

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION DETERMINATION PHYSICS-GEOLOGY BUILDING FIFTH FLOOR ADDITION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The UC Davis campus (the campus) proposes to add approximately 4,721 gross square feet (gsf) (4,527 assignable square feet [asf]) to the fifth floor of the existing Physics-Geology Building. The addition would provide office, dry lab workroom, and computer lab space for the UC Davis Physics Department.

The existing Physics-Geology Building is located in the central campus, east of the Crocker Nuclear Laboratory, north of the Physical Plant, west of Parking Lot 3, and south of Roessler Hall. The north wing of the building is a five-story structure with only 60 percent of the fifth floor built out. A previous structural feasibility study confirmed that a light steel-framed structure could be constructed on the remaining fifth floor area (Cole/Yee/Schubert 2000).

The Physics Department is currently operating under severe space deficit constraints. The proposed fifth floor addition would provide needed space to alleviate current constraints and accommodate planned growth. The project would accommodate 13 new staff and 12 new graduate students. In addition, approximately five existing staff would be relocated to the new space, serving to decompress existing offices.

The addition would include approximately 4,527 asf comprising the following uses:

- Four multiple occupancy workspace offices for Physics graduate students, post doctorates, and faculty (totaling approximately 1,451 asf)
- Four dry lab workrooms (totaling approximately 2,556 asf) including space for Physics research teams
- Two general computer laboratories (totaling approximately 520 asf) including computers for student use

The portion of the fifth floor that is not built out is currently a roof deck area. Mechanical equipment mounted on this roof area (including six vane-axial roof exhaust fans) would be relocated to the roof area above the existing fifth floor as part of the proposed project. An abandoned cooling tower located on the roof above the existing fifth floor would be replaced with a single 9,000 cubic feet per minute air handling unit. Two new 3-pole circuit breakers would be installed in the building to serve increased electrical loads. In addition, utility conduits would be extended within the building to serve the addition.

Construction of the proposed project is expected to begin in April 2002 and extend through March 2003. Construction staging and contractor parking would be located on the lower driveway/parking/loading area accessing the southern side of the building and/or on an unpaved area to the west of the building. The location of construction staging and contractor parking would be decided with input from building occupants.

Building occupants would be notified about potential disturbance prior to construction of the proposed project. Vibration-sensitive research is located on the Physics-Geology building's first floor and basement level. Construction is not expected to significantly disturb this research.

PROJECT DETERMINATION

In compliance with the State Guidelines and University of California procedures for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), UC Davis reviewed the proposed project. The proposed project was determined generally exempt from CEQA under Title 14 California Administrative Code Section 15061 (b)(3), and categorically exempt under Section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities).

The proposed project is covered by the general rule that CEQA does not apply to activities where there is no possibility that a significant effect on the environment could occur (Section 15061). The proposed project would add approximately 4,968 gsf to the fifth floor of the existing Physics-Geology building. No component of the project would have a significant impact on the environment.

The project is categorically exempt under Section 15301 because it would add less than 10,000 square feet (approximately 4,721 gsf) to an existing structure. The project would be located in an area where all public services and facilities are available to allow for maximum development permissible in the 1994 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). In addition, the project would not be located in an environmentally sensitive area.

None of the exceptions to categorical exemptions presented in Section 15300.2 apply to the proposed project. The proposed Physics-Geology Building is located in an already developed urban area, and the proposed project would not be located in an area where an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern is designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by a federal, state, or local agency (Section 15300.2 [a]). No significant cumulative impacts associated with successive projects of the same type in the same place over time are anticipated (Section 15300.2 [b]). There are no unusual circumstances present that produce a reasonable possibility that the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment (Section 15300.2 [c]). In addition, the project would not occur near a scenic highway (Section 15300.2 [d]), a hazardous waste site (Section 15300.2 [e]), nor any historical resources (15300.2 [f]).

In conclusion, it is determined that the Physics-Geology Building Fifth Floor Addition is exempt from CEQA and no further environmental review is necessary. The proposed project incorporates all relevant mitigation measures from the 1994 LRDP Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 94022005), as updated and revised by the 1997 Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Replacement Project EIR (State Clearinghouse Nos. 95123027 and 96072024), 1997-98 Major Capital Improvement Projects Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) (State Clearinghouse No. 97122016), Center for the Arts Performance Hall and South Entry Roadway and Parking Improvements Tiered Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (State Clearinghouse No. 98092016), USDA Western Human Nutrition Research Center Tiered Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (State Clearinghouse No. 99092060), and the Veterinary Medicine Laboratory and Equine Athletic Performance Laboratory Facilities Focused Tiered EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2000022057).

Having reviewed and considered the environmental analysis presented above, pursuant to authority delegated from the Board of Regents of the University of California, I hereby approve the construction and operation of the Physics-Geology Building Fifth Floor Addition.

Signed: _____ Date: December 6, 2001

John A. Meyer
Vice Chancellor - Resource Management and Planning
University of California
One Shields Avenue
376 Mrak Hall
Davis, CA 95616

References:

Cole/Yee/Schubert & Associates Structural Engineers, Incorporated. 2000. Physics I Building B Evaluation for Proposed 5th Floor Addition. February 23, 2000.