

BELLA TERRA RESIDENTIAL PROJECT HISTORICAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

This historical resources technical report discusses the potential for impacts under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on built-environment historical resources resulting from development of the Bella Terra Residential Project (Project) at 7777 Edinger Avenue in the city of Huntington Beach, Orange County, California. The Project would demolish two structures, a 149,001-square-foot (sf) building occupied by Burlington Coat Factory and an adjacent 33,331 sf retail commercial building, and replace them with a mixed-use development, consisting of residential units and commercial uses.

This report explores the potential for both direct and indirect Project impacts on historical resources, as defined by CEQA. CEQA generally considers historical resources to be any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that is historically or archaeologically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural history of California. A study area was established to take into account the potential for both direct and indirect Project impacts on cultural and paleontological resources, as defined by CEQA.

A standard records search was conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center at California State University, Fullerton on October 15, 2021. Nine cultural resource studies have been conducted within a 0.5-mile radius of the Project site; two of the studies encompassed the Project site. However, no built-environment historical resources were found in the vicinity of the Project during any of the aforementioned studies.

The evaluations for the two buildings at the Project site concluded that they are not historical resources. Because this report did not identify any historical resources for the purposes of CEQA, the proposed Project is not expected to have any direct or indirect impacts on built-environment historical resources.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BERD	Built-Environment Resources Directory
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
City	City of Huntington Beach
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
GPA	Galvin Preservation Associates
HCM	Historic-Cultural Monument
I-405	Interstate 405
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PRC	Public Resources Code
SCCIC	South Central Coastal Information Center
sf	square foot
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer

Chapter 1. Introduction

ICF conducted a historical resources survey for the proposed Bella Terra Residential Project (Project), a mixed-use development in the city of Huntington Beach, Orange County. The survey partially fulfills the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This report describes the methods and the results of the historical resources survey. It also provides technical recommendations for the Project.

Project Location

The Project would be developed on the grounds of the Bella Terra shopping center at 7777 Edinger Avenue in the northern portion of Huntington Beach (see Figure 1). Primary regional access to the Project site is provided by Interstate 405 (I-405), which runs in a northwest–southeast direction approximately 0.19 mile east-northeast of the Project site; Edinger Avenue, which runs in an east–west direction approximately 0.7 mile south of the Project site; Beach Boulevard, which runs in a north–south direction approximately 0.28 mile east of the Project site; and Center Avenue, which runs in an east–west direction 0.7 mile north of the Project site. In addition, the Project site is near the Golden West Transportation Center, which provides mass transit access throughout both the city and Orange County, and Golden West Community College, which is approximately 0.29 mile to the west. The college houses the Boys & Girls Clubs of Huntington Valley, Pacific Life Foundation Branch, and the weekly Huntington Beach Farmers Market.

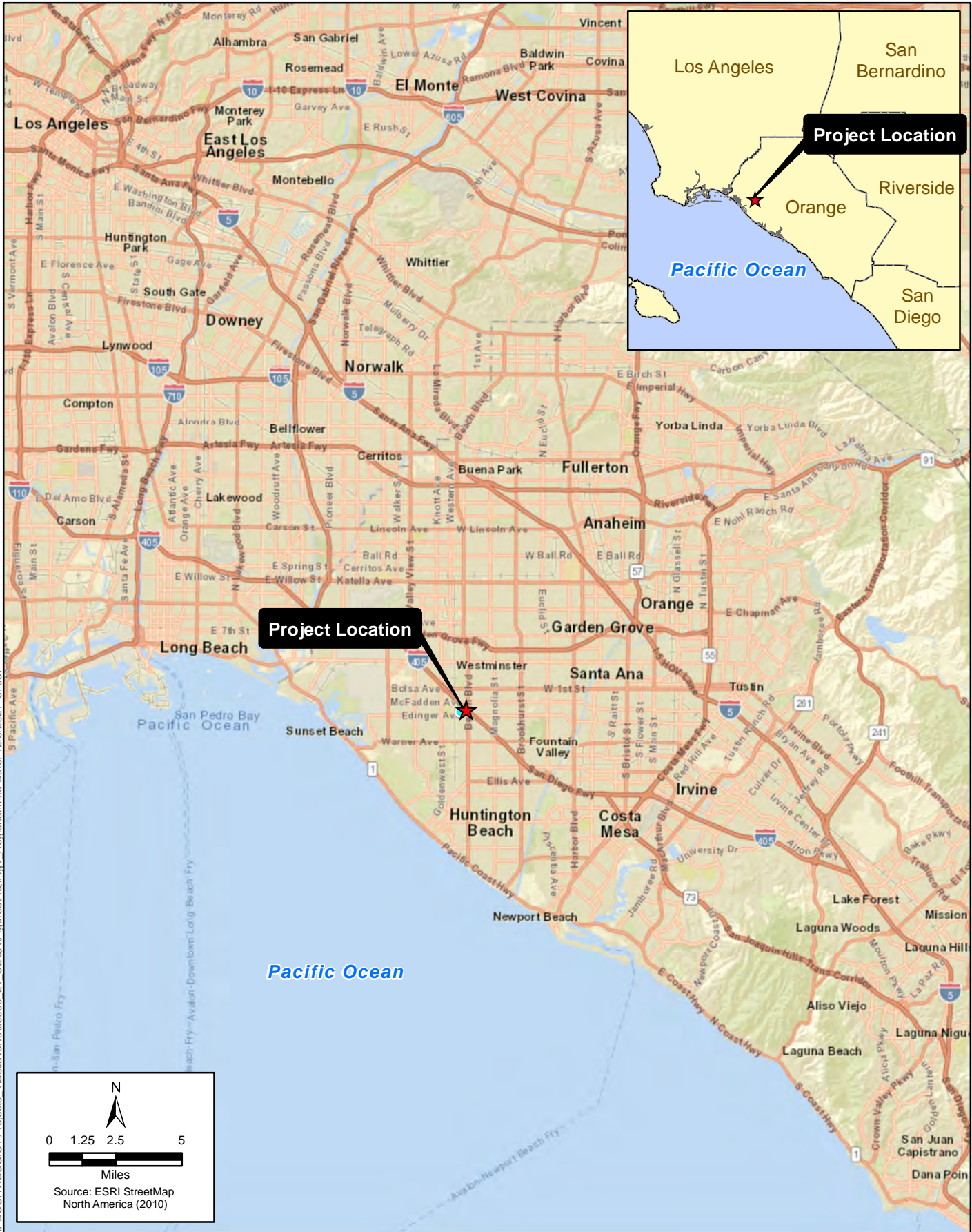
Project Description

The Project would redevelop a portion of the Bella Terra shopping center at 7777 Edinger Avenue in Huntington Beach with a new mixed-use infill development. Specifically, the Project would demolish a 149,001-square-foot (sf) building occupied by Burlington Coat Factory and an adjacent 33,331 sf retail commercial building and replace them with a mixed-use development, consisting of approximately 300 residential apartment units, approximately 25,000 sf of new retail uses, 404 new on-site residential parking spaces in a three-level podium-structured parking garage, 150 off-site residential guest parking spaces, 201 commercial parking spaces in a three-level parking garage, and associated hardscape, landscaping, and related improvements. The Project would be a maximum of 100 feet high.

Project Background

Current Setting

The Project would be located on the north side of Edinger Avenue, east of The Residences at Bella Terra and a Costco store, within an existing open-air dining, shopping, and entertainment center. The Project site and surrounding vicinity are relatively flat, with few trees or shrubs, except for mall landscaping. The project location and vicinity are shown in Figure 2.



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Figure 1
Regional Location





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Figure 2
Project Location and Vicinity

Regulatory Framework

Federal, state, and local regulations recognize the public's interest in cultural resources and the public benefit of preserving them. These laws and regulations require analysts to consider how a Project might affect cultural resources and take steps to avoid or reduce potential damage to them. A historical resource can be considered any property valued (e.g., monetarily, aesthetically, or religiously) by a group of people. Valued properties can be historical in character or date to the pre-contact past (i.e., the time prior to contact with European Americans).

The proposed Project would be subject to the requirements of CEQA. It therefore may be affected by other state and municipal laws, regulations, and building codes regarding historical resources. These might include the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and the California State Historical Building Code. In addition, the City of Huntington Beach (City) requires historical resources studies, surveys, and reports, such as this technical report, to consider the potential eligibility of properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Moreover, the appropriate treatment of historic properties at the municipal, state, and federal levels is informed by standards and guidelines promulgated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

This document was prepared to satisfy requirements of all applicable cultural resources regulations.

Federal

National Register of Historic Places

First authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the NRHP was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments; private groups; and citizens to identify the nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment.” The NRHP recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels. Ordinarily, birthplaces, cemeteries, or graves of historical figures; properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes; structures that have been moved from their original locations; reconstructed historic buildings; properties that are primarily commemorative in nature; and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years are typically not considered eligible for the NRHP, unless they satisfy certain conditions.

According to NRHP guidelines, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess and meet any of the following criteria:

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

The NRHP requires that a resource not only meet one of the criteria but also possess *integrity*, defined as the ability of a property to convey historical significance. The evaluation of a resource's

integrity must be grounded in an understanding of that resource’s physical characteristics and how those characteristics relate to its significance. The NRHP recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define the integrity of a property (i.e., location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association).

A property listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP is automatically included in the CRHR and, therefore, a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

In addition to providing criteria for evaluating the historic significance of properties, the Secretary of the Interior has developed Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. According to the National Park Service, the standards provide “common sense historic preservation principles” and present “a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials as well as designing new additions or making alterations” (National Park Service 2019).

There are “four distinct approaches to the treatment of historic properties: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.” The selection of a treatment approach “depends on a variety of factors, including the property’s historical significance, physical condition, proposed use, and intended interpretation” (National Park Service 2019). Rehabilitation is the most commonly applied approach and generally used to guide adaptive reuse projects and new construction adjacent to historic properties.

The standards for rehabilitation (36 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 67) are as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of the deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize a property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the property and its environment will not be impaired.

State

California Register of Historical Resources

The National Historic Preservation Act mandated the selection and appointment in each state of a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Each SHPO is tasked, among other duties, with maintaining an inventory of historic properties. In California, the state legislature established additional duties for the SHPO, which include maintenance of the CRHR. Established in 1992 by California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1(a), the CRHR serves as “an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state’s historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent feasible, from substantial adverse change.” According to California PRC Section 5024.1(c), the CRHR criteria broadly mirror those of the NRHP. The CRHR criteria are found in California PRC Section 5024.1(c).

A historical resource must be significant at the local, state, or national level under one or more of the following four criteria:

1. It is associated with 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.
2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history.
3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method or construction; represents the work of a master; or possesses high artistic values.
4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

The general rule is that a resource must be at least 50 years old to qualify for the CRHR. In addition, the resource must meet one or more of the aforementioned criteria and possess integrity, defined as “the authenticity of an historical resource’s physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource’s period of significance.” According to Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 4852(d), in order for a resource younger than 50 years to achieve significance, “sufficient time must have passed to obtain a scholarly perspective on the events or individuals associated with the resource. A resource less than 50 years old may be considered for listing in the CRHR if it can be demonstrated that sufficient time has passed to understand its historical importance.”

There are several ways for resources to be included in the CRHR. A resource can be listed in the CRHR as the result of a nomination and public consideration process. In addition, a resource that is subject to a discretionary action by a governmental agency will be evaluated for eligibility for the

CRHR. As previously stated, properties listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP are automatically listed in the CRHR.

California Environmental Quality Act

Established in 1970, CEQA requires state and local government agencies to analyze and publicly disclose potentially significant environment impacts of proposed projects. Moreover, it requires development and adoption of mitigation measures to lessen significant impacts. In Section 21060.5, the CEQA Guidelines define *environment* to include “objects of historic...significance.” The definition of *historical resources* is provided by Section 15064.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines. The following is an abbreviated and excerpted summary of this definition:

1. A resource listed in, or determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in, the CRHR.
2. A resource included in a local register of historical resources, or identified as significant in an historical resource survey, shall be presumed historically significant. Public agencies must treat any such resource as significant, unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant.
3. Any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California may be considered an historical resource, provided the lead agency’s determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record. Generally, a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be “historically significant” if it meets the criteria for listing in the CRHR.

Local

The City’s General Plan, updated in October 2017, includes a Historic and Cultural Resources Element, which was adopted in October 2015. The goals and policies listed below, which have been adopted in the general plan, are designed to protect and preserve historic resources.

- Goal HCR-1. To promote the preservation and restoration of the sites, structures, and districts that have architectural, historical, and/or archaeological significance to the city of Huntington Beach.
 - Objective HCR-1.2: Ensure that city ordinances, programs, and policies create an environment that fosters preservation, rehabilitation, and sound maintenance of historic and archaeological resources.
 - HCR-1.2.1: Use the California Historic Building Code, Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation, and standards and guidelines prescribed by the State Office of Historic Preservation as the architectural and landscape design standards for rehabilitation, alteration, or additions to sites containing historic resources in order to preserve these structures in a manner consistent with the site’s architectural and historic integrity.
 - HCR-1.2.2: Encourage new development to be compatible with adjacent existing historic structures in terms of scale, massing, building materials, and general architectural treatment.

- HCR-1.2.3: Investigate the appropriateness of establishing a “receiver site” program and explore the opportunity to integrate historic buildings with cultural and arts education.
- HCR-1.2.4: Investigate the feasibility of initiating an “adopt a building” program to preserve historic structures that would be removed from their sites.
- Objective HCR-1.3: Consider the provision of incentives (strategies, assistance, and regulations) for the maintenance and/or enhancement of privately owned historic properties in a manner that will conserve the integrity of such resources in the best possible condition.
 - HCR-1.3.1: Encourage owners of eligible historic income-producing properties to use the tax benefits provided by the 1981 Tax Revenue Act as well as all subsequent and future financial incentives.
 - HCR-1.3.8: Preserve and reuse historically significant structures, where feasible.
- Objective HCR-1.4: Promote public education and awareness of the unique history of the Huntington Beach area and community involvement in its retention and preservation.
 - HCR-1.4.1: Encourage the promotion of the city’s historic resources in visitor- and tourist-oriented brochures.
 - HCR-1.4.2: Promote community awareness of historic preservation through Huntington Beach’s appointed and elected officials, its various departments, and local boards and organizations.

The City does not have a specific historic preservation ordinance, but the Historic and Cultural Resources Element of the City General Plan does list 79 local landmarks that the Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board recognizes; none of these are located at the Project site.

Chapter 2. Methods

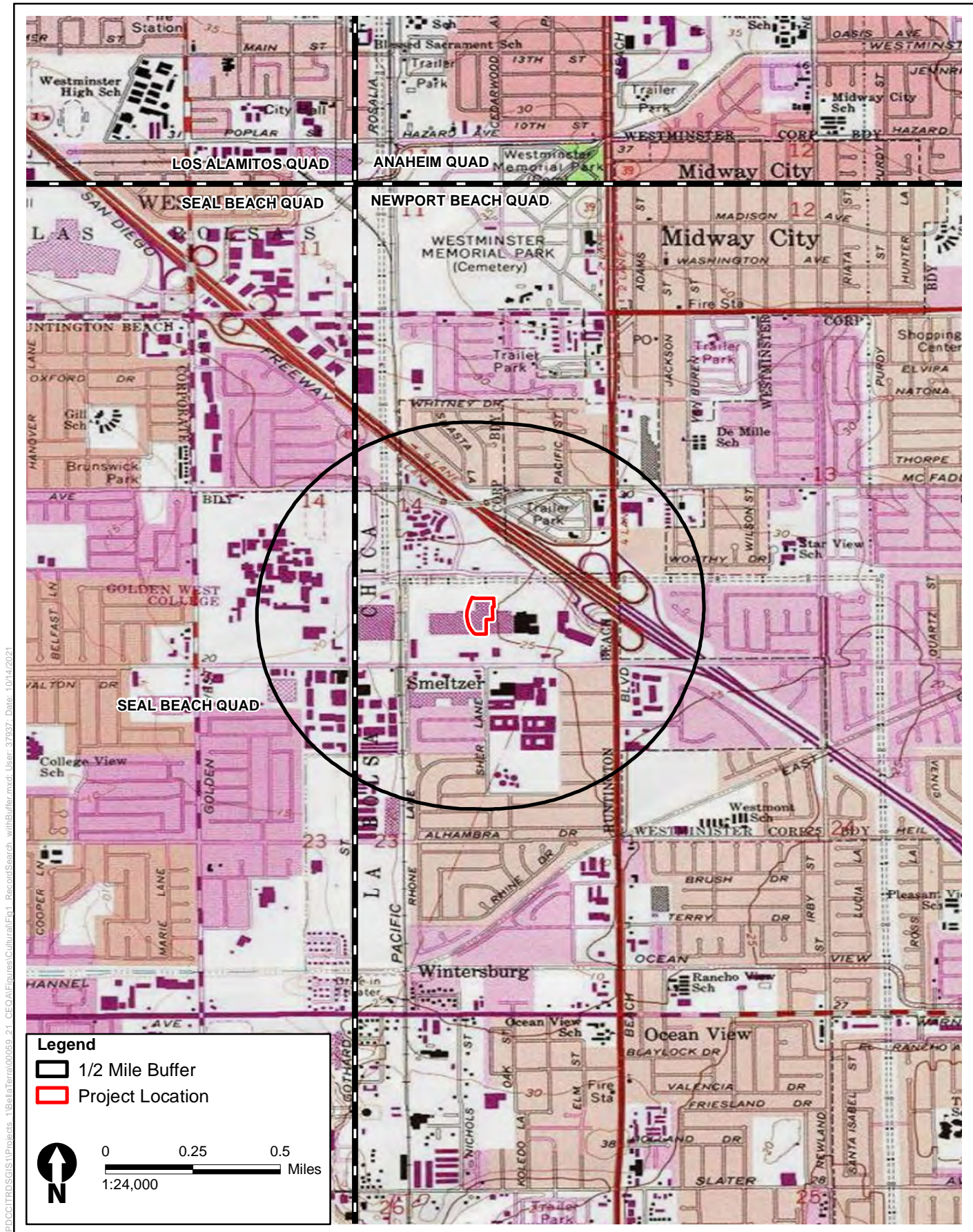
This section describes the study area, research, and field methods used to identify and evaluate historical resources as well as assess the Project’s possible impacts on identified historical resources, if any.

Study Area

The study area (Figure 3) was limited to the proposed location for demolition and reconstruction. The property was cleared and developed as a shopping center in 1966; it underwent renovations in the 1980s and 2000s.

Research Methods

ICF conducted general and property-specific archival research to establish a historic context for the study area and inform the identification and analysis of historical resources. Materials examined included previous cultural resources studies and records found during a formal literature review/records search as well as primary and secondary resources from local repositories, including maps and photographs.



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Figure 3
Record Search
Bella Terra

ICF consulted previous historic resources surveys and evaluations of historical resources, including the *City of Huntington Beach Historic Context and Survey Report* prepared by Galvin Preservation Associates (GPA) in 2014. This report, which concerned buildings in the city that were constructed prior to 1959, focused on the historic core of the city. The GPA report was the basis for the updated City landmarks list. In addition, ICF consulted the following sources to inform the analysis of historical resources within the Project site:

- ParcelQuest
- Newspapers.com
- Historic Aerials (NETRonline)
- Scholarly books and articles
- Other internet resources

Field Methods

ICF carried out field investigations of the Project site and study area using standard industry-accepted methods for identifying and recording historical resources. The methods included a historic resources survey of the study area. The historic resources survey involved observing and photographing all buildings present within the study area (direct and indirect) and evaluating both buildings within the Project site, or the direct study area. On October 29, 2021, Inga Gudmundsson conducted the historic resources survey. Inga Gudmundsson meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards for History and Architectural History.

Historic Resources Survey

During the historic resources survey in late October 2021, no other buildings of historic age were observed within the Project site or study area. Bella Terra Mall is an open air shopping center, located just west of the Beach Boulevard (CA-39) exit of the San Diego Freeway (I-405) in Huntington Beach, Orange County. The mall property sits in the center of a large mostly rectangular parcel, bounded by Edinger Avenue on the south, the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the west, Center Street on the north and the freeway and Beach Boulevard along the east. The building is surrounded on all sides by surface parking; there are several other free-standing retail buildings in the immediate vicinity within the larger combined property. The primary elevations of the mall face east, south and west, and the mall footprint is generally rectangular, although both the east and west elevations have non-original arc-shaped projections. The rear elevation features a non-original movie-theater extension and a non-original multi-story enclosed parking garage. The mall exhibits both single and double-story elevations, while the L-shaped garage along Center Street has five levels of parking. The building does not present a cohesive architectural style. Along the south and west elevations, many stores have direct access to the surface parking area, and each store displays a different storefront style, with varying types of window treatments, applied features and scored surfaces, lighting, awnings, and setbacks. Many of the architectural details are in place to evoke "Italian" architecture, such as scrolled ironwork, decorative pressed block, exaggerated tiles and cartouches, Roman arches and use of white and terracotta surface treatment. These façade features typically date to the reconstruction of the mall beginning in the early 2000s, when the mall was redesigned and was rebranded Bella Terra.

The proposed project site consists of west and south-facing storefronts that overlook the surface parking lots and the main entrance of the mall from Edinger Avenue. A water feature sits in front of this southwest corner of the mall.

Chapter 3. Literature Review/Records Search

The City Planning Commission certified The Village at Bella Terra Final Environmental Impact Report (No. 07-003) on October 14, 2008; at the same time, it approved a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for redevelopment of the Bella Terra site. In 2010, the City approved an addendum to the previously certified environmental impact report for The Village at Bella Terra as well as a Costco store and a tire sales/installation business and service station; it also approved a revised MMRP. No historical resources were identified in the study area at that time.

A cultural resources records search was requested of the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) at California State University, Fullerton on October 15, 2021. The search included a review of all recorded archaeological sites and built-environment resources within a 0.5-mile radius of the Project site as well as a review of cultural resource reports on file. In addition, ICF reviewed the Built-Environment Resources Directory (BERD) for Orange County, along with the California Points of Historical Interest, California Historical Landmarks, CRHR, and NRHP. An official SCCIC response was received from the most recent request on January 11, 2022. Nine cultural resource studies have been conducted within the 0.5-mile radius of the Project site. Of these nine, five encompassed or intersected portions of the Project site, as follows:

1. OR-0001: Ahlering, Michael. *Report of a Scientific Resources Survey and Inventory: Conducted for the City of Huntington Beach, California*, 1973.
2. OR-00485: Anonymous. *Historic Property Survey, Huntington Beach Transportation Center, Orange County Transit District*, 1980.
3. OR-02033: Mason, Roger. *Research Design for Evaluation of Coastal Archaeological Sites in Northern Orange County, California*, 1987.
4. OR-04172: Chasteen, Carrie. *Historic Property Survey Report San Diego Freeway (I-405) Improvement Project SR-73 to I-605, Orange and Los Angeles Counties*, 2011.
5. OR-04313: City of Huntington Beach. *City of Huntington Beach General Plan, Historic and Cultural Resources Element*, 2015.

The records search revealed no historic landmarks or points of interest within the 0.5-mile radius of the Project site. However, 15 historic properties or structures have been previously recorded within the 0.5-mile radius of the Project site. Fourteen are east of I-405; one is at 7902 Edinger Avenue, a 1965 commercial building, currently occupied by a Wells Fargo Bank. This property was evaluated (OR-04172) and assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code of “6Z,” which is defined as ineligible for the NRHP, CRHR, or local designation through survey evaluation. It is unknown if SHPO concurred with this conclusion. This property is outside the Project site.

Chapter 4. Assessment of Significance and Eligibility

Historic Context

The American Period

At the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, California was ceded to the United States and officially became a state in 1850. In 1850, Abel Stearns, a trader from Massachusetts, became the owner of Las Bolsas and La Bolsa Chica after the Nieto family defaulted on a debt, causing their lands to be put up for public auction (Higgins 1973). By 1868, Stearns had transferred ownership of most of his lands to the Stearns Rancho Company, following severe losses due to a 2-year drought (Baily 1981). In turn, the Stearns Rancho Company sold off its land holdings to settlers. These lands included marshy wetlands and peat bogs as well as dry mesa tops (Higgins 1973). The settlers worked to drain the marsh lands in advance of cultivation by cutting canals and ditches and even laying clay drainage pipes. Eventually, small farming communities developed near transportation hubs, such as railroad stations and major transportation corridors, including Beach Boulevard (GPA 2014). One of these communities was Smeltzer, located on the site of the Bella Terra shopping center or possibly immediately southwest. Two other nearby work camps were Wintersburg, 1 mile south of the Bella Terra shopping center, and Oceanview, located just southeast of Wintersburg.

D. E. Smeltzer, a celery farmer, formed the Earl Fruit Company around the turn of the 19th century. In the 1890s, Smeltzer hired Chinese workers. In the 1900s, after the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed, he hired Japanese workers (Higgins 1973; GPA 2014). The workers lived in nearby work camps and company towns. The work camps typically housed 30 to 50 men in one structure. Neither beds nor blankets were provided, and the men were expected to work 10-hour days 6 days a week for 15 cents an hour. The Smeltzer work camp was run by Mr. Urano (Akiyama 1982 and GPA Inc. 2014).

The Japanese immigrant community was instrumental in the formation of the Wintersburg Japanese Mission. Construction of the mission, which was part of the still-unrecognized Japanese Mission Trail, was completed in 1910. The Japanese missions were formed within existing Japanese communities, not by outsiders wishing to alter the lifeways of their flock (National Trust for Historic Preservation n.d.; Urashima 2013). In 1912, the first Japanese language school was founded in the area. The Smeltzer Japanese Association and the Smeltzer Flying Company also took their names from the Smeltzer community around the same time (Surf City Writer 2012).

The Japanese California Alien Land Laws of 1913 prevented Japanese-Americans from owning or leasing land. In 1917, the Immigration Act was signed, which, in effect, reduced the number of Mexican immigrants and prevented Asian migration almost entirely (GPA 2014). From the 1930s onward, most agricultural labor in Orange County would be done by Mexicans. Despite the decades-long history of Japanese Americans as community members and citizens of the United States, nearly the entire Japanese community in Wintersburg and Smeltzer was detained or incarcerated until the end of World War II in 1945 (National Trust for Historic Preservation n.d.).

The oil boom in coastal Southern California began in the 1920s. The largest oil deposit known at the time was in Huntington Beach. This led to a population explosion, with the city's population growing from 1,500 to 5,000 in less than 1 month. Oil continued to draw people to the growing city through the 1950s and 1960s. Housing developments sprang up to accommodate the influx of people through the 1960s and 1970s. This building boom led to Huntington Beach being the fastest-growing city in the continental United States during the mid-20th century (GPA 2014). The area immediately surrounding

the Project area remained relatively undeveloped prior to construction of Huntington Center in the mid-1960s, having been used primarily for farming (University of California, Santa Barbara Library 2021). Like other Southern California beach communities, Huntington Beach offered a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits, which were associated with the Pacific Ocean. Early-day residents and visitors to the city pursued activities such as bathing and surf fishing. Today, it is difficult to separate the sport of surfing from Huntington Beach, which, for many, has become a commercial business and way of life. Thanks to the efforts of pioneering surfing greats like Duke and Freeth, followed by Higgins and Belst, surf contests became popular during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and surfing gained mainstream popularity in the 1950s, which led to the establishment of surf clubs, surf shops, and the city's moniker, "Surf City USA." By the early 1960s, surfing had become a mainstream part of life in Huntington Beach. The first surf shop in Huntington Beach opened in 1956, and the West Coast Surfing Championships brought tourists to the city to support its growing infrastructure (City of Huntington Beach 2015).

The population growth in Huntington Beach and the growing popularity of the automobile in the pre-war years led to the need for ample parking for retail and commercial areas, which was a problem for the small, crowded streets of the traditional early 20th century downtown. Many factors including little to no parking in downtown areas as well as the developing suburban neighborhoods farther and farther out of the city center saw the shift from shopping in the traditional downtown to areas in the suburbs that provided "car friendly" shopping locations (Longstreth 1998: 223-224; Mall Hall of Fame 2022). Before the advent of stand-alone shopping centers and malls, which moved many stores and customers out of downtown and into suburbia, most Huntington beach residents did their shopping on Main Street downtown (Sanborn Map Company 1939: Sheet 3). By creating an enclosed mall roughly five and half miles north of the downtown area, the residents that were moving farther away from the city center were able to conveniently shop closer to home thanks to the newly constructed I-405 which was completed by 1969 (Interstate Guide 2019). An early example of a new type of shopping center outside of the traditional downtown in Southern California, the Linda Vista Plaza in San Diego County, opened in the early 1940s for the growing number of defense workers who were living in the newly built Linda Vista development. The 82,000 square foot plaza created a space where workers could shop, go to the cleaners, get their hair cut, and buy food from the delicatessen and bakery (Mall Hall of Fame 2022).

The one-stop shopping center garnered even more popularity in post-war America (Longstreth 1998: 223-224). Department stores and other retail chains needed space for their large buildings that catered not just to neighborhood trade but regional shopping (Longstreth 1998: 228). Typically spread apart in downtown areas, department stores by the 1950s began to purposely group themselves in shopping centers instead of separate entities thus transforming themselves into "a "new retail axis" of major proportions." (Longstreth 1998: 237). Architect Victor Gruen designed an entirely covered shopping center in Edina, Minnesota called Southdale Shopping Center. Southdale opened in 1956 and became a pioneering example of an enclosed shopping center (Hardwick 2015: 143-144). Garden courts and other interior landscaping made shoppers stay longer inside the mall, creating a steady stream of foot traffic at Southdale that Gruen said was "comparable only to Christmas shopping days downtown." (Hardwick 2015: 148-150).

Bella Terra Mall

In 1965, plans were finalized for the construction of Huntington Center, a \$20-million shopping development just southwest of the intersection of I-405 and Beach Boulevard. Covering approximately 56 acres of former farmland in the Smeltzer/Wintersburg area of Huntington Beach, Huntington Center, designed by Mazzetti, Leach, Cleveland & Associates, a planning, engineering, and architecture firm with offices in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, was one of the first enclosed, “all-weather” malls in Orange County, with an indoor temperature of 72 degrees. Three chain stores anchored the property, the Broadway department store (150,000 sf), J.C. Penney (206,000 sf), and Montgomery Ward (168,900 sf), which were joined by an additional 55 stores and parking for more than 3,500 vehicles. In addition to the primary mall, the shopping center included several stand-alone stores along Edinger Avenue and Beach Boulevard.

The Broadway department store was designed by Charles Luckman Associates and under construction while the larger site was being graded, which can be seen in the 1965 aerial of the location (Pacific Air Industries 1965). The Broadway department store anchored the east end of the center; Montgomery Ward anchored the west end. The Broadway automotive center was in a separate building on the property, southwest of the larger shopping center. J.C. Penney was to the north in the center of the property. The grand opening for the entire shopping center was held on Thursday, November 16, 1966 (*Los Angeles Times* 1966:89).



Huntington Center, NETR 1972. Aerial photo of mall. Ample parking, enclosed main mall section with other stores to the east, south, and west. Notice the mix of development and undeveloped sections in the immediate vicinity as well as the proximity to the on and off ramps of nearby I-405.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the shopping center went through a series of expansions, renovations, and rehabilitation projects. A two-story addition that housed Mervyn's was constructed on the north elevation, west of J.C. Penney, adding 82,000 sf; at the same time, a second level was added for a food court. This new wing cost \$9 million and was designed by Millard Archuleta Associates. By the end of the 1990s, the shopping center occupied more than 60 acres, had 950,000 sf of retail space, 4,500 parking spaces, and 98 occupied stores (*Los Angeles Times* 1986:173).



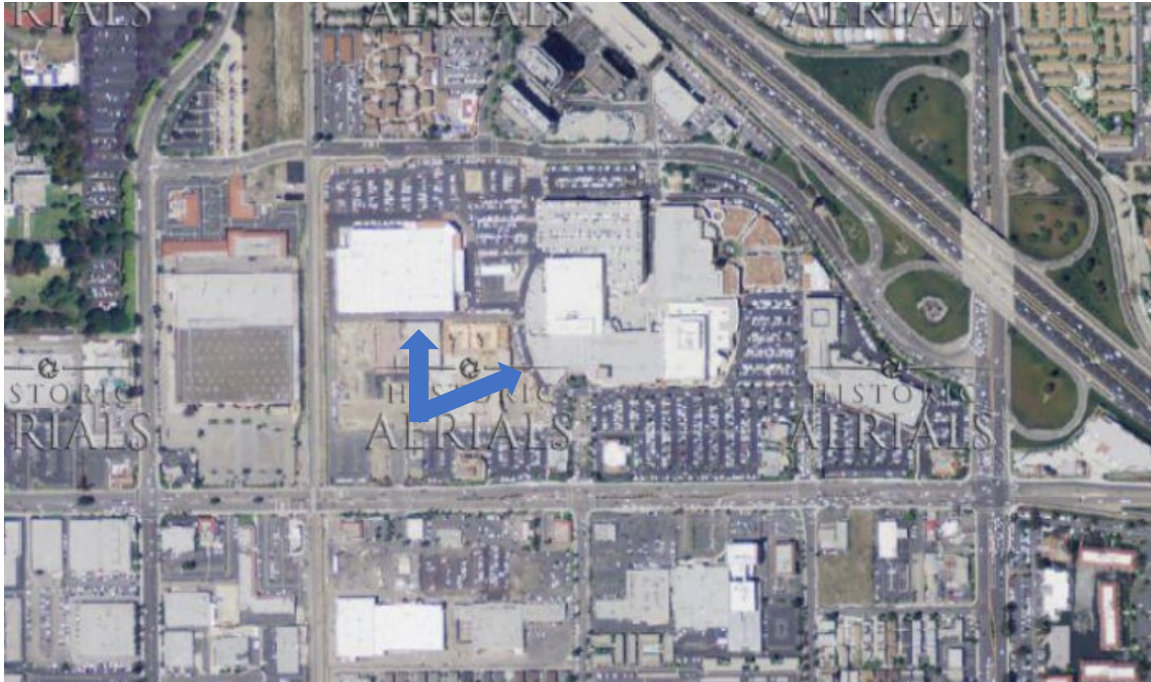
Huntington Center, NETR 1992. Addition of Mervyn's on the north elevation.



Huntington Center, NETR 2004.



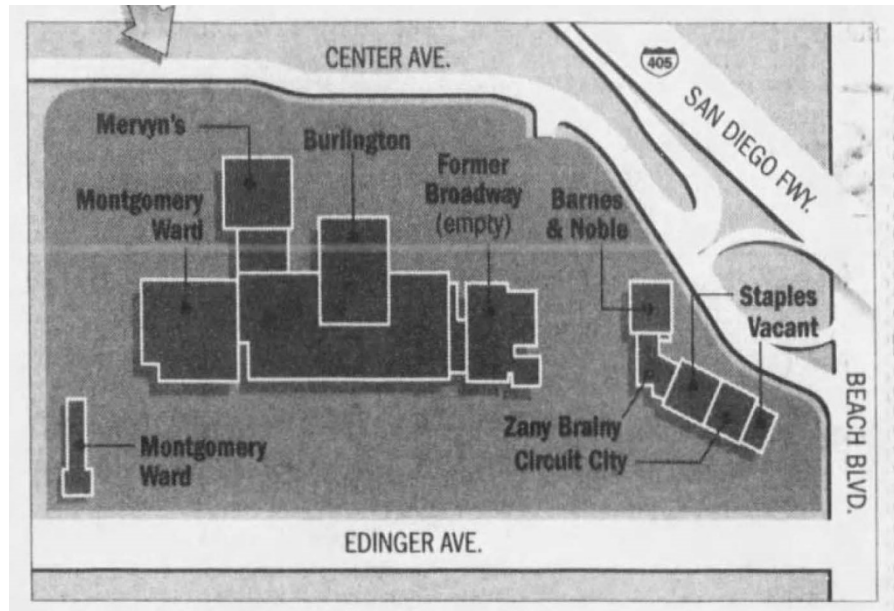
Bella Terra, NETR 2005. Additions to north and northeast elevations include a five-story enclosed garage and a movie theater.



Bella Terra, NETR 2012. Additions to southwest and new building west of main mall, as well as the removal of the associated automotive center to the southwest.



"Huntington Center Planned," *Los Angeles Times*, Sunday, August 15, 1965, p. 1285. Newspapers.com, accessed: October 18, 2021.



The footprint of the mall, circa 1999. *Los Angeles Times*, August 3, 1999, p. 129. Newspapers.com, accessed: October 18, 2021.

In 1993, the Huntington Beach J.C. Penney's store closed; the space was taken over in 1995 by Burlington Coat Factory. A year later, the Broadway department store closed, part of downsizing nationally by its parent company, Federated Department Stores (*Los Angeles Times*:1999). By 1999, the property had a new owner with a new vision for the mall: an open-air facility with an Italian design theme (*Los Angeles Times*: 2001). Redevelopment and remodeling were completed in two phases. By 2003, Kohl's had moved to the former Broadway department store location, which had been empty for 7 years. By 2004, Mervyn's moved into the space previously occupied by Burlington Coat Factory. The former Huntington Center was rebranded Bella Terra in 2006.



"Bella Terra Phase 2 Complete," *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 2004, p. 30. Newspapers.com, accessed: October 18, 2021.

Integrity

All buildings on the Project site were built in 1966 or later. The primary structure at the address, formerly Huntington Center, aka Huntington Beach Mall and Bella Terra has been expanded both vertically and horizontally during several phases of renovation, beginning in the mid-1980s. As originally constructed, the enclosed mall/shopping center was touted as one of the first "all-weather," climate-controlled shopping experiences in Orange County; however, redevelopment of

the property, beginning in the early 2000s, resulted in an open-air facility. None of the original anchor stores remain.

Huntington Center was originally designed with minimal exterior ornamental design. It had a much smaller footprint and three department stores as anchors. As a result of continual expansion and reimagining, there is no integrity of design, materials, or workmanship. The mall retains integrity of location. The integrity of the setting has changed minimally since 1966—specifically, through the addition of buildings for retail space and associated parking garages. As a result of alterations over the past 40 years, the property lacks integrity of feeling as one of the first enclosed malls built in the mid-1960s in Orange County.

Evaluation

The property at 7777 Edinger Avenue, Huntington Beach, Orange County does not meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and is not a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Under CRHR Criterion 1, the property at 7777 Edinger Avenue does not have important associations with historic events, patterns, or trends of development. Although considered to be one of the first enclosed malls in Orange County, there is no indication that its construction is associated with important local patterns or trends of development in Huntington Beach. No known events of significance are known to have been directly associated with this mall. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 1.

Under CRHR Criterion 2, the subject property does not share significant associations with the lives of persons important to history. None of the persons directly associated with the original construction, or later alterations have been identified as significant designers, architects, or engineers. Although designed by Charles Luckman Associates, one of several firms founded by Los Angeles architect Charles Luckman, the Broadway department store has no known direct associations with Charles Luckman himself. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 2.

Under CRHR Criterion 3, the subject property is not a significant example of its type, style, or era, it lacks high artistic value, and is not the work of a master architect, building, designer, or engineer. Constructed as enclosed mall in the mid-1960s with retail anchors Montgomery Ward, J.C. Penny's, and the Broadway department stores, the property was a common example of a post-war shopping center, which proliferated in suburban areas. The original footprint, layout, building materials, and identity as an enclosed shopping center have been eliminated with a series of alterations beginning in the late 1980s, not the least of which is its conversion to an "open-air" shopping facility, and it lacks integrity of feeling, materials, design, and workmanship. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 3.

Under CRHR Criterion 4, the subject property has neither yielded nor is likely to yield important information about our past. Typical of similar buildings, the subject property does not have the potential to yield important information regarding construction or engineering materials, methods, or technologies used in the 1960s. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 4.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 forms for the property at 7777 Edinger Avenue have been included in Appendix B.



View of the Former Broadway Department Store Space, Looking West.
ICF, October 29, 2021.



Looking East/Northeast toward the Current Burlington Coat Factory,
above the More Recently Constructed One-Story Stores.
ICF, October 29, 2021.

Chapter 5. Impacts Analysis

There are no historical resources in the study area; therefore, there would be no potential for impacts on historical resources as a result of the proposed Project.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

This technical report evaluates the potential for the Project to cause significant environmental impacts on built-environment historical resources. A study area was established for the Project that takes into account the potential for both direct and indirect impacts on historical resources; however, no historical resources are found at this location. Therefore, the proposed Project is not expected to have any direct or indirect impacts on built-environment historical resources.

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- Flight AXK-1953 frame 1K-56, November 18, 1952, 1:20,000.
- Flight C-23870 frame 466, May 1, 1960, 1:14,400.
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Appendix A
Field Photographs of Buildings in Study Area

Appendix A Photo Key Map

Picture 6

Picture 5

Picture 3 and 4

Bella Terra

Picture 2

Picture 1

Legend
Bella Terra



400 ft

Google Earth

©2022 Google





Picture 1: Looking northwest at the southeast corner of Bella Terra (October 2021). This is the location of the former Broadway department store, and original anchor/tenant. The Broadway closed in 1996.



Picture 2: Looking west/northwest along the south (Edinger Avenue) façade (October 2021). This façade style likely dates to the redesign of the mall between 1999-2006.



Picture 3: Looking east/northeast along the south (Edinger Avenue) façade (October 2021).



Picture 4: The southwest corner of Bella Terra, looking north. This corner was formerly occupied by Montgomery Ward, an original anchor/tenant.



Picture 5: Looking north/northeast along the west elevation of Bella Terra (October 2021). This extension of the west elevation likely dates between 1999 and 2006.



Picture 6: Looking north along the west elevation, with the west side of the parking garage visible towards the rear/middle of the photograph (October 2021). This extension of the west elevation likely dates between 1999 and 2006, as does the parking garage.

Appendix B
DPR form for 7777 Edinger Avenue

Other Listings
 Review Code Reviewer Date

Page 1 of 7 *Resource Name or #: Bella Terra Mall

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted *a. County: Orange

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad: Date: T ; R ; ¼ of ¼ of Sec ; M.D. B.M.

c. Address: 7777 Edinger Avenue City: Huntington Beach Zip: 92647

d. UTM: Zone: 10 ; mE/ 33° 43' 53.868" N mN (G.P.S.): 117° 59' 40.92" W

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation:

Parcel #: 142-073-23, 142-073-46

***P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

Bella Terra Mall is an open air shopping center, located just west of the Beach Boulevard (CA-39) exit of the San Diego Freeway (I-405) in Huntington Beach, Orange County. The mall property sits in the center of a large mostly rectangular parcel, bounded by Edinger Avenue on the south, the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way to the west, Center Street on the north and the freeway and Beach Boulevard along the east. The building is surrounded on all sides by surface parking; there are several other free-standing retail buildings on the property. The primary elevations face east, south and west, and the mall footprint is generally rectangular, although both the east and west elevations have an arc-shaped extension. The rear elevation features a movie-theater extension and a multi-story enclosed parking garage. The mall exhibits both single and double-story elevations, while the L-shaped garage along Center Street has five levels of parking. The building does not present any single style of architecture. Along the south and west elevations, many stores have direct access to the surface parking area, and each store displays a different storefront style, with varying types of window treatments, applied features and scored surfaces, lighting, awnings, and setbacks. Many of the architectural details are in place to evoke architecture found along the European side of the Mediterranean, such as scrolled ironwork, decorative pressed block, exaggerated tiles and cartouches, Roman arches and use of white and terracotta surface treatment. These façade features typically date to the reconstruction of the mall beginning in the early 2000s, when the mall was redesigned and was rebranded Bella Terra.

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** (List attributes and codes) HP6. 1-3 story commercial building

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, , and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
 Looking northeast, 10/28/2021

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: Historic Prehistoric Both

*P7. Owner and Address:
 BELLA TERRA ASSOCIATES LLC,
 60 Market Street, Suite 1220, San Jose, CA 95113-2366

*P8. Recorded by: (Name, affiliation, and address)
 Inga Gudmundsson, ICF 555 W. 5th Street, Suite 3100, Los Angeles, CA 90013.

*P9. Date Recorded: 10/28/2021

*P10. Survey Type: (Describe)
 Reconnaissance

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") Bella Terra Residential Project Historical Resources Technical Report,

prepared by ICF for the City of Huntington Beach, Community Development Department, March 2022.

*Attachments: NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List): DPR 523A (1/95) *Required information

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Bella Terra Mall

- B1. Historic Name: Huntington Center
- B2. Common Name: Bella Terra shopping center
- B3. Original Use: Retail/enclosed mall
- B4. Present Use: Retail/mall

*B5. Architectural Style: N/A

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)
1965–66 original mall constructed. See continuation sheet for full history.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: Original Location:

*B8. Related Features:

B9a. Architect: Mazeetti, Leach, Cleveland & Associates/others b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. Significance: Theme: n/a Area: n/a

Period of Significance: n/a Property Type: n/a Applicable Criteria: n/a

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The property at 7777 Edinger Avenue, Huntington Beach, Orange County does not meet the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and is not a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

The primary structure at the address, formerly Huntington Center, aka Huntington Beach Mall, has been expanded both vertically and horizontally during several phases of renovation, beginning in the mid-1980s. As originally constructed, the enclosed mall/shopping center was touted as one of the first “all-weather,” climate-controlled shopping experience in Orange County. However, redevelopment of the property, beginning in the early 2000s, resulted in an open-air facility. None of the original anchor stores remain.

Huntington Center was originally designed to be an all-weather, enclosed shopping center, with minimal exterior ornamental design. It had a much smaller footprint and three department stores as anchors. As a result of continual expansion and reimagining, there is no integrity of design, materials, or workmanship. The mall retains integrity of location. The integrity of the setting has changed minimally since 1966—specifically, through the addition of buildings for retail space and associated parking garages. As a result of alterations over the past 40 years, the property lacks integrity of feeling as one of the first enclosed mall built in the mid-1960s in Orange County. Therefore, Bella Terra does not meet the criteria for eligibility as a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

(See continuation sheet)

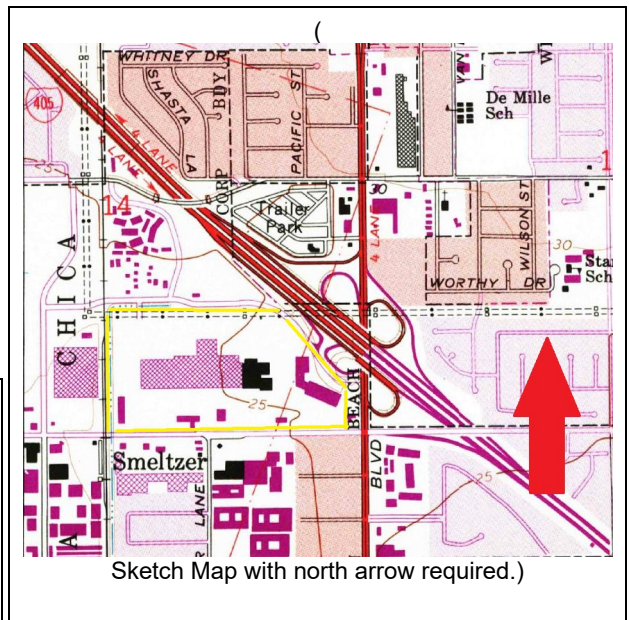
B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

*B12. References:
See continuation sheet

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Jessica B. Feldman, ICF
*Date of Evaluation: January 25, 2022

(This space reserved for official comments.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

B6. Construction History (continued)

In 1965, plans were finalized for the construction of Huntington Center, a \$20-million shopping development just southwest of the intersection of I-405 and Beach Boulevard. Covering approximately 56 acres of former farmland in the Smeltzer/Wintersburg area of Huntington Beach, Huntington Center, designed by a planning, engineering, and architecture firm with offices in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, was one of the first enclosed, "all-weather" mall in Orange County, with an indoor temperature of 72 degrees. Three chain stores anchored the property, the Broadway department store (150,000 sf), J.C. Penney (206,000 sf), and Montgomery Ward (168,900 sf), which were joined by an additional 55 stores and parking for more than 3,500 vehicles. In addition to the primary mall, the shopping center included several stand-alone stores along Edinger Avenue and Beach Boulevard.

The Broadway department store was designed by Charles Luckman Associates and was under construction while the larger site was being graded, which can be seen in the 1965 aerial of the location (Pacific Air Industries 1965). The Broadway department store anchored the east end of the center; Montgomery Ward anchored the west end. The Broadway automotive center was in a separate building on the property, southwest of the larger shopping center. J.C. Penney was to the north in the center of the property. The grand opening for the entire shopping center was held on Thursday, November 16, 1966 (*Los Angeles Times* 1966:89).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the shopping center went through a series of expansions, renovations, and rehabilitation projects. A two-story addition that housed Mervyn's was constructed on the north elevation, west of J.C. Penney, adding 82,000 sf; at the same time, a second level was added for a food court. This new wing cost \$9 million and was designed by Millard Archuleta Associates. By the end of the 1990s, the shopping center occupied more than 60 acres, had 950,000 sf of retail space, 4,500 parking spaces, and 98 occupied stores (*Los Angeles Times* 1986:173). In 1993, the Huntington Beach J.C. Penney's store closed; the space was taken over in 1995 by Burlington Coat Factory. A year later, the Broadway department store closed, part of downsizing nationally by its parent company, Federated Department Stores (*Los Angeles Times*:1999).

By 1999, the property had a new owner with a new vision for the mall: an open-air facility with an Italian design theme (*Los Angeles Times*: 2001). Redevelopment and remodeling were completed in two phases, which included the multi-story parking garage and multi-screen theater on the north side of the building. By 2003, Kohl's had moved to the former Broadway department store location, which had been empty for 7 years. By 2004, Mervyn's moved into the space previously occupied by Burlington Coat Factory. A 20 screen theater with seating for 4,000 was completed by 2005, on the northeast corner of the existing mall, with expanded restaurant areas adjacent. These changes also included a multi-level L-shaped enclosed parking garage behind Burlington Coat Factory, accessed easily from Center Street. The former Huntington Center was rebranded Bella Terra in 2006.

*Recorded by: Jessica B. Feldman and Inga Gudmundsson *Date: 10/29/2021 Continuation Update

B10. Significance (continued)

Under CRHR Criterion 1, the property at 7777 Edinger Avenue does not have important associations with historic events, patterns, or trends of development. Although considered to be one of the first enclosed malls in Orange County, there is no indication that its construction is associated with important local patterns or trends of development in Huntington Beach. No known events of significance are known to have been directly associated with this mall. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 1.

Under CRHR Criterion 2, the subject property does not share significant associations with the lives of persons important to history. None of the persons directly associated with the original construction, or later alterations have been identified as significant designers, architects, or engineers. Although designed by Charles Luckman Associates, one of several firms founded by Los Angeles architect Charles Luckman, the Broadway department store has no known direct associations with Charles Luckman himself. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 2.

Under CRHR Criterion 3, the subject property is not a significant example of its type, style, or era, it lacks high artistic value, and is not the work of a master architect, building, designer, or engineer. Constructed as an enclosed mall in the mid-1960s with retail anchors Montgomery Ward, J.C. Penny's, and the Broadway department stores, the property was a common example of a post-war shopping center, which proliferated in suburban areas. The original footprint, layout, building materials, and identity as an enclosed shopping center has been eliminated with a series of alterations beginning in the later 1980s, not the least of which is its conversion to an "open-air" shopping facility, and it lacks integrity of feeling, materials, design, and workmanship. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 3.

Under CRHR Criterion 4, the subject property has neither yielded nor is likely to yield important information about our past. Typical of similar buildings, the subject property does not have the potential to yield important information regarding construction or engineering materials, methods, or technologies used in the 1960s. As such, the subject property is ineligible under CRHR Criterion 4.

Historic Context

At the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848, California was ceded to the United States and officially became a state in 1850. In 1850, Abel Stearns, a trader from Massachusetts, became the owner of Las Bolsas and La Bolsa Chica after the Nieto family defaulted on a debt, causing their lands to be put up for public auction (Higgins 1973). By 1868, Stearns had transferred ownership of most of his lands to the Stearns Rancho Company, following severe losses due to a 2-year drought (Baily 1981). In turn, the Stearns Rancho Company sold off its land holdings to settlers. These lands included marshy wetlands and peat bogs as well as dry mesa tops (Higgins 1973). The settlers worked to drain the marsh lands in advance of cultivation by cutting canals and ditches and even laying clay drainage pipes. Eventually, small farming communities developed near transportation hubs, such as railroad stations and major transportation corridors, including Beach Boulevard (GPA 2014). One of these communities was Smeltzer, located on the site of the Bella Terra shopping center or possibly immediately southwest. Two other nearby work camps were Wintersburg, 1 mile south of the Bella Terra shopping center, and Oceanview, located just southeast of Wintersburg.

D. E. Smeltzer, a celery farmer, formed the Earl Fruit Company around the turn of the 19th century. In the 1890s, Smeltzer hired Chinese workers. In the 1900s, after the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed, he hired Japanese workers (Higgins 1973; GPA 2014). The workers lived in nearby work camps and company towns. The work camps typically housed 30 to 50 men in one structure. Neither beds nor blankets were provided, and the men were expected to work 10-hour days 6 days a week for 15 cents an hour. The Smeltzer work camp was run by Mr. Urano (Akiyama 1982 and GPA Inc. 2014).

The Japanese immigrant community was instrumental in the formation of the Wintersburg Japanese Mission. Construction of the mission, which was part of the still-unrecognized Japanese Mission Trail, was completed in 1910. The Japanese missions were formed within existing Japanese communities, not by outsiders wishing to alter the lifeways of their flock (National Trust for Historic Preservation n.d.; Urashima 2013). In 1912, the first Japanese language school was founded in the area. The Smeltzer Japanese Association and the Smeltzer Flying Company also took their names from the Smeltzer community around the same time (Surf City Writer 2012).

*Recorded by: Jessica B. Feldman and Inga Gudmundsson *Date: 10/29/2021 Continuation Update

The Japanese California Alien Land Laws of 1913 prevented Japanese-Americans from owning or leasing land. In 1917, the Immigration Act was signed, which, in effect, reduced the number of Mexican immigrants and prevented Asian migration almost entirely (GPA 2014). From the 1930s onward, most agricultural labor in Orange County would be done by Mexicans. Despite the decades-long history of Japanese Americans as community members and citizens of the United States, nearly the entire Japanese community in Wintersburg and Smeltzer was detained or incarcerated until the end of World War II in 1945 (National Trust for Historic Preservation n.d.).

The oil boom in coastal Southern California began in the 1920s. The largest oil deposit known at the time was in Huntington Beach. This led to a population explosion, with the city's population growing from 1,500 to 5,000 in less than 1 month. Oil continued to draw people to the growing city through the 1950s and 1960s. Housing developments sprang up to accommodate the influx of people through the 1960s and 1970s. This building boom led to Huntington Beach being the fastest-growing city in the continental United States during the mid-20th century (GPA 2014). The area immediately surrounding the Project area remained relatively undeveloped prior to construction of Huntington Center in the mid-1960s, having been used primarily for farming (University of California, Santa Barbara Library 2021).

Like other Southern California beach communities, Huntington Beach offered a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits, which were associated with the Pacific Ocean. Early-day residents and visitors to the city pursued activities such as bathing and surf fishing. Today, it is difficult to separate the sport of surfing from Huntington Beach, which, for many, has become a commercial business and way of life. Thanks to the efforts of pioneering surfing greats like Duke and Freeth, followed by Higgins and Belsth, surf contests became popular during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and surfing gained mainstream popularity in the 1950s, which led to the establishment of surf clubs, surf shops, and the city's moniker, "Surf City USA." By the early 1960s, surfing had become a mainstream part of life in Huntington Beach. The first surf shop in Huntington Beach opened in 1956, and the West Coast Surfing Championships brought tourists to the city to support its growing infrastructure (City of Huntington Beach 2015).

Population growth in Huntington Beach and the growing popularity of the automobile in the pre-war years led to the need for ample parking which was a problem for the small, crowded streets of the traditional early 20th century downtown. Many factors including little to no parking in downtown areas as well as the developing suburban neighborhoods farther and farther out of the city center saw the shift from shopping in the traditional downtown to areas in the suburbs that provided "car friendly" shopping locations (Longstreth 1998: 223-224; Mall Hall of Fame 2022). A major example of the shopping center outside of the traditional downtown in Southern California, The Linda Vista Plaza in San Diego County, opened in the early 1940s for the growing number of defense workers who were living in the newly built Linda Vista development. The 82,000 square foot plaza created a space where workers could shop, go to the cleaners, get their hair cut, and buy food from the delicatessen and bakery (Mall Hall of Fame 2022).

Before the advent of stand-alone shopping centers and malls, which moved many stores and customers out of downtown and into suburbia, most Huntington beach residents did their shopping on Main Street downtown (Sanborn Map Company 1939: Sheet 3). By creating an enclosed mall roughly five and half miles north of the downtown area, the residents that were moving farther away from the city center were able to conveniently shop closer to home thanks to the newly constructed I-405 which was completed by 1969 (Interstate Guide 2019).

The one-stop shopping center garnered even more popularity in post-war America (Longstreth 1998: 223-224). Department stores and other retail chains needed space for their large buildings that catered not just to neighborhood trade but regional shopping (Longstreth 1998: 228). Typically spread apart in downtown areas, department stores by the 1950s began to purposely group themselves in shopping centers instead of separate entities thus transforming themselves into "a "new retail axis" of major proportions." (Longstreth 1998: 237). Architect Victor Gruen designed an entirely covered shopping center in Edina, Minnesota called Southdale Shopping Center. Southdale opened in 1956 and became a pioneering example of an enclosed shopping center (Hardwick 2015: 143-144). Garden courts and other interior landscaping made shoppers stay longer inside the mall, creating a steady stream of foot traffic at Southdale that Gruen said was "comparable only to Christmas shopping days downtown." (Hardwick 2015: 148-150).

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