

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: **SAN DIEGO'S ASIAN PACIFIC THEMATIC
HISTORIC DISTRICT: DEFINING THE GOALS IN
REVITALIZATION OF AN ETHNIC HISTORIC
DISTRICT**

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Degree and Year: Master of Arts in Historic Preservation, 2002

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This thesis examines the problems, processes, stated goals and potential revitalization of an ethnic historic district located in downtown San Diego undergoing significant redevelopment. Historic preservation history and philosophy are examined as they relate to authenticity of historic sites. Factors affecting revitalization of the historic district such as economic redevelopment strategies and ethnic diversity are also examined. All these factors have contributed to the slow progress in revitalizing the district.

The thesis includes six chapters. The history of the original ethnic group inhabiting the site, the Chinese, was reviewed. The history of the district was reviewed. Archival and library research was conducted. Research interviews were conducted of community players involved in the revitalization efforts.

The central question of the thesis was whether the goals for revitalization of the historic district were clearly stated and whether redevelopment goals were in conflict with preservation goals. Secondary questions included whether knowledge about authenticity was important for the advocates of revitalization and what role authenticity played in contributing to the heritage tourism value of the district; and whether the involvement of the ethnic group represented was important to achieving historic preservation goals.

The findings did support the supposition that the goals for the different advocates for revitalization of the historic district were in conflict. Specifically the redevelopment goals conflicted with the historic preservation goals. The findings of the thesis did not support the supposition that the goals were not clearly stated for the historic district. The findings support the supposition that the lack knowledge about the role of authenticity in historic preservation exists among the key advocates for revitalization. The findings support the supposition that the involvement of an ethnic group in the historic preservation process of designating and revitalizing an ethnic historic district are necessary to achieve the goals of preservation. Heritage tourism of ethnic historic resources must include authenticity of the site for traditional historic preservation goals to be achieved.