

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

Kaiser Elementary School HVAC Upgrade

Project Title

2130 Santa Ana Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92627 (Buildings A through I)

Project Location - Specific

Costa Mesa

Project Location – City

Orange

Project Location – County

Newport-Mesa Unified School District proposes campus modernization improvements to the Kaiser Elementary School campus, which would be comprised of the installation of new HVAC systems. Improvements would include replacement of rooftop packaged air conditioning units with split heat pumps/fan coil units; replacement of heat pumps and fans; and removal and/or modification of ductwork to serve new HVAC units. Work would occur in nine existing permanent buildings (Buildings A through I) and would not affect portable buildings. 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 and §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 upgrades to existing buildings to provide modernization of existing HVAC systems. The project would not increase student capacity at Kaiser Elementary School and would not increase the physical footprint, square footage, bulk, or dimensions of the buildings (outside of changes to rooftop mechanical equipment as discussed above).

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 project would replace existing HVAC systems and remove/modify ductwork to serve new HVAC units. All upgraded buildings would have the same purpose and student capacity as under existing conditions.

Reasons why project is exempt

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

Mark Manstorf, Facilities Analyst

(714) 424-7567

Lead Agency/Contact Person:

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

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:

Date Received for Filing:

- ☒ Signed by Lead Agency
☒ Signed by Applicant

ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

KAISER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

1. Description of the Project

Newport-Mesa Unified School District is proposing building upgrades at Kaiser Elementary School at 2130 Santa Ana Avenue 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, *Site Plan*.

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 would 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.

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

The project site is the Kaiser Elementary School campus at 2130 Santa Ana Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 426-161-11) in the City of Costa Mesa, central Orange County. The campus is situated southeast of Santa Ana Avenue between East 21st Street and East 22nd Street, and northwest of Tustin Avenue in the eastern portion of the City. State Route 55 (SR-55) is 0.5 mile to the west while State Route 1 (PCH) is 1.8 miles to the south.

Kaiser Elementary was originally constructed in 1961 and houses approximately 661 students¹ in grades K–6. There are 31 permanent classrooms, a multi-purpose room, a library, and an administration building. Three portable classrooms were constructed between 1997 and eight portable classrooms were constructed in 2002.

Uses surrounding the school include:

- » Northwest: Santa Ana Avenue and single-family homes.
- » Northeast: single-family homes and East 22nd Street.
- » Southeast: Jordan Park, single-family homes, townhomes, Sunshine Co-Op Preschool, Bay Harbor Mobile Home Park.
- » Southwest: East 21st Street and single-family homes,

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.

¹ 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=30665976029359&aggllevel=school&year=2017-18>.

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 Kaiser 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–I and replace them with new HVAC systems. All upgraded buildings on the Kaiser 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. Similar HVAC improvements are planned for Woodland Elementary School approximately 700 feet to the southwest. However the two projects are equally minor school improvement upgrade projects and would not generate impacts (e.g., aesthetic or traffic impacts) that would combine to create a significant neighborhood impact. 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. 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.² The closest designated state scenic highway in Orange County is State Route 1, Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), approximately 1.8 miles south 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

² 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.

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.^{3,4} 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 school was originally a junior high school but was later converted to an elementary school.

The campus has built resources over 50-years of age including classrooms, administration, library, and multi-purpose buildings. The 11 portable classrooms located on campus were constructed between 1997 and 2004. Modernist style classrooms are single-story rectangular buildings with exterior stucco and brick cladding, low-pitched gable roofs. The classrooms have eight-foot wide boxed stucco overhangs with wide stucco fascia for shading. The campus has a mixture of single and double corridors, internal courtyards with connected walkways. Classroom window fenestration consists of both clearstory and multi-light metal windows units. Overall, the school is categorized as having a Modernist Institutional architectural style. The architect was Mel Gianni of the firm Kistner, Wright and Wright.

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.⁵ Lastly, the campus was not designed by a master architect. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

³ 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>.

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

⁵ Historic Preservation Services LLC, 2018. *Historic Resources Assessment for Proposed Improvements to Kaiser Elementary School*.