

## APPENDIX D

# HISTORIC PERIOD BUILD ENVIRONMENT SENSITIVITY STUDY

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## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** June 20, 2022

**To:** Ryan Bensley, LSA Project Manager

**FROM:** Casey Tibbet, M.A., Associate/Cultural Resources Manager/Architectural Historian

**SUBJECT:** Historic-Period Built Environment Sensitivity Study for the Laguna Woods General Plan and Zoning Code Update, Laguna Woods, California (LSA Project Number LWD2102.03)

LSA, under contract to the City of Laguna Woods (City), has prepared a sensitivity study for the historic-period (50 years of age or older) built environment as part of the environmental documentation for the City's General Plan and Zoning Code Update. More specifically, this study focuses on the 17 potential housing sites identified by the City as part of the Housing Element Update, which was adopted in February 2022. As described below, LSA researched these 17 sites and surveyed the historic-period buildings in order to provide preliminary determinations regarding potential historical significance.

### Research Methods

LSA conducted research to determine when the buildings on the properties were constructed and identify their architects and builders and any associations with historically significant events. To accomplish this, LSA obtained information from City staff regarding dates of construction and/or occupancy and then cross-checked this information with Orange County Assessor parcel data, historic aerial photographs, and news articles.

### Field Survey Methods

LSA conducted a virtual survey of the buildings using Google street view and other online images to determine whether any of the historic-period buildings appears to be architecturally significant.

### Research and Field Survey Results

Research determined that seven properties, consisting of six different entities, are developed with historic-period (pre-1973) buildings (refer to Table A below). Of these, one is developed with an animal hospital and five are developed with religious facilities; all date to between 1966 and 1973. More detailed descriptions of each of the six properties with historic-period buildings are provided below.

**Table A: Potential Housing Sites with Historic-Period Buildings**

APN	Address	Name	Year Built	Year Built Source
616-012-03	24271 El Toro Road	Laguna Hills Animal Hospital	1968	Orange County Assessor var.
616-041-01	24231 El Toro Road	Lutheran Church of the Cross	1966-1968	Orange County Assessor var., <i>Independent Sun</i> 1966, <i>Tustin News</i> 1966a, 1967a, 1968
616-191-05 616-191-06	24301 El Toro Road	Geneva Presbyterian Church	1968	<i>Tustin News</i> 1968a, 1968b
621-121-11	24525 El Toro Road	Saint Nicholas Catholic Church	1966	<i>Tustin News</i> 1966b; <i>Los Angeles Times</i> 1966; <i>The Tidings</i> 1966
621-121-18	24512 Moulton Parkway	Temple Judea	1967 1971	Orange County Assessor var., <i>Tustin News</i> 1967b, <i>Los Angeles Times</i> 1971a
621-121-23	24442 Moulton Parkway	Laguna Country United Methodist Church	1966 1972-1973	City of Laguna Woods var., <i>Los Angeles Times</i> 1971b; Aerial photographs var.

**Laguna Hills Animal Hospital (24271 El Toro Road)**

Research indicates that the Laguna Hills Animal Hospital was built in 1968, although the earliest certificate of occupancy found by the City dates to 1972 (Orange County Assessor var.; City of Laguna Woods var.). A review of historic aerial photographs confirms that the property was developed sometime after 1967 and before 1970 (Aerial Photographs var.). Research did not identify the architect or builder. The facility was mentioned in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1970 because veterinarians, Dr. Dennis Morley and Dr. Norman Fohrman, were examining two lion cubs who were being relocated from Florida to Lion Country Safari (*Los Angeles Times* 1970). cursory research did not find the veterinarians or the facility to be associated with historically important events or contributions to the field of veterinary medicine. Based on an online reconnaissance-level survey of the building, there does not appear to be anything unique or exceptional about its design and it does not appear to be architecturally significant.

**Lutheran Church of the Cross (24231 El Toro Road)**

Research indicates that the Lutheran Church of the Cross was built in 1966 (Orange County Assessor var.; *Independent Sun* 1966; *Tustin News* 1966a). News articles reveal that in April 1966 a permit was issued for construction of a sanctuary and in October 1966 it was reported that Daniel Bros Construction Co. of Costa Mesa had been awarded the \$190,000 contract for construction of the church (*Tustin News* 1966a; *Independent Sun* 1966). The church was completed in 1967 (*Tustin News* 1967a). No information was found regarding the architect of the church. cursory research for Daniel Bros. Construction Co. indicates the company was formed in 1952 by Gerald V. Daniel and was initially

based in Pasadena (*Pasadena Independent* 1952). An online search of news articles revealed only a dozen mentions of the company, however, most of the Orange County papers are not easily accessible online and were not searched. Some of the company's projects include the Los Angeles County Arboretum administration building and gatehouse in Arcadia (1955), civic center improvements in Arcadia and Monterey Park (1956 and 1959, respectively), and Faith Lutheran Church in Pasadena (1962). No articles after 1966 were found. Based on this limited research, the builder does not appear to be historically significant. Based on an online reconnaissance-level survey of the building, the sanctuary includes Mid-Century Modern elements such as the symmetrical plan, the arches, and the steeple and may be significant for its architecture.

#### [Geneva Presbyterian Church \(24301 El Toro Road\)](#)

Although both the Orange County Assessor and City data indicate the Geneva Presbyterian Church was built in 1970, the property appears to have been graded in a 1967 aerial photograph and a 1968 news article says the dedication for the new sanctuary occurred in August 1968 (Orange County Assessor var.; City of Laguna Wood var.; Aerial Photographs var.; *Tustin News* 1968a, 1968b). News articles also reveal that the church was organized in 1965 and designed by the renowned architectural firm William L. Pereira and Associates (*Tustin News* 1968a). Additional research was not conducted since the association with William L. Pereira and Associates is enough to give the church a high potential for significance.

#### [Saint Nicholas Catholic Church \(24252 El Toro Road\)](#)

Saint Nicholas Catholic Church was built in 1966 (Orange County Assessor var.; City of Laguna Woods var.; *The Tidings* 1966). According to news articles, it was constructed by builder/developer S. V. Hunsaker and Sons, Inc. (*Los Angeles Times* 1966). Although no architect for the church was found, it is possible that it was designed by S. V. Hunsaker and Sons, Inc. since they reportedly designed at least some of the homes they built. cursory research indicates that S. V. Hunsaker and Sons, Inc. was primarily a developer of residential properties. From 1954 to 1961, Richard Hunsaker and his father S. V. Hunsaker, Sr. built and sold more than 5,000 homes through various joint ventures (Leagle, Inc. 2019). Richard, his brother S. V. Hunsaker, Jr. and others also subdivided land and built homes during this period (Leagle, Inc. 2019). In 1957, the three Hunsakers formed a partnership, SRS Investments, and in 1962, S. V. Hunsaker & Sons was formed (Leagle, Inc. 2019). The Hunsakers are not mentioned in *Tract Housing in California, 1945-1973: A Context for National Register Evaluation*, which is a fairly comprehensive study of tract housing in California and significant people/companies associated with it (California Department of Transportation 2011). Furthermore, S. V. Hunsaker & Sons does not appear to be known for the design or construction of churches, therefore, it seems unlikely that Saint Nicholas Church would be one of the best representations of their work and, in any case, based on an online reconnaissance-level survey of the building, it does not appear to be exceptional from an architectural standpoint.

#### [Temple Judea \(24512 Moulton Parkway\)](#)

Permits were issued for Temple Judea in July 1967 and a certificate of occupancy was issued in 1968 (*Tustin News* 1967b; City of Laguna Woods var.). By 1970, aerial photographs reveal that only the part of the building closest to Moulton Parkway had been constructed (Aerial Photographs var.). In 1971, a news article reported that Richard Grossgold Associates, Seal Beach architects, had been chosen to

design the new Temple Judea sanctuary; this was the final phase of the master plan for the Temple (*Los Angeles Times* 1971a). cursory research revealed that in 1967, Grossgold apparently worked for the Rossmore Corporation and formed Richard Grossgold Associates in 1969 (*Tustin News* 1967c; Bizapedia 2012-2022). Richard Grossgold Associates has designed numerous projects including the following around the time of Saint Nicholas Catholic Church: Leisure World Clubhouse 3 and Clubhouse 4; the Helena model residence (Costa del Sol) for the Mission Viejo Company; and 181 condominium units in Kuffel Canyon (Lake Arrowhead area) (Historical Society of Laguna Woods 2007; Calishpere n.d.; *Press-Telegram* 1972). A 1971 article announced that Richard Grossgold Associates, architects and land planners, were expanding their services to include complete environmental design services “backed by the experience of designing more than 3,000 apartments to conventional and FHA/HUD standards” (*Los Angeles Times* 1971c). Based on this limited research, Mr. Grossgold does not appear to be a master architect. Based on the online reconnaissance-level survey of Temple Judea, it does not appear to be an exceptional example of a particular architectural style.

#### [Laguna Country United Methodist Church \(24442 Moulton Parkway\)](#)

The Laguna Country United Methodist Church was built in 1966 with a new sanctuary added in 1972-1973 (City of Laguna Woods var.; *Los Angeles Times* 1971b; Aerial Photographs var.). Research did not identify the architect or builder. Based on the online reconnaissance-level survey, the church embodies characteristics of the Sweeping Roof and Mid-Century Modern styles and may be potentially significant for its architecture.

#### **Conclusion**

Of the 17 potential housing sites identified by the City as part of the Housing Element Update adopted in February 2022, seven have buildings that date to the historic-period (pre-1973). These are developed with an animal hospital and five religious facilities (two of the properties are developed with one church). The buildings were constructed between 1966 and 1973.

Based on the limited research and an online reconnaissance-level survey, only three of the buildings appear to be potentially significant. These are: Lutheran Church of the Cross, Geneva Presbyterian Church, and Laguna Country United Methodist Church. While all of the buildings will require formal evaluations for significance simply based on their age, these three appear to have potential to be historically significant for their architecture and/or as the work of a master architect.

#### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that all of the properties that have buildings that are 50 years of age or older be evaluated for historical significance using the California Register of Historical Resources criteria and any applicable criteria adopted by the City of Laguna Woods. At a minimum, the buildings should be documented and evaluated on the appropriate Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523 forms and should be assigned California Historical Resources status codes. In addition, consideration should be given to the potential for the churches to be contributors to a thematic historic district composed of religious institutions associated with the themes of Leisure World and/or postwar (1945-1973) development.

**Table B: Potential Historical Significance**

<b>APN</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Potential Significance</b>
616-012-03	24271 El Toro Road	Laguna Hills Animal Hospital	1968	None apparent
616-041-01	24231 El Toro Road	Lutheran Church of the Cross	1966-1968	Architecture
616-191-05 616-191-06	24301 El Toro Road	Geneva Presbyterian Church	1968	Architecture and architect (William L. Pereira Associates)
621-121-11	24525 El Toro Road	Saint Nicholas Catholic Church	1966	None apparent
621-121-18	24512 Moulton Parkway	Temple Judea	1967 1971	None apparent
621-121-23	24442 Moulton Parkway	Laguna Country United Methodist Church	1966 1972-1973	Architecture

## References

### Aerial Photographs

- Var. 1963, 1967, 1972, and 1980 aerial photographs accessed online in May and June 2022 at: <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>
- Var. 1970 aerial photographs accessed online in June 2022 at: <https://www.ocgis.com/ocpw/historicalimagery/>

### Bizapedia

- 2012–2022 Grossgold Associates. Accessed online in June 2022 at: <https://www.bizapedia.com/ca/grossgold-associates.html>

### Calisphere

- n.d. Costa del Sol, Helena, plan H-r. Online archive of California. Accessed online in June 2022 at: <https://calisphere.org/item/ark:/13030/kt5x0nd3j6/>

### City of Laguna Woods

- Var. Building permit and other planning information provided by XXX in May 2022.

### Historical Society of Laguna Woods

- 2007 *The Historian, Preserving Today for Tomorrow*. Clubhouse 4, When is a Cul-de-Sac Not a Cul-de-Sac?. Volume 1, Number 3. Accessed online in June 2022 at: [https://lagunawoods.history.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2007\\_07\\_Journal.pdf](https://lagunawoods.history.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2007_07_Journal.pdf)

### *Independent Sun*

- 1966 New Stores Soon in Bixby Knolls Area. August 7, page 66.

### Leagle, Inc.

- 2019 Hunsaker v. Commissioner. Accessed online in June 2022 at: <https://www.leagle.com/decision/1975101934hrtcm9851794>

### *Los Angeles Times*

- 1966 Two Churches Building Near Pasaverde. February 27, page 126.
- 1970 Nice Kitty! (photo caption). February 9, page 6.
- 1971A Architects Chosen. April 4, page 144.
- 1971b Drive Nets \$343,632 for Church. October 14, page 8.
- 1971 Architect Firm Offers New Services. May 2, page 140.
- 1973 Worship with us this Week. April 21, page 23.

### Orange County Assessor

- Var. Information included parcel data purchased from Orange County in 2022.



*Pasadena Independent*

1952 Certificate of Fictitious Firm Name. February 15, page 39.

*Press-Telegram*

1972 Grossgold firm obtains canyon job. June 18, page 63.

*The Tidings*

1966 Church Completed in Laguna Hills. September 16, page 6.

*Tustin News*

1966a PD Patios on Nisson Okayed. April 14, page 2.

1966b Catholic Milestone (photo caption). January 5, page 8.

1967a Church of the Cross Plans 2 Christmas Observances. December 21, page 7.

1967b Building. July 20, page 16.

1967c Summer Goings-on Told Through Photos. Negotiations completed (photo caption). August 17, page 15.

1968a Dedication of Geneva Church Set Sunday in Laguna Hills. August 22, page 10.

1968b New Presbyterian Church Dedicated in El Toro Area. August 29, page 3.