

# PAST News

Vol. 28, No.2

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

Spring 2016

## Historic Preservation at 45



Preservation Awards! — Centennial Plaques!

— Steven Eichler

— Refreshments following presentations!

Sunday, May 15 — 2 to 5 p.m.

Lucie Stern Community Center Ball Room

1305 Middlefield Road



*Presented in association with the Palo Alto Historical Association.*

## Saturday Historic Walking Tours



May 14

PAST will be kicking off our Spring series of free walking tours on May 14, starting with a stroll through Professorville. Every May we organize these tours to celebrate Preservation Month, giving residents and visitors alike the chance to delve deeper into a piece of Palo Alto's history and character. Each year, the walking tours are among PAST's most popular events led by some of the city's most knowledgeable preservationists. Join us for a fun and friendly walk through town—we look forward to seeing you on our tours!

*Hayley Stevens, Tour Coordinator*



May 21

May 14 Professorville Led by Gail Woolley  
Meet at 1005 Bryant (corner of Bryant and Addison)



May 28

May 21 College Terrace Led by Carolyn George  
Meet at 1181 College (corner of College and Harvard)



June 4

May 28 Crescent Park Led by Margaret Feuer  
Meet at Squire House, 900 University (corner of University and Seneca)

June 4 Homer Avenue Led by Steve Emslie  
Meet at The Woman's Club, 475 Homer Avenue

All tours start at 10 a.m.

## Meet Our Board: Tom Johnston

Tom Johnston was born and raised in Palo Alto. Tom graduated from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and received his J.D. from the University of California, Davis School of the Law. Tom is a real estate attorney whose practice focuses on the representation of owners and developers of real estate in connection with the acquisition, development, and financing of multifamily, commercial, and industrial projects. He has worked on projects located throughout the United States. Tom is interested in helping to preserve and enhance Palo Alto's unique architectural and historical identity.

He developed a preservation tool for sellers who don't wish to have their houses demolished by new owners: the preservation covenant. Now that PAST has some experience with covenants, we'd



like to begin offering this service to other property owners concerned about the future of their homes once they are sold.

The preservation covenant is a formal agreement between PAST and the owner of a historic property in which the owner agrees to ensure the maintenance and preservation of the architectural and historical characteristics of that property. Covenant agreements are recorded as part of the deed for the property. The responsibility for upholding the terms of the covenant transfers to any new owner.

After six years, Tom is leaving the board. Thanks for all you contributions to PAST's success!

*(See Tom's article on page 6.)*

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**Dear PAST Heritage Friends,**

**The Woman's Club of Palo Alto cordially invites you to a birthday party!**

**Where:** 475 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto  
**When:** Thursday, June 16  
**Events:** 3:30 – Professorville & Downtown–South Walking Tours  
(originating at clubhouse entry)  
5:00 – Clubhouse Tour; MOAH Displays; Docents;  
Refreshments

**Please join us to celebrate 100 years in our wonderful  
Charles E. Hodges clubhouse!**



## PAST's Past/PAST's Future: Historic Preservation at 45

This year, the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, seems like a perfect time to reflect on our local preservation accomplishments. Palo Alto was incorporated in 1894 so we theoretically have buildings at least 122 years old to preserve. In reality there are very few structures existing from Palo Alto's earliest days. As our city grew many different styles of architecture were added to the city. Once popular styles were later viewed as old fashioned and replaced with more current designs. This activity is still occurring today so what did Palo Alto do to insure that the changing face of Palo Alto did not destroy its historic local architecture?

Within five years of the National Act, the Palo Alto Branch of the AAUW published . . . *Gone Tomorrow?* a directory of historic Palo Alto homes. It explained clearly what the city faced as citizens expressed concern for preservation:

This booklet attempts to create an appreciation for Palo Alto's early homes by delineating their part in our heritage-historically and visually. Although the survival of all structures included here is not anticipated as a possibility, it is hoped that when measures to improve the quality of Palo Alto's environment are considered, the tangible evidence of the past and the visual texture provided by these historic buildings will be evaluated along with other relevant factors.

In the 45 years following this booklet Palo Alto succeeded in preserving significant elements of our architectural history. An early project was the **Historic Resources Survey** that created the 1979 and 1984 publication of information about local buildings categorized by their significance relative to areas such as architectural style, architect, and contribution to neighborhood character. The survey provided the data needed to challenge the community to design a

process that promoted local preservation of the City's historic buildings. A **Preservation Ordinance** and the **Historic Resources Board** (HRB) were created in 1980 to insure that proposed changes to Survey structures were acceptable. The initial members of the Board were Gail Woolley (Chair), Birge Clark, Elizabeth Kittas, Bob Nerrie, and Jim Stone.

This increased awareness of our architectural legacy led to important preservation successes including saving the **Squire House** and the **Hostess House**, establishing the **Professorville Historic District** and the **Ramona Street Architectural District**, and placing **Greenmeadow** and **Green Gables** neighborhoods on the **National Register of Historic Places**. A very recent success was the single story overlay restriction that preserves the character of the **Los Arboles** Eichler neighborhood.

One early project that promoted historic architecture was the City's presentation of Centennial brass plaques to owners of centennial homes during the 1994 celebration of Palo Alto's 1894 incorporation. In 1996 Palo Alto Stanford Heritage stepped forward to continue the annual recognition of centennial homes by presenting plaques and **Preservation Awards**. PAST's 2016 awards celebration will be held on May 15 at the Lucie Stern Center.

The Palo Alto of today is a mixture of architectural styles reflecting the choices we made as we grew from a small town supporting Stanford University to an important part of Silicon Valley. Government and private organizations play a pivotal role in making sure we don't sacrifice this visible record of Palo Alto's 122 year history while accommodating the current pressure to grow through demolition.

*Brian George, PAST President*



*the  
architectural  
character  
of  
Palo Alto*

# **PAttern & STyle**

*February 20, 2016*



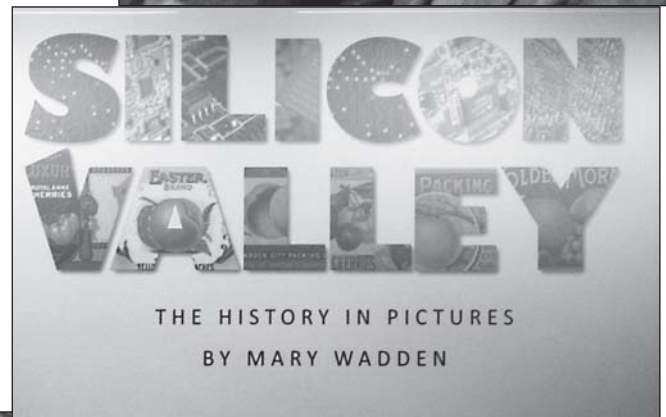
PAST's latest member event was a major success. The goal was to provide background information about the architectural character of Palo Alto. Since our mission is to promote the preservation of Palo Alto's architecture and neighborhood character we decided to ask Michael Garavaglia, Garavaglia Architecture, Inc., Dan Garber, Fergus Garber Young Architects, and Mary Wadden, Silicon Valley Commercial Brokerage, Inc., to address the importance of preserving the area's diverse pattern and style.

Michael presented an illustrated talk about what makes a property historic. Historic context, Significance, Character Defining Features, and Integrity are all part of the considerations in the decision of whether or not a property is historic. The accompanying slides provided good examples related to the criteria.

Dan Garber's talk covered local architects and their contributions to Palo Alto's architectural character. Buildings designed by Pedro de Lemos, Charles Sumner, Birge Clark, and Joseph Eichler are significant examples of local architectural styles that are part of the Palo Alto character. Dan's creative timeline slides provided insight into the growth of neighborhood architecture.

Mary Wadden's presentation helped the audience appreciate how Silicon Valley grew from the early days of Lee de Forest, Frederick Terman and Hewlett and Packard through Shockley Semiconductor, Fairchild and Apple to today's Stanford Research Park and the area's recognition as a place to create the future.

We thank Michael, Dan, and Mary for sharing their expertise. PAST is planning more member events so check our website, <http://www.pastheritage.org> for more information.





An easement requires both current and future owners to properly maintain the historic character of the property, and it provides a legal means of enforcement. Because easements are recorded on the title for the property and run in perpetuity, regardless of the owner, they serve as a vital tool to protect historic buildings for future generations.

## Benefits of Easements

Preservation easements have become an important component of state and federal policy to encourage public participation in the preservation of America's historic resources. Their use is specifically encouraged by an important economic incentive: if the property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places property owners who donate qualified preservation easements may be eligible for a charitable contribution deduction from their federal income taxes for the value of the historic preservation easement.

The donation value is deductible from federal income taxes in the same manner as other non-cash charitable contributions. For additional information on historic preservation tax benefits, please follow the link to the U.S. Department of

the Interior's Historic Preservation Tax Incentives webpage:

<http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/incentives/index.htm>

## For More Information

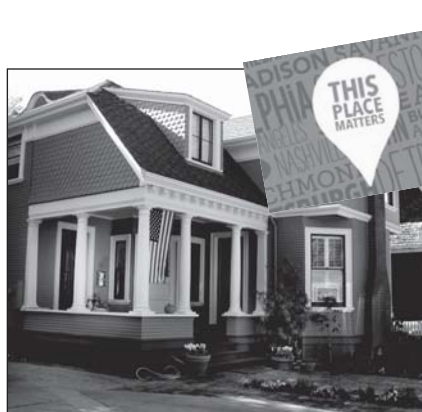
The National Trust for Historic Preservation has a great section about preservation (conservation) easements on their website:

<http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/legal-resources/easements>.

If you have questions or would like to speak with someone about donating an easement to PAST, please e-mail us at: [president@pastheritage.org](mailto:president@pastheritage.org)



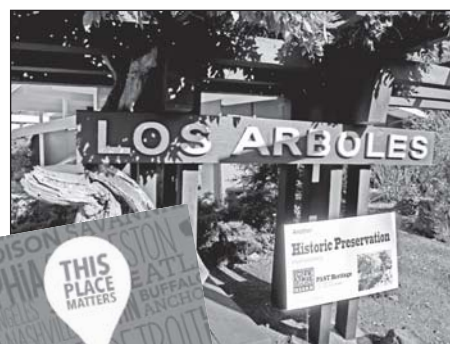
Theophilus Allen House, 601 Melville Avenue



730 Bryant Street



351 Homer Avenue



Ames Avenue and Middlefield Road

## Calendar of Historical Happenings

Saturdays — **Walking Tours!** May 14, 21, 28 and June 4 at 10 a.m. *Museum of American Heritage: Vintage Pinball Machines*, 351 Homer Ave., 11 a.m.– 4 p.m., Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Free.

Sunday, May 15, 2 p.m. — **Presentation of Centennial Plaques, Preservation Awards, and talk by Steven Eichler.** Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield. Free

Thursday, June 16 — **The Woman's Club Birthday Party**, 475 Homer Ave. (See page 2)

**Historic Resources Board** — 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed. – 8:30 a.m., City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave.

## PAST Heritage Board of Directors

President: Brian George  
 Vice President: Tom Johnston  
 Secretary: Hayley Stevens  
 Treasurer: Tom Johnston

Steve Emslie  
 Carolyn George (Webmaster)  
 Lee Lippert  
 Steve Staiger (Historian)

[www.pastheritage.org](http://www.pastheritage.org)

The 2016 theme for National Preservation Month, **This Place Matters**, is particularly appropriate to PAST's mission. Look for this in this issue!



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 Palo Alto Stanford Heritage  
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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.

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[www.pastheritage.org](http://www.pastheritage.org)