



# FALL NEWSLETTER 2021

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY DEAN ALEXANDER

FIG · GARDEN  
HOME · OWNERS  
ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 5796 , Fresno, California 93755 · [www.oldfig.org](http://www.oldfig.org) · October 2021

Hello Fig Garden Neighbors.

I am honored to serve another year as president of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association (FGHOA). Within the past few months, the Fig Garden neighborhood has seen a faint glimpse back to normalcy related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of Fig Garden residents have been vaccinated. However, talking to neighbors, they indicate that they are still concerned about the virus and how it will impact them, family and friends in the future. With the new Delta strain of the virus, additional concerns have arisen. However, even with the Delta strain, our Fig Garden community is significantly better off than we were a year ago. Mask wearing restrictions have been reduced and socializing with neighbors, friends and community is getting back to normal.

There are two major areas of concern that have affected and may affect our residents, both of them linked to the homeless situation within our community. Between 2019 to 2020, the number of estimated homeless within the Fresno/Madera area increased from 2,508 to 3,641 people. That was a 40% increase in a 12-month timespan. Governor Newsom has pledged a \$12 billion proposal to offer remedies for the homeless situation in California. A

large portion of this money would be grants for affordable housing. These grants have created several low-income housing projects within the Fresno metropolitan area.

One particular proposed development, identified as the Shaw Glenn project, may impact the Fig Garden neighborhood residents. The project is on a 2.3-acre site located on the southeast corner of Shaw and Glenn Avenues. The primary concern for this residential development is the residential density of the complex. As proposed, the development will consist of 4- and 5-story buildings with 126 units. The density for the parcel is 55 units per acre exceeding the norm for the Fresno area which, on the high side, is 30 units per acre. This proposed residential development at such high density will significantly increase vehicle traffic as well as have other resource impacts within our neighborhood.

The FGHOA supports low income housing and would support a well-designed housing project within our neighborhood provided the residential density does not exceed 30 units per acre and the project is designed and constructed to minimize the impact within our neighborhood. We have communicated our concerns about the project to the developer

and to City and County representatives. We also recommend that you express your concerns and opinions about the project to City Councilmembers and County Supervisors.

The other concern related to homelessness that has impacted our Fig Garden neighborhood is sober/transitional housing, which was discussed in our previous newsletter. Transitional housing facilities are present within the Fig Garden area and more of them are being proposed. The issue with these homes is the lack of regulatory oversight. This type of group home is unique, and, according to Fresno County representatives, there are few regulations required to run this type of facility. Other group homes we've been so far familiar with have a maximum occupancy of six, unless they obtain a conditional use permit. According to Fresno County personnel, however, this limitation does not apply to this type of transitional or sober living housing. I know of two transitional housing facilities within Fig Garden that exceed 12 occupants per house. The high density of occupants has created issues impacting our neighborhood as evidenced by frequent police service at these two residences.

The FGHOA, along with neighbors, asked Fresno County representatives about safety concerns at these high occupancy transitional housing/sober living units. Other municipalities within California have set requirements for these group housing facilities to be similar to regulations for other

group homes. Fresno County representatives are still evaluating if these requirements can be used in Fresno County. I encourage you to reach out to County Supervisor Steve Brandau to let him know your opinion regarding appropriate conditions for transitional/sober living housing in relation to all other group homes.

Positive changes also occur as residential neighborhoods continue to evolve. If you walk or drive around Fig Garden you see evidence of remodeling and new construction. Our homes wear out over time and will eventually require remodeling. Remodeling and new construction typically will improve our neighborhood.

Fig Garden is also known for its great tree-lined streets. Together with unique homes, the mature tree canopy along the streets creates the special character of the area and it's crucial that we preserve and care for the trees. Removal of trees within the roadway easement does require approval from the Fresno County Public Works Department. Our Fig Garden neighborhood has its unique character developed over the past 100 years and it's paramount that it doesn't decline. I believe that we still live in one of the best neighborhoods within the United States, and, as I continue to say, I am proud to be a Fig Garden resident.

Our annual dinner was canceled this year due to the COVID-19 Delta variant breakout but we look forward to our Spring Annual meeting in 2022.

## **FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION**

### **OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2021**

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*Note: The Fig Garden Home Owners Association Board Election for the three-year terms were postponed this year due to local and state health restrictions concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. The election will resume at the next Fig Garden Home Owners Annual Meeting tentatively scheduled for Spring 2022. Updates will be posted in the Spring 2022 newsletter, as well as on the [www.oldfig.org](http://www.oldfig.org) site and through E-Alerts.*

# FIG GARDEN HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO UPHOLDINGS' SHAW GLENN DEVELOPMENT DESIGN CHANGES

The Fig Garden Home Owners Association would like to reconfirm its support for affordable housing, including in areas within and surrounding our Fig Garden neighborhood, such as the Shaw Glenn parcel, provided the development assures quality of life for its residents at a density that is not twice or more than that of every other affordable housing development in Fresno.

The changes UPholdings listed are these:

1. The Glenn Ave section of the building is now four floors, while the Shaw Ave. section remains at five floors.
2. The commercial space has been removed and replaced with live-work units.  
(The project still includes a small retail space for community-wide use.)
3. The total unit count has been lowered to 126 total units (from 128).
4. The parking space count has remained at 128 spaces.
5. Exterior amenity space has been increased from 8,290 square feet to 12,525 square feet.  
(Total exterior and interior amenity space has increased from 12,260 square feet to 17,230 square feet.)

Based on the project design changes supplied by UPholdings, the Shaw Glenn development will be reduced in density by **only 2 units**: from 128 units–or from **55.4 units/acre to 54.5 units/acre**, when the **maximum residential density is 30 units/acre** in accordance with Zone CMX, without enhancements. To use the potential zoning enhancements for low income projects is inappropriate in this location.

As far as we know, every other affordable housing development in Fresno as well as every one done by UPholdings here as well as around the country is at 30 units/acre or less.

The proposed Shaw Glenn development is almost **double the density** of the new development at Blackstone and McKinley and **quadruple** the density of these other two (which have only 2 stories):

- 1501 N. Blackstone at McKinley  
(Integrated Community Development):  
88 units on 2.9 acres - **30 units/acre**
- 130 W.Barstow - Alegre Commons  
(Fresno Housing):  
42 units on 2.8 acres - **15 units/acre**
- 725 N. Alluvial at Willow - Solivita Commons  
(Fresno Housing):  
60 units on 4.2 acres - **14 units/acre**

Even new residential units in downtown Fresno **do not exceed three stories in height**. While other affordable housing developments in Fresno may have considered the option to have a fourth, fifth or more floors, they have not done so—perhaps to preserve the quality of life for their residents and for their neighbors.

UPholdings has shown they can build affordable housing at a density of **no more than 30 units/acre**, as they have done so everywhere else. If this project is built to the stated 30 units/acre zoning density, it would blend more easily into our neighborhood at a height of no more than three stories on the 2.31 acres.

We are encouraged there are plans for increasing “Exterior Amenity space” as this is a critical feature for providing a healthy living environment for the residents. However, there are serious questions whether this is enough since this development, unlike other affordable housing developments, has a higher proportion of 2- and 3-bedroom units, which are likely to be rented to families with children. Other affordable housing developments have only one bedroom and are targeted mainly at single adults.

The Shaw Glenn development **must account for a population that requires a safe environment for its children, where they can play outdoors**. This is a challenge exacerbated by having a high-density family development **close to one of the busiest intersections in Fresno**.

We are concerned that 126 units with multiple bedrooms, with a large number of young children who may need to walk over a mile, each way, to school every weekday is a **significant safety issue still to be resolved**.

We commend and encourage UPholdings on their work in finding solutions to affordable housing in Fresno, but we insist UPholdings should follow its past practices of providing affordable housing at **no more than 30 units/acre** so that our new neighbors at Shaw Glenn can have the **quality of life where their families can be safe and thrive**.

It is the position of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association to **support this project at 30 units/acre or less** and we strongly ask that **additional life support spaces be added to this project to support a quality of life experience for the residents and children who will be living there**.

**In its current form and density, we strongly oppose this project**. It will be apart from the community and will not provide the quality of life experience the residents deserve and expect.



## THE SECOND BEST TIME

*"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."*

*– Chinese proverb*

Most of Fig Garden's old trees lining our streets were planted a hundred years ago when J.C. Forkner hired Horace Cotton, a San Francisco landscape architect, to design the plantings in the Fig Garden Tract. Over 20,000 ornamental trees were planted along the right-of-way to create a park-like feeling. The original planting in the former Tracts 1 and 2 (current Core area) was also extended to the East and West Wing areas, east of Maroa and west of Palm within the County island. In Fig Garden's West wing, for example, Gettysburg (with its cork oaks) and Arthur (with Arizona cypresses) continue Cotton's original design. Most of the originally planted, now venerable

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*Historic photo of original plantings on Van Ness  
(Courtesy of the Pop Laval Foundation)*

trees still stand deserving our respect and care. Some, however, if diseased or damaged, need to be replaced.

Walking along Arthur Ave recently, just a few days after a major wind storm (Oct. 11), I met Ryan Pilegard, a homeowner whose truck was damaged by a downed 105-year-old Arizona cypress (36-year-old Ryan meticulously counted the rings), one of many lining the street in a beautiful, fragrant colonnade.

The tree was weakened by termite damage, and Ryan was working on the extensive root system to dig out the base of the stump. In full appreciation of the character of our area, Ryan talked about his plan to transplant a young volunteer Arizona cypress growing

nearby to replace the old tree. No cost, lots of care and labor to preserve the old planting along the street. Bravo Ryan!

Kudos also to Karen Woodard on Gettysburg, who planted young replacement cork oaks to preserve the character of her street. Karen built her house in 1963 and has lived there since. While she celebrates her 80th year, she is still inspired to plant a slow-growing oak in her front yard for future generations. Thanks, also, to all others who plant in the same spirit.



*Ryan Pilegard plans to replace a 105-year-old Arizona cypress, which fell during a storm*



We want to sensitize all our residents to appreciate the historic plantings along their streets, care for the trees and replace them with like-species if necessary. Our website provides a full inventory of trees that was compiled in 2012. There you can find the name of your street's trees. <https://bit.ly/3aTT3eL>

Drought, disease and sometimes careless cutting have depleted some of the original continuous line of trees in some areas. Also, unfortunately, some new home owners desiring to modernize landscaping around their house, in some cases and probably unaware of the overall design of the area, remove whole swathes of old trees, replacing them with new and different species. Let's not carelessly change the character of our streets. Those old trees were planted in the County right-of-way and belong to all of us. As good stewards we need to appreciate and care for them.

The FGHOA recently created a Tree Committee to increase homeowners' awareness of the ecological, historical and aesthetic value of our trees through community involvement and events. Our first such event took place on May 1 in celebration of Arbor Day. UCCE Master Gardeners guided educational tours of Fig Garden streets, identifying signature trees, pointing out unique specimens and giving tips on tree maintenance and pruning. The celebration also included the planting of two young deodar cedar on Van Ness, with music accompaniment and great neighborly



*Newly planted cork oaks join their fellow senior oaks at Karen Woodard's home on Gettysburg*

participation. There was a children's activity table, food trucks at Gazebo Gardens, and Tree Fresno held their informational booth and expressed willingness to participate in future events. Fun was had, trees were admired, appreciated and planted, and great energy was created to carry the momentum forward.

Our next tree planting event will take place on December 4 (Saturday) starting at 9 am. The plan is to put more young trees in the ground, and we count on the Fig Garden residents to help with the labor. More information will be provided on Fig Garden E-Alert.

*-Magda Gilewicz*



*Old Fig neighbors plant a deodar cedar on Van Ness during this year's Arbor Day celebration*

# TREE CARE DURING DROUGHT

By Cynthia Zimmerman, *Fresno County Master Gardener*

In recent years many trees in the Fresno-Clovis area have been dying. Given our current drought conditions, it is a pretty safe bet that most trees are experiencing some stress. Leaf wilting, curling or browning of leaf edges, leaf scorch, a sparse canopy of off-color and undersized leaves, leaf yellowing and early leaf drop are all signs of drought stress.

As homeowners it's important to understand that during a drought trees require more care and attention than at any other time. To help your trees stay healthy and survive there are a number of steps you can take.

**WATER** is essential for healthy survival. Approximately 15-20 gallons of water should be applied by slow deep watering to at least a depth of 18 inches or more below the soil surface about once a week. Early in the morning is the optimal time. Remember that the roots go out past the drip line so be sure to water out there too. Test a day after watering with a soil probe, wooden dowel, or metal rod to see how far it can be easily pushed into the soil. Soil types will determine how quickly the water will be absorbed into the ground – sandy soil drains quickly from the surface while clay can cause puddling. The best way to water is with a soaker hose or drip system. Leaves, branches, and particularly trunks should not be watered – just the roots. A precise method of water delivery that can be used is a unique watering system called the Tree Ring Irrigation Contraption (TRIC) developed by the California Center for Urban Horticulture at UC Davis, UC Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Ewing Irrigation. Homeowners can put the kit together for about \$100 for one large tree. For more information: <https://ccuh.ucdavis.edu/tric>

**AVOID PRUNING.** Pruning a drought-stressed tree can lead to problems. It not only wounds the tree, which can lead to disease and insect attacks, the reserves of food stored in the branches are also removed. When a tree is already stressed it cannot restore those reserves, causing even more stress. Go ahead and remove any branch that is broken, dead, or insect- or disease-infested, and the suckers at the base of the tree in order to keep the tree from being further weakened or dangerous. Otherwise, do minimal pruning; instead of the usual rule of removing 1/3, remove no more than 1/4 of a tree's mass, and only if necessary.

**AVOID FERTILIZING.** Fertilization promotes tree growth, which increases its need for water. If you feel you absolutely must fertilize, avoid quick-release fertilizer, never fertilize when it is hot, and do not use fertilizer with nitrogen greater than 10%.

**REMOVE COMPETITION.** Plants compete for water, nutrients, light, and space. If turf is underneath a tree, more water will be needed because turf absorbs the greater part of the water applied to the surface. If possible, remove the turf.

**MULCH.** Apply organic mulch in a circle around the tree base, 3-4 inches thick and at least 3 feet out. Leave a clear 6-8 inch circle at the base of the trunk in order to avoid rot. Avoid using rock as mulch since it absorbs heat and can stress the roots.

**For more information about specific trees and professional tree care, go to the UC Cooperative Extension, Fresno County website <https://ucanr.edu/sites/mgfresno/Helpline>  
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## CHRISTMAS TREE LANE 2021

Christmas Tree Lane will be celebrating its 99th season this year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will not be any walk nights this year. The current State guidelines for mega outdoor events (attendance over 10,000) recommend that guests attending be vaccinated against COVID-19 or have a negative COVID-19 test result. There is no way to ensure that all attendees have been vaccinated, tested negative for COVID-19, or will wear a mask, as may be still required in December. With such a large venue and

with unlimited points of entrance/access, it is not possible to follow the State guidelines safely.

There will be a Christmas Tree Lane Event but only with drive nights where visitors can view the Lane with friends and family from the safety of their vehicles. Opening night will be Wednesday, December 1. The Lane will be open through Christmas Day, December 25. Let's mark our calendars and enjoy another magical year.



# OLD FIG GARDEN 2021 HOME SALES TO AUGUST 2021

Our market in general continues to be very robust. Due to the low mortgage rate market (still the lowest we have seen in years) and the fact that COVID-19 made people aware of their home environments, and their wish list of what they now need to move forward, homes have been flying off the market, with multiple offers in many cases. I will recap what has occurred specifically in our area.

As I have done previously for reporting the sales, the neighborhood is divided into three areas. On the west side of the neighborhood the borders are Palm to Fruit and Shaw to Ashlan. The middle section is Shaw to Lansing (South of Lansing is the City of Fresno, although Circle Drive is included in our map, and Palm to Maroa. (minus a small area of homes south of Griffith and east of Wishon to Maroa, which are in the City of Fresno, but again considered to be a part of expanded Old Fig.) The third section is Shaw to Ashlan and Maroa to Blackstone.

So far in 2021 there have been 57 closed home sales in the entire Old Fig Garden Area. Inventory has been low. At right is a breakdown of sales in the areas identified above.

Now for the 2021 statistics so far:	# of Sales	Median Sales Price	Avg. Sq. Ft Cost
Palm to Maroa and Shaw to Lansing /Circle Dr	28	\$570,000	\$238.31
Shaw to Ashlan and Palm to Fruit	12	\$374,000	\$206.70
Shaw to Ashlan and Maroa to Blackstone	17	\$447,500	\$227.66

The highest price home sold/closed was \$995,000.

The lowest home/condo price was \$274,000.

The highest s.f. cost in Old Fig Garden was at \$337.51

The lowest s.f. cost was \$152.08.

Homes sold for an average of 100.29% of their asking prices. There are currently 12 other homes in our neighborhood that are pending and getting ready to close, as well as 11 other homes actively for sale.

Stay safe and be well!

Your neighbor and board member,

-Angie Hyatt

## PG&E POWER LINE CLEARANCE

By Tony Pings

There has been an increase in the questions and concerns about the power line vegetation management by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. I have ongoing experience on this issue and would like to offer advice for our unique area.

You need to understand your rights and obligations to work with PG&E from an informed position on how to maintain your lines in a safe manner. The information can be found at this url: <https://bit.ly/3ayUejz>

PG&E has a right to require the main transmission line to be cleared, per their published Public Utilities Commission (PUC) approved document. That is only 18 inches in most cases – a dimension you will probably not hear from their representatives. If you visit the PGE.com website, search for “Residential Power Line Clearance” on the list. It is rather hard to find and is not favorable to what PG&E actually does in the field.

In reality, 18 inches is not a reasonable distance. You should work with them to establish a reasonable distance. You will hear a 12-foot clearance from their representatives, which is a recommendation in high fire-threat districts, but even in these areas the required clearance is 4 feet, not 12 feet. Be sure to download this document and have it when

talking with PG&E. You can have your own tree trimmers maintain this distance, at your cost, or PG&E will have a crew do the work. Keep in mind that they are not tree arborists. They will cut your trees to their benefit, not the health of your trees.

You do have the right to negotiate with the PG&E crew (these are contractors for PG&E, not PG&E employees) on the final condition and on access on your property. Be reasonable, but firm. Their goal is for a yearly visit. This is understandable, but not in the PUC approved requirements.

Trimming the line from the power transmission line to your house, if it is overhead, is not a requirement of PG&E, yet they may do this work. Trimming this line is your responsibility.

I do recommend working interactively with PG&E. Keeping the lines clear is for safety, but this does not mean they can come on your property any time they want and cut your tree 12 feet back. Know your rights, then be reasonable in working with PG&E. But you needn't always take what they tell you as the final answer.

# FIG GARDEN ANTI-SCAVENGING ORDINANCE

In response to concerns about safety and privacy related to security of personal information thrown into waste receptacles, Fresno County enacted an ordinance for the core areas of Fig Garden within the Police Protection District. A story about the ordinance that appeared in YourCentralValley.com can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/3iXLw33> Here is the full text of the ordinance:

## Current Code Version as of July 26, 2021 8.19.060 - Scavenging prohibited

A. No person shall open, look into, search through or remove any of the contents of any waste receptacle.

B. For purposes of this section, "solid waste receptacle" shall mean any bin, automatic lift container or any other type of receptacle used for the deposit, storage, collection or transport of garbage, litter, junk, debris, refuse, swill, rubbish, waste matter, putrescible waste, hazardous waste, infectious waste, recyclable materials, or garden refuse.

C. This section shall not apply to the following persons:

1. Any owner, tenant, lessee, or occupant of the property for which the solid waste receptacle is used;
2. Any persons acting with the consent of any owner, tenant, lessee, or occupant of the property for which the solid waste receptacle is used;
3. Any private collector or any contractor of a private collector, that owns or maintains the solid waste receptacle or is responsible for hauling away its contents, who is acting in accordance with their duties as such;
4. Any employee or contractor of any city, county, state or federal government agency, who is acting in accordance with their duties as such.

D. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Code, any person violating this section is guilty of an infraction. The first violation of this section in any twelve-month period shall be punished by a fine of one hundred dollars. The second violation of this section in the same twelve-month period shall be punished by a fine of two hundred dollars. The third and each subsequent violation of this

section within the same twelve-month period shall be punished by a fine of three hundred dollars for each violation.

E. This section shall apply and be enforced only in the following area of the unincorporated county: Fig Garden policing district boundaries.

The ordinance can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/3mOJUd8>

Fig residents within the Police Protection District can call the Fresno County Sheriff's office at 559-600-3111 to report suspicious activity related to the anti-scavenging ordinance.

### THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OLD FIG!

Please join the Fig Garden Home Owners Association. We work to protect and strengthen our unique neighborhood. The dues are \$70/year, which goes to pay fees associated with filing documents, for projects that protect the quality of life and integrity of the neighborhood, printing and mailing newsletters to keep you informed, and running and hosting the [www.oldfig.org](http://www.oldfig.org) website. Please mail your check payable to FGHOA to:

FGHOA  
PO BOX 5796  
Fresno CA 93755

or pay on our website: [www.oldfig.org](http://www.oldfig.org)

Unlike with most homeowners groups, our dues are voluntary and we depend on the generosity of our fellow neighbors. The Board of Directors and Officers receive no payment for their work on behalf of the Fig Garden Home Owners Association.

## USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Sheriff's Dispatch	600-3111 (Emergencies call 911)
Fresno Humane Animal Services	600-7387 (PETS)
Fresno County Code Enforcement	600-4550
24-Hour Domestic Violence Help	233-4357 (HELP)
Building Permit Info	600-4540
City of Fresno Water Division	621-5300, 621-5480
Fig Garden Fire Station (non-emergency)	621-4320 (Emergencies call 911)
Fresno County Library Information	600-7323 (READ)
Fresno County Public Health	600-3200, 600-6449
Graffiti Abatement	600-8107
Fresno County Road Maintenance	600-4840

For help or comments regarding Fresno County issues, contact our Fresno County District 2 Supervisor Steve Brandau:  
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