



Staff Report and Recommendations Agenda of June 12, 2023, Item 6b

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency

800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009-1740 • (805) 654-2478 • www.vcrma.org/divisions/planning

I. APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER:

Applicant:

Marta Y. Alvarez
YCE, Inc.
1587 Morse Ave, Suite A
Ventura, CA 93003

Property Owner:

Farmers Irrigation Company, Inc.
133 North 10th Street
Santa Paula, CA 93060

II. REQUEST:

A request for a Certificate of Review (COR) (Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) §1372) related to the construction of an 1,820-square-foot pump house and two separate, 8.9-acre-foot agricultural water reservoirs to be covered with solar panels at the Linebarger Ranch property located at 15132 West Telegraph Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060. The scope of work includes additional site improvements, fencing, and landscaping (Case No. CH23-0003).

III. LOCATION AND PROPERTY INFORMATION:

15132 West Telegraph Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060 (unincorporated Ventura County)

Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 098-0-010-435

Historic Designation: Site of Merit

Historic Name: Linebarger Ranch

Zoning: AE-40 ac – Agricultural Exclusive 40 Acre Minimum Lot Size

General Plan Designation: ECU (Existing Community or Urban)-Agricultural

The approximately 9-acre Linebarger Ranch contains a 1,200 square foot main residence built around 1888 and a 500 square foot detached garage, both located along an asphalt access road. The structures are surrounded by former citrus and avocado orchards that are now vacant land.

IV. PROJECT SCOPE:

The applicant requests that the Cultural Heritage Board (CHB) provide a COR for the construction of an 1,820-square-foot pump house and two separate, 8.9-acre-foot agricultural water reservoirs at the Linebarger Ranch property located at 15132 West Telegraph Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060. The agricultural water reservoirs are proposed to be covered by sheet metal and solar panels. The scope of work also includes the installation of an air conditioning unit, electrical transformer, switch

equipment, and open pad area with fencing adjacent to the proposed pump house. A total of 24 oak trees will be planted in various areas on the property. In addition, a new 7-foot-tall metal fence (50% transparent) will be installed along the frontage road of Telegraph Road. A vehicle entrance gate will also be installed outside of the 20-foot front setback as indicated on the plans. No changes are proposed to the existing 1,200 sq. ft. single-family dwelling and 500 sq. ft. detached garage.

The proposed project is described across the site plans and elevations included in Exhibit 1. The proposed pump house is intended to visually align with the agricultural character of the Santa Clara Valley by evoking aspects of the Western Barn style, including monitor roof, materials, and colors, and would consist of a metal exterior. Refer to Exhibit 2 for Architectural Cut Sheets and Exhibit 3 for existing photographs and renderings. In addition, Exhibit 3 contains images of sample reservoirs (both covered and uncovered) and solar panel installations for reference.

V. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

The Linebarger Ranch was evaluated in the 1996 *Phase V West Santa Clara Valley Cultural Heritage Survey* (“Historic Survey”) prepared by San Buenaventura Research Associates (Exhibit 4).¹ Commonly known as Linebarger Ranch, the subject property is historically significant as one of the earliest remaining houses in the Briggs District, built about 1888 for William and Callie Linebarger.² Linebarger, a native of Illinois, first settled in Wheeler Canyon in 1877 after living in the gold rush country in Northern California. He purchased 15 acres of land, including the subject property, in 1888 and began raising walnuts.³ The property was later subdivided. The Historic Survey describes the main residence at the Linebarger Ranch as follows:

“This is a one-story folk Victorian style residence with an I-shaped plan and a side-facing medium-pitched, gable roof with an offset front gable on the west side covered with composition shingles. A projecting porch is located on the east side of the house, and is supported by chamfered columns. The house is covered with board-and-batten siding and rests on a stone foundation. The closed eaves have a frieze band with decorative fishscale shingles and sawtooth detail under the gable ends. The house has tall, one-over-one, double-hung windows with plain wood casings...[and] a modest element of Italianate detail.”⁴

¹ San Buenaventura Research Associates, *Phase V West Santa Clara Valley Cultural Heritage Survey*, 1996.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Figure 1 – Photo of Main Residence at 15132 West Telegraph Road



Source: YCE, Inc., 2023

Figure 2 – Photo of Property at 15132 West Telegraph Road, Looking South



Source: Google, 2023

According to the Historic Survey, the property was assigned a Historical Resource Status Code of 3D as an identified contributor to an eligible overall historic district encompassing the entire western Santa Clara Valley.⁵ The district boundaries include the unincorporated areas whose historic landscape elements contain agricultural lands primarily devoted to citrus and dotted with ranch houses, barns, sheds and packing houses.⁶ The western Santa Clara Valley is significant under NRHP Criterion A (events) for its reflection of the growth and development of agriculture during its period of significance (1860-1946).⁷ The district illustrates the historical development of agricultural products and farming techniques, and documents the progression of this land use from the dry farming of grains and row crops, to irrigated tree crops and citrus ranching.⁸

VI. CULTURAL HERITAGE ORDINANCE ANALYSIS:

The Ventura County Cultural Heritage Ordinance (CHO) §1372, requires that the CHB provide a COR in the case of a permit application to construct, change, alter, modify, or remodel in a manner a Site of Merit that affects the exterior character-defining features or integrity of the site.

CHO §1372-2 provides that the CHB uses the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (“Secretary’s Standards”) in its evaluation of the property and the proposed scope of work. The COR process consists of voluntary recommendations for the applicant’s consideration in order to better conform to the Secretary’s Standards. CHB staff determined the standards for rehabilitation are appropriate for this request and evaluated the proposed scope of work against the relevant standards below.

Standards	Staff Comments
#9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials,	New construction is most appropriately located where its visibility from the primary views of the historic building is minimized. ⁹ This is often a rear or obscure elevation. Inherent in all of the guidance is the concept that new construction needs to be subordinate to the historic building. The size, scale, and massing of new construction all pertain to the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, “New Construction within the Boundaries of Historic Properties,” <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/new-construction-in-historic-properties.htm>.

Standards	Staff Comments
<p>features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.</p>	<p>construction’s overall volume and three-dimensional qualities.¹⁰ Taken together, size, scale and massing are critical elements for ensuring that new construction is subordinate to the historic building, thus preserving the historic character of a historic property.¹¹</p> <p>The proposed new construction would be located in excess of 200 feet from the vicinity of the existing residence and situated closer to the rear of the property, away from primary views along Telegraph Road. This placement, combined with the planting of 24 oak trees near the front of the property, has the effect of limiting visibility of the new construction from primary viewpoints.</p> <p>The exterior of the pump house is intended to visually align with the agricultural character of the Santa Clara Valley by evoking aspects of the Western Barn style, including monitor roof, materials, and colors.</p> <p>Based on the above considerations, CHB staff determined the scope of work is consistent with this Standard.</p>
<p>#10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.</p>	<p>Integrity is defined as the ability of a property to convey its historical significance, or the authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics and materials that existed during the property’s historic or pre-historic period of significance. A property would typically possess several (although not necessarily all) of the following seven aspects of integrity, as defined in National Register Bulletin 15, to convey its significance: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association.¹²</p> <p>The proposed pump house, reservoirs, and associated infrastructure would be detached from any existing structure and sited at a distance from the main residence. If removed in the future, such a design would not preclude the ability to maintain</p>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ventura County Ordinance Code, Article 5 of Chapter 3 of Division 1, Section 1363.

Standards	Staff Comments
	<p>the essential form and integrity of the historic property.</p> <p>Based on the above considerations, CHB staff determined the scope of work is consistent with this Standard.</p>

VII. STAFF CONCLUSION:

Based on the above considerations, the proposed scope of work appears consistent with the Secretary’s Standards. Following implementation of the project, the property would retain a majority of its character-defining features; however, replacement of agricultural area with reservoirs, pump house, and associated infrastructure would appear to negatively impact the subject property’s sense of integrity, in particular, its integrity of Setting, Feeling, and Association. Of note, the proposed reservoirs, pump house, and associated infrastructure would be intended to serve the surrounding agricultural community, thereby increasing the viability of these uses continuing in the Santa Clara Valley.

CHB staff recommends the CHB adopt the following recommendations related to the scope of work in order to better conform to the Secretary’s Standards:

- **Recommendation #1: Historic Conjecture of the Pump House.** While the proposed building mimics much of the historic architecture of this type, the applicant should consider and explore incorporating modifications sufficient to prevent the structure from adding conjecture that the structure is original. One method could be incorporating a durable placard or sign on the pump house indicating its construction date.
- **Recommendation #2: Landscape Screening.** The applicant should ensure that the proposed new reservoirs, pump house, and associated infrastructure are sufficiently screened from primary viewpoints along Telegraph Road and in the vicinity of the existing residence. The applicant should consult a certified arborist to identify appropriate locations for the trees to be planted to ensure optimal tree health.
- **Recommendation #3: Preservation of Residence.** The property owner should preserve and make repairs as needed to prevent the deterioration, decay, and/or degradation of the subject residence in accordance with the International Property Maintenance Code, as adopted by the Board of Supervisors on November 5, 2019, and as may be amended. Additionally, it is

the intent of this recommendation to preserve the residence from deliberate or inadvertent neglect.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No public comment regarding this item has been received to date.

IX. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

CHB staff recommends the CHB take the following actions regarding the request:

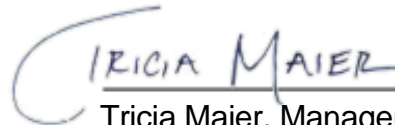
1. **CONDUCT** public hearing, **RECEIVE** oral and written testimony, and **CONSIDER** the Planning Division Staff report and all exhibits and attachments hereto; and
2. **REVIEW** and **COMMENT** on the proposed project in accordance with CHO §1372 based on the preceding evidence and analysis.

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



Tricia Maier, Manager
Planning Programs Section
(805) 654-2464

Exhibits:

- Exhibit 1: Proposed Plans and Elevations
- Exhibit 2: Architectural Cut Sheets
- Exhibit 3: Photo Exhibit
- Exhibit 4: Historic Survey Evaluation