Exhibit C

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THOMPSON
WILDLAND MANAGEMENT
Environmental Management & Conservation Services
International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist # WE-7468A
Department of Pesticide Regulation Qualified Applicator Lic. #QL50949 B
Arborist & Environmental Assessments, Protection, Restoration, Monitoring & Reporting
Wildland Fire Property Protection, Fuel Reduction & Vegetation Management
Invasive Weed Control, and Habitat Restoration & Management
Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control
Resource Ecologist

March 1, 2024

Zhang-Ding Residence
5486 Quail Meadows Drive
Carmel, CA 93923
APN: 157-171-017-000

Subject: Pre-construction tree impact assessment & removal report for 5486 Quail Meadows Drive in Carmel

Per *Monterey County Housing & Community Development Department-Planning Services* requirements, an arborist-conducted pre-construction tree impact assessment was recently performed for the undeveloped lot located at 5486 Quail Meadows Drive in Carmel (APN: 157-171-017; refer to attached photos, *Figures 1-11*) in preparation for home construction activities. Based on this tree evaluation and review of the construction design plans for this new single family home construction project (refer to the corresponding site plans that identifies the location of trees in relation to the proposed construction footprint), it has been determined that 3 Coast Live Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) will need to be removed in preparation for property development activities. No other trees are proposed for removal. Several additional oaks on the lot that are in the vicinity of planned property development activities will be adequately protected and are not expected to be adversely affected by proposed construction activities.

The location of the 3 oak trees proposed for removal (identified as *Tree#s 1-3* on the project site plans and assigned tag#s 437-439 in the field that have been affixed to the trunks of the trees), as well as trees to be retained and protected are identified on the project site plans. The site plans will also show the location of tree protection fencing that will be installed prior to construction activities beginning. Photos of the proposed homesite, nearby trees and the 3 oaks planned for removal are located at the end of the report (refer to attached photos, *Figures 1-11*). Findings and recommendations are provided herein.

I. SITE CHARACTERISTICS, PROJECT DESCRIPTION & TREE REMOVAL

The subject parcel is approximately 4 acres in size and is located in a *wildland-urban interface* (WUI) mixed oak woodland and coastal scrub environment that is dominated by native mature and senescing Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) trees. The proposed project site area has been previously mowed so currently is not densely vegetated and has relatively low fuel loads (refer to *Figures 1-11*). Lower growing vegetation occurring in the few small clearings and woodland understory areas of the previously mowed homesite area is primarily composed of non-native annual grasses and exotic broadleaf weeds, such as Italian Thistle and Milk Thistle. In the surrounding steeper woodland areas to the north and west that have not been mowed understory vegetation is dominated by a variety of more densely vegetated native coastal scrub type flora and exotic weedy vegetation. Understory vegetation in these surrounding denser vegetated woodland areas is primarily composed of native coastal scrub type vegetation, such as Poison Oak, Pacific Blackberry, Coyote Brush, Coffeeberry, Toyon, California Gooseberry and Sticky Monkey Flower, among others, as well as exotic annual grasses and broadleaf weeds, native herbaceous perennials, annual forbs and some native perennial grasses.

As indicated above, the proposed project site is located in a small previously disturbed grassland clearing that is primarily composed of low growing non-native annual grasses and broadleaf weeds, and is surrounded by several nearby large and aging Coast Live Oak trees. Per the property development plans and as previously noted, prior to property development activities beginning it will be necessary to remove 3 Coast Live Oaks addressed in this report (identified as *Tree#s 1-3* on the project site plans and assigned metal tag#s 437-439 in the field that have been nailed to the trunks) due to their locations within or directly adjacent to the proposed construction footprint (refer to the project design plans and the attached photos, *Figures 3-9*).

The remaining trees in the construction site area will be protected with tree protection fencing to avoid and minimize impacts to the root zones of the retained trees. Based on the project design plans and given the proper installation and maintenance of tree protection measures that will be required for the duration of the project (refer to the tree protection recommendations and guidelines provided in this report, as well as the project site plans that identify the location of tree protection fencing), several nearby large and aging oaks that will be retained and protected are not expected to be significantly impacted by construction and grading activities, and will likely tolerate construction related impacts and disturbance with minimal adverse affects, especially if the tree protection recommendations provided in this report are properly implemented. It should be noted that the proposed permeable surfaced driveway, turnaround and parking areas appear to be a sufficient distance away from retained and protected oaks (refer to *Figures 1-3 & 10*), which will assist in minimizing harmful impacts to tree health. Additionally, these driving surfaces will be constructed with pavers (a permeable surface), which will also help to reduce and mitigate impacts to the root systems of oak trees located in the vicinity of driveway construction operations.

Prior to construction activities beginning, it is strongly advised that a pre-construction meeting be held with the consulting arborist, general contractor and project team to discuss project details and construction and grading plans that could affect how trees are impacted, as well as the location of required tree protection fencing and any other tree and resource preservation measures that will be necessary to protect trees, critical root zones and oak woodland habitat.

The large and aging multi-codominant trunk Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) identified as *Tree#1* on the project site plans (tag#437 is nailed to the trunk) has a DBH (diameter at breast height) of approximately 68 inches. This oak is recommended for removal due to its close proximity to the proposed main house that is located a short distance to the north and northwest of the subject tree, and the driveway looping around the tree is a short distance to the east, south and west of the tree (refer to *Figures 3, 5 & 6*). It should be noted that this tree has poor canopy balance and symmetry with a significant natural lean in the direction of the proposed main house. This oak is in fair physiological health and condition, but is generally in poor structural condition due to poor canopy balance and symmetry, multiple structurally problematic co-dominant trunk and stem attachments, and visible decay features that are compromising structural integrity. Per County requirements, two 5 to 15-gallon replacement oaks will need to be planted on the property to satisfy tree removal permit conditions.

The large and senescing Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) identified as *Tree#2* on the project site plans (tag#438 is affixed to the trunk) has a DBH of 40 inches. Per the design plans, this declining oak will need to be removed due to its location within the proposed building footprint for the main house (refer to *Figures 4, 5, 7 & 8*). This oak is generally in fair physiological health and condition, but has a structurally problematic co-dominant stem attachment with visible decay features from a previous structural failure that is compromising the tree's structural integrity and increasing potential hazard concerns to the subject property. Per County requirements, two 5 to 15-gallon replacement oaks will need to be planted on the property to satisfy tree removal permit conditions.

The large and aging Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) identified as *Tree#3* on the project site plans (metal tag#439 is affixed to the trunk) has a DBH of 58 inches. Per the project plans, this oak is recommended for removal due to its location within the proposed construction footprint (refer to *Figures 4, 5 & 9*). This oak is in fair, but declining physiological health and condition, and has a structurally problematic co-dominant trunk with cankers and decay features occurring at a previous structural failure point that is compromising the tree's structural integrity and increasing potential hazard concerns to the property. Per County requirements, two 5 to 15-gallon replacement oaks will need to be planted on the property to satisfy tree removal permit conditions.

These 3 oaks proposed for removal (identified as *Tree#s 1-3* on the project site plans and assigned tag#s 437-438), as well as many of the other trees on the property, have fairly dense and healthy canopies consisting of green foliage, which indicates fair to good physiological health and condition. Significant chlorosis or necrosis in the crowns (e.g., limb or branch dieback),

which would indicate dead, dying and/or rapidly declining and unhealthy trees, was not observed during the assessment. However, as previously noted, the 3 large and aging oaks proposed for removal have problematic structural defects and disorders (i.e., decay features) that are compromising structural integrity.

It should be noted that at this time biotic disorders (e.g., disease, insect pests, decay) and/or significant structural defects appear to be absent in levels that are detrimental to the health and welfare of the oaks on the site that will be retained and protected.

The numerous oaks on the property will be retained and protected from grading and construction activities for the duration of the property development project (refer to tree protection recommendations and guidelines provided in this report). Tree and resource protection measures will be routinely inspected and properly maintained during the project to assist in preserving and protecting ecological resources and minimizing impacts to trees and woodland habitat.

During project operations the trees on the property will be routinely monitored and adequately protected, and in the event that large primary roots are encountered the project arborist should be notified and consulted to assist in providing guidance and recommendations that will serve to minimize impacts to protected trees. If trees exhibit any signs or symptoms of stress and decline due to possible construction related impacts or any other factors (e.g., biotic and/or abiotic disorders) specific treatments can be performed (e.g., supplemental deep watering, radial or vertical mulching, growth regulator treatments, among others) to assist in mitigating adverse impacts and to aid in the recovery of impacted trees, but none of these treatments are anticipated to be necessary.

Landscaping activities associated with property development will be designed and implemented in manner that will avoid and minimize impacts to nearby oaks, reduce water use, and mitigate wildland fire hazard concerns in this WUI community. For example, landscaping and grading should be avoided or limited within the critical root zone area (i.e., canopy dripline) of trees with minimal soil disturbance, grading, irrigation, planting and introduction of soil or other landscaping materials. Landscaping plants should be drought tolerant and lower combustibility vegetation that is appropriate to oak woodland habitat. Lower density, lower growing and properly irrigated, spaced and maintained plants and planting configurations should be used that are less flammable and more fire resistant.

Additionally, it will be necessary to prune several oak trees that are located in relatively close proximity to the proposed driveway and homesite in order to maintain and preserve tree health, provide adequate clearance around structures, reduce combustible fuel loads (i.e., ladder fuels) and improve defensible space for wildland fire protection. Pruning operations should occur during the proper time of year (preferably fall through early winter) and will utilize proper pruning best management practices (BMP's) to minimize impacts to trees.

Tree removal and/or pruning operations should be avoided during the bird nesting season, which in Monterey County may begin as early as February and continue through August. If tree work is necessary during this time period a nesting assessment is advised to determine if any nesting birds are present. A recent tree assessment and site inspection determined that actively nesting birds or raptors are presently not occurring within or directly adjacent to the property development site; however, depending on when tree removal and construction activities begin (i.e., February-August) it may be necessary to perform an additional assessment.

When tree removal and pruning operations commence, tree work should be performed by licensed and insured tree workers trained in accordance with ANSI Z133.1 safety regulations, as required by OSHA. If necessary, tree protection measures should be installed to nearby trees that could potentially be damaged during removal operations. Additionally, if substantial soil disturbance occurs at the removal site it may be necessary to install erosion and sedimentation control measures to effectively stabilize exposed soil surfaces and contain sediment runoff. Furthermore, BMP's involved with tree removal, disposal, and the cleaning and sterilization of tools and equipment should be implemented to minimize the chance of biotic disorders (that may be present) spreading to other areas.

The ecological impacts from the proposed removal of 3 mature and senescing oaks will be minimal due to limited tree removal occurring on a fairly densely wooded lot that has numerous oak trees. Additionally, the planting of 6 replacement oak trees (5 to 15-gallon container size is advised) to comply with County tree removal permit conditions will assist in supporting and sustaining the health and character of this mixed oak woodland vegetation community.

It should be noted that if there are any naturally occurring oak seedlings and saplings located within or in close proximity to the project site, these young trees should be protected from construction activities or, alternatively, saved and relocated to a safe and suitable area on the property and cared for until they are properly established.

In regards to tree replacement, six (6) 5 to 15-gallon container size Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) replacement trees of good physiological health and structural condition shall be planted on the subject property to replace the 3 landmark status oaks planned for removal and to help preserve and sustain the long-term health, viability and character of this mixed oak woodland environment. Landmark status trees are 24 inch DBH or larger and Monterey County tree removal permit conditions require that native landmark status trees be replaced at a 2:1 replacement ratio, which in this case will require the planting of 6 Coast Live Oak trees.

The 6 replacement oak plantings should be acquired from a local plant nursery that has a good selection of specimens that are free from harmful pathogens, insect pests and/or significant structural disorders. Furthermore, the replacement trees should be planted during the appropriate time of year (preferably fall or winter) using proper tree planting techniques and best management practices, and should be planted in suitable locations that will support healthy establishment and maturation. The replacement plantings should be provided the necessary

irrigation, mulching and protection (i.e., welded wire fence secured with T-posts around the plantings to protect from wildlife) until they are successfully established. Successful completion of this County tree removal permit compliance action shall be achieved when the 6 replacement oak plantings survive a one-year monitoring period.

II. CONSTRUCTION TREE PROTECTION MEASURES

Per *Monterey County Housing & Community Development Department-Planning Services* requirements and resource preservation BMP's, the following tree and resource protection measures shall be implemented for this property development project that is planned for 5486 Quail Meadows Drive in Carmel. It should be noted that not all of these tree protection measures may be necessary or applicable to this specific project, but may come in useful at some point during project operations and should be provided in case they are needed. The proper implementation of tree and resource preservation BMP's and regular construction site monitoring will assist in protecting and preserving the health and welfare of trees, habitat and surrounding ecological resources. The location of tree protection measures will be determined on-site by the project arborist and/or design team and contractor during a scheduled pre-construction meeting, and tree and resource preservation measures will be regularly inspected and properly maintained for the duration of the project to ensure they are functioning effectively:

1) Prior to commencing with grading and construction activities install high visibility exclusionary fencing that clearly defines the work area, limits unnecessary disturbance to surrounding areas, and protects the critical root zone (CRZ) of individual trees and/or tree groupings. Generally speaking, the CRZ area is defined by the outermost portion of the canopy dripline 360 degrees around the tree (so basically the entire area under the canopy dripline), or alternatively, but less desirable in terms of tree preservation, installing exclusionary fencing to a distance from the trunk that protects at least half of the interior canopy dripline and CRZ or to a minimum distance of 15 feet from the base of the tree, whichever is greater. For protecting the canopy dripline and CRZ areas of trees use a more durable and heavier duty orange exclusionary fencing (e.g., *Resinet Heavy Duty Square Mesh Access Control Barrier Fence*) anchored in with steel T-posts, or in some cases consideration should be given to using a much stronger and more durable chain link fencing to protect the most valuable and important trees located in the vicinity of proposed construction activities (refer to the project plans that shows the location of tree protection fencing). Where possible, tree protection fencing will be installed along the outer portion of the canopy dripline (i.e., the CRZ area) or beyond the canopy dripline of trees located within and/or adjacent to the project site to avoid and minimize impacting critical roots. Perform regular monitoring and inspections of tree protection measures, as well as any necessary repairs, modifications and maintenance on a as needed basis for the duration of the project.

2) Install appropriate sedimentation control measures (e.g., silt fence) along downslope perimeter of construction site and, if necessary, apply soil stabilization and source control measures (e.g., rice straw mulch, erosion control blankets, all-weather surfaces) to exposed soil surfaces to prevent erosion problems and sediment runoff during rain events. Perform routine monitoring,

as well as the necessary maintenance, modifications and improvements on a as needed basis to ensure that erosion & sedimentation control and resource protection measures are functioning effectively. It should be noted that erosion problems and sediment deposition around trees can adversely affect tree health and stability.

3) If it's necessary to perform grading activities within the canopy dripline and critical root zone (CRZ) area of trees the following practices should be implemented: 1) Try to maintain natural grade as much as possible; 2) Where feasible use permeable surface materials at final grade; and 3) Avoid cut (i.e., lowering grade) and fill (i.e., raising grade with fill material) operations (particularly lowering grade) within the CRZ that could result in significant root loss or damage to large primary roots that are important to supporting and sustaining tree health and structural stability.

4) Notify the project arborist if grading and construction activities is required within 5 feet of trees. If this is necessary, the arborist should be present during grading and excavation activities to assist in minimizing impacts to large primary roots that will likely be encountered. Additionally, prior to construction activities within 5 feet of trees install trunk and stem protection measures (e.g., 2x4 lumber forming protective barrier around circumference of trunk and lower stem of tree) that will need to be secured to the trees with rope and high visibility exclusionary fencing. If it is necessary to perform any pruning use proper tree pruning practices to minimize impacts and maximize wound healing.

5) If it is necessary to temporarily store construction materials or equipment within the canopy dripline (i.e., CRZ) of nearby trees, which ideally should be avoided, apply 2 to 4 inches of clean and properly sourced woodchip mulch to limit soil disturbance and prevent soil compaction within the critical root zone area. In some cases a deeper and more protective mulch layer may be necessary.

6) Where possible, avoid damaging or cuting roots located within the critical root zone (i.e., canopy dripline) of trees, especially roots that are 2 inches diameter or larger, and to the extent possible avoid grading or significant soil disturbance within a radius that is a minimum five times (5X) the diameter (DBH) of the subject trees, which is the most sensitive portion of a tree's critical root zone (CRZ) area. It should be noted that, where possible, root zone disturbance should ideally be avoided within the entire CRZ and canopy dripline area (i.e., the outer most portion of the canopy dripline 360 degrees around the tree) and even expanded to the area beyond the canopy dripline and primary root zone. Construction footings should be designed and excavation activities performed in a manner to minimize impacts to primary roots, or alternative foundation designs (e.g., pier and grade beam) that are less impactful to critical root systems should be considered. If significant roots are encountered efforts should be made to carefully excavate (e.g., tunnel or dig) under or around primary lateral roots. Grading or trenching operations that may occur within the critical root zone of retained trees should be performed under the guidance and monitoring of the project arborist. Tree roots severed or significantly damaged during grading and excavating operations should be cleanly cut and

promptly covered with moist burlap fabric or equivalent until roots are permanently covered with backfill material or until the exposed grading cut and soil profile is permanently stabilized and protected. If burlap covered cut roots are exposed to the outside environment for an extended period of time a project attendant shall be assigned the task of regularly wetting burlap covered roots to prevent root desiccation. Additionally, in the absence of rain during the wet season it may be necessary to perform supplemental watering (i.e., regular deep irrigating throughout the remaining portions of the critical root zone) to construction impacted trees. Frequency, quantity and duration of supplemental watering should be determined by the project arborist or a qualified landscape professional or tree care professional with similar experience.

7) Healthy and younger oaks in particular can be fairly tolerant of low to moderate levels of root system impacts; however, they are generally less tolerant to increases (i.e., introduction of fill material) or decreases (i.e., cut slopes) in natural grade. Where possible, avoid altering the natural grade (particularly lowering grade) within the CRZ to reduce the likelihood of causing root loss and tree stress, decline and/or mortality. Lowering natural grade can result in significant root loss or damage and raising the grade (i.e., introducing fill material, particularly around the lower trunk and root crown) can lead to trunk and root decay disorders that are detrimental to the health and structural integrity of trees. Where possible, root loss and root system impacts should be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent possible, and this important factor should be considered when developing a construction design plan. It should be noted that root loss or root system impacts does not always result in an immediate or significant decline in tree health, but instead often occurs slowly and gradually over a period of severals years or decades. Per the site assessment and analysis of the project plans, it appears that trees in the vicinity of proposed construction operations will likely tolerate grading activities with minimal to moderate impacts and are suitable for being retained, protected and preserved.

8) Avoid storing construction tools, materials and equipment within the CRZ (i.e., canopy dripline) of trees, and do not wash out or dispose of excess materials (e.g., paint, plaster, concrete, or other potentially harmful substances) within CRZ areas. As previously noted, if it is unavoidable and necessary to temporarily store or stockpile materials and equipment within the CRZ of trees, apply 2 to 4 inches of clean and properly sourced woodchip mulch (or in some cases a thicker mulch layer may be necessary) to prevent soil compaction and root zone disturbance.

9) If tree pruning is necessary it is important to utilize proper pruning BMP's that will assist in minimizing harmful impacts to trees. In most cases, tree pruning should ideally be performed during the fall through early winter months when the trees are at a lower level of physiological activity, the exception being deadwood removal or minor pruning, which can occur during any time of year. A general principle to follow is that it is important to make proper pruning cuts, keeping them as small as possible while removing as few living branches as necessary to achieve the objective. Large pruning wounds often do not completely heal over with wound wood callus tissue, which creates a permanently exposed entry point for decay, disease and insect pests. Excessive pruning can stress, injure and harm trees by depleting energy reserves and reducing

food making processes (i.e., photosynthesis), which can compromise a trees ability to perform essential physiological functions and to recover and replenish essential reserves during periods of stress (e.g. root disturbance and drought conditions). As noted above, excessive pruning can create an abundance of exposed wounds providing entry points for potentially harmful biotic disorders (e.g., disease, decay and/or insect pests) that can adversely affect the health and structural integrity of trees. It should be noted that significant pruning involving the removal of 30% or more of living canopy material or the removal of healthy sizable limbs requires a County permit. Additional pruning BMP's and guidelines are available upon request.

10) The primary objective of pruning operations should be as follows: To remove dead and unhealthy limbs and branches (i.e., deadwood removal); improve canopy balance and symmetry and maintain natural form; thin out overly dense and heavy portions of the canopy; and, if necessary, perform targeted and selective weight reduction pruning of the canopy and large limbs (i.e., end weight reduction pruning) to assist in preventing significant structural failures that could be detrimental to tree health and potentially hazardous to property and areas with human activity. As suggested in the previous sentence, perform necessary pruning to reduce and mitigate hazard concerns to occupied structures and areas with human activity; and perform necessary pruning to reduce wildland fire hazards and combustible fuel loads, and to improve property protection and defensible space around structures.

11) Perform pre-construction meeting with contractor to ensure that tree and resource protection measures are properly located, positioned and installed. Additionally, perform regular construction site inspections for the duration of the project to monitor the condition of tree and resource protection measures, and to determine if any repairs, adjustments or modifications are necessary. Trees impacted by site development should be periodically monitored and assessed during and following the project to determine if any tree care and management actions are necessary, and to make certain trees do not present a hazard to property and/or nearby structures.

III. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the 3 Coast Live Oaks addressed in this report (identified as *Tree#s 1-3* on the project site plans) located on the undeveloped property at 5486 Quail Meadows Drive in Carmel are proposed for removal due to impacts associated with planned property development activities. The several remaining trees located in the vicinity of the proposed driveway and homesite will be retained and protected for the duration of the project. Given the proper installation and maintenance of tree and resource protection measures retained oaks and woodland habitat is not expected to be significantly impacted or adversely affected by home construction and property development activities.

Additionally, in the interest of complying with *Monterey County Housing & Community Development Department-Planning Services* tree removal permit conditions and sustaining the health and character of this mixed oak woodland environment, six (6) 5 to 15-gallon container

size Coast Live Oak replacement trees shall be planted in suitable locations on the subject property and survive a one-year monitoring period.

Best regards,

Rob Thompson — *March 1, 2024*
ISA Certified Arborist # WE-7468A — Date
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Figure 1. View of driveway entrance into oak woodland homesite area from Quail Meadows Drive. Driveway will primarily pass through clearing between canopy driplines and oaks will be protected with fencing to minimize impacts.

Figure 2. Another view of driveway entrance area taken from homesite looking back towards Quail Meadows Drive.

Figure 3. Proposed driveway passes between oaks up through center of photo. Oak identified as Tree#1 (red arrow) is proposed for removal. Other nearby oaks will be retained and protected.

Figure 4. Oaks identified as Tree#2 (red arrow to the left) & Tree#3 (red arrow to the right) will need to be removed due to their location within the proposed construction footprint.

Figure 5. Tree#1 (left), Tree#2 (center background) and Tree#3 (right) are proposed for removal due to construction impacts.

Figure 6. Closer view of multi-trunk Coast Live Oak (Tree#1) identified with pink flagging tape. Oak in left background will be retained and protected.

Figure 7. Oak identified as Tree#2 has visible decay occurring in lower trunk and root crown due to previous structural failure.

Figure 8. Another view of Tree#2 (left foreground) with decay and structurally defective co-dominant stem. Oak in center background will be retained and protected.

Figure 9. Tree#3 also has co-dominant stem and visible decay and cankers due to previous structural failure.

Figure 10. A few oaks near proposed permeable surfaced driveway, parking and turnaround area will be retained and protected to minimize impacts.

Figure 11. View of surrounding perviously mowed oak woodlands that will be protected and will have minimal impacts from property development activities.

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