



Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Winners of the Fifteenth Annual Preservation Awards & AAPS Kids Preservation Contest

Ceremony Held Thursday, May 17, 2012

Auctions by the Bay Theater 2700 Saratoga Street • Alameda, California



Red Onion, A Tasty Rehab 1222 Park Street *Story by Woody Minor*

**Award Recipients: Buffie Choi, Business Owner;
Community Development Department, City of Alameda**

The recent conversion of 1222 Park Street to restaurant use is a fine example of the continuity of community traditions. The current owner, Buffie Choi, an Alameda resident raised in the Island City, belongs to a family of restaurateurs. Her mother, Ivy Yee, owned several restaurants in Berkeley, including Raza's Garden and Ivy's, on Telegraph Avenue, and Claremont Seafood across from the Claremont Hotel, as well as the Ducal restaurant on Webster Street in Alameda.

In the 1980s, Mrs. Yee purchased the original Red Onion, established in El Sobrante in 1963. There were two other Red Onion restaurants, in El Cerrito and Pinole, opened in the 1970s and 1980s. Mrs. Yee purchased the Pinole Red Onion in the 1990s and trademarked the name. Her son, Johnny Yee, runs the Pinole Red Onion, and has worked with his sister, Buffie, setting up the Alameda Red Onion. "It was so exciting to have the opportunity to open a Red Onion in our hometown," he said. The building they leased turned out to be perfect, both for its architecture and its historical associations.

Built in 1946, the structure originally housed the tailor shop and clothes cleaners of Bernard Bernardi, who had learned his trades in the family business established by his father in the 1920s in Alameda. The business was originally located across the street in the little brick storefront at 1221 Park Street, built in 1929. After World War II, Bernard Bernardi commissioned the new building at 1222 Park Street, from the design of architect

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The rejuvenated sign of Red Onion adds a burst of nostalgia and neon light at night to the Park Street setting.

Red Onion...continued from page 1

F. W. Dakin. Mr. Bernardi lived in an attached apartment at the rear of the building, finally selling the property in 1968. The business kept going under the original name through the 1990s. From 2000 to 2010, the building was occupied by Amazon Tropical Fish Supplies. Red Onion restaurant opened here in January 2012.

The building is a fine example of Moderne style commercial architecture, notable for its stepped pylon, generous expanse of display windows, and high degree of integrity. The original Bernardi signage consisted of vertically applied metal letters on the pylon ("Bernardi") and horizontally applied letters over the windows ("Cleaners" and "Tailors"). During the occupancy of the Amazon Tropical Fish Supplies, the original signage was removed.

Under the guidance of Oakland designer Wes Hildebrand, and the oversight of the Historical Advisory Board and city planner Simone Wolter, the building's 2011 rehab made excellent use of the original Moderne styling. Vertical neon tube lighting was added to the pylon, accentuating the zigzag shape. Neon lighting was also used for the business name ("Red Onion"), applied vertically at the center of the pylon, and for the pair of horizontal words over the display windows ("Breakfast" and "Burgers"). The new signage reprises the look and feeling of the original with the added zing of period-appropriate neon. The adaptive reuse of the interior works equally well—a spacious room with high ceiling, kitchen and counter to one side and open seating on the other, where diners sample the restaurant's selection of breakfasts, specialty burgers, pastas, and desserts. In more ways than one, Red Onion is a tasty addition to the Park Street business district.



Left: This Moderne style building was commissioned by Bernard Bernardi after World War II. He lived at the back and ran his dry cleaning business in the storefront. The current owner, Buffie Choi, an Alameda resident raised in the Island City, belongs to a family of restaurateurs. Together with Oakland designer Wes Hildebrand, and the oversight of the Historical Advisory Board, and city planner Simone Wolter, they have achieved an excellent reuse of the property.

Saved at The Brink: 855 Cedar Street By Meilin Liu, Larry Kudla, and Christopher Buckley

Award Recipients: Meilin Liu, Owner; Larry Kudla, Contractor; City of Alameda Code Compliance Program; J. Benjamin McGrew, Receiver

The story of 855 Cedar began back in the late 1890s, when the house was designed by a woman, Mrs. Thomas H. Speddy, who also supervised the construction. Woman architects were very unusual at that time and Mrs. Speddy's work was the subject of a full page March 17, 1901 San Francisco Chronicle article. So it seems fitting that today the house is again owned and controlled by a woman, Meilin Liu.

According to the very interesting and informative website, www.855cedar.info, established and maintained by a former owner's relative, the house was developed by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Speddy as their residence and completed on August 1, 1899. The builder was Charles Bolin. The house was converted to a triplex in 1949 accompanied by additions. At some point, the original shiplap siding, with cedar shingles on the upper walls, was covered with stucco.

Meilin took possession of the house on December 28, 2010, following a court-supervised receivership auction, and to say it had fallen out of grace would be an

understatement. The house had become a blight to the neighborhood. Meilin and Larry heard stories of the roof leaking for 40 years. The prior occupants had rigged up a contraption on the 2nd floor to catch water for toilets and bathing since the water main was broken. Two 50 gallon containers were arranged so the over flow would run through the floor to the 1st floor and to the outside. The foundation was caving in; the electrical was unsafe; and the plumbing system was inoperative. The first floor bathrooms did not even have a floor. There were illegal fireplaces spliced into the existing chimneys in almost every room to provide heat, which, of course, resulted in a fire in 2007. There was not much left to save. If not for the historical value, the best solution would have been to raze the structure.

Alameda's historic preservation community was concerned that the structure would be burned down by squatters or rendered unrepairable by architectural thieves and ongoing exposure to the elements. However, Meilin and her contractor, Larry Kudla, completed the project and have moved into one of the three units.

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Cedar Street...continued from page 2



The house had become a blight to the neighborhood. Prior occupants had rigged up a contraption to catch water for toilets and bathing since the water main was broken. The foundation was caving in; the electrical was unsafe; and the plumbing system was inoperative.

The structure had been vacated in 2007 after the fire left a hole in the roof. Following inspection, the City's Code Compliance Unit issued in November 2007 a list of code violations that declared the structure a "Dangerous Building" and included, among other things: a portion of foundation removed in the basement; dry rot and deterioration in the roof; exterior stairs and a roof overhang in danger of collapse; and kitchens, fireplaces and a sauna (!) added without permits.

Following repeated unsuccessful efforts to have the previous owner correct these conditions, the Superior Court in January 2008, at the City's request, appointed J. Benjamin McGrew as Receiver for the property. Under State law, a Receiver can take possession of a property, correct code violations, bill the owner for all costs and, if not repaid, lien and sell the property. Mr. McGrew is a licensed California Real Estate Salesperson and President of Managewest, Inc., a full service real estate management company. He has acted as a court-appointed Receiver since 1982 and handled over 450 cases.

After over 40 court hearings where the former owner was given repeated opportunities to correct the violations or sell the property, the Court finally ordered the property to be sold at the 2010 auction, subject to the buyer correcting the code violations under the Receiver's oversight.

During the rehab Meilin and Larry heard from so many—contractors, power company workers, Alameda waste workers—that had either lived in the house or knew someone who did. The house holds many memories for many Alamedans. There were daily visits from neighbors with words of encouragement and stories of their own projects. It seemed like everyday Meilin and Larry were giving tours of the home.

The most difficult part of replacing the roof was removing the four layers of tarps; the roof itself could be removed with a broom. Once the house was water tight, the foundation was replaced. In doing so, the rear corner of the building fell off into a pile of debris, since the walls were so decayed they could no longer support themselves let alone the structure above.

The house now sports all new mechanical systems, insulated glass windows, and replaced windows on the second and third floors. Spray foam insulation was used,

since in many areas the space for insulation was limited; this provided the highest insulation value and sound control. The original gravity furnace was nonoperational and was replaced with new high-efficiency furnaces for each of the three units. In addition, the interior received a total face lift, with three new kitchens and five new bathrooms. As a finishing touch, the house was given a bright, shiny new paint job.

The original first floor wood windows were retained, except on the south side where they were replaced in-kind due to deterioration. Glazing in the original sash was replaced by insulated glass (two sheets of glass bonded together) for noise attenuation and energy conservation. Eight second story aluminum windows were replaced with salvaged wood windows from Urban Ore in Berkeley and St. Vincent de Paul in Oakland. The top floor window openings needed to be enlarged on the north, south and east elevations for emergency egress. Here, the architecturally incompatible louvered windows were replaced with wood casements.

Meilin says "The job required a contractor with knowledge of multiple disciplines and a passion in preserving the historical aspects. Larry Kudla, my contractor, guided me through this adventure, and labor of love."

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society is very grateful to Meilin and Larry for taking on this project and saving a distinctive historic building that was on the brink of total loss. AAPS would also like to acknowledge the City of Alameda for working very hard and creatively to save the property and going the extra mile by pioneering the use of receivership in Alameda.

Finally, AAPS would like to thank J. Benjamin McGrew for his diligent and successful efforts to find a buyer who would sensitively rehabilitate the property. The successful conclusion of this precedent-setting receivership case sets the stage for further use of receivership to rehabilitate other extremely deteriorated Alameda properties where conventional code compliance tools are insufficient.

Meilin reports that when the City's Building Official, Gregory McFann, asked Larry if he was ready for the next project, their initial reaction after one year of twelve-hour days everyday was "No way"! However, after receiving encouragement from the AAPS award, Meilin says that she will consider doing it again if the opportunity presents itself.



This Cedar Street residence is once again fit to live in, thanks to diligent efforts in recovery and rehabilitation by several entities. All accepted a challenge of saving this historic home rather than considering it a lost cause.

Reconstruction of a Tower 1723 Central Avenue

Story by Alan H. Teague

Award Recipient: Alan H. Teague, Owner; Sam & Matt Najdek, Ore-Cal Construction; Alan Santes, The Windows Zone; Derek Pavlik Design

In March of 2009, I wrote to “This Old House” to see if they had any advice for restoring the tower on my 1895 Queen Anne home. The response was “Lots of money and a restoration specialist”. While not particularly helpful, it did drive home that I would need to be the one to figure out the project.

Over the next several months, I explained the project to three different contractor/designers. Each one came back with a bid which exceeded what they originally thought. Scaffolding seemed to be a big variable in cost for folks—but ten thousand? Really? None of these worked for me either in terms of budget nor comfort with the contractor.

I figured that I needed to have plans to show contractors so that they would understand that the project really is simple except for the height. This was where Luck stepped in to play. A friend at work was deep into figuring out how to more than double the square footage of their home. I leveraged their research into designers and settled on the one they had chosen. Derek Pavlik turned out to be a good choice and it wasn’t very long before I had plans submitted to the Alameda Planning Department. The project submittal included several archive photos of the original.

Over the next few weeks, Derek had “interesting” discussions with planning about whether this ‘Tower Reconstruction’ would fall into the height exception granted to ‘Towers, spires, and scenic lofts’. In the end, the project was given a green light. It wasn’t very surprising that the Planning Department was very interested and supportive of my restoration project. I ended 2009 with Planning Approval.

As my friends’ designer became my designer, so their contractor became mine. Sam of Ore-Cal Construction met with me to go over the plans and my ideas



The tower of this Queen Anne was removed in 1915 likely to modernize the look of the house.



After ten months of intricate restoration, the tower offers a stunning view of Alameda’s skyline from the inside and an improved view from the street of a Queen who regained her crown.

and hopes for the project and beyond. This meeting helped satisfy me that he understood my desires and love for the house. With this in mind, he worked up a bid that I could make work.

The original plans called for four windows and one door in the planned space. Luckily, the original door was still in the frame so that would be used simply as-is. The windows, on the other hand, required an artisan’s touch. I wanted the windows to match the rest of the house not only in visible style but also in technology—counterweights, ropes, and pulleys. The talented man who restored all of the rest of the windows in the house was tasked with creating these pieces of the puzzle. The end result would be quite awesome.

Now came the time to apply for the actual Building Permit. The City is allowed 14-15 business days to review applications and they used every moment. In the end, the permit was granted without any additional fuss. Moving forward required decisions regarding the interior trim.

Custom trim is expensive! They have to make a special knife for each type and so it makes sense to cut all that you would ever want to have at the same time to save on costs. I searched the house and identified all of the places where the trim was missing or damaged. In the end, it came to about 30 rosettes and many many feet of door trim and baseboard caps. It would be cut out of poplar which is supposed to do very well on being bent a bit to conform to the curved walls.

The last two pieces of the puzzle were the finial to top off the witch’s cap and the material selection for the actual roof. I explored bronze, copper, ceramic, and wood for the finial. I found a place in Michigan to make a Lincoln Copper finial. While a copper roof would look incredible it would not fit into the budget so I ended up with matching shingles with the rest of the roof.

The deconstruction of the roof began in October 2010. The roof and structure came off quickly and we ended up with a fantastic view of the surrounding neighborhood. While enjoying the view and seeing Christ Church’s Steeple through the trees, an idea struck. In the dark room, there’s a round window sitting on a shelf—no clue as to its origin. It turns out there is a gap between

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Tower . . . continued from page 4

the studs where it fits perfectly and gives an amazing view of the steeple. We changed the plans to include this additional window— with only a slight delay from planning to view the change.

We had over 6" of rain in December. Which given an average rainfall of 3" or so would explain a bit why the project moved forward very slowly. Christmas Day was very wet and the tarp weather-proofing failed spectacularly. Water was running down the hallway several feet and to my unhappy surprise out of the ceiling one floor below. Sam and Company worked late into the night cutting, hammering, sealing, taping, and generally fixing the problem. The tower laid fallow for a while longer with another disturbing leak into the downstairs caused by what may have been a gutter overflow cluttered with construction debris hidden beneath a tarp. Neither of these caused damage that couldn't be repaired.

One Friday once the weather cleared, the final arrived and they began shingling the roof of the tower. Once the roof was done, they began putting up the fish-scale shingles on the sides. Each of these cedar shingles needed to be stained on both sides prior to being installed. There are 1,200 shingles so it was quite a job.

Well, sunny January passed with very little progress on the project. Construction was held up waiting for the gutters to be installed and the installer wasn't available for a couple weeks. Once Jenks Gutters started the project, the rains came back. Very slow installation of the top gutter ensued. About 2 1/2 weeks later the top gutter was in place. Once he finished the top gutter, the plans changed. The lower gutter was delayed until the outside work was done. This way the gutter wouldn't be damaged during the rest of the construction.

The outside details involves many different shaped pieces: a crown, a dentil, more crown, a flat section, a square line and then a final crown. Each one is hand-crafted out of reclaimed redwood and painstakingly installed. There is more trim to be added under the gutter. The most important bit is the part that establishes the drip-line. The vertical siding under the gutter goes down to about 5/8" past where the frame cuts back in to the wall. This sets up a place for water to gather and 'drip' instead of seeping back along the flat into the wall and trim on the wall.

When the top of the tower was removed back around 1915, at least two of the original redwood joists were reused as roof supports. Or at least, that is my theory. I had two of them put aside during the demolition for use in the finished tower as the cross beams to support the chandelier/lights. After cleaning them up, I decided to use "old school" techniques. One part boiled linseed oil, two parts turpentine made up a very thin penetrating oil finish. Pure linseed oil turns redwood black, so the diluted version darkened the wood and more importantly brought out the grain. Once the third coat dried, I sealed the wood with shellac.

Making a long story of the interior short. Drywall went up (twice) and then lots of mud applied to make a smooth curve and cone. Window frames, trim, and aprons installed. Baseboards and floor refinished. Painting of the cone, walls and trim. The two beams installed and the lights hung. Done!

After ten months, I believe I made the right decision to rebuild the tower. The look of the house from the outside is quite different and much improved. The fish-scale siding blends in and it looks very much like it was always there. While it is hard to believe the removal of the tower was probably to modernize the look of the house, the reconstruction of it brings back the external elegance of this lone surviving mansion.



This fabulous trade sign was discovered under various materials added to the building façade. It has been restored by artist Michael MacDonald.

The Belfast Mug Root Beer Sign 1521 Webster Street

Story by Jim Smallman

Award Recipients: Don Lindsey Owner; Michael MacDonald, Artist; The Economic Development Department, City of Alameda Façade Grant Program

In recent years the building at 1521-25 Webster Street had become known as "The Tin Building". First constructed in Alameda's late 1890's commercial building boom, the structure sported a cupola, Victorian fenestration, and shiplap siding. Subsequent owners sought to camouflage its origins, first slathering on stucco and then covering that indignity with metal siding, and aluminum windows.

As so often happens in restoration, there was a surprise waiting to be discovered. Under the tin squares workers found a period soda advertisement. The tastefully revitalized building now boasts this authentically restored sign for Belfast Mug Old Fashioned Root Beer. First produced by the Belfast Beverage Company in the early 1950s, Mug Root Beer was originally available only in its native San Francisco, but the secret soon went nation-wide and Belfast prospered. In 1986 the company was acquired by PepsiCo.

The sign was discovered under the tin squares, painted on top of the stucco. Painstakingly restored, the sign adds an interesting historical element to Webster Street. Silver-striped cans were produced in the 1960s, before PepsiCo bought Belfast, so the sign is about fifty years old.

Michael McDonald is the artist who lovingly restored the sign. The city contributed funding for this valuable "collectible", which will add interest and charm to Webster Street for years to come. The owner, Don Lindsay, has a long history of supporting Alameda preservation. When he acquired the building he decided to acknowledge the "Tin Buildings" origins as much as possible. While full restoration was not practical, Victorian elements such as dentil moldings, brackets supporting a new cornice, and decorative windows give an appropriate flavor to the ongoing renovation. The highlight is the period soda sign!

AAPS Kids Preservation Contest

Story by Corri Jimenez

The task was simple. Get kids enthused about historic preservation. No pressure. A piece of cake, you might say. And with that said, we launched a committee with both excitement and a little hesitation. The committee was represented by Johanna Hall; first grade Otis Elementary teacher and author, Judith Lynch; Corri Jimenez, AAPS Board member; Erich Stiger, AAPS President. Between the four of us, we have education, business, and preservation experiences, as well as an extensive knowledge of Alameda's built environment.

As the first inaugural competition, we chose to focus on Alameda's 30 designated Monuments—these monuments are historic places that include the Leonard Mansion, Alameda City Hall, the Alameda Theatre, Lincoln Park, and, interestingly enough, 1,297 historic streetlights. Participants were asked to visit several monuments, pick one, and think about what makes it important to Alameda. The contest was divided into teacher-led classroom projects at local elementary schools, which were fairly open-ended and allowed teachers to combine with existing curriculum, such as art docent projects or Alameda's existing Kids and Queen Victoria program. In addition, there were individual art and essay projects that focused on the same theme as the classroom projects and were submitted to us, well, individually.

Our committee worked with schools, local papers and extensively worked to get the word out about educating kids about the monuments and what makes them significant to Alameda. Judith herself presented in so many classrooms, and even I participated in presenting at St. Joseph Catholic School. I found myself clicking a slide to have a little hand raise high to say, "I go to church there!" or "That's where I play soccer!" As statements, these are entertaining, but with context, such as St. Joseph's Basilica or Alameda Point's Naval Base, they are priceless and exactly communicated our goals.

We were able to offer some great prizes with the help from the Alameda Museum, Alameda Theatre and Cineplex, Asena Restaurant, Double Rainbow Ice Cream, The Meyers House, and CLP Specialty Screen Printing. All kids and their teachers get as gifts the swanky t-shirts we designed that showcases First Grader Daniel Tea's rendition of City Hall with its original tower.

When it came time to picking winners, our committee brought together a terrific panel of judges including Alameda Museum President, Robbie Dileo; *Alameda Sun* publishers, Eric Kos and Dennis Evanovsky; AAPS Board Advisor, Nancy Hird; Architect and Historic Advisory Board Chair, Dennis Owens; and Author and Local Historian, Woody Minor.

All together, over 150 Alameda students participated in the contest—not bad for our first year! Nevertheless, the best part was seeing all these entries. Some are amazing art pieces whereas others are detailed essays or a combination of both. Heck, we even got a ghost story on Lincoln Park! Overall, a lot of effort went into these projects, and we even found ourselves learning a few new things about these Monuments.

An entry depicting the Webster House by Tommy Soderlund, a third grader at Otis Elementary in Ms. Myovich's class.



A group painting by the first graders in Sasha Zeldin's class at Otis Elementary School won the grand prize. They are shown above in AAPS Kids Contest t-shirts. Photo: Sasha Zeldin.

KIDS CONTEST WINNERS

INDIVIDUAL PRIZE WINNERS

Mary Malkic, wrote an essay on the Alameda Theatre. She is in 6th grade at Lincoln School and won Alameda Theatre tickets and passes to the Meyers House.

Her sister, Selma, wrote about Lincoln Park. A 3rd grader at Otis school, she won Alameda Theatre tickets and passes to the Meyers House.

Siblings Ellina and Maslin Coutts, both Otis students drew renderings of the Leonard Mansion and shared a gift certificate from Asena Restaurant and Meyers House passes.

GROUP PRIZE WINNERS

For colorful drawings of the Webster House, two third grade classes at Otis received prizes, thanks to teachers Jackie Myovich and Irene Quon.

A group of students from Girls, Inc. drew their headquarters, the Monument Greenleaf House, also called the Edith Meyers Center. Their prize, appropriately, is a special tour and tea party at the Meyers House, Alameda's only Victorian museum and a Monument itself.

Teacher Sharon Jackson took her 3rd grade class at Washington School to the Whidden House, a little known Monument on 9th Street. For their drawings, they won a Double Rainbow ice cream party.

Another ice cream party went to the 3rd grade at St. Josephs School. Ashley Aldrich's class produced a book of essays and drawings on the St. Joseph Basilica.

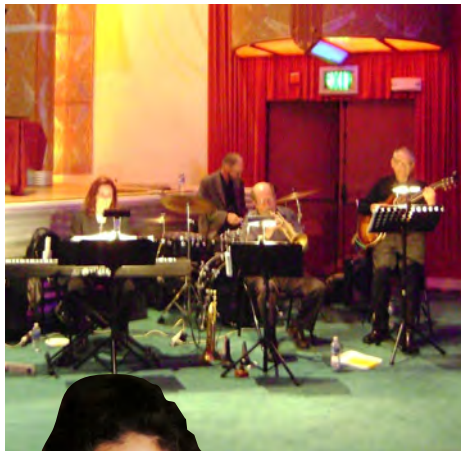
A group painting of the Alameda Theatre garnered the grand prize for the first graders taught by Sasha Zeldin at Otis. They won a combination pizza and Double Rainbow ice cream party.

In addition, all participants received AAPS tee shirts designed by Corri Jimenez, education committee member, and printed by CLP Specialty Screen Printing.



Above: Winners exhibited their art and project stories on the big screen.

Right: The Franz–Nichols Band provided music for the reception and throughout the award presentations.



Architectural Winners Honored

The goal of AAPS is to educate, increase public awareness and appreciation of historic architecture in Alameda. Each year, AAPS takes time to honor substantial architectural renovations that make a difference in our community and share these efforts with our members, guests and interested parties.

The Preservation Awards Ceremony was akin to having Oscar/Hollywood night take place right here on the Island—with Hollywood glamour and glitz at the Auctions by the Bay Theater. The City of Alameda and Allen Michaan, donated this beautiful, luxurious, and opulent theater venue to the event.

The reception began at 6:30 pm in the gilded Deco lobby. The room was abuzz as presenters, nominees, and guests mingled over appetizers, wine, and desserts while listening to music by the Franz-Nichols Band.

At 7:30 pm, Mistress of Ceremonies Felicity Hesed kicked off the awards with a comedic entrance in a classic evening gown. Hesed who regularly performs in the Bay Area, kept the awardees on their toes with her entertaining observations.

The presentation shared each of the winning projects' stories—complete with highlights, pictures and key learnings. Ten winners completed excellent preservation and restoration projects worthy of recognition and admiration. They received honorary plaques or a certificate for their efforts. Many a tale was told about how each project turned out to be a success. Well timed music of the era matching the original buildings' construction dates accompanied each award which further added to the festivities.

The 15th annual Preservation Awards was a fun and informative event that let property owners know how much their work is appreciated in Alameda. And, to give others an idea that they can do it too!

Mistress of Ceremonies Felicity Hesed introduced the winners and entertained the crowd.



Presenter Jerri Holan enjoys wine provided by Rock Wall Wine Company at the reception. Bartenders are AAPS members Ross Dileo and Charlie Howell. Event photos: Valerie Turpen.

A Storefront Reborn: 1616 Webster Street

Story by Jerri Holan

**Award Recipient: Charles Ma, Owner; Daniel Hoy, Architect;
Economic Development Department, City of Alameda Façade Grant Program**

This storefront started life as J. Bonne West End French Laundry. The 1878 Victorian storefront has had many reincarnations since then. The building, along with its neighbor at 1612 Webster, had been in the same family for several generations and sold to the current owner, Charles Ma, about five years ago. With some seed money from Alameda's Façade Improvement Program, Charles improved a run-down series of storefronts from 1604 to 1616 Webster. Success seems to be stimulating other business along this short but vibrant section of Webster Street, often a forgotten area of Alameda's commercial community.

The building is wedged between two taller buildings. Built in 1875, the Victorian on the right was the West End Market, Webster Street's first General Store. Both buildings were developed by William Holtz and were part of a small commercial district which sprung up at this intersection. The district was called "Long Branch" after a famous East Coast spa of the day. The local paper, *The Encinal*, even commented that "They are really pushing ahead at 'Long Branch,' quite a village has sprung up." According to an 1897 Sanborn Map, by then, 1616 Webster was a cobbler and the French Laundry had moved to 1606 Webster.

The immediate neighborhood is a wonderfully preserved block of old one-story buildings that recalls Webster Street's early business origins. Wooden buildings on this north end of Webster reflect the commercial development of the area from about 1875

when the West End Victorian resort boom started until about 1920 when development of the Bethlehem Shipyard spurred a boom further north on Webster.

Webster Street's period of biggest growth was between 1915 - 1945 spurred by the Neptune Beach Resort and the shipyards at opposite ends of the Street. In 1921, the City issued a permit to 1616 Webster for \$400 for alterations and the building was listed as "The Tank House." Two more alterations occurred at this property in 1926 and 1938 and it's likely the Victorian building lost its wood siding then in favor of the fashionable stucco Spanish Style, popular in the 20s and 30s.

Previous owners also replaced the large double-hung upper windows with smaller Arts & Crafts style windows and removed the wood panel bulkheads and storefront windows and awnings. From 2005 to 2010, the City received numerous complaints about illegal residents, non-permitted construction, and the building was boarded up and neglected.

In 2011, Mr. Ma, with Sue Russell's assistance, received funds from the City of Alameda's Façade Program to replace awnings and windows, install tilework, and paint the façade in order to recapture some of the building's Victorian character.

Because the building had been modified extensively, the Architect was charged with bringing back some of the building's original details. Daniel Hoy added upper window trims, reglazed the upper windows, refurbished the original transoms, added a wood



An early photograph of the J. Bonne West End French Laundry, shown with its employees and horse-drawn cart. Photo: Alameda Museum.

cornice, and recreated wood bulkheads, in addition to replacing all the windows and door.

Structurally, the entire ground floor façade was removed and rebuilt. The bottom floor listed 4" to the left so knee braces and shear walls were added for strength. The interior was gutted and the foundation and floor slab replaced while new stairs were constructed for the residential unit above.

The rehabilitation reused many materials to recreate a distinct façade. The design retains the stucco finish and windows on the upper floor but reintroduced wood finishes on the ground floor. The combination gives period ambience to the old storefront while soft colors are traditional and respectful of the building's era.

While this small renovation project seems modest in the large scheme of things, in fact, it's an important building in the context of Webster Street and commercial development in Alameda. The community is thankful to Charles Ma and Daniel Hoy for bringing this jewel back to life.



Left: Previous owners replaced the large double-hung upper windows with smaller Arts & Crafts style windows and removed the wood panel bulkheads and storefront windows and awnings. From 2005 to 2010, the City received numerous complaints about illegal residents, non-permitted construction, and the building was boarded up and neglected.

Right: Because the building had been modified extensively, the architect, Daniel Hoy was charged with bringing back some of the building's original details. Owner Charles Ma and Daniel Hoy also received a preservation award in 2011 for work on 1606 - 08 and 1610 - 14 Webster Street.

A Labor of Love 1423 Versailles Avenue

Story by Woody Minor

Award Recipient John and Diane Dove

John and Diane Dove purchased their charming Italianate residence at 1423 Versailles Avenue in 2004, moving to Alameda from Oakland so their son could benefit from the local school system. Born and raised in Berkeley, John and Diane love old houses, and they felt an immediate connection with their home on Versailles.

Built in 1880 for a widow named Jane P. Rowe, the high-basement cottage had been enlarged in 1884 with a rear addition for rental or resale by Dr. Calvin C. Knowles, who lived next door in a spacious Italianate that is no longer standing. The Doves became the proud owners one of the oldest houses in the East End, on a prominent corner lot across the street from the 1920s Fernside tract.

When John and Diane took possession, the house was nearly inhabitable; however, they took pleasure in the many original features, including carved brackets under the eaves and delicate incised ornament on the porch posts and entry. The interior featured a central hall with embossed wainscot, vintage wallpaper, parlors and bedrooms with fireplaces, and an airy dining room and kitchen at the rear. But the house had suffered from decades of deferred maintenance—brick foundation, unfinished basement, sagging front porch—and one major misguided improvement, in the form of gray asbestos shingles (“transite”), applied to the exterior walls in 1947 over the original channel-rustic wood siding.

Their first tasks involved stabilizing the structure and removing the transite. Once the transite shingles were off, the old lead-based paint could be removed and the original siding restored. At this point another major hurdle revealed itself: all of the original detailing had been removed when the transite shingles were applied! This was the first of many projects that were executed while the couple worked at their jobs and conducted day-to-day lives.

The unfinished basement, with dirt floor, was excavated to provide adequate height for usable space. A concrete foundation and floor was put in. The bricks from the old foundation were used for walkways in the newly landscaped yard. The basement, with recycled vintage columns and wainscot, is midway to becoming an art studio for the couple and their college-age son, all artists.

The new foundation included the footing for the structurally challenged porch extending across the front of the house. In addition to the structural renovation of the porch, the boxed posts were deconstructed, reinforced with new interior posts, and reassembled, along with new balusters and rails that John milled himself. In addition, the corner boards and water table were milled and applied. The house’s exterior is presently coated in tinted oil-based primer to preserve the redwood as it awaits other trim details that have not yet been restored. As the house is a work in progress, the final coat and color have yet to be decided.

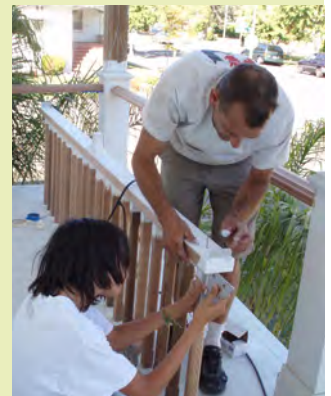


Above: The home's original channel rustic siding has been restored and coated in tinted oil-based primer to preserve the redwood as it awaits other trim details that have not yet been restored.



Above: John and Diane Dove chose this Italianate home for its original features, although much had been covered by asbestos shingles in 1947. The structure had suffered through years of deferred maintenance visible in the sagging front porch and failing stairs.

Right: New balusters and rails milled by John Dove complement the delicate incised ornaments on the porch posts.



Phoenix From Ashes 727 Paru Street

Story by Denise Brady

Award Recipients: Rick & Kris Nelson, Owners

In 1994 PG&E had a major regulator failure causing a gas surge into the entire island. Dozens of fires erupted simultaneously, including at this house. With no available firemen, the house burned for over an hour before the first emergency crew arrived. The house was essentially gutted... almost to the point of structural failure. After sitting empty for over a year, Rick and Kris Nelson, who are both architects, happened to drive by and noticed the windows boarded up. It was fate that brought them here as they were not even looking for a house, but driving a friend around who was thinking of moving here from the city.

Within an hour Rick had found and contacted the owner and within 48 hours they had agreed to buy it! Unfortunately due to bureaucratic red tape with the owners' insurance company, they were not able to take possession for another six months.

The house was designed by renowned architect Charles Shaner and built in 1887 for Albert Newbold. Sometime in the 50's it went through the standard "Re-muddle" where they removed most of the gingerbread and the porch columns and brackets. What was a wooden porch was covered over with bricks (yes over the wood). Subsequently the wood rotted away causing the brick porch to settle in the center almost 2"... expected to fall through at any moment!

Rick began the renovation by removing the center bricks on the porch, maintaining the brick steps and brick sides. He reframed the porch itself with PT wood and poured a water proofed concrete slab, which then received handmade French

porcelain tiles... installed by the Nelson children Shelby, Madeline and Max.

The wrought iron railing and columns were removed and they had custom turned posts made to match the original photo as best they could. Rick then created the custom brackets and railings to match the existing detailing of the upper balconies from the original photos.

With the extensive interior remodel they created a kitchen and family room on the back of the house. This skillfully designed addition includes a turret and an enlarged porch from the "stoop" that once was the only access to the backyard. The same meticulous detailing from the front, as well as Rick's hundreds of hand cut dentils, were applied to the rear façade.



Left: Due to a gas surge across the island, this home was one of many that caught fire in 1994.

Below: The interior was severely damaged and the home remained empty for nearly a year.



Purchased by Rick and Kris Nelson, restoration of the home became a project involving the entire family. Photos were used to duplicate original elements. A style-sensitive addition of a kitchen, family room, and turret were added to the back of the house.

2412-2414 Lincoln Avenue

Story by Jim Smallman

Award Recipients: Michael Wright & Michael Wright II, Owners; Economic Development Department, City of Alameda Façade Grant Program; Frank and Delores Cirmelli, Former Owners and Contributors

Michael Wright, the current owner, was told by the long-time prior owners that the building was originally a fire station, which was moved to the current location and lifted to accommodate a first floor commercial space. Some early lighting survived, and lath and plaster shadows hint at an earlier history. The current work on the building is an attractive adaptation within the building's footprint.

No city records have been found to support the "fire station move" legend. The early history of the building and the site is sketchy. Sanborn map books and permit records indicate a one story meeting hall — "Germania Hall" — had been constructed on the site by 1897. In 1912 the hall was converted to apartments at a cost of \$2,000. This substantial figure (at a time when two-story houses could be built for less than \$4,000) suggests that the second story may have been added at this time.

In 1920 the "Park Street fire" began next door. Though the building may have been damaged, permits show unspecified alterations valued at \$1,000 were made in 1930. Relatively small, these changes suggest the building had survived in some form after the 1920 fire.

Some intriguing decorative elements may have survived the earlier remodeling. In particular the current owner, Michael Wright, found two spectacular leaded glass windows upstairs, and these have been incorporated in the redesign of the front façade. Along with original hardwood flooring and high ceilings in the upper residential space, a happier future is in store for this interesting building.

The façade work was aided by a City Façade Assistance grant, administered by Sue Russell. Attractive awnings and retention of much original fenestration make a pleasant contribution to the Lincoln Avenue commercial district.



Above: The rehabilitated state of 2412 - 2414 Lincoln Avenue showcases two stained glass windows in the now matching transom windows upstairs. Below: The windows with a floral motif were found inside the building, but their origins are unclear.



Left: This property was located across from the Park Street train station, a prosperous focal point of the district until the station was removed in 1961. The building likely gained its 20th century appearance after the Park Street fire in 1920. For many years, the business space was unused and the lower window covered in wood.

A-4 Skyhawk Once Again Graces the Main Gate at Alameda Point

Story by Dick Rutter

Award Recipient: Economic Development Department, City of Alameda

On April 30, 1957, the U.S. Navy accepted a brand new A4D-1 Carrier-borne attack jet from the Douglas Aircraft Company, Inc., El Segundo, CA. The jet was flown south to NAS Miramar, just north of San Diego to join the VA-113 "Stingers", a squadron assigned to the carrier USS SHANGRI LA. This squadron also had an unsanctioned Navy Flight Demonstration Team named, "The Albino Angels", a direct dig at the Official Navy Flight Demonstration Team, the "Blue Angels". Our new A-4 was painted up in the Albino Angels color scheme, which was rather short-lived, as Navy Officialdom came down on VA-113 with both bureaucratic feet, and demanded that the Albino Angels be disestablished at once!

For twelve years, our A-4 dutifully served in the Navy in various capacities, until 1969, when it was set aside for display purposes. A concrete pylon was built at NAS Alameda's Main Gate, and mounted on the pylon, it welcomed one and all until it flew off the pylon, abetted by a particularly violent storm on the night of February 24, 2008.

The City of Alameda picked up the damaged plane, and put it into the dark recesses of the cavernous Bldg 005, former home of the Naval Air Rework Facility. While the Navy still held title, the City was tasked with the A-4's care. But the City had no money to fix it, so there it sat, out of sight, until someone could come up with a plan and some money.

Along came Alameda resident Dick Rutter, a former Naval Flyer, who boldly stated that he and some of his old Navy friends could likely fix it over several months. If the City would pay for necessary pylon repairs and a new paint job, the volunteers could likely do all the rest for free. This scheme was agreed to by both parties. Over the course of 2-1/2 years many people and firms in the aircraft industry donated freely of their time, labor, and repair parts to bring the A-4 back to its former glory. The restoration was done to FAA Quality Standards, with each repair inspected for quality assurance by a licensed FAA Inspector, even though the plane was never slated to fly again.



The A-4 Skyhawk was safely returned to its position at Alameda Point thanks to the dedicated team who restored it and the City of Alameda's Economic Development Department.

Newly painted in its original "Albino Angels" livery, the A-4 was taken from American Bus Repair's Paint Shop in Bldg 024, and hoisted above the newly repaired pylon on June 14, 2011. The Gods must not have been pleased, because the crane overturned during the lift, smashing the A-4 against the pylon, the crane's boom cutting through the tail. Within hours, news of the disaster was on all Bay Area TV Stations, and a video of the event appeared on Youtube.

This time, the A-4 was much more severely damaged than it had been during its flight during the storm of 2008. When asked if it was worth fixing—even whether it could be fixed—the volunteers affirmed that it could, and that it should. The Crane Company said they'd pay for the repairs. The City then said the volunteers had two and a half MONTHS to put it all back together again. The volunteers, again with the help of connections that literally reached to Arizona and Florida, did the job in 89-days. On December 19, 2011—this time with no fanfare, and no advanced notice to any reporters or TV stations—the A-4 was successfully put back up on its pylon.

Maintaining a tradition that began in 1969, the A-4 once again welcomes one and all who come through the Main Gate to visit wonderful Alameda Point.



Left: June 14, 2011 the A-4 fell short of its destination when the crane hoisting it onto the pylon overturned. Volunteers once again went to work on its restoration and completed the task in two and a half months. Right: Some of the crew at Building 005, Alameda Point. Left to right: Billy Zarevich, Russ Kennedy, Tim Conner, Tom McManama, Mike Hollingsworth, Dick Rutter, and Wayne Shannon.

Colonial Revival Survival 1830 Alameda Avenue

Story by Denise Brady

Award Recipients: Katja Huebner and Gaurav Kapur, Owners

Katja Huebner and Gaurav Kapur bought this sorely neglected Colonial Revival home in December 2010. The home was built in 1899 for Miss Jessie Jamieson, a teacher at Encinal School. Despite its deteriorated condition, Katja and Gaurav could see that it had once been a very elegant home and they were willing to take on the challenge of a major restoration. The challenge became even greater when a fire broke out in January 2011. Fortunately the primary damage was to the interior and the rear portions, and it did not affect the wonderful front exterior.

The front porch was sagging and rotten in various places with one of the columns sinking. It had concrete steps and 1950's sort of metal railing. The contractor fixed the structural issues and they re-built the stairs in wood with custom made balusters. They did a lot of research in order to come up with a design that fit the period and the scale of the house.

All of the windows, except the leaded ones, were replaced. Some were fire damaged, whereas others were dry rotted or not appropriate to the house, such as louvered or aluminum sliders. They used Jeldwyn custom, double pane, mostly double hung. Some were casement, but they kept the original sizing and placement for most of them.

They wanted to visually join the front bay windows, as well as the west side windows. This was accomplished by connecting them with the trim that mirrored the existing trim on the upper front windows. They put panels beneath these sets of windows to further unify them, as well as to "anchor" them and to repeat what was existing on the front upper windows. In general the bottom half of the house was very plain and "floating" a bit, so they wanted to tie it all together with the existing details and make it look more whole. They spent a lot of time and money on trim for the house, both exterior and interior.

All of the leaded glass windows were repaired by Ken Matthias at Alameda Art Glass. The very top window in the roof dormer is new – it replaced an ugly broken plain window. It now has the lovely leaded detailing found in the lower bay windows. Again, their desire was to pull together the design elements in order to unify the façade.

The general contractor for the project was Pat Fellowes and they were very pleased with his advice and how he kept things moving. This was a massive project with several things going on at once. They learned first hand how sequential things are. The attention to detail and the quality craftsmanship paid off. The end result is a stunning example of a restoration done right.



Leaded glass was added to the dormer window, matching the treatment found in the original windows.

Beautiful wood detailing in the upper front windows. Other elements from these windows were used on the lower portion of the house.



This Colonial Revival home built in 1899 had fallen into disrepair when it was purchased by Katja Huebner and Gaurav Kapur in 2010. After an unfortunate fire damaged the interior, the pair restored the home and corrected many of the added modern "improvements" it had acquired over the years.



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AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2012

AUGUST 26, 1:00 pm

Woody Walk

Location to be Determined

WOODY MINOR

•

SEPTEMBER 23

Alameda Legacy House Tour

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

•

OCTOBER 25

Panel Discussion – Tips/Techniques for Home Restoration

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH