

“A”

Recommended Findings

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING – MARCH 4, 2026
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

**80 Clear Creek Road Viewshed Protection Program & NCRSS Exception
P22-00182-VIEW
80 Clear Creek Road, Oakville, CA 94562
APN 027-310-032, -043**

ENVIRONMENTAL:

The Planning Commission has received and reviewed the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and of Napa County's Local Procedures for Implementing CEQA, and makes the following findings. That:

1. The Planning Commission has read and considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) prior to taking action on said Mitigated Negative Declaration and the proposed project.
2. The Mitigated Negative Declaration and MMRP is based on independent judgment exercised by the Planning Commission.
3. The Mitigated Negative Declaration and MMRP was prepared and considered in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
4. There is no substantial evidence in the record as a whole, that the project will have a significant effect on the environment provided that measures to mitigate potentially significant impacts to biological resources are incorporated into the project approval.
5. There is no evidence, in considering the record as a whole, that the proposed project will have a potential adverse effect on wildlife resources or habitat upon which the wildlife depends.
6. The site of this proposed project is not on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5 and is not within the boundaries of any airport land use plan.
7. The Secretary of the Planning Commission is the custodian of the records of the proceedings on which this decision is based. Records are located at the Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department, 1195 Third Street, Room 210, Napa, California.

EXCEPTION TO THE NAPA COUNTY ROAD AND STREET STANDARDS:

The Planning Commission has reviewed the attached Napa County Road and Street Standards (NCRSS) Exception Request Letter in accordance with Road and Street Standards Section 3 and makes the following findings.

8. The exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment which include, but are not limited to, steep slopes, heritage oak trees, or other trees of at least six inches diameter at breast height and found by the decision-maker to be of significant importance, but do not include man-made environmental features such as rock walls,

ornamental or decorative landscaping, fences or the like.

Analysis: There are currently five (5) driveway segments with longitudinal slopes between 18-20 percent along the centerline which exceed 300 feet in length and do not provide transition area of 10 percent or less for the 100 feet immediately preceding. Improving the driveway to reduce these longitudinal slopes and provide segments that are 10% or less would require significant earthwork on steep slopes exceeding 30-50%. No road work is required for the existing driveway to meet same overall practical effect.

9. Grant of the Road and Street Standards Exception will provide the same overall practical effect as the Standards do in providing defensible space, and does not adversely affect the life, safety, and welfare of the public or persons coming to the property.

Analysis: The applicant has demonstrated that while the driveway does not fully comply with the Road and Street Standards, there are sufficient sections of the driveway for engines to seek relief and vehicles to pass and provide the same overall practical effect as the Standards. Existing vegetation and road surface are sufficient for fire apparatus to access the site, and the applicant will be conditioned to maintain these features in perpetuity.

VIEWSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM:

The following findings must be made in order for the Planning Commission to approve a Viewshed Protection Program application pursuant to County Code § 18.106.050.

10. The project as designed or modified is consistent with Chapter 18.108 of the code.

Analysis: None of the areas proposed for earth disturbing activities are within stream setbacks. As currently designed, the application would remove 10 oak trees which are estimated to provide less than 0.13 acres of tree canopy. The application proposes 70 new tree plantings to supplement the removed trees, which are estimated to provide 0.42 acres of new tree canopy, which would satisfy County code requirements for Vegetation Removal Mitigation in Napa County Code §18.108.020.

11. If the highest point of the proposed project is located more than twenty-five vertical feet below a major or minor ridgeline, that measures have been included in the project to reduce its visual impact on the major or minor ridgeline through use of existing natural vegetation, landscaping, topographical siting, architectural design, and colortone; or if the highest point of the proposed structure is within twenty-five vertical feet of a major or minor ridgeline, that the existing vegetation, proposed landscaping, topographical siting, architectural design, and colortone screen the predominant portion of the proposed structure.

Analysis: The highest point of the proposed structures is within twenty-five feet of a minor ridgeline. Based on the proposed site plan and elevations, existing natural features (topographic and vegetative) screen the predominant portions of the proposed underground storage, underground spa and underground wine and art storage buildings. The project proposes to plant 70 trees on the project site, a mixture of coast live oak, interior live oak and California sycamore, which are intended to screen the predominant portions of the tennis pavilion. Additionally, the

buildings utilize earth colortones to blend into their surroundings. The proposed lighting is shielded and downward facing to minimize off-site visibility and glare.

12. The proposed structure, access roads and other site improvements are sited and designed to minimize adverse effects on views from designated public roads.

Analysis: The project access road is existing and, with approval of an exception to the Napa County Road and Street Standards, no construction would be required which would require minimizing adverse effects on views from designated public roads. Three of the structures proposed are below existing grade, stepped into the hillside, and viewable from only one side of the ridgeline. Additionally, proposed landscaping would further enhance the screening from designated viewshed roads.

13. The proposed structure, access road and other site improvements, including earthmoving or grading, and benches or shelves minimize the removal of vegetation.

Analysis: The amount of vegetation removed is limited to what is necessary for the construction of the proposed project. Grading design minimizes impact on existing vegetation. Additionally, new trees are being proposed for the purposes of screening and mitigating the impacts of removed vegetation.

14. The siting and design of site improvements and access roads minimize grading and alteration of natural landforms and topography.

Analysis: The grading design works with the natural landforms to minimize impact. An exception to the Napa County Road and Street Standards would prevent significant earthwork on steep slopes exceeding 30-50 percent.

15. A landscape and/or vegetation retention plan in conformance with the Design Manual has been submitted and approved for the site that would provide maximum screening from designated public roads through preservation of existing vegetation and the planting of new vegetation and provide for defensible space in conformance with state law.

Analysis: A landscape plan was included in the application along with a letter discussing the tree plantings and necessary maintenance from Kjeldsen Biological Consulting and exhibits demonstrating the potential growth of selected tree species over a five (5) and ten year period. The project would plant 70 new trees for screening from Dry Creek Road and Silverado Trail adding 0.42 acres of tree canopy onsite. Furthermore, the proposed location of the new trees will provide an ember resistant zone and buffer space around the proposed structures. The planting schedule, depending on the viewshed the plantings intend to screen, include plantings as small as 10 gallons and as large as 48" boxes. Based on letters from the project arborist and exhibits provided by the applicant, a combination of existing vegetation and new plantings would screen predominant portions of the proposed structures as the trees mature.

16. The proposed structure and associated improvements substantially conform with the Design Manual in order to reduce their visual impact on the views of major and minor ridgelines as viewed from any designated public road and unique topographic or geologic features as viewed from any county road. The following landforms will be considered to be unique topographic or

geologic features for the purposes of this subsection: Mt. St. Helena, Stag's Leap, Calistoga Palisades, Round Hill, Mt. George and Mt. St. John.

Analysis: The siting and screening of the proposed structures have been designed to minimize visual impact on public rights-of-way, and unique geologic features, as seen in the architectural visual analysis as well as building elevations.