



ORANGE PRESERVES

Preserving California's largest historic district.

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Spring 2014

The History of the OTPA

We live in California's largest residential Historic District, a one-square-mile community featuring more than 1,400 homes built before 1940. These are extraordinary showcases of historic Americana architecture including Craftsman, Spanish-Colonial, Bungalow, Prairie and Victorian styles. Many were built in the 1800s.

In 1995, the city of Orange adopted a set of Historic Preservation Design Standards to ensure Old Towne's special quality would remain for the enjoyment, pride and economic benefit of its residents. These standards address issues such as site planning, heights, scale, door and window arrangements,

material texture and colors, roof shape, signage, landscaping, overall design quality and many more.

In 1997, the Old Towne Historic District was enrolled on the National Registry of Historic Places, the official roster of cultural resources worthy of preservation.

We've witnessed how careless development, design and construction can destroy the integrity of a neighborhood if nobody pays attention. OTPA cares and takes the role of making sure new projects are sensitive and respectful of the historic and architectural character of our community, contributing to the quality of life and positively impacting property values.



Hotel Rochester was built in 1887 and located at the current location of the Orange Post Office on Lemon and Chapman. It was razed in June 1931.

Why Preserve Old Towne Orange

The Old Towne Preservation Association works to preserve the historic fabric of our community. May is National Preservation Month and in this article, reprinted from a column in the *National Trust for Historic Preservation*, we are reminded of our mission to help protect our historic district.

What is historic and worth saving varies with the beholder, but some definition is urgent. Simply put, “historic” means “old and worth the trouble.” It applies to a building that’s part of a community’s tangible past. And to a degree that may surprise cynics, old buildings can offer opportunities for a community’s future.

This article examines both the cultural and practical values of old buildings and looks at why preserving them is beneficial not only for a community’s culture, but also for its local economy.

1. OLD BUILDINGS ATTRACT PEOPLE.

Is it the warmth of the materials, the heart pine, marble, or old brick – or the resonance of other people, other activities? Maybe older buildings are just more interesting. The different levels, the vestiges of other uses, the awkward corners, the mixtures of styles, they’re at least something to talk about. America’s downtown revivals suggest that people like old buildings. Whether the feeling is patriotic, homey, warm, or reassuring, older architecture tends to fit the bill. Regardless of how they actually spend their lives, Americans prefer to picture themselves living around old buildings. Some eyes glaze over when preservationists talk about “historic building stock,”

but what they really mean is a community’s inventory of old buildings ready to fulfill new uses.

2. OLD BUILDINGS ARE REMINDERS OF A CITY’S CULTURE AND COMPLEXITY.

By seeing historic buildings – whether related to something famous or recognizably dramatic – tourists and longtime residents are able to witness the aesthetic and cultural history of an area. Just as banks prefer to build stately, old-fashioned facades, even when located in commercial malls, a city needs old buildings to maintain a sense of permanency and heritage.



Louis Gunther and family outside 206 W. Almond Ave. 1908. This building is a current example of adaptive reuse. It was rezoned to commercial use and OTPA has worked with the owner and architect throughout the process.

3. OLD BUILDINGS HAVE INTRINSIC VALUE.

Buildings of a certain era, namely pre-World War II, tend to be built with higher-quality materials such as rare hardwoods (especially heart pine) and wood from old-growth forests that no longer exist. Prewar buildings were also built by different standards. A century-old building might be a better long-term bet than its brand-new counterpart.

4. WHEN YOU TEAR DOWN AN OLD BUILDING, YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT'S BEING DESTROYED.

A decade ago, the Daylight Building in Knoxville was a vacant eyesore. A developer purchased the property with plans to demolish the building to make way for new construction. However, following multiple failed deals to demolish the building, the Daylight went back on the market. It was purchased and renovations began only to discover the building's hidden gems: drop-ceilings made with heart-pine wood, a large clerestory, a front awning adorned with unusual tinted "opalescent" glass, and a facade lined with bright copper. Beyond surviving demolition and revealing a treasure trove of details, the Daylight reminds us that even eyesores can be valuable for a community's future.

5. NEW BUSINESSES PREFER OLD BUILDINGS.

In 1961, urban activist Jane Jacobs startled city planners with *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, in which Jacobs discussed economic advantages that certain types of businesses have when located in older buildings. Jacobs asserted that new buildings make sense for major chain stores, but other businesses – such as bookstores, restaurants, antique stores, neighborhood boutiques, and especially small businesses – thrive in old buildings.



St. John's Lutheran School located at 154 S. Shaffer Street on the northeast corner of Olive and Almond, 1910. This was the second school, used from 1904 until 1929, when the present school replaced it at South Shaffer Street and Almond Avenue.

"As for really new ideas of any kind – no matter how ultimately profitable or otherwise successful some of them might prove to be – there is no leeway for such chancy trial, error, and experimentation in the high-overhead economy of new construction," she wrote. "Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings."

Jane Jacobs' book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, asserts that the destruction of old buildings hurts communities and local economies by creating unnatural urban spaces.

6. REGRET GOES ONLY ONE WAY.

The preservation of historic buildings is a one-way street. There is no chance to renovate or to save a historic site once it's gone and we can never be certain what will be valued in the future. This reality brings to light the importance of locating and saving buildings of historic significance – because once a piece of history is destroyed, it is lost forever. 🍊

GENERAL MEETINGS

Architect and preservationist Susan Secoy-Jensen treated OPA to a special tour of the historic Ice House. This unique 1930s cold storage facility was originally built to manufacture ice and circulate cold air throughout the building to keep stored citrus fruit fresh before it was shipped by rail to other parts of the country.

As Susan explained, "The 19,000 SF Ice House is my Taliesen, an experimental laboratory, constantly evolving." This is an authentic loft, the real thing, which is often imitated in today's market. It weaves together historic preservation, adaptive reuse, and environmental responsibility, since the entire building, and many original

components, have been recycled. This meeting was a great way to kickoff the 2014 events.

Save the date for the **Friday, August 8** General Meeting at the home of Robert and Ursula Imboden. This special event will begin at 7 p.m. in the back yard of one of Old Towne Orange's finest homes. This house has never been on a home tour. More information to follow, but you won't want to miss this event.

If you would like to donate a door prize for one of our general meetings, please contact thomas.matuzak@servitehs.org for more information. We accept all door prizes, large and small!

What is Historic Preservation

It's much more than saving old buildings! Historic preservation champions and protects places that tell the stories of our past. It enhances our sense of community and brings us closer together: saving the places where we take our children to school, buy our groceries, and stop for coffee – preserving the stories of ancient cultures found in landmarks and landscapes we visit – protecting the memories of people, places, and events honored in our national monuments.

Historic preservation is also about getting involved in saving our community. It doesn't have to be complicated – it can be fun! For example, have you ever...

Taken a house museum tour?

Shopped in local stores on a Main Street?

Volunteered at a historic site or community event?

Stopped to appreciate great architecture?

Detoured from the highway to follow the historic site markers?

If you have, then you've been part of preservation. There are many ways you can get involved in historic preservation and save places that matter in your life. The important part is that you recognize the places which are meaningful to you, and to our heritage, and that they deserve to be around for future generations. That's the essence of preservation. Together we are protecting America's heritage for future generations.

Join us today to help protect the places which matter to you and your neighborhood. Become a member today www.otpa.org



Palmyra Hotel, 1907, South Glassell at Palmyra. Opened on July 28, 1887, this two-story wood structure had 40 rooms and opened during the peak of a widespread land boom. This local landmark served as a social and cultural center in early Orange. It was razed in 1970.

SAVE *the* DATE

We're having dinner!

10. 05. 2014

The Old Towne Preservation Association's 20th Annual Preservation Award Dinner Gala is set for 5:30 p.m., Sunday, October 5 at the Woman's Club in Old Towne.

Awards will be given in recognition of significant improvements and enhancements of Old Towne homes, commercial buildings and other properties. Keep an eye open for prospective award nominations throughout Old Towne and submit a nomination on the OTPA website.

If you'd like to serve on the planning committee, please email community-involvement@otpa.org 🍊

23rd Annual Old Riverside Foundation Vintage Home Tour, Restoration Faire and Vintage Mercantile

SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2014

The Old Riverside Foundation hosts the 23rd Annual Vintage Home Tour, Restoration Faire and Vintage Mercantile. The ticket includes a self-guided tour of 5 examples of Riverside's rich historic architecture, 1 gratis raffle basket ticket, along with a restoration faire including suppliers, artists and craftspeople. The vintage mercantile will feature antiques and collectibles along with the return of the Tour Raffle Basket opportunity. www.olddriverside.org 🍊



WE'RE LOOKING OUT FOR YOU!

Preserving the Past. Protecting the Future.



Join the **Old Towne Preservation Association** and help keep Old Towne a great place to live. **SIGN UP NOW** at www.otpa.org

WHAT WE DO

- **We speak up for preservation** at City Council, Design Review and Planning Commission meetings, and work with home owners, developers and architects on preservation issues.
- **We participate in the City's General Plan**, and meet regularly with City Staff and Officials to minimize negative impact on our historic neighborhood.
- **We offer scholarships to students** majoring in Preservation or preservation-related studies.
- **We sponsor city staff** to attend preservation workshops and conferences.
- **We keep members informed** on matters impacting Old Towne's quality of life.

JOIN TODAY! Only \$15 for individuals, \$25 for households.

What can you do?

If you are an Old Towne resident, homeowner, business owner or represent a commercial or non-profit organization, you have a vested interest in preserving the quality of your community. We need membership support and your help on one or more of these committees:

HOME TOURS – Opens up selected historic homes and structures for the public to appreciate.

INTERNATIONAL STREET FAIR – Operates a food or beverage booth as an annual fundraiser.

PRESERVATION AWARDS DINNER GALA – Brings the community together and celebrates preservation.

PRESERVATION – Monitors new projects and prepares reviews.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Represents Old Towne before various public agencies.

MEMBERSHIP – Creates outreach programs to increase our membership.



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An official publication of the Old Towne Preservation Association. Editor: Guy Hinrichs, guy.oldtowne@yahoo.com
Historical photos courtesy of the Local History Collection, Orange Public Library, Orange, CA.

Outside the first Santa Fe Depot,
April 23, 1891.

