



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: July 13, 2010

Case No: 5.1032 – HSPB # 3 – Welwood Murray Memorial Library

Application Type: Minor Architectural Approval (MAA) - Amendment


Location: 100 South Palm Canyon Drive

Applicant: City of Palm Springs

Zone: CBD (Central Business District)

General Plan: CBD (Central Business District)

APN: 513-144-006

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The request is an amendment to a certificate of approval for the remodel of the Welwood Murray Memorial Library. The applicant has determined that the roof of the previously-approved rear (north) addition resulted in an interior room height that is non-conforming and too low for convenient use.

The applicant proposes a higher roof which would attach to the main building wall below the existing roof eave, but above the clerestory windows (the previous design showed the new roof attaching below these windows). In addition, the applicant has redesigned the wall of the new addition to eliminate the aluminum window frames and use floor-to-ceiling glass with silicon sealant between the vertical edges. No other changes are proposed to the building.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Historic Site Preservation Board approve the amendment to the certificate of approval.

PRIOR ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE PROJECT

On October 3, 1984, the City Council voted to designating the property at 100 South Palm Canyon Drive, the Welwood Murray Memorial Library as a Class 7 historic site.

On May 11, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board approved a Certificate of Approval for a remodel and expansion of the library.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The proposal is a redesign of the approved curvilinear 1,589 square foot addition to the rear of the building in the existing courtyard. The original design included a flat roof that attached approximately three and one-half feet below the top of the wall. At this attachment point, the existing clerestory windows remain exterior building elements above the new roof. They would be visible primarily from second story and higher view points in adjacent buildings. The curvilinear elevation is approved as being composed of aluminum frames filled with glass, including framed glass doors.

The amendment proposes a revised roof by increasing the height about 3 feet and connecting it to the exterior wall immediately below the shortened eave of the existing tile roof. In addition, a frameless floor-to-ceiling glass system, with the base and top frames set into the concrete floor and roof beam, respectively. Sealant is used between the windows' vertical joints. No other changes are proposed.

As before, the new structure will extend twenty-five (25) feet out into the courtyard area, and the roof will be made of fibertite roofing, with crème-colored ridged foam insulation. The primary effect of the proposed amendment will be to enclose the clerestory windows within the new enclosure rather than exposing them above the shed roof. Secondly, the revised roof height will alter the scale relationship between the old library and the new addition; however, this change will be somewhat less apparent since the two roofs will not be easily seen together, except along the side entries and from upper level views at Plaza Las Flores and surrounding buildings.

The revised window system will provide a more transparent view into and out of the library, and further distinguish the modern addition from the classically-designed original building.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

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:

That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or

- 1. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or*
- 2. That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*
- 3. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or*
- 4. 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*
- 5. That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
- 6. That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

Staff has evaluated this application for an amendment to the approved addition of 1,589 square feet to the rear of the Library building, noting that the reason for the amendment is that the approved roof profile leaves an insufficient interior height for building code and functional requirements. The proposed revision would increase the interior height from 7 feet at its lowest point to 9 feet, 9 ½ inches throughout. Not only does the amendment conform to the minimum height standards of the California Building Code (7 feet, 6 inches) but it provides a more spacious and comfortable interior space for library patrons.

The revised glass system will provide a more open view as framing elements are eliminated and the wall of glass becomes almost imperceptible. Staff believes that the distinctive architectural elements of the building will not be compromised because the revised roofline of the courtyard addition is at the rear of the building. Those elements of the building facing the street which date to 1940 will not be altered, and the rear addition will not mimic the original building.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is categorically exempt from environmental review per Section 15301(L), (1) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

CONCLUSION

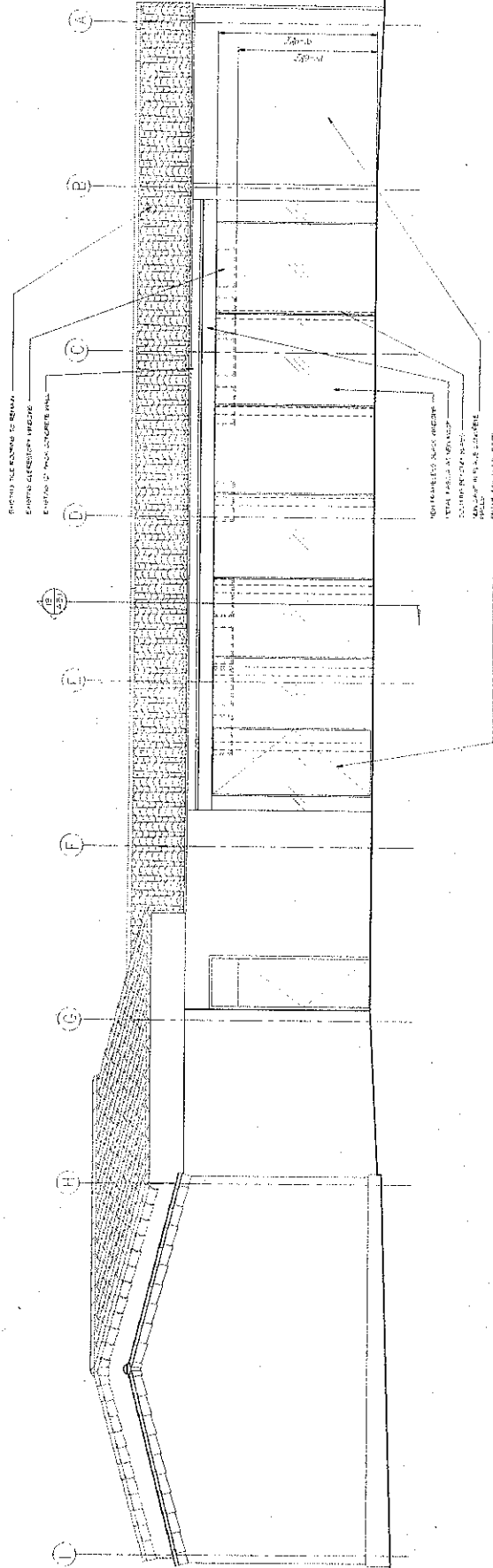
The distinctive architectural elements of the building will not be compromised and the proposed amendment to the rear addition will create a more useable facility. The rear of the library has been altered in the past to create additional space, and the proposed amendment is consistent with this pattern of adaptation and expansion. The raised roofline will compromise somewhat the relative scale of the original building, but only to

a limited set of views. The potential for active use of the original building is enhanced by the proposed amendment. Staff has concluded that the proposal will not affect the historic designation of the site, and recommends that the HSPB issue a certificate of approval.

ATTACHMENTS

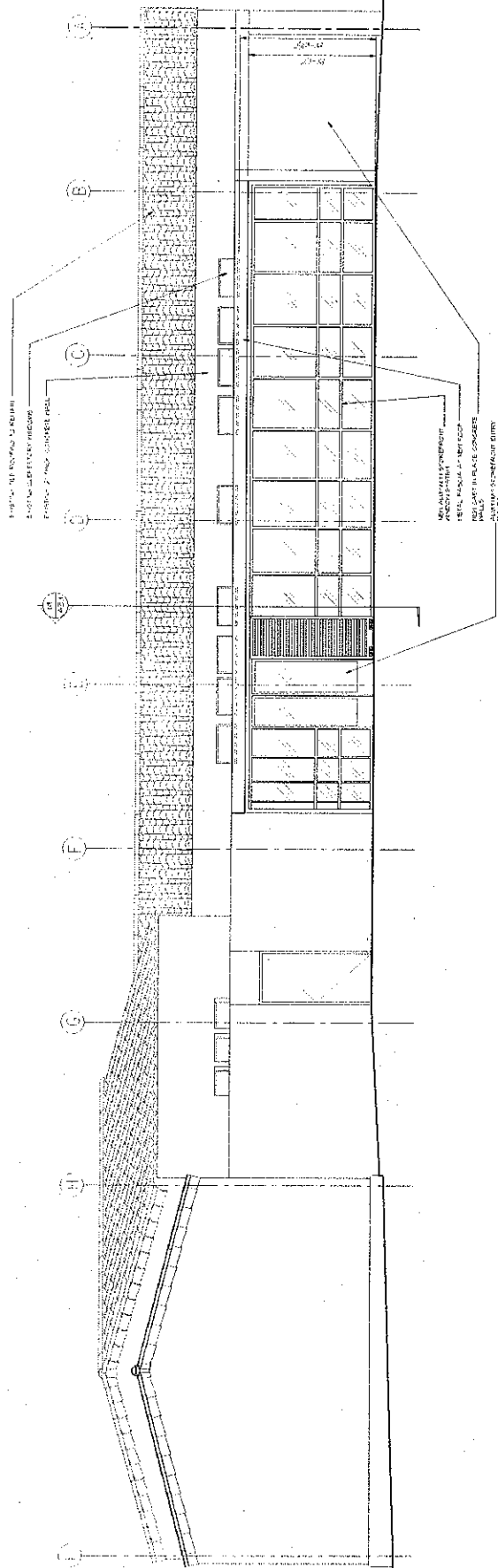
1. Building Elevations
2. Cross Section

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Ⓢ SOUTH ELEVATION W/ HIGH ROOF AT READING ROOM

Proposed Amendment



Ⓢ SOUTH ELEVATION W/ LOW ROOF AT READING ROOM

Current Approval

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PROJECT TITLE
MELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY RENOVATION
PROJECT LOCATION: CALIFORNIA HISTORIC LANDMARK

SHEET DESCRIPTION
BUILDING ELEVATIONS
SCALE: AS NOTED
DATE: 07/20/10

A2.1

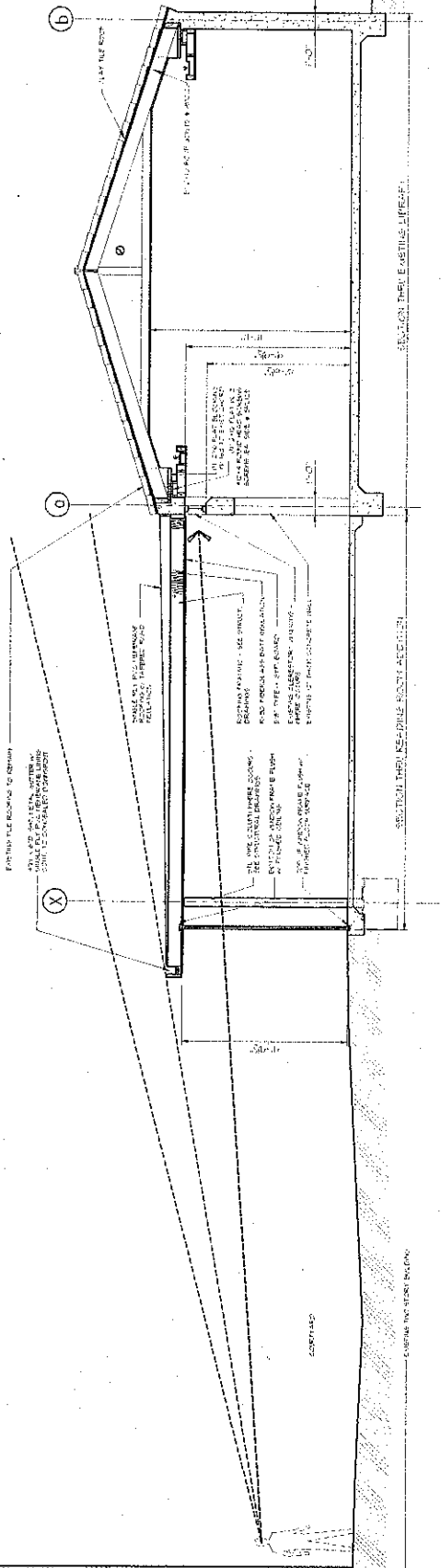
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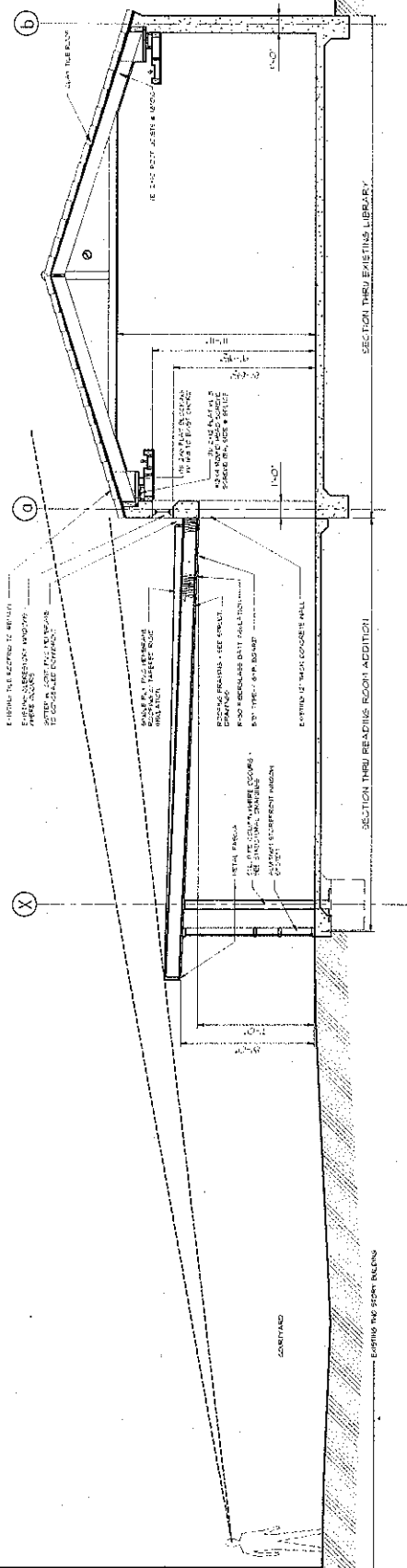
MELWOOD HARRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY RENOVATION
 PROJECT TITLE:
 100 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE
 PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 92262

BUILDING SECTIONS
 SCALE AS NOTED
 DATE: 07/08/10

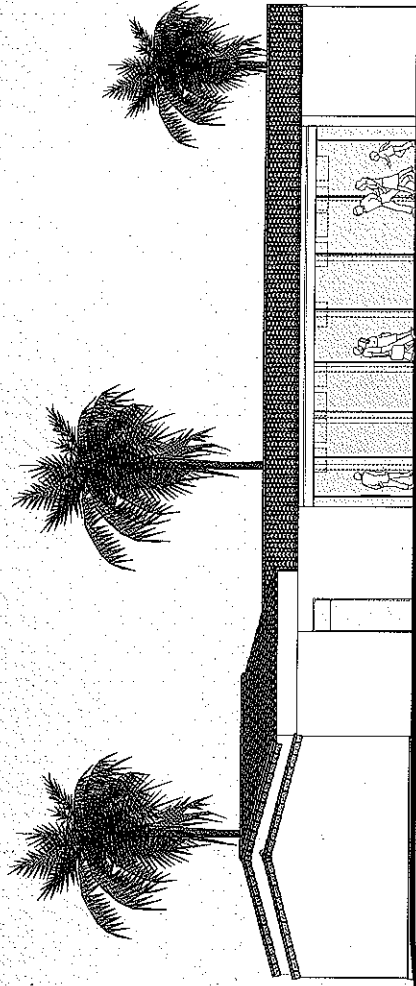
SHEET DESCRIPTION
A3.1



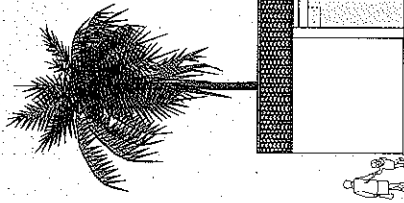
BUILDING SECTION W/ HIGH ROOF AT READING ROOM
Proposed Amendment



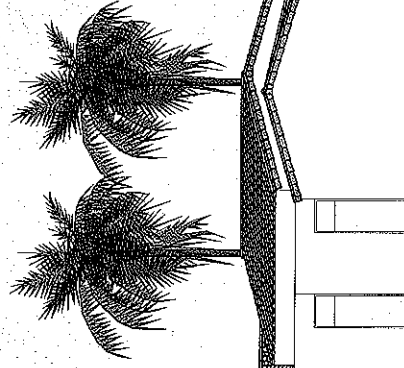
BUILDING SECTION W/ LOW ROOF AT READING ROOM
Current Approval



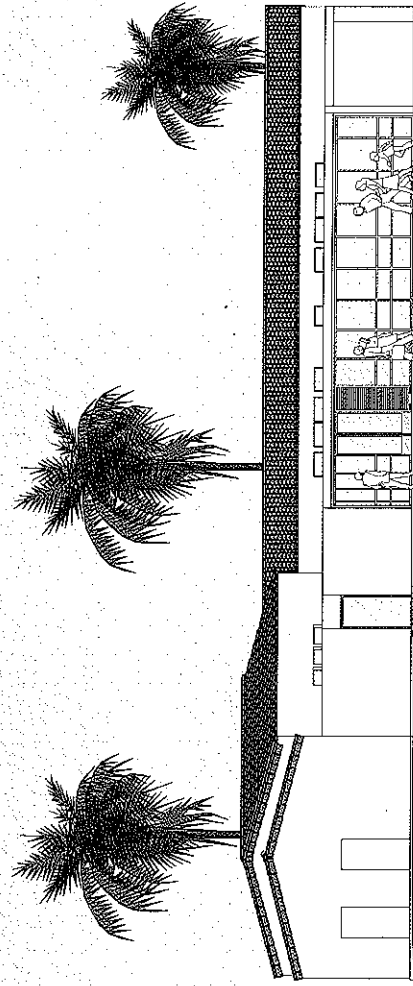
SOUTH ELEVATION / HIGH ROOF AT READING ROOM



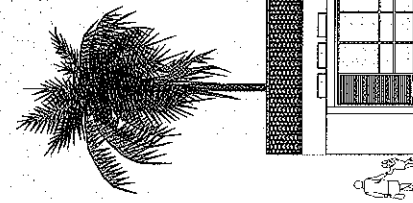
EAST ELEVATION / HIGH ROOF AT READING ROOM



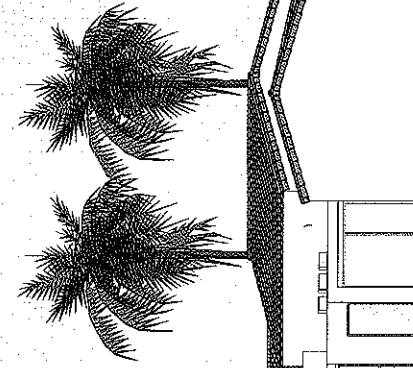
EAST ELEVATION / LOW ROOF AT READING ROOM



SOUTH ELEVATION / LOW ROOF AT READING ROOM



EAST ELEVATION / LOW ROOF AT READING ROOM



EAST ELEVATION / LOW ROOF AT READING ROOM

Proposed
Amendment

Current
Approval

WELWOOD LIBRARY ELEVATIONS



WELWOOD LIBRARY

DATE: 07/06/10 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"