

Sellers' Comments about living at 3809 Forest Hill

We loved living on Forest Hill – and the street name couldn't be more fitting. We were enveloped by our own small forest and situated on a hill that afforded us both vistas and privacy in this quiet neighborhood. The welcoming warmth of the neighbors, the lush habitat of Sausal Creek, the interesting shops and restaurants, the views from our windows, and the lovely architectural features, are just part of what we'll miss.

3809 Forest Hill was a home where sunlight and breezes and music all flowed freely. So many of our early mornings began, coffee in hand, in the living room in front of the large picture window where we relished the first rays of sun filtering through the boughs of the grand old incense cedar that graces the front yard. The sun would light up the hardwood floors with a honey-colored glow. And in winter, a robust fire in the red brick fireplace partnered with the alcoves carved into the walls and the lovely beamed wood ceilings to create a warm, cozy den-like atmosphere where we shared many an evening with family and friends.

From the large bay window in the kitchen, we loved watching the amber morning light gradually appear on the leaves of the oaks. From nearly every window in the house, we saw vistas of greenery, clouds, and sunsets. Sunlight flowed in through these upstairs windows, nourishing our house plants and cheering our day. And when we threw the windows open, fresh air flowed through, playing delightful melodies on our wind chimes. The living room seemed made for our acoustic piano and we learned after we moved in that the original owner, who lived 60 years in the house, hosted a grand piano in the same room. The lovely sound of classical piano music filled the house and spilled outside; we often spotted a neighbor who, upon walking back up the hill, sat on our little brick wall to listen for a spell.

Part of what drew us so strongly to the house were the trees – in the backyard, three majestic live oaks and a jacaranda tree that carpets the ground with purple blooms in the summer; and in the front, a soaring incense cedar and an ancient yew tree. (The incense cedar, as old as the house itself, was brought to Oakland by the original owner from Nevada City in the late thirties.) We were eventually inspired by this natural beauty to create a landscape using the alluring colors and forms of California native plants. Our lush vegetable garden of kale, collards, tomatoes, green beans, combined with the lemon and orange tree, and the native plants drew pollinators and wildlife. An amazing diversity of

birds were regular visitors – from woodpeckers to hummingbirds to hawks and house wrens – well over 30 species in all! (See our bird list on display in the house.)

We couldn't have asked for better neighbors – friendly, helpful people with who take initiative and look out for one another. There were neighborhood meetings, an annual block party and garage sale, and emergency preparedness trainings. Not long after we moved in, we experienced our first annual neighborhood-wide disaster drill, complete with scenarios, ham radios, walkie-talkies, and the Oakland fire department. We were duly impressed, both by how much we learned and how much fun we had. We've been told Forest Hill is one of the most organized blocks in all of Oakland! And one with some of the best cooks too, judging by what our neighbors brought to our annual potlucks.

People do love to eat well here! A couple around the corner generously offered their place as a neighborhood delivery site for organic produce from Full Belly Farm. Due to their efforts, over 30 households from Forest Hill and Whittle savor a weekly box of organic fruit, veggies, nuts, and flowers. The Dimond District annual Oktoberfest is an event not to be missed, with its delicious ethnic foods and great music. Ditto for the Greek Festival up the hill at the Greek Orthodox Church – music, dancing, and great food!

Dimond Park, just three blocks away, is home to majestic old-growth redwoods. The park also boasts tennis courts, a year round swimming pool, and a trailhead for hiking up Sausal Creek, probably the best creek walk in the East Bay. A few blocks further takes you into the Dimond business district. Now one of the most convivial and diverse neighborhoods in Oakland, we've seen several new businesses make their homes here: La Farine bakery, Peets, Farmer Joe's grocery, Paws and Claws, and several new restaurants with a variety of cuisines. The business owners are themselves part of the community and take pride in it. A vibrant mural celebrating the community and crosswalks created to resemble the local creeks are just part of the Dimond art scene.

Our sincere hope is that the new owners will love and cherish this place as much as we have. Namaste!