

# MORE BERKELEY WALKS- SERIES 7

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 40- NORTH CRAGMONT

This North Berkeley neighborhood walk in the hills mainly follows the contours but also has some up and down. It features a variety of architecture on tree lined streets, including Storybook style and there is also one of the rock parks to explore 2.3 miles; 450 feet elevation gain



## WALK 41- KENSINGTON PARK



In the unincorporated area just north of Berkeley the walk starts at a small commercial area and then descends through streets laid out in the early 1900s by an English surveyor. Many UC people and others from Berkeley moved here after the 1923 fire. There are some fun public paths and occasional fine views. 2-2.5 miles 500-600 feet elevation gain.

## WALK 42- UPPER ROCKRIDGE

Just north of Berkeley and Rockridge BART station is an area of mainly Craftsman bungalows on tree lined streets off College Avenue, Going up into the hills reveals grand views and many homes built after the disastrous 1991 fire. 2.25-3.75 miles; 140-400 feet elevation gain.



## Walk 40

# North Cragmont

**Overview:** This neighborhood in the northeast Berkeley hills was primarily built out from the 1920s onward with curving streets generally following the contour of the hills. It tended to be more auto dependent and favored somewhat modest homes in the styles popular at the time such as Storybook, Spanish, English Tudor, and Craftsman but with a good variety and not at all cookie-cutter. The neighborhood has a very pleasant ambiance with occasional views (when not too foggy). There is enough up and down to get good exercise.

**Highlights:**

- \* Storybook homes developed by Jack Thornburg
- \* Generally quiet residential streets with flowering trees
- \* One of the striking rock parks

**Distance:** 2.3 miles

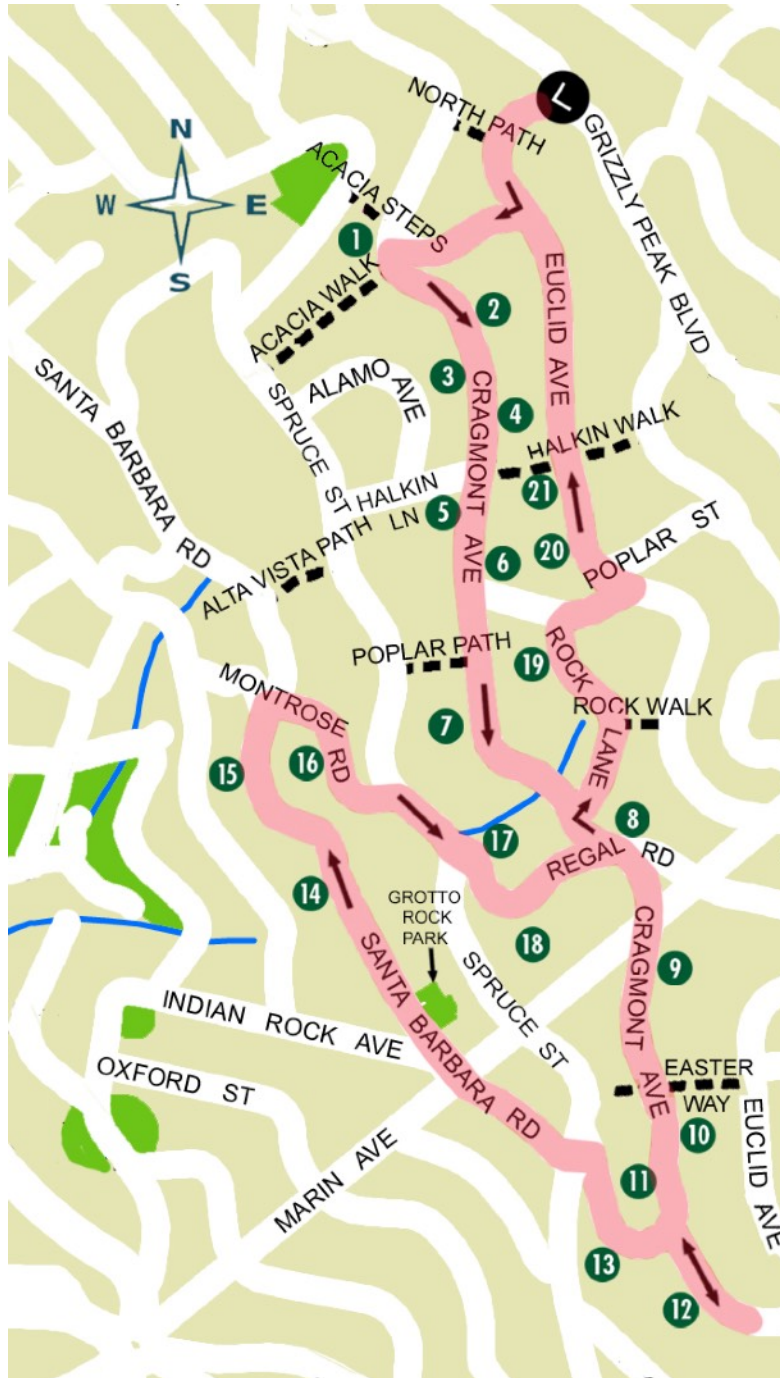
**Elevation gain:** 450 feet

**Getting there:** Start at the northwest corner of Euclid and Grizzly Peak Blvd,

Depending on the season there may be flowering ornamental plum trees, cherry blossom trees, rhododendrons or other attractive trees and plants to enjoy along this route. Walk down Euclid on the right side. There are two options. If you feel like stairs, after about five houses descend to the right on North Path (about 70 steps). Or you can walk a little farther to Acacia Avenue and descend to the right there. If you took the steps cross Cragmont Avenue and go left; or after descending Acacia Avenue also cross to the other side of Cragmont.

Virtually opposite Acacia at 604 Cragmont (1) is a charming 1929 English Tudor house with roughly hewn half-timbering, diamond pane windows, uneven shingles and a two part wooden door. This irregularity gives it the flavor of a Storybook house, a style that will be explored further on this walk.

Next door 610 Cragmont is a 1932 design by William Yelland, known for Storybook designs such as Normandy Village on Spruce near campus and the Tupper and Reade building on Shattuck. The house is asymmetrical with a very unusual zigzag central gable near the top of the roof, extremely varied window designs, and sections of irregular brick with imbedded stone and some half timbering. Moreover, the garden sports some very tall conifers and a number of sculptures with a fountain.



A little farther along 620 Cragmont on a steep lot is from 1937 in brick and stucco with some half timbering. It has a very steeply pitched roof as well. Next door at 630 Cragmont is a contemporary style home from 1998 that is a bit difficult to see due to the foliage but peeking between the trees you may see a cloud shaped window on the upper wall to the left of a type found in some Japanese Buddhist temples.

Across the street a bit farther along 639 Cragmont (2) is the first in a line of Storybook houses, all developed by Jack Thornburg. Storybook homes are also called Fairytale or



Hansel and Gretel style and refer to a certain fanciful rendition of houses and cottages one might expect to find in one of those stories. A good way to get a feel for this style is to look at this series of homes as well as 604 Cragmont at our first stop.

Jack Thornburg was the developer for Normandy Village (also called Thornburg Village) on Spruce Street just off of Hearst Avenue, a set of multi-unit buildings based on a style found in Normandy, France, that also have Storybook elements about them. The initial buildings there were designed by William Yelland, but Thornburg also designed parts of Normandy Village. That project dates from 1926-28, around the same time as the homes here. Jack Thornburg also designed some of the houses on Cragmont and was usually the builder as well as developer. This first one at 639 from 1925, however was designed and built by Herbert K. Schulz and is simpler in terms of features than some of the others.

Next door at 643 Cragmont, Thornburg was the architect, builder and developer. The 1926 house features a large main window and above that in the gable a mock dovecote. In Europe dovecotes can be seen in similar locations under the roofs or in separate structures. They were used to keep pigeons or doves, which were then readily available when desired to provide meat. From the openings in the dovecote also comes the word pigeonhole.



**643 Cragmont Avenue**

Frances G. Thornburg (Jack's wife) was the architect of 647 Cragmont from 1926 that features wavy lines in the rows of roof shingles and a small conical turret. It is actually the largest of this set of homes, built on a double lot. In more recent years it was renovated and significantly expanded to the right in a style similar to the original.

Next 657 Cragmont is built in 1926 like the others along this stretch, but the architect was Arthur Herberger. There is a large window under the front gable in a section which projects forward. In front of the house is a large deodar cedar tree

661 Cragmont is another Thornburg design and you can get a peak at the house set well back on the lot by looking up the driveway. The roofline comes down to curving eaves.

On the west side of the street 656 (3) and 660 Cragmont are not listed as part of the Thornburg development but both show elements of the Storybook style including such rustic window shutters and a dovecote.

667 Cragmont was designed by Frances G. Thornburg but is very difficult to see due to dense foliage; a bit of roof, an unusually shaped chimney and a turret-like feature can be seen beyond the fence above the garage. Jack Thornburg is the architect for 671 Cragmont which has the garage angling forward. The house has a complex massing with lots of dormers and gables; for some of the gables there is a design called jerkin head with a triangular section that comes partway down in front. 672 Cragmont from 1931 on the west side has a more Mediterranean style including a tile roof and a cylindrical entry turret

The 1929 house at 679 Cragmont (4) is not on the list of Thornburg homes but it is definitely Storybook and supposedly dubbed the Harry Potter House by local children.



**679 Cragmont Avenue**

The steep gables which turn upward and outward give almost the feel of Thai architecture. Moreover, the bargeboards (the wood pieces that run along under the eave) have a carved design that also gives the impression of Thai design. Further enhancing the house is the varied brickwork along the lower level.

Farther along 700 Cragmont (5) on the southwest corner with Halkin Lane has an intensely landscaped garden, which is typical of some other homes on this walk. Across from it 707 Cragmont on the left has somewhat more pronounced storybook features: fanciful brick and stone facing on the garage, small turrets and a curving stair. It is from 1928 and has seen recent renovation,

A couple of lots farther along 721 Cragmont is a renovated home with interesting features including a room above the storage area next to the garage which has a shed roof (with a single slant) containing a skylight and big windows on the north side. Next, 725 Cragmont is a renovated and

expanded house with terraces and large rocks. It was originally built in 1947.

There are a number of homes along the street that are not perhaps Storybook style but rather reminiscent of English country cottages and some with half timbering. These



include 726 and 732 Cragmont. Spanish eclectic and Mediterranean style homes are also common; the Spanish generally has wooden balconies.

735 Cragmont (6), on the northeast corner with Poplar Street, is a 1956 residence designed by Donald Olsen who taught at UC and was a noted practitioner of midcentury modern architecture. The home he designed and lived in for many years, located on San Diego Road, is a City of Berkeley landmark. This house has a wide veranda and tall windows/sliding doors all across the west side of the upper floor; Olsen also made suggestions for later renovations. The home can be seen to best effect if you go a little past it so you can see the side along Poplar as well as the west side.

Back on the west side of the street and farther along 752 Cragmont from 1928 features fascinating brickwork around the entrance. Then 760 Cragmont has a big deodar cedar in front of it and also a California desert fan palm near the street with old fronds hanging down like a gray beard. 770 Cragmont is in Streamline Moderne style with curved glass block windows on the south side. The 1929 Mediterranean style villa at 784 Cragmont (7) is set back in a big yard; the house has stucco walls and a red tile roof. The side yard helps to show that the house has a grand view.

Directly across from that house 785 Cragmont features two very big deodar cedars in the front yard; the one on the right has massive trunk and branches. Next door 793 Cragmont from 1937 is a nice Mediterranean style home with a big arched window and more arches on the porch and decorative ceramic tiles.

The homes at 801 and a few lots farther on at 825 Cragmont (from 1933-34) are both in Spanish eclectic style characterized by tile or red shingle roofs, stucco walls, arches and wooden balconies.

At the intersection with Regal Road cross in the crosswalk and go left a few steps on Cragmont to where you can look across to the left and uphill to see 875 (8) and 879 Regal Road. two larger Craftsman style houses with a retaining wall and garage facade both done in the same stone; the garage edifice is shared between the two houses. Both were built in 1913.



**Deodar Cedar at 785 Cragmont Avenue**

Bear right at the curve to stay on Cragmont. When you get to Marin Avenue carefully take the crosswalk (keeping in mind that some cars don't like to stop on Marin) and then go along the left side on Cragmont. After a wooden retaining wall at 911 Cragmont (9) on the left is a contemporary style house in unpainted wood, raised on pillars with a cantilevered upper section. Underneath is a ravine that crosses to the right side of the sloping front yard with a small bridge. This is Marin Creek which is often dry in the summer. It goes into a culvert under Cragmont and is only visible in a few places (such as on upper Shattuck) and before the Marin Circle it again goes into a culvert, seemingly not emerging again. The reason that Marin Avenue has several sweeping curves just west of the The Alameda is that it follows the old stream bed of the creek.

As you continue along notice the steep slope on the left with houses far up on the hill; several of these have access that is provided by a driveway from the street above (Euclid Avenue). When the sidewalk is blocked by parked cars at or least where a long wooden retaining wall ends, cross to the downhill side and continue along Cragmont. Easter Way path crosses Cragmont here. It starts at Spruce and climbs fairly steeply about three blocks to Cragmont Rock Park.

A few lots beyond the path at 969 Cragmont (10) on the left is a contemporary style home from 2015. There are trapezoidal windows on the south side of the section that projects forward and also a rising connecting corridor to the section on the right. One can assume the house has good views from its perch on the hillside. Farther along 978



**969 Cragmont Avenue**

Cragmont features many plants including orchids in pots in the front yard. Next you come across a huge redwood tree at 982 Cragmont (11) (address is on the garage) that is gradually taking over the sidewalk.

At the T-intersection cross left to go uphill on Cragmont. At 1006 Cragmont to the left of the carport driveway notice how Japanese maples line a lovely brick path towards the house (which is somewhat hidden by all the foliage). Then at 1010 Cragmont (12) is a house designed by talented Berkeley architect John Hudson Thomas in 1916 that

has a tall steep roof. Unfortunately the handsome house is mostly hidden by a fence and plantings; you can perhaps see a bit from across street. On the left side of the property is a garage that has living quarters above and as you pass it by and look down the side you will notice that there is actually quite a substantial second residence



above and behind the garage with an address of 1010 1/2 Cragmont. It would seem that even the main house has been divided into condominium units, at least according to real estate sites.

On the opposite side are 1015 Cragmont in Spanish eclectic style from 1932 and then a large Craftsman bungalow built in 1913 at 1021 Cragmont.

At this point turn around and go back downhill to Santa Barbara Road, turning left down that street. At 982 Santa Barbara (13) is a 1945 brown shingle house that has some Craftsman features, particularly in the structures over the two entries. There is also a nice bas-relief carving of pine tree branches on the front door.

Farther down cross Spruce Street carefully in the crosswalk, listening as well as looking for cars that may come around the curve. Continue down one block on curving Santa Barbara, noting several Berkeley brown shingle style houses; again cross Marin Avenue carefully. Cross Indian Rock

Road and note on the uphill side of Santa Barbara a small park dominated by a large rock outcrop. This is Grotto Rock Park, named for a small spring that was once present. You can walk on a path around the outcrop if you wish. On the south side are some steps going up which don't go all the way to the top but still provide a big view over the bay. At one point the steps get quite narrow and beyond that is a rock scramble if you desire to go higher. The part of the park closer to the street features a lot of native plants such as ceanothus, manzanita, fremontodendron, sticky



**Grotto Rock Park**

monkey flower, sagebrush, black sage, and coffee berry. Many other rock parks and outcrops are featured in the Rock Parks walk of the book *Berkeley Walks*.

After exploring the park continue on Santa Barbara Road on the left or downhill side where farther along at 830 Santa Barbara (14) you see a kind of Swiss chalet style house in brown shingle from 1914 with balconies of the type often found on such chalets. Next to it at 822 Santa Barbara is another brown shingle house, built in 1912, with very rustic feel and set amidst trees but having a view to the west.

On the uphill side 815 Santa Barbara is a contemporary style house built in 1962 with a substantial retaining wall up against the steep slope of a ravine for a small seasonal creek. There is a native big leaf maple in front and another a bit farther on the west side of the street.



Then at 784 Santa Barbara (15) is a house of many gables with the eaves curving outward. Just beyond at 774 Santa Barbara the house has extensive half timbering. Both were built in 1928

When you get to Montrose Road cross Santa Barbara and go up the right side of Montrose. It is steep at first but as it levels off look across the street to see 131 Montrose a 1929 storybook house with a section that projects forward toward the street with an angled bay.

On this side 140 Montrose (16) is an attractive Mediterranean style home that has a fascinating garden with many exotic plants. There are tall palm trees, some cycads with stiff somewhat ferny leaves (one of the most ancient plant families going back



**Exotic Plants at 140 Montrose Road**

280 million years), small trees and shrubs with various colors and textures and most amazing a plant with long cylindrical leaves going out in all directions and a trunk that looks almost like woven material with a rainbow of colors. The house also has a lovely wrought iron gates with leaf designs and a front door surrounded by Mediterranean tiles.

When you get to Spruce Street go just a little to the right and cross very carefully. There is a crosswalk farther along but being closer to the curve the view of oncoming cars is not necessarily better so remember to listen as well as look. On the other side proceed to the right a little and go left up Regal Road. On the left at 803 Regal (17) (fronted by a low brick wall) there is seasonal stream in a yard which is lush and green with various plants.

Farther up the street is Cragmont elementary school (18). The first school here was in 1926 (a period of considerable area growth in population as we note from

housing dates) and was designed by city architect Walter Ratcliff, Jr. This was replaced in 1965 by another building but that was deemed seismically unsound and vacated in 1990 and the current building was completed in 1999. When you get to Cragmont

Avenue cross it toward a two door garage at 869 Cragmont and go left a short distance; then go up the left side of Rock Lane. This is one of those streets where cars are often parked blocking the sidewalk.

At 79 Rock Lane (19) set in a large lot is Casa de Lauradel, built in 1929. It has nice siting on a hillock and both the house walls and the yard have colorful rocks. The garage with similar rock walls and tile roof was crushed by a falling tree during the winter of 2019-20.

Turn right up Poplar Street and at Euclid cross Poplar to go left on Euclid. At 726 Euclid (20) is another garden with exotic plants, somewhat crowding the sidewalk. Across the street is a row of houses in various styles up a steep hillside. There are a lot of steps to get to some of them and one wonders if the owners at a certain age will want an elevator. One actually has a cable car.



**Casa de Lauradel**

At 700 Euclid (21) is a 1960 contemporary style house with a carport to each side at street level while a central stairway leads downhill to the house itself.

Farther along on the left is an open area with a retaining wall put in by the city to prevent landslides. There are great views to the west towards San Francisco and the Golden Gate and this is a favorite place for people to stop and enjoy sunsets when fog and clouds permit. After enjoying the view that is hopefully clear continue on, eventually crossing Acacia and then around the curve to the starting point

## Walk 41

# Kensington Park

**Overview:** Adjacent to Berkeley in Contra Costa County Kensington is an unincorporated area but has the feel of a town with two modest but thriving commercial areas. From the upper commercial area on Arlington Avenue we explore the downhill side with a variety of architectural styles, mainly dating from the 1920s onward. There are also some views and enough uphill to provide good exercise. Sidewalks are intermittent but there are also some fun public paths.

**Highlights:**

- \* Pleasant streets that generally do not have heavy traffic
- \* Occasional views
- \* A variety of architecture and gardens

**Distance:** 2 miles; 2.5 miles with options

**Elevation gain:** 500 feet; 600 feet with options

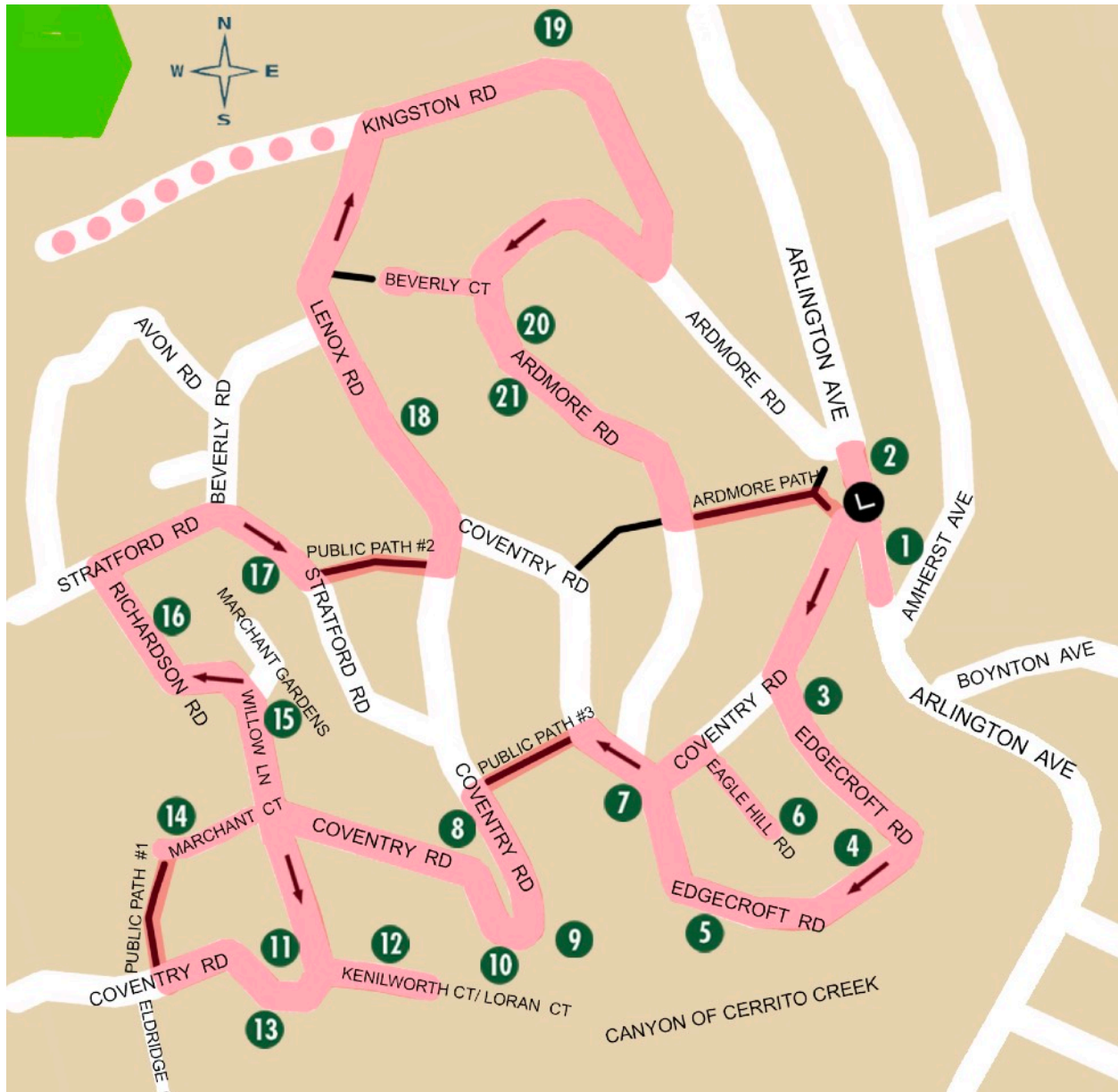
**Getting there:** Start at Arlington Avenue and Coventry Road. By car you can go up Arlington make a U-turn after the commercial district and park in the lot on the downhill side. If this is full park on nearby streets. The commercial district is also accessible by AC Transit bus line 7 that runs up Arlington; get off at the commercial area at Amherst Avenue.

From the parking lot and facing the retaining wall, go right on Arlington, crossing Coventry and then cross carefully to the left over Arlington in the crosswalk. Cars tend to be impatient at this stop sign so cross carefully.

You might want to sit on the bench or find some comfortable spot to read the following bit of historical background. Kensington is an unincorporated town in Contra Costa County and some of the early developments had Berkeley names. For some reason it was considered part of Berkeley by many even though it is across the county line. Many people connected with UC Berkeley have lived in Kensington including Nobel Prize laureate Robert Oppenheimer, Director of the Manhattan Project's Project Y. Originally home to the Huchiun band of the Ohlone native Americans, a large area called Rancho San Pablo north of Cerrito Creek was granted to Francisco Maria Castro by the Republic of Mexico in 1823 and he in turn gave the southern portion, mostly now Kensington, to his son in 1831.

By 1911 most areas had been bought by development companies including Berkeley Highlands above Arlington which has streets named after colleges and Universities.





Kensington Park is the area below Arlington where most of today's walk takes place. Other subdivisions are Berkeley Highland Terrace, Berkeley Park, Arlington Acres, and Maybeck Developments, none of which are in Berkeley despite the names. A streetcar line extended on Arlington to Kensington in 1912 helping spur early development. The major growth however occurred from the 1920s, particularly after the 1923 Berkeley fire.

The name Kensington is due to the fact that Robert Bousefield, the surveyor who laid out many of the streets, came from the London borough of South Kensington. Most of the streets in Kensington Park also have English place names.

Residents periodically voted against incorporation though the city does have local jurisdiction over the police and fire departments as well as park and refuse services.

The population grew from 226 in 1920 to 6600 in 1950. Until 1948 a streetcar ran up Arlington to Amherst (at the edge of the commercial district) followed by an AC Transit bus. Many paths were built to connect to the streetcar line though only some of these are still open as public paths and we shall use a few of them.

Start by taking a look at the shops on Arlington though you could alternatively do this at the end of the walk. Looking across Amherst on the southeast corner is an Ace hardware store and on the near corner Raxakoul (1) that carries coffee, cheese and deli items; for decades it was a pharmacy and the Drugs sign is still there. Louis Stein, Jr. was the pharmacist for many years and also a local historian who took a great many photos to document Kensington as well as Berkeley and other locations in Contra Costa county. Other shops include an eatery, wine shop, grocery, bank branch, etc. The architect for the 1928 former drug store building was Edwin Snyder who also designed many Kensington homes in various styles. Young's Market (2) down the row of shops was started by the brothers Ben and Ralph Young in 1936 and later ownership changed but it remains a locally oriented grocery store.

After exploring the shops go back to Amherst and cross Arlington at the same stop sign to head back towards the parking lot. Then take either the wooden tie steps to go down to Coventry or follow the sidewalk around to the left to get to that point. Go left on Coventry and in less than a block go left on Edgcroft Road. There is a variety of architectural styles on this fairly quiet street that loops around. #5 Edgcroft (3) from 1924 has elements of Prairie School Style and next to it #7 Edgcroft from 1927 is a charming storybook stone cottage. #9 Edgcroft is



**7 Edgcroft Road**

Mediterranean style from 1925 with a wood fence and gate featuring some Chinese ceramic tiles. Across the street you will see a long fence and there are likely to be some very active chickens pecking along it. Between 15 and 17 Edgcroft or between 23 and 27 you can catch a glimpse of the ravine of Cerrito Creek that deepens very rapidly from here, becoming essentially a canyon.

The street curves right as the ravine turns west. Across the way you can see houses that are in Berkeley in Alameda County with Cerrito Creek as the dividing line; Alameda split off from Contra Costa County in 1853. Farther around the curve 40 Edgcroft (4) on the right is a fairly large contemporary style house from 1960. This is one of many points in this walk where the sidewalk ends. 61 Edgcroft is in brown shingles with mixed contemporary/traditional design built in 1939 and renovated in

1943. The sidewalk has ended and the houses are on very steep terrain and thus sometimes almost the whole house is lower than the street. Thus at 81 Edgcroft (5) there is a fairly good view of the Bay and toward the Golden Gate and also at 87 Edgcroft.

Go right on Coventry and then right where there is sign marked Eagle Hill; it looks like a narrow asphalt driveway and there is big multiple trunk redwood on the right. Also the house on the corner and along the drive at 804 Coventry has an English air with its brick and stone siding. It is short but steep up to the top of the hill that you skirted on Edgcroft and there is a very wide view to the west from the highest point of the paving; when it is clear you can see from the Peninsula on the left to well north of Mt Tamalpais. The most impressive house is at One Eagle Hill (6) in Spanish style from 1935 with a wooden balcony over the garage, white walls, and a red tile roof.

It was a home at one time occupied by Robert Oppenheimer, the UC Berkeley physics professor who headed up the Los Alamos Laboratory and played a major role in development of the atomic bomb, though later he spoke out against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the development of the hydrogen bomb. For this and his earlier association with members of the Communist Party he had his security clearance revoked during the 1950s Red hysteria. He was later awarded the Presidential Enrico Fermi award by John F Kennedy.

Return down the drive and go left and cross Edgcroft and go first right, then bear left to stay on Coventry (do not go up Ardmore). 760 Coventry (7) has an interesting wall and gate in white painted brick and red ceramic tiles.



**633 Coventry Road**

Go left on Public Path #3 (Coventry Path) just after a pleasant house with wood siding and shutters at 748 Coventry. In the right season you will see lovely yellow iris along the path. Go left at the bottom of the path on the street which is again curvy Coventry, taking care as there is moderate traffic and there are no sidewalks. On the right at 633 Coventry (8) is a 1930 Spanish style house with wooden balcony. Next to it 629 Coventry is another Mediterranean style house with tiled roof. Then at 627 Coventry is a 1986 contemporary design inside a hairpin turn of Coventry.

Opposite on the left 618 Coventry has a big deck and a high gable facing the street; it was built in 1925 and renovated in 1940 and again more recently. Then 610 Coventry (9), set back from the road on the left side, is a large mid-century modern style house (from 1960) that cantilevers out over the steep ravine.



Going around the curve 600 Coventry (10) is a charming Mediterranean style house built in 1928 with a Moorish design at the doorway. We can see the back of contemporary 627 Coventry as the street makes its hairpin turn as well as the back of 629 Coventry that is in some ways more interesting than the front.

Farther along Coventry makes another hairpin turn, this time to the left and at the next curve on the right is a fine 1928 English style house set among trees at 501 Coventry (11). It has a very steep roof. Across the street is a fairly large house at 500 Coventry from 1923 though it seems to have undergone a major renovation in 2008. Next to this enter Kenilworth Court, a narrow street that goes off to the left. Behind the main house at 500 Coventry is a large amphitheater and gardens (12) and behind that another structure with large areas of window. The amphitheater has been the site of many events such as music concerts (though the neighbors have worked to limit them). Supposedly 10 Kenilworth which is set in trees at the end of the lane was an earlier home of Robert Oppenheimer around the time of WWII; the date of 1939 for its construction would fit for Oppenheimer's time there.

Returning to Coventry and descending to the left at 464 Coventry (13) is a house in stone brick and wood on the ravine side, originally constructed in 1939. After this curve go around yet another curve to descend down the hill. Just before the sign on the left for Eldridge Court look on the right between 429 and 425 Coventry. There is an unmarked public path which is called Public Path #1 (Marchant Path); it is partly obscured by overhanging branches but there is a white fire hydrant there to help you locate it.

For a bit of strenuous exercise ascend this steep and narrow dirt path, arriving near the end of Marchant Court. If it might seem too muddy or steep or you don't feel like the climb then ascend back up Coventry until you come to the complex intersection with Marchant Court and Willow Lane. If you took the path up to Marchant you will see directly across English style homes at #9 (14) and #7 to its right. Turn to the right and on your right is another English style house at #8 as well as along on the left at #1, all fitting for this town with its English name. Moreover, all four were built in the 1930s.

Whether you took the path or ascended Coventry, at the intersection go left on Willow Lane at the intersection where Coventry makes a sharp bend to the



**Public Path #1, Marchant Path**

right. Farther along on the right side #1 Willow Lane (15) is a house that supposedly dates to 1933 but it has been dramatically renovated around 2019 with stone and vertical board siding that has somewhat the look of a rustic retreat. Next to it is an ascending lane called Marchant Gardens.

Though not marked here it seems that the street continuing from Willow Lane changes its name to Richardson Road. On the other side of Marchant Gardens at 87 Richardson is a 1942 cottage in white covered with blue designs and the parked car has a similar



**Sculpture at 57 Richardson Road**

quirky color and design scheme. Farther along on the right 57 Richardson (16) has an impressive sculpture in the yard near the street that seems to have elements of serpent, dragon, machine and whatever you might imagine.

Up a rise go right at Stratford Road and bear right to keep on Stratford where Beverly Road goes off to the left, At 62 Stratford (17) on the right the home has elements of Southwest adobe design (though not adobe mud bricks). Between 69 and 73 Stratford on the left take the Public Path #2 (Stratford Path) up and at the top go left on Coventry. Then

bear left on Lenox Road. There tend to be somewhat more modest houses and bungalows in this area. At 45 Lenox (18) is a charming 1928 Storybook style house with a cute window high up next to the chimney. The sidewalks come and go but tend to be more continuous on the right side with more shade. There is another intersection with the other end of Beverly Road but bear right to stay on Lenox.

At Kingston Road the left goes down steeply towards a dead end. The homes are pleasant if not very unique but you can go down and come back up if you feel like more exercise. Otherwise go right and at 37 Kingston (19) on the left the driveway to the house goes over a seasonal creek. Farther along go right on Ardmore where Kingston ends. In between 87 and 97 Ardmore on the right you can briefly explore down Beverly Court, a cul-de-sac which has a path at the lower end connecting it to Richardson Road. 110 Ardmore (20) on the left is a 1927 house, but it was recently completely rebuilt and expanded with some traditional design elements such as the jerkin head gables. Back on Ardmore and farther along 115 Ardmore (21) on the right has a big deodar cedar in the front yard as well as two lion statues and a bench. Just past 151 Ardmore is a sign on the right side for Ardmore path. To the right it descends back down to Coventry. Instead go up the path on the opposite which is actually a divided walk and after a wide stairway at the end you are back at the parking lot starting point.

## Walk 42

# Upper Rockridge

**Overview:** In Northeast Oakland near the current Rockridge BART station this area was developed in the early decades of the twentieth century as Oakland expanded and transportation options increased. The flatter areas between College and Broadway were built out first and then the hills to the east. The walk thus has two very distinct neighborhoods, all the more so since much of the hill area was rebuilt after the disastrous 1991 fire.

**Highlights:**

- \* A superb collection of Craftsman bungalows near College Avenue
- \* The very different ambiance of the post-fire homes in the hills
- \* Some great views over the Bay

**Distance:** 3.75 miles; 2.25 miles with shortcut; 1.75 miles to do only the hills loop

**Elevation gain:** 400 feet; 140 feet with shortcut; 300 feet for the hills loop

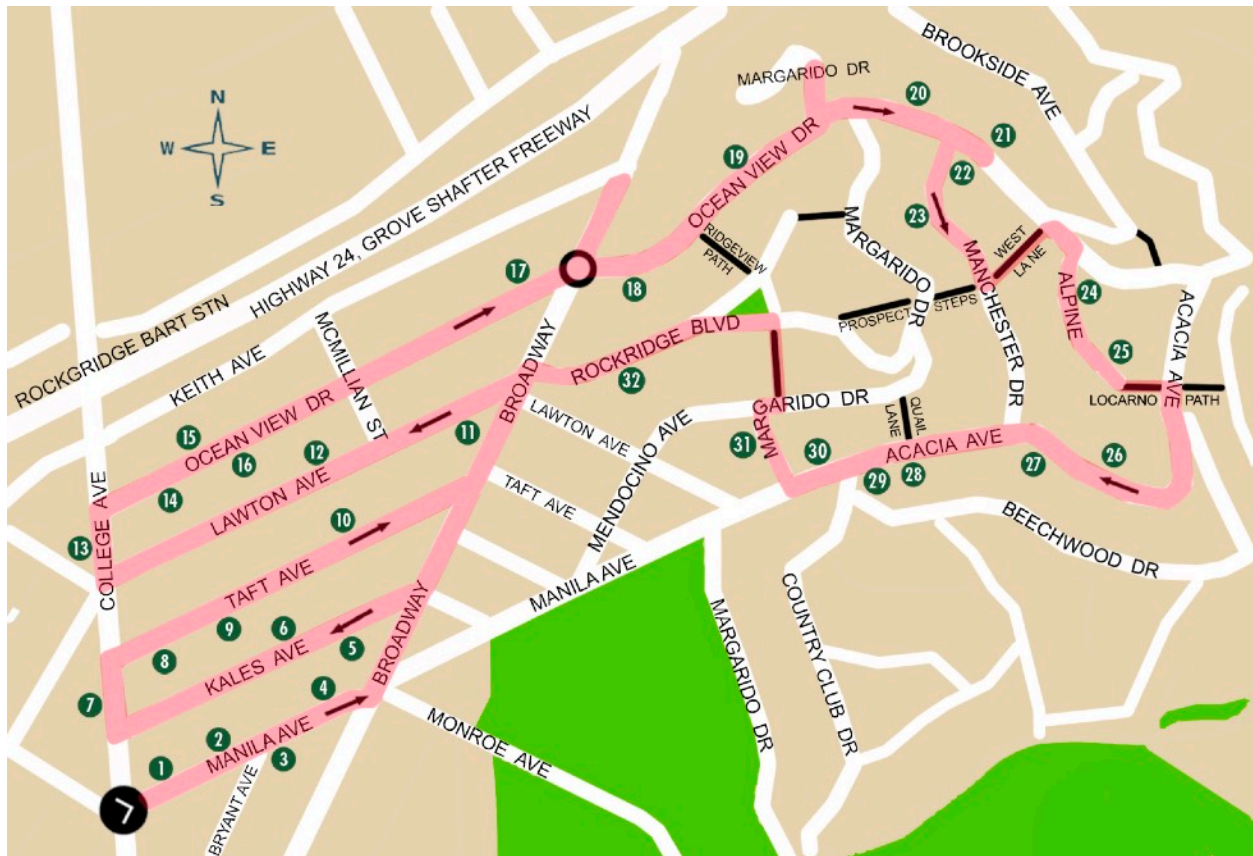
**Getting there:** Start at the intersection of Manila Avenue and College Avenue on the east side (toward the hills). Parking with time limitations may be found on the side streets off of College Avenue. Transit access is easy via BART or AC Transit.

This walk is made up of two distinct parts—the parallel streets with historic homes, primarily bungalows, that are within walking distance of the Rockridge BART station and the curvy uphill part that has views and mainly homes built after the 1991 fire. The name Rockridge comes from the outcrops in the ridge that runs roughly parallel to the Hayward fault.

Development of the area was helped by an electric streetcar running on College Avenue from Oakland to UC Berkeley which began service in 1903. The exodus of people from San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake and fire was a big boost to growth in north Oakland and Berkeley. This neighborhood saw a lot of home building in the 1910s and 1920s and this in turn spurred the commercial development on College Avenue. Another commuter rail line ran along Claremont Avenue to the transbay ferry terminal. Moreover, the Sacramento Northern Railway ran along Shafter Avenue, crossing College Avenue near the current BART station location. This area like many near the East Bay hills was characterized by zoning and racial covenants to keep out other ethnic groups.

Walk up Manila Avenue on either side of the street. The primary housing type on this and some parallel streets is the Craftsman bungalow but within that style there is great





variety in design and materials. In fact this neighborhood is a treasure trove of the Craftsman bungalow. What characterizes this style? Well first of all the bungalow is a word that comes from English colonialists in India who adapted the local bangaloo style and it refers to a house with one to one and a half stories and a porch or veranda. The Craftsman style of architecture was influenced by the British Arts and Crafts movement that focused on handmade objects of good workmanship and materials but without superfluous ornamentation. Craftsman bungalows usually have fairly steeply pitched roofs. The eaves extend out with exposed rafters and brackets and the materials include wood boards, shingles, bricks and stucco in fairly subdued colors. Interiors often feature wood paneling and built in cabinetry.

On the left at 5430 Manila (1) is a house that has siding which is fake stone but the actual design is interesting with its large arch. Across on the right at 5427 Manila is a raised Victorian house, not typical for this neighborhood, with geometric decorative elements, fish scale shingles and interesting window designs. Despite alterations and having been raised up it retains many historic features; it is divided into three units.

There is a whole row of Craftsman bungalows on the left side in varied designs including diverse placement of the gables facing forward or to the sides and so on. These include 5436, 5440, 5444, 5448 Manila and others all built around 1914-15. The siding can be stucco, wood boards or wood shingles with occasional use of stone and brick in some places such as porches and chimneys. Next on the left at 5452 Manila (2) is a raised 1912 bungalow that has Colonial Revival rather than Craftsman details, particularly characteristic are the classical style cylindrical columns; Colonial Revival was very popular in the first decade of the twentieth century and thus not surprising for a house built at this time.

Across at 5453 Manila is a two story residence from 1923, with a full two floors in contrast to most bungalows that are one to one and one half stories. At the intersection with Bryant you can look across to see a very colorful house with clay roof tiles at 5432 Bryant from 1921.

5501 Manila is a 1917 apartment building with an angled facade. The house at 5532 Manila (4) is in Mediterranean style from 1912 and has diverse designs in the front stairway tiles. California in general and Oakland in particular were renowned for decorative tile manufacture, particularly in the 1910-48 period.

Turn left on Broadway where the lots and houses on the left side are diagonal to the street because they are following the lot pattern of the streets that intersect Broadway. 5625 Broadway built in 2013 is in contemporary style that is uncommon for the initial blocks we are walking on.

Turn left again on Kales Avenue. This block is characterized by large shade trees which are London plane trees (sycamores) with multi-colored scaly bark on the trunks, large maple-like leaves and spreading branches that give the street a verdant tunnel-like look in summer and an impressive branch pattern in winter. The architecture is not that different from Manila Avenue but the ambiance is very different due to the type of trees.



**Kales Avenue shade trees**

On the left side note the porches on two homes built in 1912; the first at 5547 Kales (5) features rounded river stones while the porch next door at 5545 Kales has rectangular cement blocks molded to mimic stone. On the right 5540 Kales is a very low horizontal 1918 house while next door 5536

Kales from 1914 has a more vertical look with a nice porch and an evergreen magnolia in front. While most homes are in the Craftsman bungalow style on this block there is great diversity in the actual designs. Some have been renovated and expanded but for the most part this has been done with respect to the original style. An example of this is on the left at 5509 Kales (6) while 5501 Kales is a rather cute house with half timbering from 1911.

Later turn right on College Avenue. which is a commercial area, the southern part of the Rockridge main street district. There is a handsome three-story building at 5449-5455 College (7) across the street with arched windows and doorways. It is the Rockridge Masonic Temple, built in 1926 to replace an early 1917 structure that was

located where Market Hall is now. The architect was Francis Slocombe, an Oakland architect who also worked in Berkeley and designed the wonderful storybook Chapel of Flowers at Adeline and Essex across from Ashby BART. Next to the Masonic Temple you can clearly see at 5461-67 College that a storefront was placed at the street as part of a former home whose turret, split gabled dormer and chimney pop up behind

Turn right on Taft Avenue; it is again predominantly Craftsman bungalows with great variety. The street trees include some flowering plums but without the shady ambiance of Kales Avenue. However, there are also a number of other ornamental trees that have



**5493 Taft Avenue Craftsman bungalow**

lovely blossoms in spring such as crabapple, Japanese cherry and deciduous magnolia. On the right side 5489 (8) and 5493 Taft are nice brown shingle Craftsman bungalows, each with a big wide porch featuring a broad arched opening. 5502 Taft on the opposite side has an unusual front dormer and a porch with a curved roof, all in all a fairly unique design.

5509 Taft (9) from has a nicely done glassed in porch while 5515 Taft is another house with wide porch but featuring a kind of deck in front of the front dormer; both are

from 1911. Once in a while there is a duplex though most homes seem to be single family. The relatively small lots mean that there is reasonably high density, making transit and a pedestrian oriented commercial district more feasible. As noted previously even before the BART station was built this area featured several transit lines that intersected nearby.

5529 Taft from 1910 is a taller brown shingle house with the entry on the side. 5537 Taft from 1912 features a large redwood tree in the front yard. While the trees can live to be a couple of thousand years old they tend to become quite large in just the first 80-100 years.

5566 Taft (10) on the left has an impressive solar panel array on the roof. 5593 Taft is an unusual 1916 design with Craftsman features but different from the bungalow form in having an unusual pattern of opposing gables as well as a very small porch.



Go left on Broadway where there is a historic row of commercial shops on the opposite side next to a red brick church in somewhat contemporary style. The shops seem to be offices rather than retail stores.

Turn left on Lawton Avenue which has a similar range of homes to the previous three streets. More sycamore trees line this street. 5837 Lawton (11) is an attractive wide and low 1911 Craftsman bungalow. The houses in this neighborhood are well kept as it has become popular with successful young professionals due to its proximity to shops and transit and the tree-lined streets of handsome houses. Farther along 5590A and 5590 Lawton (12) comprise a duplex with a turret that is an unusual feature for this area as the house is considerably older, dating from 1895 though renovated in 1920.

5582, 5578, 5576 and 5572 Lawton comprise a row of several stucco homes very different from the bungalows though they date from about the same time at 1912. There is a certain influence of the Prairie School Style in their design.

Later turn right on College Avenue and across the street 5515 College (13) is a half timbered commercial building. Other buildings along this block have apartments above the commercial spaces at street level. You can see a bit farther along on the left the Market Hall, a collection of eight owner-occupied shops, experts in the craft of creating foods for home cooking and dining. Its start in 1986 was in a period of growing excitement about food other than what was standard in supermarkets. You can also see where Highway 24 and the BART tracks are elevated over College Avenue.



**5582 Lawton Avenue**

Go right at Ocean View Drive. There tend to be somewhat more multi-unit residences as you get closer to the center of the Rockridge commercial district. For example, 5621 Ocean View (14) is a 1915 house expanded into three units. A bit farther on from 5640 Ocean View (15) on the left there is a row of stucco houses that are full two story homes with details differing from the Craftsman bungalows. 5653 Ocean View (16) is colorful 1912 home on the right while 5659 Ocean View has an unusual angled layout and 5669 Ocean View from 1910 has lots of ornamentation, also very different from the less ornamented Craftsman style. The street trees are varied.

At the intersection with McMillan Street two of the four corners have tall redwoods and another (southeast) corner has a large deodar cedar. At the southwest corner with McMillan is a Craftsman house with a large stone chimney on the Ocean View side. Going uphill to Broadway there are again numerous bungalows. 5808 Ocean View from 1912 features lots of gables. 5872 Ocean View (17) has numerous fun sculptures and other items in front near the steps and also along the driveway side of the front garden.

**O Shortcut:** If you would like to make a shorter walk you can easily break this walk in two. You can return back down Ocean View to go left on College to the starting point or right to the BART station and bus stop. Or you can go down Broadway to Manila and then right.



**Garden at 5572 Ocean View Drive**

To do the second part of the walk at another time it might be useful to park on Rockridge Boulevard, walk up Broadway one block and turn right on Ocean View (where parking is more difficult) and then follow the directions below which will bring you back to Rockridge Boulevard later.

**To continue the walk:** Since Broadway is a fairly wide street with fast moving traffic and there

is a rise that obscures visibility here it is much safer to go left to the traffic signal at the next intersection. Cross in the pedestrian crosswalk after pushing the pedestrian button and go right back down the other side of Broadway to turn left up the next section of Ocean View Drive.

Initially there will be a few older houses, then some from the 1920s and a bit later almost entirely homes built since the disastrous 1991 fire. 5925 Ocean View (18) on the right is a rather cute home with half timbering, a nicely articulated big window and a row of arches on the porch from 1928. Going uphill there start to be more post 1920 houses including 5954 Ocean View from 1935 with half timbering. There are a number of connecting paths and stairways in this area including Ridgeview path on the right. Looking back we start to get partial views toward the ocean (at least the bay). There are a number of Mediterranean style homes such as 6040 Ocean View (19) on the left with arches and red tile roof, a residence from around 1933.

When you get to Margarido Drive on the left (signed No Thru Street), turn and go just a bit left up the rise to get a view over the Highway 24 freeway toward the East Bay hills to the north and perhaps a glimpse of the Claremont Hotel. Return to Ocean View and continue left uphill. 6114 Ocean View (20) on the left is quite an impressive house



from 1999 though it has many traditional architectural details and 6130 Ocean View, also from 1999, has elements of Italian Renaissance Revival.

You are now entering the area of the October 19, 1991, firestorm that destroyed over 3000 housing units (mostly single family homes and some apartments) in Oakland and 30 in Berkeley. Many of the original houses were built as weekend homes for people living in San Francisco but reportedly the replacement houses were often significantly larger than the originals.

6138 Ocean View (21) on the left has a rather elaborate intensely cultivated garden including cacti, succulents, water features and some interesting sculptural elements.

Now backtrack a few steps to go left on Manchester Drive. 6076-80 Manchester (22) on the left side (southeast) corner has an impressive gated entryway with terracotta bas reliefs on the gate pylons, one of which says Red Gate. This was the site of the famous Red Gate mansion designed by Julia Morgan for C.B. Wells that was lost in the fire. On the right just beyond the corner at 6075 is a large 5 bedroom residence with castle-like features. It is actually from 1914 so one of the few fire survivors on this street and is at a point where the hillside drops off steeply.

Back on the left side a little farther along is a very large 7000 square foot mansion that is also on the Red Gate site (address is unmarked but 6076-80 Manchester); it was built in 1999. Then 6055 Manchester (23) on the right or downhill side is in Italian style from 1926 and thus pre-fire; the ceramic tile roof may have been a plus factor for it during the fire. Also note the historic streetlamp which perhaps survived the fire. Then 6042 on the left is a French Norman design



**6042 Manchester Drive**

with an important history. The original 1929 house was designed by Albert Farr. In 1959 it was purchased by Lucille Guiton Allen and her husband Boley who both had successful business, Lucille with a beauty parlor. However, as an African American couple they had to use an intermediary to purchase the home due to racial restrictions. The previous owner and neighbors tried to stop their purchase but eventually they were accepted and the house became an important symbol and gala meeting place for the Black community. The home burned to the ground in the 1991 fire but Lucille persevered in a long battle to have it rebuilt exactly to the original plans, perhaps the



only post fire house thus reconstructed. Final plans were approved in 1998 just before she died and Mayor Jerry Brown and the community honored her indomitable spirit.

Just past 6000 Manchester on the left go up West Lane (public steps and path). At the top of the first flight of stairs you can look back to get a fairly panoramic view. The path goes over a ridge and down just a little bit to put you back on Ocean View Drive. Immediately to the right, next to West Lane at 6147 Ocean View is a contemporary style home from 1996 with a rather dramatic central section featuring a wide chimney and cutaway roofline. Farther along the house at the southeast (opposite) corner with Alpine Terrace at 166 Alpine Terrace (24) has some Craftsman features and numerous gables.

Go right on Alpine Terrace and there are more large homes with wide views. You can get a sampling from the sidewalk at a vacant lot across from a striking contemporary style house at 132 Alpine (25). The latter house was built well after the fire in 2014. Due to legal issues or other reasons there are several lots that are still vacant and houses being finally built on them from time to time; the foundations are still visible.

At the end of Alpine take the Locarno Path down to Acacia. The fairly wide path with

cement paving and handrails was renovated in the 2010s. Such public path improvements are important to help people escape in case of another emergency as well as providing pleasant ways to get exercise and explore the neighborhood. Along the path on the left is some artwork that a homeowner has placed for the enjoyment of pedestrians.



**Locarno Path**

Turn right at the bottom on Acacia Avenue and farther along on the right at 6160 Acacia (26) is a very big fenced off yard (perhaps a double lot) with some sizable rock outcrops, that look like the volcanic rhyolite also found in the north Berkeley hills. The house and rocks are hard to see

due to dense foliage but very attractive landscaping has been done next to the public sidewalk. You are now getting near the edge of the fire zone again. For example, farther along 6119 Acacia (27) on the left (number may be on the curb) is from 1935 in Mediterranean Spanish style and has some tall trees. 6101 Acacia is an American Colonial style house from 1936 that also survived the fire while others in between were lost. 6041 Acacia in Mediterranean style on the left is another survivor from 1936 while several similar homes at 6031, 6021 and 6011 Acacia are from the 1990s though the similar traditional style makes one wonder if they partially survived or were just rebuilt to a traditional design. There are also some tall trees in this area, particular

redwoods and other conifers that would seem to be pre-fire. Factors such as a clay tile roof or just the whims of the firestorm could be factors in which homes were left standing.

The house at the corner with Manchester at 5901 Manchester is from 1994 but has elements of traditional Mediterranean design. The garden with wall and unpainted wooden gates is particularly appealing.

The pre-fire house at 6000 Acacia has a big California pepper tree in front. 5929 Acacia (28) on the left side has an impressive array of windows in fairly interesting combination of traditional and contemporary design and a large dormer with a glass front and roof on the gable; it is from 1995. 5910 Acacia and 5900 Acacia were all built between 1929 and 1935 although 5922 is a post-fire house so we are as noted at the edge of the fire area where some houses remained and some not. On the left side at the corner is 5901 Acacia (29) with elements of mid-century modern design and it is indeed from 1949 so another survivor. Then moving downhill at 5850 Acacia (30) on the right is a handsome Spanish Mediterranean style house with turret, wooden balcony and scalloped arched window from 1929. The street is descending more steeply so there is a grand view toward San Francisco, Marin and the Golden Gate.

You could perhaps descend straight down as the street eventually becomes Manila but a more interesting route is to go right on Margarido Drive, noting the fanciful goat and duck statues on a rock outcrop at 5855 Margarido (31). At Mendocino Avenue bear right to stay on Margarido and just past 5861 go left on an unmarked public stair that has a low pier with mosaic tiles to mark it. This takes you down to Rockridge Blvd.

There is a triangular park area where Rockridge splits into north and south sections. Head to the left. This was built as an upscale development as you will see when you get to the impressive entry pillars at Broadway. Meanwhile there are pleasant homes, generally on larger lots than those you saw on the first part of the walk between College and Broadway. The homes were mainly built in the 1910s and 1920s. One of the most interesting is the Prairie style house from 1923 at 6019 Rockridge (32) with beautiful clerestory windows above the entrance.

At the intersection you can go left and push the pedestrian signal button to cross Broadway. You can go back to College on Lawton or continue down to Manila Avenue and turn right to get back to the starting point or go right at College to get to BART.



**Rockridge Boulevard parklet**