



February 21, 2017

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive  
401 Fifth Ave., Ste. 800  
Seattle, WA 98104

Joe McDermott  
Chair, King County Council  
516 Third Ave., Ste. 1200  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Constantine and Council Chair McDermott:

The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation is writing in support of King County acquiring and stabilizing the Mukai Barreling Plant on Vashon Island. The Mukai property is highly significant; it helps tell the story of Japanese American settlement and farming in King County as well as the development of the strawberry industry on Vashon Island and in the Puget Sound Region. The Mukai House and Garden was listed as one of Washington Trust's Most Endangered Historic Properties in 2013 and since that time we have been deeply involved in efforts to preserve the site and transform it from a misused property into a public resource that will communicate the Mukai Family story. The Mukai Barreling Plant, a designated King County Landmark, is a critical element of this story.

B.D. Mukai, who immigrated to the United States in approximately 1885, constructed the barreling plant in 1926 to accommodate a newly developed technology for freezing berries. This new technology revolutionized the berry industry, allowing growers to expand distribution from local markets to a nationwide audience. Mukai berries, frozen at the barreling plant, were soon distributed around the world for use in preserves and as ice cream toppings. Despite several changes in ownership and use during its history, the barreling plant retains a high degree of integrity and, together with the associated farmhouse and garden, conveys an important chapter of Puget Sound's regional history.

The Mukai Cold Process Fruit Barreling Plant is a key component of the Mukai Family story and is essential for properly interpreting the Mukai complex to the public. The Washington Trust has worked closely with the Friends of Mukai over the past several years and supported their efforts to gain legal control of the Mukai House and Garden. They have already taken significant steps toward the rehabilitation of the Mukai House and we believe they will also be dedicated and responsible stewards of the barreling plant.

The Washington Trust strongly supports King County's proposal to acquire the barreling plant property and invest in its stabilization with proceeds from the associated sale of county property. We will continue to offer support to the Friends of Mukai in the coming years as they work to open the entire Mukai complex to the public and share the Mukai story.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Moore'.

Chris Moore  
Executive Director