

2016 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

Santa Ysabel Restoration Project (General Store and Hoover Barn)



Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) purchased and restored two historic sites in the rural town of Santa Ysabel, San Diego County, as part of an effort to restore the area's cultural and historic landscape. The 19th century buildings—an adobe store and a wood barn—are two of the rarest types of buildings in San Diego County and both were at a high risk for loss.

SOHO purchased the Santa Ysabel General Store in December 2011. The only false-front adobe store left in the county, it was built by John Curlee in 1884 with the wood-frame addition being added about ten years later; pharmacist David L. Hoover purchased the building soon after its construction. Over the years, it served as a grocery, dry goods and feed store; post office; stage stop; western wear shop; and barbershop, among other things, and more recently has been home to several antique stores. Many of the families who ran the store over the years still live in Santa Ysabel and helped to provide the interpretive narrative.

The project included major restoration of the store's exterior, original historic signage, and, with the help of paint forensics, restoration of the original exterior color. The interior was recreated to its 19th century appearance based on historic photographs and ghost lines. Restoration was completed by spring 2015. The store opened its doors for business in October 2012 while under restoration, both to begin bringing in funds and to provide site interpretation to the public by allowing them to see a preservation project in progress. Since its restoration, the landmark building has quickly reprised its role as the most important heritage site still standing in this historic farming town and is once again a working general store as it was for more than 100 years.

The H-frame Hoover barn, with a central hall plan, was built on Washington Street behind the Santa Ysabel General Store in the late 19th century by David L. Hoover, who managed the store and a hotel next door. Built in approximately 1890, the Hoover Barn is a large 3,000 square foot Dutch-style barn and significantly it is a rare remaining example of the wood barn in San Diego, the likes of which once dotted the region's rural landscape. It's an important, increasingly precious cultural resource that speaks of the backcountry's vast ranching and agricultural uses. First phase restoration completed by January 2016 included repairing buckled walls and replacing missing boards and non-historic wood siding; preserving and restoring character-defining materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques; and installing upgraded utilities and services. Later phased work included roof replacement, reinstalled hay pulleys, and reconstruction of the historic cupola. The Hoover Barn will provide Santa Ysabel with a much needed community space for gatherings, festivals, exhibits, weddings, and other community activities.

Learn more about the [Santa Ysabel General Store](#) and [Hoover Barn](#).