



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: June 8, 2010
Case No: HSPB – 75
Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application
Location: 928 North Avenida Palmas – Cary Grant Estate
Applicant: Dr. Jane Cowles Smith
Zone: R-1-B
APN: 507-164-001
From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An application by Dr. Jane Cowles Smith, owner, to designate the house at 928 North Avenida Palmas known as the Cary Grant Estate as a Class 1 historic site. Such designation would:

1. Place the subject property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05
2. Require present and subsequent owners to maintain the buildings consistent with that ordinance,
3. Grant possible property tax reduction opportunities to the owners under the State of California Mills Act.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) adopt the attached resolution recommending to the City Council designation of the property as historic, Class 1.

PRIOR ACTIONS

On May 13, 2010, the City received the application for designation of the subject property as a historic site.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of a 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.

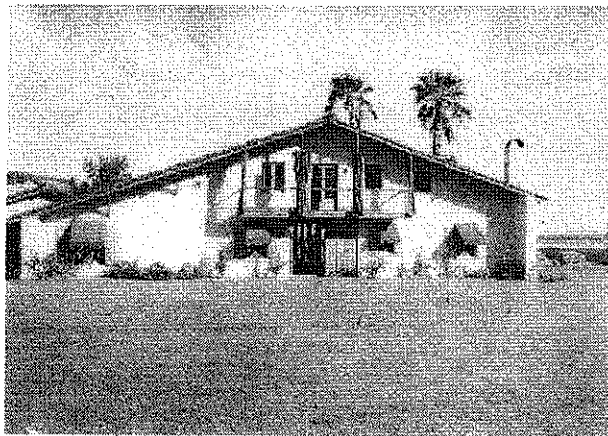
Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

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 AND ANALYSIS

The house is situated on a 67,082 square foot lot (1.54 acres) within the Movie Colony neighborhood. The original house was built in the late 1920's (completed in 1930) as a replica of an Andalusian farm house and reflected the Mediterranean / Spanish style common in Palm Springs during that era; the architect is unknown. According to the County Assessor, the house has an area of 3,884 square feet with an additional 420 square foot garage. According to the application, the house includes a great room; a kitchen; six bedrooms, 5 and one-half bathrooms and a detached studio / office. The addition of a second story over the garage was constructed in 1954.



Front - circa 1930



Front - 2010

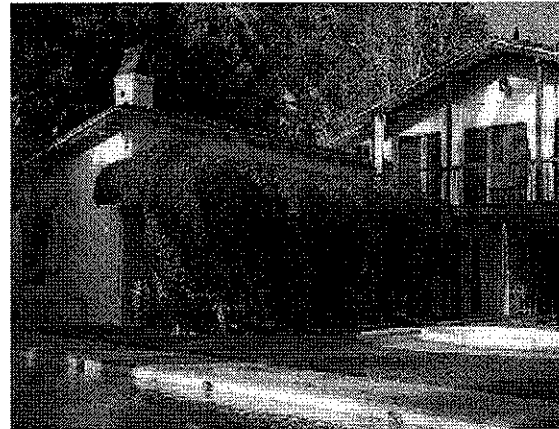
The house includes many features that represent the style: White-washed walls, red clay tile roof, wooden mullioned windows and doors, wood and iron balcony, heavy exposed beams are found on the building exterior. Inside are further examples of the style, including oak floors, corner fireplaces in a kiva style, redwood ceilings, redwood doors with original iron hardware, original tiles and fixtures in the bathrooms, and original wrought iron lighting fixtures throughout¹. The site is defined by original features, including decorative entry gates; white-washed slumpstone perimeter walls;

¹ Information regarding the building's interior is provided for descriptive purposes only. The interior of the structure is not subject to regulation under the Historic Preservation Ordinance (Section 8.05.195)

mature trees, including palm and fruit trees; and substantial gardens. A detailed description of the property is provided in the attached application and photographs.



Rear - circa 1930



Rear - 2010

The house has recently been restored including undoing numerous cosmetic alterations to the exterior and interior that had been made by prior owners. However, the basic configuration, design and architecture of the original home appear to have been unaltered over the years. An extensive discussion of the owner / applicant's restoration efforts is included in the application materials attached to this report.

Over the years the house has been owned by several notable people. The site was developed and owned by Claretta and Jacob Kocher in 1927. Dr. Jacob John Kocher (c. 1884-1938) began his medical practice in Palm Springs in 1917 and is recognized as the community's first physician. He opened his practice across from the Desert Inn, and also served on the Rations and Price Control Boards during World War I. In 1918, he was the first President of the Palm Springs Board of Trade (a precursor of the City Council). After retiring from medicine, Dr. Kocher invested in Palm Springs real estate.

The house was sold in 1931 and passed through a number of owners until 1954 when it was purchased by actor Cary Grant. An internationally-recognized movie star since the 1930's, Mr. Grant occupied the house from 1954 through 1972, claiming that he was retiring from Hollywood. However, he made thirteen movies during his tenure in Palm Springs, including "To Catch a Thief", "North by Northwest", "Charade", and his last movie, "Walk, Don't Run", released in 1966. He was married to actress Dyan Cannon from 1965 to 1968. Additional discussion of Mr. Grant's ownership of the house is found in the application materials. Because of Mr. Grant's eighteen year tenure and his extraordinary film career, the property is referred to as the Cary Grant Estate.

Less than a month after the sale to Mr. Grant, a building permit was issued to add a second story to the garage (permit dated May 17, 1954). According to the application materials, the two-bedroom, two-bath addition was designed by architect Wallace Neff, who was a personal friend of the Cary Grant. However, the building permit lists the owner as Stanley Fox, who held title to the property until April 27, 1954. It is possible that Mr. Neff designed the addition, but it cannot be verified from the record.

In 1988, the house was purchased by Christine and Frank Zane. Mr. Zane is a renowned body-builder, having won numerous awards, including Mr. Olympia in 1977, 1978, and 1979. While the Zane's occupied the property, Frank Zane conducted bodybuilding, fitness, nutrition, and motivation seminars around the world. He also operated the *Zane Haven Bodybuilding Learning Center* in Palm Springs.

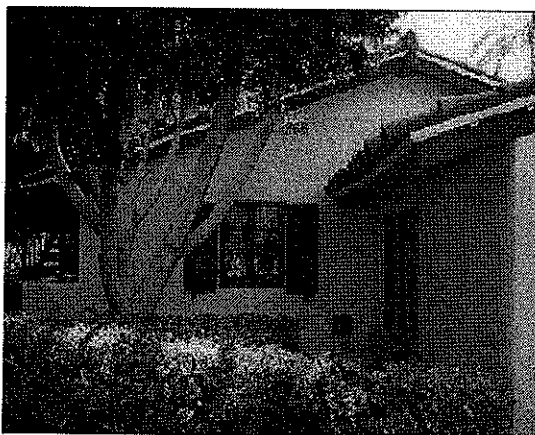
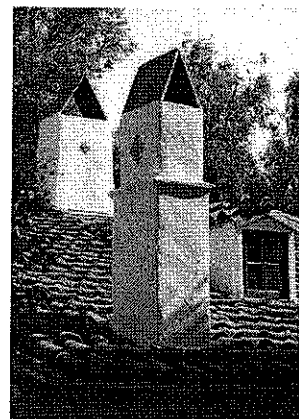
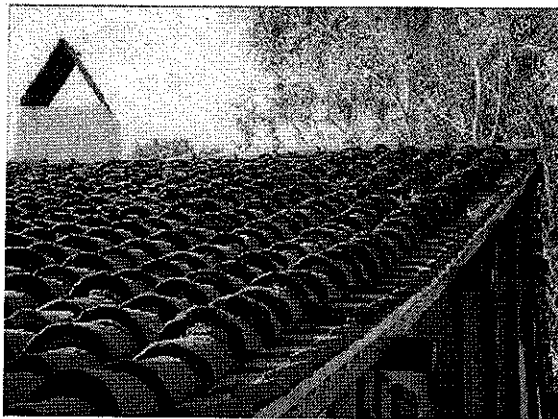
The Zane's sold the property in 1998 to Dr. Jane Cowles Smith (current owner and applicant). Dr. Smith is a cancer therapist and medical journalist, who received a master's degree in education at Harvard University and a Ph.D. in medical education at the University of Southern California Medical School. She has authored two medical books for the general public, "Informed Consent" and "Pain Relief".

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARISTICS

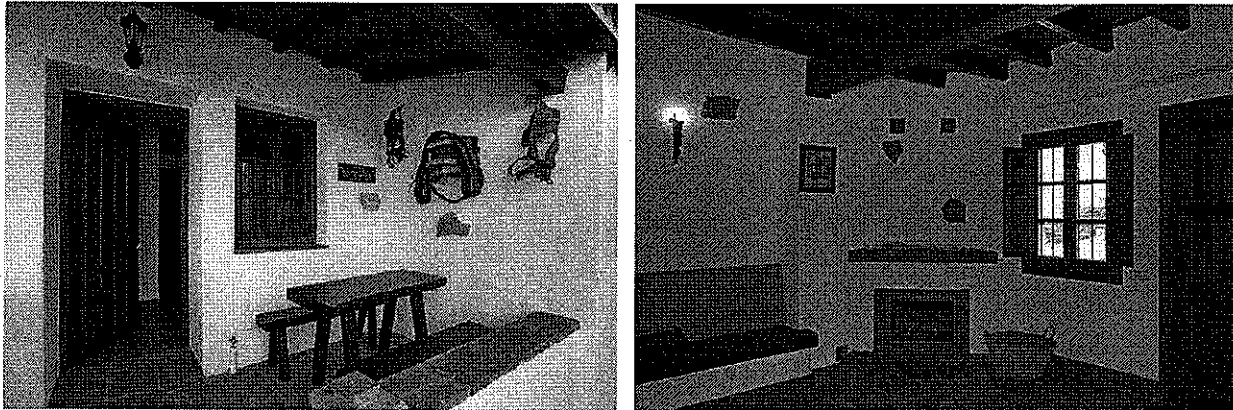
In addition to the overall plan, design and scale of the dwelling, those portions of the Cary Grant Estate that are good examples of the Spanish style Andalusian farm house, and are contributing factors of this site include:

Red clay tile roof
Heavy, exposed beams
Wooden mullioned windows / doors

White-washed walls
Original iron fixtures
Wood and iron balcony



The original photographs show shutters on some windows and doors, and all have been replaced by the current owner. It should be noted that true Andalusian style typically placed shutters on the inside, as seen in these photographs from southern Spain:



However, the shutters are part of the original design of the estate and they are not uncommon on other Mediterranean / Spanish styles. Further the owner sought out similar Palm Springs properties for the design of the replacements and they appear complementary to the rest of the structure.

The site has had significant landscape modifications since the original construction, but the perimeter wall and gates appear to have been built early in the life of the property, and today mature trees, plantings and other features provide an appropriate setting to the house.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

As noted above in Background and Setting, Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of 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". Seven other qualities are listed therein and staff notes that in addition to the finding of the basic definition of a historic site, four of the seven qualities, #2, #3, #4 and #5, can also be associated with the Cary Grant Estate, as follows:

- 2. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.*

Several owners of this property have made meaningful contributions to national, state or local history. Dr. Jacob John Kocher was the City's first physician and served on a number of the community's early civic organizations. Cary Grant was and remains one of the most recognizable names in movie stardom and, at this time, lived longer in the house than any other owner. Frank Zane is well-known in the body-building industry,

competed at the highest levels in the sport², and established his health and body-building business in Palm Springs while living at the property. Dr. Jane Cowles Smith consults widely on health issues has published books on health and pain management.

3. *That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*

The Spanish style of the property reflects the architectural design trends of the 1920's and '30's which recreated the rancho hacienda lifestyle of the early Californios. The Andalusian farm house style of this property uniquely represents the relaxed rural atmosphere of the past.

4. *That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;*

The Cary Grant Estate possesses excellent architectural features common to a Spanish style house of the 1920's, expressed in a unique farm house design. Barrel roof tiles, wide roof overhangs, thick white-washed walls, wood mullioned windows of varying sizes, and original iron hardware and fixtures are all good examples of the style.

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*

The designers of the original structures are not known. It is likely that Wallace Neff designed a second-story addition to the garage, but this has not been established with certainty. Nevertheless, the property is a complete and faithful restoration of the original structures, as well as a handsome and artistic example of the estates that once defined luxury living in Palm Springs.

CONCLUSION

Both the physical development of the site and the ownership history provide a strong basis for historic designation. The recent renovation yields a site that is in superior condition and makes a very good case for Class 1 status for the entire property. Staff recommends that any structural modifications or additions be subject to HSPB review; changes to plantings are recommended for exclusion from HSPB review.

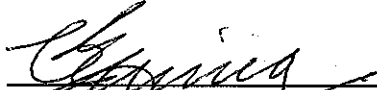
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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

² Mr. Zane won the Mr. Olympia contest in 1977, 1978 and 1979; Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger won that title in 1970-75 and in 1980.

NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any inquiries on this matter.



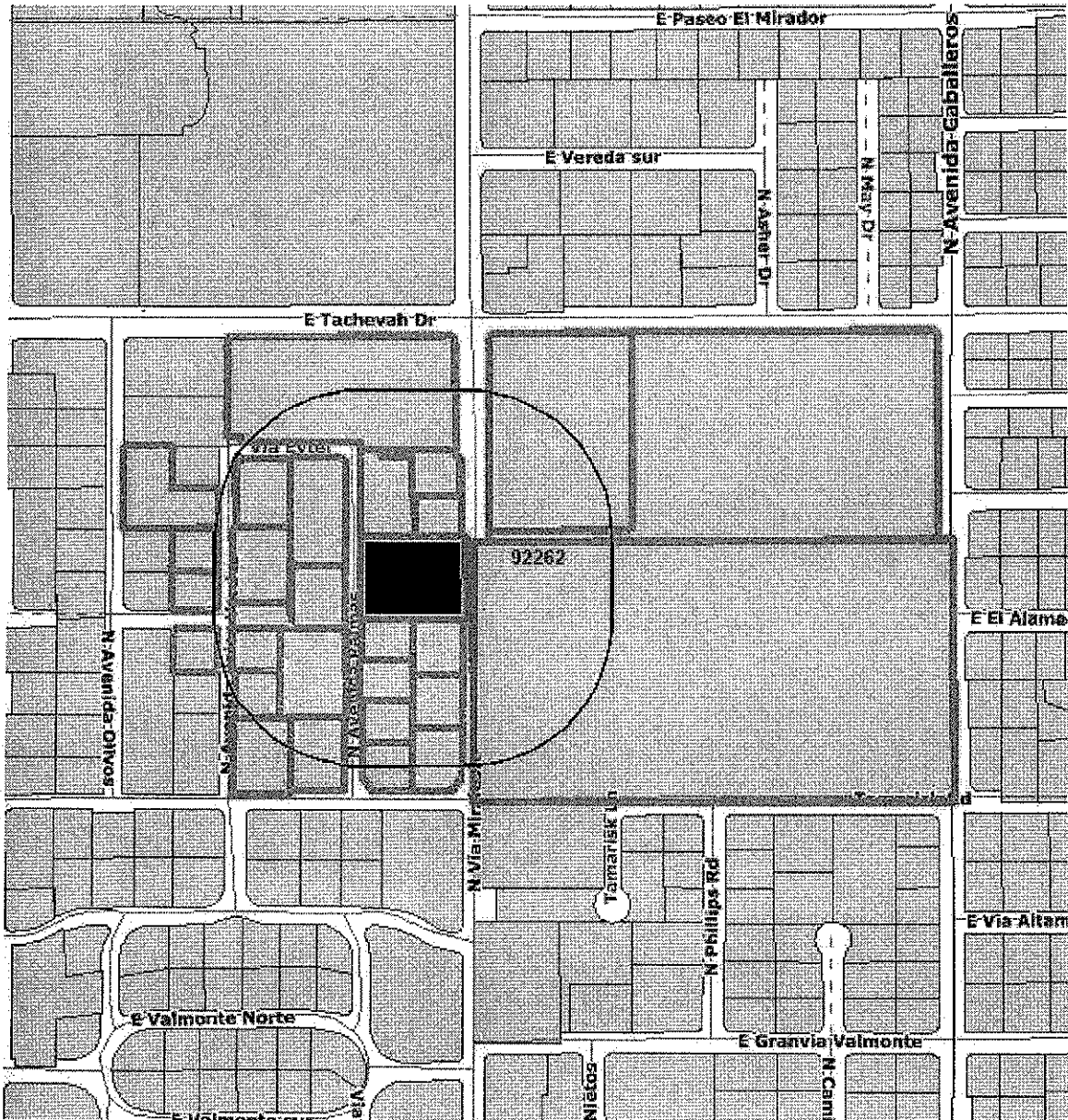
Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Application and Submitted Documents
4. Site Photos



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB 75

APPLICANT: Cary Grant House

DESCRIPTION: Application for a Class 1 Historic Site Designation at 928 North Avenida Palmas, Zone R-1-B, Section 11, APN 507-164-001.

RESOLUTION NO. ___

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 928 NORTH AVENIDA PALMAS ("CARY GRANT ESTATE") AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 75.

WHEREAS, in 1927, Dr. Jacob John Kocher commissioned the construction of the single family dwelling at 928 N. Avenida Palmas; and

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of this home are its faithful representation of an Andalusian farm-house, including white-washed walls, red clay tile roof, wooden mullioned windows and doors, wood and iron balcony, heavy exposed beams and numerous features within the dwelling that continue the style throughout the structure; and

WHEREAS, the dwelling has been occupied by several notable people, including Dr. Jacob Kocher, actor Cary Grant, body-builder Frank Zane and author / advocate Dr. Jane Cowles Smith; and

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

WHEREAS, the current property owner, Dr. Jane Cowles Smith, filed an application for Historic Site Designation; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the property, known as the "Cary Grant Estate", as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on June 8, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Cary Grant Estate as a historic site; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Cary Grant Estate shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Cary Grant Estate 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.

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: *That the property located at 928 N. Avenida Palmas is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.*

Several owners of this property have made meaningful contributions to national, state or

local history. Dr. Jacob John Kocher was the City's first physician and served on a number of the community's early civic organizations. Cary Grant was and remains one of the most recognizable names in movie stardom and, at this time, lived longer in the house than any other owner. Frank Zane is well-known in the body-building industry, competed at the highest levels in the sport, and established his health and body-building business in Palm Springs while living at the property. Dr. Jane Cowles Smith consults widely on health issues has published books on health and pain management.

Section 2. *That the property reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*

The Spanish style of the property reflects the architectural design trends of the 1920's and '30's which recreated the rancho hacienda lifestyle of the early Californios. The Andalusian farm house style of this property uniquely represents the relaxed rural atmosphere of the past.

Section 3. *That the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;*

The Cary Grant Estate possesses excellent architectural features common to a Spanish style house of the 1920's, expressed in a unique farm house design. Barrel roof tiles, wide roof overhangs, thick white-washed walls, wood mullioned windows of varying sizes, and original iron hardware and fixtures are all good examples of the style.

Section 4. *That the property presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or*

The designers of the original structures are not known. It is likely that architect Wallace Neff designed a second-story addition to the garage, but this has not been established with certainty. Nevertheless, the property is a complete and faithful restoration of the original structures, as well as a handsome and artistic example of the estates that once defined luxury living in Palm Springs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council designate the property located at 928 N. Avenida Palmas, Palm Springs, California ("Cary Grant Estate") as a Historic Site, Class 1 subject to the following conditions;

1. The property owner shall permit the City to place a historic marker of the City's choosing at the site. The marker shall be placed in a location visible from the public right-of-way. The owner shall maintain the marker in the location installed and pay for the replacement cost if the plaque is lost, stolen, or otherwise removed from the property.
2. All future modifications of the existing structures, as well as any new construction or any modifications to lighting, walls, and fences shall require HSPB review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.
3. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.

4. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
5. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be deemed acceptable.

ADOPTED this ___th day of June, 2010.

AYES: —
NOES: —
ABSENT: —
ABSTENTIONS: —

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services
Historic Site Preservation Board Secretary

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT

BUILDING

BUILDING DEPARTMENT, CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Job Location
928 Avenida Palmas

Lot *3* Block *B* Tract *Las Haciendas #2*

Owner
Stanley Fox

Contractor
W. A. Foster

Contractor's License No

Architect

State

City

Use and Occupancy

Dwelling

Lot Size

Blg Footage

Height

640

25

Zone

Fire Zone

Type

R-1

III

Front

Side

Side

Rear

Setbacks

Description of Work to Be Done—Remarks and References

add Store Room & helps Quarters to garage. Frame & Stucco Tile Roof

Total Value of Work

Including Labor, Material, Wiring, Heating, Plumbing, etc.

\$2000.00

PERMIT NO.

6770

PERMIT FEE \$

26.00

Owner OR Contractor

By

W. A. Foster

DATE

5/12/34