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November 16, 2007

Evaluation of Historic Resources Issues Raised by the Appeal of September, 19, 2007 of the HLC Approval of a Proposed Rehabilitation Project for East Cabrillo Boulevard by the City of Santa Barbara Arts & Crafts Show (SBACS) Advisory Committee

Introduction

The East Cabrillo Boulevard Sidewalk Improvement Project is within the boundaries of the East Cabrillo Boulevard Parkway Historic District identified by Caltrans in 1992. While the historic district identified by Caltrans is not listed on the City of Santa Barbara's registers of historic resources, it was identified by a previous study prepared by *Post/Hazeltine Associates* as eligible for listing as a City of Santa Barbara Landmark; therefore, it must be treated as a significant historic resource for the purpose of evaluating a project's impacts to historic resources under CEQA. Alterations to East Cabrillo Boulevard also required review by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) as a result of a covenant enacted when the state conveyed East Cabrillo Boulevard to the City of Santa Barbara. *Post/Hazeltine Associates* reviewed the proposed project and determined that the proposed design was consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and that the project's impacts could be reduced to a less than significant level through photo-recording. The Historic Properties Clearance Report prepared by *Post/Hazeltine Associates*, along with the revised project design, was reviewed and approved by the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC). Subsequently, the project was reviewed by SHPO which concluded that it met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. In September of 2007 the approval of the project by HLC was appealed by the City of Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show (SBACS). The appeal included a number of specific requests for design revisions that could potentially impact the character of the historic district identified in the Caltrans study. The following evaluation addresses those design revisions requested by SBACS, revisions that could potentially impact a significant historic resource.

Appellant's requests are as follows (pg 2 of the SBACS appeal):

1) **Removal of the planted spans between the light posts.**

The plan approved by HLC included a design that would retain, as well as replant the majority of the original planting strip, while incorporating pedestrian walkways linking curbside parking with the sidewalk. In some areas, the plantings were restricted to allow for more paving that would allow for convenient access to and from parked cars to the sidewalk, both for the use of the community and the SBACS vendors. In the Historic Properties

Clearance Report prepared by *Post/Hazeltine Associates* the proposed design was determined to meet preservation standards while allowing for contemporary uses of the parkway.

The revisions to the approved project as proposed by SBACS would replace the existing planting strip with paving and two-foot wide planting pockets extending to either side of the existing light poles. By replacing almost all of the planting strip with concrete or another hard surface material the alternative design proposed by SBACS would significantly alter a character-defining feature of the parkway that contributes to the overall historic character of the parkway and its status as a national register-eligible historic district. In the opinion of *Post/Hazeltine Associates* the removal of much, if not all of the planting strip, would not be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation since the alternative SBACS scheme would significantly alter a historic feature of the boulevard dating to its period of historic significance. The alternative design proposed by SBACS will require review by HLC.

2) ***Scaling back the planted areas around the light posts to no more than 2-foot span around the light posts, leaving an access path on the curbside. This will allow for the trailing of beautiful vines to grow upward on the proposed iron trellises, thus creating a beautiful vertical color scheme, while allowing access to a parked vehicle by the public (pg 2 of the SBACS appeal).***

Restricting the size of the planting pockets around the existing light posts and limiting the planting material to vines would change the character of the parkway, a parkway which has historically featured planting beds that extended along most of the south side of the boulevard (the planting strips are documented through historic photographs dating to as early as the 1930s). In the opinion of *Post/Hazeltine Associates* the restriction of plantings to a small pocket around the existing light posts would not be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation since the alternative scheme proposed by SBACS would significantly alter a historic feature of the boulevard dating to its period of historic significance. The alternative design proposed by SBACS will require review by HLC.

3. ***Reconsideration of loading/unloading plans for the large portion of the Craft Section which is red zoned: Thus either the red curb planting (pg 2 of the SBACS appeal):***

A. ***Must be scaled back equivalent to the revised planting in the grey curb areas if there is to be no lane closure for loading and unloading, or***

B. ***Keeping the planting as is but providing lane closure in the morning and the afternoon (this solution will probably retain more members in the show).***

As noted above in discussion of Item #1, removing most of the planting strip and replacing it with hardscape, as proposed by SBACS under Alternative 3A, would alter the appearance of the boulevard, which historically featured a planting strip between the curb and sidewalk. If Alternative 3A was implemented the integrity of the historic district defined by Caltrans would be significantly compromised. Implementation of Alternative 3A would require review by HLC. Implementation of Alternative 3B would not result in significant impacts to the historic district; but would require review by HLC.

Also (pg 2 of the SBACS appeal):

4: ***Revisiting proposed planting and species.***

The planting design for the proposed project was reviewed and approved by HLC and SHPO and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Alternative planting designs must be within the overall character of the historic landscape. Alterations to the approved planting design will require review by HLC.

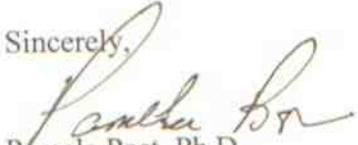
6: Planning for contemporary use. The question we might ask: "Is it more important to return the area to its historic vision or to adapt the historical context to the contemporary use of the area?"

East Cabrillo Boulevard has formed an integral component of the City of Santa Barbara's built environment since the 1930s and is considered an important example of urban planning; East Cabrillo Boulevard is eligible for listing as a historic resource at the city, state, and national level and is, moreover, within a historic district determined to be eligible for listing at the city, state, and national level (the East Cabrillo Boulevard Historic District). As a result, any alteration to East Cabrillo Boulevard would require environmental review to determine the impact of the project on the East Cabrillo Boulevard Parkway Historic District identified by the Caltrans study. While contemporary uses, such as parking, can be accommodated within the district, changes must be carefully considered to ensure that they do not result in a significant unavoidable impact to the historic character of the East Cabrillo Boulevard Parkway Historic District.

It should be noted that the approved plan for the East Cabrillo Boulevard Improvement Project is not a restoration project since its intent is not to restore every detail of the boulevard to its historic appearance; instead, it is classified as a rehabilitation project as its intent is to retain and enhance the historic character of the boulevard while responding to contemporary uses. Consequently, the approved project design includes alterations to the existing planting strip to incorporate additional hard-surface paving to accommodate parking along the south side of East Cabrillo Boulevard. As a result the project approved by HLC addresses in an effective and sensitive way the need to accommodate contemporary uses while still preserving the historic character of East Cabrillo Boulevard.

Conversely, SBACS's alternative plan to remove most of the planting strip in order to provide greater parking accessibility to the public and for the Arts and Crafts show does not address the importance to the community of East Cabrillo Boulevard as a significant historic resource, park, and public space. Alterations to East Cabrillo Boulevard must be thoughtfully considered to ensure the long term preservation of this resource, especially since contemporary uses and needs change over time; and while the removal of the planting strip may address one contemporary need, a longer term view, balancing current needs with the long-term preservation of a historically significant landscape, as addressed in the approved project design, should be considered the most appropriate treatment for East Cabrillo Boulevard.

Sincerely,



Pamela Post, Ph.D.
Senior Partner

November 21, 2007

Evaluation of a proposed scenario to reduce the amount of landscaping in the parking strip along East Cabrillo Boulevard as a result of the Appeal of the HLC Decision by the City of Santa Barbara Arts & Crafts Show (SBACS) Advisory Committee

Introduction

The East Cabrillo Boulevard Parkway Historic District identified by Caltrans in 1992 is considered a significant historic resource eligible for listing at the City of Santa Barbara, State and National level. As noted in a November 16, 2007 letter prepared by *Post/Hazeltine Associates* evaluating the potential impact of the revised design proposed by the City of Santa Barbara Arts and Crafts Show (SBACS) Advisory Committee in their appeal, further reduction in the size of the planting strip has the potential for adversely impacting the integrity of the East Cabrillo Boulevard Parkway Historic District and its eligibility for listing as a historic resource at the City, State and National level.

The planting strip paralleling the east side of the boulevard has formed an integral design element of East Cabrillo Boulevard since the completion of the parkway in the late 1920s. While the original planting scheme for the planting strip cannot be documented, it is clear from a review of aerial photographs and a postcard printed in the mid to late 1950s, that the parking strip was planted. By the mid-1950s the strip was planted with red geraniums. By the 1980s these had largely disappeared and the strip was left uncultivated. The plan approved by HLC includes new sidewalks, additional concrete paths linking the sidewalk with the curb and the replanting of much of the planting strip. The approved design scheme provides an appropriate balance between the rehabilitation and preservation of a significant historic resource and the accommodation of contemporary needs.

Reduction of the Planting Strip

The East Cabrillo Boulevard Parkway Historic District is composed of a number of character-defining elements including the overall design of the parkway, its hardscape including curbs, sidewalks, and plantings, most notably the palms trees and turf along the south side of the parkway and the planting strip that provides a buffer between the roadway and the sidewalk. The retention of these features either in the original or by replacements that match the design of the original features allows the boulevard to convey the essential features of its historic appearance to the public.

While it is possible that the approved design could undergo refinements, these revisions would need to be minor in scope and character. Further alteration of the planting strip to include significantly more area devoted to paving will impact the integrity of this character-defining feature of the National Register eligible historic district and the overall integrity of the historic district. If most or all of the planting strip were to be paved the ability of the district to convey its historic appearance would be significantly diminished and could potentially lack sufficient integrity to maintain its eligibility for listing as a historic resource at the City, State and National level. Furthermore, alterations that impact the historic character of the East Cabrillo Boulevard Parkway Historic District (to the point that it would no longer be eligible for listing as a historic resource) would diminish not only the waterfront neighborhood but the cultural, architectural, and historical heritage of the City.

Sincerely,

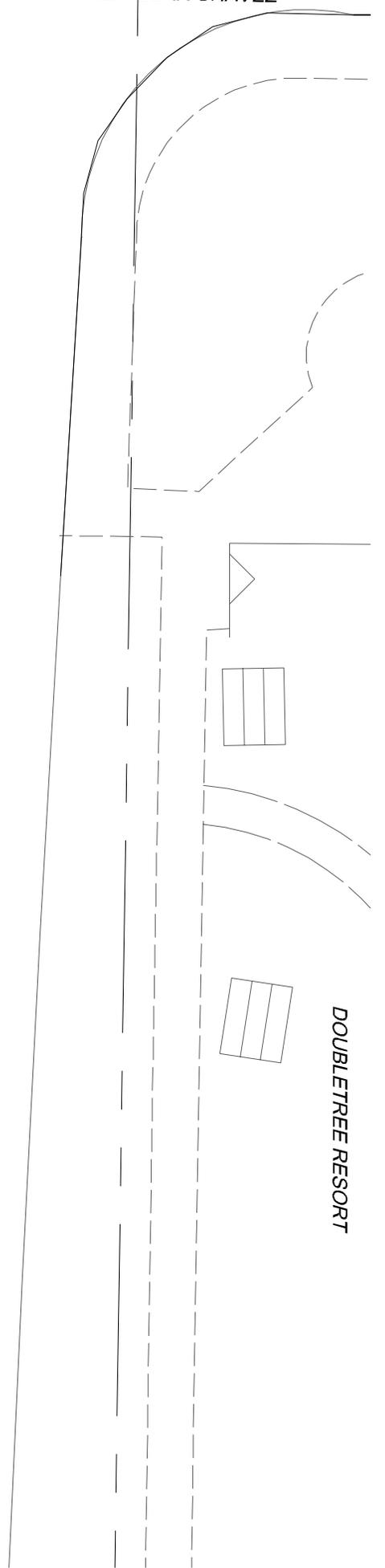


Pamela Post, Ph.D.

Senior Partner, Post/Hazeltine Associates

CALLE CESAR CHAVEZ

DOUBLETREE RESORT

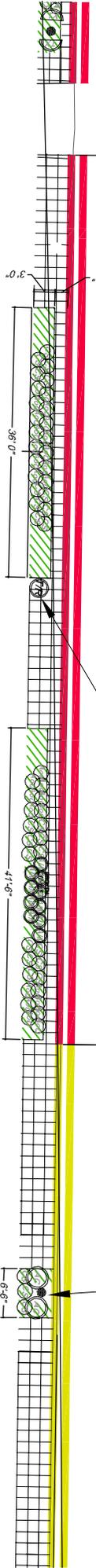


SIGNAL AND CROSSWALK

red curb / no parking zone

Existing Light post proposed wrought iron surround with vines
Trash and recycling receptacle

yellow curb / commercial loading zone

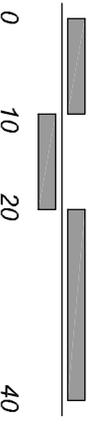


Art Show Space number metal tag

SECTION OF SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

LOCATED ACROSS FROM CALLE CESAR CHAVEZ INTERSECTION

(Representative of Typical Sidewalk Section)



Scale:
1" = 20'

