

What is a historic context statement?

A historic context statement is a report that provides the basis for evaluating historic significance and integrity. It answers questions such as:

- What aspects of geography, history and culture shaped a community's built environment
- What property types were associated with those developments
- Why those properties are important, and what level of integrity is needed for them to qualify as historic resources



Historic Context Study Area



What makes a property historic?

In order to qualify for the National or California Register, a property must be “historically significant.”

There are four criteria for significance:

1. Properties associated with **EVENTS** important in our past
2. Properties associated with **PERSONS** important in our past
3. Properties significant for their **ARCHITECTURE**
4. Properties that are significant for **ARCHAEOLOGY**

What is historic integrity?

In order to qualify for the National or California Register, a property must also have “integrity.” This refers to the ability of a building to convey a sense of the history that made it significant.

There are seven aspects of integrity:

1. Location
2. Design
3. Setting
4. Materials
5. Workmanship
6. Feeling
7. Association

Historic Integrity



A property that has integrity usually retains most or all of the seven aspects, such as its design, materials and workmanship.

Historic Integrity

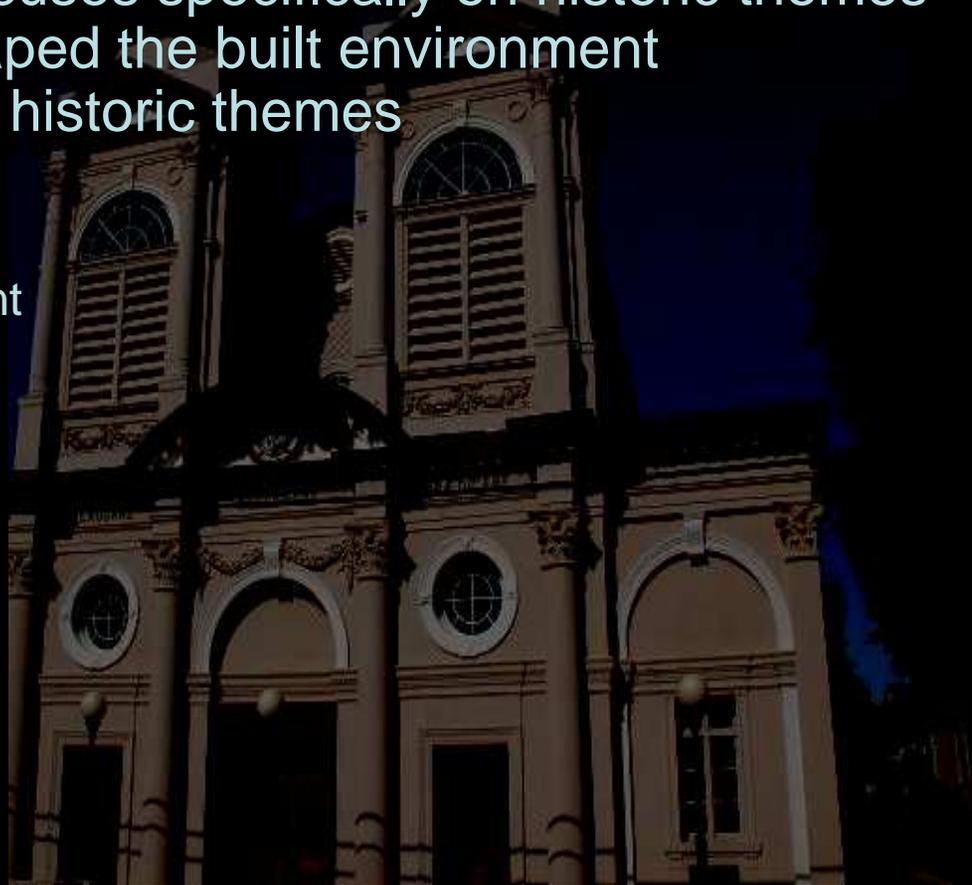


A property may lose integrity when original design elements, such as decorative trim, windows, and cladding, have been removed.

Context Statements and Historic Themes

A historic context statement is NOT a complete history of an area. Rather, it focuses specifically on historic themes and patterns that shaped the built environment we see today. These historic themes might include:

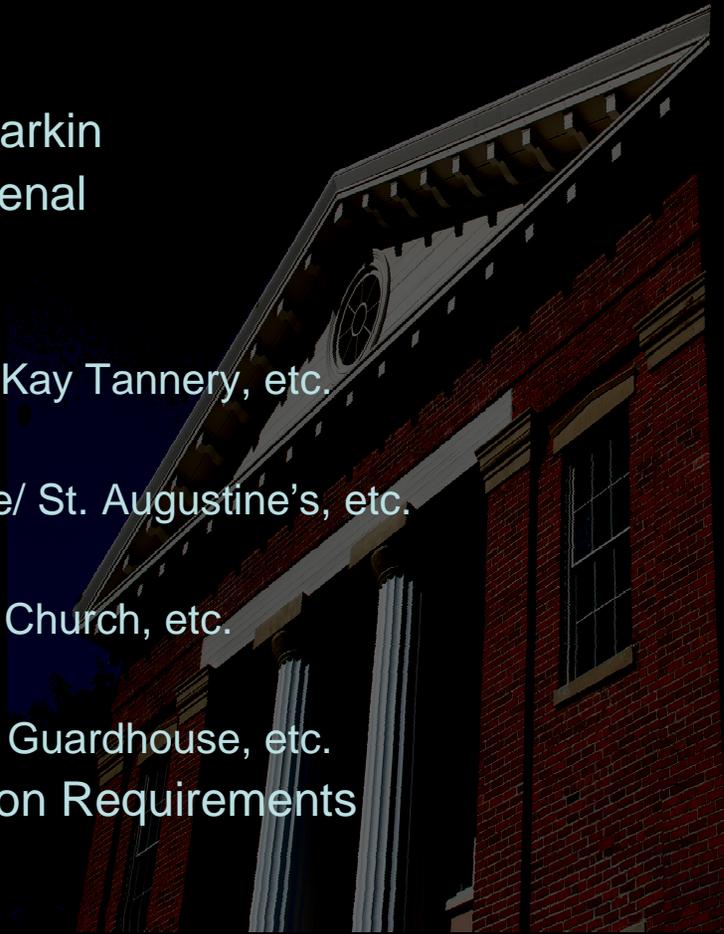
- Exploration & settlement
- Maritime history
- Industrial development
- Transportation
- Commerce & trade
- Education
- Military activities
- Architecture



Example Theme

Early American Period (1846 - 1877)

- Bear Flag Revolt
- Robert Semple & Thomas Larkin
- Founding of the Benicia Arsenal
- Statehood & State Capitol
- Industrial Facilities
 - Pacific Cement Works, McKay Tannery, etc.
- Schools
 - Benicia Collegiate Institute/ St. Augustine's, etc.
- Churches
 - St. Paul's, Congregational Church, etc.
- Military Facilities
 - "Camel Barns," Magazine, Guardhouse, etc.
- Property Types & Registration Requirements



Property Types

The historic context statement identifies the types of properties that are associated with each theme. These can include:

- Residential properties
- Commercial properties
- Industrial properties
- Civic buildings
- Churches
- Military facilities
- Agricultural properties



How You Can Help

Your help can provide important information for the context statement, such as:

- Sharing historic photos of buildings, businesses and streetscapes
- Researching specific property types, such as civic properties (schools, firehouses, etc.)
- Research on post-World War II properties
- Research on ethnic communities



575. Pacific Mail Steamship Co's. Works, Benicia.