



County of Monterey Planning Commission

Item No.2

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Agenda Item No. 2

Legistar File Number: PC 23-086

October 25, 2023

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Matter Type: Planning Item

PLN220307 - CARMEL RESERVE LLC

Public Hearing continued from September 13, 2023 to consider approving the entrance design for the One Carmel Subdivision including a 75 square foot sign, 400 square foot guard kiosk with entry gate, 3,200 linear feet of stone and wood fencing, 340 linear feet of retaining walls, exterior lighting, and landscaping.

Project Location: 2.5 miles east of Highway 1 on the north side of Carmel Valley Road, between Canada Way & Valley Greens Drive, Mid Carmel Valley area (Assessor's Parcel Numbers 015-171-013-000, 015-171-014-000, & 015-171-018-000) Carmel Valley Master Plan.

Proposed CEQA Action: Consider an addendum together with certified Final Revised Environmental Impact Report (Final REIR) for the September Ranch Subdivision Project.

Proposed CEQA Action: Consider the certified Final Revised Environmental Impact Report and Addendum (SCH#1995083033) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15162 and 15164.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Monterey County Planning Commission:

1. Consider the certified Final Revised Environmental Impact Report and Addendum (SCH#1995083033); and
2. Approve a Design Approval to allow entrance design for the One Carmel Subdivision including a 75 square foot sign, 400 square foot guard kiosk with entry gate, 3,200 linear feet of stone and wood fencing, 340 linear feet of retaining walls, exterior lighting, and landscaping (PLN110173-AMD1, Condition No. 28).

A draft resolution is attached for consideration (**Exhibit A**).

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Property Owner: Carmel Reserve LLC

Agent: Wei Huang

APNs: 015-171-013-000, 015-171-014-000, & 015-171-018-000

Zoning: Low Density Residential and Rural Density Residential, Design Control

Parcel Sizes: Parcel A, 12.30 acres; Parcel B, 6.28 acres, Parcel E, 19.84 acres

Plan Area: Carmel Valley Master Plan

Flagged and Staked: Yes

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

On October 25, 2022, the owners of the September Ranch subdivision, ONE Carmel, applied to HCD - Planning for a Design Approval for the entrance design. Staff reviewed the application

materials and made recommendations for minor changes to the application submittal. The Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee also made recommendations for fewer trees. The application was revised, and the submittal sufficiently meets Carmel Valley Master Plan (CVMP) Policies CV1.1 (development shall follow a rural architectural theme with design review) and CV-1.9 (structures proposed in open grassland areas that would be highly visible from Carmel Valley Road shall be minimized in number and be clustered near existing natural or man-made vertical features) as well as other CVMP Policies.

The Design Approval came before the Planning Commission for consent hearing on September 13, 2023. The item was pulled for discussion and the Planning Commission requested the retaining wall with decorative stone veneer in which the guard kiosk is proposed to be recessed into an artificial landform be staked and flagged and the project be more fully presented by staff and the applicant to illustrate how the entrance design would both integrate in the overall frontage improvements and meet the CVMP Policies on viewshed from Carmel Valley Road. The project review item was continued by the Planning Commission to allow these steps to be taken.

This entrance design project does not modify the frontage improvements approved by the Board (Resolution 21-123) which included modifications to the driveway, bus stop, and intersection along the frontage of the subdivision. Resolution No. 23-123 made PLN110173-AMD1 the operative permit for the subdivision. Related sheets from the approved improvement plans are shown in **Exhibit D**. The owners sought the amendment to opt for an intersection design that is the preference of both the applicant and the Carmel Valley Road Advisory Committee (CVRAC) and serve the transportation needs of the subdivision as well. The Board entitled the plan of the driveway, bus stop location and footprint, entrance intersection and drainage as well as roadway improvements. In accordance with CVMP Policy CV-2.11, there is left turn channelization and tapering at the access point on Carmel Valley Road for safe ingress and egress. Improvement plans for a safe transit stop were provided to County and MST for review and approval prior to Phase 1 final map acceptance. The bus stop meets MST standards and specifications. Pursuant to Condition of Approval number 77, PWSP006 - Transit Stop of PLN110173-AMD1, the applicant shall provide an improved pull-out in each direction, and onsite signage at the site entrance showing the transit schedule and map. In accordance with the Drainage & Flood Control Systems Agreement for the subdivision (Document No. 2020076785, Condition No. 121), two stormwater control ponds are planned for the parcels adjacent to Carmel Valley Road that include the planned entrance. The area intended for the artificial landform is shown in the approved subdivision improvement plans with a note to place excess material for entry feature, 8,900 +/- cubic yards fill (see **Exhibit D**).

The entrance design was staked and flagged in late September and HCD staff performed a viewshed impact assessment on September 26, 2023. Photographs from the assessment can be found in **Exhibit C**. Staff reviewed the potential viewshed impacts that the gradual slope of the landscaped area which peaks at 12 feet, six inches in height of the retaining wall and recessed guard kiosk (facing the gate, not Carmel Valley Road) might create. Staff did not find the viewshed to be negatively impacted. The length of the artificial landform is approximately 230 feet, while the length of lower meadow that is open and pastoral is over 600 feet on the western side and approximately 530 feet on the eastern side of the entrance; this equates to roughly 20% of the meadow being altered from flat. The landscape is already planned to be altered with two stormwater control ponds, as mentioned

above. The slope and guard kiosk were not found to cause a significant visual impact to the Carmel Valley Road viewshed due to the minimal amount of landform change both in extent and the total height of 12 feet, 6 inches retaining wall plus some landscape plants on top which typically grow to approximately two to four feet in height per the Landscape Plan. The Landscape Architect has not selected specific planting but is sensitive to the need to show preference for shorter plants in that area (staff communication, September 27, 2023).

Staff reviewed the project for consistency with CVMP Policies CV-1.1 (development shall follow a rural architectural theme with design review), CV-1.9 (Structures proposed in open grassland areas that would be highly visible from Carmel Valley Road shall be minimized in number and be clustered near existing natural or man-made vertical features), CV-3.1 - 100 foot setback for structures, CV-3.2, public vistas are provided, CV-3.3, development including buildings, fences, signs, landscaping are not significantly blocking the viewshed or the hills. Project plans and renderings presented in **Exhibit A** show the rustic character of Carmel Valley Road corridor is largely preserved while an upscale subdivision is developed (Policy CV-1.1). This is achieved because natural materials and colors are proposed for the entrance and fencing. They include beige Carmel stone veneer on the retaining wall, grey dry stacked stone and dark brown wood fencing, and beige granite hardscaping. The structures proposed in open grassland areas are minimized by the inclusion of the artificial landform (Policy CV-1.9). There is a 100-foot setback from Carmel Valley Road for structures (retaining wall along the artificial landform above three feet in height) (Policy CV-3.1). As described above, the proposed sloped landform will alter approximately 20% of the meadow vista length but the height will not impinge on the hillside vista because the slope gradually increases (Policies CV-3.2 and CV-3.3).

The approved subdivision project included the expectation of an entrance gate and guard kiosk and the final decision on the design was to be provided by the Planning Commission, as memorialized in Condition number 28, which specifies the Planning Commission shall make “final approval” of design of several elements of the subdivision improvements, including the fencing, gate and gate house and that the structures “shall follow a rural design & maintain compatible design consistency with the surroundings in keeping with the old farmhouse & equestrian center.”

Normally, no discretionary decision is required for Landscaping. In this case, there is a large landform proposed to be raised in the meadow between the equestrian center and the approved driveway and the landform terminates with a twelve-foot tall retaining wall into which the guard kiosk is proposed for construction. In this respect, the landscaping is reviewed as part of the design.

Note that this Design Approval is for construction on parcels within the Phase 1 area of the subdivision. The subdivision Phase 1 Final Map was approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 8, 2020; the related developments are for the aesthetic portion of designs already shown on amended Phase 1 improvement plans pursuant to PLN110173-AMD1. (A subsequent Phase 2 buildout would involve the development of the remaining approximate third of the area on west side of the property.)

LUAC REVIEW:

The project was referred to the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) for review and a recommendation on June 20, 2023. The LUAC recommended approval with minor changes to the landscaping 5-0 with 1 member absent (**Exhibit B**). The LUAC suggested that fewer trees be included in the landscaping design. The Landscaping Plan portion of the application was revised and resubmitted to meet the request.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

Public Resources Code Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines section 15162(a) state that when an EIR has been certified, no subsequent or supplemental EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in light of the whole record, that, either 1) substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR; 2) substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the project is being undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR; or 3) new information not known at the time the EIR was certified becomes available that shows the project may have a significant environmental effect or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.

Aesthetic design of the subdivision entrance was considered in general terms in the analysis of environmental impacts previously discussed and addressed in the Final REIR (SCH# 1995083033) certified for the September Ranch Subdivision Project Combined Development Permit (PLN110173/PLN050001). Condition of approval number 28 was adopted with the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan and the wording of the condition narrows the potential design of fencing, gate and gate house such that the structures “follow a rural design & maintain compatible design consistency with the surroundings in keeping with the old farmhouse & equestrian center.” Hence, no further environmental analysis is required beyond the REIR and Addendum pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15162.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The following agencies and HCD groups have reviewed the project, have comments, and/or have recommended conditions:

Environmental Health Bureau
Environmental Services
Engineering Services on behalf of Public Works
Monterey County Regional Fire District

Prepared by: Mary Israel, Supervising Planner
Reviewed by: Anna Ginette Quenga, AICP, Principal Planner
Approved by: Melanie Beretti, AICP, Acting Chief of Planning
Approved by: Craig Spencer, Acting Director of HCD

The following attachments on file with HCD-Planning:

- Exhibit A - Draft Resolution including:
- Draft Conditions of Approval

- Site Plan
- Landscaping Plan
- Colors and Materials
- Guard Kiosk Elevations
- Renderings of the project as viewed from Carmel Valley Road

Exhibit B - Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee June 20, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Exhibit C - Site Photographs

Exhibit D - Related sheets from approved improvement plans, Board Resolution 21-123

Exhibit E - Vicinity Map

cc: Front Counter Copy; Planning Commission; Monterey County Regional Fire District; Environmental Health Bureau; HCD-Engineering Services Works; HCD-Environmental Services; Anna Ginette Quenga, AICP, Principal Planner; Mary Israel, Project Planner; Wei Huang, Agent; Carmel Reserve LLC, Owner; John Heyl, Interested Party; Laborers International Union of North America (Lozeau Drury LLP); The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); LandWatch; Planning File PLN220307