



## Historic Site Preservation Board Memo

Date: June 8, 2010

Case No: HSPB – 72 Orchid Tree Inn


Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application

Location: 261 S. Belardo Road

Applicant: Historic Site Preservation Board

Zone: R-3

APN: 513-151-041

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

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On April 13, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) continued the public hearing on the above application for 60 days at the request of the new property owner, Weintraub Financial Services, Inc. Staff has provided new notification of the continued hearing, since it has been several months since the last public notice. The property owner has also been advised of the hearing date.

The staff report from January 12, 2010 is attached to this memo to provide a complete description and analysis of the proposal. A draft resolution is also attached; it is based on staff's recommendation to designate three of the properties historic: The Bungalow Court Motel as Class 1, and the Craftsman Cottage site and Frey Apartment Building site as Class 2.

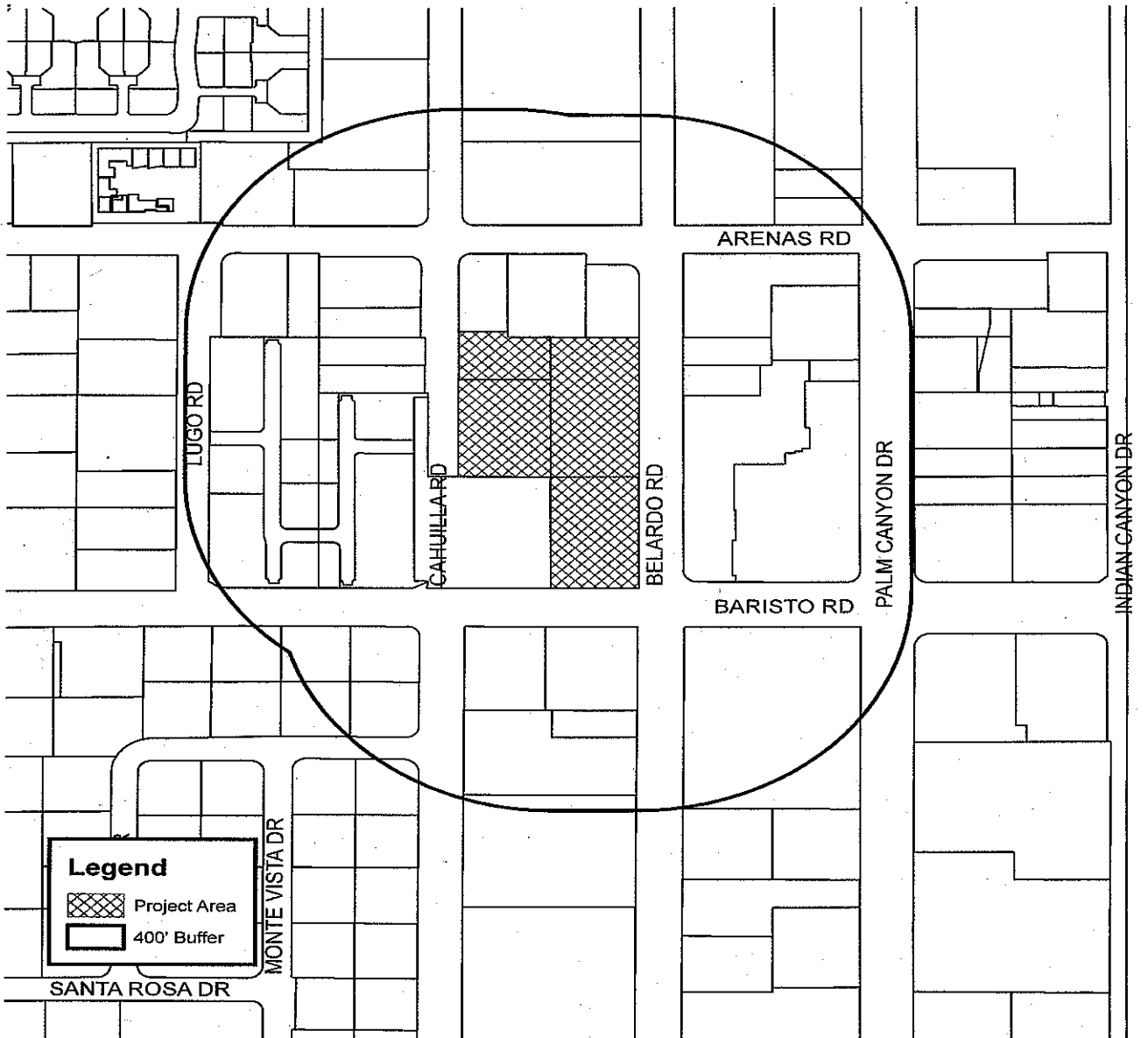
At the writing of this memo, a site visit had not been arranged with the property owner. However, Board members may report any site visits they may have performed.

Attachments:



Draft HSPB Resolution  
HSPB Staff Report, January 12, 2010  
Application and Background materials (distributed electronically)



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



**Legend**

-  Project Area
-  400' Buffer

## CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

**CASE NO:** HSPB 72

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

**DESCRIPTION:** Continuation of a Public hearing for possible designation of property as a Class 1 historic site located at 261 South Belardo Road, Zone R3, Section 15.  
APN: 513-151-041.

RESOLUTION NO.

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD  
OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,  
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL  
DESIGNATE 226 W. BARISTO ROAD, THE  
BUNGALOW COURT MOTEL AS A CLASS 1  
HISTORIC SITE, AND DESIGNATE 262 S. CAHUILLA  
ROAD - THE CRAFTSMAN BUNGALOW AND 292 S.  
BELARDO ROAD - THE FREY APARTMENNT  
BUILDING AS A CLASS 2 HISTORIC SITES APN's  
513-151-041, 042,043.

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

WHEREAS, the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) initiated the study 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 Orchid Tree Inn as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on December 8, 2009, the Historic Site Preservation Board continued a public hearing to a date certain in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Orchid Tree Inn as an historic site; and

WHEREAS, on January 12, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider the designation of the Orchid Tree Inn as a historic site, at which hearing the Board continued the matter for 90 days; and

WHEREAS, on April 13, 2010 and June 8, 2010, the Board conducted a continued hearing, with notice provided in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, the designation of portions of the Orchid Tree Inn shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of portions of the Orchid Tree Inn 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 finds the following:

1. The property located at 226 West Baristo Road built in the unique bungalow motor court style has been determined to meet the standards for Class 1 historic site designation.

The defining historic characteristics of this Class 1 site at 226 West Barito Road are as following: Bungalow Court Motel

- a. The grouping of the cottages around a central courtyard.
  - b. The presence of 10 lodging units.
  - c. One-story with wide overhanging eaves.
  - d. Projecting rafters and an informal floor plan opening to the common area.
  - e. Clay barrel tile roof, wooden doors, and double sash windows.
2. The fire destroyed Craftsman bungalow built in 1915 at 262 S. Cahuilla Road did possess special design elements unique to Palm Springs and would meet the standards for Class 2 designation.

The defining historic characteristics of this Class 2 site at 262 S. Cahuilla Road are as follows: The Craftsman Bungalow

- a. The one-story bungalow was of wood-frame construction and was clad in stucco.
  - b. A complex gable roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails capped the dwelling.
  - c. An open porch area sheltered by a shed roof was supported by square wood posts.
  - d. The center entry door was flanked by two wood-framed, multi pane casement windows.
  - e. A massive river rock chimney was located along the buildings south elevation.
  - f. An enclosed porch screen sitting area was located at the northwest end of the bungalow along with an enclosed porch at the rear of the building.
3. The Premiere Apartments designed by well known architect Albert Frey located at 292 S. Belardo Road and razed after a devastating fire meets the criteria of a Class 2 designation.

The defining historic characteristics of this Class 2 site at 292 S. Belardo Road are as follows: The Frey Apartment Building

- a. The modern style resort hotel apartment building was built in 1957.
- b. Architectural features such as low curved fiberglass panels which enclosed each of the ground floor unit's private decks.
- c. The use of concrete block, corrugated metal, and grooved plywood.
- d. Vertical dividers separated each of the balconies and outdoor porch areas and large round windows were placed and either end of the second floor wings.

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY RESOLVES:

Section 1. The Orchid Tree Inn Bungalow Court Motel meets the findings required to support designation as a historic site / Class One, as follows:

- A. The structures reflect or exemplify a particular period of the national, state or local history, because the Bungalow Court motels are a particular style of lodging unique to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and were an important forerunner to the motel industry. The bungalow motel consisted of detached cottages surrounded by a common area in a "U" formation. They were one-story with wide overhanging eaves, projecting rafters and an informal floor plan that opened to a common area. They typically contained a kitchenette, a bedroom, and a front room with bedding and kitchen utensils. Bungalow motels reflected a particular period in the history of Palm Springs by providing affordable lodging for the growing transient business.
- B. The structures embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because the bungalow motel consisted of simple detached units usually wood framed one-story cottages in a Mediterranean/ Spanish style. Wide overhanging eaves, barrel tile roofs and projecting rafters gave the bungalow distinctive characteristics. Entries to the units included wood doors, or glass sliders, all protected by extended porch roofs within small recessed verandas. Fenestration included large fixed paned glass windows, double hung sash windows with gable peaks punctuated by canales drainage holes.

Section 2. The Craftsman Bungalow Cottage meets the findings required to support designation as a historic site / Class Two, as follows:

- A. The structure reflected or exemplified a particular period of the national, state or local history, because the Craftsman Cottage was built around 1915, and owned and occupied by Genevieve Reilly, a Christian Science practitioner. It was later acquired and incorporated as part of the Orchid Tree Inn Property and converted to transient lodging as part of the motel. The presence of the uncommon building type like a Craftsman Cottage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century village of Palm Springs was a good example of an earlier period.
- B. The Craftsman Bungalow Cottage embodied the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because the one-story bungalow Craftsman Cottage was a rare house design in the desert, constructed of wood-frame, clad in stucco, with a complex gable roof, overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. Design elements included an open porch area sheltered by a shed roof supported by square wood posts. The center entry door was flanked by two wood-framed, multi pane casement windows. A massive river rock chimney was located along the buildings south elevation. An enclosed porch

screen sitting area was located at the northwest end of the bungalow along with an enclosed porch at the rear of the building.

Section 3. The Frey Apartment Building meets the findings required to support designation as a historic site / Class Two, as follows:

- A. The building embodied the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because as the Premier Apartments the building was built as a modern style resort hotel apartment in 1957 and the original complex included guest rooms, enclosed garages, shuffleboard court, and a swimming pool all for the use by the long-term tenants or tourists. The original structure contained architectural features such as low curved fiberglass panels which enclosed each of the ground floor unit's private decks; the use of concrete block, corrugated metal, and grooved plywood. Vertical dividers separated each of the balconies and outdoor porch areas and large round windows were placed at either end of the second floor wings.
- B. The building presented the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value, because the former Premiere Apartments was designed by one of Palm Springs' (and the Coachella Valley's) most prolific and accomplished architect, Albert Frey. The building was designed to take advantage of the mountain views to the west and the arid landscape. The building expressed key signature aspects or features of Frey's craft, including modern design, and the large round windows at either end of the second floor wings. It also reflected an experimental period in his architectural career whereby he adapted his design and use of materials for functional purposes. By utilizing extensive overhangs and material such as metal to reflect the heat of the sun, the building did not originally require air conditioning.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council designate:

- A. The Bungalow Court Motel at 226 W. Baristo Road a historic resource, Class 1;
- B. The Craftsman Bungalow at 262 S. Cahuilla Road a historic resource, Class 2; and
- C. The Frey Apartment Building at 292 S. Belardo a historic resource, Class 2,

subject to the following conditions:

1. For the Class 1 designation, 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 and Historic Site Preservation Board review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.

2. No permit for the alteration of the exterior of any Class One resource, 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 \_\_\_th day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010.

AYES:  
NAYS:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services



## Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: January 12, 2010

Case No.: HSPB – 72 Orchid Tree Inn

Application Type: Historic Designation

Location: 261 S. Belardo Road

Applicant: Historic Site Preservation Board

Property Owner: Palisades Development Group / Matt Fisher

Zone: R-3

General Plan: Small Hotel

APN: 513-151-041, 042, 043

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 designate Orchid Tree Inn at 261 South Belardo Road 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) recommends approval to the City Council designating portions of the Orchid Tree Inn at 261 South Belardo Road as Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Sites. A draft resolution is attached for consideration.



## **PRIOR ACTIONS**

- On June 14, 2005, the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) reviewed the project as a pre-application for a conceptual review regarding the relationship of new construction to the existing site and sensitivity to historic preservation.
- On June 12, 2006, the Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) reviewed the proposed project and voted 5-0 to restudy the architectural detailing and mass of the new condominium component of the project. The final comments by the committee were that the site plan, adaptive re-use, and restoration to historic buildings are a positive addition for the neighborhood and the city.
- On June 13, 2006, the Historic Site Preservation Board reviewed the proposed project. At the close of the discussion, a motion to continue the project until the July 11, 2006 meeting passed with a 4-2 (Williams, Nelson) vote. The one-month continuance carried a requirement that the developer, his agents, the author of the Historic Resources Assessment Report, the fellow board members, and members of the community to research for any additional documentation on sections A and B of the property site plan.
- On July 10, 2006, the Architectural Advisory Committee reviewed the revisions to the proposed new condominium building and voted 5-0 to recommend that the Planning Commission approve the architectural changes to the new residential condominium building with a request to bring the colors and materials board back to AAC at the time the construction drawings are approved.
- The July 11, 2006, Historic Site Preservation Board Site Preservation Board asked the developer, his team and the public for any additional documentation for Sections A and B, and based on the information received, voted 5-0 for a 120-day Stay of Demolition on the Craftsman Bungalow in order to allow time to investigate the potential re-location of the building. This stay only affects demolition permits for the bungalow, and all other entitlements and permits may proceed.
- On July 12, 2006, the Planning Commission voted 4-0 approving architectural approval for adaptive re-use from hotel to condominium, renovation and construction of thirty-four residential condominium units, and a conditional use permit for a bar and hospitality kitchen with a recommendation that the City Council approve Tentative Tract Map, TTM34019 and uphold the HSPB Stay of Demolition for the Craftsman Bungalow, and to allow subsequent demolition and construction of the proposed project at the end of the 120-day stay.
- On July 19, 2006, the City Council approved the tentative tract map to subdivide approximately the developed 2.13 acre site, for thirty-four residential condominiums, a nine-room hotel, and associated landscaping and parking.

- On Tuesday, September 8, 2009 the Board voted 7-0 to initiate an investigation and study of the proposed designation of the Orchid Tree Inn as a Class 1 Historic Site.

## **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.

Conditions that apply to Class 2 Historic Sites.

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 site is eligible for plaquing.
5. The site is not occupied by a modern structure or use which is different than that of the historical period.
6. The structure is unusable, nonconforming, unrestorable or the like.

**DESCRIPTION**

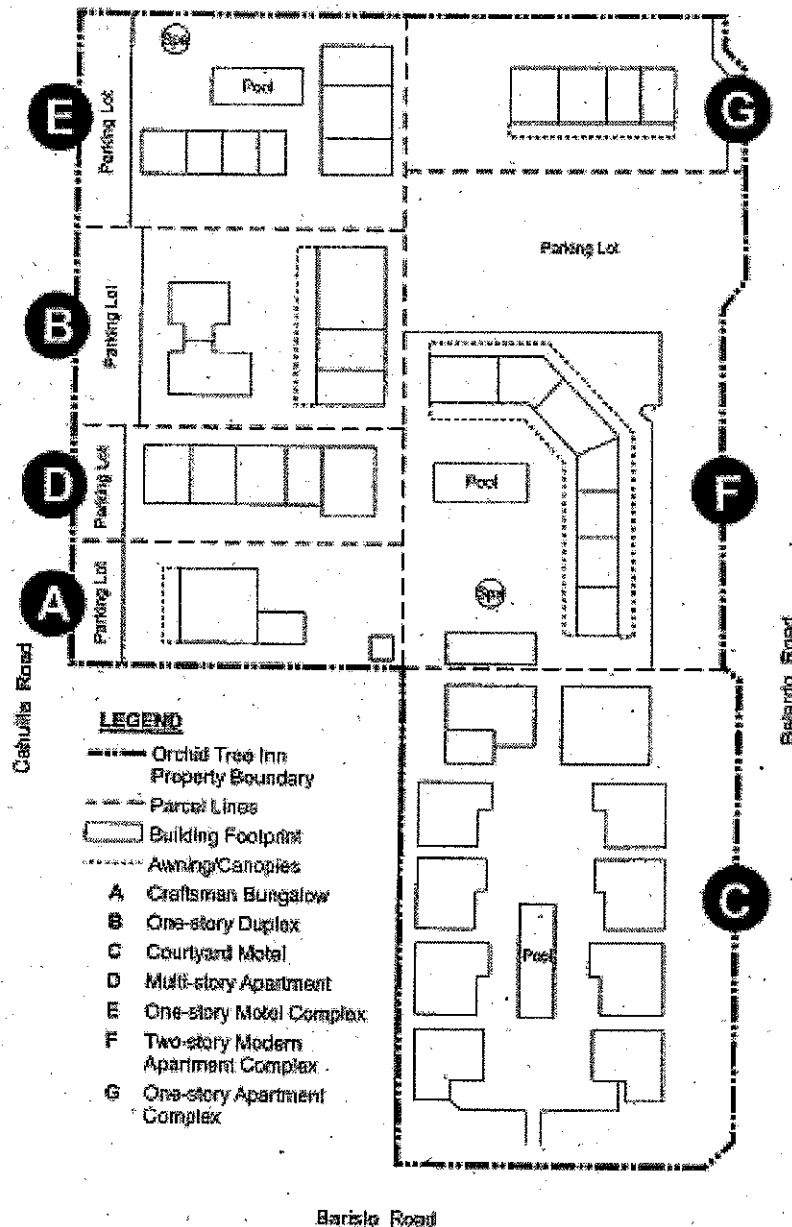
The Orchid Tree Inn site is an assemblage of five separate lots consisting of seven buildings built between the years from 1915 to 1948. The location of the complex at 261 South Belardo Road in the heart of the traditional Palm Springs Village is a concentration of early 20<sup>th</sup> century tourist and residential accommodations. The buildings were developed in close proximity to each other by multiple owners and are located within the Tennis Club Neighborhood of the City.

The seven buildings which make up the Orchid Tree Inn site along with their individual unique qualities can be characterized in Table 1 below:

**Table 1:**

Building	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
<b>Address</b>	<b>262 S. Cahuilla Road</b>	<b>244-248 S.Cahuilla Road</b>	<b>226 West Baristo Road</b>	<b>254 S. Cahuilla Road</b>	<b>220 S. Cahuilla Road.</b>	<b>292 S. Cahuilla Road</b>	<b>231 S. Belardo Road</b>
<b>Description</b>	Craftsman Bungalow	One-Story Duplex	Courtyard Motel	Multi-Story Apartment	One-story Motel	Two-Story Apartment	One-Story Apartment
<b>Year Built</b>	1934	1927	1934	1948	1941	1957-58	1938
<b>Design</b>	Destroyed by Fire	Spanish Colonial Revival	Spanish Colonial Tourist Court	Spanish Colonial Revival	Spanish Colonial Revival	Destroyed by Fire	No Distinctive Architect
<b>Materials</b>	Hand-set Stone Archway Remains	Flat Roof Stucco	Red Clay Tiles, Extended Porch Roofs	Metal Framed windows	Wood Framed	Destroyed by Fire	Wood Frame, Gravel Roof

A variety of building types comprise the Orchid Tree Inn property, including the following: a Craftsman bungalow (recently destroyed by fire); a two-story apartment building designed by Albert Frey (recently destroyed by fire); two one-story apartment buildings; a small Spanish style duplex; a one-story, L-shaped motel complex, a rectangular shaped four-unit apartment; and the original "U" shaped courtyard motel.



- Building A – Craftsman Bungalow (destroyed by fire)
- Building B – One-story Duplex
- Building C – Courtyard Motel
- Building D – One-story Apartments
- Building E – One-story Motel
- Building F – Frey Apartments (destroyed by fire)
- Building G – One-story Apartments

Over the years the Orchid Tree Inn complex has been operated by several owners and acquired different names including; The Sakarah, The Apache Lodge, and the Bel-Ardo Villas. In 1952 the bungalow court motel (building C) was sold and its current name came into place along with several renovations including the planting of Orchid Trees, the re-orientation of the main entrance and the installation of a swimming pool. With these renovations the property retained the original design of a charming bungalow court motel which conveys a particular period of time in Palm Springs history.

#### **Craftsman Cottage (Building A)**

The oldest structure in the complex was a Craftsman influenced bungalow (building A), which dated from around 1915. For over 45 years the bungalow was owned and occupied by Genevieve Reilly, a Christian Science practitioner. It was later acquired and incorporated as part of the Orchid Tree Inn Property and converted to transient lodging as part of the motel. The one-story bungalow was of wood-frame construction and was clad in stucco. A complex gable roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails capped the dwelling. An open porch area sheltered by a shed roof was supported by square wood posts. The center entry door was flanked by two wood-framed, multi-pane casement windows. A massive river rock chimney was located along the buildings south elevation. An enclosed porch screen sitting area was located at the northwest end of the bungalow along with an enclosed porch at the rear of the building. This structure was destroyed by a recent fire. Only a stone archway survived.

#### **The Bungalow Court Motel (Building C)**

As Palm Springs grew in stature as a destination for rest and relaxation in the early twenty-century, different styles of transient accommodations were built. One unique style was the bungalow court motel. This building type promoted a specific type of living, providing the amenities of a single-family residence – privacy, gardens, and porches, with the conveniences of an apartment - security and community. The bungalow courts were detached cottages surrounded by a common area in a "U" formation. They were one-story with wide overhanging eaves, projecting rafters and an informal floor plan that opened to the common area.

The original Sakarah (later the Orchid Tree Inn, building C) was a small motel consisting of 10 bungalow units. As was typical at the time, the complex was designed in a Spanish Colonial Revival style and featured a large landscape courtyard with a pool. The presence of the bungalow motel is locally significant as an example of a disappearing building type that is important to the history of Palm Springs. It is one of the earliest examples of this property type. Over time the 10-unit complex has been altered somewhat and the individual components may lack distinction, but as a grouping the units are historically significant.

#### **The Frey Apartment Building (Building F)**

The Orchid Tree Inn complex contained a two-story mid century modern motel apartment building designed by Albert Frey (building F). Originally the building was located across the street but was relocated in 1972 after it was threatened by demolition. The modern style resort hotel apartment building was built in 1957 and was known as the Premiere Apartments. The original complex included guest rooms,

enclosed garages, shuffleboard court, and a swimming pool all for the use by the long-term tenants or tourists. The original structure contained architectural features such as low curved fiberglass panels which enclosed each of the ground floor unit's private decks; the use of concrete block, corrugated metal, and grooved plywood. Vertical dividers separated each of the balconies and outdoor porch areas and large round windows were placed at either end of the second floor wings. This structure was completely destroyed by a recent fire.

### **Remaining Buildings (Buildings B, D, E, & G)**

The remaining four buildings consisting of a one-story duplex (building B); a one-story apartment building (building D); a one-story motel (building E); and a one-story apartment building (building G) are all constructed in a similar Spanish Colonial Revival style and are in various states of neglect and disrepair.

### **ANALYSIS**

An application for historic designation may be initiated by the Historic Site Preservation Board without the property owner being a party to the application as described by Section 8.05.135:

#### 8.05.135 Investigation and study.

*The historic site preservation board shall conduct or cause to be conducted such preliminary surveys, studies or investigations as it deems necessary to adequately inform the historic site preservation board and city council prior to the public hearing, and shall make available to any interested person the results of any such survey, study or investigation.*

Staff notified the property owner of the proposed application. Mark Fisher representing Pali-Palm Springs, LLC is in opposition to the application which is expressed in a letter dated September 3, 2009 and received by the Planning Department on September 8, 2009.

The site has been the subject of significant review activity by the City as described in the "Previous Actions" section of this staff report, including HSPB review of certain Class 3 structures on the site.

Subsequent to the approval of the planned development district entitlements by the City, two fires occurred at the site, one destroying a single bungalow constructed in 1915 and the other gutting the two-story apartment building designed by Albert Frey. No other actions have occurred on the site and all entitlements have since expired.

### **DEFINING HISTORIC CHARISTICS**

Those portions of the Orchid Tree Inn that are good examples of early twenty-century Palm Springs housing for permanent and transient residents and are contributing factors of this site include:

- The bungalow court motel with ten buildings in a "U" shape design surrounding a common courtyard in a Spanish/ Mediterranean style with wide overhanging

eaves, barrel tile roof, projecting rafters and an informal floor plan. This specific property to be designated as a Class 1 historic site.

- The past presence of the Craftsman Cottage built in 1915 and the remaining stone archway. This specific property to be designated as a Class 2 historic site.
- The Frey Apartment building built in the moderne style constructed of corrugated metal and wood with flat roof lines surrounding a common pool courtyard area. This specific property to be designated as a Class 2 historic site.
- The remaining four buildings containing design elements of Spanish/Mediterranean influence have been found to hold no historic significance.

### **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 and Staff notes that in addition to the finding of the basic definition of a historic site, the following required criteria as defined for Class 1 or 2 historic sites are as follows:

#### **Class 1 Designation: The Orchid Tree Inn Bungalow Court Motel**

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

Bungalow Court motels are a particular style of lodging unique to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and were an important forerunner to the motel industry. The bungalow motel consisted of detached cottages surrounded by a common area in a "U" formation. They were one-story with wide overhanging eaves, projecting rafters and an informal floor plan that opened to a common area. They typically contained a kitchenette, a bedroom, and a front room with bedding and kitchen utensils. Bungalow motels reflected a particular period in the history of Palm Springs by providing affordable lodging for the growing transient business.

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

The bungalow motel consisted of simple detached units usually wood framed one-story cottages in a Mediterranean/ Spanish style. Wide overhanging eaves, barrel tile roofs and projecting rafters gave the bungalow distinctive characteristics. Entries to the units included wood doors, or glass sliders, all protected by extended porch roofs within small recessed verandas. Fenestration included large fixed paned glass windows, double hung sash windows with gable peaks punctuated by canales drainage holes.

### **Class 2 Designation: The Craftsman Cottage**

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

The Craftsman Cottage was built around 1915 was owned and occupied by Genevieve Reilly, a Christian Science practitioner. It was later acquired and incorporated as part of the Orchid Tree Inn Property and converted to transient lodging as part of the motel. The presence of the uncommon building type like a Craftsman Cottage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century village of Palm Springs was a good example of an earlier period.

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

The one-story bungalow Craftsman Cottage was distinctive in its design being that it was constructed of wood-frame and clad in stucco. Craftsman Cottages with their complex gable roof with overhanging eaves and exposed rafter tails capped the dwelling was a rare house design in the desert. Design elements included an open porch area sheltered by a shed roof supported by square wood posts. The center entry door was flanked by two wood-framed, multi pane casement windows. A massive river rock chimney was located along the buildings south elevation. An enclosed porch screen sitting area was located at the northwest end of the bungalow along with an enclosed porch at the rear of the building.

### **Class 2 Designation: The Frey Apartment Building**

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

The Premier Apartment had a distinctive characteristic in that it was built as a moderne style resort hotel apartment in 1957 and the original complex included guest rooms, enclosed garages, shuffleboard court, and a swimming pool all for the use by the long-term tenants or tourists. The original structure contained architectural features such as low curved fiberglass panels which enclosed each of the ground floor unit's private decks; the use of concrete block, corrugated metal, and grooved plywood. Vertical dividers separated each of the balconies and outdoor porch areas and large round windows were placed and either end of the second floor wings.

*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;*

The former Premiere Apartments presents the work of one of Palm Springs' (and the Coachella Valley's) most prolific and accomplished architect, Albert Frey. The building was designed to take advantage of the mountain views to the west and the arid landscape. The building expresses key signature aspects or features of Frey's craft, including moderne design, and the large round windows at either end of the second



floor wings. It also reflects an experimental period in this architectural career whereby he adapted his design and use of materials for functional purposes. By utilizing extensive overhangs and material such as metal to reflect the heat of the sun, the building did not originally require air conditioning.

### **Final Recommendation**

Based on the above analysis and research report, staff has concluded that the following structures of the Orchid Tree Inn complex meet the definition of a Class 1 historic site because of the location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and aesthetic and because the building possesses qualities defined in items 3, and 4 from Municipal Code Section 8.05.020: Orchid Tree Inn Bungalow Court Motel – 226 W. Baristo Road.

Staff recommends that two properties; The Craftsman Cottage at 262 S. Cahuilla Road; and the Frey Apartment Building at 292 S. Belardo Road, be designated Class 2 historic sites. Staff notes that these two sites may indeed have held elements that would advance the intent of the City's historic ordinance, but the fact that these properties were destroyed by fire and razed merits a Class 2 status. The buildings possess qualities defined in items 3, 4, and 5 from Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.

Staff believes that designation of the remaining structures comprising the Orchid Tree Inn complex will not further the intent of the historic site ordinance. Staff recommends that any future development proposal be sensitive to the original setting of the site in terms of massing and building design.

### **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.

### **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.

HSPB at their December 8, 2009 meeting continued the public hearing to the date specific meeting of January 12, 2010.

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Glenn Mlaker, Assistant Planner

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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Application for Historic Designation
4. Letter from Property Owner
5. Letter from Tennis Club Homeowners Assoc.
6. Public Hearing Notice
7. Historic Resource Assessment Report
8. Riverside Co. Historic Site Survey Report
9. Site Photos from 2005
10. Current Site Photos