

Santa Fe Depot
Specific Plan Update

The Benefits of Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation in the Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Area

The Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan area is rich with historic resources. Located within the Old Towne Historic District, which is on the National Registry of Historic Places, it contains many elements of historical significance, including many residences, several industrial and commercial buildings, open space, and landscape. The main anchor in the Specific Plan area is the historic Santa Fe Depot, which was originally built in 1880 by Southern Pacific Railroad and replaced by the present Depot in 1938. It has both architectural and cultural significance to the City.

Two community organizations involved with protecting these resources



The original Santa Fe Depot, circa 1890, was replaced by the present Depot in 1938.

include the Old Towne Preservation Association (OTPA) and the Orange Barrio Historical Society. OTPA was established in 1986 to preserve and enhance Old Towne Orange. OTPA played a significant role in developing the City's Old Towne Design Standards, which were adopted in 1995, as well as securing the Old Towne Orange Historic District National Register designation in 1997. The Orange Barrio Historical Society was formally organized in 2004 to represent the historic Latino neighborhood at the northern end of the Specific Plan area. The efforts of these organizations, in coordination with the City, help to maintain the historic integrity and economic viability of the area for future generations.



The Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update will continue to support these preservation efforts. With collaboration from the community and stakeholders, the Plan will create development standards and design guidelines that encourage innovative adaptive reuse of historic structures, where appropriate. The Plan will also work in conjunction with the Old Towne Design Standards to ensure that new construction is architecturally and aesthetically compatible with the existing historic neighborhood.



Depot Park, laid out in 1891, is the oldest park in Orange County. It retains a number of trees that were planted by the citizens who originally created the park.

What is Historic Preservation?

Historic preservation is the practice of preserving part of a community, from an individual building to a whole neighborhood, because of its historical importance. The Secretary of the Interior of the U.S. Government defines preservation as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property or historic environment. The historic environment can include districts, sites, buildings, structures, objects, and landscapes that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

In simpler terms, historic preservation is about having the good sense to hang on to something – an older building or neighborhood or piece of landscape – because it is important to us as a community, state or nation.



Historic buildings in the Old Towne Historic District.

FACT SHEET

The Benefits of Historic Preservation

Preservation helps maintain identity, educates people about history, is an economic tool for planners and governments, and creates dialogues about shared values. It can benefit everyone, everywhere – young and old people, urban and rural areas, residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. People practice historic preservation for many reasons, but three of its primary advantages are:

Appearance

Some older buildings and places are important because of their architectural or aesthetic attributes. They are “a gift to the street” whose style, textures, materials and charm enrich and enliven their surroundings. They are worth saving because our communities would be less interesting, less attractive, and less architecturally diverse without them. In short, the style and variety of historic structures and places creates more attractive places to live and work.

Economics

Protecting and reusing historic structures makes good financial sense. Some older buildings are worth saving because they have plenty of good use left in them. Innovative examples of reusing older structures for new purposes can be found in many places. Factories have been turned into convention centers, train stations reborn as restaurants, mills converted into shopping centers, office buildings transformed into apartments, etc. This process, called *adaptive reuse*, is both good for the environment by “recycling” buildings and materials, as well as the pocketbook since reusing an old building can mean avoiding the expense of demolition and saving on the cost of new materials.

In addition, historic buildings, neighborhoods and districts are proving to be highly desirable places, thereby attracting residents and visitors and increasing property values and dollars spent in the community.

History and Culture

Finally, some buildings and places are worth saving because of their historical and cultural value in our society. They link us with our past, tell a story, and help us understand who we are. Historic places enlighten community about where they came from – what previous generations achieved, what they believed, what they hoped to be. Protecting these reminders of the past and recalling a community’s goals and dreams can help us achieve a better future.

Sources: National Trust for Historic Preservation
Old Towne Preservation Association



The historic Santa Fe Depot building has been restored and is now being used as a restaurant.



This historic industrial building, originally built as a packing house, is planned for adaptive reuse by Chapman University.



Several turn-of-the-century residences in the area have been restored and converted to commercial uses.

Santa Fe Depot
Specific Plan Update

For more information about the Santa Fe Depot Specific Plan Update, call Anna Pehoushek, Principal Planner at (714) 744-7228 or Julia Gonzalez, Associate Planner at (714) 744-7227.

