

THE ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY



www.alameda-preservation.org

February, 2007

FIRE PREVENTION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Sunday, March 4, 7:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church

(Corner of Santa Clara Avenue & Chestnut Street)

Parking available behind the church, enter from Santa Clara • Doors open at 6:30 PM • Free, open to all

❧ ❧ Preventing Fires ❧ ❧ in Older Buildings

The AAPS and the Alameda Fire Department Preventive Services will present a program on fire prevention with a special emphasis on saving older structures. This event is free and open to the public. You are encouraged to bring friends and neighbors.

More historic Alameda homes are damaged or lost because of fire, than from illegal demolitions. The recent loss of a Craftsman home on Clinton Avenue underscores the particular vulnerability of our older homes and other buildings.

Prior to the introduction of building codes in the 1930s, there were no requirements for fire resistive construction. Since that time, advances have been made in preventative techniques that can increase the level of fire prevention, as well as to decrease the damage or loss if a fire does occur.

The discussion will include the most common causes of fires, types of building construction and materials, smoke detectors and sprinklers, dealing with contractors and safety precautions, and the importance of building permits. Also, Larry Bolton from State Farm Insurance will be addressing issues and concerns relating to fire insurance policies and coverage.

For questions contact Denise Brady at 510-523-8886.

Two fire damaged homes on Minturn Street



Recently lost home on Clinton Avenue





A 'Retro'spective . . .

As we begin the New Year, it seems prudent to review our recent accomplishments. I am pleased to report that the list continues to grow each year for AAPS. Here are the highlights from 2006.

Presentations of our General Membership meetings included slide lectures by three renowned local architectural historians: Betty Marvin on prominent East Bay architect A.W. Smith; Paul Duchscherer and his latest book "Beyond the Bungalow"; Woody Minor with "The history of Measure A", a visual overview of the social, economic and political context of the events leading up to the passage of this landmark legislation in Alameda.

The ninth annual Preservation Awards featured two homes and three commercial buildings. The Alameda Legacy Home Tour was again a success raising money for the AAPS and the Alameda Museum. The annual "Woody Walk" ventured into "new" territory and took us deep into the lovely Fernside neighborhood.

Since it was an election year, the AAPS organized a Candidates Night as an opportunity for the public to hear the candidates for Mayor and City Council address preservation related issues. The turnout was great and so was the feedback.

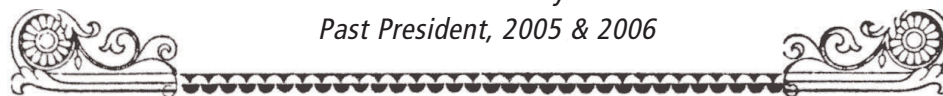
We continued our efforts to work with the City to eliminate illegal demolitions and to encourage property owners to understand the inherent value of historically sensitive renovations and remodeling projects.

Many thanks to the members of the Board of Directors, the Preservation Action Committee and to the volunteers who helped with our efforts and events throughout the year.

Connections to the past are ours to treasure. I hope that you will join us this year to help us preserve the wonderful architecture that contributes so much to the unique quality of life that we have in Alameda.

Denise Brady

Past President, 2005 & 2006



Our Indispensable Volunteers - AAPS Needs You!

by Birgitt Evans

As with so many small non-profit organizations, volunteers are indispensable to AAPS. In 2006, volunteers from President Denise Brady to Legacy Home Tour docents enabled us to run all of our programs and to accomplish our goals. With the generous help of our volunteers, we are able to educate the public about Alameda's rich architectural heritage. And we are also able to advocate for

the preservation of our architectural resources, from 500 Central Avenue, one of the city's oldest commercial buildings, to the Modern buildings at Alameda Point, so crucial to our Nation's security during World War II, to the Victorian and Craftsman houses we all love and which are regularly threatened by illegal demolitions and bad window replacements.

Without the dedication of our volunteers, we simply would not be able to do this. And there is so much more that we would like to accomplish, so many more important projects that we would like to undertake that would help people to understand the value of their historic homes and assist people in preserving them.

For instance, we would like to add a number of resources and links to our website that would make it easier for people to respectfully remodel their homes, such as a list of sources for period-appropriate windows, doors and siding and a link to Alameda's Guide to Residential Design. We would also like to create a resource center where residents could find information on their homes and the history of Alameda and put together a packet of information for new homeowners. However, we need more volunteers before we can undertake these and other pressing projects.

Fortunately, AAPS has a wide variety of volunteer projects available so there is truly something for everyone, whether you enjoy working with the public or working from home, advocating, organizing events or performing support functions. Some of the volunteer opportunities available are:

Preservation Action Committee (PAC): Meeting once a month, the PAC is the heart and soul of our advocacy function. We review proposed remodels and illegal demolitions and decide what AAPS's role and response should be, respond to requests from City staff for advice or assistance on a variety of historic preservation issues and monitor blighted and other high risk buildings.

PAC members may also speak on behalf of historic buildings at Historical Advisory Board and City Council meetings and participate in other preservation endeavors such as the U.S. Navy's Section 106 process

which identifies and plans for the transference of the historic resources of the former Naval Air Station to the City. We also need people to take photographs of and monitor at-risk buildings, obtain copies of plans at City Hall and review City staff reports.

The PAC provides a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for people with different interests and skills and public speaking is not a requirement for joining. Contact Christopher Buckley at 510-523-0411 or cbuckley@alamedanet.net.

Preservation Awards Committee:

Every spring, AAPS recognizes, in our newsletter and at our Historic Preservation Awards Ceremony, the efforts of property owners who complete period-appropriate remodels or restorations of historic properties. We need 2007 committee members to help identify worthy properties, contact the owners, obtain information about both the property and the project, write newsletter articles about the properties and plan the awards meeting. Contact Christopher Buckley at 510-523-0411 or cbuckley@alamedanet.net.

Membership: This area offers opportunities both for those who like to work with people and for those who prefer to work behind the scenes. If you enjoy working with people, we need volunteers to greet members and pass out literature at meetings and also to contact members by phone about interests and pressing preservation matters. We also need volunteers to work from home, printing mailing labels and assisting with mailings, including the welcome letter that we provide to all new Alameda homeowners. Contact Nancy Hird at 510-523-0825 or nancy@alamedanet.net.

Event Planning: For those of you who love to entertain and coordinate events, we need volunteers to help with the refreshments and set up for our Membership meetings as well as people to plan and run our wonderful

Holiday Party. Contact Janelle Spatz at 510-521-4045 or jspatz@comcast.net.

Alameda Legacy Home Tour (ALHT):

Our major fundraiser, the ALHT, showcases some of Alameda's finest homes. We need volunteers to help organize the tour, to serve as docents at the various houses and to assist with the Homeowner/Volunteer dinner which immediately follows the tour. All volunteers receive free admission to the tour and get to go to the head of any line! Contact Christopher Buckley at 510-523-0411 or cbuckley@alamedanet.net.



Newsletter: AAPS puts out about four newsletters a year and we need help with a variety of functions from coordinating the content, to writing articles, to mailing the newsletter. Contact Christopher Buckley at 510-523-0411 or cbuckley@alamedanet.net.

Website: As I mentioned earlier, we are very proud of our website, but believe that it could contain more information and serve as a true resource to our community. If you have ideas and would like to help us develop content or implement some of our ideas for the website, this would be an excellent opportunity to contribute to AAPS while working extensively from home at your own convenience. Contact Birgitt Evans at 510-521-9177 or chuck-birgitt@alamedanet.net.

PRESERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

City Council Strongly Supports the "Golden Mean" for Lifting High Basement Houses

by Christopher Buckley

The Alameda City Council on a 4-1 vote rejected the project sponsor's appeal from a Historical Advisory Board's (HAB) refusal to approve a project at 1530-1532 1/2 Ninth Street. The project proposed lifting three one story, high basement houses, with rear additions, to create three duplexes.

The project needed an HAB Certificate of Approval because it would have demolished each of the three structures over 30 percent. The project is receiving City financial assistance from the Development Services Department's residential rehabilitation program.

The two front buildings are matching high basement Queen Anne cottages built in 1891 by local Alameda builder, C.A. Brown. The front facades have been covered with asbestos shingles with some detailing removed. The rear building is a utilitarian structure probably from the early 1900s.

The design initially reviewed by the HAB would have lifted the buildings to create new at-grade ground floors. This would have violated the "Golden Mean" set forth in the City's Guide to Residential Design which limits ground floor heights to 60% of the upper floor height. The purpose of the golden Mean is to maintain the characteristic proportions of Victorian and Colonial Revival high basement houses. Adoption of the Guide by the City Council in April 2005 as the city's residential design review manual was a major goal of AAPS (see May 2006 AAPS News) Development Services Department staff said that lifting the houses higher than the Golden Mean was needed to provide level ground floor entries for handicapped access.

As a compromise, AAPS suggested raising the grade along the front of the houses by 18 inches to maintain the appearance of The Golden Mean as viewed from the street. The designs were revised to incorporate this suggestion, but they still had overly complicated retaining walls and walkways in the front yards; needed clarification of how detailing would be restored after removal of the asbestos shingles; and were proposing synthetic "hard board" siding and vinyl windows on parts of the buildings.

AAPS was especially concerned that any replacement of missing front elevation detailing following removal of the shingles be consistent with the buildings' architectural style. AAPS noted two relatively unaltered buildings one block away at 1430–32 Ninth Street, also built by C.A. Brown, that appear to have been exact matches for 1530–32 Ninth Street and could be used as models.

On July 24, 2006, the HAB declined to grant the Certificate of Approval,

citing AAPS's concerns, and also questioning the overall site design, which showed extensive paving in the rear yard to accommodate twelve parking spaces with minimal landscaping.

The applicant appealed the HAB decision to the City Council which rejected the appeal and directed that the project be sent back to the HAB. The Council's action was partly based on AAPS's concerns, but the Council also objected to raising grade to meet the Golden Mean. The Council generally agreed with HAB members who considered the expanded buildings to be too large, and that there was too much site coverage and too little rear yard landscaping.

Vice Mayor Gilmore, the only Council member supporting the appeal, agreed with the Council majority in principal on these issues, but believed that the City was obligated to support the appeal because the project complied with all zoning standards. She suggested that the City either revise the zoning standards or create a special

overlay zone for historic properties with stricter standards. Major Johnson, on the other hand, said that the City has additional authority to require higher standards because demolition of a historic structure was being requested.

The plans were again revised to provide below grade first floors for the front two buildings so that they would no longer need to be lifted. The revised plans also addressed most of AAPS's other concerns and reduced the sizes of the additions to provide more rear yard landscaping.

The Planning Board approved the revised plans on October 23, 2006 with Conditions of Approval addressing AAPS's remaining concerns. The Certificate of Approval for the front two buildings was not sent back to the HAB because the revised plans for these structures no longer involved demolition over 30 percent. The HAB subsequently approved the Certificate for the rear building.

continued on page 5 . . .

1532 9th Street with asbestos shingles partially removed, revealing original surfaces under the shingles.



Relatively unaltered building at 1432 9th Street that appears to be the same design as 1530 and 1532 9th Street



Golden Mean, continued from page 4...

This case is very significant because of the City Council's strong affirmation of The Golden Mean as well as the Council's supporting AAPS's positions concerning the treatment of architectural detailing on the front elevations following removal of the asbestos shingles. In recent years, there have been many proposals in Alameda to lift high basement houses. The Council's decision should therefore significantly impact future projects in favor of historic preservation. AAPS would like to thank the Council for supporting the Golden Mean and its support in general for changes making

the project more sensitive to the buildings' historic fabric and the neighborhood character.

At AAPS's suggestion, the applicant removed portions of the asbestos shingles to determine how much of the original surfaces still exist. We are very pleased to report that almost all of the original surfaces, including much of the detailing, appear to be intact under the shingles.

These buildings are just one example of the restoration potential offered by the large numbers of similarly altered Alameda buildings.

Alameda Museum Lectures for 2007



Thursday February 22: Alameda author and historian Woody Minor on *The Architecture of Ratcliff*, his new book about a century of East Bay building. Underwritten by the law offices of Gina Mariani.

Thursday March 29: Leslie Freudenheim, author of *Building with Nature: Inspiration for the Arts & Crafts Home*, published by Gibb Smith. Underwritten by Janelle Spatz, board member Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) and Realtor, Bayside Real Estate.

Thursday April 12: *Alameda by Rail*, a presentation and celebration for this new Arcadia book by Grant Ute and Bruce Singer. In the gallery, the tenth annual "Kids & Queen Victoria" show.

Thursday April 26: Author and historian Richard Schwartz, author, *Earthquake Exodus 1906*, published by RSB Books. Underwritten by Judith Lynch, member, Historical Advisory Board. In the gallery, the tenth annual "Kids & Queen Victoria" show.

Thursday May 31: Author and historian Gray Brechin, author of *New Deal California*, U.C Berkeley Press, to discuss WPA buildings in Alameda. Underwritten by Denise Brady, real estate agent with Kane & Associates and past president, Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS).

NOTE: Lecture topics may change. Watch the Alameda Sun or leave a message, 748.0796. All lectures start at 7:00 p.m. 2324 Alameda Avenue near Park Street. Admission is free for Museum members, \$5 for others.

GET INVOLVED AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

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!



FREE trees and shrubs in one to fifteen gallon containers are available, including deodora cedars, lindens, maples, oaks, redwoods, viburnums and more. Call Chris Buckley at 523-0411

AAPS Board Members 2006

President	Christopher Buckley	523.0411
1st Vice President	Jeannie Graham	769.9286
2nd Vice President	Nancy Hird	523.0825
Treasurer	Bob Risley	865.5918
Corresponding Secretary	Kevis Brownson	522.4966
Recording Secretary	Birgitt Evans	521.9177
Member at Large	Janelle Spatz	521.4045
Advisor to the Board	Denise Brady	523.8886

For more information, please contact:
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In this issue Fire Prevention and Historic Preservation, The Golden Mean in Construction, AAPS needs you ...

AAPS Membership Coupon

If you would like to join the AAPS or renew your membership, please send this portion back with your payment. Membership Chairperson Nancy Hird at 523.0825

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

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☐ renewal ☐ new member

Check your Membership category:

☐ Family \$30 ☐ Partner \$100

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P.O. Box 1677, Alameda, CA 94501

AAPS SCHEDULE OF EVENTS for 2007

Sunday, March 4

Fire Prevention in older homes

Sunday, April 29

Jane Powell and her newest Bungalow book

Sunday, June 3

Tenth Annual Preservation Awards

Sunday, August (TBD)

Annual "Woody Walk" with Woody Minor

Sunday, September 23

Alameda Legacy Home Tour