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**[EXTERNAL] Public Comment: Preserve 802 Buena Vista Avenue**

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**From** [REDACTED]  
**Date** Mon 7/14/2025 5:09 PM  
**To** Historical Board <historicalboard@alamedaca.gov>; Steven Buckley <sbuckley@alamedaca.gov>

Dear Historical Advisory Board Members,

I urge you to deny the demolition of 802 Buena Vista Avenue. Professional preservation specialists have determined this 1908 Craftsman bungalow can be restored.

**Professional Assessment Proves Restoration is Feasible** Page & Turnbull's architectural survey (May 2025) provides clear findings:

- East and west facades remain in "good condition"
- Fire-damaged elements "could be reconstructed based on available pre-fire photographs"
- Original features in "good and fair condition may be retained and repaired"
- The building has stood safely for over three years since the fire, demonstrating structural integrity

These conclusions come from preservation professionals meeting the Secretary of Interior's Standards. This is not speculation - it is professional assessment.

**Part of Alameda's First Subdivision** 802 Buena Vista Avenue stands in Mastick Park (1907), Alameda's first 20th-century subdivision. Built by the Strang Brothers circa 1908, it represents the post-earthquake building boom that shaped our city. The 1979 historic survey recognized it as "one of the visual anchors of the area."

This isn't just another house - it's part of the original fabric of modern Alameda.

**Fire Damage Does Not Equal Demolition** Alameda has already proven that fire-damaged historic homes can be successfully restored. The house at 1525 Minturn Street - now known as "The Phoenix House" - was devastated by fire in 2001 yet was beautifully restored and stands today as testament to what's possible when we choose preservation over demolition.

Like 802 Buena Vista, the Minturn Street property could have been written off as "too damaged." Instead, it was saved and now contributes to our neighborhood's character. The State Historical Building Code specifically provides flexibility for fire-damaged historic structures, and the Secretary of Interior's Standards directly address fire damage restoration.

When professionals confirm a building can be saved - as Page & Turnbull has confirmed here - preservation is not just possible, it's the responsible choice.

**The Owner's Responsibility** The property was listed on Alameda's Historical Building Study List when purchased. The Historic Preservation Ordinance has been in place since 1975. Owners of historic

properties have both rights and responsibilities. When professional assessment confirms a building can be saved, demolition becomes a choice, not a necessity.

**Why This Matters** Every demolition in our historic neighborhoods creates an irreversible loss. When we allow demolition of salvageable buildings, we set a precedent that fire damage - regardless of actual structural condition - justifies destruction of our heritage.

The draft resolution claims the building "cannot readily be cured." Page & Turnbull's professional assessment directly contradicts this claim. Their detailed analysis shows exactly how each damaged element can be restored or reconstructed.

**The Board's Clear Authority** Under Alameda's Historic Preservation Ordinance, you have the authority to:

- Deny demolition when buildings can be preserved
- Require restoration following professional standards
- Protect buildings that contribute to Alameda's architectural heritage

The Page & Turnbull assessment provides the professional justification for denial.

### **Request for Action**

I request the Board deny the demolition permit based on:

1. Professional assessment confirming this building can be restored
2. Alameda's successful precedent of restoring fire-damaged historic homes
3. The building's significance to Alameda's first subdivision

**Conclusion** This building has stood for 117 years as part of Alameda's first subdivision. It survived the 1906 earthquake's aftermath and remained structurally sound after the 2022 fire. Professional assessment confirms it can be restored.

The question before you is simple: Will Alameda preserve a professionally-assessed restorable building in its first subdivision, or allow its demolition?

Please choose preservation. Once demolished, this piece of Alameda's origin story is lost forever.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jonathan Manalus

**[EXTERNAL] Deny demolition of 802 Buena Vista Ave.**

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**From** Renell Middlecamp [REDACTED]  
**Date** Tue 7/15/2025 1:43 PM  
**To** Historical Board <historicalboard@alamedaca.gov>

Historical Advisory Board Members,

I am writing to urgently request you deny the demolition of 802 Buena Vista Avenue.

The owners hired Page & Turnbull (preservation specialists) to assess this property. It was their Professional Assessment that proves restoration is feasible. Page & Turnbull's architectural survey (May 2025) provides clear findings this 1908 Craftsman bungalow can be restored.

I have lived my entire 69 years just 1 block from 802 Buena Vista Ave. From my birth, 1956-1987 at 766 Buena Vista Avenue and then 1987 to present at 801 Pacific Avenue. I have either walked by or driven past this lovely home, that dominates the corner of Buena Vista and 8th Street and neighborhood, pretty much every day of my life.

The river rock fireplace, the long open porch, and the overall bungalow style are just some of the classic Craftsman features I have always admired.

As you well know, it is the mixture of classic architectural styles found in so many of Alameda's old neighborhoods, that provides the character and architectural history making it so unique, rich, and worthy to be saved.

802 Buena Vista has stood for 117 years. It stands in Mastick Parks. In the 1979 historic survey it was described as "one of the visual anchors of the area".

Now, it is documented by preservation specialists, Page & Turnbull, it can be restored. If professionals confirm a historic building can be restored, demolition should not be allowed!

You, the Historical Advisory Board Members, have the voice and power to save 802 Buena Vista Avenue and help preserve the unique character of the neighborhood.

Alameda cannot lose another historical home. Don't abandon 802 Buena Vista Avenue and doom it to demolition. It can and should be saved.

Vote to DENY DEMOLITION of 802 Buena Vista Avenue.

Respectfully,  
Renell Middlecamp

Please note: as I am away on vacation I cannot attend the meeting at City Hall Thursday, July 17th. This email is my voice!

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**FW: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Comments, PLN25-0067, 802 Buena Vista Avenue**

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**From** Jennifer Warner <jwarner@alamedaca.gov>

**Date** Wed 7/16/2025 4:30 PM

**To** Historical Board <historicalboard@alamedaca.gov>

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Karen Holmes [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Comments, PLN25-0067, 802 Buena Vista Avenue  
**Date:** July 16, 2025 at 3:39:42 PM PDT  
**To:** [sbuckley@alamedaca.gov](mailto:sbuckley@alamedaca.gov)

801 Buena Vista Avenue

Alameda, Ca 94501

July 16, 2025

Dear Historical Advisory Board Members,

I am writing to urge that you DENY the demolition of the fire damaged bungalow at 802 Buena Vista Avenue. While there is damage, the handsome 1908 Craftsman house has retained its structural integrity for over three years since the fire. Page and Turnbull, preservation specialists hired by the current owners, have concluded that the house CAN BE restored despite the fire damage. They note that two facades remain in “good condition” while original features in “good and fair condition may be retained and repaired.” Their detailed analysis shows exactly how each damaged element can be restored or reconstructed.

The house at 802 Buena Vista is not just a building. It was a handsome example of the original character of Alameda homes. Quoting the 1979 historic survey, it is recognized as “one of the visual anchors of the area.” It is a family home surrounded by other modest but lovely and well cared for homes. Looking out the front windows from my home at 801 Buena Vista, I have long appreciated the Craftsman authenticity of the low-pitched roof with its generous eaves shading a wide and open porch and the strong river rock fireplace standing proudly.

This spacious house accommodated generations of the same family. The well maintained front and side garden were a place of weekly reunions, birthday parties, anniversaries. This is the nature of its design –

gracious, inviting and charming. Even after the fire, neighbors continue to care for the roses and trees in the small gardens so typical of Craftsman corner houses.

In this growing town, it is critical that we preserve the character of existing neighborhoods and the architectural history that makes Alameda such a unique place to live.

I urge the Historical Advisory Board Members to deny the demolition permit requested for 802 Buena Vista Avenue.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Holmes



July 16, 2025

(By electronic transmission)  
Historical Advisory Board  
City of Alameda  
2263 Santa Clara Avenue  
Alameda, CA 94501

**Subject: PLN 25-0067 — 802 Buena Vista Ave. (Item 4-A on Historical Advisory Board's (HAB) July 17, 2025 agenda).**

Dear HAB Members:

The Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) would like to thank the project team for their efforts to incorporate many elements of the existing fire-damaged building into the design of the new two-story structure.

We also thank the project team for commissioning an updated evaluation of the property by Page and Turnbull and thank the HAB for requiring the additional evaluation of the property at its 3/6/25 meeting. We also thank the project team for incorporating some of our 3/6/25 recommendations into the design, including deletion of plastered covered foam trim from the window trim and sills and deletion of the front elevation's second floor sliding balcony doors.

However, there are several aspects of the new design that should be clarified and/or modified:

- 1. Incorporate existing porch rafter tails into the design.** The existing porch roof has rafter tails resting on a substantial (8 x 8 or possibly 6 x 6) girder that provides an especially "builderly" aspect to the porch design. See Attached Streetview March, 2018 image of the porch roof. The proposed design appears to lack the rafter tails.
- 2. Retain existing tapered river rock (overly generalized as "Fieldstone" in the DPR 523 form, the plans and the Page and Turnbull report) porch column bases.** We appreciate the revised plans' provision that the "fieldstone features should be preserved and incorporated into the porch columns". However, **the plans should explicitly show the column's bases tapered design and change "should" to "shall"**.
- 3. Retain the existing front porch railing design.** Since the porch floor level does not exceed 30 inches above grade, the guardrail design is not subject to the building code's 42 inch minimum height and other requirements. However, if the project team would



7. **Provide windows that visually match the existing wood windows.** As per the City's Guide to Residential Design, the new windows should visually match the existing wood windows based primarily on the dimensions in the wood window diagram in the Guide and in the City's replacement window handout.

The Marvin "Ultimate Wood/Clad" windows with simulated divided lites referred to in note 3 on sheets A305 and A306 probably meets the above criteria as do the Anderson, Pella, Kolbe and Sierra Pacific windows also referred to in note 3. However, note 3 states that additional information on these windows is available on sheet A103.1, which seems to be a mistake since there is no sheet A103.1. But there is sheet A108.1, which **does** have this information.

In addition, the "window schedule" on sheet A108.1 and the glazing notes on sheet A102 continue to reference the Milgard vinyl windows from the 3/6/25 submittal which do not appear to meet the criteria. **The plans therefore need to delete references to the Milgard vinyl windows so it is clear which windows are actually being proposed. Typical vertical section details through the windows also need to be provided to verify the proposed window design.**

8. **Do not use mullied sash for the paired windows.** The paired windows appear to use mullied sash, which has a less substantial look than the structural separation of the existing paired windows and is inconsistent with the craftsman style. **A structural separation at least 3 ½" wide between the paired windows should be provided.**
9. **Horizontally align the top 90% of the doors and windows on the street-facing elevations.** This is the typical treatment on pre-1942 buildings and promotes a geometrically coherent façade composition.
10. **Indicate which portions of the proposed elevations, if any, use portions of the existing building.**
11. **Provide vertical section details through the eaves and porch railings.**
12. The Page and Turnbull report states that although the building is currently not eligible for the California and National Registers due to the loss of integrity caused by the fire damage, the building could become eligible again if the damaged and missing character-defining features are reconstructed or replaced to restore the building's integrity. The Page and Turnbull report also notes that the building may still be eligible as an Alameda historical monument, since the city's historic preservation ordinance does not explicitly require an integrity analysis. Integrity is also not a component of the historic monument integrity criteria. **The draft resolution should be revised to reflect the above considerations.**

**If the HAB agrees with any of the above comments, we request that the HAB recommend them to staff for staff's consideration of the design review application.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Christopher Buckley at (510) 697-0411 or [cbuckleyAICP@att.net](mailto:cbuckleyAICP@att.net) if you would like to discuss these comments.

~~Re: The Page and Turnbull report states that although the building is currently not eligible for the California and National Registers due to the loss of integrity caused by the fire damage, the building could become eligible again if the damaged and missing character-defining features are reconstructed or replaced to restore the building's integrity. The Page and Turnbull report also notes that the building may still be eligible as an Alameda historical monument, since the city's historic preservation ordinance does not explicitly require an integrity analysis. Integrity is also not a component of the historic monument integrity criteria. The draft resolution should be revised to reflect the above considerations.~~

Sincerely,

Dodi Kelleher, Boardmember  
Alameda Architectural Preservation Society

Attachment: March 2018 Google Streetview of front elevation porch roof

cc: Allen Tai, Steven Buckley, Tristan Suire (by electronic transmission)  
AAPS Board and Preservation Action Committee (by electronic transmission)

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Search Google Maps

801 Buena Vista Ave  
Alameda, California  
Google Street View  
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11:02 PM 3/5/2025

This image is a screenshot of a Google Maps Street View interface. The main window displays a 3D perspective view of a house with a brown shingled roof and a white porch. A small information box on the left identifies the location as 801 Buena Vista Ave in Alameda, California, and shows the current image was captured in April 2018. Below the main view is a historical timeline of images from various dates: Jul 2022, Mar 2020, May 2019, Apr 2018 (highlighted), Oct 2016, Sep 2015, and Sep 2014. The interface includes a search bar at the top, a map inset on the bottom left, and a Windows taskbar at the bottom with the system clock showing 11:02 PM on 3/5/2025.