

Q. AESTHETICS/VIEW

Environmental Setting

The project site consists of an approximately 18 acre healthcare facility, 15.8 acres of agricultural crops, 4 acres of undeveloped land, and an approximately 2 acre area where Dry Canyon Creek crosses the site. The developed portion of the site contains approximately 277,776 square feet of one, two, and three story buildings. The site is located at the northern fringe of the Santa Monica Mountains at the extreme western end of the San Fernando Valley. The general vicinity of the project site is characterized by suburban development. Retail commercial use is located to the north and west along Calabasas Road, and to the east, directly across Mulholland Drive, in the El Camino Shopping Center. Areas further east are comprised almost entirely of single-family residences. Low density single-family residences are located to the southeast, and multi-family condominiums are located to the south. The western boundary of the project site abuts the City of Calabasas border. Land use along this boundary is characterized by town homes for the southern two-thirds of the project boundary, and multi-family condominiums to the north of that.

The aesthetic impacts examined herein take into account two attributes of aesthetic values:

- *Visual Character of Views:* Includes natural and human-made patterns, mass, architectural design and color.
- *Viewshed:* The content and range of a view.

Visual Character

Geographic features that surround the project site include foothills and the Santa Monica Mountains to the south and west, foothills and the Santa Susana Mountains to the north and west, and the San Fernando Valley to the north and east.

The visual character of the surrounding community includes a mixture of suburban development, with sporadic undeveloped parcels of 10 to 30 acres. The heavily vegetated slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains, and the primarily grass covered slopes of the Santa Susana Mountain foothills provide the visual backdrop to the development on the valley floor.

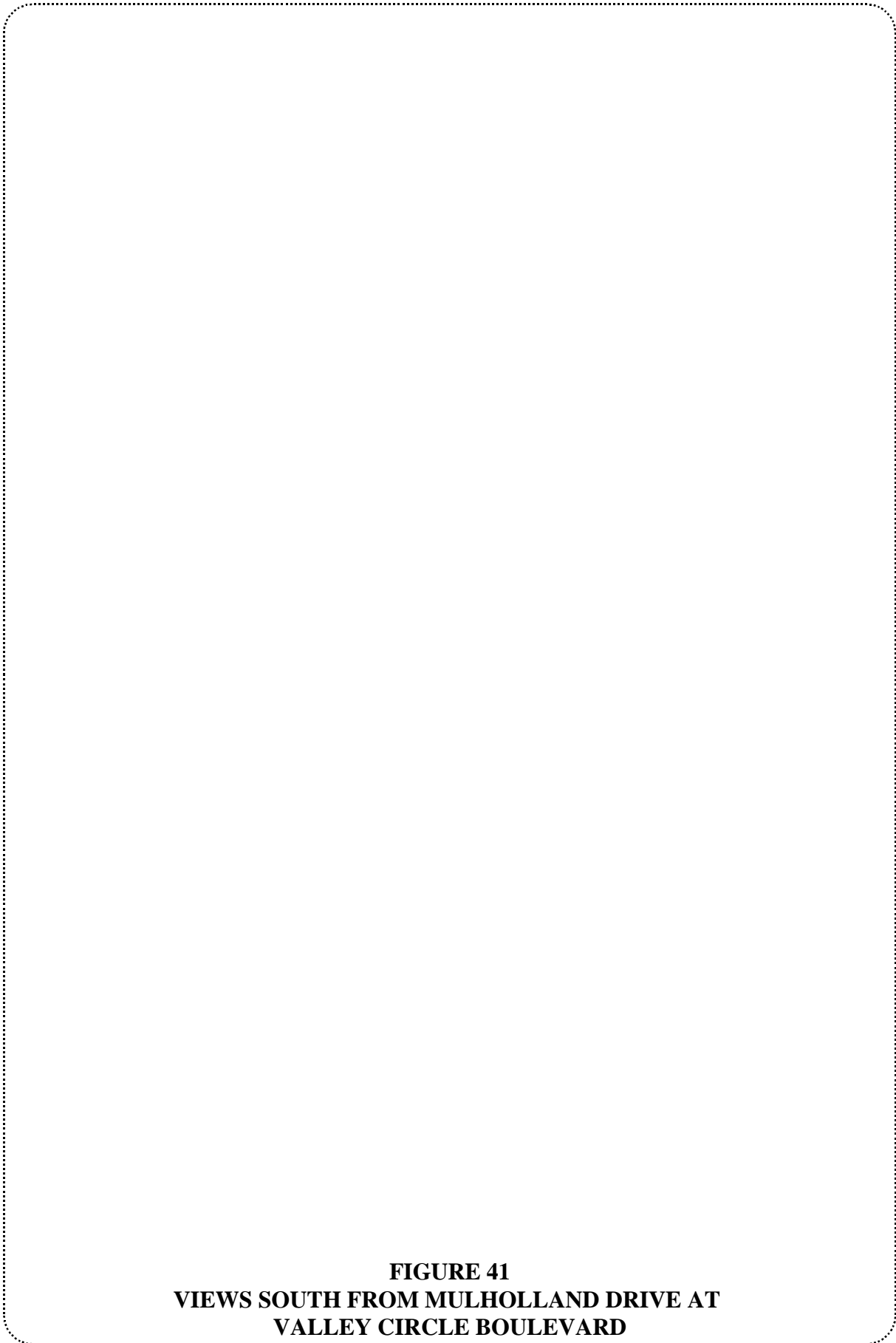
Views and Viewshed

The viewshed is defined in terms of the following:

- *Foreground Views:* Zero to approximately 2,000 feet from the viewpoint.
- *Middleground Views:* Approximately 2,000 feet to two miles from viewpoint.
- *Background Views:* Beyond two miles from viewpoint.

This analysis is based on relative visibility of the site from viewing locations, and how the site affects the rest of the viewshed from this distance. Because of the slightly sloping nature of the topography in the area, relatively small obstructions block major portions of views of development and the adjacent hillsides from most viewpoints. For this reason, the primary viewing locations of the site are from the existing development and public roads adjacent to the site.

For the purposes of this analysis, the subject site and surrounding area has been separated into six areas, each of which has a distinctive view of the project site and surrounding environs. These sections are (1) looking south from Mulholland Drive at Valley Circle Blvd., (2) looking north from Mulholland Drive at the southern portion of the subject site, (3) looking east from the commercial development along Calabasas Road, (4) looking north at the subject site from development adjacent to Valmar Road, and (5) looking east from development along Park Sorrento. Photographs representing the vistas from each of these areas are shown in **Figures 41 through 46**, pages 215 through 220.



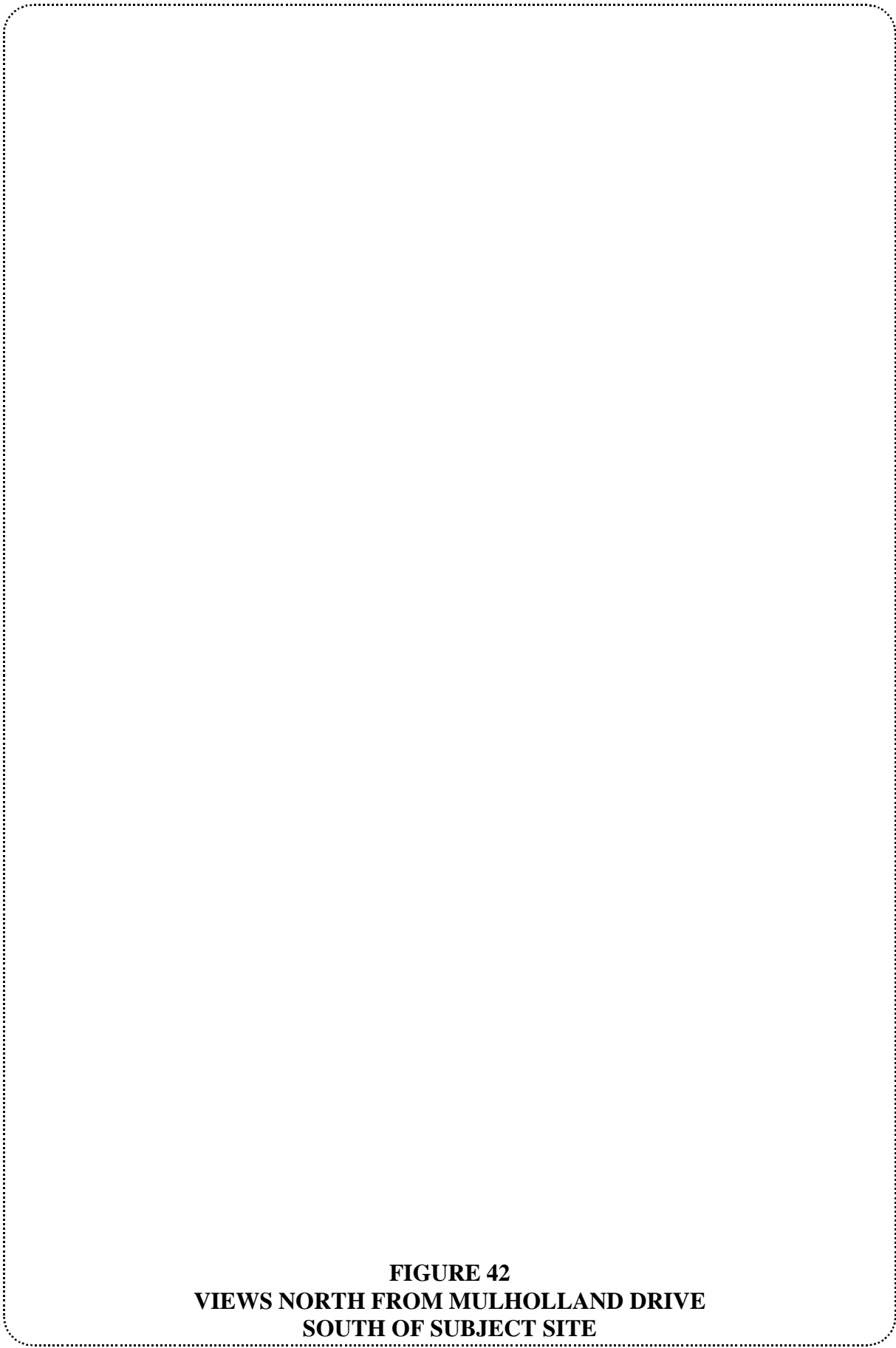


FIGURE 42
VIEWS NORTH FROM MULHOLLAND DRIVE
SOUTH OF SUBJECT SITE

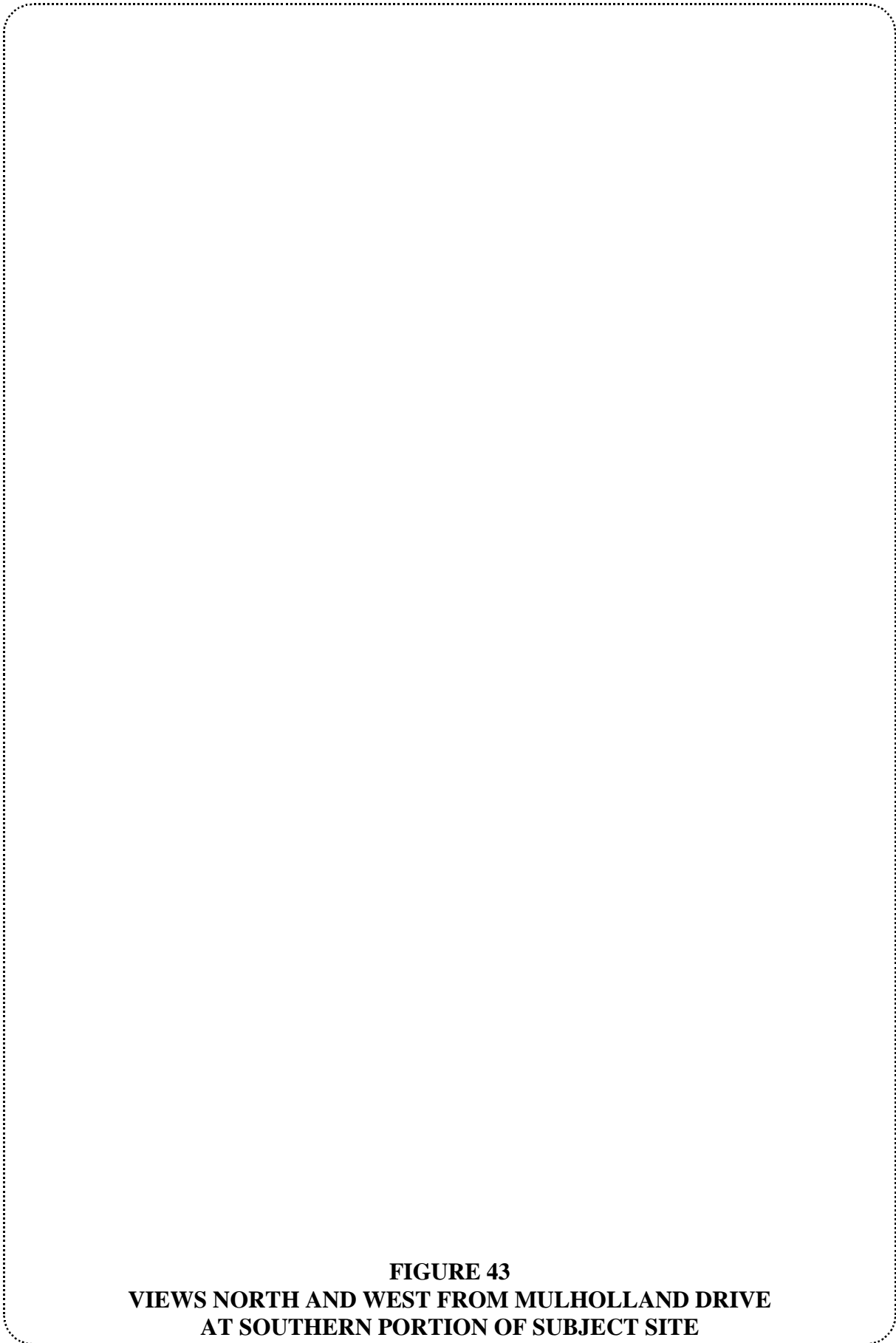


FIGURE 43
VIEWS NORTH AND WEST FROM MULHOLLAND DRIVE
AT SOUTHERN PORTION OF SUBJECT SITE

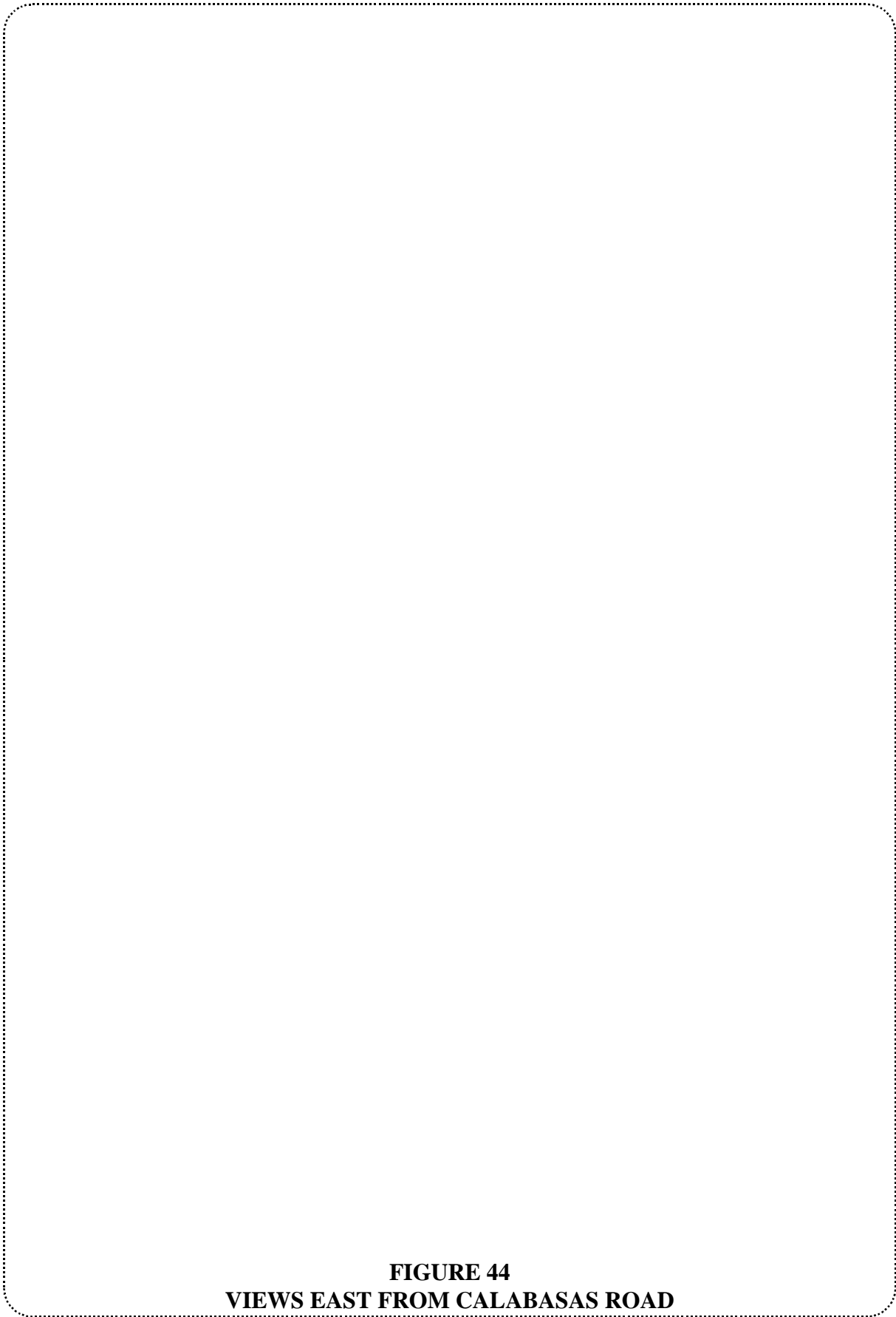


FIGURE 44
VIEWS EAST FROM CALABASAS ROAD

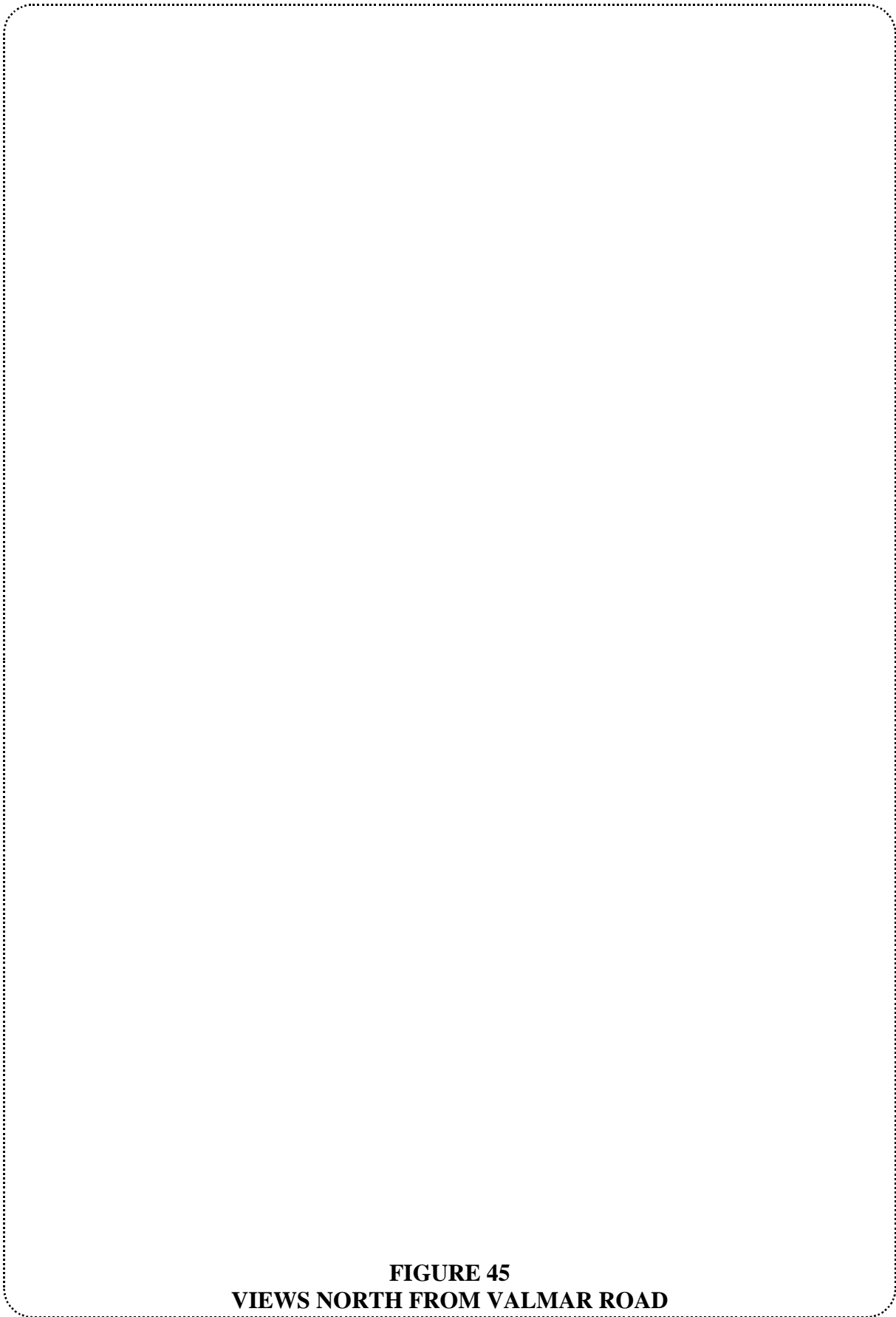


FIGURE 45
VIEWS NORTH FROM VALMAR ROAD

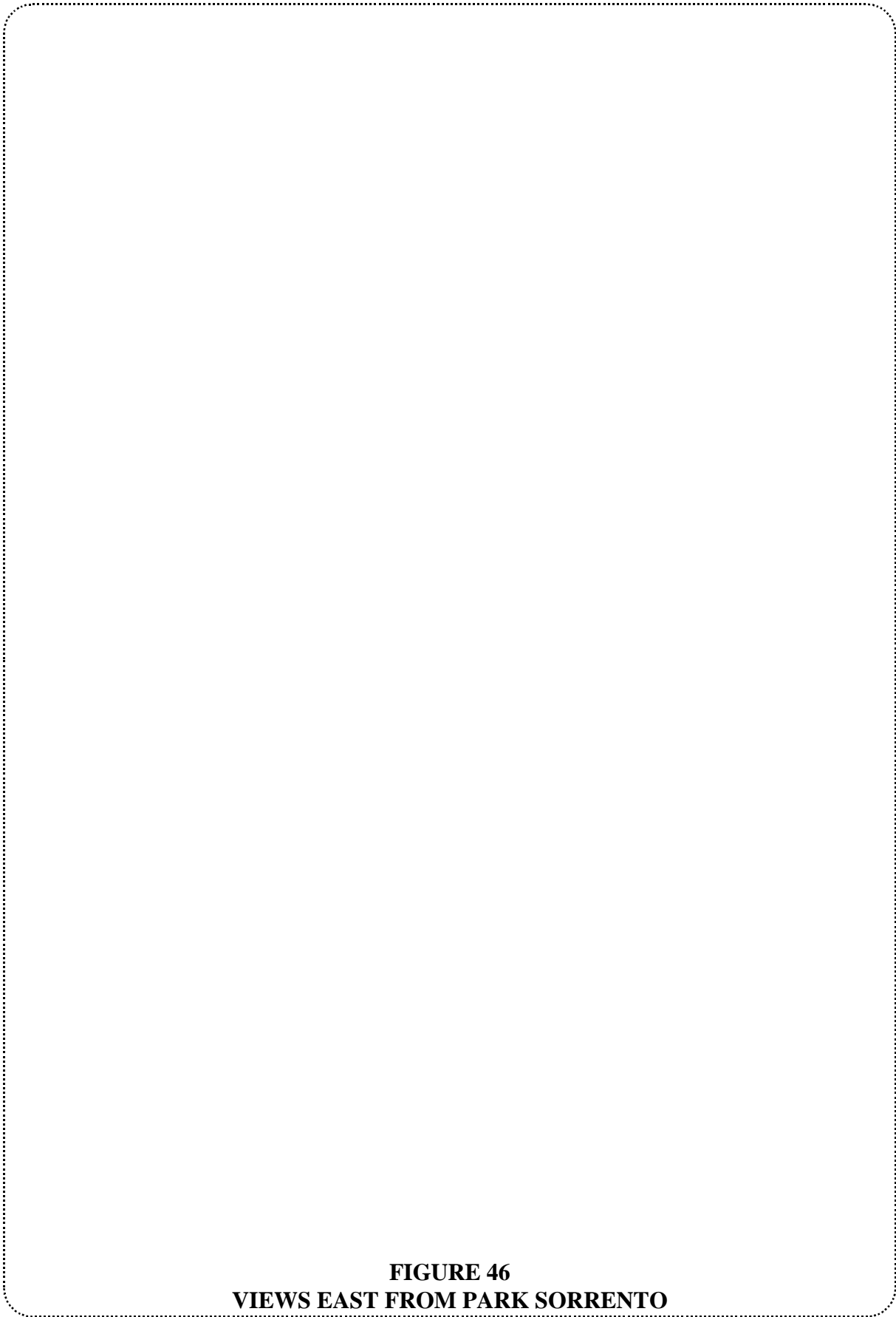


FIGURE 46
VIEWS EAST FROM PARK SORRENTO

Looking South from Mulholland Drive at North Portion of Site

Visual Character

The existing shopping center, MPTF complex, and Ventura Freeway create a visual character from this view of a major suburban commercial street. Mature, dense landscaping in the right-of way of Mulholland Drive and surrounding existing development reduces the appearance of the nearby development.

Views and Viewshed

Views are primarily of the foreground and background. Foreground views are of a major commercial suburban street with surface parking adjoining the thoroughfare. Background views are of hillsides with pockets of development. The existing development on the subject site is in the foreground of this view. The existing development appears as low-rise institutional development with extensive landscaping. The existing parking along Mulholland Drive is the prominent visual feature of the site from this view.

Looking North from Mulholland Drive at Southern Portion of Subject Site

Visual Character

The existing residential development and landscaped medians in and adjacent to Mulholland Drive create a visual character from this view of a major suburban residential street. The mature, dense landscaping focuses the view north directly on Mulholland, thus defining the character of this view as the street and its corridor with its view of distant trees.

Views and Viewshed

Views are almost exclusively of the foreground. Foreground views are of a major residential suburban street with adjacent development setback from the street by frontage roads or landscaping and parking. The limited middle ground and background views are of distant vegetation and hillsides with no identifying features evident. The subject site is in the foreground of this view. The existing development is not visible from this view. Views of the site are limited to the landscaping along Mulholland Drive and the agricultural activities of the central 15.8 acres.

Looking East from Calabasas Road

Visual Character

The multi-story development, mature landscaping, and curving nature of Calabasas Road limits views of distant objects and further increases the prominence of the commercial buildings and activity. As a result, the close proximity of the existing 2 and 3 story commercial development to the street creates a visual character of a small town “Main Street”. The existing landscaping and parking of the MPTF site combine with the open space of the freeway ramps and Creekside park to provide a contrast to and define the end of the “Main Street”.

Views and Viewshed

Views are almost exclusively of the foreground. Foreground views are of a commercial street with limited setbacks from the street. The limited middle ground and background views are of distant vegetation and hillsides with no identifying features evident. The existing development on the subject site is in the foreground of this view. This development appears as contemporary 3 story development. The existing landscaping and parking of the MPTF site combine with the open space of the freeway ramps and Creekside park to provide an opportunity to view distant trees.

Looking North from Residential Development Adjacent to Valmar Road

Visual Character

The existing residential development adjacent to this street is oriented away and raised above the street, creating a visual appearance of a major commuter thoroughfare.

Views and Viewshed

Views are almost exclusively of the foreground. Foreground views are of a residential suburban street with adjacent development setback from the street. The limited middle ground and background views are of the sky and distant vegetation with no identifying features evident. The subject site is in the foreground of this view. The existing development on the subject site is not visible from this view. Views of the site are limited to the landscaping along Valmar Road.

Looking East from Development along Park Sorrento

Visual Character

The primary visual features are the dense, tall hedge of oleander along the east side of Park Sorrento, and the driveways and garages of residential units, which lack large ground floor windows facing Park Sorrento, along the west side of the street. These features create a visual character of a planned commuter road at the edge of a subdivision.

Views and Viewshed

The broad nature of the street and the front yards of the residential units permit views of the foreground, middleground, and background. Foreground views are of well manicured front yards of one and two story residential units, numerous driveways, a broad residential street, and a dense oleander hedges adjoining a utility right-of-way and equestrian trail with a chain link fence. This fence is located adjacent to the MPTF parking lot, and is fully engulfed by evergreen vines creating a dense screen. The remaining area is heavily planted with mass groupings of several different species of 8' tall shrubs. Middle ground views are the landscaping of the front yards of the residential units and the utility right-of-way. Background views are of hillsides with pockets of development. Views of the subject site are limited to sporadic, partially obscured, views through the dense oleander hedge, where the site is located in the foreground.

Significance Criteria

A significant impact would result if the project exceeds the allowed height regulations, blocks a public visual resource considered significant by the community plan, or strongly contrasts with the surrounding environment through excessive bulk, signage, or architectural projections.

Significant impacts regarding visual character include the elimination of a significant natural feature or the insertion of a prominent feature that changes the original visual character of an area. Significant impacts on the viewshed consist of the loss or obstruction of scenic vistas or of views to the horizon, and the elimination or obstruction of natural features.

Environmental Impacts

The Proposed Project consists of a total of 316,700 square feet of medical use and 65,350 square feet of service/administration use on the northern portion of the site, and the development of 269 assisted living dwelling units, with associated activity/recreational space and surface parking, on the central and southern portions of the site. Each cluster of assisted living dwelling units would take on its own architectural character, while in harmony with overall campus materials, colors and scale.

The Proposed Project includes the provision of a perimeter landscape plan, as shown in **Figure 47, Landscape Plan**, page 227. This perimeter landscaping would be the single most identifying landscape element for the campus. The perimeter landscape would be a unifying element, and the only element of the campus that the majority of the public would see while driving by. For this purpose, the landscape would provide the unifying element that would be compatible with the existing surrounding neighborhoods. The perimeter landscape would provide a sense of arrival that would clearly identify points of entry for all visitors and returning residents. This would serve to separate pedestrian circulation from both on-site parking areas and off-site traffic. Finally, the perimeter landscape would also play a major role for the interior of the campus. For the resident of MPTF, the perimeter landscape, while beautifying their home, would also provide a certain level of safety as a landscape barrier. The perimeter of the MPTF campus would consist of four different landscape zones: Mulholland Drive to the east, Calabasas Road to the north, Park Sorrento to the west, and Valmar Road to the south. Each landscape zone would be developed subsequent to the proposed construction of buildings in the vicinity of each zone.

Looking South from Mulholland Drive at Valley Circle Boulevard

Phase One development that would be visible from this view point would include the Alzheimer residences in the near foreground and the Health Village in the far foreground. The Alzheimer residences would be a one-story building on the same site as the existing one story C and D wings of the existing Alzheimer building. The Health Village would be made up of three buildings, none of which would exceed three stories in height. During Phase One, the main entrance at Spielberg Drive would be redeveloped, and perimeter landscaping along the Mulholland Drive frontage would be installed. The remainder of Phase One development would not be visible from this view point.

Subsequent to the development of the Stark Villas, the development of Phase One of the Proposed Project would be perceived as in-fill of the existing MPTF campus. The Health Village buildings would respect the existing width of the setback from Mulholland Drive, thus reducing the visual prominence of the three-story buildings. The installation of coordinated landscaping along Mulholland Drive, and the separation of MPTF parking from Mulholland Drive would further minimize the prominence of the Health Village, serving to reduce the institutional appearance of the facility, and blending the campus into the surrounding neighborhood.

The landscaped perimeter along Mulholland Drive would vary in width, and would separate a public walkway along the length of Mulholland Drive from the campus access road and parking area. The walkway would be shaded by canopy trees, and landscaped with a shrub area and a perimeter fence. The fence would be planted with fast growing vines so that it would blend into the shrub foliage, becoming a living garden “sculptural element,” and not merely a protective barrier between the campus and Mulholland Drive. At the points of entry, the perimeter fence would be omitted and turf areas enlarged to visually “penetrate” the perimeter boundary. This would create a sense of arrival at the entry points. Three “heritage” sized oak trees (*Quercus lobata*) would be incorporated into the landscape design. By establishing repetitive elements along Mulholland Drive, a unifying theme would be created along the length of the campus.

Even when assessed from the current visual conditions, previous to the construction of the Stark Villas, Phase One development would not eliminate significant visual features, nor create a new prominent feature that would change the existing visual character or views from this vantage point. As a result, Phase One development would not significantly impact views from this location. Additionally, development under Phase One would be within the currently developed portion of the MPTF campus, and it would be designed to relate to the existing development. Therefore there would be no impact to the visual character from this view point under Phase One.

Phase Two development that would be visible from this view point would include the Outreach Center adjacent to the Health Village, a portion of two of the Assisted Living Villas, and an extension of the perimeter landscaping. This development would be visible in the far foreground and near middle ground. The Outreach Center would create a visual transition to the Health Village from the existing MPTF campus. Due to the distance from the view point to the Assisted Living Villas, these proposed structures would make little difference to the visual features of this view. As a result, Phase Two development would not significantly impact visual character and views from this location.

Looking North from Mulholland Drive from Southern Portion of Subject Site

Phase One development that would be visible from this view point would include the Health Village in the middle to far foreground. The Health Village would consist of three buildings, none of which would exceed three stories in height. During Phase One, the main entrance at Spielberg Drive would be redeveloped, and perimeter landscaping along the Mulholland Drive frontage would be installed. The remainder of Phase One development would not be visible from this view point.

Subsequent to the development of the Stark Villa buildings, the Phase One development would be perceived as in-fill on the existing MPTF campus. The installation of coordinated landscaping along Mulholland, and the separation of MPTF parking from Mulholland Drive would further reduce the visibility of the Health Village buildings. Without the presence of the Stark Villa buildings, the Phase One development would create a new prominent feature that would change the existing visual character from this vantage point. However, this feature would not eliminate any significant visual features or views from this vantage point. As a result, Phase One development would not adversely impact views from this location.

Additionally, development under Phase One would be within the currently developed portion of the MPTF campus, and it would be designed to relate to the existing development. Therefore there would be no impact to the visual character from this view point under Phase One.

Phase Two development that would be visible from this view point would include the Outreach Center adjacent to the Health Village, portions of two Assisted Living Villas, an extension of the surface parking, and the perimeter landscaping. This development would be visible in the near to middle foreground, depending on precise viewing location. Whereas the Outreach Center would be perceived as an in-fill project, the Assisted Living Villas would create a new prominent feature that would change the existing visual character from this vantage point (see **Figure 48, Cross Section-Key**, page 229, and **Figure 49, Cross Sections**, page 230). These new buildings and landscaping would eliminate the existing man-made mound on the site that is visible from this view point, and partially obstruct views of the natural knoll. As a result, Phase Two development would significantly impact visual character and views from this location.

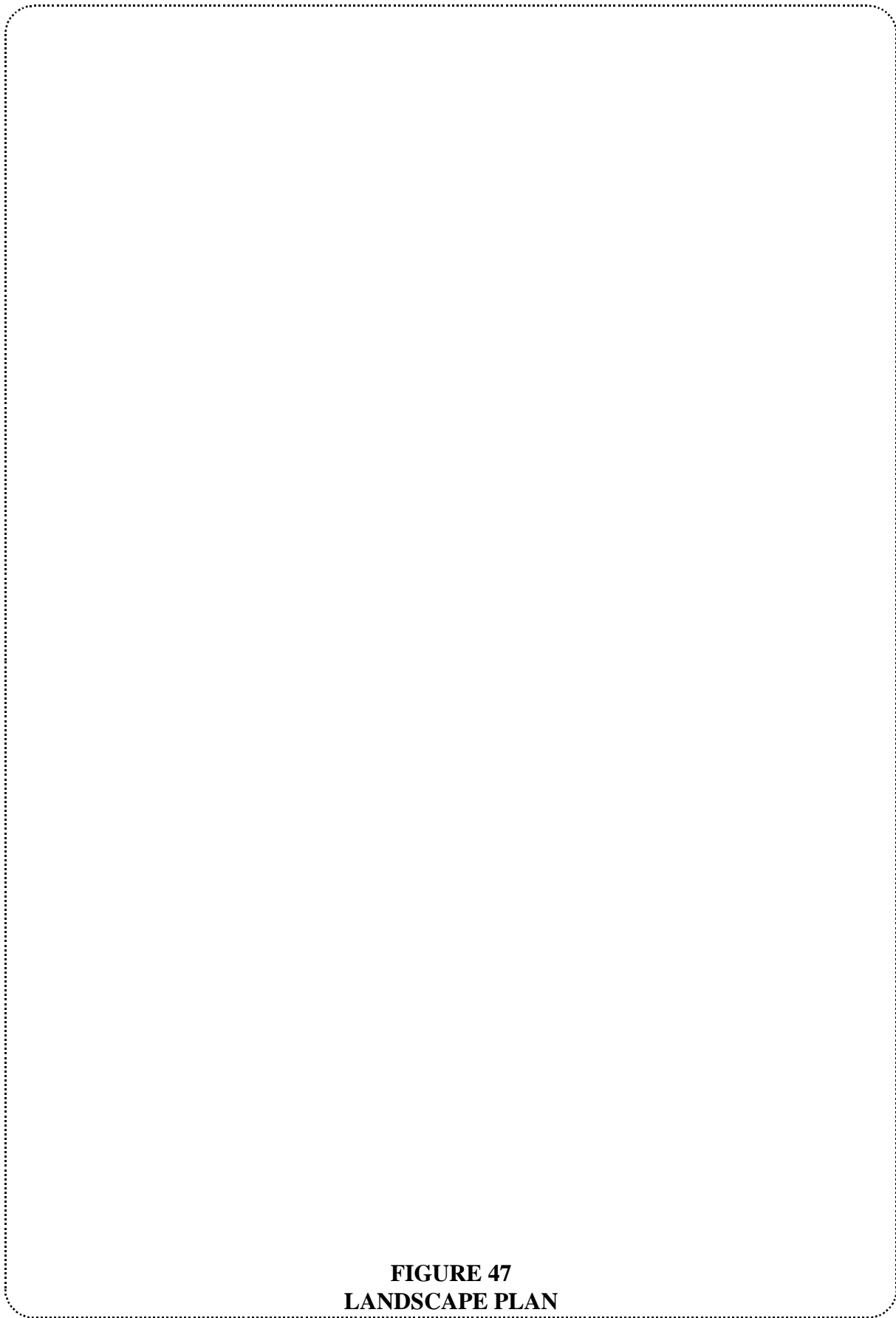


FIGURE 47
LANDSCAPE PLAN

Looking East from Calabasas Road

No development associated with either Phase One or Phase Two would be visible from this view point. Landscaping is proposed to further blend the campus in with its surroundings. The eastern end of Calabasas Road, at the corner with Mulholland Drive, would continue the landscaping themes of Mulholland Drive. To the west, the intersection of Calabasas Road and El Cañon would be designated to blend with the adjacent Old Town Calabasas street landscaping. California Coast Live Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) would be used extensively, along with other plant material, denoting the “old established western” heritage of the adjacent Calabasas area. The grade differential between the parking lot and Calabasas Road required by current street widening will result in a need for retaining walls. The walls will be highly visible from off-site, and would be included in the planning of the perimeter landscape to “soften” their appearance. The parking lot and landscape perimeter would be planted with evergreen canopy trees and tall vertical screen trees. As a result, project development would not adversely impact existing views or visual character from this location.

Looking North from Development Adjacent to Valmar Road

No development associated with Phase One would be visible from this view point. As a result, Phase One development would not significantly impact views for this location.

Phase Two development that would be visible from this view point would include the Hospice and Guest house located south of the existing creek. These buildings would not exceed two-stories, and they would be oriented away from Valmar Road. This development would be visible in the far foreground and near middle ground. To compliment the suburban landscaping of the adjacent properties, perimeter landscaping would consist of random groupings of native oaks and groundcover plantings. This character would be consistent with an open meadow or oak woodland environment. With the landscaping screening the proposed structures in this area, views would be virtually unaltered from current conditions. However, even if landscaping does not completely screen the Phase Two development, these buildings would not eliminate views of significant visual features. Nor would the proposed development create a new prominent feature that would change the existing visual character or views from this vantage point. As a result, Phase Two development would not significantly impact views for this location.

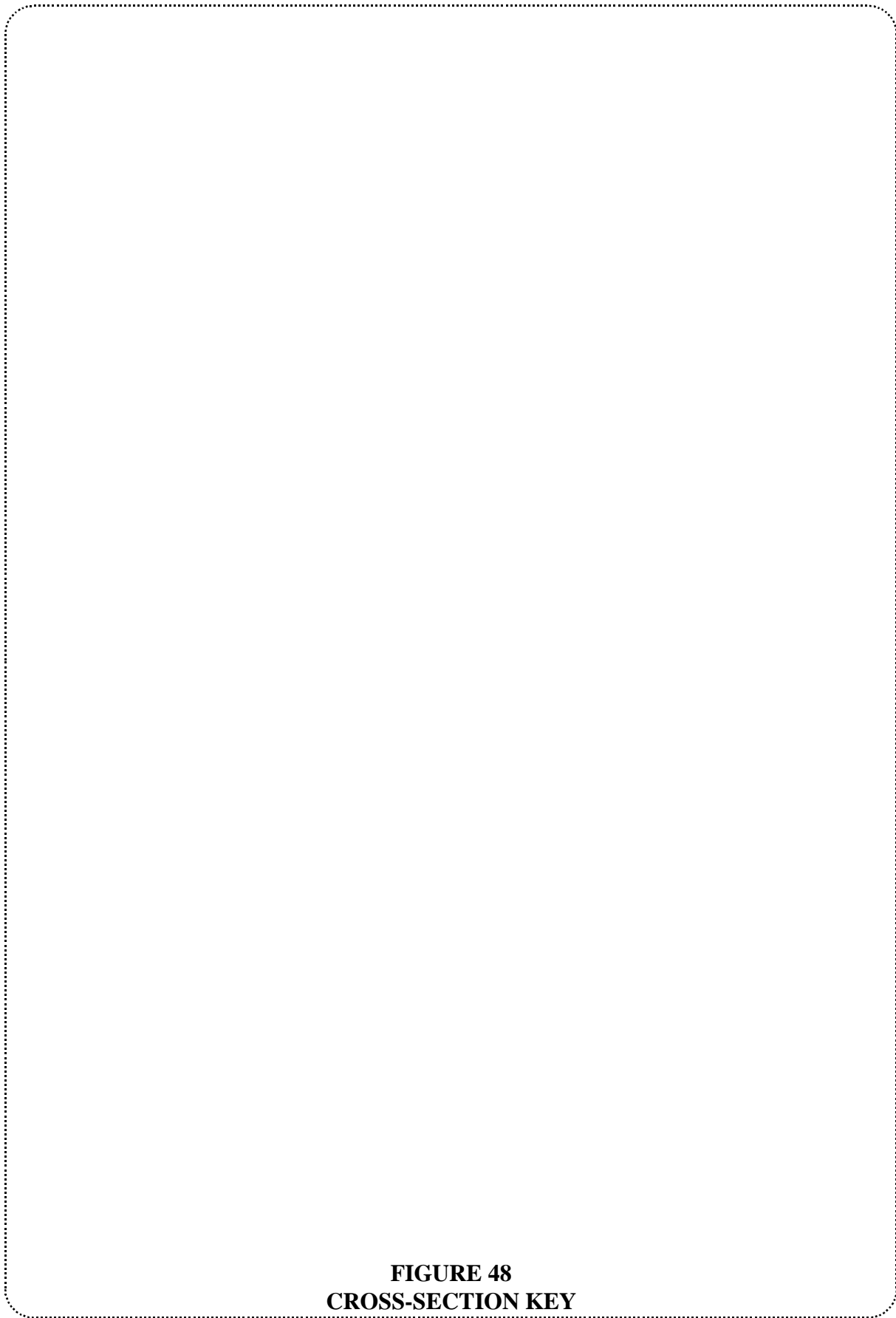


FIGURE 48
CROSS-SECTION KEY

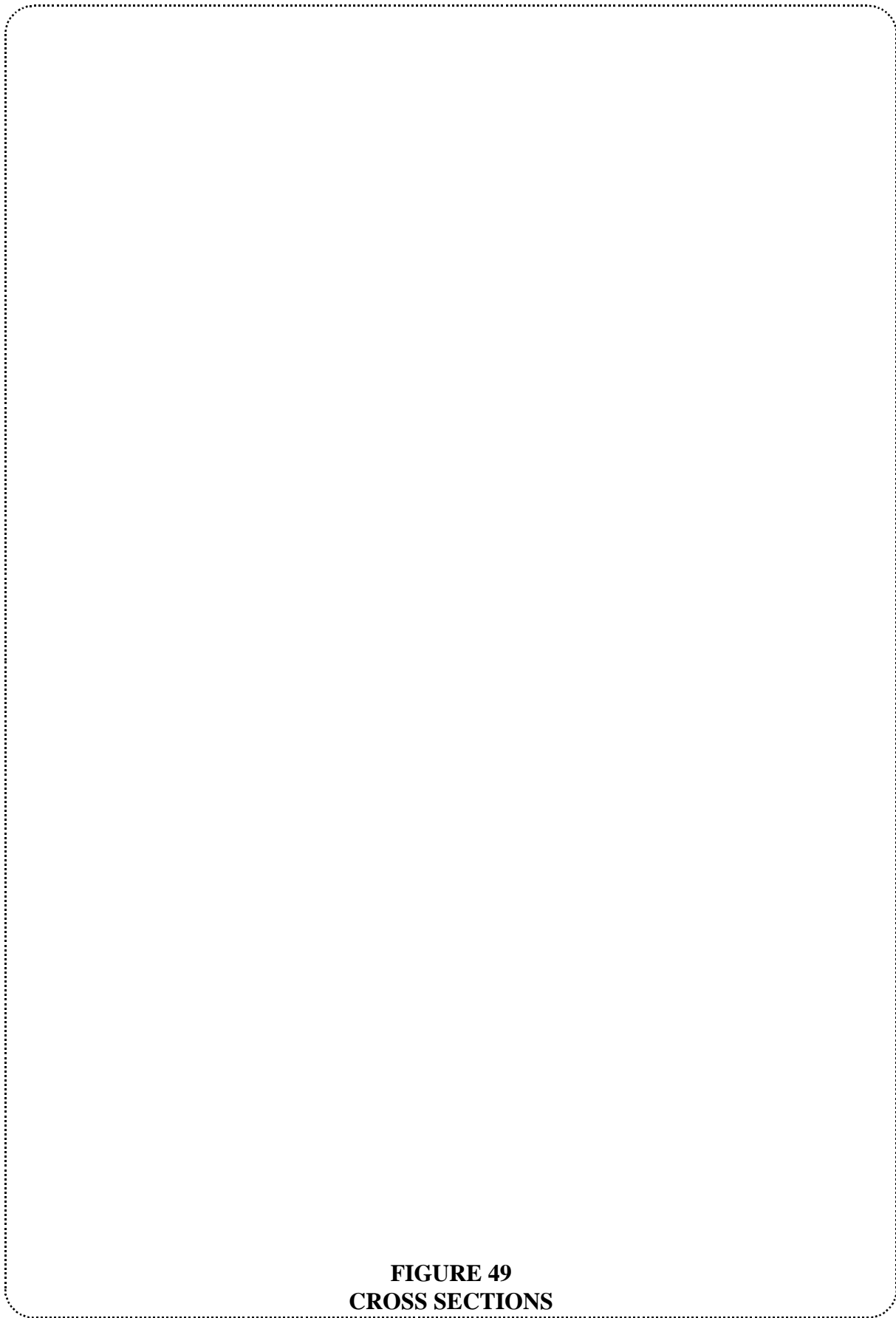


FIGURE 49
CROSS SECTIONS

Looking East from Development along Park Sorrento

No development associated with Phase One would be visible from this view point. As a result, Phase One development would not be considered to significantly impact views for this location.

Due to existing and proposed heavy landscaping, the only views of Phase Two development would be sporadic views of the upper floors of the Assisted Living Villas. The second story views from the residences on Park Sorrento would have more unobstructed views of the Assisted Living units. The proposed landscaping would not change the planting along the southern half of this frontage, with the exception of the inclusion of tall vertical evergreen trees planted in random, dense groupings. The chain link fence along Park Sorrento and the western boundary would be maintained. In addition, the adjacent on-site parking areas on the southern portion would include large canopy shade trees planted within the parking lot's landscape islands. At the extreme southern end of this perimeter, an emergency access driveway connecting to Park Sorrento is proposed. The access point would be permanently gated and secured with a 6 foot high wrought iron gate with a solid panel to obscure views. The gate would be operated per the City of Los Angeles Fire Department standards, and would be used for emergency purposes only. All pedestrian and local traffic would be denied access. This access point would be heavily landscaped to blend into the overall perimeter street landscaping, making the gate as anonymous as is possible. Depending on the existing view from specific residences, this may mean the introduction of visible development beyond the perimeter landscaping.

With the proposed landscaping, the Phase Two development would not eliminate significant visual features, nor create a new prominent feature that would change the existing visual character or views from this vantage point. As a result, Phase Two development would not significantly impact views from this location.

Cumulative Impacts

From the identified view locations only Related Project No. 11 (Stark Villas) can be seen at the same time as the proposed development. As discussed previously, the Stark Villas would be visible from Mulholland Drive, and would introduce a new prominent feature that would change the existing visual character or views. When combined with the proposed development, this introduction of a new feature on the subject site has the potential to contribute to a cumulative significant impact from view points both looking south and looking north on Mulholland Drive.

Mitigation Measures Impacts

- Prior to the issuance of a new building permit for the southern half of the site, the proposed perimeter landscaping shall be installed at least as far south as development has extended on the site.
- Site signage that is intended for identification primarily from public street shall be limited to Calabasas Road and Mulholland Drive, north of the main entrance.
- Also see mitigation measures identified in *Section IV.F.1, Artificial Light*, page 104 of this document.
- All grading adjacent to the natural knoll shall be contoured to blend with the surrounding terrain. Angular cuts and fills shall be avoided.
- Utilities along Mulholland Drive and Valmar Road shall be placed underground.
- Architectural treatment shall be designed to be aesthetically complimentary to the existing MPTF campus.
- Implementation of mitigation measures identified in *Section IV.D, Biota*, page 91.

Impacts After Mitigation

With implementation of proposed mitigation measures, the Proposed Project would still alter the visual character and views from surrounding streets. However, with the exception of views from Mulholland Drive, these impacts would be less than significant. Visual character and views looking north from Mulholland Drive would be significantly, and unavoidably altered.