
ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Editor: Ruth Tillman, ruthillman@alamedanet.net, 510-337-1405

August, 2003

General Membership Meeting **Woody Walk in the Gold Coast**

Woody Minor, Alameda Local Historian

Sunday, August 24, 2003 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Franklin Park corner of Morton St. and San Antonio Ave.

Woody Minor, one of Alameda's preeminent local historians, will be giving an informative walking tour of Alameda's Gold Coast area. This is timed to coincide with the annual Alameda Legacy Home Tour this September based in and around this historical neighborhood.

Woody is a fourth generation Alamedan whose great grandparents came here from London via San Francisco in 1891. The family home is a Colonial Revival built in 1898 by Woody's widowed great-grandmother on St. Charles Street by a London-trained architect and friend of the family.

Woody (short for Woodruff) has been passionate with the history and people of Alameda for many years. He has expressed this passion in a variety of ways: He worked for the Alameda Planning Department from 1977 until 1980, when he did a visual and historic survey of 10,000 buildings in town. That survey was the basis for today's Historic Building Study List, an important form of both recognition and protection of thousands of structures here.

His writing career began when he wrote the Historic Preservation Element for the Alameda General Plan. He also researched and wrote four minor treatises on Alameda Heritage Areas: Bay Station, Leonardville, Burbank-Portola, and Park Avenue. The publication about Leonardville is one of his favorites because of the care he devoted to Joseph Leonard, the architect and real estate developer whose signature details grace so many Alameda Victorians. His two most recent endeavors are the publications: *Pacific Gateway: A History of the Port of Oakland* and most recently *Alameda At Play, a Century of Public Parks and Recreation in a Bay Area City*.

Don't miss your chance to walk the historic footsteps of the Gold Coast with Woody and hear stories of its grandeur and elegance. Come and learn intriguing things about the rich history of this preeminent area and its lavish houses!

Information regarding Woody Minor provided courtesy of Judith Lynch.

Preservation Action Alert!!

PLANNING BOARD CONSIDERATION OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

REVIEW MANUAL SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 25, 2003 7 pm

City Council Chambers, City Hall, Santa Clara Avenue and Oak Street

The Alameda Planning Department has completed an initial draft of the new Residential Design Review Manual. The Planning Board is scheduled to consider the draft on **Monday, August 25 at 7pm. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, at Santa Clara Avenue and Oak Street.**

Improving the Design Review Manual has been one of AAPS's highest priorities. Under the existing manual, the City has often approved projects that should not have been approved. Examples include:

- Installation of vinyl (plastic) siding and vinyl windows on Victorian houses and other architecturally significant buildings that often looks synthetic and is not visually consistent with the original architecture.

- Additions to existing buildings that are not well integrated with the existing structures and are out of scale with the neighborhood.
- Inappropriate enclosures of main entry porches.



Before

Approved by the Planning Department in 1993. Second story added, front porch partly enclosed and entire building covered with vinyl siding. Original surfaces were wood shingles. Horizontal aluminum slider windows added which are inconsistent with the original Craftsman style



After

- New buildings in older areas should reflect the neighborhood's predominant architectural styles and exhibit the high quality materials, detailing and craftsmanship typically found in older neighborhoods.
- Replacement windows and siding, especially vinyl siding, that looks synthetic or is not consistent with a building's architectural character should not be allowed.
- Enclosure of main entry porches should be avoided as much as possible. Where enclosures are truly necessary, they should maintain the transparency, structure and detailing of the original porch and always leave at least 50 square feet of porch unenclosed at the head of the entry path or stairs.

Approved by the Planning Department in 1999 or early 2000. Original tall wood double hung windows replaced with short vinyl windows below transoms that create awkward proportions and are highly uncharacteristic of the building's Stick-Italianate style. Transoms have flat grids sandwiched between two layers of glass. These kinds of grids look artificial and are also uncharacteristic of the style. Incompatible wrought-iron railings also added.



Before



After

The Planning Department has said that it has to approve these projects because the existing Manual is too general to require a higher standard. Dozens of such projects occur each year. They are steadily eroding Alameda's architectural quality and are the biggest overall threat to the city's historic buildings. **IT IS THEREFORE VERY IMPORTANT THAT AS MANY AAPS MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE ATTEND THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING AND LET THE BOARD KNOW THAT THESE KINDS OF PROJECTS SHOULD NOT BE APPROVED.**

Points to communicate at the Planning Board include:

- Alameda's attractive older buildings and neighborhoods are one of the City's most valuable assets and must be preserved.
- Many new residents and businesses come to Alameda because of the uniquely attractive character of its older architecture.
- Poorly designed additions, alterations and new construction make neighborhoods less attractive and reduce property values.
- Additions and alterations to existing buildings should be consistent with the building's original architectural style.

The draft Manual addresses some of the above concerns but not all of them. In addition much of the Manual's text is not as clear as it should be, with many of its provisions described as "recommendations" or "options". AAPS is concerned that describing projects like "new siding on top of original siding" (the draft does not even mention vinyl siding specifically) as "not recommended" could be interpreted to mean that the City may still approve such siding and is merely offering comments on its design disadvantages. **The text should be presented as clear "do's" and "don'ts".**

In addition, the draft provides different treatments for "historic" vs. "non-historic" buildings, generally requiring a higher standard for "historic" buildings. This is not consistent with the feedback we recall from the public workshops held last year, which was to provide the same high standards for all structures.

Related to this issue is that the Manual suggests that complete remodeling of a "non-historic" building is acceptable, although not a remodeling of a "historic" building. The draft appears to consider "historic" buildings to be those built before WWII, although this too is not stated clearly.

Assuming therefore, that a “non-historic” building is a post-WWII building, it appears that total remodeling of 1950’s, 1960’s or any newer building is acceptable regardless of architectural merit. This approach may not be appropriate. Following Planning Board action, the Manual is expected to be forwarded to the City Council.

To obtain a copy of the draft manual or for further information, please call Chris Buckley at 523-0411 or Judith Altschuler at the Planning Department at 748-4554.

PRESERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE



1423 Morton Street Update

The 1883 Victorian home at 1423 Morton Street which had been proposed for demolition, but which was saved by the City Council (see October, 2002-May, 2003 AAPS News) has been sold.

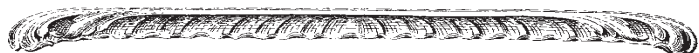


AAPS is very pleased by this development. The house, which had been poorly maintained, has already received a new roof and a coat of paint.

As we do with all purchases of historic buildings, AAPS will provide the new owner a copy of our newsletter and an invitation to join AAPS.

The Preservation Action Committee meets at 7:00 pm on the first Monday 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!

COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS



Centennial Celebration at First Presbyterian Church of Alameda

Nancy Hird

On September 13th, The First Presbyterian Church of Alameda will begin celebrating One-Hundred Years of Worship and community events that have taken place in the Sanctuary Building. The Sanctuary Building is currently located on the corner of Santa Clara Ave and Chestnut St.

Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

The extended celebration coincides with the events that took place 100 years ago when members demolished the original Presbyterian Church at the corner of Central and Versailles Avenues, using the wood as framing for the new building. Over the course of the following seven months, the present structure, as designed by architect and member Henry H. Myers, was built under the direction of prolific Alameda builder A.J. Burgner. (Also a member at that time.) The Sanctuary Building was dedicated on Easter Sunday in April 1904. The present celebration will culminate on Easter Sunday 2004 with the unveiling of a time capsule to be opened in 2065 as part of the church’s bicentennial celebration. (The church was chartered in 1865.)

Members of the Alameda community are invited to attend the celebration commencement. The afternoon event will begin with a history walk at 2:00 p.m. with railroad magnet and “pew renter” Alfred Cohen’s wife, Emily Gibbons Cohen leading a tour of the Fernside District telling the story of the life and times in Alameda, her family and the church from 1854-1902. The walk will include a visit for tea at the historic Webster House so reservations and a \$25 non-refundable fee is required. (Mail reservations and the fee to First Presbyterian Church, 2001 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda, CA 94501 prior to Sept. 10th.)

Following the history walk, the festivities will move to the front of the church on Santa Clara where the stained glass windows on the front façade will be unveiled with clear coverings. Guests are then invited to enjoy the sun lit stained glass windows from the inside of the Sanctuary Building. At 5:00 p.m., a sumptuous fund-raising dinner will be served and all are invited to join in the fun and food.

Can’t make the walk? Join us at the church site at 4:00 for the window unveiling and dinner. All proceeds will go toward building restoration from the foundation to the massive windows that adorn the sides of the Sanctuary Building. (The elements during the past one hundred years have taken a toll on the structure and a great deal of work is required to restore and preserve this Alameda landmark which is listed on the National Register.)

During the dinner, a sneak preview of plans will be announced for additional events throughout the extended celebration. All are welcome to join in the family-oriented celebrations to honor the building and the spirit of Alamedans, both past and present. Bring your calendars!

HELP NEEDED:

Can you help AAPS with our newsletter and/or webpage? We are looking for somebody to help take the strain off our volunteers.

Please contact Ruth Tillman at 510-337-1405 or ruthillman@alamedanet.net

AAPS BOARD MEMBERS 2003

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ruthillman@alamedanet.net

AAPS MEETING SCHEDULE

Sunday, October 19, 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 in 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.

March, 2004, 7 p.m.: AAPS will be showing a copy of the comedic documentary **BLUE VINYL**. A Toxic Comedy Look at Vinyl, The World's Second Largest Selling Plastic.

PRESERVATION COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Alameda Museum Lectures 2003: For information about the lectures, call 510.748.0796.

Thursday, August 28, 2003, 7 pm: *"Queen Victoria Down Under"* by Bruce Bradbury He will present a slide show tour of his discoveries in Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide.

The Victorian Alliance of San Francisco *2003 Annual House Tour featuring The Panhandle of Golden Gate Park* Sunday, October 19, 2003, 1 pm- 5 pm

Tickets cost \$20 in advance or \$25 after October 1 deadline. Call 415-824-2666. Website: www.victorianalliance.org.

Oakland Heritage Alliance *23rd Annual Walking Tours* Summer Weekends ~ \$10 per tour.
For further information, please call UHA 510-763-9218 or e-mail to oha@oaklandheritage.org.

ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR

Victoria's Heritage in the Gold Coast

September 21, 2003 11am-5pm

Tour the architectural gems of our island city located in beautiful San Francisco Bay. This year's event features Victorian homes located in and around Alameda's famous Gold Coast neighborhood. The event is hosted by the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society and the Alameda Museum. Queen Victoria with her consort Prince Albert will be gracing us with her presence. Please practice your bow and curtsy!

Tickets cost \$20 in advance or \$25 on the day of the tour. The price includes a keepsake Legacy Guidebook and light refreshments. To buy tickets by mail, make your check payable to ALHT and send it to the Alameda Museum, 2324 Alameda Avenue, Alameda CA 94501. For information, kindly call 510.523.5907. You can also send e mail to alamedahometour@netscape.net. If you are coming from out of town, call for a list of local accommodations and restaurants, or check our website www.alameda-home-tour.org

ATTENTION: We are still looking to fill docent spots and need your help!
Docents are given free passes to attend the tour.

For more information please contact
Ruth Tillman at 510-337-1405 or
ruthillman@alamedanet.net

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 - Ruth Tillman
@ 337-1405*

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

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Check your membership category.

renewal new member

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Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

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

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


FOURTH OF JULY PARADE

*Thank you to all who
participated in the parade!!*



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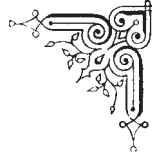
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AAPS CALENDAR

Monday, August 4, 7 pm: *AAPS Preservation Action Committee Meeting.*

Wednesday, August 13, 7 pm: *Legacy Home Tour Committee Meeting.*

Wednesday, August 20, 7 pm: *AAPS Board Meeting.*

Sunday, August 24, 2003, 4 p.m.: *AAPS General Membership Meeting: "Historic Neighborhood Walking Tour" by Woody Minor. Meet at Franklin Park.*

Sunday, September 21, 2003, 11 am- 5 p.m.: *Alameda Legacy Home Tour, "Victoria's Heritage in the Gold Coast"*

Sunday, October 19, 2003, 7 p.m.: *AAPS General Membership Meeting: "The Hidden Treasure" by Jett Thorson.*

Sunday, March, 2004: *Showing of the film BLUE VINYL.*

