
4 Environmental Analysis

4.1 Aesthetics

This section describes the existing visual conditions, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential impacts related to aesthetics, and establishes mitigation measures related to implementation of the Pacifica Project (project).

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

Regional Setting

The project site is in northern San Diego County (County), within the City of Oceanside (City). Figure 3-1, Project Location, in Draft EIR Chapter 3, Project Description, illustrates the location of the project site relative to San Diego region and local surroundings. The City encompasses approximately 42 square miles and is bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton (Camp Pendleton) to the north, the City of Vista and County to the east, and the City of Carlsbad to the south. The City has approximately 4 miles of shoreline, including a public marina, a 2,000-foot-long pier, and public beaches (City of Oceanside 2023a). Most of the city is developed, with eastern Oceanside characterized by single-family homes on streets and cul-de-sacs, intermixed with canyon and hillside open spaces and multifamily housing developments. Park, commercial, and institutional (schools and churches) uses occur within and around the residential uses and within the City's eastern portion. Industrial uses are generally confined to isolated areas along the San Luis Rey River floodway or clustered in the Ocean Ranch area that is located to the south of State Route (SR) 78 and to the north of Oceanside Boulevard.

Project Setting

The approximately 14.55-acre project site encompasses the former Pacifica Elementary School site. The buildings were ultimately demolished in 2004 after the buildings were found to be unsafe to withstand an earthquake, and modular structures were used until the school closed in 2007. The school district continued using the site in the mid-2010s. During this time, trailers were placed at the site, and it was used as a "swing school" to hold classes while permanent schools were under modernization. Figure 3-3, Existing Project Site Aerial, in Chapter 3 shows an aerial perspective of the project site, while Figure 4.1-1, Existing Conditions: Photo Key Map, presents the location of photographs taken during a site visit and referred to in the discussion below to support the characterization of existing site conditions and the quality of off-site views onto the project site. Existing conditions photographs are included as Figure 4.1-1a, Existing Conditions: Project Site, and Figure 4.1-1b, Existing Conditions: Off-Site Views to Project Site. Although no walled structures remain, there are remnant asphalt pads covering the northeast and central portions of the project site that mark the location of the former school, parking lot, and playground areas. See Photos A through D on Figure 4.1-1a. Other remnant features include curbs, chain-link fencing, an overgrown sandbox featuring small concrete blocks that have been discarded from elsewhere on site, a rectangular shade structure (the structure is visible on Figure 4.1-1a [see Photos A through D]), and a large recreational field, which is mowed approximately every 2.5 months for fire abatement. Elevations on site range from approximately 80 feet above mean sea level (amsl) to 120 feet amsl; however, the topography in areas supporting the former school structures and field are relatively flat. Easements for storm drain and sewer facilities cut through the site from west to east and tie into an existing sewer lift station located within the property along the Macario Drive frontage. There are scattered, ornamental, mature trees around the asphalt pads and field from the northeast to southwest (see

Photos C and D on Figure 4.1-1a and Photos E and F on Figure 4.1-1b). The edges of the project site are bounded by approximately 20-foot to 30-foot slopes that climb gradually to existing single-family homes on the north, south, east, and northwest perimeters. The site slopes downward slightly in the southwest towards an adjacent open space area. Vegetation on the field and slopes is predominantly composed of non-native grasses, small shrubs, ice plant (on slopes), and other ruderal groundcover.

There is currently no public access to the project site as evidenced by the presence of chain-link fencing around the site perimeter and a gate at the prior school parking lot driveway located off Macario Drive. The area surrounding the project site is mostly developed. Surrounding land uses in the vicinity of the project site include one- and two-story single-family residences to the north, northwest, south, and southeast, as well as Libby Lake Park to the southeast and Libby Elementary School to the south. There is a narrow corridor of undeveloped open space between the project site and Libby Lake Park that includes mature trees, a small pond, and ornamental and native vegetation. The northeast corner of the project site is adjacent to Roja Drive, a single-family home, and the corner of Macario Drive and Monica Circle. The western terminus of Malaga Drive also abuts the project site to the east and terminates at chain-link fencing, which surrounds the site. The western terminus of Malaga Drive offers relatively clear views onto most of the project site from an elevated perspective; see Project Site Visibility, below.

Public Views, Scenic Vistas, and Scenic Resources

Impacts on views or vistas from private land uses are typically not considered significant under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (*Mira Mar Mobile Community v. City of Oceanside* [2004] 119 Cal.App.4th 477, 493–494). As stated by the court in *Banker’s Hill, Hillcrest, Park West Community Preservation Group v. City of San Diego* (2006) 139 Cal.App.4th 249, “obstruction of a few private views in a project’s immediate vicinity is not generally regarded as a significant environmental impact,” because under CEQA, “the question is whether a project will affect the environment of persons in general, not whether a project will affect particular persons” (*Banker’s Hill v. City of San Diego*, supra, 139 Cal.App.4th at 279). Therefore, the existing conditions discussion provided below for local views and scenic vistas focuses on public vantage points or views available from publicly accessible areas (e.g., public roadways, sidewalks, parks, trails, school, and civic or historic facilities) and not from private development or other private land uses (e.g., residences, businesses, or private yards/open space areas). In addition, views are not considered from vantage points in public open space areas that are not clearly or readily accessible (e.g., steep slopes or natural areas without clear, dedicated public trail access).

Project Site Visibility

The western terminus of Malaga Drive (approximately 123 feet amsl) provides the clearest and broadest view of the project site from any publicly accessible vantage point in the local vicinity. From the Malaga Drive terminus facing west-northwest (illustrated in Figure 4.1-1), views in the foreground include the project’s site’s chain-link fencing, the vegetated southern slope, and several mature, ornamental trees (see Photo H on Figure 4.1-1b). Views also include the project site’s recreational field, asphalt pads, remnant shade structure, and on-site trees. Views in the background include the project site’s steep, northwestern slope, as well as the structures and yards of adjacent single-family residential development to the south, west, and north. The northeastern areas of the project site can be observed from adjacent vantage points in the public rights-of-way on Roja Drive (see Photo G on Figure 4.1-1b) and Macario Drive/Monica Circle, roughly 200 feet south and west (respectively) of the Roja Drive/Macario Drive intersection. As illustrated in the view facing south on Monica Circle in Figure 4.1-1b (see Photo E), views from the Macario Drive/Monica Circle roadway to the interior of the project site are partially obstructed by mature pine trees located in the northeastern corner of the project site. In addition, views to the project site from northbound motorists on Macario Drive/Monica Circle are obstructed by the existing single-family residence and fencing at the corner of

the Macario Drive/Roja Drive intersection. As motorists approach the site from the north on Monica Circle, residences and intervening elevated terrain block the project site from view (views become available as southbound motorists travel adjacent to the northeastern corner of the project site).

As stated above, the project site is adjacent to an open space area to the southwest. According to the San Diego Geographic Information Source (SanGIS)/San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) data warehouse,¹ the open space area is not part of Libby Lake Park (SANDAG 2023). Furthermore, there are no public trails identified in the open space area in the City's General Plan Recreational Trail Element, County Community Trails Master Plan, or public database of trails maintained by the AllTrails application (i.e., alltrails.com) (City of Oceanside 2002, 2023b; County of San Diego 2005; AllTrails 2023). Based on public mapping imagery (i.e., Google Earth), there is no signage or clearly marked trail extension or link leading from the Libby Lake Park's public loop trail. For these reasons, views or potential vantage points from within the adjacent open space area are not further discussed or analyzed herein.

The Libby Lake Park loop trail varies in elevation from approximately 55 feet to 60 feet amsl, while the elevation of the southwestern project site boundary ranges from approximately 90 feet to 100 feet amsl. The areas of the park at higher elevations are either limited to steep slopes, which are not readily accessible, or are bounded by adjacent developments, which block views of the project site. For example, although the park's public ingress/egress from Casa Drive rises to approximately 77 feet amsl, views to the northwest are blocked or obstructed by adjacent buildings and structures associated with Libby Elementary School. Therefore, due to intervening development, vegetation (e.g., trees), and/or topography, the project site is not visible from the Libby Lake Park or the public loop trail under existing conditions. Other potential views of the project site from surrounding streets and sidewalks (e.g., from North Redondo Drive to the south, Marblehead Bay Drive to the east, and Claire Drive to the north) are blocked or obstructed by existing residential development (i.e., buildings, fences, trees, and other landscaping).

Scenic Vistas and Resources

A scenic vista is typically defined as a long-range and/or panoramic view from an identified view/vista point, public road, public trail, public recreational area, or scenic highway.² Views and vista points are particularly common in areas with contrasting elevations/topography (e.g., views of mountains and ridgelines from a valley floor, the ocean from a hillside area, or a distant city skyline from an elevated bridge or roadway). As discussed above, potential scenic views and vistas from private properties are not under consideration in this analysis. The City's General Plan does not explicitly designate or discuss any scenic outlooks or vista points (City of Oceanside 2002). However, the City's General Plan Environmental Resource Management Element identifies scenic open space (i.e., "visual open space") as a valuable visual element that should be preserved (City of Oceanside 2002). The Environmental Resource Management Element also inventories other open space areas, such as churches, parks, schools with their adjacent playgrounds and fields, golf courses, cemeteries, and churches, that contribute to "the rural residential quality that exists in the outlying areas" of the City (City of Oceanside 2002). Libby Lake Park and the former Pacifica Elementary School (discussed above) are both identified under this open space inventory and are included due to their existing dedication or use restrictions that ensure their preservation as open space (City of Oceanside 2002). It should be noted that when the General Plan Environmental Resources Management Element was prepared in 2002, the site was operating as Pacifica Elementary School, which was the reason for it being identified as part of the open space inventory; however, the school has since been closed and demolished. The site

¹ The SanGIS/SANDAG "Parks" dataset represents a consolidation of parks datasets from the County of San Diego, incorporated cities (e.g., the City of Oceanside), San Diego Port District, SanGIS, and State Parks (SANDAG 2023).

² Scenic highways are discussed in further detail below under "Scenic Routes."

is currently fenced off, highly disturbed, and does not contribute meaningful recreation, open space, or visual resources to the community., nor are there any conservation easements over the site. In addition, the site has become an attractive nuisance for vandalism and dumping. Visual open space resources identified in the City's General Plan include the Pacific Ocean, Buena Vista Lagoon, Camp Pendleton, San Luis Rey River, and Guajome Regional Park (City of Oceanside 2002). Relative to the project site, the Pacific Ocean is approximately 6 miles west, Buena Vista Lagoon is approximately 5 miles southwest, Camp Pendleton is approximately 0.8 miles northwest, San Luis Rey River is approximately 0.4 miles southeast, and Guajome Regional Park is approximately 1.4 miles southeast of the project site. In addition, the City's General Plan recognizes lakes and reservoirs as "aesthetically pleasing landscape features" (City of Oceanside 2002). Due to intervening distance, terrain, vegetation, and surrounding development, the project site is not currently visible from any of the City's visual open space areas, lakes, or reservoirs.

Scenic Routes

The project site is not located adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, a designated state scenic highway. The nearest officially designated state scenic highway, SR-52 as it travels adjacent to Mission Trails Regional Park (from approximately Santo Road in San Diego to Mast Boulevard in Santee), is located approximately 30 miles southeast of the project site (Caltrans 2023). SR-76, approximately 1 mile southeast of the project site, and Interstate 5, approximately 5 miles southwest of the project site, are the nearest eligible state scenic highways (Caltrans 2023). Due to intervening distance, development, and vegetation, the project site is not visible from SR-76, Interstate 5, or any other state scenic highway in the County.

Light and Glare

As the project site is currently vacant, it does not contain any existing sources of artificial lighting, with the exception of three pole-mounted lights located in a landscaped area fronting Macario Drive (approximately 20 feet northeast of the gated entry point/fence line on the northeast corner of the project site). Lighting in the immediate area consists of a limited number of streetlights (including one streetlight adjacent to the northeast corner of the project site), occasional and intermittent lights from nearby passing vehicles, residential outdoor (e.g., landscape) lighting, and indoor light from nearby residences. There is no artificial lighting present in the open-space area adjacent to the southwest of the project site.

4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

State

California Scenic Highway Program

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the State Legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from change that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. A highway may be designated "scenic" depending on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view. When a city or county nominates an eligible scenic highway for official designation, it must identify and define the scenic corridor of the highway. The agency must also adopt ordinances to preserve the scenic quality of the corridor or document such regulations that already exist in various portions of local codes. These ordinances make up the scenic protection program (Caltrans 2023). The state laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. The California Scenic Highway System includes a list

of highways that are officially designated as scenic highways or eligible for designation as scenic highways. As discussed above in Section 4.1.1, Existing Conditions, the project site is not visible from any eligible or designated state scenic highway (Caltrans 2023)

California Code of Regulations – Title 24: California Building Standards Code

Title 24, California Building Standards Code, consists of regulations to control building standards throughout the state. The following components of Title 24 include standards related to lighting:

Part 1: California Building Code and Part 3: California Electrical Code

The California Building Code (Title 24, Part 1) and the California Electrical Code (Title 24, Part 3) stipulate minimum light intensities for pedestrian pathways, circulation ways, parking lots, and paths of egress.

Part 6: California Energy Code

The California Energy Code (Title 24, Part 6) stipulates allowances for lighting power and provides lighting control requirements for various lighting systems, with the aim of reducing energy consumption through efficient and effective use of lighting equipment. California Energy Code Section 130.2 sets forth requirements for outdoor lighting controls and luminaire cutoff requirements. All outdoor luminaires rated above 150 watts shall comply with the backlight, up light, and glare ratings in accordance with IES TM-15-11, Addendum A, and shall be provided with a minimum of 40% dimming capability activated to full by motion sensor or other automatic control. This requirement does not apply to streetlights for the public right-of-way, signs, or building façade lighting.

California Energy Code Section 140.7 establishes outdoor lighting power density allowances in terms of watts per area for lighting sources other than signage. The lighting allowances are provided by the Lighting Zone, as defined in California Energy Code Section 10-114. Under Section 10-114, all urban areas within California are designated as Lighting Zone 3. Additional allowances are provided for Building Entrances or Exits, Outdoor Sales Frontage, Hardscape Ornamental Lighting, Building Façade Lighting, Canopies, Outdoor Dining, and Special Security Lighting for Retail Parking and Pedestrian Hardscape.

California Energy Code Section 130.3 stipulates sign lighting controls with any outdoor sign that is on during both day and nighttime hours must include a minimum 65% dimming at night. Section 140.8 of the California Energy Code sets forth lighting power density restrictions for signs.

California Public Resources Code – Section 21071, Urbanized Area; Definitions

According to CEQA Statue (California Public Resources Code, Section 21071[a]), “urbanized area” means an incorporated city that meets either of the following criteria:

1. Has a population of at least 100,000 persons
2. Has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons

Local

City of Oceanside General Plan

The City's General Plan does not include any specific elements related to aesthetics and visual resources. However, the City's General Plan Environmental Resources Management Element addresses visual resources by assessing the suitability of land for home site development based on natural criteria, including slope, drainage, erosion hazard, shrink-swell behavior, and rockiness. In addition, the Environmental Resources Management Element identifies existing "visual open space" and states that open space lands should be preserved to "maintain the rural residential quality that exists in the outlying areas" of the City (City of Oceanside 2002). Visual open space includes local resources such as the Pacific Ocean and Camp Pendleton (City of Oceanside 2002). The project site is not identified as within or adjacent to a visual open space. Visual open space resources identified in the Environmental Resources Management Element are outlined below:

- Pacific Ocean
- Camp Pendleton
- San Luis Rey River
- Mission San Luis Rey
- Rosicrucian Fellowship
- Cemetery
- Utility Easement
- Buena Vista Lagoon
- Hosp Grove
- Prince of Peace Abbey

Additionally, the City's General Plan Land Use Element includes policies related to land use compatibility, neighborhood character, site design, and natural resource management (City of Oceanside 2002). The Land Use Element addresses the relationship between development, community enhancement, and natural resource management. The project's conformance with the City's General Plan objectives and policies is addressed in Section 4.10, Land Use and Planning, of this Draft EIR. Applicable General Plan goals and policies related to the scenic quality are listed below.

Community Values Objective 1.1. To ensure the enhancement of long-term community and neighborhood values through effective land use planning.

Policy 1.1A. Land uses shall be attractively planned and benefit the community.

Policy 1.1B. Land uses shall not significantly distract from nor negatively impact surrounding conforming land uses.

Land Use Compatibility Objective 1.12. To minimize conflicts with adjacent or related land use.

Policy 1.12A. Adequate setbacks, buffering, and/or innovative site design shall be required for land uses that are contiguous to and incompatible with existing land uses.

Policy 1.12B. The use of land shall not create negative visual impacts to surrounding land uses.

Policy 1.12C. The use of land shall not subject people to potential sources of objectionable noise, light, odors, and other emissions nor to exposure of toxic, radioactive, or other dangerous materials.

Site Design Objective 1.2. To provide high-quality site design, all proposed land development projects shall take advantage of natural or manmade environments to maximize energy conservation, natural air circulation, public safety, visual aesthetics, private and common open spaces, privacy, and land use compatibility.

Policy 1.2A. The placement of all proposed structural components, landscaping, access ways, etc. shall be oriented on the site in such a manner to maximize:

1. Interior building absorption and retention of solar energy during appropriate seasons and times of day, and the access to sunlight for potential solar energy collection; and
2. The even circulation of natural breezes between and through all buildings; and
3. The quality of view and vistas from the site to the surrounding environment; and
4. The quality of views of the site from surrounding land uses; and
5. The public safety by eliminating designs that may harbor or hide detrimental activities.

Policy 1.2B. A combination of deep, landscaped setback areas, berms, and decorative sound attenuation walls shall be required where developments abut major or intense transportation corridors.

Policy 1.2C. New development or land uses shall provide coordinated site design wherever possible with existing or proposed adjacent land uses to provide complimentary site design, unified circulation access, and joint use of ancillary facilities.

Policy 1.2G. All developments shall design parking areas to maximize efficiency, safety, convenience, and open space.

Common Open Space Objective 1.21. To provide and maintain common open areas for a wide range of uses.

Policy 1.21A. Common open space must be accessible and usable by potential users of the common open space.

Policy 1.21B. Common open spaces within a project site shall be contiguous, unless it is found that segregation of the area and type of open spaces uses better serve the purposes of the General Plan and the project site.

Policy 1.21C. Where feasible, common open space shall be integrated with adjacent common or public open spaces, trails, or bicycle transit systems to promote an open space or trails network throughout the City.

Landscaping Objective 1.22. The enhancement of community and neighborhood identity through landscaping requirements that frame and soften the built environment consistent with water and energy conservation.

Policy 1.22A. Existing mature trees shall be retained wherever possible.

Policy 1.22B. Mature trees removed for development shall be mitigated by replacement with an appropriate type, size, and number of trees.

Policy 1.22F. A buffer of landscaping shall be required between the built environment and lands left in a natural or open state. The landscape buffer shall be of sufficient size and shall use plant materials that will retard the spread of wild fire.

Architecture Objective 1.23. The architectural quality of all proposed projects shall enhance neighborhood and community values and City image.

Policy 1.23A. Architectural form, treatments, and materials shall serve to significantly improve on the visual image of the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy 1.23B. Structures shall work in harmony with landscaping and adjacent urban and/or topographic form to create an attractive line, dimension, scale, and/or pattern.

Policy 1.23C. Elevations, floor plans, perspectives, lines-of-sight, material boards, and other such displays and exhibits shall be provided as necessary to ensure compliance with General Plan policies.

Topographic Resources Objective 1.24. To ensure that development preserves and enhances the unique beauty and character of the City's natural topographic features and does not contribute to slope instability, flooding, or erosion hazards to life and property.

Policy 1.24A. Lands designated for industrial and commercial development may require significant alteration of the terrain to ensure their viability. Therefore, it is recognized that the ability of such projects to fulfill the policies contained below will be limited.

Policy 1.24F. Excessive cut and fill grading to create standard prepared pads shall be prohibited.

Policy 1.24G. Where grading is required, flat planes, and sharp angles of intersection with the natural terrain shall be avoided.

Policy 1.24H. Slopes shall be rounded and contoured to blend with the existing topography, unless on an individual site this would diminish open space or significant natural features of the site.

Policy 1.24I. The structural quality of the soil and geologic conditions shall be incorporated into the site design and determine the method and type of construction. Slope stability shall be ensured during and after construction.

Policy 1.24N. Roadways shall be designed and located to avoid excessive cut and fill, surface disturbance and to respect the existing topography.

Pedestrian System Objective 8.2. Continue to require pedestrian oriented trails and amenities in parks, new developments, and commercial centers. Encourage the inclusion of greenbelts and common open space for pedestrian use in residential development. Prioritize sidewalk construction in areas where sidewalks are missing as part of the City's Capital Improvement Budget.

Pedestrian System Objective 8.3. Continue to construct sidewalks on all streets as improvements occur. Sidewalks should be adequately maintained and kept clear of obstructions. Landscaped walking corridors should be encouraged in new development through use of meandering sidewalks, linear larks, greenbelts, and similar elements.

Vegetation and Wildlife Habitats Objective 1. Conserve and enhance vegetation and wildlife habitats, especially areas of rare, endangered, or threatened species.

City of Oceanside Municipal Code – Chapter 39 Light Pollution Regulations

Chapter 39 of the City of Oceanside Municipal Code restricts the permitted use of certain light fixtures that emit undesirable light rays into the night sky. This section of the municipal code regulates the usage of lighting intended for general illumination (Class II lighting) and the usage of decorative lighting, including building façade and landscape lighting (Class III lighting). For general illumination of parking lots, roadways, and security, low-pressure sodium lights are permitted as are other lights of 4050 lumens or less (similar lamp types are permitted for Class III [decorative] lighting). For all use types, permitted lighting shall be fully shielded where feasible and partially shielded in all other cases, and shall be focused to minimize light that would affect the night sky. Lastly, as stated in Section 39.8(c), all Class II lighting may remain illuminated all night, and pursuant to Section 39.8(d), all Class III lighting shall be off between 11:00 p.m. and sunrise.

City of Oceanside Zoning Ordinance

Article 17, PD Planned Development District (Inland)

Development of the project requires amending the City Zoning Ordinance. Currently, the entire property has a zoning designation of Public/Semipublic (PS), which does not allow for housing. A Zone Amendment is proposed that will designate the entire property as Planned Development (PD) with the Pacifica Planned Development Plan (PDP) serving as the regulating document. The requirements for a Planned Development are established in Article 17 of the Zoning Ordinance, with several sections governing the development of projects in this zone.

Section 1702, Land Use Regulations, states that no use, other than the existing use at the time of establishment of a PD District, shall be permitted except in accordance with a valid PDP.

Section 1703, Development Regulations, specifies the following regulations apply to development of a project within a PD District:

- **Minimum Area:** The minimum net area of a PD District shall be 4 acres.
- **Residential Unit Density:** The residential density allowed by the PD District shall not exceed the maximum density permitted by the General Plan.
- **Performance Standards:** The performance standards prescribed by Zoning Ordinance Section 3024 are applicable to development projects in the PD District zone. Section 3024 defines performance standards regarding noise, vibration, dust, odors, glare, and combustible, explosive, radioactive, and hazardous materials that apply to all use classifications in all zoning districts.

Section 1706(A) establishes the required findings that City Planning Commission is required to consider in order to make a recommendation for approval of a PDP.

1. The PDP or Specific Plan and the Development Plan are consistent with the adopted Land Use Element of the General Plan and other applicable policies and are compatible with surrounding development.
2. The PDP or Specific Plan and the Development Plan will enhance the potential for superior urban design in comparison with the development under the base district regulations that would apply if they were not approved.
3. Deviations from the base district regulations that otherwise would apply are justified by compensating benefits of the PDP or Specific Plan and the Development Plan.

4. The PDP or Specific Plan and the Development Plan include adequate provisions for utilities, services, and emergency vehicle access; and public service demands will not exceed the capacity of the existing and planned systems.

Pacifica Planned Development Plan (Proposed)

A detailed description of the proposed project components is provided in Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR. As discussed therein, the project consists of development of 164 three-story attached townhomes. The proposed project site plan is illustrated in Figure 3-4, Site Plan, in Chapter 3. As shown in Figure 3-4, of the 14.55-acre site, 10.23 acres would be developed of the 12.82 net acres and would have a density of 12.8 dwelling units per acre. The approximately 4 acres that would not be developed consists of 20-foot to 30-foot-tall slopes along the southeastern and western portions of the project site. Townhomes would range in size from approximately 1,200 square feet to 1,800 square feet with two, three, or four bedrooms and an attached two-car garage. Townhomes would exhibit a range of four different building types and two complementary architectural styles, but all buildings would be approximately 38 feet in height, and none would exceed 40 feet in height, as per the proposed PDP (discussed in further detail in Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR). Conceptual elevations of the townhomes showing several of the proposed building types and architectural styles are illustrated in Figure 4.1-2, Conceptual Architecture and Building Materials. A total of approximately 59,460 square feet of common open space and 23,950 square feet of private open space are proposed. Additionally, approximately 53% of the project site would be landscaped. Proposed landscaping is designed to take advantage of the existing slopes, with a plant palette slanted towards slope-stabilizing and drought-tolerant vegetation, including foothill sedge (*Carex tumulicola*), Pigeon Point coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis* 'Pigeon Point'), and 24-inch box trees (e.g., Bloodgood London planetree [*Platanus x acerifolia* 'Bloodgood'] and native coast live oak [*Quercus agrifolia*]). The entrance at the corner of Monica Circle and Macario Drive would include the addition of trees and vegetation, including a small, publicly accessible pocket park.

Elevations, Building Heights, and Setbacks. Post grading, the elevations of the proposed townhomes at floor level would be approximately 100 feet to 105 feet amsl. With a proposed height of approximately 38 feet (and maximum allowable height of 40 feet, per the proposed PDP), this would result in proposed structures reaching approximately 140 feet to 145 feet amsl at the pinnacle rooflines. The relative height of the rooflines would be slightly below most of the rooflines of adjacent single-family residential development on the elevated slopes to the north, east, and southeast (which are approximately 140 feet to 155 feet amsl), and approximately in line with the rooflines of adjacent single-family development to the south (which are approximately 130 feet to 135 feet amsl for homes fronting North Redondo Drive). The development footprint of the proposed townhomes would also be setback from the property lines of adjacent single-family lots, with the PDP establishing minimum setbacks in these areas ranging from 65 feet to 74 feet.³ Based on the current site plan (illustrated in Figure 3-4), the townhomes adjacent to the project site's southern slope would be set back approximately 74–126 feet from the adjacent residential lots, with the exception of one residence near the project entry.

Wall and Fence Requirements. According to the proposed PDP, compliance with all wall and fence regulations set forth in the PDP are required, unless otherwise modified by a Development Permit. Proposed wall and fence requirements include the following:

- Walls, fences, and architectural screening elements will be compatible with the architectural treatment of the primary building on the parcel.

³ The setback from the corner of Macario Drive and Monica Circle would be a minimum of 16 feet; however, there are no residences adjacent to this corner of the property line. All setbacks in areas of the project site adjacent to existing residential lots would be a minimum of 65 to 76 feet, with proposed setbacks from the southern residential lots of over 100 feet.

- No wall, fence, or landscaping element will interfere with intersection visibility, line of sight, or other safety issue.
- Blank walls are prohibited. Where screening or security walls (excluding wrought iron or other “open” fence types) are located within 10 feet of a public right-of-way, landscaping will be provided between the wall and the right-of-way to a minimum height of 4 feet to minimize opportunities for crime and unsafe conditions.

Landscaping Regulations. Pursuant to the proposed PDP, all required landscaping on the project site will be permanently maintained in a healthy and thriving condition, free from weeds, trash, and debris.

Article 30 Site Regulations

Article 30 of the Zoning Ordinance contains land use and development regulations, other than parking, loading, and sign regulations, that are applicable to sites in all or several districts (including the PD District).

Section 3019, Landscape, Irrigation, and Hydroseeding. This section establishes minimum standards and requirements for site landscaping and required planting areas. In accordance with Section 3019, all PD District projects are required to provide landscape plans prepared by a licensed landscape architect and required planting areas permanently maintained.

Section 3040, Fences and Walls. Per Section 3040(4)(d), any retaining wall over 4 feet in height and visible from a residential district, public right-of-way, park, or open space area must be an irrigated, “plantable” wall subject to the review and approval of the City. The height of a retaining wall must be included in calculating the maximum height limit of a wall or fence.

Article 3049, Urban Forestry Program. Article 3049 of the City Zoning Ordinance requires new development over 1 acre in size to provide a minimum tree canopy area of 12% and a minimum permeable surface area of 22%.

4.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

The significance criteria used to evaluate the project impacts to aesthetics are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, a significant impact related to aesthetics would occur if the project would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
2. Substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
3. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings. (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?
4. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

4.1.4 Impacts Analysis

Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

The City's General Plan does not identify any designated scenic vistas within the project vicinity (City of Oceanside 2002). However, resources exhibiting particularly scenic qualities are identified in the City's General Plan as "visual open space" (City of Oceanside 2002). These areas include the Pacific Ocean, Buena Vista Lagoon, Camp Pendleton, San Luis Rey River, and Guajome Regional Park (City of Oceanside 2002). In addition, the City's General Plan recognizes lakes and reservoirs as "aesthetically pleasing landscape features," which could contribute to a scenic vista (City of Oceanside 2002). This would include Libby Lake Park, which includes a lake located approximately 1,000 feet southwest of the project site at its nearest point. As discussed above in Section 4.1.1, due to intervening distance, terrain, vegetation, and surrounding development, the project site is not visible from any of the City's visual open space areas, lakes, or reservoirs.

Although the project site previously supported the Pacifica Elementary School, the school was closed in 2007. Currently, the project site is vacant and is not publicly accessible. Elevated areas to the north, west, south, and southeast of the project site support residential development and ornamental landscaping (e.g., mature trees), which obstruct any long-range views of distant hillside areas from adjacent roadways, including any potential views of Camp Pendleton to the northwest. Libby Lake Park is not identified as "visual open space" in the City's General Plan (City of Oceanside 2002). However, as discussed above, the lake and surrounding park do have valuable visual qualities that could contribute to a scenic vista. Long-range views of or from this area are not available due to variable terrain, vegetation, and adjacent developed areas (discussed above in Section 4.1.1). However, mid-range views from Libby Lake Park looking northeast include natural open space areas that separate the park from the project site. Views of this area include wildland vegetation, natural hillslopes, and disturbed wetlands surrounded by multi- or single-family residential homes to the west, single-family residential homes to the east, and Libby Lake Elementary School to the southeast. Although not particularly broad or panoramic, these views and the natural features within them function as a valuable visual resource for the existing community. As such, mid-range views from Libby Lake Park looking northeast are considered an identified scenic vista for the purposes of this analysis.

While the northeastern boundary of Libby Lake Park has a maximum elevation of approximately 95 feet amsl, the lake and the adjacent public loop trail are situated at lower elevations ranging from 55 to 60 feet amsl. The intervening open space area between the park and the project site ranges in elevation from approximately 60 feet to 100 feet amsl in the northeast corner. As established above in Section 4.1.2, Regulatory Setting, proposed three-story townhomes on the project site would be approximately 38 feet in height, and none would exceed 40 feet, in accordance with the proposed PDP development standards. Colored elevations of proposed townhomes are presented on Figure 4.1-2. Considering proposed project site grading, the rooflines of proposed townhome would reach maximum elevations of between approximately 140 and 145 feet amsl.

Although the existing project site is not visible from Libby Lake Park, the rooflines of the proposed townhomes may be partially visible in northwest-oriented views from segments of the Libby Lake Park public loop trail. However, the rooflines of the proposed townhomes would be in line with the rooflines of adjacent single-family residential development on the elevated slopes to the north, east, and southeast of the project site (which are approximately 140 feet to 155 feet amsl and situated at a slightly elevated location relative to future townhome rooflines). Visibility would also be limited to a narrow view corridor, as the open space area northeast of the park slightly bottle necks before meeting the project site boundary, and existing development to the east and west is separated by an area of approximately 300 feet in width. As such, the proposed project would not substantially alter the existing visual character of the scenic vista available from Libby Lake Park, which currently includes and is influenced by adjacent

and surrounding single- and multifamily residential development. In addition, the intervening distance, terrain, vegetation (i.e., trees), and adjacent development between Libby Lake Park and the project site would obstruct most of the proposed project from view. Furthermore, the project site comprises a previously developed school site that is located northeast of the natural open space area and no off-site development activities are proposed. As such, implementation of the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on the scenic vista from Libby Lake Park. Therefore, impacts to scenic vistas would be **less than significant**.

Would the project substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

As described in Section 4.1.1 above, the project site is not located adjacent to, or in the vicinity of, a designated state scenic highway (Caltrans 2023). Therefore, the project would not substantially damage scenic resources including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway, and **no impacts** would occur.

In non-urbanized areas, would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

California Public Resources Code, Section 21071, defines an “urbanized area” as “(a) an incorporated city that meets either of the following criteria: (1) has a population of at least 100,000 persons, or (2) has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons.” As of 2021, the City had an estimated population of 172,989, which is well over the 100,000-person threshold (U.S. Census Bureau 2023). Thus, the City would be considered an urbanized area per CEQA, and the analysis provided below considers the potential for the project to conflict with applicable City zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality set forth in the City’s General Plan, City Code, and City Zoning Ordinance.

The City would use this Draft EIR and associated documentation in its decision to approve or deny required discretionary permits, including the General Plan Amendment, Zone Amendment, Tentative Map, and Development Plan. With City approval of the required discretionary permits, the project would not result in any Zoning Ordinance or General Plan conflicts that would lead to significant scenic quality impacts. For the reasons analyzed in further detail below, impacts are determined to be **less than significant**.

City of Oceanside General Plan

Although the project does not conform to the City’s General Plan Land Use designation and a General Plan Amendment is required, the project is in conformance with General Plan’s objectives and policies. The project’s conformance with City’s General Plan objectives and policies applicable to the project is addressed in Table 4.10-2 of Section 4.10 of this Draft EIR. Regarding General Plan Policy 1.2A related to the consideration of views from surrounding land uses during the placement of new buildings, analysis of potential scenic view and vista impacts is provided above, and the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. As outlined in Table 4.10-2 of Section 4.10, the project would not conflict with the City’s General Plan objectives and policies related to scenic quality (see listed policies in Section 4.1.2, above).

City of Oceanside Zoning Ordinance

Article 17, PD Planned Development District (Inland)

Development of the project requires amending the City Zoning Ordinance. Currently, the entire property has a zoning designation of PS, which does not allow for housing. A Zone Amendment is proposed that will designate the entire property as PD with the proposed PDP serving as the regulating document. In accordance with Zoning Ordinance Section 1702, no other uses are proposed other than those included within the project's proposed PDP. Per Section 1703, the minimum net area of a PD District is 4 acres, and the proposed project site has a net developable area of 12.82 acres. In addition, projects in the PD District must not exceed the maximum density permitted by the General Plan. The project proposes a General Plan Amendment to Medium Density Residential, which would allow up to 15 dwelling units per acre. The project proposes a density of 12.8 dwelling units per acre, which would not exceed the maximum density permitted by the General Plan under the proposed Medium Density Residential designation. Finally, the project would comply with all standards set forth in Section 3024 of the Zoning Ordinance regarding noise, vibration, dust, odors, glare, and combustible, explosive, radioactive, and hazardous materials. Therefore, the project would not conflict with applicable zoning.

Section 3019, Landscape, Irrigation, and Hydroseeding

Article 30, Section 3019, sets forth landscape regulations applicable to the project. The proposed PDP provides detailed landscape design guidelines to ensure attractive landscaping that is unique yet compatible with the surrounding community. Proposed landscaping is designed to provide a distinct visual character and enhance the project site. The preliminary landscaping plan is shown in Figure 3-7 in Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR. The landscaping on site is designed to take advantage of the existing slopes, with a plant palette that includes drought-tolerant plants and plants that would help stabilize the slopes over the long term. In addition to slope stabilization, new slope trees would help to visually buffer site development from adjacent off-site areas. Landscape areas adjacent to the proposed private driveway in the northeast corner of the project site would include 24-inch box size accent and street trees. Additional landscaping is provided throughout the project site including along internal walkways and greens and in the periphery of the site (see Figure 3-7). A large buffer to the existing open space area to the southwest would also be provided. A minimum 50-foot biological buffer and a minimum 50-foot planning buffer would be established at the outer edge of the open space area, and existing landscaping and vegetation in the area would be supplemented with new slope trees, columnar trees/shrubs, and native trees including sycamore and coast live oak. Final site plans and landscape plans would be subject to review and approval by the City. As such, the project and the installation of landscaping as presented in the Conceptual Landscape Plan would not conflict with the City Zoning Ordinance regulations pertaining to landscaping.

Section 3040, Fences and Walls

Retaining walls would be located at the northern and southeastern boundaries of the project site to support the slopes in these areas. The walls in these location would be approximately 12 and 13 feet in height, respectively. Per Section 3040(4)(d), the proposed PDP requires that, where screening or security walls (excluding wrought iron or other "open" fence types) are located within 10 feet of a public right-of-way, landscaping will be provided between the wall and the right-of-way to a minimum height of 4 feet to minimize opportunities for crime and unsafe conditions. Neither wall is located near a public right-of-way, and they would not be visible from the public right-of-way. As such, the project would not conflict with applicable Zoning Ordinance requirements regulating the scenic quality of walls and fencing.

Article 3049, Urban Forestry Program

Of the 37 existing, on-site trees, 16 would be removed, while the remaining 21 trees would be preserved in place. The 16 trees proposed for removal have a combined trunk width of 358 inches (measured as diameter at breast height for canopy trees and brown trunk height for palms). As illustrated in Figure 3-7, the project proposed to plant 248 new trees with a combined trunk width of 744 inches. This would result in a net growth of 232 trees on the project site with a combined trunk width of more than double the 16 existing trees proposed for removal. After project implementation, the proposed and existing trees to remain would be maintained by the homeowners association, as required by the proposed PDP.

The City's Urban Forestry Program requires new developments over 1 acre in size to provide a minimum tree canopy area of 12% and a minimum permeable surface area of 22%. As shown in Figure 3-7, the proposed project would exceed both requirements, providing 62,847 square feet of tree canopy coverage, or 18.9% (39,880 square feet would be required) and 336,283 square feet of permeable surface area, or 53% (139,436 square feet would be required). In accordance with the PDP, tree and landscape irrigation would comply with the City's Water Conservation Master Plan, and all required landscaping would be permanently maintained by the homeowners association in a healthy and thriving condition, free from weeds, trash, and debris. Therefore, the project would not conflict with applicable City regulations pertaining to the scenic quality of the urban forest.

Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Construction

Construction activities associated with the project may occur Monday through Saturday, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., to comply with Section 6.25 of the City Code. As such, during most of the approximately 35-month construction period, nighttime lighting would not be required; however, during late fall and winter, lighting conditions may dictate that evening lighting operate at the project site to ensure the safety and security of construction workers. Due to the nature of construction, vehicles and equipment would move around the site (i.e., these elements would not be in any one location for a prolonged period) as individual phases of activity are completed. Thus, the temporary use of lighting in one area would not operate for an extended duration. Construction lighting, if needed, would be directed to specifically illuminate active areas of construction and would not extend into the later evening. Furthermore, although there are no existing, on-site light sources, the project site is in an urban setting where artificial lighting (e.g., lights from nearby passing vehicles, landscape lighting, and indoor light from nearby residences) is part of the existing, adjacent environment. Thus, the intermittent and occasional use of construction lighting on the project site would not substantially contrast with the existing lighting conditions of the adjacent environment.

Windows and exteriors of construction vehicles and equipment would represent temporary sources of potential localized glare capable of being received at off-site locations. Glare may be generated during hours of active construction and when vehicles and equipment are stored on site; however, due to the mobile nature of vehicles/equipment and relatively limited surface area of glare-inducing features (i.e., construction vehicle windows), glare is not anticipated to be received at any one location for a particularly long duration. Rather, glare generated by construction activities may be briefly experienced at off-site locations with views toward active areas of construction but would not be visible elsewhere in the visual landscape. In accordance with proposed PDP design standards, building materials would primarily consist of non-reflective building materials (e.g., wood, stone veneer, and stucco; see Figure 4.1-2) and would avoid materials and colors that present significant contrast with materials

used in the surrounding neighborhood. Additionally, as the project site is adjacent to residential development and public roadways, glare-inducing features such as windows and exteriors of motor vehicles are part of the existing, adjacent conditions. As such, the minimal and temporary sources of glare resulting from project construction equipment and materials would not be out of character with the existing, ambient environment. Due to the limited use of construction lighting, the mobile nature of construction activities, and existing sources of lighting and glare present in the surrounding environment under existing conditions, the project would not create a new source of substantial light or glare, and short-term construction impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

The project has the potential to create new light sources in the project area due to the introduction of new townhomes, roadways, landscaping, and associated infrastructure on a currently vacant site. Lighting for the project would be provided throughout the project site, affixed to building façades, along the pedestrian walkways, and in open space areas. Lights from motorists traveling to and from project site would be intermittent and occasional. Permanent lighting fixtures would consist of energy-efficient lighting that would be fully shielded and directed downward to minimize light trespass onto surrounding properties. All outdoor lighting would meet requirements outlined in Chapter 39 of the City Code (discussed above in Section 4.1.2) and would be appropriately shielded. Exterior lighting would be turned off during daylight hours. Street lighting featured throughout the site would be shielded to reduce lighting impacts to the surrounding residences and promote dark sky regulation compliance. Through compliance with the Code Chapter 39, proposed outdoor lighting would not substantially affect day or nighttime views.

The proposed project also has the potential to create new glare sources in the project area due to the introduction of new townhomes and associated infrastructure, including photovoltaic (solar) panels on the townhome roofs (in accordance with Project Design Feature PDF-5, discussed in Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR). Exact solar panel features for the project would be determined prior to building permit issuance. Although the proposed solar panels have the potential for glare during sunlight hours, solar panels are generally designed to absorb light not reflect it and typically generate glare only at acute angles. Furthermore, the installation of slope trees and other site landscaping along the site perimeter would help to partially block views to proposed townhome roofs from private off-site locations. The design and location of the solar panels would minimize the potential for glare to nearby neighbors and would not result in glare that would be experienced from any roads.

In accordance with proposed PDP design standards, building materials would primarily consist of wood, stone veneer, and stucco (see Figure 4.1-2) and would avoid materials and colors that present significant contrast with building materials used in the surrounding neighborhood. The sidings of the townhomes would be finished with neutral-colored stucco. Potential glare inducing materials such as polished metals or glass would be limited windows, accents, and trims.

For the reasons discussed above, the proposed project would not introduce any new sources of substantial light or glare that would differ substantially from light and glare sources in the existing surrounding area. Additionally, compliance with the City Code and implementation of PDP design features, which will be required as a condition of project approval, would ensure impacts related to light and glare would be **less than significant**.

4.1.5 Cumulative Analysis

Projects contributing to a cumulative aesthetic impact include those within the project viewshed. The viewshed encompasses the geographic area within which the viewer is most likely to observe the proposed project and

surrounding uses. Typically, this is delineated based on topography, as elevated vantage points, such as from scenic vistas, offer unobstructed views of expansive visible landscapes. As discussed above in Section 4.1.4, Impact Analysis, elevated areas to the north, west, south, and southeast of the project site support residential development and ornamental landscaping (e.g., mature trees), which obstruct any long-range views of distant hillside areas from adjacent roadways, including any potential views of Camp Pendleton to the northwest or other “visual open space” areas identified by the City. Due to intervening distance of at least 0.7 miles (i.e., the Nagata Property Rezone, which is the closest related project to the project site), relative topography, and existing development, the related project sites identified in Section 3.4, Cumulative Projects, of this Draft EIR are not within the proposed project viewshed (including the scenic vista available from Libby Lake Park). Therefore, the project’s less-than-significant aesthetic impacts would not have the potential to incrementally contribute to a cumulatively significant aesthetic impact. In addition, the project site is not within view of any state scenic highways, and thus would have no potential to damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway. Furthermore, the proposed project would have no significant environmental impacts related to substantial adverse effects on a scenic vista, conflicts with applicable zoning (or regulations governing scenic quality), and/or substantial new sources of lighting or glare. For these reasons, cumulative impacts related to aesthetics would be **less than significant**.

4.1.6 Mitigation Measures

Impacts related to aesthetics because of project implementation are determined to be less than significant; therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

4.1.7 Level of Significance After Mitigation

No substantial impacts related to aesthetics were identified; therefore, no mitigation measures are required. Impacts related to aesthetics would be **less than significant**.

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SOURCE: SANGIS 2019; Open Street Maps 2022



FIGURE 4.1-1
Existing Conditions: Photo Key Map

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Photo A



Photo B



Photo C



Photo D

SOURCE: Dudek 2023

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Photo E



Photo F



Photo G



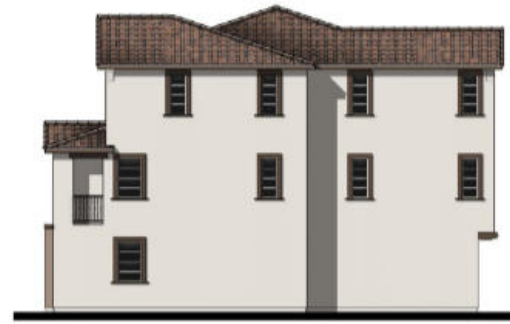
Photo H

SOURCE: Google Earth 2022

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Front



Right



Front



Right



Rear



Left



Rear



Left

Conceptual Architecture - 3-Plex Building Elevations

Conceptual Architecture - 6-Plex Building Elevation "A"



Front

Right



STUCCO BODY

ROOF

STUCCO 2

FASCIA / TRIM / GARAGE DOOR

FRONT DOORS / SHUTTERS

CLAY PIPES

WROUGHT IRON

DECORATIVE TILE



Rear



Left

Conceptual Architecture - 8-Plex Building Elevation "B"

Color and Material Scheme 1

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Table of Contents

SECTION	PAGE NO.
4 Environmental Analysis.....	4.1-1
4.1 Aesthetics	4.1-1
4.1.1 Existing Conditions.....	4.1-1
4.1.2 Regulatory Setting	4.1-4
4.1.3 Thresholds of Significance	4.1-11
4.1.4 Impacts Analysis	4.1-12
4.1.5 Cumulative Analysis.....	4.1-16
4.1.6 Mitigation Measures.....	4.1-17
4.1.7 Level of Significance After Mitigation	4.1-17

FIGURES

4.1-1 Existing Conditions: Photo Key Map	4.1-19
4.1-1a Existing Conditions: Project Site.....	4.1-21
4.1-1b Existing Conditions: Off-Site Views to Project Site	4.1-23
4.1-2 Conceptual Architecture and Building Materials.....	4.1-25

TABLES

No table of figures entries found.