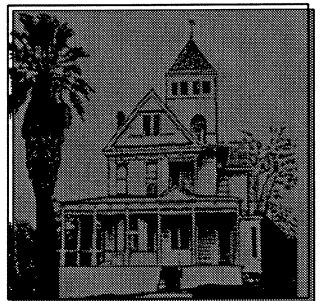


Appendix B



Appendix B

Visual Resources

B.01 VISUAL RESOURCES

B.01.01 Regional

The Folsom Historic District is located in the central-western portion of the City of Folsom, at the western edge of the Sierra Nevada foothills. The surrounding region to the east includes primarily grassy rolling hills dotted with oak trees. Elevations increase to 500 ft. above mean sea level (msl) within 10 miles of the Historic District. To the west is the mostly urbanized Sacramento metropolitan area, with elevations near 100 ft. msl.

Northeast of the Historic District, Folsom Dam and Folsom Lake are prominent visual features. The lake and surrounding shoreline are part of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (FLSRA), which offers opportunities to view the lake and the dam. Folsom Prison, including a broad buffer area of open grassland, and the Folsom City Park lie between the Historic District and Folsom Lake. Southeast of the Historic District is a residential and modern commercial zone, while the area directly south includes land scheduled for development which in 1995 was vegetated by grassland, oak woodland, and a narrow riparian strip along Willow Creek. The west and north boundaries of the Historic District are formed by the Lake Natoma section of the American River.

The American River, Lake Natoma, and Folsom Lake contribute significantly to the overall visual character of the Folsom area. Much of this lake/river complex is surrounded by the open space of the FLSRA with a fairly intact greenbelt of lush riparian vegetation and unique bedrock outcroppings that lend a distinct natural quality to the urban landscape. The area below Folsom Dam has been designated a recreational river under the state and federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Acts. Much of this corridor's shoreline is part of the Lake Natoma unit of the FLSRA, providing recreational land uses with limited development of recreational facilities (Figure C-7.1).

Trails and facilities associated with the FLSRA provide easy public access to the visual resources of both Lake Natoma and the American River. The Lake Natoma/American River complex creates a vivid and intact image of a relatively undisturbed greenbelt in the midst of an urban environment (Figure C-7.2). The corridor is viewed and enjoyed by many visitors and is a significant self-identifying feature to area residents. Because the river corridor setting is unique and creates a distinct visual impression on viewers, the viewsheds that encompass a portion of this scene are considered sensitive.

B.01.02 Local

Elevations within the Historic District range from approximately 130 ft. to 320 ft.. From the south bank of Lake Natoma, within the FLSRA, the topography of the Historic District has a mostly

gradual trend from lower elevations near Lake Natoma to higher elevations in the northeast area. The southwest portion of the Historic District is located on an upper terrace with elevations from 200 to 320 ft. msl. A steep slope parallel to Lake Natoma drops about 40 vertical ft. over a horizontal distance of 300 ft. to a lower terrace. This slope extends between Figueroa, Sutter, and Leidesdorff Streets at the northeast Historic District boundary, then occurs on a more north-south alignment between Sibley and Reading Streets and between Orange Grove Way and the Southern Pacific Railroad in the central part of the Historic District.

A cross-section through Wool Street from Lake Natoma to Mormon Street illustrates 2 of the most abrupt changes in elevation across the terraces between the lake and Leidesdorff Street (approximately 11% slope) and between Sutter and Figueroa streets (approximately 12% slope). The normal pool elevation of the lake is approximately 126 ft., the Radisson Inn between the lake and Leidesdorff Street is at 160 ft., Leidesdorff Street is at 192 ft., Sutter Street is at 214 ft., Figueroa Street is at 250 ft., and Mormon Street is at slightly over 250 ft.. A similar, but smaller, elevational change occurs in a northwest to southeast direction between Reading and Sibley Streets and again from Orange Grove Way to the Southern Pacific Railroad. These terraces are approximately parallel to Lake Natoma along the western Historic District boundary.

This change in elevation from the central part of the Historic District to the north and west along Lake Natoma creates a visually varied terrain. Views of the lake from high points within the Historic District are limited, however, primarily by buildings, street trees, and tree cover within the riparian zone adjacent to the lake (Figure C-7.4). From a shoreline vantage, high-quality, relatively intact views of Lake Natoma and the American River are possible (Figure C-7.3). From this perspective, the surrounding mature riparian forest hides many of the urban features on the adjacent hillsides, giving the viewer the impression of being in a relatively intact natural area. From the western Historic District boundary within the FLSRA, views extend across Lake Natoma to a nearly vertical bluff more than 140 ft. high with a bike trail near the water level.

Long-range views of the Rainbow Bridge and the American River can be seen from within the FLSRA and from the historic Folsom Powerhouse. Most views of the bridge from streets within the Historic District are blocked by buildings or tree canopy (Figure C-7.4). From the southwestern boundary of the Historic District, open grassland and historic dredge tailings are viewed adjacent to Folsom Boulevard. The viewshed down Decatur Street includes long-range views of the riparian zone along Lake Natoma and the opposite shore to the north and Bidwell Street to the south.

Within the central parts of the Historic District, most views tend to be short-range. Views include older residential areas of mostly single-story homes, many with mature street trees in front, as well as newer developments of multi-family homes, apartment buildings, and modern commercial zones (Figures C-7.5). Near the north and west boundaries of the Historic District, short-range views include densely canopied riparian vegetation along Lake Natoma. The riparian zone along the northern boundary provides a backdrop for part of the viewshed that encompasses the Folsom City Park and rodeo grounds. Along the western boundary, riparian and woodland vegetation nearly enclose the Folsom corporation yard, which can be viewed only from the end of Leidesdorff Street, the adjacent Lake Natoma Shores development, or the adjacent FLSRA. The Southern Pacific

Railroad alignment, which is parallel to Folsom Boulevard, is a strip of open space that widens the view corridor down the boulevard.

In contrast to the surrounding modern urban landscape, many historical structures are located in the Historic District. Folsom's rich mining heritage has been preserved in the restored homes and buildings, which include the Folsom Powerhouse and Museum along the southern shoreline of the lake just below Rainbow Bridge, the railroad depots on Wool Street, the Wells Fargo building on Sutter Street, and several historic churches throughout the central Historic District (Figure C-7.6). The intricate building facades and covered sidewalks fronting the Sutter Street shops attract many visitors to the Historic District. Up the hill from Sutter Street are a number of homes built prior to 1900 along Figueroa Street. Rainbow Bridge, a candidate for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, provides an arching gateway between Lake Natoma and the American River.

The Historic District can be viewed from several areas located outside the District boundaries. Viewsheds of the Historic District from the southern or eastern approaches include primarily short-range views due to the relatively level terrain and the presence of buildings and street trees (Figure C-7.8). From Riley Street at the southern boundary and Natoma Street at the northeast boundary, the views encompass commercial areas bordered by residential streets. The Riley Street viewshed also includes Folsom High School. Natoma Street views include the City Park to the north. From the southern approach to the Historic District along Folsom Boulevard, the viewshed into the District includes dredge tailings and large trees surrounding the Lakeside Cemetery to the west with the sound wall extending into the background along the west side of the boulevard. To the east side of Folsom Boulevard views include the railroad alignment, a mixed commercial and residential zone at the corner of Bidwell Street and Oakdale Street, and a large open grassland bordered by trees south of Bidwell Street.

North of the Historic District at the Cliff House Restaurant across Rainbow Bridge, the riparian vegetation within the FLSRA and the upper levels of 2- and 3-story buildings are visible (Figure C-7.9). From Negro Bar at the lake level, views are primarily of a natural area within the FLSRA and some rooftops within the Historic District. Behind the bluffs on the west shore of Lake Natoma is a large residential area in the community of Orangevale with a section of public park space along the edge of the bluff. From this park, the entire Historic District and the surrounding area is within the viewscape (Figure C-7.10). The view is a mixture of natural and urban landscape. The natural landscape includes the lake and open space along the banks in the foreground with the open space surrounding the prison and distant hills in the background. The urban landscape includes the Historic District as the central view, with The Preserve development in the foreground, and newer developments to the east and on the opposite side of the lake. Expanses of dredge tailings to the south are also part of this viewshed.

The existing viewsheds from the Historic District that encompass Lake Natoma would be altered as a result of the proposed bridge crossing project (City of Folsom, 1992). The proposed four-lane bridge would cross the FLSRA in an area southwest of The Lakes shopping center and would cross over Lake Natoma to a point upstream of the boat dock at Negro Bar. The bridge would add an urban focal point to a view with strong rural character and would reduce the natural quality of the Lake Natoma views from the historic Folsom Powerhouse museum and along trails within the

FLSRA. This bridge would become the dominant middle ground component of the Lake Natoma viewscape.



1. View of Folsom Historic District from Bluff in Orangevale



2. View of Negro Bar from Folsom Lake State Recreation Area



3. View of Folsom Powerhouse from Sutter Street and Scott Street Street, Looking North



4. Scott Street, between Riley Street and Figueroa



5. Corner of Natoma Street and Decatur Street, Looking Northeast



6. Corner of Natoma Street and Stafford Street, Looking Southwest



7. Corner of Bidwell Street and Folsom Boulevard, Looking North



8. Corner of Sutter Street and Wool Street, Looking Northeast



9. Corner of Natoma Street and Sibley Street, Saint John the Baptist Church



10. View of Folsom Historic District from the Cliff House Restaurant

