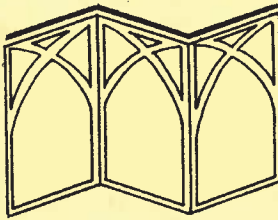
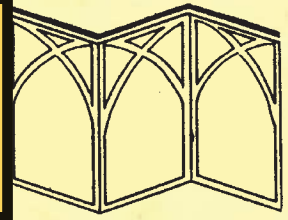


BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION



THE BAHHA NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2012

HOUSE TOUR NUMBER

NO. 139

THE HISTORIC ACHESON PROPERTIES — in Downtown Berkeley

see page 8





Town Hall, Tours

THE BAHA NEWSLETTER

NO. 139

WINTER 2012



City Hall, Berkeley

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COVER: Rendering of Sill's Store Building, c. 1915; James W. Plachek Collection, BAHA Archives. Above (left): Tours: town hall, Photograph, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online, accessed February 16, 2012, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/medial/121860/Town-hall-Tours-France>. Above (right): Berkeley City Hall, postcard c. 1950, courtesy Susan Cerny.

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TWO RECENT LOSSES

Berkeley lost two prominent historic buildings to fire recently. On November 18, the Sequoia Apartments was completely destroyed. This ornate, 4-story cream-colored brick building was designed by Richardson & Burrell in 1916. It anchored a Telegraph Avenue intersection, with shopfronts facing Telegraph and an ornate Prairie-style marble apartment entry on Haste. More than 20 years ago, the Berkeley Inn on the opposite corner was lost in a similar disaster.



The Sequoia Apartments at Haste and Telegraph. 1939 Donogh photo, BAHA.

On March 8 at 2227 Dwight Way, another fire seriously damaged The Elms, a Mission Revival apartment house that opened in 1912. This was not a new building then, but a major alteration to the R.J. Johnson House, built in 1885 and subsequently enlarged in the 1890s. Above the parapet walls of the 1912 addition at the front could be seen the gable roof of the old house. This is a block with many surviving 19th-century houses.



The Elms, 2227 Dwight Way. 1939 Donogh photo, BAHA.

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Produced January–April 2012. Contributing writers this issue: Anthony Bruce, Susan Cerny, Daniella Thompson

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Spring is here. At BAHA, we celebrate our beautiful Berkeley spring each year with a House Tour, and a few weeks later, our annual Awards. It is a marvelous time to appreciate our built environment. But this year, something really tragic is on the horizon—the potential demolition of our “old” City Hall.

The very first nine City of Berkeley Landmarks were designated on December 15, 1975. They were the jewels in our crown, and included the First Church of Christ, Scientist; the Berkeley City Club; the Thorsen House; St. John's Presbyterian Church (Julia Morgan Center for the Arts); and the Berkeley City Hall.

Our City Hall (which we now call “old”), completed in 1909, was designed by architects John Bakewell Jr. & Arthur M. Brown Jr., who also designed many of the jewels in the crown of San Francisco, including their City Hall, the War Memorial Opera House, Temple Emanu-El, and (this one is fun to those of us who remember it in its glory) the interior, including the stained glass rotunda, of the City of Paris store on Union Square. After a brief solo career, during which he designed Coit Tower, Arthur Brown became the UC's architect, and was responsible for designing many campus buildings including the Bancroft Library and the Cyclotron.

But soon our City Hall will be abandoned. Boarded up. The City will erect a chain-link fence around it. They have no plans to find another use, and no funds to work with. The Berkeley Unified School District has moved to its new headquarters at the former West Campus of Berkeley High School. And the City Council will meet elsewhere starting in late spring. The building needs seismic work (the tower was removed and retrofitted twenty years ago, but the building has reportedly not had any work done since), and apparently the price tag for retrofit is large. While city and school buildings all around town have had new life breathed into them, the City Hall and the Veteran's Building (on Center Street) are waiting for a lifeline. City officials say they want to hear from citizens who might have ideas. And, if *you* have an idea, please send it to the mayor: mayor@ci.berkeley.ca.us or write to him at: Mayor Tom Bates, 2140 Milvia Street, Berkeley, California 94704.

When the former president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation came to Berkeley a few years ago to give a lecture for BAHA members, he taught us, “the greenest building is one that has already been built.” Let's hope that this green building can be saved.

Carrie Olson, President

LATEST CITY OF BERKELEY LANDMARKS

310. Fish-Clark House

A. H. Broad (1883)
1545 Dwight Way
Designated: 5 August 2010

This Stick-Eastlake Victorian was one of the earliest houses to go up in the Spaulding Tract. It was built by the prolific Berkeley contractor, pioneer civic figure, and artist Alphonso Herman Broad for A.C. Fish, owner of the Pacific Spring and Mattress Company.



Donogh File, BAHA.

311. Pelican Building (Anthony Hall)

University of California Campus
Joseph Esherick (1956)
Designated: 3 February 2011

In 1903, University of California student Earle C. Anthony founded the humor magazine *California Pelican*. Later, Anthony was the Packard distributor for all of California. In 1954, he donated funds for a campus Pelican Building. The building is architect Esherick's tribute to Maybeck. In materials and details, it strongly resembles Maybeck's First Church of Christ, Scientist.



Pelican Building. Craig Buchanan, 1978, BAHA Archives.

312. Duncan & Jean McDuffie House

22 Roble Road

Willis Polk (1921–1924)

Designated: 3 March 2011



McDuffie House. Tim Reynolds, 2000.

This rambling villa is believed to be the last residence designed by renowned San Francisco architect Willis Polk (1867–1924). McDuffie, the iconic Berkeley developer (Claremont, Claremont Court, Northbrae) and mastermind of “residence parks”—elegant subdivisions in naturalistic settings—was also a nature lover and environmental leader *par excellence*. He served twice as president of the Sierra Club, was a founder of Save-the-Redwoods League, first chair of the California State Parks Council, and a key figure in the establishment of the East Bay Regional Park District. The McDuffie house is an early example of the Mediterranean architectural style. It is set within grounds designed by landscape architect James Frederick Dawson, partner in the celebrated Olmsted Brothers company of Brookline, Massachusetts.

313. John Boyd House

1915 Addison Street

designer unknown (1893)

Designated: 5 Jan. 2012

This Victorian cottage with Queen Anne elements was the home of one of Berkeley’s most colorful characters. An expressman by trade (his business card read “Boss Baggage Buster of Beautiful Berkeley”), John Boyd was a Civil War veteran and a famous gadfly. He was frequently featured in local newspapers as a poet, humorist, and writer of many letters to the editor. Among Boyd’s civic feats was the 1900 campaign to erect a public drinking fountain in the Downtown. Boyd lived in his Addison Street house until his death in 1912.



Donogh photo, 1939, BAHA

314. University Art Museum

2626 Bancroft Way

Mario J. Ciampi, et al. (1967–1970)

Designated: 2 February 2012

The University Art Museum is considered a masterpiece of modern design and has been called a “visual masterpiece.” In its sculptural forms, it outstandingly exemplifies the Brutalist style of its era. Especially impressive is the unique complex formed by the soaring atrium and spirals of multiple galleries and ramps. Also visually powerful is the building’s exterior, which strongly reflects the interior layout and presents staggered Cubist masses that rise and shift direction compellingly. BAM is a prime example of work by Mario J. Ciampi (1907–2006), an important Bay Area architect and urban designer with a distinctive mod-



University Art Museum. Craig Buchanan, 1978, BAHA.

WHAT WILL BECOME OF OUR OLD CITY HALL?



LAST May, Becky O'Malley reported in an editorial in the *Berkeley Daily Planet* (berkeleydailyplanet.com, May 11, 2011) a disturbing dialogue between some council members and then City Manager, Phil Kamlarz, regarding old City Hall at a budget meeting.

Councilmember Maio...asked about a line item she spotted, "...We will be vacating this building [Old City Hall, re-named the Maudelle Shirek Building] [?]." Kamlarz answered: "To retrofit this building is closer to \$30 million, \$40 million... The plan is to secure the building until we can develop a long-term plan."... Mayor Bates: "Maybe we can sell it..."

When Berkeley's City Hall was completed in 1909, its tower rose above the existing downtown and reflected Berkeley's growth from a town to a city. It is an early work by John Bakewell and Arthur Brown, Jr., designers of San Francisco City Hall (1912–16) and the San Francisco Opera House (1932).

Berkeley City Hall's design was derived from the Town Hall at Tours, France, designed in 1901 by Arthur Brown's professor at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Victor Laloux. The Bakewell and Brown interpretation of Laloux's design was the winner of a 1907 competition to replace the original Town Hall (Samuel and J. Cather Newsom, 1884) which had burned in 1904.



Berkeley City Hall, postcard, c. 1910, courtesy Susan Cerny. above: City Hall Lion, photo by Susan Cerny.

The elegant Beaux Arts–style building served as the home of city government from 1909 to 1977, when city offices were moved across Civic Center Park into a larger office building. The City then leased the building to the Berkeley Unified School District. Under the lease agreement, the District was to maintain the building, but by 1988 it was in need of a new roof and a restored tower. This work was completed in 1992.

In May of 2002, a Berkeley Old City Hall Concept Design Study was submitted to the council and a general obligation bond of \$21 million to fund the seismic retrofit of Old City Hall was placed on the November ballot. The bond measure failed.

At the City Council meeting of January 17, 2012, Christine Daniel, Interim City Manager, submitted a report to the council regarding alternative council meeting sites. Ms. Daniel reported, "With the poor seismic condition of Old City Hall and the continued costs for maintenance and repairs, an alternate location for City Council meetings is likely to be needed after BUSD relocates to its new meeting location in the fall..."

Ms. Daniel's report did not address the issue of what will become of Old City Hall, although the council at their October asked that, "...The report should also discuss the City's plans for the future use of Old City Hall, including alternatives to securing and closing Old City Hall."

Will Old City Hall be vacated and boarded up? If it is vacated and "secured," Berkeley's venerable City Hall might end up being demolished by neglect. It would be politically risky if the Council simply ordered it demolished outright—costing them good will and votes. In lieu of the wrecking ball, "old" City Hall could face a slow and painful demise.

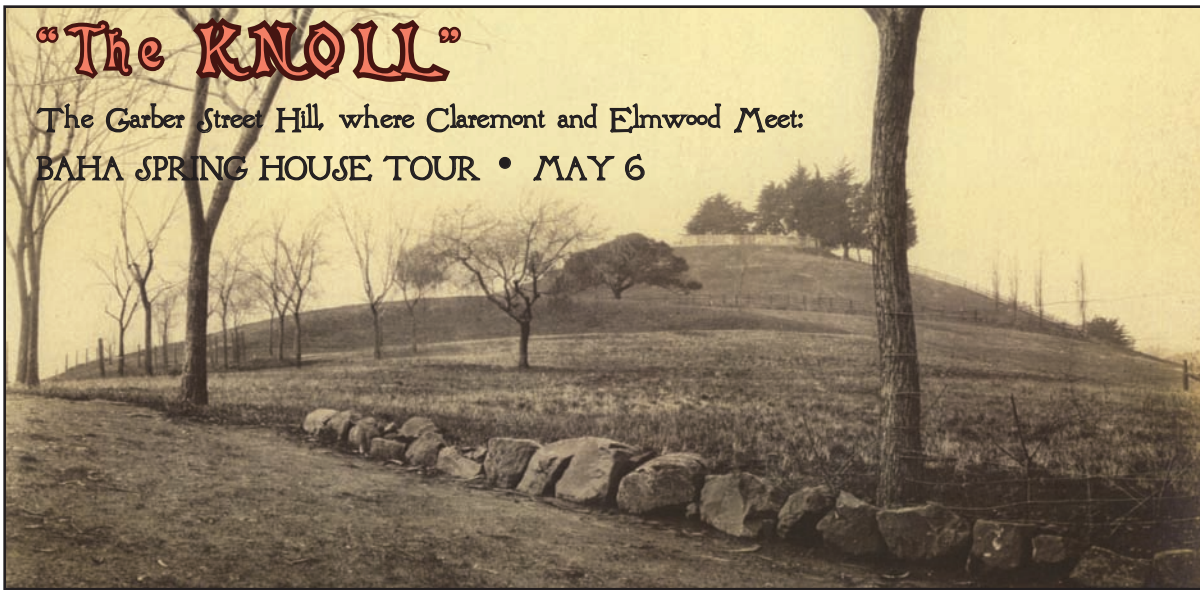
It is well known that an unused and vacant building deteriorates quickly. The absence of daily use takes a mean toll on a building's infrastructure. It doesn't even need to be vandalized to deteriorate, but of course most vacant buildings, including the former University Printing Plant, *are* vandalized.

Will the City of Berkeley lose its iconic symbol of identity?

Portions of this article were published by *Berkeley Patch* and the *Berkeley Daily Planet*.

"The KNOLL"

The Garber Street Hill, where Claremont and Elmwood Meet:
BAHA SPRING HOUSE TOUR • MAY 6



The Garber Street Hill seen from the Palache ranch to the east in 1906. Courtesy Judith Palache Gregory.

BAHA's 2012 spring house tour will explore a neighborhood of hillside homes. But here's the catch: these homes are not in the Berkeley Hills, where you would expect to find them. They were built on a steep knoll—the so-called Garber Street Hill—that rises just a block east of College Avenue. A bit of an anomaly in an otherwise flat area of Berkeley, this striking geological feature is not as apparent to the casual observer today as it would have been when the Claremont and Elmwood neighborhoods were still grassy fields. Now well-forested, crossed by streets and pedestrian pathways, and with a dwelling on every amenable lot, the knoll blends in with the surrounding residential areas. Only when one attempts to drive up Garber Street (to find it blocked at the top!) or to walk one of the public paths, does this topographic surprise make itself known. The change in topography is abrupt and well-defined: the hill extends from the north side of Russell Street to the south side of Forest Avenue. Approached from the west, the Garber Street Hill's most precipitous face abruptly begins just east of Piedmont Avenue.

Some areas of the hill were still in a natural state in the 1920s, when the Reinhardt family built its home at 2919 Avalon Avenue. In *A Personal Reminiscence*

(1993), Richard Alan Reinhardt recalled his childhood in the house and described the topography:

A few blocks west of the Claremont Hotel, rises a steep knoll which stands out clearly against the generally westward downslope of the surrounding area. Between this knoll and Claremont Avenue (which is at the base of the Berkeley hills) is the residential area called Claremont Court. For the most part, Claremont Court is fairly level, but as the knoll is approached, the slopes increase. The corner of Avalon and Oak Knoll Terrace is the highest point on the streets of the tract. Avalon slopes rather steeply to the west. Oak Knoll is also rather steep, dropping away to the north.

Reinhardt goes on to describe the several steep pedestrian pathways leading downhill from Avalon, relating that the "single long flight of stairs" at the west end of the Avalon *cul-de-sac* was "our well-traveled route to Willard Junior High."

How did this knoll come to be? According to the geologist daughter of one of the Garber Street residents, the Hill is "a knob of the Franciscan Complex, a classic California rock formation found throughout northern California; a 'tectonic melange,' which is a fancy way of saying it's a mixture of several types of rocks that were scraped off of the seafloor during subduction many millions of years ago. The hill comprises

sedimentary rocks of the Franciscan Complex, formed during the late Jurassic or early Cretaceous period. The hill was uplifted about 20 million years ago.”

In the early days of Berkeley’s settlement, several owners held the land that covers the knoll, and these ownership distinctions are preserved today as the various subdivisions that were created at different times from these holdings. The earliest filed at the County Recorder’s Office is the Berkeley Homestead Association Tract of 1872. That subdivision extends east from College Avenue and includes the northwest quadrant of the hill. In 1880, the Kelsey family, who owned a ranch to the south of the 1872 subdivision, sold the eastern third of its land to a water company. A concrete reservoir was then built at the crest of the hill, buffered by a stand of pines. In 1891, the remainder of the Kelsey ranch was opened as the University Villa Tract, which included hillside lots on the eastern side of Kelsey Street.

To the east were the ranch lands and apricot orchard of the Palaches and Garbers. In 1907, the properties were combined and marketed as Claremont Court, its several entrances marked by distinctive brick-and-iron gateways. This subdivision includes the northeastern section of the knoll. The final piece of vacant land was the south-facing slope, owned over the years by various water companies. The Avalon Court tract was created in 1920 from this land. The last remaining piece of water company property gave way in 1960 to a house designed by Henry Hill on the crest of the hill.

Today, the barren hill of old has mellowed with age. Moss-covered stone retaining-walls hold back the hillside, and the terraced gardens spill over with mature plantings and trees. Glimpsed through the foliage is an intriguing group of houses of various architectural types; some sit at street level, while others perch high above, approached by vertiginous stairways of stone or brick. The first house built on one of the knoll’s hillside lot is the Prof. Osterhaut House of 1904; its shingled



Garber Street Hill. Sketch by Alice Eichold Barney, 1982, from a photograph in The House Beautiful, July 1910.

walls and chalet-like details set the tone for other early houses on this side of the hill.

Tour goers will be able to visit wooden Craftsman-style houses, tile-roofed Mediterranean-inspired houses, a grand and gracious half-timbered house, as well as an architect’s own home designed in a very personal style. Architects and designers whose works will be viewed are Henry Gutterson, Edward Seely, George T. Plowman, John Hudson Thomas, Joseph Coward, F. E. Allen, and Louis Engler. Julia Morgan will be represented by an alteration she designed for one of the houses. Join BAHA on May 6 for a memorable afternoon on the Garber Street Hill, Berkeley’s own enigmatic knoll!

TOUR VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Please contact BAHA if you would like to volunteer the day of the tour. Call 510-841-2242 or send an e-mail to baha@berkeleyheritage.com (include your address and telephone number if you have not volunteered before). Volunteers are assigned one of two shifts and receive complimentary admission to the houses during the other two hours.

THE ACHESON PROPERTIES IN DOWNTOWN BERKELEY

DOWNTOWN BERKELEY bears the legacy of the pioneer Acheson family with a block of impressive 20th-century buildings on University Avenue. John Acheson built one of Berkeley's first hotels, at the northeast corner of University and Shattuck in about 1880. His son, William, carried on the improvement of the Acheson holdings with several more structures, including the eponymous Acheson Building. Today, this block is being scrutinized for 21st-century development.



Craig Buchanan, 1978.

Acheson Physicians' Building

2131 University Avenue

George L. Mohr, Designer, 1908

Landmark No. 69, designated January 16, 1983

William J. Acheson built this sand-colored pressed brick office building at the downtown terminus of the Key Route interurban train. By the time it opened in January 1909, the entire building had been leased exclusively to physicians and dentists.

The building is one of several large structures that marked the change from wood-frame to substantial brick and (often) steel construction during the early 1900s. The Acheson Building is one of the most intact today. From its original untouched façade, highlighted with terra-cotta ornament, and mosaic entry; to the birdcage elevator, broad corridors, and original office spaces; to the tin-clad porches and stairways at the rear, the Acheson Building is a historic downtown asset, both handsome and instructive.

Shop Building for Letitia Acheson

2111 University Avenue

William L. Boldt, Designer, 1911

This small shop building was built for the mother of William J. Acheson. It echoes the ground floor design of the Acheson Building, with matching unusual pink mortar between the buff bricks, terra cotta classical orna-



Katherine R. Wright, 1978

ment, and pilasters defining the shopfronts. The effect of color and texture was lost in 1984, when one tenant painted the western half blue green. This was soon followed by the other tenant defacing the adjacent side with pink paint. Since then, the building has suffered many mismatched paint jobs. The result: a small gem of a building has become almost a downtown eyesore as it awaits the restoration it deserves!



Walter A. Scott photo, Plachek Collection, BAHA

S. J. Sill & Co. Grocery & Hardware Store

James W. Plachek, Architect, 1915

2145 University Avenue

Landmark No. 273, designated June 7, 2004

This classic downtown store building has a steel frame, is finished in tan pressed brick, and retains much of

its original appearance. The building was commissioned for Stephen J. Sill by William J. Acheson. Sill remained at this address until 1925, when he sold the store to Appleton's Grocery. The latter closed during the Depression. In 1940, Montgomery Ward opened its first West Coast store in this space. It remained until 1964, at which time the present occupant, Berkeley Hardware, took it over.



McCullough photo, Plachek Collection, BAHA.

Gilbert's Cigar Shop

2125 University Avenue

James W. Plachek, Architect, 1921

Built into a tiny triangular space hugging the Acheson Physicians' Building, this shop building replaced an earlier, smaller Gilbert's. The façade is completely covered with colored and embossed tiles, which once created a lively checkerboard pattern above the clerestory windows. As with 2111 University Avenue, this building's character has been obliterated by many coats of paint.

U.S. Realty Corp. Building

1987 Shattuck Avenue

Earle Bertz, Architect, 1925

Landmrk No. 109, designated September 15, 1986

This traditional shop building, with its highly decorative sheet-metal cornice, was built on the site of the Acheson Hotel, which was rebuilt after a damaging fire in 1896 and ultimately demolished in July 1925. All the shopfronts remained intact, but from 1930, a billboard-like sign for MacFarlane's Candies hid much of the cornice and bands of arched clerestory windows. In 1983, the sign was removed, but the intact corner shopfronts were replaced!



U.S. Realty Corp. Building. BAHA

Dudley House

1922 Walnut Street

designer unknown, 1901

Mary E. Moore House

1930 Walnut Street

E. T. Leiter, Builder, 1905



Dudley House in 1939.

Donogh File, BAHA Archives

Behind Berkeley Hardware, and facing on Walnut Street (originally Home Street), are two surviving brown-shingle houses from the days when this was part of a residential neighborhood. The short block on which these structures stand runs between University Avenue and Berkeley Way, and is now an isolated southern extension of Walnut Street. Both the Dudley House and the Moore House were subsequently purchased by the Acheson family.



Moore and Dudley houses. Daniella Thompson, 2009.

KENNETH HARVEY CARDWELL: AN ORAL HISTORY

PUBLISHED BY THE BERKELEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN DECEMBER 2011



*Kenneth H. Cardwell.
Berkeley Historical Society.*

THE project began as a germ of an idea by oral historian Paul Grunland in 2004, when he and the late Kenneth Harvey Cardwell started meeting for tape-recorded interviews about Cardwell's life. This led to a long collaboration and ten tapes, which captured many details about the narrator's varied contributions to Berkeley and its history. The final product is a newly

published resource for Berkeley and Bay Area architectural history.

When Kenneth Cardwell came to Berkeley in 1939 to attend the university, where he majored in architecture, he established a friendship with architect Bernard Maybeck. Later, he and his wife Mary and their family lived in a Maybeck-designed house in Berkeley for many years. In discussing Maybeck's talent for his very individual designs, Cardwell stated in his oral history, "It's hard, for example, to compare the Christian Science Church with the Palace of Fine Arts. They're both public buildings... one is an expression of structure and materials, the other is a complete kind of fantasy of space. And another kind of comparison would be this house which we're in [the Cardwell family home], which is a very simple structure, and the Roos house in San Francisco, which was built at the same time... all elaborately carved, with moldings, ornate, etc."

Kenneth Cardwell joined the Architecture faculty at the University of California in 1949; teaching developed into a lifetime career for him. Under William Wurster's leadership, the Department of Architecture and other related disciplines were combined into the College of Environmental Design, as detailed in the oral history. Cardwell witnessed this and other major changes on the Berkeley campus over the years, some of which he initiated himself. He also worked as an ar-



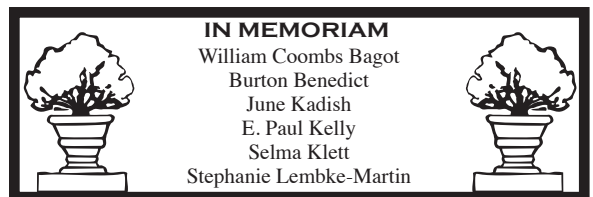
Bernard Maybeck, left, with Kenneth Cardwell, center. Cardwell's Bernard Maybeck, Artisan, Architect, Artist was published in 1977. Berkeley Historical Society.

chitect, and became involved in City of Berkeley commissions. Later in life, he served as President of the Berkeley Historical Society, where he was a tireless volunteer and the Society's Archivist until 2009.

Archival copies of the oral history can be found at The Bancroft Library; the Archives of the College of Environmental Design at the University; the Berkeley History Room at the Berkeley Public Library; the Berkeley Historical Society; and BAHA. A few copies, at \$25 each, are available for sale at the BAHA bookstore.

Funding sources for this oral history include a generous anonymous donor, Paul Grunland, and the Berkeley Historical Society.

—*Therese Pipe, Former Coordinator of Oral History,
Berkeley Historical Society*



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!

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Berkeley City Hall (Bakewell & Brown, 1907–09). Susan Cerny photo.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 3–6 – PRESERVATION CONFERENCE

“Old Roots, New Growth—Cultivating Communities.” Oakland Marriott City Center. Sessions, tours, and workshops on issues facing California’s historic, cultural, and natural resources—taught by over 100 expert speakers, plus continuing education units are available for AIA, ASLA, USGBC, MCLE, and AICP. Exclusive Tours that highlight Oakland’s architecture, landscapes, history, culture, and more. Special Events at some of Oakland’s most historic and architecturally significant venues—including CPF’s signature event, the Three-Minute Success Stories. For more information: www.californiapreservation.org

MAY 6 – BAHA HOUSE TOUR

“The Knoll” 1 to 5 pm \$40 general, \$30 BAHA members, \$25 CPF Conference attendees (with badge). See article on page 6 and visit www.berkeleyheritage.com

MAY 31 – BAHA ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Membership Meeting, Preservation Awards Presentation, and speaker, architect Kirk E. Peterson. Watch for announcement in May and check www.berkeleyheritage.com

JUN 19–BAHA LECTURE

“Secretary of Interior’s Standards & Sustainability” at 7:00 pm. Location to be announced. What *are* the Standards, and why are they important? Discover what the new 2011 *Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* can offer you, and learn about the various sustainability tools used for historic buildings and properties.

SEP 25–BAHA LECTURE

“Preservation Incentives” at 7:00 pm. Location to be announced. Economic tools and incentives for historic preservation; the benefits to property owners, local communities, and the region will be discussed.

THE BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION
ANNOUNCES ITS 37TH ANNUAL

SPRING HOUSE TOUR AND RECEPTION

THE KNOLL

WHERE CLAREMONT AND ELMWOOD MEET

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 6, 2012

FROM 1 TO 5 O’CLOCK



\$40 GENERAL ADMISSION
\$30 BAHA MEMBERS

CALL 510-841-2242 TO
VOLUNTEER AT THE TOUR OR
RECEPTION.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
BERKELEYHERITAGE.COM