

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** 15 December 2022

**TO:** Project Review Advisory Committee

**FROM:** Joshua Miranda, Project Planner

**RE:** File No: CMO22-0005; Certificate of Modification to a Minor Subdivision  
 Owners: Matthew Theobald and Sarah Chandler Trust  
 Addresses: 17008 and 17106 Gehricke Road, Sonoma  
 APN: 127-022-100

Request

Certificate of Modification to expand the building envelope on Lot 2 of “Parcel Map MNS07-0018” recorded in Book 741 of Maps, Pages 26-28 in Sonoma County Records, on a 38.59-acre parcel. The proposed expansion is to accommodate a new garage near an easement road (“Gehricke Road”).

Site Details

<b>General Plan Land Use:</b>	RR 15
<b>Zoning Designation:</b>	AR B6 15, LG/MTN RC50/50 RC100/50 SR
<b>Parcel Size:</b>	38.59 acres
<b>Parcel Specific Policy:</b>	N/A
<b>Applicable GP Policies:</b>	N/A
<b>Fire Protection (LRA/SRA):</b>	SRA
<b>Fire Hazard Severity Zone:</b>	High
<b>Groundwater Area:</b>	Class 3 - Marginal
<b>NPDES:</b>	N/A
<b>Water Quality Control Board:</b>	San Francisco Bay Region
<b>Williamson Act/Conservation Easement:</b>	N/A

Background

On July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the Project Review and Advisory Committee (PRAC) held a public meeting to consider a request for a Certificate of Modification to Lot 2 of Parcel Map MNS07-0018 (Book 741 of Maps, Pages 26 to 28) to move the building envelope to be adjacent to the eastern edge of an existing 55-foot-wide easement road (“Gehricke Road”). The overall size of the building envelope would not be modified but it would be shifted westward, closer to Gehricke Road to allow the owner to construct a new 900-square-foot garage. PRAC continued the project to August 18, 2022, with direction to the applicant to provide a site plan that delineates the location of the proposed garage and conformance to the 55-foot street centerline setback.

On August 18, 2022, PRAC continued the hearing to a date uncertain to allow time for staff to address the applicability of the Zoning Code's 55-foot street centerline setback requirement.

#### Project Details

The request is for a Certificate of Modification to expand the building envelope on Lot 2 of "Parcel Map MNS07-0018" recorded in Book 741 of Maps, Pages 26-28 in Sonoma County Records, on a 38.59-acre parcel. The proposed expansion is to accommodate a new garage near the easement road.

The existing Building Envelopes for this subdivision were required for geologic impacts, and to concentrate development along the downslope near Gehricke road, which would prevent construction along the exposed ridges near the eastern property line.

The project site is a designated Scenic Resources identified by the General Plan. Resulting structures will require Design Review approval to ensure development is consistent with the Scenic Landscape Unit (SR) combing district designations and Local Guidelines for areas in the Sonoma Mountains (LG/MTN).

#### Street Setback Analysis:

The property is zoned Agriculture Residential which requires a 55-foot minimum setback from the street centerline (Sec. 26-08-040 – Development Standards). Gehricke Road bisects the western border of the subject property. This portion of Gehricke Road is a privately maintained 12-foot-wide paved road. The project site is encumbered with a 55-foot-wide road easement that extends approximately from the western property line eastward, spanning the 12-foot wide Gehricke Road on both sides. Approximately 0.5 miles south of the project site, Gehricke Road is a publicly maintained road.

The 55-foot street centerline setback applies to Gehricke Road and the subject property; however, the Zoning Code allows exceptions for garages. Pursuant to Sec. 26-16-060(C)(2) of the Zoning Code, the required setback can be reduced to a depth equal to the average front setback, provided that the setback is greater than 10 feet and there are no traffic hazards:

#### *Sec. 26-16-060(C)(2)(a):*

*"If twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the lots on a block or portion of a block in the same zoning district have been improved with garages or carports, the required setback may be reduced to a depth equal to the average front setback of these garages or carports. In no case may the front setback be reduced to less than ten feet (10'). The director may require a use permit if the reduction may result in a traffic hazard.*

Additionally, the Zoning Code allows required setbacks to be reduced when such reductions are appropriate in light of topography, vegetation, or unique physical characteristics:

#### *Sec. 26 88-040 (g):*

*"In any TP, LIA, LEA, DA, RRD, RRDWA, AR or RR district the required yard standards may be reduced when the planning director finds that such reduction(s) are appropriate in light of topography, vegetation or unique physical characteristics. In determining such findings, consideration will also be given to visibility from public roads and adjacent properties.*



*Such reduction shall not result in a front yard of less than ten feet (10') for any garage or carport opening. The planning director may require a use permit or signatures from adjacent property owners."*

The subject property contains steep topography limiting the buildable areas of the site and is already developed with an art studio located in the 55-foot street centerline setback, approximately 47 feet from the centerline of Gehricke Rd. If the request for a Certificate of Modification to the building envelope is approved, the proposed garage would be located approximately 36 feet in the southwest corner and 40 feet from the northwest corner of the garage, from the centerline of Gehricke Rd. Immediately south of the project site is a rural residential parcel (APN 127-022-099, 17132 Gehricke Rd) that contains similar topography, vegetation, and a cluster of residential structures. This parcel is developed with a car port/garage approximately 47 feet from the centerline of Gehricke Rd. Therefore, staff finds the average reduced setback within vicinity of the site is approximately 40 feet from street centerline.

The proposed garage on the subject site will not result in a new traffic hazard as the garage opening would face into the property and not require a new driveway. Staff find that the area proposed for the building envelope expansion is appropriate due to the site topography limits of the parcel and the reduced setbacks of existing nearby structures. Staff recommends the project is conditioned to place a note on the recorded Certificate of Modification Map that requires native vegetation to screen the proposed garage from public views from Gehricke Road, and to limit the height of the structure further than what the base zoning district allows to ensure conformance with the Zoning Code exceptions to setbacks (Sec. 26-16-060 and Sec. 26 88-040). Additionally, visual impacts will continue to be addressed on all future structures prior to building permit issuance, as the property is subject to design requirements for Taylor/Sonoma/Mayacamas Mountains Local Development Guidelines and Scenic Landscape Units (Sec. 26-64-020 and Sec. 26-90-020).

#### Environmental Review

Staff finds the Certificate of Modification is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to section 15305, given that there will be a minor alteration in land use as a result of the minor expansion of the existing building envelope. No exceptions apply.

#### Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Committee approve the proposed Certificate of Modification subject to the attached conditions.

#### Attachments

1. Proposal Statement
2. Proposed Modification
3. Recorded Map
4. Draft Conditions of Approval

