



26 January 2015

The Honorable Mayor Helene Schneider
& Members of City Council
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Dear Mayor Schneider and Members of Council:

We were thrilled to receive the outpouring of community support and unanimous approval by the Planning Commission of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's proposed Master Plan and updated Conditional Use Permit on January 8th. Naturally, we are disappointed that an appeal has been filed by Museum neighbors, Mark and Lauren Carey, with whom we have had ongoing discussions and for whom several meaningful project revisions were made to specifically address their concerns.

At the appeal hearing, we will be prepared to review the proposed project in detail and to answer any questions you may have about the project. Between now and then, we will contact the appellant to see if there is any possibility that we might further address their concerns, which we believed had already been resolved. For example, in addition to making changes to some of its operational practices, the Museum added a sound wall to its Master Plan that is proposed to be located between the Museum's parking lot and the Careys' property. This feature was added specifically to address the Careys' concerns. Perhaps the Careys will be willing to meet with us and we can reach a reasonable accommodation to avoid the need for an appeal hearing at Council.

Meanwhile, we would like to share with you how we addressed each of the concerns listed in the Careys' appeal letter.

Regarding the proposed public address (PA) system, we are confident that, based on the study of our technical consultant, Jonathan Leech of DUDEK, use of the PA system will not be audible off site. Given that the Careys were skeptical about the noise study's conclusions, and, to be fail safe, the Museum proposed a condition whereby the actual system, once installed, would be tested to confirm whether or not announcements are audible at the property boundary. If the system is audible and remains audible after testing to adjust it, (i.e. volume reduction, reorientation, relocation or removal of certain speakers) the Museum has agreed to restrict use of the system to emergency announcements. All of this is reflected in the conditions of approval discussed and approved by the Planning Commission (Condition G.3.).

Regarding trash collection, the Museum's plan proposes to relocate trash dumpsters from their current unenclosed location in an interior and central location on the campus where there are conflicts with pedestrian circulation. The new location will be at the southwestern corner of the parking lot (more than 300-ft from the Careys' property), where the trash containers will be enclosed, truck access will be facilitated, pedestrian conflicts avoided, and noise levels reduced overall. Trash collection activity is a part of modern life and, while the collection trucks used throughout our community are noisy, they provide a necessary and beneficial service. The Careys' property is adjacent to the northernmost portion of the Museum's parking lot where the landscape buffer is narrow. In response to the Careys' concerns regarding car headlights and concerns about noise in general, the Museum offered to construct a sound wall which will serve the dual purpose of shielding the Careys from the headlights as well as significantly reducing noise they will experience from the Museum site. Currently, noise levels at all property boundaries are lower than what is allowed by City standards and will remain so after implementation of the Master Plan. The Museum has proposed construction of the sound wall to be the first project component and the conditions require that this happen within one year of CUP approval (Condition I.5.a.).

Regarding construction activities, our project description/applicant report stated our expectation that the City would require and the Museum would implement standard construction measures, and indeed such measures were included in the conditions of approval. This is a project of very limited scale and scope. The Museum has also agreed to prohibit construction parking, construction equipment, staging or materials storage from occurring within the northernmost portion of the parking lot (the portion closest to the Careys). This prohibition is included in Condition F.4.

We also want you to be aware of the early and ongoing outreach conducted by the Museum throughout its Master Planning process. In addition to bringing conceptual plans to the City staff, Historic Landmarks Commission and Planning Commission on several occasions, the Museum met first and continually with its closest neighbors and the general public. The plan that was ultimately submitted to the City and approved by the Planning Commission was drastically different from the initial project in scale and scope and was the direct result of input received from all the stakeholders who participated and provided comment. At the time that the Museum's formal DART application was submitted to the City last year, we held a dinner meeting with the Museum's "closest neighbors" (everyone sharing a property boundary with the Museum including the Careys who did attend) and the project team to review the project and its associated technical studies. This meeting provided an opportunity to understand the details of the project, plans and technical studies, all of which were made available to everyone.

As a planner in our community who has had the privilege of representing many of our finest educational, cultural, and health care institutions over the last 28 years, I want you to know that the depth, transparency, and responsiveness of the Museum's outreach efforts have been extraordinary. The Museum was sincere in its desire to address all reasonable concerns throughout the process, up to and including suggesting revisions

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to the staff proposed conditions of approval, to tighten language, clarify intent, and specify the Museum's commitments. Significant compromises and meaningful revisions were made to this project throughout the Museum's outreach effort in direct response to neighbor concerns, including those of the Careys.

Sincerely,
SUZANNE ELLEDGE
PLANNING & PERMITTING SERVICES, INC.



Suzanne Elledge
Principal Planner

cc: Gwen Peirce
Paul Casey
Ariel Calonne
Dan Gullett



SUZANNE ELLEDGE

PLANNING & PERMITTING
SERVICES, INC.

3 March 2015

The Honorable Mayor Helene Schneider
& Members of City Council
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Subject: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Dear Mayor Schneider and Members of Council:

In preparation for the upcoming hearing with Council on March 24th we would like to augment the information we provided in our January 26th letter and update you on further revisions the Museum is willing to make to its project and PC-approved CUP.

As we indicated we would in our January 26th letter, we reached out to the appellants to see if we could come to an agreement that might avoid the appeal hearing. We have held a cordial and candid meeting with Mark and Lauren Carey. While we had hoped we could come to a reasonable compromise with the Careys, the Careys instead presented us with numerous additional items beyond those mentioned in their appeal letter. With such increasing requests, the Museum feels it has no choice but to present its proposed project to you for your consideration on March 24th.

Public Address System

As part of its permit application, the Museum requested that Condition II.A.16 in its 1989 CUP be revised to allow limited use of a PA system with external speakers in locations that would be operationally useful to the Museum and designed to not be audible at the property boundary. To not be audible, sound from the PA system could not exceed 2dBA over ambient noise levels.

The practice of making visitor service announcements via a public address system is now standard practice in museums and other cultural venues across the country and a service that visitors have come to expect. The need for such a system is particularly pronounced at the Museum of Natural History given that the developed portion of the site that is used by the public comprises a number of adjoining building and immediately adjacent outdoor activity areas to the south of the building assembly; a PA system provides the only reasonable and convenient way to alert all visitors in those spaces of programmatic activities such as the Planetarium show and Museum closing time.

The Museum is aware that the PA system that was in place 25 years ago was an issue for some Las Encinas neighbors, and therefore it has designed a system using current

technology and specific speaker locations to avoid any nuisance to neighbors. It is our understanding that the 1989 system included a speaker outside Fleischmann Hall as well as one in the parking lot both of which were directed toward the northern property boundary (Las Encinas Lane) and were apparently audible off-site. The proposed system has speakers that only face toward the interior of the built campus and which, according to the Museum's licensed acoustical engineer, will not be audible off-site.

Furthermore, the proposed public address system will be equipped with a tamper-proof electronic governor which can only be re-set by the system installer. The governor will restrict the maximum volume of system operation, which will be set according to sound level verification monitoring that will be performed during initial testing of the installed system.

Finally, prior to the Planning Commission hearing in January and together with its Las Encinas neighbors, the Museum crafted the following condition of approval regarding the PA system:

Noise Measurements. *For the phase of the project that includes the exterior speaker system, submit a final report from a licensed acoustical engineer, verifying that the sound produced by the exterior speaker system does not exceed ambient exterior noise levels by more than 2 dBA at any property boundary with a residential use. In the event the noise is not within acceptable levels, additional measures shall be recommended by the noise specialist and implemented subject to the review and approval of the Building and Safety Division and the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC). Such measures may include volume reduction, relocation, reorientation, removal of speaker(s), or limiting the use of the speaker system to emergency announcements only.*

These protocols were approved by the Planning Commission as Condition II.G.3. We believe that the system as designed and described above, together with the foregoing PC-approved condition, provide failsafe protection for the neighborhood. If, upon installation and testing of the system and modifications to the system as necessary, noise levels unexpectedly exceed what the experts anticipate, the system shall only be used for emergency announcements.

Additional Construction Conditions

As we mentioned in our January 26th letter, this is a renovation project of limited scale and scope. There are no new buildings being constructed and minimal earthwork. The project will be built out in phases with long periods of time (years) in between phases. The Museum has already agreed to reduce daily construction hours (PC Condition F.3) and prohibit construction staging and construction worker parking in the portion of the parking lot closest to the Careys (PC Condition F.4.)

Nonetheless, the Careys continue to have concerns about potential construction disturbances and have requested additional construction requirements. While we believe, and the Planning Commission agreed, that the limited scope of the Museum project does not warrant any more construction conditions than those standard conditions that the City normally imposes, the Museum is willing to implement the following additional construction measures that were of importance to the Careys:

1. All construction equipment used on the site, including trucks, shall be professionally maintained and fitted with standard manufacturers' muffler and site activity silencing devices. Sound control devices and techniques, such as noise shields and blankets, shall be employed as needed to reduce the level of noise of all project development activity to surrounding residents consistent with the requirements of Section 9.16.025.C.
2. No radios, music playback equipment, or musical instruments shall be used by workers while on the project site. Drugs and alcohol are prohibited on the project site.
3. When portable or stationary equipment, such as but not limited to generators, air compressors and wood sawing stations are required on the project site, the equipment shall be located as far from the project boundaries with residences (other than those owned by the Museum) as possible. If it is necessary to locate portable/stationary equipment within 200 feet of the project perimeter, methods to provide noise shielding for that equipment shall be implemented. This may include but is not limited to: providing a two or three sided enclosure which is lined with a sound absorbing material between the equipment and the property line, or locating the equipment so that noise shielding is provided by existing or new structures located on the project site consistent with the requirements of SBMC 9.16.025.C.
4. Relevant signage shall be included on-site that provides a Museum-designated representative's telephone number at which noise complaints can be received. The Museum will include construction related complaints and methods of resolution in its annual reporting to the City. In response to verified complaints the City may require the applicant to implement a noise monitoring program. The noise monitoring program shall be designed and conducted to ensure that appropriate noise reduction and control measures are identified and implemented so that construction related noise levels at the property lines of sensitive receptors (residents) adjacent to the project site are consistent with the requirements of SBMC 9.16.025.C.
5. If construction workers arrive at the property before 8:00 a.m., they are to remain in the area of actual construction, and away from any neighbors' property lines.

Trails for Public Use

Along with proposing to implement habitat restoration in the woodland in the western portion of the Museum's site, the Museum's updated CUP maintains public access through the woodland portion of the property. We have attached an exhibit entitled *Trails for Public Use* that illustrates these twin objectives on a single plan sheet. The exhibit incorporates only information from plans that have already been reviewed and

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approved by the PC, and was prepared to further clarify existing and proposed trails following public testimony on February 5th when the PC considered its draft resolution and minutes from the January 8th SBMNH hearing. Public access is maintained through a loop trail that provides public access connections to and from Puesta del Sol, and Las Encinas West as well as around the woodland and along a major segment of the creek. Habitat restoration activities will take place in a contiguous and central portion of the woodland.

We hope that this additional information is useful to the Council. We look forward to presenting the Museum's Master Plan and updated CUP to you at your Council's March 24th hearing. Thank you.

Sincerely,
SUZANNE ELLEDGE
PLANNING & PERMITTING SERVICES, INC.



Suzanne Elledge
Principal Planner

Enclosures

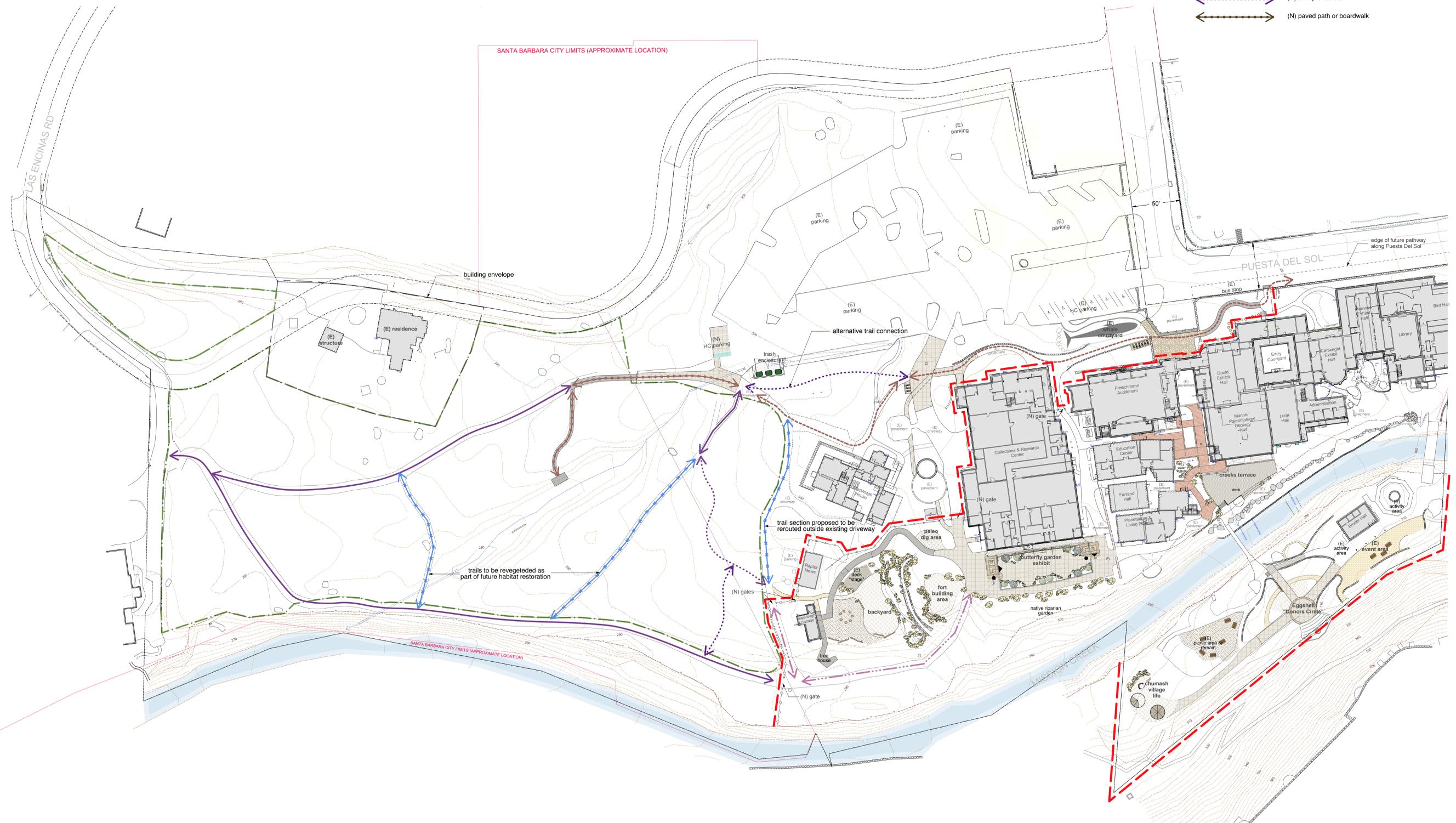
cc: Gwen Peirce
Paul Casey
Ariel Calonne
Dan Gullett



legend

Refer to sheets L1.0, L1.1, L1.2 for additional information on proposed site improvements.

- - - - - Museum fee area
- - - - - woodland habitat restoration area
- - - - - (N) relocated wood fence
- - - - - (N) split rail fence
- <- - - - -> (E) unimproved trail
- <- - - - -> (E) unimproved trail to be abandoned or rerouted
- <- - - - -> (E) unimproved trail within "Museum fee area"
- <- - - - -> (E) paved path
- <- - - - -> (N) unimproved trail
- <- - - - -> (N) paved path or boardwalk



**Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
Schematic Design**

Santa Barbara, California

Principal SVA
Project Manager GG
Drawn By GG/LF
Reviewed By
Job No. 10-16

Revisions:
No. Date By

**NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION**

Feb 25, 2015
MASTER PLAN
-DART
Submission

**TRAILS FOR
PUBLIC USE**

L0.2