





# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

From: Community Development – Planning Division  
505 Forest Avenue Laguna Beach, California 92651

# FILED

JUL 11 2025

HUGH NGUYEN, CLERK-RECORDER

BY:           ID           DEPUTY

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1. **APPLICANT:** Warren Hutcherson, 2435 Laguna Canyon RD Laguna Beach, CA 92651 949-338-6905
2. **LEAD AGENCY:** City of Laguna Beach, 505 Forest Ave. Laguna Beach, CA, 92651
3. **PROJECT PLANNER:** Daniel Latham, Associate Planner, 949-464-6612 dlatham@lagunabeachcity.net
4. **PROJECT TITLE:** CDP 2025-0036 to construct a 810 square-foot, second-story, accessory dwelling unit attached to an existing single-family residence above the northwest portion of such residence at 1673 Louise Street in the R-1 (Residential Low Density) zone ("Project").
5. **PROJECT LOCATION:** 1673 Louise Street, Laguna Beach, CA, 92651 (APN: 053-103-10)
6. **DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT:**

On April 9, 2025, the Community Development Director ("Director") held a public hearing on CDP 25-0036 for the Project, approved the Project, and found the Project categorically exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") Guidelines Section 15303, as reflected in Community Development Director Determination No. 25-0036 (the "Director Approval").

On April 23, 2025, Michael and Stacy Simondi ("Appellant"), the property owners of 1655 Hillcrest Drive, filed a notice of appeal of the Director Approval (the "Appeal").

On June 10, 2025, the City Council held a public hearing on the Appeal and continued the public hearing to July 8, 2025. On July 8, 2025, the City Council held a continued public hearing on the Appeal and adopted a resolution (Attachment 1 to the June 8, 2025 staff report) denying the appeal, upholding the Director's Approval, and finding the action categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

### ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), the Project is categorically exempt pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303 – Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, in that the Project consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small structures. Examples of this exemption include a single-family residence or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone. (State CEQA Guidelines, § 15303(a).) Here, the Project consists of a second-story attached accessory dwelling unit to be constructed above the northwest portion of the existing single-family residence.

Further, none of the exceptions outlined in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply. The Project site does not contain any environmentally sensitive areas according to the City's GIS. There will be no cumulative impact resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time. There is no evidence of any unusual or special conditions that would result in a significant effect on the environment in that the Project is a second-story attached accessory dwelling unit to be constructed above the existing single-family residence and is proposed in a developed neighborhood. Further, the addition of this 810-square foot ADU as a second story will result in an overall structure height of 20.166 feet, where a maximum height of 25 feet is permitted pursuant to LBMC 25.10.008(D), and thus is appropriately scaled to be visually compatible with its surrounding environment. There will be no damage to scenic resources, including trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway in that Project is located within the footprint of an existing single-family home. The Project is not located on a hazardous waste site or any other site included on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 according to the Cortese list. The Project will not result in significant adverse impacts to historical resources as defined by CEQA in that the Project site does not contain historic resources. Consequently, this Project is categorically exempt pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15303.

Therefore, the City Council has determined that further environmental evaluation is not required because:

- The project is not subject to CEQA because it "does not involve the exercise of discretionary power," or "will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment," or, "is not a project as defined in Section 15378 of the CEQA guidelines." (Sections 15060(c)(1), (2) & (3)); or,
  - "The activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA" (Section 15061(b)(3)); or,
  - The project is statutorily exempt, Section \_\_\_\_\_, <name> (Sections 15260-15277); or,
  - The project is categorically exempt per State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15303 (Class 3 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).
7. If filed by applicant: Attach Certificate of Determination (Form "A") before filing.
8. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving this project?
9. Was a public hearing held by the Lead Agency to consider the exemption?  
 Yes  No  If yes, the date of the public hearing was: June 10, 2025 and July 8, 2025.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

Date: July 10, 2025

Daniel Latham  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name

Title: Associate Planner

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
 Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

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BY: 10