

Preserving BAREC, a Historical Perspective

In the 1960's City leaders made a decision to forever change the face of the City of Santa Clara by razing the core of the City, forever losing the downtown center by doing what they believed was best for its community.

Today, the City leaders are once again turning a blind eye to her citizens by ignoring our pleas to preserve BAREC and again choosing to disregard the historical relevance with their decision to raze BAREC.

BAREC is important to our community, our state and our nation for several reasons, some of which I should mention

1. In the 1880's prominent local physician, Dr. Antrim Osborne established a home for children with special needs, providing a safe and unique service for our community. Even today, Dr. Osborne's importance is further validated by the naming of the school at juvenile hall the "Osborne School".
2. In 1921, the Women's Relief Corps moved the nation's only home for indigent women survivors of Union soldiers from the Civil War to the BAREC site. The original San Jose home, built in 1880's was destroyed by fire. The facility provided humanitarian and health services to over 400 women from our community, honoring the 16,000 Californian's that served during the Civil War.
3. From 1921 until it's closing in 2003, the University of California provided critical agriculture research at BAREC, helping to establish Santa Clara as the County that fed the world. This research included strawberry, walnuts, apricots and other stone fruits. Currently there are many diverse and irreplaceable plants and trees on the property. For decades, thousands of children had their first experience to growing healthy food by taking a tour of the BAREC farm, which was valuable part of third grade curriculum.

A final point: The BAREC site currently contains 3 structurally sound buildings over 80 years old, constructed from locally harvested redwood. The Craftsman style research building and adjoining maintenance shop have provided a distinctive and necessary service for educational, research and economical purposes. The disposition of these unique landmark buildings has not even been addressed by the City.

We have filed for State Historical Status of the BAREC site. The Commission has deemed our application worthy of consideration, further solidifying our position that BAREC does in fact have an important place in our state's history.

It is important to remember that California's 32 BILLION dollar agriculture industry was nurtured in the Valley of Hearts Delight. As John Steinbeck said, "we cannot know who we are unless we remember our past".

For information regarding this statement, contact Sharon McCray at 408-264-9654