

RESOLUTION NUMBER R- **290038**

ADOPTED ON MAY 04 1998

WHEREAS, on June 6, 1997, the San Diego Society of Natural History submitted an application to the Development Services for a Resource Protection Ordinance Permit and amendments to the Balboa park Master Plan and the Central Mesa Precise Plan for the expansion of the Natural History Museum; and

WHEREAS, the matter was set for a public hearing to be conducted by the Council of The City of San Diego; and

WHEREAS, the issue was heard by the Council on May 4, 1998; and

WHEREAS, the Council of The City of San Diego considered the issues discussed in Environmental Impact Report No. 96-7562; NOW, THEREFORE,

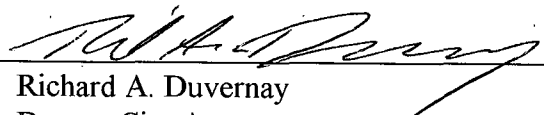
BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of The City of San Diego, that it is certified that Environmental Impact Report No. 96-7562, on file in the office of the City Clerk, has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (California Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq.), as amended, and the State guidelines thereto (California Code of Regulations section 15000 et seq.), that the report reflects the independent judgment of The City of San Diego as Lead Agency and that the information contained in said report, together with any comments received during the public review process, has been reviewed and considered by this Council in connection with the approval of a Resource Protection Ordinance Permit and amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan for the expansion of the Natural History Museum.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 21081 and California Code of Regulations section 15091, the City Council adopts the findings made with respect to the project, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to California Code of Regulations section 15093, the City Council adopts the Statement of Overriding Considerations, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, with respect to the project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 21081.6, the City Council adopts the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, or alterations to implement the changes to the project as required by this body in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

APPROVED: CASEY GWINN, City Attorney

By 
Richard A. Duvernay
Deputy City Attorney

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FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE
PROPOSED LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AND ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that no public agency shall approve or carry out a project which identifies one or more significant environmental effects of the project unless the public agency makes one or more written findings for each of those significant effects, accompanied by a brief explanation of the rationale for each finding. The possible findings are:

- (1) Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which mitigate or avoid the significant environmental effects on the environment.
- (2) Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been or can or should be, adopted by that other agency.
- (3) Specific economic, legal, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the EIR.

(Sec. 21081 of the California Environmental Quality Act)

CEQA further requires that, where the decision of the public agency allows the occurrence of significant effects which are identified in the final EIR, but are not at least substantially mitigated, the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons to support its action based on the final EIR and/or other information in the record (Sec. 15093 of the State CEQA Guidelines).

The following Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations have been submitted by the project applicant as candidate findings to be made by the decision making body. The Land Development Review Division of Development Services does not recommend that the discretionary body either adopt or reject these findings. They are attached to allow readers of this report an opportunity to review the applicant's position on this matter.

R-290038

FINDINGS FOR THE PROPOSED
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM EXPANSION AND ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

The following Findings and Statement of Overriding Considerations are made relative to the conclusions of the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Natural History Museum Expansion Project and associated actions (the "project") (LDR No. 96-7562/SCH No. 97111015). The final EIR is incorporated by reference herein.

The proposed project would expand the existing Natural History Museum, a principal contributing building within the Balboa Park National Historic Landmark District. The expansion is intended to enable the Museum to continue its role as the leading institution of natural history, science and environmental education in the community and region. The expansion will take place at the rear of the site as planned in the original 1932 design. It would provide 89,435 square feet of new space for administrative, office, laboratories, research, collections, exhibits, storage, auditorium and public areas. The project is the culmination of a 45 year planning and fund raising effort and is intended to enable the Museum to continue to carry out its scientific and educational missions.

The final EIR for the project evaluates the following environmental issues in relation to the project: land use, traffic/ circulation, neighborhood character/aesthetics, paleontological resources and historical resources. The final EIR also analyzes the cumulative effects and growth inducing impacts of the project as well as alternatives to the project.

Having reviewed and considered the information contained in the final EIR for the Natural History Museum Expansion (LDR No. 96-7562), related documents and the public record, the Council of the City of San Diego makes the following findings pursuant to Section 15091 of the California Code of Regulations.

- A. Alterations have been incorporated into the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects relative to: traffic/circulation, neighborhood character/aesthetics and paleontological resources as identified in Final EIR No. 96-7562.

TRAFFIC/CIRCULATION

Impact: Potentially significant impacts on the demand for off-site parking would be created by the addition of 26 cars per day.

Finding: The project has been revised to include mitigation measures to mitigate the significant impact on parking to below a level of significance:

- 1) The Natural History Museum shall provide free local transit passes to its staff members and volunteers.
- 2) The Natural History Museum shall conduct and distribute an analysis of the existing tram service serving Balboa Park and recommend improvements to increase service to the east end of El Prado in the vicinity of the Museum.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER/AESTHETICS

Impact: potentially significant impacts to a tree identified as significant in the Central Mesa Precise Plan.

Finding: The project has been revised to avoid impacting the tree identified as significant in the Central Mesa Precise Plan, however this project alteration does not reduce significant impacts on Neighborhood Character/Aesthetics to below a level of significance.

Impact: potentially significant impacts to the existing character of the area by a proposed service drive, loading dock, removable sidewalk, retaining wall and parking lot improvements which would result in the loss of the northeast pedestrian Gateway to the Prado.

Finding: The project has been revised to retain the pedestrian Gateway by providing an "at-grade" loading dock, eliminating the need for the sidewalk with protective walls and maintaining the northeast pedestrian Gateway to the Prado and the free and open access which currently exists. However, this project alteration does not reduce significant impacts on neighborhood character/aesthetics to below a level of significance.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Impact: potentially significant adverse effects to paleontological resources that may be contained in the San Diego Formation could result from the project.

Finding: The project has been revised to include mitigation measures for potentially significant fossil resources including the retention of an acceptable, qualified

paleontologist or geologist to monitor site excavation. In addition, if fossils are discovered, there shall be salvage and preparation for curation of the recovered fossils. The paleontologist shall prepare a written report summarizing the results, analyses, and conclusions of the monitoring/fossil salvaging effort.

- B. There are no changes or alterations within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency which are necessary to avoid or mitigate significant environmental effects.
- C. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations make infeasible the project alternatives identified in the final EIR 96-0333 to reduce the following significant impacts:

1. LAND USE

Impact: inconsistency with adopted land use plans relative to the loss of open and landscaped parkland, the recommended size of the expansion footprint and the recommended expansion floor area.

2. NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER/ AESTHETICS

Impact: removal of two 80 year old trees and relocation and possible loss of other mature landscaping.

3. HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Impact: inconsistency of the proposed design with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation.

In addition to the effects directly attributable to the project, as described above, the project would result in effects on an incremental basis, which when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects would be cumulatively significant.

FINDING: Final Environmental Impact Report 96-7562 addresses a range of project alternatives which could reduce one or more of the significant impacts that would result from the proposed Natural History Museum Expansion. The environmental benefits of each of these alternatives and the reasons for their rejection are described below.

1. NO PROJECT

The No Project Alternative would result in no further development on the site. The recommendations of the Balboa Park Master Plan and the Central Mesa Precise Plan for the expansion of this particular cultural institution would not be implemented. To continue to serve the public as proposed, the Museum would need to lease or acquire additional space outside the Park and bifurcate their programs and facilities, or build a new museum facility elsewhere. The City would be deprived of all or part of the \$20,000,000 in private funds that have been raised to improve this existing City owned building.

This alternative is infeasible for the following reasons:

- A. This alternative does not meet the stated goals of the project. The Natural History Museum would not be expanded.
- B. Bifurcation of Museum functions between the existing facility and new facilities outside the Park would have an adverse impact on the Museum's ability to function as a cohesive whole and as an effective scientific institution.
- C. Abandonment of the historic building and the Balboa Park leasehold interest would result in adverse economic and programmatic consequences. The Museum's lease entitles it to the free use of the existing 65,000 square foot facility indefinitely. The Prado area of the Central Mesa is the focal point of the City's cultural institution heritage and the Museum's home for sixty-five years. No comparable location in the City exists. The symbiotic relationship between the twelve cultural institutions of the East and West Prado could not be duplicated.

2. PROJECT DESIGN CONSISTENT WITH ADOPTED LAND USE PLANS ALTERNATIVE

This alternative would involve redesign of the proposed expansion to substantially comply with the floor area and other recommendations set forth in the Precise Plan and it would reduce the amount of open parkland impacted from 5,000 square feet to 4,300 square feet. This alternative would reduce the size of the proposed expansion by 45%, from 89,435 square feet to 50,000 square feet consistent with the adopted Central Mesa Precise Plan. This alternative would eliminate the proposed architectural design for the expansion and replace it with a design that would be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Structures.

This alternative is infeasible for the following reasons:

- A. A reduction of the expansion size by 45% would result in a comparable reduction in all aspects of Museum functioning including research, collections, exhibits, education and public use.
- B. A reduction of the expansion size by this amount would reduce the capacity of the Museum in being able to carry out its scientific and educational missions into the next century.
- C. Elimination of the proposed design for the expansion and replacing it with a design that would be consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Resources, as proposed in this Alternative, would result in the withdrawal of the financial contribution pledged by Members of the Board of Trustees of the San Diego Society of Natural History in support of this project. The withdrawal of these financial contributions would make implementation of the project economically infeasible.

ALTERNATIVE SITES

This alternative would abandon the current Natural History Museum building in the East Prado area of the Central Mesa and construct an entirely new building of approximately 154,4355 square feet in a 41,248 square foot footprint on an existing parking lot intended to serve the new Inspiration Point Activity Center, located near the intersection of Highway 5 and Park Boulevard. The Natural History Museum would no longer be a part of the cultural institution complex located along the Prado.

This alternative is infeasible for the following reasons:

- A. It would eliminate the Museum's ability to use the existing 65,000 square foot building which the Museum constructed with its own funds in 1932 and later donated to the City. It would require the Museum to abandon its perpetual, no cost leasehold site on the Prado.
- B. It would remove the Natural History Museum from an area which serves as the Park's cultural institution focal point. Twelve museums and institutions are located on the Prado and provide visitors with a variety of cultural experiences within easy walking distance. Removal of the Natural History Museum from this symbiotic relationship and complex would adversely affect the quality of the visitor experience and Museum attendance.

- C. This alternative would eliminate 46% of the parking spaces intended to serve the new Inspiration Point Activity Center. It is therefore inconsistent with the Balboa Park Master Plan that recommended the existing parking supply to be maintained in conjunction with site improvements.

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS
FOR THE PROPOSED NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM EXPANSION
AND ASSOCIATED ACTIONS

The City Council, pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, after balancing the benefits of the proposed Natural History Museum Expansion and associated actions against the unavoidable significant direct and cumulative impacts of the project on land use, neighborhood character/aesthetics and historical resources hereby determines that the impacts are acceptable for the following reasons:

1. The project would preserve and enhance the oldest cultural institution in the City of San Diego, and the second oldest scientific institution west of the Mississippi, at its home for the past sixty-five years. The San Diego Society of Natural History, founder of the Museum, has been a major force for environmental preservation and natural science research for more than a century. The San Diego Zoo, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Torrey Pines State Preserve were all founded with the help of the Society.
2. The project would preserve and enhance a principal contributing building to the Balboa Park National Historic Landmark District by retaining all existing historic and architecturally significant facades and by locating the expansion at the rear of the building as planned in its original design.
3. The project would enable the Museum to continue to serve the community and region as a leading institution of natural history, science and environmental education. These objectives are facilitated by Natural History Museum scientists who serve as local experts on certain aspects of the region's environment.
4. The project would provide necessary new and improved space for administrative, office, laboratory, research, collections, exhibits, storage, education and public functions. The project would provide accessibility to disabled persons.
5. The project will provide facilities to appropriately house the Museum's collections, which now contain 7.5 million specimens of plants, animals and rocks from the Southwestern United States and Northwestern Mexico and 90,000 scientific

journals and rare books, for the first time in the Museum's history. The project will provide appropriate facilities for the expansion of these collections into the next century and enable the Museum to continue to serve as the curator of our natural heritage. These collections serve as a regional scientific resource to conservation and wildlife agencies at the Federal, State, County and City level and to colleges and universities. Agencies using these collections include the State Parks and Recreation Department, the State Fish & Game Department, County Park and Recreation Department, private environmental consulting firms, the Poison Control Center, U.S. Customs Service and Police and Sheriff forensic entomology departments.

6. The project would provide 8,500 square feet for popular traveling exhibits from around the world that the Museum has been unable to host because of the space and environmental limitations in the existing sixty-five year old building. The ability to host such exhibits is critical to the Museum's development of operating resources. In addition, 20,000 square feet of new and renovated exhibit space will be created.
7. The project would enable the Museum's Biodiversity Research Center of the Californias and Environmental Science Education Center to expand and better serve the scientific and educational communities of this region. The expansion of these two programs, in conjunction with the new exhibition space and telecommunications facilities, will double the Museum's cultural and educational outreach to the community.
8. The Museum's expanded research role will be supported by a library and archives in safe, climate-controlled and facilities accessible to the general public. Current library facilities are not accessible to the public.
9. The project would enable the Museum to become the Natural History center for the entire region and fulfill its mission of service to the community in terms of environmental education with a 300-seat state of the art auditorium, four large permanent classrooms and a large Discovery Center.
10. The project would invest \$20 million in private funds in a City-owned property and all resulting improvements will continue to be owned by the City of San Diego. The City would invest \$3 million for renovation of specific aspects of the existing building to bring it up to full compliance with all applicable Codes.
11. The City of San Diego has endorsed the expansion of the

Natural History Museum through the Balboa Park Master Plan, the Central Mesa Precise Plan and other public policy determinations. The Master Plan calls for the restoration and improvement of existing buildings and landscaped areas and the preservation and enhancement of the mix of cultural, and active and passive recreational uses within the Park that serve national, regional, community and neighborhood populations. The Central Mesa Precise Plan stated a goal of rehabilitation and modification of the physical environment in a manner which preserves historic significance while providing for future uses. The expansion of the Natural History Museum was identified as one aspect of that goal. The Precise Plan included a recommendation that cultural institutions, organizations and activities in the Park should be encouraged and supported. The Plan included statements that cultural use of the Central Mesa benefits the public and contributes greatly to its significance and character. The proposed project contributes to achievement of these goals.

12. The proposed expansion would result in the loss of approximately 5,000 square feet of landscaped area, all but 200 square feet of that area is buffer landscaping between sidewalks and existing improvements. The expansion as proposed in the Central Mesa Precise Plan would have resulted in the loss of approximately 4,300 square feet of landscaped area in the same vicinity. The impact from the loss of the additional 700 square feet of landscaped area is acceptable in light of the benefits, including other landscape improvements, of the proposed project.

Natural History Museum Expansion

MITIGATION MONITORING

and

REPORTING PROGRAM

**LDR No. 96-7562
SCH No. 97111015**

February 1998

R-290038

INTRODUCTION

This Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program has been prepared for the Natural History Museum Expansion project (LDR No. 96-7562, SCH No. 97111015) to comply with the mitigation monitoring statute (Public Resources Code section 21081.6) which requires public agencies to adopt such programs to ensure effective implementation of mitigation measures. This program shall be a requirement of the discretionary actions associated with the Natural History Museum Expansion project.

The following text includes a summary of the potentially significant project impacts, a list of mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Impact Report, and the monitoring efforts necessary to ensure that the mitigation measures are properly implemented. Mitigation measures, monitoring and reporting requirements shall be as defined in Environmental Impact Report LDR No. 96-7562, and may require further detail prior to construction and/or following project implementation.

I. TRAFFIC/ CIRCULATION

The following measures are required to mitigate the significant impact on parking to below a level of significance:

- (1) The Natural History Museum shall provide free local transit passes to its staff members and volunteers.
- (2) The Natural History Museum shall conduct and distribute an analysis of the existing tram service serving Balboa Park and recommend improvements to increase service to the east end of El Prado in the vicinity of the museum.

MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING

Implementation and continuation of the above mitigation measures shall be monitored jointly by the Park and Recreation Department and the Environmental Analysis Section of the Development Services Department of the City of San Diego.

II. PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The following measures are required to mitigate the potentially significant impacts to paleontological resources to below a level of significance. The following measures shall be stated in the construction contract documents and shall be stated on the construction plans. The plans and specifications shall be reviewed by the Environmental Analysis Section (EAS) prior to contract advertisement.

1. The Natural History Museum shall provide a letter of verification to EAS stating that a qualified paleontologist has been retained to implement the monitoring program. A qualified paleontologist is defined as an individual with a Ph.D. or M.S. degree in paleontology or geology who is a recognized expert in the application of paleontological procedures and techniques such as screen washing of materials and identification of fossil deposits.

A paleontological monitor may be retained for performance of the on-site monitoring in place of the qualified paleontologist. A paleontological monitor is defined as an individual who has experience in the collection and salvage of fossil material and who is working under the supervision of a qualified paleontologist.

2. All persons involved in the paleontological monitoring of this project shall be approved by EAS at least 30 days prior to the pre-construction meeting.
3. The qualified paleontologist shall attend the pre-construction meeting to consult with the excavation contractor. The paleontologist's duties shall include monitoring, salvaging, preparation of collected materials for storage at the Museum. These duties are defined as follows:
 - a) Monitoring - A paleontological monitor shall be on-site at all times during the original cutting of previously undisturbed deposits of high sensitivity formations to inspect exposures for contained fossils. The paleontological monitor shall be on-site on a half-time basis during the original cutting of previously undisturbed deposits of moderate sensitivity formations. In the event that fossils are discovered in moderate sensitivity formations it may be necessary to increase the amount of field monitoring time. Conversely, if fossils are not being found in these rock units the monitoring shall be reduced.
 - b) Salvaging - In the event that fossils are encountered, the paleontologist shall have the authority to divert or temporarily halt construction activities in the area of discovery to allow recovery of fossil remains in a timely fashion. Because of the potential for recovery of small fossil remains, it may be necessary to set up a screen-washing operation on-site. The paleontologist shall contact EAS at the time of discovery. EAS must concur with the salvaging methods before construction activities are allowed to resume. In most

cases this fossil salvage can be completed in a short period of time. However, some fossil specimens (such as a complete large mammal skeleton) may require an extended salvage period. In these instances the paleontologist (or paleontological monitor) shall be allowed to temporarily direct, divert or halt grading to allow recovery of fossil remains.

- c) Fossil Preparation - Fossil remains collected during the monitoring and salvaging portion of the mitigation program shall be cleaned, repaired, sorted and cataloged and the prepared fossils, along with copies of all pertinent field notes, photos, and maps shall be offered to be deposited in a scientific institution such as the Natural History Museum. Donation of the fossils shall be accompanied by financial support for initial specimen storage.

The qualified paleontologist shall be responsible for preparation of fossils to a point of identification, and submittal of a letter of acceptance from a local qualified curation facility. If the fossil collection is not accepted by a local qualified facility for reasons other than inadequate preparation of specimens, the project paleontologist shall contact EAS to suggest an alternative disposition of the collection.

- d) Report Preparation - A monitoring results report with appropriate graphics summarizing the results (even if negative), analyses, and conclusions of the above program shall be prepared and submitted to EAS within three months following the termination of the paleontological monitoring program, and prior to DSD's final inspection. Any discovered fossil sites shall be recorded at the San Diego Natural History Museum.