

**SECTION 3.1**  
**AESTHETICS AND VISUAL QUALITY**

## **3.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL QUALITY**

### **3.1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section analyzes the potential impacts of the proposed project on aesthetics and visual quality. The Visual Analysis Technical Report prepared by Dudek and Associates in May 2007, which is located in **Appendix B** of this EIR, served as the basis for this section.

### **3.1.2 METHODOLOGY**

The methods used to analyze visual changes associated with the proposed project consisted of: (i) a detailed field and photographic inventory of the campus areas that would be affected by the proposed project; (ii) documentation of proposed project components using existing available land use and topographic data; (iii) a review of conceptual plans for the proposed project components; and (iv) an analysis of the proposed project's consistency with aesthetics considerations in the existing SDSU Physical Master Plan.

The field and photographic inventory focused on the existing visual character of the affected portions of the campus, the presence or absence of sensitive receptors, and existing lighting conditions in the project area. The inventory also considered two factors important in characterizing the visual resources of an area: (1) the existence of scenic features (both natural and man-made); and (2) the value of the view to those who experience it. Sensitive views are generally defined as those views of scenic features from vantage points such as roadways, public lookouts, or trails. Sensitive views are also characterized as backyard vistas from private residences. Changes in views may be analyzed in the context of the distance of the view (foreground, mid-ground, distance view, or panorama), the duration of the view, and/or the level of obstruction created by a particular project feature. Visual changes may be softened or screened by a variety of design features, such as landscaping, barriers, or architectural treatments.

Various techniques were used to analyze anticipated visual changes associated with the proposed project. These included the use of aerial and site photographs to map existing viewsheds, and the preparation of visual simulations to provide the reader with anticipated visual changes from sensitive viewpoints. Visual simulations were developed by creating digital models with 3D Studio Max, AutoCAD 14, and Photoshop programs.

### **3.1.3 SETTING**

#### **3.1.3.1 Regional Setting**

The project site is located in the southwestern portion of San Diego County. The landscape typical of this area includes a network of large canyon drainages feeding into lower coastal river systems. Canyons in the area include Alvarado Canyon, Mission Gorge, Murray Canyon, Murphy Canyon, Talmadge Canyon, and several unnamed canyons. These canyon tributaries are part of the San Diego River system.

A majority of urban development within the San Diego River system is located atop level mesas. Established communities on surrounding mesa tops include the College Area, Talmadge, La Mesa, and Rolondo on the south side of Interstate 8 and Del Cerro, Grantville, Navajo, and Allied Gardens north of Interstate 8. Development has also taken place within the San Diego River Valley. Established communities include Mission Valley and the Mission Gorge area.

#### **3.1.3.2 Local Setting**

SDSU is located in the City of San Diego's College Area Community, which ranges from 340 to 453 feet above average mean sea level (AMSL). The western portion of campus is situated approximately 430 feet AMSL, whereas the eastern portion ranges from 457 feet AMSL at the southeast end to 340 feet AMSL at the northeast end. The developed portions of the campus are generally located on the flatter, mesa top areas. Adjacent canyon areas mostly remain in a vacant, undisturbed condition.

The northern portion of SDSU, at which the proposed Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing project component would be located, lies within the Navajo community. The Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing parcel ranges from approximately 130 to 360 feet AMSL, and is located in a canyon created by Alvarado Creek. The developed portions of the Navajo community are generally on the mesa tops; however, some development is located in canyon areas near Interstate 8 and in the Mission Gorge area.

The areas immediately surrounding SDSU include a mixture of residential, commercial, and institutional uses. A residential sector of the College Area community is located to the west of campus, and contains a mixture of single and multi-family residential units. To the south of campus, along Montezuma Road, there is a mixture of single- and multi-family residential units intermixed with fraternities and sororities and commercial establishments (e.g., restaurants, gas

stations, and student-service oriented businesses). Faith Presbyterian School and Hardy Elementary School are located adjacent to Montezuma Road, south of campus. The community east of campus primarily includes single-family residential units. The Alvarado Medical Center is located east of the northeast boundary of campus. Interstate 8 is the primary feature located to the north of campus.

To the north, the communities of Del Cerro, Navajo, Allied Gardens, and Grantville are located across Interstate 8. College Avenue, a major arterial roadway connecting the Navajo and College Area Communities, makes up the far eastern edge of the Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing parcel. Single-family residential uses are located immediately north and east of this parcel. The Smoke Tree Condominium Complex abuts this parcel to the west. Vacant land in the Adobe Falls Canyon area is owned by the California Department of Transportation ("Caltrans"), the City of San Diego, and private interests. Visual access to SDSU is provided from portions of all surrounding areas described above.

Due to its central location within the College Area community, SDSU is influenced by a number of local transportation routes. College Avenue, Montezuma Road, East Campus Drive, Remington Road, 55th Street, Campanile Drive, Lindo Paseo Drive, Hardy Avenue, and Interstate 8 all provide access to the campus. Views of the campus are present from stretches of each of these roadways. Adobe Falls Road and Mill Peak Road also afford views of both the main campus and the proposed Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing site.

### **3.1.3.3 Visual Character**

In general, the existing visual environment of the area immediately surrounding the campus is that of an urbanized area. The visual character can be described as vacant canyon slopes with development located on the canyon floors as well as the mesa tops above. The canyon slope areas are characterized by low-lying shrub vegetation, including southern mixed chaparral and coastal sage scrub. The areas abutting SDSU-owned property have been built out to include single- and multi-family residential units, institutional, and commercial uses.

## **3.1.4 EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **3.1.4.1 Existing Master Plans**

The assessment of visual impacts considers the effect of the proposed project on planned land uses surrounding potential areas of impact. Two Master Plan documents, one developed by SDSU and the other a component of the City of San Diego's community plan system, document

anticipated future uses of the campus and surrounding communities. Each of these plans is described below.

The existing SDSU Campus Master Plan delineates the existence of current land uses within campus boundaries. Existing land uses, in combination with alterations proposed by the Aztec Walk Master Plan and Campus Master Plan 2000, make up SDSU's template for future development. SDSU's Physical Master Plan, Phase I, outlines design elements to which future campus development should conform. Guidelines for campus entries, campus edges, campus landmarks, campus nodes, campus views, architectural elements, site form, campus neighborhoods, building character, landscape architecture, informal spaces, formal urban spaces, way-finding systems, memorials, public art, circulation elements, and transit facilities are included in this planning document. Guidelines applicable to visual quality in the SDSU campus and surrounding campus are particularly relevant to this analysis.

The College Area and Navajo Community Plans are the City of San Diego's blueprints for future development or redevelopment within these areas. Within the College Area and based on the College Area Community Plan, land uses located along the northwestern portion of campus at the *cul-de-sac* of 55th Street are planned as low-density residential. Existing land uses within this area of the City consist of multi-family residential complexes. Undeveloped areas along the northwestern boundary of campus are planned to remain as open space due to the canyon topography. Existing land uses within the College Area are consistent with this Community Plan designation, as are residential areas abutting the western edge of campus consistent with the Community Plan designation of single-family residential. An institutional designation has been included in the Community Plan south of the western recreational field area, as the existing land use consists of Hardy Elementary School. Very high-density residential land uses are designated along the north side of Hardy Avenue, and existing land uses are consistent with this designation. Commercial land uses are located southeast of the Hardy Avenue/College Avenue intersection, which is also consistent with the City's Community Plan designation. Low-density residential land use abuts the college along the southwestern border. The entire eastern edge of campus is abutted by single-family residential units, which conform to the College Area Community Plan designation. Alvarado Hospital and associated facilities are located immediately east of Alvarado Court; these land uses are consistent with the institutional designation documented in the Community Plan.

The proposed Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing site abuts single-family residential land uses to the north. These land uses are in conformance with the Navajo Community Plan. A portion of the northern boundary of the site also abuts land owned by the City of San Diego. This land consists of Alvarado Creek and is planned to remain undeveloped consistent with the Community Plan designation. The eastern edge of the parcel abuts College Avenue, which is planned to remain a major arterial within the eastern San Diego area. The southern portion of the parcel is abutted by Interstate 8 and undeveloped land associated with the Interstate 8 right-of-way. Undeveloped right-of-way land would remain as such, unless Caltrans were to widen the freeway or make other freeway-oriented improvements. The western boundary of the parcel is abutted by the Smoke Tree Condominium complex, which is consistent with the multi-family residential designation in the Navajo Community Plan.

#### **3.1.4.2 Existing Visual Character**

The existing visual character of each project component is described below, and **Figures 3.1-1 through 3.1-7** depict existing campus settings.

##### **3.1.4.2.1 Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing**

**Existing Visual Character.** The Adobe Falls site is primarily an undeveloped, vacant site vegetated with native and exotic vegetation communities, including coastal sage scrub/chaparral and palm trees. Some utilities are present and modifications to the flow channel and site drainage have been made over time. The site includes a north-facing slope descending to the Alvarado Creek floodplain from Interstate 8, a small canyon surrounding Alvarado Creek as it flows through the site, and a south-facing slope immediately north of Interstate 8. The site contains both upland and wetland vegetation. Disturbed portions of the site contain non-native annual grassland or bare soil. Approximately 4 acres of the site were burned in October 2003. These areas are being re-vegetated with native and non-native plants. Wetlands on the site include Alvarado Creek and its associated riparian areas, a small marsh located adjacent to Alvarado Creek, and several small drainages that convey runoff from Interstate 8 and Mill Peak Road into Alvarado Creek. The stream channel and riparian habitat



BASE MAP SOURCE: AirPhoto USA, Jan 2006



-  Photo Location/Direction
-  SDSU Campus Boundary
-  Area of Focus



Photo 1: Adobe Falls Site from east

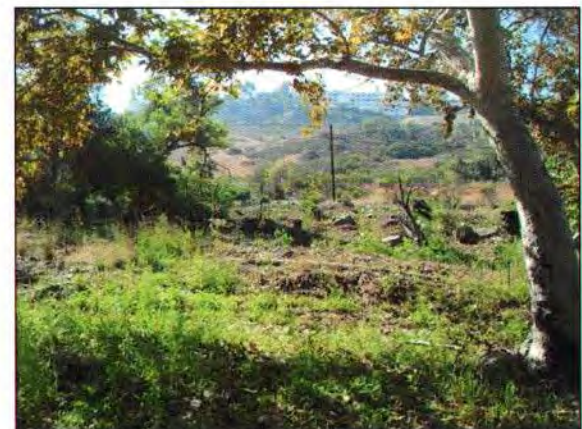


Photo 2: Adobe Falls Site from north





MAP SOURCE: AirPhoto USA, Jan 2006



Photo Location/Direction



0 450  
Feet

SDSU Campus Boundary

Area of Focus



Photo 1: Alvarado Medical Center from west



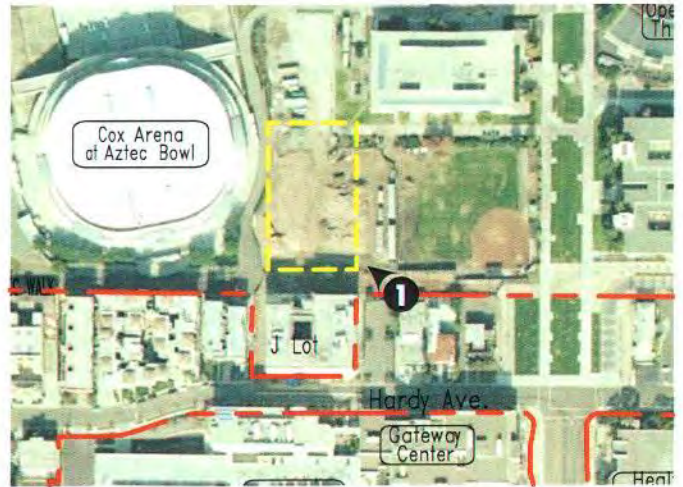
Photo 2: Alvarado Medical Center from east



Photo 3: D Lot from west



### Campus Conference Center



MAP SOURCE: AirPhoto USA, Jan 2006

--- SDSU Campus Boundary

--- Area of Focus



0 350

Feet



Photo Location/Direction



Photo 1: Campus Conference Center Site from southeast

### Student Union Expansion



MAP SOURCE: AirPhoto USA, Jan 2006

--- SDSU Campus Boundary

--- Area of Focus



0 350

Feet



Photo Location/Direction



Photo 2: Student Union Expansion Site from southwest





MAP SOURCE: AirPhoto USA, Jan 2006



0 450  
Feet



Photo Location/Direction



SDSU Campus Boundary



Area of Focus



Photo 3: Student Housing Lawn Area north of Lot H from southeast

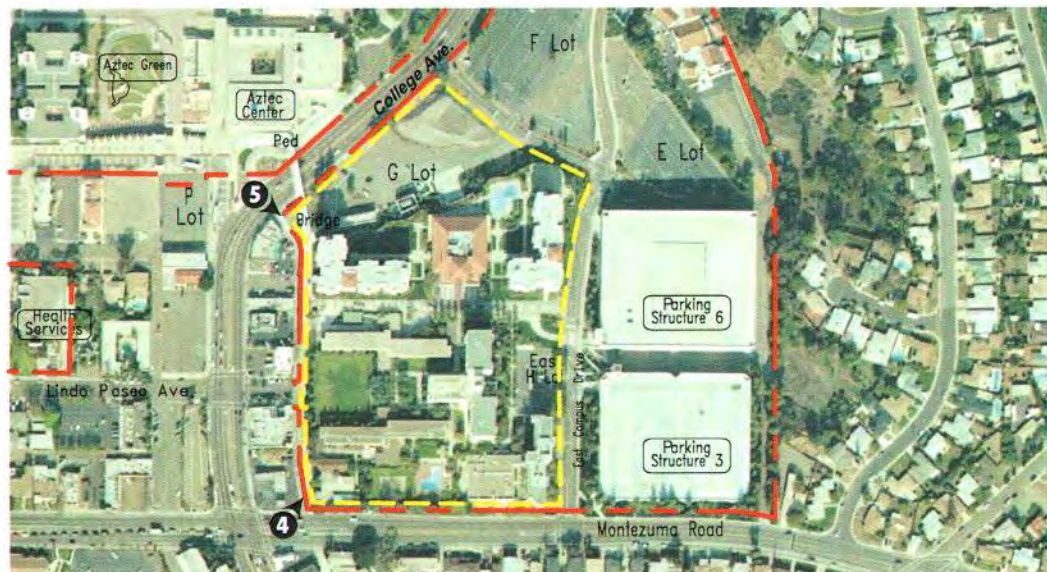


Photo 1: Student Housing G Lot from east



Photo 2: Student Housing G Lot from west





MAP SOURCE: AirPhoto USA, Jan 2006



0 450  
Feet

-  Photo Location/Direction
-  SDSU Campus Boundary
-  Area of Focus



Photo 4: Student Housing Phase II from southwest



Photo 5: Student Housing Phase II from northwest



### U Lot Residence Hall



MAP SOURCE: Airphoto USA, Jan 2006

--- SDSU Campus Boundary

--- Area of Focus



0 450

Feet



Photo Location/Direction



Photo 1: U Lot Residence Hall Site looking west

### Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion



MAP SOURCE: Airphoto USA, Jan 2006

--- SDSU Campus Boundary

--- Area of Focus



0 600

Feet



Photo Location/Direction



Photo 1: Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion Site looking southwest





MAP SOURCE: AirPhoto USA, Jan 2006

-  Photo Location/Direction
-  SDSU Campus Boundary
-  Area of Focus



Photo 1: Alvarado Hotel Site from south



Photo 2: Alvarado Hotel Site from west

along Alvarado Creek is being restored on the City's parcel to the north. (See **Figure 3.1-1, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing.**)

**Sensitive Receptor Summary.** This project component would be visible to Adobe Falls Road, Capri Drive, Mill Peak Drive, Adobe Falls Court, Genoa Drive and Del Cerro Boulevard residents. The residents would have both mid-ground and distant views of the Adobe Falls development. The project would also be visible from residences within the Smoke Tree condominium community. Travelers on Genoa Drive, Del Cerro Boulevard, Capri Drive, College Avenue, internal Smoke Tree roadways, and Interstate 8 all have mid-ground-to-distant views of the project site; however, due to travel speeds and maneuvering of curves/residential street hazards, drivers are not likely to experience views of long duration. Travelers on Adobe Falls Road, especially those in the lower *cul-de-sac*, would have prominent views of the project beginning with the foreground view of the access roadway followed by the mid-ground view of the townhomes and condominiums.

#### **3.1.4.2.2 Alvarado Campus**

**Existing Visual Character.** The western portion of this project component area consists of Lot D, a campus parking area with a capacity of 432 vehicles. The existing Rehabilitation Center is located at the eastern edge of the parking area. Alvarado Creek forms the western edge of Lot D. A pedestrian bridge spanning Alvarado Creek links Lots C and D to the west. The visual character of this area can be described as a developed campus use bordered by a mature riparian stream system. Vegetation along Alvarado Road and Alvarado Court consists of low-lying ornamental shrubs intermixed with mature trees. Alvarado Creek is a mature riparian system dominated by willows, sycamores, and other low-lying wetland vegetation.

The Alvarado Medical Center area is located east of Lot D and consists of approximately 360,000 gross square feet ("GSF") of existing medical and research facility space. The buildings are surrounded by surface parking spaces. Landscaped areas consist of parking lot islands, edge treatments, and building entryways. This area is included in a specific redevelopment zone as outlined in the College Area Redevelopment Plan. The primary objective of this plan is to eliminate blighted conditions and rehabilitate, renovate, and redevelop underutilized areas. The area's inclusion in the redevelopment plan gives evidence to the existing run-down nature of the medical complex. (See **Figure 3.1-2, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Alvarado Campus.**)

***Sensitive Receptor Summary.*** This project component site is visible from both east- and west-bound lanes of Alvarado Road and north- and south-bound lanes of Alvarado Court. Alvarado Road travelers also have mid-ground views of the Rehabilitation Center along the south side of Lot D, although it is in the distance and less prevalent than the parking area. The pedestrian bridge linking Lots C and D provides campus users with expansive foreground views of Lot D. Residents of West Falls View Drive, which overlooks the area, have mid-ground views of the project area from their backyards located along the mesa top above the parking/Rehabilitation Center area. The existing parking area is difficult to see from residences along the north side of Interstate 8 as the freeway, combined with mature vegetation along the north edge of the parking area, shield the component site from view. Trolley riders also have views of the Alvarado Campus development.

#### **3.1.4.2.3 Student Union**

***Existing Visual Character.*** The proposed Student Union Expansion entails renovation of the west side of the existing Aztec Center. The Aztec Center is located northeast of the recently opened bus plaza, which is located directly above the underground trolley station facilities. The Aztec Center is bound by the Student Services Building to the north, the underground trolley station entrance to the west, College Avenue to the east, and Aztec Walk to the south. The west side of the Aztec Center consists of a market/student store with ATM machine, an outdoor seating area and patio, and a canopied walkway. (See **Figure 3.1-3, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Campus Conference Center and Student Union Expansion.**)

***Sensitive Receptor Summary.*** Mid-ground views of the proposed Campus Conference Center building would be partially visible from the elevated walkway areas extending over College Avenue to the East Campus Residence Hall, and from northbound traffic on College Avenue. Views of this project component would be short in duration to vehicles traveling on College Avenue. Mid-ground views of the site area are apparent looking northward from the eastern terminus of Hardy Avenue. The west side of the Aztec Center is also visible by users of the Adams Humanities Building and Centennial Hall.

#### **3.1.4.2.4 Campus Conference Center**

***Existing Visual Character.*** The Campus Conference Center site would be located immediately east of the Cox Arena, and bound by softball fields to the east, the Calpulli Center to the south, the music building to the northeast, and a construction site for the planned Performing Arts Complex to the north. This site is currently an open lawn area previously used for tennis

courts. This site is slightly elevated relative to the Cox Arena. (See **Figure 3.1-3, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Campus Conference Center and Student Union Expansion.**)

**Sensitive Receptor Summary.** Mid-ground views of the Campus Conference Center would be partially visible from the elevated walkway areas extending over Aztec Circle Drive north of Lot L and Cox Arena. Foreground and mid-ground views would be prevalent walking east or west toward the project site along Aztec Walk. However, because property west of the site is at a lower elevation, only the upper portion of the proposed facility would be visible walking east on Aztec Walk. The site would also be visible from the Exercise and Nutritional Sciences Building, and the Music Building located north of the project site, from the Calpulli Center south of the project site, and by users of the softball fields/lawn area to the east. The campus housing facilities located east of 55th Street, west of Campanile Drive, north of Hardy Avenue, and south of Aztec Walk have windows facing north and, therefore, have project site visibility.

#### **3.1.4.2.5 Student Housing**

**Existing Visual Character.** The Student Housing component of the project is proposed for development on existing Lot G, the existing Olmeca/Maya Residence Halls site, the existing Housing Administration/Residential Education Offices, and the lawn area north of Lots C, H, and U.

Lot G is located to the north of Cuicacalli Residence Hall and primarily serves as an ingress/egress route for Cuicacalli Residence Hall food deliveries. The parking lot slopes in a slight downward direction to the north. (See **Figure 3.1-4, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Student Housing Phase I.**)

The existing Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls are located within the eastern campus residential community. These halls are surrounded by Tepeyac Hall, Cuicacalli Hall, and Tacuba Hall to the north; Zura Hall to the east; and the Housing Administration/Residential Education Offices and Montezuma Road to the south. The Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls are 3-story structures, smaller than the Tepeyac, Tacuba, and Zura Halls, which range from 6 to 7 stories in height. A landscaped fenced courtyard area runs the length of and between Olmeca and Maya Halls. Bicycle parking is available on the northeast side of Olmeca Hall, and an associated recycling center building is located on the northwest side of Olmeca Hall. To the west of Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls and the Housing Administration/Residential Education Offices are a fire lane and a strip of fast food and convenient shops. Large trees line



the southern side of the Housing Administration/Residential Education Offices. A gas station is located on the corner of College Avenue and Montezuma Road. (See **Figure 3.1-5, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Student Housing Phase II.**)

The lawn area north of Lot H is on the east side of Zura Hall and west of Parking Structures 3 and 6. A pedestrian walkway divides the grass area and extends northwest from East Campus Drive, leading through the East Residential Hall corridor. This project area contains a covered parking validation meter, lighting and landscaping features, and an emergency vehicle turnout lane with barricades. (See **Figure 3.1-4, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Student Housing Phase I.**)

Lot U is located on the southwest side of campus and currently consists of a parking lot to service residences and users of the west side of campus. Lot U is slightly lower in elevation relative to Remington Road. Smith Field is located south of Lot U and Remington Road. North of the project site is an undeveloped vegetated canyon area sloping downward toward the north. The "College View" apartment complex is located northeast of the project site, and single-family homes are located northwest of the project site. West of Lot U is the 11-story Chulalac Hall and associated residential structures. (See **Figure 3.1-6, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Lot U Residence Hall and Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion.**)

Lot C is located on the northeastern end of campus and is the lot proposed for the Alvarado Hotel as well as the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion. The Student Housing component would be located on the strip of parking lot located south of the trolley tracks. The eastern side of the lot is relatively flat, and the western end slopes downward to the west underneath the trolley tracks. To the east is the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall. Elevated residences are located atop a mesa south of the project site. A steep vegetated slope including both larger trees and smaller shrubs extends down and north from these residences toward the project site. (See **Figure 3.1-6, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Lot U Residence Hall and Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion.**)

**Sensitive Receptor Summary.** The Student Housing Lot G site is located within the mid-ground views of campus pedestrians on the main campus and within foreground views of those walking across the pedestrian bridge immediately west of Lot G. The site is visible from College Avenue, although motorists' views are brief due to traffic speed. The site is also visible

from East Campus Drive, Zura Way, Lots E and F, and any pedestrians within this area. This parking lot is also visible from West Falls View and Adobe Drive residences.

Foreground views of the Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls and Housing Administration/Residential Education Offices building are visible by campus pedestrians, users of the fire lane, and pedestrians on College Avenue looking east in between building structures on College Avenue. Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls form the eastern terminus and are the primary focal point to motorists on Lindo Paseo Avenue looking eastward. Foreground and mid-ground views of the Housing Administration/Residential Education Office are discernable from eastbound and westbound motorists on Montezuma Road and at the intersection of Montezuma Road and College Avenue.

Foreground views of Lot U are visible by both pedestrians and motorists traveling in either direction on Remington Road for a short duration of time. As already stated, Lot U is lower in elevation than the property south of the site. Foreground views of Lot U are visible by residents of Cholula Hall. Off-site residential receptors with visibility of Lot U include residents of the college apartments to the northeast with mid-ground views, single-family residences to the northwest of the project site with mid-ground to distant views from their backyards, and residences north of Interstate 8 located south of Adobe Falls Road on the canyon top with distant views.

Visibility of the portion of Lot C south of the trolley is obstructed from every direction. Eastbound and westbound motorists on Alvarado Road have mid-ground views of Lot C for a short duration of time before both vegetation along Alvarado Road and the trolley tracks obstruct the view. Because of the discrepancy in elevation and existing vegetation, visibility of Lot C is limited from the edge of the backyards of residences along the *cul-de-sac* of West Falls View Drive. The most prominent views of Lot C south of the trolley are the distant views experienced by motorists traveling north and south on College Avenue, north of Interstate 8, for a short duration of time. Residents and users of the existing Villa Alvarado Residence Hall facing west would have foreground views of the project site.

#### **3.1.4.2.6 Alvarado Hotel**

**Existing Visual Character.** The Alvarado Hotel is planned for location on approximately 2 acres of Lot C immediately north of Villa Alvarado Residence Hall. The project would be bordered on the north and east by Alvarado Creek and existing parking lot uses on the west. The project

site is located in the Alvarado Creek Canyon area, which is at a lower elevation than the main SDSU campus. The site is surrounded by mature eucalyptus trees on the south side and a mixture of native and non-native palms associated with the Alvarado Creek wetland areas along the north and east. Due to its location along the campus periphery, this area of campus is quiet and away from the activity characteristic of the main, mesa-top campus. (See **Figure 3.1-7, Existing Conditions Site Photographs - Alvarado Hotel.**)

**Sensitive Receptor Summary.** The Alvarado Hotel would be visible from Lot D and the western portion of Lot C. Eastbound Alvarado Road motorists would have limited views of the hotel, while westbound motorists might have slightly longer views of the structure. Residents of the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall would have foreground views of this structure. Residents with north-facing backyards along East Falls View Drive have limited mid-ground views of the portion of Lot C proposed for the hotel; and a larger structure on the existing parking lot would afford these neighbors a similar view. Similar to Alvarado Campus, trolley riders would have views of this facility as the trolley line is located immediately north of the proposed building footprint.

#### **3.1.4.3 Existing Campus Vantage Points**

**Figure 3.1-8, Campus Project Component Vantage Points** illustrates the vantage points encompassing surrounding areas that have foreground, mid-ground, or distant views of SDSU. A written description of each vantage point depicted in **Figure 3.1-8** is provided in **Appendix B** of this EIR. As shown on **Figure 3.1-8**, views of SDSU are typically limited to roadways (and motorists or pedestrians on roadways), walkways, and surrounding residential land uses atop mesas. Residences located adjacent to the east and west boundaries of campus, as well as residences in Del Cerro and visitors to Adobe Falls, also have significant views of the campus.





BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



**Figures 3.1-9 thru 3.1-17** provide a visual representation of existing viewsheds specific to each of the six proposed project components. Only vantage points from Interstate-8, College Avenue, Montezuma Road, pedestrian thoroughfares, East Campus Drive, Alvarado Road, Hewlett Drive, the East Falls View Drive neighborhood, and the Del Cerro neighborhood would be affected by the proposed project. Therefore, the remainder of this analysis focuses on these vantage points.

### **3.1.4.4 Existing Lighting Characteristics**

#### **3.1.4.4.1 Regional and Local Setting**

Due to the project's location within an urbanized area of SDSU and the College Area community, urban skyglow is characteristic of the site. SDSU structures and facilities that supply light to the local skyglow effect include Tony Gwynn Stadium/Smith Field, the East and West Residence Hall complexes, Cox Arena, Peterson Gymnasium, Aztec Recreation Center, and surrounding parking and pedestrian areas. These facilities contribute to the existing skyglow of the area due to security or incandescent light fixtures. The amount of light present within the project area varies slightly depending on the level of use and activity within each facility.

#### **3.1.4.4.2 SDSU Lighting Policy**

SDSU has adopted a lighting policy that is to be incorporated into exterior campus design considerations. The primary goal of SDSU's lighting policy is to achieve safety and security on all walkways and parking areas. At the same time, the lighting systems should strengthen the public's impression of the SDSU campus by accentuating unique architectural qualities and enhancing pedestrian activities. The full text of this lighting policy is included in **Appendix B** of this EIR.

Exterior lighting design for walkways, parking lots, and streets on campus will comply with standards published by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America ("IES"). For example, IES publishes specific values for recommended light levels expressed in foot candles ("FC") and average-to-minimum uniformity ratios. These standards are applied to four distinct classes of walkways/sidewalks to meet IES requisites for pedestrian identification or special pedestrian security. SDSU also applies IES standards for parking lots based on the classification of the university as an educational facility with a medium activity level, due to the large number of vehicles present at night.



## LEGEND

- Project Component Vantage Point
- Campus Vantage Point
- Campus/Project Component Vantage Point
- Project Component Vantage Point Photo Number
- Existing SDSU Campus Boundary
- Future SDSU Campus Boundary
- Area of Focus

BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



0 450  
Feet



Photo 10: Adobe Falls Lower Village looking east

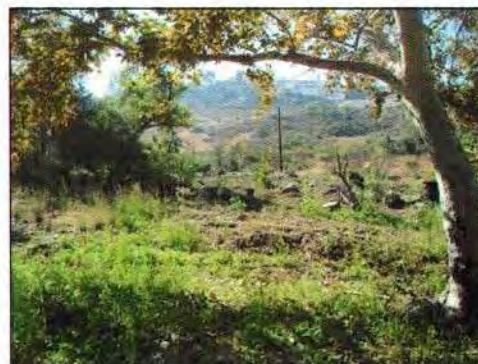


Photo 1: Adobe Falls Lower Village looking south



Photo 2: Adobe Falls Upper Village (foreground)  
Lower Village (middleground) looking west





BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006

## LEGEND








-  Project Component Vantage Point
-  Campus Vantage Point
-  Campus/Project Component Vantage Point
-  Project Component Vantage Point Photo Number
-  Existing SDSU Campus Boundary
-  Future SDSU Campus Boundary
-  Area of Focus



Photo 3: Alvarado Campus Park Site (Western Segment) looking east



Photo 4: Alvarado Campus Park Site looking south & west



Photo 5: Alvarado Campus Park Site looking north






BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006




0 450  
Feet


## LEGEND

 Project  
Component  
Vantage Point

 Campus Vantage  
Point

 Campus/Project  
Component  
Vantage Point  
Photo Number

 SDSU Campus  
Boundary

 Area of Focus

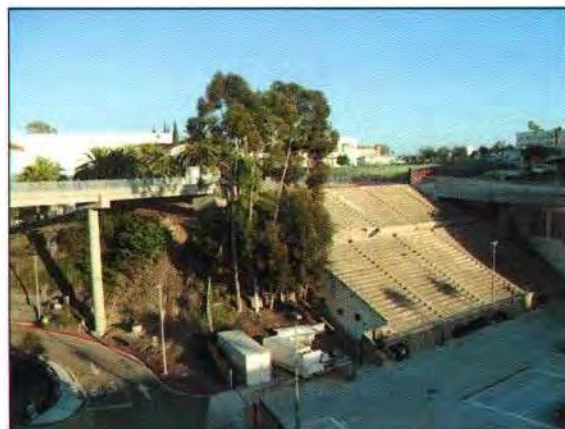
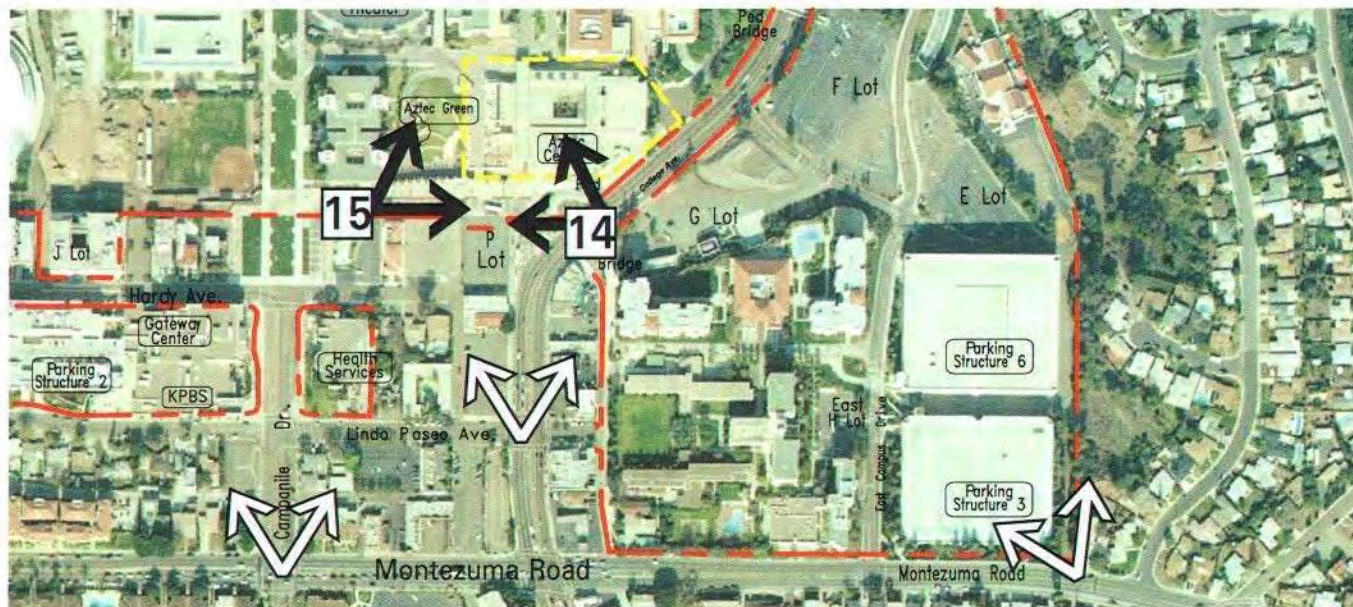


Photo 6: Campus Conference Center looking southeast



Photo 7: Campus Conference Center looking northwest



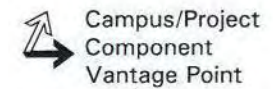
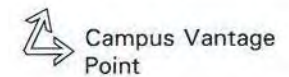
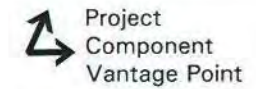


BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



0 450  
Feet

## LEGEND



**1** Project  
Component  
Vantage Point  
Photo Number

SDSU Campus  
Boundary

Area of Focus

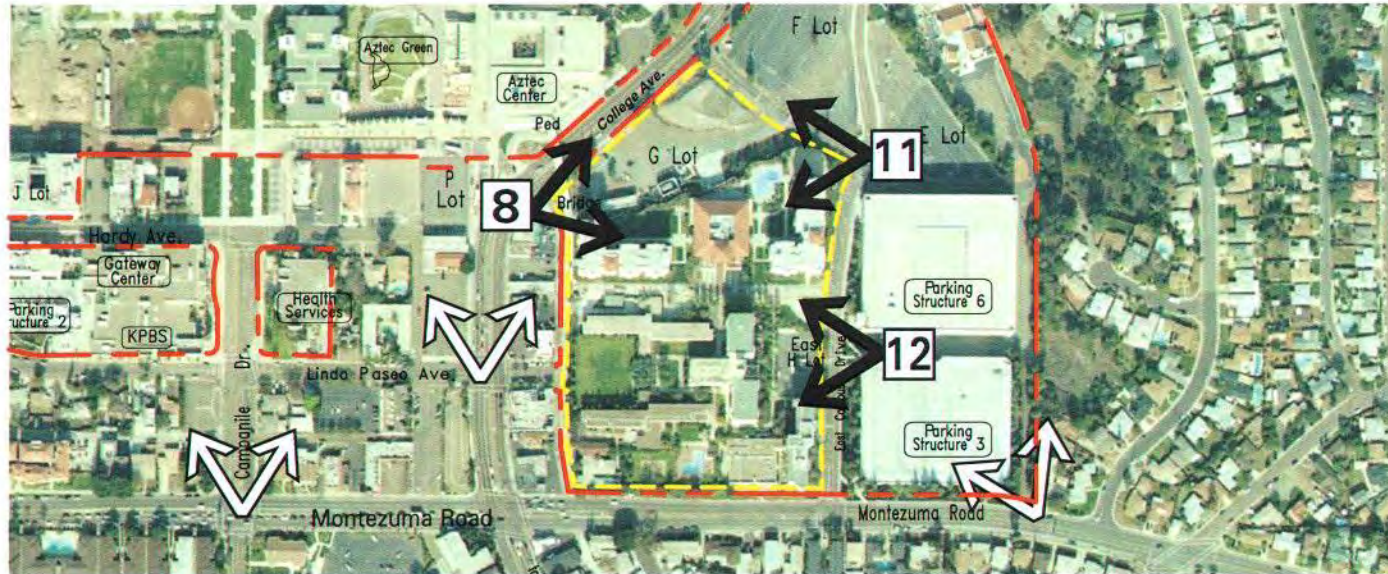


Photo 14: Student Union Expansion looking northwest





Photo 15: Student Union Expansion looking northeast





## LEGEND

 Project Component Vantage Point

 Campus Vantage Point

 Campus/Project Component Vantage Point

**1** Project Component Vantage Point Photo Number

 SDSU Campus Boundary

 Area of Focus

BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



0 450  
Feet



Photo 8: Student Housing (G Lot & Lawn Area North of H Lot)  
Phase I looking east

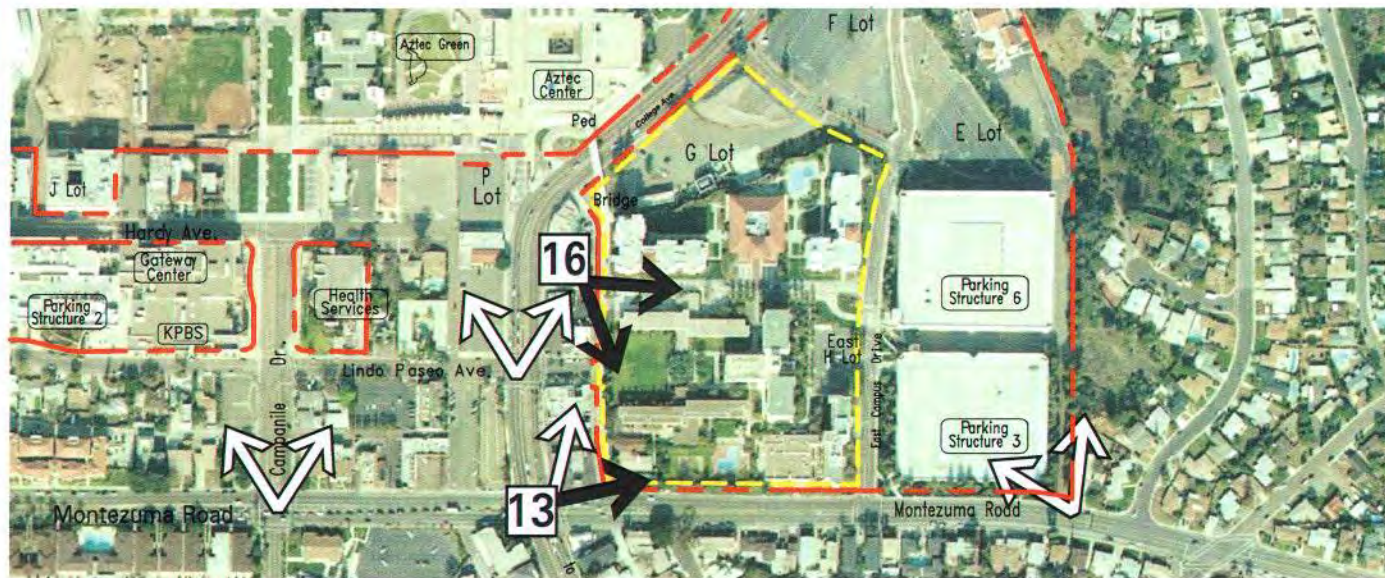


Photo 11: Student Housing (G Lot & Lawn Area North of H Lot)  
Phase I looking west



Photo 12: Student Housing (G Lot & Lawn Area North of H Lot)  
Phase I looking west






BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



0 450  
Feet


## LEGEND

 Project  
Component  
Vantage Point

 Campus Vantage  
Point

 Campus/Project  
Component  
Vantage Point

 Project  
Component  
Vantage Point  
Photo Number

 SDSU Campus  
Boundary

 Area of Focus

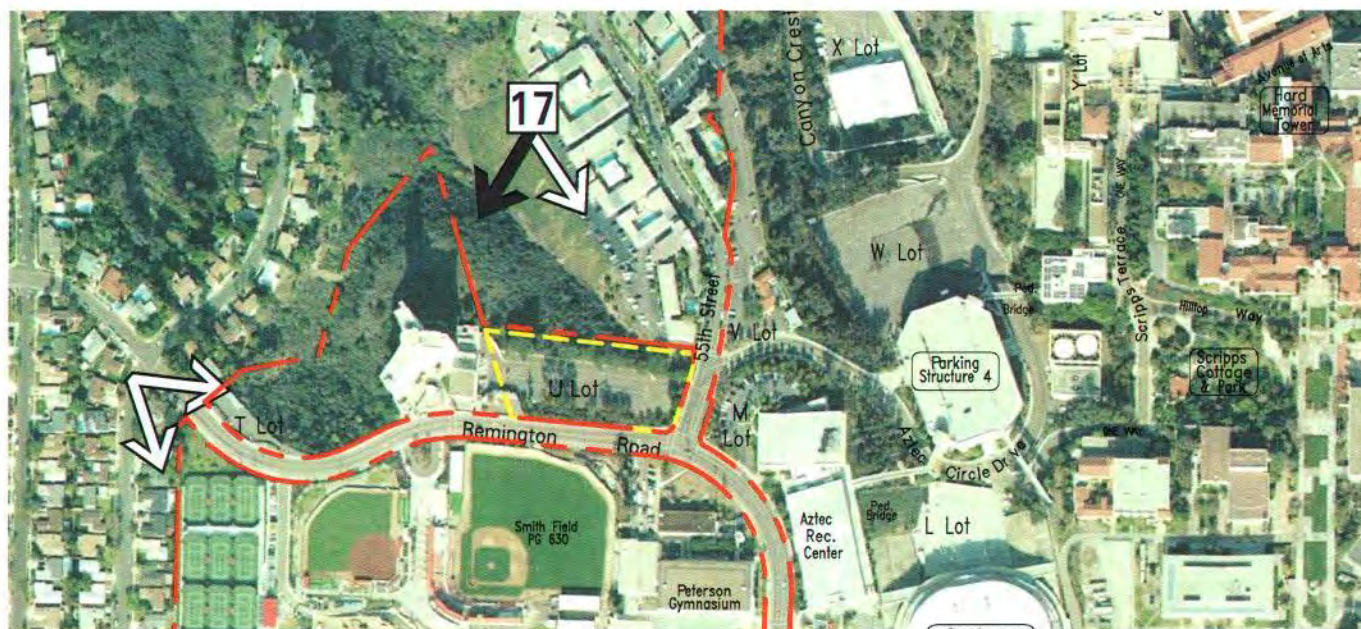


Photo 13: Student Housing (Olmeca/Maya & SRLA Building)  
Phase II looking northeast



Photo 16: Student Housing (Olmeca/Maya & SRLA Building)  
Phase II looking southeast





BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



0 450  
Feet

## LEGEND



Project  
Component  
Vantage Point



Campus Vantage  
Point



Campus/Project  
Component  
Vantage Point

1

Project  
Component  
Vantage Point  
Photo Number



SDSU Campus  
Boundary



Area of Focus



Photo 17: U Lot Residence Hall looking south





BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



0 550  
Feet

## LEGEND



Project  
Component  
Vantage Point



Campus Vantage  
Point



Campus/Project  
Component  
Vantage Point

1

Project  
Component  
Vantage Point  
Photo Number

- Existing SDSU  
Campus Boundary
- Future SDSU  
Campus Boundary
- Area of Focus

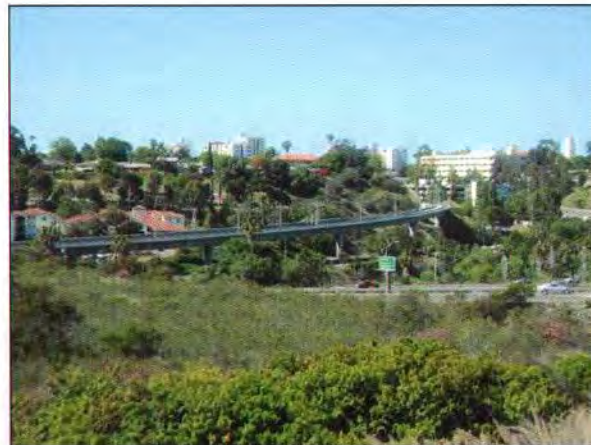


Photo 18: Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion looking south



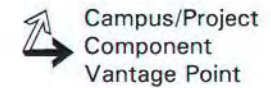


BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006



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Feet

## LEGEND



**1** Project  
Component  
Vantage Point  
Photo Number

- Existing SDSU  
Campus Boundary
- Future SDSU  
Campus Boundary
- Area of Focus



Photo 9: Alvarado Hotel Site looking northwest



Photo 19: Alvarado Hotel Site looking southeast

SDSU's lighting policy also voluntarily follows the adopted ordinances of the City of San Diego for any outdoor lighting upgrade. The impetus for establishing this directive lies in the university's interest in reducing light impacts because it affects astronomical research, particularly at the Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories.

#### **3.1.4.5 Existing Lighting Conditions**

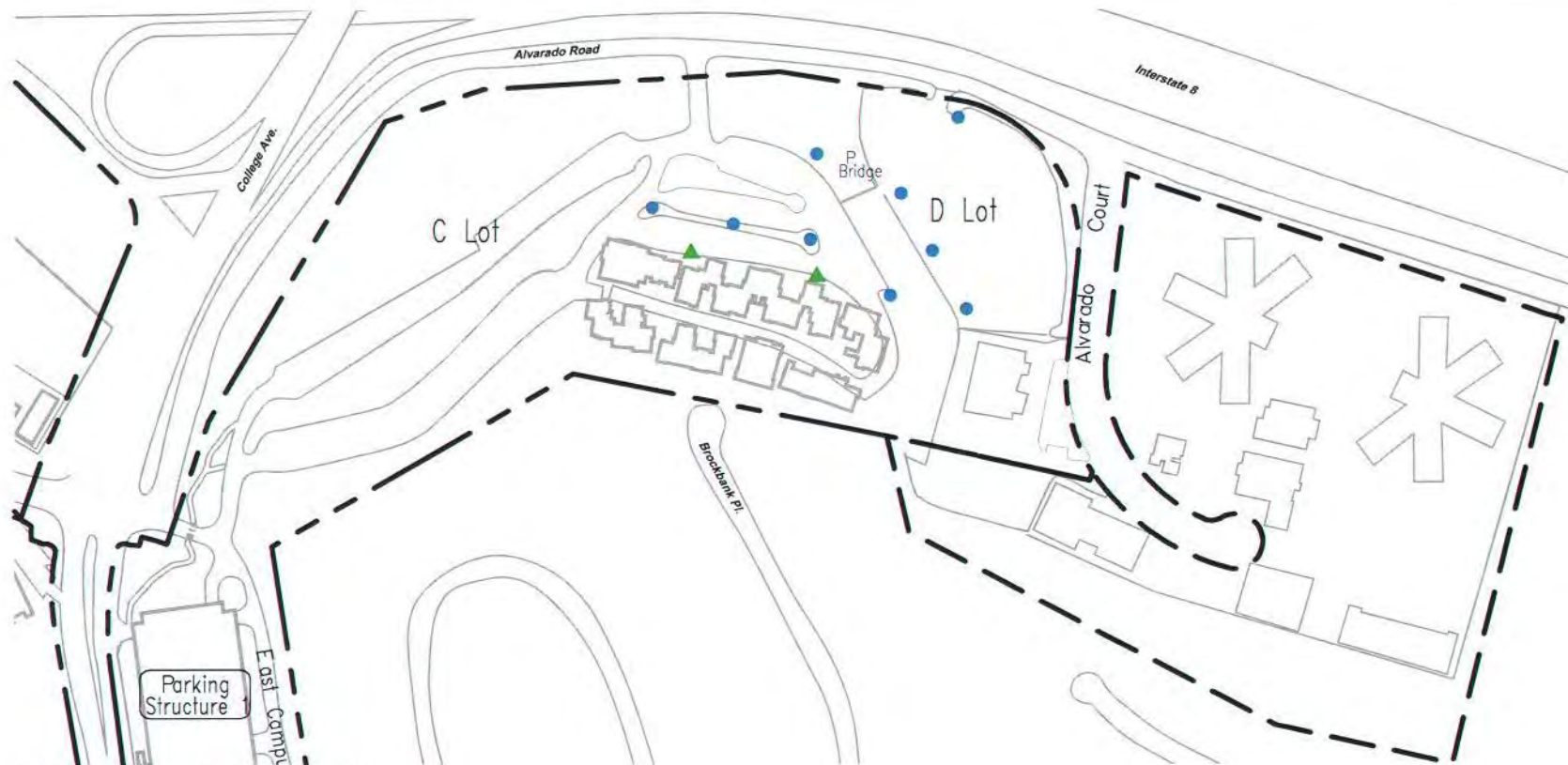
Existing campus lighting conditions were observed on a nighttime visit on March 6, 2007. **Figure 3.1-18** thru **3.1-20** depict the location of each exterior lighting unit within the proposed Alvarado Hotel, Lot D, Student Union Expansion, Lot G, and Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls areas. The Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing site is undeveloped and no lighting fixtures are present. As identified in these figures, the light fixtures currently located within the project boundaries represent a mixture of types and strengths of lighting. The street lights are either high-pressure sodium or mercury vapor units. The walkway lights are either high-pressure sodium, mercury vapor, or metal halide. The parking lot lights are either high-pressure sodium or metal halide in non-light sensitive areas and low-pressure sodium in areas where minimal lighting is required. Lights on buildings generally consist of wall sconce fixtures.

The existing lighting conditions and sensitive receptors associated with the project components are described below.

##### **3.1.4.5.1 Alvarado Campus**

Lot D is well lit with security lighting. In the parking area, two sets of high-pressure sodium light fixtures are located in the middle of the parking area, while single units line the exterior of the lot. Four metal halide wall scones are attached to the north and west facing sides of the existing Rehabilitation Center, which is located immediately south of the parking area. This lighting regime is visible from Alvarado Road and Interstate 8 very briefly. San Diego trolley users also encounter this lighting scenario due to its proximity to the tracks. (See **Figure 3.1-18, Existing Lighting Conditions - Alvarado Hotel and Lot D.**)





MAP SOURCE: Kawasaki, Theilacker Ueno & Associates

- Existing SDSU Campus Boundary
- Future SDSU Campus Boundary



● Low Pressure Sodium



▲ High Pressure Sodium

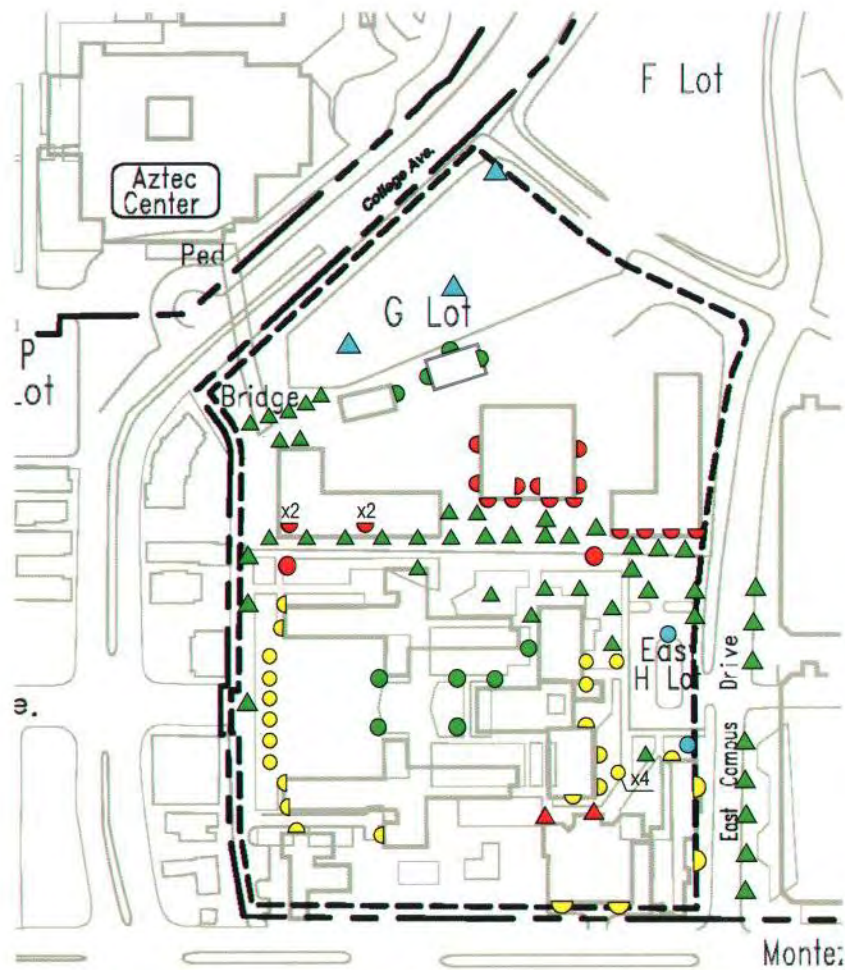


0 300  
Scale in Feet

2007 Campus Master Plan Revision EIR



Figure 3.1-18  
Existing Lighting Conditions - Alvarado Hotel & D Lot



MAP SOURCE: Kawasaki, Thellacker Ueno & Associates



0 250  
Scale in Feet

--- Existing SDSU Campus Boundary  
--- Area of Focus



▲ Metal Halide



● Low Pressure Sodium



▲ High Pressure Sodium



▲ High Pressure Sodium



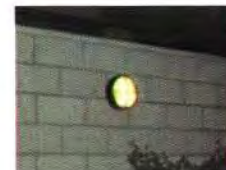
▲ High Pressure Sodium



● Metal Halide



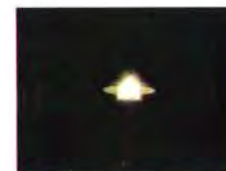
● Emergency Light



▲ Metal Halide



▲ Metal Halide



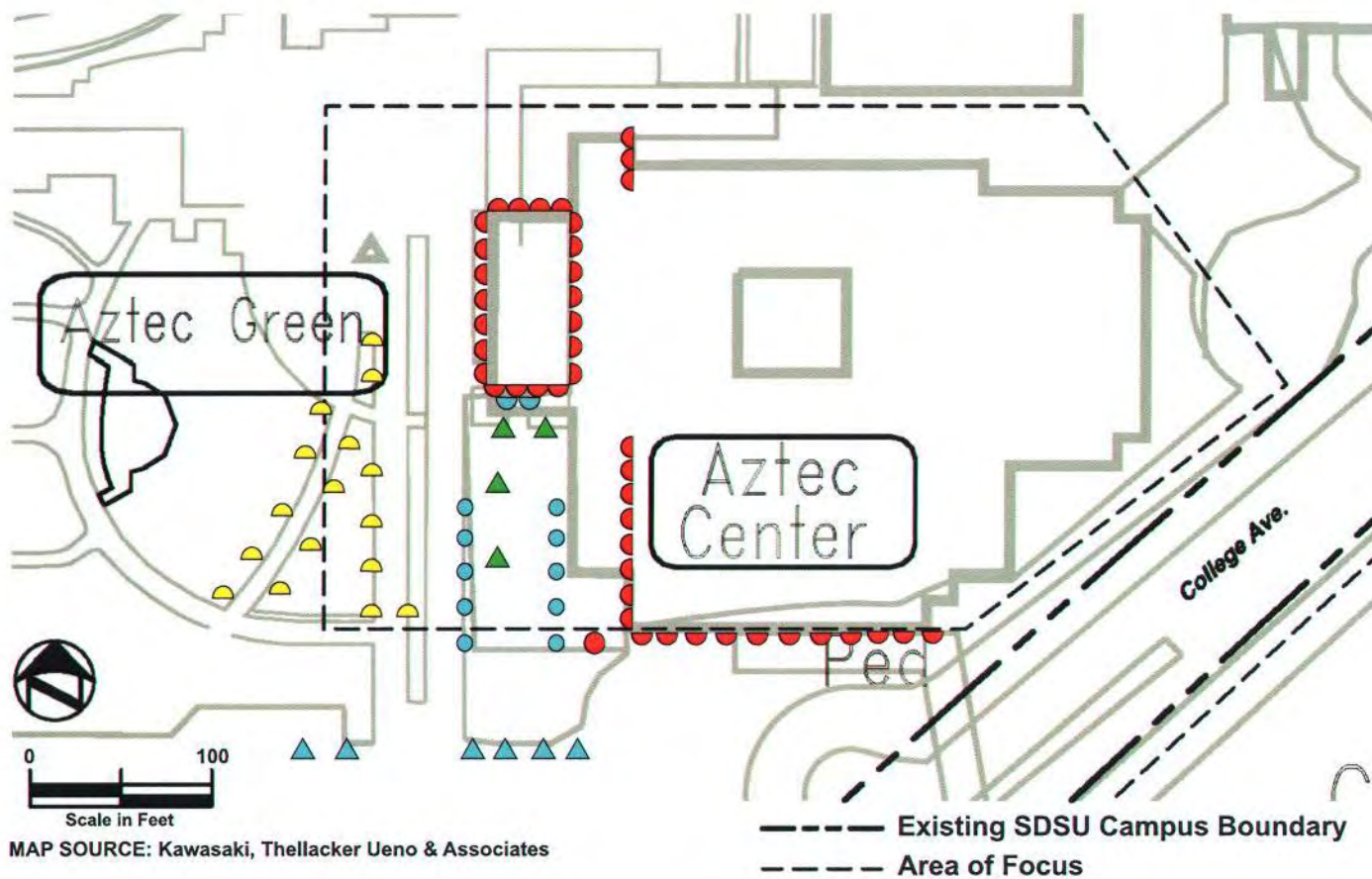
● High Pressure Sodium

2007 Campus Master Plan Revision EIR



Figure 3.1-19  
Existing Lighting Conditions  
Student Housing (G Lot & Olmeca/Maya) Phase I & II





▲ High Pressure Sodium



● Emergency Light



● High Pressure Sodium



▲ Metal Halide



● High Pressure Sodium



▲ High Pressure Sodium



▲ Metal Halide



**Sensitive Receptors.** Lighting located within this area can be seen by several receptors located within the College Area community. Eastbound travelers on Interstate 8 are exposed to lighting within Lot D. However, due to the speed at which Interstate 8 motorists travel, coupled by the other urban development along the freeway, lighting from Lot D is not discernable. Travelers on Alvarado Road have glimpses of the night-lighting regime on Lot D. The duration of the view from Alvarado Road is dictated by the topographic difference between the road and Lot D, which is more or less level. Trolley users are exposed to existing lighting on Lot D due to the trolley line's close proximity. Lighting from this project component is visible from private viewpoints as well. East and west Falls View Drive residences with north and northeast-facing backyards are exposed to Lot D lighting.

#### **3.1.4.5.2 Alvarado Hotel**

Lot C is also well lit with security lighting. The lighting in this parking area is made up of low-pressure sodium lighting around the periphery of the parking lot and high-pressure sodium lighting along the north side of the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall. This high-pressure sodium lighting is used to illuminate walkways and other high-traffic areas, while the taller, low-pressure sodium units are meant to illuminate the parking lot areas. This lighting regime has limited visibility from Alvarado Road, and is visible from Interstate 8 (very briefly) and adjacent neighbors' backyards, although highly obscured by creek and hillside vegetation. San Diego trolley users encounter this lighting scenario due to its proximity to the tracks, as well. (See **Figure 3.1-18, Existing Lighting Conditions - Alvarado Hotel and Lot D.**)

**Sensitive Receptors.** Lighting located within this area can be seen by several receptors located within the College Area community. Eastbound travelers on Interstate 8 are exposed to lighting within Lot C. However, due to the speed at which Interstate 8 motorists travel, coupled by the other urban development along the freeway, lighting from Lot C is not discernable. Travelers on Alvarado Road have brief glimpses of the night-lighting regime on Lot C, which is dictated by the drastic topographic difference in elevation between the road and Lot C. Trolley users are exposed to existing lighting on Lot C due to the trolley line's close proximity. Lighting from this area is visible from private viewpoints as well. East and west Falls View Drive residents with north and northeast-facing backyards are exposed to Lot C lighting.

#### **3.1.4.5.3 Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing**

The sites proposed for the Upper and Lower Villages are currently undeveloped and devoid of any lighting fixtures.

**Sensitive Receptors.** No lighting fixtures currently exist on this undeveloped area. However, sensitive receptors in the vicinity include residences along Adobe Falls Road, Capri Drive, Mill Peak Drive, Adobe Falls Court, Genoa Drive, and Del Cerro Boulevard. The project site would also be visible from residences within the Smoke Tree condominium community. Travelers on Genoa Drive, Del Cerro Boulevard, Capri Drive, College Avenue, internal Smoke Tree roadways, and Interstate 8 also have project site visibility.

#### **3.1.4.5.4 Student Housing**

Lot G is lit by 3 high-pressure sodium lights. A three-pronged light structure exists on the southwest area of the lot, a two-pronged light structure exists in the middle of the lot, and a one-pronged structure exists on the northeast area of the lot. Relative to Lot F, located immediately north, this parking lot is only dimly lit and has minimal light structures. Lighting from peripheral structures contributes to the light on the project site. A pathway extending from Lot G to the west side of Tepayac Hall is lined with high-pressure sodium lights. Wall fixtures are also attached to the facilities and dumpster storage buildings on the south side of the parking lot. Lighting from the food delivery entrance associated with Cuicacalli Hall radiates onto the parking lot. (See **Figure 3.1-19, Existing Lighting Conditions - Student Housing (Lot G and Olmeca/Maya) Phase I and II.**)

Lighting in the lawn area north of Lot H primarily comes from fixtures located along the walkway extending through the East Campus Residence Hall complex and from a combination of low-pressure and high-pressure sodium lights along parking lots and streets. Three high-pressure sodium lamps are located on the grass area along the southern side of the walkway, and another three are located along the north side of the walkway in front of Tacuba Hall. One additional high-pressure sodium lamp is situated on the grass island south of the designated fire lane turnout. A series of decorative metal halide lamps on Tacuba Hall also contribute to the glow in the area. Lot H contains 4 metal halide lights, and the walkway west of Lot H, southwest of the project site, is lined with three high-pressure sodium lights. East Campus Drive is lined with high-pressure sodium lights, for vehicle traffic and sidewalks. These lights, in combination with the lighting features on the lawn area, create a bright and secure



environment typical for residential areas. (See **Figure 3.1-19, Existing Lighting Conditions - Student Housing (Lot G and Olmeca/Maya) Phase I and II.**)

**Sensitive Receptors.** The lighting fixtures on Lot G are visible by drivers on College Avenue and by pedestrians traversing the bridge extending from the East Campus Residence Hall Complex to the Aztec Center; however, these lights are not a primary focal point for an extended period of time. The north side of Cuicacalli Hall, which is lined with windows, and residences of Tepeyac Hall facing northward overlook Lot G with foreground views of the lighting structures. Users of these facilities are exposed to lighting from Lot G for extended periods of time. Lighting from this site also contributes to the lighting conditions for residences along East Falls View Drive.

The lighting regime associated with the lawn area north of Lot H is visible by campus users, including pedestrians along walkways through the East Campus Residence Hall complex and motorists on East Campus Drive for limited duration. Surrounding dormitories, including Tacuba and Zura Halls, contain windows facing the lawn area north of Lot H. Students occupying these facilities facing east in Zura Hall and facing south in Tacuba Hall have foreground visibility of the lighting layout on the lawn area north of Lot H.

The Olmeca/Maya Residence Hall portion of the project is situated in the center of the East Campus Residence Hall complex, which is a well-lit area in order to serve the needs of a secure residential community. The project area is surrounded by Tepeyac, Cuicacalli, Zura, and Tula Halls, which all feature high-pressure sodium lights and metal halide fixtures along walkways serving and attached to the buildings, respectively. The older Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls are relatively dimmer than the newer surrounding residential facilities. Two metal halide lights are located on the west side of Olmeca and Maya Halls. The fenced courtyard connecting the two halls includes seven shorter high-pressure sodium lights and seven taller high-pressure sodium lights. Attached to the Housing Administration/Residential Education Offices building is one metal halide light. (See **Figure 3.1-19, Existing Lighting Conditions - Student Housing (Lot G and Olmeca/Maya) Phase I and II.**)

**Sensitive Receptors.** Lighting features associated with Olmeca and Maya Halls are visible by drivers on Montezuma Road traveling either direction and on Lindo Paseo Avenue traveling east. The light emanating from the upper levels of the Tepeyac and Zura Halls is a more distinguishing glow relative to the light emanating from Olmeca and Maya Halls. Pedestrians

crossing the East Campus Residence Hall complex have views of the lighting regime. Students in dormitories with windows facing south and east also have views of the Olmeca and Maya Hall lighting layout.

Lighting in Lot U is provided by four, two-pronged high pressure sodium lights. Additionally, the eleven-story Chulalac Hall, which is adjacent to Lot U, is lit by wall scones and interior lights that remain on throughout the night. North of Lot U is an undeveloped canyon devoid of any light features.

Lot C, the site of proposed Villa Alvarado Residence Hall, is lit by a combination of high and low pressure sodium lights. Specifically, the south side of the lot is lined with low pressure lights while the north side is lined with high pressure lights.

**Sensitive Receptors.** Foreground views of Lot U are visible by both pedestrians and motorists traveling in either direction on Remington Road for a short duration of time. As previously stated, Lot U is lower in elevation than the property south of the site. Foreground views of Lot U are visible by residents of Chulalac Hall. Off-site residential receptors with visibility of Lot U include residents of the college apartments to the northeast with mid-ground views, single-family residences to the northwest of the project site with mid-ground to distant views from their backyards, and residences north of Interstate 8 located south of Adobe Falls Road on the canyon top with distant views.

Visibility of the portion of Lot C south of the trolley is obstructed from every direction. Eastbound and westbound motorists on Alvarado Road have mid-ground views of Lot C for a short duration of time before both vegetation along Alvarado Road and the trolley tracks obstruct the view. Because of the discrepancy in elevation and existing vegetation, visibility of Lot C is limited from the edge of the backyards of residences along the *cul-de-sac* of West Falls View Drive. The most prominent views of Lot C south of the trolley are the distant views experienced by motorists traveling north and south on College Avenue, north of Interstate 8, for a short duration of time. Residents and users of the existing Villa Alvarado Residence Hall facing west would have foreground views of the project site.

#### **3.1.4.5.5 Student Union Expansion**

Because the Aztec Center site serves as a center for student activity, the site is well lit and used by students and trolley users well into the night. A combination of street lights, lighting around the trolley entrance west of and adjacent to the Aztec Center, decorative lighting around the



student seating area, and the grid of light fixtures attached to the walls defining the Aztec Center structure makes this area safe and bright for student use. An emergency call box and light is located on the southwest side of the Aztec Building. Street lighting combined with a platform of lights over the glass-encased elevators southwest of the Aztec Center contribute to glow in the area. An electronic billboard is located over the ATM structure, which is visible to pedestrians on Aztec Walk, bus riders, and users of the Aztec Center. The Aztec Center is very well lit relative to the surrounding academic and institutional buildings north and east of the project site, which are minimally used at night. (See **Figure 3.1-20, Existing Lighting Conditions - Student Union Expansion.**)

**Sensitive Receptors.** Sensitive receptors include users of the surrounding academic facilities, which are infrequently used after dark, and pedestrians along Aztec Walk and associated pedestrian thoroughfares. Drivers traveling north on College Avenue would experience short-duration nighttime visibility of the lighting layout.

In summary, the existing lighting contributes to the local skyglow within the College Area community. Sensitive receptors include travelers on Interstate 8, residents of the Del Cerro and Navajo neighborhoods located near the SDSU campus, as well as viewpoints throughout the College Area community. These receptors are affected by skyglow, which is partially attributable to the lighting of SDSU facilities.

#### **3.1.4.5.6 Campus Conference Center**

The site proposed for the Campus Conference Center is presently an open lawn area, and no lighting features currently exist on the project site. However, lighting features are present along the periphery of the project where development already exists. For instance, both the Aztec Walk, which runs east-west along the southern boundary of the project site, and the pedestrian walkway, which runs north-south along the eastern boundary of the project site, are well lit for security purposes. The Aztec Walk is lined with three metal halide lights to provide a low glow along the walkway, and five high pressure sodium lights illuminate the pedestrian pathway. Additionally, the Calpulli Center, which is south of the proposed project area, also remains well lit in the evening hours.

**Sensitive Receptors.** Currently existing lighting fixtures on the periphery of the proposed project site are visible by users of the Aztec Walk and the central walkway through campus north of Campanile Drive. Additionally, users of the surrounding music and humanities

facilities may have nighttime views; however, use of these buildings after dark is infrequent. Residences with north-facing windows along Hardy Avenue have foreground views of the project area.

### **3.1.5 THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

CEQA Guidelines appendix G provides that a project would result in a potentially significant impact to aesthetics and visual quality if the proposed project would:

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

### **3.1.6 IMPACTS**

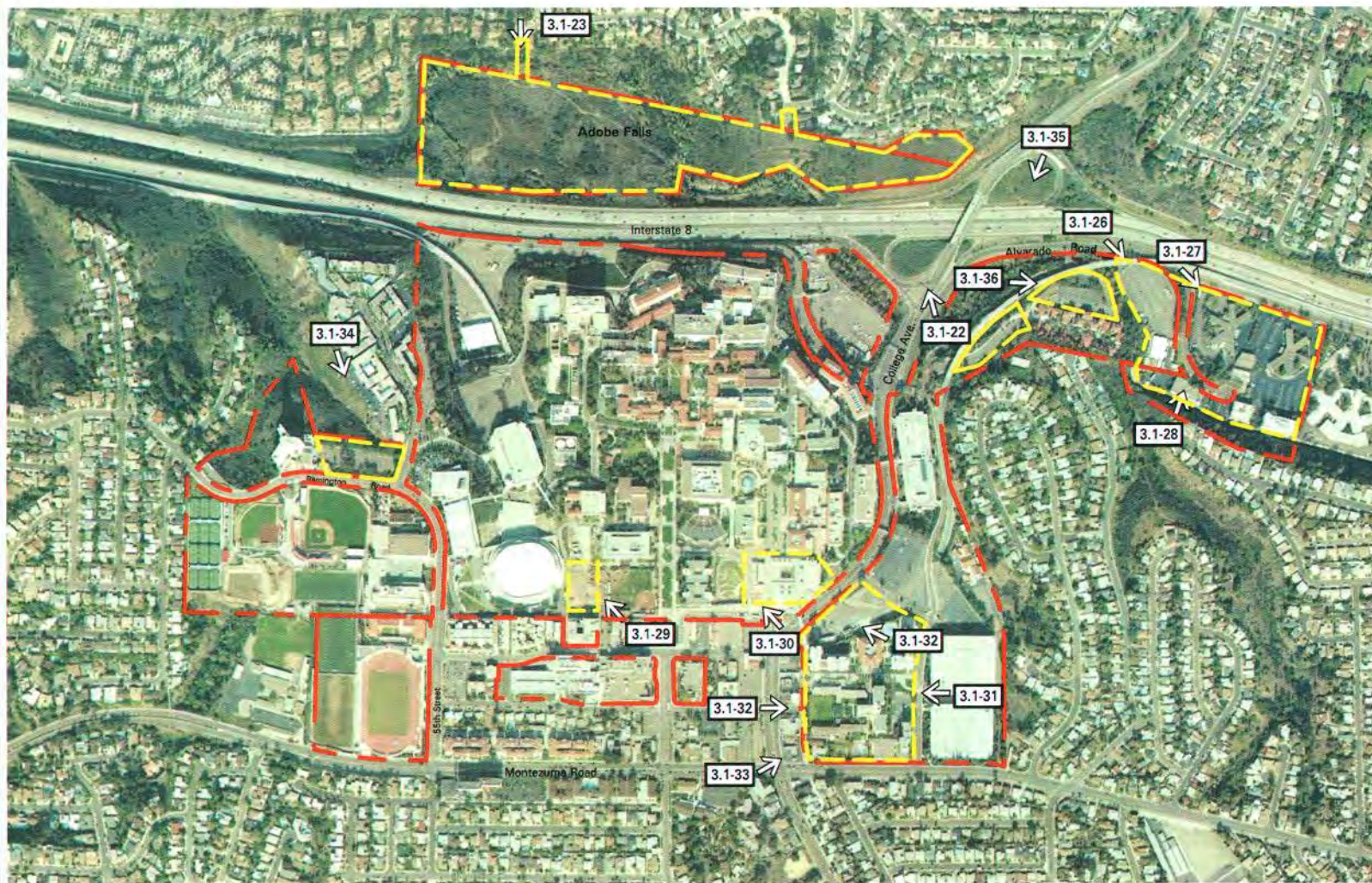
#### **3.1.6.1 Visual Character**

In order to assess the potential impacts to visual character associated with the proposed project visual simulations of the project components were prepared utilizing common vantage points. EIR **Figure 3.1-21, Visual Simulations Index Map**, notes the vantage point for each visual simulation discussed in the following sections.

##### **3.1.6.1.1 Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing**


The introduction of a faculty and staff housing development into the existing undeveloped Adobe Falls site would represent a visual change in the south Del Cerro area. In order to document these anticipated visual changes, visual simulations were created to depict the change in visual character. The simulation for the Upper Village is presented from College





## LEGEND

 Visual  
Simulation  
Photo  
Number  
 3.1-22

 Existing  
SDSU Campus  
Boundary

 Future  
SDSU Campus  
Boundary

 Area of Focus

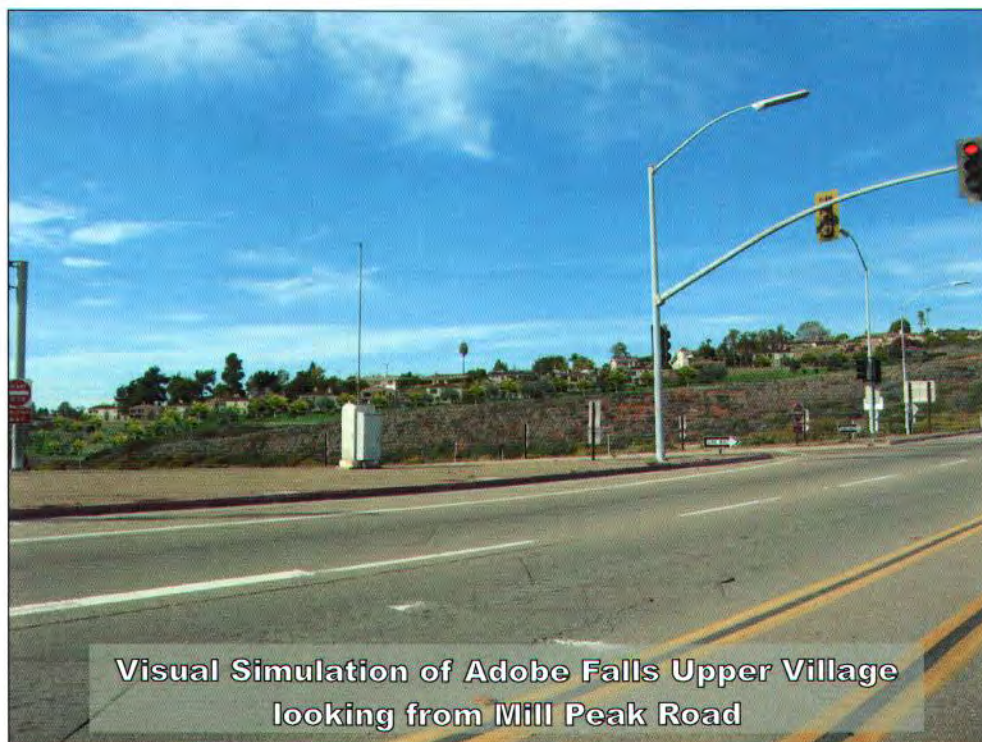
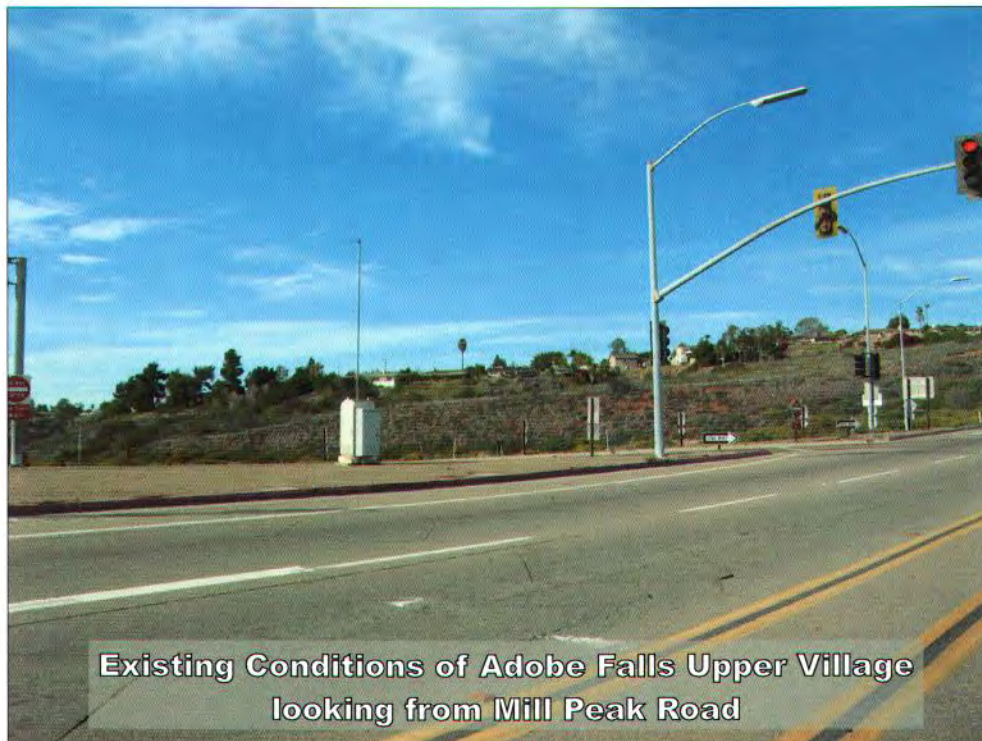
BASE SOURCE: AIRPHOTO USA, JAN 2006

Avenue looking northward, and a simulation for the Lower Village depicts the view for residents north of the Adobe Falls site. (See **Figure 3.1-22, Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing Upper Village Visual Simulation** and **Figure 3.1-23, Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing Lower Village Visual Simulation**.) Two cross-section drawings also have been prepared to show existing topography plus proposed grading of the Upper Village site as they relate to surrounding home elevations. (See **Figure 3.1-24, Adobe Falls Upper Village Section A-A** and **Figure 3.1-25, Adobe Falls Upper Village Section B-B**.) Under the proposed project, neighbors along Adobe Falls Road, Mill Peak Road, Adobe Falls Court and within the Smoke Tree Condominium complex would experience a change in their fore and mid-ground views. Del Cerro residents along Del Cerro Boulevard would be exposed to a change in distant visual character due to their location from and above the Adobe Falls site. However, while the existing visual character of the undeveloped site would change, the proposed development would appear as an extension of existing residential development already within the Alvarado Canyon area. Furthermore, the introduction of the Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing component would not block existing views present from Del Cerro Boulevard residents' backyards. Del Cerro Boulevard residents are approximately 160 to 250 feet above the existing elevation of the Lower Village site. Although the visual character would change, the proposed project would result in the introduction of additional residential uses that would be consistent with the development patterns currently present in the Alvarado Creek Canyon.

As shown at this location, the existing single family homes at Adobe Falls Road are more or less at the same elevation as the north portion of the proposed Lower Village site. Existing views from these single family residences are that of a canyon with trees in the foreground. It is anticipated that the existing trees or other landscaping would screen the view of the proposed development from these residents. The view through the trees would change to that of townhomes and condominiums higher than the existing single family homes abutting the south edge of Adobe Falls Road. Though screened, the existing visual environment for residents along Adobe Falls Road would change as a result of the proposed project.

**Figure 3.1-24, Adobe Falls Upper Village Section A-A** shows the existing backyard elevation of a nearby neighbor on the west side of Mill Peak Road at approximately 370 feet AMSL. The slope behind these neighbors' homes falls fairly drastically toward the Alvarado Creek drainage. The topography along the western edge of the Upper Village site would require some





NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.

SOURCE: DUDEK

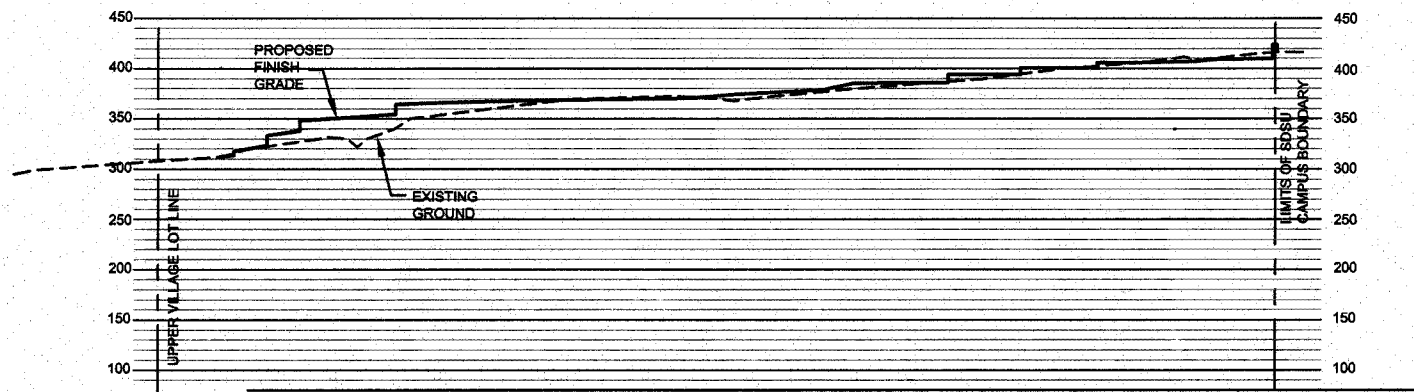




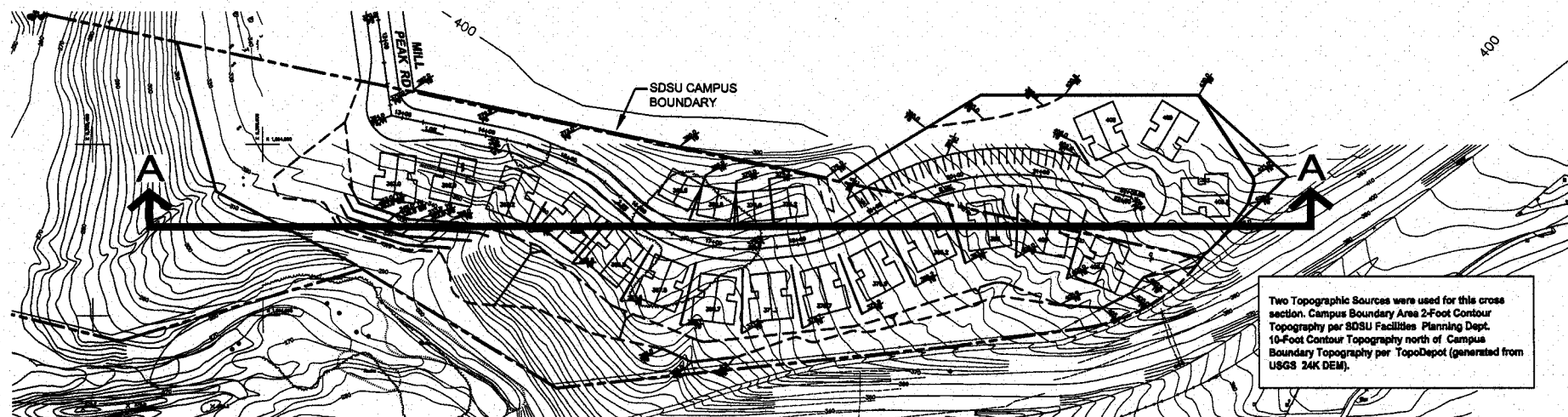
*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK



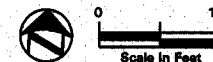


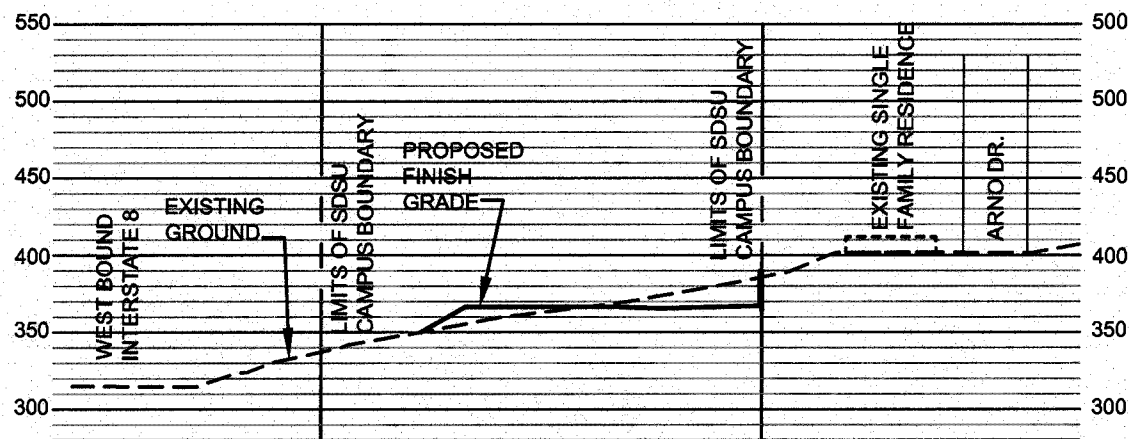
SECTION A-A  
Horizontal Scale: 1" = 120'  
Vertical Scale: 1" = 120'



NOTE: PROPOSED LAYOUT IS CONCEPTUAL ONLY.

--- SDSU Campus Boundary





**SECTION B-B**  
Horizontal Scale: 1' = 120'  
Vertical Scale: 1' = 120'



**NOTE: PROPOSED LAYOUT IS CONCEPTUAL ONLY.**

--- SDSU Campus Boundary



0 120  
Scale in Feet



element of cut and fill slopes. Views from Mill Peak Road residents' backyards may be slightly obstructed in the foreground, again, depending on the ultimate form and placement of cut and fill slopes and ultimate building height. While foreground views may be partially obstructed, this project component would result in a visual change from native habitat/undeveloped land to an urban environment.

**Figure 3.1-25, Adobe Falls Upper Village Section B-B** depicts a representative cross-section of the existing Adobe Falls parcel's topographic relationship to homes along the south side of Genoa Drive. In this area, the elevation of existing Adobe Falls residences ranges from approximately 313 to 390 feet AMSL. It is estimated that the home located within this cross-section view is located at approximately 405 feet AMSL. Existing residents have views of the sloping undeveloped land in the foreground, Interstate 8 in the mid-ground, and SDSU in the distance. Depending on the specific residence, existing vegetation obscures some of these residents' views beyond their backyards. Similar to the western portion of the proposed Upper Village site, the topography falls fairly drastically toward the Alvarado Creek drainage and Interstate 8 right-of-way. Depending on ultimate building height and placement of cut- and fill-slopes, foreground and mid-ground views currently available to Genoa Drive residents may be slightly obstructed. As indicated in the previous paragraph, while these views may be partially obstructed, views would change from a natural setting to an urban setting.

Although existing communities would be screened from the proposed development *via* landscaping and/or elevation differences, and proposed buildings would blend in with existing development patterns, this project component would permanently change existing open space containing native habitat to urban development. Establishment of permanent open space easements/dedications in the Adobe Falls/Alvarado Creek canyon area would help preserve open space and aesthetically pleasing settings in perpetuity; however, a significant impact would still occur. To help offset the impact of these modified views and to help shield neighbors from new development on the Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing parcel, mitigation is proposed.

The change in visual character of the site from the Interstate 8 and College Avenue vantage points would not result in a significant impact to motorists. These motorists would be traveling at speeds that would allow a fleeting glimpse of the site at best. Furthermore, due to the elevated nature of College Avenue and Interstate 8, and the lower, undulating terrain present

on the Adobe Falls site, it is difficult to see much of the site from these roadways. Motorists passing this area would see an extension of existing development already present in the canyon.

The proposed project would also be visible from the faculty office/classroom/gallery building located along the northern edge of campus. This facility would have distant views of the residential uses, although these views may be partially distorted due to the sloping nature of the Adobe Falls site. While the distance of these views and the partial distortion would represent a change from the existing undeveloped nature of the site, these view changes would not be considered significant.

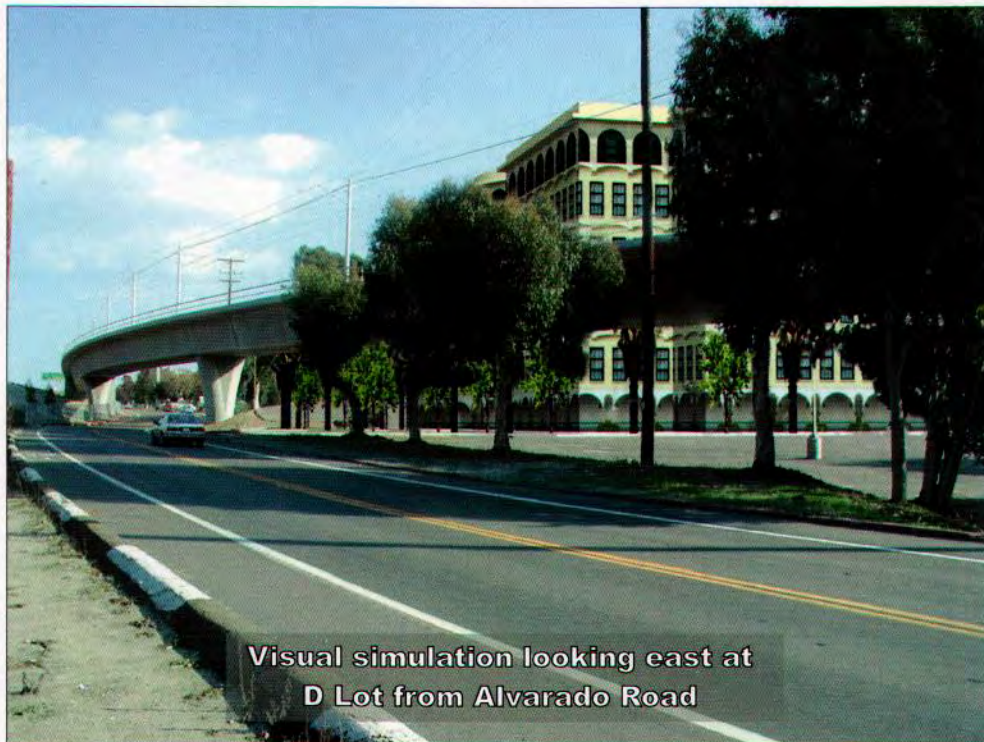
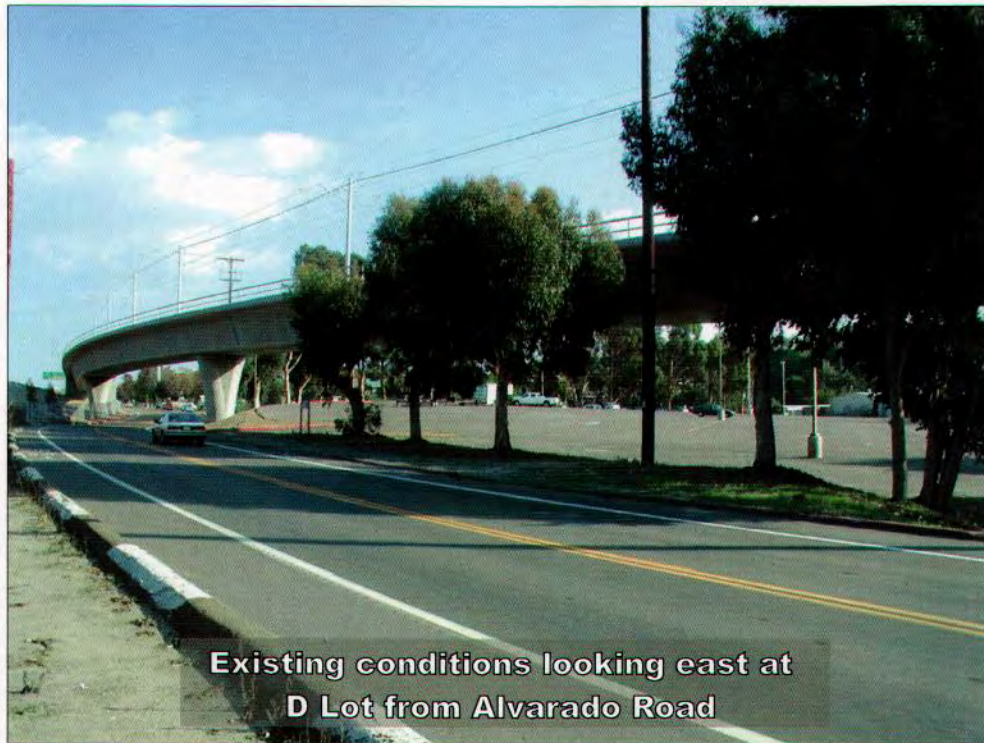
#### **3.1.6.1.2 Alvarado Campus**

**D Lot.** A view of the future campus buildings is depicted in **Figure 3.1-26, Alvarado Campus Visual Simulation**. The implementation of academic and administration development would alter the existing parking-lot character of Lot D; however, the site would appear as an extension of the existing academic facilities located atop the main campus mesa. The introduction of buildings and associated uses would represent a new visual theme in the area. The quiet, parking lot nature of the site would give way to increased activity levels and the appearance of the site as a designated node of the campus. This change in view would be substantial, but, due to the existing parking-lot nature of the site, the change would improve the area's visual appeal rather than degrade the existing visual character.

Viewers in the Del Cerro neighborhoods may be exposed to a new building in their mid-ground viewsheds. However, due to the sunken elevation of the proposed buildings, as well as the position of Interstate 8 between this area and cross-freeway residents, visual impacts to sensitive receptors would be partially obscured. Existing vegetation along Alvarado Road would remain, further reducing potential for significant cross-freeway viewshed impacts.

Views from Alvarado Road travelers would be impacted by the proposed academic buildings. The abrupt change in the existing mid-ground viewshed of Alvarado Road travelers would be substantial. However, due to the existing parking lot view present from this vantage point, a building and campus node area would be considered a positive visual change.





*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK

Views from the East Falls View Drive residences to the south would also be augmented from a parking lot to a campus academic center. While vegetation on the slope and riparian habitat within Alvarado Creek would remain and partly shield these viewers from a new vista, significant impacts would result. Mitigation is provided that would reduce these impacts to below a level of significance. San Diego trolley users currently see existing Lot D, and would experience a visual change when this project component is developed. The trolley users, similar to the Alvarado Road traffic, would have fleeting views of Lot D, depending on the speed of the trolley. Existing landscaping would not shield these viewers from the visual change.

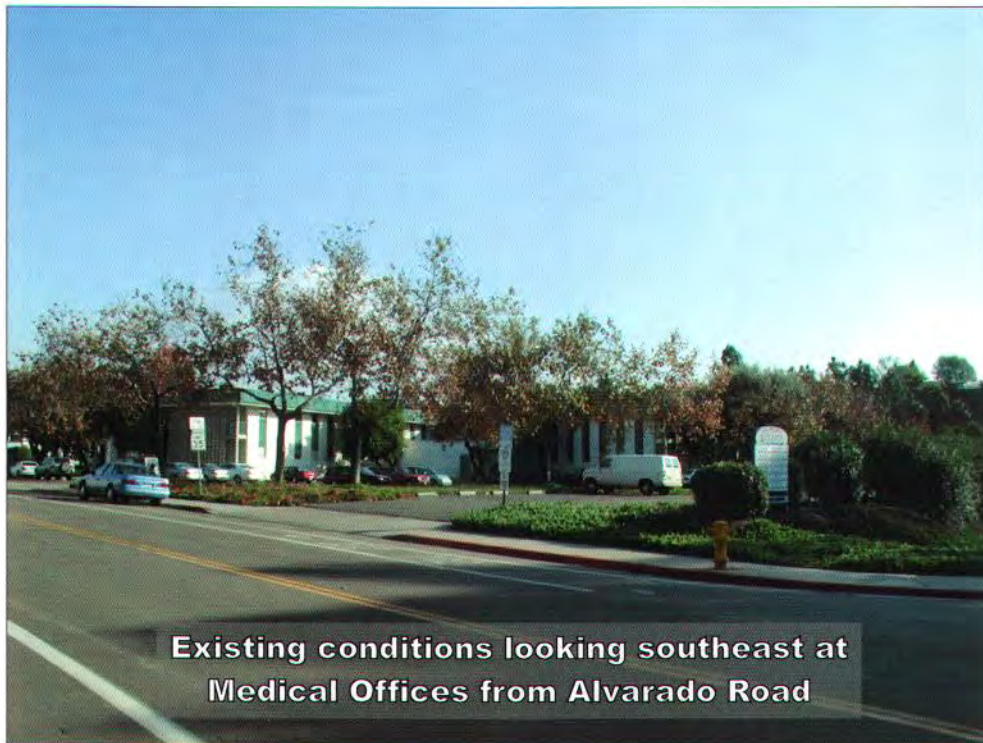
**Alvarado Core Site.** Because the project would result in the elimination of existing blighted medical research buildings to make way for the introduction of new academic and research facilities, a change in visual character of the site would occur. (See **Figure 3.1-27, Alvarado Campus Visual Simulation.**) Integration of this site with Lot D immediately west will create the appearance of a campus academic and activity node, whereas currently only disjointed parking lot and research facilities exist. This change would be substantial; however, it would be an overall improvement to the site's visual condition.

Development of the proposed academic facility would not result in significant adverse impacts to future surrounding land uses. Guests or workers in the proposed Alvarado Hotel would be confronted with views of an academic activity node instead of existing parking lots and the rehabilitation center. This change in view would be considered beneficial over the existing parking lot condition.

Impacts to City of San Diego land uses located east of this facility would not occur as these surrounding land uses consist of institutional research and medical facilities that would be similar in size and function as those proposed. Trolley users would be confronted with an academic campus node rather than a parking lot and rehabilitation center. Although a change in existing visual character from a parking lot area on the periphery of campus to a campus academic node would occur, this change in visual character would be not be adverse.

Introduction of the proposed buildings to the existing Alvarado Core Site would result in significant visual changes for neighbors along the southern edge of the site/campus boundary. **Figure 3.1-28, Alvarado Campus Visual Simulation** depicts the suggested style and bulk of

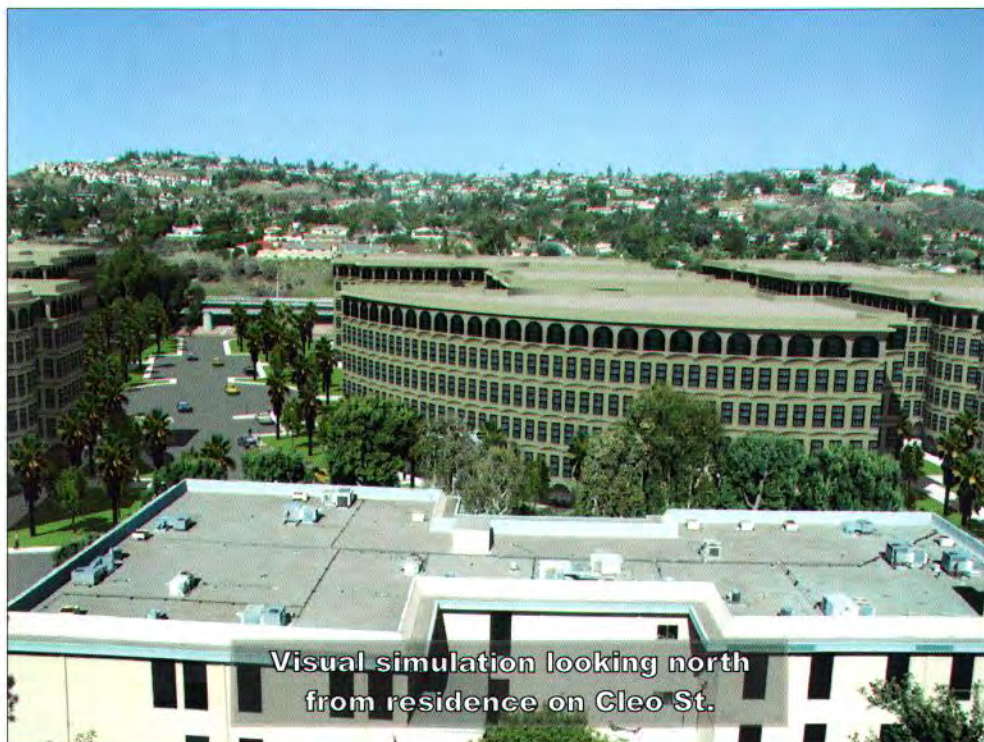




*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK





*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK



future facilities. The introduction of several 5+ story buildings and a 6/7 story parking structure into an area that currently supports 2 to 3 stories would change the mid-ground view of residents along Cleo Street and Brockbank Place. Because native habitat within the City of San Diego's Multiple Habitat Preserve Area ("MHPA") separates these homes from the proposed project site, additional non-native vegetation tall enough to shield these future buildings would not be permitted. Although this project component would result in a substantial change to the existing mid-ground view of these adjacent neighbors, these visual changes would not be adverse.

#### **3.1.6.1.3 Campus Conference Center**

The Campus Conference Center component proposes construction on the lawn area east of and adjacent to Cox Arena, and would introduce a building into an area where no facilities currently exist. (See **Figure 3.1-29, Campus Conference Center Visual Simulation.**) Visual impacts would occur to sensitive receptors on Aztec Walk and pedestrians following the central walkway through campus north of Campanile Drive. Forefront views of the proposed 2-story building would be visible to pedestrians traveling west on Aztec Walk. Because the elevation of Aztec Walk to the west of the site is lower than the project site, pedestrians heading eastbound would only see the upper levels of the proposed building. Existing views on this walkway are of the 2-story music building and Exercise and Nutritional Sciences building, which views would be mostly replaced by the 2-story Campus Conference Center. Unobstructed mid-ground views would be visible to pedestrians looking west from the central walkway. This change from open lawn area to building structure would blend in with the vicinity and would not be considered adverse.

The pedestrian pathway extending north of Cox Arena *via* Parking Structure 4 currently provides a distant vantage point of the project site. The southeast view from this location includes the project site and construction site for the Performing Arts Building southeast of Lot L, the Exercise and Nutritional Sciences building partially blocked by eucalyptus trees, the western end of the Music Building, and housing facilities lining Aztec Walk in the distance. The inclusion of a 2-story building in the viewshed of this pedestrian corridor would not adversely alter existing conditions.



*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK



While the change from an open lawn area to a 2-story structure is a significant change, this change would not be adverse. The proposed building would be an infill project, designed to blend in with the surrounding structures. The Performing Art Building, which will be adjacent to and north of the Conference Center, would be 3 stories in height. Architectural features would be similar to that of the Health Services Building, and landscaping would be consistent with the surrounding features. The Campus Conference Center would also be consistent with the Aztec Walk Master Plan, which states that this area would be reserved for development of future master-planned academic facilities. The softball fields to the east are planned for conversion into a grass area. Views associated with ongoing Campus Master Plan 2000 and Aztec Walk Master Plan improvements would not be adversely effected by this project component. The structures that surround the site would also shield it from view by sensitive receptors in the College or Navajo Areas.

#### **3.1.6.1.4 Student Union Expansion**

Renovation of the west side of the existing Aztec Center would include a 70,000 GSF expansion and remodeling of existing structures. (See **Figure 3.1-30, Student Union Expansion Visual Simulation.**) Visual impacts would occur to sensitive receptors on Aztec Walk and pedestrians traveling northeast over the pedestrian bridge from the East Campus Residence Hall complex. Forefront views of the proposed project site would be visible to pedestrians traveling west on Aztec Walk. Pedestrians traveling northwest over the bridge have existing views of the Aztec Center seating area and patio and a dominant view of the Adams Humanities building. Completion of renovation activities would decrease the visibility of the Adams Humanities building and make the Aztec Center more apparent in the viewshed. Visual impacts would be substantial; however, because the renovation constitutes an improvement to existing structures, impacts would not be adverse. The proposed architectural style of the expansion includes a more modern look as compared to the existing building *via* use of glass features. Views associated with ongoing Campus Master Plan 2000 and Aztec Walk Master Plan improvements would not be adversely affected by this project component.

#### **3.1.6.1.5 Student Housing**

The Student Housing component of the proposed project would involve construction on the following five locations: (i) Lot G; (ii) the lawn area north of Lot H; (iii) the existing Olmeca/Maya residence halls and Housing Administration/ Residential Education Offices; (iv) Lot U; and (v) Lot C. Phase I includes development on Lot G and the lawn area north of Lot H.



*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK



Phase II includes the demolition and reconstruction of Olmeca/Maya Residence Halls and Housing Administration/ Residential Education Office structure locations. Subsequent phases include development of Lots C and U. The Student Housing component represents the introduction of buildings to areas characterized by parking facilities and existing development.

**Lot G. Figures 3.1-31 and 3.1-32, Student Housing (Lot G and Olmeca/Maya) Visual Simulations** provide a visual simulation of the proposed Lot G Residence Hall. Visual impacts would occur to sensitive receptors on College Avenue and pedestrians on the College Avenue pedestrian over-crossing as a result of the Lot G residence hall. Viewers would see a structure rather than the existing parking lot. The introduction of a student living facility would represent a change in the existing viewshed. However, due to the proximity of the existing East Campus Residential Hall complex immediately south of the site, this facility would represent a visual extension of the existing student residential community and no adverse impacts would result.

The proposed structure would be 10 stories in height, which is slightly taller than the existing Tepayac Residential Hall to the south, and noticeably taller than the existing Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls. However, Phase II entails demolition of the existing Olmeca and Maya structures and construction of two 10-story residential structures. Although intensity of use would increase, the entire eastern residential community would be consistent in terms of building height.

Introduction of the new Lot G residence hall would result in impacts to future surrounding land uses documented in the overall SDSU Master Plan. The Academic/Research Facility planned for location within Lots E and F to the north would be affected by this visual change. However, because this facility would appear as an extension of the existing residence hall complex, visual impacts to surrounding campus master plan uses would be less than significant. This project component is also consistent with planned land uses as designated in the College Area Community Plan.

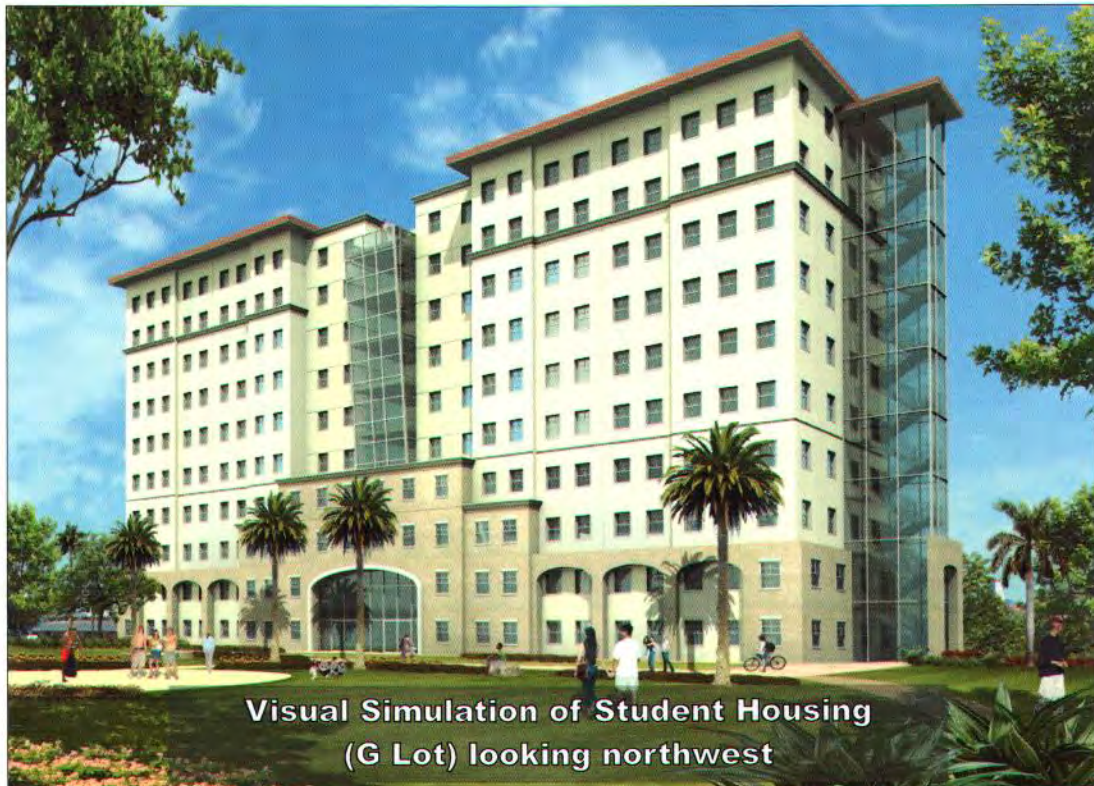
The upper levels of this project component would be visible from residences along East Falls View and Adobe Drives. This facility would not be visible from trolley users as the trolley is underground in this area. Although this project element will appear as an extension of existing



NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.

SOURCE: SDSU





*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

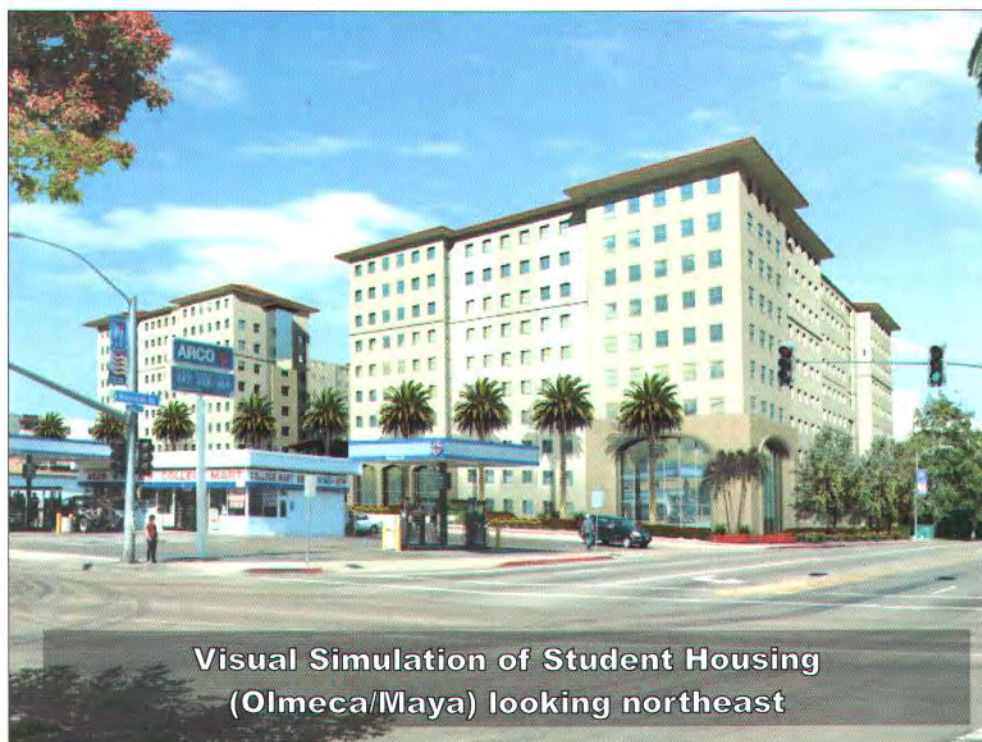
SOURCE: SDSU

residential facilities and be similar in height to surrounding and planned structures, visual impacts would be significant due to the change from an undeveloped parking lot to 10-story structure visible by off-campus residences. In order to reduce these significant impacts, mitigation in the form of visual treatments and light shielding pertaining to this facility is proposed. Nonetheless, even with mitigation, the impact would remain significant.

***Olmeca/Maya/Housing Administration/Residential Education Offices/Lawn North of Lot H.*** Phase II of the Student Housing project component proposes two, 10-story, 300,000 GSF residential structures in place of the existing Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls and Housing Administration/Residential Education Office buildings. (See **Figures 3.1-31 and 3.1-32, Student Housing (Lot G and Olmeca/Maya) Visual Simulations**, and **Figure 3.1-33, Student Housing (Olmeca/Maya) Visual Simulation**.)

Viewers at the intersection of College Avenue and Montezuma Road, driving eastbound on Lindo Paseo Avenue, and walking southbound along the west side of Tepeyac Hall would be exposed to views of these proposed buildings. Olmeca and Maya Halls are surrounded by residential buildings and commercial development, and thus only obstructed views of the buildings are available. Landscaping further hides these buildings. These existing three-story brick residential facilities are not architecturally consistent with the surrounding reinforced concrete structures off-white and beige in color. Furthermore, the proposed 10-story height would only be slightly taller than the surrounding 6- and 7-story Tepeyac, Tacuba, Tenochca, and Zura Halls. Distant eastbound views from Lindo Paseo Avenue of the East Residence Hall complex would entail the top of the proposed Olmeca and Maya structures as a focal point rather than Zura Hall (currently the tallest building in the existing East Campus Residence Hall community). The two proposed residence halls and associated landscaping would be considered an aesthetic improvement as compared to existing conditions. Reconstruction of these two improved residence halls would further complete the East Campus Residence Hall community renovation underway through the existing SDSU Campus and Aztec Walk Master Plans.





NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.

SOURCE: SDSU

Although the proposed Olmeca and Maya structures would be consistent with the existing buildings in the immediate area and include landscaping features desirable by the campus community, these two large buildings would inevitably establish a more densified campus horizon. Residences south of Montezuma that previously only encountered 6-7 story structures would now encounter two, ten story buildings as well. Off-site residences and fraternity/sorority facilities along Montezuma Road facing northward would experience a permanent change from a two-story structure shielded by trees and vegetation to landscaped ten-story structures. This change in campus horizon and permanent impact to off-site residences is considered a significant impact. In order to reduce these significant impacts, mitigation in the form of visual treatments to this facility are proposed to soften the view. However, even with mitigation, the impact would remain significant and unmitigable.

The lawn area north of Lot H would be visible to drivers along East Campus Drive and to pedestrians crossing over East Campus Drive to and from Parking Structures 3 and 6. Viewers would see a 2-story building rather than a grass area. This building, a needed administration building for the east residential community operations, would blend in with the residential complex. Views associated with ongoing Campus Master Plan 2000 and Aztec Walk Master Plan improvements would not be adversely affected as a result of development of this site. Off-site receptors would not have visibility of this structure. Therefore, impacts associated with construction of this two-story facility would be less than significant.

**Lot U.** The Lot U component of the Proposed Student Housing entails construction of a 10-story, 350,000-GSF Type 1 structure atop the existing master-planned Parking Structure 7. (See **Figure 3.1-34, Lot U Residence Hall Visual Simulation.**) The existing site is a parking lot. West of this site are the Cholula and Chapultepec Residence Halls and associated convenience store. Development of the parking facilities with residential uses would be an expansion of the western residential complex. Foreground and mid-ground views of the project site would be visible only for a short duration of time by motorists and pedestrians traveling on Remington Road and 55th Street. Permanent mid-ground and distant unobstructed views of the site would be visible from residences northeast, northwest, and directly north across Interstate 8. The introduction of a 10-story structure to an area where none presently exists would constitute a visual change to the surrounding community. Furthermore, due to the unobstructed view currently afforded to residents along Hewlett Drive, coupled with the lower topography, presence of a new 10-story residence hall would be significant and adverse to these residents.





*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK

Residents in the Del Cerro neighborhood north of Interstate 8 would also be confronted with this new structure in their mid-ground to distant views. While mitigation measures are proposed to lessen the impact, the visual impact resulting from the proposed development of Lot U would remain significant and unmitigable.

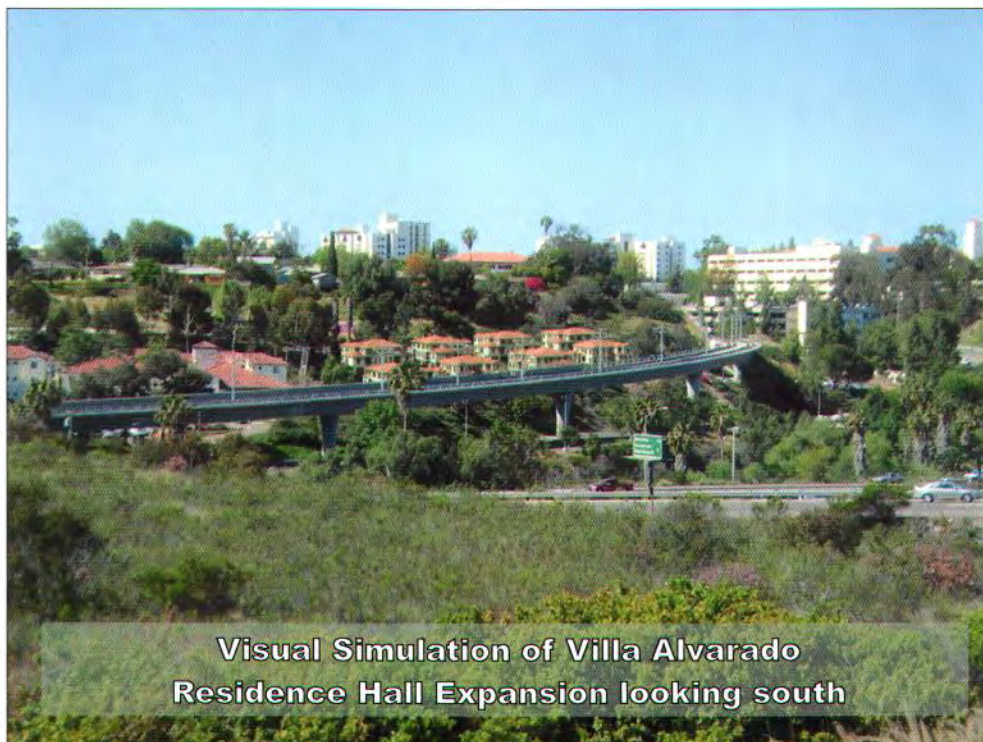
**Lot C.** The Lot C Student Housing component would result in a western expansion of the existing Villa Alvarado Residence Hall. (See **Figure 3.1-35, Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion Visual Simulation.**) The use of Lot C for residential uses would be consistent with surrounding master plan uses. Unobstructed views of the proposed 2-story buildings would be visible by residents/visitors of the existing Villa Alvarado Residence Hall. The project site is shielded by the trolley tracks and vegetation to the north and a steep highly vegetated hillside to the south. Drivers along Alvarado Road would see obstructed views of the proposed residences for just a short amount of time, as would drivers on College Avenue north of Interstate 8. The site would be visible from the edge of the backyards of residences atop the mesa south of the project site. Construction could involve encroachment into the hillside and involve removal of vegetation currently shielding these residences from visibility of Lot C.

Due to this potential aesthetic change of an obstructed parking lot to less obstructed densified student housing facilities, a significant impact would occur to off-site residences south of the project site. Mitigation measures are proposed to provide light shielding and landscaping techniques to soften the change, and to require additional vegetative screening along the slope inclusive of tree planting. With mitigation, this impact would be reduced to less than significant.

#### **3.1.6.1.6 Alvarado Hotel**

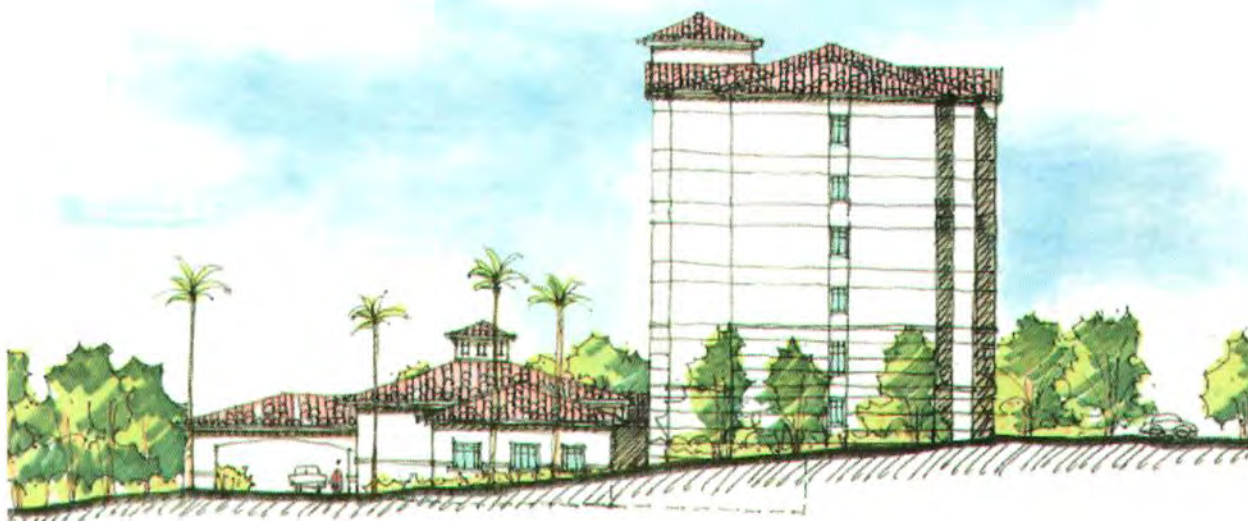
Construction of the Alvarado Hotel within Lot C would introduce a building and associated freeway signage into an area presently characterized by parking facilities. (See **Figure 3.1-36, Alvarado Hotel Rendering.**) Visual impacts would occur to sensitive receptors on Alvarado Road, residents of the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall, and trolley users. The introduction of hotel buildings and associated uses would represent a new visual theme in the area; however, this would not be an adverse visual change.





*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: DUDEK



**Rendering of Alvarado Hotel looking east**

*NOTE: Visual Simulations are conceptual in nature as detailed architectural plans have yet to be prepared.*

SOURCE: SDSU



Construction of the proposed Alvarado Hotel would result in impacts to other future surrounding land uses proposed as part of the project. Lot D, located immediately east of the proposed hotel site, is planned for academic building uses in both the Campus Master Plan 2000 and this existing master plan update. These academic uses would be exposed to a different visual environment - that of a six-story building instead of parking lots broken up by creek vegetation. However, this change would not be considered adverse.

The proposed hotel also would be visible from East Falls View Drive residences, although obstructed by the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall and mature vegetation. Exposure to this structure in these residences' mid-ground viewshed would occur; however, due to the obstruction, a significant impact would not occur. The upper story of the hotel may be visible in the distant viewshed of Navajo residents on the north side of Interstate 8. However, due to the trolley line and proximity of existing Alvarado Creek vegetation, distant views of the facility would be partially obstructed. A change in viewshed of Navajo Community residents to the north would not be considered significant.

Notwithstanding, signage directed at freeway traffic would need to be located north of the trolley tracks in order to be visible to Interstate 8 traffic. The placement of the sign feature may, therefore, be visible to Navajo Community members to the north. Because this potential impact to Navajo Community members would be significant, mitigation is proposed.

The proposed hotel's proximity to the trolley tracks would allow trolley users a foreground view of the planned hotel. This would represent a change from the existing parking lot and visible creek vegetation to a more developed site that would partially hide creekside and surrounding vegetation. While this would be a change over the existing condition, this change would not be adverse.

### **3.1.6.2 LIGHTING**

The proposed project would involve alteration of existing lighting themes. A thorough analysis of lighting conditions is dependent on architectural and defined site plans. Therefore, specific lighting impacts and appropriate mitigation measures are provided for the project components analyzed in this EIR at a project-specific level. A general discussion of lighting impacts associated with the program-level components is provided below, with the understanding that these components will be subject to subsequent environmental review when specific design

plans are available. Notwithstanding, all future building and lighting design would be consistent with SDSU's lighting policy contained in the Physical Master Plan, Phase I.

#### **3.1.6.2.1 Alvarado Campus Lot D**

The proposed Lot D development would be primarily utilized as an academic facility with limited parking surrounding the site. Walkways and congregation nodes would be lit with high-pressure sodium fixtures, while open parking areas will be lit with SDSU's standard low-pressure sodium parking lot lighting. (See **Figure 3.1-37, Proposed Lighting Conditions - Alvarado Hotel and Lot D.**)

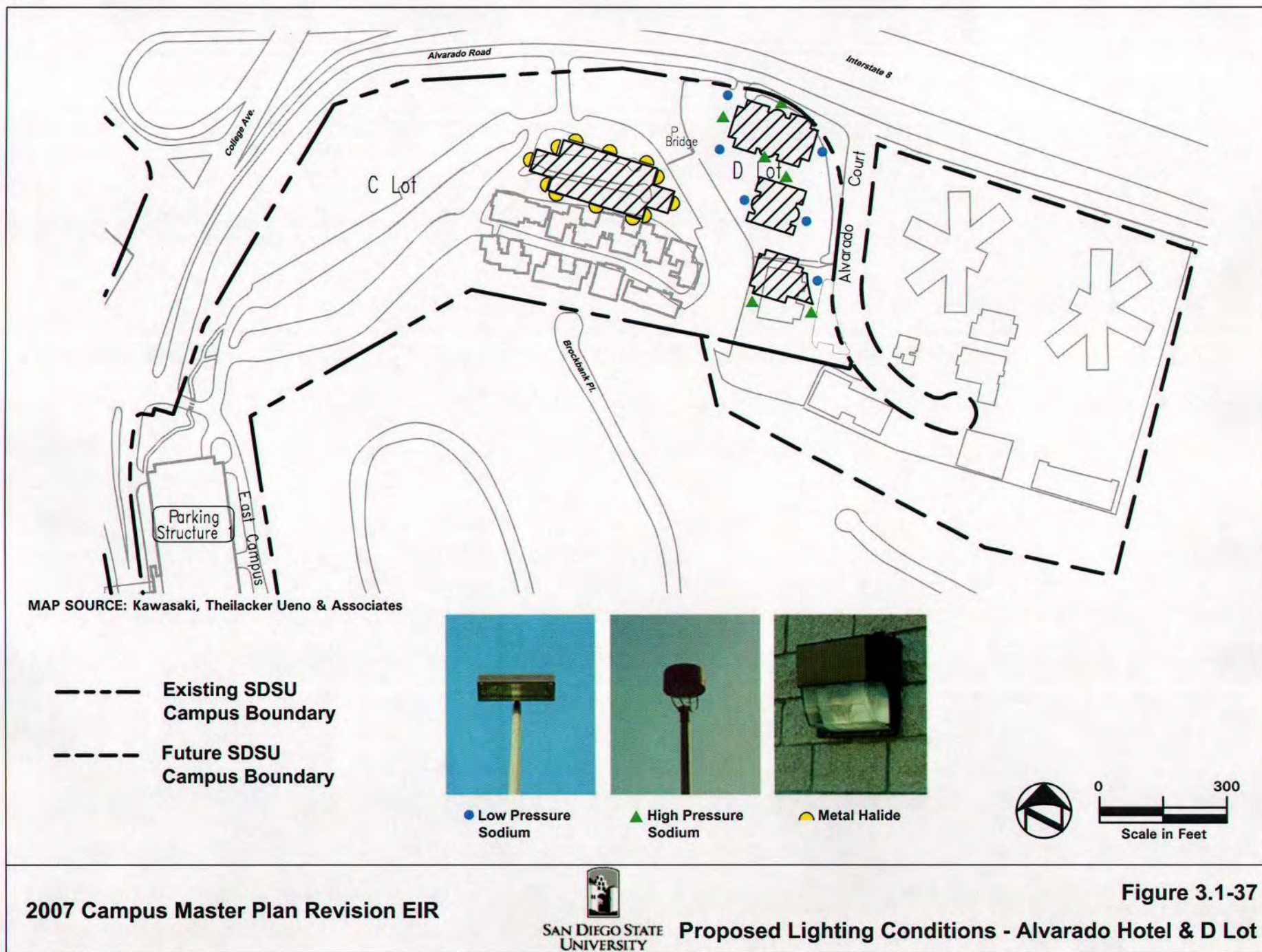
The proposed combination of low-pressure sodium and high-pressure sodium light fixtures would replace the existing low-pressure sodium parking lot lights. The existing Rehabilitation Center is lit by metal halide wall sconces. The introduction of high-pressure sodium fixtures would likely represent a decrease in amount of light from the existing condition. Therefore, due to the potential for a reduction in area lighting, a less than significant impact would occur.

The introduction of a new building and more activity, which requires additional lighting beyond existing parking lot security lighting, would result in a change in the existing lighting scheme currently onsite. The increase in intensity of land use may result in more light fixtures than in the current condition. This increase in lighting would constitute a potentially significant impact, and mitigation is proposed to reduce this impact to less than significant. The same analysis and conclusion holds true for the construction of Phase II and all subsequent phases of this proposed project component.

#### **3.1.6.2.2 Alvarado Hotel**

This facility will be used to house visiting lecturers, guests of the university, visiting parents or alumni, and will consist of a single building of hotel and affiliated uses. Walkways and congregation areas such as the front entrance and food service receiving area will be lit with high-pressure sodium fixtures, and open parking areas will be lit with SDSU's standard low-pressure sodium parking lot lighting. (See **Figure 3.1-37, Proposed Lighting Conditions - Alvarado Hotel and Lot D.**)





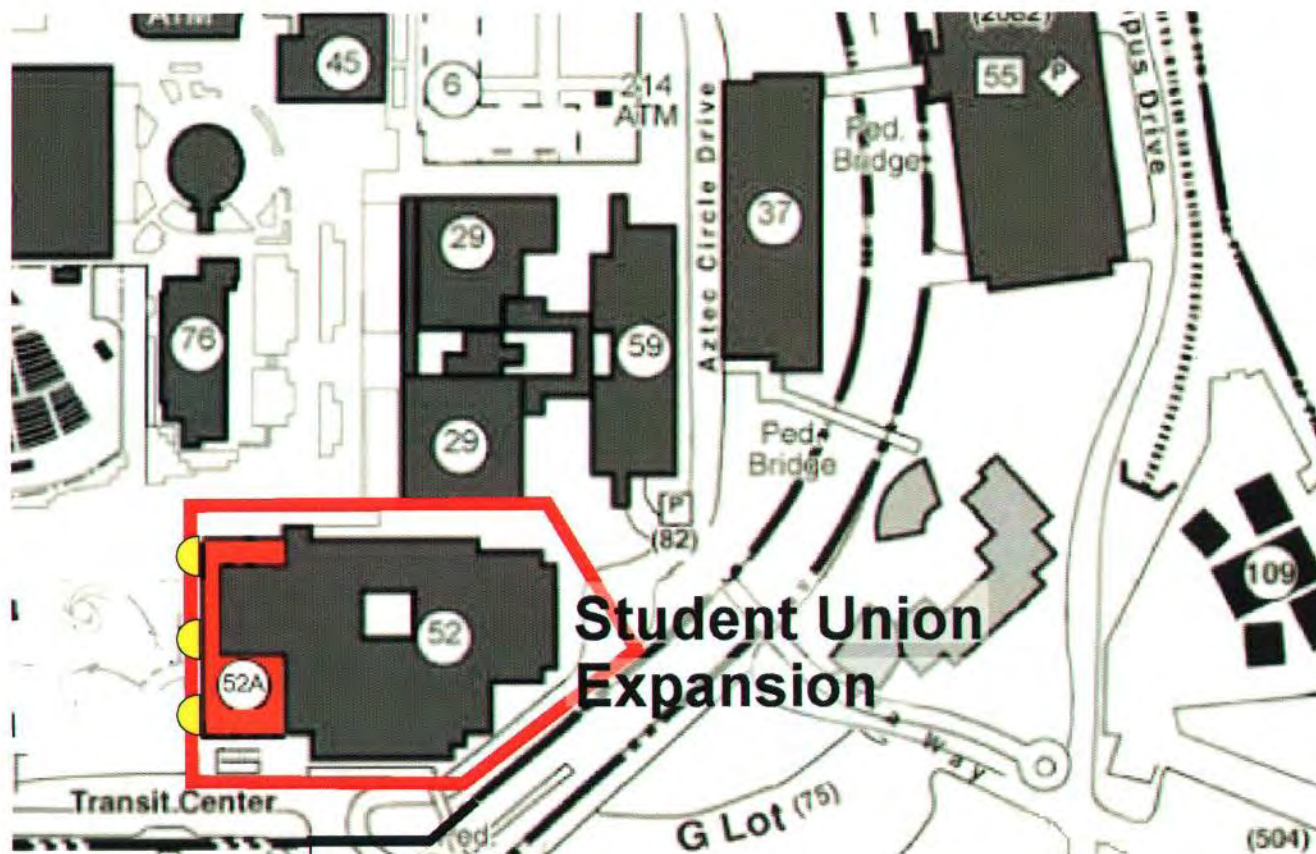
The introduction of new buildings and more activity, which requires additional lighting beyond existing parking lot security lighting, would result in a change in the existing lighting scheme currently onsite. Additionally, the introduction of buildings onto the site could result in interior lighting during evening hours. However, the introduction of high-pressure sodium fixtures would help reduce the amount of exterior lighting currently present at the site. Due to the vegetation and existing apartment uses at the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall located between sensitive East Falls View Drive receptors south of the site, a less than significant impact would occur.

The introduction of a hotel sign to this portion of the Interstate 8 corridor would represent a new light source. Existing vegetation between the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall and East Falls View Drive residents would shield this new light source from view; therefore, impacts would not occur to this neighborhood. The introduction of a new light source to Interstate 8 traffic would not constitute a significant impact as this freeway is located in an urban setting where many hotel and business light features are already present, and the speed at which motorists travel would prevent this sign from becoming a dominant visual feature on the roadside horizon. However, this new source of light would be visible from Navajo community viewers to the north of Interstate 8. While this sign would blend in with the developed nature of the Alvarado Road corridor, this feature could represent a new source of light and/or glare to north-side freeway residences, resulting in a potentially significant impact. In order to reduce this impact to less than significant, mitigation is proposed.

#### **3.1.6.2.3 Student Union Expansion**

Renovation of the west side of the existing Aztec Center requires demolition of the canopied walkway, the La Tienda/ATM building, the seating area and associated lighting structures. The proposed facilities would result in construction of improved replacement facilities, with an up to 70,000-GSF expansion. While the expansion would increase lighting in the area, this increase would not result in substantial changes as compared to existing conditions. The expanded and renovated facilities would result in lighting impacts similar to that of the existing conditions *via* use of high-pressure sodium and metal halide lights in the form of tall lighting poles, decorative wall fixtures, ground lighting, and safety lights. (See **Figure 3.1-38, Proposed Lighting Conditions - Student Union Expansion.**) Because this area would remain a center for student activity, night lighting is necessary for health and safety purposes. The renovated





 Metal Halide

Aztec Center lighting layout would be visible by the same viewers as those capable of seeing the existing lighting layout, which primarily consists of pedestrians and motorists for short duration in passing. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.

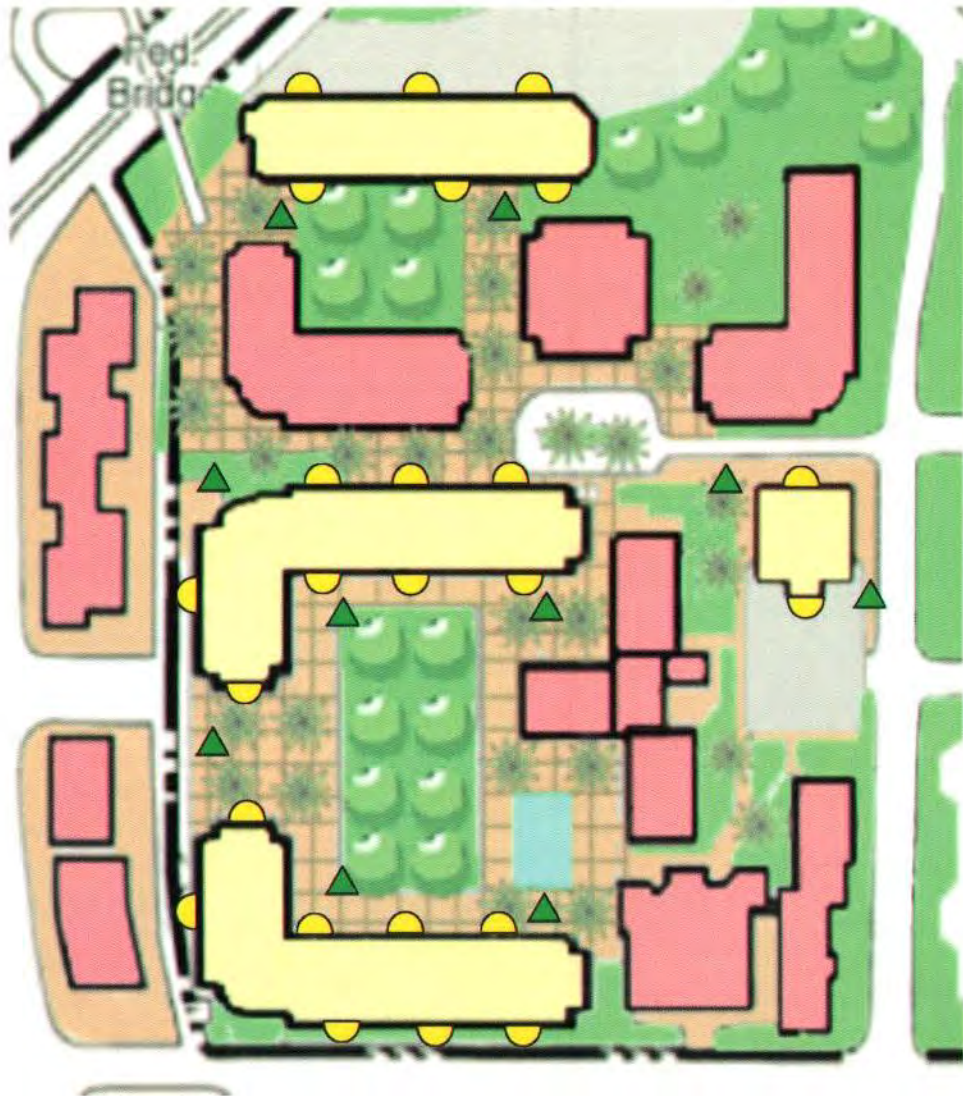
#### **3.1.6.2.4 Student Housing**

**Lot G.** Construction of a 10-story student housing structure and reduction in parking spaces would represent a new light source and change in the existing lighting regime on Lot G. The proposed lighting regime would involve a combination of high and low sodium lights along with metal halide fixtures on the buildings. (See **Figure 3.1-39, Proposed Lighting Conditions - Student Housing (G Lot and Olmeca/Maya) Phase I and II.**) In an effort to physically unite these areas, lighting on the proposed building would be similar to the 6 and 7 story residence halls south of Lot G. The introduction of buildings onto the site could result in interior lighting during evening hours. Typically, stairways are lit up to the top floor with bright safety lights.

The proposed increase in lighting associated with the change in land use of the site would affect users of Cuicacalli Hall and existing residences to the south. Because of the building height, internal lights from top floors may radiate eastward and be visible to East Falls Drive and Adobe Drive residents. However, this change would not be considered a significant impact because existing parking lot structure uses already provide an existing substantial light source adjacent to these sensitive receptor, and the new building would blend in with the existing lighting theme in this portion of campus. Nevertheless, mitigation is proposed to ensure that any potential impacts associated with the increase in lighting would be less than significant.

***Olmeca and Maya Residence Halls/Office of Housing Administration and Residential Education/Lawn North of H Lot.*** Construction of two 10-story student housing structures would represent a new light source and a change in the existing lighting regime associated with the existing East Campus Residence Hall complex. (See **Figure 3.1-39, Proposed Lighting Conditions - Student Housing (G Lot and Olmeca/Maya) Phase I and II.**) The project would replace the existing Olmeca and Maya Halls and Student Administration/Residential Education Office, which are currently minimally lit, with two structures similar to the surrounding 6 and 7 story residential halls to the north and east. High pressure sodium lights would line the walkways, and the buildings would be lit by decorative metal halide wall fixtures. In addition, these proposed buildings would result in interior lighting during evening hours. Typically,





▲ High Pressure Sodium



◐ Metal Halide

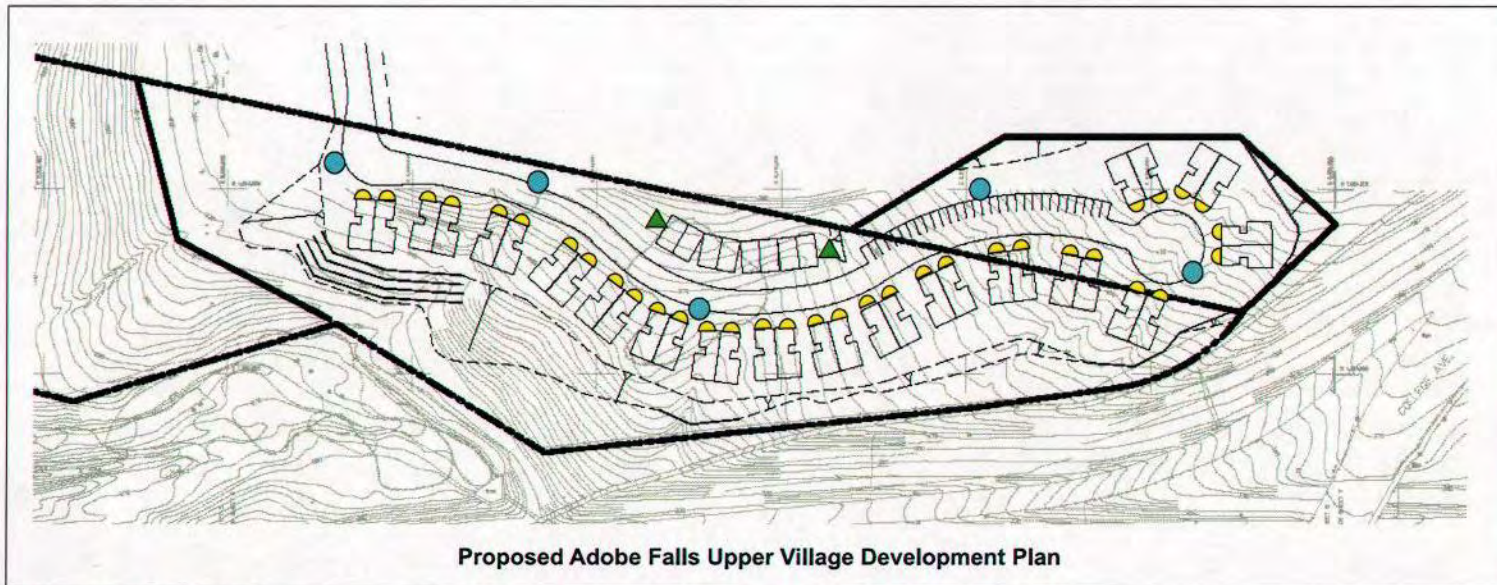
stairways are lit up to the top floor with bright safety lights visible well into the distance. The proposed structures would represent the tallest buildings in the East Campus Residence Hall complex. Surrounding residential halls and pedestrians in the East Campus vicinity would have foreground views of the revised lighting regime. However, adjacent Zura, Tenochca, and Tacuba Halls would shade residences along East Falls Drive and Adobe Road from direct lighting impacts associated with these two structures. Residents south of Montezuma Road may also be exposed to new sources of light due to the height of the buildings, however, because these buildings are proposed for location within an existing residence hall neighborhood, which is characterized as a well lit area at night due to parking emergency lighting, walkways, and lighting visible through dormitory windows, the introduction of these new structures would appear as an extension of existing campus light sources and any potential impacts would be less than significant. Nonetheless, mitigation is proposed to ensure that any impacts would be less than significant.

**Lots C and U.** Development of the 10-story residential structure on Lot U would represent an expansion of the west residential hall complex. Existing parking lot lights would be replaced with a residential structure that emits more light than currently exists on site because stairways of residential halls typically are lit with bright lights for safety purposes. Unobstructed views of these lights would be visible by residences to the west, east, and north of Interstate 8. Development of the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall would also increase the amount of light present on the existing site, though it would entail a lighting regime similar to that of the existing villas east of the project site. The lights associated with the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall would be visible to residences along East Falls View Drive. Lighting impacts resulting from the development of Lots C and U would be significant; however, mitigation is provided to reduce these impacts to a level below significant.

#### **3.1.6.2.5 Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing**

This proposed project component would result in the introduction of lighting in an area currently devoid of light. (See **Figure 3.1-40, Proposed Lighting Conditions - Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing - Upper Village.**) Lighting structures would include high-pressure sodium or mercury vapor street lights, as well as metal halide sconces on housing structures typical of residential neighborhoods. Residences along Adobe Falls Road, Capri Drive, Mill Peak Drive, Adobe Falls Court, Genoa Drive, and Del Cerro Boulevard, as well as residences

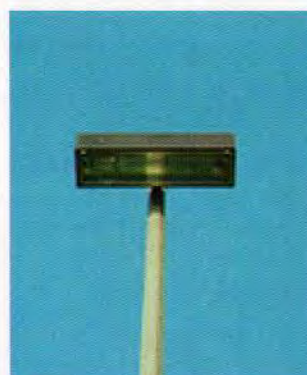





SOURCE: NOLTE ENGINEERING




 Metal Halide



 Low Pressure Sodium



 High Pressure Sodium

within the Smoke Tree condominium community would be exposed to a lighting element, from the Upper Village, where one previously did not exist. Similarly, residences along Adobe Falls Road, Mill Peak Drive, Adobe Falls Court, Genoa Drive, and Del Cerro Boulevard, as well as the Smoke Tree condominium community, would be exposed to light features, from the Lower Village, where none previously existed. However, this new lighting source would be consistent and compatible with the existing surrounding residential uses. Additionally, existing vegetation and proposed landscaping would shield residences away from proposed light sources. Nevertheless, mitigation is proposed to ensure that any potential impacts would be less than significant.

Travelers on Genoa Drive, Del Cerro Boulevard, Capri Drive, College Avenue, internal Smoke Tree roadways and Interstate-8, which all have mid-ground to distant views of the project site, and travelers on Adobe Falls Road, which has prominent views of the project, would be impacted by this new light source. However, motorists are only temporarily exposed to this night light. Although the lighting impacts would be substantial to these motorists, impacts would not be adverse.

#### **3.1.6.2.6 Campus Conference Center**

The introduction of the Campus Conference Center on an existing lawn area would represent a new light source, as compared to existing conditions. Views of this new light source would primarily be limited to pedestrians and users of the surrounding buildings for short time periods. Lighting from this structure would be restricted to on-campus viewpoints (e.g., residences looking north; passing pedestrians; users of building facilities during the early evening hours), and internal lighting would extend two-stories in height. Based on available information, this project component would most likely generate substantial impacts; however, mitigation is provided to ensure that these impacts would be reduced to a level below significant.

### **3.1.7 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

While individual project components may result in a significant impact, the overall addition of new buildings and, therefore, the appearance of intensification of urban use in the SDSU area would be consistent with the overall urban university campus setting present within this portion of the City of San Diego. These project components would be constructed in accordance with SDSU architecture and design standards outlined in the existing Campus Physical Master Plan, which was designed to ensure that a uniform aesthetic be developed throughout campus.



With the exception of the Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing project component, the overall aesthetic character of the campus would not substantially change or result in a significant adverse contribution to cumulative impacts relative to aesthetics and visual quality. As stated in the direct impacts discussion, the proposed Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing component would result in the conversion of existing open space to urban development. The permanent loss of native habitat and change to urban environment could be viewed as cumulatively considerable when viewed in combination with other projects throughout the City that result in a similar open space conversion. Therefore, the proposed project would result in a significant cumulative impact relative to aesthetics and visual quality.

### **3.1.8 MITIGATION MEASURES**

The following mitigation measures are proposed to reduce the identified potentially significant impacts to aesthetics and visual quality to a level below significant:

#### **3.1.8.1 Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing**

**AVQ-1** During the preparation of final site design plans for the Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing Upper and Lower Villages, in order to shield sensitive viewers from the proposed buildings, SDSU, or its designee, shall incorporate landscape treatment consistent with the landscape themes in the surrounding communities.

**AVQ-2** During the preparation of final site design plans for the Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing Upper and Lower Village sites, in order to minimize impacts to sensitive viewers from lighting, SDSU, or its designee, shall locate and shield all light fixtures away from sensitive viewers. Additionally, all lighting located on the north side of each building shall be of low intensity and height, and motion sensor lights shall be used to further reduce the amount of light emitted.

#### **3.1.8.2 Alvarado Campus**

**AVQ-3** During the preparation of final site design plans associated with development of the Alvarado Campus buildings, in order to shield sensitive viewers from the proposed buildings, SDSU, or its designee, shall incorporate landscape treatment consistent with landscape themes

present throughout campus and consistent with SDSU's Physical Master Plan, Phase I.

- AVQ-4** During the preparation of final site design plans associated with development of the Alvarado Campus buildings, in order to minimize impacts to sensitive viewers from lighting, SDSU, or its designee, shall locate and shield all light fixtures away from sensitive viewers. Motion sensor lights shall be used to further reduce the amount of light emitted.

#### **3.1.8.3 Alvarado Hotel**

- AVQ-5** During the preparation of final site design plans associated with development of the Alvarado Hotel, in order to shield Navajo community viewers from the hotel sign as much as possible, SDSU, or its designee, shall locate the sign at a 90 degree angle to the Interstate 8 freeway and shall not incorporate flashing or marquee elements into the sign.

#### **3.1.8.4 Campus Conference Center**

No significant impacts were identified; therefore, no mitigation is proposed.

#### **3.1.8.5 Student Housing**

- AVQ-6** During the preparation of final site design plans associated with development of the Student Housing buildings, in order to shield sensitive viewers from the proposed buildings, SDSU, or its designee, shall incorporate landscape treatment consistent with landscape themes present throughout campus and consistent with SDSU's Physical Master Plan, Phase I.

- AVQ-7** During the preparation of final site design plans associated with development of the Student Housing buildings, in order to minimize impacts to sensitive viewers from lighting, SDSU, or its designee, shall locate and shield all light fixtures away from sensitive viewers. Motion sensor lights shall be used to further reduce the amount of light emitted.



**AVQ-8** During the preparation of final site design plans associated with development of the Villa Alvarado Residence Hall Expansion, in order to soften the visibility of the proposed buildings from sensitive viewers atop the mesa south of the project site, SDSU, or its designee, shall incorporate vegetative screening along the slope south of the project site.

#### **3.1.8.6 Student Union Expansion**

No significant impacts were identified; therefore, no mitigation is proposed.

#### **3.1.9. LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

The proposed project would result in potentially significant impacts to aesthetics and visual quality relative to the Adobe Falls Faculty/Staff Housing, Alvarado Campus, Alvarado Hotel, and Student Housing components of the proposed project. The proposed mitigation would reduce the identified impacts associated with development of the Alvarado Campus and Alvarado Hotel to a level below significant.

However, the potentially significant aesthetic and visual quality impacts associated with the conversion of open space/natural habitat on the Adobe Falls site to residential housing would remain significant and unavoidable after implementation of the proposed mitigation measures. Additionally, the potentially significant impacts to aesthetics and visual quality associated with development of 10-story residence hall buildings on Lot G, Lot U, and the existing Olmeca and Maya Residence Hall sites would remain significant and unavoidable after implementation of the proposed mitigation measures.