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Planning, Building & Environmental Services

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Brian D. Bordona  
Director

## MEMORANDUM

To:	Planning Commission	From:	Andrew Amelung, Planner II
Date:	June 18, 2025	Re:	Vine Cliff Winery Alteration P25-00161-UP & P24-00191-MM

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide clarification and consistency across all hearing documents on the 3:1 tree replacement ratio for the removal of one oak tree, and to correct a clerical error from the 2017 Conditions of Approval (P17-00129-MOD) regarding visitation hours for tours and tastings which should read Monday-Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The 2017 Conditions of Approval listed these hours as 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. in error, as the 11 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. hours only apply to marketing events. In addition to this, one section of proposed development area on slopes over 30 percent was not listed in the Staff Report and Conditions of Approval and has been included in the redline revisions. Corrections have been made to the Staff Report, Findings, Conditions of Approval and CEQA Exemption Memorandum, and changes are reflected in the redline revisions included with this memorandum.

Should the Planning Commission decide to approve the applicant's proposal, be advised that approval will be based on the Conditions of Approval and project documents as amended in this memorandum.

Staff Requests the Following Changes to the Staff Report, Recommended Findings, Recommended Conditions of Approval and CEQA Exemption Memorandum:

Revisions are shown below with underline and ~~strikethrough~~.

### Staff Report: Update Section on Parcel History

In 2017, the County authorized modifications to the entitlement through Major Modification to Use Permit P17-00129-MOD, which involved revisions to the marketing program and recognition of changes to the site and floor plan. The modification included 1) visitation, tours, and tastings seven days a week ~~from 11:00am to 11:00pm~~ with up to 50 visitors per day or up to 350 per week, which may include food pairings by a licensed caterer or food service provider and can take place in the existing winery building, patio, pond and garden area, vineyards and within the cave; 2) on-premise consumption of wine in accordance with "Assembly Bill 2004" and the sale of wine for consumption on premise; 3) up to ten full-time employees and six part-time employees; the construction of driveway and access road improvements as required by Napa County Road and Street Standards; 4) the removal of custom crush from the entitlement; 5) utilization of the existing 2,338 square-foot winery building for winemaking, retail sales, tastings, marketing events and offices (including the 840 square-foot mezzanine), with a total accessory use area of

2,338 square feet and production area of 21,696 square feet; and 6) utilization of the 15,000 square foot cave to also include marketing events for up to 50 persons, which requires a Type III occupancy permit to be in place prior to any public use.

REPLACE WITH:

In 2017, the County authorized modifications to the entitlement through Major Modification to Use Permit P17-00129-MOD, which involved revisions to the marketing program and recognition of changes to the site and floor plan. The modification included 1) visitation, tours, and tastings seven days a week from 10:00am to 6:00pm with up to 50 visitors per day or up to 350 per week, with marketing events occurring from 11:00am to 11:00pm, which may include food pairings by a licensed caterer or food service provider and can take place in the existing winery building, patio, pond and garden area, vineyards and within the cave; 2) on-premise consumption of wine in accordance with “Assembly Bill 2004” and the sale of wine for consumption on premise; 3) up to ten full-time employees and six part-time employees; the construction of driveway and access road improvements as required by Napa County Road and Street Standards; 4) the removal of custom crush from the entitlement; 5) utilization of the existing 2,338 square-foot winery building for winemaking, retail sales, tastings, marketing events and offices (including the 840 square-foot mezzanine), with a total accessory use area of 2,338 square feet and production area of 21,696 square feet; and 6) utilization of the 15,000 square foot cave to also include marketing events for up to 50 persons, which requires a Type III occupancy permit to be in place prior to any public use.

#### **Staff Report: Update Section on Slopes Over 30 Percent**

##### Conservation Regulations

The overall development area consists of mild to steep slopes, with ~~four~~ sections in areas with slopes over 30 percent. These sections include 1) a 3,408 square-foot development area with an average slope of 41.02 percent near one of the cave hospitality areas; 2) a 1,295 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.69 percent near the entry courtyard for guests; 3) a 1,177 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.96 percent near the tunnel that connects the winery structure to the historic barrel storage cave; ~~and~~ 4) a 2,805 square-foot development area with an average slope of 48.25 percent where the new covered crush pad and production cave portal will be located.

REPLACE WITH:

##### Conservation Regulations

The overall development area consists of mild to steep slopes, with five sections in areas with slopes over 30 percent. These sections include 1) a 3,408 square-foot development area with an average slope of 41.02 percent near one of the cave hospitality areas; 2) a 1,295 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.69 percent near the entry courtyard for guests; 3) a 1,177 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.96 percent near the tunnel that connects the winery structure to the historic barrel storage cave; 4) a 2,805 square-foot development area with an average slope of 48.25 percent where the new covered crush pad and

production cave portal will be located; and 5) a 1,016 square-foot development area with an average slope of 35.22 percent near the existing crush pad and proposed courtyard entryway.

**Findings: Update Section on Exception to Conservation Regulations Finding 6:**

6. The development project minimizes removal of existing vegetation, incorporates existing vegetation into the final design plan, and replacement vegetation of appropriate size, quality and quantity is included to mitigate adverse environmental effects;

**Analysis:** The removal of sections of concrete production area and retaining walls where slopes are over 30 percent, which will allow for hillside restoration back to the original slope, as well as additional area for natural vegetation regrowth. One live oak will be removed due to its proximity to the proposed cave portal, and it will be replaced at a 2:1 replanting ratio. The remainder of the trees to be removed are non-native ornamental species, and landscaped areas along the existing watercourse will be preserved. The removal of the existing impervious driveway and parking area at the entrance of both the cave and the hospitality structure and the installation of a garden plaza in its place will result in an overall enhancement in both the quality and quantity of vegetation on site.

REPLACE WITH:

6. The development project minimizes removal of existing vegetation, incorporates existing vegetation into the final design plan, and replacement vegetation of appropriate size, quality and quantity is included to mitigate adverse environmental effects;

**Analysis:** The removal of sections of concrete production area and retaining walls where slopes are over 30 percent, which will allow for hillside restoration back to the original slope, as well as additional area for natural vegetation regrowth. One live oak will be removed due to its proximity to the proposed cave portal, and it will be replaced at a 3:1 replanting ratio. The remainder of the trees to be removed are non-native ornamental species, and landscaped areas along the existing watercourse will be preserved. The removal of the existing impervious driveway and parking area at the entrance of both the cave and the hospitality structure and the installation of a garden plaza in its place will result in an overall enhancement in both the quality and quantity of vegetation on site.

**Recommended Conditions of Approval: Update Condition 4.2:**

4.2 TOURS AND TASTINGS/VISITATION **[RESERVED]**

REPLACE WITH:

4.2 TOURS AND TASTINGS/VISITATION **[RESERVED]**

Tours and tastings shall be by appointment only and shall be limited to the following:

- a. Frequency: 7 days per week, Monday through Sunday
- b. Maximum number of persons per day: 50
- c. Maximum number of persons per week: 350
- d. Hours of visitation: ~~11:00 am to 11:00 pm~~ 10:00 am to 6:00 pm
- e. Tours and tastings may include food pairing, to be furnished by a licensed caterer or food service provider.
- f. Tours and tasting activities may take place in the existing winery building, patio, pond and garden area, vineyards and within the caves.

**Recommended Conditions of Approval: Update Condition 1.1:**

- 1.1 Approval of a Use Permit for an Exception to the Conservation Regulations to allow development on slopes over 30 percent at four areas with slopes over 30 percent. These sections include:
  - a. One 3,408 square-foot development area with an average slope of 41.02 percent near the cave hospitality areas;
  - b. One 1,295 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.69 percent near the entry courtyard for guests;
  - c. One 1,177 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.96 percent near the tunnel that connects the winery structure to the historic barrel storage cave;
  - d. One 2,805 square-foot development area with an average slope of 48.25 percent where the new covered crush pad and production cave portal will be located.

REPLACE WITH:

- 1.1 Approval of a Use Permit for an Exception to the Conservation Regulations to allow development on slopes over 30 percent at four areas with slopes over 30 percent. These sections include:
  - a. One 3,408 square-foot development area with an average slope of 41.02 percent near the cave hospitality areas;
  - b. One 1,295 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.69 percent near the entry courtyard for guests;
  - c. One 1,177 square-foot development area with an average slope of 42.96 percent near the tunnel that connects the winery structure to the historic barrel storage cave;
  - d. One 2,805 square-foot development area with an average slope of 48.25 percent where the new covered crush pad and production cave portal will be located.
  - e. One 1,016 square-foot development area with an average slope of 35.22 percent near the existing crush pad and proposed courtyard entryway.

**CEQA Exemption Memorandum: Update Section on Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land**

Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land [California Code of Regulations (CCR) §15304]

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The removal of approximately 10,000 square feet of impervious asphalt surface to create a pervious garden plaza, and the addition of a second cave portal near the proposed crush pad, can be considered a private alteration in the condition of land. A healthy, but not mature and not scenic, oak tree will be removed at the site of the proposed second cave portal and will be replaced at a ~~2:1~~ replanting ratio as identified on the submitted site plans. The proposed project as conditioned does not significantly change the existing baseline conditions or trigger exceptions described in CEQA Section 15300.2, as it does not present any potential for cumulative impacts, significant effects, impacts on scenic highways, development on hazardous waste sites, or impacts on historical resources. Therefore, the project can be Categorically Exempt under Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land.

REPLACE WITH:

Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land [California Code of Regulations (CCR) §15304]

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The removal of approximately 10,000 square feet of impervious asphalt surface to create a pervious garden plaza, and the addition of a second cave portal near the proposed crush pad, can be considered a private alteration in the condition of land. A healthy, but not mature and not scenic, oak tree will be removed at the site of the proposed second cave portal and will be replaced at a ~~2:1~~ replanting ratio as identified on the submitted site plans. The proposed project as conditioned does not significantly change the existing baseline conditions or trigger exceptions described in CEQA Section 15300.2, as it does not present any potential for cumulative impacts, significant effects, impacts on scenic highways, development on hazardous waste sites, or impacts on historical resources. Therefore, the project can be Categorically Exempt under Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land.