

MORE BERKELEY WALKS- SERIES 8

by Robert E. Johnson

The walks feature:

- * fascinating tidbits on architecture, famous people, street trees and more
- * color photos
- * maps with marked walking route and numbered stops coordinated with text
- * highlights, distance and elevation gain and how to get to the starting point

WALK 43- Halcyon Commons

This South Berkeley neighborhood is mostly level and features a variety of architecture, a lovely mini-park created by the community, a fascinating sculpture garden and street trees that have fine autumn tints. It dips slightly into North Oakland 2.3 miles; less than 100 feet elevation gain



WALK 44- Above the Claremont Hotel

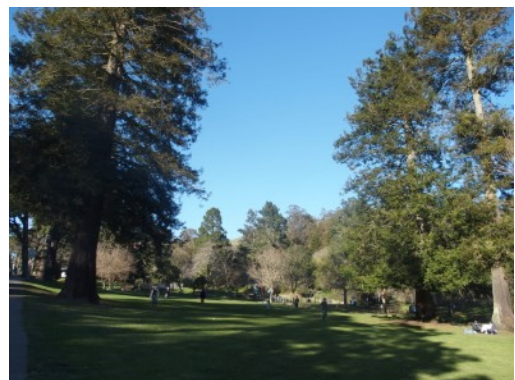


The walk starts in Berkeley but the route is mainly in Oakland. There is a marked contrast between the historic architecture of the lower section and the post-fire residences in the upper part. Some steep uphill walking is rewarded with impressive views. There is also an unusual mid-block path. 2.8 miles 560-600 feet elevation gain.

WALK 45 - El Cerrito Parks and Paths

Our first walk in this neighboring town features some impressive views (weather permitting) as well as interesting small public parks and stairways and a house bridging a creek. 3.5-4.6 miles; 430-680 feet elevation gain.

Co-authored with Janet Byron



Walk 43

Halcyon Commons

Overview: The Halcyon Commons area southwest of Telegraph and Ashby features mainly quiet, tree-lined streets with early twentieth century residences although there are a few nineteenth century Victorians. Halcyon Commons itself is a lovely bit of public parkland that exists thanks to the tenacity and hard work of the neighboring community. It is also a good neighborhood in which to see some autumn colors.

Highlights:

- * Halcyon Commons, a lovely small mid-street park
- * Tree-lined residential streets with fine autumn tints
- * An amazing sculpture and plant garden

Distance: 2.3 miles; 1.85 miles excluding option

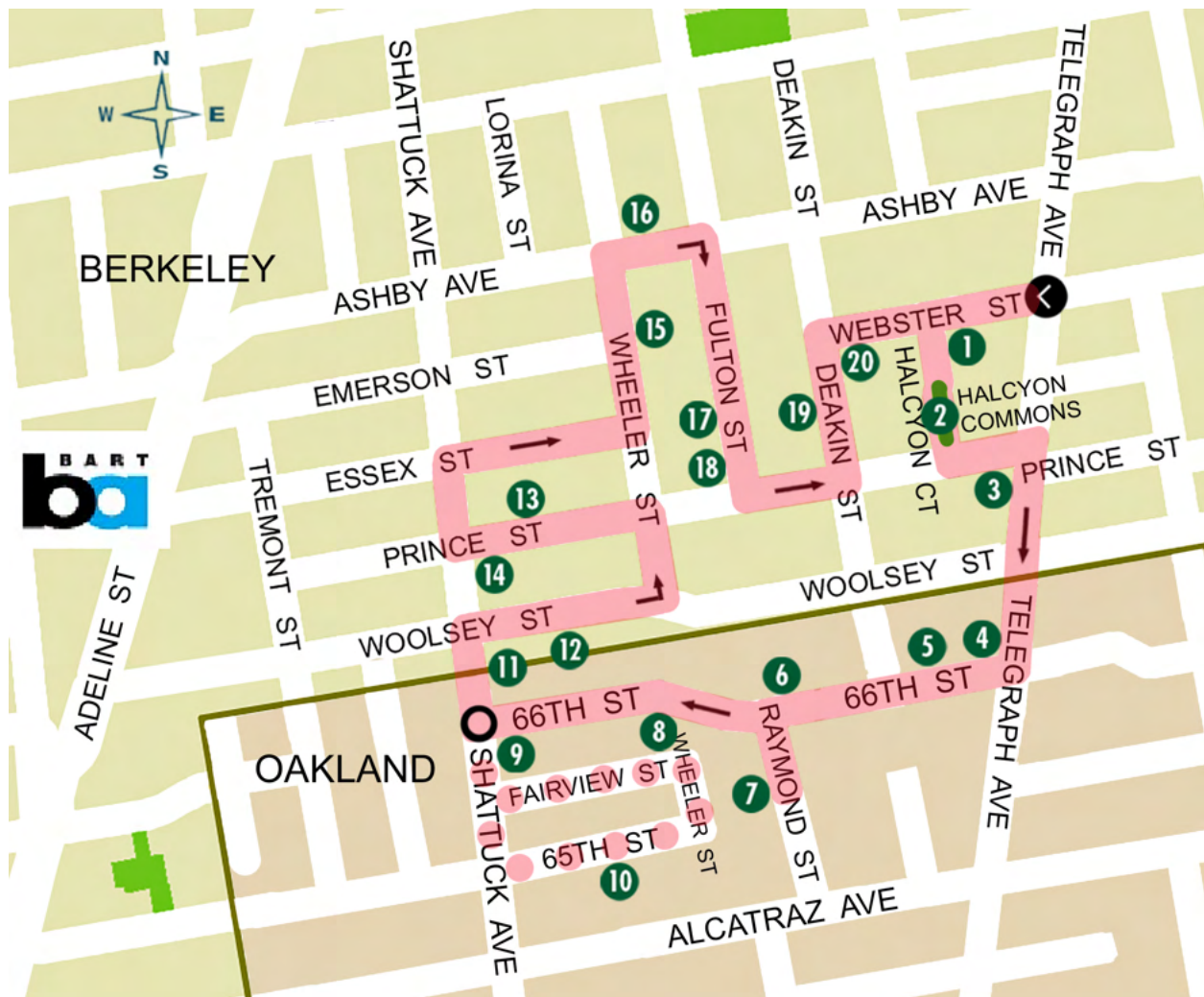
Elevation gain: less than 100 feet

Getting there: Start on Webster Street near Telegraph though you may need to find parking on another nearby street. Pay attention to parking limits or street cleaning signs. It is accessible by AC Transit from the corner of Ashby and Telegraph.

Partway down the block Webster Street is closed to traffic heading west. Walk down Webster on the left side. The house on the southeast corner with Halcyon Court at 2326 Webster (1) is from 1910 and has steep gables and interesting support posts on the porch. Cross Halcyon and on the opposite southwest corner is a Colonial Revival design featuring classical columns and squared off massing; it also from 1910. This is another of the neighborhoods that saw rapid growth in the years after the 1906 earthquake as people fled San Francisco to the purportedly safer East Bay cities.

Turn left on Halcyon Court “a street which reflects on tranquility and calm” according to the Berkeley Historical Society *Quick Index to the Origin of Berkeley Street Names*. It is a surprisingly wide street for one that is only a block long, perhaps indicting it was a turnaround point for electric streetcars in the past. There are lots of California bungalows on the east side and generally homes of modest scale.

Midblock farther along is a small park called Halcyon Commons (2). Use the crosswalk to carefully cross the street into the park where at this north end there is a large metal gateway with sculpted plants and animals. The space occupied by Halcyon Commons was for a time a 28-space parking area. At a block party in 1992, residents were inspired to transform the area into a community commons. The neighborhood association underwent a three year process to gain consensus with hands-on design workshops and then obtain approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Berkeley City Council.



Community volunteers worked with city crews to remove the paving for a park space where the volunteers, guided by city gardeners, planted trees, shrubs, flowers and grass sod. A grant from the city and local business donations helped but the sweat equity of local volunteers was crucial to keeping down the cost and making the project feasible. In July of 1996 a big celebration dedicated the park, which received an Excellence in Design award from Berkeley Design Advocates. Community members have been key not only in creating the park but in continuing to maintain it.

Strolling inside you will find several coast redwoods, a California buckeye and other trees and plants as well as a big tire swing, a picnic table, benches, a grassy area, a bulletin board that includes photos that document the creation of the common and a wooden gateway at the south end of the park.

Exiting from there look right just a bit to see on the northwest corner at 2315 Prince Street, a rather charming small commercial building that dates from 1910. At this writing it is home to The East Bay Anxiety Center and medical professionals. Now head left to cross over Halcyon Court in the crosswalk and walk east on Prince toward Telegraph Avenue. On the left are two multiunit buildings, one at 2327 Prince with a columned entryway from 1915 and next to it a larger building with arched entryways extending to the corner, also from the early 1900s.

At the corner cross Prince to go right on Telegraph Avenue. On the southwest corner is the Bethlehem Lutheran Church (3) at 3100 Telegraph with elements of Spanish Mission Revival in its architecture. Beyond that towards the end of the block at 3120 Telegraph is a large residential and office complex in brown shingle with a fence and gate leading to an entry courtyard. It is purportedly from 1957.

On the opposite side of Telegraph on the corner you can hardly miss the big red sign of the very popular Smokehouse serving burgers and fries. It first opened in 1951 and changed owners in 1993 to an Afghani-American family, led by Sally Shaghasi and her son Shaikaib. A fire closed it in 2019 and it did not reopen until 2021 after a major remodel. Across the street from it to the right is a wall mural of the Smokehouse.

Continuing on Telegraph and crossing Woolsey you enter Oakland. A little farther on the right past some medical buildings is a low rise commercial building at 6601-13 Telegraph (4) with shops and service businesses. Turning right on 66th street there is a mural on the wall of the building relating to the Vietnamese noodle shop at the corner. Here it is important to note that the numbering system is very different in Oakland. In Berkeley all east/west streets have rising numbers from the bay to the hills and even numbers are on the south side; north/south streets have numbers rising from the north border going south with even numbers on the west side. In this part of Oakland the east/west streets have numbers going up from east to west and the north/south streets going up from the south to the north. Moreover, the odd and even street addresses in both cases are on the reverse sides from what they would be in Berkeley. This may seem confusing to remember but it seemed worth pointing out since you are crossing back and forth between the two cities in this walk.

In any case, the first part of 66th that you traverse is characterized by a substantial number of small apartment buildings as well as older homes that have been turned into multi-unit residences. Examples of the latter include 528 66th (5) from 1906 in Colonial Revival style and 543-45 66th on the left in Victorian style, a 1904 building that was raised up at some point. Also 568 66th is set farther back than others and has been altered but with a date of 1885 is one of the oldest buildings in the neighborhood. Then 576 66th (6) is a well maintained 1911 Craftsman bungalow in brown shingle.

Go a little ways left on Raymond Street which also has a diverse range of styles including Craftsman and Victorian. Notable are two Victorian cottages at 6509 and 6505 Raymond (7), both from 1895 and perhaps by the same builder though they differ somewhat in design. Single floor Victorians like these are usually called cottages whereas the bigger two-story stand alone Victorians are often called villas. The house at 1610 is a combination of Victorian and Colonial Revival elements.



528 66th Street

Return to 66th and go left. At the curve 617 66th **(8)** is a Colonial Revival house from 1910 with a high peaked gable facing the street and large dormers on the side. This is one of the two main styles of Colonial Revival though the squared type with two stories is more common (like the one we saw at 528 66th). That being said Colonial Revival style architecture can also be used for another format that can be seen from 634 66th onward on both sides of the street. These are neat rows of bungalows in the Colonial Revival style, mostly built between 1906 and 1910. Though they have some variation they were probably done by the same builder. Bungalow refers to a 1 to 1 1/2 story modest sized house that has a substantial front porch. Architectural details tend to be Craftsman or Colonial Revival in most cases and there are a few examples here of the Craftsman version which don't have the classical columns but have more prominent brackets and other features. One of the Craftsman style bungalows is at 650 66th.

At Shattuck Avenue on the corner and along Shattuck is the Dry Garden Nursery **(9)** which since 1987 has emphasized plants that are drought tolerant to fit the local climate including lots of cacti, succulents and other plants, some of which are quite unusual. It appears to be in the space of a former auto service station. You may want to browse if it is open.

Optional: If you are running short of time head right on Shattuck but if you are OK in terms of time and energy, head left, passing the nursery, to Fairview Street and turn left. From here there is a loop back to Shattuck that features a mix of architecture similar to the rest of the neighborhood; nevertheless, with the ample street trees and lack of fast through traffic it has a very pleasant ambiance. Craftsman and Colonial Revival (look for those classical columns) are the main styles. As in much of the neighborhood trees such as sweetgum (liquidambar) offer lots of brilliant fall color and summer shade. 663-65 Fairview has an interesting room over the second floor porch entrance on the left side. At the end of Fairview continue right on Wheeler. There is also a sprinkling of flowering plum trees on this section of the walk.

Go right again on 65th and father along at 649 65th **(10)** on the left are some large examples of the California desert palms with their fan shaped fronds. At 657 and 667 65th are two California



667 65th Street

bungalows, not so common on this walk. They are from 1924 and 1934, respectively so later than most of the other homes noted on this walk. The style perhaps originated in Los Angeles and features stucco walls, some curves and arches, clay tiled flat or low rise roofs and very small porches. Finally, 686 65th has a giant yucca in front and tall Canary Island palms on the left side with their more typical pinnate palm fronds; they are in the date palm family. These two types of palms on 65th are probably the most commonly planted ones in the Bay Area.

At Shattuck note on the

southeast corner a mural on the wall of the Two Wheels motorcycle and electric bike shop. Turn right on Shattuck, passing Fairview and 66th. After passing some California bungalows at 6618 Shattuck **(11)** note an auto shop in Spanish Mission Revival style. Turn right on Woolsey and you are back in Berkeley. 2118 Woolsey **(12)** is an 1897 house with elements of both Victorian and Colonial Revival style and an angled turret, 2121 Woolsey is a 1919 Craftsman with a very nice porch design.

Turn left on Wheeler Street where there is a large landscaped median and then left again on Prince, another street with good autumn colors. At 2131 Prince **(13)** is a charming Italianate house with a false front from 1888. The house had been clad in wood shingles and most of its Victorian detail removed in the 1940s but in 2005 the current owner beautifully restored the wood siding and carved wood moldings, brackets etc., based on a few that remained as well as a historic photograph. Note also the very handsome front door that was custom made. In 2006 it won a Berkeley Architectural Heritage Assn. preservation award. Across the street 2132 Prince has lovely tiles on the stairway. 2137 Prince is a handsome Colonial Revival House from 1907. Farther along at the southeast corner with Shattuck is the Starry Plough Irish Pub **(14)** which has served food and ales and presented live music and poetry in an intimate setting since 1972. Murals are on both the front and side of the building. The location is particularly lively on St Patrick's Day (March 17) and in 2022 it reopened after a long closure due to Covid.

Turn left on Shattuck to see the front mural of Starry Plough and just beyond that the La Peña Cultural Center, at this location since 1975 to pursue the cultural, social and political aspirations of Latin Americans and other communities,. It was founded in response to the 1973 military coup that overthrew the socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile. The Song of Unity mural was restored in 2014, including 3-D relief. The center offers a cafe, classes and many events annually.



La Peña Cultura Center Mural

Turn around to head back north on Shattuck past Prince, noting the ginkgo trees with their fan shaped leaves that turn golden yellow in late autumn. Turn right at the next intersection onto Essex Street which also features some colors in autumn. There are a number of Victorian cottages and a few homes in other styles. Cross Wheeler Street and go left.

When you are opposite the intersection with Emerson Street on the right side at 3017 Wheeler **(15)** is an 1895 house in brown shingle with Victorian elements but the amazing thing is the front yard with an array of unique sculpture elements, some wrapping around the white trunk of a eucalyptus tree, as well as a lush array of plants with varied forms and textures. It is truly a fantastical garden and a gift to passers-by. For over 40 years the owner, Marcia Donahue, has created artwork including stone and ceramic sculptures (oversize prayer beads, ceramic flowers and many others) as well as the garden plantings. There are also found objects such as bowling balls and sculptures by other artists including Marcia's daughter Sara Tool. More art is

inside and in the back yard, which may be open some Sunday afternoons to the public. However, please do not go beyond the public sidewalk unless invited to do so. More details about 3017 can be found in a web posting by Tom Dalzell, author of *Quirky Berkeley*, or in the book itself.

When you tear yourself away continue on Wheeler to Ashby and turn right. Opposite on the northeast corner at 2151 Ashby **(16)** is a large 1895 house with elements of Colonial Revival and Victorian styles though it has been extensively remodeled and enlarged. In front is a row of skinny Italian cypress trees. Next to it is another large house at 2155 Ashby, this one from 1902 with ornamental woodwork over the porch.

Turn right on Fulton and farther along at 3040 Fulton **(17)** on the right is a high peaked brown shingle house that has been divided into several units. At Prince Street on the northwest corner and going along Prince to the right is the Chochmat Halev Center for Jewish Spirituality **(18)**. The colorful compound includes a high-ceilinged former church building with arched windows, a residential structure and a landscaped courtyard. The progressive Jewish community is known for its joyful, high-energy musical services as well as its meditative and contemplative spiritual practices.

Turn around to head back toward the hills on Prince and turn left on Deakin Street. Farther along at 3044 Deakin **(19)** is a 1906 Craftsman with interesting porch brackets and lovely leaded windows. Then at the southeast corner of Deakin and Webster streets at 3033 Deakin



(20) is an attractive 1910 Colonial Revival house with a jutting corner bay that seems rather like a truncated turret. It is actually a multifamily house with four units. While some 1960s and 1970s apartments were not well designed this neighborhood shows how properly done single family and multifamily residences can be harmonious with good community character.

Turn right on Webster to return to the starting point.

3033 Deakin Street

Walk 44

Above the Claremont Hotel

Overview: Starting in a corner of Berkeley, the majority of the route is in Oakland though one city flows into the other fairly seamlessly (except for house numbering.) The neighborhood is characterized by impressive early 20th century residences on the lower section and newer homes in the upper portion, the latter built since the disastrous 1991 fire.

Highlights:

- * Some impressive architecture in a variety of styles
- * The contrast between the historic and post-fire neighborhoods
- * Some uphill exercise to gain some wide views

Distance: 2.8-3.0 miles; 1.3 miles with shortcut

Elevation gain: 560-600 feet; 170 feet with shortcut

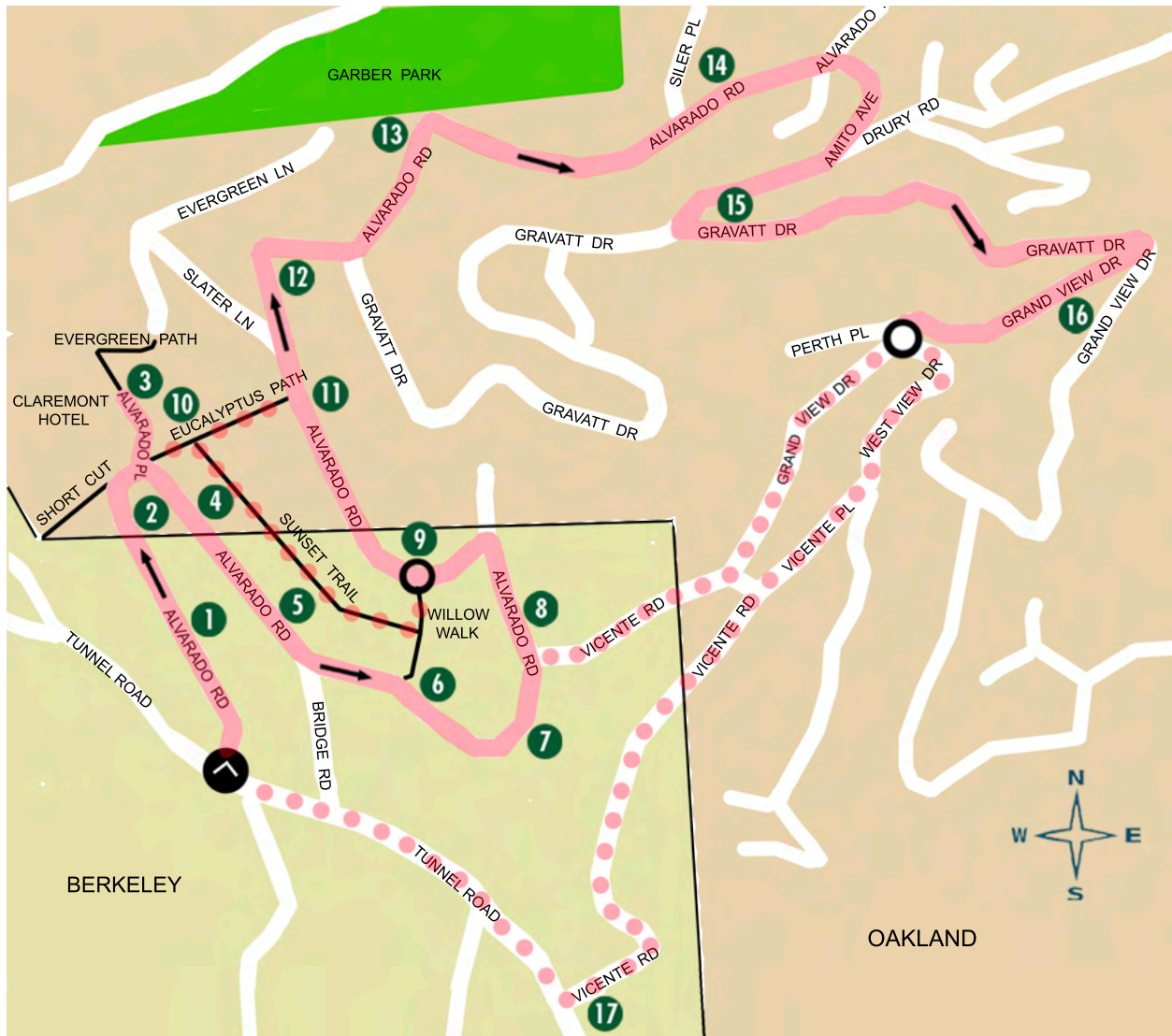
Getting there: Start at the corner of Tunnel Road and Alvarado Road. Parking is usually available along Alvarado Road but it is a narrow street so park as close to the curb as possible and make sure not to obstruct any driveways. Also check signs for parking limitations. AC Transit passes nearby at Ashby and Claremont avenues but check maps and schedules as they are subject to change.

Start initially on the left side of Alvarado Road. The first part of the uphill route has more stops to look at the distinctive architecture and after that becomes more of an exercise walk with fewer stops. Parts of the walk are shady and other parts are sunnier, especially in the fire area. There are some options to shorten the walk or take alternative routes.

The initial part of Alvarado Road is lined with London plane trees (*Platanus*), closely related to the sycamore, with peeling multicolored bark and large maple-like leaves.

The 1914 house across the street at 34 Alvarado (1) in Prairie School style has a rather imposing entryway. On the left side at 31 Alvarado is a 1912 brown shingle style house with crossed gables and flat roofed dormer windows. Next on the right side 44 Alvarado from 1930 is in Italian Renaissance style featuring arches and a tile roof.

Farther along some of the homes are well hidden behind high hedges. Looking through the driveway opening you can see part of 62 Alvarado (2), a 1938 home by



modernist William Wurster who co-founded the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design.

If you went on the right side of the street, cross with extreme care to the left side of Alvarado, listening for any vehicles that might come around the curve. Or just continue if on the left side. Just past 72 Alvarado on the left is a public stairway and path called Short Cut that goes down to a parking lot for the Claremont Hotel and from the top of the stairway there is a partial view of the side of the big white hotel. You have actually entered Oakland just before this point.

Farther along the curve you can take a short diversion left on Alvarado Place which dead-ends where there is a big house (3) at number 50 with a large gate at the driveway. The house was designed in 1917 by William Hays, who taught at UC, for Edward Lee Soulé, whose company provided steel for the Golden Gate Bridge and many other structures. If it is not muddy you can go along the wide dirt path next to the wall of that property which brings you to a point with a fairly good view of the back of the Claremont Hotel. There is a public stairway path going up to the right from this point

called the Evergreen Path. However, return on the path along the wall and Alvarado Place to Alvarado Road and stay on the left side now heading in a more southerly direction.

The route goes back into Berkeley here for a little while. There are a number of large homes in this section including 95 Alvarado (4) on the left from 1932 with stone retaining walls for a steeply terraced front garden and 116 Alvarado on the opposite side from 1934 which has the ambiance of an English country house. Back on the left is another Brown Shingle style from 1910 at 111 Alvarado. Then 128 Alvarado from 1928 is in Italian style with a large corner balcony and 131 Alvarado (5), also from 1927, has a more Spanish Colonial look with its wooden balcony. 136 Alvarado from 1914 has an interesting collection of windows with bays.

Bridge Road heads off to the right but bear left to stay on Alvarado. Opposite the intersection the 1931 house at 145 Alvarado has an angular facade and varied materials: half timbering, stucco, wooden boards, and brick. It was designed by William Yelland, most famous for his Storybook designs such as Normandy Village in Berkeley. 175 (6) and 179 Alvarado both have strong elements of English Tudor style and both were built in 1926 though the designs differ markedly.



145 Alvarado Road

Then on the right 186/88 Alvarado is the former stable for 190 Alvarado, now made into residences. The adjacent house at 190 Alvarado Road (7) is a little difficult to see though you can get tantalizing glimpses through the hedge and gate if you carefully cross to the right side. It is a Spanish Colonial style home designed in 1925 by Clarence Tantau to replace an original Craftsman style. It is on a very large lot with a very extensive garden that you can perhaps see peeking through the hedge; the garden was destroyed in the 1991 fire and rebuilt afterward, but miraculously the house survived. Clarence Tantau was active as an architect for more than 30 years in the Bay Area and beyond and primarily designed residences in the Spanish style including a large hacienda in Pebble Beach that was later home to Clint Eastwood. Tantau's own house, also in Spanish style, is just somewhat off our route today at 228 Tunnel Road. The upper part of the 190 Alvarado property was subdivided and another house in contemporary style was built there in 2022 with a new address of 200 Alvarado.

You are now at the edge of the 1991 fire zone that in one day, October 19, burned over 3000 residences, mostly single family homes and some apartments. Twenty five people

perished in the fire, mainly because they could not escape in time, emphasizing the importance of public paths and stairways when traffic is jammed up. The large house next on the right at 210 Alvarado was built in 1998 in traditional style after the fire.

On the left side 215 Alvarado, a large house with a turret, is from 1921 and thus a survivor of the fire. It was designed by Henry Atkins for his newlywed brother; he also designed the interior of the UC Doe main library. Bear left where Vicente comes in from the right. Continuing up Alvarado is another post-fire house from 2002 at 244 Alvarado (8) that is quite large with a rounded section; it has 5 bedrooms and 8400 square feet of space. It has been commented that many of the houses built after the fire were considerably larger than the lost homes that they replaced.

252 Alvarado built in 1993 is a fairly traditional design with elements of Italian style such as the arched openings, balcony like railings, loggia on the right side and tile roof. Then 278 Alvarado (9) is a 1994/95 house with much more contemporary design features, though some of it obscured by trees.

Option: For a very different view of the neighborhood and a bit more exercise take Willow Walk which is across from 278 Alvarado to go downhill to Sunset Trail where you go right rather than proceeding all the way to the bottom of Willow Walk. Sunset



27 Eucalyptus Path

Trail is an unusual path that runs between the back yards of houses on Alvarado; the street has looped back on itself at a higher level along this stretch. When you get to Eucalyptus Path note a brown shingle house with the address of 27 Eucalyptus Path (10) ; it has no direct street access.

Shortcut: If you are running short of time or energy you can take Eucalyptus Path down which takes you to the lower section of Alvarado that you can follow back to your starting point. You could also do this if you did not take Willow Walk and Sunset Trail but came down Eucalyptus Path from Alvarado Road.

To continue the walk go right on Eucalyptus Path and as you ascend the steep stairway/path, notice more of the mid-block fairly large homes at 36 and 44 Eucalyptus on the right and on the left 37 Eucalyptus with 43 Eucalyptus behind number 51. All of these are accessed from the path. Think about lugging a piano or big

refrigerator to these homes. The path goes to the upper section of Alvarado Road where numbers 678 and 688 Alvarado are on the opposite side.

If you stayed on Alvarado Road instead of taking the option you will have entered Oakland again (and likewise if you took Sunset Trail). Along the upper section of Alvarado in Oakland the house numbers jump to much higher figures. For example not far beyond 278 is 614 Alvarado on the left. This is a 1994 home that was rebuilt using the original 1922 plans by Warren Charles Perry. It has many typical elements of American Colonial style such as the symmetry, the columned entranceway, the shutters and the dormer windows. 654 Alvarado (11) with the front part of the house raised up on pillars has some elements of traditional design such as the jerkin head roof shape and unpainted vertical wood siding while the window designs and deck are very contemporary.

You could also see the house at 654 Alvarado (11) if you took the optional paths noted above; just go a few steps to the right on Alvarado from the top of the Eucalyptus Path steps.

Whether you stayed on Alvarado or took Sunset Path, from the top of Eucalyptus Path there is a partial view to the west. Continue upward on Alvarado, bearing right where Slater Lane goes down to the left. There is some good uphill exercise from this part onward for a while. Be aware of fast moving cars as most of the route in the hills has no sidewalks

Farther along as you approach a curve up on the right is a contemporary style house with a broad sweep of windows that must provide a grand view. The address is 760 Alvarado (12) but you don't see the number until you go well around the curve. The house is listed as built in 1951 so would seem to be one of the few survivors in this part of the fire area. Opposite this house you can see from over the roof of 763 Alvarado a view looking across Claremont Canyon to the other side. You may also notice a number of historic lamp posts that seem to have survived the fire.



763 Alvarado and View

Pass Gravatt Drive on the right and then farther along on the left after 845

Alvarado (13) is a sign with an entrance to Garber Park

on a steep hillside and there are more views across Claremont Canyon. You might want

to explore the steeply sloping, wooded park another time. Farther along after a Not A Through Street sign on the right and next to 910 Alvarado is a vacant lot with the old house foundation remaining. Many homes did not get rebuilt for many years and a number of lots remain vacant for various reasons. Some were purchased by neighbors to give them more open space. Farther along on the left 1007 Alvarado (14) is an attractive contemporary style 1995 house perched on the side of the canyon with views.

Later bear right on Amito Avenue where Alvarado goes down to the left. When Amito intersects Drury Road across the street is a vacant lot on a steep slope with a good view to the south. Bear right here to stay on Amito and farther along on the left is the North Hills Fire station (15). Just after this take a sharp left down Gravatt Drive and there will eventually be views to the southwest as the land drops down steeply on the right. Looking far up to the ridge and to the right a bit you can perhaps see a large cylindrical house. Cactus and other drought tolerant plants have been placed on a steep slope at one property to the left. There is a view toward downtown Oakland on the right through a V-shaped canyon. As you near a curve you can see a forested slope up ahead and to the left. Did these trees survive the fire or have they grown quickly in the intervening years?

Where there is a very sharp turn go right down into the canyon on Grand View Drive. The signs may be confusing but just take the street heading downhill to the right. There are some redwoods, trees that may have survived the fire in a cool moister ravine like this although most of the homes seem to have been lost. 1210 Grand View (16) is a 2016 house that is basically a bridge built over the seasonal creek. Next at



1219 Grandview Drive, house bridging the creek

1138 Grand View the 2004 house is on the other side and there is a broad driveway bridge over the creek. A similar 2023 house on the other side of a bridge is just beyond. There are also some oaks here which would seem to predate the fire. Many homes are built on the very steep slopes of the canyon and at one place there is a driveway to nowhere, probably for a house lost in the fire. Keep left on Grand View where Perth goes up to the right. From here there are two options.

Option A: To see one of the most impressive houses in the area go left just after Perth on West View and bear

right around a sharp curve (where the street to the left is marked Not Through) and then bear right down Vicente Place at the next intersection. When you get to point where Vicente makes a U-turn take the left section that eventually leads to 227 Tunnel Road.

227 Tunnel Road (17), variously listed with a construction date of 1910 or 1913 is called the Wintermute House, but is also called “The Rocks.” A book put out by the American Institute of Architects on architecture in northern California says it is “A collection of forms assembled with an abandon that few architects would dare to attempt.” The carriage house on the left had been separated with an address of 20 Vicente but it burned in the fire and was then rebuilt and reunited with the property of the main house at 227 Tunnel Road. The architect, John Hudson Thomas, designed hundreds of homes in California and a great many of these in Berkeley. In this major project he combined Prairie and Viennese Secessionist styles, attending to landscaping, the environment and views. The gables go up strikingly above the level of the roofs. Note also the “railings” near the sidewalk and elaborate stairs. To get back to Alvarado you need to go right down Tunnel Road. Traffic is kind of fast and noisy but there is a proper sidewalk all the way.

Option B: Continue on Grand View past West View. 1066 Grand View on the left built in 1993 has the ambiance of a Mediterranean structure with its bright white stucco walls, narrow windows and numerous interesting chimneys. Later 1015 Grand View on the right goes up five stories from the street, designed in contemporary style. Bear right when you get to Vicente (this is actually the top of a loop that Vicente makes).

Option on the option: For the adventurous, just past the wood sided garage and house at 146 Vicente is a wooden staircase and then a steep path that lead up to a bit of open space called the Vicente Canyon Hillside Open Space that is not clearly marked but rather interesting to explore. It is owned by a neighborhood foundation but open to all and the neighbors have been trying to establish more native plants in the somewhat hidden 2.5 acre area that includes views and some benches. Be aware that the trail is steep and rough although the first part has a handrail or rope hold. Proceed at your own risk. Return carefully down the same way and continue downhill on Vicente.

Go left when you get to Alvarado and you can follow this back down to the start or if you are parked close to Tunnel Road on Alvarado it may be a little shorter to go left down Bridge, right on Tunnel Road and right on Alvarado.

Walk 45

El Cerrito Parks and Paths

Overview: This walk features a number of small parks, public paths, and panoramic views. From the start to near the top of the ridge it has a significant elevation gain but done in stages, so not too onerous. There are also bits of history and some examples of notable architecture. *This walk is Co-authored by Bob Johnson and Janet Byron.*

Highlights:

- * Great views out over the bay
- * Arlington Park, Centennial Park, Huber Park
- * Unique architecture and a very quirky yard

Distance: 4.6 miles; 3.5 miles with shortcut

Elevation gain: 680 feet; 430 feet with shortcut

Getting there: Start at the El Cerrito Plaza BART station, accessible by not only BART but bus, automobile, or bicycle. AC Transit has a number of lines that serve the Plaza station. The BART parking lots are limited to train users on weekdays; check street signs for other possible parking limitations. Secure bike parking is adjacent to the station.

From the El Cerrito Plaza BART station, head north (with the hills to your right), and cross Central Avenue on the clearly marked crosswalk. You are on the Ohlone Greenway, a bicycle and pedestrian route that dates back to the mid-1980s and links Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, and Richmond. Notice the mature trees that line the Greenway throughout El Cerrito, which were planted by residents.

Continue on the Greenway and after the second street you cross, Lincoln Avenue, take the left fork. Then as you approach another street on the left take a short asphalt path up to the sidewalk, which leads you into attractive Centennial Park (1), planned in 2017 to celebrate El Cerrito City's centennial of incorporation in 1917. It was previously called Fairmont Park. The revamped park was reopened in December of 2020, with innovative climbing and play equipment, new paths, and seating areas.

After wending through the small but lively park return to the Greenway beyond the park where there is a mural on the right side by Kilmunoz, who has done a number of these along the Greenway. Keep heading north, passing the Fairmount School on the left. At the next street, Stockton Avenue, note on the left the El Cerrito branch of the Contra Costa County library. In his biography, *Fortunate Son*, John Fogerty of



Creedence Clearwater Revival recalled riding his bicycle to take out science fiction books. Plans are underway to build a new, modern library at El Cerrito Plaza BART.

Cross Stockton and turn right to head up Stockton toward the hills. At the northwest corner of Stockton and Elm Street at 6631 Stockton (2) is an attractive garden. About three blocks later you will pass a small commercial area (3) with gift shop, coffee bar, and other businesses and shops. Tibetan murals are on the walls of the corner building at Norvell Street.



Ohlone Greenway at Stockton

One block up cross over Ashbury Avenue, and then cross over Stockton to continue uphill on the right side. After a couple of more blocks uphill the road forks and Stockton goes to the left, but bear right to continue onto Terrace Drive. Notice how some houses across the street are built behind others; a dozen homes are in the middle of the block but with the driveways on Terrace. One example is between 7363 and 7387 Terrace (4). This is due to the unusual triangular shape of the block, but it illustrates a way to provide more homes.

Continue past Colusa Avenue. Toward the end of the block a large rather dark rock outcrop is in a sloping garden on the left.

Turn right on Balra Drive. 790 Balra, the first on the left (at the corner), has two front-facing gables and a nice porch. Just a bit farther along on the right, past a multi-house driveway, 779 Balra (5) is a very cool, contemporary-style house that is built on a steel bridge spanning a creek. There is also a small footbridge below the house. The 1962 house was designed by David Beverly Thorne, who initially made his name in the 1950s designing a house for jazz musician Dave Brubeck. You can usually see through part of the glass walled house to its fine view of the San Francisco Bay.

You can also see the creek on the opposite side of the street looking over a bit of wooden fence. Next to the creek on the right side is 780 Balra, which has the ambiance of a house in Sea Ranch north up the coast. It was built in the 1977, so it could have been influenced by Sea Ranch, which was built out from the 1960s.

Return to Terrace and turn right. On the left side, the second house from the corner is 7517 Terrace (6) from 1922, one of the older homes in the neighborhood. It has a simple but appealing and well-proportioned design with nicely textured stucco. Farther along, 7547 Terrace has a large redwood tree in the front yard and a grove of redwoods can be seen up ahead where Galvin Drive comes in from the left. Bear right to stay on Terrace. At the next intersection with Sea View Drive, which comes in from

the left, go a little around to the right and carefully cross Terrace in the crosswalk toward Huber Park.

The park is named for Judge William Huber, who was the town's first justice of the peace in early 1900s (when El Cerrito was called "Rust"), chair of the board when the Stege Sanitary District was established in 1913, and on the first town board of trustees. Huber was a three-time mayor in the 1930s, a proponent of incorporation, and the person who proposed naming the city El Cerrito. "El Cerrito" means "the little hill" in Spanish, although the still-prominent hill is actually just across the county borderline in Albany (where they call it Albany Hill). El Cerrito incorporated in 1917.

To enter Huber Park, go right toward the end of a stone retaining wall then then go up a few steps and through the gate. If the gate is closed you can push it open, as it should not be locked. Cross along the basketball court and go up the stairway. The Works Progress Administration, a New Deal agency, is believed to have built the terracing with stone retaining walls and recreational facilities, completing the 2.6-acre park around 1939 (the date inscribed on a brick fireplace at the next terrace though it is hard to read clearly). The park's terraces include a playground, cement slide, barbecues, and a water feature where a bit of the small creek cascades into a small pool when the creek is flowing. The park was refurbished in 2016.

Farther up there is a sign about the upper Huber Park bridge. Go left to cross the bridge and follow the dirt trail into the park through a small forest of live oaks; some of the California live oaks in the park are quite large as you may have noticed while ascending. After a big rock on the right bear left on the trail for a framed view of the Golden Gate (assuming it is not too foggy). Then backtrack and go left before the rock onto a trail that is fenced on both sides. (NOTE: If this dirt trail seems too muddy you can skip it by going back across the bridge and continuing left up on the main trail to Terrace and turning left.)



Huber Park Bridge

The fenced trail goes up to Terrace Drive which has looped up and around the park. At the street, take a few steps to the right to see 8037 Terrace (7) (or go left to this point if you took the main trail up to Terrace Drive), a large, brown-shingle house from 1988. The brown-shingle style started in the late 1800s in New England, found favor in Berkeley and other parts of the Bay Area, and was adopted into post World War II contemporary-style houses as well. The small creek that feeds into the park is visible in the front yard. Turn around and head back north on Terrace, going uphill.

SHORTCUT: To cut out the upper part of the walk, turn left on Shevlin Drive. Carefully cross steep, busy Moeser Lane. On the other side find the dirt trail going downhill through the PG&E property and jump ahead in the text to ★★★ on page 7.

To continue the main walk, continue walking up Terrace and cross over to the right side of the street in the crosswalk after Shevlin. Between 8106 and 8118 Terrace is the public right-of-way for an overgrown path that was never built out. Since it is a public right-of-way feel free to explore, then return to Terrace. El Cerrito has several path rights-of-way that have not been built out; hopefully more will be in the future. El Cerrito Trail Trekkers are active in this endeavor. Their map, “El Cerrito Public Paths, Trails and Stairways” is available at local stores (including JennyK gift shop on Stockton) and directly from the Trail Trekkers at ectrailtrekkers.org. (Our thanks to David Weinstein, president of El Cerrito Trail Trekkers, who originally developed this walk.)

A little farther along at the complex intersection with Contra Costa Avenue, go around a curving bit of sidewalk in front of a garage between the two streets, noting a large rock with three yellow poles. Cross Contra Costa here to the uphill side and walk right a few steps. To the left of 836 Contra Costa (8) is a public stairway (the path is not signed). Ascend this and after the first flight of steps carefully turn around for a good view. Keep going up.

This path becomes a wide driveway and ends at Bay Tree Lane. Turn left and then cross the street at the fork to go right on the upper street, which is Gelston Place. Cross to the other side of Gelston and continue going right. Shortly you will arrive at a small cul-de-sac on the left side. 732 Gelston (9) in the middle of the cul-de-sac angles sharply in the front to deal with an oddly shaped lot. It was designed by El Cerrito architect U. S. Barbachano. Above and behind 732 you can see a row of four striking contemporary-style homes.



Homes above Gelston Place

Now return the way you came on Gelston walking with care, as the sidewalk ends. At the end of the block, turn right and walk up Terrace, which ascends steeply. On the right at 8318 Terrace (10), notice the metal retaining wall terraces for its landscaping, mainly of succulents. Continue up Terrace to the next street on the right, Bates Avenue.

OPTION: If you were intrigued by that row of contemporary houses, turn right on Bates Avenue and walk one block toward the end of the street, where you can see the houses at

827, 825, 823, and 821 Bates, on land that was previously one estate. The houses were completed in 2017 after a long period of construction, and 827 and 825 in particular have a split-level design going up by half floors from the garage to three more floors. The homes obviously have spectacular views. Then return to Terrace.

If not doing the option, at Bates bear left to stay on Terrace. Carefully cross steep Moeser Lane with its fast-moving traffic to continue on Terrace. Pause just before the next intersection to admire the house on the left corner (11). The address is 8457 Terrace though the front is around the corner on Havens Place. It is an impressive 1926 house with gambrel roof, stone chimney, and putting green in the backyard. The house was more recently renovated but still retains many of its historic features. Continue to the corner and go left on Havens Place to see the home's terraced front garden, cute door, and more gambrel roof gables, including one over the garage.



Continue on Havens Place. Eventually you will reach a long fence covered in greenery along the left toward the end, where you meet Arlington Boulevard. Turn left at the corner (you will be in the shoulder of Arlington) and stop to see the large property on the left (12), which is behind that fence you passed. It is 1073 Arlington, which at one time was the home of Dosho Tessema Shifferaw, an Ethiopian immigrant who drove a cab to get through college. Subsequently he patented the idea for the Bowflex exercise machine, which he sold directly to customers in the 1980s. His success enabled him to buy this 1938 house and renovate and expand it.

Continue left along Arlington, keeping to the far left side of the wide shoulder as the street has fast moving traffic. At the intersection with Brewster Drive, the driveway for 1101 Arlington (13) can be seen across the intersection on the opposite side. The 5,000-square-foot 1929 house, which may be hard to see, sits on 2.6 acres, reputedly the largest residential lot in El Cerrito.

It was designed by architect Edwin Lewis Snyder in 1930 in Spanish style. Snyder was enamored with Spanish architecture after a visit to the Mediterranean island of Majorca and was a leading proponent of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style in California. The house, called La Casa de los Amigos, was designed for George Friend (and perhaps the Spanish name is a pun on his surname). He was a comic actor who married the daughter (technically stepdaughter) of Berkeley developer John Hopkins

Spring. He then became a developer himself, subdividing land around this estate, in the Arlington Estates neighborhood. Friend also proposed the nearby Boy Scout camp (now Camp Herms)

Carefully cross Arlington in the crosswalk, go left to Arlington Park, and take the sidewalk past redwood trees. The park is double the size of Huber Park at 5.2 acres and includes barbecues, basketball and tennis courts, playground equipment, and a clubhouse available for rentals. Bear right on a paved path into the park, curve around the playground equipment, and walk past a small stream. You can walk around the pond where there may be ducks (live ones as well as decoys), plus there is also an upper pond; both are charming features of the park fed by a small stream. Bathrooms are in the clubhouse by the tennis courts (though they are often locked). Behind the park is Camp Herms, a Boy Scout camp owned by the Golden Gate Area Council. It has 20 acres including public hiking paths, a lodge, cabins, and campsites.

After seeing some of lovely Arlington Park return back to Arlington Boulevard and go left back on the sidewalk to the same crosswalk just beyond Brewster. Cross very carefully and walk along the metal fence to just before a guardrail. Walk down the wooden stairway (another unmarked public right-of-way), which becomes a cement path, Note the nice landscaping of the second yard on the right. At the first street, Contra Costa Drive, walk left about 100 paces to 1050 Contra Costa (14). You can't

miss the large house on the uphill side with an amazing collection of sculptures and statues of animals, Mother Goose characters, and more. Looking up the driveway you can see a few more sculptures.



1050 Contra Costa Ave

Having your fill of this fantasyland, return back to the public stairway path on the left (where there is just a bit of sidewalk and is more or less opposite the one you came down on). Descend on another cement path, passing a small stream lower down. Cross King Drive and descend again on a public path to a bulb at the end of Shevlin Place. Descend this block on the right and when you get to Shevlin Drive cross carefully heading in the direction of distant

Albany Hill and go left, immediately crossing Earl Court. Continue left toward Moeser.

Just before you get to the stop sign for Moeser (or just after) [★★★ where you reunite with the optional shortcut (15)] turn right on a path and descend, keeping steep Moeser to your left and a line of PG&E utility towers to your right. The trail is called the Great Western Power Trail, named for the predecessor to PG&E. The views of the Bay are pretty spectacular if it is clear. After several minutes when you reach a big tower close to the path on the right (16), take the narrow path that bears left to the end of

Sea View Place. Walk down the street, turn left on Navellier Street, cross Moeser, and turn right down Moeser.

Past the fencing, when you get to a gate where there is an opening go left on a trail into Cerrito Vista Park. After walking a little ways through some trees go right on a path that descends sharply back in the other direction and eventually curves to head downhill parallel to Moeser Lane, past grassy playing fields and spectator stands. When you get to the end, exit the park to the right and walk a short block on Moeser and note El Cerrito Community Center (17) at Ashbury. It includes meeting and event facilities, as well as a public swimming pool. The center was designed by William Wurster, a modernist architect and co-founder of the UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design.

Walk down Moeser for one more block. Turn left on Norvell Street then right on Waldo Avenue, noting at the intersections for Waldo some added signage lower on the street sign poles playfully altering the street names to the names of animals (Walrus for Waldo, etc.). When you get to the Ohlone Greenway turn left and walk back several blocks to the starting point.