

---

## 6. CULTURAL RESOURCES

---

This SEIR chapter describes the project's potential additional impacts on cultural (archaeological) resources and identifies supplemental mitigation measures as necessary to reduce potentially significant impacts to less-than-significant levels.

The potential impact of Midpoint Technology Park construction operations, including earthmoving, on potential archaeological resources, was determined by the City to be less-than-significant in its original June 1996 Initial Study Checklist (item 20) for the Midpoint Technology Park. There are no known archaeological sites on or in the vicinity of the project site. No archaeological resources were discovered during the recent construction of the Midpoint Technology Park campus, including the @Home buildings. Due to the previous disturbance of the site, it is unlikely that any unrecorded archaeological resources would be encountered during the limited excavation activities anticipated for the project. Nevertheless, there is some potential to encounter such artifacts and remains during the limited excavation and grading activities associated with construction of the proposed new underground storm water retention basins, additional underground utility infrastructure, new landscaping, and/or possible future parking decks.

### 6.1 SETTING

#### **6.1.1 Prehistoric Habitation of the Margins of the San Francisco Bay<sup>1</sup>**

An extensive marsh system comprised the original landscape of the project site vicinity. Permanent settlements demonstrating long periods of habitation (up to 5,000 years at nearby San Bruno Mountain) were located west of the Bay margin on dry lands bordering the fresh water and close to the hills farther west.

Almost 100 years of archaeological survey work done on the margins of San Francisco Bay have demonstrated that prehistoric Bay margin sites are found in a number of predictable locations. The Costanoan people inhabited the San Francisco Bay area and predated Spanish occupation by up to 4,000 years. Seasonal camps and villages have been found next to existing or former water courses draining into the bay on lands that were elevated above the high tide line directly adjacent to the original marsh system that bordered the bay. Village sites were marked by shells and other refuse, in some instances eventually creating raised "shell mounds," several of which have been found in Redwood City.

Investigations of various nearby sites along the Bay margin have not found evidence of recorded historic or prehistoric resources, however. These investigations have included a Northwest Information Center file inspection for the 14-acre Bayside Gardens site on East Bayshore Road northwest of the project site, an archaeological survey of the 150-acre Leslie

---

<sup>1</sup>This section is adapted from the Bayside Gardens Project Draft Environmental Impact Report, prepared for the City of Redwood City by Wagstaff and Associates, June 2004, pages 14-1 and 14-2.

Salt pond area north of the project site, and a field inspection of a 5.2-acre property off Bair Island Road northwest of the project site.

### **6.1.2 Potential for Cultural Resources on the Project Site**

Approximately 85 percent of the 11.3-acre project site consists of building footprints or pavement. The remaining 15 percent of the site is comprised of a central landscaped area facing Broadway and additional parking and building entrance area turf and vegetation. There are no known archaeological sites on or in the vicinity of the project site. No archaeological resources were discovered during the recent construction of the Midpoint Technology Park campus. Due to the previous disturbance of the site, the potential for discovering unrecorded archaeological resources is limited. Based on all of these factors, the likelihood of uncovering buried archaeological resources at the project site is very low. Nevertheless, given the site's location near the Bay margin, the potential for the site to contain prehistoric artifacts or remains cannot be completely discounted.

## **6.2 PERTINENT PLANS AND POLICIES**

The Redwood City Strategic General Plan Historic Resources Element (HRE) contains no policies relevant to the proposed project site. All current HRE policies pertain to landmark districts and structures, none of which exist on the project site or in the project vicinity. The existing buildings on-site, due to their recent construction (1998), are not considered historic structures.

For all identified historic sites or sites that have a potential for on-site discovery, reconnaissance, and identification of cultural resources,<sup>1</sup> the Redwood City Planning and Redevelopment Department typically requires developers to prepare a *cultural resources management plan*. Since the likelihood of uncovering buried archaeological resources at the project site is very low (see subsection 6.1.2, above), a *cultural resources management plan* would not be warranted for the proposed project.

## **6.3 SUPPLEMENTAL IMPACT AND MITIGATION FINDINGS**

### **6.3.1 Supplemental Analysis Scope**

This supplemental analysis focuses on the cultural resources implications of the proposed project changes (i.e., the differences between the project evaluated in the 1996 EIR and 1998 SEIR and the currently proposed project). For cultural resources, the key project changes are the limited excavation and grading that would be associated with:

- construction of the proposed new underground storm water retention basin;
- any proposed additional underground utilities; and
- proposed new landscaping.

---

<sup>1</sup>Redwood City Planning and Redevelopment Department, *Cultural Resources Management Plan*, revised 2000.

### **6.3.2 Significance Criteria**

Based on the CEQA Guidelines, the project would be considered to have a significant cultural resources impact if it would:

- (a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines section 15064.5;<sup>1</sup> or
- (b) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.<sup>2</sup>

These criteria are not cited in the 1996 EIR or 1998 SEIR, as those documents did not evaluate cultural resources impacts.

### **6.3.3 Supplemental Impacts and Mitigations**

**Supplemental Impact 6-1: Potential Disturbance of Prehistoric Cultural Resources.** Excavation and grading for the proposed underground storm water retention basins, any additional underground utilities, new landscaping, and possible future parking decks, could disturb as yet unidentified sensitive, on-site, subsurface cultural resources. This potential represents a ***potentially significant environmental impact*** (see criteria [a] and [b] in section 6.3.2, "Significance Criteria," above). This is a new impact not identified in the 1996 EIR or 1998 SEIR.

Native American resource sites occur in the immediate region. While the proposed project is not expected to affect cultural resources, it is possible that concentrations of archaeological material could be found during excavation and grading, based on the known prehistory of the project site vicinity.

---

<sup>1</sup>CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, item V(b).

<sup>2</sup>CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, item V(d).

**Supplemental Mitigation 6-1.** In the event that subsurface cultural resources are encountered during approved ground-disturbing activities, work in the immediate vicinity shall be stopped and a qualified archaeologist retained to evaluate the finds. The discovery or disturbance of any cultural resource shall be reported to the California Historical Records Information System (CHRIS) and the Native American Heritage Commission. Identified cultural resources shall be recorded on State Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) form 422 (archaeological sites). Mitigation measures prescribed by these groups and required by the City shall be undertaken before construction activities are resumed. If disturbance of a project area cultural resource cannot be avoided, a mitigation program, including measures set forth in the City's *Cultural Resources Management Program* and in compliance with sections 15064.5 and 15126.4 of the CEQA Guidelines, shall be implemented. In the event that any human remains are encountered, earth-moving shall be stopped until the County Coroner's office has been contacted. Implementation of these measures would reduce this potential impact to a ***less-than-significant level***.