

To: Santa Clara County Historical Commission
From: Craig M. Kolodge Ph.D., former Superintendent, Bay Area Research and
Extension Center (BAREC)
Date: February 1, 2007

I was asked by Sharon McCray, (former colleague and volunteer, UC Cooperative Extension – Master Gardeners) to comment a bit on the structural integrity of the existing buildings at the Bay Area Research and Extension Center with which I was affiliated with from 1989 – 2000 as both a University of California researcher, program director and superintendent. Before I do, I believe it important to set the context for my comments.

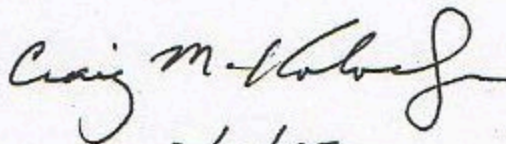
During my tenure with UC (I retired in February 2000) I had the privilege of working at BAREC, the smallest of the 9 research centers scattered throughout the state with a history as rich as the soil it was built upon. It was here that the earliest strawberry varieties were developed for consumers throughout California and deciduous fruit and greenhouse flower production research flourished. Up until its official closure by UC in 2002, the research center was fully utilized by academic researchers and community volunteers to provide valuable local horticultural research, school tours, and demonstration trials on urban horticultural commodities such as turfgrass varieties and native oak trees.

To support the efforts of the academic researchers and volunteers, UC continued to invest in both support of the research trials as well as the physical plant including the existing buildings and work sheds. This facility investment continued up until its closure. The main BAREC building housed academic and community-based classes and events and were fully equipped to accommodate the handicapped as well as meet current OSHA and state and local regulatory requirements.

The main headquarter, which housed the conference room, laboratory, library and miscellaneous offices, was unique in that it was built completely from Grade A California Redwood and went back several generations to when it was a Veteran's Hospital for the widows of Civil War veterans. What always amazed me was how well preserved and sound the structure was and I suspect still is after so many years.

Because it was in constant use over the many generations of its existence, it was well maintained with repairs and/or upgrades done on a regular basis.

I would sincerely encourage you to do what is necessary to preserve and maintain this unique and enduring facility. Help tell the history of the "Valley of the Heart's Delight", and honor the countless individuals whose lives and sacrifice remain a valuable part of our heritage and who we are today and where we came from. Their story and the story of this site needs to be told I hope you can be the storytellers for our current generation and those yet to come.


2/1/07