TO:        HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM:     CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE:     FEBRUARY 17, 2004

CMR:156:04

SUBJECT:     4010 PAGE MILL ROAD [03-D-10, 03-EIA-15, 03-V-15]:
APPLICATION BY CARTMELL/TAM ARCHITECTS ON BEHALF OF
DAVID DITZEL FOR SITE AND DESIGN REVIEW TO ALLOW A 1,677
SQUARE FOOT ADDITION TO AN EXISTING 3,433 SINGLE-FAMILY
RESIDENCE LOCATED AT 4010 PAGE MILL ROAD AND
CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SWIMMING POOL, INCLUDING A
REQUEST FOR THE FOLLOWING VARIANCES: A 29’6” SIDE YARD
SETBACK WHERE A 30’ SETBACK IS REQUIRED, CONSTRUCTION
OF AN EXTERIOR STAIRWAY AND LANDING HAVING A 46’ FRONT
YARD SETBACK AND CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW GARAGE
HAVING A 69’ FRONT YARD SETBACK WHERE A 200’ SETBACK IS
REQUIRED, AND A TOTAL IMPERVIOUS AREA OF 13.5%, WHERE
3.5% IS NORMALLY THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED. ZONE DISTRICT:
OPEN SPACE (OS). ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: A NEGATIVE
DECLARATION HAS BEEN PREPARED.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff and the Planning and Transportation Commission recommend that the City Council
approve the following:

1. Negative Declaration, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

2. Variance to allow 13.5% lot coverage and setback encroachments as described in the
Draft Record of Land Use Action.

3. Site and Design Review application to allow construction of a residential addition in
the Open Space district.

BACKGROUND
The project site is a single parcel of approximately one acre in the Palo Alto Foothills that
is located entirely within the 200’ special scenic setback along Page Mill Road.
The site contains a single-family residence of 3,433 square feet on two levels and accessory structures, including a cloth greenhouse, storage shed, and a hot tub. Any development on the site would be within the special scenic setback. In addition, the site is noncomplying for lot size (one acre) and lot coverage (13.6%). The minimum lot size in the OS district is 10 acres. The maximum lot coverage is 3.5%.

The applicant has proposed an approximately 1,700 square feet expansion of the residence. This expansion requires a variance for side yard and scenic setback encroachments and lot coverage. Since the site is located in the Open Space district, Site and Design Review is also required to determine compliance with the Open Space Development Criteria.

The addition includes a 237 square foot expansion of the master bedroom and bath, a 1,440 square foot addition at the lower level for a new attached garage and storage area, an uncovered deck above the proposed garage, a new exterior stairway and landing for the main entrance and a 16’ x 32’ swimming pool and deck at the rear of the house.

The existing driveway would be slightly modified to accommodate the new garage. A backup area will be created so that automobiles would not have to back out onto Page Mill Road. A new concrete pad adjacent to the backup area would accommodate a proposed propane tank, which would provide a fuel source of the residence for heating and cooking.

Exterior materials for the addition include a stucco finish to match the existing finish and horizontal redwood siding around the garage deck and garage elevations.

A full project description is included in the attached Planning and Transportation Commission Staff Report.

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This project was heard by the Planning and Transportation Commission (Commission) on November 12, 2003 and January 14, 2004. The Commission recommended that the City Council approve the Negative Declaration, the Variance and the Site and Design Review application (4-2-0-0, Commissioners Burt and Holman opposed).

In addition to the variance and Site and Design findings, the Commissioners discussed the use of pervious and impervious surfaces on the site and the aesthetics and visibility of the existing cloth greenhouse.

The project applicant originally proposed an impervious surface coverage of 20.7% of the site area. In that plan, the asphalt driveway was counted as an impervious surface. The Commission directed the applicant to revise the plan so that the impervious surfaces proposed for the site did not exceed the existing coverage.
The applicant revised the plans by converting the driveway material to a Basalite pervious concrete system. This material would allow rainwater to be absorbed and would reduce water runoff during rainstorms. In addition, the cloth greenhouse was found to be a temporary structure and therefore does not count as an impervious surface. These and other minor revisions reduced the proposed overall impervious coverage to an amount less than the existing impervious coverage.

The existing cloth greenhouse is a 688 square foot temporary structure that can be disassembled and stored when not in use. The structure, in its existing location on the site, is visible from Page Mill Road. As a proposed condition of approval, staff recommended that the greenhouse be removed from the site six months of the year (so that the structure could be considered temporary) and that the greenhouse covering material be changed to a color that is more compatible with the environment. Commissioners discussed the visibility of the greenhouse from Page Mill Road and supported staff’s recommendation. The Commission recommended as a condition of approval that the period when the greenhouse could be in place would be restricted to the “growing season” of the specific variety of fruits or vegetables to be cultivated.

With the above modifications, the Commission recommended approval of the Site and Design and variance application, finding that the project is compatible with other single-family uses in the area, maintains the investment of the property owner, does not detract from the natural environment, includes materials that increase permeability on the site and is in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission recognized the hardships of a substandard lot size and location of the lot within the 200’ scenic setback as justification for approval of the requested variances.

Commissioner Burt opposed the motion to approve the project based upon his determination that substantial evidence was not presented to indicate that the variance would not be harmful or detrimental to neighboring property owners or users of Page Mill Road, in that there is not adequate protection of the scenic right-of-way along Page Mill Road. In addition, Commissioner Burt could not find that the project was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan or constructed with sound environmental design principals, in that the exterior materials proposed for the building are not compatible with the natural environment.

Commissioner Holman opposed the motion to approve the project based upon her determination that substantial evidence was not presented to indicate that the variance was necessary to preserve a substantial property right, in that the existing lot size allows for a reasonably sized house without the need for a variance and that property owners are not are not entitled by right to have large homes within the Open Space district.
ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Record of Land Use Action
Attachment B: Planning & Transportation Commission Staff Report January 14, 2004
Attachment C: Planning & Transportation Commission excerpt verbatim minutes, January 14, 2004
Attachment D: Project Plans (Council packet only)

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