

## **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).

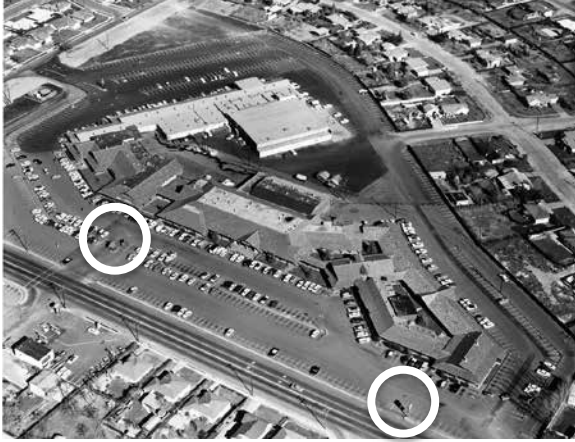


Fig.8 – Cambrian Park Plaza, c1960, original c1954 pylon sign (circled at bottom right) and c1956 sign (circled at middle left)

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 **678** DATE **6-13-94**  
**42678**  
OWNER **WINSTON CHEW**  
JOB ADDRESS **14420 Union Ave San Jose**  
NEAREST CROSS STREET **CAMDEN**  
POST OFFICE (CITY) **SAN JOSE**  
OWNER: **SCHAFFER LAWYERS (408) 377-0001**  
MAILING ADDRESS **San Jose**  
CITY **San Jose**  
CONTRACTOR **Cambridge Sign** LIC. NO. **498786 CLASS C4**  
ADDRESS **6700 Alvarado Ct** PHONE **(408) 499-8111**  
CITY **Vacaville CA** ZIP **94988**

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

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
SUBMIT FEE			SUBMIT FEE			SUBMIT FEE		
PERMIT FEE Complete Mechanical System for new single and multiple family structures			PERMIT FEE Complete Plumbing System for new single and multiple family structures			PERMIT FEE Complete Electrical System for new single and multiple family structures		
Installation, relocation, repair or alteration of each boiler or gas/oil type furnace or burner, including ducts and vents attached to each appliance, up to and including 100,000 B.T.U.s		Each	Each plumbing fixture or trap or set of fixtures on one trap		Each	Temporary pole or meter set		1 - 10 min (Minimum fee)
Over 100,000 B.T.U.s		Each building sewer	Each on site sewer system		Each	Light meters		Over 10, each additional
Domestic type evaporator		Each water service	Each on site water service system		Each	Photocopies		
Commercial or industrial type evaporator		Mixed building	Each water heater and/or any gas vent		Each	Light fixtures		Over 15, each additional
Floor furnace, suspended heater, recessed wall heater or floor mounted unit heater, including vent		Prepare tank	Prepare tank		Each	Heater (Per kw)		
Or replacement of appliance vent material and not included in an appliance permit		Gas Test	Each gas piping system, natural or LPG		Each	Range/oven/processor/water heater *		
Pressure valves and gaskets, sized shut at \$ 1.00 each		Each gas piping system, natural or LPG	Each gas piping system, natural or LPG		Each	Panel/board/panel/rack/switchboard		
Alteration or repair of boiler or furnace		Each industrial waste pre-treatment interceptor, including its trap and vent, exceeding kitchen type grease interceptors becoming as fixture	Each industrial waste pre-treatment interceptor, including its trap and vent, exceeding kitchen type grease interceptors becoming as fixture		Each	Service charge: repair, or well		100 amp or less 200 amp 400 amp to 800 amp 800 amp or more
Installation or relocation of each boiler or compressor		Each condenser system - die drain	Each condenser system - die drain		Each	Mixed building		
10 and including 3 hp		Vacuum breakers or back flow protective devices on gas, water, air, or for installation on unprotected piping	Vacuum breakers or back flow protective devices on gas, water, air, or for installation on unprotected piping		Each	Meters - 1/2 hp or less transformers - 9 kva or less		
Over 10 hp to and including 30 hp		Each sanitary sewer system - die drain	Each sanitary sewer system - die drain		Each	2 to 2 1/2 hp		2 to 2 kva
Over 30 hp and including 50 hp		Each water heater and/or any gas vent	Each water heater and/or any gas vent		Each	2 to 3 hp		2 to 3 kva
Or alternator system - 10 to 100,000 B.T.U.s		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	3 to 15 hp		3 to 15 kva
Over 100,000 to and including 500,000		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	15 to 25 hp		15 to 25 kva
Over 500,000 to and including 1,000,000		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	25 to 50 hp		25 to 50 kva
Over 1,000,000 to and including 1,750,000		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	50 to 100 hp		50 to 100 kva
Over 1,750,000 to and including 3,500,000		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Over 100 hp		Over 100 kva
Over 3,500,000 to and including 6,000,000		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Solar system		
Over 6,000,000 to and including 1,000,000		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Solar pumps / Spa		
Over 1,000,000 B.T.U.s		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Public		
For gas air conditioning unit, package air conditioning system over 1,750,000 B.T.U.s		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Signs		
For gas air conditioning unit, package air conditioning system over 1,750,000 B.T.U.s		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Sign transformer		760
For gas air conditioning unit, package air conditioning system over 1,750,000 B.T.U.s		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Fasten lighting		100 or less 101 to 200 Over 200
		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Over 200		
		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Special Circuits		
		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Trailer sockets		
		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Electric welder		
		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Mercury vapor		
		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Public		
		Each venting system - die drain	Each venting system - die drain		Each	Sub TOTAL		70

Requested for refunds or adjustments in fees paid must be made to the building official in writing or conference with appropriate sections of the Santa Clara County Ordinance Code.

MECHANICAL PERMIT	
INITIAL OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE
ROUGH OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE
FINAL OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE

PLUMBING PERMIT	
INITIAL OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE
ROUGH OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE
FINAL OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE

ELECTRICAL PERMIT	
INITIAL OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE
ROUGH OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE
FINAL OK (SIGNATURE)	DATE

THIS SPACE FOR INSPECTOR'S USE

OK for sign replacement  
SR 6-13-94  
FORM NO. 70 REV. 10/93  
SUB TOTAL 70  
PERMIT EXPIRATION  
PERMIT EXPIRES IF WORK IS NOT STARTED WITHIN 180 DAYS OF PERMIT ISSUANCE OR 180 DAYS FROM LAST SIGNED INSPECTION.

THIS PERMIT SHALL EXPIRE BY LIMITATION AND BECOME NULL AND VOID IF WORK IS NOT COMMENCED WITHIN 180 DAYS.  
\*REFUND: WHERE NO PORTION OF THE WORK OR CONSTRUCTION COVERED BY THIS PERMIT HAS BEEN COMMENCED BEFORE THE EXPIRATION DATE HEREOF, REQUESTS FOR REFUNDS MUST BE MADE IN WRITING TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE BUILDING INSPECTION OFFICE ON OR BEFORE ONE HUNDRED-EIGHTY (180) DAYS FROM THE DATE OF ISSUANCE OF THIS PERMIT.

### LICENSED CONTRACTORS DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that I am licensed under provisions of Chapter 9 (Commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, and my license is in full force and effect.

License Class C4 Lic. Number 498786  
Date 6/13/94 Contractor Cambridge Sign

### OWNER-BUILDER DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that I am exempt from the Contractor's License Law for the following reason (Sec. 7031.5, Business and Professions Code): Any city or county which requires a permit to construct, alter, improve, demolish, or repair any structure, prior to its issuance, also requires the applicant for such permit to file a signed statement that he is licensed pursuant to the provisions of the Contractor's License Law (Chapter 9 (commencing with Section 7000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code) or that he is exempt therefrom and the basis for the alleged exemption. Any violation of Section 7031.5 by any applicant for a permit subjects the applicant to a civil penalty of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500).

I, as owner of the property, or my employees with wages as their sole compensation, will do the work, and the structure is not intended or offered for sale (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code). The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who does such work himself or through his own employees, provided that such improvements are not intended or offered for sale if, however, the building or improvement is sold within one year of completion, the owner-builder will have the burden of proving that he did not build or improve for the purpose of sale.

I, as owner of the property, am exclusively contracting with licensed contractors to construct the project (Sec. 7044, Business and Professions Code). The Contractor's License Law does not apply to an owner of property who builds or improves thereon, and who contracts for such projects with contractor(s) licensed pursuant to the Contractor's License Law.

I am exempt under Sec. \_\_\_\_\_, B. & P.C. for this reason \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Owner \_\_\_\_\_

### WORKERS' COMPENSATION DECLARATION

I hereby affirm that I have a certificate of consent to self-insure, or a certificate of Worker's Compensation Insurance, or a certified copy thereof (Sec. 3800, Lab. C.).

Policy No. R949190 Company Republican Indemnity  
 Certified copy is hereby furnished.  
 Certified copy is filed with the county building inspection department or county \_\_\_\_\_ department.

Date 6/13/94 Applicant Winston Chew

### CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM WORKERS' COMPENSATION INSURANCE

(This section need not be completed if the permit is for one hundred dollars (\$100) or less.)

I certify that in the performance of the work for which this permit is issued, I shall not employ any person in any manner so as to become subject to the Worker's Compensation Laws of California.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

NOTICE TO APPLICANT: If, after making this Certificate of Exemption, you should become subject to the Worker's Compensation provisions of the Labor Code, you must forthwith comply with such provisions or this permit shall be deemed revoked.

### CONSTRUCTION LENDING AGENCY

I hereby affirm that there is a construction lending agency for the performance of the work for which this permit is issued (Sec. 3097, Cv. C.).

Lender's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Lender's Address \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have read this application and state that the above information is correct. I agree to comply with all city and county ordinances and state laws relating to building construction, and hereby authorize representatives of this county to enter upon the above described property for inspection purposes.	Signature of Applicant or Agent <u>Earle W Gibbings</u> Date <u>6/13/94</u>
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Cambrian Park Plaza - Sign replacement permit, 1994