

Notice of Preparation

Notice of Preparation

To: Trustee/Responsible Agencies

(Address)

From: County of Monterey – Resource
Management Agency

1441 Schilling Place, South 2nd Floor

Salinas, CA 93901

(Address)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

The County of Monterey will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

A public scoping meeting will be held via Zoom Webinar on **October 9th, 2020 from 5:30-7:30pm**. The Zoom Webinar may be joined via the following methods:

Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device:

Please use this URL to join. <https://montereycty.zoom.us/j/96249605619>

Or join by phone:

Dial: 1-669-900-6833

Webinar ID: 962 4960 5619

Please send any responses to Brandon Swanson, Planning Services Manager at the address shown above or swansonb@co.monterey.ca.us or call (831) 755-5334. Please give a name for a contact in your agency.

Project Title: Mid-Valley Shopping Center (PLN190140)

Project Applicant, if any: Russel W. Stanley, Mid-Valley Partners, LLC, 2275 Winchester Boulevard, Campbell, CA 95008

Date September 22, 2020

Signature Brandon Swanson

Title Planning Services Manager

Telephone (831) 755-5334

Mid-Valley Shopping Center Design Approval EIR Notice of Preparation

PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Mid-Valley Shopping Center (project site) is located at 9550 Carmel Valley Road in unincorporated Monterey County (Accessor's Parcel Numbers 169-234-007 and 169-234-008). [Figure 1, Location Map](#), shows the regional setting of the project site. The project site is developed with a one-and two-story commercial complex consisting of five commercial buildings within an approximately six-acre parcel on the south side of Carmel Valley Road between Dorris Drive and Berwick Drive. The complex includes the five buildings, parking lots, and landscaping, courtyard and pedestrian walkways.

The project site is surrounded by other roadside commercial uses to the west and east, multi-family and single-family residential uses to the south, and rural, single-family residential neighborhoods across Carmel Valley Road to the north. [Figure 2, Aerial Photograph with Surrounding Land Uses](#), presents an aerial view of the project site and surround land uses.

Existing Site Conditions

The project site is made up of a series of five (5) main building structures (Building A, B, C, D, and E). Building A is located on the southern portion of the site and currently consists of six tenant spaces including a Safeway grocery store and Jeffreys Grill, among others. Building B is located on the southeast corner of the site and currently consists of seven tenant spaces, including the Carmel Valley Coffee Roasting Company, and maintenance areas. Building C is located on the eastern portion of the site and currently includes 12 tenant spaces including Mid-Valley Storage. Building D is a detached building located near the northeast corner of the site that is currently occupied by Ace Hardware and Building E is located at the northwest corner of the site and is currently occupied by an auto repair shop. Eave extensions on Buildings A and C provide covered walkways along the facades of each building and a covered walkway extends from Building A to Building C providing a covered pedestrian connection between the two buildings. Representative photos of each building on the project site are provided in [Figure 3, Representative Photographs](#).

General Plan Land Use Designation and Zoning

The site is located within the County's Carmel Valley Master Plan area with a land use designation of "Visitor Accommodations/Professional Offices" with a "Affordable Housing" overlay. The site is zoned "Light Commercial-Design-Site Plan Review-Residential Allocation Zoning District (LC-D-S-RAZ)".

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The County of Monterey Resource Management Agency (County) received an application for Design Approval (PLN190140) in May 2019 for proposed exterior alterations and site improvements at the project site. [Figure 4, Overall Site Plan](#), presents an overview of existing and proposed development on the project site.

Given the age of the shopping center and local concern over potential historical significance due to the architect of record, Olof Dahlstrand, the County requested the applicant provide a phase one historic assessment. Dr. Anthony Kirk, a County-qualified architectural historian, prepared a phase one historic assessment on behalf of the applicant (September 2019). Dr. Kirk concluded that while the shopping center is associated with the development of Carmel Valley, no evidence exists that would support its architectural importance as required for Criterion A of the National Register of Historic Places or Criterion 1 of the California Register of Historical Resources. In addition, Dr. Kirk concluded that the center does not have an association with an individual with significant national, state, or local history. This assessment, therefore, determined that the site was not historically significant as it did not meet the criteria for eligibility for listing as an individual resource in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or the Monterey County Register of Historic Resources. Therefore, the project site would not be considered a historical resource for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

During the course of the administrative review and evaluation of the project by the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee (LUAC), a number of public comments were received, including questions regarding the historicity of the site and disagreement with a historic evaluation prepared by Dr. Anthony Kirk. In addition, the applicants had started painting the building exteriors without benefit of a permit so the County issued a stop work order.

At the request of the Carmel Valley Association, Page & Turnbull prepared a preliminary opinion memo in direct response to Dr. Kirk's assessment (dated October 29, 2019). Page & Turnbull's preliminary opinion indicated that the Mid-Valley Shopping Center appears to possess sufficient significance and integrity to be eligible for listing in the California

Register of Historical Resources, for its architectural style and association with architect Olof Dahlstrand.

Dr. Kirk provided a written rebuttal in response to Page & Turnbull's preliminary opinion (dated November 4, 2019) that disagreed with Page & Turnbull's initial assessment, questioning their characterization of the center as a "suburban shopping center" as well as the ability for the property to retain "a good degree of integrity" relative to the original design.

Page & Turnbull prepared a phase one historic assessment in the form of Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) 523A and 523B forms for the Mid-Valley Shopping Center at 9550 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley (dated November 18, 2019). Page & Turnbull's phase one historic assessment concluded that the Mid Valley Shopping Center appears to be individually eligible for the National Register and California Register under Criterion C/3 (Architecture) for its association with Olof Dahlstrand. According to Page & Turnbull's assessment, the shopping center exemplifies Dahlstrand's use of form and material in a Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired design that respects the features of its surrounding natural environment. The assessment further concludes that the shopping center is a unique example of the application of the architect's work to a large suburban commercial complex, with integrated vehicle parking and circulation in addition to pedestrian walkways and courtyards. Based on these observations and assessments of the architectural qualities of the shopping center, Page & Turnbull determined the shopping center is eligible for the National Register and California Register and should be considered an historical resource for the purposes of CEQA.

Proposed Exterior Alterations

The proposed exterior alterations include painting the building exteriors including window trim and roof facias; wrapping select aggregate concrete columns in a hardy board material that mimics rough-sawn siding; removal of the covered walkway connecting Building A and Building C; and alterations to eight roof areas on several of the buildings to provide better visibility of the tenant spaces. The major components of the roof structure would remain in these areas with the fascia and major roof joists being visible. The roof areas at six corners would be removed exposing the fascia and joists and substituting a bronzed aluminum decorative panel. The panels would be attached to the remaining joists and fascia. New exterior paint colors, new wood vertical siding at walls and select columns and new metal roofing at the entry gable on Building C. The proposed colors include earth-inspired soft light to medium colors, including tans, sage-like greens, and blues. Select roof elements would be upgraded to include a standing-seam steel material in a non-reflective silver tone. The project also includes replacement of the portions of the existing landscaping with drought-tolerant landscaping. [Figure 5, Proposed Exterior Elevations](#), present conceptual colored elevations with proposed exterior alterations.

Required Permits and Approvals

In accordance with County Code Section 21.44, the proposed project is subject to the County's Design Approval process. Design Approval is the review and approval of the exterior appearance, location, size, materials and colors of proposed structures, additions, modification and fences located in an "Design Control" overlay. The Design Control overlay are those areas of the County which include "D" (design control) "S" (Site Plan Review) or "VS" (Visual Sensitivity) in their zoning as well as all parcels in the Carmel Area Land Use Plan. The purpose of Design Approval is to protect the public viewshed, neighborhood characters, and the visual integrity of development with Design Control Districts. The Carmel Valley Master Plan provides specific land use guidance and design guidelines for projects within the Carmel Valley Land Use Plan. Carmel Valley Master Plan Supplemental Policies (most recent updated by the County in 2013) further elaborate requirements for design review in Policy CV-1.20:

"Design ("D") and site control ("S") overlay district designations shall be applied to the Carmel Valley area. Design review for all new development throughout the Valley, including proposals for existing lots of record, utilities, heavy commercial, and visitor accommodations, but excluding minor additions to existing development where those changes are not conspicuous from outside of the property, shall consider the following guidelines:

- a. Proposed development encourages and furthers the letter and spirit of the Master Plan.
- b. Development either shall be visually compatible with the character of the valley and immediate surrounding areas or shall enhance the quality of areas that have been degraded by existing development.
- c. Materials and colors used in construction shall be selected for compatibility with the structural system of the building and with the appearance of the building's natural and man-made surroundings.
- d. Structures should be controlled in height and bulk in order to retain an appropriate scale.
- e. Development, including road cuts as well as structures, should be located in a manner that minimizes disruption of views from existing homes.
- f. Minimize erosion and/or modification of landforms.
- g. Minimize grading through the use of step and pole foundations."

Design Approvals for simple, non-controversial projects may be approved by Planning staff, while more complex projects will be referred to neighborhood Land Use Advisory Committees and the Zoning Administrator. In the case of the proposed project, Planning

staff referred the application to the Carmel Valley LUAC where it was presented to the LUAC over the course of two meetings (July 15, 2019 and December 2, 2019).

No other approvals from the County are required for the proposed project.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Historical Resources

The County has received two conflicting Historic Resource Evaluations for the Mid-Valley Shopping Center in the Carmel Valley. EMC Planning Group, environmental consultant to the County, will prepare an EIR in order to resolve this situation and make a final determination as to the historical significance and architectural integrity of the resource. Painter Preservation, a historic preservation firm specializing in mid-century commercial and residential development, will serve as a subconsultant to EMC Planning Group and will prepare a third historic evaluation to determine if the shopping center is historically significant and eligible for listing for national, state, and local historic registers.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 and 15126.4(b), if found to be historically significant, the project may also involve establishing mitigation for any perceived impacts to the resource or providing advice as to how the proposed renovation of the property may meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which is typically the threshold proposed projects must meet to establish that there is no negative impact to the resource.

The project proposes to make structural and primarily cosmetic changes including some minor structural modifications to the exterior of the shopping center. Specifically, changes include the re-design of the parking lot and landscape features; the addition of signage on the buildings, which requires some alteration of the roofline; the addition of some semi-transparent decorative features; and new siding and windows in certain locations. The historic evaluation to be prepared by Painter Preservation will consist of the following:

- Review existing documentation on the property and research existing records, including the Olof Dahlstrom Collection at the University of California-Berkeley, as well as other archives;
- Research available information on any significant persons, events and/or activities associated with the site;
- Conduct a visual inspection of the site and structures to assess current architectural and landscape features and visible changes over time;
- Interview persons with knowledge of the property as available;
- Develop a context statement for the Historic Resource Evaluation;

- Update information on the historic significance and architectural integrity of the buildings and site; and
- Prepare a report that will consist of an intensive-level Historic Resource Evaluation and an integrity analysis. An evaluation of the extent to which changes to the property to date meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards may be provided if it assists with the analysis. The resource will be evaluated for its eligibility for listing in the National, State, and Monterey County registers.

This historic evaluation to be prepared by Painter Preservation will be included an appendix to the draft EIR.

The proposed project consists of minor alterations and cosmetic treatments to an existing shopping center for which an administrative design approval is required. Absent the opposing historic reports, the proposed project would either not be subject to CEQA or would qualify for a categorical exemption.

Although the proposed project has generated local controversy, the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064 (f)(4) states, "The existence of public controversy over the environmental effects of a project will not require preparation of an EIR if there is no substantial evidence before the agency that the project may have a significant effect on the environment."

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(g) states, "After application of the principles set forth above in Section 15064(f), and in marginal cases where it is not clear whether there is substantial evidence that a project may have a significant effect on the environment, the lead agency shall be guided by the following principle: If there is disagreement among expert opinion supported by facts over the significance of an effect on the environment, the Lead Agency shall treat the effect as significant and shall prepare an EIR."

In light of the differing conclusions of the two historic assessments, an EIR will be prepared to analyze the project's effects to the potentially significant resource.

Section 15060(d) of the CEQA Guidelines states that if "the lead agency can determine that an EIR will be clearly required for a project, the agency may skip further initial review of the project and begin work directly on the EIR process" and "In the absence of an initial study, the lead agency shall still focus the EIR on the significant effects of the project and indicate briefly its reasons for determining that other effects would not be significant or potentially significant."

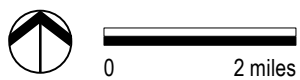
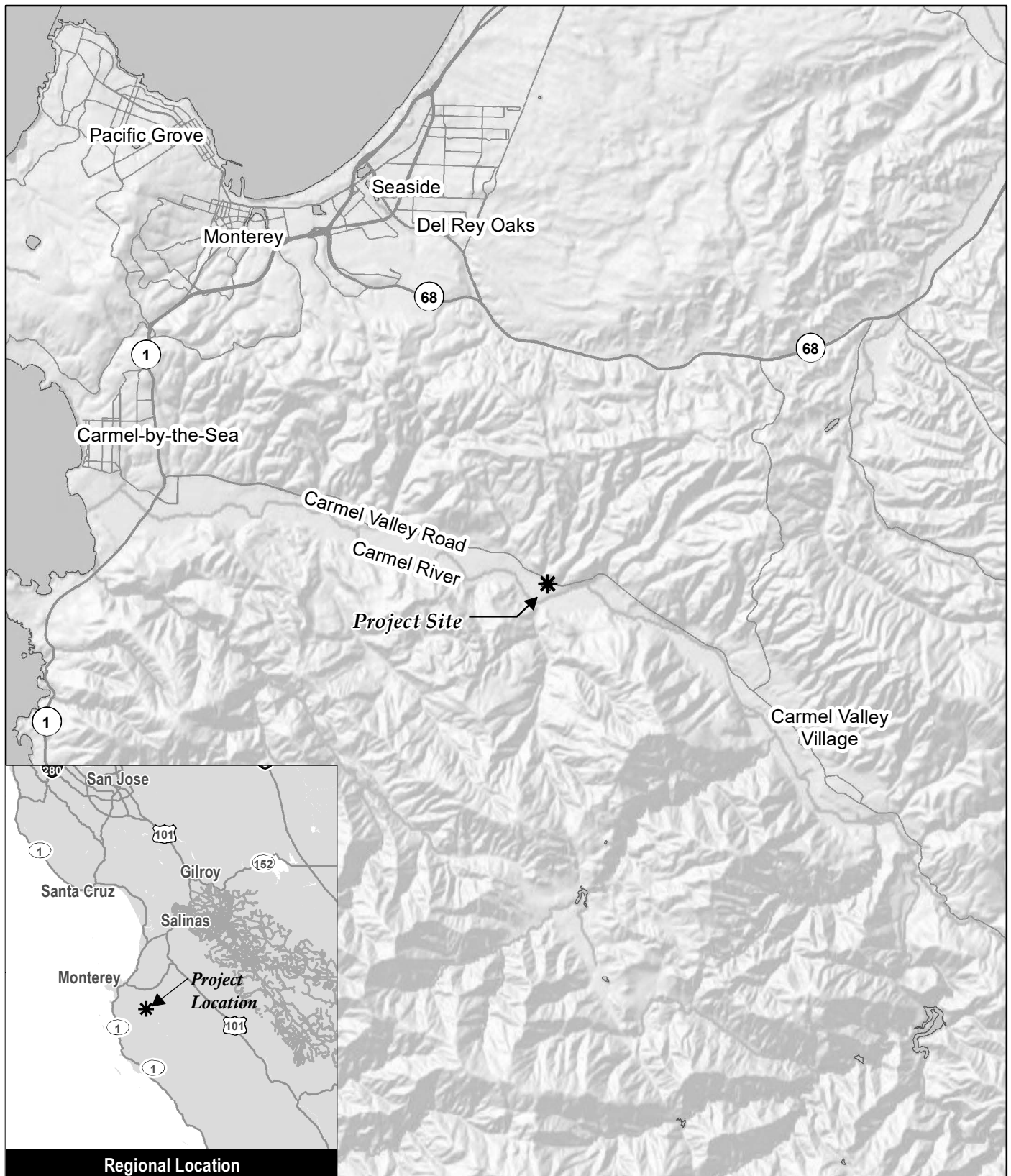
EMC Planning Group will prepare an EIR summarizing the points of disagreement among the experts. The EIR will identify the significant effects and mitigation measures to reduce them will be developed based on the conclusions of the third historic resource evaluation.

Other Environmental Issues

In addition, the EIR will also include a discussion of effects found not to be significant as the proposed project would otherwise be categorically exempt under CEQA; and consistency analysis of proposed project with applicable County historic resources policies.

Figure 1

Location Map



Source: ESRI 2019

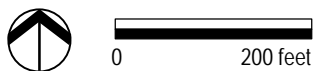
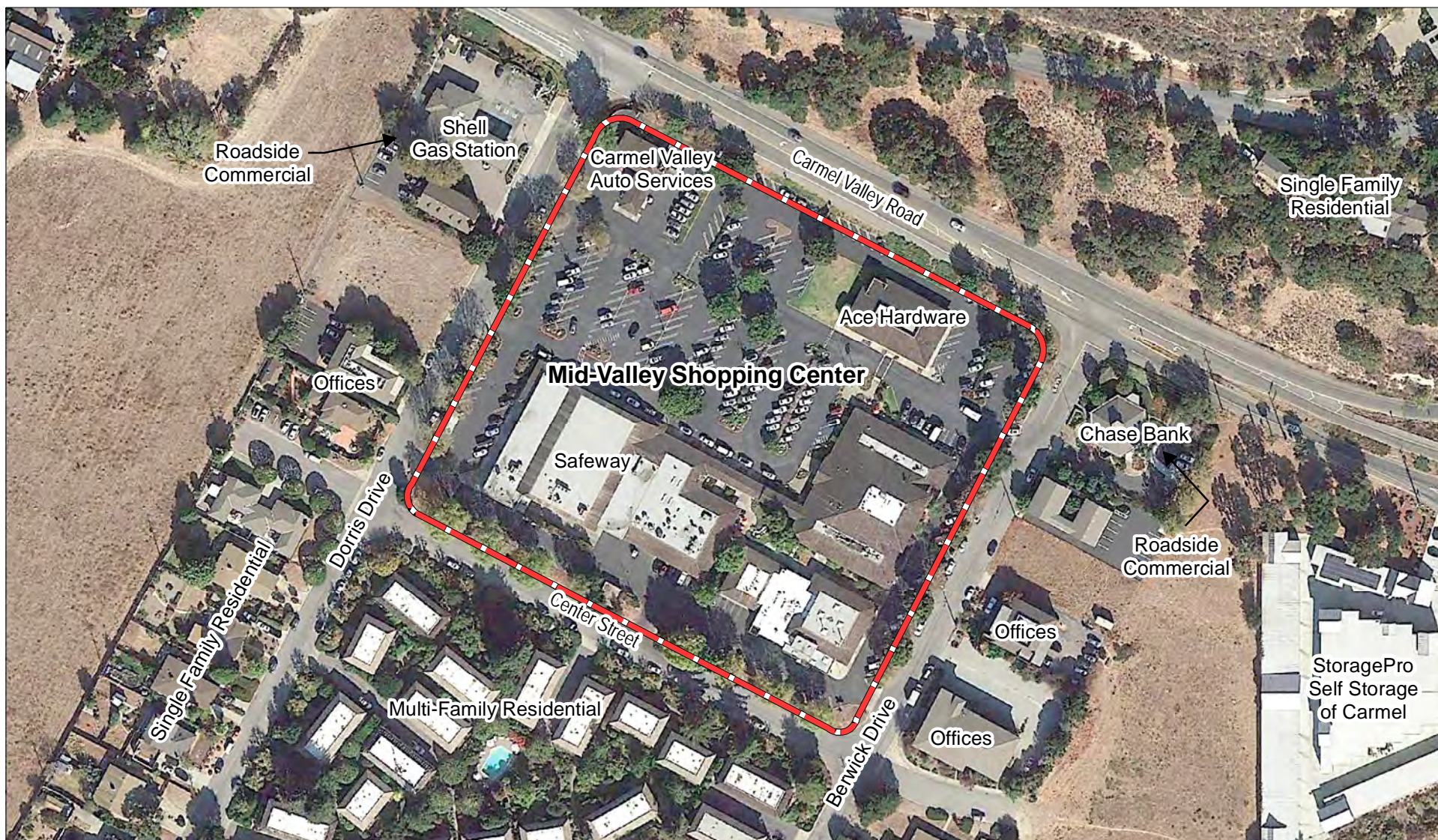
Figure 1
Location Map



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Figure 2

Aerial Photograph with Surrounding Land Uses



Source: Google Earth 2018, Monterey County GIS 2018



Figure 2
Aerial Photograph with Surrounding Land Uses
 Mid-Valley Shopping Center Design Approval EIR Notice of Preparation

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Figure 3

Representative Photographs



① Building A - Safeway



② Building B



③ Building C



--- Project Site

Source: Google Earth 2018
Photographs: Page & Turnbull, Inc. 2019



④ Building D - Ace Hardware

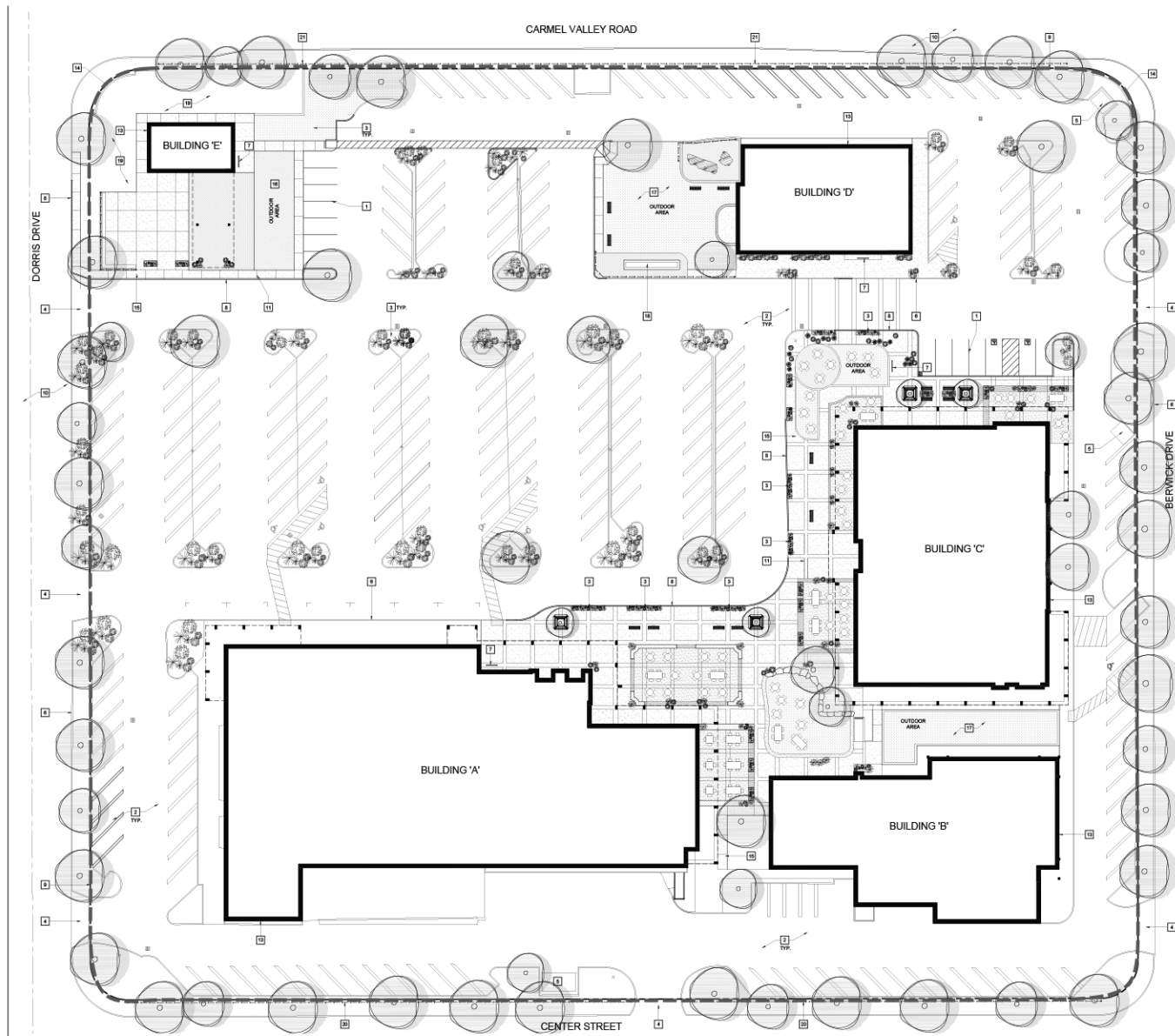


⑤ Building E - Carmel Valley Auto Service

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Figure 4

Overall Site Plan



----- Project Site

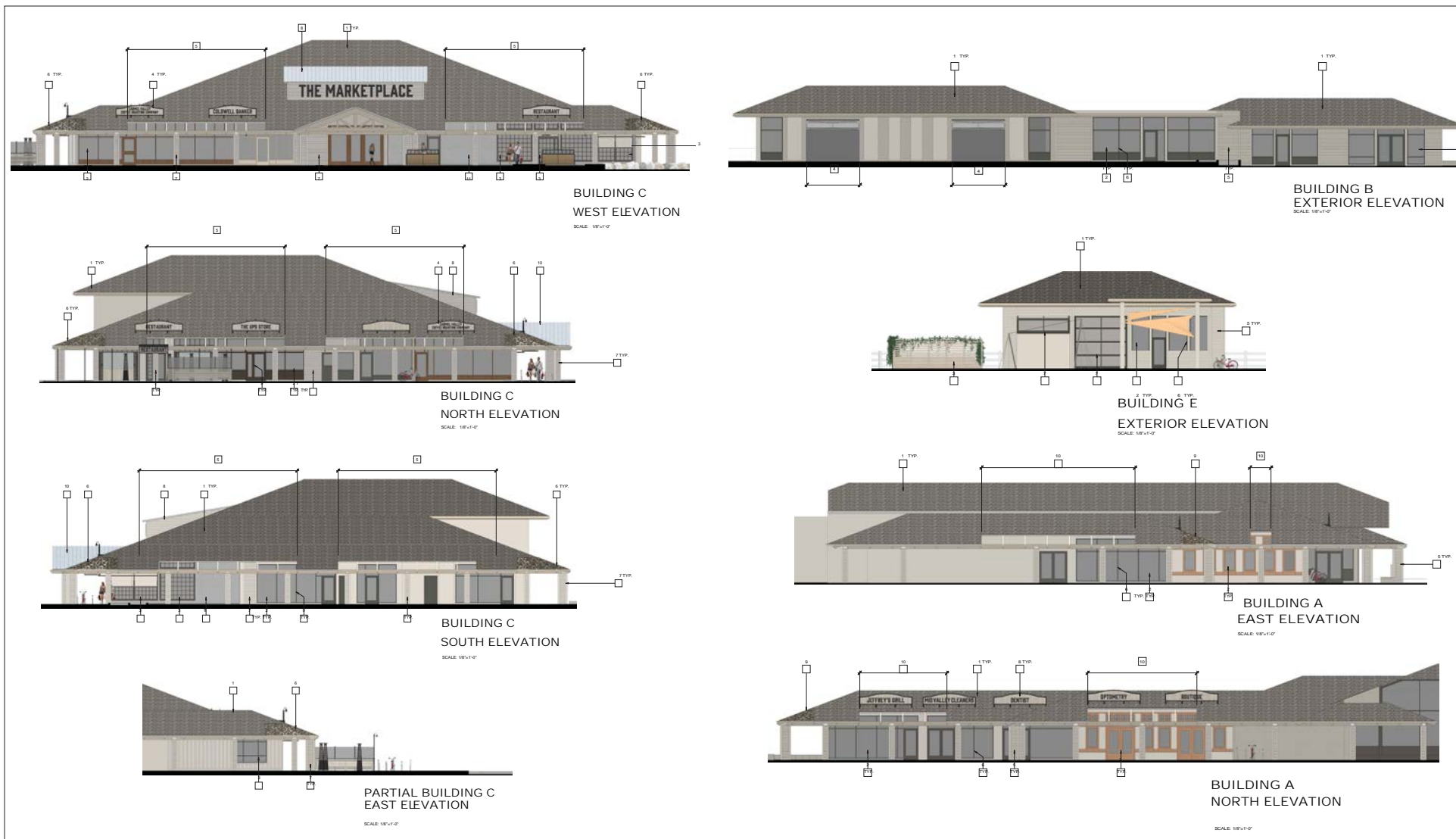
Source: Wald Ruhnke & Dost 2019

Figure 4
Overall Site Plan

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Figure 5

Proposed Exterior Elevations



Source: Wald Ruhnke & Dost 2019



Figure 4
Proposed Exterior Elevations

Mid-Valley Shopping Center Design Approval EIR Notice of Preparation

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