4.1 Aesthetics

This section of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) discusses the potential impacts to the visual character of the Project Site and its surroundings associated with implementation of the French Hotel project (Proposed Project). This section includes a discussion of the qualitative aesthetic characteristics of the environment that could be potentially degraded by the project's implementation and the consistency of the Proposed Project with established relevant policies related to visual resources. The information presented in this section is based on review of the Project Site and aerial photographs; graphic representation of the project as provided by the project applicant; and view simulations generated for this DEIR.

A Notice of Preparation for the Project was released for public review on March 19, 2026, and an EIR Scoping meeting was held on April 6, 2026. No comments were made during the public scoping period that pertain to aesthetics. Additionally, no comments related to aesthetics were received during the public scoping meeting.

4.1.1 Environmental Setting

The following sections describe the environmental setting for the Project as it relates to aesthetics.

4.1.2 Regulatory Setting

This section describes the Federal, State, and local regulatory framework adopted to address aesthetics.

4.1.2.1 Federal

No Federal regulations apply to aesthetics.

4.1.2.2 State

California Scenic Highway Program

The California Scenic Highway Program is managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The program was created in 1963 with the goal of protecting the aesthetic significance of the State's scenic highways, as provided in the California Streets and Highways Code, Section 260 et seq. Accordingly, a highway may be designated as "scenic" based on certain criteria, including how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the landscape's scenic quality, and the extent to which development intrudes on the traveler's enjoyment of the view. The California Scenic Highway Program's Scenic Highway System List identifies scenic highways that are either eligible for designation or have already been designated as such. The California Scenic Highway Program also includes provisions for the Corridor Protection Program, which includes ordinances and planning policies required by jurisdictions to maintain lands visible from the designated scenic highways (Caltrans 2008).

California Building Code

The California Building Code, Part 2 of Title 24 in the California Code of Regulations, is based on the International Building Code and combines three types of building standards from three different origins:

- Building standards that have been adopted by state agencies without change from building standards contained in the International Building Code.
- Building standards that have been adopted from the International Building Code to meet California conditions.
- Building standards, authorized by the California Legislature, constitute extensive additions not covered by the International Building Code that have been adopted to address particular California concerns.

The California Building Code includes standards for outdoor lighting that are intended to improve energy efficiency, and to reduce light pollution and glare by regulating light power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls.

The Mills Act

The Mills Act is a state law enacted in 1972 that encourages the preservation and maintenance of qualified historic structures. The Mills Act permits cities to enter into agreements with owners of qualified historic structures to preserve and maintain their properties, in exchange for the County Assessor assessing their property at a lower rate by using a formula established by the State.

4.1.2.3 Regional

Orange County Scenic Highway Plan

The Orange County Scenic Highway Plan identifies a number of landscape corridors and viewscape corridors in the County, and the County desires to preserve the scenic character of these visually important roadways. The Scenic Highway Plan lists officially designated and eligible scenic highways and categorizes them by landscape and viewscape corridors.

Southern California Association of Governments – Connect SoCal RTP/SCS (2024)

The 2024–2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS), "Connect SoCal," was adopted in April 2024. Connect SoCal embodies a collective vision for the region's future and is developed with input from local governments, county transportation commissions, Tribal governments, non-profit organizations, businesses, and local stakeholders in member counties. Connect SoCal is a long-range visioning plan that balances future mobility and housing needs with economic, environmental and public health goals. It builds upon and expands land use and transportation strategies established over several planning cycles to increase mobility

options and achieve a more sustainable growth pattern. It charts a path toward a more mobile, sustainable, and prosperous region by making connections between transportation networks, between planning strategies, and between the people whose collaboration can improve the quality of life for residents of southern California. Connect SoCal outlines over 4,000 transportation projects through 2045—highway improvements, railroad grade separations, bicycle lanes, new transit hubs, replacement bridges, etc. In addition, Connect SoCal is supported by a combination of transportation and land use strategies that outline how the region can achieve California's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and Federal Clean Air Act requirements. Connect SoCal also strives to achieve broader regional objectives, such as the preservation of natural lands, improvement of public health, increased roadway safety, support for the region's vital goods movement industries, and more efficient use of resources. Although Southern California Association of Governments does not establish binding aesthetic regulations, the regional plan encourages:

- Compact, walkable development patterns
- Protection of natural open spaces
- Enhancements to visual quality within activity centers
- Context-sensitive corridor design

4.1.2.4 Local

City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan

A complete rewrite of the City's General Plan was last adopted in December 1999. In May 2002, the City Council approved a variety of changes to several of elements of the General Plan. In February 2022, a new Environmental Justice Element was added to the General Plan. The General Plan's Housing Element is updated every eight years with the latest update adopted in August 2022. The City's General Plan is the principal land use document guiding development within the City. The City's General Plan is a comprehensive plan that establishes goals, objectives, and policies intended to guide growth and development in the City. The General Plan also serves as a blueprint for development throughout the community and is the vehicle through which the community needs, desires, and aspirations are balanced. The San Juan Capistrano General Plan is the fundamental tool for influencing the quality of life in the City.

Community Design Element

The Community Design Element (1999, revised 2002) addresses the conservation and enhancement of the visual quality of the City. The goals and policies in the Community Design Element aim to protect natural hillsides and features in the City (e.g., creeks and floodplains), preserve and enhance the historic character of the community, incorporate new development into existing developed neighborhoods, and maintain the community's "small-village" and "rural atmosphere."

The following goals and policies applicable to the Proposed Project and related to aesthetics and scenic quality are presented in the Community Design Element:

- **Goal CD-1:** Encourage and preserve a sense of place.
  - **Policy CD-1.2.** Encourage high-quality and human scale design in development to maintain the character of the City.
- **Goal CD-2:** Preserve the historic character of the community.
  - **Policy CD-2.1.** Encourage development which complements the City's traditional, historic character through site design, architecture, and landscaping.
- **Goal CD-3:** Preserve and enhance natural features.
  - **Policy CD-3.1.** Limit development of important natural characteristics such as ridgelines, unique hillside features and creeks.
  - **Policy CD-3.3.** Preserve and enhance scenic transportation corridors, including Interstate 5 and the railroad.
  - **Policy CD-3.4.** Preserve important viewsheds.

Conservation and Open Space Element

The Conservation and Open Space Element addresses the conservation and enhancement of the visual quality of the City. The goals and policies in the Conservation and Open Space Element aim to protect natural hillsides and features in the City (e.g., creeks and floodplains), preserve and enhance the historic character of the community, incorporate new development into existing developed neighborhoods, and maintain the community's "small-village" and "rural atmosphere."

The following policies applicable to the Proposed Project and related to aesthetics and scenic quality are presented in the Conservation and Open Space Element:

- **Goal COS-5:** Shape and guide development in order to achieve efficient growth and maintain community scale and identity.
  - **Policy COS-5.1.** Encourage high-quality design in new development and redevelopment to maintain the low-density character of the City.
  - **Policy COS-5.2.** Ensure that new development integrates and preserves areas designated for scenic, historic, conservation, or public safety reasons.
  - **Policy COS-5.3.** Ensure that no buildings will encroach upon any ridgeline designated for preservation.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element (1999, revised 2014) presents goals and policies pertaining to how existing development is going to be maintained and enhanced and new development occur. The Land Use Element identifies the proposed distribution, location, and extent of land uses. The Land Use

Element goals and policies directly affect the establishment and maintenance of existing neighborhoods, districts, corridors, and open spaces that distinguish and contribute to the City's livability, vitality, and image, while enhancing the City's existing setting through new development. A key ingredient to successful implementation of this vision is through the management and appropriate mix of land uses. To this end, a Land Use Map was adopted and included in the Land Use Element to guide future development decisions.

The following goals and policies applicable to the Proposed Project and related to aesthetics and scenic quality are presented in the Land Use Element:

- **Goal LU-2:** Control and direct future growth within the City to preserve the rural village-like character of the community.
  - **Policy LU-2.2.** Assure that new development is consistent and compatible with the existing character of the City.
- **Goal LU-7:** Enhance and maintain the character of neighborhoods.
  - **Policy LU-7.1:** Preserve and enhance the quality of San Juan Capistrano neighborhoods by avoiding or abating the intrusion of non-conforming buildings and uses.
  - **Policy LU-7.2:** Ensure that new development is compatible with the physical characteristics of its site, surrounding land uses, and available public infrastructure.

City of San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code

Title 9, Land Use, of the City of San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code identifies land use categories, development standards, and other provisions that ensure consistency between the general plan and proposed development and redevelopment projects. Adherence to the following sections of the municipal code improves and maintains the visual quality of the community.

- **Section 9-3.517, Fences, Walls and Hedges.** This section of the code establishes standards and regulations for the construction and maintenance of fences and walls, and the planting and maintenance of hedges used for screening or buffering purposes. The standards are intended to ensure that all fences, walls, and hedges provide safety but do not detract from the visual appearance of the community.

- **Section 9-3.527, Landscape.** While this section focuses on water conservation standards and urban runoff, it is intended to address these issues while "maintaining aesthetics and community character." The section advocates visually pleasing landscape environments, use of native trees and plants, and water features that use recirculated water. It requires that parking lots be screened from streets and private property with landscaping and/or native landscape berms and low screen walls.

- **Section 9-3.529, Lighting Standards.** The intent of this section is to "balance the goals of the General Plan to maintain a small-village, rural atmosphere, with the need to provide for the safe movement of vehicles and people in all districts." The section establishes standards for the design, orientation, spacing, shielding, and illumination level of outdoor lighting fixtures. Specific standards are provided for parking lot lighting, outdoor recreation facilities, and residential areas.

- **Section 9-3.543, Signs.** This section aims to maintain and enhance the City's appearance by regulating the design, character, location, number, type, materials, size, illumination, and maintenance of signs. Special attention is dedicated to pedestrian-scaled design and temporary signage.

- **Section 9-3.549, Storage and Display.** This section requires that areas used as outdoor storage are enclosed by masonry walls and establishes provisions related to outside display of merchandise and products. The section emphasizes the role of the development review process and identifies the Planning Commission's ability to grant exceptions where provisions of the code are not appropriate

Architectural Design Guidelines

The City implements a citywide set of architectural design guidelines that were adopted in 2003. The guidelines "set forth land use specific design parameters to achieve General Plan aesthetic goals, foster high quality design, stimulate investment and eliminate subjectivity in project review" (San Juan Capistrano 2003). They include a user guide that outlines the City's requirements for the design review process.

4.1.3 Existing Conditions

4.1.3.1 Scenic Vistas and Resources

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.

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. 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.

4.1.3.2 State Scenic Highways

No roadways in the vicinity of the Project Site are officially designated State Scenic Highways. The closest officially designated State Scenic Highway in Orange County is located in the City of Anaheim, more than 25 miles north of the Project Site. Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Route 74 (SR-74), located approximately 0.25 miles east and northeast of the Project Site, respectively, are identified as eligible State Scenic Highways; however, neither segment in the vicinity of the Project Site has received official scenic highway designation by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Accordingly, the Project Site is not located within a designated State Scenic Highway corridor and would not affect officially designated scenic highway resources.

4.1.3.3 Nighttime Lighting

Nighttime lighting conditions at and surrounding the Project Site are characteristic of a developed urban corridor within central San Juan Capistrano. Existing sources of nighttime lighting include decorative streetlights along Camino Capistrano, lighting associated with adjacent commercial and restaurant uses, building-mounted fixtures, illuminated signage, parking area lighting, and vehicle headlights along Camino Capistrano, Del Obispo Street, and nearby Interstate 5. Additional intermittent lighting is associated with nearby railroad operations west of the site, including passing Metrolink and Amtrak trains. Ambient nighttime lighting levels are moderate and consistent with a mixed commercial, hospitality, and pedestrian-oriented environment. Although the area experiences localized urban skyglow, lighting intensity is substantially lower than in more intensely urbanized portions of Orange County, and nighttime conditions retain a relatively subdued character due to the limited building heights, smaller-scale development pattern, and presence of adjacent landscaped and historic areas.

4.1.4 Method of Analysis

The aesthetics analysis evaluates the potential for the Proposed Project to affect visual character, scenic quality, and public views based on site reconnaissance, review of the Proposed Project plans, including the Site Plan, project elevations, and view simulations, and consistency with

applicable City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan goals, Town Center zoning standards, design guidelines, and other applicable regulations. The analysis considers the visibility of the Proposed Project from publicly accessible viewpoints, including Camino Capistrano, surrounding public streets and sidewalks, the adjacent railroad corridor, and nearby historic resources, and evaluates the compatibility of the Proposed Project with the existing visual character of the Historic Town Center.

4.1.5 Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Project would have a significant impact on aesthetics if it would:

- **Threshold AES-a:** Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.
- **Threshold AES-b:** Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.
- **Threshold AES-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, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.
- **Threshold AES-d:** Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The Initial Study, provided as Appendix A, substantiates that there would be a less than significant impact associated with Threshold AES-a as the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. In addition, the Initial Study substantiates that impacts associated with Threshold AES-b would be less than significant as the project would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway. Historic-resource impacts are analyzed separately in Section 4.4, Cultural Resources. These thresholds will not be addressed in the following analysis.

4.1.6 Plans, Programs, and Policies

Compliance measures are uniformly applied regulations or requirements imposed by the approving agency based on the type of action proposed. Because these measures are standard requirements, they are not considered mitigation measures. The following existing plans, programs, and policies (PPPs) apply to development allowed under the Project and help reduce or avoid potential impacts related to geology and soils:

SC AE-1 The Proposed Project shall be subject to review and approval by the Design Review Committee (DRC) and Planning Commission, who shall determine compliance with goals, policies and standards of the San Juan Capistrano Architectural Design Guidelines and the project's draft Comprehensive Development Plan that promote

"high-quality" urban design and aesthetic resource preservation through the City's design review process.

SC AE-2 All street, signage, landscape, and parking lot lighting sources shall be shielded and oriented, or provided with baffled luminaires so as to prevent lighting overspill into adjacent or nearby properties in compliance with the Title 9, Land Use Code, Section 9-3.529, Lighting Standards.

SC AE-3 Prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy for any building/structure, the project developer shall submit photometric plan(s) for all exterior lighting, which shall be subject to City review and approval to assure that compliance with the City's lighting standards per Section 9.3-529 for permitted illumination within the parking areas and walkways as well as demonstrate that illumination does not create off-site light and glare, to the satisfaction of the Development Services Director or their designee, or who refer such plans to the Design Review Committee (DRC) for review determination.

4.1.7 Environmental Impacts

The following sections address various potential impacts relating to aesthetics that could result from implementation of the Project.

4.1.7.1 Threshold AES-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, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Impact Analysis

Implementation of the Proposed Project would require demolition of the two non-historic barn structures, removal of existing paved parking areas, disturbed landscaping, and other non-historic site improvements, together with grading, excavation, utility installation, rehabilitation of the Domingo Yorba Adobe and Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe, and construction of new hotel buildings, parking facilities, landscaping, and associated site improvements. Temporary construction activities, including construction equipment, cranes, stockpiled materials, temporary fencing, staging areas, and haul trucks, would be visible from publicly accessible vantage points along Camino Capistrano, nearby sidewalks and pedestrian corridors, portions of Forster Street and Del Obispo Street, adjacent commercial and restaurant uses, and nearby rail corridors west of the site. Construction activities may also be visible from portions of the surrounding Historic Town Center area and nearby historic resources.

Construction-related visual conditions would be temporary and limited to the duration of construction activities. Construction equipment and materials would be staged on-site to the extent feasible, and visual impacts associated with grading and construction would cease upon completion of the Proposed Project. In addition, implementation of the Proposed Project would ultimately replace visually degraded and previously disturbed portions of the site with a cohesive, pedestrian-oriented hospitality development designed to complement the surrounding historic context. Therefore, temporary construction-related impacts associated with degradation of visual character would be less than significant.

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, pursuant to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the applicable threshold is whether the Proposed Project would conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The Project Site currently contains the Domingo Yorba Adobe and the Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and included in the City's Inventory of Historic and Cultural Landmarks. Existing site improvements also include a non-contributing metal barn structure northwest of the Domingo Yorba Adobe, paved parking areas, disturbed landscaping, and miscellaneous accessory improvements. Public views of the site are primarily experienced from Camino Capistrano and adjacent public rights-of-way within the Historic Town Center area. While the historic adobes contribute positively to the visual character of the corridor, the remainder of the site consists primarily of previously disturbed and visually degraded 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 improving the historic integrity and visual prominence of these resources within the public streetscape. New hotel buildings and related site improvements would be constructed in accordance with the applicable Town Center (TC) zoning district standards and Historic Town Center design objectives governing building height, setbacks, massing, floor area ratio, landscaping, pedestrian orientation, and architectural character. In addition, the Proposed Project would require approval of an Architectural Control application and Conditional Use Permit pursuant to the City's Land Use Code, which would ensure consistency with the City's adopted architectural and design guidelines, Historic Town Center planning policies, and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Proposed Project has been designed with a color palette, material selection, and architectural detailing intended to complement the surrounding historic context. Earth-toned hues, articulated building façades, textured materials, landscaped courtyards, and mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural elements would allow the new development to visually integrate with the surrounding

environment without detracting from nearby historic landmarks, including the adjacent Mission San Juan Capistrano, the El Adobe de Capistrano, the Don Juan Avila Adobe, and the Esslinger Building. The integration of new architectural forms that remain compatible yet distinguishable from the existing historic resources is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and would ensure that new improvements remain physically and aesthetically compatible with the surrounding historic setting.

The Proposed Project's setbacks, building articulation, landscaping, and massing have been designed to preserve the visual prominence of the historic adobes and maintain the established visual rhythm and pedestrian-oriented character of the Camino Capistrano corridor. As shown on the Proposed Site Plan (Figure 2-4), the Domingo Yorba Adobe and Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe are retained along the Camino Capistrano frontage, preserving the historic street edge while locating the larger hotel buildings, parking facilities, and primary guest amenities toward the western portion of the site adjacent to the railroad corridor. The site plan also incorporates a publicly accessible paseo and gathering space between the two historic adobes, substantial landscaping, and internal courtyards that maintain visual openness and reinforce the pedestrian-oriented character of the Historic Town Center.

This relationship is best illustrated on the east elevation shown in Figure 2-5, Building 1 Elevations, which demonstrates how the frontage along Camino Capistrano remains defined by the two historic adobes, while the larger hotel buildings are recessed behind the historic structures, thereby preserving their visual prominence from the primary public viewpoint along Camino Capistrano.

The Proposed Project features six distinct buildings arranged around landscaped courtyards, a central pool, and pedestrian walkways, creating a human-scale environment that reflects the walkability and courtyard-oriented character of nearby areas such as the Los Rios Historic District and River Street Marketplace. The Domingo Yorba Adobe and Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe will be rehabilitated and incorporated into the Project as publicly accessible features through a new courtyard and gathering space on the eastern portion of the property, where public access is currently restricted. As shown on the Proposed Site Plan (Figure 2-4), the retained historic adobes continue to define the Camino Capistrano frontage, while the larger hotel buildings, parking facilities, and guest amenities are concentrated toward the western portion of the site adjacent to the railroad corridor.

Although Building 3 reaches a maximum height of 43 feet, it is situated approximately 12 feet below the Camino Capistrano grade, substantially reducing its apparent height and visual prominence from the primary public viewpoints along the corridor. As illustrated in Figure 4.1-2, View Simulations 1 and 1A, the larger hotel buildings are recessed behind the historic adobes, preserving the established visual rhythm of the streetscape and maintaining the visual relationship

between Camino Capistrano and Mission San Juan Capistrano. Similarly, views from and toward the Los Rios Historic District would not be substantially degraded because the larger building masses are separated from the district by the existing railroad corridor and are softened through articulated building forms, landscaped courtyards, tree canopy, and mission- and Spanish-inspired architectural elements. From the west, the massing of the hotel wings is further broken up by the centrally located pool courtyard and open spaces, preventing the Project from appearing as a continuous or overwhelming building mass.

Rather than detracting from the surrounding historic setting, the removal of visually degraded site conditions, rehabilitation of the historic adobes, incorporation of high-quality architecture, and implementation of coordinated landscaping and pedestrian-oriented design features would improve the overall visual quality of the Project Site and surrounding streetscape while maintaining compatibility with the Historic Town Center.

Table 4.1-1 summarizes the Town Center development standards most relevant to evaluating visual character and scenic quality, including building scale, massing, landscaping, setbacks, floor area ratio, and parking. While the Proposed Project is required to comply with all applicable provisions of the Town Center zoning district and Municipal Code as part of the City's discretionary review process, the standards summarized below are those most directly related to the aesthetic analysis presented in this section.

Table 4.1-1. Development Standards Consistency Analysis

Development Standard	Proposed Project Consistency
Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR): 0.75 is permitted within the TC and TCE Districts. Up to 1.5 FAR is permitted for building(s) providing public gathering space(s), according the standards established in subsection (e)(9).	Consistent. The FAR for the Proposed Project is 0.76. According to the City's Municipal Code, allowance for an increase in floor area ratio (FAR) above 0.75:1 and up to a maximum of 1.5:1 shall be accompanied by a public gathering space of an area equivalent to 0.25 (25%) of the floor area above 0.75:1. The minimum area for any public gathering space shall equal 625 square feet. The Proposed Project includes 2,900 square feet of public gathering space.
Building height (stories): Minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3.	Consistent. Buildings 1, 1A, and 2 are proposed as 2 stories, Building 3 is proposed as 3 stories, Buildings 4 and 5 are proposed as 1 story.
Building height (feet): Minimum of 10' maximum of 45' (Subject to requirements of Frontage).	Consistent. Building 1 is proposed as 26'-3", Building 1A is proposed as 17', Building 2 is proposed as 28', Building 3 is proposed as 43', Building 4 is proposed as 18', Building 5 is proposed as 27'-10". All of these are within the allowable building height range.
Landscape: Per City Design Review.	Consistent. The Proposed Project would provide 13,550 square feet of landscaping.
Rear Setback: Minimum of 10 feet.	Consistent. The setback bordering the railroad tracks area is 10 feet.
Parking: 1 space per guest unit for hotels	Consistent. The Proposed Project would provide 70 stalls for the 70 proposed hotel rooms.

As shown in Table 4.1-1, the Proposed Project would be consistent with the Town Center development standards most directly related to aesthetics, visual character, and scenic quality.

General Plan

According to the City of San Juan Capistrano General Plan, the Project Site has a General Plan land use designation of General Commercial (GC) and is located within the Town Center (TC) zoning district and Historic Town Center area. The General Commercial designation is intended to accommodate a range of commercial, visitor-serving, retail, restaurant, hospitality, and related uses that support the City's economic and community development objectives. The Town Center zoning designation is intended to encourage pedestrian-oriented commercial, hospitality, cultural, and mixed-use development compatible with the City's historic downtown environment and architectural character.

The Proposed Project includes redevelopment of the site with a 70-room boutique hotel, restaurant and dining areas, event and conference space, landscaped courtyards, pedestrian-oriented open spaces, valet parking facilities, and rehabilitation of the existing Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe and Domingo Yorba Adobe historic resources. The proposed hospitality, dining, and visitor-serving uses are consistent with the General Commercial land use designation and Town Center development objectives. Accordingly, implementation of the Proposed Project would not require a General Plan Amendment.

The City's General Plan includes goals and policies related to community design, historic preservation, scenic quality, pedestrian-oriented development, and compatibility with the City's traditional architectural character. The consistency analysis presented in Table 4.1-2 is based on the Proposed Project's Site Plan (Figure 2-4), project elevations (Figure 2-5 through Figure 2-11), view simulations (Figure 4.1-1 through 4.1-6), as well as the Project Description provided in Chapter 2. As shown in Table 4.1-2, the Proposed Project would be consistent with the applicable General Plan goals and policies related to aesthetics, visual character, scenic quality, and historic resource preservation.

Table 4.1-2. General Plan Consistency Analysis

Goals and Policies	Proposed Project Consistency
Community Design Element	
Goal CD-1: Encourage and preserve a sense of place.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project would preserve and enhance the unique historic identity and sense of place associated with downtown San Juan Capistrano through rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the existing Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe and Domingo Yorba Adobe, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and contribute to the historic character of the Camino Capistrano corridor. The Proposed Project incorporates mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural design, landscaped courtyards, pedestrian-oriented pathways, outdoor gathering areas, decorative paving, and earth-toned building materials intended to complement the City's traditional architectural character and Historic Town Center setting. In addition, the project has been designed to maintain the pedestrian scale and visual rhythm of the Camino Capistrano streetscape by retaining the historic adobes along the frontage and locating larger hotel buildings toward the western portion of the site adjacent to the railroad

	corridor. The Proposed Project would also replace visually degraded and previously disturbed portions of the site with coordinated architecture, landscaping, and hospitality uses that reinforce the historic downtown environment and visitor-serving character of San Juan Capistrano. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Community Design Goal 1.
Policy CD-1.2. Encourage high-quality and human scale design in development to maintain the character of the City.	**Consistent.** As shown on the Project Site Plan (Figure 2-4), architectural elevations (Figure 2-5 through Figure 2-11), the Proposed Project has been designed with high-quality architectural materials, articulated building façades, landscaped courtyards, decorative paving, pedestrian pathways, and mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural elements intended to maintain compatibility with the established historic and pedestrian-oriented character of downtown San Juan Capistrano. The project incorporates varied roof forms, recessed architectural elements, balconies, textured wall surfaces, and coordinated landscaping to reduce the perception of bulk and create a human-scaled streetscape environment. In addition, the Project Site layout preserves the existing historic adobe structures along the Camino Capistrano frontage, maintaining the pedestrian scale and historic visual rhythm of the corridor. Larger hotel buildings and valet parking facilities are located toward the lower railroad-grade portion of the site, thereby reducing the apparent height and visual prominence of development from public viewpoints along Camino Capistrano and surrounding pedestrian areas. The Proposed Project also includes approximately 13,550 square feet of landscaped area and approximately 2,900 square feet of public gathering space integrated throughout the site design, further reinforcing pedestrian-oriented and human-scale development patterns within the Historic Town Center area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy CD-1.2.
Goal CD-2: Preserve the historic character of the community.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project would preserve and enhance the historic character of the community through rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the existing Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe and Domingo Yorba Adobe, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and identified as historic resources by the City. The project would remove non-historic additions and retain character-defining architectural features of the historic adobes, thereby improving their historic integrity and visual prominence within the Camino Capistrano corridor and Historic Town Center area. New hotel buildings and associated site improvements have been designed to remain compatible with the surrounding historic context through incorporation of mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural elements, earth-toned materials, landscaped courtyards, pedestrian-oriented pathways, and articulated building forms. The project also preserves the established historic streetscape character by retaining the historic adobes along the Camino Capistrano frontage and locating larger hotel buildings toward the western portion of the site adjacent to the railroad corridor. In addition, the Proposed Project would be subject to Architectural Control review and applicable historic preservation requirements, including consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Through preservation of historic resources, compatible architectural design, and enhancement of the pedestrian-oriented historic downtown environment, the Proposed Project would reinforce and preserve the historic character of San Juan Capistrano. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Goal CD-2.
Policy CD-2.1. Encourage development which complements the City's traditional, historic character through site design, architecture, and landscaping.	**Consistent.** As illustrated in the project elevations (Figure 2-5 through Figure 2-11), view simulations (Figure 4.1-1 through Figure 4.1-6), the Proposed Project has been specifically designed to complement the traditional and historic character of San Juan Capistrano through coordinated site planning, architecture, landscaping, and rehabilitation of on-site historic resources. The

	project would preserve and rehabilitate the existing Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe and Domingo Yorba Adobe and integrate these historic structures into the overall hotel development, thereby maintaining the historic identity and visual character of the Camino Capistrano corridor. New hotel buildings and associated improvements incorporate mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural elements, including articulated façades, textured finishes, earth-toned materials, varied roof forms, decorative detailing, and courtyard-oriented design features intended to remain compatible with the surrounding Historic Town Center environment. The site design emphasizes pedestrian-oriented circulation and outdoor gathering spaces through incorporation of landscaped courtyards, patios, pedestrian pathways, decorative paving, and public gathering areas integrated throughout the project. In addition, extensive landscaping, including trees, shrubs, ornamental planting areas, and courtyard landscaping, would soften views of structures and parking facilities while reinforcing the historic downtown landscape character. The project also maintains compatibility with the established streetscape by retaining the historic adobe buildings along the Camino Capistrano frontage and locating larger hotel buildings toward the western railroad-grade portion of the site, thereby preserving the pedestrian scale and visual rhythm of the corridor. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy CD-2.1.
Goal CD-3: Preserve the historic character of the community.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project is located within an existing urbanized portion of downtown San Juan Capistrano characterized by commercial, hospitality, railroad, and historic development along the Camino Capistrano corridor. The Project Site does not contain prominent natural landforms, ridgelines, or undeveloped open space features. Existing site conditions consist primarily of historic adobe structures, paved parking areas, disturbed landscaping, and ancillary improvements. The Proposed Project would enhance the visual quality of the site through incorporation of approximately 13,550 square feet of landscaped area, including trees, shrubs, ornamental planting areas, landscaped courtyards, and pedestrian-oriented open spaces integrated throughout the project design. The project would also preserve the natural grade transition between Camino Capistrano and the adjacent railroad corridor by locating larger hotel buildings and parking facilities at the lower railroad-grade elevation, thereby reducing the apparent scale and visual prominence of development from surrounding public viewpoints. In addition, the coordinated landscaping and open-space design would soften views of structures, enhance the pedestrian environment, and improve the overall visual character of the site and surrounding Historic Town Center area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Goal CD-3.
Policy CD-3.1. Limit development of important natural characteristics such as ridgelines, unique hillside features and creeks.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project is located within an urbanized portion of downtown San Juan Capistrano and does not contain or encroach upon important natural characteristics such as ridgelines, hillside features, or creeks. Existing site conditions consist primarily of historic structures, paved areas, disturbed landscaping, and previously developed portions of the Camino Capistrano corridor. The Proposed Project would preserve the existing grade transition between Camino Capistrano and the adjacent railroad corridor and would incorporate coordinated landscaping and open-space features that enhance the visual quality of the site without affecting natural landforms or scenic natural features. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy CD-3.1.
Policy CD-3.3. Preserve and enhance scenic transportation corridors, including Interstate 5 and the railroad.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project is located adjacent to the railroad corridor and within proximity to Interstate 5. Existing site conditions include disturbed areas, surface parking, and non-historic improvements. The Proposed Project would enhance the visual quality of the site through rehabilitation of the

	historic adobes, incorporation of high-quality mission- and Spanish-influenced architecture, coordinated landscaping, and pedestrian-oriented design features compatible with the Historic Town Center setting. In addition, the project design follows the natural grade transition of the site by locating larger hotel buildings and valet parking facilities at the lower railroad-grade elevation, thereby reducing the apparent scale and visual prominence of development from surrounding transportation corridors. Therefore, the Proposed Project would preserve and enhance the visual character of nearby scenic transportation corridors and would be consistent with Policy CD-3.3.
Policy CD-3.4. Preserve important viewsheds.	**Consistent.** As illustrated in the Project Site Plan (Figure 2-4) and View Simulations 1 through 5 (Figure 4.1-1 through Figure 4.1-6)the Proposed Project is located within an urbanized portion of downtown San Juan Capistrano and would not obstruct or substantially degrade important public viewsheds. The project preserves the historic adobe structures along the Camino Capistrano frontage and locates larger hotel buildings toward the western railroad-grade portion of the site, thereby maintaining the established visual rhythm and pedestrian scale of the corridor. In addition, landscaped courtyards, setbacks, and articulated building forms would soften views of development and maintain compatibility with surrounding historic resources and the broader visual setting associated with Mission San Juan Capistrano and the Historic Town Center area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy CD-3.4.
Conservation and Open Space	
Goal COS-5: Shape and guide development in order to achieve efficient growth and maintain community scale and identity.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project would redevelop an underutilized site within the Historic Town Center area with a pedestrian-oriented, visitor-serving hotel development compatible with the established scale and historic identity of downtown San Juan Capistrano. The project preserves and rehabilitates the existing historic adobes, incorporates mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural design, and utilizes articulated building forms, landscaped courtyards, and pedestrian-oriented open spaces to maintain compatibility with the surrounding community character. In addition, larger hotel buildings are located toward the western railroad-grade portion of the site, reducing the apparent scale of development from Camino Capistrano and preserving the pedestrian-oriented historic streetscape. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Goal COS-5.
Policy COS-5.1. Encourage high-quality design in new development and redevelopment to maintain the low-density character of the City.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project incorporates high-quality architectural materials, mission- and Spanish-influenced design elements, articulated building façades, landscaped courtyards, and pedestrian-oriented open spaces compatible with the established historic and low-scale character of downtown San Juan Capistrano. The project preserves and rehabilitates the existing historic adobes and organizes larger hotel buildings toward the lower railroad-grade portion of the site, thereby reducing the apparent scale and visual prominence of development from Camino Capistrano and surrounding public viewpoints. Coordinated landscaping, varied roof forms, and courtyard-oriented site planning further reinforce compatibility with the City's traditional character and pedestrian-oriented Historic Town Center environment. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy COS-5.1.
Policy COS-5.2. Ensure that new development integrates and preserves areas designated for scenic, historic, conservation, or public safety reasons.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project would preserve and rehabilitate the Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe and Domingo Yorba Adobe, both of which are designated historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places and included in the City's Inventory of Historic and Cultural Landmarks. The project integrates these historic resources into the overall hotel development through compatible site planning, mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural design, landscaped courtyards, and pedestrian-

	oriented open spaces that maintain the historic character of the Camino Capistrano corridor and Historic Town Center area. In addition, the project design follows the natural grade transition of the site and incorporates coordinated landscaping and articulated building forms that preserve the visual character of the surrounding historic setting. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy COS-5.2.
Policy COS-5.3. Ensure that no buildings will encroach upon any ridgeline designated for preservation.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project is located within a developed urbanized portion of downtown San Juan Capistrano and does not contain or encroach upon any designated ridgeline preservation areas. The site is generally characterized by existing historic structures, paved areas, disturbed landscaping, and development associated with the Camino Capistrano corridor and adjacent railroad area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy COS-5.3.
Land Use Element	
Goal LU-2: Control and direct future growth within the City to preserve the rural village-like character of the community.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project would redevelop an underutilized site within the Historic Town Center area with a low-scale, pedestrian-oriented hospitality development compatible with the established village-like character of downtown San Juan Capistrano. The project preserves and rehabilitates the existing historic adobe structures and incorporates mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural design, landscaped courtyards, pedestrian pathways, and articulated building forms intended to maintain the historic and small-scale character of the Camino Capistrano corridor. In addition, the project locates larger hotel buildings toward the lower railroad-grade portion of the site, reducing the apparent scale and visual prominence of development from surrounding public viewpoints. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Goal LU-2.
Policy LU-2.2. Assure that new development is consistent and compatible with the existing character of the City.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project has been designed to remain compatible with the established historic, pedestrian-oriented, and village-like character of downtown San Juan Capistrano through rehabilitation of the existing historic adobes, incorporation of mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural elements, landscaped courtyards, pedestrian pathways, and coordinated site design. The project maintains the historic streetscape character of the Camino Capistrano corridor by retaining the historic adobe buildings along the frontage and locating larger hotel buildings toward the lower railroad-grade portion of the site. In addition, articulated building forms, varied rooflines, decorative materials, and extensive landscaping would maintain compatibility with surrounding historic, commercial, restaurant, and hospitality uses within the Historic Town Center area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Policy LU-2.2.
Goal LU-7: Enhance and maintain the character of neighborhoods.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project would enhance and maintain the character of the Historic Town Center area through redevelopment of an underutilized site with a pedestrian-oriented hospitality project compatible with surrounding historic, commercial, restaurant, and visitor-serving uses. The project preserves and rehabilitates the existing historic adobe structures and incorporates mission- and Spanish-influenced architecture, landscaped courtyards, pedestrian pathways, and coordinated site design that reinforce the established character of the Camino Capistrano corridor. In addition, the project would improve the visual quality of the site by replacing disturbed areas and non-historic improvements with high-quality architecture and landscaping compatible with the surrounding historic downtown environment. Therefore, the Proposed Project would be consistent with Goal LU-7.
Policy LU-7.1: Preserve and enhance the quality of San Juan Capistrano neighborhoods	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project would redevelop the site with visitor-serving hotel, dining, and ancillary hospitality uses compatible with the Town Center land use designation and surrounding historic downtown environment.

by avoiding or abating the intrusion of non-conforming buildings and uses.	The project preserves and rehabilitates the existing historic adobe structures and incorporates mission- and Spanish-influenced architecture, articulated building forms, landscaped courtyards, and pedestrian-oriented design features intended to maintain compatibility with surrounding historic, commercial, restaurant, and hospitality uses. In addition, the project replaces visually degraded and non-historic site improvements with coordinated architecture and landscaping that reinforce the established character of the Camino Capistrano corridor and Historic Town Center area. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not introduce non-conforming buildings or incompatible uses and would be consistent with Policy LU-7.1.
Policy LU-7.2: Ensure that new development is compatible with the physical characteristics of its site, surrounding land uses, and available public infrastructure.	**Consistent.** The Proposed Project has been designed to integrate with the physical characteristics of the site and surrounding Historic Town Center environment through preservation of the existing historic adobe structures, utilization of the site's natural grade transition between Camino Capistrano and the adjacent railroad corridor, and incorporation of pedestrian-oriented courtyards, landscaping, and articulated building forms. The project would be compatible with surrounding historic, commercial, restaurant, hospitality, and railroad-related land uses along the Camino Capistrano corridor. In addition, the Project Site is located within an urbanized area currently served by existing roadway, utility, drainage, and public service infrastructure. The Proposed Project would therefore be compatible with the site's physical setting, surrounding development pattern, and available public infrastructure and would be consistent with Policy LU-7.2.

As shown in Table 4.1-2, the project would be consistent with the General Plan goals and policies related to aesthetics and scenic quality.

View Simulations

Several view simulations were prepared for the Proposed Project to evaluate the potential visual and aesthetic impacts anticipated to result from the implementation of the Proposed Project. The vantage points were selected because they represent locations from which important public views to the site exist, including view corridors along arterial roadways (i.e., designated scenic corridors) and locations having public access. Because resources limit the number of view simulations that can be analyzed, vantage points are selected to be representative of a general area/location. The Draft EIR is incapable of evaluating every conceivable visual vantage point of the project. However, the selected view simulations, taken in their entirety, provide a representative overview of the potential view impacts that can be anticipated by the project. Figure 4.1-1, View Simulation Map, identifies the locations from which the photographs were taken and view simulations created.

View Simulation 1

Figure 4.1-2, View Simulations 1 and 1A, depict the Proposed Project from Camino Capistrano looking generally west toward the primary street frontage of the development. These simulations illustrate the relationship between the retained historic frontage structures, pedestrian-oriented paseo entry, and adjacent hotel buildings along the public streetscape.

As shown in the simulations, the Proposed Project maintains a low-scale frontage condition along Camino Capistrano through retention of the historic adobe structures and incorporation of articulated two-story building forms with recessed balconies, covered walkways, and pedestrian-scaled architectural detailing. The proposed paseo entry between the frontage buildings creates visual permeability into the site while preserving the established rhythm and spacing of development along the corridor. Landscaping, decorative paving, and pedestrian activity areas further reinforce the pedestrian-oriented character of the Historic Town Center environment.

The simulations also demonstrate that the larger hotel massing is recessed behind the frontage buildings and screened by landscaping and internal courtyard organization. The site's approximately 12-foot drop in elevation from Camino Capistrano to the railroad-grade portion of the property reduces the visibility and apparent prominence of the proposed valet parking and car-lift structure from surrounding public viewpoints. Although new development would alter the appearance of the site, the Proposed Project maintains compatibility with the surrounding downtown context through the use of earth-toned materials, mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural elements, covered balconies, and articulated façades designed to complement the historic setting of Camino Capistrano. The proposed development would preserve the visual prominence of the retained adobe structures and would not visually dominate the surrounding streetscape.

Overall, View Simulations 1 and 1A demonstrate that the Proposed Project would maintain the pedestrian-oriented scale and historic character of the Camino Capistrano corridor while improving the visual quality of the site through coordinated architecture, landscaping, and rehabilitation of historic resources.

View Simulation 2

Figure 4.1-3, View Simulation 2, depicts an interior pedestrian-oriented paseo and gathering space within the Proposed Project looking generally northwest from the central courtyard area. The simulation illustrates the relationship between pedestrian circulation areas, outdoor gathering spaces, landscaping, and adjacent hotel and restaurant structures.

As shown in the simulation, the Proposed Project incorporates substantial open-space amenities, including decorative paving, landscaped planting areas, outdoor dining spaces, shaded gathering areas, and pedestrian circulation corridors intended to create an active and visually integrated hospitality environment. Architectural elements including exposed structural detailing, varied roof forms, recessed building planes, and natural material palettes reduce the perception of bulk and contribute to a human-scaled pedestrian environment compatible with the surrounding Historic Town Center setting.

The simulation also demonstrates the project's emphasis on landscaping and tree canopy coverage, which softens views of structures and creates visual separation between building masses. Internal

circulation areas and courtyards provide visual openness and reduce the appearance of continuous building walls or monolithic development patterns. Overall, the simulation reflects a pedestrian-oriented design approach consistent with the City's Historic Town Center planning objectives and architectural character.

View Simulation 3

Figure 4.1-4, View Simulation 3, depicts a courtyard-facing view of the proposed restaurant and event building looking generally northeast within the central gathering area of the site. The simulation highlights the architectural character of the proposed hospitality and event components, including landscaped courtyard areas, decorative hardscape improvements, and pedestrian gathering spaces.

The simulation illustrates a highly articulated building form incorporating varied rooflines, extensive glazing, exposed structural detailing, textured natural materials, and landscaped open-space features intended to create a visually cohesive and pedestrian-oriented environment. Low stone walls, integrated seating areas, ornamental landscaping, and outdoor gathering spaces further soften the appearance of development and maintain compatibility with the surrounding historic and urban design context.

As shown in the simulation, landscaping and open-space amenities substantially reduce the visual prominence of structures while enhancing the pedestrian experience throughout the site. The building design incorporates contemporary architectural elements while remaining compatible with the surrounding historic setting through the use of natural materials, subdued color palettes, and human-scaled building articulation. Overall, the simulation demonstrates that the Proposed Project would create an attractive and visually integrated hospitality environment that complements the existing character of downtown San Juan Capistrano.

View Simulation 4

Figure 4.1-5, View Simulation 4, depicts the primary arrival and drop-off area for the Proposed Project looking generally southwest from the internal driveway and entry sequence. The simulation illustrates the visual character of the hotel arrival experience, including landscaping, architectural massing, pedestrian circulation areas, and screening features associated with the internalized parking and hotel facilities.

The simulation demonstrates how the Proposed Project incorporates substantial landscaping, decorative paving, stone walls, and tree canopy to soften views of the surrounding hotel buildings and create a visually cohesive entry environment. The adjacent three-story hotel building incorporates articulated façades, recessed windows, varied materials, and segmented building planes that reduce the apparent scale and bulk of development. Landscaping and low-scale site walls further screen portions of the development and maintain compatibility with the surrounding pedestrian-oriented and historic context.

Importantly, the simulation illustrates the internalization of taller building masses away from Camino Capistrano and toward the interior and western portions of the site. Although portions of the Proposed Project would reach three stories in height, articulated building forms, landscaping, and grade transitions substantially reduce the apparent visual prominence of the development from surrounding viewpoints. Overall, the simulation demonstrates that the Proposed Project would maintain compatibility with the visual character of the Historic Town Center area while enhancing the quality of the existing site.

View Simulation 5

Figure 4.1-6, View Simulation 5, depicts an interior view of the Proposed Project's central courtyard and pool area looking generally northeast within the hotel complex. The simulation illustrates the primary open-space amenity area associated with the hotel and demonstrates the relationship between the internal courtyard environment, surrounding hotel buildings, landscaping, and pedestrian circulation areas.

As shown in the simulation, the courtyard is organized around a centrally located pool and spa area framed by three-story hotel wings, landscaped paseo areas, decorative paving, and pedestrian-oriented gathering spaces. The architectural character of the surrounding hotel buildings incorporates articulated façades, recessed balconies, varied building planes, and natural material palettes intended to create a human-scaled environment and reduce the visual appearance of continuous building massing. The arrangement of the three hotel wings around the courtyard creates visual enclosure while maintaining openness through substantial landscaping, pedestrian circulation corridors, and outdoor amenity areas.

The view simulation also demonstrates the project's landscape strategy, which includes substantial tree planting, ornamental landscaping, planter areas, and integrated pedestrian-scale site furnishings intended to soften views of structures and create a cohesive courtyard environment compatible with the broader character of San Juan Capistrano's historic and pedestrian-oriented setting. Landscaping and tree canopies substantially reduce direct views of upper-story building façades and contribute to a visually buffered and shaded courtyard environment. Decorative paving, cabanas, outdoor seating areas, and integrated hardscape improvements reinforce the resort-oriented character of the Proposed Project while maintaining a scale and material palette compatible with the surrounding Historic Town Center context.

Although three-story hotel buildings surround portions of the courtyard, the combination of landscaping, façade articulation, varying architectural planes, and pedestrian-oriented open space reduces the apparent scale of development from interior and surrounding viewpoints. The proposed courtyard configuration also supports the project's broader site-planning objective of internalizing larger building masses away from Camino Capistrano and preserving the prominence of the historic adobe structures along the street frontage.

Overall, View Simulation 5 demonstrates that the Proposed Project would create a high-quality, pedestrian-oriented hospitality environment that integrates architecture, landscaping, and open space in a manner compatible with the visual character of downtown San Juan Capistrano. The Proposed Project would not substantially degrade visual character or conflict with applicable regulations governing scenic quality.

Therefore, while the Project would allow changes to the built environment in an already urbanized location, those changes would occur under regulatory controls designed to maintain scenic quality, and the Project would not introduce substantial visual degradation in non-urbanized areas.

Development of the Proposed Project would not degrade the existing visual character or conflict with zoning or regulation for scenic quality. Impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.1.7.2 Threshold AES-d: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Impact Analysis

The Project Site is located within the Historic Town Center area of downtown San Juan Capistrano along the Camino Capistrano corridor, an urbanized environment characterized by commercial, restaurant, hospitality, railroad, and pedestrian-oriented land uses. Existing nighttime lighting conditions in the vicinity include decorative streetlights, restaurant and commercial lighting, parking area lighting, railroad-related lighting, architectural lighting, vehicle headlights, illuminated signage, and pedestrian-oriented lighting associated with the downtown core. As a result, the Project Site and surrounding area already experience moderate levels of nighttime illumination and urban skyglow typical of an active downtown commercial environment.

Implementation of the Proposed Project would introduce new nighttime lighting associated with hotel operations, including architectural lighting, landscape lighting, pedestrian pathway lighting, courtyard and pool lighting, valet and parking area lighting, and lighting associated with the proposed car-lift parking structure. Interior lighting from hotel rooms, dining areas, and ancillary hospitality uses would also be visible during nighttime hours.

However, exterior lighting associated with the Proposed Project would be subject to the City of San Juan Capistrano Municipal Code safety and lighting standards contained in Section 9-3.529, which regulate exterior lighting placement and operation to minimize light spillover and glare onto adjacent properties and public rights-of-way. The Proposed Project would also require Architectural Control approval pursuant to Section 9-2.313 of the City's Land Use Code, through

which the City would evaluate lighting design, fixture compatibility, architectural integration, and consistency with the character of the Historic Town Center area.

A substantial portion of the project's active uses and lighting elements would be internalized within landscaped courtyards, paseo areas, and recessed building areas rather than oriented outward toward surrounding public roadways. The site's approximately 12-foot drop in elevation from Camino Capistrano to the railroad-grade portion of the property reduces the visibility and apparent prominence of the proposed valet parking and car-lift structure from surrounding public viewpoints. This design reduces the visibility and apparent prominence of lighting features from surrounding public viewpoints along Camino Capistrano and nearby historic areas.

The project also utilizes earth-toned colors, textured plaster finishes, clay tile roofing, wood accents, decorative architectural detailing, and other low-reflectivity materials intended to complement the surrounding historic environment and minimize daytime glare. The Proposed Project would not include mirrored glass façades, polished metal surfaces, extensive curtain wall systems, or other highly reflective building materials commonly associated with substantial glare impacts.

In addition, the Proposed Project has been specifically designed to remain visually subordinate to the surrounding historic context. The project preserves and rehabilitates the existing Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe and Domingo Yorba Adobe and incorporates compatible architectural detailing, setbacks, landscaping, and massing intended to preserve the visual prominence of nearby historic resources and maintain the established visual rhythm of the Camino Capistrano corridor. Pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaped courtyards, and recessed building forms would maintain compatibility with the existing Historic Town Center nighttime environment rather than introducing visually dominant or unusually intense lighting conditions.

The Project Site is not located within a designated dark-sky area, scenic nighttime resource area, or other light-sensitive environment. Surrounding land uses consist primarily of urban commercial, restaurant, hospitality, railroad, civic, and historic downtown uses that already experience existing nighttime lighting conditions typical of a pedestrian-oriented downtown district. Accordingly, the Proposed Project would not create a substantial new source of light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

Rather, redevelopment of the site with coordinated architecture, shielded pedestrian-oriented lighting, landscaped courtyards, and rehabilitation of the existing historic adobes would improve the overall visual quality of the site and surrounding streetscape compared to existing disturbed conditions, surface parking areas, and non-historic improvements currently present on the property.

Although the Proposed Project is not anticipated to incorporate design features that would result in excessive lighting or the generation of glare on the site, lighting plans are subject to City review and approval as part of the site plan review process. Mitigation Measure AES-1 requires the project Applicant to prepare a lighting plan for review and approval by the City's Development Services Department (refer to Section 4.1.7, below). This mitigation measure is intended to ensure that new sources of light and glare do not impact adjacent land uses that nighttime lighting is limited to that necessary for security, and that lighting is shielded to reduce glare and spill lighting effects on adjacent sensitive uses. A comprehensive lighting plan would illustrate the final locations for parking lights, walkway lights, and landscaping lights and demonstrate consistency with the City's Municipal Code. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1 would ensure that impacts associated with new lighting would remain less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation: Potentially significant without mitigation.

Mitigation Measures: MM AES-1.

4.1.8 Cumulative Impacts

As defined in Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines, cumulative impacts are the incremental effects of an individual project when viewed in connection with the effects of past, current, and probable future projects within the cumulative impact area for aesthetics. The cumulative impact area for aesthetics related to the Proposed Project is the City of San Juan Capistrano. Several residential and commercial development projects are approved and/or pending within the City. Each of these projects, as well as all proposed development in the City, would be subject to its own consistency analysis for policies and regulations governing scenic quality and would be reviewed for consistency with General Plan goals and policies and Zoning Code development standards applicable to each site.

4.1.8.1 Cumulative Threshold AES-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, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

As discussed above, the Proposed Project would preserve and rehabilitate the existing Casa Manuel Garcia Adobe and Domingo Yorba Adobe, remove visually degraded and non-historic improvements, and redevelop the site with coordinated architecture, landscaping, pedestrian-oriented courtyards, and visitor-serving uses compatible with the historic downtown environment. The Proposed Project has been specifically designed to maintain the pedestrian scale and visual rhythm of the Camino Capistrano corridor by retaining the historic adobe structures along the frontage and locating larger hotel buildings toward the western railroad-grade portion of the site.

The project also incorporates mission- and Spanish-influenced architectural elements, articulated façades, earth-toned materials, landscaped courtyards, pedestrian pathways, and open-space amenities intended to remain compatible with the surrounding Historic Town Center setting.

In addition, the Proposed Project would comply with applicable Town Center zoning standards and would be subject to Architectural Control review, Conditional Use Permit approval, and applicable historic preservation requirements, including consistency with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These regulatory controls are specifically intended to preserve scenic quality, maintain compatibility with the City's historic downtown character, and avoid visually incompatible development within the Historic Town Center area.

Unlike projects that could substantially obstruct public views, introduce visually incompatible architectural forms, or degrade scenic resources, the Proposed Project would improve the visual quality of an underutilized and disturbed site through rehabilitation of historic resources, coordinated landscaping, pedestrian-oriented design features, and removal of non-historic improvements. View simulations prepared for the Proposed Project demonstrate that the project would maintain compatibility with surrounding visual conditions and preserve the prominence of nearby historic resources and pedestrian-oriented streetscape character.

Although cumulative development within the downtown area may incrementally contribute to ongoing urbanization and changes in visual character over time, such development would occur within an existing urbanized environment already designated and planned for commercial, hospitality, civic, and visitor-serving uses. The Proposed Project would not contribute considerably to any cumulative degradation of visual character, scenic quality, or public views because the project has been specifically designed to remain visually compatible with the surrounding Historic Town Center context and applicable regulatory standards governing aesthetics and scenic quality.

Overall, cumulative effects on visual character and public views would be less than significant due to the Project's consistency with adopted plans and the continuation of established design and development controls.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.1.8.2 Cumulative Threshold AES-d: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

As discussed above, the Proposed Project would introduce new lighting associated with hotel operations, including pedestrian-oriented pathway lighting, landscape lighting, courtyard lighting, architectural lighting, valet and parking area lighting, and lighting associated with the proposed

car-lift structure. However, lighting associated with the Proposed Project would be designed to remain compatible with the existing nighttime environment of the Historic Town Center area and would not introduce visually dominant or unusually intense lighting conditions. Exterior lighting would be subject to the City's Municipal Code lighting standards contained in Section 9-3.529 and Architectural Control review requirements pursuant to Section 9-2.313 of the City's Land Use Code.

In addition, the Proposed Project incorporates several site-specific design features that reduce the potential for cumulative light and glare impacts. Much of the project's lighting would be internalized within landscaped courtyards, paseo areas, recessed building entries, and lower railroad-grade portions of the site rather than outwardly oriented toward surrounding public streets and historic resources. The approximately 12-foot grade transition between Camino Capistrano and the railroad corridor further reduces the visibility and apparent prominence of lighting associated with valet and parking facilities from surrounding public viewpoints. In addition, the project utilizes earth-toned materials, textured plaster finishes, clay tile roofing, wood accents, and other low-reflectivity materials intended to minimize daytime glare and maintain compatibility with the surrounding historic environment.

The Project Site is not located within a designated dark-sky area, scenic nighttime resource area, or other light-sensitive environment, and surrounding land uses already experience nighttime illumination typical of an active downtown commercial and hospitality district. Although cumulative development within the Historic Town Center area may incrementally increase nighttime lighting over time, such development would occur within an existing urbanized setting planned and regulated for pedestrian-oriented commercial, hospitality, restaurant, civic, and visitor-serving uses.

Unlike projects that could introduce substantial off-site glare, excessive architectural illumination, or highly reflective building materials incompatible with the surrounding historic context, the Proposed Project has been specifically designed to remain visually compatible with the established nighttime character of downtown San Juan Capistrano. Redevelopment of the site with coordinated architecture, shielded pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaped courtyards, and rehabilitation of the existing historic adobes would improve the visual quality of the site compared to the existing disturbed and partially degraded site conditions.

Accordingly, the Proposed Project would not contribute considerably to any cumulative impacts related to light or glare, and cumulative impacts would be less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation: Less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

4.1.9 Level of Significance Before Mitigation

4.1.9.1 Threshold AES-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, conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

The Proposed Project would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings.

4.1.9.2 Threshold AES-d: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Without mitigation, the Proposed Project could have the potential to create a new source of substantial light or glare.

4.1.10 Mitigation Measures

AES-1: **Comprehensive Lighting Plan.** Prior to issuance of any building permits, the project Applicant shall prepare a comprehensive lighting plan for review and approval by the City of San Juan Capistrano (City) Development Services Director and/or the City's Design Review Committee, or designee. The lighting plan shall be prepared by a qualified lighting engineer and shall be in compliance with applicable standards of the City's Municipal Code. The lighting plan shall address all aspects of lighting, including infrastructure, on-site driveways, safety, signage, and promotional lighting, if any. The lighting plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following, as determined by the lighting engineer:

- Exterior on-site lighting shall be shielded and confined within site boundaries.
- No direct rays or glare are permitted to shine onto public streets or adjacent sites.
- "Walpak" type fixtures are not permitted.
- Parking area lighting shall include cut-off fixtures, and light standards shall not exceed 20 feet in height.
- Lighting fixtures that blink, flash, or emit unusual high intensity or brightness are not permitted.
- The site shall not be excessively illuminated based on the illumination recommendations of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, or, if, in the opinion of the City Development Services Director, or designee, the illumination creates an unacceptable negative impact on surrounding land uses or

environmental resources. The City Development Services Director, or designee, may order the dimming of light sources or other remediation upon finding that the site is excessively illuminated.

4.1.11 Level of Significance After Mitigation

4.1.11.1 Threshold AES-d: Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

With implementation of mitigation measure MM AES-1, potential impacts with regard to light and glare would be reduced to less than significant levels. No significant and unavoidable impacts would remain.

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Source: Almquist Development and Investment, Swa Archetecure, and Bickel Group Archetecture, 2026.

Harris & Associates

Figure 4.1-1

View Simulation Map

French Hotel Project Draft EIR

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J:\Projects\City of San Juan Capistrano\French Hotel Project\Map Docs\FrenchHotelProject

Source: Almquist Development and Investment, Swa Archetecure, and Bickel Group Archetecture, 2026.

Harris & Associates

Figure 4.1-2

View Simulation 1 and 1a

French Hotel Project Draft EIR

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Source: Almquist Development and Investment, Swa Archetecure, and Bickel Group Archetecture, 2026.

Harris & Associates

Figure 4.1-3

View Simulation 2

French Hotel Project Draft EIR

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Source: Almquist Development and Investment, Swa Archetecure, and Bickel Group Archetecture, 2026.

Harris & Associates

Figure 4.1-4

View Simulation 3

French Hotel Project Draft EIR

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Source: Almquist Development and Investment, Swa Archetecure, and Bickel Group Archetecture, 2026.

Harris & Associates

Figure 4.1-5

View Simulation 4

French Hotel Project Draft EIR

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Source: Almquist Development and Investment, Swa Archetecure, and Bickel Group Archetecture, 2026.

Harris & Associates

Figure 4.1-6

View Simulation 5

French Hotel Project Draft EIR