

5.1 AESTHETICS

This section identifies visual characteristics of the project site and analyzes the potential effects of the project related to aesthetics. Aesthetics are principally defined by how viewers perceive the visual attractiveness of an area. Based on this subjective perception, the key elements and features that create or enhance an area's visual quality are definable. In general, visual resources are features of urban (built) or natural environments with a high aesthetic or scenic value. Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines describes the concept of aesthetic resources in terms of scenic vistas, scenic resources (such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State Scenic Highway), the visual character or quality of the project area, and light and glare.

5.1.1 Existing Conditions

5.1.1.1 Visual Characteristics of the Project Site

The project site is located at 5801 Wilshire Boulevard within the 23-acre Hancock Park. As illustrated in the aerial photograph in Chapter 3, Figure 3-2, the project site includes 13 acres of the eastern and northwestern portions of Hancock Park. It is bounded by West 6th Street to the north (an approximately 1,200-foot-long frontage), South Curson Avenue to the east (an approximately 830-foot-long frontage), Wilshire Boulevard to the south (an approximately 500-foot-long frontage), and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to the west across the vacated Ogden Drive (approximately 250-foot-long frontage). The entirety of Hancock Park is currently enclosed with an 8- to 10-foot-high metal fence that serves to secure the site by providing full closure of Hancock Park when the facilities are closed in the evenings.

The project site includes active paleontological research areas and quarries, recreational facilities, and several buildings. Of particular note and prominence is the two-story (approximately 41 feet in height) George C. Page Museum (Page Museum) in the eastern portion of the project site. Numerous small tar seeps, an upwelling of asphalt to the ground surface, are also in various locations at the project site.

The exterior of the Page Museum is shaped like a truncated pyramid. The first floor of the museum is set into a large earthen berm which opens onto the Central Green, which is an approximately 28,000-square foot multi-purpose grass lawn to the west of the Page Museum. At the top of the earthen berm on the second floor is a 30-foot-wide rooftop covered viewing platform which surrounds the first-floor Central Atrium courtyard. The entire viewing platform is covered by an expansive projecting frieze, which appears as carved stone with a continuous bas relief sculpture depicting scenes from the Pleistocene period, prepared by sculptor Manuel La Paz and supported by an exposed space frame roof structure (Millington and Dietler 2023).

The project site contains multiple active paleontological quarries, commonly referred to as "pits." The active pits are scattered throughout the northeastern portion of the project site (Pits 3, 4, 9, 13, 61, 67, and 91.) These tar pits are fenced and include informational placards. Of paleontological and visitor interest, Pit 91 has an attached indoor viewing station (approximately 13 feet in height) that allows visitors to observe the ongoing excavation activities. Project 23, located on the north end of the excavations compound, describes the ongoing activities related to recovery of the deposits found during construction of the LACMA parking garage.¹ The Observation Pit is situated to the west of Project 23

¹ During construction on the LACMA parking garage in 2006, 16 new paleontological deposits were discovered, including an almost-complete skeleton of an adult mammoth. Given the size of the discoveries, 23 large wooden boxes were built around the various deposits, allowing many of the discoveries to remain intact. "Project 23" has now become the short-hand descriptor for the location and activities related to the excavation of deposits within the 23 large wooden boxes that is now occurring in a portion of the La Brea site.

along the project site boundary with LACMA. The Observation Pit is a small domed building (approximately 12.5 feet in height) built over the active Pit 101 and replicates the experience of a fossil pit.

To the south of the Page Museum is the Wilshire Boulevard pedestrian entrance and the Lake Pit. Although it appears to resemble a small lake or pond, the Lake Pit is a pit left over from asphalt mining operations in the late 1800s and produces visible methane gas bubbles that emit a distinctive odor. In 1967, statues of Columbian mammoths were put on display in the Lake Pit. A comfort station with public restrooms, picnic benches, and vending machines is adjacent to the Lake Pit to the west.

Landscaping on the project site includes a variety of trees, bushes, and other vegetation interspersed within the project site and along the perimeter. Vegetation consists of primarily non-native planted trees, such as pines (*Pinus* spp.), gum trees (*Eucalyptus* spp.), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), various species of palm tree (e.g., fan; queen), and other non-native ornamental trees. It is estimated that approximately 330 to 340 trees currently exist within the 13-acre project boundary. Within these existing trees, there are 13 native oak trees (12 *Quercus agrifolia* and one *Quercus lobata*). The highest concentration of landscaping occurs in the northern perimeter along West 6th Street and the eastern perimeter along South Curson Boulevard, which includes a mix of shrubs, non-native ornamental trees, and palm trees. In addition, an ephemeral creek, referred to as Oil Creek, flows from the northeast to the southwest from the southwestern end of the parking area to the southeast side of Pit 91. Oil Creek is dominated by non-native mowed grasses along with a mix of other native and non-native low-lying vegetation.

Visibility, or views of the project site's visual characteristics from adjacent uses, typically depends on the vantage point and location. Distant or panoramic views of the project site are generally constrained by the relatively flat topography of the project site within the surrounding dense urban development, street trees, and other landscaping. Long-range views of the project site are generally only available from elevated vantage points in the project vicinity, primarily private vantage points from taller buildings along Wilshire Boulevard, the residential towers in Park La Brea, and other residential and office high rise buildings in the area. From street level, visibility of the project site generally includes views of the existing fencing and existing landscaping and trees lining the project site's perimeter. Views of the Lake Pit, the Page Museum, and the Central Green can be seen from Wilshire Boulevard, looking north into the project site. From South Curson Street looking west into the project site, portions of Central Green as well as partially obstructed views of the Page Museum can be seen through the existing landscaping. In addition, views of the existing parking lot and existing entrance at the intersection of South Curson Street and Wilshire Boulevard are visible. Views from West 6th Street looking south into the project site include existing landscaping and perimeter trees, fencing, as well as obstructed views of Page Museum, Central Green, and the parking lot.

5.1.1.2 Visual Characteristics of the Surrounding Area

The project site is located approximately 5.5 miles west from downtown Los Angeles within the Miracle Mile neighborhood. The area is urbanized and is characterized primarily by low-, mid-, and high-rise buildings that are occupied by a mixture of urban uses, including museums, commercial, office, residential, and open space. The surrounding mix of uses ranges in height from one to 31 stories.

The Park La Brea Pool and Park La Brea, a residential neighborhood containing two-story garden apartment buildings, are located to the north across West 6th Street. The residential buildings associated with Park La Brea are generally oriented inward and consistent in massing. The heavy landscaping along West 6th Street contributes to a uniform visual character of the Park La Brea development.

A dense urban environment is located to the south across Wilshire Boulevard. The Craft Contemporary Museum and other museum and commercial buildings ranging in height from two stories to six stories are spread along the street. A 31-story commercial office building is also located across Wilshire Boulevard. Single- and multi-family residential uses are located farther to the south.

LACMA is located on the west and southwestern project site boundary. The buildings associated with LACMA include the Pavilion for Japanese Art, the “Urban Light” and “Levitated Mass” public artwork, and the future David Geffen Galleries. Although currently under construction, the David Geffen Galleries will be an approximately 65-foot-tall building that will replace four of LACMA’s older buildings on-site, which range in height from approximately 46 to 100 feet (County of Los Angeles 2017). A portion of the David Geffen Galleries will extend across Wilshire Boulevard to the Spaulding Lot. Construction activities are estimated to be completed at the end of 2024 (LACMA 2023). Beyond LACMA’s facilities to the west are an outdoor public art installation and the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures.

Commercial buildings, surface parking lots, a 21-story residential building, and a 5-story residential building are located across South Curson Avenue to the east.

5.1.1.3 Scenic Vistas and Views

A scenic viewshed provides a scenic vista from a given location, such as a highway, a park, a hiking trail, river/waterway, or even from a particular neighborhood. The boundaries of a viewshed are defined by the field of view. Scenic viewsheds vary by location and community and can include ridgelines, unique rock outcroppings, waterfalls, ocean views, or various other unusual or scenic landforms. This analysis relied on local and state guidance documents to identify important scenic vistas and views that should be protected in the project site. As designated and defined by both the City of Los Angeles (City) and County of Los Angeles (County), the project site is not located within or adjacent to a scenic viewshed, vista, feature, or ridgeline (City of Los Angeles 2001; County of Los Angeles 2015). Additional information regarding the regulatory setting in consideration of the aesthetics analysis contained herein is provided in Section 5.1.2, Regulatory Setting.

Public views are those that can be seen from vantage points that are publicly accessible, such as streets, freeways, parks, and vista points. Views can be defined as focal views (i.e., views of a particular object, scene, setting, or feature of visual interest) and panoramic views (i.e., views of a large geographic area for which a view may be wide and extend into the distance). Within the project vicinity, panoramic views are only available from elevated vantages, including the taller buildings along Wilshire Boulevard, the residential towers in Park La Brea, and other residential and commercial office high-rise buildings in the area. Given the relative lack of buildings on the site compared with the surrounding dense urban development, street trees, and other landscaping, panoramic views are not generally limited from the project site. Pedestrian-level, panoramic views of the Hollywood Hills may be available from certain roadway segments in the area (e.g., Fairfax Avenue). However, panoramic east-west views along Wilshire Boulevard are limited by the bend in the roadway that begins adjacent to the project site, between Stanley Avenue and Spaulding Avenue, and trends northward to the west for several miles. As a result, panoramic views along this roadway generally terminate at the buildings where this bend occurs.

Views from the project site from most public street-level locations are focal views and primarily available to viewers at adjacent locations (i.e., pedestrians and motorists along Wilshire Boulevard, West 6th Street, and Ogden Drive). In general, surrounding views consist of the urban landscape, which include a variety of low-, mid-, and high-rise buildings, both old and new, occupied by commercial, residential, and office uses; parking uses; and intermittent views of open space areas such as Hancock Park. Notable buildings and features that can be seen within the same viewshed as the project site are limited to those that are located on or adjacent to the project site, such as the Wilshire Boulevard streetlights, the Pavilion for

Japanese Art, the Observation Pit building, the high-rise building at 5900 Wilshire Boulevard, and the building at 5850 Wilshire Boulevard, which is adjacent to the Spaulding Lot.

5.1.1.4 Scenic Highways and Scenic Resources

The California Scenic Highway Program identifies State- and County-designated scenic highways. The State-designated scenic highway is Route 2, the Angeles Crest Highway, located approximately 12 miles north of the project site (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2018). The County-designated scenic highways are two sections of Mulholland Highway and the Malibu Canyon-Los Virgenes Highway, which are both located more than 20 miles to the northwest of the project site (Caltrans 2015). In addition, Route 210, the Foothill Freeway, is an eligible State Scenic Highway but is not officially designated. Route 110, the Pasadena Freeway or Arroyo Seco Parkway, is recognized by the California Scenic Highway Program as a federal Historic Parkway. Route 210 is approximately 12 miles north of the project site and Route 110 is approximately 5 miles east.

In addition to the designation of highways under the California Scenic Highway Program, the City's *Mobility Plan 2035* provides an inventory of City-designated scenic highways, special controls for protection and enhancement of scenic resources, and Scenic Highway guidelines for those designated scenic highways for which there is no adopted scenic corridor plan (City of Los Angeles 2016). The *Mobility Plan 2035* lists the following two segments of Wilshire Boulevard as a Scenic Highway: the segment from where the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Beverly Hills and City of Los Angeles meet to Malcom Avenue (the Wilshire–Westwood Scenic Corridor) and the segment between Sycamore Avenue and Fairfax Avenue. Thus the project site is adjacent to a City-designated Scenic Highway. Specifically, this portion of Wilshire Boulevard is notable due to the landscaped median that extends along this portion of Wilshire Boulevard, as well as its location within the Miracle Mile.

In summary, the project site is not within the viewshed of a State- or County-designated scenic highway due to distance and the built-out nature of the area surrounding the project site. Based on a review of the applicable County and City plans, there are no other designated scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway that would be visible from the project site (City of Los Angeles 2001; County of Los Angeles 2015).

Of note and discussed in detail in Section 5.5, Cultural Resources – Historical Resources, the Page Museum, the Observation Pit, and the La Brea Tar Pits Historic District are considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA. These historical resources are defining visual characteristics of project site and are visible from the City-designated scenic highway segment of Wilshire Boulevard. Discussion of proposed modifications to these resources as they pertain to aesthetics and visual resource impacts is included for informational purposes in the environmental impact analysis in Section 5.1.5.

5.1.1.5 Light and Glare

Given the nature of high-density urban development, most of Wilshire Boulevard and the project vicinity is characterized by moderate to high intensities of illumination. Artificial lighting in the project vicinity includes street lighting, security lighting in parking lots, signs and billboards, recreational facilities, and exterior and interior lighting of residential and nonresidential buildings. Light is also emitted from the headlights of vehicles traveling along Wilshire Boulevard and surrounding streets. Streetlights on Wilshire Avenue, particularly at intersections, illuminate most of the streets in the area. The bulk of the existing streetlights are on approximately 40-foot-tall streetlight poles. Ornamental pedestrian-level lighting is provided on some corridors, such as portions of West 6th Street. In general, the project vicinity is an urban area with many sources of ambient illumination, including light emitted from industrial and commercial properties and streetlights lining the streets, as well as from the headlights of vehicles traveling along Wilshire Boulevard.

Lighting within the project site includes interior and exterior lights adjacent to the buildings. Exterior lighting on the park facilities and buildings (e.g., the Page Museum and the Observation Pit building) and free-standing lights in the park grounds of La Brea Tar Pits are primarily located in the parking lot and along the park pathways for security and wayfinding purposes. In addition, lighting for accent signage, parking information, and architectural features is also present within the project site. Additional temporary lighting is periodically used on the park grounds of the project site, which are plugged into the bottom of the existing, free-standing light fixtures (which have electrical outlets at their bases). All outdoor lights within the project site operate on a timer, turning on at 6:00 p.m. and turning off at 7:00 a.m. every day, and conform to the requirements set forth in the County's Municipal Code Section 22.44.1270 for exterior lighting.

5.1.2 Regulatory Setting

5.1.2.1 Federal

There are no federal regulations related to aesthetics that are applicable to the project.

5.1.2.2 State

CALIFORNIA SCENIC HIGHWAY PROGRAM

The State Scenic Highway Program was created in 1963 to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment. According to state guidelines, a highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. State laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263. Caltrans defines a State Scenic Highway as any freeway, highway, road, or other public right-of-way that traverses an area of exceptional scenic quality. Eligibility for designation as a State Scenic Highway is based on vividness, intactness, and unity of the roadway. As previously described, the project site is not within the viewshed of a State-designated scenic highway.

CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS

The California Green Building Standards Code (Part 11 of Title 24) is commonly referred to as the 2019 CALGreen Code. The CALGreen Code stipulates maximum allowable light levels, efficiency requirements for lighting, miscellaneous control requirements, and light trespass requirements for electric lighting and daylighting. Paragraph 5.106.8 Light Pollution Reduction specifies that all non-residential outdoor lighting must comply with the following:

- The minimum requirements in the California Energy Code for Lighting Zones 0-4 as defined in Chapter 10, Section 10-114 of the California Administrative Code; and
- Backlight (B) ratings as defined in IES TM-15-11 (shown in Table A-1 in Chapter 8); and
- Uplight and Glare ratings as defined in the California Energy Code (shown in Tables 130.2-A and 130.2-B in Chapter 8); and
- Allowable Backlight, Uplight and Glare ratings not exceeding those shown in Table A5.106.8(N); or comply with a local ordinance lawfully enacted pursuant to Section 101.7, whichever is more stringent.

5.1.2.3 County of Los Angeles

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 2035 GENERAL PLAN

Given the location of the project entirely on County-owned land, the County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan (County General Plan) is an important applicable guiding policy document (County of Los Angeles 2015). The County General Plan provides the policy framework and establishes the County's long-range vision for how the County will grow, and establishes goals, policies, and programs to foster healthy, livable, and sustainable communities. The County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors adopted the County General Plan on October 6, 2015. Chapter 6, the Land Use Element, was updated in 2022. The objectives and policies of the Land Use, Conservation and Open Space, and Mobility Elements related to aesthetics are listed in Table 5.1-1.

Table 5.1-1. County of Los Angeles General Plan, Relevant Goals and Policies

Objective/Policy	Objective/Policy Description
Land Use Element	
Goal LU 7	Compatible land uses that complement neighborhood character and the natural environment.
Goal LU 10	Well-designed and healthy places that support a diversity of built environments.
Policy LU 10.1	Encourage community outreach and stakeholder agency input early and often in the design of projects.
Policy LU 10.2	Design development adjacent to natural features in a sensitive manner to complement the natural environment.
Policy LU 10.3	Consider the built environment of the surrounding area and location in the design and scale of new or remodeled buildings, architectural styles, and reflect appropriate features such as massing, materials, color, detailing or ornament.
Policy LU 10.10	Promote architecturally distinctive buildings and focal points at prominent locations, such as major commercial intersections and near transit stations or open spaces.
Goal LU 11	Development that utilizes sustainable design techniques.
Policy LU 11.2	Support the design of developments that provide substantial tree canopy cover, and utilize light-colored paving materials and energy-efficient roofing materials to reduce the urban heat island effect.
Conservation and Open Space Element	
Goal C/NR 13	Protected visual and scenic resources.
Policy C/NR 13.1	Protect scenic resources through land use regulations that mitigate development impacts.
Policy C/NR 13.3	Reduce light trespass, light pollution, and other threats to scenic resources.
Policy C/NR 13.4	Encourage developments to be designed to create a consistent visual relationship with the natural terrain and vegetation.
Policy C/NR 13.5	Encourage required grading to be compatible with the existing terrain.
Policy C/NR 13.6	Prohibit outdoor advertising and billboards along scenic routes, corridors, waterways, and other scenic areas.
Mobility Element	
Policy M 2.9	Encourage the planting of trees along streets and other forms of landscaping to enliven streetscapes by blending natural features with built features.
Policy M 2.11	In urban and suburban areas, promote the continuity of streets and sidewalks through design features, such as limiting mid-block curb cuts, encouraging access through side streets or alleys, and promoting shorter block lengths.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CODE SECTION 22.44.1270 EXTERIOR LIGHTING

Section 22.44.1270 establishes light performance standards for development within the County, including standards related to acceptable power of lighting, types of lighting, height of lighting support structures, lighting shielding, sign lighting, and hours of operation.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES SECTION 22.174 OAK TREE PERMIT ORDINANCE

The County of Los Angeles Oak Tree Permit Ordinance protects all oak trees, whether native (indigenous) or not (Title 22 Division 8 Chapter 22.174). Under this ordinance, oak trees 8 inches or more in diameter measured at 4.5 feet above mean natural grade (i.e., diameter at breast height [dbh]), or in the case of oaks with multiple trunks, a combined diameter of 12 inches dbh or more of the two largest trunks, are protected. A permit is required to cut, destroy, remove, relocate, inflict damage, or encroach into the protected zone. The protected zone is the diameter of the tree's canopy, plus 5 feet (County of Los Angeles Zoning Code). Exemptions to the ordinance include cases of emergency caused by an oak tree being in a hazardous or dangerous condition, or being irretrievably damaged or destroyed through flood, fire, wind, or lightning, as determined after visual inspection by a licensed forester with the Department of Forestry and fire warden.

There are 13 native oak trees on the project site that meet threshold criteria for protection under the County of Los Angeles Oak Tree Permit Ordinance.

5.1.2.4 *City of Los Angeles*

While the project site is located within the city of Los Angeles, it is owned by the County of Los Angeles and is proposed for uses that benefit the public. Accordingly, the project is not subject to the regulatory controls of the City of Los Angeles. Nonetheless, City regulatory and planning documents that are most relevant to the project as they relate to aesthetics and visual resources are provided herein for informational purposes.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES GENERAL PLAN

The City of Los Angeles City Council originally adopted the City of Los Angeles General Plan (City General Plan) in 1974 to serve as a comprehensive, long-term plan for future development of the City. The City General Plan Elements have been gradually updated over time and set forth goals, objectives, and programs to guide land use policies and meet the existing and future needs of the City. City objectives and policies of the Framework, Conservation, and Mobility Plan Elements related to aesthetics are provided in Table 5.1-2.

Table 5.1-2. City of Los Angeles General Plan, Relevant Policies and Objectives

Objective/Policy	Objective/Policy Description
Framework Element	
Policy 3.2.1	Provide a pattern of development consisting of distinct districts, centers, boulevards, and neighborhoods that are differentiated by their functional role, scale, and character. This shall be accomplished by considering factors such as the existing concentrations of use, community-oriented activity centers that currently or potentially service adjacent neighborhoods, and existing or potential public transit corridors and stations.

Objective/Policy	Objective/Policy Description
Policy 5.2.2	<p>Encourage the development of centers, districts, and selected corridor/boulevard nodes such that the land uses, scale, and built form allowed and/or encouraged within these areas allow them to function as centers and support transit use, both in daytime and nighttime (see Chapter 3: Land Use). Additionally, develop these areas so that they are compatible with surrounding neighborhoods, as defined generally by the following building characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings in community centers generally should be two to six stories in height, with the first several stories located along the sidewalk. They should also incorporate the pedestrian-oriented elements defined in policy 5.8.1. Either housing or office space may be located above the ground floor storefronts. • The built form of regional centers will vary by location. In areas such as Wilshire and Hollywood Boulevards, buildings will range from low- to mid-rise buildings, with storefronts situated along pedestrian-oriented streets. In areas such as Century City and Warner Center, freestanding high rises that are not pedestrian-oriented characterize portions of these centers. Nevertheless, regional centers should contain pedestrian-oriented areas, and incorporate the pedestrian-oriented design elements defined in policy 5.8.1 and policies 3.16.1–3.16.3. • Buildings located at activity nodes along mixed-use boulevards generally shall have the same characteristics as either neighborhood districts or community centers, depending on permitted land use intensities. Housing over ground-floor storefronts or in place of commercial development shall be encouraged along mixed-use boulevards.
Policy 6.4.4	Consider open space as an integral ingredient of neighborhood character, especially in targeted growth areas, in order that open space resources contribute positively to the City's neighborhoods and urban centers as highly desirable places to live (see Chapter 5: Urban Form and Neighborhood Design).
Objective 9.38	Ensure that street lighting designs meet minimum standards for quality lighting to provide appropriate visibility dependent on the character and usage of streets and sidewalks with minimum impact on the environment and adjoining property.
Policy 9.40.1	Require lighting on private streets, pedestrian oriented areas, and pedestrian walks to meet minimum City standards for street and sidewalk lighting.
Policy 9.40.2	Require parking lot lighting and related pedestrian lighting to meet recognized national standards.
Mobility Plan 2035	
Policy 2.16 Scenic Highways	Ensure that future modifications to any Scenic Highway do not impact the unique identity or characteristic of that Scenic Highway.
Policy 3(c)	Outstanding specimens of existing trees and plants located within the public right-of-way of a Scenic Highway shall be retained to the maximum extent feasible within the same public right-of-way.
Policy 3(e)	Landscaped medians of Scenic Highways shall not be removed. Such medians may be reduced in width (1) to accommodate left turn channelization within one hundred feet of a signalized intersection; or (2) to accommodate a designated Class II bikeway provided that there is compliance with Guideline 3c above, and that the resulting median width is not less than eight (8) feet.
Policy 4(a,b)	Only traffic, informational, and identification signs shall be permitted within the public right-of-way of a Scenic Highway. Off-site outdoor advertising is prohibited in the public right of-way of, and on publicly-owned land within five hundred feet of the center line of, a Scenic Highway

WILSHIRE COMMUNITY PLAN

Thirty-five community plans comprise the Land Use Element of the City General Plan. The community plans implement the City General Plan Framework at the local level and consist of both text and an accompanying generalized land use map. Community plans are intended to provide an official guide for future development, propose approximate locations and dimensions for land use, and show the locations and characteristics of public service facilities.

The project site is located within the Wilshire Community Plan area, which was approved by the City Council on September 19, 2001 (City of Los Angeles 2001). The majority of the Wilshire Community Plan area consists of gently sloping plains and includes about 8,954 acres (about 14 square miles). The eastern edge of the plan area is about 6 miles west of downtown Los Angeles, and the western edge abuts the City of Beverly Hills.

The Wilshire Community Plan objectives and policies relevant to the project regarding aesthetics are shown in Table 5.1-3.

Table 5.1-3. Wilshire Community Plan, Relevant Policies and Objectives

Objective/Policy	Objective/Policy Description
Objective 2-3	Enhance the visual appearance and appeal of commercial districts
Policy 2-3.1	Improve streetscape identity and character through appropriate controls of signs, landscaping, and streetscape improvements; and require that new development be compatible with the scale of adjacent neighborhoods.
Light and Glare Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Install on-site lighting along all pedestrian walkways and vehicular access ways.• Shield and direct on-site lighting down onto driveways and walkways, away from adjacent residential uses.

The Wilshire Community Plan also contains an Urban Design chapter (Chapter 5), which includes policies that establish baseline design guidelines for commercial, multiple-family residential, and limited industrial land uses in the Wilshire community. The Urban Design chapter also includes community design and landscaping guidelines that address streetscape improvements and landscaping in public spaces and rights-of-way. These design policies and guidelines ensure that projects incorporate specific elements of good design to promote a stable and pleasant environment. For commercial areas, the emphasis is on the provision and maintenance of the visual continuity of streetscapes, and the creation of an environment that encourages both pedestrian and economic activity.

The Wilshire Community Plan includes four Designated Scenic Highways, including Wilshire Boulevard, east-west from La Brea Avenue to Fairfax Avenue. Designated Scenic Highways merit special controls and/or visual enhancement programs to protect scenic resources. The land contiguous to a scenic highway is known as a Scenic Corridor. It is appropriate that protective land use controls be established for these corridors, particularly with respect to signage and billboards.

5.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

The following thresholds of significance are based on the Environmental Checklist contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. A project would result in significant adverse impacts related to aesthetics if it would:

- a) have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- b) substantially damage scenic resources including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- c) conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality, if the project is in an urbanized area; and/or
- d) create a new source of substantial light and glare which would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

5.1.4 Impact Assessment Methodology

The evaluation of aesthetics and aesthetic impacts is inherently subjective by nature. It requires the application of a process that objectively identifies the visual features of the environment and their importance. Aesthetic description involves identifying existing visual character, including visual resources and scenic vistas unique to the project site and the surrounding area. Visual resources are determined by identifying landforms (e.g., topography and graded areas), views (e.g., scenic resources

such as natural features or urban characteristics), viewpoints/locations, and existing light and glare (e.g., nighttime illumination).

Changes to aesthetic resources due to implementation of the project are identified and evaluated based on the proposed modifications as described in Chapter 3, Project Description as they relate to the existing setting and the viewer's sensitivity. Due to the project's location within the dense urban environment and the relative lack of buildings on the site compared with the surrounding urban development, the visual receptors to the aesthetic alteration of the project site would include visitors to La Brea Tar Pits and its associated museums and publicly accessible facilities located throughout Hancock Park, including LACMA. Individuals in the surrounding residential buildings and commercial buildings, as well as motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians traveling along Wilshire Boulevard, South Curson Avenue, and West 6th Street, would also be considered visual receptors of the project site. Views from private property such as balconies, rooftops, or interior living spaces are not considered public views and, thus, are not considered further in this analysis.

The aesthetics analysis in this section considers the physical and visual changes to the existing structures on the project site as well as modifications to natural features, such as trees and landscaping, and introduced features, such as structures and lighting. The analysis also considers the project's consistency with relevant plans and regulations that address issues related to visual character, scenic views, scenic highways, and light and glare. As necessary, mitigation measures are identified to minimize impacts on aesthetics to less than-significant levels.

5.1.5 Environmental Impact Analysis

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

Given the topography in the project site and the relative lack of development as compared to the surrounding dense urban development, including street trees and other landscaping, scenic views or vistas are not visible from the project site. From the project site and the immediate vicinity, there are limited and intermittent views of the Hollywood Hills, located approximately 3 miles to the northwest. Additionally, no formally designated scenic viewsheds, vistas, features, or ridgelines as designated and defined by both the City and County of Los Angeles are located within or adjacent to the project site (City of Los Angeles 2001; County of Los Angeles 2015).

CONSTRUCTION

During construction of the project, the visual appearance of the project site would be temporarily altered to accommodate construction activities such as site preparation and grading, staging equipment and materials storage, renovation and construction of existing and new structures, removal and relocation of the existing surface parking lot, and modifications to landscaping and existing trees on-site. However, given there are no formally designated scenic viewsheds, vistas, features, or ridgelines located within or adjacent to the project site, construction activities associated with the project would not result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. Impacts would be *less than significant*.

OPERATION

The project would renovate the existing Page Museum, introduce a new structure (the new museum building), relocate the parking lot by shifting its location north approximately 50 to 70 feet, and enhance landscaping features that would be visible directly from adjacent off-site locations, including high-rise residential and commercial buildings. However, due to the topography of the project site and relative lack of buildings on the site compared with the surrounding dense urban development, view changes would typically occur at limited vantage points, as opposed to along extensive roadway segments or from entire

large geographic areas. Furthermore, the new museum building would be two stories in height and integrate with the surrounding urban development along Wilshire Boulevard and the park setting of Hancock Park. Thus, while project implementation would alter the existing visual character of the project site, it would not adversely affect a scenic vista or obstruct views of visual resources. Furthermore, educational facilities and amenities on the second floor of the new museum building, which would rise above the existing earthen berm, would provide an opportunity for visitors to experience panoramic views of Hancock Park and the Hollywood Hills to the north, as well as more open, albeit focal-range views along Wilshire Boulevard. While the project site could be visible within panoramic views, such as from the Hollywood Hills to the north and west of the project site, the project site contributes to the existing urban setting of the area and would not be especially discernible among the surrounding urban development. Therefore, implementation of the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista and impacts would be *less than significant*.

AES Impact 1
The project would not have a substantial effect on a scenic vista either during project construction or operation. Impacts during project construction and operation would be less than significant. (CEQA Checklist Appendix G Threshold I. a)
Mitigation Measures
No mitigation is required.
Impacts Following Mitigation
Not applicable. Impacts related to scenic vistas would be less than significant.

b) 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 5.1.1.4, there are no State-designated scenic highways adjacent to or within the vicinity of the project site. The closest State-designated highway is Route 110, Arroyo Seco Historic Parkway, a federal byway located approximately 5 miles to the east (Caltrans 2018). However, the portion of Wilshire Boulevard between Fairfax Avenue and Sycamore Avenue, adjacent to the project site, is a City-designated scenic highway. The landscaped median is a primary feature that contributes to the scenic value of this portion of the roadway (City of Los Angeles 2016). The Designated Scenic Highways and Guidelines contained within the Mobility Plan 2035 of the City General Plan describe roadway design, earthwork, and grading design. However, these guidelines would not be applicable to the project since the project would not be modifying Wilshire Boulevard and no earthwork along Wilshire Boulevard is proposed. The unique identity and characteristics of the Wilshire Boulevard would not be impacted during either construction or operation of the project.

CONSTRUCTION

While construction activities would involve the use of the surrounding and nearby roadways for trucks and workers to access the project site, there are no State-designated scenic highways adjacent to or within the vicinity of the project site. In addition, the project would not involve earthwork or construction activities within the landscaped median along the City-designated scenic highway portion of Wilshire Boulevard. As such, impacts associated with the project's construction activities would be *less than significant*.

OPERATION

While there are no designated scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway that would be visible from the project site, the project site does include features that are considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA, including the Page Museum building and the Observation Pit. These are defining visual characteristics of the project site and are visible from the City-designated scenic highway segment of Wilshire Boulevard. Project implementation would result in modifications and enhancements to these project site features as described in Chapter 3, Project Description. Although project implementation would result in changes to the visual landscape as seen from Wilshire Boulevard, it would not substantially damage or altogether remove visually prominent or character-defining features of the project site, nor would the project alter the landscaped median of Wilshire Boulevard. Further, there are no rock outcroppings or significant topographic features on the project site. As described, the project site includes a variety of trees and vegetation interspersed within and along the perimeter; however, none of the trees are designated as scenic resources.

Given there are no designated scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway that would be visible from the project site and the project would not substantially damage or altogether remove visually prominent or character-defining features of the project site nor alter the landscaped median of Wilshire Boulevard, implementation of the project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State- or City-designated scenic highway. For these reasons, impacts associated with project operation would be *less than significant*.

AES Impact 2
The project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State- or City-designated Scenic Highway during either project construction or operation. Impacts during construction and operation of the project would be less than significant. (CEQA Checklist Appendix G Threshold I. b)
Mitigation Measures
<i>No mitigation is required.</i>
Impacts Following Mitigation
<i>Not applicable. Impacts to scenic resources within a State- or City-designated Scenic Highway would be less than significant.</i>

c) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

The project is in a highly urbanized area in the city of Los Angeles. The analysis of the zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality applicable to the project is primarily provided as a policy consistency-level analysis from a project operation perspective only as most of the applicable policies would not apply to the project's construction activities, except for the County's Oak Tree Permit Ordinance as described further in the analysis below.

The project would result in the renovation of the Page Museum and construction of a new museum building to allow for enlarged exhibition space, additional storage, a ground floor café, and retail space. The new museum building would present a design that would be both distinctive and complementary to the Page Museum and would create a cohesive extension of the educational facilities. The project would require the removal of most of the existing landscaping on the project site, a significant portion of which is visible from Wilshire Boulevard. Given the visual dominance of the project site greenery, the removal

of landscaping would alter the visual character of the project site. Native trees such as Coast live oak, California [western] sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and buckeye (*Aesculus californica*) would be preserved unless diseased or in conflict with the new construction (e.g., the pathway, the museum expansion, the shifted parking lot on the northern side of the project site). The shifting of the parking lot on the northern side of the project site may require removal or relocation of the trees between the existing parking lot and West 6th Street; the determination of whether it is feasible to retain the existing trees on the north side of the parking lot would occur after approval of the conceptual Master Plan. If these trees need to be removed or relocated, they would be either moved to another location within the 13-acre project site or replaced elsewhere within the project site. Non-native trees and/or trees in poor health would be removed. Planted trees would be consistent with or complementary to the existing streetscape. The trees and added landscaping would reflect the redesigned pedestrian pathway that would loop through the project site and connect disparate buildings. Thus, given that the loss of on-site trees and landscaping would be temporary, that removed trees would be replaced or relocated within the 13-acre project site, and that the project would enhance the overall landscaping at the project site, the removal, relocation, and replacement of trees and landscaping would not substantially and adversely alter or degrade the existing visual character of the project site or surrounding area.

As described in Section 5.1.2.4, the project site is owned by the County of Los Angeles and the project is not subject to the regulatory controls of the City of Los Angeles. Generally, because the project is being proposed by the County on County-owned property, the project is subject to the directives and guidance of County policies and regulations. Nonetheless, plans and policies of the City of Los Angeles that are most relevant to the project are also addressed in this section for informational purposes.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 2035 GENERAL PLAN

The County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan provides policies that govern scenic quality in several elements. The project would be consistent with the Land Use Element and support the County's Goal C/NR 13 and Policy C/NR 13.1 to protect visual and scenic resources by developing compatible land uses that complement the character and existing uses within the project site and Hancock Park. The project would expand access to open space and facilitate pedestrian circulation. Further, the project would

support the County's policies to consider the built environment of the surrounding area and location in the design and scale of new buildings while promoting architecturally distinctive buildings at prominent locations. The project would also be designed to be modern, efficient, and sustainable pursuant to the County's Best Practices for Design Excellence (County of Los Angeles 2022). Therefore, implementation of the project would not conflict with the policies that govern scenic quality in the County of Los Angeles 2035 General Plan.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES OAK TREE PERMIT ORDINANCE

Thirteen native oak trees are currently within the La Brea Tar Pits project site. All native oaks on-site are protected by the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Permit Ordinance; therefore, disturbance (removal or relocation) of these trees during project construction has the potential to conflict with the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Permit Ordinance. While the project is exempt from obtaining a permit under the ordinance because the project is on County-owned property, the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Foundation (Foundation) and the County intend to ensure compliance with the Los Angeles County Oak Tree Permit Ordinance. Mitigation measures are outlined in Section 5.3, Biological Resources, to provide appropriate mitigation for any relocation or removal of native oak trees. The Foundation and/or the County Museum of Natural History would coordinate with the County of Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning prior to commencement of any work on-site. Therefore, implementation of the project would not conflict with the County of Los Angeles Oak Tree permit during both construction and operation of the project.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES GENERAL PLAN AND MOBILITY PLAN 2035

Regarding consistency with the City of Los Angeles General Plan, the project would support the City's policy to provide a pattern of development consisting of distinct districts, centers, boulevards, and neighborhoods by enhancing museum uses within an area historically associated with a large concentration of museums, consistent with Policy 3.2.1. Similarly, the project would contribute to the City's policies that provide for the siting and design of new development that enhances the character of commercial districts and are adjacent to existing or potential public transit. The new museum building would be similar in height and scale to the Page Museum and surrounding buildings. The project would revitalize a publicly accessible outdoor open space that is integral to neighborhood character, as emphasized in Framework Element Policies 6.1.6 and 6.4.4. The project would also enhance pedestrian activity by providing landscaping and pedestrian pathways that would be designed to integrate the new museum building and existing uses within Hancock Park. These pedestrian pathways would connect to surrounding streets, providing access to nearby neighborhoods and transit. Therefore, the project would be generally consistent with the applicable objectives and policies that support the goals set forth in the Framework Element.

As discussed in AES Impact 2, the project would be consistent with Mobility Element Policy 2.16 and would not modify the unique identity or character of a Scenic Highway. The project would adhere to Mobility Element Policy 3(c) as much as feasible and design the landscaping plan to retain outstanding specimens of existing trees and plants located within the public right-of-way of a Scenic Highway. Therefore, implementation of the project would not conflict with the policies that govern scenic quality in the City of Los Angeles General Plan nor the Mobility Plan 2035.

WILSHIRE COMMUNITY PLAN

Regarding consistency with the Wilshire Community Plan, the project would orient the new museum building toward Wilshire Boulevard, preserve the existing open space, and enhance the pedestrian access through the expansion of the Wilshire Gateway and West 6th Street Gateway. This would contribute to the project's consistency with Objective 2-3 of the Wilshire Community Plan. The site planning of the new museum building and the rehabilitation of existing buildings would promote the continuity of the historic context of buildings in relationship to the existing pattern and scale of streets, sidewalks, and parking. As stated previously, the new museum building would be similar in height to the Page Museum and smaller in scale than most of the buildings along Wilshire Boulevard.

The project would expand educational facilities, outdoor dining opportunities, and recreational amenities, including pedestrian pathways through the site. Project signage would be improved and consistent with existing museum signage and other signage in the vicinity of the project site. New landscaping would be provided along Wilshire Boulevard that would extend and be compatible with the existing landscaping along the perimeter of Hancock Park. The project would also retain the landscaped median along Wilshire Boulevard. Therefore, implementation of the project would not conflict with the policies that govern scenic quality in the Wilshire Community Plan.

CONCLUSION

The project would be consistent with the applicable policies that govern scenic quality in both County and City plans during project construction and operation. Therefore, the project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality, and impacts would be *less than significant*.

AES Impact 3
The project would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality during either project construction or operation. Impacts during construction and operation of the project would be less than significant (CEQA Checklist Appendix G Threshold I. c).
Mitigation Measures
No mitigation is required.
Impacts Following Mitigation
Not applicable. Impacts related to conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality would be less than significant.

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

Existing sources of lighting on and around the project site include street, security, and wayfinding outdoor lighting, vehicle headlights, and interior building illumination. Implementation of the project would result in the renovation of the Page Museum, construction of the new museum building, and enhanced landscaping features that collectively would introduce new and redesigned sources of lighting on-site that would be visible from adjacent off-site locations. Impacts associated with project implementation are discussed for construction and operation of the project.

CONSTRUCTION

Construction of the project has the potential to generate light and glare spillover to off-site visual receptors in the vicinity of the project site, including visitors to the publicly accessible facilities located throughout Hancock Park and individuals in the surrounding residential buildings and commercial buildings adjacent to the project site, as well as motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians traveling along Wilshire Boulevard, South Curson Avenue, and West 6th Street. Sources of artificial light associated with construction activities could include floodlights, spotlights, and/or headlights. Daytime glare could potentially occur during construction activities if reflective construction materials were positioned in highly visible locations where the reflection of sunlight could occur. Given that construction of the project is anticipated to occur over a period of 3 to 4 years, impacts from project-related sources of artificial light and glare during construction and demolition of project could be significant.

OPERATION

Upon project completion, lighting within the project site would include interior and low-level exterior lights adjacent to the buildings and along pathways for security and wayfinding purposes. In addition, low-level lighting for accent signage, parking information, and architectural features would also be incorporated. The new museum building would introduce a new source of light that would include exterior lights adjacent to the building and for the second-floor outdoor amenities when in use. The current design of the project does not include electronic signage or signs with flash, mechanical, or strobe lights. However, given the conceptual nature of the project at this stage of design and development, the resulting lighting and design features cannot be determined with certainty, and design details that could create light and potential glare may be introduced as the building plans are more fully developed.

The County's Zoning Ordinance (Title 22 of the County Code) contains provisions intended to limit adverse light and glare impacts. Application of the requirements of Section 22.44.1270, Exterior Lighting,

of the County Code related to lighting and shielding would limit the potential of increased lighting on sensitive uses. Additionally, the California Building Code contains standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to reduce light pollution by regulating light power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls. Currently, the façade of the new museum building and the renovated Page Museum would be constructed using nonreflective materials, consistent with the exterior materials of nearby buildings. However, the architectural plans for the new buildings are at a conceptual stage and reflective materials, obtrusive lighting, and other design features could be introduced during the later design stages that may not be consistent with specifications included in Title 22 of the County Code. Further, given the project site is not zoned by the County, enforcement of the application of Title 22 of the County Code cannot be assured without the provision of a mitigation measure requiring application of these requirements. For these reasons, light and glare impacts after construction of the project could be *significant*.

AES Impact 4	
The project could create a new source of substantial light or glare during both construction activities and project operation as part of the final building and project design which could adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area. Impacts during construction and operation of the project could be significant. (CEQA Checklist Appendix G Threshold I. d)	
Mitigation Measures	
Construction Mitigation	
AES/mm-4.1	<p>During project construction, the following measures shall be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hours of construction activities shall be limited to between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. on weekdays and between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays and national holidays, with no construction permitted on Sundays. • If construction during evening hours is deemed necessary, construction-related illumination shall be used for safety and security purposes only. Additionally, any construction lighting shall be directed toward the area undergoing work, which requires that construction lighting be shielded and/or aimed so that no direct beam illumination would fall outside of the project site boundary.
Operational Mitigation	
AES/mm-4.2	<p>The project shall implement the following design features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All facades and/or building surfaces including glass windows shall be constructed using non-reflective materials or be treated with non-reflective coating. • All light emanating from new uses shall be either low scaled lighting or shielded to focus lighting and prevent lighting from spilling onto adjacent sensitive uses. • The project shall not include outdoor lighting that causes residential property to be illuminated by more than two footcandles of lighting intensity or receive direct glare from the light source. • All lights used to illuminate parking areas shall be designed, located, and arranged to reflect the light away from any street and any adjacent premises. • Signage with a light intensity of greater than three footcandles above ambient lighting, as measured at the property line of the nearest residentially zoned property, shall be prohibited.
Impacts Following Mitigation	
Implementation of Mitigation Measures AES/mm-4.1 during project construction and AES/mm-4.2 during project operation would reduce impacts related to light and glare to less than significant.	

5.1.6 Cumulative Impact Analysis

A list of related development projects and their locations relative to the project site is provided in Chapter 4, Environmental Setting. Identified related projects in the vicinity of the project are at varying stages of approval/entitlement/development and consist of a variety of land uses, including residential, institutional, commercial, office, and mixed use. These related projects occur primarily as urban infill within the existing land use setting of the downtown Los Angeles area.

The geographic context for the cumulative impact analysis of aesthetics, scenic views, and lighting is the immediate project vicinity (defined as the area directly adjacent to the project site and roadways directly surrounding the project site), as such impacts are highly localized given the relatively flat topography of the project site and the developed nature of the surrounding land uses. As shown in Figure 4-3 in Chapter 4, Environmental Setting, the related projects within the project site's viewshed would include the following:

- **LACMA Renovation:** Located directly adjacent to the project site (on parcels directly west and south across Wilshire Boulevard) at 5906 West Wilshire Boulevard. The project includes museum renovation and is under construction. Construction activities are estimated to be completed at the end of 2024.
- **Wilshire Curson Project (Wilshire Courtyard Redevelopment Project):** Located approximately 0.03 mile southeast of the project site at 5700–5780 Wilshire Boulevard, 712–752 South Curson Avenue, 5721–5773 West 8th Street, and 715–761 South Masselin Avenue. The project includes office and commercial uses and would involve both the renovation of existing buildings as well as the demolition and construction of new buildings. The project is currently under environmental review and the anticipated construction timeframe was not available at the date of publication for this EIR.

As identified in the project analysis above, formally designated scenic viewsheds, vistas, features, or ridgelines (as designated and defined by both the City and County of Los Angeles) are not located within or adjacent to the project site (threshold a). In addition, the project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State- or City-designated Scenic Highway (threshold b), nor would it conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality (threshold c). Accordingly, the project could not contribute to cumulative impacts related to these topics. Furthermore, related developments would be subject to applicable regulations and zoning requirements, such as height limits, density, and setback requirements, and would be reviewed by the City to ensure consistency with adopted guidelines and standards that relate to aesthetics. The design of these projects would also be required to be consistent with the Mobility Plan 2035 Designated Scenic Highways and Guidelines related to the designation of Wilshire Boulevard as a Scenic Highway. As such, the project would not result in cumulative contributions to impacts related to these thresholds, and impacts would not be cumulatively considerable when viewed in conjunction with related development projects.

However, the project, in conjunction with the identified related projects, could contribute to the cumulative increase in light and glare in and around the project site during both construction activities and during operation of the project (threshold d) and impacts could be cumulatively considerable. Mitigation Measures AES/mm-4.1 and AES/mm-4.2 would be required to reduce project impacts to less than significant. The area surrounding the project site and related projects is urbanized and generates ambient light. Similar to the project, the related projects would be required to minimize excessive light and glare that would be inappropriate for the setting. With implementation of these project mitigation measures, impacts from the project would not be cumulatively considerable and cumulative impacts associated with light and glare would be *less than significant*.

AES Impact 5 (Cumulative Impacts)	
The project has the potential to contribute considerably to cumulative impacts associated with light and glare during both project construction and operation.	
Mitigation Measures	
Implement Mitigation Measures AES/mm-4.1 and AES/mm-4.2.	
Impacts Following Mitigation	
With implementation of the identified mitigation measures, the project's contribution to cumulative impacts related to aesthetics would be less than significant.	