



Memo

To: The Atherton Planning Commission
From: Sally D Bentz-Dalton, Town Arborist
CC: Gerry Martin, Assistant Planner
Date: 4/28/25
Re: Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) Exception 94 Palmer

I have reviewed the application at 94 Palmer and offer the following observations and recommendations for your review:

The applicant is applying for TPZ exceptions for the following:

T14 = 16" diameter which is 7'-8" from driveway = 5.7X the diameter of tree.
T15 = 18" diameter which is 8'-10" from driveway = 5.9X the diameter of tree. Shared.
T16 = 32" diameter which is 9'-10" from driveway = 3.7X the diameter of tree. Shared/ Neighbor's tree.
T17 = 24" diameter which is 10'-7" from driveway = 5.3X the diameter of tree. Neighbor's tree.
T18 = 16" diameter which is 9'-5" from driveway = 7.0X the diameter of tree. Shared.
T19 = 19" diameter which is 9'-11" from driveway = 6.3X the diameter of tree. Neighbor's tree.

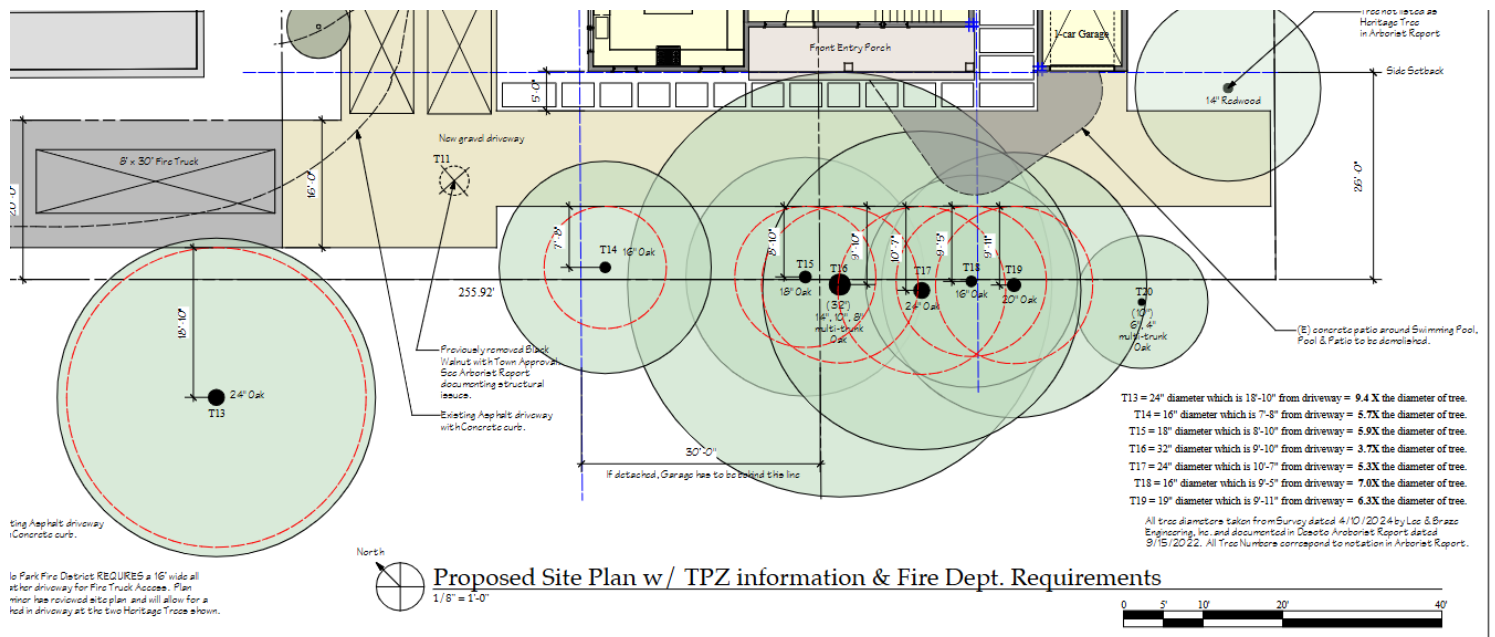
The following requests are not in front of the Planning Commission and is for information only.

T9, T10, T12 exempt from TPZ requirements at Existing Driveway Location only. 12- Neighbor's
T13 = 24" diameter which is 18'-10" from driveway = 9.4 X the diameter of tree. More than 8x. Neighbor's
T21 & T22 exempt from TPZ requirements at ADU location only. Neighbor's trees.
T23 = 22" diameter which is 14'-8" from wood deck = 8.0X the diameter of tree. Staff exception. Neighbor's
T24 = 22" diameter which is 16'-3" from wood deck = 8.8X the diameter of tree. Staff exception. Neighbor's

Per tree inventory by Dsoto Tree and Arborists Services dated 9/15/22

TREE#	SPECIES	TRUNK DIAMETER (in)	Heritage	CONDITION RATING	SUITABILITY for PRESERVATION	COMMENTS	DRIPLINES(FT)				HEIGHT (ft)
							North	South	East	West	
14	quercus agrifolia.	16	Yes	Good 75%	High	trunk covered with ivy	0	20	0	20	20
15	quercus agrifolia.	18	Yes	Good 80%	High		10	25	10	25	25
16	quercus agrifolia.	32	Yes	Good 90%	High		10	30	10	30	30
17	quercus agrifolia.	24	Yes	Good 90%	High		10	25	10	30	30
18	quercus agrifolia.	16	Yes	Good 80%	High		10	20	10	20	20
19	quercus agrifolia.	20	Yes	Good 80%	High		10	25	10	25	25

The 6 trees are all Coast Live Oaks with a good condition rating.
 Trees #16, 17 and 19 are on the neighbor's side.
 Tree #15, 18 and 19 are shared trees.



This was a lot-split. The applicant is using the existing driveway footprint from the front parcel but needs to extend it to get to the back of the parcel.

The applicant is proposing an Easypave gravel driveway as the new driveway material. The driveway per Menlo Fire must be 16' wide. However, the applicant reviewed the site with Menlo Fire agreed to let them narrow the driveway for a limited portion around trees T9, T10 & T12. Sheet A-3 for this agreed upon configuration and for the minimal impact to Tree T13.

The applicant is proposing using a permeable & porous, gravel driveway system such as the BODPAVE 85 Porous Pavers made by Terram in this location (or an approved equal product with similar attributes). It will allow water to pass through the driveway, using this type of system allows us to excavate much less and use much less base rock than a typical concrete driveway.

The applicant pointed out that portion of this proposed driveway location, there currently exists a concrete swimming pool and concrete patio. These items will be demolished, and the gravel driveway will replace a portion of these concrete structures. Only in this pool deck location would we consider exempt from the TPZ's because we are replacing the ground cover in the same location. However, we are replacing it with a better, porous material that will allow for better water percolation down into the soil.

Analysis:

The applicant needs a driveway to access the 1 car garage. I am concerned that many of these are shared or neighbor trees. So much care needs to be considered. However, the applicant has decreased the width of the driveway to allow more room as well as implementing material that will require less grading and base rock. The material the applicant is proposing using is only 2" of easy pave and 2" of gravel plus subgrade. This material is better for the roots of the tree and will cause less compaction.

In conclusion:

The Oak trees are in good condition and have a good construction rating to construction impacts. The applicant updated the design for a smaller driveway as well as materials. If the applicant does outreach to the neighbor that owns the subject trees, I can recommend the TPZ requests below with the conditions.

T14 = 16" diameter which is 7'-8" from driveway = 5.7X the diameter of tree.
T15 = 18" diameter which is 8'-10" from driveway = 5.9X the diameter of tree.
T16 = 32" diameter which is 9'-10" from driveway = 3.7X the diameter of tree.
T17 = 24" diameter which is 10'-7" from driveway = 5.3X the diameter of tree.
T18 = 16" diameter which is 9'-5" from driveway = 7.0X the diameter of tree.
T19 = 19" diameter which is 9'-11" from driveway = 6.3X the diameter of tree

I can approve with the conditions of approval below.

The following are requirements:

1. The Applicant must provide outreach to the neighbor owning trees subject to this request, ensuring that they are aware of the project scope, prior to issuance of a related building permit.
2. The Project Arborist is required to be on hand during excavation for the demo of the existing driveway and excavation of new driveway.
3. Excavations are required to be performed carefully and by hand 8x away or less to avoid tearing or pulling roots.
4. The Project Arborist or their designated person should cut all roots larger than 1 inch in diameter with a sharp saw on the side of the excavation closest to the tree (s).
5. No roots over 2" to be cut.
6. All work in this are required to be documented in the quarterly arborist reports.
7. Install Easypave grid to as shown in submitted detail.

The information included in this memo is believed to be true and based on sound arboricultural principles and practices.

Sincerely,

Sally Bentz
Town Arborist
Certified Arborist WE#9238AM