



County of Monterey

Item No.

Board Report

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

Legistar File Number: RES 25-132

August 26, 2025

Introduced: 8/18/2025

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: BoS Resolution

PLN240077 - SIGNAL HILL LLC

Continued from July 8, 2025 - Public hearing to consider three appeals, one by Samuel Reeves, one by the Alliance of Monterey Area Preservationists (AMAP), and one by Massy Mehdipour, the applicant, from the April 30, 2025 Planning Commission decision approving the construction of an approximately 8,290 square foot two-story single family dwelling with an attached three car garage with light brown stucco exterior, black metal clad wood accents, and a gravel roof, an approximately 180 square foot stairwell, and approximately 695 square feet of terrace (identified as the "Reduced Project," Alternative 6 in the Final EIR) and the relocation of three Monterey Cypress trees.

Project Location: 1170 Signal Hill Road, Pebble Beach, Del Monte Forest Area Land Use Plan, Coastal Zone

Proposed CEQA Action: Consider a previously certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) (SCH#2015021054) for the Signal Hill LLC project and find the project consistent with the FEIR.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution (Attachment B) to:

- a) Partially uphold the appeals by Samuel Reeves and AMAP, from the April 30, 2025 Planning Commission decision approving the Design Approval;
- b) Uphold the appeal by Massy Mehdipour, Applicant, from the April 30, 2025 Planning Commission decision approving the Design Approval with Condition No. 10;
- c) Consider the previously certified Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) (SCH#2015021054) for the Signal Hill LLC project, and find that the Proposed Project does not warrant an addendum pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15162; and
- d) Approve the Project as revised and as presented in Attachment B:
 - 1) Granting a Design Approval for construction of an approximately 7,690 square foot two-story single-family dwelling inclusive of a two-car garage with colors and materials of light brown stucco body and black metal clad wood accents and a gravel roof that fulfills the requirements of the "Reduced Project," Alternative 6 of the FEIR;
 - 2) Approving a Coastal Development Permit to allow the relocation of two Cypress trees;
 - 3) Approving a variance for structural development in the front setback; and
 - 4) Amending Condition No. 23 of Resolution No. 23-237 to increase the conservation and scenic easement for the project to a 1.67-acre area.

A separate resolution (**Attachment A**) has been prepared as directed by the Board of Supervisors at the July 8, 2025 hearing on this matter. The resolution attached as Attachment A would partially uphold the Reeves and AMAP appeals, uphold the Mehdipour appeal, and require the applicant to redesign to be more similar in size to the Connell House.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Property Owner: Massy Mehdipour

Agent: None

APN: 008-261-007-000

Zoning: Low Density Residential, 1.5 acres per unit with Design Control Overlay (Coastal Zone)

Flagged and Staked: Yes

SUMMARY:

On July 8, 2025, the Board of Supervisors considered three appeals of the Planning Commission's decision on the new house design and continued the item to August 26, 2025. Staff was asked to return with a resolution that reiterates the Board's prior direction from 2023 (Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 23-237). At the July 8, 2025 hearing, comments surrounding the motion clarified that the expectation was that the new house be of a similar size and height to the Connell House. The proposal considered on July 8, 2025 was much larger than the Connell house by floor area, height, and it was not entirely within the footprint of the Connell House. Specific direction to Applicant included:

- Reduce square footage to align more closely to the Connell House floor area of approximately 4,125 square feet, rather than the original Signal Hill project (Proposed Project of the EIR);
- Reduce height to 22 feet above average natural grade, and
- Eliminate development that extends beyond the hardscape of the former Connell house, including 2nd floor terraces over sand dune areas.

Pursuant to Board direction, staff has prepared a draft Resolution (**Attachment A**), which partially upholds the Reeves and AMAP appeals, upholds the Mehdipour appeal, and requires the applicant to return to the Board with a redesign to meet the direction described above.

After the July 8, 2025 Board hearing, the applicant submitted a revised design with a request that this revised design be considered by the Board as an alternative to the motion of intent approved on July 8 (described above). The revised design eliminates portions of the prior proposal that were not within the footprint of the Connell House and slightly reduces the size of the new home. The new design is within the footprint of the former Connell House. The floor area of the proposed two-story structure is proposed at 7,690 square feet, reduced from the 8,290 square feet considered on July 8, but still larger than the Connell House. The proposed maximum height remains 25.5 feet, which is the same as the prior design but is approximately 3.5 feet taller than the Connell House.

Staff is recommending approval of the revised design based on an understanding of the Board Direction that the new house comply with the description of Alternative 6 of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the project. Alternative 6 was the "Reduced Project Alternative" that the EIR described as allowing the demolition of the Connell House and new construction of a house that

would stay within the developed footprint of the demolished house and be reduced in height to avoid “ridgeline development.” The alternative also included restoration of 1.67 acres of the site to native due habitat. The redesigned project is within the footprint of the Connell House and proposed at a height that avoids ridgeline development (**Attachment B**).

Given the way that the 2023 decision was worded, and comments made at the July 8, 2025 Board hearing, it is clear there was an expectation that the new house footprint, height, and size would be compared with the footprint, height and size of the Connell House. This expectation makes sense in the context of the 2023 Board Direction which was heavily focused on the demolition of the historic Connell House and given that the decision mentions both “Alternative 6 of the EIR” and “construction of a new single-family residence of similar size, in concept, as the existing residence.” Although the new design is within the footprint and below the ridgeline height, the revised design is still taller and larger than the Connell House. For this reason, staff has included some reference to the proposed redesign in the Disapproval Resolution, Attachment A.

DISCUSSION:

The staff report prepared for the July 8, 2025 hearing provides much of the background and analysis. This staff report does not reiterate all the information previously provided and instead refers to that staff report except as updated and modified to reflect the Board direction at the July 8, 2025 hearing and the revised design submitted by the applicant between July 8 and August 26, 2025.

Board Direction:

The design that was reviewed in the July 8, 2025 Board hearing was for an 8,290 square foot, two-story single family dwelling that was 25.5 feet tall (at the tallest points). The proposed design was not entirely within the previous footprint of the Connell House. At that hearing, the Applicant asked that the Board allow an area of the footprint to be left undeveloped (the rear/northwest corner of the Connell House) in exchange for adding area in the front of the house that fills in the former courtyard of the U-shaped Connell House footprint. The height and footprint are both key issues of the appeals from AMAP and Reeves. After reviewing the proposed design, the Board directed staff to prepare a resolution reiterating the 2023 decision.

The Board decision in June of 2023 (Resolution No. 23-237 (**Attachment G**) stated, in relevant part: “4) Approve a Coastal Development Permit for the “Reduced Project” (Alternative 6 of the Final EIR) consisting of:

- a) Coastal Administrative Permit to allow the demolition of an existing 4,124 square foot single family residence;
- b) Coastal Administrative Permit for the construction of a new single-family residence of similar size, in concept, as the existing residence;
- c) Coastal Development Permit to allow development within 100 feet of environmentally sensitive habitat;
- d) Coastal Development Permit for development on slopes exceeding 30 percent;
- e) Coastal Development Permit for development within 750 feet of a known archaeological resources;”

The description of Alternative 6 of the EIR describes a new residence that is in the “footprint” of the former Connell House and at a height that does not result in “ridgeline development.” Subjection b of the action describes “construction of a new single-family residence of a similar size as the existing residence.”

The Applicant is requesting that the Board focus on the description of Alternative 6 in the EIR and the statements made in the hearing about the “footprint” and “ridgeline.” In contrast, the Appellants have pointed to the language about the new residence being of a similar size as the existing home. The July 8, 2025 Board Direction recognized that the design presented at that time was both not in the footprint of the Connell House (as required in Alternative 6) and was not similar in size and height to the Connell House (subsection b of the 2023 action, as shown above).

Revised Design:

Since the July 8, 2025 hearing, Applicant caused a modified design to be prepared for consideration by the Board that removed the previous proposal of “swapped” areas for development. By removing an exterior stairway (180 square feet) and eliminating proposed development in the previous patio (approximately 600 square feet), the proposed new development would be reduced by approximately 780 square feet. The modified Plans are attached to a second draft resolution (**Attachment B**). Staff reviewed the design as modified and found that it is the same height as the previous proposal (and that it continues to meet Alternative 6’s requirement to keep height sufficiently low to avoid ridgeline impacts). The proposed dwelling meets Alternative 6’s reduced project requirements when compared to the original project analyzed in the EIR, as it is an approximately 7,690 square foot two-story single-family dwelling inclusive of a two-car garage, while the original proposal was to construct a 11,933 square foot three-story dwelling inclusion of a three car garage.

The revised design is within the footprint of the Connell House and as revised, a swap of area or extension of the new home footprint beyond the Connell House footprint is no longer proposed. The revised design is consistent with the description of Alternative 6 of the EIR but the house is still more than 3,000 square feet larger and 3 feet taller than the Connell House.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA):

Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21083 and CEQA Guidelines sections 15081, 15161, and 15200 et seq., the County of Monterey as Lead Agency prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the original project, which consisted of (1) demolition of the existing 4,125-square-foot, two-story, single-family residence, and removal of the approximately 2,825 square feet of asphalt driveway and concrete patios; (2) construction of a new 11,933-square-foot, two-story (over basement), single-family residence including an attached three-car garage, a 986 square foot entry court, 106 square feet of uncovered terraces, approximately 2,600 square feet of covered terraces, new driveway, and approximately 1,700 cubic yards of grading (1,200 cubic yards cut/500 cubic yards fill); (3) restoration of approximately 1.67 acres to native dune habitat within 750 feet of a known archaeological resource; and (4) the removal of three Cypress trees. In addition to the original project scope, this EIR also considered and analyzed eight alternative project scopes, as required by CEQA Guidelines section 15162.6. The Draft EIR identified potentially significant impacts to Aesthetics, Archaeological Resources, Air Quality and Greenhouse Gases, Biological Resources, Geology, Seismicity, and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Historic Resources, Hydrology and

Water Quality, and Noise.

The EIR proposed mitigation measures to reduce all but one of the identified impacts to a level of less than significant. Demolition of the existing historic house was identified as a potentially significant impact that could not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. The Draft EIR was circulated for public review and comment from August 24 to October 12, 2018 (SCH No. 2015021054). Per Resolution Nos. 23-236 and 23-237, the Board of Supervisors certified this EIR and adopted a written Statement of Overriding Considerations relative to the project's unavoidable impact on a historical resource. As described above, the Board of Supervisors also approved, in concept, Final EIR Alternative 6. The Board's direction to redesign a project to conform with Alternative 6 is consistent with the FEIR.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15162, when an EIR has been certified, no subsequent EIR or negative declaration shall be prepared for the project unless the agency determines that substantial changes are proposed, or substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken. Here, no new information has been presented, no new circumstances exist, and no substantial changes are proposed that warrant further environmental review. The EIR contemplated residential development of the lot, including removal of trees and up to 10,008 square feet of structural and hardscape improvements. The EIR contemplated eight alternatives and one "no project" alternative to the original project and evaluated them separately for potential impacts. The Board's direction for redesign is intended to satisfy the parameters of Alternative 6. Should the Board elect to permit the Design Approval that the Applicant has brought forward in Attachment B, the redesign shall satisfy the parameters of Alternative 6. Evidence to support this finding is that Alternative 6 required a "reduced project" that was smaller in size than the original project and did not create a ridgeline effect (which was anticipated to result from construction of the original, full sized project). The proposed project design meets the parameters of Alternative 6 in that building coverage is 3,558 square feet less (original project was 8,058), floor area ratio percentage is reduced from 12.6% to 8.15%, and no ridgeline effect will be created because the height of the house as designed will be 4.5 feet less than the original project design (measured from Average Natural Grade) and staff confirmed no ridgeline effect during a visual impact assessment when the site was fully staked and flagged.

There has been no change in the project alternative and no indication during review of the project, or in testimony from the public, that circumstances have changed since the EIR was certified. Circumstances of the conditions of the sand dune environment of Signal Hill, the historical status of the Connell House, and the conditions of the Signal Hill neighborhood's buildout within the context of the Pebble Beach planned residential and recreational uses remain the same. Therefore, none of the conditions described in Guidelines section 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent EIR or negative declaration have occurred.

LUAC:

The proposed project was reviewed by the Del Monte Forest Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) on August 1, 2024. The LUAC voted unanimously (8 yeas, 0 noes) to recommend the project as proposed (**Attachment H**).

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

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

Environmental Health Bureau
Cypress Fire Protection District
County Counsel
California Coastal Commission

FINANCING:

Funding for staff time associated with this project is included in the FY2025-26 Adopted Budget within HCD Unit 8543 Appropriation Unit HCD002.

Prepared by: Mary Israel, Supervising Planner, (831)755-5183 israelm@countyofmonterey.gov
Reviewed and approved by: Craig Spencer, HCD Director

The following attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board:

Attachment A - Draft Resolution requiring redesign

Attachment B - Draft Resolution approving proposed redesign

- Draft Conditions of Approval
- Plans, Elevations and 3D Rendering

Attachment C - Appeals

- C1 - Samuel Reeves, c/o Anthony Lombardo, Esquire
- C2 - Alliance of Monterey Area Preservations (AMAP)
- C3 - Massy Mehdipour appeal of condition 10
- C4 - Updated responses to the three appeals (for August 8, 2025 hearing)

Attachment D - An Overlay of Connell House footprint and the newly proposed Design Approval footprint

Attachment E - Planning Commission Resolution No. 25-012

Attachment F - Board Resolution Certifying the Final EIR (#23-236)

- F1 - link to Final EIR on the County HCD website

Attachment G - Board Resolution Approving Alternative 6 (#23-237)

Attachment H - LUAC minutes for August 1, 2024

cc: Front Counter Copy; California Coastal Commission; Craig Spencer, HCD Director, Mary Israel, Project Planner; Engineering Services; Environmental Health Bureau; Environmental Services; Cypress Fire Protection District; Massy Mehdipour, Applicant/Owner and Appellant; Anthony Lombardo, agent for Appellant; Mimi Sheridan/AMAP, Appellant; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); Laborers International Union of North America (Lozeau Drury LLP); LandWatch (Director); INTERESTED PARTIES; Project File PLN240077