

# Post/Hazeltine Associates Architectural Historians

2607 Orella Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93105  
Phone: (805) 682-5751  
email: [posthazeltine@cox.net](mailto:posthazeltine@cox.net)

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## Letter Evaluating Museum Wayfinding Concept Designs for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Project

### Introduction

This letter evaluates conceptual plans for wayfinding (signage) for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Master Plan was the focus of a Phase 2 Historic Structures/Sites Report, which evaluated the Master Plan project and determined the proposed project, which met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, would have a less than significant impact to significant historic resources. While not required by City Staff, the applicant consulted with Post/Hazeltine Associates, the historian of record for the project during the design process to ensure that the conceptual plans are consistent with the guidance set forth in the Phase 2 HSSR and meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. This letter summarizes the analysis carried out during the consultation process.

### Analysis of Conceptual Plans

The following Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (the Standards) were applied to the project. Projects that meet the Standards are considered to have a less than significant impact to significant historic resources. Please note that this is a preliminary evaluation of a conceptual plan and further review will be required once final plans are prepared.

#### Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used as its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in

their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## **Programmatic Intent**

Currently, the Museum's signage includes a variety of design types from traditional routed wood signs to Spanish Colonial Revival inspired ceramic plaques and more contemporary signage. Material types include glazed ceramic tile, routed wood and metal (Sheet 2.0). The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History proposes replacement of some of its existing signage in order to enhance the visitor experience by providing a consistent and informative path of travel through the museum complex including its exhibit halls and outdoor activity areas. This would be accomplished through the implementation of a unified vocabulary of signage, text and visual imagery that is respectful of the historic and natural setting of the museum while allowing the institution to install signage that is unique to its identity and mission. The City of Santa Barbara's "Guidelines for the El Pueblo Viejo District", the Sign Committee's "Sign Review Guidelines" and "Santa Barbara Colors: A Guide to Painting Buildings" were consulted during the design process. The following provides an analysis of the conceptual plans for signage developed by Hunt Design for the project.

## **Analysis**

The signage program can be divided into several components including Museum identification signs, a map directory, directional signs, identification signs and miscellaneous signs (see Sheet 8.0). Signage materials include wood, metal and glazed metal with screen-printed text and graphics. Wood signs would be incised (see Sheets 11.0&18.0 – 27). Signage would be mounted on walls, hung from exterior corridor ceilings and freestanding.

## Museum Identification Signage

This signage would employ the Museum's new logo which features a whale's tail overlaid with the text "Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History". The font style for the text is inspired by the existing font style of the metal signage over the main entrance which reads "Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History" (Sheets 6.0 and 7.0). Secondary messaging on the signs such as the word "welcome" would be Myriad Pro font. Colors for the identification signage would be Pantone 1807(red) for the background and Cool Gray 2c for the whale logo; these colors are integral elements of the Museum's new logo. Identification signage would include the following:

- Sign at the entrance to the parking lot on Puesta Del Sol Road (Main ID sign, #10 on Sheet 8). This would be a 3-foot tall sandblasted wood sign panel emblazoned with the logo including the words "Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History" on a Pantone 1807 (red) background and a separate element giving direction to the parking area as follows: "Parking" Mon-Fri until 11pm and Sat-Sun-Holidays until 5pm on a brown (add color id) background the sign would be attached to 5-foot tall wood posts capped by simplified finial element (see Sheets 9.0 – 11.0). The logo element of the sign would feature incised letters on a sand-blasted wood panel.
- MacVeagh House Identification sign (MacVeagh House sign, #12 on Sheet 8.0). This sign would emulate the materials and design of the main identification sign (#10, on Sheet 8.0) but would be smaller in dimension. More detail regarding the appearance of this sign will be provided in a subsequent submittal.
- ID Entrance Banner, ID Entrance Banner with directional arrow and Entrance Banner at pedestrian opening in the "stegosaurus" wall (Hazard estate wall) (#15 & #17 on Sheet 8.0). The ID Entrance Banner would be composed of a 12-foot tall metal pole topped with a ball finial. The banner would be 5-foot tall colored Patone PMS 1807. The Museum logo would screen printed in Cool Gray 2C (Sheet 12.0). Vertical letter would spell out "Welcome" in Myriad Pro Bold. This sign would be located at the east end of the parking lot at the point the (see Sheet 12.0). The ID Entrance Banner with Arrow would of the same dimension as the ID Entrance Banner but would be screen printed with the word "Entrance" with a directional arrow (Sheet 13.0). This sign would be located at the entrance to the walkway from the parking area to the outdoor whale exhibit (Sheets 13.0 & 14.0). Another entrance banner of the style but on a 10-foot tall pole with a 4-foot tall banner(without a directional arrow) would be placed at the new pedestrian entrance through the "Stegosaurus" wall (Hazard estate wall) (Sheets 15.0 - 17.0).
- Promotional/Exhibit Banners would be placed on either side of the gated entrance to the Fleischmann Loggia (#20 on Sheet 8.0 & Sheet 17.0). The banners would be periodically changed-out to highlight rotating exhibits and events.
- Replacement of the existing sign at the pedestrian entrance to the main entrance from Puesta del Sol Road with a new wood sign (#20 on Sheet 18.0 & Sheet 20.0). The new incised, sand-blasted sign would be hung from the existing wood post and its metal hanger. The 1-foot, 8-inch square sign would feature the new Museum logo.

### Analysis

The proposed scheme for the Museum's identification signage employs materials such as wood and metal and design motifs such as sandblasted wood for the main signage that already exist on the museum campus. The scale and placement of the signage would not impair historic vistas towards or away from the historic buildings, nor would the installation of new signage negatively affect the semi-rural setting of the historic resources or the surrounding historic landscape since the number and scale of the signage is modest enough that it would not impair the existing landscape which is characterized by informal plantings of mostly native trees and shrubs set amongst outcroppings of sandstone boulders. While the signage incorporates the Museum's logo color, the use of this element is confined to three banner style signs and three wood signs. This would provide sufficient signage for wayfinding while minimizing the visual obtrusiveness of the new signs. Consequently, the installation of the new signage described above, would not impair the setting of the historically significant elements of the main Museum complex, MacVeagh House and cottage or the surrounding significant Cultural Landscape thereby potentially meeting Standard 9. Standard 10 is met because the signage could be removed in the future with no impact to significant historic resources or contributing elements of the surrounding Cultural Landscape.

### **Directional Signage**

Three types of Directional Signage including Exterior Directional, Trail Directional and a Pointer-Style Directional Style are proposed (Sheets 8.0, 26.0 & 27.0). Composed of sand-blasted wood signs attached to slender wood supports, Exterior Directional Signage would be modest in scale (#30, 32 & 35 on Sheet 8.0). The trail and exterior directional sign would be approximately five feet or less in height with the exception of pointer style signage which would consist of a painted metal pole with screen-printed text and graphics that would be more than six feet in height. Further detail will be provided for the individual signage in a later submittal. Another class of Directional Signage would consist of 4-foot, 10-inch long by 10-inch tall painted aluminum panels with screen-printed text hung from the corridor ceilings by a minimal cable hanging system (Sheet 23.0). While not all the details of the design or placement of the signage have been finalized, sufficient information is provided to evaluate the concept for this class of signage.

### Analysis

The proposed scheme for most of the Museum's directional signage would employ materials such as wood and metal, and design motifs such as sandblasted wood that are materials appropriate to the Museum's semi-rural setting. The scale and placement of the signage, which is modest in scale would not impair historic vistas towards or away from the historic buildings, nor would the installation of new signage negatively affect the semi-rural setting of the historic resources or the surrounding historic landscape since the number and scale of the signage is modest enough that it would not impair the existing landscape which is characterized by informal plantings of mostly native trees and shrubs set amongst outcroppings of sandstone boulders. The modest scale of the signage would minimize the visual obtrusiveness of the new signs. Consequently, the installation of the new signage described above, would not impair the setting of the historically significant elements of the main Museum complex, MacVeagh House and cottage or the surrounding significant Cultural Landscape and would not be attached to the historic buildings thereby potentially meeting Standard 9. Standard 10 is potentially met because the signage

could be removed in the future with no impact to significant historic resources or contributing elements of the surrounding Cultural Landscape.

### **Map Directory Signage**

Two types of Map Directory Signage including a Map Directory (#37 on Sheet 8) and a movable Information Kiosk (#38 on Sheet 8.0 and are proposed (Sheets 8.0& 25.0). The final design for the Map Directory has not been finalized and will be part of a subsequent submittal. The proposed scheme for the Information Kiosk would feature printed graphic banners on a three-sided metal frame. This element of the signage would be placed at different locations within the complex depending on ongoing museum events. Further detail will be provided for the individual signage in a later submittal. However, sufficient information is provided to evaluate the concept for this class of signage.

### Analysis

The proposed scheme for the Museum's Map Directory Signage would employ materials such as wood, synthetic fabric and metal, and design motifs such wood or metal supports that are materials appropriate to the Museum's semi-rural setting. The scale and placement of the Directory Signage, which is modest in scale would not impair the integrity of the buildings' architectural integrity or the setting of the buildings including the main courtyard or exterior spaces or the surrounding historic landscape since the number and scale of the signage is modest enough that it would not impair the existing landscape which is characterized by informal plantings of mostly native trees and shrubs set amongst outcroppings of sandstone boulders. This would provide sufficient signage for routing visitors through the museum while minimizing the visual obtrusiveness of the new signs. Consequently, the installation of the new signage described above, would not impair the setting of the historically significant elements of the main Museum complex, MacVeagh House and cottage or the surrounding significant Cultural Landscape thereby potentially meeting Standard 9. Standard 10 is potentially met because the signage could be removed in the future with no impact to significant historic resources or contributing elements of the surrounding Cultural Landscape.

### **Identification Signage**

Two types of Identification Signage including Corridor Directional ID Banners hung from the ceiling of exterior corridors (#40 on Sheet 8.0 and Sheet 24) and wall-mounted metal panels (#45 & 50, Sheet 8.0 and Sheets 21 & 22) are proposed. The banner signs would be printed, double-sided 4-foot by 6-inch long by 2-foot tall semi-transparent graphic scrims attached to the ceiling by minimal cable hanging systems. The scrims would feature graphics thematically related to the exhibition halls. The panel signs would be aluminum panels with 2-layered screen-printed graphics and text. The panel would be attached to the wall with metal anchors (Sheet 22). The intent of the signage is to provide wayfinding information while minimizing the visual obtrusiveness of the signs in the context of the building's Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture. Further detail will be provided for the placement of the individual sign in a later submittal. However, sufficient information is provided to evaluate the concept for this class of signage.

## Analysis

The design intent for the ID Banners is to provide wayfinding signage that is referential to the individual exhibit halls while providing a unified design scheme. The minimalist scheme for the signage is appropriate since it creates a clear distinction between the historic building and the new signage. Additionally, the reductive nature of the signage minimizes the potential for visual clutter and allows the historic architecture to remain the buildings' dominant visual imagery. Therefore, the Identification Signage, which would not compete with or obscure the building's Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, potentially meets Standard 9. Standard 10 is potentially met because the signage could be removed in the future with minimal impact to significant historic resources.

### **Miscellaneous Signage**

A variety of Miscellaneous Signage of varying size and materials has been proposed (Sheet 8, #05, 07, 08, 55, 60, 65, 70 & 75). While the design of this signage has not been finalized it is likely that it would feature metal panel and wood signs set on wood or metal poles and small metal panel signs attached to exterior walls. Further detail will be provided for the placement of the individual sign in a later submittal.

## Analysis

While further detail is required to fully evaluate this class of signage the scale of the proposed signage is sufficiently modest in scale that it does not have the potential for substantially affecting the architectural integrity of the buildings or their setting or the surrounding significant Cultural Landscape. Moreover, the minimalist scheme for the signage is appropriate since it creates a clear distinction between the historic building and the new signage. Further review is required to fully evaluate this class of signage consistency with Standard 9. Standard 10 is potentially met because the signage could be removed in the future with minimal impact to significant historic resources.

### **PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS**

This letter has reviewed a conceptual plan for signage and wayfinding at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and determined that the preliminary plans would appear to meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, although evaluation of more detailed plans will be required to confirm this preliminary evaluation.

### **8.0 LIST OF RESOURCES CONSULTED DURING THE PREPARATION OF THIS LETTER**

Post/Hazeltine Associates

2009 Historic Structures/Sites Report for MacVeagh House, Cottage and Garage. Prepared for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

2011 Phase 1 Historic Structures/Sites Report for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

2012 Historic Structures/Sites Report for 653 Mission Canyon Road. Prepared for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

2014 Phase 2 Historic Structures/Sites Report for the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

Suzanne Elledge Planning and Permitting Services, Inc.

2014 Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History 2014 Master Plan Applicant Report. March 17, 2014.

