



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

PLANNING DIVISION

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**ADMINISTRATIVE ZONING MEMORANDUM**  
**Item No. 3.2**

**DATE:** April 24, 2024

**TO:** Aaron Hollister, Deputy Zoning Administrator

**FROM:** Hang Zhou, Associate Planner

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation for Zoning Permit No. PL-2023-045 at 420 Escuela Avenue

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On March 16, 2023, Carlos Zazueta of Zazueta Tree Specialists filed a request on behalf of Avalon Apartment for a Heritage Tree Removal Permit to remove eight (8) Heritage Trees due to their close proximity to building foundations, constituting a hazard to the existing building; and a determination that the project is categorically exempt pursuant to 15304 of the CEQA Guidelines ("Minor Alterations to Land"). This project is located on the southeast corner of California Street and Escuela Ave in the R3-1 (Multiple-Family Residential) district.

A public notice has been sent out which inadvertently includes a Development Review Permit in the project description. After further evaluation staff has determined that a Development Review Permit is unnecessary. Consequently, it has been omitted from the findings report.

The applicant provided a structural evaluation report prepared by a licensed civil engineer that concludes that the roots of these trees undermine the stability of the building's foundation by seeking moisture and simultaneously extracting moisture from the soil below. This condition can lead to soil shrinkage and foundation settlement, ultimately resulting in more cracks in the foundation. The City arborist concurs with the recommendation for tree removal as the tree roots are likely to continue spreading horizontally in the clay soil and pruning the tree roots will likely destabilize the trees and increase the potential of tree failure.

City staff has completed the review of the application and is recommending approval based on the findings and conditions of approval in the attached report.

This item will be discussed at an Administrative Zoning public hearing on April 24, 2024 where a final action will be made.

Public notices were sent to all property owners within 750 feet of the project site.

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Copies of all associated project documents are available for review at the Community Development Department, 500 Castro Street, First Floor, Mountain View, CA, 94041 or may be made available by contacting the project planner.

Attachments:   Draft Findings Report  
                      Plan Set  
                      Arborist Report  
                      Structural Evaluation Report