



Alameda PRESERVATION Press

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA
ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Talk of the Block

1924 Ice Truck Delivers Restoration Clues Frozen in Time

1528 Mozart Street *by Joyce Boyd*



I looked out the window and once again saw a passerby pointing at my neighbor's beautifully restored Queen Anne. I sighed and fantasized that my Queen Anne with over 50 years of neglect would one day have passersby stop and give it the same attention. Eight years ago, my husband and I purchased our home built in 1894 by the development team of Marcuse and Remmel. There are over 300 Marcuse and Remmel homes in Alameda. You can find them on the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society's website at alameda-preservation.org/publications/marcuse-remmel-map/. And it's not that we've been sitting idly, so far we have restored stained glass windows, replaced the foundation, remodeled two ground floor apartments for rental income, and replaced the roof and gutters.



On our last project, which I also wrote about in the September 2020 issue of the *Preservation Press*, we restored the sunny south side of the house, which is 60 feet long and two stories high, and was the most damaged. We replaced 40 feet of siding, eight windows, including recreating a missing stained-glass window from scratch, moved all the exterior plumbing inside the walls, and painted the exterior.

Before and after views of the residence on Mozart Street.

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Restoration Clues...*continued from page 1.*

It was now time for the long-awaited restoration of the front of the house. And because this is not my first project, let me remind you of my rules for restoration:

1. Everything costs twice as much, takes twice as long, and you are not an exception.
2. Budget, budget, budget. The budget needs to drive decision making.
3. Have a contract and check licenses and insurance.
4. Hire the right people and a big chunk of your problems will disappear.
5. Spend a lot of time on the preparation and planning. Do a lot of research.
6. When the work is being done, be available every day and spend as much time as possible on the job site.
7. Communicate, communicate, communicate.
8. Do not be your own general contractor.
9. Before you make the final payment to a contractor, make sure you get the signed permit and check that the permit is on the City of Alameda's permit website and that it shows as finalized.

We started with research. Fortunately, our house had not been "modernized" and stripped of all its Victorian elements. However, it was missing the ornamental plasterwork and the leaded glass windows, and in their place simple wooden shapes had been nailed to the house, and a metal overhang and plexiglass windows were also added. Replacing what is missing on an old house requires detective work. You can look at other houses built by the same builder, you can remove what was added on and see if the original items remain hidden, or at least an outline or "shadows"



The High Street Ice delivery truck shown parked on the 1500 block of Mozart Street circa 1920s. The residence being restored in this article is shown in the background. Image: Alameda Museum.

of the original items remain, or if you are lucky, you find a picture.

We were lucky. The Alameda Museum had in their collection a print from a glass negative showing the High Street Ice truck parked in front of a house – my house! And it showed what the house looked like at the time with its original ornamental plasterwork, stairs, and windows.

Next, we started a budget. Our first meeting was with our fantastic prior contractor, Eric Grunseth of Pacific Northwest Painting & Contractors (PNPC). His estimate of \$70,000 to paint the front (and only the front), install scaffolding, remove all the add-ons, waterproof the porch, and install the windows seemed high. So we checked with two other contractors. One came in with a similar painting estimate, but recommended we hire a carpenter for any repair work at an unknown cost. The second had a similar estimate, but recommended we hire a contractor due to the unknown nature of the repairs needed. He also noted that since the paint on the

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Artisan Lorna Kollmeyer and Joyce Boyd.



Lorna crafts plaster ornaments at her workshop in San Francisco. She is the keeper of numerous historic molds.



Lorna at work on the facade of the house.



Restoration Clues...continued from page 2.

Ornament details shine with gold leaf applied. The process for the entire house took 58 hours.



house was so deteriorated, his crew would require many hours scrapping off the old paint. Sometimes when there are multiple layers of paint, all the paint needs to be stripped off. Our house had only a few layers of paint over its 129-year life so scrapping would do the job. When the exterior of a house is not maintained, water damage and dry rot can set in, and that was the big contingency item in our budget. Fortune smiled upon us and there was only a small amount of dry rot on the house. Once painted you should have your house power washed every other year and the paint touched up to keep it maintained. This maintenance is far cheaper than repainting the house. In the end we hired PNPC and his wife Cornelia Grunseth, "The Color Lady", as colorist.

Our next stop was the ornamentation. There are only a small number of artists who recreate Victorian ornamentation. It wasn't until I began looking with new eyes that I noticed that some of the ornamental designs were three dimensional (plasterwork) and some were flat (wood). I could see from the ice truck picture that ours had been three dimensional. Fortunately, one of the few designers that still do this type of work is right here in the Bay Area, Lorna Kollmeyer, Ornamental Plaster. So we hired her to remake all of the ornamental plasterwork. A visit to her workshop was like visiting a giant ornate wedding cake. I didn't want to leave her workshop and the stunning display of Victorian plasterwork. She is the keeper of many original casting molds, some of which were used to recreate our plasterwork and she holds the last remaining archive of San Francisco's historic plaster ornament. Lorna is a true artist who created a masterpiece. Once we had her estimates and quotes to install, we added \$27,000 to our budget.

We then got window quotes. We replaced four windows – three in the attic and one on the ground floor. We had previously worked with Russo windows and Ken Shelby of Piggery Panes. Ken would make the leaded glass window on the front of the house. This added another \$8,000 to our budget.

With a healthy 20% contingency our budget was now at \$130,000. We now looked at the staircase and asked ourselves what to do – replace or keep? Our staircase is not original. The current staircase was in good shape. A new staircase would cost at least \$25,000 as it would require engineered drawings and city permits. Those \$25,000 could do a lot in the rest of the

house. After deciding not to replace the stairs and considering numerous limited changes to the stairs, we decided to only change out the hand railing, which was currently made of plumbing pipe (very DIY) and the bottom railing which was made with plain 2 x 4s. We hired Ornamental Iron Works whom we found through the AAPS resource list at alameda-preservation.org/publications/resources-recommended-by-building-owners/. They did a beautiful job for \$2,800.

We went a little crazy on the gold leafing. Our friend, Bob Farrar, who is an expert on gold leafing, did an amazing job, which took him 58 hours! He kept reminding us that gold leaf is used as an accent as we kept adding more. Gold leafing is a time-consuming process of gluing thin leaves of gold onto the plaster. Bob had to do the work early in the morning when there was no wind, as the thin gold leaf could get blown away, which happened to Bob when he first learned to gold leaf. You can imagine the money just flying away as gold is expensive. Bob taught a workshop on gold leafing through The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society which was well attended.

Now that the front facade is restored, we can focus on the landscaping. But we still have a lot to do. The front facade is just the second side of the house we have restored. Next year we plan to restore the north side of the house and so only the back will be left, which will be a big project as it involves a deck. And while we wait for starting the work on the exterior, we will update the electrical by replacing the knob and tube original wiring.

Even with my rules above, we still made some errors along the way. I never ordered the decorative pendants that had an 8-week lead time, so they'll need to be done next year. The leaded window got delayed due to a miscommunication and it still needs to be installed. We chose a dormer window style and after it was installed we realized it would have looked better with more panes. Overall, these were small mistakes.

Watching the house transform as the work progressed was really amazing. Seeing Lorna's plasterwork installed, along with the painting, the gold leafing and other design elements was such a pleasure. My husband kept looking at it and thinking, is this beautiful house really ours? Now that the restoration is (almost) complete, people are no longer quickly passing by to look at the neighboring houses, they are stopping to look at ours, and even taking pictures.

LEGACY HOME TOUR

50 years and counting

by Conchita Perales

The Alameda Legacy Home Tour, the most exciting architectural event of the year, celebrated in style its 50th anniversary this past September. With over 850 attendees from all over the Bay Area the excitement was palpable all-around Franklin Park, where ticket and vendor booths, a well-appointed café and the AAPS Pop Up store were filled with enthusiastic tour goers. The expectations and anticipation surrounding this unique event were very high, as not only was the Home Tour returning to its original format of visiting the interiors of selected historic homes after three years of pandemic hiatus, we were also celebrating a huge milestone.

The tour showcased seven amazing homes ranging in styles and eras, all within walking distance from Franklin Park. First off, and to truly commemorate 50 years of Home Tours, we were so lucky to feature the stunning Charles Shaner 1890 Queen Anne that graced the cover of the first Home Tour guidebook in 1973! Also featured were two of A.W. Pattiani's outstanding Queen Annes, a pair of spectacular Colonial Revivals, an 1895 by William Lillie and an 1899 by Denis Straub; a Henry Meyers 1904 beautifully crafted Craftsman and, a real hidden gem, an 1893 English Arts & Crafts exquisitely designed by Ernest Coxhead.

From the generous homeowners who shared their carefully restored and well-appointed homes, to the 200 amazing docents and volunteers who brought their energy and enthusiasm to teach, lead and create an unforgettable experience for everyone, the 2023 Alameda Legacy Home Tour delivered on its great community building success. We continue AAPS' tradition and with it recognize the commitment, hard work and tenacity of all those who came before us as we carry their vision forward.

SEE YOU ON THE NEXT TOUR!



The Sullivan contingent – Leslie, Randie, Brenden, Jennifer and Sozdar.



Ken & Linda Weinstock



Devon Westerholm, host extraordinaire.



Party at the Elks Lodge.



Bill & Lois Francis



Michele & David Bock



Heather Demarest & Liz Farrar
Busy morning at Franklin Park



Vicky Bell tends the café.



Back: Susan Benko-Rainwater, Mely Perales, Margie Benko.
Front: Doree Miles, Conchita Perales, Savannah Mellon and Savannah Rainwater.



Becca Wachter, Maryam Karimjee and Sahana Sankar



Classic car and tour goers at 1303 Caroline Street



Nancy Gordon sets the tone.



Denise Brady

Karen Tierney, Mary Jacak and Lisa Baker



Karen Lithgow

Images: David & Michele Bock, Linda Weinstock, Conchita Perales and Scott Brady.



Dodi Kelleher, Jan and Lenka Fejt



TRAVELOGUE



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

French Art, Architecture, and Champagne

Text by Dodi Kelleher
Photographs by Floyd Brown

In August we went to Paris, including two daytrips outside the city; the first to visit Claude Monet's house and garden in Giverny and the second to the Champagne region.

Monet, is one of the most famous of French Impressionist painters. His house and garden in the Normandy countryside is almost as famous. He designed the expansive gardens, then devoted himself to painting them for 43 years until his death at 86. We have long wanted to visit it, especially to see the waterlily pond. We arrived from Paris by hired car in a little more than an hour and took a self-guided tour.

The home is a long two-story stone country house, with exterior painted in original colors of pink walls with green trim and shutters. The interior, with the exception of the kitchen and dining room, is made up of relatively small rooms and narrow stairs. I found the most memorable features of the house were the



▲ Claude Monet's house in Giverny. Image: sortiraparis.com

many paintings that covered the walls, including reproductions of many impressionist paintings and an extensive collection of Japanese prints in the very yellow dining room. The large kitchen had some striking features,

painted in shades of blue with beautiful handmade blue faience tile, that covered the room from the dado to the ceiling, setting off the large cast iron stove.

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▲ The Japanese inspired water garden surrounds the pond with its famous waterlilies, which inspired some of Monet's most famous works. Top right, a detail of Monet's "Blue Waterlilies".



▲ The bedroom walls are full of paintings, including reproductions from other impressionist artists.



The handmade faience tile in shades of blue covers the room from the dado to the ceiling, setting off the large cast iron stove.



TRAVELOGUE...continued from page 6

Most of our time was spent touring the gardens. There are two main gardens. The first consists of flower gardens in a profusion of colors, on the ground and trellised, leading up to and covering the area around the house. The second is the famous Japanese inspired water garden with its many trees, plants and bridges, all surrounding and crossing the large pond. It is here we saw the famous waterlilies, which inspired some of Monet's most famous works.

On returning to Paris, we traveled to the Left Bank to visit the Musée d'Orsay and view its extensive collection of Impressionist works, including Monet's "Blue Waterlilies". The d'Orsay was originally built as a grand railway station around 1900 and later converted into the world-famous art museum. One of the building's most impressive architectural features is its giant clock overlooking the Seine.



▲ The Musée d'Orsay's giant clock as seen from inside the busy restaurant.

Our second daytrip was to the Champagne region, located in the northeast of France. Reims, the biggest city in Champagne and once capital of France, is easily reached from Paris, approximately 90 minutes by car. The city has many squares lined with shops and eateries, and many grand buildings of various architectural styles. Two of the most famous are the Gothic Reims Cathedral of Notre Dame and the Romanesque Abbey of Saint Remi. There is also an Art Deco Library by Andrew Carnegie.



▲ 13th century Gothic Reims Cathedral in Champagne.

We spent most of our time exploring the 13th century Reims Cathedral, where French Kings were crowned. This high Gothic architecture is known for its carved portals, statuary and stained glass. We especially admired the stained glass. Two examples of the beautiful stained glass are the intricate rose windows and a set of three remarkable stained-glass windows designed by artist, Marc Chagall in the 1970s in his expressionist style.

Lastly, we could not come to the Champagne region without learning about the production of this famous "bubbly" and, of course, to taste it. Our guide made a stop among the vines where we learned the taste comes not only from the grapes but also the relatively cool temperatures and very chalky soil. We then visited two very different "champagne houses", a small local family-owned producer in a village setting and a large corporate estate. The local family lived and made their champagne in sturdy stone buildings that had been inhabited for generations, much like that of the surrounding small farms.

The other tour was to Champagne Pommery. Established in 1858 by wealthy merchants, Alexandre Pommery and Narcisse Greno, it was developed by Madame Pommery after her husband's death into one of the region's largest Champagne brands. The estate house was built in the Elizabethan neo-Gothic style, popular in Reims during the Victorian era, with turrets, crenellations, and towers reminiscent of a Tudor castle. Madame Pommery transformed the chalk quarries nearby into cavernous covered spaces to house her wine cellars. Today the cellars act as event spaces, housing many pieces of modern art.



▲ A typical stone farm house in the Champagne Region.



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Call For **NOMINATIONS** 2024 AAPS Board of Directors

DEADLINE NOVEMBER 30

AAPS is in the process of electing its 2024 Board.

We have three positions available including Treasurer. We 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 or 530-440-4479 with your nominations.

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SAVE THE DATE!

It's the AAPS Holiday Party
December 9th
6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
1415 Broadway



Celebrate the season in style
at the historic Crystal Room
of the 1924 Spanish Revival
Alameda Hotel & Apartments.



A HUGE THANK YOU!

To the anonymous donor
who matched the 2023
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AAPS is lucky to have
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throughout the year.

With your continued support
and participation we are making
a difference in our community.