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# ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Editor: Ruth Tillman, [ruthillman@alamedanet.net](mailto:ruthillman@alamedanet.net), 510-337-1405

October, 2003

## *General Membership Meeting* ***The Hidden Treasure***

*Jett Thorson, Decorative Painter*

**Sunday, October 19, 2003 ~ 7:00 p.m.**

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



AAPS is pleased and honored to announce the first guest speaker of this year decorative painter and artist Jett Thorson. AAPS awarded Thorson and her son, Christopher Brooks with a 2002 Preservation Award for painstakingly restoring the ceiling of the 1928 Alameda Bureau of Electricity building located at 2440 Santa Clara Avenue, now the offices of William Berg and Associates. The ornate hand painted and stenciled ceiling was hidden and forgotten under two false ceilings for many years. Previous owners Jim and Bernadette Allen discovered the ceiling

by chance one day when Mrs. Allen moved some of the acoustical tiles and was surprised to view the arches and large beams. She could faintly see some color and patterns beneath the black soot and grime covering the mural.

Thorson will be giving us a captivating slide presentation on the details of how she and her son went about their work on restoring the ceiling back to its original beauty. This includes describing how they removed not only dirt but oily soot and tobacco smoke inch by inch and how the plasterer repaired the holes using the original materials. Thorson will go into detail of how she and her son made tracings of each design and created stencils and they then hand painted the final details back in.

This presentation will be an exciting look on how people are preserving our local buildings history and beauty.



# PRESERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE

## Design Review Manual Update

*Christopher Buckley*

At its September 22, 2003 meeting, the Alameda Planning Board spent about three hours considering the draft Residential Design Review Manual. Improving the Manual has been one of AAPS's highest priorities. Under the existing 1974 Design Review Manual many projects are approved by the City that should not be approved, such as vinyl siding on Victorians and inappropriate additions, porch enclosures, replacement windows, etc. (see August, 2003 *AAPS News*).

Prior to the meeting, AAPS provided extensive written comments to the Board, including a revised version of the Manual.

AAPS's more significant comments include:

- The Manual should promote high design quality for **both** "historic" and "non-historic" buildings. The draft tends to set a higher standard for "historic" buildings, but doesn't clearly define what is meant by "historic".
- Changes to existing buildings should be consistent with their original architectural style.
- The Manual's text should be more direct and eliminate unintended verbal loopholes. Words



*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**

**Before**

*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**

like "should", "recommended", "whenever feasible", etc should not be used unless exceptions are intended to be allowed, in which case, the nature of the exceptions should be described.

- Substitute or synthetic materials like cement fiber or vinyl siding or vinyl windows must **visually match** the original materials or other materials which could have been used on the building originally.
- The manual needs to state that certain replacement materials, such as vinyl siding, often do not visually match original materials.
- Total enclosure of main entry porches should not be allowed.

About thirteen speakers addressed the Board, all generally supportive of AAPS's positions and many of whom were AAPS members. The Board also received at least five letters, all but one supporting AAPS's positions.

Much of the Board discussion focused on the following issues:

- Use of words like "shall" vs. words like "should"
- Appropriations of vinyl siding. Some Board members expressed concerns over this material.
- Whether a complete change of a building's style should be allowed. Some Board members felt such changes should be approved if they were well-designed.

Board members seemed to generally agree that any changes to existing buildings “should look like they were always there.”

The Board will consider the Manual again at its October 15, 2003 meeting. Prior to that meeting, the Board agreed to review AAPS’s revised version of the draft Manual in detail and forward comments to Staff. Staff will use these comments, along with the Boards previous comments as a basis for a revised draft of the Manual.

Thank you to all of the AAPS members who attended the meeting or wrote letters. Please call Chris Buckley at 510-523-0411 for further information or if you would like copies of AAPS’s written comments on the Manual.

*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!*



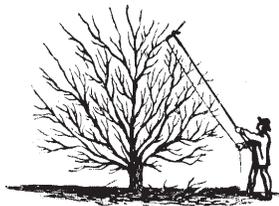
**Save the Date!!**

*2002 Annual Holiday Potluck  
Sunday, December 7, 2003*

## PRESERVATION COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**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](http://www.victorianalliance.org).



*Free trees and shrubs in one to fifteen gallon containers are available, including deodara cedars, lindens, maples, oaks, redwoods, viburnums and more. Call Chris Buckley at 523-0411.*

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### **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](mailto:ruthillman@alamedanet.net)**

# ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR

Victoria's Heritage in the Gold Coast

September 21, 2003 11am-5pm

## Thank you

*A special Thanks to PERFORCE SOFTWARE for sponsoring us!*

*Thank you to the 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.*



If you are interested in becoming a part of the  
Home Tour Team please contact  
Ruth Tillman at 510-337-1405 or  
[ruthillman@alamedanet.net](mailto: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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Phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

Check your membership category.

renewal       new member

Family \$25       Single \$20       Seniors \$10 each

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**Alameda Architectural Preservation Society**

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

510-986-9232 ~ [www.alameda-preservation.org](http://www.alameda-preservation.org)



## 2004 Board Nominations

**Do you know someone for the Board?**

**Are you interested in being  
a part of our team?**

**Do you want to know more about becoming  
a team member on the AAPS Board?**

Call Christopher Buckley at 510-523-0411 or  
e-mail Ruth Tillman at [ruthtillman@alamedanet.net](mailto:ruthtillman@alamedanet.net)

## AAPS BOARD MEMBERS 2003

President: Nancy Hird-523-0825

1st VP: Jean Graham-Gilliat-769-6293

2nd VP: Gia Boscacci-865-1249

Treasurer: Mary Jacak-749-1320

Advisor to the Board: Ruth Tillman

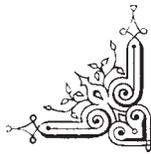
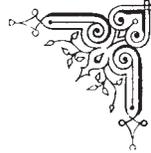
Corresponding Sec.: Janelle Spatz-521-4045

Recording Sec.: Randy Horton-523-0135

Member at Large: Christopher Buckley-523-0411

Newsletter Editor: Ruth Tillman-337-1405,

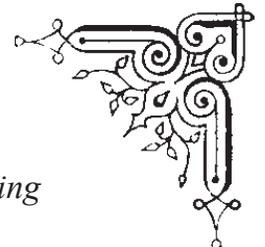
[ruthtillman@alamedanet.net](mailto:ruthtillman@alamedanet.net)



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Society

ARCHITECTURAL  
The ALAMEDA  
Preservation Society

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## AAPS CALENDAR

**Monday, October 6, 2003, 7 pm:** Preservation Action Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, October 15, 2003, 7 pm:** AAPS Board Meeting

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

**Monday, November 3, 2003, 7 pm:** Preservation Action Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, November 19, 2003, 7 pm:** AAPS Board Meeting

**Monday, December 1, 2003, 7 pm:** Preservation Action Committee Meeting

**Sunday, December 7, 2003, 6 pm - 9 pm:** AAPS Annual Holiday Potluck, for members only.

