

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 71000160

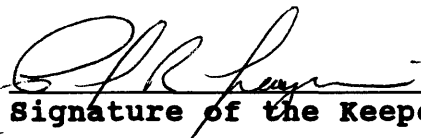
Date Listed: 8/19/94

Banning, General Phineas, Residence
(Additional Documentation)
Property Name

Los Angeles CA
County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

8/19/94
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Level of Significance:

The significance justified by the current documentation is at the state level.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

PH 0065277

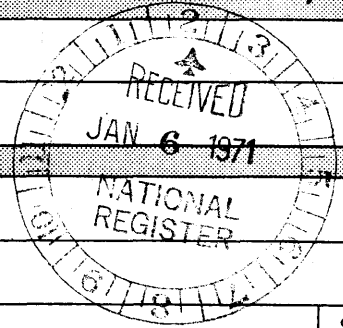
Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California	
COUNTY: Los Angeles	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71.5.06.0033	DATE 5/6/71



1. NAME

COMMON:
Banning ~~Home~~ House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
The Gen Phineas Banning Residence

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
401 East M Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Wilmington

STATE: **California** CODE: **06** COUNTY: **Los Angeles** CODE: **037**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
City of Los Angeles - Parks and Recreation Department

STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall - 200 N. Spring Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Los Angeles** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Hall of Records

STREET AND NUMBER:
220 N. Broadway

CITY OR TOWN: **Los Angeles** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
California Historic Landmarks Advisory Committee

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Department of Parks and Recreation

STREET AND NUMBER:
1416 9th Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Sacramento** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **California**

COUNTY: **Los Angeles**

ENTRY NUMBER: **71.5.06.0033**

DATE: **5/6/71**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

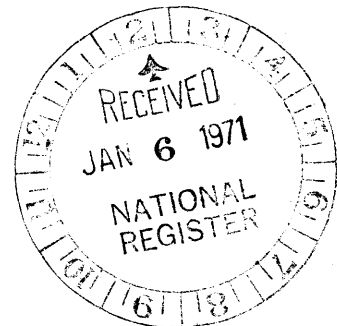
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Large Victorian Style two story frame building - containing 30 rooms built circa 1863-1864 by General Phineas Banning, founder of the town of Wilmington. The building today is in good condition, is furnished, and open to the public. It occupies its original site, and has good environmental surroundings. It is State Historical Landmark # 147. Original grounds maintained as Banning Park.

Plan dimensions are approximately 50' x 107'. In addition to the first and second floors, there is a spacious attic making a third story and a full basement. The entire structure is wood, and the basement is so well constructed that in the 116 years since it was completed (1864-1970) there has been remarkably little deterioration. The interiors are high-ceilinged; most of the rooms have fireplaces. The gabled and shingled roof is surmounted with a cupola. The attic alone contains four rooms, a hallway and two large storage areas. The basement contains a 46' x 56' ballroom, a refreshment room, and several household service rooms. Exterior basement walls are of stone. Ceilings and walls are plastered throughout.

Bounded on the north by Pacific Highway, on the east by Elbank Avenue, on the south by M Street, on the west by the first street west of Banning Boulevard, being about 1200 feet along Pacific Highway by about 750 feet in depth.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

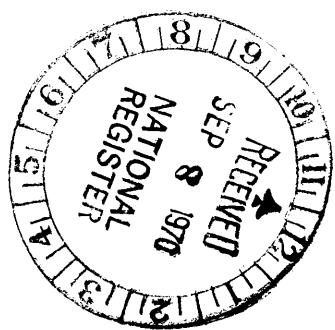
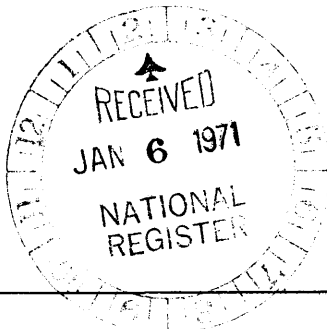
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

General Phineas Banning, founder of Wilmington and called "the father of Los Angeles Transportation" was general in the local militia during the Civil War. The development of the Los Angeles Harbor Area was in large part due to Banning. The Banning Home was built circa 1863-1864 and was far and away the largest and most impressive structure built in the harbor district.

It is interesting to note that the Banning Home was built during the Civil War when labor was scarce. Historical accounts say that Banning would greet ships when they came into port and persuade shipwrights from the many clipper ships to spend their shore leaves working on the construction of his mansion.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Historic Site in California - Rensch and Hoover

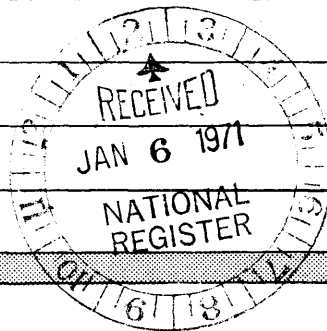
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	33°	47'	20"	118°	15'	30"			
NE	33°	47'	30"	118°	15'	19"			
SE	33°	47'	22"	118°	15'	18"			
SW	33°	47'	20"	118°	15'	32"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **20. ACRES - APPROX - (TWENTY A.)**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Allen W. Welts**

ORGANIZATION: **Department of Parks and Recreation** DATE: **6/29/70**

STREET AND NUMBER: **1416 9th Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Los Angeles** STATE: **California** CODE: **06**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *Allen W. Welts*

Title State Liaison Officer

Date August 3, 1970

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest A. Casanovi
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date MAY 6 1971

ATTEST:
William M. Montez
Keeper of The National Register

Date APR 19 1971

SEE INSTRUCTIONS
NW 11/37460/3739550
SE 11/373800/3739310
SW 11/373420/3739290

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748

RECEIVED

National Register of Historic Places APR 11 1994
Registration Form

ONP

Los Angeles County, California

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

RECEIVED
JUL 5 1994

historic name Banning, General Phineas, Residence

other names/site number Banning Residence Museum; Banning Park

NATIONAL REGISTER

2. Location

street & number 401 East M Street

not for publication N/A

city or town Wilmington

vicinity

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 90744

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

California Office of Historic Preservation
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register.

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):

Additional Documentation

[Signature]

8/19/94

Banning Residence
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
0	6	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register**

2

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

TRADE: Business

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD: Weatherboard

roof OTHER: Composition

other Chimneys: BRICK

Trim & Decorative Elements: WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Banning Residence
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

MARITIME HISTORY

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1864-1885

Significant Dates

1864

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Banning, General Phineas

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

Banning Residence Museum

Banning Residence
Name of Property

Los Angeles, CA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property 20.6 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

11	383410	3739540
Zone	Easting	Northing

2

11	383780	3739580
Zone	Easting	Northing

3

11	383790	3739330
Zone	Easting	Northing

4

11	383440	3739300
Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David G. Cameron/Portia Lee, Consultants

organization Friends of Banning Park date November 11, 1993

street & number P.O. Box 397 telephone 310-548-7777

city or town Wilmington state CA zip code 90748

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, Banning Park

street & number 401 E. M Street telephone 310-548-7777

city or town Wilmington state CA zip code 90744

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet****BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California**Section number 7 Page 1**General Phineas Banning Residence
Los Angeles County, California****Narrative Description**

The General Phineas Banning Residence consists of a 23 room house built in 1864 in the Greek Revival style. The Residence is set in 20 acres of parkland and gardens. The property is located in the Wilmington District of the city of Los Angeles, California. Since 1927 the Department of Recreation and Parks of the City of Los Angeles has managed the buildings and gardens, and now does so in cooperation with the Friends of Banning Park, a private, non-profit foundation.

The Banning Residence is a 3 1/2 story plus cupola, wood frame, front gable structure on a raised brick foundation. Cladding is lapped wood siding. The composition roof carries five brick chimneys and a square gabled cupola with shuttered double-hung windows, overhanging eaves, straight lintels above the lights and slip sills below. A pair of similar smaller, square, shuttered lights is placed in the gable peak whose ends form a classical triangular pediment with incised crown molding, applied bed molding and a plain architrave. The four bay front (south) elevation features a two-story balconied porch with square columns in the Roman Doric vernacular style.

On the upper story, paired French doors with transoms and hood molds flank a center door with engaged pilasters and stained glass transom and side lights. Similar French doors are symmetrically placed on the first story balcony whose wide center door has a more elaborate hood, a divided lunette fanlight and 3/4 side lights. A multi-paned glass wall closes the ends of the 2nd story porch; a shorter woven wood screen has a similar purpose on the ends of the first floor porch. A grade level balustrade with square support posts extends along the west side of the house. Fenestration on this elevation is irregular in shape and placement, but consists generally of double-hung lights with quarter mullions. Their shutters, hood moldings and slip sills mirror those on the cupola lights.

A screened door on the rear (north) elevation is approached by a shallow flight of stairs leading to a recessed entrance formed by the addition of two service wings. The northwest wing presents a three-story vertical facade whose gabled eaves have a boxed return. Here three sets of paired double-hung windows with quarter mullions have incised hood moldings and wide surrounds. A narrow wood course delineates the story heights. At the northeast corner the gabled addition has overhanging eaves and a louvered vent. Fenestration varies in size shape and placement. A door opens onto a small wide-rail porch which is approached by a flight of wood steps. Visible behind these additions is the gable peak of the original rear elevation on which appears a pair of shuttered lights like those on the front elevation.

A Victorian cast iron fence with cornstalk and morning glory motifs and prominent pineapple finials runs along the east elevation with its sunken terrace. A descending flight of stairs leads to the extensive brick-paved courtyard. On the north end of this elevation which is faced with stone and brick, small arched windows appear to have been cemented in. An eight panel door with a divided fanlight is set into a

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
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Los Angeles County, California

Section number 7 Page 2

round-arched brick entryway. Along side of it, a ramp affords handicapped access. Further to the south, the main entry door is recessed behind a classical entablature with a wide, plain frieze and paired, engaged square Roman Doric columns set on square plinths.

Extent of Alterations

Although there have been some modifications over time, the Banning Residence is relatively unaltered since its construction and appears little changed from an 1873 photograph. The front, or south elevation, has had window alterations and the insertions of French doors in the position of the original windows. The basement, rear and side wings have also been modified and added over time. However, these changes were made by the Banning family as successive generations lived in the house and may themselves be considered historic. There have been no substantial changes since 1927.

Interior changes have been generally limited to modernization of kitchen and bathrooms and have not substantially affected the historic arrangement of rooms. Some documentary evidence on the furnishings and other house purchases is contained in the Banning and Company collection at the Huntington Library in San Marino and is utilized in making restoration decisions. Restoration work to date has been generally limited to surfaces and building maintenance and has been sensitive to the structure's historicity.

Other buildings on the property: In addition to the residence, there is a contributing coach house. In addition, there are six non-contributing buildings built after the period of significance and used in connection with the park -- pump house, two restrooms, 2 recreation buildings and a stone storage building. While these buildings are numerous, they do not detract from the overall historic feeling of the property.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California

Section number 8 Page 3

General Phineas Banning Residence
Los Angeles County, California

Summary Statement

The General Phineas Banning Residence is a structure built in California in 1864 that demonstrates the role a seminal figure in the history of Southern California played in the building of the nation. Several historic themes show Phineas Banning's national vision: his creation and development of the port of Los Angeles as a gateway for international commerce; his part in the establishment of a transcontinental railroad system; his accomplishments as a Union supporter in holding California for the Federal side during the Civil War, and finally his untiring efforts as a community builder - an Easterner who imposed Yankee values and cultural norms on the commerce, architecture and politics of the pre-existing social order of Hispanic California. The Banning Residence served as a focus for these activities. Banning's choice of Greek Revival architecture, regarded as the first genuinely American architectural style, connects California frontier life with the politics, democratic idealism and enterprise that informed the national temper in the period, 1830-1885.

Phineas Banning, Patriot and Community Builder

Community Building and Commerce in Southern California: 1851-1885

Phineas Banning was born at Oak Hill Farm, near Wilmington, Delaware, in 1830. His grandfather, a Revolutionary War patriot, had been a member of the First Electoral College of the United States. Phineas was the ninth of eleven children of his father, a gentlemen farmer and graduate of Princeton College. After working in Philadelphia, the second largest port in the United States, Banning set out for California in 1851 by way of the Isthmus of Panama, in the employ of a goods trader. Immediately on arriving in Southern California he began working for the freighting firm of Douglass and Sanford, hauling freight and passengers between San Pedro and Los Angeles. Banning prospered, later becoming a member, then partner, in the firm of Alexander and Banning. By 1853 the firm was running fifteen wagons and seventy mules between the harbor and the pueblo of Los Angeles in fierce competition with other freighters.

In 1854, Banning's brother-in-law William Sanford, pioneer settler Benjamin Davis (Don Benito) Wilson, and associates John Gately Downey, Joseph Lancaster Brent and Henry Myles, bought 2,400 acres of the Dominguez Rancho San Pedro - land bordering the Pacific that extended several miles inland - so that Banning could establish a town, wharf and warehouses on a site that was less hilly than that at the existing port, and 6 miles closer to the Pueblo of Los Angeles. On October 1, 1858, Banning's dream was a reality and the new landing was formally opened with an elaborate celebration. Originally called New San Pedro, the town was later renamed Wilmington in honor of Banning's home town in Delaware. In

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California

Section number 8 Page 4

1855 the Banning firm established stage and freight routes to the Mormon community of San Bernardino, then expanded the route to Salt Lake City, Utah, providing a link between the religious settlement and its California colony.

Even as Wilmington flourished in the late 1850s, Banning's business activities reflected the growing national crisis. Tensions arising between North and South began to be felt in Southern California. Banning announced himself to be firmly pro-Union and anti-slavery. When the Federal government chose Southern California as the center for Union army supplies in the Southwest, Banning and Benito Wilson donated sixty acres as the site for Fort Drum. Winfield Scott Hancock, for whom Banning named his youngest son, came to Los Angeles to establish the Army Quartermaster Corps of the Southwest. In 1859 the Banning firm received the contract to haul supplies to Fort Yuma, just across the Colorado River, and was a contractor for the telegraph line between Los Angeles and Wilmington which lessened the isolation of the Southern California port.

California During the Civil War

As the clouds of Civil War gathered, Phineas Banning cast his lot with the recently established, anti-slavery Republican Party. A majority of Southern Californians, however, were Democrats, sympathetic to the South and, if not actually pro-slavery, opposed to interference with its "peculiar institution." California as a whole voted for the Republican Abraham Lincoln for President in 1860, but Southern California did not. Fortunately, the Drum Barracks, under construction during 1861, rendered improbable the chances of a pro-Southern rebellion in the Los Angeles area. Despite the local hostility and the numerical majority of Southern sympathizers, Banning organized a pro-Union celebration and flag-raising on May 25, 1861. He was a featured speaker at the small Fourth of July gathering of Union supporters that year.

Later in the war years, Banning canvassed for funds in support of the National Sanitary Commission, a relief organization formed in Washington to assist wounded Union soldiers and their families. When Republican Frederick Low succeeded Banning's associate, Democrat John G. Downey, as Governor of California, Banning was appointed Brigadier General, commanding the First Brigade of the California State Militia; it was, however, never ordered into active service. Banning, a California delegate-at-large at the convention that renominated Abraham Lincoln, took the lead in organizing and speaking at rallies in support of Lincoln's re-election. Los Angeles County went for Lincoln, aided by the votes of Army men at Drum Barracks. Because there was a majority of Union supporters in Northern California, Phineas Banning's successful attempts to overwhelm Southern sympathy and Secessionist sentiments in Southern California were critical in keeping the State for the Union side in the Civil War.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California

Section number 8 Page 5

National Transportation Networks: 1853 - 1885

Railroads: the Los Angeles and San Pedro Railroad

In 1864, based on his experience with Eastern ports, Banning recognized the need for technologically advanced transportation facilities. He publicly proposed a railroad from Los Angeles to Wilmington. The following year he was a successful candidate for State Senator, so as to be able to promote this goal. In 1866, his railroad bill was unsuccessful, but his bill authorizing local governments to support a Los Angeles and San Pedro railroad was enacted in early 1868. Early in the year the Los Angeles County electorate approved issuance of bonds for the railroad, and the Los Angeles and San Pedro Railroad was organized, with Banning owner of a majority of the stock. Ground was broken on September 19, 1868, and the line opened on October 29, 1869. With plans conceived and carried out by Phineas Banning, the Los Angeles and San Pedro became Southern California's first railroad, radically enhancing the Wilmington/San Pedro port area as it developed into a nationally important shipping hub.

Railroads: the Southern Pacific

During 1872, one of the great issues in Los Angeles was whether the Southern Pacific's main line from San Francisco Bay to Texas would be routed through Los Angeles. In that year, following a campaign in which Banning took a leading role, the voters of Los Angeles approved a subsidy (authorized by a State law for which Banning, as a member of the state Senate, and his allies had fought) to the SP to insure this routing. Included in the deal was control of the Los Angeles and San Pedro Railroad. Banning's affiliation with the SP's "Big Four," Charles Crocker, Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford and Mark Hopkins, now became closer. In the mid-'70s he acted as their confidential agent to acquire the right-of-way for their main line through Arizona and New Mexico, securing local support and lobbying the Arizona Territorial Legislatures. When Los Angeles took its place on the Southern Pacific main line being constructed southward from San Francisco, Banning was one of the speakers at the ceremony celebrating the completion of the line on September 5, 1876. Phineas Banning's support for the SP was a significant factor in the successful struggle to place Los Angeles on its main line, a decision which saved the town from a permanent role as an agricultural backwater, the "Queen of the Cow Counties."

The Los Angeles Harbor at San Pedro and Wilmington

Banning's commercial operations at San Pedro and, later Wilmington, depended on the location's suitability as a harbor. Unfortunately, with its sand bars, mud flats and shallow channels, the site was not a natural harbor like San Diego on the south, or San Francisco on the north. Money needed to be spent in substantial amounts for channel dredging and breakwater construction, and the Federal government was the only realistic source of the required funds. After years of lobbying by Banning and his associates,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California

Section number 8 Page 6

Congress appropriated the first funds in 1871 for a one-mile breakwater from Rattlesnake (now Terminal) Island to Dead Man's Island. Further appropriations followed: \$75,000 in 1872 and \$150,000 in 1873, with Banning again active in the lobbying. Dredging work followed the breakwater construction. In 1875, Senator John P. Jones' development of Santa Monica and its railroad as a rival to San Pedro and Wilmington caused the Federal appropriation to taper off, and it was not until 1881 that appropriations again were as much as \$100,000. The Federal policy was to keep an 18 foot channel dredged through the harbor to Wilmington. This early breakwater and dredging work formed the foundation of the great Los Angeles Harbor projects of the end of the century, a work which can be traced directly to the vision and nation-building goals of Phineas Banning.

Historic Architectural Significance - Banning Residence

Architectural Analysis

The Banning Residence was lived in by three generations of the Banning family until it and the surrounding land were acquired by the City of Los Angeles in 1927. Eighteen rooms of the house containing furniture and decorative elements added during 60 years of Banning family residence in the house are shown to the public during regular tours of the house and grounds. Recognition of the residence as an historic landmark was a major motivation for this public acquisition.

The house was built in 1864 at the close of the Civil War. Many family papers were lost in a fire in 1946 and there is little documentation to indicate the exact details of the structure's construction. No records indicate the name of any known builder or architect. The structure's stylistic details recall many Greek Revival houses in the Northeast that would be familiar to Banning from his boyhood. However, skilled craftsmen were available throughout California at this time and redwood lumber and brick would have been relatively easy for Banning to procure through his lumber yard and freighting and shipping activities.

A Historic Structure Report commissioned for the house in 1992 noted the similarities in construction between the Banning Residence and the Drum Barracks for which Phineas Banning was the contractor. Extended study of the house, however, convinced these architects that both the Drum Barracks and the Banning Residence must have had the direction of someone very experienced with architecture and must have been constructed by workmen with previous experience in the building of major structures, since the work was carefully executed and is still sound after 130 years of continued use.

Greek Revival Style

The American Revolution brought about cultural as well as political liberation from England, which was no longer regarded, except in extremely conservative circles, as the arbiter of taste and style in the arts. Led by the architecture and writings of Thomas Jefferson, Americans turned to the inspiration of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748

Los Angeles County, California

Section number 8 Page 7

classical world which they conceived to be the cradle of intellectual freedom and liberty. Architectural historian Talbot Hamlin calls the Greek Revival "a style of extraordinary richness:

rooted alike in the culture of its place and time and in the physical needs of the climate and the building materials used. It was founded upon the work of at least three generations of craftsmen, each improving upon its predecessor in skill, imagination and resources.

The Banning Residence, built in 1864, comes close to the end of the flowering of the Greek Revival style. However, it shares most of its characteristic elements: two to three stories, symmetrical plan; doors of glass and windows with transoms; wide entablature and a two-storied balconied porch with square columns. The roof carries the characteristic cupola often seen in large Greek Revival residences.

Evaluation - National Register Criteria - National Level of Significance

General Phineas Banning Residence appears to meet the National Register and National Historic Landmark criteria as a building which possesses exceptional value in illustrating and interpreting the heritage of the United States in history, culture and architecture. It retains integrity of location although the setting has changed from that of a country estate to a city parkland; its design is essentially original; both exterior and interior modifications over time have been made with concern for retaining the spirit of the original house and its workmanship. The house now functions as a museum containing some original furnishings, Phineas Banning's personal artifacts, and papers, and materials from Banning's descendants. The house's association with its original builder and his family has been retained since construction in 1864.

Criteria of significance - Historic contexts

Within the context of National Transportation Networks - 1855 -1880, the Banning Residence appears to meet the requirements of Criterion A, "association with events that have made a significant contribution to, or outstandingly represent, the broad national patterns of United States history, and from which an understanding and appreciation of those patterns may be gained." The Banning Residence was the focus of Phineas Banning's activities as he received, on a personal and professional basis, persons who joined with him in the following activities:

1) a freight-forwarding and stagecoaching operation that extended throughout Southern California facilitating silver and gold mining operations, agricultural production, colonization and settlement of Southern California communities. Banning and Company's freighting activities extended to Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, carrying mail and supplies. Extremely important were Phineas Banning's connections to the United States Army, and his company kept open the supply lines to Fort Yuma during the Civil War. In addition Banning operated harbor steamers carrying freight

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748

Los Angeles County, California

Section number 8 Page 8

and passengers to the coastal steamers bound for San Francisco.

2) Phineas Banning's role in the development of Los Angeles as an international port has long been recognized. It was his vision and untiring efforts in harbor improvement and expansion that transformed a sleepy agricultural pueblo with an open roadstead exposed to winds on three sides to a metropolitan port city whose commerce extended worldwide. Banning made many trips to Washington to secure federal aid for port projects, persuading Washington that such activities were for the betterment of the nation as well as the state.

3) Banning was the chief contractor and promoter for the first local railroad, the Los Angeles and San Pedro. However, his ultimate goal was to link California with the nation through the establishment of a transcontinental railroad. To bring this about he began to move in the legislative arena, becoming a State Senator himself and promoting the candidacy of other progressive politicians for national office. Banning's decision to cast his lot with the "Big Four" of the Southern Pacific was important to the ultimate success of that line in California.

Within the context, Phineas Banning, Patriot and Community Builder, the Banning Residence appears to meet the requirements of Criterion B, "important association with lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States." The Banning house, coachhouse and gardens were constructed under Phineas Banning's direct supervision, and as his primary residence and home office from 1864 until his death in 1885, reflect the man and his life. His patriotism showed not only his Northeastern background, but also his moral determination to stand against Southern California public opinion during the Civil War.

Phineas Banning is the embodiment of that legendary American figure, the paradigmatic Yankee west-seeking pioneer. He founded the town of Wilmington on land that was generally thought worthless, and proceeded to drain, fill and make it habitable. He developed a water system for the community, cultivated many new strains of grain and fruits, established the first local oil exploration company, and helped to found a local church. Historian Oliver Vickery states, "Banning was never backward in taking a giant step forward." In addition to his business and city-building interests, he must be credited with a crucial role in keeping California in the Union. In preparation for war, he donated land and promoted the building of Drum Barracks, essential to maintaining the Federal presence during the conflict. Operating against the majority Secessionist sentiment, he held rallies, Fourth of July celebrations, and bought the press of the Los Angeles Star in order to print a local paper, The Wilmington Journal, so that a strong pro-Union voice could be heard.

Within the context of the Greek Revival country house in Southern California, the Banning Residence appears to meet the requirements of Criterion C, Design/Construction, "embodying the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction..." The house represents the imposition on the California landscape of a national style that is widely held to be the first indigenous American architectural style. Greek Revival elements represented to American designers and builders of the period the freedom of thought, rationality and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California

Section number 8 Page 9

democratic ideals of government they wished to graft onto the American political landscape. The Banning Residence is the most imposing exemplar of the form built in Southern California, which lacked the public Greek Revival buildings that were familiar in Washington, D.C. and New York.

Banning Park - California Registered Historical Landmark # 147

On January 11, 1935, Banning Park was officially made a California Registered Historical Landmark. The document provides an excellent record of the life and accomplishments of Phineas Banning, and offers a history of the land acquisition by the City of Wilmington through a district bond issue. The nomination and extant newspaper articles also note the important part played by the Women's Clubs of Southern California and the El Camino Real Association in securing the land for the Park Department. Today the Banning Residence Museum is an institution whose programs include public tours, demonstrations, garden seminars, lecture series and a research library open to scholars.

Since 1935, additional research on the house and the life and times of Phineas Banning, together with the information being uncovered through ongoing house restoration, appears to warrant the upgrading of the designation of the house from a National Register property significant at the state level to one with the necessary qualifications to meet the stringent standards of National Landmark status. From his ground floor office in the house, and through the social events and meetings in its parlor, dining room and ballroom, General Banning created the transportation and freighting networks that were crucial to the development of Southern California and the Arizona Territory. His influence in the development of the harbor, rail and telegraph facilities that linked Southern California to the eastern United States and the port cities of the world is manifested in the size and splendor of the house that he built and designed in a style that was virtually non-existent elsewhere in Southern California, a style whose nationalistic overtones reinforced his outspoken patriotism and Yankee entrepreneurial spirit. While it seems clear from the vantage point of the late 20th century that Los Angeles and Southern California were emerging from the Pueblo period of their Hispanic forbearers to become an American city, Banning and the influential men he gathered around him engineered that transition. His activities set the pattern for the settlers, fortune seekers, and city makers that came after him into territory that his efforts had cast into an American mold.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California

Section number 9 Page 10

General Phineas Banning Residence
Los Angeles County, California

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

BANNING RESIDENCE MUSEUM
L.A. CITY RECREATION AND PARKS DEPT.
P.O. BOX 397
WILMINGTON, CA 90748
Los Angeles County, California

Section number 9.10 Page 11

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Bounded on the north by Pacific Highway, on the east by Eubank Avenue, on the south by M Street, on the west by Lahkme, being about 1200 feet along Pacific Highway by about 750 feet in depth.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated area is all that remains of the historic property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____ Photo Log _____

For all photos:

Date of photo: Feb., 1994
Photographer: Dale Berman
Negative 401 W. M Street
Wilmington, CA 90744

Views:

1. South side of exterior
2. Exterior, southwest
3. Exterior, east
4. Exterior, west
5. Exterior, north

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Banning House Los Angeles County CALIFORNIA 71000160

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

 8/19/94