



Town of Atherton
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DATE: APRIL 26, 2023

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: RADHA HAYAGREEV, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBJECT: Request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow for a 363 sq. ft. addition and renovation of the existing locker room facilities at 190 Park Lane. (APN 070-214-080) Permit number CUP23-00002

CEQA: This project is categorically exempt from further CEQA review pursuant to Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION:

For the reasons as outlined in this staff report, Planning Staff recommends that the Planning Commission conduct the public hearing and **approve** Conditional Use Permit No. CUP23-00002 to allow a 363 sq. ft. minor addition and renovation of the existing locker room facilities and related amenities.

An analysis of the information provided by the applicant for the Conditional Use Permit is outlined in the Analysis section of this report.

Per Atherton Municipal Code [Chapter 17.12.030](#), Conditional Use Permits can be granted only if the following two findings can be made.

1. ***The proposed use is consistent with the general plan and all applicable provisions of this title***

Staff Recommendation: Staff opines that Finding 1 can be made.

2. ***The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use applied for will not, under the circumstances of the particular case (location, size, design, and operating characteristics) be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, or general welfare of persons residing, or working in the neighborhoods of such use, or the general welfare of the town.***

Staff Recommendation: Staff opines that Finding 2 can be made.

Findings are detailed in the appropriate section below.

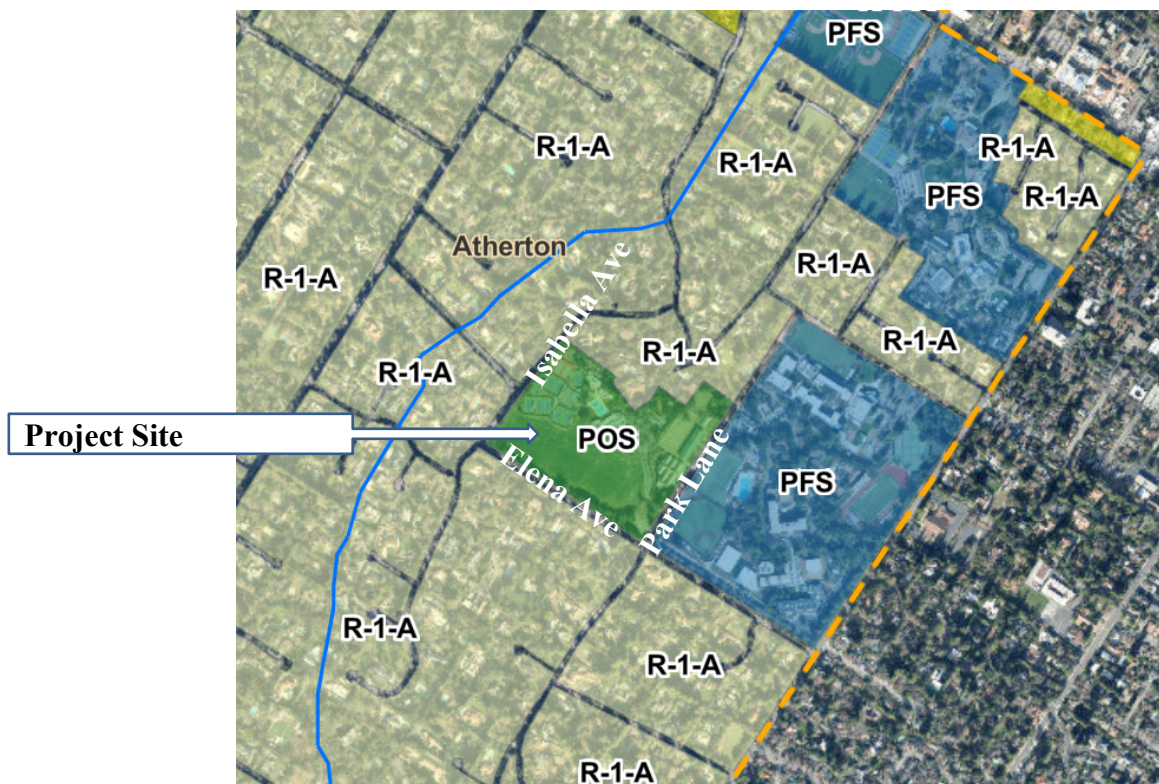
BACKGROUND:

The project site at 190 Park Lane is approximately 27.79 acres in size. It currently has the Menlo Circus Club (country club) and is zoned Parks and Open Space District (POS), shown in green in Figure 1 below. Per [AMC 17.34.030](#) Country Clubs in POS districts are permitted as a Conditional Use Permit.

Menlo Circus Club has an equestrian center, polo grounds, tennis court facilities, members clubhouse, pool facilities, and recreation/fitness center with men's and women's locker room facilities.

The proposed project is for a remodel and minor addition to the men's and woman's locker room facilities.

Figure 1: Zoning and Location



The site is bounded by the (R-1-A) zoning district that contains one- and two-story single family residential developments to the north, Park Lane to the East, Elena Avenue to the South, and Isabella Avenue to the West. Generally, the Menlo Circus Club is surrounded by single-family dwellings with the exception of the Sacred Heart Schools campus zoned for Public Facilities and School District (PFS) to the East, across Park Lane. A 6-ft fence and landscape screening have been installed along the northside property line separating the adjacent residential homes from the fire access lane, maintenance yard, and rear of the locker room facilities of the Club.

The Club is open daily 7 days a week from roughly sunrise-sundown and is accessible to members and guests only. Parking access to the Club is provided from Park Lane with 115 parking stalls

provided on the north side of the parcel.

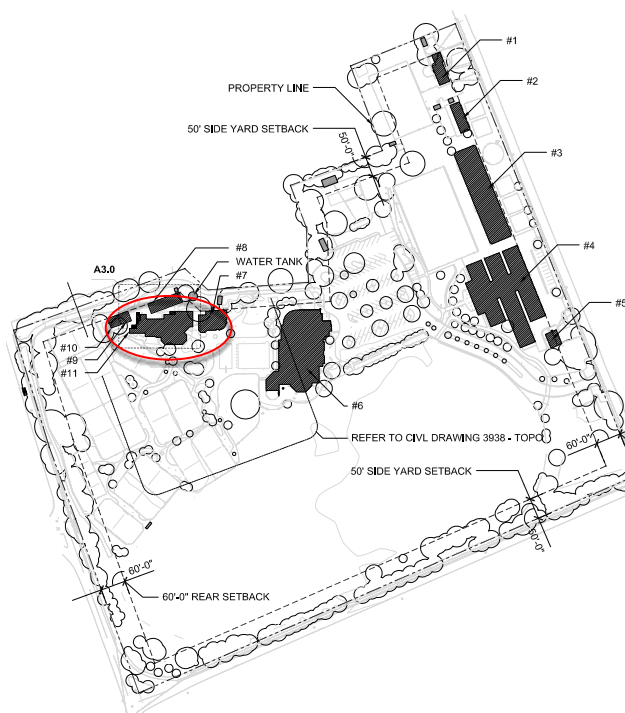
On their webpage Menlo Circus Club notes that they were established in 1922, a year before the Town of Atherton incorporated in 1923. Our records for the Menlo Circus Club go back to 1974 which included a screening fence around a tennis court. The Planning Commission have received applications and granted conditional use permits to the Menlo Circus Club for various purposes/developments on the property, including but not limited to the construction of an addition to the existing stable buildings, the construction of tennis courts, expansion of the parking lot, and modifications to the clubhouse building. In February 1995, the Planning Commission granted a conditional use permit for the demolition of the existing tennis office and locker room structures and the construction of a new structure to house a tennis office, men's and women's locker rooms, and swim office. These facilities were relocated to their current location and consolidated in order to meet the needs of the club membership as well as current regulations to make the facilities accessible to individuals with disabilities. The construction also included an exercise room with equipment and therapeutic spa facilities.

On March 2, 2023, Greg Hagey, Architect, on behalf of the property owner, Menlo Circus Club, submitted an application for the complete remodel of the existing men's and women's locker rooms and a 363 sq. ft. addition for accessibility upgrades, spa, and related amenities which is the scope of work for tonight's discussion.

ANALYSIS:

The Club consists of several structures distributed mostly along Park Lane and towards the rear side near Isabella Avenue. The Boys and Girls Locker room is the largest building shown in the red circle below.

Figure 2: Site Plan

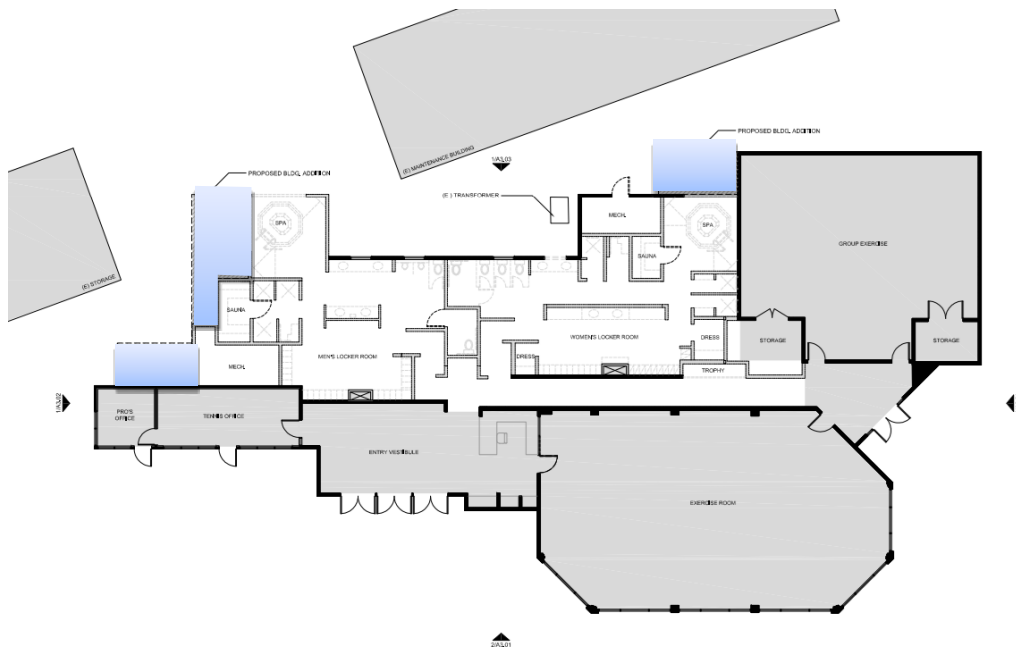


**Image 1: Front Entrance to Fitness/Recreation Room with Locker Room Facilities
(South Facing, Exterior)**



The plan in Figure 3 below (also Attachment 2, Sheet A2.0) shows the proposed construction and modifications to the existing men's and women's locker room facilities, highlighted in blue.

Figure 3: Proposed project scope



The modifications include new mechanical rooms, spas, as well as the addition of sauna and steam rooms, sitting areas and new ADA compliant shower amenities for both the men's and women's individual facilities. The total modification proposed is a net increase of 363 sq. ft., increasing the total footprint of the building from 7,650 sq. ft. to 8,013 sq. ft. resulting in a 0.1 percent overall increase in lot coverage for the club.

The proposed project additions are minor and do not include an increase to the height of the existing structure or any modifications that would impact the existing conditions related to privacy of the adjacent properties. The project is not projected to expand the Club's number of members, require additional parking, or alter the current operating hours of the Club. Furthermore, the proposed project would be developed in accordance with the Conditional Use Permit and other required entitlements for the project site.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS:

Per AMC 17.34.040, all projects in the Parks and Open Space District must comply with the development standards detailed below:

Development Standard Description	Development Standard	Proposed	Complies?
Height, Maximum	34 feet	22' ½"	Yes
Lot Coverage, aggregate, maximum	20% gross lot area	6.2%	Yes
Front and rear yard, minimum	60 feet	>60feet	Yes
Side Yard, minimum	50 feet	>50feet	Yes

Access to the Club is from Park Lane with parking for members and guests available at the northside of the property. Members can access the locker room directly from a walkway connecting the parking lot, pool facilities, and locker room facilities. Additionally, a fire access lane exists along the north side property line connecting the parking lot with the maintenance yard and rear of the locker room facilities. The proposed addition and remodel does not change to the existing grade on site as the project will use the existing development pad.

FINDINGS

Per AMC [Chapter 17.12.030](#), Conditional Use Permits can be approved only when the approval authority determines that the proposed use or activity complies with all of the following findings:

1. The proposed use is consistent with the general plan and all applicable provisions of this title

Staff Review: The proposed use of the Menlo Circus Club seems to be consistent with the Atherton General Plans Goals listed below:

Goal OSC 1	Protect both publicly and privately held open space lands from deterioration of their semi-rural charm, scenic value and environmental equilibrium.
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Policy OSC-1.2	The Town seeks to preserve the open space characteristics of existing public and private schools, churches, the Menlo Circus Club, the Bear Gulch Reservoir property and the public parks.
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The proposed use is to continue the Menlo Circus Club and add minor additions and remodel to continue the use of the boys and girl's locker rooms. The proposal is consistent with all the development standards of the Use Permit in the underlying Public and Open Space Zone. The proposed project is a modification of existing facilities that will maintain the general character of the existing conditions of the site, without removal of trees and without impairing the current or potential uses of adjacent properties.

2. The establishment, maintenance, or operation of the use applied for will not, under the circumstances of the particular case (location, size, design, and operating characteristics) be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, or general welfare of persons residing, or working in the neighborhoods of such use, or the general welfare of the town.

Staff Review: The proposed remodel and minor addition is consistent with this finding as they are a continuation of the same uses in substantially the same location. The renovations once complete, will promote the health of the Club's members and the Town's residents and will not be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, or general welfare of persons residing, or working in the neighborhoods of such use, or the general welfare of the Town.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Staff has determined that this project is exempt under CEQA under both Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the CEQA Guidelines in that the project consists of the renovation of an existing locker room facility, and a minor addition to an existing building.

There is no evidence of any unusual or special conditions that would result in a significant effect on the environment.

NOTICE

Notice of this application was mailed to all property owners within 500 feet of the subject property. At the time of publishing this report, staff has not received any public comment or inquiries on the application. The applicant has submitted a no-objection letter from one of the neighbors, see Attachment 4

CONCLUSION:

Staff requests that the Planning Commission consider all the analysis and findings to motion for a vote of approval or denial. Approval of the permit is subject to the standards conditions contained in the Approval Certificate, see Attachment 1.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Planning Commission can deny, approve, or modify the request.

SUGGESTED MOTION FOR APPROVAL:

I move that the Planning Commission determine that the proposed project is exempt from CEQA and **approve** the Conditional Use Permit (CUP23-0002) to allow for the 363 sq. ft. Addition and renovation of the existing locker room facilities an at the Menlo Circus Club located at 190 Park Lane, based on the findings outlined by the Planning Commission, subject to the conditions listed in the Certificate.

SUGGESTED MOTION FOR DENIAL:

I move that the Planning Commission deny the Conditional Use Permit at 190 Park Lane for the Menlo Circus Club, as there was insufficient information to make both Conditional Use Permit Findings.

/s/ Radha Hayagreev

Radha Hayagreev, Senior Planner

Attachments:

1. Conditional Use Permit Draft Certificate
2. Architectural Plan Set including project scope and details.
3. Planning Commission Application Form
4. Neighbor support letter