



Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Insights from Home Inspection and Insurance Experts

Sunday, October 20, 2019 at 6:30 pm

**First Congregational Church of Alameda
1912 Central Avenue, Alameda CA**

Free for AAPS members • \$5 for non-members



Homeowners often get inspections prior to sale to show the overall condition of a home and inspections of vintage homes are particularly critical with more issues that can occur over time. Reliability of information is key which is why Dave Teare of Inspection Pros and Allen Kanady of Omega Termite and Pest Control are frequently sought out for their work. They've been inspectors here in Alameda for many years and buyers and their agents come to rely heavily on their reports.

Inspections can be stressful for owners, they have to watch their homes poked and prodded; every system and area tested and inspected. They're often surprised by the findings, particularly if they think they've done a good job maintaining their homes over the years. Vintage homeowners may want to know now what shape their building is in to stay on top of the maintenance and take care of issues before they become bigger problems. Some hidden problems may be getting worse with time.

Hand in hand with inspections are insurance issues, which are particularly relevant with vintage homes. Many people have no idea which

Interesting crack situation through brick and concrete at the side of a wall.

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features of a property might prevent a homeowner from getting insurance and what kind of insurance they should get? Leah Nishi with Farmers Insurance is our go-to source for all such questions here in Alameda.

Our inspection panelists will talk about what areas of a home are inspected, what types of issues come up with a vintage home and what type of maintenance homeowners should be aware of. Our insurance specialist will talk about relevant insurance issues associated with vintage homes and the available insurance options. Lastly, the panelists will give ample time for the audience to ask questions.



Dave Teare and Allen Kanady preparing to inspect the foundation of a lagoon-side vintage home.

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On the Road to Serendip by Judith Lynch

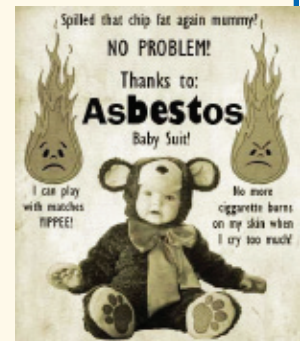
"Architectural Forensics" was a slide talk I recently presented to AAPS members, an effort nobly detailed in this publication by Karen Lithgow. Searching for images, we engaged the Internet for substances used to deface vintage buildings, and what a revelation!

Who knew that people in Bosnia slavered over antique print ads for Johns-Manville asbestos? Collectors proved to be legion, as did purveyors of all manner of products.



Arsenic was advised as an ointment for women who wanted pure white complexions.

Johns-Manville asbestos was commonplace in many household products for well over a century.



Currently a rave on TV, a character in "The Marvelous Mrs. Maizel" visits a tea-leaf reader whose kitchen features this 1930s electric stove.

Ads abounded for poisonous substances such as arsenic and cocaine, doctors recommended that pregnant mothers smoke cigarettes to relax, and asbestos fibers were woven into warm jammies for infants.

So when gathering material about original vintage kitchens and bathrooms, I was beguiled by seemingly infinite possibilities for the 2019 Alameda Legacy Home Tour Guidebook. Replicas of catalogues and ads, newspaper commentary, books, and reflections by Alameda experts led to an eight-part series of "Vintage Vignettes," as nicknamed by historian Woody Minor. Their purpose was to show how these two most practical rooms might have been appointed originally, as they are most often modernized for practicality and convenience of the families of today. As always, along the way proved a captivating map to the enchanted land of Serendip!



Gloriously colored bathroom fixtures were much praised and advertised but rarely installed.

Alameda Artist Spotlight

by Candace Rowe

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

Born in Berkeley, Vivian Aldridge began her life in art at the age of five. She started splashing around with poster paints as a child, an experience she vividly remembers to this day. Unable to translate that love of splashing paints into a living as an adult, she temporarily abandoned her love of art for a career in engineering. Currently Aldridge works in the educational arena as an instructional designer at Golden Gate University in downtown San Francisco. There she finds she can express her creativity in many ways, even integrating her love of sketching.



Vivian Aldridge

On weekends Aldridge indulges her urban sketching. She describes herself as an urban sketcher with a great love of architecture. Many of her works are of people's homes and often she is commissioned to capture the spirit of a home and match it to the people who live there.

Aldridge says her ultimate goal with all her artwork is to allow viewers to rest and reflect for a moment through her sketches. "The world is filled with many wonders that are too often drowned out by an over demanding, multi-tasking lifestyle. Does anyone stop to really look anymore? How can one find that one cherished moment among chaos? Artists can help them do that."

You can direct message Vivian on Instagram, where you will also be able to see more of her work.



Contact info:
[instagram.com/vivianaldridge/](https://www.instagram.com/vivianaldridge/)

TRAVELOGUE



An illustrated architectural travel story inspired by places visited and experiences encountered.

The Parisian Model for Urban Households *by Jim Smallman*

Last year the writer enjoyed a three-month vacation in the Marais district of Paris. My apartment was in a remodeled 17th century building with a very heavy oak entry.

Architecture in every urban landscape reflects the challenges of the time and location. In the 16th through 19th centuries, residential development in Paris was active in the Marais, a district north of the Seine and east of the city center. Elegant homes were built here and many of their entrances remain. I became interested in understanding the function of these magnificent doorways.

Early transportation depended on horse-drawn carriages, which had to enter through large security doors built right to the sidewalk. The area is still full of similar entrances, twelve feet and taller. Iron brackets protected the sides of the entrance and provided clearance for the carriages. The interior arrangement provided stables and storage for the carriages. More modest homes might have paved courtyards inside; and elaborate homes often had formal gardens.

The word "hotel", which can still be found on Paris maps, does not necessarily mean public accommodations. Hotel translates better as a



17th century oak entry doorway to the writer's Marais apartment during his stay in Paris. Notice its height and the iron brackets protected the sides of the entrance and provided clearance for the carriages.

substantial residence. Business and commercial enterprises were often located in "hotels", which provided additional living quarters for the owner's family and staff.

The pattern was consistent. Whether modest or elaborate, the interior space behind the entrance doorway was an open courtyard. The living space faced inward. Stables and carriage storage were fastidiously separated from the primary family, who lived upstairs. It's instructive to note that the phrase for what we call "the first floor" is, in French, *rez de chaussée*, meaning entry or ground floor. The first floor in France is what we call our second floor.

The tradition of separating living areas from the dirt and noise of the street continues in France today. American visitors are warned to watch where they step. It is a rare Parisian who picks up while walking their dog. The more enlightened encourage the dog to use the space in the street between parked cars.

The social status of the owner is suggested by the entrance. The Hotel de Sully, built in the 17th century for a wealthy financier, shows the extreme. The owner lived there and also ran his business. The inward-facing layout and entrance is clear. This is now a state office administering the many historic buildings in France.

The front of Hotel de Sully is built right to the sidewalk. One will search in vain for expansive front lawns, but the lawns and gardens are always in the interior courtyards of the more imposing structures, such as Hotel de Sully.



Hôtel de Sully, Paris. Built in 1630 and attributed to architect Jean Androuet du Cerceau. The front façade is built right up to the sidewalk. Images: Jim Smallman.

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The visitor today is left to ponder why the most elaborate grounds of such edifices are shut away from the public and left to be enjoyed only by the owner's family, staff, clients and social equals. We're reminded that France struggled to establish democracy.



Past the front doors, Hôtel de Sully features interior courtyards with expansive gardens and lawns.

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



EXAMPLE: HISTORIC BUILDING 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 alameda-preservation.org
email plaques@alameda-preservation.org
or call 510-479-6489.**

2019 Home Tour Highlights

by Conchita Perales

The Alameda Legacy Home Tour, the most exciting architectural event of the year, hosted over 800 attendees from all over the San Francisco Bay Area on Sunday, September 22nd. The tour focused on the history of the development of Alameda's East End, described beautifully in Woody Minor's opening essay in the keepsake guidebook. It featured eight houses ranging from the 1880's to the 1930's that exemplify the area's gradual evolution. "What a great way to experience architecture through the decades in one afternoon!" a tour goer exclaimed.

A new addition to the annual event was an air-conditioned shuttle that followed the tour route in a continuous loop. Taking off from this year's 'home base' at Rhythmix Cultural Works, where attendees enjoyed cool refreshments and snacks, it rolled by designated shuttle stops and picked up those who'd flagged it in between. "My knee is 'shot', I don't think I would've made it without the shuttle", said a comforted tour goer.

From the generous home owners who shared their beautifully restored historic homes, to the hundreds of amazing docents and volunteers who bring their energy and enthusiasm to teach, lead and create an unforgettable experience for everyone, the Alameda Legacy Home Tour proves again its great community building success. The Architectural Preservation Society and the Alameda Museum would also like to express their gratitude to Alameda Municipal Power for sponsoring the event, and to the vendors, the advertisers and the local companies that donated in kind to make it all possible. The funds raised assist both organizations in their efforts to bring awareness to the preservation of Alameda's history and architectural character.

To sum it all up, Patty Shipps sent us a happy note: "I had such a lovely time at your event this weekend. The docents were all kind and knowledgeable, the homes were beautiful, and the shuttle was really appreciated. I can't wait for next year's event!!" So mark your calendars for September 27, 2020 – we have a surprise in store for you. See you on the tour!



MORE ABOUT THE ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR

All aboard! Well placed shuttle stops eased the way for tour goers. In the background, the General Electric Demonstration house 1935-36. Image: Mike Van Dine.

2019 Home Tour Highlights



David Bock and Chuck Millar set up shop at Edison Park. Image: Fred Fago.

Tatiana Bookbinder, Denise Brady and a costumed guest. Image: Mike Van Dine.

With the eight homes on tour within walking distance, tour goers enjoyed the beautiful fall day. Images: Mike Van Dine.



Docent Mary Oppendahl welcomes guests with a thorough introduction of the General Electric Demonstration house. Image: Mike Van Dine.

Suffragette Gigi Gentry greeted visitors at the Colonial Revival residence on Everett Street (right). Image: Mike Van Dine.



Dapper docent Ross Dileo. Image: Conchita Perales.



Is That House a Marcuse and Rimmel? *by Conchita Perales*



Robert Farrar stands in front of his 1893 Marcuse and Rimmel on Santa Clara Ave. It took him five months to paint the whole house in 8 different colors including the gold leaf. Color consultant Bob Buckter. Image: Conchita Perales.



Plaster rosettes were a typical feature Marcuse and Rimmel built into their homes. The rosette pictured here adorns the dining room ceiling and it's one of seven different designs found throughout the house. It took Robert about two weeks to strip and apply the new colors which were selected by Bob Buckter to complement the woodwork and wall paper in each room. Images: Robert Farrar.



The original quarter sawn oak mantle was shipped in pieces from the East Coast and mounted into place when the house was built, as well as the multicolored marble tile which depicts a mythical scene of dancing cherubs holding hands (below).



Marcuse and Rimmel enthusiast Robert Farrar is embarking on the creation of a database of the over 300 surviving homes built in the 1890's by Alameda's foremost Victorian homebuilder Marcuse and Rimmel. Through research and interviews with current homeowners he hopes to uncover what remains of the builder's extensive work.

Robert's interest grew from personally restoring his own 1893 Marcuse and Rimmel and realizing how many of these homes still stand and how little is known about them. He plans to

focus his attention on many of the details that characterize the builder's work typically found in these homes, and to note the similarities and differences between them — even if they have been modified or remodeled — such as the exterior and interior wood work, the floorplan, the mantle and even the ceiling rosettes!

The database will connect Marcuse and Rimmel homeowners with each other, provide resources and information to assist them in the restoration and preservation of their iconic houses, and contribute an extensive well of material that

will be available to the architectural minded community and historical enthusiasts alike.

AAPS is very excited in supporting Robert's project and we hope you are too. If you own or know someone who owns or lives in a Marcuse and Rimmel house, don't hesitate to contact him.

MARCUSE & REMMEL DATABASE

Contact Robert Farrar

rfarrar665@yahoo.com

530-440-4479

PAC
PRESERVATION ACTION
COMMITTEE

GET INVOLVED & MAKE A DIFFERENCE! We maintain a Google Group list to advise AAPS members on ongoing issues that could affect historic properties and provide an opportunity to review and comment on draft AAPS position statements. If you would like to be added to the Google Group list or would like obtain more information, please contact Christopher Buckley at 510-523-0411 or cbuckleyAIPC@att.net



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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2020 AAPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AAPS is in the process of electing its 2020 Board.

We have an excellent Board; however welcome the opportunity to expand our ranks to include new members with ideas to further enhance and benefit AAPS preservation interests throughout the community we serve.

Please let us know if you or someone you know would like to serve AAPS in a board capacity. Our goal is to continue to increase awareness, understanding, available resources and support of architectural preservation throughout Alameda.

Please contact Christopher Buckley at cbuckleyaicp@att.net or 510-523-0411 with your nominations.

AAPS Board Members 2019

President • Steve Aced
510-239-4455

1st Vice President • Conchita Perales
510-205-6762

2nd Vice President • Karen Lithgow
510-846-7288

Treasurer • Bob Risley
510-864-1103

Corresponding Secretary • Patty Ferrari

Recording Secretary • Patsy Baer
510-769-1143

Advisor to the Board • Janet Gibson
510-521-1332

Member at Large • Doree Miles

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AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20
6:30 PM

*Insights from Home Inspection
and Insurance Experts*
First Congregational Church
of Alameda
1912 Central Avenue

•
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15
Holiday Party

Details to be Announced