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Rescue *of the* MacFarlane's Building

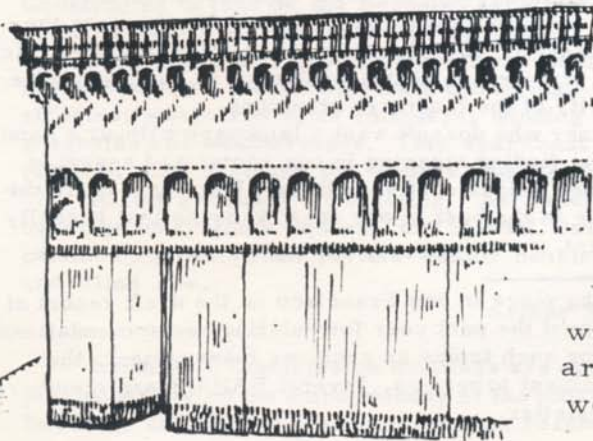
Built in 1925 by the architect Earle Bertz, the U.S. Realty Corporation Bldg. (MacFarlane's) was designed to attract a number of unrelated businesses as tenants. It is one of the best-preserved of the few surviving shopfront buildings downtown. But this lovely one-story commercial building--

at the highly visible position of Berkeley's major downtown intersection of Shattuck and University--has languished under the MacFarlane's sign since the 1930's. After fifty years it is being rescued.

For many years BAHA has been encouraging the owner of the property and the owner of MacFarlane's to remove the sign and expose the architectural details. We were delighted and surprised to see the sign come down last December. I checked to see who had taken out the building permit and learned that a new ice cream parlor/bakery called Snoopy's will be opening in May. According to Charles Janigan, Vice-President of this new company and an architect, because the MacFarlane's sign was so well made, it cost \$2,500 to remove--but because the sign was so well made, the hidden architectural details had been protected from the elements. He was able to obtain the cooperation of other tenants in the building (owned by the Acheson Estate). Both Berkeley Vacuum Center and Coffee Cafe have also removed their signs and will participate in the restoration.

But even before the start of the restoration, which will include removing paint from the copper framing of the windows and refurbishing the green marble base, once again are now visible: the cast metal cornice consisting of balustrade and closely-spaced corbels, a wide frieze of cement plaster, and the arched clerestory windows with lathed wood mullions.

---Arlene Silk.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Recently the BAHA office received a letter raising a question that comes up from time to time. A question of rights. The rights of the community versus the rights of the individual property owner. Property rights have long been controlled by government, such as with zoning. Yet questions of property rights are indeed complex and have occupied our best minds down through the ages. Preservationists are frequently at the center of these discussions.

Our correspondent objects strongly to having any community designate his private domain as a landmark because the landmark ordinance requires him to maintain his landmark property, and worse yet, to maintain it in such a way as not to significantly alter its exterior facade. This, he protests, poses an unfair financial hardship. He goes on to state that he will appeal his landmark designation unless the City will exempt his property from the tax rolls. Needless to say, Berkeley would have more landmark applications than Carter has pills if the City were to grant such a bounty to lucky landmark owners. Yet aside from his exaggerated position, our writer does have a valid point. Why not some economic incentives for landmark ownership?

It is too bad there are not some local financial supports for City landmarks when the case warrants. And there are not. There are, however, real tax advantages (a 25% tax credit) for certified rehabilitation of National Register landmarks. In most cases local landmarks can be elevated to National status with little effort.

Unfortunately the community's heritage--and their own pride of possession--isn't enough for some owners to take joy in landmark ownership. I too own a Berkeley landmark building. Like many landmark owners I have maintained my property in a high fashion; in fact, I have restored it to its lost glory. Ironically the owners BAHA and the Landmarks Preservation Commission hear from who most vociferously disdain landmark status are rarely the needy. More often one feels they are looking for a handout in addition to their luck in owning a property treasured by the community. I hope that is not the case here.

Many times, as in my own case, owning a landmark, especially a commercial structure, can actually bring in more income to its owner even without tax incentives from the City. Landmark buildings are in many ways more economical than new construction, and are attractive to tenants and customers. BAHA will continue to lobby for fair economic incentives for Berkeley landmarks: possibilities include adoption of the State Historic Building Code, waiving of permit fees for the renovation of landmarks, or establishment of a revolving fund for low-cost rehabilitation loans. We sincerely hope that no one will seek to undermine the concept of landmark status solely to put pressure on City Boards and Commissions for their own economic gain.

It is worth noting that in those cases where needy landmark owners have come before the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the Commission has always acted to allow repairs which are within their means. In fact, the Commission provides no cost consultation to suggest viable design alternatives which will maintain the integrity of the landmark structure.

To sum up my feelings to you and to our owner who doesn't want a landmark without a handout. Caring about the character of our community; finding meaning in our roots; and assuring that our children can experience their heritage does indeed cost something. Usually it costs the time and the education to recognize and take pride in the best of our past, knowing that it really brightens up the quality of our present environment.

--Jeffrey S. Leiter

As we go to press, public hearings are taking place in San Francisco on the draft report of the California Heritage Task Force, which has spent the past year formulating recommendations for state preservation-related legislation, covering such topics as archives management, the Historic Building Code, and tax incentive and easement programs. Several BAHA board members will attend and testify--full report in the next newsletter.

LANDMARKS NEWS



In the past four months, the Landmark Preservation Commission has named five new Berkeley Landmarks: a house in West Berkeley, three commercial buildings, and an apartment complex on the north side of campus.

The Charles Brown House at 1614 Sixth Street was designated by the LPC last November, but has been appealed by the owner. The City Council has set a public hearing for the appeal on June 6. This is an important early building in West Berkeley and was designated both for its architectural significance--as one of the best surviving Queen Anne houses in the area--and its historic place within the early West Berkeley working community. Built in 1888, the Charles Brown house was chosen by the U. S. Department of the Interior in 1978 as one of eight in West Berkeley eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Of these eight buildings the Landmark Commission has so far designated the Heywood House at 1808 Fifth Street, the Silva House at 1824 Fifth Street, and the Ghego House at 1809-11 Fourth Street. In addition, the Alphonso House (Green House) was recently moved onto the Delaware Street Historic District.

The newly landmarked commercial buildings include Fidelity Savings at 2323 Shattuck Avenue, Maggini Chevrolet at 2140 Durant Avenue, and the Mikkelsen and Berry Building at 2124 Center Street. Fidelity Savings was designed by Walter Ratcliff Jr. and built by Walter Sorensen in 1925. A reinforced concrete and stucco Mediterranean style bank building, it features three large arches of carved stone, supported by stone columns. Maggini Chevrolet is a fine example of the Zig-Zag Moderne style of the 1920s and 1930s. This showroom was built in 1930 by the architect Frederick Reimers for the Howard Automobile Company, which called itself the "largest distributor of autos in the world--Buick Headquarters of the East Bay." Contemporary with the moderne Berkeley Public Library on Kittredge, the Maggini building is unusual in its brick surfaces. Its pilasters are poured concrete pylons, tinted brown, with zig-zag vertical fluting and scrolled fountain capitals extending above the parapet line. The Mikkelsen & Berry building was designed in 1902 by Louis Stone and Henry C. Smith, and is one of Berkeley's earliest and best examples of the Mission Revival style. A small two-story wooden building, faced in green stucco, with a false front and red tile roof, it originally housed a tailoring and gentlemen's furnishing business. Mikkelsen and Berry also owned the Golden Sheaf Bakery on Addison Street.

Normandy Village on Spruce Street was designated a landmark last December. This decision was appealed by the owner to the City Council, which has set a public hearing for April 10. Constructed in 1928 by the Berkeley architect William Raymond Yelland after the 1923 fire had destroyed most of the area's hillside houses, Normandy Village was designed as a complete medieval village with cobbled streets and pathways. Its multiple dwellings have irregular stucco-surfaced walls, picturesque half-timbering, steeply pitched roofs covered with wavy wooden shingles, weathered brick chimneys, winding outdoor stairways, towers and cupolas, carved gargoyles and weathervanes. This apartment complex is considered Yelland's masterpiece. (Yelland also designed the Tupper and Reed building on Shattuck Avenue.)

At its February 27 meeting, the Landmark Preservation Commission will hold public hearings on Shattuck Square, the Samuel Davis House at 2547 Channing Way, and the building permit application for the new senior housing project proposed for the Schools for the Deaf and Blind site.

Arlene Silk, vice-pres. BAHA & chair, LPC

Landmark Commission meetings are open to the public. The Commission meets at 7:30 pm, generally on the third Monday of the month, in the employees' lunchroom of the Civic Center Building, 2180 Milvia (enter by the rear basement door). Preservation in action!

COMING ATTRACTIONS



Readers have been overwhelmed by the 1984 calendar, "Demolished!" Besides an anthology of historic pictures, it is a documentary history of preservation and anti-preservation in Berkeley throughout this century. Month by month are presented striking historic photographs of such lost monuments as Bacon Hall, First Presbyterian Church, Maybeck's Rieger and Hall houses, McKinley School, the Southern Pacific station, and the gothic Garber House on Tanglewood. Captions are period quotations which show the esteem in which the buildings were held when new, and the attitudes that allowed their destruction. In addition, an introductory essay summarizes recent local preservation legislation and the coming and going of buildings through the century, and inset "after" photos show the sites of the demolished buildings today.

Copies are still available. With extensive text and extra photos, this calendar was expensive to produce, and more must be sold. We are now offering the remaining copies at a discount price of \$3 each (\$4.18 with tax & postage)--that's 1/4 off for a year only 1/6 over--and you get a valuable permanent document of the pre-history of preservation and the knowledge that you are helping to support a 14-year-old BAHA tradition. (order form on back page.)

Incidentally, printing is expensive, and our educational mission depends on it. Calendars, monographs, the house tour brochure, newsletter and flyers, and day-to-day administrative and research copying loom amazingly large in BAHA's budget. If you have expertise, contacts, or suggestions to help us streamline the cost of communication, or would like to undertake some research on the subject, contact the office--845-6591.

Julia Morgan, Lilian Bridgman, Leola Hall, Edna Deakin, Katherine Underhill, Gertrude Comfort Morrow... were all women practicing architecture in Berkeley in the early 20th century. A selection of their works will be the subject of the next BAHA House Tour, on Sunday afternoon May 20. Is this sexploitation? Were they any good? Do their works have anything in common? What can we learn about architecture and society in the Crafts(wo)man period? Research is in progress, and because this is a relatively unexplored subject, we especially hope to draw on personal information from the community. If you know of other architects or houses, or have relevant pictures, documents, or reminiscences, please contact the office, 845-6591 (Betty or Anthony), or house tour chair Judy Laws, 530-7717.

A large number of volunteers will be needed to guard houses on the day of the tour--2 hours docent duty in exchange for free admission the other 2 hours. It's not too early to sign up: call the office, 845-6591.

Note that after 2 years in the fall, the house tour is returning to the spring (the neighborhood walking tours, recently in spring, will be in September or October). Which schedule do you prefer? Or do you have other comments about the tours, or BAHA's other programs? Would you like to help plan programs? What should BAHA be doing? Write a note with your renewal, call the office, let us know.

Fireside Chats, a new monthly program of informal BAHA lectures, begins March 29 with Susan Stern speaking on "The Evolution of Residential Building Styles in Berkeley." This slide lecture was created for the Town & Gown Club, and uses dazzling turn-of-the-century tract brochures and other rare material from the Mason-McDuffie archives. Susan is BAHA publica-

tions chair, head of the Architectural Heritage Committee of the Berkeley Board of Realtors, researched and lectured for the Gutterson house tour, and took the After photos for "Demolished!"

April 26's program will be a slide survey of "The Work of Stafford L. Jory, Architect," by Robert Minichiello, San Francisco architectural drafter who has catalogued Jory's papers, and recently arranged the Jory exhibit at the San Francisco Public Library. Stafford Jory (1889-1968) studied and taught at U. C. , worked with John Galen Howard , and designed homes and public and commercial buildings in a personal, progressive version of the Bay Region Tradition.

Lectures will be at 8 pm, the last Thursday of each month, in the period living room of the Shattuck Apartments building (James W. Plachek, 1925; National Register & City Landmark). The address is 2322 Shattuck, front door (the BAHA office being through the back door); programs are free to BAHA members and guests.

These programs are planned to bring BAHA members together more frequently, and to provide a forum for BAHA lectures prepared for other audiences, for encores of past shows you may have missed or want to see again, and for sharing the wealth of information that exists within the BAHA community. We hope you will attend, and will even think about performing. An infinity of topics suggest themselves: photo collections, research in progress, construction and restoration techniques, concerns of nonprofit organizations, travel slides with a preservation slant.

The last Thursday in May, May 31, is planned for the Annual Dinner at the Julia Morgan-designed Berkeley City Club. The after-dinner business meeting and program (speaker T. B. A.) is open without charge to all members. A highlight of the annual meeting is the presentation of BAHA's restoration awards, for outstanding rehabilitation of historic buildings in the past year. Winning restorations have ranged from paintjobs to complete reconstructions, and from historically accurate recreation to ingenious adaptive reuse. The awards committee, composed of architect, real estate, and neighborhood representatives, will begin screening soon. To nominate your own or someone else's building, call the office, 845-6591.

BAHA's stockpile of research, from the block survey and Gazette series and State Historic Resources Inventory, is at last beginning to take book form. A publications committee is working on A Guide to Berkeley Architecture. Members of this committee are Susan Stern, Betty Marvin, Anthony Bruce, Stephanie Manning, Trish Hawthorne, Sally Sachs, & Karen Jorgensen-Esmaili. The committee is seeking old photographs of Berkeley neighborhoods, buildings, and houses; advertising materials such as developers' promotional brochures, and any other interesting tidbits of things past. Volunteers are also needed to help research some blocks of Berkeley which have not yet been covered: please contact Anthony or Betty at the office, 845-6591, if you would like to participate. Publication is probably a year to a year and a half away.

Just in the planning stages, to happen in June, is an event featuring the oldest definitely dated house in Berkeley. Bill Coburn, AIA, will conduct an on-site tour of the Napoleon Bonaparte Byrne House restoration project. This event will be a fund raiser for restoration of the Byrne House, 1301 Oxford Street, an elegant Italianate villa built in 1868. Have you noticed? The original house has reappeared from its plastic shell--a wonderful sight! This restoration is truly a gift to Berkeley--let's support it. Come to the on-site tour, or ask about assisting the Byrne House restoration project.

Mark Wilson, author of East Bay Heritage, will be offering three sections of his eight-week course on local architectural history, beginning the last week of March. Using color slides, handouts, lectures, discussion, and a weekend walking tour, the class will survey 200 years of East Bay architecture, missions to Victorians, brown shingles, and Art Deco. Classes will be Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, 7-9:30, at Albany (525-7131 eves.) and Piedmont (653-9454 eves.) Adult Schools & Vista College (841-8431 eves.); tuition is \$32 approximately. For more information, phone the schools, or the instructor (548-1882).

WEEKLY GAZETTE SERIES

The list of articles below is continued from the Oct. Newsletter, and will be updated in future issues. The series appears each Wednesday in the Berkeley Gazette and has been a continuous feature for almost 10 years. New contributors--writers and photographers--are always welcome. Reminiscences, research, old photos or documents; on a building, a neighborhood or architect--your choice! If you have an idea for an article, contact the BAHA office; we may have relevant material in our files, or any other help you may need to get into print.

BAHA will provide xeroxed copies of the below listed articles for \$1.00 (postpaid), or 50¢ each for two or more.

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|--|--|---|
| <p>432. Hillside Club's "Taste for the Esthetic" 18 May 1983</p> <p>433. Duncan McDuffie House 156 Tunnel Road John Galen Howard, 1910 27 May 1983</p> <p>434. Tennis Club, 1917 1 Tunnel Road Roland S. Stringham 3 June 1983</p> <p>435. California's Mission Revival Style 16 June 1983</p> <p>436. George Maxwell House 2405 Prospect Street Clinton Day, 1883 23 June 1983</p> <p>437. Amiot French Laundry Oregon & Ellsworth 29 June 1983</p> <p>438. Academic Building, 1920 Berkeley High School William C. Hays 7 July 1983</p> <p>439. San Pablo Park bungalows 13 July 1983</p> <p>440. Mission Revival style, part II 21 July 1983</p> <p>441. Ivy Shoppe, 1916 2937 College Avenue Eugene K. Martin 28 July 1983</p> <p>442. Capt. Bowen's Inn at Ocean View 4 August 1983</p> | <p>443. Grove Street Bldgs. Berkeley High, 1937-40 Gutterson & Corlett 11 August 1983</p> <p>444. Home Telephone Co. Allston & Milvia, 1907 Ernest Coxhead 18 August 1983</p> <p>445. Lafayette Apts. 2315 Dwight Way Newsom & Newsom, 1906 24 August 1983</p> <p>446. Joseph N. LeConte House 19 Hillside Court Julia Morgan, 1908 1 September 1983</p> <p>447. Mission Revival style: train stations 8 September 1983</p> <p>448. Peters Houses, 1913 14 & 18 Hillside Court John Hudson Thomas 15 September 1983</p> <p>449. S.S. Maxwell House 15 Hillside Ct., 1907 John Hudson Thomas 21 September 1983</p> <p>450. Oxford School, 1909 1130 Oxford Street George T. Plowman 28 September 1983</p> <p>451. Willis Jepson House 2712 Benvenue Ave., Plowman & Thomas, 1908 5 October 1983</p> <p>452. T.C. McCleave House 2844 Garber Street, 1908 Plowman & Thomas, Part I 12 October 1983</p> <p>453. T.C. McCleave House Part II 26 October 1983</p> | <p>454. Chemistry Building UC Campus, 1889 Clinton Day 2 November 1983</p> <p>455. Judge Garber House 15 Tanglewood Road Wright & Saunders, 1879 9 November 1983</p> <p>456. Berkeley National Bank Shattuck & Center, 1908 John Galen Howard 16 November 1983</p> <p>457. 2200 Block Telegraph (now Sproul Plaza) 23 November 1983</p> <p>458. Recycling old buildings. 30 November 1983</p> <p>459. Joseph Mason house 139 Hillcrest, 1908 Plowman & Thomas 7 December 1983</p> <p>460. Davis-Harms house 733 Hearst, 1893 14 December 1983</p> <p>461. New American Home John Ekin Dirwiddie 95 Parnassus, 1935 21 December 1983</p> <p>462. American Home-- part 2. 28 December 1983</p> <p>463. Locan House, 1917 Stafford L. Jory 1135 Euclid Ave. 4 January 1984</p> <p>464. Walter Wood house 1 The Plaza Drive August Peterson, 1909 11 January 1984</p> |
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