

APPENDIX D4

Cambrian Park Plaza Signage - Peer Review

July 11, 2016

Mr. Robert Salisbury
County of Santa Clara, Department of Planning and Development
70 W. Hedding Street, East Wing, 7th Floor
San Jose, California 95110

Re: Cambrian Park Plaza Signage – Peer Review

To Mr. Salisbury:

I write on behalf of the owner of Cambrian Park Plaza (“CPP”), the purpose being to address the historic resources record entitled *Historical Nomination of the Cambrian Park Plaza carousel sign at 14900 Camden Avenue, San Jose, Santa Clara County, California*; Brunzell Historical, June 6, 2016 (hereafter *Carousel Sign Nomination*). There is evidently enough popular interest for the CPP pylon/carousel sign (the “CPP Sign”) to be proposed for promotion to the standing of historic landmark. The salient question isn’t whether the CPP Sign is popular, but whether it is historically significant. In my expert opinion, the answer to that question is “no” and which is based on extensive research that concludes:

- The CPP Sign was erected c1959 and was the third, not the original CPP sign.
- While substructural elements of the c1959 CPP Sign appear to remain, important elements of the CPP Sign have been replaced and altered, likely in 1994 including its primary-most elements – its CPP signage and its carousel; and
- The CPP Sign had no impact on later buildings and does not contain distinctive characteristics of any important historic architectural period.

Moreover, the one existing feature of interest is the carousel, yet which has not only been changed – again presumably in 1994 – but whatever association the original carousel had to the CPP has been lost, as there is no evidence of its design origins or original design intent. As it exists today, while the CPP Sign retains some of its original characteristics, its original design, materials, workmanship and association have been altered. Thus, the existing CPP Sign does not convey a potential historic character or meaning and therefore lacks sufficient historic integrity and age to qualify it as a historic resource.

Specific evidence of the 1959 CPP Sign are limited to two 1959 photos, both from the same perspective – the Union Ave. sidewalk looking east – and in which about half of the original carousel characters are visible. A comparative and current photo approximately replicating the original perspective provides detailed evidence that subsequent changes to the CPP Sign were more than cosmetic (figs.1-2).

The original exterior signage features that evidently remain are limited to the sub-structural elements, including the underlying backing of the panels; the raw, serrated vertical wood edges; to parts of the carousel; and the sheet metal cladding at the base of the central pylon. The latter element clearly presents the case that simple repainting can have a substantive effect, in that the original pylon cladding was painted to have a rustic wooden character, which was a detail tying the CPP Sign to the CPP itself, yet which has been lost by repainting.

Another evident difference between the 1959 and existing CPP Sign is the signage. Originally, the signage was neon backed on panels differently configured than what now exists. The original and traditional script font has been changed to a stylized block font within a contemporary and illuminated signage unit. The current sign also does not contain the same language as the original sign. The original sign stated, *Cambrian Plaza Shopping*, while the current sign states *Cambrian Park Plaza* and contains an additional informational sign panel. The c1994 signage is also backed with sheet metal panels, which overlaid the 1959 signage

backing, and which covered up and thus further altered the rustic character of the 1959 sign while also changing the form of the sign by eliminating the canted bottom, visible in the 1959 photos. These signage alterations in and of themselves greatly altered the CPP Sign.

Another obvious feature of the CPP Sign that has been altered is the carousel. The apron of the carousel has been removed; the apron gave the c1959 CPP Sign a more rustic-wood-like look than the current version of the CPP Sign. Moreover, detailed comparison shows that the carousel figures themselves have been altered. The characters that existed in 1959 remain in part, yet they are painted differently and some of their forms have clearly been altered. For example, the characters that precede and follow the bicycle, while apparently original in part, have several clear differences in overall shape. And repainting also updated the characters and objects. For example, characters of color were introduced and the bicycle appears to be painted to represent a mountain bike. This change in design motif provides further evidence that the CPP Sign was recently altered, and that doing so erased the 1959 characters.

In sum, based on site visits and the 1959 images, it is clear that the lettering, panel backing, brick basin and planter, and possibly some of the carousel characters were replaced, possibly as part of the work authorized by the 1994 sign replacement permit, indicating that much of the CPP sign is less than fifty years old. Although the *Carousel Sign Nomination* indicates that a sign replacement permit could not be located, based on the review of numerous permit records, the date at which the sign was replaced and altered has been identified as 1994, when a sign replacement permit specific to the overall CPP (rather than to a specific store) was issued (see attached permit).

The *Carousel Sign Nomination* concludes that “paint on metal would not last 65 years without being refreshed, so the carousel’s repainting can be considered an expected alteration (analogous to replacing a worn out roof) that does not negatively affect integrity.” Rather, as stated above, the primary features of this CPP Sign appear to have been replaced and altered, not merely repainted. Replacement and alteration necessarily impact the integrity of historic materials, design and workmanship. Moreover, as demonstrated, repainting has in fact altered the overall design character of the 1959 CPP Sign.

While the *Carousel Sign Nomination* acknowledges the consequential loss of the neon, stating that the “removal of neon lettering is a significant alteration that has negatively impacted the integrity of the resource,” the *Nomination* does not identify the other material losses and characteristic changes. The overall extent of change to this sign must be taken into consideration for an effective evaluation.

Finally, whatever association the original carousel had to the CPP has been lost, as there is no evidence of its design origins or original design intent. Beyond its original signage function, the association of the CPP Sign to the CPP has been severed via the above-described alteration of architectural characteristics that formerly allied the sign design with the design of the shopping center itself. In addition, any association with a CPP tenant or site feature also has been lost. One possible original association may have been an on-site playground or toy store or, perhaps, an actual carousel. But there is no evidence of any such association, as no playground or carousel appears in an overall 1960 aerial photo. Another suggested possibility is an association to a cake baker. Yet, again, there is no evidence of any association between the CPP Sign, and specifically its carousel, to an on-site bakery.

Thus, the CPP Sign appears to lack sufficient historic integrity to be a historic resource, and key elements of the CPP Sign are less than fifty years old.



Fig.1 – Cambrian Park Plaza – View of pylon sign, 1959
(courtesy Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History, Arnold Del Carlo Collection)



Fig.2 – Cambrian Park Plaza – View of pylon sign, 2016

1. Construction Chronology

The CPP was not completed in 1953-1954 as reported in the *Carousel Sign Nomination*. Building permit records, historic photos and historic USGS maps clearly show the chronology of construction of the CPP (figs.3-7). The original building was the western leg, which dates to 1953-54. The turned knuckle at the northwest corner of the central building followed, dating to the c1955-56 period, along with the rear addition to the original, western leg. The rotated northern leg was added c1959-60, completing the core building of the CPP. Based on a 1968 USGS map, three of the existing freestanding buildings were added along the Camden Ave. frontage during the latter 1960s (fig.6). The fourth freestanding building was added between 1973 and 1980 (fig.7).



Fig.3 – Cambrian Park Plaza – Aerial, c1956

(courtesy Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History, Arnold Del Carlo Collection)



Fig.4 – Cambrian Park Plaza – Aerial, c1960



Fig.5 – Cambrian Park Plaza – USGS Map, 1961 (north is up)



Fig.6 – Cambrian Park Plaza – USGS Map, 1968 (north is up)



Fig.7 – Cambrian Park Plaza – USGS Map, 1980 (north is up)

2. CPP Sign

The historic photos of the CPP in the Arnold Del Carlo Collection (housed at the Sourisseau Academy for State and Local History) appear to have chronicled phases of the CPP as they were being completed. Based on the actual sequence of construction and historic photos, including two of the CPP Sign specifically dated July 15, 1959 (fig.1), the CPP Sign may therefore be dated to 1959. Importantly, two other CPP signs preceded it: an original pylon sign located at the southern end of the Union Avenue frontage, built c1954; and a monument sign located in the middle of the Union Avenue entry drive, added c1956 (fig.8).

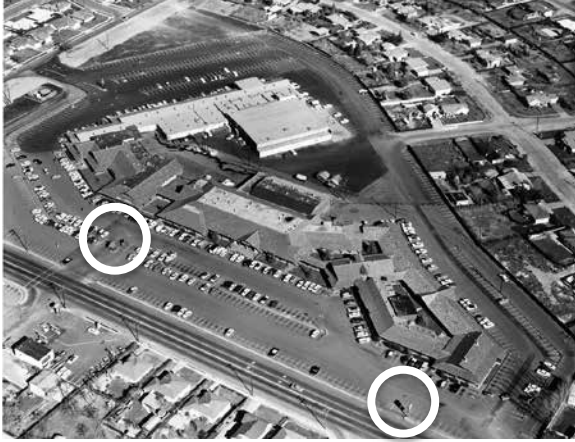


Fig.8 – Cambrian Park Plaza, c1960, original c1954 pylon sign (circled at bottom right) and c1956 sign (circled at middle left)

One of the photographic images in the 1956 article is of the original, low, freestanding Cambrian Park Plaza monument sign (fig.9). As is evident in those c1956 images, that sign stood not at the roadside or entrance to the CPP but in the middle of the central entry drive off Union Ave. It was a low sign in character with the ranch-like architecture of the CPP. How long it lasted is not known but, even though the newer CPP Sign had since been erected, that original sign is again depicted in a 1963 advertisement (fig.10) and is the sign most representative of the CPP in that period.



Fig.9 – Cambrian Park Plaza – Monument sign, c1956 (from Cambrian Weekly News, June 14, 1956)



Fig.10 – Cambrian Park Plaza – 1963 Advertisement (from Cambrian Weekly News)

3. Architectural Period/Style

In the *Carousel Sign Nomination*, the assigned architectural period/style is “Roadside Vernacular,” though that designation is without attribution. In the *San José Modern Context Statement*, which is appropriately referenced in the *Nomination* as the local and applicable historic context statement, no such distinctive architectural style is identified for the San Jose

environs. The closest relevant style to the label “roadside vernacular” is “Googie” (*San José Modernism*, pp.83-84) and under which two of the three photographic examples are distinctive roadside signs, neither of which are representative of the design of the CPP Sign. Nor is the distinctive Googie style applicable to the CPP Sign, as the primary character of the Googie style is “space-age” design that incorporates abstract, curvilinear, stylized, sweeping and soaring shapes and lines.

The original c1954 CPP sign, like the buildings of the CPP, was modern yet traditional, in that the design is of the Modernist architectural period (broadly, c1930-c1970) yet carries forward a ranch-like aesthetic. In short, the architecture of the original CPP sign may best be labeled Ranch-style Modern, the primary characteristics of which blend Modern architectural uses and forms – the modern shopping center set amidst parking lots, and the long and low building massing – with rustic and semi-traditional architectural elements, in this case timber and wood elements that evoke a California ranch.

According to *San Jose Modernism*, the ranch styles identified as distinctive to the period – specifically, Tract Ranch and Custom Ranch – are exclusive to residential development. The application of the traditional yet modern ranch style to the original sign is therefore without distinction in its post-war commercial context. Further, the CPP Sign had no impact on later buildings and does not contain distinctive characteristics of any important historic architectural period.

While the feeling of the 1959 CPP Sign partly remains, while it appears to be in its original location and retains some original elements, the CPP Sign has been substantially altered both in terms of its materials and its design elements. As noted in the *Carousel Sign Nomination*, the neon was an element distinctive of its period and that performed an important function for the shopping plaza because it would have made the plaza visible to motorists, especially at night. The loss of that neon is, in and of itself, obviously significant.

Given the extent to which the original sign materials and design have been altered, the CPP Sign does not embody design, material or construction distinction relative to the historic context or period in which the CPP was developed. Additionally, whatever association the carousel design had to the CPP has also been lost. And given the identified recent age of the majority of the elements of the CPP Sign, including the basin and planter, signage backing, signage, and decorative motifs, including of the carousel, it does not have the potential to embody the distinctive characteristics of a historic period.

4. Evaluation vs. Nomination

Finally, the language of the *Carousel Sign Nomination* is often the language of advocacy rather than evaluation. There are numerous textual examples that indicate the report is not an evaluation (for example, use of the words “iconic,” “stylish,” and “fashionable”). In addition, the title states that it is not a Historic Resource Evaluation but a *Nomination*. That title bluntly acknowledges the purpose of the report and may explain why the report assumes the CPP Sign is at least 50 years old and maintains sufficient integrity to be a historic resource. However, as explained above, research indicates that a substantial portion of the CPP Sign was replaced in 1994 and that replacement has adversely impacted the integrity of the CPP Sign.

Signed:



Mark Hulbert
Preservation Architect

PERMIT NUMBER **676** DATE **6-13-94**
42676 **WINSTON CHEW**

MECHANICAL / PLUMBING / ELECTRICAL / PERMIT
SANTA CLARA COUNTY
 BUILDING INSPECTION OFFICE
 70 W. HEDDING ST., SAN JOSE, CA 95110 TEL. 299-2351

FOR BUILDING INSPECTION CALL 299-3161
 MINIMUM 24 HOURS NOTICE

JOB ADDRESS:
14420 Union Ave
San Jose
 NEAREST CROSS STREET: **CAMDEN**
 POST OFFICE (CITY): **SAN JOSE** ZIP
 OWNER: **SCHAFFER LAND TRUST (408) 377-0023**
 MAILING ADDRESS:
San Jose
 CITY: **San Jose** ZIP
 ARCHITECT: _____ LIC. NO.
 ENGINEER ADDRESS: _____ LIC. NO.
 CONTRACTOR: **SEI**
Samir Singh Syst LIC. NO. **498786** CLASS **CA**
 ADDRESS: **620A Gibbons Ct** PHONE: **(415) 497-8111**
Yocaville CA ZIP: **94688**

MECHANICAL PERMIT FEE				PLUMBING PERMIT FEE				ELECTRICAL PERMIT FEE			
ITEM	NO	FEES		ITEM	NO	FEES		ITEM	NO	FEES	
ISSUANCE FEE		10.00		ISSUANCE FEE		10.00		ISSUANCE FEE		10.00	
SURVEY FEE				SURVEY FEE				SURVEY FEE			
PERMIT FEE				PERMIT FEE				PERMIT FEE			
Complete Mechanical System for new single and multiple family structures				Complete Plumbing System for new single and multiple family structures				Complete Electrical System for new single and multiple family structures			
Installation, relocation, repair or alteration of each boiler or gas or gravity-type furnace or burner, including ducts and vents attached to each appliance, up to and including 100,000 B.T.U.s				Each plumbing fixture or trap or set of fixtures on one trap				Temporary pole or meter set			
Over 100,000 B.T.U.s				Each building sewer				Light meters		1 - 10 mm (Minimum test)	
Domestic type evaporator				Each on site sewer system				Photocopies		Over 10, each additional	
Commercial or industrial type evaporator				Each water service				Light fixtures		1 - 10 (Minimum test)	
Floor furnace, suspended heater, recessed wall heater or floor mounted unit heater, including vent				Each on site water service system				Over 15, each additional			
Or replacement of appliance vent material and not included in an appliance permit				Mixed building				Heater (Per kW)			
Pressure valves and gaskets, each shut at \$ 1.00 each				Each water heater and/or any gas vent				Range/oven/boiler/water heater *			
Alteration or repair of boiler or furnace				Prepare tank				Panel/board/switchboard			
Installation or relocation of each boiler or compressor:				Gas Test				Service change: repair, or well		100 amp or less	
Up to and including 3 hp				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG				Over 100 amp		200 amp	
Over 3 hp and including 15 hp				Each industrial waste pre-treatment interceptor, including its trap and vent, exceeding kitchen type grease interceptors becoming as fixture				400 amp to 800 amp		800 amp or more	
Over 15 hp and including 30 hp				Each installation or repair of water, soil, waste, and vent system							
Or absorption systems: up to and including 100,000 B.T.U.s				Each vacuum breaker or back flow protective device on public water, soil, or for installation on unprotected							
Over 100,000 to and including 500,000				Each industrial waste pre-treatment interceptor, including its trap and vent, exceeding kitchen type grease interceptors becoming as fixture							
Over 500,000 to and including 1,000,000				Each rainwater system - see drain							
Over 1,000,000 to and including 1,750,000				Each steam radiator system or any one meter, including back flow protection devices therefor							
Over 1,750,000 to and including 3,500,000				Vacuum breaker or back flow protective device on public water, soil, or for installation on unprotected							
Over 3,500,000 to and including 7,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 7,000,000 to and including 14,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 14,000,000 to and including 28,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 28,000,000 to and including 56,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 56,000,000 to and including 112,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 112,000,000 to and including 224,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 224,000,000 to and including 448,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 448,000,000 to and including 896,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 896,000,000 to and including 1,792,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 1,792,000,000 to and including 3,584,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 3,584,000,000 to and including 7,168,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 7,168,000,000 to and including 14,336,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 14,336,000,000 to and including 28,672,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 28,672,000,000 to and including 57,344,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
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Over 114,688,000,000 to and including 229,376,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 229,376,000,000 to and including 458,752,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 458,752,000,000 to and including 917,504,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 917,504,000,000 to and including 1,835,008,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 1,835,008,000,000 to and including 3,670,016,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 3,670,016,000,000 to and including 7,340,032,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 7,340,032,000,000 to and including 14,680,064,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 14,680,064,000,000 to and including 29,360,128,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 29,360,128,000,000 to and including 58,720,256,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
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Over 117,440,512,000,000 to and including 234,881,024,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 234,881,024,000,000 to and including 469,762,048,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 469,762,048,000,000 to and including 939,524,096,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 939,524,096,000,000 to and including 1,879,048,192,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 1,879,048,192,000,000 to and including 3,758,096,384,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 3,758,096,384,000,000 to and including 7,516,192,768,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 7,516,192,768,000,000 to and including 15,032,385,536,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 15,032,385,536,000,000 to and including 30,064,771,072,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 30,064,771,072,000,000 to and including 60,129,542,144,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 60,129,542,144,000,000 to and including 120,259,084,288,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 120,259,084,288,000,000 to and including 240,518,168,576,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 240,518,168,576,000,000 to and including 481,036,337,152,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 481,036,337,152,000,000 to and including 962,072,674,304,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 962,072,674,304,000,000 to and including 1,924,145,348,608,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 1,924,145,348,608,000,000 to and including 3,848,290,697,216,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 3,848,290,697,216,000,000 to and including 7,696,581,394,432,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 7,696,581,394,432,000,000 to and including 15,393,162,788,864,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 15,393,162,788,864,000,000 to and including 30,786,325,577,728,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 30,786,325,577,728,000,000 to and including 61,572,651,155,456,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 61,572,651,155,456,000,000 to and including 123,145,302,310,912,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 123,145,302,310,912,000,000 to and including 246,290,604,621,824,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 246,290,604,621,824,000,000 to and including 492,581,209,243,648,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 492,581,209,243,648,000,000 to and including 985,162,418,487,296,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 985,162,418,487,296,000,000 to and including 1,970,324,836,974,592,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 1,970,324,836,974,592,000,000 to and including 3,940,649,673,949,184,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 3,940,649,673,949,184,000,000 to and including 7,881,299,347,898,368,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 7,881,299,347,898,368,000,000 to and including 15,762,598,695,796,736,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 15,762,598,695,796,736,000,000 to and including 31,525,197,391,593,472,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 31,525,197,391,593,472,000,000 to and including 63,050,394,783,186,944,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 63,050,394,783,186,944,000,000 to and including 126,100,789,566,373,888,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 126,100,789,566,373,888,000,000 to and including 252,201,579,132,747,776,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 252,201,579,132,747,776,000,000 to and including 504,403,158,265,495,552,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 504,403,158,265,495,552,000,000 to and including 1,008,806,316,530,991,104,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 1,008,806,316,530,991,104,000,000 to and including 2,017,612,633,061,982,208,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 2,017,612,633,061,982,208,000,000 to and including 4,035,225,266,123,964,416,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 4,035,225,266,123,964,416,000,000 to and including 8,070,450,532,247,928,832,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 8,070,450,532,247,928,832,000,000 to and including 16,140,901,064,495,857,664,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 16,140,901,064,495,857,664,000,000 to and including 32,281,802,128,991,715,328,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 32,281,802,128,991,715,328,000,000 to and including 64,563,604,257,983,430,656,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 64,563,604,257,983,430,656,000,000 to and including 129,127,208,515,966,861,312,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 129,127,208,515,966,861,312,000,000 to and including 258,254,417,031,933,722,624,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 258,254,417,031,933,722,624,000,000 to and including 516,508,834,063,867,445,248,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 516,508,834,063,867,445,248,000,000 to and including 1,033,017,668,127,734,890,496,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 1,033,017,668,127,734,890,496,000,000 to and including 2,066,035,336,255,469,780,992,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 2,066,035,336,255,469,780,992,000,000 to and including 4,132,070,672,510,939,561,984,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 4,132,070,672,510,939,561,984,000,000 to and including 8,264,141,345,021,879,123,968,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 8,264,141,345,021,879,123,968,000,000 to and including 16,528,282,690,043,758,247,936,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 16,528,282,690,043,758,247,936,000,000 to and including 33,056,565,380,087,516,495,872,000,000				Each gas piping system, natural or LPG							
Over 33,056,565,380,087,516,495,872,000,											