
ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Editor: Ruth Tillman, ruth.tillman@attbi.com, 510-337-1405

October, 2002

General Membership Meeting

All About Chimneys

Fireplaces From Yesterday For Today

Paul Breitkopf, Breitkopf Masonry and Sally McKnight, The Irish Sweep

Sunday, October 20, 2002 ~ 7:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church at the corner of Santa Clara Ave & Chestnut St

AAPS is pleased to welcome Paul Breitkopf, mason, and Sally McKnight, chimney sweep, with us at our next General Membership Meeting. Appropriate for the fall season, they will be presenting us with alternative chimney techniques.

Paul will be educating us on various fireplace and chimney designs and styles. His presentation will include examples of designs that are appropriate to different periods; Victorian, Edwardian, Craftsman, etc. He will discuss common defects and problems found in older fireplaces and chimneys. These defects could be caused by age, quakes, weather, or poor maintenance. He will show good and bad examples of chimney bracing. Paul is the third generation mason of Breitkopf Masonry, which was founded by his grandfather decades ago. He is a 25 year member of Mason's Union Local 3.

Sally McKnight will be discussing maintenance on various types of fireplaces and chimneys. In addition she is going to talk about fireplace inserts, woodstoves, metal flues and re-lining. Sally is the owner of the Irish Sweep. She has been a chimney sweep since 1982 and is known for her expertise in – and passionate enthusiasm for - the chimney industry. Sally is actively involved in professional associations for the chimney sweep industry. Her accomplishments include serving as board member and ethics committee chair for the National Chimney Sweep Guild; serving as treasurer for the Chimney Sweep Institute of America; and serving several terms as treasurer and one term as president of the Golden State Chimney Sweep Guild.

Both Paul and Sally will be happy to answer any questions you may have and they encourage you to bring photos.



PRESERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE

Chris Buckley

Victorian at 1423 Morton Street proposed for demolition—Building is attributed to the Architect of City Hall and is not presently on the Historic Building Study List

A design review application has been filed with the Planning Department for demolition of a Victorian residence at 1423 Morton Street and for its replacement with a duplex.

The property is described in George Gunn's *Documentation of Victorian and Post-Victorian Residential and Commercial Buildings, City of Alameda, 1854-1904* as a Transitional Eastlake Cottage, built in 1883, with design attributed to George W. Percy, one of the architects (as part of the firm Percy and Hamilton) of Alameda's City Hall.

Tax assessment records, contract notices and city directories indicate that the owner and builder was Gershom H. Percy. He was variously described in the directories as a "millman" or "carpenter." He also owned and built the very fine adjacent residence at 1425 Morton Street, constructed in 1879.

The directories indicate that "George W. Percy, architect" lived on the "west side of Morton Street between Central and Santa Clara", presumably in one of the two homes owned by Gershom H. Percy. The design of both homes has been attributed to George W. Percy because of his obvious relation to Gershom H. and his presumed residence in one or possibly both of the structures.

If 1423 Morton Street were on the City's Historic Building Study List, it could not be demolished without approval by the Historic Advisory Board, with possible appeal to the City Council. Unfortunately the building is not on the study list probably because it has been covered with composition or asbestos shingles. When the study list was created, there appears to have been a policy to exclude from the list buildings with significant alterations. AAPS believes that such a policy is highly

inappropriate because these buildings still usually retain most of their architectural integrity. Such alterations are often easily reversed and exclusion from the list disqualifies the building from the State Historical Building Code (SHBC). Ironically, altered historic buildings have more need for the SHBC than the unaltered structures that comprise most of the study list and which are therefore eligible for the SHBC.

AAPS has written a letter to the Planning Department opposing the Design Review application and is awaiting the Department's decision. The decision is appealable to the Planning Board. AAPS has also written a letter to the Historic Advisory Board requesting that the Board place the building on the study list, so that the structure is protected from demolition and becomes eligible for the SHBC. The Board is expected to consider the request at its November 7, 2002 meeting.

This case dramatizes the gaps in the study list. AAPS is therefore developing a proposal for presentation to the Planning Department and Historic Advisory Board for identifying and adding properties to the study list, like 1423 Morton Street, which should have been on the list from the very beginning.



The Preservation Action Committee meets at 7:00 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month to address issues important to the architectural preservation of the City of Alameda. Committee meetings are open to all AAPS members. If you would like to attend a meeting or would like more information please call Chris Buckley at 510-523-0411. We are making an impact within the community. It's fun and informative. We encourage all members to GET INVOLVED!

Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

Preservation Action Alert!! ~ Minturn Street Demolition Date Has Changed!!



1979 photo from the Planning Dept.



Recent Photo After Fire

Tuesday, September 17, 2002 was the originally scheduled date.

TUESDAY, October 15, 2002, 7:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

The building has major architectural merit and is part of one of the City's most important groups of Marcuse & Remmel structures and does not need to be demolished.

Please come to the meeting and urge the Council to support the HAB's decision and deny the appeal.

Traditional Building and Period Homes

You will find in this newsletter (pages 4-5) and in future issues, we will be inserting a featured article from the publications Clem Labine's **Traditional Building** and **Period Homes**. For more information on these magazines please call 718-636-0750 or visit their web sites at www.traditionalbuilding.com or www.period-homes.com.

The article featured in this newsletter is from *Period Homes*, Summer 2002, Vol. 3 / No. 2

ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR

Comfortable Living in Vintage Houses

September 15, 2002

Thank you

A special Thanks to PERFORCE SOFTWARE for sponsoring us!

Thank you to the 8 sets of Homeowners for the use of your beautiful homes.

Thank you to all who were involved from the beginning planning stages and to the docents.

Thank you to all who attended and made this event such a success.

ern white pine. In 1890, they commissioned publisher Rand McNally to issue a single comprehensive molding and millwork catalog.

New Source For Dating and Identifying Period Moldings

In March of 2002 Hull Historical Millwork published the "Historical Moldings Catalog," a catalog that not only makes available 650 of the most popular moldings in the Victorian, Arts & Crafts and Colonial Revival styles, but also is itself a research tool for the field, enabling designers, builders and preservationists to identify moldings and properly place them in their historical and stylistic context. This catalog is an outgrowth of research that Brent Hull has been doing for a book on historic millwork. In working on the book, he assembled what is believed to be the largest archive of original period millwork catalogs in the country: over 70 catalogs printed from 1870 to 1940 — an era Hull refers to as the "Golden Age" of historical millwork. It occurred to him that the most practical and immediate means for presenting the subject was as a working catalog that furnished historical background for each molding, including a description of its stylistic elements, the time period during which it was originally available and an original period illustration. This catalog will continue to serve the needs of the industry in future editions by making available additional moldings from the period as interest arises and by placing them in their historical context. The Catalog is available from Hull Historical Millwork, Inc., of Fort Worth, Tex. More information on the catalog and ordering moldings can be found on the company's website at www.hullhistorical.com. Hull's book on historic millwork will be published in October of 2002 by John Wiley and Sons.

These catalogs were hardbound with different covers for each manufacturer and distributed to local lumber yards across North America. Soon after, the Association established the "8000" series numbering system to identify each item. Vestiges of this scheme (four digits beginning with "8") can still be seen in millwork catalogs today, even though the system itself no longer has any meaning or coherence. Through changes in taste, struggles for dominance in the industry, and through the migration of the centers of lumber production to the south and west, these "Universal Standard Molding Catalogs" were reissued every few years. As long as they stayed popular enough to enjoy steady sales, moldings remained in the catalog and were distributed across the country without variation.

These "Standard" molding catalogs tell a bigger story about the development of architectural decoration in America. Before the Civil War, catalogs were little known. Taste was guided by "pattern books," which were illustrated essays on the principles of design produced by celebrated master builders such as Asher Benjamin and his successors. These were intended to teach design skills, not to furnish building elements, and they rarely presented full profiles of millwork. Certainly anyone who has worked with "antebellum" structures can attest that moldings from the period don't always match up from builder to builder, never mind across any significant geographic area. With the rise of industrialization after the Civil War, however, and the resulting concentration of millwork production within a few companies, manufacturers found it necessary to standardize production and to take control of the public's taste, hence the creation of the "Catalogs."

Revival of the "Universal Standard"

After WWII, the role of wood in architecture diminished, and most of the "Universal Standard" molding profiles went out of production. But now with the growing interest in building renovation and restoration,

there is a parallel growth of interest in historic molding profiles.

For many years, restoration projects that involved reproduction of "Standard" moldings has required the grinding of a new molding knife: a steep initial investment with limited return. After the molding was run, the knife in question would most likely be forgotten in the millworker's archive, identified only by the name of the contractor or project, too expensive to throw out and too useless to sell. In effect, what has transpired over several decades is the steady but piecemeal and poorly documented restoration of "The Universal Standard Molding Catalog" in custom-millwork shops dispersed across the original area of distribution. Some shops have in this way accumulated thousands of profiles and now, in the information age, they are circulating these archives on CD-Rom and on the Internet. Other shops have issued lines of "Victorian" and other period moldings. While some are undersized reinterpretations meant to appeal to modern nostalgia for the period, others are authentic reproductions. Hull Historical Millwork has published its own "Historic Molding Catalog," including the most popular moldings from all the "Universal Standard Molding Catalogs" (see sidebar) and is itself a resource for researching and procuring historic moldings. These are all faithful "Standard" moldings, replicated from historic samples and from the original catalog illustrations. With the research tools being assembled by Hull Historical Millwork, you can trim a room with off-the-shelf authentic period millwork. ♦

John M. Corbett is Publisher of The Restoration Trades Exchange, a web-based network of the leading artisans and contractors in the traditional-crafts fields. John is a former steeplyback and rigger, but now spends most of his time cataloging and chronicling the exploits of fellow tradespeople. John contributes "Building Arts Notebook" to every issue of Period Homes and Traditional Buildings; he can be reached at john@restorationtrades.com or at (888) 852-8202.



Matching Millwork to Historic Buildings

Through a rigorous study of the standard wood molding catalogs issued from 1870 through 1940, Brent Hull of Hull Historical Millwork is providing restoration architects and contractors with a tool for specifying period-appropriate molding profiles.

by John M. Corbett, *RestorationTrades.com*

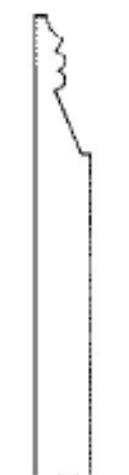
Millwork for the great majority of the historic buildings in existence today, those built between the Civil War and WWII, was produced under a nationwide distribution system more uniform and comprehensive than any in existence today. Thus, your historic molding was most likely distributed nationwide by one of a very few companies who all shared the same molding profiles and sent out the same catalog. This understanding can help you identify and date historic millwork. Conversely, if original millwork is missing, this knowledge can give you a better idea about where to find affordable, appropriate reproductions.

The standardized millwork system came into being rather abruptly after the Civil War. Proprietary millwork catalogs were first issued in the 1870s. In the 1880s several large Midwestern manufacturers banded together as the Sash, Door and Blind Assn. of the Northwest (so called at that time) to establish grading rules for the then-dominant species. East-



HHBM001
Base
1890-1920
Classical
3/4 x 5-1/2 or 7-1/2

A classic molding that is ready to accept a base cap. Available in the Victorian era and up to the 20's, it is versatile in style and can work without a base cap in an Arts & Crafts style home.



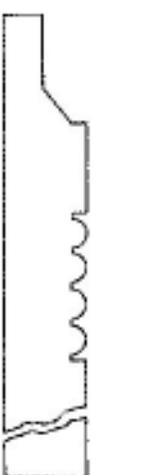
HHBM002
Base
1890-1915
Victorian
3/4 x 7-1/2

A Victorian base mold that was a popular treatment. It is a simpler base mold because it would not accept a base cap. The top detail is meant to mimic the cap that might appear on a more ornate base.



HHBM003
Base
1890-1915
Victorian
3/4 x 7-1/2

Another Victorian base similar to HHHBM002 but with a beaded detail two-thirds of the way up. This detail looks great painted or stained and is typical of the ornate Victorian moldings at the time.



HHBM004
Base
1890's
Victorian
3/4 x 7-1/2

A short-lived Victorian base ready to accept a base cap. The heavy beaded detail showed up in the first *Universal Molding Catalog* but was cut after the first edition.

SOME VICTORIAN BASE MOLDINGS. Hull's research turned up only 15 base moldings that were offered in the "universal" catalogs between 1870 and 1940, all of which are reproduced in the new Hull historical millwork catalog. Shown above are four of the typical Victorian base moldings that Hull has replicated.



Save the Date!!

*2002 Annual Holiday Potluck
Sunday, December 8, 2002*

AAPS BOARD MEMBERS 2002

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AAPS MEMBERSHIP COUPON

If you would like to join the Architectural Preservation Society or renew your membership, please send this portion back with your payment.

Membership Chairperson - Denise Brady

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Check your membership category.

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Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

P.O. Box 1677 ~ Alameda ~ CA ~ 94501

510-986-9232 ~ www.alameda-preservation.org

2003 AAPS GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, February 3, 2003, 7 p.m.: *"The Hidden Treasure"* by Jett Thorson. Jett and her son, Christopher Brooks, spent nine grueling months to clean up and restore the original Bureau of Electricity ceiling on Santa Clara Avenue. AAPS presented them with a Preservation Award this year, 2002. Jett will be giving a presentation on how she went about the task of restoring such a beautiful piece of Alameda's architectural history.

Sunday, March 16, 2003, 7 p.m.: *"Bungalow Bathrooms"* by Jane Powell. Jane will be giving us a slide presentation on her new book Bungalow Bathrooms.

Sunday, May 2, 2003, 7 p.m.: *"Façade Restoration"* by Skeeter Jones. Skeeter will be discussing Façade Restoration - taking off composition, asbestos, or vinyl siding and shingles, replacing missing ornaments, and asbestos disposal issues. This meeting will also include the 2003 Preservation Awards.

OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS

Alameda Museum Lectures:

Admission is free for Museum members and \$5 for others. Call 510-748-0796.

Thursday, February 27, 2003, 7 pm: *"Victorian Polychroming"* by expert color consultant Bob Buckter, (aka Dr. Color), who will present glorious slides that are the result of his two decades of transforming buildings all over California. With a wave of his magic color wheel, he entices glum houses to smile in a riotous run of fancy paint. This lecture is underwritten by Pagano's.

Thursday, March 27, 2003, 7 pm: *"A. W. Smith: Architect"* by Betty Marvin, an Oakland Heritage Alliance member who has made an intense study of Smith and his work.

Thursday, April 24, 2003, 7 pm: *"Red Tile Style"* by architect Arrol Gellner, who will present juicy slides taken by photographer Douglas Keister, who illustrated this new book by Viking.

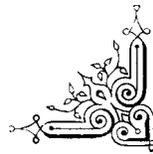
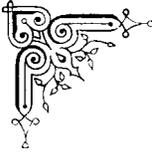
Thursday, May 29, 2003, 7 pm: *"Early Berkeley,"* by Richard Schwartz, author of *Berkeley 1900*, "the first book to approach a true history of day-to-day life in our neighborhoods at the turn of the century," according to Stephanie Manning of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association.

San Francisco Victorian Alliance (415) 824-2666 or www.victorianalliance.org:

House Tour featuring The Webster Street Historic District. Sunday, September 22 from 1 to 5 p.m.

Woman's Will, the Bay Area's all-female Shakespeare company, presents: *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde

Come see this 1895 classic comedy brought to life in its proper setting! November performances are at the Historic Landmark Pardee Home in Oakland followed by a tour of other sites through December 8th. Reservations (highly recommended) and info: 415-567-1758 or www.womanswill.org



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AAPS CALENDAR

Sunday, October 20, 2002, 7 pm: AAPS General Membership Meeting: *All About Chimneys*, by Paul Breitkopf and Sally McKnight.

Wednesday, November 20, 2002, 7:30 pm: Board Meeting at the home of Ruth Tillman, 1716 Encinal Ave.

Sunday, December 8, 2002: Annual AAPS Holiday Potluck.

Sunday, February 3, 2003, 7 p.m.: AAPS General Membership Meeting: "The Hidden Treasure" by Jett Thorson

Sunday, March 16, 2003, 7 p.m.: AAPS General Membership Meeting: "Bungalow Bathrooms" by Jane Poewll.

Sunday, May 2, 2003, 7 p.m.: AAPS General Membership Meeting: "Façade Restoration" by Skeeter Jones and Annual 2003 Preservation Awards.

