

ALAMEDA HISTORICAL MONUMENT NOMINATION REPORT

POST-TOP AND PENDANT-STYLE STREET LIGHTS

ALAMEDA HISTORICAL ADVISORY COMMISSION

REVISED OCTOBER 1987

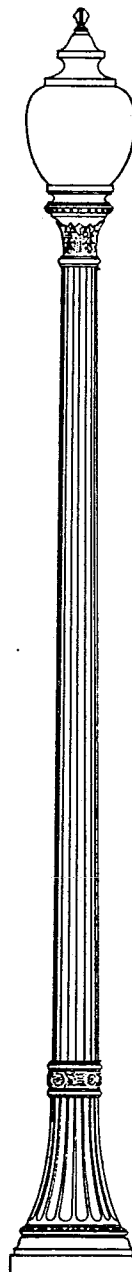
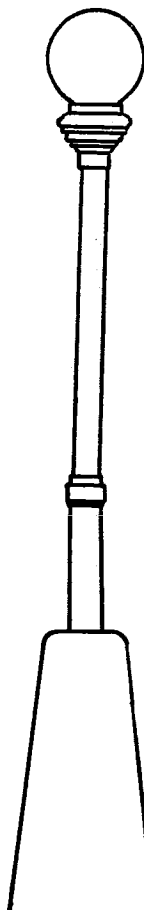
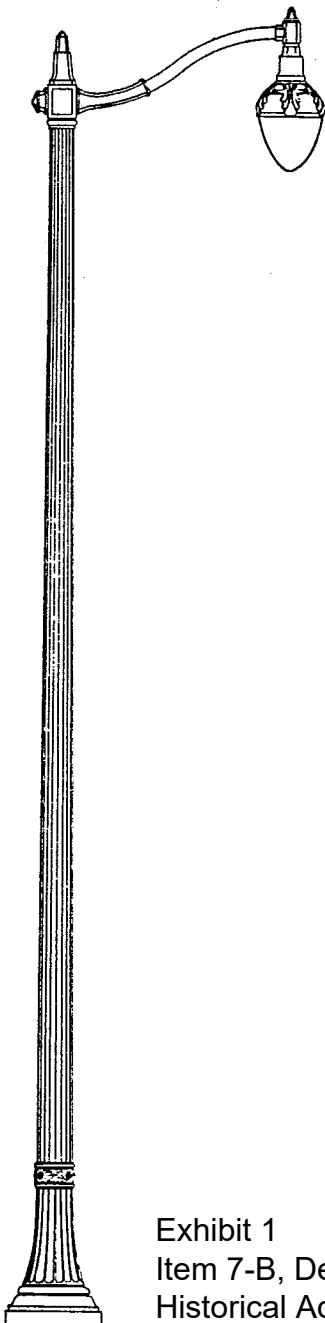

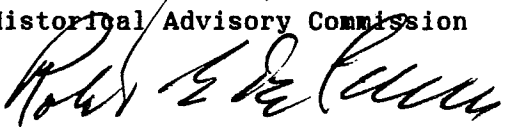


Exhibit 1
Item 7-B, December 2, 2021
Historical Advisory Board Meeting

This report identifies and describes the architecturally and historically significant street lights in the City of Alameda (excluding South Shore and Bay Farm Island). It also gives a brief history of electric street lighting in Alameda since 1886. The 1,297 post-top and pendant-style street lights in Alameda are worthy of designation as Alameda Historical Monuments. It is the purpose of this report to explain why. This report, originally prepared in July, 1981 by Woodruff C. Minor and Gary Knecht, has been revised by Woodruff C. Minor and John Woodbury in October, 1987.


The City of Alameda Historical Advisory Commission on November 5, 1987 approved this report for forwarding to the City Council with a recommendation that the street lights be designated as Alameda Historical Monuments.


Woodruff C. Minor, Chairman
Historical Advisory Commission


Robert E. DeCelle, Vice-chairman


Naomi Hatkin, Commissioner


David O. Plummer, Commissioner


Janice Gruman, Commissioner

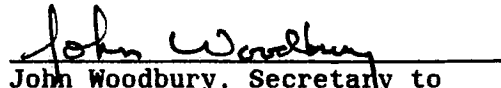

John Woodbury, Secretary to
the Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

I.	Alameda Street Lighting Chronology	1
II.	History of Alameda Street Lighting	2-5
III.	Chart: Summary of Significant Street Lights	5
IV.	Description of Street Light Types	6
	Post-top globe.....	6
	Post-top trident.....	7
	16-fluted post-top.....	7
	Concrete post-top.....	7
	16-fluted pendant.....	8
	Octo-fluted pendant.....	8
	Smooth-pole pendant.....	8
	Illustrations of Street Light Types.....	9-11
V.	Significance Statement.....	12-13
VI.	Chart: Locations of Significant Street Lights.....	14-16

I. ALAMEDA STREET LIGHTING CHRONOLOGY

- 1870-78 Gas street lighting on Park Street.
- 1885-86 Jenny Electric Company, under a \$20,000 contract with the City of Alameda, constructed a 90-KW electrical generating plant, and erected 13 iron masts, 125 feet high, with gobble clusters of arc lamps.
- 1887 City purchased the generating plant, distribution system and masts, for \$40,000.
- 1895 Incandescent lighting introduced.
- 1906 Department of Electricity created under new city charter.
- 1907 New electric light standards installed along Park Street, each consisting of a 15' cast-iron pole topped by seven ground-glass globes.
- 1911-12 Old arc and incandescent iron masts dismantled. Initial city-wide installation of over 4,000 post-top globe lights, each consisting of a 9' cast-iron pole on concrete base with ground-glass globe.
- 1930 Steel, double bracketed standards replaced old globe cluster standards along Park Street.
- 1938-41 Steel post-top standards, 18' high with fluted poles, installed on Webster Street and in some new subdivisions.
- 1939-49 Steel pendant standards, 20' high with fluted poles, replaced the old 9' post-top globe lights on some major streets.
- 1952-54 Steel pendant standards, 20' high with "octoflute" poles, installed on major streets, replacing old post-top globe lights.
- 1955-58 Steel pendant standards, 20' high with smooth poles, installed on major streets, replacing old post-top globe lights.
- 1956 Fluorescent pendant lights replaced double-bracket standards on Park Street.
- 1961-68 Mercury-vapor cobra lights, bracketed to telephone poles, replaced most of the remaining post-top globe lights in Alameda.

II. HISTORY OF ALAMEDA STREET LIGHTING

The history of Alameda's street lighting is distinguished by an unusually early use of electricity. Most municipalities in the United States converted gradually from gas to electricity, often not making the transition until the turn of the century. Alameda, after a brief episode of gas illumination, utilized electric street lighting a full decade before most other American cities.

Following sporadic attempts in the 1870s to install gas lights on Park Street, Alameda was without street lighting between 1878 and 1885. In that year, the City's Board of Trustees contracted with the Jenny Electric Company, at a cost of \$20,000, to construct a 90-KW electric generating plant and install a distribution system of overhead wires to power thirteen carbon-arc lights mounted on 125-foot iron masts. The system was first lighted on October 13, 1886. When the Board of Trustees purchased the system a year later for \$40,000, Alameda became the second city in the United States (after Lansing, Michigan) to have a municipally-owned electrical generating and distribution system.

At least thirty more masts of varying heights were erected throughout the city by the end of the century, including one on Bay Farm Island. Old prints and post cards depict spindly looking towers with thin iron members supporting clusters of glass globes. Each day the city electrician was required to climb the towers to replace the carbon elements. The lights operated on a "moonlight schedule," illumination being provided until shortly past midnight on dark, moonless nights only.

The first use of incandescent lighting in Alameda occurred in 1895 when the City modernized its generating plant and began to service homes and businesses. Newly installed masts incorporated the incandescent technology.

A reorganization of city government in 1906 under a new charter resulted in the creation of a Department of Electricity. The following year the first series of modern light standards appeared along a length of Park Street. An article in the July 1907 issue of Out West magazine commented on the improvement:

"The merchants of Park Street have installed over forty electroliers on the three blocks between the two Park Street railroad stations....the City furnishes free current for these lighting improvements."

Each light standard consisted of a 15' cast-iron pole topped by one large and six small ground-glass globes. They were replaced in 1930 by new steel standards with double brackets for lamps and an upper section of pole for wires.

The Department of Electricity undertook a street lighting program in 1911 which was truly ambitious. Enabled by a Charter Amendment of April 10, 1911, which set up an "electric fund", the Department began installing a system of over 4,000 incandescent light standards with underground wiring. They were distributed along both sides of city streets at staggered, 150-ft. intervals, producing 75-ft. intervals between individual street lights. These standards, referred to as "post-top globe lights" in this report, are the oldest surviving street lights in Alameda. They are 9' high and consist of a battered concrete base with cast-iron pole surmounted by a white ground-glass globe. They were designed by the Superintendent of the Department of Electricity.

It is unclear exactly how much time the installation of this system required. The bulk of the work seems to have been performed in 1911 and 1912; some sources state that it was not until 1915 that all the standards were in place. As new subdivisions were developed, and new streets opened, such as Sterling Avenue (1916), Marion Court (1920), and the Fernside development (1925), new post-top globe lights were installed.

A rare variant on the simple post-top standard had a three-pronged "trident" pole with three globes. A photograph from c.1920 shows one of these in front of the old West End Fire House on Pacific Avenue. One survives today on an ornamental stone-and-brick pedestal in St. Margaret Court.

The new street lighting system gave Alameda a reputation in the teens and twenties as a superbly lighted city. It is difficult to separate mere boasting from factual claims, but several quotations from the time will give the flavor of the comments. The San Francisco Daily News in its July 21, 1921 issue called Alameda the best lighted city in the Bay Area, and credited the city with "having more and better 'lamp posts' than any other city per unit of population." A pamphlet printed by the Times Star Press in the early 1920s praised the lights variously as "the most complete system of electroliers ever created, ... the only complete electrolier system on the Coast, ... a street lighting system that is second to none in the United States."

It seems certain that Alameda's attractive post-top globe lights, distributed generously throughout the City, were impressive to the residents and visitors of those years. This, and the fact that the electric plant was operating at a handsome profit (\$76,000 in 1921), and was municipally owned (indeed, one of the first such plants in the country), probably combined to lend an aura of unrivaled success and unparalleled performance about Alameda's street lighting. It would make an interesting study, beyond the concerns of this report, to evaluate these claims.

The "best lighted city in the Bay Area" underwent few changes in its street lighting system during the twenties and thirties. The Alameda Municipal Report for 1932-33 listed the number of street lights as 4,878. An experiment (tried for several years in the early thirties and still remembered by old-time residents) involved putting green bulbs in street lights at corners, apparently to help drivers locate intersections.

Several dozen standards were installed on Park Street in the spring of 1930. These poles were made of open hearth steel, electrically welded, and fluted to the elevation of a double electrolier, above which a round pole held the overhead electric wires. Manufactured by the Taper Tube Company, a division of the Pacific Union Metal Company, these were the first steel light standards used in Alameda. (In 1956, when Park Street wiring was put underground, the steel poles were removed.)

In 1939, the Taper Tube Company began supplying the City with a new type of steel street light, still in use today. The City began replacing the old post-top globe lights on Santa Clara Avenue east of Webster Street, and on Broadway south of Santa Clara Avenue with 20' high, 16-fluted pendant type street lights. In 1941, Central Avenue was fitted with the new standards between Webster and Chestnut Streets.

An 18'-tall, 16-fluted post-top street light, very similar to the pendant variety, was also supplied by the Taper Tube Company and used in several places in the City including Webster Street (1938), the Fernside Marina development (1939), and Woodstock Housing (1941). (Several also were placed around the new Central Substation on Grand Street and Eagle Avenue, which opened in 1936.) All have survived except those on Webster Street.

In 1941, the war halted all work on the street lighting system. A progressive year-by-year replacement began in 1947. Using the same steel 20' high, 16-fluted pendant type streetlights, the City replaced the rest of the post-top globe lights on Central Avenue, and all those on Encinal Avenue. In a few locations, a double pendant 16-fluted streetlight was used, as described in the City's annual report for 1946-47:

"Twelve double light standards with a 20' light center.....were installed on the Encinal Avenue Esplanade from High Street to Fernside Boulevard."

In 1948 and 1949, the replacement program continued, using both the single and double pendant standards. (The specific streets are listed in the chart at the end of this report). The 16-fluted pendant type streetlight, although not used in Alameda after 1949, has survived in larger numbers than any other significant type of street light.

In 1952, 8-fluted, or "octo-fluted" 20' pendant-type streetlights were introduced to Alameda's streets. This model, used through 1954, continued to replace the post-top globe lights.

Between 1955 and 1958, smooth-pole 20' pendant-type streetlights provided the last link in the continuous chain of steel pendant standards first installed in 1939. Both single and double pendant standards of this type were installed.

By 1958, 1,109 pendant standards were installed along Alameda streets, replacing the old post-top globe lights. A Times-Star article from June 18, 1959, noted that "the old globe lights still illuminate over half the City."

With the introduction of mercury-vapor cobra lights between 1961 and 1968, nearly all the remaining post-top globe lights were removed.

The total number of architecturally and historically significant street lights in Alameda is 1,297. The chart below gives a numerical breakdown of this total by type.

III. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT STREET LIGHTS IN ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

Quantity*	Type	Installation Dates	Photo	Bu/Elec Drawings
103	Post-Top Globe	ca.1912-ca.1925	1	5-C-61 (6-9-1911)
1	Post-Top Trident	1917	-	?
76	16-Fluted Post-Top	1939-1941	2,4	3-C-84 (10-1-1938)
1	Concrete Post-Top	?	-	?
669	16-Fluted Pendant	1939-1949	3,4,5	3-C-64 (5-11-1935)
236	Octo-fluted Pendant	1952-1954	6,7	3-C-122 (5-6-1947)
205	Smooth-Pole Pendant	1955-1958	8,9	?

* Based on Bu/Elec. Map #7385 (updated to 7/7/78) of Alameda's Streetlight System and Field Surveys conducted on July 4 & 5 1981.

IV. DESCRIPTIONS OF EXISTING HISTORIC STREET LIGHTS

Alameda's older surviving street lights fall into three distinct groupings. The 9' post-top globe lights, installed between 1911 and ca. 1925, are the City's oldest surviving standards. 90 of these grace a few of Alameda's older streets, and 13 are located in City parks. A rare variant is the three-globed "trident" light, only one of which survives.

The second grouping is comprised of the 18' 16-fluted post-top lights installed between 1939-1941. Only 76 of these elegant, neo-classical standards survive. A single 15' concrete post-top standard, falls into this category.

The third distinctive grouping is the pendant-style, 20' standards installed between 1939 and 1958 on most of Alameda's major streets. From the neo-classical 16-fluted pendant of the late 1930's and 1940's, to the progressively simpler "octo-fluted" and smooth-pole pendants of the 1950's, these standards present a unified, elegant image to Alameda's most important streets. There are 675 of the 16-fluted, 236 of the octo-fluted, and 205 of the smooth-pole pendants.

Individual descriptions follow for each of these street light types.

POST-TOP GLOBE (Photo #1)

This is a 9' tall concrete and cast-iron street light. It consists of a 3' battered concrete base, approximately 18" square at the bottom, sloping inward to become approximately 10" square at its top. The corners of the base are bevelled, its top edges rounded, and all surfaces are covered with a natural sand cement finish. A 6"-square opening near the bottom of the base has a recessed metal plate containing these words: "Alameda Municipal E.L. Plant." Above the concrete base rises 5 1/2' of wrought-iron pole. The bottom 1 1/2' of this pole (4" diameter) is joined by a bell reducer to a 3' section of slightly smaller diameter. A corbelled round headcasting, increasing in diameter from approximately 5" to 9", rests atop the pole at a height of 8 1/2'. This head-casting in turn supports a white translucent glass globe 1' in diameter. (Some lights, notably those on Dayton Avenue and Palmera Court, have elongated luminaires with flattened conical tops).

POST-TOP "TRIDENT"

The only survivor of this rare type of post-top globe light is located in St. Margaret Court. A square, 6'-tall, stone and brick base supports a 3', three-pronged "trident pole" assembly. Three white translucent globes top the three poles, the center globe being slightly higher than the others.

16-FLUTED POST-TOP (Photos #2 and #4)

This is an 18'-tall, hollow-steel street light. A 3' tall base has a round bottom, 18' in diameter and approximately 2" high. The words "Taper Tube Pole Co." are embossed on the side. The base has 16 flutes, tapers upwards, and is crested with a decorative band approximately 4" wide, with a floral motif. A 15'-tall tapering steel pole welded to the base rises to the composite height of 18', decreasing from 7" to 4" (approximate) in diameter. It too has 16 flutes. A stylized quasi-Corinthian capital, with bas-relief leaf pattern and bead-molding crest, flares from the top of the pole. The combined effect of the fluted base and pole, with the capital, is that of a neo-classical column. The lamp head rests atop the capital, consisting of embossed socket and globe. The base-down globe of translucent glass has a complex elliptical shape with a receding crested top. It is capped with a small metal finial in the form of a spike.

CONCRETE POST-TOP

This is a concrete street light approximately 15' tall. The sole example of this type is in Hoover Court. The base has 8 sides, and is approximately 8" tall. Each side has a small square decorative recess. An 8-sided shaft rises from the base, tapering slightly. Atop the shaft are a capital and elongated globe with finial identical to those on the 16-Fluted Post-Top street lights. The concrete is tinted pink.

16-FLUTED PENDANT (PHOTOS #3, #4, #5)

This is a 20'-tall, hollow-steel street light. To a 3' tall base (identical to the base of the 16-Fluted Post-Top Street Light) is welded a 17'-tall tapering steel pole which rises to a composite height of 20'. It decreases from an approximate 7" diameter at the base to 4" at its top. Like the base, it has 16 flutes. An "S"-curve arm, 4' long, projects from the pole at the 20' height. The pole is capped with a striated stepped finial above this juncture. Suspended from the arm is a lamp head with a teardrop, base-up, translucent globe. (Street lights of this variety with two arms opposite each other, called "double pendants", are rare in Alameda).

OCTO-FLUTED PENDANT (Photos #6 & #7)

This is a 20' tall, hollow-steel standard. From a 1' square base, approximately 4" tall, with rounded floriate corners, rises a slender vertical tapering pole (approximately 6" at base) capped by a spearhead finial. The pole is 8-sided. Each side is a shallow, concave flute. (Hence, the name: "octo-fluted.") A curved 4' arm, supported by a thin, flat, curved bracket, holds the rounded lamp head with its teardrop, base-up, translucent globe.

SMOOTH POLE PENDANT (Photos #8 & #9)

This is a 20'-tall, hollow-steel street light. Above a 1' square base with rounded top, rises a smooth, slender tapering pole (approximately 6" at base), capped by a ball finial. A curved 4' arm supported by a thin, flat, curving bracket holds the rounded lamp head with its teardrop, base-up, translucent globe. (This arm and globe assembly is identical to that on the octo-fluted standard).

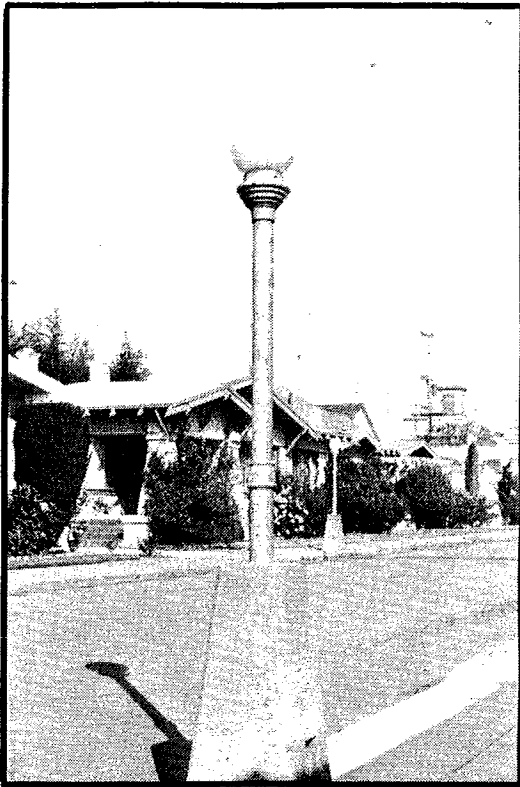


Photo 1
Post-Top Globe Light

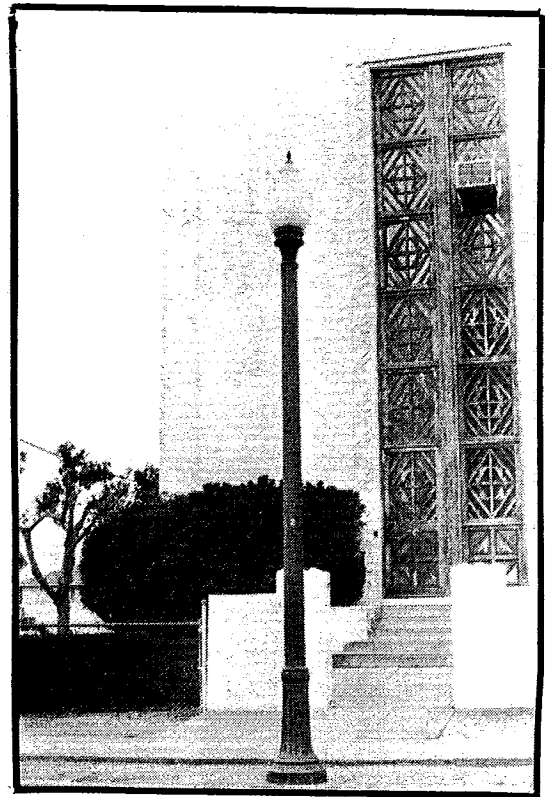


Photo 2
16-Fluted Post Top Light

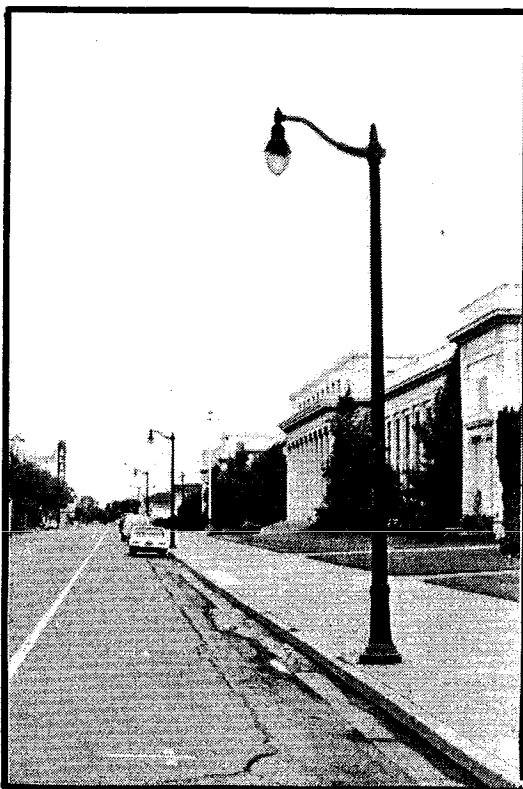


Photo 3
16-Fluted Pendant Light



Photo 4
Detail of 16-Fluted Post-Top
and Pendant Base

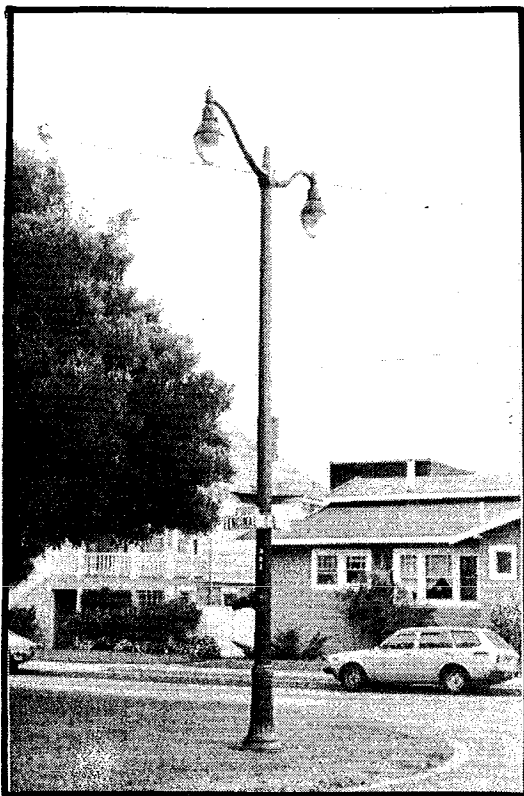


Photo 5
16-Fluted Double Pendant Light

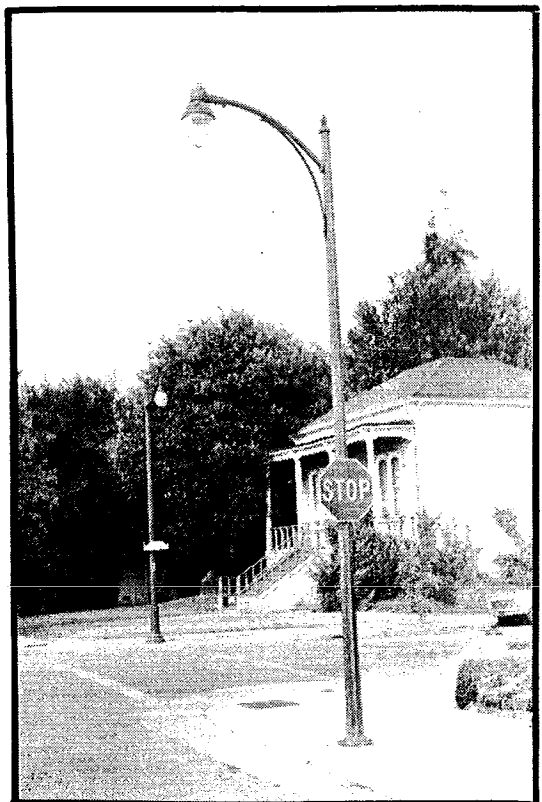


Photo 6
Octofluted Pendant Light

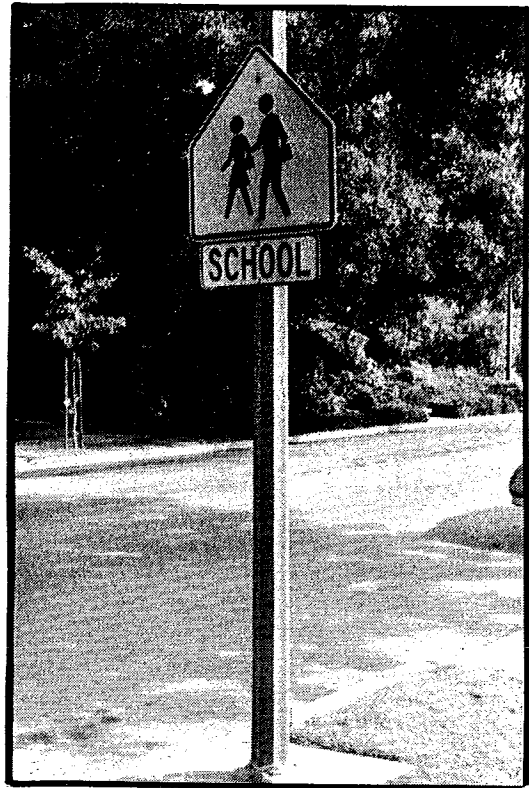


Photo 7
Detail of Octofluted Pendant
Base and Pole

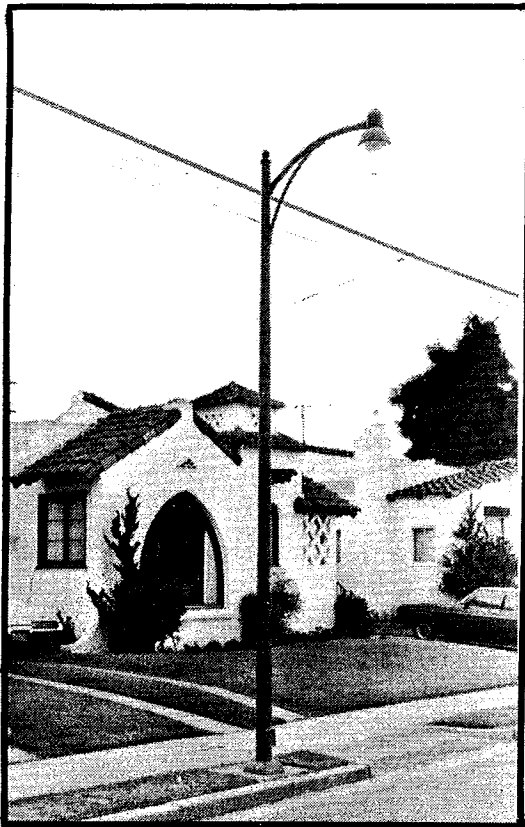


Photo 8
Smooth-Pole Pendant Light



Photo 9
Smooth-Pole Double Pendant Light

V. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

The long and distinguished history of electric street lighting in Alameda is visibly embodied in the City's 1,297 older street lights. These post-top and pendant-style street lights incorporate a high degree of design excellence. They contribute positively to the visual quality of many of Alameda's streets, by day and by night. Considered together, they are an irreplaceable and invaluable part of Alameda's heritage.

As explained in the Description section, these street lights fall into three distinct groups:

- o post-top globe (ca.1912-ca.1925);
- o 16-fluted post-top (1939-1941); and
- o three types of pendant-style (1939-1958).

Post-Top Globe Lights and Post-Top Trident Lights

The 103 post-top globe lights are the only remnants of the system of over 4,000 street lights installed by the Alameda Department of electricity beginning in 1911. It was this pace-setting system that gave Alameda its reputation as the "best lighted city" of the Bay Area, the West Coast, or the United States (depending on one's source). The post-top globe light was designed locally by the Department of Electricity. All of these considerations--along with the fact that they are the oldest surviving street lights in Alameda--combine to give the post-top globe lights historical significance.

In addition, they are handsome objects, whose interesting design may be unique to the United States. The post-top globe lights, as street furniture, are compatible with the historical neighborhoods and parks in which they are located. Their scale relates well to people on sidewalks. All these factors together produce a high degree of architectural quality.

The post-top "trident" light, while including all the above factors, has the added distinction of being the sole survivor of its type.

16-Fluted Post-Top and Concrete Post-Top

The next distinctive group of older street lights is comprised of the surviving 16-fluted post-top standards installed between 1939 and 1941.

These were new street lights in new developments, and are contemporary to the buildings of the neighborhoods where they are located. As such, the 16-fluted post-top variety is historically associated with major developments in Alameda prior to and including World War II.

These elegant street lights possess a high degree of design excellence. The fluted pole and capital create the impression of a neo-classical column. The elliptical globe possesses beauty. Their scale and design as street furniture relate them well to sidewalks, streets and older buildings.

The concrete post-top street light located on Hoover Court is of interest because it is the only example of its type in Alameda.

Pendant-Type Street Lights

Of the three types of steel pendant street lights in Alameda, the 16-fluted variety has the greatest historical and architectural significance. Yet, the steel pendant-style street lights installed in the 1950's (the octo-flute and smooth-pole varieties) share a common overall design and scale. Together, the three types create a cohesive image on most of Alameda's major streets.

The 16-fluted pendant street lights, installed between 1939 and 1949, replaced the post-top globe lights on Alameda streets. They represent the earliest refurbishing of the street lighting system installed in the teens. Their design and use of materials - of the same excellent quality as the 16-fluted post-top street lights - make a substantial visual impact because of their great numbers. They comprise a vital part of Alameda's collective street-scape.

The double-pendant variety of the 16-fluted street light has all the qualities mentioned above, with the added distinctiveness of its comparative scarcity.

The octo-fluted pendant street light of the period 1952-54 illustrates a progressive simplifying of the design. Its wide, shallow flutes and slender pole combine to create a handsome design. The smooth-pole variety of 1955-58 represents the culmination of the simplifying design process. These straightforward street lights are pleasing complements to the other pendant types.

In conclusion, Alameda's 1,297 older post-top and pendant-type street lights, individually and collectively, possess a high level of architectural and historical significance. As such, they are worthy of designation as Alameda Historical Monuments.

VI. LOCATIONS OF SIGNIFICANT STREETLIGHTS IN ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

Post-top globe lights (Total: 103)

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
17	ca. 1912	Bay (San Antonio to sea wall)
8	ca. 1912	Caroline (San Antonio to sea wall)
5	ca. 1912	Dayton Avenue (Grand to Palmera)
3	ca. 1922	Doris Court
2	ca. 1925	Grace Court
9	ca. 1912	Hawthorne
2	ca. 1924	Lewelling Court
2	ca. 1920	Marion Court
1	ca. 1912	Morton (South of San Jose)
8	ca. 1913	Palmera Court
11	ca. 1912	St. Charles (San Antonio to sea wall)
15	ca. 1916	Sterling
7	ca. 1912	Weber (San Antonio to Sea Wall)
3	?	McKinley Park
10	?	Washington Park

Post Top Trident (Total: 1)

1	ca. 1917	St. Margaret Court
---	----------	--------------------

16-Fluted Post Top (Total: 76)

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
1	1939	Fernside Marina (Cornell)
2	1939	" " (Harvard)
3	1939	" " (Cambridge)
2	1939	" " (Versailles)
17	1939	" " (Marina)
16	1939	" " (Windsor)
7	1941	Woodstock (Cypress)
3	1941	" (Main)
8	1941	" (Second)
10	1941	" (Footpaths)
4	?	Central Substation (Eagle)
1	?	" " (Minturn)
2	?	" " (Grand)

Concrete Post Top (Total: 1)

1	?	Hoover Court
---	---	--------------

16-Fluted Pendant (Total: 675)*

36	1939	Broadway (Otis to Santa Clara)
122	1948	Buena Vista (Webster to Park)
75*	1941	Central (Webster to Chestnut)
80	1947	Central (Chestnut to High)
108*	1947	Encinal (Sherman to Fernside)
3	1939	Gibbons (Central to Santa Clara)
33	1949	High (Encinal to Fernside)
15	1948	Lincoln (Fifth to Webster)
12	1949	Lincoln (Webster to Eighth)
7*	1949	Marshall Way
2	1947	Morton (Encinal to Central)
16	1948	Pacific (Central to Fourth)
6	?	Park Street (Clement to Blanding)
160	1939	Santa Clara (Webster to High)

*Including DOUBLE PENDANTS

1	1941	Central and Encinal
11	1947	Encinal Esplanade
2	1949	Marshall and Pacific

Octo-Fluted Pendant (Total: 236)

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
13	1954	Buena Vista (Tilden to Versailles)
1	ca.1953	Calhoun (High to Post)
2	ca.1953	Court (Calhoun to Fillmore)
16	1953	Eastshore (Central to Fernside)
1	ca.1953	Fillmore (Court to High)
2	ca.1953	Central (Fernside to Eastshore)
3	ca.1953	Constance Circle
19	1952	High (Otis to Encinal)
3	ca.1953	Liberty (Fernside to Eastshore)
7	1954	Morton (San Jose to Encinal)
14	1954	Ninth (San Antonio to Santa Clara)
5	ca.1953	Oak (Santa Clara to Lincoln)
6	ca.1953	Post (Otis to Washington)
27	1954	San Antonio (Ninth to Morton)
91	1954	San Jose (Morton to High)
1	ca.1953	Toyon Terrace
25	1954	Versailles (Central to Fernside)

Smooth-Pole Pendants (Total: 205)

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
2	1955	Fifth (Lincoln to Pacific)
14	1956	Sixth (Central to Pacific)
4	ca.1956	Alameda (Oak to Park)
9	1957	Broadway (Santa Clara to Buena Vista)
4	1955	Central (Lincoln to Third)
23	1957	Central (Fourth to Webster)
7	1956/58	Eastshore (Encinal to Meyers)
4	1958	Encinal (Fernside to Eastshore)
8	1956/57	Everett (Central to Lincoln)
9	ca.1956	Hansen
1	ca.1956	Janis Circle
21	1957	Lincoln (Park to Versailles)
1	ca.1956	Meyers
10	ca.1956	Oak (Santa Clara to Encinal)
21	ca.1956	Pacific (Fourth to Webster)
11	1957	Pearl (Central to Buena Vista)
31	1956	Santa Clara (Third to Webster)
20	ca.1956	Tilden Way
5	ca.1956	Webb (Park to Everett)