Appendix I-B2

LA GRANGE HISTORICAL STANDARDS

Adopted by the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

JUNE 23, 1987

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LA GRANGE HISTORICAL STANDARDS

APPENDIX I-B2

HISTORY

La Grange's colorful historic past created many buildings and structures worthy of preservation. Unfortunately, many of these structures have since been destroyed by flood or inactivity. The few remaining structures are scattered throughout the town amidst newer structures. The primary objective of this section is to identify the structures (see Historical Site Map on Page 1-36) and develop guidelines for the preservation of their character and setting.

This section will provide guidelines that will assist the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors when evaluating future construction and reconstruction in the La Grange historical designation, thus preserving and enhancing the unique historic character and setting. The ultimate goal of this plan is to assure that La Grange's heritage will remain a functioning asset to the community through continued use and enjoyment.

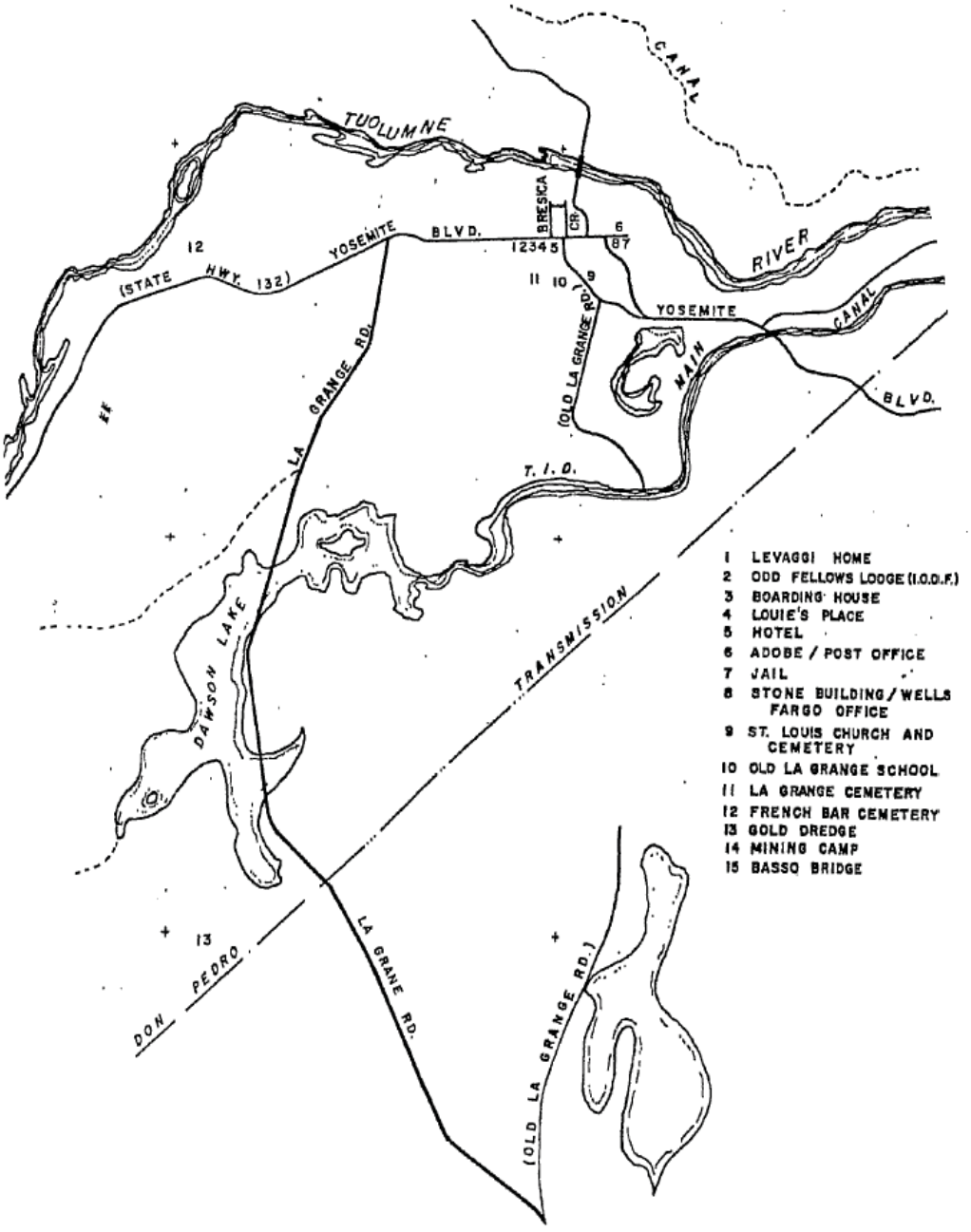
In order that the historical character and setting of the community is preserved, the Historical section is grouped into three categories:

1. Inventory of Building Details
   Identifies the predominant architectural details found within the community.

2. Suggested Design Principles and Standards for New Construction
   Intended to ensure the maximum compatibility of new construction with older buildings utilizing the Inventory of Building Details as a data base.

3. Suggested Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Buildings
   Specific actions to be considered or avoided to ensure the ongoing historic preservation.

HISTORICAL SITES



Inventory of Building Details

With many original buildings missing and their void being filled in by newer structures constructed over a long time span, no definitive architectural style or styles dominate. Even though there is no dominant architectural style, some similarities in building height, color, and landscaping exist. These similarities form the basis of this inventory. This inventory will establish a good foundation for planning and for evaluating proposed construction in the community.

Height: The average height of the older residences is 1 to 1 ½ stories consisting of a ground floor and sometimes additional attic rooms. Commercial buildings are either one or two stories in height.

Entrances: Door openings are placed at the ground floor level, reached by a short flight of stairs. Entrances are sheltered by a porch, at times extending across the entire frontage of buildings.

Color: Most buildings tend toward low intensity shades of white and gray, weathered wood, and redwood stain. Stone work is left natural. Roof coverings are generally wood shingles or composition roofing in grey shades.

Landscaping: Natural vegetation is an integral part of the La Grange setting. Yards are small with most of the landscaping to be found in front of the homes. Most yards utilize a combination of fruit and shade trees, shrubs, and fences for defining lots and private space.

Roofs: Most structures have either gable or hip roofs. Roofing materials are wood singles or grey composition shingles.

Suggested Design Principles and Standards for New Construction

The use of these design principles and standards is not intended to require new buildings to be an exact duplication of older styles, but to ensure the maximum compatibility of new construction with other buildings in the La Grange historical designation.

1. Height and Scale. It is important that new buildings should be constructed to a reasonable average height of existing adjacent buildings within established historical districts.

2. Relationship to Colors. The proper application of a color scheme to a building or a series of buildings can highlight important features and increase their overall appearance. Accenting or blending colors on building details is also desirable in enhancing the compatibility of structures.

3. Relationship of Landscaping. There is a predominance of a particular quality and quantity of landscaping. The concern here is more with mass and continuity. It is important that landscaping be placed to emphasize design rather than becoming an obscuring factor.

4. Continuity. Physical ingredients such as wood fences, wrought iron fences, brick walls, evergreen landscape masses, building facades, or combinations of these form continuous, cohesive walls of enclosure along the street.

5. Relationship of Roof. The majority of buildings have gable or hip roofs. Roofs are an important factor in the overall design of a building to help relate items such as height and scale to those of adjacent structures.

Suggested Guidelines for the Rehabilitation of Buildings and Structures

Due to the fact that many of the historic buildings have deteriorated or been destroyed, the emphasis of the Community Plan is placed on the preservation and rehabilitation of remaining buildings. Although stationary, structures are not static. It is necessary that they function today as they functioned a century ago and, indeed, should function a century hence. Change is inevitable. As structures age, they need maintenance and repair or alteration to accommodate new occupants and uses. This maintenance and change should be a compromise between yesterday and today at once to insure the architectural integrity of the structures and, at the same time, to enhance their utility.

The following eight fundamental concepts can be considered basic guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic property. They are followed by a detailed checklist for the application of the guidelines to carry out actual rehabilitation projects. The checklist suggests specific actions to be considered or avoided to insure the ongoing preservation of historic property.

1. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide a compatible use for historic property which will require minimum alteration to the property and its environment.

2. Rehabilitation work should not destroy the historic character of the property and its environment. The removal or alteration of any historic material or architectural features should be held to the minimum consistent with the proposed use.

3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of original features, substantiated by physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs, or the availability of architectural features from other properties.

4. Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize older structures and often predate the mass production of building materials should be treated with sensitivity.

5. Changes to the property and its environment which have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history of the property and the town. These changes may have developed significance in their own right, and this significance should be recognized and respected.

6. All historic property should be recognized as a product of its own time. Alterations that restore a building to an earlier appearance which the building never had, should be discouraged.

7. It is not the intent of these guidelines to discourage contemporary design of new buildings, additions to existing buildings, or landscaping in historic districts if such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the neighborhood, building, or its environment.

8. Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to historic property should be done in such a manner that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the original property would be unimpaired.

CHECKLIST FOR THE APPLICATION OF BASIC GUIDELINES

These guidelines suggest specifications which should be considered or avoided when remodeling or restoring existing structures.

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
La Grange	
Retaining distinctive features such as the size, scale, mass, color, and materials or buildings, including roofs, porches, stairways that give the town its historic character.	Introducing new construction or materials into the town which are incompatible with the character of the town and because of size, scale, color, and materials.
Using new plant materials, fencing, walkways, and street furniture which are compatible with the character of the town in size, scale, material, and color.	Introducing signs, street lighting, street furniture, new plant materials, fencing, walkways, and paving materials which are out of scale or inappropriate to the town.
Retaining landscape features such as gardens, street furniture, walkways, streets, and building setbacks which link historic properties to their environment.	Destroying the relationship of historic properties and their environment by widening existing streets, changing paving material, or by introducing poorly designed and poorly located new streets and parking lots, or introducing new construction incompatible with the character of the town.
Building: Lot	
Inspecting the site carefully to locate and identify plants, trees, fencing, walkways, and street furniture which might be an important part of the property's history and development.	

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Retaining plants, trees, fencing, walkways, and street furniture which reflect the property's history and development.	Making hasty changes to the appearance of the site by removing old plants, trees, fencing, walkways, and street furniture before evaluating their importance in the property's history and development.
Basing all decisions for new work on actual knowledge of the past appearance of the property found in photographs, drawings, newspapers, and tax records. If changes are made, they should be carefully evaluated in light of the past appearance of the site.	Over-restoring the site to an appearance it never had.
Retaining the basic topography which reflects the character of the property.	Altering the topography by extensive grading and cut and fill operations that will destroy the character of the site except where necessary for safety and efficiency.
Building: Exterior Features	
(Masonry Buildings)	
Retaining original masonry, or stone and mortar, whenever possible, without the application of any surface treatment.	Applying waterproof or water repellent coatings or other treatments unless required to solve a specific technical problem that has been studied and identified. Coatings are frequently unnecessary, expensive, and can accelerate deterioration of the masonry or stone.
Duplicating old mortar in composition, color, and texture.	Repointing with mortar of high Portland cement content can create a bond that is often stronger than the material. This can cause deterioration as a result of the differing coefficient of expansion and the differing porosity of the material and the mortar.
Duplicating old mortar in joint size, method of application, and joint profile.	Repointing with mortar joints of a differing size or joint profile, texture, or color.

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Cleaning masonry, or only when necessary, to halt deterioration always with the gentlest method possible, such as low pressure water and soft, natural bristle brushes.	Sandblasting brick or stone surfaces; this method of sand cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration.
Repairing stucco with a stucco mixture duplicating the original as closely as possible in appearance and texture.	Using chemical cleaning products which could have an adverse chemical reaction with the masonry or stone materials.
Repairing or replacing, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible.	Applying new material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as artificial brick siding, artificial cast stone or brick veneer.
Replacing missing architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railings, and shutters.	Removing architectural features, such as cornices, brackets, railings, shutters, window architraves, and doorway pediments. These are usually an essential part of a building's character and appearance, illustrating the continuity of growth and change.
Retaining the original or early color and texture of masonry surfaces, wherever possible. Brick or stone surfaces may have been painted or whitewashed for practical and aesthetic reasons.	Indiscriminate removal of paint from masonry surfaces. This may be historically incorrect and may also subject the building to harmful damage.
(Frame Buildings)	
Retaining original material, whenever possible.	Removing architectural features such as siding, cornices, brackets, railings, shutters, window architraves, and doorway pediments. These are, in most cases, an essential part of a building's character and appearance, illustrating the continuity of growth and change.

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Repairing or replacing, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible.	Resurfacing frame buildings with new material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed such as artificial stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, plastic or aluminum siding. Such material also can contribute to the deterioration of the structure from moisture and insect attacks.
(Roofs)	
Preserving the original roof shape.	Changing the original roof shape or adding features inappropriate to the essential character of the roof such as oversized dormer windows or picture windows.
Retaining the original roofing material, whenever possible.	Applying new roofing material that is inappropriate to the style of the building and the town.
Replacing deteriorated roof coverings with new material that matches the old in composition, size shape, color, and texture.	Replacing deteriorated roof coverings with new materials which differ to such an extent from the old in composition, size, shape, color, and texture that the historical integrity of the property is diminished.
Preserving or replacing, where necessary, all architectural features which give the roof its essential character, such as dormer windows, cupolas, cornices, brackets, chimneys, and cresting.	Stripping the roof of architectural features important to its character.
Placing television antennae and mechanical equipment, such as air conditioners, in an inconspicuous location.	

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Building: Exterior Features (cont).	
(Windows and Doors)	
Retaining existing window and door openings including sash, glass lintels, architraves, shutters and doors, pediments, hoods, steps, and all hardware.	Introducing new window and door openings into the window principal elevations of historic buildings, or enlarging or reducing window or door steps, openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes.
The stylistic period or periods a building represents. If replacement of window sash or doors is necessary, the replacement should duplicate the material, design, and the hardware of the older window sash or door.	Altering the size of window panes or sashes which are part of the structure's historic fabric. Such changes destroy the scale and proportion of the building.
	Discarding original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired and reused in place.
	Inappropriate new window or door features such as aluminum storm and screen window combinations that require the removal of original windows and doors, or the installation of plastic or metal strip awnings or fake shutters that disturb the character and appearance of the building.
(Porches and Steps)	
Retaining porches and steps which are appropriate to the building and its development. Porches or additions reflecting later architectural styles are often important to the building's historical integrity and, whenever possible, should be retained.	Removing or altering porches and steps which are appropriate to the building and its development represents.

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Repairing or replacing, where necessary, deteriorated architectural features of wood, iron, cast iron, terra-cotta, and brick.	Stripping porches and steps of original material and architectural features, such as hand rails, balusters, tile, columns, brackets, and roof decoration of wood, iron, cast iron, terra-cotta, tile, and brick.
Repairing or replacing, where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible.	Applying new material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as artificial cast stone, brick veneer, asbestos or asphalt shingles, or plastic or aluminum siding. Enclosing porches and steps in a manner that destroys their intended appearance.

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Building: Interior Features	
Retaining original material, architectural features, and hardware whenever possible, such as stairs, handrails, baluster, mantelpieces, cornices, chair rail, baseboard, panelings, doors and doorways, wallpaper, lighting fixtures, locks and doorknobs.	Removing original material, architectural features and hardware, except where essential for safety or efficiency.
Repairing or replacing where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible.	Installing new decorative material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed, such as vinyl, plastic, or imitation wood wall and floor coverings, except in utility areas such as kitchens and bathrooms.
Retaining original plaster whenever possible.	Destroying original plaster except where necessary for safety and efficiency.
Discovering and retaining original paint colors, wallpapers and other decorative motifs or where necessary, replacing them with colors, wallpapers or decorative motifs based on the original.	
Color	
Discovering and retaining original paint colors, or repainting with colors based on the original to illustrate the distinctive character of the property.	Repainting with colors that cannot be documented through research and investigation to be appropriate to the building and the neighborhood.
Plans and Function	
Using a building for its intended purpose.	Altering a building to accommodate an incompatible use requiring extensive alterations to the plan, materials, and the appearance of the building.
Finding an adaptive use, when necessary, which is compatible with the plan, structure, and appearance of the building.	

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Building: Interior Features (cont.)	
Retaining the basic plan of a building whenever possible.	Altering the basic plan of a building by demolishing principal walls, partitions and stairways.
Additions	
Keeping additions to historic buildings at a minimum and pursuing the use of similar scale, building materials, and texture.	Unnecessary additions to historic property.
Designing additions to be compatible in materials, size, scale, color, and texture with the earlier building and the area.	Additions which are incompatible with the earlier building and the area in materials, size, scale, and texture.
Using contemporary designs compatible with the character and mood of the building or the area.	Imitating an earlier style or period of architecture in additions, except in rare cases where a contemporary design would detract from the architectural unity of an ensemble or group. Especially avoid imitating an earlier style of architecture in additions that have a completely contemporary function such as a gas station.
Mechanical Services: Heating, Electrical, and Plumbing	
Installing necessary building services in areas and space that will require the least possible alteration to the plan, materials, and appearance of the building.	Causing unnecessary damage to the plan, materials, and appearance of the building when installing mechanical services.
Installing the vertical runs of ducts, pipes, and cables in closets, service rooms, and wall cavities.	Installing vertical runs of ducts, pipes, and cables in places where they will be a visual intrusion.
	Cutting holes in important architectural features, such as cornices, decorative ceilings, and paneling.

CONSIDER	TRY TO AVOID
Mechanical Services: Heating, Electrical, and Plumbing (cont.)	
Selecting mechanical systems that best suit the building.	Installing “dropped” acoustical ceilings to hid inappropriate mechanical systems. This destroys the proportions and character of the rooms.
Rewiring early lighting fixtures.	
Having exterior electrical and telephone cables installed underground.	Having exterior electrical and telephone cables attached to the principal elevations of the building.
Safety and Code Requirements	
Comply with code requirements in such a manner that the essential character of a property is preserved intact.	
Investigating variances for historic properties afforded under some local codes.	
Installing adequate fire prevention equipment in a manner which does minimal damage to the appearance or historic fabric of a property.	
Providing access for the handicapped without damaging the essential character of a property.	

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

The following books, magazines, and organizations will provide sound, basic information about the rehabilitation and care of historic property.

Books

Bullock, Orin M., Jr., The Restoration Manual: An Illustrated Guide to Preservation and Restoration of Old Buildings, Norwalk, Connecticut: Silvermine Publishers, Inc., 1966.

Cantacuzino, Sherban, New Uses for Old Buildings, London: Architectural Press, 1975.

Gray, Thorne B., Quest for Deep Gold: The Story of La Grange, California, La Grange, California, 1973,

Historic Walker's Point, Inc., Preservation Minded Home Improvements: The Exterior, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Insall, Donald W., The Care of Old Buildings Today: A Practical Guide, London: Architectural Press, 1972.

Stephen, George, Remodeling Old Houses Without Destroying Their Character, New York: Alfred A. Knoff.

Magazine

The Old-House Journal, a monthly publication, published by the Old-House Journal Corporation, 199 Berkeley Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217

Organizations

Committee on Historic Resources; American Institute of Architects; 1735 New York Avenue, Northwest; Washington, D.C. 20006

E Clampus Vitus, Estanislao Chapter; Jack Brotherton, Historian

Interagency Historic Architectural Services Program; Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation; National Park Service; Department of the Interior; Washington, D.C. 20240

Office of Preservation Services; National Trust for Historic Preservation; 740-748 Jackson Place, Northwest; Washington, D.C. 20006

Stanislaus County Historical Society; c/o Jack Brotherton; 1226 Fiori Avenue; Modesto, California 95350