August 2025

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION CASE NO. ENV-2024-8032-CE

The City of Los Angeles determined based on the whole of the administrative record that the project is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15332, and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies.

The Caswell Ave. Apartment Project (the "Project") would demolish two (2) vacant single-family houses and an accessory structure, and construct a new six-story, 16-unit residential building of which two (2) dwelling units will be reserved for Very Low Income Households. The project will encompass a total floor area of 19,130 square feet with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.99:1 and a maximum building height of 67 feet. The project will provide 20 automobile parking spaces within the ground and subterranean floor levels with access through a two-way driveway along the adjacent rear alley. The project will provide a total of 18 bicycle parking spaces; 2 short-term bicycle spaces and 16 long-term bicycle spaces. The project will contain five (5) one-bedroom units, one (1) two-bedroom units, and 10 three-bedroom units. The project will not remove any protected trees. As a housing development project and a project which is characterized as in-fill development, the Project qualifies for the Class 32 Categorical Exemption.

The Project requires the following:

Pursuant to Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 12.22 A.25, a Density Bonus Compliance Review to permit a housing development project consisting of 16 dwelling units, of which two (2) units will be set aside for Very Low Income Households in lieu of thebase density of 10 units; and pursuant to LAMC Sections 12.22 A.25(g)(2) and 12.22A.25(g)(3), the following four (4) On-Menu Incentives and one (1) Waiver of Development Standard:

a. On-Menu Incentive to permit up to a 35 percent increase in Floor Area Ratio (FAR) to permit up to 4.05:1 in lieu of 3:1 pursuant to LAMC Section 12.21.1 A;
b. On-Menu Incentive to permit a 20 percent reduction in the required westerly side yardto allow a 7-foot, 3-inch side yard in lieu of a 9-foot side yard pursuant to LAMC Section12.10 C.3;
c. On-Menu Incentive to permit a 20 percent reduction in the required easterly side yardto allow a 7-foot, 3-inch side yard in lieu of a 9-foot side yard pursuant to LAMC Section12.10 C.3;
d. On-Menu Incentive to permit a 20 percent reduction in the open space requirement to permit a minimum of 1,900 square feet of open space in lieu of 2,375 square feet pursuant to LAMC Section 12.21 G; and
e. Waiver of Development Standard to permit a 22-foot increase in maximum building height to permit a building height of 67 feet in lieu of 45 feet pursuant to LAMC Section12.21.1.

Pursuant to LAMC Section 12.24 U.26, a Conditional Use Permit to allow a 57.5 percent Density Bonus for a housing development project in which the density increase is greater than otherwise permitted by LAMC Section 12.22 A.25.

Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act

Pursuant to Section 21084 of the Public Resources Code, the Secretary for the Natural Resources Agency found certain classes of projects not to have a significant effect on the environment and declared them to be categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents.

The project meets the conditions for a Class 32 Exemption found in CEQA Guidelines, Section 15332 (In-Fill Development Projects), and none of the exceptions to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 apply.

Conditions for a Class 32 Exemption

A project qualifies for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption if it is developed on an infill site and meets the following criteria:

1) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations;
2) The proposed developed occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses;
3) The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species;
4) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and
5) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The Project is located within the Palms – Mar Vista – Del Rey Community Plan which designates the subject property for Medium Residential land uses with the corresponding zones R3 and R3(PV). The subject property is located in the R3-1 Zone. The Project is consistent with the applicable general plan land use designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations.

The Project site is wholly within the Palms – Mar Vista – Del Rey Community Plan, on a site that is approximately 7,119 square feet, or 0.16 acres, in size. Lots adjacent to the subject property are developed with low- and mid-rise multi-family residential buildings. The Project site is currently developed with residential uses. Therefore, the Project site has no value as a habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. The Project will plant four (4) new on-site trees and will maintain the existing one (1) street tree, and will preserve the existing one (1) street tree along West Caswell Avenue. No street trees or protected trees may be removed without prior approval of the Board of Public Works/Urban Forestry (BPW) under LAMC Sections 62.161 - 62.171.

The Project will be subject to Regulatory Compliance Measures (RCMs), which require compliance with the City of Los Angeles Noise Ordinance, pollutant discharge, dewatering, stormwater mitigations, and Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff. These RCMs will ensure the Project will not have significant impacts on noise and water. The Project would not result in any significant effects related to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.

- The Project will be subject to Regulatory Compliance Measures, which require compliance with the City of Los Angeles Noise Ordinance, pollutant discharge, dewatering, stormwater conditions, and Best Management Practices for stormwater runoff. These RCMs will ensure the project will not have significant impacts on noise and water.

- Noise Study dated January 2025, was prepared by DKA Planning, for the proposed project indicating that construction and operation activities associated with the development of the proposed Project will result in less than significant impacts.

- Air Quality Study dated January 2025, was prepared by DKA Planning, for the proposed Project indicating construction and operation emissions associated with the proposed Project will not result in significant air quality impacts.

- The proposed Project would not result in significant transportation impacts. A Transportation Study Assessment form was completed by the Los Angeles Department of City Planning and the Department of Transportation determined that based on the number of estimated daily trips associated with the Project, a VMT Analysis, Access, Safety, and Circulation Evaluation, and Access Assessment are not required.

- The proposed Project would not result in significant impacts to water quality.

- The proposed Project will not result in the removal of any protected trees.

The Project site will be adequately served by all public utilities and services given that the construction of a 16-unit multi-family development will be on a site which has been previously developed and is consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, the Project meets all the Criteria for the Class 32.

Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

There are six (6) exceptions to categorical exemptions must be considered in order to find a project exempt from CEQA: (a) Location; (b) Cumulative Impacts; (c) Significant Effect; (d) Scenic Highways; (e) Hazardous Waste Sites; and (f) Historical Resources.

The Project is not located on or near any environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies. No related projects located within one-half mile were identified and based on the analyses the analyses provided in the *Appendices* and *Categorical Exemption – Class 32* report prepared for this project, the Project would not result in significant cumulative impacts. The Project would not reasonably result in a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The Project is not located near a State Scenic Highway. Furthermore, according to Envirostor and GeoTracker, the State of California's database of Hazardous Waste Sites and Water Resources Control Board, neither the subject site, nor any site in the vicinity is identified as an active hazardous waste site. The Project site has not been identified as a historic resource by local or state agencies, and the project site has not been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register or Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, the Los Angles Historic-Cultural Monuments Register, and/or any local register, and was not found to be a potential historic resource based on the City's HistoricPlacesLA website or SurveyLA, the citywide survey of Los Angeles. Based on this, the project will not result in a substantial adverse change to the significance of a historic resource and this exception does not apply.