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CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

SOUTH CENTRAL COAST AREA 89 SOUTH CALIFORNIA ST., SUITE 200 VENTURA, CA 93001 (805) 641-0142

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Staff Report: 5/20/96
Hearing Date:6/11-14/96

Commission Action:

7296A

STAFF REPORT: CONSENT CALENDAR

APPLICATION NO.:

4-96-047

APPLICANT:

Bob and Sherry DaSilva

PROJECT LOCATION:

975 Cold Canyon Road, Calabasas, Los Angeles County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Construct a 4,100 sq. ft. two-story single family residence, attached three car garage, swimming pool and spa, driveway, retaining wall, swale and underground drainage system. Remove portion of existing drainage swale. Finished grading consists of about 330 cubic yards. The property includes a building pad, driveway and drainage swale approved in Coastal Permit P-81-7701.

Lot Area 2.35 acres Building Coverage 3,570 sq. ft. Pavement Coverage 4,208 sq. ft. Landscape Coverage 1,500 sq. ft. Parking Spaces 3 1 du/ 5 acres Zoning Rural Land II Plan Designation Project Density 1 du/ 2 acres 32 feet Ht abv fin grade

LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED: Project Approval in Concept, Department of Regional Planning, Los Angeles County, dated 3/7/96; Sewage Disposal Approved, Department of Health Services, Los Angeles County, dated 3/8/96; Geologic Engineering Review Sheet, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Materials Engineering Division, dated 4/25/95; Fire Department, Los Angeles County, dated 2/8/96.

SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS: Certified Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan, Los Angeles County; Coastal Permit No. P-81-7701, Western Estates; Coastal Permit 5-83-290, Western Estates; Coastal Permit Nos. 5-91-409 and 4-94-157, Teherani; Coastal Permit No. 4-92-153, Ballard; Coastal Permit No. 4-96-041, Zeluck-Leeds.

SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the proposed project with four (4) Special Conditions; addressing the consulting geologist's recommendations, a wild fire waiver of liability, a landscaping and fuel modification plan, and a future improvements restriction. The property includes a portion of Cold Creek, a blue line stream, and the Stunt High equestrian trail within the Malibu/Cold Creek Resource Management Area and the Cold Creek Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area. The project as conditioned will protect these resources and public access.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following resolution:

I. Approval with Conditions.

The Commission hereby grants a permit, subject to the conditions below, for the proposed development on the grounds that the development will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 of the California Coastal Act of 1976, will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act, and will not have any significant adverse impacts on the environment within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act.

II. Standard Conditions.

- Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.
- 2. <u>Expiration</u>. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.
- 3. <u>Compliance</u>. All development must occur in strict compliance with the proposal as set forth in the application for permit, subject to any special conditions set forth below. Any deviation from the approved plans must be reviewed and approved by the staff and may require Commission approval.
- 4. <u>Interpretation</u>. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.
- 5. <u>Inspections</u>. The Commission staff shall be allowed to inspect the site and the project during its development, subject to 24-hour advance notice.
- Assignment. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.
- 7. <u>Terms and Conditions Run with the Land</u>. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

III. SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

1. PLANS CONFORMING TO GEOLOGIC RECOMMENDATION

Prior to the issuance of the permit the applicant shall submit, for the review and approval by the Executive Director, evidence of the consultant's review and approval of all project plans. All recommendations contained in the

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reports: 1) "Engineering Geologic Memorandum, Sewage Disposal Concept, Lot 6, Tract 33873, Calabasas", dated September 28, 1994 by Geoplan, Inc.; 2) "Final Geologic Report, Lots 5, 6 and 7, Tract No. 33873, Cold Canyon Area, County of Los Angeles, California", dated March 19, 1991 by Pacific Soils Engineering, Inc.; and 3) "Final Soils Engineering Report, Lots 5, 6 and 7, Tract No. 33873, 901 Cold Canyon Road, County of Los Angeles, California", dated March 19, 1991 by Pacific Soils Engineering, Inc., shall be incorporated into all final design and construction including final grading, foundation and slab design, retaining walls, septic system, and drainage must be incorporated into the final plans. All plans must be reviewed and approved by the geologic consultant.

The final plans approved by the consultant shall be in substantial conformance with the plans approved by the Commission relative to construction, grading and drainage. Any substantial changes in the proposed development approved by the Commission which may be required by the consultant shall require an amendment to the permit or a new coastal permit.

2. WILD FIRE WAIVER OF LIABILITY

Prior to the issuance of the coastal development permit, the applicant shall submit a signed document which shall indemnify and hold harmless the California Coastal Commission, its officers, agents and employees against any and all claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses, of liability arising out of the acquisition, design, construction, operations, maintenance, existence, or failure of the permitted project in an area where an extraordinary potential for damage or destruction from wild fire exists as an inherent risk to life and property.

LANDSCAPE AND FUEL MODIFICATION PLAN

Prior to issuance of the permit, the applicant shall submit landscaping and fuel modification plan prepared by a licensed landscape architect and approved by the Los Angeles County Forestry Department for review and approval by the Executive Director. The plans shall incorporate the following criteria:

- A) All graded areas on the subject site and access easement shall be planted and maintained for erosion control and visual enhancement purposes. To minimize the need for irrigation and to screen or soften the visual impact of development all landscaping shall consist primarily of native, drought resistant plants as listed by the California Native Plant Society, Los Angeles Santa Monica Mountains Chapter, in their document entitled Recommended Native Plant Species for Landscaping in the Santa Monica Mountains, dated October 4, 1994. Invasive, non-indigeneous plant species which tend to supplant native species shall not be used.
- B) All cut and fill slopes and disturbed soils shall be stabilized with planting at the completion of final grading. Planting should be of native plant species indigenous to the Santa Monica Mountains using accepted planting procedures, consistent with fire safety requirements. Such planting shall be adequate to provide 100 percent coverage within three years and shall be repeated, if necessary, to provide such coverage.

- C) Should grading take place during the rainy season (November 1 March 31), sediment basins (including debris basins, desilting basins, or silt traps) shall be required on the project site prior to or concurrent with the initial grading operations and maintained through the development process to minimize sediment from runoff waters during construction. All sediment should be retained on-site unless removed to an appropriate approved disposal location.
- (D) Vegetation within 50 feet of the proposed house may be removed to mineral earth. Selective thinning, for purposes of fire hazard reduction, shall be allowed in accordance with an approved long-term fuel modification plan submitted pursuant to this special condition. However, in no case should vegetation thinning occur in areas greater than a 200' radius of the main structure. The fuel modification plan shall include details regarding the types, sizes and location of plant materials to be removed, and how often thinning is to occur. In addition, the applicant shall submit evidence that the fuel modification plan has been reviewed and approved by the County of Los Angeles Forestry Department.

4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT RESTRICTION

Prior to the issuance of the coastal development permit, the applicant shall execute and record a deed restriction, in a form and content acceptable to the Executive Director, stating that the subject permit is only for the development described in the coastal development permit No. 4-96-047; and that any future additions or improvements to the property, including clearing of vegetation and grading, will require an amendment to Permit No. 4-96-047 or will require an additional coastal development permit from the California Coastal Commission or from its successor agency. The removal of vegetation consistent with Special Condition three (3) of this permit 4-96-047 is permitted. The document shall be recorded as a covenant running with the land binding all successors and assigns in interest to the subject property, and shall be recorded free of prior liens.

IV. Findings and Declarations.

A. <u>Project Description and Background</u>

The applicant proposes to construct a 4,100 sq. ft., two story, 32 ft. high from finished grade, single family residence with attached 550 sq. ft. 3-car garage, pool, spa, driveway, septic tank, retaining wall, drainage swale adjacent to retaining wall and driveway trench drain, fencing along west and south perimeter of the pad, and to remove a portion of existing drainage swale. About 330 cubic yards of additional grading is proposed on the 0.95 acres building pad and driveway within the total 2.35 acre lot. The property includes a building pad, driveway, drainage swale and wood fencing approved in Coastal Permit P-81-7701. (See Exhibits 1-10)

The project site, the building pad, is located north of the Monte Nido area, west of Cold Canyon Road, drains to a blue line stream, Cold Creek, is within the Malibu/Cold Creek Resource Management Area, and is within 200 feet of the Cold Creek Environmentally Sensitive Resource Area, which includes a significant oak woodland and savannah. The Los Angeles County Environmental Review Board has recommended a number of conditions on the project to protect environmentally sensitive habitat areas and has restricted the development to earth tone colors to reduce visual impacts from the equestrian trail which

crosses the property below and west of the building site. (see Exhibits 4 and 11, Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Area Plan, Trail System, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, June 1983).

The subject site is lot 6 of a ten lot, 85 acre subdivision approved by the Commission in 1981 (P-81-7701). This permit included the grading of roads, building pads, and septic systems. The subject property contains an equestrian trail easement, the Stunt High trail, along the east side of the creek among a number of significant oak trees, which was originally recorded on tract map 33873, Lot 6, Page 5 of 8, pursuant to CDP 5-83-290 (Western Estates). The proposed development will not interfere with the trail easement that traverses the parcel. The adjoining parcel to the south includes a completed residence as a result of coastal permit 4-94-157, Teherani; the adjoining parcel to the east includes a temporary residential trailer and a partially constructed residence as a result of coastal permit 4-92-153, Ballard.

B. Geologic and Fire Hazards

Section 30253 of the Coastal Act states, in part, that new development shall:

- (1) Minimize risks to life and property in areas of high geologic, flood, and fire hazard.
- (2) Assure stability and structural integrity, and neither create nor contribute significantly to erosion, geologic instability, or destruction of the site or surrounding area or in any way require the construction of protective devices that would substantially alter natural landforms along bluffs and cliffs.

In addition, the certified Los Angeles County Land Use Plan includes the following policies regarding hazards, which are applicable to the proposed development. These policies have been applied by the Commission as guidance, in the review of development proposals in the Santa Monica Mountains.

- P147 Continue to evaluate all new development for impact on, and from, geologic hazard.
- P156 Continue to evaluate all new development for impact on, and from, fire hazard.

The proposed development is located in the Santa Monica Mountains, an area which is generally considered to be subject to an unusually high amount of natural hazards. Geologic hazards common to the Santa Monica Mountains include landslides, erosion, and flooding. In addition, fire is an inherent threat to the indigenous chaparral community of the coastal mountains. Wild fires often denude hillsides in the Santa Monica Mountains of all existing vegetation, thereby contributing to an increased potential for erosion and landslides on property.

The parcel consists of a rough graded building pad and driveway about 50 feet above Cold Creek and its floodplain, west of Cold Canyon Road. The building pad consists of compacted artificial fill on bedrock known as Conejo Volcanics. Along the Cold Creek floodplain the alluvium consists of loose sand, silt gravel and boulders. At the building pad, the site descends to the north and west at gradients ranging from about 2:1 to 1-1/2:1 to the Cold Creek floodplain. The site ascends from the building pad to the south and

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east at a gradient of about 1-1/2:1 to another building pad with a recently constructed residence permitted by coastal permit 4-94-157, Teherani.

Vegetation on portions of the descending slopes consist of dense native chaparral, while the floodplain includes eleven significant oak trees on the subject parcel. According to the Los Angeles County of Public Works Department, the OES-FEMA map dated 9-21-94 indicates that this site has burned in the past 10 to 30 years.

The Commission reviews the proposed project's risks to life and property in areas where there are geologic, flood and fire hazards. Regarding the geologic and erosion hazard, the applicants submitted three soils and geology reports titled: 1) "Engineering Geologic Memorandum, Sewage Disposal Concept, Lot 6, Tract, 33873, Calabasas", dated September 28, 1994 by Geoplan, Inc.; and 3) "Final Geologic Report Lots 5, 6, and 7 Tract 33873 Cold Canyon Area County of Los Angeles, California", and "Final Soils Engineering Report", both dated March 19, 1991 by Pacific Soils Engineering, Inc. The Final Geologic Report addresses the geology and soil issues by stating:

In conformance with the grading codes of the County of Los Angeles, submitted herewith is formal documentation that geologic recommendations made prior to and during grading have been incorporated into site construction. As a result, on-site improvements will be free from adverse effects of landsliding, settlement and slippage. Additionally, on-site grading construction improvements will not create adverse effects on geologic stability for bordering off-site property.

It is the opinion of this firm that grading complies with recommendations from this office and the sites are geologically acceptable for residential construction.

The geology report, engineering geologic memorandum, and soils engineering report were approved by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, as noted on the Geology Review Sheet dated 9-1-92 and as a Geologic Engineering Review Sheet dated 4/25/95. The recommendations in these reports address the following issues: final grading, foundation and slab design, retaining walls, septic system, and drainage.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the consulting geologist, the Commission finds that the development is consistent with Section 30253 so long as all recommendations regarding the proposed development are incorporated into project plans. Therefore, the Commission finds it necessary to require the applicants to submit the final project plans that have been certified in writing by the geology consultant as conforming to their recommendations, as noted in special condition one (1).

The Coastal Act requires that new development minimize the risk to life and property in areas of high fire hazard. The Coastal Act also recognizes that new development may involve the taking of some risk. Coastal Act policies require the Commission to establish the appropriate degree of risk acceptable for the proposed development and to establish who should assume the risk. When development in areas of identified hazards is proposed, the Commission considers the hazard associated with the project site and the potential cost to the public, as well as the individual's right to use his property.

Vegetation in the coastal areas of the Santa Monica Mountains consists mostly of coastal sage scrub and chaparral. Many plant species common to these communities produce and store terpenes, which are highly flammable substances (Mooney in Barbour, <u>Terrestrial Vegetation of California</u>, 1988). Chaparral and sage scrub communities have evolved in concert with, and continue to produce the potential for frequent wild fires. The typical warm, dry summer conditions of the Mediterranean climate combine with the natural characteristics of the native vegetation to pose a risk of wild fire damage to development that cannot be completely avoided or mitigated.

Due to the fact that the proposed project is located in an area subject to an extraordinary potential for damage or destruction from wild fire, the Commission can only approve the project if the applicant assumes the liability from these associated risks. Through the waiver of liability, the applicant acknowledges and appreciates the nature of the fire hazard which exists on the site and which may affect the safety of the proposed development, as incorporated by condition number two (2).

Minimizing the erosion of the site is important to reduce geological hazards and minimize sediment deposition in an environmentally sensitive habitat area along Cold Creek, known as the Cold Creek Resource Management Area. The building site has about 75 feet of topographic relief and drains into a portion of Cold Creek and riparian habitat areas located on the property. certified Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan seeks to minimize non-essential vegetation clearance in the Cold Creek Resource Management Area, where the proposed project is located. In addition, the recommendations of the consulting engineer emphasize the importance of proper drainage and erosion control measures to ensure the stability of development on the site. The applicants have submitted a drainage plan which minimizes erosion from the project site to Cold Creek. Although a portion of the existing drainage swale will be removed for the construction of the pool, most of the swale will remain and is proposed to be connected to the proposed drainage system as noted in the applicant's drainage plan. (Exhibit 6) An existing water dissapator at the end of the downslope swale will remain to minimize erosion. For these reasons, the Commission finds it necessary to require the applicant to submit a landscape plan to minimize vegetation removal and to provide plantings primarily of native species. To ensure all disturbed slopes and soils are stabilized with landscaping after construction, a landscape plan that includes native drought resistant, and fire retardant plants compatible with the surrounding vegetation is necessary.

In addition, the site will be selectively cleared of native brush pursuant to the Fire Department requirements for clearing and thinning the area 200 feet from the residence. The replacement plants provided in the landscape plan will minimize and control erosion, as well as screen and soften the limited visual impact of the proposed development from the equestrian trail below the building pad. Special Condition number three (3) requires a landscape plan that provides for the use of native plant materials, plant coverage and replanting requirements and the submittal of a fuel modification plan approved by Los Angeles County Department of Forestry and for sediment basins if grading occurs during the rainy season.

Thus, the Commission finds that only as conditioned: to incorporate all recommendations by the applicant's consulting geologist; provide for the wild fire waiver of liability; and require a landscape and erosion control plan will the proposed project be consistent with Section 30253 of the Coastal Act.

C. Visual Impacts

Section 30251 of the Coastal Act states in part that:

The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas.

In addition, the certified Los Angeles County Land Use Plan includes the following policies regarding protection of visual resources, which are used as guidance and are applicable to the proposed development. These policies have been applied by the Commission as guidance, in the review of development proposals in the Santa Monica Mountains.

- P91 All new development shall be designed to minimize impacts and alterations of physical features, such as ravines and hillsides, and processes of the site (i.e., geological, soils, hydrological, water percolation and runoff) to maximum extent feasible.
- P129 Structures should be designed and located so as to create an attractive appearance and harmonious relationship with the surrounding environment.
- P130 In highly scenic areas and along scenic highways, new development (including buildings, fences, paved areas, signs, and landscaping) shall:
 - -be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and to and along other scenic features, as defined and identified in the Malibu LCP.
 - -minimize the alteration of natural landforms.
 - -be landscaped to conceal raw-cut slopes.
 - -be visually compatible with and subordinate to the character of its setting.
 - -be sited so as not to significantly intrude into the skyline as seen from public viewing places.
- P134 Structures shall be sited to conform to the natural topography, as feasible. Massive grading and reconfiguration of the site shall be discouraged.

The applicants propose to construct a two story residence and garage on an existing building pad located about 500 feet beyond and 125 feet below Cold Canyon Road and about 50 feet beyond and above an existing equestrian trail along Cold Creek. A private driveway from Cold Canyon Road provides access to the subject parcel and two adjoining parcels, one to the east and to the south.

In the review of this project, the Commission reviews the publicly accessible locations where the proposed development is visible to assess potential visual impacts to the public. The Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan protects visual resources in the Santa Monica Mountains. The Cold Creek Canyon Preserve is recognized as a "Scenic Area" which is given special treatment when evaluating potential impacts caused by new development.

The Commission examines the building site, the proposed grading, and the size of the building pad and structures. The project site is located within the Cold Creek Canyon Preserve. The development of the residence and garage raises two issues regarding the siting and design: one, whether or not public views from public roadways will be adversely impacted, or two, whether or not public views from public trails will be impacted. The siting and size of the building pad is existing; staff believes it is not visible from any public location. The proposed final grading of the pad is relatively minor compared to the nearly one acre size of the pad; after the grading is completed, the pad will not be visible from public locations from the south and east along Cold Canyon Road. Regarding the view of the proposed residence and garage, it is well beyond and hidden from the nearest public road, Cold Canyon Road. Further Cold Canyon Road is not designated as a scenic highway by the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan.

An equestrian trail, the Stunt High trail, is located on the western portion of the subject parcel along the east side of Cold Creek. Immediately to the north of the parcel, across and on the west side of Cold Creek is the Calabasas - Cold Creek trail which intersects with the Stunt High trail. (Exhibits 4 and 11) The proposed residence and pool will be visible from the Stunt High trail. However, its visibility will be limited due to the topography of the site, a 50 foot elevation difference and eleven large specimen oak trees along the trail. From the Calabasas - Cold Creek trail, the residence will also be visible. Again, it will be screened over time by a number of trees planted by the applicants along the north edge of the building pad. Further, the residence is designed to be visually compatible and subordinate to the topography of the building site by locating the residence on the portion of the building pad opposite these public trails.

The applicants propose a landscape plan that includes native, drought resistant, and fire retardant plants compatible with the surrounding vegetation. In addition, the site will be selectively cleared of native brush pursuant to the Fire Department requirements for clearing the area 200 feet from the structure. The replacement plants will minimize and control erosion, as well as screen and soften the visual impact of the proposed development. The existing oak trees along the western portion of the property will be retained. The landscape plan provides for new plants which will blend with the surrounding native vegetation. In addition, the existing trees and landscape plan will reduce potential visual impacts of the residence, garage and pool. Special Condition number three (3) requires a landscape plan and fuel modification plan that also provides for the use of only native plant materials, plant coverage and replanting requirements and submission of a fuel modification plan approved by Los Angeles County Department of Forestry and for sediment basins if grading occurs during the rainy season.

Further, future developments or improvements to the property have the potential to create visual impacts as seen from the public equestrian trail on the property. It is necessary to ensure that future developments or improvements normally associated with a single family residence, which might otherwise be exempt, is reviewed by the Commission for compliance with the

visual resource protection policies of the Coastal Act. Condition number four (4), the future improvements deed restriction, will ensure the Commission will have the opportunity to review future projects for compliance with the Coastal Act. Therefore, the proposed project will not impact the scenic public views in this area. Thus, the Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent, as conditioned, with Section 30251 of the Coastal Act.

D. Public Access and Recreation

Generally, the Coastal Act requires that public access and recreational opportunities to and along the coast be provided in all new development projects except where adequate access exists nearby. (Sections 30210, 30212 and 30214) In addition, the certified Los Angeles County Land Use Plan includes the following policy regarding protection of public access and recreational opportunities, which are used as guidance and are applicable to the proposed development. These policies have been applied by the Commission as guidance, in the review of development proposals in the Santa Monica Mountains.

- P32 Provide a safe trail system throughout the mountain and seashore that can achieve the following:
 - * Link major recreational facilities
 - * Link with trail systems of adjacent jurisdictions
 - * Provide recreational corridors between the mountains and the coast
 - * Provide for flexible, site-specific design and routing to minimize impact on adjacent property, communities, and fragile habitats. In particular, ensure that trails located within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas are designed to protect fish and wildlife values
 - * Provide connections with populated areas
 - * Provide for and be designed to accommodate multiple use (walking, hiking and equestrian) wherever appropriate
 - * Facilitate linkages to community trail systems
 - * Provide for a diversity of recreational and aesthetic experiences
 - * Reserve certain trails for walking and hiking only
 - * Prohibit public use of motorized vehicles on hiking/equestrian trails

The project site is located nearly five miles from the coast and inland of the first public road along the coast, Pacific Coast Highway. Therefore, access to the beach is not an issue. Rather, access to and along the coast is the issue. The Santa Monica Mountains include a number of public hiking and equestrian trails established to allow the public to access the area to and along this section of coast. There are two major trails in the vicinity of this project as noted in the map of the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Trail

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System, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, dated June 1983. (Exhibits 4 and 11) As noted above, one of these trails, the Stunt High trail, is located on the western portion of the project site. To the north of the property, is the Calabasas to Cold Creek Trail. The proposed residence, garage and driveway will not block access to any established trails in the area.

Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project does not affect public access to and along the coast and is thus, consistent with the public access and recreation policies, Sections 30210, 30212, and 30214, of the Coastal Act.

E. Land Resources/Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas

Section 30250 (a) of the Coastal Act provides that new development be located within or near existing developed areas able to accommodate it, with adequate public services, where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources:

Section 30250

(a) New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have a significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. In addition, land divisions, other than leases for agricultural uses, outside existing developed areas shall be permitted only where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the created parcels would be no smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels.

Sections 30230 and 30231 of the Coastal Act are designed to protect and enhance, or restore where feasible, marine resources and the biological productivity and quality of coastal waters, including streams:

Section 30230

Marine resources shall be maintained, enhanced, and where feasible, restored. Special protection shall be given to areas and species of special biological or economic significance. Uses of the marine environment shall be carried out in a manner that will sustain the biological productivity of coastal waters and that will maintain healthy populations of all species of marine organisms adequate for long-term commercial, recreational, scientific, and educational purposes.

Section 30231

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

In addition, Section 30240 of the Coastal Act states that environmentally sensitive habitat areas must be protected against disruption of habitat values:

Section 30240

- (a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas.
- (b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas.

The habitat values contained in the Cold Creek Watershed have been well documented. A consultant's report prepared for Los Angeles County in 1976 by England and Nelson designates the Cold Creek Significant Watershed as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA). The report describes the concept of an SEA as follows:

The 62 significant ecological areas selected were chosen in an effort to identify areas in Los Angeles County that possess uncommon, unique or rare biological resources, and areas that are prime examples of the more common habitats and communities.

Thus, the goal of the project was to establish a set of areas that would illustrate the full range of biological diversity in Los Angeles County, and remain an undisturbed relic of what was once found throughout the region. However, to fulfill this function, all 62 significant ecological areas must be preserved in as near a pristine condition as possible ...

If the biotic resources of significant ecological areas are to be protected and preserved in a pristine state, they must be left undisturbed. Thus, the number of potential compatible uses is limited. Residential, agricultural, industrial, and commercial developments necessitate the removal of large areas of natural vegetation and are clearly incompatible uses.

The England and Nelson report also cites the specific habitat values of Cold Creek Canyon as follows:

"This is a relatively undisturbed natural sandstone basin. The floor of the valley is steep, with springs and a perennial stream, Cold Creek. The year-round surface water, which is uncommon in southern California, supports an unusually diverse flora. The extreme range in physical conditions, from wet streambed to dry rocky ridges, makes the area a showplace for native vegetation. Pristine stands of chaparral, southern oak woodland, coastal sage scrub, and riparian woodland are all found in Several plant species that are uncommon to the general region are found here. Those include stream orchis (Epipachis gigantea), red mimulus (Mimulus cardinales), Humboldt lily (Lilium humboldtii ocellatum), big-leaf maple (Acermacrophyllum) and red shank (adenostema sparsifolium). In addition, the presence of several tree-sized flowering ash (Fraxinus dipetala), reaching 40 feet in height, is a unique botanical oddity. This scrub species has a normal maximum height of 15 to 20 feet."

Due to its many outstanding botanical features, the area serves an integral role as part of the instructional program for many academic institutions as well as a site for nature study and scientific research. The Mountains Restoration Trust and Occidental College have holdings in the area that are used for education and visited by qualified biologists.

The Cold Creek watershed consists of about 8 square miles (5000 acres) of generally rugged terrain within the heart of the Santa Monica Mountains. Both the lands and the remainder of the watershed serve as tributary areas to Cold Creek and the downstream Malibu Creek and Malibu Lagoon Significant Ecological Areas. The Cold Creek watershed has also been included in the inventory of California Natural Areas Coordinating Council, which includes this area as one of the 1,250 such natural areas in the State of California exhibiting "the significant features of the broad spectrum of natural phenomena that occur in California... These areas include those that are unique or outstanding examples and those that are typical or representative of a biotic community of geological formation. All areas have been selected on their merit..."

In recognition of these outstanding natural resources, State Parks and Recreation acquired the 320-acre Stunt Ranch in the heart of the Cold Creek watershed to protect the unique flora and fauna of this watershed. This ranch is directly adjacent to the 530-acre Cold Creek Preserve. The University of California's Natural Reserve System will be using portions of Stunt Ranch and the Cold Creek Preserve for teaching and research use in the field-oriented natural sciences. Cold Creek is also used as a control in regional water quality studies.

A report prepared for L.A. County Department of Regional Planning by Richard Friesen of the L.A. County Museum of Natural History also discusses the ecological significance of the Cold Creek SEA. The report states that the stream is "fed by several year round springs and seepage areas and has uncommonly interesting and healthy riparian communities". The report notes that the Cold Creek watershed is the last remaining watershed in the Santa Monica Mountains known to still contain representatives of Stone flies (Plecoptera)-aquatic insects that are very sensitive to increased siltation and runoff of petroleum-derived compounds from asphalt and other sources. Other more sensitive animal species "likely to utilize Cold Creek riparian and stream-side woodlands include the Bobcat (Lynx rufus), Mountain Lion (Feliz concolor), white-tailed kite (Elanus leverus), Long-eared owl (Asio otus) Ringtail ((Bassariscus astutus), Long-tailed Weasel (Mustela frenata), and two-striped Garter Snake (Thamnophis couchi)."

The report further states that the riparian woodland is "fragile and susceptible to watershed damage (vegetation removal and grading), water diversion, and stream pollution" and that chaparral is "subject to severe fire damage when extreme fire protection prevents natural burning cycles from occasionally reducing fire loads." When such impacts do not complicate recovery, riparian woodlands and chaparral "are generally capable of self-restoration after floods and fires." The report concludes that the primary impacts upon ecological resources in the SEA are due to residential development which contributes to cumulative impacts to "local land forms (through grading and erosion), stream pollution (through applying chemical pesticides and herbicides and septic tank seepage), and to biotic communities (through vegetation removal)."

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A report prepared by the Coastal Conservancy in 1980 states that:

there is extremely limited development potential in the watershed...the watershed has already been developed (at about 250 built homes) to a level beyond its carrying capacity... a Los Angeles County study found pollution in Cold Creek and concluded that Cold Creek probably does not meet standards for freshwater recreational uses and that it would be desirable to retire up to approximately 300 building sites generally lying in the southern and eastern portions of the watershed. The southern and eastern portions of the watershed which have remained relatively undeveloped, rise in a rugged and steep manner to the scenically spectacular Saddle Peak. The northern and western portion of the watershed, especially north of the lower reaches of Cold Creek (the Monte Nido area) have experienced dense and active subdivision and residential development.

The Land Use Plan policies addressing protection of ESHAs and Significant Watersheds are among the strictest and most comprehensive in addressing new development. In its findings regarding the Land Use Plan, the Commission emphasized the importance placed by the Coastal Act on protecting sensitive environmental resources. The Commission found in its action certifying the Land Use Plan in December 1986 that:

coastal canyons in the Santa Monica Mountains require protection against significant disruption of habitat values, including not only the riparian corridors located in the bottoms of the canyons, but also the chaparral and coastal sage biotic communities found on the canyon slopes.

The subject parcel is located within the Cold Creek Resource Management Area. The site is considered valuable as it is located in the upper Cold Creek watershed area. This area encompases sensitive riparian woodlands, and is an inherent component of the Malibu Creek/Lagoon ecosystem.

The LUP contains several policies designated to protect the Watersheds, and ESHA's contained within, from both the individual and cumulative impacts of development:

Protection of Environmental Resources

P63 Uses shall be permitted in ESHAs, DSRs, Significant Watersheds, and Significant Oak Woodlands, and Wildlife Corridors in accordance with Table 1 and all other policies of this LCP.

Table 1 states that for "existing parcels smaller than 20 acres in proximity to existing development and/or services, and/or on the periphery of the significant watershed", residential uses are permitted: "at existing parcel cuts (build-out of parcels of legal record) in accordance with specified standards and policies..." The Table 1 policies applicable to the Cold Creek Resource Management Area are as follows:

Allowable structures shall be located in proximity to existing roadways, services and other development to minimize impacts on the habitat, and clustering and open space easements to protect resources shall be required in order to minimize impacts on the habitat.

Grading and vegetation removed shall be limited to that necessary to accommodate the residential unit, garage, and one other structure, one access road, and brush clearance required by the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

Stream protection standards shall be followed.

Other applicable Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan policies include:

- Board Review (ERB) comprised of **Environmental** P64 An management technical expertise in resource professionals with (modeled on the Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee) shall be established by the Board of Supervisors as an advisory body to the Regional Planning Commission and the Board to review development proposals in the ESHAs, areas adjacent to the ESHAs, Significant Watersheds, Wildlife Corridors, Significant Oak Woodlands, and DSRs. The ERB shall provide recommendations to the Regional Planning Commission (or decision making body for coastal permits) on the conformance or lack of conformance of the project to the policies of the Local Coastal Program. Any recommendation of approval shall include mitigation measures designed to minimize adverse impacts on environmental resources. Consistent with P271 (a)(7), projects shall be approved by the decision making body for coastal permits only upon a finding that the project is consistent with all policies of the LCP.
- P65 The Environmental Review Board shall consider the individual and cumulative impact of each development proposal within a designated Significant Watershed. Any development within a significant watershed shall be located so as to minimize vegetation clearance and consequent soil erosion, adverse impacts on wildlife resources and visual resources, and other impacts. Therefore, development should be clustered and located near existing roads, on areas of relatively gentle slopes as far as possible outside riparian areas in canyons and outside ridgeline saddles between canyons which serve as primary wildlife corridors.
- P67 Any project or use which cannot mitigate significant adverse impacts as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act on sensitive environmental resources (as depicted on Figure 6) shall be denied.
- P68 Environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHAs) shall be protected against significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas. Residential use shall not be considered a resource dependent use.
- P74 New development shall be located as close as feasible to existing roadways, services, and existing development to minimize the effects on sensitive environmental resources.

Stream Protection and Erosion Control

P78 Stream road crossings shall be undertaken by the least environmentally damaging feasible method. Road crossings of streams should be accomplished by bridging, unless other methods are determined by the ERB to be less damaging. Bridge columns shall be

located outside stream courses, if feasible. Road crossings of streams within Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas designated by the LCP may be allowed as a conditional use for the purpose of providing access to recreation areas open to the public or homesites located outside the ESHA where there is no feasible alternative for providing access. Wherever possible, shared bridges or other crossings shall be used for providing access to groups of lots covered by this policy.

- P79 To maintain natural vegetation buffer areas that protect all sensitive riparian habitats as required by Section 30231 of the Coastal Act, all development other than driveways and walkways should be set back at least 50 feet from the outer limit of designated environmentally sensitive riparian vegetation.
- P80 The following setback requirements shall be applied to new septic systems: (a) at least 50 feet from the outer edge of the existing riparian or oak canopy for leachfields, and (b) at least 100 feet from the outer edge of the existing riparian or oak canopy for seepage pits. A larger setback shall be required if necessary to prevent lateral seepage from the disposal beds into stream waters.
- P82 Grading shall be minimized for all new development to ensure the potential negative effects of runoff and erosion on these resources are minimized.
- P84 In disturbed areas, landscape plans shall balance long-term stability and minimization of fuel load. For instance, a combination of taller, deep-rooted plants and low-growing ground covers to reduce heat output may be used. Within ESHAs and Significant Watersheds, native plant species shall be used, consistent with fire safety requirements.
- P88 In ESHAs and Significant Watersheds and in other areas of high potential erosion hazard, require site design to minimize grading activities and reduce vegetation removal based on the following guidelines:

Structures should be clustered.

Grading for access roads and driveways should be minimized; the standard new on-site access roads shall be a maximum of 300 feet or one-third the parcel depth, whichever is less. Longer roads may be allowed on approval of the County Engineer and Environmental Review Board and the determination that adverse environmental impacts will not be incurred. Such approval shall constitute a conditional use.

Designate building and access envelopes on the basis of site inspection to avoid particularly erodible areas.

Require all sidecast material to be recompacted to engineered standards, re-seeded, and mulched and/or burlapped.

P91 All new development shall be designed to minimize impacts and alterations of physical features, such as ravines and hillsides, and processes of the site (i.e., geological, soils, hydrological, water percolation and runoff) to the maximum extent feasible.

P96 Degradation of the water quality of groundwater basins, nearby streams, or wetlands shall not result from development of the site. Pollutants, such as chemicals, fuels, lubricants, raw sewage, and other harmful waste shall not be discharged into or alongside coastal streams or wetlands.

The applicant proposes to construct a 4,100 sq. ft., two story, 32 ft. high from finished grade, single family residence with attached 550 sq. ft. 3-car garage, pool, spa, driveway, septic tank, retaining wall, fencing, drainage swale adjacent to retaining wall and driveway trench drain, and remove portion of existing drainage swale. About 330 cubic yards of additional grading is proposed on the 0.95 acres building pad and driveway within the total 2.35 acre lot. The applicants do not propose to remove any significant vegetation.

In analyzing the proposed project for conformance with the resource protection policies of the Coastal Act, Land Use Plan and with Table 1 policies, one can address the project with regard to each policy in turn. For instance, Table 1 specifies that grading and vegetation removal shall be limited to that necessary to accomodate the residential unit, garage, an additional unit, a access road, and brush clearance. The project, as proposed, involves the construction of a residence with an attached garage on a lot with an existing building pad and access driveway. The only grading involved with the project is about 330 cubic yards of finished grading for the building pad and a retaining wall. Additionally, LUP policies (P78, P82, & P91) specify that grading activities be minimized, that structures be clustered, that development be designed to minimize landform alteration, and that said development is placed as close to existing services as possible. In the case of the proposed residence, the structure is accessed via a driveway that serves two other adjacent lots, and therefore the structures are clustered. The driveway will not need to be modified to serve the proposed development to meet the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's standard width of 20 feet. The project will not affect any natural landforms as the site's building pad Although native vegetation does surround the site, is already graded. including oak trees, no significant vegetation is to be removed as a part of the development of the residence.

Table I policies also specify that development be located in proximity to existing roads, services and other development to minimize impacts on habitat, and that streambeds, and ESHAs not be altered and that they are protected to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, LUP policy P96 specifies that and water quality be protected from degradation resulting from development. mentioned, the proposed project site is located on a lot that is within the Cold Creek Resource Management Area. Furthermore, although the lot does contain a minor drainage swale from the building pad, the proposed drainage system will not cause erosion and the water disapator at the end of the swale that now exists is about fifty feet from Cold Creek. However, there remains a risk that sediment could enter the Cold Creek drainage from slopes recently graded or disturbed by construction activities. The Los Angeles County Environmental Review Board has provided on January 22, 1996 recommendations leading to a new drainage plan to address drainage issues. The Environmental Review Board also found this project consistent with the Malibu/Cold Creek Resource Management Area. This drainage plan is now part of the applicant's submittal.

The Commission finds that minimizing site erosion will add to the protection of the adjacent ESHA and the Cold Creek Canyon Watershed. Erosion can be

minimized by requiring the applicant to landscape all disturbed areas of the site with native, drought tolerant, and non-invasive, plants that are compatible with the surrounding environment. Therefore special condition number three (3) is required to ensure that all areas disturbed or graded as a part of this project, are stabilized and landscaped properly following construction activities. To ensure that no adverse impacts result from vegetation management activities, required by the Los Angeles County Fire Department, these landscape plans will also illustrate how fuel modification is implemented on site. Thus, this landscape and fuel modification plan will serve to ensure that the proposed development results in the development of the site that is consistent with and conforms to the Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act.

Further, future developments or improvements to the property normally associated with a single family residence, which might otherwise be exempt, have the potential to impact these sensitive environmental resources noted above. It is necessary to ensure that future developments or improvements normally associated with a single family residence, which might otherwise be exempt, is reviewed by the Commission for compliance with the coastal resource protection policies of the Coastal Act. Condition number four (4), the future improvements deed restriction, will ensure the Commission will have the opportunity to review future projects for compliance with the Coastal Act. Thus, the Commission finds that as conditioned, the proposed project is consistent with Sections 30231, 30240, and 30250(a) of the Coastal Act.

F. Septic System

The Coastal Act includes policies to provide for adequate infrastructure including waste disposal systems. Section 30231 of the Coastal Act states that:

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

Section 30250(a) of the Coastal Act states in part that:

New residential, ... development, ... shall be located within, ... existing developed areas able to accommodate it ... and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources.

In addition, the Los Angeles County Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan includes the following policies concerning sewage disposal, which are use as guidance:

P217 Wastewater management operations within the Malibu Coastal Zone shall not degrade streams or adjacent coastal waters or cause aggravate public health problems.

- P218 The construction of individual septic tank systems shall be permitted only in full compliance with building and plumbing codes...
- P226 The County shall not issue a coastal permit for a development unless it can be determined that sewage disposal adequate to function without creating hazards to public health or coastal resources will be available for the life of the project beginning when occupancy commences.

The proposed development includes constructing a new septic pit and system to provide sewage disposal. The applicant has submitted an approval for the sewage disposal from the Department of Health Services, Los Angeles County. This approval indicates that the sewage disposal system for the project complies with all minimum requirements of the County of Los Angeles Plumbing Code. The septic pit is located at least 100 feet from the creek. The Commission has found in past permit actions that compliance with the health and safety codes will minimize any potential for waste water discharge that could adversely impact coastal waters. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed septic system is consistent with Sections 30231 and 30250 of the Coastal Act.

F. Local Coastal Program

Section 30604 of the Coastal Act states that:

(a) Prior to certification of the local coastal program, a coastal development permit shall be issued if the issuing agency, or the commission on appeal, finds that the proposed development is in conformity with Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a local coastal program that is in conformity with Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

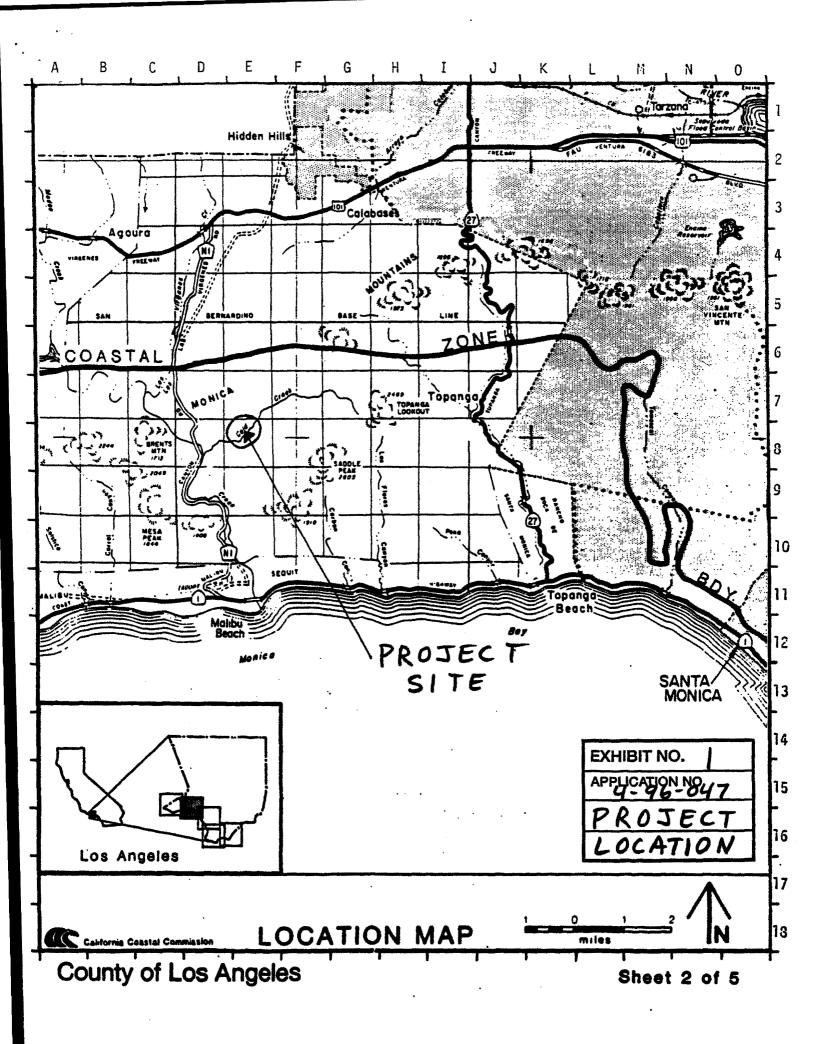
Section 30604(a) of the Coastal Act provides that the Commission shall issue a coastal permit only if the project will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction to prepare a Local Coastal Program which conforms with Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The preceding sections provide findings that the proposed project will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 if certain conditions are incorporated into the project and accepted by the applicant. As conditioned, the proposed development will not create adverse impacts and is found to be consistent with the applicable policies contained in Chapter 3. Therefore, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development, as conditioned, will not prejudice the County of Los Angeles' ability to prepare a Local Coastal Program for this area of the Santa Monica Mountains that is also consistent with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act as required by Section 30604(a).

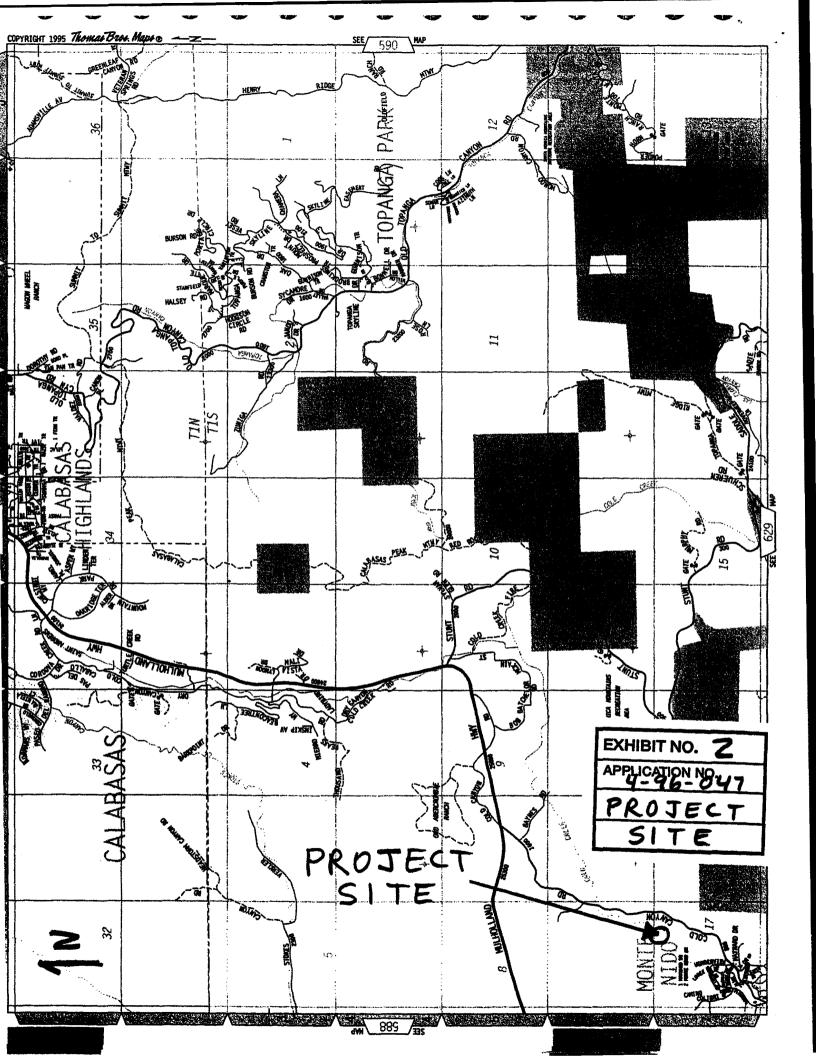
G. California Environmental Ouality Act

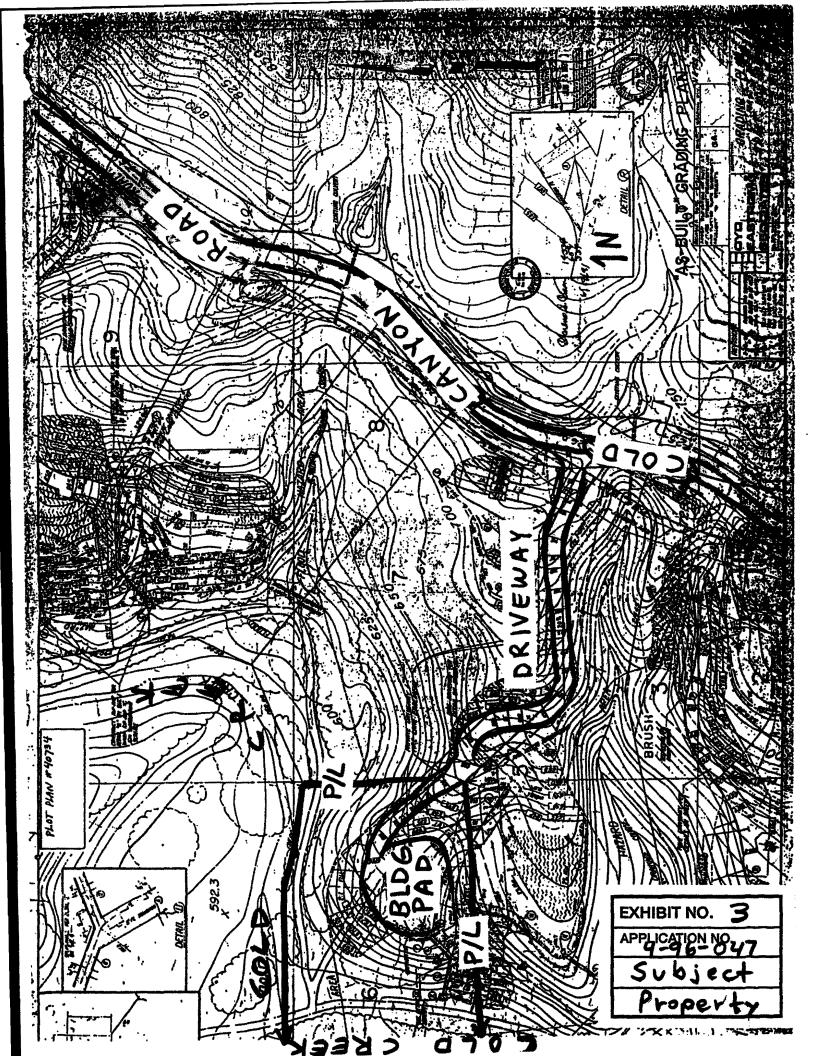
The Coastal Commission's permit process has been designated as the functional equivalent of CEQA. Section 13096(a) of the California Code of Regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permit applications to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of CEQA. Section 21080.5 (d)(2)(i) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts that the activity may have on the environment.

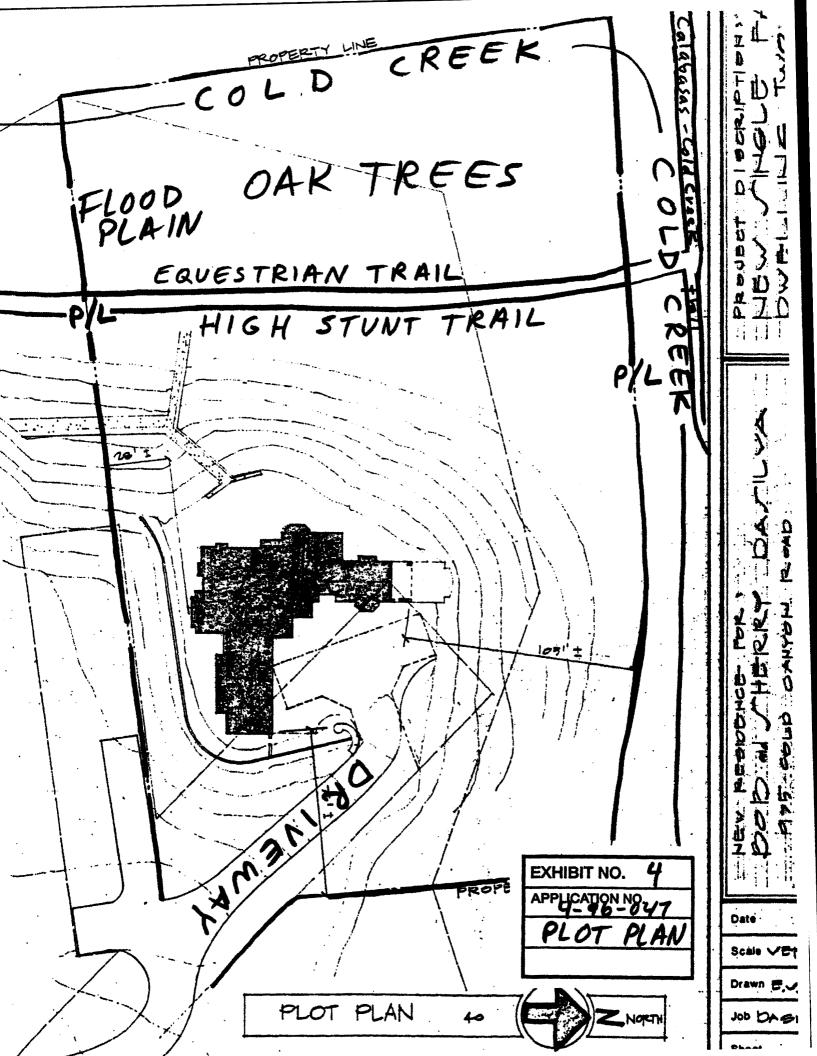
As discussed above, the proposed project has been mitigated to incorporate all recommendations by the applicant's consulting geologist, a wild fire waiver of liability, a landscape and fuel modification plan, and a future improvments restriction. As conditioned, there are no feasible alternatives or mitigation measures available, beyond those required, which would lessen any significant adverse impact that the activity may have on the environment. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project, as conditioned to mitigate the identified impacts, is the least environmentally damaging feasible alternative and is found consistent with the requirements of CEQA and the policies of the Coastal Act.

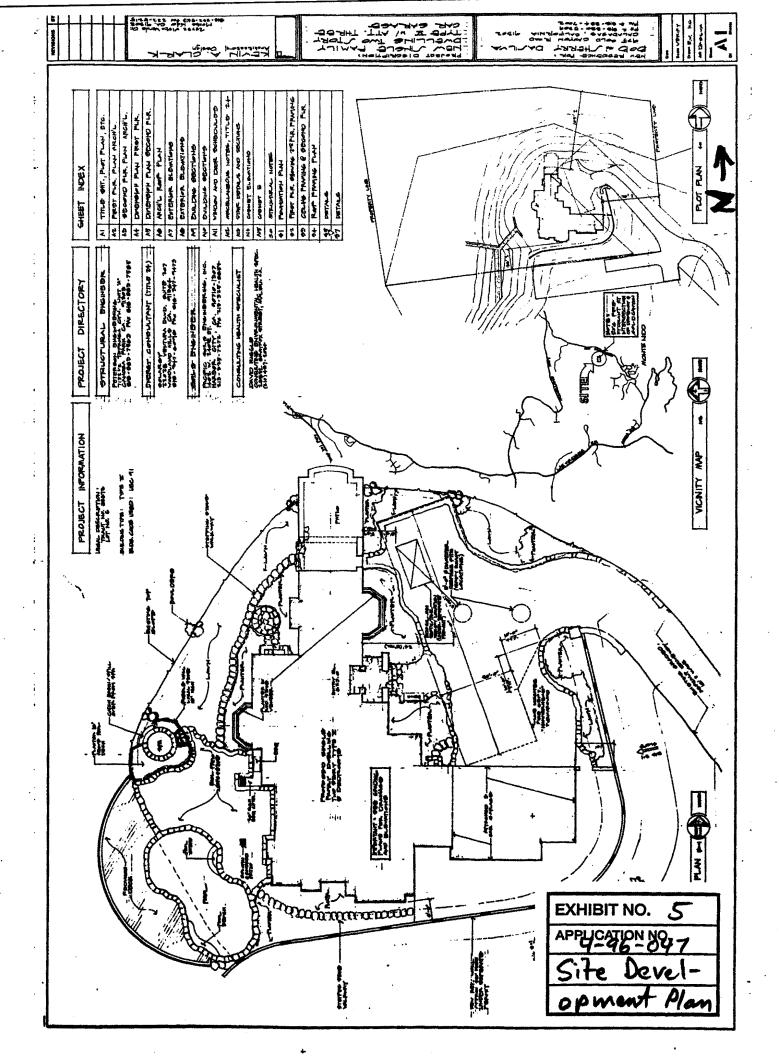
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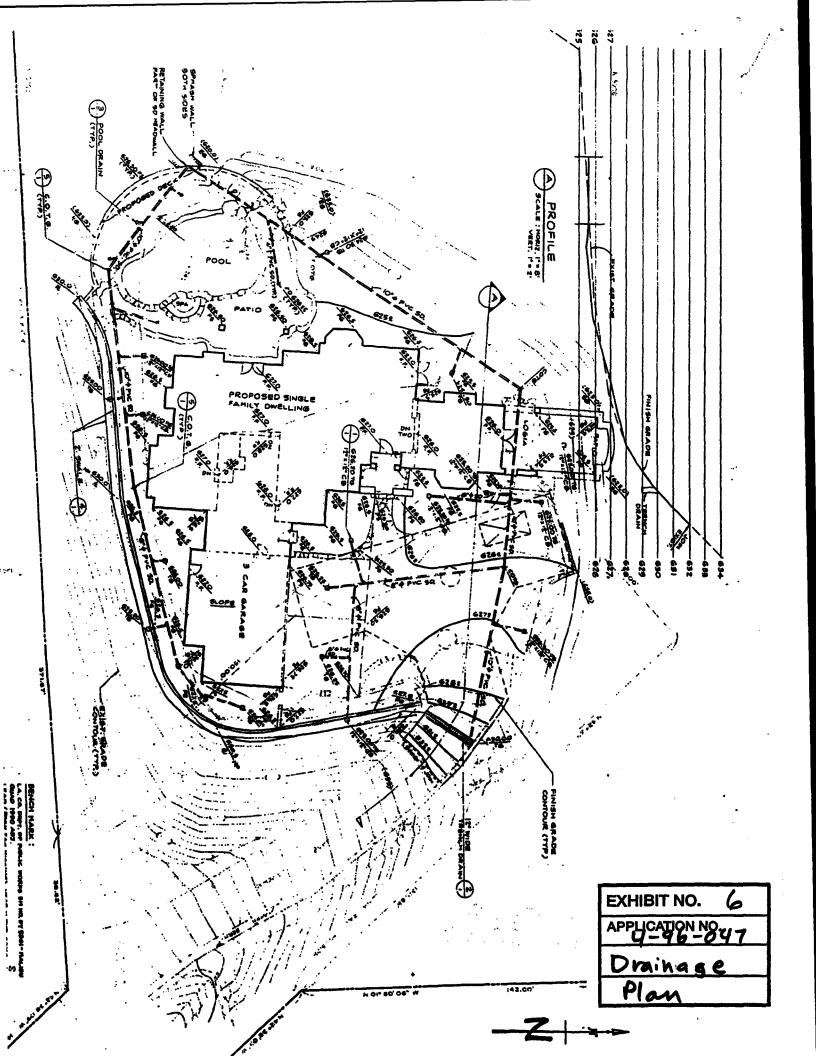


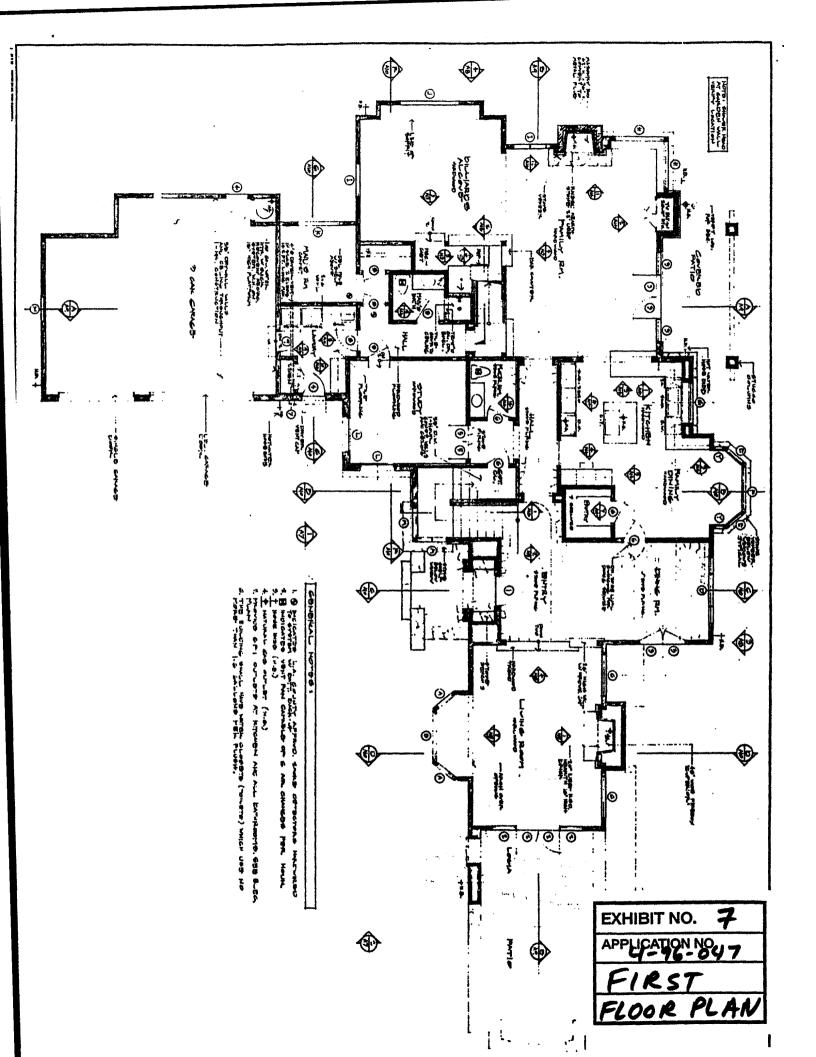


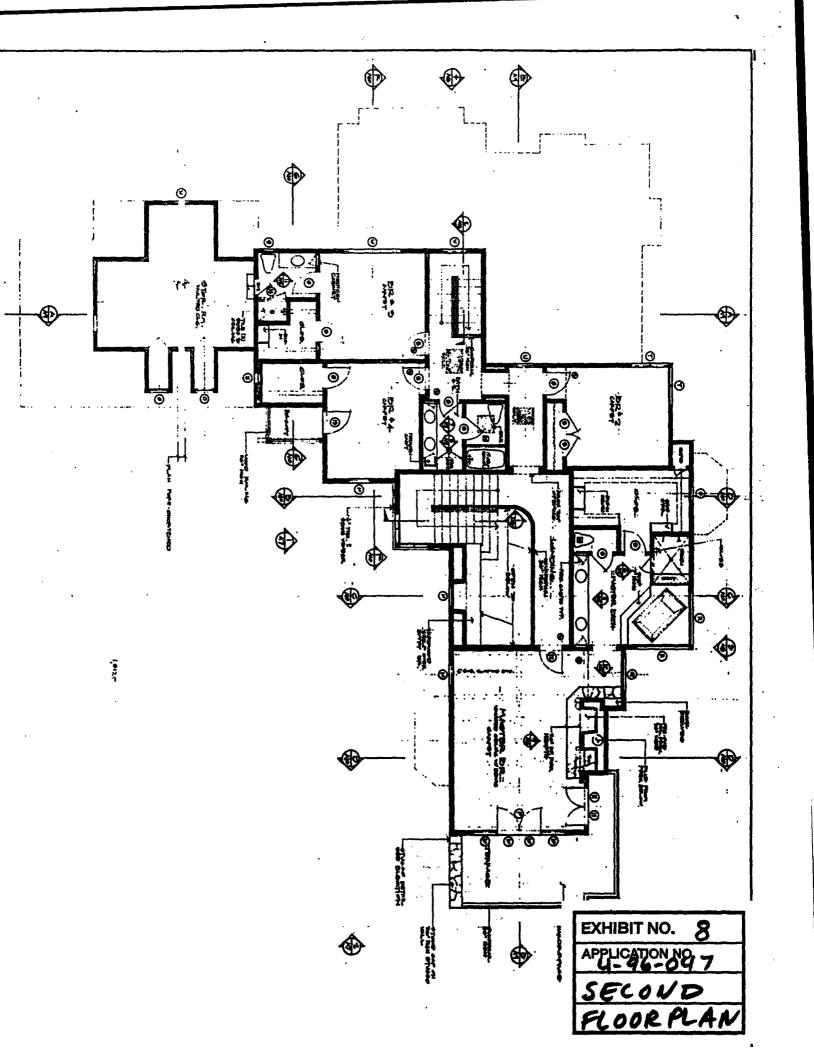


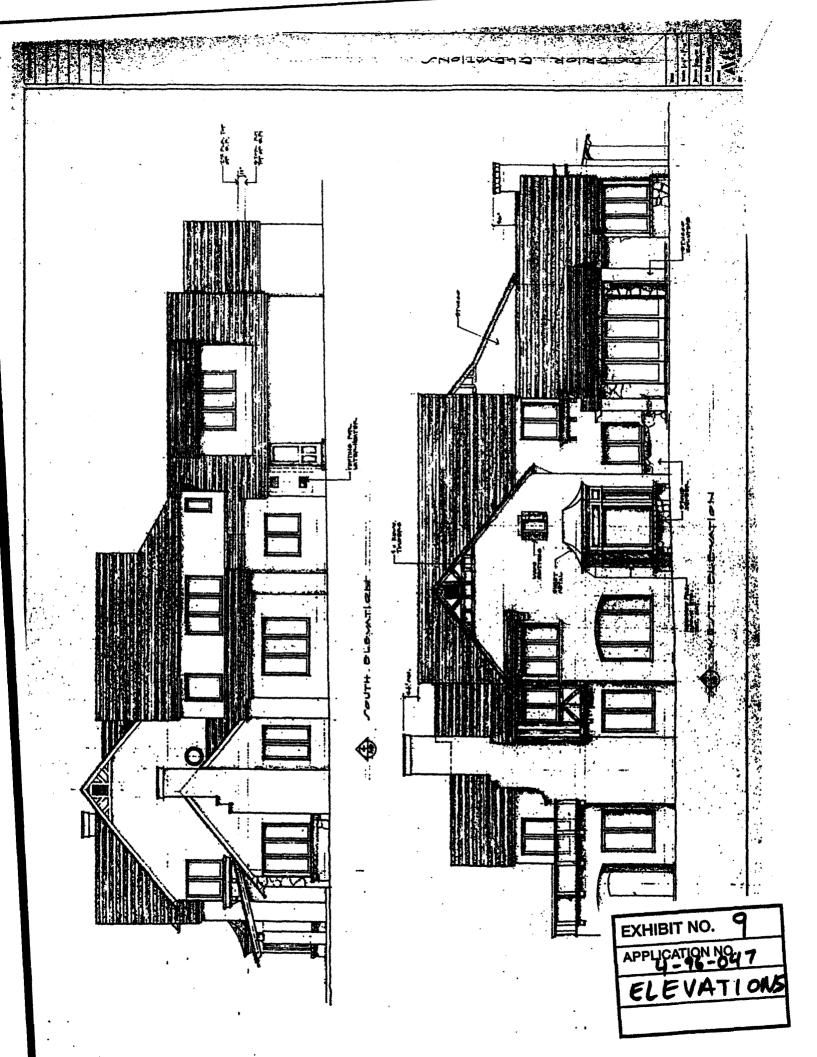


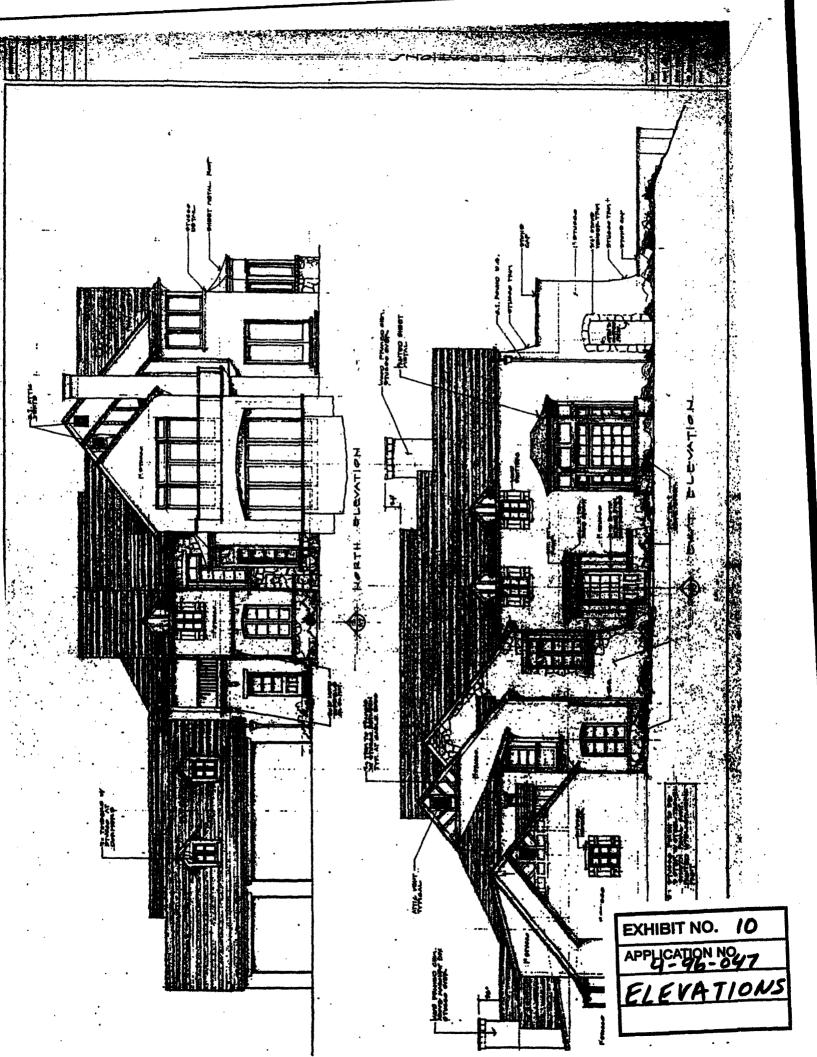


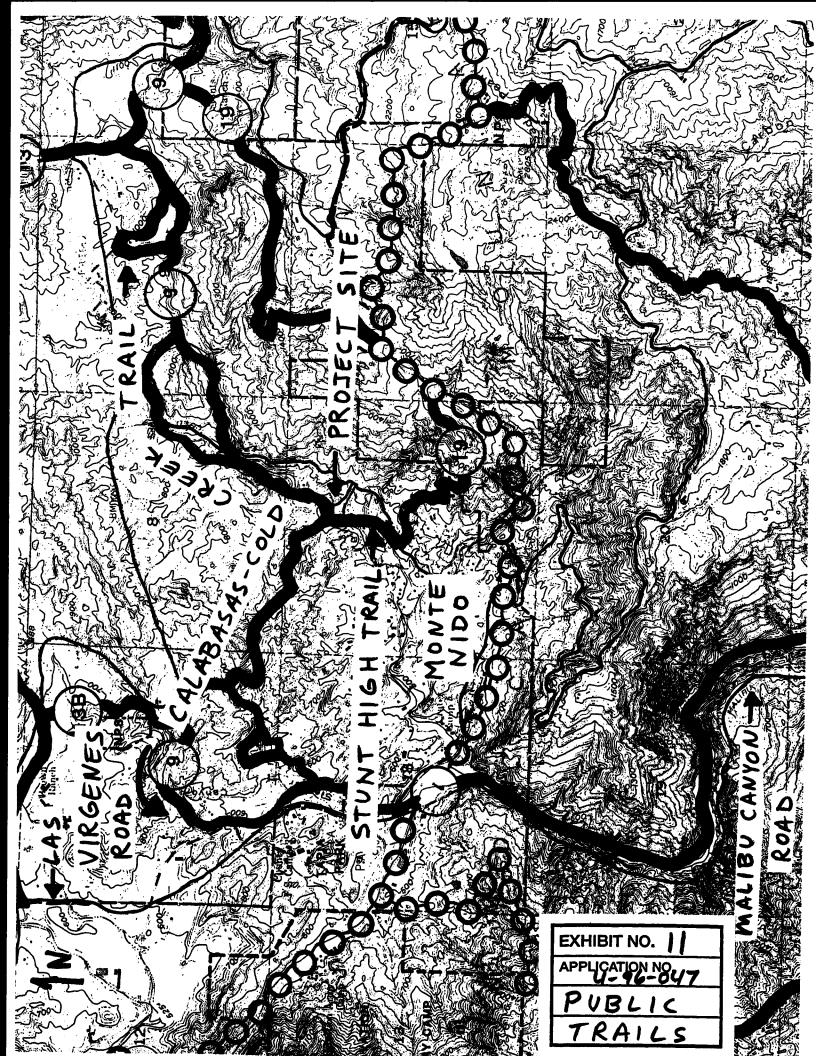












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