

# Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

## Winners of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Preservation Awards

— LIVE EVENT WITH ZOOM ACCESS AUGUST 14 —

### In with the Old, In with the New— Mulberry

Story by Devon Westerholm

**Award Recipients:**  
**Alameda Collection Community Corporation;**  
**Hunt Hale Jones Architects, Architect;**  
**City Ventures, Builder;**  
**RW Stover & Associates, Inc., Landscape Architect.**

This year AAPS has added some new categories to our Preservation Awards. One of these is 'New Construction'. This award honors new construction or "infill" projects, as well as detached ADUs, within older neighborhoods that mirror or enhance the surrounding built environment. Including single family homes, duplexes and/or multiple unit buildings.

Growth is an inevitable part of living in one of the most desirable areas of the United States. Cities can grow in an unstructured, chaotic way that detracts from quality of life, or conversely, focus on smart growth that adds to the community. In 2014 City Ventures developers acquired the land between Eagle Ave. and Willow to build multi-family housing. Architect Dan Hale of Hunt Hale Jones Architects joined the project once it got moving. Dan and the



*The Mulberry buildings were created with environmentally conscious designs, showcasing diverse architectural styles, and modern solar amenities throughout the construction.*

team worked closely with the city of Alameda on the standard decisions such as size, height, and open space. They also met with members of the community twice to collect feedback – knowing that early engagement with the neighbors would not just be key to smoother relations; but would result in a better project. To honor the architecture of the area, the project has three distinct architectural styles – Bungalow, Victorian and Mediterranean.

The initial design for the development was not historically influenced. However, in meeting with the community, neighbors were passionate about the historical nature of the area and keeping that consistent with the other homes which have been there for over 100 years. Dan spent time walking the neighborhood to get a sense of the feel and styles already present as well as the colors used. This led to a major re-work of the design. Working with the city

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**NEW  
CONSTRUCTION  
AWARD**

**Mulberry**



The team took pains to reference the existing architectural styles with a focus on livability and maintenance considerations. To honor the architecture of the surrounding neighborhoods, the project was designed with three distinct architectural styles – Bungalow, Victorian and Mediterranean.

The variety in color and design of the new buildings reflect and blend with the existing architecture, creating a balanced environment between the old and the new.



The open porches on these town-homes feature curved openings, corbels, wide trim work and variety of column styles reminiscent of the Victorian era.



and the community; the side facing Willow reflected the bungalows in the area and incorporated a simple design with the 2 story buildings. There is another section with a Mediterranean look that employs stucco, tile roofs and wrought iron railings. My personal favorite was used for the 3-story buildings which overlook the Alameda High School football field, which has Victorian references. These town-homes offer large porches, curved openings, corbels, and wide trim work. Porches have thick columns and even the railing design references the shorter railings common on Victorians with an open area above the main spindles in order to meet current building codes. Many porches feature turned wood and other detailing common of the era.

The new development included open space and originally was going to be in the back where it would be private for the new homes. Feedback from the neighbors led to its placement at Eagle Avenue which makes it feel like a neighborhood pocket-park and is available for use. Walking through the neighborhood, everything blends together between the old and new.

The project once approved in late 2015 took around 2 years to build. The homes were for purchase. The city of Alameda was a great partner and really enforced quality which led to significant upgrades in windows to match with the historical architecture. The homes near the playfield also had upgraded doors to help with noise control.

As Alamedans know, the State of California has mandated over 5,000 new units to be built over the next eight years in Alameda. There are a lot of new developments coming which is why we want to honor this project. It was very successful due to its effort to blend into the existing neighborhood and maintain the historical nature of Alameda. The team took pains to really reference and reinforce the existing styles with a focus on livability and maintenance considerations. The fact that this project started without historical references and ended up so seamlessly blending into the surrounding blocks shows the enormous impact that community feedback can have! Well done to those working on the project and thank you to the neighbors that were committed to partnering with the development team.



**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.

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

# 1250 Park Street at 150 Years

Story by Kay Weinstein

**Award Recipients: Kenny and Linda Fong, Owners; Daniel Hoy, Architect; Tom Carroll, Carroll Construction, Contractor.**

Alameda Architectural Preservation Society is giving a preservation award for the exterior restoration of the stand alone mixed use commercial property at 1250 Park Street. The three award recipients are all rooted in Alameda: Kenny and Linda Fong, owners; Daniel Hoy, architect; Tom Carroll of Carroll Construction.

As referenced in George Gunn's *Documentation of Victorian and Post Victorian Residential and Commercial Buildings, City of Alameda, 1854-1904*, this property at 1250 Park Street was built in 1873. The original architect and builder are unknown.

The original owner was H.C. Elliott, a San Francisco teamster. By way of background on this property, the Alameda Museum has provided a 1943 photo that gives a sense of the building's historic features.

Kenny Nai Don Fong grew up on nearby Park Avenue in the late 1960s, and he still has relatives living in his childhood residence. He has been operating his namesake salon, KENZ! Marketplace Salon, since 1985. When Kenny and Linda Fong purchased 1250 Park Street in 2003, its historic facade had been covered up by an inappropriate remodel. There was little to be seen of the original character of this building.

Despite delays due to the Great Recession of 2008, the Fongs were determined to restore their property to its former glory. Amanda Gehrke, with the City Department of Economic Development, patiently helped them move it all along. In 2017 they began working with local architect, Daniel Hoy, to draw up plans. Mr. Hoy credits the success of this restoration project to the enthusiasm, vision, and community interest of Linda Fong.

In 2019, the Fongs began working with local building contractor, Tom Carroll. Construction was delayed by the Covid pandemic, but not deterred. Mr. Carroll finds joy in doing exterior restorations, especially when he gets to remove the awful stucco!

There was a happy discovery along the way. Daniel Hoy's original design included a straight roofline, but when the old boards were removed, the original profile was discovered! Fortunately, approval for a roofline change was requested and received. One of the distinctive features of this property is the decorative upper roofline.

Exterior restoration was completed in 2021, and it is stunning. The architectural integrity of 1250 Park Street has been brought back to life, almost 150 years later. In addition to a certificate of award, Kenny and Linda Fong will receive a bronze preservation plaque to display on their building. Their next project is the interior, and we look forward to seeing the result.



1250 Park Street in 1943 included a storefront with rooms above and a parking space.



The 1873 Victorian building survived almost intact—the façade was stuccoed at some point—until the early 1960s when it was completely “modernized”. When Kenny and Linda Fong purchased it there was little to be seen of its original character, but they knew that the building was ready to be rediscovered. They were determined to restore their property to its former glory, and as the old boards were removed, the original profile was uncovered revealing its distinctive decorative upper roofline.

Exterior restoration was completed in 2021. The clerestory and double-hung windows were restored, as well as the addition of trim boards and millwork that resonate back to the era when it was built. The architectural integrity of 1250 Park Street has been brought back to life, almost 150 years later!



TIP OF THE HAT



Notice the long dark brown boards are covering the front of the brackets. There are also multiple shingles missing all over the front facade and discoloration under the top window.



The bottom shingles have been replaced with new cedar shingles.

On the top of the house, shingles have been removed partially exposing the beautiful 1906 original redwood boards.

After letting the new shingles cure for a year Olson's Painting Company returned to stain the shingles and paint the trim white. Now the exposed brackets stand out beautifully.



## The Big Brown House on the Corner 2531 San Jose Avenue *Story by Conchita Perales*

**Award Recipients: Kristen Batten and Jerrold Connors, Owners; Govers Sidewall Shingling, Berkeley; Olson's Painting Company, Alameda, Contractors.**

Every transformation starts in an instant. That moment came for Kristen Batten and her husband Jerrold Connors one windy day at the corner of Broadway and San Jose Avenue in Alameda. While standing outside their Colonial Revival home, a cedar shingle suddenly blew right off the siding of their house. It wasn't the first shingle to fall off, but it was the first time they saw it happen. Kristen remembered thinking, "Okay, we can't put this off any longer; we may have already waited too long."

After deciding they wanted to find a house in Alameda, Jerrold and Kristen discovered the handsome property at 2531 San Jose Avenue built in 1906 by the Alameda Land Company. When they walked through the open house, they knew this was the house for them. Kristen describes how "The bones of the house were great and it had so many unique details. The windows were huge and brought in lots of light, and the trim around the windows and doors were gorgeous. We didn't have kids at

the time, so the three-bedroom house felt big for the two of us, but we knew it would be a fantastic forever home as our family grew."

While the inside of their newly purchased home was in good shape, the exterior of the 100-year-old Pitched Gable Colonial Revival gem was a different story. The house desperately needed re-shingling. Kristen described how "The previous owners had painted the shingles with a very thick layer of paint which over time caused them to warp and bend outwards. At that point, the shingles were no longer layered tightly together, and missing spaces began appearing where they had fallen off leaving flakes of paint and shingles strewn throughout the yard. "Ultimately, we knew it was time to address the problem, but we also worried there would be water damage underneath once we started to remove them."

After extensive research, Govers Sidewall Shingling in Berkeley emerged as the only company

that focused specifically on shingle installation and repair. "They have excellent reviews, and their portfolio was incredible", Kristen recounts. "Oliver Govers, who owns the business, came out to look at the house and discuss our options. Fortunately, the job was straightforward because we just wanted to replace the shingles 'in-kind' and we weren't looking to do anything different with patterns."

Kristen and Jerrold had another issue that needed to be addressed by Govers. Mysteriously, the previous owners of the house had installed large pieces of wood covering part of the brackets underneath the eaves. "It was really strange," describes Kristen, "I don't know if they put the boards up because birds were nesting up there or if they had other concerns. So this was an opportunity to finally remove those boards and see what the original brackets looked like."

Once they booked and scheduled Govers, it took about six weeks for his crew to tackle the job. "The first step was to remove all of the old shingles. I can't tell you what an enormous relief it was for us to learn that there was absolutely no water damage to the underlying redwood or structure! Then, the crew wrapped the house in building paper before installing the new #1 Cedar shingles. They also did

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## 2531 San Jose Avenue

a fantastic job repairing trim and uncovering the original brackets."

Kristen and Jerrold then chose another expert tradesman for the next step of the project when they contracted with Olson's Painting Company of Alameda. Olson's would paint the trim, the rafter tails under the eaves, and the newly exposed original brackets under the pitched roof. "It took Olson's about three weeks to complete the painting. Now the white paint highlights the trim and the now exposed brackets stand out beautifully. We never did understand why they'd been hidden, they are not only a structural feature of the house, they also have a unique style to them we haven't seen in other houses of the same period." Kristen recounts.

Govers recommended letting the shingles cure for a year before being stained because new shingles release natural oils, so it's important to let them breathe and dry out. So a full year later, Olson's crew came back to stain the shingles.

"I loved the light color and all the different gradients of the new shingles", says Kristen, "however, because we waited a year before we stained them, we could see how they discolored over that time. We also noticed where rainwater would pour off the roof and down on the shingles turning them black. So it was a good reminder that the shingles need stain as a layer of protection, and darker stains would also hide discoloration.

I honestly feel like we gave new life and light to the house, which it really needed. And I'm so happy that we were finally able to do it."

With the completion of this transformation Kristen describes the happy ending: "The whole family just adores the house, it's become the family home we always envisioned it would be. And I'm thrilled that we chose to stain the shingles the same dark brown that it was before, because the kids always loved that we were known as the 'big brown house on the corner', and it's very nice that it will continue to be known that way".

Local activist and author Mark Greenside joined the Wedge Team and scoured all 12 blocks on foot searching for this antique water shut-off valve installed by the Fire Department. Image: Donna Umeki.

Several Wedge walls are emblazoned with replica vintage tiles and whimsical mosaics. Image: Dan St. John.



## WEDGE-WARDIANS UNITE!

About 20 years ago, residents in a small area off north Park Street feared their 12-block neighborhood was vulnerable to commercial and apartment depredations. They christened it "the Wedge" because of its boundaries: Park Street, Tilden Way and the estuary. They petitioned the Historic Advisory Board (HAB) for help. HAB members issued a document stressing the significance of Wedge antique structures, many of which were built on large lots during the 1870s and '80s, well before land was zoned and permits were required.

Now, two decades later, the menace looms ever more potently. A recent *Alameda Sun* letter from Wedge homeowner Patricia M. Paul warns that recent "upzoning" and height limit increases could have an adverse effect: "We do not want to be overpowered by rectangular six story apartment buildings... We do not want to suffer tomorrow for poor decisions made today."

Almost two dozen volunteers rallied to produce a walking tour booklet to alert residents, city staff, and preservationists about the potential fate of the Wedge. They include artists, librarians, Kindergarten teachers, HAB veterans, roving photographers, historians, and authors. The group chose the collective name of "Wedgemites," a pun on the British vegetable spread "Vegemite."

For such a minor part of the Island, Wedgemites were astonished to discover four cultural endeavors that enhance the neighborhood and draw visitors, both Islanders and outlanders. First, Rhythmix Cultural Works is a reused brick structure, site of the Alameda Rug Works since 1906. Second, tile artists have adorned several walls with tile mosaics in patterns that engage passersby and encourage smiles. Third, the Housing Authority paid careful attention to residents and others concerned about modern additions to old areas and the result is the exemplary Everett Commons project that is a respectful echo of Victorian era detail, harmonizing with nearby Wedge buildings. Read all about its Preservation Award Story on page 7. The Marketplace, a rekindled red brick auto showroom, was renovated and thrives with offerings of baked goods, bespoke slabs of meat, wine, coffee, and more.



The Team's history-walk booklet is a replica of a tabloid in the newspaper style of the 1870s. Publication date is October, and it will be given out free thanks to an anonymous donor during the October in-person AAPS membership meeting. Don't miss it!

**Sunday, October 23, 2022**  
**6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**  
**First Congregational Church**  
**1912 Central Avenue**

We can still use research help, so if the project intrigues you please contact:  
**judithlych7@gmail.com**



The concrete slab was replaced by a patio for dining and a grassy area for play. The red tile roof ties the back of the house to the front porch creating a style continuity.



The expert restoration work maintained and highlighted the original design of this 1926 George Noble house. New, double paned energy efficient windows will keep water and termites away for years to come.



The addition extended the existing garage by 18" to create a family room that seamlessly flows to the backyard.



Stair hand-painted tile detail.

## Build Back Better! 2722 Washington Street

Story by Conchita Perales

**Brian Maryo and Katie Schultz, Owners; Angela Klein, Architect; Keith Challberg, Buestad Construction; Juan Gonzalez, GM Painting; John Vasquez, Montclair Garden Company.**

Brian Maryo and Katie Schultz went looking for a house four years ago and felt lucky to find a beautiful one in Alameda that “checked all the boxes” for the style, size and type of neighborhood they were looking for. Now, as you admire the extensive restoration and new inspiration they have given their 1924 Mediterranean-style home, built by famous Alameda architect and builder George Noble, you realize that it’s the house and the neighborhood that are lucky to have found owners like them.

Brian describes how they knew this was their house from the moment they walked inside. From its architectural style and layout, the wood fireplace, the hardwood floors, the original gumwood trim around doors and windows that had never been painted . . . there were just so many things about the house that captivated them. However, when you purchase a home, usually there are changes you want to make, things that need to get fixed, and issues yet to be revealed.

“The project was simple, we wanted to convert part of the garage into a livable, usable space that would work as a family and play room for our young daughters. The new room would also naturally connect the house to the outside, rather than going through a laundry room, two doors, and the garage”, Brian recounts. “It was important to us that the new floating hardwood floors we wanted to install would match the rest of the house. And we also knew that the aluminum windows that were put in the 1970s needed to be replaced with double pane efficient ones. However, as we began planning these projects, our list of how to improve and fix the house grew.”

And so it was, that updating a leaking aluminum kitchen window led to a decision to update all the inefficient single-pane windows. And fixing the water damage led to updating the wiring and insulating the walls. But that was just the beginning! Once they committed to a construction company being on hand for the new

addition, they also decided to update and remodel the kitchen. The most important thing to us was that the work would feel like it was part of Noble’s original design.

Brian and Katie knew several people who had worked with local architect Angela Klein, so they hired her to put all their ideas on paper. Then they contracted with historic preservation specialists at Buestad Construction to manage the project. With these experts on board, it looked like clear sailing.

Brian clearly remembers the day Buestad’s Ken Carvalho came out to look at the house. “One of the first things he asked was ‘Do you know from the home inspection report if there is termite damage? Because I’m looking at the cracks in the stucco, and I’ve just got a nervous feeling. . . From my 40-plus years of experience, these cracks indicate termite damage.’”

Sure enough, Buestad’s crew found active termites in the French doors on the side of the house. And at first, it seemed the termites had stayed only in the frames, but later, when the plaster was removed, there was massive termite damage and evidence they had traveled everywhere. In fact, in one corner of the house, the termites had eaten an entire support post away, leaving the corner of the room suspended in the air, and the plaster the only thing holding it up. “We would’ve never known!” Brian exclaims. “The structural engineer, the carpenters, and everybody involved had to be very creative solving this major issue, and they did an impressive job. Now the house is solid, and it looks better than it ever looked before.”

What started as a semi-garage and laundry passageway to a concrete slab has now been transformed into a comfortable family room that looks and feels as if it had always been part of the house. It’s connected by a three single pane sliding door to a beautiful and practical outdoor space surrounded by cleverly built wood planter boxes designed by Keith Challberg, the site supervisor, that hold flowers and greenery. Brian and Katie added a patio with a large table to enjoy family meals, a green patch of grass for their girls to play on, and a sitting area with Adirondack chairs for relaxing with friends and family. To add a decorative touch they selected hand-painted tiles to go on the risers of all the outdoor steps as well as in a special niche that decorates the exterior wall. And to finish it all off, they incorporated a red tile roof just like the one in the front porch, with cleverly built-in vents.

Katie and Brian have lovingly taken their 100-year-old classic handmade house and added another 100 years to its life. Walking past and admiring its beauty, we can all enjoy this beautiful house just as much as they do.

# Everett Commons 2437 Eagle Avenue

Story by Robert Farrar

**Award Recipients: Island City Development, Owner/Developer; J.H. Fitzmaurice, Inc., General Contractor; The John Stewart Company, Property Manager; Bay Tree Design, Landscape Design; Luk & Associates, Civil Engineer; Anne Phillips Win Architecture (PWA), Architect.**

**Funding was provided by: Chase Bank, Bank of Alameda AHP, City of Alameda HOME, Housing Authority of the City of Alameda, City of Alameda Community Improvement Commission, Alameda County Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), California Tax Credit Allocation Committee.**

Alameda needs housing and specifically low income housing. The Housing Authority of the City of Alameda has been able to help build houses that blend with the Victorian theme of Alameda and supply affordable homes.

In 2014, the land that once held the former Island High School and Everett School on Eagle Avenue at Everett Street was transferred to the Alameda Housing Authority (AHA). Everett Elementary School was started at that location in 1891 (This is how it got its name). The idea was to build multiple houses at this location for low income families and veterans.

The architectural firm, now called Phillips Win Architecture (PWA) was the lead designer. The AHA and PWA solicited ideas from the public for the exterior design. At the time the Everett Commons were being developed, the City did not have objective planning standards, so the design went through various iterations with staff and the community getting their input for the final exteriors. The housing units needed inspiration from the immediate vicinity to blend Everett Commons into the neighborhood and to have that Victorian era look. During the design process, the community wanted the development to look like single family homes, but larger buildings are more effective to build and operate. The development ended up with fewer units than anticipated because the buildings were more widely spaced. In the end there was a total of 20 units built.

In 2018, the project was completed at a cost of \$18,935,696. The project known as Everett Commons is comprised of three buildings on .83 acres, 36,000 square feet. The complex consists of 4 one bedroom units, 10 two bedroom units and 5 three bedroom units. There is also a manager's unit. The units are one and two story townhouse design.

When walking past Everett Commons, you can see how the Victorian designs were blended into the buildings. The enjoyment of seeing multiple colors on the front doors of the units brings a calming effect to the neighborhood.

The project recently won a Gold Nugget (Pacific Coast Builder's Conference highest honor) for Grand Award for Best Affordable Housing Community under 30 du/acre.

*Resources used for this article came from the Alameda Sun and Sylvia Martinez, Director of Housing Development, Housing Authority of the City of Alameda.*

## NEW CONSTRUCTION AWARD



The resulting design leverages contemporary construction techniques and materials to create new buildings that have a similar character and scale to their historic neighbors.

Images and caption text: Phillips Win Architecture

*These collection of townhomes, nestled into a neighborhood of Victorian-era homes, is an example of how to integrate much-needed affordable housing into an established and historic setting.*



*Variation of color, massing and roofs references historic patterns but offer a welcoming, modern sensibility. Along the street, porches and stoops with varied door colors open directly to the sidewalk.*



TIP OF THE HAT



2000 Clinton prior to exterior restoration.

When the house was re-shingled, all the wood trim was repaired, especially around the window frames. The work also encompassed repairing the original masonry and the re-mortaring of all the bricks on the front porch and the chimney.



The decorative metal hardware featured is surrounded by a variety of textures.

## New Life Jacket for a Beach House 2000 Clinton Avenue

Story by **Devon Westerholm**

**Award Recipients: Leslie Shubin, Owner; Concepción Contreras, Contractor.**

The shingled house on the corner of Clinton and Chestnut has been watching over the ever changing Alameda waterway since 1896. The house was built by Straub and Son and was purchased by the current owner, Leslie Shubin, in 1997. The house was in very poor condition: the main floor was covered in brown shag carpeting that clearly had spent many years with a dog! What sold Leslie on the house was the lovely main staircase with all the original woodwork. The house was initially a single family home. During WWII the home was converted into a fourplex with two studio apartments on each floor. The main hallway to the upstairs still retains the original inlay in the hardwood floors.

The main floor studios were eventually converted back to a single 2-bedroom/2 bath unit. The wood beam ceilings of the original dining room are adorning the current primary bedroom, which has a grand ambience with the prominent beams and open views of the water.

As most Alamedans know, Clinton Avenue used to sit on the shores of the San Francisco Bay. When the South Shore of Alameda was created in 1959-1960 the lagoon system was created. While Clinton Avenue homes still enjoy a water view, it is very different from the original bay view.

Since Leslie purchased the house in 1997, she has done extensive restoration. The foundation was the original clinker brick that needed to be reinforced. Leslie thought the bricks were beautiful, so she had the foundation contractor build an interior foundation within the perimeter of the original brick foundation. Over time Leslie has also replaced the roof, updated all of the kitchens and bathrooms and refinished the oak and fir floors.

On Martin Luther King day in 2007 the house next door at 2004 Clinton caught fire. Leslie remembers hearing the sirens and at a certain point realized that they were not just driving by. Her tenant alerted her that the house next door was on fire. The fire caused a fair amount of damage to the east wall of the house. Leslie was extremely grateful for the wonderful job the Alameda Fire Department did to save her historic home. There were high easterly winds that day that kept reigniting the fire. Smartly, the fire chief left two fire fighters on site through the night who were able to put out the reignited fire on the east wall of 2000 Clinton Avenue twice. Since insurance only covered the damaged east side of the house, re-shingling was postponed until the whole house could be done at the same time.

Leslie remembers that shortly after she purchased the house, she came across an old photo that looked to

be from the 1950s. While she didn't know the people in it, Leslie was compelled to keep the photo. One day a woman stopped by the house and said that she used to live there. Leslie offered to give her a tour and chatted with her about the home. The woman was becoming emotional walking through the home when Leslie remembered the old photograph. She showed the woman the photograph; it turned out to be a photo of the former tenant's boyfriend's brother, who had since passed away. Leslie gave her the photo and knew then why she had held onto it.

When Leslie decided to tackle the long-postponed shingling job, she gave the job to C. Contreras, who had done many smaller jobs on the home since 2003. In addition to replacing all the cedar shingles, Mr. Contreras repaired all the wood, especially around the window frames. He also repaired the original masonry and re-mortared all the bricks on the front porch and the huge chimney facing Chestnut Street. It should last another 100+ years. This chimney is functional, and Leslie enjoys an occasional fire in the fireplace during the winter months. Leslie has managed to retain all the original wood windows that were present when she purchased the home but replaced the cheap aluminum windows with new dual pane windows immediately after the fire (which cracked every window on the east side).

Leslie is thrilled with the new cedar shingles and full exterior restoration of her little piece of history. As a neighbor I can personally attest to the beauty! Thank you, Leslie, for taking such good care of your lovely home!



# TRAVELOGUE



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

## A Send-off to Remember

by Karen Lithgow

*M*y trip to Spain and Austria this May was a bitter sweet journey to visit the home of my recently departed in-laws in Mijas, Spain and attend their celebration of life in Saint Gilgen, Austria. Many of the family members joined us in these two places and the sweet part of the trip was the fun we had getting together again and remembering all of the great times we shared in these special places. Our wedding, after all, took place in Mijas back in 1988 during my first visit there.

Mijas is one of those very picturesque white-washed villages in Andalusia, a region in Southeastern Spain bordering the Mediterranean. These white towns of Andalusia or “pueblos blancos”, are in an area with a very long and varied history starting with the occupation in prehistoric times by the Tartessians. Successive waves of Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans, Visigoths, Moors and finally the Catholic monarchs, laid claim to this area. The towns were originally built and settled by Berber farmers from North Africa who came to Andalusia between the 9th and 10th centuries – the early heyday of Moorish rule. While the Moors were in charge, these farmers peacefully worked the valleys.

By the late 11th century, when the Christian Conquest began to topple the Muslim kingdoms in Northern Spain, these farmers began heading for the hills. Choosing the highest vantage points, some of which had already been the sites of former Roman settlements, they enclosed their streets of Moorish-style whitewashed homes in fortified walls, finding safety in their isolated pueblos. The Moorish influence makes



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these towns architecturally interesting with their labyrinths of narrow, cobbled stone streets, fortress-like walls and whitewashed houses with wrought-iron grilles. Whitewashing was done in part because of the antibacterial properties of the alkaline whitewash although there is no evidence that the majority of the villages were whitewashed before the 1920s.

Remains of the original fortification in Mijas are still visible on parts of the exterior wall of the city. Archaeological findings in the town include the ruins of a Moorish castle that used to stand there until the 15th century. With its close links to Málaga and Cadiz, Mijas used to be considered an important trading center point and was then named ‘Tamisa’ before the arrival of the Romans, when it became ‘Mijas’.

Like other pueblos blancos, Mijas is nestled into the side of a mountain, has brown tiled roofs, narrow, winding, cobblestone streets, and ornate churches with views of the hills below. This village also looks down to the sea, with about a 10 minute drive to the beaches of the town of Fuengirola. Beautiful Mijas is very popular with tourists with its great shops, restaurants and architecture, and the horse-drawn carts and donkey taxis lined along the village square are often in use. When Alex and I were married there in 1988, we left the little church in a horse-drawn carriage and rode around the town for a bit. I took the opportunity to perfect my ‘queens wave’ while the Spaniards called out “buenas noches” to my husband.

My in-laws Tom and Gudrun settled in Mijas in the 1970s after their lives were disrupted

- 1 San Sebastian Church in Mijas where I was married in 1988. It’s been there since 1637 and rebuilt several times.
- 2 Plaza shops and outdoor cafe in Mijas village.
- 3 Front courtyard of our Mijas house with decorative tile mural.

*Continued on page 10. . .*

**TRAVELOGUE...***continued from page 9.*

in Tanzania, Africa, due to shifting political conditions. The home they bought just outside Mijas is a sprawling white-washed villa with sweeping views of the Mediterranean sea. They decorated the courtyards, outer walls and even the pool with colorful Spanish tiled murals and accent borders, and created a fantastic variety of outdoor entertainment areas throughout the multiple levels of the property. Tom and Gudrun also incorporated a variety of African architectural elements into the home and its furnishings. The wooden front door is an exquisitely carved showpiece, and the Zanzibar cupboard in the living room is used as a well-stocked stylized bar. African artwork and sculptures are on display throughout the home along with cupboards and paintings from Gudrun's home country of Austria.

The siblings that gathered at the family home decided to keep the property; we all want to come back and stay at the 5 bedroom/4 bathroom house nicknamed Casa Karibu, and share it with others coming to the area. I have to admit that every time I come to Mijas I make a stop at my favorite pottery shop in town and visit the church where we were married, shedding a few nostalgic tears each time.

Next, the family went to Saint Gilgen, Austria for Tom and Gudrun's celebration of life. The event was held here because of Gudrun's family history and affiliation with the village church. Other pre-deceased relatives are buried in the church's graveyard and this is where Tom and Gudrun were laid to rest. Honoring their wishes to have a fun family send-off, we did our best to comply!

While Mijas is arguably one of the prettiest towns in Spain, Saint Gilgen is likewise one of the prettiest villages in Austria. Located in a lake district just east of Salzburg, the village is nestled between the gorgeous Wolfgangsee Lake and the towering Zwolferhorn mountain. Saint Gilgen is the home of Mozart's mother, where he intended to eventually live, and is billed as Austria's "Mozart village". Strolling around this picturesque town you will see chalets with



cute wooden balconies and traditional alpine buildings in pastel colors with painted facades, blooming flower boxes, lots of greenery and hanging flags. The lovely Café Nannerl (named after Mozart's sister's nickname) serves the best strudel and coffee I've ever had. Stretching overhead is a string of cable cars climbing up to the mountain with the tall steeple of the parish church rising up from the middle of town.

This parish church is where Gudrun and Tom's family members are buried and where we held our special service for them. One of the most touching parts of the service were the poems and speeches recited by the grandchildren who shared memories of their grandparents. Gudrun and Tom would have wanted a happy family celebration on their behalf, so we organized a fun-packed afterparty in a restaurant. The bagpiper who played at the service also came to the party and was joined by an accordion player whom we've known and sang with over the years. A large beer keg was tapped and delicious Austrian food served to the many friends and relatives who joined us.

One of the relatives who still lives in town is Aunt Vroni who invited us all to lunch the next day at her home overlooking the lake. Some of us had bought traditional dirndl dresses and lederhosen shorts in town during our stay and we showed up in good form for our lunch. The home was built in the late 1800s by one of the ancestors and we were given an extensive tour of the home. The wood beamed front room was particularly attractive which included a traditional tiled room heater called a *Kachelofen*. Wooden balconies with fanciful cutouts decorate the front and sides of the house. The flower

- 4 Mijas house front door made by Makonde wood carvers in Tanzania, East Africa.
- 5 St. Gilgen shop fronts with painted facades and wooden balconies.
- 6 Cafe Nannerl with church steeple in background.
- 7 St. Gilgen building with decorative flower boxes, shutters and flags.

*Continued on page 11. . .*

**TRAVELOGUE...***continued from page 10.*

meadow out front inspired a Sound of Music moment where five of us wearing dirndl dresses decided to “frolic” and “spin”. I didn’t include one of the ‘frolicking’ photos but they are pretty funny to look at.

Despite being a very small village, there is much to do in Saint Gilgen. We had a very challenging steep hike up to the Zwolferhorn where three-quarters of the way up is a darling wood chalet that served us crispy wiener schnitzel and pancakes with plum sauce, while the owners’ Saint Bernard cruised by for a visit. Coming down on the cable car, the views of the village and lake below are spectacular. Nearby, in the neighboring town of St. Wolfgang, we went on the Schafbergbahn, a cute cog railway that climbs the nearby mountain that was featured in the 1965 film *The Sound of Music*. The 35-minute ride takes you to the top of Schafberg Mountain which offers spectacular views of the surrounding area. We also swam in the clear aqua/turquoise water of the lake and took a hike around to the other side to a fabulous restaurant where we all ate under the shade of big trees. As always, we stayed at the family-run Sherthaner Inn where we’ve been happily visiting for many years and will return again.

I feel very lucky to have the opportunity to visit these incredible places time and time again with family and friends. The link between these two towns was forged by ancestors who had the good luck and vision to establish roots in these great places. I’m particularly pleased to see the next generation enjoy these places and each other’s company as well and will no doubt continue to do so long after we are gone.

**8** Aunt Vroni’s St. Gilgen home built in the late 1800s by her ancestors.

**9** Traditional tiled room heater in Vroni’s home called a *kachelofen*.

**10** Vroni’s wood-ceiling front room overlooking front porch and Wolfgangsee Lake.



## Need any work done to your vintage home?



Look no further than the Resource section of the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society’s website to find that plumber, contractor, electrician, etc. or artisan to hire to repair or enhance your vintage home.



If you’ve had someone work on your home that’s not on our list contact us to add their name to our page.



[alameda-preservation.org/  
publications/resources-  
recommended-by-building-  
owners/](http://alameda-preservation.org/publications/resources-recommended-by-building-owners/)



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## AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2022

### AUGUST 14

25th Annual Preservation Awards  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Live event and broadcast via Zoom

### SEPTEMBER 25

Legacy Home Walking Tour  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm  
Franklin Park

### OCTOBER 23

Member Meeting: The Wedge  
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
First Congregational Church

## Draft Housing Element Effectively Repeals City Charter Article 26 (Measure A)

The Planning Board reviewed a revised draft Housing Element on May 22 and related zoning amendments on June 13. The drafts effectively repeal Article 26 and if adopted by the City Council will undo the 2020 election defeat of Measure Z that would have repealed Article 26 outright.

Article 26 limits new residential development to two units per building and 2000 ft.<sup>2</sup> of lot area per unit, but can be preempted to the extent necessary to conform with state law, including completing a new housing element that is certified by the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) by early 2023.

Other provisions in the two drafts inconsistent with Article 26 and which could radically densify Alameda over time include:

- Increased residential density by ca. 50% -300% from the Article 26 limits in the R-3 through R-6 residential zones, which cover central Alameda.
- Unlimited residential density in all existing buildings.
- Unlimited density and height limit increases to at least 40' in new buildings with units less than 1000 ft.<sup>2</sup> within ¼ mile of the 51 bus line and possibly other "high quality" bus lines.
- Increased height limit on Webster Street from 40' to 60' and the ca. 80% of Park Street that is not already 60'.

Planning staff states that these changes are needed to allow the City to develop the 5325 new units required by the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) by 2031 and to meet state fair housing requirements, but AAPS believes this is not true. See the numerous AAPS letters to the Planning Board and City Council posted on the AAPS website for more discussion. The draft Housing Element and zoning amendments are at [www.alameda2040.org/housing](http://www.alameda2040.org/housing).

The draft Housing Element has been sent to HCD for review. HCD comments are expected by late August. The draft Housing Element and zoning amendments would then be further reviewed by the Planning Board and City Council in response to the HCD comments with adoption currently scheduled by December.

For updates AAPS members can join our Preservation Action Committee by contacting Christopher Buckley at [cbuckleyaicp@att.net](mailto:cbuckleyaicp@att.net).

Map of areas within ¼ mile of "high quality" bus lines.

