

COUNTY CLERK'S USE

CITY OF LOS ANGELES

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
200 NORTH SPRING STREET, ROOM 395
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

(PRC Section 21152; CEQA Guidelines Section 15062)

Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21152(b) and CEQA Guidelines § 15062, the notice should be posted with the County Clerk by mailing the form and posting fee payment to the following address: Los Angeles County Clerk/Recorder, Environmental Notices, P.O. Box 1208, Norwalk, CA 90650. Pursuant to Public Resources Code § 21167 (d), the posting of this notice starts a 35-day statute of limitations on court challenges to reliance on an exemption for the project. Failure to file this notice as provided above, results in the statute of limitations being extended to 180 days.

PARENT CASE NUMBER(S) / REQUESTED ENTITLEMENTS

ZA-2022-2095-CU-SPP / Conditional Use & Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance

LEAD CITY AGENCY

City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)

CASE NUMBER

ENV-2022-2096-CE

PROJECT TITLE

Shekinah Church

COUNCIL DISTRICT

7-Rodriguez

PROJECT LOCATION (Street Address and Cross Streets and/or Attached Map)

7740 - 7770 West McGroarty Street (Mt Gleason Avenue & Plainview Avenue)

Map attached.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Additional page(s) attached.

Conditional use to allow a church to operate in the RE15-1 and RE40-1 Zones and Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance Review for the refurbishment and upgrade of existing buildings, removal of a 608 square-foot mezzanine office space, and the construction, use, and maintenance of a new 300 square-foot entry portico.

NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER:

Shekinah Church / John G Smith 2020 Trust

CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above)

Weston Munselle

(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER

(213) 435-7017

EXT.

EXEMPT STATUS: (Check all boxes, and include all exemptions, that apply and provide relevant citations.)

STATE CEQA STATUTE & GUIDELINES

STATUTORY EXEMPTION(S)

Public Resources Code Section(s) _____

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION(S) (State CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15301-15333 / Class 1-Class 33)

CEQA Guideline Section(s) / Class(es) 15301, Class 1 and 15332, Class 32

OTHER BASIS FOR EXEMPTION (E.g., CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) or (b)(4) or Section 15378(b))

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION:

Additional page(s) attached

The subject property was previously permitted as a live-in rehabilitation facility and a school. The proposed project would refurbish and upgrade existing buildings without expanding the developed area of the property or the floor area. The developed portion of the site is less than five acres, substantially surrounded by urban uses, has no value as a habitat, would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality and the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

None of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 to the categorical exemption(s) apply to the Project.

The project is identified in one or more of the list of activities in the City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines as cited in the justification.

IF FILED BY APPLICANT, ATTACH CERTIFIED DOCUMENT ISSUED BY THE CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT STATING THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS FOUND THE PROJECT TO BE EXEMPT.

If different from the applicant, the identity of the person undertaking the project.

CITY STAFF USE ONLY:

CITY STAFF NAME AND SIGNATURE

Cecilia Castillo

STAFF TITLE

Planning Assistant

ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED

Conditional Use and Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance Review

DISTRIBUTION: County Clerk, Agency Record

I hereby certify and attest this to be a true and correct copy of the original record on file in the office of the Department of City Planning of the City of Los Angeles designated as Office Training
Meyra Cervantes 2/27/2024
Department Representative

**DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING**

COMMISSION OFFICE
(213) 978-1300

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION

CASE NO. ENV-2022-2096-CE

The Planning Department determined that the City of Los Angeles Guideline for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 and the State CEQA Guidelines designate the subject project as Categorical Exempt under Article 19, Section 15301, Class 1 and Section 15332, Class 32.

Project Description

The proposed project is a Conditional Use to allow a church with a sanctuary of 2,077 square feet to operate in the RE15-1 and RE40-1 Zones and San Gabriel/Verdugo Mountains Scenic Preservation Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance Review for the refurbishment and upgrade of existing buildings, removal of 608 square feet of mezzanine office space, and the construction, use, and maintenance of a new 300 square-foot entry portico.

CEQA DETERMINATION – CLASS 1 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION APPLIES

The Class 1 Categorical Exemption is applicable to projects that consist 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 existing or former use, including additions to existing structures.

The proposed project consists of exterior renovations, the construction of a new 300 square-foot portico, and removal of the mezzanine offices for Building A, modifications to meet ADA requirements for Building B, and no modifications to Building C. There will be no expansion of the developed area nor an increase in total floor area.

CEQA DETERMINATION – CLASS 32 CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION APPLIES

The Class 32 Categorical Exemption is applicable to projects characterized as in-fill development meeting the following conditions: (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designations and regulations. (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no

more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban areas. (c) The project site has not value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. (d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. (e) the site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The applicant, Shekinah Church, is requesting a conditional use to allow a church to operate in the RE15-1 and RE40-1 Zones. The church will occupy existing buildings totaling 25,884 square feet with a new 2,077 square-foot sanctuary, media rooms, administrative offices, conference rooms and ADA compliant restrooms on a developed area of approximately 2.1 acres within a 14.25 acre property. The proposed project would occupy the site in a manner that is consistent with the General Plan and Sunland – Tujunga – Lake View Terrace – Shadow Hills – East La Tuna Canyon Community Plan.

The project does not propose an expansion of the existing graded area. The applicant submitted an Owner's Declaration of Biological Resources which stated there were no water resources on the site. An arborist report dated November 15, 2022 was submitted to City Planning and the Bureau of Street Services-Urban Forestry Division stating no protected trees would be removed. Because the footprint of the developed area will not increase and no protected trees will be removed, the project site has no value as habitat.

The proposed project will include a 2,077 square-foot sanctuary with no increase to the developed area on site and no increase in floor area. The two existing parking lots and proposed bike parking will provide sufficient parking to satisfy parking requirements. In addition, the project will comply with Low Impact Development (LID) standards for stormwater mitigation. Therefore, the project will not result in significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. In addition, as the project site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

CEQA Section 15300.2:

The City has further considered whether the proposed project is subject to any of the six exceptions set forth in the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 that would prohibit the use of any categorical exemption. None of the exceptions are triggered for the following reasons:

- A. Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located. A project that is ordinarily insignificant in its effect on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes may not be utilized 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.

This exception does not apply as the exemption is under Class 1 and Class 32.

- B. Cumulative Impact.** The exception applies when, although a particular project may not have a significant impact, the impact of successive projects, of the same type, in the same place, over time is significant.

There are no other conditional uses for churches within 1,000 feet of the site. Two Specific Plan Project Permit Compliance Reviews approved projects of a different type. Case No. DIR-2014-2741-SPP approved an addition to a single-family dwelling and CPC-2004-4345-SPP-SPR approved a vesting tentative tract map for a maximum

of 221 single-family homes. The tract map has not been effectuated and the entrance to the subdivision will be from a different street. These are not the same type of case and will not result in a significant impact.

- C. Significant Effect Due to Unusual Circumstances.** This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there is a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances.

The subject site is an upward sloping, irregular shaped lot in the Sunland – Tujunga – Lake View Terrace – Shadow Hills – East La Tuna Canyon Community Plan, which seeks a safe, secure, and high quality residential environment for all economic, age and ethnic segments of the community. The existing property has history of community serving uses as a boarding/rehabilitation facility and private school. Of the 620,876 square feet (14.25 acres) approximately 2.1 acres have been developed. The project has protected trees onsite and a protected tree report has been reviewed by the Bureau of Street Services, Urban Forestry Division. In addition, the project will comply with Low Impact Development (LID) stormwater management standards to the satisfaction of the Bureau of Sanitation. The proposed project will not result in the expansion of the developed area of the property nor an increase the overall floor area. Therefore, there are no known unusual circumstances that could lead to a significant effect.

- D. Scenic Highways.** This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there may be 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.

According to Appendix B of the City of Los Angeles Mobility Plan 2035, the subject site is not located on or near any designated Scenic Highways. Based on this, the proposed project will not result in damage to scenic resources including trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway, and this exception does not apply.

- E. Hazardous Waste Sites.** Projects located on a site or facility listed pursuant to California Government Code 65962.5.

Based on a review of the California Environmental Protection Agency "Cortese List Data Resources" (<https://calepa.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/CorteseList/>), no known hazardous waste sites, leaking underground storage tanks, active Cease and Desist Orders or Cleanup and Abatement orders are located on the project site. In addition, there is no evidence of historic or current use, or disposal of hazardous or toxic materials at this location. Based on this, the project will not result in a significant effect due hazardous waste and this exception does not apply.

- F. Historical Resources.** Projects that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource.

The applicant is proposing the operation of a church in the RE15-1 and RE40-1 Zones and the refurbishment and upgrade of existing buildings, removal of 608 square feet of mezzanine office space, and the construction, use, and maintenance of a new 300

square-foot entry portico. Based on a review of Historic Places LA the site was home to the Sunair Asthma Home from 1937 to 1985. The site contains multiple buildings, stone features, including retaining walls, steps and planters, some of which may date to the original development. The 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 of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or the Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments Register. Based on this information, the project will not result in a substantial adverse change to the significance of a historic resource and the exemption does not apply.

In conclusion, since none of the applicable exceptions to the use of the exemption apply to the project, it is appropriate to determine this project is categorically exempt from CEQA requirement.