



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 20, 2017

TO: The Balboa Park Committee
Agenda of January 4, 2018

FROM: Bruce E. Martinez, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: North Prado Area Visitor Center

SUMMARY

Issues – Should the Balboa Park Committee advise the relocation of the proposed Visitor Information Center is consistent with the Central Mesa Precise Plan?

Department Recommendation – Advise the relocation of the proposed Visitor Information Center is consistent with the Central Mesa Precise Plan.

Fiscal Impact – None.

Environmental – This recommendation will not result in a “project.” The City of San Diego as the Lead Agency under CEQA will review any proposed projects and provide environmental determination or document per State CEQA guidelines at the project level.

BACKGROUND

Balboa Park is located in the heart of San Diego, immediately north of the downtown area. The Park is surrounded by the communities of Golden Hill, North Park, Uptown and Centre City. Balboa Park is one of the City’s largest developed parks at 1,172 acres and is host to numerous passive and active recreational activities, cultural and educational institutions, and special events. Over 12 million visitors come to Balboa Park each year to enjoy the diversity the park has to offer.

Development, maintenance and management of Balboa Park are governed by the Balboa Park master Plan (BPMP), the Central Mesa Precise Plan (CMPP), the East Mesa Precise Plan (EMPP) and subsequent amendments to these documents. The BPMP is a part of the City’s Progress Guide and General Plan (General Plan), and implements land use policies for Balboa Park.

The BPMP was adopted by City Council on July 25, 1989 (Resolution No. R-274090). The BPMP addresses the entirety of Balboa Park and provides general guidelines for development and management. The CMPP was adopted by City Council on October 20, 1992 (Resolution R-280920) and addresses the central portion of the Park in greater detail.

A large portion of the Central Mesa, including the location of the proposed visitor information center, is within a designated National Historic Landmark District (NHLD). The District is approximately bound by SR 163 to the west, Interstate 5 to the south, Park Boulevard to the east and the San Diego Zoo to the north. A portion of the District extends westward to encompass the Cabrillo Bridge and guard houses, and northward to encompass Spanish Village, the carousel and the miniature railroad.

The Central Mesa is comprised of several subareas, including the North Prado Area (see Attachment A). The Central Mesa Precise Plan identifies a new visitor information center and food services at the intersection of Village Place and Old Globe Way. These facilities would be a reconstruction or remodeling of the existing food service facilities currently found at that site.

DISCUSSION

The City of San Diego is currently in the process of re-issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the redevelopment of the food services at Village Place. In evaluating the size of the site and the average size of the desired facilities, it is difficult, if not impossible, to contain food services, outdoor dining and a visitor information center on such a small site.

The size of the site is approximately 8,200 square feet (excluding the sidewalk). The assumed size for a visitor center is approximately 1,300 square feet, based on the visitor information center footprint proposed for the Palisades area. The existing food services building, which has no interior space for patrons, is approximately 2,100 square feet (patrons must stand outside to order and wait for food). Adding space for patrons would increase the building to approximately 4,000 square feet. Based on a standard 60/40 ratio of kitchen space to dining space, the outdoor dining/patio should be approximately 3,200 square feet. With 4,000 square feet for food service/kitchen space and 3,200 square feet for patio area, there would be only 1,000 remaining for a visitor center.

The location of the proposed visitor information center is not ideal for park visitors. It is located inside the park and not near the visitor arrival point(s). The building shown in the CMPP appears to be quite small and would not be able to house both food services and a visitor information center. Staff is recommending separating these two uses, thus reducing user conflicts and congestion, and freeing up more space for the dining patio.

The CMPP identifies reconstruction of previously demolished buildings that were original to the 1935 Exposition. The proposed visitor center could be located in this building or one of the other Spanish Village buildings with minor relocation of tenants. Locating the visitor center in Spanish Village would be more proximate to visitors as they arrive at the park.

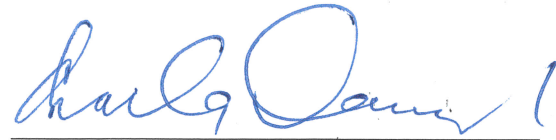
ALTERNATIVE

1. Do not advise that relocation of the proposed visitor center is consistent with the Central Mesa Precise Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Bruce E. Martinez
Deputy Director, Developed Regional Parks



Prepared by: Charles Daniels
Park Designer, Administrative Services

BEM/cd





Attachments: A – Excerpts from the CMPP

cc: Council District 3 Office



North Prado

revised May 2003 **Figure 31**

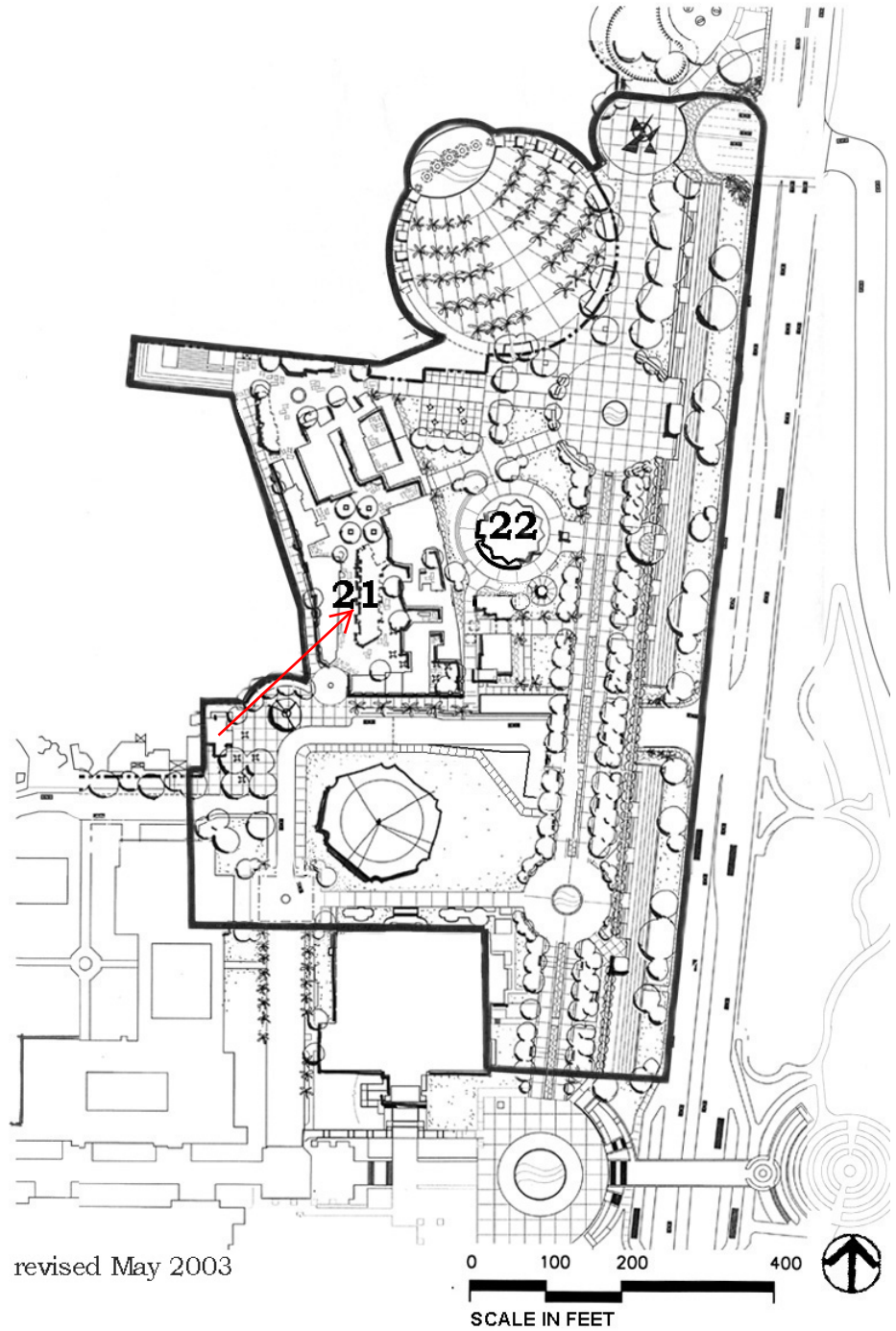
	Trees		Lawn
	Groundcovers		Paved Pedestrian Areas

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SCALE IN FEET

ESTRADA Land Planning



North Prado



21. Spanish Village

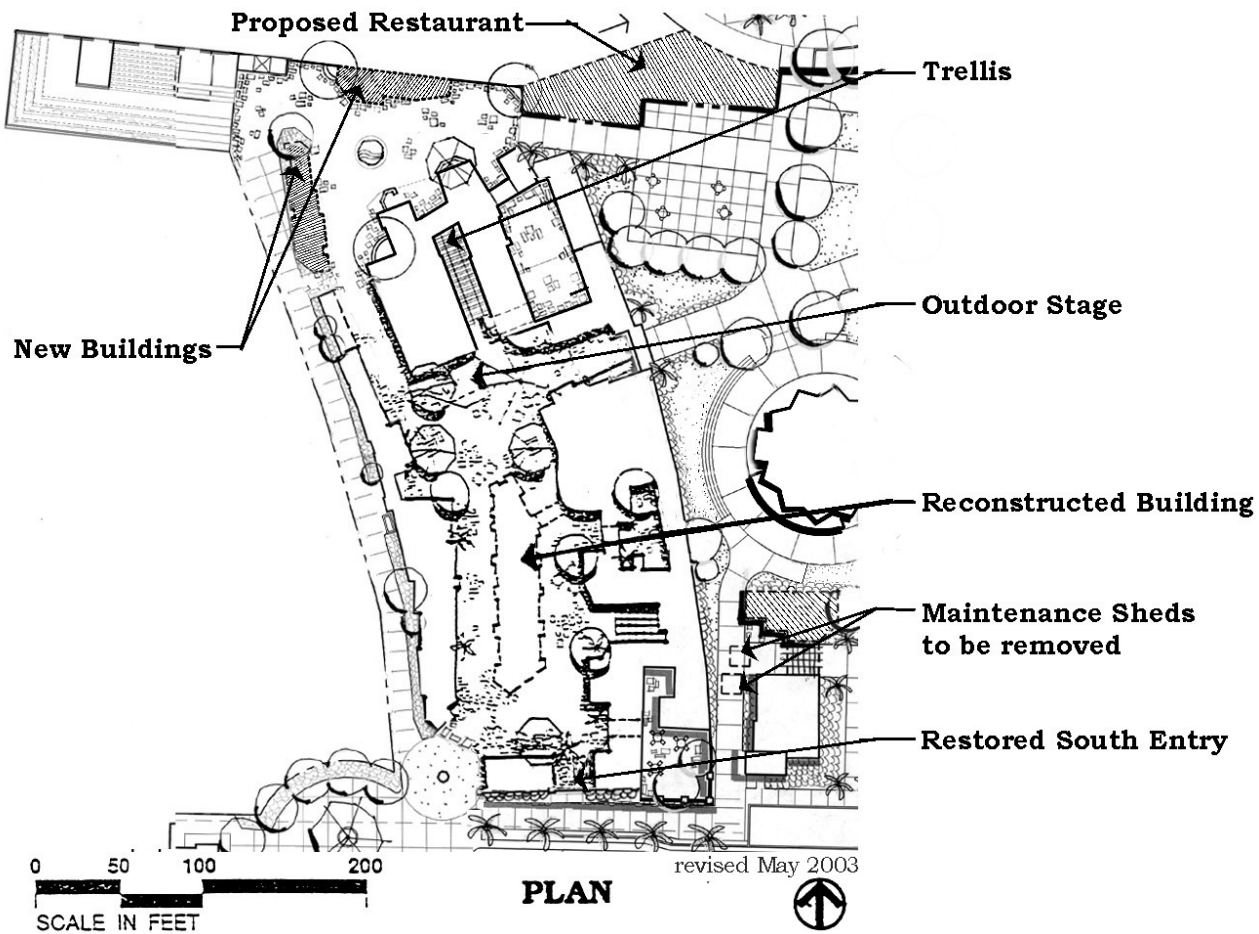
Design Objective:

Rehabilitate and expand the Village to resemble its 1935 appearance, add studio space and provide increased opportunities for viewing artists at work.



BALBOA PARK • CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN

Precise Plan - Architecture



Recommendations:

- Conduct a detailed assessment of existing utilities and refurbish where needed.
- Reconstruct the central building exterior according to the original plans. Interior spaces should provide for main floor uses such as large exhibitions, meetings, or individual studios. The second floor should be designed to accommodate administration work space.
- Reconstruct the historic building portion located at the northwest portion of the Village as shown.
- Remove the non-historic structure located in the proposed east entry patio.
- Restore the south entry that was present in 1935.
- Construct new studio buildings at the north and east entry areas as shown.
- Replicate the original building elevations wherever possible.
- Include space for public viewing of working artists in interior floor plans for all studios.
- Provide floor space for a specialty food service.



- Remodel the existing residence and restore archways into the northeast courtyard as shown.
- Remodel the non-historic addition to the Mineral and Gem building to conform to historic elevations and detailing.
- Extend the roofline of the Mineral and Gem building to partially cover the proposed outdoor stage.
- Replace non-historic bars on windows with operable wood shutters that can be closed and locked after hours of operation.
- Replace non-historic bars on windows with operable wood shutters that can be closed and locked after hours of operation.
- Construct a new restaurant building to the northeast of Spanish Village within the Zoo Leasehold. The architecture of this proposed building shall comply with the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1995), Standards for Rehabilitation No. 9. Namely, it should be respectful of the Spanish Village architecture by relating to it in scale, detail, colors, and material; but it should not mimic the historic Spanish Village architecture. The architecture shall also follow the General Guidelines for Architecture (pages 211-212).

The south entry of Spanish Village with a view of the Central building during construction in 1935.

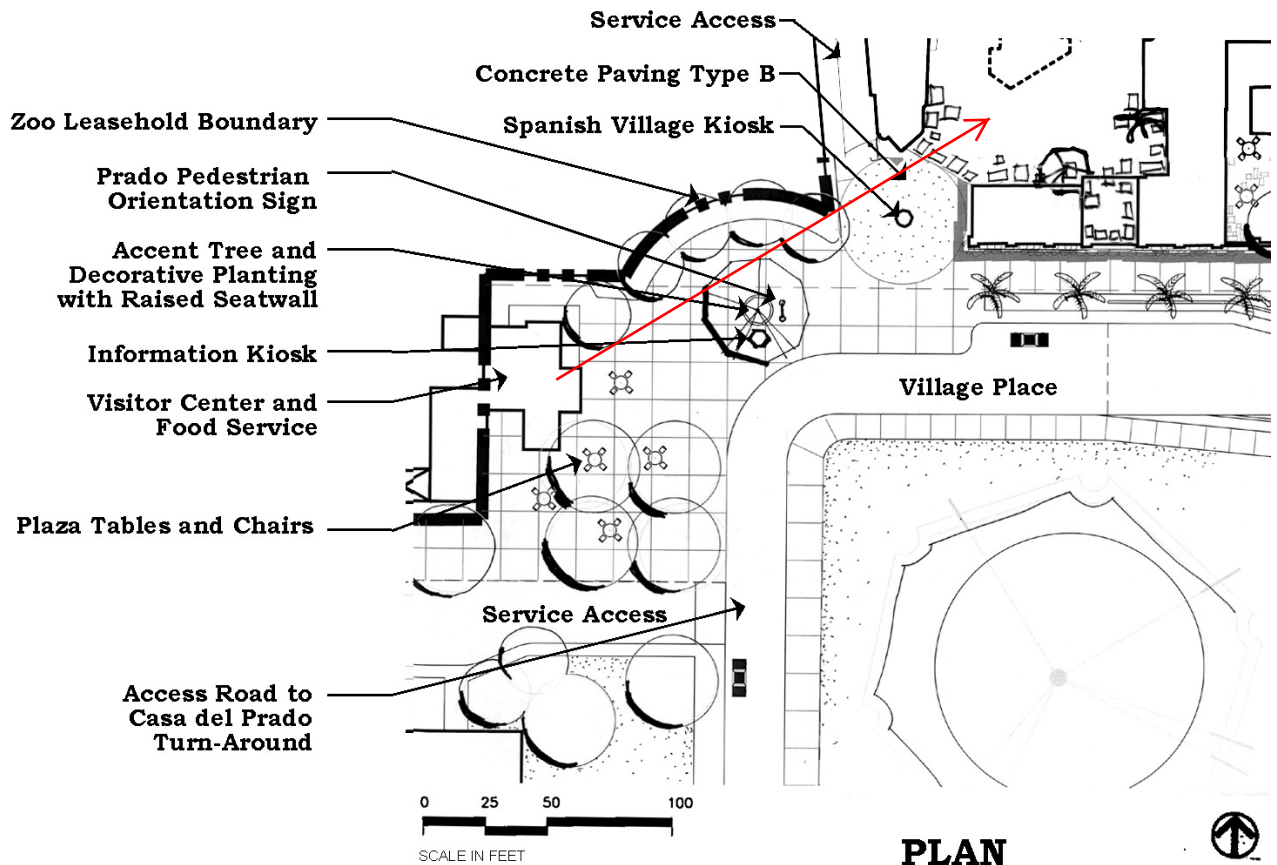




3. Spanish Village South Entry Plaza*

Design Objective:

Because of its significant location, this plaza presents an opportunity to create a festive gathering place at a major crossroads area of the Park. It will include a major visitor service center and provide a vital link between Spanish Village and the Prado. It will be a visual focal point from the Prado and the Village Place ~~cul-de-sac~~ along the Village Promenade.



Recommendations:

- Provide an outdoor dining area with plaza tables and chairs. Include accent trees in grates.
- Increase the lawn area on the northwest side of the Moreton Bay Fig.
- Replace the existing chain link fence with one of decorative wrought iron.
- Create an additional lawn area near the visitor center. Include a three foot high wall to serve as a visual barrier between the plaza and the service access to Spanish Village. Provide palm and theme trees.

*proposed name for a new feature

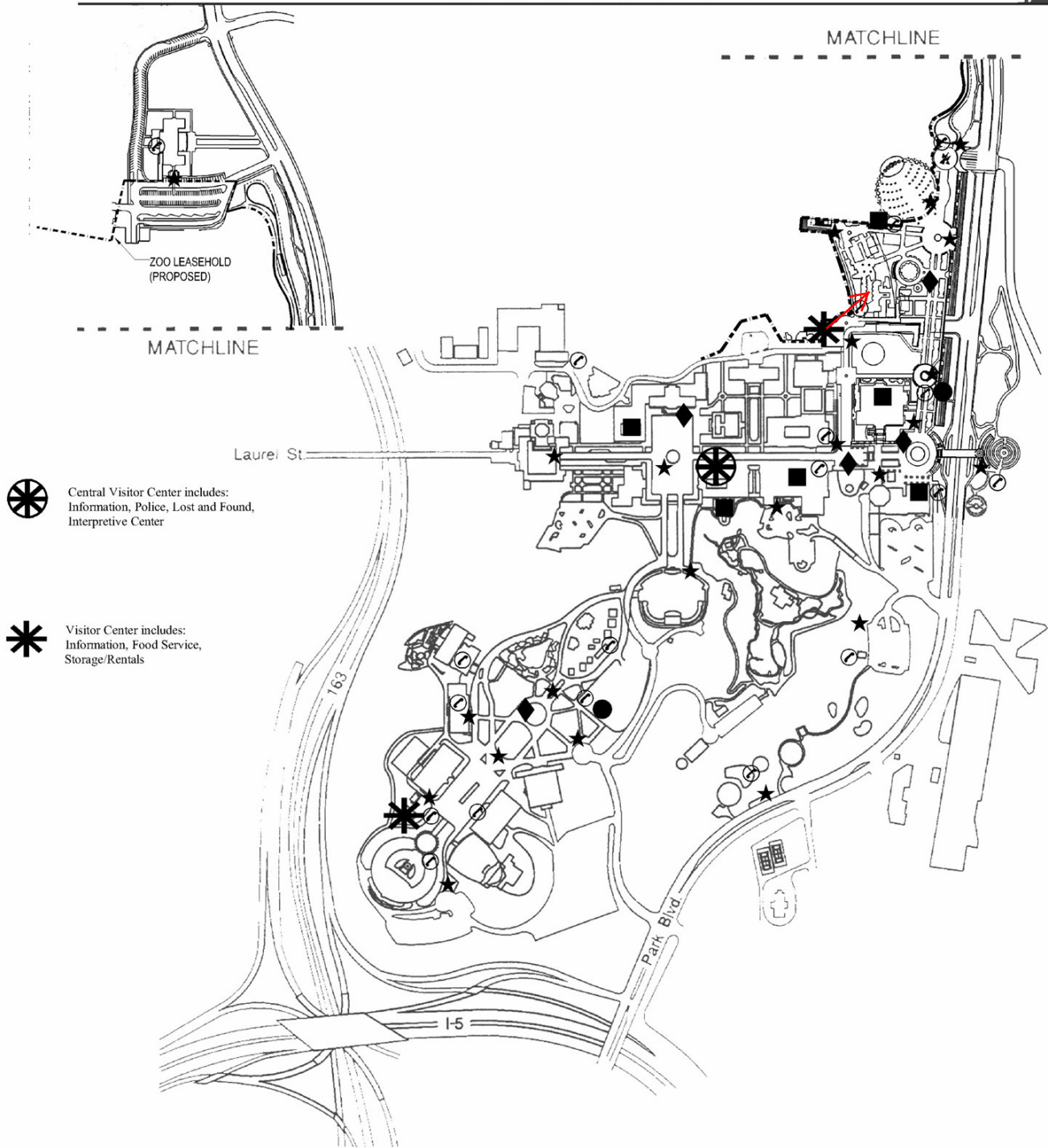



·BALBOA PARK·CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN


Precise Plan - Specific Recommendations

- Create new accent planting areas adjacent to the south wall of Spanish Village.
- Incorporate a circular shaped paving treatment near the southwest entry to Spanish Village that subtly contrasts with the rest of the plaza paving as shown.
- Allow room for vehicular service and emergency fire access from ~~the~~ Village Place ~~cul-de-sac~~ to Old Globe Way and the Casa del Prado Theater Entry Plaza as a part of the plaza design.
- Provide a raised seatwall underneath a proposed shade tree adjacent to the cul-de-sac.






Accent tree: Jacaranda mimosifolia – Jacaranda
Theme Tree: Alectryon excelsum – N.C.N.
Palm Tree: Washington filifera – California Fan Palm
Shade Tree: Erythrina ‘Sykesii’ – ‘Sykes’ Coral Tree



 Central Visitor Center includes:
Information, Police, Lost and Found,
Interpretive Center

 Visitor Center includes:
Information, Food Service,
Storage/Rentals

Proposed Visitor Services

-  Food Service
-  Food Cart
-  Park Map
-  Telephone
-  Storage/ Rentals

13 June 1991
revised May 2003

Figure
53



ESTRADA Land Planning

THIRD DRAFT