

Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency Competes for City's Champion Slumlord

Miraflores is a made-up name given to a collection of former Japanese-American flower growing businesses located near South 45th Street and I-80. See <http://www.tombutt.com/forum/2007/070421.htm>. The Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency owns the property, which is in violation of every public nuisance listed in the Richmond Municipal Code. If this property were owned by a private individual, he or she would be subject to thousands of dollars in fines on a daily basis and could actually be sent to jail.



Gates to the Miraflores site are wide open on May 18, despite the following arrest report: "Tuesday 5/15/07, 0445 Hours 487 PC – Grand Theft 4855 Wall Ave. 07-46041. City workers reported that 2 males were stealing aluminum from the buildings on the property owned by the Richmond Redevelopment Agency. Ofc. Cantrell responded with several other officers and observed GIBSON, Terrell D. BMA 1-22-1959 and WILLIAMSON, Kevin R. WMA 1-24-1959 taking aluminum to a waiting car. Initially both suspects fled, but were located after a search of the property. Both were arrested for theft and WILLIAMSON's parole was violated. Extra patrol is requested from all



Gate to Oishi residence is wide open on may 18, as is door to house. Trash is strewn everywhere.

The City of Richmond should be setting an example of proper stewardship for the private sector but is, instead, setting the worst example possible. The property is completely unsecured and is littered with solid waste. Vandals and thieves are looting and pillaging it on a daily basis, despite the fact that it has historical structures that have been found to be eligible for the national Register of historic places (see <http://www.tombutt.com/pdf/Miraflores.pdf>).



The site is a virtual garbage dump

The Site consists of three separately-owned properties (the Sakai, Oishi, and Endo parcels) totaling about 14 acres. The Site currently includes about 40 greenhouses, several residences, and numerous structures and buildings which were used to support the nursery operations warehouse.

Plant nurseries began operating at the Site in the early 20th century. The Sakai Brothers Rose Company grew roses on its property from the early 1910s until operations ceased in 2003. In 1908, the Oishi family began growing carnations on its property. Approximately half of the existing Oishi greenhouses are still being used for growing carnations. The Endo property was originally developed as part of the Y.U. Mayeda Nursery in the early 1910s. The Endo family acquired the property in the late 1950s or early 1960s and grew carnations and bouquet flowers until 1999. From 2000 until early 2005, the Endo family leased the property to individuals who operated a vegetable and flower garden. Pesticides were used by the various nurseries that have operated at the Site. Underground storage tanks (USTs) were used to store fuel for heating boiler rooms and operating vehicles and equipment.

While the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency is waiting for the completion of an EIR that will evaluate, among other things, the historical structures, the agency is allowing those very structures to undergo “demolition by neglect.”



Greenhouses, some of which have historical value, are being torn down and carted away for scrap metal by thieves

In addition, the Richmond Community Redevelopment Agency is allowing the public free access to a site that has the soil contaminated with metals, pesticides, and total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH). The groundwater beneath the Site is contaminated with TPH and TPH-related compounds (such as benzene) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).



Left, the Sakai residence has been broken into and is being vandalized. Right, trash and garbage everywhere.