



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: February 6, 2013

PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: CASE HSPB #86: APPLICATION FOR DESIGNATION OF THE SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING AT 611 N. PHILLIPS ROAD 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 property at 611 N. Phillips Road. 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 611 N. PHILLIPS ROAD AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 86"

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The property owner, Eric Ellenbogen, filed an application requesting the subject property be designated a Class 1 historic site. Such designation would:

1. Place the subject property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05
2. Require present and subsequent owners to maintain the site consistent with that ordinance, and

ITEM NO. 1A

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 attached staff reports to the Historic Site Preservation Board dated December 11, 2012.

PRIOR ACTIONS

On January 8, 2013, the HSPB voted 4 to 0 (McGrew recused, Gilmer absent) adopted HSPB Resolution #86 to recommend that the City Council designate the site at 611 N. Phillips Road, a Class 1 Historic Site in accordance with Municipal Code Section 8.05.

ANALYSIS

Located on the northwest corner of N. Phillips Road and Gran Via Valmonte, the wood-frame, nine-room dwelling was constructed in 1962-63. The corner lot has an area of 36,590 square feet (0.84 acres) and is generally flat.¹ According to the building permit, the dwelling contained 4933 square feet and the carport 1281 square feet. A swimming pool was constructed at the same time as the original dwelling.

A parking court leads to the entrance, a central pyramidal-roofed pavilion that houses the Foyer and Living Room. L-shaped wings are attached to the central pavilion at the northwest and southeast corners and the whole suggests a "pinwheel" floor plan. Each wing is surmounted by a hipped roof structure, originally finished with shake shingles. The northernmost wing functions as a carport; the west wing houses the Dining Room, Kitchen and Guest Room. The east wing contains a Library / Den and the south wing houses the Master Bedroom suite.

Extending out from the southwest corner of the central pavilion is the swimming pool and surround. Evenly spaced wooden columns support a nearly continuous pergola that surrounds most of the house and connects the outer pavilions to the center, thus extending the "roofed" area to nearly 10,000 sq. ft. Grounded by a reinforced concrete foundation, the home is built of standard wood frame construction. Exterior walls are either painted slump stone or conventional frame walls faced with painted vertically scored wood siding.

The house does not necessarily seek to minimize the division between the interior and the exterior; however, the glazing minimizes the window framing details to the point of near invisibility. Entire walls of floor to ceiling windows and sliders are framed in natural aluminum with minimally slim profiles and are similarly trimless and frameless. New double-glazed low-e glass sliding door and window systems have replaced the originals.

¹ This description is derived from the application submitted by the Eric Ellenbogen and the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, October 1, 2012. Additional information is provided in the application, attached to this report.

The house is open and fluid in plan; the interior doors are flush panel, frameless and trimless. A single massive slump stone chimney stack is centered on the north façade of the central pavilion.

More recent additions to the site and original dwelling include:

- A gunite spa; permit issued in 1988
- Re-roof with pressure-treated shakes and 3-ply fiberglass (on flat roof area); permit issued in 1989
- A new detached carport and exterior patio / pool pavilion; permits issued in 2012
- An additional bathroom in pool pavilion and roof-mounted photo-voltaic solar system; permits applied for in 2012

The dwelling was designed by architect William F. Cody at a time when he was well-established in residential and country-club designs, especially in the desert and other warm climates.² He came to the Coachella Valley when he was commissioned in 1946 to provide design services to the Desert Inn. By 1950, William Cody and his family had relocated to Palm Springs, and he was retained to convert the Thunderbird Dude Ranch into the Thunderbird Country Club. Subsequent commissions in the Coachella Valley included altering and expanding the Spa Hotel for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Mr. Cody was elevated to Fellowship in the AIA in 1965 and, following a stroke, died in 1978 at age 62.

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

As an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and methods of custom residential styling, the building displays distinctive characteristics and physical features.³ These features define resort-style living, expressed in this home as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The exterior spaces were fully developed to promote the year-round use of multiple outdoor amenities such as patios, spas and swimming and reflecting pools. This property contains enough of these characteristics to be considered a true representative of its particular type, period, and method of construction. The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period.

The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. The house and site utilization represent an important

² A more detailed discussion of Mr. Cody's life and career is provided in the attached nomination application.

³ Statement of Defining Historic Characteristics derived from the attached nomination application.

phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates.

Prior to 2012, the building survived essentially unaltered, with a "refresh" by its second owner, interior designer Hal Broderick, including as repainting some trim, removing heavy layers of drapes, and polishing the terrazzo floors. Subsequently, a restoration effort was undertaken, including replacement of glazing, interior room redefinition in the service wing, new bathrooms, restoration of previous modifications and reconfiguration of the garden. The architects conducted this work following a study of the original design and utilizing Cody's principles. The biggest exterior change was to extend the terrazzo to the entire pool surround. More recently and under the current ownership, the landscaping was redesigned with drought-friendly materials to create a series of outside spaces that respond to the owner's different needs. The Abernathy Residence was given PS ModCom's Best Restoration Award in 2010.

This year, additional modifications were made to the site, including the construction of a detached carport and additional patio covering. The improvements respect the main dwelling's architecture without mimicking the style. Of more interest is a building permit application to install a roof-mounted photo-voltaic solar system, which has the potential to alter the pavilion-style appearance of the roof. As shown on the attached exhibit, the panels will be located on nearly all the flat portions of the roof, many with little to no setbacks from the roof edge. However, these panels are of a new technology; they are flexible "blankets" that lie flat on the roof and are not mounted on posts. They are not expected to be visible from off-site views and can easily be removed. (The panels on the new carport will be mounted about one-foot above the roof surface and are expected to be visible from on-site views. These panels can also be removed at any time in the future.)

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 does not request designation based on 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.*

Midcentury modern residential architecture developed deep roots in Palm Springs beginning in the 1950's and the Abernathy Residence is an excellent example of how William F. Cody developed his approach to defining resort-style living, through a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates. Subsequent additions have been generally respectful of the original site plan and design. Staff supports this finding.

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

The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. 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 building's architect, William F. Cody, was recognized by the AIA with a Fellowship after twenty years of practice in southern California and other warm climates. He is one of the recognized groups of mid-century modern architects who practiced in the Palm Springs area. The Abernathy residence expresses the distinctly midcentury modernist phase in Cody's career for which he continues to be known. 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.*

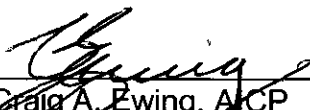
The application does not seek approval under this finding.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

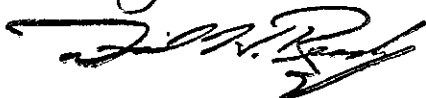
In accordance with Section 15331 (Historical Resources Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed designation is categorically exempt from environmental review as the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource.

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.



Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services



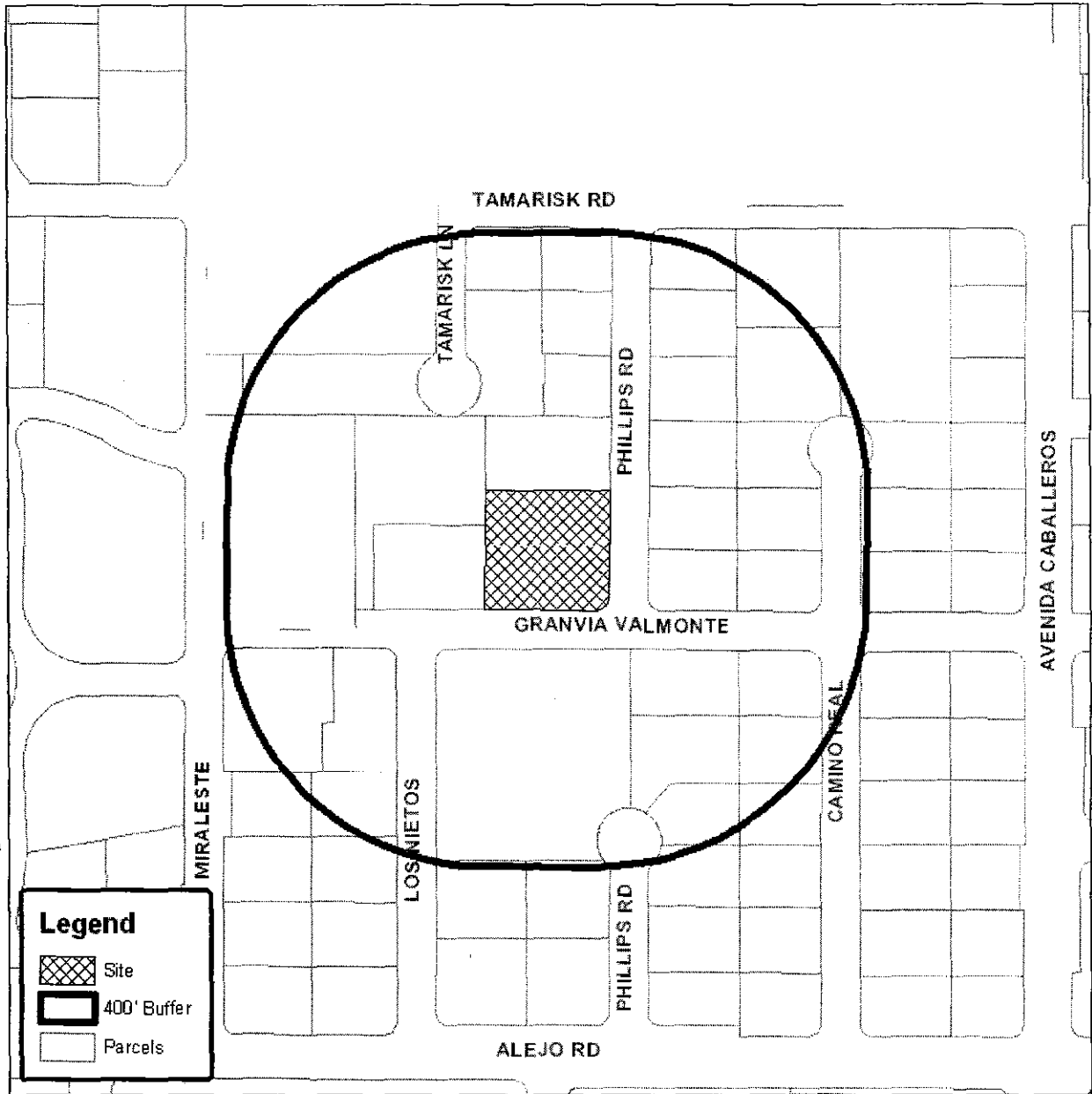
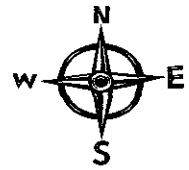
David H. Ready
City Manager

Attachments:




1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft City Council Resolution
3. Resolution #86 of the HSPB
4. HSPB meeting minutes dated December 11, 2012 and January 8, 2013 (draft)
5. HSPB staff report dated December 11, 2012, without attachments
6. HSPB staff memo dated January 8, 2013
7. Applicant's application



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



Legend

-  Site
-  400' Buffer
-  Parcels

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB 86

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: To consider designating a residential property developed with a single family home and accessory structures as a Class 1 Historic Site at 611 North Phillips Road, APN: 507-201-006.

CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. _____

OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 611 N. PHILLIPS ROAD AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 86

WHEREAS, in 1962-63, a single family dwelling designed by noted architect William F. Cody was constructed at the northwest corner of N. Phillips Road and Gran Via Valmonte, and with a site address of 611 N. Phillips Road; and

WHEREAS, the dwelling has been remodeled and restored, including landscaping, following the design principles of William Cody; and

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of this building include:

- Form, proportion, structural grid, and floor plan, represented as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass.
- Stylistic and architectural detailing, including trimless windows and doors, and
- Sophisticated building materials

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

WHEREAS, the property owner, Eric Ellenbogen, with the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, has submitted an application for Historic Site Designation for the subject property; 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 at 611 N. Phillips Road, as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2012 and January 8, 2013, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the property at 611 N. Phillips Road as a historic site, and at which meeting the Historic Site Preservation Board 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 following said hearing voted 4 to 0, with one absence and one abstention to recommend Class 1 designation of the site as contained in HSPB Resolution No. 86; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the property at 611 N. Phillips Road, as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on February 6, 2013, the City Council conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the property at 611 N. Phillips

Road as a historic site, and at which meeting the City Council 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 CITY COUNCIL HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

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

Midcentury modern residential architecture developed deep roots in Palm Springs beginning in the 1950's and the Abernathy Residence is an excellent example of how William F. Cody developed his approach to defining resort-style living, through a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates. Subsequent additions have been generally respectful of the original site plan and design.

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

The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s.

3. *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, William F. Cody, was recognized by the AIA with a Fellowship after twenty years of practice in southern California and other warm climates. He is one of the recognized groups of mid-century modern architects who practiced in the Palm Springs area. The Abernathy residence expresses the distinctly midcentury modernist phase in Cody's career for which he continues to be known.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the City Council does hereby adopt the attached Statement of Historic Significance and designate the entire property located at 611 N. Phillips Road as a Historic Site, Class 1 subject to the following conditions and noting that the carport, pavilion and cactus garden do not contribute directly to the property's historic significance, yet should be included to provide for future review of any alterations;

1. The property owner shall permit the City to place a historic marker of the City's choosing at the site. The marker shall be placed in a location visible from the public right-of-way. The owner shall maintain the marker in the location installed and pay for the replacement cost if the plaque is lost, stolen, or otherwise removed from the property.
2. All future modifications of the existing structures, as well as any new buildings shall require HSPB review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.
3. No review for maintenance of the parking lot or landscaping shall be required, except that, subject to staff approval, any new landscape materials shall be native or desert-appropriate, including removal of turf, where practical.
4. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.
5. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
6. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be considered legal, non-conforming only as to Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.

ADOPTED this ___th day of February , 2013.

AYES:
 NOES:
 ABSENT:
 ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

James Thompson
City Clerk

STATEMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

611 N. PHILLIPS ROAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Palm Springs is known internationally for its significant concentration of midcentury modern residential and commercial construction. It has been said that no American city is more closely identified with this particular period of American architecture. As a perfect example of the domestic architecture of the period, the James Logan Abernathy Residence truly exemplifies this period of national, State and local history. The Abernathy residence is significant primarily for its architectural quality. Master architect William F. Cody's design for the 1962 home exemplifies Midcentury Modern desert architecture and that period of local architectural history. It embodies the distinctive characteristics and construction methods of a private residential retreat of its era. Furthermore, the home is a unique representation of the high artistic values that may be found in a desert residence.

As an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and methods of custom residential styling, the building displays distinctive characteristics and physical features. These features define resort-style living, expressed in this home as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The exterior spaces were fully developed to promote the year-round use of multiple outdoor amenities such as patios spas and swimming and reflecting pools. This property contains enough of these characteristics to be considered a true representative of its particular type, period, and method of construction. The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates.

To understand how William F. Cody qualifies as a "master architect" it is necessary to review his background and career. He came to the Coachella Valley when he was commissioned in 1946 to provide design services to the Desert Inn. A native of Ohio, Mr. Cody attended Beverly Hills (CA) High School, Santa Monica Junior College and the College of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1942. During the war years, he worked on industrial, military and educational facilities in northern and southern California, and Arizona. He also worked for Cliff May, a leading southern California building designer, and is credited with work on May's Pace-Setter House – an influential, low-cost California ranch house design.

Mr. Cody received National Design Award recognition for several elementary and high school buildings on which he worked while employed at the firm of Marsh, Smith and Powell (Los Angeles, CA). He applied for membership in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1948 showing an office location in Santa Monica. The Southern California Chapter of the AIA granted one of his first desert commissions, the San Marcos Hotel, an "honorable mention" in its award ceremony in 1949.

By 1950, William Cody and his family had relocated to Palm Springs, and he was retained to convert the Thunderbird Dude Ranch into the Thunderbird Country Club. Subsequent commissions in the Coachella Valley followed, including work at the Eldorado Country Club, the Tamarisk Country Club, the Racquet Club and the Tennis Club. He spent nearly a decade beginning in 1960 altering and expanding the Spa Hotel for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Additional commissions in California, Arizona, Texas, Cuba and Mexico continued his specialization in country club / residential developments.

Mr. Cody was elevated to Fellowship in the AIA in 1965 and found his last commissions back in Palm Springs where he designed St. Teresa's Catholic Church and Convent (1966-68) and the Palm Springs Public Library (1973). Following a stroke, he died in 1978 at age 62.

HSPB RESOLUTION NO. 86

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF
THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL
DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 611 N.
PHILLIPS ROAD ("ABERNATHY RESIDENCE") AS A
HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 86

WHEREAS, in 1962-63, a single family dwelling designed by noted architect William F. Cody was constructed at the northwest corner of N. Phillips Road and Gran Via Valmonte, and with a site address of 611 N. Phillips Road; and

WHEREAS, the dwelling has been remodeled and restored, including landscaping, following the design principles of William Cody; and

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of this building include:

- Form, proportion, structural grid, and floor plan, represented as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass.
- Stylistic and architectural detailing, including trimless windows and doors, and
- Sophisticated building materials

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

WHEREAS, the property owner, Eric Ellenbogen, has submitted an application for Historic Site Designation for the subject property; 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 Abernathy residence, as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Abernathy residence 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:

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

Midcentury modern residential architecture developed deep roots in Palm Springs beginning in the 1950's and the Abernathy Residence is an excellent example of how William F. Cody developed his approach to

defining resort-style living, through a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates. Subsequent additions have been generally respectful of the original site plan and design.

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

The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s.

3. *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, William F. Cody, was recognized by the AIA with a Fellowship after twenty years of practice in southern California and other warm climates. He is one of the recognized groups of mid-century modern architects who practiced in the Palm Springs area. The Abernathy residence expresses the distinctly midcentury modernist phase in Cody's career for which he continues to be known.

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 611 N. Phillips Road as a Historic Site, Class 1, subject to the following conditions and noting that the carport, pavilion and cactus garden do not contribute directly to the property's historic significance, yet should be included to provide for future review of any alterations;

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.

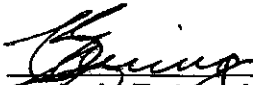
3. No review for maintenance of the parking lot or landscaping shall be required, except that, subject to staff approval, any new landscape materials shall be native or desert-appropriate, including removal of turf, where practical.
4. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.
5. 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 8th day of January, 2013.

AYES: Glenn, Ploss, Vice-Chair Grattan, Chair DeLeeuw
NOES: none
ABSENT: Gilmer
ABSTENTIONS: McGrew

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA



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

STATEMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

611 N. PHILLIPS ROAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Palm Springs is known internationally for its significant concentration of midcentury modern residential and commercial construction. It has been said that no American city is more closely identified with this particular period of American architecture. As a perfect example of the domestic architecture of the period, the James Logan Abernathy Residence truly exemplifies this period of national, State and local history. The Abernathy residence is significant primarily for its architectural quality. Master architect William F. Cody's design for the 1962 home exemplifies Midcentury Modern desert architecture and that period of local architectural history. It embodies the distinctive characteristics and construction methods of a private residential retreat of its era. Furthermore, the home is a unique representation of the high artistic values that may be found in a desert residence.

As an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and methods of custom residential styling, the building displays distinctive characteristics and physical features. These features define resort-style living, expressed in this home as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The exterior spaces were fully developed to promote the year-round use of multiple outdoor amenities such as patios spas and swimming and reflecting pools. This property contains enough of these characteristics to be considered a true representative of its particular type, period, and method of construction. The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates.

To understand how William F. Cody qualifies as a "master architect" it is necessary to review his background and career. He came to the Coachella Valley when he was commissioned in 1946 to provide design services to the Desert Inn. A native of Ohio, Mr. Cody attended Beverly Hills (CA) High School, Santa Monica Junior College and the College of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1942. During the war years, he worked on industrial, military and educational facilities in northern and southern California, and Arizona. He also worked for Cliff May, a leading southern California building designer,

and is credited with work on May's Pace-Setter House – an influential, low-cost California ranch house design.

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Mr. Cody was elevated to Fellowship in the AIA in 1965 and found his last commissions back in Palm Springs where he designed St. Teresa's Catholic Church and Convent (1966-68) and the Palm Springs Public Library (1973). Following a stroke, he died in 1978 at age 62.

~~Motion by Ploss; second by Grattan; vote 5-0-1 (Gilmer absent) To approve the minutes from November 6, November 13 and December 11, 2012, as amended.~~

6. PUBLIC HEARING:

- ➔ 6A. Case HSPB 86 – An application by Eric Ellenbogen, owner, requesting the Historic Site Preservation Board recommend to the City Council designation as a Class 1 historic site the single family dwelling at 611 N. Phillips Road (“Abernathy Residence”).

Board member McGrew recused himself and left the room.

Director Ewing presented the staff report. Board members Glenn, Ploss, Vice-chair Grattan and Chair DeLeeuw reported having visited the site on December 19, 2012 and met with contractor Anthony Wallace to discuss the features of the site and property. The Board discussed:

- The building exterior and gardens;
- The loss of mountain views by recent adjacent development;
- The effective placement of the roof-mounted solar panels;
- The driveway design;
- The design and importance of the new carport, pavilion, cactus garden and terrazzo surface surrounding and projecting into the pool;
- Replacement of all windows on the dwelling;
- How much of the site should be designated.

Motion by Glenn; second by Ploss; vote 4-0-1-1 (McGrew recused, Gilmer absent) To adopt the Statement of Historic Significance and recommend to the City Council a Class One historic designation for the entire site, noting that the carport, pavilion and cactus garden do not contribute directly to the property's historic significance, yet should be included to provide for future review of any alterations.

~~Board member McGrew returned to the room.~~

- 6B. Case HSPB 87 – An Application by Barbara Black, owner, requesting the Historic Site Preservation Board recommend to the City Council designation as a Class 1 historic site the single family dwelling at 1320 E Tamarisk Road (“General Houses, Inc. Palm Springs Model Home”).

Chair DeLeeuw opened the public hearing. There were no speakers and the public hearing was closed.

Board members Ploss, Vice-chair Grattan and Chair DeLeeuw reported having visited the site on December 19, 2012. Chair DeLeeuw met with the owner and also toured the interior. Board member Glenn reported having visited the site on January 3, 2013. Board member McGrew read into the record his research on one of the site's property owners, architect Michael Black. The Board discussed:

- The connection between Michael Black, Don Wexler and E. Stewart Williams: 18

- ~~5B. Case HSPB 87 – An application by Barbara Black, owner, requesting the Historic Site Preservation Board recommend to the City Council designation as a Class 1 historic site the single family dwelling at 1320 E Tamarisk Road (“General Houses, Inc. Palm Springs Model Home”).~~

~~Chair DeLeeuw asked that this item be continued so that a site visit could be arranged for Board members. He asked that a site visit also be arranged for the prior item. The Board discussed previous site visits made by some members and also asked that future applications have site visits scheduled prior to public hearings.~~

~~Director Ewing presented the staff report. The Board asked about staff’s recommendation to include the finding related to periods of history~~

~~Chair DeLeeuw opened the public hearing:~~

- ~~– Ron Marshall, Palm Spring Preservation Foundation, expressed support for the application and noted that the house will be included in a PSPF tour of steel houses.~~

~~(Board member Grattan arrived.)~~

- ~~– Barbara Black, property owner, expressed support for the application, noting that she has occupied the house for 50 years. She welcomed the Board to tour the property.~~

~~The Board discussed:~~

- ~~– Scheduling a site visit,~~
- ~~– Adding to the record information about architect Michael Black who owned the property~~

~~Motion by Grattan; second by Gilmer; vote 5-0-1 (Glenn absent) to continue the matter to the meeting of January 8, 2013, with direction to staff to arrange for site visits prior to the next meeting.~~

- 5A. ~~Case HSPB 88~~ – An application by Eric Ellenbogen, owner, requesting the Historic Site Preservation Board recommend to the City Council designation as a Class 1 historic site the single family dwelling at 611 N. Phillips Road (“Abernathy Residence”). (CE)

With the arrival of Board member Grattan, Chair DeLeeuw returned to this item. Board member McGrew recused himself and left the room.

Director Ewing presented the staff report. The Board discussed including the parking area and landscaping in the designation

Chair DeLeeuw opened the public hearing.

- Ron Marshall, Palm Spring Preservation Foundation, expressed support for the application, noted that the building might be William Cody’s best residential design, and noted the carport installation as well as the property owner’s support. 9

The Board discussed the solar panel installation already permitted. Director Ewing noted that a new type of solar "blanket" will be the main dwelling which could be a model for future projects.

Motion by Grattan; second by Ploss; vote 4-0-1-1 (McGrew recused, Glenn absent) to continue the matter to the meeting of January 8, 2013, with direction to staff to arrange for site visits prior to the next meeting.

In response to a question from Board member Grattan, Director Ewing stated that the Board may wish to consider a future condition on historic designations requiring solar "blankets" unless waived by the HSPB.

~~6. OTHER BUSINESS.~~

~~6A. Theft of Historic Markers~~

~~Board member Ploss noted that four markers were stolen from the American Legion Hall building on N. Belardo Road. She reported that Sign-a-Rama has offered to replace the smaller memorial markers. While the City did not pay for the marker that recognized the historic designation, she asked if the Board was interested in replacing it. Director Ewing stated that the Board could replace the marker out of its budget, noting that a new marker would not include the relief of palm trees and mountains found on the old markers. He also asked if new descriptive language conforming to the Board's protocols should be developed.~~

~~Board member Grattan was concerned about stolen markers generally and whether the Board should set a precedent for replacing them. She also asked about insuring or physically securing the markers. Board member Gilmer noted that a determined thief will steal a bronze marker notwithstanding Board policies. Board member McGrew suggested that enameled metal or other lower value materials might be more appropriate.~~

~~Motion by Ploss to purchase and install a new marker for the American Legion Post based on the Board's adopted protocols, with text to be determined by a Board sub-committee. The motion failed for lack of a second.~~

~~Board member Gilmer asked staff to provide reports on the status of designated properties that could have markers and on the budget. Board member McGrew asked staff to research the price of enameled metal. He confirmed that the Board uses aluminum markers for modern buildings, which could be considered for all properties. Director Ewing noted that the circumstances related to the American Legion Hall building made it a particularly attractive target, and that future markers will be installed with consideration for security as well as visibility.~~

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS:



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING SERVICES MEMORANDUM

Date: January 8, 2013
To: Historic Site Preservation Board
From: Director of Planning Services *[Signature]*
Subject: HSPB 86 – 611 N. Phillips Road – Continued Public Hearing

At your meeting of December 11, 2012, the HSPB continued the above item to the meeting of January 8, 2013 so that site visits could be conducted by Board members. No new information has been received by staff to supplement the report previously distributed to the Board.

Board members should identify the date and time of any site visits, as well as any communications they may have had regarding the project. The public hearing can be re-opened and the matter decided. Staff's recommendation is unchanged.

Attachment: HSPB 86 staff report and exhibits (previously distributed)



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: December 11, 2012

Case No: HSPB – 86

Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application

Location: 611 N. Phillips Road / James Logan Abernathy Residence

Owner / Applicant: Eric Ellenbogen

Zone: R-1-C / Residential, Single Family

APN: 507-201-006

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An application by Eric Ellenbogen, owner, to designate the single family dwelling at 611 N. Phillips Road 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

None.

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 northwest corner of N. Phillips Road and Gran Via Valmonte, the wood-frame, nine-room dwelling was constructed in 1962-63. The corner lot has an area of 36,590 square feet (0.84 acres) and is generally flat. The area was platted by developer Culver Nichols as the "Palm Springs Estates" sub-division in the late 1920s.¹ The sub-division featured estate-sized parcels large enough to develop homes for the wealthy. According to the building permit, the dwelling contained 4933 square feet and the carport 1281 square feet. A swimming pool was constructed at the same time as the original dwelling.

A parking court leads to the entrance, a central pyramidal-roofed pavilion that houses the Foyer and Living Room. The underside of the roof is exposed to provide a 26-foot high Douglas Fir tongue-and-groove ceiling. L-shaped wings are attached to the central pavilion at the northwest and southeast corners and the whole suggests a "pinwheel" floor plan. Each wing is surmounted by a hipped roof structure, originally finished with shake shingles. The northernmost wing functions as a carport; the west wing houses the Dining Room, Kitchen and Guest Room. The east wing contains a Library / Den and the south wing houses the Master Bedroom suite.

Extending out from the southwest corner of the central pavilion is the swimming pool and surround. Evenly spaced wooden columns support a nearly continuous pergola that surrounds most of the house and connects the outer pavilions to the center, thus extending the "roofed" area to nearly 10,000 sq. ft. Grounded by a reinforced concrete foundation, the home is built of standard wood frame construction. Exterior walls are either painted slump stone or conventional frame walls faced with painted vertically scored wood siding.

The house does not necessarily seek to minimize the division between the interior and the exterior in the style of many midcentury homes; however, the glazing minimizes the window framing details to the point of near invisibility. Frameless, trimless fixed glass windows are found at the end of corridors and other focal points to extend the view into the gardens. Similarly detailed clerestory windows in bathrooms, bedroom and closet areas give the illusion of floating roofs. Entire walls of floor to ceiling windows and sliders are framed in natural aluminum with minimally slim profiles and are similarly

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

trimless and frameless. New double-glazed low-e glass sliding door and window systems have replaced the originals. The Bronze entrance doors appear to be the originals, manufactured by a Los Angeles custom door manufacturer: Forms and Surfaces. Otherwise, the house is so open and fluid in plan it appears that no interior doors were required; those that do exist are flush panel, frameless and trimless. A single massive slump stone chimney stack is centered on the north façade of the central pavilion.

More recent additions to the site and original dwelling include²:

- A gunite spa; permit issued in 1988
- Re-roof with pressure-treated shakes and 3-ply fiberglass (on flat roof area); permit issued in 1989
- A new detached carport and exterior patio / pool pavilion; permits issued in 2012
- An additional bathroom in pool pavilion and roof-mounted photo-voltaic solar system; permits applied for in 2012

The original owner was James Logan Abernathy (1890-1980), who purchased the vacant lot and commissioned the house. He appears to have gained his wealth from the family's furniture business located in the mid-west, and moved to Palm Springs sometime in his late 50's or 60's. With his second and then third wife, Mr. Abernathy was active in Palm Springs art and social circles, where he became the president of the Civic Arts Association. Upon his death, his widow Madge remained in the house until 1991, when she sold to interior designer Hal Broderick. Broderick retired in 1996, moved to Sonoma, California and sold the house to Perry S. McKay in 2004. (Broderick died in 2006 in Sonoma.) McKay sold the house to the current owner in 2006.

The dwelling was designed by architect William F. Cody at a time when he was well-established in residential and country-club designs, especially in the desert and other warm climates.³ He came to the Coachella Valley when he was commissioned in 1946 to provide design services to the Desert Inn. A native of Ohio, Mr. Cody attended Beverly Hills (CA) High School, Santa Monica Junior College and the College of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1942. During the war years, he worked on industrial, military and educational facilities in northern and southern California, and Arizona. He also worked for Cliff May, a leading southern California building designer, and is credited with work on May's Pace-Setter House – an influential, low-cost California ranch house design.

Mr. Cody received National Design Award recognition for several elementary and high school buildings on which he worked while employed at the firm of Marsh, Smith and Powell (Los Angeles, CA). He applied for membership in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1948 showing an office location in Santa Monica. The Southern

² See attached building permits and temporary permits.

³ A more detailed discussion of Mr. Cody's life and career is provided in the attached nomination application.

California Chapter of the AIA granted one of his first desert commissions, the San Marcos Hotel, an “honorable mention” in its award ceremony in 1949.

By 1950, William Cody and his family had relocated to Palm Springs, and he was retained to convert the Thunderbird Dude Ranch into the Thunderbird Country Club. Subsequent commissions in the Coachella Valley followed, including work at the Eldorado Country Club, the Tamarisk Country Club, the Racquet Club and the Tennis Club. He spent nearly a decade beginning in 1960 altering and expanding the Spa Hotel for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Additional commissions in California, Arizona, Texas, Cuba and Mexico continued his specialization in country club / residential developments.

Mr. Cody was elevated to Fellowship in the AIA in 1965 and found his last commissions back in Palm Springs where he designed St. Teresa’s Catholic Church and Convent (1966-68) and the Palm Springs Public Library (1973). Following a stroke, he died in 1978 at age 62.

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

As an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and methods of custom residential styling, the building displays distinctive characteristics and physical features.⁴ These features define resort-style living, expressed in this home as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The exterior spaces were fully developed to promote the year-round use of multiple outdoor amenities such as patios, spas and swimming and reflecting pools. This property contains enough of these characteristics to be considered a true representative of its particular type, period, and method of construction. The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period.

The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs’ architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates.

Prior to 2012, the building survived essentially unaltered, with a “refresh” by its second owner, interior designer Hal Broderick, including as repainting some trim, removing heavy layers of drapes, and polishing the terrazzo floors. Subsequently, a restoration effort was undertaken, including replacement of glazing, interior room redefinition in the service wing, new bathrooms, restoration of previous modifications and reconfiguration

⁴ Statement of Defining Historic Characteristics derived from the attached nomination application.

of the garden. The architects conducted this work following a study of the original design and utilizing Cody's principles. The biggest exterior change was to extend the terrazzo to the entire pool surround. More recently and under the current ownership, the landscaping was redesigned with drought-friendly materials to create a series of outside spaces that respond to the owner's different needs. The Abernathy Residence was given PS ModCom's Best Restoration Award in 2010.

This year, additional modifications were made to the site, including the construction of a detached carport and additional patio covering. The improvements respect the main dwelling's architecture without mimicking the style. Of more interest is a building permit application to install a roof-mounted photo-voltaic solar system, which has the potential to alter the pavilion-style appearance of the roof. As shown on the attached exhibit, the panels will be located on nearly all the flat portions of the roof, many with little to no setbacks from the roof edge. However, these panels are of a new technology; they are flexible "blankets" that lie flat on the roof and are not mounted on posts. They are not expected to be visible from off-site views and can easily be removed. (The panels on the new carport will be mounted about one-foot above the roof surface and are expected to be visible from on-site views. These panels can also be removed at any time in the future.)

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 does not request designation based on 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.*

Midcentury modern residential architecture developed deep roots in Palm Springs beginning in the 1950's and the Abernathy Residence is an excellent example of how William F. Cody developed his approach to defining resort-style living, through a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates.

Subsequent additions have been generally respectful of the original site plan and design. Staff supports this finding.

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

The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. 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 building's architect, William F. Cody, was recognized by the AIA with a Fellowship after twenty years of practice in southern California and other warm climates. He is one of the recognized groups of mid-century modern architects who practiced in the Palm Springs area. The Abernathy residence expresses the distinctly midcentury modernist phase in Cody's career for which he continues to be known. 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. Recent remodel of the building and its landscaping have been accomplished in a respectful and sensitive manner. The building exterior and grounds present a prime example of a custom, mid-century modern residential estate, as designed by William F. Cody.

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.

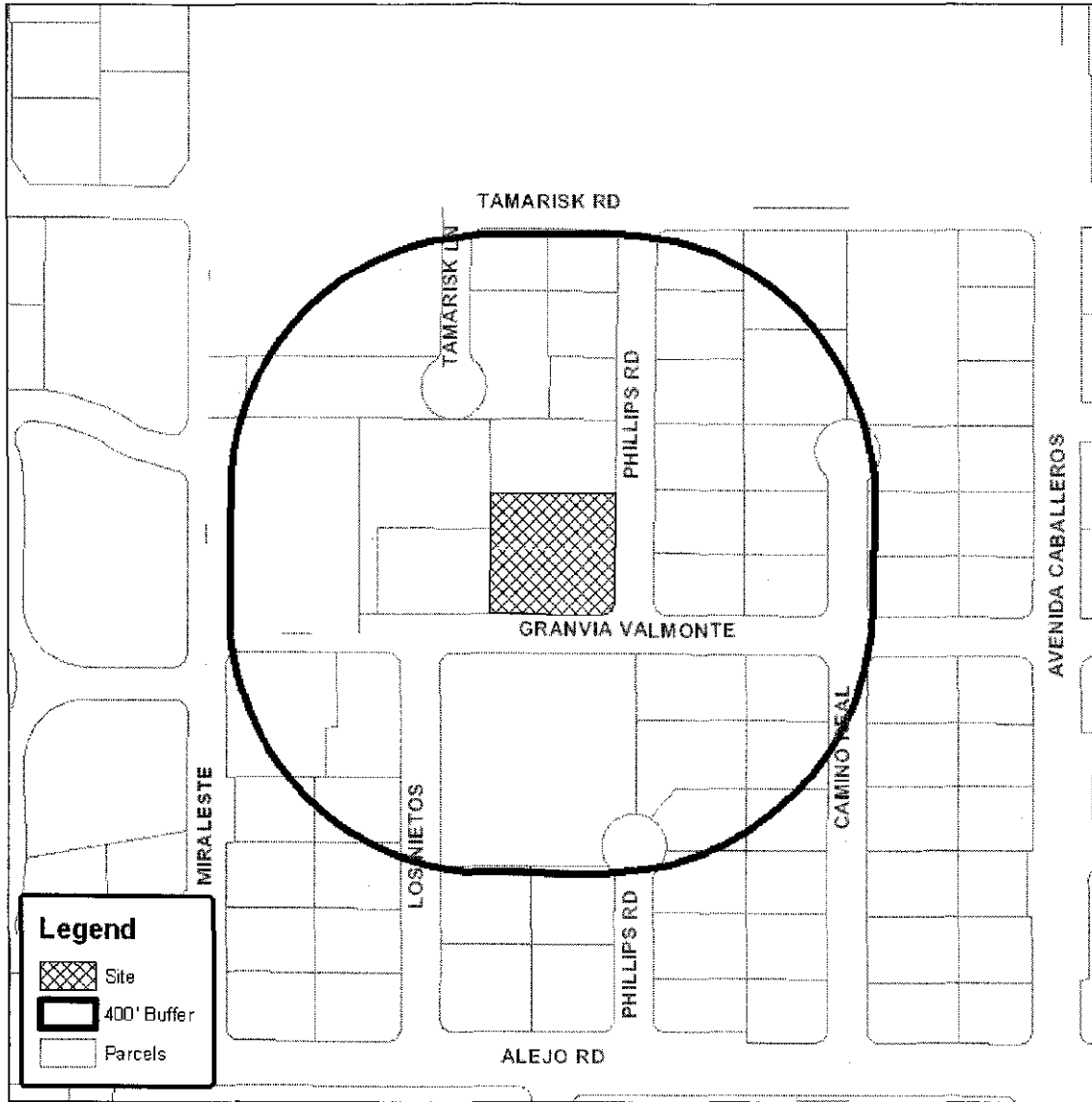
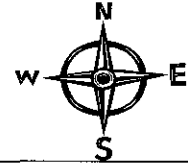
Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution and Statement of Historical Significance
3. Application and Submitted Documents
4. Building permits and permit applications
5. Roof Plan for proposed photo-voltaic solar installation



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB 86

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: To consider designating a residential property developed with a single family home and accessory structures as a Class 1 Historic Site at 611 North Phillips Road, APN: 507-201-006.

HSPB RESOLUTION NO. 86

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF
THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL
DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 611 N.
PHILLIPS ROAD ("ABERNATHY RESIDENCE") AS A
HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 – HSPB 86

WHEREAS, in 1962-63, a single family dwelling designed by noted architect William F. Cody was constructed at the northwest corner of N. Phillips Road and Gran Via Valmonte, and with a site address of 611 N. Phillips Road; and

WHEREAS, the dwelling has been remodeled and restored, including landscaping, following the design principles of William Cody; and

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of this building include:

- Form, proportion, structural grid, and floor plan, represented as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass.
- Stylistic and architectural detailing, including trimless windows and doors, and
- Sophisticated building materials

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

WHEREAS, the property owner, Eric Ellenbogen, has submitted an application for Historic Site Designation for the subject property; 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 Abernathy residence, as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Abernathy residence 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:

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

Midcentury modern residential architecture developed deep roots in Palm Springs beginning in the 1950's and the Abernathy Residence is an excellent example of how William F. Cody developed his approach to defining resort-style living, through a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates. Subsequent additions have been generally respectful of the original site plan and design.

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

The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s.

3. *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, William F. Cody, was recognized by the AIA with a Fellowship after twenty years of practice in southern California and other warm climates. He is one of the recognized groups of mid-century modern architects who practiced in the Palm Springs area. The Abernathy residence expresses the distinctly midcentury modernist phase in Cody's career for which he continues to be known.

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 611 N. Phillips Road as a Historic Site, Class 1 subject to the following conditions;

1. The property owner shall permit the City to place a historic marker of the City's choosing at the site. The marker shall be placed in a location visible from the public right-of-way. The owner shall maintain the marker in the location installed and pay for the replacement cost if the plaque is lost, stolen, or otherwise removed from the property.
2. All future modifications of the existing structures, as well as any new buildings shall require HSPB review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.

3. No review for maintenance of the parking lot or landscaping shall be required, except that, subject to staff approval, any new landscape materials shall be native or desert-appropriate, including removal of turf, where practical.
4. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.
5. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
6. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be considered legal, non-conforming only as to Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.

ADOPTED this ___th day of December, 2012.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS,
CALIFORNIA

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

STATEMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

611 N. PHILLIPS ROAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Palm Springs is known internationally for its significant concentration of midcentury modern residential and commercial construction. It has been said that no American city is more closely identified with this particular period of American architecture. As a perfect example of the domestic architecture of the period, the James Logan Abernathy Residence truly exemplifies this period of national, State and local history. The Abernathy residence is significant primarily for its architectural quality. Master architect William F. Cody's design for the 1962 home exemplifies Midcentury Modern desert architecture and that period of local architectural history. It embodies the distinctive characteristics and construction methods of a private residential retreat of its era. Furthermore, the home is a unique representation of the high artistic values that may be found in a desert residence.

As an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and methods of custom residential styling, the building displays distinctive characteristics and physical features. These features define resort-style living, expressed in this home as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The exterior spaces were fully developed to promote the year-round use of multiple outdoor amenities such as patios spas and swimming and reflecting pools. This property contains enough of these characteristics to be considered a true representative of its particular type, period, and method of construction. The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates.

To understand how William F. Cody qualifies as a "master architect" it is necessary to review his background and career. He came to the Coachella Valley when he was commissioned in 1946 to provide design services to the Desert Inn. A native of Ohio, Mr. Cody attended Beverly Hills (CA) High School, Santa Monica Junior College and the College of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, where he received a Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1942. During the war years, he worked on industrial, military and educational facilities in northern and southern California, and Arizona. He also worked for Cliff May, a leading southern California building designer,

and is credited with work on May's Pace-Setter House – an influential, low-cost California ranch house design.

Mr. Cody received National Design Award recognition for several elementary and high school buildings on which he worked while employed at the firm of Marsh, Smith and Powell (Los Angeles, CA). He applied for membership in the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1948 showing an office location in Santa Monica. The Southern California Chapter of the AIA granted one of his first desert commissions, the San Marcos Hotel, an “honorable mention” in its award ceremony in 1949.

By 1950, William Cody and his family had relocated to Palm Springs, and he was retained to convert the Thunderbird Dude Ranch into the Thunderbird Country Club. Subsequent commissions in the Coachella Valley followed, including work at the Eldorado Country Club, the Tamarisk Country Club, the Racquet Club and the Tennis Club. He spent nearly a decade beginning in 1960 altering and expanding the Spa Hotel for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. Additional commissions in California, Arizona, Texas, Cuba and Mexico continued his specialization in country club / residential developments.

Mr. Cody was elevated to Fellowship in the AIA in 1965 and found his last commissions back in Palm Springs where he designed St. Teresa's Catholic Church and Convent (1966-68) and the Palm Springs Public Library (1973). Following a stroke, he died in 1978 at age 62.

Nomination Application for
Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site
James Logan Abernathy Residence
611 North Phillips Road
Palm Springs, California 92262

James Logan Abernathy Residence



Submitted by the
Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

10/1/2012

Executive Summary:

Statement of Significance:

Palm Springs is known internationally for its significant concentration of midcentury modern residential and commercial construction. It has been said that no American city is more closely identified with this particular period of American architecture. As a perfect example of the domestic architecture of the period, the James Logan Abernathy Residence truly exemplifies this period of national, State and local history. The Abernathy residence is significant primarily for its architectural quality. Master architect William F. Cody's design for the 1962 home exemplifies Midcentury Modern desert architecture and that period of local architectural history. It embodies the distinctive characteristics and construction methods of a private residential retreat of its era. Furthermore, the home is a unique representation of the high artistic values that may be found in a desert residence.

As an embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and methods of custom residential styling, the building displays distinctive characteristics and physical features. These features define resort-style living, expressed in this home as a cluster of pavilions that focus on gardens through large expanses of glass. The exterior spaces were fully developed to promote the year-round use of multiple outdoor amenities such as patios, spas and swimming and reflecting pools. This property contains enough of these characteristics to be considered a true representative of its particular type, period, and method of construction. The subject is a model for desert or resort residential construction for the wealthy of the mid-century period. The defining characteristics include form, proportion, structural grid, floor plan, stylistic and architectural detailing, and materials among the most sophisticated in the region. The building serves as a reference to ideas of design and construction in plan and form in the ways it combines particular construction materials in a unified whole. The way in which the defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of the materials and technology utilized in its construction is emphasized because the home is a perfectly intact and important example of its type, and of the building practices of the 1960s. The house and site utilization represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs' architecture that influenced the development of later custom estates.

To understand how William F. Cody qualifies as a "master architect" it is necessary to review his background and career. A short biography of William F. Cody is included in this nomination application as a separate attachment. To summarize, Cody qualifies as a master architect because he is a figure of generally recognized greatness in his profession as exemplified by the subject property. The Abernathy residence expresses the distinctly midcentury modernist phase in Cody's career for which he continues to be known. As an example and prototype, the subject property possesses high artistic values as expressed in both architectural and site planning design.

To summarize, based upon the above statement, *the building appears to qualify for listing as a Class 1 site under Criteria 3, 4 and 5.*



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Department of Planning Services
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262
Telephone: 760-323-8245 ~ Fax: 760-322-8360

Public Works & Engineering ~ 760-323-8253
Fire Department ~ 760-323-8187
Building & Safety ~ 760-323-8242
Building Inspections ~ 760-323-8243
Code Enforcement ~ 760-778-8434

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION

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

APPLICATION

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

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

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

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD (HSPB)

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

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

CITY COUNCIL

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

NOTIFICATION

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



Office Use Only

Date:
Case No.
HSPB No.
Planner:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Department of Planning Services

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION

TO THE APPLICANT:

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

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

“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: Abernathy Residence

Other names: N/A

Address: 611 North Phillips Road

Assessor parcel number: 507201006-1

Owner's name: Eric Ellenbogen

Owner's Address: Same

City: Palm Springs

State: California

Zip: 92262

Telephone: 212.659.1970

Cell:

Fax: 212.659.1974

E-mail address: <EE@classicmedia.tv>

2. Classifications

Ownership of Property: Check as many boxes as apply.

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

Category of Property

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- 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
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: Single Family Residence

Current Use or Function: Single Family Residence

4. Description

Architect: William F. Cody

Construction Date and Source: 1962, per Riverside County Assessor's Records

Restoration, 2006, Architect: Michael Haverland

Architectural Classification: Desert Modern / Midcentury Modern

Construction Materials:

Foundation: Concrete

Roof: Wooden Shake Shingles

Walls: Wood Frame w/ Slump Stone, Board & Batten Siding

Other: Painted tubular sheet metal Colonnade.

Building Description: See continuation sheets

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

Events

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

Persons

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

Architecture

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

Archaeology

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

Criteria Considerations (Check all the boxes that apply.)

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

6. Statement of Significance

Attach an explanation of any of the numbered criteria selected in Section 5 (above).

The subject building appears to be Architecturally significant under Criteria 3, 4 and 5; see continuation sheets.

7. Integrity Analysis

Attach an analysis of the Building & Site's integrity based on the criteria in this section.

Integrity: (See Integrity Statement, Continuation sheets).

In addition to being determined eligible under at least one of the applicable designation criteria the building must also retain its architectural integrity. Integrity is based on significance to explain why, where and when a property is important. Only after significance is fully established can a determination be made with regard to the issue of integrity. In this case, the building's significance lies in its midcentury architecture. To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects of integrity which include **Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association.**

As described in the continuation sheet, extensive landscaping has minimally altered the setting. Otherwise, the building and site possess six of the seven aspects of integrity. This is sufficient to provide no impediments to listing as a Class 1 Historic Site.

8. Bibliography

See Continuation sheets

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property:

Property Boundary Description. The boundary includes all of Riverside County Assessor's Lot No. 507201006; Legal description: Lot A RS 037/005

10. Prepared By

Name/title: Patrick McGrew

Organization: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

Street address: 674 South Grenfall Road

City: Palm Springs

State: California

Zip: 92264

Telephone: (760) 416-7819

Cell: (760) 567-2978

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 ½ 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.

ERIC ELLENBOGEN
85 FIFTH AVENUE, FL6
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(212) 659-1970
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September 4, 2012

Via Certified Mail

Mr. Craig Ewing
Director of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Re: 611 North Phillips Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Dear Mr. Ewing:

Please accept this letter as my authorization for the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (PSPF) to act as my agent/representative in matters regarding the Class 1 Historic Site designation of the Abernathy "Pavilion" House (William F. Cody, 1962) at 611 North Phillips Road in the City of Palm Springs, California.

It is my desire that as much of the site as possible be designated as historic.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Mr. Ronald Marshall of PSPF at (760) 837-7117.

Sincerely yours,



Eric Ellenbogen
Property Owner

cc: Ron Marshall (via email - modpod_one@yahoo.com)
Lance O'Donnell (via email - lance@o2arch.com)

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

Building Description:

The Abernathy residence is a 4,680 sq. ft. single-story structure. A spacious parking court leads to the entrance, a central pyramidal-roofed pavilion that houses the Foyer and Living Room. The underside of the roof is exposed to provide a 26-foot high Douglas Fir tongue-and-groove ceiling. L-shaped wings are attached to the central pavilion at the northwest and southeast corners. The resulting plan recalls Richard Neutra's "pinwheel" floor plans. Each wing is surmounted by a hipped roof structure finished with shake shingles. The northernmost wing functions as a carport; the west wing houses the Dining Room, Kitchen and Guest Room. The east wing contains a Library / Den and the south wing houses the Master Bedroom suite. Extending out from the southwest corner of the central pavilion is the swimming pool and surround. Evenly spaced wooden columns support a nearly continuous pergola that surrounds most of the house and connects the outer pavilions to the center, thus extending the "roofed" area to nearly 10,000 sq. ft. Grounded by a reinforced concrete foundation, the home is built of standard wood frame construction. Exterior walls are either painted slump stone or conventional frame walls faced with painted vertically scored wood siding.

The glazing and its detailing reflect Cody's sure hand. Although this house doesn't necessarily seek to minimize the division between the interior and the exterior in the style of many midcentury homes, Cody still minimizes the window framing details to the point of near invisibility. Frameless, trimless fixed glass windows are found at the end of corridors and other focal points to extend the view into the gardens. Similarly detailed clerestory windows in bathrooms, bedroom and closet areas give the illusion of floating roofs. Entire walls of floor to ceiling windows and sliders are framed in natural aluminum with minimally slim profiles and are similarly trimless and frameless. New double-glazed low-e glass sliding door and window systems have replaced the originals. The Bronze entrance doors appear to be the originals, manufactured by a Los Angeles custom door manufacturer: Forms and Surfaces. Otherwise, the house is so open and fluid in plan it appears that no interior doors were required; those that do exist are flush panel, frameless and trimless. A single massive slump stone chimney stack is centered on the north façade of the central pavilion.

Integrity:

Having had only four owners,¹ the building has survived essentially unaltered. "Refreshed" by its second owner, interior designer Hal Broderick, he described his restoration efforts as repainting some trim, removing heavy layers of drapes, and polishing the terrazzo floors.

With his colleagues Darren Brown and Thomas Morbitzer, Architect Michael Haverland retained Cody's work while updating the house to offer the comforts of a modern lifestyle. The restoration project began by analyzing the architect's original drawings housed in the Cody Archive at Cal Poly University in San Luis Obispo. An understanding emerged of the grids and systems that generated the plan and section of the house and its relationship to the site. Once the original design was understood, modifications and restoration, including replacement of glazing, interior room redefinition in the service wing, new bathrooms, restoration of previous modifications and the garden reconfiguration was developed utilizing Cody's principles. The architects brought to light the original details while allowing an elegant updated atmosphere to emerge.

The biggest exterior change was to extend the terrazzo to the entire pool surround. This resulted in a seamless change in the flooring from the interior to the exterior. Broderick, who purchased the home from Abernathy's widow, described the landscape as "over-planted." Under the current ownership, the grounds were stripped and redesigned with an imaginative choice of drought-friendly materials to create a series of outside spaces that

¹ James Logan Abernathy (1962-1991), Harold Broderick (1991-2004), Perry McKay (2004-2006) and Eric Ellenbogen (2006-present).

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

respond to the owner's different needs. Otherwise the interior finishes strongly recall those originally created for the Abernathys by interior designer Noel Birns. The Abernathy Residence was given PS ModCom's Best Restoration Award in 2010.

Context:

The area was platted by developer Culver Nichols as the "Palm Springs Estates" sub-division in the late 1920s. The sub-division featured estate-sized parcels large enough to develop homes for the wealthy. Soon, new homes being built included George Heigho's "*Invernada*," (1930, Architect Unknown) at 657 Via Miraleste, a Class 1 site; Harry Hanbury's home at 796 Via Miraleste (1934, Ross Montgomery, Architect); and Henry Huntington's spinster daughter Marian's sprawling 1933 estate at 735 East Granvia Valmonte.

The block containing the Abernathy house was framed by Via Miraleste, Tamarisk Road, Avenida Caballeros and Granvia Valmonte / Park Avenue. Mrs. Mabel (née Judson) Cox Harrison² (1884-1956) was the first to build on this block following her purchase of the southwest quadrant of the property. Twice divorced by 1919, Mrs. Harrison had already developed a certain degree of notoriety and chose to relocate to California to embrace a quieter lifestyle. Although she maintained a Los Angeles apartment on the 7th floor of 1424 North Crescent Heights Boulevard, in 1933 she began construction of two Spanish style homes on lots 14 and 19. Access was via a long formal entrance drive from Via Miraleste. Both of the Harrison homes are extant but their setting has been radically altered. In 1939 Mrs. Harrison sub-divided her property and sold the front third of the parcel (Lot 3) that became the site for a home built by Texans Edward C. and Della Thompson with the address of 650 Via Miraleste. The sale required a new access road from Granvia Valmonte be built for the Harrison properties, one of which was then land-locked in the center of the block and not visible from the street. The new addresses for these properties became 670 and 678 East Granvia Valmonte. Upon Mrs. Harrison's death, her acreage was again sub-divided into smaller lots and the new Phillips Road, along with the Tamarisk Lane and Camino Real cul-de-sacs were built to allow additional development on the once large parcel. The first of the second-generation houses on the new small lots was built in 1958 at 755 Phillips Road. An unusual low masonry wall borders two sides of the Abernathy property. It actually encloses four contiguous lots that surrounded the Harrison property after Lot 3 was sold. Lot 7, just north of the Abernathy house, remained undeveloped until 2011, when a new home was built at 661 North Phillips Road.

Persons Associated with the Property:

James Logan Abernathy (1890-1980) purchased 611 Phillips Road (Lot 6) in the early 1960s. It was the south-eastern one-third of the Harrison property. He commissioned William F. Cody to design his desert home. Abernathy was the eldest of three children born in Leavenworth, Kansas to Harry Thomas and Mary Abernathy; his siblings were Taylor S. Abernathy and Cora Abernathy Hull. Abernathy was named for his grandfather, Civil War Col. James Logan Abernathy (1833-1901), an important figure in Kansas / Missouri mercantile and banking history, having established the Logan Furniture Co in 1873, and later, the First National Bank of Kansas City, MO. James Abernathy attended DePauw University where, in 1911, he was listed in the Sigma Xi Directory. In 1913 he married his childhood sweetheart Zemula Johnson (1891 - 1951) with whom he fathered two children, William Logan Abernathy and Mary Scott Abernathy. James Logan Abernathy worked as an insurance broker in the 1920s, but ultimately joined the family furniture business, rising to the level of Vice-President in 1940. Following the death of his first wife, in 1957 Abernathy married Helen K. Beatty, a decorator

² Her second husband was an extremely wealthy and attractive American diplomat who became Governor-General of the Philippines. At age 45, he divorced Mable and married an 18-year-old Philippine girl. Within a couple of years, he married her younger sister, the 4th of his six marriages.

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

at Bullock's, who was described *Palm Springs Life* as a landscape painter. As a couple, they moved in Palm Springs art and social circles, where he became the president of the Civic Arts Association. Abernathy was widowed a second time within a few years, and soon began a relationship with Magdalen H. "Madge" Phillips, a portrait painter. It was during this period that the Abernathy Residence was built. Cody's project files confirm that the house was designed for "James and Madge." Two years later, at the age of 73, in 1964 Abernathy and Phillips were married. Widowed in 1980, Madge remained in the house until 1991, when she sold to interior designer Hal Broderick. Broderick retired in 1996, moved to Sonoma, California and sold the house to Perry S. McKay in 2004. Broderick died in 2006 in Sonoma. McKay sold the house to the current owner in 2006.



The following are the four categories of criteria that may qualify a property for listing. A nominee need qualify under only one criterion, and have a high degree of integrity to qualify for listing as a Class 1 site

Events

(1) A property may be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

No specific events associated with the historic context of this property in any important way have been discovered. *The property is not found significant under this criterion.*

Persons

(2) A property may be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Over the period during which this property was developed, it is associated with a several interesting individuals, but "persons significant in our past" refers to those individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, State, or national historic context. The criterion is generally restricted to those properties that illustrate (rather than commemorate) a person's important achievements. *The property is not found significant under this criterion.*

Architecture

- (3) A property may reflect or exemplify a particular period of national State or local history, or
- (4) A property may embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or
- (5) A property may represent the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or

The property is found significant under Criteria 3, 4 and 5 as documented in the following Statement of significance.

(6) A property may represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. *This criterion is reserved for historic districts; the subject property is not found significant under this criterion.*

Archaeology

(7) A property may have yielded, or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. *The property was not examined for significance under this criterion.*

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

Statement of Significance:

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PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

Bibliography (Partial):

Books

Cygelman, Adele, *Palm Springs Modern*. Rizzoli, New York: 1999.³

Hess, Alan, *Palm Springs Weekend*, Chronicle Books: San Francisco: 2001.

Merchell, Tony with Andy Sotta, *The Architecture of William F. Cody, A Desert Retrospective*, Palm Springs Preservation Foundation; Palm Springs: 2004.

Schirmböck, Thomas with Jürgen Nogai, *Julius Shulman: the Last Decade*. Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg: 2011.

Stevens, Walter Barlow, *Centennial History of Missouri (1820-1921)*. S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., St. Louis: 1921.

Magazines

Phillips, Ian. "Palm Springs Oasis" *Architectural Digest* (France): May 2012.

-----, "Golden Oldie" *Belle Magazine* (Australia): 2012.

-----, "Palm Springs 60s Oasis," *Madame Figaro* (France): 2012.

Meyerhoffer, Linda L. "Interior Motives" *Palm Springs Life*, December: 2009.

Paris, Ellen, "Wealth - Modernism as an Investment: Architecturally Significant Houses Require Special Consideration." *Palm Springs Life*, Feb: 2009.

Palm Springs Life, 1962-63 Pictorial: James and Helen Abernathy

Palm Springs Life, October: 1962: James and Helen Abernathy

Palm Springs Life, August: 1963: Noel Birns interior of the Abernathy Residence

Palm Springs Life, November :1962 Cover: James Logan Abernathy

Reports and Other

Architectural Resources Group, City of Palm Springs, 2004 Citywide Survey; DPR Form.

Merchell, Tony, *Classic Moderns*, a Home Tour Booklet. PSMoCom, Fall 2008.

Cal Poly University Archive: William F. Cody Papers: Abernathy, James and Madge, residential, Job # 6204, Palm Springs, 1962. The archive contains project files, photographs and drawings.

³ It should be noted that the Cygelman text is the earliest found source that contains two errors that continue in print to this day. It is her work that mistakenly identifies the owner as "Ralph Abernathy" rather than James Logan Abernathy. Ralph Abernathy was a figure of some importance in the Civil Rights movement, but he is not related to James Logan Abernathy and was not associated with this property. Additionally, Madge Phillips was incorrectly identified as Abernathy's second wife; she was the third Mrs. Abernathy.

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

WILLIAM CODY BIOGRAPHY

"There is a fine line between minimalism and boredom. In the glass box high-rises and homes that came to dominate Modernism after World War II, in the buildings that shaved off ornament in the search for a pure concept and pure form, in the homes that became chaste altars on which architects sacrificed the mess and clutter of real life for the thin pleasures of stasis and stillness, a potentially vivid architecture was invented, but one that easily became as dry as the desert sand.

"Palm Springs architect William Cody (1917- 1978) played a unique if largely overlooked role. A designer committed to Modernism, to seeking ever more slender and daring expressions, he also brought a huge appetite for life that gave his spare buildings a liveliness and personality that others lacked. From his arrival in Palm Springs in 1942 to his death in 1978, his office was continually busy, but his reputation rarely escaped the Banning Pass. He made little effort to promote his work in the architectural journals, or to seek clients in the greater Los Angeles area; the projects he designed elsewhere were spinoffs from clients or projects he cultivated in Palm Springs—particularly in country club design.

"Born in 1916 in Dayton, Ohio, raised in Los Angeles, Cody began in architecture early, working with Cliff May in the late 1930s even as he was going to the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California. He was already doing well, impressing fellow students with his convertible and hiring them on as draftsmen on his projects. Though admired today, May was never trained formally, yet developed residential designs of great warmth; their rambling lines, patios and ranch house imagery struck a lasting chord with westerners. May's designs drew on historic regional ranch and hacienda models as well as modern ways of life and construction techniques.

"The same care for warmth and lifestyle, overriding theoretical purity, echo through Cody's work. Modernism at first confused and angered Cody, reports his schoolmate and friend George Hasslein. When it was first introduced into the U.S.C. architecture school around the time of Cody's third year of design in 1941, it provoked controversy and arguing matches between Hasslein, who quickly embraced it, and Cody whose design sense was rooted elsewhere. Yet, Cody came around. Greater thinness and more striking elegance became the single-minded focus of his ongoing designs. The sense of gracious spaces remained in his buildings.

"This search for elegance was all the more surprising considering his personality. 'Cody overworked and overplayed,' remembers Stewart Williams, but 'he was a fine designer.' Donald Wexler, who first came to the desert from Neutra's office to work for a winter with Cody in 1952, recalls that the boss was never around during the morning hours. The office was a shack—some described it as a cave, some as a tent—in the middle of a palm grove. Wexler describes Cody as having earned the nickname "Wild Bill" from his social life after hours. It was an unignorable aspect of Cody's personality; Hasslein and Cody were considering going into business together, but Hasslein decided he would rather keep Cody as a friend than have him as a partner.

"Cody was aware of his contradictions, but he clearly funneled his attention to his designs. 'He was his architecture,' says Hasslein. 'He was also a skilled renderer,' says William Krisel, another U.S.C. schoolmate who went on to make important contributions to Palm Springs in the Alexander subdivisions. Cody could deftly flick a watercolor brush to perfect a rendering. His personal energy can be seen, remarkably disciplined, in the intensity of his designs, in the proportions, the energetic details, the polished compositions, the interwoven spaces. His buildings in the desert never became desiccated abstractions.

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

"Bill Cody moved to Palm Springs to ease his asthma after graduating from U.S.C. in 1942 - the illness made him 4-F for the army in wartime. He had a plan: 'If I go to Palm Springs I'll be doing architecture all over the world,' he told Hasslein. It was true; the kinds of clients he met in Palm Springs had connections, homes, and businesses around the United States and in Havana, while a school board client might be ill at ease with his larger-than-life style compared to someone like J. P. Clark, Cody's best clients were social friends like Robert McCullough, power tool millionaire, with whom he shared an outgoing approach to life. McCullough helped to select Cody to design the clubhouse for the Tamarisk Country Club, which led to the clubhouse for the even more prestigious Eldorado Country Club, designed with San Francisco Bay Area architect Ernest Kump.

"One of Cody's first designs for the desert, the 1947 Del Marcos Hotel, fittingly followed the lead of Taliesin West, then less than ten years old. Rubble stone walls contrasted with a framework of angled wood doglegs in a design that rose out of the earth. When Thunderbird Dude Ranch converted to Thunderbird Country Club in 1952, the Gordon Kaufmann-designed clubhouse required renovations and enlargements to the dining room, and Cody was hired. He kept its flavor of 'casual ranch-style' Modern, but in the bungalows he designed around it soon after, he adopted a simpler style: shallow gable roofs for a Modern bungalow. Clubhouses, bungalows and custom homes remained the mainstay of Cody's career in California.

"In Huddle's Springs restaurant of 1957 on South Palm Canyon Drive, Cody delved into Modernistic organic design again, with a superb rendition of the Googie style of design then popular in Southern California's roadside coffee shops; Eldon Davis and Louis Armet, prime purveyors of the style, were also Cody classmates at USC Architecture School, and had designed other Huddle's restaurants in Los Angeles. Huddle's design starts with a plan, a joyful play of oblique angles thrusting the restaurant's winds out into the landscape and creating dynamic polygonal spaces. The structure was equally complex, with wood beams soaring beyond the building line and touching down or doubling back in doglegs to claim the site. They also claim outdoor dining terraces, made pleasant with colorfully striped fabrics stretched between beams as sun shelter.

"Like other Coachella Valley architects, Cody worked on designs ranging from churches to gas stations to hotels. When developer Sam Banowit finally convinced the Cahuilla Tribe to lease the town's original springs to him for the 1955 Spa Hotel, he hired Cody and Wexler and Harrison. Cody oversaw the five-story hotel wing.

"Although Albert Frey's Tramway gas station has become the better known because of a 1997 preservation battle, Bill Cody also designed one nearby in 1964 that is as strong a piece of architecture. A long, thin, high slab of concrete stretches out over three open bays and an enclosed service bay. The slab is in effect a widened capital, akin to the mushroom-shaped columns Frank Lloyd Wright designed for the Johnson Wax offices in Racine, Wisconsin, though square instead of round, the two elegant gas stations, at the town's north gateway, make a point of announcing the Modern city that Palm Springs proudly considered itself in the late 1950s.

"Cody's St. Theresa's Catholic Church is a more expressionistic form; it combines a religious sanctuary, capped by a large spreading pyramidal roof, with surrounding cloister-like forms framed by dramatic concave walls. There is something vaguely oriental, as well as sheltered and mysterious, about the church's modernized stupa form. The thick perimeter walls create meditation courtyards, paved in packed sand. Inside, the great roof canopy is held aloft on an extravagant wood post-and-beam structure that recalls the upward soaring space and structural form of Gothic cathedrals. It is a strongly - and appropriately - introspective building.

"Cody's own house also focuses on an interior courtyard. The structure stretches the California ideal of indoor-outdoor living in a loose confederation of pavilions. We have seen these thin roof planes and spindly columns,

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

used time and again in Case Study designs and scores of imitators. But in Cody's work the vocabulary takes on a very personal meaning and energy.

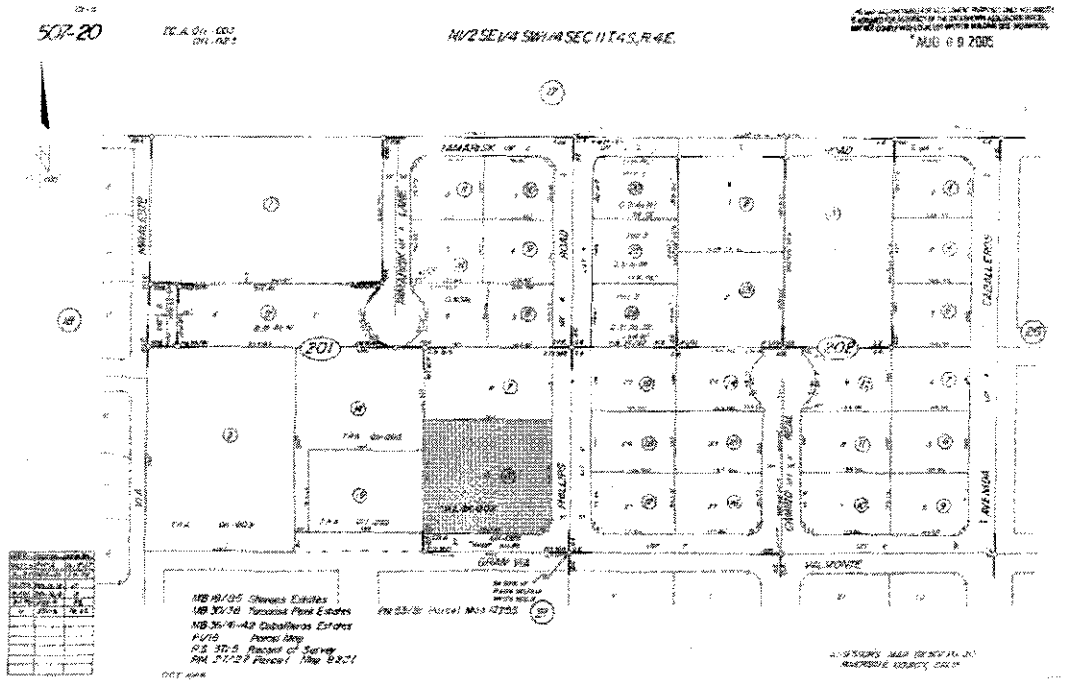
"Like the other architects of Palm Springs, Cody's work was varied. He designed motels, custom homes, a carwash, country clubs, mobile home parks, offices, townhouses, shopping centers, gas stations, and so on. Yet a distinct character can be seen in all of them. It is a restless energy that brings liveliness to his plans, elevations and details. The radical thinness of Cody roofs or the daring reach of a cantilever are clearly the result of a wrestling match between the architect and the materials and the laws of physics; that energy and striving remains in the building. This contrasts with the more measured, balanced composition of Neutra, for example. The spirited angles Cody used in plan and elevation show the breadth of his mastery; he could use organic forms as successfully as minimalist forms.

"The fact that Cody could take an established vocabulary and style and reinterpret it so vividly ranks him among the best of midcentury California designers - a field already crowded with talents like Eames, Koenig, Ellwood, Lautner, Frey, Neutra, Esherick, Callister, Jones and many others. It is time for his work to become more widely known."¹

Following a debilitating stroke in 1973 that ended his career, Cody's firm continued under the stewardship of Frank Urrutia until Cody's death in 1978. Leaving behind a legacy of important contributions to what is known today as Desert Modernism; his career continues to serve as an inspiration to successive generations of architects. In addition to the work, his legacy included mentoring; among his apprentices were Richard Holden, William Johnson, Ric Harrison and of course Don Wexler among others. And the work is as fresh and exciting today as it was when it was built. Of Cody's sophistication as a designer, his contemporary E. Stewart Williams said: "He was the best designer of us all... Cody brought 5th Avenue into the Desert." Over time, many important Cody's have been lost to demolitions or inappropriate alterations. During Modernism Week 2012, Cody was awarded a Star on Palm Springs Walk of Fame.

¹ Hess, Alan, *Palm Springs Weekend*.

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet



1 The original subdivision was named Palms Springs Estates. The subject property is shaded. Source: Riverside County Assessor.

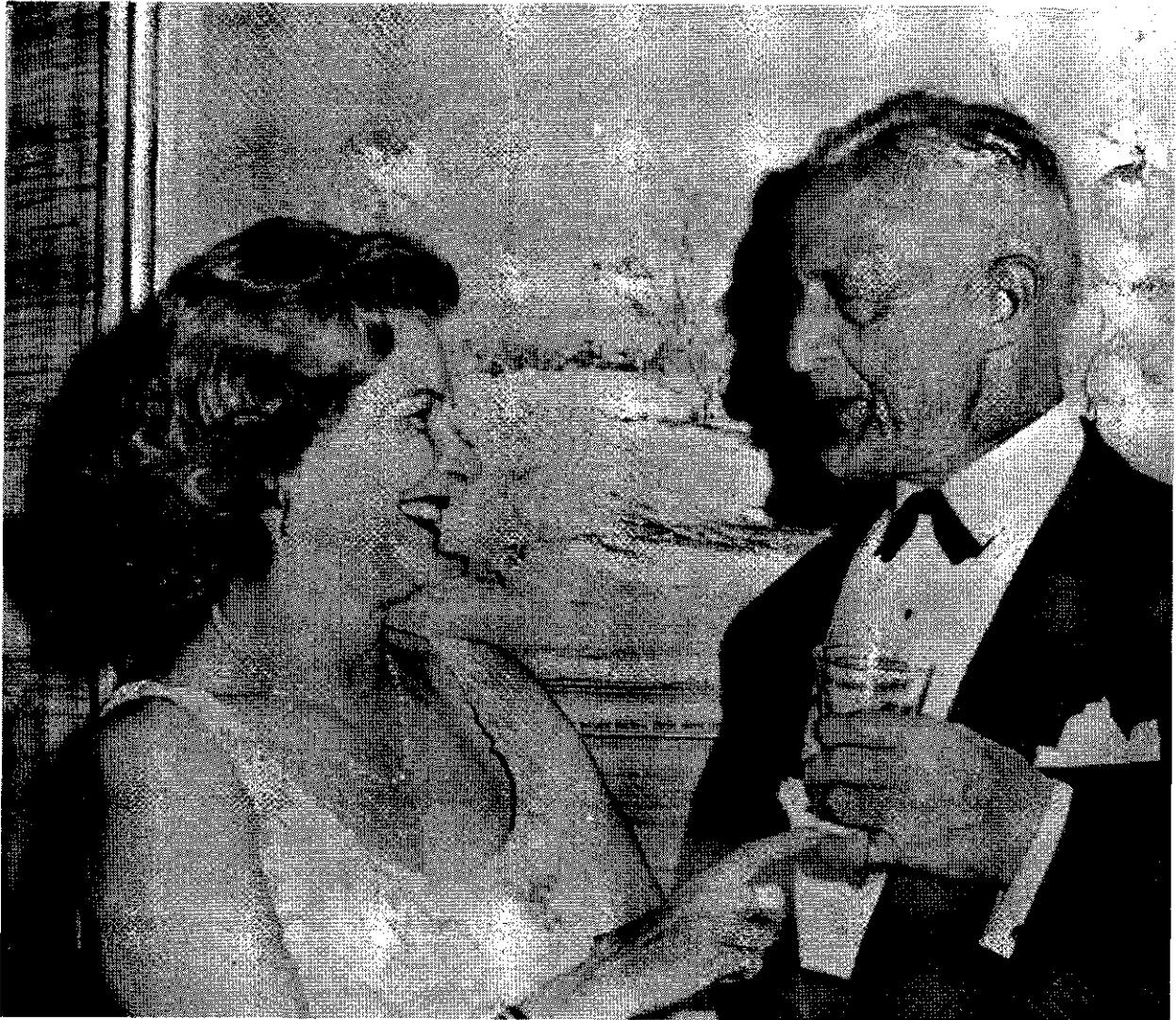
PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet



2 Aerial view of Abernathy residence.

Source: Google Maps

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet



3 James Logan Abernathy with 2nd wife Helen Beatty with one of her landscapes in the background Source: *Palm Springs Life*

PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet

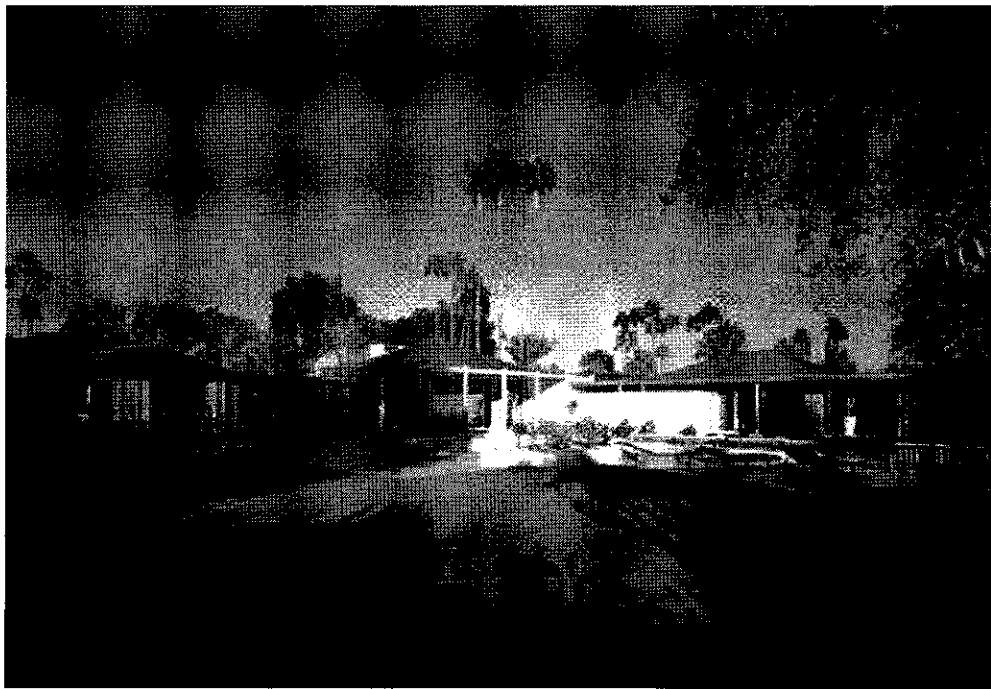


Relaxed informality is invited by the planes and textures in the living room of the James Logan Abernathys' Palm Springs residence. Coordinated whites of the walls, ceiling and floor which features the huge polar bear eyebrow are accented by use of lemon, soft oranges, and royal blues in the ottoman and chairs.

4 Original interior design by Noel Birns. Source: Palm Springs Life Magazine

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PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM
Continuation Sheet



5 Upper: View from Auto Court. Lower: Corresponding view from rear yard. Source: Julius Shulman

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION**



City Council
Meeting Date: February 6, 2013
Subject: HSPB 86 (611 North Phillips Road)

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 26, 2013.

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



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 24, 2013.

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



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 23, 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.



Kathie Hart, CMC
Chief Deputy City Clerk

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF THE RESIDENCE AT 611 N. PHILLIPS ROAD AS
A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE AND NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM CEQA
CASE HSPB 86
611 NORTH PHILLIPS ROAD

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

The purpose of the hearing is to consider a recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board to designate a residential property developed with a single family home and accessory structures as a Class 1 Historic Site, located at 611 North Phillips Road, APN 507-201-006.

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.

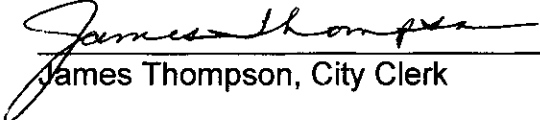
COMMENT ON THIS APPLICATION: Response to this notice may be made verbally at the Public Hearing and/or in writing before the hearing. Written comments may be made to the City Council by letter (for mail or hand delivery) to:

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]).

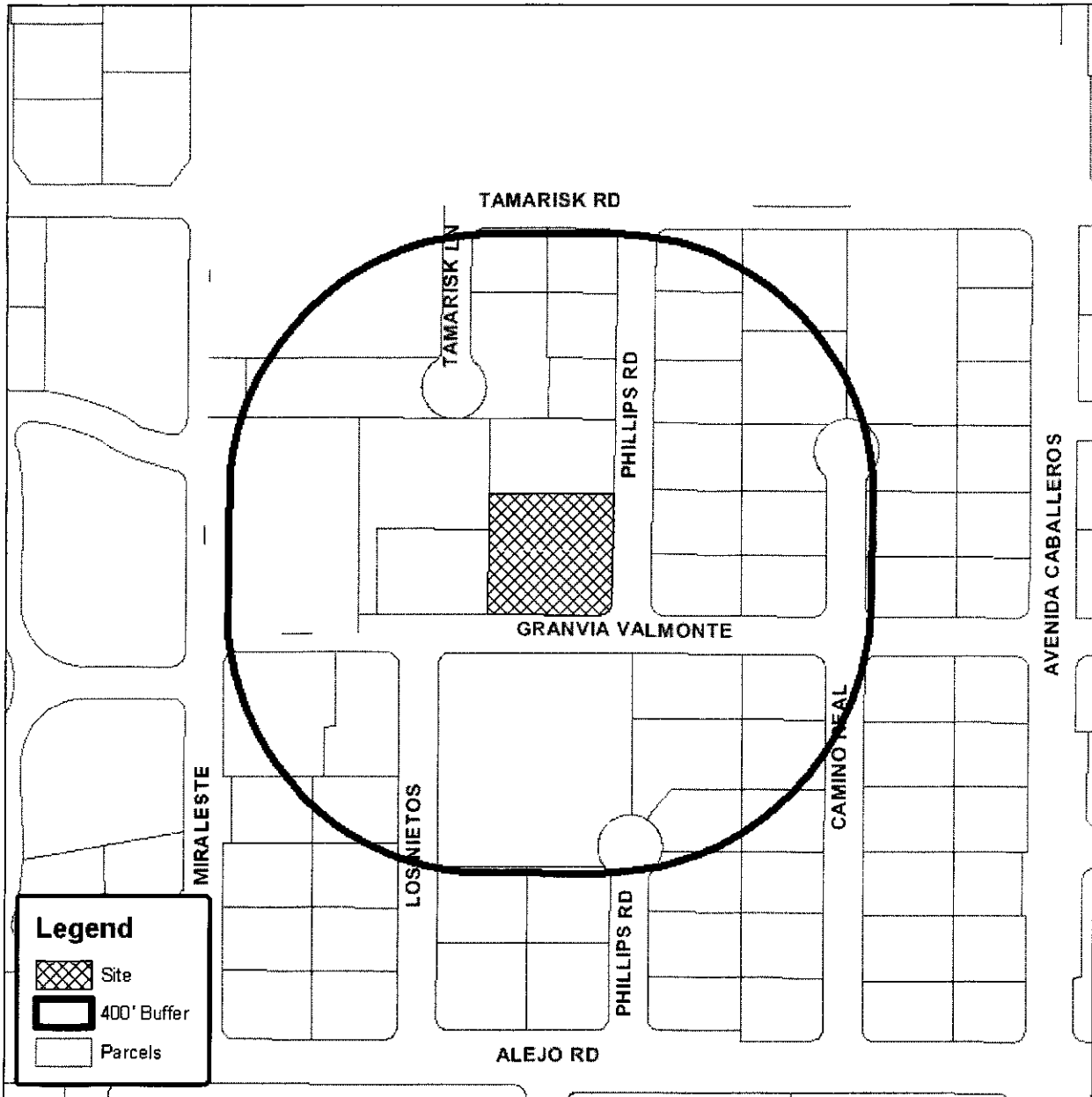
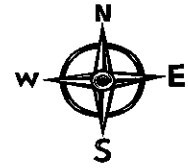
An opportunity will be given at said hearing for all interested persons to be heard. Questions regarding this case may be directed to Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services at (760) 323-8245.

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 86

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: To consider designating a residential property developed with a single family home and accessory structures as a Class 1 Historic Site at 611 North Phillips Road, APN 507-201-006.