

Attachment A

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DETAILED DISCUSSION

Project Description and Setting

The project involves the demolition of a 4,952 square foot single family dwelling and construction of a 6,092 square foot single family dwelling and associated site improvements on the parcel located at 39140 Highway 1 in the Big Sur area of unincorporated Monterey County. The proposed development also includes: removal of an existing propane tank, stone retaining wall, and wood fence; installation of a new gravel path, underground propane tank, stone steps, green roof, roof mounted solar panels, patio, spa, grill, and wood plank boardwalk; replacement utility lines and septic system; and resurfacing the driveway with asphalt and the auto court with pavers to withstand the weight of a fire truck. The proposed materials and colors consist of the natural colors and elements found in the surrounding area. Building coverage would decrease to 1.4 percent. Associated grading would involve approximately 120 cubic yards of cut and 30 cubic yards of fill (net export of 90 cubic yards). No trees will be removed as a result of project implementation. Vegetation removal only consists of non-native and invasive plants. The project would also involve the amendment to a Conservation and Scenic Easement deed and corresponding map, to site the new residence further away from the public viewshed.

The existing main dwelling was constructed in 1959 and the detached guesthouse and garage was constructed in 1967. The existing guesthouse and garage were remodeled in 2022, as approved by Design Approval No. DA210104 and Construction Permit No. 21CP01018. The proposed scope of work would not alter the guesthouse or garage. The project site is located within the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan (LUP) area. The 7.7-acre subject parcel includes a limited buildable area as the existing development and driveway are bounded on all sides by a scenic easement.

Project Analysis

Big Sur Critical Viewshed and Design

Pursuant to Monterey County Code (MCC) Chapter 20.44, the subject parcel and surrounding area are designated as a Design Control Zoning District (“D” zoning overlay), which regulates the location, size, configuration, materials, and colors of structures and fences to assure the protection of the public viewshed and neighborhood character. The proposed exterior colors and materials include stone veneer, brown cement plaster, bronze metal doors and windows membrane, a vegetated roof, and metal roof fascia. The proposed exterior colors and finishes would blend with the surrounding environment. The proposed residence is also consistent with the size and scale of nearby residences, and the proposed bulk and mass would not contrast with the neighborhood character. The proposed exterior colors and finishes would blend with the surrounding environment and minimize impacts to the Critical Viewshed.

Staff conducted a site visit on April 21, 2022 and confirmed that the existing development and proposed single family dwelling would not be visible from Highway 1 when traveling south. However, when travelling north on Highway 1, portions of the residence’s south and eastern façades would be entirely visible for approximately 1.2 miles (Hurricane Point turnout to Bixby Creek Bridge north turnout). The roof of the existing and proposed residence would be visible from the cliff edge of the Bixby Creek Bridge turn out.

The site is therefore subject to Critical Viewshed policies in the LUP (Policy 3.2.3). The project complies with relevant policies, as demonstrated below.

- 3.2.3.A.1 – The project would not involve development on a new parcel.
- 3.2.3.A.2 – Structures are clustered on site to limit intrusion into the Critical Viewshed.
- 3.2.3.A.3 – The proposed single-family residence would be constructed within an existing building footprint and the height of the proposed structure would be lower than the existing structure.
- 3.2.3.A.4 – The project would not involve the construction of new roads.
- 3.2.3.A.5 – The project would comply with the Critical Viewshed policy and would not be environmentally inappropriate for development.
- 3.2.3.7 – The project involves construction of a replacement single-family dwelling and would not increase the visibility of the structure.

In sum, 953 square feet of the existing residence’s south and eastern façade is visible from Highway 1, whereas implementation of the proposed project would result in 893 square feet of its façade being visible from Highway 1 (a 60 square foot improvement). Below describes the modifications which have reduced the project’s visibility:

1. A 2-foot 3-inch reduction in height. The proposed flat, green roof will have a height of 19 feet 2 inches above average natural grade, whereas the current three pyramidal-roofed design has a ridge height of approximately 21 feet 5.
2. Siting the residence 10.5 feet west. Siting the residence further west will thereby reduce the proposed residence’s visibility from Highway 1 by essentially making it smaller due to a further distance.
3. Narrower design. The proposed residence is approximately 34.5 feet wide whereas the existing residence is 40 feet wide.
4. Colors and materials. proposed exterior color and material finishes are designed to allow the structure to blend into the natural environment and include metal fascia; natural teak soffits; stone veneer; metal windows, doors and railings; cement plaster; wood trim; and a green roof.



NOTE: SOUTH BRIDGE TURNOUT VIEW IS ENLARGED TO GRAPHICALLY REPRESENT CHANGES IN VIEWSHED

EXISTING STRUCTURE
VISIBLE WITHIN CRITICAL VIEWSHED: 953 S.F.



NOTE: SOUTH BRIDGE TURNOUT RENDERING IS ENLARGED TO GRAPHICALLY REPRESENT CHANGES IN VIEWSHED

PROPOSED STRUCTURE
VISIBLE WITHIN CRITICAL VIEWSHED: 893 S.F.

Biological Resources

The policies in Chapter 3.3 of the LUP are directed at maintaining, protecting, and where possible enhancing sensitive habitats. As designed, conditioned, and mitigated, the project is consistent with applicable policies regarding avoidance and minimization of habitat disruption. According to the biological report prepared for the project, the project site contains three sensitive plant species (Monterey Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja latifolia*; California Rare Plant Rank [CRPR] 4.3), Ocean bluff milkvetch (*Astragalus nuttallii*; CRPR 4.2), and Little sur manzanita (*Arctostaphylos edmundsii*; CRPR 1B.2), and two sensitive wildlife species

(Monterey dusky footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes luciana*) and peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). The Monarch butterfly, a candidate for federal listing under the Endangered Species Act, has potential to occur within the subject parcel, though none were observed overwintering on Monterey cypress trees outside of the project site. Federally protected southern sea otters and harbor seals, marine mammals protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, have potential to occur offshore, outside of the project site. The Project Biologist confirmed via phone on April 5, 2023, that the Western Bumble Bee (WBB) has the potential to occupy the site given the project site's vegetation and litter debris. As of September 30, 2022, the WBB is a candidate species under California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and as such, receives the same legal protection afforded to an endangered or threatened species.

Direct impacts to sensitive plant or wildlife species from construction of the residence is unlikely due to siting the replacement residence almost entirely within a previously disturbed area (previous residence footprint and hardscape).

Temporary construction-related indirect impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species generally include staging activities, trampling, dust generation, pollutant discharges, soil erosion and runoff, noise, vibration, lighting, increased human activity, and accumulation of trash and garbage, which can attract introduced terrestrial, native terrestrial and avian predators (i.e., corvids, canids, raccoons and striped skunks). Additionally, pollutant discharges, soil erosion and runoff that could occur during construction on the project site has the potential to result in indirect impacts to the sensitive wildlife species that occur in the aquatic marine habitat south and west and downslope of the project site. Mitigation Measures are proposed to reduce potentially significant indirect impacts to biological resources to a level of less than significant.

The project has been designed to avoid impacts to the coastal bluff and the adjacent aquatic marine habitat. Implementation of Mitigation Measure No. 2 (Condition No. 12) would require the Applicant/Owner to protect native habitat values located beyond the existing development area with protective fencing. Adherence to this Mitigation Measure will ensure that no debris, soil, silt, sand, oil, petroleum products, cement, concrete, or washings thereof enter, or are placed where they may be washed by rainfall or runoff, onto the adjacent bluff or into the Pacific Ocean.

Mitigation Measure No. 3 (Condition No. 13) requires the Project Biologist to conduct pre-construction and pre-invasive species removal surveys for special status species, specifically Monterey Indian paintbrush, Seacliff buckwheat, Ocean bluff milkvetch and Smith's blue butterflies. Should a special status species be identified, mitigation protocols established in the Northern Coastal Bluff Scrub Restoration Plan shall be adhered to (Mitigation Measures No. 4; Condition No. 14). The Northern Coastal Bluff Scrub Restoration Plan has the primary goal of restoring all areas currently occupied by introduced landscape plantings around the development area, including proposed septic leach field areas inundated with exotic species and any disturbed soils resulting from staging, trenching, or other ground disturbance development impacts on the bluff parcel. To accommodate proposed infrastructure and driveway construction impacts, 36 Seacliff buckwheat plants, 19 Monterey Indian paintbrush plants and 1 Ocean bluff milkvetch plant would be removed. The Northern Coastal Bluff Scrub Restoration Plan requires replanting of these species on a 2:1 ratio. The Northern Coastal Bluff Scrub Restoration Plan shall work in conjunction with Mitigation Measure No. 5 (Exotic Species Control).

Mitigation Measure Nos. 6, 7, and 9 require pre-construction surveys to determine if Western bumble bees, monarch butterflies, or any avian species occupy the project site. Although

Monterey Cypress are typically considered a rare, threatened or engaged species in California, on the subject parcel, they are out of natural range for the species. While this species may provide overwintering habitat for the Monarch butterfly, the offspring of this species are adversely impacting the sensitive northern coastal bluff scrub habitat through pioneering seedlings that are encroaching within the habitat. Mitigation Measure No. 7 ensures management of germinating cypress saplings within the identified sensitive habitat areas by removing them when the presence is noted.

An existing culvert on the east side of Highway 1 appears to divert roadway drainage under the highway and onto the property. Observations by the project engineer and biologist along the cliff directly east of the main residence indicate the outflow from the culvert may have contributed to slope failure in this area as the cliff-face soils are scarred and show recent evidence of slope failure. Additionally, there is a driveway stormwater collection basin and culvert that routes runoff under the driveway and appears to exit west at the cliff edge in a thicket of iceplant. These collective drainage elements are proposed to be disbanded. New drainage trenching, retention pits, and piping are proposed to be installed in pre-developed areas or within areas occupied by invasive iceplant. To ensure that site drainage is thoroughly analyzed to prevent slope failure and reduce potential erosion and sedimentation that could impact sensitive habitat along the bluff and shoreline, Mitigation Measure No. 8 requires preparation of an exit flow analysis and drainage plan. Adherence to this mitigation measure will require that exit flows of stormwater be routed in a manner that will not impact sensitive biological resources and deposits the runoff onto bedrock or rock outcrops to prevent slope erosion of the erosive cliff face that found on the parcel.

Coastal Bluff

The project includes application for development within 50 feet of a coastal bluff. The location of the proposed development better achieves the goals and objectives of the Big Sur Coast LUP by positioning the replacement residence further away from the crown or top edge of the bluff.

The subject property is located on the seaward edge of a coastal terrace on the seaward side of Highway 1 between Rocky Creek and Bixby Creek. The coastal terrace slopes gently seaward and is located at approximately 200 feet above sea level. According to the County's GIS database, the project site is located within an area of moderate erosion hazard and low landslide risk. The presence of bedrock below surface soils makes the potential for soil liquefaction low. Per the geotechnical and geological report (LIB220101), development of the project site would not create a geologic hazard or diminish the stability of the area. The reports identified and concluded that the site is underlain with metamorphic sandstone bedrock, the coastal terrace is stable, the historical bluff recession rate is slow, and excavation for new structures would not adversely impact or undermine the coastal bluff.

The proposed project entails grading and excavation of approximately 120 cubic yards of cut and 30 cubic yards of fill. During the construction permit phase, the project would be required to comply with Monterey County Code, Chapter 16.12, Erosion Control, which sets forth required provisions for preparation of erosion control plans, runoff control, land clearing, and winter operations; and establishes procedures for administering those provisions to minimize erosion during construction. In summary, overall site development would be subject to current regulations regarding control of erosion and drainage and would be required to address post-construction requirements and runoff reduction.

Per the geological report, the site has encountered approximately 2 feet of natural bluff retreat over the last 47 years (1972 to 2019), or about half an inch per year. Bluff recession of the bedrock at the property will likely be very slow and sporadic at the property in the future. Based

on this information, the site may encounter an additional 3 feet of natural bluff retreat over the lifespan of the project; however, the proposed development and existing guesthouse will be located in an area of the parcel not threatened by the projected amount of bluff recession, and the project site is well above the projected elevation of sea level rise. As designed and located, the project would comply with applicable policies of LUP Chapter 3.7, Hazardous Areas. Specifically, consistent with LUP Policy 3.7.3.A.9, the reports demonstrate that the site would be stable for development.

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