



## Historic Resources Review Board

Legistar File Number: 26-280

April 02, 2026

**Introduced:** 3/19/2026

**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

**Version:** 1

**Matter Type:** General Agenda Item

### **DA260028 - CARMEL RIVER INN**

Public hearing to consider recommending that the Chief of Planning approve a Design Approval to allow the remodel and additions to six existing historic cabins located at the Historic Carmel River Inn. Colors and materials to match each of the existing structures. Base wood siding consisting of dark brown, light grey and light brown, respectively, with different color trims consisting of mint green, white, peach, and yellow, respectively.

**Project Location:** 26600 Oliver Road, Carmel (Assessor's Parcel Number 009-563-005-000), Carmel Area Land Use Plan.

### RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the County of Monterey Historic Resources Review Board (HRRB) adopt a resolution recommending that the Chief of Planning 1) Find the project qualifies for a class 31 exception pursuant to section 15331 of the CEQA guidelines; and 2) approve a Design Approval to allow the remodel and additions to six existing historic cabins located at the Historic Carmel River Inn. Colors and materials to match each of the existing structures. Base wood siding consisting of dark brown, light grey and light brown, respectively, with different color trims consisting of mint green, white, peach, and yellow, respectively.

### DISCUSSION:

An original field survey of the subject property was conducted by Kent Seavey in April 2004 (Exhibit C). According to this survey, the Carmel River Inn consists of twenty-two wood-framed buildings informally sited in a wooded landscape setting immediately adjacent to the Carmel River. Sixteen of these structures are motor court cabins, fourteen originally constructed in 1934, with two a little later. One cabin was constructed in 1941. There are four duplex cabins, constructed between 1957 and 1962. There is a two-story motel building with 19 rooms, constructed in 1960, and a storage facility that is dated 1934, and may be a former cabin. The majority of the buildings present are small, one-story wood framed guest cabins with attached carports. They are mostly irregular in plan, and all rest on concrete foundations. The exterior wall cladding for all of the pre-1940 cabins is vertical board-and batten. The cabins, with few exceptions, have low-pitched side-gabled roofs, with open carports attached to one side of the structure. Most of the carports are under extensions of the side-gabled roofs, however four of the carports are front gabled. Some of the cabins have small, overhanging door hoods, supported by wood brackets. All current roof covering on the cabins is composition shingle. Only two of the pre-1940 cabins have fireplace chimneys. Decorative treatment throughout the campground consists of fascia boards with sawn trim in a modified bead-and-reel motif, scalloped vertical trim board in the gable ends of the cabins, their carports where present, and planked wood shutters pierced by a pine tree motif. The shutters are clipped at their upper corners. Colors

and materials are to match each of the existing structures, including reinstalling the shutters.

The cabins are randomly scattered throughout a grove of mature trees of varying species. Most cabins have low hedges or shrubbery around their perimeters and some grass areas to the front, rear or sides of the structures. Low retaining walls and small patios of brick and adobe are also present, but undated. As originally constructed, the campground was surrounded on three sides, north, east and west, by fields of artichokes running all the way to the Carmel Mission, and on the South by the Carmel River. In the mid-1950s, the land to the north and west was subdivided into a residential neighborhood called Mission Fields. A high levee was constructed along the north side of the Carmel River and planted with riparian growth by the Army Corp of Engineers for flood control purposes. Entry into the Inn, originally of Oliver Road, has also been modified over time, and now comes off U.S. Highway 1, near the Carmel River Bridge. The facility has lost its larger historic landscape setting, but the remaining campground, with its informal clutter of small tourist cabins continues to convey a strong sense of time and place and of feeling and association.

There are four noncontributing buildings present in the Carmel River Inn complex, three duplex guest units, and a two-story, nineteen room motel structure. These buildings do not appear to qualify as contributing features of the potential historic district because of age and/or architectural style. The four noncontributing features were built between 1957 and 1960, with additions and alterations as late as 1983.

The 1934 Carmel River Inn was evaluated for significance based on age, historical association, and architectural value. Eighteen of the twenty-two buildings present appear to meet the 50-year-old threshold of the National and California Registers. Historically the eighteen contributing buildings are significant in the development of California's emerging automobile-oriented tourist industry, particularly as it related to the development of this industry in Monterey County in anticipation of the completion of the Carmel-San Simeon coastal highway (U.S. Highway 1) in the 1930s. The Inn is also significant in the area of architecture for its high concentration of little altered 1930s motor court cabins. Of the twenty-two buildings or structures present, eighteen appear to qualify for listing as an historic district in the California Register of Historic Places, at the local level of significance.

Since they appear to be eligible to qualify for listing in the National Register, demolition of an historic guest cabin may have a significant impact on the environment. Moving the existing guest cabin to an appropriate location on the property or returning a former guest cabin now used for storage purposes to visitor accommodating use, should mitigate such a potential impact in the context of eligibility requirements of the National Register. However, any proposed alterations or new additions to the proposed Historic District will have to be designed in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment Historic Properties, under the treatment for Rehabilitation. Careful adherence to the Secretary's standards will reduce any potential adverse change in the significance of the property to a less than significant effect on the environment.

Hence, the reason these projects are before the HRRB. There are six building permits that proposed remodels/additions as follows and included as Exhibit B:

Permit #25CP02377 - Cottage #17 remodel with an approximate 45 square foot addition

Permit #25CP02473 - Cottage #18 remodel with an approximate 37 square foot addition

Permit #25CP02472 - Cottage #19 remodel with an approximate 56 square foot addition  
Permit #25CP02482 - Cottage #20 remodel with an approximate 66 square foot addition  
Permit #25CP03981 - Cottage #21 remodel with an approximate 68 square foot addition  
Permit #25CP03871 - Cottage #32/33 laundry remodel with a 280 square foot addition

A Focused Phase II Historic Assessment was prepared by Kent Seavey, dated November 10, 2025 (Exhibit D). As proposed, this Focused Phase II rehabilitation project will be limited to additions to six of the historic cabins, to include new footings (if needed), expanded walls, repair & reinstall existing historic windows & reroofing one cabin. The intent of the current owners is to continue rehabilitation for several of the remaining c.1934 cabins by small additions & repairs (if necessary), to include reroofing one cabin, add new footings (if needed), expand some exterior walls to provide for utility upgrades to current code, & minor expansion of interior space, in all, repair/reinstall existing shutters and windows, if needed, matching, in kind, the historic features.

Based on the character-defining features of the Carmel River Inn in the 2004 Historical and Architectural Evaluation of the Inn, the cabins under review will retain their principal character defining features of the cabin building envelopes. The simple utilitarian treatment of the side elevations assures the prominence of the facades. As proposed, the new single wall additions will minimally change the visual appearance of the altered elevations and return existing historic wood windows, both original and matching, in kind close to their historic locations. The proposed project will repair and rehabilitate deteriorated historic features. Replacement, if necessary, will be with in-kind materials, satisfying Standard #6.

The summary of approved cabin rehabilitation and continued Focused Phase II rehabilitation of further cabins at the Carmel River Inn, is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties.

#### CEQA

The proposed project qualifies for a class 31 exemption pursuant to section 15331 of the CEQA Guidelines with no exceptions to section 15300.2. This exemption applies to projects that are for the "**maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources**" in a manner consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties" ("the Standards") are exempt from CEQA. Additionally, the project will not have a cumulative impact on the environment, there are no unusual circumstances regarding this project that will cause a significant impact to the environment, the project is not visible from any scenic highways, the project is not located on a hazardous waste site and the proposed project will not cause a substantial change to any historical resources.

Prepared by: Elizabeth Gonzales, Permit Center Manager  
Reviewed and Approved by: Jordan Evans-Polockow, Assistant Planner

The following attachments are on file with Housing and Community Development:  
Exhibit A - Draft Resolution  
Exhibit B - Project Plans, Colors and Materials and Renderings  
Exhibit C - Historical and Architectural Evaluation prepared by Kent Seavey,

Preservation Consultant, dated April 2004

Exhibit D - Focused Phase II Historic Assessment, prepared by Kent Seavey, dated November 10, 2025

Exhibit E - Design Approval application with Site Photos

Exhibit F- Revised Elevations for the five cottages

Cc: Paul Davis Partnership (Agent); Project File DA260028