

# OHA *at 25*

BANKING ON OUR FUTURE  
BY BUILDING ON OUR PAST

*A Quarter-Century of Preserving Oakland's History*



Oakland Heritage Alliance  
[www.oaklandheritage.org](http://www.oaklandheritage.org)

# OAKLAND HERITAGE ALLIANCE

## BANKING ON OUR FUTURE BY BUILDING ON OUR PAST

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Special Thanks to Betty Marvin, Ed Clausen and Dea Bacchetti

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### OHA'S MISSION

Oakland Heritage Alliance is a non-profit membership organization which advocates the protection, preservation, and revitalization of Oakland's architectural, historic, cultural and natural resources through publications, education, and direct action.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Oakland Heritage Alliance began in a backyard in 1980 with a bankroll of \$150 and seven people who loved the city's history. Today, at a thousand members strong, OHA is proudly taking stock of twenty-five years of preservation successes.

Imagine Oakland without its ornate City Hall, the beautiful Art Deco Floral Depot, the dome-topped Rotunda building, or the stately Mission-style Old Merritt College, first known as University High School. These and myriad other cultural and architectural gems are with us today because of OHA's leadership and advocacy. Early on, OHA members understood that successful development in Oakland need not come at the expense of the city's rich, historic past. Far from hindering the city's development, OHA believes that incorporating historic buildings and elements in new projects has proven to be a lure for residents and businesses, making Oakland a stand-out among so many cities whose landscapes and skylines increasingly look the same.

OHA was born at a time when cities across the country were rising in revolt against the ill-effects of freeway and urban renewal projects. The 1960s had seen devastating urban destruction, with redevelopment projects tearing out whole blocks of Victorian and early 20th century commercial buildings. Oakland was no exception. Hundreds of buildings were lost downtown and throughout the city; by the mid-70s, as Oakland saw even more losses such as the magnificent lakeside Packard Showroom, built by Bernard Maybeck, and the Art Deco Gray Shop at 1200 Broadway, local preservationists decided something had to be done.

A citizen advisory group, some of whose members had helped save the Camron-Stanford House on the shores of Lake Merritt, helped with what would become the most important historic preservation tool in the city: the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Funded with a state grant in 1979, the survey was undertaken by city planners who examined and logged Oakland's important buildings, so that when new developments were proposed, planners had a resource for determining an existing building's historic value. The first phase of the survey was completed in 1980, and many of those involved went on to form the Oakland Heritage Alliance.

From the start, OHA has engaged residents, policymakers, elected officials and many others in preservation. Its main strategies have been education, outreach and advocacy. Popular walking tours through historic, often little-known neighborhoods, and an informative, quarterly newsletter are the cornerstones of OHA's education and outreach program. With a steady publication over the past 25 years, the newsletter today serves as an important record of Oakland's preservation wins and losses, detailing many of the most critical city planning battles since 1980. To honor the many Oaklanders who every day pre-

serve Oakland's past—whether by restoring their houses, fixing up their churches or re-establishing period facades on their businesses—OHA proudly presents annual Partners in Preservation Awards. Meanwhile, OHA is constantly involved in advocacy efforts to protect the city's historically significant architecture, unique green spaces and cherished neighborhoods. And while there have been some notable losses in the last 25 years, particularly after the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, OHA believes that even saving one Oakland gem spells success.

The 25 success stories presented in this report represent some of the best examples of how historic preservation can achieve many goals at once: it can provide affordable housing, strengthen a community's character, stir neighborhood pride and build on a city's unique architectural and cultural assets. Our hope is that these stories will inspire the next generation of Oakland residents and policymakers to take action before today's historic treasures are lost. As we look back at the last 25 years, the words of one of OHA's founders, Beth Bagwell, ring as true today as they did when published in our inaugural 1981 newsletter:

"OHA cares about the Oakland of yesterday because we care about the Oakland of tomorrow. The environment we live in today has been given to us from the past: the buildings that remain, the layout of the streets, the ethnic character of our neighborhoods, the forgotten creeks, the lake that still forms the centerpiece of our city. The Oakland of today is the result of what Oaklanders of yesterday built or demolished, fostered or neglected. This is our inheritance. What we do with it is our choice."

# OAKLAND CITY HALL

One Frank Ogawa Plaza

District: Downtown

Built: 1911–14

Architect: Palmer & Hornbostel  
(New York)

Damaged & Closed: 1989

Reopened: 1995

**EARLY HISTORY:** One of the nation's first "skyscraper" city halls, this granite and terra-cotta building was the tallest structure west of the Mississippi when it opened in 1914. The structure housed court rooms, council chambers, a hospital ward, fire station and, on the top level, jail cells.

**RECENT HISTORY:** City Hall was one of many downtown landmarks closed after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Despite calls to tear it down, a task force of OHA and American Institute of Architects members—prominent among them, Larry Mortimer and Alan Dreyfuss—advocated for its repair, and in 1992, the city began to revive the building. Using FEMA and insurance funds, the state-of-the-art renovation cost more than \$80 million and isolated the building's base to protect against future earthquakes. It re-opened in 1995 and today houses Oakland's City Council and various administrative offices in Beaux Arts splendor.



## THE BROADWAY BUILDING

1401 Broadway/150 Frank Ogawa Plaza

District: Downtown

Built: 1907-08

Architect: Llewellyn B. Dutton Endangered: 1989-90

Reopened: 1998

**EARLY HISTORY:** The eight-story Broadway Building represents one of Oakland's finest Beaux Arts buildings and one of two outstanding flatirons gracing the downtown stretch of Broadway. Built as the First National Bank Building, it was designed by Llewellyn B. Dutton, who had previously worked for the Chicago-based Daniel Burnham firm, noted architects of the Flatiron Building in New York City. When it operated as a bank at the turn of the 20th century, the lobby featured a separate teller area especially designed for women.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Following the 1989 earthquake, the Broadway Building's owner proposed demolition because repair would be "costly, disruptive, and difficult." Both OHA and the National Trust for Historic Preservation appealed to the Planning Commission and the Landmarks Board to nominate the structure as an Oakland Landmark, buying time for the building; landmark status was finally approved in 2005. Meanwhile, the city acquired the property, which has since been restored and now houses city offices, with restaurants and shops on the ground floor.



# LAKE MERRITT

District: Downtown/Lake Merritt

Beginnings as a Lake: 1869

**EARLY HISTORY:** Before it became Oakland's most beloved body of water, Lake Merritt was the San Antonio Slough—a tidal marsh that functioned as part of the San Francisco Bay. In 1869, Oakland Mayor Dr. Samuel Merritt donated money to build a dam at 12th Street, across the neck of the inlet, thus creating the present-day lake. At first called "Lake Peralta," the lake over time became known as Lake Merritt. In 1870, the California legislature declared the lake the first Wildlife Refuge in North America. In 1925, Lake Merritt's "Necklace of Lights" was lit for the first time and in 1963, the entire site became a National Historic Landmark.

**RECENT HISTORY:** In the 1980s, the Lake Merritt Breakfast Club led fund-raising efforts to restore and relight the Lake's Necklace of Lights. OHA was a founder of the Coalition of Advocates for Lake Merritt (CALM), pushing to preserve and enhance public areas at the lake, and particularly to improve the 12th Street edge. Architects Alan Dreyfuss and James Vann and landscape architects Chris Pattillo and Cathy Garrett realized that it was possible to enlarge the park area for public use. In 2002, a dream was realized when eighty percent of Oakland voters approved Measure DD, authorizing \$198 million in bonds to help pay for reconstruction and narrowing of the 12th Street dam. The bond will also help fund the new shoreline park on the lake's southern end, and renovations of the municipal boathouses, Children's Fairyland and the Cleveland Cascade.

**NOTABLE:** Oakland is the only city in the world with a salt water lake in its downtown.



## THE FOX OAKLAND THEATER

Telegraph Avenue between 18th & 19th Streets

District: Uptown

Built: 1928 Architects: Charles Weeks, William Day, & Maury I. Diggs

**EARLY HISTORY:** The Fox Oakland Theater operated as a first-run movie house from 1928 until 1962. The San Francisco architectural firm of Weeks & Day designed the 76,100-square-foot theater. Alterations in 1946 added about 3,600 square feet to the upper floors. The theater's architecture is an interesting mixture of styles: Indian, Moorish, Medieval (the gargoyles at roof level), and Baghdadian. Its style is perhaps best summed up by one writer's assessment: "One part Arab and three parts Hollywood hokum."

**RECENT HISTORY:** In the 1970s, the Fox was narrowly saved from becoming a parking lot by Oakland's DeLucchi family. By the mid-1990s, when the city purchased the property, the Fox was suffering from neglect: theater seats had been removed, roofs leaked and mushrooms were growing out of carpets. OHA publicized the building's plight and formed a Fox Committee; this spun off to become Friends of the Oakland Fox (FOOF), which today is working to re-open the once-grand movie palace. Thanks in part to activism by FOOF and OHA, the City has installed new roofs; in addition, public funds have restored the spectacular neon Fox Oakland sign, which shines like a beacon for great things to come in Uptown. Former OHA boardmember Pat Dedekian is now president of FOOF.

**NOTABLE:** In the theater's early days, an intense orange-red neon beacon was installed atop the main theater tower—and was bright enough "to guide aerial traffic toward the Oakland airport."





## THE FLORAL DEPOT

1900–1932 Telegraph Avenue

District: Uptown

Built: 1931

Architect: Albert Evers

Endangered: 1980s–1990s

**EARLY HISTORY:** With its ornate Aztec-style trim, the cobalt blue and silver Floral Depot is one of the most distinctive Art Deco buildings in Oakland. The City's Cultural Heritage Survey bestows its highest rating upon the Floral Depot, citing it as an "outstanding architectural example of extreme historical importance." Some surmise the Floral Depot's ornate detailing was to allow the building to shine in the shadow of its grander partner across the street, the Fox Oakland Theater.

**RECENT HISTORY:** After several demolition threats in the early 1980s, OHA spearheaded a fifteen-month campaign to designate the structure an Oakland city landmark. Unsuccessful, OHA then worked tirelessly to convince the city not to demolish the structure to make way for various schemes, including a new BART headquarters building. The Floral Depot was first saved when Matthew Fox and Phil Tagami bought the block from Federated Department stores, and then was purchased by Akol Architects in 2000. The firm moved into the building and initiated a significant restoration soon thereafter. Among other uses, the building now houses the Uptown Bar, a performance venue for rock, jazz and blues.

**NOTABLE:** There is a replica of the Floral Depot at Walt Disney World in Florida.





## THE ROTUNDA

300 Frank Ogawa Plaza

District: Downtown

Built: 1913

Architect: C.W. Dickey

Closed: 1984

Reopened: 2001

**EARLY HISTORY:** The Rotunda began life as Kahn's department store, modeled on Parisian-style establishments with many "departments" under one roof. It features a light-filled, four-story atrium with a magnificent dome overhead, where luxury goods were once elegantly displayed. The building changed names and owners twice before it became known as the Rotunda.

**RECENT HISTORY:** A victim of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the building stood vacant for a decade until purchased by Oakland developer Phil Tagami in 1999. Under his stewardship, a \$49.6 million renovation restored the building to its former glory, including repair of the 170-foot-high dome. In 2000, at the grand opening of the Rotunda, OHA recognized Tagami's work with a special Preservation Award. Today the building houses offices and a variety of restaurants and shops. The Rotunda Building is a primary contributor to the Downtown Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## **PRESERVATION PARK**

**Preservation Park Way**

**District: Downtown**

**Built: Individual houses date from 1870 to 1911**

**Creation of Preservation Park: 1991**

**HISTORY:** A microcosm of Oakland's past, the serene enclave known as Preservation Park was originally slated to become, among other things, a 3,000-car parking garage. Thanks to the vision and creativity of planners and preservationists—including early OHA members—the site became what it is today: A beautifully landscaped business park comprised of restored historic mansions. The story began in the 1970s. When a swath of historic buildings west of downtown were to be razed for the Grove-Shafter Freeway (I-980), activists succeeded in saving 11 of the homes; the city agreed to move them to join the five Victorians already on the site now known as Preservation Park. Until 1988, the buildings sadly sat with peeling paint as mere shadows of their former selves, but in 1989 a \$7 million, two-year renovation completely restored the building facades and some of the interiors.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Used today as offices for small businesses and non-profits, the buildings in Preservation Park became the heart of an area designated for future historic preservation. It is now joined by other nearby restoration projects of architectural significance: the Greene Library, the First Unitarian Church, and the Pardee Home Museum. The homes in the Park represent diverse building styles popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Italianate, Stick and English Arts and Crafts. Early OHA members Blair Prentice and Helaine Kaplan Prentice, who at the time worked in the city's planning department, developed context-sensitive improvements to the park such as sidewalks, benches, lighting, and the placement of an antique fountain.





## **AAMLO**

**African American Museum & Library  
of Oakland**

**659 14th Street**

**District: Downtown**

**Built: 1902**

**Architects: Walter Bliss & William Faville**

**Closed: As the main library in 1951,  
as a branch library in 1973**

**Re-opened: 2002 as AAMLO**

**EARLY HISTORY:** This Italian Renaissance building was Oakland's original main library. It was funded by a \$50,000 grant from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, and guided by the vision of Charles S. Greene, who was city librarian at the turn of the 20th century. Funds were also contributed by the Ebell Society, an Oakland women's organization dedicated to educating "the feminine mind." In 1951, a post-war bond financed construction of a new main library at 14th and Oak Streets. The Charles S. Greene Building, as it came to be known, continued to function as a branch library until 1973.

**RECENT HISTORY:** In 1994, the City of Oakland, together with a local African-American history collection, created the African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO), to be housed in the old library. OHA monitored the restoration of the building during a complex and challenging project led by Willis Architects. The unique library and museum opened to the public in February 2002.

## TRIBUNE TOWER

409 13th Street

District: Downtown

Built: 1906, Tower Added: 1923

Architects: D. Franklin Oliver, original building; Edward Foulkes, tower

Renovated: 1999

**EARLY HISTORY:** Perhaps the most recognizable feature of Oakland's skyline, this East Bay landmark was originally built as the six-story Breuners furniture store. The *Oakland Tribune* bought the building in 1918 and, five years later, added the signature clock tower. The newspaper was founded by Oakland's Knowland family, known for its influence in the California Republican party. In 1964, prominent former U.S. Senator William F. Knowland, who had lost his bid for Governor to Democrat Pat Brown, took over as the *Tribune's* editor and president, succeeding his father in that post.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Robert Maynard published the *Tribune* from 1983 to 1992, making it the first major metropolitan newspaper owned by an African American; under his reign, the *Tribune* won a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 1989 earthquake. Earthquake damage to the building, however, prompted the newspaper to relocate to Jack London Square for several years. After a 1990s restoration and remodeling effort skillfully guided by Oakland developer John Protopappas, the *Tribune* returned to its old home, where it remains today.

**NOTABLE:** The top floor of the tower housed Radio Station KLX from its opening until the station was sold in 1959.



## SWAN'S MARKETPLACE

10th and Washington Streets

District: Old Oakland

Built: 1917

Architect: Oliver & Thomas, et al.

Closed: 1983 Reopened: 1999

**EARLY HISTORY:** This distinctive white brick structure was built during World War One as a department store and public food market, where Oaklanders could buy fresh produce, fish and meat from individual vendors. The original market was known by many different names and expanded several times between 1917 and 1940. The structure's exterior has a series of colorful round terra cotta reliefs just under its roofline depicting bountiful baskets of produce.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Bustling Swan's Market is an award-winning example of "adaptive reuse," in which a building is re-designed—rather than razed—to accommodate new uses. OHA board members Alan Dreyfuss and Carolyn Douthat played an important role in Swan's new life by helping to reverse a decision by the city to demolish the building. Today, Swan's has a central courtyard surrounded by residential, commercial and arts-related uses including the Museum of Children's Art. On Fridays, the building is part of a farmers' and crafts market. The residential units include affordable housing and 20 market-rate "co-housing" lofts, all located within parts of the original market. Completed in 1999, the award-winning project was spearheaded by the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation and Oakland-based architect Michael Pyatok, nationally recognized for his innovative affordable housing designs.



## HOTEL OAKLAND

120 13th Street

District: Downtown

Built: 1912

Architects: Walter Bliss & William Faville

Closed: 1943 as a hotel (1943–1963 served as a VA hospital)

Reopened: 1981 as senior housing

**EARLY HISTORY:** No fewer than three United States Presidents slept in this grand dame of a hotel when it was the city's finest hostelry and an important social center of the East Bay. Financed by Borax Smith and Edson Adams in an effort to put Oakland on the map after the 1906 quake, the building served as a hotel from 1912 to 1943. In addition to Presidents Wilson, Coolidge and Hoover, early guests included Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart and Jean Harlow. In February 1943, the Army commandeered the building as a regional hospital and auctioned off its furnishings. A Veterans Administration hospital occupied the building until 1963, after which the building stood vacant. The hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**RECENT HISTORY:** In 1981, the hotel was renovated as senior housing. Despite suffering significant damage the 1989 earthquake, its occupancy was not interrupted, with repairs and seismic strengthening completed in 1993. The hotel's grand, ornately decorated rooms include the main entrance lounging room; the Corinthian-columned, 5,000-square-foot ballroom; the dining room; and the cafe, which has 30-foot-high oak-paneled walls and a finely detailed plaster ceiling.

**NOTABLE:** OHA holds a façade preservation easement on the building, to safeguard its historic integrity during any future remodeling or reconstruction.





## **16TH ST. SOUTHERN PACIFIC DEPOT**

**16th & Wood Streets**  
**District: West Oakland**  
**Built: 1910–12**  
**Architect: Jarvis Hunt**  
**Closed: 1980s**

**EARLY HISTORY:** A Beaux Arts gem, the Southern Pacific Depot long served as the major transportation hub of the East Bay. More than 500 trains passed through the depot daily, offering service from main line steam trains on a lower platform and, on the upper level, interurban electric commuter trains. The surrounding neighborhoods were home to many African-American families—as well as to immigrants from all over the world—who found work with the railroads soon after their migration to the west.

**RECENT HISTORY:** While Amtrak had been working on plans to shift its Oakland station to Jack London Square before the 1989 earthquake, the temblor closed the station indefinitely. Meanwhile, rebuilding and rerouting the Cypress Freeway (I-880) along the edge of West Oakland cut off the old tracks serving the SP depot and ensured train service would never return to that site.

In 2005, after intense negotiations among West Oakland activists, OHA, the City Council, and a team of developers, plans to build new housing on the site were revised to accommodate rehabilitation of the station and its baggage wing, key locations in Oakland's African-American history.



## OAK CENTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

**District:** Oak Center/West Oakland

**Built:** Most buildings from 1860–1925

**Designated Historic District:** 2003

**EARLY HISTORY:** Oak Center started as a residential neighborhood when Dutch-born banker and gentleman farmer James DeFremery built his grand estate west of Adeline in the early 1860s. Some of the Bay Area's most prominent early architects followed suit, gracing the district with a stunning collection of Italianate, Stick, Queen Anne, Colonial and Shingle style homes. During World War II, the neighborhood attracted an increasing number of African-American families, many of whom still live in the area.

**RECENT HISTORY:** After entire blocks of historic homes in West Oakland were razed for construction of the Cypress Freeway and other urban renewal projects, the Oak Center Neighborhood Association, and activists such as Ellen Wyrick Parkinson, fought to preserve the area's historic character. In June 2003, after thirty years of citizen effort, and as the result of an enormous research and outreach effort by Betty Marvin, planner at Oakland Planning Department's Cultural Heritage Survey, the Oakland City Council voted to make Oak Center the largest historic district in Oakland.

**NOTABLE:** The Oak Center Historic District now covers 600 buildings on approximately 50 blocks, and contains nine houses designated as city landmarks, more than any other neighborhood in Oakland.



## UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL/MERRITT COLLEGE

5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way

District: North Oakland

Built: 1922 Architect: C.W. Dickey

Closed: 1983

Re-opened: 1998

**EARLY HISTORY:** Built on the former Oakland Oaks baseball field, this building is a rare surviving example of early 20th century California school architecture. The nine-acre campus was modeled on California missions, designed to reflect the local setting and climate—along with the prestige of the “laboratory” school it housed. Run cooperatively by UC Berkeley and the Oakland School District, University High School was a widely respected progressive institution. After World War II, the Spanish Colonial buildings became the campus of Merritt College and, in the 1960s, the birthplace of the Black Panther Party, ethnic studies and the Chicano muralist movement. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992.

**RECENT HISTORY:** The fight to save Old Merritt College was one of the fiercest preservation battles seen in Oakland. In the late 1980s, as developers threatened to raze the site for a shopping center, neighbors formed the North Oakland Voters Alliance (NOVA) to attract new uses that would be compatible with the historic buildings. OHA, NOVA, and activists such as Bob Brokl and Al Crofts worked for five years to convince the city that the rehabilitation was an attainable and worthwhile goal. In that time, the campus was listed on the National Register of Historic Places—even though city landmark status was still in doubt. Today, restored buildings house the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute and the North Oakland Senior Center. A 1944 Uni High graduate wrote of the renovated buildings: “It really feels the same, walking down those hallways . . . it just feels good to be back.”





## CALIFORNIA HOTEL

35th Street & San Pablo Avenue

District: Clawson

Built: 1929

Architect: Clay Burrell

Closed: 1972

Reopened: 1991

**EARLY HISTORY:** Rich in history, the California Hotel served as an important center of African-American cultural and political life in the East Bay in the mid-twentieth century. A change in management in 1953 ended segregation in the establishment and allowed the hotel to attract first-rate performers including Billie Holliday, Fats Domino, Ike and Tina Turner and Count Basie. Entertainers playing at any of the many black-owned nightclubs in Oakland often stayed at the California Hotel.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Closed in 1972, the hotel was purchased by Oakland Community Housing, Inc. in 1986. It underwent a \$9 million renovation in the late 1980s and reopened in March 1991. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the facility now provides 149 units of affordable housing and is beautifully restored with a grand lobby, rustic fireplaces and wood beam ceilings. With a grant from the California Council for Humanities, OHA helped mount an exhibit about African American cultural history and the California Hotel.

**NOTABLE:** During the 1950s, the California Hotel was the only full service hotel in the East Bay to welcome African Americans.

# CARNEGIE BRANCH LIBRARIES

## TEMESCAL BRANCH LIBRARY

5205 Telegraph Avenue  
Architects: Donovan & Dickey

## MELROSE BRANCH LIBRARY

4805 Foothill Boulevard  
Architect: William H. Weeks

## GOLDEN GATE BRANCH LIBRARY

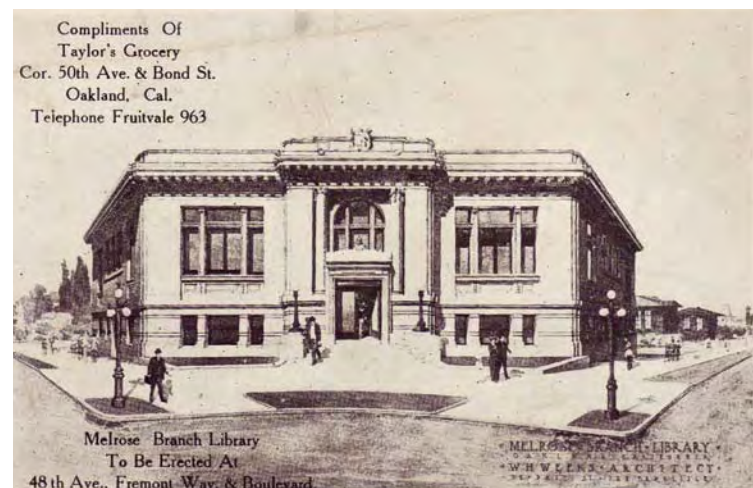
5606 San Pablo Avenue  
Architect: Donovan & Dickey

## MILLER AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY

1449 Miller Avenue

**EARLY HISTORY:** Oakland was a pioneer of branch libraries, opening reading rooms in the city's fast-growing neighborhoods as early as 1878. The idea was to bring books closer to where people lived. City librarian Charles S. Greene asked Andrew Carnegie for financial support to open four branch libraries and in 1916, the steel magnate agreed, granting the city \$140,000; these funds were matched by the Ebell Club, an Oakland women's organization. The elaborately designed buildings were constructed between 1916 and 1918. During planning phases, controversy erupted as the city strove to allocate the four sites evenly between established, working-class neighborhoods and newer middle class communities east of Lake Merritt.

**RECENT HISTORY:** In early 1995, plans were advanced to shut down the Temescal, Melrose and Golden Gate branch libraries due to seismic safety concerns. Strong lobbying by OHA, the North Oakland Voters Alliance (NOVA), Temescal Neighbors Together, Rockridge Community Planning Council and the Friends of the Golden Gate Library helped save the buildings; in 1995, the city allocated \$500,000 to begin upgrading three structures. In November 1996, voters approved Measure I, a bond measure with significant funding for the renovation and seismic upgrading three of the branch libraries. The Miller Branch remains closed.



## COHEN-BRAY HOUSE

1440 29th Avenue

District: Fruitvale

Built: 1882-1884

Builder: George W. Flick

**EARLY HISTORY:** The Cohen-Bray house was built in 1884 as a wedding present to Emma Bray Cohen and her husband, Alfred H. Cohen. Emma's parents gave the newlyweds the land—which was then surrounded by Fruitvale's orchards and rolling open spaces. They also gave the couple furnishings, which remain inside the house to this day. The interior decoration is a quintessential example of the Anglo-Japanese design craze that was popular among American and British tastes in the 1880's. Emma and Alfred had four children; the youngest, Emelita, lived in the house for 90 years.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Upon the death of Emelita Cohen in 1988, the family faced a crisis. A decision was made among the heirs to give up private ownership, yet continue to love the house, live in it, and most importantly, preserve it for future generations of Bay Area Californians. The family formed the non-profit Victorian Preservation Center of Oakland (VPCO) to govern the house and safeguard its passage into a second century.

**NOTABLE:** OHA holds a preservation easement on the property to safeguard it during any future remodeling or reconstruction. Currently, the landscape is undergoing restoration.



## OLD OAKLAND

District: Old Oakland

Built: 1868-1885

Restored: Early 1980s

**EARLY HISTORY:** Old Oakland is this city's 1870s downtown. With its brick buildings and large plate-glass windows, the area remains a remarkably intact reminder of the early commercial district that sprang up after the arrival of the transcontinental railroad.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Oakland residents recognized the beauty of Old Oakland in the 1960s, when Marie Converse founded the Victorian Preservation Society and sponsored a small art gallery on 9th Street. In the early 1980s, a private developer (Storek & Storek) undertook restoration of the area. The historic business district, including Victorian Row on 9th Street, contains more than a dozen significant Victorian structures that have been restored, including the old LaSalle and Arlington Hotels.

**NOTABLE:** By 1900, Oakland's shopping district was moving north to 14th & Broadway, and moved even further "uptown" when Capwell's department store was opened at 20th & Broadway in 1929.





## **SWEET'S BALLROOM**

**1933 Broadway**

**District: Uptown**

**Built: 1923-24**

**Architect: Schirmer-Bugbee Co.**

**Reopened: 1997**

**EARLY HISTORY:** Historic Sweet's Ballroom was built for \$80,000 by Oakland residents Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Hassler. Between 1924 and 1932 it was run by William Sweet, who had been a professor of Agriculture at UC Berkeley. He gave up his professorship to run the first Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland; there were eventually a total of four Sweet's Ballroom sites. Of those four, this is the only ballroom that survives. During the Big Band Era, the halls echoed with performances by Benny Goodman, Lionel Hampton, Jimmy & Tommy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, Duke Ellington, Harry James and a host of others.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Sweet's Ballroom was threatened with demolition in the 1990s when its owner, Federated Department Stores, wanted to sell the property and others nearby for BART administrative offices. In 1998, the building was purchased by Episcopalian priest Matthew Fox, who now uses the site for events connected with Oakland's University of Creation Spirituality.

## MADISON PARK APARTMENTS

100 9th Street

District: Chinatown/Madison Square

Built: 1908

Builder/Designer: C.M. MacGregor

Closed: 1989

Reopened: 1995

**EARLY HISTORY:** Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Madison Park Apartments across from the Lake Merritt BART station represents a blend of craftsman and colonial revival architecture. When it opened, Madison Park Apartments was said to be the largest wooden structure west of the Mississippi.

**RECENT HISTORY:** In 1990, BART purchased the damaged five-story building with plans to demolish it and use the site for office expansion. OHA, building residents, the California Preservation Foundation and East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) advocated for repairing the structure and returning it to housing. The \$4 million rehabilitation by EBALDC—financed with assistance from the National Trust for Historic Preservation—was finished and reopened in 1995. Today, the building features 98 affordable units and an adult education classroom in the basement.

**NOTABLE:** The basement of the Madison Park Apartments once housed a speakeasy.





# SEARS BUILDING

2633 Telegraph Avenue at 27th Street

Built: 1929–30

District: Telegraph/Northgate

Architect: Nimmons, Carr & Wright

Closed: 1993

Reopened: 2002–03

**EARLY HISTORY:** This Art Deco building once anchored the busy commercial corridor north of downtown. In 1964, an extensive makeover covered the building's façade with stucco and industrial-style metal grills—a move lauded by the *Oakland Tribune*: "No longer is this Oakland store one of the 'plain Janes' of the Sears chain . . . she's now a 'glamour girl!'"

**RECENT HISTORY:** In 1993, Sears vacated the building. In 2000, under the ownership of Oakland developer John Protopappas, the former store was converted into 54 live/work units along with retail space and self-storage. The project restored the original brick facade and created a large atrium in the center of the building.



## LAKE MERRITT HOTEL

**Built:** 1927

**Architect:** William Weeks

**Endangered:** 1986 **Renovated:** 2000

**EARLY HISTORY:** This Mediterranean Art Deco building was designed by prominent California architect William Weeks. It originally opened in 1927.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Application for a demolition permit was filed by the owners of the Lake Merritt Hotel in 1986. Soon thereafter, a petition protesting the demolition was filed by neighbors and Oakland residents. OHA asked the Landmarks Board to consider landmark designation for the historic hotel, but the request was withdrawn when the hotel's potential sale fell through. In 2000, the hotel was renovated by Candra Scott & Associates, which took special care to select furnishings and accessories to best enhance the hotel's stunning Mediterranean Art Deco architectural features. In 2003, the hotel was converted to corporate housing, with furnished apartments for extended stays.





## THE ALTENHEIM

**District:** Glenview/Dimond

**Architect:** Oscar Haupt

**Built:** 1908

**Closed:** 2002

**To reopen:** 2006–2008

**EARLY HISTORY:** Perched on the edges of Oakland's Glenview and Dimond districts, the Altenheim was opened as a retirement home in 1896. Run by the German Benevolent Society, the Altenheim was home to many elderly residents who moved from San Francisco to enjoy the warm climate and bucolic surroundings of the East Bay. The first Altenheim, a Queen-Anne style structure, was built from 1883–96 and designed by architect Charles F. Mau; after it was destroyed by fire, it was replaced in 1908 by the current Colonial Revival-style structure.

**RECENT HISTORY:** The Altenheim closed its doors in 2002, partly due to difficulties attracting prospective tenants with a turn-of-the century layout that included communal bathrooms and kitchens. OHA advocated for the reuse of the historic buildings, and the use of tax credits to help fund the project. Purchased by Citizens Housing Corporation, a non-profit affordable housing developer, the Altenheim is undergoing a \$33 million renovation and several additions that will soon provide 174 units of low-income housing for seniors, including new offices for the Altenheim Association and their German cultural programs.

**NOTABLE:** The Altenheim was featured in the Hollywood film "The Bee Season."

## STUDIO ONE

365 45th Street

District: North Oakland/Temescal

Built: 1894; remodeled 1906–07

Architect: Howard Burns, A.H. Broad

**EARLY HISTORY:** Built as an orphanage, this shingle-and-brick structure is tucked behind Oakland Technical High School. It was built in 1894 for the Ladies' Relief Society, whose members included prominent Oakland matrons with ties to the U.C. Berkeley faculty. After a fire in 1906, the structure was remodeled; it included two wings—one to house girls, the other for boys. Following military use during World War II, the building served North Oakland as an arts facility, attracting nationally recognized artists and offering a variety of classes and programs.

**RECENT HISTORY:** After the Loma Prieta Earthquake, the building was listed as an unreinforced structure requiring significant repairs. To draw attention to the structure's plight, OHA held a press conference in front of Studio One and placed it on the organization's endangered buildings list. The Oakland Studio Arts Association (OSAA) and its chair, Sandy Strehlou, were instrumental in making sure that \$10 million for the renovation of Studio One was included in the successful Measure DD bond measure approved by Oakland voters in 2002. OSAA continues to work towards a successful restoration plan of this important building.

**NOTABLE:** Studio One is the only program of its kind in the City of Oakland that provides arts classes for adults and children alike.



## HEINOLD'S SALOON

Built: 1883–84

District: Jack London Square/Waterfront

**EARLY HISTORY:** With its slanted floors and one-of-a-kind ambiance, Heinold's "First and Last Chance" Saloon is one of the few remaining 19th century structures on Oakland's waterfront. Long famous as the writer Jack London's favorite watering hole, the Saloon continues to operate today as a bar—exactly where it started more than a century ago.

**RECENT HISTORY:** Heinold's was declared one of eight city "gems" at the first meeting of the Oakland Landmarks Board in 1974 and was declared a National Literary Landmark in 1998. In 2000, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Yet a draft of the 1998 Oakland Estuary Plan recommended possibly moving the saloon to integrate it with one of the new waterfront developments. Another proposal suggested incorporating the historic saloon in the interior glassed-in lobby of a new building, prompting one Landmarks Board member to say the idea would turn an historic building into a "snow globe." OHA publicized this threat, and worked with the developer to come up with a more compatible design.





Bakery Lofts



The Tribune Tower



Telegraph Lofts

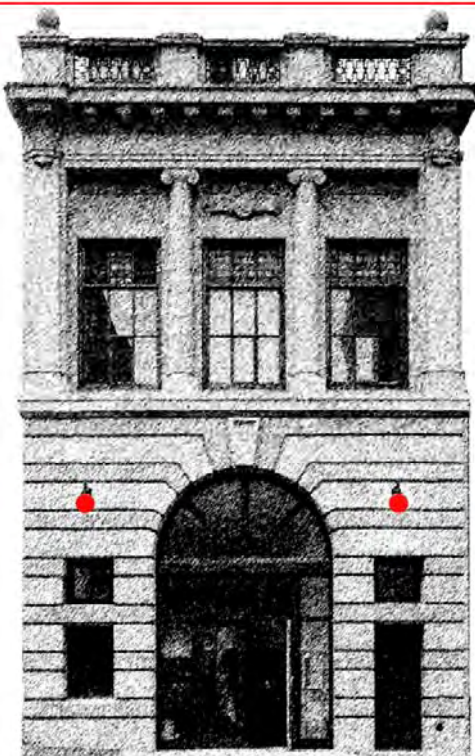
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