

Heritage Square – Origins and Significance

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Ingrid Peña

The Problem

Heritage Square is a house museum that consists of historic structures from different parts of Los Angeles and (assumed) different time periods. The structures were physically moved from their original locations to Heritage Square to avoid demolition. While the houses have been saved, they have lost some of their context because of their physical relocation. GIS serves as an appropriate tool for approaching this issue because it can map the original locations of the houses to provide some contextual reference to their beginnings in relation to their current place of residence at Heritage Square.

The Map Process

The data used to help map the original locations of the houses was provided by Heritage Square and includes the original addresses, or at least the nearest cross streets. Confirmation of some of the data also came from *bigorangelandmarks.blogspot.com*. The format of the addresses came in a PDF so it required entering the information into Excel in preparation for geocoding. It was also necessary to label each column in Excel e.g., Name, Address, City, State and Zip Code, to prepare for the processing of the addresses in ArcMap. Once the addresses were entered, the Excel data was added to the map (Arc Map Base Map, Streets) via the “Add Data” button. After selecting the Excel data sheet in ArcMap, and selecting “Geocode Addresses,” the addresses were geocoded and the result was a successful 100% match. However, after double-checking the addresses and locations against Google Maps, one location was not matching. Upon further investigation, I discovered that I was using the wrong zip code and after looking within “Review/Rematch Addresses” in the Geocoding toolbar, I saw that ArcMap matched the address to the zip code but to a different variation of the street address e.g., S. Figueroa St. vs. N. Figueroa St. This meant that I needed to edit the zip code, un-match and rematch the address to map to the correct location. In the end, I was successful in correcting the location.

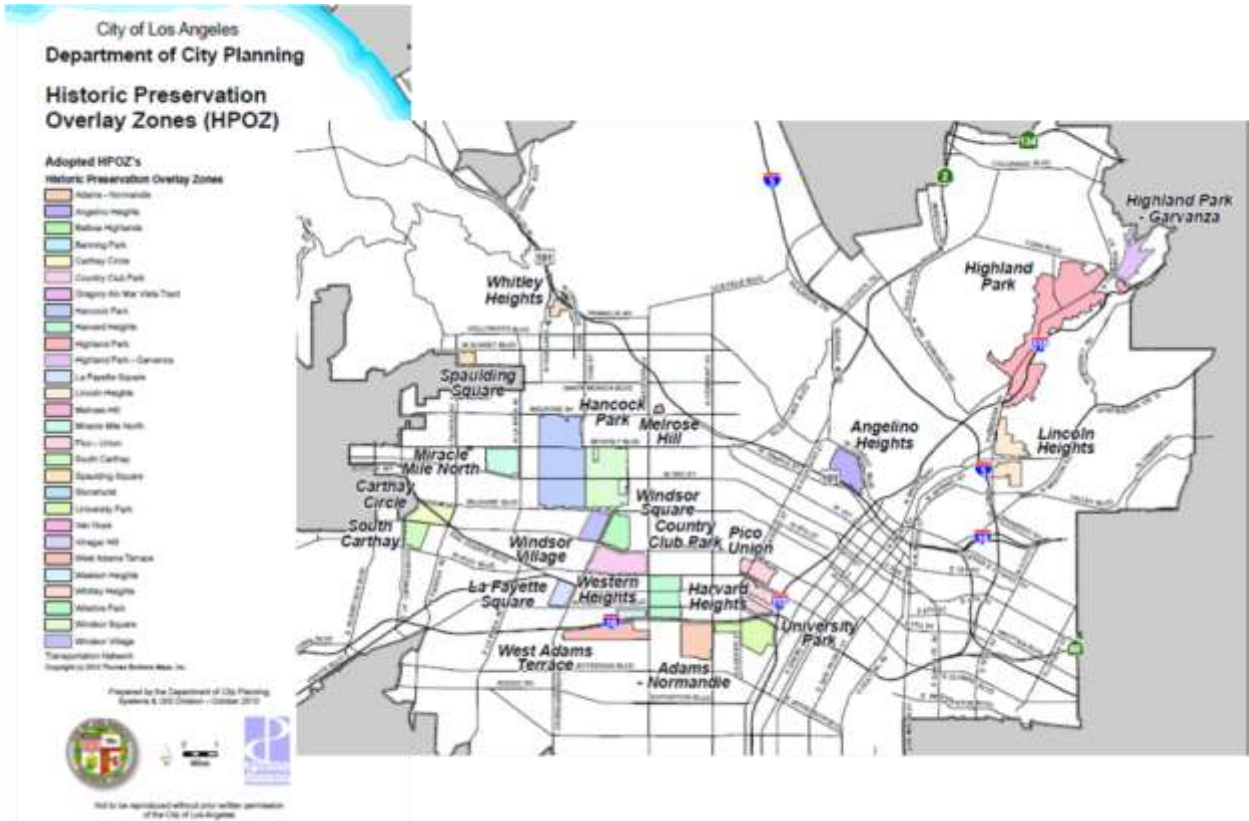
The Findings

The assumption I was working off of was that the houses at Heritage Square were from different parts of Los Angeles and from different eras. Based on the map below, it confirms that the structures *did* come from different parts of Los Angeles but the concentration of half of the houses came from near the downtown area. Three other structures came from the Pasadena area while one came from just west of Culver City.

Original Locations of Heritage Square Houses



Given how large the Los Angeles area is, I would have thought that there would be more houses from other areas. One could be concerned that more is not being done to preserve the city's historic and cultural resources. However, thanks to Los Angeles' Historic Preservation Overlay Zones¹, many historic neighborhoods have some form of protection, seen below.



With regards to the other assumption I had about the houses being built in different eras, after conducting my research, I learned that I was wrong. All of the structures were built in the late 19th century, specifically between 1876 and 1899, thus are largely part of the same era.² As such, the architectural styles of the buildings share a great deal of similarity.

There are a total of eight structures at Heritage Square. Six of the eight buildings employed some form of the Queen Anne style. Queen Anne was the dominant style for American houses between 1880 and 1910 and is loosely defined by combining elements of the picturesque from medieval Gothic and the rationalism of Classicism. The reason for its popularity stemmed from its ability to successfully capture the somber mood of the 1870's.³

Coming off of the post-Civil-War extravagance, America fell into a severe economic depression in the 1870's which lasted the entire decade. This caused architects to move away from the flamboyant nature of the previous decade's preference of High Victorian Gothic and Second Empire styles inspired by Britain and Europe. Rather than a complete departure from the picturesque of the aforementioned, architects of the 1870's attempted to fuse a softer, more modest version of the styles while also employing more vernacular traditions of medieval buildings (Old English). The spread of these ideas was helped by architectural journals. The result: the American Queen Anne. Because of the ambiguity of the name and the different sources used, architects took some creative liberty in executing the style that sometimes made it difficult to identify its common characteristics.⁴ The following houses from Heritage Square are good examples of how Queen Anne was interpreted differently.

Palms Depot 1887



The Palms train depot was originally located along a local Southern Pacific Railroad line in the current day city of Palms⁵. It is built in the Eastlake style, named after Charles Locke Eastlake, which grew from the Queen Anne motif⁶. Typical of this style is the asymmetry of the building, wooden detailing e.g., fish scales and the pointed gable roofs.

John J. Ford House 1888



This house was built by John J. Ford, a "prolific and well-known wood carver". His work is also present at the California State Capitol building and the Iolani Palace in Hawaii. The house embodies a combination of Italianate (use of Corinthian columns, classic temple pediment and porch) and Queen Anne (asymmetry, applied wooden detailing).⁷

Valley Knudsen 1883-84



This house uses a mix of styles from the French Mansard roof, Classical elements (symmetrical structure, columned porch) and Queen Anne (fish shingles, ornamental elements). Its former location is in the present day HPOZ, Lincoln Heights⁸. Lincoln Heights is one of Los Angeles' first suburbs and established one of the city's first streetcar lines to connect the East Los Angeles subdivision with downtown⁹.

Hale House 1887-88



The Hale House's original location is in the HPOZ of Highland Park, further NE of Downtown than Lincoln Heights. Highland Park encompasses nearly every style popular from the 1880s through the 1940s – Queen Anne, Shingle, Craftsman, Mission Revival and Tudor Revival¹⁰. This house is a classic depiction of Queen Anne¹¹: fish scale shingles, corner tower and turret, porch, asymmetrical.¹²

Lincoln Methodist Church



The Lincoln Methodist Church was originally located in NW Pasadena, on Lincoln Ave and Orange Grove Bl. It is a mix of styles including Carpenter Gothic (a flavor of Victorian), Queen Anne and Neo-classical. The corner steeple and pitched gable roof are typical of how Protestant churches were built at that time.¹³

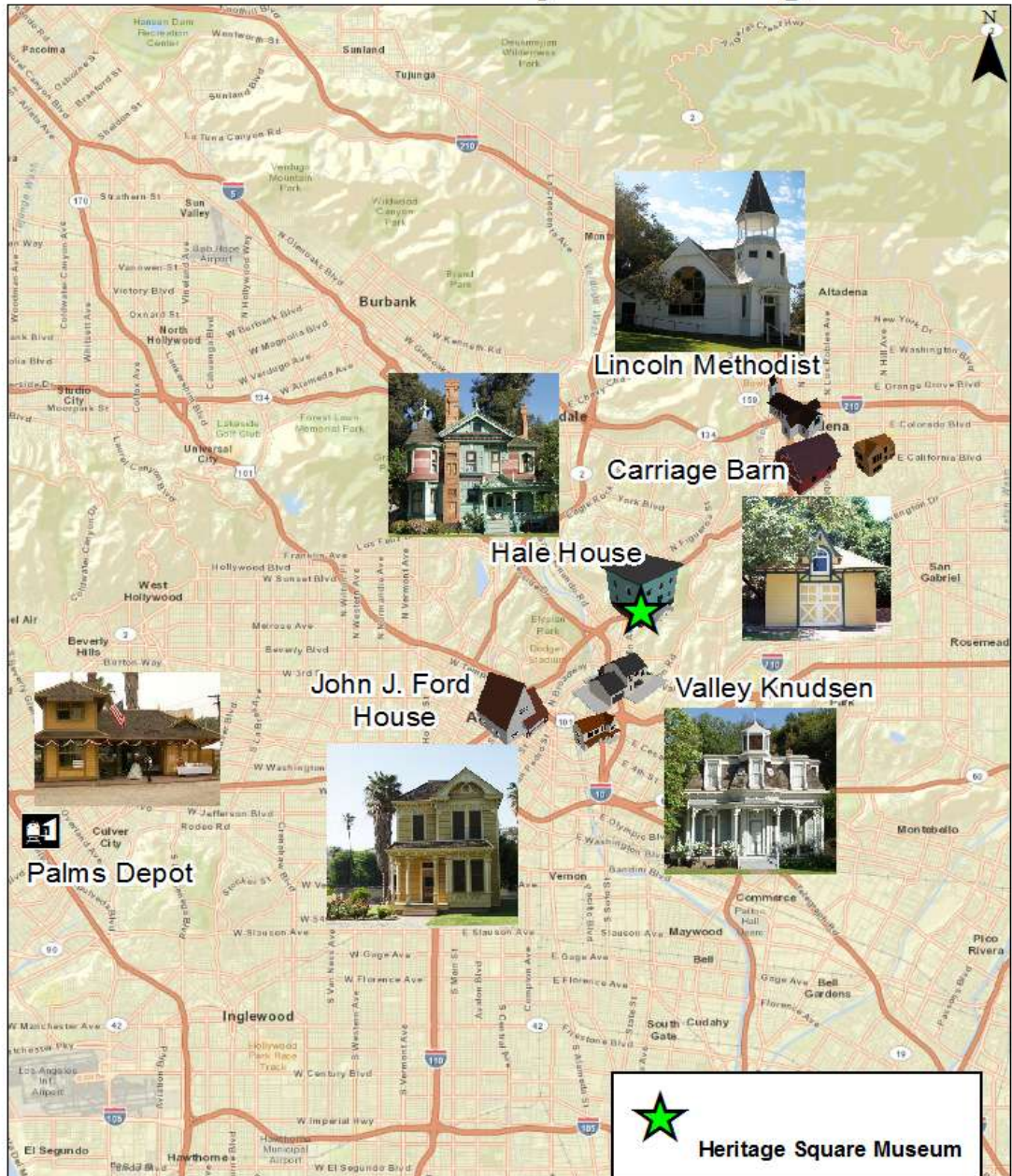
Carriage Barn



This barn was built on the grounds of what is present day Pasadena's Huntington Memorial Hospital. Its original use was to stable 2 horses and one carriage. The barn's pitched roof and decorative stick-work are typical of the Carpenter Gothic style.¹⁴

The following map highlights the six structures that are reflective of the Queen Anne style. Based on the various locations, it is apparent that this was indeed a popular architectural style of the time.

Queen Anne Style Buildings



Map Source: ArcMap Base Map
Data Source: Heritage Square Museum



The Italianate was another popular style within the 19th century, but came a little earlier than Queen Anne. This architectural theme was popularized in the middle of the 19th century and is best characterized as a fusion of Gothic and Classical, inspired by vernacular farmhouses in the Italian countryside.¹⁵ Some of the defining Gothic details can be seen in the Perry/Mt. Pleasant House, pictured below left, and include asymmetrical shape, bay windows and porch. Classical elements include the semi-circular arches, the corner quoins, and the Greek Ionic columns. The shallow roof that projects beyond the wall and the large brackets under the overhanging eaves are also characteristic of this style.¹⁶

Perry/Mt Pleasant House 1876



Longfellow-Hastings Octagon 1848



Finally, the one house in Heritage Square that isn't in a mainstream architectural style of the late 19th century is the Longfellow-Hastings Octagon House, pictured above right. Inspired by progressive American thinking and the desire to reflect this innovation in American homes, architect Orson S. Fowler experimented with the octagonal shape to avoid wasted space in the house and create a unique shape. He believed that most American houses were too big and were not the most efficient use of space.¹⁷ His spirit attracted Gilbert Longfellow who built the only Octagon house in Pasadena, CA.¹⁸

While there isn't any household income data from the late 19th century, based on the information we have about the owners of the aforementioned homes, they tended to have substantial income. William Hayes Perry, the owner of the Perry House was a prominent businessman and lumber baron. The Hale house belonged to James Hale who was a motor man for the railroad and was married to Bessie who bought and sold real estate. John J. Ford, owner of the Ford House, was a well-known and established wood carver. Valley Knudsen founded the organization, *Los Angeles Beautiful*, that "worked to enhance the natural and cultural environment" of the city.²⁰ Typically, houses with multiple stories and elaborate ornamentation suggested and reflected their owner's wealth. Taken altogether, one could speculate that those who had the means to travel out west and build their own homes with such ornate detail likely had the income to do so.

Contrary to my ingoing theory, the structures at Heritage Square largely depict the architectural styles of one time period, the late 19th century, vs. from a variety of eras. Also, unlike what I assumed, most of the buildings came from the Los Angeles downtown area to northeast of downtown vs. from more neighborhoods. In conclusion, the museum currently captures one part of American history and architecture and, has the potential to expand its collection to include other styles such as the California bungalow, Mission revival Tudor revival, California ranch and mid-century modern.

End Notes

1. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Los Angeles' HPOZ's, <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/files/Los%20Angeles%20HPOZ%20Map%20October%202010.pdf> (accessed November 14, 2012).
2. Kim Hernandez, Iris Greenberg, Diana Robertson, and Karen Burd, "Heritage Square: Working Walking Tour," PDF (Los Angeles: Heritage Square Museum).
3. Mark Gerlenter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in their Cultural and Technological Context* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), p.178.
4. Ibid.
5. Hernandez et al., "Heritage Square: Walking Tour," PDF.
6. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, "19th Century Styles," July 14, 2005, <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/files/19th%20Century%20Styles.pdf?phpMyAdmin=656bde215507386e6e1906d727c09691> (accessed November 14, 2012).
7. Hernandez et al., "Heritage Square: Walking Tour," PDF.
8. Ibid.
9. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Los Angeles' HPOZ's: Lincoln Heights, <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/hpoz/la/lincoln-heights> (accessed November 14, 2012).
10. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, Los Angeles' HPOZ's: Highland Park-Garvanza, <http://www.preservation.lacity.org/hpoz/la/highland-park> (accessed November 14, 2012).
11. Hernandez et al., "Heritage Square: Walking Tour," PDF.
12. Department of City Planning, Office of Historic Resources, "19th Century Styles," July 14, 2005.
13. Hernandez et al., "Heritage Square: Walking Tour," PDF.
14. Ibid.
15. Gerlenter, p. 161
16. Ibid

End Notes (cont.)

17. Sam Watters, "Lost L.A. - Octagon house in Heritage Square has a multidimensional history," August 22, 2009, *LA Times*, <http://www.latimes.com/features/home/la-hm-lostla22-2009aug22,0,793355.story> (accessed November 16, 2012).

18. Hernandez et al., "Heritage Square: Walking Tour," PDF.

19. United States Census Bureau, History: Through the Decades: Fast Facts, http://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/ (accessed November 23, 2012).

20. United States Census Bureau, History: Census Records, http://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/decennial_census_records/census_records_2.html (accessed November 23, 2012).

21. Hernandez et al., "Heritage Square: Walking Tour," PDF.

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