

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk

County of: San Francisco
City Hall, Room 180, One Dr Carlton B Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

From: (Public Agency): San Francisco Unified School District
135 Van Ness Ave
San Francisco, CA 94102

(Address)

2023-0000073

FILED

SAN FRANCISCO County Clerk

NOV 09 2023

by: Mariedyne Nadonza
Deputy County Clerk

Project Title: West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project

Project Applicant: San Francisco Unified School District

Project Location - Specific:

5 Lenox Way, San Francisco, CA 94127 (Assessor's block/lot 2979/014)

Project Location - City: San Francisco Project Location - County: San Francisco

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

West Portal Elementary School, a transitional kindergarten through 5th-grade school with an estimated 600 student enrollment (SFUSD 2023), is located at the 2.8-acre project site. The project site consists of approximately 122,320 square feet of educational space between two permanent buildings and eight temporary portable classroom units used for classroom and administration spaces, as well as paved surface lots and outdoor recreational spaces. The project would include the demolition of eight temporary portable classroom units (existing Buildings C through H) and the construction of two new buildings (proposed Buildings C and D). Two existing buildings (Buildings A and B) would remain on-site and would be renovated.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: San Francisco Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: San Francisco Unified School District

Exempt Status: (check one):

- 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. State type and section number: Class 14 Minor Additions to Schools
Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project would result in a total net increase of approximately 7,300 square feet of building space. There would be no net increase in classrooms because the project would demolish 10 classrooms and construct 10 classrooms. The project would not result in an increase in student enrollment or staffing at the project site.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Licinia Iberri Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 415.439.9271

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: [Signature] Date: 11/8/23 Title: SFUSD Bond Program Director

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR:

NOV 09 2023
POSTED
TO



**SFUSD** SAN FRANCISCO  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**Submitted to:**

San Francisco Office of the County Clerk  
City Hall, Room 160  
One Dr Carlton B Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Office of Planning and Research  
*Submitted electronically via CEQA Submit*

**From:** San Francisco Unified School District  
135 Van Ness Ave.  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**PROJECT TITLE:** West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project

**Project Address:**  
West Portal Elementary School  
5 Lenox Way  
San Francisco, CA 94127

**Assessor's Parcel Number:**  
Assessor's block/lot 2979/014  
**County of:**  
San Francisco

**Project Description:** The 2.8-acre project site is bound by Taraval Street to the north, Claremont Boulevard to the east, Verdun Way (a public pedestrian walkway) to the south, and Lenox Way to the west (Figure 1). The project site is surrounded by residential uses to the north, east, and west; a public park, the West Portal Recreation Center, and residential uses are located south of the project site.

West Portal Elementary School, a transitional kindergarten through 5th-grade school with an estimated 600 student enrollment (SFUSD 2023), is located at the project site. The project site consists of approximately 122,320 square feet of educational space between two permanent buildings and eight temporary portable classroom units used for classroom and administration spaces, as well as paved surface lots and outdoor recreational spaces. Specifically, the project site currently includes two permanent buildings (Building A, which includes a multipurpose wing and a main wing, as well as Building B) as well as eight temporary portable classroom units (Buildings C through H). The three-story, approximately 29,200-square-foot Building A includes 13 classrooms, a multi-purpose room, library, and kitchen. The single story, approximately 4,000-square-foot Building B includes four classrooms. The eight temporary portable classroom units total approximately 9,000 square feet. The West Portal Elementary School was initially constructed between 1926 and 1927, with later additions from 1931 to 1932 and the mid- to late 20th century. Various play areas and

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landscaping are located throughout the project site. The project site consists of five flat terraces, referred to as yards, that step down in elevation from a high point at yard 1 in the northern portion of the site (closest to Taraval Street) to a low point at yard 4 in the southern portion of the site.

The Twin Peaks Tunnel is an underground light rail tunnel under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority (SFMTA). The Twin Peaks Tunnel was completed in 1917 and is 2.3 miles long. The K Ingleside, M Ocean View, and T Taraval lines of the San Francisco Municipal Railway (SF Muni) system use the Twin Peaks Tunnel. The Twin Peaks Tunnel runs beneath the central portion of the project site, approximately 41 feet below ground surface at yard 4. The approximate extent of the Twin Peaks Tunnel is depicted in dashed lines in Figure 2.

The project would include the demolition of eight temporary portable classroom units (existing Buildings C through H) and the construction of two new buildings (proposed Buildings C and D). Two existing buildings (Buildings A and B) would remain on-site and would be renovated. Figure 2 depicts the conceptual site plan for the Project. The project would include the following components:

- Existing Buildings C, D, E, F, G, and H: The project would demolish the eight temporary portable classroom units, which total approximately 9,650 square feet and include ten classrooms.
- Proposed Building C: The project would construct a new two-story building (with a cantilevered deck) that would be approximately 10,400 square feet. The proposed Building C would include six classrooms. The building would be located in yards 2 and 3 along Claremont Boulevard.
- Proposed Building D: The project would construct a new single-story building (with a breezeway connecting two portions of the building) that would be approximately 6,300 square feet. The proposed Building D would include four classrooms. The building would be located in yard 1 immediately east of the main wing of existing Building A.
- Existing Building A: The project would renovate the existing kitchen.
- Existing Building B: The project would upgrade interior finishes as well as include interior window treatments, minor accessibility compliance, and new heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment to replace the existing gas furnace.
- Additional on-site improvements: The project would provide selective replacement of sewer lines. The project would also include stormwater features, landscape features, and selective

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replacement of fencing and gates. Damaged existing retaining walls would be repaired and campus signage would also be upgraded as part of the Project.

The project would be constructed in phases. The first phase would occur in yard 4 with the placement of nine temporary interim housing units and the second phase would occur in yards 1, 2, and 3. Construction materials and equipment would be staged entirely on-site, in areas where construction is not occurring. Construction of the project would require staging areas in the center of the project site (i.e., in the center of yards 1, 2 and 3). Typical equipment would be used during construction of the Project. This could include, but would not be limited to, a flatbed trailer, trencher, roller, backhoe, front end loader, dump trucks, dumpster, drill rig, concrete pump and mixer, and a truck mounted crane. The location of the truck-mounted crane would likely change periodically, depending on the construction activity occurring at a particular time. The project could require temporary closures of the sidewalks and public rights-of-way adjacent to the project site. Roadway traffic control would be used as needed during construction.

The proposed Buildings C and D as well as the proposed retaining walls would be constructed using drilled piers. Each drilled pier would consist of a two-foot diameter shaft. There would be a total of approximately 36 drilled piers required for the construction of proposed Buildings C and D and the retaining walls. To accommodate the drilled piers, the project would require a range of excavation from 10 feet to a maximum of 100 feet below existing surface elevations depending on the proximity to loose soil, the extent of the Twin Peaks Tunnel, and other factors. To accommodate grading, utility trenches, and other on-site improvements, the project may require excavation up to five feet in selected areas below existing ground surface elevations. The selected areas of excavation would not impose an additional structural load to the Twin Peaks Tunnel. To accommodate building foundations, the project would require excavation of up to four feet below existing ground elevations in selected areas.

The project would require a total of approximately 2,530 cubic yards of soil to be exported, including approximately 1,940 cubic yards during demolition and grading, 240 cubic yards of during trenching, and 350 cubic yards during excavations for building pads and grade beams. In addition, the project would require the demolition and export of approximately 18,800 square feet of asphalt pavement, 700 square feet of concrete, and 2,500 square feet of brick pavers.

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This project has been **approved by** and **will be carried out by** the San Francisco Unified School District.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Licinia Iberri, SFUSD Bond Program Director, 415.439.9271

**Signature:**

**Date:**

11/8/23

**EXEMPT STATUS**

- Ministerial Project (Section 21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Categorically Exempt **Classes:** Class 14 Minor Additions to Schools
- Declared Emergency (Section 21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (Section 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
- Statutory Exemption (Code/Section \_\_\_\_\_)
- The project clearly will not have a significant effect on the environment (15061(b)(3))

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### ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

**Reason Project is Exempt:** This project consists of a total net increase of approximately 7,300 square feet of building space and no net increase in classrooms at the project site. The project would not result in an increase in student enrollment or staffing at the project site. The project is exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15314 – Minor Additions to Schools.

The project meets the conditions for these exemptions as explained below.

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Minor Additions to Schools (Class 14). This categorical exemption consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

**Student Capacity.** The project site currently consists of approximately 122,320 square feet of educational space between two permanent buildings and eight temporary portable classroom units used for classroom and administration spaces, as well as paved surface lots and outdoor recreational spaces. As shown in Table 1, the project would result in a total net increase of approximately 7,300 square feet of building space. The project would not result in an increase in student enrollment or staffing at the project site.

**Table 1, Project Summary**

Proposed Demolition	Proposed Construction	Net Increase
9,650 sf (including 10 classrooms)	16,950 sf <sup>1</sup> (including 10 classrooms)	7,300 sf (0 classrooms)

Source: SFUSD, 2023a

Notes: sf = square feet

- <sup>1.</sup> The proposed construction includes the proposed Buildings C and D as well. The proposed construction also includes outdoor cantilevered decks, stairs, and other nonconditioned exterior spaces.

**Classrooms.** As shown in Table 1, there would be no net increase in classrooms because the project would demolish 10 classrooms and construct 10 classrooms.

There would be nine temporary portable units (including eight classroom units and one bathroom unit), which are referred to by SFUSD as interim housing units or “portables”, located in yard 4 to provide flexible classroom space during construction of the project; these

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temporary portable units would be removed once construction of the project is complete and would not result in a permanent increase in classrooms.

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**Exceptions to Use of a Categorical Exemption:** The project does not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 prohibiting the use of a categorical exemption.

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- a. 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 is limited to just the existing school site, limiting the potential for cumulative impacts to the immediate area. No other projects on the project site or adjacent to the project site would be constructed at the same time as the project (San Francisco Planning 2023a, San Francisco Planning 2023b, SFUSD 2023b). There would not be successive or concurrent projects in the same place over time that could result in similar impacts to the same kinds of resources as the proposed project. Thus, this exception does not apply to the project.

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- b. 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.

There are no known unusual circumstances that would be applicable to the project or project site that would result in a significant effect on the environment. The project is a typical construction project to modernize school facilities, similar to other similar projects that are undertaken periodically as school facilities age and needs change. There is also nothing unusual about the environmental resources on the site. Thus, this exception does not apply to the project.

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- c. 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.

The nearest scenic highway is a segment of Interstate 280 near San Bruno, approximately 8 miles south of the project site (Caltrans 2023). The project site is not within a highway that has been officially designated as a state scenic highway and has no trees, historical buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar visual resources within a highway that has been officially designated as a state scenic highway. Thus, this exception does not apply to the project.

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- d. Hazardous Waste Sites. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

The provisions of Government Code Section 65962.5 are commonly referred to as the "Cortese List." The provisions require the Department of Toxic Substance Control, the State Water Resources Control Board, the California Department of Public Health, and the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery to submit information pertaining to sites associated with solid waste disposal, hazardous waste disposal, leaking underground storage tanks, and/or hazardous material releases to the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency. The project site is not on a currently maintained Cortese List site (DTSC 2023, SWRCB 2023). The project site is also not identified on any other lists compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code. Thus, this exception does not apply to the project.

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- e. Historical Resources. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

CEQA requires a lead agency to consider the effects of a project on historical resources. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 provides specific guidance for determining the significance of impacts on historical resources (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[b] and California Public Resources Code Section 21084.1). Under CEQA, these resources are called "historical resources," whether they are of historic or pre-European contact age. ICF was retained to evaluate the potential historical resources impacts of the project. ICF prepared a Built



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Resources Technical Report (2023a) and Archaeological Resources Technical Memorandum (2023b) for the project.

**West Portal Elementary School.** As stated in the Built Resources Technical Report, a Secretary of the Interior-qualified architectural historian completed an intensive-level survey of the West Portal Elementary School campus on July 18, 2023. A Secretary of the Interior-qualified architectural historian evaluated the campus and its individual buildings for CRHR eligibility. Neither the campus as a whole nor any of its individual buildings appear eligible for listing in the CRHR due to a lack of significant historical associations, architectural merit, and compromised integrity (ICF 2023a). Therefore, the West Portal Elementary School is not considered a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

**Twin Peaks Tunnel.** The Twin Peaks Tunnel was completed in 1917 and is a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA; the tunnel was determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and is listed on the California Register of Historical Resources. The project is anticipated to generate vibration at the Twin Peaks Tunnel that would be below any reasonable damage threshold (ICF 2023a). The Twin Peaks Tunnel would not be demolished, destroyed, altered, or relocated as a result of the project, and there would be no substantial adverse change to the tunnel as a result of vibration during the construction of the project (ICF 2023a). Therefore, there would be no substantial adverse change to the tunnel as a result of activities during operation of the project.

**Undiscovered Archaeological Resources.** As stated in the Archaeological Resources Technical Memorandum, the project site is considered to have low potential for containing intact historic-period archaeological deposits (e.g., artifact-filled features such as wells or privies) that could be considered a historical resource under CEQA. In addition, the project site is considered to have low sensitivity for containing buried pre-contact-period archeological resources that could be considered a historical resource under CEQA. The project would not result in a substantial adverse change to the integrity of previously undiscovered historical resources (ICF 2023b). It is not anticipated that ground disturbance associated with construction of the project would have impacts on historical archaeological resources. No mitigation measures are required or recommended to reduce, minimize, or avoid potential environmental impacts on historical resources associated with the project.

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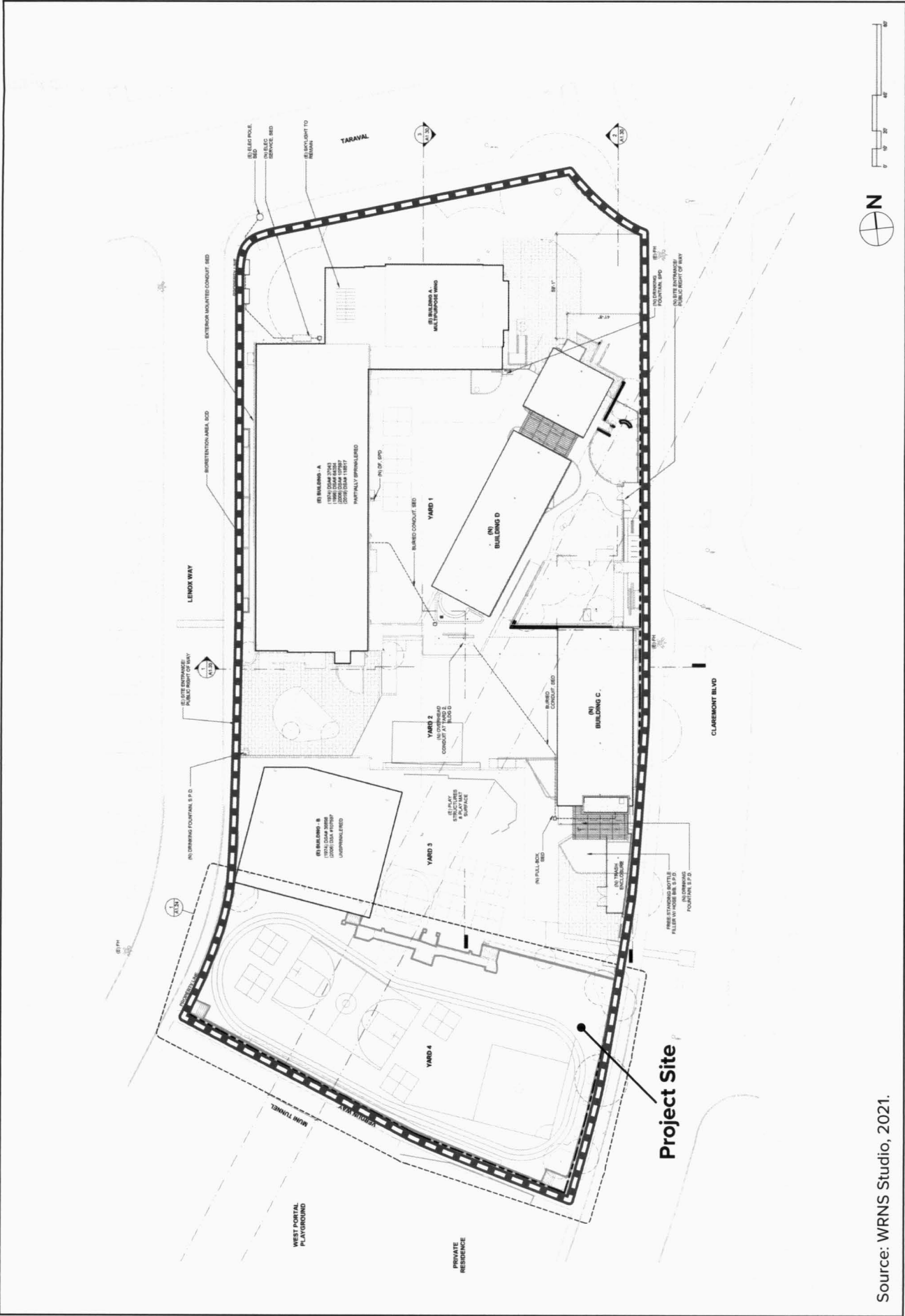


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**Conclusion.** Based on the above, the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource and no mitigation measures are required. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.



**Figure 1**  
**Project Location**  
 West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project



Source: WRNS Studio, 2021.



**Figure 2**  
**Conceptual Site Plan**  
 West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project

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### REFERENCES

- California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2023. Envirostor.  
<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>. Accessed November 2, 2023.
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2023. List of Eligible and Officially Designated State Scenic Highways. Updated August 2019.
- ICF. 2023a. *West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project Archeological Resources Technical Memorandum*. October. (ICF 104740.0.001.) San Francisco, CA. Prepared for San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, CA.
- ICF. 2023b. *West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project Built-Resources Technical Report*. September. (ICF 104740.0.001.) San Francisco, CA. Prepared for San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, CA.
- San Francisco Planning. 2023a. Development Pipeline Map. <https://sfplanninggis.org/pipeline/>. Accessed November 6, 2023.
- San Francisco Planning. 2023b. SF Property Information Map. <https://sfplanninggis.org/pim/>. Accessed November 3, 2023.
- San Francisco Unified School District. 2023a. Review of West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project Final Project Description. September 1.
- San Francisco Unified School District. 2023b. Response to data needs request for the West Portal Elementary School Modernization Project. August.
- San Francisco Unified School District. 2023c. West Portal Elementary School. Available:  
<https://www.sfusd.edu/school/west-portal-elementary-school>. Accessed: August 2, 2023.
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2023. GeoTracker.  
<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>. Accessed November 2, 2023.



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**2023 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE**  
**CASH RECEIPT**  
 DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/23) Previously DFG 753.5a

**Print**  **Finalize&Email**

RECEIPT NUMBER:  
 38-11/09/2023-120  
 STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER (If applicable)

**SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.**

LEAD AGENCY SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE 11/09/2023
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY	DOCUMENT NUMBER 2023-0000073	

PROJECT TITLE  
 WEST PORTAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODERNIZATION PROJECT

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME LICINIA IBERRI	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER (415) 439-9271
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS 135 VAN NESS AVE	CITY SAN FRANCISCO	STATE CA
		ZIP CODE 94102

**PROJECT APPLICANT** (Check appropriate box)

Local Public Agency   
  School District   
  Other Special District   
  State Agency   
  Private Entity

**CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:**

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) \$ 3,839.25 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND) \$ 2,764.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW \$ 1,305.25 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

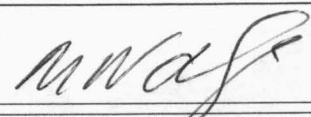
Exempt from fee  
      Notice of Exemption (attach)  
      CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)  
 Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only) \$ 850.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 County documentary handling fee \$ 79.00 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **79.00**  
 Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

Cash   
  Credit   
  Check   
  Other

**TOTAL RECEIVED \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **79.00****

SIGNATURE <b>X</b> 	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE Mariedyne Nadonza Deputy Clerk
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