

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

DIR-2023-6430-TOC-SPR -HCA

LEAD CITY AGENCY

**City of Los Angeles (Department of City Planning)**

CASE NUMBER

ENV-2023-6431-CE

PROJECT TITLE

2641 West Olympic Boulevard

COUNCIL DISTRICT

5

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

Map attached.

**2635, 2639 & 2641 West Olympic Boulevard, 981 & 987 South Westmoreland Avenue (Olympic Blvd and South Westmoreland Ave.)**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Additional page(s) attached.

Demolition of a commercial building and the construction, use and maintenance of a new 123 unit, 7-story mixed-use development; 4.05:1 FAR, 9,700 square feet of Open Space; 100 bicycle parking spaces, 116 automobile parking spaces, and (31) 24-inch trees.

NAME OF APPLICANT / OWNER:

**Mihee Jang, MHKJ Investments, LLC**

CONTACT PERSON (If different from Applicant/Owner above)

**Mick Choi, Corbel Architects Inc.**

(AREA CODE) TELEPHONE NUMBER

(213) 272-7523

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 (Urban Infill)**

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 City of Los Angeles determined based on the whole of the administrative record, that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section, 15332 (Urban Infill), and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies. The project was found to be exempt based on the following: the project is in an infill site in an urbanized area, complies with the general plan and applicable policies, and would not result in significant impacts to traffic, noise, air quality or water quality.

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

RICARDO VAZQUEZ

STAFF TITLE

CITY PLANNING ASSOCIATE

ENTITLEMENTS APPROVED

Transit Oriented Communities (TOC); Site Plan Review (SPR)

DISTRIBUTION: County Clerk, Agency Record

Rev. 6-22-2021

DEPARTMENT OF  
CITY PLANNING  
COMMISSION OFFICE  
(213) 978-1300

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

MONIQUE LAWSHE  
PRESIDENT

ELIZABETH ZAMORA  
VICE-PRESIDENT

MARIA CABILDO  
CAROLINE CHOE  
MARTINA DIAZ  
KAREN MACK  
MICHAEL R. NEWHOUSE

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA



KAREN BASS  
MAYOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICES  
200 N. SPRING STREET, ROOM 525  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012-4801  
(213) 978-1271

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP  
DIRECTOR

SHANA M.M. BONSTIN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

HAYDEE URITA-LOPEZ  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ARTHI L. VARMA, AICP  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LISA M. WEBBER, AICP  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

## JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT EXEMPTION CASE NO. ENV-2023-6431-CE

---

On August 16, 2024, the Department of City Planning 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 Categorically Exempt under Section 15332 (Class 32), Case No. ENV-2023-6431-CE, and there is no substantial evidence demonstrating that an exception to a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Section 15300.2 applies.

### **Project Description**

The project consists of three continuous lots with a total lot size of approximately 28,799 square feet. The project is located on the northerly side of Olympic Boulevard with approximately 160 feet of street frontage. The project site is bounded to the east by South Westmoreland Avenue where it has approximately 180 feet of street frontage. The subject property is zoned C2-1 and R4-1 with corresponding land use designations of General Commercial and High Medium Residential. The project is not located within the boundaries of or subject to any specific plan, community design overlay or "Q" Qualified Conditions or "D" Development Limitations ordinance. The site is located within the Housing Element Inventory of Sites (ZI-2512), Transit Priority Area in the City of Los Angeles ZI-2452, Redevelopment Project Area: Wilshire Center/Koreatown (ZI-2488), Local Emergency Temporary Regulations - Time Limits and Parking Relief - LAMC 16.02.1 ZI-2498, State Enterprise Zone: Los Angeles (ZI-2374), and is within an Urban Agriculture Incentive Area. The project site is within the Puente Hills Blind Thrust fault zone.

The site is currently improved with a vacant commercial structure constructed in 1961 and adjoining surface parking lot. Italee Optics was the most recent occupant of the structure, leaving towards the end of 2022. There are three (3) existing street trees along Olympic Boulevard and seven (7) existing street trees along South Westmoreland Avenue. The project proposes to maintain the existing street trees along Olympic Boulevard as well as all of the street trees along South Westmoreland Avenue except for one (1) Palm tree the project proposes to remove to allow the construction of the driveway, and two (2) Palms trees on the north east corner of the subject site the project proposes to remove to allow for the staging of the transformer.

The proposed project includes the demolition of the existing commercial structure along Olympic Boulevard, as well as the construction, use and maintenance of a new seven (7)-story mixed use development containing 99,527 square feet of floor area, with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 4.05:1. The project proposes 2,173 square feet of commercial uses and a total of 123 dwelling units, 110 of which will be market rate and 13 will be restricted to Extremely Low Income Households. This building will be a maximum of 87 feet and four (4) inches in height, as measured from grade. The

unit mix will be comprised of 53 studios, 60 1-bedroom and 10 2-bedroom units. The project will provide 116 automobile parking spaces, of which 110 will be for residential uses and six (6) will be for commercial uses along the second floor, first floor at grade, and in one level of subterranean parking. The project will provide 100 bicycle parking spaces, 96 will be for residential use and four (4) will be for commercial use. Bicycle parking will be provided at grade level and the second floor.

The project will provide 9,700 square feet of open space, consisting of 6,850.1 square feet of common open space and 2,850 of private open space. The project proposes to maintain the three (3) existing street trees along Olympic Boulevard, and four (4) of the seven (7) existing street trees along South Westmoreland Avenue. The project proposes to replace a dead street tree along Olympic Boulevard, per UFD requirements. Altogether the project proposes 31 24-inch box trees including on-site and existing street trees. It should be noted that the project is not counting the three (3) existing Palm Trees in the public right of way along South Westmoreland Avenue that are to remain toward its total of 31 trees. The project proposes grading and export of approximately 10,066 cubic yards of earth.

**CEQA Section 15300.2: Exceptions to the Use of Categorical Exemptions**

The City has considered whether the Proposed Project is subject to any of the five (5) exceptions that would prohibit the use of a categorical exemption as set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. There are five (5) Exceptions which must be considered in order to find a project exempt under CEQA: (a) Cumulative Impacts; (b) Significant Effect; (c) Scenic Highways; (d) Hazardous Waste Sites; and (e) Historical Resources.

**(a) 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.*

The proposed project is located at 2635, 2639 and 2641 West Olympic Boulevard and 981 & 987 South Westmoreland Avenue within the Wilshire Community Plan. There are currently 15 projects dating back to March 1, 2018, which are currently filed with the Department of City Planning have received a Letter of Determination from the Department of City Planning but have yet to receive a Certificate of Occupancy from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS). As such, there are projects within 1,500 feet of the same type and in the same place as the subject project at the time of filing.

<b>PROJECTS WITHIN A 1,500 FEET FROM THE SUBJECT SITE</b>			
<b>Address</b>	<b>Case Number</b>	<b>Date Filed</b>	<b>Scope of Work</b>
2970 W San Marino St	DIR-2023-6587-TOC-HCA	9/29/2023	New 77-unit residential building.
981 S Westmoreland Ave	DIR-2023-6430-TOC-SPR-HCA	9/22/2023	New mixed-use building with 123 units and 2,070 square feet of commercial space.
2805 W San Marino St	DIR-2023-1391-TOC-VHCA	2/28/2023	New 36-unit residential building.
957 S Arapahoe St	DIR-2022-7885-TOC-SPR-HCA	10/27/2022	New 109-unit residential building.

956 S Vermont Ave	DIR-2022-4433-TOC-SPR-HCA	6/22/2022	New mixed-use building with 90 units and 2,815 square feet of commercial space.
950 S Berendo St	DIR-2021-9706-TOC-HCA	11/24/2021	New 77-unit residential building.
2649 W San Marino St	DIR-2021-624-TOC-HCA	1/21/2021	New 55-unit residential building.
2716 W James M. Wood Blvd	DIR-2020-5300-TOC-HCA	9/9/2020	New 58-unit residential building.
1216 S Menlo Ave	DIR-2020-4501-SPR-TOC-PHP-VHCA	7/30/2020	New 128-unit residential building.
1116 S Westmoreland Ave	DIR-2019-7577-TOC	12/18/2019	New 87-unit residential building.
2766 1-12 W James M. Wood Blvd	DIR-2019-4023-TOC	7/9/2019	New 28-unit residential building.
2683 W San Marino St	DIR-2019-2854-TOC	5/14/2019	New 28-unit residential building.
904 S New Hampshire Ave	DIR-2019-1200-TOC	2/28/2019	New 63-unit residential building.
None	DIR-2018-5664-TOC	9/27/2018	New 25-unit residential building.
971 S Hoover St	DIR-2018-1122-TOC-WDI	3/1/2018	New 39-unit residential building.

According to SCAQMD, individual construction projects that do not exceed the SCAQMD's recommended daily thresholds for project-specific impacts would not cause a cumulatively considerable increase in emissions for those pollutants for which the Air Basin is in non-attainment. 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. Construction-related daily emissions at the project site would not exceed SCAQMD's regional or localized significance thresholds. Therefore, the project's contribution to cumulative construction-related regional emissions would not be cumulatively considerable and therefore would be less than significant. Construction of the project also would have a less-than-significant impact with regard to localized emissions. The project submitted an Air Quality Impact Analysis, prepared by Envicom Corporation, dated August, 2023, that found that the proposed project would have less than significant effects as to air quality. The report states that "...the peak onsite emissions during construction would

not exceed the applicable SCAQMD [Local Significance Thresholds], and as such, potential LST impacts would be less than significant.”

Regarding operational impacts the report goes on to state “...the proposed project’s total operational daily emissions would be far below SCAQMD thresholds...Therefore, operational impacts of the project would be less than significant”. Finally, the report also found that toxic air contaminants and odors resulting from the project would be less than significant. As such, the projects potential impact on Air Quality is less than significant.

As noise is a localized phenomenon and decreases in magnitude as the distance from the source increases, only projects and ambient growth in the nearby area could combine with the proposed project to result in cumulatively considerable noise impacts. These above-noted projects will begin construction and end construction at different timelines, with minor overlap between projects. Thus, the construction of these known projects will be staggered and therefore do not have the potential to cumulatively contribute to air quality, construction traffic, and noise levels.

**(b) Significant Effect.** *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.*

As mentioned, the proposed project includes the demolition of the existing commercial structure along Olympic Boulevard, as well as the construction, use and maintenance of a new seven (7)-story mixed use development containing 99,527 square feet of floor area, with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 4.05:1. The project proposes 2,173 square feet of commercial uses and a total of 123 dwelling units, 110 of which will be market rate and 13 will be restricted to Extremely Low Income Households. This building will be a maximum of 87 feet and four (4) inches in height, as measured from grade. The proposed seven (7)-story building is in an area developed with residential and commercial buildings that range in height from one (1) to three (3)-stories. Thus, there are no unusual circumstances that may lead to a significant impact on the environment.

**(c) 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.*

As it relates to development along a Scenic Highway, 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 not located with the vicinity of the subject property. Therefore, the subject site will not create any impacts within a designated state scenic highway.

**(d) Hazardous Waste.** *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.*

In regards to Hazardous Waste sites, 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. As such, the project would not be developed on a site identified as a hazardous site pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. The project was required to provide a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment Study, due to the prior manufacturing use at the subject site. The Phase 1 ESA, prepared by CalEnviro Geologist & Engineer, dated January 2024, identified a Recognized Environmental Concern on the

property abutting the subject site to the west. There was an underground storage tank (UST) leak that was first reported in 1989 and the case was closed in 1996 without any cleanup activities reported. In 2008, the case was reopened when the underground storage tanks were replaced. The Phase 1 ESA discovered this REC from records obtained from the Los Angeles Fire Department. The REC was never listed on a Cortese list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, and as such the project is not on a site which is included in any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code, nor abutting any site that is listed on a Cortese database. According to the Phase 1 ESA, the UST leak in the adjacent property "...may have migrated beneath the subject property and fuel impact soil may be encountered during future grading work on the subject property. CalEnviro recommends a Soil Management Plan (SMP) to identify and properly handle impacted soil that may be encountered during future grading work on the subject property." The project provided a SMP developed by CalEnviro Geologist & Engineers, dated March 2024. Per the SMP, it will "...govern the onsite worker and community health and safety monitoring, notification, and reporting requirements associated with the Site COCs. The HASP is under development and will be completed prior to the excavation activities commencing on the Site. The SMP protects worker safety by establishing clear means of implementing regulatory compliance measures related to the excavation, proper handling and disposal of potentially contaminated soil. The SMP is being voluntarily implemented by the project as a project design feature. Additionally, the letter from CalEnviro Geologist & Engineers dated August 2, 2024, Exhibit B, provides the concentration thresholds that will trigger reporting of potential contaminants of concern to CalEPA-DTSC and the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, as conditioned.

**(e) Historic Resources.** *A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

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 chooses not to treat the site as historic.

### **CEQA Determination – Class 32 Categorical Exemption Applies**

A project qualifies for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption if it is developed on an infill site and meets the conditions as follows: (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.

**(a) The project is consistent with applicable general plan designation, applicable policies, and applicable zoning designations.**

The subject site is located within the Wilshire Community Plan. The site is zoned C2-1 and R4-1 with the corresponding land use designations of General Commercial and High Medium Residential. 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.

**(b) The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site no more than five acres substantially surrounded by urban uses.**

The subject site is wholly within the City of Los Angeles, on a site that is approximately 0.62 acres. The surrounding properties are developed with urban uses. Properties to the north are zoned R4-1 with a land use designation of High Medium Residential and improved with two- to three-story multifamily residential structures. To the south, across Olympic Boulevard, properties are zoned C2-1 with a land use designation of Neighborhood Office Commercial and sites are improved with a one-story commercial structure. To the east properties are zoned C2-1 and R4-1 with the corresponding land use designations of General Commercial and High Medium Residential. Sites to the east are improved with a one-story commercial structure as well as two-story multifamily residential structures. To the west properties are zoned C2-1 and R4-1 with the corresponding land use designations of General Commercial and High Medium Residential. To the west properties are improved with a two-story commercial structure and a three-story multifamily structure.

**(c) The project has no value as a habitat for endangered species, rare, or threatened species.**

The site was previously disturbed and surrounded by development and therefore is not, and has no value as, a habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. The project provided a Tree Report dated August 19, 2023 prepared by James Komen that found the subject property has 15 trees, 12 of which are on the public right of way. It should be noted that one of the street trees noted in the Tree Report on South Westmoreland is slightly north of the project site. There are no protected trees on site. The project proposes the removal of three (3) existing street trees. There is one street tree at the wester corner of the subject property along Olympic Boulevard that was removed by the City due to the fact that it was dead. The tree report confirms that this street tree was in fact dead at the time the report was issued. The three (3) existing street trees the project propose for removal along South Westmoreland Avenue are due to the new driveway apron and the need to stage for the placement of the transformer at the Northeast corner of the property. Given space limitations along the project's street frontage, the project is unlikely to be able to meet the required two for one replacement ratio for street trees. As such they will be required to pay the in-lieu fee for replacement trees. Note, no street tree or protected tree may 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 CE, no approvals have been given for any tree removals on-site or in the right-of-way by BPW.

**(d) Approval of the project would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality.**

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. The transportation study, prepared by Gibson, dated July 22, 2022 with an addendum dated November, 2023, concluded the project will result in impacts that are less than significant. The July 2022 report was for a different project at the subject property. The proposed project that was analyzed in the July 2022 report was for a 143 key hotel. The addendum dated November 2023 updated the original report to reflect the potential transportation impacts for the currently proposed project. The proposed mixed-use project has a Household VMT per capita of 5.4, which is below the threshold for the Central Area of 6, and there is negligible Work VMT per employee. In a memorandum dated December 20, 2023, signed by Eileen Hunt, Acting Transportation Engineer, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation concurred with the addendum that

the proposed project would have less than significant impacts on transportation. 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. Additionally, as mentioned previously, the applicant provided an Air Quality Impact Analysis prepared by Envicom Corporation, dated August, 2023 that found that the construction and operation of the project would not result in a significant impact to Air Quality.

**(e) The proposed project has been reviewed by City staff and can be adequately served by all required utilities and public services.**

The project site will be adequately served by all public utilities and services given that the construction of a residential building will be on a site that has been previously developed and is consistent with the General Plan. Therefore, the project meets all of the Criteria for the Class 32. As the project has been found to be categorically exempt from CEQA, the project is not anticipated to have a negative effect on the environment and no mitigation measures are required.