



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: November 6, 2013 CONSENT AGENDA

SUBJECT: MILLS ACT HISTORIC SITE CONTRACT – THE TWIN PALMS
ESTATES MODEL A2 HOME (HSPB SITE #85)

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: Planning Services

SUMMARY

This action would engage the City of Palm Springs into a standard Mills Act Agreement with Lawrence E. Wood and Rodney L. Love, owners of 992 La Jolla Road (APN 511-053-012), a Class 1 historic site. The intent of this contract is to require maintenance and preservation of this Class 1 historic site in exchange for possible property tax relief as calculated by the County of Riverside.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve a Mills Act Historic Property Agreement between the City of Palm Springs and Lawrence E. Wood and Rodney L. Love, owners of The Twin Palms Estates Model A2 Home, a Class 1 historic site (HSPB #85).
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute the Agreement.
3. Direct the City Clerk to record the Agreement.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

On January 2, 2013, the City Council designated The Twin Palms Estates Model A2 home a Class 1 historic site.

On May 14, 2013, the Historic Site Preservation Board voted 6-0-1 (Williamson absent) to recommend that the City Council execute a Mills Act Contract between the City of Palm Springs and Lawrence E. Wood and Rodney L. Love, owners of The Twin Palms Estates Model A2.

Pursuant with California Government Code Section 50280 – 50290 upon the application of an owner of any qualified historic property, the legislative body of a city may contract with the owner or agent to restrict the use of the property to carry out the purposes and

ITEM NO. 211

goals of historic preservation of the property. Such a contract is commonly referred to as a "Mills Act Agreement" and it provides for possible alternative property tax rate calculations in exchange for specific and ongoing preservation and maintenance of the property, specifically its historically significant elements and characteristics.

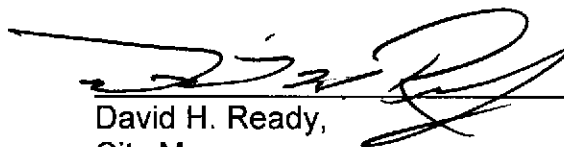
The subject property has been designated a Class 1 historic site. As such, the property qualifies for a Mills Act Contract.

FISCAL IMPACT: None

There is no known fiscal impact upon the city as a result of this recommended action.



Margo Wheeler, AICP,
Director of Planning Services



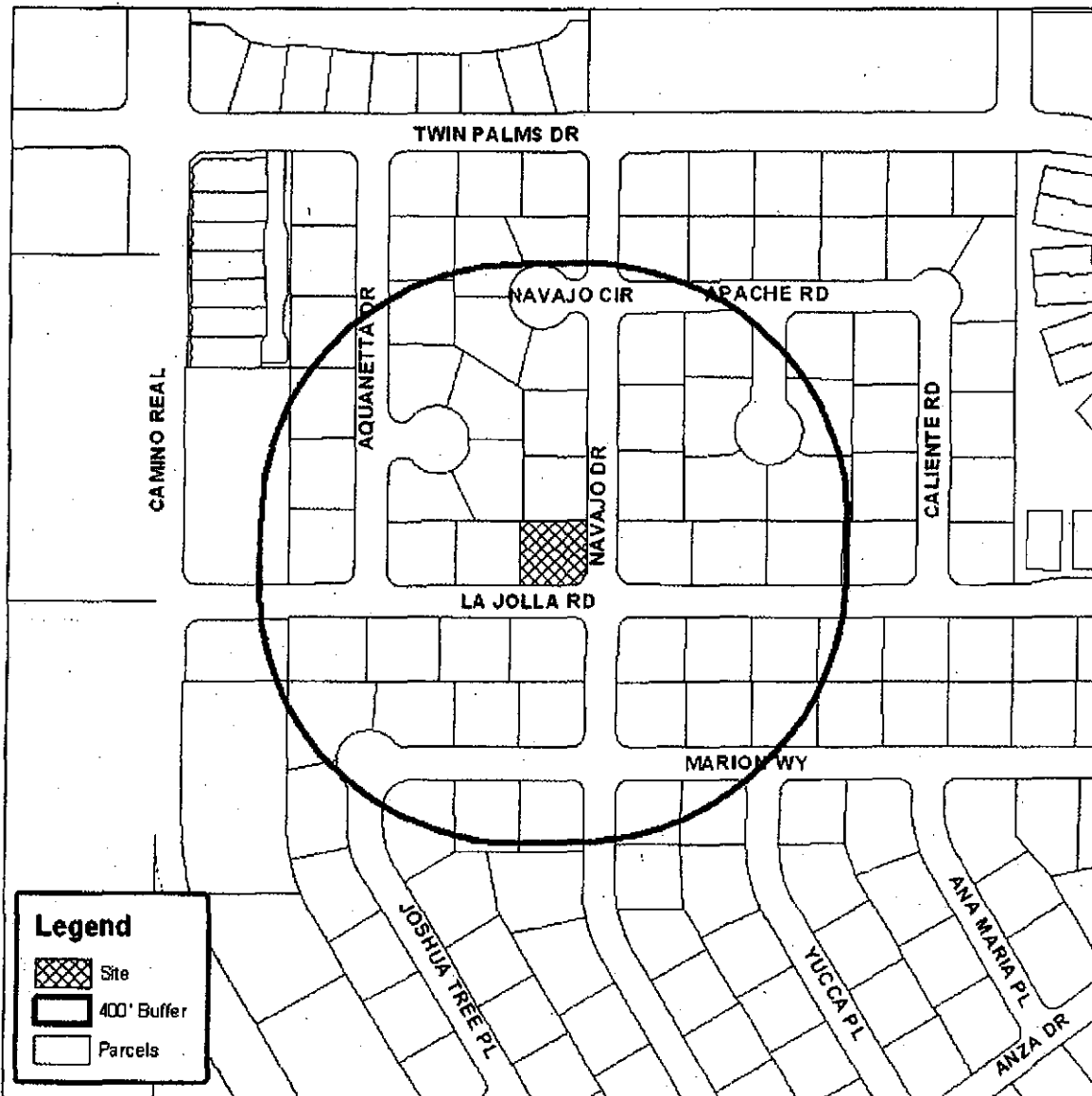
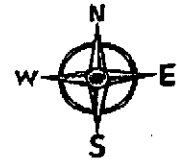
David H. Ready,
City Manager

Attachments:

- Vicinity Map
- City Council Resolution designating the subject property a Class 1 historic site.
- HSPB minutes of May 14, 2013.
- HSPB staff report dated May 14, 2013.
- Wood/Love to Ewing letter of application dated January 4, 2013 with attachments.



Department of Planning Services
Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB 85

DESCRIPTION: To consider a Mills Act located at 992 East La Jolla Road. (APN 511-053-012).

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

RESOLUTION NO. 23283

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 992 EAST LA JOLLA ROAD / TWIN PALMS ESTATE MODEL A2 RESIDENCE AS A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE (HSPB 85).

WHEREAS, in 1957-58, the Alexander Construction Company's first single family residential development was constructed, including the dwelling at the northwest corner of E. La Jolla Road and Navajo, and with a site address of 992 E. La Jolla Road; and

WHEREAS, the dwelling has been remodeled and restored, including landscaping designed by William Krisel, one of the original architects on the dwelling; and

WHEREAS, the defining characteristics of this building include:

- Post-and-beam construction;
- Expansive floor to ceiling windows with clerestories;
- The absence of moldings or trim around windows and doors;
- A breezeway that connects the carport to main house;
- Screens and walls with decorative cutouts;
- Idiosyncratic gable roofline; and
- Exterior finishes of board and batten wood siding and native stone

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

WHEREAS, the property owner, Lawrence E. Wood, 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 992 E. La Jolla Road (Twin Palms Estate Model A2 Residence), as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2012, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the property at 992 E. La Jolla Road (Twin Palms Estate Model A2 Residence) 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

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the property at 992 E. La Jolla Road (Twin Palms Estate Model A2 Residence), as a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on January 2, 2013, the City Council conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the property at 992 E. La Jolla Road (Twin Palms Estate Model A2 Residence) 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 Twin Palms Estates Model A-2

Residence is an excellent example of how the style served to create an open plan residential environment for both weekend visitors and fulltime residents. The building has been restored to its nearly original condition with no significant modifications or additions imposed on the structure since its construction. The property well-exemplifies Palm Springs' and Southern California's embrace of the

midcentury modern tract house style in the mid- part of the 20th century.

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

The residence embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type, period and method of construction and is an excellent example of how midcentury modern

architecture was expressed in multi-unit speculative housing subdivisions. The

basic plan and one of the multiple variations presented at the site serve as examples of simplified and standardized building features that fostered

resort-style living featuring post-and-beam construction with large expanses of

glass. Exterior spaces were fully developed to allow year-round use of the outdoor amenities including patios spas and pools. The subject property could easily serve as a model for the genre expressed in plan, form, proportion, structure, style, materials and architectural details.

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 property presents the work of a master architect and possesses high artistic value. This building is an excellent example of architects Palmer & Krisel's command of the midcentury idiom. Their use of the style in this project illustrates

the adaptability of the style to a multi-family setting. The way in which the

defining characteristics of this property are related by style, choice and availability of materials and technology utilized in its construction makes show the sure hand of a master in creating a structure that fully articulates the aesthetic ideal of a Midcentury modern vacation home more fully than many other properties of its type.

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 992 E. La Jolla 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.

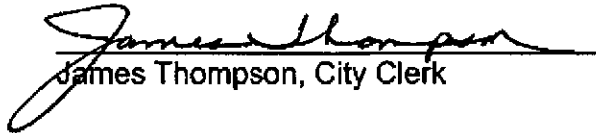
5. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
6. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be considered legal, non-conforming only as to Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.

ADOPTED THIS 2ND DAY OF JANUARY, 2013.



David H. Ready, City Manager

ATTEST:




James Thompson, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

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

I, JAMES THOMPSON, City Clerk of the City of Palm Springs, hereby certify that Resolution No. 23283 is a full, true and correct copy, and was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs on January 2, 2013, by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmember Foat, Councilmember Hutcheson, Councilmember Lewin,
Mayor Pro Tem Mills, and Mayor Pougnet.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.


James Thompson, City Clerk
City of Palm Springs, California 02/10/2013

STATEMENT OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

992 E. LA JOLLA ROAD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statement of Significance: The subject property meets architectural criteria 3, 4 and 5 to qualify as a Class 1 site because it exemplifies the Midcentury Modern architectural style and period of local history; embodies the distinctive characteristics of that type, period, and method of construction; represents the work of Master architects Palmer & Krisel, AIA, and possesses high artistic values.

Palm Springs is known internationally for its significant concentration of Midcentury modern residential and commercial construction. In fact, it is safe to say that no American city is more closely identified with this particular period of American architecture; the city truly exemplifies this period of national State and local history. As such, the building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 site under Criterion 3.

Additionally, the building embodies the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, and methods of mass residential development construction. The building's distinctive characteristics, physical features and traits include resort-style living featuring post-and-beam construction that featured large expanses of glass; exterior spaces were fully developed to stimulate the year-round use of outdoor amenities such as patios spas and swimming pools. Eligibility under these criteria requires that a property contain enough of these characteristics to be considered a true representative of its particular type, period, and method of construction. The subject property could easily serve as a model for the type with all of the characteristics, as expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, materials and architectural details. The building serves in general as a reference to ideas of design and construction, basic plan and form, as well as in the specific, for the precise ways it combines the particular materials found in this property and in variations throughout the neighboring development.

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 it is a perfectly restored example of its type and period of construction. The subject property becomes an important example within the context of the building practices of the 1950s. The house and the development represent an important phase of the development of Palm Springs and influenced the development of later subdivisions. For these reasons the building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 site under Criterion 4.

To understand how Palmer & Krisel merit the honor of being called "master architects" it is necessary to understand their background and careers. The following biographies of both Palmer and Krisel were drawn from the Los Angeles Times obituary for Dan Saxon Palmer dated January 29, 2007 by Claire Noland and the William Krisel archive at the Getty Museum.

Dan Saxon Palmer (1920 – 2007) was born in Budapest, Hungary. Two years later he moved with his parents to New York, where his father operated a Hungarian import business and his mother was a dress designer. After earning a bachelor's degree in architecture from New York University in 1942, Palmer served in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II as a mapmaker, draftsman and photographer in England and France. After the war, he apprenticed in the offices of architects Morris Lapidus in New York and Victor Gruen in Los Angeles.

William Krisel (1924– present) was born and raised in Shanghai, China to American parents until the family relocated to Beverly Hills in 1937. Krisel developed an early interest in architecture which he attributes to his father's correspondence with Rancho Santa Fe architect Lillian Rice, who designed a home for the family in California. He enrolled at the University of Southern California (USC) as an architecture student in 1941, but his studies were interrupted by the onset of World War II. He served for three years as a Chinese interpreter before returning to USC. As a student, Krisel apprenticed at the offices of Paul Laszlo and Victor Gruen. He graduated in 1949 and obtained his license in 1950, the same year he formalized his partnership with architect Dan Saxon Palmer whom he had met when they both worked in Gruen's office. Krisel would go on to earn his license as a landscape architect in 1954.

"The firm, Palmer & Krisel, AIA, Architects (including for a brief period a third partner, John Lindsay) focused its early attention on custom homes in Bel Air and Brentwood, where they experimented with the modular post-and-beam system that they would later employ in their tract houses. In 1952, Palmer and Krisel completed their first tract development, consisting of ten houses in the San Fernando Valley. The attention the firm gained from builders for this modest project led to a new collaboration with the family-owned Alexander Construction Company, which commenced with the Corbin Palms development in 1953.

"Over the next decade, Palmer and Krisel expanded their practice to meet the needs of the booming housing industry by offering a complete array of services to clients and builders. Their work came to be characterized by unique siting, minimal ornamentation, butterfly roofs, and large glass windows, all of which reflected ongoing popular interest in casual indoor-outdoor living. The standardized designs of these single-family tract homes made them both easy to construct and accessible to first-time homebuyers. The residential projects reveal Krisel's interest in experimenting with construction methods, building materials, and layout patterns, as well as his consideration of lifestyle changes after World War II. Krisel's work with Palmer represented the mass replication of the ideals and aesthetic of the program, moving beyond prototype to meet the large-scale needs of the postwar housing boom. Over the next decade, the pair would design approximately 20,000 units of housing in Southern California.

"Looking to broaden their market, the Alexanders turned to the Coachella Valley as a site of recreational development. In order to bring visitors to Palm Springs and the surrounding area, they commissioned a destination resort in 1954, which Palmer and

Krisel designed on a ten-acre site. The Ocotillo Lodge was completed in 1957 and featured a striking modern design juxtaposed against the warm desert landscape. Additional Alexander tracts in the vicinity of the resort made the ownership of second residences outside of Los Angeles, including condominiums and single family houses, popular among members of the middle class. These projects include Twin Palm Estates, Racquet Club Road Estates, and the Sandpiper Condominiums. The homes were notable for their textured landscaping, concrete block walls, extensive glass walls featuring desert views, and swimming pools, emphasizing an elegant, but relaxed lifestyle."¹

Palmer and Krisel ended their partnership in 1964, but it is the firm's work through that year that is relevant to this nomination. The firm's principals Dan Palmer and William Krisel qualify as master architects because they are figures of generally recognized greatness in their profession as exemplified by the subject property. It expresses the distinctly Mid-century modernist phase in the development of their careers, a theme for which they continue to be known. As an example and prototype, the subject property possesses high artistic values as expressed in both architectural and community design and planning. It is eligible for its high artistic values because it fully articulates the aesthetic ideal of a Midcentury modern vacation home more fully than many other properties of its type. For these reasons the building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 site under Criterion 5.

- 992 LA JOLLA
- 217 TWIN PALMS
- ABERNATHY

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

Large Conference Room, City Hall

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, California 92262

Staff Representatives:

Margo Wheeler,
Director of Planning Services

Ken Lyon,
Associate Planner

CALL TO ORDER: Chair DeLeeuw called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Burkett, Glenn, Johns, Ploss, Vice Chair Grattan, Chair DeLeeuw
Absent: Williamson

POSTING OF AGENDA: The Agenda was available for public access at the City Hall exterior bulletin board (west side of Council Chamber), City Clerk's office and Planning Services' counter on or before 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 8, 2013.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ron Marshall, representing the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, turned in papers from the Racquet Club Villas expressing interest in becoming an historical district.

1. CONSENT AGENDA:

1A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: Change Recommendation from "by" to "to" City Council.

Motion to Approve by Grattan; second by Ploss; Vote 6-0 (absent Williamson).

1B. Case HSPB 85 – An application by Lawrence E. Wood and Rodney L. Love, owners of 992 La Jolla Road, "The Twin Palms Estates Model A2 Residence", for a Mills Act Contract.

Recommendation: Recommend Approval to City Council.

Motion to Approve by Grattan; second by Ploss; Vote 6-0 (absent Williamson).

1C. Case HD #2 – HSPB 73 – An application by Craig Hammond, owner of 217 East Twin Palms Drive, "Royal Hawaiian Estates", for a Mills Act Contract.

Recommendation: Recommend Approval to City Council.



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: May 14, 2013
Case No.: HSPB #85 Mills Act
Application Type: Mills Act Agreement
Location: 992 East La Jolla Road "Twin Palms Estates Model A2 Residence"
Applicant: Lawrence E. Wood and Rodney L. Love
From: Glenn Mlaker, AICP, Assistant Planner

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An application by Lawrence E. Wood and Rodney L. Love, 992 East La Jolla Road, "Twin Palms Estates Model A2 Residence" to enter into a Mills Act Agreement with the City of Palm Springs.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend that the City Council execute a Mills Act Agreement between the City and Lawrence E. Wood and Rodney L. Love, 992 East La Jolla Road, "Twin Palms Estates Model A2 Residence".

PRIOR ACTIONS TAKEN ON THE PROJECT

On January 2, 2013 The City Council designated the property at 992 East La Jolla Road a Class 1 Historic Site.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Pursuant with California Government Code Section 50280 – 50290 upon the application of an owner of any qualified historic property, the legislative body of a city may contract with the owner or agent to restrict the use of the property to carry out the purposes and

goals of historic preservation of the property. Such a contract is commonly referred to as a "Mills Act Agreement" and it provides for possible alternative property tax rate calculations in exchange for specific and ongoing preservation and maintenance of the property, specifically its historically significant elements and characteristics.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The Mills Act is state sponsored legislation granting local governments the authority to directly participate in a historic preservation program. It is designed to provide private property owners with an economic incentive, via property tax relief, to actively participate in the restoration of their historic properties.

Property owners may qualify for property tax relief if they pledge to restore and maintain the historical and architectural character of their properties for at least a ten-year period. A formal agreement known as a Mills Act contract is executed between the local government and the property owner for a minimum ten-year term. Contracts are automatically renewed each year and are transferred to new owners when the property is sold. Property owners agree to preserve and maintain the property in accordance with specific historic preservation standards and conditions as identified in the contract. Local authorities may impose penalties for breach of contract or failure to protect the historic property. The contract is binding to all owners during the contract period.

The Mills Act contract has the effect of freezing the base value of the property. There is little effect over the first few years but as the property is restored over a longer period of time, the value increases and the property tax savings may increase over time. The property owners have consulted with their tax advisors and determined that entering into a Mills Act contract with the City would be mutually beneficial for both parties. The owners also understand that entering into the Mills Act contract only represents the potential for property tax savings and is not a guarantee.

The owners of the subject property have invested a significant amount of money to restore and preserve the property in nearly original state and will continue to do so. The potential property tax savings provided by the Mills Act contract will assist the owners in defraying the costs associated with maintaining the property.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

Mills Act Agreements may only be executed on qualified historic properties.

Pursuant California Government Code 50280.1 "*Qualified historical property*" for purposes of this article, means privately owned property which is not exempt from property taxation and which meets either of the following:

- (a) *Listed in the National Register of Historic Places or located in a registered historic district, as defined in Section 1.191.2(b).*

(b) Listed in any state, city, county, or city and county official register of historical or architecturally significant sites, places, or landmarks.

The property at 992 East La Jolla Road meets this criteria in that it is was designated a Class 1 historic site by the City Council of the City of Palm Springs.

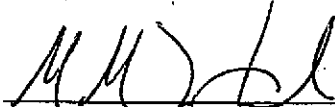
Following review and recommendation by the Board, the contract will be forwarded to the City Council for action.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This project is exempt from environmental review per Section 15331 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.



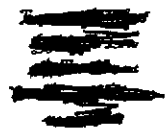
Glenn Mlaker, AICP, Assistant Planner



M. Margo Wheeler, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. Mills Act Agreement



RECEIVED

FEB 12 2013

**PLANNING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

January 4, 2013

Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262
760-323-8269

SUBJ: Mills Act Contract – HSPB 85, 992 E. La Jolla Road

Dear Mr. Ewing:

Per the recent approval of our property, HSPB 85, as a class 1 historic site, we formally request a Mills Act contract with the city of Palm Springs.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Wood

Rodney L. Love (Jan 4, 2013)

Rodney L. Love

511-053-012

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