

# MORE BERKELEY WALKS- SERIES 3

by Robert E. Johnson

The walks feature:

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

## WALK 28- NE BERKELEY & KENSINGTON

There are some panoramic views and a path along the edge of Tilden Regional Park. The residential area has homes in various styles dating mainly from the 1920s to the present. Can be a good exercise walk. 2.5-3.8 miles; 320-640 feet elevation gain



## WALK 29- BERKELEY ALBANY BORDER



The residential area walk crosses into Albany and back to Berkeley. Delightful tree-lined streets feature both autumn colors and spring flowering trees. A variety of home styles and a hidden mid-block park are also features, as well as some fine landscaping. 1.4-3.1 miles; 190-400 feet elevation gain

## WALK 30- CHANGING SOUTHWEST BERKELEY

The former industrial area now features contemporary residences, specialty manufacturing, retail and artisans. There are examples of both historic and hip modern architecture and reminders of the area's historic past in this fascinating area in flux. 1.3-3.3 miles; 30-50 feet elevation gain



## Walk 28

# Northeast Berkeley and Kensington

**Overview:** The northeast Berkeley hills area spreads to the border between Alameda and Contra Costa counties and many streets continue across the line into Kensington on the Contra Costa side with no clear demarcation. This mostly residential area features views to both east and west, a variety of twentieth century homes and a trail that goes along the edge of Tilden Regional Park. Most of the walk follows the contours but there is enough elevation gain to get some proper exercise.

**Highlights:**

- \* Panoramic views from certain locations
- \* Quiet residential streets and a path at the urban edge
- \* Homes dating from the 1920s to the 21st century

**Distance:** 3.8 miles; 2.5-2.8 miles with various shortcuts

**Elevation gain:** 640 feet; 320 feet or more with various shortcuts

**Getting there:** Start at the northwest corner of Spruce Street and Grizzly Peak Boulevard next to the EBMUD reservoir property. The 67 bus from downtown Berkeley stops at this intersection and the 65 bus passes a few blocks away. Parking is generally available on nearby streets.

Just down Spruce along the reservoir is a little plaza with a drinking fountain and some seating. The reservoir was originally built in the 1890s but has been upgraded repeatedly since then, and in 2017 a large partly underground tank was completed taking up less space although the consequent large area of vacant land seems wasted.

Head north on Grizzly Peak along the reservoir property. Traffic tends to go fast on this straight stretch of road but there is a sidewalk and a parallel path. Between the sidewalk and the fence EBMUD has planted California natives and other drought-tolerant plants as an example of how to reduce water usage. When you get up the hill to an intersection, cross to the right at Beloit Avenue, being very careful of speeding traffic—especially cars coming around the corner from the left on Beloit which do not have a stop.



Head east on the quieter section of Beloit. From here some of the streets have sidewalks and some do not thanks to American lack of foresight in postwar planning that assumed that with cars sidewalks were not needed (forgetting about the children, the elderly, the handicapped and others who do not drive not to mention those who walk for exercise and for pleasure)

In any case there is not much traffic here and at the southeast corner on the right at 301 Grizzly Peak (1) is a Japanese cherry blossom tree that is stunning when in full bloom in March, covered with delicate pale pink flowers. The houses on this street are a mix of ranch style, two-story structures with board siding, mid-century modern, and so on. When the street turns to the left there is a 1957 stucco and wood contemporary style house up on the hill at 629 Beloit with a big wisteria vine over the entryway and carport. Wooden shade slats extending outward from the roofline make an attractive shadow pattern on the walls at certain times.





**629 Beloit Avenue**

As the street turns twice to the left the name changes to Los Altos Drive and there are views off to the east of Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Regional Parks as well as Little Farm down in the valley of Tilden Park. There was at one point a sign advertising view lots for sale at this location; however, looking at the steepness of the terrain might have caused anyone to hesitate about buying one.

The house on the left at the second turning (298 Los Altos) was renovated in a more contemporary style and the garden re-landscaped. A number of houses on this street are built out over the very steep

hillside (though not quite as steep as the advertised lots mentioned above). You can see just ahead where some major civil engineering work was done to shore up the road which was prone to slides in the rainy season.

At 281 Los Altos (2) is a 1975 house built by the owner with a modern stained glass front door, diagonal wood siding and a skylight all along the ridgeline of the roof with big windows at each end of the house on the uppermost level in line with the skylight. The interior also has diagonal cedar boards upstairs. The house is built using treated wooden telephones to hold up the structure on the steep slope. Just beyond this 276 Los Altos on the other side has elements of Swiss chalet style. Next to it 272 Los Altos (3) has a large piece of black material hanging on a retaining wall with numerous pockets for plants, an intriguing approach to vertical landscaping. A little further on you can see where part of the road subsided in the past and has been left that way.

Between 255 and 251 Los Altos is a crabapple tree with lovely pink blossoms and deep pink buds in late February/early March and just beyond it a couple more Japanese cherry blossom trees. The houses at 251 and 247, both built in 1989, have two exterior decks, one right over the other, that connect the house to the garage and take advantage of the steep slope for views.

When Los Altos curves left and intersects the end of Grizzly Peak go right and enter the trail where there is a sign about the cooperation of various agencies on fire safety for the urban/park interface; it is locally called Ye Olde School Trail. If it is too rainy and muddy you can skip the trail and continue ahead from Los Altos which becomes Kenyon Street from the end of Grizzly Peak on to Lake Drive; jump in the text to \*\*\*.

Proceeding on the trail you will find the back yards of houses along the left side of the trail and panoramic views of the park from time to time to the right with a mixture of native and non-native plants along the trail. That high bump on the ridge directly

opposite is Wildcat Peak. You might encounter a group of wild turkeys on this trail, an introduced species in California that has gone from rare a few years ago to a major pest that is ravaging some native plant communities and urban gardens.

Stay on the trail and after the last house near the trail on the left side, the path goes somewhat uphill and intersects another trail that goes back up to the left. If you stayed on the same trail on which you have been walking you would eventually get to Kensington School, a nice possible diversion; either way take the



**View of Wildcat Peak**

trail back to the left which goes uphill somewhat and go left again at a fork proceeding to a gate that lets you onto the end of Lake Drive. Continue south on this street.

This street does not have very distinguished architecture but has a pleasant enough ambiance and there is not much traffic. At 250 Lake (4) the front gate has plant and animal designs in metal with mosaic tiles around the edge. Continue past Kenyon (\*\*\*) or turn left here onto Lake Street if you did not take the trail), noting giant yuccas with their long leaves in the front yard at 265 Lake. At Beloit turn right and follow the gravel path next to the road that goes downhill and eventually becomes a proper sidewalk.

Turn tight on Purdue Avenue. The first house on the left at 298 Purdue (5) is a latter day half timber style from 1932 in brick, wood, and stucco siding, somewhat of a contrast to the other blander houses nearby. Farther along on the right, 261 Purdue is a rather modest 1938 house that illustrates how just a small feature like the front bay window can enliven the appearance. 249 Purdue (6) is a simple 1939 Streamline Moderne style with a round window and curved roofline above the front entry.

Keep on Purdue, going down and then up, passing Kenyon and Willamette Avenues and the "No Outlet" sign going uphill. There are a few tall American elm street trees remaining next to the street but probably not for long as most have been removed when struck by the Dutch elm disease.

The sidewalk ends at 141 Purdue and just beyond at 137 Purdue is a large (3800 square foot) mid-century modern house (from 1959) that has some appealing features. Then Purdue becomes a private street. Despite the keep out sign there seems to be no problem about well behaved people walking through here, and there are some very worthwhile houses to see. However, if you feel uncomfortable walking on the private street, return on Purdue past Willamette to Kenyon and the **O** symbol in the text and

on the map to continue the walk. Even if you plan to turn back, at least walk a few steps past the sign and look uphill at the first house.

First on the right at 135 Purdue (7) is a Bernard Maybeck designed house made from poured concrete walls with metal window sash and roofing (originally corrugated steel roofing). Despite these seemingly industrial materials it has the feel of a pleasant English country house with a big wooden door. It was built in 1937 for Maybeck's son Wallen and in 2002 a renovation and sensitive addition were designed by architect Gary Earl Parsons. It has views both east and west from its position on the ridge; trees near the street are native live oaks.

Staying to the right on the upper roadway, next at 133 and 131 Purdue (8) (best seen after passing the high hedge in front of 133) are two contemporary style houses with some traditional design elements—the left a 1959 home with some Japanese design features and the right from 1972 rather like a country retreat at Sea Ranch. They have



**131 and 133 Purdue Avenue**

different designs and orientations but still relate well to each other—sharing a craftsman-like design approach with unpainted wood siding or framing. A grassy slope joins the two yards. From the upper part of the road are wide views, weather permitting, over the rooftops of San Francisco Bay, the Golden Gate and Mount Tamalpais. The next house at 129 Purdue is a mid-century modern design with a big sloping roof, a kind of split level with lots of glass and rather dramatic for a house built in

1948. A major renovation was done in 2019.

Then 117 Purdue is an A-frame characterized by a high steeply-pitched roof; it seems to have a later addition to the left but the main house dates from 1948. At 114 Purdue also on the right is a brown shingled house with a New England look; it seems strange to have an even number on this side--presumably because it was built in 1980, later than 115 from 1970 and 113 from 1949 on each side. Next at 113 Purdue (9) the house has lots of sculptures, ceramic pots and some Asian features in the garden including wooden structures with Chinese characters written on them; the traditional style house from 1949 helps illustrate the wide diversity of modern and traditional styles being built on this street in the early postwar period. Next 111 Purdue was supposedly built in 1961 but had a very dramatic make-over in 2013 including brightly stained wood.

The street turns to the left and at the end of the street facing the bay is a 2011 U-shaped house at 92 Purdue (10) designed by Gary Earl Parsons. It has a roof with a consistent angle around on three sides sloping towards the central entry courtyard and



then an opposing angle for the smaller roof section over the front entrance. A strenuous effort was made to provide a level courtyard on the sloping site so that the roof pours rainwater into a central cistern, like the courtyard in a Pompeian villa called an impluvium. You can imagine what glorious views the house must have to the west while on this side the rooms face the landscaped courtyard.

Turn around and return on Purdue, this time taking the lower roadway, and on the right side where the road splits is a house at 126 Purdue (11) in a somewhat traditional English Style built in 1956 but significantly remodeled more recently. Farther along there are several large redwoods in the yard at the right side as you approach an intersection. Garden Drive descending to the right has some views toward the bay if you want a diversion down the short street, but the architecture is generally less interesting so you can just as well skip it and keep on Purdue past Willamette.

**O** Whether you walked the private part of Purdue or not you should now be back at Kenyon at the circular symbol on the map. **A.** If you want to cut short the walk and finish another day: continue past Kenyon to Beloit, turn left and carefully go up the street as the sidewalk and shoulders disappear. At Grizzly Peak cross Beloit and go right downhill past the reservoir back to the starting point.

**B.** To continue the walk: cross Kenyon and turn right to go downhill. Immediately on the right next to the street are two more Japanese cherry blossom trees and after that some ornamental plum that bloom even earlier. Pass Colgate and Columbia Avenues. Cross Trinity Avenue and go left. At 220 Trinity the garden has a water feature with various sculptures around it. Farther along on the uphill side at 249 Trinity (12) is a large contemporary brown shingle house from 1975 high up the slope with a big deck and lots of shrubbery in a terraced garden including above the garage and a large wisteria on the front of the garage. The last house on right at 266 Trinity (13) has a metal gate with fantastical sculptural designs.



**266 Trinity Avenue gate**

You have probably noticed that most street names in this area are the names of universities and thus even the ones that are state names presumably refer to their public universities rather than the states per se. In another part of Kensington downhill many streets have English place names as does the community itself thanks to a British surveyor who laid out streets in 1911 and had lived in South Kensington, London. This community really started to grow after 1912 when a streetcar line was extended up Arlington Avenue. Repeated attempts to incorporate or merge with the city of El Cerrito failed over the years, and Kensington

remains an unincorporated area within Contra Costa County. Despite being across the county line, in the past many regarded the area as an extension of Berkeley with subdivisions having names such as Berkeley Highlands for the area we are now exploring. The first part you walked through was in Berkeley Woods and nearby is Berkeley Highland Terrace. The 1923 fire that destroyed almost 600 homes in Berkeley further spurred housing development in Kensington for people who had lost their residences. The 1920s also saw the development of the commercial area on Arlington Avenue.



**254 Cambridge Ave. Tibetan element**

Go right on Beloit and head downhill as occasional bay views open up; when you get to Cambridge Avenue cross it and go left. At 254 Cambridge (14) on the right there are Tibetan prayer flags and large ornaments on the gateway as well as prayer wheels on a wooden structure and paintings on the front walkway. Next door at 256 Cambridge the garden has numerous cacti and distinctive rocks. At Yale Avenue go right downhill and then carefully cross at Vassar Avenue to the other side of Yale. The lot on the southeast corner has very extensive and exotic landscaping though it sometimes obstructs the public right of way. Continue down Yale to Rugby Avenue and go left on Rugby after crossing it.

At 330 Rugby (15) on the right, along the fence near a Little Free Library box look down to see Cerrito Creek flowing out below an owl sculpture although it is dry at some times. The creek will get bigger as other forks join and it enters a deep ravine below Arlington Avenue. This is the dividing line

between Alameda and Contra Costa counties. As you pass the stream you return to Berkeley and the street becomes Vermont Avenue at the next intersection. As you go around the curve after passing the front of 360 Rugby, you will come to a view of the back yard of this home at the large gate, featuring a very impressive “tree house.”

On the other side on the southeast corner at the next sharp turn is an English style 1928 house at 401 Vermont with some diamond paned windows. Then on the right between 400 and 402 Vermont (16) there are some statues in the garden and lots of native oak trees although they seem to be suffering from disease. At 409 Vermont on the left there is a glassed in front porch and three Jerkinhead gables.

Along the right side houses such as 424, 438, 442, 446, 456, 470, 474 and 484 Vermont (17-18) have various period revival details that give them a certain charm with a vaguely rural English air about them. They were all built between 1923 and 1931 and would seem to have been done by the same builder due to similarities in style and



materials but each one is unique. At 474 Vermont in the garden there is a large ceramic vase with a water feature bubbling out the top and recirculating underground.

At 499 Vermont (19) on the left is a contemporary style 1978 house in wood with a complex roof design and some tall glass windows on the right side. Lots of bamboo and horsetail ferns have been planted in the yard and near the street. Hopefully they will not be too much of a problem as they spread; there are also two giant sequoia trees in the front yard. Turn left up Colorado Avenue. Along the first part of the block area a couple of strawberry trees (*arbutus unedo*) with bell-shaped pink flowers (blooming in summer) and red peeling bark. As you go left on Michigan there are several pink flowering plum trees (generally blooming in late January or February).

There is a nice mix of houses in differing styles on this street including 432 Michigan in European half-timber style from 1930 with a curving roofline over the left front window that features leaded muntions in the upper part, 429 Michigan on the opposite side in 1936 Streamline Moderne with a porthole window and 415 Michigan (20) in Spanish Eclectic, built in 1934, with two wooden balconies.

At the end go right uphill on Maryland Avenue. The last house on the right at 98 Maryland has a native plant garden on both sides of the sidewalk featuring pink flowering currant, coffee berry, manzanita, grape vine, black sage, yarrow, sagebrush and red-flowered hummingbird sage. Go right on Kentucky Avenue. Many people illegally park their cars here obstructing the public sidewalk so make your way as best you can. At the end of the block turn left up the continuation of Michigan Avenue, noting a 1929 Tudor house across the street at 478 Michigan with half timbering and cute gables and another Tudor with storybook elements at 486 Michigan. It was built in 1928 and more recently renovated while preserving period features. Beyond that at 500 Michigan (21) a 1991 house has modern elements such as severe walls and contemporary window designs but also has elements that give a classical ambiance such as columns, trellises and a pitched roof.



**478 Michigan Avenue**

At Spruce Street at the top of the block turn left. You can either follow Spruce back up to the starting point or if you want a slightly more devious route cross later to turn right up Alta and then left on Cragmont and left on Grizzly Peak back to the start.

## Walk 29

# Along the Berkeley Albany Border

**Overview:** The Berkeley Albany border runs partly along Codornices Creek but also jogs north from the creek near the intersection of Monterey Avenue and Hopkins Street. The neighborhood in this corner of Albany and across the border in north Berkeley provides a lovely place to walk. There are tree-lined streets, well kept gardens, and a variety of residences, mostly built in the early part of the twentieth century (and often renovated in later years). There is only a modest amount of up and down, mainly due to a little hill that pops up between Albany Hill and the main line of the Berkeley hills.

**Highlights:**

- \* Delightful streets with a variety of residential architecture
- \* Attractive gardens and street trees, many featuring fine autumn tints
- \* A hidden small park in Albany, little known to most Berkeley residents

**Distance:** 3.1 miles; 1.4 miles with shortcut

**Elevation gain:** 400 feet; 190 feet with shortcut

**Getting there:** Start at the corner of Madera Street and Merced Street, just off Colusa Avenue in North Berkeley. Bus lines such as 18 from downtown Berkeley BART go to Solano Avenue or park on the various side streets in the area which generally do not have many parking restrictions; however, do pay attention to signs.

This is a very good walk from October to early December with here and there sweetgum trees, ginkgoes, Japanese maple, persimmon, and others displaying their colorful leaves. In late winter to early spring there are also flowering magnolia, camellia, plum and cherry trees. Many of the street names are for California cities and counties, part of the unsuccessful effort in 1908 to move the state capital to Berkeley.

Head south on Merced Street noting first at 1003 Merced (1) an unusual 1924 house in stucco and brown shingle that has some Craftsman elements such as the artful window lattices but also a rather classical symmetry and a columned inset porch. Two lots farther along a 1913 Craftsman at 1015 Merced underwent substantial renovation in 2015 though still retaining some Craftsman features. Quite a few other houses on this walk also have seen recent renovation, often including significant expansion.

There are a number of brown shingle and craftsman houses along this block as well as many attractive gardens such as those at 1020, 1024, 1027, 1034, 1038 and 1042



Merced. In fact intensely landscaped gardens are a feature throughout the walk; grass lawns are not the norm. The California bungalow at 1031 Merced was renovated with a strikingly colorful facade. The street goes up and down over a small hill and the latter part of the street is lined with camphor trees with their shiny leaves that are fragrant when crushed.

Farther along at 1060 Merced (2) on the right is a fairly large 1920 house for which the former porch or sun room on the south side was glassed in almost from floor to ceiling in a recent renovation that also added skylights. The back yard of the corner house next to this one (1749 Sonoma Avenue) has an unusual garden structure in wood and translucent glass that is rather mysterious as to its purpose.



Turn right on Sonoma, lined with camphors, and then right again on Sierra Street. This street rises to the top of the hill which stands out in front of the main slope of the Berkeley hill area. Perhaps a hint of why this little hill juts up here is in the geology that is visible at the top of the hill at 1055 Sierra (3). Many layers of a sedimentary rock called chert are turned up at a sharp angle creating a base for the front yard. Formed by the laying down of countless tiny sea creatures about 115 million years ago, this rock was later shoved into California when tectonic plates collided. The rock is said to be very colorful near dusk and some of it has turned into quartz.



**1055 Sierra chert**

Also note the street trees with small bright green leaves that turn a bronze color in autumn. Across the street from 1055 Sierra is a fairly large house at 1042 Sierra where you can see by looking past the sides of the house that there is enough of a hill here to give the houses on that side of Sierra a fine panoramic bay view. Farther along 1026 Sierra (4) is a brown shingle 1916 Craftsman with large multi-pane windows and a prominent porch structure featuring wood and brick. 1020 Sierra is a 1918 house that is another Craftsman, this time in stucco with a long flower box under the first floor row of windows and a wide second floor dormer window.

In front of these houses are several Chinese pistache trees with their long narrow leaves that turn bright colors of yellow, orange and vermilion in autumn. At 1000 Sierra on the southwest corner with Madera is a 1915 house in dark gray painted wooden shingles that has a marbled brick-red rock outcropping in the front yard and a chimney and porch wall made from large rounded rocks done in a style that makes the house somewhat reminiscent of historic state or national park structures.

Go left on Madera and then left again on Tulare Avenue. At 967 Tulare (5) on the left the 1925 half timbered house and garage and the colorful garden with many succulents have considerable charm. The house at 974 Tulare on the right has a huge old wisteria over the front porch that usually blooms around March/April. 983 Tulare also have lots of succulents and cacti in a terraced garden

Go right on Sonoma with a view of Albany Hill off in the distance. At this point you have crossed the border into Albany. The house on the northwest corner with Ventura Avenue at 1613 Sonoma (6) was remodeled and expanded but retained many of the beautiful Craftsman features on the exterior and the interior including a stone chimney. The three gables get larger as they rise one above the other facing Sonoma. Turn right on Ventura.



**963 Ventura with palm**

The 1916 stucco craftsman (7) at 963 Ventura has a pergola type porch and a sympathetic second floor addition from a later renovation. It also features a giant Canary Island palm in the front yard as well as large rocks sitting next to the sidewalk. There are lots of sweetgums on the second half of the block that turn brilliant colors in autumn.

Go left on Marin Avenue, noting how the street curves because it follows the former creek bed of Marin Creek, now buried in a culvert. Turn left on Ordway Street where there are some Bradford ornamental pear trees whose leaves turn bright red in autumn.

Then pass a towering deodar cedar at 949 Ordway (8) with its vertically upright cones. A nice succulent garden is at 955 Ordway. Another deodar cedar can be seen in front of 968 Ordway (9) farther along on the right with a fairly typical feature of big upright branches so that it seems to have multiple trunks.

The trees are native to the western Himalayans and the name comes from a Sanskrit term meaning wood of the gods.

If you need to cut short the walk at this point where there is the **O** symbol on the map, go left on Sonoma and left again several blocks later on Merced back to the start.

To continue the walk, cross Sonoma to proceed on Ordway. The 1922 Spanish style stucco house at 1014 Ordway (10) has a square wooden window bay with a tiled roof over it. Another Spanish style house is across the street at 1017 Ordway. The 1916 Craftsman at 1031 Ordway has a fairly unique arched window in the second floor dormer with stucco pilasters on each side. There are a lot of low rise bungalows in this area that subsequently acquired pop-up second floors.

Go right on Manor Way. a signed public pathway next to the driveway of 1032 Ordway, and then turn right on Peralta Avenue passing a number of evergreen magnolia trees with shiny leaves and large white flowers. Peralta is named for the family that had the huge Spanish land grant in this area. More succulent gardens are at 1025 (11) and 1021 Peralta. At the bottom of the hill the 1925 house at 1005 Peralta is one of several on the street that has a five sided bay window.



Cross Sonoma to continue on Peralta. A huge long-needle pine tree is on the left and a number of ginkgoes line the street, mainly on the right side, with their fan shaped leaves that turn golden around November. The third house on the left at 990 Peralta (12) is a 1915 shingled Craftsman with an impressive multi-paned window, a raised central roof section and large, tapered stucco porch piers.



**990 Peralta**

On the right side 963 Peralta (13) is a cute California bungalow from 1933 with large medieval style metal hinges on the front door. At 957 Peralta a 1918 Craftsman has a brick front porch that continues around the left side and an angled bay window facing the front that is unusual for this style. There is also a very slightly raised central portion of the roof that seems rather strange as it is not a dormer window and the purpose is rather unclear. Unfortunately shrubbery hides much of the house. Then at 949 Peralta is a 1924 white stucco house set back above numerous landscaped terraces faced in white stucco that step up the hillside and feature a stairway finished in earth colored tiles.

At Marin note that on the continuation of Peralta across the street there is a another line of ginkgo trees that sport golden leaves in autumn. Go left on Marin past some large, gnarly-trunked London plane street trees; then turn left on Neilson Street.

Uphill on the left at 961 Neilson (14) is a more contemporary design flat-roofed house from the early date of 1925 for this style that has some tiles embedded in the front wall and repeated painted designs on the upper floor. Opposite at 970 Neilson the 1922 house has large and small gables facing the street and a brick arch in the wall over the main window. 965 and 967 Neilson have an unusual wall texture of raised patches of stucco that look as if something was embedded in the wall, but actually they are just good trowel work by the plasterers according to the owners of one of the homes. Go right and then left across Sonoma to continue on Neilson, which jogs to the west here; there are more Craftsman style houses in the next couple of blocks. At 1025 Neilson (15) is a Spanish style home with an unusual parabolic entryway. Continue to 1083 Neilson to see fantastical mosaics of plants and animals around the entryway.

Backtrack a bit and go right onto Terrace Street, noting a tall California desert fan palm in front of 1506 Terrace. Just beyond on the right side enter Jewel's Terrace Park. It is a rather little known mid-block park with two sets of playground equipment, picnic tables, a grassy lawn, a basketball court and two tennis courts. A city website



says the history is not clear but that it was probably Albany's first park. The most intriguing feature is the mosaic mural on the wall of the restroom building portraying



**Terrace Park mosaic**

bits of local history and Albany residents. It was done in 2007 by Josef Norris and includes dozens of tiles hand painted by the community. The park is often fairly busy on weekends with kids in the playground, dogs chasing balls on the lawn and perhaps families or a party group having a picnic or barbecue.

To leave the park take the path toward the opposite end of the park and then over to the path on the left of the tennis courts which turns into an alley (Tevlin Street). Cross Francis Street and go down the south section of Tevlin, which dead-ends, just to see the infill development done in the mid-1980s at 1080-1100 Tevlin (16). The architecture is not splashy but it is a good example of how to make housing more affordable with a slight increase in density and overall it is a quiet development that has aged fairly well. The houses have been fitted in carefully including two duplexes at the end.

Return to Francis and go right to Peralta and this time right or south on Peralta. At 1100 Peralta (17) you can see where Codornices creek flows through a ravine alongside the house that has a long wooden railing and there is a large native buckeye tree along the left bank. The creek forms the boundary between Berkeley and Albany in this area. Now return back on Peralta, passing a traffic island on the opposite side and at 1086 Peralta very carefully cross Peralta to go along the left side of Posen which angles off to the northeast.

Proceed on Posen past Ordway to Ventura where you can see off to the right some of St Mary's College High School buildings and the stadium. Turn left on Ventura Avenue noting that the initial houses on the right (east) side are on angled lots to conform to Posen Avenue rather than to Ventura whereas on the left side the lot lines follow the normal pattern of perpendicular to the street they face. At 1042 Ventura on the left there is a large but squat Canary Island palm and another is at 1038 Ventura (18) which also features bamboo growing in clumps along the path called Manor Way. Opposite 1030 Ventura the house at 1041 Ventura angles from right to left so that the subsequent homes and their lots now line up directly perpendicular to Ventura. 1016 Ventura has giant yuccas in the front yard.

Go right on Beverly Place (named for an early Berkeley mayor) and the second house on the left side at 1503 Beverly (19) is a 1918 two story wood-sided house with shutters

and a pergola-like porch with columns, elements of American Colonial style that make an uncommon design for this neighborhood. At 1515 Beverly (20) there is a 1922 Craftsman with stucco on the first floor and brown shingle on the set back upper floor. Next to it on the right at 1517 is a 1921 house that has been renovated in unique fashion; it has a front deck with an angled projecting bay and jerkin head roofline above it.



**1517 Beverly Place**

Crossing an invisible line back into Berkeley, farther along at 1548 Beverly (21) there is a beautiful large ginkgo tree in the front yard that turns brilliant yellow around November or so and at 1554 Beverly the house has yard ornaments, toys set out for children and a community bulletin board in front. At Monterey Avenue

turn right and then at Posen proceed to the large triangular median where there is a crosswalk to go over Monterey, taking care as it is a complex intersection and cars tend not to make proper stops. On the other side continue away from Monterey on the right side of Posen. Between Carlotta and Colusa are some impressive sweetgum trees that have long lasting colors in autumn.

Crossing at the intersection with Colusa Avenue, the street going forward becomes Colusa; it soon curves sharply to the left. There is a 1914 two story Craftsman house at 1181 Colusa (22) on the curve with painted shingle siding and an impressive gothic style wooden front door. Next to it is 1177 Colusa from 1925 also with a lovely front door, in this case with an oval glass design, as well as a finely detailed front window. Then 1175 Colusa, a Craftsman from 1912, has walls of stucco and brown shingle and a central entry way with facing benches that is inset farther back between two gabled wings.

Continue on Colusa uphill after the curve and cross Beverly Place, There are a number of Craftsman houses in this area and other attractive designs such as at the four corners of Colusa and Sonoma. Cross katy corner to the northwest corner and continue on Colusa. In the next block 1118 Colusa (23) hosts an amazing sculpture garden, which changes from time to time and may include a Japanese samurai with armor of disposable lighters, a figure made from fishnet floats, hardhats hanging from the tree, a large collection of faces in diverse materials and many others; in fact they seem to be increasing as time goes by. According to the artist, Mark Olivier, the sculptures are almost entirely made from objects found at or near the shoreline — a great example of creative reuse. Some neighboring homes also have sculptures from the same innovative sculptor such as the front wall sculpture at 1114 Colusa and ground hugging creatures



**1118 Colusa Ave**

made from billed caps at 1106 Colusa.

Cross Monterey at the stop sign and walk through the triangular median to carefully cross the right turn lane as cars tend to be going a little too fast here. The lane exists from when commuter trains turned from Monterey onto Colusa. Continue north on Colusa passing curlicue pruned Italian cypress trees at 1030 Colusa (24) to reach Madera and go left a few steps to the starting point.



## Walk 30

# Changing Southwest Berkeley

**Overview:** West Berkeley was the first Anglo settled area of the city and from early on became a location for many industries due to the flat land and convenience for transport. Homes, particularly for workers, were built near the factories. However since World War II the area has gone through major change as big industries departed. The juxtaposition of specialty industries, offices, new multi-unit housing, older homes, retail shops, artisan studios and old and new architecture make it a fun area to explore.

**Highlights:**

- \* Interesting specialty industries, retail shops and artisan studios
- \* A variety of architecture: old and new, commercial and residential
- \* Reminders of the historic past such as railroad tracks, repurposed buildings

**Distance:** 3.3 miles; 1.3 miles with shortcut

**Elevation gain:** 30-50 feet

**Getting there:** start at the southwest corner of Dwight Way and San Pablo Avenue, accessible by AC Transit lines such as 72. Parking is available on some side streets but check signs for time limits, etc.

The first Anglo-settled place in what is now Berkeley around the 1850s was just a little north of this area where Strawberry Creek entered the bay; it was called Ocean View. Western Berkeley developed into an industrial area in contrast to the somewhat later campus and downtown area. In 1919 there were 130 manufacturing plants in Berkeley and by 1923 the total had risen to 198. During the 1930s the WPA (Works Progress Administration) made a dike fill for a highway next to the bay which also created Aquatic Park.

A movement called Save Ocean View in the 1970s eventually led to some protection for historic resources in the West Berkeley plan of 1993. The area contains industrial zoning as well as mixed use industrial and residential. There has been an effort to protect small industry by some citizens as the city now seems to prefer expansion of commercial sites, offices and condos at the expense of industry. Nevertheless, industry provides needed jobs and services and is an important part of the community.



Walk south on San Pablo, with the hills to your left. San Pablo is Alameda county's oldest named road, though it was originally called Contra Costa Road (against the coast) and the current name refers to the fact that the road originally went from the Rancho San Pablo in present day El Cerrito to the family hacienda of Spanish land grant holder Peralta in what is now Fruitvale. The first block along the west side has a fairly vibrant, pedestrian-friendly ambiance reflecting good urban design. This means buildings that come up to the sidewalk with lots of glass windows and entrances as well as wide sidewalks, street trees, sidewalk tables and a parking lane acting as a buffer between pedestrians and traffic. The lively node includes Cafe Chiave on the Dwight corner, restaurants, non-profit organizations, diverse retail shops and so on. The opposite east side seems less vibrant and has had more difficulty keeping the lesser number of storefronts occupied.

In particular the renovated building in the first block at 2530 San Pablo (1) is the home



**2530 San Pablo Avenue**

of the Ecology Center, which runs Berkeley's farmers markets, its recycling program as well as classes and workshops and other activities "to inspire and build a sustainable, healthy and just future" and the building is also the location of the Yoga Room.

Just after Parker Street is a Kaiser Permanente Berkeley Medical Office which has an official address of 2121 10th Street on the other side of the block but the three story building also has an entrance on the San Pablo side. It opened in 2021 on the site of a

former industrial facility and vacant lot where Urban Adamah had its farm before moving to Sixth and Harrison Streets.

Then at 2700 San Pablo (3) at the southwest corner with Carleton (a street that jogs at this point) is an example of the recent trend to build mixed use buildings in this area. Aventerra Apartments was designed by David Baker in somewhat of an industrial style and built in 2008 with 30 standard apartments as well as four live-work units on the first floor that feature high ceilings and doors onto the street; there is also a corner commercial space and in front are corrugated metal planter boxes.

Opposite 2700 San Pablo look across the street and up Derby Street which goes east from San Pablo to see the ginkgo trees all along both sides of Derby. They turn a golden color in late autumn but have attractive branch patterns even in winter. At the next corner at 2730 San Pablo is the Barkmoor Dog Daycare and Hotel. After that is the Rad Power electric bike shop, a spiffy looking store.

Satellite Affordable Housing Associates has built affordable housing at 2740-48 San Pablo (4) at the northwest corner with Grayson Street. Called Grayson Street Apartments it is a four story building with ground floor commercial space and 23 one and two-bedroom apartments available to people who meet certain lesser income requirements. On the other side at 2747 San Pablo is Bloom Condos Berkeley, a five story condominium building with five commercial spaces and 39 units.



At 2810 San Pablo is Vital Vittles, an artisan mill and bakery emphasizing organic hand-made bread loaves though it does wholesale and not any retail sale at this location. After 46 years in business it was scheduled to close in 2023 but was taken over by Alta Mira Baking Company and kept in business. At 2818 San Pablo is one of the few remaining much older houses (from 1903) along this part of San Pablo that is now home to the Manzanita Wellness Clinic and Collective. Numerous auto repair shops, sign makers and printers are also found in this area.

After crossing Heinz Street the whole next block is the very impressive former Heinz Building (5) at 2900 San Pablo; it was constructed in Mediterranean style in 1927-28 featuring a red tile roof, rich ornamentation, an arched loggia in the central section and large multipane windows. The architect was Albert Kahn who did many industrial buildings around the country. In addition to office space it encompassed a major factory, producing up to 28 of H.J. Heinz' 57 varieties of foods. Production was moved to Tracy in 1956 and the complex was renovated to provide retail shops and office space. It is worth walking to mid-block to see the ornate central entrance.



**Entry to former Heinz building**

The landmarked building is well maintained and landscaped and is now called the Berkeley Business Center. One tenant is the Kala Art Institute which provides Artist-in-Residence and Fellowship programs as well as exhibits and educational programs for the community. There are studios with an array of equipment for printmaking, photography, book arts and digital media.

Another tenant is Meyer Sound Laboratories which has an office back at 2832 San Pablo but the production and shipping are in the old Heinz building. Helen and John Meyer founded the company in 1979 to provide high quality products for sound reinforcement and recording sold internationally with a focus on performing arts. Return to Heinz Avenue, cross it and turn left. Meyer Sound has its shipping and receiving department at 1080 Heinz and you may be able to see inside if the large door is open on the south side of Heinz. On the left a small building is brightly painted with strange characters. According to a plaque it is a Rama mural by Berkeley artist Amrita Singhal,

following the mediation of repeated writing of Rama who represents goodness, desxxx and courage. It was formerly Sam's 58 Club but now owned by Meyer Sound Laboratories.

Turn right on 10th Street. At 2818 10th (6) is a 1921 wood frame house that was raised up and at 2816 a two story home also from 1921; then at 2812 10th is yet another 1921 house of uncertain style but with unusual brick pilasters and a Craftsman style window on the right front. At the next intersection on the northeast corner at 1027 Grayson is a simple 1911 Colonial Revival house. Beyond that to the east (toward San Pablo) at 1035 Grayson is a red and white one-story building marked CEID. This is the Center for Early Intervention on Deafness which emphasizes education and therapy.

Continuing north on 10th at 2741 10th is Tippett Studio (7), which does stop-motion animation, computer graphics and other visual effects and film services. Founded in 1984 by Phil Tippett it employs a large number of artists in Berkeley and has worked on many films such as *Jurassic Park*, *Starship Troopers*, *Star Wars*, *Hellboy*, etc. It has won two academy awards and other accolades and has an office in Toronto as well as Berkeley. The building appears to be a converted older industrial structure with a large sliding metal door and now sports a mirror glass entryway when that is open.

Pardee Street is named for the Progressive Era California governor and later EBMUD president George Pardee. At 2709 10th are back-to-back loft style condos (8) from 2004 that go up the equivalent of 3 floors above the ground level parking and feature some high ceiling internal spaces and wraparound decks. The exterior has a retro industrial look from the use of gray stucco and corrugated metal in the siding. Two more

buildings in similar style are behind 2709. In this area industrial, office and residential uses are often mixed together on a given block. Next 2703 10th with the name Oceanworks is actually an auto repair shop.



**Concrete grid form building**

1025 Carleton at the northeast corner is a concrete grid form building. This style of construction was developed around the same time by two different local groups in the 1930s and 1940s, one of them including architect Bernard Maybeck. Diamond shaped openings with glass blocks are included in the concrete lattice and it was used mainly for industrial buildings, primarily found in West Berkeley.

The Kaiser Permanente Medical Office that we saw earlier is on the right side. It offers adult and family care, pediatrics, mental health and wellness, a pharmacy etc. The



property previously had an old industrial building and then was the site of Urban Adams farm that subsequently moved to xx and 4th.

On the left or west side of 10th Street is a parking lot and beyond that a blockish 1971 tall structure (9) and 1980 tower that was the former home of Fantasy Records (address is 2600 10th). The company is best known for recordings of jazz musicians such as Dave Brubeck, comedian Lenny Bruce and rock band Credence Clearwater Revival. It is now called the Zaentz Media Center which is unusually tall for west Berkeley. Saul Zaentz and others purchased the company from the founders Mel and Sol Weiss in 1967 and for many years was embroiled in disputes with CCR's leader John Fogerty (the structures here were called the building that CCR built). Zaentz was also a leading movie producer with three Best Picture Academy Awards. The part of the building as you approach the corner has an ugly wall with embedded rounded stones and no windows, not a very good sidewalk interface, especially when compared to the Heinz Building on San Pablo.

Cross Parker Street, noting how the Bank of America entrance faces a parking lot rather opening to a sidewalk on either side of the block. Parker is named for early Berkeley town trustee George F. Parker. At 2514 10th (10) on the left a contemporary style two-unit house that steps back up in stages to a fourth floor. It involves 1995 and 2010 drastic remakes of a 1923 residence. Due to the narrowness of the lot it has an awkward side garage that would seem difficult to get in and out of.

If you are short of time, just go right on Dwight back to the start from O on the map.

To continue the walk turn left on Dwight and then left on 9th Street. On the west side are some converted older industrial buildings such as the Parker Plaza Office Complex (11) at 2550-60 9th.

There seem to be small tech companies, professional offices and many others in the buildings along this block. There are also some retail businesses including the Tarocco, a Barcelona-inspired cafe at the northwest corner of Parker Street and 9th. Overall the street trees, mainly a species of ash, and new and old buildings with lots of windows create a pleasant ambiance on the west side.



Offices on 9th Street

At the southwest corner at 950 Parker (12) is the 1925 Pacific Electric Clock Building; it was for many years home to Nolo (formerly Nolo Press) a publisher of do-it-yourself



legal books and software which closed this brick and mortar store. Just beyond that building to the right at 940 Parker and set well back from the street is Cellarmaker Brewery Company which also has a taproom.

Whether or not you are sampling brews, continue past Parker on 9th Street and the back of the Fantasy Records/Zaents Media Center tower is on the left with another rock-embedded wall, this time with windows. The building owner is changing from media production to tech xx. Farther along 9th at the southwest corner with Carleton Street at 2700 9th Street is Berkeley Humane (13) which emphasizes cat and dog adoption programs. On the northwest corner is long-standing Juan's Place Mexican Food. On the Southeast corner is a Kaiser employee parking lot with a big, colorful mural on one wall facing the lot.

One block further on at the northwest corner with Pardee Street at 2712-22 9th, is a building of condos and live work units built in 1993. At the southwest corner at 2730 9th is the Acme Bread Company facility (14) which bakes bread here. The one-story building has lots of solar panels on the roof and you can perhaps peak in some of the windows to see the bakers at work. On the opposite side at 2743 9th is Panache Lighting which designs and fabricates new lighting fixtures (often from old materials) and refurbishes antique lighting. The owner was previously the owner of Omega Lighting & Design, where many of her products are still sold.

Next door on the northeast corner with Grayson Avenue at 2777 9th are the 1989 Brickside Lofts (15), a conversion of an older building to 21 live work units featuring high ceilings and skylights for artisans and others. This area is called the Potter Creek District. Potter Creek is one of the smallest of half a dozen historic creeks in Berkeley and like most of the others is mainly a "ghost" creek now found only in culverts. Codornices Creek, which can be enjoyed in a *Berkeley Walks* chapter is the only one to remain largely in a natural state above ground.



**933-35 Grayson Street**

Go to the right (west) from the next corner where at 933-35 Grayson in a contemporary style building from 2004 is John Phillips Harpsichords which produces high quality harpsichords in various styles per year as well as doing repairs on instruments. The work is mainly done in a beautiful high ceiling studio on the upper level of this live/work building. As part of the same complex at 935 Grayson, John's wife Dr. Susanne Hering is president of Aerosol Dynamics which specializes in the measurement of airborne particles. This short lit-

the block has a very desirable ambiance with several residences and large shade trees including sweet gums with brilliant autumn colors.

Return to the corner of 9th street where there are historic residences from 1904 on both the southwest and southeast corners though the one on the southeast corner at 1002-04 Grayson better retains its Colonial Revival Details.

Continuing south on 9th from Grayson some of the residences in the next block have been recently restored and renovated. The right side of the street like several blocks in this area is planted with ornamental pink-flowering plum trees that bloom around late February, early March. As you approach Heinz on the left there is a large modern playground of the Berkeley Ecole Bilingue. On the right at 2830 9th Street is the Global Montessori International School in an older commercial building. Then the building on the northeast corner of Heinz and 9th is now part of the school (16) but was originally the Walker L. Thomas Building of 1915, designed by John Hudson Thomas as a store and home for the owner of the San Francisco Sulphur Co. It is in Dutch Colonial Style with gambrel roof and half timbering; in 1977 it was converted to be part of the French/English school and has a very bright color scheme.



**Ecole Bilingue Historic Building**

You can go a bit left on 9th to see how the school has expanded and renovated with extensive buildings, gardens etc. On the opposite side of Heinz to the southwest is the giant Berkeley Bowl West store (17), the second after the original store on south Shattuck. It is very popular..

Go west (toward the bay) on Heinz, crossing 8th Street and past the former Scharffenberger Chocolate building on the left in brick and corrugated metal. It was originally the San Francisco Sulphur Company factory. On the ground floor corner is the Mintleaf Vietnamese restaurant.

Cross 7th Street at the signal and continue on Heinz past some newer buildings of the Aquatic Park Center, to see on the left side the Durkee Margarine building (18) at 800 Heinz. It is an Art Deco red brick industrial building that formerly provides live work lofts for artisans and others and now is part of the Aquatic Park Center. Durkee Famous Foods had manufacturing in this area comprising ten buildings built between 1916 to 1941 spread over five acres and thus it was a major national food manufacturing site similar to that of Heinz. All the facilities were closed in 1984 and only two

buildings remain. The Margarine Building was designed by Trygve Ronneberg in 1929. A restaurant, Riva Cucina, is in the rear of the ground floor. Note the decorative details at the northwest corner of the building near the entrance.

Farther along is a new structure with industrial/lab space where Durkee had its Copra Warehouse. The historic structure in unreinforced masonry was impressively tall; the edifice was a city landmark but deemed seismically unsafe and was demolished after a long controversy about saving it. The new structure attempts to pay homage to the old in its use of brick siding and a style slightly mimicking that of the period.

Return up Heinz to 7th, cross it and go left a little ways to see the former Inkworks Press building (19) at 2827 7th with its dynamic and colorful murals on the front walls. It was founded in 1974 as a worker collective that claimed to be a sustainable printing



**Inkworks Press building**

organization for peace and justice. The building is for sale so hard to say how long the mural will last.

Return to Heinz and go left and then left again at 8th. Berkeley Bowl has a second big parking lot in what was an auto junkyard on the east side. Along 8th are some residences in various older and newer styles. Gardensia Archipelago Designs (20) on the left side at 2820 8th Street features statues and other tropical garden ornaments in stone, teak and metal—mainly from the islands of Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries—and is worth a peak if open. More garden ori-

ented business are to the right of it.

Continuing along 8th Street on the southeast corner at 926 Grayson (21) the 1921 house has an amusing pop-up second floor (probably added later). The northwest corner has another part of Ecole Bilingue. On the northeast corner at 927 Grayson are some contemporary residences remodeled in 2009 from an older building in a more traditional style with peaked roofs, wood and stucco siding.

In the next block on the right at 2741 8th is Adams and Chittenden Scientific Glass Coopertive(22) which manufactures scientific glass. They use mainly borosilicate or Pyrex glass to make a wide variety of glassware for laboratory use and other applications. This is another good example of the specialty manufacturing that remains in West Berkeley even after some big industries like food processing have departed.

The next block after Pardee features many newer residential buildings. At 915-925 Pardee (23) on the northwest corner of Pardee with 8th are a number of live-work con-



dos in a bright contemporary style from 2004. On the northeast corner at 2723-25 8th and 927 Pardee the residences built in 2000 have very high ceilings on the second floor with huge windows and rear interior lofts.

Farther along on the left is one development called 8th Street Lofts from 2002 that has three sets of condos, each designed by a different architect. First at 2720-26 8th on the are three story buildings with large windows that also feature a high ceiling loft style space. The next two sets of buildings at 2700-2706 8th and 924-30 Carleton are two residential complexes that feature red walls and some common design features but also some differences in design; trees and other landscaping spill over the sidewalk. Many of the residential developments in this area of Berkeley have a kind of retro industrial appearance in some of the architectural elements such as the large multi-pane windows and the use of metal siding.

At the southeast corner with Carleton 2701 8th is a landmarked building with some controversy. It was originally the Standard Die and Specialty Co. built in 1926 with patterned brick and ample industrial windows. In more recent times for more than three decades it housed the Nexus Gallery and Collective, a non-profit providing art and artisan workspaces. However, the building was owned by the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society which decided to evict Nexus. The tenants applied to have the building landmarked but the Berkeley Landmark Protection Ordinance legally preserves only the structure not the uses and Nexus was forced out anyway.



**2701 8th Street**

The building was sold in 2010 to Jonah Hendrickson who renovated and did a seismic upgrade, preserving the historic facade to turn it into The Berkeley Kitchens with 15 commercial kitchens for up and coming (incubator) and retail food purveyors as well as some artist studio spaces. There is a first floor cafe that includes outdoor dining on former parking spaces.

Continuing on 8th all along the right is an old industrial building with most of the wall in large windows with small panes. At the end of the block at the southeast corner with Parker the building is rounded which seems strange until you note the remaining railroad tracks now embedded in asphalt going around the corner. A few of the many spur rails connecting industrial sites to the Southern Pacific main line can still be found in west Berkeley though they are not in use anymore; the shape of this building is one

reminder of the railway history. The trains ran right next to the building with its raised loading platforms.

On the southwest corner at 918 Parker (24) is a renovated historic building that now provides office space for Supervillain, a strategic marketing and creative partnership company. The building was originally designed by William Wharff in 1906 and was at first the location of J.J.Pfister Knitting Co. During a more recent renovation the earlier shingles were removed to become stucco siding, but some historic features remain such as the window framing and the cornice details. There are London plane (sycamore) trees lining part of Parker and the next block of 8th Street with their big maple-like leaves and peeling multi-colored bark.

Go left on Parker one block to 7th Street. Across the street is an entrance to the Bayer HealthCare campus (25), the biggest private employer in Berkeley. There are hundreds of personnel on 43 acres. In 1903 the site was initially Cutter Analytical Laboratory which was an early developer of vaccines and had a key role in supplying plasma during WWII. It became Miles Cutter Laboratories and in 1974 the German pharmaceutical and biotech giant Bayer AG bought Miles Cutter and made this into a major research and production facility for biotechnology focused on several important treatments for hemophilia for which a \$100 million test facility was opened in 2017. The company had also purchased an additional 15 acres from the old Colgate-Palmolive site. The complex includes both historic and newer buildings. Return to 8th Street and go left.

Along 8th beyond Parker on the right side the brick and wood building was the Kawneer Manufacturing Co. plant (26) from 1914 where display windows were made. It is commonly referred to as the Sawtooth Building because the roof shape which provides numerous skylights facing north to bring light into the industrial facility while limiting direct sunlight. Since 1972 it has been home to artist and artisan studios. The angled roof sections facing south are covered in solar panels.



**The Sawtooth Building**

Turn right at Dwight to return to the starting point noting between 8th and 9th on the left (north) side a giant araucaria tree.