IV. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS
B. AESTHETICS

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Aesthetic impact assessment generally deals with the issue of contrast, or the degree to which elements of the environment differ visually. Aesthetic features occur in a diverse array of environments, ranging in character from urban centers to rural regions and wildlands. Adverse visual effects can include the loss of natural features or areas, the removal of urban features with aesthetic value, or the introduction of contrasting urban features into natural areas or urban settings.

Since this project site is located within an urban setting, the aesthetic impact assessment concentrates on urban features. Urban features that may contribute to a valued aesthetic character or image include: structures of architectural or historic significance or visual prominence; public plazas, art or gardens; heritage oaks or other trees or plants protected by the City; consistent design elements (such as setbacks, massing, height and signage) along a street or district; pedestrian amenities; and landscaped medians or park areas.

The following analysis takes into account two attributes of aesthetic values with respect to environmental impacts: 1) aesthetics or visual character, and 2) viewshed. The former pertains to aspects of the visual character of existing development and of the proposed project such as architecture, color, design, décor, mass and height. The latter refers primarily to views of the project site from varying vantage points, as well as views from or adjacent to the site of such visual features such as historic or iconic buildings, open spaces, mountain ranges, etc.

The inherent subjectivity of issues and values of visual character creates a challenge in arriving at a conclusive determination of what constitutes a "significant impact" for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Impacts regarding visual character typically include changes to the style or ambiance of a community, the insertion of a prominent feature that changes the original visual character of an area, or the elimination of a significant natural feature (or open space).

Regarding viewshed, "significant impacts" for the purposes of the CEQA typically consist of loss or obstruction of a valued public view (e.g., scenic vista or views of the horizon or iconic structure). These impacts also include changes in the character of the viewshed that detract from a valued public view, such as the elimination or obstruction of natural and/or manmade features that were formerly part of a valued public viewshed.

Aesthetics or Visual Character

Visual Character of the Site

The project site is located in an urbanized area which has been previously disturbed by past activities. The entire project site and the surrounding area are completely paved and developed. The project site is currently developed with a single-story Wells Fargo Bank and associated surface parking lot. It is

bounded to the south by Wilshire Boulevard (designated a major highway and is a major transportation route within the City of Los Angeles), Crescent Heights Boulevard to the west, Orange Street to the northwest, multi-family residential buildings to the north and surface parking and a six-story medical office building to the east.

The one-acre L-shaped lot extends approximately 206 feet along Wilshire Boulevard. The easternmost three lots (comprising approximately 162 feet of the frontage) extend 180 feet deep. The western portion of the project site extending from Wilshire Boulevard to Orange Street along Crescent Heights Boulevard of the project site ranges from 44 feet to 50 feet wide and extends 206 feet deep along the three easternmost lots fronting Wilshire. It is a flat site with no unique landform, natural features, nor scenic resources including native trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings.

The project site was originally developed in 1947 with a residential structure constructed on the northwestern portion of the project site, a commercial structure, with approximately six store fronts, on the southern portion of the project site and an office building and repair shop on the eastern portion of the project site. In 1976 the commercial building on the southern portion of the project site was demolished and the existing commercial bank building was built. The existing surface parking replaced the residential structure in 1989 and the office building and repair shop between 2000 and 2005.

The project site is occupied by a one-story, 7,117 square foot Wells Fargo Bank and associated surface parking lot. The parking lot borders the building on the east and west sides accessed from driveways on both Wilshire and Crescent Heights Boulevards. The building is a simple rectangular structure with no distinct or unique architectural features. A flat roof overhangs the structure approximately four to five feet around the entire building. The building is constructed of a textured sand colored concrete with thick white concrete vertical elements framing the floor to ceiling windows on the east and north sides and the entrances on the west and south sides and a thick white band around the roof overhang. The ATMs are located on the north side of the building facing the parking lot. Square light fixtures are attached to the overhang and point downward on all four sides of the building. Additional light fixtures are attached to the façade of the overhang pointing outward to provide security lighting for the parking lot on all sides except for the southern side and one pole light with two fixtures is situated in the northern portion of the parking lot.

Landscaping at the site is limited to a small lawn border surrounding the building and across the sidewalk along Wilshire Boulevard and Crescent Heights Boulevard. Ficus, Pine and other ornamental trees line the sidewalk lawn along the street while small shrubs, plants and ornamental trees are dispersed around the perimeter of the building. There are a total of twelve trees, three Ficus trees along Wilshire Boulevard and the remaining nine along the west side of the project site. A concrete cinderblock wall extends around the perimeter of the parking lot ranging from approximately three feet along Crescent Heights Boulevard, Orange Street and the adjacent surface parking lot to the east to approximately five to six feet along the property line with the residential uses.

Aesthetics or Visual Character of Site Vicinity

The project site is located in the Wilshire area of the City of Los Angeles. The area is a densely developed urbanized area that is not characterized by any scenic highways or scenic resources. There are no dominant physical features on the project site or in the immediate vicinity of the project site. There are no surface water features in the immediate area or open spaces such as undeveloped fields, parks and mountains. The neighborhood is within a geographically flat area, with the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains (Hollywood Hills) approximately two and one half miles to the north.

The area surrounding the project site is developed with commercial and residential land uses, and associated surface parking lots. The property to the south of the project site, across Wilshire Boulevard, is a small retail strip mall with parking in front. The property to the east of the project site is developed with the Wilshire Medical Arts Building, a six-story mixed use structure containing limited retail stores on the first floor and medical office uses on the five upper levels. To the north, immediately adjacent to the project site, is a multi-family residential neighborhood, consisting of a of small two-story multi-family buildings. To the west of the project site, across Crescent Heights Boulevard, is the two-story Comerica Bank and associated surface parking lot. Also to the west, located along Orange Street, is a two-story multi-family building.

Commercial structures along Wilshire Boulevard in the vicinity of the project site vary widely in size and scale. The area is characterized by a mix of one- and two-story structures with surface parking abutting multi-story story structures with subterranean parking garages. Located approximately 1,200 feet east of the project site is "Museum Row" which includes the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Broad Contemporary Art Museum, the La Brea Tar Pits and the George C. Page Museum, and the Petersen Automotive Museum. The museum complex is unique along Wilshire Boulevard mixing sophisticated architecture with open space and incorporating the historic May Company building.

Along Wilshire Boulevard within approximately one-third of a mile both to the east and to the west are several buildings which are fifteen stories or more. On the south side of Wilshire, immediately to the east of the project site is a 17-story, approximately 116,000 square foot office building which was constructed in 1970. At the end of the block, on the southwest corner of Fairfax Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard is a black glass building with stainless steel balconies. The building which was completed in 1986 contains 203,000 square feet and rises 16 stories tall. Farther east, located at Wilshire Boulevard and Ogden Street is a 32 story building constructed in 1971. Several six story buildings are dispersed between the taller buildings to the east.

West of the project site along Wilshire Boulevard are several other high rises. At the southwest corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Crescent Heights Boulevard/Carthay Circle is an approximately 400,000 square foot, 21-story office building which rises 307 feet and is a steel frame structure originally built in 1973 and renovated within the last 10 years. Additional buildings include a 16-story 146,000 square foot office building constructed in the 1960s. A 19-story 215,000 square foot office tower is located on the southeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and La Jolla Avenue and a 23 story structure occupies the southeast corner of Wilshire Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard. Several other structures are five, six, 11 and 12 stories.

The buildings on both sides of Wilshire to the east and west of the project site are typically constructed to the property line without setback either at the ground floor or above. Many other smaller scale structures line Wilshire Boulevard in the vicinity, typically one- and two-story commercial structures built in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Building materials for facades include concrete, steel, glass and marble. Landscaping is not typical within this area.

Adjacent to the commercial uses, and extending to the north and south of Wilshire Boulevard and to the east and west of Crescent Heights Boulevard are residential neighborhoods including both multi-family and single family residences as well as a mix of housing types. The residential areas reflect the architectural styles of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s. North of the of the project site, the visual environment is defined by two-story duplexes and apartment buildings that have retained much of the original character of the area. South of the project site, the visual environment is characterized by smaller single family homes built in the 1920s to the1940s.

Views or Viewshed

Viewsheds typically refer to the visual qualities of the geographical area that can be viewed by the public and is defined by the horizon, topography and other natural features that give an area its visual boundary and context, or by artificial developments that have become prominent visual components of the area. There are no natural features in the project area, as noted above. Views of the project site are limited to the existing bank and associated surface parking lot. There are twelve street trees, with trunk diameters measuring 13- to 23-inches, located on the sidewalks adjacent to the project site. These street trees include Indian Laurel Fig, Ornamental Pear, and Canary Island Pine varieties. Views of the site are available from along Wilshire Boulevard, Crescent Heights Boulevard, and Orange Street.

In the vicinity of the project site, the existing viewsheds are defined primarily by the existing commercial uses. In the distance the existing viewshed includes intermittent views of the Hollywood Hills. However, as identified above, views of these ridgelines are afforded from many streets within the area surrounding the project site.

Scenic Resources

As stated above, the project site is located in a fully developed urban area of the Wilshire community. There are no significant natural features (such as rock outcroppings, bodies of water, substantial stands of native vegetation, etc.) or native California trees of particular aesthetic value (e.g., oak, sycamore, California black walnut or California bay trees) on or adjacent to the project site. While 12 trees do exist on the project site or sidewalks adjacent to the project site, all are ornamental species and are not considered a scenic resource and are planned to be replaced or preserved. There are no major open spaces and there are no aesthetically significant man-made features (such as major architectural structures,

monuments, or gardens) or historic buildings on the project site. Furthermore, the project site is not located within or adjacent to a State designated scenic highway.[1]

Light/Glare

The project site is within a densely developed area with several sources of nighttime lighting. On the project site there are approximately 16 to 20 lights installed on the underside of the roof overhang, ten to 12 lights installed at the top of the roof directed toward the parking lot and one pole light with two fixtures in the northern portion of the parking lot. Lighting associated with the surrounding land uses in the project vicinity consists of street lights along Wilshire Boulevard, Crescent Heights Boulevard and Orange Street, interior building lights, highlighting for architectural elements and security lighting in parking lots and adjacent buildings, as well as lights generated by automobiles traveling at night. The areas adjacent to the project site generally experience ambient lighting levels that are moderate (in the residential neighborhoods) to high, with the highest levels being along Wilshire Boulevard.

Glare is largely a daytime phenomenon, occurring when sunlight is reflected off the surfaces of buildings, objects (e.g., vehicle windshields), or by vehicle headlights on adjacent roadways. Excessive glare not only restricts visibility but also increases the ambient heat reflectivity in a given area. The existing building on the project site is constructed of non-reflective materials and therefore produces very little glare. Several of the newer buildings in the vicinity of the project site have employed a significant amount of glass which could cause glare.

Shade/Shadow

The issue of shade and shadow pertains to the blockage of direct sunlight by project buildings, which may affect adjacent properties. Shading is an important environmental issue because the users or occupants of certain land uses, such as residential, recreational/parks, churches, schools, outdoor restaurants, and pedestrian areas have some reasonable expectations for direct sunlight and warmth from the sun. These land uses are termed "shadow-sensitive."

Shadow lengths are dependent on the height and size of the building from which they are cast and the angle of the sun. The angle of the sun varies with respect to the rotation of the earth (i.e. time of day) and elliptical orbit (i.e. change in seasons). The longest shadows are cast during the winter months and the shortest shadows are cast during the summer months.

Winter and Summer Solstice

"Solstice" is defined as either of the two points on the ecliptic (i.e., the path of the earth around the sun) that lie midway between the equinoxes (separated from them by an angular distance of 90°). At the solstices, the sun's apparent position on the celestial sphere reaches its greatest distance above or below

[1] *City of Los Angeles General Plan, Transportation Element, September 8, 1999.*

the celestial equator, about 23 ½ of the arc. At winter solstice, about December 22, the sun is overhead at noon at the Tropic of Capricorn; this marks the beginning of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. At the time of summer solstice, about June 22, the sun is directly overhead at noon at the Tropic of Cancer. In the Northern Hemisphere, the longest day and shortest night of the year occur on this date, marking the beginning of summer. Measuring shadow lengths for the winter and summer solstices represents the extremes of the shadow patterns that occur throughout the year. Shadows cast on the summer solstice are the shortest shadows during the year, becoming progressively longer until winter solstice when the shadows are the longest they are all year. Shadows are shown for winter solstice, summer solstice and the equinox, cast from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (winter) and 9:00AM to 5:00 PM (summer) and 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (equinox).

The nearest shadow-sensitive uses are to the north, abutting the project site on Orange Street, which consist of multi-family residential properties. Multi-family and single family residential neighborhoods are located to the north, northwest and northeast of the project site for several blocks.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Thresholds of Significance

For purposes of this Draft EIR, the development of an incongruous structure relative to its location, loss of a major scenic view, or loss of a major open space resource would be considered a significant impact. According to the City of Los Angeles L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, the determination of whether the proposed project results in a significant aesthetics impact or new impacts shall be made on a case-by-case basis considering the following factors:

Aesthetics:

(a) The amount or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community, or localized area, which would be removed, altered or demolished;

(b) The amount of natural open space to be graded or developed;

(c) The degree to which proposed structures in natural open space areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site, through appropriate design, etc.

(d) The degree of contrast between proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image;

(e) The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetic value; and

(f) Applicable guidelines and regulations.

Obstruction of Views:

(g) The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (such as natural topography, settings, man-made or natural features of visual interest, and resources such as mountains or ocean);

(h) Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor, or parkway;

(i) The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption, or minor diminishment); and

(j) The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path, or trail, as opposed to a single, fixed vantage point.

Shading:

(k) A project impact would normally be considered significant if shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April), or for more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time between early April and late October).

Nighttime Illumination:

(l) The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources; and

(m) The extent to which project lighting would spill off the project site and affect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

Project Impacts

Aesthetics or Visual Character

The project site would be altered with construction of the proposed project. The most notable visual change would be the replacement of the existing building and parking lot with a 175,057 square foot (168,207 square feet of residential units and 6,850 square feet of retail space) 21-story mixed-use structure which would rise to a maximum height of 255 (see Figure II-3, Project Rendering in Section II, Project Description). The proposed project would also include the construction of four at grade town homes totaling approximately 11,106 square feet. The town homes would be located on the northwestern corner of the project site and would rise to a height of approximately 45 feet.

Valued Visual Character

The project site is located within an established commercial neighborhood containing a mix of buildings. The project site is developed with a single story concrete building and asphalt paved parking lot which is surrounded by a concrete cinderblock wall. The project site contains no valued visual character due to the current state of the site. The implementation of the proposed project would enhance the visual character of the site and immediate surrounding area, as well as the Wilshire area.

Natural Open Space

The project site is located in a highly urbanized area of Los Angeles and is approximately two and one half miles south of the foothill areas of the Santa Monica Mountains (Hollywood Hills). The project site is currently developed with a one-story bank and parking lot. The site does not contain any natural open space areas. Project implementation would involve demolition of the existing uses, but it would not involve grading of natural open space areas. Since the project site is located in an urban area, the proposed mixed-use complex will not be replacing a natural or open space area. Therefore, the project impact on grading of natural open space areas and placement of the proposed structure within open space areas is not significant.

Aesthetic Value and Image

The building would be irregularly shaped with ground floor retail and podium parking (four above grade levels of parking situated above two and one-half subterranean parking levels). The residential tower would be stepped back from the first four levels with the tallest portions of the building towards the center of the building pad to minimize the massing of the structure. The mixed-use structure would contain approximately 6,850 square feet of retail uses and 158 residential units located in the 17-story (including a roof top garden and lounge) residential tower on top of a four-story parking podium. Residential pedestrian access will be provided via a residential lobby accessible from a motor court located on Crescent Heights Boulevard, and an entry plaza located on Wilshire Boulevard. The retail space would be located along Wilshire Boulevard to create a commercially-oriented street level presence. The façade of the parking garage will employ materials and architectural accents that will achieve a residential look. Vehicular access for retail customers will be located along Wilshire Boulevard. For residential tenants vehicular access will be located along both Wilshire Boulevard and Crescent Heights Boulevard. The building, as designed, is modern in style and is intended to lend a complementary, yet distinct, commercial character which will be integrated into the Wilshire Boulevard street frontage, as well as the overall project design (See Figure II-3).

Exterior resident-only amenities would be situated on the fifth floor (terrace level) and on the roof (See Figure II-11). Amenities on the fifth floor would include outdoor recreational features such as a pool, a fire pit, fitness area, and a BBQ area. Rooftop residential amenities would include a sky lounge, and a rooftop garden (See Figure II-14). The total open space is approximately 15,425 square feet, 10,025 square feet of which is common open space available to all tenants. The remaining 5,450 square feet of open space is provided as private balconies.

Four town homes would be located on the northwestern portion of the project site and would each be between 1,700 and 1,900 square feet in size. They would be two stories, rising to a height of 45 feet. Access for both pedestrian and vehicular traffic would be provided along Orange Street.

The proposed project is designed to complement and enhance the aesthetic value and image of the surrounding area. To reduce the effects of massing of the proposed structure, the residential portion of the project (levels 5-21) would be provided in a 17-story residential tower (including a roof top garden and lounge level) set above the four-story podium parking and stepped back from the streets with the tallest

portions situated in the center of the structure. The materials on the exterior of the proposed building would consist of glass window walls, stucco with cast stone accents, exposed slab edges in typical conditions throughout elevations, gridded exterior plaster patterning, aluminum accents, metal grill work, louvers, and organic plant materials set against exterior walls. The balconies, which range in size from 100 square feet to 175 square feet depending on residential unit size, will feature powder-coated aluminum and glass railings, white or anodized aluminum pre-finished sliding-glass doors. The unit windows will be window walls with white or anodized metal, pre-finished aluminum frame accents and at least one operable window section with transoms. The building will be highly modulated with breaks and shifts in the massing and the visual impact of all exterior louvers, vent grills and other non-ornamental features will be limited.

The parking and retail portion of the building will employ similar building materials as the tower including the strata wall accents. The windows along the base of the building will employ white or anodized metal, pre-finished storefront doors and windows. Canvas and metal frame awnings will be placed at all retail openings along Wilshire Boulevard. The lobby entry canopy will be structural steel with a paint grade finish and the corner retail entry will employ a similar canopy design.

Implementation of the proposed project would replace a surface parking lot and a one-story bank building with a new, contemporary building that is visually compatible with the several newer or recently renovated high rise buildings in the vicinity of the project site. The area is slowly undergoing redevelopment to create a more dynamic landscape and skyline reflective of the scale of Wilshire Boulevard as a major transportation and activity corridor.

The project building's contemporary design incorporates several unique features including:

- "Green Roof": the use of organic materials and plants to aid in water filtration and eco construction;
- Solar roof that provides renewable energy resource that powers common areas,
- Strata Wall: incorporating unique architectural feature that links to the prehistoric features of the Page Museum and Park
- Open Space: creating a distinctive open space connecting the building to its neighborhood

The townhomes to be located on the northwestern portion of the site are similar in scale to the existing residential uses which abut Wilshire Boulevard and line Orange Street. The townhouses serve as a transition between uses. Implementation of the proposed project would include the replacement of street trees along Crescent Heights and Wilshire Boulevards. These proposed streetscape features would enhance the visual character of the site and immediate area and the impacts would be beneficial.

The proposed project does not distract from the unique image of other buildings in the area, but rather complements other uses. The proposed structure would be a modern building with a stepped design to minimize the massing of the structure. The building, as designed, is modern in style and is intended to lend a complementary, yet distinct, commercial character which would be integrated into the Wilshire Boulevard street frontage, as well as the overall project design. The structure would include a canopy on both street

elevations along Wilshire Boulevard, enhancing the pedestrian experience from existing conditions. The proposed building would include street level retail, further enhancing walkability of the area. Thus, the project building is sensitive to the visual character and image of the area and enhances the architecture of the area and pedestrian environment. Thus, project impacts to the area's aesthetic value and image would be less than significant.

Applicable Guidelines and Regulations

According to the Wilshire Community Plan, there is no Community Design Overlay for the project site and immediate area. Consequently, there are no corresponding site planning or design guidelines specifically oriented to the project neighborhood. Therefore, no impacts would occur to Applicable Guidelines and Regulations pertaining to site planning or design.

Walkability Checklist

The Walkability Checklist is the City Planning Department's first step in implementing walkability objectives. The Checklist is a framework to assist planning staff in assessing the pedestrian orientation of projects subject to site plan review. Walkability is an important component of urban design. It is a vital component of livable neighborhoods, smart growth, and transit oriented areas. The checklist identifies design elements that are important in creating an active and safe pedestrian environment. Where Community Plans and/or other adopted plans provide insufficient guidance to address the broader context of urban form and designing for pedestrians, this Checklist provides details, guidance, and rationale to enhance the pedestrian perspective and meeting pedestrian's needs. Table IV.B-1 identifies goals of the Walkability Checklist that apply to the proposed project and discusses the proposed project's level of attainment of these goals.

Table IV.B-1
Walkability Checklist

Goals	Discussion
Building Orientation • The primary entrance for pedestrians should be at grade level from the public way and be easily accessible from transit stops, with as direct a path as possible to the transit stop. Retail establishments should maintain at least one entrance from the public way with at least one door unlocked during business hours. • The main pedestrian entrance should be configured to be fully accessible per the ADA, such that an auxiliary approach for persons with mobility limitations would not be necessary.	Residential pedestrian access will be provided via a residential lobby accessible on Crescent Heights Boulevard, and Wilshire Boulevard, The retail space would be located along Wilshire Boulevard to create a commercially-oriented street level presence. As both entrances are at ground level, and the upper stories of the building are accessible by elevator, the proposed project would be fully accessible per the ADA. A bus stop is located directly in front of the proposed project site and offers a clear and accessible path to the proposed project.
Building Frontage • The façade should include a variety of features such as: a combination of different textures, colors and materials; distinctive architectural features; display windows; signage; setbacks and differentiated massing; rooflines; shade and shadow textures. • The façade should create or reinforce an existing façade rhythm. • Upper floor should be differentiated from the ground floor. • There should be no blank walls. Walls should be interesting facades by incorporating a combination of elements such as: sculpted, carved or penetrated wall surface; planters; murals; mosaics; public art; awnings; lighting. • The building frontage should include overhead architectural features, such as awnings, canopies, trellises or cornice treatments. • At corners, the building frontage should consider building cutoffs in response to any need to accommodate pedestrians and to protect pedestrian safety, security and enjoyment. • Any spaces created by setbacks, building cut-offs and/or breaks in exterior walls should be turned into active spaces, such as active plazas or courtyards. Where appropriate given the character of the street and a sidewalk that is narrower than desired, the setback should be increased to create more space for such active plazas or courtyards and/or additional pedestrian amenities or landscaping. • Where there are breaks or openings in the ground floor building façade, architectural features should be applied to create continuity across the break(s). • The building should be placed at the front property line or at the required setback; that is, the building should not be set back further than the required setback in order to be as close as possible to the	The building façade would include a variety of features that would combine to create an interesting and aesthetically pleasing visual impact. Glass window walls, gridded exterior plaster patterning, aluminum accents, plaster balcony railings, strata walls, and metal grill work, would all contribute to the creation of façade rhythm and a varied visual impact. The upper floors of the building would be stepped and differentiated from the ground floor by differing design and materials including balconies. There will be no blank walls. The building, as designed, is modern in style and is intended to lend a complementary, yet distinct, commercial character which will be integrated into the Wilshire Boulevard street frontage. While the majority of the proposed project is residential in nature, the ground level retail stores would include features typical to retail uses such as, display windows, awnings, pedestrian level signs, and entrances, which would comprise 75 percent of the ground level building façade. The building would be placed on the front property line at the required setback. Massing of the project would be reduced by incorporating the residential portion of the project into a slender tower.

Table IV.B-1 (Continued)
Walkability Checklist

front property line and maintain a strong street wall. • In non-residential uses, most (i.e., 75%) of the ground floor building façade should be devoted to pedestrian entrances, pedestrian-level display windows and/or pedestrian-level windows affording views into and out of the building interior. Display windows and other pedestrian-level windows should not be covered or otherwise blocked to prevent views during regular business hours.	
On-Site Landscaping • Canopy trees (in addition to street trees) should be provided in landscaped areas. For example, a row of trees could be provided on both sides of the sidewalk. • Landscaping should not impede pedestrian movement or views. For example, avoid tall shrubbery immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. • Trees should be considered especially where such additional vertical elements reinforce or contribute to the street wall and a sense of enclosure.	As the proposed project is located in an entirely urban environment, and the building footprint would occupy the entire site, landscaping would be similar to existing landscaping: small neat lawns bordering the site with new trees and shrubbery replacing the existing trees. Canopy trees would be planted along the sidewalk on both Crescent Heights and Wilshire Boulevards.
Off-Street Parking • Parking should be located at the rear of the building rather than adjoining the adjacent major street. • Alleys should be used to access the parking behind the building. If no alley is available, access should be created from a side street. • Vehicle access into and from the site should be accommodated with as few driveways as possible to the street; and, where available, the site plan should encourage and accommodate as much vehicle access as possible from side streets and/or alleys. • The width of each driveway should meet and not exceed the standard width identified as necessary to accommodate vehicles. • All surface parking adjoining the street should be screened by a durable barrier and landscaping that is tall enough to at least screen car headlights. • Easily identifiable pedestrian walkways should be provided from the parking to the sidewalk and to the entrance of the building. Techniques, such as landscaped lightwells and surface treatments, could be used. • All parking areas and integrated pedestrian walkways should be illuminated with adequate, uniform and glare-free lighting such that there is even light distribution and there are no harsh shadows. • Driveways that have been or are to be abandoned should be reconstructed as sidewalks. • Sub-standard driveways should be reconstructed to meet current ADA requirements.	Parking would be located entirely within two and one-half subterranean levels of parking and four above grade parking levels. Vehicular access for retail customers will be located along Wilshire Boulevard. For residential tenants vehicular access will be located along both Wilshire Boulevard and Crescent Heights Boulevard. The existing driveways would be removed and the sidewalk repaired. The interior of the parking garage would not be visible, and no surface parking would be adjoining the street. Driveways would meet all applicable standards necessary to accommodate vehicles. Parking areas and pedestrian walkways from the parking areas to the building entrance will be adequately illuminated for safety and security reasons.

Table IV.B-1 (Continued)
Walkability Checklist

Building Signage • The building façade should include pedestrian-scale signage, i.e., as a height and of a size that is visible to pedestrians, assists in identifying the structure and use, and facilitates access to the entrance. • Pedestrian level lighting should be provided on building facades and around the site along pathways.	The proposed project would include pedestrian-scale tenant signage at a pedestrian level and would be included along the retail portion of the project. Lighting would also be provided on the building façade at the pedestrian level, and around the site pathways.
Sidewalks • The sidewalk should be continuous and straight or relatively straight. • The landscape/furniture zone should maximize shade-producing street trees, including interspersing them with existing or proposed palms. • Shade trees should be planted as close to one another as possible. • The landscape/furniture zone should include features that create a buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway, especially where vehicular movement is allowed in the curb lane, which separates pedestrians form moving vehicles. Such features include bollards, planters and parkways. • The landscape/furniture zone should include street furniture. • The landscape/furniture zone should include pedestrian-level lighting. For example, such lighting could be provided with bollards that are equipped with a low level light source or mounted on decorative poles.	The proposed project would not dramatically change the sidewalks. The sidewalk would continue the same path as the existing sidewalk and be continuous and straight and is proposed to be the City standard nine feet wide. Trees would be added along the sidewalk similar to existing conditions and would offer shade and a visual buffer between the street and the proposed project. The project site would be illuminated with lighting from within the commercial portions of the proposed project, signage lighting and security lighting. No street furniture is proposed.
Utilities • Utilities should be placed underground.	Utilities would be placed underground.

As discussed above, the proposed project would be consistent with the Walkability Checklist as it applies to the proposed project. The pedestrian environment is an important asset along Wilshire Boulevard and would be enhanced by the proposed project. The project site in its current state contains no pedestrian amenities as it is a single use bank and parking lot. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would improve the pedestrian environment by providing an attractive structure that contains ground floor retail uses available to pedestrians. Therefore, the proposed project would have a positive impact

Aesthetics or Visual Character Impact Conclusion

The proposed project's potential aesthetic or visual character effects have been evaluated using the City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide to determine impact significance. Potential impacts on valued visual character, loss of natural open space, project aesthetic value and image, and applicable City guidelines and regulations regarding site planning and design were evaluated. Project implementation would result in less than significant impacts related to aesthetic or visual character.

Obstruction of Views

Views and Obstruction

The prominent natural visual features in the project area are the Santa Monica Mountains (Hollywood Hills), located approximately two and one half mile to one mile north of the project site. Views of the ridgelines of these mountains are available from other streets and locations within the residential areas located east and west of the project site. As discussed above, the project site is an urbanized area and there are no natural features or scenic resources, including trees, rock outcroppings, or historic buildings located on or in the vicinity of the project site.

Although the new structures would be significantly taller than existing uses on site, the Proposed Project would not be an anomaly to existing uses along Wilshire Boulevard. The new building would be visible from areas to the north and the south, but indistinguishable from other tall buildings from vantage points traveling along Wilshire Boulevard. Although the project would represent a structure that is unique to the project site, it would be compatible with several other uses along Wilshire Boulevard, including high rise office towers located immediately to the southwest and southeast along Wilshire Boulevard. The office tower to the southwest of the project site is approximately 50 feet taller and has approximately 250,000 square feet more than the proposed project. The proposed project does not exceed the permitted FAR or height for the project site. Project implementation would involve removal of six of the 12 existing street trees. The six trees removed as a result of project construction would be replaced per city requirements. Residential uses to the north will have altered views of the project site, however, as previously stated those views will not be unique to the general vicinity.

Views of the project site would not obstruct, totally block, partially interrupt or create a minor diminishment of a valued public view or provide a visual element that would considerably deter from a valued public view as there are no valued public views in the immediate vicinity. Therefore there would be no significant impact on public views associated with the Proposed Project.

As identified above, the only public view of a natural resource or man-made iconic feature in the area would be of the Santa Monica Mountains located to the north of the project site. Intermittent views of the mountains can be seen along the major thoroughfares in the area. Due to the topography of the Los Angeles Basin, views of the mountains can be afforded in many areas and provide a backdrop common to the area. The project site does not afford any unobstructed views that would be altered by implementation of the Proposed Project. Therefore, the impact on the view of the mountains looking north would be less than significant.

Views from a Designated Scenic Highway

None of the streets surrounding the project site are designated scenic highways or roadways. The major roadways near the project site include Wilshire Boulevard to the south, Crescent Heights to the west, Fairfax Avenue to the east and Orange Street to the north. These roadways are not designated scenic highways under the Wilshire Community Plan. Therefore, the Project impact on a designated scenic highway would be less than significant.

Views from a Public Roadway

As discussed above, views of the Santa Monica Mountains to the north of the project site are afforded from many areas surrounding the project site. The Hollywood Hills can be seen from Crescent Heights Boulevard and intermittent views of the Hollywood Hills can be seen along portions of Wilshire Boulevard. However, intervening buildings and landscaping prevent a full view of the hills in the proposed project vicinity. Further, due to the topography of the Los Angeles Basin, views of the hills can be afforded in many areas of the Basin and provide a backdrop common to the area. The proposed project is designed to minimize massing on the site with the tower situated on a north-south axis. This design has resulted in a slender tower situated on the northeastern portion of the site which would diminish view impacts of the Hollywood Hills from neighboring properties and pedestrian and motorists on Crescent Heights Boulevard. Though implementation of the proposed project may impede viewing opportunities of the hills along portions of the surrounding roadways, views of the hills can be seen elsewhere in the Basin. Further, views of the Hollywood Hills are primarily blocked by existing buildings on Wilshire Boulevard. Thus, very limited and intermittent views are currently available. Though project implementation would create a minor diminishment of this valued view (of the Hollywood Hills), views are limited and intermittent and views of the hills can be afforded in many other locations. Therefore, the impact on the view of the hills looking north from a public roadway would be less than significant.

Impact Conclusion for Obstruction of Views

The proposed project's potential effects on views have been evaluated using the City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide to determine impact significance. Potential impacts on views, obstruction of views, views from a designated scenic highway and views from a public roadway were evaluated. Project implementation would result in less than significant impacts related to obstruction of views.

Light and Glare

As previously identified, the Project Site is located in an urban area where there are high levels of ambient nighttime lighting including street lights, architectural and security lighting, indoor building illumination (light emanating from the interior of structures which passes through windows) and automobile headlights. In addition, the existing bank building and surface parking lot on the project site currently contain a variety of lighting sources.

The project site would be illuminated with lighting from within the commercial portions of the proposed project, signage lighting and security lighting in the parking levels, in the stairwells, open space areas, and in the hallways of the residential levels. These lights would either be shielded and focused on the project site or located completely indoors.

With project implementation, the total number of light sources on the Project Site would be increased as a result of a taller building with more floor area being constructed. Building materials would be used to minimize the impact of the interior lighting from the residential units on surrounding neighborhoods. The proposed project is located on Wilshire Boulevard immediately northeast of a 21-story office complex and northwest of a 17-story office tower that are also significant sources of nighttime lighting.

Additionally, although the residential uses surrounding the project site are typically two-stories, the neighborhoods adjacent to and in the vicinity of the project site are medium density residential which represent an existing and significant source of continuous nighttime lighting. Given these existing urban surrounding conditions, the additional light sources from the proposed project would not be excessive or incompatible with the surrounding land uses and impacts would not be significant.

The proposed project would involve the replacement of a concrete single-story building with limited window panels and a paved asphalt surface parking lot with a 21-story mixed use tower. The primary building material for the skin of the upper tower will be stucco with cast stone accents. However, glass comprises approximately 40% of the overall skin. The podium of the building will be clad in a combination of stucco, stone, glass, and plant materials. Although there will be significantly more glass at the project site, non-reflective and non-glare glass will be employed.

Reflective light or glare is primarily a daytime phenomenon caused by sun light reflecting from highly finished surfaces, such as window glass or reflective materials, and to a lesser degree from lightly colored surfaces. Causes of adverse glare typically include buildings having exterior facades largely or entirely comprised of highly reflective glass or mirror-like material from which the sun reflects at a low angle in the periods following sunrise and prior to sunset. The proposed project would not include exterior materials that would create glare impacts, such as reflective metal or glass materials and ornamentation. Compliance with the Los Angeles Municipal Code's reflective materials design standards (City Municipal Code Lighting Regulations, Chapter 9, Article 3, Section 93.0117), which limits reflective surface areas and the reflectivity of architectural materials used, would reduce any adverse impact from window glass glare. Implementation of the project would therefore not produce glare which would create a visual nuisance, a hazard or result in differential warming of adjacent residential properties. The project impact with regard to glare would be less than significant.

Shade/Shadow

Thresholds of Significance

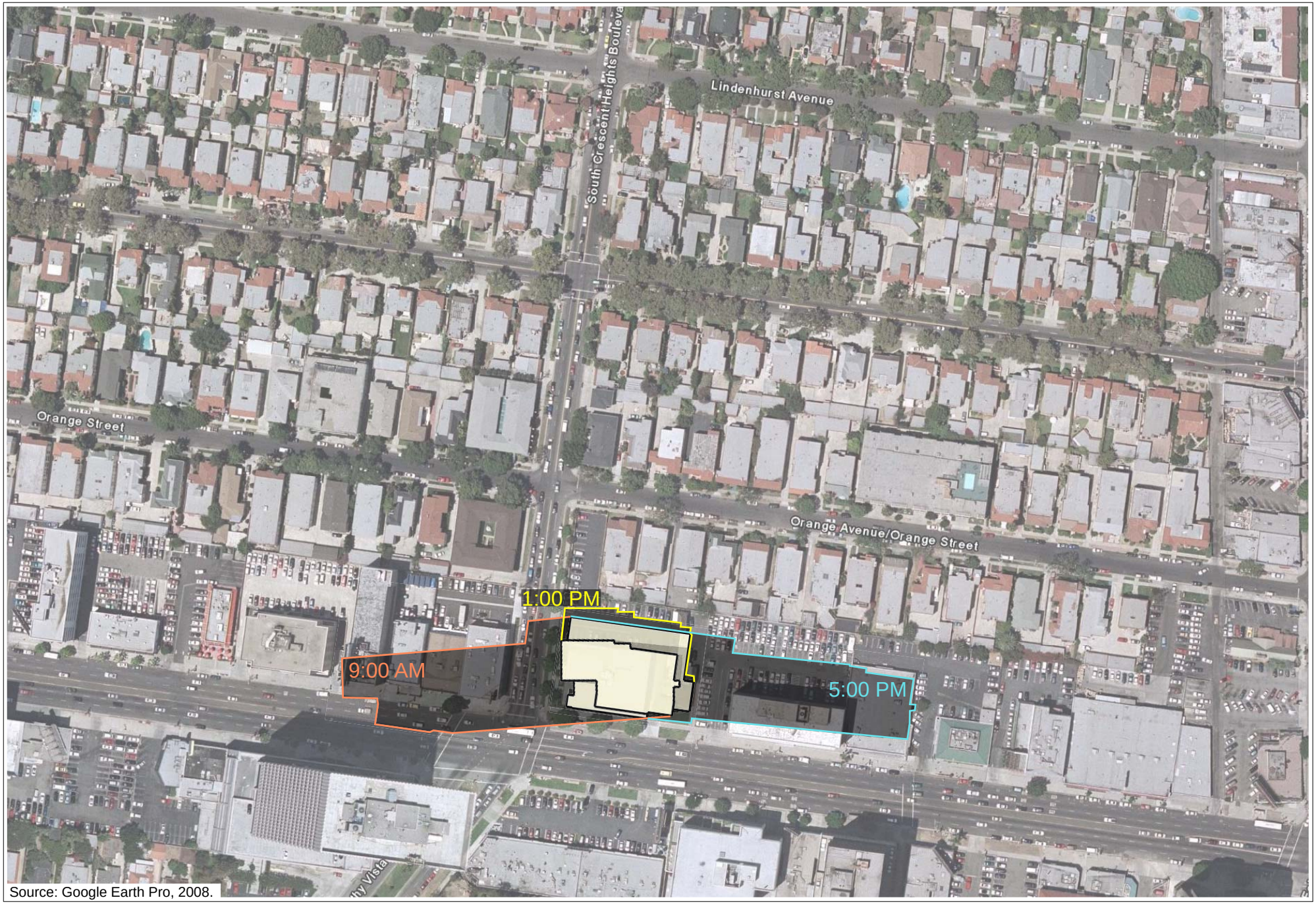
Determination of impacts from shadows is an objective assessment. According to the L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, a shadow impact is considered significant if shadow-sensitive uses (residential, recreational/parks, churches, schools, outdoor restaurants, and pedestrian areas) would be shaded by Project-related structures for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April), or for more than four hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October). For the purposes of this study the thresholds outlined above will be used. The analysis contained below analyzes the impacts of shadows generated during the summer and winter solstice, as this would depict the most extreme shadow scenario (summer solstice) and the least extreme scenario (winter solstice).The Spring and Fall Equinoxes are not analyzed for this reason. Further, as the existing onsite building is single-story, only minimal shadows would be expected to be generated under existing conditions.

Summer Shadows

Figure IV.B-1, Summer Solstice Shadows, presents project summer shadows and the potential impacts on surrounding uses. Morning shadows at 9:00AM from the Project Site would fall almost directly west shading the street, sidewalk, and three commercial structures along Wilshire Boulevard to the west of Crescent Heights Boulevard. By noon the shadows would shift to the north, and would be much shorter, shading only the Project Site. At 5:00PM the shadows would be cast to the east, shading the adjacent surface parking lot, six-story medical building, and commercial structure to the east of the medical building on Wilshire Boulevard. No shadows would be cast on sensitive uses during the summer or shadows on sensitive uses exceeding the City's thresholds. Consequently, there would be no summer shadow impacts to shadow-sensitive land uses surrounding the Project Site.

Winter Shadows

The sun angle during the winter solstice is responsible for casting the longest shadows of the year, with peak shadows occurring shortly after sunrise and before sunset. Figure IV.B-2, Winter Solstice Shadows presents winter shadows and their potential impacts on surrounding uses. As shown in this figure, winter shadows from the Project Site would be cast primarily to the north. At 9:00 AM, shadows would be longest towards the northwest, shading portions of approximately 10 multi-family buildings on the south and north sides of Orange Street and the south side of 6th Street. At Midday (noon) shadows to the north would be shorter and would shade five and a portion of one multi-family structure on the south and north sides of Orange Street. At 3:00 PM the shadows shift eastward, shading either portions of or the entire building of 20 multi-family structures on the south and north sides of Orange Street and the south and north sides of 6th Street. The three residential buildings abutting the project site would be shaded both from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM and therefore would be shaded for more than 3 hours exceeding the City's threshold. Consequently, winter shadow impacts to these three surrounding shadow-sensitive land uses would be considered significant.



Source: Google Earth Pro, 2008.

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NORTH

0 100 200 300 400
Scale (Feet)

Figure IV.B-1
Summer Solstice Shadows
June 21st

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Development of the proposed project in conjunction with the related projects would result in redevelopment or infilling of residential, and commercial land uses in the mid-Wilshire community. Development of these projects in conjunction with the proposed project would result in a substantial change to the visual environment. However, these projects would redevelop and revitalize sites and an area that is currently underutilized, thereby improving the visual character of the area. This cumulative development would also be consistent with the urban character of Wilshire Boulevard and with the concept of increased development density in Regional Commercial Centers that is encouraged in regional and local plans, including the Wilshire Community Plan.

The City of Los Angeles Planning Department shall review any development project within its jurisdiction, which would ensure that the development of the related projects would be consistent with the height, mass and visual character of the existing urban Wilshire community. In addition, any development project would be reviewed for its glare and shade and shadow generation and impacts. Therefore, the proposed project in conjunction with the related projects would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts with regard to the aesthetic and visual character of the area.

MITIGATION MEASURES

No feasible mitigation measures are available to mitigate the impacts from the winter solstice shadows on the three buildings immediately adjacent to the project site to the north. No mitigation measures are required to address any other issue areas as there are no other significant impacts.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

The project would not significantly diminish the valued visual character or image of the immediate neighborhood and does not involve grading or removal of natural open space areas. Project impacts relative to blockage, partial interruption or minor diminishment of existing valued public views of natural features such as the Santa Monica Mountains (Hollywood Hills), or man-made features would be less than significant. However, impacts from the winter solstice shadows on the three properties directly north of the project site would remain significant and unavoidable as there are no feasible mitigation measures available. Section VI of this EIR includes a reduced height alternative that was selected in part, in an effort to reduce the project's shadow impacts.