



AES Southland Development, LLC  
21730 Newland Street  
Huntington Beach, CA 92646  
tel 562 493 7891  
fax 562 493 7320

September 14, 2020

Jane James  
City of Huntington Beach  
Planning Manager  
2000 Main Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

**Re: AES Huntington Beach Energy Project – Revised Architectural Treatment Design  
Review for the Huntington Beach Energy Project: Advisory Resolution**

Dear Ms. James:

AES Southland Development, LLC (AES-SLD or Project Owner) submits the following information to support the attached Design Review Planning Application (Application) included as Attachment 1. The Application seeks an Advisory Resolution from the City of Huntington Beach (City) that recommends approval by the California Energy Commission (CEC)<sup>1</sup> of a revised, mural-based architectural treatment resulting from an extensive community outreach program for the AES Huntington Beach Energy Project (HBEP).

The revised architectural treatment design is a mural-based surface treatment by a renowned Southern California artist, Kim West. The Kim West Concept is presented in Attachment 2 to this Application.

As explained in further detail below, the mural design was conceived following an extensive public outreach effort to the local community, including several community town hall meetings and surveys. Through this outreach effort, the community supported the development of an alternative to the previously approved architectural screen that was designed as a visual treatment for the HBEP. The community and local stakeholders identified several key features for inclusion in the architectural treatment, such as imagery depicting the natural environment, local fauna and flora, and regional features, all intended to highlight nature and the unique Huntington Beach experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Resources Code section 25500 vests the CEC with “the exclusive jurisdiction” to approve all thermal power plants fifty megawatts or greater. The CEC is the only state agency empowered to license such facilities, including review over proposed amendments to licensing conditions. Where the CEC has exclusive siting jurisdiction, as it does for the HBEP, the CEC will seek the opinions and recommendations of the local land use authority through an advisory resolution regarding consistency of a proposed modification with local laws, ordinances, regulations and standards.

These concepts inspired the mural-based surface treatment proposed in the Application. The mural design incorporates and features the natural environment of the region better than the original architectural treatment, and avoids a number of potential issues that were identified with the original treatment during the detailed design process.

The original architectural concept approved by the CEC in 2017 has proven to be both an engineering and construction challenge, and potentially a maintenance challenge that could potentially fail to meet the original intent-- to improve views of the power plant from the south-east. The original concept also lacks the community-inspired artistry of Ms. West's mural design. As part of the CEC's 2017 approval for the HBEP, an architectural treatment was approved by the CEC that would partially screen views of the facility from Key Observation Point 4, located on Magnolia Avenue at the flood control canal bridge. The original architectural treatment featured a very large and complex structure featuring a number of blue spherical objects creating the impression of the shape of a wave, which actually increases the visual mass of the project thereby potentially making the power plant look even larger. That structure provided partial screening, given the concept design's incorporation of large blue spherical objects on cabling.

Given the issues associated with the original concept and the unique opportunities afforded by the mural-based design from a renowned local artist like Ms. West, the Project Owner requests that the City issue a resolution finding: (1) that the revised, mural-based architectural treatment is consistent with all applicable local laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards and (2) that the revised architectural treatment will not result in any potentially significant visual impacts from the HBEP, including from Magnolia Avenue at Key Observation Point 4.

**Design Review Planning Application Item 17: A written narrative of the proposed use or project. The narrative shall contain the following minimum information:**

**(a) Description of project and services, including proposed use, square footage, hours and days of operation, number of employees, and other information as appropriate.**

The HBEP is a new operational 644-megawatt (MW) (net) electrical generating facility built to replace the aging the Huntington Beach Generating Station (HBGS), which will operate until January 1, 2024 pursuant to a recent decision by the State Water Resources Control Board. The new HBEP and old HBGS are co-located on a 28.6-acre parcel (APN 114-150-82) on Newland Street in the City of Huntington Beach, CA.

As stated above, the CEC's 2017 approval for the HBEP included an architectural treatment that would partially screen views of the facility from Key Observation Point 4, located on Magnolia Avenue at the flood control canal bridge. The architectural treatment and screen were intended to mitigate potentially significant impacts to visual resources when viewing the new power plant from the south-east. A mural spanning across four of the power plant structures would meet the objective of the originally proposed architectural treatment, without the construction of additional structures. The four structures to be painted include the plant water treatment building, the gas compressor building, the noise attenuation barrier or wall and the air-cooled condenser (ACC), and have already been permitted and constructed as approved in the CEC's certification of the HBEP. The mural design incorporates and features the natural environment of the region better

than the original architectural treatment, and avoids a number of the potential issues that were identified with the original treatment during the detailed design process.

#### (b) Reasons for initiating application

This Application is being submitted for the City's review of the revised architectural surface treatment plan for the HBEP.

The CEC's approval process, which included environmental review and findings pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, contemplates that the "detailed design" of the architectural treatment occurs after project approval. For example, the CEC's Final Decision specifically provided for an engineering assessment to be conducted examining the feasibility of the original architectural treatment.

Upon further engineering for the original design, it was determined that the large, steel architectural framing and structures needed would require substantial footings and foundations to ensure stability during extreme wind and weather events. Moreover, the approved architectural treatment has two components, one for the operational new plant and a second for the approved, but unbuilt "phase 2" simple cycle turbines. This second phase would be located on the same site as the existing Huntington Beach Units 1 and 2.

While Huntington Beach Unit 1 has been retired, Huntington Beach Unit 2 was recently tasked by the State Water Resources Control Board to continue to operate through the end of 2023 to ensure electric grid reliability. Given this operating horizon and the need for demolition of Huntington Beach Units 1 and 2 thereafter, the original CEC structural concept could not even begin to be built until after Unit 2 ceases operations, currently anticipated on January 1, 2024. Both Units 1 and 2 will need to be demolished to provide the "footprint" needed for the second portion of the CEC approved structure. This delay resulting from the recent energy emergencies, resulted in a reconsideration of the massing and constructability issues associated with the original design. The delay also provided an opportunity for the Project Owner to engage with the community regarding a different architectural treatment that would avoid the issues discovered with the original proposal.

In April of 2020, AES met with the City of Huntington Beach, the City Manager, and the Community Development Director to seek their input on a possible change to the architectural treatment design for the HBEP. On June 1, 2020 the Project Owner mailed its construction update with a high-level proposal for a different architectural treatment to addresses within a one-mile radius from the HBEP. Other stakeholders who subscribe to email updates regarding the facility also received the construction update and proposal.

On June 25, 2020, AES HBEP mailed notice of its first "Virtual Townhall" to addresses within a one-mile radius and the email interest list. On July 8, 2020, AES HBEP held its Virtual Townhall #1. One hundred and four people participated in this more than two-hour, Zoom-based Virtual Townhall #1. On this same day, AES opened its on-line survey #1. Two days later on July 10, 2020, AES followed with on-line access to the July 8<sup>th</sup> Virtual Townhall replay and access to AES HBEP alternative design survey #1.

In July of 2020, meetings with local elected officials, their staff, business and community leaders continued. The comment period for Survey #1 closed. On July 28, 2020, the invitation for AES HBEP Virtual Townhall #2 was mailed to the one-mile address list and those who expressed interest in receiving email updates. Virtual Townhall was held on August 12, 2020.

This public process resulted in focusing on mural themes related to the Huntington Beach's native wildlife and Southern California beach communities, which inspired the concept design provided in Attachment 2.

**(c) Surrounding Uses to the north, south, east, and west**

Attachment 2 presents figures of the HBEP and HBGS site.

The HBEP site is bounded to the west by a manufactured home/recreational vehicle park; to the north by an out-of-service tank farm that will become the site of the proposed Poseidon desalination plant (the tank farm is the Project Owner's property which will be leased to Poseidon) and the Huntington Beach Channel (a facility operated by the Orange County Flood Control District); to the southeast by Huntington Beach Wetland Preserve/Magnolia Marsh wetlands and vacant parcel that was formerly the Plains All American Tank Farm, and to the south and southwest by the Pacific Coast Highway, Huntington State Beach, and the Pacific Ocean.

**(d) Description of population served by the proposed use or project**

The HBEP is located in Orange County in the densely populated Southern California region and serves the Western Los Angeles Basin local electrical reliability sub-region. The facility supports the electrical system of southern Orange County and can provide enough energy to supply over 900,000 southern California households.

**Design Review Planning Application Item 20: In order to support findings for approval for a Variance, respond to the following on a separate page:**

On May, 2, 2016, the Huntington Beach City Council approved Resolution No 2016-27, "A Resolution Of The City Council Of The City Of Huntington Beach Supporting Proposed Architectural Improvements As Modified And Approximate 150-Foot-High Structures Related To The Reconstruction Of The Huntington Beach Energy Project." This Application involves the removal of a large structure, the architectural screen addressed in Resolution No. 2016-27, in favor of the mural-based aesthetic design. The powerplant's structure as built are unchanged and no new structures are added to the project. Accordingly, the prior height variance remains valid, and no variance is required for an Advisory Resolution on the mural-based treatment.



**Request for Issuance of an Advisory Resolution**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some additional information and context to our request for an Advisory Resolution. If you have any questions, please contact me at (562 508-0962).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. O'Kane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stephen" and last name "O'Kane" clearly distinguishable.

Stephen O'Kane  
Vice-President  
AES Southland Development, LLC

Attachment 1: City of Huntington Beach Planning Application  
Attachment 2: Kim West Concept Mural  
General Arrangement Drawing

Attachment 1 - City of Huntington  
Beach Planning Application



# City of Huntington Beach

Department of Community Development  
2000 Main Street, 3rd Floor  
Huntington Beach, CA 92648  
(714) 536-5271  
www.huntingtonbeachca.gov

Planning Application Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Entitlement Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Planning Commission  
☐ Zoning Administrator

☐ Staff Review  
☒ Design Review

## PLANNING APPLICATION

Project Address: 21730 Newland Street Huntington Beach, CA 92646

Assessor Parcel Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Project Description / Request: The purpose of the planning application is to request a design review of the architectural surface treatment plan for newly constructed Huntington Beach Energy Project (HBEP).

Nearest Major Intersection: PCH/Newland Street

Lot Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Owner: AES Huntington Beach Energy, LLC

Telephone: ( 714 ) 374-1421

Mailing Address: 21730 Newland Street

Email: Weikko.Wirta@AES.com

City: Huntington Beach State: CA Zip: 92646

Applicant / Authorized Agent: Weikko Wirta

Telephone: ( 714 ) 374-1421

Mailing Address: 21730 Newland Street

Email: Weikko.Wirta@AES.com

City: Huntington Beach State: CA Zip: 90803

I, WEIKKO WIRTA am the property owner of the subject property and have read and understand all statements including the filing requirements on the reverse side of this application. I hereby authorize (Print Agent's Name) to act as my representative and to bind me in all matters concerning this application. I hereby affirm under penalty of perjury that the foregoing statements, facts and attachments are true and correct. I understand that this application for entitlement or variance may be denied, modified or approved with conditions and that such conditions or modifications must be satisfied prior to issuance of building permits. I understand that by filing the application, information on the application including, but not necessarily limited to, the name and address will be included on public records that are posted on the internet.

Property Owner's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 09/14/2020

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 09/14/2020

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Zoning: \_\_\_\_\_ DM: \_\_\_\_\_  
General Plan Designation: \_\_\_\_\_  
General Plan Sub Area: \_\_\_\_\_  
Distributed By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Pursuant To: \_\_\_\_\_  
Total Fee: \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Received By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Previous Cases: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Coastal Development Permit  
☐ Conditional Use Permit  
☐ Design Review  
☐ Entitlement Plan Amendment  
☐ Planned Sign Program  
☐ Sign Code Exception  
☐ Temporary Use Permit  
☐ Variance  
☐ Administrative Permit  
☐ General Plan Amend  
☐ Zoning Map Amend  
☐ Zoning Text Amend  
☐ Local Coastal Program Amend  
☐

Fee: \_\_\_\_\_

Environmental Review

☐ Exempt

Section: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ EA Required

EA Fee: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Coastal Area:

☐ Cat. Exclusion

☐ Appeal Area:

☐ Flood Zone

☐ Earthquake Zone

☐ Oil District

☐ Methane District

☐ Noise/CNEL

- ☐ Ownership Verification  
☐ Applicant Authorization  
☐ APN  
☐ Plans  
☐ Notification Req.  
☐ Narrative  
☐ Photos/Slides  
☐ Entertainment Permit  
☐ HOA Approval  
☐ Plans Date Stamped

- ☐ Seismic Hazard  
☐ Scenic Corridor  
☐ Residential Infill  
☐ Military Buffer  
[www.ci.huntingtonbeach.ca.us/planning/feesandcosts](http://www.ci.huntingtonbeach.ca.us/planning/feesandcosts)

Attachment 2 - Kim West Concept Mural  
General Arrangement Drawing







Kim West Mural Above Magnolia Marsh













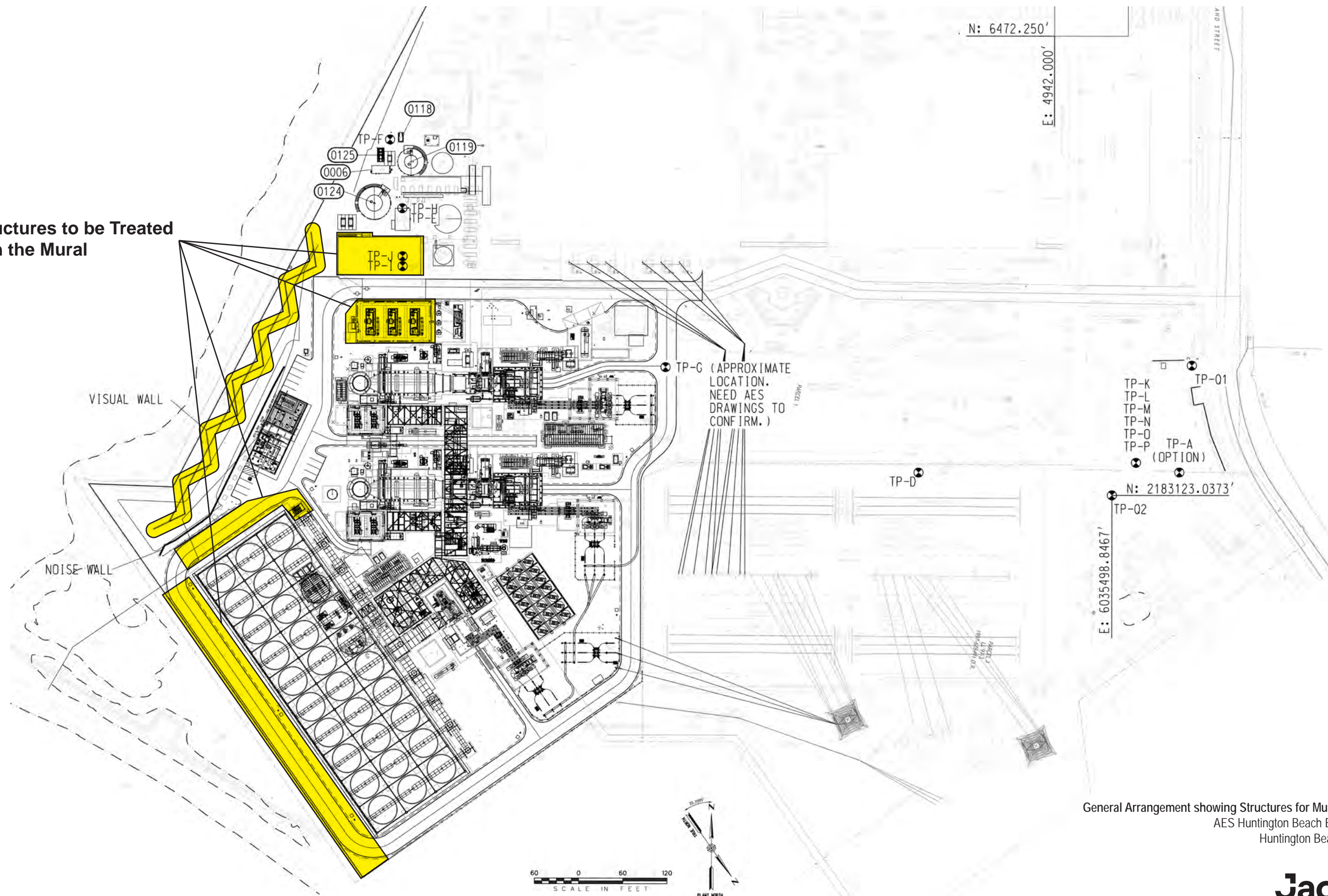








**Structures to be Treated  
with the Mural**



General Arrangement showing Structures for Mural Treatment  
AES Huntington Beach Energy Project  
Huntington Beach, California

**Jacobs**