

Murer House and Gardens Learning Center

Categorical Exemption

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE

This report serves as the technical documentation of an environmental analysis performed by HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX) for the proposed Murer House and Gardens Learning Center (proposed project) in the City of Folsom (City). The proposed project would involve the demolition of the two detached single-story buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court, located immediately south of the historic Murer House and Gardens, and the construction of an approximately 2,740 square foot (sf) one-story learning center primarily within the subject buildings' combined footprint. The intent of the analysis is to document the proposed project's eligibility under a Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 Categorical Exemption (CE) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This report provides an introduction, project description, historical resource evaluation of the two subject buildings, and analysis of the potential impacts to the historic Murer House and Gardens that may occur as a result of project implementation.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1) applies to 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. The key consideration for eligibility under a Class 1 CE is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use. CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Class 2) applies to the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. Lastly, CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (Class 3) applies to the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The applicability of all CEs is qualified by the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a) through (f). The report provides an explanation for each of the exceptions as to why the exception would not apply to the proposed project and concludes that the proposed project is eligible under a Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 CE.

1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In approximately 1923, Guiseppe "Joe" Murer obtained the three parcels that now comprise the Murer House and Gardens property. At the time, the property included the two existing one-story detached buildings located at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court in the City of Folsom, as well as the vacant land to the north of the buildings. The two subject buildings were likely constructed between 1900-1910 and 1910-1920, respectively, and were historically used as rentals by Joe Murer. Mr. Murer bought the property in 1921 for the purpose of building a residence on the vacant land immediately to the north of the two buildings. Mr. Murer constructed his private residence, detached garage (southwest of the residence), and small workshop (northwest of the residence) between 1925 and 1927. Following construction, Mr. Murer landscaped the property with ornamental and native Italian fruit and nut trees. The Murer residence, located at 1121 Joe Murer Court, and the associated garage, workshop, and landscaping are now collectively recognized as the Murer House and Gardens. Figure 1 shows the regional location of the project site, Figure 2 shows the immediate location of the site and nearby land uses, and Figure 3 shows the proposed site plan and location relative to the Murer House and Gardens (Appendix A).

Upon Mr. Murer’s passing in 1972, the Murer House and Gardens property was left to Barbara Baker. In 1997, the City acquired the property from Ms. Baker, which has since been under the management of the Murer House Foundation. In 2022, the Murer residence, garage, and workshop were listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) as the Murer House and Gardens (NRHP no. 100007367). The two subject buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court, located immediately south of the historic Murer House and Gardens, were evaluated for their potential eligibility as historical resources in 1991 and 2022. Both evaluations concluded that the two subject buildings should not be listed on the NRHP and CRHR and should therefore remain outside of the historic Murer House and Gardens boundary.

The City of Folsom retained HELIX Senior Architectural Historian, Nelson White, to prepare a Historical Resources Survey Report (HRSR) for the proposed project to ensure compliance with State laws and regulations as they relate to historical resources, including CEQA. The purpose of the HRSR, prepared in September 2024, was to determine if the two subject buildings proposed for demolition are individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and/or the CRHR, and therefore, whether either building constitutes a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. The HRSR also evaluated the potential indirect impacts from the proposed project on the NRHP/CRHR-listed Murer House and Gardens, which is a historical resource per CEQA Guidelines. The findings of the HRSR are summarized in Section 4.0, *Historical Resources Evaluation*, of this report; the HRSR is included as Appendix B to this report.

1.3 PURPOSE AND NEED

Since 1997, the Murer House Foundation has been operating and preserving the Murer House and Gardens property on behalf of the City of Folsom. The Murer House Foundation currently uses the two existing buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court, located immediately south of the historic Murer House and Gardens, as a learning center and caretaker’s cottage. As they currently operate, the two subject buildings are unable to accommodate the programmed events/classes (typically consisting of 80 attendees) internally without requiring the additional use of the outdoor areas. Therefore, the Murer House Foundation is proposing to demolish the two subject buildings and replace them with a single new one-story building, as further discussed in Section 3.0, *Project Description*, of this report. The purpose of the proposed project is to replace the two existing buildings with one building to provide a new learning center space for the Murer House Foundation. This new learning center would continue to support the range of activities currently programmed by the Murer House Foundation, which includes cultural events, cooking classes, language classes, and other types of educational and cultural activities.

2.0 PROJECT LOCATION AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project site is located in the western portion of the City of Folsom in northeastern Sacramento County, California. The project site encompasses the entirety of the Murer House and Gardens property, which consists of three Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APNs): 070-0091-007 (zoned R-4 [General Apartment District]), 070-0091-008 (zoned R-4), and 070-0091-012 (zoned R-M [Residential Multifamily Dwelling District]). The total acreage of the project site is approximately 1.17 acres. Although the project site includes the entirety of the Murer House and Gardens property, the proposed learning center would be located within the southern portion of the property on APN 070-0091-008.

The project site is located within the Folsom Historic District and is within an urbanized area. The project site is bordered by Folsom Boulevard to the east and two-story residences to the south, west, and north. The surrounding areas primarily include residential development, open space, and commercial land

uses. The Young Wo Cemetery is located approximately 200 feet west of the project site and the Lakeside Memorial Lawn Cemetery is located approximately 480 feet southwest of the project site. Access to the project site is available via Joe Murer Court, which is a gated, paved driveway off Fong Street. Currently, visitor parking is provided by the 19 off-street parking spaces (including two Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA]-compliant spaces) within the gated driveway/Joe Murer Court; additional overflow parking is available along the public residential roads in the vicinity of the Murer House and Gardens property, and at the City of Folsom public parking garage, located approximately 0.25 mile northeast of the property.

The topography of the project site is relatively flat, with average elevations ranging from approximately 186 feet above mean sea level (amsl) to 194 feet amsl. A terraced garden is located on the northwestern edge of the property with a peak elevation of approximately 200 feet amsl. Ornamental trees and plantings are located throughout the project site, including grape, chestnuts, lemons, and other plantings. A bocce ball court is located in the southernmost corner of the project site. A brick and plexiglass soundwall spans the eastern boundary of project site which provides visual access to the Murer House and Gardens from Folsom Boulevard while also abating roadway noise.

3.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

3.1 PROJECT COMPONENTS

The proposed project would include the demolition of the two buildings located at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court and the construction of an approximately 2,740 sf one-story building to be used as a learning center by the Murer House Foundation. Demolition of the subject buildings and new construction would occur entirely outside the boundaries of the NRHP/CRHR-listed Murer House and Gardens. The proposed learning center would include the following components: a multipurpose event hall; a foyer/lobby; a small commercial kitchen; an enclosed porch on the north side of the building, similar to the existing porch; covered porches on the west and south side of the building; an office; a small storage room; two bathrooms accessible from the outside of the building; and one bathroom accessible from the inside of the building. A seating area is proposed on the southern side of the building, which would connect to the existing bocce ball court. The two existing loquat and mulberry trees located between the two existing buildings and the brick soundwall would be removed and replaced with three fruitless olive trees. Three columnar musashino zelkova trees would be planted in the proposed seating area. Additional landscaping would include shrub and groundcover around the perimeter of the proposed learning center.

The new learning center would be designed in a similar shape and architectural style to the existing building at 1125 Joe Murer Court, including replicating the same exterior finishes and fenestration (i.e. clapboard siding, double-hung vinyl double-pane windows, corrugated metal roofing, etc.). Key characteristics of the proposed design include the following:

- The location and footprint of the new learning center would largely overlap those of the two existing buildings combined. The north elevation of the learning center, being the closest visually and physically to the Murer House and Gardens, would be approximately two feet further north than existing.

- The orientation of the learning center would be changed from the east (facing Folsom Boulevard) to the west so that its primary façade and entry would face the parking lot. An additional entry would be constructed on the southern elevation.
- The highest point of the roof ridge would be approximately 20 feet and one inch, which would be nearly three feet shorter than the 23-foot-high ridge of the existing building at 1125 Joe Murer Court.
- The materials of the learning center would be largely similar to those of the two existing buildings: lap siding with vinyl-framed windows and gable roofs finished with standing seam metal panels.
- The proposed landscaping design surrounding the new learning center would utilize plant and tree selections consistent with the existing landscaping on site.

3.2 CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

It is anticipated that construction would begin during the summer of 2025 and would last approximately 12 months. Construction activities would take place during daytime hours between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on weekdays and between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Construction would involve the demolition of the two existing buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court; one building would be demolished at a time. Following demolition, the proposed learning center would be constructed primarily within the footprint of the demolished buildings.

3.3 PROJECT OPERATION

Operation of the proposed project would involve the continuation of the existing range of activities currently programmed by the Murer House Foundation, including cultural events, cooking classes, language classes, and other types of educational and cultural activities. The frequency of these activities ranges from weekly cooking and language classes to larger seasonal/annual events. It is anticipated that larger events would have approximately 80 attendees, similar to the existing event sizes. The proposed project would not increase the size or frequency of events/classes; rather, the new learning center would continue to accommodate events/classes but in a singular indoor space.

As operation of the proposed project would not increase the size or frequency of events/classes, visitor parking would continue to be provided by the 19 off-street parking spaces (including two ADA-compliant spaces) within the gated driveway/Joe Murer Court; additional overflow parking is available along the public residential roads in the vicinity of the Murer House and Gardens property, and at the City of Folsom public parking garage, located approximately 0.25 mile northeast of the property.

4.0 HISTORICAL RESOURCES EVALUATION

As mentioned, HELIX prepared a Historical Resources Survey Report (Appendix B) for the proposed project to ensure compliance with State laws and regulations as they relate to historical resources, including CEQA. The HRSR presents the applicable regulatory framework and evaluates the potential for the two buildings located at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court to be eligible for listing in the NRHP and/or CRHR, and therefore, whether either building constitutes a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA. This section summarizes the regulatory framework and findings from the HRSR.

4.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures, or objects, each of which may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, and/or scientific importance. Significant resources are those resources that have been found eligible for listing in the NRHP, the CRHR, or for local listing, as applicable.

The NRHP was established by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (36 CFR Part 60.2). The NRHP is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Properties can be significant at the local, state, or national level. To qualify for listing in the NRHP, properties generally must be at least 50 years old, possess historic significance, and retain physical integrity. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a property must be considered significant under one or more of the NRHP Criteria, as explained in the HRSR.

The CRHR is “an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state’s historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change” (PRC §5024.1(a)). Certain properties, including those listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP and California Historical Landmarks (CHL), numbered 770 and higher, are automatically included in the CRHR. Other properties recognized under the California Points of Historical Interest program, identified as significant in historic resources surveys, or designated by local landmarks programs may be nominated for inclusion in the CRHR. A resource, either an individual property or a contributor to a historic district, may be listed in the CRHR if the State Historical Resources Commission determines that it meets one or more of the criteria, which are modeled on NRHP criteria.

Pursuant to CEQA, a historical resource is a resource listed in, or eligible for listing in, the CRHR. In addition, resources included in a local register of historic resources or identified as significant in a local survey conducted in accordance with state guidelines, are also considered historical resources under CEQA, unless a preponderance of the facts demonstrates otherwise. According to CEQA, the fact that a resource is not listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the CRHR, or is not included in a local register or survey, shall not preclude a Lead Agency, as defined by CEQA, from determining that the resource may be a historic resource as defined in California Public Resources Code (PRC) §5024.1.7.

Local landmarks in the City of Folsom are known as Cultural Resources and are under the aegis of the Historic District Commission. The Cultural Resource Inventory is the City’s program for the identification, evaluation registration, and protection of Folsom’s Cultural Resources. Further, the City of Folsom’s 1998 Historic Preservation Master Plan historic preservation guidelines adopted the same four criteria of the NRHP, and therefore the CRHR, to establish a set of criteria for inclusion in Folsom’s Cultural Resources Inventory.

4.2 FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of the HRSR’s evaluation for each of the subject buildings located at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court using the criteria presented in Section 4.1, *Regulatory Framework*.

1125 Joe Murer Court

The building located at 1125 Joe Murer Court was originally constructed circa 1900 and obtained by Murer in 1921 when he purchased the overall property. The building has been expanded three times and other renovations have occurred.

Criteria A/1: Association with significant events or patterns of development. The building at 1125 Joe Murer Court does not have a strong association with events or patterns that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state, or local history. Research has not uncovered any historically significant discrete events that have taken place at the former residence. Thus, the former residence at 1125 Joe Murer Court does not possess historic significance under Criteria A/1 and is therefore recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR.

Criteria B/2: Association with individuals significant in the history of the city, region, or nation. The former residence at 1125 Folsom Boulevard does not have an association with the lives of persons significant in national, State, or local history. Although Murer, who owned the property for approximately 45 years, was significant to local history, this building is only associated with him as one of his numerous investments and not as his personal residence. Thus, the building at 1125 Joe Murer Court does not possess historic significance under Criteria B/2 and is therefore recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and the CRHR.

Criteria C/3: Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value. The former single-family residence is of modest vernacular design and does not embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, nor possess high artistic value. Additionally, expansions to the rear, replacement front porch, and alterations to the side porch have impacted the property's integrity of design, materials, and craftsmanship. Thus, the former residence at 1125 Joe Murer Court does not possess historic significance under Criteria C/3 and is therefore recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR.

Criteria D/4: Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Criterion D/4 is applied most commonly to buildings, structures, or objects that have been used as a source of archaeological data and are believed to contain more, yet unretrieved, data that cannot be obtained from other sources. Thus, the former residence at 1125 Joe Murer Court does not possess historical significance under Criteria D/4 and therefore is recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR.

1127 Joe Murer Court

The building located at 1127 Joe Murer Court is a Craftsman-style-inspired residence and was originally constructed sometime between 1910 and 1920. It is located immediately south of the building at 1125 Joe Murer Court, in the southern corner of the property. Similarly, it was obtained by Mr. Murer in 1921 when he purchased the overall property. Several expansions and renovations have occurred.

Criteria A/1: Association with significant events or patterns of development. Review of nineteenth and early twentieth-century Folsom history, historical newspapers, and historical aerial images indicate that the residence at 1127 Joe Murer Court does not have a strong association with events or patterns that have made a significant contribution to the broad

patterns of national, state, or local history. Thus, the residence at 1127 Joe Murer Court does not possess historic significance under Criteria A/1 and is therefore recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR.

Criteria B/2: Association with individuals significant in the history of the city, region, or nation.

The residence at 1127 Joe Murer Court does not have an association with the lives of persons significant in national, state, or local history. Although Mr. Murer, who owned the property for approximately 45 years, was significant to local history, the former residence is only associated with him as one of his numerous investments and not as his home. Thus, the former residence at 1125 Joe Murer Court does not possess historic significance under Criteria B/2 and is therefore recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR.

Criteria C/3: Embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic value. The residence at 1127 Joe Murer Court was constructed within the 1905–1930 period of significance for the Craftsman style. However, the building lacks character-defining features that would make it a complete and better example of the Craftsman style. Furthermore, research to date does not indicate the residence to be the work of a master architect, designer, or builder. Thus, the residence at 1125 Joe Murer Court does not possess historic significance under Criteria C/3 and is therefore recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR.

Criteria D/4: Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Criterion D/4 is applied most commonly to buildings, structures, or objects that have been used as a source of archaeological data and are believed to contain more, yet unretrieved, data that cannot be obtained from other sources. However, further study of this building would not add any new information to the historic record. Thus, the residence at 1127 Joe Murer Court does not possess historic significance under Criteria D/4 and therefore is recommended to remain not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP and CRHR.

Evaluation Summary

Both buildings were purchased by Mr. Murer in 1921 and have since undergone substantial expansions and renovations. Research to date continues to indicate that the two buildings were investment properties for Mr. Murer and do not have strong associations with Folsom’s Italian immigrant community, nor are they examples of the Italian Renaissance style nor the work of Mr. Murer himself. As such, the HRSR concluded that the buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court should remain not listed as a historical resource on the NRHP and CRHR. Therefore, neither of the two subject buildings are historical resources according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

5.0 IMPACT ANALYSIS

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 a project that would physically detract, either directly or indirectly, from the integrity and significance of a historical resource such that its eligibility for listing in the NRHP or CRHR would no longer be maintained, is considered a project that would result in a significant impact on the historical resource. Adverse impacts, which may or may not rise to a level of significance, result when one or more of the following occurs to a historical resource: demolition, relocation, conversion, rehabilitation, alteration, or new construction on the site or in the vicinity.

As mentioned, neither of the two subject buildings located at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court constitute a historical resource per CEQA Guidelines, as they are not a resource listed in, or eligible for listing in, the CRHR, nor are they included in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in a local survey. However, as the Murer House and Gardens is a historical resource per CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project could have the potential to impact a historical resource. This section presents the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b), followed by a discussion of why the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of the historic Murer House and Gardens.

15064.5(b)(1) *Substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of a historical resource would be materially impaired.*

The proposed project would involve the demolition of the two buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court and replacement with a single new building primarily within the two buildings' combined footprint. The existing buildings are partially screened from view from the Murer House and Gardens by the side yard and vegetation. The location and footprint of the proposed learning center would primarily overlap with those of the two subject buildings, and the proposed materials of the learning center would be similar to those of the existing building at 1125 Joe Murer Court. Further, by locating the enclosed porch of the new learning center at the same corner as the existing building at 1125 Joe Murer Court, and by utilizing similar materials, the view of the learning center from the Murer house would be considerably the same. Additionally, it is anticipated that the highest point of the proposed roof ridge would be nearly three feet shorter than the highest ridge of the existing building at 1125 Joe Murer Court. As such, the learning center would not introduce a new visual feature from the Murer House and Gardens relative to that of the existing buildings.

Conclusion: The proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse change of the historical resource's immediate surroundings such that the significance of the historical resource would be materially impaired.

15064.5(b)(2) *The significance of a historical resource is materially impaired when a project:*

- (A) *Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in, or eligibility for inclusion in, the CRHR; or*
- (B) *Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or its identification in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC, unless the public agency reviewing the effects of the project establishes by a preponderance of evidence that the resource is not historically or culturally significant; or*
- (C) *Demolishes or materially alters in an adverse manner those physical characteristics of a historical resource that convey its historical significance and that justify its eligibility for inclusion in the CRHR as determined by a lead agency for purposes of CEQA.*

The Murer House and Gardens was listed as a historical resource in the NRHP and CRHR in 2022. As explained in the HRSR (Appendix B), the Murer House and Gardens possesses historical significance at

the local level in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/European (Italian), Architecture, and Landscape Architecture. Implementation of the proposed project would occur entirely outside of the Murer House and Gardens boundary, which encompasses the Murer Residence, garage, and workshop. As discussed above in 15064.5(b)(1), the proposed project would not result in a substantial adverse change of the historical resource's immediate surroundings such that the significance of the historical resource would be materially impaired.

Conclusion: Therefore, the proposed project would not demolish or materially alter in an adverse manner the physical characteristics of the Murer House and Gardens that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in the CRHR, or that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or its identification in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC.

6.0 EXCEPTIONS TO THE EXEMPTION

The proposed project would be eligible for a Class 1, Class 2, and/or Class 3 CE. However, the applicability of all CEs is qualified by the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a) through (f). In the discussion below, each exception is followed by an explanation of why the exception would not apply to the project.

15300.2(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 impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact 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 City of Folsom proposes to adopt a Class 1, Class 2, and Class 3 CE for the proposed project; a Class 3 CE is qualified by consideration of where the project would be located. The project site is located within a highly developed urban area that lacks habitat that would be suitable for sensitive wildlife or plant species. As discussed in 15300.2(e) *Hazardous Waste Sites* below, the project site does not contain hazardous materials. Therefore, this exception to a CE would not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(b) Cumulative Impact. *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 would involve the demolition of two buildings and replacement with a single new building primarily within the two buildings' combined footprint. The project would not result in significant environmental impacts, and there are no other successive projects of the same type or scale planned by the City. There are no reasonably foreseeable future projects in the City of Folsom that would result in significant cumulative impacts in combination with the proposed project. Therefore, no significant cumulative impacts would result from successive projects in the same place over time. This exception to a CE would not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(c) 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.*

The circumstances of the proposed project are not considered unusual because: (1) the project site is currently developed and is being used for the same events and classes that the proposed project would continue to accommodate; and (2) the proposed project would be consistent with existing land uses in the surrounding area. Further, the new learning center would not result in an expansion of use or increase in the intensity of the use beyond what is currently supported by the buildings proposed for demolition. The proposed project would continue to accommodate cultural events, cooking classes, language classes, and other types of educational and cultural activities as programmed by the Murer House Foundation. Therefore, no unusual circumstances exist and this exception to a CE would not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(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. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.*

There are no officially designated state scenic highways or highways eligible for designation in the City of Folsom. The nearest state scenic highway is the segment of U.S. Highway 50 from the City of Placerville to Echo Summit, beginning approximately 20 miles east of the project site (Caltrans 2024). Chapter 17.59.040 of the Folsom Municipal Code designates Folsom Boulevard as a scenic corridor, which borders the project site to the east. However, the new building would be located primarily within the footprint of the two subject buildings proposed for demolition. Further, it is anticipated that the highest point of the proposed roof ridge would be nearly three feet shorter than the highest ridge of the existing building at 1125 Joe Murer Court. As such, the new building would not introduce a new visual feature from the Murer House and Gardens relative to that of the existing buildings. Therefore, the proposed project would not damage scenic resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This exception to a CE would not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(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 Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.*

A search of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database and the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker database demonstrated that the project site is not located on a hazardous materials site. The search revealed one possible hazardous materials site located at the City of Folsom's Corporation Yard Landfill approximately 0.2 mile northwest of the project site. However, the EnviroStor database indicates the site is a Voluntary Cleanup site; furthermore, the GeoTracker database indicates that it is a closed site that requires no further action (DTSC 2024; SWRCB 2024). Therefore, the project site is not located on an active hazardous site included on lists compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of California Government Code. This exception to a CE would not apply to the proposed project.

15300.2(f) Historical 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 proposed project would involve the demolition of the two buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court and replacement with a single new building primarily within the two buildings' combined footprint. The Murer House and Gardens is located immediately north of the two existing buildings and

is a historical resource per CEQA Guidelines, as it is listed in the NRHP and the CRHR. However, implementation of the proposed project would occur entirely outside of the Murer House and Gardens boundary, which encompasses the Murer Residence, garage, and workshop. As demonstrated in Section 5.0, *Impact Analysis*, and supported by substantial evidence, the proposed project would not result in the alteration of the historical resource or its immediate surroundings, such that the significance of the historical resource would be materially impaired. Therefore, the proposed project does not have the potential to cause a substantial adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. This exception to a CE would not apply to the proposed project.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed project would involve the demolition of the two detached single-story buildings at 1125 and 1127 Joe Murer Court, located immediately south of the historic Murer House and Gardens, and the construction of a single one-story learning center primarily within the two subject buildings' combined footprint. The Murer House and Gardens was listed as a historic resource on the NRHP and CRHR in 2022; the boundary of the historic resource encompasses the Murer Residence, garage, and workshop, and does not include the two subject buildings. As determined in the HRSR prepared by HELIX, neither of the two subject buildings constitute a historical resource according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

The proposed learning center would be designed to avoid changes to the current Murer House and Gardens property that would result in a substantial adverse change of the historical resource's immediate surroundings such that the significance of the historical resource would be materially impaired. Further, the proposed project would occur entirely outside of the Murer House and Gardens boundary and would not demolish or materially alter in an adverse manner the physical characteristics of the Murer House and Gardens that convey its historical significance and that justify its inclusion in the CRHR, or that account for its inclusion in a local register of historical resources pursuant to Section 5020.1(k) of the PRC or its identification in a historical resources survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC. As such, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b), the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource and would, therefore, not have a significant effect on the environment.

Lastly, the proposed project would be eligible for a Class 1, Class 2, and/or Class 3 CE and none of the exceptions listed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2(a) through (f) would apply.

8.0 REFERENCES

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