General Membership Meeting

**Bungalow Bathrooms**

*Jane Powell, Author and Arts and Crafts Restoration Expert*

**Sunday, March 16, 2003 ~ 7:00 p.m.**

First Presbyterian Church at the corner of Santa Clara Ave & Chestnut St

AAPS is pleased to welcome Jane Powell, author of the newly published book **Bungalow Bathrooms**, at our next General Membership Meeting. Indoor plumbing is the very basis of modern civilization. From the white, sanitary bathrooms of the late 19th and early 20th century, through the wildly colored tile and fixtures of the 1920s and 1930s, Powell explores the history of plumbing and bathroom design, and suggests practical ways to restore a vintage bathroom, or build a new bath in a period style.

Powell is the proprietor of House Dressing, a business dedicated to buying and restoring old houses, especially bungalows. In 1987, she bought her first bungalow, a minor fixer-upper in mostly original condition. She renovated it in a way that preserved its historic features, then sold it at a profit and bought another. Several houses later it had turned into a career. She is presently working on her ninth bungalow.

Her first book, **Bungalow Kitchens**, was released in May 2000, and has in a short time become the bible of period kitchen restoration. A book about period bathrooms was the obvious sequel. Since the publication of her first book, she has become a nationally-known lecturer and consultant on all aspects of early 20th century houses.

She lives with her four cats in whatever bungalow she is currently renovating. In her spare time, she works on historic preservation issues in her hometown of Oakland, California.
City Council Sets Precedent on Historic Homes up for Demolition in Alameda

At its October 15, 2002 meeting, the City Council voted 3-1 against issuing a Certificate of Approval to demolish the fire-damaged Victorian at 1525 Minturn Street. (See October, 2002 AAPS News).

Mayor Beverly Johnson, Vice-Mayor Tony Daysog and Councilmember Al DeWitt, voted against the demolition, while Councilmember Barbara Kerr voted in favor. (Note: the meeting was before the November 5, 2002 election and subsequent seating of the current City Council. Mayor Johnson and Vice-Mayor Daysog were still Councilmembers at the time of the vote and Councilmember DeWitt was Acting Mayor.)

In another very significant historic preservation success, the Council on February 4, 2003 voted 3-0 to add an 1883 Victorian house at 1423 Morton Street to the City’s Historic Building Study List. The building, attributed to George W. Percy, one of the architects of City Hall, was being proposed for demolition by its owner, George Ong, in order to build a new duplex (see October, 2002 AAPS News). Adding the building to the Study List, means it cannot be demolished without Historical Advisory Board (HAB) approval, with possible appeal to the City Council.

Mayor Johnson, Vice-Mayor Daysog and newly-elected Councilmember Frank Matarrese voted in favor of listing the building. Councilmembers DeWitt and Kerr did not attend the meeting.

The case came to the Council after the HAB, on December 5, 2002, voted 3-2 to not list the building. AAPS was intending to appeal the HAB decision to the City Council, but this became unnecessary when Mayor Johnson asked that the HAB decision be considered by the Council under the Council’s “Call for Review” procedure. The three HAB members, Nancy Gill, Diane Mc Pherson, and Ben Tilos, who voted not to list the building, appeared concerned not so much about the building’s eligibility for the List than by the fact that the owner had already spent time and money developing the duplex proposal and had submitted it for a design review permit. The three HAB members indicated that it would be unfair to the owner to list the property and not allow its demolition this late in the development process. The building has been vacant for many months and needs considerable maintenance. The owner believes that it is not economically feasible to rehabilitate the building.

AAPS does not agree with the owner’s assessment. We believe that the building is economically feasible to rehabilitate and if the exterior were restored, would be a very attractive structure. Prior to proposing demolition, the owner listed the building for sale but rejected offers from buyers who would have rehabilitated the structure. The design work so far on the duplex proposal appears limited only to conceptual plans, rather than construction drawings. Such work should cost no more than several thousand dollars. AAPS does not believe that the owner’s loss of this investment if the building were to be rehabilitated constitutes sufficient economic hardship to justify allowing demolition.

In reversing the HAB decision, the Council appropriately based their decision on whether the building met the criteria for inclusion on the List, rather than on economic factors or the merits of the new duplex proposal. The Council noted that, under City rules, economic factors are supposed to be considered only for demolition of already listed properties that come to the Council on appeal, rather than for the listing itself. The Council
also noted that it would set a bad precedent to approve demolition after the building had been allowed to deteriorate. This would in effect reward the owner for allowing deterioration.

If the owner wishes to continue pursuing demolition, he would need to go back to the HAB for approval of a demolition permit. As in the case of 1525 Minturn Street the HAB decision could be appealed to the City Council.

AAPS members are encouraged to send thank you letters and/or make phone calls to Mayor Johnson and Vice-Mayor Daysog for their votes in both of these cases, to Councilmember Dewitt for his vote on 1523 Minturn Street and to Councilmember Matarrese for his vote on 1423 Morton Street. Special thanks is owed to Mayor Johnson for her initiative in making the “Call for Review” for 1423 Morton Street.

**City Considers Broader Demolition Protections for Historic Properties**

A bonus from the 1423 Morton Street case (see story above) is that it dramatized the missing pieces in the City’s Historical Building Study List. Structures on the List cannot be demolished, unless approved by the Historical Advisory Board (HAB), with possible appeal to the City Council.

Although the List contains about 4,000 historic properties, mostly included as a result of the City’s 1979 Historical and Architectural Inventory, there are many other significant properties, such as 1423 Morton Street, that were not on the List. Many of these properties appear to have been excluded because of alterations, which are often easily reversible. AAPS has identified other excluded properties that are unaltered and, in AAPS’ judgment, are better than some of those already on the List. These additional properties appear to have simply fallen through the cracks when the List was created.

At its December 5, 2002 meeting, the HAB discussed ways to broaden the List. This effort gained momentum when Mayor Beverly Johnson, concerned over potential “summary demolitions” of buildings like 1423 Morton Street, asked staff to investigate options for broader review of demolitions. Planning Department staff has therefore drafted an ordinance requiring HAB approval for demolition or removal of any building built before 1942.

An earlier version of the ordinance would have required HAB approval for any building over 50 years old but the HAB changed this at its February 6, 2003 meeting to the 1942 cut-off date. The change was partly due to Councilmembers concerns at the February 4, 2003 meeting over blanket demolition protection for 1950’s and newer buildings.

The draft ordinance is scheduled for City Council consideration on March 4, 2003.

AAPS is very pleased by the City’s prompt and proactive effort to provide better demolition protection for historic properties, with special thanks to Mayor Johnson, the HAB, Planning and Building Director Greg Fuz and HAB Secretary Judith Altschuler.

*The Preservation Action Committee meets at 7:00 pm on the first Monday of each month to address issues important to the architectural preservation of the City of Alameda. Committee meetings are open to all AAPS members. If you would like to attend a meeting or would like more information please call Chris Buckley at 510-523-0411. We are making an impact within the community. It’s fun and informative. We encourage all members to GET INVOLVED!*
"MODERN (adj.): Of relating to, or characteristic of the present."

Revival of the Arts & Crafts movement. Yet the modernist movement has continued to develop and evolve, and today, architects and designers continue to explore new ways of using traditional techniques and materials to create spaces that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing.

In the field of architecture, there are two predominant trends that have emerged in recent years. The first trend is a return to traditional styles, such as the revival of Victorian architecture and the use of handmade materials. The second trend is a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency, with architects designing buildings that are both green and functional.

When considering new construction projects, it is important to consider the context in which they will be located. This includes not only the physical environment, but also the cultural and historical context. By taking these factors into account, architects can create spaces that are truly unique and timeless.
Midway in the 20th century, the term "modern" became attached to the International School of architecture. Even though time and taste have relegated this style to the history books, the Modernists still cling tenaciously to their "modern" adjective. It's time we took it away!

They Can Have "Modernist"

By GM Labine

More Than Me Me Nostalgia

The Hijacking of "Modern"

Traditional Building and Period Homes

You will find in this newsletter (pages 4-5) and in future issues, we will be inserting a featured article from the publications Clem Labine's Traditional Building and Period Homes. For more information on these magazines please call 718-636-0750 or visit their web sites at www.traditionalbuilding.com or www.period-homes.com.
If you would like to join the Architectural Preservation Society or renew your membership, please send this portion back with your payment.

Membership Chairperson - Ruth Tillman
@ 337-1405

Name: ___________________________ Date: __________
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Check your membership category.
☐ renewal    ☐ new member
☐ Family $25    ☐ Single $20
☐ Seniors $10 each
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Alameda Architectural Preservation Society
P.O. Box 1677 ~ Alameda ~ CA ~ 94501
510-986-9232 ~ www.alameda-preservation.org

Free trees and shrubs in one to fifteen gallon containers are available, including deodara, cedars, lindens, maples, oaks, redwoods, viburnums and more. Call Chris Buckley at 523-0411.
2003 AAPS General Membership Meeting Schedule

Sunday, May 18, 2003, 7 p.m.: “Façade Restoration” by Skeeter Jones, of Clearheart, in San Francisco. Mr. Jones will be discussing Façade Restoration — taking off composition, asbestos, or vinyl siding and shingles, replacing missing ornaments, and asbestos disposal issues. Mr. Jones’ firm, “Clearheart” specializes in Victorian facade restorations. This meeting will also include the 2003 Preservation Awards.

Sunday, June 22, 2003, 7 p.m.: AAPS will be showing a copy of the comedic documentary BLUE VINYL. A Toxic Comedy Look at Vinyl, The World’s Second Largest Selling Plastic. With humor, hope and a piece of vinyl siding firmly in hand, Peabody Award-winning filmmaker Judith Helfand and co-director Daniel B. Gold travel from Helfand’s hometown to America’s vinyl manufacturing capital and beyond in search of answers about the nature of polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Her parents’ decision to “re-side” their house with this seemingly benign cure-all for many suburban homes turns into a toxic odyssey with twists and turns that most ordinary homeowners would never dare to take. The result is a humorous but sobering and uniquely personal exploration of the relationship between consumers and industry in the feature-length documentary BLUE VINYL, which won the cinematography award in the documentary competition at the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. This showing will be held at the beautifully renovated Auctions by the Bay Theater, located at Alameda Point.

Sunday, August 22, 4 p.m.: “Historic Neighborhood Walking Tour” by Wood Minor. Our renowned local historian Woody Minor will be giving us oodles of history while walking us through our Gold Coast historic neighborhood. This is an educational and informative experience. This is also in anticipation of the upcoming 2003 Home Tour featuring homes in the same area.

Other Community Events

Alameda Museum Lectures 2003:
These dynamic slide lectures by prominent Bay Area authors and historians take place at the Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue near Park Street, Alameda. Admission is free for members of the Museum; $5 for others. For information about the lectures, call 510.748.0796.

Thursday, March 27, 2003, 7 pm: “A. W. Smith: Architect” by Betty Marvin, an Oakland Heritage Alliance member who has made an intense study of Smith and his work.

Thursday, April 24, 2003, 7 pm: “Red Tile Style” by architect Arrol Gellner, who will present juicy slides taken by photographer Douglas Keister, who illustrated this new book from Viking.


Thursday, June 26, 2003, 7 pm: “TBA” by Bruce Bradbury, founder of Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpapers in Benicia, California and a renowned rake and raconteur. In the gallery, see an exhibition by the Alameda Art Association.
AAPS CALENDAR


Wednesday, March 12, 2003, 7:00 pm: 2003 Historic Home Tour Committee Meeting

Wednesday, March 19, 2003, 7:30 pm: Board Meeting

Monday, April 7, 2003, 7:30 pm: Preservation Action Committee Meeting.


Sunday, June 22, 2002: Showing of the film BLUE VINYL.