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### **Emeryville Case Studies: Bridgecourt Apartments**

Comm. Dev. Dept. Brisbane

In 1998, the Catellus Residential Group and Ecumenical Associates for Housing completed construction of the Bridgecourt Apartments, which include 220 units of rental housing and 7,500 square feet of street-front retail space. Over 40% of the units, 91 out of the total 220 units are designated for low and moderate-income households. The development utilizes a "podium" design, where residential are built above parking and commercial uses. Bridgecourt is part of the larger East

Baybridge development.

Past use of the property has included relatively intensive industrial and commercial activities since the turn of the century. From approximately 1938 to 1990 a portion of the parcel was the site of the Ransome Company, whose operations included asphalt mixing, metalworking, auto repair, and assembly of torch and burner equipment. Uses on the site also included a former truck depot and rail yards. The soils were contaminated with a variety of gasoline components and groundwater contaminated with gasoline components, diesel, oil, PCBs, and PNAs from both onsite and offsite sources. Catellus conducted all on-site assessment and remediation activity. The site was under periodic groundwater monitoring until 2002 when it was determined that the residual contamination was insignificant and posed no risk to human health and the environment.



The City assisted the project by raising bond financing for required infrastructure improvements and housing. The City contributed additional funds to provide for increased affordability of the project. The City purchased and remediated an access road – 40th Street, now a major transportation artery for the City.

Since the project was completed, it has been renovated twice, mostly for leaks from construction defects, and painting. There have been no known concerns from the past industrial use on the site.



### **Emeryville Case Studies: Bay Street**

The Bay Street project is “podium development” comprised of a 400,000 square foot retail project, layered over with parking and topped by residential development. The residential areas are essentially three levels above ground level. The retail and parking, including the structural work for the entire project, were completed in 2003, and the residential portions were completed in 2006. Investors included CalPERS.

Prior to modern times, the site had indigenous settlements, with “shellmounds” in the southern portion of the Bay Street site. An amusement park was built near the turn of the century. It was later filled, mostly in construction debris and other inert materials, in the 1930’s, after the railroad was

installed along the east shore of San Francisco Bay. After being filled in, the 22-acre site, was the location of significant industrial activity including a lime and sulfur plant, an insecticide and spray plant, steel storage, a trucking company, a plant producing iron oxide pigments, and storage of used drums and barrels prior to reconditioning. Many properties, including those east of the railroad tracks, released petroleum hydrocarbons, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylenes, lead, arsenic, oil and grease in the soil and groundwater. (See photo, after demolition)

A portion of the site was occupied by the Judson Steel Corporation from 1882-1987, and succeeded by the Barbary Coast Steel Corporation until 1991. The upper 3 to 7 feet of the site had been affected by diesel, gasoline, hydraulic oil, and lead. PCBs were present in the soil, and diesel and gasoline components were detected in the groundwater. Remedial work was carried out by Barbary Coast Steel during 1996 and 1997 and involved a first phase of soil excavation and removal and a second phase of capping the site and implementing a groundwater-monitoring program.



Because many sites sources of contamination, there are several case files under the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and Regional Water Quality Control Board. There are institutional controls that restrict the uses on the site and require periodic monitoring and reporting to DTSC. Since there continues to be construction on the

site, DTSC is still actively involved in oversight. There are no known issues with contamination from past uses.

## **Emeryville Case Studies: Watergate Condominiums**

The Watergate residential project was constructed in the early 1970's, during a time when land-use planning and environmental oversight were not well established in California.

Throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there had been many proposals to fill land and development along the East Bay shoreline. In the 1920-30s, Santa Fe railroad bought much of the bay shore property in Albany, Berkeley and Emeryville, and proposed substantial waterfront development. Construction of the Eastshore Highway in the 1930s resulted in extensive bay fill and moved the shoreline out to just west of the highway. The Paraffin Company built a wharf area west of the highway near the foot of Powell Street (where the Watergate office towers now stand). Because the east side of the bay was shallow, it was necessary to build long wharfs to reach water deep enough for ocean-going ships to dock. The City of Berkeley's 1955 master plan proposed up to 2,500 acres of land fill extending 3 miles into the bay and doubling the size of the city. An Army Corps of Engineers report (1959) concluded that 70% of the bay was shallow enough to be filled.

Concerned citizens feared that the bay would soon be reduced to no more than a wide river. This spurred the birth of the "Save San Francisco Bay Association" (now "Save the Bay") in 1961 and mobilized thousands of members to stop Berkeley's plan to fill the bay. This victory was repeated on bay fill projects around the region, and led to passage of the McAteer-Petris Act (effective 1965), which suspended all fill in the bay unless permitted by the newly formed San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).



Emeryville did not have much of a plan until 1966. Following 3 years of study, the General Plan was adopted, which called for filling in 400 acres of the "Tidelands," the shallow portion of the bay west of the shoreline. This was to be accomplished by extending Powell and 64<sup>th</sup> Streets about a mile into, which at that time, was just west of the existing railroad tracks, where the Paraffin wharves were constructed. (See photo).

The timing of Emeryville's 1966 general plan and the formation of BCDC were closely intertwined. On January 11, 1965, City Council voted to adopt the portion of the master plan related to the development of the Tidelands. The Planning Commission voted to recommend adoption of the entire new general plan on August 11, 1965. Just

a few days before the McAteer-Petris Act went into effect the City Council approved the "Tidelands Reclamation Project" allowing for a mile-long peninsula west of the freeway for offices, residential and marina development. Filling activity began soon thereafter. BCDC sued Emeryville but lost.



On February 14, 1966, the City Council adopted the new General Plan, which included the fill that was then underway (see photo), where Watergate residential was built between 1970-74, and proposed additional filling of the Tidelands. However, no new fill was permitted by BCDC.

Environmental oversight for the construction of

Watergate was not apparent. The Toxic Substances Control Division, precursor to the Department of Toxic Substances Control, was not established until 1981, and the Solid Waste Management Board, precursor to the Integrated Waste Management Board, was not established until 1973. The State Water Resources Control Board was established in 1966, but apparently did not have jurisdiction or applicable regulations at that time. The California Environmental Quality Act did not exist.

The development utilizes a "podium" design, where residential are built above parking. Since completion, and to this day, there have been major repairs to the Watergate structures. The most serious appear to be related to design, workmanship, and differential land settlement (e.g. the buildings, which are constructed on piles, and roads settled at different rates, resulting in gaps and uneven surfaces, issues with utilities). However, according to the Building Department, none appear to be related to any hazardous substances that may or may not exist in the subsurface.



Sources/Credits: Interview with Emeryville Building Department,  
<http://www.ci.emeryville.ca.us/662/The-Expanding-City-1960s-to-1980s>  
<http://www.calepa.ca.gov/About/History01/Report.pdf>,  
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