

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
County Clerk
County of: Sonoma
585 Fiscal Dr # 103F, Santa
Rosa, CA 95403

From: (Public Agency): City of Sonoma
No. 1 The Plaza
Sonoma, CA 95476

Project Title: Sonoma Hillside Residential Project

Project Applicant: Chad Moll, 1101 2nd Street Ste 105, Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Project Location - Specific:

149 4th St East (APN: 018-051-014); 227 Brazil St (APN: 018-051-016); 228 Brazil St (APN: 018-051-015)

Project Location - City: Sonoma Project Location - County: Sonoma

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Three individual properties are proposed for development with a single-family residence, detached garage, pool, driveways and walkways, landscaping, and other civil improvements such as utility connections and drainage improvements.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: City of Sonoma

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Chad Moll

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Class 3 Categorical Exemption (15303)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The Class 3 exemption applies to the "construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures" and the CEQA Guidelines identifies examples of this exemption that provide, "[i]n urbanized areas, up to three single-family residences may be constructed or converted under this exemption" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15303).


The proposed project would develop three single-family residences in an area mapped as urban by the U.S. Census Bureau, consistent with criteria (a) under Section 15303 (California Department of Finance 2025). Utility extensions would be of reasonable length to service the proposed project, consistent with criteria (d), and accessory structures (pool and detached garage) would be consistent with the types of structures noted under criteria (e). Class 3 exemptions are permissible only if none of the exceptions described under Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines are applicable, as discussed further below.

A Class 3 exemption is partially qualified by its location and whether "the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies." No occurrences of these species were noted in biological surveys of the area in 2017 and 2025. The project area is also outside of any designated critical habitat. Habitat quality in the project area is marginal due to lack of aquatic resources and proximity to development, and no sensitive natural communities are present.

Potential impacts to special-status species would be avoided by routine avoidance and minimization measures, such as completing tree removal outside of nesting season or performing nesting bird surveys prior to tree removal; implementing worker environmental awareness programs; and completing pre-construction clearance surveys for special-status wildlife and plant species. The recommended strategies to avoid and/or minimize

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Deva Marie Proto, County Clerk
BY:  Ashley Corbin, Deputy Clerk

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impacts to biological resources, to be imposed as conditions of approval, would be consistent with applicable regulations, such as the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Game Code, and General Plan policies directing the City to avoid potential impacts to biological resources.

The project site is located within a VHFHSZ mapped by CAL FIRE and adopted by Sonoma County (Sonoma County 2026). The proposed project has been designed in consultation with the City Fire Marshal and in accordance with the design criteria established in Chapter 7A of the Building Code for projects in wildland-urban interfaces (WUI) and the City of Sonoma Municipal Code Chapter 19.12. These standards are designed to prevent projects from increasing wildfire risk, including requirements for fire apparatus access and turnaround, fire hydrants and water supply, defensible space, and non-combustible building components. As a result, the project location within this mapped hazard area would not preclude it from use of the Class 3 exemption. There are no other mapped environmental resources of hazardous or critical concern that would apply to the project.

No cumulative impact would occur because the proposed project would not facilitate additional growth in the area and there are no known projects in the vicinity that could overlap with the construction footprint or otherwise combine with the project's effects to create a significant environmental impact. The nearest known project is the 254 First Street East Project, a proposed 31-unit condominium development located approximately 0.3 miles southwest of the project site. Given the distance from the site, scale of proposed development, and location in a developed setting on the valley floor, it is unlikely to combine with the proposed project's effects to create a cumulative impact.

There are no unusual circumstances associated with the proposed project that could result in a significant environmental impact. The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan designation of Residential Hillside and would conform to the applicable development standards for the Residential Hillside (R-HS) zone, including those established in Section 19.40.050 of the Municipal Code. The only deviation would be the pad size of 10,718 square feet at 149 4th Street East, which would exceed the maximum pad size of 5,000 square feet described in Section 19.40.050. However, this would conform to a settlement agreement between the City and property owners, dated March 24, 2021, which states that no more than 11,000 square feet of lot pad grading would be permissible for 149 4th Street East. The increased pad size would not be an unusual condition leading to a significant environmental effect.

No other exceptions related to grading, drainage, building height, setbacks, or other code requirements would be sought that would result in "unusual circumstances." Construction would occur in accordance with Chapter 9.56 of the Municipal Code and no unusual construction techniques (i.e., impact pile driving or nighttime work) are proposed that would generate significant noise impacts. In general, as a large-lot single-family development in an area of large-lot single-family developments, the proposed project would be consistent with the existing neighborhood and hillside context.

Visual simulations prepared for the project show that although it would be visible from surrounding roadways and public vantage points, the visible surface area of the new structures would be between 0 and 10%. The homes have been designed to follow the natural topography of the hillside, use existing trees for screening, and employ mass-reducing design techniques to reduce visual impacts. Thus, the project would not create unusual circumstances related to visual incompatibility with nearby land uses.

There are no officially designated state scenic highways in the vicinity of the site, thus no scenic resources within a state scenic highway would be affected (California Department of Transportation 2019).

The project site is not located on a hazardous waste site included in the Cortese List database (CalEPA 2025). Historical Resources (CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2[f])

The proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource because it would not remove any historic structures and would construct single-family homes in an area that does not contain any recorded historic resources. Background research for the project area was completed in 2025 and 2026 that determined the presence of potentially historic resources within the parcels proposed for development. There is a quarry outcrop and a stone alignment within 227 Brazil Street and stone alignment and wood water tank within 228 Brazil Street. No potentially historic resources were found to be located within 149 4th Street East.

The stone alignment that crosses both 227 Brazil Street and 228 Brazil Street was evaluated for potential eligibility as a historical resource and found not to be considered a historical resource for purposes of CEQA.

The quarry outcrop, tailings, dirt road with retaining wall and landing on 227 Brazil Street are associated with a stone contractor (Hiram C. Manuel) who worked in Solano, Napa, and Sonoma counties over the course of three decades. These resources were found not to be historic under CEQA because they are common structures, constructed without any unusual methodology, and do not reflect the work of a master. Therefore, proposed

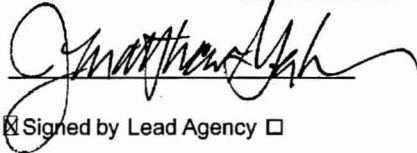
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project activities within its parcel (APN 018-051-016, 227 Brazil Street) of the proposed project would not adversely affect historical resources. The wood water tank on 228 Brazil Street was also evaluated and found not to be an eligible historical resource. Thus, there would be no adverse effect on any historical resources as a result of the proposed project.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Jennifer Gates

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (707) 938-3681

Signature:  5/21/2026 Title: PM on behalf of City

Signed by Lead Agency

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

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____