

## 2 PENROSE BLVD USE VARIANCE

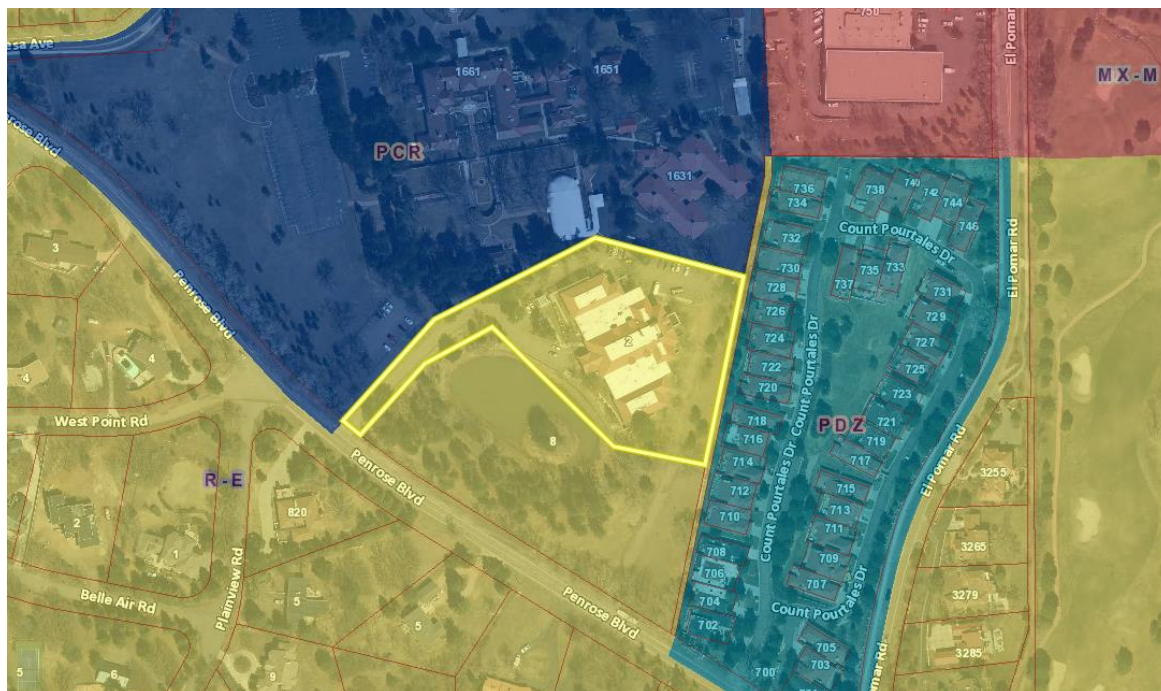
### PROJECT STATEMENT

*APRIL 2025; REVISED MAY 2025*

### REQUEST

N.E.S. Inc., on behalf of the El Pomar Foundation, requests approval of a Use Variance with a Land Use Statement to allow a Nonprofit Conference and Education Center in the R-E HS (Residential Estate, Hillside Overlay) zone district located at 2 Penrose Blvd.

### LOCATION AND ZONING



The project site is located at 2 Penrose Blvd., just south of the existing Penrose House which is the current event center and staff offices for El Pomar Foundation. There is an existing building at the site that has been vacant since 2023, prior to which it was a residential memory-care facility for Penrose St. Francis Hospital. The site is currently zoned R-E HS-O (Residential Estate, Hillside Overlay). The property to the north and west is zoned PCR HS-O (Planned Cultural Resort, Hillside Overlay). The property to the west is zoned PDZ HS-O (Planned Development Zone, Hillside Overlay). And the properties to the south are zoned R-E HS-O (Residential Estate, Hillside Overlay). More than 1-acre of land disturbance is anticipated with the development so on-site detention will likely be required and accommodated at 1661 Mesa Avenue. A Drainage Study will be submitted with any future Development Plan applications. Green Infrastructure infiltration areas will be provided throughout the site as required by the Drainage Criteria Manual.

**Legal Description:** Lot 1 Block 1 El Pomar Subdivision No. 2

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION



The Nonprofit Conference and Education Center use includes meeting halls, assembly space, conference rooms, administrative offices, and archive storage. Supporting functions include kitchen space, a chapel, and outdoor gathering space. The administrative offices will be available for use by El Pomar Staff and associated nonprofit organizations. The facilities will not be open for general public use and are intended for use only by staff during business hours and members and guests during events.

Total Square Footage permitted for this use under the proposed Use Variance: 45,000 square feet

Renovations of the building and land at 2 Penrose Blvd will reconnect property initially owned by El Pomar founders Spencer and Julie Penrose and support El Pomar Foundation's mission as a private foundation to enhance, encourage, and promote the current and future wellbeing of the people of Colorado. The renovations will serve three primary functions:

- Enhance visitor experience for Penrose House's existing activities as additional meeting space for nonprofits by adding interior space that does not currently exist to spread usage across the year rather than compacting it into fair-weather months. The existing Garden Pavillion has the largest capacity but can only be utilized during the fair-weather months.
- Provide administrative space for associated staff and nonprofit sector development
- Create climate-controlled and modern archival, collections, and management space for Penrose family records, artwork, and historic objects

As part of this renovation, the grounds will be cleaned up and improved as a continuing natural environment and mitigated for fire safety. Fencing will be repaired or improved with both security and

aesthetic considerations. The east and west driveways will be improved, and only used for staff and deliveries except for visitor drop off access from the west driveway.

Parking for 2 Penrose Blvd will be located at the property immediately to the northwest. It will be accessed through the existing parking lot for the Penrose House Garden Pavillion from the north west. Only drop-offs for guests needing close access will be allowed at the west driveway. The address provided to visitors will continue to be 1661 Mesa Avenue, the main entrance for Penrose House. Car parking access for staff, caterers, and some vendors at 2 Penrose will be on the east side of the building, but accessed through the main entrance. The east entrance driveway will be gated and used only sparingly for maintenance and emergency access.

The proposed improvements at the Penrose House property and the 2 Penrose Blvd property will require two Development Plan Modification submittals. The Development Plan Modifications will be submitted concurrently and will follow a similar construction timeline. The new offices and event space at 2 Penrose Blvd will require additional parking that will be provided on the Penrose House property. The new parking area and associated stormwater detention will be illustrated on the Development Plan Modification for the Penrose House property. A separate Development Modification will be submitted and will account for the 2 Penrose Blvd building improvements including façade improvements and an enhanced outdoor plaza space. Compliance with technical requirements will be demonstrated with the future Development Plan Modification Submittals.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT**

A Neighborhood Meeting was held on April 7, 2025 to inform and gather feedback from nearby residents and associated nonprofits regarding the proposed event space and administrative office expansion at 2 Penrose Blvd. Approximately 100 people were in attendance including 75 nearby residents and 25 members of associated non-profit organizations. Topics discussed during the meeting include the history of the property, the nature of the events, traffic calming measures for Mesa Ave, and vehicular circulation.

## **PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

### **CONFORMANCE WITH USE VARIANCE REVIEW CRITERIA (CODE SECTION 7.5.527.E)**

- 1. That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved or to the intended use of the property that do not apply generally to the property or class of uses in the same zone so that a denial of the Use Variance would result in undue property loss and not solely a mere inconvenience or financial disadvantage;**

The 2 Penrose Blvd property was part of the original El Pomar estate Spence and Julie Penrose purchased in 1916 and lived in for many years before Julie gifted it to the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati following Spencer's death. The Sisters ran a Catholic Retreat center on the property for decades. In 1989 they leased the 2 Penrose Blvd parcel to Penrose St Francis Hospital where they built and operated a memory care facility, which most recently was known as the Namaste Alzheimer's Center. Namaste ceased its Alzheimer's care facility in 2023 and El Pomar purchased the property from the Sisters in 2023, allowing the Foundation to reconnect the parcels of the



original Penrose Estate. The existing building at 2 Penrose Blvd needs some updating but is still in good enough condition to repurpose the existing facilities. The existing building is not suitable for any of the uses allowed in the R-E zone district and the site has not historically accommodated a large-lot residential use. The proposed use is consistent with the existing event center and office space currently operating at the 1661 Mesa Avenue property to the northwest.

**2. That the Use Variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a property right of the and if not approved, the property or structure cannot yield any beneficial use:**

The 2 Penrose Blvd renovation project proposes to convert the existing building into additional meeting space and administrative offices for El Pomar staff and associated nonprofits. The existing R-E zone district does not include any viable uses that are suitable for the existing building. Without the granting of a Use Variance, there are no other viable uses that are permitted in the R-E zone district. The proposed use is compatible with the Penrose House property to the northwest at 1661 Mesa Avenue.

**3. That the Use Variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or convenience nor injurious to the property or improvements of other owners of property;**

The proposed use is compatible with use and functions of the Penrose House to the northwest of the site which is currently used as administrative offices and a nonprofit conference center for El Pomar Foundation. The proposed renovation project will enhance the architecture of the existing building and provide greater, year-round function to the nonprofit community and El Pomar Foundation without significantly increasing the programming or number of events. The site will be designed to maintain primary vehicular access from the existing access at 1661 Mesa Avenue and to incorporate with the existing El Pomar campus to the northwest.

**4. That the hardship is not the result of the applicant's own actions;**

This building was constructed in 1989 after the site had already been utilized as a Catholic Retreat. Once constructed in 1989, the building was used as a Memory Care facility operated by Penrose St Francis Hospital. When these operations ceased in 2023, the facility sat empty. El Pomar purchased the property in 2023 with the intent to reconnect it with the Penrose House property at 1661 Mesa Avenue.

**5. That because of these conditions, the application of the UDC prohibition on the requested use on the subject property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the use of the property; and**

Constructed in 1989 for a large memory care facility, the existing building is not suitable for any uses listed in the R-E Zone District which is intended for large-lot residential development. The proposed use will re-incorporate the parcel into the overall El Pomar Campus.

**6. That the Use Variance is not being requested primarily to avoid the time or expense of complying with UDC standards generally applicable to similar properties and development.**

The 2 Penrose Blvd site and proposed use are not like the other surrounding residentially zoned properties. The site has not historically accommodated residential uses as is the purpose of the R-E zone district. After being utilized for a Catholic Retreat for many decades, the existing building was constructed to accommodate a large memory care facility with medical and administrative staff run by Penrose St Francis Hospital. The existing building is not suitable for any uses in the R-E zone district but is in good enough condition to be repurposed.



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