



Oakland History Room

Completed in 1915 after 10 years of construction, the Claremont is the legacy of transportation and real estate magnate F. M. "Borax" Smith and architect Charles W. Dickey. New owner, KSL Recreation Corp., wants to expand the property in ways that will threaten the appearance and setting of the hotel.

Saving Oakland's treasures

The Boom has finally hit Oakland! This last year has seen work begin on long-shuttered department stores and earthquake-damaged high-rises vacant since the last Big One.

Those fleeing San Francisco and elsewhere with sticker shock are learning that living and owning in Oakland can be a very good thing. As preservationists we're delighted.

We were here for the lean years and we want to help harness the strong new forces buffeting Oakland in ways that benefit all of us and leave an Oakland of which we can be proud.

To that end, OHA announced the release of its Fourth Annual Most Endangered List at a press conference July 12 at the Sears Roebuck Co. Building, 2633 Telegraph Ave.

The Sears Building, vacant since 1993, symbolizes the ongoing Oakland revival. Restored to its original Art Deco appearance, the store will be used for housing and retail. Its resurrection will surely be an important catalyst for the surrounding neighborhood as well.

Meanwhile, the year's most important legal victory was rejection of the EIR on the City Lofts Project in the Waterfront Warehouse District, removing a threat to placement of the district on the National Register of Historic Places.

Though these positive developments occur in the face of ongoing battles over the Montgomery Ward Building in the Fruitvale District and the Fire Alarm Building at Lake Merritt, a hopeful sign for the success of our efforts to encourage thoughtful development in Oakland

is the alignment of national, state, and local preservation groups who signed on to amicus briefs in the Wards case.

Even more excitingly, these groups were joined by environmental organizations, led by the national arm of the Sierra Club.

Our 1,000-member organization celebrates its 20th anniversary this year with a vision to promote Oakland's distinctive neighborhoods and downtown.

We have been ahead of the curve in advertising the fact that our city has long been a center of art, culture, and noteworthy architecture in the Bay Area, but the political establishment's lack of leadership and vision presents us with a major difficulty.

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Oakland History Room

Prominent architect Walter Mathews designed the 1910 city-owned Fire Alarm Building, left. The city offered it for sale to a private developer to be demolished and replaced with a high-rise apartment building, which would block views of the Alameda County Courthouse and Lake Merritt.

Treasures

Continued from page 1

In the current push to find sites appropriate for Mayor Brown's plan to bring 10,000 new residents to downtown Oakland, environmental and preservation considerations are being violated.

We need the help of all Oaklanders to save these seven buildings, districts, categories, and sites. We also call attention to the 10 properties still endangered from our previous yearly lists.

Two buildings from our list were lost last year, while the Sears building and several commercial districts threatened by the Leona Quarry Project were saved. Seven others have been placed in a new wait-and-see category. We assume many if not most in this latter group will end up in the saved column.

KSL plans to build 90 new units in front of the hotel, in addition to 75 time-share or condominium units and a multi-level parking garage planned for the Claremont Avenue tennis court side.

The new owners are also negotiating with the city for a 40-year lease and for an upgrade to the Chabot Golf Course as an amenity for guests.

This plan has aroused the concern of environmentalists and local golf course users worried about proposed fee increases from \$18 to \$45 or more. A new group called Berkeley-Oakland Neighbors of the Claremont (BONC) has sprung up in opposition to the Claremont expansion plans.

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Claremont Hotel

Completed in 1915 after 10 years of construction, the Claremont is the legacy of transportation and real estate magnate Borax Smith and architect Charles W. Dickey, who was responsible for the Rotunda Building, Old Merritt College-University High, and the downtown Bank of America and PG&E buildings.

Efforts to landmark the hotel met with stiff resistance from the previous owners, leaving this local icon without official designation or protection. New owner, KSL Recreation Corp., wants to expand in ways that will threaten the appearance and setting of the hotel, located on a spectacular site straddling the Oakland-Berkeley border and visible for miles around.

Fire Alarm Building

This 1910 city-owned building, designed by prominent architect Walter Mathews, was offered for sale to a private developer to be demolished and replaced.

The proposed high-rise apartments would block views of the Alameda County Courthouse and Lake Merritt, and loom over the sculpture garden of the Oakland Museum.

The current low-rise building with its intact marble wainscoting and mosaic

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Jack London Neighborhood Association

The C. L. Greeno Building at 255 4th Street, just one of the well-preserved buildings that make up the historic Jack London Neighborhood.

From converted warehouses to National Register neighborhood

On a warm evening in July 1998 the doorbell rang on the third floor of the American Bag Building at Third and Harrison Streets. In the previous year, my husband and I had converted the 1917 warehouse into our home and two floors of commercial space. It was unusual to have anyone ring during the evening, the area being primarily warehouses and a few recently converted residential loft buildings.

Arriving at the street level I found a petite, almost waif-like woman, shifting her light weight from one foot to another. "Hi! Did you know they were going to build a 98-foot building across from your place?" Although I had heard rumors, I thought of them as only that. "We're having a meeting to discuss neighborhood development issues—will you come?"

Thus began the Jack London Neighborhood Association (JLNA)—a grassroots neighborhood group that Wilda White initiated by going door to door that August evening in the area we now know as the Waterfront Warehouse District.

Many stories unfold from that evening: the creation of urban community, the mobilization of a neighborhood to participate in the development process, the education of a city about its cultural resources, and the ability of focused community groups to actually make a difference against insurmountable odds.

But for our purposes here, the story that evolves is how a road that began with meetings with developers ultimately led a group of local residents to prepare, nominate and secure the placement of their neighborhood on the National Register of Historic Places.

Our neighborhood was the ten or so blocks situated between Second, Fifth, Webster and Jackson streets. As we later learned, in 1983 the city of Oakland had identified the area as an Area of Primary Importance (API), a historically or visually cohesive area of well-preserved buildings that appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

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Bringing home ideas from Seattle

A message from the president

In June, I attended the annual Big Cities Retreat in Seattle. Big Cities is a group of preservation organizations from large cities, who began meeting informally at National Trust for Historic Preservation conferences three years ago.

This year preservationists from Baltimore, Dallas, Denver, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and Seattle were represented, as well as Richard Moe (head of the National Trust) and Holly Fiala (head of the Trust's Western office).

The conference consisted primarily of informal roundtables dealing with various aspects of preservation and ways each organization handled them. We discussed what worked (or didn't work) for fundraising, advocacy, programs and events.

We also prepared a presentation for the Arts and Culture Subcommittee at the U.S. Conference of Mayors, which was taking place simultaneously. The gist was that preservation enhances economic development, and that preservation was popular with voters.

I discovered that Oakland is leading the way on at least one front: no other city has an ongoing historic survey as we do with the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey.

Other cities need to hire consultants every time they want to designate a landmark or a historic district.

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Twenty years and counting

Imagine Oakland without City Hall, the Floral Depot, Old Merritt College (University High) or the Broadway Building. The Oakland Heritage Alliance began in a summer garden in 1980, or so the legend goes, with seven ardent preservationists and a bankroll of \$150.

These preservationists wanted to celebrate Oakland through its cultural and architectural history. OHA was born in a time when history had become democratized through the civil, and women's rights movements, and popularized with the Bicentennial and "Roots."

Earlier preservation had focused mostly on "prize" homes or buildings and museum-based programs, but by the mid-20th century this had changed.

The 1949 formation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation gave local organizations a national voice. Large, commercially successful adaptive reuse projects, such as Faneuil Hall in Boston and Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco, developed in the '60s.

With the passing in 1966 of the National Historic Preservation Act, there emerged a growing sophistication and economically savvy approach to preservation efforts.

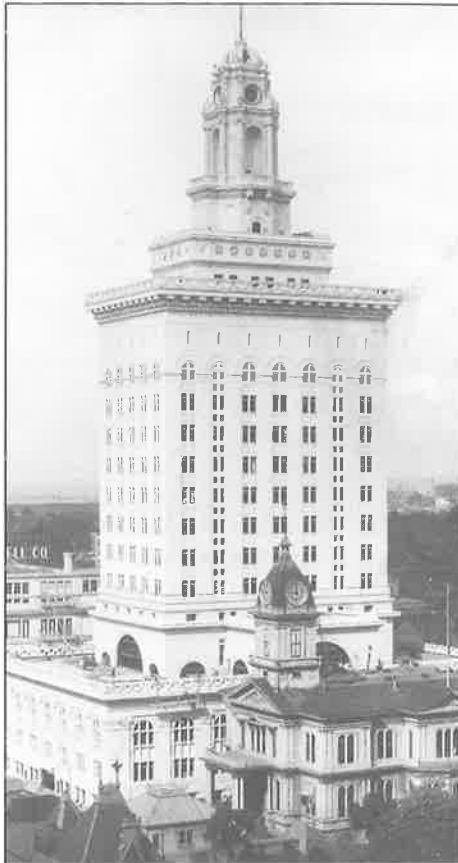
The '50s and '60s had brought the death of many urban centers with massive freeway development and its subsequent suburbanization.

Here in Oakland, preservation activity rallied around the feared loss of the Camron-Stanford House and a threat to the Pardee House and Unitarian Church by the construction of the Grove-Shafter Freeway.

The '60s and '70s brought urban renewal—a "slash and burn" approach to city planning. Redevelopment tore out blocks of Victorian and early 20th century commercial buildings downtown, and then stalled.

Birth of a preservation board

By the mid '70s, major losses of the magnificent lakeside Packard Showroom by Bernard Maybeck and the Art



Oakland History Room

Imagine Oakland without its landmark city hall, shown here just after its completion with its predecessor in the foreground.

Deco Gray Shop at 1200 Broadway, spurred local preservation efforts.

In 1979, realizing what Oakland was losing and fearing further losses, the city procured a state grant to do a survey.

A citizen advisory group—some of whose members had worked to save the Camron-Stanford House—formed to develop a methodology for what would later become the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey.

It was hoped that with a record of the buildings left and their significance to the city's history, groundwork could be laid for a Historic Preservation Element, a formal preservation plan for the city.

Phase one of the grant was completed in 1980 and the group dissolved.

Historic buildings are the old growth forest of the built environment. In a few years we hope that it will be as unthinkable to dem-olish a historic building as it is to clear cut an old growth forest today.

However, while the group realized the importance of the information collected in the survey, they saw the greater challenge as both using and sharing the data. And so OHA, which would become a co-sponsor of the survey, was born.

The organization, then as now, advocates preservation, and OHA bases its two-pronged approach of education and direct action on the premise that a well-informed constituency would want to participate in preservation programs-policy making. From the beginning, the idea of education focused on walking tours and a quarterly newsletter.

Exploring Oakland

Walking tours explored changes in the city from the microcosm of a neighborhood; social history was woven in, no matter how controversial.

OHA designed its newsletter, with its informative text, historic photos and editorial content, to appeal not only to preservationists and historians, but to the general public as well.

House tours began in 1986 with a collaboration with the Fernwood neighborhood. Local historians and survey researchers provide the resources for articles and tours, giving the histories they convey a personal touch.

A dedicated Preservation Action Committee was active from the beginning. OHA's first ten years saw three fierce battles, involving Central Oakland, which helped define the organization and its methodology.

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Twenty

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The year 1982 brought a successful 15-month struggle to save the Floral Depot—the blue and silver-tiled Art Deco gem across Telegraph from the Fox—from demolition.

The city's design review process was used in 1983 to prevent inappropriate remodeling of the Roos Building at 15th and Broadway. And in 1988 OHA battled to save the Fourth Church of Christ Scientist, a beautiful Beaux Arts church on the east shore of Lake Merritt.

The demolition was approved, and the building lost. But OHA had developed skills to negotiate, work with the city, and forge alliances with other groups.

These efforts made news, enhanced credibility, and revived the public interest in the city's historic districts. The church controversy also made very clear the need for a preservation policy to guide decision makers.

Loma Prieta

A broad-based Preservation Task Force that included OHA members, the Chamber of Commerce, the Oakland Association of Realtors, business people and neighborhood groups formed in 1988 to develop a Historic Preservation

Element for the city. And then came the earthquake. The 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake was devastating. City Hall was vacated, and many other important historical civic buildings damaged.

Frank Ogawa Plaza

The Preservation Action Committee formed a Preservation Assistance Team, including architects and other preservation organizations, to monitor the damaged buildings and urged preservation of the Broadway Building, City Hall and the Plaza Building. The result is the Frank Ogawa Plaza—a lively mix of old and sympathetic new with a magnificent City Hall as the centerpiece.

Although some historic buildings were lost to the project, the city sponsored a successful National Register nomination of the Downtown Historic District, and then established a façade-improvement program that benefits building owners and businesses in the Broadway Corridor.

By 1994, the Historic Preservation Element, which everyone believed would take six months to complete, had taken six years, but was unanimously adopted by city council in 1994.

Swan's Market faced possible demolition in 1995, when OHA lobbied the City Council and Planning Commission to choose EBALDC, the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, the

only developer that wanted to save and reuse it. That project—a mix of co-housing, apartments and retail—is bringing tenants and renewed interest to the once fashionable shopping district of Old Oakland.

Montgomery Ward

Progress is not without controversy and the 1990s included efforts to prevent demolition of Montgomery Ward and the Rubino Building on Lakeshore. OHA supported a neighborhood-driven lawsuit to reuse Montgomery Ward. Efforts to save Montgomery Ward continue.

The Rubino Building marked the first time OHA used a lawsuit as a preservation advocacy tool. The Rubino Building lawsuit was settled and the building demolished.

Through its two decades of work, OHA has grown in membership and is becoming that much more sophisticated. Grass roots support has been crucial to the organization.

Since the start, OHA's strength has been its dedicated members whose support includes volunteering to lead tours, write articles, lobby and serve on the board, saying a lot for the group whose original members are still involved and for others who commit to help preservation's voice be heard.

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Message

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The final event of the conference was a public meeting at which the retreat participants served as a "panel of experts."

We each gave a five minute presentation about our city and organization, followed by questions from the audience.

My characterization of Oakland as the Rodney Dangerfield of cities (because we don't get no respect) was met with some amusement.

I learned a great deal and came back with a lot of good ideas for us to put into motion, things like historic architecture

I discovered that Oakland is leading the way on at least one front: no other city has an ongoing historic survey as we do with the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Other cities need to hire consultants every time they want to designate a landmark or a historic district.

— OHA President Jane Powell

training for real estate agents; property tax reduction in historic districts; walking tours that include dinner.

As one participant said, "Don't reinvent the wheel—steal the whole car!"

We would love for members to get

involved in making some of these ideas happen.

Just call the office at 763-9218 and talk to OHA's Administrative Director Jo Ann Coleman.

— Jane Powell



Treasures

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floors, now underused as a storage space and carpentry shop by city workers, would readily lend itself for reuse as a library adjunct, museum space, or café.

Opposition to the lakeside high-rise building has come from many nearby residents, local institutions, and environmental groups that include the Sierra Club.

More than 100 people who attended an OHA-sponsored meeting in January registered their overwhelming opposition to the project, and a special group of citizens, called Citizen Advocates for Lake Merritt (CALM) has been formed to oppose the development.

The architect, Michael Pyatok, has scaled the project back to 10 stories, but the fact remains that the only really appropriate building for this sensitive location is the building already there.

Parking Lot and Environs of new Sears (formerly Capwell's)

A returnee from last year, this 14-acre site (bounded by Telegraph-San Pablo-17th-21streets, plus the Greyhound bus station block) has become the locus of a huge project involving the national firm of Forest City developers.

Environmental review is beginning on a plan that would make inspired urban planners like Jane Jacobs cringe. Unrelated to the entertainment uses envisioned for the nearby Fox Theater (1807-29 Telegraph) and Floral Depot (1900 Telegraph), the Uptown Project includes vacating one street and replacing it with another, for a net gain of zero; and construction of most-

ly low or medium-rise buildings. While high-rises by other developers are proposed for a later stage, this site would seem a far more appropriate location for the high-density development envisioned in Mayor Brown's 10K plan than the Fire Alarm or estuary sites.

Adjacent to the Uptown site, the nearby Navlet's building and the Royal

located mass transit terminal to outlying areas of West or East Oakland involves not only removal of a potentially distinctive building, but also unconscionably backward urban planning.

Oakland Army Base

Research conducted by Caltrans for the Cypress project shows much of the Army base is eligible for listing on the National Register, but, while civilian conversion of the Presidio in San Francisco has proceeded with extensive public scrutiny and participation, by the time most Oaklanders have had the opportunity to visit this formerly off-limits base, most of its World War II vintage buildings may have been scrapped.

The previous understandings between the Army and government agencies that are overseeing the preservation have divided the buildings on the 422-acre base into the categories of "temporary"—built after World War II began in earnest—or "permanent, any steel-

frame construction on a concrete.

A more public review of long-term use must be conducted before irreversible steps are taken, and developers demolish these 50-year-old "temporary" but still eminently serviceable buildings.

3901 Harrison Street

This distinctive three-story Colonial Revival landmark from 1912, and its neighbors at 110 Bayo Vista (1909) and 100 Bayo Vista (1938), are up for sale at \$2.6 million. Since this area of Harrison was not downzoned at the same time as neighboring Adams Point, the likeliest scenario—unless a preservation angel steps

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Jeanette Sayres

The parking lot and environs of the new Sears store (formerly Capwell's), a 14-acre site, bounded by Telegraph, San Pablo, 17th, and 21st streets, plus the Greyhound bus station block), has become the locus of a huge project involving the national firm of Forest City developers.

Apartments (2000 San Pablo) are proposed for saving, but the charming Victorian false front commercial buildings at 1966 and 1972 San Pablo (1870s) are destined for landfill. The one remaining distinctive house on William Street (574 William) along with the market building on the corner of 20th and Telegraph will also be lost.

Another unexpected addition to the removal list is the Greyhound bus station at 2101-02 San Pablo. Built in 1926, the original Beaux Arts-style Union Stage Depot was remodeled in 1951 as Moderne. An original octagon ceiling dome may remain above the now lowered ceiling. Relocation of this centrally

Waterfront

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By the middle of 1998, plans were being firmed up for our neighborhood. Information about these proposed developments was sporadic and irregularly sent to various property owners or posted on telephone poles.

The first and formative meeting of JLNA brought together information about all the proposed developments.

There were essentially two projects pending at the time: the 312-unit so-called Allegro project proposed for three lots at the intersection of Third and Jackson streets; and the so-called City Lofts, a massive, 126-unit, 98-foot, upscale apartment project proposed for an unimproved lot in the heart of the Waterfront Warehouse District.

The city of Oakland had recommended a mitigated negative declaration for both projects.

It was the Allegro project that triggered the community's understanding and appreciation of the neighborhood's cultural resources, the common design and architectural features that marked the district, and the place that our neighborhood held in Oakland history.

At JLNA's first meeting, we viewed drawings of the Allegro project depicting the size, mass and design of the 312-unit project. Overwhelmingly, the group agreed that the design was clearly suburban in appearance, relating little if any to the surrounding warehouse environment. Most of us at that first meeting didn't know a "mitigated negative declaration"

from the Declaration of Independence. We knew nothing about the planning process or development issues. Yet all of us had something in common: we had all chosen to live in warehouses in a yet-to-be developed part of a city that had been asleep for 50 years. And clearly, the suburban apartments being proposed were an aberration if not an affront to this commercial-industrial environment.

Most of us lived in converted ware-

mental impacts, acknowledged the neighborhood as an Area of Primary Importance (API).

The MND concluded, however, that because the new building was slated for a vacant lot within the Waterfront Warehouse District, the project was not required to conform to historic preservation guidelines.

The city of Oakland did, however, indicate that the new building should "utilize appropriate exterior materials and design characteristics, such that it complements the historic character of the surrounding API."

This statement alone forced us to analyze the Allegro design as it related to the rest of the neighborhood.

It was found seriously lacking. By September 1998 we had appeared before the Planning Commission and raised, among other issues, the incompatibility of the design for the area.

The Commissioners recommended that the developer conduct three to four facilitated meetings with the neighborhood where we would seek solutions to the design concerns.

A group of JLNA members along with some other neighborhood groups attended

these meetings throughout September.

The lack of substance in those meetings, the avoidance of major issues on the part of the developer and the City, and the refusal on the part of the developer to even discuss significant design considerations made us a more committed citizen group.

The developer wished to limit our input to the choice of exterior materials

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Jack London Neighborhood Association
American Bag Company/Union Hide Company, 299 3rd St. circa 1917, view looking southeast. (Wickham Havens Album, 1917 edition.)

houses and were anything but opposed to the growth of lofts and live-work units coming into the area. If anything, the apartment proposal nudged us closer to defining why we had moved here and what attracted us to this particular neighborhood. The Allegro mitigated negative declaration (MND), which we later discovered was a kind of abbreviated environmental review document permitted when there are no significant environ-

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forward—is the razing of all three historic houses and construction of yet more high-rise apartments.

Terminal One at Oakland Airport

Designed by the prominent Bay Area firm of Warnecke and Warnecke as part of an ambitious \$17.5 million airport expansion (a defiant gamble to compete with San Francisco Airport's presumed regional monopoly on air travel), the nearly \$5 million Terminal One opened in 1961.

Described as the "finest airport in the West," the terminal was an ultra-modern icon for the time, with a prominent cement awning and curved glass front, and an 11-story control tower rising from the center, with a cocktail lounge on the eighth floor.

Mushroom-shaped support pillars, that are reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright's Johnson Wax Building are a prominent feature. Now the port and the airport, as part of an more ambitious expansion plan, want to demolish the terminal.

Is it worth losing this optimistic '60s homage to air travel for another structure with a 40-year life span and even less claim to be definitively "modern?"

Laney Estuary

Though this is an area recognized as tidal wetlands and currently serving as an open space location for outsized public sculpture, a preliminary survey by city staff proposes some 2,000 units on "undeveloped sides" of the Lake Merritt Canal running through the Laney College campus.

Despite minimal public notice, Peralta chancellor Ronald Temple has already "welcomed" developers to Laney and

Merritt Colleges. Previous plans to build a Kaiser hospital campus on the Laney playing fields fizzled—will loss of this vital open space meet with any more approval? Lost in the rush to meet the 10K goal is the realization that even fervent advocates for urban density also recognize the need for open space.

Returnees

Montgomery Ward Building. 2825 International Blvd. The third lawsuit to save this National Register building



Jeanette Sayres

While civilian conversion of the Presidio in San Francisco has proceeded with extensive public scrutiny and participation, by the time most Oaklanders have had the opportunity to visit this formerly off-limits base, most of its World War II vintage buildings may have been scrapped.

was heard in July in Alameda County Superior Court.

The League for Protection of Oakland's Architectural and Historic Resources has filed suit to block transfer of the city-owned building to the Oakland Unified School District, which wants to clear the site for a 600-student elementary school.

The Emerald Fund, a San Francisco-based developer, has proposed shared use of the site—renovation of the 1920's portions of the building for apartments and live-work units, and a school for the same number of students alongside.

The Sierra Club has filed an *amicus*

letter in support of the League; an *amicus* brief was also submitted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the California Preservation Foundation, and OHA.

Fruitvale Hotel. 3221 San Leandro Blvd. This building has been boarded up while the two feuding owners remain locked in a legal battle, complicating the 1894 building's fate.

The Estuary. Though under extreme development pressure, this area saw a notable preservation victory last year.

The Jack London Neighborhood Association (JNLA) successfully sued over an inadequate EIR on the proposed City Lofts development. If built, these lofts would threaten a proposed National Register designation for the Waterfront Warehouse District. With register status now officially granted and the organization's continued vigilance, the distinctive character of the district will likely be protected.

Also about to be listed on the National Register is the 120-

year-old First and Last Chance Saloon (56 Jack London Square), a hang-out for Jack London and other early Oakland waterfront characters.

The fate of the nearby Produce District, however, remains an open question once the produce merchants relocate to larger quarters.

Also vulnerable are the low-rise buildings along Broadway below I-880, including the city's oldest brick buildings that include Clancy's and the Square Apple (311 and 318-34 Broadway). These structures all date from the early

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Waterfront

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and avoid the truly serious problems of balconies, massing, facade articulation and fenestration. The developer unilaterally said these were off the table. It was this intransigence that led us to identify our neighborhood's character-defining elements and to fight to save its historical and architectural integrity.

The more familiar we became with the qualities of the area, the more critical the Allegro design became. The developer's disregard for the District's historic and architectural significance led JLNA to demand that the City of Oakland undertake a comprehensive environmental impact report (EIR).

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), cultural resources are considered part of the environment and any potential significant impairment of a cultural resource requires the preparation of an environmental impact report.

Ultimately, JLNA reached a settlement with the developer that the City of Oakland ratified. Among the provisions of the settlement agreement was the creation of an Advisory Design Review Committee composed of a developer representative, a JLNA representative, a representative of another neighborhood group, and one architect representative from both the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the City Planning Commission.

This committee was charged with insuring that the Allegro project design did not jeopardize the Waterfront Warehouse District's eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and/or did not alter, impair or destroy the District's historic integrity.

The struggle over the inappropriate suburban design motivated many in the neighborhood to take a more intimate look at the area known as the Waterfront Warehouse District. I personally gained a deeper appreciation of the American Bag Building which I had renovated in such a manner to maintain its historic integrity. I applied for Oakland Landmark status,



Jack London Neighborhood Association.

Photo by Jacinta Bouwkamp

Building entry pediment, ornamental plaster and painted wood decorated the C. L. Greeno Building at 255-4th St.

which was approved in December 1998. This application process deepened my understanding of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and piqued my interest in the National Register of Historic Places.

Somewhat naïve as to the work that was involved, in February 1999 I began the research, preparation and writing that is required of a National Register nomination. The nomination was completed in April. The American Bag Building was placed on the National Register in August 1999.

Throughout our discussions with the Planning Commission over the Allegro project, the issue of not jeopardizing the National Register eligibility of the Waterfront Warehouse District continued to surface. These same issues emerged repeatedly with the other developments being proposed for the area.

Developers accused the neighborhood of raising "phantom" concerns and the Planning Commission repeatedly asked if anyone was actually nominating the district for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register nomination became an act of both love and respect for all those who had gone before us and those who will come after us.

While it had always been JLNA's intent to nominate our neighborhood for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, by spring 1999 JLNA members finally met and decided to prepare the nomination.

Having produced my own building's nomination and knowing the detail and work involved, I was more than a little skeptical that a group of volunteers could accomplish the required level of preparation for an area that included 31 buildings.

I agreed to chair the Historic District Nominating Committee and our first discussions were about how to raise money to hire a historic preservation architect expert to produce the actual nomination.

Soon we were to find that there were no consultants available and if it were to happen it would have to happen with us. In May a small research group met and divided up the buildings and set out to prepare the nomination form.

Eleven months later, the Oakland Waterfront Warehouse District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The National Register nomination process brought our neighborhood closer together. We gained a much deeper understanding of Oakland's history and the City's deep roots that lie within our streets.

An apparently arrogant developer and seemingly indifferent city staffers initially motivated our group.

But by the end of all of our work, the National Register nomination became an act of love and respect for those who had gone before us and those who will come after us.

— *Marianne Dreisbach*



Treasures

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1860s, while the St. Germain Building (Sunrise Sandwiches) at Third and Broadway dates from 1889.

The Ninth Avenue Terminal Building built in 1927 remains threatened with demolition, but in more immediate jeopardy is Jack London Village, on our Most Endangered list since 1998. Tenants are being removed and plans are moving forward rapidly for demolition and the construction of a high-rise hotel, a new neighbor for the "Site B" Lincoln Properties gated residential community which was so famously opposed by pre-mayor Brown.

On July 5 the Planning Commission unanimously upheld an appeal by JLNA President Wilda White challenging clearance of the village for a parking lot in violation of the Estuary Plan. The City Council next takes up the matter.

"C" and "D" Buildings

The Rubino Building, the J.P.M. Davis House and 3901 Harrison St., the eight (or more) Oakland Point demolitions in just this past year—what can we say? Look quickly before they're gone or unrecognizable.

Calou House. 3251 Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Despite a few modest repairs to the garage, this Thomas Newsom-designed Colonial Revival-Queen Anne house is still unoccupied and surrounded by a weed-filled yard.

The new owner is apparently stalled awaiting a city loan. Ironically, in a court-orchestrated sale this owner beat out a nonprofit with financing and a proposal for owner-occupied condos in the restored house—a plan preferred by many neighbors.

Studio One. 365 45th St. A community task force initiated by council members John Russo and Jane Brunner rec-

ommended renovation, not replacement, of the venerable arts facility located in a converted orphanage.

\$160,000 has been allocated to begin a fund-raising campaign, but an estimated \$10 million will be needed to upgrade and seismically retrofit the building. A substantial amount may be forthcoming from the recently passed Proposition 12.

Children's Hospital Oakland's "Baby Hospital." 747-52nd St. It remains a possibility that CHO, in their effort to maximize usage of their property, will decide to sacrifice the original "Baby Hospital."



Jeanette Sayres

This distinctive three-story Colonial Revival landmark residence from 1912 at 3901 Harrison Street and its neighboring houses at 110 Bayo Vista (1909) and 100 Bayo Vista (1938) are up for sale as a group at \$2.6 million. Unless a preservation angel steps forward, the razing of all three historic houses is likely.

Mi Rancho. 464 Seventh St. The old Southern Pacific railway station site is still vacant and still for sale.

The Oakland Point Prescott Neighborhood. This West Oakland neighborhood with properties dating from the 1870s, still suffers from neglect, absentee owners, proximity to industrial users, crime and the heavy-handed use of the Blight Ordinance to demolish rather than rehabilitate run-down properties.

In the last year, a city tally has eight of these residences lost, one to fire and two by code compliance-ordered demolition. The actual number of losses is undoubtedly greater.

Laurel Liquors. 4311 MacArthur Blvd. Although plans to demolish this 1935-36 Mediterranean style former Safeway for a fast-food El Pollo Loco have fallen through, the building is not yet out of the woods.

Although a proposal to restore the building for an Everett and Jones barbecue restaurant has support from OHA and the neighborhood, other developers with plans to demolish the structure are still in the running.

Saved

Sears 2633 Telegraph Ave. Developer John Protopappas of Madison Park REIT has purchased this long-vacated building for live/work and retail uses.

A '60s metal facade has been peeled away to reveal the original Art Deco masonry exterior. Protopappas intends to rebuild two missing floors of the central tower, using the original plans.

The restored building will include self-storage in the basement, ground floor retail, and 50 live/work units on the second and third floors.

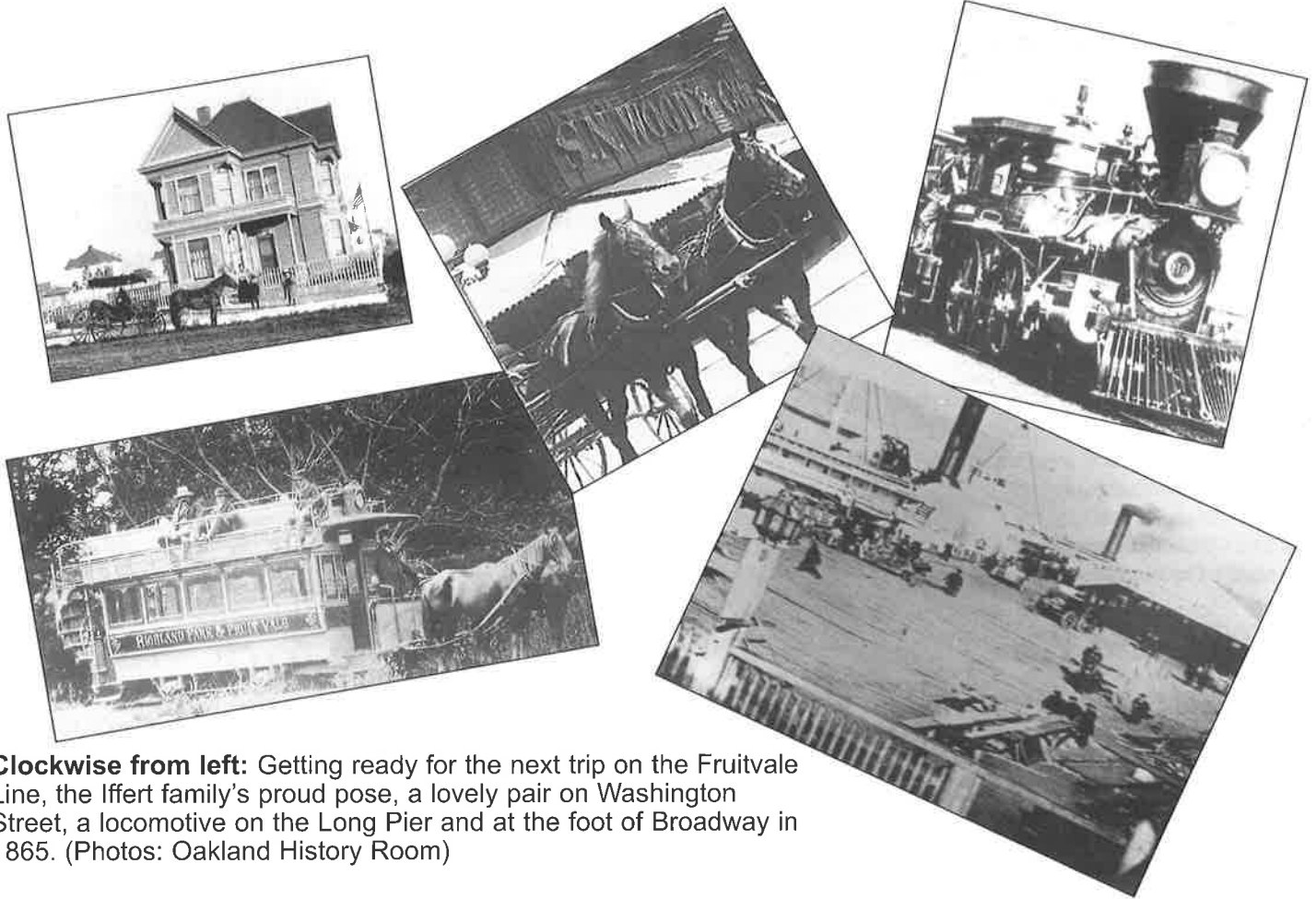
Not only will this project revitalize the surrounding neighborhood, but convince nay-sayers that recycling of such retailing icons (think Wards) makes good economic, environmental, and aesthetic sense.

The historic Laurel, Foothill, and MacArthur shopping districts threatened by the Leona Quarry Project. An easy one: the "big box" retail juggernaut proposed for the Leona Quarry proved unrealizable due to prescriptions against truck traffic on Interstate 580. But why didn't planners do their research before shoving this proposal into the new General Plan?

See **TREASURES** on page 13



GETTING AROUND OAKLAND BEFORE THE AUTOMOBILE



Clockwise from left: Getting ready for the next trip on the Fruitvale Line, the Iffert family's proud pose, a lovely pair on Washington Street, a locomotive on the Long Pier and at the foot of Broadway in 1865. (Photos: Oakland History Room)

Twenty

Continued from page 5

Building stronger ties to neighborhood organizations, environmental groups and other advocacy organizations will strengthen our ability to affect change.

OHA is working with the city and the Landmarks Board to update zoning, bringing the city's zoning into conformity with the Preservation Element.

Partners in Preservation

Advocacy projects include "Partners in Preservation" awards, rewarding great preservation projects, and the "Most Endangered List", a call to arms for threatened buildings. A revolving fund and URG (Urban Revitalization Group), two new efforts, will help OHA "put our

money where our mouth is," directly involving OHA in preservation projects.

Reinvestment in neighborhoods often starts with someone taking the care, the time, to fix up just one building. OHA believes that preservation is an economic revitalization tool and can accomplish what urban renewal failed to do.

Main Street programs, like the one in the Fruitvale, are revitalizing small downtowns and urban centers around the country with an organizational mix that is preservation based.

Preservation is the ultimate in recycling—it reduces landfill, finds new uses for the old, creates skilled jobs, and engenders neighborhood pride. To quote OHA president Jane Powell, "Historic buildings are the old growth forest of the built environment. In a few years we

hope it will be as unthinkable to demolish a historic building as it is to clear cut."

Preservation has been called a "vision of new possibilities." Imagine a revived Cox Cadillac, the old Southern Pacific Depot at 16th and Wood streets as centerpiece of a commercial park and the Fox Theater as a live performance venue.

The reuse of these and other older buildings, which embody our history, creates a continuum for our cities.

The best future would be one in which preservation of old buildings, not demolition, was the first option considered. "Preservation First."

Citizens knowledgeable of Oakland's past are proud of its present and optimistic of its future.

—Pamela Magnuson-Peddle



Share your vision for the Fox Theater!

The future is looking brighter for the long-neglected Oakland Fox Theater, now owned by the City of Oakland.

On July 25th the Oakland City Council voted to proceed with funding a master plan for the theater, including a complete structural evaluation, market analysis, cost estimates, and recommendations for future use.

The master plan will be completed by Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, an architectural firm with offices in New York and Los Angeles, and their team of consultants.

HHPA was selected over six other firms that submitted proposals in response to an RFP issued by CEDA (City of Oakland Community & Economic Development Agency).

HHPA has an impressive track record for historic theater renovation projects, including Radio City Music Hall and the New Amsterdam Theater.

Webb Management Services, a New York-based consulting firm, will perform the market and financial analysis. Theater Projects Consultants, headquartered in Connecticut, will evaluate the performance characteristics of the theater and make recommendations.

HHPA will be seeking input from the community to help determine the ultimate use of the theater and adjacent buildings.

The kick-off meeting will take place at the Paramount Theater on Thursday, Oct. 5, from 7–9 p.m. This will be a brainstorming session to identify issues

and concerns regarding the future use of the Fox Theater, and to allow participants to share their vision for this diamond in the rough.

Jeff Chew from CEDA will discuss the scope of the master plan, and representatives from HHPA and their team will make a presentation and solicit input from participants.

Friends of the Oakland Fox (FOOF), a non-profit committee dedicated to the restoration of the Fox Theater, will co-host the meeting.

FOOF meets every second Thursday of the month from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at 1970 Broadway, 12th floor.

For more information please call 510-869-3519.

—Pat Dedekian

OHA invites you to get involved

Each year with their renewal, OHA members are asked to become involved in a more personal way by volunteering. As an organization with only one part-time staff person, OHA depends heavily on the volunteer hours of dedicated members willing to give of their time. We wouldn't be able to accomplish what we do without the assistance of more people than it's possible to mention—but we'll try to mention them all.

Our mailing parties are always held in good cheer. Much chatter, catching up with old friends who have worked together on OHA's mailing events in the past. Our workspace is the kitchen/conference room at the Camron-Stanford House with windows overlooking Lake Merritt. Fueled by a bribe of snacks, brochures, newsletters or flyers are labeled, bundled, boxed and whisked off to Oakland's Main Post Office.

Many thanks to Jerry Bowling, Helen Lore, Sue Wong, Betty Thomas, Betty Johnson, and Bonnie Killip—all veterans of past mailings and without whose expertise the task would not go so

smoothly. And a special thanks to Courtenay Peddle, a new volunteer who came in on very short notice and got us over the hump on our last mailing.

Our highly successful Walking Tour Program could never take place without the long hours of research and generous gift of personal knowledge that each tour leader provides. This year's mag-nanimous group included Barbara Smith, Michael Crowe, Phil Bellman, Bill Coburn, Linda Dziengielewski, Robert Haynes, Annalee Allen, Betty Marvin, Ellen Wyrick Parkinson, Dean Yabuki, Riley Doty, Bill Sturm, Anne Hayes, Gordon Laverty, Grey Kolevzon, Carolyn Douthat, Helen Shor, Don Holmgren, Jane Powell, and Bill Moore.

In addition to tour guides each walk's success is in part due to the volunteers who help collect the money, pass out the handouts, and help to make sure no one is left behind. Many thanks to Bob Groom, Peggy Martin, George Strauss, Pat Williams, Betty Thomas, Anna Rosenberg, Francesca Passalacqua, and Jeanne Porter.

We are very sad to announce that Kathy Olson will no longer be able to record the "City Landmarks Board Actions."

Kathy with some assistance from Kathy Walsh, has for a number of years provided us with a thorough recap of the Landmarks Board's minutes for the newsletter—a monumental task at times, and we thank her for all the time and effort she put into it.

We are always looking for new volunteers to fill a wide variety of needs. We need people to help in the office, to assist with events, to speak at city council meetings, and to help with the newsletter, to mention just a few things and because of Kathy Olson's departure we also need someone to write the "City Landmarks Board Actions."

If you think you could spare some time (a little or a lot), we would love to hear from you. Just call the OHA office at 510-763-9218.

—Pamela Magnuson-Peddle
and Jo Ann Coleman

Treasures

Continued from page 10

An upbeat note about a building even further out of the woods: the formerly earthquake-damaged and financially troubled Downtown YWCA (designed by Julia Morgan) announced recently that the California College of Arts and Crafts will buy and finish the upper floors for student housing. The Y's increasingly sure financial footing should ensure that the indoor pool and other projects are finally completed.

Lost

The J.P.M. Davis House. 419-21 Clay St. (on the edge of the Bret Harte Boardwalk); demolished during last year's "Most Endangered" press conference, with no effort even to save any of the building materials, including the house's old growth redwood siding.

The Rubino Building. 3277-87 Lakeshore Ave. Demolished in deference to the wishes of many Lakeshore merchants. Had OHA further pursued the lawsuit to stop demolition, it might have settled the issue of whether the city is violating the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by refusing to require an environmental review.

Even where demolition is involved, on projects involving any of the 20,000 historic Oakland buildings lacking the top-of-the-pyramid A or B ratings. (Not that a higher rating necessarily guarantees clemency: See, for example the Fire Alarm Building and Ward's, just to mention two.)

Wait and see

JJs/Biff's. Broadway Auto Row at 27th Street. A new owner, auto dealer Steve Simi, may have a more benign attitude toward this beloved diner than previous owner Chevron, which wanted to

put a McChevron (fast food and gas) on the site.

Fox Theater. 1807-29 Telegraph Ave. Re-roofed at long last! A Request for Proposals for development of a Master Plan received seven responses.

A respected New York firm has been selected and work will hopefully soon begin to clean up and eventually restore the exterior of the building, including the marquee.

Three West Oakland Houses. These modest remnants from the earliest Oaklanders were saved from the path of the Cypress replacement freeway. Jack Purat moved the former 1817 Shorey to 6604 Tremont in North Oakland; 1815

plans are reported to involve creation of a dot-com campus with a restored train station museum as its centerpiece.

Meanwhile, deterioration continues unchecked. The station's trashed windows are clearly visible from the recently opened Cypress replacement freeway.

Cox Cadillac. Harrison Street at Bay Place. Developer Avalon Bay Properties has purchased the building. Their preliminary plan calls for restoring the showroom, but demolishing the rest of the building in order to put up a seven-story building with 181 rental units on that part of the property. The showroom will be leased to a retail tenant

The Adams Point Preservation Society's landmark nomination remains stalled at the City Council level with no action really likely until the new owner's intentions are clear.

Oakland Consolidated Street Railway Barn. 4629 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way. Though previous owners had contemplated demolition, the new owners are aware of the building's historic status as an early street-car barn and the need to retrofit the unreinforced masonry. The new owners are starting a clean-up and envision either an African-American or an African-themed cultural facility.

Unity Savings Bank Building. 1300 Broadway. Bought by Noel Yi, owner of Holmes Book Store. This building was a truly unhappy icon of the '90s with its blue-tarped, earthquake-damaged wall looming over DeLauer's Bookstore. Its restoration, now signifies the new Oakland Rediscovered era, as cited in a recent *San Francisco Chronicle* article "History Reborn as Downtown Oakland Booms: New life put into old buildings."

— Robert Brokl



Oakland History Room

Designed by the prominent Bay Area firm of Warnecke and Warnecke as part of an ambitious \$17.5 million airport expansion, Oakland Airport's Terminal One opened in 1961. Now the port and the airport want it demolished.

Shorey may be moved to 1660-11th St. The third house (one was lost to arson) is likely to be moved to a lot on Pine Street in West Oakland under the aegis of the Oakland Point Interpretive Center.

Southern Pacific 16th Street Train Station. 16th at Wood Street. This site is apparently in the process of being sold to the Emeryville-based developer Rick Holliday (Clocktower Lofts), whose



Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board actions

The Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board meets on the second Monday of each month, 4 p.m., in City Hall Hearing Room 1. Meetings are open to the public.

Landmark designation is recommended by the board to the Planning Commission and City Council. Landmarks are subject to a 240-day delay in issuance of demolition permits. Exterior alterations require approval by City Planning staff, at the recommendation of the Board.

Six districts and 131 landmarks have been designated since the Board was created in 1973. Members of the Board are: George Lythcott, chair; Carolyn Douthat, vice-chair, Annalee Allen, Janet Benson, Andrew Carpentier, Una Gilmartin, and Norman Hooks. Helaine Kaplan Prentice serves as secretary.

Special March 6 Meeting

Planning Director Gould explained requirements for placement on the local register, noting Survey Districts, Environmental Review Laws, the 1994 Preservation Element, the 130 designated landmarks, and 5-7 districts.

She introduced Chris Buckley, who explained that properties on the Local Register are those with a C rating or higher on the Oakland Cultural History Survey (OCHS). Attendees were invited to ask questions.

Following the workshop, the Board met for its annual dinner meeting to discuss Board goals and objectives for the coming year.

Regular March 6 Meeting

Gould reported that there will be a report to the full Council the following night on Uptown outreach meetings; that the **Durant Square** nomination goes to the Planning Commission on the coming Wednesday night, and the Final EIR is complete; the Draft EIR on the

Shorenstein project has been completed; and the **Cox Cadillac** nomination would be sent to Council as soon as possible.

Betty Marvin, OCHS, presented a map of the Local Register of Heritage Properties in the Central District showing a color-coded map of Local Register resources. She is working with Patrick Lane for compatibility with his 10K map.

Pamela Magnuson Peddle, OHA vice president suggested the Board appoint a representative to attend community outreach meetings for the **Uptown** development project. Director Gould said the Commission is also doing so. Board Chair Lythcott offered to ask for volunteers.

Oaklander Manny Granillo offered to speak on behalf of the **Wood Street Train Station** with a reuse proposal. He suggested the area between 12th and 17th streets, between Wood Street and the freeway, become a park with rolling railroad stock, a living museum where the railroad cars can be worked on, referring to it as the "Western Heritage Railroad Museum".

The station still has a second deck to serve the museum he envisions. When asked if trains in a museum need track, he replied there are still tracks at the station. Douthat recommended that Granillo contact Fred Ridley at Southern Pacific.

In Design Review, Board approved architect William Coburn's application to rehabilitate the retail office and theater facades at the **Fox Oakland Theater** (1807-29 Telegraph Ave.) with conditions that the applicant meet with SHPO to confirm conformance with the Secretary's Standards and protect eligibility as a federal tax credit project.

On the 18th and-19th streets side installation of the side gates be reversible; that guidelines be added to

OHA says 'thank you' to its generous donors

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Margaret Elizares

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Annalee Allen

Randall & Cheryl Berger

Deborah Cooper

Diana Hunt Edgerton

Lynne Fountain

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Anthony Holdsworth

Herbert B. Kennedy

Esther & Harlan Kessel

Inez White

Valerie Winemiller

Donors

Paul Duchscherer

Mark Edwards

Barbara Smith

Ted Wurm

Thank you and much appreciation to all those who have contributed time, money, and spirit to OHA, as we fight to ensure that the Oakland renaissance includes a renewed appreciation for our extraordinary architectural heritage. We welcome contributions to our effort at any time.

See **LANDMARKS** on page 16



The Emerald Fund, bottom left; Dennis Evanosky, top left; Oakland History Room, right.

Clockwise from bottom left: the Emerald Fund's plans for the Montgomery Ward site; Robert Brokl addresses supporters at the Aug. 26 gathering to support the preservation of the Ward site; right, Montgomery Ward circa 1923.

Updating Montgomery Ward

The fate of the Ward building hangs by a thread. Superior Court Judge Judith Ford ruled in mid-July against the plaintiffs, who are trying to preserve the building, the League for the Protection of Oakland's Architectural and Historic Resources.

An appeal was filed Aug. 1, the same day the final judgment was issued.

Meanwhile, the building—still under city ownership, without demolition permits and posting—is being dismantled at a rapid rate.

The demolition project is being so fast-tracked that the plastic supposedly covering openings for the "abatment" is torn, loose, and blowing in the wind.

The League suit argued that the city erred by picking the school district's demolition plan when an "environmentally superior plan" was available and doable. The Emerald Fund plan—a potential win-

win for all parties—involves renovating the 1920s structures for live/work, apartments and other possible uses, and building a new school alongside for 600 students—the same size school as the school district said it required. The suit maintains that while the league cannot force the city as owner to pick a plan such as the Emerald Fund's, nevertheless it can prevent the selection of a plan with significant environmental harm—in this case, demolition of the National Register Ward Building.

The league suit also asked for a supplemental EIR to consider the Emerald Fund plan, which was not specifically covered by the alternatives discussed in the Environmental Impact Report.

Judge Ford did not explain the basis for her decision. With civil and criminal case background from municipal court, CEQA issues may be new to her. During oral arguments, she seemed to give weight to "local agency" prerogatives. The implications of her ruling, if allowed to stand, are ominous. Agencies can simply do EIRs, however sloppily, and take down whatever they chose, including A and B rated, even National Register-listed-buildings.

Heaven help Cox Cadillac with its EIR-*interruptus*, JJ's Diner with its yet-to-begin EIR, or the Fire Alarm Building with its compromised stucco-over-sandstone-façade, which just might preclude National Register status pending restoration.

Meanwhile, construction crews have moved onto the Ward site and, among the most noticeable demolition activity, banks of windows are being removed wholesale.

These steel frame windows would have been reused by the Emerald fund developers and others, and are among the character-defining historic fabric of the building. Their removal may prevent any future developer from renovating and claiming historic tax credits.

Funds are urgently needed to underwrite the appeal. For more information about local efforts to save the Ward building, please contact Robert Brokl at 655-3841 or Xandra Grube of the league at 532-3010.

Contributions may be sent directly to attorney Rose Zoia, 13760 Arnold Dr./P.O. Box 309, Glen Ellen, CA. 95442.



Extending a warm welcome to new members (March–July)

Sharon Ashby
 John Benson
 Leonard & Mary Ann Benson
 Ann Butts
 Barbara Bye
 Courtney Clarkson & Roy Leggett
 Marvin Collins
 Cathy Craig
 Lea Delson
 Paul Duchscherer
 Elizabeth Ellinger
 Jeanne & Gordon Flynn
 Jane Friedman
 Mathew Frierman
 Philip Garcia
 Oliver Gilliland
 Emmi Govers
 Erik Hoffman & Deirdre Hallman
 Earl & Rosalie Holtz
 Dana Hull
 Bob Hunt
 William Kadi
 Michael Kawaleck & Michael Droubay
 David Ray Kidd
 Stacy Leier-Valentine
 Jack Levtza
 Peter Lomhoff
 Leslie & Diane Lynch
 Richard Miller & Non Travis
 Judy & Peter Mollica
 Paul & Carol Omelich
 Barbara Parsons
 Jean Puffer
 Linda Rose
 Ann Rutledge
 Prentice Sack
 Evalyn Seidman
 Linda Stoneall
 Sue Taylor
 Randal Thornally
 Ron Ucovich
 Lauren Ugi
 Tina Wallis
 Jack Waters
 Matthew Webb
 Connie Welsh
 Burlington Willes
 Marecv Zehavi

Landmarks

Continued from page 14

subdue the storefront lighting relative to theater lighting; pocket awnings are to be operable; the stain problem is to be resolved before cleaning and disposition; the design for the grill at the entry and the ticket booth be returned to the Board; that stained glass be the last priority and that terra cotta be replaced in kind.

Planning Director Gould reviewed revisions to the Oakland Zoning Regulations related to preservation, including a minor revision based on hearings to clarify that properties on the LRHR do not include the PDHPs (Potential Designated Historic Property). The revision would affect a small number of properties on the Preservation Study List; 56 of 78 affected properties are in the **Havenscourt** area. She said that the Board's recommendation to record designations at the county recorder would be forwarded to both the Commission and Council.

Boardmember Douthat asked if the revision represents a change in the Element and was told it does not. Boardmember Carpentier asked why the properties are on the Study List, and Chris Buckley explained they were listed in the early 1980s after the initial phase of the Survey with further evaluation expected later. The districts are suitable for local S-7 designation but not as National Register districts. Carpentier said that if they nominate all the properties as Heritage Properties, they would be protected.

Boardmember Gilmartin asked if temporary delay of demolition would be lost by the revision. Boardmember Douthat said she is upset at the revision, which she saw for the first time two days before. Saying it was a change to major definitions, she noted that by removing the 78 properties, the owners' right to use the State Historic Building Code has been taken away.

She offered a motion to recommend that the Planning Commission schedule a public hearing, review, and approve the proposed zoning regulation amendments limited to miscellaneous text changes

detailed in the March 13 staff report as page 3, item (a) and page 5, items (d) and (e); recommended approval excludes page 3 item, (b) and page 4, items (d) and (e) as set forth in the Rezoning and Law Change Procedure (Chapter 17.144) of the Zoning Regulations.

She also recommended a joint workshop with the City Planning Commission be scheduled for Wednesday, April 5 on the proposed related amendments to the Demolition Ordinance and to the Environmental Review regulations; directed staff to record Preservation District, Heritage Property and LRHR status on the deeds of affected properties, if the amendments are adopted, and direct staff to start work on preservation incentives including those specifically set forth in the Element and others that will be identified in the future.

See LANDMARKS on page 17

Free Guided Walking Tours

The Oakland Tours Program invites you to a series of 90-minute guided walks through historic downtown streets. See Chinatown, City Center, City Hall, Preservation Park and Jack London Waterfront.

Discover Oakland's changing skyline, landmarks, churches and high rises.

Tours are offered Wednesdays and Saturdays at 10 a.m., from May through October. Reservations are recommended but not required.

Special tours combining features of several tours or other city landmarks can be arranged for a small charge. For more information, call the 24-hour hotline (510) 238-3234, or log on at www.Oaklandnet.com (click on community link for map, dates and starting places).

Volunteers are needed to help with school tours and to learn to lead tours; a new guide class is starting soon.

Leave your name and number if you would like to help promote Oakland's unique heritage.



Landmarks

Continued from page 16

Board agreed to hold the special joint meeting with the Planning Commission April 5. Boardmember Gilmartin said she shares Douthat's concerns that some properties would lose protection.

Boardmember Benson said that an effort should be made to contact the owners to assure they are fully aware and informed.

Board Secretary Prentice asked if the Board believes it is time to reactivate the landmark nominations for the **Floral Depot, I. Magnin and the Broadway Building**. Boardmember Carpentier volunteered to meet with the owners once more, and asked staff to outline the current and proposed regulations for such a meeting. Prentice recalled that the Broadway Building was nominated for landmark designation in 1989 following the earthquake in order to prevent demolition; the building was privately owned then. The action was tabled indefinitely by the Council in 1991. Carpenter recommended that effort be continued.

Boardmember Douthat added that the Art Deco Society offered to speak in support of the Floral Depot at landmark proceedings. Prentice noted that the Planning Commission tabled the Floral Depot in 1982, and suggested the Board wait to see how the building fits into the City's current plan for Uptown before reactivating the nomination. Director Gould suggested a check with the Redevelopment Agency for new owners.

Carpentier said he would like to talk with the new owner of the **Claremont** about designation and suggested each Boardmember take a specific building to pursue landmark status before disturbing project applications arrive.

Board Chair Lythcott advised that the Floral Depot come first; he also considered **Navlet's**, and said he would like to talk with Forest City. He offered to represent the Board at the Uptown community outreach meetings. Carpentier asked if funding is available for the Floral Depot. He and Gilmartin volunteered to meet

with owners of the buildings mentioned when appropriate.

Board Chair Lythcott reported he met with Council member De La Fuente, and plans to make a presentation to CEDA to inform them of the Board's activities and philosophy. Gould said that the Board focus on zoning during the past year was essential, but they must decide on priorities for the next year; such as incentives.

Board Secretary Prentice, reported CalTrans canceled a March 8 meeting on the **Bay Bridge** replacement of the historic east span, and the MOA is not signed yet. Mitigations have not been augmented. The City has not been shown the latest work on design details for the east span, (the intended purpose of the canceled meeting).

Boardmember Gilmartin reported on code compliance referrals, noting the problem is when an owner refuses to sell. There are several quality and significant referrals, especially **1026 Pine St., Best Avenue and the Capital Theater on International Boulevard**.

She expressed a particular concern when the owner is a bank. The goal is to get the houses rehabbed and re-occupied to maintain the neighborhood as well as the resource.

Landmarks Board and Planning Commission, Joint Meeting, April 5

The Board and the Commission met to discuss the proposed revisions to the Oakland Zoning Regulations, Environmental Review Regulations, and the Demolition Ordinance to implement the Historic Preservation Element. There was no regular April Board meeting.

May 2000

Planning Director Gould had schedule conflicts, and Board Secretary Prentice reported the Historic Preservation Zoning has been delayed in coming before the Planning Commission for a full public hearing because of limited staff resources.

Currently, it is planned for a June meeting there. Gould said that she looks forward to discussing Board goals and work programs for the coming year at the next meeting. (Prentice noted that the delay in

transmittal of the Cox Cadillac nomination to City Council is also a matter of staff resources. Because of the considerable amount of development activity, most of her time is devoted to current projects, along with Board administration.)

Two reports will be received by the Council, one in favor of designation from the Planning Commission and another from staff with an alternate recommendation.

Board voted unanimously to consent to amending the landmark designation of Lakeside Park to include the **Lawn Bowling Green** building and facility.

In Design Review, Board voted to recommend approval with conditions (described below) for Lalanne Volkman, developers/Pyatok Associates, architect, for a new 92-unit four-story residential complex at 655-12th St. in the S-7 Preservation Park Preservation Zone.

The project is a model for the 10K program. The six conditions for approval are integrity of design, quality of materials, study of walkways, resolution of details, especially on the roof, landscape issues at the entry courts and relocation of two units on the facade at 11th and 12th streets rather than in the middle of the property.

Board voted enthusiastic support for listing **Heinhold's First and Last Chance Saloon** on the National Register. David Nicolai, applicant, said he followed a suggestion that the application should end its historical account in 1916 with Jack London rather than incorporating a later period. Kate Nickel, representing the Port of Oakland, said that the Port is preparing a letter of support.

Board heard a presentation by Elois Thornton of the Oakland Army Base Reuse Authority. She said the **Army Base** was listed for closure in 1995, and there has been a two-year planning process; they have been working with EDAW, environmental planning consultants to develop a master plan calling for a business and technology park east of Maritime Street and maritime use to the west.

Anticipated uses include the relocated **Produce Market**, a workforce campus for the homeless and an East Bay

See LANDMARKS on page 18



Landmarks

Continued from page 17

Regional Park District shoreline park. The BCDC Seaport Plan designates portions of the Base for Port priority use possibly altering future ownership pattern and uses as conceived in the Master Plan. The city has entered into an agreement with a master developer, and there is interim leasing on the site. Last fall, the Draft EIS was issued, and response to comments is still underway.

The Army is doing the EIS focusing on disposal, and the city is responsible for the EIR and land use approvals. Discussion focused on covering the 106 policy, Landmark Board participation in a 106 process, demolition of structures, and the role (or lack of) of preservation. Board Chair Lythcott asked for an inventory of what now exists. Thornton offered to provide a 1997-98 inventory. Lythcott stressed the need to consider building reuse, hoping to save as many as possible. Carpentier asked if the Board has a role, as the City decides what is demolished.

Thornton said yes. Aliza Gallo, executive director, OBRA, said the goal is job creation. Buildings are not up to code, and there is a BCDC requirement from the Seaport Plan that could change jurisdictional boundaries.

Prentice suggested the Board examine the feasibility study to possibly identify kinds of reuse, rather than whether the identified use can be accommodated in the historic structure. Thornton said she welcomes the Board's comments. Gilmartin said that preservation is a real source of job creation. Chair Lythcott suggested that repair of the **Wood Street Train Station** could be a possible mitigation for loss of structures.

A tour was scheduled for May 22, 8:30 a.m. at the **Army Base**.

Lythcott, Douthat and Benson formed an ad hoc committee with Allen as alternate. Board Chair Lythcott said he spoke at the CEDA committee where he summarized the Board's activities for the year.

Boardmember Allen spoke on the dedication of **Children's Hospital Research Center at Martin Luther King Jr.**

Plaza (University High School), saying she was impressed with the building, especially the library, and is gratified by the preservation achievement for Oakland. She noted the Tours program, OCHS and LPAB were represented and many stopped at the city of Oakland Environmental Expo April 19. Adding a report on the celebration of the City birthday, held this year May 2, she noted Julia Morgan and Jack London were there.

Boardmember Hooks reported on phase 2 gutter replacement at **Lafayette Square Park**. He noted that he and Allen have discussed with the landscape architect the historic timeline in the park, which Board did not review.

David Nicholai, director of Pardee Home Museum, expressed concern about the timeline on the preservation of the historic square. He said he lives at the Pardee House and uses the park, and has been attending planning meetings on the park for five years. He founded neighborhood groups, spoke at the groundbreaking and wrote about the park.

Although the design preserved the trees as intended, the historic walkways have not been retained; the plan called for preserving the entry paths at the four corners.

The May 27, 1997 approval letter was cited. Believing the design for phase 2 differs from the approved plan, he asked about the design review process. He expressed concern about the historic interpretation to be included in the park. It was supposed to include four serpentine walls at the historic entry, no longer in the plan.

There is a mural on the back of the building instead and a memory strips project. He met with the muralist and is optimistic about the mural; he asked the Board to find out whether funding is in place.

He has no input into the memory strips, and objects to the fifteen-word limit and omission of Oakland High School from the chronology. Chabot Observatory in Lafayette Square was a facility of Oakland High (across the street at the time).

William McKinley spoke to the school children in Lafayette Square just months before he was assassinated. It appears to Nicholai the designers have a distaste for traditional elements.

He believes the approach to the interpretive piece should be more coherent. Allen said she expected the interpretation to be about Lafayette Square as one of the original seven town squares. Nicholai noted that this could be the first example of a citywide landmark signage program. He is president-elect of the Alameda County Historical Society, which has an active plaque program.

Prentice said she noted that the Board realized the design was decidedly modern when it was first approved, although it did include some historic features. She observed that the greatest act of preservation is reinvestment in the square as a city park, and its continued use as open space.

Steve Costa, Board of Directors, Oakland Healthy City Fund (OCHF), said this is about a \$2 million dollar project. Landscape architect Walter Hood is the designer, but could not attend; he is a professor at Cal, and this is the last week of classes. Costa said he would like to find time to look at the issues. He added that Nicholai has been at the table for four years, and they have only heard from him in the last 90 days.

Allen observed that some design issues have evolved more recently. Costa continued saying they would like to resolve the issue in the next 30-45 days, as the contract will be signed soon. He hopes to use the site as a catalyst to identify the historic district. Allen offered to assist. Costa addressed an earlier funding question. \$5,000 is committed for the photo-mural, and \$20,000 for the memory plaza.

Secretary Prentice reported an application is under consideration to demolish three buildings at **2354, 2366 and 2398 Valley St.** rated as ASI by the Cultural Heritage Survey, for the Negherbon auto dealership on Broadway. The applicant would demolish the buildings to create an additional auto asphalt parking area. Gilmartin looked at the properties and strongly recommended alternatives to demolition. Staff has met with the owner's representative and attorney to discuss options. She observed that the small brick auto repair shop proposed for live-

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Landmarks

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work by Ron English at the beginning of the meeting is very similar to the two smaller buildings that are proposed for demolition.

The corner building is the most noteworthy of the three architecturally and appears to be in good condition. Richard Ellis of Lindquist Construction, representing Gary Negherbon, said only one tenant is left in the three buildings, and he has located another place.

Carpentier asked if the brick facades can be saved and how many cars could fit into the corner building. Ellis said the structural layout would not allow parking, and it won't be feasible to save the brick facades only on the smaller two.

Prentice recommended continuing to work with the owner and asked the Board for direction. Allen said she would like to see the building as a loft, as demolition would change the neighborhood's fabric. Lythcott and Hooks volunteered to be involved in future decisions and work with the owner or his representative. Ellis said that the owner might not be willing to relax his stance.

Allen asked about other area parking. Ellis said parking must be on the property owned by the dealership. Carpentier recommended allowing the removal of the two small brick structures in order to save the corner two-story structure, staff was directed to work with Ellis to at least save the corner building.

Prentice reported that the Board acted unanimously on Hook's suggestion to approve seismic upgrade and a second story addition at 380-88 12th St., a historic URM. A preservation consultant worked with the applicant to achieve compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's standards.

Betty Marvin was complimented for the high quality and thoroughness of her Certified Local Government Report.

Allen said the **Claremont** is planning to expand and add 90 units. She asked

about CEQA and whether the Board will get the proposed design.

June 2000

In Open Forum, Elois Thornton, OBRA project manager, thanked the Board for touring the **Army Base**. Work on a feasibility study on re-use of the permanent historic structures is expected shortly. She said she would like to present it to a subcommittee, consisting of the Board subcommittee and a community preservation subcommittee June 26; Board thanked Thornton, and the subcommittee said they would participate in the meeting.

Monica Rohrer of the California Preservation Foundation spoke on behalf of the **Building Conservancy of Northern California**; as president, she introduced the organization to the Board. She recognized local organizations as good at advocacy and regulation but in need of a financial player. They hope to build a revolving fund for rehab, restoration, façade easements, acquisition and reconveyance. They plan to seek real property and cash donations as a 501C3. They plan to influence the outcome of projects.

Burton Edwards, BCNC vice president, said they are new but have a lofty goal. The board consists of an architect, a Realtor, community organizers, a Berkeley Landmarks Board chair, and someone from the Main Street program. They are in partnership with Berkeley, primarily in the relocation of houses in association with UC.

They will be holding a conference in the fall. Vice-Chair Douthat said the City periodically has buildings that need relocation and owners that need assistance. She asked if referral to the organization is appropriate. Edwards said that they have no money, but can offer information. Douthat suggested they contact OHA to learn what similar activities they are involved in, wishing him good luck.

Wendy Markel, Oakland pre-school teacher, said she is concerned about the **Claremont** and was surprised to learn it is not a landmark, despite efforts to make it one. She spoke to OHA and learned that KSL, the owner, made a presentation

to them; she noted that there are now enormous holes being dug into the side of the building, but the Claremont office tells her nothing is happening—165 additional rooms are proposed, but there are no plans. They also propose a new three-story garage with tennis courts on top, and time share condominiums. Board-member Allen asked staff to look into the matter and asked if permits are required for exploratory tests?

Planning Director Gould said there have been a few meetings over the last few years on Claremont expansion, but no details and no formal application and no request to initiate environmental review; she will check with the building department regarding permits. Allen said she attended the town hall meeting with Jane Brunner and discussed expansion; KSL said they are in the preliminary stages of a major expansion and are asking for public input. A full EIR is expected. The Mayor of Berkeley expressed great concern.

The Board should be involved in meetings and provide a public forum to publicize the issues. Prentice said she spoke with KSL executive offices, and they seemed interested in considering landmark designation. Allen is forming a delegation of the Board to meet with them and present application materials and obtain their support.

Planning Director Gould, reported the **Cox Cadillac** nomination is going to the Rules Committee for a date, which will either be in July or in September after the six-week recess. She said that Chris Buckley is reviewing zoning revisions for historic preservation; they are expected to go to the Planning Commission at the last July meeting or in August.

There has been a lot of concern about complexity, and they are considering simplifying the regulations without changing the intention of the Element.

They hope to convene a Board-Commission meeting to informally discuss the idea. Allen, noting she wants to monitor any "simplification" carefully, said she would like to help. Vice-Chair

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Landmarks

Continued from page 19

Douthat expressed concern over the time involved, especially in view of shortages in staff time, saying she sees the process facing unending delay.

Boardmember Carpentier said that the Board's principal responsibility is to identify eligible landmarks, and in his opinion, they are spending too much time on marginal buildings.

He said there are still many landmark quality buildings that need to be identified. In addition to new designations, he said his priorities for the coming year are preservation incentives and improved communication with the Council and the Commission. Allen said such comments indicate a limited understanding of the Board's role as defined in the Element.

Douthat said her priorities include a list of city-owned properties eligible for landmark designation, a look at pending nominations and how to proceed, assuming the zoning revisions are adopted, looking at non A or B properties to see if any should be made Heritage Properties.

She asked Director Gould the status of the Historic Resources Group's consulting contract with the city. The group was working on the Mills Act. Director Gould said the Oak Center S-7 application is pending; they might have to craft a modified S-7 process for a neighborhood over 500 properties.

She said that Picardy Drive might also be interested in designation as a modified S-7 Preservation Zone.

There was an update on the application to construct a 92-unit residential complex in the Preservation Park S-7 Zone. The architect said they have addressed the Board's concerns on elevation, and are still working on building materials. No further Board action was required.

Board voted to approve an application by Berger Enterprises to change the exterior paint scheme at the **Lake Merritt Hotel** (1800 Madison St.) Approval is subject to an on-site visit and recommendation during painting for all colors. Staff suggested selecting a base color that sets

off rather than replicates the terra cotta ornament at the entry, and examination of the value of the sash color.

Boardmember Douthat said EBALDC (East Bay Asian Local Development Corp.) had a nice reception at the **Swan's Market** plaza. Mayor Brown and Council members Reid and Nadel spoke; the co-housing area was open for viewing. She recommended a Board tour.

Secretary Prentice said that the architect, Rosemary Mueller Associates, had sent the subcommittee design development drawings for the Fox façade based on the Coburn schematics approved by the Board.

Staff met with both architects and Jeff Chew to review the designs. Boardmember Hooks said he sat on the selection committee to chose a consultant for the Fox Theater marketing plan.

Allen said that she and Hooks are working on **Lafayette Square** with a meeting is scheduled to resolve treatment of signage. The **Dunsmuir House** held opening ceremonies for their new pavilion, which the Board approved. She reported that the **Sears** renovation was denied approval as a tax credit project and asked staff for more information..

Boardmember Carpentier announced that the CHORI project at old **University High School**, another Board approved project has won the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation

Prentice reported that the nomination of **Heinhold's First and Last Chance Saloon** was approved at the State level of significance for listing on the National Register; the Board's attention was directed to a letter from Vice-Mayor Henry Chang, which accompanied the Board's letter.

Reporting on the opening of Tully's in the historic Broadway Building, she called it a beautiful and long-awaited ideal use for the very significant space at the corner of 14th and Broadway.

She said the high quality interior design uses historic motifs where it was not feasible to retain historic features, signage is responsive to staff comments, achitectural artifacts from the original ceiling are displayed.

Floral Depot update

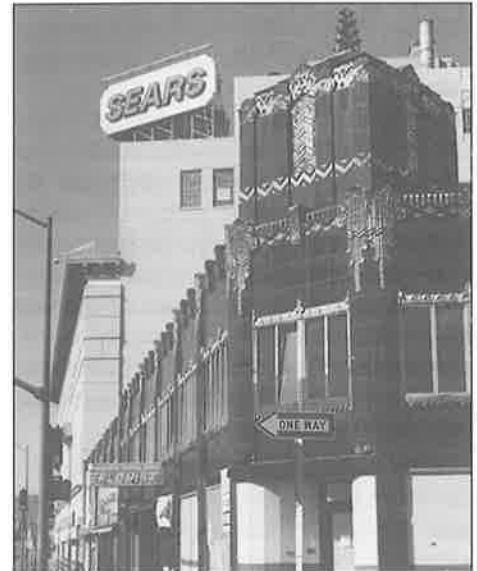


Photo courtesy Jeanette Sayres

Local architect Dan Akol has purchased Oakland's Art Deco fantasy, the Floral Depot, above. Akol plans to bring the building back to life. He hopes to maintain offices in this stunning example of terra cotta in blue, silver and black glazes. Hope is arising for a historically sensitive facelift for this sadly neglected building at 19th Street and Telegraph Avenue.

Staff-approved awnings are forthcoming and the mechanical system was redesigned so that the transom windows would be unobstructed.

Prentice reported that the owner who withdrew the demolition permit for 2398 Valley St. agreed to look into preservation alternatives for the corner building. The other structures have been removed.

Prentice reported that staff has approved an architectural replacement at the **Pekin Low Café** (706 Franklin St.) for the deteriorated balcony, using the provisions for alteration of character-defining elements of a PDHP in the Preservation Element.

The rail will be rebuilt in wood instead of sheetmetal, but the profile will closely resemble the original. Prentice added that she will be willing to work on some of the construction details at the Charles Greene Library if any Boardmember wants to participate.

OHA 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 oaklandheritage @california.com. All phone numbers in 510 area code unless indicated

Current exhibits

Through Friday, Sept. 30 "Idora Park; Oakland's Greatest Amusement Park 1903-1929," on display at the Oakland History Room, Oakland Main Library, 125-14th Street, 238-3222.

Upcoming events

Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 14-15, "Maybeck Weekend." Study tour of Bernard Maybeck's buildings in San Francisco and the East Bay. Sponsored by the California Preservation Foundation and the Maybeck Foundation, 763-0972.

Thursday, Oct. 26, 7:30 p.m., "Julia Morgan and Hearst Castle" presented by Vickie Kastner. BAHA Lecture Series. Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar, Berkeley, 841-2242.

Thursday, Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m., OHA's Annual Meeting. Guest speakers Wilda White and Marianne Dreisbach from the Jack London Warehouse District. Come celebrate OHA's 20th birthday. Location TBA, 763-9218.

Thursday, Nov. 2, 7:30 p.m., "William Wurster & Gardens by Thomas Church" by Daniel Gregory. BAHA Lecture Series. Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar, Berkeley, 841-2242.

Sunday, Nov. 5, "Music in Great Berkeley Houses." Co-sponsored by BAHA and the Empyrean Ensemble. 841-2242.

Thursday, Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m., "Early Modern Architecture" by Andrew Wolfram. BAHA Lecture Series. Hillside Club, 2286 Cedar, Berkeley, 841-2242.

Thursday, Nov. 30, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., Dunsmuir's Holiday Soiree. Dunsmuir's annual formal fundraising event begins with wine, hors d'oeuvres and a sneak preview of the mansion's holiday décor. Enjoy a star light carriage ride, dancing and a buffet dinner; advance reservation only; at the Dunsmuir House & Gardens, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland. Call 615-5555 or visit www.dunsmuir.org.

Dec. 1-31, Wednesdays from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Sundays from 1-5 p.m., tour the Camron-Stanford House, an 1876 Italianate house museum on Lake Merritt decorated for the holidays. Admission \$4/\$2 (free Sunday, Dec. 3), 1418 Lakeside Dr., 836-1976

Tours and exhibits

Oakland Tours, discover Oakland's changing skyline, landmarks, churches and high-rises on one of the many free guided walking tours. The tours are offered Wednesdays and Saturdays at 10 a.m., from May through Oct.; Tours of historic City Hall and Frank H. Ogawa Plaza are offered the first Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m. Call the Tours Hotline, 238-3234 or visit www.oaklandnet.com and click on the community link.

Oakland Historical Landmark Tour, bus tour sponsored by City of Oakland, East Bay Water and Land Tour, and Port of Oakland, Saturdays, departs from front of Oakland Museum at 10th and Fallon, 1-3 p.m., 835-1306.

Black Panther Legacy Tour, historical tour conducted by the Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation of 18 sites significant in the history of the Black Panther Party, last Saturday of each month, noon to 2:30 pm, advance tickets, \$20 adults, \$15 students; \$25 day of tour. Departs from West Oakland Library, 1801 Adeline Ave., 986-0660.

Camron-Stanford House, an 1876 Italianate house museum on Lake Merritt, Wed 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Sun 1-5

p.m., \$4/\$2 (free first Sun), 1418 Lakeside Drive, 510) 836-1976.

Cohen-Bray House, an 1884 Stick Eastlake with original interiors, 1440 29th Ave., 4th Sunday, 2 p.m. and by appt. Adm. \$5; Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland, 532-0704

Dunsmuir House & Gardens, Neo-classical Revival mansion, from April to Sept., 1st Sun, 1 and 2 p.m., Wed., 11 a.m. and noon; \$5/\$4; grounds open Tues-Fri, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., free, 2960 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland. Call 615-5555 or www.dunsmuir.org.

Mountain View Cemetery, free docent tours, 2nd Sat, 10 a.m., 5000 Piedmont Ave., Oakland, 658-2588

Paramount Theatre, Art Deco movie palace, tour includes areas not usually open to the public and theater's history, first and third Saturdays, 10 a.m., 2025 Broadway, \$1, 893-2300.

Pardee Home Museum, an 1868 Italianate villa home to two Oakland mayors and one California governor, Fri./Sat., noon, reservations recommended; schools and private groups (six or more) by reservation. \$5 adults, children 12 and under free. 672-11th St., 444-2187 or www.pardeehome.org.

Meetings of interest

OHA Board of Directors, 4th Mon., 7 p.m.; for agenda/location, 763-9218.

OHA Preservation Action Committee, 4th Wednesday, noon; for agenda and location call 763-9218.

Friends of the Oakland Fox (FOOF), second Thursday of the month, 6 p.m.; for agenda/location, call 763-9218.

Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, 2nd Monday. 4-8 p.m. (Open Forum 4 p.m.), City Hall, Hearing Room. Call 238-3941 for agenda.

City Planning Commission, alternate Wednesdays, times vary, City Hall. Call 238-3941 for agenda.

City Council, every Tues., 7:30 p.m., City Hall, Council Chambers. Call 238-3941.



At the end of the line

Walker Street in Brooklyn rooted in the past

Photo courtesy Oakland History Room

A look down Walker Street (13th Avenue) and beyond into the Alameda Estuary. Washington Street (East 12th Street) ran along the shore in 1890 when this photo was taken. One can trace our present-day 13th Avenue to Park Street and up along Sausal Creek. The stretch of Park along Sausal, which was developed in the 1920s, bore no name in the 19th century as it reached the ancient stand of redwoods that became part of a flourishing industry. According to the information on the back of the photo, Derby's Lumber Wharf stood here, a vestige of the terminus of the redwood trail.

OHA NEWS

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EDITOR-PRODUCTION: Dennis Evanosky

OHA News welcomes contributions — research projects large or small, historic photos, and reports on preservation issues or events. Submissions on disk should be in Wordperfect or Word for PC. Submissions by e-mail may be sent to oaklandheritage@california.com.

OAKLAND HERITAGE ALLIANCE, a California nonprofit corporation since 1980, was formed to bring together community groups and individuals sharing an interest in the history of Oakland, and in the preservation of the city's archaeological, architectural, cultural, environmental and historical resources. Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible.

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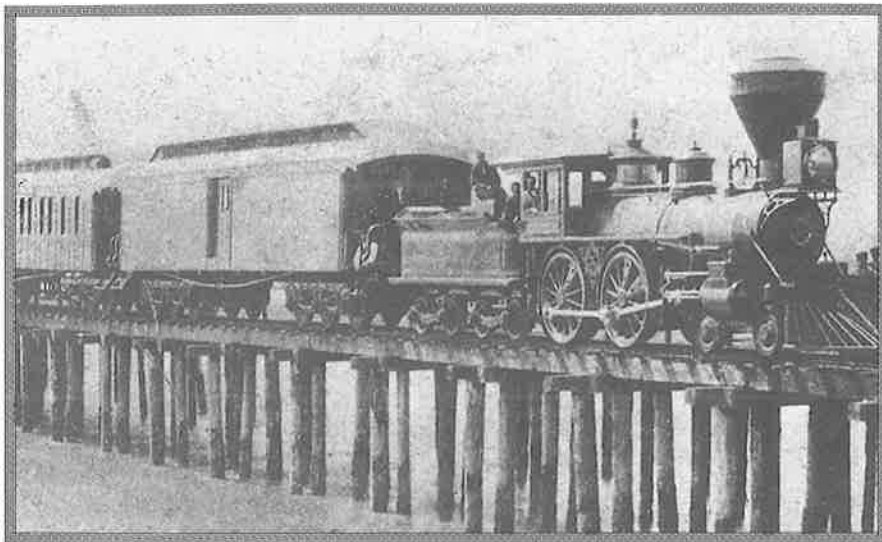
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Oakland History Notes: the Shredded Wheat Company

“The new \$1,000,000 Pacific Coast plant of the Shredded Wheat Company was today officially welcomed into Oakland’s growing industrial family,” announced the *Oakland Tribune* on March 15, 1911.

Situated on 14th Street between Union, Poplar and 12th streets, the factory joined the growing number of food and canning industries locating in West Oakland after 1900, attracted by the area’s advantageous railroad and ship transportation. The opening of the biscuit company was celebrated with great panoply. “It was like opening an exposition,” observed a reporter.

“City officials rubbed elbows with goddesses, a golden key was presented, a message flashed over the long-distance wire from Governor Johnson at Sacramento, whistles blew, bells rang, spectators cheered and the doors swung open for the first time.”

Designed by Lewis B. Hobart, also architect of Grace Cathedral and a number of Hillsborough mansions, the factory would supply employment to generations of West Oaklanders.

The plant featured a large employee dining room where free luncheons, “scientifically prepared,” were offered to workers.

Other benefits included dances and concerts and schools in stenography, sewing and music.

Local residents remember the immense sign over the building reading, “Shredded Wheat, Visitors Welcome.” For many years

Oakland school children streamed into the factory to find out how whole-wheat biscuits were made. The Shredded Wheat Company distributed its product to eleven Western states.

When the factory finally closed in 1991, a victim of the company’s economy moves, the area lost a vital source of employment and a link with its industrial past. After the failure of a proposal to place eighty units of housing in

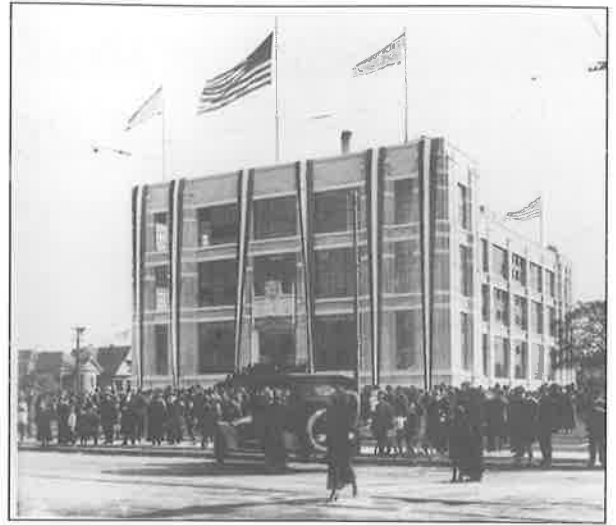


Photo Courtesy Oakland History Room

Crowds gather around the Shredded Wheat Factory at its 1911 grand opening. The plant provided employment for the nearby West Oakland residents and an education in business practices for many Oakland school children.

the structure, the plant began new life in 1994, when California Cereal Products began operating in the factory.

— *William W. Sturm*

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