

8900149

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

JUL 21 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER
Guidelines

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See **NATIONAL REGISTER** Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name HOTEL SAN CLEMENTE
other names/site number SAN CLEMENTE HOTEL

2. Location

street & number 114 AVENIDA DEL MAR N/A not for publication
city, town SAN CLEMENTE N/A vicinity
state CALIFORNIA code CA county ORANGE code 059 zip code 92672

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	N/A buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official *Kathryn Guatieri* Date 7-17-89
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. *Ang Federman* 8/31/89
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls stucco

roof terra cottaother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Hotel San Clemente, constructed in 1927, is a three-story Spanish Colonial Revival hotel building located in the heart of San Clemente's original commercial center. It is the largest and most imposing of the remaining commercial and public buildings which were part of the settlement period. "U"-shaped in design, with a spacious front-facing courtyard, the building features a picturesque offset square bell tower in the northwest corner of the U. The original handmade red clay tiles cover the low-pitched hipped roof and the shed-style roof which shelters the arcade which spans the area above the main entrance at the rear of the courtyard. Rough-textured stucco, over frame construction, covers the exterior. The building's original spaces, including commercial bays on the first floor, the centrally-located lobby and offices, and the tenant living areas are still in use today. The row of 15 arches which form the doorways and windows of the first floor, front facade, are significant character-defining elements. The rectangular volume, red-clay-tile roofs, and square tower add further to the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Multi-paned, metal-framed casement windows form rows along the second and third floors. The arcade, which runs across the front of the second floor, has five rectangular openings which correspond to the five arched openings below. The courtyard has experienced some changes since 1927, but retains its original size, perimeters, and entrances.

The square tower, offers a spectacular view of the Pacific Ocean and San Clemente. Ole Hanson often took prospective buyers and special guests to the tower to show them the beauty of the community. The lobby features heavy concrete columns, topped by Byzantine-influenced capitals, which appear to have been shaped by hand. Heavy carved wooden ceiling beams, the original clay tile floor, and the original wrought iron light fixtures all contribute to the Spanish Colonial character of the interior. Designed to fit into the Spanish Colonial Revival theme of San Clemente, as it was envisioned by founder Ole Hanson, this large hotel is one of the most important historic buildings in the city. It clearly illustrates strong associative context through the architectural style and use of appropriate building materials. The building is in good condition and retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A good example of the philosophy upon which the community was founded, the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture is symbolic of the feeling Hanson wanted to convey: a seaside Mediterranean village. Hanson placed a sign along the Pacific Coast Highway which read "San Clemente, Where Sunshine Spends the Winter".

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Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 2GENERAL PLAN AND ROOF

The U-shaped configuration and large open courtyard of the three-storied 26,368 square-foot Hotel San Clemente are significant design elements appropriate to Spanish Colonial architecture and San Clemente's location along the Pacific Ocean. The roof plan features hipped roofs, running the length (southeast to northwest) of the wings, and ending in gables at the rear of the building. Shed-style roofs slope from each side of the rectangular flat roof at the top of the center section and above the second-story arcade on the front facade. The flat section is rimmed with 4-foot-high stucco-clad walls, and all of the roof sections are clad in handmade red clay tiles. Ole Hanson specified that "any house, building, or structure will be erected or placed upon any said residence or building lots in said tract shall be covered with handmade tile". The tower, accented by large rectangles featuring handpainted Spanish tile, is placed off-center in the otherwise symmetrical plan. Louvered shutters have been placed in the original arched openings. The tower and roof top are still the ideal location from which to view San Clemente, the Pacific Ocean, and the hills which rise dramatically to the east. A large chimney, also capped with red clay tiles, and decorated with inset panels, rises from the corner of the tower. The tower once held a set of bells which could be heard throughout the entire city. In 1985-86, during a campaign called "Bring Back the Bells to San Clemente", the residents raised the funds to reinstall a bell system at the Hotel San Clemente. The bells add much atmosphere to this Mediterranean village by the sea.

FRONT FACADE

The fifteen arches which frame the entrances and plate glass store windows on the first floor are all original. The centered, recessed entrance on the front of each symmetrical wing leads to two shops, running parallel from southeast to northwest. Arched plate glass windows face the street, flanking the entrance, and facing the central courtyard. A row of iron grillwork has been added to one of the store windows.

Originally, the central courtyard was planted in grass and bordered with concrete walks. Spanish-style tiles now cover the ground and a cast concrete fountain, appropriate to the style, has been added in the center. Low stucco-clad walls now reach partway across the courtyard and are attached to the sides of the front-facing wings. Five arched openings along the back of the courtyard lead to the hotel lobby and offices. The second floor arcade features five rectangular openings which are designed to complement the five arched openings below. French doors lead out onto the balcony. Multi-paned metal-framed windows flank the balconies centered in the fronts of the wings of the third floor. French doors in the wing on the east side are original, while the pair in the west wing have been replaced with a plate glass window. Three wrought iron balconies form rows along the front facades of the second floor wings. All once had french doors, now replaced with windows. The one exception is the door in the center of the east wing, which is original. Shutters have been added to the third floor windows. Both large and small multi-paned, metal-framed casement windows face the central courtyard.

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REAR AND SIDE FACADES

Rows of multi-paned, metal-framed casement windows, which match those used on the front, occupy the three-story rear facade. Brown wood shutters have been added to each side of the windows. A round window, in the third floor landing of the staircase and a rectangular window on the second floor are the only elements which break the rhythm of the windows along the three floors. A new door, leading to the lobby, has been added at ground level. Some of the basement windows have been covered over, leaving a row of three at the west end still in use.

INTERIOR

Much of the interior is original, including the red clay tile floor in the entry, lobby, and office space. Heavy concrete columns, with Byzantine-influenced capitals, and heavy carved wooden beams decorate the original lobby. The delicate wrought iron light fixtures are original and most are still in place. An arch, tiles, and pair of ledges on the west wall of the lobby appear to be the remains of a Spanish-style fireplace. The arch is now used as a niche. The offices are located at the rear of the entry hall, behind the lobby. Stairs lead up to the hotel rooms from both the east and west sides of the foyer, in front of the offices. There is an elevator, as well as two sets of stairs, leading to the upper floors. The hotel rooms appear basically as they did in 1927; however, some have had walls removed to create larger apartments.

The Hotel San Clemente, which has changed little since Ole Hanson built it, is one of the most significant Spanish Colonial Revival buildings constructed during the Settlement Period of the planned City of San Clemente. It represents one of the earliest and most successful efforts in city planning. It retains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Community Planning and Development
Exploration/Settlement
Architecture

1927-1933
1927-1933

1927

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Hanson, Ole

Architect/Builder

Hershey, J. Wilmer, Architect
Sears and Westbrook (after death of
Hershey in 1927)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The Hotel San Clemente, one of that city's most prominent landmarks, is (A) illustrative of the broad patterns of the city's settlement and development period, (B) was built by and used by the city's founder, Ole Hanson, during the city's prime development period, and (C) embodies the distinctive characteristics of Spanish Colonial architecture, the design theme which played such a significant role in the visual character and ambience of the community.

Constructed in 1927, soon after San Clemente was founded (November 5, 1925), the building provided a vital service to this city which was in a then-isolated location midway between Los Angeles and San Diego. A centerpiece of the development and sales system, the hotel played host to prospective buyers and visitors who came to see the new city. Ole Hanson often put his prominent Republican friends in the hotel because he had 10 children at home. Hanson would take them to the bell tower to view the new roads, development progress, and the natural beauty of the location. This influenced many buyers to purchase property in the new city. Ole Hanson was a phenomenal man with innovative environmental and community planning concepts. He was not afraid to risk everything he had and was very generous to the community. Not only did his critics scoff at the advanced ideas he put forth, but also some of his friends were most skeptical. They believed that cities could only grow when allowed to follow the whims of the people and economics. The romantic visual character of a white stucco and red-clay-tile-clad Spanish Colonial village on the shores of the Pacific Ocean matched the picture of a village along the Mediterranean. The architect who designed the building, J. Wilmer Hershey, had served as a consultant for the City of Santa Barbara when that area was rebuilt in the 1920s. He not only designed the hotel, but also the public buildings, boulevard shops, and the business and industrial districts. After he died in 1927, Richard Sears and Virgil Westbrook were hired as the lead architects. The Hotel was the largest and one of the most prominent buildings in town and still presents a significant visual impact on visitors to the city, just as it did when San Clemente was being developed and settled.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Kearns, William The San Clemente Story 1976

Banks, Homer The Story of San Clemente, The Spanish Village 1930

Welton, Blythe, Carol Gray, Nina Arcibold Fishcarts to Fiestas 1974

City of San Clemente Building permits

First American Title Company photo file

Interviews with the Hanson family

Sleeper, Jim Shot in Orange County 1980

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

San Clemente City Hall

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one acre

UTM References

A

1	1
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4	4	3	0	4	0
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3	6	9	8	6	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The property in this application includes all of lot 25 in Block 81 of Tract No. 779. The parcel begins 200 ft. southwest of the corner of El Camino Real and Avenida Del Mar. It runs for 120 ft. southwest along Avenida Del Mar, turning northwest for 90 ft., then turning northeast 120 ft.; turning back to the point of origin (southeast for 90 ft.).

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the property are also the boundaries of the hotel, including the central front-facing courtyard. The boundaries are the historic boundaries and encompass the three lots which were combined to create the property on which the hotel was built.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diann Marsh

organization _____ date September 2, 1988

street & number 321 East Eighth Street telephone (714) 541-2441

city or town Santa Ana, CA state CA zip code 92701

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The Hotel San Clemente is an imposing and significant landmark, visually related to the broad patterns of the city's development and settlement period (November 1925-1933). It is illustrative of the city's original Spanish Colonial Revival architectural theme. That settlement period is the only pre-1950's development period, due primarily to the Great Depression of the 1930s, which brought building to a virtual standstill. The hotel retains a substantial amount of its original integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is the only remaining hotel from the settlement period and still serves in that capacity. The view from the bell tower is still, as it was in Ole Hanson's day, spectacular and inspiring.

San Clemente had one other settlement period hotel, The Prado, a single-storied Spanish Colonial Revival building constructed to house the workers who were building the city. It was demolished several years ago. The Administration Building, 1/2 block from the hotel is still standing. The Beach Club and City Yard also survive, but have been substantially altered. The Beach Club has had aluminum windows installed and the City Yard has been made into a shopping plaza. There are two large Spanish Colonial homes still surviving. One, the Casa Romantica, was Ole Hanson's home and the other served as the Western White House when Richard Nixon was president. It is still a private home. There are several small Spanish Colonial homes sprinkled throughout the old section of the city. The other commercial buildings have either been altered or demolished. The Hotel San Clemente presents a visual impact while driving down Avenida Del Mar because of its size and character-defining Spanish Colonial appearance.

SAN CLEMENTE HISTORY

The City of San Clemente was built on virgin land, stretching five miles along the Pacific Ocean and covering 1/2 to 1 mile between the Ocean and Pacific Coast Highway. Once part of the Rancho Los Desechos, granted to Filipe Carrillo in 1846, the land passed into the hands of the Forster family in the late 1870s. Cornelio Echenique and Max and Herman Goldschmidt acquired the land in 1906. Echenique used the land where the city eventually was built to pasture his cows. In 1919 a syndicate, headed by Hamilton Cotton, purchased the land. The millionaire Cotton was a friend of Ole Hanson's and had been associated with him in several financial ventures. Hanson had seen the land several years before, while traveling through the area by train, and was most enthusiastic about the location and view. Hanson purchased the land from the syndicate in 1925. The Los Angeles Examiner, on November 8, 1925, announced: "Completing one of the largest purchases of land in the Southland in recent months, Ole Hanson, subdivider and town builder, yesterday announced the founding of a new city to be

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known as San Clemente, the Spanish village. The site for the new town comprises 2,000 acres between the State Highway and the ocean 6 miles below the Mission San Juan Capistrano. Extensive plans for development were worked out while the purchase of the property was negotiated, according to Mr. Hanson, and are now being carried out. Grading work is being done on the streets to be laid out to fit the natural contour of the most perfect town site and construction is about to be started on the restaurant and offices which will be the first building. Within a few years, according to the announcement, work will be started on a clubhouse, residences, store buildings, a park and bridle trails. The purchase of 2,000 acres followed a lengthy search by Mr. Hanson for a property suitable for the town he has been planning for years; a village done in the fashion of old Spain".

Hanson's friends and critics were skeptical of his plans to create a planned city and even more concerned about the location so far from any large city or town. He was far more interested in creating the ideal environment for successful living than he was in making a profit. He was a generous man who gave the streets, sewer system, 3,000 feet of beach, a community clubhouse, a beach club with an Olympic-sized swimming pool, a fishing and pleasure pier, a park, a nine-hole golf course, eighteen miles of bridal paths, a municipal water reservoir, the Las Palmas Elementary School, tennis courts, and a baseball diamond. When San Clemente became a city on February 21, 1928, he deeded the above improvements to the city for a token payment of \$1.00.

All deeds included a clause whereby plans must be submitted to an architectural review board for approval, and that all the buildings must be of Spanish architecture and clad in white stucco with handmade red clay tile roofs. Because Hanson saw the site as the future home for 50,000 people, the streets and improvements were designed to realize that vision. Never becoming discouraged, even when the Orange County Board of Supervisors refused to accept his street map, Hanson filed a surveyor's map, making himself owner of the streets until the city was incorporated in 1928. The grand opening day was December 6, 1925. Before the day was out, Hanson, with his fervor, facts, and visionary personality, had sold over \$125,000 in property. The hotel, the centerpiece of the commercial sector, was formally opened in November of 1927. J. Wilmer Hershey, well-known for the Spanish Colonial buildings he had designed in Santa Barbara, was Hanson's main architect and designed the hotel. After he died in 1927, the team of Richard Sears and Virgil Westbrook became the supervising architects. In 1927, building permits in the amount of \$714,000 were issued; 1928 records show \$958,000 in permits; building permits exceeded \$1,000,000 in 1929. Ole Hanson deeded the hotel to his son, Bob, who ran it for several years. Ole Hanson was deeply in debt, and as a result of the Depression, lost everything. He moved to Los Angeles where he lived until he died of a heart attack in 1940.

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Ole Hanson, the builder of San Clemente, brought with him a rich and varied background when he purchased the land on which he would develop the city. Born in Racine, Wisconsin, he was a teacher, lawyer, and merchant before coming to Seattle in 1902. He founded a real estate empire in that city and launched a campaign against gambling and vice. Rising in Republican circles, he served in the Washington State Legislature. He was a friend of Theodore Roosevelt and became an internationally-known lecturer defending Americanism against Bolshevism. Hanson lost his real estate fortune after WWI. Soon after, he lost another fortune in the oil market. Moving to Los Angeles, he went into real estate development. In 1912, he had refused Teddy Roosevelt's offer of the vice-presidential nomination and in 1919 lost the Republican nomination to Warren G. Harding. In the files at First American Title Company, there are photos of Ole Hanson with Teddy Roosevelt and with movie star, Marie Dressler.

Ole Hanson wrote the following passages to a friend:

"I vision a place where people can live together more pleasantly than any other place in America. I am going to build a beautiful city on the ocean where the whole city will be a park; the architecture will be of one type, and the houses will be located on sites where nearly everyone will have his view preserved forever. The whole picture is very clear before me. I can see hundreds of white walled homes bonneted with red tile, with trees, shrubs, hedges of hibiscus, palms and geraniums lining the drives and a profusion of flowers illuminating the patios and gardens. I can see gay walks of red Spanish tile and streets curving picturesquely over the land. I want plazas, playgrounds, schools, clubs, swimming pools, a golf course, a fishing pier, and a beach enlivened with people getting a healthy joy out of life.

I want people to have more than a piece of land; I want them to have location, environment, development. I feel that my past success in real estate will assure them of future prosperity here, and I feel that by giving people a chance to live intelligently and artistically I may possibly influence other builders to help. I do not want people to be repulsed and sent away by ugliness in San Clemente as they have been by ugliness in other communities (unless they have been forced to remain and hammered into their ugly moulds). This will be a place where a man can breathe! I have a clean canvas and I am determined to paint a clean picture. Think of it--a canvas five miles long and one half a mile wide!"

The Hotel San Clemente is one of the finest settlement period buildings in the city. It was the centerpiece for the downtown commercial center. Its Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, attention to detailing and quality construction are representative of the philosophy of Ole Hanson, San Clemente's founder.

