

City of Monterey

# Lower Presidio Historic Park

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## Master Plan

December 2002

Prepared By

Bellinger Foster Steinmetz  
*Landscape Architecture*

Edna Kimbro  
*Historian*

Rebecca Allen – Past Forward, Inc.  
*Archaeologist*



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for the  
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Monterey, California

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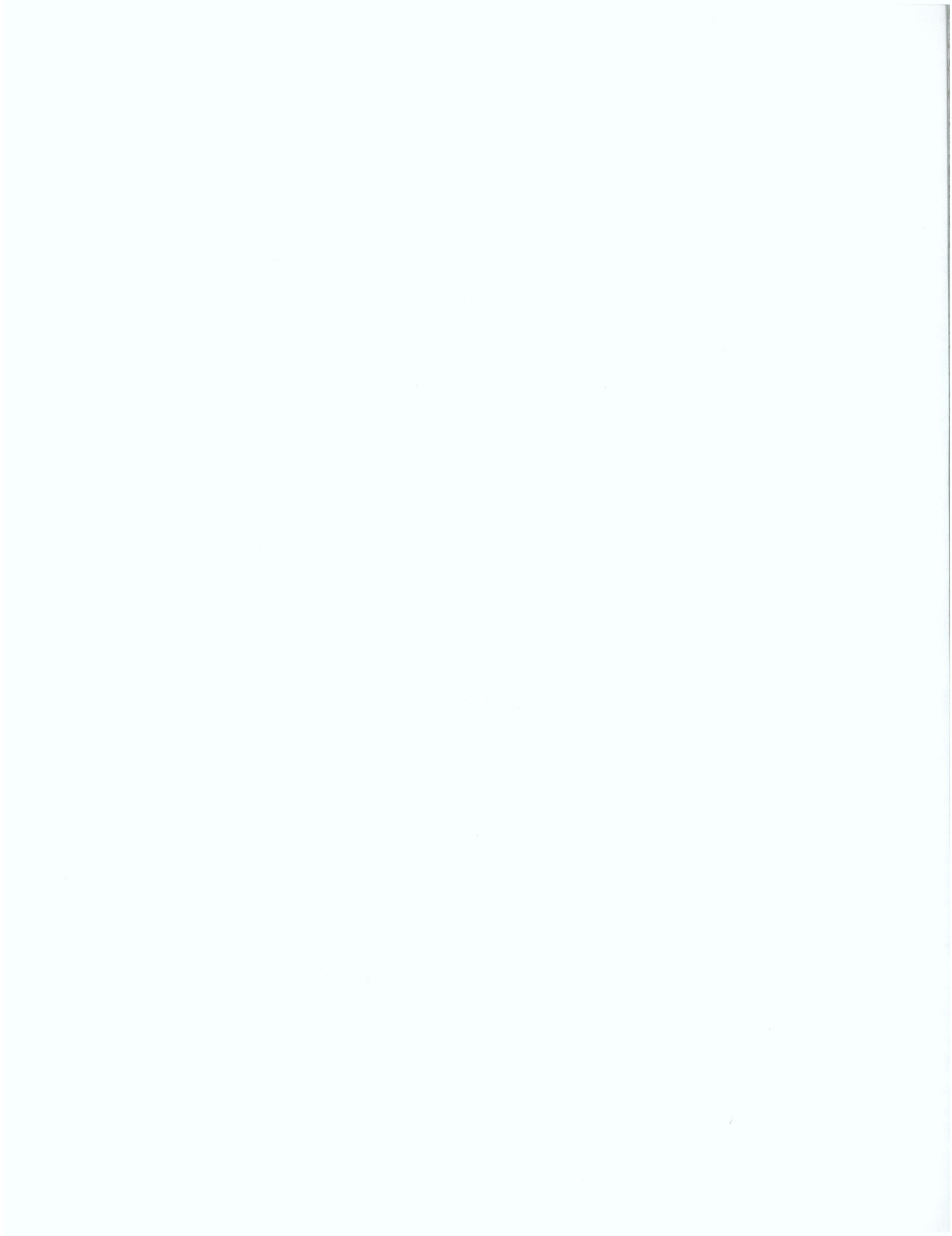
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# Executive Summary

## MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

Development of the Master Plan was guided by resource protection and interpretation objectives with the consensus of community, city, state and Army representatives :

- Foster an appreciation and understanding of prehistoric, historic, and cultural activities, and their relationship to the landscape.
- Develop and maintain the natural open space qualities of the site.
- Acknowledge the major periods of site occupation through site design, interpretive zones and an interpretive strategy for structures and features.
- Rehabilitate remaining historic structures to house interpretive exhibits and activities.
- Enhance remaining historic features and structures by relocating or removing encroaching built features that distract from the primary interpretive strategy.
- Develop a site management plan to protect sensitive site resources as well as promote site activities that encourage public visitations.
- Maintain minimal vehicle use of the site as needed by the U.S. Army and for on-site functions. Develop trail system and encourage bicycling, alternative transportation, and off-site parking to minimize vehicle impacts to site.

The mix of uses proposed for the Lower Presidio Historic Park are intended to be blended into an overall site walking experience. These uses are illustrated on the Master Plan map and briefly described below.

### ***Open Space and Prehistoric Site***

The site will be restored to grass, trees, and riparian landscape where possible. Unnecessary pavements and non-historic structures would be removed to create more continuous open space and views to Monterey Bay. Where possible, secondary site features and utilities would be removed, relocated, or redesigned to blend with proposed interpretive features.

The primary open space zones are created with the intent to honor and interpret prehistoric habitation. A monument, interpretive trails, and activity areas for special events are included to share the site's history with visitors.

### ***Museum/Orientation Center***

The renovated building which now serves as the Presidio Museum will remain and be designated for visitor orientation to the park. A 25-car parking lot at the museum will be developed to accommodate daily visitors, including school bus groups. Large events will require special permit parking.

### ***Interpretive Paths***

A path system will connect the park to known neighborhood routes into the Presidio, as well as serve people on foot seeking to visit the site. From the visitor orientation center at the museum, paths will guide visitors through an interpretive experience. Sign panels with text and graphics will tell the site's historic stories. Interconnecting path loops will allow short excursions into the park or longer trips which connect all the park's interpretive experiences.

### ***Spanish and Mexican Castillo Sites***

Interpretive panels will describe the historic military batteries that defended the site. Protective earth contours will delineate the size and relationships to the site. Low fences and interpretive stations will be sited to protect and direct visitors around the bluff.

### ***Calvary and World War II Buildings***

Remaining historic U.S. Army structures will be clustered on site at their original locations. The structures will be rehabilitated as necessary for safety and to accommodate exhibits that illustrate the range of weapons and transport used by the Army during the Lower Presidio period of use. The structures may also have small gathering spaces for interpretive activities and community events. Associated with the Stables Building would be a reconstructed pasture and corral that could allow horses to be reintroduced to the site.

### ***Fort Mervine and Sloat Memorial***

Fort Mervine remnants will be preserved by eliminating intrusive vehicles and pavements. Interpretive stations will exhibit the intended scale of the earthworks and extent of the military establishment at that time. Removal of trees and pavements around Fort Mervine and the Sloat Memorial will set the

stage for reenactment events and features that are attractive to many visitors. Firing a canon could add to a regular, if not daily event.

#### ***Site Monument and Signs***

Much of the site's monumentation has occurred at varying times, in a variety of styles. Walk areas, paving, planting, and interpretive signage will be renovated to improve the site setting. Certain features may be relocated to more appropriate locations, onsite or offsite, with interpretive panels.

#### ***Offsite Visibility and Signage***

Incorporate directional information to the park with other city signage along Lighthouse Avenue, Pacific Street and Del Monte Avenue. Increase visibility into the park from the Recreational Trail and Shoreline Park with selective tree removal consistent with other landscape planting recommendations.

#### ***Site Roadways and Parking Paths***

The primary entrance to the park will be the Artillery Street Gate. An orientation kiosk will host event information, interpretive panels and directional information.

Existing asphalt roadways will be utilized for park access and circulation. Some roadways and parking will be removed and replanted with turf grass. New paths will be stabilized decomposed granite or concrete.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH HISTORIC DISTRICT**

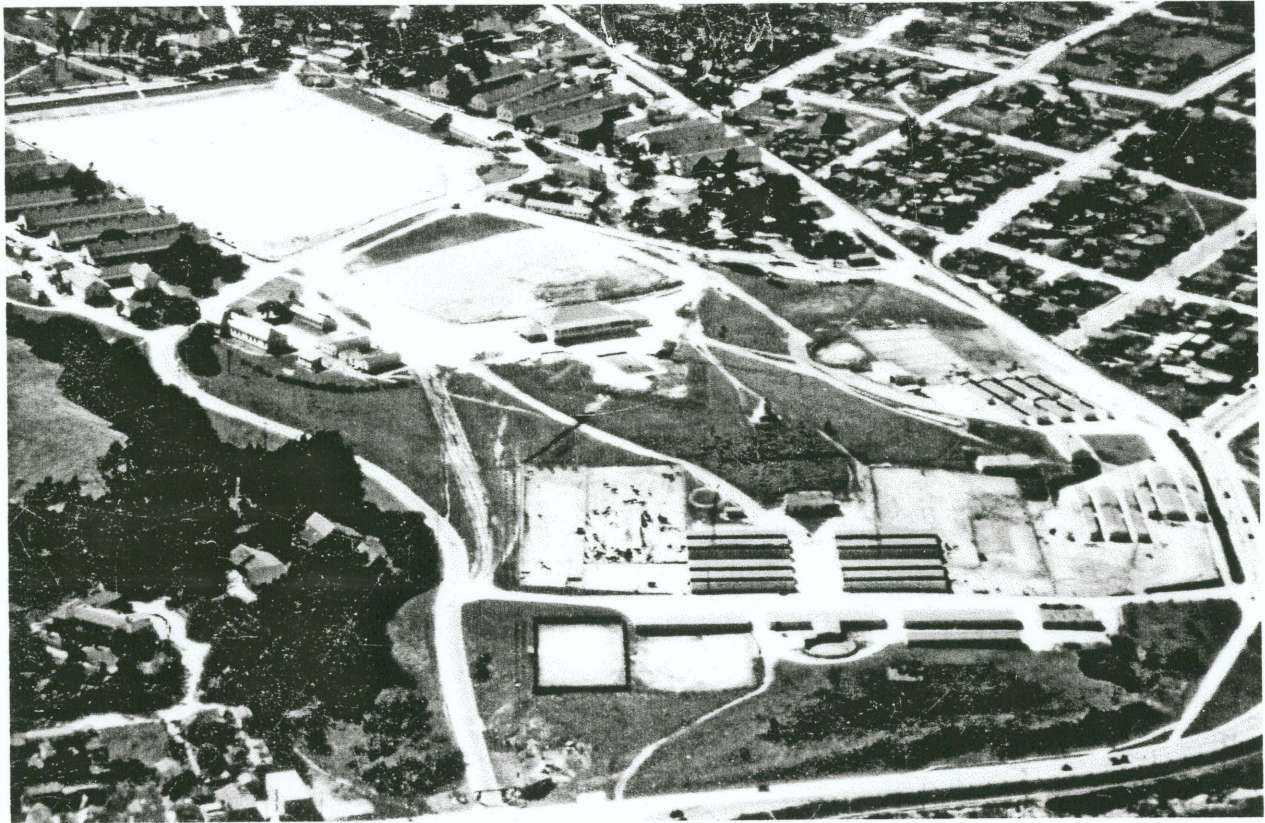
In 1971, a National Register Historic District was declared for the Presidio of Monterey (Roberts 1971). The nomination included El Castillo (the Spanish fort), the 1902 Old Army Post, the Serra and Sloat monuments, and the prehistoric sites on the lower presidio grounds. The Presidio of Monterey district was revised in 1992, focusing on the architectural elements of the district (Corbett and Minor 1992). The architectural district was determined to have a period of significance dating from 1902-1940. Within the grounds of the lower presidio, only the Sloat Memorial and Father Serra Monument were recognized for architectural significance as contributing elements to the revised architectural historic district. As the former gun shed and stables were

determined to noncontributing elements, proposed utilization of these buildings for interpretation does not conflict with the historic district listing.

Updating the National Historic Register to clarify the various districts and overlapping designations is recommended.



# Introduction







# Introduction

While the Monterey Peninsula is known for its significant cultural treasures, the Presidio of Monterey is little known for its history of man's presence on the site for the last 7,000 years.

From earliest known inhabitants to its current role as a national defense resource, the story of man on the Presidio site reflects man's constant interest yet changing perspective on landscape and culture.

The Lower Presidio Historic Park is a unique opportunity for Monterey, the State of California, and the U.S. Army to offer the public an experience of the site and its remaining resources through protection, sensitive enhancements, and interpretation of the site.

## VISION FOR THE SITE

The City of Monterey desires to create a seamless framework of historic preservation and public visitation to all historic places in Monterey. Not only will the Lower Presidio be at the physical center of the community, it will create new opportunities to communicate a spectrum of archaeological and cultural histories not currently available on the Monterey Peninsula.

The Lower Presidio Historic Park is envisioned as a multicultural interpretive experience that compliments other historic features in Monterey while remaining an open space treasure to the community.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The City of Monterey has leased 25.15 acres of the Presidio of Monterey from the U.S. Army (U.S. Army Lease No. DACAD 5-1-96-554) with the understanding that it would be developed as an historic park. To facilitate establishment of the Lower Presidio Historic Park, the City must prepare a master plan in conjunction with the U.S. Army Presidio of Monterey (Defense

Language Institute–Foreign Language Center), and the Monterey State Historic Park, California State Parks and Recreation Department.

The purpose to this plan is to evaluate previous archaeological and historic research, assess the character of current site features, recommend a strategy for protection and enhancement of historic resources, and develop an interpretive development concept for the 26 acre Lower Presidio site.

The Master Plan project goals are as follows:

- Identify the archeological/historic resources and interpretive themes.
- Identify existing land use and landscape features and the planning issues related to each.
- Recommend interpretive and site development concepts compatible with City, state and Federal preservation goals.
- Recommend an implementation strategy to be used for phasing, budgeting, and development planning for the City.
- Facilitate community input into the planning process and coordinate with State and Federal agencies.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The planning team, with assistance from City staff, State and Army personnel, held one community meeting at City Hall. Fliers were sent to over 200 individuals, organizations and agencies along with newspaper public notices.

In addition, focused meetings with local Native Americans and their representatives provided important insights into priorities for interpretation of the site as a multicultural resource.

## PROJECT PROCESS

The *Historic Overview* section of this report provides information on the archeological and historic resources of the site. This information provided the necessary foundation of data for development of the *Interpretive Themes* recommendations for the site.

Based on the site features present today, the planning team presented Alternative Site Use diagrams that varied the amount of open space, parking and circulation organization and relocation, and preservation or demolition of site structures. Input from City, State, Army, Native Americans and community residents was incorporated into the Master Plan recommendations.

Plan approval process includes a joint meeting between Historic Preservation, Planning, and the Parks and Recreation Commissions. The Plan requires approval by Monterey City Council before proceeding with Environmental Clearance and Federal approvals.

