



PAST News

Vol. 25, No.4

P.O. Box 308 • Palo Alto, California 94302

Summer 2013

Calendar of Historical Happenings

Opening September 27 — **Television: A History**, Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Free.

Sunday, October 6, 2 p.m. — **William Warrior: Animal Tales from the Past**. Palo Alto Historical Association, Lucie Stern Center, 1305 Middlefield Road. Free.

Sunday, November 3, 2 p.m. — **PAHA Celebrates Its 100th Year**, Palo Alto Historical Association, Lucie Stern Center, 1305 Middlefield Road. Free.

Saturdays, Late September / October — **Walking Tours**, times and places to be determined. Contact Hayley Stevens hes.stevens@gmail.com, or check our website: www.pastheritage.org for more information.

1st & 3rd Wednesdays – **Historic Resources Board**, 8 a.m. City Hall.

January 2013 — **The Story of Juana Briones** Exhibit by the California Historical Society

Was your house built in 1914? If so, please contact Janet Peacock at janet1585@gmail.com

On the Web

One of PAST's projects is to photograph and identify buildings throughout town. How can you help? Email a photo of your house to webmaster@pastheritage.org It's especially nice if you can send both recent and historic photos! Thanks.

PAST News

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PAST WEBSITE: www.pastheritage.org



PAST News

Palo Alto Stanford Heritage
P.O. Box 308
Palo Alto, CA 94302

PAST Heritage is a nonprofit organization advocating the preservation of the historic architecture, neighborhoods, and character of the greater Palo Alto Stanford area through informed citizen involvement and education.

PAST Heritage Board of Directors

President: Margaret Feuer
Vice President: Tom Johnson
Secretary: Judith Mattingly
Treasurer: Cheryl Lathrop
Brian George (Ex Officio)
Carolyn George (Webmaster)
Ellie Mansfield
Janet Peacock
Steve Staiger (Historian)
Haley Stevens

JUANA BRIONES UPDATE

The latest news about the section of wall from Juana Briones's house which was purchased by The Friends of Juana and PAST comes to us from PAST member, Clark Akatiff:

In January, 2014 The California Historical Society in San Francisco will be mounting an exhibition of the Story of Juana Briones. This will be a bi-lingual presentation which will include artifacts and displays from her life and home. It is the intention of the curators, under the direction of Professor Al Camarillo, to display the remnant wall as a centerpiece of the exhibit.

Presently, the wall is located in Foothills Park and \$20,000.00 is needed to move it to San Francisco and mount the display. Please help to ensure the protection of the wall by making a generous pledge.

Email Clark Akatiff with your donation amount at forjuanab@yahoo.com

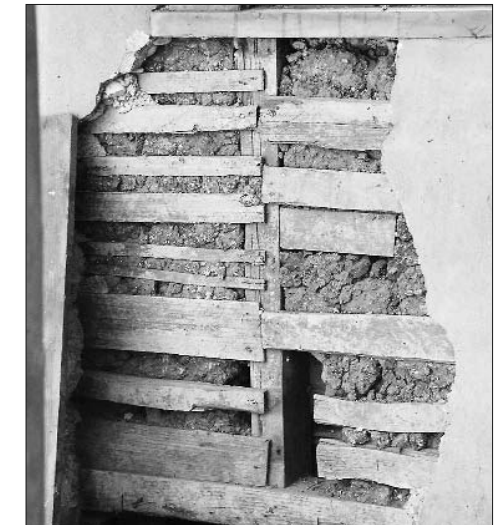


Photo of rammed-earth wall taken before demolition.



Wall being prepared for relocation and storage at Foothill Park.



1901 photo of east side of Juana Briones house showing Miranda barns on the south slope.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Looking back on my Presidency, I feel that PAST made significant contributions during the past year to preservation advocacy. Two of our goals — increasing membership and community visibility were realized. We have 408 members, 160 more than the prior year. Approximately 400 people from Palo Alto and beyond were enthusiastic attendees at our September and May Walking Tours and the 25th Holiday House Tour had 500 attendees and 75 docents. We celebrated Preservation Month on May 19th by presenting centennial plaques to homeowners and preservation awards to owners, contractors and architects. Weekly articles in the *Daily News* showcased historic houses in Palo Alto and reached a circulation of 50,000 people. We advocated for the preservation of MacArthur Park, the Hamilton Avenue Post Office, and 509 Embarcadero Road and we rejoiced in the restoration of 601 Melville, a house on which we hold a preservation easement.

As proud as I am of our work this year, victory is often bitter-sweet. For every house saved more are demolished. The PAST Board, in an effort to understand why we are losing so many significant buildings by well-known architects like Clark, Sumner and Eichler, met with Planning staff. We learned a lot, but the bottom line is that Palo Alto's Historic Ordinance is virtually toothless. Combine that with tremendous wealth, a general lack of interest in preservation by the City and the diminution of citizen activism, and you have a gloomy outlook for preservation and for PAST.

It took extraordinary and unsustainable efforts by PAST's 7 board and 2 ex officio members to make 2012–2013 a success. **To survive, PAST needs your active participation. Please consider volunteering your talent to our Board for 2013-2014.***

I believe that Palo Alto's architecture is worth preserving. The people who created our city, the structures they built and their individual stories enhance our lives every day. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to honor them through preservation and to advocate for the importance of the past to the future.

Margaret Feuer

*** Contact Tom Johnston at johnston@swllp.com for Board opportunities.** We're looking for board members with a zest for advocating for historic preservation of buildings, neighborhoods and culture. Monthly meetings are the 1st Wednesday at 7 p.m.



Treasurer's Year End Report:

There is \$35,730.39 in the bank, of which \$10,000 is for covenants.

HAMILTON AVENUE POST OFFICE UPDATE

The Mission Revival style Post Office on Hamilton Avenue, designed by Birge Clark in 1932, is a building much loved by Palo Altans. Before the USPS can sell this National Register building, it is obliged to reach an agreement whereby a Certified Local Government (e.g. the City of Palo Alto) or a preservation entity (e.g. PAST) agrees to hold a covenant/preservation agreement. The holder is then charged with overseeing this historic preservation covenant which will be binding upon the grantee (i.e. purchaser) upon conveyance of the Post Office.

In May, the City of Palo Alto received permission from the Council to agree to be the covenant holder. The City also was granted permission to explore the purchase of the Post Office property with intent to make an offer.

PAST's interest in the Hamilton Avenue Post Office is that it be preserved. We support the City's desire to do this. The potential conflict of interest should the City both hold the covenant and purchase the building will surely be resolved. Perhaps more problematic is the overly broad language of Clause 10 of the Covenant Agreement:

"The City may, for good cause, and following notice to the public, modify or cancel one or all of the foregoing restrictions upon application of the grantee (i.e. purchaser), its heirs, successors, or assigns."

Clear, legal standards for termination in the event of damage or destruction do exist; however, the above proposed language constitutes a blank check. PAST has expressed its concern to the State Historic Preservation Officer. Hopefully, the residents of Palo Alto, the "public" referred to in Clause 10 will object vehemently to any modification which would destroy the historic fabric of this iconic building.

***HISTORIC EXTERIOR FEATURES:** Smooth stucco walls; Spanish clay tile roof; arcade of round arches; original windows fitted with steel sash casements; molded cornice; ornamental glazed tiles set at intervals below the roofline; copper gutters, and down-spouts; projecting bays at both ends of the façade; hipped roof sheltering main entrance; arched main entryway with Sandstone quoins and an eagle relief in the keystone; metal lanterns that flank the entrance; ornate decorative metal grillwork that fills the arched transom above the door; front gable roof over projecting bay Southeast entrance; glazed quatrefoil tile adorning the gable end; all original ornamental metalwork; cloister with six wide, round arches spanning the façade; terra cotta tile flooring of cloister; exposed wood roof beams of cloister; metal lanterns of cloister; and five original windows located in cloister behind the arcade.

THE HISTORIC INTERIOR FEATURES of the property are determined to be the following: ox beamed ceilings with dark-stained wood; rustic metalwork chandeliers that hang from the ceiling beams on long chains; metalwork, including the ornamental metal screen in the arches above the service windows; original individual service counters, including sashes, grilles, and wood frames; post office boxes framed in rich wood trim; radiator covers which also incorporate ornamental metal; variegated red marble wainscoting; and marble tiled floors in the lobby. Additionally, while not historic, a Greg Brown mural is located on the Gilman Street façade.



(See more photos on the web at www.pastheritage.org/Articles/PostOffice.html)

Preservation Month Recap

May was National Preservation Month and PAST celebrated with Saturday Walking Tours and a Preservation Event on May 19th

Walking Tour attendees, numbering between 25 and 55, enjoyed learning about the history and architecture of Homer Avenue, Professorville, Downtown and Crescent Park. Their enjoyment was enhanced by Brian George who provided a portable microphone for the guides and by the new Crescent Park tour, created by Margaret Feuer. The popularity of these walks through history can be attributed to Hayley Stevens, the Walking Tours Chair and her knowledgeable guides:

Steve Emslie, Suzanne Mantell, Gail Woolley, Joan Jack and Sallie Tasto.

Over 100 people attended the 18th Annual Preservation Event on May 19th at the Palo Alto Woman's Club. Eleven houses, built in 1913, received commemorative brass plaques as well as six houses built in prior years. Thanks to Janet Peacock for all her painstaking research. Additionally, Preservation Awards were presented to five owners, architects and contractors who restored or adapted historic buildings.

This event also featured a talk by author, journalist, and preservationist David Weinstein who spoke on *What's Modern About Bay Area Modern Architecture*. Tracing the roots of modernism, often to seemingly traditional architects like Gardener Dailey and Birge Clark, Dave gave his audience new insights into their surroundings.



621 High Street, 1897



1401 Emerson Street



1701 Bryant Street



177 Bryant Street



305 Churchill Avenue



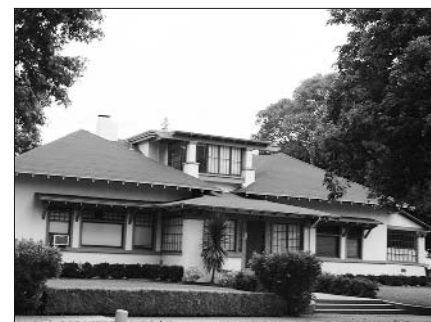
761 Dolores, Stanford



711 Middlefield Road



328 Guinda Street



215 Middlefield Road



566 Everett Avenue



710 Palo Alto Avenue



216 Fulton Street



618 Kingsley Avenue, 1908



1300 Hamilton Avenue, 1903



1511 Waverley Street, 1909



225 Addison Avenue, 1903



825 Kipling Street, 1898

Next year's Preservation Event will be on Sunday, May 4th. Check our website for details.

2013 PRESERVATION AWARD WINNERS

Residential Restoration and Renovation Award
1061 Bryant Street
Michael and Caroline Hu Flexner, Owners
Hans Baldauf, Architect
Pete Moffat, Contractor

for the restoration and renovation of the Sunbonnet House which restored the cantilevered gambrel roof, the open stairwell, dining room and wood paneled living room of this Bernard Maybeck house while renovating its living spaces and foundation. The house is an outstanding example of the Bay Area Arts and Crafts movement and is on Palo Alto's Historic Inventory.



Residential Restoration and Addition Award
859 Lytton Avenue
Azar Lohrasbpour, Owner
Charles Brown, Architect

Joe Bettencourt of Straightline Construction, Contractor
for the restoration of and addition to 859 Lytton Avenue which replicates the original 1909 design, footprint, room layout, woodwork and unusual brick siding. A partial 2nd story was added behind the original cross gable roof. The house is an extraordinary example of neighborhood preservation.



Institutional Restoration and Remodel Award
Hoover Pavilion
Stanford University Medical Center, Owner
Tom Eliot Fisch, Architect
Page & Turnbull, Preservation Architects
Vance Brown Builders, Contractor

for the restoration and remodel of the 1931–1939 Hoover Pavilion which preserved the Art Deco facade, lighting fixtures and windows, and replicated the original finial atop the former Palo Alto Hospital. These preservation efforts ensure that this building remains eligible for the California and National Registers.



Commercial Rehabilitation Award
Thompson Bakery
206–210 Homer Avenue
Richard & Lorraine Kruss & Family, Owners
Lippert & Lippert Design, Architect
Lindstrom & Son Builders, Contractor

for the rehabilitation of Palo Alto's second oldest remaining retail store front which provided seismic stabilization of the 1907 soft-story wood frame building. Original wood ceilings, floors, interior paneling and exterior siding were painstakingly dismantled, and numbered for installation of a steel brace frame and then reinstalled. New double hung windows were matched to the two remaining original sashes. The Thompson Bakery will remain part of Palo Alto's historic fabric for another 106 years.



Commercial Rehabilitation Award
Thompson Bakery
212–214 Homer Avenue
Richard & Lorraine Kruss & Family, Owners
Lippert & Lippert Design, Architect
Lindstrom & Son Builders, Contractor

for a rehabilitation which preserved and restored the original 1927 concrete and steel structure by harvesting and re-installing the original ribbed chicken wire glass and refurbishing the industrial steel windows and doors. Also, electrical utilities were undergrounded. Originally a commercial bakery distributing baked goods throughout the Peninsula, today it houses hi-tech start up incubators.



Institutional Restoration and Remodel Award
City of Palo Alto, Owner
Mark Cavagnero Associates, Arch, Architect
Big—D Pacific, Contractor

for the revitalization of the Palo Alto Arts Center which involved restoring exterior wood siding and gutters. New windows matched the shape and character of the old and a new entrance was carefully inserted into the original drive-up window in order to minimize change to the historic fabric. The landscaping was developed to define this entrance. Internally, dropped ceilings were removed to expose and celebrate the existing trusses.

