

It's Official: Floral Park Is Now A National Historic District!



On February 2, 2023, the Floral Park neighborhood was listed as the Floral Park Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

The Floral Park Historic District is the largest historic district in the City of Santa Ana and the second largest in Orange County. This is a significant achievement for the neighborhood by the Floral Park Historic District Committee.

The Floral Park Historic District Committee was established by the Floral Park Neighborhood Association (FPNA) in 2008. The committee undertook a volunteer effort to photograph, document and catalog each of the neighborhood's 636 homes to respond to the comprehensive application processes established by the State and Federal offices. The committee realized in 2018, the Herculean project required the services of a professional consultant. Local Santa Ana historian, Dylan Almendral, was retained to complete the lengthy application and lead the project to its completion.

The Floral Park Neighborhood Association will

not be adopting any type of review committee to police the historical character of properties within the historic district; however, it is the hope that the historic district will serve as an educational vehicle for continued preservation. The creation of the historic district will facilitate a tangible link to the past and a way to bring meaning to history and to the lives of the neighbors. FPNA invested a substantial amount of time and resources in this process with the goal that the designation will inspire owners to preserve the character of the home and streets while continuing to welcome growth and innovation within the neighborhood.

The U.S. federal government designates historic districts through the United States Department of Interior

under the auspices of the National Park Service. Federally designated historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but listing usually imposes no restrictions on what property owners may do with a designated property. But they do give major bragging rights. Plus, historic district designation typically increases residential property values by 5-35% per decade over the values in similar, undesignated neighborhoods.

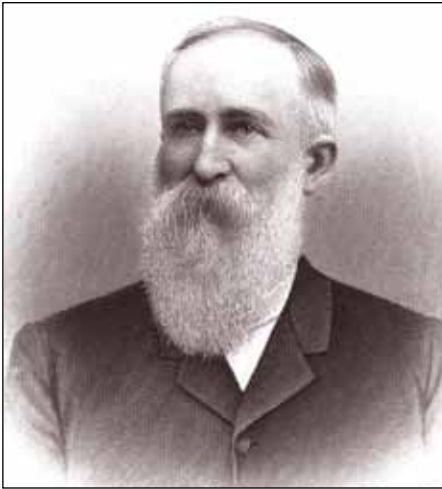
THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The neighborhood was declared a national historic district based on its historical significance, architectural distinction, preservation and association with the lives of significant persons.

Floral Park Historic District served as the premier neighborhood for many of Santa Ana's early political leaders, prominent business leaders and the well-to-do, representing the city's growth as the commercial center in the early development of Santa Ana and Orange County. Floral Park has also been home to international royalty, noted authors, and prominent architects and designers.



The Floral Park Historic District features a wide array of architectural styles including this Spanish Colonial Revival Home built on North Park Boulevard in 1926.



William Henry Spurgeon, (October 10, 1829 – June 20, 1915) is credited with founding the city of Santa Ana, California. Spurgeon was also the first mayor of the city.

The neighborhood contains a diverse and well-preserved collection of various architectural styles ranging from Victorian Mansions of the early 1900s to the Mid-Century Modern homes of the 1950s. A majority of the homes within Floral Park originate from the Revival era of the 1920s and 1930s with examples of Spanish Colonial, Norman Cottage, Tudor, Colonial Revival, Mission Style, Craftsman, Mediterranean, Monterey, Italian Renaissance, Neoclassical, Streamline Moderne, Hollywood Regency, French Eclectic, Prairie, Modernistic, Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Tiki Modern and Split-Level and other popular designs in post-World War I California.

Floral Park features vestiges of the early streetcar suburban streetscapes



The Frank Greenwald House, a Victorian farm house built in Greenleaf Street in 1894, is the earliest remaining home built in the Floral Park Historic District.

with narrow lots, generous setbacks, small detached rear garages in the southern portion of the neighborhood grid, and early automobile streetscape featuring curvilinear streets in the north. There was heavily natural landscape influence and land space architecture to provide two different living experiences in one neighborhood. The scale of the homes, the mature tree canopy, the architectural character and style, and homes that fit comfortably in their generous lots exemplify a bygone era of residential development not replicated by the economics of contemporary suburban planning and development.



In 1910, what is now Floral Park was primarily orange and walnut groves dotted with a Victorian grove houses.



Ad in the Santa Ana Register announcing the opening of North Broadway Park, an upscale housing development north of Santa Clara Street.

HISTORY

On October 27, 1869, William Henry Spurgeon and Major William Bradford founded Santa Ana as a speculative town site on the Spanish land grant known as Rancho Santiago de Santa Ana. The purchase consisted of 74 acres, at the cost of \$594.00 from Jacob Ross, who purchased the land from Zenobia Yorbade Rowland, granddaughter to Antonio Yorba, the original grantee. That subsequent April, the land was

split between Spurgeon and Bradford, with Bradford later selling his interest. The Spurgeon portion of the land comprises the easterly half of the tract.

By December of 1870, the city was 24 blocks, all staked, surveyed, recorded and ready for sale. This city was then known as Santa Ana. The town site was 43 acres bounded by First St., Spurgeon St., Seventh St. and West St. (now Broadway). Spurgeon opened his first general store at the southwest corner of Sycamore and 4th, serving as the city center.

In 1877, the opportunity arose for Santa Ana to claim its crown as the centerpiece of the region: the arrival of the Santa Pacific Railroad, extending from Anaheim. At this time, Spurgeon formed the Western Development Company with J. H. Fruit and James McFadden. Later that year, Western



The Anton Segerstrom family were among the many notable Orange County families to make Floral Park their home. They built their home at 1914 Victoria Drive in 1930.

Development Company purchased 160 acres of Northeast of the original town site to move the business district away from 4th and Main. This effort failed, and residential subdivisions were planned and constructed. On June 1 of 1886, Santa Ana incorporated as a City of Los Angeles County, with W. H. Spurgeon as its first mayor. Soon, the efforts of Spurgeon and McFadden to secure a partition and separate organization of Orange County, with Santa Ana as the county seat, were realized. The bill establishing Orange County passed on March 11, 1889.

By 1900, the City of Santa Ana was expanding quickly. The civic and commercial areas were the city's core, and the county centered at the intersection of Main and Fourth. Santa Ana grew in all directions. The region of Santa Ana where Floral Park became situated was on the northern most reaches of Santa Ana. The city grew outward, with residential neighborhoods developing to the north, south and east of the city center.

Agricultural uses predominated in the outlying areas, with cultivated fields and orchards dotted with widely scattered farm houses. Among the several tracts that would make up Floral Park, the original tract to first carry that name was the property of the Greenwald brothers, Herbert R. and Oscar. With Oscar's portion later acquired by Norman B. Greenwald, the tract was in the family for 45 years before 1923. This original tract, bound by Santa Clara Avenue, 17th, Greenleaf and Flower streets. Floral Park took this name in the 1990s as part of a city-wide rebranding effort and the Floral Park Neighborhood Association formation.

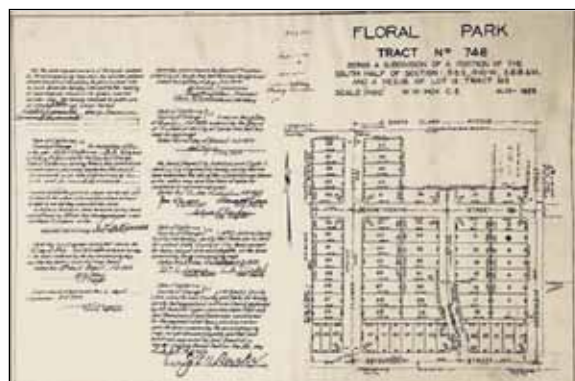
The development of Floral Park began at opposite ends. It work edits way toward the middle until 1939, when the northern and southern halves of Heliotrope Drive connected at Santa Clara Avenue. Several tracts made up Floral Park, with pockets of larger-scale homes interspersed among moderately sized homes of the era.

Allison Honer, in 1923, was the first to break ground in developing



this region of Santa Ana. Before 1923, there was limited small bungalow development in the southeastern corner of the boundary, resembling that of streetcar suburban design, aligning with Broadway and 17th St. Honer, his partners, and other independent builders began developing homes during the mid to late 1920s. Construction and development of Flora Park continued unceasingly until World War II when the nation shifted to wartime production and lumber was valuable war materiel.

The natural landscape dictated the northern boundary of Floral Park. Santiago Creek formed the curving Riverside Dr., the northern most street in the neighborhood. This curvilinear design is echoed through the entirety of the northern sector of the neighborhood. South of Santa Clara Ave., rectilinear



Floral Park track map from 1929 shows the original layout of Honer's initial development which incorporated portions of Flower, 17th Street, 19th Street, Heliotrope Drive and Greenleaf Street.

streets reigned supreme, buttressed by Santa Clara to the north and 19th St. to the south, creating long rectilinear residential blocks. It is important to note that this curvilinear development was the first compared to other developments in other parts of the county. In the 1920s and '30s, the other cities and towns in the county were still heavily influenced by rectilinear streetcar streetscape. Compared to Orange, Fullerton and Anaheim, streetscapes featuring early automobile/curvilinear grids were not present until after World War II.

The streets are lined with myriad types of trees: mature oaks and sycamores occupy space in the parkways adjacent to the pavement sidewalks and concrete streets. Medians were not present in the southern portion of the neighborhood but are located primarily along North Park Blvd., where traffic used to connect to Broadway and served as a thoroughfare on the approach to the Flower St. (Santiago Creek) Bridge. Today, this connection no longer exists. The credit for the layout of the streets in Floral Park lies with Allison Honer. He used many of the "City Beautiful" movement elements and maintained a high standard of community feeling and organization.

The oldest portions of Floral Park exist in the southeastern reaches of the district, from 19th St. to 17th St., 18th St., Jefferson Pl., North Ross St. and Greenleaf Ave. Within this portion of the district, one of the original farm homes exists at 1810 Greenleaf. It is a Queen Anne Victorian. The post-World War II era brought minimal traditional homes and ranch-style homes into the neighborhood to fill out the remaining lots and complete Floral Park's growth.

During this time, the various subdivisions of Floral Park had racial covenants placed on their deeds. Allison Honer placed covenants on entire tracts under his development. Given the time and place, the use of racial or otherwise restrictive covenants was



New Floral Park home under construction on Greenleaf Street in the 1930s.

commonplace. Many smaller developers within the historical boundary and other parts of the city utilized these divisive legal tools. The practice of racial covenants is not to be confused with the practice of "redlining," as found in other cities across the country.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

In the 1980s, the City of Santa Ana began a rebranding campaign, and many of the individual neighborhoods formed supportive organizations. Floral Park was the name of one of the early subdivisions that make up the greater area. Floral Park Neighborhood Association (F.P.N.A.) was borne from a split with the North Santa Ana Association in May of 1992. Within a few years, Floral Park began its Home and Garden Tour, showcasing the historic architecture and robust and romantic gardens tended to by residents. This event is now a highly-anticipated annual production with various homes on rotation for showing and tours and is the primary funding source for F.P.N.A. For over twenty-five years, F.P.N.A. has been a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving the integrity and the historical significance of the homes, developing a sense of unity within and educating the neighborhood, surrounding communities, and the City of Santa Ana of the historical significance of the neighborhood, its architectural value and the impact it has had on the City and County of Orange since its origin, this, the historic neighborhood that we call home!

For stories, photos and videos go to FloralPark.com/history.

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