alameda-preservation.org | August 2025

Alameda PRESERVATION

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALAMEDA ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY Preservation and the control of the alameda architectural preservation society.

Alameda's Bronze Coast Beauties

— Alameda Legacy Home Tour — Sunday, September 21, 2025 · 10am to 4pm

The tour starts at Franklin Park, 1432 San Antonio Avenue



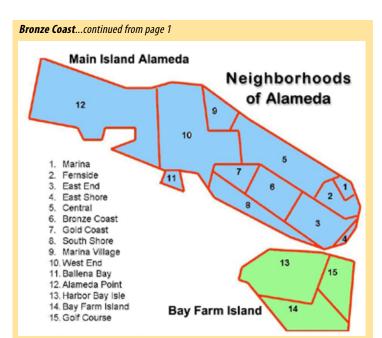
Turn of the century ladies out for a stroll. Image: Days Gone By, Hinh Anh, Pinterest.

The Bronze Coast – What is it? by Denise Brady

hirty years ago, the Bronze Coast was not a thing. Back then, people would ask me, "Do you live in the Gold Coast?" since my house sits a block and half away from the Gold Coast. So I would jokingly respond, "No, I live in the Bronze Coast!" I shared this story with my real estate peers, and the name caught on. (Looking back, maybe I should have trademarked it!) Since then, it has definitely become a thing. Just Google it...

Alameda's Gold Coast neighborhood is pretty well defined, with Grand Street and Central/Encinal Avenue as the primary borders. If you look at Alameda's zoning map, the Gold Coast stands out as an R-1 zone (residential single family). The Bronze Coast has a more nebulous boundary, with multiple zoning classifications. If you ask 10 people to define it, you will likely get 10 different answers. The popular neighborhood app Nextdoor even has a subgroup called "Bronze Coast." Real Estate websites seem to have settled on the area bordered by Grand Street to the west, Park Street to the east, Central Avenue to the north and the lagoon to the south. The seven homes featured on this year's Legacy Home Tour fall within these boundaries.

Continued on page 2...



One of many unofficial Alameda neighborhood maps that includes the "Bronze Coast". A decidedly non-historic name coined within the last 30 years, it is now commonplace. Image: Compass Realty via Karen Lithgow.

During the Covid lockdown, AAPS sponsored three outdoor walking tours, featuring different Alameda neighborhoods. The 2021 tour focused on Leonardville, an Alameda Heritage Area located within the Bronze Coast. That tour was exteriors-only and the focus was on architectural styles and their defining characteristics. This year we are fortunate to be able to tour the interiors of seven beautiful homes, three of which were built by Joseph A. Leonard.



The Bronze Coast features many homes built by Joseph A. Leonard, including this one built in 1890. Image: The Gunderman Group.



A 1910 Arts & Crafts home designed by Julia Morgan is one of seven homes featured in this year's Legacy Home Tour. Image: Valerie Turpen.

There are other significant Alameda architects and builders represented, including Julia Morgan, William Armitage, John J. Boyle, and the Alameda Land Company. These homes reflect the popular architectural styles from 1890 to 1910, including Queen Ann Victorian, Colonial Revival, and Tudor Revival.

This year marks the 52nd anniversary of Alameda's Historic Home Tour, celebrating our extraordinary collection of beautiful vintage homes. Please mark your calendar for Sunday, September 21, for this year's tour.

The tour committee is looking for volunteers to help with the event. Volunteer Docents can attend the tour for free in exchange for a morning or afternoon shift in one of these "beauties." After the tour, all volunteers and homeowners are invited to celebrate at a post-tour reception.



A Bronze Coast Colonial Revival home designed by William H. Armitage. Image: Woody Minor.

For tickets and information please visit alameda-preservation.org

Rolling-in-Style at the Alameda 4th of July Parade!

AAPS Celebrated our Nation's birthday at Alameda's 48th annual 4th of July Parade! According to the City of Alameda, it's the longest 4th of July parade route in the country at 3.3 miles long with approximately 60,000 parade goers. This year was no different with thousands of parade goers descending on the route and enjoying perfect weather to boot! **HAPPY 4th of JULY!!!**

AAPS promoted the Legacy Home Tour in style by rolling in a vintage 1976 El Dorado Cadillac convertible. What a great way to participate with the community and to remind everyone that AAPS has been working to preserve Alameda for over 52 years!



Alex Lithgow carefully decorates his beautiful 1976 El Dorado Cadillac with festive bunting on the morning of the parade.



Voila! The Caddy is ready to go and so are the AAPS Gals! From Left to Right: Kay Weinstein, Karen Lithgow, and Miriam Fox.



AAPS rolling along the parade route on Central Avenue waving to parade goers while promoting the Legacy Home Tour event.

ALAMEDA LEGACY HOME TOUR

SAVE THE DATE! Sunday, September 21, 2025

10:00 am to 4:00 pm



FREE ADMISSION to the tour in exchange for being a docent on either the early or later shift. Two shifts: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm or 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Enjoy a day of Alameda's finest architecture and finish off with a fun celebration event for docents and homeowners.

To sign up, contact Erich Stiger at estiger@alameda-preservation.org

Costumes admired but not required.

PRESERVATION AWARDS ——2025 ——

A very large and enthusiastic audience of well over 100 people attended the 28th Annual Preservation Awards ceremony held at the historic Veterans Memorial Auxiliary Hall on June 8th.

Eight impressive properties won awards this year, including a Gothic Revival church, a Mission Revival radio museum, five distinct 1890's Victorian homes, and for the first time this year, a new construction award went to a modern ADU that is beautifully compatible with the main house, ca 1906. For a complete description of all the award-winning buildings, please see "Winners of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Preservation Awards" in the June 2025 edition of the AAPS Preservation Press.

The award winners' presentations were informative and awe-inspiring as they told the stories of love, care, attention to detail, and very hard work that went into each project, in some cases over many years. The homeowners, along with many of the artisans and skilled contributors to each building's rebirth were honored and presented with certificates of recognition. The owners of the properties will also receive a bronze plaque to be placed on the façade of their building, recognizing it as a preservation award winner.

The process that leads to an award begins with nominations in various categories provided by Alameda Architectural Preservation Society members. Our awards committee then carefully reviews the nominees, including studying before and after photographs, to determine the final awardees. The building owners submit additional photographs of their project to be added to the power point slide show accompanying their presentations.

Before and after the event, everyone had an opportunity to mingle and enjoy the delicious buffet and libations prepared by AAPS members and volunteers.

If you know of a property that deserves recognition, let us know!



Patsy Baer checks in guests.

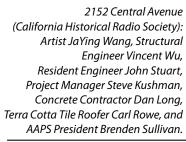






Owner Nancy Lewis.

929 Lafayette Street: Owners Megan and Quinton Larson and daughter Adelaide.





1528 Mozart Street: Painter Myron Olson, Owners Joyce Boyd and Peter Conn, Painter Eric Grunseth, Ken Shelby of Piggery Panes.







1021 Union Street: Painter Myron Olson, Owner Nancy Joy Gordon, Brenden Sullivan, Andreas Lehmann of Lehmann Glass Studios.

1420 Lafayette Street (Immanuel Lutheran Church): Project Manager Megan Carver, Church Council President Judy Blank, Music Director Terry O'Connor, Architectural Historian Elizabeth Greene, and AAPS member Kay Weinstein.





attended this year's awards ceremony.

779 Santa Clara Avenue: Claire Lloyd, Owner and Contractor John Beall with Brenden Sullivan.

City Council member Tony Daysog chats with AAPS member and awardee Joyce Boyd.



Preservation Awards Committee: Karen Lithgow, Miriam Fox, Kay Weinstein, Jerri Holan, Lisa Baker, Robert Farrar. (Not shown: Kevis Brownson and Chris Buckley).





924 SANTA CLARA AVENUE

We Bought a Fixer-Upper Part II: Restoring a Victorian Home – Fun with Rats, Asbestos, Electrical and Gas! by Robert Farrar

n February, I told you about an amazing, but severely dilapidated, home at 924 Santa Clara Avenue that my wife and I purchased. Our plan is to restore this Marcuse & Remmel gem to its former Victorian glory. (See, "Guess What, Honey? We Just Bought Another Fixer-Upper!", AAPS Preservation Press, February 2025). A lot has happened in the few months that have passed since then.

After acquiring the property, our first order of business was to conduct a thorough walk-through. We promptly changed the locks, enlisting the help of Reed Brothers Security, who rekeyed all the doors to a single key and provided us with several duplicates.

Next, we issued eviction notices to the tenants living in both the house and the garage. This process took about two weeks and required some persistent nudging, but we ultimately succeeded in evicting all the unwelcome residents — specifically, the rats that had taken up residence in the walls and furniture of the house and garage loft. With the property cleared, we could better assess the house and formulate a renovation plan.

During our inspection, we noticed that the ceilings in the front entry and living room had a popcorn texture, which, according to the previous owner's son, likely contained asbestos. Additionally, we found asbestos tiles on the east exterior addition. To address this, we secured a temporary permit from the California Toxic Substance Control Program and hired Sterling Environmental Corporation from Oakland to handle the asbestos removal. This process took about three days, and the asbestos was transported to Nevada for proper disposal in mines, where it originally came from. It's worth noting that the home owner must obtain a temporary permit from the State of California before an asbestos abatement company can proceed with removal.



The last medallion on the ceiling waiting to be removed and refinished.

Originally built in 1892, the house was converted into two units in 1936, with plans for a third unit in the garage. Our vision is to restore the property to a single-family residence and potentially raise the house slightly to add two basement units. We plan to relocate one unit from the garage and another from the house into the basement.

The foundation needs replacement, as the house is supported by bricks. We've engaged John Jamison Contractors for the new foundation and hired an extraordinary architect, Daniel Hoy, who provided us with preliminary plans. His measurements revealed that the house exceeds the city's height restrictions for R-4 Zoning by 1 foot 3 inches, which prevents us from raising it. As a result, we decided to excavate for the basement units. Daniel Hoy is currently working with the planning department to secure the necessary permits, and we hope to begin demolition of the existing brick foundation once we receive approval.

In the meantime, we are also addressing the electrical wiring and gas pipes. Due to numerous loose and exposed wires, we disconnected and removed the knob-and-tube wiring and installed temporary wiring from the old electrical panel. We also disconnected the gas lines from the meters, and to our surprise, the gas pipe

leading to the fireplace was capped with a cork! We're amazed that the house hasn't burned down considering all the gas and electrical issues we have discovered.

In the 1970s, the previous owners attempted to repair the lath and plaster walls by screwing and nailing ½-inch sheetrock over the existing plaster. Then texture was added to all the walls and ceilings. We decided to remove the sheetrock, which revealed large sections of damage to both the underlying plaster and the laths supporting it. This led to a decision to remove all of it which has the added benefit of allowing us to install new electrical, gas, and plumbing systems and to add insulation.

While removing the drywall, we stumbled upon a sealed pocket door that had been closed off since 1936. We removed this pocket door along with the other two pocket doors and are in the process of restoring them. Unfortunately, the large double pocket doors were missing.

Continued on page 7. . .



Stripping old paint from an East Lake door.

Fixer-Upper Part II...continued from page 6



Stack of molding waiting to be stripped.

We found them! They were in the garage loft, where they had been stored for years. Although the rats have contaminated these doors, we plan to clean and restore them soon.

We also removed all the medallions from the ceilings. The smaller medallions were carefully detached, while the larger ones, made up of multiple pieces, required more effort. Some of the larger medallions cracked along the seams during removal, but repairs should be manageable. It took five of us to carefully lower the largest medallion intact. With all the medallions down, they can be stripped of old paint and readied for repainting with multiple colors.

Over the course of several weeks, we have carefully removed all the molding around doors, windows, and baseboards. We systematically removed all the layers of old paint and stain revealing the original redwood buried underneath.

Stay tuned for updates on this ongoing restoration project in our next newsletter!

AAPS SCHEDULE of EVENTS 2025

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Alameda Legacy Home Tour Alameda's Bronze Coast Beauties The tour starts at Franklin Park 1432 San Antonio Avenue

> SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Holiday Party
The Trident Room
Albert H. Dewitt Officers Club
641 West Redline Avenue

PRESERVATION ACTION COMMITTEE

Get Involved & Make a Difference!

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

Please contact **Dodi Kelleher at dodikelleher@comcast.net**

AAPS BOARD MEMBERS 2025

President
Brenden Sullivan

1st Vice President Erich Stiger

2nd Vice President Dodi Kelleher

Corresponding Secretary Kay Weinstein

Recording Secretary
Karen Lithgow

Advisor to the Board Robert Farrar

Member at Large Shiva Mendez

Member at Large Lisa Baker

Treasurer: OPEN

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LEGACY HOME TOUR

Sunday September 21st, 2025 10am - 4pm

Explore the interiors of seven historic homes in the heart of the Bronze Coast.

Beginning August 1st, use your member promotion code to get \$5 off your ticket when purchased early online at Eventbrite!

Use Promo Code:
MEMBER25
alameda-preservation.org