TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER
DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

DATE: JUNE 7, 2004

CMR: 203:04

SUBJECT: 820 LOS TRANCOS WOODS ROAD [03-D-06, 03-EIA-23]: APPLICATION BY BAR ARCHITECTS ON BEHALF OF YOAV SHOHAM AND ORIT ATZMON FOR SITE AND DESIGN REVIEW TO ALLOW CONSTRUCTION OF A 11,006 SQUARE-FOOT, TWO-STORY, SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE, A 2,294 SQUARE-FOOT ACCESSORY SPORTS BUILDING, SWIMMING POOL, LANDSCAPING AND OTHER SITE IMPROVEMENTS. 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 and Addendum, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Attachment B).

2. Site and Design Review application to allow construction of a residential structure in the Open Space district, with the findings and conditions of approval contained the Record of Land Use Action (Attachment A).

BACKGROUND
The project site is a single parcel (APN 182-36-030) of approximately ten acres in the Palo Alto foothills. The site is undeveloped, containing no structures or utilities. The site slopes upward to the east, north and west from the lowest point near the west property line. The project area is on the east side of the property, in a relatively flat area that is part of a “bowl”, adjacent to upward sloping hillsides. This area contains native and non-native grasses, chaparral, and various species of pines and oaks.
Adjacent land uses include single-family residential home sites. Access to the site is from a shared driveway (also known as Los Trancos Woods Road) connected to Los Trancos Road and Alpine Road in Portola Valley.

The OS district does not have a maximum house size regulation. However, development is limited by the amount of site coverage, which is 3.5% of the site area. This maximum amount includes structures, driveways, walkways and patio areas constructed of impervious surfaces. Previous projects in the open space utilized asphalt and concrete surfaces throughout the site. Since these surfaces counted against the maximum site coverage, the lot area available for structures was reduced.

The applicant is proposing to build two structures: a single-family residential home of 11,006 square feet and a sports building of 2,294 square feet (containing indoors courts, an exercise room, bathroom and storage facilities).

The residential structure will essentially appear as a single-story structure that will be oriented to the west. The second story areas are located at the north and south ends of the structure, extending to a maximum height of 25 feet. The swimming pool, a terraced patio area and landscaping extend to the west of the home. The site improvements were designed to maximize the use of permeable surfaces. In addition to the landscaped planters, gravel surfaces are used in many of the terraced areas (including the exterior stairways), the driveway and auto parking court. Interlocking paver stones are used on the walkway and stairway areas and at portions of the driveway.

The sports building will be located to the south of the residential structure and would extend to a maximum height of 25 feet. This building is designed to provide a variety of uses for the owner.

The exterior materials and finishes are designed to be compatible with the surrounding environment. Thick plaster and limestone walls in muted, earth tone colors will complement the limestone flooring at the interior living areas and exterior patio spaces. The roof will be standing seam metal roof that will be of a dull zinc or deep gray color. Stainless steel and wood trellis features extend over the interior/exterior thresholds.

The landscape plan is designed to fit seamlessly with the existing natural areas of the site. Plant materials were selected for water conservation and low-maintenance characteristics. Special consideration is placed on the preservation of the existing oak trees and the existing grassland areas that would surround the structures. A small vineyard to the northwest of the home (shown on Sheet L1.0) will be installed.

**DISCUSSION**

The applicant has proposed minor revisions to the project plans since the Planning and Transportation Commission meeting on January 28, 2004. These revisions have been
made to accommodate program changes and economic considerations for the owner and to allow the new structures to better follow existing contours of the project site.

The primary building and sports building now have 872 square feet of additional floor area above grade, and the 1,117 square foot basement has been removed from the project. Pervious areas have replaced impervious area at portions of the driveway and in the landscaped areas. The result is that the amount of impervious area has been reduced by approximately 480 square feet. Removal of the basement from the project would reduce the amount of excavation and soil exported from the site by approximately 770 cubic yards. The wing of the house containing the study was shifted approximately 25 degrees to better follow the existing site contour. Minor changes to the materials palette and the landscape plan are described in the applicant’s revision summary contained in Attachment C.

These changes are considered by staff to be minor changes that would not affect the recommendation of staff and the Planning and Transportation Commission. The Record of Land Use Action has been revised to reflect the submittal date of the plans requested to be approved. The Negative Declaration prepared for the project describes a larger single-family residence, a smaller accessory sport building and more impervious surface than the most recent revisions. The amount of impervious surfaces is the site development regulation that limits development on site. As there will be a net decrease in impervious area, there are no additional environmental impacts on the site. Additional floor area will be converted from the basement to the first and second floors of the residence and to the sports building. The Negative Declaration has been amended to indicate this with a finding that this would not be a significant incremental aesthetic impact (Attachment B).

In addition to these changes, the applicant has submitted photographs and views of existing site conditions and renderings that simulate the addition of the structures on the undeveloped site. These photographs and renderings are contained in Attachment D.

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

**BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
This project was heard by the Planning and Transportation Commission (Commission) on January 28, 2004. The Commission recommended that the City Council approve the Negative Declaration and the Site and Design Review application (6-0-0-0).

In addition to the Site and Design findings, the Commissioners discussed the use of pervious and impervious surfaces on the site, the visibility of the sports building, and tree protection for non-protected tree species. Although the Commission generally supports the use of pervious materials to reduce water runoff and promote on-site permeability, the result is that the structures can be larger, covering more of the site.
However, the Commission found that the project has been sensitively designed in that it would: 1) be located to minimize off site views; and 2) would have a predominantly single story floor plan that generally follows existing land contours.

The sports building would be a separate structure that would extend to a maximum height of 25-feet. This structure would be seen from the private driveways, as shown in the attached renderings (Attachment D). Several Commission members proposed a condition that would lower the height of the sports building to 18 or 20 feet. However, the proposed condition was not supported by the majority.

The project would include tree protection for all trees impacted by the project. Three non-native pine trees located within the proposed building footprint would be removed. The Commission discussed specific tree maintenance conditions, such as a tree pruning and plan. Staff informed the Commission that the project would be subject to the tree maintenance and pruning regulations contained in the Tree Technical Manual, so specific conditions were not required for this project.

The Commission recommended that the building color be revised to be a darker shade of brown. This condition is included in the Record of Land Use Action, Section 6.

**ATTACHMENTS**
Attachment A: Record of Land Use Action.
Attachment B: Negative Declaration and Addendum.
Attachment C: Applicant’s Design Statement and Revision Summary.
Attachment D: Photographs and Renderings of the Site.
Attachment G: Project Plans (Council packet only)

**PREPARED BY:**
________________________________________
STEVEN TURNER
Planner

**DEPARTMENT HEAD REVIEW:**
________________________________________
STEVE EMSLIE
Director of Planning and Community Environment

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**
________________________________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager