

...coming clouds. Despite the more than perfect day, the event did not set a

New 100,000 Gal. Winery Proposed on Yountville Hill

A permit application for a new 100,000 gallon winery on Yountville Hill was scheduled to be reviewed yesterday at a public hearing before the Napa County Planning Commission.

The address -- 7420 and 7400 St. Helena Highway -- is the same as Castle in the Clouds, a four-unit Victorian bed and breakfast inn on the east side of Highway 29 just north of Yountville. That business is no longer operating.

The Commission agreed to continue the hearing for 30 days in reaction to strong opposition to the project by neighbors who were notified

of the proposal on February 18. Only property owners within a 300-foot radius of this project were required to be notified.

According to information submitted with the permit application, "CS2 winery is the dream project of two established Napa Valley vintners, Eric Sklar of St. Helena, founding partner at Alpha Omega winery, and Prescott Ashe, founder and proprietor of Prescott Ashe Vineyards."

The scope of the project is for a large business operation with strong daily visitation.

Proposed on the 11-acre site, comprised of two parcels, is a

winery with maximum annual production of 100,000 gallons per year, with almost the entire wine production facility located underground in two separate caves. In all, approximately 35,000 square feet of caves would be constructed.

The application also seeks to construct two new winery buildings with just over 14,000 square feet -- a reception building and a separate winery, administration and visitor center.

Almost 10,000 square feet of unenclosed terraces are also proposed. On-site parking is proposed for 37 vehicles, and

wine tours and both interior and exterior tastings by appointment for 285 visitors per day is envisioned.

The marketing plan provides for 48 events with a maximum of 50 guests, half of which will be scheduled after 6:30 p.m., six events with up to 100 guests and two events with a maximum of 200 guests, also after 6:30 p.m.

All parking is proposed on site, with valet parking for all of the large events and release parties.

Food is intended to be served at all events. All food is proposed to be catered and prepared off site. The winery will provide a catering work area for caterers.

Sklar and Ashe presently own 30-plus acres of producing vineyard and are actively seeking to acquire 100 additional acres.

The winery would employ up to 19 people.

"The proposal also includes an exception to the conservation regulation to grade/construct improvements on slopes exceeding 30 percent, a viewshed application to construct on slopes 15 percent or greater and visible from a viewshed

designated roadway (Highway 29) and a variance to allow the lower cave portal and winery-related activities on the pad in front of the cave to encroach approximately 300 feet into the 600-foot setback from Highway 29. Other encroachments are also requested.

The existing 4,000 square foot building that operated as a bed and breakfast, a garage, the existing driveway from Highway 29 and a cave are proposed to be removed to facilitate construction of the new winery, a new driveway and associated improvements.

Detailed documents relating to this proposal may be viewed online at <http://services.countyofnapa.org/AgendaNet/MeetingDocuments.aspx?ID=3491>.

Written comment regarding the environmental effects of this project are solicited. They must be presented during the public review period which runs through April 16. Comments should be directed to Sean Trippi, Napa County Planning, Building & Environmental Services Department, 1195 Third St., Suite 210, Napa, 299-1353 or sean.trippi@countyofnapa.org.

Church, Neighbors Reach Accord; Council Okays New Use Permit

After four meetings dominated by what Mayor John Dunbar termed "a very respectful, candid, honest dialogue," Yountville Community Church and its neighbors came to an agreement on how the church will modify and use the house, garage and yard it purchased at 6619 Yount St, immediately adjacent to and south of the church.

Tuesday evening that agreement, incorporated into a use permit and design review for

the property, was unanimously approved by Yountville's Town Council after a brief public hearing.

The 140-year-old church will now expand onto this adjacent property, using it for administrative offices, children's programs, pastoral counseling for church members and families, baptisms and special events.

Main features of this agreement include:

- ❖ Eliminating the Webber Street driveway onto the property

- ❖ Significant new landscaping around the corner at Webber and Yount

- ❖ Fencing along a portion of the south and west property boundaries

its neighbors brought an attorney, the Council postponed its decision on the proposed change in use and appointed an ad hoc committee to meet and discuss the issues.

That ad committee was comprised of Mayor Dunbar, Councillor Marita Dorenbecher, Pastor Bart Pense, church member John Jolly, neighborhood representative Charlene Silva and community representative Brian Plescia.

"We believe this project has been greatly enhanced by this process," said Silva during Tuesday's public hearing.

"I am so impressed with how this process went . . . and I am delighted with this outcome," commented

