



# HAWTHORNE PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 16, 2025  
SUBJECT: DR-2023-0021  
FROM: Gregg McClain, Director of Planning  
BY: Maria Majcherek, Senior Planner

## PROJECT INFORMATION

SUMMARY: Design Review Application for a new hotel  
LOCATION: 11410 Menlo Avenue (APNs 4047-006-001 and 002), City of Hawthorne, Los Angeles County  
APPLICANT: Tom Bergerson (Authorized Agent), AO Architects  
OWNER: Zeina Awad, ZS Development

## DESIGN REVIEW

### Introduction

Design Review Application DR-2023-0021 is a request to approve the proposed exterior facade and site design for a new six-story hotel. In accordance with HMC Chapter 17.99, the design review process is intended to reasonably insure and encourage an orderly, attractive, and harmonious appearance of structures, property, and associated facilities, such as signs, landscaping, parking areas and reasonably insure new development does not have an adverse aesthetic, health, safety, or architecturally related negative impact on existing adjoining properties, or the City in general. The Planning Commission was appointed as the design review authority and is tasked to ensure projects meet or exceed the requirements of Chapter 17.99.

### Project Description

As shown on the floor plans and elevations (Attachment 1), the applicant is proposing a new six-story hotel consisting of 57 guestrooms, 57 parking spaces and hotel amenities. The first level consists of the lobby/check-in area, staff work area/offices, restroom, service areas (including storage/utility room, electrical and machine/mechanical rooms) and parking spaces with the remainder of the parking spaces located on the second level. The guestrooms are distributed between levels three through five. The hotel

amenities total approximately 8,999 sq. ft. and are found on the sixth level, consisting of a lounge, hospitality flex space, and fitness room.

Hotel guests and employees will have access to the hotel from the northwestern corner via a driveway on Menlo Ave. The hotel will provide valet only parking service with a dedicated drop-off area with a valet office.

**Guestrooms and Parking**

Floor	Guestrooms	Parking
1	0	11
2	0	46
3	19	0
4	19	0
5	19	0
6	0	0
TOTAL	57	57

**Existing Conditions**

As seen in the aerial photo and street views below, the project site is comprised of two parcels, at the southeast corner of Imperial Hwy. and Menlo Ave. The site is approximately 0.40 acres (17,424 sf). The entirety of the site is currently vacant and has been utilized, on occasion, as vehicle storage.





### General Plan Consistency

The project site is located within the Downtown Hawthorne Specific Plan (DHSP) and specifically, the project site is implemented by the zoning district *Hospitality Commercial (CH)*. The vision of the DHSP is to make Hawthorne Boulevard the City's economic, civic, and cultural downtown hub by encouraging a mix of retail, office, hotel, dining, entertainment, housing and employment.

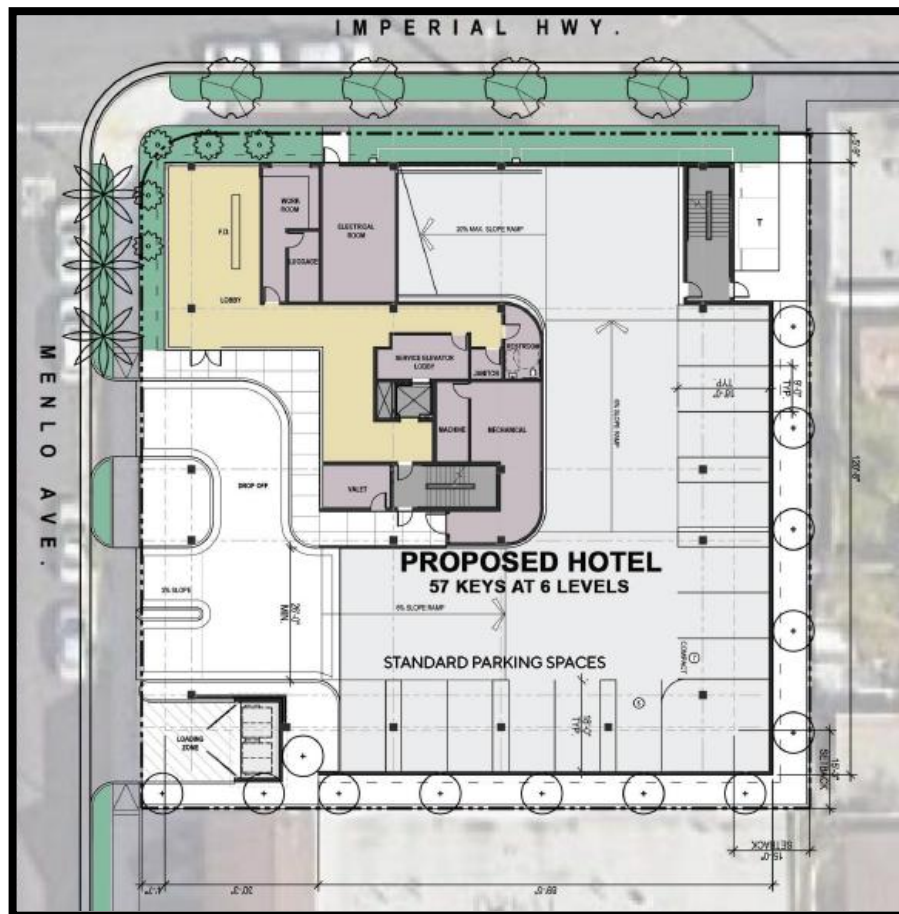
The project is consistent with several goals and policies found within the General Plan Elements, as listed below:

- Land Use Element
  - o Goal 1, Policy 1.4
  - o Goal 2, Policy 2.1
  - o Goal 3, Policy 3.2 and 3.5
- Circulation Element
  - o Goal 1.0, Policy 1.9
- Conservation Element
  - o Goal 2.0, Policy 2.3
- Economic Development Element
  - o Goal 1, Policy 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3
- Noise Element
  - o Goal 3.0, Policy 3.3
- Safety Element
  - o Goal 1, Policy 1.12
  - o Goal 2, Policy 2.1 and 2.8
  - o Goal 3, Policy 3.3
  - o Goal 4, Policy 4.4 and 4.5

### Zoning Ordinance Compliance



The project site is zoned CR-MU (Regional Commercial/Mixed-Use) and is consistent with the DHSP zoning district, which allows for hospitality uses. A Conditional Use Permit is not required, per HMC Chapter 17.25, as it applies only to proposed hotels and motels containing 100+ rooms. Although there is no height limitation within the zone, the project will not be more than six stories, with a maximum of 78 feet, 2 inches in height. The building is set back 15 feet facing the residential neighborhood located to the south and east of the project site, see below:



The project site is located within a half-mile of a major transit stop and per AB 2097, the project is not required to provide parking, but in order to accommodate guests and visitors, the project will provide a total of 57 valet only parking spaces within the project area.

#### Architectural Style – Materials and Colors

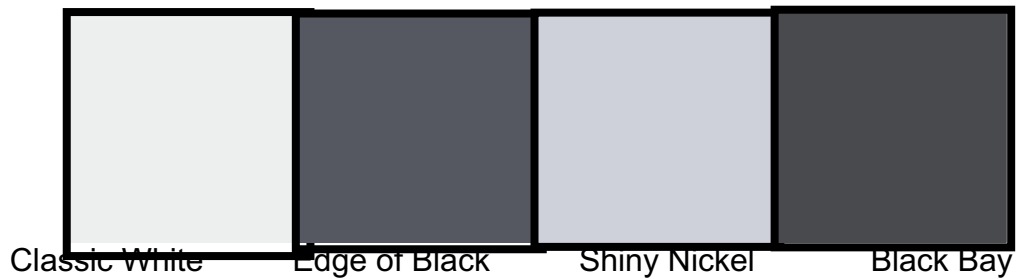
The applicant is proposing a contemporary facade for the building. The architectural style of the hotel is in concert with current hotel designs, which provide a contemporary look with the use of color and materials.



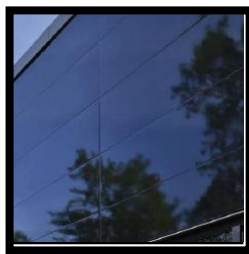


HMC Section 17.99.110—Design Guidelines, specifies architectural styles and materials proposed shall be consistent throughout the project site. The applicant is proposing to utilize a variety of materials (stucco, fiber cement, concrete, metal) and a variety of colors to create the look as seen in the submitted renderings.

Paint/Stucco Colors – Dunn Edwards:



Wall Panels - Miraia:



Onyx



Glacier



Snow

Other:



Perforated Metal



Green Screens



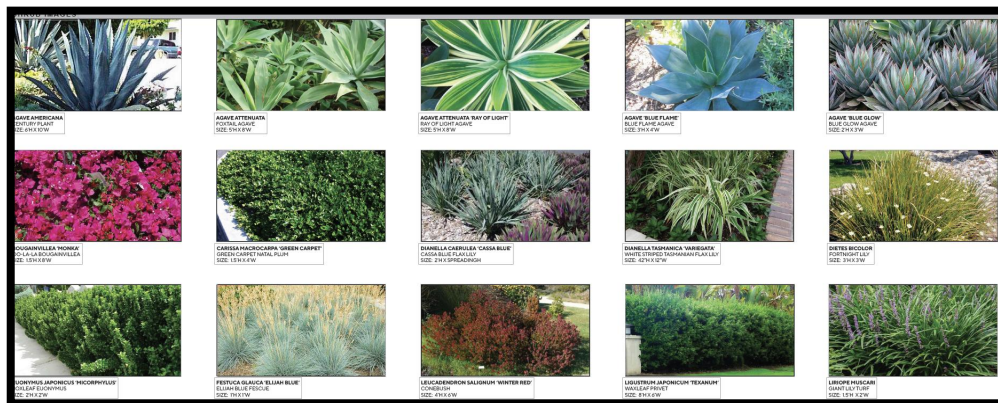
Metal Canopy

The color combinations serve as the required base, accent, and trim colors and meet the requirements of the design review regulations and Section 17.30.010 for commercial buildings.

Landscaping



## Signs

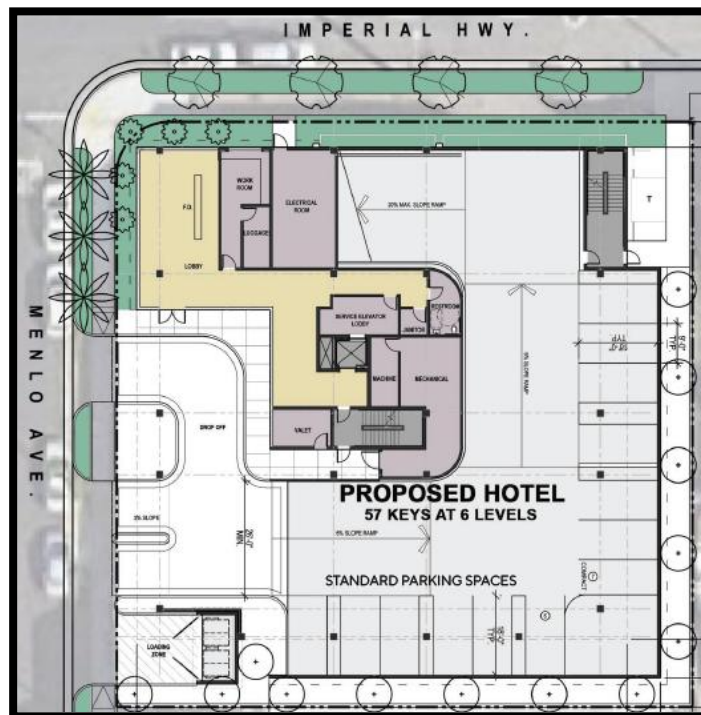


The renderings indicate three wall signs (rendering not the actual sign wording) will be placed on the north and west elevations. Per HMC Section 17.35.110, the hotel is permitted to place signs on the property. Any proposed signs will be evaluated by Staff to ensure they are in harmony with the style of the building and do not exceed the allocated permitted square footage for the property.



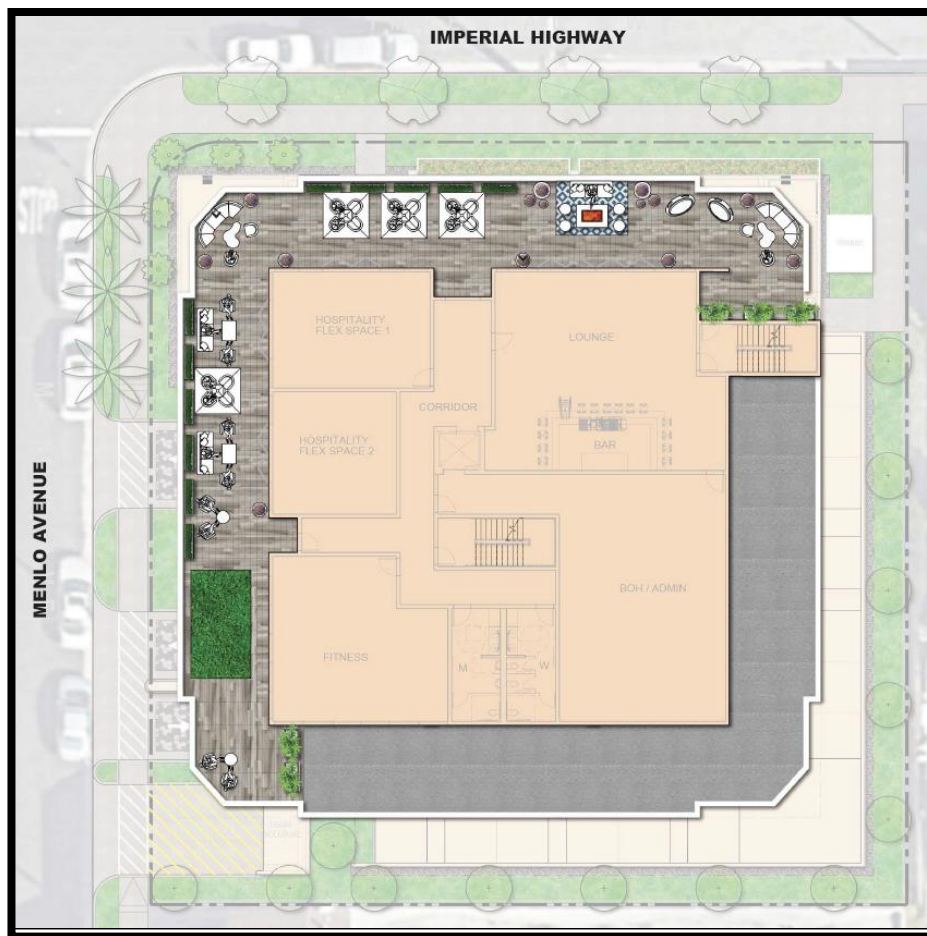
### Additional Information

The site plans and renderings indicate a dedicated vehicle drop-off area and vehicular access to the parking provided from the southwest side of the project site, via one ingress driveway and two egress driveways on Menlo Ave.



The main hotel amenities, consisting of indoor lounge/flex spaces, lounge furniture, patio/dining tables, fire pit, artificial turf, and fitness center, are located on the top floor overlooking Menlo Ave. and Imperial Hwy. Staff recommends a condition of approval to limit its use to between 7:00am and 10:00pm as well as restrictions related to private functions and management supervision. This application is only for the approval of a Design Review and as such, the scope of the project does not include authorization to serve alcohol, so, if desired, that will require a separate discretionary approval. In addition, a special events application is required for events.





### Required Design Review Findings

HMC Chapter 17.99 specifies the Planning Commission must make the following findings prior to granting an approval of a design review application:

*1. The location, size, design and characteristics of the proposed project will be compatible with and will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare of persons residing in or working in or adjacent to the proposed project;*

The proposed project is compatible with the surrounding area and is set back 15 feet to provide separation from the existing neighborhood and diminish impacts. In addition, the parking area is screened with decorative landscape panels to beautify the view from the residential areas. Additionally, the hotel guest amenities, containing fitness center and outdoor lounge spaces, will be limited in hours of operation to diminish noise associated with its use during evening hours. The CR-MU zone is an ideal use for hotels. Hotels are economically viable and a sustainable use for the City. The proposed façade includes updated architectural elements found in contemporary style commercial buildings and will significantly update a location that has been vacant and plagued by blight.

*2. The proposed design is suitable for its purpose, is harmonious with and relates properly to, the surrounding neighborhood, contiguous parcels, and the site itself.*

The proposed design will replace a blighted property by introducing a new hotel with a contemporary building style. The overall design will be of quality that will preserve the integrity of, and upgrade, the existing area.

*3. The design of the proposed project is in accordance with the general plan and all applicable provisions of the zoning ordinance.*

As detailed earlier in this report, Staff reviewed the Hawthorne Municipal Code and the General Plan and, as a result, Staff determined that the project is consistent with the Land Use Element of the General Plan and is in accordance with all applicable provisions of Title 17.

## **Public Hearing Notice**

Public Notice (Attachment 2) was given in accordance with Chapter 17.06 of the HMC. The Planning Department published a public hearing notice in the local paper on June 19, 2025, and mailed notification to property owners within a 300-foot radius of the site.

## **Environmental Analysis**

Michael Baker International analyzed and prepared a CEQA Class 32 Categorical Exemption Report, dated June 2025, with associated studies found in appendices A through D (Attachment 5 and Appendices A through D) and Staff reviewed the proposed development project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. The proposed project is exempt from the requirements of preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration because the project meets the criteria for a Class 32 Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15332, (In-Fill Development Projects) of CEQA. The project is consistent with the applicable general plan designation and all applicable general plan policies as well as with applicable zoning designation and regulations. The proposed development occurs within city limits on a project site of no less than five acres that is completely surrounded by urban uses. The project site has no value as habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species. Finally, there are no features that distinguish the Project from others in the exempt class and thus there are no unusual circumstances and approval will not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality, and the site is adequately serviced by all required utilities and public services.

## **NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

The proposed project meets all the requirements found in CEQA State Guidelines Section 15332 for in-fill development. The site's size and location are appropriate, the project is consistent with the General Plan, there would be no impact to sensitive habitats, all utility services can be provided, and technical studies validated that there would be no significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. As such, adoption of a Notice of Exemption under Class 32 for In-Fill Development is appropriate. Upon Planning Commission action, staff will file the Notice of Exemption (Attachment 3) with the Los Angeles County Clerk's office in compliance with CEQA.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Based on staff's analysis of the issues and the recommended conditions of approval, the proposed hotel: 1) complies with the requirements of the HMC; 2) is compatible with adjacent land uses; and 3) will not result in any negative impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods. Accordingly, the Planning Department recommends that the Planning Commission adopt attached PC Resolution 2025-08 (Attachment 4) approving the CEQA determination and Design Review DR-2023-0021, subject to the conditions included in the resolutions.

#### ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Site Plans
- 2) Public Hearing Notice
- 3) Notice of Exemption
- 4) PC resolution 2025-08 for design review with conditions of approval
- 5) CEQA Class 32 Categorical Exemption Report dated June 2025
- 6) Appendices A through D



Attachment 1  
Site Plans

# Attachment 2 Public Hearing Notice



Herald Publications  
531 Main St., #1160.  
El Segundo, CA 90245  
(310) 322-1830 • Fax (310) 322-2787

## PROOF OF PUBLICATION

(2015.5 C.C.P.)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,  
County of Los Angeles,

I declare, that I am a citizen of the United States and a resident of the County aforesaid; I am over the age of eighteen years, and not a party to or interested in the above-entitled matter. I am the principal clerk responsible for accepting, formatting and publishing legal notices in the **Hawthorne Press Tribune**, a newspaper of general circulation, printed and published weekly in the City of Hawthorne, County of Los Angeles, and which newspaper has been adjudged a newspaper of general circulation by the Superior Court of the County of Los Angeles, State of California, under the date of **July 31, 1959**, Case Number **187530**; that the notice, of which the annexed is a printed copy (set in type not smaller than nonpareil), has been published in each regular and entire issue of said newspaper and not in any supplement thereof on the following dates, to-wit:

**6/19/2025**

All in the year **2025**

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated at **Hawthorne**, California,

this **19** day of **June** **2025**

Signature

Code # HH-28977

This space is for the County Clerk's Filing Stamp

Proof of Publication of:

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING DESIGN REVIEW DR-2023-0021

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Planning Commission of the City of Hawthorne will hold a public hearing to consider the following matter:

**DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION NO. DR-2023-0021:** A request by ZS Development Corp. to approve the proposed site design (exterior architectural building facade, landscaping, etc.) for a new boutique hotel. The project consists of a 47,584 sq. ft., six-level hotel with 57 guest rooms, and 57 parking spaces.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** 11410 Menlo Ave., City of Hawthorne, County of Los Angeles, State of CA

#### MEETING DETAILS:

Day: Wednesday  
Date: July 2, 2025  
Time: 6:00 PM  
Place: City Council Chambers  
4455 West 126th Street  
Hawthorne, CA 90250

Those interested in this item may appear at the meeting and submit oral or written comments. Written information pertaining to this item must be submitted to the Planning and Community Development Department prior to 5:00 PM July 2, 2025, at 4455 West 126th Street, Hawthorne, California 90250 or emailed to mmajcherek@cityofhawthorne.org or planning@cityofhawthorne.org. For additional information, you may contact Maria Majcherek 310-349-2970 or at the email(s) noted above.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** The Menlo Hotel Project (Design Review Application DR-2023-0021) is consistent with the General Plan

and zoning with approval of the discretionary permit. The Project meets the requirements of the Class 32 categorical exemption, as it meets the definition of infill development; would be consistent with the applicable General Plan designation and all applicable General Plan policies as well as with the applicable zoning designation and regulations; occurs within City limits on a Project Site of no more than 5 acres substantially surrounded by urban uses; would be located on a site that has no habitat for endangered, rare, or threatened species; would not result in any significant effects relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality; and could be adequately served by all required utilities and public services. Further, none of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply to the Project. Finally, there are no features that distinguish the Project from others in the exempt class and thus there are no unusual circumstances. Therefore, the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15332 of the State CEQA Guidelines—Class 32, In-Fill Development Projects.

Upon the Planning Commission's action, Staff will file the Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk's office in compliance with CEQA. **PLEASE NOTE** that pursuant to Government Code Section 65009: In an action or proceeding to attack, review, set aside, void, or annul a finding, determination or decision of the Planning Commission or City Council, the issues raised shall be limited to those raised at the public hearing in this notice or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission or City Council at or prior to the public hearing.

Hawthorne Press Tribune Pub. 6/19/25  
HH-28977

# Attachment 3

## Notice of Exemption

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION		
DESIGN REVIEW APPLICATION No. DR-2023-0021		
<b>NOTICE OF EXEMPTION</b>		
<b>TO:</b>	County Clerk/Registrar-Recorder County of Los Angeles Environmental Filings 12400 East Imperial Highway, Room 2001 Norwalk, CA 90650	<b>FROM:</b> Planning Department City of Hawthorne 4455 West 126th St. Hawthorne, CA 90250
<b>Project Title and Location (including county):</b> Menlo-Imperial Hotel Project (Design Review Application No. DR-2023-0021). APNs 4047-006-001 and 4047-006-002, City of Hawthorne, Los Angeles County.		
<b>Project Description:</b> The Project proposes the construction a 47,584 square-foot, five-level hotel with 57 guest rooms, 57 parking spaces, and approximately 8,999 square feet of hotel amenities.		
<b>Name of Public Agency Approving Project:</b> City of Hawthorne		
<b>Name of Person/Agency Carrying Out Project:</b> Applicant: Tom Bergerson (Authorized Agent), AO Architects Property Owner: Zeina Awad, ZS Development		
<b>Exempt Status:</b> (Check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268); <input type="checkbox"/> Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)); <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)); <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c)); <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exemption: Section: <u>15332</u> Class: <u>32</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory Exemption: Section: ____ Class: ____		
<b>Reasons why project is exempt:</b> The Grevillea-Imperial Hotel Project (Design Review Application DR-2023-0021) is consistent with the General Plan and zoning with approval of the discretionary permit. The site is less than five acres, is located within the city limits in an urbanized area surrounded by commercial and residential uses, and is adequately served by utilities and public services. The Project is located within a highly developed area of the City and does not provide habitat suitable for endangered, rare, or threatened species. The Project will not result in any significant impacts relating to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. It will not require significant expansion of utilities and public services beyond existing conditions. The cumulative impact of this project, and the approval of other projects like it in the vicinity, is not expected to have any significant environmental impact. There are no unusual circumstances applicable to the Project site. The Project is not located along any state designated scenic highway nor within any designated hazardous waste site. There are no historical resources which would be impacted. The Project is not subject to any of the exceptions for exemption under Section 15300.2 of CEQA. Upon the Planning Commission's action, Staff will file the Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk's office in compliance with CEQA.		
<b>Lead Agency Contact Person and Phone Number:</b> Maria G. Majcherek, Senior Planner, 310-349-2970		
<b>Prepared and filed by the Hawthorne Planning Department by:</b>		
Signature	Printed Name and Title	Date



Attachment 4  
PC Resolution 2025-08

Attachment 5  
CEQA Class 32 Categorical Exemption Report

Attachment 6  
Appendices A through D