



## CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: FEBRUARY 15, 2012

PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: CASE HSPB #33: RECOMMENDATION TO AMEND AN EXISTING CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL TO INCLUDE SITE PARKING AND LANDSCAPE AREAS, LOCATED AT 3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: The Planning Department

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### SUMMARY

Under Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code (Historic Resources), the City Council may designate properties as "Class 1" historic sites. On October 2, 1996, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 18907 designating Palm Springs City Hall a Class 1 Historic Site. The City's Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) has recommended that the Class 1 designation be amended to include the parking lot and landscape areas surrounding the building. The Council will conduct a continued public hearing (from September 22, 2010) and determine if the existing historic designation should be amended. Notification of this hearing was published and mailed on January 5, 2012.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt Resolution No. \_\_\_\_: "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA AMENDING THE CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF THE PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL TO INCLUDE THE CONCRETE PLAZA IMMEDIATELY FRONTING THE MAIN AND COUNCIL CHAMBER ENTRANCES AT 3200 TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY".

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Historic Site Preservation Board has initiated an amendment to the existing Class 1 designation for City Hall to expand the designation to include the parking and landscape areas surrounding the City Hall building. No other changes to the existing designation are proposed. If adopted by the City Council, such amendment would:

ITEM NO. 1A

1. Place the entire property (as opposed to only the City Hall building) under the provisions of Municipal Code Section 8.05 (Historic Preservation).
2. Require the City Council to forward any proposed changes to the parking lot or landscaping to the HSPB for review.

A full project description, historic assessment report and Staff's findings and recommendations can be found in the attached staff report to the Historic Site Preservation Board dated April 13, 2009.

## **PRIOR ACTIONS**

On September 10, 1996, the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) conducted a public hearing unanimously recommended to the City Council designation of the Palm Springs City Hall as a Historic Site, Class 1.

On October 2, 1996, the City Council conducted a public hearing and unanimously approved the Palm Springs City Hall as a Historic Site, Class 1. The Council resolution included the following language:

*"Section 4. No permits for the exterior alteration to the...Palm Springs City Hall...shall be granted without prior approval of the Historic Site Preservation Board and / or the City Council, pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; approved alterations shall maintain the historic architectural integrity of the building."*

On March 9, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board initiated an amendment to the approved historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to expand the designation to include the site's landscape and parking area. The HSPB also adopted a 120-day Stay of Demolition on the landscape and parking areas.

On May 11, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing and voted 7-0 to recommend amendment of the Class One historic designation of City Hall to include the entire site.

## **BACKGROUND AND SETTING**

The Palm Spring City Hall was construction in the 1950's (with subsequent additions) during the mid-century modern architectural wave that swept through the desert at that time. Among the best-known architects of that era, Albert Frey with then-partners John Porter Clark and Robson C. Chambers undertook the design of the City's government center. The architectural features and merits of the building are described below.

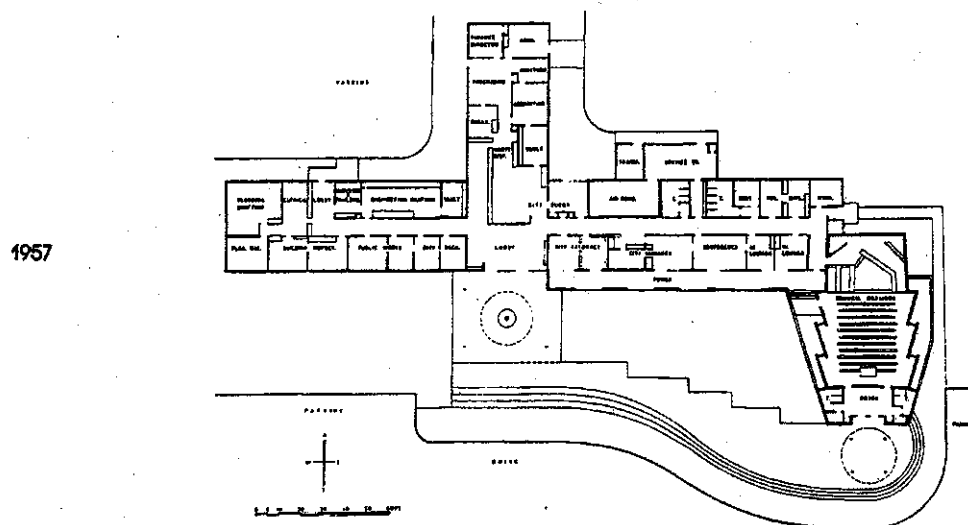
The site is located at the northwest corner of the eastern terminus Tahquitz Canyon Way at El Cielo Road. City Hall, the Police and County government buildings to the south and the Palm Springs International Airport to the east define this part of the City as the community's government center. Certain common features define all these

facilities, including low-rise buildings, significant street setbacks, parking lots in front of the buildings and predominantly low landscaping, usually in the form of lawns.

## ANALYSIS

In the October 2, 1996 staff report to the City Council, the Palm Springs City Hall was included with several other Albert Frey structures as recommended for designation as historic sites, Class 1. The report cited Joseph Rosa's, Albert Frey, Architect (1990; Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.) for much of the information used to analyze the property's architectural and historic importance. However, no specific mention is made of the building's relationship to the site or site conditions (lot size, shape, setbacks, etc.) nor is there a discussion of the design of the parking lot and landscape areas. The record is silent regarding any design or historic significance associated with the grounds of the City Hall complex.

In Mr. Rosa's book, a site plan for City Hall is reproduced, but only the cement plinth in front of the building is included:



PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL, PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

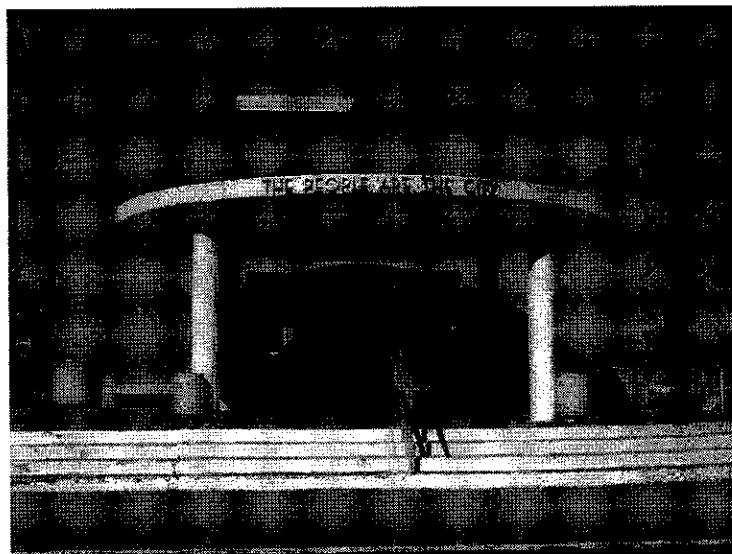
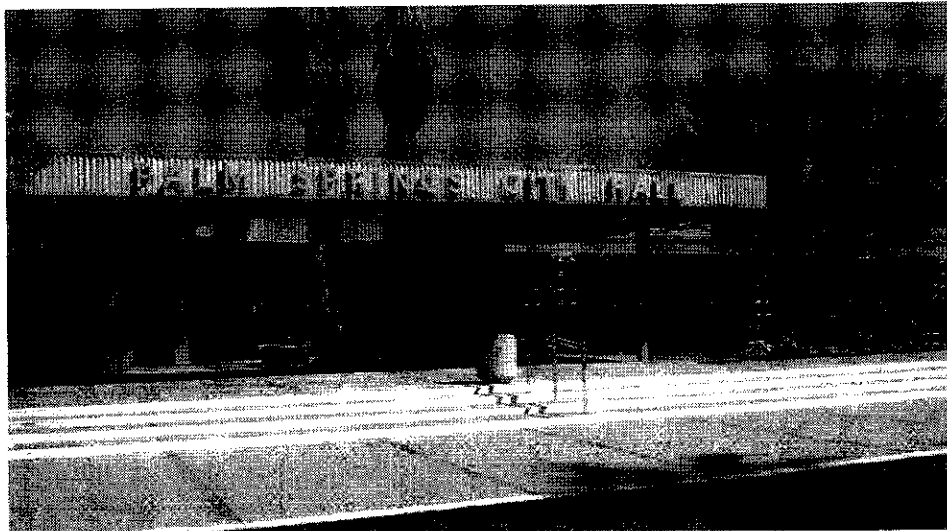
Staff has also investigated the possibility that famed landscape architect Garrett Eckbo may have designed the landscaping for the site. However, a review of the Eckbo archives at the University of California has revealed no drawings, prints or manuscripts for the property. The archives include photos of the site, but there is no evidence to indicate that Mr. Eckbo had any involvement in the design of the site's landscaping. Based on the record, there does not appear to be any acknowledged architectural or historic significance to either the parking lots or landscape areas surrounding the building.

Staff notes that absent any specific information, it may still be possible to ascribe significance based on site conditions and features. Public comment has been received

to suggest that the parking lot's layout provides certain unobstructed views of the City Hall building from Tahquitz Canyon Way. According to this argument, any revision that would allow cars to park where they are currently not parking would inhibit the views of the historic building. There is some merit to this argument if there can be found historic significance to the open views of the site.

One example of such significance can be found in how the building is set on its base. The low-rise building that reflects the mid-century modern ethic includes the concrete base – or “plinth” – that has long been a characteristic of important buildings. Government buildings, churches, banks were classically placed on massive foundations that included a long series of steps from the ground level to the entry:

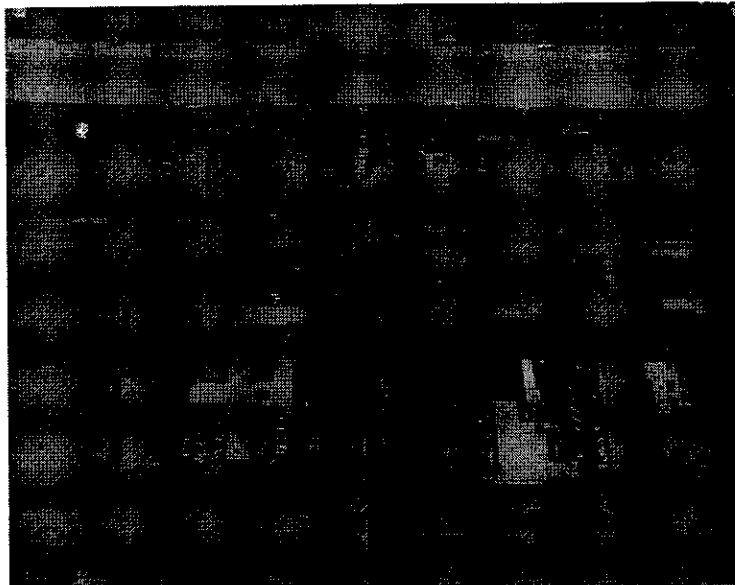
The low-rise nature of Palm Springs City Hall compressed the plinth to a flat concrete base with only a few steps:



This concrete element is not protected by the current designation, but is an important element in setting the scale of the building within the meaning of a government facility.

Whether it is important to view the building and base from off-site is a separate issue. Government buildings are often located and designed to be prominently viewed from surrounding areas. It is more difficult to achieve such prominence with a low-rise building on a flat lot; however, the placement of parking to the sides of the main City Hall entries, as well as the use of an unadorned lawn provides an open view of the building from the street. Staff recognizes these elements as design choices, but it is not clear whether they rise to the level of "historic".

During the time of the building's initial construction, the development of the Tahquitz / El Cielo area was generally devoid of significant landscape or other features and the buildings sat in a fairly open and unobstructed landscape:



However, other features were soon introduced, including a fountain at the airport, statuary on several sites and trees throughout the area, which combined to interrupt the originally unimpeded views. Consequently, it does not appear that the City ever considered the open and visible look of City Hall or other public buildings to be of singular importance. Monuments, statues, other decorative elements and trees were placed in front of the low-rise buildings; these created a more complicated setting and demonstrated that more than views of the building were important to the community.

## **REQUIRED FINDINGS**

As noted above in Background and Setting, Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site: *"An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or*

*significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect*". Seven other qualities are listed therein:

- (1) That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or
- (2) That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or
- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or
- (4) That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or
- (5) That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or
- (6) That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (7) That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

In review of the records and photographs, staff believes that several of the findings can be made to extend the historic designation to include the concrete steps and walkway in front of the building. This plinth element embodies the distinctive characteristics of the mid-century modern style, as applied to a public building (finding no. 4) and appears to be part of Albert Frey's design plan for the property (finding no. 5).

While the parking lot and some of the landscaping are also part of the original design, the record fails to demonstrate that they represent part of the deliberate or historic design scheme of the City Hall building. Further, staff does not recommend extending historic designation for the parking lot and landscaping on the basis of protecting views from off site; such off-site views do not appear to be a historic element of the site.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the above analysis, staff recommends that the Board recommend to City Council the amendment of the Class 1 historic designation for the Palm Springs City Hall to include the concrete steps and entry plaza in front of the main entrance and Council Chambers.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

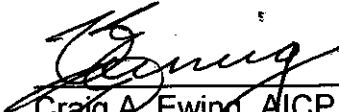
In accordance with Section 15331 (Historical Resources Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed amendment is categorically exempt from environmental review as the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource.

## NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within four hundred (400) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation.

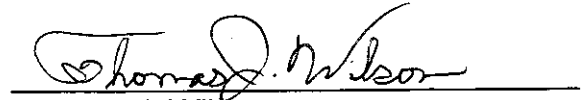
## FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.



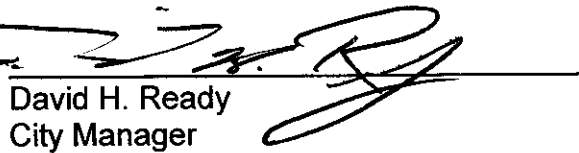
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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services



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Thomas J. Wilson  
Assistant City Manager, Dev't Svcs



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David H. Ready  
City Manager

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft City Council Resolution
3. Resolution #33A of the HSPB
4. HSPB Staff Reports and Meeting Minutes (excerpt) of March 9, April 13, and May 11, 2010
5. Related HSPB exhibits
6. City Council Resolution No. 18907



# City of Palm Springs

Office of the City Clerk

3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way • Palm Springs, CA 92262

Tel: (760) 323-8204 • Fax: (760) 322-8332 • TDD: (760) 864-9527 • Web: www.palmspringsca.gov

## NOTICE OF CONTINUANCE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Meeting of January 18, 2012, Item No. 1.A.

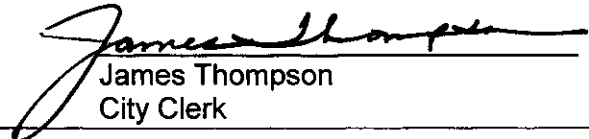
**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL TO DENY THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD'S REQUEST TO INCLUDE SITE PARKING AND LANDSCAPE AREAS, AND AMENDING THE DESIGNATION TO INCLUDE THE CONCRETE PLAZA, LOCATED AT 3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE (HSPB 33)**

The City Council of the City of Palm Springs continued the hearing to Wednesday, February 15, 2012, Council Chamber, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, at 6:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as possible.

### AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

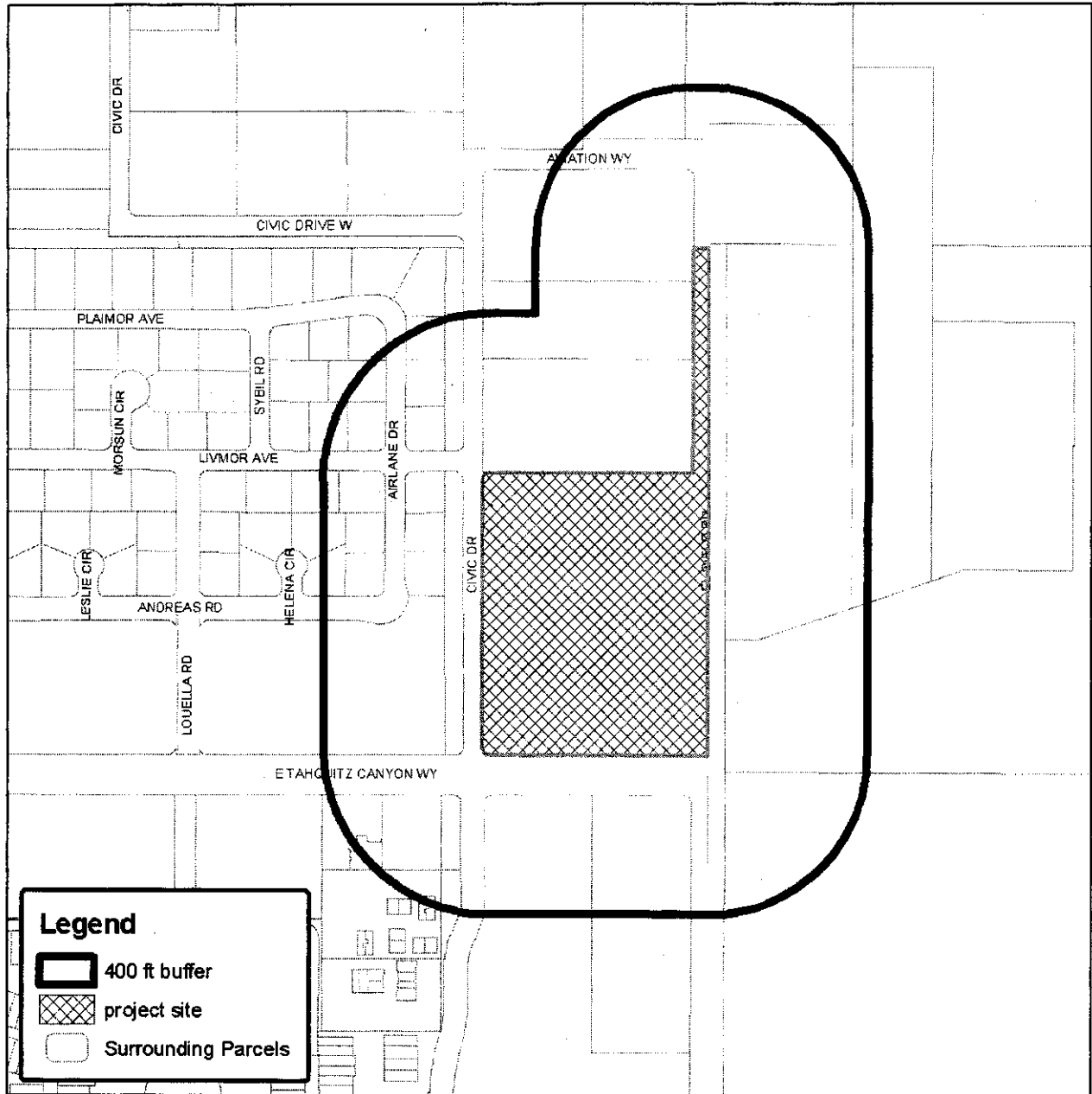
State of California )  
County of Riverside ) ss.  
City of Palm Springs )

I, James Thompson, City Clerk of the City of Palm Springs, California, certify this Notice of Continuance was posted at or before 6:00 p.m., January 19, 2012, as required by established policies and procedures.




  
James Thompson  
City Clerk



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



**Legend**

-  400 ft buffer
-  project site
-  Surrounding Parcels

## CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

**CASE NO:** HSPB - 33

**APPLICANT:** City of Palm Springs  
Historic Site Preservation Board

**DESCRIPTION:** Amend the Palm Springs City Hall Class 1 Historic designation (Case No. HSPB 33) to include the City Hall site including landscape and parking areas.

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING THE EXISTING HISTORIC CLASS 1 DESIGNATION FOR PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL, 3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, TO INCLUDE THE CONCRETE STEPS AND PLAZA AREA IN FRONT OF THE MAIN (SOUTH) ELEVATION

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites; and

WHEREAS, ON October 2, 1996, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 18907 adopting a historic designation, Class 1 for the Palm Springs City Hall building, but excluding the site and grounds; and

WHEREAS, on May 11, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law and voted to recommend amending the existing Class 1 historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to include the entire site in the historic designation; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the steps and plaza fronting the Palm Springs City Hall shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the steps and plaza fronting the Palm Springs City Hall shall promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report, application and historical research, all written and oral testimony presented, and notes the following:

1. That the concrete area in front of the main entries to the Palm Springs City Hall embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because the steps and plaza, as a base or "plinth", reconcile the distinctive characteristics of the mid-century modern style with the traditional design of a public building.
2. That the concrete area in front of the main entries to the Palm Springs City Hall presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; because the steps and plaza appear to be part of Albert Frey's design plan for the property; the life and work of Albert Frey has been well-documented; and his work is recognized world-wide as significant toward the development of the modern

movements of architecture, especially as he adapted such styles and movements to the local environment.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The Class 1 historic designation for the Palm Springs City Hall is hereby amended to include the concrete steps and plaza in front of the main (south) entries of the building, subject to the following conditions;

1. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall require Architectural Approval pursuant to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Ordinance.
2. No permit for the alteration of the building exterior or the steps or entry plaza fronting the main (south) building entries, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics shall be issued without prior approval by the Historic Site Preservation Board.
3. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
4. All existing or previously approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

ADOPTED THIS xxTH DAY OF MONTH, YEAR.

\_\_\_\_\_  
David H. Ready, City Manager

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Thompson, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE ) ss.  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS )

I, JAMES THOMPSON, City Clerk of the City of Palm Springs, hereby

certify that Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_ is a full, true and correct copy, and was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs on \_\_\_\_\_, by the following vote:

AYES:  
NOES:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Thompson, City Clerk  
City of Palm Springs, California

RESOLUTION NO. 33-A

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL AMEND THE EXISTING HISTORIC CLASS I DESIGNATION FOR PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL, 3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE SITE OF THE PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL.

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites; and

WHEREAS, ON October 2, 1996, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 18907 adopting a historic designation, Class I for the Palm Springs City Hall building, without specifically including the entire site and grounds, and

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board, by a vote of 7 to 0, initiated an application to amend the existing historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to consider including the entire site; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the Palm Springs City Hall site as a Class I historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and ,

WHEREAS, on April 13 and May 11, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider amending the existing Class I historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to specifically include the entire site; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the site of the Palm Springs City Hall shall further the purpose and, intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Palm Springs City Hall site shall promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report, application and historical research, all written and oral testimony presented, and notes the following:

1. The site of the Palm Springs City Hall provides an important element as the setting of the building within the meaning of a government facility.

2. The site design is a part of the original plan of the Clark, Frey, Chambers Williams and Williams design of the City Hall.

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

Finding 1: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community, as the city expanded from the downtown core to the east to create a new government complex, and

Finding 3: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; because the city was among the first to develop an entire civic complex in a non-traditional style, and

Finding 4: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or, method of construction; because the building and its site are component of the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary architectural interpretation of civic center buildings.

Finding 5: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value because the steps and plaza appear to be part of Clark, Frey, Chambers, Williams and Williams design plan for the property; the life and work of Albert Frey has been well-documented; and his work is recognized world-wide as significant in the development of the modern movements of architecture as he adapted such styles and movements to the local environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council amend the Class I historic designation for the Palm Springs City Hall to include the entire site subject to the following conditions:

1. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall require Architectural Approval pursuant to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Ordinance.
2. No permit for the alteration of the building exterior or site, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics shall be issued without prior approval by the Historic Site Preservation Board. .
3. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
4. All existing or previously approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

ADOPTED this 11<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2010

AYES: DeLeeuw, Grattan, Ploss, Strahl, Williams, Marshall, Gilmer  
NOES: none  
ABSENT: none  
ABSTENTIONS: none

ATTEST: CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- 6A. Case HSPB 33 (*Palm Springs City Hall*) – An application by the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board to amend the designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to include the City Hall site as a Class 1 historic site at 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Zone CC, Section 13.

Director Ewing summarized the staff report. Chair Gilmer reviewed his own memo previously e-mailed to the Board and offered his arguments for designation of the entire site. The Board discussed the request.

Chair Gilmer opened the public hearing. John Tymon spoke in favor of designating the entire site. No other speakers came forward, and Chair Gilmer closed the public hearing.

Board member Grattan confirmed that the parking lot modifications currently under review would not be 'grandfathered' under the draft condition that allows all previously-approved alterations.

M/S/C (Ploss / DeLeeuw, 7-0) To approve the draft resolution prepared by Chair Gilmer to recommend amendment of the Class One historic designation of City Hall to include the entire site, subject to the following amendments:

1. The architects of record be listed as Clark, Frey, Chambers, Williams and Williams, and
2. The hearing dates of both April 13 and May 11, 2010 be listed.

7. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST(S):

- 7A. Case HSPB 3 (*Welwood Murray Library*) – An application by the City of Palm Springs to remodel and expand the existing public library at 100 S. Palm Canyon Drive, a Class One historic site, Zone C-B-D, Section 15. (CE)

Assistant Planner Mlaker presented the staff report, including staff's recommendation to approve the request. Speakers on behalf of the applicant included Ana Escalante, Alex Meyerhoff, Barbara Roberts (City Librarian) and Al Smoot, project manager. The Board discussed a number of issues:

- use and design of the outdoor plaza, including public access and landscaping
- design of the addition, including relationship to the building, its historic elements, scale, materials and color
- use of the site and plaza in relation to adjacent buildings and development
- accessibility to the site and availability of restrooms to the community room
- placement and use of interior furnishings



## Historic Site Preservation Board Memo

Date: May 11, 2010

Case No.: HSPB – 33, Amendment; City Hall

Application Type: Amendment to Historic Designation

Location: 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way


Applicant: Historic Site Preservation Board

Property Owner: City of Palm Springs

Zone: C. C. (Civic Center District)

General Plan: Public / Quasi-Public

APN: 502-150-005

From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services 

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On April 13, 2010, by a vote of 5-0-2 (Marshall and Williams absent) the Historic Site Preservation Board continued the public hearing on the above application to its May meeting. The continuance was granted in part at the request of Vice Chair Marshall, as well as to provide for additional research and opportunity for public comment.

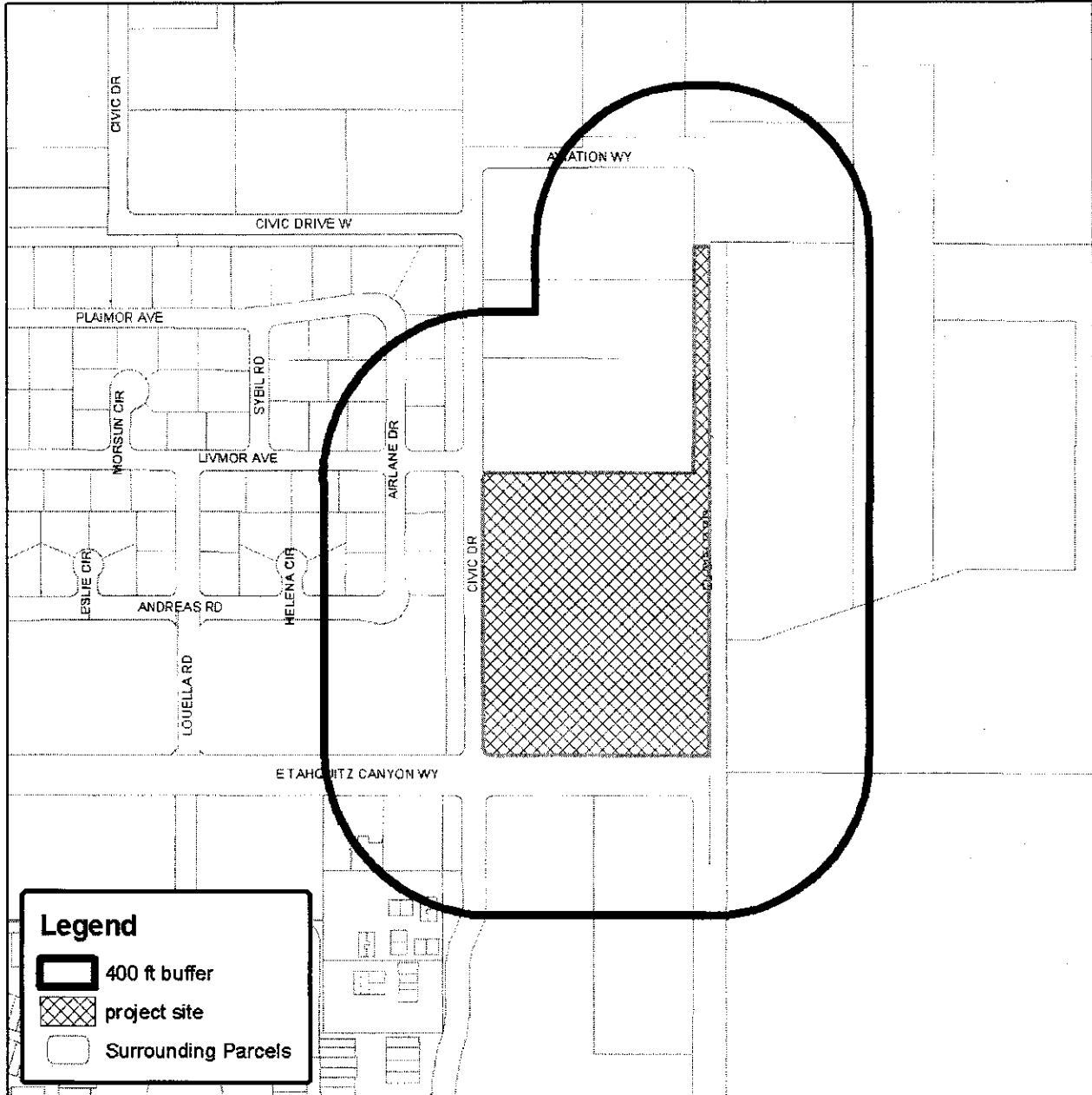
As of the writing of this memo, no new research information has been submitted to the City. Consequently, there is no additional analysis to provide the Board, and staff continues to recommend that the Board recommend to the City Council amendment of the Class 1 historic designation of the City Hall to include the concrete steps and entry plaza in front of the main entrance and Council Chambers.

### ATTACHMENTS




1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Staff Report, April 13, 2010
4. Draft Meeting Minutes, April 13, 2010 (excerpt)



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



**Legend**

-  400 ft buffer
-  project site
-  Surrounding Parcels

## CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

**CASE NO:** HSPB - 33

**APPLICANT:** City of Palm Springs  
Historic Site Preservation Board

**DESCRIPTION:** Amend the Palm Springs City Hall Class 1 Historic designation (Case No. HSPB 33) to include the City Hall site including landscape and parking areas.

RESOLUTION NO. 33-A

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD  
OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,  
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL  
AMEND THE EXISTING HISTORIC CLASS 1  
DESIGNATION FOR PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL,  
3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, TO INCLUDE  
THE CONCRETE STEPS AND PLAZA AREA IN  
FRONT OF THE MAIN (SOUTH) ELEVATION

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites; and

WHEREAS, ON October 2, 1996, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 18907 adopting a historic designation, Class 1 for the Palm Springs City Hall building, but excluding the site and grounds; and

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board, by a vote of 7 to 0, initiated an application to amend the existing historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to consider including the site; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the Palm Springs International Airport's west façade a Class 1 historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider amending the existing Class 1 historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the steps and plaza fronting the Palm Springs City Hall shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the steps and plaza fronting the Palm Springs City Hall shall promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report, application and historical research, all written and oral testimony presented, and notes the following:

1. The steps and plaza fronting the main (south) entries of the Palm Springs City Hall provide an important element in setting the scale of the building within the meaning of a government facility .
2. The steps and plaza appear to be part of the original plan of the Albert Frey design of the City Hall.

**THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:**

Section 1: That the concrete area in front of the main entries to the Palm Springs City Hall embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because the steps and plaza, as a base or "plinth", reconcile the distinctive characteristics of the mid-century modern style with the traditional design of a public building

Section 2: That the concrete area in front of the main entries to the Palm Springs City Hall presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; because the steps and plaza appear to be part of Albert Frey's design plan for the property; the life and work of Albert Frey has been well-documented; and his work is recognized world-wide as significant toward the development of the modern movements of architecture, especially as he adapted such styles and movements to the local environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council amend the Class 1 historic designation for the Palm Springs City Hall to include the concrete steps and plaza in front of the main (south) entries of the building, subject to the following conditions;

1. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall require Architectural Approval pursuant to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Ordinance.
2. No permit for the alteration of the building exterior or the steps or entry plaza fronting the main (south) building entries, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics shall be issued without prior approval by the Historic Site Preservation Board.
3. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
4. All existing or previously approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

ADOPTED this 13th day of April, 2010.

AYES:

NOES:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

**Craig Ewing**

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**From:** Barbara Marshall [atomicbee57@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 08, 2010 5:39 PM  
**To:** John@johngilmer.com; Craig Ewing  
**Subject:** HSPB 13 Apr Agenda

Hi Craig and John,

I would very much like to participate in the discussion on agenda item 6B, HSPB-33 Amendment; City Hall, and respectfully request that the item be pulled from the 13 Apr agenda and rescheduled for discussion at the May HSPB meeting.

Cheers,  
Barbara

including if disclosure of the pending HSPB decision was provided to prospective buyers and the improved conditions at the site.

M/S/C (Strahl / Grattan, 4-1, opposed Ploss, 2 absent Marshall and Williams)  
To continue the item for 60 days.

Staff noted that the item would be returned to the Board at its meeting of June 8, 2010.

M/S/C (DeLeeu / Ploss, 5-0, 2 absent Marshall and Williams) To re-open Public Comments

Chair Gilmer invited any public comments, especially on the above item.

Frank Tysen, 175 S. Cahuilla Road, reported that the gate between the Community Church and the Orchid Tree is not secure and that the fence netting is not being maintained. He has met the new owners and was impressed with their level of interest in the property. Mr. Tysen also reported on the economic importance of preserving smaller historic hotels.

~~No other speakers came forward, and Chair Gilmer closed the Public Comments.~~

→ 6B. Case HSPB 33 (*Palm Springs City Hall*) – An application by the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board to amend the designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to include the City Hall site as a Class 1 historic site at 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Zone CC, Section 13.

Director Ewing presented the staff report and noted the request from Vice Chair Marshall to continue the item. The Board asked about past landscaping in front of the site.

Chair Gilmer opened the public hearing.

No speakers came forward, and Chair Gilmer continued the public hearing.

The Board discussed continuance of the item, including the practice of granting Board member continuance requests, the ability to conduct more research into the archives, the timing of related parking lot improvement plans and the potential for receiving additional public testimony.

M/S/C (Strahl / DeLeeuw, 5-0, 2 absent Marshall and Williams) To continue the matter to the next meeting.

~~7. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST(S):~~

7A. Case SP 09-001 AMND / HSPB 27 (*El Paseo Building*) - A request by property owner to revise existing building sign program to include one eight

# MEMO REGARDING EXTENDING THE HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION OF PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL (HSPB 33) TO INCLUDE THE CITY HALL SITE

Date: April 13, 2010  
Location: 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Property Owner: City of Palm Springs  
Zone: C. C. (Civic Center District)  
General Plan: Public / Quasi-Public  
APN: 502-150-005

A memo to the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) regarding amending the existing historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall at 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way. The proposed amendment would expand the existing designation to include landscape and parking areas. Such amended designation would:

1. Place the entire property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05
2. Require the City to maintain the buildings consistent with that ordinance,

## PRIOR ACTIONS

- On September 10, 1996, the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) conducted a public hearing unanimously recommended to the City Council designation of the Palm Springs City Hall as a Historic Site, Class 1.
- On October 2, 1996, the City Council conducted a public hearing and unanimously approved the Palm Springs City Hall as a Historic Site, Class 1. The Staff Report contained the following language:

*"the recommended Class 1 designation protect the architectural and historic integrity of the sites in that the structures and their sites may not be modified, nor objects removed, without the approval of the City Council; usage may also be limited to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site...The City Council's approval of modifications is delegated to the HSPB by Chapter 8.05 except that appeals of an HSPB decision are heard by Council."*

The Council resolution included the following language:

*“Section 4. No permits for the exterior alteration to the...Palm Springs City Hall...shall be granted without prior approval of the Historic Site Preservation Board and / or the City Council, pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; approved alterations shall maintain the historic architectural integrity of the building.”*  
[NOTE: There is nothing in this language that excludes site protection.]

- On March 9, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board initiated an amendment to the approved historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to reaffirm its intended designation of the entire site including the site's landscape parking lot design. The HSPB also adopted a 120-day Stay of Demolition on the landscape and parking areas.

## **BACKGROUND AND SETTING**

### Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site as follows:

(a) *Historic Site.*

*An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect and:*

- 1. That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or*
- 2. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or*
- 3. That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or .*
- 4. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of Construction; or .*
- 5. That presents the work .of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or*
- 6. That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, or*
- 7. That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

A Class 1 Historic Site may also qualify for historic designation at the federal, state and/or county level.

### Designation of Historic Sites.

The City Council is authorized to designate Historic Sites.

The Historic Site Preservation Board makes recommendations to the City Council that certain sites be designated as Historic Sites in accordance with Section 8.05.135 of the Municipal Code. The Board may initiate studies, surveys and investigations it deems necessary to adequately gather information in consideration of a recommendation.

### Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

According to Section 8.05 of the Municipal Code, the following shall apply to a Class 1 Historic Site;

1. It shall meet the definition of an historic site as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.
2. An archival file shall be maintained on the property by the City.
3. It may be qualified as historic' at the federal, state, and/or county level.
4. The structure/site may not be modified nor objects removed without the approval of the City Council.
5. The use may be limited by the City Council to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site.
6. A plaque explaining the historic nature of the site will be installed at the site.
7. Compliance with all rules and regulations for Historic Sites and Historic Districts under Article IV of Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code shall be required.

### **DESCRIPTION**

The original designation of city Hall as a Class 1 Site was ratified by the City Council on 10/02/96. The Staff Report read as follows: ""The recommended Class 1 designation protects the architectural and historic integrity of the sites in that the structures and their sites may not be modified, nor objects removed, without the approval of the City Council; usage may also be limited to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site. The City Council's approval of modifications is delegated to the HSPB by Chapter 8.05 except that appeals of an HSPB decision are heard by the Council. The Current Planning Director has indicated that the Council's approval of the Class 1 designation deleted the protection for the site and covered only the building. However, no support documentation for this assertion has been forthcoming.

Although it has been widely believed that designation by the City Council included the entire City Hall site, as a precaution, the HSPB has decided to forward an amended nomination to the City Council to reaffirm its intended designation of the entire site, and asked the planning staff to prepare a nomination to that effect. The response from the staff was to modify the request of the HSPB and prepare a resolution that proposed extending the boundaries of the designation to include only that portion of the site that contained the walkway that connects to entrances to the Administration building and the

Council Chambers. The staff based its decision on the fact that in Joseph Rosa's biography of Albert Frey, "no specific mention was made of the building's relationship with the site nor is there a discussion of the design of the parking lot and landscape areas." It should be pointed out that no discussion of the design of the parking lot and landscape areas of any of the illustrated Frey projects is included in the Rosa text.

The Palm Spring City Hall was constructed in 1957 as part of an overall Civic Center project. Palm Springs was one of the first American cities to build an entire civic center in a contemporary style. The site is located at the northwest corner of East Tahquitz Canyon Way at El Cielo Road. City Hall, along with the Police Station and the Riverside County Building to the south and the Palm Springs International Airport to the east, define this part of the City as the community's Civic Center. Certain common features define all these facilities, including low-rise buildings surrounded by setbacks that include low landscaping, usually in the form of lawns, and islands of parking set in the landscape.

City Hall was designed by the architectural firm of Clark, Frey & Chambers.<sup>1</sup> The architectural features and merits of the building are described in Joseph Rosa's *Albert Frey, Architect* (1990; Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.) for much of the information used to analyze the property's architectural and historic importance:

*"When Frey returned from a trip around the world at the end of 1955, he completed the final scheme for one of his most important public buildings, the Palm Springs City Hall (1952-57). While traveling, Frey's interest in the relationship between pure form and function was renewed, and this interest is reflected in the City Hall by the creation of a separate volume for the Council chamber. The main volume of the building is linear and symmetrical, with a wing extending from the rear of the main entrance. To the right is the Council Chamber, which is higher than the rest of the building, as function requirements of the public assembly hall were used to shape the space. All of its perimeter exterior walls are stepped to improve the acoustics and to bring in north light. The entrance to the Council Chamber is more elaborate than the main entrance. A sign above it states "The People Are The City," and it is marked by a poured concrete disc held up by four columns. The disc corresponds to the void left by a circle removed from the rectangular metal plan that marks the main entry. The building is constructed of concrete block in which every two rows are aligned in relation to each other, thereby creating a pattern of squares in elevation."*

In the October 2, 1996 staff report to the City Council, the Palm Springs City Hall was included with five other structures designed by Albert Frey as recommended for designation as Class I Historic Sites.

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<sup>1</sup> (The original structure was designed in collaboration with E. Steward Williams, A/A, and additions (Emergency Operation Center in 1964, New Conference. Rooms in 1972 & Community Development Wing in 1984, designed by Mr. Williams, have been made over the years.)

## **ANALYSIS**

Over the course of his career, Albert Frey was well-known for the siting and the context of his projects. Virtually all of projects were site specific, often incorporating large elements such as boulders already existing on the site into their designs. Other projects, such as the Palm Springs City Hall (which was part of a larger Civic Center master plan) benefitted from his experience with Modernist Master Le Corbusier, where designs were sited as objects in a field of greenery, i.e. objects in space. Although this formalist dates from classical times, and was reinterpreted concept in the siting of Palladio's famous villas, it was Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye of 1928 that informed Frey's work, most notably on the famous freestanding Aluminaire House of 1932 and the Palm Springs City Hall only 23 years later. No landscape architect is credited for the City Hall project, thus reaffirming the master's (Frey's) hand in the site planning that created the building's setting.

It would only be a surprise to a lay person that the first design exam an architect must complete to begin securing his license is the Site Planning exam. It is with the site plan that an architect decides how a building will be designed. The building's relationship with the site is of paramount importance in the resolution of the program and the aesthetics that ultimately decide how a building functions and ultimately how it will appear. With the City Hall design, the building is centered on the site and available for viewing from all sides; the site plan reads almost like an architect's flow diagram with the parking modules placed nearest the functions they serve; on the east is the parking for the public attending hearings in the Council Chambers; on the west is parking reserved for visitors headed to City Hall's administrative entrance. These two areas are connected by an elegantly curving roadway, resulting in a view of the building that is essentially unobstructed.

Clark, Frey & Chambers used sophisticated architectural devices of centering and re-centering on the facade of City Hall to express the functions within. The main block of City Hall is symmetrical in plan about its central axis – the main entry. The addition of the bris-soleil to facade and the raised plinth of three steps to the east links the main entrance with its square canopy and circular void, to the Council Chamber entrance, with its circular canopy which is the positive of the main entries void. This creates a central element with the two entrances flanking it and balancing each other. This gives prominence to this portion of the building, which not coincidentally houses the mayor's offices. In much the same way, the central panel of open lawn, allowing unobstructed views of the two entrances and the central linking element, refocuses the eye to this central element and the two entrances. The building and site are in stasis. The setting reinforces this concept with its tripartite layout of object (parking), void (lawn), object (parking). The two parking lots are carefully placed objects, aligning with the edges of the central building composition, highlighting the important elements of the building and serving an integral role in the reading of the building. The original design of the landscaping (from early aerial photographs) had a strip of desert landscaping running

between the parking and vehicular access and the front of the building from street to street. This should be taken into account in any future landscaping of the site, as it served to further define the central panel of lawn in front of City Hall as 'special'.

Public buildings are particularly important examples of properties where the landscape, and especially the open space surrounding the building, adds to the significance or setting of the property. Setting is the physical environment of an historic property; it refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historic role. It involves how, not just where, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property is built and the factions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences. The setting includes the placement or arrangement of buildings and other resources on their sites. With public buildings, it is especially important that the historic appearance and land uses, including landscape features, and vegetation that characterized the property during the period of significance including gardens, walls, roadways, grading, fountains, open space be maintained.

In Palm Springs' Civic Center, these features and their relationships should be valued as part of the original civic center design, not only within the exact boundaries of the City Hall property, but also between that property and its surroundings including the relationships between the other buildings, features and open space that comprise the Civic Center complex.

Based on this understanding, the importance of the architectural and historic significance of the site plan the parking lots or landscape areas surrounding the building must be acknowledged.

## REQUIRED FINDINGS

As noted above in Background and Setting, Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site: *"An historic site is any real property such as a building, a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements, an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect.* Seven findings are listed therein:

- (1) That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or
- (2) That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state, or local history; or
- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or

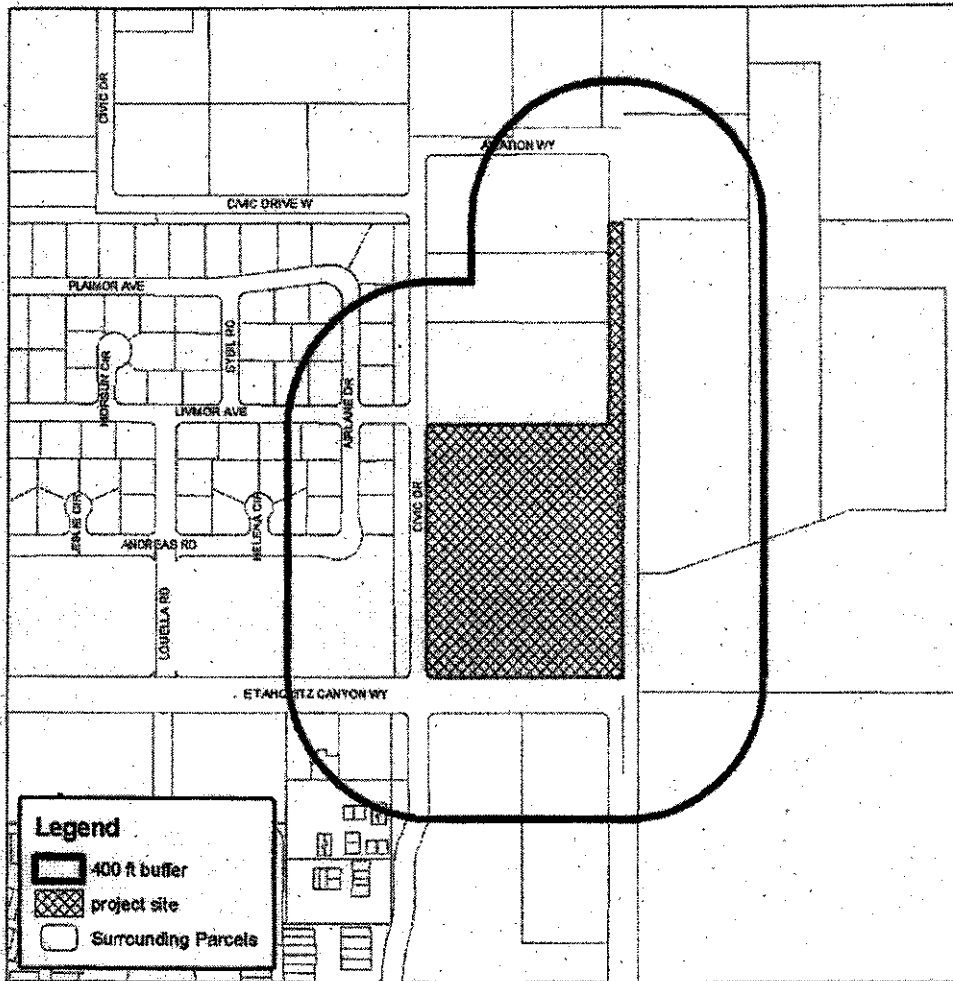
- (4) That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or, method of construction; or
- (5) That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or
- (6) That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (7) That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

I would ask that the Board consider these points in its discussion of the potential amendment to City Hall Historic Site Designation to clarify the inclusion of it's site.

One potential Draft Resolution is attached for the Board's consideration.



**Department of Planning Services  
Vicinity Map**



**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS**

**CASE NO:** · HSPB - 33

**APPLICANT:** City of Palm Springs  
Historic Site Preservation Board

**DESCRIPTION:** Amend the Palm Springs City Hall Class 1 Historic designation (Case No. HSPB 33) to include the City Hall site including landscape and parking areas.

RESOLUTION NO. 33-A

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL AMEND THE EXISTING HISTORIC CLASS I DESIGNATION FOR PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL, 3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, TO INCLUDE THE ENTIRE SITE OF THE PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL.

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites; and

WHEREAS, ON October 2, 1996, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 18907 adopting a historic designation, Class I for the Palm Springs City Hall building, without specifically including the entire site and grounds, and

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board, by a vote of 7 to 0, initiated an application to amend the existing historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to consider including the entire site; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the Palm Springs City Hall site as a Class I historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2010, <sup>and May 11, 2010</sup> the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider amending the existing Class I historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to specifically include the entire site; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the site of the Palm Springs City Hall shall further the purpose and, intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Palm Springs City Hall site shall promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report, application and historical research, all written and oral testimony presented, and notes the following:

1. The site of the Palm Springs City Hall provides an important element as the setting of the building within the meaning of a government facility.
2. The site design is a part of the original plan of the Clark, Frey & Chambers design of the City Hall.

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

Finding 1: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community, as the city expanded from the downtown core to the east to create a new government complex, and

Finding 3: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; because the city was among the first to develop an entire civic complex in a non-traditional style, and

Finding 4: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or, method of construction; because the building and its site are component of the distinctive characteristics of the contemporary architectural interpretation of civic center buildings.

Finding 5: That the Palm Springs City Hall and site presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value because the steps and plaza appear to be part of Clark, Frey & Chambers design plan for the property; the life and work of Albert Frey has been well-documented; and his work is recognized world-wide as significant in the development of the modern movements of architecture as he adapted such styles and movements to the local environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council amend the Class I historic designation for the Palm Springs City Hall to include the entire site subject to the following conditions:

1. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall require Architectural Approval pursuant to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Ordinance.

2. No permit for the alteration of the building exterior or site, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics shall be issued without prior approval by the Historic Site Preservation Board.
3. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
4. All existing or previously approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

ADOPTED this \_\_\_ day of May, 2010

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,

1. 關於... 2. 關於... 3. 關於... 4. 關於... 5. 關於... 6. 關於... 7. 關於... 8. 關於... 9. 關於... 10. 關於... 11. 關於... 12. 關於... 13. 關於... 14. 關於... 15. 關於... 16. 關於... 17. 關於... 18. 關於... 19. 關於... 20. 關於... 21. 關於... 22. 關於... 23. 關於... 24. 關於... 25. 關於... 26. 關於... 27. 關於... 28. 關於... 29. 關於... 30. 關於... 31. 關於... 32. 關於... 33. 關於... 34. 關於... 35. 關於... 36. 關於... 37. 關於... 38. 關於... 39. 關於... 40. 關於... 41. 關於... 42. 關於... 43. 關於... 44. 關於... 45. 關於... 46. 關於... 47. 關於... 48. 關於... 49. 關於... 50. 關於... 51. 關於... 52. 關於... 53. 關於... 54. 關於... 55. 關於... 56. 關於... 57. 關於... 58. 關於... 59. 關於... 60. 關於... 61. 關於... 62. 關於... 63. 關於... 64. 關於... 65. 關於... 66. 關於... 67. 關於... 68. 關於... 69. 關於... 70. 關於... 71. 關於... 72. 關於... 73. 關於... 74. 關於... 75. 關於... 76. 關於... 77. 關於... 78. 關於... 79. 關於... 80. 關於... 81. 關於... 82. 關於... 83. 關於... 84. 關於... 85. 關於... 86. 關於... 87. 關於... 88. 關於... 89. 關於... 90. 關於... 91. 關於... 92. 關於... 93. 關於... 94. 關於... 95. 關於... 96. 關於... 97. 關於... 98. 關於... 99. 關於... 100. 關於...



## Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: April 13, 2010

Case No.: HSPB – 33, Amendment; City Hall

Application Type: Amendment to Historic Designation

Location: 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way

Applicant: Historic Site Preservation Board

Property Owner: City of Palm Springs

Zone: C. C. (Civic Center District)

General Plan: Public / Quasi-Public

APN: 502-150-005

From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services

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### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

An application by the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) to amend the existing historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall at 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way. The proposed amendment would expand the existing designation to include landscape and parking areas. Such amended designation would:

1. Place the entire property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05
2. Require the City to maintain the buildings consistent with that ordinance,

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) recommends approval to the City Council amending the historic designation of the City Hall to include the site's landscape and parking areas. A draft resolution is attached for consideration.

## PRIOR ACTIONS

- On September 10, 1996, the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) conducted a public hearing unanimously recommended to the City Council designation of the Palm Springs City Hall as a Historic Site, Class 1.
- On October 2, 1996, the City Council conducted a public hearing and unanimously approved the Palm Springs City Hall as a Historic Site, Class 1. The Council resolution included the following language:

*“Section 4. No permits for the exterior alteration to the...Palm Springs City Hall...shall be granted without prior approval of the Historic Site Preservation Board and / or the City Council, pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; approved alterations shall maintain the historic architectural integrity of the building.”*

- On March 9, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board initiated an amendment to the approved historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to expand the designation to include the site's landscape and parking area. The HSPB also adopted a 120-day Stay of Demolition on the landscape and parking areas.

## BACKGROUND AND SETTING

### Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site as follows;

(a) *Historic Site.*

*An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect and:*

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- 2. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or*
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A Class 1 Historic Site may also qualify for historic designation at the federal, state and/or county level.

Designation of Historic Sites.

The City Council is authorized to designate Historic Sites.

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Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

According to Section 8.05 of the Municipal Code, the following shall apply to a Class 1 Historic Site;

1. It shall meet the definition of an historic site as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.
2. An archival file shall be maintained on the property by the City.
3. It may be qualified as 'historic' at the federal, state, and/or county level.
4. The structure/site may not be modified nor objects removed without the approval of the City Council.
5. The use may be limited by the City Council to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site.
6. A plaque explaining the historic nature of the site will be installed at the site.
7. Compliance with all rules and regulations for Historic Sites and Historic Districts under Article IV of Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code shall be required.

**DESCRIPTION**

The Palm Spring City Hall was construction in the 1950's (with subsequent additions) during the mid-century modern architectural wave that swept through the desert at that time. Among the best-known architects of that era, Albert Frey with then-partners John Porter Clark and Robson C. Chambers undertook the design of the City's government center. The architectural features and merits of the building are described below.

The site is located at the northwest corner of the eastern terminus Tahquitz Canyon Way at El Cielo Road. City Hall, the Police and County government buildings to the south and the Palm Springs International Airport to the east define this part of the City as the community's government center. Certain common features define all these facilities, including low-rise buildings, significant street setbacks, parking lots in front of the buildings and predominantly low landscaping, usually in the form of lawns.

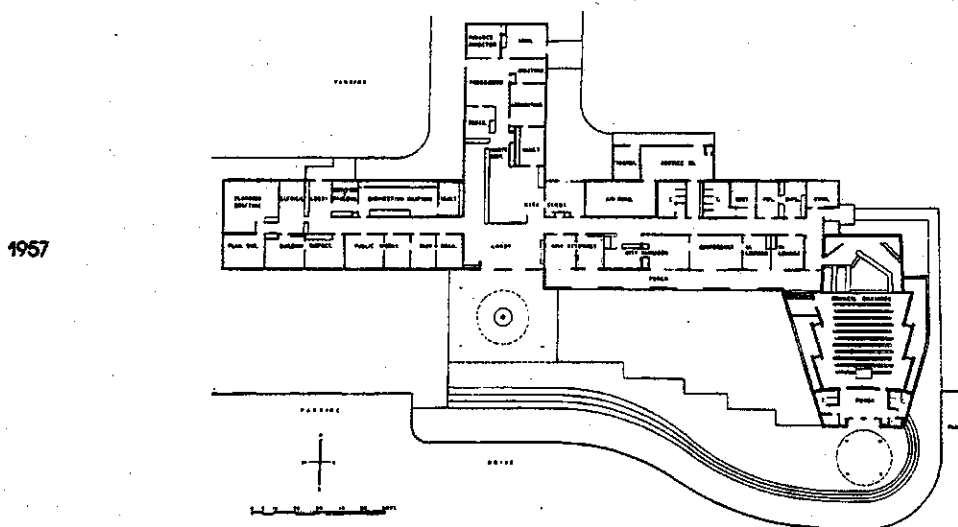
In the October 2, 1996 staff report to the City Council, the Palm Springs City Hall was included with several other Albert Frey structures as recommended for designation as historic sites, Class 1. The report cited Joseph Rosa's, Albert Frey, Architect (1990; Rizzoli International Publications, Inc.) for much of the information used to analyze the property's architectural and historic importance:

*"When Frey returned from a trip around the world at the end of 1955, he completed the final scheme for one of his most important public building, the Palm Springs City Hall (1952-57). While traveling, Frey's interest in the relationship between pure form and function was renewed, and this interest is reflected in the City Hall by the creation of a separate volume for the Council chamber. The main volume of the building is linear and symmetrical, with a wing extending from the rear of the main entrance. To the right is the Council Chamber, which is higher than the rest of the building, as function requirements of the public assembly hall were used to shape the space. All of its perimeter exterior walls are stepped to improve the acoustics and to bring in north light. The entrance to the council Chamber is more elaborate than the main entrance. A sign above it states "The People Are The City," and it is marked by a poured concrete disc held up by four columns. The disc corresponds to the void left by a circle removed from the rectangular metal plan that marks the main entry. The building is construction of concrete blocks in which every two rows are aligned in relation to each other, thereby creating a pattern of squares in elevation. (The original structure was designed in collaboration with E. Steward Williams, AIA, and additions (Emergency Operation Center in 1964, New Conference Rooms in 1972 & Community Development Wing in 1984, designed by Mr. Williams, have been made over the years.)*

No specific mention is made of the building's relationship to the site or site conditions (lot size, shape, setbacks, etc.) nor is there a discussion of the design of the parking lot and landscape areas. The record is silent regarding any design or historic significance associated with the grounds of the City Hall complex.

## ANALYSIS

In Mr. Rosa's book, a site plan for City Hall is reproduced, but only the cement plinth in front of the building is included:

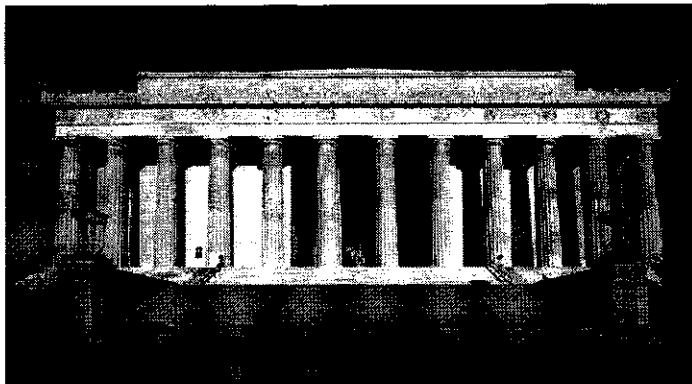


PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL, PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Based on the record, there does not appear to be any acknowledged architectural or historic significance to either the parking lots or landscape areas surrounding the building.

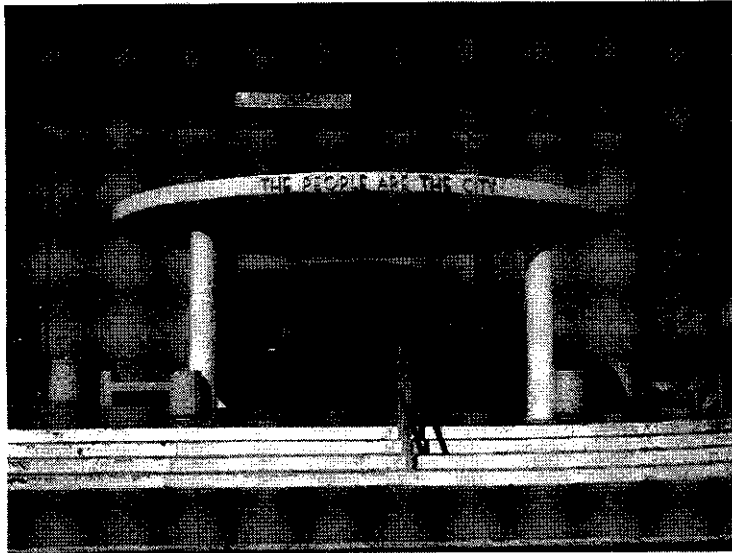
Staff notes that absent any specific information, it may still be possible to ascribe significance based on site conditions and features. Public comment has been received to suggest that the parking lot's layout provides certain unobstructed views of the City Hall building from Tahquitz Canyon Way. According to this argument, any revision that would allow cars to park where they are currently not parking would inhibit the views of the historic building. There is some merit to this argument if there can be found historic significance to the open views of the site.

One example of such significance can be found in how the building is set on its base. The low-rise building that reflects the mid-century modern ethic includes the concrete base – or “plinth” – that has long been a characteristic of important buildings. Government buildings, churches, banks were classically placed on massive foundations that included a long series of steps from the ground level to the entry:



The low-rise nature of Palm Springs City Hall compressed the plinth to a flat concrete base with only a few steps:

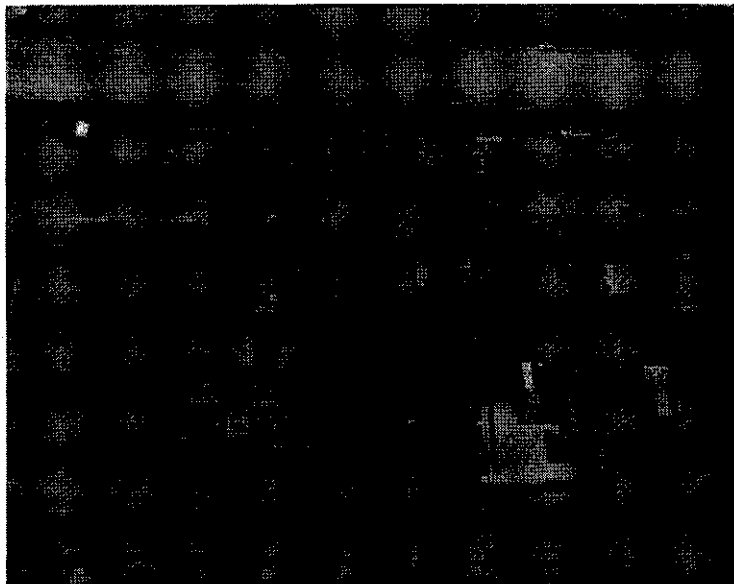




This concrete element is not protected by the current designation, but is an important element in setting the scale of the building within the meaning of a government facility.

Whether it is important to view the building and base from off-site is a separate issue. Government buildings are often located and designed to be prominently viewed from surrounding areas. It is more difficult to achieve such prominence with a low-rise building on a flat lot; however, the placement of parking to the sides of the main City Hall entries, as well as the use of an unadorned lawn provides an open view of the building from the street. Staff recognizes these elements as design choices, but it is not clear whether they rise to the level of "historic".

During the time of the building's initial construction, the development of the Tahquitz / El Cielo area was generally devoid of significant landscape or other features and the buildings sat in a fairly open and unobstructed landscape:



However, other features were soon introduced, including a fountain at the airport, statuary on several sites and trees throughout the area, which combined to interrupt the originally unimpeded views. Consequently, it does not appear that the City ever considered the open and visible look of City Hall or other public buildings to be of singular importance. Monuments, decorative elements and trees were included among the low-rise buildings; these created a more complicated setting and demonstrated that more than views of the building were important to the community.

## REQUIRED FINDINGS

As noted above in Background and Setting, Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site: "*An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect*". Seven other qualities are listed therein:

- (1) That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or
- (2) That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or
- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or
- (4) That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or
- (5) That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or
- (6) That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (7) That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

In review of the records and photographs, staff believes that several of the findings can be made to extend the historic designation to include the concrete steps and walkway in front of the building. This plinth element embodies the distinctive characteristics of the mid-century modern style, as applied to a public building (finding no. 4) and appears to be part of Albert Frey's design plan for the property (finding no. 5).

While the landscaping and parking lot are also part of the original design, it is not clear from the record that they represent part of the deliberate or historic design scheme of the City Hall building. Further, staff does not recommend extending historic designation for the parking lot and landscaping on the basis of that protecting views from off site does not appear to be a historic element of the site.

## RECOMMENDATION

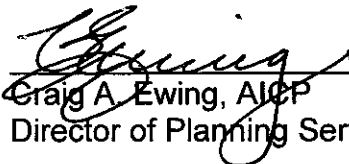
Based on the above analysis, staff recommends that the Board recommend to City Council the amendment of the Class 1 historic designation for the Palm Springs City Hall to include the concrete steps and entry plaza in front of the main entrance and Council Chambers.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Section 15331 (Historical Resources Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed amendment is categorically exempt from environmental review as the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource.

## NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within four hundred (400) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 33-A

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD  
OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,  
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL  
AMEND THE EXISTING HISTORIC CLASS 1  
DESIGNATION FOR PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL,  
3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY, TO INCLUDE  
THE CONCRETE STEPS AND PLAZA AREA IN  
FRONT OF THE MAIN (SOUTH) ELEVATION

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites; and

WHEREAS, ON October 2, 1996, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 18907 adopting a historic designation, Class 1 for the Palm Springs City Hall building, but excluding the site and grounds; and

WHEREAS, on February 9, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board, by a vote of 7 to 0, initiated an application to amend the existing historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall to consider including the site; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the Palm Springs International Airport's west façade a Class 1 historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider amending the existing Class 1 historic designation of the Palm Springs City Hall; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the steps and plaza fronting the Palm Springs City Hall shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the steps and plaza fronting the Palm Springs City Hall shall promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report, application and historical research, all written and oral testimony presented, and notes the following:

1. The steps and plaza fronting the main (south) entries of the Palm Springs City Hall provide an important element in setting the scale of the building within the meaning of a government facility .
2. The steps and plaza appear to be part of the original plan of the Albert Frey design of the City Hall.

**THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:**

**Section 1:** That the concrete area in front of the main entries to the Palm Springs City Hall embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because the steps and plaza, as a base or "plinth", reconcile the distinctive characteristics of the mid-century modern style with the traditional design of a public building

**Section 2:** That the concrete area in front of the main entries to the Palm Springs City Hall presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; because the steps and plaza appear to be part of Albert Frey's design plan for the property; the life and work of Albert Frey has been well-documented; and his work is recognized world-wide as significant toward the development of the modern movements of architecture, especially as he adapted such styles and movements to the local environment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council amend the Class 1 historic designation for the Palm Springs City Hall to include the concrete steps and plaza in front of the main (south) entries of the building, subject to the following conditions;

1. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall require Architectural Approval pursuant to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Ordinance.
2. No permit for the alteration of the building exterior or the steps or entry plaza fronting the main (south) building entries, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics shall be issued without prior approval by the Historic Site Preservation Board.
3. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
4. All existing or previously approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

**ADOPTED** this 13th day of April, 2010.

**AYES:**

NOES:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

---

Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

planes under one of the sides of the house. The only strong vertical element is the back of the fireplace, which denotes the entry, located at the intersection of the two rectangles. At this junction, the walls become static and separate and define the outside from the inside. As you enter the house, you pass through one of the walls and find yourself "outside" again. To enter a room, one must pass through one of the wall planes again. The pool comes into the house, also blurring the distinction between the outside and inside. These elements break the boundaries of enclosure in the same way that the roof projects into the desert to claim part of the landscape as private space. Loewy contributed to the design of the house with pickled wood around the pool area, the interior furnishings and the cosmetic streamlining of the living room ceiling.

Another change in the partnership occurred in 1952, when Robson C. Chambers (1919- ), who had been an employee of the firm since 1946, was made a partner and the name of the firm was changed to Clark, Frey & Chambers.

## PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL

When Frey returned from a trip around the world at the end of 1955, he completed the final scheme for one of his most important public buildings, the *Palm Springs City Hall* (1952-57). While traveling, Frey's interest in the relationship between pure form and function was renewed, and this interest is reflected in the *City Hall* by the creation of a separate volume for the Council Chamber. The main volume of the building is linear and symmetrical, with a wing extending from the rear of the main entrance. To the right is the Council Chamber, which is higher than the rest of the building, as functional requirements of the public assembly hall were used to shape the space. All of its perimeter exterior walls are stepped to improve the acoustics and to bring in north light. The entrance to the Council Chamber is more elaborate than the main entrance. A sign above it states "The People Are The City," and it is marked by a poured concrete disc held up by four columns. The disc corresponds to the void left by a circle removed from the rectangular metal plane that marks the main entry. The building is constructed of concrete blocks in which every two rows are aligned in relation to each other, thereby creating a pattern of squares in elevation. [The original structure was designed in collaboration with E. Stewart Williams, AIA, and additions (Emergency Operating Center in 1964, New Conference Rooms in 1972 & Community Development Wing in 1984), designed by Mr. Williams, have been made over the years.]

The partnership of Clark, Frey & Chambers was dissolved at the end of 1956, the most lucrative year of Frey and Clark's 19 years together. When Clark left the firm, the name was changed to Frey & Chambers. Clark, who had dealt with the business aspects of the firm, wanted to concentrate more on large commercial, public and institutional structures at the expense of residential work. Frey, however, was interested in designing a variety of structures. During the partnership of Frey and Chambers, their larger buildings developed a greater fluidity, with each project expressive of its function. The residential work also changed at this point. While Frey was still exploring experimental housing issues on a small scale, he began to infuse his buildings with the metaphors pertinent to each project.

## CAREY HOUSE

As the years passed, Frey's ability to site the residential works on the natural outcroppings of mountain sides and on their lower contours grew. Although not fully realized in his work of the 1950s, one can, nevertheless, see then the genesis of ideas that would be successfully executed in the 1960s. In the *Carey House* (1956, 651 W. Via Escuela, 1983 Frey alteration), Frey gave the client the "average suburban house" that she had requested, yet still respected the unique natural formation of the land. This interaction between two seemingly dissimilar concerns created an unusual building. The house is built at various levels above the ground plane, which provides a carport below and exposes the rocks and boulders that cover most of the site. Changes in elevation, expressed in the building volume, occur only at the floor plane, and the roof is consequently sloped to accommodate the various ceiling heights that result.

While the house at first looks like the quintessential suburban house, on closer observation, it becomes apparent that it is an assembly of industrial materials that needs no maintenance. The exterior walls are sheathed with asbestos cement board fastened with exposed screws. The windows are steel sash casement and the window zone is differentiated from the wall zone by the use of colored asbestos cement board. The house is a

Recorded  
10-8-96  
# 38625

RESOLUTION NO. 18907

OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS,  
CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING THE FREY HOUSE II, THE  
VALLEY STATION OF THE PALM SPRINGS AERIAL  
TRAMWAY, THE LOEWY HOUSE, PALM SPRINGS CITY  
HALL, AND THE CAREY-PIROZZI HOUSE AS CLASS 1  
HISTORIC SITES.

\* \* \* \* \*

WHEREAS the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey House have contributed substantially to the historic architectural diversity of the City of Palm Springs; and

WHEREAS the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House have long been landmarks of the City of Palm Springs for residents, architectural students and visitors; and

WHEREAS the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House together constitute a significant portion of a body of work designed by the architect Albert Frey, FAIA, along with various partners; and

WHEREAS the life and work of Albert Frey, FAIA, has been well-documented, and his work is recognized world-wide as significant toward the development of the International style and other modern movements of architecture, especially as he adapted such styles and movements to the local environment; and

WHEREAS the Palm Springs General Plan provides for the long-term preservation of significant architectural and historic buildings; and

WHEREAS Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code provides for the designation of sites with architectural and historic significance; and

WHEREAS on September 10, 1996, the Historic Site Preservation Board held a public hearing to recommend the designation of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House as historic sites and unanimously recommends to the City Council designation of said properties as Class 1 Historic Sites; and

WHEREAS the City Council concurs in the recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board regarding the architectural and historic value of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House; and

WHEREAS the designation of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House shall further the purposes and intent of the General Plan and Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; and

WHEREAS the designation of the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House shall promote the sensitive preservation and restoration of said sites.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California, as follows:

- Section 1. The Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey House were constructed during the period 1946-1965 and have since contributed to the historic architectural diversity of the City of Palm Springs.
- Section 2. The Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey House are excellent examples of the Modern architectural movement in the City of Palm Springs as designed and adapted by the renowned architect Albert Frey, FAIA.
- Section 3. a. The Frey House II, owned by Albert Frey ("Owner"), and located at 686 Palisades Dr., shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on Lot 10, and a portion of Lot 8, of Palm Springs Palisades, M/B 19/23, Riverside County, California; APN 513-110-020.
- b. The Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, owned by Mount San Jacinto Winter Park ("Owner"), and located at the westerly terminus of Tram Way, shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on a portion of Sec. 7, T.4S., R.4.E., Riverside County, California; APN 505-020-012.
- c. The Loewy House, owned by James Gaudineer ("Owner"), and located at 600 Panorama Rd., shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on a portion of the SW1/4 SE1/4 of Section 3, T.4S., R.4E., Riverside County, California; APN 504-292-014.
- d. Palm Springs City Hall, owned by the City of Palm Springs ("Owner"), and located at 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, shall be designated as a Class I Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on Lot 16 of Palm Valley Colony Lands, MB 14/652, San Diego County, California; APN 502-150-005.
- e. The Carey-Pirozzi House, owned by Vincent & Karen Pirozzi ("Owners"), and located at 651 W. Via Escuela, shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The site is located on Parcel 1, R/S 27/75, Riverside County, California; APN 504-193-002.
- Section 4. No permits for the exterior alteration to the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House shall be granted without the prior approval of the Historic Site Preservation Board and/or the City Council, pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code; approved alterations shall maintain the historic architectural integrity of the building.
- Section 5. The Owners shall permit the City to demark the Frey House II, the Valley Station of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Loewy House, Palm Springs City Hall, and the Carey-Pirozzi House as historic sites with a plaque of the City's choosing.
- Section 6. This resolution, and the historic designation put in place by it, shall not affect title to the subject properties.

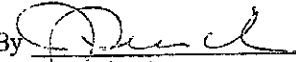
Section 7. The City Council hereby directs the City Clerk to submit this resolution to the county recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.

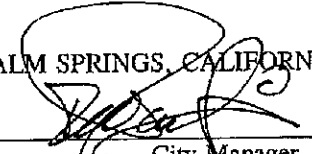
ADOPTED this 2nd day of October, 1996.

AYES: Members Barnes, Hodges, Oden, Spurgin and Mayor Kleindienst  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

By   
City Clerk

  
City Manager

REVIEWED & APPROVED: 

## Jay Thompson

---

**From:** Craig Ewing  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 12, 2010 11:59 AM  
**To:** Jay Thompson  
**Cc:** 'debrahovel@gmail.com'  
**Subject:** FW: Parking lot

To: City Clerk  
The e-mail below was directed to the City Council. Please forward or include in their mail. Thank you.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services  
City of Palm Springs  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262  
760-323-8269

"Go all the way, then come back."  
- Harley Earl

-----Original Message-----  
From: Debra Hovel [mailto:debrahovel@gmail.com]  
Sent: Thursday, August 12, 2010 10:32 AM  
To: Craig Ewing  
Subject: Parking lot

Craig Ewing  
Palm Springs City Council

Dear Sir,  
I am most distressed to read that the parking lot at City Hall is not being included under the Historic Site Preservation designation. These buildings were sited so much more sensitively than today. It would be a shame to lose the chance to save it.

My husband and I are citizens of Minneapolis and Palm Springs. I can not stress enough how important the historic architecture is to us.

We chose Palm Springs because of the concentration of historic buildings and preservation efforts. It is part of the charm and Brand of the city. We are on a 3 year plan to relocate permanently.

Please consider the entire site as protected as you proceed with the plans. I know your part in this is not easy. We are counting on your vision for the future of the city to protect the precious past.

Sincerely,  
Debra and Richard Hovel

This message sent from my iPhone. Debra Hovel

**Kathie Hart**

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**From:** Kathie Hart  
**Sent:** February 22, 2010 4:44 PM  
**To:** Craig Ewing  
**Cc:** 'Edward Robertson'; Terri Hintz  
**Subject:** Case 3.3377-MAA Appeal  
**Attachments:** 4815\_001.pdf

Tracking:	Recipient	Delivery
	Craig Ewing	Delivered: 02/22/10 4:44 PM
	'Edward Robertson'	
	Terri Hintz	Delivered: 02/22/10 4:44 PM
	Edward Robertson	Delivered: 02/22/10 4:44 PM

Craig:  
Please find attached an appeal to the Planning Commission on the City Hall Parking Lot Rehab Project. This request was received in our office on February 8, 2010, along with the appeal fee of \$305.00, a copy of the receipt is attached.  
It should be noted this item should be presented to the Planning Commission for consideration within 45-days, by March 25, 2010.  
Feel free to contact me if there are additional questions.  
Thx!

*Kathie*

**Kathie Hart, CMC**

Chief Deputy City Clerk  
City of Palm Springs  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

☎ (760) 323-8206 | 📠 (760) 322-8332

✉ Kathie.Hart@PalmSpringsCA.gov

*Please note that City Hall is open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and closed on Fridays at this time.*

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**From:** City Clerk [mailto:iR4570-cm@ci.palm-springs.ca.us]  
**Sent:** February 22, 2010 4:29 PM  
**To:** Kathie Hart  
**Subject:** Attached Image

5-19-10  
Spoke to Edward. Appellant, Mills, Eng, &  
Planning have all agreed to waive the  
45-day requirement. They are meeting &  
Revising Plan.

*Kah*

52

February 8, 2010

RECEIVED  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

2010 FEB -8 PM 4: 31

JAMES THOMPSON  
CITY CLERK

City of Palm Springs  
Department of Planning Services  
Attn: Planning Commission (Mr. Leo Cohen, Chair)  
P. O. Box 2743  
Palm Springs, CA 92263-2743

Subj: Case No. 3.3377-MAA; City Hall Parking Lot Rehabilitation

Ref: (a) Director of Planning Services letter of January 25, 2010

Pursuant to section 9314.04 (Appeals) of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, the undersigned hereby appeal, to the Planning Commission, the approval decision of the Palm Springs Director of Planning in reference (a).

This appeal is based on numerous serious concerns including:

#### HISTORICAL

- Failure to gain the approval of the city's Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) for a significant site change to a properly designated Class I Historic Site (the Palm Springs City Hall). This failure is a violation of local ordinances and CEQA responsibilities (see attachments (1) and (2)).
- Documented evidence that the proposed reconfiguration of the parking lot will negatively affect the City Hall's historic view shed.

#### PROCEDURAL

- Characterization of the subject project as a Minor Architectural Addition (MAA) thereby effectively circumventing Planning Commission review.
- A city government-wide pattern of failure to address negative public comment concerning the project.

#### FISCAL

- The unnecessary expense associated with the design and implementation of a parking lot reconfiguration during a period of fiscal crisis.
- Decrease in the number of available parking spaces (the reconfiguration eliminates five spaces).

#### DESIGN and SUSTAINABILITY

- A widespread perception that the current landscape architecture proposal is "over-designed" and "over-planted" and seriously detracts from the simplicity and sophistication of City Hall site, one of the city's most important architectural resources.

- Despite our strong support for the creation of a sustainability garden next to or near city hall, placing such a garden in front of one of our most beloved architectural resources is both inappropriate and unnecessary.

The applicable appeal fees (\$305.00) are enclosed. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Gary Johns at (760) 327-7290.

Sincerely,



David Lee  
432 W. Hermosa Place  
Palm Springs, CA 92262



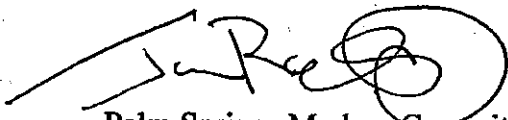
Gary Johns  
2428 S. Sierra Madre  
Palm Springs, CA 92264



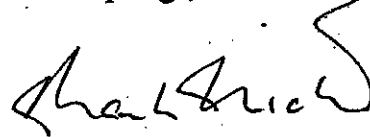
Mary Jensen  
74-533 Pepper Tree Drive  
Palm Desert, CA 92260



Brett Klein  
456 Bradshaw Lane  
Palm Springs, CA 92262



Palm Springs Modern Committee  
J. R. Roberts, Vice President  
P. O. Box 4738  
Palm Springs, CA 92263



Mark Nichols  
1502 E. Baristo Road  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**Attachments:**

- (1) PSPF letter of August 23, 2009 (with additional attachments)
- (2) McGrew Architecture letter of February 5, 2010



# PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

August 23, 2009

The Honorable Steven Pougnet  
Mayor of Palm Springs  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: CITY HALL PARKING LOT RECONFIGURATION

Dear Mr. Mayor,

The city's current proposal to reconfigure the parking lot of the Palm Springs City Hall (designed by Clark, Frey & Chambers (1952)) replaces a view of great architecture with a view of unsightly car grills. The proposed reconfiguration blocks sight lines that have been in place for more than fifty years and does not reflect well on the city's stewardship of this world-renowned modernist icon. Attachments (1) and (2) provide visual aids that amply illustrate our concerns.

To summarize, the proposal to reconfigure the parking lot was included as a "consent" item entitled "City Hall and Dog Park Parking Lot Repairs" in the January 7, 2009 city council meeting agenda. As you know, consent items are typically routine items of minor importance that do not receive a public hearing. However, far from being a mere repaving of the parking lot, the consent item included a wholesale reconfiguration of the City Hall parking lot.

Far more alarming has been an inexplicable decision by the planning department to not let the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) review the parking lot reconfiguration despite the fact that the City Hall (along with a host of other Albert Frey-designed buildings) was designated a Class 1 historic site in 1996. City Council Resolution No. 18907 of October 2, 1996 unequivocally states that the "Palm Springs City Hall...shall be designated as a Class 1 Historic Site pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code." Further, an October 2, 1996 planning department memorandum to the city council on the designation clearly states that:

"The recommended Class 1 designation protects the architectural and historic integrity of the sites in that the structures *and their sites may not be modified*, nor objects removed, without the approval of the city council; usage may also be limited to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site....The city Council's approval of modifications *is delegated to the HSPB* by Chapter 8.05 except that appeals of an HSPB decision are heard by the Council" (*emphasis added*).

Regardless of any perceived ambiguity in the "building versus site" distinction, such ambiguity should argue that the HSPB review the matter. I'm sure you agree that ambiguities in city

100 S. Sunrise Way, Suite A #465, Palm Springs, CA 92262-6778  
760-837-7117 \* [info@pspreservationfoundation.org](mailto:info@pspreservationfoundation.org) \* [www.pspreservationfoundation.org](http://www.pspreservationfoundation.org)

policies and precedent decisions should never be used as an excuse to circumvent review by a city board or commission.

On August 10, 2009 the city's Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) reviewed that portion of the Tahquitz Canyon Way Median Design Concept that featured the proposed City Hall parking lot reconfiguration. During that review AAC members were pointedly and repeatedly told by the contractor representing the city that a discussion of the reconfiguration was not within their purview. Nevertheless, some AAC members voiced serious concerns about the reconfiguration.

Because the parking lot reconfiguration has now been lumped into the Tahquitz Canyon Way Median Design Concept, at this date it is difficult for members of the public to register their concerns. Nevertheless, we will soon encourage our membership to state their objections to the reconfiguration (as provided for on the city's Sustainability web page).

Recognizing that "slip and fall" legal concerns may be driving the parking lot repaving project, we encourage the city to repave the parking lot in its current configuration. Not only will this save money, it should have no impact on the city's Tahquitz Canyon Way sustainability efforts.

While the city has a generally good track record of encouraging public input, the handling of this matter has served as a textbook example of what can happen when public input is not aggressively solicited. The obvious solution is to ensure that the review of such matters, by the city's duly appointed boards and commissions, be liberal in scope. A liberal review process not only brings specialized expertise to bear but provides the public with an opportunity to express their views.

I hope you will make a personal effort to rectify this matter and review the opaque (versus transparent) city processes that have allowed such a proposal to progress this far. The foundation can be contacted at (760) 837-7117 or via email at [info@pspreservationfoundation.org](mailto:info@pspreservationfoundation.org).

Sincerely,

*Ron Marshall*

Ron Marshall  
President

Attachments: (1) Photographs of cars in proposed reconfiguration blocking sight lines  
(2) Overhead graphic of proposed reconfiguration impacting sight lines

Copy to (with attachments):

City council members G. Foat, C. Mills, L. Weigel and R. Hutcheson

City Manager (Mr. D. Ready)

Chair, Planning Commission

Chair, Historic Site Preservation Board (J. Gilmer)

Chair, Sustainability Commission

Chair, Architectural Advisory Committee

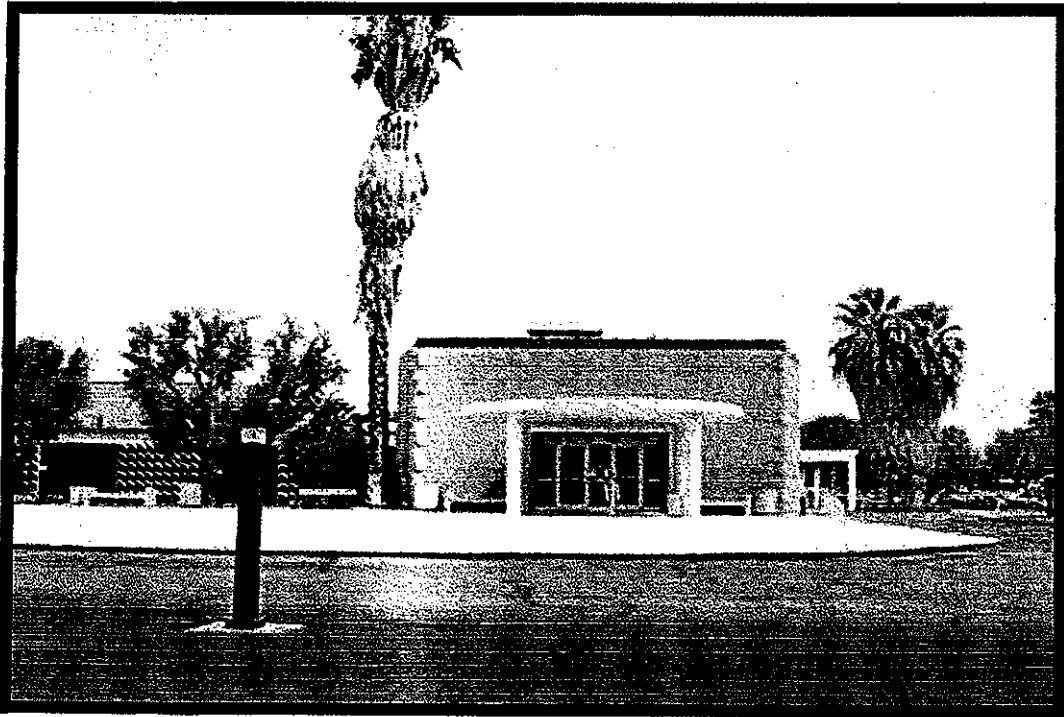
PSModCom (Mr. P. Moruzzi)

Desert Sun (Mr. M. Honore)

2

100 S. Sunrise Way, Suite A #465, Palm Springs, CA 92262-6778  
760-837-7117 \* [info@pspreservationfoundation.org](mailto:info@pspreservationfoundation.org) \* [www.pspreservationfoundation.org](http://www.pspreservationfoundation.org)

# Today



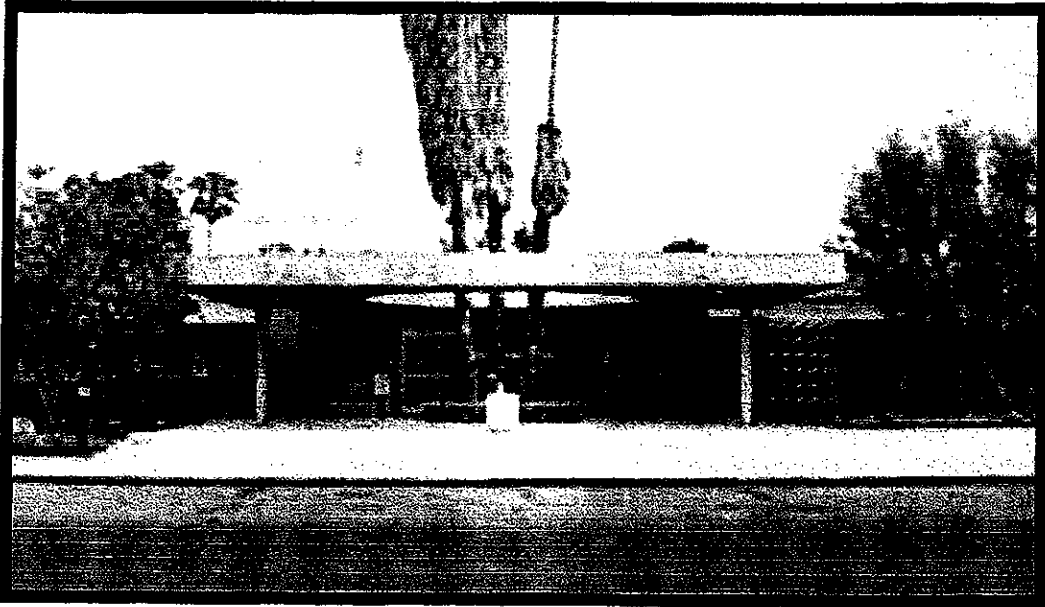
# Tomorrow?



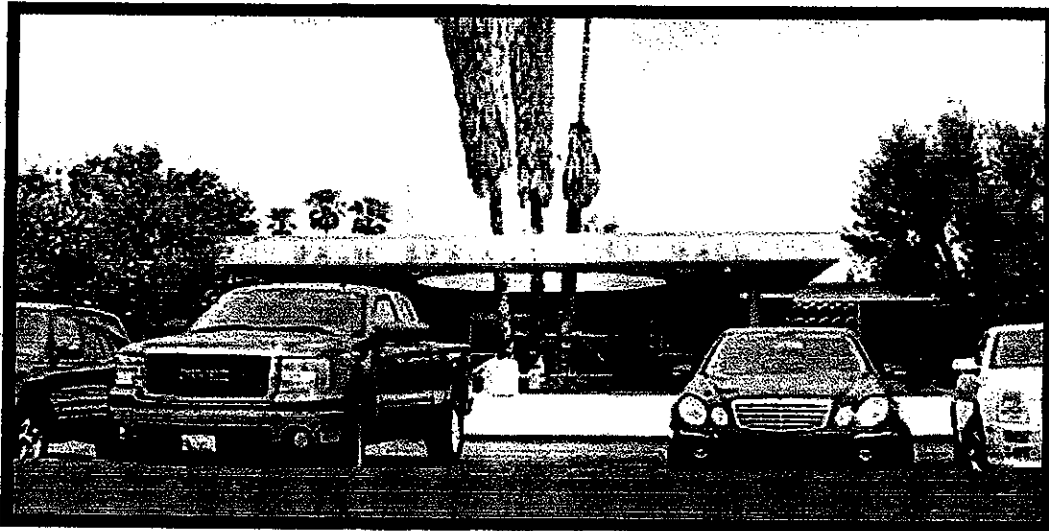
**Cars in proposed reconfiguration blocking sight lines**

Attachment 1

# Today



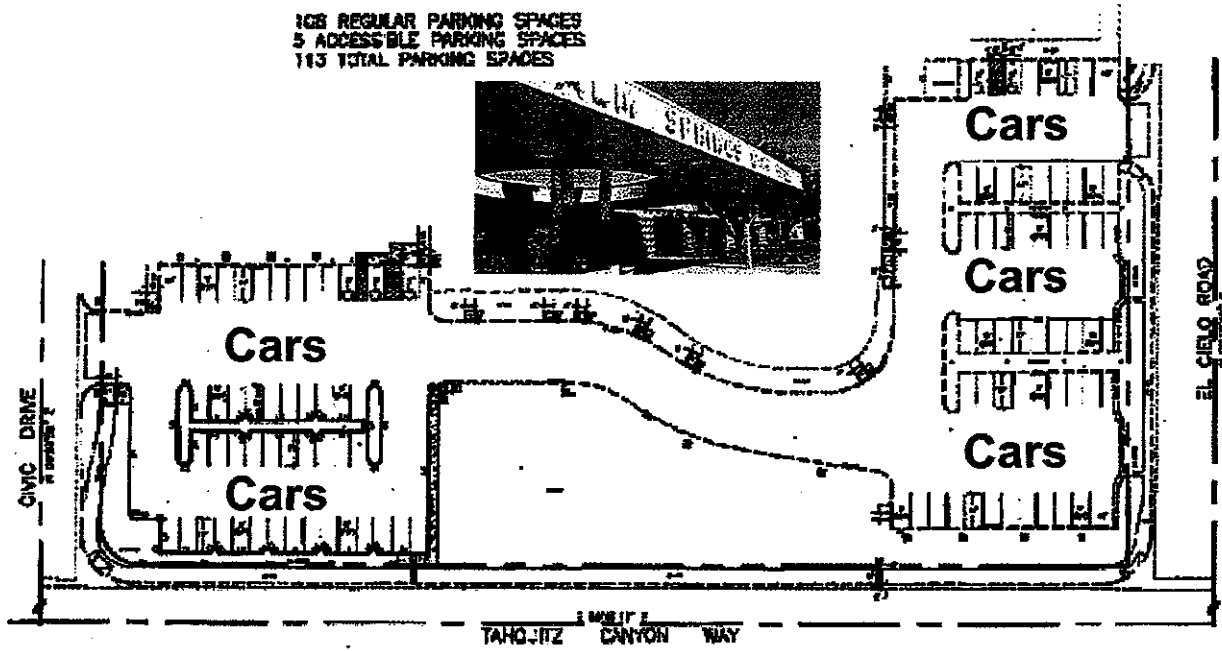
# Tomorrow?



**Cars in proposed reconfiguration blocking sight lines**

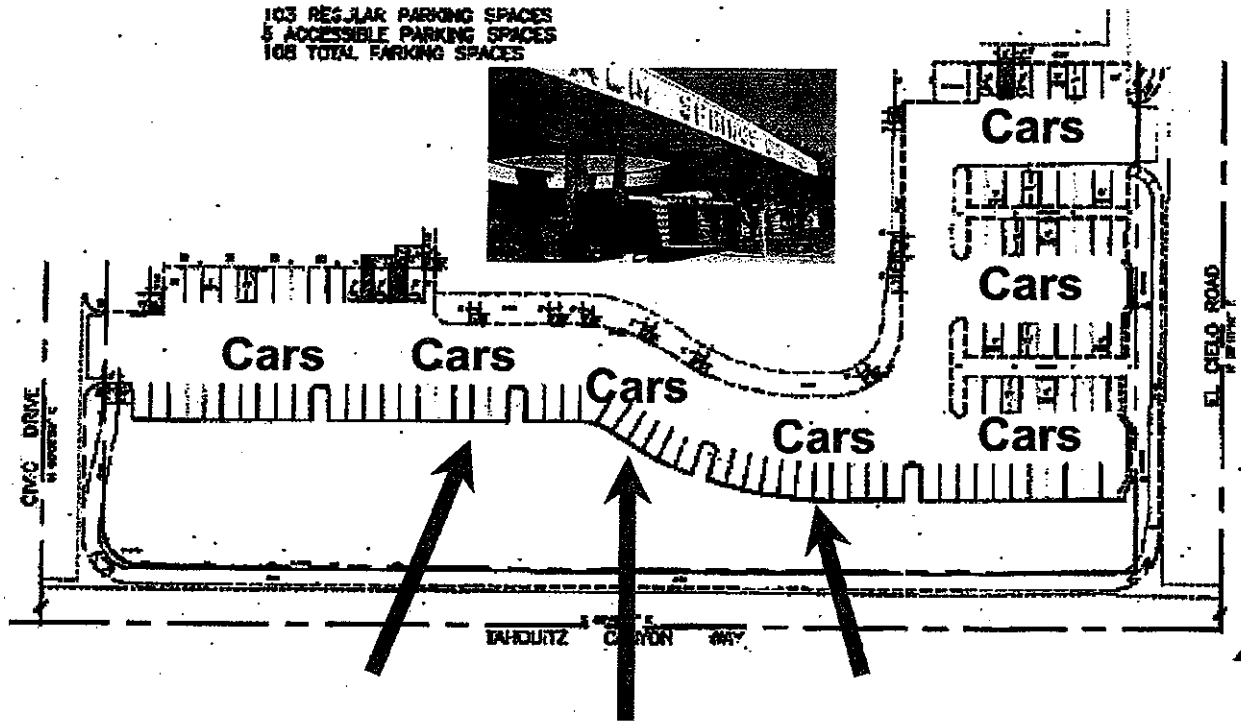
# Current

108 REGULAR PARKING SPACES  
5 ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES  
113 TOTAL PARKING SPACES



# Proposed

103 REGULAR PARKING SPACES  
5 ACCESSIBLE PARKING SPACES  
108 TOTAL PARKING SPACES



# Blocked sight lines

(Note that 5 parking spaces are actually lost in the proposed plan)

# City moved too quickly on City Hall parking lot

Earlier this year, in a much publicized and highly debated 3-2 vote, the Palm Springs City Council designated Santa Fe Federal Savings & Loan a class one site. Class one status is the city's highest level of preservation protection. The council members voting in favor of the designation individually opined on the importance of preserving the site from encroachment; with the "open space" being recognized as an important element of the designation. Why then is the council allowing for the open space at the city's most recognized class one site, City Hall, to be violated?



**gary johns**

City Hall, designated class one in 1996, is in the cross hairs of proposed changes to the site. A plan is working its way through the city that reconfigures the site. The plan will eliminate half of the existing parking lot to create landscape area, then, adds a parking lot where landscape already exists. As a part of the city's "20 First Steps on Sustainability" the intention is to reduce the amount of sod and create more area for drought tolerant, native, desert plants. Designed by Clark, Frey & Chambers (1952), City Hall, the open space and the parking areas are an intentional part of the overall design of the site. The proposed plan significantly changes his design. The city can still accomplish its sustainability goals by working with the existing site. There is no good reason to reconfigure it.

The plan was approved by the council as a consent calendar item titled "City Hall and Dog Park parking lot repairs, Phase 1." Consent calendar items, unlike public hearing items, are usually of a routine nature and are moved through the system quickly without public comment. A public hearing on the item would have benefited the council; hearing the public's views on the issue would have been important early in the process and more than likely the council would have been reminded of the class one status of the site.

Without a public hearing, residents were excluded from the process. Council members often rely on city staff reports for advisement. The class

one status of City Hall is not mentioned in the staff report for this item.

A city Tahquitz Canyon Median/City Hall subcommittee met several times over the summer and has approximately 12 members. The meetings are open to the public but there is no public representation. City Councilman Chris Mills is a member and at the July 22 meeting, notes on the city's Web site attributed to Mills state, "Obtain public comments on medians only. (City needs to move forward with parking lot work)." Mr. Mills' views on limiting public comment on the issue are interesting.

Many in the community feel the planned changes to the City Hall site should have been more transparent. The heading on the consent calendar item was misleading to the public. The use of the word "repair" implied routine work when in fact it is much more than that. Viewable on the city's Web site, the artist renderings of the new parking/landscape areas are romanticized, pretty pictures with lots of plants but no cars.

The council maintains the right to approve changes to class one properties and there is a procedure in place to aid them. Owners of class one properties requesting changes to their site must go before the city's Historic Site Preservation Board first.

City Hall, owned by the people, should go through the process too. As reported recently by The Desert Sun, City Manager David Ready feels there is no harm in having the board review the proposed changes. Already nine months into the planning, Ready might have considered the review process before the plan got this far along.

Gary Johns is a Realtor who lives in Palm Springs. Email him at [garyjohns@aol.com](mailto:garyjohns@aol.com)



PHOTOS COURTESY IF DANIEL CHA

Preservationists are upset over a new design of the Palm Springs City Hall parking lot that, according to Preservation Foundation President Ron Marshall, "replaces a view of great architecture with a view of unsightly car grills."

# McGREW / ARCHITECTURE

February 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Recent approval of redesign for Palm Springs City Hall parking layout and landscaping

At the request of a group of concerned citizens, I have prepared a brief analysis on the CEQA issues relevant to this project.

## Background

Palm Springs City Hall was designated a Class 1 Historic Site by action of the City Council per Resolution No. 18907 as recorded on October 8, 1996. The resolution protects not only the building, but also the site as indicated in the Planning Director's recommendation:

"The recommended Class 1 designation protects the architectural and historic integrity of the sites in that the structures and their sites may not be modified, nor objects removed, without the approval of the City Council; usage may also be limited to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site... The City Council's approval of modifications is delegated to the HSPB by Chapter 8.05 except that appeals of an HSPB decision are heard by the Council."

During a January 7, 2009 City Council meeting, a redesign of City Hall parking layout was placed on the consent Calendar and approved without a public hearing or prior review by the Historic Site Preservation Board, as would normally be required under Chapter 8.05 of Planning Code. Monday January 25, 2010, the City's Planning Director approved a new City Hall landscape design that incorporates the revised parking lot layout after the Architectural Advisory Committee voted to turn it down.

## When CEQA Applies

Resources listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register are resources that must be given consideration in the CEQA process. Historical resources are recognized as part of the environment under CEQA (PRC Sections 21002(b), 21083.2, and 21084.1). Properties of local significance that have been designated under a local preservation ordinance (local landmarks or landmark districts) or that have been identified in a local historical resources inventory may be eligible for listing in the California Register and are presumed to be significant resources for purposes of CEQA unless a preponderance of evidence indicates otherwise (PRC Section 5024.1, 14 CCR § 4850). Additionally, all projects undertaken by a public agency are subject to CEQA. This includes projects

undertaken by any state or local agency, any special district (e.g., a school district), and any public college or university.

A project that has been determined to conform with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties can generally be considered to be a project that will not cause a significant impact (14 CCR Section 15126.4(b)(1)). In fact, in most cases if a project meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties it can be considered categorically exempt from CEQA (14 CCR Section 15331).

#### Analysis of Project Compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The following Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

(1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its environment.

*Analysis: The proposed project complies with this Standard.*

(2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.

*Analysis: The proposed project removes historic materials and spaces that characterize the property, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(3) Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes made to create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

*Analysis: The existing historic resource currently exists as a physical record of its time, place, and use. The proposed project would alter that record, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historical significance in their own right shall be preserved.

*Analysis: N/A*

(5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.

*Analysis: In this case, the distinctive features in question are the setting for the existing building. This setting maximizes the visibility of City Hall from Tahquitz Way. Under the proposed project, this visibility will be substantially impaired. The proposed project would alter the setting, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

*Analysis: The proposed project would replace deteriorated materials and features with new ones that do not match the old in color, texture and other visual qualities, and therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(7) Chemical or physical treatments such as sandblasting, that cause physical damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken by the gentlest means possible.

*Analysis: N/A*

(8) Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken,

*Analysis: N/A*

(9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

*Analysis: The proposed alterations and related new construction destroy historic materials that characterize the property, and are incompatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features that comprise the historic integrity of the property and its environment. The proposed project therefore does not comply with this Standard.*

(10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

*Analysis: The proposed project may comply with this Standard.*

#### **Compliance Summary**

The proposed project fails to comply with Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, & 9. Consequently the project may not be considered categorically exempt. Instead, based upon this analysis, the project will result in a significant negative environmental impact.

#### **Who Insures CEQA is Being Followed Properly?**

In a way, the people of California bear this responsibility. But, ultimately, it is the judicial system that insures public agencies are fulfilling their obligations under CEQA. There is no CEQA "police" agency as many members of the public mistakenly assume. Rather it is any individual or organization's right to pursue litigation against a public agency that is believed to have violated its CEQA responsibilities.

Although the Office of Historic Preservation can, and often does, comment on documents prepared for CEQA purposes (or the lack thereof), it is important that the public be aware that such comments are merely advisory and do not carry the force of law. Comments from state agencies and other organizations with proven professional qualifications and experience in a given subject can, however, provide valuable assistance to decision-makers as well as provide substantive arguments for consideration by a judge during CEQA litigation.

To whom it may concern  
Page: 5  
February 5, 2010

### Conclusion

The approval of this project without review by the HSPB constitutes a violation of the public trust and is in conflict not only with the local ordinance, but is also a violation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as detailed in the foregoing analysis. Based upon this analysis, it appears that the Planning Staff and/or the City Council have violated not only their own local ordinances, but their CEQA responsibilities as well.

Sincerely,

*Patrick McGrew*

---

Patrick McGrew

PM:bc w/ attachment

To whom it may concern  
Page: 6  
February 5, 2010

#### Historic Consultant Qualifications

**Professional Qualifications Standards:** The Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61 defines the minimum education and experience required to perform historic preservation identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities. The minimum professional qualifications in architecture are a professional degree in architecture plus at least two years full-time experience in architecture; or a State license to practice architecture. Patrick McGrew meets or exceeds all professional qualifications.

Patrick McGrew received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oklahoma in 1965. He has been actively engaged in the architectural profession, specializing in historic preservation, since then. McGrew has been a licensed architect in the State of California since 1970, as well as a holder of the NCARB (national licensing) certificate. He possesses an in-depth knowledge of all procedures and standards utilized in the identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of historic properties as evidenced by his lengthy career known for the depth and breadth of accumulated architectural / historical knowledge. He places a high value on the objectivity and completeness of his written works. He has several years experience in research, writing, practicing and teaching architecture with an academic and historical agencies and institutions. He has made a substantial contribution through research and publication of a body of scholarly knowledge in the field of California architectural history. His experience has included the preparation of numerous historic research reports, National Register nominations, and San Francisco and Palm Springs historic site nominations, as well as the preparation of plans and specifications for architectural preservation projects. He regulates his firm through the use of ethics standards developed by the Society of Architectural Historians.

Patrick McGrew's knowledge and reputation in the field of historic preservation provided the basis his public service as the long-time President of San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, which extended over an eighteen year span beginning in 1978 when he was first appointed by then-Mayor George Moscone; he served the next ten years under Mayor Dianne Feinstein. Although he served less than a year under Mayor Art Agnos, it was Agnos who declared November 17, 1991 as "Landmarks of San Francisco Day" to honor the publication of McGrew's first book, *Landmarks of San Francisco* (Harry Abrams, New York, 1991). Reappointed in 1992 by Mayor Frank Jordan, McGrew served four more years on San Francisco's Landmarks Board. McGrew's second book, *Landmarks of Los Angeles* was published by Abrams in 1994. His acknowledgment by government and/or regulatory agencies, combined with Mr. McGrew's impressive list of publications on California's historic architecture, is a testament to his proficiency as a leading expert in California architectural history. He has received many awards for his work during a distinguished career. In 1995, his book *The Historic Houses of Presidio Terrace*, received an award of honor from the California Heritage Council.

Upon the occasion of Mr. McGrew's induction into the City Club of San Francisco's Wall of Fame, Mayor Willie Brown declared November 30, 2003 as "Patrick McGrew Day" in San Francisco, and a Commendation from the United States Senate was presented in recognition of McGrew's "distinguished career and outstanding contributions to the City of San Francisco." In 2005, Patrick McGrew moved to Palm Springs, where he recently completed a monograph entitled *Donald Wexler, Architect*.

#### Memberships and Affiliations:

Board Member & Lecturer: Architecture & Design Council, Palm Springs Art Museum  
Board Member: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation  
Palm Springs Architectural Advisory Committee  
Palm Springs Historical Society  
Society of Architectural Historians, Southern California Chapter  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

ARCHITECTURE + PRESERVATION

674 SOUTH GREENFALL ROAD • PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 92264 • (760) 416-7819

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

RECVD BY: CR 01000032852  
PAYOR: PS MODERN COMMITTEE  
TODAY'S DATE: 02/22/10  
REGISTER DATE: 02/22/10 TIME: 17:11

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
OTHER CHARGES SVCS	\$305.00
CUST ID: APPEAL 1/25/10	

TOTAL DUE: \$305.00

CHECK PAID:	\$305.00
CHECK NO: 1650	
TENDERED:	\$305.00
CHANGE:	\$ .00

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS  
PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION**



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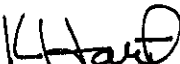
City Council  
Meeting Date: January 18, 2011  
Subject: HSPB 33 – City Hall

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**AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING**

I, Kathie Hart, Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice of Public Hearing was mailed to each and every person on the attached list on January 5, 2012, in a sealed envelope, with postage prepaid, and depositing same in the U.S. Mail at Palm Springs, California. (52 notices)


I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathie Hart, CMC  
Chief Deputy City Clerk

**AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION**

I, Kathie Hart, Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Desert Sun on January 7, 2012.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathie Hart, CMC  
Chief Deputy City Clerk

**AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING**

I, Kathie Hart, Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice of Public Hearing was posted at City Hall, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Drive, on the exterior legal notice posting board and in the Office of the City Clerk on January 5, 2012.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathie Hart, CMC  
Chief Deputy City Clerk

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING  
CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

AMEND THE DESIGNATION OF THE PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL – HSPB 33 TO INCLUDE  
THE CITY HALL SITE AS A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE AND  
3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California, will hold a Public Hearing at its meeting of January 18, 2012. The City Council meeting begins at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider a recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board to amend the Palm Springs City Hall Class 1 Historic designation (Case HSPB 33) to include the City Hall site including landscape and parking areas. The subject site is addressed as follows: 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way (APN 502-150-005).

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:** This request is categorically exempt from review pursuant to Section 15331 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), whereas the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource. The application is available for public review in the Planning Services Department, City Hall, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.


**REVIEW OF PROJECT INFORMATION:** The staff report and other supporting documents regarding this project are available for public review at City Hall between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Please contact the Office of the City Clerk at (760) 323-8204 if you would like to schedule an appointment to review these documents.

**COMMENTS ON THIS APPLICATION:** Response to this notice may be made verbally at the Public Hearing and/or in writing before the hearing. Written comments may be made to the City Council by letter (for mail or hand delivery) to:

James Thompson, City Clerk  
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

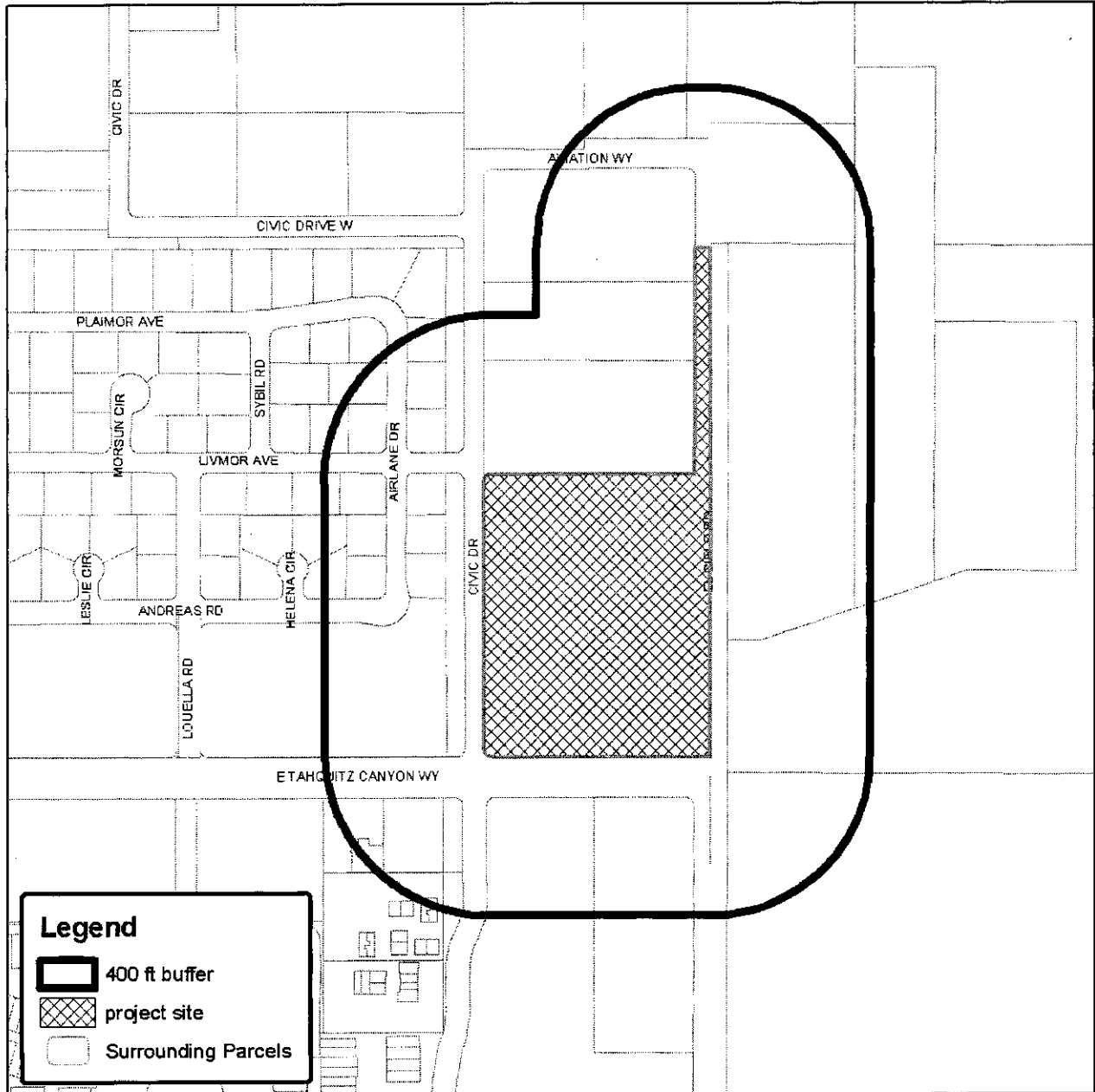
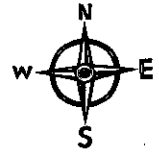
Any challenge of the proposed in court may be limited to raising only those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this Notice or in written correspondence delivered to the City Clerk at, or prior to, the public hearing. (Government Code Section 65009[b][2]). An opportunity will be given at said hearing for all interested persons to be heard. Questions regarding this case may be directed to Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services, at (760) 323-8245.

Si necesita ayuda con esta carta, porfavor llame a la Ciudad de Palm Springs y puede hablar con Nadine Fieger telefono (760) 323-8245.




  
James Thompson  
City Clerk



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



**Legend**

-  400 ft buffer
-  project site
-  Surrounding Parcels

## CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

**CASE NO:** HSPB - 33

**APPLICANT:** City of Palm Springs  
Historic Site Preservation Board

**DESCRIPTION:** Amend the Palm Springs City Hall Class 1 Historic designation (Case No. HSPB 33) to include the City Hall site including landscape and parking areas.



RECEIVED  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

2012 JAN 17 PM 2:57

JAMES THOMPSON  
CITY CLERK

January 13, 2012

The Honorable Steve Pougnet  
Mayor of Palm Springs  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CITY HALL CLASS 1 DESIGNATION (HSPB #33)

Dear Mr. Mayor,

Over two years ago, under the California Public Records Act, we requested documents related to city council Resolution 18907 of October 2, 1996 which granted Class 1 historic site status to our City Hall, the Frey II House, the Valley Tramway Station, the Loewy House, the Carey-Pirozzi House and the Tramway Gas Station. The city's response to our records request included an October 2, 1996 planning department memo to the city council. That memo explained the intent of Resolution 18907 and states, in part, that:

"The recommended Class 1 designation protects the architectural and historic integrity of the sites in that **the structures and their sites** may not be modified, nor objects removed, without the approval of the city council..." (emphasis added)

Accordingly, it is our view that Resolution 18907 clearly and unequivocally protects the sites identified in the resolution. We also believe that the first "contrary" interpretation of Resolution 18907 (which surfaced about two years ago) was motivated by bureaucratic expediency when it was realized that the city hall's parking lot reconfiguration project had not been properly staffed through the Historic Site Preservation Board. This is a view the city's Planning Commission largely concurred with at its' September 8, 2010 meeting.

To give this proposed amendment fuller context, the HSPB recommendation before you to designate the city hall site was borne out of a profound frustration by many HSPB board members that the board was being deliberately circumvented (we would invite you to review the video of the relevant HSPB meeting). The HSPB directed staff to designate the entire site but unfortunately the staff report before you quibbles and effectively ignores even that simple direction. However, that is not our primary concern: we are more concerned that if you support the recommendation to amend HSPB #33 you will give credibility to and legitimize the Planning Director's recent misinterpretation of Resolution 18907 (i.e., that the resolution applies to the buildings and not their sites). By such an action city council would implicitly remove the protections already afforded to the five remaining sites protected under the resolution.

To put it simply, you will take one step forward and five steps backwards for the city's historic preservation program.

Subject: PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CITY HALL CLASS 1 DESIGNATION (HSPB #33)

We found the staff report confusing and even contradictory, to wit, the verbiage on page 25 (“Description” first paragraph) states:

“The Current Planning Director has indicated that the Council’s approval of the Class 1 designation deleted the protection for the site and covered only the building. **However, no support[ing] documentation for this assertion has been forthcoming.**” (emphasis added)

Based upon such a lack of supporting documentation, we reiterate that the Planning Director’s recent interpretation was flawed and that there is no need to act upon the amendment before you.

In short, the issue before you really isn’t about sightlines, the musings of architectural historian Joseph Rosa or how many steps constitute a “plinth.” Rather, it is simply: “What was the intent of the city council when it passed Resolution 18907 on the evening of October 2, 1996?” We submit that the council’s intent was obvious: that duly appointed city boards review significant changes to the buildings and sites of the six identified historic properties.

In previous city actions over the last fifteen years interpretations of Resolution 18907 have included changes to the sites. For example, as recently as October 2008 and March 2009 the HSPB reviewed changes to, not the building, but rather the signage and landscape lighting on the Tramway Gas Station *site*.

For all of these reasons we ask that you re-affirm the clearly stated intent of the previous city council to confer Class 1 historic designation to all six of these buildings *and their sites*.

If you have questions regarding this matter, please contact us at (760) 837-7117.

Sincerely,



Ron Marshall  
President

Copy to:  
Council members G. Foat, P. Lewin, R. Hutcheson, C. Mills  
PSModCom (Mr. C. Menrad)

Jay Thompson

RECEIVED  
CITY OF PALM SPRING

**From:** Ginny Foat  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 18, 2012 2:14 PM  
**To:** Jay Thompson  
**Subject:** FW: TONIGHT: Proposed Amendment re City Hall Designation

2012 JAN 18 PM 3:30

JAMES THOMPSON  
CITY CLERK

FYI

---

**From:** MRIMBER@aol.com [mailto:MRIMBER@aol.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 18, 2012 1:34 PM  
**To:** Ginny Foat  
**Subject:** TONIGHT: Proposed Amendment re City Hall Designation

Dear Mayor Pougnet and City Council Members;

**I strongly concur with the PSPF letter you received regarding tonight's Agenda Item No. 1.A and beseech your appropriate action:**

As in municipalities nationwide and previously noted and enforced in Palm Springs, historic designation defines SITE as site; not building, component, or amenity selectively. As in sites referenced in Mr. Marshall's letter regarding Resolution 18907, in designating the E. Stewart Williams *Santa Fe Federal Savings* SITE the entire property was properly designated not partial amenities as subsequently suggested by some. Regardless of any perceived timely or optimistic potential of a restaurant or condominium tower that might have come at that site today's future social, economic, and cultural potential stems from what IS happening there...motivated primarily by efforts of reasonable and stalwart preservationists who understand the inherent value of building a better tomorrow by properly protecting and including essential historic assets. Such vital lessons must not be unheeded.

By acting on the Item before you regarding City Hall, if we had the Mona Lisa only her smile could be designated. Let's not redress her as Lady Gaga (now) as we shouldn't have updated her as Madonna (then) when she was at the peak of popularity. There is an essential and beneficial place for them ALL to make a better place.

Respectfully,

Robert Imber  
760-641-9908