

## Calendar of Events

February 9th through June 3rd, 2007

### 100 Years at the Williams House

Museum of American Heritage

351 Homer Avenue, Palo Alto

For more information call (650) 321-1004 or visit their website at [www.moah.org](http://www.moah.org)

April 29, 2007

### Stanford Historical Society House and Garden Tour - see this issue.

May 6, 2007 - 2pm

### Palo Alto Historical Association Meeting

Steve Staiger will be speaking on

Palo Alto Rapid Transit - P.A.R.T.

Lucie Stern Community Center

May 19, 2007

### Palo Alto Woman's Club Antiques

Appraisal Day - see this issue.

## PAST Heritage Board of Directors

Ralph Britton, President

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Grace Hinton, Treasurer

Betty Britton

Carolyn George

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# PAST

# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 20 - NUMBER 4

SPRING 2007

*May is Preservation Month*

## Making Preservation Work!

"Making Preservation Work!" is a call to action for areas to begin a rebirth of the historic neighborhoods, revitalization of commercial buildings, and improvement of other natural settings in the places they call home.



PAST Heritage is Celebrating Preservation Month at our annual Preservation Award and Centennial Plaque Presentation Ceremony

*Please Join Us in Celebrating Preservation Month!*

**Sunday, May 20th from 3-5 pm**

for the presentation of our annual preservation awards and plaques to our newest centennial homes.

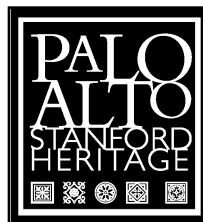
We will gather in the historic gardens of the

**1907 Williams House - Museum of American Heritage at 351 Homer Avenue**

Light refreshments will be served

## NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

If you know of any projects that are worthy of the PAST Board's consideration of a Preservation Award, please let us know via email at [president@pastheritage.org](mailto:president@pastheritage.org) or by phone at (650) 299-8878



## PAST NEWSLETTER

Palo Alto Stanford Heritage

P.O. Box 308

Palo Alto, CA 94302

(650) 299-8878

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

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 NEWSLETTER

Editor: Scott Smithwick

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Grace Hinton

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Margaret Feuer,

Photographs: Woman's Club of Palo Alto

Stanford Historical Society

The Juana Briones Heritage Foundation

## President's Column

The last few days, volunteers have been salvaging anything that can be preserved from the Juana Briones house.

Other volunteers are taking videos and still photographs to at least preserve the historic images of the house. True, the house had suffered the ravages of time, earthquake and insects, but it represented a link to the time before California became a part of the United States. Now the courts have ruled that the owners can destroy this historic landmark to make way for a new and larger home. The fact that the previous owners had benefited from tax relief provided by the Mills Act was insufficient to protect the property from demolition. In a few days bulldozers will destroy this historic structure and all that will remain will be a few artifacts, photos and a commemorative plaque.

Historic aging buildings are hard to maintain. Wood is subject to dry rot and termites in our climate. Old buildings were not designed to resist earthquakes, although wood structures have survived due to their inherent flexibility and high strength to weight ratio. Those who own historic buildings take on significant maintenance, repair, restoration and upgrade responsibilities. The reward is that the community has something to remind them of those who have passed this way before. The owner can feel privileged and proud to live in a house where a family can feel connected with tradition and history.

While this building has been lost, others survive and with care and concern will serve to connect the present generation to the traditions and achievements of those who have passed this way before.  
~ Ralph Britton



“The reward is that the community has something to remind them of those who have passed this way before.”



## Treasurer's Report

We are now halfway through our 2006-2007 fiscal year. Like last year, we had terrific membership renewal numbers, and a very successful Holiday House Tour featuring houses in Professorville. As of this writing, we have close to \$30,000 in our reserves fund after budgeted expenses, even though we were able to donate generously to preservation-related causes last year.

Next to the newsletter and Holiday House Tour costs, our biggest expenditure to date this year has been our gift to the Stanford Historical Society's Historic Houses Project. We've committed a total of \$5,000 to support the excellent work they're doing. Their Historic Houses Committee is preparing histories on all campus homes built before 1930. Each history will include the architectural history of the house, background on the people who have lived there and the changes they have made over time. The Society's spring tour, which features some of the residences presented in their forthcoming Book IV, should be a treat.

Last year the Board gave \$200 to the Friends of the Griffin House. This 1901 building, located on the Foothill College Campus, had been threatened with demolition. We are happy to report that the Friends won their case when it was brought before a judge last summer. In addition, they reimbursed the \$200 we donated.

PAST itself has received several generous donations. Abraham and Marian Sofaer are longtime members and benefactors, and we were very pleased to receive \$100 from their Sofaer Scheuer Philanthropic Fund of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund.

Earlier this year Steve Staiger of PAST and PAHA received a request for historic photos of a residence marketed by Alain Pinel Realtors. Steve directed them to PAST's Robert Brandeis Architectural Photograph collection. After finding just the right items, Alain Pinel Realtors donated \$100 to PAST. Thank you!

The Board continues to discuss ways to use our reserve fund to further support local preservation projects. We welcome member input, and will keep you informed as our fiscal year progresses.  
~ Grace Hinton

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### HELP WANTED: Webmaster

PAST is looking for someone to take over the management of our Website. We need someone familiar with basic HTML and CSS. The current webmaster will be available for consultation.

If you are interested, please contact PAST President, Ralph Britton by email at [ralphbritton@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ralphbritton@sbcglobal.net) or by phone at (650) 328-0760

## Palo Alto Stanford Heritage Advocates for the Children's Library

Early last year, the City of Palo Alto approached PAST with an interesting proposition concerning the Children's Library. The City intended to make use of Transfer of Development Rights (TRD) as a way of funding the ambitious project, and needed an independent group with expertise in preservation to review the project during construction and to certify that the construction conformed to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings. The PAST Board voted to enter into the agreement with the City.

Representatives from PAST have been meeting at least quarterly during construction with the Stakeholders, a group made up of representatives from PAST, Palo Alto Public Works, the Library, and the Library Foundation. The construction had been going smoothly until the new windows in the additions were installed. PAST felt that the new windows neither met the Standards, nor met the intent of the drawings approved by the Historic Resources Board, drawings which formed the basis of our agreement with the City.



We were troubled about the windows with divided lights, not only in their inherent heavy appearance but also as viewed against original features. On the front façade of the building we felt that the scale of both the sashes and the muntins of these windows was problematic as contrasted against the original, graceful metal sash windows. As approached down Hopkins Avenue along Rinconada Park, we question whether the overly-heavy windows would be a distraction from the original, historic façade.

The City's historic consultant, Garavaglia Architecture, Inc., issued a report concerning the new windows, calling them "marginally compliant" with the Standards, a finding that PAST was bound to by the terms of the agreement. However, because the PAST board did not believe that the windows meet the *intent* of the drawings approved by the Historic Resources Board, we asked that the new windows be reviewed by the HRB.

The Historic Resources Board toured the site, and met twice to revisit the subject of the windows. The first meeting was continued to allow the architect, Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco, more time to present better technical information about the configurations/sizes of the various window components. At the second meeting, following the Architect's presentation, the Board voted that the windows did not meet the Standards, and called for the most egregious windows (those installed in the same plane as the original windows, and those most visible from the public way) to have different, more compatible sashes. The windows at the north program room, as a unified part of a more contemporary composition, were allowed to remain.

While the City's managing of the project has on the whole been sensitive, this incident points up the need of the Public Works Department to have more training in the field of historic preservation. The City has the responsibility for stewardship of many publicly-owned historic buildings that will be undergoing renovations in the next few years—the College Terrace Library, the Roth Building, and the Sea Scouts building are some examples that come to mind. It would be to the community's benefit for Public Works to have someone on staff with a heightened sensitivity to preservation issues.

~ Grace Hinton

## The Woman's Club of Palo Alto and Its Clubhouse



In 1894, the year that Palo Alto was incorporated, 24 women met at the old Presbyterian Church to formally organize the Woman's Club. They dedicated it to the goals of "self improvement, mutual help and community involvement." These women contributed to Palo Alto by founding its first library, building its first high school, striving for woman suffrage, and even planting this pioneer town's first trees.

In 1904, The Woman's Club was incorporated and the dream of building a clubhouse led to the development of a lot fund. By 1906, the Club with 106 members purchased a lot on the northwest corner of Homer Avenue and

Cowper Street for the princely sum of \$1,500. There was some trepidation that this location was "too far out in the country" from the fledgling town! For the next 10 years, incessant fund raising through receptions, food markets, costume parties, sell-out speakers such as Helen Keller and the publication of two books, *The Santa Clara Valley* and a *Woman's Club Cook Book*, enabled the women to raise \$5,370 for construction.

The architect chosen was Charles Edward Hodges (1866-1943) a resident of Palo Alto who had offices in San Francisco and who had been the resident architect at Stanford from 1888 to 1906. In addition to overseeing the construction of the Quadrangle, Memorial Church and the Museum, Hodges contributed eight buildings to Palo Alto's Historic Inventory - one of which is the Clubhouse at 475 Homer Avenue.

Hodges choice of a Tudor-Craftsman style for The Woman's Club ensured that it would blend into its residential setting and yet not be mistaken for a house. The one and a half storied structure is surfaced in stucco with some half-timber work. The pavilion entryway is framed and executed in wood. To further the home/meeting place theme, the building included two fireplaces and a kitchen, as these elements were associated with home and hospitality. Craftsman details in the Club's interior are seen in the built-in cupboard in the Fireside Room as well as in the wainscot throughout. Another example of the Arts and Crafts movement are the fireplace tiles which were manufactured by Steiger Terra Cotta and Pottery Company, located at 18th and Division in South San Francisco. These salt-glazed tiles have a varied surface effect, which was achieved by throwing salt on the tiles while they were in the kiln. Brown grouting was typically used with salt glazed tiling. Steiger only produced such tiles for a 5-year period around 1910. These tiles are an early example of the Craftsman style pre-dating the better known tiles of Batchelder. Of further interior interest is the fire curtain on the stage. In 1926, The Advertising Agency paid the Woman's Club \$500 to hang the curtain and local businesses were charged to advertise on the curtain, thus combining both safety and commercial interests.

The cornerstone, engraved and donated by George McLachlan, was laid in a June 1916 ceremony. On 6/10/1916 *The Palo Alto Times* opined: "We believe The Woman's Club in starting this building is preparing to contribute a great deal to the future of this city." At a house warming party, held on 9/22/1916, all 400 seats in the Ballroom were filled well before the speeches and musical program began. Emily Pardee Karns, Building Committee Chair, acknowledged the three men whose generosity had helped make the clubhouse a reality: the architect, Charles Hodges, whose fee was only 2% of the construction cost, City Attorney, Norman E. Malcolm, who donated his services and F.W. Fox, the contractor, who made little profit while completing construction for \$5,370.

~ Margaret Feuer, co-author of "A Walk Through History: Women of Palo Alto 1994"

In 2007, as in 1894, The Palo Alto Woman's Club takes pride in preserving this historic building. Please support our efforts and enjoy viewing this historic building by attending our Antiques Appraisal Day on May 19th. For more information, please see the insert or visit their website <http://paloalto.womensclub.org>

# Stanford Historical Society's Annual Historic House and Garden Tour

Anticipating National Preservation Month in May, the Stanford Historical Society offers a rare glimpse into the campus' early residential architecture on Sunday, April 29, when it opens five historic houses and gardens in the lower San Juan subdivision from 1 to 4 pm.

The tour, which will focus on restoration and renovation, includes stops at three of the double houses designed by Bakewell & Brown and built by Stanford in 1908 and 1909, as affordable housing for some of the university's earliest faculty members. The double houses also served as an audition for the fledgling architectural partnership of Arthur Brown Jr. and John Bakewell, who became university architects in 1913 and designed many campus buildings, as well as major buildings in San Francisco and elsewhere. Also on the tour will be two Tudor houses from the 1920s. All the houses are characterized by well-executed renovations in keeping with their original designs and details. This tour also celebrates the publication of *Historic Houses IV: Early Residential Communities of the Lower San Juan District, Stanford University*, which focuses not only on the 12 homes in the 6 double houses on Alvarado Row and Salvatierra Street but also on the 1920s Hoover cottages on Salvatierra Street and Mayfield Avenue. The book will be available for sale during the house tour for \$20 including tax.

Preview of the houses open for the 2007 tour

## Three Double Houses



These houses were designed as four different models, though three of the four have similar interior plans. The tour includes two model B houses and a model D house. Model B houses are clad in clapboard siding and have steeply hipped roofs spanning the width of the structure.

On the original plans, model B houses have a receiving (entry) hall that opens to a large living room with false beams and a corner fireplace that adjoins a similar fireplace in the dining room. At the back of the entry hall, a staircase leads to the second floor and -- down from a landing -- to the kitchen. A pass pantry joins the kitchen and dining room. Beyond the kitchen are a laundry room, adjacent half-bathroom, and rear entrance. The dining rooms have built-in china cabinets with leaded-glass windows. Upstairs are three bedrooms, a study, a bath, and a sleeping porch that is now enclosed in all the houses. The master bedroom, on the outer back corner, has a porch on the back and attic access from stairs in the closet; the study with fireplace is on the front next to the adjacent duplex.

The contrast between the two model B houses on tour is evident from the outside.

The end one of the houses has been redesigned, breaking its facade's

symmetry, to include a guest bedroom and bath on the first floor and an expanded master bedroom, bath and closet above it.

The model D house, one of the last built, has low-pitched gable roofs over the outer ends and a sloped roof across the central section. Dormer roofs cover the entrance porches, a small, hipped roof shades downstairs windows in the center and multi-paned windows face the street. Its interior plan much resembles model B's.



Highlights of the double houses include:

- careful restoration of original wood and period detailing
- an Asian art collection
- the power of a simple bay window to enlarge and enhance the Craftsman style
- sensitive updating and transformation of kitchens and pantries
- multiple uses of enclosed sleeping and open porches
- original brass fittings and lighting fixtures
- varied fireplace treatments, pre- and post-1989 earthquake

## Two Tudor Houses

A 1924 Tudor-style house, designed by Wolfe & Higgins of San Jose and built for Stanford's first organist, Warren Dwight Allen, is dominated downstairs by a truly "great" room, made to house the owner's organ. The two-story frame residence with garage has been carefully expanded in the back to include a large, airy kitchen and family room.

Highlights include:

- inset tiles in the entry patio, believed to have come from the Quad after the 1906 earthquake; one is of Noah's ark, complete with dove
- organ alcove in the living room, where organ pipes were once installed in the walls and extended upward to an opening in the ceiling.
- living room fireplace with mantel decorated with acanthus and Corinthian column motifs
- original chandelier, created from a Moroccan metal fire pot



A 1929 Tudor-style house designed by Henry Collins, for Ida Stauf, professor of Romanic Languages, has steeply pitched roofs with intersecting gables, slightly curving roof slopes, and exterior beams and curving diagonal braces. Though it was originally built at 1,700 square feet, it had just two bedrooms and a small kitchen. The dining room was designed for additional use as a library with three walls fitted with custom cabinets containing adjustable shelves. The living room, designed on a grand scale relative to the rest of the house, provided design groundwork for later additions to the back and side of the house, which have more than doubled its size.



Highlights include:

- additions to the dining room and kitchen which make use of the original pantry space to open up new spaces
- a magnificent living room and library with wrought-iron fixtures and an angular staircase
- the owner's extensive model train set-up in the garden

## Tour Logistics

These five houses are within easy walking distance of one another. Parking and shuttle service are available at the Tresidder Union parking lot; pick up the shuttle in front of the Stanford Faculty Club, adjacent to the lot. Shuttles continue among the houses for those who have trouble walking. *Note:* Tour goers should be aware that these houses may have uneven paths and stairs without railings. Please wear appropriate footwear. In the houses, visitors will be asked to wear shoe covers. For additional information, see the insert.