

Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Rynerson O'Brien Architecture:

Historically Appropriate Additions & Alterations to Period Structures

Sunday, November 3, 2013 at 7:00 pm

Immanuel Lutheran Church: 1420 Lafayette Street, Alameda, CA

(Parking available at the corner of Chestnut Street and Santa Clara Avenue.)

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



The Art of Looking Original

Rynerson O'Brien Architecture's residential practice focuses on the late 19th and early 20th century homes that comprise much of the San Francisco Bay Area's regional vernacular. They design additions and alterations to older homes that fulfill clients' requirements while incorporating the character-defining element and historical vocabulary that characterize the original structure. For new homes, ROBA applies knowledge of period architecture to produce designs that are historically accurate and thoroughly adapted to modern living.

Historic residences and commercial buildings often suffer from years of neglect and misguided improvements that destroy the intent of the original design. ROBA's expertise with designing historically correct façades and storefronts can help to realize the potential of old structures and restore integrity to the streetscape.

At the November 3rd meeting, Stephen Rynerson will discuss design issues common to old houses and how his firm employs a historically grounded approach to practical, problem solving alterations, as well as to restoration. Case studies will include modest projects and larger homes, with an overview of the role of a design professional, from measured drawings of existing conditions through completion.

continued on page 2...

While designing façade restorations at San Francisco Victoriana in the late '70s, Stephen Rynerson conceived a plan to add a turret over the front entry on this Queen Anne cottage in Ashbury Heights, San Francisco, as well as for restoring character-defining ornament and shingles to a façade that had been completely stripped.

Looking Original...continued from page 1.

Stephen Rynerson

Growing up in Lakewood, California, "The Levittown of the West", Rynerson O'Brien Architecture co-founder Stephen Rynerson experienced first hand all the joys and well-publicized sorrows of the planned American suburbs of the 1950s. As a young man exploring utopian alternatives to the suburban model, Mr. Rynerson worked on the construction of Arcosanti, Paolo Soleri's visionary city in Arizona and lived in Mendocino County during the early days of the "back to the land" movement.

Returning to live in Alameda in 1975, Stephen's life changed forever when he enrolled in a UC Extension course about Victorian architecture co-taught by Judith Lynch and the late Gary Kray, one of the founders of San Francisco Victoriana, the pioneering restoration firm. His class project was a brochure describing several walking tours of Alameda. By the end of the class, he was apprenticed at San Francisco Victoriana, where he spent three years learning to design façade restorations for houses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that had been badly "remuddled" by misguided attempts at modernization. It was here that Stephen found his calling and where he learned that what is initially built is only the beginning; that cities and suburbs alike evolve



A small lot with tight setbacks required the addition to this Berkeley hillside Craftsman to make efficient use of very limited space.



The McDonald Mansion. A landmark Stick Eastlake restoration and rehabilitation in Santa Rosa, California. This 5-year project involved restoring the original exterior of the McDonald Mansion, while making discrete additions to the rear of the property and integrating the house with its spacious gardens.

by the slow, organic accumulation of incremental changes, that good design can contribute to the quality of change, and that past mistakes can be corrected.

As a sole proprietor, Stephen expanded his practice to include comprehensive remodels, new houses, and commercial work. Since joining forces with Patrick O'Brien in 1989 to form Rynerson O'Brien Architecture, he has continued to focus on designing historically appropriate residential alterations as well as adaptive reuse of commercial structures.

Stephen Rynerson is a charter member of Artistic License, a guild of Bay Area restoration artisans and professionals. His work has been recognized by the Woodwork Institute of California, the Sonoma County Historical Society, and by the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society for a historical interpretation of 1417 San Antonio Avenue.



Award-winning architect Stephen Rynerson.

In collaboration with historical consultant Paul Duchscherer, Rynerson O'Brien Architecture won the 2013 Palladio Award for excellence in traditional design for their work on the McDonald Mansion in Santa Rosa.

For a consultation on your project contact:

Rynerson O'Brien Architecture
1512 Franklin Street, 3rd Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-2804
510-452-9152
www.rynersonobrien.com

AAPS Privacy policy: AAPS never shares its membership list or email addresses with other organizations or commercial enterprises. Emails to our own membership are sent bcc "blind copies," so that recipients see only their own address.

The AAPS Board has decided to begin a pilot program, sharing information about activities of similar preservation organizations and even, occasionally, suitable commercial activities. These emails will summarize notices we regularly receive and consolidate them into a single email. We hope that this service will be useful to you. However, if you wish to discontinue receiving these informational messages go to: www.alameda-preservation.org/about-2/contact-us/ and tell us that you would still like to receive information about AAPS activities, but not about other organizations.



AAPS provided a scale depiction to the Alameda City Council of 60' building along the 1600 block of Park Street, next to McGee's building.

City Approves Reduced Building Height Limits and Other Planning Improvements for North Park Street *by Mary Jacak*

For people following the evolution of the North Park Street area zoning, can you believe it has been over 20 years since a reduction in building height down from 100 feet and eight stories was proposed in 1991 for North Park Street? 100 feet? Eight stories?? Last April, the City Council finally implemented this proposal by reducing the height limit to 60' and 5 stories. At 60', the limit is still higher than the 40' and three stories called for in the City of Alameda General Plan and recommended by AAPS.

Among the reasons AAPS put forth for a lower, 40 foot height restriction, were that buildings taller than 40' will visually overwhelm and adversely affect the setting of the historic buildings along north Park Street, they will be drastically out of scale with the mostly 1-2 story buildings on the side streets and they will create a "canyon" affect along Park Street. Placement of four and five story buildings among the existing, lower structures will result in a jagged streetscape that detracts from the small-scale commercial district feel that makes Park Street a unique destination in the Bay Area (see figures).

Over the years, AAPS and many members of the community who attended Planning Board, City Council and visioning meetings advocated a 40' /3 stories

height limit and were successful in convincing staff and the City Council to retain this provision in the 2008 Park Street North of Lincoln Strategic Plan. The height limit was then variously proposed to be 50', reduced to 40' in 2012, but then suddenly increased to 60' in January of 2013. Despite five years of meetings and community involvement in developing the Strategic Plan for North Park Street, along with numerous adoptions and endorsements that called for a 40' height limit, the ordinance adopted by the City Council in April of this year sets a 60 foot / 5 stories height limit. The Council did require that additional provisions be developed for the Design Review Manual to minimize the visual impacts of taller buildings along North Park Street such as by stepping back the upper story or stories to better relate to the existing, lower buildings.

Improvements to the Strategic Plan include adoption of a new North Park Street Design Review Manual (currently there are no Non-Residential Design Guidelines in Alameda other than for Webster Street and rezoning the current, primarily residential areas adjacent to Park Street as residential or residential compatible. The intent of the latter change is to eliminate the threat of industrial and other incompatible enterprises from reducing the quality of life and property values of these areas. The residential areas adjacent to North Park Street along Eagle, Buena Vista and Clement are among the most historic in the City and include some of Alameda's oldest homes. The new Design Manual provides design guidelines that encourage new development to be compatible with these older buildings.



Example of a tall building among one and two story commercial buildings in San Francisco.

GET INVOLVED & MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The Preservation Action Committee meets at 7:00 pm usually on the first Monday of each month to address issues important to the architectural preservation of the City of Alameda.

If you would like to attend a meeting, be added to the Google Group list or would like obtain more information, please contact **Christopher Buckley** at 510-523-0411 or cbuckleyAICP@att.net



Those interested in the history and development of the Waterside Terrace tract joined AAPS's walk throughout the neighborhood with architectural historian Woody Minor. Photo: Kevin Frederick.

A Nice Day for a Walk

A large crowd estimated at 150 turned out for the annual Woody Walk on August 25. Following a talk in oak-shaded Lincoln Park about the Gold Rush origins of the East End, Woody Minor led the group up High Street to Waterside Terrace, talking about other tracts along the way.

Several homeowners from the neighborhood joined the tour, and one extended an invitation to go inside his home—a fine Prairie design with open plan and sleek wood trim. The tour ended by looping back up Fernside Boulevard to Lincoln Park, checking out rows of Arts & Crafts bungalows.

AAPS sold 72 bottles of water and collected \$175 in membership fees. Ticket receipts brought the grand total to \$702—a good day for local preservation!



THE ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

(AAPS) has been protecting the architectural legacy of Alameda's historic buildings for more than 35 years. Through AAPS action committees, educational seminars and home tours, citizens of Alameda have learned to embrace their diverse older neighborhoods. Over 4,000 buildings are on the City's Historic Building Study List. Alameda City Hall, one of the oldest in California, is a historical monument.

Alameda retains the rich charm of a bygone era, in both residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. Alamedans responded to AAPS's preservation mission back in the early 1970s, when Victorians were being demolished in order to construct large apartment buildings. AAPS, then called the Alameda Victorian Preservation Society (AVPS), helped pass a local initiative, Measure A, that preserved vintage homes by forbidding the construction of buildings with more than two housing units. To learn more about Alameda architectural treasures and the organization, visit the AAPS web site:

www.alameda-preservation.org

AAPS MEMBERSHIP

Join the AAPS or renew your membership by sending this form back with your payment or visit our web site and pay with PayPal. Call AAPS at 510-479-6489 if you have any questions.

Name _____

Date _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Would you like to receive your newsletter

Electronically Regular mail

Please check one

Renewal New member

Select your membership category

Family \$35 Student \$10 each Sponsor \$250

Number of family members _____ Partner \$100 Patron \$500

Single \$30 Senior \$20 each Donation \$ _____

Mail to: AAPS P.O. Box 1677, Alameda, CA 94501

Credit cards accepted online. www.alameda-preservation.org

~~X~~ Renew my AAPS Membership

NOW IS A GOOD TIME

As we enter the last quarter of our preservation year, with the Holiday Party and an exciting general meeting still to go, it would be a great time to renew for the new season.

We'll have wonderful events throughout the year. To the regular preservation oriented general membership meetings we're adding "how-to" activities and email alerts about other Bay Area preservation group events.

**You won't want to miss
a single month!**



P.O. Box 1677
Alameda, CA 94501

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ALAMEDA, CA
PERMIT NO. 207

In This Issue:

- *Cover Story*
- *Return to Yesteryear: Family History Day*
- *Walking Tour Brochure Now Available*
- *City Approves Reduced Building Height Limits and Other Planning Improvements for North Park Street*

printed on recycled paper.

AAPS BOARD MEMBERS 2013

President

Erich Stiger • 510-865-2740

1st Vice President

Christopher Buckley • 510-523-0411

2nd Vice President

Mary Jacak • 510-522-8208

Treasurer

Bob Risley • 510-864-1103

Corresponding Secretary

Jim Smallman • 714-318-4106

Recording Secretary

Patsy Baer • 510-769-1143

Member at Large

Kathy McIntire • 510-522-5808

Advisor to the Board

Nancy Hird • 510-523-0825

For more information, please contact:
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society
P.O. Box 1677 • Alameda, CA 94501
510-479-6489
www.alameda-preservation.org

Newsletter Design: Valerie Turpen 510-522-3734

AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2013

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

7:00 pm

Rynerson O'Brien Architecture:
Historically Appropriate Additions & Alterations to Period Structures
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

•
DECEMBER DATE TBD

AAPS Holiday Party

•
SATURDAY, JANUARY 25

1:00 – 4:00 pm

Return to Yesteryear: Family History Day
MEYERS HOUSE & GARDENS • 2021 ALAMEDA AVENUE

•
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

7:00 pm

John M. Jameson Construction
Foundations, Ground Water Management, and More
IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH