

# **HISTORY**

## **Early History:**

"Local Indian tribes were the first known residents of the Oregon Coast. Although they had many similarities, individual tribes occupied separate and sometimes separated areas. Thus, by the time the first explorers landed, the Indians had developed differing customs and varying levels of attainment in use of available natural resources, including well-developed religious and political systems. This was particularly true along the Oregon coast, where a temperate climate and plentiful food supplies, particularly anadromous fish, supported large groups living in relatively close proximity to each other.

"Juan Cabrillo, a Spanish explorer, is believed to have reached the southern Oregon Coast in 1542. By 1594, Spain was systematically exploring the northwest coast. In the late 1700's, Spain made thorough, systematic, and accurate surveys of the area, and claimed sovereignty over portions of the coast. Heceta Head, in the mid-Coast subarea, is named for one of the Spanish explorers.

"In March of 1778, Captain James Cook, in a search for the supposed Northwest Passage, made the first landfall of his voyage near Yaquina Bay, also in the Mid Coast subarea; and in 1787, Captain Meares identified points along the Oregon coast. Also about that time, an American, Captain Robert Gray, entered [the] Columbia River and explored its lower reaches, but made no claims of possession for the United States.

"In 1805, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, after leaving St. Louis, Missouri, in 1804, reached the Pacific Coast and wintered near the Columbia River. Following Lewis and Clark came increasing numbers of trappers, traders, and settlers, both Canadian and American. Fort Astor was established on the Columbia River by John Jacob Astor, an American; in 1821 it was acquired by Hudson's Bay Company and moved inland to a site in what is now the State of Washington. In 1825, the fort was renamed Fort Vancouver.

"By the middle 1830's, exploration was largely completed, Indian tribes and their complex social systems were experiencing severe adjustments to accommodate the increasing number of settlers, and disease was sharply reducing their numbers." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pacific Northwest River Basins Commission, The Oregon Coast Level B Study of the Water and Related Land Resources (Oregon State Study Team, 1976), p. 15.

The Pacific Northwest would never be the same.

### **Recent History:**

"The Yaquina Bay area was originally settled in the 1850's. Newport was named in 1866 and subsequently incorporated in 1882. Lack of access generally stifled any significant growth until the 1880's when construction on the railway was begun. The first train made the trip from Corvallis to Yaquina in 1885. The construction of the railway first to Elk City and then to Toledo significantly improved access and stimulated growth in the Newport area. Newport began to develop as a tourist community. Yaquina Bay was the only bay on the Oregon Coast connected to the Willamette Valley by railway. People coming to Newport would take the train from Albany and Corvallis to Elk City and down the Yaquina River on a ferry to Newport, docking on what is now Bay Boulevard.

"In the 1890's, Newport had a permanent population of approximately 120 people. In a brochure advertising the recreational attraction of the Newport area, promoters claimed to have had hotel and boarding house accommodations for 400 to 500 people plus unlimited camping space available.

"While Newport experienced relatively slow growth, the cities up the river involved in lumbering and other industries thrived. Steam boats and schooners often came in and out of the bay to pick up a load of lumber or Yaquina oysters, and deliver supplies to the settlers. Before it burned, Yaquina City had a population of over 2,000.

"Commercial fishing was also an important industry and provided settlers with food as well as a source of income.

"During World War I, the United States Government established the largest spruce mill in the world at Toledo, to provide wood for the construction of airplanes. This also served to stimulate growth in the Newport area.

"Newport continued to be the primary coastal tourist center for the Willamette Valley until the late 1920's when construction began on the Coast Highway and other areas of the coast were opened up to motorists.

"In 1936 the Yaquina Bay Bridge was built. With the building of other bridges and completion of the coast highway, the full length of the Oregon Coast was opened to travelers. While tourists no longer came exclusively to Newport, the construction of the coast highway and bridges allowed many more people to vacation on the coast and Newport continued to grow.

"With the growth of tourism, fishing, and lumbering and continued improved access after 1936, Newport began to grow fairly rapidly until the late 1950's and early 1960's. Then many of the mills in the area closed down, resulting in many families leaving the area. More recently with increasing numbers of people traveling the Coast Highway, Newport is again growing." <sup>2</sup>

During the 1970's and 1980's, Newport experienced sharp swings in the local economy. Still dependent on the tourism, lumber, and fishing industries, the drastic fluctuations in energy costs, interest rates, and commodity prices severely affected the amount and type of growth.

## **Historical and Archaeological Resources:**

The historical and archaeological heritage of the Oregon coast is irreplaceable both to the people of the coast and the entire State of Oregon. It offers present and future generations educational and scientific opportunities to better understand the ways, values, and traditions of the past coastal peoples. These historical and archaeological resources also have value to the coastal economy for their attraction to tourists and potential residents. Thus, it is important to inventory and protect those resources that have been identified as having historic or archaeological significance.

As the competition for land has grown, some of these sites have become desirable for other uses; they will convert to those uses unless they're protected by some method. The job of concerned citizens through their public officials is to determine which of these resources are too valuable to be lost and then to implement methods for their protection.

In determining historical or archaeological significance of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects, the following characteristics can serve as a guide:

### Historic Sites:

- (a) Have character, interest, or value as part of the development heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state or nation;
- (b) Are the site of an historic event with an effect upon society;

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<sup>2</sup> City of Newport, Oregon, 1980-2000 Newport Comprehensive Plan, 1982.

- c) Are identified with a person or group of persons who had some influence on society; or
- (d) Exemplify the cultural, political, economic, social, or historical heritage of the community.

Archaeological Sites:

- (a) Have material evidence of human life and culture of the prehistoric past that may be recovered and studied; or
- (b) Are identified as potential archaeological sites by a recognized archaeological organization.

Considering the above criteria, and in view of the historical significance of Newport as one of the first coastal recreation communities, the Lincoln County Historical Society has identified the following sites within the Newport urban growth boundary as being of historical significance:

1.) Cape Foulweather Lighthouse/Yaquina Head Lighthouse:

Constructed by the U.S. Lighthouse service in 1862, this is the second oldest lighthouse on the Oregon Coast<sup>3</sup> and was built to replace the light at the entrance to Yaquina Bay. Apparently, the lighthouse was originally to have been erected on Cape Foulweather, but the supplies were mistakenly landed at Yaquina Head, so it was built there. The Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association (OCZMA) has classified the site as being of natural historic significance, and it is marked with a Lincoln County Historical Society marker, as well as being listed on their map. The National Register of Historic Places also lists the site.

Owner: U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Current Use: Automated lighthouse, wildlife refuge, and a scenic and natural area.

Conflicting Use: None.

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: Yes (lighthouse only).

Conclusion: The site and lighthouse should be preserved. Other out buildings are not significant and are not worth

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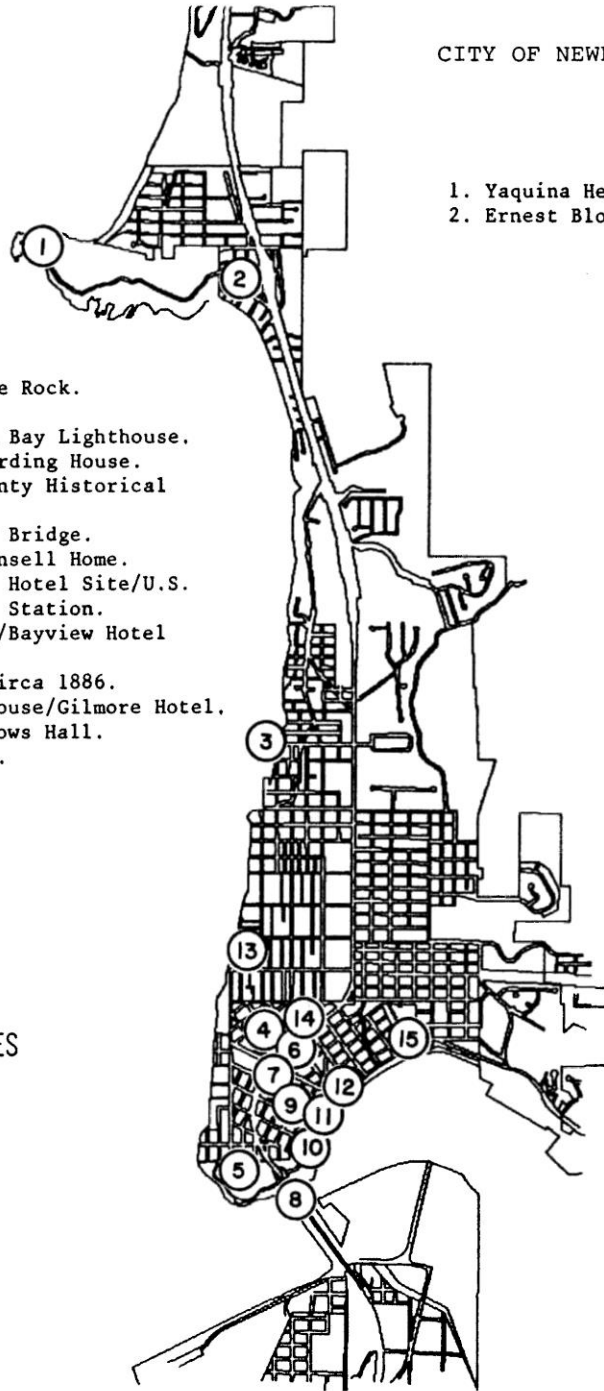
<sup>3</sup> The first is the old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse (number 5 on this list).

CITY OF NEWPORT

1. Yaquina Head Lighthouse.
2. Ernest Bloch Home.

3. Jump-Off Joe Rock.
4. The Castle.
5. Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse.
6. Burrows Boarding House.
7. Lincoln County Historical Museum.
8. Yaquina Bay Bridge.
9. Royal A. Bensell Home.
10. Ocean House Hotel Site/U.S. Coast Guard Station.
11. Abbey Hotel/Bayview Hotel Site.
12. The Grand/Circa 1886.
13. New Cliff House/Gilmore Hotel.
14. Old Oddfellows Hall.
15. Scott House.

HISTORIC AND  
CULTURAL  
RESOURCE SITES



the preservation effort. Any modification or alteration to the lighthouse or the site shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission to assure the maintenance of its historic value consistent with the provisions contained in the City of Newport Zoning Ordinance.

2.) Ernest Bloch Home:

Ernest Bloch, a well-known composer and orchestra conductor, occupied this house from 1941 until 1959. It has been classified as being of historical importance to the nation by the OCZMA, and a bronze plaque mounted on a boulder located at the junction of Yaquina Head Lighthouse and Highway 101 marks the site.

Owner: First Baptist Church of Salem.

Current Use: None.

Conflicting Use: Zoned for retail commercial uses, there could be negative results for the site if development pressures become too great. If retail commercial uses are not allowed, unfavorable economic consequences could occur. If conflicting uses develop on or near this site, the loss of a cultural resource could be socially detrimental. No energy consequences will occur as a result of either allowing or not allowing the conflicting uses.

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: Both the site and the Bloch Home have significance such that the Planning Commission shall review any proposal for modification or alteration to the structure to assure the maintenance of its historic value consistent with the provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

3.) Jump-Off Joe Rock:

Located north of Nye Creek off Coast Street, this large Nye Sandstone formation has eroded over the years to a small sea stack. Legend attributes the name to an Indian named Joseph who was chased to the site by men and was advised by a Siletz woman to "Jump off, Joe", which he did. OCZMA classifies the site as being of importance to Lincoln County, and the Lincoln County Historical Society distinguishes the site with both a marker and being shown on their map.

The Jump-Off Joe landslide area is an example of a detached mass sliding on a seaward-dipping bedding plane. Both north and south of Jump-Off Joe the heads of slides have moved

land forward several hundred feet and have cut off roads, damaged or destroyed houses, and disrupted the ground surface. More than 16 acres of land have been involved in the Jump-Off Joe landslide area. While this is a dramatic example of a catastrophic slide potential, because so much of Lincoln County's development is along the margin of the marine terrace where soft soil and weathered rock is being undermined by erosion at a rapid rate, catastrophic landslides are a potential hazard in many areas.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the city has concluded that while this particular slide area must be mentioned as a geologic hazard, it has not been found to be scientifically significant.

Owner: State of Oregon.

Current Use: Natural area.

Conflicting Use: None (site is in the ocean).

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: State ownership protects the site. The inshore area is City of Newport park land, which contributes to site protection.

4,) The Castle:

Located on S.W. Alder Street just west of U.S. Highway 101, and now divided into three apartments, this house was built by Charles A. and Teresa Roper in 1912.<sup>5</sup> The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Owner: Jeff Ouderkirk.

Current Use: Residential (apartments).

Conflicting Use: None (zoned for residential use).

Site of Special Historic Significance: No.

Building of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: The building is worth preserving. Any modification or alteration to the building or the site shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission to assure that its

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<sup>4</sup> State of Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Bulletin 81: Environmental Geology of Lincoln County, Oregon, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Roper was the mayor of Newport from 1921-23.

historic value is maintained consistent with the provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

5.) Old Yaquina Bay Lighthouse:

Built in 1871, this was the first lighthouse on the Oregon Coast. It is classified as being of historical importance to the nation by the OCZMA, and the Lincoln County Historical Society distinguishes the site on their map and with a marker. The National Register of Historic Places also lists the site. The lighthouse is on property owned by the Oregon State Parks Department, which maintains it as a museum. It is open to the public during the summer months.

Owner: Oregon State Parks Department.

Current Use: Museum.

Conflicting Use: None.

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: The building and site are worth preserving, and they are adequately protected by the Oregon State Parks Department. Any modification or alteration to the lighthouse or the site shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission to assure the maintenance of its historic value consistent with the provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

6.) Burrows Boarding House:

This building was originally located west of Highway 101 at the site of the Bank of Newport. Originally used as a boarding house and then as the Bateman Funeral Home, the Lincoln County Historical Society moved it in 1976 to S.W. 9th Street next to their museum to serve as a museum annex. Photographs in 1889 show the Queen Anne style building as a boarding house. OCZMA has rated the house as being of historical significance to the City of Newport.

Owner: Lincoln County Historical Society (the land is owned by the City of Newport).

Current Use: Museum.

Conflicting Use: None (zoned for public buildings).

Site of Special Historic Significance: No.



Building of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: The building and site are worth preserving, and they are adequately protected by both the Lincoln County Historical Society and the City of Newport. Any modification or alteration to the building or the site shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission to assure the maintenance of its historic value consistent with the provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

7.) Lincoln County Historical Museum:

A log building on S.W. 9th Street, the museum has one of the finest Indian interpretive exhibits on the Coast.

Owner: Lincoln County Historical Society (the land is owned by the City of Newport).

Current Use: Museum.

Conflicting Use: None (zoned for public buildings).

Site of Special Historic Significance: No.

Building of Special Historic Significance: No.

Conclusion: The building is a replica of a early log cabin and contains important historic exhibits and artifacts. Change, expansion, removal, or replacement of the building by the Historical Society, as needed, shall be allowed.

8.) Yaquina Bay Bridge:

Completed in 1936 after two years of construction, the bridge replaced the Yaquina Bay Ferry and was a key portion of the coast highway system. The bridge led to development of the business district along Highway 101 in Newport, dramatically increasing tourism on the Oregon Coast. OCZMA has categorized the bridge as having importance to the state.

Owner: State of Oregon.

Current Use: Bridge.

Conflicting Use: None.

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Structure of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: If necessary to expand the bridge, it should be in the same corridor. Any expansion shall preserve the bridge silhouette by locating on the west side. Any modification or alteration to the bridge or the site shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission to assure the maintenance of its historic value consistent with the provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

9.) Royal A. Bensell Home:

Located at 757 S.W. 13th Street, this home was built in 1885 by Royal A. Bensell, an infantryman to the Grande Ronde Reservation in the Civil War. He was a co-owner of a steam sawmill at Depot Slough and was involved in direct lumber shipments to San Francisco. Bensell served as a representative to the State Legislature from Western Benton County from 1868-1882, and was justice of the peace and collector of customs for the Yaquina District in the 1880's. Mr. Bensell also served as mayor of Newport from 1908-10, 1915-17, and part of 1921. The OCZMA notes this home as being of historical importance to the county.

Owner: Dr. Russell Guiss.

Current Use: Residence.

Conflicting Use: Yes.

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: No.

Conclusion: The structure has undergone wholesale structural and aesthetic changes during the last 25 years through the efforts of the current owners, Dr. and Mrs. Russell Guiss. These alterations have irrevocably altered the original appearance and character of the house by commingling contemporary building materials and designs with the original.

10.) Ocean House Hotel Site and U.S. Coast Guard Station:

The Ocean House Hotel was built in 1866-67 by James R. Bayley<sup>6</sup> and Samuel Case. Case, the proprietor, came to the area as an infantryman to serve at the Siletz Reservation. The present U.S. Coast Guard Station is located on the Ocean House Hotel Site and was built in about 1935. The OCZMA has listed the site as having historical importance to the

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<sup>6</sup> Mayor of Newport from 1884-85, 1892-93, and 1897-99.

county. A Lincoln County Historical society marker identifies the Ocean House site, and it is shown on their map.

Owner: U.S. Coast Guard.

Current Use: Coast Guard Station.

Conflicting Use: None.

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: The historic marker for the site should be maintained, as should the typical 1930's Coast Guard style. This is a significant anchor to the original town site. Any modification or alteration to the building or the site shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission to assure the maintenance of its historic value consistent with the provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

11.) Abbey Hotel/Bayview Hotel Site:

Peter Morton Abbey was one of Newport's pioneer settlers in 1867. He built the Bayview Hotel in 1871 on the waterfront and moved it back against the hill in 1911. The hotel was torn down in 1935. The Abbey Hotel, built in 1911 at 704 S.W. Bay Boulevard, operated until it burned in 1964. It was a three-story wooden building with 45 rooms. George Bahr, the owner in 1964, replaced the hotel with a restaurant-bar called "The Abbey," which was subsequently torn down for a parking lot in 1986. The OCZMA has recognized the site as having historic importance.

Owner: City of Newport.

Current Use: Public parking lot and rest rooms.

Conflicting Use: Yes (zoned for water-related uses).

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: No.

Conclusion: Preservation of neither site is required. A sidewalk marker may be appropriate.

12.) The Grand:

This two and one-half story wooden structure at 618 S.W. Bay Boulevard is one of the oldest structures, if not the oldest, on the Newport waterfront. It was built in 1886 as an

Oddfellows or Masonic Lodge in Olsonville (about a half a mile up the bay from its present location) and was established as a boarding house. It is now known as "Circa 1886," a gift shop. The building has historic significance to the county according to the OCZMA.

Owners: Richard C. Wilton.

Current Use: Gift shop.

Conflicting Use: While the building's location provides much of its historical significance, the designation of the area for water-related uses could pose a conflict. Because the building is one of the city's few historic buildings, its loss would have adverse social consequences. Its preservation would not have an adverse economic impact, as long as the character of the bayfront remains a mix of tourist and water-related uses. No significant energy consequences are likely to occur as a result of the preservation of this building or the identified conflicting uses.

Site of Special Significance: No.

Building of Special Significance: Yes.

Conclusions: The Planning Commission review of alterations or modification of this building will assure maintenance of historic value of the structure. The provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance shall govern any review.

13.) New Cliff House/Gilmore Hotel:

Located on the ocean at the end of N.W. 3rd Street, this hotel was completed in 1913 by W.D. Wheeler. He and Peter Gilmore traded businesses in 1921, Gilmore taking over the hotel and Wheeler taking on Gilmore's chicken ranch outside of town. The Gilmore is the last of the turn-of-the-century oceanfront resort hotels in Newport still standing. Completely restored, it is currently operating as the Sylvia Beach Hotel.

Owner: Sylvia Beach Hotel, Inc.

Current Use: Hotel.

Conflicting Use: No (zoned for tourist commercial).

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Conclusion: The structure is restored. The Planning Commission shall review any future alterations to assure the maintenance of the historic value. Such review shall be consistent with provisions contained in the Zoning Ordinance.

14.) Old Oddfellows Hall:

Located on the southwest corner of S.W. Hurbert Street and U.S. Highway 101, this large wooden frame structure was completed in 1912. Besides the Oddfellows, it has also housed Newport's U.S. Post Office and various retail businesses. A restaurant is currently in operation there.

Owner: Charles Thompson.

Current Use: Restaurant and other retail businesses.

Conflicting Use: Yes. The building has been substantially altered. The area is zoned for retail commercial uses but has a parking problem.

Site of Special Historic Significance: No.

Building of Special Historic Significance: No.

Conclusion: Neither the site nor the building should be preserved.

15.) Scott House:

Located on S.E. Bay Boulevard across from Port Dock 5, this house was built in 1928 by General Ulysses S. Grant McAlexander, a World War I veteran known as the "Rock of Marne." The house was built on the foundation of Dr. James R. Bayley's mansion and has been partially rehabilitated. Since this house is not the original structure and has been altered, it has no special historic significance. The site itself has been significantly altered in anticipation of commercial development.

Owner: Magna Corporation.

Current Use: Restaurant and lounge (Gracie's at Smuggler's Cove).

Conflicting Use: Yes (zoned for high density residential).

Site of Special Historic Significance: No.

Building of Special Historic Significance: No.

Conclusion: The building and the site are not significant and not worth any preservation effort.

16.) Oar House Bed and Breakfast:

The Oar House Bed and Breakfast is located at 520 S.W. 2nd Street. Built in approximately 1900 for Mrs. C.H. Bradshaw as "The Bradshaw," a rooming house, it has functioned in that capacity for 75 of its 88 years. On the corner of S.W. 2nd and S.W. Brook Streets, it is an L-shaped cross-gabled Craftsman style building. Although altered by the addition of some auxiliary structures, wall openings, and room partitions, the building retains most of its original fabric and function. Photographs dated 1907 and 1910 indicate little change to the main structure configuration except for the addition of the cupola in 1981.

Owners: Jan G. LeBrun.

Current Use: Bed and breakfast and residence.

Conflicting Use: No (zoned for high density residential and is developed residentially).

Site of Special Historic Significance: Yes.

Building of Special Historic Significance: No (building has been substantially altered).

Conclusion: The building and site do have the potential to be of special historic significance, but alterations to the building have compromised the historic quality. This site will need to be looked at closer to make a final determination of its significance.

Besides the above sites and structures, the bayfront and the Nye Beach areas are two potential historic districts. No specific study and determination has been made, but the importance of those two areas for their historic significance suggests that the city should explore the possibility of designating them as historic districts.

As for archaeological sites, all of the Newport Planning area falls within the "high density" archaeological site density classification shown in the 1976 Lincoln County Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the state archaeologist has said that areas as far as five miles upstream

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<sup>7</sup> State of Oregon Department of Transportation (Parks and Recreation Division), State of Oregon Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings, 1974.

on all streams and rivers emptying into the ocean are archaeological sensitive areas.

### **Conclusions:**

- 1.) The Newport planning area contains several historic sites and buildings and two potential historic districts.
- 2.) Many of the sites and buildings are worth preserving, whereas some alterations and remodels have destroyed the historic qualities.
- 3.) While there are no conflicting uses among the sites currently listed, the inventory of historical-cultural sites developed thus far does contain several structures that are in precarious physical condition. Those sites may also be subject to a use change that could diminish their historic value.
- 4.) All of the Newport planning area is archaeologically sensitive.

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## **GOALS/POLICIES** **HISTORY**

**Goals:** To maintain and preserve identified historic and cultural resources, to encourage private and public efforts aimed at preservation, to provide public information concerning the city's historic resources, and to provide public access to important historic-cultural sites where appropriate and possible.

Policy 1: The City of Newport shall work with the Lincoln County Historical Society and the State Advisory Committee on historic preservation, as well as with local residents to maintain and update the inventory of historically and culturally significant resources.

Policy 2: The City of Newport shall cooperate with the Lincoln County Historical Society and the Chamber of Commerce in the establishment of historical markers and information to increase awareness of Newport's historic background.

Policy 3: The City of Newport may consider the creation of historic districts, property acquisition, ordinance provisions, tax benefits, and other incentives to facilitate the preservation of an historic area.

Policy 4: The City of Newport shall encourage property owners making alterations to identified historic structures to maintain their historic value. The Planning Commission shall review all proposals for modification or alteration to structures designated in the inventory as having historical significance. In determining whether or not the proposal complies with this policy, the following shall be considered by the Planning Commission in their review:

- (a) Whether or not the proposed use or alteration is compatible with the historic nature of the structure.
- (b) Whether or not the proposed alteration to the exterior of the structure will maintain its historic value.

Policy 5: The bayfront and the Nye Beach areas will be considered for historic district status. The Goal 5 analysis and possible ordinance development will be completed by the next regularly scheduled periodic review.

Policy 6: The City of Newport shall protect Mike Miller Park and allow conflicting uses as outlined in this section.