

C O P Y

3723 Wilshire Boulevard.

March 12, 1923.

*Subject
Change T.P. Road*

CAPTAIN W. C. CRANDALL,
P. O. Box 494,
La Jolla, C a l i f o r n i a .

My dear Captain Crandall:

In reference to the matter of a road proposed to by-pass the present TORREY PINES GRADE, eliminate existing curves and reduce the gradient between Torrey Pines Slough and Torrey Pines Mesa, as discussed with Mr. Jorgenson, Mr. Fleming and yourself yesterday, the following are my impressions as far as data presented enable me to judge.

From strictly an engineering standpoint, I feel that any of the suggested routes for a new highway would effect a decided improvement over the present Torrey Pines Grade. From the standpoint of a road, alone, any of the road locations under consideration seem to offer a safe and reasonable gradient and curvature, and might be expected to meet the demands of highway traffic for some years to come, although the maximum gradient, thus far proposed, would be in excess of the desired maximum by at least a probable one percent. Considered only from the engineering standpoint, the choice of routes would seem to depend upon matters of cost, as related to the required cut and fill, rather than upon matters of alignment from other standpoints. Of the different locations presented to me and considered on my visit of yesterday, there is a difference of but 200 feet in the extreme lengths of the three routes platted by the City Engineer's office of San Diego, which is an inconsiderable length.

In an attempt to predict the future needs of traffic, it would seem to me much more reasonable to expect that the eventual route that traffic would demand into and from the northern portal of San Diego would be from Del Mar up the Soledad Valley into Rose Canyon, which latter is already being graded in anticipation of pavement under State Highway Specifications. Whether or not the proposed highway may be cut through Torrey Pines Preserve, as now considered, I would expect that the reasonably near future would demand some such additional route to further reduce gradients and curvature and shorten the direct line from San Diego to all northern points. It seems to me to be highly important that this possibility be considered in connection with any proposal for immediate relief of the present congestion at the Torrey Pines Grade; for, although the cost of a Soledad Canyon road would be considerably more than that of the cut-off under present consideration, if it were to be an eventual reality it would be far greater ultimate economy to forego the present plan and pool available assets toward the bigger scheme that would come in the end, anyway.

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To analyze the road locations as studied by your City Engineer, and as presented to us yesterday, may I begin at the southern end of the proposed cut-off where it would leave the paved highway some few hundred feet to the south of Torrey Pines Lodge. For the first approximate 1050 feet, the new roadway would be in heavy cut, running to a maximum of forty-five feet at the center-line of the roadway and averaging a possible thirty or thirty-five feet; the road would then continue in slight fill for about 600 feet from which it would plunge into a second cut, 1050 feet long, with a maximum depth of thirty-five feet and an average of between twenty-five and thirty feet; a fill with a maximum of thirty-five feet would then follow for another approximate 650 feet, the road then going into a 700 foot cut averaging about twelve feet at the centerline of the roadway, with a maximum of eighteen feet. For the next 1000 feet northward to the edge of the slough, the road would then run on approximate, existing grade.

This analysis is for the intermediary route of the three now under consideration, my preference of the three suggested, and the one which has more moderate extremes of both cut and fill. This intermediary location would seem to disturb natural conditions less than either of the other two, and would appear to mar the scenic aspects of the park less than the others. Its location would also be less conspicuous from the viewpoints normally attained in tramping over the most frequented portions of the Park. So far as we ~~are~~ were able to locate it on the ground and to judge from the paper profiles, there would seem to be no doubt of its preference.

In spite of the fact that this location seems to be the less of three evils, it, in itself, would be a very definite blemish to the natural aspects of the Park and would cut a very deep and broad scar across the center of Torrey Pines Preserve. Of its approximate 5000 feet in length, about three-fifths of the entire distance is in cut so deep that there would be no view from the roadway at all. In grading a forty-six foot (minimum) or a sixty foot (maximum) roadway along a one hundred foot right-of-way, with a cut as deep as forty-five feet along the centerline of the road, one might expect to run into cut-banks, on the upper side of the road, of as high as sixty or seventy feet, and the problem of slipping these back to a proper angle of repose would necessitate the exposure of very large areas of raw cut-bank. Fill-banks, where the earth was wasted or filled into the low places, would be of equally impressive proportions.

From the standpoint of through traffic and the tourist, the proposed road would practically by-pass Torrey Pines, due to the fact that it climbs up from the slough over the low mesa, passes through the long cuts that obscure all outlook for ~~more~~ more than one-half its distance, and then emerges from the canyon onto the Torrey Pines Mesa at a point considerably south of the main groups of trees and of the Lodge. This, of itself, would be a minor objection in my opinion, although the through-traveler would scarcely more than glimpse a suggestion of the Pines and their setting, which would thus lose much of the publicity value which they now carry for the City of San Diego. Under such circumstances, Torrey Pines

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Preserve would become the objective of those who cared to seek it rather than a lovely incident to the journey of all who visit your city from the north. On the long grade from the Slough to the upper Mesa there would be no place where a car could stop and, once off the grade, the motorist would be past the park and forced to a hair-pin turn and retracing of steps to visit the trees. I believe this not to be an objection from the standpoint of the Preserve, since such semi-seclusion would increase its charm and add to the sense of discovery for those who might seek it, but it is a factor to be weighed in the considerations at hand.

An alternative to any of the routes above mentioned would be that of which we spoke in considering a road almost due south from the Torrey Pines Garage, crossing the slough along the east side of the Santa Fe Right-of-way and then crossing the railroad, by viaduct, onto the east slope of the Torrey Pines bluffs, from there to work its way up to the level of the mesa. This would be intermediary between the three locations under present consideration and one up the floor of Soledad Valley, both in length and in probable cost. From the standpoint of the Preserve, alone, it would be far preferable to a road that would bifurcate the park area with a broad, deep and unsightly scar of raw banks, bare of vegetation and a prey to erosion.

As has been set forth at different times in the past, Torrey Pines Preserve is a very unusual bit of distinctive landscape, standing out as an example of Nature's caprice, created in a mood of extravagance, with a fancy run wild. Her greatest beauty and individuality lie in the form of her land sculptures and erosion and in the colors of the different strata thus exposed to view. The pines, themselves, are an added charm in the picturesque beauty of the locality, but it is more the setting in which they are placed than it is the trees, themselves, that gives distinction to the picture created. The life span of the trees is very short, no more than that of a normal human life; and mature specimens may be grown from seed within the years of a single generation. The destruction of pines thus becomes of minor importance to the destruction of ground forms, the latter becoming a greater obstacle to road invasions or other "improvements" than would be the actual loss of trees.

All three of the road locations thus far considered within the Preserve cut through some very picturesque and interesting ground forms of colored and eroded cliffs which, though not prominently visible from the Lodge nor the high point within the park, are very beautiful from the northern and eastern portions of the property. No road can be run through this canyon without considerable destruction to the scenic qualities of the location in rather an overwhelming degree. The fact that it is practically concealed from viewpoints about the Lodge make it no less apparent from other angles of view to which visitors may very easily stroll in their wanderings. To say that such a road would altogether ruin the park is, of course, far-fetched; but there is no question at all but that it would make an irreparable blemish through the very center of the reserved area.

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Another factor of consideration is that, though very unique and distinctive in its ground forms and colorations, the area of the preserve as a whole and of these unusual formations in particular, is very limited; and the destruction of seemingly small bits of the natural slopes and canyon walls assumes increased, relative significance by virtue of this fact. About two such roads as the one considered and there would be little of the original park aspect left! The proposed road so closely parallels the existing road, and for so much of their distance each is visible from the other, that from a purely park standpoint, it would be considered neither as good economy nor proper planning.

To sum up the thoughts set forth, there can be no doubt that relief is needed from the present curves and gradient of the so-called Torrey Pines Grade; that any of the proposed schemes would bring about much improvement to traffic conditions; that it is the writer's opinion that traffic and the future will demand a road routed up Soledad Canyon or otherwise to the east of Torrey Pines; that the road, as now proposed, would not, of course, ruin the park but would create a very objectionable and uneradicable scar that would remain for all time; that such a road would preclude the possibility of any appreciable view of the pines from the highway and would practically by-pass the entire park; and that any road location through this particular canyon would entirely destroy certain very fine and picturesque bits of ground forms and colorations.

While I recognize that the existing Torrey Pines Road is a menace to public safety and should be replaced by a road of easier gradient and less curvature, I feel that the old road should be maintained as a scenic park-drive, under control of limited speed. As such, it is of great value to the traveling public and to the City of San Diego, since it affords views of pines, sea and distant mountains - such as could be obtained from no other road site. In my opinion, it also seems inevitable that a road will be built at some future date along the general course of Soledad Canyon, from Torrey Pines Garage to Rose Canyon.

Before determining the exact location for an immediate and temporary road to serve as an emergency expedient, I should like to have engineering studies made for the line suggested to run east of the Santa Fe Tracks from a point near Torrey Pines Garage to the northeastern projection of Torrey Pines Bluffs - where the road would cross the tracks on a viaduct and then climb to the elevation of the upper mesa, along these easterly cliffs, emerging onto the present highway somewhere near the present Government station. Such a road could in no way injure the park, would involve but little greater length than the location now being considered, and might entail less cost. If its engineering problems did not seem too involved, I am inclined to feel that it would be my choice of location for the road to be built at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

(SIGNED) RALPH D. CORNELL
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT.

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