

May 5, 1977

Mr. Aaron Gallup
California State Historic Preservation Office
P. O. Box 2390
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Mr. Gallup:

In recent years the Forestiere Underground Gardens has been besieged with one intrusion after another. Fending off encroachments has not always been successful. In recent months further encroachments of water easements and well-site location on the Gardens premises were averted. However, it has just come to my attention that a deep well (in excess of 500') is proposed on adjoining property - less than 300' from the Gardens property line. Two test pilot holes were drilled as part of a federally funded project together with a loan from the Farm Home Administration for the Highway City Community Service District - an unincorporated area in Fresno County. There are no wells of such great depth in existence in the area. It is not difficult to conclude the end results. Even in normal times, such a deep well would disturb the balance that now exists. With the drought we are experiencing, such a deep well would definitely syphon dry the two wells on the Gardens premises.

The significance of an adequate shallow underground water supply is inherent to the history, character and concept of the Gardens. The concept of the self-sufficiency of the proposed historic site is being threatened. The significance of such water to the Gardens for the past 70 some odd years will be impaired. The concept of mans reconciliation to his environment as exemplified by Baldasare Forestiere in creating his Underground Gardens would be effected.

At the present time the water needs of the neighborhood is being serviced by a private water system, perhaps, in need of being updated, but not at the risk of depleting the shallow underground water supply. Other alternatives for the water needs of the small surrounding neighborhood (a great part of which was once part of the Gardens) have not been adequately explored. A slight delay for an impact review would cause no undue hardship and would present no danger to either life, health or property. A delay in the replacement of one water system for another in the same neighborhood would not even be an inconvenience. A decision to the contrary would produce adverse results.

We ask for your help in considering less drastic alternatives. We discussed these concerns with Nina Liston from the National Trust Office earlier in the week. Please advise....is it hopeless???

Sincerely,


Rick Forestiere
5021 W. Shaw Ave.
Fresno, Ca. 93711