

Petaluma Film Tour

“American Graffiti,” “Basic Instinct,” and “Peggy Sue Got Married” are just a few of the many films that have captured Petaluma’s charm on film. Let us guide you through some of the locations that set the scene for these and other films.

Iron-front buildings on Western Avenue between Kentucky Street and Petaluma Boulevard are frequently the backdrops for film sets. This area was used in Francis Ford Coppola’s “Peggy Sue Got Married” as well as for “Basic Instinct” and “Heroes.”

The Riverfront at the foot of Western Avenue was where the police car splashed in the water in “Howard the Duck.”

120 Petaluma Blvd. No. (Bluestone Main building) was the site of Bodell’s Appliances in “Peggy Sue Got Married.”

The Mystic Theatre, 21 Petaluma Blvd. No., was transformed into the State Movie Theater in “American Graffiti. Incidentally, in the film, the marquee on the movie theater read “Dementia 13,” which was one of George Lucas’ first films. Lucas also inserted another reference to one of his earlier movies by having the license plate of one of the hot rods read “THX113.”

Petaluma Blvd. No. from D Street to Washington Street was used for the cruising scenes in “American Graffiti.” The parking lot next to the McNear Building was used in the scene when the police car was chained to a light pole.

The end of H Street at the Petaluma River was “Lovers Lane” for Peggy Sue and her boyfriend. And 600 Petaluma Blvd. So. at H Street was transformed into the Donut Hole Café, where Peggy Sue cuddled with her boyfriend then roared off with him on his motorcycle.

920 D Street - The upstairs bedroom was used in “Explorers” and a 20-foot tree was imported from Los Angeles for the boyfriend to climb into the girl’s bedroom. Brown Court, off D Street, has a look that is a favorite with commercial producers, including producers for Orville Redenbacher.

1006 D Street was Charlie’s house in “Peggy Sue Got Married.”

St. Vincent’s Church and the surrounding neighborhood near Howard and Liberty Streets were used for the TV remake of “Shadow of a Doubt” as well as in the film “Basic Instinct.”

226 Liberty Street – The big white house on the east side of Liberty Street near Washington Street was Peggy Sue’s house in “Peggy Sue Got Married.”

A few other film sites out of walking distance, include: Adobe Road where some scenes were shot for “Farmer’s Daughter” and “American Graffiti.” The **Sonoma-Marin Fairgrounds** on East Washington Street hosted “Mr. Billion,” and the **Municipal Airport** at East Washington Street hosed “Explorers.”