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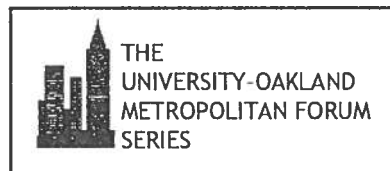
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Architecture and Urban Design in Oakland: An Annotated Bibliography

Robert Dobrushkin



The University-Oakland Metropolitan Forum is a partnership of the University of California at Berkeley; California State University, Hayward; Mills College; Holy Names College; the Peralta Community College District; and the Oakland community.

University of California at Berkeley
Institute of Urban and Regional Development

Introduction

This annotated bibliography (and the accompanying "Supplemental List of Journal Articles") is intended to be a resource aid to those who are interested in learning about architecture and urban design in Oakland. There is a need for such an aid because much of the information that has been written about architecture and urban design in Oakland is scattered throughout works that do not deal primarily with these subjects. Information on Oakland's built environment is often found in the context of Oakland as part of the East Bay or Oakland as a subsidiary zone of San Francisco. Indeed, while books on San Francisco's noteworthy buildings abound, few works are devoted exclusively to buildings in Oakland, and, even sadder, no current and comprehensive books on the subject of architecture in Oakland are available.

This guide, then, attempts to pull together much of the disparate information that is available on architecture and urban design in Oakland, listing and describing these materials in a single source.

The works cited here represent a broad spectrum of literature, including scholarly books, popular books, business-oriented journal articles, Oakland City Planning Department documents, and student theses. Most of those works can be found in libraries at UC Berkeley. Of these libraries, the Environmental Design Library and the Bancroft Library are particularly rich in Oakland-related materials. Several works listed in the bibliography can also be found in Oakland Public Libraries and in local bookstores.

The mere existence of all these reports and documents does not ensure that they can be utilized by the maximum number of individuals and organizations. The proliferation

of information from different sources, much of it not formally published, has made a centralized cataloging of Oakland-specific data difficult. This bibliography is the first step in an attempt to make information about Oakland more readily available. The organizers of the University-Oakland Metropolitan Forum hope that this version is useful in its own right and that it stimulates readers to offer additional titles for inclusion in the bibliographic data base.

The bibliography includes citations and summary descriptions of more than one hundred titles, and is at present largely limited to work done during the 1980s. Each entry is referenced by one or more keywords denoting its subject and/or geographic scope. The entire bibliography is computerized, and entries can be sorted by their keywords. The system, which is operated with the software program Paradox, will be maintained by the Institute of Urban and Regional Development at the University of California, Berkeley.

Two general subjects were chosen for the first installment of this Oakland bibliographic system. In addition to this collection on architecture and urban design, there is an annotated bibliography on economic development and planning. Although the two sections are reproduced separately in their first drafts, they are parts of a unified system.

Taken as a whole, the works described in the bibliography have much to say about the present state of architecture and urban design in Oakland. The clearest and most important message is that Oakland has many reasons to take pride in its architecture and urban design.

- The city has a rich architectural heritage, especially in its pre-World War II housing stock.

- The city has many noteworthy historical landmarks and landmark districts, plus many diverse and good examples of various twentieth century architectural styles.
- Oakland is the home of many buildings designed by nationally and internationally known and respected architects, something that is generally not well-publicized in architectural literature or descriptions of the city.

Indeed, much of what is good and noteworthy about Oakland's architecture and urban design -- including its human-scaled downtown, its pleasant commercial areas, and its fine stock of Victorian houses -- goes relatively unnoticed in design-related literature about Oakland. The city's architecture and urban design deserves better press than it has been getting.

There is much that is already good about architecture and urban design in Oakland, and much to be built upon and improved. It is hoped that this bibliography will contribute to the reader's appreciation of Oakland's built environment, and contribute as well to the knowledge that will be needed to design better buildings and make Oakland an even more livable city.

KEYWORD INDEX TO
Bibliography of Information Sources on Architecture and
Urban Design in Oakland

*Some titles are incomplete; for full titles, see
alphabetical listing.

Keyword Index: architects

Cardwell, Kenneth
Bernard Maybeck
Publisher: Peregrine Smith Books
Place of Publication: Salt Lake City
Keywords: historic buildings; architects; architecture

Smith, Thomas Gordon
John Hudson Thomas and the Progressive Spirit in Architecture, 1910 - 1920.
Publisher: UC Berkeley
Place of Publication: Berkeley
Keywords: architects; historic buildings; architecture

Weber, David
Oakland: Hub of the West. A pictorial and entertaining commentary on the growth of the city.
Publisher: Continental Heritage Press
Place of Publication: Tulsa, OK
Keywords: description; history; architects; architecture; urban design

Keyword Index: architecture

Armentrout-Ma, Eve;
Huei-Ma, Jeong
The Chinese of Oakland: Unsung Builders.
Publisher: Not listed
Place of Publication: Oakland, CA.
Keywords: history; districts; Chinatown; architecture

Bagwell, Beth
Oakland, The Story of a City.
Publisher: Presidio Press
Place of Publication: Novato, CA
Keywords: history; architecture

Beach, John;
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Guide to the Streamlined Moderne Buildings of the San Francisco Bay Area
Publisher: UC Berkeley
Place of Publication: Berkeley, CA
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Publisher: Forest Hills Press
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San Francisco Bay Region Architecture: an Introductory Bibliography. A 1780
Publisher: Vance Bibliographies
Place of Publication: Montecello, IL
Keywords: bibliographies; architecture

Dashiell, H. Dale
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Publisher: not listed
Place of Publication: Berkeley, CA
Keywords: historic buildings; architecture

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Keywords: guidebooks, description, architecture

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Place of Publication: Oakland
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Place of Publication: Berkeley
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Design Resources in the Oakland Central District
Publisher: Oakland City Planning Dept
Place of Publication: Oakland
Keywords: urban design; city form; historic buildings; architecture

Oakland Convention and Visitors Bureau
Official Visitor's Guide to Oakland
Publisher: JWJ Enterprises
Place of Publication: Oakland
Keywords: description; architecture

Oakland Heritage Alliance
Oakland Heritage Alliance News
Publisher: Oakland Heritage Alliance
Place of Publication: Oakland
Keywords: architecture; urban design; historic buildings; hist. dist.

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Urban Design in Oakland

34 annotated entries.

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Armentrout-Ma, Eve;

Huei-Ma, Jeong

The Chinese of Oakland: Unsung Builders

Publisher: Not listed

Place of Publication: Oakland, CA

Keywords: history; districts; Chinatown; architecture

A history of the Chinese community in Oakland. The last chapter, "Oakland Chinatown Today" (pp. 92-103), contains several black-and-white photographs of buildings in modern Chinatown, but the chapter as a whole (and the book in general) unfortunately does not emphasize Chinatown's architecture.

Chinatown is an architecturally distinctive part of the city, but it is often overlooked or downplayed in architectural literature on Oakland. More work needs to be done to study and promote the architecture of this area.

Bagwell, Beth

Oakland, The Story of a City

Publisher: Presidio Press

Place of Publication: Novato, CA

Keywords: history; architecture

A general chronological history of Oakland, from the time of the native Indian inhabitants to the present (1982). There are no specific chapters or sections devoted to Oakland's architecture, urban form, parks, streets, or city image, but the book mentions these topics throughout its presentation of the city's history. (Precise page locations can be found in the book's index.)

Oakland, The Story of a City is divided into six sections -- Prologue: Before 1852; The Village of Oakland: 1852-1869; Town to City: 1869-1906; The Progressive City: 1906-1930; Coming of Age: 1939-1952; and Epilogue: Oakland Today.

Although it does not emphasize the history of Oakland's built environment, the book is useful in learning some of the background behind the development of the city's image and physical form. It is also useful in gaining a better overall understanding of the city's history.

Oakland, The Story of a City has many black-and-white photographs, drawings, and maps, depicting scenes from the city's past and present, all of them helpful in understanding the city's physical environment.

The book also has a separate architectural bibliography listing books on architecture in the Bay Area.

Beach, John; Herb Schmidt; Ace Van Horne
Guide to the Streamlined Moderne Buildings of the San Francisco Bay Area

Publisher: UC Berkeley

Place of Publication: Berkeley, CA

Keywords: historic buildings; guidebooks; architecture

The work of graduate students taking a course at UC Berkeley on the Streamlined Moderne style, this short book lists the addresses of Streamlined Moderne buildings throughout the Bay Area. Three sections in the book -- Areas F, G, and H -- include buildings in Oakland.

Not much information is provided other than addresses, building types, and business names (if any). A few buildings have been identified by date, and a few are illustrated in small, badly reproduced photographs. The book has no text, table of contents, index, or page numbers.

This "guide" is merely a list. Its authors apologetically refer to their work as a "preliminary version," but unfortunately they never wrote a final version. This book could be the basis for a future study of Streamlined Moderne buildings in Oakland. In its present form, though, it has little to offer to those interested in learning more about Oakland's architecture.

Bay Area Historic House Museums

Published by Bay Area Historic House Museums:

Hayward, CA, 1979

Keywords: historic buildings; guidebooks; architecture

A booklet published by B.A.H.H.M., listing all historic house museums in the Bay Area as of 1985.

One page of information is provided per house museum, including a map and a black-and-white photograph or drawing, as well as miscellaneous information concerning addresses, hours of operation, and admission prices. One or two short paragraphs describe the history and appearance of each house.

For Oakland, there are two entries -- the Camron-Stanford House (p. 17) and the Dunsmuir House and Gardens (p. 18).

The information in the descriptions of these two houses is very basic. More detailed information on these houses can be found in other sources, such as Mark Wilson's East Bay Heritage.

Bernhardi, Robert

The Buildings of Oakland, with a section on Piedmont

Publisher: Forest Hills Press

Place of Publication: Oakland, CA, 1979

Keywords: historic buildings; guidebooks; architecture

Bernhardi's book profiles 43 buildings in Oakland and Piedmont. Divided into four sections -- Central/West Oakland; East/Southeast Oakland; Oakland Hills; and Piedmont -- the book briefly describes (usually in three to four paragraphs) the history and appearance of various houses, churches, office buildings, and theaters in Oakland and Piedmont. The emphasis in these descriptions is on photographs (mostly black-and-white, mostly over-exposed) rather than on text.

In spite of its title, The Buildings of Oakland is not really about the buildings of Oakland. It is concerned only about some of them. What the book does is merely describe a few selected buildings, and it does so without really analyzing them, either individually or in relation to the general context of architecture in the rest of the city. Why have these buildings been chosen over others? Are they meant to be representative of the rest of the city's buildings? Does the author consider them to be the best buildings or the most interesting buildings in Oakland, and if so, why?

In any case, because of its limited scope and because of its lack of analysis, this book would not be especially useful for someone trying to gain a general understanding of architecture and urban design in Oakland. Only the three-page introduction, which takes a quick look at Oakland's history and architectural styles, seems to address the city as a whole and tie the book together.

Unfortunately, this is one of the few books to deal with the subject of architecture or urban design in Oakland. There simply aren't many other books to turn to. Someone should write a comprehensive book analyzing architecture and urban design in Oakland. There's a book crying out to be written on this subject.

Bohn, Dave

East of These Golden Shores: Architecture of the Earlier Days in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties

Publisher: Junior League of Oakland and Scrimshaw Press

Place of Publication: Oakland, CA, 1971

Keywords: history; historic buildings; architecture

East of These Golden Shores is a photographic essay (with black and white photos and accompanying text) about architecturally and historically significant structures built before 1917 in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

Only a few of the buildings depicted in the book are in Oakland; the rest are in other parts of the East Bay. Unfortunately, the precise ratio of Oakland to non-Oakland

buildings is difficult to calculate, as many of the photo captions are vague about location, and the book does not have a photo index. (The book also lacks a table of contents and general index.)

This is not the book to pick up if one is interested in reading a definitive survey of early East Bay architecture. East of These Golden Shores is a poetic, evocative study rather than a straightforward architectural inventory. The book is not organized by area, style, building type, or any other apparent or logical means. There is simply a flow of photos with vaguely related text, often in the form of quotations from letters written by people who lived in the featured buildings.

What the book tries to do is convey a sense of the East Bay's architectural history, rather than try to describe and analyze this history in detail. The book attempts to evoke a sense of the past by excluding from the photos all obvious references to the present, such as billboards, cars, and people in modern dress. The photos have a strange quality to them; they almost look as though they could have been taken 50 years ago, yet they also seem oddly contemporary.

East of These Golden Shores does succeed in showing that the architecture of the East Bay is interesting and worth studying, and in that regard the book could be helpful to those trying to gain a better understanding of and appreciation for Oakland's built environment. What the book does not do, and does not try to do, is to convey "facts" and hard information. One has to go to other sources for that.

Kenneth Cardwell

San Francisco Bay Region Architecture: an Introductory Bibliography. A 1780

Publisher: Vance Bibliographies

Place of publication: Montecello, Illinois, March 1987

Keywords: bibliographies; architecture

A bibliography (not annotated) of works on the Bay Region style of architecture. Most of the works cited deal specifically with architecture in San Francisco or Bay Area cities other than Oakland. Most of the books relating directly to Oakland are included in the Forum's annotated bibliographic data base.

Divided into four sections -- books, bibliographies, theses and manuscripts, and oral histories.

Kenneth H. Cardwell

Bernard Maybeck

Publisher: Peregrine Smith Books

Place of Publication: Salt Lake City, 1977

Keywords: historic buildings; architects; architecture

An excellent study of the life and works of Bernard Maybeck. Although better known for his buildings in

Berkeley, Maybeck also designed several buildings in Oakland, and most of these exist today.

Cardwell lists all of Maybeck's designs in a chronological list of executed works and projects (pp. 239-246) and discusses two of Maybeck's Oakland buildings in more detail in the text. These two are the Warren P. Stamford House (p. 217 and 223) and the now-demolished Packard Showrooms (p. 220, 222, and 223). Cardwell includes photographs of both buildings, and a floor plan of the Stamford House.

H. Dale Dashiell

Murphy's Buick Showroom

Publisher: Not listed

Place of Publication: Berkeley, CA, 1962

Keywords: historic buildings; architecture

A photo essay on Bernard Maybeck's Packard Automobile showroom of 1928. Located on Harrison Street near Lake Merritt, the Packard Showroom later became the home of Murphy's Buick, and was eventually and regrettably demolished in 1974.

The book is in the form of a photo album, with black-and-white glossy photographs and typed text mounted on cardboard. It appears to have been completed for an architecture course given at UC Berkeley.

The essay analyzes the form and design of the showroom, with particular emphasis on the way the building had been transformed over the years (e.g., the addition of an inappropriate revolving Buick sign in the building's later years).

This book is a sad reminder of how much of Oakland's architectural heritage has been lost and continues to be threatened. It is also a reminder that many prominent architects such as Maybeck did receive commissions in Oakland, and that these works are often underemphasized in literature on Bay Area architecture. It should be noted that several Maybeck buildings are still standing in Oakland. These buildings could be discussed in a future book on Oakland architecture.

Demars and Wells;

Jack T. Sidener

Oakland's Form and Appearance: An Evaluation Based on the 701 Urban Design Survey

Publisher: Oakland City Planning Department

Place of Publication: Oakland, CA

Keywords: urban design; city form

An outstanding study of urban design in Oakland, written in the sixties as part of the federally-funded Oakland 701 project. This project, funded by an urban planing assistance grant under Section 701 of the Housing

Act of 1954, studied population and housing, jobs and economic development, and physical development.

Oakland's Form and Appearance is a report based on the 701 Projects Urban Design Survey. This survey analyzed several aspects of urban design in Oakland, including 1) the physical features and visual elements of the city's urban form, 2) architectural and aesthetic elements of the city that planning programs should preserve or enhance, 3) the physical character of each area of the city, and 4) opportunities for improving or developing the existing built environment.

This comprehensive survey served as the basis for Oakland's Form and Appearance, which is equally comprehensive in scope. The report is divided into six major sections: summary of findings; natural settings and urban form; residential areas; commercial, civic, and industrial areas; open spaces, creeks, and the shoreline; and major trafficways. Each of these sections is illustrated with numerous black-and-white sketches and maps.

Although this report was written nearly twenty years ago, many of its findings and conclusions ring true today. Oakland's Form and Appearance is perhaps the most thorough and the most readable study of urban design in Oakland and well worth reading.

An updated version of this study could be a valuable contribution to the existing base of information on architecture and urban design in Oakland.

Dunsmuir House and Gardens

The Story of Oakland's Historic Dunsmuir House

Publisher: Dunsmuir House and Gardens

Place of Publication: Oakland, CA, 1970

Keywords: historic buildings; history; architecture

A small booklet, published by the Dunsmuir House and Gardens, it tells an intricately detailed history of the Dunsmuir House and the people who have been associated with it since its construction. Includes a few black-and-white photographs and a floor plan.

This booklet has more to say about the Dunsmuir House's history than about its architecture.

An interesting supplemental source.

Dykstra, John Beatty

A History of the Physical Development of the City of Oakland: The Formative Years

Publisher: Dept. of City and Regional Planning

Place of Publication: Berkeley, CA

Source Title: M.A. Thesis, Dept. of City & Regional Planning

Keywords: urban design; city form

Dykstra's thesis provides a good basis for understanding the historical forces that have shaped the physical form of Oakland. The scope of the thesis, though,

is limited to the years 1850 through 1930. A continuation, from 1930 through the present, could be a useful addition to the literature on architecture and urban design in Oakland.

The thesis has an excellent, detailed table of contents, but no index. Photocopied black-and-white photographs are the only illustrations.

Gebhard, David, et. al

The Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California

Publisher: Peregrine Smith Books

Place of Publication: Salt Lake City

Keywords: guidebooks; architecture; historic buildings

An architectural guidebook. The chapter on Oakland (pp. 286-310) contains:

-- a short history (four and a half pages) of architecture and urban design in Oakland, with references to the city's image.

-- five walking/driving tours of Oakland, complete with maps, photographs, drawings, addresses, and brief descriptions of significant buildings. The five walking tours featured are: downtown Oakland; outer Oakland; Oakland Hills; Oakland East; Oakland Hills (continued).

Also of use are:

-- a 16-page introductory chapter on architecture in Northern California

-- a section containing 114 photographs of Northern California buildings, including several found in Oakland: Moss Cottage, Pardee House, the bell tower at Mills College, the Paramount Theater, the Talbert House by Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, and Whittaker, and Cafe Figaro

-- a glossary of architectural styles, analyzing the history and characteristics of architectural styles found in Northern California

-- a voluminous bibliography, with surprisingly few Oakland references.

Groth, Paul

AC 15: Oakland as a Cross-Section of America's Urban Cultural Landscapes

Publisher: UC Berkeley

Place of Publication: Berkeley

Keywords: guidebooks; description; architecture

An unconventional tour of Oakland, following the route of AC Transit busline #15 and focusing on Oakland as a "cultural landscape." This is a combination bus and walking tour, with 90 stops along the way. These stops include places usually not found on typical architectural or urban design tours, such as commonplace wig shops, pawn shops, and corner grocery stores.

The tour is divided into three segments: "Views from a Crosstown Streetcar Line," "Tracking Down the Rebuilt

Landscapes of a Center City," and "Slices Through Residential Life in East Oakland."

The text includes interesting information about the history of Oakland's street patterns and housing styles. AC 15 was written as a tour book for students taking an environmental design course at UC Berkeley, and is still in a somewhat rough and unfinished form.

Hegemann, Werner

Report on a City Plan for the Municipalities of Oakland and Berkeley

Publisher: Munic. Gvmts. of Oakland/Berkeley

Keywords: urban design; city form

One of the earliest (if not the earliest) studies of urban design and planning in Oakland. (While the report is concerned with both Oakland and Berkeley, its main focus is on Oakland.)

The remainder of the report analyzes five major components of city design in Oakland and Berkeley:

- o Harbors
- o Railroads (both freight and passenger)
- o Streets (major traffic streets, business streets, and residential streets)
- o Parks and Playgrounds
- o Civic Art and Civic Centers

All five of these sections are relevant to the study of urban design in Oakland today, providing a glimpse of what urban design in the city was like in 1915, and creating a point of reference for discussing how the physical form of the city has changed since then. Hegemann's report helps set a historical context for analyzing current urban design issues.

It is interesting to note, for example, that although Oakland has changed vastly since the report was written in 1915, and the City Beautiful and City Efficient movements of the time are no longer with us, many of the design concerns voiced in Hegmann's study (e.g. improving the design of the square in front of City Hall) are still being debated today.

The report has many black-and-white photographs of Oakland circa 1915 and earlier, as well as architectural drawings and plans (including proposed changes to the City Hall area).

Lawler, Virginia;

Carlos Anglin;

Cathy Casteel

Landmarks and Preservation Districts

Publisher: Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: historic buildings; historic districts; guidebooks; architecture

A short booklet listing and describing 24 landmarks and preservation districts (circa 1979) in Oakland. In addition to the text, there are sepia-and-white photographs of the landmarks, as well as a map of the city.

In need of updating, but the Board has no plans to do so in the near future.

Maschino, John D.

The Oakland City Hall

Place of Publication: Berkeley

Keywords: historic buildings; architecture

A photo essay, completed for an architecture course at UC Berkeley, analyzing Oakland's City Hall.

This work looks at various design topics -- the function of a city hall, the building's history, its relationship to its site, its orientation, structure, mechanics, materials, exterior details, lobby details, and council chamber details.

Somewhat amateurish in content and format, this book nonetheless studies a building which has not received the scholarly or public attention and praise it deserves.

Black-and-white glossy photographs and typed text, mounted on cardboard.

Oakland City Planning Commission

Design Resources in the Oakland Central District

Publisher: Oakland City Planning Dept

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: urban design; city form; historic buildings; architecture

Issued as part of Oakland's Central District Study of 1964, this report analyzes the "design resources" of the city's Central District. The report concerns itself with three types of design resources -- natural, man-made, and a combination of natural and man-made -- and its key theme is the need for preservation and rehabilitation.

The report lists 267 buildings in the Central District as "design resources," yet qualifies this count by saying that it is not definitive. The report could have included more buildings on its list, but didn't because of the limited size of the study and because many buildings were not in danger of being demolished or altered.

The study area is divided into several sections -- Middle Broadway, Upper Broadway, Lower Broadway-Chinatown, Jack London Square, and "Other Areas" of the Central District, including the Sycamore Area and the Lakeshore Residential Area. There is a map showing the location of these areas and the selected structures, as well as more detailed maps for each of the major areas.

The report describes the architectural and design resources for each of these main areas, showing the more significant buildings in simple sketches. These sketches

depict examples of older buildings which have been well-adapted to modern uses as well as buildings which have been poorly adapted. Some of the sketches show how these poorly-adapted buildings could be redesigned and improved.

This work is an important study of architecture and urban design in Oakland. Although the report is nearly 25 years old, much of its analysis and many of its conclusions remain valid today. Especially valid is the report's call for preserving and rehabilitation the city's rich architectural heritage, much of which has been destroyed or compromised since this study was written, and which continues to be threatened now, even in the current, "enlightened" preservationist era.

Oakland City Planning Dept

Options for Oakland: A Summary Report on the Oakland 701 Project

Publisher: Oakland City Planning Dept

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: urban design; city form

This report, written by Oakland's City Planning Department staff, summarizes the "701 Project" completed in Oakland during the 1960s. This project, funded by an urban planning assistance grant under Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, studied population and housing, jobs and economic development, and physical development. These studies were completed by City Planning Department staff, as well as by various consultants.

Of particular interest here is Chapter 7, devoted to Oakland's physical form.

Oakland Convention and Visitors Bureau

Official Visitor's Guide to Oakland

Publisher: JWW Enterprises

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: description; architecture

An example of civic promotional literature that does not promote architecture or urban design well.

In its overview of the city, the brochure mentions that in Oakland, "you'll find art, music, architecture, customs, and languages from all over the world" (architecture from all over the world), but does not go on to say very much about what or where this architecture is, or why it is important and interesting to the general public.

The guide lists the Cameron-Stanford House, the Dunsmuir House, and Oakland Walking Tours in its section of "Attractions," but refers to them only briefly. Nowhere is architecture or urban design emphasized or highlighted.

There is a map of Oakland, entitled "A Family Adventure," that has a list "Landmarks" including the Cameron-Stanford House, the Dunsmuir House, the Fox Oakland Theatre, the Henry J. Kaiser Convention Center, Oakland City

Hall, the Convention Center, the Paramount Theatre, Treadwell Hall at CCAC, the Tribune Tower, and the YWCA. Adventurous visiting families deserve a better guide to architecture and urban design, with the city's prominent buildings and districts thoroughly discussed and vigorously promoted, all in terms that non-design-professionals can appreciate.

Oakland Heritage Alliance

Oakland Heritage Alliance News

Publisher: Oakland Heritage Alliance

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: architecture; urban design; historic buildings; historic districts

Published quarterly by the Oakland Heritage Alliance, this newsletter contains articles, news briefs, and a calendar of events concerning history and preservation issues in Oakland.

A recent issue featured a seven-page article on the Hald-Treadwell House at the California College of Arts and Crafts; a description of an upcoming OHA-sponsored lecture; a section called "Oakland Briefing" which gives updates on preservation stories (e.g. preservation legislation, demolitions of historic buildings, etc.); another section, "City Landmarks Board Actions," reporting on meeting held by the Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board; OHA update, highlighting OHA activities, tours, and meetings relating to history and preservation in Oakland.

An excellent source of current information on historic buildings and on preservation activities in Oakland.

Prentice, Helaine Kaplan;

Prentice, Blair

Rehab Right: How to Realize the Full Value of Your Old House

Publisher: City of Oakland Planning Dept

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: historic buildings; architecture; rehabilitation

Rehab Right is a guide to rehabilitating your old houses. It was written primarily as a manual for homeowners interested in rehabbing their homes, but is also aimed at real estate agents, professional contractors, public employees, and anyone interested in learning more about the rehabilitation and architectural heritage of houses. The book is decidedly in favor of preservation. Its thesis is that building improvements should respect the architectural character of a home and not impose the personality of the homeowner on the structure of a house. "Let your house be itself," the authors advise.

This is the second edition of Rehab Right. The original 1978 edition, subtitled "How to Rehabilitate Your Oakland House Without Sacrificing Architectural Assets," was

meant as a guide mostly for Oaklanders. The new version is directed at a broader audience, but still contains a treasury of information and sources concerning architectural heritage in Oakland.

Rehab Right contains eight chapters. Chapter One is an introduction explaining the book's preservationist outlook. Chapter Two describes the characteristics and history of architectural styles common to houses being rehabbed (e.g., Italianate, Queen Annes, Neoclassic Rowhouse, Brown Shingle, Mediterranean Style, and Wartime Tract), with black-and-white line drawings illustrating each of various styles. Chapter Three discusses various codes, permits, and tax incentives which apply to the rehabbing of houses in Oakland. Chapters Four and Five, on "Exteriors" and "Interiors," comprise the bulk of the book, and explain how to rehab the exterior and interior of a house. These chapters offer do's and don'ts for architecturally sensitive rehabbing, complete with illustrations, construction details, and step-by-step instructions. Chapter Six contains information on using professionals to do rehab work and on tracing the history of a house, as well as further information on access, asbestos, and earthquake safety. Chapter Seven lists sources and resources of interest to rehabbers, including the names and phone numbers of various organizations and preservation administrations. It also lists relevant classes, conferences, and workshops; and books, periodicals, and films. Much of this information, such as addresses, phone numbers, and contact names, is very timely and of great use right now, but likely to become out-of-date quickly (this can also be said of prices given for materials, etc.), yet most of the book should be of great help for many years to those learning about Oakland's architectural heritage.

Rather, Lois

Dunsmuir House

Publisher: Rather Press

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: historic houses; history; architecture

A limited edition history of Oakland's Dunsmuir House. This work focuses more on telling the story of the people who have been associated with the house throughout its history than on analyzing the house's architecture.

The book does not include photographs, floor plans, or elevations of the Dunsmuir House.

This book is useful to those interested in learning the history of Dunsmuir House, but it has little to say about the architecture of the house itself.

Rather, Lois

Oakland's Image: A History of Oakland, California

Publisher: Rather Press

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: history; description; city image

A somewhat deceptive title, Oakland's Image is concerned more with the city's history than with its image. The last chapter, though, "Where Now?" (pp. 126-137), is devoted entirely to Oakland's image, and is worth reading. This chapter discusses both the positive and negative sides of the city's image, including such issues as: Oakland as a suburb of San Francisco, Oakland as a city on the rise, and Oakland as a city with many deep social problems.

Although these issues are still currently debated, this chapter was written fifteen years ago and in need of updating.

Richey, Elinor

The Ultimate Victorians of the Continental Side of the San Francisco Bay

Publisher: Howell-North Books

Place of Publication: Berkeley

Keywords: history; historic buildings; architecture

As its introduction states, The Ultimate Victorians is "a most interesting examination of selected facets of the architectural, social, and art history" of the Victorian age in the East Bay. Most of the book is about Oakland, although some parts discuss Berkeley and Alameda.

The Ultimate Victorians treats its subject matter with a great deal of nostalgia -- perhaps more than it deserves. Indeed, this is not a piece of scholarly research or analysis, but a general work intended for a lay audience.

Includes many black-and-white photographs of buildings and some black-and-white line drawings.

The Ultimate Victorians is an interesting look at the Victorian era, and makes one wish that there was a more specialized and more scholarly book (with color photographs) devoted just to Victorian buildings in Oakland.

Robinson, Charles Mulford

A Plan of Civic Improvement for the City of Oakland, California

Publisher: Oakland Enquirer Publishing Co

Place of Publication: Oakland

Keywords: urban design; city form; city image

A report by pioneer planner Charles Mulford Robinson to Oakland's City Council in 1906 on how Oakland could be made more attractive and how its "civic beauty" could be enhanced. In his report, Robinson assesses the state of urban design in Oakland and recommends certain improvements. These include making the Waterfront more accessible;

increasing the quantity and quality of city parkland; improving the railroad entrance to the city; focussing more attention on the City Hall area; burying utility wires; and eliminating billboards.

This report helps provide an interesting historical perspective to Oakland's urban design problems. Also interesting is that many of Robinson's design concerns persist as problems today (e.g., waterfront areas, entrances to the city). Will these problems ever be solved?

Smith, Thomas Gordon

John Hudson Thomas and the Progressive Spirit in Architecture, 1910 - 1920

Publisher: UC Berkeley

Place of Publication: Berkeley

Source Title: M.A. Architecture thesis

Keywords: architects; historic buildings; architecture

Noted Bay Area architect and UC Berkeley Architecture Department alumnus Thomas Gordon Smith wrote his master's thesis on the residential work of John Hudson Thomas in the East Bay between 1910 and 1920. By 1920, Thomas had designed nearly 150 houses in the East Bay, many of them in Oakland.

Smith's thesis analyzes Thomas's career and work in general, and focuses on three of his houses as "case studies" (none of these is located in Oakland, however). The thesis is illustrated with poorly-reproduced black-and-white photographs, and with several floor plans. In addition to the main text, there is also a bibliography and a catalogue of selected Thomas houses in Berkeley and Oakland. The catalogue lists the dates, addresses, and present condition of these houses.

A good introduction to Thomas's life and buildings; a future book about architecture in Oakland might include a special section highlighting Thomas's works. His contribution to the architectural scene in Oakland is generally overlooked, as in the contributions of other noteworthy and widely respected architects, such as Julia Morgan and William Wurster.

Stone, Susannah Harris

The Oakland Paramount

Publisher: Lancaster-Miller Publishers

Place of Publication: Berkeley

Keywords: historic buildings; architecture; rehabilitation

A well-written, well-illustrated study of Oakland's Paramount Theatre, written after the theater's restoration.

The book is divided into three sections: "The history of the Paramount," "The Restoration of the Paramount," and "The Operation of the Paramount." The book includes many photographs. Some are black-and-white "historical" views of the theater in its early days; others are stunning color

shots taken since the theater was refurbished during the 1970's. Also included is a floor plan of the Paramount (p. 93). Unfortunately, there is no index.

The Oakland Paramount is a beautiful tribute to one of the city's finest buildings. This is a book (and a building) the city can be proud of. Other buildings in the city deserve similar tributes.

Vance, James E., Jr.

Geography and Urban Evolution in the San Francisco Bay Area

Publisher: UC Berkeley, IGS

Place of Publication: Berkeley

Keywords: urban design; city form; history; city image

As the title says, this book is about geography and urban evolution in the Bay Area. Of greatest interest to those interested in urban design and civic image is the book's final chapter, "Conclusions" (pp. 78-89). In its discussion of San Francisco and its surrounding urban areas, this chapter argues that the East Bay is a metropolis in its own right. Worth reading even if the figures (circa 1964) are dated.

Waldhorn, Judith Lynch;

Woodbridge, Sally B.

Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area

Architecture

Publisher: 101 Productions

Place of Publication: San Francisco

Keywords: guidebooks; historic buildings; history; architecture

Victoria's Legacy is a guide to Victorian buildings throughout the Bay Area, with particular emphasis on San Francisco. One chapter is exclusively about Victorians in Oakland; two other chapters are also of interest. One is a discussion of interior decoration and house design ("Inside the Victorian House"), while the other is an illustrated analysis of Victorian architectural styles ("Victorian House Styles"). Both are worth looking at for background information. Of further interest are a glossary of architectural terms and a bibliography of Victorian architecture.

The section on Oakland (pp. 142-157) gives a brief history of the city and its Victorians, but only through the 1980s. Unfortunately, there is not much about the destruction or deterioration of Victorians in Oakland since that time or on efforts during the 1970s to restore or move Victorians. But the chapter does include five walking tours of Oakland, each with several paragraphs on each area covered, as well as detailed maps, descriptions of specific buildings on the tours, and black-and-white photographs. The tours are of (1) Oak Center/De Fremery

park, (2) Prescott, (3) Central Oakland, (4) Lake Merritt and Madison Square, and (5) East Oakland.

There is a lot to be learned about the city's Victorians, but it is not all contained in this book. This is a guidebook, not an exhaustive study. The descriptions of buildings and neighborhoods are short, and many of the buildings on the walking tours are not even described at all. Furthermore, Victoria's Legacy is nearly ten years old, and in need of updating. An expanded section on Preservation Park would be particularly helpful.

Oakland's numerous Victorians are one of the city's most important architectural resources. They are a visible and positive part of the city's architecture and something citizens can point to with pride. These buildings are worth studying and promoting, and reading the chapter on Oakland in Victoria's Legacy is a good place to begin.

Yet, the city's Victorians deserve to be written about in greater detail. Their story is interesting and rich enough to be the subject of a separate book. The question is, who will write it and when?

Weber, David

Oakland: Hub of the West. A pictorial and entertaining commentary on the growth and development of Oakland, California

Publisher: Continental Heritage Press

Place of Publication: Tulsa, OK

Keywords: description; history; architects; architecture; urban design

White, Anthony G.

Architecture of Oakland, California: A Selected Bibliography. #A 1846

Publisher: Vance Bibliographies

Place of Publication: Monticello, IL

Keywords: bibliography; architecture

A coffee-table-style history of Oakland's growth and development. Oakland: Hub of the West is very well-illustrated, with recent color photographs and many black-and-white historical drawings and photographs. There are numerous photographs of early Oakland buildings and street scenes. Pages 168-171 describe modern downtown Oakland, including a discussion of the Oakland Museum and City Center. Also worthy of note is a one-page feature "article" (p. 210) on the Ratcliffe Architects, the oldest architectural firm in the East Bay, founded in 1906.

Anthony G. White
Architecture of Oakland, California: A Selected Bibliography. #A 1846
 Publisher: Vance Bibliographies
 Place of Publication: Montecello, Illinois.
 Keywords: bibliography; architecture

A bibliography (not annotated) of books and journal articles on architecture in Oakland. Most of the references are for journal articles, and most of those have been included in the Forum's accompanying "Supplementary List of Journal Articles."

White's bibliography begins with a three-paragraph description of the history, growth, and architectural features of Oakland.

Wilson, Mark A.
East Bay Heritage: A Potpourri of Living History
 Publisher: California Living Books
 Place of Publication: San Francisco
 Keywords: guidebooks; historic buildings; description; architecture

An outstanding, comprehensive look at architecture in the East Bay.

East Bay Heritage is divided into four parts. The first of these, a five-chapter "Brief History of Architecture in the East Bay: 1850-1950," is fairly detailed and not as brief as its title suggests. It is so interesting that it's a shame it stops at 1950 and doesn't continue through the present. The second part, "Major Styles of Historic Architecture in the East Bay," describes and illustrates with simple black-and-white drawings many of the architectural styles found in the East Bay. (Again, though, "history" stops in 1950. Why? Aren't the recent past and the present worthy of historical analysis, especially in a "living history"?)

The third part, "Self-Guided Tours of Historic Architecture in the East Bay," features several walking tours in Oakland. The areas covered are: Downtown, Preservation Park-Victorian Row, Oak Center, West Oakland, Lake Merritt, Brooklyn Area, San Antonio Park Area, and Fruitvale.

The tour section begins with a two-page history of development in Oakland. Each tour includes several paragraphs describing the architecture of the tour area, a few sentences about each of the buildings on the tour, a map, and black-and-white photographs of selected buildings. The fourth part, "Supplemental Information," contains a guide to historical groups and research sources concerned with East Bay architecture, a bibliography of books relating to architectural history, a thorough and useful glossary of architectural terms, and an equally useful index to

significant East Bay buildings organized by architectural style.

The only drawbacks of this book are that it does not concern itself with buildings constructed since 1950; it does not focus specifically on Oakland; and it is almost ten years old and needs to be revised.

Wilson, Mark A.

Living Legacy

Publisher: Lexicon

Place of Publication: San Francisco

Keywords: guidebooks; historic buildings; architecture; description

Not yet available in libraries or bookstores, this soon-to-be-published book will be the definitive source on architecture in the East Bay, according to its publisher. Living Legacy will contain 1500 entries on historic buildings in the East Bay, from Benicia to Hayward, and will have 500 illustrations.

About 50 pages will be devoted to Oakland, including 10 walking tours of the city. Lexicon promises that Living Legacy will be like Wilson's other book on East Bay architecture, East Bay Heritage, only "with a turbocharger."