

2019068108

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Rancho Santiago Community College District
2323 N Broadway, Ste 112
Santa Ana, CA 92706

County Clerk
County of Orange
630 N Broadway Building 12 Room 106
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Orange Educational Center
Project Title

1465 North Batavia Street in the City of Orange, Orange County.
Project Location - Specific

Orange
Project Location - City

Orange
Project Location - County

Demolish the Orange Educational Center and remediate the contaminated soil and soil vapor at the site. Demolition of a vacant building and remediation of contaminated soil will benefit the general community surrounding the site.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Rancho Santiago Community College District
Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Rancho Santiago Community College District
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status: (check one below)

- 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 1, CCR § 15301, Existing Facilities; and Class 30, CCR § 15330, Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release or Threat of Release of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substances
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

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The proposed project would demolish an approximately 85,000 square foot building and remediate the contaminated soil and soil vapor at the site. The project qualifies for an exemption under CEQA Sections 15301 and 15330. The proposed project was also reviewed for possible exceptions under Section 15300.2 and found that the exceptions do not apply. See Attachment to Notice of Exemption for further explanation of the evaluation.

Reasons why project is exempt

Carri Matsumoto, Assistant Vice Chancellor (714) 480-7510
Facilities Planning, District Construction & Support Services

Contact Person: Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption findings
- 2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project Yes No

Date Received for Filing:

6/25/19

Signature:

Carri Matsumoto

Title:

Assistant Vice Chancellor

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JUN 25 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Attachment to Notice of Exemption

ORANGE EDUCATIONAL CENTER

Rancho Santiago Community College District

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

2019068108

The Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD) proposes to demolish an existing vacant building on its Orange Educational Center site and remediate contaminated soil. This supplemental information provides justification for the Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines under California Code of Regulations, Title 14 § 15302.

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is at Orange Educational Center (OEC) at 1465 North Batavia Street in the City of Orange, Orange County. The site is north of Katella Avenue and south of Taft Avenue, approximately 0.5 mile east of the Santa Ana River. Regional access to the site is from State Route 57 (SR-57, the Orange Freeway), approximately 1.2 miles to the southwest via Batavia Avenue and Katella Avenue (see Figure 1, *Location and Aerial Photograph*).

SURROUNDING LAND USES

The OEC is in a commercial and industrial area, surrounded by commercial uses to the south; commercial uses opposite Collins Channel directly to the east; industrial uses opposite a Union Pacific Railroad track directly to the north; and commercial and industrial uses opposite Batavia Street fronted to the west, as shown in Figure 1. Collins Channel is an engineered Orange County Flood Control District channel with riparian banks and earthen bottom. The railroad track crosses Batavia Street at-grade next to the northwest corner of the project site.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND PROJECT BACKGROUND

As part of initial redevelopment efforts, in 2003 the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) issued a case closure based on the previous owner's environmental investigation activities that determined that low levels of onsite chemicals of concern in the soil from previous industrial operations did not pose a threat to human health or the environment. In 2004, OCHCA approved a request concerning a proposed change in land use from industrial to the adult education and child care center, supporting the conclusions of a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment.

The existing OEC building is an approximately 85,000 square foot single-story converted warehouse facility with 25 classrooms and four child development classrooms surrounded by landscaping and 331 surface parking spaces on a 6.37-acre parcel of land (see Figure 2, *Site Photographs*). The campus was used by the District as adult education classrooms, administrative offices, child development center, district warehouse and publications between approximately 2005 and 2017. In 2012, classes at the OEC were temporarily relocated to leased facilities and the Santiago Canyon College main campus, following a finding that the building had not received proper certification for its intended use through the Division of State Architect (DSA), in response to a 2010 building investigation.

In response to proposed renovations of the facility approved by the District in 2014 and 2015, and due to more stringent cleanup standards since case closure in 2003-2004, OCHCA recommended that the District consider further investigation of any soil and soil vapor contamination. The building was vacated in February 2017 in order to conduct destructive testing for the soil and vapor contamination. Environmental analysis presented in April 2018 indicated that concentration levels of multiple volatile organic compounds (VOCs), specifically benzene, ethylbenzene, perchloroethylene (PCE), and trichloroethane (TCE), were present in soil vapor at the site in excess of currently established standards for an unrestricted land use and exceed industrial/commercial screening levels.

Therefore, upon advisement from the OCHCA, the district plans to conduct remediation efforts to address soil vapor contamination underneath the existing building in the western and center portion of the campus, which was determined to extend to up to 70 feet below ground, through the preparation and implementation of an Interim Response Action Plan and Remediation Action Plan.

RANCHO SANTIAGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

The District operates two campuses, Santa Ana College in the City of Santa Ana and Santiago Canyon College in the City of Orange. The District spans 193 square miles in central Orange County and had a total student headcount in Fall 2018 of 52,361 (RSCCD 2019a).

The Santiago Canyon College Continuing Education Division (CED) offers classes in English as a second language, short-term career technical education, adult basic education, adult high school diploma, GED test preparation, parenting education, health and safety education, and programs for older adults and adults with disabilities. CED classes are offered at three main locations in the City of Orange—the Provisional Orange Education Facility; Santiago Canyon College; and the College and Workforce Preparation Center—as well as 30 other Orange locations in the cities of Orange, Villa Park, Garden Grove, and Anaheim Hills (RSCCD 2019b). The CED also offers free assessment services, academic counseling, career counseling, personal counseling, and orientation services to all students.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The District proposes to demolish the existing education center building on the west side of the property which overlies an area largely underneath the building footprint containing contaminated soil vapor. The area of contamination would be remediated under OCHCA oversight over a period of years depending on the extent to which commercial or residential cleanup levels are to be achieved.

DEMOLITION AND REMEDIATION

The existing building would be demolished beginning in August 2019. Demolition of the current structure would be completed prior to installation of the full-scale remediation system in the impacted area to allow for easier facilitation of remedial activities.

All demolition and remediation activities would occur on the OEC campus; no off-OEC campus work would occur. The facility is currently vacant due to the destructive testing conditions. District administration and the construction contractor would work together to coordinate and manage demolition and remediation activities and any changes and impacts to schedule. Demolition noise regulations would be adhered to and would not disrupt onsite or offsite operations. Remedial activities would be implemented on the impacted portion of the site to achieve residential/commercial cleanup standards and would continue until a No Further Action (NFA) letter is issued by the OCHCA.

3. REASONS WHY THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The project is exempt from further environmental review under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§ 21000 et seq.) because it is consistent with Class 1, Existing Facilities, and Class 30, Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release or Threat of Release of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substances, as explained below.

- » **Class 1, Existing Facilities (CEQA Guidelines § 15301)** consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. The types of "existing facilities" itemized below are not intended to be all-inclusive of

the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use.

- » **Class 30, Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release or Threat of Release of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substances. (CEQA Guidelines § 15330)** consists of any minor cleanup actions taken to prevent, minimize, stabilize, mitigate, or eliminate the release or threat of release of a hazardous waste or substance which are small or medium removal actions costing \$1 million or less.

The project involves demolition of an existing building and remediation of soil contamination at the project site.

4. REVIEW OF EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

The project has been reviewed under CEQA Guidelines § 15300.2 - Exceptions, for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the project is exempt from CEQA. Each exception is listed below followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the project.

- (a) Location.** Classes 3,4,5,6 and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project would be located—a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The project site is on an existing education center surrounded by a developed industrial and commercial area. The campus has a school facility building, surface parking lots, and landscaping. Due to the site's developed nature and frequent human disturbance, it does not contain any sensitive biological species or habitat. The project would not impact the contaminated soil as the project is intended to remediate the soil and bring the site to acceptable health standards and protect the community. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.

- (b) Cumulative Impacts.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

Ongoing development of trails, infrastructure updates, hotel, and residential projects are currently underway in the city of Orange, either in the planning, approval or construction phase. There are no other known successive projects of the same type at or near the campus that when combined with the project would result in a cumulative environmental impact. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (c) Significant Effects.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

The project site is on a community college education center and surrounded by industrial and commercial development. The soil vapor in the land underlying the existing building is contaminated in excess of residential and commercial standards, prompting demolition of the existing building to allow for remedial operations of the subsurface contaminants. Remediation per federal, state and local regulations would be carried out on the contaminated area following demolition of the existing building.

The contractor and construction manager will execute demolition per current local, state, and federal laws, regulations, construction Best Management Practices, District standards and guidelines. There is

no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (d) Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

There are no designated State scenic highways near the OEC campus. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the closest officially designated state scenic highway is Route 91 (Riverside Freeway), approximately 3 miles northeast of the campus (Caltrans 2019). The project would not affect this highway due to distance and intervening development, and topography obscuring the school from the highway. Demolition of the existing building would not adversely impact scenic highways. The project would not affect scenic resources along any officially designated or eligible scenic highways. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the compiling of lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated. These applicable databases were searched for hazardous materials sites and within a quarter mile radius:

- » GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2015)
- » EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2019)
- » Solid Waste Information System. California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle 2019)

The site is listed on EnviroStor as an inactive DTSC cleanup site and designated as withdrawn as of October 2004. The site is not actively listed on any of the sites as a hazardous waste site and is not one of the categories of hazardous materials sites specified in California Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, the hazardous waste site exception does not apply to the proposed project.

Site Investigation History

The following site history information is based partly on the Additional Investigation Report and Site Conceptual Model by Terracon Consultants, Inc. dated April 6, 2018; a copy of this report is available at the Rancho Santiago Community College District office. The project site was cultivated as part of an orchard from at least 1947 through at least 1952. The project site was used by a manufacturer of diffusion ovens for the computer chip industry from the 1960's to 2002. The following investigations were conducted at the site to confirm the extent of soil and soil vapor contamination between 2002 and 2018:

Soil investigations conducted in 2002 and 2003 yielded the presence of arsenic and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) tetrachloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethylene (TCE) and metals at concentrations

below regulatory screening levels. The arsenic was considered to be naturally occurring and not related to historical industrial use onsite. The Orange County Health Care Agency issued a Case Closure Letter in June of 2003. In 2015 the District proposed rehabilitation of the OEC, including relocation of the Child Development Center within the site, prompting the OCHCA to inform the District that due to more stringent cleanup standards an additional investigation be conducted.

Tests of soil gas in 2016 and 2017 yielded PCE, TCE, benzene, ethylbenzene, and chloroform detected over their respective residential and/or commercial screening levels. Terracon therefore recommended development of a Site Conceptual Model and a Remedial Action Plan. OCHCA approved a Revised Site Investigation Work Plan Addendum #1 for the site in November 2017.

Six exterior soil vapor probes and two interior sub-slab vapor probes were installed in 2018. Tests of soil gas samples from interior sub-slab vapor probes yielded PCE, TCE, ethylbenzene, benzene, and chloroform, all above commercial screening levels. Tests of soil gas from exterior vapor probes yielded PCE and TCE above commercial screening levels; concentrations of benzene, ethylbenzene, and chloroform were below screening levels for commercial land use. Tests of soil samples yielded PCE at concentrations below screening levels for commercial land use.

A test of a groundwater sample collected beneath the building at a depth of about 95 feet below ground surface yielded TCE at concentration below the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for TCE—that is, the highest concentration of TCE allowed in drinking water.

Proposed Remediation

The remediation process is underway pursuant to a Site Investigation Work Plan conditionally approved by the OCHCA. Demolition of the existing building will allow remediation to continue to achieve regional screening levels for commercial land use for the contaminants identified, to the satisfaction of the OCHCA.

To mitigate the soil vapors, a soil vapor extraction (SVE) system consisting of horizontal and vertical extraction wells will be installed within the area of the vapor plume. System design remedial efforts will be completed with oversight of the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA). A permit to construct and operate the SVE system will be obtained from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

In addition to implementing the SVE remedial activities, a limited volume of soil in the vicinity of suspected onsite source areas may be removed to expedite the cleanup process.

- (f) **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Under Public Resource Code § 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, historical resources included in a local register of historical resources are presumed to be historically or culturally significant, and a lead agency can determine whether the resource may be an historical resource.

The project site is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or as a California Historical Landmark or California Point of Historical Interest (NPS, 2014) (OHP n.d.). Four portions of the City of Orange are identified as historic resources by the City of Orange, and the project site is not in any of those areas.

The existing building was constructed as an industrial building between 1963 and 1972 and was renovated by the District in 2004-05. The OEC has been closed for testing and renovations since 2013. The project site appears to have been in agricultural use with either grass crops or row crops in 1946 and 1952 based on aerial photographs (NETR 2018). A 1963 photograph shows a building approximately where the west half of the existing building is; by comparison of the 1963 and 1972 photographs, it appears that the building shown in the 1963 photograph was expanded to form the existing building. No historical resources have been identified onsite during preparation of this Notice of Exemption, and the Historical Sites exception would not apply to the proposed project.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed project at the Orange Educational Center is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 and 15330. As substantiated in this document, the proposed project would not meet the conditions specified in § 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines, and the project is categorically exempt under Class 1 and Class 30.

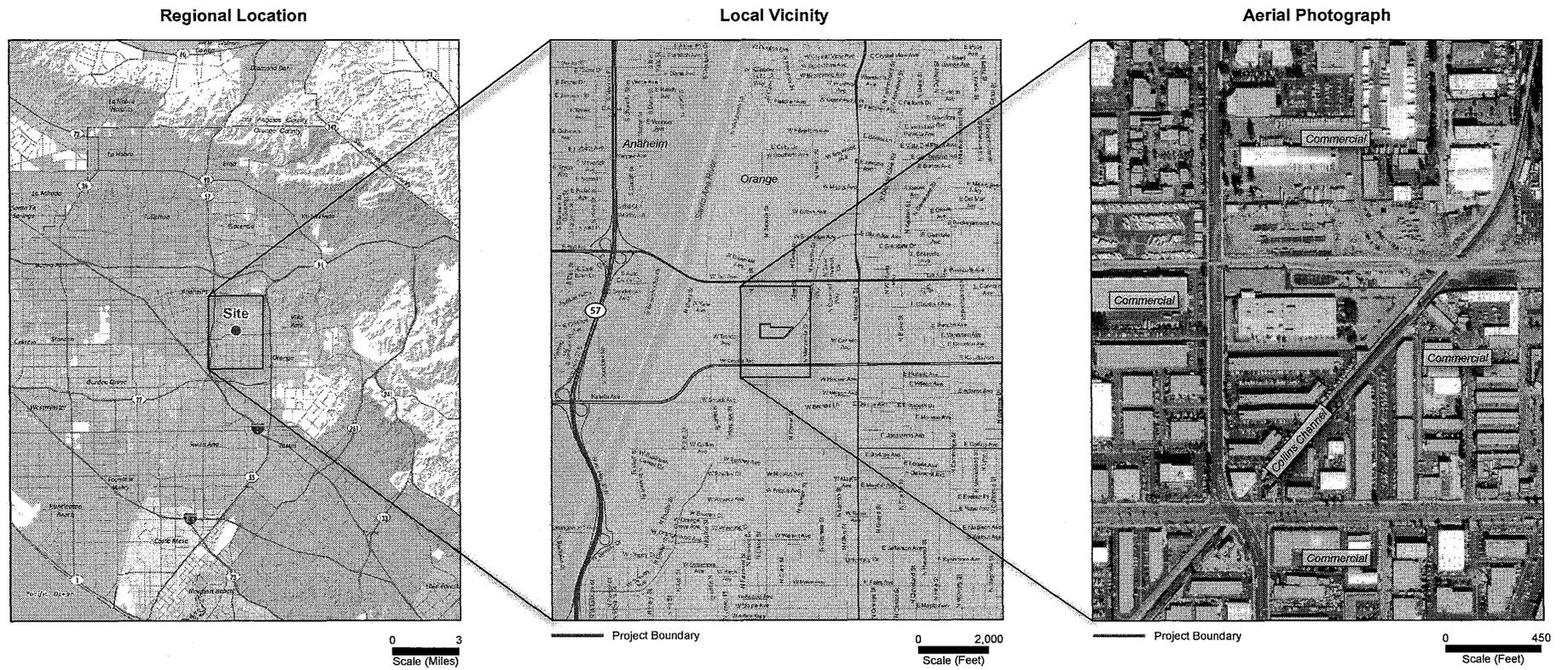
6. REFERENCES

- California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). 2019. SWIS Facility/Site Search. <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SWFacilities/Directory>
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2011, September 7. California Scenic Highway Mapping System. http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/.
- Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2019. EnviroStor. <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.
- National Park Service (NPS). 2014, April. National Register of Historic Places. <https://www.nps.gov/maps/full.html?mapId=7ad17cc9-b808-4ff8-a2f9-a99909164466>.
- ¹ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC (NETR). 2018, April 18. Historic aerial photographs. Historicaerials.com.
- Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). n.d. California Historical Resources. <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=33>.
- Rancho Santiago Community College District (RSCCD). 2019a, April 4. Discover RSCCD. <https://www.rsccd.edu/Discover-RSCCD/Pages/default.aspx>.
- 2019b, April 4. Santiago Canyon College. Division of Continuing Education Class Schedule: Spring 2019. https://www.sccollege.edu/Departments/oec/schedule/Documents/CLASS%20SCHEDULES/OEC_Class_Schedule_Spring_2019%20English.pdf.
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2015. GeoTracker. <http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>.

Figure 1 Location and Aerial Photograph
Figure 2 Site Photographs
Figure 3 Building to be Demolished

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Figure 1 - Location and Aerial Photographs



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Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.
Source: ESRI, 2018

Figure 2 - Site Photographs



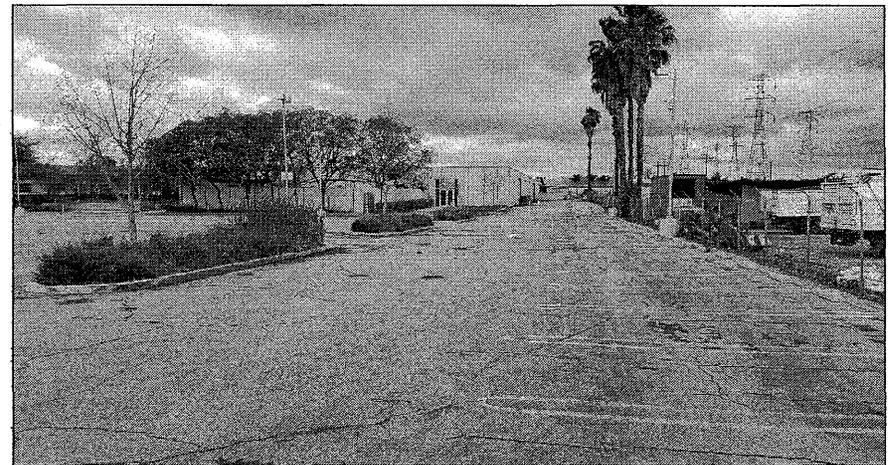
1. View of the OEC building looking southeast from the northwest part of the project site. The Santa Ana Mountains are in the left background.



2. View of the southwest part of the OEC building looking northeast from the southwest part of the site.



3. View of the south part of the project site looking west from the southeast part of the site. The OEC building is on the right and off-site commercial uses are on the left.

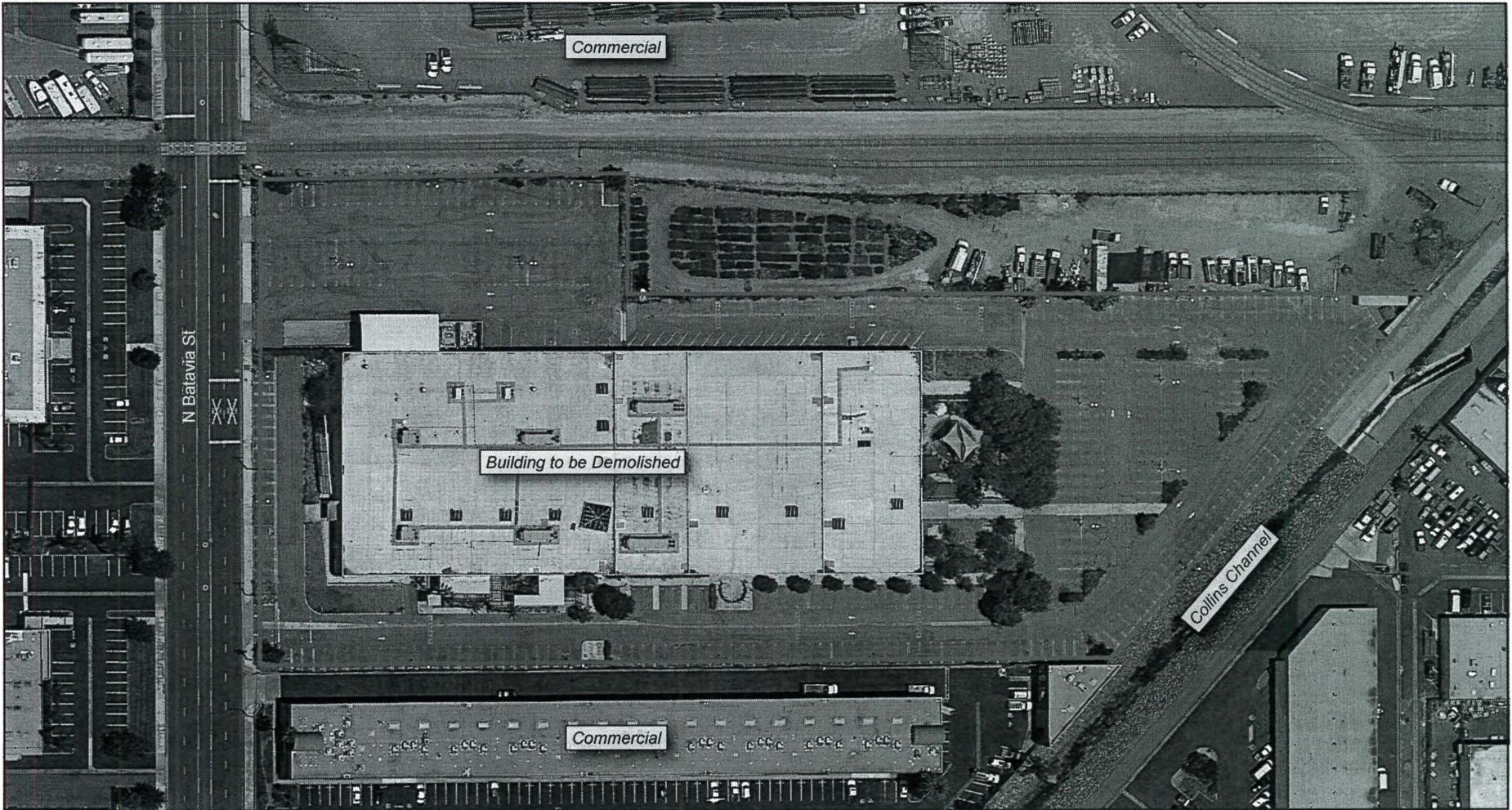


4. View of the north part of the project site looking west from the northeast part of the site. The OEC Building is in the center, and offsite industrial use to the north is on the right.

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SUPPLEMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
ORANGE EDUCATIONAL CENTER
RANCHO SANTIAGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Figure 3 - Building to be Demolished



— Property Line

0 130
Scale (Feet)

