TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CITY MANAGER
DEPARTMENT: PLANNING AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT
DATE: MARCH 10, 2008

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION, SITE AND DESIGN AND RECORD OF LAND USE ACTION TO ALLOW (1) ARCHITECTURAL AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL CHANGES TO TWO OPEN SPACE (OS) DISTRICT HOMES AT 3220 AND 3230 ALEXIS DRIVE, (2) SCREENING VEGETATION ON ADJACENT FOOTHILLS PARK LAND, AND (3) EXPANSION OF THE PROJECT SITE TO INCLUDE AN ADJACENT, VACANT OS PARCEL AT 3208 ALEXIS DRIVE TO BE GRADED, LANDSCAPED AND USED FOR DRIVEWAY ACCESS, A SPA AND A PERIMETER PATHWAY.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff, the Planning and Transportation Commission, and the Architectural Review Board recommend that the City Council approve the following:

1. Mitigated Negative Declaration and Addendum, prepared for properties located at 3208, 3220, and 3230 Alexis Drive, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Attachment E).

2. A Record of Land Use Action approving a Site and Design Review application to allow architectural and site plan revisions to the previously approved project, including screening vegetation on Foothills Park land and the addition of a driveway, spa and screening landscaping on the adjoining vacant parcel in the Open Space district, subject to the findings and conditions of approval contained the Record of Land Use Action (Attachment A).

DISCUSSION
The Site and Design Review application for the construction of the two homes that currently exist at 3220 and 3230 Alexis Drive was originally approved in May 2000 by the City Council after Planning and Transportation Commission (Commission) and Architectural Review Board (ARB) reviews. Attachment C includes additional background information on the original application. A full project description of the subject application is included in the attached Planning and Transportation Commission staff report (Attachment D). In this project, the
applicant is requesting landscaping, grading and architectural changes from the original approval with a negligible change to impervious coverage.

**Landscaping and Grading Changes**
The changes include the modification of the existing driveway into a new circular driveway to accommodate parking at the front of the property; grading for a gravel trail along the perimeter of the site; terracing between the main residence and the guest house; grading of the southern portion of the site to accommodate a new infinity style swimming pool and to create a more useable rear yard; and installation of perimeter fencing, landscape lighting, and additional vegetation. No lighting is proposed for the trail along the perimeter of the site. A seven-foot iron fence is proposed to encircle the site for security. A six-foot iron fence with two gates is proposed for the driveway area and will be located sixteen feet behind the front property line. The new fence and gates will be obscured with plantings at the base. Over 363 new trees would be planted on and off site. These trees would include various large specimen native trees, such as Coast Live Oak, Coast Redwood and Valley Oak trees, to provide additional screening along the perimeter of the site. Since the project includes the removal of some of the smaller trees and may include the relocation of several trees on site, the applicant will work with the Planning Arborist to identify locations for replanting.

**Building Changes**
The project includes minor changes to the existing main house, including: changes to materials; a reduction in the amount of glazing; a minor addition of 36-sq. ft.; and the conversion of the lanais to more enclosed loggias. Changes to the windows include the addition of divided lights, arch shapes and exterior shutters. The loggias will feature stone columns, walls and arches, creating more private outdoor areas. The original building materials included natural stone walls with slate roofs in earth-tone colors, natural wood doors, windows, columns and trellises and bronze anodized skylights. New materials will consist of imported earth-toned antique clay roof tiles, wood trellises, natural wood doors and windows with non-reflective glass, and natural stone materials for columns and the base. The loggias will incorporate the greater use of stone to frame the outdoor areas. The eave overhangs throughout the building would be reduced by 15 inches and entirely removed from the gabled features. A detailed description of the changes by elevations is provided in Attachment D.

**BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
This project was reviewed by the Planning and Transportation Commission (Commission) on January 9, 2008 and January 30, 2008. On January 30, the Commission recommended that the City Council approve the Negative Declaration and the Site and Design Review application. The Site and Design findings, the visibility of the site from Vista Point, and landscape screening were discussed. It was acknowledged that the landscaping would never completely screen the buildings, but is likely to soften the appearance. The Commission discussed planting trees on the adjacent Foothills Park property, impact on wildlife, location and appearance of the perimeter fence, maintenance of the off-site and on-site landscaping and fence and fire safety. The Planning Arborist, Dave Dockter, confirmed that staff is satisfied with the applicant’s progress in revising the landscaping plan. The Foothills Park supervisor, Lester Hodgins, confirmed that the City’s Parks and Recreation Department was supportive of the proposed tree planting on Foothills Park lands. The Commission voted in favor of the proposed project with the following changes, which are reflected in the revised Record of Land Use Action (Attachment A):
Addition to findings:

- Reflect that this is a unique property, and location, and the planting on Foothills Park lands provide a significant benefit to the City that does not set any precedent given the benefits and unique site issues.

Changes to conditions of approval:

- Supported staff recommendation to change condition of approval number 9, so that prior to any future sale of the third lot, the property owner shall remove the spa located in that lot and either record an easement to allow a portion of driveway to remain on the third lot or remove the portion of the driveway from the third lot.
- Supported staff recommendation to change to condition of approval number 14, increasing the duration that the tree relocation security deposit be held to five years, so that it is consistent with condition number 16.
- Require perpetual maintenance and replacement of the landscaping on the property.
- Require vines be planted on the rear elevation.

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) reviewed the project on February 7, 2008. The ARB unanimously recommended that the City Council adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and approve the Site and Design Review application. The ARB discussed the view from Vista Point in Foothills Park, landscaping, plantings in Foothills Park, building design, color and materials, and screening vegetation on the house. The members of the ARB indicated that the proposal would be an improvement to the existing condition and the plans reflected improvements over those reviewed at the ARB preliminary review. The ARB voted in favor of the project with the following additions to the conditions of approval, which are reflected in the revised Record of Land Use Action:

- Vines shall be planted in irrigated planters to be placed adjacent to the south elevation walls above the green roof, and the vines shall be allowed to grow along the second floor of the south elevation.
- References to “ivy” in plans shall be replaced with “vines” on all project drawings and the permit.
- References to the Universal Building Codes should be replaced with the current approved Building Code for the State of California.

Additionally, two items will be required to return to an ARB subcommittee subsequent to any building permit approvals. Prior to the issuance of any building permits, the subcommittee shall review the following:

- The shape of the arched window on the south elevation to determine if it should be modified.
- The potential use of a darker stucco color.

Several members of the public spoke regarding the project at the public hearings. One member of the public spoke at both the Commission and ARB hearings expressing concerns regarding the Mitigated Negative Declaration and the adequacy of the landscape screening. Two members of the Palo Alto Foothills Neighborhood Association spoke in favor of the proposal. A petition signed by Palo Alto Foothills Neighborhood Association in favor of the project was submitted (Attachment H).
POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Under the current regulations in Chapter 18.76.020 of the Municipal Code, applications for two or fewer single family residences do not require architectural review by the ARB. However, this application was brought before the ARB for review for two reasons. The first reason is because the original project was reviewed by the ARB for the two existing residences when ARB review was required by the Municipal Code. The second reason is because the project involves a third parcel, where a third single family residence would be allowed (although was not proposed in this project). The Commission and ARB found that the changes are consistent with the Open Space policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
A Draft Initial Study, which reviewed the environmental issues as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration were posted and circulated for public review. The 20-day public review circulation period began January 11 and ended January 31, 2008. A copy of the environmental document is provided as Attachment E. Key mitigation measures include the requirement of a Tree Relocation and Maintenance Plan, a Tree Security Deposit, and a Tree Preservation Report. The Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration must be adopted prior to the Council decision on this project application.

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CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: _________________________

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ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Record of Land Use Action.
Attachment B: Location Map
Attachment C: Background
Attachment D: January 30, 2008 PTC/ARB staff report w/o attachments
Attachment E: Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration
Attachment G: Applicant’s Submittals
Attachment H: Correspondences from the public
Attachment I: Project Plans (Council packet only)
COURTESY COPIES
Open Space LLC/Park Arastradero LLC
Ken Alsman, Scott Design Associates
Lester Hodges, Foothills Park/Community Services Dept.
Brian Schmit, Committee for Green Foothills