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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

545 Avenue of the Flags — Mixed-Use Development

City of Buellton, California

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed project at 545 Avenue of the Flags involves the rehabilitation of an existing single-story retail/warehouse commercial building and the construction of two new three-story multi-family residential buildings on a 34,848 square-foot site comprised of five parcels (APNs 099-282-008, -009, -013, -019). The project is located within the Avenue of the Flags Specific Plan area and is zoned CR (General Commercial).

The proposal represents a thoughtful mixed-use infill development that integrates ground-floor commercial uses — including retail, restaurant, office, and storage — with 24 residential dwelling units distributed between two three-story residential buildings situated at the north and south ends of the site. A proposed open courtyard connects the commercial and residential components, creating an activated pedestrian environment at the interior of the site. Vehicular access is provided via two one-way drive aisles connecting Avenue of the Flags to the Central Avenue Alley, with diagonal on-street parking improvements proposed along the Avenue of the Flags frontage.

PROPOSED USES

Commercial (Ground Floor — Existing Building, Rehabilitated)

- Furniture/retail showroom (existing)
- Commercial kitchen / food supply store (existing)
- Storage room (existing)
- Future restaurant tenant space
- Office space

Residential (New Construction)

- 24 multi-family dwelling units
- Distributed between two three-story buildings — one at the north end and one at the south end of the site
- Mix of unit types consistent with the Avenue of the Flags Specific Plan Chapter 4, Section H.2.F

Site Amenities

- Proposed open courtyard with pedestrian connections

- Landscaped planting areas
- EV charging infrastructure
- Underground stormwater infiltration chambers
- Trash enclosure

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AND DESIGN INTENT

Agrarian Modern — A Style Rooted in the Santa Ynez Valley

The proposed architecture draws its character from the deep agricultural heritage of the Santa Ynez Valley and the broader Central Coast region. Rather than imposing a stylistic designation disconnected from the community's identity, the design embraces what might best be described as **Agrarian Modern** — a contemporary interpretation of the working vernacular buildings that have historically defined this landscape: the farmhouse, the barn, the feed store, and the ranch outbuilding.

This approach is entirely consistent with Buellton's authentic identity as a community shaped by ranching, farming, and the land. The Avenue of the Flags corridor, while commercial in nature, sits at the gateway to wine country and working agricultural land; its architecture should reflect that connection rather than contradict it.

Key Architectural Elements

Roofline and Form

The residential buildings are characterized by steeply pitched gabled roof forms with multiple intersecting ridgelines, creating a varied and human-scaled silhouette along the streetscape. Standing-seam metal roofing in a dark charcoal tone unifies the composition and references the corrugated metal roofs of agricultural structures throughout the valley. Shed dormers and secondary gable elements add depth and articulation consistent with farmstead compound massing.

Exterior Wall Materials

The facades employ a deliberate layering of three complementary materials that together evoke the textures of agricultural construction:

- **Board-and-batten vertical siding** in crisp white — the defining element of the California farmhouse
- **Horizontal lap siding** in warm gray — grounding the upper volumes and providing visual variety
- **Stacked ledger stone veneer** at the base and feature elements — anchoring the buildings to the earth and referencing the dry-stack stone walls common to valley ranches

This material palette is consistent with and complementary to recent high-quality development in the broader Santa Ynez Valley region, including wine country commercial developments that have established a recognized standard of excellence for Agrarian Modern design in this area.

Windows and Glazing

Large multi-lite windows with dark-framed surrounds and divided lights provide generous daylighting while maintaining the rhythm and proportion of agricultural vernacular. Ground-floor commercial glazing is generous and transparent, promoting visibility and street activation. Stone-framed entry elements on the residential buildings serve as anchor points that reinforce the agrarian character.

Porches, Stairs, and Pedestrian Circulation

Exterior stairways with simple wood railings and covered porch elements at the residential entries recall the functional porches and covered entries of working ranch buildings. These elements also serve to reduce the perceived massing of the three-story structures by breaking the facades into human-scaled components.

Landscaping

Site landscaping will incorporate drought-tolerant, California-native and Mediterranean-climate species consistent with the valley's agricultural landscape — including ornamental grasses, agave, lavender, and similar low-water plantings — with shade trees at the courtyard and parking areas. Landscaped planting islands are provided throughout the parking field consistent with City of Buellton requirements.

NOTE ON ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNATION

The City of Buellton's Avenue of the Flags Specific Plan references Art Deco as a preferred architectural theme for the corridor. However, the project team respectfully notes that no existing structures within the Avenue of the Flags area reflect Art Deco design, and that imposing this style would be inconsistent with both the physical context of the corridor and the broader cultural identity of Buellton and the Santa Ynez Valley.

The proposed Agrarian Modern character is not a departure from local identity — it *is* local identity. It reflects the region's genuine history as a ranching and farming community, aligns with the architectural language that has emerged organically along the corridor and throughout the valley, and creates a sense of place that is authentic, attractive, and durable.

The project team respectfully requests that the City consider this design approach as a positive contribution to the corridor's evolving character, and as a foundation for a cohesive, community-rooted design standard for future Avenue of the Flags development.