# CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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# RECORD PACKET COPY

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Commission Action:



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# STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

**APPLICATION NUMBER:** 

5-03-503

**APPLICANT:** 

Christopher and Joy Wynkoop and Charlotte Walton, Trustee of the

Menzie Family Trust

PROJECT LOCATION:

601 Rockford Road and 515 Rockford Place, Newport Beach,

Orange County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Slope repair at two lots along Morning Canyon, including

reconstruction of an approximately 45 foot high slope with cement treated soil buttress and geogrid reinforcement, construction of a retaining wall at the top of the slope and revegetation with native plant material. Approximately 4520 cubic yards of grading (2020 cy

cut and 2500 cy fill) is proposed.

**LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED:** Approval-in-Concept No. 3072-2003 by the City of Newport Beach dated November 21, 2003; Approval from RWQCB dated June 25, 2004.

#### **SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

The applicants are proposing to reconstruct a failed slope along Morning Canyon located inland of Pacific Coast Highway in Corona del Mar (Newport Beach). The site is currently developed with two single-family homes and associated improvements located at the top of the canyon slope. Due to a slope failure occurring in 1997-98, the face of the slope is partially denuded. The applicants' property extends to the canyon bottom, which serves as a natural drainage course leading to the ocean. Primary issues addressed in this staff report include assurance that the proposed development is consistent with the geologic hazard policies of the Coastal Act, as well as assuring that the development is consistent with protection of environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA).

Staff is recommending <u>APPROVAL</u> of the proposed project subject to eight (8) special conditions requiring: 1) submittal of revised plans showing the reconstructed top of slope at pre-failure location; 2) conformance with geotechnical recommendations; 3) submittal of a drainage and runoff control plan; 4) revegetation of the slope with native plant materials; 5) conformance with construction responsibilities and submittal of a site access, staging, work area and equipment storage plan; 6) assumption of risk; 7) future development be submitted for review by the Commission or applicable certified local government agency; and 8) recordation of a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the Special Conditions contained in this staff report.

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#### SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:

City of Newport Beach Land Use Plan; Geotechnical Evaluation and Recommendations for Repair of Slope Failure prepared by Geofirm dated May 28, 2003 as supplemented by response letters dated January 12, 2004 and February 24, 2004; Findings of Biological Constraints Analysis:

Morning Canyon, Newport Beach letter report prepared by LSA Associates, Inc. dated May 27, 2004.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission APPROVE the permit application with conditions.

**MOTION:** 

I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit

No. 5-03-503 pursuant to the staff recommendation.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL:

Staff recommends a <u>YES</u> vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

#### **RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PERMIT:**

#### I. APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

The Commission hereby **APPROVES** a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and will not 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 complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.

#### II. STANDARD CONDITIONS

- Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
- 2. <u>Expiration.</u> If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date this permit is reported to the Commission. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
- 3. <u>Interpretation.</u> Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.

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- 4. <u>Assignment.</u> The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
- 5. <u>Terms and Conditions Run with the Land.</u> These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

#### III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- 1. Submittal of Revised Plans
  - A. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit two (2) sets of final plans to the Executive Director for review and approval. The revised plans shall show the following changes to the project:
    - (a) The top of slope shall not extend beyond the pre-failure top of slope, as generally depicted in Exhibit 4 of this staff report; and
    - (b) The geogrid slope shall be set back at least one (1) foot from the edge of the cement-treated soil.
  - B. The revised plans shall, prior to submittal to the Executive Director, be reviewed and certified by a qualified professional to ensure that they are consistent with the Commission's approval and with the recommendations contained in the Geotechnical Evaluation and Recommendations for Repair of Slope Failure prepared by Geofirm dated May 28, 2003.
  - C. The permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approval final plans. Any proposed changes to the approved final plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plans shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.
- 2. Conformance of Design and Construction Plans To Geotechnical Recommendations
  - A. The applicant shall comply with all recommendations contained in the *Geotechnical Evaluation and Recommendations for Repair of Slope Failure* prepared by Geofirm dated May 28, 2003 as supplemented by response letters dated January 12, 2004 and February 24, 2004.
  - B. The permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approved plans. Any proposed changes to the approved plans shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plans shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.
- 3. Drainage and Run-Off Control Plan
  - a) PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit, for review and approval of the Executive Director, a final drainage and runoff control plan prepared by an appropriately licensed professional.

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- 1. The plan shall demonstrate that
  - (a) run-off from the project shall not increase sedimentation in the Morning Canyon streambed; and
  - (b) run-off from all roofs, patios, driveways and other impervious surfaces and slopes on the site shall be collected and discharged to avoid ponding or erosion either on or off the site.
- 2. The plan shall include, at a minimum, the following components:
  - (a) A schedule for installation and maintenance of the drainage system, and
  - (b) A site plan showing finished grades and drainage improvements.
- B. The permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final plan. Any proposed changes to the approved final plan shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plan shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

# 4. <u>Submittal of Revegetation Plan</u>

- A. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit, for the review and approval of the Executive Director, a plan for revegetation to prevent erosion and enhance the habitat value of the canyon. The plan shall be prepared by a licensed landscape architect or qualified professional.
  - 1. The plan shall demonstrate that
    - (a) all vegetation planted in the areas disturbed by construction activities will consist of native, drought-tolerant plants common to coastal Orange County;
    - (b) all planting will be completed within 60 days after completion of construction;
    - (c) all required plantings will be maintained in good growing condition throughout the life of the project, and whenever necessary, shall be replaced with new plant materials to ensure continued compliance with the landscape plan;
    - (d) all non-native plants shall be removed from the construction area within the canyon
  - 2. The plan shall include, at a minimum, the following components:
    - (a) a map showing the type, size, and location of all plant materials that will be on the developed site, topography of the developed site, and all other landscape features, and
    - (b) a schedule for installation of plants.

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B. The permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final plan. Any proposed changes to the approved final plan shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plan shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is legally required.

#### 5. General Construction Responsibilities

- A. The permittee shall comply with the following construction-related requirements:
  - 1. Prior to commencement of any work approved by this permit, a temporary barrier or work area demarcation (such as but not limited to flagging, staking or plastic mesh fencing) shall be placed between the construction areas and the canyon. All temporary flagging, staking, fencing shall be removed upon completion of the development.
  - All areas disturbed and/or denuded by the project shall be stabilized using non-vegetative erosion controls such as mulching or fiber rolls/ground cover.
  - 3. No construction materials, debris, or waste shall be placed or stored where it may encroach upon the adjacent canyon or enter any storm drain;
  - 4. Construction materials, chemicals, debris and sediment shall be properly contained and secured on site or upon adjacent existing paved areas to prevent the unintended transport of material, chemicals, debris, and sediment into habitat areas and coastal waters by wind, rain or tracking. Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Good Housekeeping Practices (GHPs) designed to prevent spillage and/or runoff of construction-related materials, and to contain sediment or contaminants associated with construction activity, shall be implemented prior to the on-set of such activity. BMPs selected shall be maintained in a functional condition throughout the duration of the project. A pre-construction meeting shall be held for all personnel to review procedural and BMP/GHP guidelines.
  - 5. Disposal of debris and excess material. Debris and excess material shall be disposed or recycled at a legal disposal/recycling site. If the disposal site is located in the coastal zone, a coastal development permit or an amendment to this permit shall be required before disposal can take place unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment or new permit is required. No debris or excess material shall be placed on or within the adjacent canyon.
  - 6. Debris and sediment shall be removed from the construction areas as necessary to prevent the accumulation of sediment and other debris which may be discharged into habitat areas and coastal waters.
  - 7. Any and all debris resulting from construction activities shall be removed from the project site within 24 hours of completion of construction.
- B. PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit a site access, staging, work area and equipment storage plan(s) which conforms with the requirements of subsection A.1 through A.7. of this special condition. The permittee shall undertake development in accordance with the approved final plan(s). Any proposed changes to the approved final plan(s) shall be reported to the Executive Director. No changes to the approved final plan(s) shall occur without a Commission amendment to this coastal development permit unless the Executive Director determines that no amendment is required.

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#### 6. Assumption of Risk, Waiver of Liability and Indemnity

By acceptance of this permit, the applicant acknowledge and agrees (i) that the site may be subject to hazards from slope creep and soil movement; (ii) to assume the risks to the applicant and the property that is the subject of this permit of injury and damage from such hazards in connection with this permitted development; (iii) to unconditionally waive any claim of damage or liability against the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees for injury or damage from such hazards; and (iv) to indemnify and hold harmless the Commission, its officers, agents, and employees with respect to the Commission's approval of the project against any and all liability, claims, demands, damages, costs (including costs and fees incurred in defense of such claims), expenses, and amounts paid in settlement arising from any injury or damage due to such hazards.

# 7. Future Development

This permit is only for the development described in Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-503. Pursuant to Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 13250(b)(6), the exemptions otherwise provided in Public Resources Code Section 30610(a) shall not apply to the development governed by Coastal Development Permit No. 5-03-503. Accordingly, any future improvements to the development authorized by this permit, including but not limited to a change in the intensity of use (including a change in the physical number of residential units or a change in the number of parking spaces) and repair and maintenance identified as requiring a permit in Public Resources Section 30610(d) and Title 14 California Code of Regulations Sections 13252(a)-(b), shall require an amendment to Permit No. 5-03-503 from the Commission or shall require an additional coastal development permit from the Commission or from the applicable certified local government.

#### 8. Deed Restriction

PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF THE COASTAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT, the applicant shall submit to the Executive Director for review and approval documentation demonstrating that the landowner has executed and recorded against the parcel(s) governed by this permit a deed restriction, in a form and content acceptable to the Executive Director: (1) indicating that, pursuant to this permit, the California Coastal Commission has authorized development on the subject property, subject to terms and conditions that restrict the use and enjoyment of that property; and (2) imposing the Special Conditions of this permit as covenants, conditions and restrictions on the use and enjoyment of the Property. The deed restriction shall include a legal description of the entire parcel or parcels governed by this permit. The deed restriction shall also indicate that, in the event of an extinguishment or termination of the deed restriction for any reason, the terms and conditions of this permit shall continue to restrict the use and enjoyment of the subject property so long as either this permit or the development it authorizes, or any part, modification, or amendment thereof, remains in existence on or with respect to the subject property.

#### IV. FINDINGS AND DECLARATIONS

The Commission hereby finds and declares:

#### A. PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

#### **Location**

The proposed development is located at 515 Rockford Place and 601 Rockford Road, inland of Pacific Coast Highway in the City of Newport Beach, Orange County (Exhibits 1 & 2). The project site is located along Morning Canyon, a steep-sided canyon with residences along both sides. The subject properties are designated R-1 in the certified LUP. Surrounding development consists of single-family residences. Development is proposed on two adjacent inland lots, which are not between the first public road and the sea. The nearest coastal access is available at Corona del Mar State Beach, approximately one-quarter mile from the subject site on the opposite side of Pacific Coast Highway.

#### Description

The proposed development consists of a slope repair at two residential lots along Morning Canyon. The slope failure initially occurred in 1997-98 after heavy rainfall and stream redirection resulted in erosion and oversteepening of the slope toe. The current project includes reconstruction of the approximately 45 foot high slope with a cement treated soil buttress, geogrid reinforcement, and construction of a retaining wall at the top of the slope. The cement treated soil buttress will be placed at the toe of slope within an approximately 110 foot long, 15' wide key. The buttress will extend along the toe of slope of both properties at a 1:1 angle. The failure area within the center of the slope will be cut benched, compacted for strength and reconstructed using geogrid material at a 1.5:1 angle. A retaining wall will be placed at the top of the slope to reestablish the integrity of the housing pads. The proposed retaining wall will be supported by 23 caissons. The caissons will be embedded 15-20 feet into the existing fill slope. No work is proposed to the existing residences. Project plans are provided in Exhibit 3.

As currently proposed, the project includes a canyonward extension of the flat building pad located at the top of the slope. Such canyonward encroachment is inconsistent with past Commission actions and may result in an adverse cumulative impact to sensitive canyon resources in the subject area. As will be discussed in Section B, the Commission requires the project be redesigned so that the top of slope remains in its pre-failure location. No further extension will be allowed.

The applicant indicates that all staging and storage of material and equipment will occur on private property, either on the building pad at the top of slope or on the applicants' property at the toe of slope. Construction access is available from the frontage street. No permanent disturbance of surrounding canyon habitat is proposed. However, temporary streambed impacts will occur. Stream flow will be intercepted upstream of the slope repair site and transferred downstream via a temporary pipe. No construction or post-construction downstream impacts are anticipated from the slope repair and no streambed modification is proposed.

The project requires approximately 4520 cubic yards of grading (2020 cy cut and 2500 cy fill). During construction, the applicants will be required to implement best management practices (BMPs) designed to minimize erosion and prevent debris from entering the storm drain system leading to the ocean. After construction, the applicants propose to revegetate the slope using a hydroseed native seed mix to be watered by hand. No permanent irrigation is proposed. Site runoff will be conveyed via pipe to a 4' x 4' rip rap outlet point at the toe of the slope.

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# **Alternatives Considered**

In developing the project, the applicants considered various alternatives. Such alternatives included the use of K-rails, rip-rap, concrete walls and gabion walls. These alternatives were rejected by the applicants and the City of Newport Beach as they would result in protective devices that would harden and channelize stream flows within the canyon. The applicants assert that the proposed alternative is the least environmentally damaging alternative and will assure stability of the canyon slope.

# B. **GEOLOGIC STABILITY**

#### 1. Coastal Act Policies

Section 30235 of the Coastal Act states, in pertinent part:

Revetments, breakwaters, groins, harbor channels, seawalls, cliff retaining walls, and other such construction that alters natural shoreline processes shall be permitted when required to serve coastal-dependent uses or to protect existing structures or public beaches in danger from erosion, and when designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on local shoreline sand supply.

Section 30236 of the Coastal Act states,

Channelizations, dams, or other substantial alterations of rivers and streams shall incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible, and be limited to (1) necessary water supply projects, (2) flood control projects where no other method for protecting existing structures in the floodplain is feasible and where such protection is necessary for public safety or to protect existing development, or (3) developments where the primary function is the improvement of fish and wildlife habitat.

Section 30253 of the Coastal Act states, in pertinent part:

New development shall:

- (1) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.
- (2) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

#### 2. Project Site Geotechnical Report

The applicant submitted a geotechnical report prepared by Geofirm dated May 28, 2003. The geotechnical investigation includes a review of geotechnical maps and literature, reconnaissance of the property and nearby areas, preparation of three geotechnical cross-sections, geotechnical analysis of subsurface conditions as related to slope design and site grading, and preparation of the report. The report was subsequently supplemented by letters dated January 12, 2004 and February 24, 2004.

The subject properties are located along the southerly flank of Morning Canyon. The rear property boundaries extend to the canyon bottom. As described in the geotechnical report, the slope

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descending at the rear of the properties into the canyon was graded circa 1959 to a 1.5:1 (horizontal:vertical) gradient and is up to  $45 \pm$  feet high. The slope failure area extends westerly from the easterly property boundary of 601 Rockford Road approximately 65 feet at the toe, 50 feet wide at the top, and extends up the full height of the slope. The debris from the failure has apparently been washed downstream.

The geotechnical consultant concludes that the slope failure involved moderate to shallow depth fill materials and occurred as a result of erosion and over-steepening of the toe of slope. In a letter dated February 24, 2004, the consultant describes the condition of the site as follows:

The current slope face is near a ratio of 1:1 and is comprised of disturbed and loosened material. The slope in its current condition has a factor of safety of about 1, indicating a marginally stable slope which is likely to fail if the delicate balance is disturbed. This is consistent with field observations, which indicate continued sloughing of the slope, as well as cracking and widening of cracks in hardscape in the pad area adjacent of the residence.

The geotechnical investigation concludes that the slope can be repaired by removal of disturbed soil and reconstruction of the slope with a soil/cement buttress, geogrid reinforced stabilization fill, and upslope retaining wall. As described in the report,

The slope will be restored as much as possible to its original geometry, but the current constraint of keeping the toe of slope at the property boundaries will require some local lowering of the slope, which can be accommodated by the proposed upslope retaining wall. Maintaining the toe of slope at the property boundary will not reduce the canyon drainage area and actually increases the stream cross-section over the original condition; therefore, it should not adversely affect the hydraulic cross-section or flow patterns.

To repair the failed slope, the geotechnical consultant recommends that a soil/cement toe buttress, geogrid reinforced slope, and upslope retaining wall be constructed to achieve a stable slope at the proposed configuration. The consultant states that the repaired slope will need to be properly landscaped and maintained, with proper attention given to surface drainage systems. (Specific recommendations are discussed in the subsequent section.)

#### 3. **Project Analysis/Special Conditions**

Section 30235 of the Coastal Act allows protective devices to be permitted when required to protect existing structures. As described in the geotechnical investigation, the proposed project is necessary to protect the existing single-family residences from adverse effects resulting from further slope failure and foundation soil movement.

Section 30236 of the Coastal Act allows alterations of rivers and streams when required to protect existing development. Such projects must incorporate the best mitigation measures feasible.

The existing residences are constructed approximately 25' from the canyon edge at their closest point. At 601 Rockford Road, hardscape improvements and a swimming pool are sited as close as 5' from the edge. The applicants assert, and the geotechnical report supports, that installation of the proposed stabilization system is necessary to protect the existing structures (as well as the hardscape improvements) from geologic hazard.

The current project includes reconstruction of the approximately 45 foot high slope with a cement treated soil buttress, geogrid reinforcement, and construction of a retaining wall at the top of the

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slope. The cement treated soil buttress will be placed at the toe of slope within an approximately 110 foot long, 15' wide key at a 1:1 angle. The buttress will extend along the toe of slope of both properties. The buttress fill will be placed to an elevation of 107 feet at the maximum proposed gradient of 1:1. The design elevation was determined from the hydraulic analysis provided by Rivertech, Inc. as the maximum anticipated stream elevation for a 500-year flood, plus a 1 foot freeboard. According to information provided by the applicant, the proposed project is unavoidable and necessary to protect the existing development, consistent with Section 30235 of the Coastal Act.

As described previously, the existing patio and pool at 601 Rockford Place extend almost to the edge of the canyon slope. Prior to the slope failure in 1997-98, the slope descended canyonward at a less steep angle than it does presently (Exhibit 4). However, the top of slope was sited in the same approximate location. With the current proposal, the applicants intend to create additional flat pad area by extending the rear yards approximately 15-20 feet beyond the current top of slope. As such, the applicants will gain additional yard area. The applicants assert that their proposal is consistent with recent development occurring within the subject area. Photo documentation of nearby development has been submitted that shows rear yard extensions into the canyon. However, the nearby developments were processed by the City of Newport Beach through the Categorical Exclusion process and were not the subject of coastal development permits. Commission staff is investigating the issuance of these approvals, which included reconstruction of single-family residences with increased yard areas at the top of the canyon slope.

Unless necessary for geologic stability, the Commission typically discourages such encroachment as it contributes to adverse cumulative impacts on canyon habitat. In this instance, no geotechnical evidence has been submitted which justifies the applicants' request to increase the yard area by 15-20 feet. The applicants should not be able to increase their buildable pad area as a result of the slope failure. The Commission imposes Special Condition No. 1, which requires the applicant to submit revised plans showing the rear yard top of slope at the pre-failure location, which is essentially where the top of slope is currently. The condition also requires that the geogrid/cement treated soil interface be modified, as recommended by the Commission's Senior Engineer.

The Commission's Senior Engineer has reviewed the project and evaluated the design of the proposed slope reconstruction. The Staff Engineer has determined it to be prudent to set the geogrid slope back one (1) foot from the edge of the cement-treated soil, to allow a "splash ledge" to catch any debris from the slope. Also, if the geogrid were set back from the edge of the cemented soil, there would be some leeway for that material to erode before the geogrid slope is threatened.

Section 30253(2) of the Coastal Act states that new development shall assure stability and structural integrity and shall not contribute to erosion, geologic instability or destruction of the site or require the construction of protective devices which would substantially alter natural landforms. The geotechnical report includes recommendations regarding foundation design and construction. As stated in the geotechnical investigation, "the proposed foundation system remediation should have no geotechnical adverse effect on the subject or adjacent properties. The remediation is intended to stabilize the structure, and not to improve subsurface foundation soil conditions. The site is considered grossly stable, and geotechnically suitable for the intended remediation."

Since the recommendations provided by the geotechnical consultant include measures to mitigate any adverse geologic effects, the Commission finds that Special Condition 2 ensures that a consulting geotechnical expert has reviewed the development plans and verified their conformance

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with the geotechnical recommendations. As such, Special Condition 2 guarantees that the development plan is consistent with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act.

Since the manner in which the site drains is important to site stability, plans must be submitted to document how site drainage will be accomplished. The project plans submitted show site runoff being conveyed via pipe to a 4' x 4' rip rap outlet point at the toe of the slope. However, these plans may have to be modified in response to Special Condition 1. To prevent adverse impacts resulting from improper site drainage, Special Condition No. 3 requires the applicants to submit a final drainage and runoff control plan prepared by an appropriately licensed professional. The plan must demonstrate that runoff is collected and conveyed in a manner that ensures slope stability and prevents erosion and sedimentation to Morning Canyon.

Revegetation of the slope is necessary to prevent erosion and instability of the canyon slope. Special Condition No. 4 requires submittal of a revegetation plan. The plan must use a native plant species common to coastal Orange County. Vegetation will be discussed further in Section C.

To ensure that construction activities are carried out in a manner that ensures geologic stability of the site, the Commission imposes Special Condition 5. Special Condition 5 outlines construction responsibilities and requires submittal of a site access, staging, work area and equipment storage plan. The condition prohibits the applicant from working beyond the canyon edge and requires the applicant to replant any vegetation disturbed during construction. The condition also includes guidelines for debris removal and proper drainage. This will serve to minimize erosion of the slope, consistent with geotechnical recommendations.

Although the proposed project will be constructed with geotechnical approval, risk from development on a coastal canyon is not eliminated entirely. While the project is deemed entirely adequate at this time to minimize any potential hazard, future hazards may arise as subsurface conditions continue to change. Therefore, the standard waiver of liability condition has been attached through Special Condition 6. By this means, the applicant is notified that the structure is built in an area that is potentially subject to geologic hazard that can damage the applicant's property. The applicant is also notified that the Commission is not liable for such damage as a result of approving the permit for development.

In order to ensure that development on the site does not occur which could potentially adversely impact the geologic stability concerns expressed in this staff report, the Commission finds that the applicant shall comply with Special Condition 7, a future development requirement. This condition will ensure that the applicant and all successors and assigns are aware that a coastal development permit or amendment to the current permit is required for development at the site.

Finally, Special Condition 8 requires recordation of a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the Special Conditions contained in this staff report. This deed restriction will provide notification to any future landowner of the hazards present at the site and the special conditions of this permit that pertain to the property.

#### 4. Conclusion/Project Consistency with Coastal Act

The Commission has found that in order to assure that the proposed development minimizes risks to life and property in areas of high geologic hazard and assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area the applicant shall be conditioned for: 1) submittal of revised plans

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showing the reconstructed top of slope at pre-failure location; 2) conformance with geotechnical recommendations; 3) submittal of a drainage and runoff control plan; 4) revegetation of the slope with native plant materials; 5) conformance with construction responsibilities and submittal of a site access, staging, work area and equipment storage plan; 6) assumption of risk; 7) future development be submitted for review by the Commission or applicable certified local government agency; and 8) recordation of a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the Special Conditions contained in this staff report. Only as conditioned does the Commission find that the proposed development is consistent with Sections 30235, 30236 30253 of the Coastal Act.

# C. <u>ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE HABITAT AREA</u>

#### 1. Coastal Act and Land Use Plan (LUP) Policies

Section 30240(b) of the Coastal Act states:

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat and recreation areas.

Newport Beach's certified Land Use Plan (LUP) discusses areas which are environmentally sensitive in nature and list Morning Canyon as an area which may contain environmentally sensitive habitat area. Morning Canyon is described as follows;

Located north and south of Pacific Coast Highway, between Shorecliffs and Corona Highlands, and Cameo Shores and Cameo Highlands in Corona del Mar, Morning Canyon is similar in character and function to Buck Gully. Like Buck Gully, Morning Canyon contains riparian vegetation at is base, sage scrub vegetation on the lower slopes, and a mixture of native and horticultural species on the upper slopes. A mixture of introduced grasses and forbs also exists in spots at the base of the canyon. Vegetation in Morning Canyon is most lush in the area below Pacific Cast highway, and progressively less well-developed farther up the canyon. Besides providing a high-quality wildlife habitat, Morning Canyon acts as a buffer for the Marine Life Refuge and provides a wildlife corridor to the Irvine coastal area.

The certified LUP contains the following policy related to siting of new development in Morning Canyon:

5. Morning Canyon. This area is a natural canyon between Corona Highlands and Cameo Highlands. It is designated for Recreational and Environmental Open Space. In order to provide an adequate buffer for the environmentally sensitive areas within Morning Canyon, all construction including but not limited to fence retaining walls, polls of any size or depth, or tennis courts or other activity areas are expressly prohibited within 25 feet of the property lines of all properties adjacent to Morning Canyon. In addition, prior to the issuance of a grading permit, the Grading Engineer shall determine that there will be no grading activities, including the alteration of the existing landform or removal or deposition of material, within the 25 foot buffer area from the rear property line.

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#### 2. Site Analysis

The proposed development is located along Morning Canyon in Corona del Mar. As cited above, the City's certified LUP identifies Morning Canyon as an area that may contain environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA). The setback policy along Morning Canyon prohibits development within 25' of the property line. The property lines at the subject sites extend to the canyon bottom. The proposed development involves slope reconstruction within the 25' buffer. In this case, the City has authorized slope reconstruction activities (including grading) within the buffer area due to stability concerns at the subject site. No further development is proposed or authorized. After construction, the toe of the slope will be located entirely within the applicants' private property and will not encroach further into the canyon than during its pre-failure condition.

Morning Canyon currently contains a majority of non-native plant species. The Commission advocates the preservation and reintroduction of native vegetation and discourages the introduction of non-native vegetation in coastal canyons. While no rare or endangered species have been reported to exist within the subject area, the City has indicated that Morning Canyon may contain environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA) in the certified LUP. Coastal canyons act as open space and potential wildlife habitat, as well as corridors for native fauna. Decreases in the amount of native vegetation due to displacement by non-native vegetation have resulted in cumulative adverse impacts upon the habitat value of the canyons. As such, the quality of canyon habitats must be assessed on a site-by-site basis.

It is necessary to obtain baseline information regarding existing vegetation and habitat value at the subject site in order to determine impacts of the proposed project. Toward this end, the applicant submitted a letter report prepared by LSA Associates regarding biological resources within the entire Morning Canyon area. The City of Newport Beach has contracted with LSA to conduct this study to analyze the impacts of a future canyonwide drainage improvement project. The study includes a detailed vegetation survey of the project area. The length of the drainage was surveyed for occurrences of native vegetation and the location of native plant species were recorded on an aerial photograph. The LSA analysis of Morning Canyon contains the following results:

The project site is located in a steep-sided canyon with residences on both sides. The rear yards of the residences are characterized as steep slopes down to the canyon bottom. Ornamental landscaping is the predominant vegetation within the yards adjacent to the drainage. Within the drainage itself, the vegetation is dominated by escaped and planted ornamental species combined with invasive nonnative species. Dominant species present within the drainage are myoporum (Myoporum laetum), garden nasturtiam (Tropaeolum majus) and giant reed (Arundo donax). Scattered occurrences of native species are shown on the attached figure. In some cases, these are natural "volunteer" occurrences; in other cases, such as some of the trees, they appear to have been planted by residents....

...Given the nonnative nature of the vegetation, the location within a residential area, and the fact that the immediately adjacent area upstream is mostly developed with a golf course, it is highly unlikely that the project supports any special status or special interest plant or animal species...

...With removal of nonnative plants and restoration of native habitat, Morning Canyon could provide increased habitat values to supplement the open space in the adjacent Newport Coast Planned Community.

The canyon adjacent to the subject site is considered somewhat degraded due to the predominance of non-native plant species. No portion of the area affected by the proposed development contains resources that rise to the level of ESHA.

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Only minimal work is proposed within the drainage course along the canyon bottom, including temporary flow interception during construction. No permanent impacts to streambed are proposed. No native vegetation removal is proposed along the canyon bottom. After construction, the applicants proposed to restore the site and revegetate any disturbed areas. The applicants propose to use a native hydroseed mix to revegetate the slope. The slope will be hand watered until the plants are established. However, no formal planting plans have been submitted.

To ensure that revegetation is carried out in a manner that ensures slope stability and habitat enhancement, the Commission imposes Special Condition 4. Special Condition 4 requires the submittal of a revegetation plan prepared by an appropriately licensed professional. The condition specifies that areas disturbed by construction activities will be replanted with of native, drought-tolerant plants common to coastal Orange County. All planting must be completed within 60 days after completion of construction and must be maintained in good growing condition throughout the life of the project. In addition, all non-native plants shall be removed from the construction area within the canyon.

Due to its location along a drainage course, the project also required review from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The applicants applied for a Streambed Alteration Agreement. However, the DFG determined that such an agreement was not required "because the project or activity 1) does not substantially divert, obstruct or change a natural flow or bed, channel, or bank of a river, stream, or lake, or 2) use material from a streambed, or 3) substantially adversely affect existing fish or wildlife resources."

Because the proposed project will occur within a riparian area that drains to the ocean, proper care must be taken to prevent erosion and potential water quality impacts. As such, the Commission imposes Special Condition 5, which outlines construction responsibilities intended to prevent adverse impacts to the adjacent canyon. These responsibilities are discussed further in Section D.

#### 3. Special Conditions

The previous section on geologic hazards includes findings to support eight special conditions: including 1) submittal of revised plans showing the reconstructed top of slope at pre-failure location; 2) conformance with geotechnical recommendations; 3) submittal of a drainage and runoff control plan; 4) revegetation of the slope with native plant materials; 5) conformance with construction responsibilities and submittal of a site access, staging, work area and equipment storage plan; 6) assumption of risk; 7) future development be submitted for review by the Commission or applicable certified local government agency; and 8) recordation of a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the Special Conditions contained in this staff report. These conditions are necessary to ensure compliance with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act concerning geologic stability. Many of these are also necessary to ensure compliance with Section 30240(b) of the Coastal Act concerning environmentally sensitive habitat area.

Newport Beach's certified Land Use Plan (LUP) advocates the preservation of native vegetation and discourages the introduction of non-native vegetation in Morning Canyon. Coastal canyons act as open space and potential wildlife habitat, as well as corridors for native fauna. Decreases in the amount of native vegetation due to displacement by non-native vegetation result in an adverse impact upon habitat value of the canyons. Special Conditions 3, 4, 5, and 7 ensure that the proposed development, which is adjacent to the canyon, does not have any significant adverse effect on environmentally sensitive habitat area. Special Condition 3 requires the submittal of a drainage plan demonstrating that runoff be collected and conveyed in a non-erosive manner,

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thereby reducing potential soil movement and erosion. As such, adverse impacts from sedimentation to the designated environmentally sensitive habitat area will be prevented. Special Condition 4 requires revegetation of the slope with native vegetation, thereby improving habitat value and preventing erosion. Special Condition 5 requires the applicant to comply with specific construction responsibilities, which will ensure protection of the canyon habitat. Special Condition 7, the future development special condition, ensures that no development, including landscaping, takes place that would adversely impact Morning Canyon.

# 4. Consistency with Section 30240 and Land Use Plan (LUP) Policies

The proposed development is adjacent to Morning Canyon, which is identified in the certified LUP as an area that may contain Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA). However, based on results of a site-specific analysis, the project location does not contain resources that rise to the level of ESHA. Nonetheless, the special conditions of this staff report (future development, runoff control plan, & construction BMPs) are designed to protect and enhance Morning Canyon. Therefore, as conditioned, the Commission finds that the proposed development is consistent with Section 30240(b) of the Coastal Act and the policies of the certified LUP.

#### D. WATER QUALITY

Section 30230 of the Coastal Act states, in pertinent part:

Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored.

Section 30231 of the Coastal Act states:

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

Section 30232 of the Coastal Act states, in pertinent part:

Protection against the spillage of crude oil, gas, petroleum products, or hazardous substances shall be provided in relation to any development or transportation of such materials.

Storage or placement of construction materials, debris, or waste in a location which may be discharged into coastal waters via runoff carried by the storm water system would result in adverse impacts upon the marine environment that would reduce the biological productivity of coastal waters. For instance, construction debris entering coastal waters may cover and displace soft bottom habitat. In addition, the release of lubricants or oils from machinery may be toxic to marine life. Sediment discharged to coastal waters may cause turbidity which can shade and reduce the productivity of eelgrass beds and foraging avian and marine species' ability to see food in the water column. In order to avoid adverse construction-related impacts upon marine resources, Special Condition 5 outlines construction-related requirements to provide for the safe storage of demolition materials and the safe disposal of construction debris. The condition

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ensures that debris will not be allowed to enter the storm water system via the drainage course within Morning Canyon.

After construction, the streambed within Morning Canyon will be restored and stream flow will continue unaltered. The toe of the slope will be sited further inland from the drainage course than it is presently. The reconstructed slope will be located outside the 100-year flood plain. No post-construction impacts to water quality are proposed or anticipated. The Santa Ana Region of the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) granted approval on June 25, 2004. The RWCQB determined that the proposed project qualifies as a Class 2 Categorical Exemption for construction of limited small new facilities.

Only as conditioned for implementation of construction BMPs does the Commission find that the proposed development consistent with Sections 30230, 30231 and 30232 of the Coastal Act.

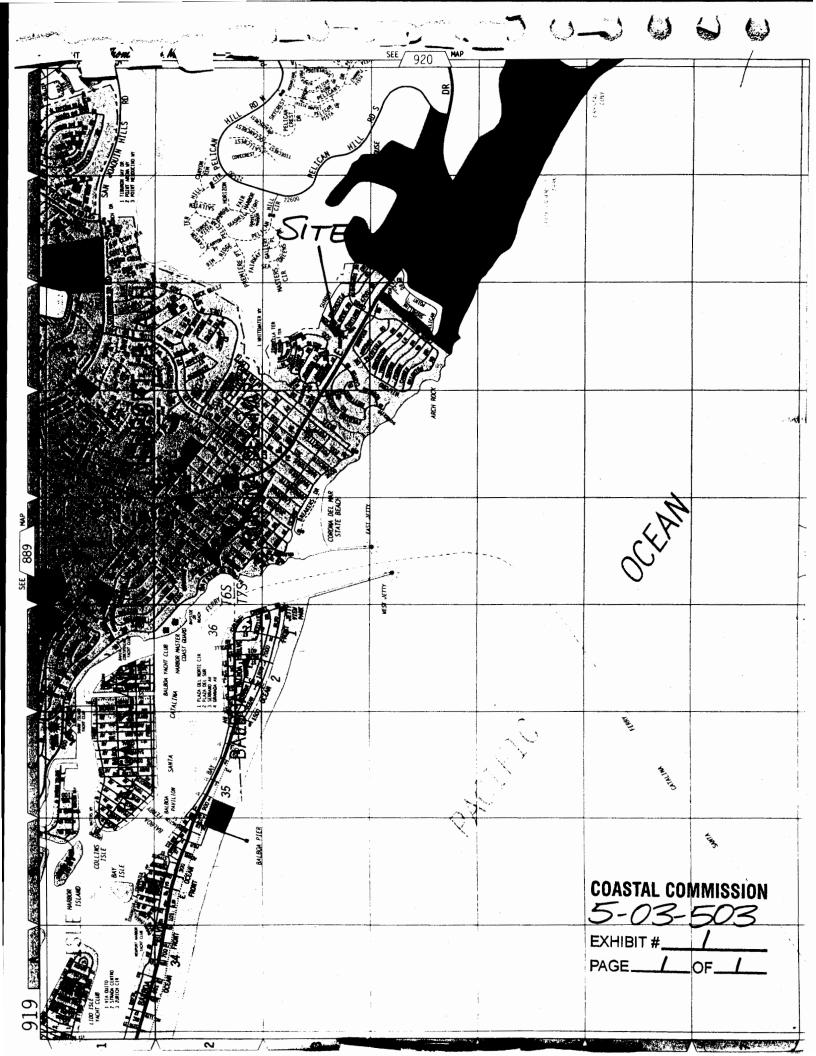
#### E. LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM

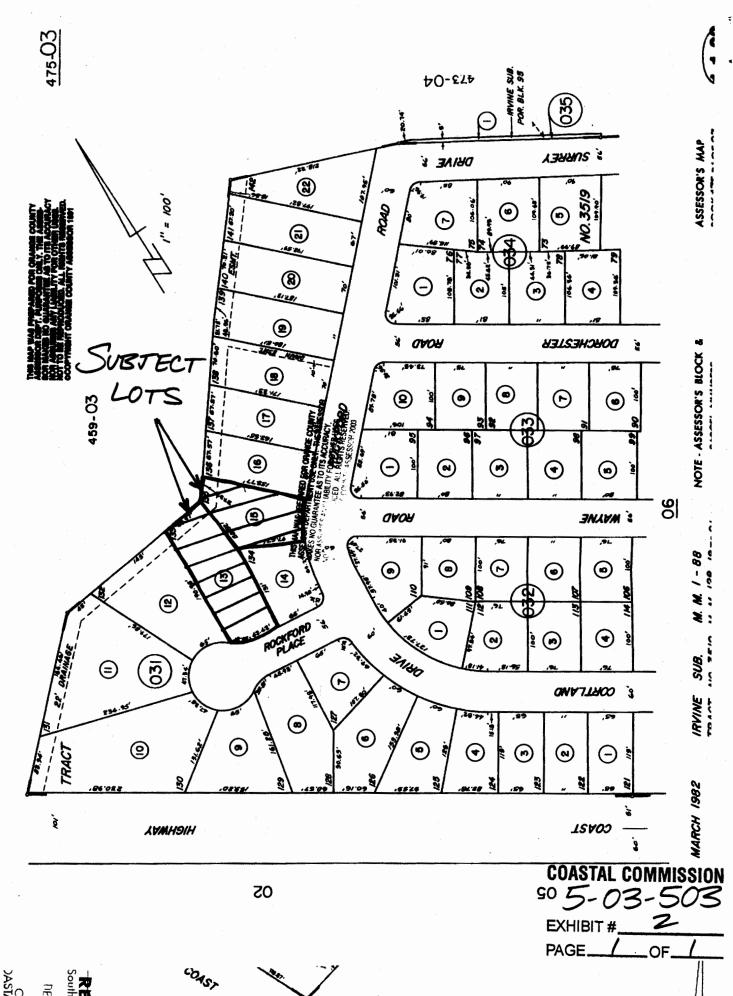
The LUP for the City of Newport Beach was effectively certified on May 19, 1982. The certified LUP was updated on January 9, 1990. As conditioned, the proposed development is consistent with Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and with the certified Land Use Plan for the area. Approval of the project, as conditioned, will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a Local Coastal Program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3.

# F. CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

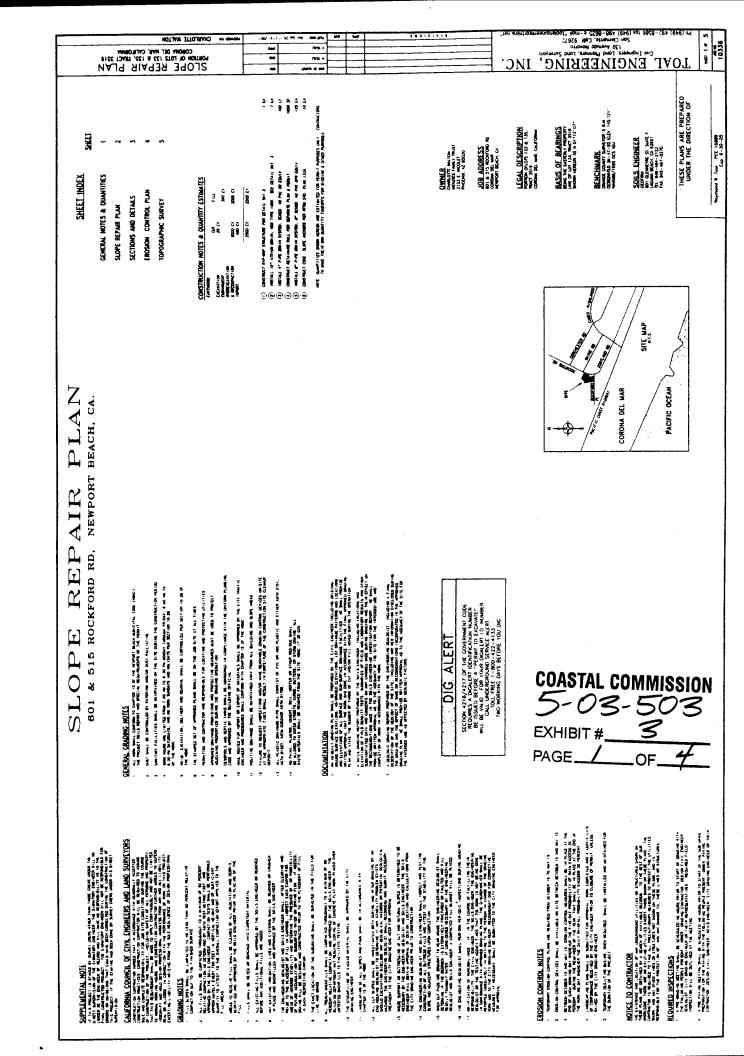
Section 13096 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permits to be supported by a finding showing the permit, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental 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 effect that the activity may have on the environment.

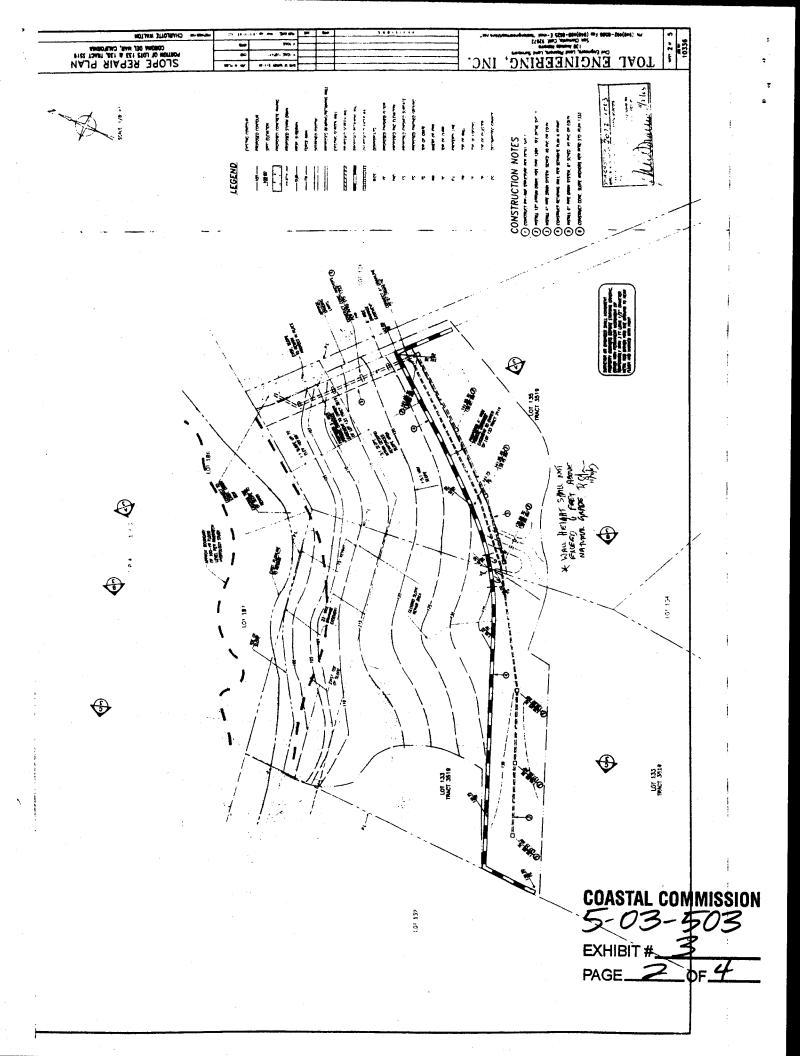
The proposed project has been conditioned in order to be found consistent with the geologic hazards, water quality and environmentally sensitive habitat policies of the Coastal Act. Mitigation measures, in the form of special conditions, require 1) submittal of revised plans showing the reconstructed top of slope at pre-failure location; 2) conformance with geotechnical recommendations; 3) submittal of a drainage and runoff control plan; 4) revegetation of the slope with native plant materials; 5) conformance with construction responsibilities and submittal of a site access, staging, work area and equipment storage plan; 6) assumption of risk; 7) future development be submitted for review by the Commission or applicable certified local government agency; and 8) recordation of a deed restriction against the property, referencing all of the Special Conditions contained in this staff report. As conditioned, there are no feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect that the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project can be found consistent with the requirements of the Coastal Act to conform to CEQA.

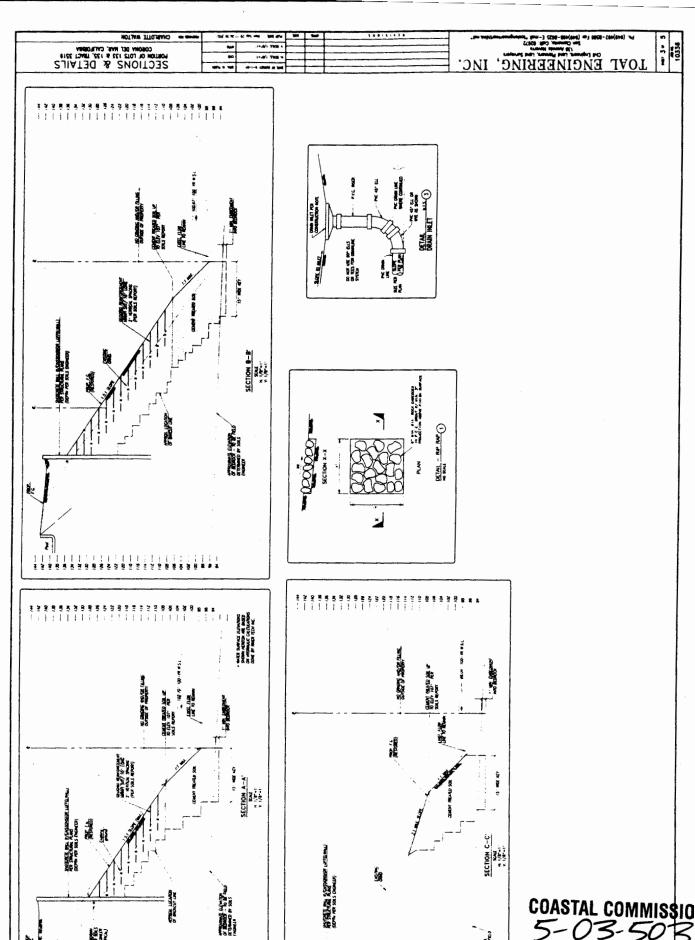




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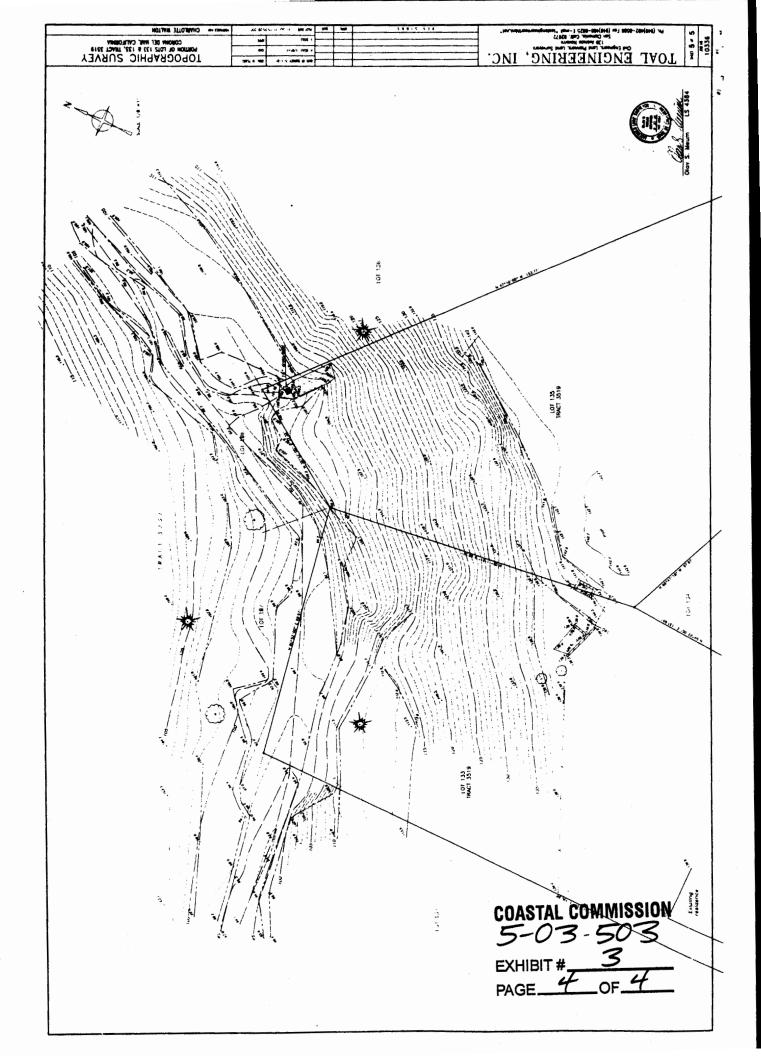




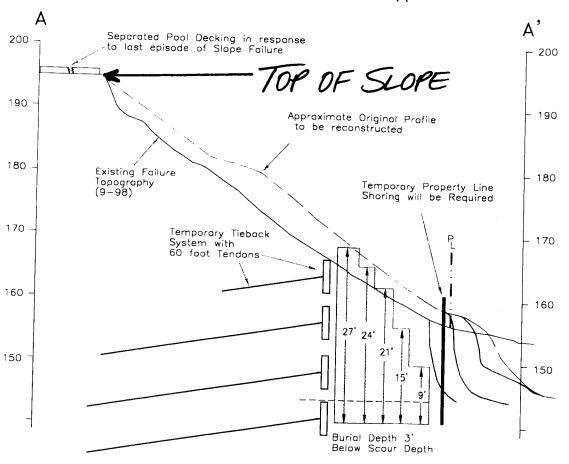
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# CROSS SECTION A-A



Original Profile Profile prior to 12/97 Profile 12/97 February/March 1998 Profile

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SCALE: 1" = 10'

JOB NUMBER 97-7081

