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Alameda PRESERVATION

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Winners of the Eighteenth Annual Preservation Awards

Sunday, June 7, 2015

Alameda Point Theater • 2700 Saratoga Street • Alameda, California

An Alameda Landmark Regains its Prominence 1400 Park Street

Story by Dick Rutter

Award Recipients: Capone's Speakeasy; Construction Innovations, Inc. (Tenants); Giulio Accornero, Jr. (Property Owner)

rchitect William Patton (1821-1899), one of the most influential architects practicing in the High Victorian Style, lived in Alameda. Born and educated in England, he had come to California, as one of the original '49ers, who had arrived from all parts of the world. Like most who came in '49, Patton found mining for gold to be hard going, and financially unrewarding. He soon turned to designing buildings in order to make a living. By the 1880's, he was a very successful architect, securing prestigious commissions including San Francisco's 1889 City Hall, which was destroyed in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire.

As an Alameda resident, he made the acquaintance of Capt. R. R. Thompson, who commissioned him to design the Artesian Waterworks, at 1412 Park Street, a

continued on page 2...



This former bank building stood vacant for years at the corner of Park Street and Central Avenue. Several historical details were removed as architectural styles changed and it was coated in numerous layers of dull white paint. Renovation began in 2014. To maintain the structure's historic character, many architectural finishes and features were restored, repurposed, or refinished. Inside the original marble columns and bank vault have been maintained.

An Alameda Landmark . . . continued from page 1

Designed in the High Victorian Style, the building was decorated with cast iron and stone elements, including a balustrade around the top and a bracketed corner balcony over the entry.

The Banking Hall was later remodeled, and a rear two story addition constructed, in 1902. This early postcard shows a group of ladies crossing Park Street toward the bank. Image: alamedainfo.com.





After Wells Fargo left a travel agency used the building as an office. After their departure the large corner structure stood empty for years stripped of most ornate details and coated in a several layers of bland paint.

building which supported a 240,000 gallon domestic water storage tank over 30-ft up in the air! Captain Thompson and others had organized the First Bank of Alameda in 1879, and in 1887, they decided to relocate the bank to a new building to be built on land owned by Thompson at the corner of Park Street, and Central Avenue. William Patton was commissioned to do the design. Designed in the High Victorian Style, the building was decorated with cast iron and stone elements, including a balustrade around the top and a bracketed corner balcony over the entry. The Banking Hall was later remodeled, and a rear two story addition constructed, in 1902.

Between 1888 and 1995, the building was continuously occupied by various banking businesses. Wells Fargo was the last, occupying the building from 1960 to 1995. The banking industry was rapidly evolving to meet the new and changing demands of consumers. Bank branches became uneconomical to operate, especially those located in old downtown

areas with limited parking. When Wells Fargo left, Uniglobe Travel occupied the premises, but with the onset of the internet, the travel business changed, and they also left. The building began its decline into a decade of vacancy.

Many in the community, as well as the building's owners themselves, wondered if there would ever be a tenant, who would be the right fit for the building, and who would be willing to invest the money and make the commitment required to bring the building back to a condition approaching its original glory. A complication was the fact that

common facilities were shared across a legal property line, with the building at 1410 Park Street next door. Even the stairs to the second floors of both buildings are shared. While seismically upgraded, both buildings still required many quite expensive Accessibility Upgrades to be code compliant.

Three years ago, Mark Strachan was looking to open an upscale nightclub and restaurant. His initial searches for a location in Danville were unsuccessful. Happening upon Alameda, he was charmed with its abundance of old buildings, which supported his vision for his new business venture.

In January 2014, the building's renovation began. Its conversion from a bank to a restaurant and night-club dictated that no part of the building remained untouched. To maintain its historic character, many architectural finishes and features were restored, repurposed, or refinished. Giulio Accornero, Jr., the building's owner, financed the exterior renovation. With a vibrant new use, 1400 Park Street has regained the prominence it enjoyed so many years ago, and in the bargain, Alameda is much the richer.

Dreadful Exterior Hides an Intact Interior at 1833 Clinton Avenue

Story by Jim Smallman

Award Recipients: Jim Smallman, Owner; Jerri Holan, Architect; John Jameson Construction, Foundation, Exterior Restoration, and Framing; Bob Buckter, Exterior Color Design

n 1971 Jim Smallman bought his first Alameda Victorian, a dilapidated six unit rooming house, with good bones. After six years of "sweat equity", this first house was rounding into shape as a single family home. With more spare time now, Jim took exploratory bike rides around Alameda to see what others were doing. In the summer of 1976 he visited a yard sale at 1837 Clinton, a Queen Anne house that had seen better days. The seven electric meters on the front, along with a dreadful stucco cocoon told him the sad story: The once proud mansion had been chopped up into apartments, and another classic had been lost.

Well, not quite. Chatting with the yard sale operator, Jim discovered that the seven electric meters covered two adjacent Queen Anne Victorians and a separate four unit apartment building, all on contiguous property and under single ownership. Most exciting, the interiors of both Victorians were intact. Coffered

ceilings, curly redwood paneling, walnut and mahogany staircases, beautiful mantles— all unpainted—original American Encaustic tiles. Only the kitchens and bathrooms had been seriously compromised.

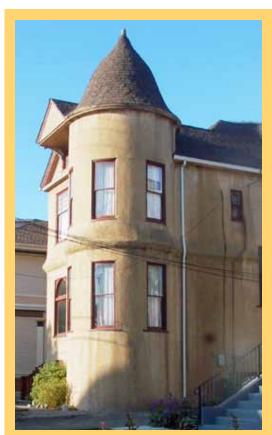
Jim remembered this visit a year later when he spied an ad in the commercial real estate section of the *Alameda Times Star* for "Six Units on Clinton", with no other description. No mention of Victorians. Pretty sure the ad was for the two "dreadful exteriors" on Clinton, he called the owner. After confirming the property identification, Jim bought both Queen Anne Victorians in a single transaction, and became a landlord.

Fast forward thirty years: Jim returned from Southern California exile to retire in Alameda. Never forgotten, the two houses, which had "purchased" themselves and put his kids through college now had their turn.

In 2009 and 2010, the corner house was restored, receiving a coveted AAPS Preservation Award. In 2011, work began on the sister house, 1833 Clinton Avenue. John Jameson, who worked on 1837 Clinton Avenue, again stripped stucco and restored exterior trim, finishing the front and one side. Bob Buckter created a tasteful color scheme. The tenant moved in June, 2014, and serious work began: foundation, stripping remaining stucco, and restoring exterior trim.

Award-winning architect Jerri Holan designed a beautiful kitchen and reimagined a former first floor maid's room into a combined laundry and bathroom. This second home now settles into an elegant second life as it was always meant to be: a wonderful family home. It and its sister next door are ready for their second century.

See interior images on page 4...

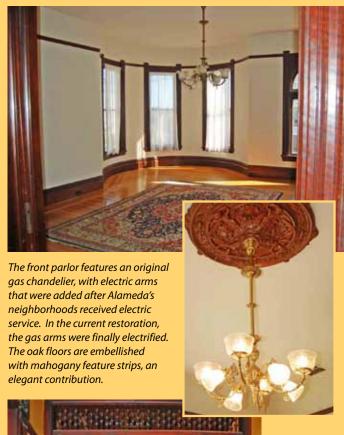


The original millwork and wood siding of the Queen Anne was encased in stucco for over 50 years.



In 2011 work began to remove the stucco and restore the exterior and interior of the residence. This photo shows both homes designed by Joseph A. Leonard for his Leonardville development, returned to their original glory.

1833 Clinton Avenue ... continued from page 3





The entry hall has a rare coffered ceiling, further embellished with beautiful fretwork. The hall is separated from the front parlor and the dining room by pocket doors whose operation is newly restored. Wood paneling in the entry hall and the ceiling are curly redwood, a now rare grain pattern formed in the lower trunk of huge old growth trees.

Picture-Perfect Porch 305 Haight Street

Story by Jerri Holan

Award Recipients: John and Elizabeth Warmerdam, Owners; Dean Gourley, Gourley Construction, Contractor; Bob Buckter, Color Consultant

ooking a bit worn in a City photograph from 1979, this Queen Anne Cottage didn't look much better in 2003 when Elizabeth and John Warmerdam decided to purchase the property for their family. It was still covered with asbestos shingles and sported the corner turret. But it did look a bit different — the sunroom porch had been eliminated, the metal awning removed, and metal railings installed. Unfortunately, the differences were not improvements.

Like any home of this vintage, the home was in need of new foundation so, in 2004, with the assistance of their skilled contractor, Gourley Construction, John and Liz decided to make the basement habitable by removing the brick foundation and adding three bedrooms and a bath on a new slab foundation. Instead of raising the home, they kept the home's original height intact and dug down, satisfying zoning regulations as well as preserving the neighborhood's character. And so began their efforts to restore this lovely cottage, bit by bit, inch by inch.

One of the first things that went were the asbestos shingles below which they found the original siding. They saved what they could, replaced what they had to. The turret was originally sheathed in bead board so that too was restored. Same thing with the Victorian eave and gable dentils which were still extant. Board



Modern additions to this Queen Anne cottage, circa 1979, were not an improvement to the look of the home. It was covered with Asbestos siding, the porch was enclosed, and the stair railings were wrought iron.



Starting in 2004 "improvements" were removed inside and out from this quaint home. Asbestos siding, aluminum windows and metal porch railings were replaced with appropriate materials and styles to regain its 19th century charm.



The Queen Anne cottage, circa 2003, when Liz & John purchased it.

siding was removed from the gable end and fish scales took its place. In 2008, John got rid of the metal railings and columns and redid the porch in wood with generous Newell posts and carved pickets. Queen Anne spindle brackets were added to tie the porch posts together. And, finally, in 2012, the disgraceful aluminum windows were removed from the turret and custom wood windows installed with genuine curved glass, a real rarity these days.

The rear of the home also received improvements and the cavernous Queen Anne attic was transformed into a family entertainment center. But one of the best things about this revival is what's inside. What you can't see from the sidewalk are the lovingly restored 11' tall ceilings which extend throughout the interior. A previous occupant had installed 9' ceilings, probably to save energy, and John and Liz took them all down!

John and Liz saved the best task for dessert. When they replaced the aluminum windows, they also consulted with Dr. Color, aka Bob Buckter, for appropriate colors on their modest cottage. He kept them in the golden family, but with a dash of aubergine and a splash of teal, he made their home sparkle. So much so that it landed in *The New York Times* when an article about Dr. Color featured their humble home.

Thank you John and Liz for all your efforts. You've restored a cozy Queen Anne and it's finally picture perfect!



Right: Detail of the porch. Metal railings and columns were removed and replaced with generous Newell posts and carved pickets.

Do You Own a Historic Building? Let Everyone Know with a Plaque!



The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society offers four types of plaques to historic building owners.

To obtain a plaque application, please go to our website at www.alameda-preservation.org, email plaques@alameda-preservation.org, or call 510-479-6489.



A Queen Anne Castle's Tale, with a Storybook Ending... 3264 Briggs Avenue story by Dick Rutter



The house was converted from a single family home to a duplex. It became a rental for the next 75-years. Above: The residence in 1979.

Right: Once again a single family home with new foundation, repaired porches, steps reconstructed, plaster and woodwork repaired, plumbing, and wiring updated.



Award Recipients: Clive and Susan Hughes, Owners

riggs Avenue is off most people's radar. Ask most Alamedans where Briggs Avenue is, and many times, you'll just get a blank stare. Real old timers will remark that most of the houses around there were owned by Railroad People. The South Pacific Coast Railway had a Freight Marshalling Yard at what is now that very wide portion of Encinal Avenue, running between High Street and Fernside. Funny little tall and skinny houses face Encinal Avenue. Behind them on Briggs Avenue, however, is an eclectic mix of unique house styles, many of whom seem to have originated in a child's storybook.

Briggs Avenue was named for George Gregg Briggs, a'49er who like many of his peers, found gold mining poor paying hard work. Originally from Ohio, he fell back on his experience in fruit growing, in order to make a living. Briggs established fruit orchards along the Yuba River near Marysville, but a devastating flood in the Winter of 1862, literally wiped him out. Picking up what was left, he went south to Ventura County, and began planting orchards again. In 1864, his wife Emma died. By 1867, Briggs had given up on orchards in Ventura County, subdivided his land into 150-acre plots, sold them, and moved to Northern California. In 1868, he was living in Oakland.

It is presumed that about this time, he acquired the property in Alameda now bisected by Briggs Avenue. In the 1870's, Briggs had moved again, and was living in Davisville (now Davis, California). His Alameda land by that time had been subdivided into large lots, and sold. George Briggs died in Davis in 1885.

Alameda's 1897 Sanborn Map shows the subdivision along Briggs Avenue with only a smattering of houses on the lots. Each map issue published by the

Sanborn Map Co., however, was about a year out of date by the time it was distributed. For example, the huge A. A. Cohen Mansion, "Fernside", is shown, but we know it had burned to the ground in that year. Not shown on this edition of the Sanborn Map, is a 2-story Queen Anne House with a unique two story turret porch built in 1897, by George Lydiksen, at 3264 Briggs Avenue.

Shortly after its original construction, the house was converted from a single family home to a duplex, containing two flats. It became a rental for the next 75-years. The quite large back yard grew into an overgrown jungle containing one large California Live Oak, and a gang of quite aggressive monster Acacia Trees. Three years ago, the house came up for sale, its "as-is condition" a solid line of defense against all but the most intrepid, or unwitting, prospective buyers.

Real Estate Agent Denise Brady, who was helping Clive and Susan Hughes look for houses in Alameda, spotted this "Diamond in the Rough", and aided the Hughes family in its purchase. Her husband Scott Brady, an architect, helped the Hughes in making technical decisions. Large power tools in hand, Clan Hughes tackled the jungle and deteriorated house with equal abandon. Among the many things which had to be done, were construction of a new foundation, repair of porches, steps reconstructed, plaster and woodwork repair, plumbing, wiring, dealing with an old chimney, and the list goes on.

After two years' continuous work, Clive and Susan Hughes have recreated a place of beauty, and the results are stunning. Again a single family residence, this house is also home to two little girls and a big brown dog. From diamond in the rough, it has become a Queen Anne Castle with a storybook ending.

The City Insists on Integrity for New Windows in an Eastlake Cottage: 1609 Lincoln Avenue

Story by Wendy Markel

Award Recipient: Michael Meyer, Code Enforcement Department of the City of Alameda

he AAPS would like to offer a Certificate of Appreciation to the Code Compliance Officer and the Planning Department of City of Alameda for true diligence in making sure the integrity of the property was maintained.

In 2007 several windows were installed in the property without permit and a complaint was lodged against the then owner indicating that the

installation of the windows was without a permit and in violation of Alameda code.

The property continued to deteriorate and a Declaration of Public Nuisance was filed by the Code Enforcement Office of the Planning Department of the City of Alameda.

The property went into foreclosure and the city needed to give the owner a Compliance Agreement

to enable the sale of the property to the now current owner, Mr. Kee. Subsequently the property was sold in November, 2010 for approximately \$600,000.

In 2011 a combination Building Permit was issued by the city and MDB Construction Inc. did the necessary work to "legalize 50 windows: 23 needed to meet Planning requirements". Additional work involving stairs, decking and water heaters was also completed.

The work done to bring the windows up to code on this property significantly improved the integrity of the property due to diligent work on the part of the Code Enforcement arm of the Planning Department. The work was signed off by the city inspector on March 8, 2011.





Fifty new windows were installed at the property and additional work involving stairs, decking and water heaters was also completed. The project was signed off by the city inspector on March 8, 2011.





Several windows were installed in the property without permit in violation of Alameda code as shown in the photos with notations by the City of Alameda.



P.O. Box 1677 Alameda, CA 94501 RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2015

SUNDAY, JUNE 7 7:00 PM

18th Annual Preservation Award Gala
ALAMEDA POINT THEATER
ALAMEDA POINT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Alameda Legacy Home Tour alameda-home-tour.org