



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: June 12, 2012

Case No.: HSPB-82 – “Casa Palmeras” Residences

Application Type: Application for Historic Designation

Location: 783 N. Indian Canyon Drive / 175 E. Tamarisk Road

Applicant: The City of Palm Springs

Zone: R-3 (Multiple Family Residential and Hotel Zone)

General Plan: NCC (Neighborhood Community Commercial)

APN: 505-286-010

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An application by the City of Palm Springs, requesting the Historic Site Preservation Board investigate and consider a recommendation to the City Council designating 783 N. Indian Canyon Drive, the “Casa Palmeras” residences 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 site consistent with that ordinance,
3. Grant possible property tax reduction opportunities to the owner under the State of California Mills Act.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) recommend that the City Council determine that the Casa Palmeras residences, 783 N. Indian Canyon Drive (175 E.

Tamarisk Road) is a historic site and that it be assigned Class 1 historic status. A draft resolution is attached for consideration.

PRIOR ACTIONS

In 1986, the City adopted the Las Palmas Business Historic District, and included the Casa Palmeras property as a "Class 4" site. (In 1989, the historic preservation ordinance was revised and Class 4 properties were reclassified as "contributing" properties within a historic district.)

In 2004, the Casa Palmeras property was identified in the Citywide Historic Resources Survey as possessing significant historic importance.

On May 8, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board initiated an application to consider if the subject property should be designated a historic structure.

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.

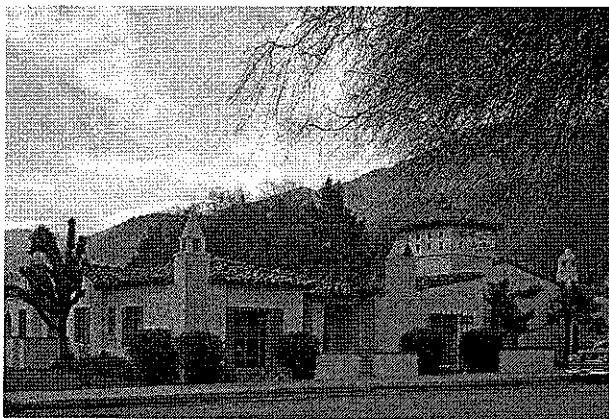
Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

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

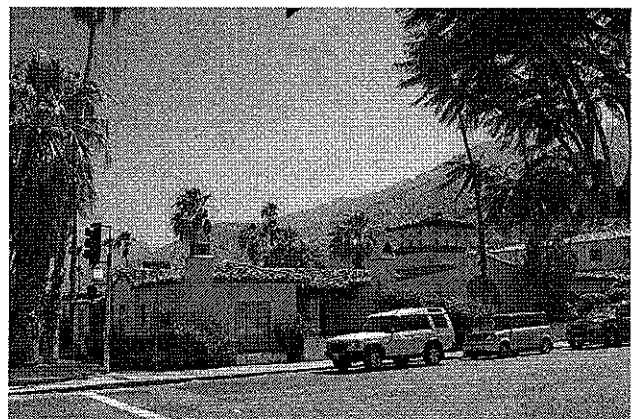
1. It shall meet the definition of a historic site as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.
2. An archival file shall be maintained on the property by the City.
3. It may be qualified as 'historic' at the federal, state, and/or county level.
4. The structure/site may not be modified nor objects 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 property is a 21,126 square foot (about one-half acre) lot located on the south-west corner of N. Palm Canyon Drive and Tamarisk Road. The site is a flat, rectangular lot with dimensions of 140.63 by 150 feet; the narrower street frontage is along Tamarisk. There are no known special geologic features on the property. Surrounding uses include commercial to the northwest, west and south, including the Class One "El Paseo" and "Pacific" buildings and the Kocher-Samson building, which designation is pending. Immediately north and northeast are residential development, and to the east and southeast are hotels and related commercial uses.



1930's



2012



Interior court and pool

The lot is fully developed with the Casa Palmeras residential apartments, which were constructed in the early 1930's and named the Palmaire Apartments. By the early 1950's the name had been changed to Casa Palmeras. The thirteen attached apartment units that make up the development (five studios, seven one-bedrooms and one two-bedroom) are clustered around a central court that now contains a swimming pool; originally the court was a landscaped sitting area. Setbacks fronting the streets range from about three to ten feet along Tamarisk Road and about eight to fifteen feet along N. Indian Canyon Drive. The main entry faces Tamarisk, and an address of 175 E. Tamarisk was once assigned to the property. The current address is 783 N. Indian Canyon Drive.

On-site parking for nine vehicles is provided at the very south of the site; these spaces are part of a common parking lot that is accessed from Indian Canyon Drive and are shared with adjacent properties. The shared parking layout is not original to the site.

Construction of the building pre-dates the City's permit records and miscellaneous building permits for subsequent work have been found in the City's records. From a site visit and comparison with historic photographs, the building has experienced few modifications:

- Removal of wooden window shutters and of the wind-vain from the tower;
- Construction of a swimming pool and required security fencing;
- Addition of wall-mounted air conditioning units with exposed electrical conduit
- Addition of small storage sheds, roof vents and other miscellaneous modifications;
- Addition of trim paint color, from the original all-white scheme; and
- Re-landscaping.

The entry tower may have originally included interior access stairs; if so, they have been removed.¹ Additional information about the complex is provided in the attached analysis (Patrick McGrew / Palm Springs Preservation Foundation; 2012).

¹ Interview with building manager, May 31, 2012.



A/C Units and Exposed Conduit



Shed

The complex was designed by architect Paul R. Williams who was among the most prolific residential architects in Southern California, working from the mid-1920's until his retirement in 1973. Mr. Williams was fluent in a variety of architectural styles and is recognized for many achievements, including being among the first and most successful of African-American architects in the country. He is associated with over 2000 residences, many of which were designed for the elite of Hollywood's Golden Age. He is also associated with several Southern California commercial landmarks, including the Los Angeles International Airport Theme Building.

The Casa Palmeras complex is designed in the Spanish Revival style, and is characterized by asymmetrical floor plans and facades, white stucco walls, arch entry and squat tower, red-tile gable and shed roofs with short or no eaves, decorative iron work and rustic masonry detailing. The complex is almost completely intact, although it is presently in need of cosmetic maintenance. While the building permit record is not complete, it appears that no significant changes have occurred to the site, except those noted above.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

Section 8.05.160 of the Municipal Code requires that the City Council find that designation of a site as historic furthers the purpose of the Historic Resources ordinance:

8.05.010 Purpose and authority. This chapter is adopted pursuant to the authority of Government Code Section 37361 for the purpose of preserving areas and specific buildings of the city which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political, architectural and archaeological history. This chapter is intended to stabilize and improve buildings, structures or areas which are considered to be of historical, architectural, archaeological or ecological value, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of specific buildings for the education and welfare of the citizens.

Staff has concluded that the stated purpose and authority of the Historic Resources ordinance are furthered by this proposed designation. As a complete and apparently

original example of the courtyard apartment complex rendered in the Spanish Revival style, the Casa Palmeras apartments hold an important place in the City's architectural history. The designation will help with future stabilization and improvement of the building as it can promote the preservation of the building in its original configuration and design. Designation of the building will foster civic beauty, strengthen the local economy and improve the citizens' education of Palm Springs' experience with small apartment living and Spanish Revival architecture.

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 with staff's analysis provided below:

1. *The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community.*

No specific event of national, state or local history is known to be associated with the property. Staff does not support this finding.

2. *The property is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.*

No specific person of national, state or local history is known to be associated with the property. Staff does not support this finding.

3. *The property reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history.*

Spanish Revival architecture developed deep roots in Palm Springs in the 1930's and the Casa Palmeras is an excellent example of how the style served to create an intimate residential living environment for the small apartment dweller. The buildings are in nearly original condition with no significant modifications or additions imposed on the structures since their construction. The property well-exemplifies Palm Springs' and Southern California's embrace of the Spanish Revival style in the early part of the 20th century. Staff supports this finding.

4. *The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.*

Casa Palmeras provides an excellent example of how the Spanish Revival style could be expressed in the smaller scale of courtyard housing. The overall asymmetrical plan and the off-sets provided each unit from its neighbor are evidence of the custom craftsmanship of the times. The rustic details on the chimneys, masonry screens, archway and tower show the hand-made look of pre-war construction, as contrasted to more simplified and standardized building techniques of subsequent years. Staff supports this finding.

5. *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.*

The building's architect, Paul R. Williams, is recognized as one of Southern California's most prolific residential architects and who contributed several projects to Palm Springs' trove of significant architecture. This building is a clear example of Williams' command of the Spanish Revival style, which he employed in many of his residences around the region. His use of the style in the Casa Palmeras courtyard apartment project shows his ability to adapt the style to a multi-family setting. Staff supports this finding.

6. *The property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

A look at the components of the original building may not reveal individual distinction, as stucco, red clay roofing tile and masonry detailing are common materials used throughout warm climate areas. Yet, they are employed here to significant and distinguishable effect through asymmetrical arrangement, intimate scale, and careful organization. Staff supports this finding.

7. *The property has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

No information beyond the building's design and provenance has been found to support this finding.

CONCLUSION

The Casa Palmeras apartments provide an attractive and important example of the Spanish Revival style as applied to the small courtyard apartment setting. Subsequent changes to the building have been few and they could easily be removed or restored in the future. That portion of the property immediately surrounding the building should be considered part of the site's historic character. The landscaping is not historic and should be allowed to be modified without Board review, subject to the condition that any changes result in the use of native and desert-appropriate plants and, where practical, the removal of turf. The extreme southerly portion of the lot has been developed with shared parking and its maintenance is not recommended for inclusion in the designation.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board:

- 1 Determine that the Casa Palmeras residences are eligible for historic designation.
- 2 Recommend that the Casa Palmeras residences and site be designated as a Class One historic site and be so regulated under Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code, subject to the following condition:

- That landscape materials may be changed to native and desert-appropriate plants and that turf be removed, where practical, subject to staff approval; and
- Maintenance of the parking lot be exempt from Board review.

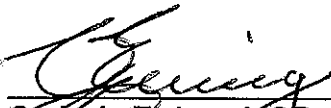
A draft resolution is attached for the Board's consideration.

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.

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. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any inquiries on this matter.



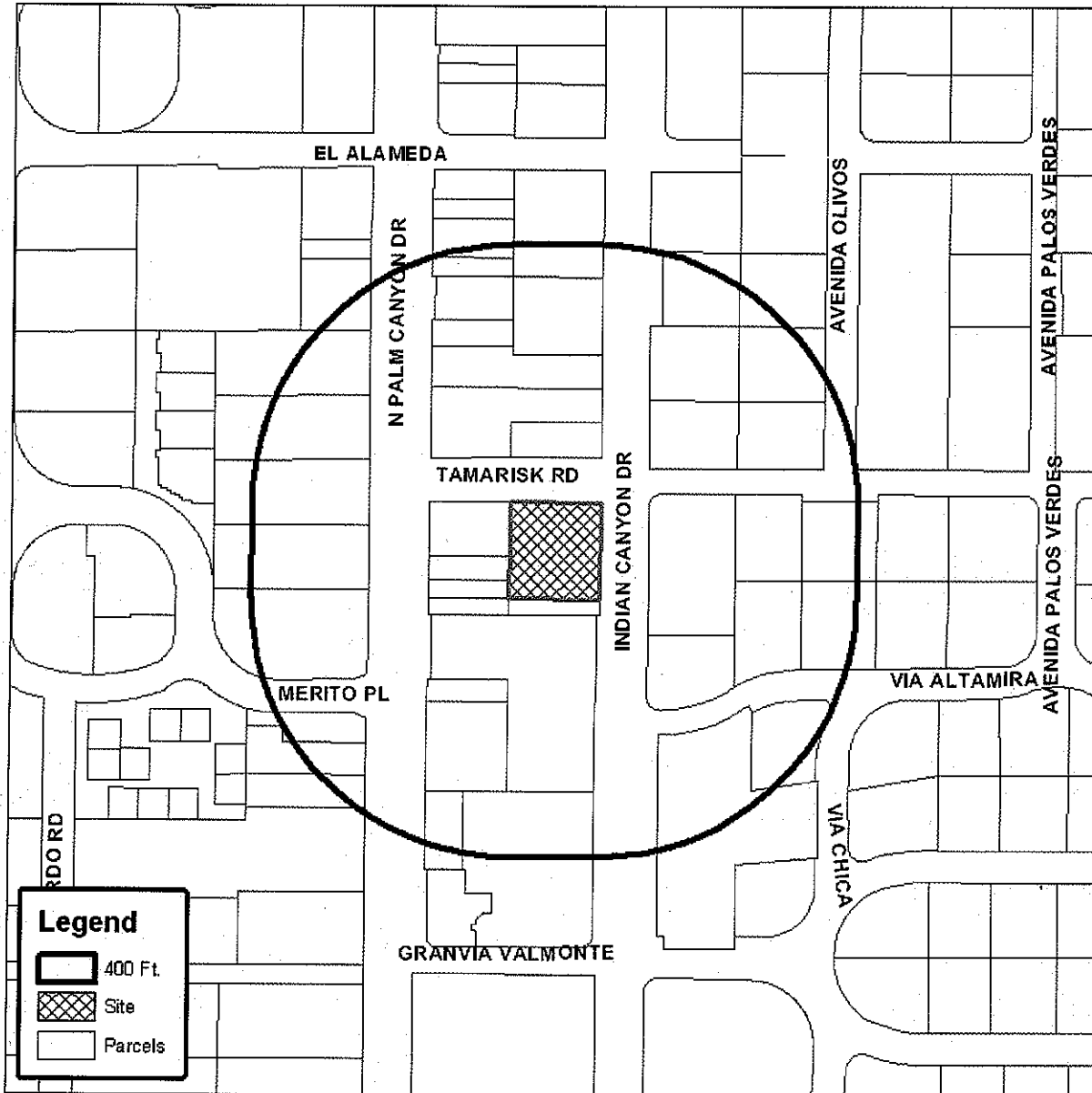
Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft HSPB Resolution #82
3. Historic Site Preservation Board minutes of May 8, 2012
4. Background information



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HD #82

APPLICANT: Casa Palmeras

DESCRIPTION: The designation of "Casa Palmeras" as a Class 1 Historic Site located at 783 North Indian Canyon Drive, Zone R-3, Section 10.

HSPB RESOLUTION NO. 82

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 783 NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE ("CASA PALMERAS" RESIDENCES") AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 82.

WHEREAS, in 1930, the 33-unit Casa Palmeras residences (nee Palmaire Apartments) were constructed according to the design of architect Paul R. Williams on a flat, rectangular lot at the south-west corner of N. Palm Canyon Drive and Tamarisk Road, and with a site address of 783 N. Indian Canyon Drive; and

WHEREAS, the Casa Palmeras residences were among the early courtyard apartments in Palm Springs designed and built in the Spanish Revival style, and are almost completely intact, save for minor exterior modifications such as removal of wood window shutters and wind-vain, addition of a swimming pool, minor exterior repainting and revised landscaping; and

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of this building include:

- Asymmetrical floor plans and facades,
- White stucco walls, arch entry and squat tower,
- Red-tile gable and shed roofs with short or no eaves,
- Decorative iron work and rustic masonry detailing.

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites; and

WHEREAS, on May 8, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) of the City of Palm Springs, initiated an application for Historic Site Designation for the Casa Palmeras residences; 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 Casa Palmeras residences, as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Casa Palmeras residences as a historic 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. The stated purpose and authority of the Historic Resources ordinance are furthered by this proposed designation.

- a. As a complete and apparently original example of the courtyard apartment complex rendered in the Spanish Revival style, the Casa Palmeras residences hold an important place in the City's architectural history.
- b. The designation will help with future stabilization and improvement of the building as it can promote the preservation of the building in its original configuration and design.
- c. Designation of the building will foster civic beauty, strengthen the local economy and improve the citizens' education of Palm Springs' experience with small apartment living and Spanish Revival architecture.

Section 2. The property reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history.

Spanish Revival architecture developed deep roots in Palm Springs in the 1930's and the Casa Palmeras is an excellent example of how the style served to create an intimate and warm residential living environment for the small apartment dweller. The buildings are in nearly original condition with no significant modifications or additions imposed on the structures since their construction. The property well-exemplifies Palm Springs' and Southern California's embrace of the Spanish Revival style in the early part of the 20th century.

Section 3. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

Casa Palmeras provides an excellent example of how the Spanish Revival style could be expressed in the smaller scale of courtyard housing. The overall asymmetrical plan and the off-set which each unit is provided from its neighbor are evidence of the custom craftsmanship of the times. The rustic details on the chimneys, masonry screens, archway and tower show the hand-made look of pre-war construction, as contrasted to more simplified and standardized building techniques of subsequent years. Staff supports this finding.

Section 4. 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.

The building's architect, Paul R. Williams, is recognized as one of Southern California's most prolific residential architects, who also contributed several projects to Palm Springs' trove of significant architecture. This building is a clear example of Williams' command of the Spanish Revival style, which he employed in many of his residences around the region. His use of the style in the Casa Palmeras courtyard apartment project shows his ability to adapt the style to a multi-family setting.

Section 5. The property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

A look at the components of the original building may not reveal individual distinction, as stucco, red clay roofing tile and masonry detailing are common materials used throughout warm climate areas. Yet, they are employed here to significant and distinguishable effect through asymmetrical arrangement, intimate scale, and careful organization. Staff supports this finding.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council designate the entire property located at 783 North Indian Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California (Casa Palmeras residences) 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 buildings shall require HSPB review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.
3. No review for maintenance of the parking lot or landscaping shall be required, except that, subject to staff approval, any new landscape materials shall be native or desert-appropriate, including removal of turf, where practical.
4. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.
5. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
6. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be considered legal, non-conforming only as to Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.

ADOPTED this ____th day of _____, 2012.

AYES: _____
NOES: _____
ABSENT: _____
ABSTENTIONS: _____

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS,
CALIFORNIA

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

~~Motion by Grattan; second by Ploss; vote 6-0, to initiate investigation for possible designation of the Farrell house at the Racquet Club, 630 E. Tachevah and 1120 Via Miraleste.~~

➔ 8.C Initiation of Procedure for Designation of Historic Site:
- Casa Palmeras, 783 N. Indian Canyon Drive

Senior Planner Edward Robertson summarized the staff memo.

The Chair invited Patrick McGrew to clarify the name of the property, which he indicated has changed over the years as noted in his book. He opposed holding the Kocher-Samson building nomination until the Casa Palmeras nomination is ready, and objected to the Board initiating nominations without preliminary investigations into the property. He offered to complete a historic documentation on the Casa Palmeras property.

The Board discussed the procedure for initiating investigation and Board member Ploss offered to prepare the historic documentation.

Motion by Ploss; second by DeLeeuw; vote 6-0, to initiate investigation for possible designation of Casa Palmeras, 783 N. Indian Canyon Drive.

~~8.D Historic Markers (Plaques) - Stephens House, Sinatra House, Del Marcos Hotel~~

~~Chair Gilmer asked Board member Grattan to prepare draft language for the three markers, and she agreed.~~

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

9.A Public Outreach Committee - Update

No report.

10. STAFF & OTHER REPORTS

Senior Planner Robertson requested Board member DeLeeuw to e-mail his list of properties in the Las Palmas Business Historic District so that it could be forwarded to the entire Board.

11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Board member Ploss distributed a list of film and other media programming that included a reference to Palm Springs.

Palmaire
Apartments / Casa
Palmeras Apartment
Hotel

175 Tamarisk Road
Palm Springs, California
Nomination Application for
Class 1 Historic Site



Prepared by
Patrick McGrew
For the
Palm Springs Preservation Foundation
May 2012



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Department of Planning Services

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Telephone: 760-323-8245 ~ Fax: 760-322-8360

Public Works & Engineering ~ 760-323-8253

Fire Department ~ 760-323-8187

Building & Safety ~ 760-323-8242

Building Inspections ~ 760-323-8243

Code Enforcement ~ 760-778-8434

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION

The City of Palm Springs allows for the local designation of historic buildings, sites or districts within the City (Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.) This application packet is to be completed in order to request a historic designation. For additional information, please contact the Department of Planning Services at 760-323-8245 or planning@palmspringsca.gov.

APPLICATION

The completed application and required materials may be submitted to the Department of Planning Services. The submittal will be given a cursory check and will be accepted for filing only if the basic requirements have been met.

A case planner will be assigned to the project and will be responsible for a detailed review of the application and all exhibits to ensure that all required information is adequate and accurate. Incomplete applications due to missing or inadequate information will not be accepted for filing.

Applicants may be asked to attend scheduled meetings pertaining to their project. These will include the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) and the City Council.

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD (HSPB)

Once the application has been determined to be complete, the HSPB will review the application to determine whether the site meets the minimum qualifications for designation pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. If such determination is made, a public hearing will be scheduled for a future meeting.

A public hearing will be held by the HSPB to receive testimony from all interested persons concerning the Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the HSPB will make a recommendation to the City Council. Notice will be provided as indicated below.

CITY COUNCIL

After receiving the recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board, a public hearing will be held by the City Council to receive testimony from all interested persons concerning the requested Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the City Council will then conditionally approve, deny, or approve the application as submitted. The City Council's decision on the application is final.

NOTIFICATION

Prior to consideration of the application by the HSPB and the City Council, a notice of public hearing for a Historic Site Designation request will be mailed to all property owners within 400 feet of the subject property a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the hearing dates.



Office Use Only

Date:
Case No.
HSPB No.
Planner:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Department of Planning Services

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION

TO THE APPLICANT:

Your cooperation in completing this application and supplying the information requested will expedite City review of your application. Application submitted will not be considered until all submittal requirements are met. Staff may require additional information depending upon the specific project. Please submit this completed application and any subsequent material to the Department of Planning Services.

This form is to be used to nominate individual properties for Class 1 or 2 historic designation, or to nominate the formation of historic districts. Applicants are encouraged to review two bulletins from the US Department of Interior for additional information:

- f "How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (National Register Bulletin 16A / <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>); and
- f "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (National Register Bulletin 15; <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>).

Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions in the Bulletins.

1. Property Information

Historic name: Palmaire Apartments

Other names: Casa Palmeras Apartment Hotel

Address: 738 North Indian Canyon / 175 Tamarisk Road

Assessor parcel number: 505-286-010

Owner's name: Mike Kilroy

Owner's Address: The Kilroy Companies, LLC; 800 South Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 225

City: Redondo Beach State: CA Zip: 90227

Telephone: Unknown Cell: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail address: m1@kilroy.com

2. Classifications

Ownership of Property. Check as many boxes as apply.

- Private
- Public - Local
- Public - State
- Public - Federal

Category of Property. Check only one box.

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property. TOTAL must include at least One (1) in Contributing Column.

Noncontributing	Contributing	
<u> </u>	<u> 1 </u>	Buildings
<u> </u>	<u> 1 </u>	Sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	Objects
<u> </u>	<u> 2 </u>	TOTAL

If the building or site is part of a larger group of properties, enter the name of the multiple-property group; otherwise enter "N/A"

3. Use or Function

Historic Use or Function: Apartment Hotel Building

Current Use or Function: Apartment Building

4. Description

Architect: Paul R. Williams

Construction Date and Source: 1930 (Assessor's Records)

Architectural Classification: Spanish Colonial Revival

Construction Materials:

Foundation: Concrete Roof: Red Clay Tile

Walls: Unreinforced masonry Other: Steel Windows

Building Description: Today, the building survives almost exactly as it was originally built. Among its characteristic features are the wrought iron *Rejas* and other original ironwork, the rambling facades with thick adobe-like white walls, modern multi-pane industrial windows, hand-made red clay roof tiles and an interior court with a fountain (the current swimming pool was a later addition), all of which remain virtually unchanged. The entrance creates a memorable impression as it pairs a graceful

arched opening with a squat, but charming tower centered on a broad gabled façade.

The building is a single story Spanish / Andalusian inspired 33-unit apartment building. It is rectangular in plan with building elements arranged along all four property lines. A mix of individual units includes both studio and one bedroom apartments. An interior courtyard provides light air and access to the interior units. The walls are constructed of unreinforced masonry; the roofing is rustic red clay tile and may have been hand-made. The principal façade along Tamarisk features an entrance arch beneath a gabled roof accented by a squat bell tower with punched opening in the walls and a pyramidal roof; at one-and-one-half stories, it is the building's tallest element. The roof includes multiple gabled, hipped and shed roofed forms. Centered on an imposing entrance archway, the nearly symmetric front façade may be subdivided into four distinct elements, reflecting the presence of your apartments within. The west façade is only slightly less intricate than the front façade. It is composed of four distinct elements from north to south including: an end gabled element; a lower sloped roof over an arched private entrance sheltered from the street by low walls; a slightly taller two-unit entrance accessed by arched openings; and a single shed-roofed element. The south façade is a plainer variation of the east façade, and the west façade is located along a common property line and therefore inaccessible.

The original windows throughout the complex survive. They are steel-framed casement windows, usually multi-paned. Many had wooden shutters, all of which have subsequently been removed. The arched openings all had keystones supported with pilasters with corbelled capitals. Specific features associated with the building a number of distinctive chimney caps throughout the project that are best understood by viewing the historic photos. Although whitewashed, a base of native stone is located below the large window on the Tamarisk elevation. Nearby is a *rejas* or wrought iron grill that protects another large window.

The building has slight setbacks on two important streets, Indian Canyon and Tahquitz. The setbacks provide space for planting, none of which is original. The historic images include several Joshua trees that are now gone. Once the sidewalks and curbs were installed, simple pairings of low greenery and some foundation planting was installed as were the Palm trees that survive today. There is no evidence of any formal landscape plan, but the existing planting is well-maintained but not significant. Numerous mature Palm trees survive on the site, but were not original to the building.

An historic postcard shows the courtyard as being filled with greenery, including flowering shrubbery and a small fountain. Today, a swimming pool is located in the courtyard, and there appears to be no vegetation.

5. Criteria (Check all boxes that apply for the criteria qualifying the property for listing.)

Events

(1) Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Persons

(2) Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Architecture

- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, State or local history, or
- (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or
- (5) Represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or
- (6) Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Archeology

- (7) Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Check all the boxes that apply.)

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. removed from its original location.
- a birthplace or a grave. a cemetery.
- a reconstructed building, object, or structure. a commemorative property.
- less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

6. Statement of Significance

The building is Significant for its Architecture because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction and represents the work of master architect Paul R. Williams and possesses high artistic values. Previous listings: The building is listed in the HSPB 1987 Survey, and also listed in the 2004 Citywide Survey although it was not evaluated.

The 33-unit *Palmaire Apartments*, also known as the *Casa Palmeras Apartment Hotel* is located in the most intact commercial block of Spanish Colonial buildings in Palm Springs. A rare and intact example of a Spanish Colonial-style apartment complex arranged around a sheltered courtyard, the property is especially significant as an early work of master architect Paul R. Williams.

The historic images of the building (see attachment) are from the Mott Studio in Los Angeles and are titled "1930, Palmaire Apartments, Paul R. Williams." In these images the building is simply set in sand without the benefit of sidewalks, curbs or streets and conveys the feel of an isolated desert location. Although the original owner's name has not been located, an early manager was Nathan Wolfe. A notation hand-written in pencil in the margins of the 1934 Palm Springs Telephone indicates that the building got its first telephone in 1934.

A gifted designer in many eclectic styles, Williams' early works were often in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. In this project he designed a series of asymmetric facades and mismatched chimneypots that give the impression that the building was expanded over a period of years – the signature quality of Andalusian farmhouses.

Eventually stone curbs were added to separate the pedestrian areas from the parking, and later still sidewalks, curbs and paved streets were added resulting in the current appearance.

Paul Revere Williams, FAIA (1894- 1980) was the second son of Chester and Lila Williams. He was orphaned at the age of four, and was raised by foster parents. An industrious child, he was soon selling newspapers on street corners to assist his foster family, a trait that would carry him a long way. A gifted artist from an early age, he put himself through school starting with the Los Angeles School of Art and Design and the Los Angeles Beaux-Arts Institute of Design, subsequently working as a landscape architect. He attended U. S.C. and designed his first residential projects while still a student. He married Della Mae Givens in 1917; they soon became the parents of two surviving daughters, Marilyn Frances and Norma Lucille Williams. He established his own practice in 1922, but supported himself by working with other architects; from 1921 through 1924 Williams worked for Los Angeles architect John C. Austin, eventually becoming chief draftsman.

Williams designed more than 2,000 private homes including his own home which is designated Los Angeles Cultural-Historic Monument No. 177. His most famous homes were for Hollywood celebrities, and he was well regarded for his mastery of various eclectic styles, including interpretations of Tudor-revival, French Chateau, Regency, and Mediterranean architecture. Possibly his most famous home is the one he designed for Jay Paley in Holmby Hills. Other celebrity clients included Frank Sinatra, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, Lon Chaney, Sr., Lucille Ball, Julie London, Tyrone Power (two houses), Barbara Stanwyck, Bert Lahr, Zasu Pitts, and Danny Thomas. During World War II, Williams worked for the Navy Department as an architect. Following the war he published his first book, *The Small Home of Tomorrow* (1945), with a successor volume *New Homes for Today* the following year. He also designed many public and private buildings. Architect A. Quincy Jones (1913-79) apprenticed in Williams office in 1939. He so admired Williams that the two later collaborated on projects in Palm Springs, including the Palm Springs Tennis Club (1947) and The Center featuring the Town & Country Restaurant (1948).

An award-winning architect, Williams also received honorary doctorates from Howard University (doctor of architecture), Lincoln University of Missouri (doctor of science), and the Tuskegee Institute (doctor of fine arts). In 2004, USC honored him by listing him among its distinguished alumni. Williams retired his practice in 1973, and died January 23, 1980, at age 85.

7. Integrity Analysis

It is surprising to find a building of this vintage in Palm Springs that displays such a high degree of architectural integrity. Six of the seven aspects of integrity are met: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. The building is not known for any particular event or person, so "association" is not a requirement.

Still in its original location, a comparison of historic and current photographs reveals only slight changes, many of which are reversible. The design, materials, workmanship and feeling are intact and remain unchanged. The Setting has evolved as the town grew up around the building, a common occurrence among older buildings.

Observable changes include the color of the painted trim and removal of the original shutters, painting of stone base, construction of swimming pool. Of concern is the condition of the roof which appears to be damaged and in need of repairs.

8. Bibliography

HSPB, 1987 Survey

Architectural Resources Group, *Citywide Historic Resources Survey*, City of Palm Springs, Department of Strategic Planning: 2004.

Hudson, Karen E., *The Will and the Way, Paul R. Williams, Architect*. Rizzoli, New York: 1994.

-----, *Paul R. Williams, Architect*. Rizzoli, New York, 1993.

Newcomb, Rexford, *Spanish-Colonial Architecture in the United States*. Dover Publications, New York: 1937; reprinted 1990.

Reese, Jennifer, "An Architect: Paul Williams." *Via Magazine*, September 1999.

Websites:

Paul Revere Williams Project, <http://www.paulwilliamsproject.org/>

<http://paradiseleased.wordpress.com/>

9. Geographical Data

Property Boundary Description. All of Assessor's parcel 505-286-010.

10. Prepared By

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11. Required Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed application form. **Do not mount any exhibits on a board.**



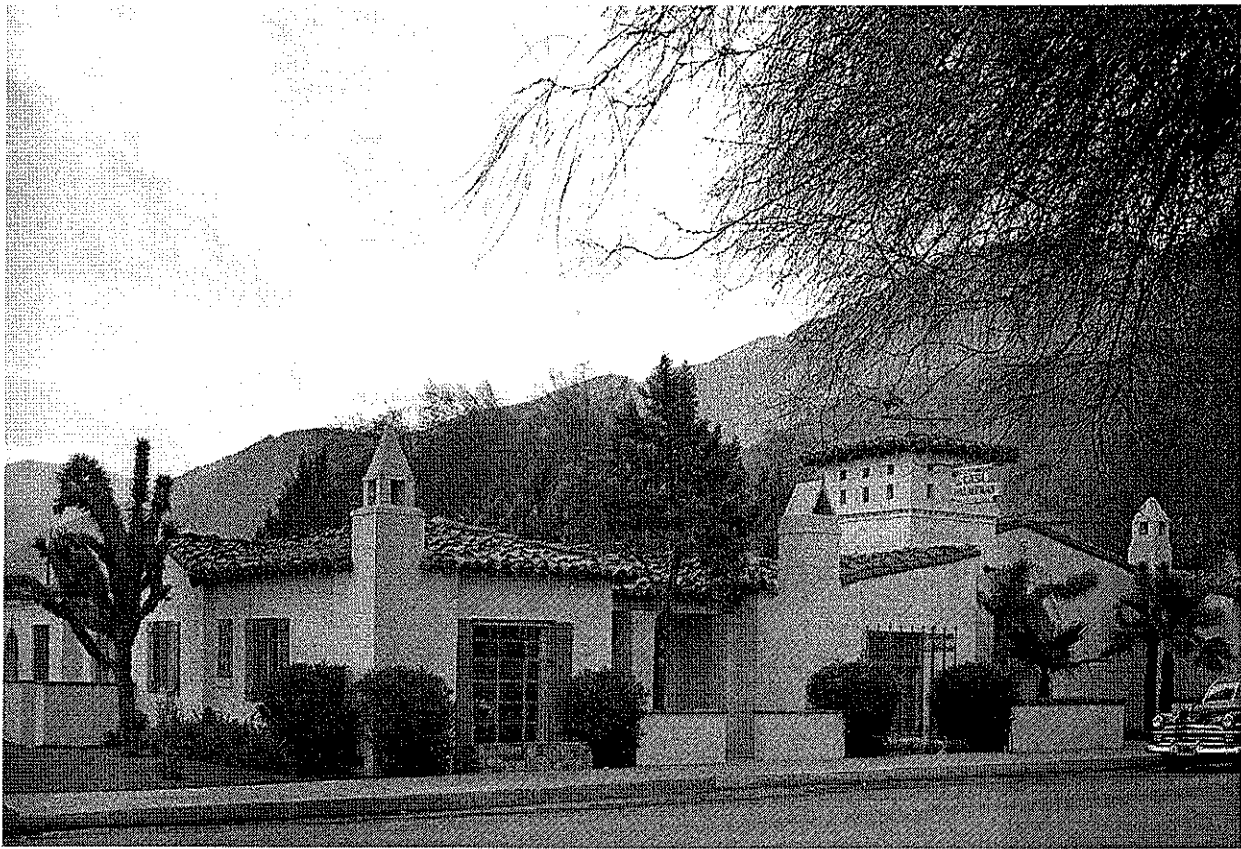
1. Palmyra Apartments, 1930. Paul R. Williams. Source: California State Library / Mott Studio



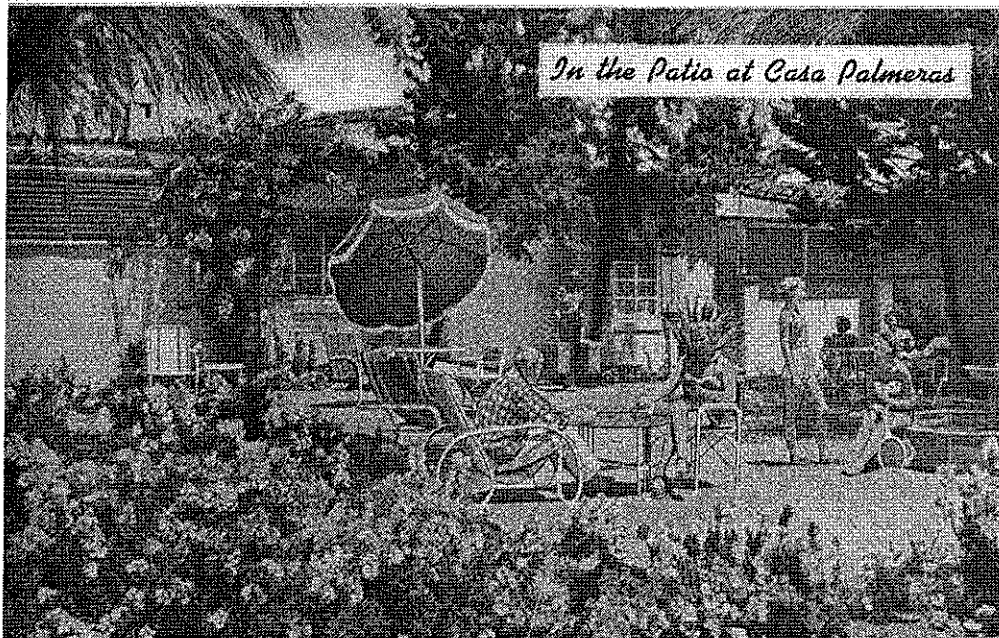
2 Palmaire Apartments, 1930. Paul R. Williams. Source: California State Library / Mott Studio



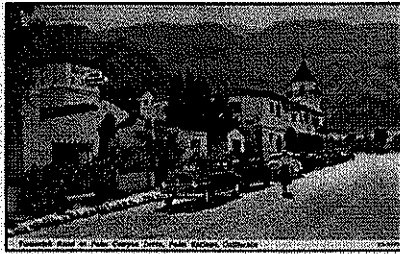
3 Palmaire Apartments, 1930. Paul R. Williams. Source: California State Library / Mott Studio



4 Casa Palmeras Apartment Hotel, 1951. Source: The Willows Historic Inn Collection, Gail B. Thompson



5 Historic Postcard



6 Casa Palmeras, Then and Now: Historic postcard and current image.

