



County of Monterey

Item No.2

Planning Commission

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

Legistar File Number: PC 25-076

September 10, 2025

Introduced: 9/2/2025

Current Status: Agenda Ready

Version: 1

Matter Type: Planning Item

PLN240207 - REY ERIC J & CLARK HARVEY C (ULLMAN CHAD W TR)

Public hearing to consider construction of a 5,620 square foot single-family dwelling with an attached 995 square foot three-car garage, 4,800 square foot detached barn, 36,610 square foot uncovered roping arena, and associated site improvements on slopes in excess of 25%. Project includes ridgeline development and 3,500 cubic yards of grading.

Project Location: 27650 Via Quintana, Carmel, Carmel Valley Master Plan

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

RECOMMENDATION:

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

- a. Find that the project qualifies as a Class 3 Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15303 of the CEQA Guidelines, and there are no exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2; and
- b. Approve a Combined Development Permit consisting of: 1) Administrative Permit and Design Approval to allow construction of a 5,620 square foot single-family dwelling with an attached 995 square foot garage, 4,800 square foot detached barn, 36,610 square foot uncovered roping arena, with associated site improvements and grading of approximately 3,500 cubic yards; 2) Use Permit to allow development on slopes in excess of 25%; and 3) Use Permit to allow Ridgeline Development.

The attached draft resolution includes findings and evidence for consideration (**Exhibit B**). Staff recommends approval, subject to 10 conditions of approval.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

Agent: Jay Auburn

Property Owner: Chad & Avery Ullman

APN: 185-052-023-000 and 185-052-026-000

Parcel Size: 75.496 acres or 3,288,605 square feet

Zoning: Low Density Residential with 2.5 acres per unit, Design Control, Site Plan Review, Residential Allocation Zoning overlays or "LDR/2.5-D-S-RAZ"

Plan Area: Carmel Valley Master Plan

Flagged and Staked: Yes

Project Planner: McKenna Bowling, Associate Planner

bowlingmr@countyofmonterey.gov, (831) 755-5298

SUMMARY

The subject property is located at 27650 Via Quintana, Carmel, within the unincorporated area of Monterey County. The lot is currently undeveloped and situated in a gated community within Carmel Valley. The proposed project includes construction of a 5,620 square foot single-family dwelling with an attached 995 square foot garage, 4,800 square feet barn out-building, a 36,610 square foot uncovered roping arena, an off-grid 15,000-gallon water storage, well, septic system, ground mounted PV array and battery storage with backup generator, and associated site improvements including a driveway, hardscape, a pool, and 3,500 cubic yards of grading. The project includes development along a ridgeline and approximately 54,900 square feet of development on slopes in excess of 25%. The project site is supplied with potable water by a small water system, Via Quintana WS#1, which allows two connections. The sewer connection is provided through an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS).

DISCUSSION:

Land Use

Based on staff's review of the planning application materials, the project complies with all rules and regulations pertaining to zoning uses and other applicable provisions of the 2010 General Plan, Carmel Valley Master Plan, and applicable sections of the Monterey County zoning ordinance (Title 21). The parcel is zoned Low Density Residential, with 2.5 acres per unit density, Design Control, Site Plan Review, and Residential Allocation Zoning overlays, which allow for the construction of a new residence and accessory structures, subject to a Design Approval. Based on the siting of the residence along the hillside, towards the ridge, staff determined that a Use Permit is required to allow ridgeline development, per Title 21 section 21.66.010.C.

Title 21 section 21.14.060 establishes the side development standard applicable to structures within the LDR zoning district. Pursuant to Title 21 section 21.14.060.C, the subject main structures shall have setbacks of at least 30 feet for the front, 10 percent of the average lot width to a maximum of twenty feet for the sides, and 20 feet for the rear, and a maximum allowable height of 30 feet. The garage is structurally attached to the proposed residence and therefore are subject to the same site development standards as the main structure. As established through approval of this subdivision, the subject lot was created with a building envelope that balanced the site's constraints. The residence and attached accessory structures will be entirely within the allowable building area. The structures have a proposed height of 24 feet 9 inches from average natural grade. The subject property has an allowable building site coverage of 25 percent, and as proposed the lot coverage will be 0.37 percent. Therefore, the property complies with the required site development standards based on the applicable zoning district.

Design

Carmel Valley Master Plan Policy CV-1.1 requires that development follow a rural architectural theme. As designed, the proposed residence will have exterior colors and materials that include light brown vertical siding, dark brown metal framing for windows and doors, gray metal roofing, and stone veneer siding. The garage will have dark brown vertical siding and a dark brown metal roofing, and the prefabricated barn will have a light green exterior siding with a light tan metal roof. The proposed bulk, colors, and materials are consistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood. Consistent with

Carmel Valley Master Plan Policy CV-1.20, the exterior finishes and proposed rural architectural style are compatible with the surrounding environment, consistent with the surrounding residential neighborhood character, and maintain an appropriate bulk and mass. Policy LU-1.13 of the 2010 General Plan requires that all exterior lighting shall be unobtrusive and constructed or located so that only the intended area is illuminated, long-range visibility of the lighting source is reduced, and off-site glare is fully controlled. As delineated on the project plans, the lighting fixtures proposed are warm LED bulbs, are IDA Dark Sky compliant, and are downlit and unobtrusive, as required in Condition No. 9. Therefore, the project, as designed and sited, assures protection of the public viewshed, is consistent with neighborhood character, and assures visual integrity, as required by Title 21, Chapter 21.44. Also see the discussion below regarding ridgeline development

Ridgeline Development

According to County of Monterey GIS records, the subject property is designated as being visually “sensitive”. Additionally, staff conducted a site visit on April 18, 2025 to determine whether the project would be visible from any common public viewing area, including Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade. The majority of the subject property, specifically the building envelope, is visible from Carmel Valley Road when travelling east. The primary vantage point is a 0.25-mile section of Carmel Valley Road (0.97 miles, 5,122 feet west of the project site), near the turnout east of the Mid Valley Shopping Center. Given the building envelope’s visibility and based on the installed staking and flagging, staff determined that the proposed development would be visible at this vantage point for approximately 15 seconds. At this vantage point, a proposed development would not silhouette against the sky (**Exhibit F**). Additionally, a number of other residences along hillsides are also entirely visible or partially visible from this section of Carmel Valley Road. A secondary vantage point is approximately 0.5 miles west of the project site, where the proposed residence would be visible for approximately 400 linear feet along Carmel Valley Road or 5 seconds (**Exhibit F**). At this vantage point, the residence is not directly in a driver's or passenger's line of sight due to the significant elevation difference between Carmel Valley Road and the subject property. However, given this change in elevation and the topography of the property, the ridge of the residence silhouettes against the sky at this second vantage point. Due to the steep topography of the property, the project site is not visible when traveling westbound along Carmel Valley Road.

Title 21 section 21.06.950 defines "Ridgeline development" as development on the crest of a hill which has the potential to create a silhouette or other substantially adverse impact when viewed from a common public viewing area. Development must be on the crest of a hill or silhouette against the sky to be considered ridgeline development. Based on the location of the development towards the top of a hill and its silhouette against the sky (vantage point #2), the project meets the definition of “Ridgeline development.”

Pursuant to Title 21 section 21.64.230, ridgeline development may be allowed upon issuance of a Use Permit. General Plan Policy OS-1.3 provides that ridgeline development could be allowed with exceptions considered at a publicly noticed hearing. The General plan policy prohibits ridgeline development unless the following findings can be made:

The ridgeline development will not create a substantially adverse visual impact when viewed from a common public viewing area; and either;

The proposed development better achieves the goals, policies, and objectives of the Monterey County General Plan and applicable area plan than other development alternatives; or,
There is no feasible alternative to the ridgeline development.

The property's 4.5-acre building envelope is located on a hillside, visible from Carmel Valley Road. Given the size of the development and visibility of the entire building envelope, no location would eliminate visibility from Carmel Valley Road. Although it is visible from Carmel Valley Road, the proposed development would not create a substantial adverse visual impact due to its location and design. The Applicant/Owner made multiple design changes through Planning's review to ensure that visibility of the project would be minimized. The initial project design (single-family dwelling, barn, and roping arena) included expansive exterior windows, a white exterior with black trim, and a steep roofline pitch. After discussions with staff, who raised concerns regarding visibility from Carmel Valley Road and compliance with applicable General Plan Policies, including CV-1-1, CV-1.9, CV-1.20, and CV-3.4, the Applicant/Owner revised the project by reducing the number and size of west facing exterior windows, and incorporating earth tone colors (light beige and brown trim) and a less steep roofline pitch. These exterior colors were further revised to consist of a light brown/taupe exterior with a dark brown trim. The proposed development is also 5.5 feet below the maximum allowed structure height for the subject zoning district (30 feet). Consistent with Carmel Valley Master Plan Policies CV-1.1 and CV-1.20, the proposed natural colors and materials and modern farm style architectural style help the development blend into the surrounding grassland and oak woodland hillside and be compatible with the rural theme of Carmel Valley. In addition to the exterior colors, the proposed development would be situated on lower elevations of the building envelope to ensure that the roof lines do not silhouette against the sky when viewed from the primary Carmel Valley Road vantage point. However, it should be noted that the project would still silhouette against the sky at the second visible vantage point along Carmel Valley Road (5 seconds; 400 linear feet). At the first vantage point, the proposed residence's bulk and mass would be perceived as smaller due to distance (1 mile), resulting in visibility that is consistent with or less than other residences in the neighborhood - see **Exhibit E**. At the second vantage point, although the bulk and mass would appear more consistent with the true size of the development, its visibility is minimal (5 seconds) and would be in the upper left-hand corner of the public viewshed due to the elevation change. For these reasons, staff believes that the proposed project meets the first criterion to grant the required Use Permit to allow ridgeline development.

Carmel Valley Master Plan Policy CV-1.9 states, "Structures proposed in open grassland area that would be highly visible from Carmel Valley Road or Laurels Grade shall be minimized in number and be clustered near existing natural or man-made vertical features." The purpose of this policy is public viewshed protection/minimization and environmental harmony. Clustering buildings near existing natural vertical features - such as trees- **camouflages or visually integrates** new development into the environment, making it less noticeable. The proposed development is sited on a grassy hillside that is visible from Carmel Valley Road, but not Laureles Grade. The proposed residential development (single-family dwelling, garage, pool, sports court, and site improvements) is clustered near an existing stand of Coast live oak trees. By locating the residential development near mature vegetation and using natural colors, the project reduces visual impact and remains consistent with the rural aesthetic of Carmel Valley. The proposed barn is sited on the western portion of the building envelope, between

numerous mature Coast live oak trees. The existing vegetation would partially screen the barn's visibility from Carmel Valley Road. Finally, the roping area will be enclosed with a rustic fence, which is compatible with the surrounding environment.

There are portions of the building envelope that contain less than 25% slopes. The single-family dwelling is sited in a flatter portion of the building envelope, while the roping arena and barn are partially sited on steeper slopes. Relocation of the proposed development would impact a greater quantity of steeper slopes and may result in greater impacts to visual and forest resources. Carmel Valley Master Plan Policy CV-3.4 requires that the alteration of hillsides and natural landforms caused by cutting, filling, grading, or vegetation removal be minimized through design and restoration. As shown on sheet L-2.1 of the attached plans (**Exhibit B**), all disturbed areas will be hydroseeded to maintain the original rural, grassland condition of the hillside. In addition, constructing a roping arena, rather than structural development, on steeper portion of the building envelope helps maintain the rural character of Carmel Valley (Policy CV-1.1). Finally, the selected building locations also avoid tree removal, consistent with Carmel Valley Master Plan Policy CV-3.11. For these reasons, staff believes the project meets the second criterion to grant the required Use Permit to allow ridgeline development.

If the second criterion of General Plan Policy OS-1.3 can be met, then it is not necessary to meet the third criterion, which requires a finding that there is no feasible alternative to ridgeline development. Although the second criterion can be met in this case, the staff provides the following discussion as well. In this case, there may be alternative building sites that would avoid being located on the crest of a hill, such as relocating the development further downslope (west/south) while still being sited within the required building envelope. However, any downslope alternative location could increase the visibility of the residence from Carmel Valley Road (vantage points #1 and #2) and result in a similar silhouette against the sky (from vantage point #2) because the development would be placed on the front-facing slope and the differences in elevation. Further, such relocation would result in greater impacts to slopes in excess of 25% and forest resources than the proposed project. Such alternatives would likely conflict with General Plan Policy OS-3.5, and Carmel Valley Master Plan Policies CV-3.4 and CV-3.11.

Development on slopes in excess of 25%

In accordance with 2010 General Plan Open Space Policy 3.5, development on slopes in excess of 25 percent shall be prohibited, unless there is no feasible alternative which would allow development to occur on slopes of less than 25 percent, and the proposed development better achieves the resource protection objectives and policies contained in the 2010 General Plan, and applicable Area Plans and Master Plans.

The subject property is almost entirely sloped in excess of 25 percent, as shown on County GIS records and the attached project plans (**Exhibit B**). The building envelope created as part of the approved subdivision (PLN220339-DEP) is situated in an area of the parcel that minimizes impacts to slopes. The property has an existing dirt access road running parallel to the proposed barn. This road could be extended on less steep slopes to access the proposed residence, but permanently scar the hillside with asphalt. To avoid scarring the hillside and minimizing hillside alteration, as encouraged by Carmel Valley Master Plan Policies CV-2.9 and CV-3.4, the project proposes to install a driveway through a cluster of trees, which also contains steeper slopes. All other development on slopes is

associated with leveling a building pad for the proposed barn and creating a roping arena. No development on slopes is required for the residence. As delineated on the project plans, the project proposes a total of 54,900 square feet of development on slopes exceeding 25 percent. Of the development taking place on slopes, 1,470 square feet is allocated to construct the driveway to access the property, and the remaining 53,430 square feet is the pervious area adjacent to the roping arena and barn. Additionally, by developing on steeper slopes to construct the associated site improvements, the project does not involve tree removal or cause negative impacts to environmentally sensitive habitats. Further, the roping arena is a principally allowed use under LDR zoning and has been designed to contour the natural slope and topography of the land, and backfill the lowest portion of the arena to create an even grade. The proposed development reduces potential visual impacts by siting the residence towards the rear (east side) of the parcel; therefore, the proposed development on slopes better meets the objectives and policies within the General Plan, by reducing visual impacts along a scenic corridor and avoiding removal of mature landmark Oaks.

CEQA:

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15303 categorically exempts new construction, inclusive of single-family dwellings and accessory structures. As proposed, the project involves construction of the first single-family dwelling with an attached garage, and detached barn. The project, as proposed, does not create impacts to an environmental resource, any scenic highways, or historical resources; this will not create any cumulative or significant impact, and this site is not a hazardous waste site. Per the biological report, there were no signs of any endangered plant or animal communities on the property during the pedestrian survey. No evidence of significant adverse environmental effects was identified during the staff's review of the development application.

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
- County of Monterey Regional Fire Protection District

LUAC:

The proposed project was reviewed by the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee on July 21, 2025. The committee voted unanimously in support of the project as proposed (**Exhibit D**). No comments or concerns were raised.

Prepared by: McKenna Bowling, Associate Planner, (831)755-5298
Reviewed by: Fionna Jensen, Principal Planner
Approved by: Melanie Beretti, AICP, Chief of Planning

The following attachments are on file with the HCD:

- Exhibit A - Project Data Sheet
- Exhibit B - Draft Resolution
- Draft Conditions of Approval

Site Plan, Elevations & Floor Plans

Colors and Materials

Exhibit C - Vicinity Map

Exhibit D - LUAC Minutes dated July 21, 2025

Exhibit E - Visual Simulations

Exhibit F - Carmel Valley Road Vantage Points

cc: Front Counter Copy; Planning Commission, California Coastal Commission, Monterey County Regional Fire Protection District; HCD-Environmental Services; HCD - Engineering Services; Environmental Health Bureau; McKenna Bowling, Project Planner; Jacqueline Nickerson Principal Planner; Chad and Avery Ullman, Property Owners; Jay Auburn, Agent/Architect; The Open Monterey Project (Molly Erickson); Laborers International Union of North America (Lozeau Drury LLP); Christina McGinnis, Keep Big Sur Wild; LandWatch; Project File PLN240207.