

## 4.5 Cultural Resources

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-Than-Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less-Than-Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>Would the proposal:</b>				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Background information regarding the Project's regional environmental setting was obtained from SCG's PEA (2000), which included the *Cultural Resources Records Search Report (September 2000)* prepared by Chambers Group, Inc. Both documents describe historical, archaeological, and paleontologic resources in the Project's area.

#### Regional

The MGSF is located primarily in the City of Montebello and partially in the City of Monterey Park, both within Los Angeles County, California. Montebello and Monterey Park, two of many urban communities that comprise the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, are located 8 mi east of downtown Los Angeles.

#### Prehistoric Background

The Project area is located within territory occupied by the *Gabrielino* Native American group when Europeans first arrived in the region. Gabrielino settlement and subsistence patterns may extend back to the beginning of the Late Prehistoric period about A.D. 750. The Gabrielino were semi-sedentary hunters and gatherers. Coastal groups collected shellfish and fished for estuary, nearshore, and kelp bed species. Dried fish and shellfish were exchanged for inland products such as acorns. The nuts were pounded into flour using stone mortars and pestles, then cooked as soup or gruel. Seeds from sage, grasses, goosefoot, and buckwheat were ground with stone manos and metates. Deer, rabbits, birds, and marine mammals were hunted with bow and arrow, nets, traps, and snares.

The Gabrielino lived in villages of up to 150 people located near permanent water sources and a variety of food resources. The village acted as the center of a territory from which resources were gathered. Small groups left the village for short periods to hunt, fish, and gather plant foods, as well as collect raw materials for tools, housing, and other utilitarian needs. While away from the village, they established temporary camps and resource processing locations. Archaeologically, such locations are marked by bedrock mortars for acorn processing, manos and metates for seed grinding, and flaked lithic scatters indicating the manufacturing or maintenance of stone tools (usually of chert) used in hunting or butchering. Overnight stays in these field camps are indicated by fire-affected rock resulting from use in hearths.

The period from 1000 B.C. to A.D. 750 is known archaeologically as the Intermediate Period. During this period, mortars and pestles appear, indicating the beginning of acorn exploitation. Use of the acorn -a high- calorie, storable food source - probably allowed greater sedentism and a higher level of social organization. Large projectile points indicate that the bow and arrow, a hallmark of the Late Prehistoric Period, had not yet been introduced, and hunting was likely accomplished using the *atlatl* (spear thrower) instead. Settlement patterns during this time are not well understood. The semi-sedentary settlement pattern characteristic of the Late Prehistoric Period may have begun during the Intermediate Period, although lower population densities may have limited local territoriality.

The Milling Stone Period (about 6500 B.C. to 1000 B.C.) represents a long period of time characterized by smaller, more mobile groups, compared with later periods. These groups probably relied on a seasonal round of settlement, which included both inland and coastal residential bases. Seeds from sage and grasses, rather than acorns, provided calories and carbohydrates. Although fewer projectile points occur (compared with later periods), faunal remains indicate that similar animals were hunted. Inland Milling Stone Period sites are characterized by numerous manos, metates, and hammerstones, while shell middens are common at coastal sites. Coarse-grained lithic materials, such as quartzite and rhyolite, are more common than fine-grained materials, such as chert, in flaked stone tools from this time.

### ***Historic Background***

Existing structures have been built since 1955 and are only 45 years old at a maximum and are generally not of historic interest as industrial or architectural resources.

The first Spanish explorers to visit the *Alta California* coastline included Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo (1542), Pedro de Unamuno (1587), Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño (1595), and Sebastian Vizcaíno (1602). After Vizcaíno's visit, 167 years passed before the first mission was founded in San Diego during the Gaspar de Portolá land expedition of 1769. Native Americans of the Los Angeles Basin were taken to Mission San Gabriel, established in 1771, and called *Gabrielinos* by the Spanish because of their association with the mission. Other Gabrielinos were taken to Mission San Fernando, established in 1797, and called *Fernandeños*. The founding site of Mission San Gabriel, called Mission Vieja ("Old Mission"), is located 1.5 miles east of the project area along the Rio Hondo River. After a devastating flood destroyed Mission Vieja, it was re-established in 1776 as San Gabriel Arcángel in the present-day location 5 mi to the northwest.

Spain made several large land grants in the Los Angeles Basin, but much of the land was not granted until Mexico gained independence in 1822 and mission holdings were secularized in 1834. The current project area is located within Rancho La Merced, a relatively small grant of 2,364 ac made in 1844 to Casilda Soto by Manuel Micheltorrena, a Mexican governor of *Alta California*. The grant was apparently named for the broad meaning of the Spanish *merced* for "mercy" or "grace".

During Mexican rule of *Alta California*, the early pueblo of Los Angeles was located west of present-day Union Station downtown. Surrounding lands continued as ranchos devoted largely to livestock. California became an American state in 1850, with Los Angeles County one of the original counties into which the new state was divided. The population of southern California remained relatively low through the 1870s, however, with cattle ranching prospering as the chief economic activity until the severe floods of 1861-62 and subsequent two-year drought forced the breakup of many ranches.

Rancho La Merced was gifted to Juan Matías Sanchez in 1851 by pioneer businessman William Workman. The Sanchez adobe house from this period still stands along the west bank of the Rio Hondo River, 0.6 mile east of the current project area. By 1874, the ranch had been acquired by Alessandro Repetto, an Italian sheep rancher. Pioneer businessman Harris Newmark, along with four others, bought the ranch from Repetto in 1886. Newmark later described the ranch:

This fine domain, lying between Whittier and Los Angeles, was apportioned long before 1899, among the five purchasers [Newmark, Kaspere Cohn, J. D. Bicknell, I. W. Hellman, and S. M. White]. In that year, Kaspere Cohn and I, on the advice of William Mulholland, developed water on our individual share, meeting with as great a success as has attended all of the operations of that eminent engineer. After an abundance of water was secured, we sold the property in five-acre and smaller lots, locating the town site of *Newmark* near the tracks of the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railroad, and naming the entire settlement Montebello.

The town site known as Newmark was changed to Montebello on October 16, 1920, illustrating, according to Harris Newmark's sons Maurice and Marco, "another of the many instances in recent years of the lack, among Californians, of proper historic respect for pioneer names".

According to data provided by SCG, oil and gas production activities began in the area of the Montebello Property during the 1930s. SCG acquired the oil fields here in 1956, chiefly from Union Oil Company of California, after subsurface oil reserves had been partially depleted. Because SCG acquired the property in 1956, SCG has not constructed any structures that are over 50 years old.

### ***Paleontological Resources***

Paleontological resources of the region generally involve marine invertebrates in the older marine deposits but could also include marine mammals, whales, pinnipeds, and sea cows and Pleistocene terrestrial mammals in the alluvium and Pleistocene formations.

### **Local Setting**

The 24 lots comprising the MGSF are grouped into four configurations designated as the Main Facility, East Site (Eleven Acres), Monterey Park Lots (2), and Townsite (Fourteen)

Lots in Montebello (Chambers Group 2000). The 7 lots of the Main Facility which are located in the City of Montebello have not been previously surveyed for cultural resources but have been severely impacted by surface mining activity. Archaeological survey of these lots, therefore, is unnecessary.

Results of the cultural resources records search for the MGSF area indicate that archaeological resources in the Project area are virtually unknown if not just unreported. The Montebello area in general has been substantially impacted by 100 years of urbanization, quarrying, road construction, and other developments. Relatively few archaeological investigations, however, have been documented in this area, and the presence of archaeological materials is still possible, although most likely in subsurface contexts.

A stronger potential for aboveground historic resources is indicated by a number of historic structures and properties recorded within 4000 ft of the MGSF in the Montebello area (Chambers Group 2000). These resources include the Juan Matías Sanchez Adobe dating from the 1850s, located roughly 3,000 ft from the nearest part of the MGSF. Historic structures and properties, which date before 1900, often have associated archaeological deposits of trash, buried pits, or foundation remains.

#### ***Archeological and Historic Resources***

As indicated above, the major Main Facility site has been substantially disturbed during quarrying operations before 1956 and some modifications related to Howard and Texcoco Ave. The western and northeastern margins of the Main Facility site have not been disturbed by previous earthworks and could retain cultural resources related to the original drainage from the Montebello Hills crest. The East Site and Monterey Park Lots have been disturbed less than that of the Main Facility but are expected to have less potential for archaeological resources as they have a smaller area and less water and native food resources. The Townsite Lots were extensively disturbed by previous earthwork and filling and few resources of any kind are expected to remain intact.

Historic resources are unknown from any site and would be expected only at the Main Facility site. As most facilities and structures on the Main Facility site were built after 1956, none are expected to be of historic interest.

Sites of pre-1940 wells may include materials or relicts of their original well drilling and could contain items of historic interest.

A number of standing structures exist on these lots within the quarry area, and verification of their construction dates is recommended before any impacts to them. If any structure was constructed before 1951 (50 years old or more), an evaluation of the structure for historical significance by an architectural historian is recommended. The two lots of the Main Facility, which are located in the City of Monterey Park, were previously surveyed for cultural resources, but the age of that study (1970s) indicates that current conditions of these two lots cannot be adequately addressed. These lots remain largely undeveloped, with original soil horizons still exposed. An updated intensive archaeological survey is recommended prior to any further impacts.

### ***Paleontological Resources***

Excavations to early- to mid-Pleistocene depths have already taken place at the Main Facility and partially at the East Site and Monterey Park lots and future excavations may directly encounter marine and terrestrial fossils. Other sites have significant depths of fill material or no excavations to fossil-bearing materials and would not be considered to contain important fossils within the probable area of excavation.

### ***Human Remains***

Historic development of the City of Montebello was generally further south and east of the Main Facility, East Site and other combinations of lots having more than 5000 sq ft.. As a result, no cemeteries are known to be present on any of the MGSF sites. The Main Facility was largely excavated before 1955 as part of quarry operations, and no burials or cemeteries would be expected therein. The East Site and, to some extent, Main Facility contain remnants of the original ground surfaces, but no evidence of historic occupation in the vicinity has yet to be found on them.

## **REGULATORY SETTING**

### **Federal**

Federal legislation requires that federal agencies consider environmental effects to historical and cultural resources prior to authorizing any activity. NEPA regulations and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) specify that environmental evaluations of proposed projects consider historic and cultural resource effects. This review process is referred to as "Section 106 review." The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) is responsible for administering the Section 106 review process. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) provides a method for preserving and maintaining cultural resources that meet certain eligibility criteria. In 1971, the President's Executive Order No. 11593 required that all Federal agencies initiate procedures to preserve and maintain cultural resources by nomination and inclusion on the NRHP.

### **State**

State legislation requires the protection of historical and cultural resources. In 1980, the Governor's Executive Order No. B-64-80 required that state agencies inventory all "significant historic and cultural sites, structures, and objects under their jurisdiction which are over 50 years of age and which may qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places."

CEQA Guidelines §15064.5 are used to determine the significance of impacts to archeological and historical resources. The guidelines state that a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of an historical resource would be materially impaired (CEQA Deskbook 1999).

### Local

The *Montebello General Plan Elements* contains a conservation policy related to cultural resources. It is as follows:

- Policy 8: The Juan Matías Sanchez Adobe, the Rio Hondo monument, the Viejo Mission, Taylor Ranch, and El Camino Real should be preserved and restored as necessary.

The *Monterey Park General Plan* contains a conservation policy related to cultural resources. It is as follows:

- Policy 10: Relate any historic or cultural attractions to open space, recreation and conservation lands.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

### Significance Criteria

The significance criteria utilized to assess potential environmental effects based on established regulatory frameworks or established technical requirements are:

- Encountering or disturbing the context of any structure, foundation, or thick deposit of historic age and value.
- Encountering or disturbing the context of any deposit or materials of archaeological value.
- Encountering of any vertebrate or other unusual fossils or thick shell deposits.
- Encountering any human remains, burials, or cemetery.

### Decommissioning and Sale

Results of the cultural resources records search for the MGSF project area indicate that archaeological resources in this area are virtually unknown (Chambers Group 2000). The Montebello area in general has been substantially impacted by 100 years of urbanization, industrial activity, and other developments. Relatively few archaeological investigations, however, have been documented in this area, and the presence of archaeological materials is still possible, though most likely in subsurface contexts.

**Checklist Question a)** The proposed Project would have a less-than-significant impact on the significance of historical resources and may require mitigation. If well abandonment requires significant excavation of contaminated soils on the sites, some effects may occur to historic-aged debris of the 1940-50s in the vicinity of the older oil wells (Townsite Lots, especially those located at Victoria/Maple).

**Checklist Question b)** The proposed Project would have a less-than-significant impact on the significance of archaeological resources and may require mitigation. During gas recovery and decommissioning, some excavations may occur around older oil, gas, and monitoring wells and could disturb undocumented archaeological materials, most likely at the East Site and perhaps some of the isolated Townsite lots primarily east of Montebello Blvd.

**Checklist Question c)** The proposed Project may directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature and, therefore, may require

mitigation. Decommissioning of the sites involves degassing the gas storage facility, plugging and capping the wells, removing surface facilities, and remediation. Due to the increased amount of subsurface activity during decommissioning, undocumented paleontological resources may be encountered and disturbed or destroyed. The highest potential for resource encounters exists at the Main Facility, where potentially fossiliferous materials may be at the surface and not yet buried by other fills or destroyed by typical soil processes.

**Checklist Question d)** No known burials are in the MGSF sites. However, the presence of historical and archaeological evidence indicates that previous human activity and, therefore, possibly human remains may also be present, requiring possible mitigation. Any encounter with human remains under any conditions requires immediate suspension and identification of the remains and their origins.

### **Future Development**

Once decommissioning has taken place, the MGSF sites are expected to be developed for urban uses. Such development would involve forms of land disturbances that may reach greater depths than previously experienced on the lands (especially at the East Site and Main Facility). The new forms of land disturbances would create a potential for encountering previously undisturbed, unknown cultural resources.

**Checklist Question a)-c)** Future development of the MGSF sites (especially the East Site and, to a lesser extent, Main Facility) could be expected to have a less-than-significant impact on cultural resources and require mitigation. During urban development of the MGSF sites, disturbances similar to those during the gas recovery and decommissioning are expected to occur.

### **MITIGATION MEASURES**

Mitigation is required to protect known and unknown cultural resources in the MGSF sites.

**Checklist Question a)** Any demolition, earthwork, and urban development shall be inspected and monitored to verify historic importance of structures and debris prior to and during Project actions, especially during well abandonment.

#### **Mitigation Measure 4.5-1**

The following measure should be used prior to commencement of decommissioning activities:

- Any structure of 50 years or older shall be reviewed and assessed as to its historic significance

**Checklist Questions b)-d)** Any demolition, earthwork, and urban development shall be inspected and monitored to verify that known and unknown archaeological and paleontological resources and human remains are not destroyed.

**Mitigation Measure 4.5-2**

There are no known archaeological or paleontological resources at the Project site. There is no known sacred use of the Project site. Since the possibility exists for disturbing unknown cultural resources, the Project areas shall be intermittently monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Pursuant to Section 21083.2 (I) of the Public Resources Code, in the event any archaeological, paleontological, or historic resources or human remains are encountered during site preparation or construction, all work in the immediate vicinity of 20 meters shall cease and a qualified archaeologist or historian will be consulted to evaluate the find.