



# County of Monterey Planning Commission

## Agenda Item No.3

Legistar File Number: PC 25-070

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

August 27, 2025

**Introduced:** 8/12/2025

**Version:** 1

**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

**Matter Type:** Planning Item

### **PLN240231 - MAUSE PATRICK W & ROBIN M RILEY TRS**

Public Hearing to consider the construction of a 2,265 square foot single-family dwelling with a detached 740 square foot garage and associated site improvements, including a driveway and decks, and development on slopes in excess of 25%.

**Project Location:** 28007 Mercurio Rd, Carmel.

**Proposed CEQA action:** Find the project Categorically Exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15303, and there are no exceptions pursuant to Guidelines section 15300.2.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- a. Find that the project qualifies for a Class 3 Categorical Exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15303 and that none of the exceptions set forth in Guidelines section 15300.2 apply; and
- b. Approve a Combined Development Permit consisting of:
  - 1) Administrative Permit and Design Approval to allow construction of a 2,265 square foot two-story single-family dwelling with a detached 740 square foot garage and associated site improvements; and
  - 2) Use Permit to allow development on slopes in excess of 25%.

The attached draft resolution includes findings and evidence for consideration (**Exhibit A**). Staff recommends approval subject to 11 conditions of approval.

### PROJECT INFORMATION

**Agent:** Robert Carver

**Property Owner:** Mause Patrick W & Robin M Riley Trs

**APN:** 169-081-008-000

**Parcel Size:** 1.0 acre (43,560 square feet)

**Zoning:** Low Density Residential with Building Site-6, Design Control, Site Plan Review, and Residential Allocation Zoning District overlays [LDR/B-6-D-S-RAZ]

**Plan Area:** Carmel Valley Master Plan

**Flagged and Staked:** Yes

**Project Planner:** Hya Honorato, Assistant Planner

Honoratoh@countyofmonterey.gov, (831) 755-5173

### SUMMARY/DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is located within the Mercurio Subdivision in Carmel Valley. The one-acre

parcel is the last parcel to be developed within this subdivision and sits within a wooded, steeply slopes area. The proposed development involves the construction of a 2,265 square foot single-family dwelling with a detached 740 two-car garage, associated site improvements including a new driveway and 677 square feet of decks, and 2,455 square feet of development on slopes in excess of 25%. Grading consists of 313 cubic yards of cut and fill. Water service will be provided by CalAm and managed by the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District. As proposed, the project will be served by an on-site wastewater treatment system, which has been reviewed and approved by the Environmental Health Bureau. No tree removal is proposed.

Based on staff analysis, the proposed project is consistent with all rules and regulations pertaining to zoning uses and any other applicable provisions of the 2010 Monterey County General Plan, Carmel Valley Master Plan (CVMP), and Zoning Ordinance (Title 21).

#### *Site Development Standards*

The project complies with the development standards of the Low Density Residential (“LDR”) zoning district. The one-acre, triangular-shaped parcel has a 0.22-acre (9,735 square foot) building envelope. The remaining 0.78 acres of the lot are conveyed as scenic easements: a 50-foot scenic easement along the southeast property line, a 40-foot scenic easement along the south property line, and a 60-foot scenic easement along the northwest property line. As proposed, the residence and garage are located within the required building envelope area; no development is proposed in the scenic easement. The LDR zoning district allows a maximum height of 30 feet for the main structures and 15 feet for non-habitable structures. The proposed main structure is 24 feet 8 inches and the detached garage is 12 feet 2 inches, both within the allowed limits. The total building site coverage is 7%, well below the 35% limit. Overall, the project meets all height, size, and setback requirements set forth in the development standards of the LDR zoning district.

#### *Design*

The proposed exterior colors and materials are consistent with the area’s setting and surrounding residences. As proposed, the colors and materials of the proposed single-family dwelling include fiber cement siding in light brown for the exterior walls and trim, natural stone veneer accents, dark gray Class “A” standing seam roof, and natural stone veneer site walls. The proposed project will have a comparatively similar layout, bulk, and mass to other custom homes within the subdivision. The proposed project will not be visible from Highway 68, Carmel Valley Road, or other common public viewing areas due to distance and topography.

#### *Development on Slopes*

Pursuant to General Plan Policy OS-3.5, development on slopes that exceed 25% is prohibited unless a Use Permit is obtained and the appropriate authority finds that there is no feasible alternative that would allow development to occur on slopes less than 25%, and/or the proposed development better achieves the goals, policies, and objectives of the Monterey County General Plan and applicable land use plan than other development alternatives.

The one-acre property is situated on a forested hillside, surrounded by steep slopes to the north and east. The project site slopes down from Mercurio Road. Approximately one-third to a half of the subject property’s building envelope contains slopes in excess of 25%. The proposed project involves approximately 2,455 square feet of development on slopes in excess of 25%. A majority of the

development on steeper slopes is associated with the driveway. To ensure there is adequate fire truck turnaround and grade transitions, the proposed driveway traverse is along the front portion of the property. Additionally, the proposed driveway configuration allows access to the flattest portion of the property. The proposed garage and single-family dwelling are sited in the flattest areas of the property. Portions of the garage will be located on slopes in excess of 25%. There is no development on steeper slopes associated with the main residence as its entry patio and bridge (connecting to the garage) are cantilevered over the steeper slopes. Siting the garage entirely on less steep slopes would impact native trees and require a longer driveway and additional development on slopes in excess of 25%, which would conflict with CVMP Policy CV-3.4, which requires that “alteration of hillsides and natural landforms caused by cutting, filling, grading, or vegetation removal shall be minimized through sensitive siting and design of all improvements.” The proposed garage is sited in the most appropriate location that avoids tree removal and minimizes the length of the proposed driveway. Further, due to the forested and sloped nature of the property, there is not an adequate area to site the residence, garage, and required primary and secondary leach fields without impacting steeper slopes or trees. Avoiding impacts to native trees complies with CV-3.11.

Development must be located within the property’s 0.22-acre building envelope. Given the sloped nature of the entire subdivision, development on steeper slopes for the subject property and others would have been contemplated. However, the necessary discretionary permit to allow such development was not granted at the time of the subdivision. In this case, the proposed development on slopes, specifically the siting of the driveway, better balances the forest resource and hillside protection policies of the General Plan and Carmel Valley Master Plan. The topography of the land leaves no opportunity for development on less steep slopes and requires that trees be removed in order to access the flattest building site location. Therefore, the proposed project meets the required criteria of General Plan Policy OS-3.5.

#### *Geologic Hazards*

The GIS Records show that the Navy Fault is within proximity of the project site (325 feet southwest). Pursuant to General Plan Policy S-1.7, a Geological Investigation Report was provided (County of Monterey Library No. LIB250106; **Exhibit C**). The report confirmed that there is no fault surface trace crossing the site, and that the potential for surface-fault rupture or seismically-induced landslides is considered low due to the site being underlain at shallow depths by competent bedrock. The project site is still susceptible to seismic shaking; however, design measures shall be incorporated to resist damage associated with very severe shaking in accordance with current building codes and design standards. Title 16 section 16.08.100 require that recommendations of the geotechnical report and geological report implemented into the final construction plans. Accordingly, potential geologic hazards will be reduced to an acceptable level pursuant to General Plan Policy S-1.6. Finally, evidence submitted demonstrates that the site is physically suitable for development and the development will neither create nor significantly contribute to geologic instability or geologic hazards (General Plan Policy S-1.8).

#### OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

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

HCD-Engineering Services

Environmental Health Bureau  
HCD-Environmental Services  
Monterey County Regional Fire Protection District

LAND USE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On August 4, 2025, the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC) reviewed the project at a duly noticed meeting. The LUAC continued the meeting to a date uncertain to provide an opportunity for the agent to be present to address concerns expressed during public comments. On August 18, 2025, the LUAC reviewed the project again and addressed comments regarding privacy between the main dwelling and the downhill neighbor. The agent stated that the applicant is willing to provide additional screening and plans to plant trees immediately in the hopes that the trees will be mature when they are ready to move in. The LUAC voted unanimously to support the project and made the recommendation to provide screening along the property line adjacent to the downstairs neighbor (**Exhibit B**).

CEQA:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15303 categorically exempts the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, including one single-family residence, and accessory structures within a residential zone. The proposed project involves the construction of a 2,265 square foot single-family dwelling, with a detached 740 square foot garage, and associated site improvements. Therefore, the project is consistent with the categorical exemption requirements of CEQA Guidelines section 15303. There are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2. No evidence of significant adverse environmental effects was identified during staff's review of the development application.

Prepared by: Hya Honorato, Assistant Planner, x5173  
Reviewed and Approved by: Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner

The following attachments are on file with HCD:

Exhibit A - Draft Resolution including:

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

Exhibit B - Carmel Valley LUAC Minutes 08/06/25

Exhibit C - Geological Hazards Evaluation (LIB250106)

Exhibit D - Vicinity Map

cc: Front Counter Copy; Monterey County Regional Fire Protection District; HCD-Environmental Services; HCD-Engineering Services; Environmental Health Bureau; Hya Honorato, Assistant Planner; Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner; Patrick Mause and Robin Riley, Property Owners; Robert Carver (Studio Carver), Agent; The Open Monterey Project; LandWatch (Executive Director); Lozeau Drury LLP; Christina McGinnis, Keep Big Sur Wild; Planning File PLN240231.