

Nuisance building finally coming down

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Take a long, last, lingering look at Crescent City's most infamous eyesore. After a prolonged rainy season, court receiver Richardson Griswold law firm will begin demolishing arguably the city's most notorious nuisance property, this week.

Over the next three months, the goal of the city and receiver Griswold is to abate this blight. 200 A St will be a 1.5 acre soon-to-be vacant lot. Late last year, the city declared the former medical office building a health nuisance, a magnet attracting homelessness, criminal activity, drug abuse and unsanitary lifestyle, unacceptable in any neighborhood and especially in the pristine, visitor-welcoming coastal location by the Oceanfront Lodge and surrounding upscale homes.

Four years back, Lawnchair investments acquired the property in hopes of developing high-end condominiums. The investor failed to move forward on razing the building and was soon in violation of California Health Code. Ultimately, the city declared the property a nuisance, went to court and sought relief in having Griswold law as the court receiver.

The history of this building dates to the 1930s. Union Carbide founder George Owen Knapp came to Crescent City on a fishing trip. Knapp was a diabetic; he was enthralled with Crescent City but was concerned the lack of medical care in Del Norte was unacceptable.

Knapp's passion was philanthropy, notably in building hospitals, including the Cottage hospital in Santa Barbara where Knapp is buried.

Knapp returned home to Chicago and immediately made plans to build a spectacular medical center in Crescent City. His generosity was welcomed by a community lacking reasonably satisfactory medical care. This new facility would serve the medical needs of this county, irrespective of one's ability to pay.

The Knapp hospital was renamed Seaside Hospital. Knapp passed away in 1945.

The hospital slowly deteriorated and in 1992, the hospital building was leveled and replaced with the Oceanfront Lodge. Meanwhile, the adjoining medical office at 200 A Street remained and slowly ebbed toward nuisance status.

All efforts to abate this eyesore were unsuccessful, until present day.

Take a long, last view of this eyesore. Alas, it's finally coming down.