

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**To:** ☒ Office of Planning and Research  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

☒ County Clerk  
County of Orange  
12 Civic Center Plaza, Room 101  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**From: (Public Agency)** Newport-Mesa Unified School District  
Mark Manstorf, Facilities Analyst  
2985 Bear Street, Building E  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Davis Magnet Elementary School HVAC and Fencing Upgrade

**Project Title**

1050 Arlington Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 (Buildings A through J)

**Project Location - Specific**

Costa Mesa

Orange

**Project Location – City**

**Project Location – County**

Newport-Mesa Unified School District proposes campus improvements to the Davis Magnet Elementary School campus, which would be comprised of the installation of new HVAC systems. Improvements would take place in Buildings A–H and Building J and would include replacement of existing rooftop packaged units and forced air units (FAUs) with variable refrigerant flow (VRF) systems and split heat pump/fan coil units. Additional work would include removal and/or modification of existing ductwork to serve these new units, along with the patching and painting of affected walls. The proposed project only involves the renovation of existing buildings; the project would have no effect on the capacity of the school. Construction activities are anticipated to be performed between June 2018 and August 2018. The project would benefit the staff and students at the school.

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project**

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project**

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project**

**Categorical Exemption**

Exempt Status: (check one below)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. CEQA Guidelines §15301 Class 1; §15302 Class 2.
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

Class 1 consists 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 use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

*The proposed project consists of repairs, upgrades, and minor alteration of existing buildings to provide HVAC system improvements. The project would not increase student capacity at Davis Magnet Elementary School and would not increase the physical footprint, square footage, or bulk of existing buildings.*

Class 2 consists of 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.

*The proposed project would remove HVAC systems in Buildings A–H and J and replace them with new HVAC systems. All upgraded buildings on the Davis Magnet Elementary campus would have the same purpose and capacity as under existing conditions.*

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Reasons why project is exempt

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

Mark Manstorf, Facilities Analyst

(714) 424-7567

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Lead Agency/Contact Person:

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

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If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption findings
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project ☒ Yes ☐ No

Signature:

Title:

Date:

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Date Received for Filing:

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- ☒ Signed by Lead Agency
- ☒ Signed by Applicant

# ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

## DAVIS MAGNET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

### 1. Description of the Project

Newport-Mesa Unified School District is proposing building upgrades at David Magnet Elementary School at 1050 Arlington Drive in the City of Costa Mesa, Orange County. The existing school campus is shown in Figure 1, *Aerial Photograph*. Proposed improvements are shown in Figure 2, *Proposed Improvements*.

The objective of this campus improvement project is to install new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. The project will not increase the student population of the school and will have no effect on the capacity of the school. Construction activities are anticipated to start in June 2018, and the overall construction duration is anticipated to conclude prior to the beginning of the 2018–2019 school year on September 4th, 2018.

Specifically the proposed project involves the following project components:

- » **Building A (Classrooms):** Replacement of six (6) existing rooftop packaged HVAC units with split heat pump/fan coil systems.
- » **Buildings B and C (Classrooms):** Replacement of two (2) existing rooftop packaged HVAC units with split heat pump/fan coil systems (4 total). Removal and replacement of existing exposed rooftop ductwork.
- » **Building D (Library and Administration):** Replacement of existing rooftop packaged HVAC unit with two variable refrigerant flow (VRF) systems; replacement of indoor fan coils. Removal of existing ductwork and air distribution system.
- » **Buildings E and F (Classrooms):** Replacement of four (4) existing forced air unit (FAU) systems and rooftop packaged unit with split heat pump/fan coil units (8 total). Work includes removal of existing furnaces; wall patching; and installation of new fan coils. Modification of existing ductwork to serve new AC units.
- » **Building G (Classrooms):** Replacement of six existing rooftop packaged units with split heat pump/fan coil units.
- » **Building H (Administration, Office, and Music Room):** Replacement of existing HVAC system with VRF systems and related ductwork.
- » **Building J (Classrooms):** Replacement of three (3) FAU units with split heat pump/fan coil units. Removal of existing furnaces; wall patching; and installation of new fan coils. Modification of existing ductwork to serve new AC units.

### 2. Description of the Existing Setting of the Site and Adjacent Areas

The project site is the Davis Magnet Elementary School campus at 1050 Arlington Drive (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 141-342-08) in the City of Costa Mesa, central Orange County. The campus is situated north of Arlington Drive between Fairview Road and Junipero Drive in the central portion of the City. State Route 55 (SR-55) is 0.4 mile to the southeast while Interstate 405 (I-405/San Diego Freeway) is 1.1 miles to the north.

Davis Magnet Elementary was originally constructed in 1961 and houses approximately 577 students<sup>1</sup> in grades K–6. There are 32 permanent classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and an administration building. Four

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<sup>1</sup> California Department of Education. 2017. 2–017–2018 Enrollment by Ethnicity and Grade; DataQuest tool.  
<https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=30665976029409&aggllevel=school&year=2017-18>.

portable classrooms were constructed in 1991 and four additional portable classrooms were constructed in 2003.

Uses surrounding the school include:

- » North: Coastline Regional Occupational Program campus, single-family homes, and Presidio Drive.
- » East: TeWinkle Park.
- » South: Arlington Drive and the Orange County Fair and Event Center.
- » West: Costa Mesa High School, Fairview Road, and Orange Coast College.

### **3. Reasons Why This Project is Exempt**

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under Class 1 - Existing Facility (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301) and Class 2 - Replacement or Reconstruction (CEQA Guidelines Section 15302).

- » Class 1 - Existing Facility (CEQA Guidelines Section 15301) consists 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 use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

*The proposed project consists of repairs, upgrades, and minor alteration of existing buildings to provide HVAC system improvements. The project would not increase student capacity at Davis Magnet Elementary School and would not increase the physical footprint, square footage, or bulk, of existing buildings.*

- » Class 2 - Replacement or Reconstruction (CEQA Guidelines Section 15302) consists of 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.

*The proposed project would remove HVAC systems in Buildings A–H and J and replace them with new HVAC systems. All upgraded buildings on the Davis Magnet Elementary campus would have the same purpose and capacity as under existing conditions.*

### **4. Review of Possible Exceptions to the Categorical Exemption**

The proposed project has been reviewed under Section 15300.2 for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the project is exempt from CEQA, as follows:

#### **a. Cumulative Impacts**

There are no additional projects planned for or adjacent to the project site. The proposed project is a minor project at an existing school campus and would not combine with offsite impacts of other development or redevelopment projects to result in a significant environmental impact. The project site is across Arlington Drive from the Orange County Fair and Event Center, which generates substantial traffic and circulation issues during peak event hours between mid-July and Mid-August. However, the small number of workers and vehicles required to implement the proposed project would not be expected to increase traffic volumes or exacerbate congestion along Arlington Drive during this period. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a significant cumulative environmental effect. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

## **b. Significant Effects**

There is no reasonable possibility that the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment as planned or under “unusual circumstances.” The site is already developed with a school and is located in a built-out residential neighborhood in the City of Costa Mesa; therefore, impacts to sensitive biological resources or scenic views would not occur. Similarly, because the project would not change the capacity of the school or alter transportation routes or drop-off zones, there would be no impacts on public services, recreation, utilities, and transportation systems. Due to the small project scale, air, noise, and transportation impacts during construction would be less than significant and would be governed by local ordinances for construction projects. Given these considerations, environmental impacts would not occur. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

## **c. Scenic Highways**

There are no state scenic highways in the vicinity of the project site.<sup>2</sup> The closest designated state scenic highway in Orange County is State Route 1, Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), approximately 3.6 miles south and southwest of the school. The project site is not visible from PCH and the proposed project would not damage any scenic resources. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

## **d. Hazardous Waste Sites**

Section 65962.5 specifies lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated. A review of the Regional Water Quality Control Board and Department of Toxic Substances Control regulatory agency databases was conducted to determine if the site was listed on any database. The project site is not listed on any of the dozens of federal, state, and local agency databases searched, including those identified under Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. Therefore, the proposed project would not create hazards related to the disturbance of, or exposure to, a hazardous waste site.<sup>3,4</sup> This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

## **e. Historical Resources**

A historic resources assessment was prepared by Historic Preservation Services LLC for the proposed project. This assessment confirmed that the school was first constructed in 1961.

The campus has built resources over 50-years of age including classrooms, administration, and multi-purpose buildings. The late Modernist styled classrooms are single-story, single corridor, rectangular buildings with smooth concrete panel construction, with occasional brick cladding on end walls. Roofs are low pitched or flat with exposed metal drip-edge. Classrooms and support buildings have covered canopies, and/or eight-foot wide enclosed cantilevered overhangs with wide fascia for shading. Classroom window fenestration consists of both clearstory and multi-light metal windows units. The campus displays some characteristics of the Modernist School design, but the design does not rise to the level required for eligibility on the California Register. Campus buildings are oriented inwards, with a five buildings forming a large courtyard with two classrooms in the center; the remaining campus buildings are east of this courtyard. Overall, the school is categorized as having a Modernist Institutional architectural style. The architect was Mel Gianni of the firm Kistner, Wright and Wright.

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<sup>2</sup> California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Updated September 7, 2011. California Scenic Highway Mapping System. [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/index.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm).

<sup>3</sup> California Regional Water Quality Control Board, 2017. Geotracker Sites and Facilities.

<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=750+Euclid+Avenue%2C+Long+Beach%2C+CA>.

<sup>4</sup> California Department of Toxic Substances Control 2017. EnviroStor. <https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>.

All the permanent buildings are 57 years old and were therefore evaluated for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR). A windshield survey of the campus indicates that these Modernist school buildings have little applied ornament, and do not embody any distinctive style, high artistic design, or unique method of construction. The proposed project involves no demolition, expansion or major modifications to the buildings and the site. The proposed scope of work is limited to the installation of HVAC improvements. The affected buildings are considered secondary campus buildings that do not meet any of the criteria for being determined significant resources, individually or collectively, on a statewide level, and therefore are ineligible for listing in the California Register.<sup>5</sup> Lastly, the campus was not designed by a master architect. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

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<sup>5</sup> Historic Preservation Services LLC, 2018. *Historic Resources Assessment for Proposed Improvements to Davis Magnet Elementary School*.