4.2 AESTHETICS

This section describes the existing aesthetic character of the project area and describes views of the project site from surrounding and on-site vantage points. The information presented in this section is based on field reconnaissance, review of the project site, and review of aerial photographs. An analysis of the potential aesthetic, light and glare, and shade and shadow effects associated with the proposed project is provided.

4.2.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Visual Characteristics of the Site and Surrounding Area

The topography of the project site and surrounding areas is relatively flat. The project site consists of two rectangular-shaped parking lots and a commercial building located in the downtown area of the City Fullerton, and it is completely surrounded by urban development of varying scale and intensity. The asphalt-paved parking lots are landscaped with non-native ornamental trees and shrubs that are typical of urban areas.

The project site is visible from immediately surrounding land uses. However, because the project site is not located directly adjacent to major arterials and because the site is surrounded with development, existing views of the project site from off-site surrounding land uses are limited.

Views of the project site from various vantage points within and surrounding the site are depicted in the photographs presented in Exhibits 4.2-1a and 4.2-1b. The views presented in these photographs and site characteristics are described below.

- **View 1 — View from the northeast portion of the project site looking west.** The existing north parking lot is located in the foreground. As shown in the photograph, one- and two-story structures surround the parking lot. It should be noted that the structures shown in the right portion of the photograph (2 stories) front the parking lot which is the focal point of views from these uses.

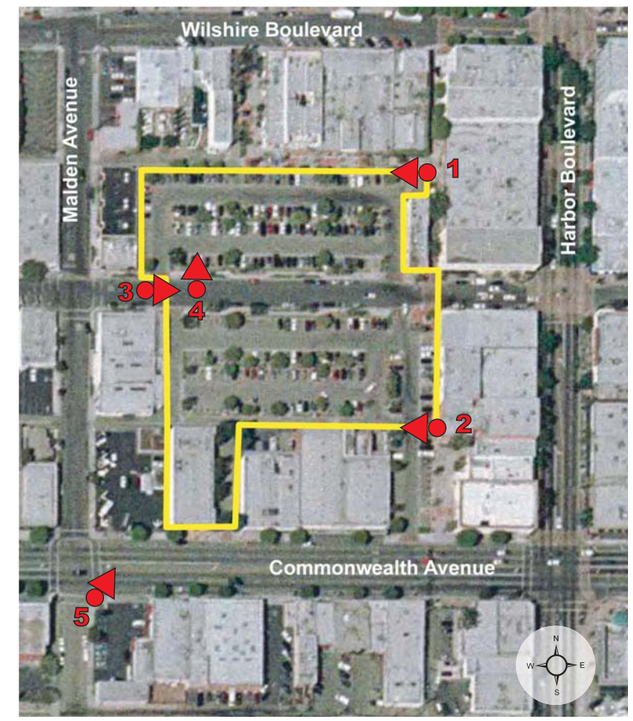
- **View 2 — View from the alley south of the south parking lot looking west.** This photograph shows the relationship between the project site (south lot) and commercial uses immediately to the south. The Commonwealth Building is also visible in this photograph. There are no key viewsheds from the commercial uses to the south. These buildings front 131 W. Commonwealth Avenue with the rear areas primary used for storage and secondary pedestrian access.

- **View 3 — View from Amerige Avenue looking east.** This photograph depicts the current visual character of the north and south parking lots as seen from Amerige Avenue which bisects the lots. Motorists along Amerige Avenue are one of the primary viewer groups of the project site. The parking lots are the primary focus of the viewshed from this vantage point. The tree-lined streetscape further to the west is also a notable visual feature. The five-story “Chapman Building” and the two-story “Parker Building” are visible on the north side of Amerige Avenue. The Chapman building is located east of the project site across Harbor Boulevard and the Parker building is located on the northwest corner of Amerige Avenue and Harbor Boulevard.

- **View 4 — View from the south side of Amerige Avenue looking north toward the project site (north lot).** This photograph from Amerige Avenue depicts the views of the north parking lot and the existing surrounding uses to the west and north. The five-story

View 1: View from northeast portion of the project site looking west.

View 3: View from Amerige Avenue looking east.



Source: Aerials Express, Flown April, 2005

View 2: View from the alley south of the south parking lot looking west.

View 4: View from the south side of Amerige Avenue looking north toward the project site (north lot).

D:/Projects/Pelican/J001/Ex.4.2-1a.ai

Existing Photographs – Views 1 – 4

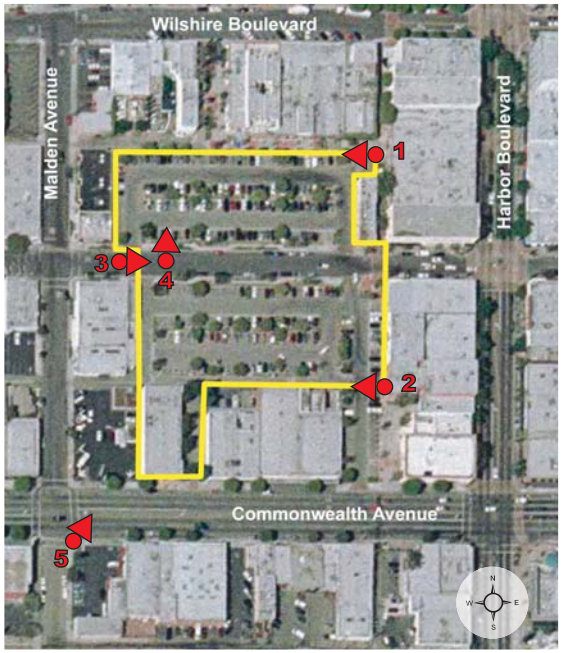
Exhibit 4.2-1a

Amerige Court Mixed-Use Development EIR

BonTerra CONSULTING

R:/Projects/Pelican/J001/Graphics/Ex.4.2-1a_080306.pdf

View 5: View from the southeast corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Malden Avenue looking northeast to the project site.



Source: Aerials Express, Flown April, 2005

D:/Projects/Pelican/J001/Ex.4.2-1b.ai

Existing Photographs – View 5

Exhibit 4.2-1b

Amerige Court Mixed-Use Development EIR

BonTerra CONSULTING

R:/Projects/Pelican/J001/Graphics/Ex.4.2-1b.pdf

residential structure "Wilshire Promenade" north of Wilshire Avenue is visible in the background of the photograph. It should be noted that due to its height, the upper levels of this structure have views over the project site.

- **View 5 — View from the southeast corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Malden Avenue looking northeast to the project site.** Commonweath Avenue and land uses typical of the project area are shown in this photograph, including the 131 W. Commonwealth Building (building on the far left).

Views from Harbor Boulevard

Harbor Boulevard, north of Brea Boulevard, is classified as a scenic corridor in the Resource Management Element of the City's General Plan. This scenic corridor is approximately 1.5 miles north of the project site. Views of the project site from this roadway are limited due to the distance from the site and intervening topography and development. As previously discussed in Section 2.3.2, Effects Found Not to be Significant, during preparation of the Initial Study, the City of Fullerton determined that the proposed project would not impact a scenic vista and no further analysis is warranted.

Light and Glare

The project area has the nighttime illumination typical of an urban area. This condition is attributable to the commercial development, street lighting, and parking lot lighting in the project vicinity and on the site itself. Residential development is also lighted. Transient lighting from vehicular lights also contributes to nighttime illumination in the project area. There are no existing buildings in proximity to the project site that are constructed of building materials that cause a glare. The majority of the buildings are brick and/or concrete.

Shade and Shadow

Shading refers to the effect of shadows cast upon areas adjacent to structures or vegetation. Although there are trees and the 131 W. Commonwealth building on site, they do not cast a shadow on adjacent uses. The trees provide shade within the parking lot. Shade and shadow from the existing buildings surrounding the project site is minimal. Uses surrounding the project site that may be sensitive to shade and shadow effects are the residential uses immediately to the north. There are a few residences that have outdoor patio areas; however, because these areas are recessed, they currently receive some shade and shadow from the sides of the buildings.

4.2.2 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following significance criteria are from the City of Fullerton Initial Study Checklist. The project would result in a significant impact related to aesthetics if it would:

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The City of Fullerton, similar to most cities in Orange County, does not have an established threshold for shade and shadow effects. For purposes of this analysis, the project would result in a significant impact related to shade and shadow if it would:

- Cause shade and/or a shadow on currently un-shaded, shadow-sensitive uses, where sunlight is important to its function.

4.2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Methodology

Visual Analysis

The assessment of aesthetic/visual changes was based on field reconnaissance, review of photographs, and evaluation of the proposed site selections (refer to Exhibit 3-4 in Section 3, Project Description). Aesthetics may be defined as visual qualities within a given field of view, and may include such considerations as size, shape, color, textual and general composition, and the relationships between these elements. It is recognized in performing this analysis that visual resources are subjective and based on the interpretation of individual viewers.

Shade and Shadow Analysis

A shade and shadow analysis was conducted for the proposed project using Lightscape software. This process consists of inputting building heights, setbacks, and street dimensions, as well as geographic location and orientation, day of year, and time of day. The software interprets this information and calculates the exact location of the sun over the earth. Directional lighting of the sun is conveyed onto the inputted information, producing an accurate angle of the sun as well as the resulting shadows.

June 21 (summer) and December 21 (winter) represent the days of the year with the longest and shortest periods of daylight, respectively. By analyzing the shade and shadow effects at several different times of day, the earth's rotation around the sun is illustrated. For example, during early morning hours (sunrise), the sun is positioned low in the sky and casts longer shadows. As the day progresses, shadow lengths become shorter as the sun approaches its highest point in the sky around midday (noon). From this point in the day the sun's position in the sky becomes progressively lower and corresponding shadows become longer until the sun disappears beyond the horizon at sunset.

Shade and shadow simulations are available for review at the City of Fullerton Community Development Department and the assessment of potential impacts is provided under Threshold 2.3 of this Section.

Standard Conditions

SC 2-1 Prior to approval by the City, the project developer shall submit architecture (elevations, floor plans, and site plan), landscape architecture (concept planting and hardscape plans), and paint and material samples to the Redevelopment Design Review Committee for review, in compliance with the procedural requirements of the Central Business District Design Guidelines.

Impact Analysis

Threshold 2.1: Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

The visual impacts of a project include both the objective visual resource changes created by the project and the subjective viewer response to that change. Distance from the project,

frequency of view, length of view, viewer activity, viewer perception, and viewing conditions contribute to the assessment of a visual impact. The physical limits and changes of the views and the quantity of the viewers are objective and viewer perception is subjective.

As described in Section 3, Project Description, the proposed project is a mixed-use development that would introduce four-story structures (approximately 50 feet high) on the north lot and 131 W. Commonwealth Building site, and a nine-story structure (approximately 95 feet high) on the south lot. Conceptual site selections were presented in Exhibit 3-4 in Section 3, Project Description. Since the proposed development is a concept design, there are currently only fundamental layouts with no detailed plans or elevations specified. Materials, fenestration patterns, massing, relationship of solids to voids, scale, and color is yet to be determined. It is assumed that exterior elevations will be constructed in some combination of masonry (brick, stone, stucco, etc), precast concrete panels, metal, and glazing. Glass would have low reflectivity and metals would have brushed finishes.

Implementation of the proposed parking structures, retail/commercial, and residential uses on the project site would alter the existing visual character and use of the project site, and the views from surrounding land uses would be changed. As discussed above and demonstrated in the site photographs, the existing views into the project site are limited. The primary viewers are motorists and pedestrians along Amerige Avenue. As shown on Exhibit 4.2-1b (View 3), from Amerige Avenue there are existing views of the project site and surrounding uses, and a focal point of the viewshed is the streetscape along Amerige Avenue. The proposed project would introduce new buildings immediately adjacent to Amerige Avenue. As described in Section 3, Project Description, Amerige Avenue would be modified to have expanded sidewalk areas for pedestrian circulation and seating, and on-street parking would be eliminated within the project site. Accent paving such as concrete pavers may be used in selected locations along Amerige Avenue (such as entries and crosswalks) but accents would reflect the existing architectural character of the area. Landscape materials consistent with the existing plant palette in downtown Fullerton would also be used. The finished project would result in a different visual character, but is not considered degraded because it would be comprised of a professionally designed pedestrian environment with finished architectural detail, landscaping and streetscape. The modification of views from Amerige Avenue would not degrade the existing visual character of the project site or surrounding areas.

The proposed four-story structures on the north lot and the Commonwealth Building site are consistent in scale with other development in the immediate vicinity of the project site (e.g., the Chapman Building and the five-story residential building north of Wilshire Avenue). The proposed nine-story structure is taller (proposed to be 95 feet high) than existing structures; however, this does not represent a substantial adverse change in the visual character of the project site or its surroundings, which consist of a built out urban setting. The proposed project would not introduce elements that would substantially detract from the existing urban identity of downtown Fullerton. It should also be noted that because the topography of the area is relatively flat, distant views from most surrounding uses are obstructed by existing development.

In summary, the project site and immediate project vicinity consist of a built out urban environment with mixed uses. The proposed project would be consistent with existing land uses. Additionally, as identified in SC 2-1, the project design must be reviewed by the City of Fullerton Redevelopment Design Review Committee (RDRC) (in addition to the Planning Commission and City Council) to ensure it complies with the design guidelines that have been developed for the Central Business District (refer to discussion provided in Section 4.1, Land Use and Planning). The primary goal of these design guidelines is to ensure that future development complements and enhances the existing urban identity of downtown Fullerton's Central Business District. With the incorporation of appropriate design elements, building massing could

be visually reduced. Implementation of the proposed project would not substantially degrade the visual character of the project site or surroundings.

It should be noted that an assessment of the proposed project in relation to historic/cultural resources is provided in Section 4.6, Cultural Resources.

Impact on Views During Construction

During construction, there would be views of construction equipment, ongoing construction activities, and stockpiles of building materials within the project site. This potential impact is less than significant because of its temporary nature and because the view would be typical of construction sites for residential and commercial projects.

Views Harbor Boulevard and Brea Boulevard

Motorists traveling south on Harbor Boulevard from areas in northern Fullerton may see the development on the south lot, particularly the nine-story building. However, these views would be intermittent due to traveling speeds, distance from the project site, intervening topography and development. The proposed project would not substantially degrade the views from Harbor Boulevard.

Impact 2.1: The proposed project involves the development of residential, commercial, and parking uses in a built-out urban environment and would not substantially degrade the visual character of the project site or surrounding areas. The project's impact would be less than significant.

Threshold 2.2: Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Although the project would introduce new development to the project site, it is located in an area that is already subject to nighttime lighting from on-site and surrounding uses. Project lighting would include streetlights for vehicular safety; mid-level post lights for delivery zones and pedestrian passageways; and low-level bollard lights for pedestrian accent lighting. Due to the urban nature of the project site, surrounding areas and existing lighting, the lighting associated with the proposed project would not impact nighttime views. Additionally, on-site building mounted lighting fixtures would be shielded or directed downwards to minimize light spillover.

Glare is caused by light reflections from pavement, vehicles, and building materials such as reflective glass and polished surfaces. During daylight hours, the amount of glare depends on intensity and direction of sunlight. Glare can create hazards to motorists and nuisances for pedestrians and other viewers. As discussed in Section 3, Project Description, specific building construction materials for the proposed project have not been determined; however, they would include materials compatible with the existing downtown aesthetic character. Any metal surfaces would have a brushed finish. Potential glare from sunlight would be virtually non-existent, would not pose a hazard to motorists traveling in the project vicinity, and would not affect surrounding uses. Therefore, no significant impacts would occur.

Impact 2.2: The proposed project would include nighttime lighting but would not affect nighttime views as the project site is in an urban environment that is currently subject to similar lighting. The project would not involve use of building materials that could cause a glare effect.

Threshold 2.3: Would the proposed project cause shade and/or a shadow on currently un-shaded, shadow-sensitive uses, where sunlight is important to its function?

As noted above, the proposed project would involve development of four-story structures on the north lot and Commonwealth Building site and a nine-story structure on the south lot. These structures would be taller than structures immediately adjacent to the project site and have the potential to cause shade and shadow. Shade and shadow in urban settings is common where there are differences in building height. Based on review of the project site and surrounding areas, the City identified the four apartment units immediately north of the project site (south of Wilshire Avenue) as sensitive receptors related to shade and shadow. However, only two of these apartments have outdoor patio areas facing the project site. The other units are on the opposite side of the building and face Wilshire Avenue.

As previously noted, a shade and shadow analysis was completed for the summer and winter solstice: the periods when shadow effects would be the greatest. During the summer, shade and shadows would primarily remain within the Amerige Court site boundaries. Shadows would extend off site onto adjacent properties (retail and commercial uses) in the early morning and late afternoon; they would not fall on sensitive land uses. Shade and shadow impacts during the summer months are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

During the winter, shade and shadow from the project site would extend to the northwest, north, and northeast depending on the time of day, with the longest shadows being cast on winter mornings and afternoons. As previously noted, the two apartment units immediately to the north of the project site with outdoor patio areas are considered sensitive land uses. Based on the simulations of shade and shadow effects, the proposed four-story structure on the north lot would cast shadows on these apartments in the early morning and late afternoon hours. The patio areas of these apartments are currently subject to partial shade and shadow based on their existing design. Additional shade and/or shadow resulting from the project would not alter the use of these areas and is not considered a significant impact.

Impact 2.3: The proposed four-story structure on the north lot would result in additional shade and shadow affecting two apartments immediately to the north of the project site during early morning and late afternoon hours in the winter. The apartment patio areas are presently subject to partial shade. The use of the outside patio areas for these apartments would not be altered and the impact is less than significant.

4.2.4 MITIGATION PROGRAM

Mitigation Measures

No significant impacts have been identified and no mitigation is required.

4.2.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The cumulative study area for aesthetic impacts is the viewshed that includes the project site and surrounding areas. Because the project site and surrounding area is relatively flat and is in a developed urban setting, the viewshed is limited to uses surrounding the site and vantage points along roadways in the vicinity of the project site.

There is not a substantial amount of new development and/or redevelopment anticipated to occur in the immediate vicinity of the project site that would be within the same viewshed as the

project site. The proposed project would not degrade the visual quality of the project site or surrounding areas and would have less-than-significant impacts related to light and glare, and shade and shadow. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative aesthetic impacts. Further, the proposed project must be reviewed by the RDRC in a public forum to determine compatibility with applicable design requirements of the City of Fullerton for the downtown area (refer to SC 2-1).

4.2.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

The proposed project is required to comply with the design and review procedures outlined in the Central Business District Design Guidelines and would not result in significant aesthetic impacts.