



View of the Lake Norconian Club Casino with historic hotel in background.

NAVAL WEAPONS STATION SEAL BEACH DETACHMENT NORCO CULTURAL RESOURCES – SMALL INSTALLATION 2019

The Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach (NWSSB) Detachment Norco (Det. Norco) is located in the City of Norco, Riverside County, California, about 40 miles southeast of Los Angeles. The City of Norco is a small town with great pride in its history of which the Navy has played an important role. The 247-acre installation is bounded on the north by a state-run rehabilitation center and the south by the Riverside Community College. Det. Norco provides shore based infrastructure support for the primary mission tenant, Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC), Corona Division.

THE MISSION of NSWC, Corona Division is to *serve warfighters and program managers as the Navy's independent assessment agent throughout systems' lifecycles by gauging the Navy's warfighting capability of weapons and integrated combat systems*. This mission requires a wide range of high technology laboratories that perform assessment of weapons systems' performance, readiness, quality, supportability, and the adequacy of training. The NSWC Corona Division employs 1,586 personnel, and CNIC has 25 personnel on-site with additional support from the parent command located at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach. Naval Facilities (NAVFAC) Public Works Department (PWD) Seal Beach provides facilities and cultural resources management.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

The Lake Norconian Club Historic District encompasses a significant portion of the base including seven buildings and structures, the 50-acre lake and surrounding landscape which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The centerpiece of the District is a former luxurious 1928 hotel resort complex currently owned by the State of California and operated as a prison. During World War II, the resort buildings were sold to the U.S. Navy and functioned as a naval hospital for wounded servicemen. A hospital complex, referred to as Unit II, was added to the hospital between 1943 and 1945. When the hospital permanently closed in 1957, Unit II was converted to weapons research, development, testing, & evaluation laboratories. This area is currently referred to as the “inner compound” and houses most of the NSWC Corona Division laboratories and mission operations.

Recent archaeological surveys have been completed for about 80% of the installation and have determined that no significant archaeological resources exist on base. The focus of the Cultural Resources Program is therefore centered around the historic district and its associated elements.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

GOALS: The command goals for the Cultural Resources Program at Det. Norco center around preservation and enhancement of the historic district while improving mission capabilities.

- Goal 1 - Promote Facilities Development and Modernization in support of the military mission.
- Goal 2 - Preserve existing historic elements of the property and seek opportunities for enhancement.
- Goal 3 - Develop long lasting cooperative relationships with interested parties.

Full compliance with the spirit and intent of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) including the Section 106 consultation process are the bedrocks of our Cultural Resources Program

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: During the past two years accomplishments have been realized through process improvements to the internal facilities planning and external consultation procedures and included:

- Expansion of mission laboratories and engineering spaces into rehabilitated historic buildings.
- Reduced planning and design cycle time by including the Cultural Resources Manager (CRM) on the planning and design teams.
- Increased outreach to interested parties through quarterly meetings and project site-walks.

CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT TEAM

NAVY: The Installation Commanding Officer (CO) provides strategic direction to the Navy’s Cultural Resources Management Team - a collaborative partnership between the host and tenant commands and NAVFAC Public Works Department. The Installation Environmental Program Director (IEPD) and the CRM provide program management. The tenant command, NSWC, Corona Division, funds facilities maintenance and performs initial planning. Senior leadership of both tenant and host commands hold monthly Customer Advisory Board (CAB) meetings. On a weekly basis the PWO, IEPD and CRM collaborate with tenant and facilities planners and keep the CO abreast of stakeholder concerns.

INTERESTED PARTIES primarily include the City of Norco and the Lake Norconian Club Foundation. Stakeholder “Section 106” meetings are held quarterly with the City and other participants. Project collaboration meetings and site walks are conducted as needed and are on-going.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND IMPROVEMENTS

The installation **Environmental Management System (EMS)** is used to effectively administer environmental aspects and drive continual improvement. NWSSB and NSWC Corona Division have one of the only joint Navy EMS programs which ensures collaborative management of cultural resources. The command made cultural resource management a top priority when cultural resources was placed on the EMS list of “significant aspects.”

The **Environmental Aspects and Requirements Review (EARR) Process** is the centerpiece of the EMS that enables integration of all environmental concerns into NAVFAC project planning, design and construction including historic properties aspects and requirements. The EARR process is administered using a locally developed MS Access data management tool that schedules and tracks projects and consultations in addition to generating NEPA Record of Category Exclusion documentation. The data system has been shared with other installations and is being reviewed by Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center as a best-in-class tool for installation level management of the project review and NEPA process.

PROCESS INNOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS made during the past two years include:

- **Cultural Resources are considered in all PWD project phases:** The CRM is represented on the Work Induction and Project Review Boards and execution planning team. **Result:** SHPO consultation timeline is now incorporated into initial project schedule and then tracked by CRM to meet PW execution targets.
- **Earlier review of projects:** Projects are now inducted to the CRM and entered into the EARR database at the time planning is initiated. **Result:** A preliminary review and “Consultation Execution Plan” is provided to planners and used to develop project documentation and concept studies.
- **Enhanced Collaboration between CRM and PW and tenant planners:** The CRM initiated monthly coordination meetings to review upcoming projects for next 5 years including site selection.

These practical innovations have greatly increased engagement of the CRM throughout all project stages. Projects now move forward to execution more easily and are fully compliant with NHPA standards.

DRIVING CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT: A new best management practice was initiated to perform CR program reviews taking an EMS approach. The annual reviews exceed Navy internal audit requirements by evaluating the effectiveness of the management processes and progress toward improvement objectives and targets. The reviews are conducted in conjunction with the Regional CRM and with Subject Matter Expert (SME) participation. An annual strategic planning brief is provided to the installation Commanding Officer. Benefits:

- Command level cultural resources goals and strategies are set and progress reviewed.
- Regional SMEs provide valuable input for program improvements and future support.
- Management effectiveness is evaluated and improved through the use of EMS principles.

SHPO ENGAGEMENT: The installation initiated annual meetings with the State Historic Preservation Officers’ (SHPO) staff to provide an overview of our Navy programs, Section 106 processes, and project plans for the coming year. In 2018 the meeting was held at the SHPO office in Sacramento and in past years SHPO staff have visited the installation and met with Navy facilities managers and community representatives to discuss historic preservation and upcoming projects. These meetings have helped forge a closer working relationship and given SHPO staff a fuller understanding of the installation’s mission and cultural resources program including our robust Section 106 process and interaction with community stakeholders.

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN FOR MISSION REUSE OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES

REDUCED COST, SHORTENED TIMELINE AND ENHANCED MISSION SUPPORT

THE NSWC MISSION is growing and modernization is urgently needed in order to support emerging weapons technologies and fleet operational demands. In order for NSWC to support the demand, additional laboratory space is needed and funding for new construction is difficult to obtain. While historic properties were available, they were dilapidated and ill-suited to support modern technical equipment and components used in the Navy's modern fleet. The standard design process would have adversely affected characteristics of the historic structures and required a costly environmental assessment and lengthy negotiations with the SHPO to develop a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). In addition, the project timeline would have been delayed.

A NEW COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP was facilitated by the CRM to bring planners and designers together from NAVFAC and the tenant command to form an integrated historic facilities team.

GOAL: Deliver modernized facilities to support the NSWC mission and the Navy's Pacific Fleet.

To do this the team accomplished 4 supporting objectives:

- Minimized adverse effects to historic properties;
- Avoided protracted negotiations for an MOA with SHPO;
- Eliminated the need for a costly NEPA Environmental Assessment, and;
- Used limited funding more wisely to deliver renovated facilities.

FROM GAS STATION TO HIGH TECH LABORATORY – BUILDING 204

PILOT PROJECT: The team's first project was to convert a historic building into a modern laboratory. The structure, built in 1928, is a historic district contributing element and functioned as a gas station and maintenance buildings for the historic hotel. The new project team approach helped to redirect funds away from environmental studies and toward a sensitive design for adaptive reuse, thereby avoiding adverse effects.

INNOVATIVE TEAM APPROACH: Facilities requirements and early designs were developed in conjunction with the CRM to ensure that modifications could be completed while retaining the historic fabric of the building. A full renovation of this building was completed to provide new laboratory facilities without compromising essential property characteristics. The gas station façade is now home to a conference facility and the garage areas were converted to high tech laboratories.



Building 204 view of the old gas station

RESULTS: Saved over \$100,000 in environmental studies and reduced project timeline 12 – 18 months. The collaborative approach built trust both internally and with external stakeholders.

TRANSFERABILITY: The lessons learned from the pilot project have been normalized into the NSWC and NAVFAC facilities planning processes and may be easily duplicated.

MAID'S QUARTERS TO SUPPORT MODERN MISSION – BUILDING 209

FACILITY ANALYSIS CONCEPT DESIGN (FACD) PROCESS: In order to support NSWC Corona Division's requirement for additional office and collaborative space, NAVFAC personnel are in the process of planning for the reuse of an abandoned hotel-era Maid and Chauffer's Quarters, located inside the historic district. A FACD was commissioned to refine and integrate mission requirements with historic properties design considerations. The vision of the FACD is to "design a modern facility that supports flexible collaboration and innovation while preserving the historic context."

The integrated planning/design team commissioned a FACD to address historic elements into the design and ensure adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The schedule for the FACD also incorporated consultation steps to ensure early integration of comments from interested parties including the City, the LNCF and the CA Rehabilitation Center as owner of the main hotel historic element. The interior will be modernized, the building structure stabilized and the historic exterior rehabilitated.



RESULT: ↓ Cost; ↓ Time to Execute; ↑ Mission Capability; ↑ Historic Property Value

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS HELP RETAIN A BROADER HISTORIC FLAVOR

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE AND VIEW SHED: A Lake and Landscape Management Plan balances historic restoration objectives with facilities development and natural resources plans and provides a resource zoning map which was implemented to inform planning and design decisions.

The historic landscape consists of the lake, four ponds, connecting stream and garden landscape. By 2015, the lake and surrounding landscape was overgrown with reeds and invasive palm trees which obscured views and prevented landscape improvements. A project to remove over 500 invasive trees and thin reeds was funded by jointly by the natural resources and facilities maintenance programs. Informal consultation with the City and LNCF included an on-site working group to determine which trees to save and which to remove.

RESULT: Improved view shed by opening up the lake and surrounding landscape which are contributing elements of the historic district thereby regaining more of the original sense of place. The project also benefitted the lake ecosystem and enhanced outdoor areas used for command and employee events.

SECTION 106 PROCESS AND INFORMAL COLLABORATION

HISTORIC PROPERTIES STATUS AND CONTROVERSY: The Navy and the City have built an overall positive collaborative partnership regarding historic preservation despite a long standing controversy centered around a proposed revised eligibility determination. The partnership is based upon the historic Hotel “Norconian Period” (1927 – 1941) while the on-going eligibility disagreement relates to the later periods of the “Naval Hospital” (1941 – 1957) and “Cold War” (1951 – 1989). The NSWC Division Corona “Inner Compound” area, which the Navy determined as ineligible in 2014, is at issue. The City submitted its own evaluation to the California Historical Resources Commission in 2018 and requested an expansion of the current historic district to include the Inner Compound and additional state owned facilities. The Commission concurred and directed the SHPO to forward the City’s evaluation to the Navy’s Federal Preservation Officer (FPO) for consideration. The FPO’s decision is pending.

CONTINUED COLLABORATION WITH INTERESTED PARTIES: In the spirit of NHPA Section 106, the Navy has broadened its outreach despite the controversy and initiated quarterly status meetings with the City and informal collaboration discussion on a number of proposed undertakings. These informal discussions often occur before written Section 106 consultation and, as a result, incorporate interested parties comments and streamline the formal SHPO consultation process.

COLLABORATIVE “IN-FILL” PROJECTS

SPONSOR OWNED MATERIALS WAREHOUSE: This project fulfills the mission need for property accountability and efficient laboratory operations and is immediately adjacent to Lake Norconian Club Historic District. To resolve community concerns regarding visual impacts, the Navy adjusted the siting and design elements of the proposal to ensure the new facility would be in character with the district.

Led by the CRM, and inclusive of the mission tenant, the planning and design team set a goal to develop an architectural design consistent with the Lake Norconian Club theme and also meet the mission requirements and budget constraints. The CRM and command leadership engaged the City of Norco and other interested parties, to arrive at a mutually agreeable design. The key design elements were the roof, quoins and windows which matched the 1928 Lake Norconian Club Resort features.

Instead of an *adverse effect* determination the Navy obtained concurrence on *no adverse effect* determination.

FORMER LIBRARY HAS RENEWED LIFE AS A COLLABORATION AREA: High performing tech organizations are driven by innovation and creativity, which is best supported by allowing employees to openly collaborate within an informal open environment. The Navy looked to the former hospital library for this function. Although not currently designated as a historic property, the Navy recognized the importance the structure and its use as a library had to the City and interested parties. The new entryway was designed to simulate the original large window in order to retain the architectural character of the façade.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

STAKEHOLDER INTERACTIONS

QUARTERLY MEETINGS: As part of a strategic communications strategy, Section 106 meetings are held quarterly with the City and interested parties to facilitate consultation, collaboration, and synergy during facility planning efforts. Participants have included primarily City of Norco elected officials and LNCF members.

IN-THE-FIELD WORKSHOPS: Site walks were started with the community stakeholders to show the Navy’s commitment to maintaining and enhancing historic district elements. These site walks have evolved to discuss projects both within and external to the current historic district and are central to the current Section 106 process.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

CIVIC AND OPEN HOUSE EVENTS are hosted annually by the installation and tenant commands which have a long shared history with the City of Norco and surrounding communities. These events are part of the continuing history of the Navy and the community in Norco, “Horsetown U.S.A.”

The Commanding Officer and community leaders enjoy the view of Lake Norconian during the annual Saddle Sore Riders event.



Runners make their way through the historic district during the 8th Annual Lake Norconian 5K Run/Walk.

The Lake Norconian Conference Center hosts special events such as the 76th annual Pearl Harbor Commemoration which also marked the 76th anniversary of the base.



FUTURE PLANS: The installation and host commands are developing long-range facilities sustainment plans that include preservation and enhancement of the historic properties and Lake Norconian Club Historic District as part of the Navy’s laboratory modernization efforts. Collaborative opportunities with the community on the horizon include renewal of the historic landscape and iconic lake side casino building.