

HISTORIC RESOURCES ASSESSMENT REPORT

of

**West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch
1080 17th Street
Newport Beach, CA**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment report documents and evaluates the federal, state, and local significance and eligibility of the buildings and structures known as the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch, located on approximately 401 acres with the address of 1080 West 17th Street, Newport Beach, Orange County, California.

The historic resource assessment and evaluation was conducted by Pamela Daly, M.S.H.P., Senior Architectural Historian. In order to identify and evaluate the subject property as a potential historic resource, a multi-step methodology was utilized. An inspection of the site and existing buildings and structures, combined with a review of local and regional historic archives regarding this parcel, were performed to document existing conditions and assist in assessing and evaluating the property for significance.

In assessing the subject property's historical significance federal, state, and local criteria were applied. The subject property is not currently listed on either the National Register or the California Register.

Under the National Register or California Register criteria relating to the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch sites association with significant historical events that exemplifying broad patterns of our history, the subject property does not qualify as a significant resource. There is no evidence of the activities of the early rancho period, or when the land had been used for agricultural purposes and owned by Mary Hollister Banning and her heirs. The development of this 400 acre section of what had been part of Mary Hollister Banning's original 4,077 acres of the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana as an area of oil exploration and pumping operations had been done on a large scale starting in the 1960s. There have been no significant events relating to the oil industry on a regional or national level at this site.

Under the National Register or California Register criteria relating to the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch sites association with persons of historic importance, the property and the collection of buildings do not qualify as a significant resource. Research has not revealed any direct association between this property and persons important either regionally or nationally.

Under the National Register or California Register criteria relating to the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, the buildings, structures and related oil industry features are not significant as they do not embody any distinctive style, high artistic design, or method of construction. The buildings, structures, and equipment used by the oil pumping operations are purely functional in design, and do not have any architectural or engineering merit.

In summation, the property at 1080 West 17th Street is not eligible for listing on the National Register or the California Register as a significant historic resource as it does not meet any of the criteria necessary for listing in the registries.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This assessment report documents and evaluates the federal, state, and local significance and eligibility of the collection of buildings and structures located on approximately 401 acres known as the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch property within the boundary of the City of Newport Beach, Orange County, California. The street address for the project site is 1080 West 17th Street, Newport Beach, CA. The report includes a discussion of the survey methodology used, a brief historic context of the property and surrounding area, the identification of buildings and structures, and formal evaluation of the subject property.

The site is reached by traveling south on Interstate 55 until it ends and becomes Newport Boulevard, and continuing south on Newport Boulevard to the intersection with West 17th Street. At this intersection, turn right and continue west to the end of West 17th Street. At the end of West 17th Street is a locked gate and the current entrance to the West Newport Oil Company operations with the street address of 1080 West 17th Street.

The subject parcel features a site that appears to have built environment resources that are between 45, and 50 years of age (1959 to 1964). The proposed Newport Banning Ranch Project site encompasses the land where the West Newport Oil Company pumping operations are presently located. The project site is bound on the north by Talbert Nature Preserve; on the south by West Coast Highway; on the east by light industrial and residential development; and on the west by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) wetlands restoration area and the Santa Ana River. (See Figures 1 and 2.)



Figure 1: Regional Project Location

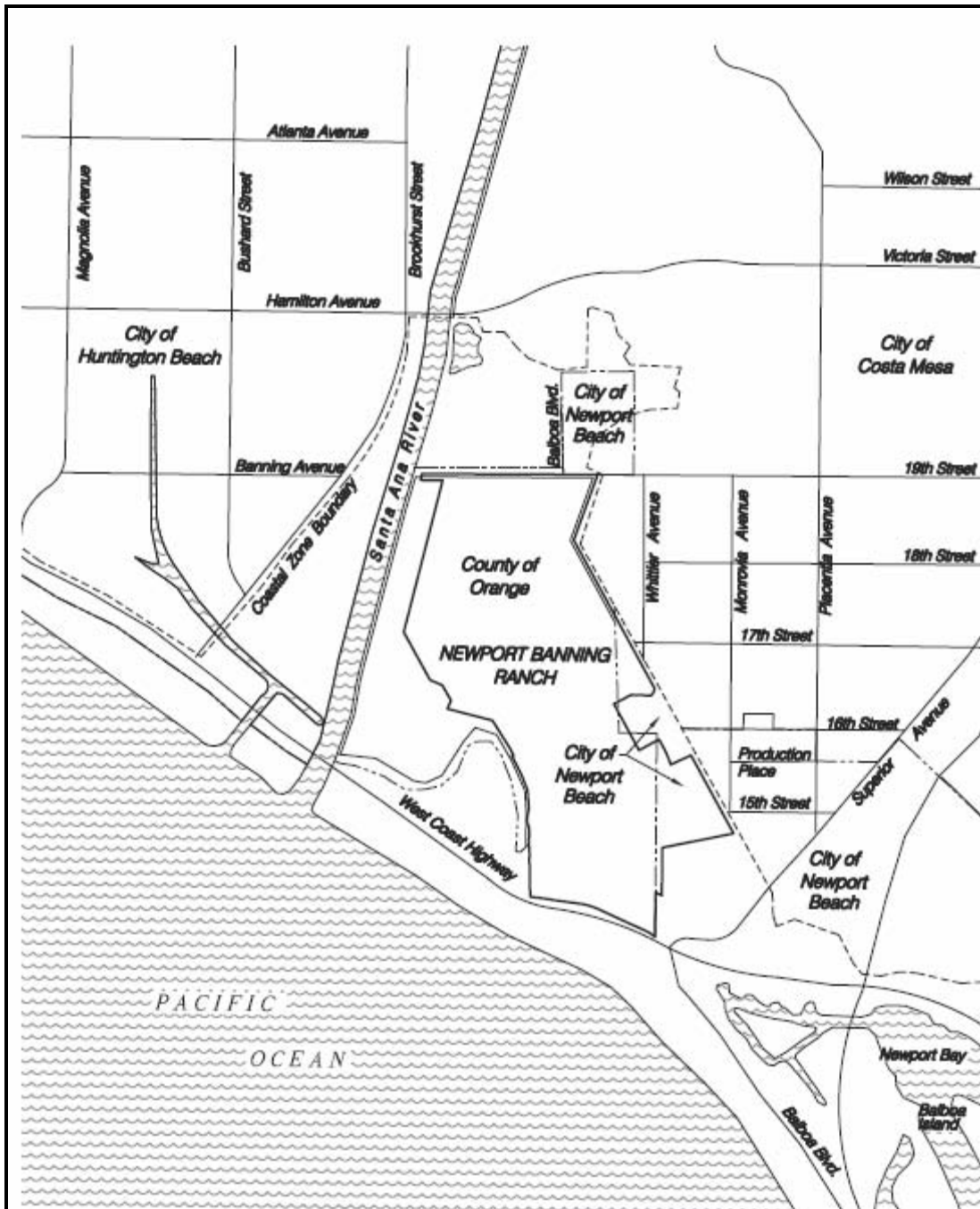


Figure 2: Project Location
 (Source: City of Newport Beach, Notice of Preparation, March 16, 2009)

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The subject property has previously been surveyed multiple times by competent professional archaeologists for the investigation and documentation of cultural resources. During these cultural resource surveys there were attempts to identify the World War II military use of the land and the location of the Costa Mesa Gun Battery. The archaeological findings and the possible remains of the gun battery have been recorded using California Department of Parks and Recreation Series 523 forms (DPR) for the recordation of cultural resources. The remains of the gun emplacement are recorded as a site in Orange County; (CA-ORA-1610.)

The built-environment buildings and structure on the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch property have not been previously surveyed by a qualified architectural historian, nor have they been evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or California Register of Historical Resources.

C. METHODOLOGY

This historic resource assessment and evaluation for this report was conducted by Pamela Daly, M.S.H.P., Senior Architectural Historian. In order to identify and evaluate the subject property as a potential historic resource, a multi-step methodology was utilized. An inspection of the sites existing buildings and structures, combined with a review of accessible archival sources for this parcel, was performed to document existing conditions and assist in assessing and evaluating the property for significance. Photographs were taken of all building and structures, including photographs of architectural details or other points of interest, during the pedestrian-level survey.

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) and the California Register of Historical Resources (California Register) criteria were employed to evaluate the significance of the property. The City of Newport Beach does not have specific regulations in their municipal code for the preservation, alteration or demolition of historic resources. As such, built-environment resources in the City of Newport Beach use the California Register criteria to evaluate the significance of resources over 50 years old. In addition, the following tasks were performed for the study:

The National Register and the California Historical Resources Inventory were searched.

Site-specific research was conducted on the subject property utilizing maps, city directories, newspaper articles, historical photographs, and other published sources.

Background research was performed at local historic archives and through internet resources.

Ordinances, statutes, regulations, bulletins, and technical materials relating to federal, state, and local historic preservation, designation assessment processes, and related programs were reviewed and analyzed.

II. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Historic resources fall within the jurisdiction of several levels of government. Federal laws provide the framework for the identification, and in certain instances, protection of historic resources. Additionally, states and local jurisdictions play active roles in the identification, documentation, and protection of such resources within their communities. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), of 1966 as amended, and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), are the primary federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing the evaluation and significance of historic resources of national, state, regional, and local importance. A description of these relevant laws and regulations are presented below.

In analyzing the historic significance of the subject property, criteria for designation under federal, and State landmark programs were considered. Additionally, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) survey methodology was used to survey and rate the relative significance of the property.

A. FEDERAL LEVEL

1. National Register of Historic Places

First authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, the National Register was established by the NHPA 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.”¹ The National Register recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state and local levels.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture must be in a district, site, building, structure, or object that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and:²

- A) is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B) is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that

¹ *Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)*, 36 § 60.2.

² *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms, National Register Bulletin 16, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, September 30, 1986 (“National Register Bulletin 16”). This bulletin contains technical information on comprehensive planning, survey of cultural resources, and registration in the National Register of Historic Places.*

represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D) yields, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

A property eligible for listing in the National Register must meet one or more of the four criteria (A-D) defined above. In addition, unless the property possesses exceptional significance, it must be at least 50 years old to be eligible for National Register listing.

In addition to meeting the criteria of significance, a property must have integrity. “Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance.”³ According to *National Register Bulletin 15*, within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognize seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of these seven aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance.⁴ The seven factors that define integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The following is excerpted from *National Register Bulletin 15*, which provides guidance on the interpretation and application of these factors.

- Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.⁵
- Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of the property.⁶
- Setting is the physical environment of a historic property.⁷
- Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.⁸
- Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.⁹

³ *National Register Bulletin 15*, page 44.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ “The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of historic property, complemented by its setting is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved.” *Ibid.*

⁶ “A property’s design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing; and arrangement and type of plantings in a designed landscape.” *Ibid.*

⁷ *National Register Bulletin 15*, page 45.

⁸ “The choice and combination of materials reveals the preferences of those who created the property and indicated the availability of particular types of materials and technologies. Indigenous materials are often the focus of regional building traditions and thereby help define an area’s sense of time and place.” *Ibid.*

- Feeling is property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.¹⁰
- Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.¹¹

In assessing a property's integrity, the National Register criteria recognize that properties change over time; therefore, it is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must, however, retain the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity.¹²

For properties that are considered significant under National Register criteria A and B, *National Register Bulletin 15* states that a property that is significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s).¹³

In assessing the integrity of properties that are considered significant under National Register criterion C, *National Register Bulletin 15* provides that a property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique.¹⁴

The primary effects of listing in the National Register on private property owners of historic buildings is the availability of financial and tax incentives.¹⁵ In addition, for projects that receive federal funding, the Section 106 clearance process must be completed. State and local laws and regulations may apply to properties listed in the National Register. For example, demolition or inappropriate alteration of National Register eligible or listed properties may be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

⁹ "Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques." *Ibid.*

¹⁰ "It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character." *Ibid.*

¹¹ "A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to the observer. Like feeling, associations require the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character...Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register." *Ibid.*

¹² *National Register Bulletin 15*, page 46.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ "A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of features that once characterized its style." *Ibid.*

¹⁵ See 36 CFR 60.2(b) (c).

B. STATE LEVEL

The California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), as an office of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, implements the policies of the NHPA on a statewide level. The OHP also carries out the duties as set forth in the Public Resources Code (PRC) and maintains the California Historic Resources Inventory. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is an appointed official who implements historic preservation programs within the state's jurisdictions.

1. California Register of Historical Resources

Created by Assembly Bill 2881, which was signed into law on September 27, 1992, the CRHR is "an authoritative listing and guide to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens in identifying the existing historical resources of the state and to indicate which resources deserve to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change."¹⁶ The criteria for eligibility for the California Register are based upon National Register criteria.¹⁷ Certain resources are determined by the statute to be automatically included in the California Register, including California properties formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register.¹⁸

The California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register automatically includes the following:

- California properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places and those formally Determined Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- California Registered Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward;
- Those California Points of Historical Interest that have been evaluated by the OHP and have been recommended to the State Historical Commission for inclusion on the California Register.¹⁹

Other resources which may be nominated to the California Register include:

- Individual historical resources;
- Historical resources contributing to historic districts;
- Historical resources identified as significant in historical resources surveys with significance ratings of Category 1 through 5;
- Historical resources designated or listed as local landmarks, or designated under any local ordinance, such as a historic preservation overlay zone.²⁰

¹⁶ *California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(a).*

¹⁷ *California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(b).*

¹⁸ *California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(d).*

¹⁹ *California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(d).*

²⁰ *California Public Resources Code § 5024.1(e).*

To be eligible for listing in the California Register, a historic resource must be significant at the local, state, or national level under one or more of the following four criteria:

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Additionally, a historic resource eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one or more of the criteria of significance described above and retain enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historic resource and to convey the reasons for its significance. Historical resources that have been rehabilitated or restored may be evaluated for listing.²¹

Integrity under the California Register is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The resource must also be judged with reference to the particular criteria under which it is proposed for eligibility. It is possible that a historic resource may not retain sufficient integrity to meet criteria for listing in the National Register, but it may still be eligible for listing in the California Register.²²

2. California Office of Historical Preservation Survey Methodology

The evaluation instructions and classification system prescribed by the California Office of Historic Preservation in its Instructions for Recording Historical Resources provide a three-digit evaluation rating code for use in classifying potential historic resources. The first digit indicates one of the following general evaluation categories for use in conducting cultural resources surveys:

1. Listed on the National Register or the California Register;
2. Determined eligible for listing in the National Register or the California Register;
3. Appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through survey evaluation;
4. Appears eligible for the National Register or the California Register through other evaluation;
5. Recognized as Historically Significant by Local Government;
6. Not eligible for any Listing or Designation; and

²¹ *California Code of Regulations, California Register of Historical Resources (Title 14, Chapter 11.5), Section 4852(c).*

²² *Ibid.*

7. Not evaluated for the National Register or California Register or needs re-evaluation.

The second digit of the evaluation status code is a letter code indicating whether the resource is separately eligible (S), eligible as part of a district (D), or both (B). The third digit is a number that is used to further specify significance and refine the relationship of the property to the National Register and/or California Register. Under this evaluation system, categories 1 through 4 pertain to various levels of National Register eligibility. The California Register, however, may include surveyed resources with evaluation rating codes through level 5. In addition, properties found ineligible for listing in the National Register, California Register, or for designation under a local ordinance are given an evaluation status code of 6.

C. LOCAL LEVEL

1. City of Newport Beach

As previously stated in this report, the City of Newport Beach and unincorporated areas of Orange County do not have specific historic resource regulations in their municipal codes. As such, built-environment resources in those areas use the California Register criteria to evaluate the significance of buildings, structures, objects, features and landscapes over 50 years old.

III. EVALUATION

A. HISTORIC CONTEXT

1. Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana

In 1801, Juan Pablo Grijalva and his son-in-law, Jose Antonio Yorba requested title to all the land that lay east of the Santa Ana River, from the ocean and spreading inland for 25 miles to the mountains. Grijalva was not given title to the land, but he was allowed grazing rights on over 62,500 acres. Grijalva died in 1806, just four years before the land was granted to his son-in law, Jose Antonio Yorba, and Yorba's cousin Juan Pablo Peralta. When the U.S. Government finally formally passed title to the lands in 1883, in accordance with the Spanish-Mexican Grant Act of 1851, they defined Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana as having 81,855 acres, and being legally owned by Juan Pablo Peralta, Jose Antonio Yorba, Bernardo Antonio Yorba (the third son of Jose Antonio Yorba), and the heirs of Bernardo Yorba.²³ Through marriages and offspring, between the Yorba, Peralta and Grijalva families, Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana became one of the largest ranchos in California.

Andrew Glassell, an attorney from Los Angeles specializing in land issues, and founder of the City of Orange, was paid for legal services rendered to the Peralta Family heirs with 4,077 acres of land in the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. Glassell sold the land in 1872, to Gabe Allen of Los Angeles, who had earlier purchased acreage in the Rancho de Santa Ana from Don Sepulveda's holdings located on the northern border of the Glassell parcel. Due to financial problems, Allen had to sell the land back to Glassell in 1874 just two years after the sale. Glassell turned around and quickly sold the land again, this time to Mary Hollister Banning for \$17,500 in 1874.²⁴

2. Mary Hollister Banning

How Mary Hollister Banning came to own just over 4,077 acres of land in the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana is a story of early California history. Twenty years before in 1853, two separate – but related – sheep drives occurred, bring valuable livestock from the Midwest to the new state of California. The sheep could not only be used for both the manufacturing of clothing and meat, but could survive on the desert grasses. The Flint-Bixby sheep drive started in Illinois and was under the control of Dr. Thomas Flint, his brother Benjamin Flint, and their cousin Llewellyn Bixby. The second was the Hollister drive headed up by William Welles Hollister and his brother Joseph Hubbard Hollister, who had both been extremely wealthy farmers in Ohio before heading west.

Once they arrived in California, the Hollisters and Flints joined financial interests in 1855 to buy the Rancho San Justo, located in the Monterey County area.²⁵ Thomas Flint and Benjamin

²³ Bureau of Land Management, *Grand Land Office Patent Record No. CACAAA 084587*

²⁴ Miller, Edrick J. *A Slice of Orange, The History of Costa Mesa*. Page 5.

²⁵ *Brief History of San Benito County, San Benito County Historical Society*.

Flint were two out of nine children, and their sister Ellen had married Joseph H. Hollister in 1845. The families were close socially, for census data from 1850 and 1860 shows that both Joseph Hollister and his brother William supported over ten young members of the Flint family within their own households.²⁶ Local history states that there was a falling out between the Flints and Hollisters in 1861 over the division of land.

Phineas Banning had been born in Wilmington, Delaware in 1833, and upon his arrival in California started entrepreneurial endeavors that were of great importance to the settlement of the new city of Los Angeles. He literally created the new village known as Wilmington located just to the south of Los Angeles and its formation as a major shipping port for southern California. He was instrumental in building a railroad line that ran from Los Angeles south to San Pedro that the Southern Pacific Railroad Company later bought. The Southern Pacific Railroad had been trying for years to make a connection to the Pacific Ocean in Southern California to establish a ship to shore terminal. Banning had married his first wife Rebecca around 1855, and fathered four sons with her. Rebecca and his oldest son John died in the mid-1860s.

In 1871, at the age of 38, Phineas married 23-year old Mary Hollister, the daughter of Joseph H. Hollister. Mary Hollister was the oldest daughter of Joseph Hollister and his first wife, Ellen Flint Hollister. Hollister was living at that time with his family on a large cattle and sheep ranch in San Luis Obispo. Joseph H. Hollister had continued to amass great wealth while in California; the marriage between Banning and Mary was the melding of wealthy families.

Phineas and Mary were married for fourteen years until his untimely death in 1885, at the age of 52.²⁷ While together, Mary had been stepmother to Phineas' three sons William, Hancock, and Joseph, and had given birth to three daughters; Ellen (who died in infancy), Lucy and Mary.

In previous investigations into the history of the Banning Ranch, it has been reported incorrectly that Phineas Banning bought the 4,077 acres in Orange County for himself (Van Horn 1982), or for his wife as a wedding present (Strudwick 2008). During a court case in June of 1888, when Mary's stepsons were trying to get possession of the Banning Ranch land in Santa Ana, Mary testified as to how she became owner of the land. When Mary's father died in the early 1870s, he had directly willed to his daughter a share of a 60,000-acre ranch he owned in Santa Barbara County that was worth \$500,000. With her share of the ranch, she bought a parcel of land in what had been the Rancho Santiago Santa Ana from Andrew Glassell. (See Figure 3.) She may have been advised as to the value of the land by her uncle Thomas Flint who had bought the nearby Rancho San Joaquin with James Irvine and Llewellyn Bixby. She stated at the trial, that the land in Orange County had never been part of the community property of her marriage with Phineas Banning, but that it was part of her "private fortune".²⁸ Her argument prevailed and she was able to keep sole possession of the land.

²⁶ *U.S. Census Records for 1850 and 1860.*

²⁷ *Los Angeles Times*; "Gen. Phineas Banning". March 10, 1885.

²⁸ *Los Angeles Times*; "The Banning Estate", June 16, 1888.

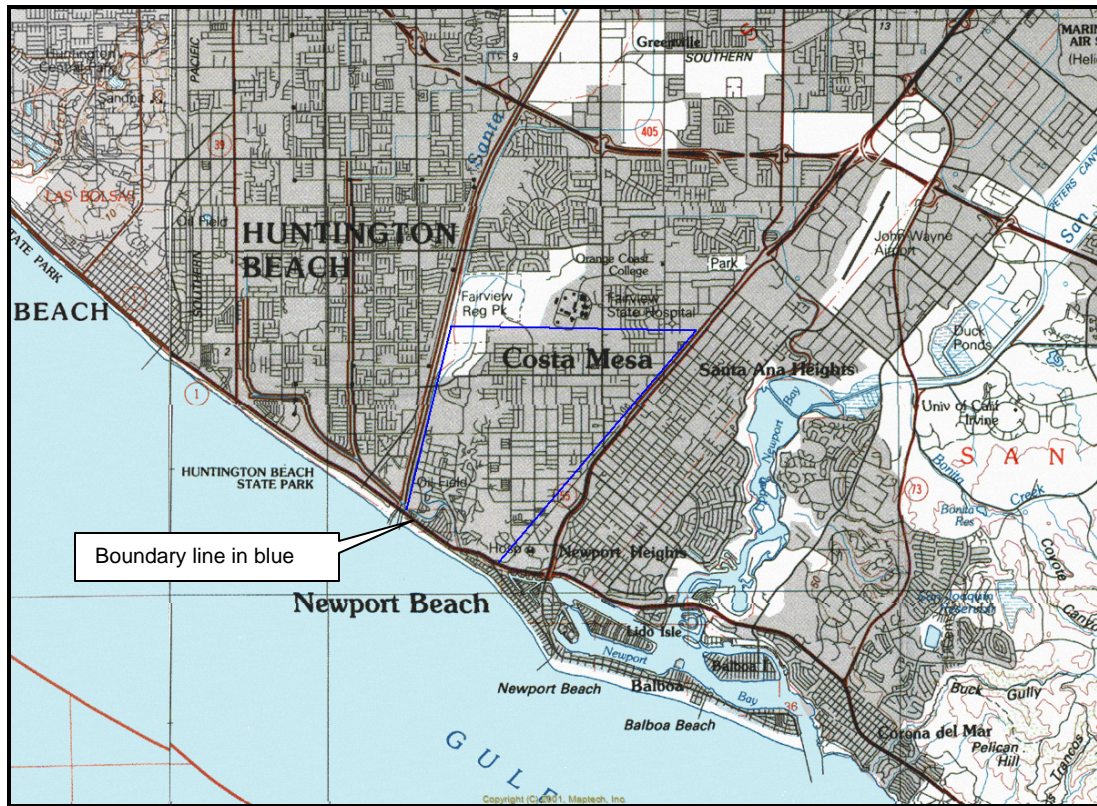


Figure 3: Approximate boundary of the Mary Hollister Banning Ranch circa 1890.

Over the years, Mary leased land to various endeavors and farmers in the local area of what is now the Costa Mesa region of Orange County. She leased 3,000 acres of her parcel to Henry D. Meyer in the 1890s, and he farmed the land for over 35 years growing wheat, oats, and barley. Gregory and Will Harper, and Walter and Will Griffith also leased acreage from Mary H. Banning for the raising of grain. In 1891, William Im Hof bought 150 acres for \$5,500.²⁹

In 1913, Mary Banning Norris (the daughter of Mary Hollister Banning) sold 1,020 acres of the existing 3,500 acres of the Banning Ranch.³⁰

“The land will be subdivided into small farms, supplied with water, and opened under the name of Fairview Farms. The Banning ranch comprises a portion of the old Spanish grant, Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. With the exception of the Irvine property, it has been the largest single holding in Orange County. The tract purchased covers a strip on mile wide and two miles long on a mean two miles north of Newport Beach.”³¹

Exploratory oil wells were drilled in the West Newport region in the mid-1920s with mixed results. The oil was so thick that it needed to be heated before it could be pumped from

²⁹ Miller, op. cit. Page 77.

³⁰ Los Angeles Time; “To Divide Old Rancho”, February 13, 1913.

³¹ Ibid.

the ground.³² The Interstate Oil Corporation was leasing land from Mary Banning Norris in 1926 when it was placed under indictment for unscrupulously “securing a large sum of money from Mrs. Catherine B. Stephens, a wealthy Pasadena widow”.³³ In 1939, 1,750 acres of the Banning Ranch were leased for drilling operations by the Thompson Company, an independent operator.³⁴ After her death in 1956, the estate of Mary Banning Norris sold the oil fields to Beeco, Ltd.³⁵

The project area is currently owned with a ½ interest each by Aera Energy LLC. and Cherokee Newport Beach, LLC.³⁶

3. Military Use of Banning Ranch

In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps considered opening a flying base on 1,400 acres of the Banning Ranch. The land was offered for purchase at \$250 per acre.³⁷ Major C.C. Mosely, the head of Cal-Aero Corporation, a private firm that trained many pilots for later military service, also looked at 750 acres of the Banning Ranch for establishing a flying school there.³⁸ Both Mosely and the U.S. Government rejected the site as an airfield.

But the U.S. Army did consider the Banning Ranch a good place to locate a gun emplacement as part of line of defense against a potential attack from Japan on the west coast of the United States. In 1941 and 1942, temporary field mounts were used for the installation of three 155 millimeter (mm) guns in the most southern part of Banning Ranch, almost along the Coast Highway. In 1943, three permanent Panama gun mounts were constructed on the Ranch. A “Panama” gun mount consists of a large circular concrete platform; approximately 38 feet in diameter where the end of the gun was fixed in the center of concrete pad and the front of the gun could be pushed along a circular metal rail, rotating the mouth of the gun into firing position. The three mounts were placed about 200 feet apart with a system of 6-foot deep trenches and ammunition storage areas running between them.

After the end of WWII the guns were removed and the trenches backfilled with the demolished concrete pads and other related, and un-related refuse. Previous archaeological investigations on the Banning Ranch have tentatively identified the location of an area of buried debris possibly related to the gun emplacement. The archaeological section of this environmental review discusses the description and significance of the refuse deposit.

³² *Los Angeles Times*; “Getting Shallow Pumpers”, May 4 1925.

³³ *Los Angeles Times*; “Bank Attaches Oil Property”, January 17, 1926.

³⁴ *Los Angeles Times*; “Costa Mesa Wildcat”, September 13, 1939.

³⁵ *Van Horn*; *op. cit.*, page 13.

³⁶ *First American Preliminary Title Report OSA-3087325*, May 30, 2008.

³⁷ *Los Angeles Times*; “Huge Air Unit Plans Made”, August 24, 1941.

³⁸ *Miller, Edrick J. The SAAAB Story; The History of Santa Ana Army Air Base. Page 14.*

B. HISTORIC RESOURCES IDENTIFIED

A site visit and pedestrian-level inspection of the historic resources on the property at 1080 West 17th Street, Newport Beach, was performed on June 29, 2009. Rick Swearingen, the Field Supervisor for the West Newport Oil Company, and thirty-year employee at the site accompanied this investigator describing the various buildings and structures spread over the 400 acres. Mr. Swearingen was also able to assist in dating the various buildings which he said were constructed from the 1960s and later. (See Figure 4.) He stated that all early pumping machinery and equipment had been removed from the site and that the current pumps had started being brought to the site in the 1970s. Also, Mr. Swearingen stated that the only structures that may date from before 1960 are the temporary field structures known as “dog houses”. These small metal multi-purpose structures can be easily moved and have served a number of purposes on the oil field over the years.

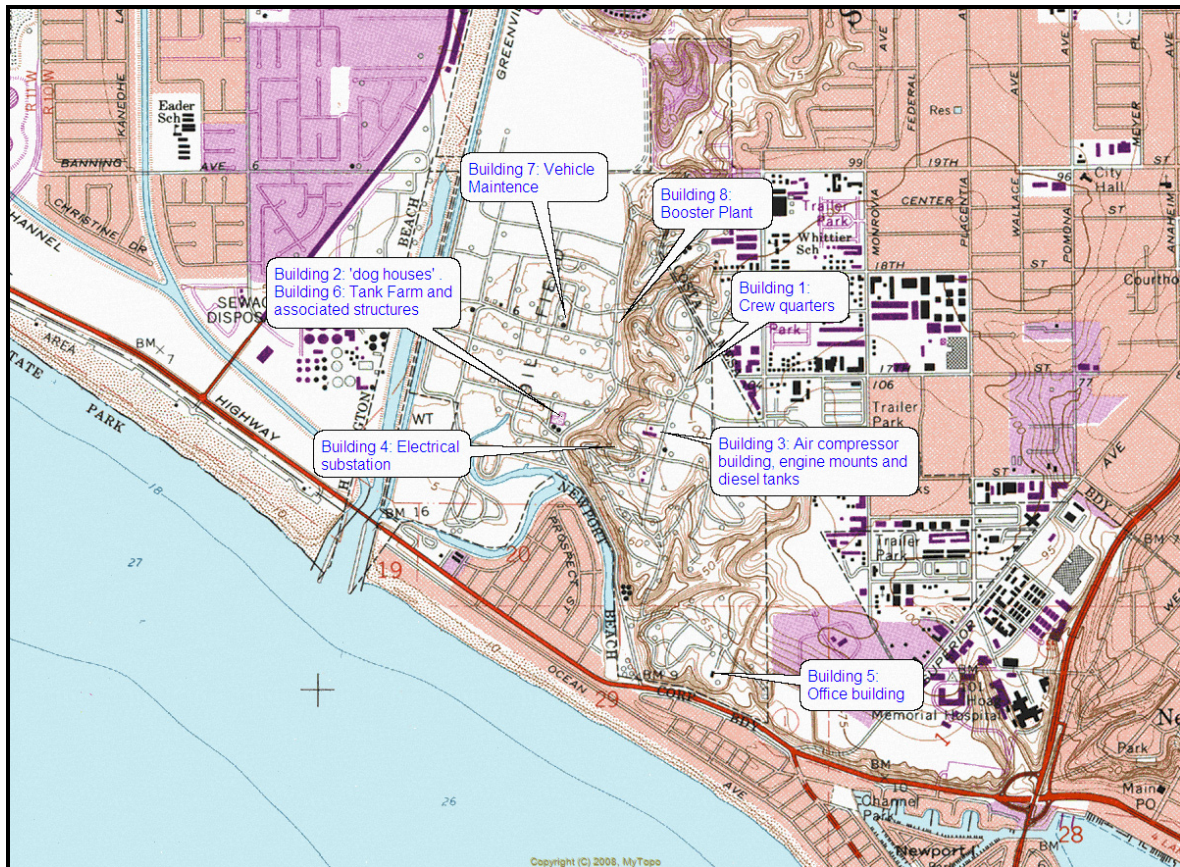


Figure 4: Location of buildings on the project site.

Building 1: is the Crew Quarters building. (See Photograph 1.) It is used to provide field staff with changing rooms, showers, lockers, and room for meetings and taking meals. The building is a one-story, rectangular massed structure measuring 60-feet long by 30-feet wide that sits on a concrete pad foundation. The building is covered with a low-pitched gable roof, and the entire structure is clad in corrugated metal siding. The windows are aluminum framed sliders. A metal awning covers the entranceway to the building on the east elevation, and there is a small storage shed made of concrete block attached to the north end of the east elevation. This building does not appear on Newport Beach Quad topographic map that was created in 1965 and updated in 1981. Mr. Swearingen believes the building dates from the late 1960s.



Photograph 1: Crew Quarters building. View looking northwest.

Building 2: is known as a “dog house”. (See Photograph 2.) These small, movable structures were used for any purpose from small field offices, to storing supplies and equipment. The dog houses are constructed entirely of thick metal plates and vary somewhat in length and height. Generally, the six “dog houses” found on the West Newport Oil Company site measure 8-feet wide by 16- to 25-feet long. The height of the units measure 6 feet from the ground to the roof edge, and 8 feet high at the slightly-pitched gable or arched roof peak. The small buildings range from being in excellent condition to being in severely deteriorated condition. The metal structures sit on the ground, and are constructed so that they can easily be moved from place to place. Because they are temporary type structures, even if they date from before the Newport Beach Quad topographic map that was created in 1965, they would not have been recorded on the map.



Photograph 2: Two “dog houses” side-by-side. These are located in the Tank Farm area. View looking north.

Building 3: is the Air Compressor Plant. The building was used from the 1960s to the mid-1980s to house the air compressor operations. (See Photographs 3, 4, and 5) The air compressor equipment was used in conjunction with five very large 12-cylinder diesel engines that were installed across the road where the large concrete engine mounts now remain. The diesel engines and air compressor system were used to create a thermal oil recovery method known as “fire flooding”. In this process, a special combustible oil is injected into the ground and ignited, with the result that the heat of the fire vaporizes lighter hydrocarbons and the water surrounding the warmed oil pushes it towards a pumping unit for recovery.³⁹ This approach to gathering oil was discontinued in the 1980s. The Clark diesel engines have been removed and only the large solid concrete engine mounts and the large empty diesel tanks remain. The concrete mounts measure 17-feet by 9-feet and are 6-feet high.

Located at the west end of the Air Compressor Plant building were the electric generators that the oil company used to produce their own electrical power for the oil recovery operations. This building and surrounding features do appear on Newport Beach Quad topographic map that was updated in 1981.

³⁹ *Oil and Gas Well Drilling and Servicing e-Tool, Glossary of Terms.*



Photograph 3: Air Compressor building. View looking northwest.



Photograph 4: Clark diesel engine mounts. View looking west.



Photograph 5: Where electric generators were located. View looking north.



Photograph 6: Electric substation. View looking west.

Building 4: this is the electrical substation that was used to step-down the electrical power for the West Newport Oil Company operations. (Photographs 6 and 7.) There is a small shed built on skids and a “dog house” located in close vicinity to the electrical substation.



Photograph 7: Electric station shed. View looking west.

Building 5: this is a ranch style house that is currently used for the Offices of the West Newport Oil Company. (See Photographs 8 and 9.) The house is one-story, set in a cross-gable plan, and sits on a concrete pad. The low pitched gable roof has wide overhanging eaves, and the main entrance is located at the crux of the ells on the east elevation under a porch roof formed by an extension of the roof planes. The porch roof is supported on the south end by a portal with a battered, rectangular box column. Round steel posts are used to support the wide overhanging eaves at the south end of the south ell, and under the eaves on the south elevation of the west ell. The building and porch portal is clad in a stucco finish. The windows throughout the building are aluminum sliders. The building has approximately 2,500 sq. ft. of floor space. Ornamental fretwork is located at the end of the south ell, and on the south elevation of the west ell. The fretwork appears to be a Frank Lloyd Wright inspired design of vertical and horizontal members. The house appears on the Newport Beach Quad map dated 1965



Photograph 8: Office building. View looking west.



Photograph 9: Entrance area to Office Building. View looking west.

Building 6 is the Tank Farm and associated oil recovery equipment used by the West Newport Oil Company. (See Photographs 10, 11, and 12.) The large storage tanks date from the early 1960s and appear on the Newport Beach Quad map dated 1965. Located in this area are the large heaters that warm the oil to 175 degrees before it is loaded on tanker trucks and removed to a refinery. The oil pumped from the fields used to be shipped through pipelines to a refinery in El Segundo until 1985. Now all oil is removed from the site by tanker trucks. There are two “dog houses” set side-by-side that provide office space for field engineers in this area along with a modular structure used as an operations office.

On the north side of the road that goes through the tank farm were located the large “steamers” that heated the water for injecting into the ground to warm the natural oil for easier pumping. The steaming equipment has been removed, and only the sheds that covered the steamers remain. Two other “dog houses” and related sheds, piping, tanks and equipment are located in this area also.



Photograph 10: Crude oil heaters. View looking south west.



Photograph 11: Crude oil storage tanks. View looking east.



Photograph 12: Shed that contained a steam heater. View looking southwest.

Building 7 – this is the Vehicle Maintenance shed, a large metal clad building that is used for repairing and maintaining the various motor vehicles used on the site. (See Photographs 13 and 14.) The main block of the building is over 21-feet high at the peak of the low-pitched gable roof, and measures approximately 30-feet wide by 85-feet long. The building is constructed of a steel pole frame, and the roof is supported by a truss system also made of steel poles. A tall shed roof addition is appended to the east side of the building and is approximately 20-feet wide by 52-feet long. Large hanging doors are located on the east and south elevations to allow large vehicles to enter, while pedestrian doors for employees are on the south elevation. The building sits on a concrete pad foundation. A smaller shed-roof structure is located just to the north of the large building. It is also clad in corrugated metal siding and measures 22-feet wide by 25-feet long. The Vehicle Maintenance building is noted on the Newport Beach topographic map dated 1965.



Photograph 13: Maintenance shed. View looking northwest.



Photograph 14: Maintenance Shed. View looking southwest.

Building 8 – this pole framed structure was used to cover the equipment used to support the booster air system. (See Photograph 15.) The equipment would supplement the air pressure produced at the main Air Compressor Building located on the mesa above. The frame structure sits in a concrete pad foundation. It does not appear on the Newport Beach Quad topographic map dated 1965, and updated in 1981.



Photograph 15: Booster Plant structure. View looking southwest.



Photograph 16: Old pump equipment.



Photograph 17: Closed well site.



Photograph 18: Abandoned electrical supply shed located near Maintenance Shed.

C. SIGNIFICANCE

The subject property located on approximately 401 acres known as the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch site consists of buildings, structures, objects, features, and landscape related to the operations of a crude oil pumping business. The primary buildings and structures that were constructed permanently on the site have been recorded in this investigation, but there is an abundance of equipment and features that were installed on a temporary basis. There are many old oil well pump units, lengths of metal pipe, old power poles and transformers, and small storage sheds scattered throughout the large site. (See Photographs 16, 17, and 18.) At its peak, the oil field had over 500 working wells. That number is now down to 60 wells.

The area surrounding the subject property, which was originally agricultural land, has been almost completely replaced by residential and light industry development. The original setting of the property changed as more people settled in the Orange County area in the last half of the twentieth century.

Oil exploration started in the area in the early 1900s, but was constantly a sporadic activity as the effort required to pump the heavy, viscous oil from the subterranean reserves was beyond the financial investment of most oil companies. The original oil wells had long been removed, and between 1930 and 1943 there had been almost no oil produced on the Banning Ranch. In the 1943 *Report by the State of California Department of Natural Resources, Bulletin 118* about the Newport Oil fields, it was said; “all the old producers are abandoned”. Even after

the end of World War II, there were numerous companies that leased the land, and because of that, there were no permanent structures built in the current project area prior to 1960.

The collection of debris identified as the Costa Mesa Battery location within the Banning Ranch continues to be investigated as an archaeological resource as it has lost all architectural and historic integrity due to its demolition.

In assessing the historical significance of the subject property, federal and state significance criteria were applied. The subject property is not currently listed on either the National Register or the California Register.

Under the National Register or California Register criteria relating to the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch sites association with significant historical events that exemplifying broad patterns of our history, the subject property does not qualify as a significant resource. There is no evidence of the activities of the early rancho period, or when the land had been used for agricultural purposes and owned by Mary Hollister Banning and her heirs. The development of this 400 acre section of what had been part of Mary Hollister Banning's original 4,077 acres of the Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana as an area of oil exploration and pumping operations had been done on a large scale starting in the 1960s. There have been no significant events relating to the oil industry on a regional or national level at this site.

Under the National Register or California Register criteria relating to the West Newport Oil Banning Ranch sites association with persons of historic importance, the property and the collection of buildings do not qualify as a significant resource. Research has not revealed any direct association between this property and persons important either regionally or nationally. The land has been used for grazing, the growing of crops, and for the exploration of oil. There are no buildings or structures on the site that appear to date from before 1960.

Under the National Register or California Register criteria relating to the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, the buildings, structures and related oil industry features are not significant as they do not embody any distinctive style, high artistic design, or method of construction. The house that now holds the office operations of West Newport Oil Company was not constructed by a known architect nor was it designed in an exceptional architectural style. The buildings, structures, and equipment used by the oil pumping operations are purely functional in design, and do not have any architectural or engineering merit.

In summation, the property at 1080 West 17th Street is not eligible for listing on the National Register or the California Register as a significant historic resource as it does not meet any of the criterions necessary for listing in the registries.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PUBLICATIONS

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To Divide Old Rancho, February 23, 1913.
Pioneer Dead, August 23, 1919.
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Descendants of Early Californians to Dedicate Banning House Memorial Today, June 6, 1936.
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V. DPR FORMS

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 14

*Resource Name or #: West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch

P1. Other Identifier: Banning Ranch

***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:** Newport Beach

Date: 1965/1981

T ; 6 S R 10 W of

¼ of Sec

; S.B.

B.M.

c. Address: 1080 West 17th Street

City: Newport Beach

Zip:

d. UTM: See Location Map with UTM Boundary Points

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

Located at the most western end of West 17th Street. Approximately 401 acre.

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

The subject property located on approximately 401 acres known as the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch site consists of buildings, structures, objects, features, and landscape related to the operations of a crude oil pumping business. The primary buildings and structures that were constructed permanently on the site have been recorded in this investigation, but there is an abundance of equipment and features that were installed on a temporary basis. There are many old oil well pump units, lengths of metal pipe, old power poles and transformers, and small storage sheds scattered throughout the large site. At its peak, the oil field had over 500 working wells. That number is now down to 60 wells. (See Continuation Sheet for additional description data.)

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP6 (1-3 story commercial building), HP8 (Industrial Building), HP39 (other – Oil pumping operation.), AH2 (Foundation pads), AH4 (Trash scatters), AH7 (Roads, trails), AH10 (Machinery), AH16 (Standing structures).

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



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #) Building 1. View looking north. June 29, 2009.

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and**

Sources: ☒ Historic

☐ Prehistoric ☐ Both

Built resources date from after 1960, per Rick Swearingen, Field Supervisor for West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch.

***P7. Owner and Address:**

Aera Energy LLC. And Cherokee Newport Beach, LLC.
1080 West 17th Street
Newport Beach, CA.

***P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)

Pamela Daly, M.S.H.P.
Daly & Associates
4486 University Avenue
Riverside, CA 92501

***P9. Date Recorded:** June 29, 2009

***P10. Survey Type:** (Describe) Historic Resource Assessment and Evaluation for CEQA.

***P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.") Daly, Pamela; West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch Historic Resources Assessment Report, July 2009.

***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

Page 2 of 14

*NRHP Status Code 6Z

*Resource Name: West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch

B1. Historic Name: Banning Ranch

B2. Common Name: Banning Ranch

B3. Original Use: Grain crops, agriculture.

B4. Present Use: Oil pumping.

*B5. **Architectural Style:** Building 5 was designed in the Ranch style. All other buildings are general industrial type design.

*B6. **Construction History:** (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Construction history is unknown. Rick Swearingen, the Field Supervisor for West Newport Oil Company, stated that all the current buildings were erected after 1960.

*B7. **Moved?** ☒ No ☐ Yes ☐ Unknown **Date:**

Original Location:

*B8. **Related Features:**

B9a. Architect: Unknown

b. Builder: Unknown

*B10. **Significance: Theme:** None

Area: Coastal Orange County

Period of Significance: None

Property Type: Oil field

Applicable Criteria: NR/CR

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

The subject property located on approximately 401 acres known as the West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch site consists of buildings, structures, objects, features, and landscape related to the operations of a crude oil pumping business. The primary buildings and structures that were constructed permanently on the site have been recorded in this investigation, but there is an abundance of equipment and features that were installed on a temporary basis. There are many old oil well pump units, lengths of metal pipe, old power poles and transformers, and small storage sheds scattered throughout the large site. At its peak, the oil field had over 500 working wells. That number is now down to 60 wells. (See Continuation Sheet for additional discussion of Significance.)

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

*B12. **References:**

Daly, Pamela; West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch Historic Resources Assessment Report, July 2009.

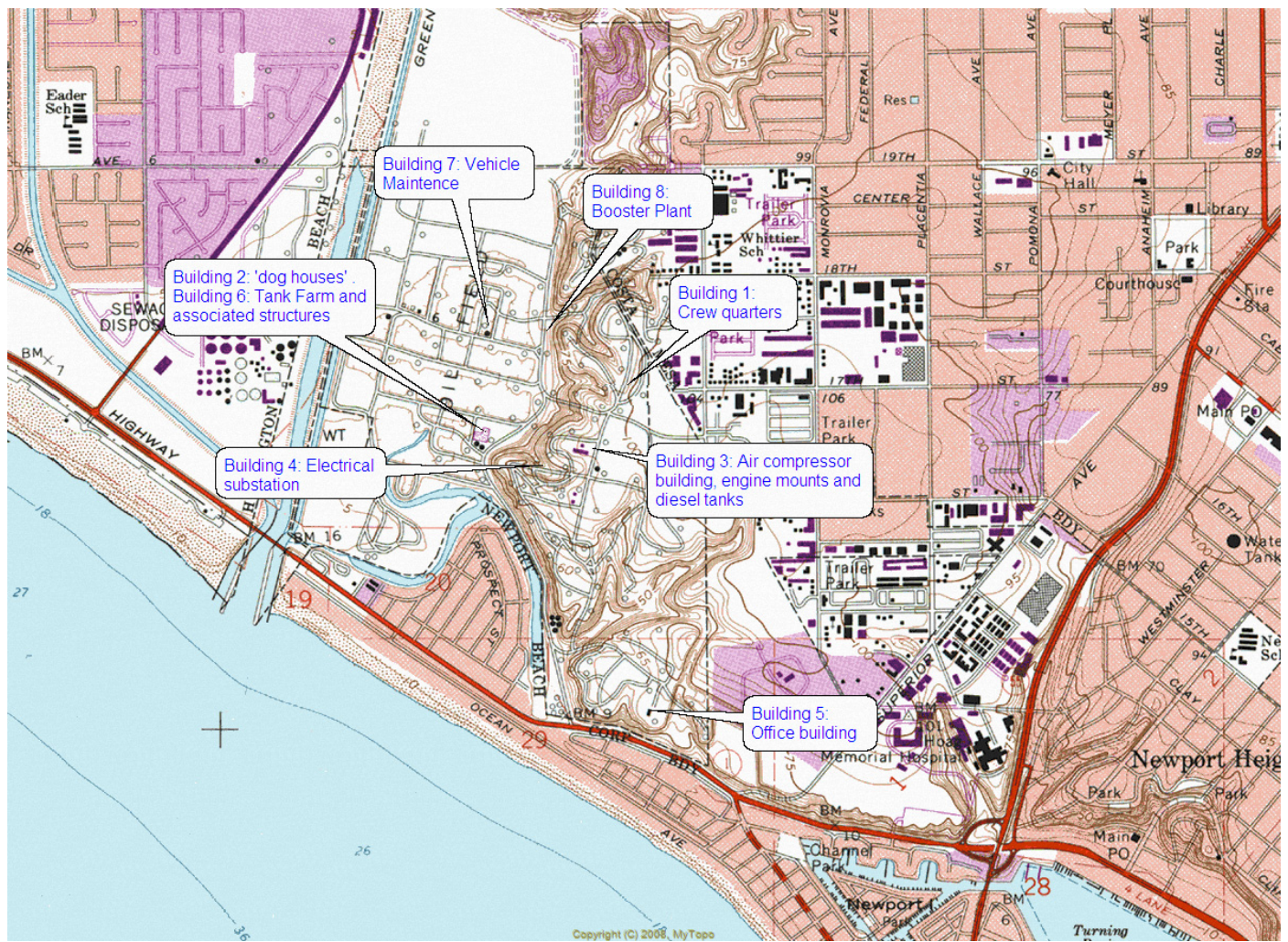
B13. Remarks:

*B14. **Evaluator:** Pamela Daly, M.S.H.P.

*Date of Evaluation: July 15, 2009

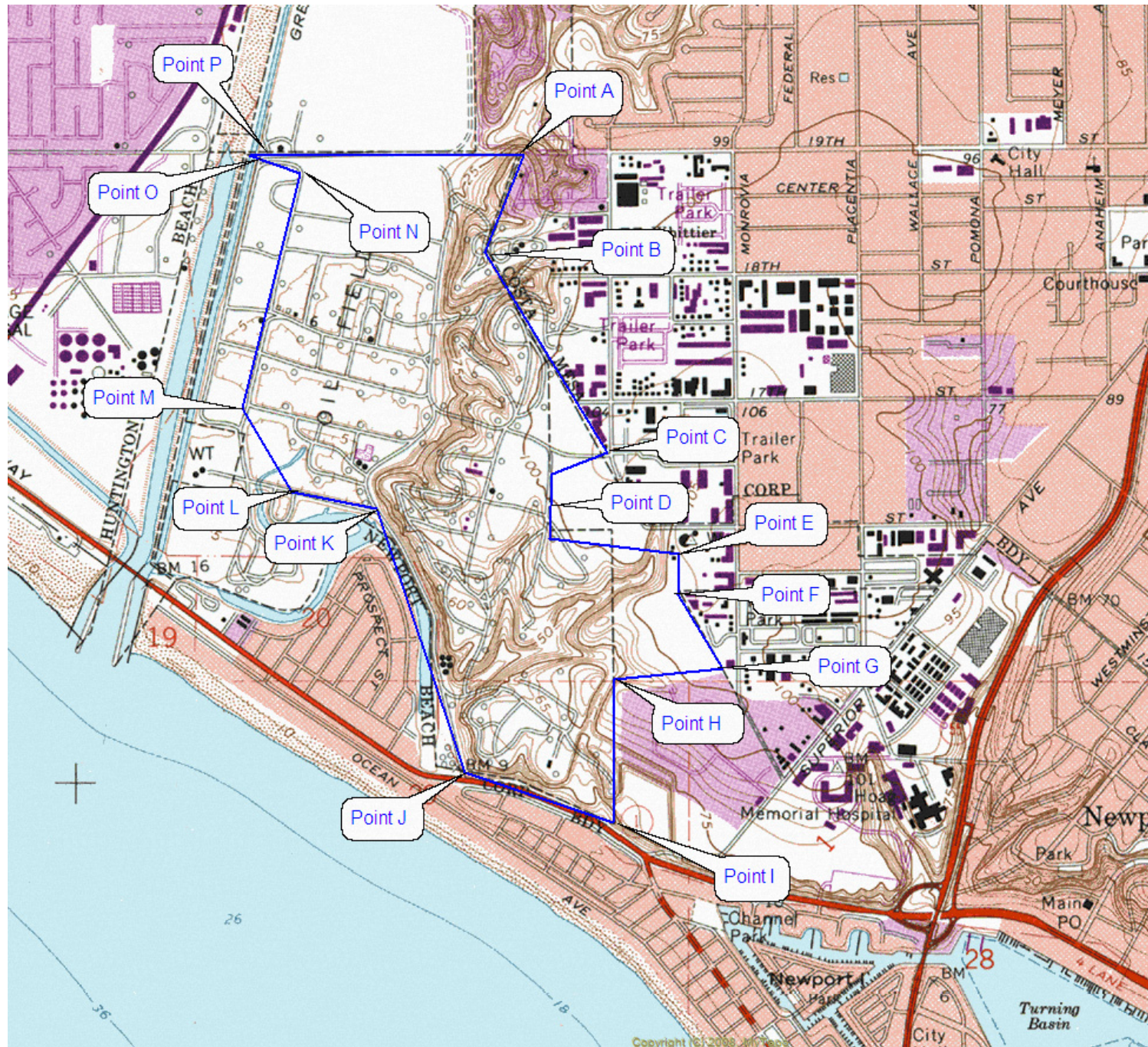
See Location Map DPR form with Buildings Locations.

(This space reserved for official comments.)



*Map Name: Newport Beach
DPR 523J (1/95)

*Scale: 1:24,000 *Date of Map: 1965/1981
*Required information



Boundary Map

A. Zone 11: 412486; 3722998
B. Zone 11: 412388; 3722670
C. Zone 11: 412756; 3722039
D. Zone 11: 412590; 3721860
E. Zone 11: 412974; 3721700
F. Zone 11: 412965; 3721577
G. Zone 11: 413119; 3721354

H. Zone 11: 412783; 3721311
I. Zone 11: 412791; 3720856
J. Zone 11: 412312; 3721032
K. Zone 11: 412022; 3721862
L. Zone 11: 411764; 3721925
M. Zone 11: 411610; 3722179
N. Zone 11: 411773; 3722959

O. Zone 11: 411659; 3722971
P. Zone 11: 411678; 3723017

*Map Name: Newport Beach
DPR 523J (1/95)

*Scale: 1:24,000 *Date of Map: 1965/1981
*Required information

Continued from DPR form Primary, P3a. Description:

Building 1: is the Crew Quarters building. It is used to provide field staff with changing rooms, showers, lockers, and room for meetings and taking meals. The building is a one-story, rectangular massed structure measuring 60-feet long by 30-feet wide that sits on a concrete pad foundation. The building is covered with a low-pitched gable roof, and the entire structure is clad in corrugated metal siding. The windows are aluminum framed sliders. A metal awning covers the entranceway to the building on the east elevation, and there is a small storage shed made of concrete block attached to the north end of the east elevation. This building does not appear on Newport Beach Quad topographic map that was created in 1965 and updated in 1981. Mr. Swearingen believes the building dates from the late 1960s.

Building 2: is known as a "dog house". These small, movable structures were used for any purpose from small field offices, to storing supplies and equipment. The dog houses are constructed entirely of thick metal plates and vary somewhat in length and height. Generally, the six "dog houses" found on the West Newport Oil Company site measure 8-feet wide by 16- to 25-feet long. The height of the units measure 6 feet from the ground to the roof edge, and 8 feet high at the slightly-pitched gable or arched roof peak. The small buildings range from being in excellent condition to being in severely deteriorated condition. The metal structures sit on the ground, and are constructed so that they can easily be moved from place to place. Because they are temporary type structures, even if they date from before the Newport Beach Quad topographic map that was created in 1965, they would not have been recorded on the map.

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Located at the west end of the Air Compressor Plant building were the electric generators that the oil company used to produce their own electrical power for the oil recovery operations. This building and surrounding features do appear on Newport Beach Quad topographic map that was updated in 1981.

Building 4: this is the electrical substation that was used to step-down the electrical power for the West Newport Oil Company operations. There is a small shed built on skids and a "dog house" located in close vicinity to the electrical substation.

Building 5: this is a ranch style house that is currently used for the Offices of the West Newport Oil Company. The house is one-story, set in a cross-gable plan, and sits on a concrete pad. The low pitched gable roof has wide overhanging eaves, and the main entrance is located at the crux of the eaves on the east elevation under a porch roof formed by an extension of the roof planes. The porch roof is supported on the south end by a portal with a battered, rectangular box column. Round steel posts are used to support the wide overhanging eaves at the south end of the south ell, and under the eaves on the south elevation of the west ell. The building and porch portal is clad in a stucco finish. The windows throughout the building are aluminum sliders. The building has approximately 2,500 sq. ft. of floor space. Ornamental fretwork is located at the end of the south ell, and on the south elevation of the west ell. The fretwork appears to be a Frank Lloyd Wright inspired design of vertical and horizontal members. The house appears on the Newport Beach Quad map dated 1965.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Continued from DPR form Bldg, S, O, B. 10, Significance:

The area surrounding the subject property, which was originally agricultural land, has been almost completely replaced by residential and light industry development. The original setting of the property changed as more people settled in the Orange County area in the last half of the twentieth century.

Oil exploration started in the area in the early 1900s, but was constantly a sporadic activity as the effort required to pump the heavy, viscous oil from the subterranean reserves was beyond the financial investment of most oil companies. The original oil wells had long been removed, and between 1930 and 1943 there had been almost no oil produced on the Banning Ranch. In the 1943 *Report by the State of California Department of Natural Resources, Bulletin 118* about the Newport Oil fields, it was said; "all the old producers are abandoned". Even after the end of World War II, there were numerous companies that leased the land, and because of that, there were no permanent structures built in the current project area prior to 1960.

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In assessing the historical significance of the subject property, federal and state significance criteria were applied. The subject property is not currently listed on either the National Register or the California Register.

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In summation, the property at 1080 West 17th Street is not eligible for listing on the National Register or the California Register as a significant historic resource as it does not meet any of the criterions necessary for listing in the registries.



Building 2: "Dog Houses" side-by-side, front (west) elevation. View looking east.



Building 3: Air Compressor Plant, west elevation. View looking northwest.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #

HRI#

Trinomial

Page 8 of 14

*Resource Name: West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch



Building 3: Engine mounts for Clark engines at Air Compressor building. View looking west.



Building 3: Electric generator at Air Compressor Plant, west elevation. View looking northwest.

CONTINUATION SHEET



Building 4: Electric station shed. View looking west.



Building 4: Electric sub station, east elevation. View looking west.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #

HRI#

Trinomial

Page 10 of 14

*Resource Name: West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch



Building 5: Entrance to Office Building. View looking west.



Building 5: Office building, east and south elevation. View looking northwest.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #

HRI#

Trinomial

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*Resource Name: West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch



Building 6: Tank farm. View looking east.



Building 5: Oil heaters at Tank Farm. View looking west.



Building 6: Shed at Tank Farm that had been for steamer. View looking west.



Building 7: Vehicle Maintenance building. View looking northwest.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #

HRI#

Trinomial

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*Resource Name: West Newport Oil Company Banning Ranch



Building 7: Vehicle Maintenance building - rear. View looking south.



Building 8: Booster Plant building. View looking southwest.



Example of abandoned pump units on the site.



Example of closed well found on the site.