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November 14, 2024

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
City Hall, Room 395
Los Angeles, California 90012

Attention: PLUM Committee

Dear Honorable Members:

SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT REGARDING CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION ENV-2017-1106-CE FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3701 GLENRIDGE DRIVE WITHIN THE SHERMAN OAKS - STUDIO CITY - TOLUCA LAKE - CAHUENGA PASS COMMUNITY PLAN AREA (CF 24-1325)

Pursuant to Section 15303 (Class 3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Department of City Planning prepared a Categorical Exemption (ENV-2017-1106-CE) for the proposed project at 3701 Glenridge Drive with the following project description:

The proposed project is for the construction of a new two-story, 5,169 square-foot (Residential Floor Area) single-family dwelling with a 400 square-foot detached two-car carport, a 2,004 square-foot basement, and a 4,624 square-foot subterranean garage. The project proposes a maximum height of 32 feet on an approximately 41,036 square-foot lot. The project also includes a driveway bridge on piles varying in height from three feet and six inches to a maximum height of 24 feet and six inches, a pool/spa and 14,433 square feet of hardscape. The project does not propose the removal of any protected or non-protected significant trees. The project proposes 4,249.57 cubic yards of cut grading, 258.94 cubic yards of fill grading, 3,990.63 cubic yards of export grading, and no import grading.

The Categorical Exemption ("CE") was adopted by the Department of Building and Safety Board of Commissioners ("Board") on October 17, 2024. The Board also approved a Haul Route Permit for the subject project.

A total of 13 appeals were filed regarding the approved Haul Route Permit. The appeal points address a variety of issues relating to the Haul Route approval as well as the Categorical Exemption. The Department provides the following responses to appeal comments relating to

the Categorical Exemption. Many of the appeal points were repetitive and therefore the appeal points have been consolidated and edited to reduce repetition.

The following appeal comment was made regarding review by the Mulholland Design Review Board:

- The project needs a Mulholland Design Review hearing, there are concerns it does not comply with the Mulholland Design Guidelines including visibility, neighborhood compatibility, retaining walls, building height, fence height, and landscaping

Department Response

The project is subject to the Mulholland Scenic Parkway Specific Plan and Design Review and was approved through the proper procedures. On June 1, 2017, the Mulholland Design Review Board convened a quorum of 6 members and voted unanimously (6-0) to continue the case with requested modifications. A revised set of architectural plans was submitted by the applicant and the project was subsequently scheduled for a second hearing. On August 15, 2018 the Mulholland Design Review Board met with a quorum of 6 members and voted unanimously (6-0) to continue the case with requested modifications. An updated set of revised architectural plans was submitted by the applicant and the project was subsequently scheduled for a third and final hearing. The Design Review Board met on August 21, 2019 where the board convened a quorum of 6 members. The vote was unanimous (6-0) to deny the proposed project.

After the August 21, 2019 Design Review Board meeting, the applicant provided revised plans to Staff addressing each of the recommendations outlined by the Design Review Board during the third and final hearing. As noted in the Director's Determination, the Board's final recommendations were not substantive enough to warrant a denial of the project.

The applicant provided a revised set of architectural plans on March 25, 2020. Staff determined these revisions complied with the Specific Plan provisions and design guidelines, and as such, the Director conditionally approved the proposed project on April 16, 2020.

The case was subsequently appealed. The appeal was heard by the South Valley Area Planning Commission on January 14, 2021 which voted unanimously (4-0) to grant the appeal in part and deny the appeal in part in order to approve the revised Exhibit A previously provided to the Department and dated March 25, 2020.

The following appeal comments were made regarding the potential impact to Biological Resources as a result of the proposed project:

- Illegal tree removals have occurred, appellant requests an arborist report on oak trees and other natives trees on the project site
- 3701 Glenridge Drive is part of a wildlife habitat zone/block (Zone 11). It is near Charles and Lotte Melhorn Overlook and is a wildlife corridor. Appellant requests a wildlife mitigation study and a covenant and agreement affecting wildlife protection
- The project will have a significant impact on the environment, wildlife, and day to day living/commuting
- The project will disrupt wildlife including hawks, coyotes, raccoons, and vermin and these animals will inundate our homes

Department Response

The total lot area is approximately 41,038 square feet, and the proposed location of the new home is located on the southern portion of the site and does not propose removal of any protected trees or shrubs. A Protected Tree Report was prepared by William R. McKinley of American Society of Consulting Arborists, and dated February 9, 2017. The tree report included a field observation and inventory of protected trees, recommendations for the protection of trees to remain, a photograph index of protected trees, an evaluation of potential construction impacts, a protected tree location plot map, and protected tree construction impact guidelines.

The Arborist Report identified the location of two Southern California Black Walnut trees, a protected tree species. The report states that the two protected trees will be preserved in place. No protected trees are proposed for removal. No substantial evidence has been submitted regarding the alleged unpermitted protected tree removals.

No substantial evidence has been provided regarding the presence of any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species, or any potential interference with any wildlife species, migratory wildlife corridors, or native wildlife nursery sites. However, per Condition #13 in DIR-2017-1105-DRB-SPP-MSP-1A, the applicant may enter into an agreement with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to covenant land for the movement of wildlife. The condition is as follows:

Wildlife Corridor. Should the Applicant voluntarily reach a private agreement with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for the movement of wildlife, which references issues such as fence heights, portions of the lot(s) which shall not have development shall be shown on the revised Site Plan. If a covenant agreement of land conservation is recorded, the Applicant shall illustrate and denote the agreed upon sections of the lot in "Revised Plans" labeled site plan and submit to the Department of City Planning prior to final sign-off. The Applicant shall also provide a copy of the covenant associated with this agreement if and when it is recorded with the County of Los Angeles for inclusion to the subject case file.

The following comments were made regarding potential impacts to Geology / Soils / Hydrology / Water Quality:

- The project creates a dangerous slope stability issue, appellant requests a third party review for all Geology, Grading and Slope reports
- Unapproved grading on-site has occurred
- Construction on the property could cause foundation failure to the four adjacent properties, and cause street and hillside instability
- Concerns regarding the impact of a potential flood on the homes below on Benedict Canyon (below the project) and request additional mitigation measures

Department Response

The subject site is located within the Hollywood Fault zone, High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, Landslide Zone, and Hillside Grading Area. A Preliminary Geotechnical Engineering and Engineering Geology Investigation report was prepared by SASSAN Geosciences, Inc. and dated Jan. 20, 2017 with addenda dated March 14, 2018 and August 14, 2018. The Department of Building and Safety Grading Division approved these reports on August 19, 2020, concluding that the reports were acceptable provided the adherence to 52 conditions of approval which address drainage, grading, protection of adjacent building foundations and the public rights of way, retaining walls and shoring, among many other requirements. In addition, Regulatory Compliance

Measures (RCMs) in the City of Los Angeles regulate the grading and construction of projects in these particular types of “sensitive” locations and will reduce any potential impacts to less than significant. RCMs require that design and construction of the building must conform to the California Building Code seismic standards, must comply with conditions contained within LADBS’s Geology and Soils Report Approval Letter as described above, must comply with LADBS Methane design requirements, must comply with Los Angeles Fire Department recommendations prior to building permit approval, and grading on site shall comply with the City’s Landform Grading Manual, as approved by the Department of Building and Safety. These RCM’s have been historically proven to reduce any impacts to the specific environment in which the project is located.

The following appeal comments were made regarding Transportation / Traffic on Glenridge Drive:

- Glenridge is a bad condition, substandard street and trucks will not be able to navigate the dead-end street.
- Construction trucks could block access to emergency vehicles, garbage trucks, mail delivery and other delivery vehicles, and could trap residents in their homes
- Glenridge Drive is not structurally able to accommodate the size of this project and construction activities
- There will not be enough parking for construction vehicles, the area has red flag days
- The amount of hauling trucks creates a safety hazard

Department Response

No substantial evidence has been provided to substantiate the claims that construction trucks and hauling will block access to vehicles on Glenridge Drive, result in inadequate emergency access, increase hazards due to incompatible uses, or damage the street infrastructure. Numerous Los Angeles Municipal Code Sections provide requirements for construction activities and ensure impacts from traffic and parking are less than significant. The Board of Building and Safety Commissioners approved a Haul Route Permit with 20 General Conditions of Approval and 15 Specific Conditions of Approval. These conditions prohibit the staging of hauling vehicles on streets adjacent to the site, prohibit hauling and grading on Red Flag days, require daily maintenance of Glenridge Drive, require flag attendants for traffic control, and require workers’ vehicles to be parked off-site with workers transported to the site, among many other conditions. These conditions of approval and standard Regulatory Compliance Measures will ensure the project does not create a significant impact.

Conclusion

The Categorical Exemption for the haul route permit adequately addresses any potential impacts relative to the proposed project.

Sincerely,

VINCENT P. BERTONI, AICP
Director of Planning

Blake Lamb

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Principal City Planner