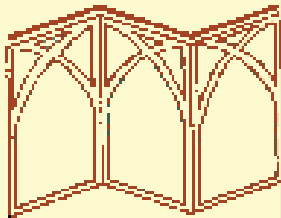
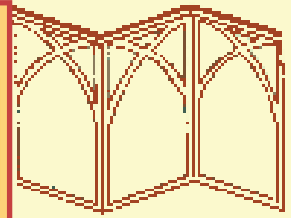


BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION



# THE BAHHA NEWSLETTER



NO. 148

PRESERVATION ISSUES NUMBER

FALL 2016



Losing Berkeley's Iconic Brown-Shingle Houses



2628 Benvenue Avenue

# THE BAH NEWSLETTER

NO. 147

FALL 2016



2627 Ridge Road

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Cover: *Magneson House (Fred Voorhees, 1908), 2710–12 College Avenue; Mark Parsons, 1971. Inset: the same house in September 2016; Anthony Bruce. This page: two now-painted brown-shingle houses. Anthony Bruce, 2004 and 1971 photo, BAH Archives.*

### WEBSITES YOU SHOULD KNOW

- BAH's website includes upcoming events, a list of Berkeley landmarks, illustrated essays, and more: [berkeleyheritage.com](http://berkeleyheritage.com)
- BAH maintains a blog where notices of immediate interest are posted: [baha-news.blogspot.com](http://baha-news.blogspot.com)
- BAH is on facebook: [facebook.com/berkeley.architectural.heritage?ref=hl](https://www.facebook.com/berkeley.architectural.heritage?ref=hl)

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## CLAREMONT HOTEL UPDATE

As we've reported before, Claremont Hotel owners are proposing an \$80 million alteration of the grounds of the hotel, including construction of a new four-story building with 43 condominiums, two freestanding houses by the driveway entrance to the hotel, parking structures on the grounds, and a tennis stadium with spectator seating for hundreds. Even though the Claremont is in Oakland, BAH is quite concerned that some of these changes could degrade the setting of this landmark structure, including the iconic views towards the hotel from Berkeley. The essential character of the Claremont could be lost if the grounds were obstructed by intrusive new structures and parking garages to maximize profits, not beauty.

Neighbors have organized a group to advocate for preservation of both the historic structure and its grounds. They have put together an extensive website with issues and images, at [SaveourClaremont.org](http://SaveourClaremont.org). You can make donations, and contact the organization, through the website.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE

In recent months, the undersigned has noticed a rash of historic house remodel projects that have badly compromised the houses' historic integrity. Most notable is the trend of painting brown-shingle exteriors. This seemingly innocent action destroys their distinctive character, and, in a cumulative effect, robs Berkeley of its most distinguishing architectural tradition. So many unpainted shingled houses were built in Berkeley in the boom years of the early 1900s that the city became identified with this house type—so much so, that shingled houses in other Bay Area communities were soon referred to (often by real estate agents) as “Berkeley” houses. Now, newcomers to Berkeley, unaware of their new town's architectural traditions, are quick to paint the beautifully weathered shingles that cover their new home. And that's not all. Sadly, the redwood, pine, oak, or Douglas fir interiors often follow, obliterated with white paint.

A few recent examples:

• **Colby House (Julia Morgan, 1905), 2901 Channing Way.** One of Julia Morgan's early shingled houses, it was given a coat of chocolate brown paint this summer, with trim painted white. Looking much like a gingerbread house, it makes a mockery of Julia Morgan's sophisticated design. I hope that the redwood interior remains intact.

• **McGrew House (Bernard Maybeck, 1900), 2601 Derby Street** has been painted black with white trim. Charles Keeler supervised construction of this house, an example of the Hillside Club's “building with nature” philosophy for hillside houses translated to a flat terrain. Seen on a recent walk, an open window seemed to reveal what looked like white paint in what had been an entirely redwood interior.

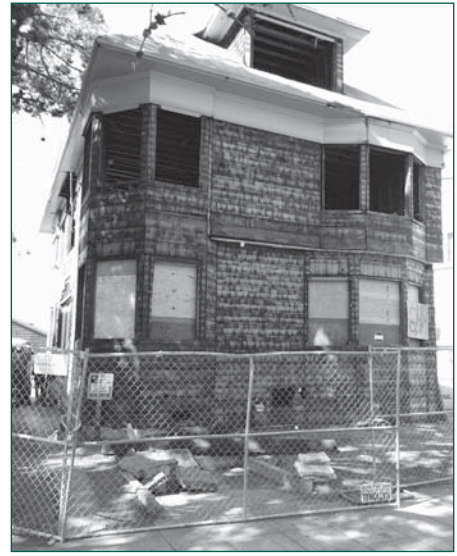
• **Magneson House (Fred Voorhees, 1908), 2710-12 College Avenue.** The most egregious of the current remodeling projects is still in progress; it is almost total destruction. This was a textbook example of a Berkeley brown-shingle, perfect in every way (see cover photo). It was included in BAHA's series in the *Berkeley Gazette* in 1971 and was also included in the official inventory that BAHA compiled for the State of California, in which the house was evaluated as appearing eligible for the National Register. Apparently it was not enough to completely remove the original unpainted interior of this quintessential Berkeley brown-shingle. Now the natural redwood shingles are being painted, obliterating its major defining feature. A local design firm that specializes in “taking on” historic houses is responsible for this and at least two other projects:

• **Erwin-Rhodes House (architect unknown, 1903), 2628 Benvenue Avenue,** was bought in 2014 by investors who hired the firm to modernize the interior (fortunately, they did not gut it, and the redwood had been painted by the previous owner) and paint the brown shingles gray and the dark-stained never-before-painted (and never intended to be) eaves and beam ends white, along with the rest of the trim. This house was also included in the State Historic Resources Inventory and was found to appear eligible for the National Register.

• **Phi Kappa Psi Chapter House (Harris C. Allen, 1901), 2627 Ridge Road** (included in the State Historic Resources Inventory as appearing eligible for the National Register; City of Berkeley Landmark No. 291). The same design firm painted the shingles here as well.



*The Colby House, before the redwood shingles were painted and a fence was erected. Anthony Bruce, 2004.*



Standing about a block away from BAHA's McCreary-Greer House is the Eastman House at 2414 Dana Street, shown on the left in the early 1950s (Donogh File, BAHA Archives), and in September, gutted and stripped. Anthony Bruce, 2016.

Unfortunately, painting is not under the purview of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, even though painting can be just as destructive to the architectural significance of a building.

• **Eleanor Eastman House (architect unknown, c. 1903), 2414 Dana Street.** This more anonymous brown-shingle house is now standing as an empty shell. It had been compromised with the addition of composition shingles years ago. Recently I noticed that they had been removed, revealing the intact original shingles. A restoration in the beginning stages? Apparently not. The interior has been removed and the exterior stripped; even the columned porch was removed.

• **Leola Hall House (Leola Hall, 1912), 2929 Piedmont Avenue.** Lastly, I am including a stucco house that has not been altered on the exterior: the so-called “Honeymoon House” that Leola Hall designed for herself and her husband, Herbert Coggins, shortly after their marriage. The house had one of Berkeley’s most spectacular Arts & Crafts interiors, with a two-story wood-paneled living room designed for entertaining. The house was included in BAHA’s 1984 House Tour, “Five Women Architects”; was featured with superb photography in John Ribovich’s article on Leola Hall in *Style 1900* magazine in 2002; and is in Dave Wein-

stein’s book, *Signature Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area* published in 2006. This kind of recognition of the significance of the interior of the house did not stop the new owners from painting it white, *as this is being written*.

The San Francisco *Chronicle* has not been helpful. The paper has been promoting this trend, at least once a week extolling a historic house that has just received a new hi-tech interior or the painting-over of original woodwork. What can be done?

BAHA’s message is most often directed to those who already believe that historic preservation is a worthy cause. Perhaps trying to reach new homeowners before they begin a project could be helpful, but this is beyond the capacity of the BAHA staff and Board. Perhaps YOU can help. If you notice a special house on your street has just sold, you could, if so inclined, welcome the new neighbors and talk with them about Berkeley’s special architectural heritage emphasizing what a great historic house they have just bought. If one of our house tour pamphlets would help get the point across, we are happy to supply you with a complimentary copy of the most appropriate title or titles.

—Anthony Bruce, Executive Director

## DANGEROUS LEGISLATION

*Berkeley's ability to protect its own historic resources and its neighborhoods could be severely weakened by events in Sacramento. BAHA has been watching with much concern two bills that have recently been considered—and in one case passed—by the State Legislature.*

**B**UDGET TRAILER BILL 707 (so called for its purported linkage to a proposed State budget item to promote affordable housing) would—with only limited and inadequate exceptions—require all cities and counties to give “by right” approval to any multi-unit housing development that includes a prescribed (tiny in some cases) percentage of “affordable” units and that complies with the particular local government’s “objective” land use controls such as on use type and yard dimensions. It would thereby sweepingly exempt even very large developments from local governments’ own requirements for “discretionary” review, such as via conditional use permits—and thereby would implicitly exempt the same developments from environmental review under CEQA. Banning such discretionary reviews would eliminate local governments’ ability to judge and condition projects case-by-case according to their specific sites and surroundings and would render largely voiceless the nearby residents and other people whom the projects would most impact.

The trailer bill provoked strong opposition from environmental and other groups, including BAHA. Finally, key officials admitted that support within the Legislature was insufficient for the bill to be passed during this session. But there is danger that in 2017—with

*A massive new building rising at the northeast corner of Shattuck Avenue and Dwight Way. Steven Finacom, 2016.*

the election safely behind them—legislators may be more susceptible to reviving Trailer Bill 707 or approving something much like it. So BAHA will remain alert to that dangerous potential.

**L**ESS conspicuous but also quite worrisome is the final version of ASSEMBLY BILL 2501, which the Legislature passed this summer (and has now been signed by the Governor). Among this bill’s features is a subtle but potentially harmful rewording within a key subparagraph of the State Density Bonus Law. Regarding developments invoking that law, the subparagraph’s existing language implicitly gives local governments at least some much-needed discretion to question, substitute for, or deny requested “concessions or incentives.” But AB 2501’s rewording here could make it much harder to challenge the particular concessions or incentives that each developer happens to request. The rewording’s actual effect may come out only over quite some time, as individual projects are reviewed and/or legal interpretations are made. But this matter, too, will bear close watching.



## A CHALLENGE FOR PRESERVATION IN BERKELEY: URBAN RENEWAL II

THE “housing crisis” and the “need for higher density housing” are not new concepts. San Francisco and surrounding communities, including Berkeley, have seen the results of Urban Renewal, which was invented in the 1940s to address the same concerns and others. An example of Urban Renewal’s history can be found in San Francisco’s Fillmore district (see <http://hoodline.com/2016/01/how-urban-renewal-destroyed-the-fillmore-in-order-to-save-it>). Urban Renewal I was designed to replace arguably run-down urban areas with new, higher-density, affordable housing that would get rid of old structures, and “fix” crime and poverty. It did not work. Instead, it displaced entire communities and destroyed architecturally significant housing, including Victorians, replacing them with featureless apartment buildings. Today, you can walk around parts of Oakland, where you will find blocks with one or two Victorians surrounded by unattractive apartment buildings from the 1940s–1970s. Sound familiar?

Today, we have Urban Renewal II, based on rather much the same tried-and-failed land use policies to replace single-family homes and small neighborhood commercial buildings with high-density, unattractive apartment buildings. Advocates claim that demolitions in small-scale commercial neighborhoods, such as Telegraph Avenue, and an increased number of tall buildings in the downtown area will result in disappearance of the homeless; U.C. students will all have housing; and those who cannot afford today’s rents will suddenly find they can afford them as the building boom continues to eat away at competitive rental prices. Like Urban Renewal I, none of these promises have panned out, and they are not likely to do so in the future.

Under the state’s density bonus laws, which were definitely lobbied for by developers, just a tiny fraction of affordable housing units in a given project allows a developer to qualify for many



*Apartment house at 2732 Benvenue Avenue built by Fred Chopin in 1955. A type of ultra-insensitive high-density housing that will forever be a blight on this beautiful block of early 20th century houses. 1976 real estate listing photo, Donogh File, BAHA Archives.*

more market-rate units and greater height than zoning would normally allow. Homeless, middle-, and low-income people are not the target market for 650-square-foot apartments in Berkeley—the developers have claimed that these units are intended for empty-nesters, seniors, or wealthy San Francisco tech workers. In fact, we are seeing that many of the units are filled by many more students than the size of the units can accommodate. By pooling their resources, and sleeping in closets or on the floor, students are able to afford high rents and obtain housing that way—but not for long, as U.C. has continued to increase the number of Berkeley students each year. U.C., too, is constructing unattractive, tall buildings that detract from the architecturally significant surroundings that make Berkeley so unique.

Local churches ride the high-density building boom as well. Large parcels owned by churches have become “cash cows” for churches that no longer can or wish to rely on worshippers for funding. They, too, abandon open space and the spiritual and cultural well-being of Berkeleyans for the money to be made on high-density housing. And it



*The Ernest Arnold House stood at 2732 Benvenue from 1902 until 1955, when it was replaced by the Chopin-built apartment building. 1939 photo, Donogh File, BAHA Archives.*

is starting to look like the construction industry is building so fast, that it cannot keep up with safety regulations and building standards, leading to the Millennium Tower disaster in San Francisco and our own tragedy of faulty apartment building balconies. As with Urban Renewal I, the policies at the state and local level are not delivering what all of us would like to see—adequate and well-designed affordable housing for persons who cannot now afford to live in the Bay Area.

BAHA, along with various California cities and state-elected officials, is working to address the rush to high-density legislation. As several politicians have stated, “One size does not fit all.” Land use laws and policies that have and will continue to have negative impacts on our substan-



tial number of landmarks and historic structures that qualify for designation do not fit Berkeley’s small-neighborhood commercial, downtown, and residential areas. Some areas are appropriate for higher-density housing, and BAHA has pointed them out to the City Council. But we also repeatedly identify the sensitive areas that would be destroyed by high-density housing, which at minimum overshadows and detracts from the historic fabric that is so important to Berkeley’s heritage and enjoyed by its residents. High-density structures are incompatible with most residential neighborhoods and generally reflect nothing short of slipshod architecture meant to cut costs. There is only so much an architect can do with tonal colors!

You can help, especially with the upcoming election so near. Ask the candidates for their position on preserving Berkeley’s architecturally significant buildings, and where they propose affordable, high-density housing should be placed. Support and vote for candidates who evidence a sincere appreciation of Berkeley’s architectural heritage and a desire to preserve the lower density zoning near landmarks and architecturally significant buildings. BAHA is always struggling to analyze and oppose developments that threaten existing historic structures designed by some of the region’s best architects. Donations, and more members to help us with that struggle, are always appreciated!



*The Brock House (Frederick Estey, 1897), 2606 Benvenue Avenue, and its replacement designed by Bartlett & Ayer in 1963. Donogh File, BAHA Archives.*

# PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION IN THE NEWS

## — MASSIVE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSED —



*Administration Building and Holbrook Memorial Library (Walter H. Ratcliff, Jr., 1925). Daniella Thompson, 2006.*

### WHY THE PSR/MATHER HOLY HILL PROJECT IS BAD FOR BERKELEY

**I**N 1994, the California State Assembly enacted AB 133 (Willie Brown), exempting non-commercial property owned by religious organizations from local ordinances protecting historic resources. Thereafter, it has been impossible to designate religious buildings as city or county landmarks without their owners' permission.

AB 133 left historic religious buildings with little protection against development. The brunt of that bill is becoming acutely evident now, as local seminaries are experiencing declining enrollment and operating deficits.

Currently, two Berkeley seminaries, the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) and the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, are planning to downsize, abandoning all or most of their historic campuses. While the Lutherans have decided to sell their property and relocate downtown, PSR, located on "Holy Hill" just north of the University of California campus, is proposing something far more radical and disruptive.

PSR established its campus in 1925 and constructed five distinctive buildings on it over a period of 55 years. In addition, PSR acquired many



*The proposed project viewed from Virginia and Arch streets, looking southeast across the PSR campus. To gain a sense of scale, the original Ratcliff building is the one in the center with the several intersecting gables. Rendering from Mather project packet submitted to the City of Berkeley.*



*View into the Pacific School of Religion campus from Scenic Avenue. Daniella Thompson, 2004.*

residential buildings in the immediate neighborhood to house its students.

Now PSR has teamed up with Mather Life-Ways, a developer and manager of upscale senior housing and continuous care facilities headquartered in Illinois. PSR and Mather recently submitted to the City development plans that propose to demolish 17 of PSR's 19 buildings and replace them with new ones, including a continuous wall of five-story buildings on the campus site.

This overscaled development would do away with the beloved historic PSR campus, an oasis on the hill. Gone would be the beautiful open space, the western vista, and all but one of the campus's architecturally significant buildings. The Mather development would tear the fabric of a residential neighborhood, razing an unprecedented number of dwellings built mostly in the 1920s on Virginia Street, Le Conte Avenue, and Arch Street.

The project purports to follow the LEED Gold standard yet would be extremely ungreen. The greenest building is the one already built. Demolition and construction would last for years, disrupting the life of residents in this quiet neighborhood.

Building senior housing on top of a steep hill is ill-advised. Those of us who live on the Northside are familiar with its hilly topography and can only shake our heads at the thought of the Mather residents descending the precipitous slope of Le Conte Avenue. The Mather residents' cars (potentially hundreds of them) and the facility's regular shuttle buses would turn peaceful Holy Hill and its narrow streets into a traffic hub.

Berkeley badly needs affordable housing, but no affordable housing would be available in this project. Residents would buy in with an initial payment of about \$500,000, followed by thousands more in monthly "care services" fees.

There's more than one way for PSR to overcome its financial shortfall. The school could sell its buildings individually, or it could rent a limited portion to its shrinking enrollment of students and lease the rest to the general public at market rates. Yet PSR has not made public a fallback plan in case their mammoth building scheme should fail.

Learn more about neighborhood efforts to save Holy Hill. Visit [www.saveholyhill.org](http://www.saveholyhill.org).

## CIVIC CENTER PLANNING



*Berkeley's Veterans Memorial. 1940s photo-postcard courtesy Anthony Bruce.*

**B**AHA is concerned about the future of two key buildings in Berkeley's Civic Center. These are the old City Hall (officially, the Maudelle Shirek Building, *and even more officially*, Berkeley City Hall), and the Veterans Memorial building. Both structures are owned by the City and are in need of extensive upgrades and repairs. City Hall is now nearly entirely vacant, used only for a few meetings a month. The grand auditorium of the Veterans Memorial, where many community events were once held, is now partially partitioned into office cubicles for a non-profit organization.

Since the City has taken no action for years to plan for the restoration and permanent reuse of these buildings, BAHA has proposed partnering with the Berkeley Historical Society (one of the non-profit tenants of the Veterans Memorial) and the Downtown Berkeley Association to fund a preliminary study of the renovation needs and restoration costs of the Veterans Memorial.

It is proposed that the study be done by a local architect experienced in historic renovations. We hope it will start this fall. When it is complete, we hope it will provide an impetus and a blueprint to the City Council to move forward with a comprehensive re-use and funding plan for the

building and for the old City Hall. There will be more details about the proposed study in a future newsletter.

Both buildings are vital parts of Berkeley's Civic Center, which itself is a National Register Historic District. BAHA sponsored and supported the district nomination many years ago.

City Hall should be restored to regular civic use as a meeting facility, and could also house exhibit spaces for local art and history. Official meetings of government bodies, including the City Council and commissions, should regularly be held there as they have been for more than a century.

The Veterans Memorial would be an excellent location for a municipally owned live performance and meeting space, with the auditorium restored for shared use by the many local groups that give periodic live performances but do not need their own exclusive year-round theater. Both buildings could host small to mid-sized conferences and, in combination with Civic Center Park, provide wonderful indoor-outdoor space for community gatherings like the Bay Area Book Festival. BAHA also remains an advocate for the full restoration of the historic fountain in the park, which has been dry and unused for decades.

## BAHA AT BERKELEY STREET FESTIVALS

**B**AHA promoted preservation and community history at three Berkeley street festivals this year.

In June, we shared a large booth with the Berkeley Historical Society at the second annual Bay Area Book Festival. Each organization sold books and distributed information from one end of the booth. The middle space featured a changing array of local authors—including BAHA’s Susan Cerny and Anthony Bruce—selling and signing their books about Berkeley.

Unlike the typical street festival which people attend for many reasons (food, entertainment, arts and crafts), the Book Festival crowd was self-selected to be interested in books; we sold many local history books and BAHA publications and helped draw attention to several local authors.

In August, BAHA and the Historical Society again shared a booth at a south Berkeley community street festival on Sacramento Street celebrating the unveiling of a statue of Berkeley Assemblyman William Byron Rumford. We handed out free copies of BAHA’s walking tour of the adjacent San Pablo Park neighborhood, where Rumford had lived. Our booth was in front of the Rumford Pharmacy building and we saw many familiar and new faces in the happy crowd.

On September 11, we had our traditional stint at the Solano Stroll. Our booth, as usual, was near Ensenada and in front of Sue Johnson’s iconic lamp store. Hundreds of people stopped by and we handed out literature, signed up people for BAHA’s email list, sold BAHA publications, and distributed material about current preservation issues in Berkeley. We also had a front-row seat for the always endearing and entertaining community parade that kicks off the Stroll.

These community appearances are important, perhaps even essential, for BAHA and historic preservation. We reach people who might not otherwise know about BAHA or our events, renew ties with current members, sell our books and



*Ann Killebrew at the BAHA Solano Stroll booth. Andy Liu, 2016.*

other publications, and make the case for historic preservation and Berkeley’s special character.

However, it’s not certain that BAHA will be able to continue “tabling” at Berkeley’s street festivals. Although our membership remains strong—more than 1,000—the number of volunteers who regularly participate in events like these has dwindled. This year, only a handful of dedicated volunteers made it possible for BAHA to have booths and tables at the three events; most of them volunteered at two of the events, and some worked eight-hour stretches.

Please consider offering a few hours to volunteer at a BAHA booth in 2017. You don’t need to be a historic preservation expert! You can help handing out literature and membership information, selling books, setting up and taking down the booth (a job that can need several volunteers, and a couple of vehicles, both morning and evening), or simply being there to keep an eye on things while other volunteers take a break.

Let the BAHA office know if you are willing to be on a volunteer list to be contacted about these or other BAHA events.

Mark these dates on your calendar and look for BAHA booths at these events:

- Third Annual Bay Area Book Festival, June 3-4, 2017
- Juneteenth (date not yet announced, but always a Sunday in mid-June; most likely June 18, 2017).
- Solano Stroll, Sunday, September 10, 2017.

## BAHA GARDEN EVENT - LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

**T**HE BAHA GARDEN is looking nice after extensive pruning of overgrown shrubs and clearing pathways and lawns during the summer and regular watering by BAHA Board members Carrie Olson and Leila Moncharsh.

Join us on Saturday, November 12, for a half-day garden work party at BAHA to continue the garden improvements. The work will take place in the afternoon.

Here are some of the things we're planning to do: plant bulbs for the spring; dig up and pot live oak seedlings that need new homes; clean patio areas; rake leaves and generally clear deadwood and debris before the rainy season; prune those roses and shrubs that are ready for winter.

You don't need to be a gardening expert—there's a task for every level of garden experience and enthusiasm.



Please call or e-mail the office if you're interested and can help that day. This is a volunteer event where we may need to limit the number of volunteers to the tasks, tools, and space available, so we need you to "register" with the office in advance.

## GIFTS TO BAHA



- "Firestorm," College of Environmental Design Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1983 from **Christopher Adams**.
- Copy of blueprints for the Berkeley High School swimming pool building (demolished) from **Mark Hendrix**.
- 5 color photos by Arthur Gough of dance classes at the Temple of Wings from **Harold Adler**.
- A Bernard Maybeck watercolor—number 4 in a Nativity series about "The Little Pilgrim"; this one is "Shepherds Going to Bethlehem" and is labeled as an "alternate"—from **Alta Tingle**.
- Monetary gifts from **Kim Bancroft, Lucia Howard, Peter Schorer, Kristine Steensma**.
- A contribution to the Sara Holmes Boutelle Fund (for writing landmark applications) from **Grace Smith**.

## THE LATEST BERKELEY LANDMARK DESIGNATIONS

### **Bennington Apartments (1892; 1915)**

**2508 Ridge Road**

**City of Berkeley Landmark No. 322**

**O**N February 4, 2016, the Landmarks Preservation Commission unanimously designated the Bennington Apartments as a City of Berkeley Landmark. The apartment building was created in 1915 through the joining of two adjacent houses that had originally stood on Euclid Avenue and were moved to the rear of their lots, reoriented, and placed end-to-end.

Constructed circa 1892, the two Euclid Avenue houses were among the earliest built in the newly subdivided (1889) Daley's Scenic Park tract. Joined, these houses represent the only extant relic of 19th-century Euclid Avenue, as well as the oldest surviving brown-shingle building on the Northside and one of the three oldest known brown-shingle buildings in all of Berkeley.

The Bennington Apartments were created by William W. and Mary Henry, proprietors of the adjacent Northgate Hotel and parents of Aurelia Henry Reinhardt, future president of Mills College. Dr. Reinhardt resided in the Bennington Apartments from the time the building opened in 1915 until she moved to the Mills College campus in 1916.

The Bennington Apartments combine a rare 19th-century Shingle Style street façade with Arts & Crafts elements along the west elevation. The latter include notable architectural details such

### **Yazdi Building (William I. Garren, 1933)**

**2910–12 Telegraph Avenue**

**City of Berkeley Landmark No. 323**

**B**ERKELEY'S newest official landmark is a modest building at 2910–12 Telegraph Avenue that many BAHAs members may remember as the long-time home of Robert Bruce Antiques.



*Street façade of the Bennington Apartments on Ridge Road. Daniella Thompson, 2009.*

as a circular stucco wall, handsome glazed doors and arched windows, and robust tapered columns. This highly unusual hybrid style is unique on the Northside and possibly in all of Berkeley.

In 2009, BAHAs honored the building in its annual Preservation Awards, recognizing its reshingling as a Noteworthy Project.

Although no development application is pending for this property, the building's owner, Rue-Ell Enterprises, appealed the landmark designation to the City Council. At a public hearing on October 25, 2016, the Council upheld the landmark designation of the Bennington Apartments. Daniella Thompson researched and wrote the landmark application.

The European cottage-like building at the northwest corner of Telegraph and Howe Street was designed by William I. Garren in 1933 as both the home and place of business of Ali and Marion Yazdi. The Yazdis were one of the early families of the Bahá'í Faith in Northern California. Marion Carpenter, who grew up in Southern California, was the first Bahá'í convert to attend

U. C. Berkeley, where she met Ali Yazdi, an engineering student whose Persian family lived in exile in Egypt.

They married and started a Persian import business that originally operated out of their rented home in Fox Court on University Avenue. A few years later, they decided to “step forth,” in the words of their opening-day newspaper advertisement, and moved to the custom-built structure, which contained a high-gabled showroom facing on Telegraph Avenue, living quarters for their family in an attached ground-floor apartment to the south, and an upstairs apartment for Marion’s sister, Margery, who was a leading social worker in Berkeley.

Not only does the building express an important but little-known piece of Berkeley’s cultural heritage—the story of the Yazdis and the beginnings of the Bahá’í faith in Berkeley—but it is also a late example of Storybook-style architecture and one of Garren’s only two designs in Berkeley (the other is the architect’s own home). It also appears to be part of the only fully intact Telegraph Avenue block frontage in Berkeley where every original building still stands.

The Yazdis lived and ran their business there for more than two decades, and also used the building for Bahá’í gatherings and classes. They



*The Yazdi Building shown in the first Robert Bruce Christmas catalog, published in 1969. Courtesy Anthony Bruce.*

finally sold in the mid-1950s to another family, which operated an antiques and gift shop, Lila’s Antiques. They, in turn, were followed by Bernice Ellis and her notable Robert Bruce store.

In more recent years, the building went through a succession of owners and uses. A number of original features were removed, including decorative wooden shutters and other ornamental details. This prompted current BAHA President Steven Finacom to propose designating it. Daniella Thompson had already researched architect Garren and his work, so they combined forces and wrote a joint landmark application.

The Landmarks Commission voted on July 7, 2016, to designate the building City of Berkeley Landmark No. 323. The new owner (who bought the building this past February) opposed the landmark designation but ultimately did not appeal it to the City Council. The exterior of the building has been boarded up, but it is hoped that the new owner will soon submit renovation and use plans to the City.



*Yazdi Building, real estate listing photo, 1967. Donogh File, BAHA Archives.*

**WELCOME  
NEW MEMBERS**

*BAHA welcomes the following people who have joined BAHA since the last Newsletter went out.*

Charlene Abina  
Jeffrey C. Adams

Cori Allen  
Penny Bartlett

Deborah Durant  
Richard Engle

Lisa Kalar  
Stuart Kelman

John T. Lyman  
John Maddox

Adam Mezan  
Peter Rasmussen

Paul Robertson  
Katherine Wallace

Lynda Wright

**CONTRIBUTING**  
Daina Apple  
Robin Pennell

**IN MEMORIAM**

Ellen Drori  
Ursula Flache  
Martha Nicoloff

**AND RENEWED MEMBERS:**

A. Rhoda Alvarez, Judy & Gary Amado, John Aronovici, Pam Atkinson;

N. Julie & Fred Nachtwey, Linda Nack, Doris Nassiry, Colleen Neff, Neff & Kapczynski, Juanita Neilands, Karen Nelsen, Paul Newacheck & Elaine Chan, William Newton, John Newton, Carland & William Nicholson, Gretchen Nicholson & Tom Carpenter, Martha Nicoloff, Ortrun Niesar, Frank Norick, Ellen B. North, Sheri Novak, James Novosel;

O. Romney O'Connell, Virginia Ogle, Barbara & Philip O'Hay, Gaby Olander, Donna Oliver, Linda Oliver, Valorie Olsen;

P. Kathy Pacheco, Nancy Pakter, Jan Papps, Anne Pardee, Gary Parsons, Howard Partridge, Loren Partridge, MaryJane & Bob Pauley, Glenda & Stewart Pawsey, Terry Pedersen, Catherine Leeson Pelizzari, Gladys Perez-Mendez, Aida Peterson, Gary Peterson, Kirk Peterson, Russ Peterson, Jack Phillips, Ruth & Barry Phillips, Xanthippe Phillips, Ilene Philipson, Therese Pipe, Karma Pippin, Gloria Polanski, Zetta Lynne Poli, Wendy Polivka & Evan Painter, Linda Polsby, Barbara Pottgen, Elizabeth Powell, Roger Pritchard, Alyce Proctor, Senta Pugh-Chamberlain;

Q. Mark Quady & Jonathan Lee, Hellen Quan;

R. Nancy & John Randolph, Ratcliff Architects, Christopher Ratcliff, David Ratoosh, Charlotte Rea, Claudia Reet, Jean Reilly, John Remenarich, Suzanne Renne, Diane Resek, Elsie Revenaugh, Olga & Greg Reznick, Rhoades Planning Group, Pam Riby, Leland Rice & Susan Ehrens, Michael Rice, Gayle Richardson, Rena Rickles, Shelley Rideout, Richard Riffer, Rhonda Righter, Ronald Rioux, Maxine Risley, Barbara & Michael Robben, Lynn Roberts, Paul Roberts, William Roberts, Glenda Robinson, Nina Robinson & Lincoln Cushing, Suzanne Rogalin, Helen Rogers, Norman Ronneberg, Linda Rose, Linda & Steve Rosen, Nicholas Rosenlicht &

Kelly Woodward, Rosie Rosenthal, Jon Rosen, Gail Rubman, Patricia Russell, Ruth & Y.H. Rutenberg, Marguerite Ryce;

S. Patricia & Martin St. John, Maria Salgado & Gustavo Manso, Louise Sampson, Judith Sanderson, Nan Sandusky, Mark Sarconi, Marjorie & Ken Sauer, Jack Sawyer, Margaret Saydah, Jim Schee, Judith Schelly, Susie Schevill & Robert Sinai, Cathryn & Rob Schmidt, Renata Polt Schmitt, Susan Scholtz, Josie Scholz, Peter Schorser, Kay Schwartz, Karen Scott, Elaine Seed, John Selawsky & Pam Webster, Scott Selmanoff & Walter Ankrom, Carol & Ira Mark Serkes, Brenda Shank, Valerie Shearer, Lindsey Shere, Lynn Sherrill, Robert Shimshak, John Shively, Elizabeth & Howard Shugart, Elizabeth Shun, Ben Sigman, Pamela Sihvola, Gordon Silvera, Cany & Tom Simonen, Ann Singer, Joan & Ron Sipherd, Barbara & Sam Skelly, Paul Slater, Sherrick Slattery, Dan Slobin, Sharin Smelser, Brad Smith, Carl & Grace Smith, Dan Smith, Gibbs Smith, Grace Smith, Harvey Smith, Margot Smith, Robin Smith & Gene Erickson, Roger Smith & Gene Erickson, Jim Smoldt, Todd Snow, Franz Snyder, Jane Sokolow, Sandhya Sood, Sherri Spellman, Mary Staats, Cynthia & John Stanfield, George Starr & Julia Bader, Kristine Steensma, Clara Stern, Romer Stevenson, Sallie Stockton, Carol Stone, Susan Stone, Karlyn Strand, George Strauss, Liz Strauss, Susan Subtle, Joan Sullivan, Kathleen Sullivan, Molly Sullivan & Philip Monrad, Ken Swenson, Tricia Swift, Joan Symonds, Kathleen Szawiola;

T. Rachel & Bret Taber, Vanessa Tait, Marcia Tanner, Tarpoff & Talbert, Ann & Dickran Tashjian, Frances Tauber, Anna Taylor, Christine Taylor, Delia & John Taylor, Edie Darknell Taylor, Marion Taylor, Susan Taylor & Bob Fabry, Tracey Taylor, Susan Teesse, Paul Teicholz, Joyce & Don Temby, Paul Terrell, Janice Thomas, Judith Thomas, Marci Thomas, Mary Thompson, Ellen E.

Thomsen, Judy & Pate Thomson, Elizabeth & Dan Thornton, Megan Thurmond-Smith, Garth Tissol, Patricia Todhunter, David Trachtenberg, Margaret Jory Tracy, Elsa & Revan Tranter, Maya Trilling, Robin Boyce Trubitt, Helen Tryon, William Tuikka;

U. Brian Ullensvang & Mary Brennan, Clem & John Underhill, University of California Library;

V. Inga Vanek, M. Frances Van Loo, Sara Van Orsdel, Sayre Van Young & Diane Davenport, John Vilett, Lenore Vogt, Charlotte von der Hude;

W. Aleta Wallace & Peter Nussbaum, Suzanne Weakley, Kristin Weinberger, Mary & Dave Weinstein, Madeline Wells, Susan Wester, Katie Whitmer, Gloria & Raymond Will, Zoë Williams, Kristin Wilson, Darlis Wood & Andrew Stewart, Madeleine Wood, Bill Woodcock & Audrey Plonk, Charlene & Bill Woodcock, Harold Wright, Nicole & Robert Wrubel, Helen Wynne;

Z. Alison Zaremba & Dan Marvin, Bill Zerkle.

**CONTRIBUTING**

Carol Bagot, CENA, Jean & Phil Darnall, Helen J. Gross Dierkes, Blake Gilmore, Norman Givant, Fran Halperin, Jacci Harris, Lucia Howard, Darby Johnston, Diane Lynch, Suzanne Masuret, May & Freeland, Susan Messina, Anne Middleton & Gene Rochlin, Madeline & Joe Mixer, Jean & Roger Moss, Mary Lee & John Noonan, Lorraine Osmundson, Nancy Pietrafesa & John Danner, Judy & Fred Porta, Judith & John Ratcliffe, Elsie Revenaugh, Melinda Samuelson, Candy & Tom Simonen, Carolyn & Marvin Smoller, Rebecca & Robert Tracy, Steven Winkel, Katinka Wyle.

**SUSTAINING**

Abrams/Millikan, Bruce Aidells, Sheila & Lloyd Andres, Susan & Chuck Fadley, Mara Melandry, Valorie Olsen, John Northmore Roberts.

**BENEFACTOR**

Patricia Vaughn Angell.

**HONORARY**

Siegfried Brockmann, Soma & John Stickler, Pam Valois & Lloyd Linford.



*Another view of 2710-12 College Avenue (Fred Voorhees, 1908) taken shortly before it was severely altered. Steven Finacom.*

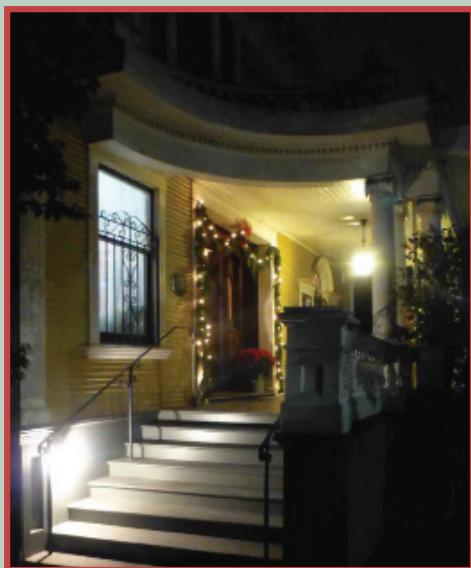
BERKELEY ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

INVITES BAHA MEMBERS AND GUESTS TO A

# HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

**Thursday, December 8  
from 4 to 7 o'clock**

The McCreary-Greer House will be filled with holiday cheer, including light refreshments. Meet Board members, staff, and volunteers. Come enjoy the historic main rooms, resplendent with new carpeting recently installed. Learn about other improvements to our landmark headquarters, both building and grounds, and plans for future work, as well as BAHA's event plans for the new year and current preservation issues and controversies in which BAHA is active.



View a display of rare Wheelock china, depicting scenes of Berkeley buildings and landscapes a century and more ago. These decorative porcelain pieces were produced in Germany and Austria, reproducing local postcard images. Antique postcards showing the same scenes will also be on display. We may also have a display of antique silverware with Berkeley themes. Part of the rarely seen upstairs may also be open.

The BAHA bookstore will be open for your holiday gift shopping.

*Do you play the piano? We are looking for volunteers to play a bit at BAHA's front parlor piano. Volunteers to help with preparations, decorations, refreshments, and clean-up would also be most welcome. Even an hour of your time during the event would be appreciated. If you would like to help, call BAHA (841-2242).*