



Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)

Headquarters: 1765 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115 Tel: (415) 921-5225
DC Office: 1629 K Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20006 Tel: (202) 223-1240
www.jacl.org

March 1, 2022

Mayor Barbara Delgleize and the Huntington Beach City Council
2000 Main Street
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

Sent via email

Dear Mayor Delgleize and Huntington Beach City Council,

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) was devastated to learn of the fire and unpermitted demolition of the 1910 Wintersburg Japanese Mission's manse at the Historic Wintersburg property that took place on Friday, February 25, which was the culmination of years of deliberate neglect. Historic Wintersburg were named one of America's Most Endangered Historic Places in 2014 and designated a National Treasure in 2015. Preserve Orange County named it one of Orange County's Most Endangered Historic Places in 2017.

Since 1929, the JACL has worked tirelessly to preserve the history, culture, and legacy of Japanese Americans. For 93 years and counting, the JACL has supported, honored, and advanced policies that safeguard the interests of those who are Japanese Americans, and all others who are victimized by injustice and bigotry. We maintain a strong presence in the Huntington Beach area with several chapters serving the area.

As an organization that actively works towards preserving and honoring the legacy of those Japanese Americans who were wrongfully incarcerated during WWII, the allowance of the Historic Wintersburg site to fall into such disrepair and the catastrophic loss of the Japanese Mission's Manse particularly upsetting.

We join others in urging several immediate actions by the city of Huntington Beach:

1. We are calling for a thorough arson investigation in light of the ongoing negligence and purposeful neglect by property owners Rainbow Environmental-Republic Services.
2. We call for the opportunity for Japanese Americans in partnership with appropriate historians and archaeologists who have a connection to this site to be granted permission to collect ash and artifacts, to honor and save what is left of a sacred site where the mission and manse stood. For Japanese and Japanese Americans, this is a significant heritage property and a place imbued with spiritual meaning.
3. We also call on the City to help facilitate agreement between Republic Services and local organizations for historic preservation (Preserve Orange County, Heritage Museum of Orange County, Historic Wintersburg) to arrange for

purchase of the property on which the historic buildings stand so they may be preserved.

We hope that the city and community of Huntington Beach will do its part to recognize the important place Historic Wintersburg holds in the history of Huntington Beach, Orange County, and our nation. The site is of particular interest for the Japanese American community. For me, as a Japanese American, and as a Presbyterian, this site is of particular importance personally.

If Huntington Beach continues to allow these historic landmarks to fall further into disrepair, they will be lost forever. Please take action to ensure future generations can learn the story of Historic Wintersburg.

Sincerely,



David Inoue
Executive Director

cc: Sean Joyce, Interim City Manager
Mary Urashima, Historic Wintersburg in Huntington Beach