



County of Monterey Zoning Administrator

Item No.3

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

Legistar File Number: ZA 24-054

November 14, 2024

Introduced: 11/8/2024

Current Status: Agenda Ready

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Matter Type: Zoning Administrator

PLN210091 - SANTA ROSA MOTEL CO.

Public hearing to consider demolition and rebuild of nine structures and site renovations to the existing Portofino Inn and removal of two protected oak trees (one landmark).

Project Location: 10 Country Club Way, Carmel Valley, Carmel Valley Master Plan

Proposed CEQA action: Find the project Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15302 of the CEQA Guidelines

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Zoning Administrator approve a Resolution allowing the following:

- 1) Find the project categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15302 of the CEQA Guidelines and there are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2 of the CEQA guidelines; and
- 2) An Administrative Permit and Design Approval to allow facility renovations to the Portofino Inn consisting of the demolition & rebuild of nine existing buildings: Building A, 1,709 sq. ft. caretaker residence proposed to be reduced by demolition of a 578 sq. ft. attached shed, with a new building entry adding 57 sq. ft. and an approximately 480 sq. ft. portochere; Building B, 2,411 sq. ft. barn proposed to be rebuilt as 2,444 sq. ft. and with a new 120 sq. ft. covered patio; Building C, 5,974 sq. ft. clubhouse proposed to be rebuilt as 6,006 sq. ft., associated new covered patio approximately 455 sq. ft.; Building D, 410 sq. ft. pool house proposed to be rebuilt in same footprint as a guest exercise room with a basement; existing cabins E1.A (1,720 sq. ft.), E1.B (1,720 sq. ft.), E2.A (1,149 sq. ft.), E2.B (1,149 sq. ft.) and E3 (577 sq. ft.) full remodel; demolition/relocation of the pool from 2,322 sq. ft. to 420 sq. ft. and spa from 60 sq. ft. to 301 sq. ft. and construction of new patios. Project includes onsite wastewater treatment system upgrade, rehabilitation of flatwork (walkways, parking areas & hardscape), landscape rehabilitation, and removal of two Oak trees: one single trunk (7.5 inches diameter) and one landmark tree with a cluster of trunks (10, 5, 10, 14.5, 5, 8, and 12 inches diameter).

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Agent: Anna Bornstein, EMC Planning Group

Property Owner: Santa Rosa Motel Co.

APN: 187-252-011-000

Parcel Size: 6.7 acres

Zoning: Visitor Serving/Professional Office Zoning District with Design Control, Site Plan Review and Residential Allocation District overlays (VO-D-S-RAZ)

Plan Area: Carmel Valley Master Plan

Flagged and Staked: Yes

Planner: Mary Israel, 755-5183, israelm@countyofmonterey.gov

SUMMARY:

The project is located on and accessed from Country Club Drive in Carmel Valley, approximately 0.6 miles northwest of Carmel Valley Village. The property boundary of the subject parcel fronts Carmel Valley Road for approximately 0.24 miles. The parcel is zoned VO-D-S-RAZ and is subject to the policies of the 2010 General Plan, Carmel Valley Master Plan (CVMP) and regulations of the County of Monterey Inland Zoning Ordinance (Title 21).

The proposed project includes an Administrative Permit and Design Approval to allow facility renovations to the existing development previously known as the Portofino Inn, not to increase density or intensity, consisting of the extensive remodel (including selective demolition and rebuild of portions of structures) of nine existing buildings.

Project also includes the removal of two Oak trees: one single trunk (7.5 inches diameter) and one landmark tree with a cluster of trunks (10, 5, 10, 14.5, 5, 8, and 12 inches diameter), onsite wastewater treatment system upgrade, driveway and an upper parking area resurfacing.

The discussion below provides a summary of the project scope, siting and design, tree removal, water use and public comment. All issues identified have been resolved and the project is consistent with the policies and regulations mentioned above.

DISCUSSION:

The subject property is permitted to operate as a visitor serving resort for over 70 years. Since the time of establishment, the facility has fallen into a state of disrepair. As such, the applicant proposes a major remodel of the facility buildings and grounds. **Exhibit A** includes a sheet showing the proposed changes to the overall site (Plans, Sheet AS101C). The following structures are proposed for rehabilitation:

- Building A, 1,709 sq. ft. caretaker residence proposed to be reduced by demolition of a 578 sq. ft. attached shed, with a new building entry adding 57 sq. ft. and an approximately 480 sq. ft. portochere;
- Building B, 2,411 sq. ft. barn proposed to be rebuilt as 2,444 sq. ft. and with a new approximately 120 sq. ft. covered patio;
- Building C, 5,974 sq. ft. clubhouse proposed to be rebuilt as 6,006 sq. ft., associated new covered patio approximately 455 sq. ft.;
- Building D, 410 sq. ft. pool house proposed to be rebuilt at same size as a guest exercise room with a basement;
- Existing cabins E1.A (1,720 sq. ft.), E1.B (1,720 sq. ft.), E2.A (1,149 sq. ft.), E2.B

(1,149 sq. ft.) and E3 (577 sq. ft.); and

- Demolition/relocation of the pool from 2,322 sq. ft. to 420 sq. ft. and spa from 60 sq. ft. to 301 sq. ft. and associated new 900 sq. ft. patio.

Materials are board and batten vertical siding, horizontal wood siding, stone veneer siding, and standing seam metal roofs and stone veneer walls in pool/spa area; colors will consist of natural earth tones of gray, beige and brown.

The project also includes rehabilitation of flatwork consisting of internal driveways, the parking area, walkways (including new ADA accessible ramps), and new hardscape such as patios near structures and the pool/spa).

Site Development Standards

Site development standards for the VO zoning district per Title 21 Section 21.22.070 are met. All building and covered patio heights are proposed well below the 35 foot height limit (all are between 12 and 23 feet in height). Site coverage maximum is 50 percent, the project is below the maximum at 4 percent building site coverage. All developments allowed shall have landscaping covering a minimum of 10 percent, the proposed landscaping includes 5 percent planted area and 84 percent is natural oak savannah.

Setbacks for development in the VO district shall be established by the approval of a General Development Plan. The project incorporates reuse of existing buildings rather than a complete demolition and build of a new facility. Thus, the project would maintain the existing development setbacks which are between 15 and 30 feet from property lines. CVMP Policy CV-3.1 requires a 100 foot minimum setback for all properties abutting Carmel Valley Road. The structures closest to Carmel Valley Road include Building “D”, pool house, which is currently setback 15 feet from the property line, Building “C”, clubhouse, which is setback approximately 30 feet from the property line, Building “A”, caretaker residence, which is approximately 90 feet and cabins “E3” and “E2.B” which are setback approximately 60 feet from the property line. However, an exception may be granted in cases where an existing structure permitted prior to adoption of the original CVMP (1986) would become legal nonconforming. In this case, the rebuilding of Building “D” and extensive remodel of Buildings “A”, “C”, “E3” and “E2.B” qualify for this exception as allowing maintenance of the existing structural footprint would result in no change in establishment of structures when viewed from Carmel Valley Road and avoids development within undisturbed areas of the site. However, as proposed the project includes two new covered patios within the Carmel Valley Road 100 foot setback. One patio, associated with the pool area, is currently proposed to be a 4-sides open canopy wood timber structures of approximately 900 sq. ft. with a standing seam metal roof max height of approximately 16 feet. The other patio is proposed adjacent to Building C, approximately 450 sq. ft. with stone columns and standing seam metal roof of 11 feet, four inches. Staff has communicated to the applicant that HCD - Planning cannot permit new structural development two feet above average natural grade within the 100 foot setback established in the 2010 CVMP. Therefore, as part of the motion staff recommends the Zoning Administrator require either no vertical development as part of the proposed patios or that they be relocated.

Design and Neighborhood Character

The project requires a Design Approval. In consideration of the Design Approval, the architectural style, colors and materials and potential conflict with the neighborhood character are to be considered. Proposed materials are board and batten vertical siding, horizontal wood siding, stone veneer siding, and standing seam metal roofs. Stone veneer walls will be constructed as retaining walls throughout the swimming pool and patio area. Material colors will consist of natural earth tones of gray, beige and brown. Architectural renderings are included in the application package. The colors and materials are consistent with the neighborhood. Also, in compliance with 2010 General Plan Open Space Policy OS-1.2 (development in designated visually sensitive areas shall be subordinate to the natural features of the area) and CVMP Policy CV 3.3 (development including buildings, fences, signs, and landscaping shall not be allowed to significantly block views of the viewshed, the river, or the distant hills as seen from key public viewing areas such as Garland Ranch Regional Park, along Carmel Valley Road, etc.), the project will not create potential impacts to visual resources in Carmel Valley and was designed to avoid ridgeline development. It was sited and flagged and staked to ensure it would not be more visible than previous development on the site or create a substantially adverse visual impact from Garland Ranch or Carmel Valley Road. Staff inspected the site on May 16, 2022 and November 8, 2024 and found no visual impacts.

Historical Resource

Given the age of the Portofino Inn, constructed between 1949 and 1952, a Phase 1 historical report was required for the project. Kent Seavey, qualified architectural historian, concluded that the property lacks sufficient historic integrity, does not meet the necessary criterion for listing in the National or California Registers of Historical Resources, and does not meet the criterion established by the County of Monterey to qualify for inclusion in the Monterey County Historic Resources Inventory (February 11, 2020, HCD-Planning Library Document No. LIB220102).

Water Use

The project site is served by California American Water (Cal-Am) for potable water to the project site. The project application provided water bills from the recent years that the Portofino Inn functioned, an existing fixture inspection report, and an email record from Cal-Am with a civil engineer on the flow tests for the service connection. The project proposes to use approximately 5.06 acre-feet per year (AFY) because less water will be required for the reduced swimming pool, only minimal landscaping is added, and the water fixtures in the buildings will be modernized and low-flow. Water use will not exceed the water usage of 5.23 AFY that was established for the Portofino Inn. The flow tests were found adequate for Cal-Am to state that the company can serve the project. Based on these facts, HCD-Planning and the County of Monterey Environmental Health Bureau (EHB) determined that the proposed water quality and source would be sufficient to serve the project. (**Exhibit A** includes the Operations Plan and Use History for details on water use.)

Tree Removal

Two coast live oak trees are proposed for removal, tree no. 40 (a cluster of trunks of 10, 5, 10, 14.5, 5, 8, and 12 inches diameter) and no. 48 (7.5 inches diameter). Tree no. 40 classifies as a landmark tree; the owners wished to retain it but it was identified by the Fire Marshal during project application review as encroaching on the fire safety path for emergency vehicles. The other tree is in the construction area for Building “C”, the clubhouse. At a staff site visit on May 16, 2022, staff observed

over a dozen landmark trees on the project site. The owner identified some which the Arborist Report had called “hazardous” and in need of removal separate from the proposed restorations of the structures and pool. Concerned for worker safety, staff recommended that the owner submit a hazardous tree removal form to the Permit Center to identify how and why safety was threatened by the trees. There is no record of hazardous tree removal requests on file in Accela, the permitting database of the County. Two trees fell down in the winter of 2022/23, nos. 49 and 66. No hazardous trees are proposed for immediate removal. although the Arborist Report for the project has not been updated (Minnick and Ono, HCD-Planning Library Document No. LIB230178 and LIB230177). In addition, trees which staff considered having the potential to be impacted by the project due to their close proximity to structures include tree numbers 62, 63 and 64. Staff discussed the inclusion of these trees in the tree removal count with the architect. The architect assured staff that no potential harm would come to trees near structures. Buildings which are directly beside tree numbers 62, 63 and 64, will have interior remodel to the point that County code considers it a demolition; however the foundations and exterior walls will not be changed. Therefore, no damage is anticipated to the trees. **Exhibit A** includes a draft a Tree Protection Plan (Plans, Sheet C1).

Traffic

A chief concern for neighbors, as expressed in a letter to the Carmel Valley LUAC during review of this project, is the potential for the project to negatively increase traffic on Carmel Valley Road and within the neighborhood. The proposed project would not generate additional daily trips or peak-hour trips when compared to the former on-site uses. The traffic report by Luis Descanzo and Robert Del Rio of Hexagon Transportation Consultants, Inc. (HCD-Planning Library Doc. No. LIB230333) found the proposed project is estimated to generate 10 AM peak-hour trips (6 inbound and 4 outbound) and 13 PM peak-hour trips (7 inbound and 6 outbound) during weekdays. During Saturdays, the proposed hotel would generate 16 afternoon peak-hour trips (9 inbound and 7 outbound). Traffic flow with ancillary services is typical for hotels so they were included in the trip rate estimates. Since the project proposes to reoccupy a vacant hotel facility, the net new vehicle traffic to be added to the surrounding roadway network by the proposed project was considered. The traffic study focused on the Level of Service (LOS) at Carmel Valley Road and County Club Drive, and at Country Club Drive and Country Club Way/Terrace Way. The intersection of Carmel Valley Road and Country Club Drive currently operates at an acceptable LOS C or better under existing conditions, and the addition of project traffic would not result in the degradation of the study intersection’s LOS during the AM, PM and Saturday peak hours. Additionally, peak-hour volumes at the study intersection would not meet signal warrant thresholds. The study intersection of Country Club Drive and Country Club Way/Terrace Way currently operates at an acceptable LOS A under existing conditions, and the addition of project traffic would not result in the degradation of the study intersection’s LOS during the AM, PM and Saturday peak hours. Like the other study intersection, peak-hour volumes at the study intersection would not meet signal warrant thresholds.

CEQA:

The project is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to 15302 of the CEQA Guidelines. This exemption applies to the reconstruction of existing structures. The facility renovations to the existing development previously known as the Portofino Inn, not to increase density or intensity, consisting of the demolition and rebuild/remodeling of nine existing buildings and the pool is consistent with these exemptions. None of the exceptions under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to this

project. The project does not involve a designated historical resource as evidenced by the historical report prepared by Kent Seavey dated February 11, 2020 (HCD-Planning Library Document No. LIB220102). The property is not a hazardous waste site. Utilizing existing development footprint, the project would not impact public experience of a scenic highway (Carmel Valley Road) and is not likely to effect cultural resources or biological resources. The project involves reuse of an existing developed area. With minimal tree removal, the project would not contribute to cumulative impacts to cultural, biological, aesthetics to a considerable level. Potential temporary increases to air quality impacts from the project demolition and construction are reduced through the requirement to adhere to County and State air quality regulations and Best Management Practices as part of construction permitting. Therefore, Air Quality cumulative impacts will not be considerable. The project will use less water than the previous Portofino Inn, therefore the cumulative impact of this project with others in the area on hydrology will not be considerable. The project will include the return of traffic to the area at a similar rate and flow pattern as the historical use. This traffic was analyzed in cumulative modeling with existing traffic in the area and was not found to cross state thresholds for VMT. Therefore, the project is categorically exempt.

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
- Monterey County Regional Fire District

LUAC:

The project was referred to the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) for review. The LUAC, at a duly-noticed public meeting on May 16, 2022, voted 5 - 0, with one absent member, to support the project with recommendations for downlighting and shading of skylights; noise attenuation for adjacent neighbors; add a condition limiting special events. The architect explained before the LUAC that the project would comply with exterior lighting requirements per County code, and add shading to the skylights. Lighting plans in the plan set submittal dated June 26, 2023 show downlit, shaded exterior lights (Sheets AS 121-125). Special events which require an encroachment permit from Public Works are reviewed on a case-by-case basis through the process described in Title 21, Chapter 14.04. The Operations Plan for the project suggests up to 208 events per year, typically on Thursdays through Saturdays. The owner did not offer to reduce this estimate and staff did not propose a cap, as the purpose of the zoning district is to provide locations for such events and all potential impacts are regulated by the County codes and regulations, the limits of the OWTs, and applied conditions of approval. The LUAC received and reviewed a letter from the public as part of the project review. The minutes are presented as **Exhibit C**.

Prepared by: Mary Israel, Supervising Planner

Reviewed and Approved by: Anna Ginette Quenga, AICP, Principal Planner

The following attachments are on file with the HCD:

Exhibit A - Draft Resolution, including:

- Conditions of Approval
- Site Plan, Floor Plans, Elevations
- Colors and Materials

Exhibit B - Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan (combined documents LIB230177 and LIB230178)

Exhibit C - Carmel Valley LUAC Minutes (May 16, 2022)

Exhibit D - Vicinity Map

cc:Front Counter Copy; Zoning Administrator; Monterey County Regional Fire District; HCD-Engineering Services; HCD-Environmental Services; Environmental Health Bureau - Land Use; Mary Israel, Planner; Anna Ginette Quenga, AICP, Principal Planner; Santa Rosa Motel Co., Property Owner; Anna Bornstein, Agent; Terri Beatty, Interested Party; Pamela and Jerry Takigawa, Interested Party; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); Laborers International Union of North America (Lozeau Drury LLP); LandWatch; Project File PLN210091.