3.4 - Cultural Resources

3.4.1 - Introduction

This section describes the existing cultural resources setting and potential effects from implementation of the Specific Plan on the Specific Plan area and its surroundings. Descriptions and analysis in this section are based on information contained in the City of San Ramon General Plan 2030.

3.4.2 - Environmental Setting

Overview

The term "cultural resources" encompasses historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources, and burial sites. Below is a brief summary of each component:

- **Historic Resources:** Historic resources are associated with the recent past. In California, historic resources are typically associated with the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods in the State's history and are generally less than 200 years old.
- **Archaeological Resources:** Archaeology is the study of prehistoric human activities and cultures. Archaeological resources are generally associated with indigenous cultures.
- **Paleontological Resources:** Paleontology is the study of plant and animal fossils.
- **Burial Sites:** Burial sites are formal or informal locations where human remains, usually associated with indigenous cultures, are interred.

Cultural Setting

Prehistory

The Prehistoric period is classified into three temporal ranges: the Early Horizon (3000 to 1000 B.C.), the Berkeley Pattern or Middle Horizon (1000 B.C. to A.D. 500), and the Augustine Pattern or Late Horizon (A.D. 500 to historic period). Brief descriptions of these temporal ranges and their unique characteristics follow.

Early Horizon

Characterized by the Windmiller Pattern, the Early Horizon was centered in the Cosumnes district of the Delta and emphasized hunting rather than gathering, as evidenced by the abundance of projectile points in relation to plant processing tools. Additionally, atlatl, dart, and spear technologies typically included stemmed projectile points of slate and chert but little obsidian. The large variety of projectile point types and faunal remains suggest hunting of numerous types of terrestrial and aquatic species. Burials occurred in cemeteries and intra-village graves, and they typically were ventrally extended, although some dorsal extensions are known, with westerly orientation, and a high number of grave goods. Trade networks focused on acquisition of ornamental and ceremonial objects in finished form rather than in raw material form. The presence of artifacts made of exotic materials

such as quartz, obsidian, and shell indicate an extensive trade network that possibly represents the arrival of Utian populations into central California. Also indicative of this period are rectangular Haliotis and Olivella shell beads, and usually perforated charm stones.

Middle Horizon

The Middle Horizon is characterized by the Berkeley Pattern, which displays considerable changes from the Early Horizon. This period exhibited a strong milling technology represented by minimally shaped cobble mortars and pestles, although metates and manos were still used. Dart and atlatl technologies during this period were characterized by non-stemmed projectile points made primarily of obsidian. Research suggests that the Berkeley Pattern marked the eastward expansion of Miwok groups from the San Francisco Bay Area. Compared with the Early Horizon, there is a higher proportion of grinding implements during the Middle Horizon, implying an emphasis on plant resources rather than on hunting. Typical burials occurred within the village with flexed positions, variable cardinal orientation, and some cremations. The practice of spreading ground ochre over the burial was common at this time. Grave goods are sparse and typically included only utilitarian items and a few ornamental objects. However, objects such as charm stones, quartz crystals, and bone whistles occasionally occur, suggesting the religious or ceremonial significance of the individual. Larger populations are suggested by the number and depth of sites compared with the Windmiller Pattern. It is believed that the Berkeley Pattern reflects gradual expansion or assimilation of different populations as well as a gradual shift in economic emphasis, rather than sudden population replacement.

Late Horizon

The Late Horizon is characterized by the Augustine Pattern, which represents a shift in general subsistence patterns. Changes include the introduction of bow and arrow technology and, most importantly, acorns as the predominant food resource. Trade systems expanded and included raw resources as well as finished products. There are more baked clay artifacts and extensive use of Haliotis ornaments of many elaborate shapes and forms. Burial patterns retained the use of flexed burials with variable orientation, but there was less use of ochre; evidence of cremation was widespread. Judging from the number and types of grave goods associated with the two types of burials, cremation seemed to have been reserved for individuals of higher status, whereas others were buried in flexed positions. Research suggests that the Augustine Pattern represents expansion of the Wintuan population from the north, which resulted in combining new traits with those established during the Middle Horizon.

Ethnography

At the time of European contact in the 18th century, the San Ramon area was occupied by the Ohlone tribe of California Native Americans. The Ohlone group designates a linguistic family consisting of eight different yet related languages. The eight Ohlone languages were quite different from one another, although each language was related to its geographically contiguous neighbors.

The arrival of Ohlone groups into the Bay Area appears to be temporally consistent with the appearance of the Late Period artifact assemblage in the archaeological record, as documented at sites such as the Emeryville Shellmound or the Ellis Landing Shellmound. It is probable that the Ohlone moved south and west from the delta region of the San Joaquin-Sacramento River region into the Bay Area. The tribal group that most likely occupied the project area is the Chochenyo language group, whose territory extended from the southern end of the Carquinez Strait south to Mission San Jose (present-day Fremont), east to present-day Livermore, and west to the San Francisco Bay.

The various Ohlone tribes subsisted as hunter-gatherers and relied on local terrestrial and marine flora and fauna for subsistence. The predominant plant food source was the acorn, but they also exploited a wide range of other plants, including seeds, buckeye, berries, and roots. Protein sources included grizzly bear, elk, sea lions, antelope, and black-tailed deer as well as smaller mammals such as raccoon, brush rabbit, ground squirrels, and wood rats. Waterfowl, including Canadian geese, mallards, green-winged teal, and American widgeon, were captured in nets using decoys to attract them. Fish also played an important role in the Chochenyo diet and included steelhead, salmon, and sturgeon.

The Ohlone constructed watercraft from tule reeds and possessed bow and arrow technology. They fashioned blankets from sea otter pelts, fabricated basketry from twined reeds of various types, and assembled a variety of stone and bone tools in their assemblages. Ohlone villages typically consisted of domed dwelling structures, communal sweathouses, dance enclosures, and assembly houses constructed from thatched tule reeds and a combination of wild grasses, wild alfalfa, and ferns.

The Ohlone were politically organized into autonomous tribelets that had distinct cultural territories. Individual tribelets contained one or more villages with a number of seasonal camps for resource procurement within the tribelet territory. The tribelet chief could be either male or female, and the position was inherited patrilineally, but approval of the community was required. The tribelet chief and council were essentially advisors to the community and were responsible for feeding visitors, directing hunting and fishing expeditions, ceremonial activities, and warfare on neighboring tribelets.

The first European contact with the Ohlone likely occurred in 1602, when Sebastian Vizcaíno's expedition moored in Monterey. The estimated Ohlone population in 1770, when the first mission was established in Ohlone territory, was approximately 10,000. By 1832, the population had declined to fewer than 2,000, mainly due to diseases introduced by the European explorers and settlers. When the Spanish mission system rapidly expanded across California, the Ohlone traditional way of life was irreversibly altered. The pre-contact hunter-gatherer subsistence economy was replaced by an agricultural economy, and the Spanish missionaries prohibited traditional social activities.

The Gold Rush brought further disease to the native inhabitants, and by the 1850s, nearly all of the Ohlone had adapted in some way or another to economies based on cash income. Hunting and

gathering activities continued to decline and were rapidly replaced with economies based on ranching and farming.

Historic Era

Spanish and Mexican Exploration and Settlement

Spanish exploration into the Central Valley dates back to the late 1700s, and Spanish mission records indicate that local Native American inhabitants were being taken to Mission San Jose until secularization of the missions in 1833. Many Native Americans were not willing converts, and there were numerous accounts of neophytes fleeing the missions and a series of "Indian Wars" broke out when the Spanish tried to return them to the missions. During this period, Native American populations were declining rapidly from an influx of Euro-American diseases. In 1832, a party of trappers from the Hudson's Bay Company, led by John Work, traveled down the Sacramento River unintentionally spreading a malaria epidemic to Native Californians.

The Mexican revolt against Spain in 1822 and the secularization of the missions in 1834 changed land ownership patterns in California. The Spanish philosophy of government was directed at the founding of presidios, missions, and secular towns with the land held by the Crown, whereas the later Mexican policy stressed individual ownership of the land. Following Mexico's independence from Spain in 1822, the vast mission lands were granted to private citizens. The last of the mission land holdings were relinquished in 1845, which led the way for the large ranchos common to California in the mid-1800s.

Mission San Jose was one of the most prosperous missions in California because of its fertile land, excellent water supply, large numbers of Native American laborers, and its proximity to San Francisco Bay. In 1824, when a map was drawn of the Mission San Jose territory, it included the San Ramon Valley, which at that time was called "Yngerto Canada," its original Spanish name.

During the Mexican Period, vast tracts of land, including former Mission lands that had reverted to public domain, were granted to individuals. The San Ramon Valley contained three large ranchos: San Ramon (Amador), 16,517 acres; San Ramon (Carpentier), 8,917 acres; and San Ramon (Norris), 4,451 acres. The project site is within the San Ramon (Norris) rancho.

American Period

Following the end of the Mexican-American War in 1847 and the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe in Hidalgo in 1848, California became a United States territory. California was formally admitted into the Union in 1850. Contra Costa County was one of the original 27 counties created at the time of statehood by the California legislature and included portions of present-day Alameda and Santa Clara counties. The county was originally named Mt. Diablo County, but the name was changed prior to incorporation to Contra Costa (Spanish for "opposite coast"), reflecting its geographical relationship to San Francisco.

The Gold Rush of 1848 brought a massive influx of immigrants to California from all parts of the world. California's 1848 population of less than 14,000 (exclusive of Native Americans) increased to 224,000 in four years. With the beginning of the American period, the population explosion resulting from the Gold Rush created a market for a wide range of agricultural products. As more and more gold seekers became discouraged with mining, they turned to farming as a livelihood. Farmers started to raise crops and livestock for sale, not just to be self-sufficient.

The population of Contra Costa County increased rapidly during the Gold Rush and, later, by the completion of Western Pacific Railroad between Stockton and Niles Junction in 1869 and the Santa Fe Railroad between Stockton and Richmond in 1896. The great rancheros of the Spanish period were divided and sold for agricultural uses, and intensively irrigated farming was made possible in some areas of the County by the development of canals that brought water from the eastern portions of the County to the central portions. Other areas, such as nearby Livermore Valley, used the more limited water available from local creeks and wells. Orchards dominated where abundant water was available, while seasonally dry areas were used for dry farming and cattle ranching. Walnuts were an especially attractive orchard crop in central portions of the County, with farmers using thin-shelled English walnut branches grafted to hardy and disease-resistant American walnut rootstock.

The first settlers to the San Ramon area were Leo and Mary Norris, who purchased 4,450 acres of land in 1850. Other early settlers included names that are recognizable from local street names and landmarks, such as Crow, Bollinger, and Glass. The first village was developed on the site of the present-day Outpost Bar and Grill at the intersection of Deerwood Road and San Ramon Valley Boulevard. San Ramon was known by a series of names in the nineteenth century: Brevensville, for a local blacksmith; Lynchville, for the early settler William Lynch; and Limerick, for the numerous Irish immigrants.

The Southern Pacific Railroad arrived in the San Ramon Valley in the 1890s. Dubbed the San Ramon Branch Line, the single-track line originally extended from a junction with the Oakland-Stockton main line near Martinez south to San Ramon, a distance of approximately 20 miles. Service commenced in June 1891. In 1909, the southern terminus of the San Ramon Branch Line was extended south to a junction with the Lathrop-Niles Junction main line near Pleasanton. San Ramon was served with a station, known as San Ramon Siding, near the present-day Iron Horse Trail crossing at Crow Canyon Road. By the mid-1970s, traffic on the line had dwindled to 125 carloads annually and the Southern Pacific Railroad petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the branch line. The line was formally abandoned in 1978 and the counties of Alameda and Contra Costa acquired ownership of the right-of-way within their respective jurisdictions. The Iron Horse Trail, an approximately 30-mile Class I bicycle/pedestrian trail, follows the alignment of the San Ramon Branch Line from Pleasanton to Concord.

Twentieth Century

The San Ramon Valley remained primarily an agricultural area up through the early 1960s. Following the completion of Interstate 680 (I-680) through the San Ramon Valley in the mid-1960s, the San Ramon area experienced rapid growth. The first residential subdivisions were developed in South San Ramon (also known as San Ramon Village) and Twin Creeks. In the early 1980s, Sunset Development began developing the Bishop Ranch Business Park. The most notable facilities in the Bishop Ranch Business Park are Chevron Park and the AT&T campus (formerly known as the Pacific Bell campus), both of which opened in the mid-1980s. Sunset Development continued to develop the Bishop Ranch Business Park through the 1980s and 1990s, and the newest complex, Bishop Ranch 1, opened in 2001.

With growth came the desire for greater control over land use and development. In March 1983, the City electorate voted to incorporate and the City of San Ramon came into existence on July 1 of that year. Since incorporation, the City has expanded its limits west to include the Westside area and portions of Norris Canyon; north to include the Crow Canyon area; northwest to include the Northwest Specific Plan; and east to include the Canyon Lakes, Dougherty Hills, and Dougherty Valley.

Historic Resources

The Specific Plan boundaries do not contain any resources that are listed on a national, state, or local historic register.

3.4.3 - Regulatory Framework

Federal

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, established the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), which contains an inventory of the nation's significant prehistoric and historic properties. Under 36 CFR 60, a property is recommended for possible inclusion on the NRHP if it is at least 50 years old, has integrity, and meets one of the following criteria:

- It is associated with significant events in history, or broad patterns of events.
- It is associated with significant people in the past.
- It embodies the distinctive characteristics of an architectural type, period, or method of construction; or it is the work of a master or possesses high artistic value; or it represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- It has yielded, or may yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Certain types of properties are usually excluded from consideration for listing in the NRHP, but they can be considered if they meet special requirements in addition to meeting the criteria listed above. Such properties include religious sites, relocated properties, graves and cemeteries, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years.

State

California Register of Historical Resources

As defined by Section 15064.5(a)(3)(A-D) of the CEQA Guidelines, a resource shall be considered historically significant if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CR). The California Register of Historical Resources and many local preservation ordinances have employed the criteria for eligibility to the NRHP as a model, since the NHPA provides the highest standard for evaluating the significance of historic resources. A resource that meets the NRHP criteria is clearly significant. In addition, a resource that does not meet the NRHP standards may still be considered historically significant at a local or state level.

California Environmental Quality Act

The CEQA Guidelines state that a resource need not be listed on any register to be found historically significant. The CEQA guidelines direct lead agencies to evaluate archaeological sites to determine if they meet the criteria for listing in the California Register. If an archaeological site is a historical resource, in that it is listed or eligible for listing in the California Register, potential adverse impacts to it must be considered. If an archaeological site is considered not to be an historical resource but meets the definition of a "unique archeological resource" as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21083.2, then it would be treated in accordance with the provisions of that section.

Local

City of San Ramon

General Plan 2030

General Plan 2030 establishes the following guiding and implementing policies related to cultural resources that are applicable to the proposed project:

- **Guiding Policy 8.7-G-1:** Identify, evaluate, and preserve the archaeological, paleontological, and historic resources that are found within the San Ramon Planning Area.
- **Implementing Policy 8.7-I-1:** Require that new development evaluate potential impacts to historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources and, if necessary, implement appropriate mitigation measures to protect the resources.
- **Implementing Policy 8.7-I-2:** Protect and maintain the integrity of officially listed historic resources.
- **Implementing Policy 8.7-I-3:** Closely review any proposals to nominate local resources for eligibility for listing on national or state historic registers.

- **Implementing Policy 8.7-I-4:** As a standard condition of approval, require all development projects involving grading and excavation to implement appropriate measures in the event that burial sites or human remains are encountered during earthwork activities.
- **Implementing Policy 8.7-I-5:** For projects involving a General Plan Amendment, the development of a Specific Plan (or amendment), or designating open space, provide for tribal consultation opportunities in accordance with state law.

3.4.4 - Methodology

Michael Brandman Associates evaluated potential impacts on cultural resources through review of the City of San Ramon General Plan 2030, federal and state historic registers, aerial photographs, and local historical documents.

3.4.5 - Thresholds of Significance

According to Appendix G, Environmental Checklist, of the CEQA Guidelines, cultural resources impacts resulting from the implementation of the proposed project would be considered significant if the project would:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

3.4.6 - Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts associated with the development of the project and provides mitigation measures where appropriate.

Historic Resources

Impact CUL-1:	**Development and land use activities contemplated by the Specific Plan may have the potential to damage or destroy previously undiscovered historic resources.**

Impact Analysis

The Specific Plan boundaries do not contain any resources that are listed on a national, state, or local historic register. The nearest officially listed historic resources are associated with Forest Hill Farms, located more than 1 mile from the Specific Plan boundaries.

From a historic resources perspective, the land uses of most concern are those that contain structures that are at least 50 years old. Based on review of historic aerial photographs dating back to the 1940s,

the only land use within the Specific Plan boundaries that would meet this age criterion is the former Aerojet General facility, located east of Camino Ramon and north of Crow Canyon Road. The Aerojet General facility began operations in 1957, and aerial photographs indicate that substantial changes occurred to the site between the 1950s and the 1980s (such as demolition and new construction). Several structures associated with the former Aerojet General facility are still in use, including part of the San Ramon Valley Unified School District maintenance facility, and appear to have been substantially modified over the years. Generally, these structures are characterized as non-descript industrial buildings, lacking in any unique or significant architectural details. Based the previously mentioned characteristics, it would not be expected that these structures would meet federal or state criteria for historic eligibility. All other existing buildings within the Specific Plan boundaries were developed after the mid 1970s and, therefore, would not be old enough to be considered potentially historic resources.

Subsurface construction activities associated with development within the plan boundaries, such as trenching and grading, could potentially damage or destroy previously undiscovered historic resources. Accordingly, this is a potentially significant impact. Mitigation is proposed to reduce this potentially significant impact to a level of less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM CUL-1 If a potentially significant prehistoric or historic resource is encountered during subsurface activities, all construction within a 100-foot radius of the find shall cease until a qualified archaeologist determines whether the resource requires further study. The project applicant shall include a standard inadvertent discovery clause in every construction contract to inform contractors of this requirement. Any previously undiscovered resources found during construction shall be recorded on appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms and evaluated for significance in terms of California Environmental Quality Act criteria by a qualified archaeologist. Potentially significant cultural resources consist of, but are not limited to, glass, ceramics, stone, bone, wood, and shell artifacts or features, including hearths, structural remains, or historic dumpsites. If the resource is determined to be significant under CEQA, a qualified archaeologist shall prepare and implement a research design and archaeological data recovery plan, if necessary. The archaeologist shall also perform appropriate technical analyses, prepare a full written report and file it with the appropriate information center, and provide for permanent curation of the recovered resources.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Prehistoric Resources

Impact CUL-2: **Development and land use activities contemplated by the Specific Plan could potentially damage or destroy previously undiscovered prehistoric resources.**

Impact Analysis

The Specific Plan area contains mostly urban, built-up land uses. These properties were previously graded and soil engineered to support urban development; any prehistoric resources that may have been present have likely already been removed. Nonetheless, subsurface excavation beyond existing engineered soils could potentially damage or destroy previously unknown archeological resources. This is a potentially significant impact. Mitigation is proposed to reduce this potentially significant impact to level of less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

Implement Mitigation Measure CUL-1.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Paleontological Resources

Impact CUL-3: **Development and land use activities contemplated by the Specific Plan could potentially damage or destroy previously undiscovered paleontological resources.**

Impact Analysis

The Specific Plan boundaries contain mostly urban, built-up land uses. These properties were previously graded and soil engineered to support urban development; any fossils that may have been present have likely already been removed. Nonetheless, subsurface excavation beyond previously disturbed soils could potentially damage or destroy previously undiscovered paleontological resources. This is a potentially significant impact. Mitigation is proposed to reduce this potentially significant impact to a level of less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM CUL-3 Prior to initiation of deep excavation procedures at depths greater than 10 feet, a qualified paleontological monitor will be retained to conduct an onsite monitoring program to ensure protection of previously unknown paleontological specimens. In the event a fossil is discovered during construction of the proposed project when the paleontological monitor is not present, excavation within 100 feet of the find shall be temporarily halted until the discovery is examined by a qualified paleontologist, in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards. The project applicant

shall include a standard inadvertent discovery clause in every construction contract to inform contractors of this requirement. The paleontologist shall notify the City and project applicant of the procedures that must be followed before construction is allowed to resume at the location of the find. If the find is determined to be significant and the City determines that avoidance is not feasible, the paleontologist shall design and carry out a data recovery plan consistent with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards. The plan shall be submitted to the City for review and approval. Upon approval, the plan shall be incorporated into the project.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.

Burial Sites

Impact CUL-4:	**Development and land use activities contemplated by the Specific Plan could potentially damage or destroy previously undiscovered burial sites.**

Impact Analysis

The Specific Plan boundaries contain mostly urban, built-up land uses. These properties were graded and soil engineered to support urban development; therefore, any burial sites that may have been present have already been removed. Nonetheless, subsurface excavation beyond previously disturbed soils could potentially damage or destroy previously undiscovered burial sites. This is a potentially significant impact. Mitigation is proposed to reduce this potentially significant impact to a level of less than significant.

Level of Significance Before Mitigation

Potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measures

MM CUL-4 If human remains are encountered during earth-disturbing activities, all work within 100 feet of the find shall stop immediately and the Contra Costa County Coroner's office shall be notified. If the Coroner determines the remains are Native American in origin, the Native American Heritage Commission will be notified and, in turn, will notify the person determined to be the Most Likely Descendent. The Most Likely Descendent will provide recommendations for treatment of the remains (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5; Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5; Public Resources Code Sections 5097.94 and 5097.98).

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Less than significant impact.