



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 16, 2013

PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: CASE HSPB #84: APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION OF THE (J.W. ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE / ROBINSONS SPECIALTY SHOPS / "THE ALLEY" LOCATED AT 333 - 343 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE AS A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: The Planning Department

SUMMARY

Under Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code (Historic Resources), the City Council may designate properties as "Class 1" historic sites. The City's Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) has recommended such a designation for the entire site, at 333 - 343 South Palm Canyon Drive ("J.W. Robinsons Department Store / Robinsons Specialty Shops / The Alley"). The property owner has expressed opposition to the designation. The Council will conduct a public hearing and determine if the site should be designated. Class 1 designation would place the building under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05 "Historic Preservation".

RECOMMENDATION

1. Open the public hearing and accept public testimony.
2. Adopt Resolution No. ____: "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA DESIGNATING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 333 - 343 S. PALM CANYON DRIVE ("J.W. ROBINSONS BUILDING / THE ALLEY") AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 - HSPB 84"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The HSPB initiated an investigation to determine if the subject property should be designated a Class 1 historic site. Such designation would:

1. Place the subject property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05

ITEM NO. 1A

2. Require present and subsequent owners to maintain the site consistent with that ordinance, and
3. Grant possible property tax reduction opportunities to the owner under the State of California Mills Act.

A full project description, historic assessment report, findings and recommendations can be found in the HSPB staff report and other exhibits attached hereto.

PRIOR ACTIONS

On July 10, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation initiated an investigation in accordance with Section 8.05.135 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code for possible designation of the subject property as a historic site.

On November 13, 2012, the HSPB adopted a resolution (HSPB 84) recommending that the City Council adopt a statement of historic significance and designate the site as a Historic Site, Class One.

DISCUSSION

Located on the southwest corner of South Palm Canyon Drive and West Baristo Avenue, the concrete slab construction building built in 1958 consists of 14,500 square feet of retail, office and receiving space on a 1.94 acre lot in downtown Palm Springs. The building was supplemented in 1972 with a 13,400 square foot addition. The pavilion-style modernist building is elevated from the street level by four long horizontal concrete steps.¹

The building has a glassed-in, well-lighted façade on the east side of the building which acts as a giant display window. Clerestory windows in the center of the building provide a view of the mountains and provide bright daytime lighting to the main selling area.

Broad roof overhangs are supported with load-bearing 4-inch finned steel pipe columns spaced at 9-foot intervals. These fins protrude about 2-inches near the ground, subtly increase to about 4-inches of width at an elevation of about 10-feet, and decreased again as the top of the column nears the building's overhang. The underside of the building overhang is punctuated with cylindrical spun-aluminum lighting fixtures also spaced at 9-foot intervals. A gold anodized aluminum fascia on the building exterior is now painted over.

Three of the exterior walls are characterized by three-dimensional horizontal diamond, or "harlequin," design 12"x12"x1" concrete decorative tile, along with 12"x12"x12" single-core concrete block, primarily on the south elevation. The block creates a grid-like pattern that compliments the patterned concrete tile.

¹ This description is derived from the application submitted by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, revised September 17, 2012. Additional information is provided in the application, attached to this report.

In 1972, in response to an apparent need for more retail space, an addition was constructed, connecting to the south end of the original building. Stylistically identical to the original Luckman & Pereira structure, records show the addition was supervised by architect William L. Pereira (who was then practicing independently). The seamless addition uses similar building materials, repeats the central clerestory windows and is virtually indistinguishable from the original building.

The building was recognized as significant from the time of its original construction. An article entitled "Bazaar in an Oasis," in the March 1958 issue of *Architectural Forum* recognized the Robinson's building as one of "six stores of distinction". The article also identified Raymond Loewy Associates as designer of the store's interiors and Robinson & Wilson, Inc. as the general contractor.

The building's patterned marble and quartz aggregate tile was part of the building industry's foray into the use of concrete block in more decorative expressions. The late 1950s and early 1960s saw an explosion in the use of decorative concrete block which was to take two major directions, i.e., one in the form of solid, load-bearing "Shadowal" concrete blocks and the second as airy, perforated, non-load bearing, concrete "screen block."

In the summer of 1958, the July issue of *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects* announced 1958's "National Honor Awards" in the field of architecture. Based on judgment criteria, including "quality of unity in the entire work," "expression of strength without heaviness," "refinement," "aesthetic quality," and finally "originality and inventiveness", the "First Honor Award" went to the Palm Springs J.W. Robinson Department Store.

Beyond its architectural significance, the store represents a pre-shopping mall era, when Palm Canyon Drive, like Rodeo Drive and Worth Avenue in Palm Beach, Florida, was known as one of the world's famous streets for carriage-trade shopping. World-renowned upscale retailers sharing Palm Canyon Drive in their own free-standing buildings included Bullock's Wilshire, Saks Fifth Avenue, I. Magnin, Joseph Magnin, and a plethora of independent resort fashion houses and fine jewelers. All of the other original stores, except for the Saks building at Ramon and Palm Canyon Drive are gone. The mid-century J.W. Robinson's building, now home to The Alley, is one of the few remaining relics of Palm Springs' shopping and fashion heyday of the 20th Century.

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 Preservation 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.

The HSPB concluded that the stated purpose and authority of the Historic Preservation ordinance are furthered by this proposed designation, as follows:

- a. As a complete and largely intact example of the mid-century department store rendered in the modernist style, the J.W. Robinson's building holds an important place in the City's architectural and social 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 modern architecture and carriage-trade retail shopping.

Seven other qualities are listed in the Historic Resources ordinance as the basis for designating a site, with the Board's recommendation on three of them provided below:

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

The Board did not support this finding.

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

The Board did not support this finding.

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

The application describes the building as designed by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Luckman & Pereira (with Max R. Horwitz as the credited designer), and further notes that the building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' Modern Period. One of the city's better-known commercial buildings, the structure is a prime, largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture, i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The building also expresses the post-war and pre-mall retailing era of the 1950's and '60's when major stores were located downtown (including Bullock's Wilshire, Saks Fifth Avenue, I. Magnin, Joseph Magnin on Palm Canyon Drive) and locals and visitors calmly shopped alongside world-famous celebrities.

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

The application states that the building possesses distinctive characteristics of modern architecture, such as overall horizontality, expression of structure, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, use of inexpensive, machine produced materials, and masonry. The structure is an important example of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury.

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, the firm of Luckman & Pereira, has long been recognized as a leading firm of the modernist movement and documentation on the firm is extensive. The April 1957 issue of *Architect & Engineer* identifies Luckman & Pereira vice-president Max R. Horwitz as the designer credited with both the Beverly Hills and Palm Springs Robinson's stores. The Palm Springs Robinson's building was immediately recognized by the architectural press and peers in the profession as an extraordinary effort that combined a sense of proportion, massing, refinement and use of modern materials and technology, including receipt of the 1960 Triennial Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects Southern California Chapter. Luckman & Pereira's J.W. Robinson Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop certainly articulates the best of "corporate modernism" to a level of excellence and confidence that could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal.

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

The Board did not support this finding.

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

The Board did not support this finding.

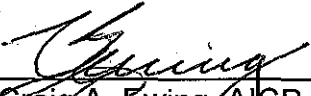
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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.

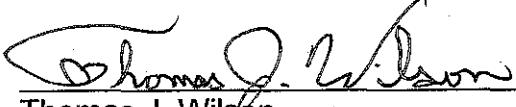
NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within four hundred (400) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation. As of the writing of this report,

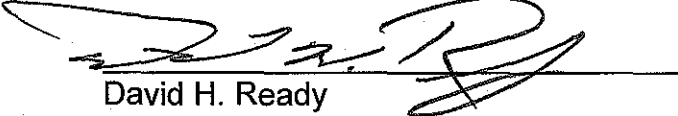
staff has not received any inquiries on this matter. The property owner has also been notified and has previously expressed support for the designation.



Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services



Thomas J. Wilson
Assistant City Manager, Dev't Svcs



David H. Ready
City Manager

Attachments:

1. Draft City Council Resolution, including Statement of Historic Significance
2. Vicinity Map
3. Letter and e-mail from property owner, William Marek, December 20, 2012
4. Resolution #84 of the HSPB
5. HSPB meeting minutes and staff report dated and November 13, 2012
6. HSPB meeting minutes dated October 9, 2012
7. HSPB meeting minutes and staff report dated July 10, 2012
8. Nomination application from Ron Marshall / Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, revised September 17, 2012

RESOLUTION NO. _____

OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA DESIGNATING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 333-343 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE (J.W. ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE / ROBINSONS SPECIALTY SHOPS / "THE ALLEY") AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 84

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

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board initiated an investigation to determine if the property at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive (J.W. Robinsons Department Store / Robinsons Specialty Shops / "The Alley") should be designated a historic site; and

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the property at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive as a historic site; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of said hearing and after considering all materials and testimony presented on the matter, the HSPB adopted Resolution #84 to recommend to City Council designation of the property located at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive as a Historic Site, Class 1; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the property located at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive as a Historic Site, Class 1 was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on January 16, 2013 the City Council conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the property located at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive as a Historic Site, Class 1; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the property located at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive as a Historic Site, Class 1 shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05 and promotes the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the designation of a historic site is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15331 for the preservation of historical resources; and

WHEREAS, the City Council 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 and notes the following:

1. In 1958, the J.W. Robinsons Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop ("Robinson's"), now "The Alley", was constructed (with an addition in 1972) on a flat, rectangular lot at the south-west corner of S. Palm Canyon Drive and Baristo Road, and with a site address of 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive; and
2. The Robinson's building was recognized as significant from the time of its original construction, including a "First Honor Award" from the American Institute of Architects in 1958 and significant mention in the March 1958 issue of *Architectural Forum*; and
3. The defining characteristics of this building include:
 - A pavilion-style building elevated from street level by four horizontal concrete steps;
 - A glassed-in, well-lighted east elevation functioning as a display window;
 - Clerestory windows in the center of the building;
 - Broad roof overhangs supported by 4-inch finned steel pipe columns;
 - Cylindrical spun-aluminum exterior lighting fixtures;
 - Gold-anodized aluminum fascia
 - Concrete decorative tile fascia in a three-dimensional horizontal diamond pattern on three elevations

THE CITY COUNCIL DOES HEREBY RESOLVE:

SECTION 1: Pursuant to CEQA, the City Council finds that the designation of the property at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive (Robinsons / "The Alley") as a Class 1 historic site is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15331 whereby this designation is for the preservation of a historical resource.

SECTION 2: Pursuant to Section 8.05.020 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, the City Council does hereby make the following findings regarding the property at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive (Robinsons / "The Alley") to support designation as a Class One historic site:

1. *The stated purpose and authority of the Historic Resources ordinance are furthered by this proposed designation.*
 - a. As a complete and largely intact example of the mid-century department store rendered in the modernist style, the J.W. Robinson's Department Store / Robinsons Specialty Shops holds an important place in the City's architectural and social 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 modern architecture and carriage-trade retail shopping.

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

The application describes the building as designed by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Luckman & Pereira (with Max R. Horwitz as the credited designer), and further notes that the building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' Modern Period. One of the city's better-known commercial buildings, the structure is a prime, largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture, i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The building also expresses the post-war and pre-mall retailing era of the 1950's and '60's when major stores were located downtown (including Bullock's Wilshire, Saks Fifth Avenue, I. Magnin, Joseph Magnin on Palm Canyon Drive) and locals and visitors calmly shopped alongside world-famous celebrities.

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

The application states that the building possesses distinctive characteristics of modern architecture, such as overall horizontality, expression of structure, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, use of inexpensive, machine produced materials, and masonry. The structure is an important example of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury.

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, the firm of Luckman & Pereira, has long been recognized as a leading firm of the modernist movement and documentation on the firm is extensive. The April 1957 issue of *Architect & Engineer* identifies Luckman & Pereira vice-president Max R. Horwitz as the designer credited with both the Beverly Hills and Palm Springs Robinson's stores. The Palm Springs Robinson's building was immediately recognized by the architectural press and peers in the profession as an extraordinary effort that combined a sense of proportion, massing, refinement and use of modern materials and technology, including receipt of the 1960 Triennial Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects Southern California Chapter. Luckman & Pereira's J.W. Robinson Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop certainly articulates the best of "corporate modernism" to a level of excellence and confidence that could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal.

SECTION 3: Based upon the foregoing, the City Council does hereby adopt a Statement of Historic Significance attached hereto as Exhibit A, and designate as a Class 1 Historic Site the building and site at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive (J.W. Robinsons Department Store / Robinsons Specialty Shops / "The Alley"), 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. No HSPB review shall be required for new portable, detached, non-habitable structures or modifications to landscaping.
3. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.
4. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
5. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be deemed acceptable.

ADOPTED THIS ___th day of January, 2013.

David H. Ready, City Manager

ATTEST:

James Thompson, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE) ss.
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS)

I, JAMES THOMPSON, City Clerk of the City of Palm Springs, hereby certify that Resolution No. _____ is a full, true and correct copy, and was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs on _____, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

James Thompson, City Clerk
City of Palm Springs, California

EXHIBIT A

STATEMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

J.W. ROBINSON DEPARTMENT STORE / ROBINSON'S SPECIALTY SHOP THE ALLEY 333-343 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE

LOCATION

The J.W. Robinson Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop building remains in its original location and therefore qualifies under this aspect.

DESIGN

The J.W. Robinson Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop ("Robinson's") building has seen some minor alterations; however, the essential characteristics of form, plan, space, structure, and style have survived intact. Similarly, the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; and the type, amount, and style of detailing, has survived as well. The exterior surface materials (concrete block and metal fascia) have been painted but this is an insignificant and reversible change. One of the primary design elements of the building is the elevation of the structure above the street level by four, long horizontal steps that create both a sense of arrival and impart a sense of importance to the building. Over the years concrete planters have been installed which act as a barrier between the building and the street thereby diminishing the drama of entering the building. These planters could be removed or mitigated to more closely echo the original design. There is extensive documentation in the form of plans and photographs (including many taken by architectural photographer Julius Shulman) that illustrate the original design intent of the architects.

SETTING

The setting of the Robinson's building continues to reflect the architects' original design relationship of site and structure.

MATERIALS

As mentioned previously, the Robinson's building's exterior surface materials have been painted, but this change does not constitute a significant loss of the physical elements that expressed the design during the building's period of significance; the particular pattern and configuration that today forms the building survives intact.

WORKMANSHIP

With the Robinson's building, the workmanship is comprised of integral ornamental detailing reflected in concrete block, glass, steel, and even the exposed structural system itself. The property continues to express a high degree of contemporary period workmanship.

FEELING

The Robinson's building was designed and built to express Palm Springs' informal glamour. As a retail establishment that unapologetically catered to the rich and aspiring upper middle class, the "feeling" of the building reflected urbanity in an informal resort location. The late 1950s and early '60's were a sophisticated, open and optimistic time, a feeling expressed by the design of this building. With few modifications since originally built, the Robinson's building retains the integrity of feeling, even as shopping tastes and behaviors have changed.

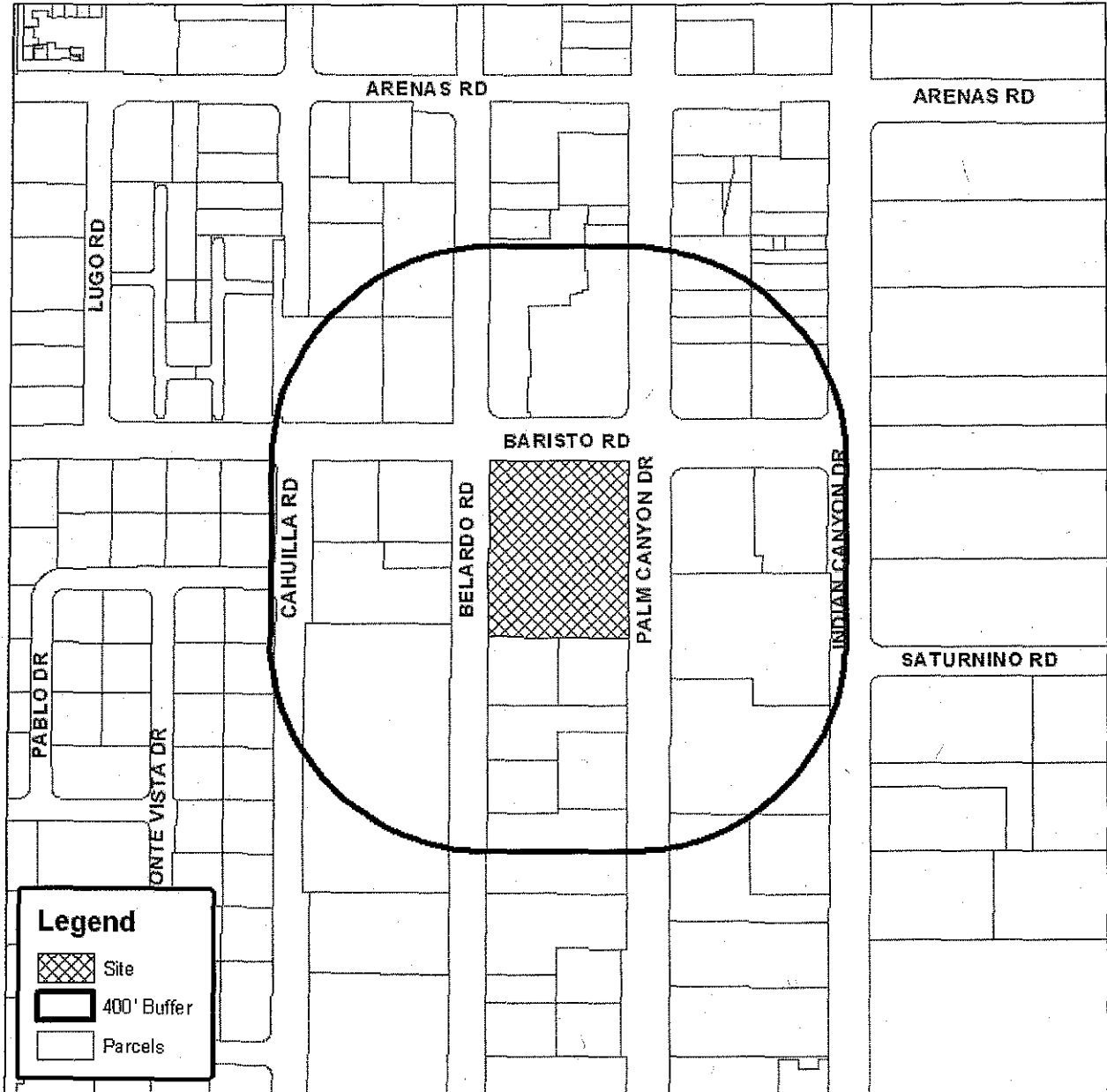
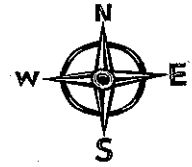
ASSOCIATION

As stated under Criterion 1: the Robinson's building is an important example of midcentury commercial development in Palm Springs. The building represents the city's overall commercial development from the 1950s to the 1960s, and contributes to the scale and character of the city's midcentury commercial "banking district." As such, it continues its association with a pattern of events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community; the building retains integrity of association.

SUMMARY: The building appears to be in excellent condition due largely to the use of construction materials suitable for the harsh desert environment. The Integrity analysis confirms that the building still possesses all seven aspects of integrity. And while the building has undergone numerous minor alterations since it was built, virtually all of its character-defining features survive. The building retains a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify it for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site.



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB 84

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: To consider designating the property known as the J.W. Robinsons Building ("The Alley") as a Class 1 Historic Site (Case HSPB 84). The subject site is located at 333-343 South Palm Canyon Drive. (APN 513-203-013).



THE ALLEY

80250 Highway 111, Space A101, Indio, CA 92201
(760) 863-5077 Fax: (760) 863-5077

December 20, 2012

Palm Springs City Council
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

RE: 333 South Palm Canyon Drive
(Former Robinson's building)

Dear City Council Members,

I was encouraged to write to you by Craig Ewing. As you know, the City Historical Site Preservation Board wants to make our building on Palm Canyon a historical site. I have spoken to my longtime real-estate agent and she does not share the Board's view that the designation will improve its property value. Her words were "There is no upside for you if your property is designated a historical site."

Obviously, we don't want the historical designation, but we can understand the City's desire to preserve its best architecture. We are looking to find a middle ground between forcing us to accept the historical designation and failing to protect Palm Springs' heritage.

We would be willing to sign an agreement with the City to the effect that as long as we own the building we will make no changes to the exterior without the City's approval. If at some time in the distant future, we should sell the building, the historical designation could be revisited at that time.

The Alley has been in Palm Springs since 1975. We have helped to make the City the interesting and vibrant tourist destination it is. We hope you can see our point of view and will work with us as a partner rather than an adversary.

Best regards,

William Marek
Owner

Craig Ewing

From: William Marek [Will@TheAlley.info]
Sent: Thursday, December 20, 2012 6:50 AM
To: Craig Ewing
Subject: Re: Historical Designation
Attachments: Palm Springs Historical letter.doc

Dear Craig,

Attached is a copy of the letter I sent to the City Council. If you have any more comments or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Will Marek
Corporate Offices
The Alley
80250 Highway 111
Indio, CA 92201
(760) 347-7200 Fax (760) 345-1076

> From: Craig Ewing <Craig.Ewing@palm Springs-ca.gov>
> Date: Tue, 27 Nov 2012 10:18:04 -0800
> To: William Marek <Will@TheAlley.info>
> Subject: RE: Historical Designation
>
> Will,
> There may be some merit in your suggestion, although it will be the
> City Council's to consider. One possibility would be to let the
> Council approve the designation now, but make it effective only upon
> the sale of the building and subject to the condition you proposed. I
> don't know that they would go for that, but it allows them to act now
> and preserve your concern.
>
> We haven't scheduled the hearing with the Council yet, and it will
> probably go sometime in January. You may wish to consider a letter
> directly to the City Council laying out your suggestion. I hope that
> is helpful.
>
> Craig A. Ewing, AICP
> Director of Planning Services
> City of Palm Springs
> 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
> Palm Springs, CA 92262
> 760-323-8269

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Will Marek [mailto:Will@TheAlley.info]

> Sent: Monday, November 26, 2012 4:47 PM

> To: Craig Ewing

> Subject: Historical Designation

>

> Dear Craig,

>

> You have mentioned that the City doesn't like to go against the wishes
> of the building owner regarding designating it historical.

>

> I have a suggestion that could make us both happy. We would sign an
> agreement that as long as we own the Robinson's building we will not
> alter the exterior without the consent of the City. When and if in
> the distant future we do sell the building, the City could revisit the
> historical designation at that time.

>

> Please let me know what you think.

>

> Best regards,

>

> Will Marek

> The Alley Corporate Offices

> 80250 Highway 111

> Indio, CA 92201

> (760) 347-7200

> Fax: (760) 345-1076

>

>

HSPB RESOLUTION NO. 84

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 333-343 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE ("J.W. ROBINSONS DEPARTMENT STORE / ROBINSON'S SPECIALTY SHOP") AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 84

WHEREAS, in 1958, the J.W. Robinsons Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop ("Robinson's"), now "The Alley", was constructed (with an addition in 1972) on a flat, rectangular lot at the south-west corner of S. Palm Canyon Drive and Baristo Road, and with a site address of 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive; and

WHEREAS, the Robinson's building was recognized as significant from the time of its original construction, including a "First Honor Award" from the American Institute of Architects in 1958 and significant mention in the March 1958 issue of *Architectural Forum*; and

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of this building include:

- A pavilion-style building elevated from street level by four horizontal concrete steps;
- A glassed-in, well-lighted east elevation functioning as a display window;
- Clerestory windows in the center of the building;
- Broad roof overhangs supported by 4-inch finned steel pipe columns;
- Cylindrical spun-aluminum exterior lighting fixtures;
- Gold-anodized aluminum fascia
- Concrete decorative tile fascia in a three-dimensional horizontal diamond pattern on three elevations

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

WHEREAS, on July 10, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) of the City of Palm Springs, initiated an application for Historic Site Designation for the J.W. Robinsons Building; 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 November 13, 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 largely intact example of the mid-century department store rendered in the modernist style, the J.W. Robinson's building holds an important place in the City's architectural and social 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 modern architecture and carriage-trade retail shopping.

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

The application describes the building as designed by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Luckman & Pereira (with Max R. Horwitz as the credited designer), and further notes that the building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' Modern Period. One of the city's better-known commercial buildings, the structure is a prime, largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture, i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The building also expresses the post-war and pre-mall retailing era of the 1950's and '60's when major stores were located downtown (including Bullock's Wilshire, Saks Fifth Avenue, I. Magnin, Joseph Magnin on Palm Canyon Drive) and locals and visitors calmly shopped alongside world-famous celebrities.

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

The application states that the building possesses distinctive characteristics of modern architecture, such as overall horizontality, expression of structure, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, use of inexpensive, machine produced materials, and masonry. The structure is an important example of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury.

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, the firm of Luckman & Pereira, has long been recognized as a leading firm of the modernist movement and documentation on the firm is extensive. The April 1957 issue of *Architect & Engineer* identifies

Luckman & Pereira vice-president Max R. Horwitz as the designer credited with both the Beverly Hills and Palm Springs Robinson's stores. The Palm Springs Robinson's building was immediately recognized by the architectural press and peers in the profession as an extraordinary effort that combined a sense of proportion, massing, refinement and use of modern materials and technology, including receipt of the 1960 Triennial Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects Southern California Chapter. Luckman & Pereira's J.W. Robinson Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop certainly articulates the best of "corporate modernism" to a level of excellence and confidence that could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council adopt the attached Statement of Historic Significance and designate the entire property located at 333-343 South Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California (J.W. Robinsons Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop / The Alley) 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 13th day of November, 2012.

AYES: Glenn, McGrew, Vice-Chair Grattan, Chair DeLeeuw
NOES: Ploss
ABSENT: Gilmer
ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS,
CALIFORNIA



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

6. PUBLIC HEARING:

- ➔ 6A. Case HSPB #84 - An application by the Historic Site Preservation Board to designate the commercial building known as the J.W. Robinson's Building ("The Alley") as a Class 1 Historic Site located at 333 – 343 South Palm Canyon Drive, Zone CBD, Section 15.

Director Ewing presented the staff report. The Commission asked about updated information from the applicant and Board member McGrew noted the following changes to the application:

- Identify the original name as "Robinsons Specialty Shop" (page 5)
- Add reference to building designer Max Horwitz, (Page 9)
- Note recognition of 1960 Triennial Honor Award from AIA Southern California Chapter
- Additional language regarding other retail stores designed by notable architects
- Additions to the bibliography

He also suggested adoption of a revised statement with these changes in the Board's recommendation.

Board member Ploss confirmed that the property owner does not support the nomination, and suggested that designating only the original 1957 building might alleviate the property owner's concerns.

Chair DeLeeuw opened the public hearing.

Gary Johns, resident, noted that a recent Palm Springs Preservation Foundation tour of the building's exterior reinforced his belief that the 1972 addition be included in the designation and expressed support for the nomination.

Chair DeLeeuw closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed:

- The importance of the 1972 addition to the nomination;
- The regulations and practices for notifying surrounding property owners;
- The building's design in light of its phased construction ;
- The owner's objections to the nomination;
- The draft history statement; and
- The draft resolution, including the discussion of character-defining features

Motion by McGrew; second by Glenn; vote 5-0-1 (Gilmer absent) to adopt the history statement, as amended.

Motion by Grattan; second by Glenn; vote 4-1-1 (Ploss opposed, Gilmer absent) to adopt the draft resolution, as amended, recommending Class One designation for the entire building, including the Statement of Historic Significance.

Board member Ploss noted that she supports designation of the original construction.

~~Board member McGrew indicated that he will recuse himself on the next item and left the meeting.~~

6B. Case HSPB #85 – An application by Lawrence E. Wood, owner, to designate the single-family dwelling as a Class 1 historic site located at 992 E. La Jolla Road, Zone R-1-C, Section 25.

Director Ewing presented the staff report. The Commission asked about:

- Designating a single house as a prototype within a tract of similar homes;
- The particular elements of this property, including the "woven" wood fence;
- The landscape plan as a contemporary expression of modernism, as designed by the original architect, and as a desert-appropriate design;
- The City's authority to designate parts of the property;
- The potential of creating a historic district in the Twin Palms Estates neighborhood.

Chair DeLeeuw opened the public hearing.

Chris Menrad, property owner, indicated that the redwood fence is original and that the design was used throughout the tract. He noted that the landscape plan is true to the mid-century modern era, even though it was only recently prepared by Kreisel. He also indicated that he was responsible for the recent renovation, including research into the design, materials and colors used in the original construction. He expressed his support for designating important homes and requested approval of this application.

Chair DeLeeuw closed the public hearing.

The Board discussed the quality of the restoration.

Motion by Ploss; second by Glenn; vote 5-0-1 (Gilmer absent) to adopt the history statement, as amended.

Board member Glenn confirmed that, should the landscaping be included in the City's designation, future changes to the landscaping would be subject to Board review.

Motion by Ploss; second by Glenn; vote 5-0-1 (Gilmer absent) to adopt the draft resolution, as presented, recommending Class One designation for the entire site, including the Statement of Historic Significance.

Board member McGrew returned to the meeting.



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: November 13, 2012

Case No: HSPB – 84

Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application

Location: 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Dr. – J.W. Robinson's Store (The Alley)

Owner: Marek Family LLP, (Mr. William Marek)

Applicant: Historic Site Preservation Board

Zone: C-D-B / Central Business District

APN: 507-274-003

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An application by the Historic Site Preservation Board to designate the commercial building at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive, known as the J.W. Robinson's Store (and presently occupied by "The Alley") as a Class 1 historic site. Such designation would:

1. Place the subject property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05
2. Require present and subsequent owners to maintain the buildings consistent with that ordinance,
3. Grant possible property tax reduction opportunities to the owners under the State of California Mills Act.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) open a public hearing, received any testimony and adopt the attached draft statement of historic significance and resolution recommending to the City Council a Class 1 historic designation for the property.

PRIOR ACTIONS

On July 10, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation initiated an investigation in accordance with Section 8.05.135 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code for possible designation of the subject property as a historic site.

On October 9, 2012, the HSPB discussed a draft statement of historic significance for the project.

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

Located on the southwest corner of South Palm Canyon Drive and West Baristo Avenue, the concrete slab construction building built in 1958 consists of 14,500 square feet of retail, office and receiving space on a 1.94 acre lot in downtown Palm Springs. The building was supplemented in 1972 with a 13,400 square foot addition. The pavilion-style modernist building is elevated from the street level by four long horizontal concrete steps.¹

The building has a glassed-in, well-lighted façade on the east side of the building which acts as a giant display window. Clerestory windows in the center of the building provide a view of the mountains and take advantage of the desert climate to provide bright daytime lighting to the main selling area (thereby saving on the costs of electrical lighting).

Broad roof overhangs are supported with load-bearing 4-inch steel pipe columns spaced at 9-foot intervals. These columns each have four "fins" or "ribs" which sprout from each column at 90-degree angles starting about at about 6.5 inches above the concrete sidewalk. These fins protrude about 2-inches near the ground, subtly increase to about 4-inches of width at an elevation of about 10-feet, and decreased again as the top of the column nears the building's overhang. The underside of the building overhang is punctuated with cylindrical spun-aluminum lighting fixtures also spaced at 9-foot intervals. A gold anodized aluminum fascia on the building exterior is now painted over.

Three of the exterior walls are characterized by three-dimensional horizontal diamond, or "harlequin," design 12"x12"x1" concrete decorative tile, creating interesting shadows throughout the day. (The original Robinson's store sign, now lost, echoed the diamond-like design of both the concrete tiles and the aluminum fascia.) There was also

¹ This description is derived from the application submitted by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, revised July 10, 2012. Additional information is provided in the application, attached to this report.

extensive use of 12"x12"x12" single-core concrete block, primarily on the south elevation. The block creates a grid-like pattern that compliments, rather than competes with, the patterned concrete tile.

In 1972, in response to an apparent need for more retail space, an addition was constructed, connecting to the south end of the original building. Stylistically identical to the original Luckman & Pereira structure, records show the addition was supervised by architect William L. Pereira (who was then practicing independently). The seamless addition uses similar building materials; repeats the central clerestory windows and is virtually indistinguishable from the original building.

The record of City building permits is extensive and described in the application. The major permits are listed below:²

Date	Address	Type/Number	Owner	Remarks
8/26/57	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/9961	J. W. Robinson (Pearl McManus)	14,500 sq. ft. at cost of \$280,000
7/24/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/4794	J. W. Robinson	Add 13,400 sq. ft. at cost of \$275,000 Coble & Wessman

Other permits for interior work, electrical / plumbing / HVAC and signs were also issued over the years; however, the primary exterior design and features have not been significantly altered over the years.

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

The building was recognized as significant from the time of its original construction. In an article entitled "Bazaar in an Oasis," the March 1958 issue of *Architectural Forum* described the Robinson's building in enthusiastic detail:

Built on a concrete platform at a busy center in Palm Springs, California, the branch of the J.W. Robinson Company, a West Coast specialty shop, has a two-way policy of visibility. Glass front walls, sheltered by deep overhangs, make the entire interior a showroom...enticing the motorist to park and come in. Once he is inside, in the center of the store, a 3-foot-deep clerestory perched on the roof gives him back his view of the mountains, in whose lap Palm Springs sits. The psychology is deliberate. Robinson's wanted to become a part of the sophisticated resort reputation of this famous watering spot, to catch the excitement in the air.

The design methods, besides providing great inward and outward visibility, include a feeling of lightness. The roof is a series of light steel trusses linked in a serrated pattern, and set on lean pipe columns...Nowhere does this roof rest on walls, even at the solid masonry rear of the store....The walls are faced with a

² This information is derived from the application submitted by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, revised July 10, 2012. Additional information is provided in the application, attached to this report.

special tile of marble and quartz aggregate, patterned in a horizontal diamond to repeat the rhythm of the gold anodized aluminum fascia.

Inside, shopping arrangements are on the open plan. The air conditioning does not use conventional diffusers; tempered air is filtered into the store through small adjustable slots in the acoustical tile ceiling...which acts as a plenum.

The "Bazaar in an Oasis" article was part of a special *Forum* installment entitled "Six stores of distinction: Outstanding examples of new design trends in display and merchandising" which showcased a variety of significant commercial projects. The article also identified Raymond Loewy Associates as designer of the store's interiors and Robinson & Wilson, Inc. as the general contractor.

The building's patterned concrete tile, identified as "special tile of marble and quartz aggregate" in the *Forum* description, was part of the building industry's foray into the use of concrete block in more decorative expressions. The late 1950s and early 1960s saw an explosion in the use of decorative concrete block which was to take two major directions, i.e., one in the form of solid, load-bearing "Shadowal" concrete blocks and the second as airy, perforated, non-load bearing, concrete "screen block."

Today, both of these building materials can be found throughout Palm Springs in a profusion of patterns. The use of an expensive, aggregate-imbedded tile (versus an integrally decorative concrete block such as Shadowal) is an accurate snap-shot of an evolving building material which would ultimately become inexpensive, rugged and modular (and provide an alternative to expensive marble and quartz chips).

In the summer of 1958, the July issue of *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects* announced 1958's "National Honor Awards" in the field of architecture. This prestigious awards competition was juried by five nationally-prominent architects (including Los Angeles architect Welton Beckett). There were 312 entries in the competition which, according to the judges, evaluated entries based on "quality of unity in the entire work," "expression of strength without heaviness," "refinement," "aesthetic quality," and finally "originality and inventiveness." The "First Honor Award" went to the J.W. Robinson Department Store in Palm Springs.

Beyond its architectural significance as "The Jewel Box of the Desert," the Palm Springs J.W. Robinson's store represents a pre-shopping mall era, when Palm Canyon Drive, like Rodeo Drive and Worth Avenue in Palm Beach, Florida, was known as one of the world's famous streets for carriage-trade shopping. World-renowned upscale retailers sharing Palm Canyon Drive in their own free-standing buildings included Bullock's Wilshire, Saks Fifth Avenue, I. Magnin, Joseph Magnin, and a plethora of independent resort fashion houses and fine jewelers.

During this fashion era, sophisticated locals and visitors calmly shopped alongside Liberace, Red Skelton, the Gabor Sisters, Dinah Shore, Kirk Douglas, Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope. J W Robinson's first Palm Springs venture started as a small shop in the Desert Inn. The J.W. Robinson's corporation opened its free-standing store

at the present site in 1958 and sold it 30 years later when it merged with the May Company and opened a store in Palm Desert's Town Center. All of the other original stores, except for the Saks building at Ramon and Palm Canyon Drive are gone. The mid-century J.W. Robinson's building, now home to The Alley, is one of the few remaining relics of Palm Springs' shopping and fashion heyday of the 20th Century.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

As noted above in Background and Setting, Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of a historic site: "*An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect*". Seven other qualities are listed therein with the applicant's and staff's analysis provided below:

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

The applicant asserts that the building's existence during the "gradual rise of a city's prominence in architectural excellence" provides adequate justification for this finding. Staff believes that a closer connection between the property and one or more specific events is necessary to meet this finding. No specific event of national, state or local history is known to be associated with the property save the occupation of the building by the J.W. Robinsons Company and subsequent tenants. Staff cannot support this finding.

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

The applicant does not request designation based on this finding.

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

The application describes the building as designed by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Luckman & Pereira, and further notes that the building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' Modern Period. One of the city's better-known commercial buildings, the structure is a prime, largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture, i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The building also expresses the post-war and pre-mall retailing era of the 1950's and '60's when major stores were located downtown and locals and visitors calmly shopped alongside world-famous celebrities. Staff supports this finding.

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

The application states that the building possesses distinctive characteristics of modern architecture, such as overall horizontality, expression of structure, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, use of inexpensive, machine produced materials, and masonry. The structure is an important example of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury. Staff supports the 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 application notes that the firm of Luckman & Pereira has long been recognized as a leading firm of the modernist movement and documentation on the firm is extensive. The J.W. Robinson Department Store building was immediately recognized by the architectural press and peers in the profession as an extraordinary effort that combined a sense of proportion, massing, refinement and use of modern materials and technology. Luckman & Pereira's J.W. Robinson Department Store certainly articulates the best of "corporate modernism" to a level of excellence and confidence that could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal. Staff supports the finding.

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

The application does not seek approval under this finding.

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

The application does not seek approval under this finding.

CONCLUSION

Both the original physical development of the site and its current condition provide a strong basis for historic designation. The 1972 addition expanded the building in a respectful and sensitive manner. The building exterior continues to demonstrate one of the most successful realizations of mid-century modern architecture in a department store retail context, and is a testament to a way of public life (downtown department store shopping) that has since passed into history.

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 and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any inquiries on this matter.

Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution and Statement of Historical Significance
3. Application and Submitted Documents
4. Correspondence from William Marek, property owner, Aug. 9, 2012
5. Letter to Mr. Marek from Chair DeLeeuw, Sept. 18, 2012

~~8. OTHER BUSINESS~~

- 8A. Case 3.1198 MAA / HSPB #27 El Paseo Building – Staff memo regarding HSPB imposed conditions of approval for exterior changes associated with Workshop Kitchen and Bar located at 800 North Palm Canyon Drive, Zone C-1.

Assistant Planner Glenn Mlaker presented the staff memo. The Board had no comments.

- 8B. Case HSPB 83 – A request to consider designation of the property known as The Alley, previously the JW Robinson Department Store, as a Class 1 Historic Site located at 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive; Zone C-B-D, Section 15.

Director Ewing presented the staff memo. Will Marek, property owner, expressed his concern that historic designation would harm his property's value and therefore opposed the designation. The Board discussed:

- The potential for a historic designation to enhance property values,
- The potential for tax credits under the Mills Act,
- Positive publicity associated with historic designation in Palm Springs
- The property's location across from the Santa Fe Federal Savings building,
- Limiting the designation to the original 1958 construction.

The Chair invited any public comments. Ron Marshall expressed support for the designation's positive effect on property values and for the Mills Act's potential benefits. He also stated his support for historic designation of the property.

The Board discussed:

- Alternative Statements of Historic Significance
- Shopping during the mid-century era in Palm Springs
- Contents of a sufficient statement
- Additional information on the design firm
- Outreach opportunities for future applications

~~9. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS~~

- 9.A Las Palmas Business Historic District Committee - Update

Board member McGrew presented information on the JW Robinsons building and the Ambassador Apartments to demonstrate how additions can be attached to an original building. He also showed historic photos of the District showing Francis Stevens School and of the water department building.

- 9.B Public Outreach Committee – Update

No report.

~~9. OTHER BUSINESS~~

~~9.A Case HSPB 73 / HD #2 - A request for a Mills Act Contract for the MacBeth / Deen Residence" within the Royal Hawaiian Estates Historic District, Historic District #2 located at 275 East Twin Palms Drive, Zone R-2, Section 26.~~

~~Ken Lyon presented the staff report. The Board confirmed that any unit owner within the complex could apply for a similar contract.~~

~~Motion by McGrew; second by Gilmer; vote 4-1-1 (Ploss opposed, Glenn absent) To recommend the City Council direct staff to execute a Mills Act Historic Property Agreement between the City of Palm Springs, The Royal Hawaiian Homeowners Association and Owners, Douglas MacBeth and Stanley Deen.~~

→ 9.B Initiation of Procedure for Designation of Historic Sites for 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive / The J. W. Robinson Department Store (presently, "The Alley").

Ron Marshall, representing the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, described the nomination report and summarized the highlights of his investigation. The Board discussed:

- Phasing of the building's construction and timing of phase 2;
- The condition of the south wall of the first phase;
- Rationale for designating a less-than 50 year old addition (phase 2);
- The story of the Luckman / Pereira firm during the building's construction;
- The effect of the addition on the historical significance of the property;
- Ownership of the site and prior tenants;
- The rendering provided in the nomination investigation; and
- The merits of the building's site plan as a downtown store that supports automobile traffic.

Motion by Ploss to initiate an investigation into the possible designation only 333 S. Palm Canyon Drive (Phase 1), including the street side stairs as a historic site. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Motion by McGrew; second by Grattan; vote 4-1-1 (Ploss opposed, Glenn absent) to initiate an investigation into the possible designation of 333-343 S. Palm Canyon Drive as a historic site.

Chair DeLeeuw asked staff that color copies of the nomination investigation be distributed to the Board. Mr. Marshall indicated that the report will be revised to replace one photograph.

~~10. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS.~~



City of Palm Springs
Department of Planning Services

Memorandum

Date: July 10, 2012
To: HSPB Board Members
From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services
Subject: Initiation of Procedure for Designation of Historic Sites:
- J. W. Robinson Department Store, 333-343 S. Indian Canyon Drive

Following receipt of a nomination by Ron Marshall / Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, the HSPB directed staff to agendize the J. W. Robinson Department Building for initiation of investigation to designate. Now occupied by The Alley home goods store, the building is located at the southwest corner of S. Palm Canyon and Baristo Road in the Central Business District (C-B-D).

Without specific authorization from the property owner, staff seeks the Board's action to initiate the investigation. The Board may, by adopting a motion, initiate the process of designation for any or all of the above properties. A copy of this memo, the nomination application and the HSPB July agenda will be mailed to the property owner of record prior to the Board's meeting.

Attachment:

1. Nomination Application, prepared by Ron Marshal / Palm Springs Preservation Foundation; June 2012 (previously distributed)

**J. W. Robinson
Department Store
Building**

**333-343 S. Palm Canyon Dr.
Palm Springs, California**

**Nomination Application
For City of Palm Springs
Class 1 Historic Site**



Prepared by

Ronald W. Marshall

for the

Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

June 2012

Acknowledgements

Partial funding for the research of this nomination came from the

PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

The author would like to thank the following individuals for editing and research assistance:

*Barbara Marshall
James Harlan
Patrick McGrew*



JW Robinson

Robinson's

Robinson's
CALIFORNIA

J. W. Robinson Department Store Building

**CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION
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EVALUATIONS for CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION: PAGE 14

APPENDICES

- I Assessors Map
- II Permit History
- III Luckman Biography
- IV Pereira Biography
- V Photographic Documentation of Building and Site
- VI Miscellaneous Documentation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SIGNIFICANCE: The J. W. Robinson Department Store building (1958) was designed by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Charles Luckman Associates and William L. Pereira. The commercial building exhibits numerous stylistic markers that place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' modern period. Additionally, the building is a largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is internationally known. As such, it should be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture (i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies "a particular period of the national, state or local history").

DESIGNATION CRITERIA: The J. W. Robinson Department Store building has not been previously evaluated for Class 1 Historic Site eligibility but over the years has been frequently included on the Historic Site Preservation Board's (HSPB) "work program." The Robinson's building was not included in the 1987 HSPB Survey (possibly viewed as "too new") but does appear in the 2004 Citywide Historic Resources Survey (which incorrectly identifies the construction date as 1953). A brief summary of the evaluation contained in this nomination is as follows:

8.05.020 (a) paragraph 1 - Events: This criterion recognizes properties associated with events or patterns of events or historic trends, for the purposes of this nomination, the gradual rise of Palm Springs' prominence in midcentury architectural excellence. The J. W. Robinson Department Store building is an outstanding example of commercial design and construction of buildings within the context of midcentury desert modernism. The nominated building is associated with this pattern of events for its ability to exemplify the modern period of the national, state and local history. *The J. W. Robinson Department Store building is associated with this pattern of events, and is associated as well with Criterion 3 for its ability to exemplify a particular period of the national, state or local history. Therefore, the building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site under Criterion 1.*

8.05.020 (a) paragraphs - 3, 4 & 5 Design/Construction: The building is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up modernist style, including a flat roof, clerestory windows, expansive amounts of glass, novel use of new materials and engineering techniques, idiosyncratic use of concrete masonry, etc. Additionally, the work of the award-winning and nationally-recognized architectural firm of Luckman & Pereira must be catalogued as the work of "Master" architects because of the firm's impressive record of architectural excellence. For its distinctive characteristics, as the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, the building qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Site under Criteria 3, 4, and 5.

SUMMARY: The evaluation contained herein finds the building eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site under 8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 1, 3, 4 & 5 of the local ordinance's seven criteria. Additionally, the building was found to retain a high degree of architectural integrity.



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

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 designations, or to nominate the formation of historic districts. Applicants are encouraged to review two bulletins from the US Department of Interior for additional information:

- "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
- "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: J. W. Robinson Department Store / Robinson's Specialty Shop

Other names: *La Mirage Interiors, Crown Books, The Alley*

Address: 333-343 South Palm Canyon Drive

Assessor Parcel Number: 513 203 013 - 8

Owner's Name: Marek Family, LLP (Mr. William Marek)

Owner's Address: 72-240 Highway 111

City: Palm Desert State: CA Zip: 92260

Telephone: (760) 347-7200

E-mail address: none

2. Classifications

Ownership of Property. Fill as many boxes as apply.

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

Category of Property. Fill only one box.

- Building (Note can include site)
- District
- Site (Exclusive of Structures)
- Structure
- Object

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

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1		Buildings
1		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
<hr/>		
2		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".

"N/A"

3. Use or Function

Historic Use or Function: Commercial Building

Current Use or Function: Commercial Building

4. Description

Architect: Charles Luckman Associates and William L. Pereira (aka "Luckman & Pereira")

Construction Date and Source: 1957-58 (Multiple sources, including Appendix II, Permit History)

Architectural Classification: International Style - Desert Regional Variation

Construction Materials:

Foundation	Concrete slab	Roof	Tar and Gravel/Metal
Walls	Concrete block	Other:	

Building Description: *Attach a description of the Building / Site / District, including all character defining features on one or more additional sheets. (See pages 9-11)*

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

Events

- (1) Fill this box if the property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Persons

- (2) Fill this box if the property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Architecture

- (3) Fill this box if the property reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, State or local history, or
- (4) Fill this box if the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or
- (5) Fill this box if the property represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or
- (6) Fill this box if the property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Archeology

- (7) Fill this box if the property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Other Criteria Considerations (Check all the boxes that apply.)

- the property is owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- the property has been removed from its original location.
- the property is a birthplace
- the property is a grave or cemetery.
- the property is a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- the property is commemorative
- the property is less than 50 years of age or has achieved significance within the past 50 years (Note: Primary structure more than 50 years of age, however portions are less than 50 years of age)

6. Statement of Significance

The Client

The J. W. Robinson Company, or "Robinson's," was a chain of department stores operating in southern California and Arizona headquartered in Los Angeles, California. The first Robinson's store was built at 600 West 7th Street in Los Angeles (see Figure 1, Appendix VI for a vintage postcard of the first Robinson's store). The second Robinson's store was opened in Beverly Hills in 1952 on Wilshire Boulevard at Santa Monica Boulevard next to the Beverly Hilton Hotel (1953).

The relatively small Palm Springs Robinson's (1958) (which, interestingly, was preceded by a small boutique Robinson's store on the grounds of the Desert Inn) was intended to be an "open in winter only" store. A Robinson's on Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena followed. The Pasadena Robinson's was significant because it appears to have been the last "free-standing" store as the commercial concept of the shopping mall had begun to take root. The first stores adjacent or connected to shopping malls opened in Panorama City, Anaheim, Santa Barbara and Glendale. By the time J.W. Robinson's was dissolved into Robinson's-May there were almost 30 stores spread all across southern California from San Diego to Palm Desert to Santa Barbara.

Designed to serve the "carriage-trade" J. W. Robinson's was acquired by May Department Stores in 1986 with its acquisition of Associated Dry Goods. Robinson's had been acquired by Associated Dry Goods (ADG) in 1957 as its West Coast flagship and operated primarily in southern California. In 1989, when May Company dissolved its Goldwater's division based in Scottsdale, Arizona, Robinson's took over the company's metropolitan Phoenix stores. The combined chain became Robinsons-May.

{Author's note: Unfortunately there are few primary sources of information concerning the J. W. Robinson Company and the foregoing section relies on secondary sources}

The Firm

Charles Luckman and William Pereira had both been students of architecture at the University of Illinois. In 1950, shortly after Luckman left his job as president of Lever Brothers, Pereira offered him a partnership. By 1955, the firm has 400 employees and more than \$500 million in projects in progress, including the NASA Space Facility at Cape Canaveral, the Los Angeles International Airport master plan and the CBS Television City Studio. However, despite this incredible success, their completely different personalities and work approaches eventually resulted in the firm's dissolution in 1958.

The April 1957 issue of *Architect & Engineer* identifies Luckman & Pereira vice-president Max R. Horwitz as the designer credited with both the Beverly Hills and Palm Springs Robinson's stores.

In a September 6, 1963 *Time* magazine article, Pereira was queried about the break-up of the architectural partnership of Luckman & Pereira. *Time* magazine reported that:

“...eight years after the partnership began, Bill Pereira abruptly broke it up. Given the differences between the two, it is surprising that the association lasted as long as it did. Though trained as an architect, Luckman was a slick businessman with a flair for super-salesmanship; to Pereira, on the other hand, architecture was simply a profession. “The businessman who hires us,” he once said, “doesn’t need another businessman to do the work – he needs an architect.” Said Pereira after he left the firm: “It was like working in a factory. Everybody was standing in line with projects for us to do, like a line of railroad cars waiting to unload.”

Yet despite Pereira’s somewhat disconsolate view of the firm’s working environment, Luckman & Pereira produced an extraordinary variety and high-quality of work during its eight years of existence (1950-1958) as evidenced by the numerous projects that received recognition in the national architectural press.

The Architecture & Building Description

Constructed from 1957-1958 at a cost of \$280,000 on land purchased from Palm Springs pioneer Pearl McManus, the J.W. Robinson Department Store building was designed by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Charles Luckman Associates and William L. Pereira. Sited on a 1.94 acre lot in the shadow of the San Jacinto Mountains, the concrete slab construction building consists of 14,500 square feet of retail, office and receiving space (this was supplemented in 1972 with a 13,400 square foot addition). Located on the southwest corner of South Palm Canyon Drive and West Baristo Avenue, the pavilion-style modernist building is dramatically elevated from the street level by four long horizontal concrete steps that create both a sense of arrival and impart a sense importance to the building.

The design of the building is greatly enhanced by a glassed-in, well-lighted, pedestrian entrance at the northeast corner of the building. The original intent of the northeast entrance was to lure automobile drivers off the main city thoroughfare into the large hidden parking lot located on the west side of the building site. This siting scheme was an early recognition that the typical shopper was arriving by car rather than by foot.

In an article entitled “Bazaar in an Oasis,” the March 1958 issue of *Architectural Forum* described the Robinson’s building in enthusiastic detail:

Built on a concrete platform at a busy center in Palm Springs, California, the branch of the J.W. Robinson Company, a West Coast specialty shop, has a two-way policy of visibility. Glass front walls, sheltered by deep overhangs, make the entire interior a showroom...enticing the motorist to park and come in. Once he is inside, in the center of the store, a 3-foot-deep clerestory perched on the roof gives him back his view of the mountains, in whose lap Palm Springs sits. The psychology is deliberate. Robinson’s wanted to become a part of the sophisticated resort reputation of this famous watering spot, to catch the excitement in the air.

The design methods, besides providing great inward and outward visibility, include a feeling of lightness. The roof is a series of light steel trusses linked in a serrated pattern, and set on lean pipe columns....Nowhere does this roof rest on walls, even at the solid masonry rear of the store....The walls are faced with a special tile of marble and quartz

aggregate, patterned in a horizontal diamond to repeat the rhythm of the gold anodized aluminum fascia.

Inside, shopping arrangements are on the open plan. The air conditioning does not use conventional diffusers; tempered air is filtered into the store through small adjustable slots in the acoustical tile ceiling... which acts as a plenum.

The "Bazaar in an Oasis" article was part of a special *Forum* installment entitled "Six stores of distinction: Outstanding examples of new design trends, in display and merchandising" which showcased a variety of significant commercial projects. The article also identified Raymond Loewy Associates as designer of the store's interiors and Robinson & Wilson, Inc. as the general contractor.

Not mentioned in the *Forum* description is that the clerestory windows in the center of the building not only provide a "view of the mountains" but take advantage of the reliably sunny Palm Springs weather to provide bright daytime lighting to the main selling area (thereby saving on the costs of electrical lighting).

The broad overhangs of the building's roof are supported with load-bearing 4-inch steel pipe columns every 9-feet. These pipe columns each have four "fins" or "ribs" which sprout from each column at 90-degree angles starting about at about 6.5-inches above the concrete sidewalk. These fins protrude about 2-inches near the ground subtly increasing to about 4-inches of width at an elevation of about 10-feet (only to thin again as the top of the column nears the building's overhang).

The underside of the building overhang is punctuated with cylindrical spun-aluminum lighting fixtures also at 9-foot intervals (originally, the silver cylindrical lighting fixtures counterpoised nicely with the gold anodized aluminum fascia which is now, unfortunately, painted over).

Additionally, the building changes character as the sun grazes the applied three-dimensional horizontal diamond, or "harlequin," design 12"x12"x1" concrete decorative tile, creating interesting shadows throughout the day (and on what would otherwise be the less interesting concrete block walls of the building). The original Robinson's store sign (now lost) echoed the diamond-like design of both the concrete tiles and the aluminum fascia. Also not mentioned in the *Forum* description was the extensive use of 12"x12"x12" single-core concrete block on the exterior walls (most notably on the south elevation). The block creates a grid-like pattern that compliments, rather than competes with, the patterned concrete tile.

The building's patterned concrete tile, identified as "special tile of marble and quartz aggregate" in the *Forum* description, was part of the building industry's foray into the use of concrete block in more decorative expressions. The late 1950s and early 1960s saw an explosion in the use of decorative concrete block which was to take two major directions, i.e., one in the form of solid, load-bearing "Shadowal" concrete blocks and the second as airy, perforated, non-load bearing, concrete "screen block." Today, both of these building materials can be found throughout Palm Springs in a profusion of patterns. The use of an expensive, aggregate-imbedded tile (versus an integrally decorative concrete block such as Shadowal) is an accurate snap-shot of an evolving

building material which would ultimately become inexpensive, rugged and modular (and also eventually shed such affectations as expensive marble and quartz chips).

In 1972, in response to an apparent need for more retail space, an addition was constructed, connecting to the south end of the original building. Stylistically identical to the original Luckman & Pereira structure, records show the addition was supervised by architect William L. Pereira (who was then practicing independently). The seamless addition uses similar building materials, repeats the central clerestory windows and is virtually indistinguishable from the original building.

"The Award"

In the summer of 1958, the July issue of *The Journal of the American Institute of Architects* announced 1958's "National Honor Awards" in the field of architecture. This prestigious awards competition was juried by five nationally-prominent architects (including Los Angeles architect Welton Beckett). There were 312 entries in the competition which, according to the judges, evaluated entries based on "quality of unity in the entire work," "expression of strength without heaviness," "refinement," "aesthetic quality," and finally "originality and inventiveness." The "First Honor Award" went to the J.W. Robinson Department Store building (Palm Springs) designed by Luckman & Pereira (the second award went to another California project, Edward Durrell Stone's Stuart Pharmaceutical Company in Pasadena).

This is perhaps the most prestigious architectural award ever received by any Palm Springs project, commercial or residential, at the time of its construction.

The J. W. Robinson Store Building also received the 1960 Triennial Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects Southern California Chapter.

The Local Impact of the "Fashion Jewel Box of the Desert"

The February 1958 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine published an article entitled "Desert Fashion Center" which reported the arrival of the new J.W. Robinson Department Store to the city. Interviews with those involved with the project shows that cutting-edge architecture was a deliberate and integral part of the store's selling strategy. In the *Villager* article it was conveyed that:

The opening of the new J.W. Robinson, one of the top fashion stores of the West Coast, emphasizes anew the importance of Palm Springs as a desert fashion center.

"Palm Springs is in the process of fulfilling a brilliant destiny"... said Robinson's president, Donald Buckingham. "Opening a beautiful new store two and one-half times larger than the old...we are showing our confidence and faith in the future of Palm Springs."

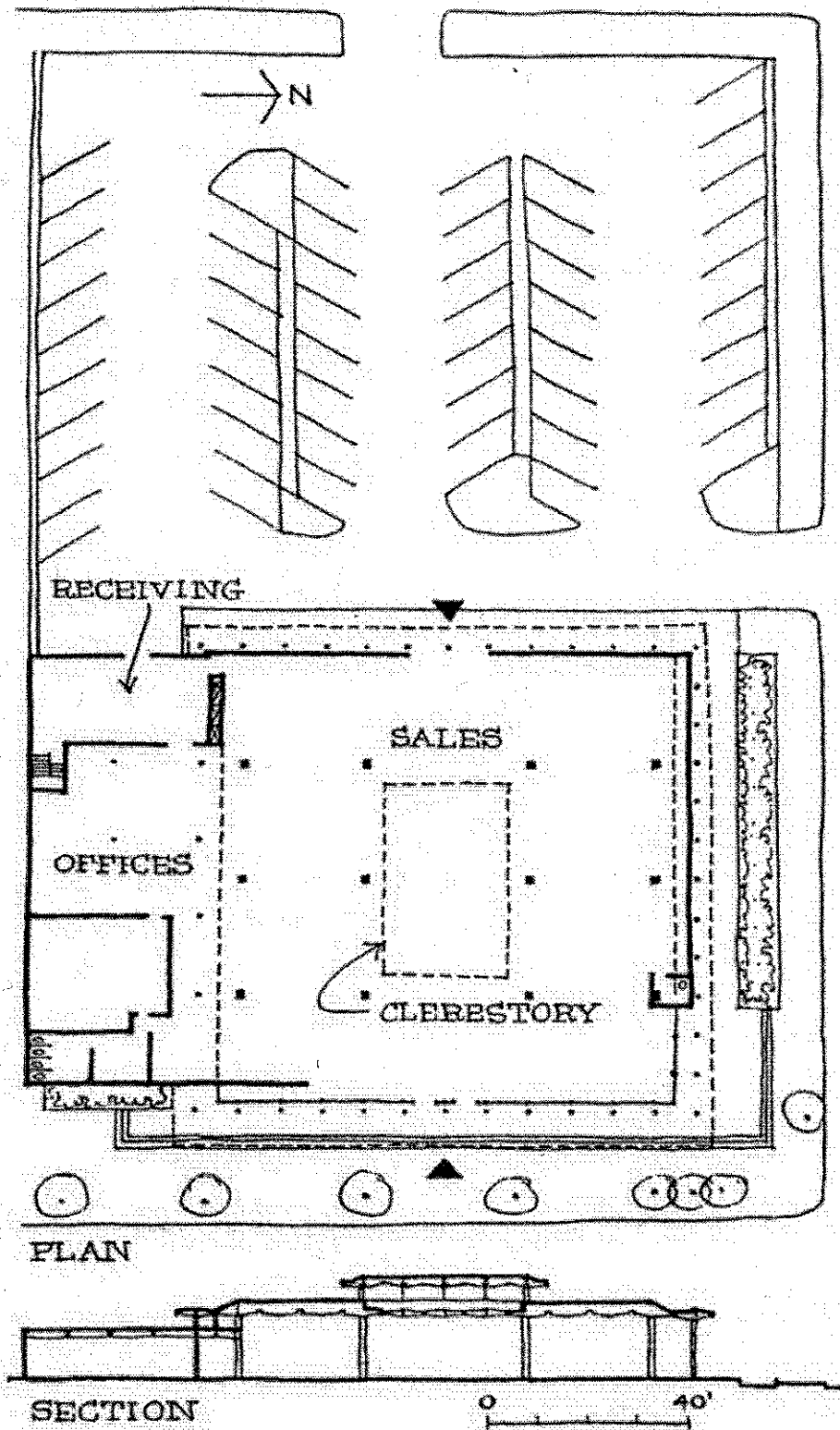
At a cost of a million dollars, the new Robinson's is as ultra-modern in architectural design as is its fashionable content. A special feature is the extensive use of glass across the front, carried to the sides and roof, which gives the entire store the appearance of a huge display window, above which is an umbrella-type of roof [which] seems to float as if on air.

"Our primary aim is to make Robinson's Palm Springs store the fashion headquarters for the entire desert region," said Pierre Bouscaren, its manager, "to be always first with the newest and most authentic in fashions for all who live in or who visit this area – men, women and children."

(The "old" store referred to was the modest Robinson's store on the grounds of the Desert Inn).

The 1958 opening of the Palm Springs J.W. Robinson Department Store (sometimes referred to as "JWR Palm Springs") was attended by throngs of local residents and at least one celebrity (pianist Władziu Valentino Liberace).

Other department store chains employed well-known architectural firms to design major buildings in post-war Palm Springs. These include the now-demolished Bullock's Department Store (1947, Wurdeman & Becket) and sadly altered Sak's Fifth Avenue Department Store (1960, Welton Becket and Associates) at the northeast corner of South Palm Canyon and Ramon Road.



Site plan and section from the March 1959 issue of *Architectural Forum*

HISTORIC CONTEXT

To qualify as a Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site, a property must be significant; that is, it must represent a significant part of the history, architecture, or archeology, of an area, and it must have the characteristics that make it a good representative of properties associated with that aspect of the past. The significance of an historic property can be properly understood when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history is made clear. In order to decide whether a property is significant within its historic context, it must be determined which facet of history the property represents; the significance of that facet of history; whether the subject property has relevance in illustrating the historic context; how the property illustrates that history; and an analysis of the physical features the property possesses to determine if it conveys the aspect or history with which it is associated. If the subject property represents an important aspect of the area's history (under any of the seven criteria recognized by the Municipal Code) *and* possesses the requisite quality of integrity, it then qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Site.

BACKGROUND / HISTORIC CONTEXT

The relatively short history of Palm Springs can be organized into three more or less distinct periods that include Prehistory, the Settlement Period, and the Modern Period. It is within the context of the last period that this building will be evaluated.

Modern Period (1925 - 1960s) This period might be considered to have begun with the construction of the area's first "modern" structure, Rudolph Schindler's Paul and Betty Popenoe Cabin in 1922. With this building, the area's then predominant architectural style based on Mexican and Spanish Colonial motifs already well-established in Southern California began to change. Incorporation of the town of Palm Springs followed in 1938. During the post-WWII era, Palm Springs prospered through reliance on tourism that fueled the economy. Hollywood celebrities discovered the desert oasis and patronized its hotels, inns, nightclubs and restaurants; celebrity-seeking tourists soon followed, transforming Palm Springs from a sleepy village into an increasingly cosmopolitan environment that saw the construction of schools, hospitals, an airport and other important public works projects. The commercial core along Palm Canyon Drive (originally Main Street) flourished. In the 1950s the downtown core was expanded by the construction of the cross-axis of Tahquitz-McCallum Way that extended from the center of the original settlement to the airport, spurring new development along the way. Early private residential development also expanded into new sub-divisions composed of midcentury modern second homes in the flat lands surrounding the town's original core.

Palm Springs' Hollywood associations certainly imparted an air of sophistication to the city. This was an association the J.W. Robinson department store chain wanted to be part of. Additionally, by 1958, the city had built a reputation for cutting edge architecture as a result of local architectural practitioners like John Porter Clark, Albert Frey, E. Stewart Williams, William F. Cody and Donald Wexler. While these local names permeate the town's collective consciousness, there are many "outside" architects who

made significant contributions to the city's stock of great midcentury architecture. Certainly Luckman & Pereira, along with architect Rudi Baumfeld of Victor Gruen Associates (Bank of America Building) and Richard Neutra (Kaufmann House) must be numbered among these outsiders.

EVALUATION:

Criterion 1: Significant Event (Completed because Criterion 1 is marked above)

To qualify for listing under this criterion, a property must be associated with one or more events important in the defined historic context. *Criterion 1 recognizes properties associated with events or patterns of events or historic trends, such as the gradual rise of the city's prominence in architectural excellence in midcentury modern architecture that is an important pattern of events within this associated context. The J.W. Robinson Department Store building is an outstanding example of commercial design and construction of buildings within the context of midcentury desert Modernism. The J.W. Robinson Department Store commercial building is associated with this pattern of events for its ability to exemplify the modern period of the national, state and local history. Therefore, the building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site under Criterion 1.*

ARCHITECTURE (Criteria 3 – 6)

Criterion 3: (That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history.)

The J.W. Robinson Department Store commercial building (1958) was designed by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Luckman & Pereira. The building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs modern period. One of Palm Springs better-known commercial buildings, the structure is a prime, largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs image as a center of important midcentury architecture, an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site on the local registry under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: (That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or) Type, Period, and Method of Construction: "Type, period, or method of construction" refers to the way certain properties are related to one another by cultural tradition or function, by dates of construction or style, or by choice or availability of materials and technology. To be eligible under this Criterion, a property must clearly illustrate, through "distinctive characteristics" a pattern of features common to a particular class of resources. "Distinctive characteristics" are the physical features or traits that commonly recur in individual types, periods, or methods of construction. To be eligible, a property must clearly contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction.

Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials.

The building is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses distinctive characteristics that make up the many qualities of the style, such as overall horizontality, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, use of inexpensive, machine produced materials, masonry, etc. The structure is eligible as a specimen of its type or period of construction because it is an important example (within its context) of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury. The building qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Site on the local registry under Criterion 4.

Criterion 5: (That (a): represents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or (b): that possesses high artistic value).

5a: Work of a Master: A master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill. The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his work, or a particular idea or theme in his craft. A property is not eligible as the work of a master, however, simply because it was designed by a prominent architect. For example, not every building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is eligible under this portion of Criterion 5, although it might meet other Criteria.

Both Charles Luckman and William Pereira are important as nationally-prominent practitioners of Modernist architecture. Short biographies of Luckman and Pereira can be found in Appendices III and IV respectively. The firm of Luckman & Pereira has long been recognized as a leading firm of the modernist movement and documentation on the firm is extensive. Further, the J.W. Robinson Department Store building was immediately recognized by the architectural press and peers in the profession as an extraordinary effort that combined a sense of proportion, massing, refinement and use of modern materials and technology. In short, the Robinson Department Store building exemplifies all of the stylistic markers of the maturing modernist movement in the late 1950s.

5b: Properties possessing high artistic values: High artistic values may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture. A property is eligible for its high artistic values if it so fully articulates a particular concept of design that it expresses an aesthetic ideal. As mentioned above, as an example of the maturing modernist movement, Luckman & Pereira's J.W. Robinson Department Store certainly articulates the best of "corporate modernism" to a level of excellence and confidence that could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal. As the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, The building qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Site under Criterion 5.

Criterion 6: (That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction). This Criterion was created to address the resources contained within a potential historic district. Since no claim has been brought forward regarding an historic district in this tract, The building does not qualify as a Class 1

Historic Site under Criterion 6.

ARCHEOLOGY

Criterion 7: (That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.) The building does not qualify for listing on the local registry under Criterion 7.

7. Integrity Analysis

INTEGRITY

This is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the local registry, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. The definition of integrity includes seven aspects or qualities. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant. The following sections define the seven aspects and explain how they combine to produce integrity.

LOCATION

Location is the place where an historic property was constructed or the place where an historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved. ***The J.W. Robinson Department Store building remains in its original location and therefore qualifies under this aspect.***

DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. It results from conscious decisions made during the original conception and planning of a property and applies to activities as diverse as community planning, engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture. Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. A property's design reflects historic functions and

technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing. ***Although the J.W. Robinson Department Store building has seen some minor alterations, the essential characteristics of form, plan, space, structure, and style have survived intact. Similarly, the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; and the type, amount, and style of detailing, has survived as well. The exterior surface materials (concrete block and metal fascia) have been painted but this is a relatively insignificant and reversible change. As previously mentioned, one of the primary design elements of the building is the elevation of the structure above the street level by four, long horizontal steps that create both a sense of arrival and impart a sense of importance to the building. Over the years bulky concrete planters have been installed to create a separation from the bus transportation activities on the east side of the site. Arguably, this has somewhat diminished the drama of entering the building. Fortunately, these changes (specifically the planters) could be removed or mitigated to more closely echo the original design. Fortunately, there is extensive documentation in the form of plans and photographs (including many taken by architectural photographer Julius Shulman) that clearly illustrate the original design intent of the architects.***

SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the *character* of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves *how*, not just *where*, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences. ***The setting of the J.W. Robinson Department Store building continues to reflect the architects' original design relationship of site and structure.***

MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The choice and combination of materials reveals the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of particular types of materials and technologies. ***As mentioned previously, the J.W. Robinson Department Store building's exterior surface materials have been painted, but this change does not constitute a significant loss of the physical elements that expressed the design during the building's period of significance; the particular pattern and configuration that today forms the building survives intact.***

WORKMANSHIP

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques. Workmanship is important because it can furnish evidence of the technology of a craft, illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic or prehistoric period, and reveal individual, local, regional, or national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. ***With the J.W. Robinson Department Store building, the workmanship is comprised of integral ornamental detailing reflected in concrete block, glass, steel, and even the exposed structural system itself. The property continues to express a high degree of contemporary period workmanship.***

FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district retaining original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the 19th century. ***Although the current culture's concept of glamour may have changed somewhat, the J.W. Robinson Department Store building was the very essence of Palm Springs glamour when built. As a commercial establishment that unapologetically catered to the rich and aspiring upper middle class the "feeling" of the building necessarily had to exude urbanity albeit it in a more informal resort location. The late 1950s were a sophisticated, open and optimistic time, a feeling still expressed by the design of this building. As such, the J.W. Robinson Department Store building retains the integrity of feeling.***

ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it *is* the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. For example, a Revolutionary War battlefield whose natural and man-made elements have remained intact since the 18th century will retain its quality of association with the battle. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register. ***As stated under Criterion 1: the J.W. Robinson Department Store building is an important example of midcentury commercial development in Palm Springs. The building represents the city's overall commercial development from the 1950s to the 1960s, and contributes to the scale and character of the city's midcentury***

commercial "banking district." As such, it continues its association with a pattern of events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community; the building retains integrity of association.

Integrity Summary: The building appears to be in excellent condition due largely to the use of construction materials suitable for the harsh desert environment. The Integrity analysis confirms that the building still possesses all seven aspects of integrity. And while the building has undergone numerous minor alterations since it was built, virtually all of its character-defining features survive. The building retains a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify it for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site.

8. Bibliography

Attached is a list of books, articles, and other sources cited or used in preparing this application and other documentation that may be relevant.

Books

Architectural Resources Group, *Citywide Historic Resources Survey*. San Francisco: 2004.

Cygelman, Adele, *Palm Springs Modern*. Rizzoli International Publications, New York: 1999.

Hess, Alan, and Andrew Danish, *Palm Springs Weekend: the Architecture and Design of a Midcentury Oasis*. Chronicle Books, San Francisco: 2001.

National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. U. S. Department of the Interior (National Park Service), Washington, D. C.,

William Pereira, edited by James Steele, USC Architectural Guild Press, Los Angeles, 2002.

Shulman, Julius and Pierluigi Serraino, *Modernism Rediscovered*. Taschen, Los Angeles: 2000.

Von Eckardt (ed.), *Mid-Century Architecture in America*, Reinhold, Washington, D.C: 1961

Magazines

Architect & Engineer, April 1957.

Architectural Forum, Volume 110, Number 3, March 1959, p. 112, "Six Stores of Distinction" (the Palm Springs' J.W. Robinson Department Store building entry is entitled "Bazaar in an Oasis").

Journal of the American Institute of Architects, Volume 30, No. 1, July 1958, pages 29-31, "The 1958 National Honor Awards."

Palm Springs Villager, February 1958, p. 33, "Desert Fashion Center"

Western Architect & Engineer, November 1960.

Other Sources Consulted:

Palm Springs Assessor's Office, Palm Springs Historical Society, Palm Springs Public Library and City of Palm Springs Planning Department (HSPB files)

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1.94 acres (or approximately 84,506 sq. ft.).

Property Boundary Description: The boundary includes all of APN 513203013-8:

10. Prepared By

Name/title: Ronald W. Marshall

Organization: N/A (submitted on behalf of the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation)

Street address: 2685 East Livmor Avenue

City: Palm Springs

State: CA

Zip: 92262

Telephone: (760) 808-6988

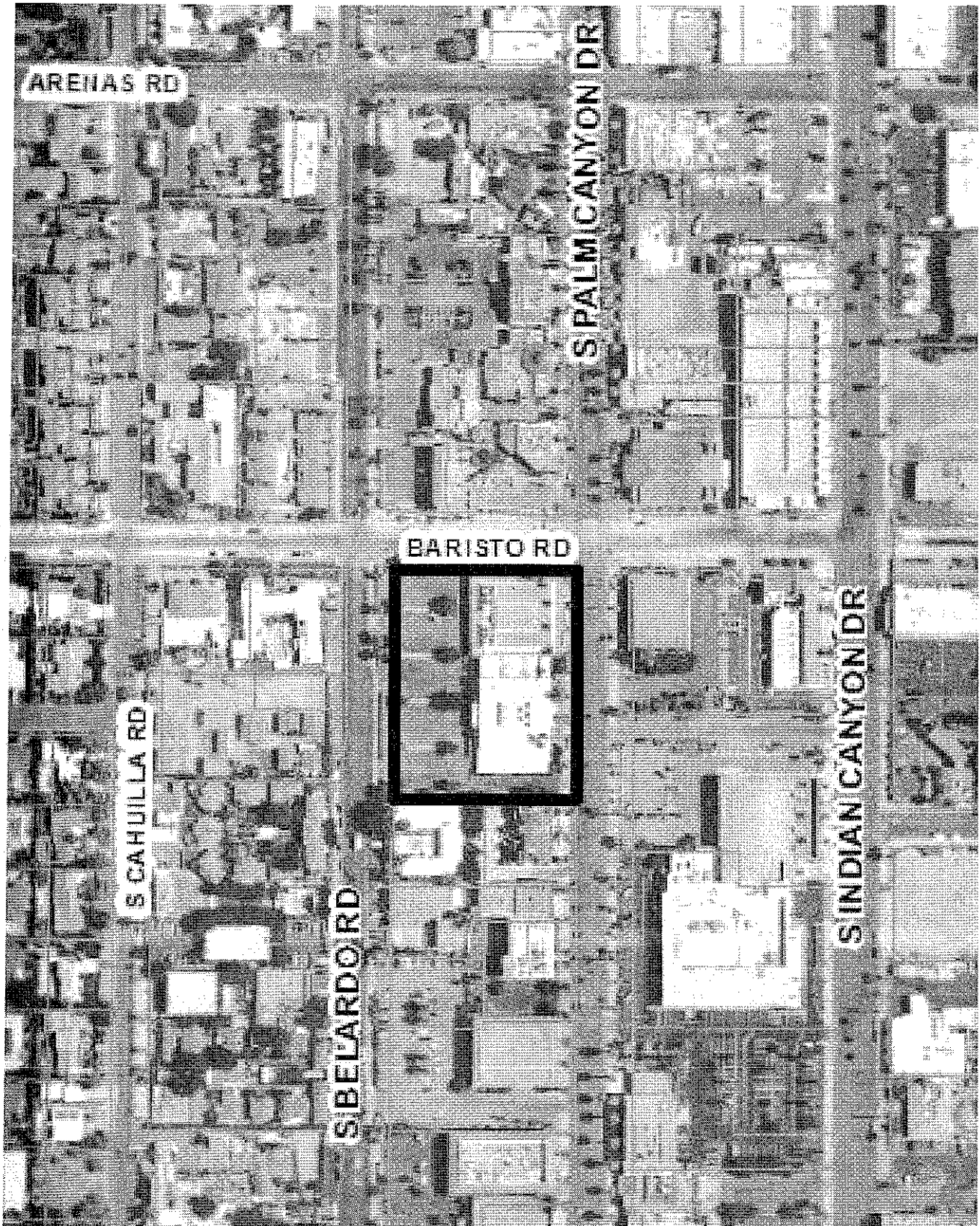
e-mail address: modpod_one@yahoo.com

11. Required Documentation

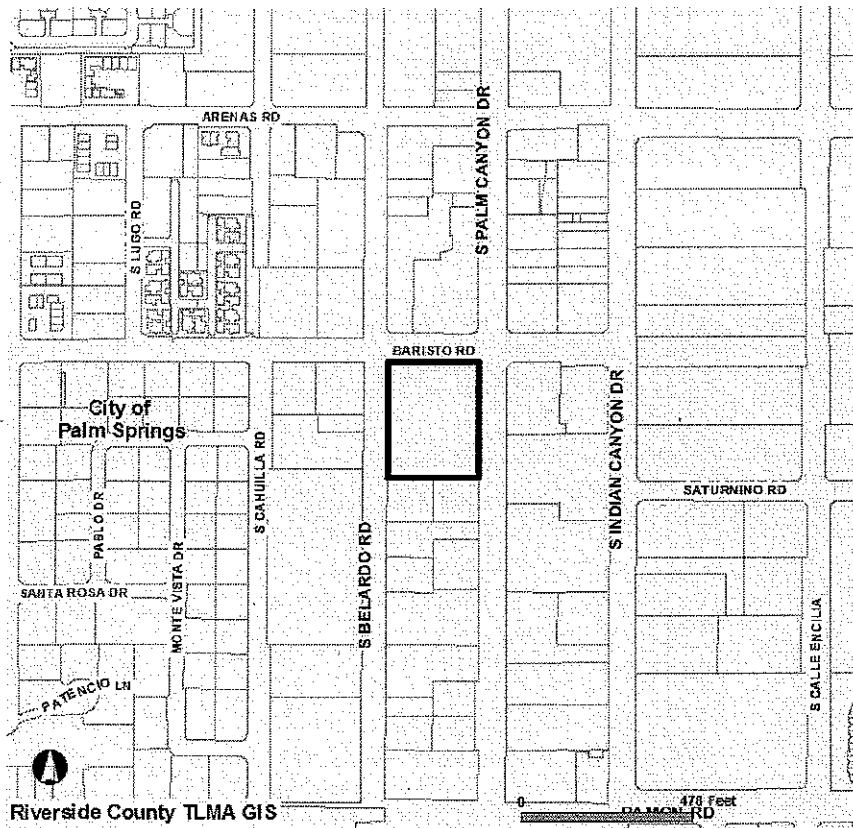
Submit the following items with the completed application form. **Do not mount any exhibits on a board.**

- 1. Attachment Sheets.** Include all supplemental information based on application form (above).
- 2. Maps:** For Historic Districts, include a sketch map identifying the proposed districts boundaries.
- 3. Photographs:** Eight (8) sets of color photographs showing each elevation of the property and its surroundings.
- 4. Non-owner's Notarized Signature:** If the applicant is not the owner, a notarized affidavit shall be provided (see following page).
- 5. Site Plan:** One 1/8" to 1/4" scale drawing of the site, and eight reduction copies (8 1/2 x 11 inches) The site plan shall show all of the following: Property boundaries, north arrow and scale, all existing buildings, structures, mechanical equipment, landscape materials, fences, walls, sidewalks, driveways, parking areas showing location of parking spaces, and signs. **Indicate the square footage and use of each building and the date(s) of construction.**
- 6. Public Hearing Labels:** Three (3) sets of typed self-adhesive labels of all property owners, lessees, and sub-lessees of record. **The labels shall include the Assessor's parcel number, owner's name and mailing address of each property with 400 feet from the exterior limits of the subject property.** Additionally, all Assessor Parcel Maps clearly indicating the 400-foot radius and a certified letter from a title company licensed to conduct business in Riverside County, California shall be submitted.

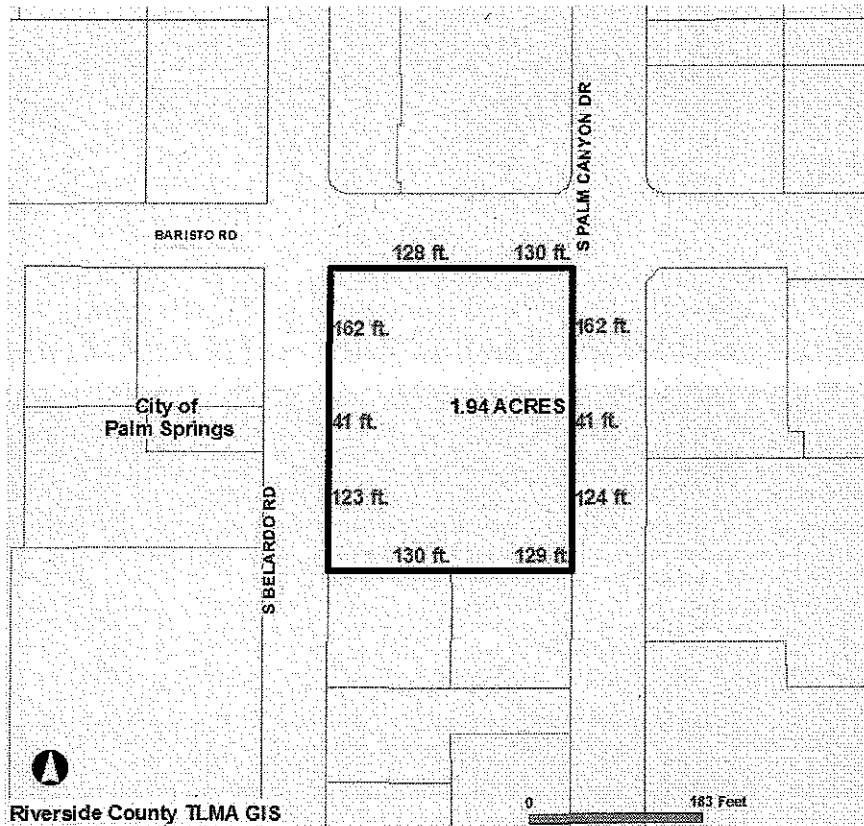
Note: If any property on this list is owned by the United States Government in trust for the Agua Caliente Indian Tribe or individual allottee, copies of notices with postage paid envelopes will be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to notify the individual Indian land owners of the public hearings.



Aerial View of J.W. Robinson Department Store Building (2011) (Courtesy County of Riverside)

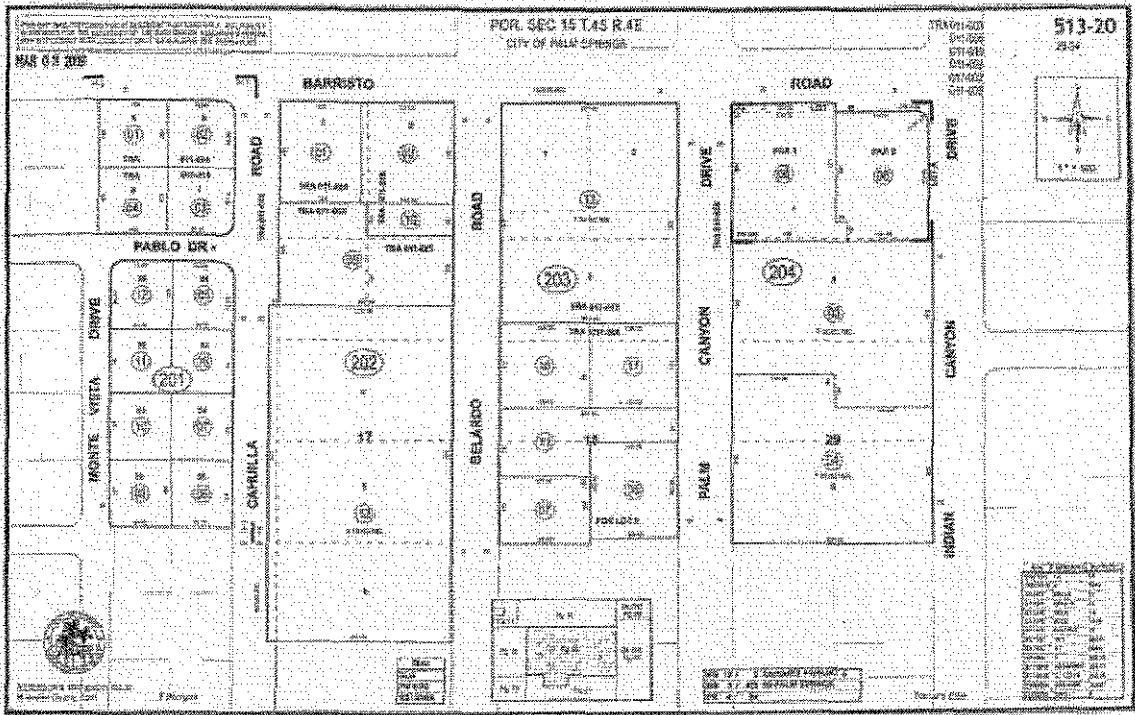


J.W. Robinson Department Store Building parcel



J.W. Robinson Department Store Building parcel dimensions

Appendix I: Assessor's Map



Appendix II: Permit History (333-343 South Palm Canyon Drive)

Date	Address	Type/Number	Owner	Remarks
8/26/57	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/9961	J. W. Robinson (Pearl McManns)	14,500 sq. ft. at cost of \$280,000
9/5/57	333 S. Palm Canyon	Plumbing/10033	J. W. Robinson	
9/10/57	333 S. Palm Canyon	Grading report	J. W. Robinson	Pacific Materials Laboratory
10/22/57	333 S. Palm Canyon	Electric/8749	J. W. Robinson	
11/12/57	333 S. Palm Canyon	Sewer/13	J. W. Robinson	
Various	333 S. Palm Canyon	Job Record Card	J. W. Robinson	
5/21/62	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/4491	J. W. Robinson	Repair roof
7/24/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/4794	J. W. Robinson	Add 15,400 sq. ft. at cost of \$275,000 Coble & Wessman
Various	333 S. Palm Canyon	Job Record Card	J. W. Robinson	Coble & Wessman
7/31/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Electric/5706	J. W. Robinson	
8/8/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Plumbing/2309	J. W. Robinson	
8/11/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Concrete compression test	J. W. Robinson	So. California Testing Laboratories Arthur Pereira AIA Coble & Wessman
8/15/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Concrete compression test	J. W. Robinson	So. California Testing Laboratories Wm. Pereira AIA Coble & Wessman
8/22/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Electric/5771	J. W. Robinson	
9/28/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/5166	J. W. Robinson	Interior partitions
12/8/72	333 S. Palm Canyon	Temporary Certificate of Occupancy	J. W. Robinson	
12/27/77	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/1958	J. W. Robinson	Remodel interior Spencer & Reynolds
1/5/78	333 S. Palm Canyon	Plumbing/5939	J. W. Robinson	
1/5/78		Sewer/6327		
1/5/78	333 S. Palm Canyon	Electric/608	J. W. Robinson	
11/9/79	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/2011	J. W. Robinson	Job Record Card Re-roof
7/23/90	Not indicated		La Mirage Interiors	Re-roof proposal
Illegible	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building Application	La Mirage Interiors	Demo store fixtures
8/16/90	333 S. Palm Canyon	Job Card/18775	La Mirage Interiors	
8/16/90	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building	La Mirage Interiors	Re-roof

9/10/92	333 S. Palm Canyon	Sign/0254	Super Crown	
9/23/92	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/23608	Crown Books	Non-structural demo
Illegible	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building Application	Crown Books	John Ash Group Architects
12/4/92	333 S. Palm Canyon	Insp. Corrections/23667		
12/11/92	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/24004	Super Crown	Install signs
3/24/93	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/24529	Not noted	Handicap ramp/contractor Eloulia & Eloulia (sic?)
4/1/93	333 S. Palm Canyon	Building/24576	Crown Books	Parking lot lighting
4/12/93	333 S. Palm Canyon	Certificate of Occupancy	Crown Books	
4/19/93	333 S. Palm Canyon	Insp. Corrections/24567		
12/14/93	343 S. Palm Canyon	Building/26131	Not noted	Re-roof/contractor Jerry Eloulia

Appendix III: Charles Luckman Biography

The "boy wonder" of American business in the late 1930s and the 1940s, and then a leader in the field of architecture, Charles Luckman—an only child—was born in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1909. Following graduation from Kansas City's Northeast High School in 1925, and a stint in a Kansas City junior college, he took a job as a draftsman in an architect's office in Chicago. He then enrolled in the University of Illinois in 1927, where he graduated with a degree in architecture in 1931. There he met his future architectural partner, William Pereira.

Lacking professional opportunities in architecture because of the Great Depression, Luckman entered the business world, joining Colgate-Palmolive-Peet as a draftsman in the advertising department in 1931. That same year he married Harriet McElroy (1908-2003) (the couple's three children were Charles, Jr.; James; and Steven). Luckman then transferred to sales. He achieved impressive gains in the sales of his company's soap on Chicago's South Side, which earned him a reputation as a superb salesman and set the stage for a remarkable rise in the business world.

His progress at Colgate led to an offer from Pepsodent, which he joined as sales manager in 1935. Luckman successfully promoted Pepsodent to customers throughout the United States and claimed to know over 35,000 druggists by their first names. Such effective salesmanship resulted in Luckman's rapid rise through the Pepsodent hierarchy, becoming vice-president in charge of sales in 1936. In 1941, Luckman was promoted to executive vice-president, and in 1943 came the crowning achievement of the presidency. By that year Pepsodent had the largest sales of dentrifice in the United States. His \$100,000 per year salary was remarkable for that time (he also held ten percent of Pepsodent's stock).



Luckman on cover of June 10, 1946 issue of *Time* magazine

The next major step in Charles Luckman's career occurred in 1944, when Lever Brothers acquired Pepsodent for ten million dollars. Luckman continued as president of Pepsodent and became a vice-president of Lever Brothers, which was the United States branch of the international corporation Unilever. In 1946 he was named president of Lever Brothers in the United States becoming the head executive of one the country's largest corporations, and one of the country's youngest head executives as well. This feat earned him a place on a 1946 cover of *Time* magazine.

Luckman was also involved in significant public service. He served on President Harry Truman's "President's Committee on Civil Rights," which evaluated the state of human rights in the United States (1947). Luckman chaired Truman's "Citizens' Food Committee," charged with conserving American grain supplies, so that the savings could be used to feed desolate post-war Europe.

In a move that was headline news, Luckman resigned from Lever Brothers in 1950 after a meeting with the directors of Unilvever, the parent company. The exact reason or reasons for his departure remain unclear, but Lever had failed to equal its rival Proctor and Gamble in such areas as the marketing of synthetic detergents, and by 1949 Lever Brothers was in the red.

Luckman returned to his old profession, architecture, after his resignation, answering the invitation of William Pereira, his fellow architecture student at Illinois. Luckman's renewed interest in architecture was stimulated in part by his instigating the building of the Lever House, the corporate headquarters in New York City. The ground floor of the twenty-six story tall skyscraper was open, with landscaping and fountains, an unusual design for its time. That it was one of the first steel and glass skyscrapers added to its novelty and perhaps stands as Luckman's greatest contribution to American architecture.

Luckman & Pereira was highly successful, and among its many accomplishments were the CBS Television City in Hollywood, the Hilton Hotel in Berlin, the Disneyland Hotel, the "Theme Building" at Los Angeles International Airport, and United States military bases in Spain.

In a disagreement over approaches regarding architectural and marketing practices, Pereira and Luckman split in 1958. Luckman then formed Charles Luckman Associates (CLA), which proved to be hugely successful. By 1968 the firm was one of the country's five largest, with offices in New York, Los Angeles, and Phoenix. Its architectural accomplishments included the Madison Square Garden in New York, Boston's Prudential Center, NASA's manned flight center in Houston, and countless projects in Los Angeles, including the Los Angeles Zoo and what is now Macy's Plaza. In 1968, Charles Luckman's second son, James, became president of the firm, while he became chair of the board. That same year CLA merged with Ogden Corporation, a union that lasted until 1973.

Luckman had his architectural critics. Reflecting his strong business background, he marketed his firm as one that would design projects to suit the client's tastes and needs, rather than create designs based only on the vision of the architect. In honor of this unusual approach to architecture, the American Management Association awarded him its highest honor in 1982, the Henry Laurence Gantt Medal for "distinguished achievement of management as a service to the community."

Luckman's public service was considerable. An active supporter of public education, he served on the California State Board of Trustees from 1960 through 1982 and was twice chair of the board. Notable during this tenure was his strong stand against the campus unrest of the 1960s. He also established teaching awards at different

universities. Besides this educational service, Luckman served as president of the Los Angeles Ballet and as chair of the board of UCLA's Brain Research Institute.

Luckman retired from Charles Luckman Associates in 1977, although he remained an active presence there (the firm was later reorganized as the Luckman Partnership, with son James as president). Charles Luckman died in 1999 in Los Angeles.

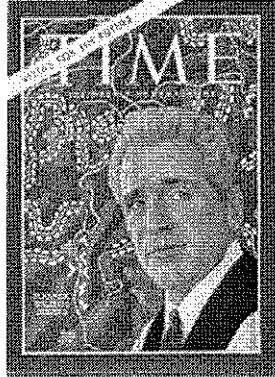
{Note: Much of the foregoing biography is courtesy of Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles). LMU's William H. Hannon Library houses the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Center for the Study of Los Angeles. As such, the Hannon Library holds papers of many of Los Angeles' public officials, real estate and industrial developers, and prominent Roman Catholic families. Included in this collection are 96 archival boxes containing the "Charles Luckman Papers, 1908-2000 (CSLA-34)"}.

Appendix IV: William Pereira Biography

William L. Pereira, was an architect and urban planner who designed the Transamerica building in San Francisco and was the designer of the master-planned community of Irvine, California. Throughout his career, Pereira brought to his designs a strong belief in the integration of architecture and environment. The pyramidal Transamerica building, for example, was designed to allow light onto the streets of a city that Pereira believed was becoming crowded with "building-block" skyscrapers.

His plan in the early 1960's for the community of Irvine called for the conversion of 93,000 acres of land in Orange County into a modernistic community of homes for people in various income groups, hotels and theaters, and for the preservation of 30,000 acres of mountain wilderness for recreation. Some of his vision was realized, although a booming real estate market later in the decade transformed Irvine into a more ordinary, if unusually large, suburb.

In the early 1930's, Pereira began his architectural career by designing many theaters around the United States for the movie chain of Balaban & Katz. The popularity of the theater designs led him to a job designing a Hollywood studio for Paramount. His deep research into the movie industry for the project led him to stray, for a time, into a variety of projects in the film industry. In 1942 he shared an Oscar award with other special effects experts for his work on Cecil B. DeMille's film, "Reap the Wild Wind." He was also the producer, for RKO-Radio, of the mystery-melodrama "Johnny Angel," starring George Raft, and the romance "From This Day Forward," starring Joan Fontaine.



Pereira on cover of September 6, 1963 issue of *Time* magazine

In 1949 he returned to architecture and, in 1950, established the architectural firm of Pereira and Luckman with Charles Luckman. The firm flourished, quickly gaining a reputation for the master-planning of building complexes. Among their designs were those for the pilot plant of CBS Television City in Hollywood, the rocket-launching installations at Cape Canaveral, the Los Angeles International Airport, jet bases in California for major airplane manufacturers, and the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California.

In 1958, he set up his own firm, William L. Pereira Associates, and in the following years designed many major buildings in California, including the Hollywood Film Museum and the monumental Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He had originally

designed a pyramidal skyscraper for the ABC headquarters in Manhattan, but that building was never realized. His design for a 48-story Transamerica building was initially controversial - some called it a "dunce cap" - but the building, built in 1973, quickly became a trademark of San Francisco's skyline.

Pereira also designed many buildings for colleges and universities around the country, including the campuses of the University of Missouri, Occidental College in Los Angeles, Pepperdine University and Brigham Young.

William Pereira died in 1985 in Los Angeles at the age of 76.

{Note: The foregoing biography is derived from two sources, Pereira's obituary, entitled "William L. Pereira, Architect; A Specialist in Planned Cities," by Douglas C. McGill which appeared in the November 15, 1985 edition of the New York Times, and *William Pereira* published by the USC Architectural Guild}

Appendix V: Photographic Documentation of Building and Site



Figure 1: North elevation (2012)



Figure 2: East elevation (2012)

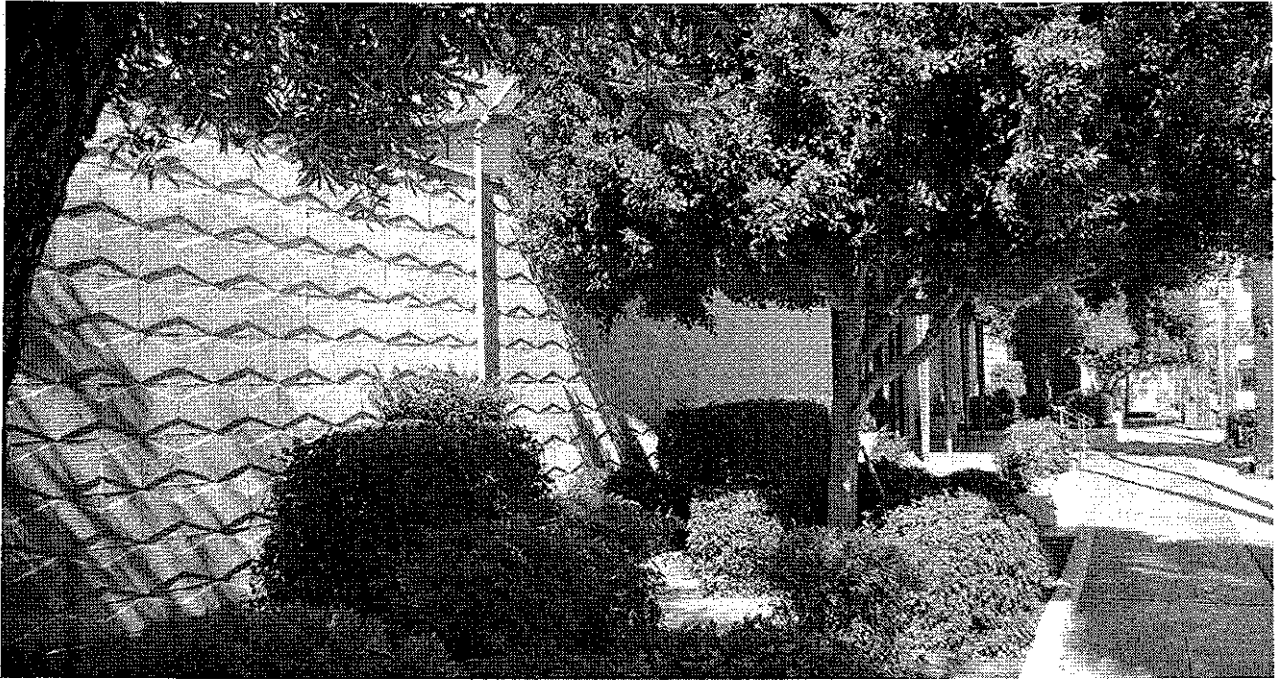


Figure 3: East elevation (southeast corner) (2012)

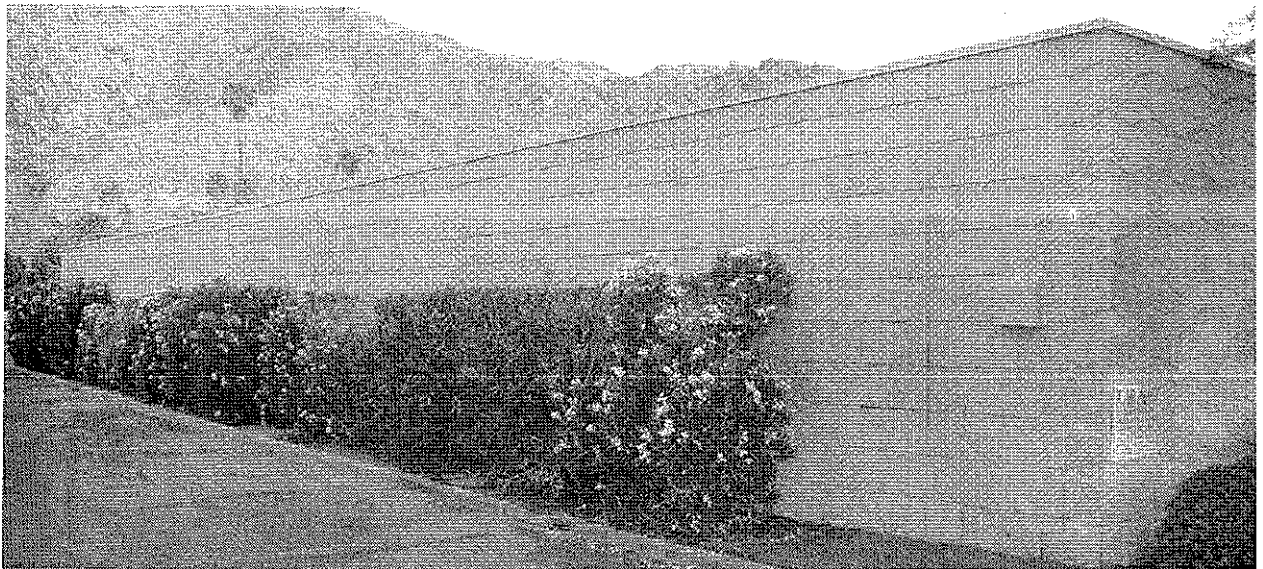


Figure 4: South elevation (southeast corner) (2012)



Figure 5: West elevation (northwest corner) (2012)



Figure 6: West elevation (southwest corner) (2012)



Figure 7: The northeast corner of the building still exhibits much of the “transparency” intended by its designers (2012)

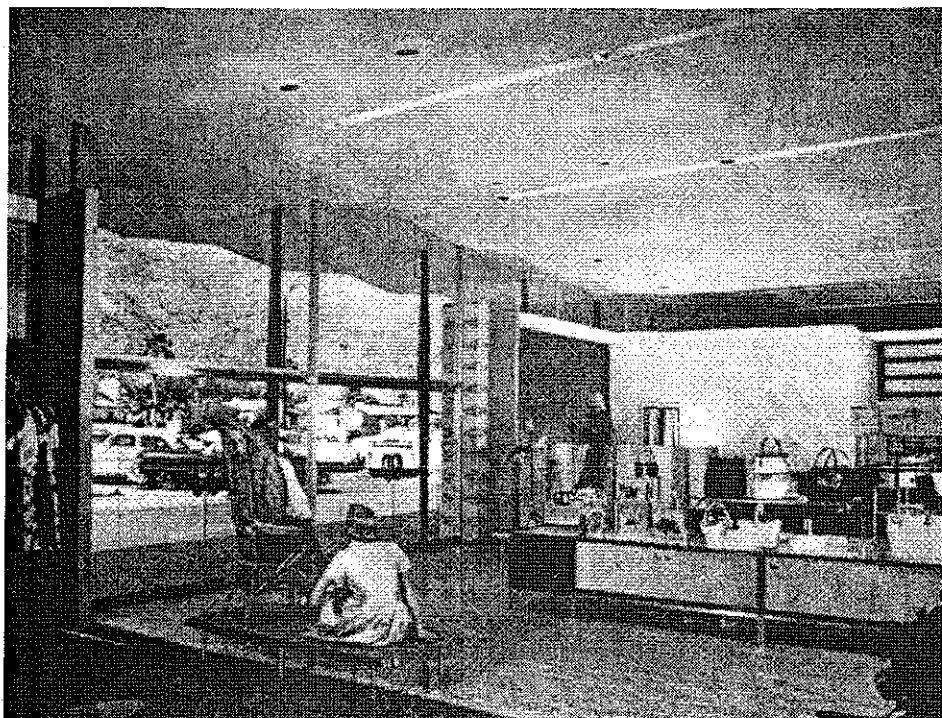


Figure 8: Interior photograph showing ceiling air-conditioning plenums (1958)

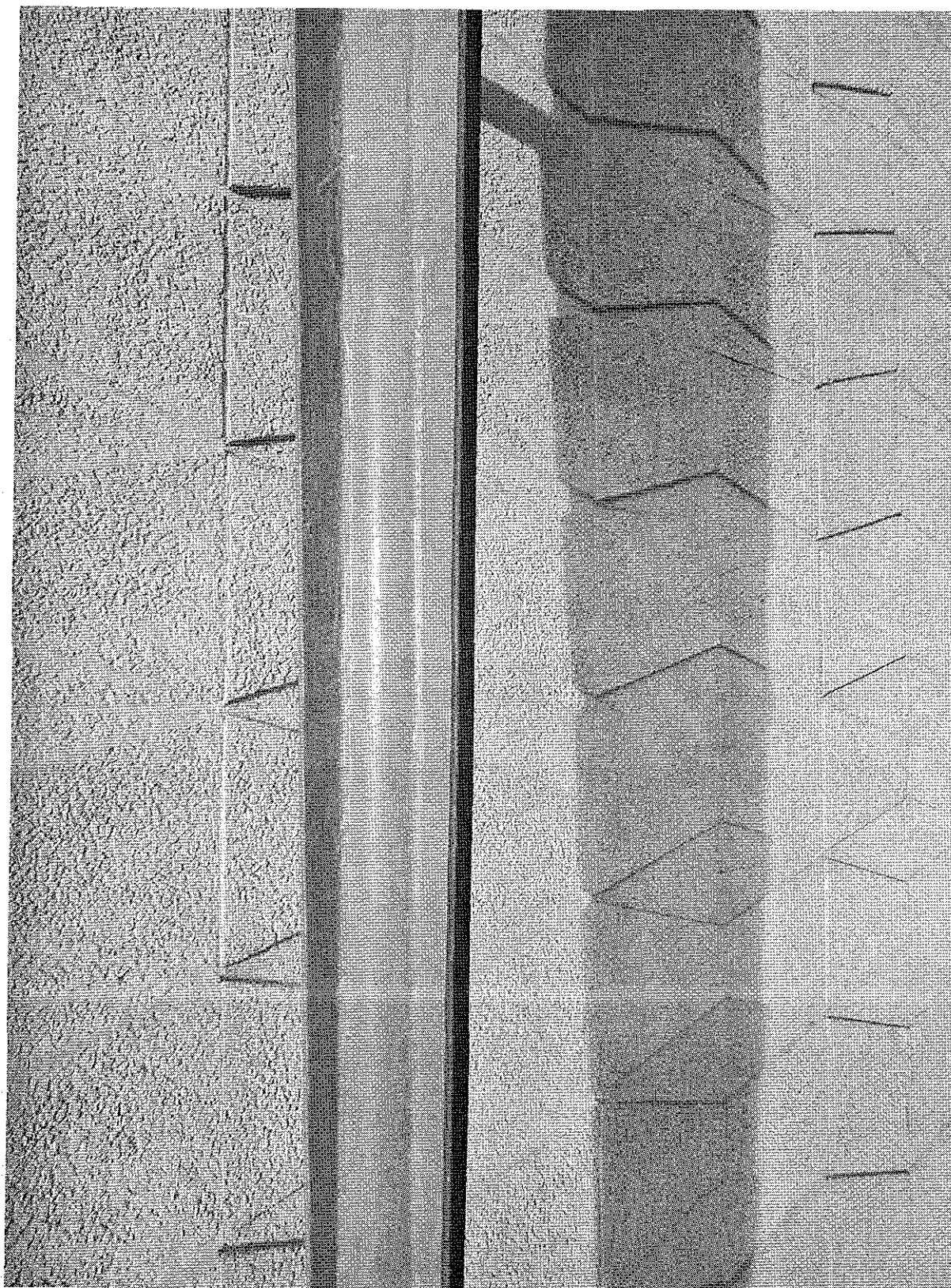


Figure 6: Load-bearing 4-inch “finned” steel pipe columns and harlequin-patterned facing tiles (2012)

Appendix VI: Miscellaneous Documentation



Figure 1: The first Robinson's Store in Los Angeles

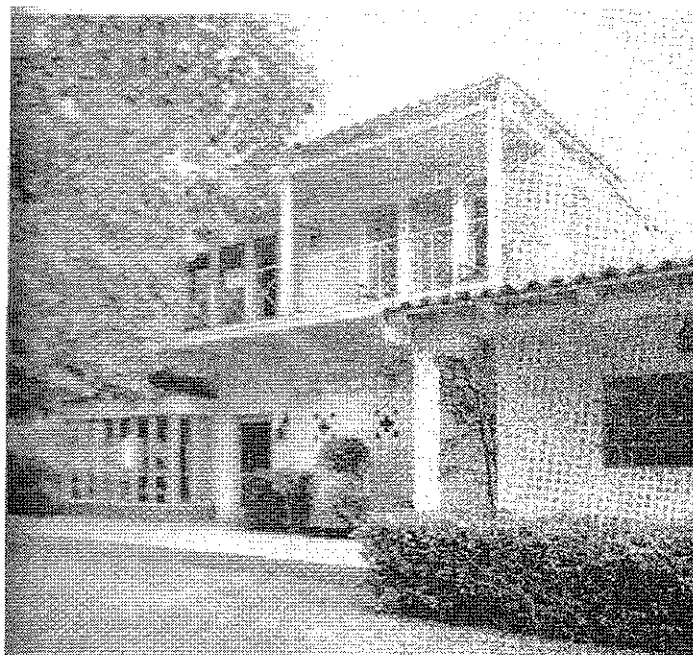


Figure 2: The boutique Robinson's in Palm Springs "on the grounds of the Desert Inn" (1948)



Liberace (center), famous piano artist, photographed here with large crowds waiting outside doors of J. W. Robinson's new store on opening day.

Figure 3: Liberace waiting outside the Palm Springs Robinson's on opening day (from February 1958 *Palm Springs Villager* magazine)

JWR PALM SPRINGS

YOURS FOR THE LIGHT SIDE OF LIVING!
OUR JUST-OPENED FASHION JEWEL-BOX OF THE DESERT



Robinson's
SPARKLING 75TH

SELECTION OF THE SMARTEST IN RESORT WEAR FOR MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD BECOMES ONE OF THE DELIGHTS OF A PALM SPRINGS VACATION AT JWR. HERE, TOO, THE QUALITY FAMOUS FOR 75 YEARS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S FINEST STORE, J. W. ROBINSON LOS ANGELES... BEVERLY HILLS... PALM SPRINGS... AND SOON PASADENA. ROBINSON'S PALM SPRINGS • 333 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE, FAIRVIEW 4-9691. STORE HOURS MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY 10 AM TO 6 PM.

Figure 4: Robinson's advertisement (from February 1958 *Palm Springs Villager* magazine)

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION**



City Council
Meeting Date: January 16, 2013
Subject: HSPB 84 (The Alley)

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

I, Kathie Hart, Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Desert Sun on January 5, 2013.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

KHart

Kathie Hart, CMC
Chief Deputy City Clerk

AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

I, Kathie Hart, Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice of Public Hearing was posted at City Hall, 3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Drive, on the exterior legal notice posting board, and in the Office of the City Clerk and on January 3, 2013.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

KHart

Kathie Hart, CMC
Chief Deputy City Clerk

AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

I, Kathie Hart, Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice of Public Hearing was mailed to each and every person on the attached list on January 3, 2013, in a sealed envelope, with postage prepaid, and depositing same in the U.S. Mail at Palm Springs, California. (48 notices)

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

KHart

Kathie Hart, CMC
Chief Deputy City Clerk

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE J.W. ROBINSONS BUILDING ("THE ALLEY") AS
A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE AND NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM CEQA
CASE HSPB 84
333-343 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California, will hold a Public Hearing at its meeting of January 16, 2013. The City Council meeting begins at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber at City Hall, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider designating the property known as the J.W. Robinsons Building ("The Alley") as a Class 1 Historic Site (Case HSPB 84). The subject site is located at 333-343 South Palm Canyon Drive. (APN 513-203-013).

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: This request is categorically exempt from review pursuant to Section 15331 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), whereas the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource. The application is available for public review in the Planning Services Department, City Hall, 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

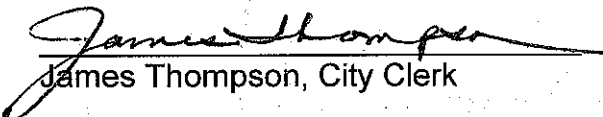
REVIEW OF PROJECT INFORMATION: The staff report and other supporting documents regarding this project are available for public review at City Hall between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Please contact the Office of the City Clerk at (760) 323-8204 if you would like to schedule an appointment to review these documents.

COMMENT ON THIS APPLICATION: Response to this notice may be made verbally at the Public Hearing and/or in writing before the hearing. Written comments may be made to the City Council by letter (for mail or hand delivery) to:

James Thompson, City Clerk
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

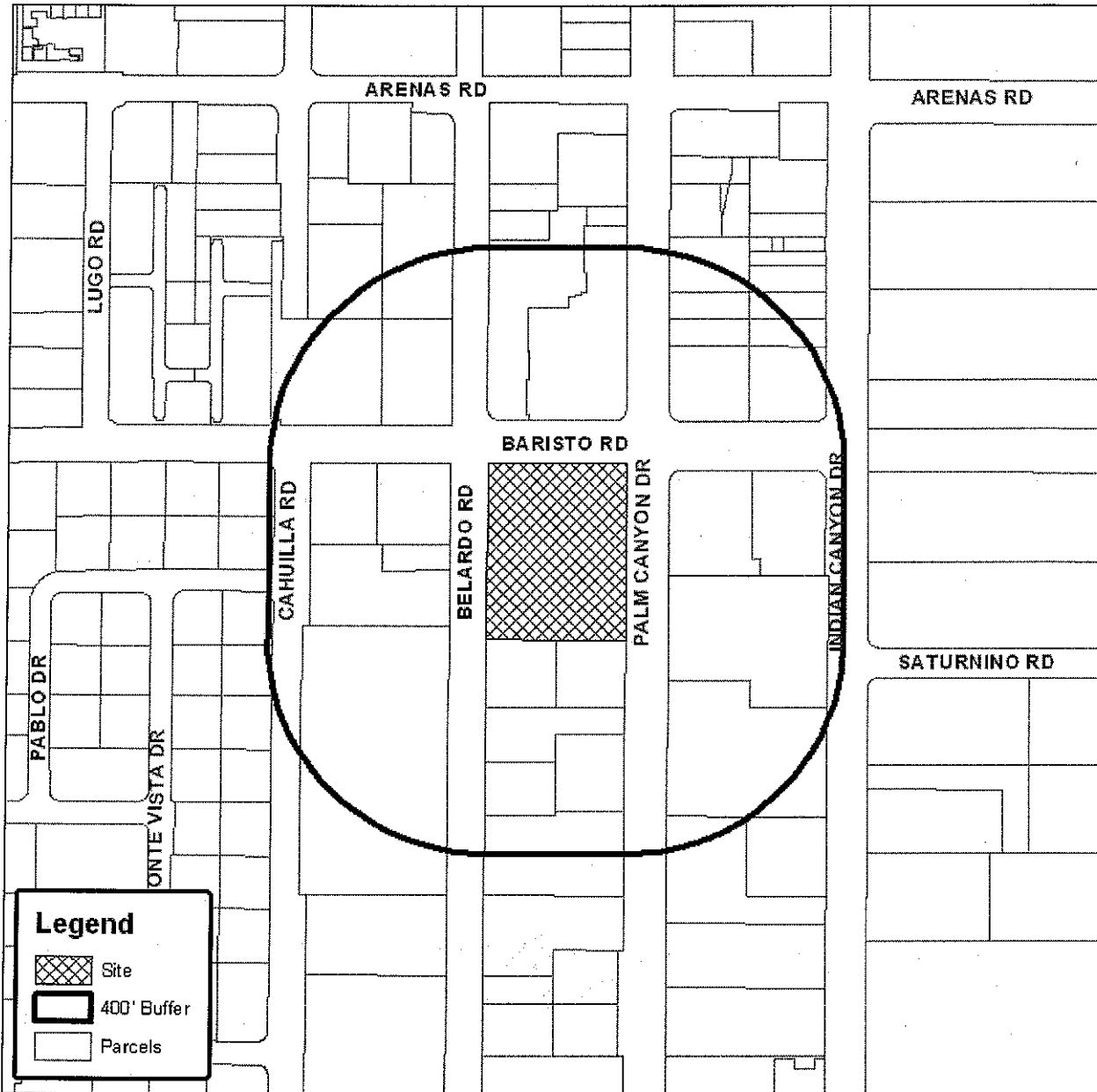
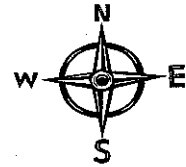
Any challenge of the proposed project in court may be limited to raising only those issues raised at the Public Hearing described in this Notice or in written correspondence delivered to the City Clerk at, or prior to, the City Council hearing. (Government Code Section 65009[b][2]). An opportunity will be given at said hearing for all interested persons to be heard. Questions regarding this case may be directed to Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services, at (760) 323-8245.

Si necesita ayuda con esta carta, porfavor llame a la Ciudad de Palm Springs y puede hablar con Nadine Fieger telefono (760) 323-8245.


James Thompson, City Clerk



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB 84

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: To consider designating the property known as the J.W. Robinsons Building ("The Alley") as a Class 1 Historic Site, located at 333-343 South Palm Canyon Drive. (APN 513-203-013).