



January 19, 2023

Town of Atherton  
Planning Commission  
80 Fair Oaks Lane  
Atherton, CA 94027

Re: TPZ Exception Application  
244 Park Lane  
Atherton, CA 94027

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Thank you for your time in reviewing our request for TPZ exceptions at this new house project at 244 Park Lane.

We have been working with the homeowner for the last several months on design drawings for their new family home which will consist of a new 9000 SF main residence with partial basement and a new 1100 SF detached ADU structure. The site development will also include other typical landscape improvements including a pool and bocce court. The lot is 0.83 acres, is relatively square in shape and has roughly 2ft of grade change from a high point at front left (site-South) to a low point at back right (site-North).

Although the property is very uniform in terms of size and topography, it is anything but typical in terms of TPZ encroachments into the buildable area on the lot. This is due to the substantial number of heritage trees on site. There are 19 heritage sized trees on or adjacent to the property. Most are redwoods, but there are also two valley oaks and two live oaks. There is one main redwood grove at the back right (site-North) portion of the lot, and then there are several extremely large redwoods at the front left (site-South) portion of the lot. Our goal in designing for the homeowner on this project has been to work within the TPZs as best as possible while incorporating all of the desired elements of the homeowner's program. Inevitably, we knew we would likely be heading to Planning Commission review on this property due to the substantial amount of TPZs on property. The total TPZ encroachment into buildable area on this site is 42% which is uniquely high. With that in mind, we came to the design layout shown on attached diagram TPZ-1.

As part of our site design, we plan to re-use some of the existing driveway and existing pool hardscape area in order to provide garage driveway access and low impact bocce court in areas that would otherwise be off limits due to TPZs. Existing paved area is indicated on our TPZ-1 diagram with a green diagonal striped hatch. The extent of new planned driveway area is shown with a blue cross hatch on diagram TPZ-1. The diagram shows that there is a substantial portion of paved area in the north corner of the lot which will be returned to landscape area and give the trees in that zone more 'breathing room'.

In consulting with Town Arborist Sally about our planned site layout and constraint issues, Sally agreed that we should do some exploratory trenching in order to determine where roots are located on the most critical adjacent trees. We proceeded with (2) long trenches approximately 24"-30" deep, locations shown in green on attached diagram TPZ-1. The result of our trenching was that no sizeable roots were found in trench #1, adjacent to redwood #16, and (1) 4" root was found in trench #2, adjacent to redwood #13/14. The approximate location of the one root found is shown on diagram TPZ-1 as a bold red line.

Given our findings, and the fact that we had space to move the Main House structure away from tree #13/14, we shifted the Main House 5'-6" towards tree #16. The result of this shift is shown in attached diagram TPZ-2 which is our current proposed site layout.

As an added effort to preserve all of these trees on site, it is our intention to provide stitch pier shoring at all full depth basement or lightwell wall locations within TPZs. Areas of full depth basement or lightwell are shown in the dark grey hatch on diagram TPZ-2. This will reduce the impact of construction on tree health as we can avoid large overcuts during excavation – commonly referred to as OSHA cuts.

We would like to ask the Planning Commission to review the following list of detailed TPZ exceptions for us as diagramed on sheet TPZ-2, and to consider allowing these requests so we can move forward with a thoughtfully designed home at 244 Park Lane.

#### #16 Coast Redwood – 91.6" diameter

- We are requesting an exception to reduce the TPZ from 10X to 5.43X or 40'-9 ½". We are encroaching into the 6X TPZ a total of 111 SF which represents 1.7% of 6X diameter TPZ of the tree. We are asking for this encroachment because we did not find any substantial sized roots in trench #1. The tree is 91.6" in diameter which results in an excessively large TPZ based on the Town's standard 10X diameter calculation.
- We are removing the existing in-ground pool shown in green hatch adjacent to this tree. The planned bocce court shown will be surface level, low impact and sit further from the tree than the current pool which we think will help the overall continued health of the tree.
- Take note that the area of house encroachment will not be full depth basement, only crawlspace as shown in light grey on our TPZ-2 diagram

#### #15 Valley Oak – 32.7" diameter

- We are requesting an exception to reduce the TPZ from 10X to 7.6X or 20'-9" in one small, 3 SF area. This encroachment is slightly smaller than the staff level approval of 8X diameter so we are requesting the planning commission to approve the encroachment. The area of encroachment represents 0.2% of the 8X diameter TPZ for this tree, which could have otherwise been approved at staff level.
- The adjacent structure is a slab on grade ADU, so the structural slab will have a very shallow depth as compared to a full basement excavation at areas of the Main House.

#### #12 Coast Redwood – 30.3" diameter

- We are requesting an exception to reduce the TPZ from 10X to 6X in one 23 SF area. The area of encroachment represents 1.8% of the 8x diameter TPZ for this tree, which could have otherwise been approved at staff level.

#14 Coast Redwood – 43.7” diameter

- We are requesting an exception to reduce the TPZ from 10X to 6.5X or 23’ – 9 ½” in one area of shallow foundation. The areas of full basement encroachment are further from the tree – 7.8X diameter minimum and will have stitch pier shoring to decrease construction impact on surrounding trees.
- We are encroaching into the 8X TPZ of this tree a total of 82.4 SF which represents 3.1% of 8X diameter TPZ of the tree.
- We did an exploratory trench along the edge of this tree and found only (1) 4” root (shown in bold red line on TPZ-2) which will be impacted by our planned construction. Our project Arborist confirms that there is minimal concern with cutting a 4” root on a redwood at the distance required. In our case, the root would need to be cut at 7.5X tree diameter or 27’ – 1 ½”.
- We have moved the structure 5.5ft further away from this tree given the root finding
- We are eliminating most of the existing hardscape surrounding the tree (green diagonal striping) and only providing new driveway to the extent shown in blue cross hatch on diagram TPZ-2
- No other roots were found in our trench which continues at 24”-30” depth all the way to the extent of the lightwell shown in our diagram TPZ-2.

#1 Coast Redwood – 16.9” diameter

- This is a small, borderline heritage tree that sits between two areas of very close existing paving. We are requesting an exception to reduce the TPZ from 8X for driveways down to 4.9X or 7ft. Part of the existing driveway already encroaches to this same dimension. The area of new encroachment is necessary in order to provide for our curved driveway to access the garage/ parking back-up on site and tie-in with existing driveway area. We are trying to soften the curve of the driveway enough to make it maneuverable for everyday parking.
- The encroachment will only consist of asphalt paving in this zone.

Thank you for your consideration,



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