



June 17, 2013

Job No. 11-121

Mr. Nate Galambos, PE  
Engineering Manager  
Engineering Division  
Napa County Planning, Building and Environmental Services Department  
1195 Third Street, Suite 201  
Napa, California 94559

Re: Request for Exception to the Napa County Road and Street Standards for the  
Fantesca Winery Winery Use Permit Modification Application (P13-00080)  
2920 Spring Mountain Road, St. Helena, CA 94574  
Napa County APN 022-250-008

Dear Mr. Galambos:

This request for an exception to the Napa County Road and Street Standards is being filed concurrent with the above referenced Use Permit Modification application for the Fantesca Winery. We are providing this information for your review and final decision by the Conservation, Development and Planning Commission pursuant to Section 3 of the Napa County Road and Street Standards as revised by Board of Supervisor's Resolution No. 06-198. Section 3 of the Standards allows exceptions to the Standards provided that the exception still provides the same overall practical effect as the Standards towards providing defensible space and consideration towards life, safety and public welfare and:

1. The exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment which includes, but is not limited to, natural watercourses, steep slopes, geological features, heritage oak trees, or other trees of at least 6" dbh and found by the decision maker to be of significant importance, but does not include man made environmental features such as vineyards, rock walls, ornamental or decorative landscaping, fences or the like;
2. The exception is necessary to accommodate physical site limitations such as grade differentials; and/or
3. The exception is necessary to accommodate other limiting factors such as recorded historical sites or legal constraints.

The remainder of this letter describes the proposed project, provides background information regarding existing access conditions, outlines proposed driveway improvements, identifies the areas where an exception to the Standards is being requested and provides justification for the requested exception.

## **Project Description**

Fantesca Winery was originally granted a use permit by Napa County in 2000 (#00236-UP) and has applied for two Use Permit Modifications prior to the current pending Use Permit Modification. It is our understanding that Fantesca Winery is currently permitted to produce 30,000 gallons of wine per year. No change in the approved production capacity is proposed with this application. The proposed Use Permit Modification includes an increase from three employees to nine employees and implementation of a modest new marketing plan to allow the following activities:

Description	# of Guests	Frequency
Tours and Tasting Visitors	18	Daily
Marketing Events with Catered Meal	20	48 per year
Marketing Events with Catered Meal	60	6 per year
Wine Auction / Harvest Events	125	2 per year

## **Existing Access Road Conditions**

Access to the Fantesca Winery is via a shared private driveway off of the northeast side of Spring Mountain Road approximately 0.6 miles west of the City of St. Helena. The driveway approach intersects Spring Mountain Road at an angle. Sight distance at the intersection was examined by Omni-Means and their report dated 2/19/2013 notes adequate sight distance to the southeast and provides several recommendations for signage, vegetation management and a wide angle mirror to help improve the limited site distance that exists to the northwest. Fantesca Winery intends to implement all recommendations from Omni-Means for improving sight distance at the intersection.

Leaving Spring Mountain Road, the private driveway traverses the steeply sloping hillsides typical of the area for approximately 0.2 miles to its terminus at the Fantesca Winery. The first 350 feet of the private driveway are used by Fantesca Winery as well as four adjacent and nearby properties including Napa County Assessor's Parcel Numbers 022-250-006, 022-250-009, 022-250-013 & 022-250-014.

The private driveway is currently paved with asphalt from its intersection with Spring Mountain Road all the way to the Fantesca Winery. Paved widths vary from approximately 17 feet to over 20 feet along the length of the driveway. The driveway crosses steeply sloping hillsides however the slope along the length of the driveway (the longitudinal slope) is generally less than 17% with the exception of a short stretch, approximately 50 feet in length, located immediately in front of the winery. This limited section of driveway is inclined at a slope of approximately 24.8%. Sight distance along the length of the road is generally adequate for the low speeds that are typically encountered along the road. Please refer to the Fantesca Winery Road Exception Request Exhibit for a detailed topographic survey and illustration of the existing and proposed driveway conditions.

## **Request for Exception to Napa County Road and Street Standards**

The Napa County Road and Street Standards require that a “Common Drive” (18 feet paved plus 2 feet of shoulder, for a total of 20 feet drivable width) be installed to serve winery facilities. Furthermore, Section 3.D. of the Napa County Road and Street Standards, as revised by Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 06-198, states that an exception to the Road and Street Standards may be granted if the exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment (including native trees, watercourses, steep slopes and geologic features) and the proposed driveway provides the same overall practical effect as the Road and Street Standards towards providing defensible space, and consideration towards life, safety and public welfare.

In this case, making the existing driveway fully compliant with the Road and Street Standards would require substantial grading on steep slopes and removal of numerous native trees and slope stabilizing vegetation which would result in undue environmental impacts. In some instances creating compliance with the Road and Street Standards is not feasible due to existing legal constraints (right of way location). The following exceptions to the Road and Street Standards are hereby requested to allow the following conditions along the existing driveway (refer to the Fantesca Winery Road Exception Request Exhibit for illustration):

1. A non-standard driveway connection to Spring Mountain Road (STA 10+00)
2. A reduced driveway width of approximately 17 feet to 18 feet paved for approximately 450 feet along the existing driveway (STA 14+50 to 18+00, STA 18+50 to 19+00 and STA 19+50 to 20+00)
3. A maximum longitudinal slope of 25% for approximately 50 feet (beginning at STA 19+65)

## **Proposed Driveway Improvements & Justification for Exception**

As part of the pending Use Permit Modification Fantesca Winery proposes to improve the existing driveway and access conditions by making the following improvements:

1. Install a wide angle mirror to improve site distance at Spring Mountain Road (as recommended by Omni-Means)
2. Maintain low level vegetation along the north side of Spring Mountain Road, north of the driveway intersection to improve sight distance (as recommended by Omni-Means)
3. Install signs on Spring Mountain Road both north and south of the driveway to alert drivers of the location of the driveway intersection (as recommended by Omni-Means)
4. Install signs and paint marks on speed humps to alert unfamiliar visitors to their presence (as recommended by Omni-Means)
5. Realign a short section of the driveway where it splits in three directions to serve the various properties to simplify ingress and egress to the winery

6. Implement horizontal and vertical vegetation management along the entire length of the private driveway and around the existing and proposed structures to create defensible space. This will include vegetation management and modification 10 feet horizontally and 15 feet vertically along all access roads and 100 feet around buildings in accordance with Napa County Fire Department requirements.

#### Conclusions & Findings In Support of Exception Request

It is our opinion that the proposed request to allow the existing private driveway, with the improvements described in this letter, to serve the existing winery, meets the criteria established in Section 3 of the Road and Street Standards. More specifically, granting of the exception will preserve unique features of the natural environment and will provide the same overall practical effect as the Road and Street Standards towards providing defensible space and safe access conditions for the general public and emergency vehicles.

As previously described, there are a number of mature natural trees alongside the driveway that are worthy of preservation. These trees are important in terms of how they define the natural land forms and character of the area which is generally forested and very rural in character with interwoven plantings of vineyard. It is important to preserve the natural woodland character of the Napa Valley hillsides by minimizing the amount of grading and tree removal necessary for providing safe access. Not only do the trees contribute to the rural character of the woodlands and watershed areas, they also provide shelter and habitat for a wide range of animal and plant species.

Preservation of these features can be achieved by allowing the existing driveway, with the proposed improvements, to continue to serve the existing winery as outlined in this request. The Applicant is willing to provide the necessary maintenance of trees and roadside vegetation (15 feet vertically and 10 feet horizontally on either side of the driveway) in order to allow adequate clearance for emergency vehicles and also to reduce the potential for fire hazard. With the proposed improvements, proper vegetation management and regular maintenance, there is no reason that these natural features cannot be preserved while still achieving the same overall practical effect as outlined in the Road and Street Standards.

We look forward to hearing from a representative from your department to discuss any questions that may arise during review of this request. Please contact us at (707) 320-4968 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Applied Civil Engineering Incorporated

By:

*Michael R. Muelrath*

Michael R. Muelrath, RCE 67435  
Principal



Enclosures:

Fantesca Winery Road Exception Request Exhibit

Cope:

Duane and Susan Hoff, Fantesca Winery (via email)  
Donna Oldford, Plans 4 Wine (via email)