

K. AESTHETIC RESOURCES

This section evaluates the effects of the proposed project on aesthetic resources, including views and shade/shadow patterns in the vicinity of the project site. This analysis also considers the proposed project's consistency with applicable visual resources-related policies. Photographs, visual simulations, and diagrams are included to illustrate the site's visual character, and the effects of the proposed project on aesthetic resources and shade/shadow patterns.

1. Setting

The following section describes the visual quality of the project site and views of the project site from surrounding areas.

a. Visual Quality of the Project Site. Please refer to Section IV.A, Land Use and Planning Policy, for a description of the physical characteristics of the project site.

The project site comprises six legal parcels north of downtown Menlo Park. In general, the site is flat and almost entirely paved; only the southern portion of the site contains landscaping along El Camino Real in front of the former Cadillac dealership showroom. Several buildings are located on the project site, including three large corrugated metal sheds. The majority of the site is surrounded by brick walls and chain link fencing with barbed wire, and is inaccessible to the public. Key land use characteristics influencing the visual character of the site include the mixed-use nature of the area, and the Caltrain railroad tracks, which are adjacent to Garwood Way along the northern boundary of the site.

The vacant site represents a visual gap in the streetscape. Surrounding land uses vary widely and include automobile service outlets, a vacant theater, small retail shops, residential apartments, a salon, and restaurants. The project site's visual isolation from surrounding land uses is increased by the location of the Caltrain tracks to the north of the site, which separate the site from residential areas further east. The Derry Lane Mixed-Use Development is currently proposed to replace the commercial uses and surface parking lots to the east of the site.

Key visual landmarks along El Camino Real on the southern portion of the site include two large redwood trees. These trees are among the tallest in the neighborhood.

b. Visual Quality of the Project Site Surroundings. Following is a brief discussion of the visual character of the areas surrounding the project site. The orientation of the project site does not exactly match the cardinal directions. For the purpose of the following description (and consistent with the background discussion in the rest of this EIR), the Caltrain tracks are considered to be *north* of the site; Oak Grove Avenue is *east* of the project site; El Camino Real is *south* of the site; and Glenwood Avenue is *west* of the site.

- *North.* Beyond the Caltrain tracks, the neighborhood to the north of the project site consists of detached single-family and multi-family dwellings. Most of these residences are one to two stories in height. This area includes buildings with a diversity of architectural styles and ages.
- *East.* Commercial buildings are located immediately east of the project site along El Camino Real. The proposed Derry Lane Mixed-Use Development project site would be located immedi-

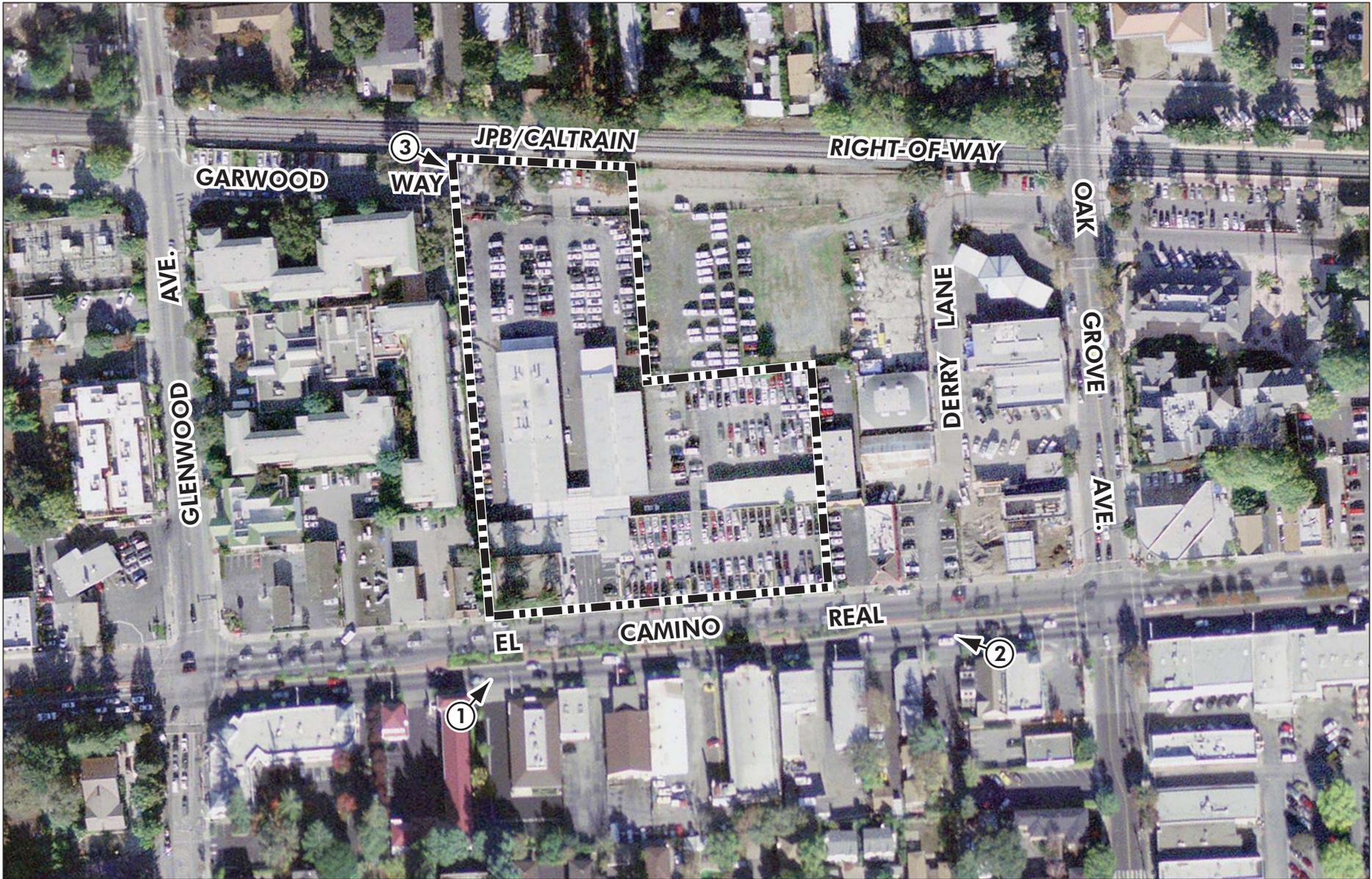
ately to the east of the project site along Oak Grove Avenue and the Caltrain tracks. Downtown Menlo Park, including the Menlo Park Caltrain station, is located beyond Oak Grove Avenue.

- *South.* Areas to the south of the project site consist of small, mainly one-story commercial buildings along El Camino Real. The neighborhood south of El Camino Real consists mainly of detached single-family dwellings along tree-lined streets.
- *West.* The commercial district on both sides of El Camino Real to the west of the project site is dominated by car-oriented businesses with adjacent surface parking, in addition to more traditional one and two-story street-front retail and mixed-use buildings and the Glenwood Inn.

c. Views from the Project Site. Views from the project site are constrained by surrounding development and trees. Views to the west and east are limited by buildings along Glenwood Avenue and Oak Grove Avenue, respectively. Tall trees and a privacy wall along the Caltrain right-of-way block views to the north. Limited views of the Santa Cruz Mountains to the west are available from portions of the project site. However, no views within or around the project site are designated as scenic views by local, State, or federal agencies.

d. Views of the Project Site. Views of the project site are available from the streets that border the project site: El Camino Real and Garwood Way. Figure IV.K-1 shows views of the project site for which visual simulations of the proposed project were prepared. Figures IV.K-2a through IV.K-2d show existing views from these viewpoints (in addition to the effects of the proposed project on these views). Visual simulations are conceptual and do not specifically show a grocery store/market/major retail tenant on the ground floor. However, they accurately represent the proposed massing of the project. Key views of the project site are discussed below.

- *Views From El Camino Real (eastbound).* Views of the project site heading east along El Camino Real (see Figure IV.K-2a) are characterized by street trees and the two large redwoods in the southwestern portion of the site. The concentration of vegetation in this part of the project site lends the area a leafy feel. Beyond the vacant main dealership building, the site appears as a large vacant lot with little activity; from El Camino Real, views of the project site are bounded to the east by commercial buildings adjoining the Derry Lane Project site.
- *Views From El Camino Real (westbound).* Views of the site traveling westbound on El Camino Real (see Figure IV.K-2b) are similar to those seen in an eastbound direction. Street trees and the two large redwoods in the southwestern corner of the site are evident, as are the low-slung commercial buildings. The site appears to be underutilized because there is very little internal vehicle activity, unlike some of the commercial uses in the vicinity of the site.
- *Views From Garwood Way.* Views of the project site along Garwood Way are partially obstructed by the senior residential apartment building to the west of the site and fencing and vegetation along the south side of the street (see Figure IV.K-2d). From a pedestrian level, buildings within the site are barely visible, and the site appears to be largely vacant. Commercial buildings in the Derry Lane Project site can be seen from the Garwood Way frontage of the project site.
- *Views From Caltrain Tracks.* Passengers sitting on the El Camino Real side of northbound trains from Menlo Park and southbound trains into Menlo Park have fleeting views into the project site. Such views are characterized by surface parking and the vegetation adjacent to the tracks.



LSA



0 80 160
FEET

LEGEND



PROJECT SITE



VIEW LOCATIONS

FIGURE IV.K-1

1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Visual Simulation Locations

SOURCE: GLOBEXPLORER, 2005.

I:\CMK0601 1300 el camino\figures\Fig_IVK1.ai (9/22/06)

Back of Figure IV.K-1



Existing view from El Camino Real looking south (wide-angle)



Visual simulation of proposed project

LSA

FIGURE IV.K-2a

NOTE: THE SIMULATIONS ILLUSTRATE THE BASIC BUILDING FORM BUT DO NOT FULLY DETAIL THE BUILDING MATERIALS AND ARTICULATION.

1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
 Visual Simulation
 Viewpoint 1

SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, FEBRUARY, 2009

I:\CMK0601 1300 el camino\figures\Fig_IVK2a-d.indd (2/12/09)



Existing view from El Camino Real looking north (wide-angle)



Visual simulation of proposed project

LSA

FIGURE IV.K-2b

NOTE: THE SIMULATIONS ILLUSTRATE THE BASIC BUILDING FORM BUT DO NOT FULLY DETAIL THE BUILDING MATERIALS AND ARTICULATION.

1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Visual Simulation
Viewpoint 2

SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, FEBRUARY, 2009

I:\CMK0601 1300 el camino\figures\Fig_IVK2a-d.indd (2/12/09)



Existing view from El Camino Real looking north (wide-angle)



Visual simulation of proposed project plus Derry Lane Development

LSA

FIGURE IV.K-2c

NOTE: THE SIMULATIONS ILLUSTRATE THE BASIC BUILDING FORM BUT DO NOT FULLY DETAIL THE BUILDING MATERIALS AND ARTICULATION.

1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Visual Simulation
Viewpoint 2

SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, NOVEMBER, 2009.

I:\CMK0601 1300 el camino\figures\Fig_IVK2a-d.indd (2/12/09)



Existing view from Garwood Way looking south



Visual simulation of proposed project

LSA

FIGURE IV.K-2d

NOTE: THE SIMULATIONS ILLUSTRATE THE BASIC BUILDING FORM BUT DO NOT FULLY DETAIL THE BUILDING MATERIALS AND ARTICULATION.

1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Visual Simulation
Viewpoint 3

SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, NOVEMBER, 2009.

I:\CMK0601 1300 el camino\figures\Fig_IVK2a-d.indd (2/12/09)

e. Existing Shade/Shadow Patterns. Figures IV.K-3a through IV.K-3f show existing shadow patterns within the project site, in addition to simulations of the shadow patterns that would be expected after buildout of the proposed project. Shadow pattern simulations were prepared for the following dates: June 21 (the summer solstice, when the sun is at its highest point in the sky); December 21 (the winter solstice, when the sun is at the lowest point in the sky); and March 21 and September 21 (the spring and fall equinoxes, respectively, when day and night are of approximately equal length).

Simulations were prepared for three times during each day: 9:00 a.m.; 12:00 p.m. (noon); and 3:00 p.m. Shadows cast by existing structures within the project site are limited because existing buildings are only one story high. In addition, the northern portion of the project site comprises surface parking and vacant areas, and generates minimal shadow. Shadows are most widespread within the project site on December 21, the shortest day of the year. However, even on December 21, shadows generated by structures within the project site are generally confined to the project site itself.

f. Applicable Policies

The Land Use section of the General Plan Policy Document and Background Report includes the following aesthetics-related policy that is applicable to the proposed project:

Policy I-A-1. New construction in existing neighborhoods shall be designed to emphasize the preservation and improvement of the stability and character of the individual neighborhood.

2. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section analyzes impacts related to aesthetics and visual resources that could result from implementation of the proposed project. The subsection begins with the criteria of significance, which establish the thresholds for determining whether an impact is significant. The latter part of this section presents the impacts associated with the proposed project. Mitigation measures are recommended, as appropriate.

a. Criteria of Significance. Implementation of the proposed project would have a significant effect on aesthetic resources if it would:

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

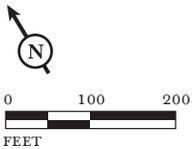
These criteria are derived from the *CEQA Guidelines* environmental checklist. The City of Menlo Park does not have any official scenic views or viewsheds.

b. Less-than-Significant Aesthetic Resources Impacts. The following describes the less-than-significant impacts to aesthetic resources that would result from implementation of the proposed project. As described in Chapter III, Project Description, implementation of the 1300 El Camino Real



LSA

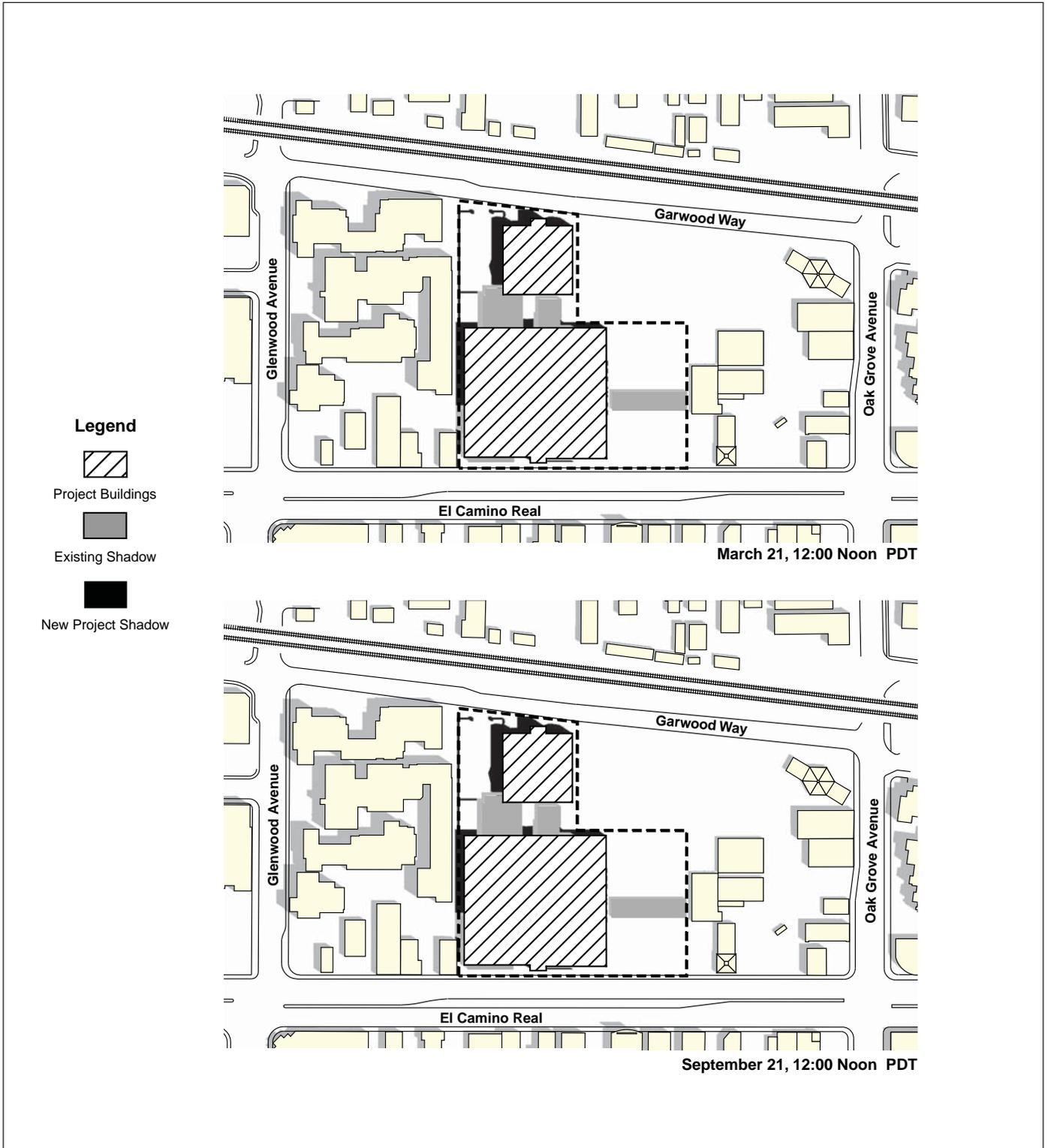
FIGURE IV.K-3a



1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Shadow Diagrams
March and September, 9:00 am

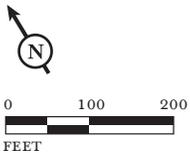
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, OCTOBER 2007.

I:/CMK0601 1300 el camino/figures/Fig_IVK3a.ai (11/06/07)



LSA

FIGURE IV.K-3b



1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
 Shadow Diagrams
 March and September, 12 noon

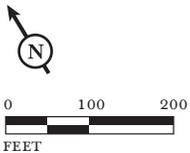
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, OCTOBER 2007.

I:/CMK0601 1300 el camino/figures/Fig_IVK3b.ai (11/6/07)



LSA

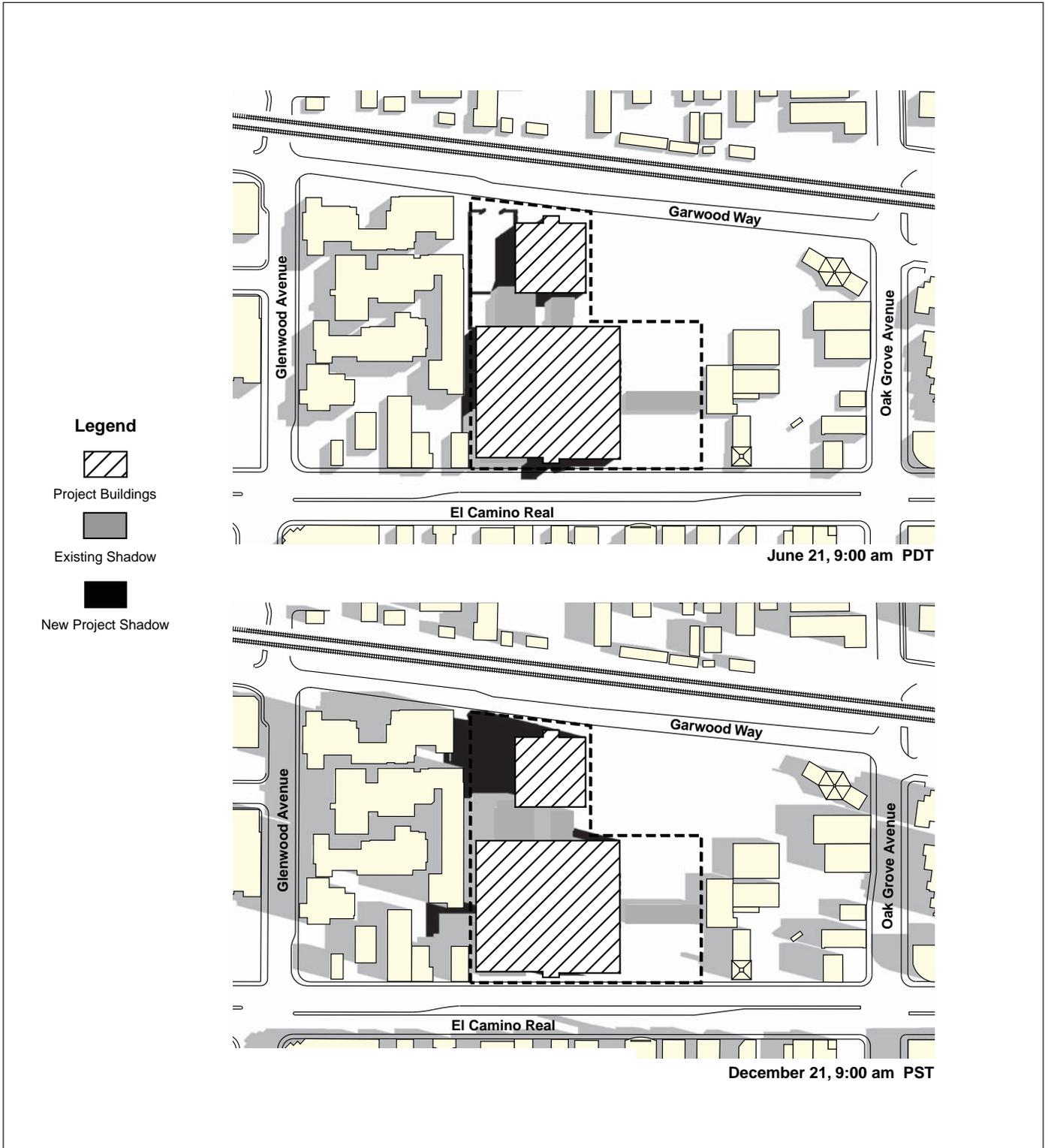
FIGURE IV.K-3c



1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Shadow Diagrams
March and September, 3:00 pm

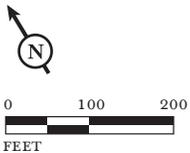
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, OCTOBER 2007.

I:/CMK0601 1300 el camino/figures/Fig_IVK3c.ai (11/6/07)



LSA

FIGURE IV.K-3d



1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Shadow Diagrams
June and December, 9:00 am

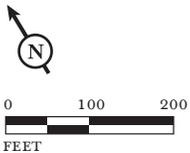
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, OCTOBER 2007.

I:/CMK0601 1300 el camino/figures/Fig_IVK3d.ai (11/6/07)



LSA

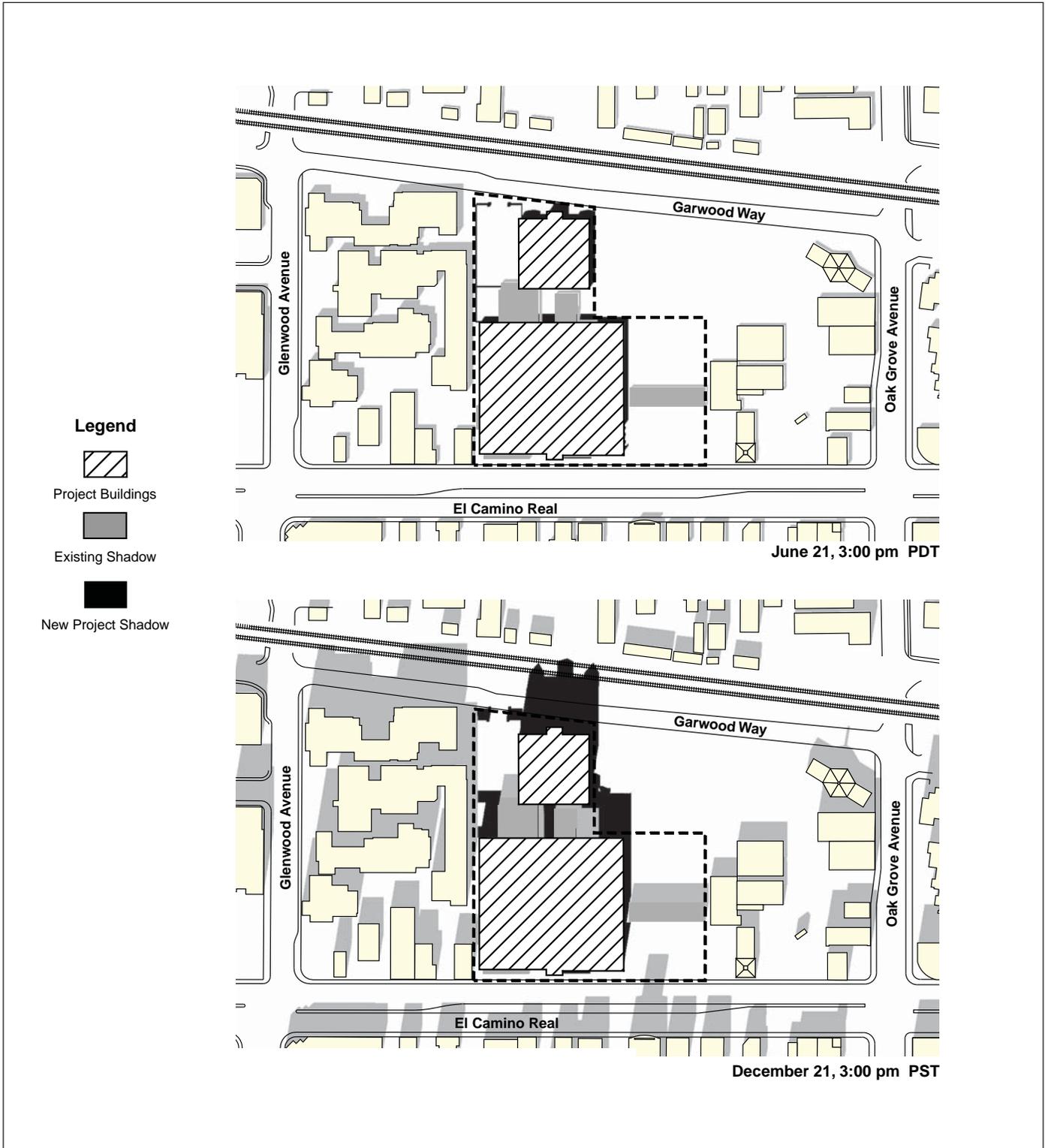
FIGURE IV.K-3e



1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Shadow Diagrams
June and December, 12 noon

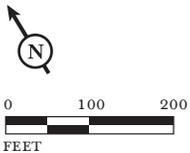
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, OCTOBER 2007.

I:/CMK0601 1300 el camino/figures/fig_IVK3e.ai (11/6/07)



LSA

FIGURE IV.K-3f



1300 El Camino Real Project EIR
Shadow Diagrams
June and December, 3:00 pm

SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL VISION, OCTOBER 2007.

I:/CMK0601 1300 el camino/figures/fig_IVK3f.ai (11/6/07)

Project would result in the construction of two grocery store/market/major retail tenant and office buildings with two above-grade stories that include 51,365 square feet of retail space and 58,700 square feet of office space. Building roof lines would be no higher than 40 feet above grade.

(1) Scenic Vistas (Criterion A). The project site is generally flat and contains limited views of surrounding areas due to existing buildings and trees. Although restricted views are available from select portions of the project site of the Santa Cruz Mountains, these views are not identified as scenic vistas or views in the General Plan, or by regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

(2) Scenic Resources (Criterion B). The project site is not located within the viewshed of a designated State scenic highway. Two heritage trees (one blackwood acacia, which is a potentially hazardous specimen, and one coast redwood, which is a high hazard specimen) would be removed from the project site. In addition, three heritage trees (all oak trees) would be removed from the Garwood Way right-of-way adjacent to the project site. These heritage trees would be removed in accordance with the City's Heritage Tree Ordinance (refer to Section IV.J, Cultural and Paleontological Resources). Although the removal of heritage trees from the site and surrounding area would change the visual character of the site, this removal would not result in a significant impact on scenic resources. All but two of the existing sycamore trees along El Camino Real would be preserved as part of the project. No rock outcroppings or historic structures are located within the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would not adversely affect scenic resources within the project site.

(3) Visual Character (Criterion C). The project site is characterized by vacant buildings and an expanse of asphalt parking lots. The El Camino Real frontage of the site has two tall redwood trees and a narrow lawn along the sidewalk in front of the former showroom. A short hedge separates the El Camino Real parking lot on the site from the sidewalk and the sycamore trees that line the street along the project site. Street-front retail uses characterize buildings along El Camino Real to the south and east of the project site. The moderate level of pedestrian activity along this portion of El Camino Real is concentrated around these businesses.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the demolition of the buildings and parking lots on the project site, the construction of street-front retail uses along El Camino Real, and the removal of one of the prominent redwood trees along the street frontage. The proposed retail space would add visual interest to El Camino Real and would enhance the street-level pedestrian experience. First floor grocery store/market/major retail tenant uses and a cafe with outdoor seating areas would create a more interesting and active environment for pedestrians. Second floor office uses would also enhance the visual diversity of the street scene as a result of varying wall setbacks and façade treatments. All but two sycamore trees along the El Camino Real frontage of the project site would be maintained as part of the project, which would preserve the tree-lined visual character along El Camino Real, even with removal of one of the two prominent redwood trees.

The two-story building elements would help to fill in the streetscape void left by the closed down auto dealership and would add texture and life to that portion of the street. Figures IV.K-2a to and IV.K-2d show "before" and "after" (project implementation) pictures of the project site. Figure IV.K-2c also shows the appearance of the Derry Lane Mixed-Use Development in conjunction with the proposed project from a viewpoint along El Camino Real.

Because proposed uses are so different from existing uses in type and intensity, the proposed project would result in a substantial change in the visual character of the project site. These changes would be highly visible from streets surrounding the project site, including El Camino Real, Glenwood Avenue, and Garwood Way. Proposed buildings would be seen by drivers traveling along El Camino Real.

The architecture of the proposed project is characterized by stucco siding, red tile roofs, and slightly sloping rooflines with overhangs. Although the proposed architectural style is different from that of buildings in the vicinity of the project site, the architecture would be similar to that of the proposed Derry Lane project and the Safeway project in Menlo Park. Therefore, the architecture and design of the project would not result in a significant adverse change in the visual character of downtown Menlo Park or the El Camino Real commercial corridor.

The visual changes to the project site that would result from the proposed project would seem appropriate and even beneficial, based on the context of the project site, near downtown Menlo Park and the Caltrain station. Proposed buildings are of a size and scale that are similar to existing buildings in downtown Menlo Park, including Menlo Square, which is located east of the project site. In addition, taller buildings are consistent with the Caltrain station's function as the major transit node in Menlo Park and would improve the comfort of the pedestrian experience along El Camino Real, which is a relatively wide roadway.

The proposed project would develop an unoccupied and underutilized site. The introduction of an employee population and commercial uses to the site would increase the daytime activity within and around the area and enhance the visual appeal of this stretch of El Camino Real. Development of the project site with mixed commercial and office uses would create a visual link between the commercial uses along El Camino Real and downtown Menlo Park. The proposed project would enhance the visual quality of the project site and its surroundings.

(4) Visual Resources Policies. The proposed project is consistent with the visual resources-related policy in the General Plan Land Use Element Policy that applies to the project (I-A-1), which requires new construction in existing neighborhoods to improve the stability and character of those neighborhoods. The proposed project would enhance the integrity of downtown Menlo Park and the El Camino Real Commercial District and provide a linkage between downtown and lower-density residential neighborhoods to the north and west of the project site, consistent with Policy I-A-1.

(5) Shade and Shadow. Implementation of the proposed project would result in the construction of two-story building elements where one-story buildings and surface parking lots currently exist. As depicted in Figures IV.K-3a through IV.K-3f, these buildings would cast new shadows within and around the project site, including on the senior residential facility to the west of the site, and Garwood Way and the Caltrain tracks to the north of the site. The most extensive shadow coverage outside the project site that would result from implementation of the proposed project would occur during morning hours throughout the year, and in the winter in the late afternoon. No shadows would be cast by the project south across El Camino Real or east towards the Derry Lane project. Outdoor spaces proposed as part of the Derry Lane project would not be adversely affected by project shadows.

The proposed project would cast new morning shadow on the windows of the senior residential complex. In addition, a few private balconies would be subject to shadow from the proposed project. In mornings around the winter solstice, when the sun is lowest in the sky, new shadow from the proposed project could extend approximately 100 feet into the senior residential complex site. However, it should be noted that much of the senior residential site is shadowed during the morning hours under existing conditions. Therefore, although the project would incrementally reduce morning sunshine on the senior residential site, this impact would not be considered significant.

In late December, afternoon shadows would extend from the project site across the railroad tracks, but would not extend into the residential neighborhood on the south side of Mills Street. The new shadows across Garwood Way and the railroad tracks would only occur during the late afternoon in the winter. These temporary, but recurring, shadows during the winter months are not expected to affect the beneficial uses of Garwood Way as urban open space. In addition, shadows cast by the proposed project would not interfere with the beneficial use of existing parks or solar collectors.

The proposed structure would cast shadows on the project's interior courtyard. However, the courtyard would remain relatively shade-free during the morning and noon hours for much of the year, especially the summer when usage rates are expected to be high. Shadow in the courtyard would be most extensive during the afternoon hours, especially around the winter equinox. However, the courtyard would be used the least at this time. Therefore, shadows cast by the proposed structure would not substantially interfere with the use of the courtyard.

c. Significant Aesthetic Resources Impacts. Implementation of the proposed project would result in the following significant impact:

Impact AES-1: The proposed project could increase the amount of light and glare in Menlo Park. (S)

Exterior lighting would be installed throughout the project site, including along interior pedestrian circulation routes. Although proposed lighting is expected to be generally consistent with and similar to existing lighting in downtown Menlo Park, this lighting could increase levels of nighttime light and glare in the area, particularly for the senior residential area to the west of the project site. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

Mitigation Measure AES-1: The project applicant shall prepare a lighting plan and photometric study and submit to the City for review and approval prior to issuance of a building permit. City staff shall review the plan to ensure that any outdoor lighting for the project is oriented downwards and is designed to minimize lighting or glare off-site. (LTS)