

City of Orange, CA
Saturday, February 28, 2026

Title 17. Zoning

Chapter 17.17. HISTORIC DISTRICTS

§ 17.17.010. Title.

Historic District Zone as amended, previous reference "Old Towne Overlay Zone" and "Old Towne Districts," supplements the existing base zoning standards for residential, commercial, and industrial development within the City's historic areas.

(Prior code 17.10.010A; Ord. 38-88; Ord. 12-95)

§ 17.17.020. Purpose and Intent.

The City Council has determined that the spirit, character and history of the City, State, and nation are reflected in the historic structures, improvements, natural features, sites, and areas of significance located within the City, and that in the face of ever-increasing pressures of modernization, cultural historic resources and historic districts located within the City are threatened with alteration, removal or demolition.

These structures and districts represent the City's unique historical, social and cultural foundations, and should be preserved as living parts of community life and development in order to build a greater understanding of the City's past and to give future generations the opportunity to appreciate, understand and enjoy the City's rich heritage.

This chapter is intended to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare by:

- A. Providing a means of reviewing development projects to ensure that these projects are compatible with community aesthetics including architectural design, massing and scale, context, signage, and landscaping.
- B. Providing and encouraging preservation and complementary new development within the existing components of the Old Towne Historic District including the Plaza, Downtown Core, Spoke Streets, Nutwood Tract, and residential quadrants, and other districts as established.
- C. Preserving diverse architectural styles, patterns of development and design preferences reflecting the City's history and encouraging complementary design and construction and inspiring a more livable urban environment.
- D. Integrating the preservation of cultural historic resources, and historic districts into the public and private land use management and development processes.
- E. Stabilizing neighborhoods through the preservation of cultural resources and the establishment of historic districts, thus enhancing the City's attraction to tourists and visitors thereby stimulating business and industry.
- F. Encouraging public participation in identifying and preserving historic and architectural resources thereby increasing community pride in the City's cultural heritage.

(Prior code 17.70.010; Ord. 38-88; Ord. 12-95)

§ 17.17.030. District Established.

One district has been established, the Old Towne District as delineated on a map on file in the Planning Division, City Hall, City of Orange. The official map is entitled "Old Towne Boundaries." Said map is incorporated into this title by reference and shall be deemed as much a part of this title as if the information upon the map were fully described herein. Other historic districts may be established in the future.

(Prior code 17.70.010B; Ord. 38-88; Ord. 12-95; Ord. 15-98)

§ 17.17.040. Establishment Procedure.

Application for a historic district shall comply with the zoning amendment procedure for a change in the zoning district classification upon designation approval by City Council as prescribed under Section **17.10.020**.

(Prior code 17.70.040; Ord. 38-88; Ord. 12-95)

§ 17.17.050. Criteria for Establishment.

An historic district may be established to preserve landmarks and areas exemplary of architectural, archaeological, cultural, economic, social, or historical value if the landmark or area meets the following criteria:

- A. The resource exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history and possesses an integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association; and
 - 1. It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction, or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or
 - 2. It contributes to the significance of an historic area, being a geographically definable area possessing a concentration of historic or scenic properties or thematically related grouping of properties which contribute to each other and are unified aesthetically, by plan or physical development; or
 - 3. It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particular transportation modes, or distinctive examples of park or community planning; or
 - 4. It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation; or
 - 5. It has a unique location or singular physical characteristic or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the City of Orange.
 - B. It is one of the few remaining examples in the City, region, state, or nation possessing distinguishing characteristics of an architectural or historical type, or specimen; or
 - C. It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history; or
 - D. It is representative of the work of a notable builder, designer or architect.
- (Ord. 38-88; Ord. 12-95)

§ 17.17.060. Development Standards.

A historic district zone includes additional regulations and uses over base zoning of a particular area to encourage historic preservation and complementary new development. To promote orderly development and preservation within historic districts the following standards and their amendments shall apply: Historic Preservation Design Standards for Old Towne Orange, Historic Preservation Objective Design Standards (as applicable to qualifying multi-family housing projects), the Southwest Project Area Design Standards, the Orange Eichler Design Standards, the General Plan's Historic Preservation Element sample guidelines including the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation. (Ord. 12-95; Ord. 14-18, 2018; Ord. 31-24, 12/10/2024)

§ 17.17.065. (Reserved)

§ 17.17.070. Use of State Historic Building Code.

Pursuant to the **California Health and Safety Code** 18950 et seq., any alteration made to a cultural resource or structure within a historic district for the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration or relocation of such structures shall be made according to the requirements of the State Historical Building Code. (Ord. 38-88; Ord. 12-95)