

# Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA  
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

## A Primer for Paint

Protect and Showcase Your Home

by Devon Westerholm

Alameda is fortunate to have a large and varied inventory of historic homes from many different architectural eras. The beauty and charm of these houses can be accentuated and protected with a strategic application of exterior paint.

There are several steps and cost to do the job right however. If you're considering painting your house but you're not quite ready, we'll talk through the considerations from 'when' to 'how'. Myron Olson, of Olson's Painting (established in 2003), has painted many homes in Alameda – and specializes in historic homes. He collaborated with me on this article to help you understand how to use paint to both protect and showcase your home's beauty.

### How often to paint

A good paint job will last 7 to 10 years. However, if you work with a qualified local painter, they will often offer a maintenance plan to do small touchups over the years to ensure it is holding up – this can extend the life of the paint job by an additional five years. How long your specific paint job will last has a lot to do with what the substrate is – all of them have different quirks. For example, stucco homes can develop cracks from earth movement that require filling. However, stucco surfaces don't break down as quickly as wood does. Horizontal wood surfaces are the most prone to breaking down, especially on windowsills and stairs, as water will sit there longer than on other surfaces. Therefore, stairs should be repainted every three years and windowsills every five years. And while some people prefer to let shingles weather naturally for the look, it will shorten their life span. For example, cedar shingles will curl and split over time; that's why shingles need stain or paint to protect them. If your home needs a paint



*This lovely home has 6 colors with gold leafing. On an ornate building, having distinct accent colors allows particular details to stand out.  
Image: Devon Westerholm.*

job in less than 7 to 10 years, it can be due to weather, direct sun, too many layers of paint on the substrate, improper preparation, or low-grade paint and materials. Since painting is expensive, many people wait too long to repaint their homes which can lead to increased costs. Most of the expense of painting is in the prep – about 2/3 of the total cost – while only 1/3 is the actual painting itself. Preparing to paint (sanding, replacing wood, etc.) can double or triple if the paint job has been put off for too long. Deferred painting may bring more dry rot, which means replacing the area vs. just painting it.

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*A Primer for Paint...continued from page 1*



Here is an example of dry rot. These boards must be removed and replaced.  
Image: Myron Olson.



Here's an example of dry rot causing structural damage underneath.  
Image: Devon Westerholm.

### **The painting process and problem areas**

Typically, the job will start with power washing the house, which will allow for a clean surface to work with and will also help identify problem spots. The painting company will go over problem areas; they'll scrape the paint off and assess if there is damage to the wood – this could involve such things as dry rot (which requires removing the rotted wood) or holes that need to be filled. Once the problem areas have been addressed, everything else that isn't in good enough shape to be painted over gets sanded. A house that hasn't been painted in a long time may require substantial sanding, or if the paint job is more recent, it may only require spot sanding. In some cases, houses have asbestos siding or lead paint. For asbestos siding, a professional company can be hired to remove it, or the homeowners can do it themselves. However, if you choose the latter, familiarize yourself with the local rules since you can't sand any type of asbestos. My family and I removed asbestos from a home we owned previously, and it was a lot of work, but it saved us a substantial amount of money. For lead paint – if your house was painted any time prior to 1978 – you likely have lead in your paint. Chatting with Myron Olson about how he handles this, he says that his company is certified and follows the requirements from the State and the EPA. The key requirement in removing lead paint is that everything has to be fully contained (windows taped off on the inside and outside) and a LOT of plastic placed at a certain distance from the house. They usually do an additional barrier on the scaffolding. The employees use respirators and wear Tyvek suits and use HEPA vacuums. Sometimes they use chemical strippers, which help minimize the dust. They focus on making sure the job can be done keeping everyone safe.

Friendly reminder, if you still have lead paint on your house, you likely also have lead in the soil around your house from paint degradation. Keep that in mind for kids, pets, and if you have a garden.

### **The fun part – Choosing the Colors**

With so many choices, it can be overwhelming. There are color experts in Alameda available to help, but most homes have a minimum of three colors. The typical number of colors for a Victorian is 5 to 6 colors. And in general, the most common color layout for any style of home involves a medium tone for the body, a light trim around doors and windows, and a darker hue for the actual windows and doors. Most paint manufacturers offer colors that are historical, which you'll usually see indicated on the color chip at the store. Lighter colors will typically age better if the house gets a lot of direct sun, but will often look dirty within a couple of months of painting (which is frustrating after spending all that money!) Alameda is very dusty – if you have shrubs that are a 2-3 ft tall around your home, it will keep much of the dirt off your home.

The cost will go up for additional colors; however, including an additional color doesn't add that much if it's done on certain key details within the trim. If you're cost-conscious but considering adding an additional color, ask your painter about where it can be applied for the most effect. Going up to 4 to 6 colors may increase the cost 10 to 20% based on the details you'd like to highlight in the trim. For Victorians, the high-end is gold leafing. Actual gold leaf – while more expensive – lasts longer than paint and does not require a sealer. Some people choose to go the more economical route and apply acrylic gold paint instead – which is what we did on our current house. Silver leaf is also an option, but it does require a sealer.

It is a lot of fun when the scaffolding goes up, everyone on the block is excited to see what colors you'll use! We asked everyone walking by to weigh in on various shades when we were choosing our colors. Enjoy it!

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*A Primer for Paint...continued from page 2*

### Paint quality

Painting your home is an enormous effort and expense, so it makes no sense to skimp on paint quality. Always get the best quality paint available. For sheen, there is flat, low-luster/low-sheen and semi-gloss. On older homes, the low-luster shows up better over time than the flat paint. Flat is good for hiding imperfections, but does not hold up as well in conditions and is not as easy to wash, which if you have a light color paint, you'll want to clean from time to time. Stucco houses are fine to use a flatter paint. Always use semi-gloss for trim. It holds up better and reflects light. The higher sheen paints last longer.

### How to think about costs and making it affordable

Costs of paint and labor are always going up and the longer you wait, the more weathered your house will be. The best time to paint your house is now! However, if the cost is too much – many companies (including Olson's Painting) will do partial jobs. You can do half of your home or even just a side. Always start on the most damaged side to stop further harm. Remember, if the outside of your house gets too damaged, it can harm the sheathing of your house which can harm the structural integrity of your house. This can turn your home which is normally an asset into a liability. If you are not sure how close you are to that point, call in a company to come do an assessment.

### Summary

Your home is a significant investment whose exterior must be cared for against the elements. Despite sticker shock, it is cheaper in the long run to regularly care for the outside – even if you just do it one side at a time. If you are unsure, call a local company to come out and assess your home. Choosing colors is a great creative experience and gives you a chance to show your personality – enjoy the process! Older homes with architectural detailing can be particularly fun to paint to showcase their beauty and adds to the curb appeal of your home.

**Thank you to Myron Olson of Olson's Painting for your collaboration on this article!**



*On this 3-color home, the trim is a light color with the actual windows a darker color to create depth in the windows also used under the belly-band. Notice the minimal use of the 4th color on the roof detail. Image: Devon Westerholm.*



*Detail view of how to pull certain features of woodwork out with different colors. Image: Devon Westerholm.*



*Example of a 2-color home. The dark body allows the light trim to showcase the trim. Image: Devon Westerholm.*

# Home Tour Rediscovered the Gold Coast's Lost Shore *by Conchita Perales*

On September 25th AAPS staged a grand opening for its third consecutive self-guided architectural walking tour "The Gold Coast and the Shore Before". The starting point and heart of the event was located at Franklin Park, where gorgeously costumed volunteers received and guided over 400 attendees throughout the day. The park thrived with activity with booths and displays dotting the lawn: AAPS' ticket, store and plaques tables, local vendors – from shades and plaster, to color consulting and photo books, to windows and glass conservation. And, as a special treat, a crew of East Bay Regional Park naturalists set up an impressive taxidermy exhibit of shore bird species, informing and educating tourgoers. A cute café with small round tables was set up in the tree's shade where attendees could enjoy a well-deserved respite from the day's activities.

This year's tour focused on the original Gold Coast South Shore neighborhood and its transformation from bayfront to lagoon, and its collection of unique architecture dating from the late 1880s to the 1920s. Available through AAPS' Preservation Travel app, the tour contains narration, pictures and a full-color collectible companion booklet featuring detailed information on over 60 houses by architecture expert and longtime AAPS member Denise Brady.

To top off the day, we were treated to a fantastic garden party at Jeannie Graham's beautifully appointed backyard, where delicious food was thoughtfully prepared and stories and anecdotes from the big day were shared by all. The Legacy Home Tour would not be possible without the commitment and support of its docents, volunteers, and all who attended to make this event a huge success. Thank you!

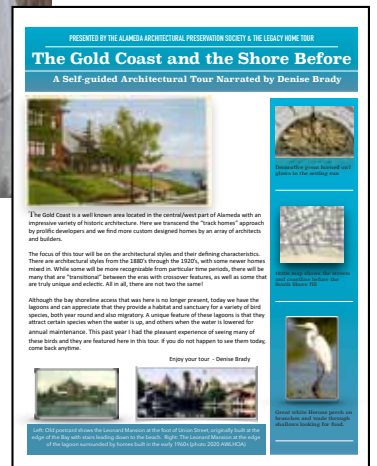
And a special announcement! Mark your calendars... Next year we're celebrating AAPS and the Home Tour's 50th Anniversary. We'll be back indoors admiring some of Alameda's great historic homes plus fun and interesting activities that you won't want to miss!



Let the tour begin! Joyce Boyd, Janice Cantú and Grant Ute are set up for success.



The full color guidebook features a self-guided walking tour with over 60 detailed entries and information on the South bay shore transformation, as well as a guide to help you identify Alameda's shorebirds.



Susan Driscoll's hospitality brightens up the café.



Patsy Baer sets up the AAPS store with t-shirts, mugs, tote bags and more!



Afternoon shift at the ticket table: Brenden Sullivan, Reyla Graber and Diane Dove.



*This life size arch was built for the 1979 Home Tour and has been in storage for at least 20 years. It was carefully restored by Robert Farrar and served as this year's entry marker at Franklin Park. Thank you to Scott Brady, Brenden Sullivan and Erich Stiger for all the moving parts!*



*Kay Weinstein, Betty Cosmos, Barbara Coapman and Diane Hayes enjoy the party after a successful tour.*



*Trish Spencer and Denise Brady admire Jeannie Graham's gourmet display.*

*Lois Francis dressed to impress in head to toe 1920s garb.*



*Naturalists from East Bay Regional Parks set up an incredible display. The taxidermy birds offered a great opportunity to see the wild bay birds up close and personal!*



*It takes a village! Docents and volunteers at Jeannie Graham's beautiful house and garden. From left: Kay Weinstein, Karen Tierney, Conchita Perales, Barbara Coapman, Judith Nichay, Diane Hayes, Mely Perales, Scott Brady, Gene & Dora Calhoun, Karen Lithgow, Denise Brady, Lois Francis, Toni Lewis, Trish Spencer and Sozdar & Brenden Sullivan.*

# TRAVELOGUE



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

## Road to Riches Virginia City, NV

by Conchita Perales

We arrived in Virginia City on a beautiful clear December morning after driving through miles of deserted mountain terrain. I was excited to see for myself what the “Old West” was all about: the buildings, the mines, the feel of the town. And sure enough, stepping out of the car we were immediately transported to a time and place we’d only seen on screens. It’s no wonder why this alluring and charismatic place has been rightfully preserved as a National Historic Landmark District and why many of its buildings are recorded in the National Register of Historic Places.

Incredibly, this small city retains much of its authentic historic character with board sidewalks, original signs on main street façades, and numerous restored buildings dating to the 1860s and 1870s. And while there are many simple gable style vernacular houses in Virginia City, most of the more notable and remarkable structures were constructed in the Italianate architectural style for a specific reason: “The Great Fire of 1875”. The fire started when a coal oil lamp was knocked over in a boarding house bursting into flames. The weather didn’t help as the westerly “Washoe Zephyr” wind fanned the fire devastating the town. It destroyed over 2,000 structures in nine hours and left hundreds of people homeless. Virginia City, however, quickly rose from its ashes. Within a year, its residents completely rebuilt the town, constructing most of the buildings in the period’s popular Victorian style.



▲ The road to Virginia City takes you through the Virginia Mountains of Nevada.

▶  
Fourth Ward School  
built in 1876.  
Wooden building  
designed in the Second  
Empire architectural  
style. Built to accom-  
modate 1,000 students  
grades 1st to 12th.  
Images: Conchita Perales



It’s hard to fathom that just a square mile of land on a mountainside at 6,200 feet would become the country’s wealthiest and most important industrial city. Seemingly overnight, Virginia City developed as a boomtown with the 1859 discovery of the Comstock Lode, the first significant silver deposit discovered in the United States. Its history is short – going bust in 23 years – but its consequences were far-reaching. At one point its population soared to 25,000 people contributing to Nevada’s separation from Utah in 1864 and its admission to the Union as the 36th State.

Today, with a current population of barely 800 people, Virginia City can feel a bit like a ghost town as you stroll through its quiet steep streets, but the experience is one of a kind, as

house after house and the mountainside itself, makes you feel as if you’re in a movie set.

Few American dreams came more true and more impressive than the good fortune bestowed on the four “Bonanza Kings” of the Comstock Lode. James Fair, and John Mackay, who first worked as miners, paired up with James Flood and William O’Brien, saloon keepers in San Francisco, and bought up deflating silver mine stocks just before the biggest silver lode was discovered. Their perfect timing and smarts turned them into the four wealthiest men on the West Coast and some of the richest ever in American history.

Virginia City’s riches would also fuel the rapid growth of San Francisco in the late 1800s, turning it into the jewel city by the bay. Among

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▲ Time stopped on C Street — businesses maintain some of the original signs and charm of Virginia City's heyday.



▲ This 1875 detailed drawing by Augustus Koch shows Virginia City clinging to the steep side of Mount Davidson before the fire struck on October of that year.

its many successful economic aftershocks, the Comstock Lode also sparked San Francisco's famous Victorian building boom. It may have been Mark Twain, the noted writer and contributor of Virginia City's once popular newspaper *The Territorial Enterprise*, who quipped: "Virginia City people hoped to go to San Francisco rather than heaven when they died".

The journey between Virginia City and San Francisco in the early days was far from heavenly. In 1864 *The Daily Alta California* headlined "San Francisco to Virginia City in Twenty-Four Hours". Here's an outline of the trip: Passengers would depart the city at 4:00 pm in order to avoid the heat of the valley, taking a 7 hour steamboat voyage to Sacramento. They'd disembark and transfer to a train bound for Latrobe, where they'd hop on a stage coach passing through Placerville at 3:00 am and getting to Lake Tahoe by daybreak. The final leg of the journey carried them across the Virginia mountains arriving in Virginia City by 4:00 pm.

These days, in just 4.5 hours, you can drive from silver baron James Flood's mansion on Nob Hill all the way to the side of Mt. Davidson overlooking Virginia City, where you can survey the valley and wonder if just maybe there's one more vein, one more claim, and one more Bonanza to be made!



◀ "The Castle" is an Italianate Villa completed in 1868. It's three story tower features a mansard roof and dormers. Mansions once lined this portion of the street giving it the name "Millionaires Row". Today it's a museum and retains most of its original finishes.



▲ Wide Boardwalk on C Street.



▲ The Piper-Beebe House on A Street is an Italianate style row house with a simple hipped roof built in 1876.

# Housing Element Update *by Christopher Buckley*

As expected, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) found Alameda's Draft Housing Element to be in substantial compliance with the state housing element law and informed the City that HCD expected to certify the Housing Element following approval by the City Council. The draft Housing Element and related zoning amendments effectively repeal City Charter Article 26 ("Measure A"), and if adopted by the City Council, will undo the 2020 election defeat of Measure Z that would have repealed Article 26 outright.

Provisions in the drafts inconsistent with Article 26 and which could radically densify Alameda and adversely affect Alameda's historic buildings and neighborhoods over time include:

- Increased residential density by ca. 1½-3 times the Article 26 limit of one unit/2000sf of lot area in the R3 through R6 residential zones, which cover central Alameda.
- Unlimited density in the very historic North Park Street residential areas (outside R3-R6) and height limit increases from 30' to 40' and from 35' to 50'.
- Unlimited residential density in all existing buildings.
- A "Transit Overlay" that would allow 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.

- Reduced minimum lot sizes, side and rear yard setbacks and other zoning changes to allow increased building coverages.
- 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 5353 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. Other housing elements certified by HCD do not involve the magnitude and geographic extent of Alameda's proposed intensity increases. 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 can be viewed at <https://www.alameda2040.org/housing>

At its September 26 meeting, the Planning Board recommended to the City Council that the proposed unlimited density within existing buildings be reduced to four regular units per parcel in residential areas, plus unlimited ADUs. This is mostly consistent with AAPS's recommendation and we are very pleased with



the Planning Board's action. Several Planning Board members also proposed limiting the Transit Overlay to parcels fronting the transit route, but the majority of the Board did not support this.

The City Council is expected to consider approving the Housing Element and related zoning amendments at its November 15 meeting. Please email the City Council and/or speak at the November 15 meeting and any subsequent meetings to urge the Council to delete or at least scale back the provisions listed above.

Send your emails to  
 mezyashcraft@alamedaca.gov  
 mvella@alamedaca.gov  
 jknoxwhite@alamedaca.gov  
 tspencer@alamedaca.gov  
 tdaysog@alamedaca.gov  
 and clerk@alamedaca.gov

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

## Simulation of a 60' tall building on the 1600 block of Park Street, west side.





# Preservation Awards: Hybrid Event Gives Access to All

This was a unique year for the Preservation Awards ceremony. After two years of a remote only event and with Covid19 not yet out of our lives, there was a lot of interest in having both a streaming and an in-person celebration again. So we found a happy medium and we produced a "hybrid" award ceremony!

Anyone could attend the event in-person if they felt comfortable mingling, or they could watch it remotely as we would also live-stream it via Zoom. It took a little tweaking and troubleshooting, but it turned out to be a great idea! We held the ceremony at the First Congregational Church of

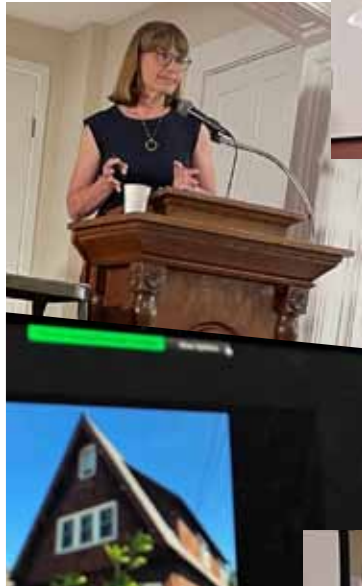
Alameda's spacious "meeting room", which turned out to be the ideal location for our ceremony. We all enjoyed seeing each other in person and taking part in an event that celebrates preserving Alameda's historic character. Congratulations again to all the winners! Special thank you to Lisa Martin, Erich Stiger, Maria Muñoz, Brenden Sullivan and Joyce Boyd.

**If you're interested in joining the Preservation Awards Committee or know of a property that deserves recognition, please contact Christopher Buckley at [cbuckleyaicp@att.net](mailto:cbuckleyaicp@att.net)**

Architect Angela Klein receives the award certificates for Washington Street from Karen Lithgow. The project won in the category for "New Addition". Homeowners Brian Mayo and Katie Shultz were happy to attend the event remotely via Zoom. >



^ Board member Devon Westerholm presented the first award of the night to Yanni Soewignjo, representing the Mulberry Development, under the category of "New Construction".



< Homeowner Kristen Batten took us on a fascinating historic ride of her house restoration project as she presented her house's "Tip of the Hat" Preservation Award. The bottom half of the picture shows the laptop broadcasting live the slideshow via Zoom.



< The second award for New Construction went to Everett Commons accepted by Sylvia Martinez of Island City Development, Architects Anne Phillips, and Winston Win of Phillips Win Architecture.

Devon Westerholm presents the "Tip of the Hat" award certificate to owner Leslie Shubin, recognizing the new re-shingling of her 1896 Craftsman house. v

Winners of the "Restoration" category: Tom Carrol and owners Kenny & Linda Fong stand next to AAPS President Karen Lithgow and Preservation Award committee member Kay Weinstein, who wrote and presented the project during the event. >





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# Call For NOMINATIONS

## 2023 AAPS Board of Directors



**DEADLINE NOVEMBER 12**

**AAPS is in the process of electing its 2023 Board.**

We have an excellent Board; however welcome the opportunity to expand our ranks to include new members with ideas to further enhance and benefit AAPS preservation interests throughout the community we serve.

Please let us know if you or someone you know would like to serve AAPS in a board capacity. Our goal is to continue to increase awareness, understanding, available resources and support of architectural preservation throughout Alameda.

**Please contact Robert Farrar at [rfarrar665@yahoo.com](mailto:rfarrar665@yahoo.com) or 530-440-4479 with your nominations.**

### AAPS BOARD MEMBERS 2022

<i>President</i> Karen Lithgow	<i>Corresponding Secretary</i> Devon Westerholm
<i>1st Vice President</i> Conchita Perales	<i>Recording Secretary</i> Patsy Baer
<i>2nd Vice President</i> Robert Farrar	<i>Advisor to the Board</i> Janet Gibson
<i>Treasurer</i> Joyce Boyd	<i>Member at Large</i> Brenden Sullivan

For more information, please contact:  
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### DECEMBER 4, 2022

Holiday Party  
From 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm  
Location TBD



## Need 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 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, please 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/)