



City of Palm Springs

Department of Planning Services

Memorandum

Date: March 13, 2012

To: HSPB Board Members

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

Subject: Initiation of Procedure for Designation of Historic Sites:

- Kocher-Samson Building, 766 N. Palm Canyon Drive
- Charlie Farrell House, 177 Santa Catalina Road

At the last meeting, the Board requested that two properties be placed on the March meeting agenda for possible initiation of designation procedure:

1. The Kocher-Samson Building, 766 N. Palm Canyon Drive
2. Charlie Farrell House, 177 Santa Catalina Road

Each of these properties has had prior activity with the HSPB. The Kocher-Samson Building was discussed over a period of several months from mid-2008 to early 2010), but no action was taken to initiate designation process (see attached meeting minutes excerpts).

An application for designation of the Charlie Farrell House was submitted by Mr. Jose Portillo and reviewed by staff in early 2008. However, the application was deemed withdrawn when the applicant failed to respond to staff requests for additional information. Of special interest was the possible sale of the house such that Mr. Portillo was no longer the owner. (See attached letter.) No further work has been undertaken regarding the property.

The Board may, by adopting a motion, initiate the process of designation for these properties.

Attachments:

1. Meeting Minutes Excerpts (June, August, November 2008; April, July 2009; March 2010)
2. Letter to Mr. Jose Portillo, December 1, 2008

a top priority based on the recent development plans that includes the T & C. The Cary Grant house was under consideration by the Board for the Class 1 process – which apparently is being sold.

→ Chair S. Williams mentioned the Kocher Samson Building should also be added to the list for Class 1. She was contacted by Don Wexler, Architect, who is interested in HSPB looking at the Palm Springs International Airport – particularly the west façade that he also designed and is interested in having it considered for Class 1.

Director Ewing pointed out that the Board went through a process last year that generated six properties – he proposed going through the same process again including those properties because they may still be the same six properties or not. The Board can complete a new priority list to see what properties come up this year based on information that has come forward since the six properties of 2007/2008 were suggested.

Staff Liaison Bullock pointed out that the six potential properties from September 2007 were considered by this Board, but they have not been nominated to start the Class 1 designation process.

→ Chair S. Williams reported that the Kocher Samson Building report has been written. She summarized what is expected from the Board for the next meeting:

- (1) Work Program Suggestions for 2008/2009
- (2) Budget Program for 2008/2009
- (3) Individual lists of properties to be consideration for potential designation – from any source.

(4) Web site: The HSPB web site design and link is of major importance. Staff reported that James Smith, the City's IT Manager, will lead the program to re-design the City Web site.

Chair S. Williams requested that HSPB assist and participate with items, events, and other informational materials. The HSPB Web site has the potential to reach a much broader audience in its preservation goals.

Board member Grattan asked for a 'HSPB link' on the City's home page as quickly as possible.

(5) CPF Conference in Palm Springs April 16-19, 2009

- C. P.S. Preservation Foundation - Jade Nelson
William Kopeik is the outgoing President, and a new President will be elected in the near future. There are several hundred members in PSPF.
- D. P.S. Modern Committee - John Williams
PS Mod Com presented an alternative plan to the City Council related to the Town & Country Center at their June 4, 2008 meeting. It can be seen in the archives of the City Council meeting under Public Comments.
- E. P.S. Historical Society - Sidney Williams

9.C. Image Template discussion for Historic Publications – Sheila Grattan

Board member Grattan talked with Clara Nelson, designer of the *Historic Site Preservation in Palm Springs* brochure. Modern vs. Traditional and “elements of design” were discussed. Prior Board discussion involved “working with the design” used on the original tri-fold brochure to vary colors, contents, layouts, etc., but use the same graphics for future brochures. Board members Gilmer and Grattan will further discuss layout, graphics, and continuity of design with Clara Nelson. Staff Liaison Bullock recalled Board discussion that the tri-fold brochure would be used for communication; however, the Board would decide the images to be used on the front and inside panels based on the topics and text. This would be open for review and discussion at the time brochures for various subjects were prepared, but a universal image would be used to identify the front of all HSPB brochures.

9.D. List of Properties for Potential Designation

Staff Liaison Bullock explained that all Board members had provided their selections for this year’s properties to be reviewed for potential designation – all outlined in the memo to HSPB dated 8.12.08. Casa Cody Inn will be presented to the City Council during September, 2008 per the owner’s request. The Town & Country Center at 174 North Palm Canyon Drive is now part of the Wessman Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan.

Council directed that La Serena Villas and the front façade of the Palm Springs Airport be processed for potential designation. These two will be processed prior to any other properties.

Board member Marshall asked about the Kocher-Samson Building not being on the voting list. Chair Williams advised that the owner, who also owns the Elrod House, is interested in having both nominated at a future time.

Board member DeLeeuw asked if any of the properties listed are considered to be “threatened” and need immediate attention.

Planning Director Ewing advised the Board that its authority to initiate designation of a property or properties is legally unfettered – the Board can identify any property and initiate historic designation. The Council, however, has often indicated they prefer designation on properties of willing owners.

Chair Williams commented that the Oasis Commercial Building at 101 South Palm Canyon Drive was a Board initiated designation in 2006. The research has been done, but it has not been sent to Council because there is opposition. Staff Liaison Bullock will contact the owner to set a meeting of two Board members, staff, and the owner – hopefully in September.

Two properties for historic designation are Council directed:

- (1) La Serena Villas Council directed
339 South Belardo Road
Built 1935, unknown architect or builder
- (2) Front (west) Façade of the P.S. Airport Council directed
3400 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Built c. 1966, Donald Wexler

The Board’s vote for potential designation was:

- (3) Ellwood/Palevsky House
1021 West Cielo Drive
Designed in 1970 by Craig Ellwood
Built 1970/71 by Albert Duke Wilde

Board members who will contact owners:

Chair Williams

Director Ewing stated that there is a report on the Town & Country Center that is part of the draft Environmental Impact Report, including a background report on the property. It is quite extensive and can be used as the basis of a Staff Report to HSPB.

→ Chair Williams commented that the Albert Frey Kocher-Samson building is on the 'for sale' market now along with the entire block. There is an urgency to proceed with this particular building which is on the list of 53 significant historic buildings from the 2004 Survey. There has been a written report, but it has not been on HSPB's Agenda for discussion or recommendation.

Board member Gilmer asked if prioritizing will be based on staff reports and the amount of time to write them or if a report is available on certain buildings, and how to proceed?

Director Ewing posed the questions (from staff's perspective)...how much research has been completed that HSPB and staff could act on a property or properties quickly? And, how much historic value do the properties have that the Board wants to proceed, or how threatened are properties by potential changes? These properties have their own sets of value under the criteria and all of them can be taken into account.

It was pointed out that the Oasis Commercial Building has already been nominated for historic designation, and it's now a matter of being submitting to the City Council.

→ The Board feels the Kocher-Samson building is very important, it may be endangered, and the Board needs to look after it – it needs the Board's help. Board members concurred and agreed to move forward on the Kocher-Samson building after the P.S. Airport.

The Town & Country Center was suggested for follow-up after P.S. Airport and Kocher-Samson Building – the Board concurred.

→ Staff suggested working with those three (1) P.S. Airport; (2) Kocher-Samson; and (3) Town & Country Center in that order. Staff will bring back the list in a few months for further discussion, prioritizing – in case that changes, etc. Each Board member can take their own support, priorities, information, etc. in to account on these buildings, i.e. whether there is owner support, Council support, or high or low historic value, threat factor, etc.

Board member Marshall asked for clarification...is Staff going to move forward with the Oasis Building and the Santa Fe Federal being submitted to City Council?

Director Ewing stated that staff will confer with the City Manager who establishes the Council's priorities, present HSPB's actions thus far on the Oasis Commercial Building and get it calendared. The Council has reviewed and acted on the Santa Fe Federal building indicating they want it to be brought back to them when the major development project "Baristo Lofts" is presented to Council. Baristo Lofts is scheduled for the December 10, 2008 Planning Commission hearing, and will then go to Council in January or February 2009.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS:

10.A P.S. Preservation Foundation – Information is available at www.pspf.net

Board member Strahl contacted the Foundation, expressed interest, and that he reports to HSPB on their events, activities, etc., but he has not heard from them.

10.B P.S. Modern Committee – Board member Barbara Marshall - No report

6. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR: Chair Williams reminded everyone of the California Preservation Conference starting Thursday, April 16 at the Hilton Hotel. There are a few openings left for the Study Tours – reservations can be made online at www.cpf.org.
7. PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE
8. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST(S): NONE
9. OTHER BUSINESS: The following historic properties were discussed and updates outlined in the Staff Memo dated 4.14.09 in Board packets. Comments are underlined.
 - 9.A Review of Potential Class 1 Designations in Process From Previous Meetings:
 - (1) HSPB 54 – Santa Fe Federal, 300 South Palm Canyon Drive – Baristo Lofts
Scheduled for Council action on May 6, 2009.
 - (2) HSPB 55 – Oasis Commercial Building, 101-121 South Palm Canyon Drive
Report written – awaiting Council
 - (3) HSPB 68 – Casablanca Adobe, 590 South Indian Trail – to CC early June
 - (4) HSPB 69 – La Serena – 339 South Belardo Road - scheduled for CC 4.15.09
 - (5) HSPB 70 – West Façade of P.S. International Airport – scheduled for CC 4.15.09
 - (6) Kocher-Samson Building, 766 North Palm Canyon Drive – report written, owner & report writer to coordinate their reports.
 - (7) HSPB 51 – Town & Country Center, 174 North Palm Canyon Drive – Council to review May 13 with Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan. Patrick McGrew just completed historic report.
 - (8) Ellwood/Palevsky House, 1021 West Cielo Drive – owner supports – needs historic report
 - (9) Horizon Hotel (formerly L'Horizon), 1050 East Palm Canyon Drive
 - (10) Del Marcos Hotel, 225 West Baristo Road – damaged by falling tree in recent windstorm
 - (11) Cary Grant “Las Palomas” House, 928 North Avenida Palmas
 - (12) Lapham Office Building, 666 North Palm Canyon Drive
 - (13) Harold Hicks Real Estate Office Building, 1345 North Palm Canyon Drive
 - (14) Dinah Shore Residence – 432 West Hermosa Place tied with
 - (15) P.S. Unified School District Building – 980 Est Tahquitz Canyon Way
 - (16) Dollard Building – 687 tied with
 - (17) Professional Park - 161-199 South Civic Drive
 - (18) HSPB 67 – Casino House, 982 North Avenida Palmas – awaiting more info from owner

Chair Williams reported that owner, Mike Kilroy and his representative, Bryan Fahrback of the Historic Resources Group in LA, are working on several properties to present for designation Kocher-Samson (item #6 above), Elrod House, Steve McQueen house, Jack Benny house, and racecar driver Jeffords' home in Southridge.

Chair Williams **REQUESTED** suggested listing the Town & Country Center on the May 12 HSPB Agenda. Director Ewing and Chair Williams to meet to review the work program, identify schedules and resources.

Board members welcomed and encouraged volunteers to write reports or documents on any of the properties on the list. Board members cannot write the staff reports – they have to ultimately vote on what is being presented.

3. With the California Preservation Foundation conference in Palm Springs earlier this year, the City expended \$867 on dues, historic tours (by Mr. Imber) and CPF conference sessions.
4. Six hundred copies of the Architectural Guides were printed for \$300, and an insurance premium was paid at \$85.

Proposed Work Program FY 2009 / 10

1. **Designations for Class 1 Status** – Last year, the Board established a list of nominated properties for the 2008 / 09 fiscal year and made significant progress in the form of five recommendations to the City Council. In the year ahead, the Board can continue to identify and recommend for designation properties which merit historic protection. From the list of properties reviewed in April, 2009 (see attached memo), the following sites are next in order for Board consideration:

- Kocher-Samson Building, 766 N. Palm Canyon Drive
- Ellwood / Palevsky House, 1021 West Cielo Drive
- Horizon Hotel (formerly L'Horizon), 1050 E. Palm Canyon Drive
- Del Marcos Hotel, 225 West Baristo Road
- Cary Grant "Las Palomas" House, 928 North Avenida Palmas

Additional properties under consideration include:

- Lapham Office Building, 666 N. Palm Canyon Drive
- Harold Hicks Real Estate Office Building, 1345 N. Palm Canyon Drive
- Dinah Shore Residence – 432 W. Hermosa Place
- P. S. Unified School District Building, 980 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
- Dollard Building, 687 N. Palm Canyon Drive
- Professional Park, 161-199 S. Civic Drive

The Board is not bound by this list and may consider any property in any order it chooses. Given current resources and hearing scheduling, staff believes that four to five properties could be reviewed for recommendation in this fiscal year. All research and report writing is expected to be conducted by in-house staff and volunteers.

Proposed Budget Allocation: Zero

2. **Markers** – The cost for metal markers is listed below, and is not expected to change significantly in the coming months:

- 12" wide x 8" hi – Bronze \$ 540
- 12" wide x 8" hi – Aluminum \$ 455

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

(None)

7. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST(S):

(None)

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

A Candidates for Historic Designation – Priority-setting

Chair Gilmer summarized candidate listings previously reviewed by the Board in 2007 and 2008. The Board discussed its current preferences and how to move more aggressively to designate properties.

M/S/C (Williams / Ploss, 5-0, 2 absent Grattan and Strahl) To establish the City Hall site amendment as the first priority for Board action.

Chair Gilmer established a sub-committee on the Stephens House consisting of Williams, Marshall and DeLeeuw.

The Board identified the following lists of candidate properties for initiation by the Board:

- (a) City Hall site amendment (already initiated),
- (b) Stephens Residence,
- (c) Del Marcos Inn,
- (d) Robinsons,
- (e) Professional Park on Civic Drive,
- (f) Palm Springs Unified School District Administration Building on Farrell, Raymond Cree School, and Palm Springs High School Auditorium,
- (g) L'Horizon Hotel,
- (h) Ocotillo Lodge

The Board noted the following applications anticipated from property owners or others:

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- (a) Kocher-Samson Building,
 - (b) Cary Grant Estate,
 - (c) Wexler Residence.

B Preserve America Grant Opportunities - Update

Vice-Chair Marshall reported that first grant candidate would be the Las Palmas Business Historic District. She also noted that grant funds are at risk due to budget concerns in Washington D.C.

December 1, 2008

Jose Portillo
177 W. Santa Catalina
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Re: Case No. HSPB 66 177 W. Santa Catalina, Palm Springs
Dear Mr. Jose Portillo

On April 2, 2008, Staff sent you a letter requesting further information in order to research the potential designation of the aforementioned property. We also received information that the house was in foreclosure and being purchased by someone else. Staff has tried calling the phone numbers on the application and received disconnected responses. Staff considers this application for potential designation as withdrawn due to the fact that you no longer own the house and were not accessible for contact.

As of December 1, 2008, the application is **withdrawn**.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (760) 323-8245.

Sincerely,

Diane Bullock
Associate Planner