

## IV.K VISUAL RESOURCES

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the potential changes in visual character that would result from implementation of the proposed project. Also evaluated are the impacts of light and glare, and the impact of changes in shade and shadow patterns.

### 2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### a. Visual Character

The proposed Herald Examiner project would be located in the South Park area of Downtown Los Angeles. The visual character of Downtown Los Angeles is urban with a variety of building heights, building types, and densities. High-rise tower buildings are primarily located north of the project sites in the Civic Center, Bunker Hill, and Financial Core areas of the Central City Community Plan.

A few high-rise tower buildings are located in the South Park area in the immediate vicinity of the project, including the SBC Tower and in the Historic Core of the Central City Community Plan Area.

The Historic Core area of the Central City, located north of the project sites, has a number of historic buildings that were developed as the “pueblo” of Los Angeles expanded in the 1800’s.<sup>1</sup> Two National Register Historic Districts have been identified in the Historic Core area of Downtown Los Angeles: (1) the Spring Street Financial District between 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets; and (2) the Broadway Theater District between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets. The project sites are located just south of the Broadway Theater District and Financial District boundaries.

Southwest of the South Park area is the Convention Center / Arena area, which consists of large, mid-rise buildings that house the Staples Center and the Los Angeles Convention Center and surrounding parking and other entertainment uses. East of the project sites is the South Market area, which also consists of mid-rise buildings, which are primarily associated with the Fashion Industry and Fashion District of Los Angeles.

Each of the three project sites and their surroundings are discussed separately below. Refer to **Section III, General Description of Environmental Setting**, for photographs of the project sites and detailed descriptions of surrounding land uses.

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<sup>1</sup> Central City Community Plan. City of Los Angeles Planning Department.

### ***Broadway Site***

The Broadway site, which is currently developed with the historic Broadway building, is located on the southwest corner of Broadway and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, immediately east of the Hill Street site and north of the SBC Tower. North of the site is a restaurant, church, corner-store market, and buildings used for commercial purposes. The northwest corner of 11<sup>th</sup> and Hill has a row of restaurants starting with Tony's Burger. West of the site, on 11<sup>th</sup> Street, is a manufacturing building, a Bank of America, and the SBC Tower. South of the site, on 12<sup>th</sup> Street, is a parking structure. East of the site contains a mixture of paved parking lots and roadside eateries. The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Job Corps building is located on the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway. The northeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway is a building used for office and retail purposes. These and other surrounding land uses are shown in **Figure III-1, Surrounding Land Uses**.

Traveling north and south along Broadway and/or westbound along 11<sup>th</sup> Street provides views of the existing Broadway building, which formerly housed the Hearst Corporation's *Herald Examiner* newspaper operations. As discussed in detail in **Section IV.L, Cultural Resources**, the Broadway building has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Resources, is listed in the California Register of Historic Resources and is designated as Historic-Cultural Monument No. 178 in the City of Los Angeles.

The Broadway building is an example of the Mission Revival architectural style. The cast-in-place concrete and concrete encased structural steel structure is a 103,555-square-foot building with five stories. The tan stucco-like exterior is capped by red-tile hipped and gabled roofs surmounted with a series of blue and yellow tile domes. A five-story central pavilion provides the focal point of the rectangular shaped structure. The building is located on a 41,859-square-foot lot and has a total floor area of approximately 103,500 square feet. The structure is 320 feet long and 110 feet wide with heights of 45 feet and 125 feet (at the dome). The central dome is 35 feet in diameter and 30 feet in height.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Hill Street Site***

The Hill Street site is located on the southeast corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Hill Street, immediately west of the Broadway site and north of the SBC Tower building. The surrounding visual character is the same as the Broadway building discussed above.

Traveling north and south on Hill Street and/or eastbound on 11<sup>th</sup> Street provides views of the existing Press building located on the Hill Street site. Constructed in 1948, the Press building is located on a

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<sup>2</sup> Cultural Resources Technical Report. Historic Resources Group. February 2006.

46,220-square-foot lot and is constructed of concrete encased structural steel with exterior walls of reinforced concrete block. The existing 74,512-square-foot building consists of three stories including a basement, sub-basement level and mezzanine level. The majority of floor space of the first and mezzanine levels, which was the former location of the printing presses, is open to the basement. The basement level extends north to 11<sup>th</sup> Street, under the surface parking at the northwest corner of the property and was originally used for paper storage. The building has a complete second floor and approximately 7,600 square feet on a third floor at the northwest corner of the building. A bridge connecting the second floor of the Press building to the second floor of the Broadway building covers a loading dock area below.

The Press building has not been found eligible for listing in either the National Register of Historic Resources or California Register of Historic Resources, as discussed in detail in the Cultural Resources Technical Report.

### ***12<sup>th</sup> Street Site***

The 12<sup>th</sup> Street site is currently a paved parking lot located at the southeast corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway. Commercial buildings are located to the south of the site, including the Club Starlight, a warehouse, retail buildings, and two paved parking lots. North of the site is a paved parking lot and retail buildings, including a wig factory. West of the site is a parking structure, and east of the site are fashion and jewelry retail shops and a plaza. An easterly view includes the Channel 8 news tower.

### **b. Off-Site Views**

Existing views of the project sites from seven off-site vantage points are described below. The vantage point locations relative to the project sites are depicted in **Figure IV.K-1, Vantage Point Locations**. Photographs of each of the off-site views are provided in **Figures IV.K-2, Off-Site Views from Vantage Points 1 & 2**, through **IV.K-4, Off-Site Views from Vantage Points 5 & 6**. The off-site view descriptions focus primarily on the Broadway and Hill Street sites to provide a background for the visual impact analysis.

### ***Southwest Corner of South Broadway and Pico Boulevard***

When looking north on South Broadway from the southwest corner of Broadway and Pico Boulevard, several prominent structures are in view. These structures include the SBC Tower and Anjac Fashion building at 830 South Broadway. The Anjac building is 11 stories, cement-sided and fronted with brick and gothic detail. A portion of the United Artists Theatre can be seen beyond the Anjac Fashion building. Across Broadway to the east, the office building at the corner of 11<sup>th</sup> Street and South Broadway, a

building of similar color and material but noticeably taller, represents the most visually prominent feature from this vantage point.

To the east, a series of buildings contribute to the dense urban aesthetic of the area. These include the Harris Casuals building, a mid-rise, light colored cement building; a mid-rise structure with a staggered glass façade; and the Jonathan Martin building, a light pink cement mid-rise building. The surface parking lot currently occupying the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site is also visible to the north from this vantage point.

### ***Southeast Corner of South Broadway and 12<sup>th</sup> Street***

When looking northwest on South Broadway, from the southeast corner of South Broadway and 12<sup>th</sup> Street, towards the Broadway and Hill Street sites, the view is similar to that described for the vantage point at the southwest corner of South Broadway and Pico Boulevard. From this position, the portion of the United Artists Theatre that was visible one block south cannot be seen. However, small portions of three high-rise structures located in the Financial District can be seen beyond the Broadway building, including the 73-story U.S. Bank Tower.

### ***Southeast Corner of South Broadway and Olympic Boulevard***

When looking south along South Broadway from the southeast corner of South Broadway and Olympic Boulevard, the Broadway site is the only proposed project site visible from this position. When scanning from east to west, a series of low- to high-rise structures are in view. The easternmost structures within this view include brightly colored low-rise structures amid mid-rise structures of muted hues. Beyond a teal, low-rise structure, the northern façade of the Harris Casuals building can be seen. Adjacent to the west is the YWCA Job Corps building. These two buildings appear similar in color and material. Across South Broadway to the west, the mid-rise attachment to the SBC Tower, the Broadway building, and the Anjac Fashion building are visually prominent. From this vantage point, the Anjac Fashion building is the most striking feature. North of the Anjac Fashion building on South Broadway are several single-story commercial structures, some with brightly painted façades and signage.

### ***Southeast Corner of South Broadway and 9<sup>th</sup> Street***

From this vantage point, none of the proposed project sites are visible. Prominent visual features from this position include light colored, mid-rise structures along the east side of South Broadway, the mid-rise portion of the SBC Tower, the Anjac Fashion building, and the United Artist Theatre.

**Figure IV.K-1 Vantage Point Locations**

**Figure IV.K-2 Off-Site Views from Vantage Points 1 & 2**

**Figure IV.K-3 Off-Site Views from Vantage Points 3 & 4**

**Figure IV.K-4 Off-Site Views from Vantage Points 5 & 6**

### ***Southeast Corner of Hill Street and Olympic Boulevard***

When looking south, towards the proposed project sites from this vantage point, the Anjac Fashion building and the SBC Tower are the most prominent components of the view. The light beige concrete north and west façades of the Anjac Fashion building are visible. The structural separation of the building into two twin sections is apparent from this position. In addition to the Anjac Fashion building, signage and a mid-rise, grey concrete structure characterize the east side of Hill Street from this vantage point. Across Hill Street, a five-story brick building adjacent to the SBC Tower features a conspicuous mural on its north side. An adjacent surface parking lot, a billboard and several one-story businesses complete the south-facing view from this position.

### ***Northwest Corner of Hill Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street***

The Hill Street and Broadway sites can be seen clearly from the northwest corner of Hill and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets. In addition to the existing Broadway and Hill Street buildings, the Eastern Columbia building, United Artists Theatre, Anjac Fashion building, YWCA Job Corps building, and the SBC Tower are visually prominent from this location.

### ***Interstate 110 and Jefferson Boulevard***

The Interstate 110 (I-110) is a State Scenic Highway located immediately south and west of Downtown Los Angeles. When looking north and slightly east from the northbound I-110, the skyline of Downtown Los Angeles can be seen clearly. Two distinct clusters of mid- and high-rise buildings define the skyline from this view: the South Park area and Financial District. Mid- to high-rise structures are in view, including the U.S. Bank Tower, Aon Center and the 777 Tower.

### **c. Scenic Vistas**

The project sites are located in the heart of the Central City area of Los Angeles, approximately three-quarters of a mile east of I-110 and approximately one-half mile north of the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10). As discussed in the Initial Study prepared for the project, the skyline of Downtown Los Angeles forms a panoramic vista visible from numerous vantage points throughout the Los Angeles region. The Scenic Highway Plan, an element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan adopted in 1978, designated a portion of I-110 as a Scenic Highway due to the availability of views of the downtown skyline. The project would be set within the existing urban and high-rise setting of Downtown Los Angeles. Views from the project sites are of buildings and other urban features immediately surrounding each project site. The grid street layout does allow for longer distance views of tower buildings in the Financial District and Historic Core

of Downtown Los Angeles. A description of the view of the skyline from I-110 and Jefferson Boulevard is provided above.

#### **d. Shade and Shadow**

Shade can adversely affect visual character if shadow-sensitive land uses are denied expected sunlight. Though all land use types benefit from solar access, residential uses are generally recognized as the most shadow sensitive, primarily because shading can eliminate passive solar heating, and thus, cause increased energy consumption. Exterior recreation spaces and other gathering places are also considered shadow-sensitive uses.

The extent and direction of a shadow is dependent upon the angle of the sun, which changes throughout the day, depending on the time of day and the time of year. The sun traverses the southern sky from east to west. As a result, morning shadows are cast to the west, midday shadows are cast to the north and afternoon shadows are cast to the east. The longest shadows are cast in the morning and evening and during the winter months. The shortest shadows are cast at midday and during the summer months.

Shadows cast from the existing structures on the Broadway and Hill Street project sites primarily shade adjoining streets and sidewalks. Shadows are also cast by surrounding structures, particularly the taller structures in the area such as the SBC Tower building, the YWCA Job Corps building, parking structures and other surrounding multiple story commercial buildings. **Figures IV.K-5, Herald Examiner Building Autumnal Equinox, September 21 8:00 AM, through IV.K-10, Herald Examiner Building Winter Solstice, December 21 3:30 PM,** show the existing shadows cast in the Broadway and Hill Street project vicinity during the Autumn Equinox and Winter Solstice in the morning, afternoon and noon time. The 12<sup>th</sup> Street site currently has no structures on it, and therefore, does not generate or cast any shadows.

#### **e. Nighttime Lighting**

The site is located in an urban setting characterized by high levels of nighttime lighting. Nighttime lighting sources include street lighting on surrounding roadways, such as Broadway, 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Main Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Harbor and Santa Monica Freeways; security lighting of neighboring buildings and land uses; interior nighttime lighting of offices and other uses surrounding the project sites emanating from windows; and general urban lighting associated with being set in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles. The fixtures used to illuminate the existing parking lots and the SBC Tower buildings are a substantial source of light in the immediately project vicinity.

**Figure IV.K-5 Herald Examiner Building Autumnal Equinox, September 21 8:00 AM**

**Figure IV.K-6 Herald Examiner Building Autumnal Equinox, September 21 12:00 PM**

**Figure IV.K-7 Herald Examiner Building Autumnal Equinox, September 21 5:00 PM**

**Figure IV.K-8 Herald Examiner Building Winter Solstice, December 21 9:00 AM**

**Figure IV.K-9 Herald Examiner Building Winter Solstice, December 21 12:00 PM**

**Figure IV.K-10 Herald Examiner Building Winter Solstice, December 21 3:30 PM**

Reflective light or glare is primarily a daytime phenomenon caused by sun light reflecting from highly finished surfaces, such as window glass or other reflective materials, and to a lesser degree from lightly colored surfaces. Typically, the primary cause of adverse glare is buildings with exterior façades of highly reflective glass or mirror-like material that reflect the sun when it is at a low angle following sunrise and prior to sunset. Nighttime illumination of commercial buildings causes light to be cast onto surrounding uses. The existing structures on the sites do not presently create substantial glare as these buildings have either façades of concrete, stucco, non-reflective glass or other non-reflective materials. Most of the glare of light is currently directed from the SBC Tower buildings, which have a dark glassy surface. Because the glass is of a dark color, the reflectivity is reduced.

### 3. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

#### a. Central City Community Plan

The Central City Community Plan of the City of Los Angeles General Plan includes urban design objectives designed to guide the orderly development of streets and public open spaces, primarily for pedestrians in the downtown environment.<sup>3</sup> Objectives include:

- To create a series of street types, unique to downtown. Define individual building criteria that would address bulk, profile, placement and street walls;
- To develop parking design criteria, whether applied to garages, open air lots or integrally within other buildings, that create places that provide safety, comfort and convenience for the pedestrian; and
- To improve the pedestrian environment.

Specifically for the South Park area of downtown, the following additional objectives are identified:<sup>4</sup>

- To provide a major open space focus for this residential neighborhood and establish a network of well-landscaped streets, mini-parks and mid-block paseo in order to create a garden City environment; and
- To complete the Hope Street Promenade as a well-landscaped, mixed-use street detailed for the pedestrian and linking South Park neighborhoods to the Financial Core.

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<sup>3</sup> Central City Community Plan. City of Los Angeles Planning Department. p. V-1.

<sup>4</sup> Central City Community Plan. City of Los Angeles Planning Department. p. V-2.

## 4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

### a. Significance Criteria

The *L.A. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Thresholds Guide* requires that the determination of impacts to visual resources are made on a case-by-case basis, considering the following factors:

#### *Visual Character*

- The amount or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community or localized area which would be removed, altered, or demolished;
- The amount of natural open space to be graded or developed;
- The degree to which proposed structures in natural open areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site, through appropriate design, etc;
- The degree of contrast between the proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image;
- The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from existing style or image of the area due to density, height, bulk, setback, signage, or other physical elements;
- The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetics value; and
- Applicable guidelines and regulations.

#### *Scenic Vistas*

- The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (such as natural topography; settings; man-made or natural features of visual interest and resources, such as mountains or the ocean);
- Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor or parkway;
- The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption or minor diminishment); and
- The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path or trail, as opposed to a single, fixed vantage point.

#### *Shade and Shadow*

- A project impact would normally be considered significant if shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than 3 hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April) or for more than 4 hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October).

### *Nighttime Lighting*

- The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources; and
- The extent to which project lighting would spill off the project sites and effect adjacent light-sensitive areas.

## **b. Project Impacts**

### *Visual Character*

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the construction of a new 23-story structure on the Hill Street site, a new 37-story structure on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site, the rehabilitation of the existing five-story historic Broadway building on the Broadway site and implementation of the proposed Streetscape Plan, as shown in **Figure II-11, Streetscape Plan, in Section II, Project Description**. The proposed buildings would be approximately 280 feet, 435 feet and 125 feet, respectively, from street level to the top of the highest point of the roof. The exterior of the new Hill Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street buildings would be mainly composed of a concrete wall structural system, continuous concrete balconies with operable glazed openings with the sunscreen framed on the outside of the balconies (see **Figures IV.K-11, Hill Street Building Elevation, and IV.K-12, 12<sup>th</sup> Street Building Elevation**). The elevational materials may include terra-cotta red cement fiberboard, glass fiber reinforced concrete or pre-finished sheet metal. The exterior of the Broadway building would be composed of the existing material, which is mainly painted concrete. The proposed heights of the new tower buildings, relative to the existing tower buildings located in the vicinity of the project are shown in **Figure II-8, Building Height Comparisons, in Section II, Project Description**, of this EIR. As shown in this figure, the comparative heights of the new buildings are of a relative proportion to surrounding buildings, and specifically, the neighboring SBC Tower building.

An approximately 50-foot-wide courtyard would separate the Broadway building and Hill Street building by providing setback separation as well as geometric and organizational links between the two structures (see **Figure IV.K-13, Schematic for Courtyard Between Broadway and Hill Street Buildings**). A landscaped courtyard between the two buildings would include a series of tiered gardens, separated by hedges and seat walls. The size and scale of each tier would be derived from the original structural grid of the Broadway building. The grid of the Hill Street building would also play a part in organizing the garden tiers and hedges. The proportions of the courtyard would be established by the Broadway building. A setback would exist on the courtyard façade of the Hill Street building. The height of the setback would be controlled by the roofline of the Broadway building.

The façade of the Hill Street building would bend towards the courtyard to reveal views of one of the three story domed bell towers of the Broadway building. The penthouse structure at the top of the Hill Street building would relate to the central dome penthouse space and cupola of the adjacent historic Broadway building.

The proposed project would also include a streetscape program that would connect the three sites and enhance the pedestrian experience. The intent of the program is to create a unified environment for the three parcels included in the proposed project. Proposed elements within the streetscape plan may include the planting of new trees at established and consistent intervals; planting of new shrubs and groundcover, as appropriate; the creation of new, enhanced and/or renovated concrete sidewalks and street lighting fixtures; potential signage and way-finding features; and a potential new landscaped median along Broadway between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Improvements proposed in the streetscape program could include the intersections of 11<sup>th</sup> and Hill Streets, 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, 12<sup>th</sup> and Main Streets, and 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, creating a connected, unified site. Improvements along north-south streets could occur along the following:

- Broadway between 11<sup>th</sup> Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street;
- Hill Street between the alleyway at the southern edge of the Hill Street site and 11<sup>th</sup> Street; and
- Main Street along the eastern edge of the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site.

Improvements along east-west streets would occur along the following:

- 11<sup>th</sup> Street between Hill Street and Broadway; and
- 12<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and Main Street.

Impacts related to visual character are considered significant for the proposed project if:

- *The amount or relative proportion of existing features or elements that substantially contribute to the valued visual character or image of a neighborhood, community or localized area that would be removed, altered or demolished.*

The proposed project involves, in part, the removal of the surface parking lot currently on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site, the demolition of the Press building and the rehabilitation of the Broadway building. The surface parking lot is one of many in the project area and does not offer any distinct aesthetic features within the community. As determined by the Cultural Resources Technical Report prepared for the proposed project, the existing Press building does not qualify as a historical resource. In addition, the Press building does not substantially contribute to the valued visual character of the area, as it offers no distinct or aesthetically valuable features. The rehabilitation of the Broadway building would serve to enhance the visual character and contribution of the historical structure to the community. As such, no potential for significant impacts would occur with respect to the removal of visually valued features or elements in the project vicinity.

**Figure IV.K-11 Schematic for Courtyard Between Broadway and Hill Street Buildings**

**Figure IV.K-12 Schematic for Courtyard Between Broadway and Hill Street Buildings**

**Figure IV.K-13 Schematic for Courtyard Between Broadway and Hill Street Buildings**

Impacts related to visual character are considered significant for the proposed project based on:

- *The amount of natural open space to be graded or developed; and*
- *The degree to which proposed structures in natural open areas would be effectively integrated into the aesthetics of the site, through appropriate design, etc.*

No natural open space areas currently exist either on or in the vicinity of the project sites; therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not affect natural open spaces areas in the Central City area of Los Angeles, and there is no potential for significant impacts.

Impacts related to visual character are considered significant for the proposed project based on:

- *The degree to which a proposed zone change would result in buildings that would detract from existing style or image of the area due to density, height, bulk, setback, signage or other physical elements.*

As stated in **Section IV.A, Land Use**, Section 12.14 of the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code states that the proposed project sites are zoned C2, Commercial Zone, which identifies 70 specific permitted commercial and residential uses within this zone. Uses proposed for the Herald Examiner project, including residential, retail, office, commercial and parking uses, are allowed within the C2 zone. As such, no zone change would be required, and there is no potential for significant impacts.

Impacts related to visual character are also considered significant for the proposed project based on:

- *The degree of contrast between the proposed features and existing features that represent the area's valued aesthetic image; and*
- *The degree to which the project would contribute to the area's aesthetics value.*

A discussion of the changes to the off-site views resulting from project implementation from six of the seven vantage points presented above in **Subsection 2, Existing Conditions**, is provided below. An evaluation of the changes to the views from the 110 Freeway and Jefferson Boulevard is discussed under Scenic Vistas, below.

With implementation of the proposed project, views when looking north on South Broadway from the southwest corner of Broadway and Pico Boulevard would change. The 37-story high-rise structure proposed on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site would be a prominent addition to the view from this location. The high rise would obstruct views from this vantage point of the structures on the east side of Broadway, including the Harris Casuals building, staggered glass façade structure and the cement and brick structure that currently represents the most visually prominent component of this view. The view of the Broadway building would remain unobstructed and the rehabilitation is expected to represent a noticeable improvement to the Broadway building structure. The 23-story, high-rise tower building

proposed on the Hill Street site would be visible immediately beyond the Broadway building. Views of the SBC Tower and Anjac Fashion building would remain the same.

When looking northwest from the southeast corner of South Broadway and 12<sup>th</sup> Street, views of the Broadway building would only be changed by the rehabilitation of the structure and are intended to be an improvement over existing conditions. The addition of the 23-story high rise on Hill Street site would be the only visual variance from this vantage upon implementation of the proposed project, as the proposed 37-story 12<sup>th</sup> Street site high-rise building would be located directly behind this view location. The high rise on the Hill Street site would rise above the Broadway building and be clearly visible and quite prominent behind the Broadway building.

When looking south from the southeast corner of South Broadway and Olympic Boulevard, the 37-story high rise on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site would be visible from beyond the structures on the east side of South Broadway. Due to the proposed height of the structure it is anticipated to represent an obvious addition to the high-rise building aesthetic on South Broadway and in the general vicinity. The Broadway building would remain clearly visible from this location. The top of the 23-story high rise on the Hill Street site would be visible adjacent to the Broadway building and beyond the Anjac Fashion building.

When looking south from the southeast corner of South Broadway and 9<sup>th</sup> Street, currently none of the project sites are visible. The only component of the proposed project that is anticipated to be clearly visible would be the upper portion of the 37-story high-rise building on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site. This view is expected to virtually remain the same.

When looking south from the southeast corner of Hill Street and Olympic Boulevard, both the 23-story high rise on the Hill Street site and portions of the 37-story high rise on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site would be visible from this point. The Broadway building is not visible from this location. The remainder of the view would remain unchanged with project implementation.

When looking at the project sites from the northwest corner of Hill Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the view from this vantage point would change drastically with project implementation. The 23-story high rise on the Hill Street site would be a striking alteration to the existing view. Views of the existing brick and cement structure on the southeast corner of Broadway and 11<sup>th</sup> Street would be obstructed. The Broadway building would be in partial view and its rehabilitation would be an obvious improvement. The 37-story high rise on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site would also be clearly visible. Views of other prominent structures within from this vantage point, including the Eastern Columbia building, United Artists Theatre, Anjac Fashion building, YWCA Job Corps building, and the SBC Tower, would remain as they are under existing conditions.

Of the changes to the views in the project vicinity described above, views from four of the six vantage points would be altered. These four vantage points include:

- Looking north from the southwest corner of Broadway and Pico Boulevard;
- Looking northwest from the southeast corner of South Broadway and 12<sup>th</sup> Street;
- Looking south from the southeast corner of South Broadway and Olympic Boulevard; and
- Looking southeast from the northwest corner of Hill Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street.

These alterations would not result in the degradation of the aesthetic of the South Park area; however, at these vantage points, the contrast between the new Hill Street building and the rehabilitated Broadway building would be apparent. The existing Broadway building, as well as the two proposed buildings on the Hill Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street sites would have general designs that can be described as having a striking upper element sitting atop a large base with a strong presence. However, despite the similarity of upper elements sitting atop each building, the mass and height of the proposed Hill Street building is such that it would contrast with the existing historic Broadway building. To minimize contrast between the Hill Street building and the existing historic Broadway building, **MM-VR-1** is recommended. With the implementation of this mitigation measure, this potentially significant contrast would diminish the severity of the contrast; however, the aesthetic of the area in the immediate vicinity of the Broadway and Hill Street buildings would be degraded since the proposed high-rise building would contrast with the mass and height of the neighboring Broadway building. While the new Hill Street building would contrast with the neighboring Broadway building, the Hill Street building would be similar in mass and height to neighboring high-rise structures such as the SBC Tower and adjacent complex of buildings. Similarly, the high-rise building proposed on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site would be visually compatible with the area based on its proposed mass, height and materials relative to surrounding buildings. Despite the fact that these buildings would be similar in mass and height to neighboring structures, the mass and height of the Hill Street building is such that it would contrast with the adjacent Broadway building and result in a significant visual resource impact. Implementation of **MM-VR-1** would reduce the severity of the impact, although not to a less than significant level. Therefore, the project would result in an unavoidable significant impact due to the contrast between the proposed Hill Street building and the existing historic Broadway building.

Impacts related to visual character are considered significant for the proposed project if would conflict with:

- *Applicable guidelines and regulations.*

Implementation of the proposed project would be subject to the urban design objectives for the Central City area and the South Park neighborhood specifically included within the Central City Community Plan. The design, as proposed, implements these objectives through:

- Incorporating streetscape improvements to improve the pedestrian environment;
- Providing enclosed parking in subterranean and above-ground parking structures separated from the street and public spaces; and
- Providing courtyard open space between the rehabilitated Broadway building and the newly constructed Hill Street building.

Implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with applicable objectives related to urban design and the aesthetic character of the Central City or South Park neighborhood. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impacts with respect to conflicting with applicable guidelines and regulations.

### *Scenic Vistas*

Impacts related to visual character are considered significant for the proposed project based on:

- *The nature and quality of recognized or valued views (such as natural topography, settings, man-made or natural features of visual interest and resources such as mountains or the ocean);*
- *Whether the project affects views from a designated scenic highway, corridor or parkway; and*
- *The extent of obstruction (e.g., total blockage, partial interruption or minor diminishment).*

The three project sites are located in the heart of the Central City area of Los Angeles. As stated previously, a portion of the I-110 has been designated as a Scenic Highway due to the availability of views of the downtown skyline. Implementation of the proposed project would introduce new 23- and 37-story tower buildings on the Hill Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street sites, respectively, that would contribute to the expected urban visual characteristics of the skyline but would not obstruct a critical feature or interfere with its aesthetic character. The new structures would be visible from the vantage point at I-110 and Jefferson Boulevard but would not obstruct, affect, or prevent views from the designated Scenic Highway. The addition of two high-rise structures to the Downtown Los Angeles skyline would not result in the potential for significant impacts to scenic vistas.

Impacts related to scenic vistas are considered significant for the proposed project if:

- *The extent to which the project affects recognized views available from a length of a public roadway, bike path or trail, as opposed to a single, fixed vantage point.*

As stated above, the view of the Downtown Los Angeles area from I-110 would change slightly with implementation of the proposed project. Views along neighboring streets within the project vicinity,

including along Broadway, Hill, 11<sup>th</sup> Street, and 12<sup>th</sup> Street would also change with project implementation. Long-range views in the area are already limited due to the dense urban setting; however, the addition of two high-rise structures would change the views along neighboring streets as far as they are visible. These structures are intended, in part, to improve the visual character of the area and are consistent with surrounding land uses and the scale and massing of other nearby tower buildings. As such, no potential for significant impacts would occur.

### *Shade and Shadow*

Impacts related to shade and shadows are considered significant if:

- *Shadow-sensitive uses would be shaded by project-related structures for more than 3 hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April) or for more than 4 hours between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October).*

Implementation of the proposed project would change the pattern of shadow cast by the sun on the adjacent properties. Construction of the proposed mixed-use tower buildings on the Hill Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street sites would introduce new high-rise buildings in locations currently occupied by a three-story building and surface parking lot, respectively. However, shadow-sensitive uses, including residences and open space recreational areas, do not exist in the immediate vicinity of the project sites.

During summer months, the sun travels in an arc farther north than during other times of the year. As such, shadows cast during the summer do not extend as far onto other adjacent properties as would occur during the winter. The angle of the sun during the winter solstice casts the longest shadows of the year, with peak shadows occurring shortly after sunrise and before sunset.

As discussed earlier, **Figures IV.K-5 through IV.K-10** show the shadows cast in the vicinity of the Hill Street and Broadway building sites. Morning shadow patterns would extend to the west and northwest of the project. The maximum shadow lengths would occur at the winter solstice. On that day, the project would cast shadows of approximately 727 feet (Hill Street building) and approximately 1,318 feet (12<sup>th</sup> Street building) at 9:00 AM and approximately 384 feet (Hill Street building) and approximately 696 feet (12<sup>th</sup> Street building) at 12:00 PM.<sup>5</sup> Early morning shadows would fall across properties on the west side in the winter and the southwest side in the autumn. Noon shadows would be cast on properties to the northwest in the winter and properties to the west in the autumn. Afternoon shadows cast by the project would extend to the northeast in the winter and autumn. Overall, the shadows cast onto adjacent properties would not create a significant impact because the shadows cast from the neighboring SBC Tower building overlap those that would be cast by the Broadway and Hill Street buildings. In addition,

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<sup>5</sup> L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide, City of Los Angeles, Environmental Affairs Department, May 14, 1998, pp. L.3.-5

the shadows cast from the 12<sup>th</sup> Street building would not be cast upon shadow sensitive uses. Therefore, no potential for significant impacts would occur with respect to shadowing and shading sensitive uses.

### *Nighttime Lighting*

Impacts related to nighttime lighting are considered significant for the project if:

- *The change in ambient illumination levels as a result of project sources.*

New light sources introduced from the proposed project would include lighting associated with the 23-story Hill Street building and the 37-story 12<sup>th</sup> Street building. Lighting associated with the rehabilitated Broadway building would be comparable to existing lighting patterns around the building.

The existing nighttime security lighting associated with the Press building, located on the Hill Street site, would be replaced with lighting from the new Hill Street building. The Hill Street building lighting would include nighttime security lighting along the building's frontage with 11<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Hill Street to the west and the alley to the south. Lighting would also be located in the courtyard area between the new building and the rehabilitated Broadway building, at the building's pedestrian entrance and at the building's vehicle driveway.

The existing nighttime security lighting associated with the surface parking lot on the 12<sup>th</sup> Street site would be removed and replaced with new nighttime security lighting for the new tower building. The 12<sup>th</sup> Street building lighting would include nighttime security lighting along the building's frontage with 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, Broadway to the west, Main Street to the east and the alleyway to the south. Lighting would also be placed at the building's pedestrian entrance and at the building's vehicle driveway.

In addition to the exterior ground-level nighttime security lighting at the Hill Street and 12<sup>th</sup> Street buildings, interior lighting associated with the retail and residential uses would provide an additional source of nighttime illumination from these two project sites. The illumination would produce a gentle glow from each of the buildings through any uncovered windows. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not significantly change ambient illumination levels, and no potential for significant impacts would occur.

Impacts related to visual character are considered significant for the proposed project based on:

- *The extent to which project lighting would spill off the project sites and effect adjacent light-sensitive areas.*

As discussed above, project lighting would include exterior nighttime security lighting and interior lighting associated with the residential, retail, office, commercial, open space, and parking uses. Lighting

would be directed and aimed at on-site areas of the property, adjacent alleyways, sidewalks surrounding each project site, building entry points, and in the courtyard area between the Broadway and Hill Street buildings. No light-sensitive uses are located immediately adjacent to the three project sites. Therefore, the project would not have the potential to generate lighting that could spill off the project sites such that adjacent light-sensitive uses would be affected. No potential for significant impacts to light-sensitive uses would occur.

### c. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts could occur if “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Aesthetic impacts could compound if the proposed project, either on its own contributes or in combination with other projects in the surrounding vicinity, degrades the visual quality and character of the project area. The proposed project, in combination with the list of related projects identified in **Section III, General Description of Environmental Setting**, does have the potential to alter the visual character of the South Park neighborhood within the Central City Community Plan Area, although not to a level considered to be significant.

This impact is not considered to be significant because the South Park area of Downtown Los Angeles has been slated for the development of higher-density buildings on underutilized and/or vacant property. Similar to the proposed project, the related projects are visually compatible with the planned land uses and densities in the various land use plans governing the development and redevelopment of the South Park area. Therefore, no cumulatively considerable visual resource impacts are anticipated through implementation of the proposed project in combination with the identified related projects.

### *Visual Character*

The visual character of the South Park neighborhood consists primarily of mid-rise buildings associated with the Los Angeles Fashion District and historic buildings. These structures include the five-story Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising (FIDM) building and the historic Mayan Theatre. Also within the South Park neighborhood is the SBC Tower complex consisting of high-rise buildings. The South Park area is also home to the Staples Center Arena and the Convention Center. Construction of the proposed project, in combination with the identified related projects, would increase the density of land uses and general height of buildings in the South Park neighborhood, as several of the projects would be high-rise structures. Without detailed design proposals for each of the related projects, it is difficult to determine exactly how the visual character of the area would be altered. However, increasing the height and density of buildings in the South Park area is consistent with the growth and development planned

for within Central City Community Plan, as well as the Central Business District Redevelopment Plan and City Center Redevelopment Plan. All proposed projects would be subject to design review by the City of Los Angeles to assure that each is compliant with all relevant City policies. Thus, no cumulatively considerable impacts to visual character would occur through implementation of the proposed project in combination with related projects. Impacts are considered less than significant.

### *Scenic Vistas*

The proposed project sites, as well as the sites corresponding with the identified related projects, are located in the heart of the Central City area of Los Angeles. The skyline of Downtown Los Angeles forms a panoramic vista visible from several vantage points throughout the Los Angeles region. The Scenic Highway Plan, an element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan adopted in 1978, designated a portion of the I-110 as a Scenic Highway due to the availability of views of the downtown skyline. Implementation of the proposed project and related projects would introduce new high-rise and mid-rise tower buildings in the South Park neighborhood and Convention Center/Arena District that would contribute to the expected visual characteristics of the Downtown Los Angeles skyline. It is unknown how tall each of the structures proposed for the related projects would be and, therefore, difficult to determine exactly how the Los Angeles skyline would be modified. However, given the types of developments proposed for each of the related projects, it is likely that several additional mid- and high-rise structures would be constructed in the South Park area as the related projects are implemented. Each of the related projects would be subject to design review by the City of Los Angeles to assure that the visual character of the skyline is maintained from all distant vantage points, including the portion of the I-110 designated as a Scenic Highway. As such, the proposed project in conjunction with the identified related projects would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact on the Downtown Los Angeles skyline as a scenic vista.

### *Shade and Shadows*

Implementation of the proposed project in combination with the identified related projects would change the pattern of shadow cast by the sun on the properties throughout the South Park neighborhood and the Convention Center/Arena District.

During summer months, the sun travels in an arc farther north than during other times of the year. As such, shadows cast during the summer do not extend as far onto other adjacent properties as would occur during the winter. The angle of the sun during the winter solstice casts the longest shadows of the year, with peak shadows occurring shortly after sunrise and before sunset. Therefore, throughout each day, shadows would be cast in the vicinity of the proposed and related mid-rise and high-rise projects.

Morning shadow patterns would extend to the west and northwest of each project site. The maximum shadow lengths would occur at the winter solstice. Noon shadows would be cast on properties to the northwest in the winter and properties to the west in the autumn. Afternoon shadows cast by each mid-rise and high-rise tower would extend to the northeast in the winter and autumn.

In the general vicinity of the proposed and related projects, shadows are already cast onto adjacent properties from the neighboring SBC Tower buildings and other mid-rise and high-rise structures. While construction of the additional proposed mid-rise and high-rise structures would generate additional shadows and shading in the South Park neighborhood and Convention Center/Arena District, the additional shadows are not expected to create a significant cumulative impact upon shadow sensitive uses in the southern portion of the Central City Community Plan Area because the shadows cast by the new structures would primarily overlap with shadows cast by current structures. As such, a cumulatively considerable impact relating to shade and shadows would not occur. Impacts are considered less than significant.

### *Nighttime Lighting*

Each of the proposed sites corresponding to the related projects listed in **Section III, Environmental Setting**, are currently located in a dense urban environment and are a source of nighttime light in the area. Implementation of the proposed project along with the related projects in the area would result in higher density and, generally, an increase in the amount of lighting present on each site and in the greater South Park area of Downtown Los Angeles. New light sources introduced from the proposed project in combination with the identified related projects would include additional nighttime security lighting on each project site, street lighting and lighting in open spaces between buildings. In addition to the exterior ground-level nighttime security lighting at each project site, interior lighting associated with the proposed uses would provide an additional source of nighttime illumination from each project site. Each project would be subject to design review by the City of Los Angeles to assure that none of the projects generate a new substantial source of nighttime lighting aimed at light-sensitive receptors in the South Park area. The existing nighttime and security lighting throughout the South Park area and Convention Center/Arena District creates a nighttime illumination in the southern portion of the Central City Community Plan Area. Due to the urban nature of the project area and the fact that each proposed project would be removing and replacing existing on-site lighting, substantial new sources of ambient lighting affecting light-sensitive uses are not expected to generate cumulatively significant nighttime lighting impacts. Implementation of the proposed project and the identified related projects would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact with regard to nighttime lighting; therefore, impacts are less than significant.

#### d. Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce potentially significant visual resource impacts from the Hill Street building upon the historic Broadway building, however, not to a less than significant level.

MM-VR-1. The project shall incorporate the following design features in order to increase the compatibility of Hill Street building with the Broadway building.

- At the corner of Hill Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Street, the elevation of the new Hill Street building shall be set back in order to reveal the west and north (side) elevations of the historic Broadway building.
- A setback shall be provided on the courtyard façade of the Hill Street building, the height of which shall be controlled by the roofline of the Broadway building. No balconies shall occur below this back line as a reference to the presence and massing of the Broadway building.
- The ground floor of the new Hill Street building shall be 15 feet tall to create a sense of entry and grand scale, similar to the ground floor of the adjacent Broadway building.
- Large glazed openings shall wrap the ground floor, providing a view of the Broadway building from the Hill Street building.
- The materials and features of the new construction on the Hill Street site shall be distinguishable from those of the Broadway building, and shall be designed so as to reflect the historic resource in both the location and use on the east elevation of the Hill Street building that faces the Broadway building.
- The Broadway-facing façade of the Hill Street building would be designed and constructed with proportions, details and materials that frame, complement and respect the historic Broadway building to ensure its architectural significance is differentiated from the adjacent new construction.

#### e. Adverse Effects

Implementation of the proposed project would result in modifications to the aesthetic environment in the project vicinity and to some degree to the Downtown Los Angeles skyline. Based on the above analysis of the thresholds of significance, construction of the proposed Hill Street building would contrast in mass and height with the adjacent Broadway building. While **MM-VR-1** would reduce the severity of the contrast between these two buildings, and thus the significance of the impact, this mitigation measure would not fully mitigate the visual resource impact to a less than significant level. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would result in an unavoidable significant impact with respect to visual resources.