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JUN 05 2008

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Date: June 5, 2008

To: Allen Bell, Senior Planner

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cc:

Re: Ballantyne Single Family Residence IS/MND Revisions

This memorandum outlines Rincon's suggested revisions to the Ballantyne Single Family Residence Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) based on the comments received during the public review of the document. This includes all suggested revisions other than possible changes to the discussion of aesthetics and related policies as they pertain to Farren Road. That issue will be addressed in a separate memorandum.

The comments that we believe warrant revisions to text or graphics are listed below, followed by our suggested revisions. The comments & suggested revisions are organized by IS/MND section. In addition to these suggested revisions, several issues raised may warrant further discussion between County and Rincon staff (and possibly the applicant) as well as possible additional revisions. These include:

- Confirmation of the utility infrastructure needed to provide water and gas service to the site
 - Confirmation that the County considers the photosimulations prepared for the project valid
 - Confirmation of whether or not additional BAR review is required
 - Whether or not additional geotechnical analysis has been prepared for the project and could be included in the IS/MND
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Suggested IS/MND Revisions

1.0 Project Description

Comment

Project Description should include the applicant's most recent site plan, which shows the locations of utility lines.

Suggested Revision

Add most recent site plan & brief description of utility lines (note that the water line is already mentioned in the Project Description, but we could perhaps provide a slightly more detailed description based on the site plan).

2.0 Project Location

Comment

Project location on Figure 1 is shown in the wrong place.

Suggested Revision

Correct Figure 1 to show the project site farther east.

3.0 Environmental Setting

Comment

The environmental setting does not accurately describe the sensitive nature of the Gaviota Coast.

Suggested Revision

Add the following paragraph at the beginning of Section 3.0:

The project site is located at the eastern end of the Gaviota Coast, which has been described by the National Park Service as "one of the last remaining rural landscapes on the Southern California Coast." The area retains much of the character and scenery of its ranching history and includes a range of biological, agricultural, recreational, and cultural resources.

I. Aesthetics

Comment

The MND should disclose whether the house would be visible from other public roads: Vereya Leyenda, Vereda del Padre, Calle Real, western end or Hollister.

Suggested Revision

Revise the sixth paragraph under Item I.a to read as follows:

The proposed residence and associated structures would be visible from some private properties, particularly the residences in the Embarcadero West subdivision located approximately 1,000 feet to

the south and east of the proposed construction site. **Site structures could also be partially visible from portions of public roadways within the nearby Embarcadero West subdivision, such as Vereya Leyenda, Vereda del Padre, Vereda Escolar, and Vereda Galeria. However, structures would be largely obscured by existing topography.** Views of identified scenic resources would not be blocked and implementation of the conditions discussed above would minimize the visibility of onsite structures. **Moreover, roadways within the Embarcadero West subdivision exclusively serve private residential properties within that neighborhood and provide no vehicular throughway. As such, these roadways do not serve as major public view corridors.**

Comment

The MND should address view impacts from the Pacific Ocean.

Suggested Revision

Add the following after the third paragraph under Item I.a:

Site structures generally would not be visible from the coastline due to the presence of intervening topography. Structures could be partially visible from portions of the Pacific Ocean. However, as shown on the photosimulations on figures 10, 11, and 12, the project would represent only a small fraction of the overall panoramic view from Highway 101 and, even without the proposed berm, would be only minimally visible. The project would represent an even smaller fraction of the panorama from the ocean because of the increased distance between the project and view location. As such, the overall visual effect on views from the ocean would be negligible.

XVI. Water Resources/Flooding

Comment

Water demand is underestimated in the MND due to size of structure and extent of landscaping, swimming pool and reflecting pool.

Suggested Revision

Revise Item XVI.k to read as follows:

The proposed **11,535 square-foot residence and 800 square-foot guest house would generate higher water demand than the average single family residence due to its size and landscape irrigation needs. However, the project would not substantially reduce the amount of water available for public supply as water service would be through a connection to the Goleta Water District. The District's 2005 Urban Water Management Plan indicates a water supply surplus during normal years through 2030 and indicates that no reduction in water deliveries would occur during critically dry years or multiple dry years. Water demand associated with development of the project site was accounted for in the District's water demand forecasts. Therefore, significant impacts relative to water supply are not anticipated. The Urban Water Management Plan is incorporated by reference and is available online at www.goletawater.com.**

A water line would be extended to the project site from existing services located at the intersection of Farren Road and Vereda Del Padre. As indicated in the *Project Description*, the water line would be the minimum size necessary to provide service to the proposed single-family residence and accessory structures, and would not serve other existing or future residences or development. **As such, onsite water infrastructure would not induce or facilitate development of other parcels located to the**

north or west. The Goleta Water District noted in a March 7, 2007 letter to the project applicant that the costs of connecting to the District would be substantial, and that booster pumps, privately owned water storage tanks, and an onsite chlorination facility may be needed in order to meet water quality, fire flow, and pressure requirements. However, there has been no indication that connection to the District is infeasible and the costs of needed onsite water infrastructure would be borne by the project applicant. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

Comment

Need more detail on impacts of infrastructure required to deliver water, and to assess secondary impacts from that infrastructure as well as potential for growth-inducement.

Suggested Revision

Though the proposed water line and associated impacts are discussed, it would be useful to include the current site plan and any additional details that can be provided regarding the proposed water & gas lines. Perhaps we can get a better description of the proposed utility lines and any other needed facilities from the project applicant.

II. Agricultural Resources

Comment

Mention Class II (prime) soils on parcel.

Suggested Revision

Revise Item II.a,b to read as follows:

a, b) **According to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) data, the portion of the site on which the residence is proposed contains Class II (prime) soils. However,** the Important Farmlands Inventory classifies the project site as grazing land, ~~though it~~ **The site** is not currently used for grazing and, at 17.1 acres, is not large enough to support a viable grazing operation on its own. Based on the grazing land designation, the proposed project would not **significantly** affect Prime farmland or farmland of State or Local Importance. In addition, the project site is not within an agricultural preserve, while the nearest active agricultural land (orchard) is about ½-mile away to the north. Therefore, the proposed project would not impair agricultural land productivity or conflict with agricultural preserve programs. Impacts to agricultural resources would be **less than significant**.

Comment

Checkmark in wrong place for ag impacts (should be less than significant, not no impact, to match discussion).

Suggested Revision

Correct table to check "Less Than Significant" rather than "No Impact."

Comment

Provide more discussion of possible land use conflicts with agricultural uses and include the County's right to farm ordinance as a mitigation-measure.

Suggested Revision

Though not recommended as a mitigation measure since compliance with the Ordinance is a standard requirement, add the following at the end of the discussion under Item II:

Conflicts between the proposed residential use and agricultural activity are not anticipated given the distance to the nearest agricultural operation (approximately 1/2 mile). In addition, in accordance with the County's Right to Farm Ordinance (County Code Chapter 3, Article V, Section 3-23), "no agricultural activity, operation or facility, or appurtenances thereof, conducted or maintained for commercial purposes, and in a manner consistent with proper and accepted customs and standards, as established and followed by similar agricultural operations in the same locality, shall be or become a nuisance, private or public, due to any changed condition in or about the locality, after the same has been in operation for more than three years if it was not a nuisance at the time it began." This ordinance would ensure that existing agricultural operations could continue even if complaints arise from the future occupants of the proposed residence. Thus, project implementation would not adversely affect the ability of existing agricultural operations to continue to practice farming.

IV. Biological Resources

Comment

Impacts to birds/raptors are not discussed

Suggested Revision

Revise Item IV.g-k to read as follows:

g-k) No unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species were observed onsite during an April 8, 2008 site visit and, based on the general lack of habitat for such species, none are anticipated to inhabit the site. As noted above, the proposed project would not involve the removal of any trees and much of the area in which the residence and associated structures are proposed has been disturbed by past onsite activities, including grading, mowing and disking. **Various raptors, including the White-tailed kite (a California Species of Concern), are known to inhabit the general site vicinity. Such species could periodically use portions of the project site for foraging. However, due to the disturbed nature of the area where the residence is proposed, limited size of the area (less than one acre) that would be further disturbed by the proposed residence, and continued availability of extensive and more suitable foraging areas throughout the site vicinity, project implementation would not significantly affect raptors.** As noted under item I, *Aesthetics*, conditions included in the Land Use Permit approved by the Planning Commission include restrictions on nighttime lighting and limit site landscape to native, drought-tolerant species. These conditions would minimize the potential for disruption of wildlife movement through nearby corridors such as the drainage adjacent to the site's northeastern boundary. No direct or indirect impacts to sensitive fauna are expected as a result of project implementation and impacts would be **less than significant**.

VII. Fire Protection

Comment

The MND does not address water pressure or fire truck access.

Suggested Revision

Revise Item VII.c to read as follows:

The proposed residential unit, guest house and accessory buildings are located adjacent to agriculture lands used for cattle grazing and orchards. ~~Nearby~~ To the east is an established rural residential subdivision. Such uses have lower wildfire hazard potential than undeveloped hillside areas.

Firefighting access would be via Farren Road. Although portions of the road are steeply sloped, there is no evidence that fire trucks would be unable to access the site via this existing County road. Given the Fire Department enforces development standards for these areas all development in the County, including standards relating to the provision of fire access roads and driveways, stored water fire protection systems, automatic fire sprinkler and alarm systems, and vegetation management, and water pressure. The proposed project would be required to demonstrate compliance with all applicable Fire Department standards prior to issuance of a Coastal Development Permit. These Fire Department standards can be found at the Fire Department website (<http://www.sbcfire.com/fp/dr/index.html>), which is incorporated by reference.

IX. Hazards/Hazardous Materials

Comment

The MND must analyze the evacuation capacity of Farren Road.

Suggested Revision

Revise Item IX.d to read as follows:

The proposed project would generate an estimated 16 daily vehicle trips, which would access Calle Real and Highway 101 via Farren Road. This number of trips would not interfere with emergency response **and would not hinder evacuation by the limited number of travelers on Farren Road north of the project site.** Impacts would be **less than significant.**

XII. Noise

Comment

Large properties with extensive landscaping have substantially more operational noise impacts than typical SFD. All the maintenance, landscaping and service people also increase onsite noise and daily trips.

Suggested Revision

Revise Item XII.a,c to read as follows:

The proposed single family residence and accessory buildings would not generate substantial onsite noise at the nearest sensitive receptors (residences in the Embarcadero West subdivision, approximately 1,000 feet from the location of the proposed residence). The project would generate an estimated 16 daily vehicle trips on Farren Road and on Calle Real and/or Highway 101. This number of trips would not generate substantial noise increases, nor would it affect any sensitive receptors as none are located along Farren Road south of the site. **Because of the size of the proposed residence, the proposed project would be expected to generate higher than typical noise levels due maintenance and landscaping requirements. Potential noise sources include periodic maintenance/landscape vehicles and landscape machinery (lawn mowers, leaf blowers, etc.).**

However, noise associated with these types of events would be periodic and would not be expected to exceed County standards, particularly given the distance (approximately 1,000 feet) to the nearest adjacent residence. Long-term noise impacts would be **less than significant.**