

The Heritage Society of Pacific Grove NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to Maintaining the Beauty and Individuality of Pacific Grove

Volume 4, Issue 3

April 2004



Alexander Agassiz Hall

by Maryanne Spradling

One of the most recent additions to Pacific Grove's Historic Inventory is Alexander Agassiz Hall on the grounds of the Hopkins Marine Station. During



Agassiz Hall 1918

the March Historic Resource Committee's hearing, the committee voted unanimously to add the building to the list. It not only fit the lists criteria in terms of age (built before 1926, with historic integrity intact), it has been associated with one of California's most prestigious universities (Stanford) and with one of the turn-of-the-century's preeminent oceanographers, Alexander Agassiz.



Class of 1894 (photo C.K. Tuttle)

Pacific Grove has the honor of being home to the first marine laboratory on the West Coast (the third in the U.S.). In 1892, Stanford University established the Hopkins Seaside Laboratory, located at Lovers Point. Later, seeking to expand, the university

purchased China Point (now called Cabrillo Point), where in 1917 they built the Hopkins Marine Station of Stanford University. In 1929, the building was renamed Alexander Agassiz Hall in honor of his oceanographic achievements and contributions.

Alexander Agassiz was the son of naturalist Louis Agassiz, who founded the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard. After graduating from Harvard in 1857 with degrees in zoology and engineering, Alexander traveled to the West Coast where he collected specimens for his father's museum. Alexander is best known for his studies of echinoderms (sea stars, sand dollars and sea urchins). Following in his father's steps, he became curator of the museum, and upon his father's death, Alexander became director. Though his first love was oceanography, it was his engineering prowess with Michigan's copper mines that earned him millions of dollars, which were contributed to both the museum and extensive oceanographic research around the world. At the time of his death in 1910 while on a transatlantic voyage, Agassiz was considered one of the authorities on echinoderms and the formation of coral reefs.

Today Agassiz Hall may be glimpsed through the cypress trees while walking the recreation trail along Ocean Blvd. One of the best ways to see the building is during the



Agassiz Hall 2003

Hopkins Marine Station's open house, which takes place every three years, or via the Friends of Hopkins annual open house in October. Appointments also may be arranged.

The Machine Age comes to the Grove

By James McCord, Architect

In 2003 I began to research and to document a structure at 501 Congress Ave (formerly 687 Spruce) in Pacific Grove. The residence is currently in dilapidated condition, due to a variety of additions that have been added to the structure over the years. Sanborne Maps

Calendar

MAY

HERITAGE HOUSE AWARDS

Friday, May 7, 2004, 7:00 p.m.

Museum of Natural History
Forest & Central Avenues

FREE

JUNE

5TH ANNUAL

SUMMER LECTURE SERIES

ANTIQUES ROAD SHOW

Friday, June 18, 2004, 7:00 p.m.

Museum of Natural History
Forest & Central Avenues

FREE

OCTOBER

HISTORIC HOME TOUR

October 3, 2004, 10: a.m. to 12 p.m.

All opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the Board of Directors, but are meant to stimulate interest in and discussion of preservation issues.

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Bob Davis,
Frances Grate,
and Anonymous,
"Highway 68"
already have

show all existing construction on the property was in place by 1926, making it all “historic”, by City standards.

My first realization was that poorly conceived and executed additions (a.k.a. “remuddeling”) were not an invention of the post-war era. This home could be the poster child for shoddy work! My second revelation was that there was a small wooden jewel buried within the morass of siding types, roof slopes, and window and door varieties that were leaned up together on the site. It was expressed as one single 16’ long section of exterior wall, and an opposing gable end that all presented a neat, orderly and deliberate assembly of parts, both delicate in scale and unconventional in assembly. The walls appeared to be panelized, with ceiling framing projecting through the walls like furniture tenons, and a tiny bay window applied to the wall as a single unit, setting off the assemblage of apparently pre-fabricated components.

This 12’ by 16’ area was part of the 1904 Sanborne documentation, along with the adjacent, obviously added, larger floor area that is a kitchen and bath. Let’s see, small structure without a kitchen or bath? Late 1800s? Built like a piece of furniture?

In the post-railroad period of Western development, purchasing “Knock-down” furnishings and chicken coops, catalog order building parts and other standard components of “the good life” was common. Anything

that could be off-loaded to a wagon was available in catalogs and delivered by rail, was available and soon to become commonplace in California.

ALADDIN Build it Yourself



Knocked-down Summer Cottage and Hunting Lodge.
Hunting Lodge, Style B, 10x16 ft., without porch. \$ 98
Summer Cottage, Style B, 10x22 ft., with porch. \$128
Summer Cottage, Style B, 10x22 ft., with partition, making 2 rooms. \$158



Size of room, 10x16 ft., or two 8x10 rooms.
Porch, 6x10 ft.
Height of walls, 8 ft.
Studding and rafters 2x4 inches.
Studding, rafters and joists are placed every 16 inches.
Flooring 1 inch matched.
Siding 1 inch.
Roof inch lumber, over eave with best prepared roofing.
Paneled doors, size 2 ft. 6 inch by 6 ft. 8 inch.
Windows 26x50 inches, with two sliding sash.
Porch columns turned 1 inches.
Glass double strength.
Price includes everything complete.

Sears, and others, made such acquisitions easy, and the concept of “mail order” housing was not such a stretch, I found, since pre-fabricated, “instant-up” or “Built-in-a-Day” structures were used as early as the Civil War! Sears was a



501 Congress

late bloomer, however, since it entered the packaged housing market in the early part of the twentieth century, with houses in kit form, with only minimal pre-fabrication of sub-assemblies such as windows, to try to combat competition

with firms such as “Presto-up”, “Aladdin”, and other mail order home shippers.

As Pacific Grove was originally a town of tents, which evolved into tiny cottages sporadically around the turn-of-the-century, it is logical that summer cottages, such as the Aladdin “knocked-down” Summer Cottage and Hunting Lodge, pictured here from their 1908 catalog, would be a likely candidate for shipping by rail to Pacific Grove. Few structures from the late 1800’s prefab home builders are documented, as few flyers or catalogs survived; however the 12th edition of “Modern Homes of California,” in 1913, indicates that this company had been producing such homes since the turn-of-the-century. Bloussart Homes, maker of the Redibilt homes, boast in their catalog of 1915, that they were established in 1859 and are builders of bungalows for over 25 years. Was one of these

cottages delivered to 687 Spruce? Perhaps, and we intend to find out, as the selective demolition occurs, and we expose the jewel, we will be looking for those telltale brand marks, tab A into slot B indications, if you will, so as to identify the lineage, and enhance the historic record of this simple retreat hideaway.

Editor’s Note: There is no known documentation of kit houses in Pacific Grove. If any reader knows of a kit house in PG, please contact Gary Sprader at 375-1336 or e-mail at gary@backporchfabrics.com. We would like to do more articles on this subject.

What They Can’t Tell You at City Hall

(about windows for your remodeling project)

by Ken Hinsbaw

Members of the Architectural Review Board and others interested in the material standards that are used for design review have been meeting at City Hall to educate themselves about all the window products available. The chairman of the ARB would like to minimize the time wasted (?) on this topic during regular meetings. If your own project has ever been at the center of one of these tug of wars you may have felt like you have fallen into a parallel universe of obscure philosophers arguing the merits and demerits of mysterious substances: fiberglass, vinyl, vinyl clad wood, wooden windows with aluminum cladding.

The truth is that there are clear preferences for windows, certain types over others, but the policy is that they cannot recommend any brands during meetings. But I can! If you have a historic home and you are remodeling here are some guidelines:

If your home is a landmark then you would probably be required to match very closely what was originally in the building, including the corner decorative lugs on double hung windows, matching sill configuration and other details. This will probably mean custom windows.

For the rest of our historic

homes there are a number of reasonably priced manufactured windows available: Kolbe and Kolbe and Marvin and Sierra Pacific both offer a line of wood double hung and casement windows that



receive a favorable reception. Most of the manufacturers will customize the details to match the existing ones at reasonable prices.

If you are just replacing the sash (the moving wood frames that hold the glass) your best bet may be a "pop in" kit that uses your existing trim and casing, at considerable savings. Several of the above manufacturers offer this option.

Vinyl will likely not be approved for any historic home, unless you have a window in a shower area that cannot be seen from the street.

The many clad windows offered fall into the murky middle. Some have been approved for some homes, and many have been the subject of long debates.

The common factor of all the manufacturers that were preferred was the proportions of the parts of the window in relation to the originals.

These workshops will probably cut down on the wrangling about window material at the meetings.

Help Save This House (OPINION)

by Ken Hinsbaw

What happens when the new owner of a historic home wants to remodel and expand his plain and simple shingled cottage, but doesn't want to be bound by any of the constraints that the rest of the community has adopted? Is it unfair for our community to require that the integrity of a historic home be retained in remodeling? How important is the preservation of our neighborhoods to the present Mayor and City Council? We will find out how our civic leaders think about these important issues on April 21.

The owner of 275 Spruce Street requested that his home be removed from the Inventory of Historic Resources. This request was unanimously denied by the four sitting members of the Historic Resources Committee, who heard all such requests at their March meeting. At that meeting the Committee focused on the question of whether or not the run down cottage retained its original integrity. The evidence showed that there had been some additions to the rear of the home and to the porch. Rear additions were very common on our older homes as indoor plumbing replaced the outhouses. In the big picture the changes were about what one would expect to see in the evolution of a small home over 90 plus years old. The front porch alteration, done sometime after 1928, is the only change to the public view.

There are hundreds of these simple hip-roofed homes, such as 275 Spruce, in our older neighborhoods. Many have been restored while others wait for new owners or the inspiration (and cash) needed. The real estate section of the



275 Spruce

Herald usually features one or two fixer-uppers going for \$500,000 or \$600,000. Somebody out there thinks they are valuable because even at these prices they do not stay on the market long. We who already live here need to recognize the value of our own historic resources and insist that their protection not be undermined.

Demonstrate to the City Council that there is widespread support for preservation in Pacific Grove. Please attend the Council meeting on April 21 (meetings start at 6:00).

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Plant Sale

The Cooper-Molera Historic Garden is having its annual plant sale on Saturday, May 22, 2004, between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. The Cooper-Molera Garden is located at 525 Polk Street in downtown Monterey. This is a wonderful opportunity to get heritage plants for your garden. Best of all, you can wander through the garden and see just exactly what your little plant shoot will look like when it's all grown up. Don't miss this wonderful event.

Hot Summer Lectures

by Ken Hinsbaw

We have been proud to use the great auditoriums of Robert Down School and PG Middle School in the past for the Summer Lecture Series. With the passage of local school bonds, badly needed construction will be underway on both facilities. The larger capacity of the school auditoriums has been welcome because of the large turnouts for the talks. Several local churches were willing to host our event, but their rooms proved unsuitable.

So, we will be holding this year's series at the Natural History Museum; the room is perfect, except for the limited seating.

Most of the details of the three lectures have been set: The opening event will be June 18, where we will put on our version of the Antiques Road show with appraisers and dealers organized by Claudia McCord, manager of the Cannery Row Antique Mall. Bring your family heirlooms in for the experts to have a look at. The July date is not set, but we are attempting to bring Edward Bosley, the archivist of the Gable House in Pasadena, to speak on Greene and Greene. The final event on August 20 will feature Mary Hardy of the Getty Conservation Institute, who is an expert on historic buildings and the problems posed by earthquakes.

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House Awards Evening

The Heritage House Awards will be awarded on Friday, May 7, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. at the Museum of Natural History, Forest & Central Avenues. Barbara Nelson, Senior Planner with the City, will give a talk, with slides of Heritage houses in Pacific Grove, on the value of Pacific Grove's Historic House Inventory. Ms. Nelson gave a similar talk last year that was not only informative but also highly entertaining.

As a special treat, the Gretchen Flesher will give an in-depth description of the rehabilitation of the Julia Morgan house on First Street.

Don't miss this important evening.

Thank You

A donation of \$20 was received from Jean and Thomas Martin of Florence, Oregon, for research done for them last month concerning the Pacific Grove house of his great grandmother at 141 19th Street. Many thanks to the Martins.

Do It Yourself Research II Sanborn

by Ken Hinsbaw

Last month I wrote about Don Howard's amazing books that offer so much information for those curious about their own home and our community as a whole. This month I would like to acquaint you with the sometimes arcane

world of Sanborn Maps. These maps were drawn up starting in the 1860's by a nationwide company that served the fire insurance industry. Every incorporated

town in the country was surveyed so that fire insurance policies could be sold to everyone. The company updated its maps every decade or so until the Depression. The Pacific



Grove maps show an accurate footprint of each house. By comparing the newer maps with the older, the progression of additions can be seen. The availability of the 1926 Sanborn Map along with other information available in city archives enabled the framers of the Historic Preservation Ordinance to choose that as the cut off date commonly used for inclusion on the Inventory of Historic Resources for our town. Until lately the use of the Sanborn maps has been the province of

archivist types, namely those among us who shun sunlight and crave the company of musty old papers. But help is at hand for the rest of us. I have just discovered that the complete maps are available on line, in a user friendly gis type system. Here is one way get to

the maps: 1) do a google search for Sanborn Maps, 2) open the "splash" page, 3) enter the user name "sjplremote" and the password "welcome" 4) select the city, 5) select the year. Shazam!!

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You are there!

Lowell Northrop, who is of the Mac persuasion, has discovered a way that would be quicker for some. http://www.vitalsearch-ca.com/gen/ca/sanborn_loginm.htm

Hold on to your hats! Next month I will write about the 1928 building survey!

Send your submissions to:
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