

BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

# THE BAHHA NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2007  
NO. 125



HOUSE TOUR NUMBER



# THE BAHHA NEWSLETTER

No. 125

SPRING 2007



S.P. Electric Railway Station

## C O N T E N T S

John Spring's Palm Garden

1908 Parks Bond Measure _____	Page 2	House Tour: <b>Among the Rocks</b> _____	Page 12
President's Message _____	Page 3	Piedmont Way Restoration Update _____	Page 13
Landmarks in Berkeley: a Guide _____	Page 4	BAHA Members Win Awards _____	Page 14
Recent Landmarks _____	Page 5	Member News _____	Page 15
"On the Knoll of Thousand Oaks" by Trish Hawthorne _____	Page 8	Calendar of Events _____	Page 16

COVER: A bit of Shasta Rock in the garden of the Mark Daniels House (A.W. Smith, Architect, 1910) in Thousand Oaks. From a 1911 Thousand Oaks promotional brochure, courtesy of the Berkeley Historical Society [colored for the newsletter].

ABOVE: Two advertising cards for Thousand Oaks, courtesy of Sarah Wikander. The reverse of each card carries a different message.

**"Location."** "Thousand Oaks is a veritable forest of oaks in North Berkeley. It is a 5 minutes' walk through high class property to the Southern Pacific's new station (see arrow in picture), where a train will pass every 7 or 8 minutes, and land you at the Ferry Building in 35 minutes."

**"Neighbors."** "The grounds for J.H. Spring's \$100,000 home, east of Thousand Oaks, are being laid out according to designs made by Mr. Mark Daniels, the well-known landscape engineer. This villa home-site comprises twenty-one acres. The Japanese garden is perhaps the most attractive feature of this lovely estate. Lawns are now up, trees and flowers are flourishing, and the swimming pool and tennis court are about completed."

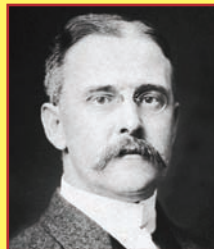
### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Wendy Markel,  
*President*
- Carrie Olson,  
*Vice-President*
- John McBride,  
*Corporate Secretary*
- Stephanie Manning,  
*Treasurer*

- Laurie Bright
- Susan Cerny
- Susan Chase
- Patrick Devaney
- Jane Edginton
- Richard Ehrenberger
- Steve Finacom
- Austene Wiley Hall
- Tim Hansen
- Richard Pettler
- Sally Sachs
- Arlene Silk
- Jerry Sulliger
- Janice Thomas
- Daniella Thompson
- Anne Wagley

### STAFF

- Anthony Bruce
- Lesley Emmington Jones



from an early Blue and Gold

## Benjamin Ide Wheeler on "Thousand Oaks"

BAHA's Spring House Tour will take place in Thousand Oaks, one of Berkeley's most enchantingly beautiful residential neighborhoods. In 1908, Berkeleyans were asked to vote on a Parks Bond Measure that would have allowed the City to acquire this land as a public park. In promoting the measure, University President, Benjamin Ide Wheeler had this to say about what is now Thousand Oaks:

I have been up on that noble North Berkeley hill a good many times in my life, and I must say that it is a beautiful natural park ... [with] those splendid oak groves, those huge boulders, those sunny glades, and those slopes... we should not allow that hillside, which was shaped by the hand of the Almighty, to go to waste and be devastated by the hand of man... We must look to the future. We must plan for many generations to come...

The bond measure lost, but, fortunately for future generations, the developers who then subdivided the land as "Thousand Oaks" showed special respect for the natural beauty of the area. A sunny knoll was set aside as a public park (Great Stone Face Park), roads followed the contours of the land, and natural features were preserved. The subdivision map even showed, along with lot lines, the location of venerable oaks and great rocks (as well as their names). You will have a chance to judge their work for yourself on the May 6 tour, **AMONG THE ROCKS**. Be sure to read Trish Hawthorne's story of Thousand Oaks, beginning on page 8 in this issue.

The BAHHA Newsletter is published quarterly by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association and is sent to all members of the Association. Entire contents of this issue © 2007 by the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association, P.O. Box 1137, Berkeley, California 94701. tel: 510-841-2242; e-mail: baha@berkeleyheritage.com; website: www.berkeleyheritage.com.

Produced April 2007. Contributing writers this issue: Anthony Bruce, Trish Hawthorne, Lesley Emmington Jones, JoAnn B. Price, Daniella Thompson



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear BAHA members,

I hope you have already purchased your tickets to what promises to be the really memorable House and Garden Tour, “**AMONG THE ROCKS**”, on the afternoon of Sunday, May 6th. You will be amazed at the proliferation of rocks in the North Berkeley hills and will delight in the creative and imaginative way in which some really massive outcroppings have influenced the construction of the houses and the nurturing of gardens. I hope to see you on the tour and at the two lectures prior to the tour. Tickets will be available on the day at the tour ticket table (which we hope to have set up in or near Great Stone Face Park).

Although “architectural heritage” is our mission, as an organization we cannot help but be aware of the trends of today and wonder which of the new constructions, in time, we will consider worthy of counting among those parts of our built environment that are noteworthy, and that will stand the test of time. Relentlessly, the face of Berkeley is changing and I’m not sure it is all for the best. Only this week the press noted that the Berkeley Unified School District was proposing the disposal of the public property it oversees. Remember that lovely Hillside Elementary School on LeRoy Avenue designed by Walter H. Ratcliff? And, Ratcliff’s Day Nursery building on 6th Street? How about the Berkeley High School Tennis Courts? Do we have such a declining student population that the BUSD no longer needs these public assets? If that is indeed the case, why is it that this week the City Planning Department proposed a “forest” of fourteen new towers of 16 stories, for new residents in downtown Berkeley? Where will the young go to school? Of the towers, the Downtown Area Planning Advisory Committee (DAPAC ) member Victoria Eisen noticed, “...that would really change the character of the place”, and another member, Winston Burton, noted that, “14-, 15, 16-stories seems like overkill”! The proposal was brought forward by the outside consultant, Matt Taecker, City Planning and Development Director Dan Marks, and Planning Manager Mark Rhodes.

Another question: What will the effect be in Berkeley of the sale of 368 apartment units in seven buildings in Berkeley to a huge organization based in Chicago that already oversees 165,716 units in twenty-five states? Will they care about the character of Berkeley, as a local owner would? (Interestingly, all seven buildings were financed with largely tax-exempt bonds, authorized by ABAG, to the tune of \$72,130,000 for the builders!) All this may not seem to fall under BAHA’s mission, but we worry greatly for the general architectural, cultural, and historic heritage of our city, and, as we all know, it is often the older buildings that suffer and fall prey to the demolition hammer. I would urge every resident of Berkeley to keep a weather-eye open for such changes, to become informed, take the opportunity to comment, and be involved.

On a lighter side, I would encourage those interested in architecture to see the play *Private Jokes, Public Places*, written by Oren Safdie, currently running at Berkeley’s Aurora Theatre. It is guaranteed to lead to interesting discussion. As a teaser, may I quote from the program notes: “Increasingly, architects are not even bothering with actual buildings any more, but are simply showing their drawings in galleries as art in and of themselves...Thankfully, in the emergent children of postmodernism such as ecoism and deconstructivism...” But to know more, you must see for yourself and discover your own interpretation. Finally, to satisfy your literary self, may I recommend *The Architecture of Happiness* by Alain de Botton and *NorCalMod* by Pierluigi Serraino for summer reading.

Wendy Markel

# LANDMARKS IN BERKELEY

## A “HOW-TO” GUIDE

**B**ACK in the 1970s Berkeley’s Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO) was one of the first to be adopted in California. At that time, Berkeley, like many cities and towns across America, was reeling from the effects of dynamic change. It was a time when entire urban areas had disappeared in some cities because of large Federal Redevelopment Projects. Berkeley’s citizens faced “the bulldozer” in the form of the West Berkeley Redevelopment Project, the University’s eminent domain policy that claimed blocks and blocks of private property in the Southside, and replacement construction of large “ticky-tacky” apartments all over town.

The National Historic Preservation Act was less than ten years old then, having been adopted by Congress in 1964. There were few landmarks ordinances to refer to or to use as examples. The small group of citizens who struggled to create Berkeley’s ordinance began by modeling language after what had already been adopted in San Francisco, save a couple of important differences—their Landmarks Commission did not have its own authority, being only advisory. What Berkeley finally adopted proved, in turn, to serve as a guide for other ordinances. In 2000, the LPO was Certified by the California State Office of Historic Preservation because of its being consistent with State and Federal preservation planning law.

While preservation issues can be dynamic and controversial, it is fair to say that over the last thirty years Berkeley’s LPO has been effective. Its provisions have been broad enough to help protect, without freezing, Berkeley’s unique sense of place throughout the city (do you have a copy of Susan Cerny’s *Berkeley Landmarks* in your library?). In contrast to other cities and towns, Berkeley still retains a historic “feel” of tradition, contrasts, and diversity, defined by its varied neighborhoods, its Downtown, the University Campus, the San Francisco Bay, and the surrounding open hillsides.

This past year, when “Measure J” was on the ballot, it was difficult for many to understand “in the heat of the battle” the positive provisions of the LPO. Now, again, a vote will go to the public in the form of a Referendum to challenge the “Mayor’s Revised Ordinance” *which reduces the protections and citizen participation long established in the LPO*. Anticipating more civic discussion, here is a simple primer of the LPO as it stands today. BAHA encourages all citizens to become involved in the landmarking program.

## LANDMARKS IN BERKELEY

In 1974, the Berkeley City Council adopted the *Landmarks Preservation Ordinance* in order to preserve those buildings, structures, sites, and districts which are of historical significance to a neighborhood, the City, region, state, or nation. The Ordinance establishes an appointed nine-member *Landmarks Preservation Commission* to carry out this mandate by identifying and designating landmarks.

The Commission reviews proposed exterior alterations or demolitions of designated *Landmarks, Structures of Merit, and Historic Districts* to determine whether they are consistent with the intent of the Ordinance. The Commission is also responsible for assessing the impacts of proposed development upon or adjacent to the City’s historic resources in order to find the most appropriate methods of preserving the important features of these properties.

### How do Applications for Landmarks Begin?

Properties may be *Initiated* (proposed for landmark status) by the Commission, or by a property owner, or by a petition signed by fifty Berkeley residents, or by the City Council, or by the Civic Arts Commission, or by the Planning Commission.

### How do Applications for Historic Districts Begin?

Multiple properties may be Initiated for *Designation*

in an Historic District by the Commission, or by 50% of the residents and property owners, or by a petition signed by one hundred Berkeley residents, or by the City Council, or by the Civic Arts Commission, or by the Planning Commission.

To begin the Designation process, an *Application* for landmark status (full documentation may be submitted later) must be completed and filed with the City’s



“Pioneer Cottage”

Planning and Development Department. The Application is reviewed by office staff for completeness.

### How is a Property Designated a Landmark, Structure of Merit, or Historic District?

Within 70 days of the Initiation, the Commission holds a **Public Hearing** to consider the Application, with full documentation, and receives any public testimony.

After the close of the Public Hearing the decisions available to the Commission, guided by the **Criteria** in the Ordinance are:

- **Designate** the property a City Landmark
- **Designate** the property a Structure of Merit
- **Designate** multiple properties as an Historic District
- **Deny** the Application



“False Front”

If the property is not designated as a Landmark, or Structure of Merit, or Historic District, then a new application cannot be considered for two years.

The decision made by the LPC is formalized by a **Notice of Decision** which cites the Criteria in the Ordinance guiding the Commission’s decision. The Notice of Decision also delineates the character-defining features to preserve.



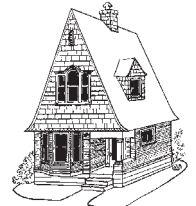
“Stick-Eastlake”

### What Are The Benefits of Having a Landmark Property?

Most importantly, owners and occupants of Landmarks and Structures of Merit demonstrate a shared civic pride. A neighborhood or commercial area often responds with immediate appreciation when a building is landmarked.

Designated properties prove to benefit their owners directly by attaining a new economic value. Furthermore, because the City has adopted the **Mills Act**, owners of landmarked buildings have the opportunity to file for a 10-year tax deduction if work is undertaken on their property that contributes to its preservation. Owners of landmarked building are also entitled to utilize the **State Historic Building Code**. Application of the State Historic Building Code can reduce costs when alterations need to be made.

The Commission can be helpful in assisting property owners with design solutions that preserve the integrity of designated buildings, while also allowing for adaptive re-use. The Commission has also proved to be encouraging of alterations that preserve the character-defining features of the landmarked building.



“High-Peaked Gable Colonial Revival Cottage”

### Effect of Landmark Status on My Property?

All **Applications for exterior alteration(s)** (additions, new construction, remodeling, signs, etc.) of a Landmark, Structure of merit, or building located in an Historic District must be reviewed and approved by the Commission after a public hearing has been held.

Work which is considered “Ordinary Maintenance and Repair,” as defined in the Landmark Ordinance, is not subject to Commission review unless the Commission determines that approval of such work would seriously conflict with the purposes of the Ordinance.

In order for the Commission to approve an application for exterior alteration(s) it must find that the proposed work does not adversely affect the exterior architectural features of the landmark and/or the special character or special historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the landmark, including the character defining features. Following the Commission’s decision a Notice of Decision is prepared.



“Turn-of-the-Century Transitional”

### Can Historic Buildings Be Demolished?

**Applications to demolish** a Landmark, Structure of Merit, or a building in an Historic District



“Brown-Shingle”

require Commission review and a public hearing. In order to approve a demolition application, the Commission must find that the landmark is in such condition that it is economically infeasible to preserve or restore.

The Commission has the authority to *suspend a demolition permit* for up to one year for a Landmark or building located in an Historic District, and up to six months for a Structure of Merit.

Upon the expiration of the suspension period, a property owner is allowed to demolish the structure, provided the building permit for the replacement structure has been approved. The Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) and the City Council have the authority to deny any demolition permit.

### How Can Commission Decisions be Appealed?

Commission decisions are final, unless an *Appeal* is filed with the City Clerk within 15 days of the issuance of the Notice of Decision. Appeals may be filed by the property owner or by petition of 50 residents aggrieved or affected by the decision. Check with the City Clerk for current procedures.



McCullough Photo, James W. Plachek Collection, BAHA Archives.

**295. ENNOR'S**, 2128-30 Center Street  
James W. Plachek, Architect, (1923)  
Designated: 2 November 2006

This new building for Ennor's, a popular restaurant established by Harvey and Marie Ennor in 1918, housed "a restaurant, banquet hall, bakery, confectionery, ice cream

### When Does the Landmarks Commission Meet?

Commission meetings are usually held on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue. The public is encouraged to speak with any question pertaining to historic resources at the "open mike" at 7:30, or for a matter that is calendared for a Public Hearing.

### Where Can Applications Be Obtained?

Applications for Landmarks designation, petitions, and application forms for Commission review of alterations or demolition are available at the Planning and Development Office, 2120 Milvia Street. They are also available on-line: [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us).

For further information and helpful assistance, the current Secretary of the Landmarks Preservation Commission may be called upon. Her name is Janet Homrighausen and she may be reached at 981-7400.

BAHA is always happy to answer questions about the LPO, the landmarks program, or assist with research for documentation.

## BERKELEY'S RECENTLY DESIGNATED LANDMARKS

factory, ice plant, heating and steam plants, grocery, butcher shop, and the necessary places to dispense the many foods manufactured on the premises," according to the Chamber of Commerce periodical *The Courier*. Ennor's remained in the building but a few years; the most recent long-time tenant was the movie theater, Act One & Two Cinema. There is now talk that the building might be restored for a new restaurant and altered above to accommodate second floor apartments.

**296. WALLACE-SAUER HOUSE**, 1340 Arch Street  
John White (1905)  
Designated: 2 November 2006

This imposing Swiss chalet near Live Oak Park was built for Frederick William Wallace, a manufacturer's purchasing agent. It is enhanced by a garden set-back that gives the house a dramatic presence. Originally



*Anthony Bruce, 2001.*

clad in shingles, the house was designed by Bernard Maybeck's brother-in-law, a Berkeley resident and prolific architect best known for the Le Conte Memorial Lodge (1904) in Yosemite Valley and the Hillside Club (1924). From 1932 until 1975, this house was the home of world-renowned geographer Carl Ortwin Sauer. From 1978 until 1997, the house was owned by Amy Wallace, daughter of Irving Wallace and co-author of *The People's Almanac* and several editions of *The Book of Lists*.



*From The Simple Home by Charles Keeler (1904).*

**297. MAYBECK HOUSE NO. 1**, 1300 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (Grove Street)  
 Bernard Maybeck, Architect (1892–1902)  
 Designated: 1 February 2007

This is the first known house designed by Maybeck. When he and Annie bought the lot it was then on the outskirts of Berkeley. Maybeck built the house by hand in stages, creating a Swiss Chalet. Being appointed as instructor in drawing at the Civil Engineering College of the University (predating architecture courses), Maybeck offered interested students courses in architectural design in the garden of the house. The students (Wiley Corbett, Edward H. Bennett, Julia Morgan, Lewis Hobart, John Bakewell, Arthur Brown, Jr., G. Albert

Lansburgh, and Loring P. Rixford) worked on the additions to the house as part of the course.



*Berkeley Iceland. Moulin photo, Cal Monthly, October 1945.*

**298. BERKELEY ICELAND**, 2727 Milvia Street  
 William Clement Ambrose, Architect (1939)  
 W. A. Bechtel, Builder  
 Designated: 5 April 2007

Iceland is one of the largest rinks in the western United States. With its huge expanse of ice and vaulted steel structure, the Iceland building is an impressive engineering feat, representing design and construction techniques in ice arenas that are found in few other places—and no longer found in modern times. Berkeley Iceland is also representative of its period of construction, with sleek lines and prominent Art-Deco features. Michael Crowe, noted Art-Deco architectural historian, cited it as a “unique structure representing the finest architectural, historic, and cultural values that Berkeley represents to the Bay Area community.”

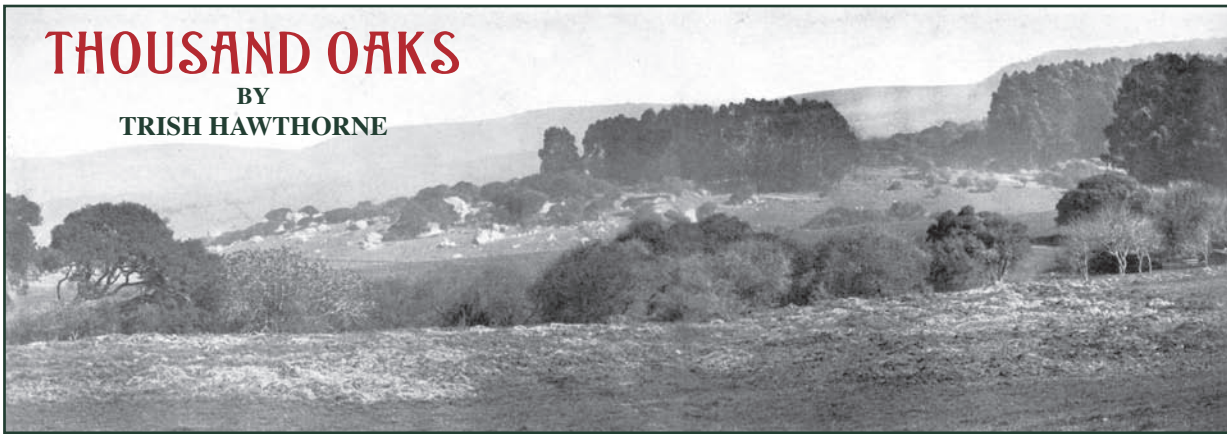
**299. CORKILL HOUSE**, 2611 Ashby Avenue  
 Russell R. Bixby, Designer (1908)  
 Designated: 5 April 2007

Representative of the gracious brown-shingle houses in the Benvenue-Hillegass neighborhood, the Corkill House, set along the busy arterial of Ashby Avenue, helps define the historic character of this district. Fred Corkill was a respected mining engineer in the West who was recruited by F.M. “Borax” Smith in 1899 to be superintendent of his borax mining operations

*...continued on page 14.*

# THOUSAND OAKS

BY  
TRISH HAWTHORNE



*The knoll of Thousand Oaks. Looking north from near Solano Avenue to the “sombre wedge of eucalyptus forest” around The Great Stone Face Park. “Park and Playground Bonds” brochure published by Berkeley Chamber of Commerce Campaign Committee, 1908, BAHA Archives.*

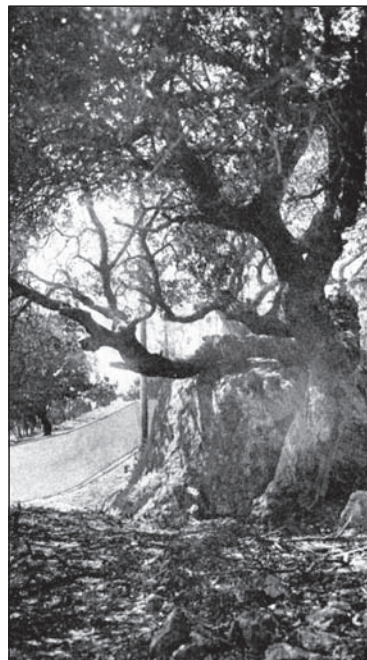
*The tract is a considerable one, and midway there is thrust up into it from the west a sombre wedge of eucalyptus forest, contrasting strangely with the rest of the scene. For here we seem to be in a veritable bit of New England pasture. The rocks too are of a striking size and form, and culminate near the lower end of the tract in a bold, fantastic crag, in itself well worth the effort to visit it. But the most unlooked for feature of the place is its air of remoteness and seclusion. Here it lies, spread out on the open hillside, in full view from bay and from town. Yet as we thread its quiet alleys, or lie dreaming in the sunshine under the lee of its rocks, we seem to have journeyed leagues from the work-a-day world we left behind.*

—“Walks about Berkeley,” Cornelius Beach Bradley, A Berkeley Year,

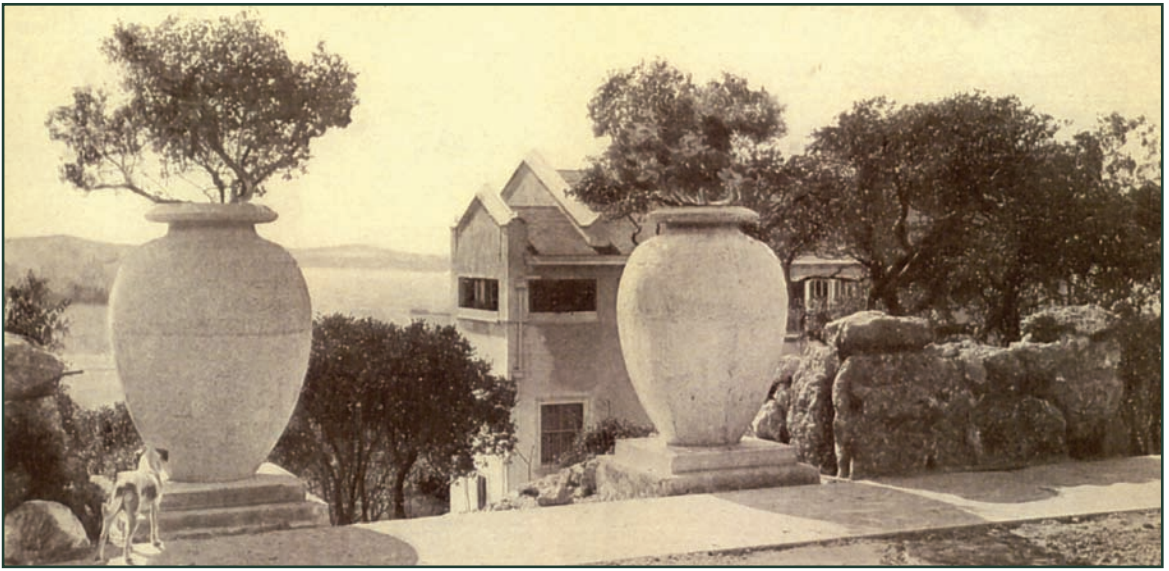
**T**HIS is a description of what was then called “Boswell’s” or the “Indian Burying Ground,” and what we now know as Thousand Oaks, the site of this year’s House Tour, “Among the Rocks.” Studded with oak trees and strewn with rugged and picturesque boulders, its grassy glades were a mecca for nature lovers in the 1890s and early 1900s.

All this changed when the area was subdivided for building sites in 1909 after an unsuccessful campaign to make one hundred acres of it a city park, planned to adjoin the proposed site of the state capitol immediately to the south. With the failure of the park bond measure in August of 1908, the land was snapped up by private enterprise and soon retailed as “villa sites.” The famous natural park was thus transformed into a residential park.

The time was right for such a venture. Between 1900 and 1914, Berkeley had become one of the fastest growing cities in the country, her population swelling from 13,000 to 64,000. The development of several new large residential tracts — Claremont, Northbrae, Cragmont, and Thousand Oaks — on the outskirts of the older core area of town fueled this growth. Advances in electric railway transportation made it possible to live in outlying districts and commute to work in Oakland and San Francisco. Electric transit was introduced in Berkeley in 1891, expanded as the “Key Route” in 1903, and supplemented by the big red trains of the newly-electrified Southern Pacific system in 1911. It seems more than coincidental that the northernmost part of the new S.P.



*“Along the Alameda.” Thousand Oaks real estate advertising card, courtesy of Sarah Wikander.*



View southwest from the knoll of Thousand Oaks after the tract opened. The two Maxfield Parrish urns stood at the top of Indian Trail. Behind is the Newell House (William Knowles, architect, 1910). From a 1911 Thousand Oaks promotional brochure, courtesy of the Berkeley Historical Society.

line was at Solano Avenue, adjacent to the new Thousand Oaks district. The district's developers could boast that all home sites were within a five minute walk of the train lines, due in part to a carefully planned system of walking paths cut through the tract.



In a bold stroke, developer John Hopkins Spring, owner of hundreds of acres of land from the edge of the bay to the crest of the hills (including most of Albany), created the Thousand Oaks district. A capitalist with diversified interests (he was a road builder who owned a quarry in the canyon adjacent to the tract, a banker, and a developer), Spring had been a colleague of F.M. "Borax" Smith and Frank C. Havens in the Realty Syndicate, which pioneered large scale land development linked to the Key Route system. He was also associated with Duncan McDuffie in the development of Northbrae and with W.J. Mortimer in Claremont Court, as well as a partner in the Claremont Hotel. Soon after the failure of the park measure, Spring set about making Thousand Oaks the pinnacle of east bay residential development. Incorporating the principles developed by Frederick Law Olmsted and the lessons of Claremont and Northbrae, he supplemented the striking beauty of the hillside knoll with the genius of landscape architects and engineers.

A 1910 advertisement asserted:

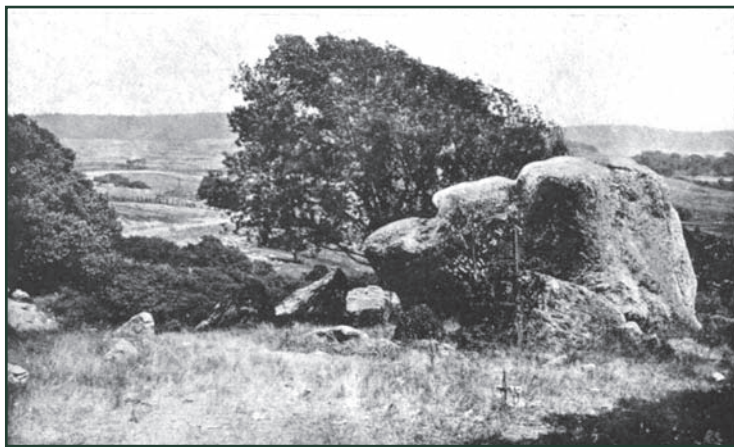
Thousand Oaks is the crown of Berkeley's real estate development. We are touching this, Nature's masterpiece, with reverent hand. No deep cuts will scar its velvet slopes; streets will wind gracefully in and out, oaks will be preserved. The rocks will be undisturbed. The finest landscape engineer on the coast has been working for months in order to supplement nature's profusion with the highest of man's art.

"El Capitan," in Thousand Oaks. "Park and Playground Bonds" brochure, 1908, BAHA Archives.

The “finest landscape engineer on the coast” was Mark Daniels, who was responsible for laying out the streets and building lots of the district. He incorporated the huge boulders—some of which had names like Guardian Rock, Shasta Rock, Tunnel Rock, Picnic Rock—into the lots themselves. Just a few were left for public view—the scattered rocks along Indian Trail and The Great Stone Face, which became the centerpiece of a park—and as reminders of the fact that this had been an old Indian burial ground. The network of pedestrian paths added to the parklike quality of the tract. Daniels, like Spring, believed in capitalizing on the appeal of scenic beauty. Graceful, winding roadways following the contours of the hillside, parkways and boulevards enhanced with lush plantings and brilliant flowers, and building sites that took advantage of the panoramic views of the bay, made good business sense to both men.

“Civic art” features were also incorporated into the development. The era was a progressive one, and one way to progress toward a better life in the public arena was through beautification of public areas. The Marin Circle Fountain and the move to cluster beaux arts buildings around a downtown civic center are Berkeley legacies from this same period. In Thousand Oaks, the masses of trees and flowers planted in the parkings, the placement of monumental cement urns on every corner, and the addition of ornamental benches, all contributed to civic beauty. Arlington Avenue was planned as a grand boulevard, with a ribbon of brilliantly-colored flowers running its length, in the style of Olmsted’s parkways. All of this produced a district that was called the most beautiful in Berkeley—or even in California.

Thousand Oaks caught the attention of city planner Werner Hegemann, who wrote this about it in his *Report of a City Plan for the Municipalities of Oakland & Berkeley* of 1915: “The subdividers have done what was in their power to preserve the natural features of the ground. It is as if the outlines of the oaks had suggested the curve of the street and the forms of the large vases shaped in concrete after a pattern designed by Maxfield



*“The Great Stone Face”—the centerpiece of a public park. Thousand Oaks real estate advertising card, courtesy of Sarah Wikander.*

Parrish, the painter. A good example of landscape work that has the ‘feel of the land.’”

Like other tracts of the period, there were restrictions on the use of the land. No house could cost less than \$3,000; no saloons, stores, or flats were allowed, except in designated areas. Zoning laws, introduced in Berkeley in 1916, eventually supplanted these deed restrictions.

The natural and manmade landscape gives Thousand Oaks a unique identity. Several other factors add to this uniqueness. The Spring Mansion is one of them. Spring, as a partner in the development of the Claremont Hotel, may have thought that any new tract needed a grand touch. Whatever the reason, he planned his own twenty acre estate on a parcel with a commanding vista immediately adjoining the new tract. His showplace mansion — unlike anything else in Berkeley — was a monumental Italian villa of reinforced concrete that dominated the hillside. Designed by architect John Hudson Thomas, it was set in elaborate terraced gardens planned by Mark Daniels. The mansion and gardens were certainly a draw to those who came out on nice Sunday afternoons to tour the district, and perhaps buy property for a future home or investment.

Spring was not the only one involved in developing Thousand Oaks who actually lived there in the early days. Mark Daniels appears to have built the first house on an especially beautiful site. Spring’s four sons-in-



*John Hudson Thomas' Sill House of 1913, set high above curving Lovers' Lane. Learn what "Lovers' Lane" is today on the House Tour! Louis L. Stein Collection, Berkeley Historical Society.*

law also participated in the business and lived in Thousand Oaks. One, Noble Newsom, a second generation member of the famous Newsom family architectural firm, designed a number of houses in the district, including a honeymoon cottage for himself and his bride. William Murdoch, Robert Newell, and later George Friend (a former vaudeville actor), marketed the property and built early houses in the tract. Thus the story of the beginnings of Thousand Oaks is the story of the extended Spring family and their business associates. Although most of them, including Spring, had moved elsewhere by 1920, they left their mark.

John Hudson Thomas, the architect most closely identified with the tract, did not live here, but his work helped define the character of Thousand Oaks. A favorite of developers in this period because his innovative and assertive designs matched their bold schemes, Thomas designed several significant early houses in Thousand Oaks in addition to the Spring mansion. Including eclectic stucco designs, a stylized Tudor, and an elegant craftsman bungalow, they represent some of his finest work from this period. He returned to Thousand Oaks in the 1920s to design at least a dozen more houses in the romantic period revival style popular then.

While Thomas' work from 1911 to 1916 was rather avant garde, the landscape itself inspired other architects and designers to build more informal country houses, including lodges, craftsman bungalows, and cottages which are especially appropriate for their sites and well-suited to life in an outlying district. (Thousand Oaks was an unincorporated part of Alameda County until 1920 when it was annexed to the city of Berkeley.) The rustic houses work well with the many oak trees and huge boulders, and the gardens that surround them have a natural feeling. The combination of the bold designs of Thomas and the more rustic work of Maybeck, Daniels, Newsom, and others gave Thousand Oaks a distinctive sense of place in the early years. The district built up slowly, and there were many vacant lots into the early twenties. Another period of intense building came then, and a variety of period revival houses — English Tudor,

Mediterranean, Colonial — were added from this point into the 1930s, when Thousand Oaks was almost fully built up. The neighborhood we see today reflects all these periods.

In many ways the story of Thousand Oaks is an extension of the stories of other large residential tracts from the first part of this century, but it is also different. This is in part due to the striking landscape itself: the oaks and monumental rocks. But in Thousand Oaks everything is somehow writ larger. Perhaps this is attributable to the flamboyant, risk-taking personality of John Spring. Perhaps after his association with the development of the other tracts he felt he had to exceed their accomplishments in his own project. We may never know exactly what it is that sets Thousand Oaks apart.

Whatever the reason, we do know that from its days as a picnic ground to the developed neighborhood we know today, Thousand Oaks had a distinct identity as a place and as a district. The beauty of the landscape, the convenience of location, the layout of its streets and lots, all give this district a strong sense of community within the larger city. Tucked away in a northern corner of Berkeley, bordering on Albany and Kensington, it somehow retains the aura of remoteness and seclusion

Existing just below our everyday consciousness is a fantastic geological landscape unique to Berkeley—an extraordinary profusion of massive rock outcroppings. There is beauty, mystery, and power to these ancient sentinels that rise high above the roadway to embrace a hillside home, or serve as a centerpiece for a private garden or public park. The rocks were once a quite prominent feature of the open Berkeley slopes, the larger even serving as landmarks for surveyors. Indian Rock is certainly famous, but many of these large rocks are now hidden from view: lost under mature foliage, out of sight behind houses or walls, or, perhaps, invisibly serving as a sturdy footing for a residence. . .



Daniella Thompson, 2007.

## “AMONG THE ROCKS”

### HOMES AND GARDENS IN THOUSAND OAKS: BAHA'S SPRING HOUSE TOUR

**T**HE recently-published *Berkeley Rocks* by Jonathan Chester, with text by Dave Weinstein, celebrates this special natural feature of Berkeley. The photographs and commentary bring alive a neglected aspect of the Berkeley landscape, giving the rocky crags the attention they deserve. Drawing inspiration from *Berkeley Rocks*, the BAHA House Tour will focus on these wonderful natural outcroppings, and the homes and gardens that share the landscape with them. The Thousand Oaks neighborhood is one of Berkeley's most “rocky” areas, and the tour will take place here. You will want to read elsewhere in this newsletter, Trish Hawthorne's telling of this fascinating story of this area's transformation from a rock-strewn knoll to an idyllic residential park.

Today, Thousand Oaks is a leafy, fully-built neighborhood, which, beyond its outward beauty, shelters a secret landscape of secluded dells and alpine slopes. Tourgoers will have a chance to wander into some of these hidden, private gardens and be able to view some of the silent, sturdy masses of rock up-close. Of interest will be the wide variety of gardens that have been created around the rocks, and the placement of the houses in relation to these sometimes almost overpowering natural objects. Open for viewing will be distinctive North Berkeley homes designed by architects such as James W. Plachek, John Hudson Thomas, Noble Newsom, Robert Ratcliff, and Roger Lee.

- *The rocks themselves will be the main theme, and here we insert a note of caution to tourgoers. Most of the rocks are accessible only by narrow garden paths, uneven rock steps, and sloping ground. Please bear this in mind and wear appropriate shoes, and exercise vigilance and caution while on the tour.*
- *To volunteer at the Tour, please send an e-mail to [baha@berkeleyheritage.com](mailto:baha@berkeleyheritage.com)*



Daniella Thompson, 2007.

### TWO HOUSE TOUR LECTURES !

Two illustrated lectures will lead up to the House Tour. On Thursday, April 26, Trish Hawthorne, a favorite BAHA speaker and resident of Thousand Oaks, will speak on the history of THOUSAND OAKS, the neighborhood setting for the tour. A week later, on Thursday, May 6, Jonathan Chester, photographer, and author of *Berkeley Rocks*, will speak on BERKELEY ROCKS and tell how these powerful natural features inspired the book that now seems to be sitting on every Berkeley home's coffee table.

The talks will take place in the Chapel of Northbrae Community Church (Reginald Inwood, Architect, 1957). Sitting in this wonderful mid-century Modern structure with walls of glass and *stone*, will be a pleasure in itself.



*Piedmont Avenue (Way) Proposed Rehabilitation Plan. Courtesy PGAdesign.*

## A Progress Report from the Friends of Piedmont Way

**T**HE Rehabilitation Plan for historic Piedmont Way is nearing completion. Last September, with an award from the Chancellor’s Community Partnership Fund and matching funds from the community, Friends of Piedmont Way (FPW) hired landscape architect, Cathy Garrett of PGAdesign, Inc., Oakland. Garrett’s deftly considered Plan, drafted with the assistance of Kirsten Johnson, a University of California graduate student in Landscape Architecture, had dual tasks: to take into consideration the identified period of significance of the landmarked streetscape (1865-1930) and to balance those parameters with present day needs. The Rehabilitation Plan recaptures Olmsted’s notion of an inviting shady street within the context of a thriving population of students and community members. The draft Plan was presented to City staff in October and to community members in November. Based on feedback from those meetings, a revised Plan was created and presented to the Landmarks Preservation and Parks & Recreation commissions this January. The Plan will next be shown to student neighbors on Arbor Day (April 25) at Alpha Chi Omega and shared with the University’s Design Review Committee on May 10.

While finalizing the Plan is dependent upon consensus from City staff, FPW is looking ahead to the creation of contract documents; the ultimate phase between planning and planting. If all goes well, the City Council will have approved Councilmember Gordon Wozniak’s budget request, for funds to cover the costs of drafting the contract documents, by the time you read this update. Contract documents should be completed in December, and FPW’s first *Community Planting Day* to implement Frederick Law Olmsted’s vision for the historic parkway, should happen by this time next year! For more information, please visit: [www.piedmontway.org](http://www.piedmontway.org).



*Piedmont Way, looking north from Dwight Way in 1907. Photo-postcard courtesy of Anthony Bruce.*

## Former BAHA Board Member Jerri Holan Wins Award

PAST member of the BAHA Board, Jerri Holan, will be receiving a Cultural Resource Award at the 32nd Annual California Preservation Conference in May for her work on “Vikingsholm,” at Emerald Bay State Park, Lake Tahoe.

In 2004, Jerri Holan & Associates, with past BAHA President consulting architect, Henrik Bull, FAIA, prepared a report providing recommendations for the reconstruction of Vikingsholm’s log roof in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and with the Preservation Objectives of the 2001 Historic Structures Report prepared for this site. The original roof possessed a high degree of specialized craftsmanship that required unique construction techniques and special types of logs. The methodology employed to prepare this study included historical research, field investigations and documentation, architectural analysis and recommendations as well as a scale model illustrating reconstruction.

The report is noteworthy as it explains a roof construction technique that is not common in the United States. A detailed scale model was prepared to aid in the final reconstruction of the complex roof system including interlocking logs and spiked wooden gutters. One challenging aspect of the report was to resolve a traditional construction technique with current building standards. The precise nature of the head log join is critical to the roof’s ability to withstand natural forces. The report also examines techniques to prolong the life of the roof such as seasoning and treating the logs, possible species of wood to be used, and phasing construction in light of the region’s short building season.

Vikingsholm is considered to be one of the finest examples of Scandinavian architecture in the United States. Patterned after Medieval and Renaissance buildings, the site and its structures are on the National

*“Recent Landmarks” continued from page 7...*

in Death Valley. The historic Amargosa Opera House (Corkhill Hall) in Death Valley was named for him. The current owners of the Corkill House wrote a fascinating Landmark Application. They hope to restore it back to a single family home.



*View of the Caretaker’s House at Vikingsholm from courtyard. Note spiked wooden gutter construction that is described here.*

Register of Historical Places and the California Register of Historic Places. Mrs. Lora J. Knight built this home for her family in 1925, assisted by architect Lennart Palme, after a visit to Sweden and Norway. The estate is situated majestically on 239 acres among pines and cedars, at the head of Emerald Bay.

In 1974, a tree fell through the west wing which destroyed the original split-log saddle roof. At that time, the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation installed a shingle roof on the Caretaker’s House. Currently, the shingle roof has failed, has been removed, and fund-raising efforts are being conducted to reconstruct a saddle roof similar to the historic log roof.

*For more information, visit:* [www.holanarchitects.com/awards\\_viking.html](http://www.holanarchitects.com/awards_viking.html), and, [www.californiapreservation.org/calendar.html#PDA2](http://www.californiapreservation.org/calendar.html#PDA2).



*The Corkill House and its neighbors. 1939 Donogh photo, BAHA Archives.*

## Welcome New Members . . .

*BAHA welcomes the following people who have joined BAHA since the last Newsletter went out. Tell your friends about BAHA and encourage them to join, too!*

Marie Bowman	Tim Lundgren
Ruth Breslin	Mary MacCready
Jean Driscoll	Denis Martinet
Nick Fox	

## . . .and Members Renewed!

**Susan Acquistapace**, Jeff Angell;

**Elizabeth Bacon**, David Baker, Bancroft Library, Horst Bansner, Barbara Fletcher Barbour, Louise Beattie, Helen Beck, Georgia Becker, Robert Becker, Diana & Frank Beer, Donald A. Bell, Judith Bendor, Burton Benedict, Dorothea Benney, Beverly Bense, Ralph W. Benson, Guy & Karen Nelson Benveniste, Jan Berckeveld, Julia Berg, Stuart Berg, Betty I. Bernstein, Cheryl Best, Sandra Biasotti, Josh Bigelow, Steven R. Binder, Elizabeth & Bob Birge, Priscilla Birge, Robert Wallace Blake, Alan Block, Annamaria Blower, Lise & Neal Blumenfeld, Eloise Bodine, Steve Booth, Stephen Born, Carol M. Bowen, Fadilla Bradley, Roland Brandel, Jane Brandes, Robert Brecker, Carole Bremer, Rita Brenner, Robert Breuer, Tamlyn & Laurie Bright, Eric Brink, Kay Bristol, Robert Brokl & Alfred Crofts, Zelda Bronstein, Michael L. Brown & Harold F. King, Jr., Rob Browning & Linda Maio, Anthony Bruce, Lisa Bruce, Teocoah & Thomas Bruce, Christopher Buckley, Leonard James Bullock, Christa Burgoyne, Frances Burnette, Patricia Butler;

**Robert Cabrera**, Barbara H. Cadwalader, Nancy Callahan, Eugene Candau, Jim Canty, Joanne Carder, Eleanor Carpioux, Juliet Carr, Patricia M. Carroll, Caleb B. Case, Andrea & Michael Cassidy, Karen Chapple, Cheryl Cherpitel, Jonathan Chester, Fran Chiappetta, Eunice Childs, Linnea & Richard Christiani, Betty Cimino, Harvey Clark, P. & David Clark, Robert Judson Clark, Dorothy & Bill Clemens, Sydney Clemens, Thomas W. Cline & Barbara J. Meyer, Janet & Joseph Clynne, Betty & Murray Cohen, Helen & Robert Cole, Diana Collins, Lyndon Comstock, Celia Concus, Marguerite Conrad, Renate A. Coombs, Janice & Kenneth Craik, Elizabeth Crews, Renate Crocker, Betty Croy, Lynn Crosby, Maria Curtis;

**Robert Dahlstrom**, Ann Dales, Sharon & Damon Darlin, Jean & Phil Darnall, Diane Davenport & Sayre Van Young, Bob Day, Blair Dean, Mary Hope Dean, Cindy & Brian Deans, Annie-May de Bresson, Charlotte Dethero, Robert de Vight, Stanley Dickover, Jr., Francine Di Palma, Tamie & Rick Dishnica, Kevin Donahue, Barbara & David Dornfeld, Riley Doty, Carole Dougherty, Steven P. Douglas, Wendy Draper, Ellen Drori, Mary Lou DuBois, Ken Duffy, Katherine Dunlap, Joanna Dwyer, Rosalie Dwyer;

**Anita Eblé**, Matthew Eccles, Ted Edlin, Burton Edwards, Jacque Ensign, Jane L. Erwin, Karen Euston, Elizabeth Exter & Stephen Klucharich;

**Nancy & Jerry Falk**, John Farnkopf, Anita Feder-Chemila, Susan Duhann Felix, Marina Fenner, Barbara Ferenstein, John Ferrari, Gordon Fine, Becky Flavin, Angela Forti-Lewis, Rocky Francis, Constance Fraser, Jeri Fraser, Frederic Knapp Architect, Martin Freedman, Rodney Freeland & Ann May, Grace Fretter, Douglas Freitag, Sandy & Tom Friedland, Ruth Friedman, John Fuller;

**Phyllis & Phil Gale**, Tena Gallagher, Carol Gamble, Chantal Garcia, Gale Garcia, W. Philip Gardner, George Ann Garms, Terry Geiser & Janet Mark, Elwood Gerrits, Eleanor Hall Gibson, Rick Gilbert, Judith & Alex Glass, Susan Goldstein, Evelyn Goodman, Jane Goodwin, Joan Gornell, Diane & John Gosard, Gretchen Grant, Judith Palache Gregory, Clare Griffith, Gretchen & Tom Griswold, Lillian Walli Grove, Mr. & Mrs. Paul Grunland, Ellen Gunther & Deborah Raphael & Gary Whitmer;

**Nadine Hack**, Roberta Hadley, Eric Hæsløp, Nancy Hair, Bronwyn H. Hall, Marygracia Hall, Wendy & Daniel Hallinan, Fran Halperin, Daryl A. Halverson, Pat Hanscom, Tim Hansen & Dianne Ayres, Kay Hardy, Mary Hardy & Michael Corbett, Mark Harpainter, Hugh W. Harris, Jacci Harris, John Harris, Judith Harte & Susan Ellard, George Harter, Holly Haugh, Trish & Tony Hawthorne, Harvey Helfand, Donna Hemmila, Paul A. Henning, Randi Herman, Richard Herr, Dixie Hersh, Frederick C. Hertz, Valerie Heusinkveld, Stella Hexter, Harry Hicks, Ward G. Higgins, Douglas J. Hill, Kathryn Hill, Jane

Hoberman & Robert Kelly, Lynn V. Hofmann, Robert Hofmann, Jerri Holan, Gary Holloway, Rosalie Holtz, Inge S. Horton, Roberta Horton & Mary Mashuta, Shelley Horwitz, Colleen Houlihan, Jacquelyn Housh, Paula Hughmanick & Steven Berger, Sally Hughes, Marion & Jeff Hunt, Rainer Hurst, Kathleen Hutchinson, Steve Hyske;

**Don Jacobus**, Sarah Jaffe, Donatas Januta, Lee Jester, Marcia Johnson & Thomas Blackadar, Raymond Johnson, Rita Jones, Mary Anne Joseph, Faye Joyce;

**Heather Kaney**, Patricia Kates, Michael Katz, Judith S. Kays, Fred Kellogg, E. Paul Kelly AIA, Angela Keres, Bonnie Killip, Walt Klemchuk, Selma Klett, Phyllis Kluger, Lorraine A. Knight, Sara P. Knight, Judy & David Knoll, Klara Komorous-Towey, Dorcas & Ted Kowalski, Michael Kreps Architect, Joyce Robinson Kraus, Tim Kraus, Deborah & Alan Kropf;

**Nora & Paul Land**, Jack Lapidus, Anne Larson, Joye & Ian Leventhal, Sally Levinson, Arthur Levy, Eleanor Lindgren, Ann G. Livingstone, Susanna Lombardi, Peter Lomhoff, Mary Lorain, Helen Lore, Yorkman Lowe, Waverly Lowell, Carter W. Lowrie, Jane Lundy, Gerald Lundy, Robert Lustig, Margarete Lyons;

**Mary E. MacDonald**, Anne Madden, George Mallman, Saidu Mannell, Stephanie Manning & George Manning, Roger Marquis, Leona & Gerald Martin, Peggy Martin, Margaret Malone, John McBride, James McClure, McKeldin Library, Lynn McMurray, Nancy & Howard Mel, Mara Melandry, Gladys Perez Mendez, Mr./Mrs. Matthew P. Mitchell, Mary Montali, Susan Moon, Dale Moore, Rosemary Mucklow, Edward A. Murphy, Paul Myers.

## CONTRIBUTING

Eva & David Bradford, Lynne & Audel Davis, Julie Dickinson, Deborah Finch, Thomas & Sandy Friedland, Bill Jetton, Diane Lynch, Theresa & David Mathiasmeier, Judith & John Ratcliffe, Sylvia & Joel Saldinger, Thornwall Properties.

## SUSTAINING

Janis Mitchell & John Gordon, Yovino-Young, Inc. HONORARY Norman Givant.



*The Sill House (John Hudson Thomas, 1913. Daniella Thompson, 2007.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### APR 22—BHS EXHIBIT OPENING

“Vanishing Victorians” curated by Kenneth H. Cardwell, professor emeritus of architecture. 3-5 pm, Berkeley History Center, 1931 Center Street. Regular hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 1-4 pm through September 29, 2007. Call 848-0181 or visit [www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/histsoc/](http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/histsoc/).

### APR 26—BAHA LECTURE

“Thousand Oaks” by Trish Hawthorne. 8 pm, Chapel, Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda. \$10. Call 841-2242 or visit [www.berkeleyheritage.com](http://www.berkeleyheritage.com).

### MAY 3 — BAH A LECTURE

“Berkeley Rocks” by Jonathan Chester. Followed by a book-signing of *Berkeley Rocks*. 8 pm, Chapel, Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda. \$10. 841-2242.

### MAY 3-6 — PRESERVATION CONFERENCE

32nd Annual California Preservation Conference, “Preservation Goes Hollywood” in Hollywood. For information, visit: [www.californiapreservation.org](http://www.californiapreservation.org).

### MAY 6 — BAH A HOUSE TOUR

“Among the Rocks” Tour of gardens and homes in Thousand Oaks’ natural rock landscape. 1-5 pm; \$25/\$35. Call (510) 841-2242 to volunteer. Visit [www.berkeleyheritage.com](http://www.berkeleyheritage.com) to order tickets online.

### MAY 31 — BAH A ANNUAL MEETING

Includes presentation of annual Preservation Awards. Time and place to be announced.

### JUL 26 — B.A.R. LECTURE

“Arts & Crafts Houses in the East Bay: Why They’re More Art than Craft” by Dave Weinstein. Hillside Club, 7:30. \$15/\$20. Part of the Berkeley History & Architecture Lecture Series (benefit for B.A.R. Youth Arts & Education Fund). Sept. 27: Jane Powell on “Bungalows: The Ultimate Arts & Crafts Home.” [www.berkeleyaor.com/lecture/](http://www.berkeleyaor.com/lecture/).



“Dog Rock” in Thousand Oaks in the 1930s. Courtesy Higley Family.



THE BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION  
ANNOUNCES ITS

**32ND ANNUAL SPRING TOUR AND RECEPTION**



# AMONG THE ROCKS

• HOMES AND GARDENS IN THOUSAND OAKS •



**SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2007 • FROM 1 TO 5 O'GLOCK**  
**\$25 BAH A MEMBERS • \$35 GENERAL ADMISSION**

- and two Illustrated Talks -

<p><b>“THOUSAND OAKS”</b> by <b>TRISH HAWTHORNE</b> 8:00 Thursday Evening, April 26th, Chapel, Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, \$10.</p>	 <p><b>“BERKELEY ROCKS”</b> by <b>JONATHAN GHESTER</b> 8:00 Thursday Evening, May 3rd, Chapel, Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, \$10.</p>
---	--

To volunteer the day of the tour, please call (510) 841-2242.  
For further information, please call (510) 841-2242 or visit [www.berkeleyheritage.com](http://www.berkeleyheritage.com)