun wedding" was held in Dana Point, marrying the sometime contentious parties and celebrating the formation of the new city. In 1993, the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District was folded into City operations and ceased to exist.

In 1978, the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District accepted a one-acre deed to a property adjacent to Pines Park. The property was considered unbuildable because most of it consisted of a steep hillside canyon containing numerous storm drain outlets, with the exception of a small flat portion near Camino Capistrano. The property was sold multiple times, eventually transferring to a developer, Pioneer Builders. The developer managed to overcome the challenges of a steep canyon lot with numerous storm drain outlets and succeeded in obtaining Planning Commission approval for an almost 8,000 square foot home that exceeded height restrictions by a whopping 11 feet, 3 inches, completely obscuring public view of the coast and adjacent park. When story poles erected by the City planners alerted residents to the fact that they were about to lose a huge view corridor, local residents appealed the Planning Commission approval to the City Council demanding that they stop the development and protect the scenic views promised to the community by the original Doheny Development. In the end, the residents' Planning Commission appeal was withdrawn when the City of Dana Point purchased the property from the developer who negotiated a \$2.1 million price tag. This was the first time in Dana Point history that the City purchased land for open space and public enjoyment. The City fenced off the dangerous canyon section, and installed landscaping and two seating areas which residents refer to as their "million-dollar benches". There is no doubt

that countless locals and visitors, plus those who simply drive by the park, continue to benefit from this glorious public view.

Another interesting feature of Pines Park is the iconic “climbing tree” which bends and twists its way along the eastern lawn in the central park area. According to long term resident Hank Thomas, one day in the early 70s he noticed the tree leaning over, with the roots beginning to emerge from the soil. Hank took matters into his own hands, placing a concrete slab and a wooden post under the tree to support the offending branch to allow the roots to return safely to the ground. Later, the City of Dana Point replaced the post with a concrete structure which supported the old tree, allowing it to ramble and grow, creating a delightful enticement to climbing. Many parents have held the hands of small children as they’ve balanced along its thick curved trunk. Today, there are many nodules visible on the upper side of the trunk but none on the bottom. The nodules have presumably been caused by the abrasion of many little feet over the years.

Historic records refer to Edward and Estelle Doheny hosting a Christmas party for 100 children at Capistrano Beach in 1931, promising to make it an annual event. That didn’t actually occur, but decades later, the Capistrano Beach Community Association celebrated Christmas with an impromptu local tree lighting along the Camino de Estrella mall. Long time residents recall Christmas parties at Pines Park complete with a petting zoo and horse drawn wagon, and in the 1980s and 90s, an annual Christmas craft fair. These traditions eventually lapsed, only to be reignited in 2014, when community advocacy group Capo Cares restored the practice at the same location. It was moved to Pines Park the following year, where an annual tree lighting continues as a popular community event hosted by the City of Dana Point.

Pines Bluff Park, now simply “Pines Park” has changed significantly over the decades, benefiting from the watchful stewardship of local residents and the City of Dana Point. In 1991, the City added modern playground equipment in the lower western park, replacing earlier wooden play structures that had deteriorated. Later, landscaping improvements and public art were added, enhancing the beautiful location. Today, Pines Park is a favorite spot for strolling, dog walking, picnicking, tree climbing and squirrel watching, plus impromptu yoga and Tai Chi classes, and the occasional private or public meeting. It is a popular setting for weddings and a perfect venue for public events like Veterans Day, the annual Easter egg hunt and community Christmas celebrations. The magnificent pines, many of them decades old, bear witness to the park’s unique and beautiful setting and its importance to the Capistrano Beach community in its past, present and future.

Palisades Gazebo Park

Palisades Gazebo Park is located above Pacific Coast Highway at the first peak of Palisades Drive, a steep road created by the Capistrano Beach Company in 1928. It is located on two lots at a natural landing along the bluff a short walk from Pines Park. This popular landmark overlooks Doheny and Capistrano Beaches with panoramic views extending north to the Dana Point Headlands, harbor and Catalina Island and south to the San Clemente pier. An early

photo shows vintage cars parked at the ridge of Palisades Drive where salesmen eagerly pitched the beautiful view lots available for sale throughout Doheny's Capistrano Beach development.

The gazebo, three original lamp posts (still in working condition) and several original concrete benches exist on the site. Lamp posts at one time continued down the seaward side of Palisades Drive where they are visible in vintage photos of the site. These have been lost to history except for one identical lamp post located outside Doheny House #1 on Camino Capistrano, and several more located along the Estrella Mall as sentinels to the area's rich past. Beautiful rose gardens were added in the late 70s by designer James T. Jesser, who oversaw the renovation for the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District. According to a May, 1978 *Sunset* magazine article, he took special care to choose rose species that would have graced the garden during the Doheny era.

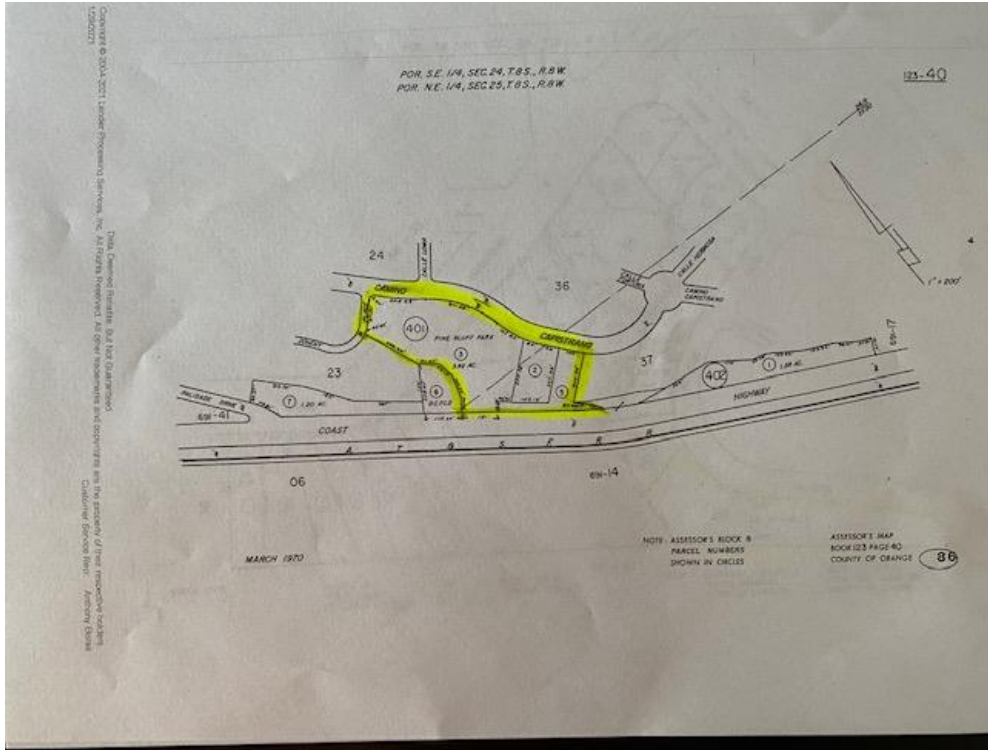
Local historian Doris Walker's book, *Home Port for Romance* refers to an interesting episode that speaks to residents' love for this iconic site: *"Even the old gazebo – an original landmark of the tract – was almost lost. Community residents formed a human blockade against a private wrecking crane in 1972, and public domain was declared again through legal channels. Restored with wooden beams and gardens as an even more attractive viewpoint park in 1978, the gazebo site lost yet another round in 1980. A neighbor discovered the park had overdeveloped its bounds through a surveying error. The disputed section had to be uprooted."*

The preservation of Gazebo Park is owed to the collective vision of the 1970 Orange County Board of Supervisors, which directed that the Harbors, Beaches and Parks Department should seek to expand coastal recreation spots throughout the County. The Department outdid themselves, eventually adding over 100 parks covering 1200 acres throughout Orange County, including this tiny, but historically significant and beloved location.

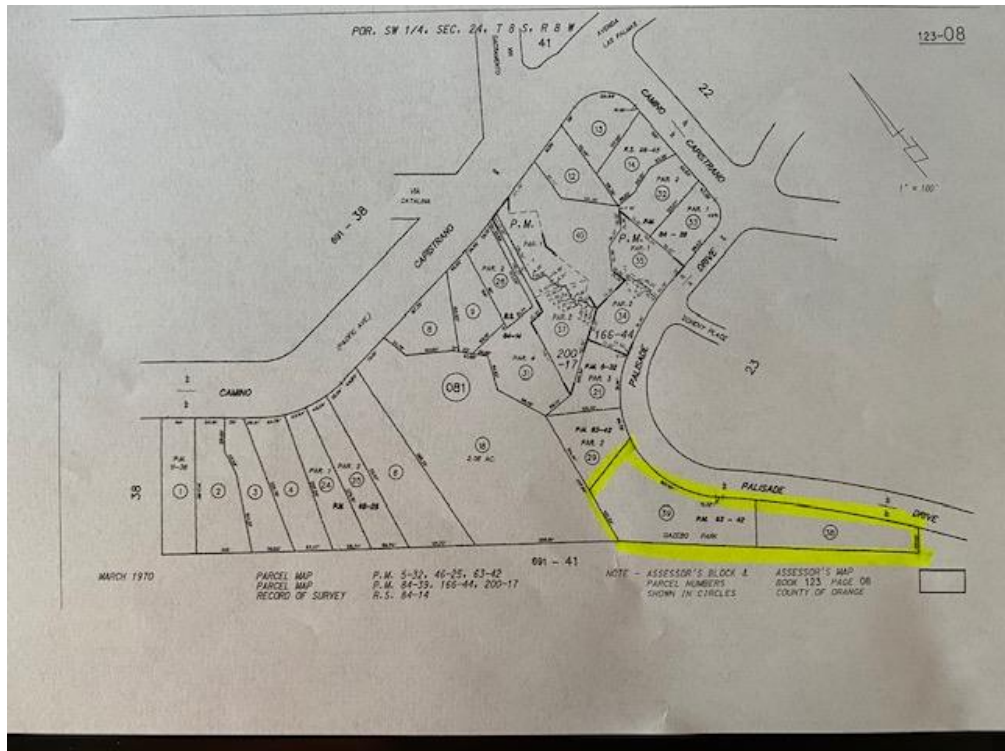
The Palisades Gazebo Park property was awarded by the court to the public in July, 1975, when Capistrano Beach was part of unincorporated Orange County. It was restored by the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District, which added new wooden beams and gardens, allowing for a dedication ceremony on Sunday, February 12, 1978. The park became the property of the City of Dana Point upon its incorporation in 1989.

Today this small but beautiful ocean view park is popular as a daily viewing spot for local residents and visitors. Located at a natural landing at the top of the steepest section of Palisades Drive, it offers a welcome respite for residents who regularly walk down to Capistrano Beach from homes in the palisades area. It also serves as a popular panoramic viewpoint for locals and visitors and a small, but very charming, scenic wedding venue. The rose gardens have been enhanced with lavender, succulents and bougainvillea vines which will soon trail over the old gazebo as they did almost a century before.

ASSESSOR'S MAPS



Pines Park, March 1970, Orange County Assessor

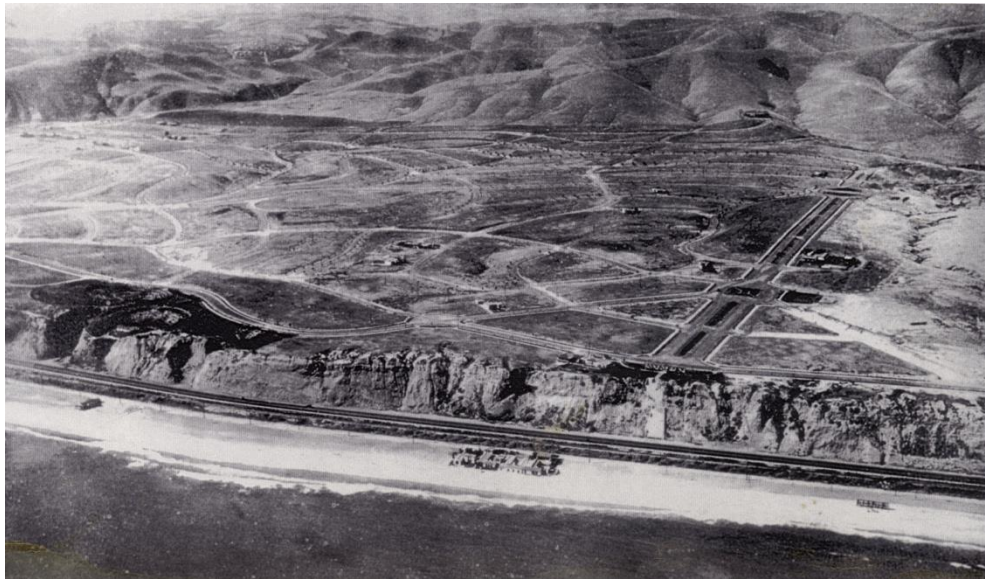


Palisades Gazebo, March 1970, Orange County Assessor

PHOTOGRAPHS - THEN



Early photo of Capistrano Bay viewed from craggy Pines Park bluff.
Circa 1920s, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection.



Estrella Mall, Doheny House#1, Doheny Houses on Beach Road, Pines Park at left above Capistrano Beach Club. *Circa 1929, Dana Point Historical Society*



Pines Park gazebo, trail in "Bowl Gardens". Capistrano Beach Club and pier
Circa 1930, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection.



Pines Park Bowl Gardens and gazebo
1931, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection



Pines Bowl Garden from the South. Note elevation of Gazebo for optimal viewing. *Spring 1932, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection*



Announcement of end of legal challenge, making Pines Park a permanent park. December 2, 1971, The Daily Sun-Post. *Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection.*



Pines Park. Allan Seymour and son Gavin. Note rough grasses typical of the Park's "unkempt" period with little to no public maintenance.
1979, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection



View from the top. Prospective purchasers drove to the top of Palisades. See cluster of visitors listening to a real estate pitch beyond the parked cars.
1927, Dana Point Historical Society



Route to the bluff via Palisades Drive constructed by the Capistrano Beach Company. *Circa 1926-28, Dana Point Historical Society*



Palisades Gazebo Park view toward Headlands,
Circa 1930, Dana Point Historical Society



Palisades Drive as viewed from Gazebo. Note Doheny era street lamps and Capistrano Beach Club across Pacific Coast Highway. *Circa 1960, Dana Point Historical Society*



Palisades Gazebo Park. Note original structure, concrete benches and street lamps. Shawn and Aaron Simmons on bicycles. Inside the gazebo is community advocate Edmund "Ted" Simmons (1936-2019), whose name is engraved on a memorial bench in Pines Park.

1978, Dana Point Historical Society

PHOTOGRAPHS - NOW



Original Doheny foundation, lookout point, Pines Park, 2021, *Capo Cares*



Remnant of path along bowl area which led to the old gazebo,
Pines Park, 2021, *Capo Cares*



Remnant of Doheny era, Pines Park. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Eastern portion of Pines Park showing “million-dollar” benches and panoramic view over steep canyon. *Capo Cares, 2021*



Central portion of Pines Park. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Central Pines Park showing original overlook above lower bowl.
2021, *Capo Cares*



Iconic climbing tree, Central Pines Park. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Central Pines Park Bowl area. Site of original gazebo, walking trail and Beautiful bowl gardens demolished in late 1960s. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Western Pines Park showing playground below Central portion. A well worn path down the canyon is still visible from the ramp at left. 2020, *Capo Cares*



Pines Park view, *Christmas 2020, Jane Horlings*



Palisades Gazebo Park viewed through bougainvillea, 2020, *Capo Cares*



Palisades Gazebo Park signage and original structures, lamps.
January 2021, Capo Cares



Palisades Gazebo Park, in bloom. 2020, *Capo Cares*



Palisades Gazebo interior showing magnificent view over the Pacific.
2021, *Capo Cares*



Sunset view from Palisades Gazebo Park toward Dana Point Headlands,
2019, Capo Cares

TIMELINE

The Doheny Family History in Capistrano Beach

- 1856 - Edward Laurence Doheny, future “rags to riches oil tycoon” is born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. The son of Irish Catholic immigrants, he graduated from High School as Valedictorian, was employed by the U. S. Geological Survey and went west in 1873 to prospect, eventually making a fortune in oil production.
- 1883 – Edward marries Carrie Lou Ella Wilkins in New Mexico. First child, Eileen, is born in 1885 but dies of heart disease in 1892.
- 1891 – The Doheny family moves to Los Angeles
- 1893 – “Ned” (Edward Laurence Doheny Jr.), founder of Capistrano Beach and second child of Edward and Carrie, is born in Los Angeles
- 1899 – Carrie divorces Edward and takes Ned to San Francisco
- 1900 – Edward Doheny marries Estelle (Carrie Estelle Betzold)
- 1900 – Carrie Wilkins Doheny dies, recorded as an “accidental drinking of battery fluid”.
- 1900 – Ned returns to Los Angeles to live with his father and step mother Estelle as their only child.
- 1914 – Ned marries Lucy Smith, daughter of a prominent railroad executive, and has 5 children
- 1914 – Ned hires Hugh Plunkett, a former employee’s at his father in law’s gas stations. Ned Plunkett becomes a trusted confidante and business manager, and later Ned’s supposed “murderer”.
- 1916 – Edward forms the Pan American petroleum and Transport Company and other corporate entities on whose boards sat Ned, and the brothers of Ned’s wife, Lucy Smith Doheny.
- 1916 – Ned graduates from USC, joins the Navy and begins work in the family business after WWI.
- 1916 – Edward forms the Pan American Petroleum & Transport Company
- 1918 – Estelle converts to Catholicism and the family begins a rise to prominence in Los Angeles society.
- 1920 – Edward increases in power and influence as an oil producer and prominent businessman with wells in Southern CA and Mexico.
- 1921 – Ned Doheny and Hugh Plunkett carry \$100,000 in cash to the U. S. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall, as a “loan” to help his failing ranch. This plants the seeds of the huge and sensational “Teapot Dome Scandal” after Fall grants oil leases to Doheny’s Pan American Company and Sinclair Oil (owned by Harry Sinclair, another person who had “lent” Fall substantial sums).
- 1923 – Secretary Fall resigns and Senate Hearings delve into the oil leases and loans. Civil and criminal lawsuits are filed against Fall, Sinclair and Doheny, with trials lasting until 1930. Ned Doheny is indicted but granted immunity in exchange for his testimony in the Sinclair trial. No immunity is granted to Plunkett.
- 1926 – Ned Doheny, along with his wife Lucy’s twin brothers, Clark and Warren Smith, begin to develop a community of Spanish Style homes in what would become Capistrano Beach. He hires Luther Eldridge as chief contractor for The Capistrano Beach Company.

- Eldridge builds the original Doheny family home on the bluff, a compound of 4 homes on the beach below (now Beach Road), the Capistrano Beach Club, and 24 other homes in the Palisades. Twenty-one of the original 28 homes remain today.
- 1928 – Fearing financial ruin in the wake of the scandal, Edward sells the Western portion of the Pan American Petroleum Company to the Richfield Gas Company and divides his holdings into equal parts for Ned, Estelle and himself. Edward’s share is further divided in half, establishing the Los Nietos Trust for his grandchildren.
- 1928 – Plunkett becomes more concerned about the potential for prosecution and is urged by the Doheny family to enter an asylum. On Christmas Eve, 1928 Plunkett suffers a collapse at a party and is confined to nursing care at “Greystone” the Doheny family estate in Los Angeles for 3 weeks.
- 1929 – On February 16 Ned Doheny and Hugh Plunkett are found dead of gunshot wounds, in a tragic murder-suicide at Greystone.
- 1929 – Petroleum Securities Company took title of the Capistrano Beach Company holdings one week after Ned’s death. Eldridge signed over his ownership interest in the construction company, lumber mill, lumber yard and hardware store to expedite closing the estate. The original project was terminated and Eldridge moved out of the area.
- 1929 – Harry Leyden, newly appointed manager of the Capistrano Beach project, moves into Doheny home #1 along with his wife Louise, who becomes a well known artist and community advocate in Capistrano Beach
- 1929 – Albert Fall is convicted of bribery and sent to prison.
- 1930 – Edward Doheny is found not guilty of wrongdoing in the Teapot Dome bribery scandal.
- 1931 – Through the Petroleum Securities Company, the Doheny’s donate 41.4 acres to the State of California for Doheny State Park as a memorial to their murdered son. They later donate funds for construction of St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church at its original site (now home to San Felipe de Jesus Catholic Church in Dana Point.
- 1935 – Edward L. Doheny dies in Los Angeles. As per his wishes, Estelle destroys all his personal and business documents.
- 1938 – Petroleum Securities Company bequeaths the Doheny properties in Capistrano Beach to Estelle Doheny, Lucy Smith Doheny Battson (Ned’s widow), and the heirs of Edward L. Doheny Sr. deceased. By 1944, all of the properties owned by the Doheny family, heirs and trusts had been sold to private parties.
- 1958 – Mrs. Doheny continues the family’s significant charitable and philanthropic work after her husband’s demise until her own death in 1958.

SOURCES

Walker, Doris I. **Dana Point Harbor/Capistrano Beach: Home Port for Romance**. Dana Point CA, To-the-Point Press, 1995 (First edition 1981).

Baum, Alice S., and Burnes, Donald W., PhD, **The Dohenys and Capistrano Beach: The Untold Story**, Prepared for the Dana Point/Capistrano Beach Historical Society, Dana Point CA, 2000.

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Olvera, Carlos N., **"Its History: The Rich History of Our City Parks and Recreational Areas,"** Dana Point Times, Dana Point, CA, July 8, 2016.

Jessen, Eric, **"Chapter 5: History of Orange County Parks"**, Performance Production Series, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gOP1XyS_b0&feature=youtu.be (35:00), August, 2018.

Jessen, Eric, **"Chapter 7: History of Orange County Parks"**, Performance Production Series, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xacMOi1gSgg> (17:30), August, 2018.

Olvera, Carlos N., **"It's History: A Lost Beachfront Treasure"**, Dana Point Times, Dana Point, CA, July 5, 2014.

City of Dana Point, Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, **Summary of Park District History**, 2004.

Earnest, Leslie, **"Service to be Held for William Wilcoxon"**, LA Times, August 5, 1997.

Ceballos, Chris, **"Focus: Orange County Community News, Dana Point"**, LA Times, September 24, 1999.

Sunset Magazine, **"Capistrano Beach Overlook Restored"**, May, 1978.

Research Guidance:

Barbara Force Johannes, President of Dana Point Historical Society

Oral History:

Dan Raphael, Capistrano Beach, CA

Ann Romano, Laguna Woods, CA

Allan Seymour, Capistrano Beach, CA

Aaron Simmons, Capistrano Beach, CA

Gwynne Simmons, Capistrano Beach, CA

Hank Thomas, Capistrano Beach, CA

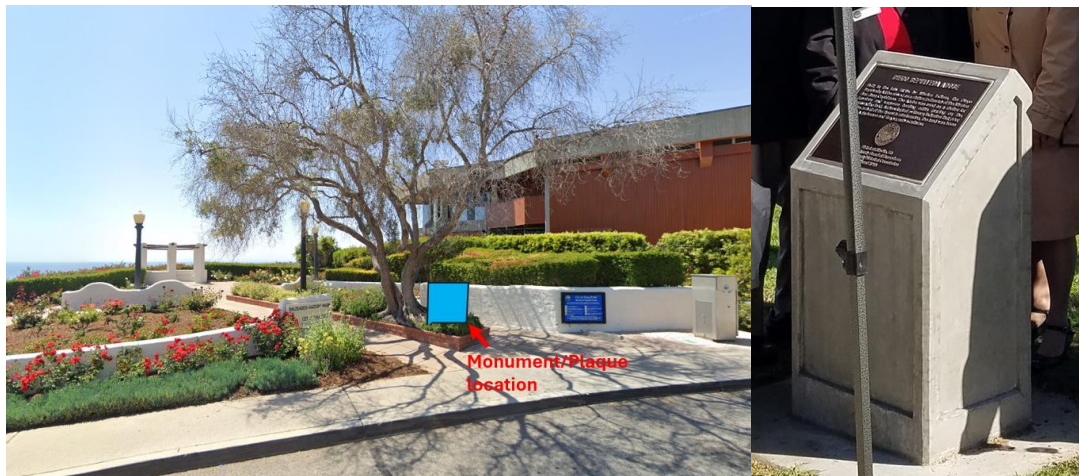
Orange County Historical Commission Plaques for Pines Park and Palisades Gazebo Park

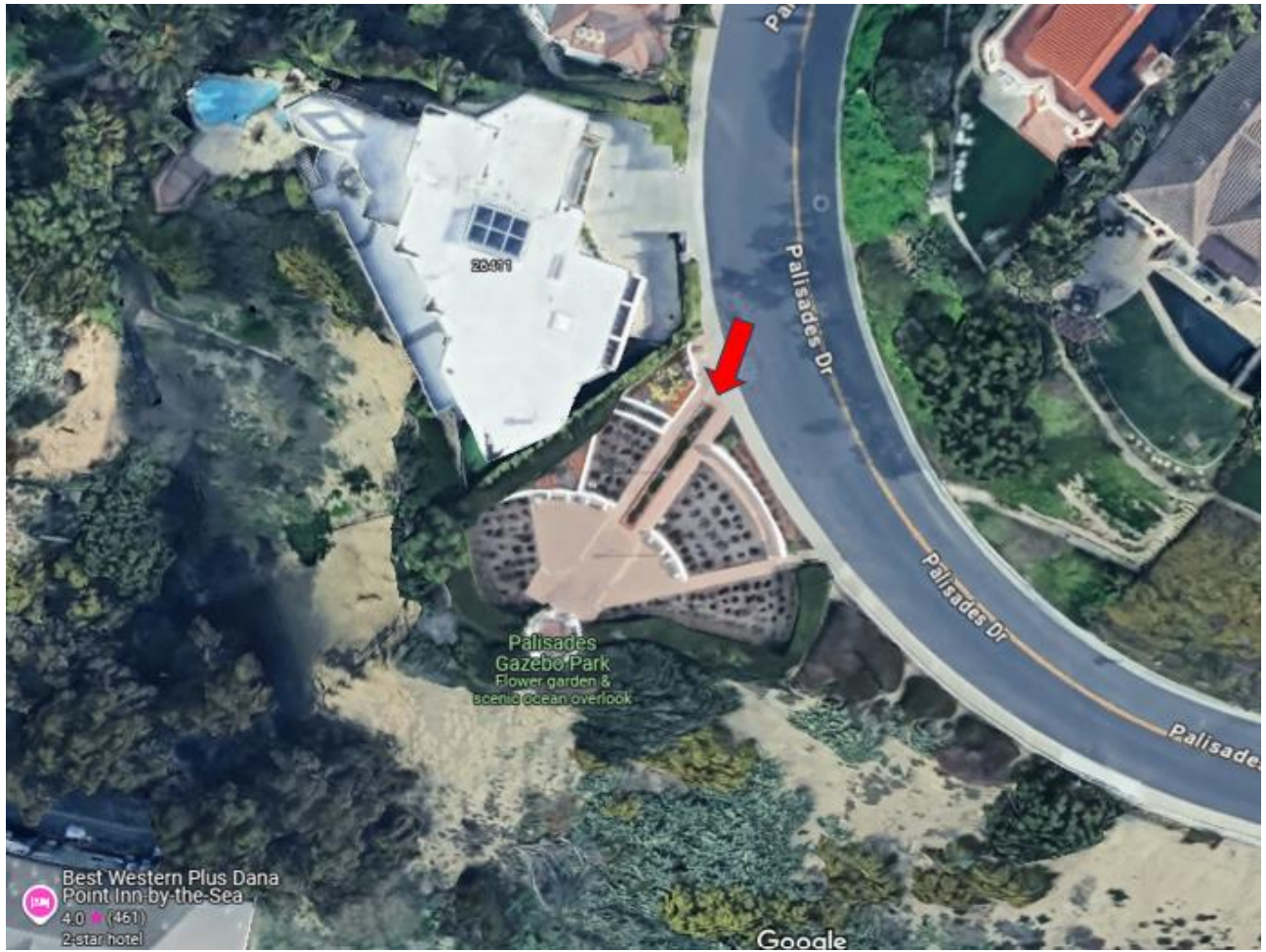
Plaque & Monument Locations

Pines Park -flat area adjacent to the walkway near the bluff and seating area identified below.



Palisades Gazebo Park – locate the monument near the entrance on the planter (see the location listed below in Blue





ORANGE COUNTY PARKS
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

NO.: 7.2.301

TITLE: Historic Site Plaque Program

Effective: December 10, 1999
Revised: June 6, 2017

I. PURPOSE

To establish uniform guidelines for identifying and evaluating sites of historic significance for the placement and dedication of plaques.

II. POLICY

The County's Historical Site Plaque Program is administered by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) under authority of the Board of Supervisors. The program's purpose is to place plaques containing historical data at selected sites in order to identify their location and significance and to promote their preservation and use.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Site Identification and Evaluation

Proponents of a historic site plaque submit an application (Attachment A) to OCHC. The application should include an authorization and approval statement prepared by the owner of the site. A member of OCHC visits the site and reports to the Plaque Committee, which evaluates the application based on criteria of significance (Attachment B) and reports to the OCHC.

Within 90 days after receiving the completed application, OCHC will notify the applicant of its decision to approve or disapprove the application. The applicant has the right to appeal an adverse decision to the Board of Supervisors.

B. Property Owner and Sponsorship Organization Agreements

Property Owner Agreements (Attachment D) and Sponsorship Organization Agreements (Attachment C) are executed with appropriate parties. The Director of Orange County Parks (OC Parks) or designee shall sign for the County of Orange.

C. Plaque Wording and Mounting

1. The plaque proponent submits proposed plaque wording which must focus on historical site data pertinent to the significance of the site. Plaque size limits wording to 400 characters, including spaces (Refer to Attachment E). Any revisions of plaque wording by the OCHC are submitted to the proponent prior to final approval by OCHC. Final OCHC approval is announced within 60 days after receipt of final approval by the applicant, if possible.

Funding credit for the plaque may be included at the end of the text. The plaque becomes property of the County of Orange.

2. Plaques shall be mounted on the concrete or masonry portion of a building or structure, or on a monument to be provided by the plaque proponent. Plaques must be mounted in publicly visible places. The property owner is responsible for provision of and

maintenance of the monument. A sketch showing the proposed design and location of the monument or building mount is submitted to OCHC for approval along with the proposed plaque wording.

D. Coordination with OC Parks

After approval by OCHC, selection of the plaque manufacturer and processing the purchase order are coordinated through OC Parks. Under special circumstances, by vote of OCHC, the Commission or OC Parks may assist in funding the manufacture of the plaque or the monument.

E. Dedication Ceremony

A dedication ceremony shall be arranged in cooperation with the Board of Supervisors, OCHC, the plaque proponent, OC Parks, and other parties as appropriate.

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
13042 OLD MYFORD ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92602-2304
(714) 973-6609

HISTORIC SITE

PLAQUE APPLICATION FORM

The Board of Supervisors has authorized the Orange County Historical Commission to administer the placement of plaques commemorating sites of historical significance in Orange County. This form along with the Sponsoring Organization Agreement (Attachment C) and the Property Owner Agreement (Attachment D) must be completed to nominate any site that the applicant believes merits recognition. This form may be copied and additional sheets attached, as long as the form's content and format are retained.

Name of Site Pines Park

Address of Site 34941 Camino Capistrano City Dana Point

Year of Original Construction 1928

Original Use Park

Architect (or Design Engineer) None identified

Builder (or Prime Contractor) None identified

Present Owner City of Dana Point

Address of Owner 33282 Golden Lantern

City Dana Point State CA Zip Code 92629 Phone 949-248-3591

Current Use Park

Applicant's Name	<u>City of Dana Point</u>	Date	<u>November 14, 2024</u>
Address	<u>33282 Golden Lantern</u>	City	<u>Dana Point</u>
State	<u>California</u>	Zip code	<u>92629</u>
		Phone	<u>949-248-3591</u>
Sponsoring Organization	<u>Dana Point Historical Society</u>		

PROPERTY CLASSIFICATION

Ownership	Category
<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Building
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> District
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> Site
<input type="checkbox"/> Public-federal	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure
	<input type="checkbox"/> Object

DESCRIPTION

Describe the site's historic appearance and present physical condition, noting any major changes from its original appearance.

Pines Park is located at 34941 Camino Capistrano (APN: 123-401-02). This popular ocean view park offers panoramic coastal vistas, a playground, picnic tables, barbeques, memorial benches and, true to its namesake, many beautiful mature pine trees. The park, formerly known as "Doheny Pines Park" or "Pines Bluff Park" has four distinct areas due to the natural canyon topography as well as fill from early development. The largest central park area, often used for weddings and public events, is at street level. A lower "bowl" area is located directly below the central park, down a steep incline toward a bluff edge facing Pacific Coast Highway and the beach beyond. The original "Bowl Gardens" once contained an attractive wooden gazebo and walking trail. Unfortunately, the gazebo deteriorated and was demolished by the County of Orange in the early 1970s and the area remains undeveloped today. Lower still is a western level which contains playground equipment and picnic facilities. The fourth area, a lot to the east of the central park, was purchased as open space by the City of Dana Point in 2004. It consists of a narrow street-grade lot containing two viewing benches, and a deep canyon descending to Pacific Coast Highway. The canyon is not considered safely navigable and is enclosed by fencing.

SIGNIFICANCE

Describe the historical significance of the site. For criteria, refer to Attachment B.

Pines Park is located within the historical boundaries of Capistrano Beach, a community that was conceived in the mid-1920s. Amid a real estate boom in the 1920s, the coast and palisades between Dana Point and San Clemente were subdivided into a new tract called Capistrano Beach, which consisted almost entirely of residential lots – many with commanding ocean views. However, development within Capistrano Beach was slow to start. A couple dozen houses were erected in the 1920s and early '30s as was the Capistrano Beach Club, an elaborate ocean-front recreation center that was available to local residents and was built to entice prospective buyers to the then peripheral community. The Doheny family (of Los Angeles oil fame), who spearheaded the subdivision and early development of Capistrano Beach, built a large house for themselves atop the palisades, on Camino Capistrano. However, the Great Depression put a damper on development, as did the sensational murder of Ned Doheny in 1929. Though it had been planned and fully subdivided, Capistrano Beach remained very sparsely developed until after World War II.

The Orange County Historic Site Plaque application notes that the origins of Pines Park are associated with the earliest period of community development in Capistrano Beach. The application states that "Pines Park was constructed when early developers partially filled a craggy coastal canyon to the west of Ned Doheny's 1920s Doheny House #1." Though a specific date of construction is not provided, it is implied that early improvements to the park were completed sometime in the late 1920s. Photos dating to the early 1930s show that by that time, the park featured a wood viewing gazebo that afforded sweeping views of Capistrano Bay, as well as stairs and walking paths, stone retaining walls, and various other site features that helped evince its sense of picturesqueness. Roses and other landscaping surrounded the gazebo. One historic photo of the site dated circa 1930 refers to the gazebo and adjacent grounds as the "Bowl Gardens."

The park had been set aside for use as open space; however, it was originally located on private property. Absent public stewardship, the site eventually fell into disrepair, and its grounds became untended and overgrown. Maintenance was largely shouldered by the local community, who often held fundraisers and organized cleanups to clear the site of excess brush. By the late 1960s, the wood-framed gazebo had deteriorated so significantly that it was demolished by County officials out of concern for public safety. Other site features including paths and stairs were also demolished at this time. However, some remnant features of early park development have survived, and are mostly located in the fenced-off bowl-shaped area adjacent to the edge of the bluff. These includes remnants of original stone walls and features, remnants of an original trail, and foundations and other infrastructure associated with the park's early (1920s) improvements.

Additional improvements were catalyzed by an effort to redevelop the site into a condominium complex in the late 1960s, and largely date to the 1970s and beyond. The proposed redevelopment scheme spurred controversy within the local community, since the site had been used as their *de facto* neighborhood park for decades, and also resulted in confusion as to who had ownership of the site, as the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District had been maintaining the park with public dollars since 1965. The matter eventually ended up in the hands of the courts, which ultimately ruled in favor of the District and allowed the park to revert to public use. Pines Park was officially dedicated in 1972.

In 1991, modern playground equipment was installed at the northeast corner of the park, replacing existing equipment that had deteriorated. Various other site and landscape improvements were carried out in the following years, providing the park with its present-day configuration and appearance.

See Attachments 1 and 2 for additional information.

A. Documentation

Provide photographs with the application that show both current views and historic setting (where available). Prints should be black-and-white glossy format, maximum 8" x 10", minimum 5" x 7". Identify the source, credit and the date of each photograph.

See Attachment 3 for photographs of the site.

B. Sources

List the books, documents, historic surveys, and interviews used to document the historic significance of the site.

Sources are listed as Architecture Resources Group (ARG) as Attachment 1 and those listed in Attachment 2

PLAQUE WORDING AND MOUNTING

A. Wording

Please enter proposed wording for the plaque, including the name of the site and historical data pertinent to its significance. See Attachment E for the format and size of the plaque.

PINES PARK, ALSO KNOWN AS PINES BLUFF PARK AND DOHENY PINES PARK WAS ESTABLISHED FOR RESIDENTS IN 1928 BY THE CAPISTRANO BEACH COMPANY OWNED BY EDWARD L. "NED" DOHENY JR. (1893-1929). SUBSEQUENTLY, THE DOHENY FAMILY DONATED THE PROPERTY TO THE PUBLIC. THE PARK WAS MAINTAINED BY CAPISTRANO BAY PARKS AND RECREATION DISTRICT, CURRENTLY OWNED AND MAINTAINED BY THE CITY OF DANA POINT.

B. Mounting

The applicant must provide a mounting for the plaque in a location accessible to the public – either on a monument on the masonry foundation of a building. A sketch showing the proposed design and location of the plaque and its mounting shall be submitted with the application.

See Attachment 3 for a description of the plaque mounting and location.

Attachments:

1. Architectural Resources Group Historic Evaluation
2. Dana Point Historic Society Supportive Information and Images for Pines Park and Palisades Gazebo Park

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
13042 OLD MYFORD ROAD
IRVINE, CA 92602-2304

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SIGNIFICANT HISTORIC SITES
(Adopted 1972 and Revised 1999)

A. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Are the properties, sites, and structures connected with significant in cultural, political, economic, military or social history?
2. Were the properties or places related to significant activities of notable people?
3. Do the sites or groups of structures represent the development patterns of historic eras such as early settlement, agriculture, seaports, railroads, and pre-1940 highways?
4. Do the sites represent a historic business or activity?
5. Have the properties or sites yielded or are they likely to yield significant information in cultural or natural history?

B. ARCHITECTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Do the structures represent the work of architects or builders who have made major contributions to the history of architecture, engineering or building technology?
2. Is the structure one of the few remaining examples in the county of a particular architectural style or period?
3. Is the structure a unique architectural curiosity or does it represent a unique or indigenous building style or form?
4. Does the structure retain the integrity of the original design or has it been substantially altered?
5. Is the structure part of a concentration of higher quality landmark buildings where its presence, even though it is of lesser quality, is still necessary to support the architectural composition?
6. Is the building a good representative example of a particular architectural style or period?
7. Is the structure an outstanding example of workmanship or materials?
8. Has the structure been moved from its original site?
9. Is the property a visual landmark that establishes and embellishes the county's image?

C. SITE CONSIDERATIONS

1. Is the property a visual landmark that establishes and embellishes the county's image?

2. Does the property identify a neighborhood?
3. Are the properties or buildings significant and important because they form a building grouping which, because of its collective impact, becomes more significant to the site or area?
4. Are there significant plant materials such as a row of boulevard trees, or specimen plantings of exceptional size or beauty?
5. Is the property a fixed work of art, commemorative sculpture, wall mural, graphic or an item of street furniture such as clocks, lamp posts, etc., that depict an era of the county or give it distinction?
6. Is the property or structure easily viewed by the public?
7. Do(es) the structure(s) form an important visual and aesthetic background and scene for a noted gathering place, square or plaza?
8. Is the site important because of the presence of a significant cultural or natural object?

HISTORICAL PLAQUE PROGRAM
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION AGREEMENT

~~~~~

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
13042 Old Myford Road  
Irvine, California 92602-2304  
(714) 973-6609

With reference to Pines Park historical plaque authorized by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) and the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the undersigned hereby understand and agree to the following conditions:

1. To obtain the property owner's signature on the Historical Plaque Program Property Owner Agreement;
2. **Optional condition:** With the assistance of an OCHC member, to take the responsibility for the preparation of an application for the historical site as a State Point of Historical Interest. The application will be submitted to the State through OCHC and the Board of Supervisors;  
 I agree to apply for State designation.  
 I choose to apply for an OCHC designation only.
3. To participate in arranging a dedication ceremony for the plaque in cooperation with the OCHC Board of Supervisors, the property owner, County Public Information Office, and other parties as deemed appropriate by OCHC.

Dated: November 25, 2024

John Ciampa, Planning Manager

Name and Title

City of Dana Point

Organization

33282 Golden Lantern

Address

Dana Point, 92629, CA. 949-248-3591

City, Zip Code & Telephone Number

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_


\_\_\_\_\_  
County of Orange

ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
13042 Old Myford Road  
Irvine, CA 92602-2304  
(714) 973-6609

The undersigned hereby understand and agree to the following conditions with reference to the Pines Park historical plaque as authorized by the Orange County Historical Commission (OCHC) and the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

1. That said plaque shall remain the property of the County of Orange and shall be returned to the County of Orange upon demand.
2. That if said plaque is to be placed on a monument, provision and maintenance of monument shall be the responsibility of the property owner. Monument design shall be subject to the approval of OCHC.
3. That said plaque shall be mounted in a publicly visible location.
4. That property owner shall notify in writing the County of Orange in the event of a sale of the property, change of possession or any other occurrence which may cause said plaque to be lost or destroyed.

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Owner

DATED: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Property Owner



## HISTORICAL SITE PLAQUE FORMAT AND SIZE

**The body of the text is to be no more than 400 letters and spaces and must contain historical date pertinent to the historical significance of the site. Dimensions to be 20" x 14". Drawing below is not to scale.**

|                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| TITLE                                                                                                                                            |
| BODY OF<br>TEXT _____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____<br>_____                                                                               |
| SEAL OF THE<br>COUNTY OF ORANGE                                                                                                                  |
| Historical Site No. _____<br>Orange County Board of Supervisors<br>Orange County Historical Commission<br>Donated by _____<br>Placed <u>2###</u> |



Architectural  
Resources Group

360 E. 2nd Street, Suite 225  
Los Angeles, California 90012

[arg-la.com](http://arg-la.com)

## Memorandum

**To:** Johnathan Ciampa  
Senior Planner  
City of Dana Point, Planning Division  
33282 Golden Lantern, Dana Point, CA 92629  
JCiampa@DanaPoint.org

**Project:** Dana Point Consulting Services: Review of Additional Inventory Properties

**Project No.:** 17200

**Date:** Aug. 24, 2022

**Via:** E-mail

Dear Mr. Ciampa:

Pursuant to the City of Dana Point (City)'s request, Architectural Resources Group (ARG) has preliminarily evaluated the potential historic significance of Pines Park, located at 34941 Camino Capistrano in the Capistrano Beach neighborhood of Dana Point. At question is whether the park may merit inclusion in the City's Historic Inventory (the Inventory), which was most recently updated in 2015. This memorandum includes a summary of our analysis and recommendations.

### Background

#### Historic Inventory

Dana Point's first citywide historic resources survey was completed in 1997. Properties that were constructed prior to 1940 were evaluated in this initial survey. In total, 68 properties were identified as potentially eligible for designation, all of which were added to the City's Inventory.

In 2015, an update of the Inventory was completed. All previously evaluated properties were re-evaluated to account for changes that had taken place over time, and the horizon year of the Inventory was extended to 1975 to capture the full arc of post-World War II development. A citywide historic context statement was also prepared. 123 properties were identified through this process. These properties collectively constitute the current iteration of the City's Inventory.

#### Pines Park

Pines Park has not been previously identified as a potential historic resource through survey evaluation. It was not identified in the original (1997) Inventory or the subsequent (2016) update.

It is not listed in the State of California's Historic Resources Inventory (HRI) database for Orange County (last updated 2012), or in the State's Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD).<sup>1</sup>

However, additional information about the park and its history has been provided to ARG by the City. Specifically, ARG was provided with a pending application to nominate two public parks – Pines Park and Palisades Gazebo Park – to the Orange County Historic Site Plaque Program (Toni Nelson/Capo Cares and the Dana Point Historical Society, February 2021).<sup>2</sup> The application includes a narrative history and significance statement for each park, as well as assessor maps and photographs. This information was not available at the time the Inventory update was completed.

The scope of this assessment is limited to Pines Park, since Palisades Gazebo Park was identified as a potentially eligible historic resource in the 2015 Inventory update.

## Registration Programs and Eligibility Criteria

For purposes of the Inventory update (2015), properties were evaluated against eligibility criteria for federal (National Register), state (California Register), and local (Dana Point) designation.

The National Register and California Register criteria mirror one another and are as follows:

- Criterion A/1 (events): associated with events or patterns of events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;
- Criterion B/2 (persons): associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
- Criterion C/3 (architecture): embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values;

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<sup>1</sup> The Built Environment Resource Directory (BERD) is maintained by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), and includes data regarding all historic and cultural properties that have been processed by OHP. For more information, visit [https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=30338](https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30338).

<sup>2</sup> The Orange County Historic Site Plaque Program is a commemorative program managed by the Orange County Historical Commission. It is administered independent of federal, state, and local designation programs, including the City of Dana Point's historic preservation ordinance and historic resource register. For more information, visit <https://www.ocparks.com/about-us/oc-historical-commission>.

- Criterion D/4 (information potential): has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, state, or the nation.

The City of Dana Point administers its own local designation criteria, which are enumerated in Chapter 9.07.250 (Historic Resources) of the Dana Point Municipal Code. In total, there are ten local criteria. However, these local criteria are not aligned with federal and state designation criteria and current professional best practices related to the valuation of historical resources, per guidance provided by the National Park Service (NPS) and the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). Thus, for purposes of the Inventory Update, the National/California Register evaluative framework was also used to evaluate local eligibility to ensure a streamlined evaluation process and consistency of findings.<sup>3</sup>

## Site Description

Pines Park is a public park that is operated by the City of Dana Point. Located in the Capistrano Beach community, the park is sited at the edge of a bluff on the southwest side of Camino Capistrano; by virtue of its setting it offers commanding views of the Pacific Ocean. It is generally a passive recreation space with lawns, pedestrian paths, and mature trees and vegetation including a preponderance of mature pine trees, from which the park derives its name.

As noted in the Orange County Historic Site Plaque nomination, the park is divided into several areas. The first area, which sits at street level, has a wide lawn, undulated concrete paths, mature trees and shrubs, and concrete benches. This area of the park is commonly used for weddings and other events. To its northwest is the second area, which sits at a lower grade and also has a lawn, concrete paths, and mature trees and shrubs. Other features include children's playground equipment, concrete steps, and stone retaining walls and signage at the street. The third area, which abuts the edge of the bluff, also sits at a lower grade. It comprises a bowl-shaped area that is largely undeveloped but includes remnants of early park development including stone walls, portions of a serpentine trail, and miscellaneous other site features. This area is fenced off.

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<sup>3</sup> City of Dana Point Historic Resources Inventory Update Survey Report, draft document prepared 2016, 21.

## Analysis

### Historical Overview<sup>4</sup>

Pines Park is located within the historical boundaries of Capistrano Beach, a community that was conceived in the mid-1920s. Amid a real estate boom in the 1920s, the coast and palisades between Dana Point and San Clemente were subdivided into a new tract called Capistrano Beach, which consisted almost entirely of residential lots – many with commanding ocean views. However, development within Capistrano Beach was slow to start. A couple dozen houses were erected in the 1920s and early '30s as was the Capistrano Beach Club, an elaborate ocean-front recreation center that was available to local residents and was built to entice prospective buyers to the then-peripheral community. The Doheny family (of Los Angeles oil fame), who spearheaded the subdivision and early development of Capistrano Beach, built a large house for themselves atop the palisades, on Camino Capistrano. However, the Great Depression put a damper on development, as did the sensational murder of Ned Doheny in 1929. Though it had been planned and fully subdivided, Capistrano Beach remained very sparsely developed until after World War II.

The Orange County Historic Site Plaque application notes that the origins of Pines Park are associated with the earliest period of community development in Capistrano Beach. The application states that “Pines Park was constructed when early developers partially filled a craggy coastal canyon to the west of Ned Doheny’s 1920s Doheny House #1.” Though a specific date of construction is not provided, it is implied that early improvements to the park were completed sometime in the late 1920s. Photos dating to the early 1930s show that by that time, the park featured a wood viewing gazebo that afforded sweeping views of Capistrano Bay, as well as stairs and walking paths, stone retaining walls, and various other site features that helped evince its sense of picturesqueness. Roses and other landscaping surrounded the gazebo. One historic photo of the site dated circa 1930 refers to the gazebo and adjacent grounds as the “Bowl Gardens.”

The park had been set aside for use as open space; however, it was originally located on private property. Absent public stewardship, the site eventually fell into disrepair, and its grounds became untended and overgrown. Maintenance was largely shouldered by the local community, who often held fundraisers and organized cleanups to clear the site of excess brush. By the late 1960s, the wood-framed gazebo had deteriorated so significantly that it was demolished by County officials out of concern for public safety. Other site features including paths and stairs were also demolished at this time. However, some remnant features of early park development have survived, and are mostly located in the fenced-off bowl-shaped area adjacent to the edge of the

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<sup>4</sup> Excerpted from “Orange County Historical Commission Plaque Application, Historic Doheny Parks of Capistrano Beach, City of Dana Point,” prepared by Toni Nelson of Capo Cares and the Dana Point Historical Society, Feb. 2021.

bluff. These includes remnants of original stone walls and features, remnants of an original trail, and foundations and other infrastructure associated with the park's early (1920s) improvements.

Additional improvements were catalyzed by an effort to redevelop the site into a condominium complex in the late 1960s, and largely date to the 1970s and beyond. The proposed redevelopment scheme spurred controversy within the local community, since the site had been used as their *de facto* neighborhood park for decades, and also resulted in confusion as to who had ownership of the site, as the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District had been maintaining the park with public dollars since 1965. The matter eventually ended up in the hands of the courts, which ultimately ruled in favor of the District and allowed the park to revert to public use. Pines Park was officially dedicated in 1972.

In 1991, modern playground equipment was installed at the northeast corner of the park, replacing existing equipment that had deteriorated. Various other site and landscape improvements were carried out in the following years, providing the park with its present-day configuration and appearance.

A one-acre parcel to the immediate east of the park was given to the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District in 1978. This land was generally seen as unbuildable as it consisted of a deep canyon. It was subsequently sold to a developer who proposed to build a house on the site; however, these plans were shelved amid opposition to the project, and the developer sold the parcel to the City of Dana Point in the early 2000s. The City thereafter installed protective fencing around the canyon, but did not dedicate the parcel as a part of the adjacent Pines Park.

#### Evaluation of Potential Eligibility

Most of the physical fabric of present-day Pines Park dates to the 1970s and beyond, following the park's dedication in 1972 and its subsequent acquisition by the City of Dana Point when the City incorporated in 1989. A detailed assessment of the park's landscape and site features was not completed given the preliminary nature of this assessment, but based on available documentation and visual observation the park appears to largely date to the contemporary era.

However, the Orange County Historic Site Plaque application indicates that there are several extant site features that are remnants of the park's earliest development in the 1920s, during the formative years of the Capistrano Beach community. The existence of these features was not known when the Inventory update was completed in 2016, given the lack of existing documentation as well as these features' obscure location in a peripheral and inaccessible section

of the park.<sup>5</sup> These remnant features appear to be rare, extant vestiges of site planning and development associated with the origins of the Capistrano Beach community in the 1920s.

The historic context provided in the application also suggests that while the fabric of present-day Pines Park is largely a product of the contemporary era, its continuous use as public open space between the 1920s and the present is a physical expression of the planning principles and essential land use and development patterns that were envisaged by the community's founders.

For these reasons, ARG believes that there is sufficient evidence to support adding Pines Park to the Inventory. The continuous use of the site as public open space, as well as its remnant features, have the potential to yield information important to the history of the Capistrano Beach community, and specifically with early efforts at community planning and development. We recommend adding the park to the Inventory with a California Historical Resources Status Code of 5S3 (appears to be individually eligible for local listing or designation through survey evaluation) on account of its information potential (Criterion D/4). The property appears to be of local importance only; it does not appear eligible for either the National Register of California Register.

## **Conclusion**

Upon reviewing additional information related to Pines Park, ARG concludes that there is sufficient evidence to justify its inclusion in the Inventory. The property appears to be potentially eligible for local designation for reasons relating to its information potential – specifically, information associated with the early planning and development of the Capistrano Beach community. We thus recommend that the property be added to the Inventory with a status code of 5S3.

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<sup>5</sup> Field surveyors completed property evaluations from the public-right-of-way during the 2015 Inventory Update and did not venture onto properties beyond the street.

**ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**PLAQUE APPLICATION**

**Historic Doheny Parks of Capistrano Beach  
City of Dana Point**

**Submitted by Toni Nelson**

**Founder, Capo Cares**

**In conjunction with the Dana Point Historical Society**

**February, 2021**



**ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
PLAQUE APPLICATION**

**Historic Doheny Parks of Capistrano Beach  
City of Dana Point**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

|                                            | <b>PAGE</b> |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>DESCRIPTION</b>                         |             |
| Pines Park                                 | <b>3</b>    |
| Palisades Gazebo Park                      | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>SIGNIFICANCE and HISTORY</b>            |             |
| The Doheny Development in Capistrano Beach | <b>4</b>    |
| Pines Park                                 | <b>5</b>    |
| Palisades Gazebo Park                      | <b>7</b>    |
| <b>ASSESSOR’S MAPS</b>                     | <b>9</b>    |
| <b>PHOTOGRAPHS...THEN</b>                  |             |
| Pines Park                                 | <b>10</b>   |
| Palisades Gazebo Park                      | <b>14</b>   |
| <b>PHOTOGRAPHS...NOW</b>                   |             |
| Pines Park                                 | <b>17</b>   |
| Palisades Gazebo Park                      | <b>22</b>   |
| <b>TIMELINE</b>                            | <b>25</b>   |
| <b>SOURCES</b>                             | <b>27</b>   |
| <b>SUGGESTED PLAQUE WORDING</b>            | <b>28</b>   |
| <b>SUGGESTED PLAQUE MOUNTING</b>           | <b>28</b>   |

# ORANGE COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## PLAQUE APPLICATION

### Historic Doheny Parks of Capistrano Beach City of Dana Point

#### DESCRIPTION

The community of Capistrano Beach in the City of Dana Point is home to two beautiful and historic landmark parks that trace their beginnings to the original development of Capistrano Beach by Edward L. “Ned” Doheny Jr., beginning as early as 1926.

**Pines Park** consists of two lots (123-401-02, 03); is located at 35009 and 34905 Camino Capistrano. This popular ocean view park offers panoramic coastal vistas, a playground, picnic tables, barbecues, memorial benches and, true to its namesake, many beautiful mature pine trees. The park, formerly known as “Doheny Pines Park” or “Pines Bluff Park” has four distinct areas due to the natural canyon topography as well as fill from early development. The largest central park area, often used for weddings and public events, is at street level. A lower “bowl” area is located directly below the central park, down a steep incline toward a bluff edge facing Pacific Coast Highway and the beach beyond. The original “Bowl Gardens” once contained an attractive wooden gazebo and walking trail. Unfortunately, the gazebo deteriorated and was demolished by the County of Orange in the early 1970s and the area remains undeveloped today. Lower still is a western level which contains playground equipment and picnic facilities. The fourth area, a lot to the east of the central park, was purchased as open space by the City of Dana Point in 2004. It consists of a narrow street-grade lot containing two viewing benches, and a deep canyon descending to Pacific Coast Highway. The canyon is not considered safely navigable and is enclosed by fencing.

The park’s craggy bluff top location and scenic canyons and vistas make it a highly popular local destination, attracting many local residents and tourists. It is the site of several annual City of Dana Point events including a Veterans’ Day ceremony, an Easter Egg Hunt, a community Christmas party, and numerous private events. Pines Park is in great demand as a wedding venue due to the panoramic ocean view, stately pines and large grassy area. It is a beloved community gathering place, enjoyed by local residents and visitors on a daily basis.

**Palisades Gazebo Park** consists of two lots (123-081-38 and 39); is located at 26401 Palisades Drive; and is number 20 on the City of Dana Point Parks & Facilities list. This beautiful little park was constructed in July, 1928 by The Capistrano Beach Company under the direction of Ned Doheny. Photographs from the period show a gazebo that today, is substantially unchanged from the 1920s structure. In the late 1970s, it was restored by the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District, which added new wooden beams and gardens, celebrated in a dedication ceremony on Sunday, February 12, 1978. The popular landmark overlooks Doheny and Capistrano Beaches, providing panoramic views extending north to the Dana Point Headlands,

harbor and Catalina Island and south to the San Clemente pier. Today this small but beautiful ocean view park is popular as a daily viewing spot for local residents and visitors. It also serves as a small but stunning wedding venue.

## **SIGNIFICANCE and HISTORY**

### **The Doheny Development in Capistrano Beach**

Pines and Palisades Gazebo Parks are Capistrano Beach landmarks that are as old as the community itself. Edward “Ned” L. Doheny Jr. along with his wife Lucy’s twin brothers, Clark and Warren Smith, established The Capistrano Beach Company in 1926. That same year, they purchased 1,000 acres of palisades and beach to the west of Ole Hanson’s “Spanish Village by the Sea”, now San Clemente. The palisades portion, which included both parks, began at Estrella Mall (today’s intersection of Camino Capistrano and Camino De Estrella) and extended westward to encompass what today are known as the Palisades and Doheny Village areas of Capistrano Beach. Luther Eldridge, a college friend of Ned Doheny, was hired as chief contractor and Roy Kelley as architect. He soon constructed the first of 28 tile-roofed, Spanish colonial homes, 21 of which survive today and are listed as “Doheny Houses” on the 1997 Aegis Historic Architectural Resources Inventory prepared for the City of Dana Point and adopted in 2001.

“Palisades House No. 1”, known as the “Doheny mansion” although never occupied by the immediate family as a permanent residence, still sits at that same intersection, now lovingly restored. This beautiful home was frequently visited by Edward L. and Estelle Doheny over the years. Ownership remained with the extended Doheny family until 1946. From the bluff top house and elaborate gardens, a still existing stone staircase led to the beach below, where a compound of four more homes was constructed along the shores of Capistrano Bay. The crowning touch was the adjacent Capistrano Beach Club, which included a three-story Spanish colonial tower, dining facilities and a 100-foot swimming pool as key amenities. A free membership to the \$125,000 Capistrano Beach Club was offered to all homeowners of Doheny’s Capistrano Beach palisades development.

Tragedy struck in February, 1929 when Ned Doheny was shot to death in Los Angeles in a murder/suicide involving Hugh Plunket, his closest confidante and business associate. Soon after, Edward L. Doheny Sr. visited his son’s dream development and, succumbing to its charms, retained ownership for several years. Title was transferred from the Capistrano Beach Company to Doheny–controlled Petroleum Securities Company one week after Ned’s death. In 1931, Petroleum Securities Company gifted 41.4 acres of land to the State of California as a memorial to Ned Doheny, where the family name lives on at Doheny State Beach. In 1938, three years after Edward L. Doheny Sr.’s death, the Capistrano Beach properties were bequeathed to his widow, Estelle Doheny, Ned’s widow Lucy Smith Doheny Battson, and other heirs of Edward L. Doheny Sr. through various trusts including the Los Nietos Land Company created in 1928 for Doheny’s grandchildren. By 1946, almost all of the properties owned by the Doheny family, its heirs and trusts, had been sold to private parties.

The Doheny family had a lasting impact on the community, which was briefly renamed “Doheny Park” in 1931, but the name chosen by Ned Doheny, *Capistrano Beach*, was restored in 1948. In her book, *Home Port for Romance*, Doris Walker makes a statement that captures the significance of the Doheny family and its historic sites and structures: “...along the whole California coast, “Doheny” is a household word for “beach.” Today, the community of Capistrano Beach retains its identity and a separate 92624 zip code, and is a proud district within the beautiful City of Dana Point. Residents of the Palisades continue to enjoy panoramic coastal views over the site of the original Capistrano Beach Club (now County-owned Capistrano Beach Park) as it stretches west and joins Ned’s namesake Doheny State Beach.

## **Pines Park**

Pines Park was constructed when early developers partially filled a craggy coastal canyon to the west of Ned Doheny’s 1920s Doheny house #1. It is a stunning landmark which overlooks the breathtakingly beautiful Capistrano Beach coast. The park once known as “Pines Bluff Park”, or “Doheny Pines Park” was located directly above the focal point of the 1920’s Doheny development - the stately Capistrano Beach Club, which was lost to history in 1969.

A portion of the stone retaining walls supporting an original serpentine trail that led down the east side of the bluff is still visible today along the eastern portion of the lower “bowl” area of the central park. An early photo refers to the area as “Bowl Gardens”. The path led down the canyon to a flat lower terrace. This in turn led to a staircase to an elevated area that was graced by a beautiful viewing gazebo. The construction of the stone retaining walls is identical to an existing but deteriorated staircase built in 1928 directly down the bluff to Pacific Coast Highway below Palisades House No. 1. The aging foundation of a circular outlook area at the east end of the park is constructed of the same original stone and concrete materials used along the trail and staircase. A remnant of early stone construction can also be seen on the east end of the park surrounding a drain outlet.

For several decades, Pines Bluff Park had little to no public oversight and fell into disrepair. Local residents, led by the Capistrano Beach Community Association, held pancake breakfasts and periodic cleanups to supplement public efforts, removing large mounds of pine needles shed from the prolific namesake trees. Finally, the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District was established in 1965 to levy taxes to maintain this and other Dana Point parks. The levy was apparently 10 cents per \$100 of assessed value, which yielded the grand sum of \$14,000 for parks maintenance throughout the area.

Unfortunately, by the late 1960s, the gazebo, which was constructed of wood framing and wire encased in stucco, and had been neglected for decades, began to rot from within, a victim of termites and wood rot. Vandals and graffiti artists damaged what nature had not, and the County finally razed the structure due to safety concerns. Remnants of the old gazebo were apparently bulldozed off the side of the bluff and were visible for years until they were buried beneath layers of dirt and coastal brush. The staircase, a five-foot mound that had hosted the

gazebo, and a wooden walking path that had surrounded it, were leveled and lost to history. Today the formerly lovely Bowl Gardens is a flat, undeveloped plot with a panoramic view. The area is fenced off for safety reasons, but is often infiltrated by squirrels and rabbits, and sometimes, local kids who breach the fence to ride dirt bikes or race remote-controlled cars across the dirt lot.

The last of the original Doheny Palisades properties had been sold to private parties by 1946. The exact lineage of the Pines Bluff parcel is uncertain, but in 1969, the District issued a quit claim deed to the park when a developer purchased it with the intention of building several view homes along the bluff. According to long term residents, one house was constructed along the west side of the park on Doheny Place. This ignited nearby residents who convinced the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District to sue the developer and return the park to public use. Several homeowners apparently had clauses in their deeds referring to Pines Bluff Park as a plot reserved by the Doheny's for the use of palisades residents. The District's attorney, noted environmental advocate William Wilcoxon, embarked on a suit on behalf of the District that lasted two years and went all the way to the California Supreme Court. The court refused to hear the developer's appeal and the park was returned to District ownership, allowing Pines Park to be officially dedicated in 1972. County historian Eric Jessen refers to the case, where the lower court "unanimously ruled on the perpetuity of the intention of the original dedication by the Doheny family of Pines Bluff Park", allowing the Park to revert to public ownership.

In 1989, upon incorporation of the City of Dana Point, including Monarch Beach and Capistrano Beach, a mock "shotgun wedding" was held in Dana Point, marrying the sometime contentious parties and celebrating the formation of the new city. In 1993, the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District was folded into City operations and ceased to exist.

In 1978, the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District accepted a one-acre deed to a property adjacent to Pines Park. The property was considered unbuildable because most of it consisted of a steep hillside canyon containing numerous storm drain outlets, with the exception of a small flat portion near Camino Capistrano. The property was sold multiple times, eventually transferring to a developer, Pioneer Builders. The developer managed to overcome the challenges of a steep canyon lot with numerous storm drain outlets and succeeded in obtaining Planning Commission approval for an almost 8,000 square foot home that exceeded height restrictions by a whopping 11 feet, 3 inches, completely obscuring public view of the coast and adjacent park. When story poles erected by the City planners alerted residents to the fact that they were about to lose a huge view corridor, local residents appealed the Planning Commission approval to the City Council demanding that they stop the development and protect the scenic views promised to the community by the original Doheny Development. In the end, the residents' Planning Commission appeal was withdrawn when the City of Dana Point purchased the property from the developer who negotiated a \$2.1 million price tag. This was the first time in Dana Point history that the City purchased land for open space and public enjoyment. The City fenced off the dangerous canyon section, and installed landscaping and two seating areas which residents refer to as their "million-dollar benches". There is no doubt

that countless locals and visitors, plus those who simply drive by the park, continue to benefit from this glorious public view.

Another interesting feature of Pines Park is the iconic “climbing tree” which bends and twists its way along the eastern lawn in the central park area. According to long term resident Hank Thomas, one day in the early 70s he noticed the tree leaning over, with the roots beginning to emerge from the soil. Hank took matters into his own hands, placing a concrete slab and a wooden post under the tree to support the offending branch to allow the roots to return safely to the ground. Later, the City of Dana Point replaced the post with a concrete structure which supported the old tree, allowing it to ramble and grow, creating a delightful enticement to climbing. Many parents have held the hands of small children as they’ve balanced along its thick curved trunk. Today, there are many nodules visible on the upper side of the trunk but none on the bottom. The nodules have presumably been caused by the abrasion of many little feet over the years.

Historic records refer to Edward and Estelle Doheny hosting a Christmas party for 100 children at Capistrano Beach in 1931, promising to make it an annual event. That didn’t actually occur, but decades later, the Capistrano Beach Community Association celebrated Christmas with an impromptu local tree lighting along the Camino de Estrella mall. Long time residents recall Christmas parties at Pines Park complete with a petting zoo and horse drawn wagon, and in the 1980s and 90s, an annual Christmas craft fair. These traditions eventually lapsed, only to be reignited in 2014, when community advocacy group Capo Cares restored the practice at the same location. It was moved to Pines Park the following year, where an annual tree lighting continues as a popular community event hosted by the City of Dana Point.

Pines Bluff Park, now simply “Pines Park” has changed significantly over the decades, benefiting from the watchful stewardship of local residents and the City of Dana Point. In 1991, the City added modern playground equipment in the lower western park, replacing earlier wooden play structures that had deteriorated. Later, landscaping improvements and public art were added, enhancing the beautiful location. Today, Pines Park is a favorite spot for strolling, dog walking, picnicking, tree climbing and squirrel watching, plus impromptu yoga and Tai Chi classes, and the occasional private or public meeting. It is a popular setting for weddings and a perfect venue for public events like Veterans Day, the annual Easter egg hunt and community Christmas celebrations. The magnificent pines, many of them decades old, bear witness to the park’s unique and beautiful setting and its importance to the Capistrano Beach community in its past, present and future.

## **Palisades Gazebo Park**

Palisades Gazebo Park is located above Pacific Coast Highway at the first peak of Palisades Drive, a steep road created by the Capistrano Beach Company in 1928. It is located on two lots at a natural landing along the bluff a short walk from Pines Park. This popular landmark overlooks Doheny and Capistrano Beaches with panoramic views extending north to the Dana Point Headlands, harbor and Catalina Island and south to the San Clemente pier. An early

photo shows vintage cars parked at the ridge of Palisades Drive where salesmen eagerly pitched the beautiful view lots available for sale throughout Doheny's Capistrano Beach development.

The gazebo, three original lamp posts (still in working condition) and several original concrete benches exist on the site. Lamp posts at one time continued down the seaward side of Palisades Drive where they are visible in vintage photos of the site. These have been lost to history except for one identical lamp post located outside Doheny House #1 on Camino Capistrano, and several more located along the Estrella Mall as sentinels to the area's rich past. Beautiful rose gardens were added in the late 70s by designer James T. Jesser, who oversaw the renovation for the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District. According to a May, 1978 *Sunset* magazine article, he took special care to choose rose species that would have graced the garden during the Doheny era.

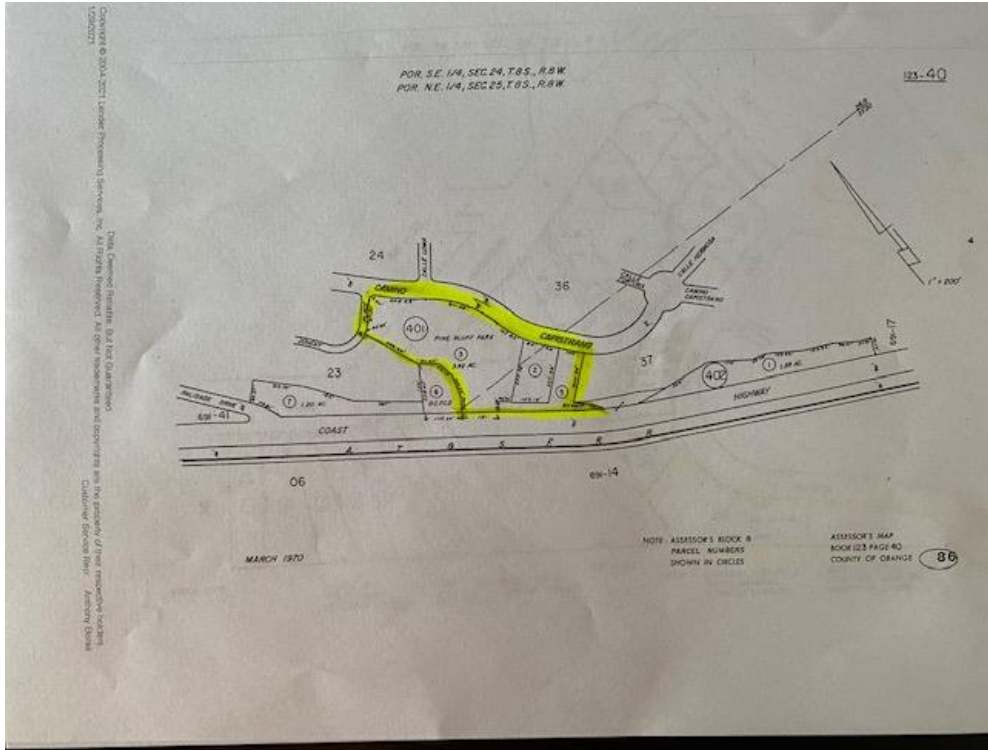
Local historian Doris Walker's book, *Home Port for Romance* refers to an interesting episode that speaks to residents' love for this iconic site: *"Even the old gazebo – an original landmark of the tract – was almost lost. Community residents formed a human blockade against a private wrecking crane in 1972, and public domain was declared again through legal channels. Restored with wooden beams and gardens as an even more attractive viewpoint park in 1978, the gazebo site lost yet another round in 1980. A neighbor discovered the park had overdeveloped its bounds through a surveying error. The disputed section had to be uprooted."*

The preservation of Gazebo Park is owed to the collective vision of the 1970 Orange County Board of Supervisors, which directed that the Harbors, Beaches and Parks Department should seek to expand coastal recreation spots throughout the County. The Department outdid themselves, eventually adding over 100 parks covering 1200 acres throughout Orange County, including this tiny, but historically significant and beloved location.

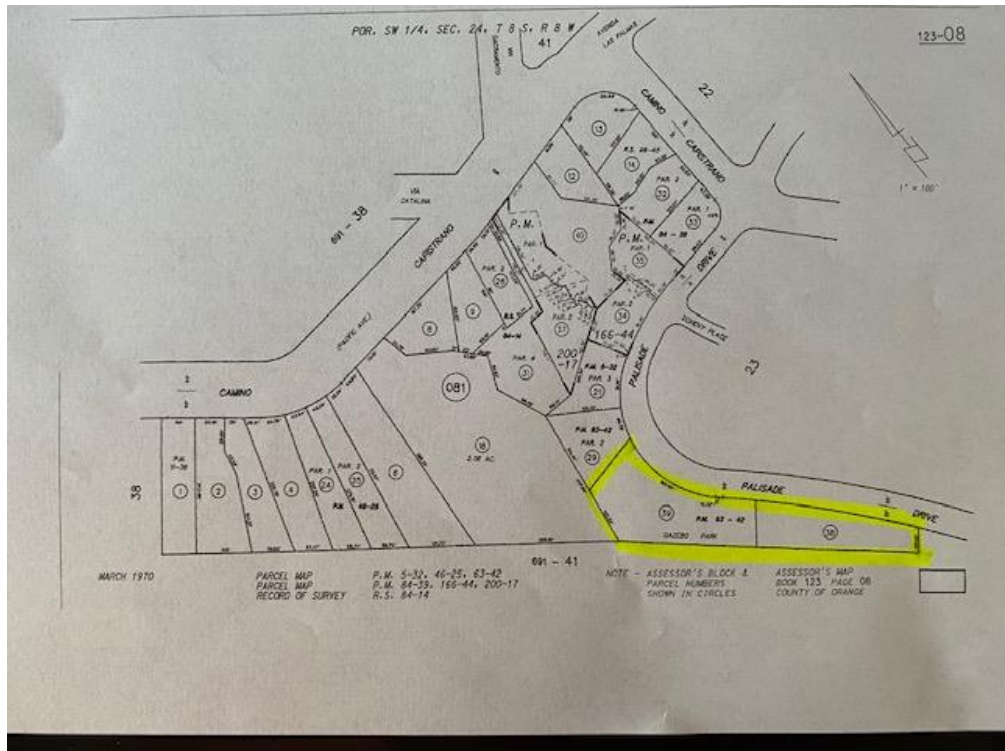
The Palisades Gazebo Park property was awarded by the court to the public in July, 1975, when Capistrano Beach was part of unincorporated Orange County. It was restored by the Capistrano Bay Parks and Recreation District, which added new wooden beams and gardens, allowing for a dedication ceremony on Sunday, February 12, 1978. The park became the property of the City of Dana Point upon its incorporation in 1989.

Today this small but beautiful ocean view park is popular as a daily viewing spot for local residents and visitors. Located at a natural landing at the top of the steepest section of Palisades Drive, it offers a welcome respite for residents who regularly walk down to Capistrano Beach from homes in the palisades area. It also serves as a popular panoramic viewpoint for locals and visitors and a small, but very charming, scenic wedding venue. The rose gardens have been enhanced with lavender, succulents and bougainvillea vines which will soon trail over the old gazebo as they did almost a century before.

## **ASSESSOR'S MAPS**



Pines Park, March 1970, Orange County Assessor



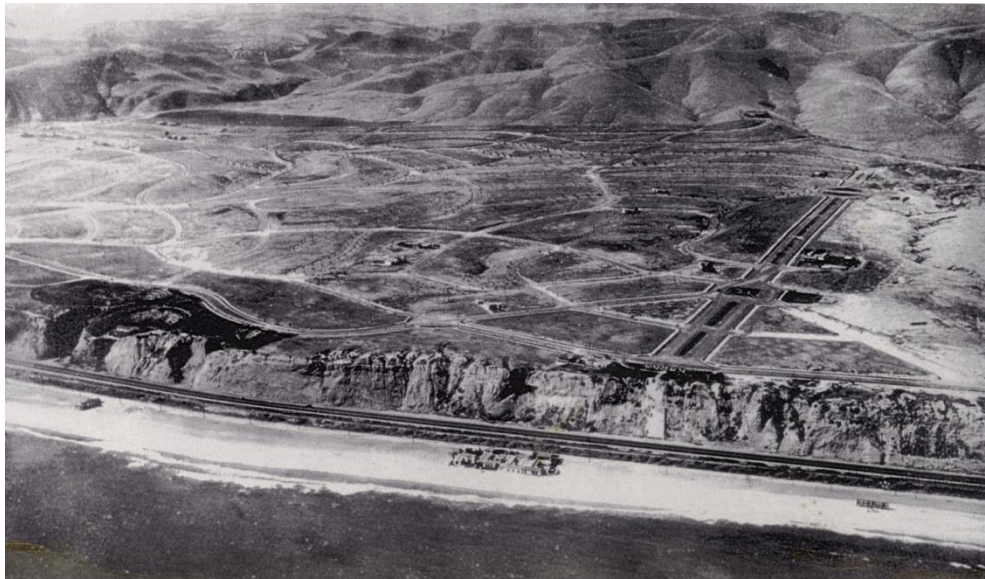
Palisades Gazebo, March 1970, Orange County Assessor

**PHOTOGRAPHS - THEN**





Early photo of Capistrano Bay viewed from craggy Pines Park bluff.  
*Circa 1920s, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection.*



Estrella Mall, Doheny House#1, Doheny Houses on Beach Road, Pines Park at left above Capistrano Beach Club. *Circa 1929, Dana Point Historical Society*



Pines Park gazebo, trail in "Bowl Gardens". Capistrano Beach Club and pier  
*Circa 1930, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection.*



Pines Park Bowl Gardens and gazebo  
*1931, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection*



Pines Bowl Garden from the South. Note elevation of Gazebo for optimal viewing. *Spring 1932, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection*



Announcement of end of legal challenge, making Pines Park a permanent park. December 2, 1971, The Daily Sun-Post. *Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection.*



Pines Park. Allan Seymour and son Gavin. Note rough grasses typical of the Park's "unkempt" period with little to no public maintenance.  
*1979, Gertie and Allan Seymour Costeño Collection*



View from the top. Prospective purchasers drove to the top of Palisades. See cluster of visitors listening to a real estate pitch beyond the parked cars.  
*1927, Dana Point Historical Society*



Route to the bluff via Palisades Drive constructed by the Capistrano Beach Company. *Circa 1926-28, Dana Point Historical Society*



Palisades Gazebo Park view toward Headlands,  
*Circa 1930, Dana Point Historical Society*



Palisades Drive as viewed from Gazebo. Note Doheny era street lamps and Capistrano Beach Club across Pacific Coast Highway. *Circa 1960, Dana Point Historical Society*



Palisades Gazebo Park. Note original structure, concrete benches and street lamps. Shawn and Aaron Simmons on bicycles. Inside the gazebo is community advocate Edmund "Ted" Simmons (1936-2019), whose name is engraved on a memorial bench in Pines Park.

*1978, Dana Point Historical Society*

## PHOTOGRAPHS - NOW



Original Doheny foundation, lookout point, Pines Park, 2021, *Capo Cares*



Remnant of path along bowl area which led to the old gazebo,  
Pines Park, 2021, *Capo Cares*





Remnant of Doheny era, Pines Park. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Eastern portion of Pines Park showing “million-dollar” benches and panoramic view over steep canyon. *Capo Cares, 2021*



Central portion of Pines Park. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Central Pines Park showing original overlook above lower bowl.  
2021, *Capo Cares*



Iconic climbing tree, Central Pines Park. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Central Pines Park Bowl area. Site of original gazebo, walking trail and Beautiful bowl gardens demolished in late 1960s. 2021, *Capo Cares*



Western Pines Park showing playground below Central portion. A well worn path down the canyon is still visible from the ramp at left. 2020, *Capo Cares*



Pines Park view, *Christmas 2020, Jane Horlings*



Palisades Gazebo Park viewed through bougainvillea, 2020, *Capo Cares*



Palisades Gazebo Park signage and original structures, lamps.  
*January 2021, Capo Cares*



Palisades Gazebo Park, in bloom. 2020, *Capo Cares*



Palisades Gazebo interior showing magnificent view over the Pacific.  
2021, *Capo Cares*



Sunset view from Palisades Gazebo Park toward Dana Point Headlands,  
*2019, Capo Cares*

## TIMELINE

### The Doheny Family History in Capistrano Beach

- 1856 - Edward Laurence Doheny, future “rags to riches oil tycoon” is born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. The son of Irish Catholic immigrants, he graduated from High School as Valedictorian, was employed by the U. S. Geological Survey and went west in 1873 to prospect, eventually making a fortune in oil production.
- 1883 – Edward marries Carrie Lou Ella Wilkins in New Mexico. First child, Eileen, is born in 1885 but dies of heart disease in 1892.
- 1891 – The Doheny family moves to Los Angeles
- 1893 – “Ned” (Edward Laurence Doheny Jr.), founder of Capistrano Beach and second child of Edward and Carrie, is born in Los Angeles
- 1899 – Carrie divorces Edward and takes Ned to San Francisco
- 1900 – Edward Doheny marries Estelle (Carrie Estelle Betzold)
- 1900 – Carrie Wilkins Doheny dies, recorded as an “accidental drinking of battery fluid”.
- 1900 – Ned returns to Los Angeles to live with his father and step mother Estelle as their only child.
- 1914 – Ned marries Lucy Smith, daughter of a prominent railroad executive, and has 5 children
- 1914 – Ned hires Hugh Plunkett, a former employee’s at his father in law’s gas stations. Ned Plunkett becomes a trusted confidante and business manager, and later Ned’s supposed “murderer”.
- 1916 – Edward forms the Pan American petroleum and Transport Company and other corporate entities on whose boards sat Ned, and the brothers of Ned’s wife, Lucy Smith Doheny.
- 1916 – Ned graduates from USC, joins the Navy and begins work in the family business after WWI.
- 1916 – Edward forms the Pan American Petroleum & Transport Company
- 1918 – Estelle converts to Catholicism and the family begins a rise to prominence in Los Angeles society.
- 1920 – Edward increases in power and influence as an oil producer and prominent businessman with wells in Southern CA and Mexico.
- 1921 – Ned Doheny and Hugh Plunkett carry \$100,000 in cash to the U. S. Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall, as a “loan” to help his failing ranch. This plants the seeds of the huge and sensational “Teapot Dome Scandal” after Fall grants oil leases to Doheny’s Pan American Company and Sinclair Oil (owned by Harry Sinclair, another person who had “lent” Fall substantial sums).
- 1923 – Secretary Fall resigns and Senate Hearings delve into the oil leases and loans. Civil and criminal lawsuits are filed against Fall, Sinclair and Doheny, with trials lasting until 1930. Ned Doheny is indicted but granted immunity in exchange for his testimony in the Sinclair trial. No immunity is granted to Plunkett.
- 1926 – Ned Doheny, along with his wife Lucy’s twin brothers, Clark and Warren Smith, begin to develop a community of Spanish Style homes in what would become Capistrano Beach. He hires Luther Eldridge as chief contractor for The Capistrano Beach Company.



- Eldridge builds the original Doheny family home on the bluff, a compound of 4 homes on the beach below (now Beach Road), the Capistrano Beach Club, and 24 other homes in the Palisades. Twenty-one of the original 28 homes remain today.
- 1928 – Fearing financial ruin in the wake of the scandal, Edward sells the Western portion of the Pan American Petroleum Company to the Richfield Gas Company and divides his holdings into equal parts for Ned, Estelle and himself. Edward’s share is further divided in half, establishing the Los Nietos Trust for his grandchildren.
- 1928 – Plunkett becomes more concerned about the potential for prosecution and is urged by the Doheny family to enter an asylum. On Christmas Eve, 1928 Plunkett suffers a collapse at a party and is confined to nursing care at “Greystone” the Doheny family estate in Los Angeles for 3 weeks.
- 1929 – On February 16 Ned Doheny and Hugh Plunkett are found dead of gunshot wounds, in a tragic murder-suicide at Greystone.
- 1929 – Petroleum Securities Company took title of the Capistrano Beach Company holdings one week after Ned’s death. Eldridge signed over his ownership interest in the construction company, lumber mill, lumber yard and hardware store to expedite closing the estate. The original project was terminated and Eldridge moved out of the area.
- 1929 – Harry Leyden, newly appointed manager of the Capistrano Beach project, moves into Doheny home #1 along with his wife Louise, who becomes a well known artist and community advocate in Capistrano Beach
- 1929 – Albert Fall is convicted of bribery and sent to prison.
- 1930 – Edward Doheny is found not guilty of wrongdoing in the Teapot Dome bribery scandal.
- 1931 – Through the Petroleum Securities Company, the Doheny’s donate 41.4 acres to the State of California for Doheny State Park as a memorial to their murdered son. They later donate funds for construction of St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church at its original site (now home to San Felipe de Jesus Catholic Church in Dana Point.
- 1935 – Edward L. Doheny dies in Los Angeles. As per his wishes, Estelle destroys all his personal and business documents.
- 1938 – Petroleum Securities Company bequeaths the Doheny properties in Capistrano Beach to Estelle Doheny, Lucy Smith Doheny Battson (Ned’s widow), and the heirs of Edward L. Doheny Sr. deceased. By 1944, all of the properties owned by the Doheny family, heirs and trusts had been sold to private parties.
- 1958 – Mrs. Doheny continues the family’s significant charitable and philanthropic work after her husband’s demise until her own death in 1958.

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### Research Guidance:

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### Oral History:

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Orange County Historical Commission Plaques for Pines Park and Palisades Gazebo Park

Plaque & Monument Locations

Pines Park -flat area adjacent to the walkway near the bluff and seating area identified below.



Palisades Gazebo Park – locate the monument near the entrance on the planter (see the location listed below in Blue)

