

4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents existing visual resources at the project site and analyzes the potential for implementation of the proposed Solar Energy Research Center (SERC) project to affect those resources. Information used in the analysis below was obtained from site visits, the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) 2006 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and environmental documents associated with other projects at LBNL.

For purposes of this analysis, visual or aesthetic resources are generally defined as the natural and built landscape features that are visible to humans from public vantage points. The overall visual character of a given area results from the unique combination of natural landscape features including landform, water, and vegetation patterns as well as built features such as buildings, roads and other structures.

One computer-generated visual simulation illustrating “before” (current) and “after” (proposed) visual conditions from a representative public vantage point near the project site is presented as part of this analysis. The location of the visual simulation vantage point was selected in consultation with visual resources professionals and UC LBNL staff and was chosen to represent the public viewpoint that provides the most direct view of potential site changes.

No comments were received regarding aesthetics in response to the Notice of Preparation for this EIR.

4.1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Regional Location

The SERC project site is located at the LBNL hill site, in the eastern hills of the cities of Berkeley and Oakland in Alameda County. The LBNL hill site is located on approximately 200 acres that are owned by the University of California (see **Figure 3.0-1, Regional Location**). Situated on the steeply sloping hillsides above the UC Berkeley campus, the LBNL hill site rises from an elevation of 500 feet near its main entrance along Cyclotron Road at the Blackberry Canyon Gate to about 1,000 feet at the northern border of the site. The hills that are covered in a mix of grasses and native stands of oaks and California bay trees as well as introduced eucalyptus or conifers provide a natural-appearing landscape backdrop to the LBNL hill site.

The entire LBNL hill site cannot be viewed from any one single off-site vantage point; however, portions of the site are visible from residential neighborhoods, public roadways, and public vantage points in the

adjoining areas. Views of individual buildings or groups of buildings are available from public vantage points such as the Memorial Stadium, the Lawrence Hall of Science, and Grizzly Peak Boulevard. Portions of the LBNL hill site are visible in medium range views (less than 1 mile) from nearby elevated off-site locations such as the residential neighborhoods in the north and northwestern portions of the city of Berkeley. Long-range views (greater than 1 mile) available from downtown Berkeley and the Berkeley Marina encompass portions of the LBNL hill site. **Figure 4.1-1, Photo Viewpoint Locations**, provides a key to the photo viewpoints used in this analysis and shows the range of public views that were considered.

Surrounding Land Uses

The LBNL hill site is surrounded by open space, institutional uses, and residential and neighborhood commercial areas. UC Berkeley, including the Strawberry Canyon open space area, lies south and southeast of the LBNL hill site. Residential neighborhoods and a small neighborhood commercial area in the city of Berkeley lie to the north and northwest, and regional open space, including the 2,000-acre Tilden Regional Park, lies to the northeast.

The LBNL hill site is largely buffered by undeveloped land owned by the University of California, although the northwest corner of LBNL hill site abuts residential neighborhoods in the city of Berkeley. Access to the LBNL hill site is not available to the general public; three controlled-access vehicular gates include the main Blackberry Canyon Gate on Cyclotron Road and the Strawberry Canyon and Grizzly Peak gates on Centennial Drive. Visitors primarily use the Blackberry Canyon Gate. The Grizzly Peak Gate is an exit-only gate for use after the morning commute hours. The western part of the LBNL site, including the project site, lies within the Berkeley city limits, whereas the eastern part is within the city of Oakland.

The visual character of the LBNL hill site's built environment can be described as eclectic. Established in the 1930s, the laboratory now includes buildings of various ages and architectural styles. Many buildings display an industrial look and utilitarian quality. A number of buildings are painted in neutral colors to blend with the natural setting. Some of the buildings are recognizable landmarks including the distinctive domed Advanced Light Source building, which was constructed as the Cyclotron in the 1940s. Portions of these buildings are visible from some public locations; however, mature trees interspersed through the site screen views of LBNL buildings from many other locations. Views of the LBNL hill site from nearby areas generally include natural landform and tree clusters as well as buildings or other structures, roadways, fencing and pavement situated on the hillside.

Project Site

The proposed SERC project would be centrally located on the LBNL hill site at the current location of Buildings 25A, 44, 44A, and 44B in the “Old Town” area (see **Figures 3.0-2 and 3.0-3** in **Section 3.0, Project Description**). The project site is approximately 1.5 acres and would be vacant following decontamination and demolition of Buildings 25A, 44, 44A, and 44B as part of the Old Town Demolition and Environmental Restoration project prior to commencement of construction of the SERC project. The site has been heavily disturbed by construction and uses associated with the existing buildings. Approximately 19 small trees and a large shrub are present on the project site.

The project site is located in an area heavily developed with buildings associated with the Old Town. Several of these buildings in the general vicinity of the proposed SERC facility, specifically Buildings 4, 5, 14, 16, 40, 41, and 52, are planned to be demolished under the Old Town Demolition and Environmental Restoration project. Building 25 would be demolished and replaced by a General Purpose Laboratory (GPL) as part of the Seismic Phase 2 project. The GPL when constructed would be adjacent to the SERC project. Other surrounding research facilities include the Advanced Light Source, which is a national user facility that generates intense light for scientific and technological research. The only area with landscaping in the project’s vicinity is a 0.25-acre redwood grove to the southwest of the project site.

Site Viewshed

For purposes of this study, the project viewshed is defined as the general area from which the SERC project would be visible to the public. Due to screening provided by intervening vegetation, topography and existing development, the project site is not visible from most areas located beyond the LBNL hill site itself. However, public views of the site are available from a limited number of places within the surrounding area including intermittent points along Centennial Drive. The following section describes potentially affected existing views, which are available from these areas.

Site Visibility and Public View Corridors

A set of four photographs, presented as **Figure 4.1-2, Public Views of Site and Surroundings**, document representative public views of the SERC project site as seen from relatively close range and distances of up to approximately 0.5 mile away.

Motorists and bicyclists on Centennial Drive have limited views of the project site. Portions of the roadside are surrounded by dense vegetation, which screens views towards the site or surrounding landscape from the road. Photo 2, shown in **Figure 4.1-2**, taken from Centennial Drive below the Lawrence Hall of Science and above the UC Botanical Gardens, shows the existing Buildings 25 and 25B (proposed for demolition under the Seismic Phase 2 project), Building 26 (the health center), and Building 25A, which is on the project site, in the background above the electrical substation and Glaser Road.

Due to intervening topography, vegetation and structures, the project site is generally not visible from elsewhere in the city of Berkeley and its environs including the Panoramic Hills neighborhood to the south, the Jordan fire trail, the downtown district, and more distant areas. Photos 3 and 4, respectively, on **Figure 4.1-2**, taken from these viewpoints demonstrate that views of the project site from these locations are obstructed by intervening structures and vegetation.

4.1.3 REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Local Plans and Policies

The LBNL hill site is an approximately 200-acre site owned by the Regents of the University of California, where the University conducts research, service, and training work within the University's mission. The LBNL hill site includes research and support structures that are primarily part of a multi-program national laboratory called the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, a federally funded research and development center operated and managed by the University of California under a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)-UC contract. As such, the University is exempted by the state constitution from compliance with local land use regulations, including general plans and zoning. However, the University seeks to cooperate with local jurisdictions to reduce any physical consequences of potential land use conflicts to the extent feasible. The SERC project site is located within the portion of the LBNL hill site that lies in the city of Berkeley. The following sections summarize objectives and policies from the LBNL 2006 LRDP and LBNL Design Guidelines, the City of Berkeley General Plan, and local ordinances that relate to visual quality.

2006 LRDP Principles and Strategies

The "Vision" section of the 2006 LRDP proposes four fundamental principles that form the basis for the LRDP's development strategies. The two principles most applicable to aesthetic aspects of new development are to "Preserve and enhance the environmental qualities of the site as a model of resource conservation and environmental stewardship" and to "Build a more campus-like research environment" (LRDP, Section 2 – "Vision").

Development strategies provided by the 2006 LRDP are intended to minimize potential environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the 2006 LRDP. Development strategies set forth in the 2006 LRDP that are applicable to aesthetics include the following:

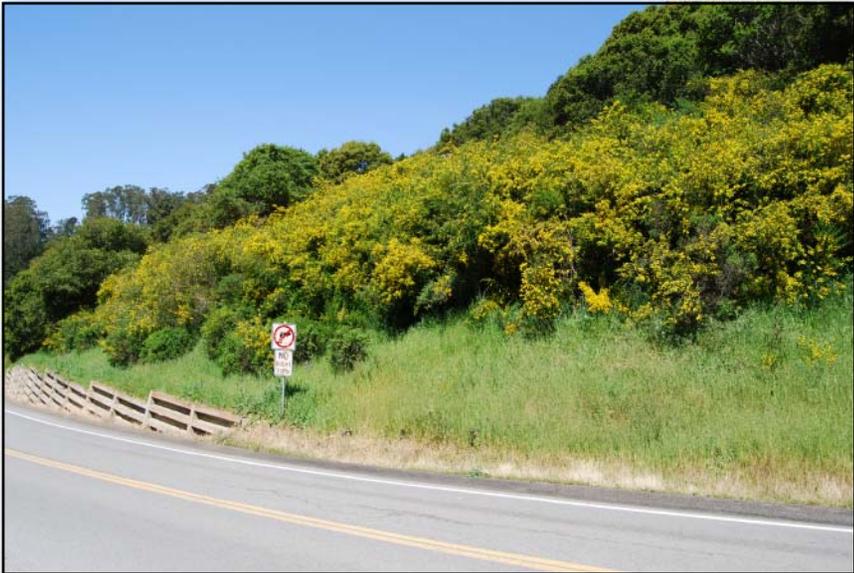
- Protect and enhance the site's natural and visual resources, including native habitats, streams and mature tree stands by focusing future development primarily within the already developed areas of the site.



Campus Drive Hiking Trail



Centennial Drive



Jordan Fire Trail



Panoramic Hills

SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. – May 2010

FIGURE 4.1-2

Public Views of Site and Surroundings

- Increase development densities within areas corresponding to existing cluster of development to preserve open space, enhance operational efficiencies and access.
- To the extent possible site new projects to replace existing outdated facilities and ensure the best use of limited land resources.
- To the extent possible site new projects adjacent to existing development where existing utility and access infrastructure may be utilized.
- Create a more “collegial” environment that encourages and facilitates interaction among the variety of Berkeley Laboratory employees and guests.
- Preserve and enhance the native rustic landscape and protect sensitive habitats.
- Improve the pedestrian spaces at the heart of the research clusters and adjacent to research facilities so as to support interaction among Laboratory users.
- Retain and improve walkways as appropriate throughout the open space portions of the site, carefully integrating these pathways to minimize intrusion in the natural environment.
- Improve wayfinding for visitors in particular through a comprehensive and coordinated signage system and through the naming of buildings and research clusters.
- Develop new campus-like outdoor spaces such as plazas within clusters of facilities and improve those that already exist.
- Maintain and enhance tree stands to reduce the visibility of Laboratory buildings from significant public areas in neighboring communities.
- Improve the overall appearance and experience of the Laboratory through improvements to the main entry gates, and the landscape areas associated with roadways, parking lots, and pedestrian pathways.

LBL Design Guidelines

The LBNL Design Guidelines were developed in parallel with the 2006 LRDP and provide specific guidelines for site planning, landscape and building design as a means to implement the 2006 LRDP’s development principles as each new project is developed. Specific design guidelines are organized by a set of design objectives that essentially correspond to the strategies provided in the 2006 LRDP.

The design guidelines would be applied to the proposed project. As part of the design review and approval process, the proposed project would be evaluated for adherence to the LRDP Land Use Map, the design guidelines, the Building Heights Map, and any other relevant plans and policies. Approvals would be subject to satisfactory compliance with these provisions. Design objectives that are contained within the design guidelines and applicable to the aesthetics analysis include the following:

- Provide screening landscape elements to visually screen large buildings

- Create landform elements consistent with design on the Hill
- Mass and site buildings to minimize their visibility
- Screen roofscapes
- Respect view corridors
- Integrate buildings into the overall landscape using appropriate materials
- Create a cohesive identity across the Laboratory as a whole by following established precedents for new landscape elements
- Provide appropriate site lighting for safety and security
- Create new commons spaces in clusters that currently lack them
- Allow sunlight to reach the commons spaces
- Create as high a density and critical mass around commons spaces as possible
- Create new keystone structures in clusters that currently lack them
- Utilize artifacts to create identity and add interest to each cluster
- Create consistency between buildings in individual clusters
- Develop research clusters in a way that is mindful of future expansion
- Design pathway layouts that support pedestrian flow and encourage casual interaction
- Construct new walkway structures such as stairs, bridges, slope retention for walkways and guardrails of materials compatible with the surrounding landscape
- Minimize visual and environmental impacts of new parking lots
- Site and design parking structures to integrate with the natural surroundings
- Organize service functions to minimize conflicts and visual impacts

City of Berkeley General Plan

The Urban Design and Preservation Element of the City of Berkeley General Plan contains few policies related specifically to visual quality. These policies include:

Policy UD-10: The University of California: The City of Berkeley strongly supports actions by the University to maintain and retrofit its historic buildings, and strongly opposes any University projects that would diminish the historic character of the campus or off-campus historic buildings. (see Land Use Policies LU-36 and LU-37)

Policy UD-31: Views: Construction should avoid blocking significant views, especially ones toward the Bay, the hills, and significant landmarks such as the Campanile, Golden Gate Bridge, and Alcatraz Island. Whenever possible, new buildings should enhance a vista or punctuate or clarify the urban pattern.

Policy UD-32: Shadow: New buildings should be designed to minimize impacts on solar access and minimize detrimental shadows.

4.1.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Significance Criteria

The impact of the proposed project on aesthetics would be considered significant if it would exceed the following Standards of Significance, in accordance with Appendix G of the *State CEQA Guidelines* and the UC CEQA Handbook:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway;
- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

Issues Not Discussed Further

The SERC project Initial Study found that implementation of the proposed project would have no impact on scenic resources within a State scenic highway, as there are no scenic routes located within the vicinity of the project site. This issue is not discussed further in this section.

Methodology

Field observation of the project site and its surroundings was conducted in April 2010 in order to observe existing visual conditions in the project vicinity, to photograph representative public views of the site, and to identify key viewing locations for purposes of preparing visual simulations. In addition to the field observations, the visual impact assessment is based on review of project materials including topographic maps, project drawings and technical data supplied by the UC LBNL project design team, aerial and ground level photographs of the project area, and a computer-generated visual simulation, which portray the project's appearance from a representative public viewing location. The evaluation of potential visual impacts associated with the SERC project is based, in part, on comparing the "before" and "after" visual conditions as portrayed in the simulation image and assessing the degree of visual change that the project would bring about.

A visual simulation is presented in this aesthetics analysis to illustrate "before" and "after" visual conditions in the project area. The simulation illustrates the location, scale and appearance of the proposed project as seen from the representative public viewpoint on Centennial Drive between the UC Botanical Garden and the Lawrence Hall of Science, approximately 0.25 mile from the project site (see **Figure 4.1-3, Visual Simulation - Centennial Drive**). This viewpoint was selected, as this is the only public viewpoint that provides the most direct view of the potential site changes and therefore was determined to be the most appropriate location from which to prepare a visual simulation. Computer modeling and rendering techniques were employed to produce the visual simulation image. The computer-generated visual simulation is the result of an objective analytical and computer-modeling process described briefly below.

The visual study employs photographs taken in April 2010, using a single lens reflex (SLR) digital camera with a 50mm lens equivalent, which represents a horizontal view angle of approximately 40 degrees. Existing topographic and site data supplied by UC LBNL provided the basis for developing an initial digital model. The three-dimensional computer model of the proposed building was combined with the digital site model to produce a computer model of the proposed project. For the simulation viewpoint, viewer location was digitized from topographic maps using 5 feet as the assumed eye level. Computer "wireframe" perspective plots were overlaid on photographs to verify scale and viewpoint location. A digital visual simulation image was then produced based on computer renderings of the 3-D model combined with the digital version of the selected site photograph.



Before



After

SOURCE: Impact Sciences, Inc. – May 2010

FIGURE 4.1-3

Visual Simulation – Centennial Drive



Project Characteristics

The proposed project includes development of a new three-story approximately 40,000-gross-square-foot research building. **Figures 3.0-4** and **3.0-5** present a plan and elevation drawing of the proposed SERC building. The proposed SERC building would have an aboveground footprint of approximately 150 by 50 feet. At its highest, the structure would be approximately 34 feet above the main entry level on the east side of the building and 50 feet above the service road and loading dock on the west side. The main entry is designed to be at the same elevation as the GPL entry so as to promote connectivity between the adjacent facilities. The project would include reconfiguration of 200 linear feet of the service road along the western edge of the project site and the removal of approximately 35 parking spaces on the site.

The exterior of the building would be compatible with the surrounding buildings and appropriate for the intended uses of the site. The exterior cladding is anticipated to include a mix of concrete, metal, glass, and wood. Exterior lighting features would include landscape lighting and building exterior lighting limited to exit doors and near outdoor equipment. Exterior lighting and lighting on the roof would have cut-off shielding to prevent light spill and light pollution per LEED requirements.

Mitigation Measures included in the Proposed Project

The following mitigation measures, adopted as part of the 2006 LRDP, are required by the 2006 LRDP for the proposed project and are thus included as part of the proposed project. The analysis presented below evaluates environmental impacts that would result from project implementation following the application of these mitigation measures.

LRDP EIR MM VIS-4a:

All new buildings on the LBNL hill site constructed pursuant to the 2006 LRDP shall incorporate design standards that ensure lighting would be designed to confine illumination to its specific site, in order to minimize light spillage to adjacent LBNL buildings and open space areas. Consistent with safety considerations, LBNL project buildings shall shield and orient light sources so that they are not directly visible from outside their immediate surroundings.

LRDP EIR MM VIS-4b: New exterior lighting fixtures shall be compatible with existing lighting fixtures and installations in the vicinity of the new building, and will have an individual photocell. In general, and consistent with safety considerations, exterior lighting at building entrances, along walkways and streets, and at parking lots shall maintain an illumination level of not more than 20 Lux (approximately 2-foot candles).

LRDP EIR MM VIS-4c: All new buildings on the LBNL hill site constructed pursuant to the 2006 LRDP shall incorporate design standards that preclude or limit the use of reflective exterior wall materials or reflective glass, or the use of white surfaces for roofs, roads, and parking lots, except in specific instances when required for energy conservation.

Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

SERC Impact VIS-1: **Construction activities associated with the project would create temporary aesthetic nuisances for adjacent land uses. (*Less than Significant*)**

Construction activities associated with the project would include earth moving, building construction, paving, and landscape installation. The proposed project would involve use of heavy equipment and grading and construction on a previously disturbed site. Project construction would be visible from limited locations along public roadways such as Centennial Drive and from the backyards of a few homes in the North Berkeley Hills neighborhood. Although it is conceivable that taller equipment could be partially visible from off-site viewpoints, its use would be temporary and not clearly or distinctly visible. This effect would be temporary and is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure: No project-level mitigation measure is required.

SERC Impact VIS-2:

The proposed project would alter views of the LBNL hill site, but it would not result in a substantial adverse effect to a scenic vista or substantially damage scenic resources. (*Less than Significant*)

Scenic Vistas

For purposes of this study, a scenic vista is considered an open and expansive public view encompassing valued landscape features such as ridgeline, open bay waters, distinctive urban skyline or major landmarks. While there are no officially designated scenic vistas in the 2006 LBNL LRDP, the area where the project occurs could be considered a scenic vista from off-site locations due to its proximity to the Advanced Light Source. The 2006 LRDP Height Zone Map designates the project area as a Special Viewshed Zone, which means that building heights shall not extend into the viewing plane of the Advanced Light Source dome when viewed from the intersection of University Avenue and Milvia Street in downtown Berkeley. The Advanced Light Source dome is 88 feet in height and would block views of the SERC building, which would be no more than 50 feet in height, from the downtown Berkeley viewpoint. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse effect to a scenic vista.

Other Public Views

The project would introduce a new building on a site which includes numerous existing buildings and other facilities. To varying degrees, the changes would be visible to the public from limited areas in the vicinity. **Figure 4.1-3** shows a “before” and “after” view of the project site looking northwest from Centennial Drive midway between the UC Botanical Garden and the Lawrence Hall of Science. From this location, the view includes vegetation in the foreground, a portion of Glaser Road, a grassy hillside in the center below the electrical substation, with the existing health center (Building 26) just below the SERC project site in the background. This visual simulation illustrates a medium range view from a somewhat lower elevation approximately 0.25 mile from the project site. Portions of the new building would appear just above the health center building. Two cooling towers would be visible above the roofline of the proposed SERC building. The cooling towers are shown extending approximately 5 feet above the roofline. As shown in the simulation, the SERC facility would appear within the context of existing facilities currently seen from this location including the health center and Buildings 25 and 25B. As demonstrated by the visual simulation and described above, although it would be visible, the SERC project would not have a substantial effect on existing views experienced by the public from Centennial Drive.

As seen in **Figure 4.1-2**, the project site would not be visible from other public viewpoints that show portions of the LBNL hill site because it would be screened by intervening vegetation, topography, and existing structures. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on scenic vistas or other scenic resources.

Mitigation Measure: No project-level mitigation measure is required.

SERC Impact VIS-3: **The proposed project would alter the existing visual character of the LBNL hill site but would not substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of the site and its surroundings. (*Less than Significant*)**

The existing visual character of the project site is characterized by the aged and utilitarian structures with little or no aesthetic detail. The project would introduce a new research building and a reconfigured parking area and access road at the current location of Buildings 25A, 44, 44A, and 44B in the “Old Town” area in the center of the LBNL hill site. The SERC building would have a modern design that viewers would likely consider to be an improvement over the existing buildings. The exterior of the SERC building would display characteristics similar to the proposed GPL adjacent to the project site. The main entrances to both buildings would be located at the same elevation and the buildings would be served by a shared courtyard. Project design and implementation would be in keeping with the guidelines of the 2006 LRDP and in this respect, the project would contribute a more coherent appearance to the project area through the use of materials similar to the proposed GPL.

The new building would be constructed on a previously developed, disturbed portion of the LBNL hill site. The proposed project would result in a noticeable visual effect on the site’s existing visual character; however, the changes would not be considered an adverse effect compared to the existing condition. Therefore, the project would not substantially degrade the overall visual character of the LBNL hill site and this impact is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure: No project-level mitigation measure is required.

SERC Impact VIS-4: **The proposed project would create a new source of substantial light or glare that would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. (*Less than Significant*)**

The project would create new sources of light and glare within an already developed area. Sources of new light and glare could include expansive windows, metal and steel materials, and parking areas. During the day, sunlight could reflect off of the windows and the metal and steel materials of the

buildings, and the cars using the surface parking area, and could thereby create additional glare. During the nighttime, the project site would be lit for nighttime operations and security reasons. These new sources could potentially affect day and nighttime views and could conflict with local lighting regulations and policies, resulting in a potentially significant impact. However, **LRDP EIR Mitigation Measures VIS-4a** and **VIS-4b** are included in the proposed project, which would ensure the project's potential lighting impacts are reduced to a less than significant level. The proposed project also includes **LRDP EIR Mitigation Measure VIS-4c**, which requires all new buildings on the LBNL hill site constructed pursuant to the 2006 LRDP to incorporate design standards that preclude or limit the use of reflective exterior wall materials or reflective glass, or the use of white surfaces for roofs, roads, and parking lots, except in specific instances when required for energy conservation. With implementation of **LRDP EIR Mitigation Measures VIS-4a** through **VIS-4c** as part of the proposed project, project impacts related to light and glare would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure: No project-level mitigation measure is required.

4.1.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As stated in **subsection 4.0.4**, the 2006 LRDP EIR included the evaluation of the environmental impacts from the construction of a large building at the proposed site of the SERC project, in conjunction with the rest of the projected growth at the LBNL hill site, growth at UC Berkeley, and in the cities of Berkeley and Oakland. That cumulative impact analysis (LRDP Impact VIS-5) is presented on pages IV.A-29 to IV.A-31 of the 2006 LRDP EIR. The analysis concluded that development under the 2006 LRDP would not result in significant visual or light and glare impacts because little other development is expected that could result in overlapping visual impacts.

Because the SERC project and GPL combined (40,000 gsf and 43,000 gsf respectively) are much smaller than the accelerator facility (Building S-7) evaluated in LRDP Impacts VIS-2 and VIS-3, the cumulative analysis of the visual impact of Lab development through 2025 presented in the 2006 LRDP EIR adequately addresses the long-term cumulative impact of the proposed project. Further evaluation of the long-term cumulative effect is not required. The project's construction-phase cumulative impact is described below.

Cumulative Impact VIS-1: **Construction of multiple projects at the LBNL hill site during the 2010 to 2013 window would not create a significant cumulative aesthetic nuisance. (*Less than Significant*)**

Construction can result in temporary nuisance degradation of site aesthetics due to landscaping removal, grading, equipment parking, and materials laydown. The potential for aesthetic impacts to combine or

cumulate depends on whether two or more sites are located within the same viewshed and are therefore visible to (experienced by) the same viewer populations. The UC Berkeley campus and LBNL hill site are located in different viewsheds, and while some mobile viewer groups may conceivably be exposed to aesthetic changes at both locations; those most sensitive to visual changes (neighboring residents, along with UC faculty, staff, and students) are unlikely to have significant exposure to both sites. Consequently, the short-term aesthetic impacts of constructing projects at the UC Berkeley campus are not considered to cumulate with short-term aesthetic impacts of construction at the LBNL hill site. This analysis accordingly focuses on the cumulative impact of overlapping construction projects at the LBNL hill site and specifically on overlap between construction of projects planned for the area immediately surrounding and within the same viewshed as the SERC project site.

Four projects are considered reasonably foreseeable in this vicinity: User Support Building construction (in progress, with completion slated for late 2010), General Purpose Lab construction (planned for mid-2011 through 2013), Old Town demolition (planned for late 2010 through mid-2014), and SERC project construction (planned for mid-2011 through mid-2013). Overlap would be only partial between these four projects: construction of the User Support Building would be largely complete before the other three projects begin. In addition, work on Old Town demolition would occur in phases based on the availability of funding, so this project is not expected to involve a widespread demolition effort at any one time. As discussed previously in project-specific **SERC Impact VIS-1**, the SERC site would be visible to external viewers only from limited locations along public roadways such as Centennial Drive and from the backyards of a few homes in the North Berkeley Hills neighborhood. The same would be true of the other three project sites. Moreover, construction-related visual changes would be temporary. In consideration of these factors, although the four projects would overlap at least in part, the cumulative visual impact is considered less than significant.

Mitigation Measure: No mitigation measure is required.

4.1.6 REFERENCES

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. 2007. 2006 Long Range Development Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, SCH No. 2000102046, July.