

## Bryant Ranch House to Vie for National Registry

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The Planning Commission at its Oct. 9 meeting unanimously approved plans to restore the historic Bryant Ranch House to its original glory.

If restored to its “historically correct” condition, using the same type of building materials and construction techniques common during the era in which the 85-year-old house was built, Bryant Ranch House will become eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Once restored, the Craftsman-style ranch house will also be used as a small museum by the Yorba Linda Historical Society and Heritage Museum.

“This is great!” Bea Guinn, Yorba Linda Historical Society member exclaimed. “I’m very happy with the Planning Commission’s approval.”

“It’s a wonderful project,” agreed Commissioner Robert Clemmer during the meeting. “It’s something we can all be enthusiastic about.”

Commissioner Kenneth Ryan said the project was a “great opportunity for the city,” and commended city planner Dan Dooley for doing a “great job” with the project’s coordinators.

To be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the ranch must be restored to its original, circa 1913, appearance.

Over the past several months, Dooley worked closely with members of the Bryant Ranch Restoration Committee and Pacific Heritage Developers, who will manage the actual restoration project.

They gathered old photos, documentation and other physical evidence in order to correctly document the original appearance of the house. At the meeting, Dooley also presented a videotape of the ranch taken during the early 1950s by Owen Johnson, whose family worked and lived on the ranch during that time.

Project historian Diane Marsh wrote the application for the National Register of Historic Places. She and Dooley will attend a public hearing by the State Historic Resources Commission on Nov. 8 in Colusa, California.

The commission will decide whether Bryant Ranch House is nominated for the National Register. If approved, the nomination then makes its final review at the Department of Interior in Washington D.C.

As one of the last remaining examples of early California ranch houses in Southern California, the Bryant Ranch House located on the corner of La Palma Avenue and Camino de Bryant was also significant for its nationally recognized botanic garden.

Founded by Susanna Bixby-Bryant in 1920, the 200-acre botanic garden on Rancho Santa Ana was designed as a scientific institution for the study of native California flora. It was the second botanic garden in the nation to be credited as a museum. In 1952, the Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden moved from Yorba Linda—but it still exists today in the city of Claremont.