### CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

UTH CENTRAL COAST AREA SOUTH CALIFORNIA ST., SUITE 200 VENTURA, CA 93001 (805) 641 - 0142

## RECORD PACKET COPY

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Staff:

S. Hudson

Staff Report: Hearing Date:

2/22/01 3/15/01

Commission Action:

## STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

**APPLICATION NO.: 4-98-264** 

APPLICANT: Diva Partners LP

AGENTS: Timmy Javid, Shahab Ghods, and Richard Scott

PROJECT LOCATION: 33555, 33565, and 33575 Pacific Coast Highway, Malibu; Los

Angeles County.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Construction of three separate two-story single family residences (7,591 sq. ft., 7,956 sq. ft., and 7,987 sq. ft. in respective size) on 3 separate lots; 3 concrete terraced patios (3,407 sq. ft., 2,581 sq. ft., and 2,510 sq. ft. in respective size); approximately 2,600 linear ft. of retaining walls not to exceed 6 ft. in height; a 360 linear ft. 6 ft. high privacy wall or fence with 3 separate gates; 3 swimming pools/spas; 3 driveways, 3 septic systems; one 330 sq. ft. guest house above a detached garage; 1 tennis court; and approximately 8,257 cu. yds. of grading (3,502 cu. yds. of cut and 4,755 cu. yds. of fill).

	33555 PCH	<u>33565 PCH</u>	<u>33575 PCH</u>
Lot area:	5.6 acres	5.6 acres	5.6 acres
Building coverage:	4,468 sq. ft.	4,793 sq. ft.	4,793 sq. ft.
Pavement coverage:	6,504 sq. ft.	13,268 sq. ft.	6,503 sq. ft.
Landscaped Area:	24,000 sq. ft.	24,000 sq. ft.	24,000 sq. ft.
Ht. abv. ext. grade:	28 ft.	28 ft.	28 ft.

**LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED:** City of Malibu Approval in Concept; City of Malibu Environmental Health Department Approval in Concept.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS: Updated Preliminary Soils and Engineering Geologic and Percolation Report by GeoSystems dated 11/18/98; Updated Preliminary Percolation Test Report by GeoSystems dated 9/26/97; Updated Soils and Engineering Geologic Report by GeoSystems dated 11/15/96; Updated Soils and Engineering Geologic Report by GeoSystems dated 12/23/93; and the Soils and Engineering Geologic Investigation Report by GeoSystems dated 8/25/89; Coastal Development Permit 5-91-174 (Javid Development).

### **SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **denial** of the proposed project. The proposed development will be highly visible from Pacific Coast Highway (designated as a coastal scenic highway by the previously certified Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan) and will involve a significant amount of grading and landform alteration. Coastal Act Section 30251 requires that visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected, landform alteration shall be minimized, and where feasible, degraded areas shall be enhanced and restored.

In the case of the proposed project, several feasible alternatives exist that would serve to significantly reduce landform alteration on site and minimize adverse effects to public views from Pacific Coast Highway consistent with the requirements of Section 30251. Such alternatives include: (1) reduce the size of the structures, (2) redesign structures using a split-level design which follows the natural topography of the site rather than the proposed standard construction design which requires the use of large flat building pads, (3) relocate structures further downslope, (4) delete or reduce the size of the terraced concrete patios, and (5) reduce the number and length of the driveways and driveway turnaround areas. Implementation of any or all of the above alternatives to the proposed project would still allow for residential development to occur on site. Therefore, as proposed, the project would not serve to minimize grading and landform alteration or adverse effects to public views and is, therefore, not consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

## I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

**MOTION:** 

I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit 4-

98-264 for the development proposed by the applicant.

### STAFF RECOMMENDATION OF DENIAL:

Staff recommends a **NO** vote. Failure of this motion will result in denial of the permit and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

#### RESOLUTION TO DENY THE PERMIT:

The Commission hereby denies a coastal development permit for the proposed development on the ground that the development will not conform with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and will prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3. Approval of the permit would not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act because there are feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen the significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

## II. Findings and Declarations

The Commission hereby finds and declares:

## A. Project Description and Background

The proposed project is for construction of three separate two-story single family residences (7,591 sq. ft., 7,956 sq. ft., and 7,987 sq. ft. in respective size) on 3 separate lots; 3 concrete terraced patios (3,407 sq. ft., 2,581 sq. ft., and 2,510 sq. ft. in respective size); approximately 2,600 linear ft. of retaining walls not to exceed 6 ft. in height; a 360 linear ft. 6 ft. high privacy wall or fence with 3 separate gates; 3 swimming pools/spas; 3 driveways, 3 septic systems; one 330 sq. ft. guest house above a detached garage; 1 tennis court; and approximately 8,257 cu. yds. of grading (3,502 cu. yds. of cut and 4,755 cu. yds. of fill).

The project site consists of three separate vacant parcels, each approximately 5.6 acres in size, and located adjacent to each other on the north (landward) side of Pacific Coast Highway (Exhibit 1). The surrounding area is primarily rural in nature with some residential development. The three separate parcels on site are each characterized as long, narrow rectangular lots (approximately 2,000 ft. in length along their north/south property lines and only 120 – 125 ft. in width along their west/east property line fronting Pacific Coast Highway). The site is characterized as hillside terrain with slopes ascending to the north from Pacific Coast Highway. Slopes on site generally tend to increase in steepness further from the highway. The "front" portion of the site (adjacent to the highway) consists of relatively gentle slopes with gradients between 5:1 (11°) to 2:1 (26°). The "rear" portion of the site is dominated by significantly steeper slopes with gradients of more than 1:1 (26°).

Pacific Coast Highway is designated as a coastal scenic highway by the previously certified County of Los Angeles Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan (LUP). In addition, the subject site is designated as a "Priority One" (highest scenic value) viewshed for Pacific Coast Highway by the LUP. All native vegetation has been previously removed from the portion of the site where construction is proposed; however, native chaparral vegetation is present on the upper slopes on site. Hillside views from Pacific Coast Highway are available across the entire project site.

The project site has been subject to previous Commission action. The three separate parcels of the project site were created pursuant to the Commission's approval of Coastal Development Permit 5-85-309 (Harris) in 1985 for the subdivision of two lots into five lots. In addition, Coastal Development Permit (CDP) 5-91-174 (Javid) was approved by the Commission on September 11, 1991, for the construction of three single family residences ranging in size from approximately 8,000 to 9,600 sq. ft., three stables, a tennis court, two driveways, and 12,600 cu. yds. of grading (6,740 cu. yds. of cut and 5,860 cu. yds. of fill) subject to three special conditions regarding landscaping

plans, use of vertical landscaping elements to screen development from highway, and consistency with geologic recommendations. However, the applicant never satisfied the required conditions and the permit was never issued. Further, although three one-year extensions were granted by the Commission between 1993-1995, an extension request was neither requested by the applicant nor approved by the Commission in 1996 and the Commission's previous approval for the above development on site subsequently expired on September 11, 1996.

At the applicant's request, staff met with the applicant and the applicant's representatives on August 17, 1999; August 9, 2000; and December 14, 2000, regarding the current proposed application. At each meeting, the applicant was informed that staff believes that several changes to the proposed project are feasible that would reduce landform alteration and adverse effects to public views. proposed project, as originally submitted as part of this application, was for construction of three residences, three stables, a tennis court, two driveways, and 12,600 cu. yds. of grading (6,740 cu. yds. of cut and 5,860 cu. yds. of fill) consistent with the development previously approved pursuant to CDP 5-91-174. During the processing of this application, the applicant has modified the project description to: (1) reduce grading by approximately 4,343 cu. yds., (2) reduce the terraced concrete patios on each site from 6,000; 5,500; and 5,000 sq. ft. respectively to 3,407; 2,581; and 2,510 sq. ft. respectively. (3) delete three corrals. (4) reduce the second story of the easternmost residence by 200 sq. ft., and (5) relocate the westernmost structure 100 ft. further downslope and relocate the middle structure 15 ft. further upslope. In addition, the original application included the construction of only one shared driveway and turnaround for the two adjacent westernmost residences; however, the proposed project now includes the construction of separate driveways and turnarounds (with related retaining walls) for all three residences.

## **B. Visual Resources and Landform Alteration**

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states that:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinated to the character of its setting.

Coastal Act Section 30251 requires that visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected, landform alteration shall be minimized, and where feasible, degraded areas shall be enhanced and restored. In addition, to assist in the

determination of whether a project is consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act, the Commission has, in past Malibu coastal development permit actions, looked to the certified County of Los Angeles Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan (LUP) for guidance. The LUP has been found to be consistent with the Coastal Act and provides specific standards for development along the Malibu coast and within the Santa Monica Mountains. For instance, in concert with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act, Policy 125 of the LUP provides that new development shall be sited and designed to protect public views from designated scenic highways. Policy 134 provides that structures shall conform to the natural topography and that massive grading and reconfiguration of a site shall be discouraged. Further, Policy 130 of the LUP provides that new development minimize alteration of natural landforms and be sited so as to not significantly intrude into the skyline of highly scenic areas and along scenic highways.

The project site consists of three separate vacant parcels (each approximately 5.6 acres in size) on the north (landward) side of Pacific Coast Highway. Pacific Coast Highway is designated as a coastal scenic highway by the LUP. In addition, the subject site is designated as a Priority One (highest scenic value) viewshed for Pacific Coast Highway by the LUP. All native vegetation has been previously removed from the portion of the site where construction is proposed. Native chaparral vegetation is present on the upper slopes on site. Views of the hillslope from Pacific Coast Highway are available across the entire project site. Further, the Commission notes that Pacific Coast Highway is also a major coastal access route, not only utilized by local residents, but also heavily used by tourists and visitors to access several public beaches located in the surrounding area which are only accessible from Pacific Coast Highway. Public views along both the landward and seaward sides of Pacific Coast Highway have been substantially impacted or completely blocked in many areas by the construction of residential development (including grading and landform alteration, retaining walls and privacy walls, fencing, landscaping, and other residential related development). The Commission notes that although the construction of new residential development on an individual site may seem inconsequential, when viewed on a regional basis, such development results in potential cumulative adverse effects to public views and to the visual quality of coastal areas.

The proposed project is for the construction of three new residential structures (7,591 sq. ft., 7,956 sq. ft. and 7,987 sq. ft. in size respectively). The project also includes construction of large terraced concrete patio areas (approximately 3,407, 2,581, and 2,510 sq. ft. in respective size) on the downslope side of each of the separate residences. Although the three structures are immediately adjacent to each other, separate driveways (approximately 360, 400, and 600 linear ft. in respective lengths) and turnaround/parking areas are also proposed for each structure. In addition, the proposed project will require approximately 8,257 cu. yds. of grading (3,502 cu. yds. of cut and 4,755 cu. yds. of fill) and the construction of more than 2,600 linear feet of retaining walls (not to exceed 6 ft. in height). Further, a 360 linear ft., 6 ft. high privacy wall or fence with three separate gates would be constructed adjacent to the highway.

The proposed development will be highly visible from Pacific Coast Highway and will involve a significant amount of grading and landform alteration (the majority of which will involve the placement of fill to create level pad areas and driveways). Coastal Act Section 30251 requires that grading and landform alteration for new development be minimized and that the visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected. The majority of the subject site is designated by the previously certified Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan (LUP) as Mountain Land (1 residential unit/20 acres). The remaining portions of the site are designated as both Rural Land II (1 residential unit/5 acres) and Rural Land III (1 residential unit/2 acres). The three separate parcels of the project site were created pursuant to the Commission's approval of Coastal Development Permit 5-85-309 (Harris) in 1985 for the subdivision of two lots into five lots. The Commission notes that although residential development may be allowed on site, due to the constrained nature of the project site (steep hillside slopes and high visibility from public viewing areas) new development on site should be designed and located in a manner which minimizes grading and landform alteration consistent with the protection of public views along the Pacific Coast Highway corridor.

In this case, several revisions or alternatives to the proposed project plans are feasible that would significantly reduce the amount of landform alteration on site and minimize adverse effects to public views along the Pacific Coast Highway corridor. Such alternatives include: (1) reduce the size of the structures, (2) redesign structures using a split-level design which follows the natural topography of the site rather than the proposed standard construction design which requires the use of large flat building pads, (3) relocate structures further downslope, (4) delete or reduce the size of the terraced concrete patios, and (5) reduce the number and length of the driveways and driveway turnaround areas. The Commission notes that implementation of the above revisions to the proposed project would still allow for residential development of the subject site to occur.

At the applicant's request, staff has met with the applicant's representatives on several occasions to discuss the above recommended revisions to the project plans. Although the applicant has made some revisions to the originally submitted project plans, the applicant has not submitted project plans that include the above changes. In fact, the Commission notes that some changes made by the applicant to the originally proposed project plans (including construction of a third separate driveway and turnaround area with associated grading and retaining walls) will actually result in greater adverse effects to public views than the originally submitted project.

#### 1. Reduce Size of Structures

The Commission notes that construction of a large structure on a steeply sloping site typically requires a significantly greater amount of grading and landform alteration than would otherwise be required in order to construct the same structure on a gently sloping or relatively level site. In this case, the subject site is characterized by the presence of relatively steep slopes and the proposed development includes the construction of

three relatively large residential structures (7,591 sq. ft., 7,956 sq. ft. and 7,987 sq. ft. in size respectively). Approximately 4,155 cu. yds. of the 8,257 cu. yds. of total grading for the proposed project is specifically for construction of the three large flat building pads for the residences and terraced patios. The Commission notes that construction of smaller residential structures on the steeply sloping site would require significantly less grading and landform alteration, would minimize adverse effects to public views, and would still allow for residential development to occur on site. As such, the Commission notes that construction of smaller residences on the hillside project site would serve to reduce grading and landform alteration and would still allow for some residential development to occur on site.

### 2. Redesign the Structures

The proposed project includes a substantial amount of grading to create relatively level pad areas on the steeply sloping site. For instance, on the westernmost lot, approximately 1,455 cu. yds. of grading (98 cu. yds. of cut and 1,357 cu. yds. of fill) is proposed in order to create the flat building pad area for the structure and large terraced patio area. The Commission notes that almost all proposed grading on this lot is for the placement of fill (approximately 93%) and will also require the construction of retaining walls in order to retain the large fill pad. However, the Commission notes that the use of a split-level design (the use of several small pads cut into the hillside) would not require the creation of large uniform level pad areas, would minimize grading and landform alteration, and would allow the development to conform to the natural topography of the site.

Another method of minimizing the visual obtrusiveness of new development in hillside areas is to excavate (or sink) the structure deeper into the existing grade. By lowering, or "sinking," the elevation of the uphill portion of the structure, significantly less fill is required to create a level pad for the downslope portion of the structure. This alternative, although it would not reduce the amount of required excavation, would reduce: (1) the necessity for the placement of fill, (2) the use of retaining walls to support large fill pads, and (3) the extent that the proposed structures would intrude into the skyline and public views.

### 3. Relocate Structures Further Downslope

The subject site is characterized by relatively steep hillside slopes. Gradients on the downslope portions of the site (adjacent to the highway) are generally less steep than the upslope portions of the site (further from the highway). The proposed structures (residences and concrete terraced patios) will be located between 200 ft. to 370 ft. upslope from Pacific Coast Highway. Relocating the proposed development further downslope on the relatively less steep downslope portions of the site would reduce the amount of grading necessary to construct flat pad areas. The applicant has indicated that the City of Malibu has required a 120 ft. frontyard setback from the highway right-of-way; however, the Commission notes that even with the setback, the proposed

development could be relocated at least 80 to 280 linear feet further downslope. In addition, relocating development downslope would also reduce adverse effects to visual resources on site by clustering development on the downslope portion the site allowing the highly visible upper slopes areas of the site to remain as undeveloped hillside area. Further, relocating the proposed development further downslope would also have the beneficial effect of reducing the length (and subsequently the amount of grading) of each driveway.

#### 4. Delete or Reduce Size of Terraced Patios

The proposed project includes the construction of large terraced concrete patio areas for each of the three residences. The patios will incorporate a terraced design (backfilled patio area supported by retaining walls) due to the steep nature of the slopes on site. The concrete patios will range in size between approximately 2,500 sq. ft. and 3,500 sq. ft. in area and will require the construction of large flat fill pads supported by concrete retaining walls up to 6 ft. in height (approximately 200, 280, and 460 linear feet in respective length).

Although it is possible that the construction of large patio areas would not result in significant adverse effects to visual resources on many relatively flat project sites, the construction of the proposed patios on the steeply sloping project site would require significant landform alteration and result in significant adverse effects to public views. In this case, the Commission notes that construction of the proposed terraced patios is not necessary in order to allow for residential development to occur on the subject site and that deletion of the terraced patios in their entirety is a feasible alternative. In addition, another alternative to deletion of the proposed patios in their entirety would simply be to reduce the size of the patios; therefore, reducing the amount of fill required to construct flat pads and the number of retaining walls on site and reducing the visual impact of the project.

## 5. Reduce Number and Length of Driveways

The proposed project includes construction of three separate driveways and turnarounds. The driveways will range in length between 360 and 600 linear feet and require a combined total of more than 3,500 cu. yds. of grading. The proposed project, as originally submitted as part of this application, only included the construction of two driveways because the westernmost and middle residence had been designed to share a single driveway. The applicant has since revised the project to include the construction of a third driveway so that each residence has a separate private driveway. Revising the project plans to delete the third additional driveway and allow the westernmost and middle residences to share a common driveway and turnaround area would significantly reduce the amount of grading and landform alteration on site.

In addition, relocation of the proposed residences further downslope would not only serve to reduce grading and landform alteration related to the construction of the

building pads, but would also allow for the construction of significantly shorter driveways, thereby, even further reducing the amount of grading. In addition, the Commission notes that the configuration of the proposed driveways could also be modified in order to further reduce grading on site. As proposed, each of the driveways is proposed to continue upslope past each of the residences to large turnaround areas and garages which would be located on the upslope side of each residence. However, relocation of the turnaround areas downslope of each residence (rather than upslope) would allow the length of each driveway to be reduced by at least 180 linear feet. Relocation of the turnaround areas downslope might also include the use of partially subterranean garages located under the residences or patios further minimizing the visual obtrusiveness of the proposed structures and; therefore, further minimizing adverse effects to public views.

The Commission notes that implementation of any or all of the above alternatives to the proposed project would significantly reduce the amount of grading necessary for the proposed project and still allow for residential development to occur. As such, the Commission notes that several feasible preferred alternatives to the proposed project exist that would lessen the adverse effects of the proposed project to significantly reduce landform alteration on site and minimize adverse effects to public views from Pacific Coast Highway. Therefore, for the reasons discussed above, the Commission finds that the proposed development, as proposed, has not been sited or designed in a manner that would minimize adverse effects to public views and is, therefore, not consistent with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

## C. Local Coastal Program.

Section 30604 of the Coastal Act states that:

a) Prior to certification of the local coastal program, a coastal development permit shall be issued if the issuing agency, or the commission on appeal, finds that the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) of this division and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a local program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

Section 30604(a) of the Coastal Act provides that the Commission shall issue a Coastal Permit only if the project will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction to prepare a Local Coastal Program which conforms with Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The preceding sections provide findings that the proposed project would not be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act. The proposed development would result in adverse impacts and is found to be not consistent with the applicable policies contained in Chapter 3.

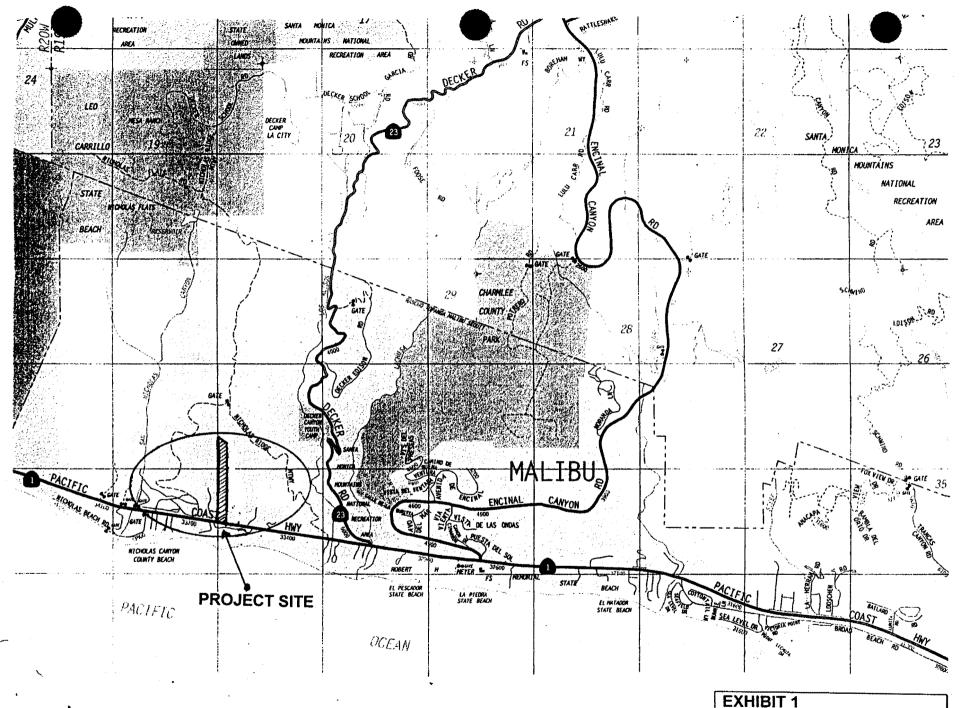
Therefore, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development would prejudice the City of Malibu's ability to prepare a Local Coastal Program which is also consistent with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act as required by Section 30604(a).

### D. CEQA

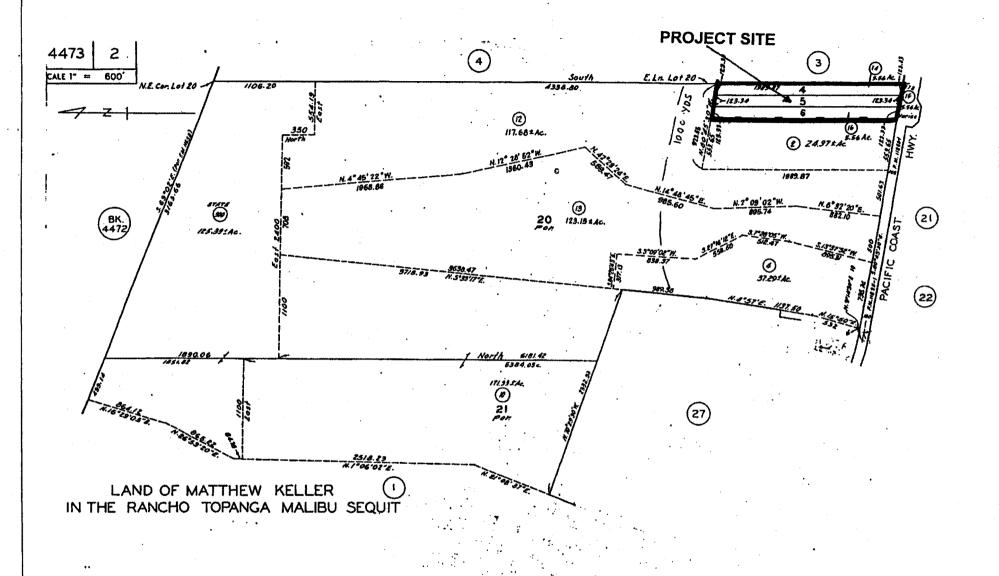
Section 13096(a) of the Commission's administrative regulations requires Commission action on Coastal Development Permit application to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effects which the activity may have on the environment.

The proposed project would result in significant adverse effects on the environment, within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970. There are feasible alternatives and/or mitigation measures that would substantially lessen any significant adverse effects which the proposed project would have on the environment. Therefore, the proposed project is determined to be inconsistent with CEQA and the policies of the Coastal Act.

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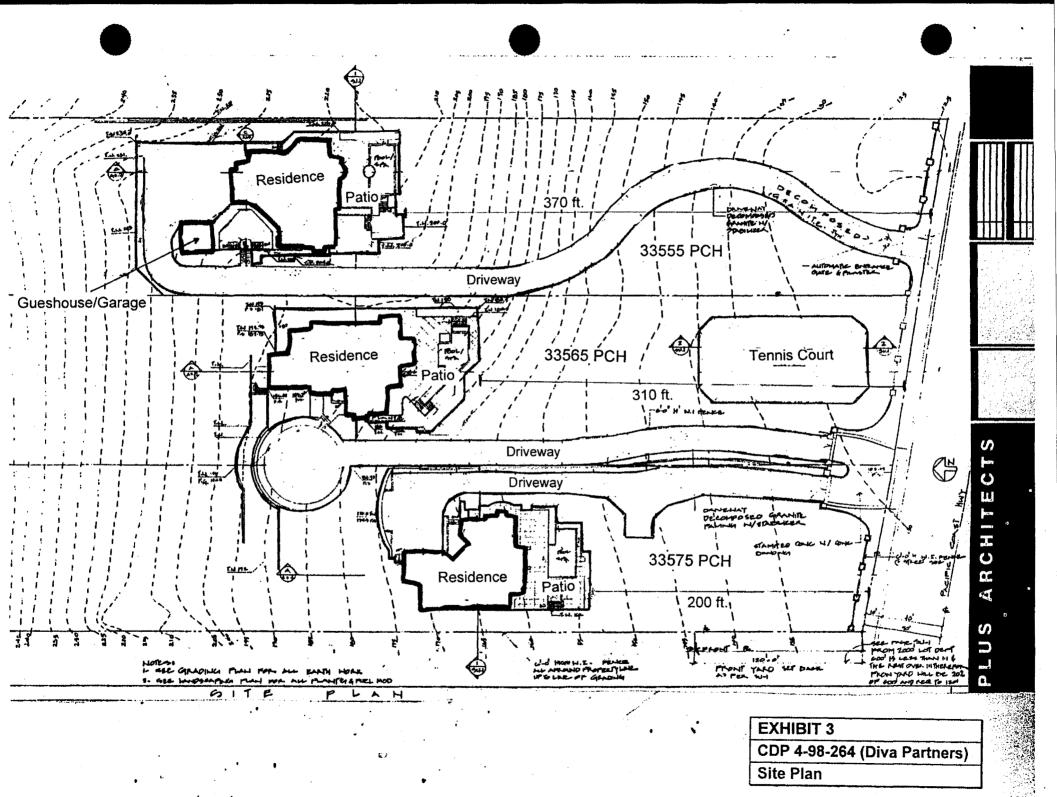
CDP 4-98-264 (Diva Partners)
Location Map

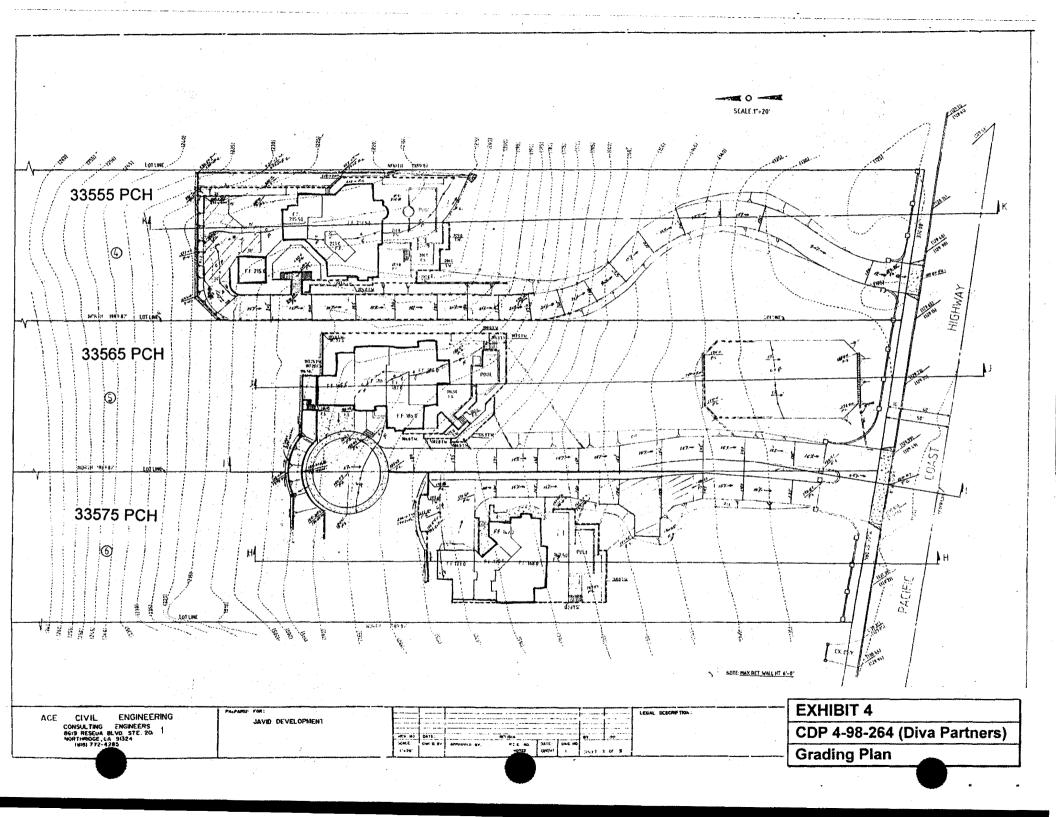


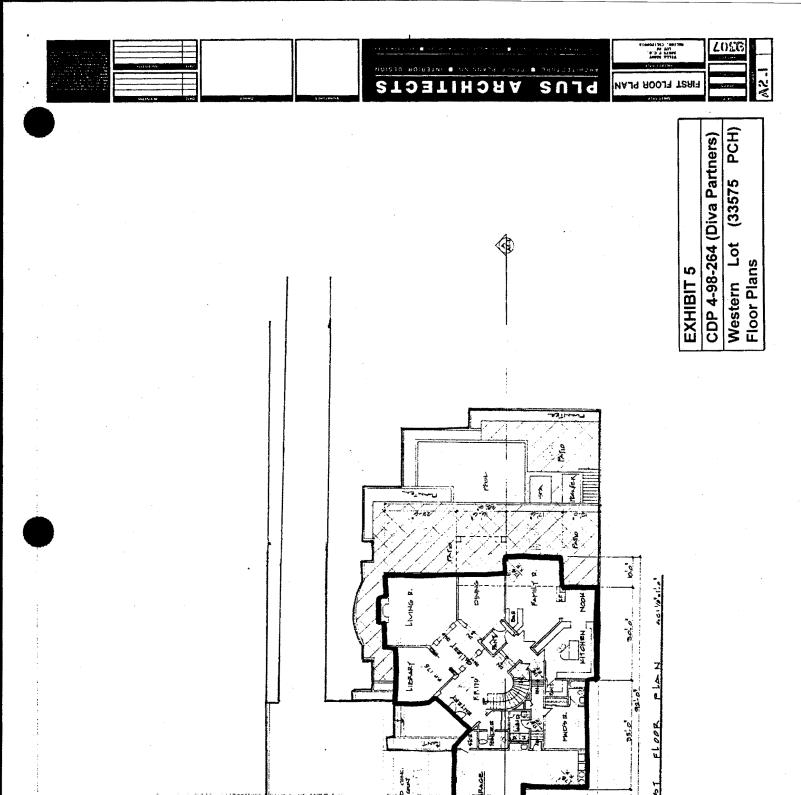
**EXHIBIT 2** 

CDP 4-98-264 (Diva Partners)

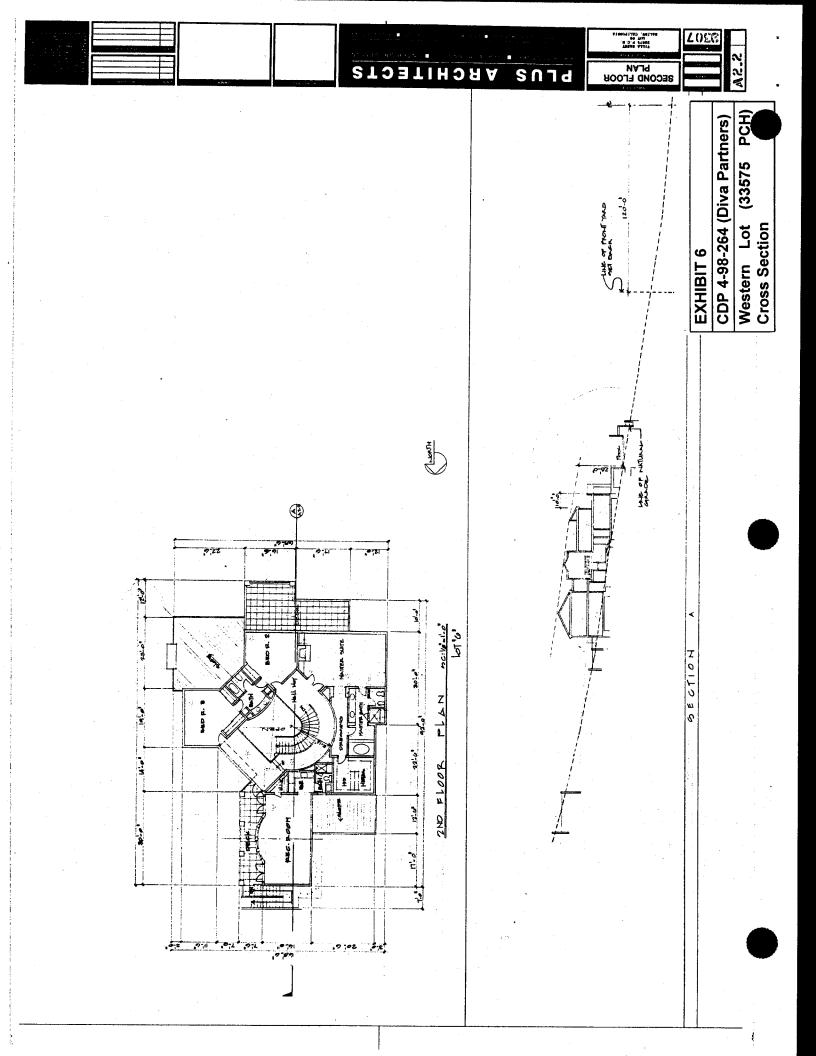
Parcel Map

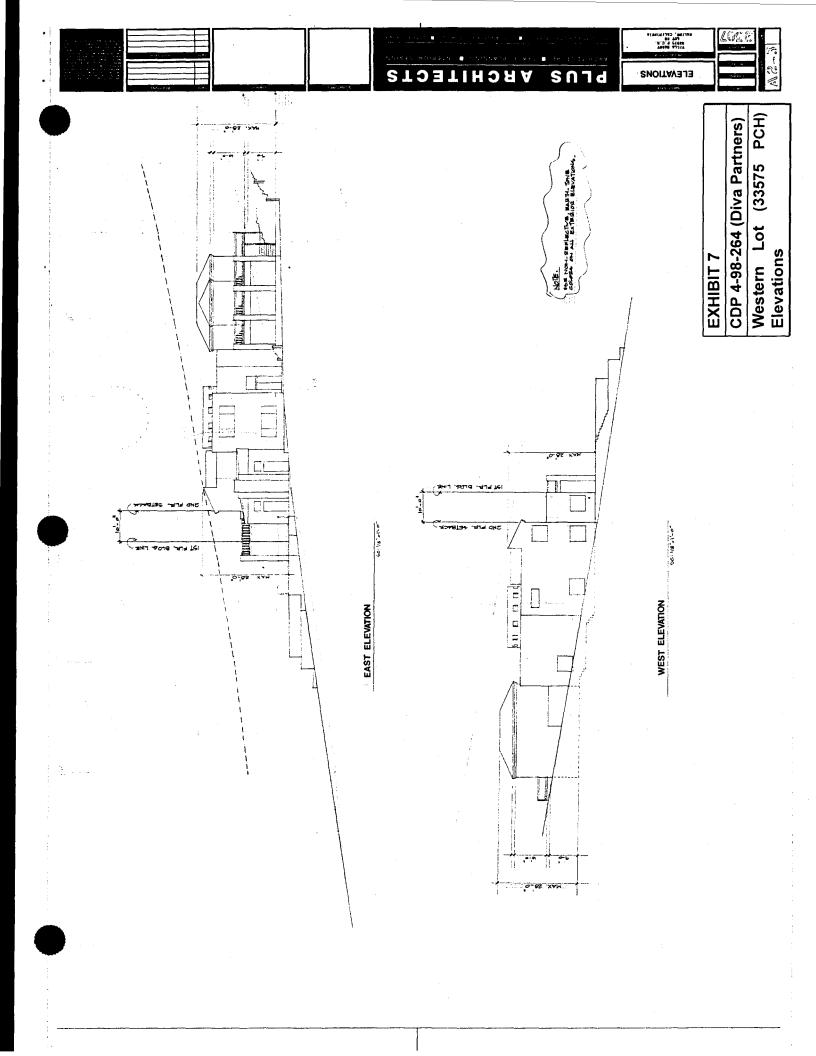






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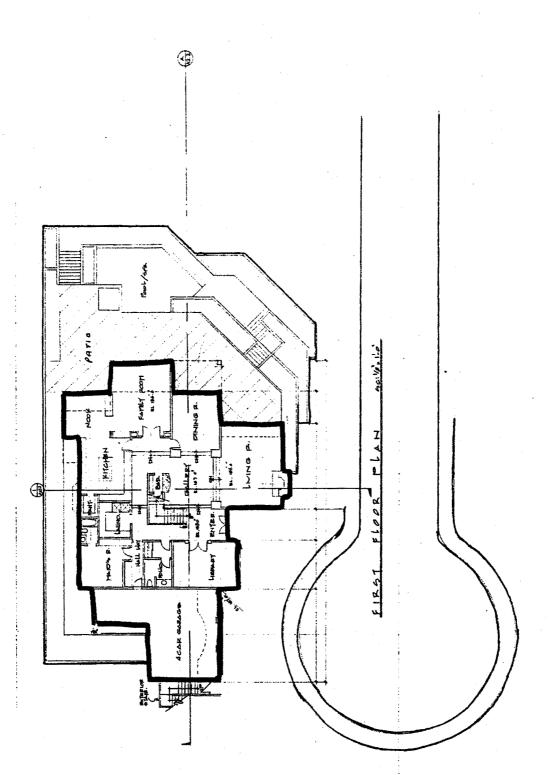




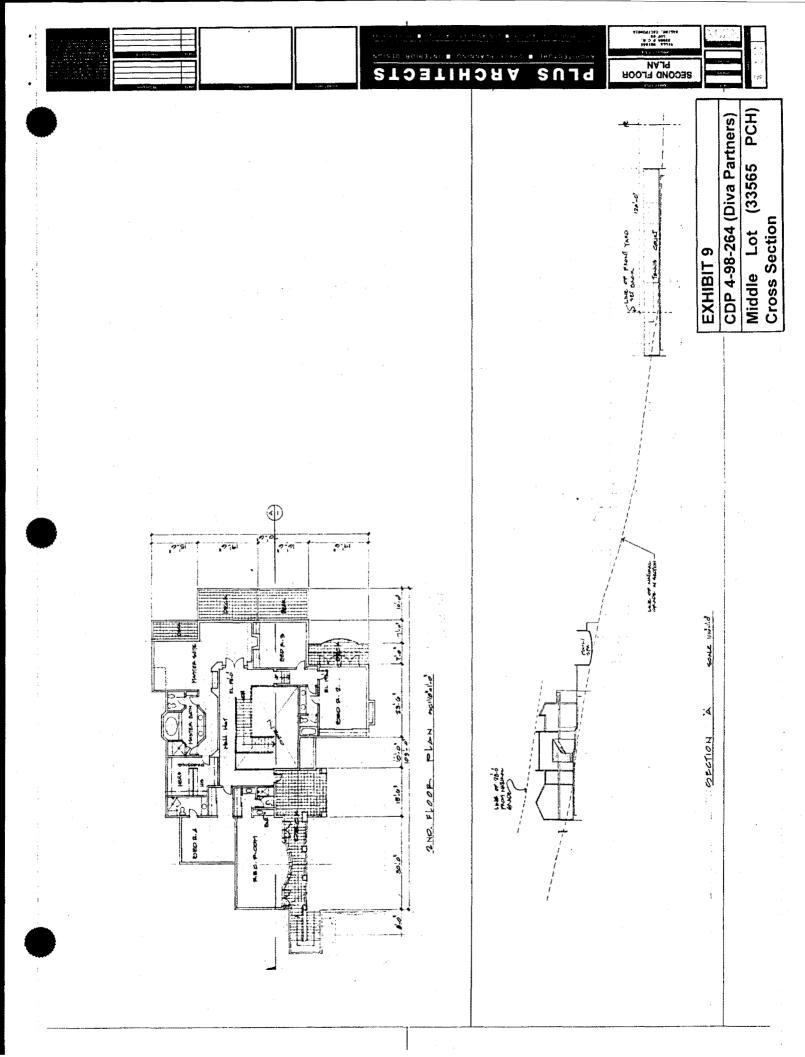


ARCHITECTS





Middle Lot (33565 PCH) Floor Plan EXHIBIT 8 CDP 4-98-264 (Diva Partners)



ELEVATIONS

EAST ELEVATION

ARCHITECTS

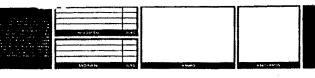


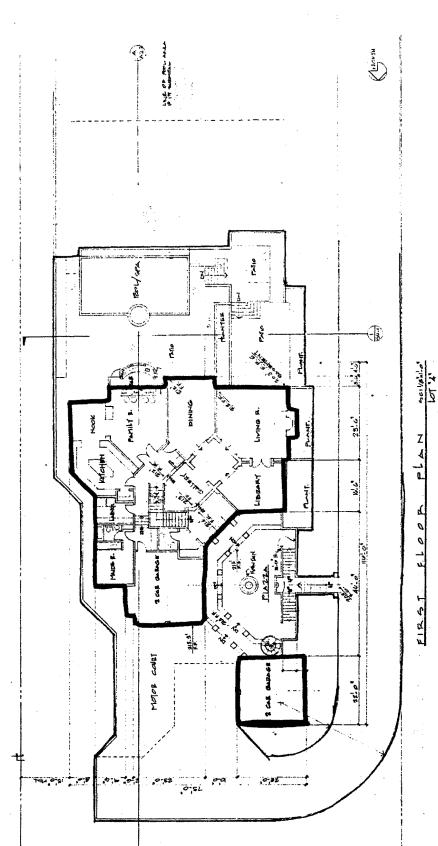
(33565 PCH) CDP 4-98-264 (Diva Partners) Middle Lot Elevations **EXHIBIT 10** 15%: The Not-partective sustained colors of all suffered sustained.

WEST ELEVATION



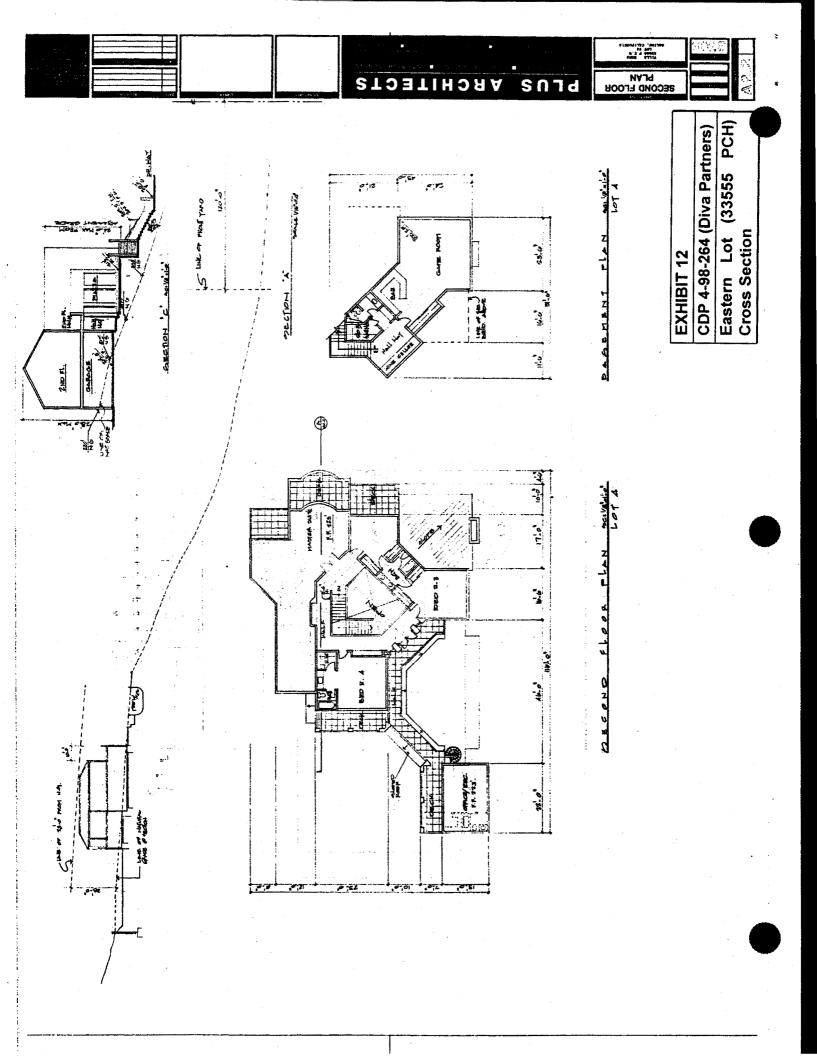
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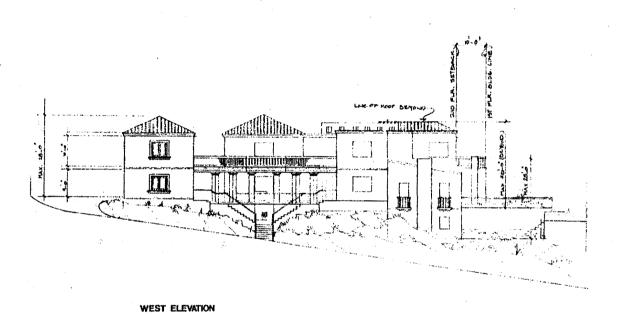




CDP 4-98-264 (Diva Partners) **EXHIBIT 11** 

Eastern Lot (33555 PCH) Floor Plan





EAST ELEVATION

NOTE:
ALL EXTREME ANAMACON HAST HAVE.
NON RESILECTIVE BARTH-TOME COME.

**EXHIBIT 13** 

CDP 4-98-264 (Diva Partners)

Eastern Lot (33555 PCH) Elevations ELEVATIONS PLUK

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