

The Architectural Legacy of Grass Valley



Presented By: Historic Resource Associates

From Mining Camp to Mining Town

- The transcendent architecture of the City of Grass Valley reveals, perhaps better than anything else, the fabric that characterizes the community's cultural and economic history. While the architecture of Grass Valley at first glance may appear to be representative of many other Mother Lode gold mining, at closer examination it is apparent that Grass Valley developed its own rather unique style. This style was, in part, a consequence of its humble beginnings and the epic rise of the region's gold quartz or hardrock mining industry during the late 1850s.

Economic Expansion and the Creation of a Community

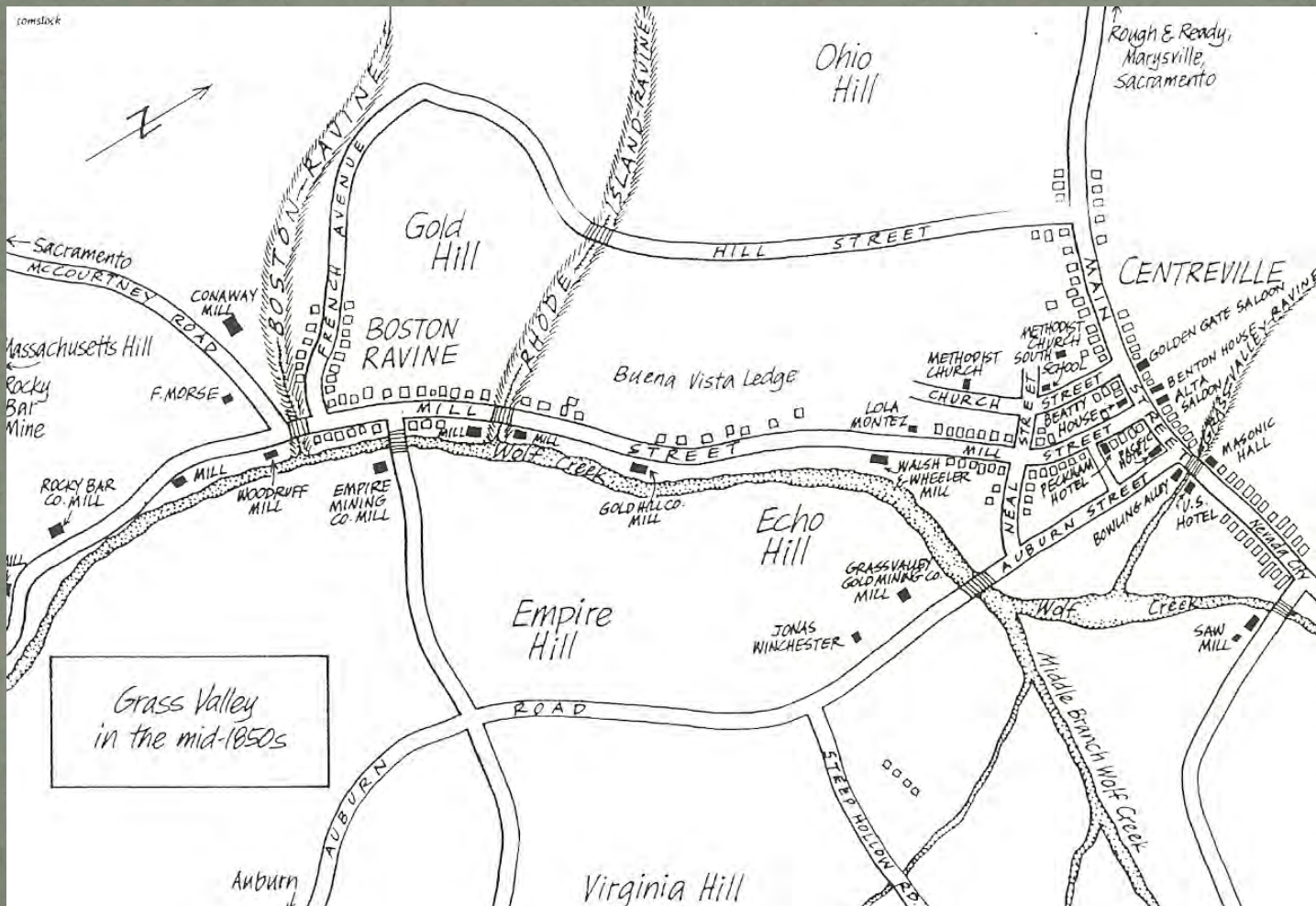


A. E. Ogilby del.

Grass Valley, Nevada County
CALIFORNIA.

Lith. Britton & Agoy San Francisco

Grass Valley's Gold Quartz Mines & Mills



Commerce, Trade, and Infrastructure



The Commercial Downtown



The Residential Areas



Miners From Cornwell “Cousin Jack”



Famous Celebrities



Lola Montez
von J. K. Stieler 1847



Architectural Styles -Commercial

Predominantly brick or stone commercial buildings were constructed in Grass Valley beginning in the early 1850s following several devastating fires. Variations include an iron-front or iron and brick-front façade; Italianate façade; a classically-inspired brick, stone, or stucco-faced façade; arcaded blocks; and false-front designs. All these variation applied to commercial architecture in Grass Valley and the greater Mother Lode region have their antecedents in Europe and later in the Northeast and the Mid-West United States. Each design could be adapted individually, and in groupings, often-times sharing a common wall.



*A handsome Classical Revival brick masonry hotel known as the Holbrooke on West Main Street.
Note the stepped parapet roof and repetition in the cornice windows and doors.*

Commercial Storefronts

- Architectural Details on Commercial Buildings



Gold Rush-Mother Lode Vernacular

Generally derived from pre-fabricated house design plans brought to California from the East Coast, particularly New England. The architectural style generally lacks the ornamentation exhibited in styles such as Italianate, Empire, and Queen Anne. Key character defining features include wrap-around porches or verandas, modest ornamentation, clapboard or horizontal ship-lap siding (other lap sidings were generally added later), moderate to steep gabled roofs, many with intersecting gables, symmetrical facades, boxed eaves, one to two-stories high, 6 over 6 or 4 over 4 light double-hung wood-sash windows, and paneled wood doors.



The elegant Coleman House with its intersecting gable roof and wrap-around porch.

Greek Revival Architecture

- The characteristic element shared by virtually all Greek Revival buildings is the wide band of trim below the cornice, representing the classical entablature. Other defining features include pilasters or paneled trim at the building corners, flat-roofed entry porches supported by round or square columns, and door surrounds that include a transom and sidelights. The sidelights on Greek Revival houses are characteristically nearly door-height versus the partial-height sidelights seen on Federal houses. Windows typically have 6/6 sashes per window with decorative surrounds using layered molding sometimes flanked by wooden shutters, and both open and pediment style gable roofs. Corner squares are often seen on window surrounds. The most enduring innovation of the Greek Revival period was the introduction of the front-gabled house, in which the gable end is turned 90 degrees to face the street. Elaborate examples feature a full-height, full-width colonnaded porch that presents a temple-like façade.



Gothic Revival Architecture

- The Gothic Revival style, less popular nationally than the competing Greek Revival and Italianate styles, was used primarily for churches, colleges, and rural houses. Steeply pitched roofs, cross gables, and lacy verge boards (gable trim, also called bargeboards) are the signatures of Gothic Revival houses. The most common plan is symmetrical with a central cross gable and a one-story porch. Typical features include hood molds over pointed arched or rectangular windows and doors, towers, and bay windows.



Late Victorian Architecture

- The Cross-Gable house style developed from the Gold Rush Vernacular homes found throughout the Mother Lode. Cross-Gabled homes are scattered throughout Grass Valley's Historic 1872 Townsite. The chief benefit of the cross-gable design was to create a living space within the second-story of the home, usually consisting of a modest attic. Windows are generally placed below the apex of the roof peak to provide light and ventilation.



Queen Ann Architecture

multiple roof forms
end-gabled bay
cross-gabled bay
corner bracket
tall, narrow window
square or large
rectangular window
decorative
ornamentation
lap siding above
shingle accent band
wrap-around porch
spindle under eave
turned posts
Queen Anne
window
Queen Anne door
porch railing

Hipped with lower
cross-gables -
most common
form



Eclectic/Revivalist Architecture

- The Tudor, or English Cottage, Revival style in America was based loosely on medieval English architecture. Enormously popular in the 1920s and 1930s, it benefited from advances in masonry veneering technique that allowed for the recreation of English brick and stucco façades. Steeply pitched roofs, prominent cross gables, half-timbering, large chimneys with chimney pots, and tall narrow windows with multi-pane glazing are the hallmarks of the Tudor/English Cottage Revival style. Entrance doorways, typically arched, are often elaborated with brick surrounds mimicking quoins. Multi-pane casement windows in groups of three or more are common.



Craftsman Architecture

- The Craftsman style was born in California and drew inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement and its focus on natural or organic materials. Widely disseminated through pattern books and magazines, some of which were available in kits, it became the most prevalent style for small houses in America until the Great Depression. One and 1½ story Craftsman style houses were popularly known as "bungalows," a term that reflected the exaggerated rooflines of many of the houses. In common with the Prairie style, the hallmark of a Craftsman house is its roof. In this case, it is generally a shallow gable (versus hipped) roof with overhanging eaves and visible roof beams and rafters. Full or partial-width porches with tapered square or multiple supports, often of stone or concrete block, are typical. Characteristic bungalow windows are set in pairs or triples, double-hung with rectangular divided lights in the top sash and a single light in the bottom sash.



Grass Valley Rating System

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
High integrity, approximately 80% or more of the historic fabric intact	Moderate integrity, approximately 50%-80% of the historic fabric intact	Poor integrity, approximately 20% to 50% of the historic fabric intact	Lacks integrity, less than 20% of the historic fabric intact, or modern infill
Best example of a specific style or sub-style	Good example of a specific style or sub-style	Typical example of a specific style or sub-style	Typical example of a specific style or sub-style or modern infill
Rare or unusual example	Typical example	Poor example	Poor example
Important association with a significant theme, event or person	Association with a significant theme, event, or person	May retain association, but lacks adequate integrity to convey that association	Lacks association due to severe alterations and/or being a modern infill property
			

Preservation Methodology

- Identification
- Evaluation
- Individual Property Designation
- District Designation
- Architectural Design Guidelines Ordinance
- Preservation Ordinance
- Historic Building Code
- Rehabilitation Grants
- Mills Act
- Certified Local Government (CLG)

Benefits of Historic Preservation

- Increases property values
- Benefits the environment (recycling materials)
- Enhances visual aesthetics
- Community pride
- Promotes tourism and economic growth
- Pride of ownership