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JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION CASE NO. ENV-2023-8181-CE

The Planning Department has determined that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 and the State CEQA Guidelines designate the subject project as Categorically Exempt under Article 19, Section 15301, Class 1 (*Existing Facilities*) and Section 15303, Class 3 (*New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures*). This project is located at 1042 North Olancha Drive.

The proposed project is for the total addition of 365 square feet and two (2) uncovered balconies to an existing two (2)-story single-family dwelling. The project includes a 25 square foot first floor addition and a 340 square foot second story addition (and an Accessory Dwelling Unit under Separate Administrative Review). The project is located on a 5,606.9 square foot lot within the Mount Washington-Glassell Park Specific Plan area.

There are six (6) Exceptions which the City is required to consider before finding a project exempt under Class 15303 and 15332: (a) Location; (b) Cumulative Impacts; (c) Significant Effect; (d) Scenic Highways; (e) Hazardous Waste Sites; and (f) Historical Resources.

The site is zoned R1-1-HCR and has a General Plan Land Use Designation of Low Residential. While the subject site is located within a Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, Special Grading Area (BOE Basic Grid Map A-13372), and is 0.4 kilometers from the Raymond Fault, specific Regulatory Compliance Measures (RCMs) in the City of Los Angeles regulate the grading and construction of projects in these particular types of “sensitive” locations and will reduce any potential impacts to less than significant. Regulatory Compliance Measures (RCMs) include requirements to conform with the California Building Code and the City’s Landform Grading. These RCMs have been historically proven to work to the satisfaction of the City Engineer to reduce any impacts from the specific environment the project is located. Thus, the location of the project will not result in a significant impact based on its location.

With regard to potential cumulative impacts during the construction phase of the project, there may be active construction activity in the vicinity of where the subject property is located at the same time that the project undergoes construction. However, Regulatory Compliance Measures will help ensure that cumulative impacts related to construction activity are addressed. The proposed project did not meet the threshold for requiring a Construction Traffic Management Plan as determined by the City’s Department of Transportation (LADOT). 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. Therefore, the subject project will have no cumulative impact on the City’s circulation system.

As mentioned, the project proposes the total addition of 365 square feet and two (2) uncovered balconies to an existing two (2)-story single-family dwelling. The project includes a 25 square foot first floor addition and a 340 square foot second story addition (and an Accessory Dwelling Unit under separate Administrative Review), on a 5,606.9 square foot lot, in an area zoned and designated for such development. All adjacent lots are vacant or developed with single-family dwellings, and the subject site is of a similar size and slope to nearby properties. The project proposes a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.44:1 or 2,479 square feet on a site that is permitted to have a maximum FAR of 0.48:1 or 2,691 square feet. The project proposes a building height of 33 feet, which is not unusual for the vicinity of the subject site and is similar in scope to other existing low residential in the area.

Prior to any work on the adjacent public 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 and for purposes of conservative analysis under CEQA, Planning has analyzed the worst-case potential for removal of all street trees. Note that street trees and protected trees shall not be removed without prior approval of the Board of Public Works/Urban Forestry (BPW) under LAMC Sections 62.161-62.171. At the time of preparation of this environmental document, no approvals have been given for any tree removals on-site or in the right-of-way by BPW. The City has required a Tree Report to identify all protected trees/shrubs on the project site and all street trees in the adjacent public right-of-way. As identified in the Tree Letter prepared by Lisa Smith (WE#3782BM) on July 8, 2023, there are no Protected Trees/Shrubs on-site or in the public right-of-way and zero Significant Trees on site. No trees are proposed for removal as part of the project. This Tree Report was reviewed by the Urban Forestry Division on July 19, 2023. 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. The project site is located approximately 30 miles away from Topanga State Park. 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.

The project will be subject to 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.