



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: June 14, 2011

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

Application Type: Certificate of Approval

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 certificate of approval request is for the renovation of the existing 4,340 square foot library facility; new construction resulting in a net increase of 44-square feet in the rear courtyard area, removal of a non-original addition, and building repair and cleaning. The new construction will be contained within the footprint of the non-original addition to include a new roof and glass wall system. The interior will be renovated to provide an open floor plan for flexible library services. The Welwood Murray Memorial Library is a Class 1 Historic Site.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Historic Site Preservation Board approves the certificate of approval request for the removal of a non-original structure to be replaced with a new roof and glass wall system, an interior renovation, and landscape improvements to the existing library, subject to conditions 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. (Subsequent amendments to the Historic Preservation ordinance converted the Class 7 historic designation to Class 1.)

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

On July 13, 2010, the HSPB continued a request to amend the 5/11/10 approval, regarding the design and height of the proposed new roof.

On August 4, 2010, the applicant decided to resubmit the entire project for consideration and approval by the Board.

On October 12, 2010, the HSPB reviewed a request to remodel and expand the existing public library. A vote was taken, (Marshall / Strahl, 5-1-1; Gilmer opposed; Grattan recused) to deny the application for a Certificate of Approval.

On November 17, 2010, the City Council considered an appeal reversing the decision of the HSPB to deny the approval of the Welwood Murray Library renovation plan and voted 3-2 to deny the appeal request.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Welwood Murray Memorial Library

Shortly after the City's incorporation in 1938, a group of citizens arranged for the donation of land and construction funds to build a permanent public library in the downtown area.

Since 1975 there have been a number of attempts to use the library site for non-library purposes. These have included a tourist information center, a restaurant, and commercial development. The property's gift-deed restrictions, its popular history as a library and litigation have precluded any of these proposed uses from occurring.

In September 1984, the Library Board approved the modification to the rear patio so as to be compatible with the new Wessman development named Plaza de Las Flores.

In March of 1987, the City Council requested the Library Board to prepare a recommendation as to whether the library branch should continue to operate as a public library or, instead, be closed and incorporated into the Wessman project. After lengthy deliberations the Library Board strongly encouraged the City Council to develop the

Wessman Project around the Library patio area. In October 1987, the City Council acted to close the library.

Citizens groups initiated a lawsuit to prevent the sale of the property, and an injunction was issued which precluded the library closing. The court ultimately ruled that the City must continue to operate the facility as a public library and the non-library use of the property would not be permitted.

Finally, construction of Plaza Las Flores located adjacent to the Library site included a Redevelopment Participation Agreement dated November 22, 1988 that affects how the library site may be developed. This document, as amended, defines 10-foot wide easement which restricts the building of any structures and allows public access.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Over the past several months the City has been working with a City Council appointed sub-committee to revise the plans for the renovation of the Welwood Murray Library. In working with Escalante Architects a revised plan has been developed.

This plan includes the removal of the non-original rear courtyard addition with the replacement with a new laminated frameless spandrel glass façade in the same footprint; and a new roof system that will utilize a single-ply fibertite material with overhang. The new proposal will incorporate two restrooms accessed from the rear courtyard. The front façade will be washed and repaired as needed.

Rear Courtyard Structure Replacement

The proposed new structure will result in a net gain of 44 square feet to the size of the existing building. The removal of the non-original rear courtyard addition will be replaced with a glass spandrel façade utilizing a frameless assembly system attached to new steel columns and beams located in the same location as the previous structure. The new roof will attach to the existing building at a height of 9'9" feet tall located above the existing clerestory windows. The clearstory windows will remain in place and will allow additional light to penetrate the interior of the building. The roof will be constructed of a single-ply "Fibertite" material over insulation to help control heat gain and loss. The support of the roof will utilize five steel exposed tubular columns located inside the structure.

Building Interior

The building interior is proposed to be renovated to provide an open floor plan as a flexible exhibit space. The renovation will include two new restrooms located within the addition that can be accessed from the rear courtyard and the building interior. Specific materials are not proposed at this time. Interior building improvements will be reviewed by HSPB before a building permit is issued.

Landscaping Plan

The rehabilitation of the rear courtyard is meant to be an extension of the indoor space. This will be achieved through the use of a new glass façade providing light and visual sightlines into the courtyard. Design elements of the courtyard will include a small amphitheater and bench for gatherings; bicycle racks; and recessed lighting in the pavement. Proposed plantings will include three Washingtonian Filifera palm trees; and two Mediterranean Fan Palms.

Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) Review

The AAC reviewed this project at their meeting of June 6, 2011. The committee members agreed that the library renovation project is complex and has a long history relating to previous meetings and decisions. The AAC believes that the extensive record of minutes, resolutions and staff reports must be reviewed before the committee can properly comment on the project.

The following is a list of recommendations and suggestions with accompanying response from the applicant:

- Staff to provide a timeline of the history of the historic designation of the property.
- Staff to respond to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for evaluating historic properties and how they will be evaluated per this project.

These standards are not the basis for review for a Certificate of Approval, however an analysis prepared by the applicant addressing each of the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation is attached to this staff report.

- A review of the historic designation documents to see if the resolution included the non-original addition.
- More clarity in the drawings: example, locations of A/C units, items are miss-labeled on plans.

The applicant has stated that corrections to the plan will be made.

- Method for repairing the front façade.

The applicant will clarify the method of cleaning the front façade at the HSPB meeting.

- Better drawings showing the design of the rear courtyard glass system.

Detailed drawings of a mullion-less glass system that allows for clear view to the rear patio and into the building from the patio will be provided.

- Better drawings of "Fibertite" roof system.

The applicant believes that there was some confusion over the presentation of the roof system. To clarify, the roof is almost dead flat and the surface will not be seen from anywhere except above it. "Fibertite" is a product name for a single ply rolled roofing the color of which is a light tan and it is a "Green roof". Additional information will be provided at the HSPB meeting.

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 as it relates to the following items: #1 - the removal of a non-original structure replaced with a new glass façade addition resulting in a net increase of 44-square feet to the rear of the Library building, # 2 - a repair and washing of the building exterior, and #3 - rehabilitation of the rear courtyard area with new landscaping and street furniture located at 100 S. Palm Canyon Drive and finds that the project will modify certain elements of the historic nature of the building, especially the building interior.

The site plan as presented will not be in conflict with the Redevelopment Participation Agreement easement requirements by providing a ten (10) foot wide non-construction area for building openings previously discussed in Staff reports and Staff finds the plan to be in conformance.

The distinctive architectural elements of the building will not be compromised because the new 44-square foot net increase to the size of the building including the removal of a non-original element of the building; a new glass façade rear courtyard addition; and a repair and cleaning of the building will not be detriment to the overall aesthetic look of the property. Those elements of the building facing the street which date to 1940 will not be altered, and the rear addition will be complementary to, but not a mimic of the original building.

The historic character of the interior will be replaced with a contemporary library layout. The applicant has determined that the existing configuration no longer serves the needs of library patrons today. Instead, the applicant proposes that the interior should support the new ways that people use libraries including a more informal, self-directed approach to seeking and exploring library resources and the availability of both traditional and non-traditional library media, such as internet access.

This adaptive reuse of the interior preserves the main building, but eliminates the stacks of books, ordered seating and central reference desk. In their place, the proposal offers various media options, flexible space and self-service capabilities. In addition, two new restrooms that can be accessed from the building exterior and interior will be added.

The fixtures, colors and materials for the interior have not been selected. The applicant proposes to return to the Board for final approval of interior finishes and landscaping. A review of the interior building plans will be conducted by HSPB before a building permit is issued.

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 by the proposal. The new construction in the rear courtyard area (including a removal of a non-original addition) and building repair and cleaning will renovate the structure to a more useable space, preserve its original street-front exterior and support its continued use as a library. The interior will be adapted to the new role libraries play in society, and will result in removal of many existing elements, including shelving and furnishings. Staff recommends that the HSPB issue a certificate of approval for the project, subject to final approval of the interior finishes and landscape plantings.

NOTIFICATION

There are no public notification requirements for this application.



Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

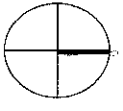
1. Exterior Perspective
2. Elevations
3. Site Plan / Floor Plan / Landscape Plan
4. Roof Plan
5. Detail Wall Section (New Roof to Existing Wall)
6. Site Photographs
7. Applicants Response to Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation



WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION
EXTERIOR PERSPECTIVE



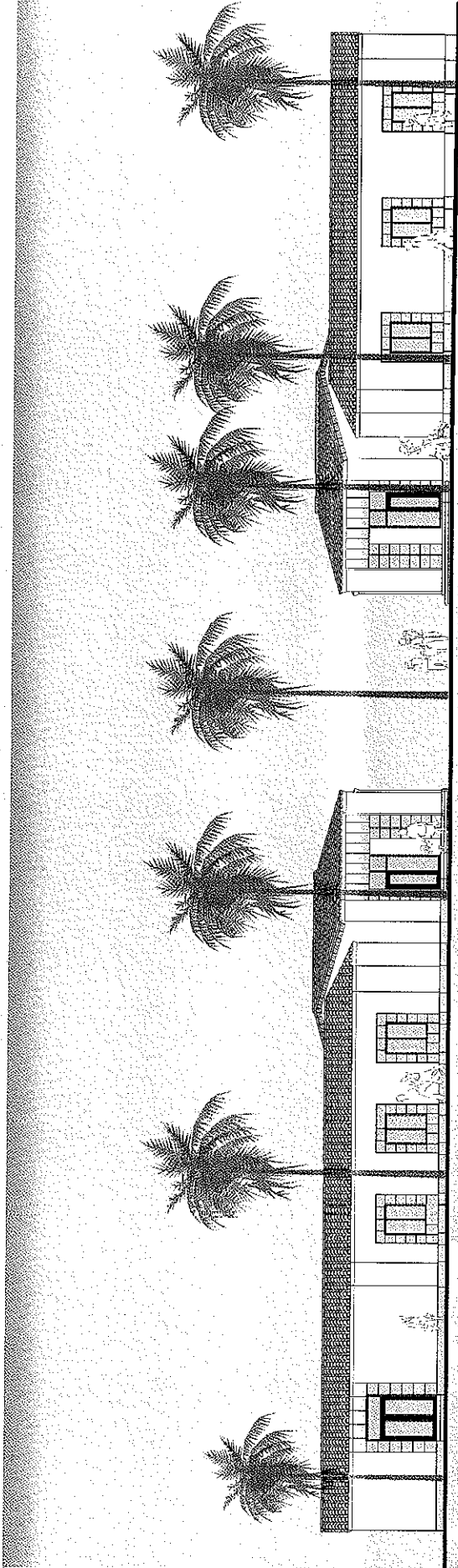
INTERIOR COURTYARD PERSPECTIVE
WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION





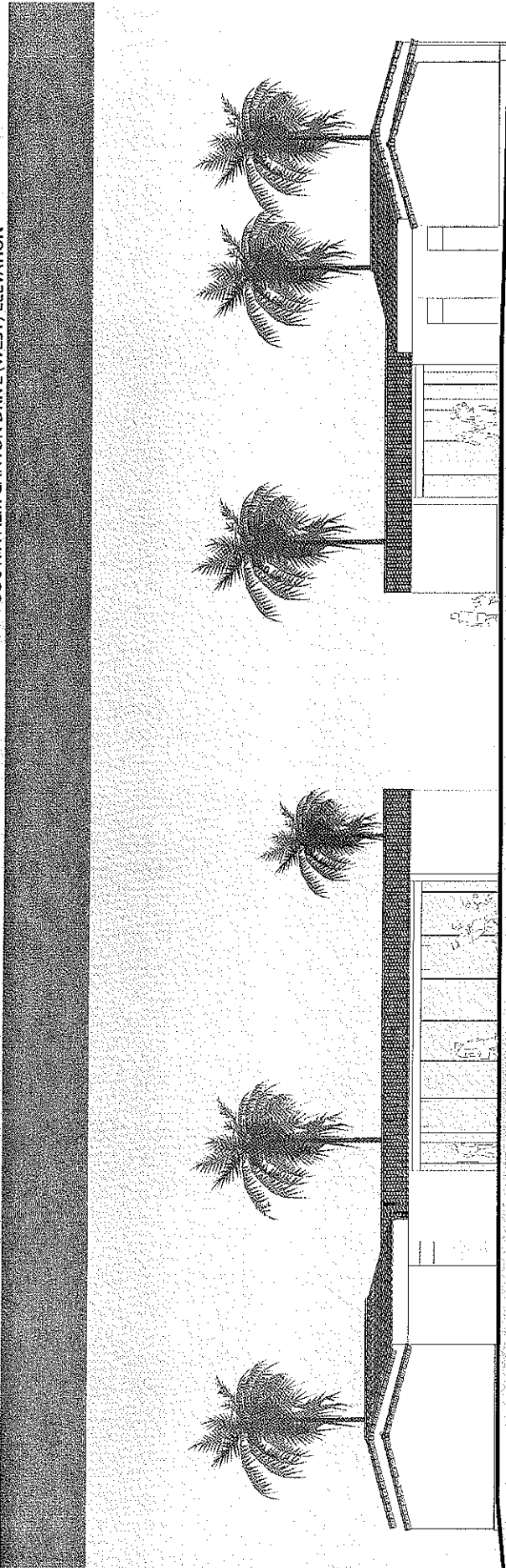
NEW SPACE - INTERIOR COURTYARD PERSPECTIVE

WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION



TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY (NORTH) ELEVATION

SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE (WEST) ELEVATION



COURTYARD VIEW (SOUTH) ELEVATION

COURTYARD VIEW (EAST) ELEVATION

WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION ELEVATIONS

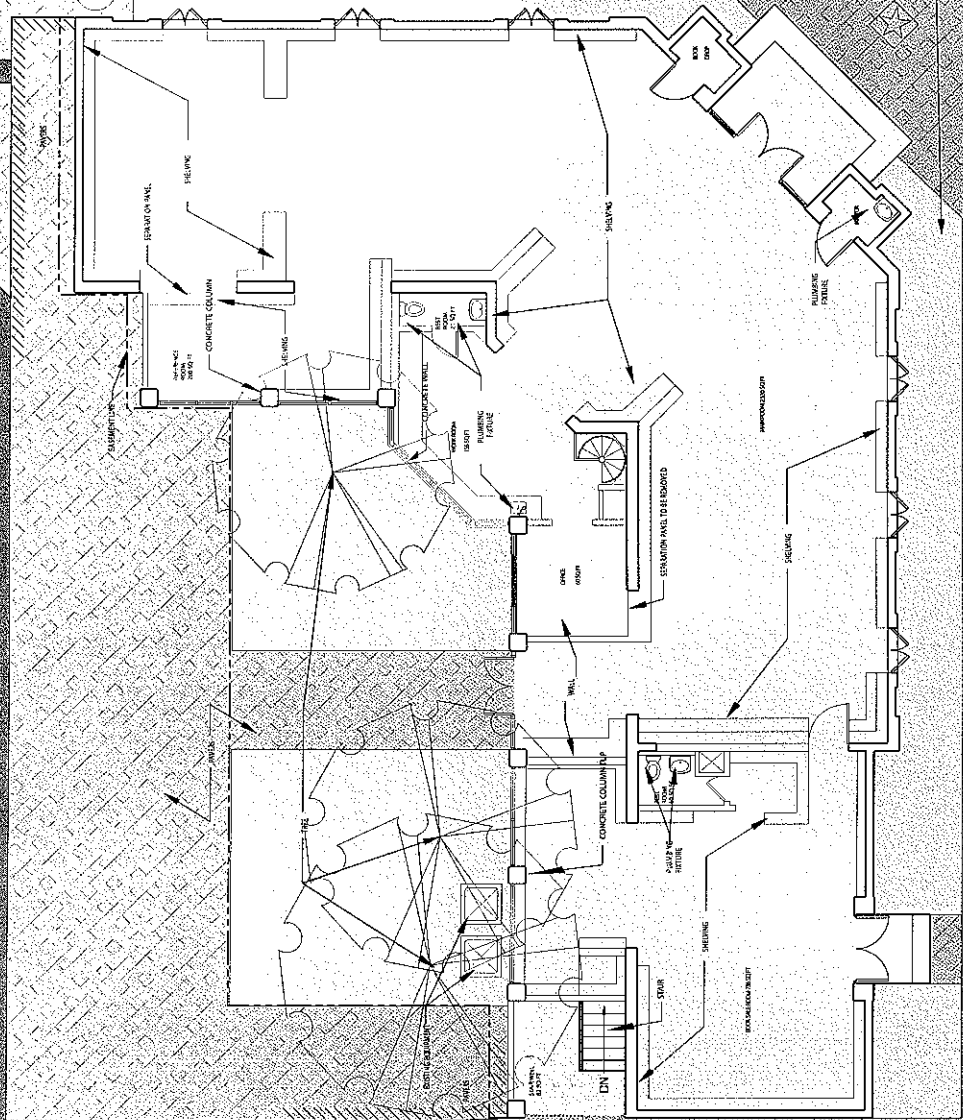
SOUTH RAIN CANYON DRIVE

WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

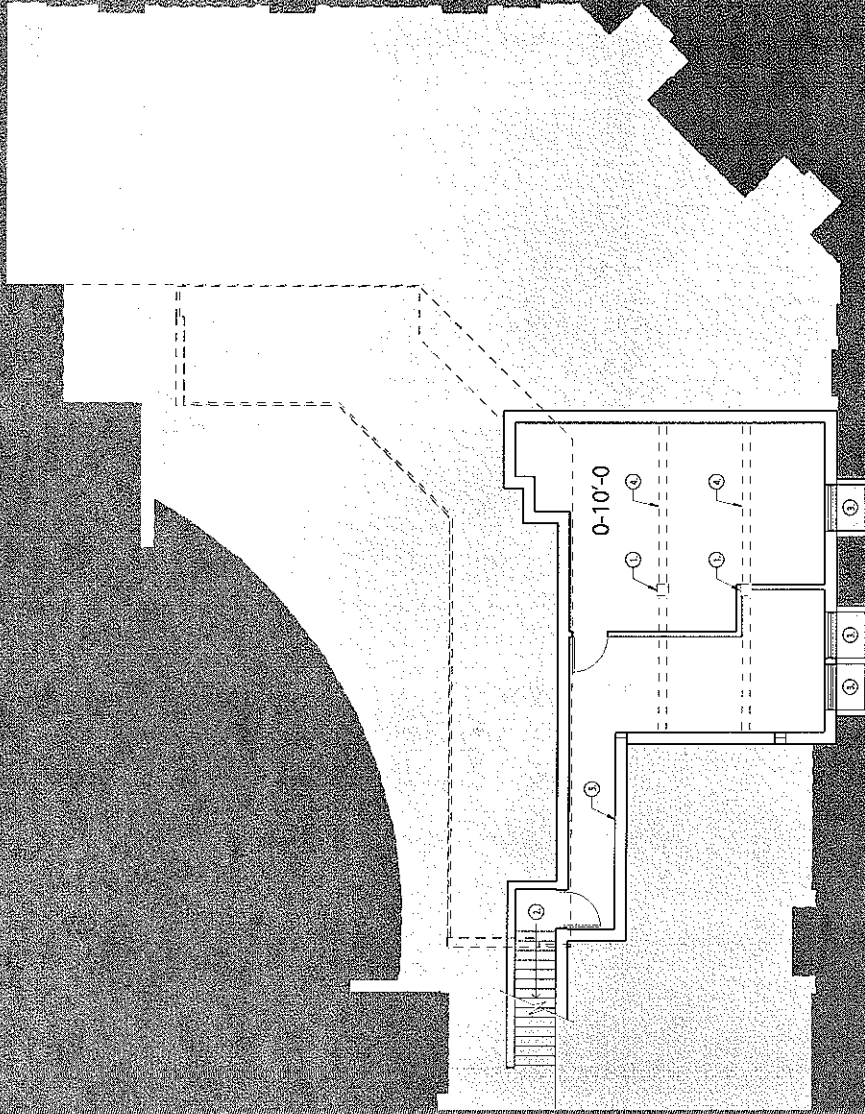
WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION EXISTING GROUND PLAN

THE CITY OF DENVER

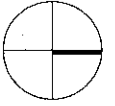
LEGEND
--- 1/4" = 1'-0"
--- 1/8" = 1'-0"
--- 1/16" = 1'-0"
--- 1/32" = 1'-0"



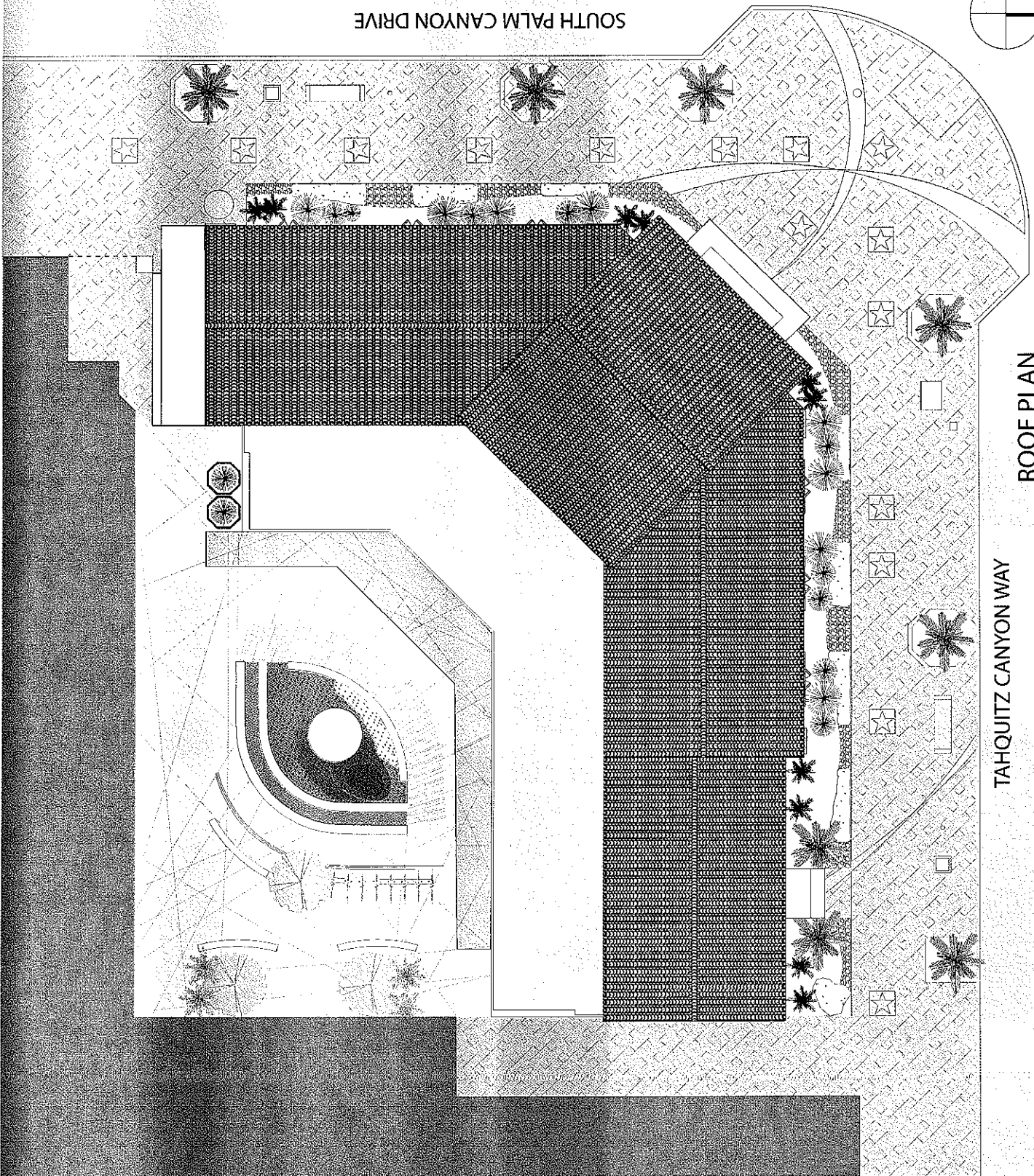
1. EXISTING CONCRETE COLUMN
2. STAIRS (J)
3. EXISTING AREA WHEEL
4. EXISTING CONCRETE BEAM ABOVE
5. EXISTING CAST-IN PLACE CONCRETE WALLS



WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION
EXISTING BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

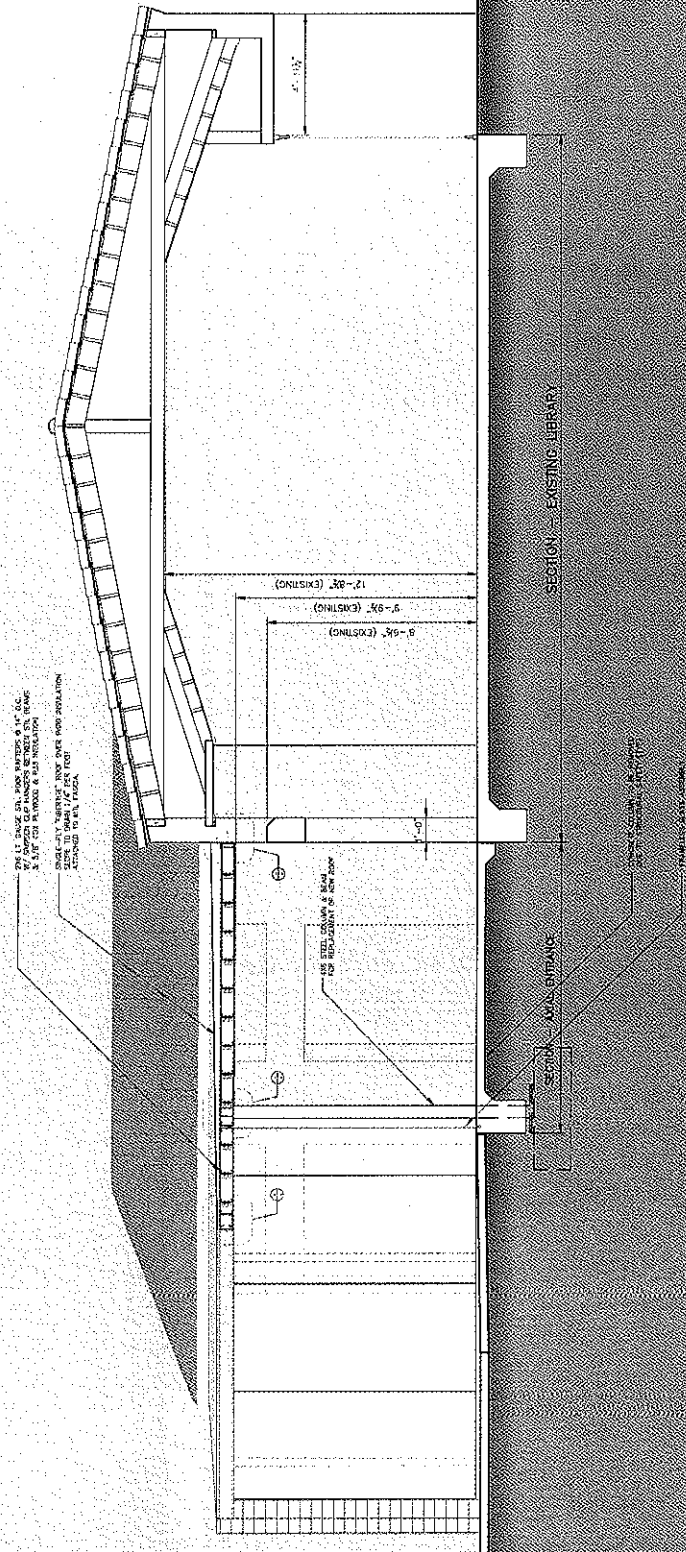


SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE



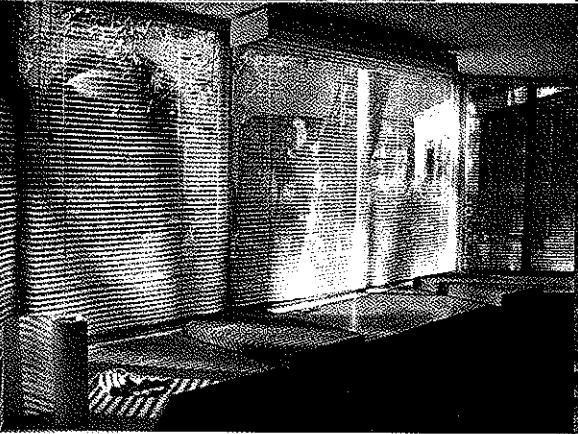
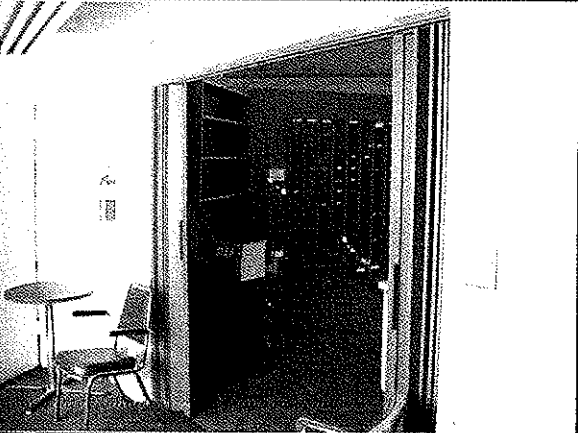
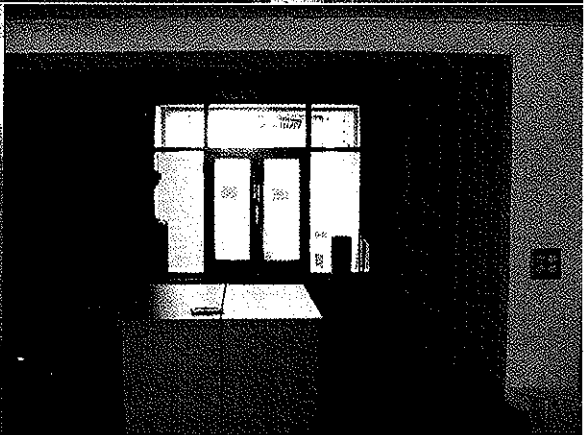
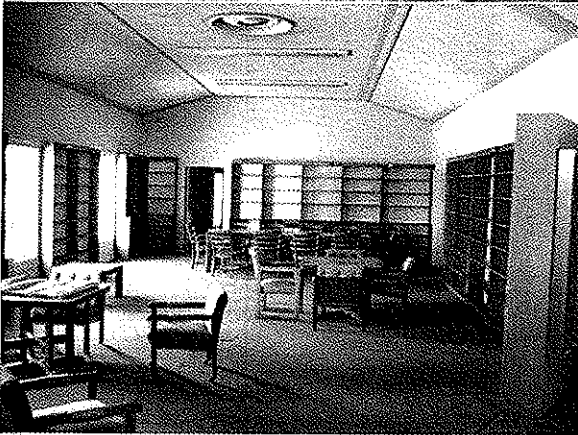
TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY

ROOF PLAN WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION



SECTION A-A 1/2" = 1'-0"

WELWOOD MURRAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY REHABILITATION







Welwood Murray Memorial Library Submittal
A review of the Adaptive Re-use of the Historical Library
Dated: June 7, 2011

The following analysis is offered concerning the proposed adaptive re-use of the Welwood Murray Memorial Library. This is based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and it is believed demonstrates appropriateness of the proposed use of the historic library.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

The proposed use of the building is to have it remain a library, though it will be Reference use only library, with electronic connection to the main library, and a small collection of reference materials on the history of Palm Springs. It will also provide space for community gatherings and rotating exhibits. In addition it will be a central reference source of information devoted to visiting Palm Springs – where to stay, where to eat, what to do. By updating the traditional library it will re-establish the Welwood Murray Memorial Library as a vital resource to the entire community and visitors. Most importantly it is believed that the revitalization will bring relevance back to a structure that is currently empty and unused.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials and alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

It can be argued that the changes that originally enclosed the patios were in fact detrimental to the building in that they removed the "Patio" experience that was intended and that is a part of the fabric of the life style in old Palm Springs, as well as a very key design element of the Library. The modifications that are being proposed retain the intent to have an outdoor experience by bringing the outside in while at the same time providing important useable additional square footage; the low patio roofed areas have substandard ceiling heights. And it will make it possible for the facility to meet the Americans with Disability Act for the first time.

The rear concrete columns have been evaluated for re-use and have been found to have very minimal foundations and rebar. To serve as support for the new roof foundation work would be required, rebar would need to be added and the columns would have to be jacketed. All of these things would substantially change the size and look of the columns. The design team evaluated leaving the columns as decorative items and adding new structure but that just continues to reduce the useable floor space and makes it harder for the design to stay close to the current footprint. The proposed design is to introduce new pipe columns and remove the existing columns.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from historic properties, will not be undertaken.

The proposed work is to remove the enclosure to the patio spaces, remove and replace the dilapidated patio roof structures, and then re-enclose the footprint in a mullion-less "glass box". This "glass-box" effect will not only reintroduce the openness to the rear patio area but will also allow for a clear and unobstructed view to the original rear of the building. The design that is offered clearly adheres to the Secretary of Interior's Standards: "designed and constructed to be clearly differentiated from the historic building".

4. Changes to the property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

The owner of the building clearly believes that the past changes to enclose the patio was detrimental to the historical fabric of the building as it totally destroyed the "Patio" experience that is so integral to the Palm Springs life style. The addition of the "board room" will be retained and incorporated into the bigger exhibit space of the renovated structure.

Other past changes to the building included the addition of swamp coolers to the areas above the patio roofs with ducts penetrating the clearstory windows. In the proposed rehabilitation all a/c equipment will be moved to the basement and will be concealed. Other modifications will provide required access and restroom facilities for handicap individuals who can currently not gain access to the historic facility. Access is being provided thru the new entrance area in the patio so as to not introduce ramps to the front of the historic structure.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

The strongest character defining features of the building are best represented on the exterior elevations that face Tahquitz Canyon and Palm Canyon and these will remain unchanged. While the new "glass-box" minimalist approach will help preserve the historic rear elevation and the clearstory areas and the tile roof will be able to be seen from the rear patio. Paint colors on the front façade and the windows will be retained.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Because the building is generally in good condition, repair is not needed, however, the presence of both asbestos containing material and lead based paint requires the removal of both. To accomplish the removal of asbestos containing requires the removal of the existing ceiling, which will be replaced with drywall and surface to match the existing condition. In addition the current wood molding on the ceiling will be replaced with matching material.

The exterior will be cleaned and the exterior colors unchanged.

7. Chemical and physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

Chemical treatments will not be used to clean the exterior and removal of hazardous materials will be conducted with the gentlest of care.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

None are known to exist. Should any artifacts be uncovered during any phase of the project, all appropriate guidelines will be followed.

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

The "glass-box" replacement of the dilapidated and enclosed patio structures will actually restore and enhance the spatial relationships that characterized the original building. This proposed work will re-establish the lost interior/exterior spatial relationship that characterized the building. The replacement work will also allow for appropriate spatial relationships to meet the requirements of the Federal Americans with Disability Act and actually allow for access to the building by citizens and visitors alike that are in wheel chairs.

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

The proposed "glass box", if removed in the future to facilitate a full restoration can be removed without damage to the original structure.