III. PLANNING CONTEXT

Several prior studies contributed to the conceptual framework of this neighborhood plan.

A. The Master Plan Study

The UCSD Master Plan Study of 1989 established a set of guiding principles to manage the growth of the campus in a coherent way. Of specific importance to this study were the following:

- The definition of neighborhoods with clear boundaries and distinct characteristics.
- The establishment of academic corridors such as the Marine Sciences Academic Corridor which includes the Upper Mesa Neighborhood. This academic corridor further extends from SIO to the Revelle College neighborhood (east of North Torrey Pines Road) and symbolizes a conceptual and programmatic link between the SIO campus and the central campus. Expedition Way (a public access road to the Birch Aquarium at Scripps) provides a physical link to the central campus, via the Revelle College Drive entrance.
- The shoreline, canyons and eucalyptus groves were to be preserved and interconnected to form the UCSD Park. Skeleton Canyon Ecological Reserve, a major element of the Park at SIO, abuts this site to the west and a portion of the Park Grove Reserve abuts the site to the north.

B. The SIO Master Plan

Included in the Master Plan was a detailed outline for the SIO campus which houses the Marine Sciences division of UCSD. The campus includes 160 acres of land stretching from the ocean to the west to North Torrey Pines Road and Torrey Pines Road to the east. La Jolla Shores Drive bisects the campus into SIO West and SIO East.

The SIO Master Plan anticipates accommodating future growth through replacement and in-fill within SIO West, and in development clusters or neighborhoods organized along a main pedestrian spine within SIO East. Future neighborhoods in SIO East will accommodate single use developments (either academic research buildings or housing facilities) with associated service areas and parking. Open spaces and plazas linked to the campus-wide pedestrian system are envisioned in neighborhood developments.

From the SIO Master Plan, several planning principles were relevant to the Upper Mesa Neighborhood:

- Arrange buildings in compact clusters around interconnecting courtyards. Relate to natural topography.
• Use one to two-story building heights, with three-stories as a maximum. Avoid blocking views to the ocean.
• Orient buildings toward views of the ocean, canyons, and other open spaces.
• Use stone, stucco, and similar materials for walls and surfaces to relate to the terrain. Avoid extensive glazing and reflective glass.
• Use light and non-reflective color for buildings. Earth tones are appropriate, especially for large surfaces.
• Buildings should be set back a minimum of 60 feet along the aquarium access road. Parking should have a setback of 30 feet from this road, screened with a landscape buffer.
• On the hillsides and mesa, create a landscape buffer between development clusters and the campus-wide open space of the Park that relates strongly to the surrounding indigenous vegetation.

C. SIO East planning studies and building development projects

Since completion of the SIO Master Plan study in 1989, the following infrastructure, building development projects, and detailed planning studies, have taken place on the SIO East Campus:

• The Birch Aquarium, Expedition Way and the aquarium parking lot were completed in 1992, establishing access to the SIO East land from North Torrey Pines Road. Expedition Way forms a boundary to the site.
• The Coast Apartments have undergone major renovation and opened for occupancy in Fall 1997. This complex is relatively close to the site but not visible.
• SIO Hillside Neighborhood Plan (1994) represents a detailed development plan and design guidelines for a 24-acre area along and east of La Jolla Shores Drive. This study proposes a strong pedestrian route, Scripps Ladder, which connects the west and east campuses and terminates in the parking court off Expedition Way. The Meander, a campus wide pathway designed by Newton and Helen Harrison, is expected to link this route with the main campus passing through the Upper Mesa Neighborhood.

D. West Campus Plans

The Revelle College neighborhood plan is being updated and gives importance to the campus entry at Revelle Drive (an extension of Expedition Way).

The Meander, a campus wide nature path connecting the various land areas comprising the Park, will enhance the link between the West Campus and SIO. It effectively creates a “gateway” consisting of similar
landscape treatment and markers on each side of the street as well as
special paving for the pedestrian crossings.

The Theatre District Plan also enhances the Revelle Drive entry
with a specific landscape element. It also shows a strong pedestrian path
leading from the eucalyptus grove to the intersection of Torrey Pines and
North Torrey Pines at an existing pedestrian crosswalk. A view corridor
from the La Jolla Playhouse to the ocean is shown at this vehicular
intersection.

From these plans, it is suggested that the Upper Mesa
Neighborhood and West Campus have pedestrian linkages from both the
intersection of Expedition Way and North Torrey Pines Road ("gateway to
the site) and from the intersection of North Torrey Pines Road and Torrey
Pines Road (minor link).

E. The Campus Landscape Planning Study

This study addresses the rustic landscape areas on Campus. It
designates eucalyptus as the street trees on North Torrey Pines Road and
Torrey pines on Torrey Pines Road. The Park grove of eucalyptus trees at
the south west corner of North Torrey Pines Road is to be preserved and
enhanced providing continuity with the grove in the theatre district on the
West Campus.

F. Site Conditions

1. Location: The study area is located at the northeast corner of the SIO
campus, bordered by Expedition Way, North Torrey Pines Road, Torrey
Pines Road, Allen Field (City of San Diego Park and Recreation), and a
portion of UCSD Park lands known as Skeleton Canyon Ecological
Reserve. This area has a prominent frontage to the public roadways,
commands views of the Pacific Ocean to the west and will provide a link
between the built environments on the SIO and West Campus.

2. Topography: The site has a gentle slope from east to west leading into
Skeleton Canyon. North Torrey Pines Road and Torrey Pines Road have
been built up so that there is approximately a five foot elevation change
where they border the site.

3. Views: Excellent views of both the ocean to the west and La Jolla and
Mount Soledad to the south are afforded throughout the site. In addition,
view corridors from the theatre district cross the site, as do views from
the corner of North Torrey Pines Road and Torrey Pines Road.

4. Edges: Each edge of the site has different characteristics. North Torrey
Pines Road and Torrey Pines Road, though different in scale and character,
are both busy, noisy streets requiring setbacks and sound buffering.
Expedition Way has a low level of vehicular traffic. Allen Field and Skeleton
Canyon are open spaces with very different landscape features and uses.
Both afford uninterrupted views and relative quiet although Allen Field is noisy when in active use.

5. Access: Vehicular access is available from Expedition Way and from Torrey Pines Road. From Torrey Pines Road, access would likely be limited to "right turn only," both in and out.

6. Geology/Paleontology: As identified in the geological report, the site is underlain by the Linda Vista Formation which consists of sedimentary deposits, with moderate potential to contain paleontological resources. According to the report, geotechnical problems on these generally stable materials should be minimal. Two faults cross the site. The Azul Fault runs from northwest to southeast, while a portion of the Redwood Fault enters the site from the east and ends at the Azul Fault (refer to drawing in Appendix). Both were mapped in 1975, but have not been investigated with regard to their activity classifications. A fault study should be undertaken to determine the presence or absence of these faults, their physical characteristics and activity classifications before facilities are sited in the area.

7. Cultural Resources: The project site is part of a previously recorded archaeological site (SDI-8469/SDM-W-2348). The site also contains a historic component. Based on recommendations in the 1989 Long Range Development Plan Environmental Impact Report, significance testing was undertaken in the fall of 1997. Testing revealed a lack of intact subsurface and lack of depth as well as a general sparseness of cultural materials. Therefore, the project area is considered not significant pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. Site planning constraints are not necessary with regard to cultural resources.

8. Utilities: The near and long term utility connections are as follows:
   - Electricity
     Near Term: San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) can provide a connection from the existing manhole at the intersection of North Torrey Pines Road and Torrey Pines Road. UCSD would have to provide a transformer pad and underground conduit.
     Long Term: Connections to UCSD 12KV Distribution System could be gained from two future locations: 1) a manhole at the intersection of Expedition Way and Downwind Way (to be implemented by the SIO Utilities Project) and 2) a manhole at the intersection of Revelle College Drive and Scholars Drive (to be in place to provide electrical service for the Natural Sciences Interdisciplinary Building).
   - Gas
     Near and Long Term: SDG&E will provide a connection to an existing 3" gas line in Torrey Pines Road.
• Sewer
  Near Term: Connect to a sewer line in Expedition Way that serves Coast Apartments and extends to the Montoro subdivision.
  Long Term: The sewer line to serve the full development of the SIO Upper Mesa should extend down Expedition Way and Downwind Way and tie to the planned sewer line in La Jolla Shores Drive.

• Water
  Near Term: Connect to an 8” water line near Mandell Weiss Forum theater.
  Long Term: Connect to a water meter station southwest of Coast Apartments with a 12” line to run in Expedition Way.

G. The Proposed Program

The UCSD Master Plan identifies this neighborhood for academic/research uses. The plan established a program of 126,000 Gross Square Feet (GSF) with parking for 170 cars. The potential USGS facility would comprise approximately 21,000 GSF.