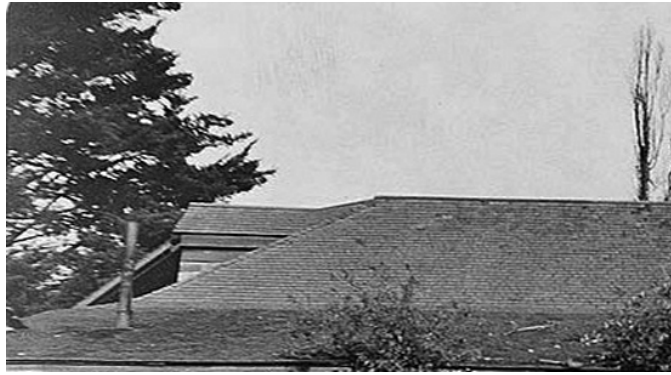


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## Moraga Adobe Purchase Appears Likely

By Laurie Snyder



The Moraga Adobe in 1922. Photo courtesy of the Historic American Buildings Survey of California

concern of FJMA. Our plan is to operate the Adobe as a history and learning center, highlighting the history of the Adobe and the Joaquin Moraga family, as well as the history of the pre-Gold Rush, land grant era of the Lamorinda region, with access for school groups and the public."

This most recent agreement would create changes to the J & J subdivision plan previously approved by Orinda's planning commission - meaning that the updated plan must be submitted for further review by the commission.

The appellation "J & J Ranch" is derived from the names of cousins Juan Bernal and Joaquin Moraga, recipients of 1835 land grants for the area which encompassed the roughly 20 acres on a south Orinda hill between Miramonte High and Del Rey Elementary schools where the planned subdivision will be located.

Although FMJA will also still need to raise the funds necessary to execute the purchase, the leaders of both J & J Ranch and FJMA are confident that a bright future is in store for the Adobe which, though designated as a California State Historic Landmark in 1954, has suffered greatly at the hands of vandals over the years. "It will be a great asset to the community," said Branagh.

To learn more about the project and about the Adobe's history visit the websites of the city of Orinda, [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org), and FJMA, [moragaadobe.org](http://moragaadobe.org).



The Moraga Adobe in April, 2012. Photo provided by Kent Long

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe (FJMA) and J & J Ranch announced April 3 that after three years of negotiations they have reached agreement on the terms for FJMA's purchase of Orinda's historic Moraga Adobe structure. While FJMA leaders indicated at press time that several details of the agreement still had yet to be finalized, they also said that the deal would enable FJMA to purchase roughly 2.3 additional acres of land surrounding the structure, as well as the structure itself.

"2012 was a really tough year for us. So this is really good news," said Matt Branagh of J & J Ranch as he reflected both on the deal and on the loss of his father and business partner. The elder Branagh and his wife, Mona, tragically lost their lives in a July 2012 plane crash.

"Bobbie Landers, Kent Long, and S.B. Master, the board of advisors for Friends of the Adobe, did a really good job of making clear what their goals were," said Branagh. "We both wanted to be able to end up being able to use [the Adobe], and that's what we achieved."

Master, FJMA vice president, said the additional acreage to be purchased by the Friends "includes the crucial view shed, the protection of which has been a special

Reach the reporter at: [laurie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:laurie@lamorindaweekly.com)

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