

# Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

## Winners of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Preservation Awards

— LIVE EVENT VIA ZOOM JULY 25 —

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### Could It Be...Another Pattiani? 1428 Benton Street

*Story by Jerri Holan*

**Award Recipients: JL Mount Investment Company, John H. Jiang and Kwan Hong Li, Owners; Kwan Hong Li, General Contractor; Phoebe Yu, Designer and Realtor; Jim Smallman, Project Manager; Russo Windows, Custom Wood Windows.**

Even covered with asbestos shingles, the home at 1428 Benton Avenue could not conceal its grandeur. An experienced eye easily detected the steep pitch of a Queen Anne roof line and the exuberant expression of a prominent, hexagonal corner turret. And then there was that grand entry stair and tall, double-hung windows some of which still had colored glass panes.

The experienced eye was Jim Smallman, the year was 2018, and the house had a For Sale sign in front of it. Wedged between two colorful Victorians, the plain two-story home seemed out of place to Jim in this older neighborhood. Well, he thought, it wouldn't hurt to check it out and see what he could find out about the building. He called up his colleagues at JL Mount Investment Corporation and wondered if they'd be interested in looking at a fixer with lots of potential?

Well, it turns out they were and they even wanted Jim to oversee the fixing. So commenced the wonderful exterior rehabilitation of another fine Victorian home in Alameda. The home was built in 1890 as a speculative job for Henry Mohns, an investor who commissioned several dozen spec houses in Alameda between 1890 and 1893. A.W. Pattiani and Company constructed the home, one of Alameda's most renowned Architects and Victorian builders. The cost of

*2021 restored facade with original Queen Anne detailing.*

*continued on page 2...*



**1428 Benton Street**



*Above: 1978 City Survey photo.*



*Below: 2019 construction photo revealing original turret cornice trim.*



*Above: 2021 restored dentils and cornice trim on turret.*

construction was \$3,200 and Mohns sold the house the same year to Wm. W. Fowler who worked as a messenger for Wells Fargo. Pattiani built three other houses for Mohns, all in 1890 and all quite similar. These are located at 1424 Benton, 1524 Encinal, and 1208 Union.

JL Mount Investment Company are partners John H. Jiang and Kwan Hong Li, a general contractor and builder par excellence. His expertise was sorely needed as the exterior of this old house was in need of dire salvation. So Kwan Hong Li got to work. The first thing that had to go was the terrible awning and front porch. Next, the awful asbestos shingles were removed. Underneath, original redwood siding, trims, bric-a-brac, window casings, and brackets were revealed. The crew salvaged everything they could and recreated what they could not. The textured gable stucco was restored as were alternating shingle courses, dentils and archways. According to Jim, unfortunately, the belt course had not been saved and was recreated under his exacting eye. Also on his watch, all the large windows were replaced with custom wood double-hungs to match originals from Russo Windows in Oakland. No detail was spared and the restored facade is breathtaking.

Since the lot was so large, and to help pay for the new foundation, JL decided to add a second, duplex unit in the back along with a basement Accessory Dwelling

Unit (ADU). The additions used similar siding but saved money by using prefabricated double-hung windows. They kept the original proportions of the home and, instead of raising the house, dug down to install the basement ADU using light wells for natural lighting on the lower floor. A beautiful new shingle roof graces the steep gable roofs and turret of the refurbished, 3-unit home.

While the exterior of this house was a disaster, the home's interiors were pretty much intact, including generous woodworking and original finishes, which just needed some refurbishing along with a kitchen remodel and new baths.

Phoebe Yu was the interior designer who remodeled the baths and kitchen while Jim helped locate a vintage fireplace to replace the missing front in the Dining Room. He also recommended refurbishing all original lighting and medallions along with the handsome woodworking, including spectacular newel posts and guard rails on the main staircase, Lincrusta wainscoting, trim, and picture and crown moldings on the walls, and recessed ceilings in the main rooms.

Finally, Phoebe Yu selected the subtle exterior color scheme and Kwan Hong Li skillfully executed it. The three-unit building cost approximately \$1 million to restore including the two, rear additions. The new Owner is absolutely thrilled with her restored Pattiani home and looks forward to many years of stewardship. Her elegant home, once again, complements the company of her distinguished neighbors.



*Left: Rear addition with new basement light wells.*

*Right: Restored stairwell, Lincrusta, and wall trim with original colored-glass window at top of stairwell.*



# 1504 Verdi Street

Story by Kay Weinstein

Award Recipients: Nate Martin and Jen Evans, Owners.

Nate Martin and Jen Evans are receiving a preservation award for the exceptional second floor addition that is faithful to the original design of their Craftsman bungalow. 1504 Verdi Street was built in 1917 by George Noble, the foremost builder of bungalows (over 300) in Alameda. In fact, Noble Avenue is named for him. The owners bought this home in 2013, when it was a fixer inside and out. Their bold vision, respect for architectural integrity, and use of reclaimed materials whenever possible, are evident throughout their remodeled home.

Attention to design and detail seem to be a part of everything the owners do. Nate is an electrical engineering director for an electric airplane company. Jen is a digital account coordinator for a podcast company. Their first task for this home was bringing it up to building code. Their second task was to bring back the original dividers between the living room and dining room; they found them on eBay! The original home had three bedrooms and one bathroom; eventually they found themselves wanting more guest rooms and home office space.

Nate and Jen first explored going down, which proved to be too expensive, so they decided to go up. One of the bedrooms, that was only accessible through another bedroom, was the perfect place to build an interior staircase to a second floor. The owners made a crucial decision to avoid the ubiquitous second floor additions that resemble a rectangular box set on top of the first floor. They were even told that such a design is desirable as it is the "Pasadena Style!" Their wiser vision was to mimic the original style by setting back the second floor, as well as matching the overlapping gables of the first floor. They took their suggestions to Architect Adamsu Tegegne who drew up the plans.

Sivtec, Inc. of Napa provided general contracting, unfortunately encountering several construction delays. The City gave approval in October of 2019, and the roof was removed. The City then made further engineering requests, delaying construction into January of 2020. Next was two months of construction full speed ahead until Covid regulations kicked in. In addition to masking requirements, only one trade could be on site at a time, with a two hour gap between trades. The workable plan became one trade a day working on plumbing, electrical, drywall, plaster, tile, and flooring.

Along the way they sourced 1930s oak flooring from Craigslist, and the bathroom tile is reclaimed. Half the light fixtures are vintage, and half are reproduction. Half the doors came from Urban Ore, and half the windows are reclaimed. Custom windows for the front and back were made to match the originals on the first floor. The owners lived on the first floor throughout renovation. In December of 2020, they could move into their second floor, containing two bedrooms, one Jack and Jill bathroom with a private water closet, and a laundry room.

Nate and Jen also went against the remodeling trend of neutral color schemes. The original house was sage green (as are several on the block) with dark red trim. That trim color sparked the idea that a dark red house would stand out on the block, and the resulting dark red house with yellow trim is striking. They also chose some bold blues and greens for the interior. They did most of the interior painting themselves, and are still putting on the finishing touches. We look forward to seeing a bronze plaque displayed on their beautiful home with a second story for a second century.



Left: Single-story bungalow before addition.



Below: Two-story home after renovation with a dark red and yellow color scheme.



Right: Eave and window details mimicking the original elements.

## TIP OF THE HAT



Aluminum windows and neglect characterized the house when it was listed for sale as a "contractor's special."



The house is transformed by incorporating Craftsman details the beaded porch ceiling, wood cladding and river rock stone veneer on the front columns and custom made garage doors, among many other upgrades.



Unique Craftsman styled stained glass windows flank the fireplace, designed and made by Jill, Greg and his parents.

### 1814 Ninth Street *Story by Conchita Perales*

**Award Recipients: Greg and Jill Harrison, Owners; Jarvis Moore, Draughtsman; Izet Tudzinovic, RI Best Construction, Contractor.**

It was early 2018 when Jill and Greg decided it was time to buy their first house. They had been renting in San Francisco and Redwood City for almost 10 years, and it had always been their dream to have their own home. They knew they wanted a house that had history and character, and Craftsman bungalows had always appealed to them for their size and open floor plans. They had been to Alameda Point Antiques Faire and enjoyed driving around the island admiring the historic homes lining the streets, but it was sitting at a local cafe one Sunday morning that Jill knew Alameda would be their forever home. "It was the combination of the weather, the neighborhood and the lively community that made me feel like I was back in my childhood home in the Pacific Northwest", she recalls.

The 1914 Craftsman in the West End had been put on the market as a "Contractor's Special", which meant the house had been neglected and needed a lot of work to make it livable again. All the original double hung wooden windows had been replaced with aluminum, the wood framing around all the doors and windows had been removed, it was practically dilapidated inside. The boxed beam ceiling in the dining room and the interior doors with their hardware where the only original turn of the century details left, everything else had been removed or modified.

"The house definitely needed a lot of work, inside and out, and it was exciting for us to imagine how we could save this historic house, make it our own, and at the same time infuse some early 1900s craftsmanship back into it. We wanted to recreate a home that would remain functional for us and also preserve it for another century", Greg recalls.

"The demolition work started as soon as the papers were signed, but it would take a little over a year for us to get ready to break ground on the rebuild of our new home. It had been a year of demolition, design review, consultations with our draughtsman, building permits, and financing logistics. It was during this

'waiting' time that we did extensive research to determine what features we wanted to have, while trying to reintroduce elements that had been lost when it had been remodeled in the 1960s", Greg continues.

"We were also very excited to get the project underway and completed so we could finally live in the community, as opposed to driving every weekend from Montara, where we had been living with my parents during the renovation. We simply couldn't wait to finally become official residents of Alameda. This little town has more character than almost any other in the country, and we are trying to play a small part in maintaining that character for years to come."

A lot of work and updates went into restoring the Craftsman character of the house, amongst them were replacing all the windows with original style double hung wood frames, replacing the iron stair and porch railings with wood and adding beadboard paneling to the porch ceiling. They also replaced the plastic rain gutters with copper and restored the original front door, dressing it with Craftsman style hardware. One of the biggest changes to the front of the house was recreating the traditional Craftsman look by installing wood clad framing and river rock stone veneer to the columns. The cement stairs and porch were clad with wood-like ceramic tile, and they added Craftsman style outdoor lighting fixtures to finish off the look. The garage door and planter box under the front windows were designed and built from scratch by Jill and Greg; and the beautiful Craftsman styled stained glass windows flanking the fireplace were also designed and made by them with the help of his parents Pat and Mike, who've been working with stained glass for over fifty years.

After almost three years of construction, and with the help of dozens of others, the Harrisons finally finished rebuilding their house and are now enjoying the benefits of their hard work. "We had been looking forward to owning our first home for so long that it is still amazing to us that we actually went through all this process of demolition and reconstruction. But it was all worth it, we are very happy with the results, and we can't wait to have our family and friends over to enjoy it with us", says Greg proudly.

# 603 Haight Avenue

Story by Robert Farrar

**Award Recipients: Nick Winkworth & Judith Jones, Owners;  
Robert Allen, General Contractor; John Jameson, Foundation Contractor.**

Nestled in the middle of the west end of Alameda, tucked within cottages, Craftmans and summer homes is one of the larger Marcuse and Rimmel houses on the main island. Designed and built in 1897, it shows the true majestic feeling of the houses built that year by the famous building firm.

The house sat for many years with no upkeep or real care and judging from the kitchen and bathrooms, the last time it had been remodeled was back in the 1950s. None of the wood sash windows worked and many were broken, and the windows in the basement and attic that had been replaced with aluminum were also breaking apart. The kitchen was nonexistent, there were no cabinets or appliances and the refrigerator was located on the back porch, which at some point had been enclosed.

The house went up for sale in November of 2019, and when Nick Winkworth and Judith Jones first walked through it, they realized it was the one for them. They wanted a house that needed work, a house they could bring back to life in a place near water, and after looking in San Luis Obispo, San Diego, Oregon and Washington state, they settled on Alameda for of its small-town feel and great historic neighborhoods.

So Nick and Judith set out to bring this jewel back to its original splendor. After working out plans with an architect, they found an excellent general

contractor, Robert Allen, who guided them through a complete restoration and interior remodel. They started from the bottom up, tackling the foundation first by hiring Jameson Construction who did an excellent job taking out the brick foundation, enlarging the depth of the basement, and bringing it up to code with seismic updates. Next, all the plumbing and electrical were replaced throughout the house.

In reviewing the layout of the house and to make it functional, they decided to remove two doors in the kitchen in order to have two solid walls for cabinets and appliances. The pantry area was enlarged to create additional storage and a work area. The house also had two sets of stairs, the main set next to the front entry and a back "service" set, much narrower and steeper, that leads from the kitchen to the second floor and to the basement. They were able to keep the back set in its original state because of the Historical Building Code. Additionally, with the two doors in the kitchen removed, they were able to create a half bath under the main staircase, and the back porch which had been enclosed, was opened up again and restored.

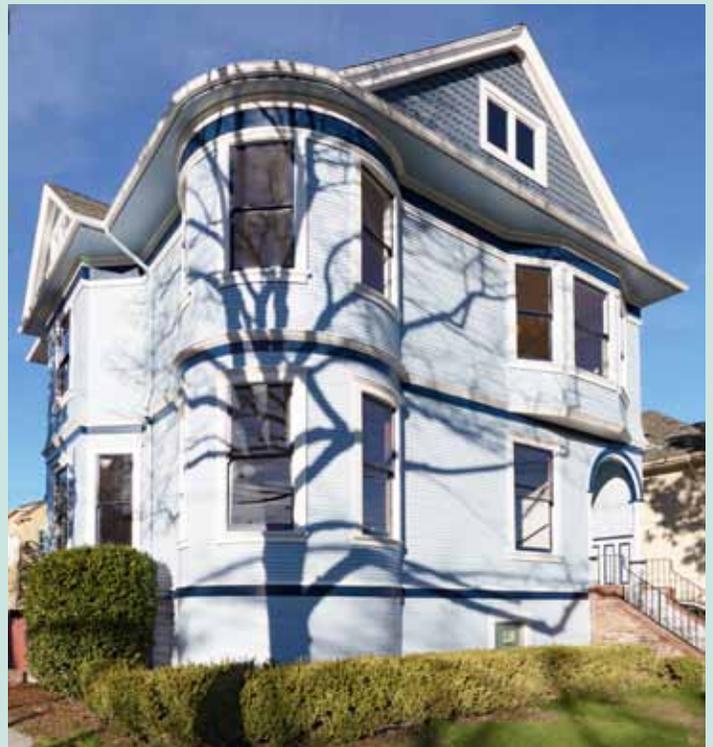
The wood on the stairs and railings, on the door and window frames on the first floor were all stripped and stained. And Nick, a hands-on homeowner with carpentry experience, worked on many of these projects, he stripped and stained all of the doors in the house, which took him one whole week each! And a big surprise during the restoration was finding an original and perfectly stained pocket door near the front door that had been sealed up for many years. All the windows were removed repaired and new sashes added to make them work like the originals did.

*continued on page 6...*



*Above: What the house has looked like for the last 50 years. The wood siding is cracked and split and none of the original wood windows worked.*

*Below: With the work complete, all the aluminum windows have been replaced, all the original wooden windows now work and a fresh paint job tops off the finished product.*



**603 Haight Avenue**



The top picture shows the enclosed porch that doubled as part of the kitchen.  
The second image shows the wall has been removed and the original porch is now visible.

The dining room needed a lot of work. The tile around the fireplace was cracked and broken, so they removed the mantle and all the tile, they refinished the woodwork and replaced the tile on the wall and floor. Now the fireplace looks original and perfect. The china cabinet next to the fireplace was also refinished and brought back to life. All in all the front entry, the side parlor, the living room, dining area, and butler's pantry have all been brought back to their original beautiful luster.

The second floor took on some major remodeling. A small bedroom was replaced with a laundry room and a full bathroom, and then it was connected to the master bedroom, which also has a full walk-in closet. For all of us that have Victorians and small closets, we are very envious of a walk-in closet! The other side of second floor has two additional bedrooms. All the upstairs windows were also repaired, and new sashes added to make them work again. With age comes movement and cracks in the plaster, so they brought in a crew that repaired all of the plaster with new mesh and now the plaster on the walls and ceiling look like what the originals would have looked like when the house was built.

Moving to the outside of the house, a lot of the siding had cracked, split, and was coming off the framing. The contractor replaced some of the boards, but mainly repaired the original siding. The frames around the windows were missing pieces that now have been remolded and replaced. The old aluminum windows were replaced with new replicated windows that are functional. The outside attic areas had new fish shingles added and a new paint job of the whole house completed the project. There are still future projects in the plans, which include landscaping with new drought resistant plants and a small grass area, and the garage, which according to city records was built in 1917, will be rebuilt to match the original.

All in all, Nick and Judith have spent the last year, during a pandemic, working seven days a week to bring life back to their beautiful Marcuse and Rimmel house, and they're now enjoying the fruits of their hard labor. The newly restored house is once again a shining jewel in Alameda's historic west end.

**... AAPS PLAQUES ...**



AAPS has plaques for buildings that are past Preservation Award winners, plaques for buildings that are historically significant and/or architecturally intact or are part of a historic district, and plaques for City Historical Monuments.

To learn if your building qualifies, see our information page [alameda-preservation.org/programs/historical-plaque-program/](http://alameda-preservation.org/programs/historical-plaque-program/)

**Questions? Please email [plaques@alameda-preservation.org](mailto:plaques@alameda-preservation.org)**

**PAC**

PRESERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE

**GET INVOLVED & MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

The General Plan is in currently being updated. Together we can make a difference in Alameda's future. Share your ideas and participate!

We maintain a Google Group list to advise AAPS members on ongoing issues that could affect historic properties.

Please contact  
**Christopher Buckley at**  
**510-523-0411 or [cbuckleyAICP@att.net](mailto:cbuckleyAICP@att.net)**



*Left: The staircase before the demolition had rotted and broken "off the shelf" posts and balusters installed in the 1980s when the concrete foundation was put in.*

*Right: The finished staircase now matches the style and proportions of the house. The design of the newel posts, balusters and plinths come together in a substantial and welcoming manner akin to what the original staircase would have looked like when it was first built.*



*Detail: Surviving newel post was the design clue and set the stage for the complete design of the staircase restoration.*

## 2508 Eagle Avenue *Story by Conchita Perales*

**Award Recipients: Kris Koblik and Sean Nolan, Owners; Don Maclean, Artisan, Designer, Master Carpenter.**

The front porch and stairs of a Victorian house often display unique architectural design features and in many cases are considered a work of art on their own. However, they are also more vulnerable to the elements than other parts of a house, and these structures, no matter how meticulously maintained, eventually must be completely restored or replaced. And for that, you need an expert and maybe even a private investigator.

Enter Don Maclean, a craftsman carpenter whose great, great, grandfather, James Millington, married and moved to Alameda in 1853. James worked many years as a carpenter and a building contractor, and later became very involved in the City's civil and political arenas. Don's knowledge and love for wood is undeniably in his DNA, and growing up in his father's Victorian on Grand Street he acquired the appreciation and skills needed to understand and repair intricate woodworking. He trained as an artist at the San Francisco Art Institute and entered into the craft of wooden boat building which he mastered for 30 years. After a stretch exploring the art world in New York while working for a restoration contracting company, Don is back in Alameda exercising his art, his carpentry and even some detective skills.

Such was the case for Kris Koblik and Sean Nolan who bought their house in 2013. They remember when "it came a point where it seemed as if the whole stairs and the porch were about to fall apart, so it was time to address the repair before they became unsafe." Sean found Don on a neighborhood app when he saw a post that featured a beautiful restoration of the stairs and railing of a Victorian house in the Gold Coast. "At that moment, I knew that Don could take care of our stairs and restore them to what they could have looked like when the house was built in 1890."

'Detective' Maclean recounts, "We didn't have much to go on except for the one original newel post that was left at the top of the stairs when they were replaced sometime in the 1960s with 'buy from the shelf' pieces from a hardware store. That one surviving post set the stage for the entire preservation of the porch and staircase, and it became the clue and the origin of the whole design. And when it was time to choose the designs for the balusters, caps and handrails, Kris, Sean and I decided to incorporate spins and patterns from the porch posts, also original to the house, to tie the staircase to the rest of the house."

"Once we started to demolish the staircase," Don continues, "we found that the entire existing framework had a lot of rot and decay, as well as termite damage. So

I had to tear it down in its entirety and replace everything, including the stringers! Once the framing was removed it became apparent that the foundation had been poured improperly, it was offset and there were no right angles for my new pieces to fall into place.

"I think my favorite moment was when Don asked me only half-jokingly 'Who built this? Dr. Seuss?'" Kris recalls, "It brought home the gravity of the need for the repairs in a lighthearted way. We have photographs of all the weird framing and some of it wasn't even nailed together. I'm surprised that the porch was even standing."

Another major challenge Don encountered was finding out that the two original supporting columns at either end of the porch were shifted to the sides, not straight. In order to fix this he had to jack up the porch overhang so it wouldn't fall and then pound to plumb and level each of the columns a little at a time. He recalls "what a real problem that was, because the stairs are built from there, so the columns had to be straight. There was quite a bit of band-aid and fixing to do before we got to the real fun stuff!"

Part of the "fun stuff" was wood choice. Don used a mix of four different types of wood for this project. For the framing underneath he selected Douglas fir and redwood, and explains how he used a penetrating epoxy, so every inch of the framing was sealed to avoid rot and termites. The posts, handrails and lower caps are made from Western red cedar, a West Coast wood resilient to rot which is a little softer and brittle, but easily sanded and sculpted. And the balusters and the stair treads are made from sapele, a Brazilian wood. "Sapele is very hard and durable, and will stand up better to the elements than almost any other wood. Unlike Douglas fir which will eventually wear down and rot, or redwood which will wear down quickly and chip easily, sapele is like steel, it repels water incredibly well and bugs don't like it."

"The posts were replicated with an old and beautiful World War II lathe, a machine with a rotating drive used for shaping wood or metal" Don continues, "the lathe was restored and operated by an experienced craftsman in Marin County, and he's quite good at what he does. He retooled the lathe to make the posts and the balusters; and the caps and the handrails were all handmade by me, one by one, in my little shop here in Alameda."

Sean and Kris agree that the whole process always felt like a partnership. "Don's work is just above and beyond what we ever expected, and we're really pleased that we made the decision to move ahead with the project. And yes, maybe the end cost was a little bit more than what we had anticipated because of all the detailed work that went into it, but it has all been worth it, to have this level of care, attention and professionalism from Don. And now our stairs and porch are rock-solid and they will last for 300 years!" Sean ends with a smile.



Above: The front bay windows needed refurbishing and the front porch was partially covered with cement. Some shingles needed to be replaced due to water damage.

Below: The front porch was resurfaced and maintained the historically accurate 30-inch railing height. The newel posts were custom made to match the interior stairs.



Above: The original fireplace was kept intact and was outfitted with a new gas insert. Damaged tiles were replaced with original tiles from a matching fireplace onsite.

## 922 Lafayette Street *Story by Devon Westerholm*

**Award Recipients: Patricia Devlin, Owner; Alexandra Saikley, Saikley Architects; Lorna Kollmeyer Ornamental Plaster, Medallions; Aurora Painting, Exterior Painters.**

Growing up in Alameda as one of six kids, Patty Devlin remembers a vibrant neighborhood with local kids walking everywhere. Her family purchased the Lafayette house in the early 1960s and tells of elaborate scavenger hunts in their house for Easter and one summer block party where rocker Eddie Money played—he was friends with a local jazz pianist playing at the party. When she was a child there was public access to the lagoons and she remembers going out on them in the summers. Their 1895 Victorian was built by famed local architect Joseph A. Leonard, and has many of the original details: medallions on the ceilings, Lincrusta wall covering in the entry and quirky little porches on the second floor. The house was originally built as a spec home. Patty and her siblings (most still local) decided to restore the home, and put a great deal of effort into respecting the integrity of the original home.

Care was taken to refurbish the front bay windows and replace exterior shingles to match their original design. The bottom siding was replaced horizontally on the architect's recommendation, as they believed that most likely the siding was horizontal not vertical. The decorative stucco on the upper part of the house was damaged and needed repairing, and they replaced the brick foundation reusing the brick in landscaping and in the backyard patio. The porch had a shingled enclosure that they didn't believe was original. Sometimes old railings will be found inside the shingled walls, but in this case, when they removed the shingles, they found that portions of the porch had been cemented over. They reconstructed the new porch, stairs and railings. The newel post caps on the porch stairs were custom

made to match and complement newel post caps on the interior staircase. They also repaired the broken stained glass in the transom over the front door.

They kept the original Lincrusta intact (after calling England to see if they could replicate it—they no longer make that pattern). The house has beautiful medallions throughout. She remembered a talk hosted by AAPS that had local artisan Lorna Kollmeyer speak who restores medallions and other ornamental work which led to hiring her. It was important to Patty to restore them, so they removed and cleaned them prior to reinstalling. For those that were damaged—they had molds made of the originals and they were recreated/recast. When working on the medallions Lorna commented that she had never seen one of the designs in Patty's house. Upon completion, Lorna added it to her collection of designs and named it the 'Lafayette' after their house. They were able to save, refurbish, and reuse most of the original baseboards and moldings. Where they needed to add or replace, they had custom moldings created to match.

In the home there are fun details like the original laundry shoot—while it no longer drops into the laundry—the door to the shoot is still visible in the upstairs hallway. One of the largest changes in modernizing the house was expanding the kitchen. They originally had a small kitchen with few windows and an enclosed porch blocking the inside view. The porch was an uninsulated enclosed porch off the back door kitchen. It had large pane windows that overlooked the backyard and at some point, a previous owner had installed a small water closet. Since it was an uninsulated add on, it was very hot in the summer and freezing in the winter! Devlin removed the porch and bathroom turning it into a large light-filled kitchen overlooking the backyard.

Patty is looking forward to enjoying many more years in her childhood home and we're thrilled with the beautiful refresh of a local gem!

## Second Draft General Plan Considered by Planning Board and Historical Advisory Board on June 14

A public hearing on the Second Draft Plan was held by the Planning Board and Historical Advisory Board on Monday, June 14. The Second Draft and other information is available at [www.alameda2040.org](http://www.alameda2040.org)

Last year AAPS submitted extensive comments on the initial draft Plan and identified important issues. The Second Draft has responded to most of these comments but there are still some major areas of concern including:

**1. Significant increases in residential densities (“upzoning”) proposed in much of historic Central Alameda between Versailles Avenue and Main Street.** The upzoning could encourage demolition and replacement of historic buildings with new larger buildings that could be out of scale with the neighborhood.

These areas are the Medium Density Residential, Neighborhood Mixed Use and Community Mixed Use Areas shown in the Plan’s land-use diagram. The Plan states that the proposed upzonings are needed to provide enough land in Alameda to develop state-required additional housing currently estimated at ca. 5400 units by 2031. Although Article 26 of the City Charter (“Measure A”) has prevented overdevelopment of Alameda since 1973, the state-required units override Article 26.



Architecturally intrusive “creative and contemporary” new buildings that arguably “complement, but do not mimic”, neighboring historic buildings.



New out of scale development in a historic neighborhood.

But such extensive upzoning does not appear necessary to meet the state’s requirements. City staff has previously said that most and possibly all of the required units could be built outside of existing neighborhoods at such locations as Alameda Point and the northern waterfront, including underutilized shopping centers. In addition, at least several hundred of the required units are estimated to be developed in existing neighborhoods as relatively non-intrusive state-required Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) that can be built within existing buildings or back yards. AAPS opposes the proposed upzoning except for very limited areas and only if, among other things, it is proved impossible to provide the state-required units elsewhere.

### 2. Potential architecturally intrusive new buildings.

Proposed General Plan Policy LU-26b states:

*“Encourage and support creative and contemporary architectural design that complements, but does not mimic, existing architectural designs in the neighborhood or district.”*

This policy is highly inconsistent with the City’s existing design review policies that promote designs consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. If its included in the Plan, it will set the stage for architecturally intrusive new development in historic areas.

The Second Draft Plan has other issues which are addressed in AAPS letters sent to the Planning Board and posted on the AAPS website.

At the June 14 meeting, the City’s planning staff presented a new proposal to expand multi-family, transitional housing, congregate housing and similar uses proposed in the Second Draft Plan for most residential and commercial areas into the R-1 Single Family Zoning District, based on previously submitted public comments. Some Planning Board members supported this proposal. Board-member responses to the above AAPS comments were mixed.

Staff expects to bring the next revision to the Draft Plan to the Planning Board in September. The next draft may be released in August. **Please plan to submit comments to the Planning Board and the City Council when the next draft is released and to speak at the Planning Board meeting.** Please join the AAPS Preservation Action Committee Google Group (see Page 6) to be kept informed of further developments and to review and comment on draft AAPS position statements.

# TRAVELOGUE



An illustrated architectural travel story inspired by places visited and experiences encountered.

## The Road to Legorreta

by Conchita Perales

On my eighth birthday my parents moved our small family to a vibrant and lively residential neighborhood in the Colonia Anzures in Mexico City, where the streets were named after writers and philosophers, and single family homes dating back to the late 1930s tightly lined the streets. Our large upstairs duplex faced the intersection of Victor Hugo and Shakespeare, and the quiet haberdashery that initially occupied the commercial space downstairs would eventually give way to a popular *tortería* that filled up with loud customers at lunch.

Taking up the west corner on Descartes was the *tiendita*, jam-packed with inventory where my brothers and I would spend our weekly stipend on candy and trading cards. A couple of blocks south, on Dante, you'd find the *panadería*, the *tortillería* and the best *taquería* ever — their tacos al pastor with a slice of grilled pineapple would attract people from all walks of life. Every week we'd hear a loud cowbell reverberate through the streets heralding the coming of the garbage truck, or the deep bass-baritone voice that filled the street with its repetitive yell "el gaaaaaaas" that would alert us of the approaching delivery truck carrying the pre-filled propane cylinder tanks. And upon hearing the blaring staccato voice "e-el... a-guaaaaa" neighbors would scramble to the street to have their water jugs refilled. The smells and sounds of those streets are as present to me today as they were then.

It was a Sunday brunch family tradition to have *molletes* (a Mexican staple of refried beans on a toasted bun with melted cheese and salsa fresca), and soon after moving to our new neighborhood, our simple venture became an adventure when my parents found, just two blocks east on Leibniz, a popular *cafetería* in the recently built architectural gem El Hotel Camino Real. And so it was, that in the middle of this energetic and bustling neighborhood, I discovered an unlikely magical place that would open my mind to a world unbeknownst to me, a place alive with bright colors, plays of light, unexpected textures and eight acres of gardens, where the outdoors merged with the indoors.

The Camino Real became my playground and its generously proportioned spaces and intimate interior corners a sanctuary that lifted my spirit and informed my soul. Its walls shielded me from the hustle of the city and taught me about architecture, art and design.



▲ Pyramid shaped stucco wall with balconies overlooking a large courtyard.

The Camino Real Hotel was designed by Mexican architect Ricardo Legorreta for the Mexico City 1968 Olympics, when the city's infrastructure and stadium, among other projects, were being updated and built for the games. Legorreta's style mirrored that of his famous teacher, Pritzker prize winner Luis Barragan, whose mentorship and collaboration is evident in the building's unique design. When the hotel opened it was a leading example of what a hotel could be: elegant, modern, austere and spacious. With an unpretentious acknowledgement to Mexico's past, the building is a mix between a pyramid and an hacienda, a gallery and a monastery, all merged into a modern, colorful and exhilarating Mexican style. Such was the creative force within the design that his work can be construed as futuristic architectural enlightenment.

The art and installations located throughout the hotel were commissioned by Legorreta himself to contemporary artists like Rufino Tamayo, Annie Albers, Miguel Covarrubias and others, and these would add another layer to his architectural conception of the hotel. Where else would you find a gigantic pink lattice wall serving as background to a hypnotic sunken fountain whose wild blade reproduces the madness of a stormy sea? Where, upon entering the grand and sparse lobby, you're greeted by a floor to ceiling canvas encompassing a 40' wall depicting an otherworldly floating figure holding forth its arm? "Hello, we are one" it seems to say... And where can you stand in front of a golden wall reflecting the waning afternoon light, its uneven gold leaf surface carefully punctured and hammered by hand. But nothing would compare to Calder's larger than life red stable. There it stood, like an



▲ The large windows in the open lobby frame the view: Goeritz lattice wall and sea fountain.

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TRAVELOGUE...continued from page 10.



▲ 'Man before the Infinite', Rufino Tamayo 1971. Image: Esteban de Llaca.

elephant in the center of the hall, practically touching the ceiling and dwarfing even the tallest of men, its long metal legs irresistible for a child to climb.

At the time the Camino Real was built, it immediately became the hippest and hottest hotel in town. Inside its walls I saw the likes of dignitaries from faraway lands and even stars from outer space. I was not yet four years old, and before we moved to the neighborhood, but I clearly remember when my mom took my brothers and me to meet The Apollo 11 astronauts, whose world tour—nicknamed “Giant Leap” by NASA—began September 29, 1969, in Mexico City. The astronauts had been back from the Moon for just nine weeks and were staying at the famous Camino Real Hotel where they held some of their press events. The line and the wait were long, but as we finally approached the three smiling men in designer suits my mom held me high in her arms, my hand outreached to touch the famous ones I’d just seen in a spaceship on tv.

The Camino Real’s geometric forms and plays of light, with its colored walls and latticed screens greeted me as a kid and bid me farewell as a teenager.



▲ Mathias Goeritz' pink sculptural wall and Fountain of Eternal Movement, by Isamu Noguchi.

Ten years had gone by and the world around our family life had dramatically changed; quaint homes were being demolished giving way to towers of office and apartment buildings, and what had been a lively and interesting family neighborhood had exploded into a crowded, traffic ridden and unsettling area. The famous hotel is still there however, as bright and bold as when it was first built, and even though it has been somewhat remodeled and some of the original furniture and art pieces removed, Legorreta’s vision lives on as an icon of Mexican modernism. I never actually stayed in the hotel, but the Camino Real stayed with me.

**“Public areas are very spacious, for what we saved in structural costs and costly finishes could be put into making the experience of the hotel more enjoyable through the luxury of space. The interior finishes were shocking for their time. Even a year after the hotel opened, Mexican architects asked me, “When is it going to be completed?”** from Ricardo Legorreta, *The Architecture of Ricardo Legorreta*, University of Texas Press, 1990.



▲ Calder's red stabile in The Camino Real hall, now removed. Alexander Calder, untitled stabile 1968 – painted steel 16 x 20 1/2 x 11 ft. Now stands installed outside of the Centro Cultural Belem in Lisbon, Portugal. Image: Archive 1970s.



▲ Mathias Goeritz, 'Abstract in Golden', 1968.



◀ Detail: Gold leaf punctured and hammered by hand.

  
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## AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2021

•  
**JULY 25**

**24th Annual Preservation Awards**  
**7:00 pm**

*Live event via Zoom*

Register for the livestream  
 Zoom presentation at

<https://2021-preservation-awards.eventbrite.com>

## TIKI BAR ZOOM EVENT

*Story by Karen Lithgow*



**AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT**, we had a Zoom visit with AAPS member and Tiki bar proprietor Brian McDonald on May 23rd to check out his fabulous drinking establishment “CapyBar” behind his Victorian residence. After long admiring and participating in the tiki bar scene himself, Brian decided to convert his garage into his own tiki paradise. Brian’s long-standing friendships with other tiki bar owners provided the contacts he needed to get started on the bar creation and decoration. And boy, is there ever a lot of cool decoration here, we’re talking eye candy on steroids!

His tiki bar of course includes an entire wall jammed with row after row of rum bottles, including the whole collection from Lost Spirits Distillery, the lacquered bar top with embedded decals and the usual tiki paraphernalia with tapa cloth, bamboo, masks, and carved tiki poles. The bar is dark and mysterious as it should be, gently lit with beautiful patterned fixtures, rope-covered glowing balls and the odd neon sign. Surf memorabilia and other fun decorations can be seen behind a movable glass panel. The de rigueur quirky drinking vessels are also in abundance with another wall filled with colorful tiki mugs. Brian’s collection is so huge he has to rotate them in from time to time. Brian showed us some of his favorites which included the ones used at his tiki-themed wedding. My personal favorite is the stately and austere Easter Island head cup. And yes, you have to have umbrellas in your drink!

During our Zoom event which included over 60 people, Brian talked about his inspiration for the bar, how he pulled it all together, aspects of the tiki life style and most importantly, how to make an original mai tai. Zoom participants were given the recipe in advance and some followed along as Brian made us this signature drink. And it was indeed delicious! Brian also told us about upcoming bar embellishments including a waterfall behind the tiki sculpture carving and the tropical “rain” that will be coming down behind the glass wall at the end of the bar. So if you want to see this marvelous place in person, you’ll have to get a hold of Brian for an invite. Stay tuned for our next architectural adventure!

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