

2004 Preservation Awards

Sunday, May 16, 2004 ~ 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Free open invitation for all!

USS Hornet Museum

http://www.uss-hornet.org/visitor_info/index.html

Alameda Point

Alameda Architectural Preservation Society would like to invite you to our annual Historic Preservation Award Ceremony. This year we will be holding the ceremony on the USS Hornet Museum, located at Alameda Point. The Hornet will be available for boarding at 5:00 pm. A slide presentation of the award recipients will be given at 6:00 pm. Directly following the presentation there will be an exciting evening tour of the USS Hornet.



USS Hornet Museum

by Ross Dileo

In May 1999, the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) presented the Hornet Foundation with their first preservation award for preserving a buoyant reminder of the Navy's legacy in Alameda and to acknowledge the herculean nature of their work. The daunting task of restoring the 41,600-ton Hornet continues to this day and in recognition, AAPS proudly presents this 2004 award.

The USS Hornet, located at Pier Three of the former Naval Air Station in Alameda, California, is a registered State and National Historic Landmark and Museum.

From her launch in 1943 as one of the Navy's largest and fastest aircraft carriers in World War II, to her recovery of the Apollo 11 and 12 astronauts upon splashdown in the Pacific, the USS Hornet's achievements and awards are unparalleled in the annals of the United States Naval history. Despite her reputation as the Navy's "Crown Jewel," the USS Hornet is striving to forge a new history as a sea, air, and space museum.

In 1991 the USS Hornet received State and National Historic Landmark status, a monumental step toward the goal of preparing for service to the community as a museum. In the mid-1990s, a small group of dedicated volunteers formed the core committee of what would later become the Aircraft Carrier Hornet Foundation. From mid-1995 to May 1998, this group formed a nonprofit organization, raised startup funds and worked successfully to save the USS Hornet from the Navy scrap yard where she was destined to go after being mothballed in 1970. From May to August 1998, the members of the Foundation burned midnight oil restoring portions of the ship for visitors and operations, assembling staff and volunteers. The USS Hornet Museum officially opened her "hatches" to the public in October 1998.

In preserving historical accuracy, the restoration crew strove to restore major areas such as the Flight Deck, Island, Hangar Deck and Second Deck. The USS Hornet's almost thirty-year history involved several retro-fittings, redesigns and rebuilds (once in the wake of a powerful typhoon in 1945 which completely destroyed the forward portion of the flight deck), so the decision was made to restore the ship to the way it looked upon decommissioning. This decision helped to ensure that all restoration would be consistent with one historical time period. The ship's volunteers, mainly former Navy crew and officers, provided

a “human” context for the restoration, filling in gaps where consultation was needed to determine accurate paint scheme, appropriate artifact retrieval and installation.

When the ship arrived at Alameda Point, besides requiring considerable restoration she needed to meet the requirements of several agencies and oversight organizations, including the Bay Coastal Development Commission, City of Alameda, Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the Department of the Interior. After completing time-intensive clean-up tasks such as asbestos removal, foam and lead paint stripping, the installation of sprinklers, alarms and lighting to comply with Fire codes, the crew could then begin restoration of the chief spaces to accommodate visitors and staff. The long-term goal was to restore all of the Super Structure, Hangar Deck, Second and Third Decks, and several spaces on the Fourth Deck. The engine room, occupying space on both the Fifth and Sixth Decks, would be the major exception to the general designation of spaces slated for restoration.



At the outset there were several main areas that received restoration efforts. These areas were first to be cleaned, painted, ducts reattached, electricity restored and made to reflect a “near-operable” condition. These included the Hangar Deck, parts of the Island and Captain’s Bridge, the Officers’ Wardroom, the Chief Petty Officers’ Mess, and Ready Room Three (one of four “briefing rooms” where Hornet pilots received mission instructions). All operable machinery and technological devices on board were disabled upon decommissioning, but the Museum’s intention was to provide a glimpse into how the ship would have operated when still in service.

Other areas restored soon after the main spaces included the Medical Spaces, Forward Engine Room, Repair Station #3, Ship’s Theater, and Berthing Spaces for the youth Live-Aboard Program. The crew also restored a variety of equipment to operable condition including the Aircraft Elevator, Elevator Doors, Bomb Elevator, Jet Blast Deflector, Radar, Anchor Windlass and 1MC speaker system. These improvements have allowed the museum to host monthly “Living Ship” demonstrations to simulate the operation of the ship while underway. Visitors can witness everything from transporting aircraft from the Hangar Bay to the Flight Deck via the Elevator to Mission Briefings in the Ready Rooms.

In the past two years, the ship’s crew has restored areas such as the Aft Engine Room, Crew’s Mess Deck & Main Galley,

Torpedo Workshop, Catapult Room, Dental Spaces, Metal Shop and Machine Shop. Equipment restoration included the Escalator, Elevator 2, Torpedo Elevator, Searchlight, Crash Barricade, Flight Deck Lights, Tire Shop, 3,000psi Air Compressor and Cathodic Rust Protection. Exhibits highlighting the Apollo recovery, anti-submarine warfare, the Hornet ships through time and various aircraft are also on display. The restoration required to offer an unforgettable visitor experience has been painstaking and demanding of extreme volunteerism and generosity. The support of the local community has been instrumental in aiding restoration progress. Celebrating her 60th anniversary at the end of November 2003, the USS Hornet reached a five-year milestone as the West Coast’s first aircraft carrier museum. Ongoing restoration will continue to provide a vehicle for interpreting her legendary past to groups of the future.

2624 Eagle Avenue



finished

by Denise Brady

Laura and Joe DiDonato did not follow the advice from their friends who told them not to buy the house. Nor did they heed the advice of another friend who told them to “just paint it”.

As you walk up to the Colonial Revival cottage built in 1907 by John Herman you are greeted by a little sign that says “Ladybug Habitat.” Right away you get the sense that the people who live here steer clear of toxins. Laura is a master gardener and Joe is a wildlife biologist. So why would they buy a house shrouded with asbestos shingles? Even though the house was a mess when they bought it in 1995, they somehow knew that it was a candidate for restoration. What had been done to the house was not right and it needed to feel right again, or, as Laura puts it “organic.”

The DiDonatos were not complete strangers to such an effort. They had recently helped some friends renovate a Craftsman home in Berkeley.



before

Even so, they had not tackled anything like this. They did have concerns about removing the asbestos. What dangers and risks might there be for themselves, their two young children and the neighbors? Since Laura was the one pushing to do it, she went about researching asbestos removal and concluded that they could do it themselves. Well, actually, SHE would be doing it. As a stay-at-home mom, she had the time to tackle the project.

Two years later, the deed was done. "You know, it always takes longer than you think."

They were very pleased to find that the original wood shingles were for the most part in good shape. Removing the nails and patching all the holes was actually the most tedious part of the job. One unexpected discovery was the presence of a large honeybee nest that had been growing in a wall cavity. Rather than exterminate them, a beekeeper from Berkeley was called in to safely take them away.

Another major project undertaken was the kitchen remodel. Joe says, "Laura is the motivator. I tell her to design it and make me a list." The result is a beautiful, very natural feeling space that is so pleasant to work in and blends perfectly in an old house. Bricks removed from an almost crumbling chimney were recycled into a patio.

Was it worth the effort? They said yes. Although it was at times very frustrating, it was also rewarding. As Laura spent her days outside on a ladder, neighbors were watching and admiring. She proudly exclaims: "the neighbors were thrilled!" She goes on to say they are hopeful that they might inspire others to do the same.

1533 Santa Clara Avenue



finished

by Denise Brady

"This house is like a Grandma, it hugs you when you walk in." That is how Michele and George Tercero describe their Craftsman home built in 1915. The house deserved some loving care. Asked when the decision was made to remove the asbestos shingles, Michele promptly replies "20 years ago, the first minute that I saw it!" She goes on to say that she had it painted once but that she would have preferred removing the stuff. Last summer she finally got her wish.

Removing asbestos shingles can be a gamble. You are never completely certain what you will find underneath. Sometimes homeowners are fortunate to find the original siding or shingles in good shape, sadly this was not the case. What they found instead was a Pandora's Box. Most of the shingles were cracked and rotted. The front porch was dry rotted as well as most of the roof eaves. The roof also needed to be torn off and replaced. Everything had to come off! Once everything was removed down to the sheathing, Michele labeled it the "naked house".

Michele coordinated the renovation effort with some very valuable guidance from Tom Kirk Construction. There was a steady stream of workers. It seemed as though there was something new to see almost every day. All the wood shingles were hand cut on site by Shingles on the Side. The front porch had to be rebuilt, new eaves were custom milled and replacement windows ordered.

One thing they were not expecting was all the attention they, or the house, would be getting. Apparently no one had told them about the Restoration Groupies. They met all the neighbors and many others. Cars slowed down or parked across the street with onlookers. Neither of them could tell you just how many people inquired about their contractors.

Who did your windows? Your shingles? Your roof? "It was constant!" says George. At times it might have seemed both-



before

ersome, but overall they got the sense that what they were doing was being noticed and that others wanted to do the same.

It was important to the Terceros to do the restoration the right way, including all the details. They describe their experience as wonderful and enjoyed working with terrific contractors who pulled it all together in about four months. They are pleased, and so is the house!

1377 Fountain Street



finished

by Denise Brady

Perhaps it was the stuccoed front, green shag carpeting, gold “bottle bottom” windows and cheap wood paneling that turned Anne Marie McLean off the first time that she saw the little house on Fountain Street. After seeing many other houses, she decided to go back for a second look. This time, she was able to see past all the “misguided improvements” from the 1960’s and envision how it might have once looked. She decided that this was the house for her.

A transitional Colonial Revival cottage built in 1907, it is one of a trio of cottages attributed to builders Foy & Rew. The other two were essentially intact and they inspired her to embark upon a restoration project. This was not going to be

an easy task. She sought the guidance of her brother and sister-in-law Bobby and Lisa McLean who live in an older home here in Alameda. They recommended that she work with Marti McCune of Martha Tout Interior Design to develop an overall plan to realize her vision.

The first thing addressed was the foundation, which was done by Gutleben Construction. Then on to the “fun stuff”. Marti and Anne Marie came up with some creative concepts for restoring the interior. Step one was the demolition. Here was a young lady who had barely ever used a hammer and now it was time to tear into walls. Along came big brother Bobby and a pal to the rescue. Some of the ensuing challenges included living without a fully functional kitchen and bathroom, not to mention all the dust and debris.

Once that the interior was completed and very livable, it was time to renovate the exterior. With the stucco removed, carpenter Tom Wolter masterfully recreated the original detailing of the period for the façade and porch. The brilliant finishing touch was the exterior painting done by Armin Rodocha.

The final phase of Anne Marie’s dream was the landscaping. With the help of Iris Watson at Thompsen’s Nursery for the plantings and John Mulligan for the stonework, the final goal was achieved. Her “remuddled” cottage had been transformed back to a home rich with character and tranquility. The trio of cottages were complete again.

This was a daunting task for our heroine, and she is very grateful to those who helped her achieve her dream. A lot of hard work went into pulling things together in time for a visit from her parents from New York. Unbeknownst to her, this would be the last trip for her dad. She is so happy that he was able to see his daughter’s first home.



before

Carnegie Retrofit



by Chris Buckley

The Carnegie Library building, City of Alameda Historical Monument No. 16, is one of Alameda's great architectural treasures. It was constructed in 1902 as Alameda's Free Library, with grant funds from the Carnegie Foundation, and designed by architects Wilcox and Curtis. For many years it suffered deferred maintenance, including roof leaks that penetrated the masonry walls and lead to deterioration of the masonry, and rust and water stains on the exterior surfaces. The building was Alameda's Main Library until 1999, when the library was moved to Historic Alameda High School to allow for rehabilitation of the Carnegie Building.

In 1996, the City Council initiated a program for the building's rehabilitation and future use. The program involves four phases: (1) stabilization (including roofing and waterproofing) and seismic retrofit; (2) code and other upgrades to allow first floor occupancy; (3) additional upgrades to allow occupancy of all the floors; and (4) new heating and ventilation systems and other tenant improvements.

AAPS's Preservation Award is for completion of the first phase. Although the building is not yet fully rehabilitated and its future use is undetermined, the completed work constitutes almost half of the original total rehabilitation cost (estimated at \$5,510,460 in 2000, but recently revised to about \$8,000,000) and represents a definitive commitment by the City to the building's preservation and ultimate restoration.

The award is being presented to the City of Alameda; project architects Muller and Caulfield; historic architect Alan Dreyfuss, AIA; and contractors Aztec Consultants. The



award recognizes the commitment to the building and the very sensitive approach to its rehabilitation, which resulted in minimal visible alterations to the building's significant architectural features and improvements to the appearance of the exterior by cleaning the masonry walls and installing new landscaping.

Significant work elements included:

- Installation of concrete shear walls and eight massive steel columns, supported by 50' deep micropiles. The columns were inserted through the roof (see accompanying photo) and, along with the shear walls, are either concealed inside the existing walls or within visually unobtrusive extensions of these walls.
- Installation of steel beams hidden in the floors and ceilings and connected to the new columns to create rigid structural frames.
- Construction of plywood diaphragms at the basement and first floor ceilings to increase resistance to seismic forces.
- Anchor bolts to tie together the masonry perimeter walls and installed from the inside so as not to affect exterior appearance.
- Cleaning of all exterior brick, terra cotta, stone and other masonry surfaces and repointing masonry joints, where necessary.
- Repair and replacement of cracked, loose or spalled exterior sandstone (mostly at the basement level) and application of a consolidant to prevent future deterioration.
- Painting of all exterior wood and metal surfaces (such as the main cornice).
- Replacement of the entire roof and both skylights in-kind.

An important note on the plans states "Where removal of existing materials or finishes is required for performance of any work under this contract, removal and replacement to match original shall be accomplished whether specifically indicated or not, unless otherwise noted."

First Presbyterian Church



The Stained Glass Windows at First Presbyterian Church – A Lesson in “Less Can Be More” in Restoration and Preservation

by Nancy Hird

For the first half of the past century, the community of Alameda enjoyed passing by the First Presbyterian Church at the corner of Santa Clara Avenue and Chestnut Street. The sight of the large stained glass windows embedded in the Neo-Classical Revival Sanctuary Building designed by Henry H. Meyers and his partner Clarence R. Ward delighted generations of Alamedans both day and night. In the late 1950's, concern about vandalism prompted members of the congregation to install lexan over the windows to preserve them. Over time, the lexan clouded and became opaque, nearly obliterating the beautiful scenes. Unless one entered the building to view the windows from inside on a sunny day, the treasured windows were lost behind the lexan.

In 2003, the steps to the sanctuary had badly deteriorated, as had the paint on the building's exterior. Events on the calendar such as the Family Service League's Annual Home Tour (The church's Fellowship Hall was scheduled to be used for the refreshments and silent auction.) and celebrations to commemorate the building's 100th anniversary at the present location prompted the congregation to embark on a restoration project. It was agreed the windows should be included if at all possible.

Members of the church sought bids to restore the windows – some re-leading, thorough cleaning and replacement of the lexan was requested. Bids came in with estimates from \$1.2 million to \$75,000. One company wanted to remove all the windows and ship them to Minnesota for repair. Local glass guru Ken Matthias declined to bid because he did not have the facilities or the time it would take to complete the work. The church members were in a quandary. The thought of removing and shipping off the beloved windows seemed incomprehensible to some. The wide divergence in cost estimates and advice given by each bidder was confusing to a

congregation who wanted to do “the right thing” from a preservation perspective. The decision was made to hire Ken Matthias as a consultant to review each bid and give unbiased advice. Ken assisted church leaders to select a “conservation” approach which resulted in some windows being removed for re-leading and complete restoration and some windows being thoroughly cleaned with leading re-worked keeping the windows in place. Ken also helped in the decision to select tempered glass over lexan for protective covering. The lowest bid, which included a complete inventory of each glass piece and an annual maintenance plan was selected, making it financially possible for the completion of the entire project in time for the events planned.

The stained glass artist who completed all the work is Joan Di Stefano Ruiz. With Q-Tips, dental tools and gentle solvents in hand, Joan lovingly spent months on scaffolding cleaning, remolding lead and cataloging each pane of glass. Joan loves glass. She earned a Masters Degree in Environmental Glass from the New York University, Venice Italy program after completing her BA of Fine Arts at San Francisco Art Institute. She studied under the tutelage of glass masters such as Narcissus Quagliata. She has since traveled the world conserving stained glass treasures in Italy, Africa, France, Mexico, California, Texas, New York, Nevada and Oregon. Her training led to her theory that we must keep “living things historically intact and glass pieces authentic to their origins until they really fail to preserve their historic integrity.” She says, “we must treat old glass like a fragile jewel and revere the old world craftsmanship.”

The windows at First Presbyterian Church had varying degrees of restoration needs. Some had lead failure that needed to be replaced and some had to be re-worked to extend the life of the windows. Due to the design of the windows, lack of support, and gravity, the lower portions of the large windows were buckling. Cracks were abundant. To repair the cracks, Joan used silicon, which is transparent and flexible that will not “yellow with age”. No epoxy was used for this reason. Lead was reshaped where possible rather than putting in newer lead that would not be in keeping with the period look. When cleaning windows, Joan used distilled water so salt deposits would not be left on the glass pieces.

If the window pieces were particularly dirty, Joan diluted commercial cleaning fluids with vinegar and ammonia. These combinations were used only on portions of the glass that were not painted. The paint on the glass of the windows is very unstable because the windows were not originally fired in a kiln so they are “cold” paint. This has resulted in a “picking” effect where tiny holes are seen in the paintings. Joan touched up the holes but her touch-up also is “cold” and will require constant maintenance and retouches as time goes on. After the church congregation's experience with lexan, the decision was made to replace the protective covering with protective tempered glass in lieu of newer lexan. Tempered glass is still penetrable with stones and other vandalistic action but the congregation has faith these actions will not mar the beauty of the windows for the continued plea-

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P.O. Box 1677 ~ Alameda ~ CA ~ 94501
510-986-9232 ~ www.alameda-preservation.org

AAPS
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sure for the viewing community.

The tempered glass covering the windows is not sealed. There are gaps engineered at the tops and bottoms of each window to promote air exchange and to prevent condensation from accumulating.

Reverend Frank Brush was the church's minister during the design and building of the sanctuary. While traveling in Italy, he was struck by the beauty of religious stained glass art. He purchased Italian glass and had them sent to Chicago where the windows were painted. Members of the congregation and community, at that time, donated the windows in memory of early church leaders. There are fourteen large windows five feet by fifteen in the main building. Ten of these are figured and four unfigured. Early Alamedans remembered in the windows include Rodney L. Tabor and Edmund Y. Garrette, former pastors of the church. Also remembered are Sarah Hastings and Caroline Webster.



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AAPS Calendar

Monday, May 3, 2004 at 7 pm: Preservation Action Committee Meeting

Wednesday, May 12, 2004 at 7 pm: Alameda Legacy Home Tour Comm.

Sunday, May 16, 2004 at 5 pm: AAPS Annual Preservation Awards held on the USS Hornet Museum

Wednesday, May 19, 2004 at 7 pm: AAPS Board Meeting

Monday, June 7, 2004 at 7 pm: Preservation Action Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 9, 2004 at 7 pm: Alameda Legacy Home Tour Comm.

Wednesday, June 16, 2004 at 7 pm: AAPS Board Meeting