

The Fall Walking Tours Are Back!

Join us this fall for our walking tours!

See the inset pages 4-5 for a full description of Saturday tours
beginning September 23 (October 1 is a Sunday tour)

Below is a sampling of pre-1900 built houses to be seen on the various tours:





President's Message

Last year was the centennial anniversary of the opening of famed Palo Alto architect Birge Clark's architectural practice in Palo Alto. Sadly, we have already lost many of his defining legacy buildings to demolition or inappropriate renovations, additions, or remodels.

Today we are also in danger of losing Palo Alto's iconic Eichler neighborhoods if we don't take measures soon to protect their integrity. Designed by architects Robert Anshen and A. Quincy Jones, these neighborhoods have reached a pivotal milestone, with mid-20th century modern-style architecture coming into its own. Many of our local Eichler homes and neighborhoods are threatened if qualified historic resource status isn't conferred soon.

With this in mind, I recently attended the City of Palo Alto Historic Resources Board retreat on July 28, where the HRB set the priorities for their new term. Among the topics discussed were the City of Palo Alto Master List of Structures on the Historic Inventory, and the Mills Act.

Back in the late 1970s, mirroring state preservation efforts, the City of Palo Alto established its own Historic Resources Board, a public process to regulate the building demolition process, and to review and evaluate historic preservation approaches. In addition to federal and state historic investment credits and property tax programs, the city established local preservation incentives: transferable development rights for qualified historic rehabilitation and bonus floor area for seismic mitigation projects. Today, Palo Alto maintains a master list of more than 600 qualified historic structures, as well as several historic preservation districts.

Since the late 1970s, the City of Palo Alto, through the City Council, has maintained and affirmed a policy to accept and promote the preservation, improvement, and rehabilitation of the city's historic resources through the City of Palo Alto Master List of Structures on the Historic Inventory. The City Council

saw value in conferring qualified historic resource status. The counterweight in this status is that historic resources are entitled to alternative building code regulations, and recently the City Council has discussed expanding that Historic Inventory list.

Palo Alto's HRB is unique in that it is a Certified Local Government program under the authority of the Office of Historic Preservation, California State Department of Parks and Recreation. This is defined in California Law and Historic Preservation; Statutes, Regulations, and Administration Policies Regarding the Preservation and Protection of Cultural and Historical Resources Section 5020.1 (b) and states "Certified local government" means a local government that has been certified by the National Park Service to carry out the purposes of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

As part of the Certified Local Government reporting requirements, CLG submits an annual report to help the Office of Historic Preservation track the local preservation program's ongoing activities.

However, we at PAST Heritage believe that the City of Palo Alto may be out of compliance with Certified Local Government requirements regarding an updated survey of the historic inventory required every 10 years. The last time a thorough survey was done, for the period of 1997 thru 2000, was more than 25 years ago by Dames & Moore (February 2001). At that time, D&M identified approximately 2,000 homes qualifying as potentially eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources.

We request you join Palo Alto Stanford Heritage in asking the Historic Resource Board and City Council to make expanding Palo Alto's Master List of Structures on the Historic Inventory their number-one priority. Thank you for your support.

*Thank you. Lee I. Lippert, AIA, President
Palo Alto Stanford Heritage (PAST)*

PAST note: The Green Gables and Greenmeadows developments were both independently listed on July 28, 2005, in the National Register of Historic Places listings in Santa Clara County, California. Each development is described as a community of Eichler homes. "The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation." (These two subdivisions are only two of 31 Eichler tracts in Palo Alto.)

Boyce Ashby Addition

Charles P. Boyce and Anna M. Shackelford were married in her family's ranch home near the Gila River, New Mexico Territory, on Christmas Day, 1879. Four years later they arrived in Mayfield and acquired farm land northwest of the town. The Boyce farm bordered the eastern zigzag edge of Hopkins' 1889 map and extended to the southside of what later became the extension of Hamilton Avenue. Hopkins owned the land between the Hamilton Avenue Extension and San Francisquito Creek.

Anna's parents acquired the parcel north the Boyce property. Boyce's sister, Elle, and her husband Delmar Edward Ashby later bought 25-acres from Anna's father and built a cottage in 1889 at the what was then the end of Forest Avenue. In 1899, Timothy Hopkins dedicated a portion of his land alongside the creek to the town of Palo Alto, incorporated 1894. Hopkins named the road along the diagonal border as Boyce Avenue.

Boyce and Ashby shipped strawberries to San Francisco, as did nearby landowners Andrew Jackson Pitman and Dr. William Newell. In 1893, Ashby, also an orchardist with many peach trees, offered for sale 15 50-foot-wide Town lots, known as the Ashby addition, along Hamilton Avenue, each with 12 peach trees and water piped from the artesian well on his land. Ashby also extended the roadway from the intersection of Forest and Hale, across Boyce Avenue, to four large Villa lots, creating a stub street, where his house was located.

The dead-end street was called Forest Court and it stopped before reaching where the grassy mid-street island is now. The houses that were built along then Forest Court are now some of the earliest and most elaborate in Palo Alto: 1001 (the Flint house, 1894), 1023 (the Herzinger house, 1896), and the Newcomer house, 1896, originally at 1015 Forest. That address is now where the "New" Forest Court branches off as a cul-de-sac. The Newcomer house was moved to a 1055 address. 1007 and 1019 Flint Court were the other two original addresses.

The "Old" Forest Court was extended in 1919 as Forest Avenue, continuing onto what was then named Ashby Avenue, now Lincoln Avenue. The 1889 Ashby house was moved and became 1145

Forest Avenue, where it remains.

The 1905 Map of the Boyce and Ashby Tracts indicates the southern portion of the Ashby property had been sold to George and Ellen Fife. They built a large home facing Boyce Avenue (burned down

1939). What is now Fife Avenue separated their land from that of Boyce, whose land extended to Pitman Avenue, now Channing.

Boyce subdivided seven 100-foot wide lots along Pitman. Boyce held onto a 300-plus-foot wide parcel adjoining Ashby (Lincoln) where with two houses addressed at 951 and 955 (Channing) were built, including a huge water tank behind 951, which remains from the 1880s.



Ashby house, built 1889

PAST Fall 2023 Architectural and History Walking Tours

The public is invited, no charge. All tours begin at 10:00 am and all are on Saturday except the Professorville tour, which is on Sunday.



Saturday, September 23, Mayfield Tour, meet at Sarah Wallis Park, 202 Ash St.

See Mayfield's earliest houses and businesses plus Birge Clark-designed storefronts including the Clark designed theater that burned in 1950 (photo). The walk includes 1890s houses, a 1910 office building, former brewery and school sites, and the corner where Juana Briones moved after leaving her adobe dwelling.



Sunday, October 1, Professorville Tour, meet at 1005 Bryant St.

Professorville Tour (continued)

Tour a National Register Historic District which comprises a variety of turn-of-the-century homes where many early Stanford professors resided. We meet at the Angell House at 1005 Bryant St. (photo) and will see many other similarly labeled homes including the Marx House, the Varian House, the Wing House, and the Sunbonnet House, plus ten cottages designed by Birge Clark.



Saturday October 7, Homer Avenue Tour, meet at 475 Homer Ave.

Homer Avenue was once the unofficial (and inconsistent) boundary between residential and commercial areas. This walk begins at the Woman's Club and includes the church filmed in the "Harold and Maude" movie, the building for the future Palo Alto Museum, former laundry businesses, the former stables that served as Steve Jobs' private office (photo), the site where the "Father of Radio" worked, the AME Zion Church, and the iconic Downing Queen Anne-style house.

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Walking Tours *(continued from page 4)*



Saturday October 14, Boyce Ashby Addition Tour, meet at 1001 Forest Ave.

This first-ever Boyce Ashby Addition walk covers property that was developed just outside the eastern Palo Alto city limit. Delmar Ashby extended Forest Avenue to a small court where some of the outer Palo Alto's most elaborate houses were built, including the 1896 Herzinger House (photo), and will include the surrounding streets.



Saturday October 21, College Terrace Tour, meet at 2310 Yale

College Terrace was developed at the same time Stanford University was being built, and was originally mapped as "Palo Alto." The "terrace" portion of this area is mostly in the upper half of the tract but we will explore the lower half, which includes richly decorated Victorians from 1889 and subsequent houses. The tour passes by all types of architectures, including the house on Hanover Street where Birge Clark was raised.



*Birge Clark design, 454 California Ave,
Mayfield Tour*



AME Zion Church, 819 Ramona St, Homer Ave Tour

Charles K. Sumner



Charles Sumner Kaiser, as he was then named, was born on May 23, 1874, in Wilkes-Barre, Penn. His father had immigrated from Bavaria, worked as a tinsmith, and married locally. Charles studied architecture at Columbia University. In December 1902, he married and

traveled with his wife to Europe and the Mideast on a fellowship. Returned from his honeymoon, he rejoined the long-established New York firm, which specialized in architecture from the Beaux-Arts school in Paris (where Berkeley graduate and architect Julia Morgan had received a degree in 1902).

On June 25, 1906, architect Stanford White, a principal with a leading New York City architectural office, was sensationally and fatally shot in public. On April 18, 1906, San Francisco was devastated by the earthquake and fire. That same year, Charles Sumner Kaiser, a 32-year-old architect with White's firm, left for the Bay Area.

Arriving in Berkeley in 1906, Kaiser opened up his own practice. The university town was full of architects, including current or former professors with offices in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco, which was then rebuilding. UC Berkeley's school of architecture, founded in 1903. Residentially, Berkeley was the center of Brown Shingle architecture and Kaiser created several notable houses in this style.

Kaiser's father died in November 1914, three months after England declared war on Germany. Charles relocated with his wife Alice and their children to Palo Alto in 1916, residing in the 700 block of University Avenue. The only other local architect of note in the area at the time was Stanford graduate and resident John Kennedy Branner, with an office in San Francisco. Branner had received his architectural degree from Columbia in 1912.

Due to wartime anti-German sentiment, Charles Kaiser reversed his middle and surnames and became known as Charles Sumner when he opened his office at 57 Post Street in San Francisco. In 1916, he designed two massive, matching two-story houses at

855 and 865 Hamilton Avenue. The houses combine French Country style with a few Mediterranean flourishes.

Also designed in 1916, his house at 249 Lowell Street is a Colonial Revival two-story dwelling. Built a year later, his 445 Lowell house has a Queen Anne hexagonal tower but otherwise has an enlarged French County shape and is unadorned with smooth stucco walls. The house is listed as encompassing just over 6,900 square feet. The four Hamilton and Lowell houses were built when Stanford graduate Birge Clark was still enrolled in Columbia's architecture program.

Sumner's Walter Hays Elementary School, built in 1919-20 at the busy junction of Embarcadero and Middlefield Roads, had a Mediterranean-Italian Revival design very much like the then-new Palo Alto High School, constructed in 1918, even including a campanile bell-tower. Sumner and the contractor argued over construction issues and Sumner fought the school district over his fees for extras. In 1924, the school district hired Birge Clark for the Addison Elementary School design. Soon thereafter Clark was also hired by commercial real estate investors to design the Ramona Avenue commercial district.

Sumner's Walter Hays School building was torn down in the 1960s due to state-mandated earthquake studies and was replaced with a lesser current building, removing his most notable nonresidential structure from a highly visible corner, whereas Clark's Lucie Stern Community Center remains at the other end of the Middlefield block.

In 1920, Sumner designed 1431 Webster Street in an Italian Revival style with an arched doorway and three identical curved-top window openings, almost Palladian-style, on the second story above the inset front door. The following year, Clark designed a smaller Italianate next door at 1455.

Although the three architects (Sumner, Branner, and Clark) all attended Columbia, Branner and Clark were both sons of Stanford professors and raised on the West Coast. Sumner had an established East Coast professional career before arriving in California just ahead of the Spanish Colonial style that arrived in the mid-1920s. Settling in Palo Alto in his early forties, his design reflected a confident blend of styles, soon augmented by the arrival of the Spanish

(Continued on page 7)

Sumner *(continued from page 6)*



1184 Palo Alto Avenue

Colonial style of the mid-1920s. Sumner asserted that restraint in composition was an important part of a structure's beauty. He believed the structure and landscaping had to work together and he designed spaces with that principle in mind. Deep front yards and enclosed courtyards are a major characteristic of his designs

In 1926, Sumner designed several Spanish Colonial homes. The house at 441 Maple Street has subtle Romanesque touches, built the same year as Clark's 420 Maple. The house at 1505 University Avenue has fairly elaborate features. A very Italian revival design at 530 East Crescent is full of arches and columns. Sumner designed the house at 535 Lowell with a towering gable rising above a Tudor second story projecting from the smooth-wall stucco front.

Sumner's two-story Spanish Colonial at 435 Coleridge Avenue is next door to Clark's Spanish Colonial (what Clark called "California Colonial") at 455 Coleridge. Both 1926 houses extend far to the rear of their lots.

In 1928, Sumner designed the Trinity Lutheran Church at Melville and Middlefield as a Spanish Colonial. The complex incorporates Sumner's ideas of light and openness with the buildings surrounding

an expansive courtyard.

Sumner's 1184 Palo Alto Avenue has an elongated street-front with two decorative wrought-iron-barred



1184 window

windows flanking the doorway. In 1935, Sumner added an attached two-story on one end. With little traffic on the street, few ever pass by what is considered Sumner's most important Spanish Colonial work. In 1936, he designed the Spanish Colonial College Terrace Library on 2300 Wellesley Street, which is also hidden from thoroughfares.

Birge Clark's commercial designs have remained downtown landmarks.

He retired in 1941 and died after a long illness on May 25, 1948 at the age of 64. Clark, born in 1893, lived for another 41 years. Both men left residential legacies throughout Palo Alto.

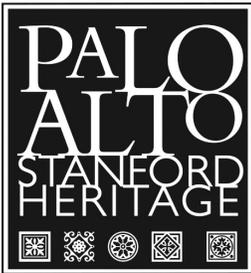
Fall 2023 PAST Calendar

See pages 4-5 for more information

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| Sept 23 (Saturday) | Mayfield Meet at Sarah Wallis Park, 202 Ash St. |
| Oct 1 (Sunday) | Professorville Meet at 1005 Bryant St, corner of Addison. |
| Oct 7 (Saturday) | Homer Avenue Meet at the Woman's Club, 475 Homer Ave. |
| Oct 14 (Saturday) | Boyce Ashby Addition Meet at 1001 Forest Avenue, corner of Boyce. |
| Oct 21 (Saturday) | College Terrace Meet at 2310 Yale, near California Ave. |

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PAST News
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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.

www.pastheritage.org

Annual membership is \$25.00

To join for remainder 2023 and all 2024,
mail a \$25 check to PAST at the PO Box
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