

5.5. Cultural Resources

CULTURAL RESOURCES				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
(a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to § 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 § 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Significance criteria established by CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G and County of Santa Barbara’s Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual, which have been adopted by the City of Goleta.

5.5.1. Setting

Approach to Analysis of Cultural Resources and Previous Cultural Resources Studies

Cultural resources reflect the history, diversity, and culture of the region and the people who created them. They are unique in that they are often the only remaining evidence of activity that occurred in the past. Cultural resources can be natural or built, purposeful or accidental, physical or intangible. They encompass archaeological, Tribal, and built environmental resources, including buildings, structures, objects, districts, and sites.

Information presented in this section, and the subsequent analysis, was based on the information presented in a report entitled *Cultural Resources Assessment Report, Greenbark 30 Battery Energy Storage Project, City of Goleta, Santa Barbara County, California* by Environmental Resources Management, Inc. (ERM) (Wiseman et al. 2025; Confidential Appendix F), unless otherwise referenced.

Cultural Resources Study Area

The Project site consists of a 2.1-acre undeveloped lot (Assessor’s parcel number 079-210-053) located at the northern terminus of Viajero Drive in western Goleta, California in Santa Barbara County. The Project site is adjacent to the existing Ellwood Generating Station (EGS). The cultural resources inventory included a record search, review of historic maps, intensive pedestrian survey, and Extended Phase I testing. The record search was conducted at the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) Central Coast Information Center at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in March of 2023. The record search included the Project site plus a 0.25-mile buffer zone (Study Area). A review of historic General Land Office (GLO) maps, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) plat maps, USGS topographic maps and aerial photographs was conducted. Intensive pedestrian survey was conducted in May of 2023 and the Extended Phase I Testing was conducted in June of 2025.

Cultural Record Search Results

A search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) revealed that no previous cultural resource studies have been completed within the Project site and no cultural resources have been previously recorded in the Project site. The search was performed to identify all previously recorded cultural resources, as well as previously conducted cultural resource studies, within the Project site and around it. Within the Study Area (0.25-mile buffer zone of the surrounding area) eight previous cultural resource studies have been completed and three previously identified cultural resources were identified, including two Native American resources (CA-SBA-1717, a light scatter of marine shell fragments, and

CA-SBA-3495, a low density scatter of marine shell and lithic materials) and one historic era resource (CA-SBA-3634H, a small historic site consisting of three paving stones).

Historic Map Review

Review of historic maps and aerial photos indicate that the Project site has been graded since at least 1969, although no structures are visible within the Project site from aerial photos or historic maps. Development of the neighboring lot that is the current site of the EGS facility is first visible in aerial photos from 1938 and topographic maps from 1942. Viajero Drive and additional development on neighboring lots are first visible in aerial photographs from 1972 (NETR Online 2025).

Pedestrian Survey- Methods and Results

On May 11, 2023, an intensive archaeological survey of the Project site was conducted by Sandra Pentney, M.A., RPA, and John Bergner, M.A., RPA, Cultural Resource Specialists for ERM. Pentney and Bergner utilized 10-15 meter transects to cover the entirety of the Project site with 20-40% average ground visibility.

Pentney and Bergner examined the ground surface and subsurface exposures for the presence of precontact artifacts, historic-era artifacts, sediment discolorations that could indicate the presence of cultural features, and depressions or other features that could indicate the presence of structures or foundations.

A large berm was observed along the northern boundary of the Project site, however, there are no additional features and no clear association or age of the berm. No precontact or historic-era resources were observed during the survey.

Extended Phase I Testing- Methods and Results

Due to the low surface visibility encountered during pedestrian survey and the moderate to high sensitivity of the surrounding area for cultural resources, ERM conducted Extended Phase I archaeological testing of the Project site from June 18-19, 2025.

Extended Phase I testing consisted of excavation of five test trenches in the proposed location of the battery storage infrastructure and four test trenches in the proposed location of the road. Trenches measured one meter (3.3 feet) wide by 3 meters (9.8 feet) long. The Project site is mapped as marine terrace deposits which date to the upper Pleistocene; consequently, it is unlikely that cultural materials would be present lower than 3 feet below ground level. Trench depth was determined by depth of bedrock or other physical obstructions, depth of sterile sediments, maximum depth of proposed disturbance, and the maximum depth considered safe for workers. All trenches were excavated to their proposed maximum depth: four feet in the proposed battery storage area and two feet in the proposed road area.

Trenches were excavated in 20 cm levels by a backhoe excavator; ERM archaeological monitors continuously monitored all excavation, examined sidewalls and spoils, and screened an approximate 25% sample of excavated soils through 1/8-inch mesh. Each trench was backfilled and recontoured prior to the next trench being excavated.

The results of the Extended Phase I testing were negative. No precontact or historic-era resources were observed during Extended Phase I testing.

Native American Heritage Commission Sacred Lands File Search

In April 2024, ERM requested that the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) complete a search of its Sacred Lands Files to determine if resources significant to Native Americans have been recorded within the Project site. On April 17, 2024, ERM received a response from the NAHC stating that the search

of its Sacred Lands file was negative for the presence of resources within the Project footprint. All Tribal outreach and formal consultation have been conducted by the City of Goleta. Please see Section 5.18 Tribal Cultural Resources for the results of consultation.

Environment

The Project site is surrounded by a mixture of industrial, commercial and residential land. The Project site is a flat, undeveloped parcel which is currently dominated by grasses (Wechter and Chartier 2024).

The Project site is situated within the Santa Barbara Coastal Plain and Terraces ecoregion, which is a flat, low elevation zone at the base of the Santa Ynez Mountains that experiences a mild climate and 20 to 23 inches of average annual precipitation.

Prehistory

Paleocoastal Period

Coastal California has been occupied for at least 12,000 years, although archaeological evidence from the Paleo-Coastal period is scant. The earliest radiocarbon dates in California come from the Santa Barbara Channel Islands south of the Project site. Artifacts of this period are indicative of a culture dependent on hunting large game, such as very large bifaces associated with atlatl and spear technology.

Millingstone Period

8000 Before Common Era (BCE) marks the beginning of the Millingstone Period, which is associated with a diversified toolset for procuring and processing a variety of animal and vegetal resources. Millingstone sites occur along the coast and inland and are often associated with stable water sources.

Hunting Culture: Early, Middle and Late Period

3500 BCE marks the transition to the hunting culture, which is further subdivided into an Early and Middle Period. The Early Period is associated with the adoption of the mortar and pestle and increased reliance on acorns, and the Middle Period is associated with the introduction of the bow and arrow. Increased sedentism, increased social stratification, and occupation of more diverse locations are also associated with this period.

1000 CE marks the beginning of the Late Prehistoric Period, which lasted until European contact in 1769. The Late Prehistoric Period is typified by population growth, increased use of inland areas, and increased cultural complexity.

Ethnography

The Project site is located within the territory of the Chumash. Linguistic anthropologists identify several regional varieties of the Chumash language family; the Project site lies within the Central Chumash language group area, specifically the region where the Barbareño dialect associated with Mission Santa Barbara was spoken (Golla 2011). At the time of European contact the Chumash lived in large, politically independent sedentary villages and used temporary seasonal camps throughout their territory. The nearest ethnographic Chumash villages to the Project site are Heliyik, Helo', 'Alkash and S'axpilil to the east and Kuya'mu and Mikiw to the west (Johnson and McLendon 1999).

The Chumash relied on a variety of terrestrial and marine resources for subsistence, and acorns were an important part of their diet. The toolkit of the Chumash was diverse, including flaked stone and groundstone tools, steatite implements, bone and shell fishhooks, nets and baskets woven from plant materials and waterproofed with asphaltum and carved wooden bowls. The Chumash utilized plank canoes called *tomols* to capture deep-sea fish and visit the Channel Islands to trade and procure resources.

Regional History

The historic period of California can be broken into three periods: the Spanish Period, the Mexican Period, and the American Period.

Spanish Period (1769 to 1821). The Spanish began establishing missions to reinforce their claims to the Mexican territory of California in 1769. The mission system endeavored to Christianize the Native Californians and transform them into Spanish citizens. The first mission established in California was Mission San Diego in 1769, and the first mission established in Chumash territory was Mission San Luis Obispo in 1772 (Grant 1978, pg. 505). The Santa Barbara Mission, which was associated with the Barbareño-speaking Chumash, was established in 1786 (Grant 1978, pg. 505). The Spanish period was a time of population decline and loss of culture for the Chumash, who were treated very poorly by the Spanish soldiers and missionaries and had no immunity to European disease. During this period Spanish families began to establish ranches in the Goleta Valley.

Mexican Period (1821 to 1848). In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain and Alta California became one of the provinces of the new Republic of Mexico. The Chumash at La Purisima Mission, Santa Ynez Mission and Santa Barbara Mission staged a revolt against the mission system in 1824; the uprising resulted in the deaths of both Spanish and Chumash people (Grant 1978, 507). Some Chumash who fled remained in remote areas of the interior beyond mission control, but many returned to the missions (Grant 1978, pg. 507). After the government began to secularize the missions in 1834, a series of large land grants (ranchos) that transferred mission properties to private ownership were awarded by the various governors of California. The Project site is part of a land grant called Rancho Los Dos Pueblos, which was awarded to Nicholas Den, an Irish immigrant, in 1842 (Historic Resources Group 2021).

American Period (1848 to the Present). The United States took ownership of California as a consequence of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, and California became a state in 1850. Santa Barbara County was also created at this time (Historic Resources Group 2021). The beginning of the Gold Rush in the late 1840s and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 led to a flood of new settlers in California.

Many of the ranchos created during the Mexican Period were sold when rancheros ran into financial trouble, especially after a severe drought in the 1860s. The ranchos were subsequently divided up and developed into agricultural lands or towns (Historic Resources Group 2021). Rancho Los Dos Pueblos was subdivided and distributed amongst the heirs of Nicholas Den after his death in 1862 (Historic Resources Group 2021).

The population of Goleta began to grow in the late 1800's along with the oil industry, and the Southern Pacific Railroad began to serve the area in 1901. In the 1920's and 1930's Goleta was a major producer of oil in the United States (Historic Resources Group 2021). The City of Goleta continued to grow through the 1900's but was not incorporated until 2002.

5.5.2. Regulatory Background

State

California Environmental Quality Act. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) establishes that historical and archaeological resources must be afforded consideration and protection (14 CCR Section 21083.2, 14 CCR Section 15064.5). CEQA Guidelines define significant cultural resources under two regulatory designations: historical resources and unique archaeological resources.

A historical resource is a "resource listed in, or determined to be eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission, for listing in the CRHR" or "a resource listed in a local register of historical resources or iden-

tified as significant in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the Public Resources Code;” or “any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be historically significant or significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California, provided the agency’s determination is supported by substantial evidence in light of the whole record.” (14 CCR Section 15064.5[a][3]).

An archaeological artifact, object, or site can meet CEQA’s definition of a unique archaeological resource even if it does not qualify as a historical resource (PRC 21083.2[g]; 14 CCR 15064.5[c][3]).

Local

City of Goleta. The City of Goleta’s Historic Preservation & Archaeological and Tribal Cultural regulations are codified as Chapters 17.33 and 17.43 of the Goleta Municipal Code (Ordinance No. 22-05), which established a Historic Preservation Commission (Section E) and a Historic Resources Inventory and seven local Landmark designations (Section G), as well as establishing standards for the protection of Archaeological Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources within the City of Goleta (Section H).

The definition adopted as part of Ordinance No. 22-05, defines an Archaeological Resource as “[a]n artifact, object, or site constituting material remains of past human life or activities” and Tribal Cultural Resources “...include Native American archaeological sites and area of natural landscape that have traditional cultural significance.” Further, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21074(a), a resource that consists of sites, features, places, cultural landscapes, sacred places, and objects with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe that are:

- (a) Included in or determined to be eligible for inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR);
- (b) Included in a local register of historical resources; or
- (c) Determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported with substantial evidence, to be significant on the basis of criteria for listing in the CRHR after the lead agency takes into consideration the significance to the Tribe(s)” (City of Goleta Ordinance No. 22-05, 2022).

5.5.3. Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Thresholds of Significance

A significant impact on cultural resources would occur if a proposed Project resulted in any of the impacts noted in the above checklist (Section 5.5). Additional thresholds are contained in the County of Santa Barbara’s Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (2021), which has been adopted by the City of Goleta.

The City’s adopted thresholds are identical to the CEQA Appendix G checklist questions, with the addition of one threshold, which indicates that a project would result in a significant impact on a cultural resource if it results in the physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of such a resource would be materially impaired. The City of Goleta defines the significance of a cultural resource and potential impacts to significance as follows:

“The significance of a cultural resource and impacts to the resource is determined by whether that resource can increase the collective knowledge regarding the past. The primary determining factors are site content and degree of preservation.”

The physical demolition, destruction, relocation or alteration of a resource or its immediate surroundings would constitute a substantial adverse change to the resource; therefore, the City’s adopted thresholds are considered in the following Impact Analysis.

Impact Analysis

a. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource pursuant to §15064.5 [§15064.5 generally defines historical resource under CEQA]?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The record search, intensive pedestrian survey, and Extended Phase I testing did not identify any known historical resources in the Project site. However, ground disturbing activity, such as grading, trenching, or excavations, has the potential to impact unknown buried resources that may be considered significant under CEQA or local regulations. Implementation of Mitigation Measures (MMs) C-1, C-2, and C-3, described below, would reduce impacts to unknown resources to a less than significant level.

MM C-1 Cultural Resources Awareness Training. Prior to the initiation of construction, all construction personnel shall be trained by an archaeologist qualified under 36 Code of Federal Regulations⁶¹ regarding the recognition of possible buried cultural resources (i.e., Native American and/or historical artifacts, objects, or features) and protection of all archaeological resources during construction. Training shall inform all construction personnel of the procedures to be followed upon the discovery of cultural materials. All personnel shall be instructed that unauthorized removal or collection of artifacts is a violation of state law. Any excavation contract (or contracts for other activities that may have subsurface soil impacts) shall include clauses that require construction personnel to attend the Workers' Environmental Awareness Program, so they are aware of the potential for inadvertently exposing buried archaeological deposits.

MM C-2 Inadvertent Discovery of Historical Resources, Unique Archaeological Resources, or Tribal Cultural Resources. If previously unidentified cultural resources are uncovered during construction activities, construction work within 50 feet of the find shall be halted and directed away from the discovery until an archaeologist qualified by the Secretary of the Interior assesses the significance of the resource, in consultation with consulting Tribe(s), and makes a recommendation to the City of Goleta.

The archaeologist, in consultation with the City of Goleta, consulting Tribe(s), and any other responsible public agency, shall make the necessary plans for treatment of the find(s) and for the evaluation and mitigation of impacts if the find(s) is found to be eligible to the California Register, local register or qualify as a unique archaeological resource or a TCR under CEQA (PRC §21083.2).

MM C-3 Treatment of Human Remains. Any human remains discovered in the Project site are to be treated with respect and dignity. Per Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(b), upon discovery of human remains, the following must occur: all work within 50 feet of the discovery area must cease immediately, nothing in the Project site is to be disturbed, and the area must be secured.

Per Health and Safety Code section 7050.5, the County Coroner's Office must be called in the event of an inadvertent discovery of human remains. The Coroner has two working days to examine the remains after notification. The appropriate land manager/owner of the site is to be called and informed of the discovery. It is very important that the suspected remains, and the area around them, are undisturbed and the proper authorities called to the scene as soon as possible, because it could be a crime scene. The Coroner would determine if the remains are archaeological/historic or of modern origin and if there are any criminal or jurisdictional questions. After the Coroner has determined that the remains are archaeological/historic-era, the Coroner would make recommendations

concerning the treatment and disposition of the remains to the person responsible for the excavation, or to his or her authorized representative. If the Coroner believes the remains to be those of a Native American, the Coroner shall contact the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) by telephone within 24 hours.

Per Public Resources Code section 5097.98, the NAHC would immediately notify the person it believes to be the most likely descendant (MLD) of the remains. The MLD has 48 hours from the time given to access the site to make recommendations to the landowner for treatment or disposition of the human remains. If the descendant does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the landowner shall reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from further disturbance. If the landowner does not accept the descendant's recommendations, the owner or the descendant may request mediation by NAHC.

According to the California Health and Safety Code, six or more human burials at one location constitute a cemetery (Section 8100), and willful disturbance of human remains is a felony (Section 7052).

b. Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The record search, intensive pedestrian survey, and Extended Phase I testing did not identify any known archaeological resources in the Project site. However, ground-disturbing activity, such as grading, trenching, or excavations, has the potential to impact unknown buried resources that may be considered a unique archaeological resource per CEQA. Implementation of MMs C-1, C-2, and C-3 would reduce impacts to unknown resources to a less than significant level.

c. Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. No known human remains, or informal, undocumented cemeteries were identified within the Project site as a result of the record search, archival research, NAHC Sacred Lands File Search, intensive pedestrian survey or Extended Phase I testing. In the unlikely event unknown buried human remains are encountered during ground disturbing activity, the implementation of MMs C-1 and C-3 would reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

5.5.3.1. Impact Conclusions and Mitigation Measures

The proposed Project would result in potentially significant impacts to cultural resources. With implementation of mitigation measures C-1 through C-3, impacts would be reduced to a less than significant level.