



Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

A Presentation by Architectural Colorist Bob Buckter Choosing Color Schemes & Decorative Finishes

Sunday, April 15, 2018 at 7:00 pm

Immanuel Lutheran Church
1420 Lafayette Street, Alameda, CA

Parking at the corner of Chestnut St. & Santa Clara Ave.

Free for AAPS members
\$5 for non-members

Renowned architectural colorist Bob Buckter is the speaker at our next member meeting. Buckter is well known throughout the Bay Area and beyond for bringing rich and harmonious color to his client's projects.

Careful color consideration can elevate and highlight the architectural beauty of a building. The elaborate ornamentation of Victorian architecture comes alive when properly adorned. Subtle contrasts in material, weight, and proportion become evident in ways that are invisible with a poor color palette. Throughout Alameda, you can see fine examples of this principle illustrated through Bob Buckter's work.

A key figure in what became known as San Francisco's Colorist Movement, Bob got his start working as a

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Color Schemes. . . continued from page 1.

painting contractor in the 1970s. He quickly found the most enjoyable part of the job was choosing attractive color schemes, and before long was designing them for other painters to follow. To date he's completed 17,500 jobs in San Francisco alone, and more than 800 in Alameda since 1979. With a career total of 23,500 custom projects the man known as Dr. Color has an experienced eye for award winning paint designs.

The popularization of vibrant color schemes so often associated with Victorian architecture is in part the product of San Francisco's Colorist Movement of the 1960's and 1970's. The polychrome "painted ladies" of the Bay Area created an aesthetic trend that spread throughout the country. However, it seems that these bold colors were divisive from the very start. A writer in *California Architects and Builders News* in April, 1885, commented of the style, "Red, yellow, chocolate, orange everything that is loud is in fashion, and the entire exterior is so gay that a Virginia creeper or wisteria would be bold, indeed, if it dare set leaf or tendril there. If the upper stories are not of red or blue . . . they are painted into uncouth panels of yellow and brown, while gables and dormers are adorned, not with tasteful and picturesque designs but with monotonous sunbursts and flaming fans done in loud tints." As true then as it is today, good taste is entirely subjective.

While it's true that many did feature vibrant colors, other homes of the period were just as likely covered in chalky white or muted earth tones. Thus, today's owners of vintage buildings are often faced with the choice between historical accuracy and contemporary trends. Just as a kitchen or bathroom of 1890 may not suit today's lifestyle, the color and decoration of one time period doesn't necessarily translate to today's tastes. Fortunately for us, Bob Buckter is here to help navigate this tricky terrain and will address how issues like contemporary color trends and historic precedent factor into his work.

Story by Chris Rummell



Bob Buckter has done consulting for over 40 years. His work includes commercial, institutional, industrial, and his specialty — historic homes. Images: Bob Buckter.



A plaster ornament before and after color treatment by Bob Buckter at 1375 Green Street in San Francisco.



Bob's designs have won local and national awards. He has completed 17,500 jobs in San Francisco and more than 800 in Alameda.



Alameda Artist Spotlight

by Candace Rowe

AAPS is pleased to feature a series of accomplished artists who have focused on Alameda architecture.

Nancy Roberts has drawn and painted all her life, and her love of drawing led her to architectural design. She earned a degree in Environmental Design at U.C. Berkeley in 1980 and went on to become a licensed architect working for Bay Area firms for more than 20 years. This resulted in a love of historic renovation and, coupled with her continued passion for creating art, she is now active as a full-time professional artist and art instructor.

Roberts first discovered Alameda's architectural gems in 2006 when she participated in the Frank Bette Center's Plein Air Paint-Out, calling it a dream come true. She loves exploring the city and finds something new to paint every time she visits; from the large, showy mansions to the more modest homes, she loves the character each has to offer. She especially enjoys the gracious entrances with their deep porches, lacy railings, columns and



Nancy Roberts



arches, amazing varieties of decorative millwork, siding and shingle patterns, and glorious color schemes.

When Roberts paints on location in Alameda, she usually spends a full day on the island and then completes the work in her studio. She works mainly with acrylic because she enjoys working in layers that combine transparent, translucent and opaque effects. She begins by drawing with paint on the canvas, then builds a structure of tonal values, and finally dresses it all up in glowing color to express a mood and celebrate beauty. If the weather does not facilitate starting the painting outdoors, Roberts works in her studio using photos as reference. This allows her to start with a more intricate pencil drawing and use small, precise brush strokes for greater detail.



A hallmark of Roberts' work is color. She likes explaining that artists are not cameras, and that inventing our own colors is a joy. Experience the color of Nancy Roberts' work at Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek and Delta Gallery in Brentwood. On her website (see below) you can see her latest work, learn about her current exhibits, and find a link to her online gallery.



For further information visit:
NancyRobertsStudio.com
DailyPaintworks.com
Follow her on Instagram
[@nancyrobertsartist](https://www.instagram.com/nancyrobertsartist)

Before and After



A kitchen remodel shown by Jerri Holan & Associates at the February Membership Meeting. Images: Jerri Holan.

Highlights from the February 25, 2018 AAPS Membership Meeting Vintage Restoration & Renovation for Today's Lifestyle by Chris Rummell

Renovation and remodeling choices are always big decisions, but can be even more complicated when considering the impacts on a vintage or historic home. The February 25th AAPS member meeting brought together a panel of experts to shed some light on how to approach these choices with an eye toward maintaining the integrity and character of a vintage home.

Guests enjoyed a discussion with our panelists, including award-winning architects Jerri Holan and Steve Rynerson. Both presented incredible before and after images illustrating how they've each approached these kinds of projects in the past. Each has a unique viewpoint on how an architect can look to the past for guidance, while taking into consideration our modern lifestyles.

Greg McFann, City of Alameda Building Official and Thomas Saxby of the Historical Advisory Board offered insights into how permitting and regulatory processes apply to remodeling projects. Of particular interest was how homeowners may take advantage of the California Historical Building Code in order to preserve character-defining features of their vintage homes and reduce costs by taking advantage of the Historical Building Code's more flexible provisions compared to modern codes.

Homeowners Jim Smallman and Margy and Virgil Silver shared their perspective and decision-making process while renovating their remarkable Victorian homes. Their practical advice, gained through hands-on experience was extremely valuable to anyone considering taking on a project of any size.

The panel format was a new one for our member meetings, and worked well with such an in-depth topic. Our deepest thanks go to all who attended, our guest panelists, and to Johanna Hall for moderating the discussion.

Why Despoil a Maritime Legend?

by Judith Lynch

The Alameda Marina is heir to a nautical heritage that has thrived for well over a century. Its most significant structure was designed by a prestigious architect, and its attributes as an "Cultural Landscape" render a portion of it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If we lose this place or let it be compromised, history will take notice. . . .

The allure of maritime Alameda is most tangible along the Northern Waterfront, from the former Naval Air Station to Fernside. There shipwrights built tall wooden ships, fortune seekers launched expeditions, explorers embarked to chart unmapped lands, and military personnel deployed vessels for warfare and defense. Now the most intact reminder of those historic enterprises is threatened, and part of our nautical past may founder altogether.

Barnes & Tibbits, then GEDDCO, now the Alameda Marina

A "midden" rich with layers of history, the B & T shipbuilding business was founded in the 1890s. The site was ideal, because it occupied flat land on navigable water, it was served by rail and water, and power; plus water, gas, and a labor force were available. According to a thorough report by renowned architectural historian Michael Corbett, the functions associated with shipyards are located in buildings of three sorts--lofts, warehouses, and offices. Their materials and construction methods were cheap, simple, and durable, because reasonable cost, efficient operations, and utility were primary goals. During WWI, B & T denizens constructed war-faring vessels mainly of wood. During WWII, the site was revamped as GEDDCO (General Engineering & Drydock), and its work force commissioned new ships and repaired some 4,000 other vessels for return to active service. As times changed, so did the place, and since the 1960s it has welcomed maritime-related businesses and recreational boating and sailing. This substantial site—45 acres along Clement Street from Willow to Union Streets-- is now a target for drastic redevelopment.

Period of Significance (POS)

When researching and evaluating architectural history, professionals must determine which era ranks as the "period of significance," of a site or a structure. Because more than three dozen remaining GEDDCO structures were completed during the Second World War, its period of significance is the 1940s. Because those were the years GEDDCO was in operation and because those buildings were constructed for its uses, that string of initials is the official name of the site. The place looks dreary and workaday, due to the multiple coats of fecal-colored paint. Yet the building interiors can reveal the strength of purpose. Some have trusses so strong they free up enough space to outfit entire ships. More modest structures provided apartments for the thousands who worked round the clock to support the war effort. Facing Clement Street is a third kind, utilitarian stucco-clad offices.

Cultural Landscape of High Value

After dedicated scrutiny, Corbett declared GEDDCO a solid candidate as a Cultural Landscape on the National Register. A "Cultural Landscape" exhibits measurable integrity in certain categories—among them topography, land uses, spatial organization, circulation networks, buildings, objects, cultural traditions, setting, and views.



Above: An aerial view of part of the building 19 roof proclaims marina territory. Image: Googlebotpix.

Proof that "We are bigger inside!" Just a portion of the vast interior space of Building 19, designed by architect Alben R. Froberg. Three stories high and providing thousands of square feet of space, it is both the tallest and the largest at the Marina. Image: Woody Minor.

The place also scored high on two of the four criteria used for Register evaluation. According to Criterion 1, History, its role is significant in the industrial development of Alameda and it was instrumental during the war. Its physical integrity means it is the most complete survivor among a handful of remaining shipyards.

The place also fulfills Criterion 3, Architecture. Industrial plants were not designed by architects but were mass produced using standardized plans. However at GEDDCO, the machine shop, Building 19, is an exception. It was designed by renowned East Bay architect Alben R. Froberg. He was responsible for structures in the low-key commercial-industrial style used during the 1930s and 40s, and his biography cites him as designing "industrial structures for shipyards in Alameda." According to Corbett, Building 19's sturdy exterior of standard corrugated metal and glass was a tangible expression of the importance of the machine shop within GEDDCO and the structure "expresses the power of American shipbuilding during the Second World War."

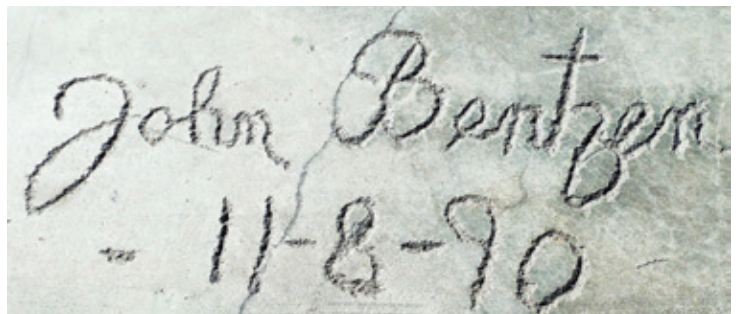
High marks from Corbett mean part of the GEDDCO site is eligible for inclusion on the National Register, a signal achievement for an industrial compound. In all of Alameda only ten places have achieved that pinnacle: City Hall, the Carnegie Library, Historic Alameda High School, the Veterans' Building, and a few others of similar importance. That it qualifies as a Cultural Landscape means the site surpasses an individual building or a historic district in consequence.

Next Moves

According to Nancy Hird of SAWW (Save Alameda's Working Waterfront) about 150 people currently work at the Marina. Some businesses there are commercial maritime-related and serve the boating community. Others contribute to the dynamics of the complex--software companies, film and museum set designers, architects, attorneys, and educational enterprises.

Over the next months, the City Council will make decisions that can seriously affect the Alameda Marina. What can AAPS members do? First, see for yourself! Plan a field trip to the marina, entering through the gate at 1815 Clement Street. The compound is open to the public every day. Noodle around until you find building 19, the tallest and largest one in the place. Sometimes the huge doors closest to Clement Street are open to reveal the vast space inside, shown in the image left below. Then stroll around to see the other activities that enliven the site. Second, consider writing a letter to the Alameda Sun, (Dennis Evanovsky editor@alamedasun.com) with a copy to City Council members and SAWW. Third, add yourself to the email list-- join@SAWWaction.org--so you can be quickly alerted as needed to write a letter or put in an appearance at City Hall.

In the 1960s, entrepreneur John Bentzen bought and leased land that now encompasses the Alameda Marina. He is also credited with naming the place!
Image: Nancy Hird.





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For information: judithlynch7@gmail.com

Alert: Add to your calendars these talks devoted to the history and architecture of Alameda, showcasing experts—authors, historians, visionaries. The free shows are held in the Stafford Room, Main Library, Oak Street at Lincoln Avenue.

Tuesday, June 19, 6:30-7:30 pm: Two ways of seeing. Two local experts confer and disagree about what they notice in vintage Alameda images. Presenters: Woody Minor, author of *A Home in Alameda*, many other books and newspaper stories about Island culture, buildings, and history. Grant Ute, author of *Alameda by Rail*, transit historian, and photo archivist at the Western Railway Museum.

Tuesday July 17, 6:30-7:30 pm: Alameda Architecture: 'Modern' is now 'Vintage,' the Legacy of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. Presenter: Pierluigi Serraino, Alameda architect and lecturer at UC Berkeley, author of *NorCalMod* and other books and articles about the modernist movement. He consults for the City of Alameda Façade Grant Program that upgrades storefronts on Park and Webster Streets.

Tuesday, August 14: 6:30-7:30 pm: Shine a Light on an Undiscovered Alameda Neighborhood, Post Street: Six Short Blocks With a Long History. Presenter: Robin Seeley, Post Street resident, research maven, attorney, and board member of City Guides of San Francisco. She regularly contributes a column to the *Alameda Sun*: "To the East End and Beyond!"



AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2018

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SUNDAY, APRIL 15
7:00 PM

*Choosing Color Schemes
and Decorative Finishes*
Bob Buckter

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

•
SUNDAY, JUNE 3
7:00 PM

21st Annual Preservation Awards
LOCATION TBD