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Knott's Berry Farm: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow A Consideration

Jack Ryan
Halcyon Ltd.

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Mr. Jack Ryan  
9318 Van Nuys Blvd., Suite 22  
Panorama City, CA 91402  

Dear Jack:

May this letter confirm in writing that I have recently commissioned you to do a "white paper" on Knott's Berry Farm. In essence, from your intellectual and professional perspective, I have asked that you address the following issues: what was Knott's Berry Farm? what is Knott's Berry Farm? what could Knott's Berry Farm be? what should Knott's Berry Farm be? Additionally, we wish to address issues such as the public's perception of Knott's Berry Farm and Knott's Berry Farm's current communications to its public.

Jack, I have chosen to keep Knott's Berry Farm within the traditions and history of California. I am enclosing a copy of Halcyon's Marketplace report which reflects this philosophy of future development. I like and am intrigued by your "Knott's Berry Farm -- The Park Californians Call Home".

I had intended that as tourists go to Universal to see Hollywood and go to Disney to see Disney, that they would come to Knott's to see and to feel the essence of California, its color, its earthly texture and the fabric of its culture. Hence, in coming here, my primary mission was to create a renaissance of spirit and a renaissance of facility for the Farm, and, without changing her great "sense of place", I have endeavored to awaken her and to make her more contemporary in the sense of being more competitive in today's marketplace. Toward this end, I developed Camp Snoopy to get: 1) a mascot for marketing identity and leverage; and, 2) to build a great children's facility to balance out the family need and nature of this park. I purposely themed Camp Snoopy after the California High Sierra - her greatest legacy. Then I turned to the
rehabilitation of the Knott's MarketPlace and again worked within the idiom of California architecture and Southern California feel. Thirdly, I have recently turned to rejuvenate Ghost Town and to make it come alive, working with California crafts instead of the Ozark crafts that we had at Spilliken Corners.

I believe that Knott's is different and that she enjoys a very special niche between the cards of Magic, Disney, Marineland, Universal, Sea World, etcetera. Her fabric is more richly textured in culture and history, her feel and colors are earthly and real. Her basic composition is of software, as opposed to hardware. Her mission is to culturally enrich the experience of the masses through quality and excellence of service and product, through humanism, through excellent food and excellent entertainment and excellent participatory experiences which deal on a very human scale with issues of our western heritage. Knott's is a more natural park, as opposed to an artificial park. It is an institution - 51 and 65 years in the making. It touches or should touch universally the simple, classic needs of the human spirit.

Jack, additionally, I am enclosing, for your review, my philosophies and values that I have stated for the Park in order that you may sense the temper of its current spine and soul.
Enclosures sent to Jack Ryan

Standards of Conduct for Executive Excellence

Our Goals...

Our Responsibilities...

Our Philosophy of Human Resource Management...

Philosophy of Management

Halcyon Report (with Terry's note)

1981 Service Award Speech by Terry Van Gorder (Conestoga Wagon

1984 CDR 50th Birthday Speech by Terry Van Gorder

July 1985 Berry Vine

Walter Knott Eulogy by Terry Van Gorder
CONFIDENTIAL

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM:

Yesterday, Today And Tomorrow

A Consideration

Prepared for: Terry E. Van Gorder

By: Jack Ryan

August 26, 1985
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I.

Introduction

Attempting to visualize the rich, leisure-time fabric of Southern California without Knott's Berry Farm is a difficult, perhaps impossible task.

In conversations initiated with several dozen local residents, media and non-media -- in both Los Angeles and Orange Counties -- the sentiments rang loud and clear: Knott's is a unique, cherished member of the huge, extended family that is Southern California. Local people hold a special place in their hearts and minds for their hometown park. Almost everybody has his or her own memories of birthdays celebrated in the Chicken Dinner Restaurant, of happy outings with family and friends in the old Ghost Town.

"I love Knott's," one native told me. "When did you last visit the park?" I asked. "About five years ago," was the reply. "If you enjoy Knott's, why so long between visits?" "Well, I just never think about it," came the answer. All across Southern California, warm goodwill exists for Knott's Berry Farm. The primary challenge: to translate this deep, residual good feeling to ticket purchases at the main gate.
The depth of affection held for Knott's by the Southern Californians I spoke to (in a hugely unscientific survey) wasn't unexpected. What did surprise me were the many misperceptions non-visitors hold concerning the size, scope and mission of the Farm today.

Long before an ersatz Matterhorn rose into the blue, Orange County sky, decades before the screams of coaster riders pierced the stillness of the sleepy Santa Clarita Valley, Knott's was here, offering Californians and visitors a unique recreational experience, based largely on the glory of the west. As Knott's looks hard at its future, at the pivotal place it must retain and expand as a California leisure-time leader in the years ahead, it would be foolish indeed to ignore the Farm's glorious past while readying it for the 1990s and beyond. The "Wild West" image that Knott's enjoys -- and which it has promoted heavily -- should figure prominently in future plans. The challenge as I see it is to contemporize the Farm's public image without diluting or destroying the varied elements that make it successful.
But I'm getting ahead of myself. First, let's take a little time to investigate what Southern Californians know -- or think they know -- about Walter and Cordelia Knott's extraordinary creation.
Everybody knows the story. Of a tiny berry stand at the side of the road. About a man with dreams and a woman whose fried chicken recipe was so darn good that, even in the Depression's darkest days, folks traveled from miles around to feast on drum sticks, homemade biscuits and boysenberry pie.

Like Topsy, for decades Knott's "just grew." Without much rhyme or reason, it appears; with little or no master plan. As the years passed, new attractions were added; the park matured. Despite the growth and improvements, a lot of Californians believed -- and some still do -- that the Knott family particularly welcomed your visit if you agreed with their decidedly right-wing and often quite vocal political view of the world.

Conservative totems were everywhere -- an "exact replica" of Independence Hall, the "John Wayne Theatre," the availability of John Birch Society literature within park shops. Traces still remain. In what other amusement park can
guests purchase reproductions of classic Old West revolvers? Harmless? Maybe. But it's a small clue that traces of Walter Knott's world view still cling on tenaciously.

Orange County, legend has it, is a bastion of staunch conservatism. A lot of people -- particularly Californians outside the County and, unfortunately, far too many media professionals (who are generally liberal in their politics) -- still perceive Knott's as something of a "right wing" park.

The media's liberal bent and Knott's perceived conservative image explain a lot about the press coverage -- or lack of coverage -- the park receives. As I discuss further in another part of this report, a long-term, carefully targeted and executed public relations program could go a long way in bringing media and park together, allowing the press to "discover for itself" that Knott's is not at all what they might think.

Because the media hasn't told them, much of "the general public," the great mass audience -- particularly those Southern Californians outside Orange County -- doesn't understand that today Knott's has no political axe to grind, no cause to
espouse except wholesome family entertainment.
Methodically -- but too often not permitting the
media to get excited about what was happening --
Knott's Berry Farm has turned itself into one of
the country's premier theme parks, offering a
highly satisfying recreational experience for
guests of all ages.

Still the big question remains: does the
typical Southern Californian understand the scope
and depth of the Knott's experience, circa 1985?
What Knott's Is

Today's Knott's Berry Farm provides an entertaining and balanced family experience. Camp Snoopy and Ghost Town Alive have both added greatly to the entertainment mix as classy, stimulating attractions.

But in a larger sense, Knott's often seems unsure of its image, of what it wants to project to its guests. To illustrate the point: if Knott's is, indeed, symbolic of the Old West, why does the park announcer slavishly imitate in tone and inflection the sound of Disneyland? Wouldn't it be more fun -- and more in character -- for park announcements to sound as though they're coming from, say, an old prospector, a crusty "Gabby" Hayes? Knott's is special; it should never attempt a Disneyland imitation. In fact, it must not.

Walking the park today, the most unsatisfying section by far is The Roaring Twenties which, as it stands, has little or nothing to do with California or the West. Although this hastily constructed area brought in the customers in 1975, ten years later it looks and feels tired. When
compared to the creativity and care which obviously went into both Camp Snoopy and Ghost Town Alive, The Roaring Twenties comes off like a tawdry, touring carnival, out-of-place within the park.

The Roaring Twenties also contains what I believe is the Farm's single most unsuccessful attraction: Knott's Berry Tales, a well-meaning but extremely poor dark ride experience. To attempt an animated-character dark ride within a few miles of "Pirates of the Caribbean" and other WED wonders was certainly audacious. And a big mistake. Even when the ride was new, it's design and technology fairly begged guests to compare it with a Disney's slick dark rides. Now that the Berry Tales is timeworn and clearly showing its age, comparisons are even more odious.

Perhaps in a park somewhere in the middle west, far from Anaheim and Orlando, Berry Tales could have worked. Something must be done with Berry Tales. No matter how you slice it, the ride is a negative experience.
Taking full advantage of its history, creatively enhancing its special image and systematically allowing the media to "rediscover" its bright uniqueness, Knott's Berry Farm can effectively grow and flourish in its own, unchallenged market position as The Park Californians Call Home.

Positioning Knott's as California's homegrown, hometown park, reflecting the wonders of the Golden State, past, present and future, would, I believe, work effectively on two levels:

(a) Expand and enhance the park's image locally as a gathering place for Southern Californians, the most sophisticated theme parkgoers in the world.

(b) Make it impossible for visitors to pass up a visit to the park that Southern Californians enjoy most. When in California, tourists just must visit Disneyland. And if they are at all interested in where future national fads and fancies are born, if they want to know what real Californians are up to, then they must visit Knott's as well!
To develop further the image I'm suggesting, let's borrow a classic theatrical concept. Consider Knott's a play. The main text is, quite simply, contemporary California. The multiple subtexts, the themes and messages that enhance the main, are the worlds, the cultures, the peoples who make California the most exciting state in the nation. Overall there must be created a real sense of contemporary California, a "now," kinetic kind of place that pays homage to the past but never, ever lives there.

Today, Camp Snoopy takes us to the High Sierra; Ghost Town sends us back in time; the Fiesta shouts "ole" to our great Spanish heritage. With a little imagination, it would be feasible to expand this contemporary California thrust by re-theming the problematic Roaring Twenties area to a whole new concept. Let's call it, just for now, "Tinseltown, 1925."

Here, one of California's most storied eras, Hollywood's days of silent movies would come to living, breathing life. There's already a tiny Charlie Chaplin miming through the area. How about adding the Keystone Kops, Mack Sennett's Bathing Beauties, flappers, ragtime and more?
It appears that many of the "airfield" type structures in the section could easily become "sound stages." On the hillside, just above the Pilots Recreation Area, there's even a perfect spot for a recreation of the celebrated Hollywood sign!

To add to the fun of Hollywood in the 20s, Knott's Berry Tales could be converted to "a trip through Hollywood history" or something of the sort. I would further suggest that such a ride might be prepared in conjunction with one or more Hollywood studios. Since Universal has "stolen" so much of Hollywood with its tour, other major studios might be quite receptive to a Knott's tie-in, promoting current releases and loaning historical artifacts for exhibition.

If marketed carefully and creatively, the new area, recycling and retheming existing attractions, adding a few new ones and tying it all together with Robin Hall's color and graphics expertise, would cause no confusion with the Universal Tour. Knott's version would be nostalgic, stylized and witty, affectionately saluting a Hollywood that probably never was. I have additional, specific thoughts about "Tinseltown, 1925" and would be pleased to detail
them if there's interest in the concept.

Connecting "old west" -- Knott's hallowed image -- with the movies could present a lot of sound media possibilities. I think immediately of an annual, off-season retrospective of classic Western movies, staged in the Good Time Theatre, with original cast members invited to attend and answer questions after the screenings. Or even an annual Knott's award to a pivotal figure in the history of Western movies, complete with awards ceremony and, perhaps, a permanent gallery of honorees ala the Baseball Hall of Fame.

During the summer, the theatre might present "Hollywood on Ice" or "The 1925 Hollywood Follies." There are many and varied colorful, appealing entertainment concepts that could be created within the theme.

I think that a 1920's Hollywood section fits in comfortably with the direction that Knott's is going. And, such a section, rising phoenix-like from the "ashes" of the present, aging area, would get a lot of ink. Let's stamp out MCA's "exclusive rights" to celebrate the movies in Southern California and annex a bit of Hollywood glitter for Knott's!
A recurring theme in recent conversations with Southern Californians about Knott's: it's impossible to talk about the park for any length of time before Knott's enviable reputation for fine food comes up. Capitalizing on that, consider as a centerpiece of the new, contemporary California park an upscale, top-flight dining experience, called, perhaps, "California Seasons."

The restaurant -- perhaps at the site of the present Steak House -- would feature many things to make it special -- and impossible for the media to ignore. For instance, every ingredient in every recipe is grown in California. The wine cellar is 100% Californian. So is the china, the serving dishes, the table cloths. The attractive young servers are all native Californians, dressed by a California designer; there's even an elegant dessert buffet shaped like the state!

The concept could be tied closely with the California Department of Tourism's current, effective campaign, "The Californias." Every three months, the restaurant's menu and decor undergoes a change, reflecting each of the four seasons and the special California foods available in each.
Elegantly designed and marketed, "California Seasons" could become, in time, as celebrated as Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant. And the two could exist very compatibly, side-by-side.

Knott's reputation for fine food should be emphasized again and again to the media. "California Seasons" should house a private dining club, ala Disneyland's Club 33. Lunch membership could become a new Orange County status symbol and, of course, such a facility would allow the media to be entertained, pampered and made to feel special. Why let Disneyland steal all the Orange County park dining thunder when Knott's is the recognized, fine food leader? A lunch or dinner invitation to this new, cleverly named "club" would bring a lot of media people to the Farm, week after week, year after year.

For years, local media people have told me what a great time they have at Club 33, what a treat it is, how impressed their family and friends are to be included. The media good will Club 33 has engendered through the years is incalculable. I know from experience that the Southern California media responds, just like Pavlov's dogs, to food, drink and VIP treatment. We proved it at Magic Mountain even though the
park enjoyed little or no restaurant-hospitality reputation.

Speaking of food, future plans for Knott's should include a tour, a well-done "experience" that demonstrates to guests the hows, whys and wherefores of making Knott's products. Knott's brand-name has nearly 100% recognition in Southern California and is highly respected. An out-of-the-park, free tour experience would offer many chances for goodwill with school groups, clubs and other organizations. All tour participants could receive a discount coupon to the park. In general, closer tie-ins between park and Knott's products would be mutually beneficial -- a page on the park in the Christmas catalog; use of the Southern California mailing list to reach proven "Knott's lovers;" perhaps an off-season ticket discount upon presentation of labels from various Knott's products.

In the provocative and interesting report on The California Marketplace by Halcyon Ltd, I particularly like their proposal of an automated audio-visual/cinema extravaganza, produced to set the tone of Knott's as symbol of contemporary California. Whether or not such an attraction should be offered at no charge outside the park or
in-park as a theme feature should be carefully considered.

To sum up, I strongly advocate "California contemporary" as an ongoing creative and marketing thrust, with food playing a major role. In such an effort, I believe you could tap the special feelings that exist for Knott's within the area while positioning the Farm as a "must visit" attraction for visitors.
V.

What Knott's Should Be

According to the August, 1985, issue of American Demographics, published by Dow Jones & Company (see Appendix I), the Anaheim-Santa Ana area will more than double in population between 1985 and 2005. Up the road apiece, Los Angeles-Long Beach can look for a 23.5% increase over the next twenty years.

In light of those somewhat staggering figures, it seems obvious that one of Knott's major, on-going commitments should be expanded capacity.

It also would seem that now's the perfect time for the Farm to involve itself heavily in such newcomer organizations as Welcome Wagon, giving large discounts -- or perhaps free admission -- to new residents of the area. It's essential that people moving into Southern California who don't have the words "Knott's Berry Farm" implanted in their tribal memories be given an easy, painless opportunity to sample the park for themselves.
The twenty-year metropolitan growth projections reported in *American Demographics* likewise pinpoints several super-growth cities within Knott's tertiary market:

* **San Diego** will grow by 65.6%.

* **Phoenix** will grow by 51%

* **Tucson** will grow by 76.7%

* **Las Vegas** will grow by 82.7%

Given these impressive numbers, I'd recommend that, starting now, San Diego, Phoenix, Tucson and Las Vegas be given special and continuing attention by Knott's public relations department, establishing meaningful media friends and contacts in these cities, providing them with year-round communications, updates and invitations. Of course, other cities could be targeted. Still, with the projections for the four I've mentioned, these markets seem the obvious places to begin.

With a little creativity and a lot of effort, Knott's could effectively penetrate the media of these cities. That effort should begin immediately.
VI.

Knott's And Public Relations

In their widely adopted college textbook, Managing Public Relations, the authors and respected communications professionals James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt aptly define public relations as "management of communication between and organization and its publics."

To effectively deal with a world growing more complex and specialized each day, communications must be managed with care, intelligence and creativity. A multi-leveled organization like Knott's must effectively communicate with many publics, particularly the community, the employees and its guests. To reach guests and prospective guests, Knott's must continually deal with another, essential public: the media -- the "gatekeepers" who set the news agenda, deciding what the great mass public will read in their newspapers and magazines, hear on their radios and see on their television sets.

In Southern California, an amusement park or, indeed, any organization attempting continuing media communications, must always recognize that it is vying for space and time in one of the
world's most competitive media centers. There's always something happening in this huge area, making it a buyer's market for the media all year round.

To function effectively under these circumstances, Knott's public relations efforts must continually present a professional, intelligent image, especially in the following areas:

**Written Communications** - News releases, letters, press kits, feature stories, pitch letters and all written materials originated by the park and sent to the media must be of highest quality -- well written, perfectly proofed and attractively presented. Determine to make them better, more useful than those distributed by any other attraction. Releases should go out only when there's something to say; don't "cry wolf" when no wolf is at the door.

**Continuous Media Contact** - A basic point that sometimes gets lost: get to know the media before you need them! Talk to the media, host the media year round. It's impossible to get them excited about your summer if you've ignored them all winter. And, when you know reporters, you find out what kinds of stories they like. It doesn't
take too much creativity to then suggest a subject or arrange an interview that's right down their alley.

**Pinpoint Problem Media** -- Who likes you? Who doesn't like you? Massage the reporters who are already in your corner; devise one-on-one meetings, dinners, park tours etc. for those who don't. This approach won't work miracles overnight but, as we proved at Magic Mountain, ongoing outreach to problem media can reap valuable longterm dividends.

**Don't Hard Sell** -- Southern California media people cringe when public relations people come on too strong. Provide the right setting, make the media person feel special and a fine product like Knott's will sell itself.

**Make It Fun!** -- It's an amusement park, not a new technique in brain surgery! Stage media events that are so appealing that the press just has to cover.

**Always Tell The Truth!** -- The end of credibility for a public relations person comes when he or she lies to the press -- and is found out. They'll never believe you again. Ever.

**Decide On A Spokesperson** -- Over and above the
public relations professional, a park spokesperson, from higher management, must be determined and made available to the media on a consistent basis. The media likes to hear what's happening from "the horse's mouth."

* Don't Forget Radio! -- Southern California is the world's largest automobile culture. Everybody listens to their radio. Court the disc jockeys and radio talk show hosts. Pay them a little attention and they will repay Knott's with ten-second tags that grow to minute-long monologues; with comments and asides that will continually boost awareness of the park.

There are, of course, additional areas that could be detailed in examining Knott's media communications. We have discussed the importance of a national public relations effort and of targeting cities such as San Diego, Phoenix, Tucson and Las Vegas for continuing attention.

In general, it seems to me that the Southern California media would respond well to a Knott's public relations program that is consistently bright and contemporary, created and executed with a light touch. In other words, PR that accurately reflects the character and feel of the park.
VII.

And in Conclusion:

Knott's Berry Farm enjoys a unique and enviable position within Southern California. The challenge is to contemporize the image, retaining the elements that have made the park work all these years, while blending in the best and brightest new ideas, designed to appeal to the widest possible spectrum of prospective guests.

"Image" is the key. The longer I study public relations, the more I am convinced that what people perceive about any given product or service is far more important than the actuality. In advertising circles, people talk about selling "the sizzle" and not the steak. At Knott's there's a whole lot of sizzle, just waiting to be sold.

As Knott's Berry Farm grows, so must grow the park's ability to communicate its wonder and excitement to reporters, assignment editors, photographers, disc jockeys and talk show hosts whose attitudes and perceptions, carefully nurtured over the years, can make a huge difference. Without the media in your corner, without their help in accessing the minds of the
public, it is difficult, if not impossible, to hit public relations' home runs.

Or even singles.

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Appendix I

"Targeting Metropolitan Growth"

American Demographics

DEMOCRAPHIC FORECASTS

TARGETING METROPOLITAN GROWTH

Washington, D.C. should gain more people than any other metropolitan area in the country between 1985 and 2005, according to projections by Woods & Poole Economics. Its growth should outstrip number two ranking Houston because Washington’s economy is heavily dependent on the rapidly growing service sector while Houston’s is more dependent on manufacturing.

Washington, Houston, and Anaheim-Santa Ana, California all should gain more than 2 million new residents in the next 20 years.

Among the nation’s 50 metropolitan areas that should gain the most people between 1985 and 2005, 10 are in California, 5 are in Texas, and 4 are in Florida. Altogether, 19 are in the West, 18 are in the South, 8 are in the Northeast—including Nassau-Suffolk, New York; and Portsmouth-Dover-Rochester, New Hampshire—and 5 are in the Midwest, including Minneapolis-St. Paul, Detroit, and Chicago.

Of the top 50 gainers, only 4 should more than double their populations—Anaheim-Santa Ana, California; Austin, Texas; Portsmouth-Dover-Rochester, New Hampshire-Maine; and Lafayette, Louisiana.

The driving force behind this metropolitan growth is jobs. The projection model developed by Woods & Poole predicts that job growth attracts people. Consequently, the metropolitan areas gaining the most people are also those that should be gaining the most jobs in the years ahead.

THE TOP 50

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro Area</th>
<th>1985</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>Growth</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
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<td>Washington, DC-MD-VA</td>
<td>3,477.5</td>
<td>6,103.9</td>
<td>2,626.4</td>
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<td>Houston, TX</td>
<td>3,378.3</td>
<td>5,910.3</td>
<td>2,532.0</td>
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<td>Anahiem-Santa Ana, CA</td>
<td>2,214.3</td>
<td>4,451.0</td>
<td>2,236.7</td>
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<td>Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA</td>
<td>7,967.4</td>
<td>9,824.2</td>
<td>1,856.8</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego, CA</td>
<td>2,131.0</td>
<td>3,258.5</td>
<td>1,127.5</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver, CO</td>
<td>1,671.6</td>
<td>2,987.8</td>
<td>1,316.2</td>
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<td>Dallas, TX</td>
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<td>3,592.1</td>
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<td>Atlanta, GA</td>
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<td>3,537.4</td>
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<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
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<td>2,670.3</td>
<td>1,108.3</td>
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<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
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<td>2,727.4</td>
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<td>San Jose, CA</td>
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<td>2,302.6</td>
<td>883.5</td>
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<td>Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL</td>
<td>1,863.1</td>
<td>2,613.9</td>
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<td>San Antonio, TX</td>
<td>1,219.0</td>
<td>1,956.4</td>
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<td>Austin, TX</td>
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<td>1,371.1</td>
<td>714.9</td>
<td>108.9%</td>
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<td>Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood-Pompano Beach, FL</td>
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<td>Oakland, CA</td>
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<td>Chicago, IL</td>
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<td>Oklahoma City, OK</td>
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<td>1,588.5</td>
<td>578.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orlando, FL</td>
<td>852.1</td>
<td>1,426.2</td>
<td>574.1</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
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<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>1,797.0</td>
<td>2,364.1</td>
<td>567.1</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
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<td>Sacramento, CA</td>
<td>1,169.3</td>
<td>1,812.0</td>
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<td>54.6%</td>
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<td>Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI</td>
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<td>2,829.0</td>
<td>549.2</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ</td>
<td>945.1</td>
<td>1,473.5</td>
<td>528.4</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
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For more information, contact Martin K. Holbeck, Woods & Poole Economics, 1734 Columbia Road, Washington, D.C. 20009. Telephone (202) 312-7111.

August 1985
Appendix II

"The Park Californians Call Home"

Alternate Marketing Lines
Alternate Marketing Lines:

* The Park Californians Call Home
* The Park California Comes Home To
* Knott's Berry Farm:
  Where California Grows Its Memories
* California's Homegrown Park
* Where California Goes To Have Fun
* California Dreamin'
* Where California Lives Now
* The California Experience

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A Proposal for
The CALIFORNIA MARKETPLACE at
Knott's Berry Farm

HALCYON LTD.
Development Consultants

55 High Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
(203) 527-1896
Cable: HALCYON
13 April 1982

Mr. Thomas Sutton, Jr.
Flood Meyer Sutton & Associates
1408 Santa Monica Mall
3rd Floor
Santa Monica, CA 90401

RE: Knott's Berry Farm Master Plan Study

Dear Tom:

Enclosed is our report on our field observations and a suggested retail Master Plan Program for Knott's Berry Farm.

As you recognize, many of the concepts contained in this report may have to be modified to suit architectural and master plan considerations, including constraints on parking and access.

We would prefer that you think of it as a concept piece. It should guide your planning how many retail components could be accommodated to make a major specialty retailing and food service statement at Knott's Berry Farm.

Additionally, the concepts in this think piece should cause some strong reaction on the part of your client. It is just that reaction, and the dialogue for their commitment to the specialty retail component, that will give you even better direction for the Master Plan.

The report is the result of Randy Brown, Mahlon Arnett and Ted Amenta's comments, plus my contribution. We believe it is the start of a process. We stand ready to assist you in continuing our advisory role in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Buckley
President

MPB/tm

cc: Terry VanGorder, General Manager, Knott's Berry Farm
SITE OBSERVATIONS

During our visit to Knott's Berry Farm on 3/31/82, and in discussions with Terry Van Gorder, Darrell Anderson and Mrs. Knott, we have formed the following preliminary conclusions:

...Independence Hall is a very long walk from the perceived main focus of the existing specialty retail area. The underpass is both narrow and steep. Any master plan scheme, which counts on this path as the main pedestrian sequence, must allow for substantial smoothing of the grade and visual appearance of that pedestrian path, either through adding additional structures to disguise the sides, or widening to the point of some four or five times its present width.

...The park with its small scale train, carrousel and lagoon boat, is a very special place—with little relationship to the theme park. It appears to serve as a zone of refuge for those who know the area, and is frequented by older people and those with young children. We presume that the new proposed children's play area would accommodate these interests, permitting this property to be reconfigured in the Master Plan.

...Marion and Tom's retail shop is one sided, facing shop windows which are used as display, behind which are located other uses. In general shop displays are not done at the level of quality that a specialty center would require.

...Walking past the Chicken Dinner Restaurant into the courtyards to the Candy shop is a disorienting experience. Perhaps it is the contrast between the landscape maintenance which is so high in the theme park, and the worn, used feeling within the specialty retail areas.

...I was surprised to see the successful Bakery shop buried in the back of the retail complex. Clearly both the Bakery and the Candy operations deserve better frontage and should become high priority master plan relocations.

...The Steak House interior decor is unique. We believe that the square foot sales contained in the Harrison Price report are understated—due to the inclusion of the central commissary kitchen. It is possible that a move to a new facility, reusing some of the decor, would impact sales profoundly.

...We were extremely surprised to find that no real expression of the produce/fruits/vegetables origin of Knott's Berry Farm as in a real market.
.. With Mexican food as the largest single component of growth in the American food service industry, we observed that there is no Mexican sit-down restaurant, but that the theme park enjoys a very well-designed and beautifully executed Mexican fast food operation.

...There is no cross-referencing of merchandise in the park. Even department stores use small outpost displays to cross-merchandise other departments within. The specialty village, to be successful in the long run, must be cross-merchised within the theme park.

...We agree with Harrison Price's recommendations on cluster fast food service. We cannot comment on the Cable Car restaurant location proposal because we didn't see that operation. I would challenge the location—for such cluster food service should occur in the specialty center area.

...In general very little design attention has been given to the specialty restaurant and shop area. This is certainly due to the traditional growth-by-accretion and not, we are convinced, the result of an implicit policy. Nonetheless, there probably will be considerable latent resistance to the idea of change. Graphics, for example, are currently undistinguished, and small scale in the specialty area.

...We also agree with the Harrison Price recommendation on animating the theme park with displays and incidental spontaneous performances. We would also claim that active, creative displays in the specialty areas, such as craftsman at work and hand dipping of chocolates, make a lot of sense.

...In a state with such a large oriental population, we did not notice the presence of either a Japanese or Chinese Theme. Certainly there was not a direct merchandising category which would reflect California's historic draw from the Pacific Basin: This void should be filled.

...Considering the surrounding residential concentrations, a home decor shop would enjoy some appeal. Unfortunately, this use is covered poorly in the basket shop, which is simply a working disaster.

...The in-park food merchandising, while probably successful financially at the moment, could use some active demonstration and display. Real berry drinks from citrus fruits, cookies baked in the open, could draw through aroma and color. The funnel-cake operation, which is not necessarily an attractive process, generates no appreciable aroma. Imagine a cookie operation instead. The location of the bakery shop closer and within a new concentrated specialty retail complex similarly would generate its own level of aromatic appeal.
...It would be difficult to suggest change in the Chicken Dinner Restaurant. However it does upset us to see people waiting in lines with nothing to amuse their patient stand. At least we could show them some retail displays—or identify other areas to which they can journey to walk off the famous chicken dinner they are about to receive.

MASTER PLANNING OPTIONS

Basically we see two major options available for master planning with regard to the specialty retail component:

OPTION 1

The first would tie Independence Hall to the main theme park entry with new structures linking the two areas under Beach Boulevard. This would require building a form partially underground street, lined with either retail shops or heavy landscape program, with retail opportunities presenting themselves very early along the path to minimize the illusion of distance for pedestrians.

This first master planning option would have the benefit of drawing the entire parking audience through a retail spine before entering the theme park. Its disadvantage is the obvious expense of widening and developing a more proper underpass across Beach Blvd.

In Option 1 a hotel, owned by Knott's Berry Farm, would be a logical anchor for the new spine facing Independence Hall.

OPTION 2

Closing Grand Avenue to traffic, and locating a major new Specialty Retail Pavilion at approximately the location of the basket shop and personnel office, would create a pedestrian focus for retail, near the theme park entry.

This option would produce a pedestrian flow concentrated from back lots through the Pavilion to the main entry. It would represent the easiest and strongest anchor for the existing businesses— including the Chicken Dinner Restaurant, men's shop, toy shop and leather shop. We would hope that a clearly dedicated parking area for the new retail pavilion could be established in an adjacent area between the pavilion and Cresent Avenue.

In Option 2, a hotel could be located to the west of Grand Avenue between the new retail area and Beach Blvd.

ARCHITECTURAL IMAGE

New construction at Knott's Berry Farm need not slavishly copy traditional forms. Contrast with contemporary—even futuristic—elements within a stylized traditional form of surface, texture and
colors, will be immensely more appealing as a shopping environment. Baltimore's Harbor Place development has sloped roofs, with metal standing ribs, and hexagonal shapes which evoke a traditional style. Yet the merchandising within is totally contemporary and exciting, with diverse colors and uses.

We see new construction such as a Marketplace Pavilion, exhibiting, through profile, materials, and colors, a traditional feel. We do not see a replication of the Western false-front, tile roofed portico environment currently existing. In other words, the new specialty component ought to look like a new, permanent installation of the highest style and image, while blending as the newest member of the existing streetscape.

There is no doubt that a closed Grand Avenue, with a new specialty retail and food service pavilion at its terminus, can create a significant pedestrian environment. From new plantings to Tivoli lights in trees, opportunities for outdoor retailing through carts and open air gazebos—the place would feel alive and fun. Currently the sidewalks in front of both the men's shop and leather shop face the street. Replacing autos with activity must become the only viable trade-off.

In general, from planting and paving to articulation of surfaces, the theme park is better done than the specialty retail area. Portions of the theme park are as professionally done as one would expect from Knott's Berry Farm. Our challenge is to make the retail additions have the same thorough planning and design characteristics—while upgrading decor and circulation within the existing shops areas.

THEME CONCEPT FOR RETAIL/FOOD SERVICE

Any new specialty retail or food service component at Knott's Berry Farm will require a cohesive theme because:

...The Specialty Retail elements will require separate and distinct identities from the theme park.

...A specialty retail and food service theme will provide a collective focus for many different categories of uses.

...A readily identifiable theme carries marketing appeal, as future prospective retail and food service tenants can understand exactly where they fit.

...A properly merchandised theme concept can generate increased sales through synergistic balancing of demand from one component to another.
The California Market Place

Annot's Berry Farm
THE CALIFORNIA MARKETPLACE PAVILION

We propose that Knott's Berry Farm entertain the construction of a single pavilion, or collection of similar structures containing a range of goods and services which are unique to California. Both historic references and California's current cultural phenomena, from entertainment to food service, should be included.

Broad categories of fashion, food service, gifts, crafts, food retail and services could be seen as a collection of experiences under a unique theme umbrella relating to California's unique history of commerce.

California is a unique state, recognized internationally as a trend setter—a fast-paced, current, front-edged, progressive state which routinely anticipates prime American movements in art and life style.

California is also rich in tradition, from Spanish colonization and exploration, to the raw energy and growth of the Forty-Niners. From gold boom and bust to freeways, California has demonstrated extraordinary vigor.

California is also a state blessed with positive climate and natural landscape features. California is recognized as one of the most receptive cultural environments for new ideas, and conversely, a proving ground for changing opinions.

THEME LIMITATIONS

However, for the Knott's Berry Farm Specialty Retail Complex, we recognize there are limits to any concept—and to the dimension of specialty retailing components. We understand the theme park is of primary importance to the successful financial operation of Knott's Berry Farm. Further, parking constraints, access, and competition from enclosed shopping centers in the immediate area will combine to limit concept applications.

We also recognize that some of the charm of the current facilities within Knott's Berry Farm are the result of accretions of various structures over a period of time, and are identified quite heavily with the Knott family. We recognize that it will be impossible to artificially duplicate that small scale intimacy.

Hence, we recommend that the retail components of this project ought to match the history, philosophy, and broad direction of Knott's Berry Farm as a commercial and historic entity. We believe this is vital to create explicit support by the Knott family for the activities and the enterprises suggested in this report.

Therefore, we propose to focus on California as a total experience, both historic and contemporary. We intend to do this without an obvious tourist tone or design contrivance, as we intend to
continue to appeal the local residents, as well as the theme park visitors.

THE CALIFORNIA ECONOMY AS THEME

The growth and diversity of the California economy is legendary. The states of Texas and New York can perhaps hold a similar claim for economic strength and innovation. Most people know that if California were counted as a country, its economic presence would stand in the Top Ten on Gross National Product.

Therefore, we see a possibility of looking closely at key factors in the California economy, and searching for collateral retail or food service theme identities which can be representative of those factors. Some of those we have identified in the preliminary way are as follows:

...The Feeders. The California Agri business is a well-recognized national leader. California banks lead in agricultural lending. Further, there are products unique to California due to its climate and terrain. These include fruits, vegetables, and processed milk products, in addition to the abundance of seafood from the Pacific Ocean.

Clearly a link to the original Knott's Berry Farming Enterprise is possible under this component. Food retailing within the project can therefore identify quite strongly. We can see a fruit and produce operation, show-casing by mood and character, surrounded by a cluster of small food boutiques, many of which are currently represented within the project area, but would hopefully be remerchandized for higher sales. These would include Candy, Bakery and Knott's Berry Farm products. From juices to gourmet cheeses, and California wines and candies, the connection is immediate and obvious.

Food service components can be linked to the California experience in a variety of ways. Further broadening of food service experiences can be handled by counter-matching elements of the Pacific basin culture such as Japanese and Chinese. Clearly, the large Mexican/Spanish-speaking population can be reflected in numerous food service and food retail categories.

...The Funders. The California financial community is growing steadily. Once the traditional financial headquarters for the western United States, the California financial community is increasing its national presence and is the largest single force in the Pacific trading.

Currently, neither bank nor financial service institution exist, to our knowledge, within Knott's Berry Farm. Clearly, there should be room for some expression. A small brokerage office with large stockquote display could be possible. Whether bank or broker, we would require that the selected tenant design their unit with
information sources on world financial matters via tele-electronics, or present the historic evolution of financial services in the state of California.

...The Generators. California is blessed with enormous wealth in thermal energy reserves and natural resources. As generators of both energy and materials, California has an impressive diversity.

While there are few commercial categories which could link with this component of the California economy, demonstrations of solar energy of multi-blade wind generators crowning the Pavilion would be totally appropriate. The wind generator, with spiral vertical blades, for example, could power some interactive information devices. Solar energy could, for example, drive a solar clock—a contemporary version of the traditional Town Square time piece.

...The Manufacturers. High technology, both in electronics and aerospace, are hallmarks of the California economy. Noted for strong contributions to the electronics market, California enjoys a reputation for innovation and production.

Commercial components could include hand-held electronics, for both data array and pleasure, and all sorts of unique science kits for children. Compared to the current children's shop, this store would be a sensation and quite unique. Possible promotional considerations for an Atari Industries, or others in California, should be explored. For example, should Atari showcase some prototype products, or test market some new devices, the science store-toy shop would have extraordinary appeal. Even a Japanese toy shop, with the requisite godzillas and mechanical superheros, would have considerable appeal compared to the existing offering.

...The Entertainers. California leads the world in planning, production, and distribution of entertainment media. From television to cinema and recording enterprises, California's impact on domestic and international entertainment is profound.

A central element for this pavilion or series of shops, should be an automated audio-visual/cinema extravaganza. We endorse the Harrison Price suggestion for such a facility, but would request that it be considered within the specialty retail area, as it offers opportunities to attract families.

We see a show such as the successful, "Where's Boston?", currently located adjacent to the Quincy Market specialty center in Boston.

"CINECHRON: A California Time Experience", a sixteen screen, split-image slide show, inaugurates an audio-visual trip through time. Slide and sound images quickly refocus the audience to California's unique history. From the California Indians to Spanish Colonial settlers, the mood changes in tempo and intensity as gold fever sweeps the west.
As quick-cut and lap-dissolved multiple images transport the viewer to current times, the CineChron shifts to a motion picture format. A 70 mm custom created ShowScan presentation takes the audience on a quick and current exploration of the California economy and unique lifestyle. From aerospace to oceanography, from agriculture to finance, all attributes of the diverse California economy are explored with stunning visual images.

The CineChron is both science/history/lecture and amusement. Its appeal must be targeted to both adults and children. It is specifically designed to convey quantitative and qualitative messages about California, and implicitly the American free enterprise system. It carries strong images of agriculture and production. The theme of the CineChron closely parallels that of the California Marketplace Pavilion in which it is located.

In Halcyon's conversations on a similar program for the New York Convention Center with Douglas Trumbull of Santa Monica, award winning special effects creator for such films as 2001 and Star Trek, preliminary cost estimates were developed. We are convinced that Mr. Trumbull's proprietary technology would be dramatically above what is currently offered by OmniMax to theme park operators.

We would suggest that this attraction be placed on a self-amortizing basis, with sales of incidental goods and food service as principal beneficiaries of its presence.

We believe a twenty minute audio-visual experience, which would have an admission fee and be conducted in theatre format, could prove a highly effective merchandising device for both Knott's Berry Farm and the specialty center.

There are clearly great opportunities for Knott's Berry Farm to subtly identify itself and its products with this screen presentation. We would assume that the theme would simply be "The California Experience," hence effectively cross-merchandising every single retail specialty shop in the complex through its format, without specifically referring to any single unit.

...The Importers/Exporters. California is a prime source for international trade. Japan is California's most important trading partner, receiving about thirty percent of the state's exports. The two largest California airports, LAX and SFO, are internationally recognized.

An international Pacific Trading Bazaar, consisting of oriental imports, Japanese specialties and precision goods from Hong Kong, is an obvious connection. Foods of the Pacific Basin, both retail and in cluster form, are another possible inclusion.
The Participators.

In homage to its fabled lifestyle, both residents and visitors to California express themselves in a trendy, pace-setting manner, not to be found in many parts of this country, indeed the world. California definitely has a projected image of the casual but quick-paced life experience.

Clearly, sportswear and leisure goods, including sporting equipment, fit perfectly within this component. From active sports equipment to more casual life-style choices, a collection of shops could be created to focus on California fashion concepts.

ACTIVITIES

Should a California MarketPlace Pavilion be constructed, including the audio-visual extravaganza and cluster food service, activities in a central Atrium outside in open-air gazebos can support the theme. From entertainment presentations to exhibitions focused on international trade, the specialty retail center must offer its own set of involving and amusing activities.

The point of distinction is that these activities should be of a higher profile and quality than the character animations suggested within the theme park. This means fashion shows, performances, classical music ensembles, children's mimes, and craft demonstrations should predominate.

The interior activities within the retail complex can link to overall theme park promotions, such as a Cinco De Mayo Festival and other newly-formed institutionalized festivals, such as recommended by Harrison Price.

PROGRAM FOR THE MARKETPLACE AT KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

The following table proposes a Maximum Program for specialty retail and food service, including additions and relocations, thought carefully at the categories. You will see that we have grouped uses into cohesive clusters. This kind of merchandising focus is missing in the existing layout, and is the kind of adjacency planning which the major shopping malls and new specialty centers have shown to be successful.

By reusing some of the older retail areas, such as the Steak House and Candy Shop, for expansion of the theme park, and relocating those potentially productive units to a new retail area, the logic behind the groupings will have a chance to demonstrate performance.

Part of the merchandise groupings also reflects some under-sized voids, such as the home decor component, and the Services categories, including financial, travel and bookstore uses.

Obviously, the list could be expanded. However, we are presenting what we would recommend as a Maximum Master Planning program—in advance of determinations which will evolve from further architectural analysis.
THE CALIFORNIA MARKETPLACE
AT KNOTT'S BERRY FARM
*existing units relocated and
re-designed for efficient operation

Food Service (not including 12,000 square feet CDR)

...The California Kitchens
(eight cluster units @ 500 square feet;
common seating and display, 8,000) 12,000
*...Steak House
(family emphasis with Western/American Indian theme) 8,500
*...Theme Restaurant
(outside lease; should include night-time enter-
tainment) 8,500

Food Retail (including current bakery, candy and
Berry Market uses)

...The Farm Market (fruits/vegies, individual fresh
Califonia juices, etc.) 1,000
*...Bakery (includes prep, assumes new facilities
produce more efficient operation) 2,500
*...Candy, more efficient operation 2,000
*...California Wines (no hard liquor, should sell
selection of cheese specialties) 2,500
*...Berry Market & Cheese (jams and jellies) 2,500
...Charcuterie California(specialty meats,
pates and marinated vegetables) 2,000
12,000

Gifts and Crafts
(not including Virginia's @ 12,000)

...California Crafts Showcase (assume ten
craftsmen @ 200 and juried gallery display @
1,000 and display and circulation @ 500) 3,500
...Knott's Berry Farm Souvenir & Card Shop 2,500
...The Pacific Bazaar (several boutique components
with gifts from Japan, Philippines, Malaysia, China) 2,000
...Leather Accessories 1,000
...Mexican Straw Market 1,000
...Electrix (toy shop with emphasis on electric
games, strategy games, puzzles, science experiments) 1,000
...Ursa Major (stuffed toys, lions & tigers & bears,
Knott's Berry 49ers Mule etc.) 1,000
12,000 s.f.

Home Decor

...Contempo Home Furnishings (promotional furniture with
contemporary designers) 4,500
Home Decor, Continued

... Candles/Tabletop Shop 1,000
... Linens & Fabrics (including active weaving demonstration) 1,500
... The Antique Fair (5-6 vendors under one master lease) 2,500
... Kitchenware/Cookware (possible cooking demonstrations) 2,000
11,500 s.f.

Fashion
(not including Bob's @ 6,682 or Westernwear @ 2,700)

... New Women's Shop (boutique) 1,500
... Costume/Estate Jewelry (including handcrafted demonstration) 1,000
... Fragrances 800
... Sportswear (re-merchandised Marion & Tom's) 4,500
... Leather & Luggage 9,500
9,300 s.f.

Services

... Hair Salon 1,500
... Camera/Photo Shop 1,500
... Bank/Financial Services 1,000
... Travel Agency 1,500
... Bookstore (including heavy children's, travel and California history) 2,500
... News & Tobacco 800
8,800 s.f.

Summary of Maximum Master Plan Program

Food Service 19,000
Food Retail 12,500
Gifts and Crafts 12,000
Home Decor 11,500
Fashion 9,300
Services 8,800
73,100

(Note: includes some uses 3.
* already existing; hence is not a new area total compared to existing.
Net new actual area is approximately 40,000 square feet. Existing Bakery, Candy, Basket Shop, Steak House etc, would either be removed or re-merchandised depending on architectural master plan issues.)
CONCLUSION

The concepts contained in this analysis are by very nature, preliminary. They depend greatly on the ability of the physical Master Plan to accommodate, in reasonable layouts, the synergistic effect of cohesive groupings.

Circulation and parking constraints are, of course, the first hurdle in any master plan analysis. Given the complexities of the Knott's Berry Farm site, these constraints will strongly affect locational choices for retail and food service.

Hence, the recommendations are given in the purest sense. That is a Marketplace Pavilion with a series of uses, some new and some relocated, which together with a major audio-visual attraction, will constitute a new level of energy for specialty retail shops at Knott's Berry Farm. While the idea of a single Pavilion may not be achievable, due to Master Planning limitations, some of the clusters could well fit within a U-shaped or linked structure configuration.

We stand ready to assist you in the Master Planning exercise in any way we can. We can see a particular need to look at the new food service concepts, and to advise on design which reflects the new realities of specialty retail within the Knott's Berry Farm philosophy.