CITY OF PALO ALTO

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Architectural Review Board

Staff Report

Agenda Date:	**December 5, 2013**	
To:	**Architectural Review Board**	
From:	**Jodie Gerhardt, Senior Planner**	**Department: Planning and Community Environment**
Subject:	**1050 Page Mill Road (13PLN-00423):** Request by 1050 Page Mill Road Property LLC for preliminary architectural review for four new two-story office buildings totaling 283,980 square feet and associated site improvement. Zoning District: Research Park (RP)	

RECOMMENDATION

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) is requested to conduct a Preliminary Review of the project concept and provide comments on the conceptual site design, and elevations to staff and the applicant. No formal action may be taken at a preliminary review; comments made at a preliminary review are not binding on the City or the applicant.

BACKGROUND

Site Information

The project site, located at 1050 Page Mill Road, has an area of approximately 587,363 square feet. There are currently two structures on the site, including a two-story 142,306 square foot office building that faces Page Mill Road and a second, two-story 141,674 square foot office building that is internal to the site. The total existing building square footage is 283,980 square feet; it is unclear as to what percentage of the existing floor area is employee amenity area (and therefore not included in floor area ratio or parking requirements). A total of 564 parking spaces are provided on the site currently; if all floor area were included as office area, the parking ratio is currently one parking space per 503 square feet of floor area where one parking space per 300 square feet of gross floor area is required.

The site has a Comprehensive Plan land use designation of Research/Office Park and a zoning designation of Research Park (RP) district. The Research/Office Park land use designation allows office, research, and manufacturing establishments whose operations are buffered from adjacent residential uses. The RP zoning district allows a limited group of research and manufacturing

uses that may have unusual requirements for space, light, and air, and desire sites in a research park environment. The maximum Floor Area Ratio in the RP district is 0.4:1; the existing FAR on the site is 0.48:1 assuming no employee amenity area.

All of the surrounding properties are zoned RP and contain similar research and manufacturing uses, with the abutting site of Fire Station #2 located to the south along Hanover Street. Across Page Mill Road to east are additional research and manufacturing uses.

Project Description

The applicant is proposing to demolish two existing buildings totaling 283,980 square feet and redevelop the site with construction of four two-story buildings totaling 283,980 square feet with associated site improvements. It is unclear from plans whether the amount of floor area used for office space and amenity space will be unchanged from existing.

The first and second floor building elevations reflect a light and glassy aesthetic, with vertical fins and a sunshade to provide horizontal banding. The conceptual plans include building elevations to assist the ARB review. A full landscaping plan has not been provided and would be submitted and fully evaluated during the formal review. The formal application for the project will be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Architectural Review Board review. Comments from City department staff have been forwarded to the applicant for consideration. The applicant further describes the proposed project in their project narrative (Attachment A).

DISCUSSION

Zoning Compliance

The RP zoning district has a required 20 foot requirement for front, rear, side yard setbacks, and a height limit of 35 feet. The site must also abide by a special setback of 50 feet along Page Mill Road. The maximum lot coverage is 30% with a 40% maximum floor area ratio (FAR). The applicant has stated that the existing FAR for the subject property is 48.35 percent. It is likely that a portion of the building is for employee amenities which do not count toward FAR. It is also possible that per Section 18.70.100 of the Municipal Code, the existing FAR is considered legal non-conforming. Staff will continue to work through this issue with the applicant prior to submittal of the formal ARB application.

Site Design and Circulation

The project includes four two-story buildings, meeting the minimum 50 foot front setback and providing approximately 90 foot side and rear setbacks. The existing large building facing Page Mill Road creates a visual barrier whereas the proposal would break the same square footage into four buildings and provide greater visibility into the site while maintaining a presence on Page Mill Road.

The concept plans indicate the square footage would be dispensed across the entire site. The impervious footprint of the development would be reduced by approximately 8 percent with the inclusion of below grading parking under the proposed structures. These parking facilities, along with trash facilities, would be dispersed around the site to allow for efficient circulation.

Building Design

As shown on sheet 4.0 thru 5.6, the main portion of the proposed building would consist of a clear glass envelope with glass vertical fins for shading. Visual interest and additional shading would be provided by the playful use of an aluminum horizontal sunshade. The applicant is currently targeting LEED Platinum for the project with the inclusion of photovoltaics covering all roofs. The applicant and staff would like direction from the Architectural Review Board on the proposed elevations, particularly the Page Mill Road facades.

Parking

Per the Palo Alto Municipal Code, 283,980 square foot project would require a minimum of one space per 300 gross square feet or 947 total spaces. The site current has 564 parking spaces, well below the current requirement assuming no employee amenity area exists on site currently. Given the project is currently proposing 937 parking spaces, just 10 spaces short of the requirement were the entire floor area to be devoted to office space, and given an assumption that some employee amenity space would be provided to address issues were it not to be provided, staff is confident the applicant will be able to bring the proposed project into conformance with the current Zoning Code regulations.

Landscaping

Landscaping details are not provided at this time; however, the project would be required to conform to the City parking design standards contain in Chapter 18.54 of the Municipal Code and preserve mature trees as possible. The County of Santa Clara has jurisdiction over Page Mill Road as it is a Country expressway. The County typically does not permit trees to be within seven feet of the roadway for safety and road maintenance concerns. The City's Arborist, Dave Dockter, will continuing working with the applicant to ensure the survival of existing mature trees and to enhance the front setback to create a less formal and more pedestrian friendly environment. Staff is also requesting comments from the ARB on this aspect of the project.

Neighbor Concerns

Staff had preliminary discussions with neighborhood leaders who expressed concerns about connectivity in the area including the desire to provide alternative transportation routes for businesses located along California Avenue. The neighborhood leaders would like to see a mid-block driveway/street that would help to reduce traffic along California Avenue. While such a driveway/street is not reflected in the City's Comprehensive Plan, and not viewed as desirable by the applicant, it was brought up years ago during several project reviews, such as the project at 2475 Hanover, approved via the ARB process and appeal to Council, and the project was designed so as not to preclude a future vehicular access road through the site to form a future "spine road" if it were to become a reality. Staff has alerted the applicant to this and will continue to work with the applicant to explore, at minimum, the creation of bicycle and pedestrian access through the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

No environmental review is required for this Preliminary Review application, as it is not considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A:	Applicant's Project Description*
Attachment B:	Site Location Map
Attachment C:	Zoning Comparison Table
Attachment D:	Development Plans (Board Members Only)*

* Prepared by Applicant; all other attachments prepared by Staff

COURTESY COPIES

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Reviewed By: Amy French, AICP, Chief Planning Official

Form4

1050 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto
Project Narrative

October 10, 2013
November 25, 2013 revised

To: City of Palo Alto Planning Division
Architectural Review Board Members

From: 1050 Page Mill Road Property, LLC - Applicant
Robert Giannini, Architect

Subject: 1050 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto
Preliminary Architectural Review Board Review

1050 Page Mill Road Property, LLC is the sponsor of this application for a new +/- 284,000 square foot, four building energy efficient Class-A office project to replace existing, obsolete buildings on the project site. The site, on the north side of Page Mill Road at Hansen Way, has a magnificent and expansive frontage. The site is +/- 13.48 acres and is zoned Research Park (RP). It currently contains two buildings; the front building facing Page Mill is a 2-story office building, and the rear building, internal to the site is primarily high bay one-story with a two-story portion at its south end.

The proposed new buildings will contain the same total floor area as the two existing buildings together, and the precise replacement area will be refined with staff.

The site is currently 100% surface parked, and is, in fact, under-parked by current zoning standards. This proposal would bring the site to current parking standards. In order to maximize the open area, the project proposes parking under each buildings resulting in roughly half the parking on grade, and half below grade. Parking will be provided on the site at a ratio of 3.3 per 1,000sf, for a total of +/- 941 spaces (dependent on final replacement area calculation).

We look forward to feedback from the Architectural Review Board and the City of Palo Alto on this proposed redevelopment project.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

BUILDING

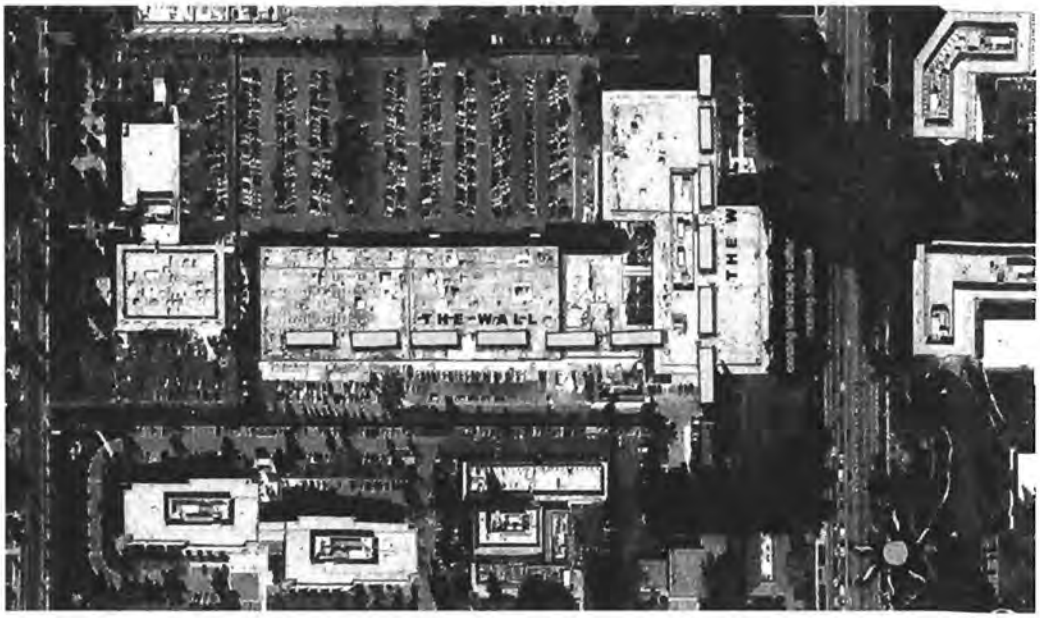
Project Description	Four new two-story buildings over one level below grade parking garage.
APN:	142-20-091
Zoning:	RP
Construction Type:	Type IIIB
Occupancy:	B
Building Codes:	2010 CBC, 2010 Green Building Standards
Fire Sprinklers:	Fully Sprinklered, Monitored
Land Area:	13.484 acres or 587,363 sf
Existing Building Area (FAR):	+/- 283,980 sf (48.35%)
Proposed Floor Area (FAR):	+/- 283,980 sf (48.35%)
Existing Lot Coverage:	+/- 193,011 sf (32.86%)
Proposed Lot Coverage:	+/- 143,990 sf (24.51%)
Parking Required @ 3.3/1000:	+/- 937 spaces
Parking Provided Surface:	+/- 454 spaces
Parking Provided Garage:	+/- 432 spaces
Total Parking Provided:	+/- 937 spaces
Garage Construction Type:	Type IB
Garage Occupancy:	S2

Architectural Design Narrative

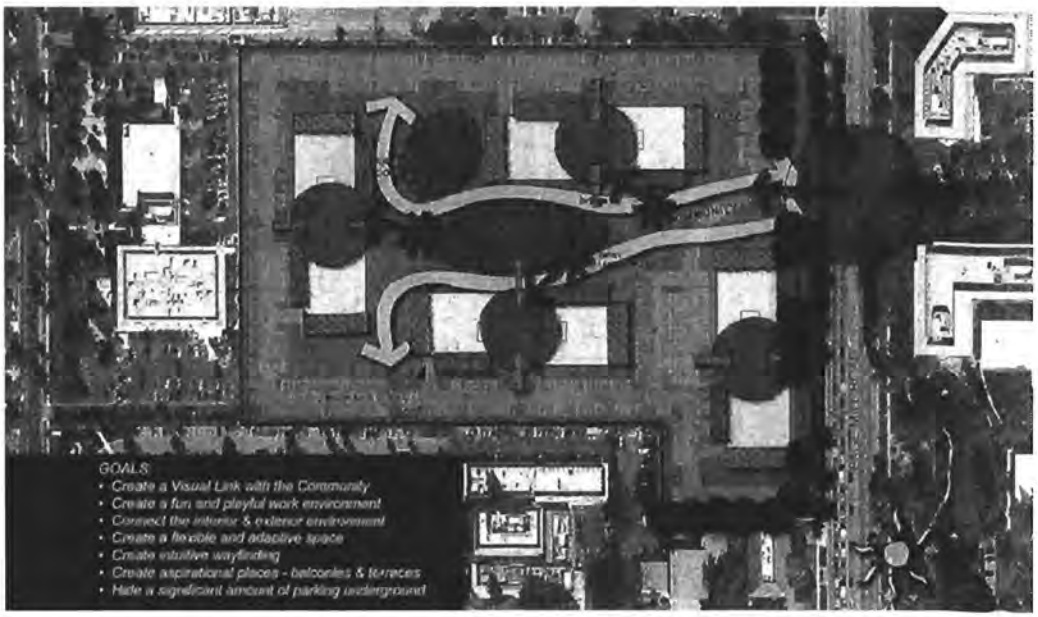
It is a pleasure to provide this design application for 1050 Page Mill Road.

This project has the opportunity to redevelop the site in two important ways. It will replace buildings that are no longer well suited to today's users, located on an under-parked site. It also has the ability to change what has been an introverted neighbor into one that is open and welcoming.

SITE PLAN:

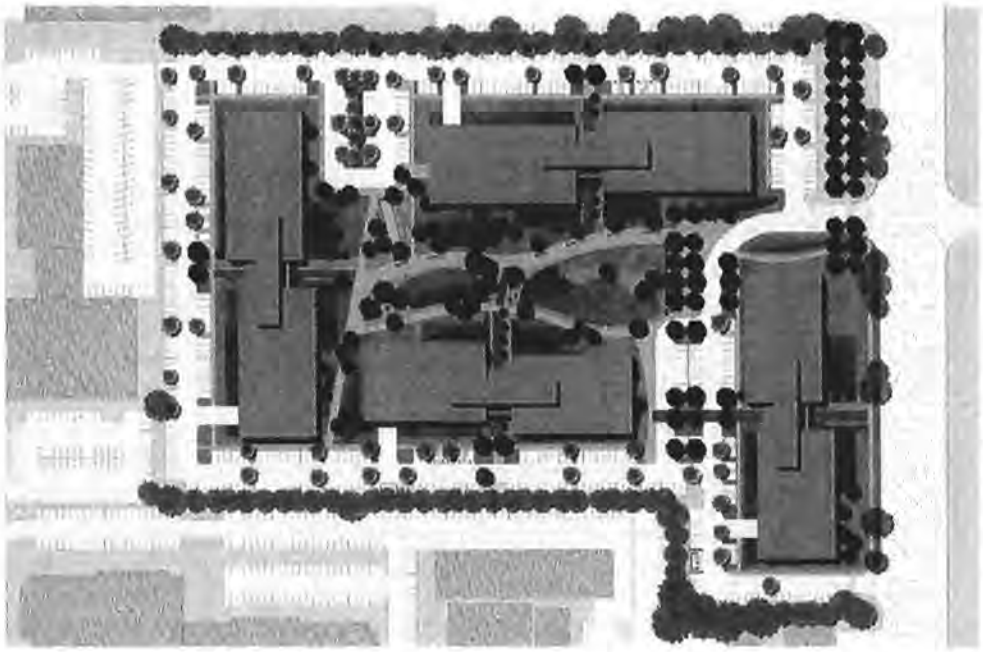


The existing buildings on the site create a wall to the community.



The proposed master plan concept opens to the community and visually invites you in. Two-sided, through lobbies, connect the public side of the building to the project's generous backyard.

The buildings are used to define an extensive central open space - free of cars thanks to underground parking.



Proposed illustrative Master Plan

The central open campus would be developed with a variety of connected spaces that add interest as well as places to meet, think and collaborate.

PROJECT GOALS

Projects along Page Mill have a history of serving for 50 years or more. The sustainability principal of creating adaptive, flexible space that can evolve over time is important. Following is that, and the other primary design goals for the project:

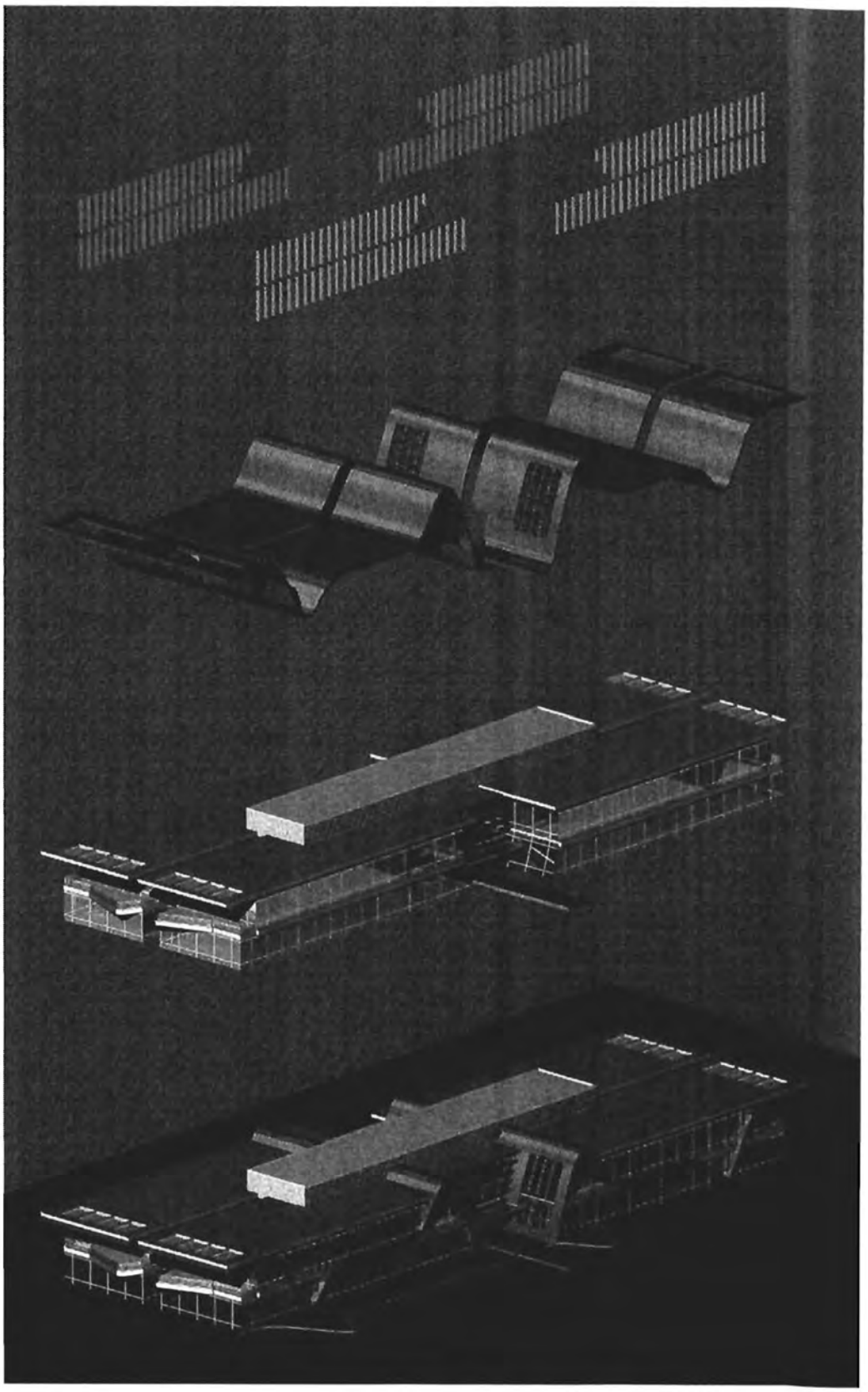
a) *Create a Visual Link with the Community*
b) *Create a flexible and adaptive space*
c) *Create a fun and playful work environment*
d) *Connect the interior & exterior environment*
e) *Be highly sustainable*
f) *Create intuitive way-finding*
g) *Create aspirational places - balconies & terraces*
h) *Hide a significant amount of parking underground*

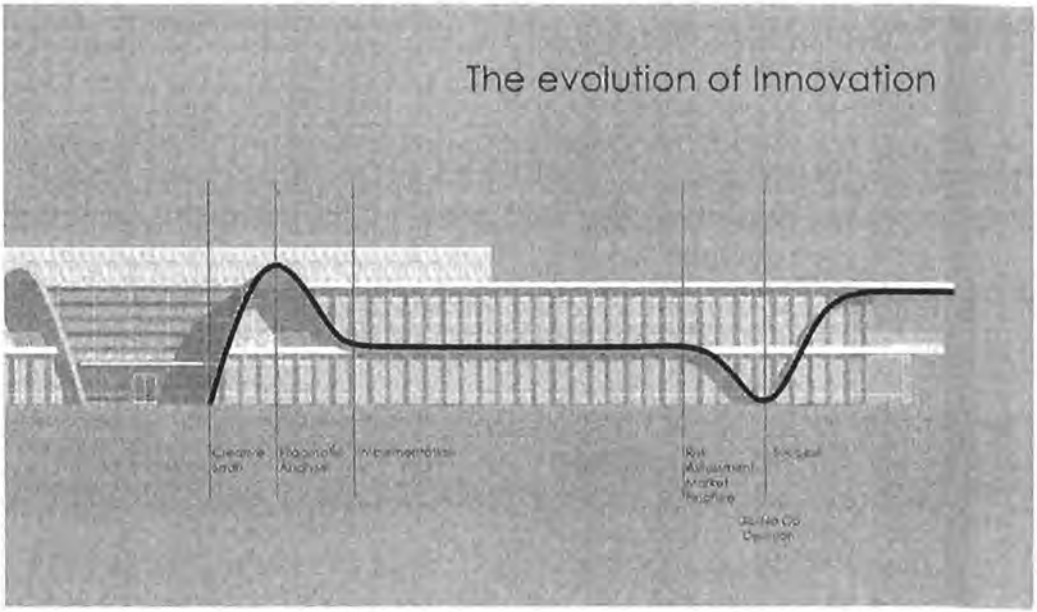
ARCHITECTURE & SUSTAINABILITY

The design of the building was inspired by a happy integration of two thoughts. The first was to create a flexible building that will function well over time and will be highly energy efficient. The second was to recognize and celebrate the innovate entrepreneurial spirit that is the essence of the research park.

While it is early in the process, at this time the team is targeting LEED Platinum for the project including photovoltaics covering all roofs.

The following diagram breaks apart the envelope shading strategy - conceived of in a lyrical way using a form evocative of the innovate entrepreneurial spirit. To make sure the building is a comfortable as it can be our team includes the daylighting expert firm of Loisos + Ubbelohde Associates, http://www.coolshadow.com:





In an effort to let the energy model allow more exterior glass, deep horizontal sunshades were needed. The sensuous mid-level horizontal component of that shading element arguably follows the shape of the classic R&D timeline; from creative spark, though trail and tribulation, to welcome success.

Glass fin verticals and a deep roof overhang complete the shading strategy. The clear glass envelope with glass shading fins create a crystalline form that evokes a sense of lightness and spirit.

While one may not recognize the inspirational allusion of "Innovation," without coaching, the composition of buildings uses it to good end and a feeling IS created.

The view above is taken at the entry to the campus from Page Mill. Following the metaphor, one enters between the gates of success, looking back to the spark of creativity. Hopefully one will indeed feel the free nature of the buildings at the entry, and be intrigued by the arch shapes in the distance.

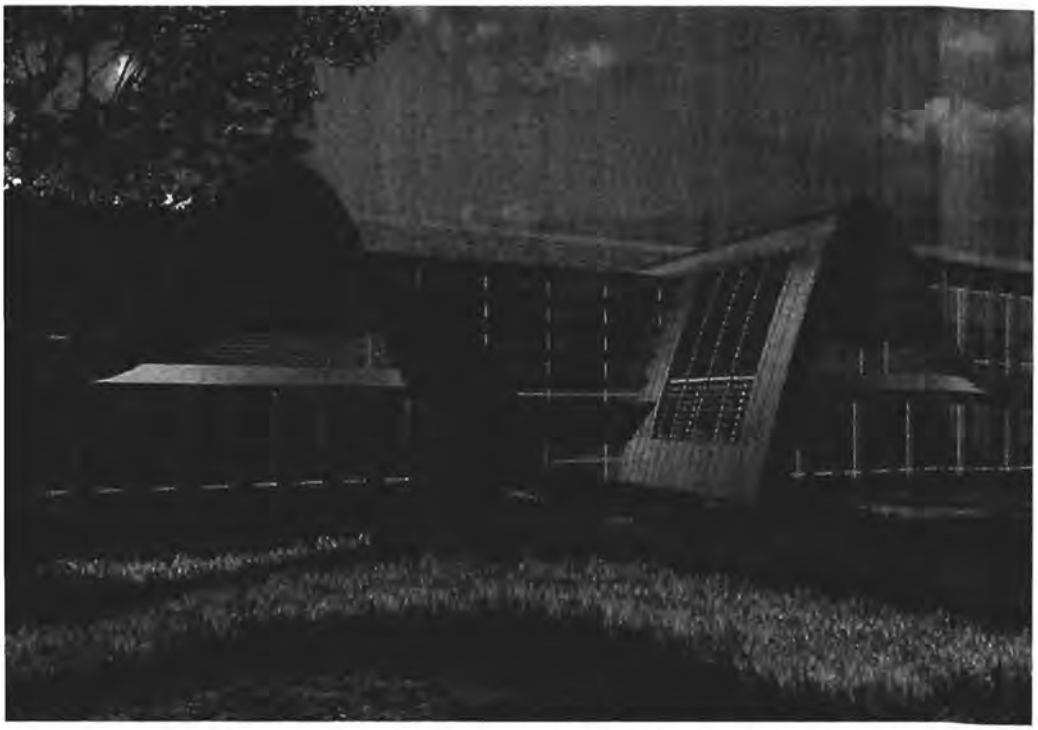
PEOPLE SCALE

Terraces will break down the scale of the building along the inner campus to create places for people to work or meet thereby helping to activate the space.

MATERIALS & TRANSITIONS

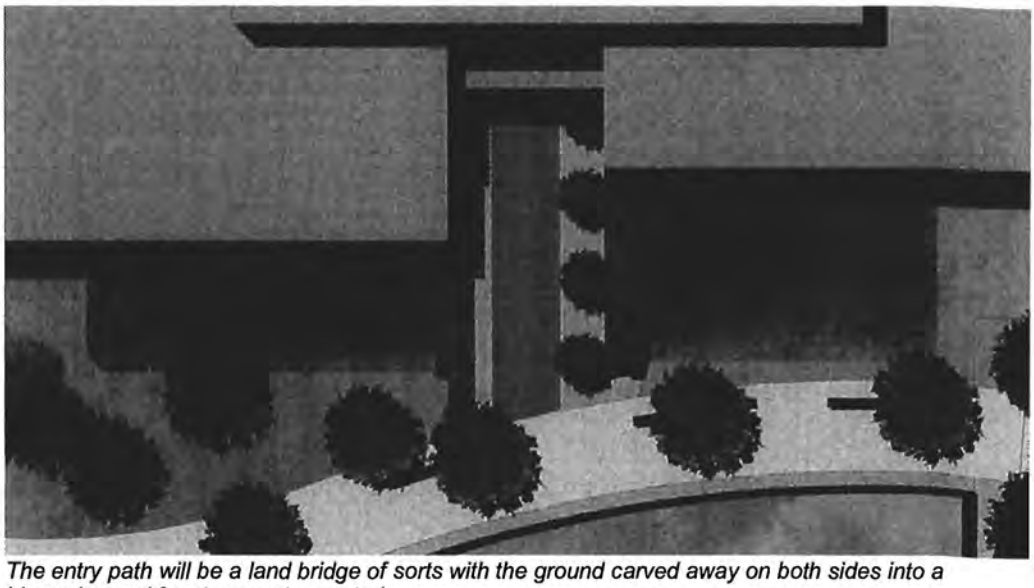
Images on the following page show the intention for the detailing of this building. The goal is to have very few materials that intertwine with each other in a graceful way. Glass is clear, or clear with a frit pattern and shadowbox back to provide desired privacy as well as hiding structure.

The curvaceous sunshade is aluminum that transitions to glass where it crosses vision glass.



To create warmth and interest at the entry the glass with shift color and include glass horizontal sun shades. The entry itself has an offset to create a welcoming form. Balconies will flank both sides to create that human scale anchor and indoor / outdoor connection. Metal louvers will create the sides of the entry, and will be a brown color to evoke wood.

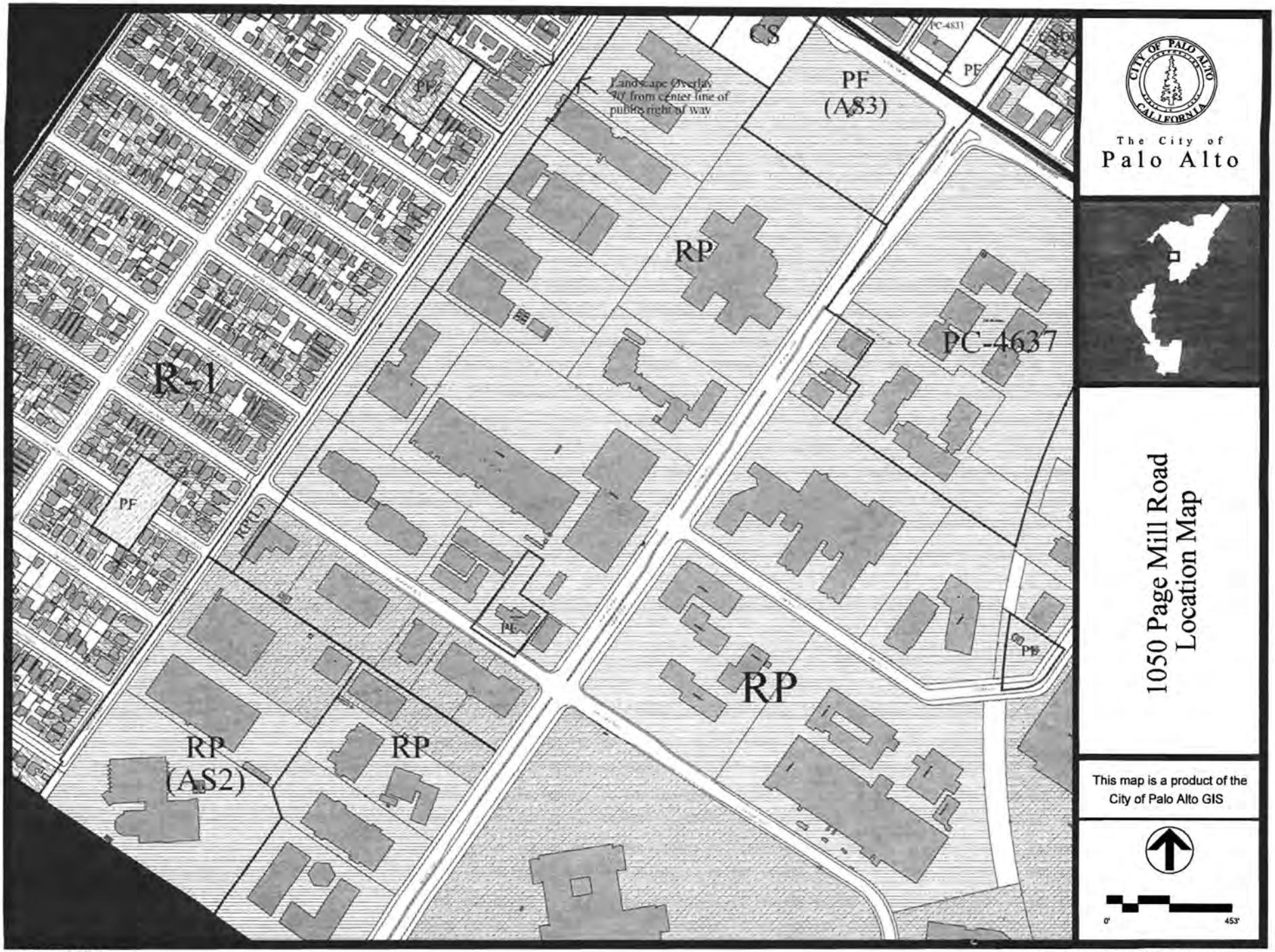
INTEGRATED BIOSWALES



The entry path will be a land bridge of sorts with the ground carved away on both sides into a bioswale used for storm water control.

Thanks very much for your review of the various design aspects of this project!

ATTACHMENT B



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ATTACHMENT C
ZONING COMPARISON TABLES
1050 Page Mill Road
13PLN-00423

Table 1: COMPARISON WITH CHAPTER 18.20 (RP DISTRICT)			
Regulation	**Proposed**	**Existing**	**RP (Research Park)**
Minimum Site Area	13.48 acres	13.48 acres	1 acre
Min. Front Setback	50 feet	57.7 feet	50 feet special setback along Page Mill Road
Rear Yard Setback	90 feet +/-	29.4 feet	20 feet
Min. Side Setback	90 feet +/-	70 feet +/-	20 feet
Max. Site Coverage	24.51% (143,990 sf)	32.86% (193,011 sf)	30% (176,208 sf)
Max. Total Floor Area Ratio	48.35% (283,980 sf)	48.35% (283,980 sf)	40% (234,945 sf)
Max. Building Height	33 feet +/- (mech. will be less than 15 ft)	34 feet +/- (with additional mech. screen)	35 feet (with additional 15 feet for mechanical)

Table 1: CONFORMANCE WITH CHAPTER 18.52 (Off-Street Parking and Loading)			
Use	**Required**	**Proposed**	**Conformance**
Admin Offices, R&D, Manufacturing and Warehousing	1 per 300 sf of gross floor area (947 spaces)	937 spaces	Non-conforming – deficient by 10 spaces (0.01%)