

PAST Celebrates Birge Clark

Did you know...

that Birge Clark designed his first buildings in 1922? Bo Crane has created four walking tours to celebrate this! Join us in October and early November for the tours. (See the schedule on page 3.)

420 Maple was designed by Birge Clark in 1927. You can read about it on page 6.

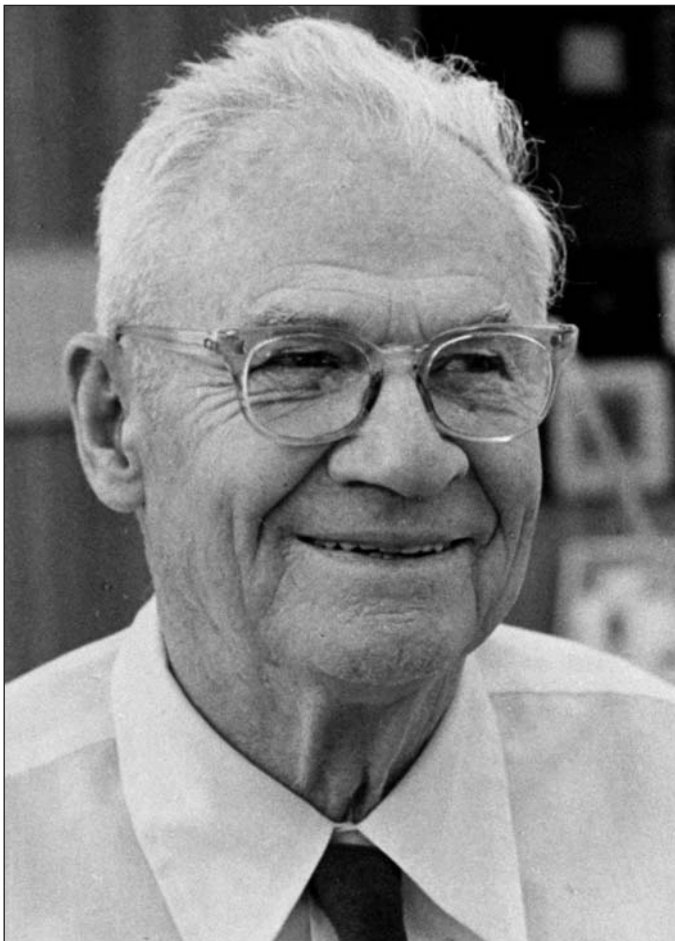


Photo from the Guy Miller Archive of PAHA

It seldom happens that a single architect is so influential that his work actually provides a major component of the image of a city. There are, however, at least three California towns where this has happened: in San Diego with the work of Irving Gill; in Watsonville with the work of W. H. Weeks; and in Palo Alto with the work of Birge Clark.

While Clark designed some structures in the Tudor or Medieval Revival styles, his work is primarily in the Spanish Colonial Revival mode, or, as he prefers to call it, the Early California Style. There is in his work a fondness for large expanses of wall, carefully irregular fenestration, and embellishments of colored tiles and wrought iron.

Clark's father, A. B. Clark, was an early Stanford faculty member and although his primary field was art rather than architecture, he was the designer of many fine early Palo Alto residences. Thus his son, Birge Clark, was exposed to architectural concerns at an early age and together they designed the Lou Henry Hoover House.

Clark's long practice has been almost solely conducted in Palo Alto, and was varied enough to include single and multiple family residences, commercial structures and prominent institutional buildings. Thus, his hand is to be traced in every range of building in the community, and is responsible for the remarkable visual coherence of post-1920's Palo Alto.

Source: Historical and Architectural Resources of the City of Palo Alto, 1979.

PAST Lifetime Achievement Award

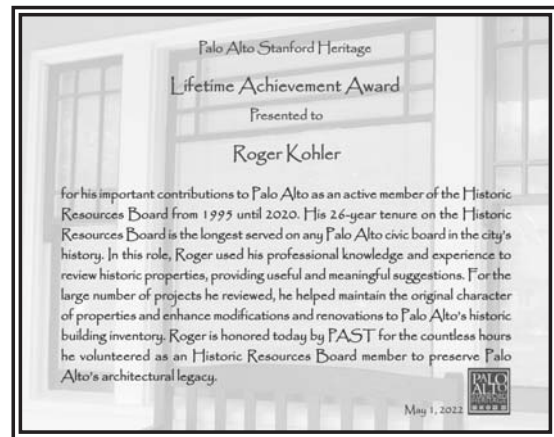


Presented to Roger Kohler for his important contributions to Palo Alto as an active member of the Historic Resources Board from 1995 until 2020. His 26-year tenure on the Historic Resources Board is the longest served on any Palo Alto civic board in the city's history. In this role, Roger used his professional knowledge and experience to review historic properties, providing useful and meaningful suggestions. For the large number of projects he reviewed, he helped maintain the original character of properties and enhance modifications and renovations to Palo

Alto's historic building inventory. Roger is honored today by PAST for the countless hours he volunteered as an Historic Resources Board member to preserve Palo Alto's architectural legacy.



David Bower, HRB/PAST, Roger Kohler, and Lee Lippert, PAST President, June 19, 2022



Birge Clark Centennial Walking Tours, Fall 2022

Birge Clark was born in 1893 in College Terrace, a part of Mayfield. As a young man back from WW I, Birge assisted his father, Arthur, a Stanford Art Professor, with his architectural endeavors, which included the Hoover House on campus. In 1922, Birge married and also opened his own architectural office, the only one in Palo Alto.

The October 1 tour starts at 1401 Edgewood. The tour highlights Birge's "Early California" designs as well as the house he designed for his own family.

The October 8 tour starts at 455 Coleridge. Birge designed every house on the east side of Coleridge and two of his first designs are on this block. The tour features Early California designs as well as homes with Monterey and Mediterranean features.

The October 15 tour starts at 1455 Webster. This house was designed under Birge's father's name in 1921. This tour includes the Birge designed house he and his bride occupied after their honeymoon, two of the largest Spanish Colonial Revival houses in Palo Alto, and the Lucie Stern Community Center.

The Birge Clark tours conclude on November 5 with a downtown walk specializing in commercial buildings, including the President Hotel, Hamilton Post Office, Medico-Dental building, and the Ramona Street historical district. This tour starts at the Palo Alto City Hall, 250 Hamilton Avenue.

Birge Clark and Professorville Tour Schedule

Sat., Oct 1 — Edgewood

Meet at 1401 Edgewood (at Southwood)

The tour highlights Birge's "Early California" designs as well as the house he designed for his own family.



Sat., Oct 8 — Coleridge

Meet at 455 Coleridge (west of Cowper)

Birge designed every house on the east side of Coleridge between Cowper and Webster and features Early California as well as Monterey and Mediterranean features.



Sat., Oct. 15 — Webster

Meet at 1455 Webster (north side of Embarcadero)

The tour includes the house Birge and his bride occupied after their honeymoon, and where he set up a small office on Embarcadero Road; two of the largest Spanish Colonial Revival houses in Palo Alto, and the Community Center.



Sunday, October 23 — Professorville

Meet at 1005 Bryant (corner Bryant and Addison)

Kris Zavoli and Anne Gregor lead this tour of the first off-campus neighborhood for Stanford professors. It covers a variety of architectural styles, including both a Birge and Arthur Clark design.



Sat., Nov. 5 — Downtown

Meet at City Hall Plaza, 250 Hamilton Avenue

The Birge Clark tour features his commercial buildings, including the President Hotel, Hamilton Post Office, Medico-Dental building, and the Ramona Street historical district.



Rain or shine! – All tours start at 10 a.m.

Tours are free, although donations are always welcome! Join us for a fun and friendly walk through town. — Please check the Palo Alto Stanford Heritage website for any updates. Tours are generally 1½–2 hours long and cover up to 1 1/2 miles.

We look forward to seeing you!

Award Winning PAST Website



On May 21, 2022, the Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance (SCCPA) presented their first annual awards to 16 individuals and organizations at History San Jose Park. The following is re-printed from the program.

The City of Palo Alto Historic Resources Board is pleased to honor Palo Alto Stanford Heritage & Carolyn George for the development and administration of their outstanding PAST Heritage website.

An abundance of information is provided on the PAST Heritage website such as walking tour information, vintage and contemporary pictures of Palo Alto historical homes, links to many additional websites and much more—a wonderful source of helpful Palo Alto historic information.

Their website has enhanced Palo Alto preservation awareness and activity by highlighting Palo Alto historic properties and events which complement them.

Our group also included Brian George, Carol Lippert, Nick Marinaro, Amy French (Chief Planning Official), and Margaret Wimmer (HRB)



With award at History San Jose Park. Caroline Willis (HRB Chair), Carolyn George (Webmaster), and Lee Lippert (PAST President)

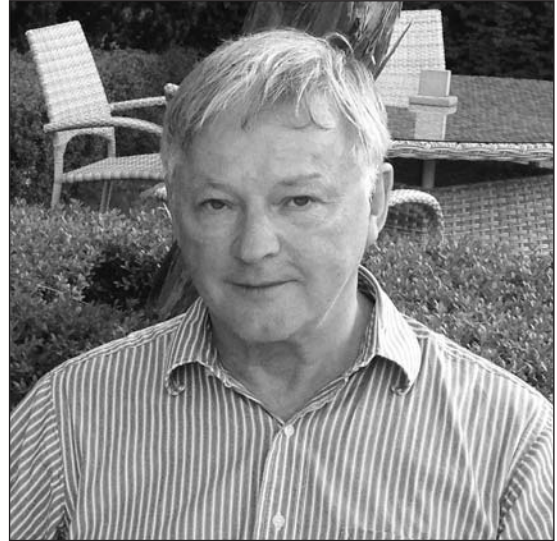
Meet Our Newest Board Members!



Laura C. Roberts

Born in Argentina, brought up attending bilingual English–Spanish school and progressing to graduate in Architecture at the University of Buenos Aires, Laura emigrated to the US in 2005.

Her work for Ko Architects where she is a principal has given her the opportunity to work extensively with Stanford University on the remodeling of their historic houses and residence halls. She prepared an in–depth building condition report for ongoing preservation and maintenance on Escondite Cottage in which she examined the history of the structure and its period of historical significance in terms of the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Evaluating Historic Properties. She has also worked on Lasuen, Haus Mitteleuropa, 717 Dolores Street, Phi Kappa Psi and Kairos. Interested in recognizing and maintaining historical buildings she feels that without history we couldn’t be where we are today and this demands respect and maintenance of these structures.



Philip Roberts

Born in the UK. Brought up and educated there with a gap year traveling in the US, finishing at the University of London (Geography and Geology!), then emigrating to the US.

Lived initially in both Palo Alto and Menlo Park, moving to Palo Alto in 1988 upon buying first home. Worked as model maker running own business in downtown Palo Alto until semi-retirement in 2018. An appearance model built for the Smithsonian: <https://airandspace.si.edu/multimedia-gallery/2006-25899hjjpg>. Most of our work was for the Silicon Valley product designers and manufacturers.

Always fascinated by historical buildings and the help they give in gaining perspective on the present by imagining the building (and its occupants) through its history. Also interested in the records that remain, determining their location and provenance.

420 Maple Street

by Bo Crane

John Adolph Dunker was the son of an immigrant from Hanover, Prussia, who married another German immigrant. His father was working as a butcher in San Francisco, where John was born in 1867. By 1900, his father listed himself in the census as a capitalist, owning his own house. Married in 1896, John and his wife, Jane, known as “Jenny,” had a daughter, Chrysella, in December. In the June 1900 census, John listed himself as a Wholesale Grocery Clerk who had not worked in 12 months. Daughter Janice was born in 1901.

Dunker must have been doing well with his own investments however, as he bought a newly built Queen Anne house at 755 University Avenue, built in 1904, on the corner of Fulton Street. In the 1910 census, John stated

he had his own income and never needed employment again. The house that they owned for over 20 years became known as the “Dunker House.” Both daughters attended Stanford University, with the younger, Janice, married in

September 1924 just after her sister, Chrysella, graduated. In December 1925, Chrysella married a Stanford graduate from Santa Barbara in the Stanford Memorial Chapel, as her sister had done.

In June 1926, John and Jenny enlisted Birge Clark to design a house east of University on a

cul-de-sac called Maple Street. Their new lot bordered San Francisquito Creek.

Santa Barbara suffered a devastating earthquake in June 1925, destroying many Moorish style buildings downtown. The city decided to restrict rebuilding to a Spanish Colonial style. This decision had impact amongst the state’s architects. Designs began to include the appearance of thick, mission-style walls, heavy iron grills, and decorative tile.

420 Maple Street is a U-shaped design with a second story on the left side and a single story at the front doorway and on the right. The entry is recessed inside a scalloped archway. There’s a second story balcony facing the street and the first-story windows have iron grills. The three-sections enclose a courtyard with a mission-style deep-covered corridor

along the single-story and a Monterey-style balcony along the two-story side over twin-arches. In his autobiography, Birge stated that the house was “my first successful expression of ‘Early California’ as far as

residences were concerned.” He would later reference “Early California” as “California Colonial,” which could be described as being a blend of artistic Spanish and straight-forward Monterey Colonial styles.

The creekside setback of the 0.62 acre lot allowed for a two-story guest house/garage in



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the front corner. A large outdoor fireplace rests against the single story, servicing a stone floor patio. The house's landscaping was designed by landscape architect Elza Leslie Kiler, Chrysella's husband, who also provided much of the exterior wrought iron details.

In 1926, Charles Sumner's design at 441 Maple Street, almost directly across the street, was also being built with more of Mediterranean feel, including a faux-style balcony over a rounded bay-window projection with delicate wrought iron and a subtle gothic arch over the entry. Chrysella and Leslie later had Charles Sumner design their house in 1931 at 1184 Palo Alto Avenue.

Janice graduated under her married name of Pershing in June 1926 when the house on Palo Alto Avenue was being completed. John and Jenny Ducker continued living in the Maple Street house. Jenny died at age 89 in 1957 and John at 90 in 1958. The house was put on the National Register of Historic Places in February 1982.

President's Letter

After three years its an honor to welcome you back to PAST Heritage's programs and activities. Like most of us, PAST Heritage has had to struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic, canceling our free public walking tours and in-person presentations. Earlier this past Spring we were able to resume our twice-annual walking tours and added a tour of Mayfield.

This year marks the Centennial of Birge Clark opening his architectural practice in 1922, and several Fall walking tours will focus on his historic buildings. In addition, PAST Heritage has partnered with Fergus-Garber Architects and local historian Bo Crane to publish a history and guidebook to selected Birge Clark buildings. The compendium will be available for pre-orders this Fall, with delivery about the same time as our walking tours. We look forward to next May's Preservation Month program featuring Birge Clark in addition to the 2022 centennial homes and preservation awards.

In May during Historic Preservation Month, Santa Clara County Preservation Alliance recognized PAST Heritage and Carolyn George for distinguished service for promoting preservation and education through the Palo Alto Stanford Heritage website.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge and thank two retiring board members Steven Emslie and Barbara Wilcox, and welcome two new board members Laura Roberts and Philip Roberts.

We look forward to PAST Heritage resuming our role of educating the public on Palo Alto and Stanford's historic architectural legacy. We look forward to you joining us for the remainder of 2022 and in 2023. Our 2022-2023 membership renewal letter will be mailed soon.

Thank you,

Lee I. Lippert, AIA

Fall History To Do List

- Oct 1 Birge Clark Edgewood Tour
- Oct. 2 Palo Alto Historical Assoc.:
*Palo Alto Clinic: Stories from
the Physicians*, Mitchell Park
Community Center, 2 p.m.
- Oct 8 Birge Clark Coleridge Tour
- Oct. 15 Birge Clark Webster Tour
- Oct. 23 Professorville Tour
- Nov. 5 Birge Clark Downtown Tour
- Nov. 6 Palo Alto Historical Assoc.:
*Valley of the Hearts Delight.
True Tales from Around the
Bay* with author Robin Chap-
man, Mitchell Park Center,
2 p.m.

PAST Heritage Board of Directors

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	Laura Roberts
	Philip Roberts

www.pastheritage.org



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.