

Del Mar Historical Society announces campaign to find a Home

By Collective Members of the
Del Mar Historical Society

Del Mar has a rich and colorful history, a history perhaps not appreciated by some because it is not well known. For decades, members of the Del Mar Historical Society have been documenting and communicating our history, through events, recordings (some as student projects), and several publications. The Society maintains a number of artifacts of Del Mar's history and runs docent operations at the Alvarado House (currently located at the Fairgrounds, open to fairgoers June 11–July 6), one of the oldest houses remaining in Del Mar.

But the Del Mar Historical Society lacks a home. Although the Society has an address for monthly meetings (225 9th Street), there is no building to which residents or visiting tourists can go to procure information about the city's history, no place to permanently display artifacts. In contrast, the La Jolla Historical Society has three historic buildings, one used as a museum, one used for offices and research, and one with an archival collection. Solana Beach, Encinitas, and Rancho Santa Fe also have their own Historical Society buildings.

Members of the Del Mar Historical Society have begun a concerted campaign to find a permanent home. This would serve first as a Museum: to house and display memorabilia, photographs, and books about our vibrant history. This home would be prominent on our phone maps, for all to swing by. It would attract more tourists and thus give more business for the restaurants and services of our community. It could serve as a starting point for historical walking tours, highlighting prominent buildings of the past and present, describing the people and events of our history.

We feel strongly that the time has come for our Society to find that home, which will allow us to promote ourselves, to residents and visitors alike. Our Society will explore two major options (not necessarily mutually exclusive), summarized as follows.

Option 1: Move the Alvarado House back to Del Mar. This historical house, built in 1885, was moved from the City Hall parking lot to the Fairgrounds in 1989. Although the House can be visited during certain events at the Fairgrounds, those events are limited, and entry is dependent usually upon paid entry into the Fairgrounds. Even so, relatively few people are even aware of the Alvarado House. Moving this house back to Del Mar proper would allow the Alvarado House to be used as a focal point for promoting our history. *This* would be the place where visitors would come, to view photographs and artifacts and to acquire information, in the form of already published pamphlets and books.

There are two challenges for moving the Alvarado House back home. The most impending challenge is to find a property to put it on. One option for that property already exists. When the relatively new Del Mar Civic Center was built, a piece of that land (on the other side of the south wall where the Farmer's Market takes place) was set aside by the architects intentionally for this purpose. In fact, some basic utilities were set in place to attach to the House. And this property is immediately next to ample parking beneath the Civic Center, ideal for visitors.

Although we feel obtaining this property for the Alvarado House is the best option, we will consider *other property sites* that might be available, either from the city or through a private donation.

Once a site for the Alvarado House is obtained, the second challenge is moving it there. Although this may seem daunting, *anything* is

possible where there is a will, and we have that will. We will investigate all possibilities, including transporting the house in two pieces as was done with the Dunham House to Encinitas a few years ago. Our Society already has a substantial fund set aside for this purpose, which we have been collecting for years. And we will fundraise as needed, reaching out to Del Mar citizens who are willing and able to help support this endeavor, whatever it takes to move the Alvarado House back to Del Mar.

Option 2: Find another building for our museum. Perhaps there is a house, relatively near the city center, that could be purchased or, with luck, donated as our new home, to become the new Del Mar Historical Society Museum. Ideally, the house would have historical significance. And, ideally, the new building site would have ample parking nearby for visitors.

We hope to gain support from all citizens of Del Mar for our mission. Please visit our website: <https://delmarhistoricalsociety.org>, for more information about our Society and our city's history. Feel free to become involved in the Society or its activities. ***Become a member!*** Please reach out to others about our cause. One day, maybe soon, we hope to find that home for the Del Mar Historical Society Museum! Please share your ideas with us by emailing us at: info@delmarhistoricalsociety.org