



## Historic Site Preservation Board Memo

Date: August 10, 2010

Case No: HSPB – 75

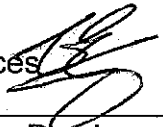
Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application

Location: 948 Avenida Palmas

Applicant: Dr. Jane Smith

Zone: R-1-A

APN: 507-164-001

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

Subsequent to the HSPB meeting of July 13, 2010, the applicant, Dr. Jane Cowles Smith, requested that the application for historic designation of the property at 948 Avenida Palmas be returned to the Board for consideration and action. (Dr. Smith requested withdrawal of the application at the July 13<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, but has since reconsidered.) The application has not changed since the previous Board meeting and no new information is presented; therefore, staff believes that the Board may take up this request as a continuation of its previous deliberations.

The Board has received a significant amount of information and materials on the request. Attached to this memo is the July 13<sup>th</sup> submittal presented to the Board from Dr. Smith which includes some clarifications she offered in response to previous Board questions, including:

- The name of the original owner and developer, Dr. Jacob John Kocher
- The project as a "restoration" as opposed to a "renovation".
- The use of tiles as chimney caps
- The presence and design of shutters on most all windows.
- Dr. Kocher's status as the community's "first" physician.
- The style of the house as Spanish Colonial. (During the July 13<sup>th</sup> meeting, Dr. Smith testified to her preference for the term "California Style".)
- The use of the term "replica".
- The use of "Cary Grant Estate" as the historic name for the property.

Other topics discussed include the analysis of living persons, landscaping, exterior building material and color, the slate walkways and various persons associated with the property.

Staff continues to recommend that the HSPB recommend to the City Council designation of the property at 948 Avenida Palmas as a historic site, with Class 1 status. A draft resolution is attached.

**Attached**

1. Draft Resolution
2. Application Information
3. Staff reports, June 8 and July 13, 2010
4. Vicinity Map

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 August, 2010.

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

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

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

# JANE COWLES SMITH

928 NORTH AVENIDA PALMAS • PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262 • (760) 322-1040  
EMAIL: JANESMITH48@YAHOO.COM

July 12, 2010

Mr. Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS  
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

SUBJECT: Case No. HSPB – 75  
Class 1 Designation application for 928 North Avenida Palmas  
(APN 507-164-001)  
Providing addition information based on further research

Dear Craig,

As a follow-up to the HSPB June 8, 2010 meeting which continued this item, since some questions had been raised about a number of items, I did further research. I am providing this information to further supplement the report that I had forwarded to you for my application, which in turn, you provided to Chairman John Gilmer and Board members. I realize that as an essential function of the public hearing process that additional information was presented during the June 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, and that even more information has since been distributed following the meeting. I realize that one of the objectives of the HSPB this year has been the expectation of substantiating a greater level of verifiable documentation for historic applications. Based on a number of compliments that I have received from individual Board members, I appreciate that the more comprehensive content of my application material can accommodate the Board's efforts and level of expectation enhanced for other future historic applications.

My review of this information identifies that some portions of it contain incorrect or partially incorrect. I want to share this new (or clarified) information to assist you and the Board's efforts. My responses contained within the attachment correspond in the same order of your memorandum to the HSPB dated July 13, 2010. As with my original application submittal, I understand that that you will be forwarding this supplemental information to HSPB members, and it is my understanding that the Board members have retained the original application material that I had earlier provided.

As always, if you should have any questions, please feel welcome to get in touch with me at (760) 322-1040.

Thank you.



JANE COWLES SMITH

Attachment: July 12, 2010 Jane Cowles Smith Memorandum to the HSPB

July 12, 2010

TO: Chairman John Gilmer and Members, Historic Site Preservation Board  
CC: Craig Ewing, Director of Planning Services

FROM: Jane Cowles Smith, Applicant

SUBJECT: Case No. HSPB – 75  
Class 1 Designation application for 928 North Avenida Palmas  
(APN 507-164-001)

Dear HSPB Chair and Members,

Since some questions were raised during the June 8<sup>th</sup> HSPB meeting regarding uncertainty about a number of items, below I am providing the results of my additional research. This information corresponds in the same sequence as the points presented in Craig Ewing's Board Memo dated July 13, 2010:

1. Correct name of Dr. J.J. Kocher?: I concur, the chain of title identifies "Jacob John Kocher." (I had previously provided the chain of title information, Page 1 that Jacob John Kocher, et al, in 1927 "Purchased the real property for subdivision Blocks A and B of Las Hacenditas No. 2 as shown on map on file in the Office of the County Recorder, Riverside County, California, in Book 15 of Maps, at Page 55, thereof."). This purchase of lots were bound by Via Miraleste to the east, to Avenida Palos Verdes to the west (which included both sides of North Avenida Palmas), from Tachevah Drive where the current professional medical center is located, to Tamarisk Road to the south. On Page 4 of the chain of title, "A grant deed from the Jacob John Kocher, et al, to Julian S. Nolan on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, 1931 . . . sold 'Lots three (3), four (4), five (5), and six (6) of Block B Las Hacienditas Tract No. 2, in Palm Springs, as shown in Book Fifteen (15) at Page Fifty-Five (55) Book of Maps, in the Office of County Recorder, Riverside County. Subject to conditions, restrictions, reservations, rights of way, record, and subject to the second half of the taxes of 1930 – 31'" (Further document chain of title, Page 5).

2. Restoration vs. Renovation: Since I purchased the estate in 1998, similar to other previous restoration work on other historic homes that I have overseen, my efforts have been to faithfully restore this property. In pursuing this task, I did not have the benefit of historical photos or write-ups from national publications on the estate, such as "Architectural Digest." I faithfully restored the Cary Grant Estate using the same materials, methods and research, and did not deviate in a manner that would be deemed historically inconsistent. I did not altar the footprint or any significant architectural detail, nor did I altar the landscaping on the grounds, with the exception of working with a trained arborist to ensure the old growth was healthy and properly maintained. There were no chimney caps on the house with exception of the Gladding McBean tiles on the chimney above the south wing, which I used spare tiles found on the property which matched the chimney tiles (on the south wing). Discussion is presented in Item No. 4 below addressing the use of window and door shutters that is demonstrated to be a part of the original building design.

3. Chimney cap finish: As indicated earlier, previously when I initiated restoration efforts, I had no access to the early Willard photographs which show a curved metal cap on one of the fireplaces. Because the south wing fireplace had the traditional angled flat tile top, and when I purchased the estate in 1998, none of the other fireplaces had anything but screened tops, I assumed that the tiles had been broken or destroyed over the years (although the south wing angled tile top remained in tact). The Gladding McBean tiles used for the angled top were unique and apparently there solely for this purpose, and their application found no where else on the structure. Since these flat tiles were available on the site and unused, my anticipation is that the builder's intention was to similarly apply them to the other chimney caps. Furthermore, since the use of a curved metal cap would be architecturally inconsistent and considered "cheap" in comparison with the higher quality Gladding McBean flat tiles (different varieties were used throughout the house including the roof), it is highly unlikely this would have been considered as a permanent architectural treatment. It has been my experience that the only reason that the curved metal cap was applied (as appearing in one of the early Willard photographs) was for temporary purposes to prevent rain percolating down the interior of the fireplace and to prevent small animals from entering through the chimney top since the chimney was incomplete. In fact, it appears that active construction work was ongoing when the early Willard photograph was taken, with five chimneys under construction, one of which apparently incomplete the day the photograph was taken.

4. Shutters: Although the actual shutters were missing from the house, the shutter holders and hinges were in place, embedded in the stucco wall finish, on both first and second floor doors and windows. Since historic photos suggested that the shutters were comprised of thinner wood members, it is likely that due to their exposure to solar radiation (especially on the south and west exposures from 1927), that the shutter absences were due to a need for repair or replacement. By coincidence, at the time when seeking out similar architectural features in other Movie Colony residences, I discovered at the nearby historic "Invernata" Estate the same shutter holders as forged by the same blacksmith being used as installed at the Cary Grant Estate. Although to reiterate I did not have the benefit of historic photos in which to refer, I was fortunate at the time to have duplicated Invernata's shutters which actually architectural design matched historic Cary Grant Estate photos which later became available to me.

5. Dr. Kocher first Palm Springs Physician? Although Dr. Jacob John Kocher was reported to be the first pharmacist in Palm Springs, research appears to verify that he was not Palm Springs' first physician. According to "Palm Springs Legends" by author Greg Neimann, Harry Coffman, M.D. was the first physician licensed by the State of California in Palm Springs, to set-up a practice in the Village. In 1909, Harry Coffman, M.D. and his wife, Nellie, started the Desert Inn, which was first a sanatorium – later more commonly called a "sanitarium" – to treat people suffering from pulmonary ailments. He was no small part of its establishment. In 1918, Dr. Coffman left Palm Springs to practice medicine in Calexico then later in Cherry Valley. He died in 1935 and is buried in the old Welwood Murray Palm Springs Cemetery. The Desert Inn became a true four-star hotel known throughout the world.

6. Architectural style: According to the National Registration guidelines, 928 North Avenida Palmas falls under the major architectural classification of "Colonial", and "Spanish Colonial" subcategory. Setting aside the characterization that the structure



appears as a "Swiss chalet", based on previous HSPB discussion, I understand that the Board already recognizes its "Andalusian" influence.

7. Replica: Although the structure is certain to replicate many architectural characteristics typical of Andalusian farmhouses found in southern Spain, nonetheless there are no models that can be identified domestically or overseas in which to conduct an exact comparison.

8. Historic name: Within my application, my intent was to follow the guidelines when completing the National Register form. The guidelines state:

*"Enter the names of well-known persons as they are listed in the Dictionary of American Biography . . . If a property is significant for more than one person, choose the most prominent. If the persons are equally important, include as many names as appropriate but do not exceed 120 characters for the entry. The property may be named for both the husband and wife who owned it. If there is not enough space for both names, choose the most prominent person's name or eliminate the first name altogether."*

Although the chain of title verifies that Dr. Jacob John Kocher and his wife, Clareta, purchased the undeveloped property on March 23, 1927, it can not be documented to what extent, if any, that he and his wife may have actually resided, except that according to the chain of title, when Dr. and Mrs. Kocher sold the home in January 23, 1931 (recorded March 5, 1931), the property was developed with the residential structure that exists today.

Upon review of Page 4 of the chain of title, it appears that new property taxes were assessed based on what appears as construction completion leading credence that the home was completed sometime in 1930, as per the following:

*" . . . the grant deed selling Lots 3, 4, 5 and 6 on Block B, Las Hacenditas Tract No. 2, in Palm Springs, as shown in Book 15, page 55, Book of Maps, in the Office of County Recorder, Riverside County. Subject to conditions, restrictions, reservations, rights of way, of record, and subject to the second half of the taxes for the year 1930 - 31."*

Based on this, if Dr. and Mrs. Kocher had resided in the home, it appears that it may have been only a very brief time, at the very most no more than one year. As such, it appears highly unlikely that he built it as his permanent home and equally unlikely that he even resided at the estate at all. Additionally, it should be noted that within this chain of title document, the description of Dr. Kocher's purchase states:

*"All the blocks of A and B of Las Hacenditas No. 2 as shown by map on file in the Office of the County Recorder of Riverside County, California, in Book 15 of Maps, at page 55, thereof."*

A review of the current Riverside County Assessor's Map appears to identify his purchase consisting of one or two contiguous residential subdivisions created in 1927, exclusive of all lands identified as blocks A and B, extending from Tachevah Drive to the

north, to Tamarisk Road to the south, and from Avenida Palos Verdes to the west to Via Miraleste to the east. These were large "estate" size lots, which appear to have originally consisted of a total of three, however having since been subdivided into smaller lots. What we do know about Dr. Kocher is that besides reported being the city's first pharmacist (although not the first physician) and active in many civic affairs, this purchase illustrates his reputation as one involved as "an entrepreneur" with many local business enterprises.

During previous HSPB discussion, questions had been raised to what extent had Cary Grant resided full-time at "Las Palomas." Although Dr. Kocher had some degree of notoriety in the Palm Springs area, nonetheless Cary Grant's continuous ownership of the property for 18 years (1954 - 1972) appears to more closely correspond to the National Registry's guidelines in reference to the Grant name. According to a feature article appearing in the March, 2006 issue of "Architectural Digest", it appears to convey the extent of Cary Grant's intensity of interest in "Las Palomas" as per the following excerpt:

*"In 1946 Grant, returning from a visit to England aboard the Queen Mary, met the young actress Betsy Drake, whom he had seen perform on stage in London. They were married three years later; she was 26, he was 45. Both were avidly interested in healthy, outdoor living, and, in 1954, after several years of vacationing in Palm Springs, they bought the house at 928 [North] Avenida Palmas, which they names Las Palomas. By then, Grant was 50 and frustrated with the quality of parts he was offered and with moviemaking in general. At Las Palomas he went into long months of virtual retirement, rarely entertaining at home, the couple devoted their days to sunbathing, horseback riding and reading (he had an extensive library)."*

*"The residence, designed in the style of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Andalusian farmhouse, was built in 1927 on one and a half acres in the central part of Palm Springs now called the Movie Colony for the famed denizens who once owned retreats there. Though Grant described it to friends as a 'falling-down' house, it was solidly constructed, with thick walls and heavy ceiling beams. Its two-story height was a rarity in the low-lying neighborhood; the master bedroom was set under the gable of the main house and opened to wide balconies looking out to Dry Falls and an ancient Indian canyon. There was an original attached three-bedroom guest wing; they added another upper wing with two bedrooms and two sunken baths (for all of the couple's reclusiveness, close friends like Grant's costar Katherine Hepburn came for rejuvenating stays). The house's defining architectural feature, its deep-gabled, red-tiled roof, was a vivid symbol of the shelter and protectiveness its owners sought."*

*"One day, in over-100-degree heat, Alfred Hitchcock, who had masterfully directed Grant in 'Suspicion' (1941) and 'Notorious' (1946), arrived at Las Palomas with the script for 'To Catch a Thief' in hand. Grant respected Hitchcock, feeling that he had done his best work for him, and agreed to the starring role that recharged his career and led to such films as 'An Affair to Remember' (1957), 'Indiscreet' (1958), 'North by Northwest'*

(1959), and 'Charade' (1963). The decision to give up his idyllic desert pace and return to work also contributed to the dissolution of his marriage (Grant biographer Marc Elliot writes that the actor indicated he and Drake 'had simply run out of things to talk about')."

"They divorced in 1962. After a later short marriage to actress Dyan Cannon also ended, Grant lived at Las Palomas alone before selling the house in 1972, two years after he was awarded an Honorary Oscar for his lifetime in film."

"Upon arriving in Hollywood for decades earlier, he had been drawn eastward as if by magnet, to the California desert. As he wrote in 'Archie Leach' [Grant's real name], his autobiography: 'I was an only child, and first saw the light of day – or rather the dark of night – around 1:00 A.M. on a cold January morning, in a suburban stone house which, lacking modern heating conveniences, kept only one step ahead of freezing by means of small coal fires in small bedroom fireplaces; and ever since, I've persistently arranged to spend every possible moment where the sun shines warmest.'"

Based on this documentation, it appears highly certain in concluding that Cary Grant (along with his various wives at the time) was a significant figure in Palm Springs, since evidently he spent the majority of his time during the years of his ownership at Las Palomas. According to National Registry guidelines, the proper name of the estate is supposed to read: Grant, Cary Estate (or House).

9. Historic analysis of living persons: Since National Registry guidelines do not address this question, the HSPB may consider development of a standard.

10. Integrity analysis: Deferred to discussion.

#### Other issues:

Landscaping: A review of the historic Willard photos of the estate appear to reflect the presence of most, if not all of the significant trees and palms, except at a less mature period. Additionally, the historic postcard identifying it as Cary Grant's Palm Springs Home appears to replicate the same trees and palms in their same location visible today, except the general landscaping is significantly lusher. Somewhere in the review process of this application there was a misunderstanding that I had removed a portion of this mature growth in favor of drought tolerant plants. Instead, I had more efficient landscape irrigation systems installed and dug-out and replaced dead and dying trees and shrubs.

Composition of the predominant exterior building material: Previous HSPB discussion was frustrated by the uncertainty of the proper identification of the exterior wall finish material (speculated by Patrick McGrew as "Double wall lath[e] cement plaster"), suggesting that the walls consist of Portland cement concrete. According to Page 27 of the National Registration form instructions, the exterior material for this structure falls under the category of "stucco."

Stanley Fox: Mr. Fox and Cary Grant for close friend for many years and at one time he served as Mr. Grant's best man at his wedding to Dyan Cannon in Las Vegas. Additionally, as his attorney and business partner, Mr. Fox often conducted business transactions on behalf of Mr. Grant, which appears to have characterized Stanley Fox's purchase of the estate, then quitclaiming it three weeks later to Cary Grant.

Dr. Louis Baldwin: Dr. Baldwin was well-known in the Palm Springs community, and an early founding physician at what is now Desert Regional Hospital.

Wallace Neff, Sr., Architect: As previously pointed out in information provided by me, witnesses have attested to Wallace Neff, Sr. having designed the two-bedroom addition over the former garage (within the north wing). Furthermore, historical documentation verifies that Mr. Neff had prepared prior architectural work on behalf of Cary Grant on his Hollywood homes.

Color of exterior trim: My research seems to indicated that the original trim color as brown. Other historic photos show white and others as a yellow trim. When I purchased the estate in 1997, I did not have at that time the benefit of extensive research on the home. Subsequently I painted it the "Spanish Blue" since historically it is consistent with the same color as appearing on similar Andalusian style homes in southern Spain.

Slate walkways: Instead of "cool decking" applied over concrete walkways which had been poured in some walkways, these were removed and replaced with matching slate material finishes, architecturally consistent with the same materials already in place at the estate.



## Historic Site Preservation Board Memo

Date: July 13, 2010  
 Case No: HSPB - 75  
 Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application  
 Location: 948 Avenida Palmas  
 Applicant: Dr. Jane Smith  
 Zone: R-1-A  
 APN: 507-164-001  
 From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services

The HSPB at their June 8, 2010 meeting continued the above application to allow the Board to review additional information and resolve certain questions or clarifications related to the property and application. The information was transmitted electronically to the Board on July 1, 2010 and is attached to this memo. The questions and clarifications which were raised by the Board, with staff's response, are as follows:

1. What is the correct name of Dr. J. J. Kocher?
  - A. According to the records on file, the correct name is Jacob John Kocher. Excerpts from original title transfers confirm the name:

JACOB JOHN KOCHER, ET AL ) 1937  
 )  
 SEC. TITLE INS. & GUAR. CO. )

IN CONSIDERATION of Ten and no/100 (\$10.00) Dollars, JACOB JOHN KOCHER and CLARETA M. KOCHER, his wife, do hereby grant to SECURITY TITLE INSURANCE AND GUARANTY CO PARTY, a corporation, all that Real Property situated in the County of Riverside, State of California, described as follows:-

and

WITNESS our hands this 23rd day of March, 1927.

Jacob John Kocher 1937  
 Claretta M. Kocher.

2. Recent improvements to the property are described in the application and staff report as a "restoration".
  - A. It is better identified as a renovation.
3. Chimney caps are not original.
  - A. The chimney caps on the original building were not of a single design or configuration. The current caps mimic one of the styles originally used.
4. Are shutters part of original design of the second story?
  - A. Early photos do not show shutters, but the applicant states that shutter dogs were found on the building at most windows.
5. Was Dr. Kocher the community's first physician?
  - A. It will depend on the criteria used to support that claim. Dr. Kocher does appear to have been one of the earliest established physicians in the community, including operating a pharmacy
6. The house is incorrectly described as an Andalusian farmhouse.
  - A. It is better described as a Spanish Colonial Revival, with Andalusian farmhouse characteristics.
7. The building is identified in the application materials and staff report as a "replica".
  - A. It is not a replica, but can be identified as influenced by Andalusian architecture.
8. The property's reference name is to be determined:
  - A. Jacob John Kocher Residence; Cary Grant Estate; "Las Palomas". There is no stated policy in this regard; the applicant proposes "The Cary Grant Estate".
9. Should living persons be included in a historic analysis (e.g. Dr. Jane Smith)?
  - A. There is no stated policy on this question; the Board may indicate in the adoption of a resolution which names it wishes to consider relevant to the property's historic status.
10. Additional integrity analysis is required.
  - A. "Integrity" is the ability of a property to convey its significance. While many elements can be considered in the evaluation of integrity, the subject property primarily conveys its significance by how it presents itself as the original design and construction of Dr. Kocher and by the occupancies of its subsequent owners. While the site and structure have been modified over the years in ways that remove them from their original setting and appearance, the underlying layout, structure and architecture are generally preserved.

The applicant has provided a detailed description of the work undertaken over the past ten years (see pages 9 – 11 of attached application). Much care appears to have been taken with the renovation such that the structure and grounds generally reflect the original design and details. Certain actions have been taken, however, which are departures from the original building:

- Additional pergolas have been added to complement a single original pergola
- Exterior color trim was originally yellow; is now blue
- Original shutters were replaced with a design found on another historic home in the area
- An original patio area was expanded using similar slate materials
- The original garage, converted to an exercise room in the 1970's / '80's, was remodeled into a "great room", with new exterior French doors added on three sides.
- A two-car carport construction in 1998 was converted to a studio / office with French doors leading outside.
- Wooden entry gates have been replaced with iron gates.
- Landscape materials have been updated and replaced with more drought-tolerant plant materials.

Most of these changes are cosmetic and could be removed, altered or replaced. The major changes are the conversion of the garage and carport, which introduced uses, materials and features that did not entirely complement the original design; however, even these conversions could be reversed at any time. The most recent modifications have been directed at either restoring the original architecture or returning the overall look to a single style.

In summary, the structure and grounds cannot be said to have been restored to their original appearance. However, given changes that have occurred to the building over time, the recent renovation has revived the architectural integrity of the structure and re-established the overall character of the site as an Andalusian-infused Spanish Colonial Revival design. Further, the current conditions reflect much of the look during the occupancy of its notable owners, particularly Dr. Jacob Kocher and Cary Grant.

Staff continues to recommend that the HSPB recommend to the City Council designation of the property at 948 Avenida Palmas as a historic site, with Class 1 status. A draft resolution is attached.

Attached

1. Draft Resolution
2. Application Information
3. Staff report, June 8, 2010



## 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

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### **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.

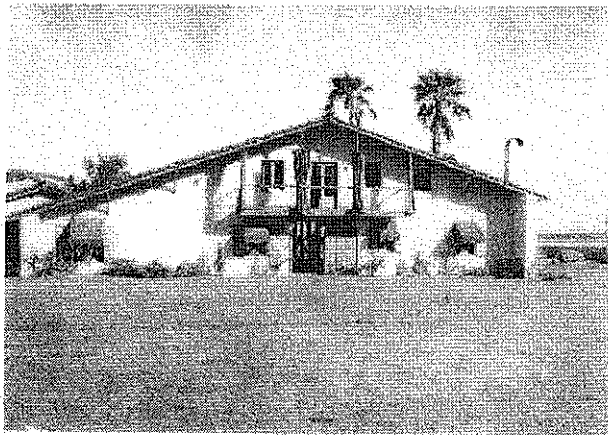
### Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

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

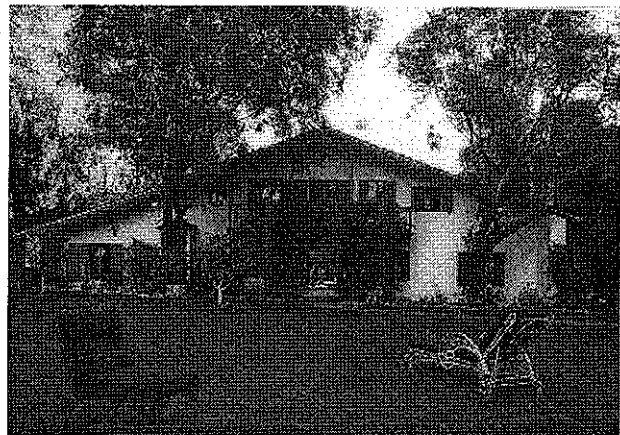
1. It shall meet the definition of an historic site as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.
2. An archival file shall be maintained on the property by the City.
3. It may be qualified as 'historic' at the federal, state, and/or county level.
4. The structure/site may not be modified nor objects 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

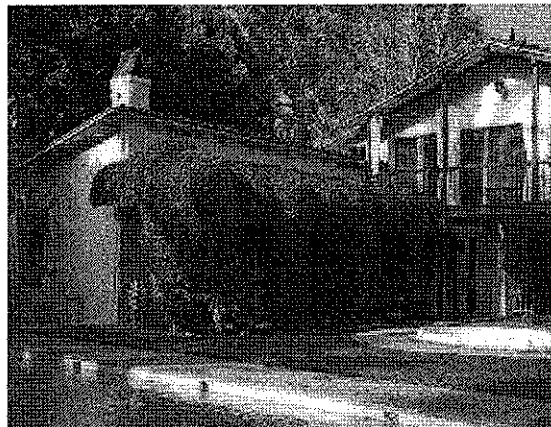
The house includes many features that represent the style: White-washed walls, red clay tile roof, wooden mullioned windows and doors, wood and iron balcony, heavy exposed beams are found on the building exterior. Inside are further examples of the style, including oak floors, corner fireplaces in a kiva style, redwood ceilings, redwood doors with original iron hardware, original tiles and fixtures in the bathrooms, and original wrought iron lighting fixtures throughout<sup>1</sup>. The site is defined by original features, including decorative entry gates; white-washed slumpstone perimeter walls;

<sup>1</sup> 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.

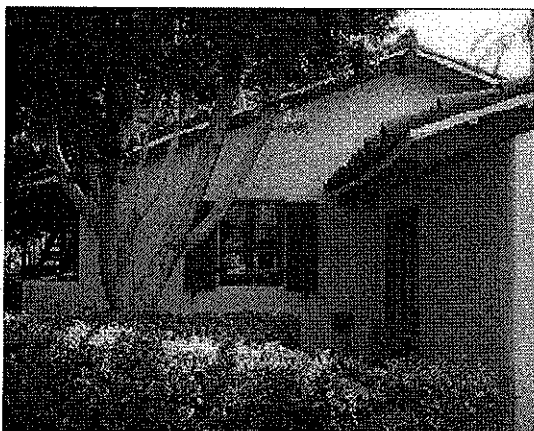
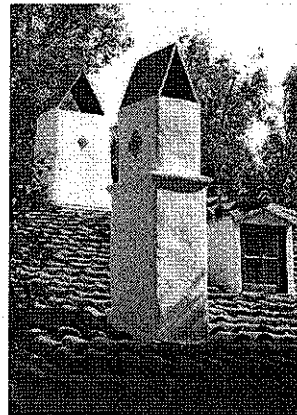
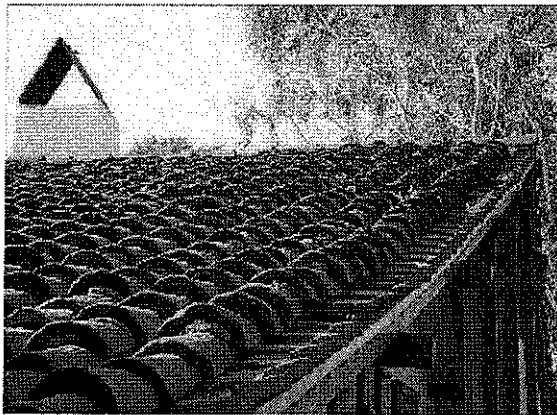
The Zane's sold the property in 1998 to Dr. Jane Cowles Smith (current owner and applicant). Dr. Smith is a cancer therapist and medical journalist, who received a master's degree in education at Harvard University and a Ph.D. in medical education at the University of Southern California Medical School.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

### DEFINING HISTORIC CHARISTICS

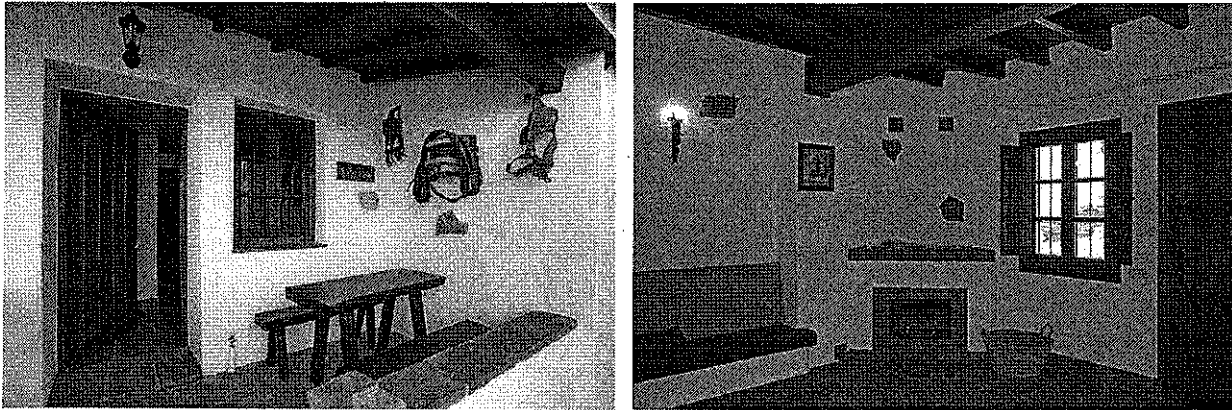
In addition to the overall plan, design and scale of the dwelling, those portions of the Cary Grant Estate that are good examples of the Spanish style Andalusian farm house, and are contributing factors of this site include:

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 sport<sup>2</sup>, 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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

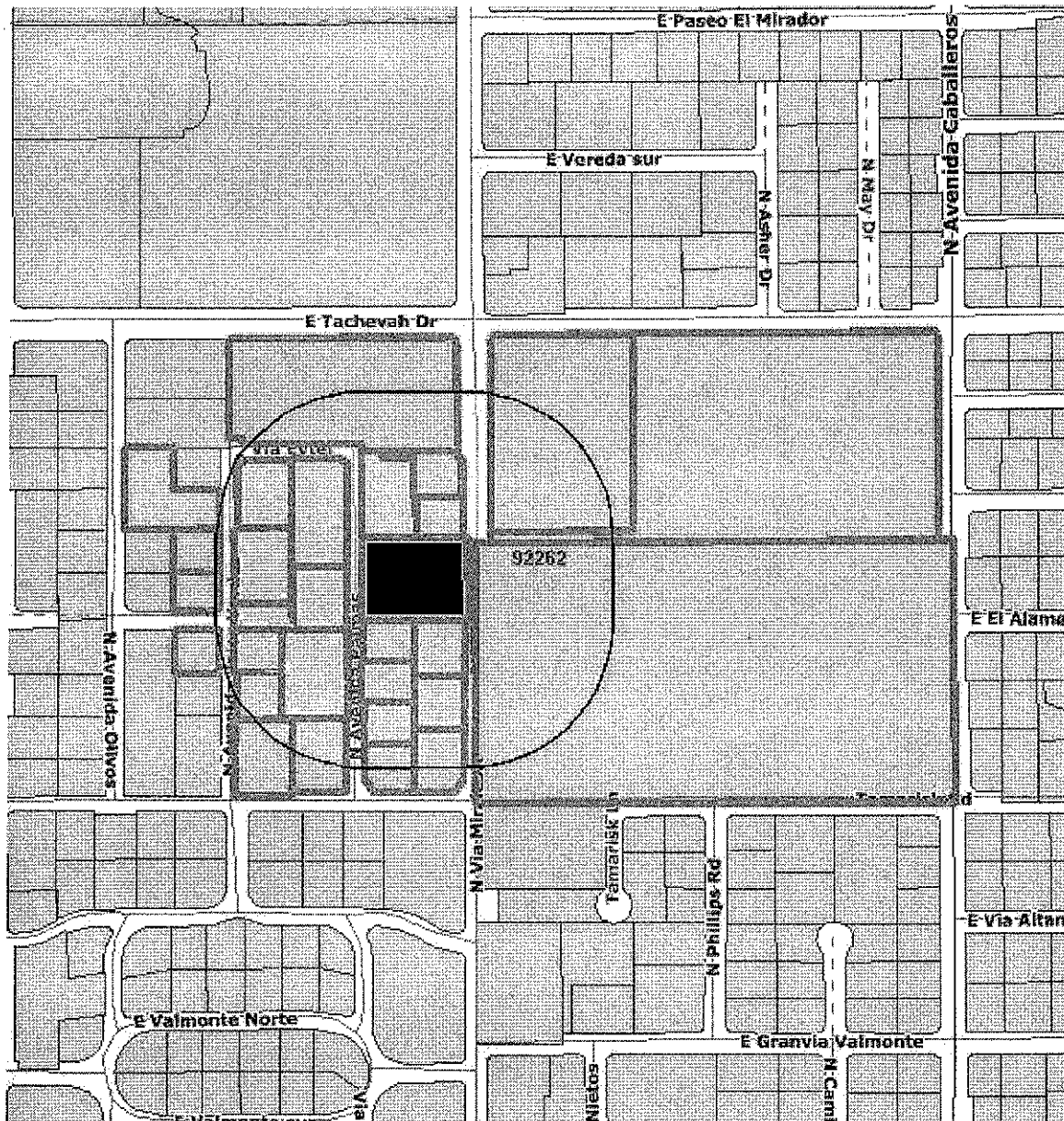
## **ATTACHMENTS**

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.