

FARM HOUSE COLLECTIVE

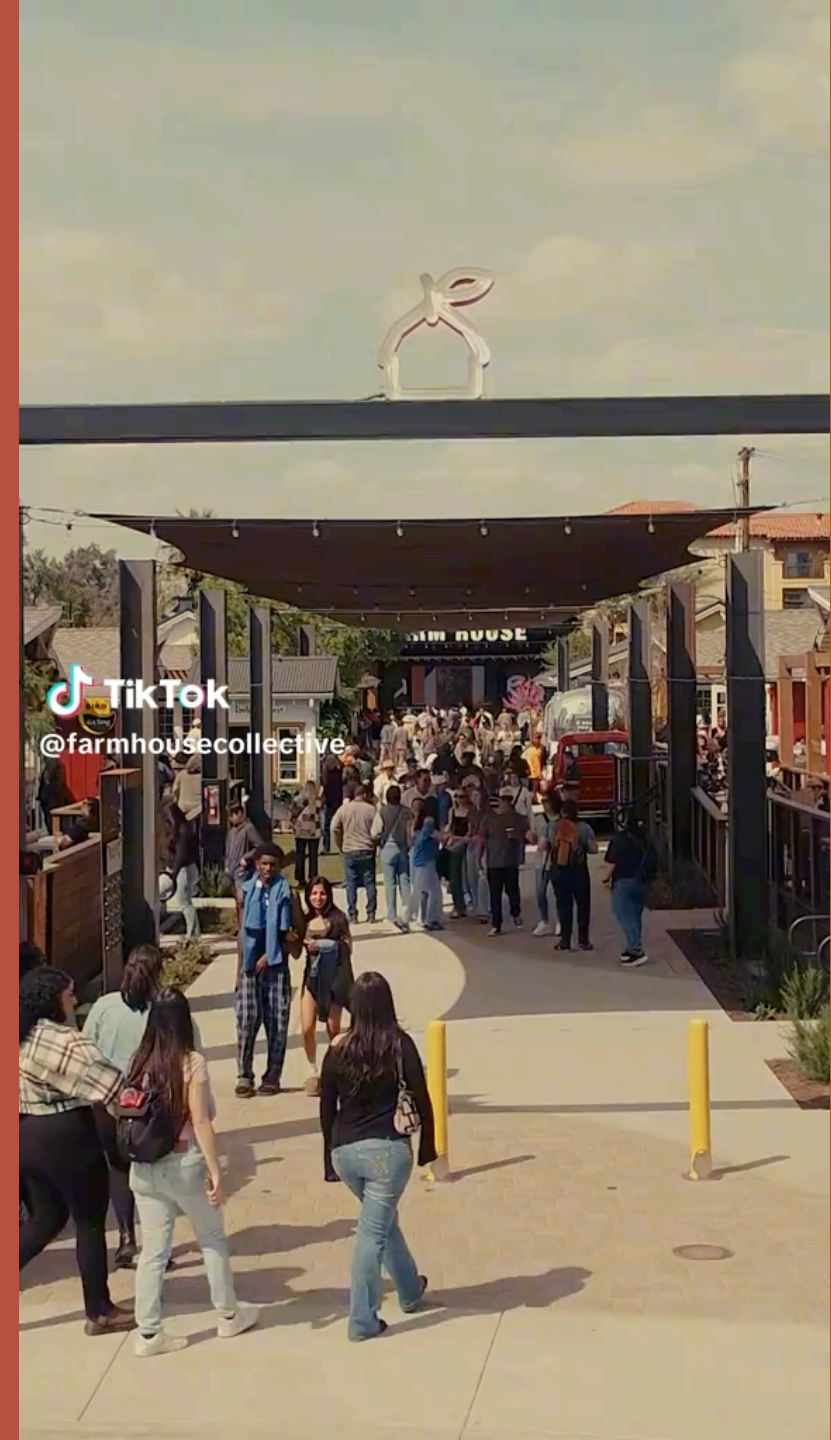
Adaptive Reuse & Historic Preservation

1393 University Ave · Riverside, CA 92507

"Grow Where You Are Planted"

City of Riverside Historic Landmark No. 140

Originally Constructed 1953 · Restored & Reopened 2025



The Farm House Motel — Timeline

From Citrus-Era Corridor to Mid-Century Motor Court to Riverside Landmark

~1900–1920

Citrus Era & Early Motorists

University Ave emerges as the main east–west artery through Riverside’s citrus belt. UCR’s predecessor campus founded 1907. Rising car ownership fuels roadside commerce — service stations, diners, and tourist courts begin lining the avenue.

1953

Farm House Motel Opens

Constructed by and operated by Isidore & Marie Claire Camou (Basque immigrant family). One of University Ave’s last motor court examples in farmhouse vernacular style with distinctive original neon sign. Operated for 32 years by the Camou family.

1960s–70s

Freeway Construction & Decline Begins

SR-60 and SR-91 freeways bypass University Avenue, redirecting through traffic away from the corridor. City’s 1966 General Plan already documenting ‘efforts to upgrade University Avenue.’ Roadside businesses lose passing trade.

1990s

City Purchases & Area Redevelopment

City of Riverside acquires the vacant Farm House Motel property. Much of vintage University Ave demolished or falls derelict. The corridor shifts toward UCR student-oriented businesses. City begins studying University Ave Specific Plan (adopted 1992).

2020–21

Bailey Purchase & Restoration Begins

Bailey family (Stronghold Engineering) acquires property from City of Riverside. Buildings and grounds restored; new kiosks and Farmyard garden constructed. Historic sign restored by architectural historian Jennifer Mermilliod.

1920s–40s

Automobile Boom & Corridor Growth

Post-WWI car culture explodes. U.S. Route 60/70 traffic flows through University Ave. Motor courts, restaurants and neon-signed businesses multiply. WWII military traffic (March Air Force Base) sustains corridor economy.

1957–60s

Riverside International Raceway Era

Riverside Int’l Raceway opens Sept 1957 — Formula One, NASCAR & IMSA events draw regional visitors to the University Ave corridor. Hotels, motels and restaurants along the avenue boom serving race spectators.

1983–89

Raceway Closes

Les Richter sells Riverside Int’l Raceway to Fritz Duda (1983). Final NASCAR race June 12, 1988. Track closes July 1989; converted to Moreno Valley Mall by 1992. Significant economic anchor removed from the broader corridor.

2019

Historic Landmark Designation

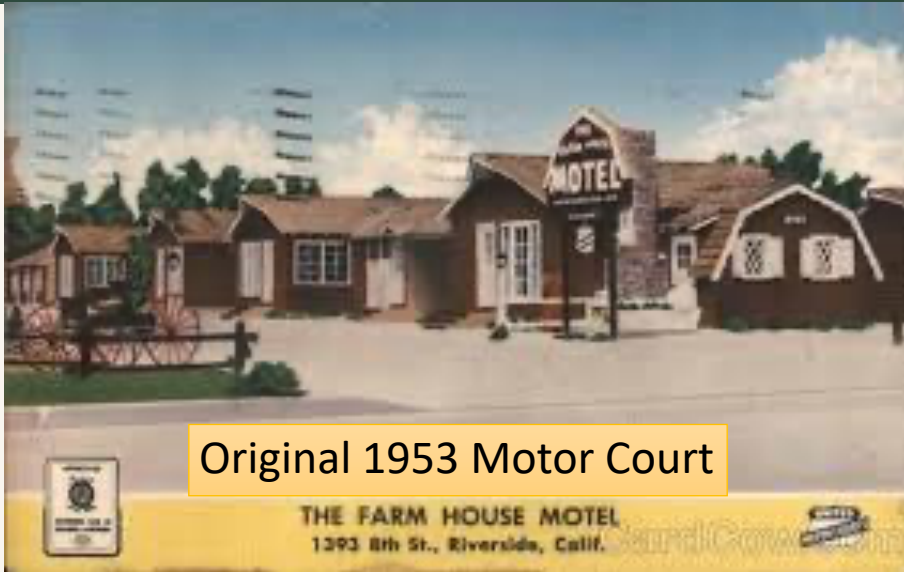
City of Riverside designates Farm House Motel as Historic Landmark No. 140 (June 5, 2019) — one of the last remaining examples of a motor court in California with its original sign intact. Preservation legislation secures the property’s future.

March 2025

Grand Opening as Farm House Collective

Ribbon cutting March 29, 2025. Mayor Lock Dawson and Council member Philip Falcone preside. 15 vendor spaces open with live music, markets, and community events. The corridor’s most significant preservation success in decades.

The Farm House Motel



Original 1953 Motor Court

THE FARM HOUSE MOTEL
1393 8th St., Riverside, Calif.

1953

2020



2025



What Visitors Are Saying

- ★ **Atmosphere & Vibe:** Consistently praised for 'eclectic community feel', retro charm, and a relaxed open-air environment unlike typical chain venues.
- ★ **Food Diversity:** Multiple cuisines under one roof — Filipino, Japanese, pizza, acai bowls, gelato — celebrated for quality and authenticity.
- ★ **Live Music:** Stage shows draw strong repeat visits; free community concerts at grand opening created goodwill. Several reviewers note it's the 'best mid-size music venue in the IE'.
- ★ **Family Friendliness:** Turf area, corn hole, ping pong, and open space earn praise from parents with young children.
- ★ **Parking & Access:** On-site gated parking lot noted as a positive; some concern about capacity on peak nights.

Project Execution — Historic Preservation Framework

The successful adaptive reuse of Farm House Motel was made possible by a layered framework of City ordinances, CLG-funded resources, professional historic guidance, and code accommodations for historic structures.

City Landmark Designation

- **Landmark No. 140 designation** (June 5, 2019) via City of Riverside Cultural Heritage Board — **triggered all subsequent preservation protections.**
- Designation under Title 20 – Cultural Resources Ordinance (adopted 1996, amended) confirmed the motel as a significant cultural resource.
- **Certificate of Appropriateness** required for all modifications; Certificates reviewed against Secretary of Interior Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.
- City ownership of the property (pre-2020) served as a de facto preservation holding action, preventing demolition during the designation process.
- City sale to Bailey family structured to facilitate preservation and adaptive reuse as the intended redevelopment outcome.

CLG Program & Federal Grants

- City of Riverside is a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the National Historic Preservation Program — meets all state and federal preservation standards.
- **CLG status enables access to Historic Preservation Fund** (HPF) grants via California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP); Riverside received \$40,000 CLG grant in 2017–18 for Latino heritage surveys supporting broader corridor context.
- State Historic Building Code applied — provides **alternative code compliance pathways for historic structures**, enabling adaptive reuse without full demolition-level upgrades.
- **Mills Act eligibility:** CLG framework allows the Baileys to apply for property tax reduction in exchange for rehabilitation maintenance commitments.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program historically supported commercial rehabilitation along University Ave corridor.

Code Accommodations & ADA



- **California Historical Building Code (CHBC, Title 24 Part 8) invoked to allow alternative means of compliance** for structural, fire, and accessibility requirements in ways that preserve historic fabric.
- ADA upgrades — continuous accessible pathways, compliant restrooms, ramp access — satisfied via holistic site design rather than room-by-room alteration of individual historic cottages.
- Grease trap and commercial kitchen permitting processed through City Environmental Compliance Division; accommodated within existing footprints to preserve motel room exteriors.
- Fire suppression systems designed to minimize intrusion to historic board-and-batten cottage facades; Riverside Fire Dept. reviewed occupancy classifications for mixed-use event venue.
- **New freestanding structures (kiosks, stage, shade structures) classified as non-contributing additions** — required Certificate of Appropriateness confirming compatibility with historic character.

Community & Music Venue Activation

- Council member Philip Falcone endorsed project at grand opening as 'the best adaptive reuse project in the entire city of Riverside.'
- Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson praised the Bailey family's 'passion and dedication' and city partnership in bringing the landmark back to life.
- Conditional Use Permit or equivalent entitlement secured for live entertainment venue operation (500-person stage capacity, alcohol service, amplified music).
- **University Avenue Specific Plan (1992)** framework referenced — project aligned with stated goals of revitalizing the corridor through quality commercial reuse.
- City of Riverside Historic Preservation Program support: Jennifer Mermilliod (JM Research) engaged as consulting architectural historian; sign restoration documented per preservation standards.

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