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## Pine Grove Transformation Provides New View from the Top

By Laurie Snyder



Oh, say can you see? The dramatic transformation of the former Pine Grove site by Pulte Homes continues. Lamorinda Weekly photographer Ohlen Alexander recently preserved for posterity this stunning view of the Orinda Theatre as one drives up or down the hill on Altarinda Road. Photo Ohlen Alexander

It's been a long time since pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers have been able to view the Orinda Theatre from the Orinda Village side of town. "The Orinda Union School District's (OUSD) Pine Grove School property has been a community resource since it first opened as an elementary school site in 1954. As the area grew, the District adjusted uses on the site to meet the needs of the surrounding community. The district added maintenance facilities and offices as the demand for classroom space waned in the late '60s and '70s. When JFK announced its intention to close its Pine Grove campus by 2004, the Orinda City Council rezoned the property, setting the stage for Pulte Homes to transform the site yet again - this time from Pine Grove to Orinda Grove.

According to the City's web site, Pulte's "development proposal contained: 80 homes (later revised to 73 homes), relocation of the City-owned ball fields to the area near the northwesterly corner of the project site, and construction of an approximately 6,000 square foot ... (OUSD) office building to replace the existing District offices on the site."

Now with development finally underway, the view from the top is changing even more rapidly with each passing week. Most of the rubble of the OUSD administrative offices has already been carted off. Old oak trees are fenced off to help keep them safe. And, at least for the time being, the beloved neon sign of the Orinda Theatre may be easily spotted sparkling brightly across the way.



Pine Grove Site Orinda Image Pulte Homes

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