



History, Mission and Activities

Preserve Orange County was registered in December 2016 as a corporation in the State of California and is a tax-exempt charity under section 501(c)(3) of the federal Internal Revenue Code.

History In 2014 and 2015, a Preservation Task Force chaired by Chris Jepsen, the president of the Orange County Historical Society, met several times to discuss the creation of a county-wide preservation advocacy group. Interested residents, local advocates and members of historical societies from cities throughout the county made up this original group. The task force voted on the name, Preserve Orange County, before disbanding.

From this original group, Alan Hess, Deborah Rosenthal, Joseph Haney and Krista Nicholds formed a smaller working group that went on to incorporate, hold an annual meeting and election of a board of directors, create bylaws and register as a charity. Joining the four members of the working group as founding directors of the organization were Tim Rush, Robert Imboden, Christy Ko Kim, Bill Kroener and Don Dooley. The first meeting of the board of directors of Preserve Orange County was on Sunday, January 22, 2017 at the home of Deborah Rosenthal.

Mission The Preserve Orange County mission is to work through education and advocacy to promote conservation of our county's architectural and cultural heritage.

Vision Historic resources are essential to maintaining and improving the livability, diversity, sustainability and economic vitality of our communities.

Preserve Orange County fulfills its mission by carrying out the following activities:

- Providing subject-matter expertise and technical advice to local organizations and residents;
- Engaging directly with city staff and property owners to build awareness about and defend the value of historic resources;
- Preparing public comment and appearing before municipal bodies;
- Encouraging and organizing action from the preservation community;

- Researching and identifying historic and cultural resources in Orange County;
- Communicating about historic and cultural resources and preservation issues in the county to the general public and membership on the website (Watch List and Most Endangered list on preserveorangecounty.org), on social media platforms and in quarterly newsletter, Tracts;
- Building partnerships with like-minded non-profits in Southern California;
- Raising funds from grants, campaigns, events, individual and corporate donors;
- Building membership and recruiting volunteers;
- Organizing and hosting events such as workshops and architectural tours; and,
- Recognizing exemplary work done by organizations, cities and individual advocates and property owners that is aligned with the mission and vision of Preserve Orange County.

Since its founding, Preserve Orange County has submitted dozens of public comments to city, county and state officials, and in 2020 became a co-petitioner in a CEQA lawsuit against the City of Laguna Beach. Preserve Orange County has assisted in or lead the initiative to protect several historic buildings in the county. Here is a partial list:

Bob's Big Boy, Harbor Boulevard, Garden Grove
 Fullerton Auditorium (formerly Plummer Auditorium), Fullerton
 First American Title Insurance Company, Main Street, Santa Ana
 Stuft Shirt (now A'maree's), Pacific Coast Highway, Newport Beach
 YMCA, Civic Center Drive, Santa Ana
 Santa Ana Public Library, Main Branch, Civic Center Drive, Santa Ana
 Chet Holifield Federal Building, Avila Road, Laguna Niguel
 Hunt Library, Fullerton
 Christiansen and Grow Filling Station, S. Main Street, Orange
 Visser's Florist, Lincoln Boulevard, Anaheim

In 2019, the organization produced an architectural walking tour, the Eichler Home Tour. The public purchased tickets to view seven Midcentury Modern houses built between 1961 and 1964 by Joseph Eichler and designed by three leading architecture firms of the day. The event exceeded revenue and volunteer recruitment goals.

In 2021, the organization launched a publicly-accessible, mobile-friendly interactive map of the historic properties and cultural heritage sites in the county.