

*WOODLAWN GATEHOUSE ENTRY, 1904, Woodlawn Memorial Park. The Gatehouse is said to have the highest artistic value of any like building in Colma or possibly the State.*

## **HISTORICAL RESOURCES ELEMENT**

### **5.08.000 INTRODUCTION**

#### **5.08.010 PURPOSE**

The Town of Colma has a unique history among California cities. Although it has been an important center, at various times, for agriculture and floriculture, it is truly unique because of its cemeteries that incorporated as a town in 1924 and now comprise nearly three-quarters of the land area within the Town limits. Buildings, monuments and residences associated with the cemeteries are among the most prominent historical resources in Town. The purpose of this Historical Resources Element is to identify historic sites and buildings in Colma and to set forth programs for their protection.

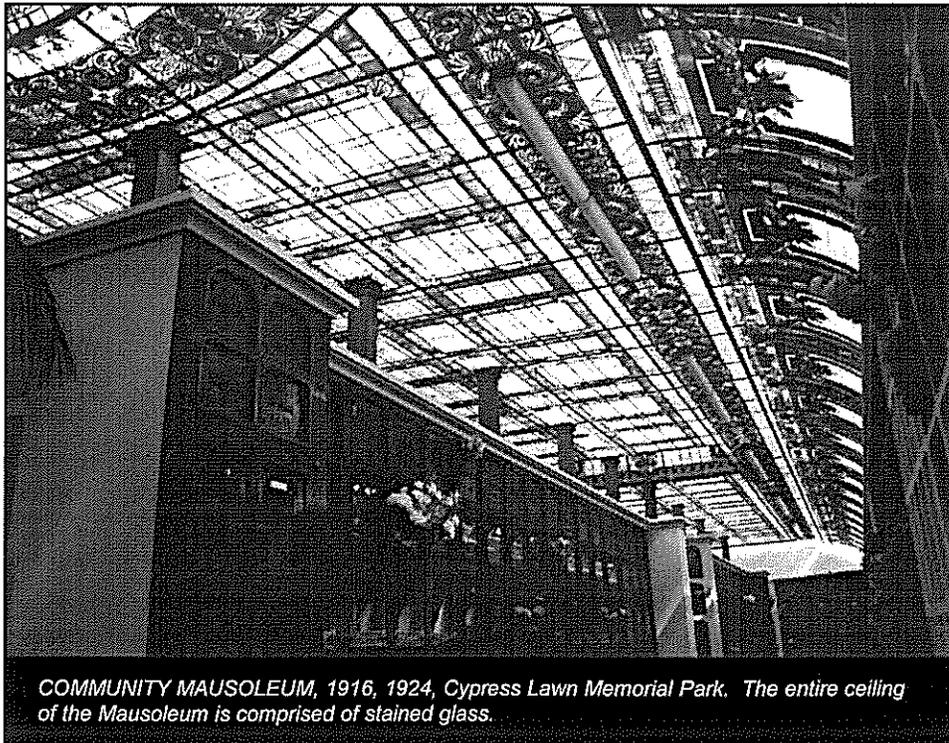
#### **5.08.020 AUTHORIZATION**

The California Government Code allows the development of optional General Plan Elements. The Code, Section 65303(J), permits the

inclusion of an Historical Resources Element for the identification, establishment, and protection of sites and structures of architectural, historical, archaeological and cultural significance, including significant trees, hedgerows and other plant materials.

#### **5.08.030 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS**

The Historical Resources Element is related to all of the other General Plan Elements. The Town's historic buildings, sites and districts can be affected by encroaching land uses, by natural hazards such as earthquakes, and by roads and transit facilities. The most extensive existing and established land use in Colma are the memorial parks and associated uses. The Land Use Element addresses compatibility between memorial parks and proposed future development. The Open Space Element recognizes dedicated cemetery lands as permanently unavailable for urban development. The Housing Element works within the framework set by the Land Use and Open Space Elements. The Safety Element strives to protect against natural hazards.



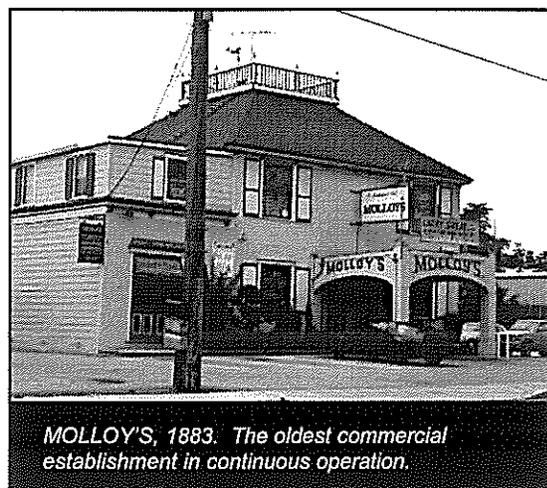
*COMMUNITY MAUSOLEUM, 1916, 1924, Cypress Lawn Memorial Park. The entire ceiling of the Mausoleum is comprised of stained glass.*

#### 5.08.040 PAST PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Recognizing its uniqueness the Town of Colma commissioned an historic resources inventory in December 1992. The Colma Historic Resources Inventory identifies and describes numerous buildings and sites having significance of local, State and National importance. A small sample of the Town's notable historic resources includes Cypress Lawn Memorial Park which is a virtual museum of architecture and art, being one of the last grand rural cemeteries built in the west. The Cypress Lawn Community Mausoleum covers four and one-half acres and represents one of the finest collections of stained glass in the United States with work by Tiffany, Connick and Lamb. Cypress Lawn has established a program to restore all of the stained glass window and ceiling panels. A restoration studio and technical staff are located at 1791 Old Mission Road.

The Holy Cross Gateway/Lodge is one of only a few examples of the Richardson Romanesque architectural style in San Mateo County and is the oldest remaining building ensemble of Colma's first cemetery; Woodlawn's Gatehouse

is considered to possess the highest artistic value of any like architectural feature in Colma or possibly in the State of California. Other historic commercial or residential buildings include: Molloy's, the Town's oldest commercial establishment in continuous operation since 1883; L. Bocci Monuments Shop which was established in 1904 and is still in operation; and, the Ottoboni residence at 417 F Street where Colma's floriculture industry began. All of the Town's historic resources are summarized in Section 5.08.100.



*MOLLOY'S, 1883. The oldest commercial establishment in continuous operation.*

Grass roots interest in Historic Preservation by Town residents resulted in the formation of a Chartered Historic Association several years ago. The Colma Historical Association has begun a museum with collections of relics and information from the past. The Association will play a key role in the Town's historic preservation efforts.

The Town recently acquired the Old Colma Railroad Station, built in 1881, which was threatened to be demolished; by the construction of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) facilities. The Station, formerly known as the School House Station, played a key role in the development of Northern San Mateo County as it was where farmers and teamsters stopped on their way to San Francisco; where the area's first school was built and around which businesses were established. The Station's architectural style is rare in the Bay Area and is one of the last surviving examples of early station houses. The Station will be restored for the Colma Historical Association to house its offices and museum.

The Town has attempted to preserve its open space and park-like greenbelt character by adopting certain development constraints. One regulation requires a 30 foot landscape setback from El Camino Real and another requires a 15

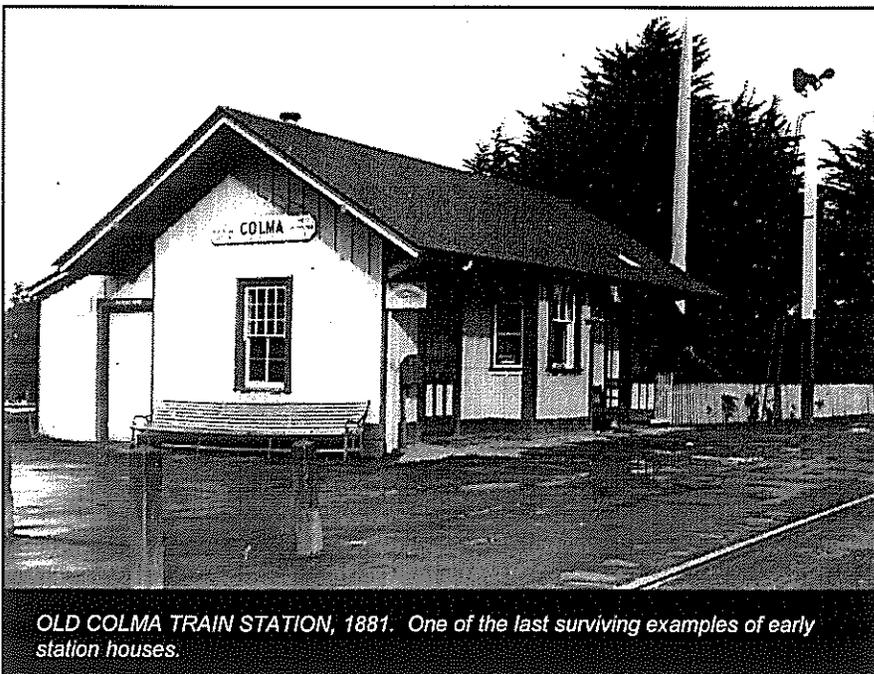
foot setback from Colma Creek. A Tree Ordinance preserves and protects trees in the Town, some of which are well over 100 years old. The Land Use Element requires that buildings on the El Camino Real corridor utilize a Spanish Eclectic architectural style incorporating tile roofs, wrought iron, stucco exterior and colors complementary to the Colma Town Hall building built in 1937.

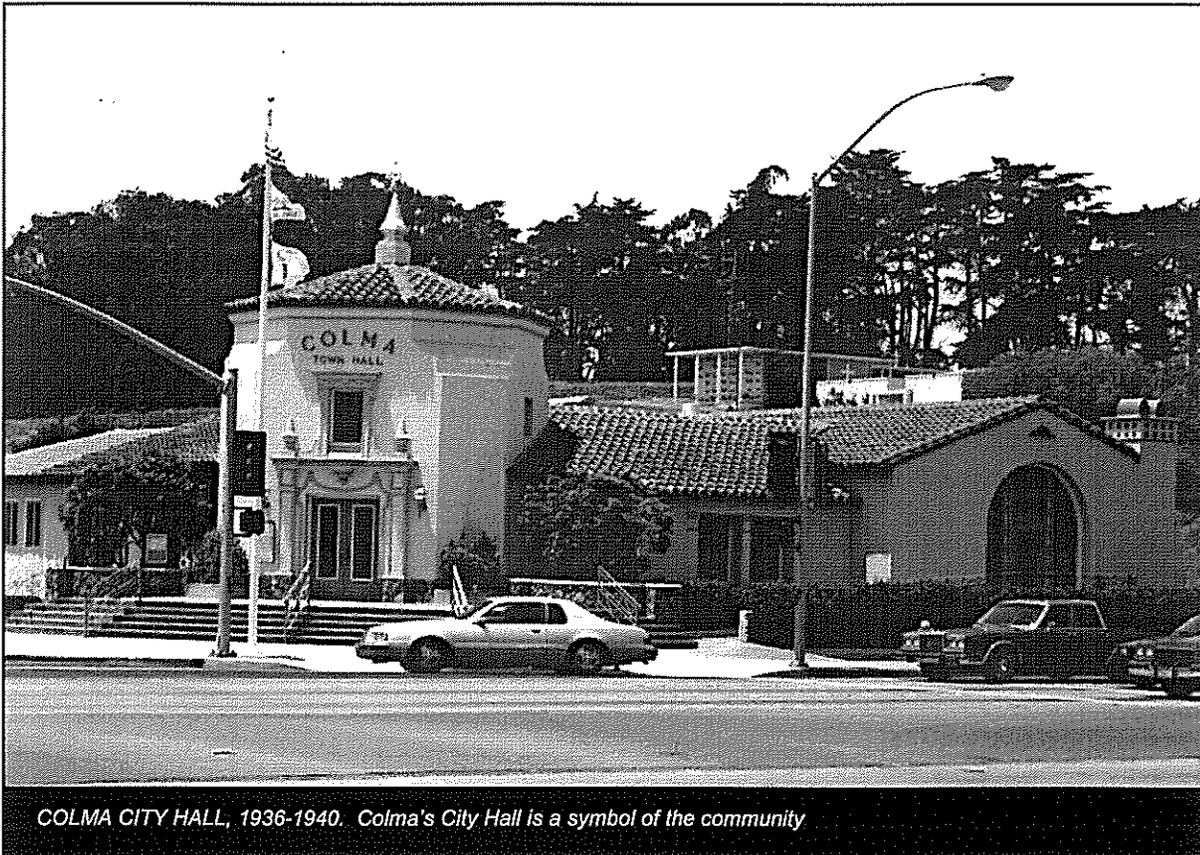
#### **5.08.050 FUTURE HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

In the interest of preserving Colma's historic resources the Town must look for ways to both promote and protect their historic resources. Numerous historic buildings have been lost to the pressures of development. The Town must find ways in its day-to-day operation to prevent other historic resources from being lost. Three such efforts are described below.

##### **5.08.051 Historic Resource Registration**

One of the basic steps that should be taken to protect historical resources is for the Town of Colma to formally adopt a list of historical resources and to seek their inclusion on national and state registers subject to the consent of the property owners. Procedures for nomination to national and state registers are described in Section 5.08.140.





#### **5.08.052 Historic Route and Signage**

In an effort to preserve the Town's historic resources the public should be informed and educated about Colma's historic buildings, monuments, mausoleums and sites. One way to do this is to establish an easy to follow historic route leading motorists and pedestrians past some of Colma's key historical sites. Knowledge about the Town's historic resources will increase the public's appreciation and support for historic preservation efforts. An informed public will build a constituency which is necessary to promote and ensure a successful Historic Preservation Program.

The historic route diagrammed on Figure HR-1 identifies 20 properties with a variety of historic resources including seven historic districts, numerous residences from different eras, several offices and commercial establishments, cemetery buildings, mausoleums and the Colma Town Hall. The historic route map and a short description of the sites should be prepared in brochure form and made available at City Hall,

the Colma Historical Association offices, local libraries and schools, the future Town Community Center, and at relevant Town events. Special signs with a distinctive color and lettering should be installed to facilitate and inform the public about the Historic Route.

#### **5.08.053 Historic Commons**

Only a few of Colma's historic residences remain. Many were lost during expansion of the commercial areas. To ensure that none of the remaining buildings are lost, the Town should establish protected historic districts or seek a site where threatened historic buildings can be relocated and restored for residential, office or commercial use. If a relocation site is found it should be developed and promoted as an Historic Commons. Depending on the use of these buildings and their location, the Historic Commons could be included on the Historic Route described above or showcased at community events to illustrate different restoration techniques.

