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# United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service $0 \mbox{HP}$

## National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms* Type all entries—complete applicable sections

## 1. Name

historic REDONDO BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY

and/or common

2. Loca	tion							
street & number	309 Esplana	ide 54	•				not for pub	lication
city, town	Redondo Bea	ach	vici	nity of	congression	al district	27	
state	California	code	06	county	Los Angel	es	code	037
3. Clas	sificatio	n						
Category district X building(s) structure site object	Ownership _X public private both Public Acquisiti in process being conside		tatus X occupie unoccu work in ccessible X yes: res yes: un no	pied progress stricted	Present U agricul comme educat enterta govern industa militar	lture ercial ional ninment nment rial	museur park private religiou scientif transpo _X other:	residence Is lic prtation
4. Own	er of Pro	perty	1					
name	City of Red	ondo Beac	ch					
street & number	415 Diamond	Street						
city, town	Redondo Bead	ch	vici	nity of		state	California	90277
5. Loca	tion of L	.egal	Desc	criptio	on			
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc.	City Ha City of	all F Redondo	Beach				
street & number		415 Dia	amond Sti	reet				
city, town		Redondo	Beach			state	Californi	a 90277
6. Repr	esentati	on in	Exis	ting	Survey	S		
title the Red	best of our kr ondo Beach Pub	lic Libr	- <del>a i y</del> -	nas this pro	perty been dete	ermined el	egible? y	es no
	listed in any xisting survey				federai	stat	e county	loca
depository for su	rvey records							

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## 7. Description

Condition	
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		Alleck Alle
excellent	deteriorated	unaltered
X_ good	ruins	_X_ altered
fair	unexposed	

Check one \_\_X\_ original site \_\_\_\_ moved date \_

#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Check one

Situated in Veterans Park, the Redondo Beach Public Library is located by the seashore on the Esplanade. Because of its location, an excellent view of the ocean, the Redondo Beach Pier-Harbor Area, and Palos Verdes Peninsula can be seen from the third story of the library building. While the rear section of the building faces the west and the ocean, the entrance to the library faces the east and the library opens its doors to Veterans Park.

Built in 1930, the library is part of the Spanish Colonial Revival (1915-1941). However, it also has some important Dutch Colonial elements. The stucco surface, arched doorway and windows, decorative ironwork on small windows, and red tile roof are some of the Spanish features. Two straight-edged Dutch gables with elbows straddle the north and south wings of the main part of the building and a Dutch stair-stepped false gable is the parapet at the building's entrance.

Focusing more specifically, the doorway is actually of classical origin. The columns and lintel are Greek, while the arch is a Roman feature. The various floral and leaf decorations around the door and swirling patterns on the steps of the stair-stepped gable are made of pre-cast, pre-fabricated terra cotta. A tiny lion is on the keystone above the door and an escutcheon (shield) with the building's date on it is at the top of the stair-stepped gable. Ceramic tiles above the door identify the building as a "Public Library". Two small recessed rectangular arched windows, each capped with a protruding keystone, flank the door.

Constructed of brick covered by a stucco surface, the library has an unusual overall floor plan. At mid-level, the main part of the building is thirty-six feet wide and one hundred and four feet long, while the rear section is thirty-five feet wide and eighty feet long. (See Diagram.)

At mid-level, the main part of the building is broken into three sections: a center section and two flanking wings (north and south) of equal size and heighth. The wings each have a large arched window recession filled with a rectangular window, capturing views of the park. At the front of the building, the wings possess three large arched windows. Inside, two sets of arches separate the center section from its wings. Also, the center section rises above its wings to a height of sixteen feet. Seen from the inside, a skylight, white ceiling, and series of dark wooden beams with ornamental brackets distinguish that center section.

The rear section of the building has three stories: a ground level, mid-level, and top level. The ceiling of that top level also has a skylight and is joined together with the ceiling of that very tall center section of the main part of the building. All of the ceilings are white and are made of stucco over metal lath.

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CONTINUATION SHEET ONE ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

Covered by Cordova red tile, the roof structure is trussed and partially gabled. The floor of the building sits on four inch by eight inch girders sitting on two foot by two foot concrete pads sitting ten feet one inch apart. Over eleven inches thick, the bearing wall is punctured by a total of forty-seven windows and four doors. A huge window system in the west wall of the rear section takes advantage of the ocean setting.

Minor alterations, which have not affected the integrity of the building, have taken place. The inside of the building has been altered through additions and removals of walls, light fixtures, and tile ceilings. Changes which commonly occur to public buildings. During 1957 - 58, the ground level of the library was remodeled. An aluminum door assembly was installed in the north wall of the rear section and the windows next to that door were enlarged. On the outside, a roof was built over this entrance. In 1958 - 59, the library was again altered on the interior and the exterior. The light well on the top level of the rear section of the building was floored over. The wood and glass doors at the main entrance and interior doors in the vestibule were removed; the front entrance doors were replaced with an aluminum door assembly. New flourescent lights were added in the foyer and a decorative modern fixture installed in the vestibule. In 1971, beams were installed on the ground level to reinforce the upstairs' floors. Also, some of the crawl space on the ground level was heightened to standing level that year. Essentially, the building is much the same as it was originally and its structural integrity has not been affected by the alterations.

A unique setting for a library in Southern California, Veterans Park is five acres of meandering walks, lots of green open space and a variety of trees and plants. Standing next to the library is a huge Moreton Bay fig tree of at least ninety years, while two banana trees stand at its entrance. Indian Laurel and Rustyleaf figs, different types of palms, several varieties of Melaleuca laetum, as well as rubber plants and Myoporum shrubs are also part of the landscape. Some of the palm and Melaleuca Laetum trees are over thirty years old. The Sketch Map shows the sites of some of the trees, while the key to Sketch Map lists their botanical names. In general, the trees give the park a sense of time and place.

Included in Veterans Park are a number of structures and activity areas. The structures and areas are: an outdoor amphitheater with bandshell, senior citizens' building, children's playground, shuffleboard courts, and picnic tables (behind the library). The senior citizens' building (1957) is a thirty-eight by sixty-four foot rectangular wood frame building with plastered walls on the inside and stucco on the outside.

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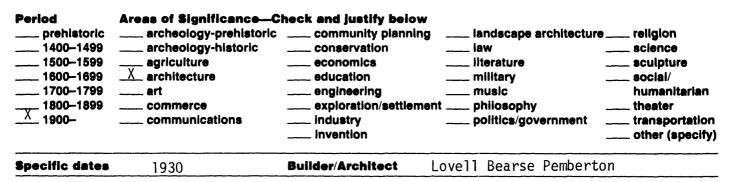
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Near the children's playground is a circular path with flagpole, which was installed when the park, formerly City Park (1923), was re-named Veterans Park in 1968. Outside of and adjacent to the park is the Elks Club and its parking lot.

Outside of the park, toward the northeast corner, is an area which belongs to the Redevelopment Agency. It contains a parking lot and a small concrete block storage shed.

## 8. Significance



#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Architecturally, the Redondo Beach Public Library is a fine example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style with some important Dutch Colonial features. The successful combination of these styles makes the library an unusual building. Also to be noted is the very fine classical doorway as well as the leaf and floral decorations, which adorn it. Another unusual aspect of the library is its setting in a park and overlooking the ocean. Very few libraries are specifically sited in parks. The library takes advantage of its location to attract people. Finally, the Redondo Beach Public Library is significant, because of its historic associations with an earlier Redondo Beach, the Redondo Beach of the turn of the century through the 1920s. Today, in Redondo Beach, no significant public or commercial buildings are still standing from that era.

#### Biographical Sketch of the Architect

A man of many talents, Lovell Bearse Pemberton was the designer of the Redondo Beach Public Library. Pemberton was born on November 25, 1866 near Bethal in Clermont County, Ohio. He graduated from Clermont Academy, Clermontiville, Ohio in 1884. During his life, Pemberton pursued a number of occupations and vocations, in addition to that of architect, namely, teacher, bookkeeper, electrician, mechanic, railroad department head, inventor, owner of a literary and society weekly, poet, playwright, and opera composer. It was his position with the Topeka Municipal Light Works that brought him to California in 1890, when a syndicate of the company bought one of the Los Angeles street car lines. Once in California, Pemberton held a number of responsible positions with various railroads and electric companys including: General Electric Co., Los Angeles Pacific Railway, Santa Barbara Consolidated Electric Co., and Los Angeles and Redondo (Beach) Railway.

Pemberton's architectural career began in 1909 and the principal buildings designed by him were: the Ainsworth residence, Los Angeles, J. L. Adams' residence, Hollywood, Marshall Building for W. M. Garland, Redondo Beach, Farmers and Merchants National Bank, Redondo Beach, Central Grammar School, Redondo Beach, Hermosa Beach Grammar School, Hermosa Beach and Redondo Beach Public Library. Although there are similarities in his designs, Pemberton was basically an eclectic designer. In other fields, his most important achievements were: a luxurious street car known as the "Mermaid", a book of poetry called "Sappho and Other Songs", a lyrical drama called "Prometheus Unbound", a five-act tragedy named "Life and Death of Joan of Arc", and two operas: "Mardi Gras" and "Nawab".

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

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state	n Prepar	code	county			code
name/title organization street & number	City of Redon Department of	nderson, Ad Ido Beach <sup>-</sup> Intergover	ministrative	<u>Coord</u>	inator (Pri 2/13/80	372-1171
	415 Diamond S					
12. Stat	Redondo Beach	بالالبطوية بالاستيمي المعربهي	onvotio	state	Californ	
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i ne evaluated sign	ificance of this prop	state				
665), I hereby nom according to the ci	State Historic Prese inate this property f iteria and procedure ervation Officer sig	or inclusion in t es set forth by t /	he National Regis	ster and o servation	ertify that it h and Recreatio	t of 1966 (Public Law 8 as been evaluated n Service.
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#### Historical Significance

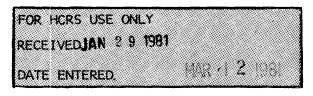
Today, amidst the condominiums and modern apartment buildings, the Redondo Beach Public Library and Veterans Park are the only linkages to an earlier, "grander" era in Redondo Beach history. In fact, they form the focal point of that history.

Once considered an up-and-coming resort/paradise and potential harbor for Los Angeles, Redondo Beach was an important port-of-call between San Diego and San Francisco. The Redondo Beach shoreline was the site of a variety of activities, attractions, and entertainments around the turn of the century through the 1920s. For the well-heeled, there was the luxurious Hotel Redondo (1870), similar to the Hotel Coronado, with its rose garden and magnificent exotic grounds. (Today, Veterans Park is located where the Hotel Redondo once stood along with its grounds.) For those of more moderate means, a tent city complete with gas and electric lights was stationed on part of the hotel grounds. (Again, the site of Veterans Park today.) A number of impressive structures lined the shoreline in those days, such as: a roller coaster, salt water plunge, and dancing pavillion. Additionally, a huge auditorium stood on the hotel grounds, which was also used for dancing. Some of these structures were quite impressive in size and design qualities. Daily visitors had access to the beach and shops of downtown Redondo Beach via the popular Red Car -- the first rapid transit system in the South Bay area. The Los Angeles and Redondo Railway had a station where the Elks Club stands today adjacent to Veterans Park.

By the end of the 1930s, the area that was originally the downtown section of Redondo Beach had fallen into decline due to a number of factors. The city had lost its oil shipping business to El Segundo, prohibition had been instrumental in closing down the hotel, which was demolished in 1925, the Red Car was being replaced by the automobile, and although the amusements continued, gambling had become the predominate amusement (in the 1930s).

Today the park is important because it is the only open space to remain in what was originally the downtown area of the city in the 1920s and 1930s. Urban renewal projects in the 1960s, eliminated the remaining old structures and King Harbor was constructed. As it was in the 1920s, the park has continued to be a favorite spot for official picnics and events of either a local or a regional nature and for visitors from all over the Los Angeles metropolitan area, who come to the park in order to barbecue in close proximity to the beach.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



CONTINUATION SHEET	four	ITEM NUMBER	8	PAGE	2	
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Except for the fact that the basement of the library was used for a USO headquarters during the second world war and shortly after that, for a toy loan program, neither the library nor the park has been used for any unusual purposes.

Because the park has undergone many changes since its inception and because further changes, such as a road-widening project along Harbor Drive, are anticipated, the park is not included in the nomination. The various structures and activity areas (see Description) inside and outside of the park, except for the library, are of no architectural or historical significance. UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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#### Resource Persons

Architecture

John A. Held, City Engineer Melvin E. Layne, Building Inspector UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET Seven

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 3

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#### History

Patricia A. Dreizler, Director of Community Resources William R. Poole, Senior Librarian Marilyn L. Hurd, Senior Librarian Ken Johnson, Deputy Director of County Department of Beaches, Author: City of Redondo Beach's Official History Book.

#### Landscaping

Benton F. Hobbs, Director of General Services Robert B. Atkinson, Director of Parks and Recreation Kenneth D. Dyer, Superintendent of Parks Georgia C. Petrie, Librarian Raymond L. Koke, Park's Supervisor

#### Maps

Ray T. Christensen, Associate Civil Engineer Roberto A. Olmos-Arreola, Planning Draftsperson

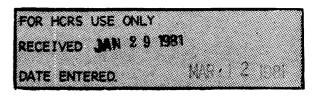
Photography

Pat Monteleone, Photographer

Technical Assistance

Paul M. Connally, Planning Associate

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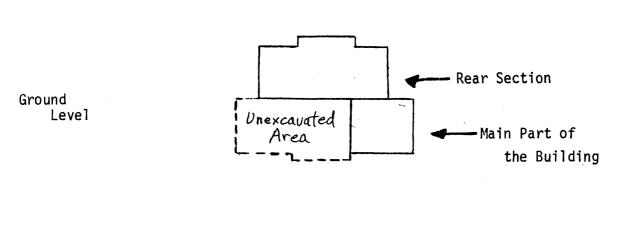


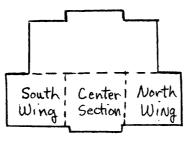
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The boundary line around the Library site consists of a series of interconnected straight lines. The southeast corner of the Library site is located 345 feet North of the centerline of Pearl Street and 495 feet west of the centerline of Catalina Avenue. The boundary line of the Library site begins at a point (A) 79 feet east and 73 feet south of the southeast corner of the Library. From this point the boundary lines runs west 154 feet to Point B. Then it turns 217 feet north to Point C, east 290 feet to Point D and then diagonally back to the point of origin, Point A. The boundary line also includes a 22 square feet area which includes one of the oldest Melalueca styphelioides trees in the area. This addition area is south and west of Point A. See accompany sketch plan.

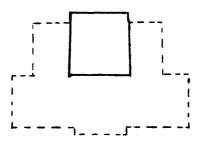
Boundary lines for this nomination have been drawn to include that portion of Veterans Park affording the historically most accurate setting for the Library, which is the principal focus of the nomination. It includes most park vegetation dating to the period of Library construction. While the City of Redondo Beach expects to maintain the Library in a sympathetic and appropriate landscape, it does anticipate some possible intrusion into portions of Veterans Park through necessary street-widening and other public works undertakings.

### DIAGRAM





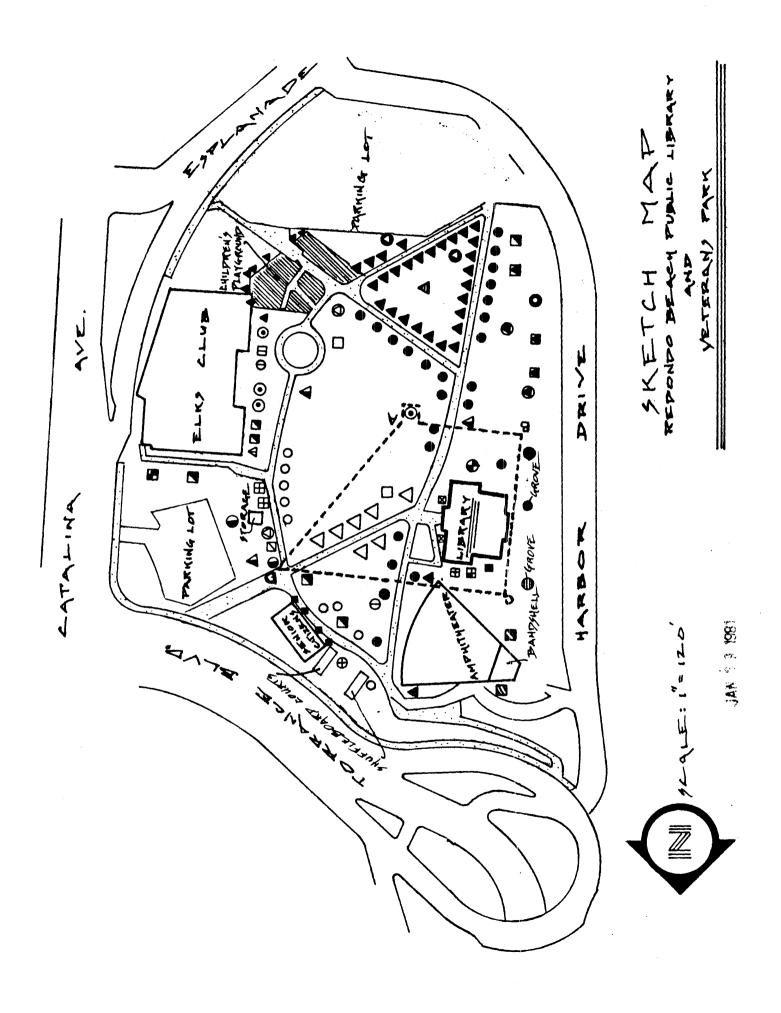
Mid-level





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KEY TO SKETCH MAP

Symbols indicate tree types:

- = Myoporum laetum
- GROVE= Grove of Nyoporum laetums

- $\square$  = Bamboo
- 🔚 = Chamaerops humilis (Meditterranean Fan Palm)
- ☐ ♥ Cordyline australis
- ▲ = Dracaena draco (Dragon)
- Eucalyptus polyanthemos (Silver Dollar Gum)
- 🗖 = Erythea edulis (Guadalupe Palm)
- ▲ = Ficus elastica (Rubber Plant)
- Ficus macrophylla (Moreton Bay Fig)
- 🖾 = Ficus retusa nitida (Indian Laurel Fig)
- 🕘 = Ficus rubiginosa (Rusty leaf Fig)
- ∆= Ilex altaclarenis 'Wilsonii' (Wilson Holly)
- 🖪 = Juniperus chinensis "Torulosa' (Hollywood Juniper)
- 🚳 = Ligustrum japonicum 'Texanum' (Texas Privet)
- $\bigoplus$  = Melaleuca leucadendron (White Paperback)
- $\bigcirc$  = Melaleuca nesophila (Pink Melaleuca)

- = Melaleuca styphelioides
- ()= Metrosideros excelsa (New Zealand Christmas)
- $\square = Musa$ (Banana)
  - = Myoporum laetum
- A = 0lea europaea (01ive)
- Phoenix canariensis **(**) = (Canary Island Palm)
- = Pinus Species
- Pittosporum tobira
- Podocarpus macrophyllus ~ (Yew Pine)
- Schinus terebinthifolius (Brazilian Pepper)
- **Ø** = Strelitzia nicolai Giant Bird of Paradise)
- **()**= Ulmus parvifolia (Chinese Evergreen Elm)
- ▲ = Washingtonia robusta (Mexican Fan Palm)

Mes

 $\Delta$  = Yucca Species