

## 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

Pomona Elementary School HVAC Upgrade

**Project Title**

2051 Pomona Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92627 (Buildings 1, 3–9, and 11)

**Project Location - Specific**

Costa Mesa

**Project Location – City**

Orange

**Project Location – County**

Newport-Mesa Unified School District proposes campus modernization improvements to the Pomona Elementary School campus, which would be comprised of the installation of new HVAC systems. Improvements would include replacement of a rooftop packaged HVAC unit and twenty (20) forced air unit (FAU) systems with split heat pump/fan coil units. Work would occur in nine existing permanent buildings (Buildings 1, 3–9, and 11) 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; §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 Pomona 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 1, 3–9, and 11 and replace them with new HVAC systems. All upgraded buildings on the Pomona 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received for Filing: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☒ Signed by Lead Agency  
☒ Signed by Applicant

# ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

## POMONA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

### 1. Description of the Project

Newport-Mesa Unified School District is proposing building upgrades at Pomona Elementary School at 2051 Pomona 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.

Specifically the proposed project involves the following project components:

- » **Building 1 (Administration):** Replacement of a rooftop packaged HVAC unit with a variable refrigerant flow (VRF) system consisting of an outdoor heat pump and indoor fan coils. Replacement of a split HVAC system with a new split system.
- » **Buildings 3, 5, 7, and 11 (Classrooms):** Replacement of three (3) forced air unit (FAU) systems with split heat pump/fan coil systems. Includes furnace removal, wall patch and paint, and modification of existing ductwork.
- » **Building 4, 6, 8, and 9 (Classrooms):** Replacement of two (2) forced air unit (FAU) systems with split heat pump/fan coil systems. Includes furnace removal, wall patch and paint, and modification of existing ductwork.

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

The project site is the Pomona Elementary School campus at 2051 Pomona Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 422-252-01) in the City of Costa Mesa, central Orange County. The campus is situated south of Hamilton Street, west of Pomona Avenue, and north of Sterling Avenue in the western portion of the City. State Route 55 (SR-55) is 0.8 mile to the east while State Route 1 (PCH) is 1.8 miles to the south.

Pomona Elementary was originally constructed in 1963 and houses approximately 491 students<sup>1</sup> in grades K–6. There are 20 permanent classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and an administration building. Two portables were placed in 1987, one was placed in 1991, three were placed in 1999, and four were placed in 2006. The six older portables were modernized in 2006.

Uses surrounding Pomona Elementary include:

- » North: Hamilton Street and single-family homes.
- » East: Pomona Avenue, single-family homes, and Everett A. Rea Elementary School.
- » South: Sterling Avenue and apartments.
- » West: Single-family homes, Wallace Avenue, and apartments.

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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=30665976029466&aggllevel=school&year=2017-18>.

### 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 Pomona 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 1, 3–9, and 11 and replace them with new HVAC systems. All upgraded buildings on the Pomona 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. 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 1.8 miles south of

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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).

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 1963. The campus has built resources over 50-years of age including classrooms, administration, and multi-purpose buildings. There are four portable classrooms located on campus which were modernized in 2006. Modernist style classrooms are single-story, single corridor, rectangular buildings with exterior stucco cladding, low-pitched gable roofs. The classrooms have wide stucco eave overhangs on each side; entrances are on one side with cantilevered overhang supported by steel columns creating covered 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 buildings are 55 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. Buildings 1 and 3–11 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>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/>.

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