County of Monterey
Planning Commission

Agenda Item No.3

Legistar File Number: PC 26-078

Item No.3

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

August 26, 2026

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Current Status: Agenda Ready
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PLN210139 - CHINAR LLC
Public hearing to consider the construction of a 3,230 square foot single-family dwelling with an attached 1,045 square foot garage, and associated site improvements, including 815 square feet of development on slopes in excess of 25%.
Project Location: 1905 San Juan Road, Aromas
Proposed CEQA action: Find the project Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15303, and there are no exceptions under Section 15300.2

RECOMMENDATION:
It is recommended that the Planning Commission adopt a resolution to:

1) Find that the project qualifies as a Class 3 Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15303, and there are no exceptions pursuant to section 15300.2; and
2) Approve a Combined Development Permit consisting of:
    a. An Administrative Permit and Design Approval to allow the construction of a 3,230 square foot single-family dwelling with an attached 1,045 square foot garage, and associated site improvements; and
    b. A Use Permit to allow 815 square feet of development on slopes greater than 25%.

The attached draft resolution includes findings and evidence for consideration (**Exhibit A**), subject to 10 conditions of approval.

PROJECT INFORMATION:
Agent: Ignacio Anaya
Property Owner: CHINAR LLC
APN: 267-041-021-000
Parcel Size: 2.503 acres
Zoning: Low Density Residential, 2.5 acres per unit, and a Visual Sensitivity Overlay, or "LDR/2.5-VS"
Plan Area: North County Area Plan
Flagged and Staked: yes
Project Planner: Jordan Evans-Polockow, Assistant Planner
Evans-PolockowJ@countyofmonterey.gov, 831-755-7065

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:
The property is located at 1905 San Juan Road, Aromas (Assessor's Parcel Number 267-041-021-000), North County Area Plan. The parcel is zoned Low Density Residential, 2.5 acres

per unit, and a Visual Sensitivity Overlay or "LDR/2.5-VS". The proposed project involves the construction of a 3,230 square foot single-family dwelling with a 1,045 square foot attached garage, with 45 square feet of porches and 414 square feet of decks, and associated site improvements, including the construction of a driveway and the installation of a septic system and leech field. The proposed single-family dwellings' entrance sidewalk and septic system leech field involves 815 square feet of development on slopes in excess of 25%, which is an allowed use subject to the granting of a Use Permit. Implementation of the project would require 100 cubic yards of stripping and 200 cubic yards of excavation. Potable water will be provided to the parcel by the Danbom/Mayr Water Mutual #1 with California Water Mutual Company, and the wastewater would be managed by the proposed Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS).

Land Use
Based on staff's review, the project is consistent with applicable goals and policies in the 2010 General Plan, policies in the North County Area Plan, and Title 21 Zoning Ordinance.

The Low Density Residential with 2.5 acres per unit and a Visual Sensitivity Overlay, allows for the establishment of the first single-family dwelling as a principally allowed use subject to the granting of a Design Approval pursuant to Title 21 section 21.44. However, Title 21 section 21.46.030.D.2 requires the granting of an Administrative Permit and Design Approval for development within the VS districts that do not have the potential to create a substantial adverse visual impact when viewed from a common public viewing area. A Use Permit is also required to allow development on slopes in excess of 25% in accordance with Title 21 section 21.64.230 and General Plan Policy OS-3.5.2.

Pursuant to Title 21 section 21.14.060.C, development within this district shall meet the required setbacks. The required setbacks in the LDR zoning district are 30 feet (front), 10 percent (side), and 20 feet (rear), unless otherwise indicated on a final map. The subject property have three front setbacks along the 30-foot road and public utility access easements on the west, east, and southern portions of the property, the Final Map of the Minor Subdivision illustrates a building envelope with setbacks of 30 feet (eastern front), 30 feet (southern front), 50 feet (south front), and 30 feet (side/rear). The proposed single-family dwelling and attached garage will have setbacks of 37 feet 10 inches (front), above 37 feet 10 inches (south front), 38 feet 6 inches (east front), over 300 feet (west front), and 67 feet (rear/side). The LDR zoning district allows a maximum height of 30 feet for main structures, and the proposed single-family dwelling would have a height of 27 feet and 5 inches above average natural grade.

The subject property has an allowable building site coverage of 25%, and as proposed, the project will have a building lot coverage of 3.075% (or 3,348.44 square feet). Therefore, the property complies with the required site development standards based on the applicable zoning district.

Design Review & Visual Resources
Residences within the vicinity of the project site generally trend with rural architectural styles, ranging from farmhouse to ranch-style to classical-style homes. The proposed single-family dwelling would have a modern classical architectural style with rural elements, stone veneer, off-white stucco exterior, charcoal horizontal exterior siding and trim, and a mixture of dark gray metal and composition roofing with plywood sheathing. The property is surrounded by mature Coast live oaks and other native

vegetation, along with nearby residences. The proposed exterior finishes would not detract from the surrounding natural environment and would be consistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood character. As conditioned, exterior lighting will be consistent with the Design Guidelines for Exterior Lighting adopted by the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Title 21 Section 21.63.020.

The project is located within a Visual Sensitivity Zoning District. Figure 15 of the North County Area Plan (Scenic Highway Corridors and Visual Sensitivity Map) indicates the subject property as being in an area designated as sensitive. The subject property is not along a scenic highway corridor or in a critical viewshed. As confirmed on a site visit, intervening vegetation and existing development block the project site's visibility from common public viewing areas, such as San Juan Road. Accordingly, the proposed residence and accessory structures would not create any adverse visual impacts, and therefore only an Administrative Permit and Design Approval are required in this case pursuant to Chapter 21.46. Therefore, as proposed and conditioned, the project assures protection of the public viewshed and visual integrity.

Slopes in Excess of 25%
Pursuant to General Plan Policy OS-3.5, development on slopes exceeding 25 percent is prohibited, unless a Use Permit is obtained and the appropriate authority finds that 1) there are no feasible alternatives that would allow development to occur on slopes less than 25 percent; and/or 2) the project better achieves the goals, policies, and objectives of the County of Monterey General Plan and applicable area plan. In this case, staff believes that both findings can be made.

The parcel is subject to a specific building envelope that is imposed by the original subdivision map that was recorded in January 2008. Sporadic areas along and within the western, southern, northern, and eastern portions of the property contain slopes in excess of 25%, as shown on County GIS records and the attached slope map (**Exhibit A, Attachment 2 - Sheet C1**). This leaves irregular building areas within the building envelope that don't contain steeper slopes. The proposed single-family dwelling itself is not sited on steeper slopes, but the proposed single-family dwellings' entrance sidewalk, driveway, and septic system leach field involve development on slopes in excess of 25%, with only 815 square feet of grading occurring on slopes.

While there is a gap between the slopes in excess of 25% along the property line that could be utilized for the driveway that would provide more direct access to the proposed single-family dwelling, the grade of that driveway would be greater than 15%, which would exceed the maximum grade of a driveway set by the fire department. The proposed single-family dwelling is currently positioned in the most open area within the building envelope. Shifting this development would result in substantial impacts to protected trees and steeper slopes. Over half of the area on the Final Map that is designated as the septic system envelope is on slopes greater than 25%. Further, that location is on the opposite side of the lot compared to the proposed residence location. Thus, the leach fields are proposed closer to the residence. Due to the size of the required leach fields, location of steeper slopes and native trees, there is no other location that would allow the leach fields to occur on less steep slopes. Given the existing constraints (slopes, protected trees, & building envelope), the development of the proposed septic system leech field is best suited in its current location. The project includes approximately 815 square feet of development on slopes of 25% or more.

In this case, the proposed project involves development on slopes to also further reduce impacts on other resources. The proposed sidewalk, driveway, and septic system leech field to be developed on slopes prevents not only the relocation of the proposed habitable structures from impacting slopes, but also prevents the removal of protected Oak trees and negative impacts to environmentally sensitive habitat (ESHA), further aligning with North County Area Plan Policy NC-3.4. By preserving these forest resources, the proposed development will be screened with vegetation and protect visibility of the development within the public viewshed. The single-family dwelling is a principally allowed use under LDR zoning, has been designed to contour the natural slope and topography of the land to prevent being located on slopes greater than 25%.

Accordingly, the project better meets the resource protection goals and policies of the 2010 General Plan and North County Area Plan, including OS-1.2 (preserving areas with visual sensitivity), and NC-3-1 (prevention of public view disruption).

Tree Protection
Additionally, despite no tree removal being proposed, the standard Tree and Root Protection Condition No. 4 will be implemented based on the Arborists' recommendation to protect the trunks of the eight Coast Live Oaks closest to the western side of the proposed single-family dwelling with tree wells and revisions to the contouring of the fill that is to be put in around the trunks of said tree. The Arborist also recommends monitoring of the retained Oaks during and after construction for a minimum period of three years.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
The following agencies have reviewed the project, have comments, and/or have recommended conditions:

Environmental Health Bureau
HCD-Engineering Services
HCD-Environmental Services
Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District

Prepared by: Jordan Evans-Polockow, Assistant Planner, (831)783-7065
Reviewed by: Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner
Approved by: Melanie Beretti, AICP, Chief of Planning

The following attachments are on file with the HCD:
Exhibit A - Draft Resolution including:

- Conditions of Approval
- Site Plans

Exhibit B - Vicinity Map

cc: Front Counter Copy; Planning Commission; Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District (fire); HCD-Environmental Services; HCD - Engineering Services; Environmental Health Bureau; Jordan Evans-Polockow, Project Planner; Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner; CHINAR LLC, Property Owner; Ignacio Anaya, Agent; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); Laborers International

Union of North America (Lozeau Drury LLP); Christina McGinnis, Keep Big Sur Wild; LandWatch; Project File PLN210139.

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