

# 2013 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

## **Bancroft Rock House Rehabilitation**



*The façade of the rehabilitated Bancroft Rock House*

The County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (SDDPR) completed the rehabilitation of the Bancroft Rock House in November 2010. The property was constructed by Hubert Howe Bancroft, prosperous publisher and historian of the far west, between 1885 and 1888 at the height of his success. Bancroft owned a great deal of real estate in San Diego County, including the 500-acre ranch on which he built the Rock House. The building served many purposes including being used as a guest house and a school room for the ranch, as well as a place for Bancroft to compile his manuscripts. Bancroft completed his epic volume on the history of California in the Rock House. In 1962, the Bancroft Rock House was declared a National Historic Landmark, and is now part of a four-acre community park (Bancroft Park) in Spring Valley, California.

It is widely accepted by the Native American community in the region that the project area is the former site of the Kumeyaay village of Meti that was first established in 8,000 B.C.E. The site contains rare Native American artifacts that were partially uncovered during archeological digs conducted at Bancroft Park in the 1970s, and is revered by the Kumeyaay as a sacred burial ground containing some of the highest concentrations of Native American human remains found in the state of California. As a result, the project required innovative design and construction techniques to avoid significant impacts to the site. In 2009, SDDPR hired G Force, a San Diego area structural engineering firm who, with the help of the project team members (County Historian Lynne Newell Christenson, Ph.D., Senior Project Manager William Saumier, and Project Manager Brad Roberts), developed a project with design elements that enabled SDDPR to rehabilitate the Bancroft Rock House without disturbing any of the native soil at Bancroft Park.

In a unique partnership with DPR, the County of San Diego Historic Site Board, Spring Valley Historical Society, Spring Valley Planning Group and County Service Area 128, Bancroft's historic home was fully rehabilitated for use as a museum and public meeting hall at Bancroft Park in November 2010. Funding for the \$543,000 rehabilitation project included \$473,000 from Proposition 12 Murray Haden Grant Program funds, \$35,000 in California Cultural and Historical Endowment funds, and \$35,000 in County of San Diego Discretionary funds.

Learn more about the Bancroft Rock House and museum:

<http://www.sdparcs.org/content/sdparcs/en/park-pages/Bancroft.html>