

Old Homes of Fair Oaks

Jim Pearce

Leland – Robert “Bob” Smith Residence, 11064 Fair Oaks Blvd.

Much interest was generated by the estate sale on the southeast corner of Fair Oaks Blvd. and Sunset Avenue over the holiday weekends. Many people had wondered about the bamboo forest and structures that were visible from Fair Oaks Blvd. to the east and took advantage of the sale to wander the property. It was the home of Robert “Bob” Smith, renowned geologist with the U.S Geological Survey, and expert on volcanic geology. I’ll include part of a tribute to Bob from the American Geologic Society bulletin.



The home was not the original one built on the corner. The little house shown in the attached photo was torn down when Bob sold the corner of his four acre plot to the convenience store which needed the property the house stood on. He built his new home farther back on the property.



The house in the photo was originally built by prominent real estate agent George Robinson and later sold to Bob’s father, W. Leland Smith, who made a business of buying and selling exotic plants and birds while his wife ran a nursery. I had the opportunity to talk to Bob several times a number of years ago and his descendants donated several valuable items to the Historical Society when they were going through his possessions. Bob was active in the Historical Society in the 1990’s and gave his insights on growing up in Fair Oaks, as well as participating in the original “Old Homes of Fair Oaks” survey and identification. He and Steve Abbott, Farmer Bob Massey and Lois Frazier would drive around Fair Oaks with an old map trying to see if the homes still existed and who built and occupied them. We have the old map and identified structures at the History Center.

Bob died in 2016 and his wife followed in 2017.