



OC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT

DATE: April 23, 2025

TO: Orange County Planning Commission

FROM: OC Development Services / Planning Division

SUBJECT: Planning Application PA23-0217 for a Use Permit

PROPOSAL: The applicant is requesting a Use Permit from the Planning Commission to convert an existing detached garage into administrative office space and to propose alternative parking standards.

ZONING: R1 "Single-Family Residential"

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: 1B "Suburban Residential"

LOCATION: The project is located at 334 Del Mar Ave, Costa Mesa (APN: 439-092-40) within the Fifth (5th) Supervisorial District

APPLICANT: David Mello, Project Manager

STAFF CONTACT: Ilene Lundfelt, Associate Planner
Phone: (714) 667-9697 E-mail: Ilene.Lundfelt@ocpw.ocgov.com

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S)

OC Development Services/Planning recommends the Planning Commission:

1. Receive the staff report and public testimony as appropriate.
2. Find that the project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Class 3 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structure pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

3. Approve Planning Application PA23-0217 for a Use Permit subject to the attached Findings (Attachment 1) and Conditions of Approval (Attachment 2).

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The project site is located at 334 Del Mar Ave, Costa Mesa and is identified as Parcel 2 of Parcel Map 95-169. The property is zoned R1 “Single-Family Residence,” a zoning district established to provide for the development and maintenance of medium density single-family detached residential neighborhoods. Only those uses that are complementary to, and can exist in harmony with, such a residential neighborhood are permitted. (Attachment 4 – Project Site Aerial.)

The project site is currently developed with a 2,179 square-foot residence that includes a detached 1,200 square-foot garage and a detached 720 square-foot childcare services building.

The existing residence and childcare services building functions as a small community care facility on the project site, operated by New Directions for Women. A small community care facility, as defined by the Zoning Code, means “any facility, place, or building that is maintained and operated to provide non-medical residential care, day treatment, adult day care, or foster family services.” (Zoning Code section 7-9-95.2.) A small community care facility is one which serves six (6) or fewer persons at a time. The existing license for New Directions for Women that is issued by the state allows for the resident to have 1 dependent at the facility. The childcare services building is primarily used as a play/study area for the children residing or visiting the residence.

PROPOSED PROJECT

The applicant is requesting a Use Permit to allow for the conversion of an existing accessory structure (1,200 square-foot detached garage) to be used as administrative offices for New Directions for Women. Under the R1 Zoning District, Administrative Offices is not listed as a permitted or prohibited use; per Zoning Code Table 7-9-31.2, all other uses not specifically enumerated shall be prohibited unless a Use Permit by the Planning Commission is obtained. The applicant is also requesting a Use Permit to allow for alternative off-street parking standards which would facilitate the two required existing covered parking spaces within the garage being removed and replaced with two uncovered surface parking spaces.

SURROUNDING LAND USES

Zoning and existing land uses for the project site and for other surrounding properties beyond are as follows.

DIRECTION	ZONING DISTRICT	EXISTING LAND USE
Project Site	R1 “Single-Family” Residential	Single-Family Dwelling
North	R1 “Single-Family” Residential	Single-Family Dwelling

South	R1 “Single-Family” Residential	Single-Family Dwelling
East	R1 “Single-Family” Residential	Single-Family Dwelling
West	City of Costa Mesa (R2-MD <i>Multiple-Family Residential District, Medium Density</i>)	Multifamily Dwelling

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Below is a table comparing the development standards for the R1 “Single-Family Residential” district with the Applicant’s proposal.

STANDARD	PERMITTED	PROPOSED
Building Site Area	7,200 square feet	11,848.66 square feet
Structural Front Setback	20 feet	Over the property line (existing legal nonconforming)**
Structural Side Setback	5 feet	Right Side: 8 feet 8 inches Left Side: 20 feet
Structural Rear Setback	25 feet	5 feet (Existing)
Off-Street Parking requirement residential uses	2 Covered Parking	2 Uncovered Parking*

STANDARD	PERMITTED	PROPOSED
Off-Street Parking requirement non-residential uses	General administrative and professional, other than medical or dental offices. 1 for each 250 square feet of gross floor area (5 covered or uncovered spaces)	5 Uncovered spaces
Any other uses	All other uses shall be prohibited unless a Use Permit by the Planning Commission is obtained.	Administrative Offices*

*Subject to the Requested Use Permit

**Legal-nonconforming structure, the property dedicated 34 feet of frontage for the future expansion of University Drive. The property was in conformance at the time of building permit issuance.

Use Permit

Currently, the project site is zoned R1 and a small community care facility is an allowed principal permitted use in the R1 zoning district. A Use Permit is being requested to convert the existing detached accessory structure (a 1,200-square-foot detached garage) into administrative office space for support staff of New Directions for Women. Founded in 1977, New Directions for Women provides support for women struggling with addiction. To enhance the quality of treatment services, the applicant proposes to utilize the existing administrative offices at 2607 Willo Lane, located behind the site, to accommodate clinical staff as opposed to administrative staff and relocate administrative offices to the proposed administrative office space at the project site. The proposed administrative office space within the converted garage will house the organization’s executive and administrative staff, totaling 5 staff members.

The proposed administrative office space will include 6 offices, one office to be used as conference room, a bathroom for staff, and donation closet. As proposed, the administrative offices will operate daily from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. It is designed as a low-intensity office use, intended to serve the immediate needs of the surrounding area while minimizing adverse impacts on nearby residential properties. Per condition #8 (Attachment 2), business hours will be restricted to not exceed between the hours of 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM. The hours that are being conditioned are mirrored from the allowed construction hours in residential zones, if in the future the applicant decides to change their hours or if staff members will need to come in before or work past their stated business hours. All administrative office activities will take place entirely within enclosed structures, except for designated parking areas.

The proposed conversion of the existing garage into administrative office space will eliminate the minimum required 2 covered parking for the residential home on the property. While the applicant initially considered adding covered parking in the proposed parking area shown on the plans (Attachment 5), space constraints would have necessitated a reduction in the required off-street parking. The applicant also initially considered adding a carport in the uncovered parking area proposed on the plans adjacent to University Drive (Attachment 5), but a review with the traffic engineering division determined that an encroachment permit would not be supported for a structure like a carport within the future right-of-way.

In 1995, the County of Orange acquired 34 feet of the property's frontage for the expansion of University Drive as part of the new right-of-way. The applicants are proposing to meet the 7 off-street parking spaces requirement (2 covered and 5 uncovered/covered) by proposing 7 uncovered parking spaces on the property; of which 1 will be a handicap space, as required by the Building and Safety Division. The parking spaces are all located on-site but they are all not contiguous. Due to the presence of this 34-foot right of way dedication, the applicant is unable to replace the two required covered parking spaces and is instead proposing two uncovered surface parking spaces. Following multiple design reviews and efforts to address the covered parking shortfall, staff supports the requested Use Permit per section 7-9-70.9 to allow for two uncovered parking spaces, as opposed to the normally required covered parking spaces. Because the applicant's request involves a proposed alternative design to meet off-street parking requirements, the findings normally required by Zoning Code section 7-9-70.9 to a reduction in off-street parking requirements do not apply.

REFERRAL FOR COMMENT AND PUBLIC NOTICE

A copy of the planning application and the proposed site plan were distributed for review and comment to appropriate County divisions. Staff has reviewed all comments received, and where appropriate, has addressed the comments through recommended Conditions of Approval (Attachment 2). Public notices were mailed to all owners of record within 300 feet of the project site, posted at the project site, published in a local newspaper, and posted at the posting kiosk at the County Administration buildings located in Santa Ana, at least ten days prior to this public hearing, as required by established public hearing posting procedures.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

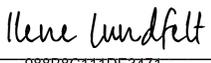
The proposed project is Categorical Exempt (Class 3) from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15303, because it provides for the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

CONCLUSION

Staff has closely reviewed the applicant's request for a use permit and found it to be compatible with adjacent use and development. Staff recommends Planning Commission's approval of Planning

Application PA23-0217 for a Use Permit subject to attached Findings (Attachment 1) and Conditions of Approval (Attachment 2).

Submitted by:

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Ilene Lundfelt, Associate Planner
OC Development Services/Planning

Concurred by:

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Cindy Salazar, Planning Division Manager
OC Development Services/Planning

ATTACHMENTS

1. Recommended Findings
2. Recommended Conditions of Approval
3. Applicant's Letter of Justification
4. Project Site Aerial
5. Site Plans

APPEAL PROCEDURE

Any interested person may appeal the decision of the Planning Commission on this permit to the Board of Supervisor within 15 calendar days of the decision upon submittal of required documents filed at the County Service Center, 601 N. Ross Street, Santa Ana. If you challenge the action taken on this proposal in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this report, or in written correspondence delivered to OC Development Services/Planning Division.