

CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE APPLICANT



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CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Elledge', written over a circular stamp or seal.

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

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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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Suzanne Elledge', written over the printed name and title.

Suzanne Elledge
Principal Planner

Enclosures

cc: Gwen Peirce
Paul Casey
Ariel Calonne
Dan Gullett



Santa Barbara
Museum of Natural History

Inspiring a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world since 1916

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March 17, 2015

City Council
 City of Santa Barbara
 735 Anacapa Street
 Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council,

I am writing to you today as Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and on behalf of my fellow trustees to share with you our unanimous and resolute support for the Museum's Master Plan and updated Conditional Use Permit.

The plan we have presented is not just about buildings, boundaries, and operations; but rather transforming learning opportunities so visitors can make discoveries, deepen common interests, expand knowledge, and connect their natural curiosity to the wonders of our world.

The Museum of Natural History is yours, mine, and the community's, and it is an invaluable local and global resource. As one of the oldest and most important institutions in Santa Barbara, the Museum serves 20,000 school children and thousands and thousands of community members every year. Our Museum is a community repository of art, life, literature, science, and our human heritage. Beyond Santa Barbara, the Museum is a global resource for ongoing scientific research so that we may better understand our world and our human impact on this world.

In order to sustain and protect the Museum's relevance, and maintain its ability to continue to serve our local and global communities well into the future, we dedicated six years to planning and evaluating the possibilities. We held many community meetings, maintained open communications with neighbors, and diligently worked with experts on historical preservation, biological resources, environmental impacts, traffic, emergency management, noise, and more. We have volunteered in our updated CUP, an additional 19 self-imposed conditions. I assure you that the Master Plan and updated CUP before you is thoughtful and our analysis has been meticulously comprehensive. Our project is reasonable, proportional, and appropriately transformational to guide the Museum over the next 10 to 15 years.

As I mentioned, the support of the Museum Board of Trustees for this project is unanimous and our philanthropic support is enormous. Our City Planning Commission voted unanimously in support of the Museum's Master Plan and updated CUP. Our Plan will revitalize the Museum and transform the visitor experience by better connecting people to science and nature...indoors and outdoors...by improving site stewardship, creating new gallery experiences, and refreshing legacy galleries.

We are at the cusp of transformational change. We are committed to see this project implemented for the benefit of our community. I ask you to approve the Museum's project without further restrictions, and help us continue our mission to inspire a thirst for discovery and wonder for the natural world.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth Fowler
 Board Chair

SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Museum
 2559 Puesta del Sol, Santa Barbara, California 93105
 805.682.4711 • Fax 805.569.3170 • www.sbnature.org

Sea Center
 211 Stearns Wharf, Santa Barbara, California 93101
 805.962.2526 • Fax 805.962.3483 • www.sbnature.org



Santa Barbara
Museum of Natural History

For the most part we are typical teenagers, but thanks to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History our teenage years were...and are...not so typical. We are the Museum's Quasars to Sea Stars, which means we are fortunate enough to be part of a unique science and education work-study program that changed our lives.

As students we work closely with educators and scientists to learn about the natural world...everything from A to Z...anthropology, astronomy, entomology, marine biology and zoology. We also learn valuable life skills such as public speaking, research, computer competency, and leadership. Once we complete 60 hours of community service, students are eligible to become paid staff members, and we work with Museum scientists and professionals in the lab and out on the field. You can find us sitting in a lab, completing research on the *Cancer gracilis* crab or digging at an archaeological Chumash site, looking for remains that tell a cool story.



And it's not just about work and study; we have so much fun with each other and with the Museum team. We go on nature hikes, camp out, volunteer at family festival, teach kids about science, take families on tours of the night sky at the monthly Star Party, visit colleges, and explore careers as interns for Museum staff. Due to Quasars to Sea Stars, the museum has become our second home. It is a place where we come to discover and learn. We push each other to excel in subjects we never knew we liked. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is a home to us because we feel comfortable and immensely supported in it. The Museum Staff does not only educate and lead us, but also trusts and pushes us to become excellent. The Museum and the program have made us into teenagers that are far above basic. It has inspired us to follow what we love and to portray the scientists and leaders that each of us is. As our time at the Museum advances, we are building lifelong friendships and mentorships.

We don't know all the intricate details about the Museum's Master Plan, but we have seen our Museum mentors work so hard on this project for so long, and they are doing this for our futures and the next generation of Quasars to Sea Stars. And what we do know is that the Museum changed our lives and opened doors that we did not know existed. Just like the Museum has opened door for us, we would like to see it open more door for teenagers to come. There is a moment in a Quasar's journey in which we realize what we are really interested in; we would love to see that exact moment in a lot more teens. The only way to see that happen is by having a museum that is more evolved and can reach out to teenagers more. This is exactly one of the goals of the Museum.

Today, we ask you to not close any doors or windows to the future of the Museum. Approve our Master Plan. Approve our updated CUP without further limiting our good works. Support the Museum. Support us. Support our futures.

Thank you,

Jacqueline Cabral
Tiana Gong
Gino Morison
Juliette Kojima
Brian Eddy
Gloria Catalan

Damaris Rojas
Maria Vargas
Karim Cortez
Daniel Missoff
Angelina Lusto
Victoria Fauerback

Gaby Baez
Charlie Thrift
Darya Pirooz
Alexia Vance
Zane Stull
Ben Warren

Tschech, Susan

From: Peirce, Gwendolynn
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 5:34 PM
To: Tschech, Susan
Subject: FW: Letter in Support of SB Museum of Natural History Master Plan and CUP

From: Christopher Knowlton [mailto:chknow@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2015 5:33 PM
To: Peirce, Gwendolynn
Subject: Letter in Support of SB Museum of Natural History Master Plan and CUP

Gwen Peirce,
Can you please forward the following letter to the City Council members regarding the up-coming appeal of the Master Plan and Conditional Use Permit for Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.
Thank you,
Christopher Knowlton
chknow@aol.com
917-922-6070

Santa Barbara City Council
City Hall
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

March 17, 2015

Dear Mayor Schneider and Members of the Santa Barbara City Council:

I am a trustee of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, writing in support of the proposed Master Plan and Conditional Use Permit now on appeal before your Council.

Today, faced with new competition for people's time and attention, museums of all kinds are pursuing innovative ways to engage with their communities, ways that will encourage visitations and make their mission, resources, and relevance more apparent. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is no exception. What differentiates it, however, is that current circumstances—in particular, challenges facing the environment such as global warming, the Sixth Extinction of species, rapid global population growth, deforestation, desertification, and rising sea levels—make its mission, and the mission of every natural history museum, more vitally important than ever before.

The critical scientific role that natural history museums play in our society is not always well understood. The collecting, deciphering, and classifying of specimens that these museums perform creates an on-going record of what has happened on our planet, a record that can be used to identify new pathogens or toxins and to trace how they are transmitted through the environment. These collections provide baselines for a healthy ecosystem, or proof of an ailing one. They help solve problems in agriculture, medicine, and forensic science. Without these collections scientists would never have been able to identify the origins of the great influenza pandemic of 1918 that caused the death of 30 million people worldwide. More recently, these collections have helped to

distinguish between the avian flu and the swine flu and to pinpoint the origins of the West Nile virus. And famously, their egg collections documented that the pesticide DDT was causing the extinction of the great birds of prey, like the Peregrine falcon, a now recovered species—the fastest animal on earth—that once again can be seen hunting off our beaches or perching in a cypress tree on the Douglas Preserve.

Museums of natural history serve an important *public* role, too, one that matches their scientific one. They provide the general public with opportunities for life-long learning in an inspirational setting. If Theodore Roosevelt Sr. had not launched the American Museum of Natural History from the front parlor of the Roosevelt brownstone in New York City, in 1869, would his eldest son, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., our 26th President, have become a naturalist and a collector himself and, subsequently, this country's greatest conservationist, preserving over 230 million acres of land and doubling the number of our national parks? Not likely. Museums of Natural History can have that level of public impact, especially if they take seriously their role as standard bearers for the culture.

This Master Plan will make the relevance and scientific import of our own collections clearer to every visitor who walks through the door. It will allow us to tell the compelling stories of nature in ingenious ways. It will introduce new gallery experiences, revitalize exhibition space and iconic dioramas, and strengthen the connection between our indoor and outdoor venues. Everything about the Master Plan is geared to help the museum better present the extraordinary beauty and miraculous complexity of the natural world and its indigenous peoples. We are not dumbing down the museum. We are not trading educational value for entertainment value. In a world full of fakery, we plan to deliver a transformative experience without the use of gimmicks. The butterflies, the paleontological specimens, the woven Chumash baskets, the minerals and gemstones—all are authentic. Even the dazzling distant galaxies seen through the telescope in our observatory will be real, as they always have been.

At a time when most children no longer encounter nature in their daily lives and where adults rarely step away from their office desks or their electronic devices long enough to experience the natural world in the flesh, our “rebooted” museum will allow both young and old to escape to nature. Indeed, with this Master Plan we can make our museum the kind of revelatory place where a child can walk in—perhaps oblivious to the surrounding wildlife, to the origins of mankind, or to the history of this planet or the cosmos—and walk out an aspiring ornithologist, ethnographer, oceanographer, or astronomer. A few, no doubt, will go on to make lasting contributions to science or to some aspect of mankind's understanding of the natural world—and we can always use a few more children like that.

We, the board of trustees, as stewards of this lovely museum, believe that the proposed Master Plan preserves and highlights all that is best about the museum's past—and that includes most of its buildings and physical plant, its ambiance, and, of course, its collections of mollusks, moths, and mammals, to name but a few. But the new museum will also utilize the best of modern museum management practices. For example, it will incorporate the latest technology for lighting and display. The Plan will allow us, in every sense, to better illuminate our remarkable collections, the scientific and cultural heritage that has been assembled and preserved for posterity over the last one hundred years.

If this Master Plan is approved and implemented, we believe the museum will become a superb venue for educating the Santa Barbara community and its visitors on the latest thinking about a host of biological and scientific topics, topics every bit as diverse and important as nature itself. Simultaneously, the museum will emerge—like a butterfly from its chrysalis—as a place to be dazzled and amazed by all the marvels of the natural world.

Happily, this Master Plan does not suffer from that common expansionist affliction known as *the edifice complex*. We are not hiring architect Renzo Piano to build a new Getty-sized museum that triples our footprint or our exhibition space. What we are proposing is a modest, proportionate, and necessary refresh of a beloved

institution that is already blessed with historical architectural charm—charm that we, like you, very much cherish and seek to preserve.

So, on behalf of the museum's board of trustees, I would respectfully ask that you allow us to proceed with this carefully conceived and sensitive renovation of a treasured local institution. We are confident that the Santa Barbara community will be proud of the outcome.

Sincerely,

Christopher Knowlton
Trustee
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Christopher Knowlton, a retired investment manager, chairs the museum's Investment Committee and serves on the Executive Committee. A former staff writer and London Bureau Chief for FORTUNE Magazine, he has been an avid birdwatcher—and museumgoer—since he was a boy.