Initial Study

French Hotel

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°F	degrees Fahrenheit
µg/kg	micrograms per kilogram
µg/L	micrograms per liter
AB	Assembly Bill
ADT	average daily traffic
Alquist-Priolo	Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act
AMSL	above mean sea level
AST	aboveground storage tank
bgs	below ground surface
BMP	best management practice
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Cal/OSHA	California Occupational Safety and Health Administration
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	climate action plan
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CCAA	California Clean Air Act
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFC	chlorofluorocarbon
CFG Code	California Fish and Game Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CH_4	methane
CNDDB	California Rare Plant Rank
CNEL	community noise equivalent level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
cy	cubic yard
dB	decibel
dB(A)	A-weighted decibel
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
EIR	environmental impact report
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	federal Endangered Species Act

GHG	greenhouse gas
GIS	geographic information system
gpm	gallons per minute
GPS	Global Positioning System
GSF	gross square feet
GWP	global warming potential
HFC	hydrofluorocarbon
HRA	health risk assessment
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
I-	Interstate
IS	initial study
L_{dn}	day-night average sound level
L_{eq}	equivalent continuous sound level
L_{max}	maximum sound level
L_{min}	minimum sound level
LOS	level of service
LUST	leaking underground storage tank
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
mg/kg	milligrams per kilogram
mg/L	milligrams per liter
MMRP	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
MMT	millions of metric tons
MND	mitigated negative declaration
mpg	miles per gallon
mph	miles per hour
MSCP	Multiple Species Conservation Program
MT	metric ton
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NCCP	natural community conservation plan
ND	negative declaration
NO	nitric oxide
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NO_x	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
O&M	operations and maintenance
O_3	ozone
OEHHA	California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
PFC	perfluorocarbon
PM	particulate matter

PM_{10}	particulate matter measuring no more than 10 microns in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$	fine particulate matter measuring no more than 2.5 microns in diameter
Porter-Cologne Act	Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	California Public Resources Code
RAQS	Regional Air Quality Strategy
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
ROG	reactive organic gas
ROW	right-of-way
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SAA	streambed alteration agreement
SB	Senate Bill
SF_6	sulfur hexafluoride
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SO_x	sulfur oxides
SR-	State Route
SVOC	semivolatile organic compound
SWPPP	stormwater pollutant prevention plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TCR	tribal cultural resource
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
v/c	volume to capacity
VdB	vibration decibel
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound

Section 1 Project Description

1.1 Project Location

Almquist Development + Investment, the project applicant ("Project Applicant" or "Applicant") is requesting approval to rehabilitate and develop a hotel and ancillary uses on a 1.68-acre property located at 31861 – 31871 Camino Capistrano in the City of San Juan Capistrano, Orange County (APNs: 121-150-28, 121-150-29, and 121-150-30) ("Project Site") with a proposed 70-room boutique hotel consisting of six buildings with a restaurant, event spaces, fitness center, pool area, a public gathering space, and on-site valet parking ("Project" or "Proposed Project"), in the City of San Juan Capistrano, Orange County (see Figure 1, Regional Location, Figure 2, Local Vicinity, and Figure 3, Aerial Photograph). The Project involves the restoration and rehabilitation of the Domingo Yorba and Casa Manuel Garcia Adobes, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places, for use as guest rooms and dining areas integrated within the overall hotel design. Regional access to the Project Site would be provided by the Interstate 5 Freeway located west of the Proposed Project and would be accessed via Camino Capistrano.

1.2 Environmental Setting

1.2.1 Existing Land Use

The Project Site is currently developed with the vacant Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes which are located along Camino Capistrano. The remainder of the Project Site consists of largely disturbed, unpaved, and unmaintained land, including areas of bare soil, overgrown vegetation, and remnants of former outbuildings and storage areas.

1.2.2 Surrounding Land Use

The Project Site is located in the historic downtown core of San Juan Capistrano, an area characterized by a mix of commercial, office, cultural, and recreational land uses. North of the Project Site are additional commercial and office buildings, including the Don Juan Avila Adobe, which is listed in the Inventory of Historic and Cultural Landmarks (IHCL). South of the Project Site is El Adobe Restaurant, which is also listed in the IHCL. East of the Project Site are the railroad tracks and Los Rios Street. West of the Project Site, the property is bordered by Camino Capistrano, Veteran's Park, and the Essinger Building, which is also listed in the IHCL.

1.3 Proposed Land Use

The proposed 70-room boutique hotel would be comprised of two existing buildings, three new buildings and a car lift structure as follows: the Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe ("Building 1"), a new one-story building for the hotel's kitchen and dining ("Building 1A"), a new one-story barn-style event building ("Building 2"), a new three-story building with lobby and guest rooms ("Building

3"), the Domingo Yorba Adobe ("Building 4") and the car lift structure ("Building 5"). The Project will include hotel amenities such as a pool area, gym, outdoor patio, and a public gathering area (See Figure 4, Site Plan).

Building 1 – Existing Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe

The Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe ("Garcia Adobe"), is an existing two-story Monterey-style structure of approximately 6,300 square feet, constructed circa 1840s.

The first floor would serve as an indoor dining area, while the second floor would include two guest rooms that can function independently or as a combined suite. The building would be restored to its 1840s appearance through structural strengthening, balcony and ornamental detail repair, and in-kind stucco and woodwork restoration. Approximately 2,900 square feet of non-contributing additions that were added in 1880-1890 timeframe along the north and rear of the original adobe will be removed to reduce structural loads and return the Garcia Adobe to its original historic form.

Additional improvements include a new exterior stairway (replacing the location of the stairway facing Camino Capistrano) and drainage upgrades. A natural color palette featuring alabaster white for the main building and hickory smoke brown for architectural accents would be used. The building would also include signage which draws inspiration from the original 1880s French Hotel sign design. Historically, the Garcia Adobe operated as a hotel and general store, with signage identifying it as the French Hotel visible along Camino Capistrano. The proposed eave mounted identity sign, centered on the upper façade and displaying the name "French Hotel" at approximately 75 square feet, reflects the historic use and location. In addition, a 60-sqaure-foot wall-mounted entry sign is proposed above the new driveway entry identifying hotel parking, along with other minor building identification signage. See Figure 5, Building 1 Elevations.

Building 1A – New Kitchen and Dining Building

This new one-story building would be approximately 2,925 square feet in size and would be located immediately west of the Garcia Adobe. The building would be located approximately six inches from the Garcia Adobe and would be connected to Building 2. Building 1A will function as the hotel's central kitchen and indoor dining and bar area, supporting the hotel's operation and event space in Building 2. The south elevation features a large, metal-framed sliding barn door system that creates a glass-wall effect and provides access to the exterior patio. The west and north elevations will feature dark brown board and batten siding. The building features a flat roof with gable sides, which follows the natural downward slope of the property with a basement level, and reaches a maximum height of 17 feet.

Building 2 – New Event Barn

This new one-story barn-style building would be located west of the Garcia Adobe and would be attached to the northeast corner of Building 1A and total approximately 6,000 square feet. The building would be 28 feet tall at the roof ridge and is designed to reference the historic barns that once occupied the site. Building 2 will function as an event space with supporting facilities. Proposed materials include wood with a weathered appearance and stone siding, a dark brown standing seam metal roof, and an aluminum-framed storefront window system. See Figure 6, Building 2 Elevations.

Building 3 – New Main Hotel Building

This new three-story building would be located towards the rear of the property and total approximately 39,249 square feet with 67 guest rooms. The three-winged building would wrap around a central pool deck and would be approximately 43 feet tall. The building would be located approximately 167 feet from Camino Capistrano. The building would include a central lobby and bar area that connects directly to the outdoor pool deck. The central wing of the building contains 31 guest rooms, the northern wing contains 16 guest rooms and the southern wing contains 20 guest rooms. The size of each guest room varies between 400 and 800 square feet. The second and third floors have balconies facing the pool and exterior walkways on the opposite sides of the building. The overall design draws inspiration from agrarian and mission heritage, featuring gabled rooflines, stone accents, wood-toned brown siding, lighter plaster walls, and dark brown metal railings and detailing. See Figure 7, Building 3A Elevations, Figure 8, Building 3B Elevations, and Figure 9, Building 3C Elevations.

Building 4 – Existing Domingo Yorba Adobe

The Domingo Yorba Adobe ("Yorba Adobe"), is an existing one-story Monterey-style structure dating to circa 1830s. The Applicant proposes to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the Yorba Adobe, removing the non-historic 2,900 square-foot rear additions constructed between 1900 and 1936. A new, smaller rear addition will be built to house restrooms and service spaces in compliance with current building codes, resulting in approximately 1,493 square feet of conditioned space. The Yorba Adobe will function as an ancillary space for the hotel, serving flexible roles such as a suite, event preparation room, or bridal "get-ready" area. As detailed in the Applicant's Sign Program, proposed signage on the Yorba Adobe includes an eave-mounted identity sign centered on the upper façade facing Camino Capistrano, displaying the name "French Hotel" and measures approximately 45 square feet, as well as other minor building identification signage. See Figure 10, Building 4 Elevations.

Building 5 – New Parking Lift

A new freestanding, 2,450-sqaure-foot mechanical parking structure that would accommodate up to 66 vehicles via a valet-operated car-lift system would be located approximately 24 feet west of

the Yorba Adobe. The mechanical structure will be screened on all four sides with a barn-style façade that uses wood with a weathered appearance and stone materials that are consistent with the Project's overall design palate. The site's approximately 12-foot drop in grade from Camino Capistrano minimizes the visibility and prominence of the parking lift from Camino Capistrano and other nearby properties. See Figure 11, Building 5 Elevations.

A development summary for the Proposed Project is presented in Table 1, Site Information.

Table 1. Site Information

Tenant/Space	Use	Area	Parking Requirement	Stalls Required
Building 1	2nd Floor Hotel	2 Keys	1/Key	2
	1st Floor Hotel Dining Area	N/A	N/A	0
Building 1A	Hotel Kitchen & Bar	N/A	N/A	0
Building 2	Hotel Kitchen Space, & Conference Rooms	N/A	N/A	0
Building 3A	Hotel	16 Keys	1/Key	16
Building 3B	Hotel	31 Keys	1/Key	31
Building 3C	Hotel	20 Keys	1/Key	20
Building 4	Hotel	1 Key	1/Key	1
Building 5	Car Lift	N/A	N/A	0

Source: Bickel Group Architecture 2025.

1.3.1 Architectural Detail

The Project has been designed with a color palette and material selection that complement the surrounding historic context. The earth-toned hues of the new buildings allow them to blend with the environment and avoid drawing attention away from the two historic adobes on the Project Site and the surrounding historic structures, including the El Adobe Restaurant, the Esslinger Building, and the Don Juan Avila Adobe when viewed from Camino Capistrano. The integration of compatible architectural details and forms that remain distinguishable from the historic resources, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, ensures that the new improvements are physically and aesthetically compatible with the surrounding historic setting. The Project's setbacks, massing, color palette, materials, and landscape design ensure that the new improvements do not diminish the historic character or prominence of these historic landmarks.

1.3.2 Landscape Standards

The landscape design would include drought-tolerant, low- to moderate-water-use plants that meet the City of San Juan Capistrano's Water Efficient Landscape Guidelines (Ordinance 1054) and the City of San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code (SJCMC) Section 8-20.01. Additionally, the Proposed Project would feature large specimen oak trees (Quercus spp.) in 96-inch boxes, designed to soften the transition between the historic structures and new development.

1.3.3 Lighting Standards

The Proposed Project would introduce new sources of exterior lighting associated with the hotel use, including architectural lighting, landscape lighting, parking and car lift illumination, pathway lighting, and pool area lighting. Interior lighting would also be visible through windows. Locations of exterior lights would comply with the City of San Juan Capistrano's safety and lighting standards (SJCMC Sec. 9-3.529). Additionally, the Project would comply with applicable building and electrical codes, which regulate light intensity, shielding, fixture design, and directionality to minimize light spillover and glare onto adjacent properties and public rights-of-way.

Project lighting would be designed with full cutoff or shielded fixtures directed downward to reduce light trespass and skyglow. Lighting levels would be the minimum necessary to provide safety and security for guests and employees. The use of warm-toned, low-reflectivity materials and earth-toned finishes would reduce the potential for daytime glare. The proposed car lift would be internally illuminated as needed for safety, and lighting would be shielded and directed inward to avoid spillover onto surrounding properties or roadways.

1.3.4 Access and Roadway Improvement

Vehicular access to the Project Site would be provided via a 20-foot-wide single drive-way along the northern property line (see Figure 12, Fire Access Site Plan), which will be accommodated with removal of the non-historic one-story addition attached to the north side of the Garcia Adobe. The existing driveway between the Garcia and Yorba Adobes will be converted into a publicly accessible pedestrian walkway and gathering space that will allow pedestrian access into the Project Site.

New pedestrian-scale signage will be installed at key access points. Additionally, a parapet-mounted "French Hotel" identity sign is proposed on the Garcia Adobe.. The Proposed Project also includes directional signage near the new entry drive, all designed to be compatible in scale, color, and materials with the historic setting.

The Proposed Project will be served entirely by valet parking, where guests will drive into the Project Site and leave their vehicles with staff at the hotel lobby entry. Vehicles will be parked in the mechanical car lift by hotel staff. In addition, there are two proposed loading zones, one located within the Project Site at the northern portion of the property and another along Camino Capistrano, which will result in the loss of three existing on-street parking spaces in front of the Garcia Adobe. Both loading zones will accommodate hotel service, deliveries, and guest drop-offs.

1.3.5 Parking

The Proposed Project would provide 70 stalls where 70 are required. The Proposed Project would provide 2 unrestricted parking stalls, 2 ADA parking stalls, one which is for EV charging. 66 stalls would be included in the parking puzzle , 10 of which would be electric vehicle capable.

1.3.6 Utilities

Water and wastewater services for the City of San Juan Capistrano are provided by the Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD). SMWD assumed responsibility for the City's municipal water and sewer systems following approval of annexation by the Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission. The District now operates and maintains the City's potable water distribution system and wastewater collection system and is responsible for treatment and regulatory compliance. Potable water supplies consist primarily of imported water from regional wholesale providers, supplemented by local groundwater and recycled water supplies where available. SMWD serves as the primary retail water and wastewater service provider for properties within the city limits, including the Project Site.

1.3.7 Solid Waste

CR&R Incorporated provides solid waste hauling services for the City of San Juan Capistrano. Cans are emptied once a week on regularly scheduled pick-ups with the local provider using standard trash trucks.

1.3.8 Electrical and Natural Gas Utilities

San Diego Gas & Electric provides energy services to the City of San Juan Capistrano. All on-site dry utilities would be provided through underground infrastructure except the above-ground transformers. Gas is existing on the property and will be routed to serve the proposed kitchen.

1.3.9 Storm Drains

The Proposed Project would connect to the City of San Juan Capistrano storm drain network, and all storm drain facilities would be designed to conform to Orange County standards.

1.4 Project Phasing

Construction within the project boundary would be completed in one phase and would take approximately 10 months.

1.5 Existing Zoning and General Plan

The Project Site has a zoning designation of Town Center (TC) and has a General Plan Land Use Designation of General Commercial (GC).

1.6 Project Approvals and Permits

The City is the lead agency under CEQA and has the principal approval authority over the Proposed Project. A responsible agency is a public agency other than the lead agency that has responsibility for carrying out or approving a project (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15381, and California Public Resources Code, Section 21069). The following discretionary actions would be required to implement the Proposed Project (Table 2, Anticipated Discretionary Actions/Approvals).

Table 2. Anticipated Discretionary Actions/Approvals

Lead Agency	Action
City of San Juan Capistrano	Architectural control for construction of the Proposed Project
	Tree Removal Permit for the removal of any tree with a trunk diameter of six inches or greater measured at three feet above grade.
	Site Plan Review by the Cultural Heritage Commission for modification to a site listed on the City's Inventory of Historic and Cultural Landmarks
	Conditional Use Permit for the Hotel use Grading Plan Modification for changes in grade to the site Sign Program for a comprehensive sign package for the development site
Responsible Agencies	**Action**
State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)	Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the General Activity Construction National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit
San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)	NPDES Permit and Temporary Construction Dewatering Permit (if necessary)
Orange County Fire Authority	Plan Approval, including emergency access and fire water supply
South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)	Construction-related permits as applicable
Santa Margarita Water District	Plan approval, including water and sewer connections
California Department Alcoholic Beverage Control	On-site alcohol sales permit
Orange County Health Care Agency	Restaurant and Swimming Pool Permits/Licenses

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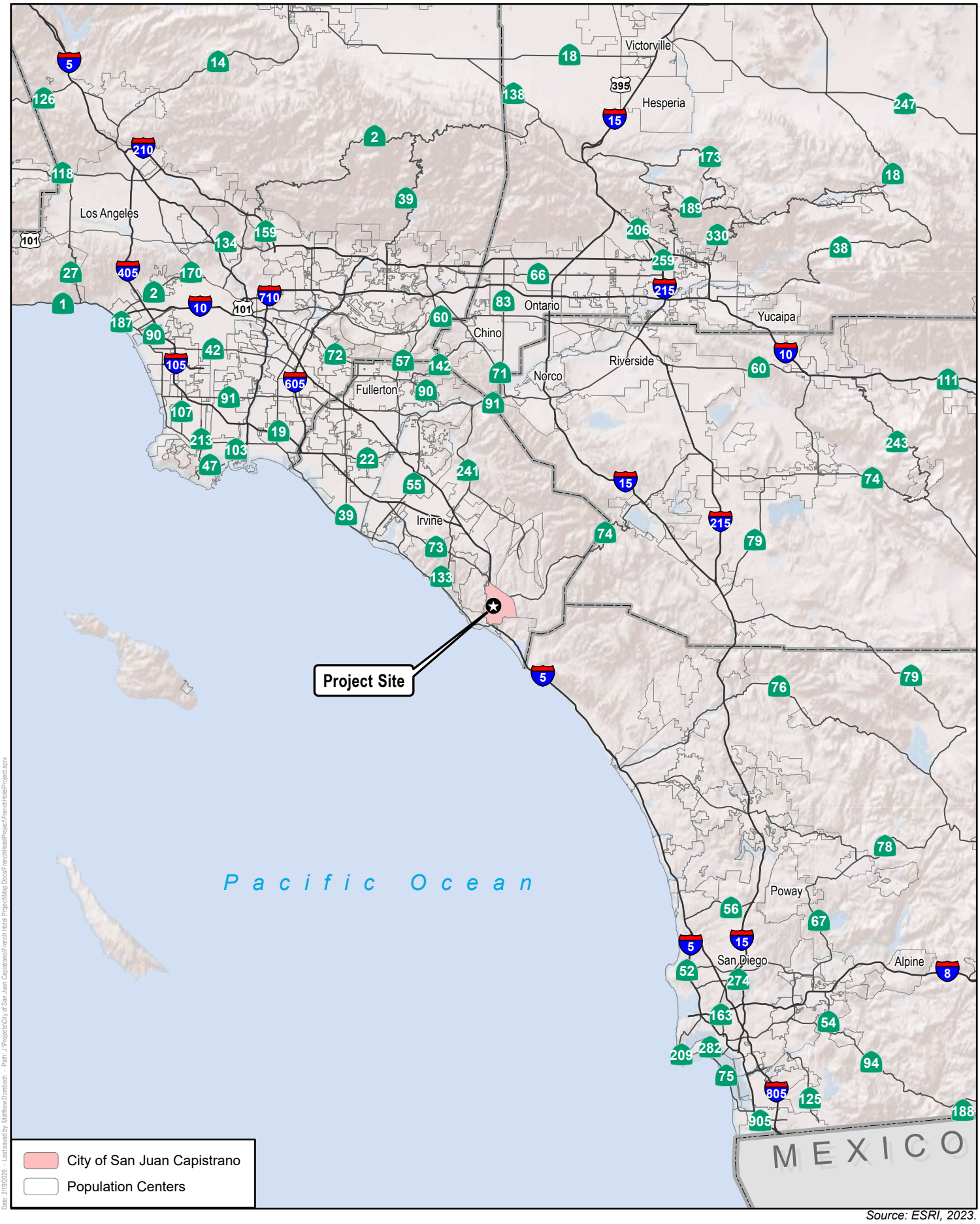

Source: ESRI, 2023.

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Figure 1

Regional Location

French Hotel Project

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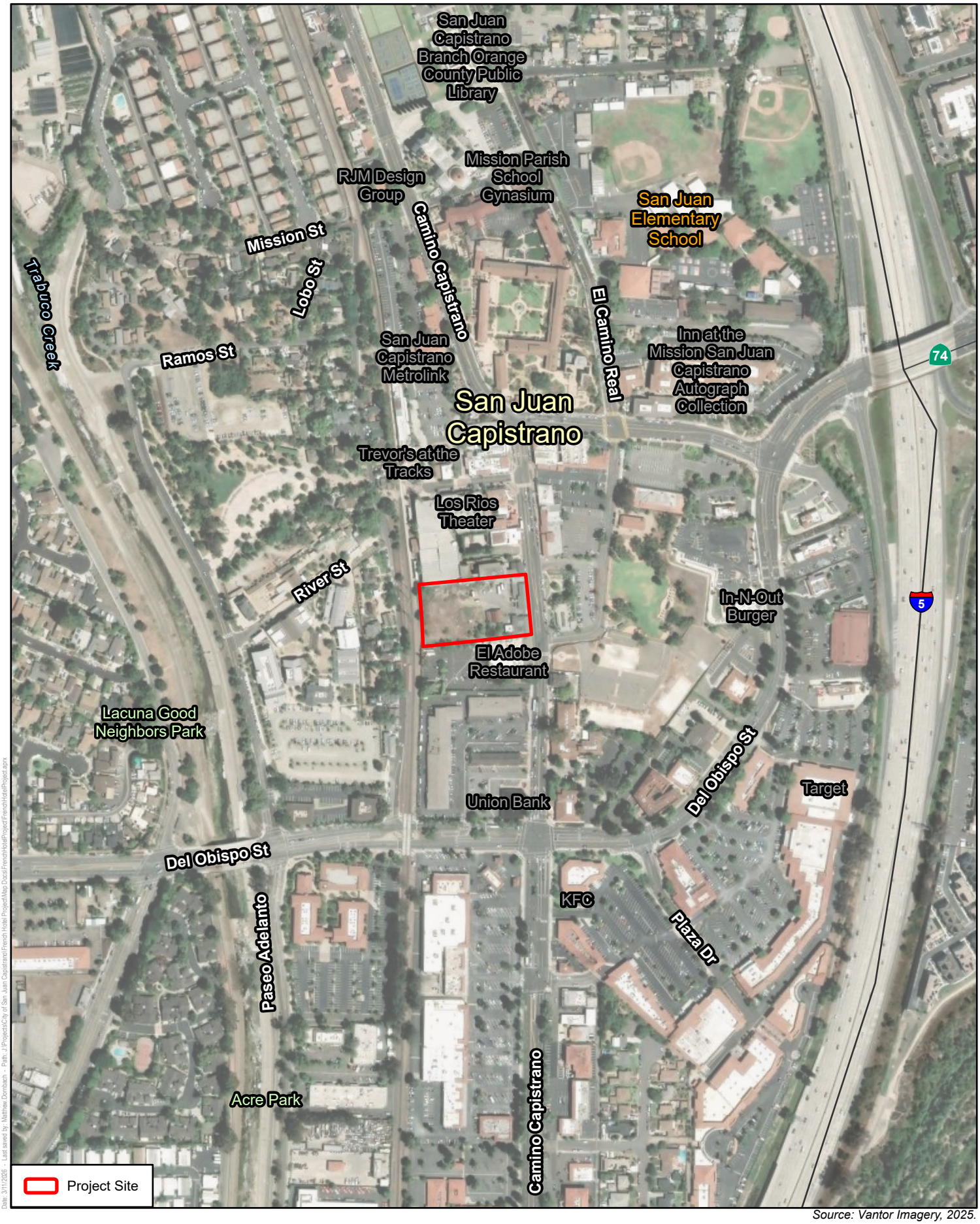

Source: Vantor Imagery, 2025.

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Feet

Figure 2

Local Vicinity

French Hotel Project

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Source: Vantor Imagery, 2025.

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Figure 3

Aerial Photograph

French Hotel Project

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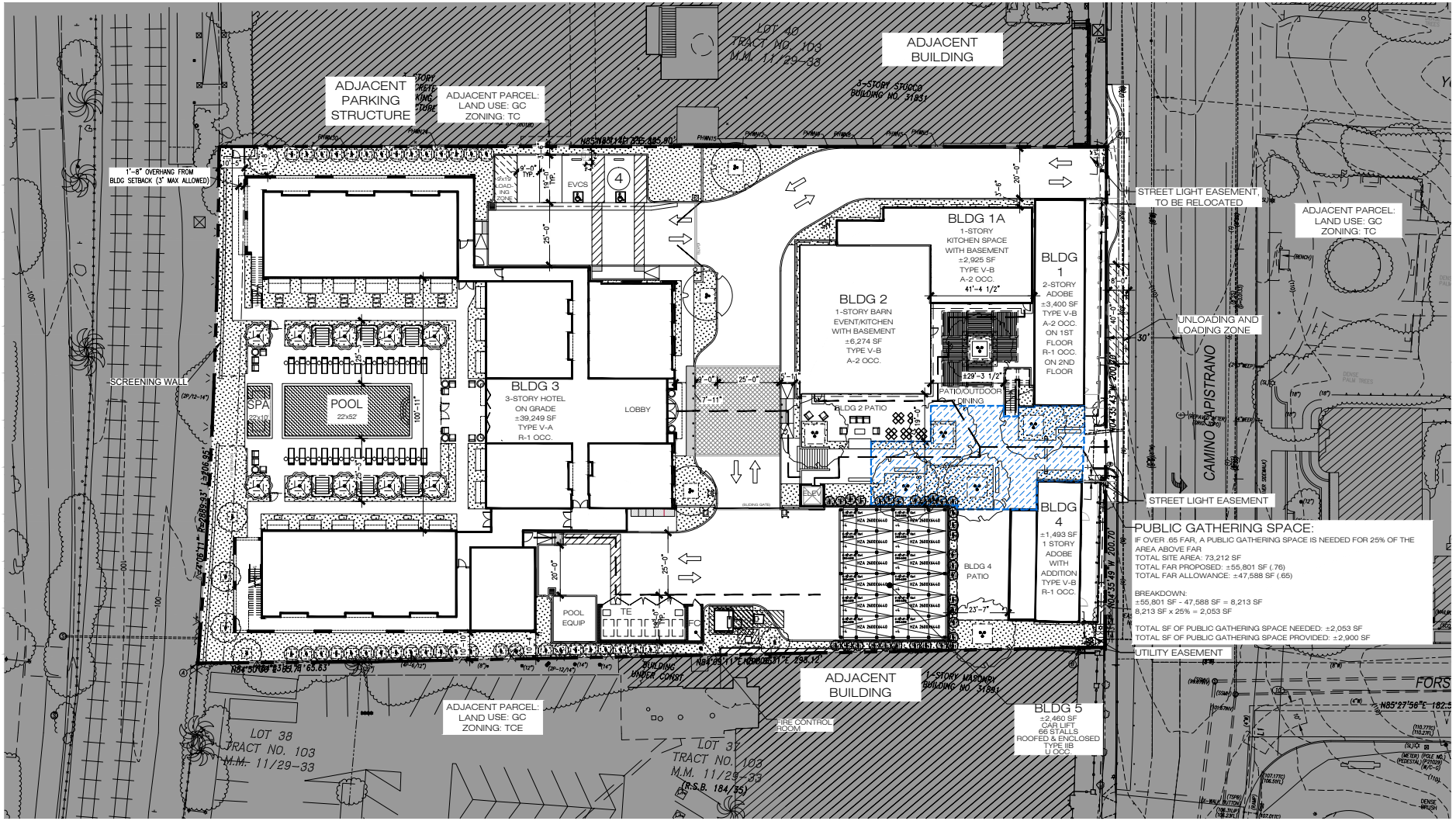

Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

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Feet

Figure 4

Proposed Site Plan

French Hotel Project

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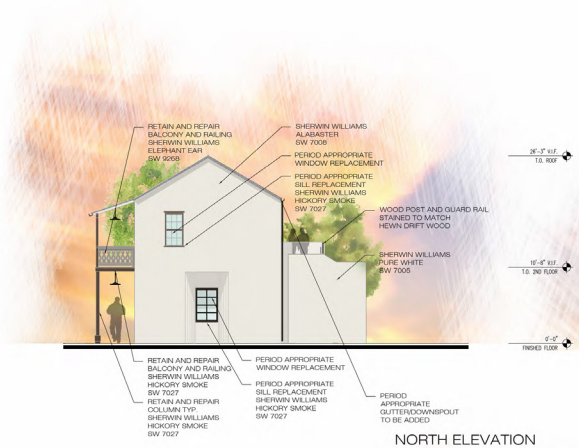
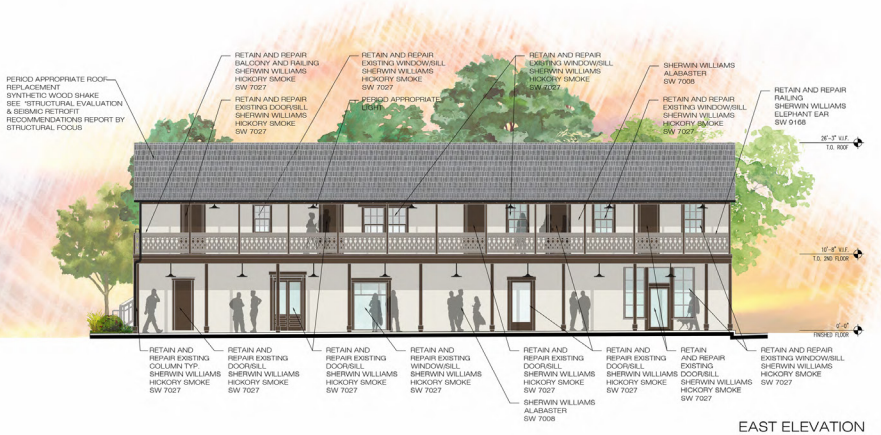
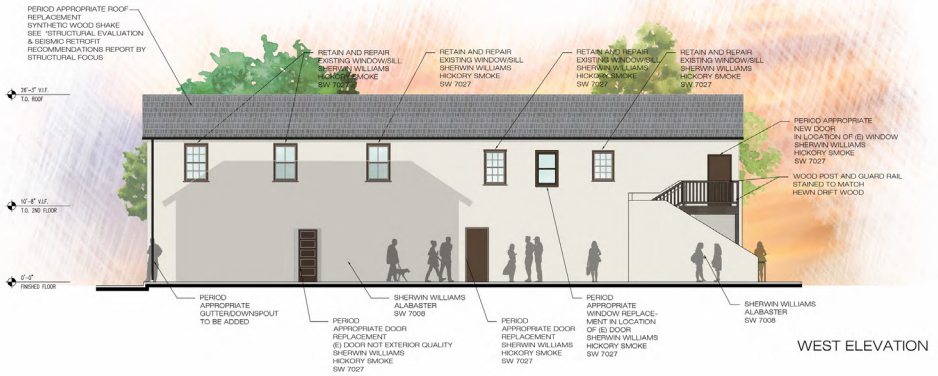
RETAIN AND REPAIR EXISTING DOORS, WINDOWS, PLASTER, TRIM, SILLS, WOOD WORK, BALCONY, RAILING AND HARDWARE



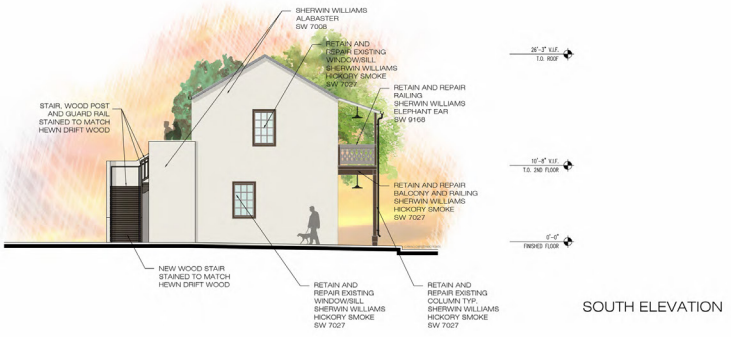
NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

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Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

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Figure 5

Building 1 Elevations

French Hotel Project

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Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

Figure 6

Building 2 Elevations

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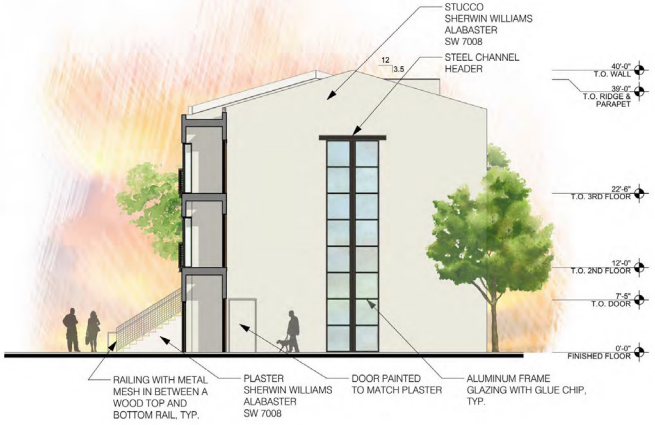

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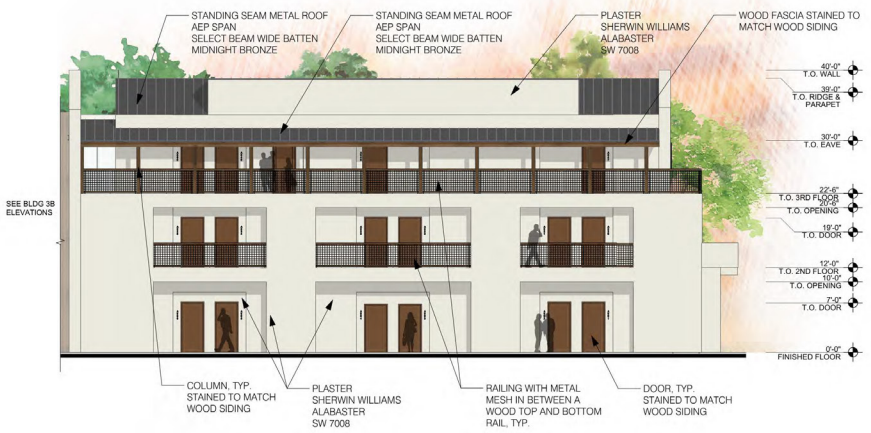
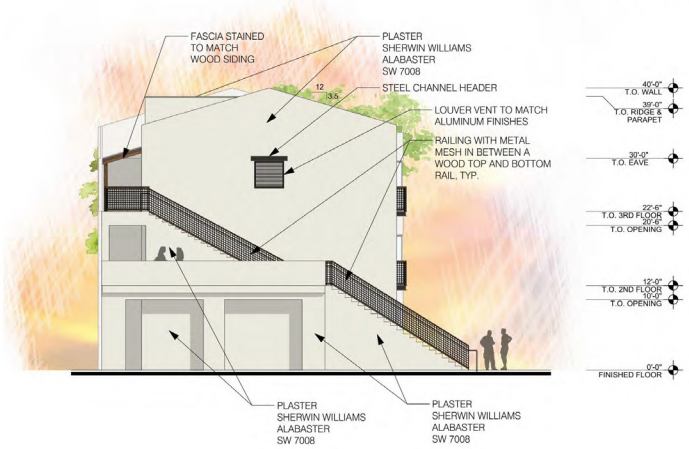


NORTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION

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Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

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Figure 7

Building 3A Elevations

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Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

Figure 8

Building 3B Elevations

French Hotel Project

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Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

Figure 9

Building 3C Elevations

French Hotel Project

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Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

Figure 10

Building 4 Elevations

French Hotel Project

Harris & Associates

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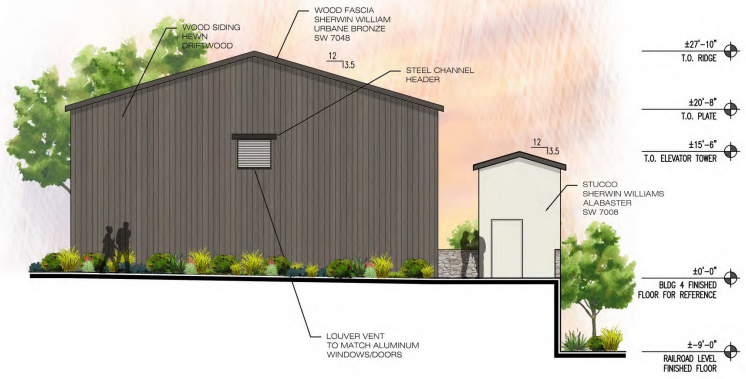


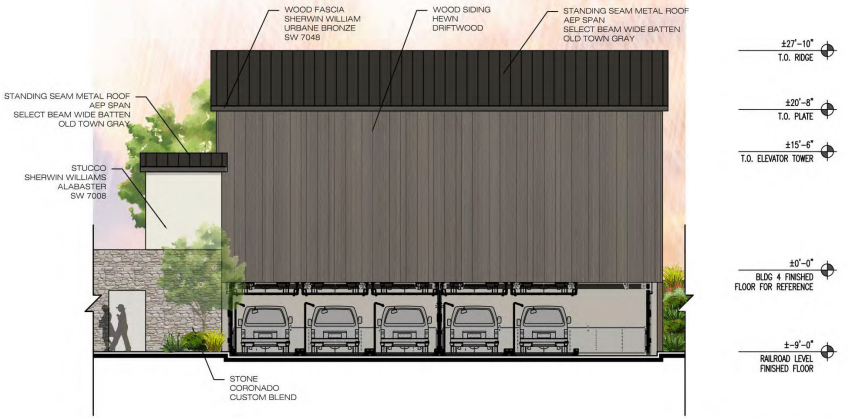
NORTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

Harris & Associates

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Figure 11

Building 5 Elevations

French Hotel Project

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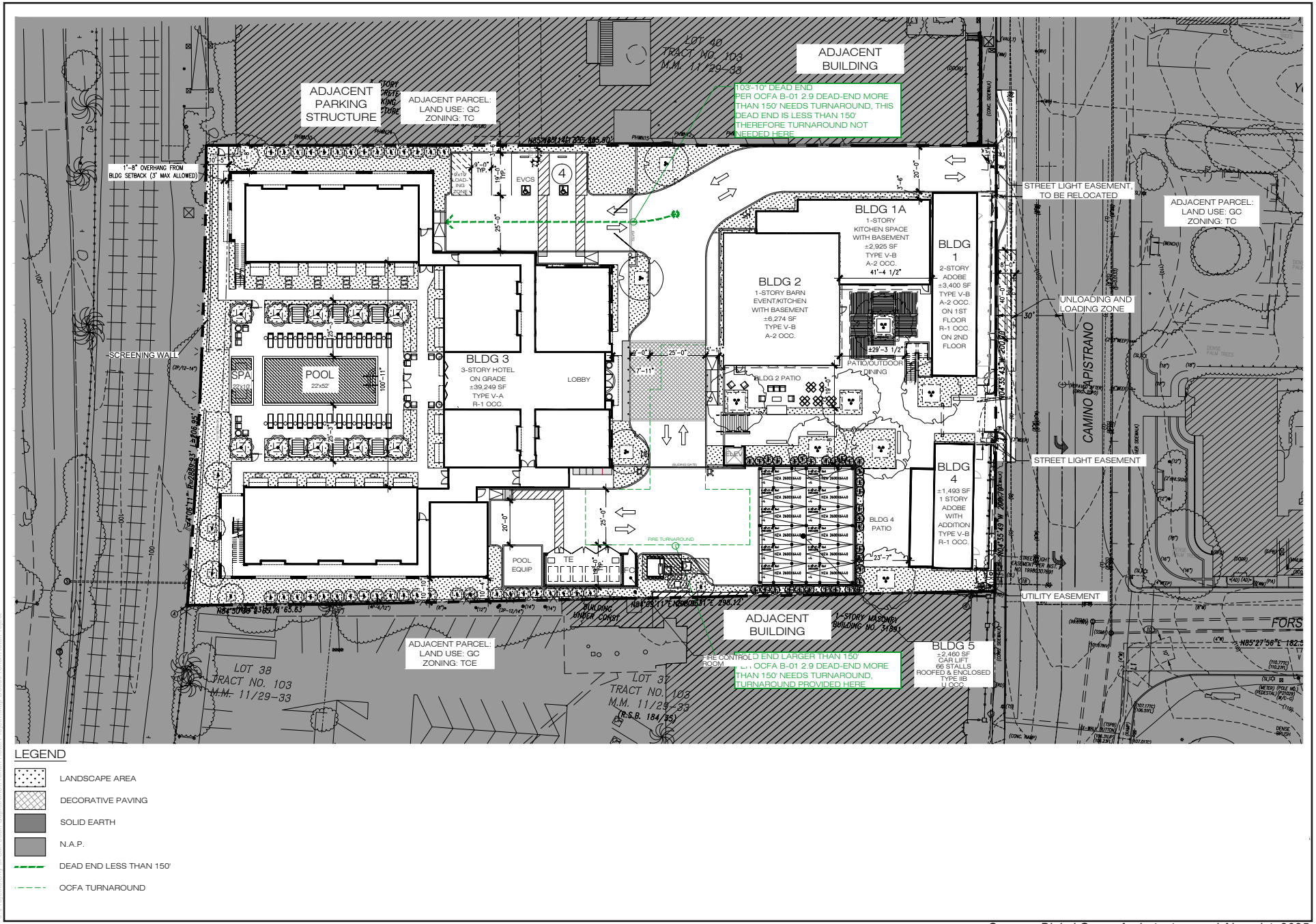

Source: Bickel Group Archetecture and Almquist, 2025.

Harris & Associates

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Feet

Figure 12

Fire Access Site Plan

French Hotel Project

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Section 2 Initial Study Checklist

The following discussion of potential environmental effects was completed in accordance with Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines to determine if the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment.

2.1 Project Information

1. Project title:	French Hotel Project Site Plan Review (SPR) 22-002, Architectural Control (AC) 22-002, Conditional Use Permit (CUP) 22-001, Tree Removal Permit (TRP) 22-005, Sign Program (SP) 25-007, and Grading Plan Modification (GPM) 22-003
2. Lead agency name and address:	City of San Juan Capistrano Development Services 32400 Paseo Adelanto San Juan Capistrano, California 92675
3. Contact person name, address, and phone number:	Izzak Mireles, Senior Planner City of San Juan Capistrano 32400 Paseo Adelanto San Juan Capistrano, California 92675 949-443-6321 /imireles@sanjuancapistrano.org
4. Project location:	31861-31871 San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 121-150-28, 121-150-29, 121-150-30
5 Project sponsor's name and address:	Almquist Development + Investment 31861-31871 Camino Capistrano QOZB LLC, Dan Almquist 31801 Paseo Adelanto San Juan Capistrano, California 92675
6. General plan designation:	General Commercial (GC).

7. Zoning:	Town Center District (TC).
8. Description of project:	Refer to Section 1, Project Description, of this IS.
9. Surrounding land uses and setting:	Refer to Section 1 of this IS.
10. Other public agencies whose approval is required:	Refer to Section 1.6 of this IS.
11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?	Refer to Section 2.4.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, of this Initial Study for details.

2.2 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by the Project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☒ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources	☒ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☒ Cultural Resources	☒ Energy
☐ Geology and Soils	☒ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards and Hazardous Materials
☐ Hydrology and Water Quality	☐ Land Use and Planning	☐ Mineral Resources
☒ Noise	☐ Population and Housing	☐ Public Services
☐ Recreation	☒ Transportation	☒ Tribal Cultural Resources
☐ Utilities and Service Systems	☐ Wildfire	☒ Mandatory Findings of Significance

2.3 Lead Agency Determination

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent (state), including implementation of the mitigation measures identified herein. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature
Izzak Mireles, Senior Planner
City of San Juan Capistrano

Date

2.4 Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

This section documents the screening process used to identify and focus on environmental impacts that could result from the project. The checklist portion of the IS begins below and includes explanations of each CEQA issue topic. CEQA requires that an explanation of all answers be provided along with this checklist, including a discussion of ways to mitigate any significant effects identified. The following terminology is used to describe the potential level of significance of impacts:

- **No Impact.** The analysis concludes that the project would not affect the particular resource in any way.
- **Less than Significant.** The analysis concludes that the project would not cause substantial adverse change to the environment without the incorporation of mitigation.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**. The analysis concludes that it would not cause substantial adverse change to the environment with the inclusion of mitigation agreed upon by the applicant.
- **Potentially Significant.** The analysis concludes that the project could result in a substantial adverse effect or significant effect on the environment, even if mitigation is incorporated. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

2.4.1 Aesthetics

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d. Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Impact Analysis

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

Less than Significant Impact. A scenic vista generally refers to a view that possesses visual and aesthetic qualities of high value to the community, aesthetic value is not limited to natural and rural viewsheds but can also be held in historic structures and districts, architectural design, streetscapes, etc. According to the City of San Juan Capistrano Community Design Element, the City's three major community design issues involves: 1) preserving and promoting those characteristics of the community which create a sense of place; 2) preserving the historical character of San Juan Capistrano; and 3) preserving and enhancing the natural features which contribute to the visual character of the City.

The Project Site is located within a developed, urbanized portion of the San Juan Capistrano characterized by commercial, mixed-use, and institutional development. The surrounding area does not contain designated scenic vistas, scenic corridors, or officially recognized scenic view resources. The closest designated State Scenic Highway is located more than 25 miles to the north, and the nearby segments of Interstate 5 Freeway and State Route 74 are not officially designated scenic highways in the project vicinity.

Existing views from Camino Capistrano toward the Project Site are primarily defined by the Domingo Yorba Adobe and the Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe (both listed on the National Register of Historic Places), mature landscaping, and paved parking areas. While the adobes contribute to the historic visual character of the corridor, the Proposed Project would retain, rehabilitate, and

restore both historic adobes, removing non-historic additions and enhancing their architectural integrity and visibility from the public right-of-way. New buildings, include a one-story building for the hotel's kitchen and dining, a new one-story barn-style even space building, a three-wing three-story hotel building, and a 32-foot tall car lift structure, would be constructed on the western and interior portions of the site. These structures would be developed in compliance with applicable height limits and development standards under the TC zoning designation.

Although the new buildings would alter existing on-site views and partially change the visual character of the property, the site is not located within or adjacent to a designated scenic vista, and the Proposed Project would not block or substantially degrade public views of mountains, open space, or other valued scenic resources. Views along Camino Capistrano would continue to include the restored historic adobes, which would remain prominent visual features along the corridor. Additionally, the Proposed Project would replace visually degraded areas and non-contributing structures with cohesive architectural development consistent with the City's design standards.

Because the Project would not obstruct or substantially degrade a recognized scenic vista and would preserve and enhance the site's primary historic visual resources, impacts related to scenic vistas would be less than significant, as such, this issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

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

Less than Significant Impact. The closest officially designated state scenic highways in Orange County is in the City of Anaheim, over 25 miles to the north. The nearest eligible state scenic highways are I-5 and SR-74. I-5 is located approximately .25 miles east of the Project Site. SR-74 is located approximately .25 miles northeast of the Project Site; however, neither segment in the Project vicinity is officially designated. Therefore, the Project Site is not located within a designated State Scenic Highway corridor.

The Project Site is located in a highly urbanized area of the City. The Project Site is currently developed with the vacant Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes, both listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) which are located along Camino Capistrano. The remainder of the Project Site consists of largely disturbed, unpaved, and unmaintained land, including areas of bare soil, overgrown vegetation, and remnants of former outbuildings and storage areas, and does not contain scenic rock outcroppings or protected scenic trees.

The Proposed Project would include the rehabilitation and restoration of the Dominga Yorba and Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe structures. The Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe structure will be restored to its 1840s appearance through structural strengthening, balcony and ornamental detail repair, and in-kind stucco and woodwork restoration. Approximately 2,900 square feet of non-contributing additions that were added in 1880-1890 timeframe along the north and rear of the original adobe will be removed to reduce structural loads and return the Garcia Adobe to its original historic form.

The Domingo Yorba Adobe ("Yorba Adobe"), is an existing one-story Monterey-style structure dating to circa 1830s. The historic nature of the Yorba Adobe is detailed in the analysis section of this staff report.

The Applicant proposes to rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the Yorba Adobe, removing the non-historic 2,900 square-foot rear additions constructed between 1900 and 1936. These improvements would enhance the historic integrity and visual character of the NRHP-listed resources rather than damage them.

In addition to the two existing buildings the Proposed Project includes a proposed one-story building for the hotel's kitchen and dining, a new one-story barn-style event building, a new three-story building with lobby and guest rooms, and a car lift structure. None of these components would substantially damage scenic resources.

Because the Project Site is not located within a designated State Scenic Highway, no scenic natural features would be removed, and the two NRHP-listed historic adobes would be preserved and restored rather than damaged, the Project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway. Impacts would therefore be less than significant, as such, this issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. As previously discussed, the Project Site is located within an urbanized portion of the City characterized by commercial, visitor-serving, and historic development along the Camino Capistrano corridor. Therefore, the applicable threshold is whether the Project would conflict with zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The Project Site currently includes the Domingo Yorba Adobe and the Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe (both listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the local Inventory of Historic and Cultural Landmarks), as well as a non-contributing metal barn structure northwest of the Yorba Domingo Adobe building, paved parking areas, and disturbed landscaping. Public views of the site are primarily experienced from Camino Capistrano and adjacent public rights-of-way. While the historic adobes contribute to the visual character of the corridor, the remainder of the site consists of visually degraded and previously disturbed areas that do not represent high-quality scenic resources.

The Proposed Project would retain and rehabilitate the two NRHP-listed adobes and remove non-historic additions, thereby enhancing their historic integrity and prominence within the public streetscape. New hotel buildings and related improvements would be constructed in compliance

with the TC zoning district development standards, including applicable requirements for setbacks, height, massing, and floor area ratio. The Proposed Project would be subject to an Architectural Control Permit and Conditional Use Permit approval pursuant to the City's Land Use Code, ensuring consistency with Secretary of Interior Standards, adopted architectural and design guidelines intended to protect community character, and scenic quality.

The Proposed Project has been designed with a color palette and material selection that complement the surrounding historic context. Earth-toned hues and compatible architectural detailing allow the new buildings to blend with the environment and avoid drawing attention away from nearby historic landmarks, including the adjacent Don Juan Avila Adobe, El Adobe Restaurant, and Esslinger Building. The integration of architectural forms that are compatible yet distinguishable from the historic resources is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, ensuring that new improvements are physically and aesthetically compatible with the surrounding historic setting. The Proposed Project's setbacks, massing, landscaping, and material selections are designed to preserve the prominence of the historic adobes and maintain the established visual rhythm of the corridor.

Although the Project Site is located within an urbanized area and the Proposed Project would be designed to comply with applicable zoning and design regulations governing scenic quality, the sire is located in proximity to the historic core of the City and within the broader visual setting associated with Mission San Juan Capistrano. Because development on the site could potentially alter the visual field from certain vantage points looking toward the Mission and surrounding historic resources, this impact is conservatively identified as potentially significant and as such will be further addressed in the EIR.

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

Potentially Significant Impact. As previously discussed, the Project Site is located within an urbanized commercial corridor of the San Juan Capistrano where existing sources of nighttime lighting include streetlights, commercial properties, parking areas, vehicle headlights, and illuminated signage along Camino Capistrano and nearby roadways. The Project Site is not located within a designated dark-sky area or other light-sensitive scenic resource area.

The Proposed Project would introduce new sources of exterior lighting associated with the hotel use, including architectural lighting, landscape lighting, parking and car lift illumination, pathway lighting, and pool area lighting. Interior lighting would also be visible through windows. However, all exterior lighting would be required to comply with the City's Municipal Code and applicable building and electrical codes, which regulate light intensity, shielding, fixture design, and directionality to minimize light spillover and glare onto adjacent properties and public rights-of-way.

Project lighting would be designed with full cutoff or shielded fixtures directed downward to reduce light trespass and skyglow. Lighting levels would be the minimum necessary to provide safety and security for guests and employees. The use of warm-toned, low-reflectivity materials and earth-toned finishes would reduce the potential for daytime glare. The proposed 32-foot tall car lift structure would be internally illuminated as needed for safety, and lighting would be shielded and directed inward to avoid spillover onto surrounding properties or roadways.

The Proposed Project does not include highly reflective building materials, extensive glass curtain walls, or large expanses of polished metal surfaces that could create substantial daytime glare.

Although the Project Site is located within an urbanized area and the Proposed Project would incorporate lighting design features intended to minimize light spillover and glare, the Proposed Project would introduce new multi-story structures, including the proposed hotel buildings and car lift structure, that could alter existing shade and shadow patterns in the surrounding area. Because the site is located within the historic core of the City and in proximity to historic resources and publicly accessible areas, new structures could potentially cast shadows on adjacent properties, public rights-of-way, or nearby historic resources during certain times of the day or year.

Therefore, while compliance with applicable lighting regulations would reduce the potential for substantial light and glare impacts, this impact is conservatively identified as potentially significant, and light, glare, and shade/shadow effects will be analyzed further in the EIR.

2.4.2 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. The Project Site is designated as urban and built-up land by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) of the California Resources Agency (DOC 2022). The Project Site is vacant and developed with Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes, and the Proposed Project would not convert any special status farmland to nonagricultural use. No impact would occur, and no mitigation measures are required. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

b. Would the project conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. The Project Site is zoned as TC and would not conflict with any agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract. No impact would occur, and no mitigation measures are required. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

c. Would the project conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

No Impact. The Project Site is zoned as TC, and no rezoning of forest land or timberland would result from project implementation. No impact would occur, and no mitigation measures are required. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

d. Would the project result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The Project Site is built-up urban land, and no forest land would be lost due to project implementation. No impact would occur, and no mitigation measures are required. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

e. Would the project involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The Project Site is urban, built-up land that was previously developed with industrial uses. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not result in the conversion of farmland to nonagricultural or forest land to non-forest use. No impact would occur, and no mitigation measures are required. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☒	☐	☐	☐
d. Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project Site is in the South Coast Air Basin (SoCAB) and is subject to the air quality management plan (AQMP) prepared by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). Construction activities would generate exhaust from construction equipment and vehicle trips, fugitive dust from demolition and ground-disturbing activities, and off-gas emissions from architectural coatings and paving. Implementation of the Proposed Project would convert currently vacant Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes into hotel uses, and develop a three-story hotel building, single story accessory kitchen and event space, and a mechanical parking puzzle resulting in a change in development intensity and associated increase in criteria air pollutants. The EIR will evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with regional growth forecasts and any impacts the planning program may have on the attainment of regional air quality objectives. Mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

b. Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard)?

Potentially Significant Impact. Construction and operation activities associated with the Proposed Project have the potential to generate fugitive dust, stationary-source emissions, and mobile-source emissions. Air pollutant emissions associated with the Proposed Project could occur over the short term for site preparation and construction activities. In addition, emissions could result from the long-term operation. An air quality analysis will be conducted for the Proposed Project to determine if the short- and/or long-term emissions would exceed SCAQMD's regional

significance thresholds. This topic will be addressed in the EIR, and mitigation measures will be recommended as needed.

c. Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Potentially Significant Impact. An air quality analysis is required to determine if the potential mobile and stationary air emissions associated with the Proposed Project could result in exposure of sensitive receptors to significant concentrations of air pollutants. This evaluation will need to address potential impacts to sensitive receptors that would be exposed on a recurring basis to substantial air emissions associated with the Proposed Project. Further evaluation in the EIR is required to determine the level of significance and to identify mitigation measures that reduce impacts to below a level of significance, if required.

d. Would the project result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

No Impact. The Proposed Project would not result in objectionable odors. The threshold for odor is if a project creates an odor nuisance pursuant to SCAQMD Rule 402, Nuisance, which states:

> A person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public, or which endanger the comfort, repose, health or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause, or have a natural tendency to cause, injury or damage to business or property. The provisions of this rule shall not apply to odors emanating from agricultural operations necessary for the growing of crops or the raising of fowl or animals.

The type of facilities that are considered to have objectionable odors include wastewater treatments plants, compost facilities, landfills, solid waste transfer stations, fiberglass manufacturing facilities, paint/coating operations (e.g., auto body shops), dairy farms, petroleum refineries, asphalt batch plants, chemical manufacturing, and food manufacturing facilities. The proposed 70 room hotel project does not fall within the aforementioned land uses. Emissions from construction equipment, such as diesel exhaust and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from architectural coatings, may generate odors. However, these odors would be low in concentration, temporary, and are not expected to affect a substantial number of people. Therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would result in less than significant odor impacts, and no mitigation measures are required. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.4 Biological Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☒	☐
f. Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

This section is partially based on the following technical reports:

- Biological Resources Baseline Study for the French Hotel Project – San Juan Capistrano, Orange County California. Michael Baker International, September 25, 2025. (Appendix A)

A complete copy of this study is included in Appendix A of this Initial Study.

a. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Potentially Significant Impact. Sensitive biological resources are habitats or species that have been recognized by federal, state, and/or local agencies as being endangered, threatened, rare, or in decline throughout all or part of their historical distribution. The Project Site is currently developed with the vacant Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes.

Three land cover types were mapped within the Project Site: landscaped/ornamental, disturbed, and developed. Approximately 0.13 acres of the Project Site was mapped as landscaped/ornamental, encompassing a small area behind the southern building. This area is vegetated primarily with fruit trees including orange (*Citrus x sinesis*), lemon (*Citrus x limon*), avocado (*Persea americana*), and apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*), with other traditional landscaping plants such as pines (*Pinus* sp.), Indian hawthorn (*Rhaphiolepis indica*), bird of paradise (*Strelitzia* sp.), and rose (*Rosa* sp.). Approximately 0.88 acres of the Project Site was mapped as disturbed, encompassing the entire western half of the site and a portion of the eastern half. This area is unpaved and unmaintained, generally vegetated with a high volume of both native and non-native weeds. Dominant species in this land cover type include horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*), pigweed (*Amaranthus albus*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*), orange trees, castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), and bristly ox-tongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*). Approximately 0.66 acres of the Project Site was mapped as developed, encompassing most of the eastern half of the Project Site including the street-facing buildings, existing barn, and paved blacktop surface. This land cover type generally consists of paved areas with little or no naturally-occurring vegetation (landscaping may be present). Vegetation on-site within this land cover type generally consisted of more weeds growing in holes in the pavement as well as traditional landscaping plants such as bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea* sp.) and hydrangea (*Hydrangea* sp.).

The Project Site is located in the highly-disturbed downtown district of a suburban city and as a result is host to a limited variety of wildlife species. A total of ten wildlife species were detected during the field survey, including one reptile and nine species of birds. None of the species that were detected are considered to be endangered, rare, or threatened. The on-site barn was examined for signs of potential bat roosts, but none were found.

No special-status plant or wildlife species were observed during the field surveys prepared for the Proposed Project and there is no habitat of value within the Project Site for endangered, rare, or threatened species. Based on the results of the field survey and a review of specific habitat preferences, occurrence records, known distributions, and elevation ranges, it was determined that Cooper's hawk (CDFW WL) has a high potential to forage on-site but a low potential to nest. None of the other special-status species identified by the California Natural Diversity Date Base (CNDDB), California Native Plant Society (CNPS), and Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) are expected to occur within the Project Site, and the Project Site does not contain any habitat of value for any endangered, rare, or threatened species (Appendix A).

Although the Project Site is highly disturbed and does not contain high-quality natural habitat, additional focused surveys are being conducted to further evaluate the potential presence of certain special-status species that could utilize disturbed urban environments, including the Crotch bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), which is listed as endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

Because the results of these additional surveys are pending and the potential presence of special-status species cannot be conclusively ruled out at this stage, this impact is potentially significant, and the EIR will be further analyzed in the EIR.

b. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?

No Impact. Sensitive natural communities are communities that are considered rare in the region by regulatory agencies; known to provide habitat for sensitive animal or plant species; or known to be important wildlife corridors. Riparian habitats are those occurring along the banks of rivers and streams. The Project Site is currently developed with the vacant Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes. No watercourse runs through or adjacent to the Project Site. No riparian habitat or critical habitat exist on-site. Michael Baker conducted a literature review for jurisdictional waters, sensitive habitats, and special-status species to characterize existing biological conditions and assess the potential for the Proposed Project to affect special-status and wildlife species. As previously indicated, based of the literature review and field surveys conducted for the Proposed Project, no special-status plant or wildlife species were observed during the field surveys prepared for the Proposed Project and there is no habitat of value within the Project Site for endangered, rare, or threatened species. No impact would occur, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

c. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. Wetlands are defined under the federal Clean Water Act as land that is flooded or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that normally does support, a prevalence of vegetation adapted to life in saturated soils. Wetlands include areas such as swamps, marshes, and bogs. The Project Site is currently developed with the vacant Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes, and there are no wetlands on-site. The closest wetland to the Project Site is Trabuco Creek approximately 0.2 miles west of the Project Site. This is a 5.82-acre Riverine habitat. The other closest wetland is 0.2 miles northeast of the Project Site running in a north-south direction near Ortega Highway. This is a 0.14-acre Riverine habitat. Neither of these wetlands occur on-site. There were no State or federal jurisdictional aquatic resources observed within the Project Site during the field study conducted on September 11, 2024, which included a thorough on-site review using the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' methodology,

and none would be directly impacted by the Proposed Project. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

d. Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Less than Significant Impact. Wildlife movement corridors facilitate movement of species between large patches of natural habitat. The entire Project Site consists of manipulated and exotic-dominated land cover types and is composed almost entirely of native and non-native weeds and ornamental vegetation, as well as the existing adobe buildings. As previously discussed, the Project Site is located in the highly-disturbed downtown district of a suburban city and as a result is host to a limited variety of wildlife species. A total of ten wildlife species were detected during the field survey, including one reptile and nine species of birds. None of the species that were detected are considered to be endangered, rare, or threatened. The on-site barn was examined for signs of potential bat roosts, but none were found.

The closest significant wildlife movement corridors to the Project Site is Trabuco Canyon, approximately 0.2 miles to the west and San Juan Creek, which would not be directly or indirectly impacted as a result of the Proposed Project. Based on the existing developed condition of the Project Site, the property does not meet the definition or is expected to serve or contribute to a wildlife movement corridor for ground dwelling species, and impacts would be less than significant.

However, there are several ornamental trees and other vegetation on-site that require removal, and these may be used for nesting by migratory birds. The Proposed Project would be required to comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act governs the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests. It prohibits the take, possession, import, export, transport, sale, purchase, barter, or offering of these activities, except under a valid permit or as permitted in the implementing regulations. If removal of the vegetation occurs during nesting season (typically between February 1 and September 1), the project applicant is required to conduct nesting bird surveys in accordance with the CDFW requirements prior to removal of the trees. Compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act would ensure that no significant impacts to migratory birds occur. If removal of the vegetation, including trees, occurs during nesting season, the project applicant is required to conduct nesting bird surveys in accordance with the CDFW requirements. Compliance with the MBTA would ensure that no significant impacts to migratory birds occur. Additionally, the Proposed Project Site is located within a highly urbanized area and would not interfere with the movement of any native residents, migratory fish, or wildlife species. A less than significant impact would occur. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

e. Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Potentially Significant Impact. Section 9-2.349 of the San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code (SJCMC) provides provisions for tree removal and obtaining a tree removal permit. The purpose of SJCMC Section 9- 2.349 is to realize the benefits of an urban forest, maintain tree health, preserve heritage trees, encourage native and drought-resistant trees, provide a functional process for permitting tree removal, and encourage the planting of new trees. Trees with a trunk diameter less than six inches measured at three feet above grade are exempted from the provisions of the section. Pursuant to SJCMC Section 9-2.349(f), Heritage Tree Provisions, a tree is deemed a heritage tree and is protected from removal when such tree has a trunk diameter at breast height of 36 inches or greater and includes the following species: California pepper (Schinus molle); oak (Quercus spp.); cedar (Cedrus spp.); blue gum eucalyptus (Eucalyptus globulus); walnut (Juglans spp.); olive (Olea europaea); sycamore (Platanus spp.); cottonwood (Populus spp.); or as otherwise designated by the Planning Commission based on the tree's unique and intrinsic value to the community because of its size, age, historic association, or ecological value.

Development of the Proposed Project would require the removal of 18 on-site trees, and no trees on-site are heritage trees. The trees on site consist of fruit trees including orange, lemon, avocado, and apricot trees. As part of the Proposed Project, the Applicant is pursuing a tree removal permit prior to the removal of any tree with a trunk of six inches or greater. The Proposed Project would have to comply with the City's tree removal code. This issue will be addressed further in the EIR.

f. Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. The Project Site is not located within any preserved areas, does not contain any coastal sage scrub habitat or other covered habitat types, does not contain any other special-status vegetation communities, and does not pose any other potential conflicts to the Proposed Project's consistency with the Orange County Central/Coastal Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) (Appendix A). In addition, none of the three NCCP/HCP target species were found within the Project Site, and there is no suitable habitat for any of them within the Project Site. Therefore, the Proposed Project is considered to be consistent with the NCCP/HCP. The Proposed Project would result in no impact associated with an adopted NCCP/HCP or local conservation plan.

The Project is also consistent with the goals and policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element of the City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan, which seeks to protect biological resources, sensitive habitats, and open space areas and encourages proper land use planning to reduce the impact of urban development on important ecological and biological resources. The Project Site is located within the City's developed downtown corridor and consists primarily of

disturbed, landscaped, and developed land cover types with limited biological value. The Proposed Project represents infill redevelopment of an already developed site and would not affect designated open space lands, habitat preserves, wildlife movement corridors, or environmentally sensitive habitat areas identified in the General Plan.

Because the Project Site does not contain sensitive biological resources or designated open space areas and is not located within or adjacent to lands identified for habitat conservation, the Proposed Project would not conflict with the resource protection objectives of the City's Conservation and Open Space Element. In addition, compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations governing biological resources would ensure that the Proposed Project does not adversely affect biological resources or conservation areas.

Accordingly, the Proposed Project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved conservation plan. No impact would occur, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

2.4.5 Cultural Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Potentially Significant Impact. Section 15064.5 defines historic resources as resources listed or determined to be eligible for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission, a local register of historical resources, or the lead agency. Generally, a resource is considered "historically significant" if it meets one of the following criteria:

i) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;

ii) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;

iii) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values;

iv) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history

The Project Site contains the Domingo Yorba Adobe and the Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are also recognized locally as historic resources. As listed historic properties, these structures qualify as historical resources under CEQA pursuant to Section 15064.5(a). The adobes are significant examples of early California adobe architecture associated with the historic development of San Juan Capistrano and contribute to the broader historic setting of the City's historic core.

The Proposed Project involves the restoration and rehabilitation of the Domingo Yorba and Casa Manuel Garcia Adobes and their integration into a proposed hotel development, including use of the structures for guest rooms and dining areas. The Proposed Project would also include new construction in close proximity to these historic resources and may require modifications to the historic structures to accommodate adaptive reuse, building code compliance, and integration with the larger development. Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b), a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource includes physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of the resource would be materially impaired.

Although the Proposed Project is intended to rehabilitate and preserve the historic adobes, project implementation could involve physical alterations to the structures, changes to their setting, or the introduction of new buildings and site improvements in close proximity to the resources. Such changes could potentially affect the historic integrity of the resources, including their design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, or association. In addition, the scale, massing, and visual relationship of proposed new development relative to the historic adobes could affect the historic context in which the resources are experienced.

Because the Project Site contains designated historic resources and the Proposed Project proposes rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, and new construction in their immediate vicinity, there is the potential for a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. The Proposed Project's potential impact on historical resources will be further addressed in the EIR.

b. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Domino Yorba Adobe ("Yorba Adobe") is an existing one-story Monterey-style structure constructed circa 1830 by Domingo Yorba. The Yorba family were prominent ranchers in Orange and San Diego counties. The one-story adobe dwelling is among the oldest extant structures in San Juan Capistrano. The building has a rectangular plan and is constructed of adobe brick with a low-pitched roof, characteristic of Mexican-period architecture. The front of the Yorba Adobe is visually accessible from Camino Capistrano. The rear of the Yorba Adobe is not visually accessible from the railroad tracks and Los Rios Street due to the non-contributing structures, dense landscape, and a 330' setback making the structure obscured from view. In 1880, Domingo Oyharzabal and Juan Salaberri bought the Yorba Adobe, and Garcia Adobe and opened the Garcia Adobe as the French Hotel.

The Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe was constructed circa 1840 by Manuel Garcia, a Portuguese immigrant. The two-story adobe structure, designed in the Monterey style, originally served as both a general store and lodging house, with the ground floor used for commercial activity and the upper floor operating as a hotel for travelers along El Camino Real. The Garcia Adobe has a

rectilinear plan measuring 21 feet wide and 75 feet long fronting Camino Capistrano, and is constructed of adobe brick, wood siding, and asphalt shingles. The ground floor contains two large rooms connected by an archway, while the second floor, as originally built, extended only over the southern half of the structure. The Garcia Adobe remains a rare and well-preserved example of early hospitality and reflects the emergence of commerce along a key transportation corridor during the Mexican and early American periods of California's history. The front of the Garcia Adobe is visually accessible from Camino Capistrano. The rear of the Garcia Adobe is somewhat visually accessible from the railroad tracks and Los Rios Street, although, the non-contributing additions and 330' setback at the rear make visibility challenging.

Figure CR-2 of the San Juan Capistrano Cultural Resources Element, "Locations of Prehistoric and Historic Archaeological Resources," shows that the Project Site is identified as "locations of prehistoric and historic archaeological resources." Development of the Proposed Project would involve excavation, grading, and other earthwork activities across the Project Site that would have the potential to impact archaeological resources. The Proposed Project's potential impact on archaeological resources will be further addressed in the EIR.

c. Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?

Less than Significant Impact. California Health and Safety Code, Section 7050.5, requires that in the event that human remains are discovered within a Project Site, disturbance of the site shall halt and remain halted until the coroner has conducted an investigation into the circumstances, manner, and cause of any death, and the recommendations concerning the treatment and disposition of the human remains have been made to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative. If the coroner determines that the remains are not subject to his or her authority and if the coroner has reason to believe the human remains are those of a Native American, he or she shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission by telephone within 24 hours. The Proposed Project would comply with existing law, and potential impacts to human remains would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

2.4.6 Energy

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Less than Significant Impact. Implementation of the Proposed Project would require the consumption of energy resources during both construction and operation. Construction activities would involve the use of gasoline- and diesel-powered heavy equipment, construction vehicles, and worker trips to and from the Project Site. Additional energy consumption would occur through the manufacture and transport of construction materials and the operation of construction equipment and generators. Although construction-related energy use would be temporary and limited to the duration of the construction period, it would still contribute to the overall consumption of nonrenewable fuel resources.

Operation of the Proposed Project would also require ongoing energy use associated with building operations and transportation. The Proposed Project includes development of a hotel and associated amenities, which would require electricity and natural gas for building lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), water heating, commercial kitchen operations, laundry facilities, elevators, and other building systems. In addition, operation of the Proposed Project would generate vehicle trips by guests, employees, and service providers, resulting in the consumption of transportation fuels such as gasoline and diesel.

California has adopted policies and regulations aimed at reducing energy consumption and promoting efficient use of energy resources, including the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) and CALGreen Building Standards (Title 24, Part 11). These regulations are intended to reduce energy demand in new development through improved building design, energy-efficient building systems, and incorporation of sustainable construction practices. However, because the Proposed Project would introduce new building area and associated operational activities that would require ongoing energy use, the project could result in increased demand for electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuels.

Accordingly, this impact is potentially significant, and the EIR will further evaluate the Proposed Project's anticipated energy demand during construction and operation, as well as consistency with applicable energy efficiency standards and conservation goals.

b. Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project Site is located within the San Juan Capistrano and is designated GC with a TC zoning designation. The proposed 70-room boutique hotel would redevelop a previously disturbed infill site and would be subject to all applicable state and local energy efficiency requirements.

California has adopted several statewide plans and regulatory programs intended to increase renewable energy generation and improve energy efficiency in new and existing development. These include policies established by the California Energy Commission (CEC) and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), as well as requirements contained in the California Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Title 24, Part 6) and other statewide energy initiatives designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption. In addition, the State's long-term energy planning efforts, including the Integrated Energy Policy Report (IEPR) and renewable portfolio standards, establish goals for expanding renewable energy generation and improving building efficiency throughout California.

At a regional level, the Proposed Project would be subject to the policies set forth in SCAG's adopted Connect SoCal 2024 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS).

At the local level, the City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan includes policies intended to encourage energy conservation, energy-efficient building design, and the incorporation of renewable energy technologies where feasible. Development projects are therefore expected to consider energy-efficient design strategies and comply with or exceed applicable state and local energy standards.

The Proposed Project involves redevelopment of the site with a multi-story hotel development and associated amenities. Large commercial buildings such as hotels can result in substantial energy demand associated with lighting, heating and cooling systems, commercial kitchens, laundry facilities, and other operational components. Depending on the design and operational characteristics of the Proposed Project, the development could influence overall building energy consumption and the extent to which renewable energy technologies or energy-efficient design features are incorporated into the Proposed Project.

Therefore, this impact is potentially significant, and the EIR will further evaluate the Proposed Project's energy use and consistency with applicable state and local plans related to renewable energy and energy efficiency.

2.4.7 Geology and Soils

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☒	☐	☐	☐
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

This section is partially based on the following technical report:

- Geotechnical Update Report, Proposed Hotel and Associated Improvements, Oyharzabal Project, 31861 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, California, GMU Engineers & Geologists, Inc., April 30, 2024. (Appendix B)

A complete copy of this study is included in Appendix B of this Initial Study.

a. Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

No Impact. The Project Site is not located within an official Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and no known active faults are shown on the reviewed geologic maps crossing the Project Site that were assessed as part of the Geotechnical Update Report included as Appendix B to this Initial Study. The Project Site is located approximately 5.6 miles from the Newport Inglewood (N-I) fault, and is also located approximately 6.7 miles from the San Joaquin Hills Blind Thrust Fault. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is in a seismically active region, as is all of Southern California. However, as indicated above, the Project Site is not located within an official Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone, and no known active faults are shown on the reviewed geologic maps crossing the Project Site that were assessed as part of the Geotechnical Update Report included as Appendix B to this Initial Study. The Project Site is located approximately 5.6 miles from the Newport Inglewood (N-I) fault, and is also located approximately 6.7 miles from the San Joaquin Hills Blind Thrust Fault. Additionally, the Proposed Project is required to be constructed in compliance with the 2025 California Building Code (effective January 1, 2026), which contains standards for building design to minimize the impacts from ground shaking. All land uses must conform to all applicable State and local building codes relative to seismic safety. Therefore, impacts from strong ground shaking would be considered less than significant, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Project Site is located within a zone mapped as having the potential for earthquake-induced liquefaction. As such, this issue is potentially significant and will be addressed further in the EIR.

iv. Landslides?

No Impact. According to the referenced Seismic Hazard Zone map for the San Juan Capistrano 7.5-minute quadrangle, the Project Site does not lie within an area that is susceptible to earthquake induced landsliding (Appendix B). Additionally, the Proposed Project would be designed and constructed to protect structural integrity and infrastructure against geologic hazards per the recommendations in the Geotechnical Update Report (Appendix B) prepared in accordance with

CBC requirements and reviewed and approved by the City of San Juan Capistrano. No impact would occur. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

b. Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction

Construction of the Proposed Project would involve site preparation, grading, excavation, and building construction activities that could temporarily expose soils and potentially result in erosion or the loss of topsoil if appropriate controls were not implemented. However, because the project would disturb more than one acre of soil, it would be required to obtain coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Construction Permit. Compliance with this permit requires preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that identifies best management practices (BMPs) to control erosion, sedimentation, and pollutant runoff during construction. (See Section 2.4.10(a), Hydrology and Water Quality.) Typical BMPs include silt fencing, fiber rolls, stabilized construction entrances, soil stabilization measures, and proper material storage and handling. Implementation of these measures would minimize the potential for construction-related soil erosion or loss of topsoil. Therefore, construction-related erosion impacts would be less than significant.

Operation

Once construction is completed, the Project Site would be largely developed with buildings, paved areas, and landscaped areas that would stabilize soils and reduce the potential for erosion. Landscaped areas would be maintained with groundcover, vegetation, or other soil stabilization measures that would further limit erosion potential. In addition, the Proposed Project would incorporate permanent stormwater management features designed in accordance with applicable City and regional requirements, which would control runoff and minimize erosion potential during operation. As a result, operation of the Proposed Project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

Because erosion during construction would be minimized through implementation of SWPPP BMPs and the developed site would be stabilized during operation, impacts related to soil erosion and loss of topsoil would be less than significant, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

c. Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is located in a seismically active region and within a zone mapped as having potential for earthquake-induced liquefaction, where saturated, loose, granular soils may lose strength and stiffness during strong ground shaking. Liquefaction can lead to lateral spreading, differential settlement, and loss of soil bearing capacity, which can compromise foundations, structures, and underground utilities. In addition, the site contains disturbed fill and landscaped areas, which could be susceptible to settlement or subsidence under seismic shaking.

Although the Proposed Project would be required to comply with the California Building Code (CBC) and applicable engineering standards to minimize seismic hazards, the potential for liquefaction, lateral spreading, and other soil instabilities could pose a risk of significant structural damage or hazardous conditions if not properly addressed in project design and engineering.

Because liquefaction and related geotechnical hazards could occur during a major seismic event and could result in substantial structural damage or hazardous conditions to on-site or off-site properties, this issue is considered potentially significant and will be further addressed in the EIR.

d. Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Less than Significant Impact. The Geotechnical Update Report determined that the Project Site's soils have a low to medium expansion potential with EI values ranging from 31 to 59, meaning they could swell or shrink slightly with changes in moisture. The Proposed Project's foundations and slabs are designed to account for this moderate expansion potential, using standard engineering measures to prevent soil movement from causing damage. With these design precautions, the risk to buildings, utilities, or other property is minimal. Therefore, impacts from expansive soils would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

e. Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

No Impact. The Project Site is in a developed area within the City of San Juan Capistrano. The Proposed Project would not use septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. It is anticipated that the Proposed Project would connect to existing sanitary sewer and wastewater facilities located in the public right-of-way that collect and convey raw sewage and wastewater generated from the Project Site. As such, no impact would occur. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

f. Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less than Significant Impact. Unique paleontological resources may be present at the Project Site. However, the Project Site is currently developed, and redevelopment of the site will not require

grading to an increased depth. No subterranean parking is proposed. Therefore, earthwork activities do not have the potential to encounter paleontological resources. Therefore, this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

2.4.8 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Potentially Significant Impact. Global climate change is not confined to a particular project area and is generally accepted as the consequence of global industrialization over the last 200 years. A typical project, even a very large one, does not generate enough greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on its own to influence global climate change significantly; hence, the issue of global climate change is, by definition, a cumulative environmental impact. The State of California, through its governor and legislature, has established a comprehensive framework for the substantial reduction of GHG emissions over the next 40-plus years. This will occur primarily through the implementation of Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32, 2006), Senate Bill 375 (SB 375, 2008), and SB 32 (2016), which address GHG emissions on a statewide, cumulative basis.

Implementation of the Proposed Project could increase GHG emissions through new construction and increase in vehicle miles traveled due to converting the currently vacant Domingo Yorba and Manuel Garcia Adobes to hotel uses. Further evaluation in the EIR is required to determine the increase and effect on GHG emissions. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the Proposed Project to generate a substantial increase in GHG emissions, and mitigation measures will be recommended as needed.

b. Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Potentially Significant Impact. The California Air Resources Board's Scoping Plan is California's GHG reduction strategy to achieve the state's GHG emissions reduction target established by AB 32 of 1990 emission levels by year 2045 (CARB 2022). The Southern California Association of Governments' Final Connect SoCal 2024 Plan sets forth a development pattern for the region that, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies,

would reduce GHG emissions from transportation (excluding goods movement) in accordance with the region's per capita GHG reduction goals under SB 375 (SCAG 2024).

The EIR will evaluate the Proposed Project's consistency with applicable plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Further evaluation in the EIR is required to determine the increase and effect on GHG emissions. Mitigation measures will be recommended as needed.

2.4.9 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐
g. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction

Construction of the Proposed Project would likely involve the use of limited quantities of hazardous materials typical of construction activities, including vehicle fuels, oils, lubricants, solvents, paints, and adhesives. These materials would be transported to and used at the site during construction and could present a potential hazard if improperly handled or released. However, construction contractors would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations governing the transport, storage, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. These

regulations are administered and enforced by agencies including the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the California Department of Transportation, and applicable City codes. Compliance with these regulations would minimize the potential for accidental releases or hazards associated with hazardous materials during construction.

Operation

Operation of the Proposed Project would involve the routine use and storage of small quantities of potentially hazardous materials typical of hotel and hospitality uses. These materials could include cleaning fluids, detergents, solvents, adhesives, sealers, paints, fuels and lubricants for maintenance equipment, and fertilizers or pesticides associated with landscape maintenance. The transport, use, storage, and disposal of these materials would be required to comply with applicable federal, state, and local regulations governing hazardous materials management. Compliance with these regulatory requirements would ensure that hazardous materials associated with operation of the Proposed Project are handled in a safe manner and would minimize the potential for hazards to the public or the environment.

Because hazardous materials used during both construction and operation would be typical of urban development and would be regulated by applicable federal, state, and local requirements, the Proposed Project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Impacts would be less than significant, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

b. Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. The term "hazardous material" can be defined in different ways. For purposes of this environmental document, the definition of "hazardous material" is the one outlined in the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25501:

> Hazardous materials that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, pose a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material that a handler or the unified program agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

"Hazardous waste" is a subset of hazardous materials, and the definition is essentially the same as in the California Health and Safety Code, Section 25117, and in the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Section 66261.2:

> Hazardous wastes are those that, because of their quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may either cause, or significantly contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness, or pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed of, or otherwise managed.

Hazardous materials can be categorized as hazardous nonradioactive chemical materials, radioactive materials, and biohazardous materials (infectious agents such as microorganisms, bacteria, molds, parasites, viruses, and medical waste).

> Exposure of the public or the environment to hazardous materials could occur through the following: improper handling or use of hazardous materials or hazardous wastes, particularly by untrained personnel; transportation accident; environmentally unsound disposal methods; and/or fire, explosion, or other emergencies. The severity of potential effects varies with the activity conducted, the concentration and type of hazardous material or wastes present, and the proximity of sensitive receptors.

Construction

During construction activities for the Proposed Project, there is a possibility of generating small quantities of hazardous materials. The construction phase of the Proposed Project would include the transport, storage, and short-term use of petroleum-based fuels, lubricants, pesticides, and other similar materials. The amount of hazardous chemicals present during construction is limited and would be in compliance with existing government regulations, such as the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and the California Code of Regulations (CCR Title 22). Any associated risk would be adequately reduced to a level that is less than significant through compliance with these standards and regulations; thus, the limited use and storage of hazardous materials during construction of the Proposed Project would not pose a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Accordingly, the potential for the release of hazardous materials during project construction would be low and, even if a release were to occur, it would not result in a significant hazard to the public, surrounding land uses, or environment due to the small quantities of these materials associated with construction. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

Operation

Hazardous substances associated with the operation of the Proposed Project would be limited in both amount and use, such that they would be contained without impacting the environment.

Longterm operational activities typical of the hotel uses, such as landscaping and building and pool maintenance, would occur on the Project Site. Maintenance activities related to landscaping include the use of fertilizers and light equipment (such as lawn mowers and edgers). These types of activities do not involve the use of a large or substantial amount of hazardous materials. The proposed hotel uses would involve the use and storage of small quantities of potentially hazardous materials in the form of cleaning solvents, pesticides, and pool sanitizers. However, such materials would be contained, stored, and used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and handled in compliance with applicable standards and regulations. As such, when utilized properly, hazardous materials used and stored on the Project Site would not result in a significant hazard to visitors or the environment. The Proposed Project includes vehicle parking; however, there would be no vehicle cleaning or maintenance areas on the Project Site. As such, chemicals, oils, and grease, generated from such activities would not result in significant impacts related to the release of hazardous materials. All transport, handling, use, and disposal of substances such as petroleum products, paints, and solvents related to the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project would be required to comply with existing regulations of several agencies, including the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Occupational Safety and Health Administration, California Department of Transportation, and the Orange County Fire Authority. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact with regard to the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous material. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

c. Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Less than Significant Impact. San Juan Elementary School is located approximately .20 miles northeast of the Project Site at 31642 El Camino Real. The next closest school is Bridges Community Day High School located approximately .25 miles northeast of the Project Site at 31576 El Camino Real.

The Project Site would be located within 0.25 miles of existing schools; however; once operational, the Proposed Project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials. During project construction, potentially hazardous materials would likely be handled on the Project Site. Handling of these potentially hazardous materials would be temporary and would coincide with the short-term construction phase of the Project. Any handling, transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would comply with all relevant federal, state, and local agencies and regulations, including the UEPA, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the

California OSHA, Caltrans, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the SCAQMD, and the Orange County Certified Unified Program Agency. Therefore, impacts associated with the emitting or handling of hazardous materials within 0.25 miles of a school would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

d. Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact. California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the compiling of lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated. A review of known electronic database listings for possible hazardous waste generating establishments, as well as sites with known environmental concerns was conducted. Facilities were identified by county, State, or federal agencies that generate, store, or dispose of hazardous materials.

A review of Cortese List online data resources did not identify any sites within the Project boundary (SWRCB 2026). There were no sites listed within 1,000 feet of the Project Site according to the DTSC EnviroStor database (DTSC 2026).

The Proposed Project Site itself is not located on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. No impact would occur. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

e. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. John Wayne Airport is the closest airport to the project site and is approximately 16 miles northwest from the Project Site. The Project Site is not within two miles of a public airport. The Proposed Project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing on the Project Site. No impact would occur. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

f. Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site abuts Camino Capistrano, which is identified by the San Juan Capistrano as an emergency evacuation route (City of San Juan Capistrano 2025). Access to the Project Site would be provided via a 20-foot-wide single aisle along the northeast boundary

along Camino Capistrano. The Proposed Project includes redevelopment of the site with a hotel, associated amenities, renovation of existing historic structures, and construction of a 32-foot-tall, four-story car lift parking structure.

Construction

During demolition and construction activities, temporary lane closures, construction staging, and delivery vehicle activity could occur. These activities could have the potential to affect access along Camino Capistrano if not properly managed. Construction would be required to comply with City encroachment permit conditions and the preparation of a traffic control plan, subject to review and approval by the City's Public Works Department and Fire Authority. The traffic control plan would ensure that:

- Emergency vehicle access is maintained at all times;
- No construction equipment or materials obstruct the emergency evacuation route; and
- Adequate signage and flagging are provided, as necessary.

Construction activities would be temporary and intermittent, and any short-term traffic disruptions would be managed to maintain safe and adequate roadway operations. Because of these controls, construction would not physically interfere with implementation of adopted emergency response or evacuation plans.

Operation

The Proposed Project would not modify the alignment, width, or operational capacity of Camino Capistrano, nor would it introduce any physical improvements within the public right-of-way that could obstruct emergency access or evacuation routes. Project access would continue to be provided via existing and/or improved driveways consistent with City engineering standards. Final access design would be reviewed and approved by the City's Public Works Department and Fire Authority to ensure adequate emergency vehicle access, turning radii, fire lanes, and compliance with applicable fire and building codes. The proposed four-story, 32-foot-tall car lift parking structure would be internal to the site and would not encroach into the public right-of-way or affect evacuation roadway capacity.

Upon completion, the Proposed Project would maintain required site access points and internal circulation designed in accordance with applicable fire code and engineering standards, including adequate fire lanes, turning radii, and emergency vehicle access, as shown in Figure 12, Fire Access Site Plan. The Proposed Project would also be required to comply with applicable fire

safety regulations, including installation of fire suppression systems and preparation of an emergency evacuation plan for guests and employees.

Because the Proposed Project would not permanently modify or obstruct Camino Capistrano, would maintain emergency access during construction through approved traffic control measures, and would comply with applicable emergency planning and fire code requirements during operation, the Proposed Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. Impacts would therefore be less than significant, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR..

g. Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

No Impact. Based on Figure S-5 of the City's Safety Element, the Project Site is not in a very high fire hazard severity zone, nor is it in an area designated as a wildland area that may contain substantial fire risk (City of San Juan Capistrano 1999). Therefore, no significant wildfire impact is anticipated. Additionally, the project site is not in or near a very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ) as identified by CAL FIRE's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA map (CAL FIRE 2025). The Project Site has been previously developed, and the proposed redevelopment would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. This impact would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

2.4.10 Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

This section is completed in part based on the following reports:

- Preliminary Drainage Study: French Hotel Project, CB Civil Engineering, October 9, 2025. (Appendix C)
- Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP, French Hotel Property, CB Civil Engineering, November 13, 2025 (prepared). (Appendix D)

Complete copies of these studies are included in Appendix C and D of the Initial Study.

a. Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?

Less than Significant Impact. The overall development would occur on approximately 1.68 acres. The Proposed Project is located in the San Juan Creek Watershed.

The existing site is sloped from east to southwest to the southwest corner of the Project Site. Storm water runoff sheet flows across vacant land to a low spot at the SWC of the site, with flows continuing to the adjacent property to the south. From the adjacent property, runoff continues to the south across several properties before discharging into the City's public storm drain on Del Obispo near the intersection with Camino Capistrano. This storm drain system is connected to San Juan Creek, an engineered channel, and ultimately discharges into the Pacific Ocean. Runoff from the roof of the historic buildings along Camino Capistrano discharges into the public street. Once in the street, runoff is conveyed via curb and gutter south on Camino Capistrano to a public catch basin at the corner of Del Obispo and Camino Capistrano. This public storm drain system is tributary to San Juan Creek, which is tributary to the Pacific Ocean. Figure 13, Existing Drainage Plan, illustrates the existing drainage condition of the Project Site.

The Project Site currently consists of two historic adobe structures and disturbed pervious areas. Existing coverage includes approximately 44,345 square feet of pervious area and 28,795 square feet of impervious area. Runoff generally sheet flows southwest. The site is not located within a mapped FEMA 100-year flood hazard area.

Construction

Construction activities would involve grading, excavation for underground infiltration systems, demolition of non-historic structures, and building construction. The Project would disturb more than one acre and therefore must obtain coverage under the State Construction General Permit. Preparation and implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be required. The SWPPP includes best management practices to reduce water quality impacts, including various measures to control on-site erosion, reduce sediment flows into stormwater, wind erosion; to reduce tracking of soil and debris into adjacent roadways and off-site areas; and to manage wastes, materials, wastewater, liquids, hazardous materials, stockpiles, equipment, and other site conditions to prevent pollutants from entering the storm drain system. Inspections, reporting, and stormwater sampling and analysis are also required to ensure that visible and non-visible pollutants are not discharged offsite. Implementation of the provisions of the NPDES permit and compliance with City grading requirements would minimize construction impacts through the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) that reduce construction-related pollutants. This would ensure that any impacts to downstream waters resulting from construction activities would be less than significant.

Operation

Post-development conditions increase impervious coverage relative to existing conditions (see Table 3, Net Increase in Impervious Area). The table details existing and post-project conditions of the Project Site. As shown, the Proposed Project would increase the impervious surface area by 529,640 square feet, from 28,795 square feet to 58,435 square feet due to new building construction; however, this change is offset through engineered infiltration systems designed to capture and infiltrate stormwater runoff.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in increased runoff water and increased urban pollutants. However, the Proposed Project would include on-site storm drain facilities and implement BMPs listed below and in the WQMP in Appendix D to this Initial Study to ensure that the Proposed Project does not increase the existing site's storm water flow rate at the discharge point.

Table 3. Net Increase in Impervious Area

Project Site	Pervious Area (sq ft)	Percentage	Impervious Area (sq ft)	Percentage	Total Sq Ft
Pre-Project Conditions	44,345	60.6%	28,795	39.4%	73,140
Post-Project Conditions	14,705	20.0%	58,435	89%	73,140
Change	29,640	40.6%	29,640	**49.6%**	**--**

Source: CB Civil Engineering 2025.

The Proposed Project would incorporate the following site design BMPs:

- **Minimize Impervious Area.** N/A, project is almost entirely constructed on a podium.
- **Maximize Natural Infiltration Capacity.** Infiltration is promoted in the underground infiltration system.
- **Preserve Existing Drainage Patterns and Time of Concentration.** The proposed site will maintain the overall existing drainage pattern.
- **Disconnect Impervious Areas.** Runoff from the podium will discharge into the landscaping along the western side of the site.
- **Protect Existing Vegetation and Sensitive Areas.** N/A.
- **Revegetate Disturbed Areas.** The existing landscape onsite will be removed, and new planting areas will be installed. All areas disturbed shall be revegetated within the proposed designated landscape areas.

- **Soil Stockpiling and Site Generated Organics.** An erosion control plan will be provided in the Final WQMP.

- **Firescaping.** The overall site will be completely developed, and drought tolerant plants will be installed at designed landscape areas. Landscape planters are not proposed directly adjacent to the building, providing additional fireproofing measures.

- **Water Efficient Landscaping.** Drought tolerant planting will be designed for in the landscape areas and shall meet local jurisdiction requirements.

- **Slopes and Channel Buffers.** Not required as the entire site will be completely developed. No exposed channels or slopes.

The WQMP identifies the Project's pollutants or conditions of concern, including suspended solids, heavy metals, pathogens, nutrients, toxic organics, trash and debris, and oil and grease. These pollutants are consistent with those typically associated with hotel, restaurant, parking, and event uses. The potential pollutants of concern anticipated by the Proposed Project are summarized in Table 4, Pollutants or Conditions of Concern, and the table also shows if the receiving water body is considered impaired for those pollutants.

Table 4. Pollutants or Conditions of Concern

Pollutant	Expected from Proposed Land Uses/Activities (Yes or No)	Receiving Waterbody Impaired (Yes or No)	Priority Pollutant from WQIP or other Water Quality Condition? (Yes or No)	Pollutant of Concern (Primary, Other, or No)
Suspended-Solids	Yes	No	Yes	Primary
Nutrients	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Heavy Metals	Yes	Yes	No	Primary
Bacteria/Virus/Pathogens	Yes	Yes	Yes	Primary
Pesticides	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Oil and Grease	Yes	No	No	Other
Toxic Organic Compounds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Primary
Trash and Debris	Yes	No	Yes	Primary
Dry Weather Runoff	Yes	No	Yes	Primary

Source: CB Civil Engineering 2025.

To address these pollutants, the Project incorporates both nonstructural and structural source control BMPs consistent with the South Orange County Technical Guidance Document (SOC TGD) (see Table 5: Nonstructural and Structural Source Control BMPs). Nonstructural BMPs include operational measures such as proper waste handling, spill prevention, landscape

management, and housekeeping protocols. Structural BMPs include measures such as stenciling and signage, trash and waste storage areas, and self-retaining landscaped areas.

Table 5. Nonstructural and Structural Source Control BMPs

ID	Name	Description
		Nonstructural Source Control BMPs
N1	Education for Property Owners, Tenants and Occupants	Educational materials for good housekeeping practices, the WQMP, as well as other applicable stormwater BMP materials will be distributed by the owner and/or HOA to all employees and contractors that will perform any task affiliated with the BMPs mentioned within the WQMP. Materials will be presented upon hire and materials review will be done annually.
N2	Activity Restrictions	No outdoor storage shall be permitted. No hosing down of any paved surfaces will occur where the result would be the flow of non-stormwater into the street or storm drains. No dumping of any waste into drop inlets or catch basins. No blowing or sweeping of debris such as leaf litter, grass clippings, miscellaneous litter, etc. into catch basins, area drains, or streets. These and any other restrictions shall be adhered to daily.
N3	Common Area Landscape Management	Maintenance shall include trimming, mowing, weeding, removal of litter, fertilizing, water conservation, and replacement of dead, diseased, or dying plants. Any plant materials shall be installed and maintained in a neat, vigorous, and healthy condition. Irrigation will be monitored to establish proper time of watering. Landscape waste will be properly disposed of. Any fertilizer or pesticides used will be done so sparingly, according to Federal, State, and County standards, and applied in accordance with the directions on the label. Landscape Management shall be performed on a monthly basis. Irrigation Management shall be done in accordance with the landscapes watering schedule.
N4	BMP Maintenance	BMP maintenance refers to the proper inspection and maintenance at specified frequencies of all Structural BMPs, Non-Structural BMPs, and Treatment Control BMPs mentioned within the report. Record of inspections and maintenances shall be made and kept on-site. BMP Maintenance shall be adhered to as required.
N11	Common Area Litter Control	Routine maintenance shall consist of litter control throughout entire site, closing trash can lids, cleaning area around trash can, emptying trash containers throughout the site and inspecting and implementing the Best Management Practices. Common Area Litter Control shall be adhered to on a weekly basis.
N12	Employee Training	Education on preventing stormwater pollution and BMP implementation.
N14	Common Area Catch Basin Inspection	Inspection shall be performed monthly and after every rain event. Catch basins shall be cleaned when sump is 40% full but at a minimum annually before the rainy season. Repair any damage to catch basins or drop inlets.
N15	Street Sweeping Private Streets and Parking Lots	Surface inspection of the parking area shall be performed on a monthly basis at a minimum. The private streets and parking lots shall be swept and cleaned monthly to prevent potential debris and pollutants from entering into the storm drain system. Hosing off streets and parking areas is prohibited.
		Structural Source Control BMPs
S1	Provide storm drain system stenciling and signage	The on-site proposed drop inlets will use City markers that state "No Dumping – Drains to Ocean." Inspection of drop inlet markers shall be done annually. Re-stenciling shall be done as needed, with a minimum frequency of every five years, to ensure legibility.
S3	Design and construct trash and waste storage areas to reduce pollution introduction	Preventing pollutants at their source by organizing, locating, and constructing waste storage in a way that minimizes contact with stormwater and reduces the chance of trash escaping into drainage systems.

S4	Use efficient irrigation systems & landscape design, water conservation, smart controllers, and source control	Landscaping will consist of drought tolerant or native plants, grouped by similar irrigation needs. Any plant materials shall be installed and maintained in a neat, vigorous, and healthy condition. Irrigation will be monitored to establish proper time of watering. Rain shutoff devices and shut off valves/flow reducers will be used to prevent erosion, over watering, and prolong plant life. The irrigation system shall minimize excess irrigation and irrigation runoff throughout the Project Site. Landscaping and irrigation systems will be inspected monthly and maintained as needed.

The Project Site has been divided into four Drainage Management Areas as summarized in Table 6, DMA Summary. DMA A, covering 0.054 acres and approximately 100% impervious, includes the public sidewalk along Camino Capistrano, and receives some runoff from a nearby residential property; stormwater here flows via curb and gutter to a public catch basin at Camino Capistrano and Del Obispo Street and will continue following existing drainage patterns. DMA B encompasses 1.347 acres, including all proposed buildings and drive aisles, where stormwater will be captured by two grated inlets along the north and south property lines, with roof drains directed to the nearest underground storm drain. From these inlets, water flows into three underground infiltration basins for water quality treatment and infiltration into native soil, designed to manage the 100-year, 24-hour storm within 72 hours; if the system is exceeded or clogged, overflow will pass through a curb cut and landscape swale to the southwest corner of the property, then follow existing drainage to Del Obispo Street and the public storm drain system. DMA C, covering 0.200 acres for the proposed pool and spa area, will capture stormwater via atrium drains to an underground infiltration basin with similar design and overflow management as DMA B, ultimately discharging to Del Obispo Street. Finally, DMA D, a 0.078-acre area of mostly at-grade landscape along the westerly property line, is 92% pervious, allowing most runoff to naturally infiltrate into the native soils at a design rate of approximately 0.70 inches per hour.

The proposed drainage plan for the Proposed Project is shown in Figure 14, Proposed Drainage Plan and as previously mentioned, the water quality management plan (WQMP) divides the site into four drainage management areas (DMAs) to be treated as shown in Figure 15, Drainage Management Area Exhibit. Table 6, DMA Summary, provides a summary of each DMA.

Table 6. DMA Summary

DMA (Number/Description)	Total Area (ac)	Imperviousness (%)	Infiltration Feasibility Category (Full, Partial, or No Infiltration)	Hydrologic Source Controls Used
A	0.054	89	No Infiltration	None
B	1.347	86	Full Infiltration	None
C	0.20	63	Full Infiltration	None
D	0.078	8	Full Infiltration	HSC-6

Source: CB Civil Engineering 2025.

Geotechnical investigations identified infiltration rates ranging from approximately 1.13 to 4.32 inches per hour, with a design infiltration rate of 1.44 inches per hour. Groundwater was not encountered to a depth of 15 feet below grade, and estimated seasonal high groundwater levels provide adequate vertical separation from infiltration facilities.

The Proposed Project would comply with all applicable regulatory requirements, including the State Construction General Permit and NPDES, and would implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) during construction to control sediment, debris, and other pollutants. Post-construction, engineered infiltration systems and drainage management areas would capture and treat stormwater from 100-year, 24-hour storm events, while BMPs, including waste management, catch basin inspections, street sweeping, and irrigation controls, would minimize pollutant discharge. Geotechnical studies confirm sufficient infiltration capacity and adequate separation from groundwater, and post-project drainage patterns would maintain existing flow paths and rates. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not violate water quality standards or substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality, and impacts are considered less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

b. Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction

During construction, water would be mainly used to control dust by water trucks. The sources of water for watering trucks are unknown at this time, but the construction would be temporary, and such temporary increase in water demands is within the City's supply and demand forecast. Water used during construction could also be from the recycled water sources. Temporary water usage during construction would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge. Construction impact would be less than significant. ***Operation***

The Proposed Project increases the Project Site's overall imperviousness to 89 percent from 39.4 percent. Although the Proposed Project results in a net reduction in natural pervious area (see Table 3, Net Increase in Impervious Area), above, the WQMP incorporates engineered infiltration systems that promote recharge. As summarized in Table 6, DMA Summary, above, infiltration facilities are sized to capture and infiltrate required storm volumes based on confirmed soil infiltration rates.

The Proposed Project's infiltration systems are designed to capture stormwater and allow it to percolate into the native soils at a rate of approximately 1.44 inches per hour, which is within the natural infiltration capacity of the site. Groundwater was not encountered to a depth of 15 feet, and there is sufficient vertical separation between the bottom of the infiltration facilities and the

seasonal high groundwater table. This means that infiltration will not cause groundwater contamination and that the system will allow some stormwater to return to the groundwater basin.

Although the Proposed Project increases impervious surfaces overall, the engineered infiltration systems are designed to offset this increase by promoting on-site recharge in the landscaped and infiltration areas.

The Proposed Project does not involve groundwater extraction or diversion. With implementation of infiltration BMPs, the Proposed Project would not substantially interfere with groundwater recharge. Therefore, the Proposed Project is not expected to substantially decrease groundwater supplies or impede sustainable groundwater management, and any impacts on groundwater recharge would be considered less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

c. Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction

During construction, the Proposed Project would involve grading, excavation, and other earth-disturbing activities that could temporarily expose soils to erosion and surface water runoff. To minimize erosion and siltation, the project would be required to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit, which mandates the preparation and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The SWPPP would include best management practices (BMPs) such as silt fencing, fiber rolls, stabilized construction entrances, and proper stockpile management to control erosion and prevent off-site siltation. Compliance with the NPDES permit and implementation of the SWPPP would ensure that construction activities do not result in substantial adverse erosion or siltation impacts.

Operation

As discussed under Section 2.4.10(a), the Proposed Project would increase the site's impervious surfaces from approximately 39.4 percent to 80 percent, altering the drainage pattern of the site compared to existing conditions. However, the Project Site is fully developed and surrounded by commercial land uses, with no streams or rivers located on or near the property. Post-construction, stormwater would be managed through engineered drainage and infiltration systems consistent with the Project's Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), which is designed to safely convey and treat stormwater while minimizing potential erosion or siltation. Because the drainage improvements would maintain the general flow direction and velocity of runoff and no nearby

watercourses exist that could be affected, operational impacts related to erosion or siltation would be minimal.

The Project Site is located within a developed area, with commercial land uses surrounding the Project Site; as such, the development of the Proposed Project would not cause a significant change to surface bodies of water in a manner that could cause siltation or erosion. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed under Section 2.4.10(a), the Proposed Project would increase the total impervious area on-site compared to existing conditions. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in increased runoff water and increased urban pollutants. However, the Proposed Project would include on-site storm drain facilities and implement BMPs listed below and in the WQMP in Appendix D to this Initial Study to ensure that the Proposed Project does not increase the existing site's storm water flow rate at the discharge point. Therefore, the Proposed Project would lead to a less than significant impact to on- or off-site flooding caused by a substantial increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

iii. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

Less than Significant Impact.

Construction

During construction, temporary increases in runoff could occur due to exposed soils, grading, and earth-disturbing activities. To minimize potential impacts, the Proposed Project would be required to implement best management practices (BMPs) as part of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), prepared in compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. BMPs may include sediment controls, stabilized construction entrances, temporary detention measures, and proper material storage. These measures would ensure that construction-related runoff does not exceed the capacity of existing or planned drainage systems or result in the discharge of pollutants off-site. Additionally, the Proposed Project would comply with existing local, state, and federal regulations related to drainage and runoff.

Operation

Once completed, the Proposed Project would maintain the overall drainage pattern of the site, discharging runoff to the south across downstream properties as it does historically. Stormwater would ultimately enter the City of San Juan Capistrano public storm drain system at Del Obispo and Camino Capistrano, which is tributary to San Juan Creek, an engineered channel that conveys

water to the Pacific Ocean. The pre- and post-development drainage patterns would remain unchanged. In addition, post-construction stormwater would be managed through engineered drainage and infiltration systems consistent with the Project's Water Quality Management Plan (WQMP), which are designed to control runoff rates and treat pollutants before discharge. Compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations ensures that the Project would not exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or substantially increase sources of polluted runoff.

As such, impacts associated with stormwater drainage system capacity would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?

Less than Significant Impact. The City's Safety Element shows that the Project Site is not located in an area of potential flooding from a 100-year flood or from a dam failure. Furthermore, the Project Site has been previously developed. Therefore, the Proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact to impeding and redirecting flood flows. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

d. Would the project, in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Less than Significant Impact. Tsunami and seiches are large waves usually caused by an earthquake. Tsunamis occur in the ocean and seiches occur in an enclosed body of water. Seiches are of concern relative to water storage facilities because inundation from a seiche can occur if the wave overflows a containment wall, such as the wall of a reservoir, water storage tank, dam, or other artificial body of water.

The Project Site is approximately four miles from the ocean. For this reason, tsunamis are not a concern at the Project Site. Additionally, based on the City's Safety Element's 100-Year Flood Hazard Areas (Figure S-3) and Dam Inundation Areas (Figure S-4), the Project Site is not located in an area of potential flooding. Therefore, impacts related to flooding hazard are less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

e. Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would further include nonstructural and structural source control BMPs as detailed above. The Proposed Project Site is located within the jurisdiction of the San Diego RWQCB Basin Plan. Construction activities would comply with applicable requirements of the San Diego RWQCB, including compliance with Stormwater Pollution Prevent Plan-mandated BMPs. Compliance with regional and local regulations related to water quality control plans would reduce potential water quality impairment of surface waters.

Therefore, the Proposed Project would not conflict with a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. A less than significant impact will occur. With the incorporation of the on-site stormwater system, including proposed stormwater treatment systems and BMPs, the Proposed Project would not adversely affect water quality or groundwater quality. Implementation of the Proposed Project would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of any water quality control plan. Impacts would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

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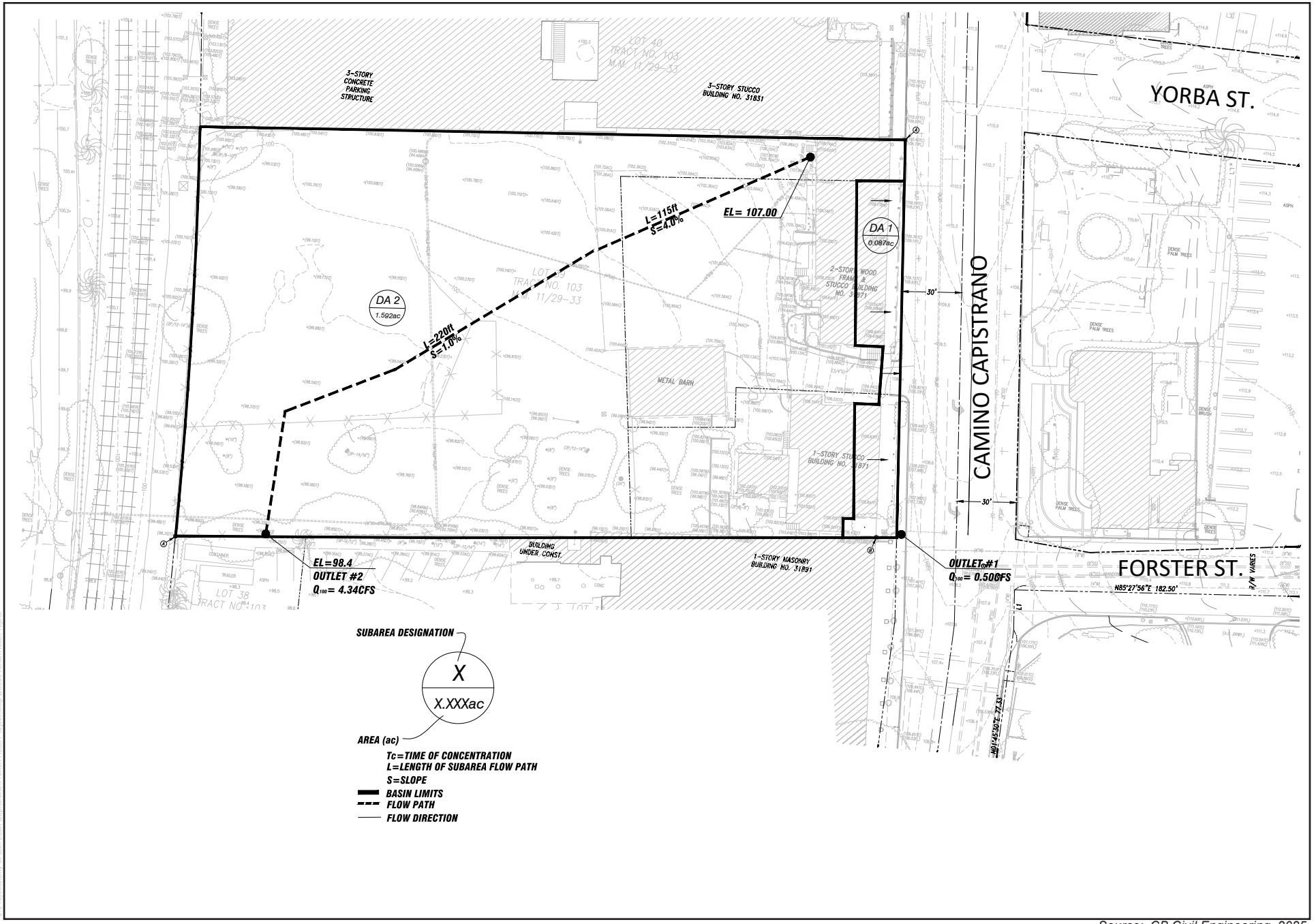

Source: CB Civil Engineering, 2025.

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Figure 13

Existing Drainage Plan

French Hotel Project

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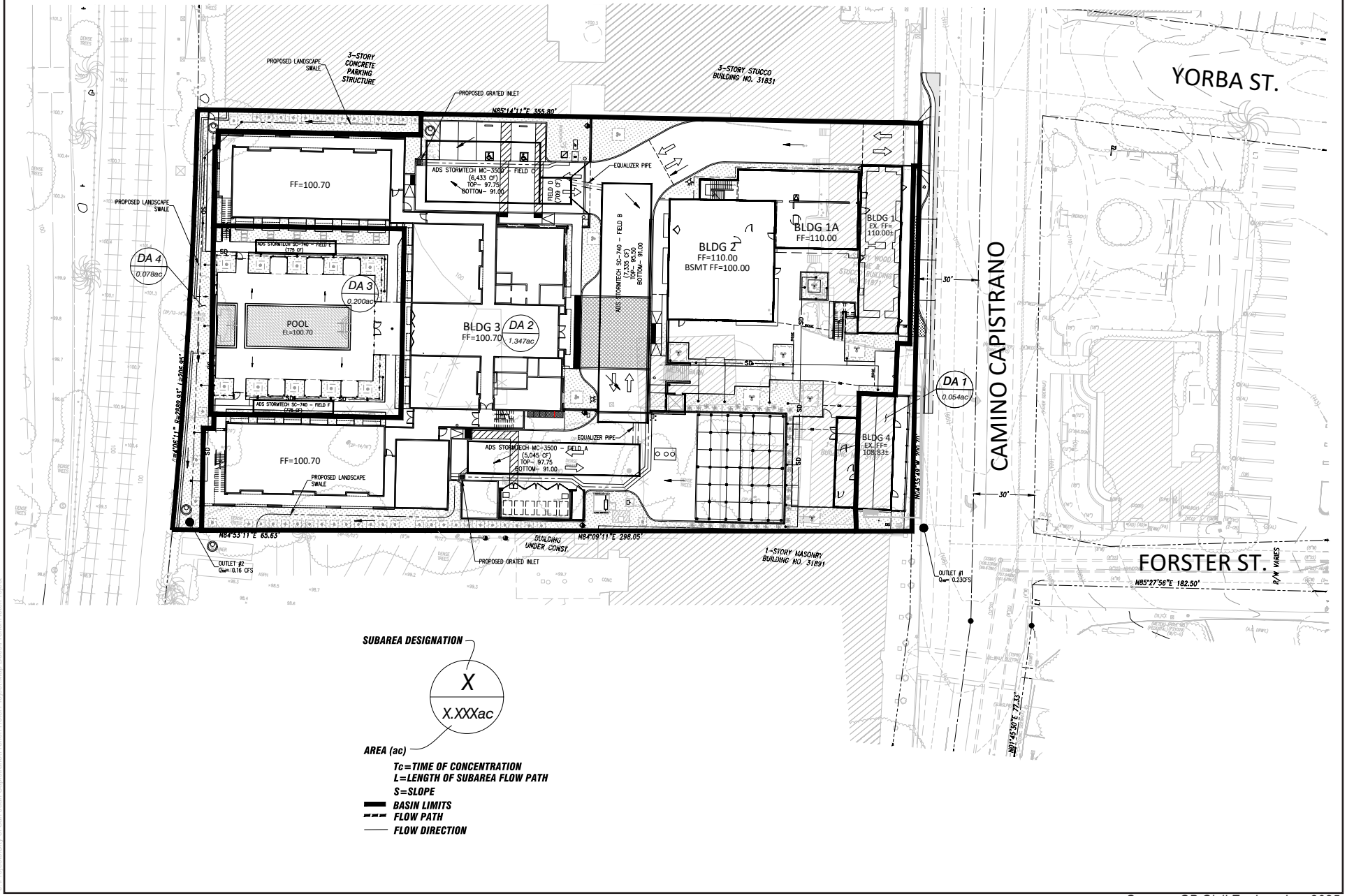

Source: CB Civil Engineering, 2025.

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Figure 14

Proposed Drainage Plan

French Hotel Project

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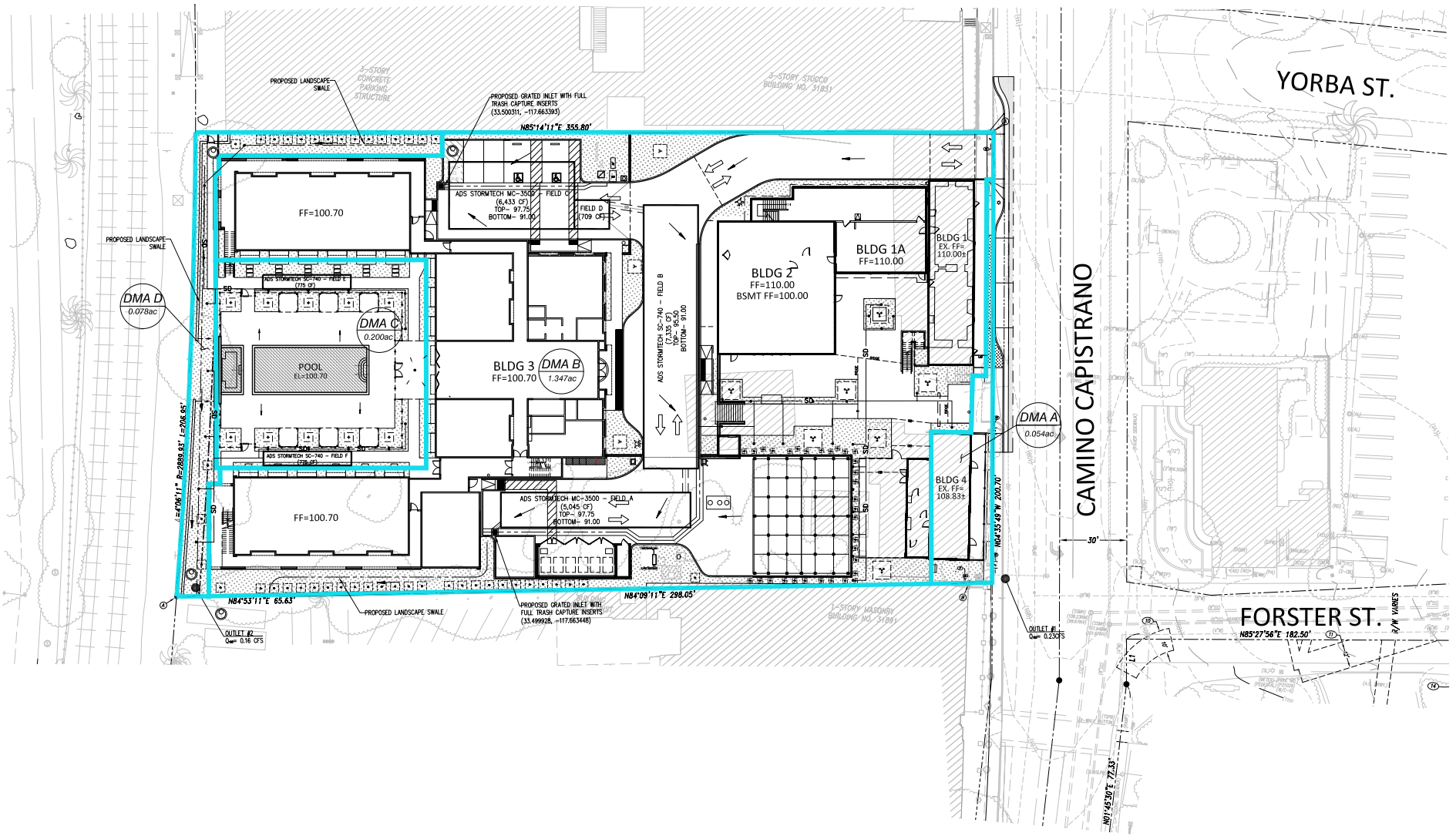

Source: CB Civil Engineering, 2025.

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Figure 15

Drainage Management Area

French Hotel Project

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2.4.11 Land Use and Planning

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The Project Site is developed with a former industrial building that is currently vacant and is generally surrounded by existing commercial/retail property to the north, El Adobe Restaurant to the south, Camino Capistrano to the east, and train tracks and Los Rios Street to the west. Further east is the Historic Town Center Park. The Interstate-5 Freeway is located approximately 0.25 east. The Proposed Project would be redeveloped with a new hotel development which would rehabilitate and adaptively reuse the Yorba Adobe, removing the non-historic 2,900 square-foot rear additions constructed between 1900 and 1936. A new, smaller rear addition will be built to house restrooms and service spaces in compliance with current building codes, resulting in approximately 1,493 square feet of conditioned space. The Proposed Project would also bring the Manuel Garcia Adobe back to its previous 1880's use as a hotel. West of the adobe, a one-story building would be constructed with a basement for kitchen and event usage. A three-wing three-story hotel would be situated on the west end around the hotel pool and spa. An existing one-story building on the eastern property line would be renovated for future use. Lastly, a 32-foot tall car lift would be installed for guest parking at the hotel.

As such, redevelopment of the Project Site would not physically divide any community. No impact would occur, and this issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

b. Would the project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is designated GC under the General Plan of the San Juan Capistrano and is zoned TC pursuant to Title 9 (Land Use Code). The proposed hotel redevelopment, including restoration of the historic Manuel Garcia adobe to its prior 1880s hotel use, construction of new hotel buildings, renovation of an existing structure, and installation of a 32-foot tall car lift parking, is consistent with the General Plan land use designation and the permitted uses within the TC zoning district.

The GC land use designation is intended to accommodate a range of retail, service, lodging, and visitor-serving commercial uses. Hotel uses are allowed within the TC zoning district subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and compliance with applicable development standards. The Project would require and obtain a Tree Removal Permit, Sign Program, Grading Plan Modification, an Architectural Control Permit pursuant to Title 9, Section 9-2.313 of the Land Use Code, a Site Plan Review pursuant to Title 9, Section 9-2.327 of the Land Use Code, as well as approval of a CUP. Through these discretionary review processes, the City would ensure compliance with adopted development standards and design guidelines intended to avoid or minimize environmental impacts related to land use compatibility, aesthetics, traffic circulation, parking, and historic resource protection.

The Project does not require a General Plan Amendment or zone change, and it has been designed to comply with all applicable development standards, including setbacks, floor area ratio, height limits, and parking requirements. Because the Project is consistent with the site's existing land use designation and zoning and would be subject to established review procedures and performance standards adopted to reduce potential environmental effects, it would not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Therefore, impacts related to conflicts with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.12 Mineral Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

Less than Significant Impact. The California Geological Survey Mineral Resources Project provides information about California's nonfuel mineral resources. The Mineral Resources Project classifies lands throughout the state that contain regionally significant mineral resources, as mandated by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975. The state classifies land into one of four mineral resource zones (MRZs). MRZ1 is an area where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence. MRZ-2 is an area where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence. MRZ-3 is an area containing mineral deposits whose significance cannot be evaluated from available data. MRZ4 is an area where available information is inadequate for assignment to any other MRZ. The Project Site is identified by the Generalized Mineral Land Classification of Orange County, California map as MRZ-3, indicating that the Project Site is in an area containing mineral deposits whose significance cannot be evaluated from available data (Miller 1994). However, the San Juan Capistrano General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element do not indicate any mineral resources within the plan boundaries (City of San Juan Capistrano 2002). The Project would not result in the loss of a known commercially valuable mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State because no known mineral resources are present on the Project Site.

Implementation of the Proposed Project would not preclude future identification and mining of aggregate deposits. The Proposed Project would not deplete or modify the availability of a known mineral resources that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state. Impacts would be considered less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

b. Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?

No Impact. The City of San Juan Capistrano does not designate a locally important mineral resource recovery site in its General Plan or other land use plan. The Project Site is also not identified as a mineral resource area by the County of Orange General Plan's Figure VI-3, Orange County Mineral Resources included in the Resources Element (Orange County 2005). Implementation of the Proposed Project would require increased demands for aggregate deposits during construction. However, building materials would come from known sources, not a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on the City's General Plan or other applicable land use plan. No impact is anticipated, and this issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.13 Noise

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project result in generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Potentially Significant Impact. Construction and operation of the Proposed Project may expose people to or generate noise levels that would potentially exceed standards established in the City's General Plan and noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies. The Proposed Project would include 70 hotel rooms and associated outdoor amenities and would also result in operational noise from increased traffic. Further evaluation in the EIR is required to determine the level of significance and to identify mitigation measures which reduce impacts to below a level of significance, if required. This issue will be addressed in the EIR.

b. Would the project result in the generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Potentially Significant Impact. Groundborne vibration or noise would primarily be associated with construction activities. These temporary increased levels of vibration could impact vibration-sensitive land uses in and surrounding the Project Site. This topic will be addressed in the EIR, and mitigation measures will be recommended as needed.

c. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The nearest airport to the Project Site is John Wayne Airport, approximately 16 miles to the northwest. There are no public airports within 2 miles, and the Project Site is not part of the Orange County Airport Land Use Commission's land use plan for John Wayne Airport or any other airports. The Proposed Project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.14 Population and Housing

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project involves redevelopment of a 1.68-acre urban infill site at 31861 Camino Capistrano with a 70-room boutique hotel. The Project Site is located within the San Juan Capistrano and is designated GC under the General Plan with a TC zoning designation. The Proposed Project does not include residential development or construction of new housing units. As a visitor-serving commercial use, the hotel would accommodate temporary guests rather than permanent residents.

The Proposed Project would employ a limited number of hotel staff, including front desk personnel, housekeeping, food service, and maintenance staff. However, these employees are expected to be drawn primarily from the existing local labor pool, consistent with other commercial and hospitality operations in the area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not generate a substantial influx of new permanent residents.

The Project Site is already served by existing roads, utilities, and public services, and the Proposed Project does not require the extension of new infrastructure that could induce population growth. While the hotel may result in temporary increases in daytime or nighttime population due to guests and employees, these increases are consistent with the land use designation, zoning, and City planning assumptions for the area and were accounted for in the City's General Plan and associated service planning.

Because the Proposed Project would not encourage new residential development or expansion of urbanized areas beyond what is already anticipated, and the employee workforce would come primarily from the existing local population, the Proposed Project would not induce substantial

unplanned population growth either directly or indirectly. Impacts related to population growth would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

b. Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The Project Site is currently unoccupied. One housing unit would be converted into hotel amenities as part of the Proposed Project. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not displace a substantial number of existing people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.15 Public Services

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Police protection?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Schools?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Parks?	☐	☐	☒	☐
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?

Less than Significant Impact. The City of San Juan Capistrano is served by the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) for fire protection services. Implementation of the Proposed Project may increase the demand for public services, including fire protection, due to change in land use, and increase in development intensity. OCFA provides fire protection, emergency medical response, rescue, hazardous materials response, and fire prevention services to the San Juan Capistrano under contract. OCFA serves 23 cities in Orange County through a regional network of stations and apparatus (OCFA 2026a).

The nearest fire station is OCFA Fire Station 7, located at 31865 Del Obispo Street in San Juan Capistrano, approximately .15 miles southeast of the Project Site. Station 7 is staffed daily with career firefighters including a Fire Captain, Engineer, Firefighter, and two Paramedics, supported by reserve personnel and multiple apparatus such as structural and wildland engines, medic units, and water tenders (OCFA 2026b).

OCFA has established fire service standards within the City, including first engine response to fire and medical emergency calls within approximately 5 to 7 minutes for the initial unit and full first-alarm company response within established time criteria under regional protocols.

The Proposed Project would result in a boutique hotel use, which would generate incremental, predictable demand for fire protection and emergency medical response relative to existing conditions. The hotel would not introduce urban expansion or high-density residential development that would significantly alter regional service demands beyond what is typical for GC land uses. As a commercial use in an established urban service area, the Project's operational fire and emergency demand would be consistent with service levels OCFA currently accommodates across the City.

The Proposed Project would be required to comply with all applicable fire and life safety codes, including fire flow requirements, fire sprinkler systems, emergency access, and fire apparatus access roads, as enforced through OCFA plan review and permitting during building construction. These requirements ensure that the development itself is designed to minimize emergency service demand and help maintain response capability and safety. Additionally, ongoing local water system improvements implemented by SMWD including upgrades to fire flow capacity and operational reliability support improved fire protection infrastructure within San Juan Capistrano.

The Proposed Project would not require construction of new fire stations, major facility expansions, or altered fire protection infrastructure beyond routine plan review and permitting processes that address building-specific needs. OCFA's regional service delivery model and existing station network would continue to serve the Proposed Project without degradation of response times or service ratios. No evidence indicates that existing facilities would be overwhelmed or that their alteration or expansion would be necessary due to project implementation.

Because the Proposed Project would be served by existing fire protection facilities with adequate capacity and response capability, would comply with applicable fire safety standards, and would not necessitate new or physically altered fire facilities that could themselves cause significant environmental impacts, impacts associated with fire protection services would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Police protection?

Less than Significant Impact. The City of San Juan Capistrano is served by the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD). Implementation of the Proposed Project may increase the demand for public services, including police protection through the change in land use and intensification of development. OCSD has provided contract police services to the City since 1961.

OCSD's Southwest Operations Division, based out of the Aliso Viejo station, covers San Juan Capistrano along with several other south Orange County cities. OCSD personnel assigned to San Juan Capistrano include deputy sheriffs, sergeants, and support staff responsible for patrol, traffic enforcement, investigations, and community policing (OCSD 2026).

Police response objectives generally aim for timely service delivery consistent with community expectations and regional standards. OCSD dispatches deputies to emergency and routine calls from its Aliso Viejo station and through local Police Services offices, ensuring coverage of the city's commercial and residential areas. The closest station to the Project Site is located 0.6 miles southwest of the Project Site at 32506 Paseo Adelanto.

The Proposed Project would redevelop a previously disturbed urban infill site with a 70-room boutique hotel. The hotel would generate a modest and predictable increase in demand for law enforcement services related to temporary occupancy, guest check-in/check-out activity, traffic circulation, and special events (e.g., outdoor patio or event spaces). However, such demand is consistent with commercial, and visitor-serving uses already found along Camino Capistrano and within the City's GC and TC land use contexts.

Because the Proposed Project is not residential, it would not create long-term new resident populations requiring additional ongoing police services beyond what is typical for a commercial corridor. Hotel staff and guests are expected to be drawn from and circulate within the existing community, and any incremental calls for police service (e.g., assistance, traffic issues, guest disturbances) would be within OCSD's existing patrol capabilities.

The Proposed Project does not require extension of roadway or utility infrastructure that would alter patrol patterns or accessibility. Police staffing and deployment are managed by OCSD through its existing facility network and response procedures. There is no evidence that the Proposed Project would overwhelm current service levels such that new substations, stations, or physically altered facilities would be necessary to maintain acceptable service ratios or response times.

Because the Proposed Project would be served by existing OCSD police facilities, would not generate a level of demand requiring construction of new or significantly expanded facilities, and would be consistent with service assumptions underlying the City's General Plan and police contracts, impacts related to police protection would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Schools?

Less Than Significant Impact. The Project Site is located within the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD), which serves San Juan Capistrano and surrounding communities. CUSD

operated multiple elementary, middle, and high schools in the area. The nearest schools to the Project Site include:

- San Juan Elementary School: Grades K-6, located approximately .20 miles northeast of the Project Site at 31642 El Camino Real
- Bridges Community Day High School: Grades 7-12, located approximately .25 miles northeast of the Project Site at 31576 El Camino Real

CUSD facilities are designed to accommodate student populations from the City's residential and urbanized areas, and the district plans for population growth through periodic enrollment projections, school capacity assessments, and long-term facility planning.

The Proposed Project involves redevelopment of a 1.68-acre infill site with a 70-room boutique hotel and associated amenities. The Proposed Project does not include any residential development, and hotel guests are temporary visitors rather than permanent residents. While the Proposed Project would employ staff for hotel operations, including front desk, housekeeping, food service, maintenance, and management positions, these employees are expected to be drawn primarily from the existing local labor pool and would not substantially increase the local population of school-age children.

Because no new housing is being created, the Proposed Project would not generate a demand for new or expanded school facilities or require construction of new school buildings to maintain acceptable student-to-teacher ratios. Existing CUSD schools and facilities are adequate to accommodate current and projected resident populations within the City, and the Proposed Project would not interfere with district planning or trigger the need for new school construction.

The Proposed Project would not result in a substantial increase in school-age population, would not necessitate construction of new or expanded school facilities, and would not interfere with maintaining acceptable service ratios or performance objectives. Impacts related to schools would therefore be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Parks?

Less than Significant Impact. The City's Community Services Department maintains and operates parks and recreational facilities in the City. The closest parks to the Project Site are:

- Historic Town Center Park: 0.05 miles east of the Project Site at 31852 El Camino Real
- Veterans Park: Directly across the Rancho Viejo Road from the Project Site at 31851 Camino Capistrano
- Los Rios Playground: .15 miles northwest of the Project Site at 31790 Paseo Adelanto

The City's General Plan Parks and Recreation Element establishes standards for park access and service ratios, aiming to provide sufficient open space and recreational opportunities for all residents.

The Proposed Project would redevelop an urban infill site with a 70-room boutique hotel and associated amenities such as a pool, outdoor patio, gym, and event spaces. The Proposed Project does not include residential development, and hotel guests are temporary rather than permanent residents. While hotel employees would contribute a minor increase in local daytime population, they would be drawn primarily from the existing labor pool in San Juan Capistrano.

Because the Proposed Project would not generate new housing or a permanent resident population, it would not create additional demand for public park facilities or necessitate new park construction. The Proposed Project's recreational amenities, including the hotel pool, gym, and private outdoor areas, provide on-site recreational opportunities for guests, further reducing any potential incremental demand on City parks.

Additionally, the Proposed Project is consistent with the City's GC and TC land use designations and does not involve expansion into open space or parkland. It would not interfere with public access to existing parks or open space areas.

The Proposed Project would not result in a substantial increase in demand for parks or recreational facilities, would not require new or physically altered park infrastructure, and would not interfere with the City's ability to maintain acceptable service ratios for public recreation. Impacts related to parks and recreational services would therefore be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Other public facilities?

Less than Significant Impact.

No other impacts have been identified that would require the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities. The Proposed Project would be subject to sewer, transportation, and stormwater impact fees. The Orange County Public Library system provides library services to San Juan Capistrano residents. The library system provides access to books, digital media, research resources, community programs, and public internet access. The closest library to the Project Site is the OC Library- San Juan Capistrano Branch at 31495 El Camino Real approximately 0.3 miles north of the Project Site. Additionally, as previously mentioned, the Project does not include any residential uses that would directly increase the population growth in the area. The Proposed Project involves redevelopment of a 1.68-acre infill site with a 70-room boutique hotel and associated amenities that would provide accommodations for visitors to the City but would not provide long-term housing opportunities. Hotel projects create minimal indirect population increases because they primarily serve temporary, transient tourists rather than permanent

residents. Therefore, development of the Proposed Project would not significantly increase the use of government services beyond current levels. \ The Project applicant would need to pay all applicable impact fees of the City.

Therefore, it is not anticipated that a substantial increase in patronage at libraries, community centers, and other public facilities would result. Nonetheless, availability and accessibility of electronic library services would reduce the need and demand for library facilities. Similarly, other municipal services are typically funded through user fees, property tax or sales tax revenues to which the future residents of the Proposed Project would contribute. A less than significant impact will occur. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.16 Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Less than Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 2.4.15 (Parks), above, the Proposed Project would redevelop an urban infill site with a 70-room boutique hotel and associated amenities such as a pool, outdoor patio, gym, and event spaces. The Proposed Project does not include residential development, and hotel guests are temporary rather than permanent residents. While hotel employees would contribute a minor increase in local daytime population, they would be drawn primarily from the existing labor pool in San Juan Capistrano. Because the Proposed Project would not generate new housing or a permanent resident population, it would not create additional demand for public park facilities or necessitate new park construction. A less than significant impact will occur. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

b. Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would redevelop a 1.68-acre urban infill site with a 70-room boutique hotel and associated amenities. On-site recreational facilities include a swimming pool and spa area; a fitness/gym facility; an outdoor patio; and gathering areas for hotel guests and events. These facilities are intended for the private use of hotel guests and staff and do not constitute public parks or recreational facilities. The Proposed Project's recreational facilities are fully contained within the hotel site and would not require construction, expansion, or alteration of public parks, trails, or open space. Because the Proposed Project is an urban infill development, all site improvements, including the pool, gym, and patios, would occur within previously disturbed areas, minimizing environmental impacts. Construction of the recreational facilities would be subject to standard permitting and design regulations, including grading, stormwater

management, noise, and building codes, which would control any temporary construction impacts. No sensitive habitats, significant trees, or protected resources would be affected by these on-site amenities, and the Proposed Project does not propose expansion into adjacent public or environmentally sensitive areas.

Because all recreational facilities are private, fully contained on-site, and would be constructed within previously disturbed areas in compliance with standard environmental and building regulations, the Proposed Project would not require the construction or expansion of public recreational facilities and would not have an adverse physical effect on the environment. Impacts would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

2.4.17 Transportation

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

This section is partially based on the following technical report:

- Focused Traffic Impact Analysis for The French Hotel San Juan Capistrano. LLG, November 19, 2025. (Appendix E)

a. Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would convert a currently vacant site to hotel use. The new hotel use is expected to result in new vehicle trips to and from the Project Site compared to current site conditions. As such, this topic will be further analyzed in the EIR, and mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

b. Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Potentially Significant Impact. As discussed in Section 2.4.17(a), the Proposed Project is expected to result in new vehicle trips to and from the Project Site compared to current site conditions. The Proposed Project would also add additional vehicles to the roadway network around the Project Site. The Proposed Project's contribution to vehicle miles traveled will be analyzed in the EIR, and mitigation measures will be identified if necessary.

c. Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Less than Significant Impact. Access to the Project Site would be provided via a 20-foot-wide single drive aisle along the northeast portion of the Proposed Project boundary on Camino Capistrano. The Proposed Project would include internal circulation routes, including truck traffic

routes and pedestrian access to the Project Site provided by sidewalks. Vehicular traffic to and from the Project Site would utilize the existing network of regional and local roadways that currently serve the Project Site area. The Proposed Project would not include unusual or hazardous design features, nor would it generate incompatible uses with the surrounding area. The access point has been designed consistently with the City's circulation standards and does not create a hazard for vehicles, bicycles, or pedestrians entering or exiting the site. Design of the Proposed Project, including the internal private roadways, ingress, egress, and other streetscape changes, would be subject to review by the City's Public Works & Engineering Services at entitlement for compliance with City regulations, and by the County of Orange for necessary ministerial permits. Impacts would therefore be less than significant, and this issue will not be addressed in the EIR.

d. Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Less than Significant Impact.

Operation

The Project Site abuts Camino Capistrano, which is identified by the San Juan Capistrano as an emergency evacuation route (San Juan Capistrano 2025). Access to the Project Site would be provided via a 20-foot-wide single aisle along the northeast boundary along Camino Capistrano. Project access would continue to be provided via existing and/or improved driveways consistent with City engineering standards. Final access design would be subject to review and approval by the City's Public Works and Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) to ensure adequate emergency vehicle access, turning radii, fire lanes, and compliance with applicable fire and building codes. The proposed 32-foot tall car lift parking structure would be internal to the site and would not encroach into the public right-of-way or affect evacuation roadway capacity.

Construction

During demolition and construction activities, temporary lane closures, construction staging, or delivery vehicle activity could occur. However, construction would be required to comply with City encroachment permit conditions and preparation of a traffic control plan, subject to review and approval by the City's Public Works Department and OCFA. The traffic control plan would ensure that emergency vehicle access is maintained at all times, that no construction equipment or materials obstruct the evacuation route, and that adequate signage and flagging are provided, as necessary. Construction activities would be temporary and intermittent, and any short-term traffic disruptions would be managed to maintain safe and adequate roadway operations. Therefore, construction would not physically interfere with implementation of adopted emergency response or evacuation plans.

Because the Proposed Project would not permanently modify or obstruct Camino Capistrano, would maintain emergency access during construction through approved traffic control measures,

and would comply with applicable emergency planning and fire code requirements during operation, the Proposed Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan. Impacts would therefore be less than significant, and this issue will not be addressed in the EIR.

2.4.18 Tribal Cultural Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or	☒	☐	☐	☐
ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	☒	☐	☐	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

i. Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or

Potentially Significant Impact. In order to determine whether there are any tribal cultural resources that could be impacted by the Proposed Project, California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Project Site will be contacted (Public Resources Code § 21080.3.1). The EIR will evaluate potential impacts of the Proposed Project on tribal cultural resources and mitigation measures will be identified if necessary.

ii. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource

Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Potentially Significant Impact. See above response to Section 2.4.18(a)(i).

2.4.19 Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d. Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e. Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less than Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunication facilities for the reasons discussed below.

Water Facilities

The Project Site is served by SMWD, which provides potable water and water service infrastructure to San Juan Capistrano. The proposed 70-room boutique hotel would connect to existing water mains along Camino Capistrano and would not require construction of new off-site water treatment facilities or major water supply pipelines. On-site water improvements would include connections to existing mains, plumbing for the hotel, fire sprinkler systems, pool, and landscaping irrigation. These connections are typical for commercial infill development and would

not result in significant environmental impacts. SMWD routinely supports such development in the area without the need for major expansion.

The Proposed Project's water demand could be served by existing water facilities serving the Project area without requiring new or expanded facilities. Thus, impacts associated with the construction or expansion of water facilities would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Wastewater Treatment Facilities

Wastewater service for the Project Site is provided by the SMWD, which conveys sewage to regional treatment facilities. The hotel would generate wastewater from guest rooms, kitchens, restrooms, and laundry facilities, which would be routed to existing sewer lines in Camino Capistrano. The hotel's sewage generation is consistent with the commercial intensity envisioned by the General Plan and TC zoning. Existing sewer mains have adequate capacity, and no expansion of off-site treatment facilities is required. Thus, the Proposed Project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new wastewater treatment facilities. Impacts would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Stormwater Drainage Facilities

The Proposed Project would include on-site stormwater management (retention basins, grading, and landscaping) consistent with City stormwater regulations and NPDES requirements. Additionally, the Proposed Project is not anticipated to substantially modify existing topography or runoff patterns. Therefore, impacts associated with stormwater drainage facilities would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Electric Power Facilities

Electrical energy is accessed by transmission and distribution lines from substations owned by San Diego Gas and Electric. At full buildout, the Proposed Project's operational phase would require electricity for building operation (appliances, lighting, etc.). In addition, the Proposed Project would be required to comply with the 2025 Title 24 standards or the most recent standards at the time of building permit issuance. The energy-using fixtures within the Proposed Project would likely be newer energy efficient technologies, using less electrical power. Therefore, impacts associated with electrical power facilities would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Natural Gas Facilities

Natural gas is provided to the City by Southern California Gas Company, Pacific Region. Although the Proposed Project would require natural gas for building heating, the Proposed Project would comply with 2025 Title 24 building energy efficiency standards, reducing energy used in the state.

Based on compliance with Title 24, the Proposed Project would generate a need for natural gas that is consistent with hotels. Therefore, impacts associated with natural gas facilities would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

Telecommunications Facilities

The City is served by multiple telephone service providers including Coc Communications, AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile. Since the Project Site is in an urbanized area and is surrounded by commercial uses, there are existing telecommunication facilities that would be able to serve the Project Site. Once the Proposed Project is completed, future visitors would be able to connect to existing telecommunication services without the need for expansion or construction of new facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

b. Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site would be served with potable water by the SMWD, which provides water service to San Juan Capistrano following the annexation of the City's water utility system. SMWD develops long-range planning documents, such as the Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP), to ensure reliable water supplies under normal, single dry, and multiple dry year conditions, as required by California law (Water Code §10631).

The proposed 70-room boutique hotel represents a type and intensity of development already anticipated by the City's General Plan and zoning. Because infrastructure in the area was planned to support the General Plan land uses, the incremental water demand from the hotel is consistent with the levels assumed for urban commercial development.

Water demand from the Proposed Project would include guest use, kitchen operations, pool and spa use, landscaping irrigation, and other typical hotel needs. These demands would be served by existing urban water infrastructure in the vicinity and by the Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD), the local water and wastewater service provider. SMWD has reviewed the Proposed Project through the City of San Juan Capistrano Design Advisory Board (DAB) process and has issued written Conditions of Approval outlining requirements for water and wastewater service. These conditions demonstrate that SMWD has evaluated the project and identified the applicable requirements for service, including conditions for design, construction, and related activities. The hotel would also comply with state and local water efficiency standards, including low-flow plumbing fixtures and efficient irrigation controls, which reduce per-guest and per-room water consumption. Because the Proposed Project is consistent with planned land uses and is located in an urban area served by existing water infrastructure, the hotel's water demands would be accommodated without the need for construction of new off-site water supply or treatment facilities. Impacts to water supply are therefore less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

c. Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Less than Significant Impact. A significant impact would occur if the wastewater treatment provider indicates that a project would increase wastewater generation to such a degree that the capacity of the facilities currently serving the Project Site would be exceeded. As mentioned in Section 2.4.19(a), wastewater generated at the Project Site would be treated at the SMWD as of November 2021. SMWD is responsible for treating the wastewater of 200,000 residents in order to protect public health and the environment. SMWD's collection system is comprised of more than 665 miles of pipeline ranging from 8 to 30 inches. The sewer collection system was designed to utilize gravity as much as possible in order to reduce pumping costs. However in order to move the wastewater over the hills and valleys that are scattered throughout the service area, lift stations are required to pump it to a point where it flow via gravity. The final destination of the collected wastewater is a wastewater reclamation plant. The City of San Juan Capistrano wastewater flows go to the JB Latham Treatment Plant located in Dana Point. SMWD manages approximately 10 million gallons of wastewater per day (MGD) (SMWD 2026).

The hotel's wastewater generation (restrooms, kitchens, laundry, pools/spa) is consistent with commercial development already planned for this area.

Wastewater generation associated with the Proposed Project was estimated using the City's Sanitary Sewer Master Plan assumptions of 105 gallons per room per day. Based on this factor, the proposed 70-room boutique hotel would generate approximately 7,350 gallons per day (gpd) of wastewater. This wastewater would be conveyed to the City's sanitary sewer system and treated at the regional wastewater treatment facilities serving the project area.

Existing sewer infrastructure was designed to serve the Town Center and surrounding GC land uses, so the incremental wastewater flows from the Proposed Project fall within the anticipated range. Because the Proposed Project is consistent with the City's General Plan and zoning, and because existing urban wastewater infrastructure is designed to accommodate planned commercial development, the Proposed Project would not result in inadequate wastewater capacity or the need for off-site expansion. Impacts are therefore less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

d. Would the project generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Less than Significant Impact. The Project Site is served by CR&R, the City's contracted solid waste hauler, for collection and transport of municipal solid waste. Waste collected by CR&R is disposed of at the Frank R. Bowerman Landfill, operated by the Orange County Waste & Recycling

Department, which has sufficient capacity to accommodate projected municipal waste through at least 2040. The City enforces compliance with state and local diversion goals, including recycling and organics programs.

The Proposed Project would redevelop a 1.68-acre site with a 70-room boutique hotel, generating typical commercial waste streams such as:

- Guest room waste (paper, food packaging, trash)
- Kitchen and restaurant waste
- Landscape and maintenance debris
- Office and administrative waste

Using standard solid waste generation factors for hotels (approximately 2 to 4 pounds per occupied room per day) (CalRecycle 2026), the Proposed Project would increase the amount of solid waste delivered to the landfill. The Proposed Project would comply with all applicable state and local solid waste reduction programs, including the California Integrated Wate Management Act (AB 939); mandatory commercial recycling and organics diversion under CalRecycle regulations; and the City and CR&R requirements for construction and demolition waste diversion. Construction debris would be managed through on-site bins and recycled to the maximum extent feasible. Post-construction, operational waste would be collected by CR&R as part of routine municipal service. Because the Proposed Project's solid waste generation is within the capacity of CR&R's collection system and the Frank R. Bowerman Landfill, and because the Proposed Project would comply with all applicable state and local waste reduction requirements, impacts related to solid waste would be less than significant. This issue will not be further addressed in the EIR.

e. Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less than Significant Impact. See response to 2.4.19 (d) above. Additionally, collection, transportation, and disposal of solid waste generated by the Proposed Project would comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations. In particular, AB 939, the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989, requires that at least 50% of solid waste generated by a jurisdiction be diverted from landfill disposal through source reduction, recycling, or composting. Regional agencies, counties, and cities are required to develop a waste management plan that would achieve a 50% diversion from landfills (California Public Resources Code, Section 40000 et seq.). To achieve these diversion goals, the City implements a variety of waste reduction and recycling programs in coordination with its franchised waste hauler, CR&R Environmental Services. These programs include curbside recycling, mandatory commercial recycling, residential and commercial organics recycling, and public education initiatives encouraging waste reduction

and recycling participation. Project implementation would not allow for an increase in development in the Project Area beyond what is already allowed under the City's adopted General Plan. Impacts would be less than significant. This issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

2.4.20 Wildfire

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The Project Site is not in or near a very high fire hazard severity zone (VHFHSZ) as identified by CAL FIRE's Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in LRA map (CAL FIRE 2025). The nearest VHFHSZ is approximately 0.5 mile to the southeast, near the San Juan Hills Golf Club.

During demolition and construction activities, temporary lane closures, construction staging, or delivery vehicle activity could occur. However, construction would be required to comply with City encroachment permit conditions and preparation of a traffic control plan, subject to review and approval by the City's Public Works Department and Fire Authority. The traffic control plan would ensure that emergency vehicle access is maintained at all times, that no construction equipment or materials obstruct the evacuation route, and that adequate signage and flagging are provided, as necessary. Construction activities would be temporary and intermittent, and any short-term traffic disruptions would be managed to maintain safe and adequate roadway operations. Therefore, construction would not physically interfere with implementation of adopted emergency response or evacuation plans.

Upon completion, the Proposed Project would maintain required site access points and internal circulation designed in accordance with applicable fire code and engineering standards, including adequate fire lanes, turning radii, and emergency vehicle access. The proposed 32-foot tall car lift

parking structure would be internal to the site and would not encroach into the public right-of-way. The Proposed Project would also be required to comply with applicable fire safety regulations, including installation of fire suppression systems and preparation of an emergency evacuation plan for guests and employees.

Because the Proposed Project would not permanently modify or obstruct Camino Capistrano, would maintain emergency access during construction through approved traffic control measures, and would comply with applicable emergency planning and fire code requirements during operation, the Proposed Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or evacuation plan.

No impact would occur, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

b. Would the project, due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to, pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

No Impact. The Proposed Project Site is not on a slope that would expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire. Additionally, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE's) FHSZ Map of the County (CAL FIRE 2024), the Proposed Project is in a local responsibility non-Very High Fire Hazard Safety Zone. Development of the Proposed Project would not expose people or structures to a significant risk from wildland fires. The Proposed Project would be constructed in compliance with the Fire Code and CBC and would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire by exacerbating wildfire risks. No impact would occur, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

c. Would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

No Impact. The Proposed Project does not propose the installation of new infrastructure that would exacerbate fire risk. The Proposed Project would be located on an infill site surrounded by urban development. Consequently, the Proposed Project would not require installation or maintenance of roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities that could exacerbate fire risk. In addition, the Proposed Project Site is not in or immediately near state responsibility areas or lands classified as Very High Hazard Severity Zones according to CAL FIRE's California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps (CAL FIRE 2024). No impact would occur, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

d. Would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

No Impact. The Proposed Project is not in an area that is susceptible to landslides. In addition, the Proposed Project Site is not in or immediately near state responsibility areas or lands classified as Very High Hazard Severity Zones according to CAL FIRE's California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps (CAL FIRE 2024). No impact would occur, and this issue will not be addressed further in the EIR.

2.4.21 Mandatory Findings of Significance

Does the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a. Have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☒	☐	☐	☐
b. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☒	☐	☐	☐
c. Have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☒	☐	☐	☐

Note: Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21083.05, Public Resources Code. Reference: Section 65088.4, Gov. Code; Sections 21080(c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21083, 21083.05, 21083.3, 21093, 21094, 21095, and 21151, Public Resources Code; Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino,(1988) 202 Cal.App.3d 296; Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors, (1990) 222 Cal.App.3d 1337; Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

Impact Analysis

a. Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Potentially Significant Impact. The Proposed Project would not degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. As discussed under Section 2.4.5, Cultural Resources, and Section 2.4.18, Tribal Cultural Resources, the Proposed Project would result in a potentially significant impact to historical, archaeological resources, and tribal cultural resources. Therefore, these topics will be further evaluated in the EIR, and mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

b. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

Potentially Significant Impact. Implementation of the Proposed Project may result in cumulative impacts to air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. Further analysis is needed to estimate the extent and significance of potential cumulative impacts resulting from the combined effects of the Proposed Project plus other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects. Cumulative impacts will be evaluated in the EIR, and mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

c. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Potentially Significant Impact. Potentially significant impacts that could substantially affect human beings, directly or indirectly, are identified in this Initial Study in the areas of air quality, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. Impacts in each of these areas will be discussed in the appropriate topical section of the EIR, and mitigation measures will be identified as necessary.

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