



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: May 8, 2012

Case No: HSPB # 5 – Cornelia White House

Application Type: Certificate of Approval

Location: Village Green –223 S. Palm Canyon Drive

Applicant: Palm Springs Historical Society / City of Palm Springs

Zone: CBD (Central Business District)

General Plan: CBD (Central Business District)

APN: 513-153-017

From: Diana Shay, Redevelopment Coordinator

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Cornelia White House is in need of a variety of repairs to protect the building and enhance the property. The property is owned by the City of Palm Springs and leased by the Palm Springs Historical Society. The scope of work includes replacement of fencing, hinges and hardware, repair of exterior building walls and windows including frames, exterior repainting to match existing color palette, filling and sealing of holes along the existing foundation railroad ties, and landscaping improvements including replacement of a portion of existing grassed areas with native desert plantings. Since the Cornelia White House is a historic structure and the cost of the proposed repairs/improvements is expected to exceed \$25,000, the project is subject to HSPB review.

No other work is proposed on the interior of the building.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Historic Site Preservation Board approves the certificate of approval request for repairs and improvements to the existing structure, foundation and landscaping at the Cornelia White House, subject to conditions of approval.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS

On September 5, 1984, the City Council voted to designate the McCallum Adobe House at 221 S. Palm Canyon Drive and the Cornelia White House at 233 S. Palm Canyon Drive as Class 7 historic sites. (Subsequent amendments to the Historic Preservation ordinance converted the Class 7 historic designation to Class 1.)

On June 13, 2000, the Historic Site Preservation Board granted Architectural Approval for a patio adjoining the McCallum Adobe House.

On December 14, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board granted Certificates of Approval for the repair and replacement of signage at the Cornelia White House and McCallum Adobe Museum.

On April 12, 2011, the Historic Site Preservation Board granted a Certificate of Approval for the replacement of the Cornelia White House roof.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The structure is located within the Village Green historic site, which is owned by the City of Palm Springs and has an area of 17,232 square feet (0.4 acres). The structure has been relocated from its original site to create a historic park on Palm Canyon Drive. In addition to this building, there are also located within the Village Green the McCallum Adobe Historical Museum, the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum building and a retail building.

According to the staff report of September 5, 1984, Miss Cornelia's "Little House" was built in 1893 out of railroad ties from the defunct Palmdale Railway. Construction is credited to Dr. Welwood Murray, the area's first hotelier. The house was sold in 1914 to Cornelia White, who arrived in Palm Springs about a year before. Ms. White was instrumental in the establishment and growth of downtown Palm Springs as her properties were developed as La Plaza, the Hotel del Tahquitz, part of the Welwood Murray Memorial Library and the Desert Museum.

The dwelling was originally located at the northwest corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Indian Canyon Drive, but was moved to the southwest corner in 1947 and made part of the Desert Museum. It was moved to the Village Green in 1979 to join the McCallum Adobe.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The structure has a number of maintenance and repair needs, which are presently under investigation:

- Wood around bottom of house damaged by water

- Hardware and hinges are damaged and need repair
- Filling holes where railroad ties join stone foundation
- Fencing that screens mechanical equipment needs to be repaired or replaced.
- Window frames damaged throughout house(s)
- Lead-based paint that is peeling and unable to be “encapsulated”

Specifically, the scope of work includes the following items:

Windows – Repair all window sash and sills. Remove individual window frames one at a time and board up. Scrape off old peeling paint and repair, then repaint, then reinstall window and move to the next one;

Building Exterior Walls -- Replace old battens on building exterior with refurbished or reconditioned wood battens. It appears that the current battens were attached to the exterior sideboards using a staple gun with metal staples. The replacement battens would be attached using authentic cut nails that will be more in line with the historical character of the building. In addition, many of the existing battens were installed in pieces. The replacement battens will be installed in one vertical piece. There are about 70 exterior wall sideboards that will be replaced due to water damage and rotting. Building exterior will be repainted to match existing finish;

Landscaping – Observation was made that water damage to exterior walls has occurred as a result of sprinkler water spraying on the building and this will be a continuing problem that needs to be addressed. Suggestion was made to replace grassed areas near the building with desert landscaping that could be watered using either drip irrigation and/or bubblers to prevent the building from being sprayed and protect the exterior walls. The use of desert landscaping would also be in keeping with the Path to a Sustainable Palm Springs and could be highlighted as an example to our community and to visitors in this very visible location. Additional benefits would be that the area would be less inviting for transients, lower water use, more similar to the landscaping that would have been used around the building in its original location and time period.

Miscellaneous Items –

There are holes and gaps in the railroad ties where they meet the building foundation. The holes and gaps will be caulked and painted to match the existing building exterior.

Damaged wooden fence at back of the building needs repair or replacement. The existing wooden fence at the back of the Cornelia White House is used to screen mechanical equipment and utilities, but is badly water damaged and falling apart. This wooden fencing is proposed to be replaced with a more period-correct fence, using field stone materials for durability and aesthetics.

The proposal and contract and a detailed description of the proposed improvements and repairs is attached.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site, as follows:

(a) *Historic Site.*

An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect and:

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

- 1. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or*
- 2. That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*
- 3. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or*
- 4. That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or*
- 5. That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
- 6. That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

Staff has evaluated this application for the proposed improvements and has determined that the distinctive architectural elements of the building will not be compromised, but rather restored and in some cases enhanced. Part of the proposal would be to replace the rear door with a period correct plank door, using old planks that are available. The door was replaced at one time with an incorrect masonite slab door. The windows would be repaired to original. Please see attached example of the repair at the front window.

It is also proposed that the wooden fence that surrounds a utility yard and equipment at the back of the building be replaced with a more period correct fence, perhaps field stone for better longevity as well. Wood battens would be replaced with single vertical pieces and attached to the building using more period correct authentic cut nails. Also the use of drought tolerant native landscaping materials would more accurately reflect the type of landscaping that surrounded the structure in its original location.

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 proposed repairs and improvements to the Cornelia White House will achieve several objectives:

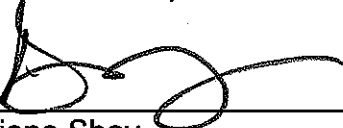
1. Protect the integrity of the building from water damage and other elements,
2. Preserve and more accurately display the historical character of the structure and landscaping,
3. Prevent further deterioration of the building exterior,
4. Prevent health hazards and other concerns associated with un-encapsulated lead paint,
5. Reduce outdoor watering needs, and
6. Provide greater longevity to the building and surrounding structures.

The project incorporates complementary materials and finishes, and the contractor will use careful construction practices to ensure that there would be no adverse affect on the historic dwelling. The proposed improvements and repairs will more accurately depict the historic elements and setting.

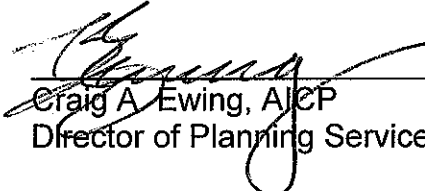
At such time as additional specifications are developed for other repairs, a separate application and HSPB review will be required.

NOTIFICATION

There are no public notification requirements for this application.



Diana Shay
Redevelopment Coordinator



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

ATTACHMENTS

1. Repair proposal
2. Photographs



**D.W. JOHNSTON
CONSTRUCTION, INC.**

1445 N. Sunrise Way, Suite 203
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 416-1144 • Fax (760) 416-1124

April 30, 2012

Diana Shay
Redevelopment Coordinator
City of Palm Springs, CA

RE: Village Green / Cornelia White House

Diana,

We are proposing to install the landscaping per the updated plan furnished by James Cioffi Architect. All work related to this plan will be performed at no cost to the City of Palm Springs.

Scope of Work

1. Remove existing landscaping.
2. Re-grade existing contours to allow for drainage away from the structure.
3. Install new irrigation system.
4. Install new plant material.
5. Install new 5' wide natural grey concrete sidewalk as noted.
6. Install boulders as shown.
7. Install compacted decomposed granite in planting areas.

The value of this work is approximately \$18,200.00.

Wood Siding & Battens

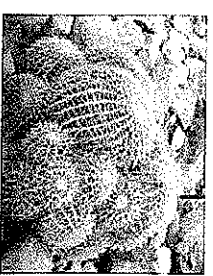
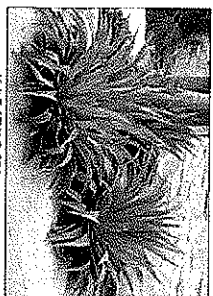
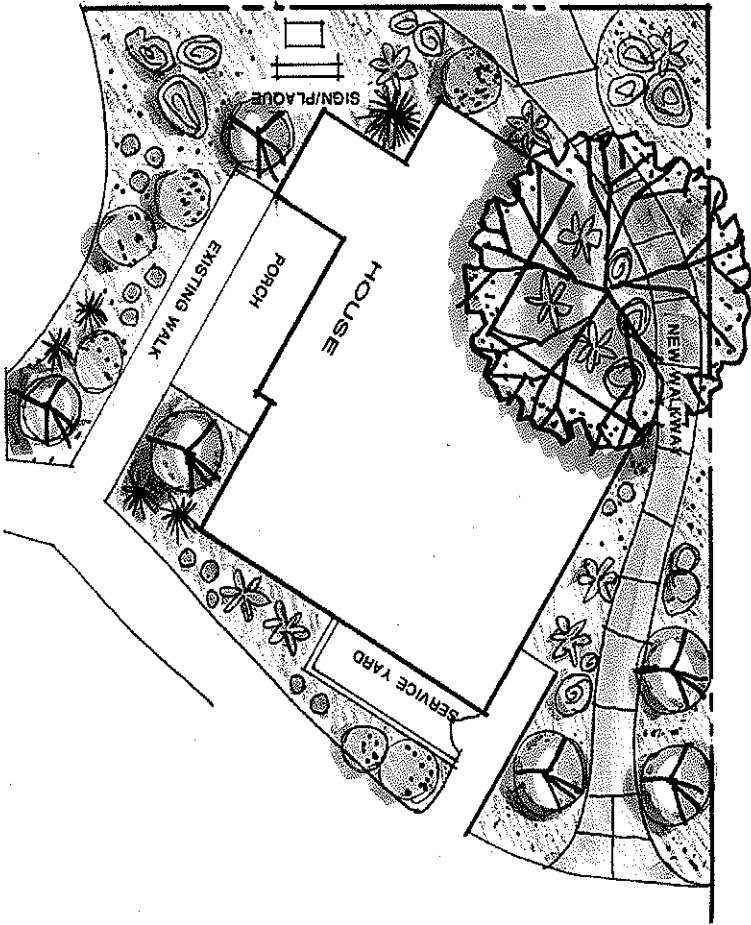
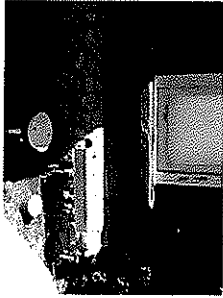
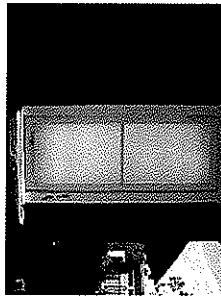
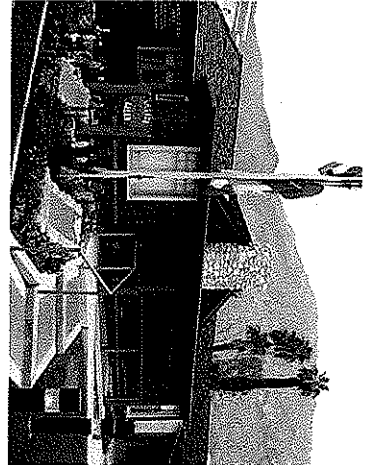
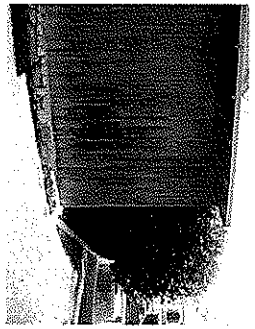
Replace damage wood exterior 1 x 6 panel (70) seventy total	\$2,950.00
Replace all wood 3/8" x 1 3/8" batten and 4 x 6 base plate	\$2,994.00
Replace existing wood door on south west side of the building	\$ 786.00
Caulk all batten prep & repaint building exterior	\$6,875.00
Repair all window sash and sills. Prep to receive new paint	\$9,854.00
Repair and replace Stone Veneer Fence	\$3,250.00

Al Miller Roofing has reduced their total cost of work by \$1,650.00. Please find attached proposals.

Respectfully,

Dave Johnston

Dave Johnston
D.W. Johnston Construction, Inc.



PLANTING LEGEND

SYMBOL	PLANTING SIZE	EDUC. NAME	COMMON NAME
1	1/2" - 3/4" DIA.	CECROPYUS HEDIC AT	PALE YEWER AT
2	3/4" - 1" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
3	1" - 1 1/2" DIA.	QUERCUS LAEVLIS	REDTANNEY PALM PALM
4	1 1/2" - 2" DIA.	LAUREL 'NORWAY	CECROPYUS HEDIC AT
5	2" - 3" DIA.	ACACIA BAIKALENSIS	ALICE YEWER
6	3" - 4" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
7	4" - 6" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
8	6" - 8" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
9	8" - 10" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
10	10" - 12" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
11	12" - 14" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
12	14" - 16" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
13	16" - 18" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
14	18" - 20" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
15	20" - 24" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
16	24" - 30" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
17	30" - 36" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
18	36" - 42" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
19	42" - 48" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
20	48" - 54" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
21	54" - 60" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
22	60" - 66" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
23	66" - 72" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
24	72" - 78" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY
25	78" - 84" DIA.	FRAXINUS L. 'BIRD AT	WHEATBERRY

PLANTING NOTES

1. PLANTING NOTES TO BE GIVEN TO THE CLIENT AT THE TIME OF THE PRELIMINARY MEETING.
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PROPOSED RENOVATIONS FOR:
THE CORNELIA WHITE HOUSE
 PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Cioffi
 ARCHITECT



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