

Orange County's Survey Efforts

Here in Orange County, our research shows that out of 34 cities, 16 cities have conducted a historic resources survey of some breadth since the 1980s but only a handful of these surveys encompassed the entire city and an even smaller number have been updated in recent years.

For example, Garden Grove's last survey was done in 1986, which means that that City has not officially accounted for historic properties built after the 1930s within its city limits. Newport Beach last conducted a survey in 1992, and Costa Mesa in 1999. The Huntington Beach inventory was updated in 2014. Only Tustin and Dana Point have undertaken surveys in the last five years. Though not yet approved by the city council, Dana Point's last survey was done in 2016, while Tustin's update is underway and will be completed this year.

Some cities such as Orange, San Juan Capistrano, and Santa Ana conducted surveys in the 2010s but on a limited scale. Outside historic districts or original town centers, most post-war resources have not been recorded in these cities.

Many more historic resources exist that are not known to our city governments. Eleven Orange County cities incorporated on or before 1971 have never undertaken a historic resources survey that we know of. And although historic resources have been identified in environmental impact reports for projects in the unincorporated communities of the county, the County of Orange has not sponsored a formal survey of the building heritage that exists in communities such as Modjeska or Silverado Canyons.

Excerpted from "What is a Historic Resource Survey?" published in the April 2021 edition of Tracts, the Preserve Orange County newsletter.