

## 2015 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

### **Dana Adobe**



The 176 year-old Dana Adobe is on the National Register of Historic Places and is an official project of Save America's Treasures. The home, a remnant of an 1837 Mexican land grant, sits astride the El Camino Real and was built by Captain William Goodwin Dana during the Rancho era, a pivotal transition in California history. The Dana Adobe Nipomo Amigos non-profit organization (DANA) identified the Dana Adobe as California's best example of a Mexican-era adobe with a unique architectural blending of New England and Mexican influences. It has one of California's earliest wood-shingled roofs with a rare, second story cupola. The adobe sits on a unique site with evidence of human occupation that includes pre-contact Native American habitation, the Mission era under Spanish rule, Mexican governance, and statehood through the modern period. The rancho's cultural diversity included Chumash and other native peoples, Mexican Californians, Americans, Chinese, African Americans, Hawaiians and Europeans.

DANA's intent was to restore the adobe back to its finished look of 1850. To accomplish this, the organization applied for and was awarded a series of major state and foundation grants, and attracted support from local builders, service groups, businesses, philanthropists and the California Conservation Corps. The Secretary of the Interior Standards for adobe restoration were followed to preserve as much of the original fabric and materials as possible. Removal of 1970s cement plaster had to be done in stages, especially where the underlying adobe material was most severely damaged, in order to prevent catastrophic collapse of the structure. Original adobe material was recycled as mortar and new adobe bricks made to build courses in stages. The walls were reinforced by vertical rebar inserts and horizontal steel rods where adjacent interior walls abutted. Archaeologists were employed to guide restoration of a large room and replacement of a concrete slab with a wooden veranda. Chumash stone scrapers and chert flakes were found during the work, giving support to historical

references of close inter-cultural cooperation at this site between Native Americans and Californios.

In 2008, DANA developed a nature education program to complement the cultural program offered at the adobe. Out of that program grew the plans and funding to develop the DANA Cultural Center. The Center will include a visitor center, the Dana Adobe, and a Chumash interpretive area to provide community gathering places for visitors to connect their life experiences with the cross-cultural stories of the site. Throughout the restoration of the adobe and planning for the historical park, public participation was encouraged through several public charrettes and more than two dozen meetings with Native American representatives. DANA continues to collaborate with the local Chumash kinship group, Yak Tityu Tityu to ensure the authenticity of Native American interpretive elements. The restored Dana Adobe and the 130 acres of preserved land, engage the visitor in the site's ecological and cultural history, and reveals how actions over time reshape our future.

Learn more about [the DANA Cultural Center](#).