

Leadership fund to honor Naomi Schiff

By Valerie Garry, OHA president

Naomi Schiff's exemplary leadership is known to just about everyone in Oakland. For many years, she has been the voice, the face—as well as the “eyes and ears”—of OHA at Planning Commission meetings, Landmark Preservation Advisory Board meetings, at countless public forums and other public meetings too numerous to mention. She steadfastly continues to advocate the protection of Oakland's cultural, architectural and historic resources.

Naomi knows her way around City Hall blindfolded and keeps Oakland's planners, politicians, and community at large ever aware of our goals and objectives—all done with exceptional grace, humor, tact and political acumen.

Two years ago, she was recognized as Oakland's “Mother of the Year”—a title that hardly begins to acknowledge her skill and stamina at balancing a busy professional career, volunteer leadership, and role as a parent. When she began her involvement with the Oakland Heritage Alliance she had a baby; today her second baby has gone off to college. That's commitment!

Naomi served as the OHA Board president for the last three years with unfailing good humor, dedication and leadership. Last spring, at a party given in her honor, her service was recognized, and well-deserved praise heaped



Erika Mailman

WEARING A CROWN OF THE OAKLAND SKYLINE, Naomi Schiff prepares to cut OHA cakes at a party honoring her and her service. At left, daughter Zina and husband Randall Goodall chat, while at right is cohort and former OHA president, Annalee Allen.

upon her, by a host of friends and colleagues who have admired her leadership over the years.

At the meeting, I had the pleasant duty to announce to the assembled guests that in her honor, the Oakland Heritage Alliance was starting a Naomi Schiff Leadership Fund that will be devoted to strengthening our role and capabilities as preservation leaders in Oakland.

Gifts to the Naomi Schiff Leadership Fund will help support OHA efforts to address critical preservation issues in Oakland, to be heard by government officials and businesses, and to plan future programs. Our priorities include:

- Educational outreach to adults and children in the Oakland area, to build awareness, appreciation, and protection of Oakland's cultural and historic resources;

- Programs that recognize outstanding achievements in historic preservation in Oakland and honor Oakland citizens, organizations, projects, and programs whose works demonstrate a commitment to excellence in historic preservation;

- Walking and house tours of Oakland's neighborhoods and cultural landmarks;

- Collaborative efforts with like-minded organizations in the Bay Area;

- Technological capabilities that enable us to reach and serve a greater number of Oakland residents through the internet;

- Expansion of our membership and volunteer base to strengthen our outreach; and

- Expansion of funding base to increase our capability to deliver programs. ■

Don't miss our San Antonio house tour! OHA proudly presents an October tour of one of the city's oldest areas, on Sunday, Oct. 28. See article inside. We are still seeking volunteer docents; work a two-hour shift and receive a free ticket. For reservations or more information on volunteering, call 763-9218.



House tour highlights San Antonio's architectural legacy



Both photos: Oakland History Room

OAKLAND'S FIRST PORT, top left, was the foot of 13th Avenue, where the Peraltas shipped cattle hides and other goods. At top right is a more modern view of San Antonio, at E. 12th Street near 22nd Avenue.

By Kathryn Hughes

Oakland's San Antonio neighborhood, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, contains some of the finest examples of Victorian architecture in the Bay Area, a veritable architectural museum spread throughout the district. On October 28, from 1 to 5:30 p.m., the Oakland Heritage Alliance will showcase 10 examples of the neighborhood's unique and outstanding architecture. The house tour will offer the opportunity to appreciate and evaluate Oakland's unique Victorian legacy, as well as the characteristics and impacts of later housing styles. Tour houses include stucco bungalows and

craftsmen hideaways, in addition to major Victorian architectural statements by architects such as Newsom and Nelson and Albert Farr.

The history of Oakland is one of layered, diversified, and changing land uses, as a succession of residents have discovered the many advantages of living here. Nowhere in Oakland is that history better reflected than in the San Antonio District, the area originally defined by 14th Avenue to the East, Fruitvale Avenue to the West, the MacArthur Freeway to the North and the Estuary to the South.

The historic settlement of this area traces its roots to the Ohlone Indian settlement at the foot of 13th Avenue as far back as 1,200 BC. That same location was favored by the Mexican rancho family the Peraltas in the 1800s, who traded hides here.

San Antonio Park, located in the San Antonio District, and Antonio Peralta's hacienda, located in the Peralta Hacienda Park in today's Fruitvale District, were once both activity hubs within the rancho, and were surrounded by rolling pasture lands. As part of the tour, Antonio Peralta's hacienda, a national landmark, will be open for visitors.

The land use changes began when Yankee entrepreneur James Larue built a wharf at the foot of 13th Avenue. In the mid-1800s, he also subdivided the Antonio Peralta land grant holdings, creating today's San Antonio District.

By the mid-to-late 1800s, the San Antonio District witnessed an explosion of notable Victorian architecture as people began to eye the East Bay as a less expensive place to live than San Francisco, with the advantages of spacious lots, access to local transit, a favorable climate, and easily cultivated soils.

San Antonio and Brooklyn, its neighboring district to the west (which incorporated San Antonio in the mid-1800s), were home to several prominent writers. Jack London and Gertrude Stein, two of the most influential fiction writers of the twentieth century, both lived in the neighborhood at one time. A strong sense of place provided inspiration for both these writers: for Jack London, the waterfront; for Gertrude Stein, the restful hills and sunsets.

San Antonio also attracted gardeners, horticulturists, and landscapers, lured by

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Report from the Preservation Action Committee

Oak to Ninth judgment to be rendered this autumn

By Naomi Schiff

Here are some of the projects OHA's Preservation Action Committee has been monitoring recently.

St. Joseph's: The committee has met several times with Bridge Housing to discuss the proposed project at International Blvd. and 26th Ave. The project will preserve the historic main building, laundry building, and "smokehouse"—a building which apparently was intended for male smokers, not for meat processing—as well as features of the historic landscape and the brick wall running around the property. Likely to be demolished are a small guardhouse, chicken coop, and garage.

In response to Landmarks Board and OHA comments, the site plan has been revised, sparing the smokehouse building. In addition to the buildings, the old palm trees in front and a huge Norfolk Pine at the rear of the site will remain. The project will preserve the main building as 87 units of senior housing, and in Phase II create up to 80 affordable units for purchase. It will also replace a long-lost grand stair entry at the front of the imposing brick building on International.

Courthouse Athletic Club: In advocating for further study and consideration of the former mortuary on the site of a planned apartment development proposed by Trammell Crow, we were unsuccessful in arguing to preserve the old building at Telegraph near 29th Street. The Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board did indicate dissatisfaction with the alternatives presented by the developer. Among other issues that made this a difficult challenge was the developer's strongly held opinion that the former mortuary use of the building (it was never a courthouse) would make it difficult to sell units even if it could be preserved. However, OHA advocacy and cooperation from city staff will result in a substantial developer contribution to the city's façade improvement program. The developers also made some modifications to the design to better consider neighboring houses. The owners of the much-loved athletic club wanted to



Port of Oakland

THIS 1932 PHOTO SHOWS break-bulk loading operations, with SP train cars on the bay side tracks at Ninth Avenue Terminal.

close their business and retire, and had sold the land.

Ninth Avenue Terminal Reuse Proposal: Reuse proponents Ninth Avenue Terminal Partners have been working on their winery project. A report went to City Council committee on September 25. The proponents are hoping to show feasibility and convince the city council that this preservation alternative would be an enhancement to the overall project, a 3,100-unit condo development sponsored by Oakland Harbor Partners.

Oak to Ninth lawsuits: Oakland Heritage Alliance pro bono attorney Arthur Levy, accompanied by board member Doug Dove, spent the entire day in Superior Court on August 23, before Judge Jo-Lynn Lee. Our CEQA lawsuit, challenging the studies and findings of the cultural resources section as well as other parts of the environmental impact report, was heard in the same proceeding as the suit presented by attorney Brian Gaffney for Joyce Roy and James Vann. The judge expected to release a ruling around the end of September. In particular, Mr. Levy attacked the infeasibility findings, which were based on financial figures never

revealed to the city or to the public, and seismic studies, which appeared to ignore a possibility of liquefaction in some parts of the site. At the same time that the city was defending the EIR's infeasibility finding, which claims that the Ninth Avenue Terminal cannot be reused, Ninth Avenue Terminal Partners was seeking to reuse it (see above)! The enormous legal record was extremely expensive to assemble, and OHA seeks contributions to help defray these and a number of other substantial court expenses. Help by sending your contribution to OHA, attn: 9th Avenue Fund.

Key Building Again!: A new group, SKS Development, has acquired the former Key System Building at 11th and Broadway, as well as the empty lot north of it, just west of the UC Office of the President building. At a September meeting with OHA, the group showed plans for a high-rise office tower of about twenty stories, taller than the one previously proposed, as well as plans for preserving and reusing the Key Building. Special attention is being given to incorporating green features in the new building, and plans call

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2007 Partners in Preservation award winners

By Valerie Garry

Last spring, OHA members and friends gathered at the Chapel of the Chimes to honor 11 projects and many individuals during the 2007 Partners in Preservation Awards program. Projects included residential, commercial, and civic projects that underwent recent exterior and/or interior preservation, restoration, rehabilitation or adaptive use. The awards are intended to encourage organizations and individuals to restore and revitalize Oakland's historic homes, buildings, structures, and neighborhoods and to support sensitive adaptive use. The PIP awards also promote awareness of the city's historical and cultural heritage.

2101–2103 9th Ave.: An 1890s Queen Anne that was slated for demolition to make way for public housing when Mark Daly's parents purchased it in 1964. A wrecking ball stood in the front yard. The house had suffered extensive damage from the 1906 and 1989 earthquakes. It had lost chimneys and moved off its original brick foundation. The Dalys gave it a new roof and painted it, but the really difficult restoration efforts didn't begin until 2003, after Mark inherited it.

Mark added a new foundation, shear walls, and a new roof, and then he began doing the interior remodeling. The turret, which was over an inch per foot out of level, was raised to level and a new steel frame was built to prevent it from collaps-



2101 NINTH AVENUE

ing again, as it had in the 1906 earthquake. The trim had deteriorated so badly that only the finial could be saved. The tower was stripped down to sheathing, sheared, and painstakingly restored down to the smallest detail using photographs and a story pole to match original detail.

Fish scale shingles were hand cut from factory cedar shakes, and missing details were carved on site.

The porch was carefully disassembled, reframed, and carefully reassembled. Two of the three original stained glass windows were fully restored, and Mark recreated the porch detail, lost in the 1906 earthquake. Mark repainted the house to match

its original 1890 colors, discovered when the previous paint layers were scraped off.

Original siding was removed, restored, and re-installed on the north and east sides of the house. New siding, custom milled to match the existing beaded siding, was installed on the south and west sides. New sills, water table and apron were also custom milled and reinstalled using salvaged material.

Kaiser House, 664 Haddon Road: Renowned local architect William Schirmer designed this Italian Renaissance revival house for Henry Kaiser. It was built circa 1925.

Henry Kaiser was, of course, one of the United State's most important and bold entrepreneurs: the father of American shipbuilding, and famous for the dams, highways, and healthcare system he developed. The house projects a kind of strength befitting him. A monumental symmetrical staircase leads up to the house and is one of its most character-defining features.

After Marlies and Jay Patterson bought the house a few years ago, they discovered that this grand staircase was structurally unsound due to water damage, settling, dry rot, fungus and termites. Interior restoration and renovation had to wait while these structural deficits were addressed. The damaged balustrades created a safety hazard. In addition, the foundation of the house was also severely deteriorated and ventilation and drainage systems needed to be installed.

The metal French doors leading to the south garden needed to be replaced because of water damage and settling. Three-quarters of the original foundation was replaced and brought up to code with a combination of T-footings and piers and grade beams. The house was seismically strengthened and leveled (it was out of plumb approximately 7 inches from north to south). New ventilation wells were constructed around the base of the house and at the new grand staircase.

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for a sensitive rehab of the old one. The new plan calls for aligning floor heights between the two, and making a distinction between old and new at the ground level. The developers hope that the site, with its excellent access to transit, will help them land a sizable tenant and move forward quickly. OHA members expressed cautious optimism, after the several previous attempts at this site, and the hope that the Key Building can be seismically improved before another large earthquake occurs.

Floral Depot Getting a Facelift: In August, passersby were treated to the sight of replacement deco window frames being installed where a huge mid-century Western Union sign once hung, midblock on 19th between Telegraph and Broadway. An upscale restaurant is planned for the Telegraph corner, where tile repairs are using materials from the original manufacturer, Gladding-McBean. After a quarter-century of alarming OHA newsletter articles, it seems that the building may finally get its due! Together with the redo of the Oakland Fox Theater, the corner is poised for a comeback. ■



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The dry-rotted framing supporting the grand staircase was replaced with pressure-treated lumber. Using the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, original balusters were repaired where possible, and recreated from cast concrete where necessary. The finish slab for the staircase was recreated following the original scoring pattern, and the integrally-colored concrete also matches the original color as closely as possible.

The framing below the slab is now protected with layer of modified bitumen, drainage mats, and metal flashing to prevent moisture penetration. The French door was replaced with a wood door and divided sidelights more in keeping with the period of the house and its existing doors and windows. A concrete patio was constructed to match the landings on the main staircase.

The staircase and foundation reconstruction was completed in January 2007 and provides the structural strength to assure that this important landmark may last well into the future.

Holland-Canning House, 954 16th St.: Located in the Oak Center Historic District, this is a handsome Italianate style home built around 1879. It has only had five owners in its lifetime. Although the residence has beautiful details and a striking elevation, it suffered from many years of deferred maintenance before the current owners, Pamela and Michael Kirby, set out to restore it. They have replaced the metal roofs with copper and stripped, caulked, filled, sanded, and painted every surface of the house. And the work continues. Landscaping will be installed once the painting is complete.

As the owners have said, "We are pleased to have provided the efforts to preserve this example for our neighborhood and future generations."

1432 Linden St.: For more than 15 years, this property stood vacant. Once a single family residence, the 1890 period Queen Anne had been divided into three rental units. Previous owners had attempted to restore the property, but ran out of funds.



THE ALTENHEIM senior residence in the Dimond District.

So the building remained as it had been when the money ran out—stripped down to its studs, in need of plumbing, electrical, new floor plans—everything except a foundation.

Bill Ganci and his partner purchased the property a few years ago with the intention of fully restoring it, adding an additional unit (to bring it to four units) and converting the units to condominiums. After 2 ½ years, they have now completed the work. By converting the units to condominiums, they have taken an empty eyesore and provided an opportunity for home ownership while honoring its architectural period and beauty.

Altheim Senior Housing Phase I: The Altheim, which means "Elders Home" in German, was founded in the 1890s. It is closely tied to the beginnings of the Dimond District, where German immigrants settled in the mid-nineteenth century. A fire destroyed the original building in 1908. The present-day Colonial Revival-style buildings replaced it and date from around 1910. But the buildings closed down in 2002 when the facility became too expensive to operate.

After two years of negotiation between Citizens Housing, the Altheim, the neighborhood, and the city of Oakland, all the parties agreed to a development plan

that would restore and renovate the existing structures, as well as new compatible structures. The rehabilitation project began in November 2005 and was completed in December 2006. The project was monitored throughout to ensure compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings.

The Altheim, rated "A" by the city of Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, will keep its character-defining features, including expansive gardens, and continue the original use of the buildings as senior housing. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in January 2007.

COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS:
2801–2829 Broadway Bldg.: Located at a focal point of Oakland's Auto Row, the 1915 flat-iron shaped building at 2801–2829 Broadway had stood vacant and deteriorating until Steve Simi, a longtime Oakland businessman, leader of the Broadway Auto Row movement, and supporter of architectural preservation, purchased it in 2000. Simi embarked on a three-year plan to restore the building façade and interior while upgrading the building structure to meet current seismic code requirements.

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Grand stairs, shiny bricks, weird schemes and more

Here's the place to get the latest gossip on Oakland's historic front. Around the Town is compiled by our crack newswoman Hildy Johnson.

■ **Ex-mayor at Cox with Phil of the Fox:** In his ex-capacity as mayor, Jerry Brown was rubbing elbows with Phil Tagami at the grand opening of Whole Foods on Bay Place. If your memory fails like mine, you won't remember (unless you go back and read our 26 years of newsletters), that the building was once the power station of the Oakland Railway Co. and later became the Cox Cadillac showroom for selling, you know, those things they use to make in Motown called cars. Why, if it wasn't for our acute sense of humility, we would brag about saving the building. Ay, there's the rub. We do the dirty work, and everyone else gets the glory. Ah, Jerry. Unfortunately, his 10K plan just lost two, as he and his wife are moving to the Oakland hills.

■ **The Angkor Wat of Oakland?:** Did you know that the same celebrated landscape architect Howard Gilkey who designed the 1923 Cleveland Cascade is the guy who brought us the now rather neglected grand stairway at the historic entry to Highland Hospital? Did he have a thing about stairs? As a huge hospital construction plan gets underway, neighbors and preservationists will be stalking the jungle to see if there is a way to bring back what remains of a fabulous period in publicly-financed landscape aesthetics.

■ **Bragging rights:** Isn't the Fox Theater beautiful? The bricks were just cleaned and they sparkle ever so brightly. Does anyone remember that fateful day when OHA's Bob Brokl conducted a tour through the theater and found mushrooms growing on the ceiling? Why, if it wasn't for Bob's strong lungs complaining about the amorous fungi, the theater might never have been saved. But we are too humble to brag about such things.

■ **Bizarro:** Is it just me, or does our City Council endorse the weirdest schemes presented to them? Like ice skating rinks, sports franchises and the Wayans Brothers amusement park at the old Army Base? I guess it hasn't gotten too much press that the Brothers stiffed the local consultants they hired and the locals had to get City Hall to pay them out of the "good faith" money the Wayans Brothers put up. Unfortunately, it's not enough to cover all the bills. Can the City Council, for once, endorse something that actually makes money?

■ **On the other side of town:** While the real estate sizzle has fizzled, Uptown is actually coming together. The gigantic Forest City project adjacent to the Fox continues its momentum towards completion, and construction is finishing up at Broadway and Grand. However, the City Walk project is



HIGHLAND HOSPITAL'S BIG STAIRS

strangely silent and the building is nowhere near completion. It's not going to be a pretty picture if it sits like that in limbo.

■ **Happy Birthday to:** Holy Names College, 140; BART, 35; Heinold's First and Last Chance Saloon, 124. Carol Brookman, the saloon's proprietress, welcomes all OHA members to linger. Tell her Hildy sent you for a shot and chaser.

■ **Idle chatter:** It is not true that OHA will be conducting Oct. 28's house tour on the Internet in Second Life. Geez, you guys are lazy! And yes, you will have to get off your backsides and walk around.

■ **Exempt thyself:** Starting this winter, you can apply for Mills Act contracts for a property tax exemption in return for making doing restoration work on your buildings. (It works out that it benefits more recent purchasers more than people who have owned for decades.)

■ **Tiny doctors:** What's with Children's Hospital knocking down some perfectly nice and somewhat historic residences for their expansion? And how did those kids get to be doctors anyway? ■

Calendar

The OHA calendar lists events, activities and meetings related to history and preservation that may be of interest to our members. To submit items, call 763-9218 or e-mail oakland-heritage@california.com. All phone numbers in 510 area code unless indicated.

EVENTS

Oct. 25: OPENING EVENT OF OUR EXCITING AND INFORMATIVE LECTURE SERIES! Award-winning Victorian restoration expert Christopher Yerke is a San Francisco-based general contractor and woodworker with 20 years of trade and craft experience. Yerke's extensive hands-on knowledge

and eclectic range of art and architectural passions promise to make this evening an inspiring introduction to our 2007 house tour. 7:30 p.m. at Chapel of the Chimes, 4499 Piedmont Ave., Oakland.

Oct. 28: OAKLAND HERITAGE ALLIANCE'S FALL HOUSE TOUR OF THE SAN ANTONIO NEIGHBORHOOD:

See page 2 of this newsletter! Volunteers are still being sought: earn a free ticket by volunteering for two hours at the event. Or just come and enjoy the tour as a guest. Call 763-9218 for more information.

Oct. 31: Uptown walking tour. Make Halloween special by taking a walking tour of the Uptown District with an emphasis on Art Deco. Tour includes the Paramount Theatre, Historic Sweet's Ballroom, the Fox Theater (restoration underway), and the Kaiser Center roof garden with views of Lake Merritt. Tour begins at 10

a.m. in front of the Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway. Parking available at Telegraph Plaza Garage, Telegraph Avenue between 21st and 22nd streets. To reserve, please call (510) 238-3234 or e-mail aallen@oaklandnet.com, and be sure to state you would like to reserve Tour 3 for Oct. 31. The Oakland City Tours program offers ongoing free tours of City Center, Old Oakland, Chinatown, the Waterfront and many other areas. To learn more, visit www.oaklandnet.com and click on "Visiting Oakland." You may also call the tours hotline at 238-3234.

TOURS AND EXHIBITS:

African-American Museum and Library is open in its renovated home, the historic Charles Greene Library at 659 14th St. Hours are Tues. through Sat., noon to 5:30 p.m. 637-0200 or www.oaklandlibrary.org.



Landmarks Board summaries

By Naomi Schiff

■ **Jan. 29, 2007:** Board members heard a presentation about the **Pardee Home Museum** by museum director David Nicolai.

Board chair Parish thanked Pamela Kershaw upon her final meeting as a member.

After presentation about the Mandela Grand Mixed Use proposal, which includes a 300-foot-high building and some proposed partial reuse of historic elements, board members agreed (with two abstentions) to upgrade the historic rating of the **Pacific Pipe Building**, for environmental review purposes.

Chris Pattillo of PGA Design and Friends of the Cleveland Cascade reported on the proposed rehabilitation of the **Cleveland Cascade** and showed design options. Board moved to approve, and concurred with a CEQA exemption for restoration of a historic resource.

Secretary Pavlinec reported that City Council passed the two-year **Mills Act** pilot program, which will allow property tax incentives for rehabilitating historic structures.

■ **March 12, 2007:** OHA member Madeline Wells appeared during Open Forum to urge the board to take action to save the **Courthouse Athletic Club**.

The board heard a presentation about Phase II of the **Altenheim** project, senior housing in historic buildings, by Citizens Housing. Board unanimously recommended approval by Planning Commission, as altered to save more landscaping and remain compatible with the historic design.

Board unanimously passed a motion to recommend designating **1815 Leimert Blvd.**, an Art Deco-style residence, as a Heritage Property.

■ **April 9, 2007:** At Open Forum, Jill Kuper presented information about a reuse of the **YWCA Building** at 15th and Webster as a charter school.

Ninth Avenue Terminal Partners presented their proposal to reuse the older 1930 portion of **Ninth Avenue Terminal** as a Vintner's Hall (approximately 90,000 square feet). Numerous citizens spoke to support the proposal. Motion unanimously passed to forward a recommendation to review bodies, and recommending assuring maximum access to the building, doing an interpretive

program, and investigating using the whole structure (180,000 square feet).

Board presented resolution of appreciation to Barbara Armstrong, thanking her for her dedicated service as she retires from board.

Rosemary Muller presented on landmark **Heinold's First & Last Chance Saloon**.

A lengthy discussion ensued upon presentation of revised designs for the **Courthouse Athletic Club** site, 2935 Telegraph Avenue. After much procedural confusion, the board forwarded design review comments, and declined to make a finding supporting demolition of the historic structure on the site.

■ **May 14, 2007:** An informative presenta-

tion on **Camron-Stanford House** by Frankie Rhodes of the home's Board of Directors.

An EIR Scoping Session about **St. Joseph's Professional Center**, 2647 International Blvd., resulted in a subcommittee to work on the design with the proponents, Bridge Housing. Directors discussed alternatives that might save some ancillary buildings. Comments addressed the view of the site from 12th Street and from passing BART trains.

Edoff Memorial Bandstand must improve access under ADA. Anne Woodell presented concern that historic integrity and beauty will be affected by proposed ramp configuration. Long discussion resulted in motion to recommend alternate design, with staff review. ■

House Tour

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the area's beneficial climate and spacious lots. These were powerful inducements when compared to San Francisco's foggy climate, constricted lots, and sandy soils. San Antonio's Victorian houses were sited so as to take advantage of light and romantic hilly views. Remnants of its horticultural past may still be seen.

Today, the neighborhood continues to be in flux. New residents are investing in the restoration of old houses and actively working to preserve the history of this area. Some point to the devastating effects of thoughtless urban development projects. Other residents advocate more low-income housing and are focused on growing local jobs and the economy.

Many of the existing housing projects were approved and built some time ago and

reflect ineffectual and destructive zoning practices. One-of-a-kind houses are jammed up against low-cost housing projects, radically altering the streetscapes, scale and proportion of buildings, as well as destroying the original historic fabric of the neighborhood. Insensitive infill construction detracts from the historic character of the streets and older homes are stripped of their original features—doors, windows, trim—to make way for inappropriate siding. There is a real sense of urgency some feel about the remaining historic resources, which they hope to preserve.

The issues that San Antonio faces are also being played out in neighborhoods throughout Oakland, as zoning and concern about quality of life come into conflict. The San Antonio District House Tour offers a unique opportunity to study this impact in one of our most historic neighborhoods and to consider solutions that will balance the needs of all. ■

OHA is grateful for the generous support of its members.

Donations made between November 2006 and September 2007:

Valerie Garry, Naomi Schiff, Ruth Peyton, Chris Pattillo, Alison Finlay, Joan Dark, Doug Dove, Kay Kohler, Mark Lempert, Sandra & Bill Threlfall, Gary Knecht & Squeak Carnwath, Cynthia Shartzter, Andrew & Billie Wiesenthal, Ann Steppan, Terry & Janice Foutz, Sandra Tillin, Ray Meilana, Richard & Carol Nitz, Leslie Freudenheim, Sarah Shaver, Lesley Johnson-Gelb, Jeff Norman & Kathy Geritz, Melanie Archer, Margaret Elizares, Tim Hallahan, . Ellen M. Wood, Helen Knopp, Jo Anne Baca, Charles Schwab Foundation-Anonymous Donor (2), Matthew & Jane Gabel, Debbie Martin, John Tuttle & Doug Drummond, and Anita Pender



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The southerly point and “tower” of the building were determined to be structurally unsafe and were completely rebuilt to replicate the existing structure. Using original drawings from 1915, missing or damaged exterior ornamentation was replicated and replaced on the façade. New window and window frames were custom designed and fabricated to match the existing openings.

With the help of the city of Oakland Community Development office, the Oakland Heritage Alliance and design professionals, Simi rescued the building from further deterioration and restored a landmark building in a highly visible location.

Uptown Arts Building: Known as the Uptown Arts Building, this historic Beaux Arts style commercial building is located next to Latham Square on Telegraph Avenue at 17th Street. Until recently, the original and beautiful terra cotta façade was hidden behind a 1960s two-story stucco façade.

The building had suffered 50 years of neglect and looked lifeless with its broken windows, rusting fire escape, peeling paint and sliding aluminum windows. It was also seismically unsafe and in need of a substantial upgrade.

The owners who purchased it in 2005 decided to take on the challenge of restoring the historic façade. Working with local contractors, architects, engineers, and restoration specialists, they emphasized the importance of restoring the building to the Beaux Arts style that architect John J. Donovan had created over 80 years ago. Their goal was to restore the building to its 1924 appearance, when it was known as the D.J. Sullivan Building.

The newly-restored Uptown Arts Building contributes to the renaissance of Oakland’s Uptown District. The National Register of Historic Places has identified this building as a historic district contributor in downtown Oakland and it is recognized as a “particularly fine example of the high base loft style common in downtown Oakland in the 1920s.”

Historic Hanifin Block, 1901–1915 San Pablo Ave.: The historic Hanifin Block was built around 1878–79 by Jeremiah H. Hanifin, an Irish immigrant who owned a hotel, saloons, and wholesale liquor businesses. Hanifin went on to become a prosperous and prominent citizen in Oakland and a man of wide influence. He served on the Alameda County Board of supervisors, was one of the founders of the St. Francis de Sales Roman Catholic Parish, and helped organize the Oakland Chamber of Commerce. The Hanifin Block is consid-

ered an especially fine Italianate style business block, distinguished by its opulent ornamentation and varied projecting bays which characterize its style. It is considered individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Like so many of Oakland’s commercial buildings, the Hanifin Block had become woefully dilapidated and blighted before Oakland businessman Mo Mashoon set out to rehabilitate it. The one-and-a-half year, \$2.5 million project has restored this handsome Italianate-style building to its original appearance and contributed to the ongoing revitalization of San Pablo Avenue.

Greyhound Station, 2103 San Pablo Ave.: In 2005, the Greyhound Company decided to replace the false ceiling of its central waiting room. As the ceiling was being removed, passengers and others were able to get a peek at the historic dome that had been hidden. They contacted the station manager and wrote letters to company headquarters in Dallas, asking that the dome be left exposed. Fortunately, the company agreed.

The station was designed by the firm of Swartz and Ryland and opened in 1926. Originally known as the Union Stage Depot, it was one of the most technologically advanced bus stations of its time. Its waiting room, with its 38-foot-high octagonal domed ceiling, was considered to be one of the most beautiful in the country.

But change happens, and at some point over the years, the dome was covered by a false ceiling. The station’s original classical façade also disappeared. While the Greyhound Company did not commit to a full restoration of the interior, it did agree to expose and repaint the dome, repaint other interior walls and accent the dome with new lighting.

INDIVIDUAL:

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT Daniel Brekke, Parent Volunteer, Oakland Technical High School: Oakland Technical High School is located on 13 acres in the Temescal neighborhood. The main building, built in 1915, was designed by architect John J. Donovan.

In 2004, plans were taking shape to do necessary “modernization” projects. Dur-



THE HISTORIC HANIFIN BLOCK on San Pablo Avenue

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ing renovation efforts 25 years ago, valuable and original architectural elements had been removed and the Oakland landmark had not been handled kindly. Alert faculty and a number of parents urged that the historic building be treated respectfully and preserved during modernization. So, it came as a bit of a shock when OHA received a message from Dan Brekke, a parent volunteer, saying that the modernization plans called for a massive investment in aluminum-frame windows to replace all of the original wood windows—550 nine-foot-tall double-hung windows (1,100 frames)!

Brekke served as the point person in countless uncomfortable and occasionally combative meetings, combining persistence with technical know-how and perseverance. Others helped too. Joann Pavlinec of the city of Oakland sent a letter to the school district, explaining the importance of the windows in maintaining the historic character of the elegant building, and pointing out that historic buildings are within the oversight of State Historic Preservation Office. That office confirmed that it commonly reviews projects at historic school buildings and would be a party to any environmental review that might be required.

Bill Essert of Wooden Window, Inc. volunteered to help, and he and Brekke walked through the building to assess the condition of every window. The good news was that most of its windows, built of 100-year-old wood, were in remarkably good shape, and only a small percentage required replacement parts.

Eventually all the project participants agreed that refurbishing the wooden windows was the right way to go. In addition, classrooms were painted, new lighting installed, and electrical work upgraded. All restrooms are being upgraded. New science labs were built and the exterior of the school has been repainted.

Brekke was the community voice that ensured that this architectural gem was preserved. For three years, he attended weekly meetings, kept the parents and community informed regarding the status of the project,



THE DOME OF THE GREYHOUND STATION, exposed once again.

and brought their input to the table. As a watchdog for the \$28,000,000 project, he took copious notes, kept everyone informed, and held project managers accountable for their work.

Brekke was able to mobilize preservation experts in the city at appropriate times in the three-year project to gather the input necessary to adhere to preservation guidelines. As Sheilagh Andujar, Principal of Oakland Tech, put it, “Daniel’s persistence as a parent volunteer, community mobilizer, and preservationist, as well as his love of Oakland, is why this treasure shines at 4351 Broadway.”

Lake Merritt Pergola and Colonnade: The Lake Merritt Pergola and Colonnade was designed by architect Walter Reed and constructed in 1913 at a cost of \$17,500.

The construction was part of a package of improvements for Lake Merritt instituted by Mayor Frank K. Mott, starting in 1908.

The Pergola renovation was the first of many projects around Lake Merritt funded by the \$198 million Measure DD Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks bond issue, approved by voters in 2002.

After a thorough condition assessment, it was determined that the historic Pergola needed some structural work and re-roofing. The architect recommendations also includ-

ed seismic strengthening, replacement of the roof membrane, flashing, broken roof tiles, and rotten wood members, and painting.

The goal was to restore and preserve the historic structure. The project team included local architectural team of Muller & Caulfield, and Bay Construction, also of Oakland.

On March 3, the city celebrated the completion of this work at a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

OHA will soon be putting out requests for nominations for the 2008 PIP awards. Information on how to nominate projects will be forthcoming later this fall. ■

Welcome to our new members!

J. Mount Joy, Mary & Robert Klinger, Nick Fox, Waverly Lowell & Robin Chandler, Ronile Lahti, David Cohen, Maryanne Wilson, Omega Too, Michael Foster, Steven Shum, Neil Bason & Jenny Gautier, Shirley McManus, Steve Canada, Judis Santos, Howard Neal, Noelle Pilat, Elizabeth Seaton, Christopher Renz, Aparna Ewing, Juliet Carr, Wally Ransom, Mike Albers, Charlene Thoryk, Jennie A. Flanigan, Lena Simning, Dr. Ann-si Li, Teresa Demchak, Scott & Thayer Lund, Sharyl Larson, Joyce Hendy



2007 walking tours still draw a crowd



Joan Dark

JUST OUTSIDE THE GATES, the tour pauses to hear about the history of Mountain View Cemetery. Each summer, OHA's walking tours draw together a great group of residents determined to learn more about their city.

OHA members invited to oral history conference

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

The Oral History Association will be holding its 41st annual meeting in Oakland October 24 through 28 at the City Center Marriott. This year's conference theme is "The Revolutionary Ideal: Transforming Community through Oral History."

Conference organizers are opening some events to the general community. Local conference organizer Nancy Mackay of Mills College has expressed the hope that Oakland Heritage Alliance members will be interested in attending them. The plenary session at the Oakland Museum, "The Next Generation of Oral Historians," is open to the public. Non-members can register for the conference or for individual workshops by paying the registration fees.

Complete conference information and registration forms can be found at: <http://alpha.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/pdf/2007finalprogram.pdf>. ■

Success story: Whole Foods opens in historic cable car barn, after years of blight

By Naomi Schiff

Customers roamed the aisles as a shiny new store opened its doors on September 26, where once Cadillacs pulled in for repair. Many years of neighborhood and OHA advocacy, at least three environmental impact reports, the demise of several earlier proposals, and a damaging blaze, are all finally in the past. The new store retains the former auto showroom, a building visible in early photos of the Piedmont Baths. Its interesting industrial metal trusses are still visible as one looks up at the exposed roof structure. The rear buildings were demolished and the building extended to make space for the huge store and its rooftop parking.

After decades of blight and vandalism, neighbors were gratified to see the street frontage awaken on the prominent corner at Bay Place and Harrison. The project appears to bear out what preservation advocates hoped, which

was that reusing the old footprint would help create an active pedestrian-oriented corner.

A few touches inside provide some historic context: while the flooring could not be saved, a reminiscent pattern of floor tile is used in some areas. There are a few interpretive signs and Oakland-centric elements, and at the eastern entrance you can see a photo of the old cable equipment. The historic facade remains entirely recognizable, even with the new tables and chairs out front. ■



Oakland History Room

In a 1913 photo, the long-gone Piedmont Baths is at right. At left you can see part of the cable car building that now houses Whole Foods. In a salute to the old, two new palm trees have been planted in front.

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A year filled with accomplishments

By Valerie Garry

In the words of Yogi Berra, “If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll wind up somewhere else.” Since being elected OHA Board president last January, I have tried to apply that inimitable logic to my position and do my best to steer OHA in the right direction—towards its mission—so we don’t end up somewhere else. Along the way I have come to appreciate the contributions of all those with whom I currently work. The OHA Board of Directors is as energetic and dedicated a group as one could hope to find in a volunteer-driven organization, and the programs that OHA delivers are certainly a testament to the board’s and our volunteers’ efforts.

We’ve done a remarkable amount of work this past year. We’ve engaged in a lengthy legal battle to save the Ninth Avenue Terminal, one of the last remaining maritime buildings in Oakland. Luckily we’ve had the benefit of outstanding pro bono legal counsel from Arthur Levy. The outcome remains to be seen but we all agree that this is a battle worth waging.

We’ve watched as another structure involved in a preservation battle, the Cox

Cadillac building, has been adapted and expanded to become Whole Foods. And yes, we often are parrying the best-laid plans of developers who don’t always share our vision for Oakland as a place with a past worth saving. We pushed for the Mills Act program in Oakland. This past spring, we celebrated the preservation efforts of Oakland residents when we recognized eleven remarkable restoration projects and a host of individuals during our annual Partners in Preservation Awards Event. And we were honored by the State Historic Resources Commission for our continuing efforts.

In July, August and September, thanks to the hard work of our Walking Tour committee led by board member Alison Finley, OHA expanded its ever-popular summer walking tours. Meanwhile, the House Tour committee, led by board members Michael Crowe and Kathryn Hughes, is planning a wonderful tour of the historic San Antonio neighborhood, which you won’t want to miss.

We began a new and exciting lecture series this year—the Second Thursdays at Chapel of the Chimes lecture program—organized by another board member, Steve Vigeant,

who pulled it all together with good humor and dedication. Our second season begins this month.

Naomi Schiff and Joyce Roy, seasoned preservation advocates and board members, spend countless hours attending meetings of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, the Planning Commission, and City Council. They keep close tabs on important planning decisions at City Hall and help assure that Oakland residents have a say about the future of our city. Those of us who happen to love old buildings and Oakland history can all sleep a little easier knowing they are keeping close watch.

Joan Dark, Doug Dove, and Dea Bacchetti—three of our newer board members—can always be counted on for help, guidance, wisdom, good humor and good sense and contribute their time and talents in many ways. Chela Zitani, our administrative director, keeps us organized. Thanks to her efficiency, our membership levels have been growing steadily. Our part-time bookkeeper, Jim Helt, keeps the books and makes sure our accounts are in good order. I hope that the organization continues to grow, in memberships and in financial health, and invite you to join us. If you would like to flex your leadership skills and serve on the board, please let me know! ■

CONTRIBUTORS: Joan Dark, Kathleen DiGiovanni, Kevin Flynn, Valerie Garry, Kathryn Hughes, Allyson Quibell, Joyce Roy, Naomi Schiff, Chela Zitani

PRODUCTION: Erika Mailman

OHA News welcomes contributions: research projects large or small, historic photos and reports on preservation issues or events. Send to news@oaklandheritage.org.

MISSION STATEMENT: OHA is a nonprofit membership organization which advocates the protection, preservation and revitalization of Oakland’s architectural, historic, cultural and natural resources through publications, education, and direct action.

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Sign me up, or enter a gift membership! Membership benefits include our newsletter, e-bulletins, advance notice and discounted pricing on programs, events, and tours.

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Greek presence 90 years & counting

By Kathleen Leles DiGiovanni

In December, Oakland's Greek community celebrates its 90th birthday. Festivities are in the works at the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Ascension on Lincoln Avenue.

The story began in 1916 when a small group of Greek immigrants started gathering to worship in the Native Sons of the Golden West Hall at 11th and Clay streets. A priest would come over on the ferry from San Francisco's Holy Trinity Church and set up a makeshift altar. On Feb. 17, 1917, around 30 families and an equal number of single men incorporated as the Hellenic Community of Oakland and Vicinity. This constituted the oldest Greek Orthodox congregation in the East Bay and the second oldest in California. They bought two lots on Brush Street at 10th on the edge of West Oakland, a site chosen because congregants could walk there from their homes. Shortly thereafter, they secured a bank loan and architect Clay N. Burrell to design a church structure on half the property.

The Greek Orthodox Church of the Assumption was dedicated on May 22, 1921, by Archbishop Meletios Metaxikis. Another building, Koraeas Hall, was built in 1933 to house religious and cultural classes and to provide a venue for the community's many social activities.

By the 1930s, the community had begun to outgrow its two buildings on Brush Street, and the congregation was spreading beyond West Oakland. A new site was acquired at

Fairmount Avenue and 29th Street but was soon deemed to be too small. Another property was secured, a city block at 12th Avenue and East 19th Street, and later sold. In 1958, the church's current site at 4700 Lincoln Ave. was purchased. Construction began in 1959.

After decades of baptisms, weddings, and funerals, the last Greek Orthodox service to be held at the old church was a liturgy on August 15, 1960, the Assumption, the church's feast day. According to members of the Ascension Historical Society, the old church had already been sold, but the new one on Lincoln Avenue was not yet ready. The congregation, once again itinerant, worshipped in the Lakeside Park Garden Center until the new church—named the Church of the Ascension—was dedicated in December.

The old church continued to be used as a house of worship, a "revolving door of denominations—Baptist, then Power of God Deliverance, then back to Baptist," according to the *Oakland Tribune*. By the mid-1970s, the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) owned the site, which stood in the path of the downtown extension of the Grove-Shafter Freeway and was slated for demolition.

Ascension parishioner Mary Mousalimas sprang into action, organizing the Committee to Save the Brush Street Church. Through her vigorous activity and by enlisting the help of then-State Senator Nick Petris, himself a member of the church and its former presi-



Ascension Historical Society

THE BRUSH STREET CHURCH, now situated on Castro Street.

dent, the former Church of the Assumption was saved from destruction when it was designated a city landmark in 1977. The following year, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of its architectural significance as "the clearest example of the Neo-Greek style within the category of Beaux-Arts classicism," according to Oakland Landmarks Board Resolution 1977-4, as well as its cultural significance.

It took another three years to find a new site for the old church. The 470-ton structure was put on jacks and rollers by the R. Trost Company and moved to its present location at 912 Castro on June 30, 1980. CalTrans paid nearly a quarter of a million dollars to move the building a little over a block. In 1981, the Corinthian Baptist Church bought the relocated church from CalTrans for \$31,000 and began holding services there the next year, ensuring its continued existence as a center for religious and community life in Oakland. ■



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