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Wooden Window’s Restoration vs. Replacement Considerations

With over 100,000 beautiful windows installed in homes and public buildings around the Bay Area, Wooden Window thrives on the fact that windows are essential to the architectural integrity of any home or building. Through the life of a building, a variety of replacement options are available. For wooden windows, restoration is typically the optimal choice over replacement. Restoration provides a building with at least four benefits:

- Wooden windows look and feel better than those made of alternative materials.
- Often, without significant difficulty and/or cost, windows can be repaired and interior trim can be reused.
- By matching custom window details—such as materials, sizes, profiles, hardware and operation, replacement can be indistinguishable from “original” windows.
- The restoration of wooden windows is necessary to maintain the status of the building as a historic structure.
SunCal's Alameda Point Redevelopment Plan Proposes to Amend Measure A

By Elizabeth Kruse

SunCal, the master developer selected by the City last year to develop the former Alameda Naval Air Station, has further evolved their plans since last December’s community meeting. SunCal has retained Peter Calthorpe, the urban planner known for his “New Urbanism” designs, to plan the development. On August 7, 2008, a community meeting was held at the USS Hornet so that SunCal could present the latest development alternatives and gather public input. Thanks to all the AAPS members who responded to the postcard alert and came to speak in favor of historic preservation of the former Naval Air Station’s historic buildings. Preservation advocates had a strong presence. Thirteen of the 20 tables expressed a preference for preservation of more historic buildings at the former base. At last December’s meeting two alternatives were presented, one of which was Measure A compliant. However, at the August 7 meeting, SunCal presented two new alternatives, neither Measure A compliant. Based on a new study that indicates that a sea level rise of 18” could occur in the future, more of the historic district’s 86 contributing buildings are threatened. Both of the August 7 alternatives would result in a historic district that is roughly half the size of the current historic district.

On September 19, SunCal submitted a Concept Plan to the City with extensive documentation which AAPS is now reviewing. The September 19 plan is available at www.alamedapoint.com/APDocs.html and indicates that 39 historic buildings potentially could be preserved and adaptively reused, including the significant administrative buildings facing the main quad, the BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters), the WAVES barracks, potentially the Big Whites, Hangars 20 through 24, and one of the seaplane hangars (Building 39). However, buildings slated for removal would include the remaining four seaplane hangars, the shops buildings, the power station, the NCO (Noncommissioned Officers) houses, the Air Traffic Control Tower, and Building 77 (the former NAS Air Terminal, now the home of the NAS Museum). SunCal proposes making the historic district much smaller, focusing on individual significant buildings rather than retaining the district.

The September 19 plan is not compliant with Measure A. It would construct 4,210 housing units at Alameda Point, and building heights would be up to four stories. SunCal suggests that with a density of 2000 additional units, other “green” goals could be achieved, such as a sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy sources, wetlands restoration, more open space, lower household energy use, fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and fewer miles per household traveled.

Higher density would also allow for the construction of a solar power farm in the point’s “northwest territory”. Various transit strategies would be used, depending on the density of housing and commercial uses. These include Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to serve Alameda Point residents and to speed bus traffic through the Posey Tube, and potentially a Peninsula Rapid Transit system (PRT) that would be, in essence, a miniature monorail that could take passengers in small pods across the estuary to link with BART in downtown Oakland. The first such system in the world is in construction at London’s Heathrow Airport, but such a system may not be realistic for Alameda. In addition, it is unclear who would pay for such a system if it were expanded to serve the rest of Alameda; the cost is estimated at $12 million per mile.

The City will present the September 19 plan to various boards and commissions during the coming months to gather input. The Historical Advisory Board will review the plan on October 2; a joint meeting of the City Council (sitting as the ARRA Board) and the Transportation Commission will take place on October 22; and the Planning Board on October 27. November 5 is a key date, as the ARRA Board will hold a public hearing on the plan. The City would normally initiate an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process in November, which would last about 18 months. However, the EIR process is in flux because SunCal is planning to bring a measure to next June’s ballot to exempt Alameda Point from Measure A. According to the City’s planning staff, there are two scenarios: if the City places a measure to exempt Alameda Point from Measure A on the ballot and the measure passes, the plan would be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and an EIR would be required. CEQA would require analysis of the impacts to historic properties, and it affords a measure of protection to historic properties. However, if a citizen-sponsored initiative to exempt Alameda Point from Measure A passes, SunCal and the City would probably not have to conduct an EIR at least on the Measure A exemption. If a citizen-sponsored initiative was for SunCal’s entire project, voter approval of the initiative might mean that the project itself would be exempt from EIR requirements. The actual determination of a ballot initiative’s CEQA status would be by the City’s legal staff. It is unknown what will happen if a Measure A exemption does not pass.

Call for Nominations

2009 AAPS Board of Directors

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Please contact Nancy Hird at 523-0825 with your nominee, personal or a referral, or if you have questions, by November 10. We have an excellent Board, but are interested in adding new members to further enhance and benefit AAPS preservation interests throughout the community we serve.

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Rachel Bennett 748.9470
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For more information, please contact: AAPS Newsletter Editor

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If you have this type of experience and wish to assist with this database project, please contact Nancy Hird at 510-523-0825 or nancy@alamedanet.net.
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For more information, please contact: Alameda Architectural Preservation Society, P.O. Box 1677 Alameda, CA 94501 986.9322 www.alameda-preservation.org

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AAPS Newsletter Editor
Karen Tierney 325.9142 k tiersy@sbcsiglobal.net
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Wooden Window President Bill Essert inspects one of the historic windows that will be restored as part of the Historic Old Administration Building at Fresno City College.