

COUNTY CLERK'S USE

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
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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

DIR-2023-1057-TOC-VHCA; Entitlement requested: Transit Oriented Communities Affordable Housing Incentive Program Review

LEAD CITY AGENCY

City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)

CASE NUMBER

ENV-2023-1058-CE

PROJECT TITLE

The Melrose Place (ENV-2023-1058-CE)

COUNCIL DISTRICT

13

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

4800-4816 W. Melrose Ave. 653 N. Harvard Blvd

Map attached.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Demolition of an existing 6,735 square-foot, one-story commercial building and removal of an adjacent surface parking lot. The construction of a new 7-story mixed use building with five (5) residential levels, over a second story parking level, a ground level for commercial and parking uses and one subterranean parking level. The project proposes approximately 1,600 square feet of commercial space and 61 residential units totaling approximately 47,961 square feet of floor area (FAR of 3.25:1). The project also includes 44 parking spaces, 54 bicycle stalls, 5,268 square feet of open space, 16 24-inch box trees.

Additional page(s) attached.

NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER:

Melrose Harvard Holding Company LLC

CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above)

Dana Sayles, Three6ixty

(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER

310-204-3500

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) Section 15332, Class 32 (Urban In-Fill Development)

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

Class 32 – (a) The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations. (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses. (c) The project site has no 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.

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

Griselda Gonzalez

Griselda Gonzalez

STAFF TITLE

City Planner

ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED

TOC – Transit Oriented Communities Affordable Housing Incentive Program Review

DISTRIBUTION: County Clerk, Agency Record Rev. 3-27-2019

**DEPARTMENT OF
CITY PLANNING**

COMMISSION OFFICE
(213) 978-1300

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION CASE NO. ENV-2023-1058-CE

The Planning Department determined that the City of Los Angeles Guidelines 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 15332, Class 32.

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

- (a) 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;
- (b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses;
- (c) The project site has no 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; and
- (e) The site can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.

The project site is comprised of two legal lots, totaling approximately 15,008 square feet in lot size. Both lots are generally flat and rectangular in shape. The proposed project is for the demolition of an existing 6,735 square-foot, one-story commercial building, and removal of an adjacent surface parking lot. The project proposes the construction of a new 91 feet, 11 inches tall 7-story mixed use building with five (5) residential levels, over a second story parking level, a ground level for commercial and parking use and one subterranean parking level. The project proposes approximately 1,600 square feet of commercial space and 61 residential units including six (6) set aside for Extremely Low-Income Households, totaling approximately 47,961 square feet of residential floor area (FAR of 3.25:1). The project also includes 44 parking spaces, 54 bicycle stalls (49 long term, and 5 short term/ The unit mix will be comprised of studio units and one-bedroom units.

The project qualifies for Assembly Bill 2097 which allows for the 0 required parking. The project however proposes a total of 44 parking spaces (42 residential, 2 commercial). The project will provide a total of 4,880 square feet of open space, including 2,300 square feet of private balconies, a 2,268 square foot roof deck and 600 square feet of interior common open space/gym. The project site does not contain any existing trees or brushes. There are zero trees located in the right of way adjacent to the subject site. The project proposes 16, 24-box size tree on the subject site. As the construction of a 61 dwelling unit housing development, and a project which

is characterized as in-fill development, the project qualifies for the Class 32 Categorical Exemption(s).

The site is currently developed with a one (1)-story commercial building built in 1929. On December 23, 2022, the applicant submitted an application to the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) for a new five story (Type IIIA), 61-unit (TOC Tier 2) affordable housing apartment, over a one level 2nd story (Type IA) parking over a one level first floor (Type IA retail/parking) over 1-level basement (Type IA) parking. (Permit #20010-10000-06401.

The project is granted the following Base and Additional Incentives of the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Affordable Housing Incentive Program per Case No. DIR-2023-1057-TOC-HCA:

- Base Incentives:
 - A 60 percent increase in the maximum density to allow a total of 61 units in lieu of 37 units.
 - A 45-percent increase in the maximum FAR to permit up to a maximum of 3:25:1 in lieu of 1.5:1 as otherwise permitted by in the Height District 1 under LAMC Section 12.21.1 A 1
- Additional Incentives
 - Yard Setbacks. Utilizing the RAS 3 yard and setbacks required under LAMC 12.10.7, to allow for five (5) foot side and rear yard setbacks along the first residential level in lieu of the required 10-foot side yard and 19-foot rear yard otherwise required in the C2-1 zone.
 - Open Space. A 20-percent reduction in the usable open space to require a minimum of 4,880 square feet in lieu of the minimum 6,100 square feet as otherwise required by LAMC Section 12.21 G.2.

The site is zoned C2-1 and has a Neighborhood Office Commercial Designation. As shown in the case file, the project is consistent with the applicable Wilshire Community Plan designation and policies and all applicable zoning designations and regulations. The subject site is wholly within the City of Los Angeles, on a site that is approximately 0.34 acres. Lots adjacent to the subject site are developed with the following urban uses: including several one to three story multi-family residential structures. The site is previously disturbed and surrounded by development and therefore is not, and has no value as, a habitat for endangered, rare or threatened species. As identified in the Tree Disclosure Statement, signed by the owner on December 7, 2022, the subject site does not contain any protected trees or shrubs and there are no street trees located in the public right of way located immediately adjacent to the subject site. Site photographs submitted by the applicant as part of their application, do not show any trees on site or in the public right of way. On 10/24/23, Google view and ZIMAS digital ortho photo 2020, are consistent with the Tree Disclosure Statement, in that no trees or shrubs appear to exist on the subject site. The project is proposing 16 trees on the subject site. The project plans to not indicate any proposed street trees along the public right-of-way. However, if the case Urban Forestry requires the planting of street trees, prior to any work on the right-of-way, the applicant will be required to obtain approved plans from the Department of Public Works. As there currently is no approved right-of-way improvement plan

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. Furthermore, the project does not exceed the threshold criteria established by LADOT for preparing a traffic study. Interim thresholds were developed by DCP staff based on CalEEMod model runs relying on reasonable assumptions, consulting with AQMD staff, and surveying published air quality studies for which criteria air pollutants did not exceed the established SCAQMD construction and operational thresholds. The project site will be adequately served by all public utilities and services given that the construction of a mixed use 61-dwelling unit residential structure with commercial uses on the ground level, will be on a site which has been previously developed and is consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, the project meets all of the Criteria for the Class 32.

There are five (5) Exceptions which must be considered in order to find a project exempt under Class 32: (a) Cumulative Impacts; (b) Significant Effect; (c) Scenic Highways; (d) Hazardous Waste Sites; and (e) Historical Resources.

At the preparation of this report, there are two (2) known discretionary projects with active permit applications for TOC projects located within 500 feet of the subject site including 649 N. Harvard Blvd (DIR approval DIR-2021-10761-TOC-VHCA issued 8/3/22 for a 5 story 16 unit project) located immediately adjacent to the subject site project site, and 640 N. Hobart Boulevard (DIR approval DIR-2020-4672-TOC-HCA issued 2/15/23 for a 5 story 16 unit project located approximately 115 feet from the subject site).

The proposed project may create environmental impacts on the surrounding area. However, the project is subject to RCMs in the City of Los Angeles that regulate impacts related to air quality and construction and operational noise as previously mentioned. There are pending applications for the construction of the previously mentioned TOC projects which are within proximity of the project site, some of which may include haul route requests. However, through regulatory compliance and upon final approval by the Board of Building and Safety Commissioners, hauling hours of operations are restricted to specific time and days of the week. Furthermore, haul route approvals are subject to conditions that may limit the number of hauling vehicles in the area and would require attendants to assist in staging and directing on trucks at specific locations. According to the Department of Transportation Vehicle Mile Travel Calculator, the project is not located within a Transportation Specific Plan Area and traffic study is not required for the proposed 61-unit apartment building. As such, the proposed project is not expected to result in cumulative impacts.

As mentioned, the project proposes construction, use, and maintenance of a 7-story mixed uses commercial and residential structure over one 2nd story parking level, one ground level parking garage and one (1) level of subterranean parking, with a total of 61 dwelling units in an area zoned and designated for such development. The lots located in the immediate neighborhood are primarily zoned R3-1 and developed with Medium Residential land uses with developments that range from on1 to 3 stories in height. The lots fronting Melrose Avenue within the immediate area are zoned C2-1, designated with Neighborhood Office Commercial land uses and primarily developed with multi-family developments and some commercial uses.

The abutting property to the north across the street from the subject site (fronting Melrose Avenue) are developed with a two-story multifamily residential development and a one-story commercial corner development with liquor store, barber shop, copy/stationary store and sit-down restaurant. The lots located to the west and immediately adjacent to the subject site are developed with a two story, multi building, multi-family development with four (4) units. The lots located to the east of the subject site across the street from the subject site (Southeast corner of Melrose Avenue

and Harvard Boulevard) are developed with a one-story commercial building and associated surface parking lot. The abutting property to the south of the subject site, immediately adjacent to the project site is developed with a three-unit multi structure, multi-family residential development including a one-story structure at the front of the property and a two story residential structure at the rear of the property. The project proposes a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 3.25:1 on a site that is permitted to have a maximum FAR 1.5:1 by right, and up to 3.25:1 allowed as base incentive for the subject TOC project, for which this project qualifies for. The proposed development is not unusual for the vicinity of the subject site and is similar in scope to other existing developments in the area. Thus, there are no unusual circumstances which may lead to a significant effect on the environment. Additionally, the only State Scenic Highway within the City of Los Angeles is the Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway, State Route 27, which travels through a portion of Topanga State Park. State Route 27 is located approximately 21 miles west of the subject property. Therefore the subject site will not create any impacts within a designated as a state scenic highway. Furthermore, according to Envirostor, the State of California's database of Hazardous Waste Sites, neither the subject site, nor any site in the vicinity, is identified as a 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 of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, the Los Angeles 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. Finally, the City does not choose to treat the site as a historic resource. 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.