



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 3, 2014 PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: AN APPLICATION BY THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD (HSPB), IN COLLABORATION WITH JOHN MANLY, (OWNER), REQUESTING CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR "THE CHARLIE FARRELL RESIDENCE" LOCATED AT 630 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE (HSPB-80) AND THE ASSOCIATED "GUEST HOUSE" AT 1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE (HSPB-81), ZONE R-1-B.

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

On May 8, 2012, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.05.135, the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) initiated investigation and study of "The Charlie Farrell Residence" at 630 East Tachevah Drive (HSPB Case #80) and a second parcel at 1120 North Via Miraleste (HSPB Case #81) for possible historic designation. Both parcels are currently owned by the same person who provided a letter of support for the proposed designation (attached).

The Board's study revealed that originally the two structures were located on the same lot – built as a "main house" and a separate "guest house", but in 1947 the lot was split leaving the rather insignificant guest house on its own lot.

The Board recommends Class 1 designation only for the Charlie Farrell House because it determined that the guest house - by itself on a separate parcel – does not meet the qualifications required to be deemed historically significant. The Board's recommendation included conditions however, by which both parcels if merged together again, could qualify as one Class 1 historic site.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Open the public hearing and receive public testimony.
2. Adopt Resolution ____, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA DESIGNATING THE PARCEL AT 630

EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE AS CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE "HSPB 80", SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS."

3. Take no action on HSPB 81, "The Guest House" at 1120 North Via Miraleste.

Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc...	
May 8, 2012	HSPB initiated study for possible Class 1 designation pursuant to PSMC 8.05.135.
June 24 & 26, 2014	Site inspection by members of the HSPB and City Staff.
July 8, 2014	The Historic Site Preservation Board recommended that the City Council designate 630 East Tachevah Drive as Class 1 historic site HSPB #80 with conditions.

Neighborhood Meeting	
None	

Other	
2011	Purchase by current owner of both parcels.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Historic Preservation activities in Palm Springs are regulated under Municipal Code Section 8.05 ("*Historic Preservation*"). The purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance is:

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

Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of a historic site as follows. The staff report evaluated both sites, HSPB-80: (located at 630 East Tachevah Drive hereinafter referred to as "the main house"), and HSPB-81: (located at 1120 North Via Miraleste, hereinafter referred to as "the guest house") against this definition and provided discussion on each item as it relates to this specific sites below.

(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:

HSPB-80 "The Main House": The Charlie Farrell Residence is significant because of its design, setting, and aesthetic effect, as characterized further in this staff report.

HSPB-81 "The Guest House": although part of the same parcel for about twelve years (1935 to 1947), the parcel on which guest house is located was split from the main house in 1947 and when analyzed independently, it is less significant in its design, setting and aesthetic effect,

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

The HSPB does not believe the sites are associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the national state or local community.

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

HSPB-80: The site at 630 East Tachevah Drive is associated with Actor Charlie Farrell, who co-founded the Palm Springs Racquet Club in 1934 with fellow actor Ralph Bellamy. Farrell made a meaningful contribution to national history as a noted actor and to local history with the creation and management of the Racquet Club, which contributed significantly to the celebrity status of Palm Springs and as mayor from 1948 to 1953.

HSPB-81: The guest house is associated with Gayle Thomson, a local photographer who, through his friendship with Farrell, captured many images of the stars and celebrities at the Racquet Club. The HSPB does not believe Thomson rises to the level of status of a person of significance at a national, state or local level.

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

HSPB-80: The Charlie Farrell Residence was constructed in 1934 in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. It reflects the period in Palm Springs when many actors and celebrities built sprawling and exclusive estate-like homes in Palm Springs, reflective of the early "haciendas" from the period of Spanish colonization of the Americas.

HSPB-81: The Guest House was constructed in a similar style and period as the main house, however as a stand-alone structure on its own parcel, it does not reflect the grand scale and estate-like setting of the main house. The HSPB does not believe it exemplifies the period in which it was constructed.

4. *That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;*

HSPB-80: The Charlie Farrell Residence embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style in its sprawling floor plan, materials, and architectural detailing.

HSPB-81: The guest house was evaluated as a separate structure on its own parcel. While constructed of a similar architectural style and period as the main house it is more modest in its scale and does not sufficiently embody the distinctive feel of a large estate-style residence which is characteristic of the main house.

- 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;*

HSPB-80: The original architect of the Charlie Farrell Residence is currently unknown, however notable architect Albert Frey is credited as the architect of record for an addition to the back side (north) of the home. The portions of the home alleged to be designed by Albert Frey have been significantly altered and although these elements now replicate the Spanish Colonial Revival style of the original architecture of the home, it is not a noteworthy example of Frey's work.

HSPB-81: The architect of the guest house is unknown.

- 6. That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;*

The HSPB does not believe the subject property meets this condition.

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

The HSPB is unaware of any archaeological or pre-historical relevancy to this site.

Designation of Historic Sites.

Only the City Council is authorized to designate historic sites. When the Historic Site Preservation Board determines that Class 1 historic designation of a certain site or district would further the purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Board may initiate studies, surveys and investigations it deems necessary to adequately gather information in consideration of such a recommendation to the City Council.

Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

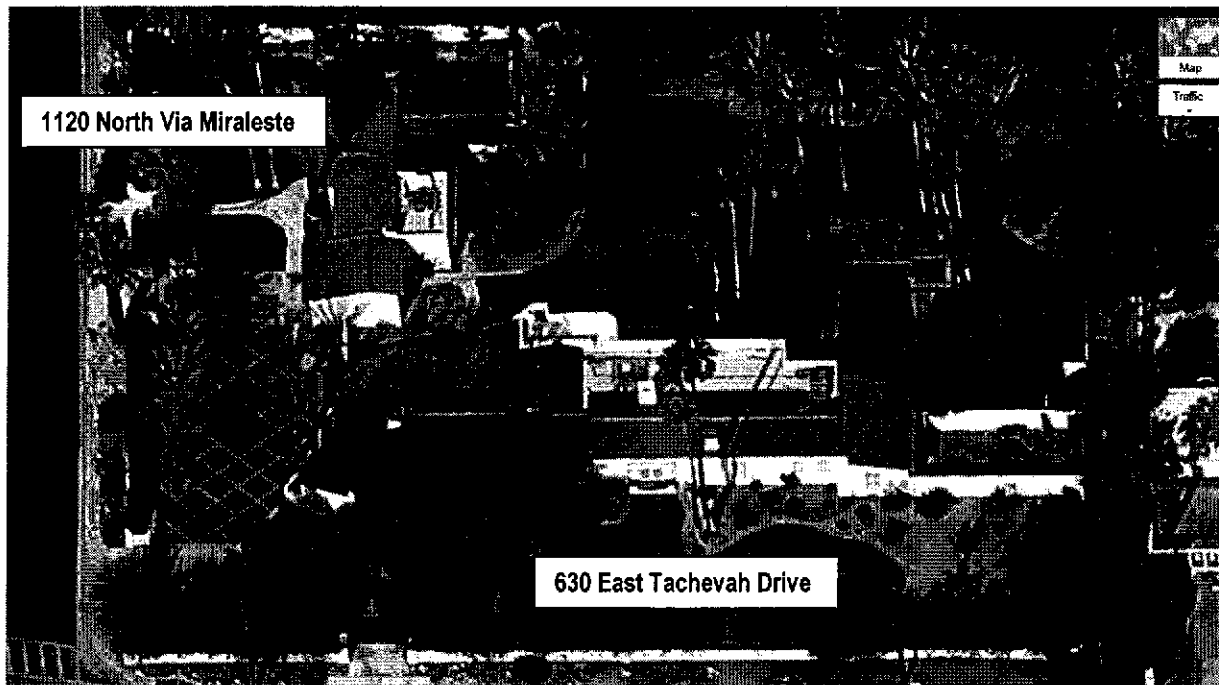
According to Section 8.05 of the Municipal Code, the following shall apply to a Class 1 Historic Site:

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 marker explaining the historic nature of the site will be installed at the site in a location viewable from the public way.
7. Compliance with all rules and regulations for Historic Sites and Historic Districts under Article IV of Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code shall be required.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The home at 630 East Tachevah was constructed around 1934 in the Spanish / Colonial Revival style reflective of the large sprawling Spanish "haciendas" (estates) or "quintas" (country homes) from the period of Spanish colonization in the southwestern region of the United States and much of Mexico.



AERIAL PHOTO OF 630 EAST TACHEVAH AND 1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE

It appears that the home was built by local builder/developer Ernst Off for a Beverly Hills investment broker named Alexander Henry. The roughly acre-sized parcel was part of a very large landholding on the north side of Palm Springs that local developer Prescott Thresher "P.T." Stevens had purchased from the Southern Pacific Railroad. Stevens was a cattleman from Colorado who was born in 1846. P.T. Stevens and his wife Francis Stevens (after whom Francis Stevens School is dedicated), moved to Palm Springs shortly after 1912 due to Mrs. Stevens' respiratory problems. After his death in 1932, P.T.'s daughter Sally and husband Culver Nichols subdivided much of the land and sold the roughly acre-sized parcel which is the subject of this report to Off in 1933.

The home changed hands several times through the thirties and forties. In 1947, a guest house that had been built on the northwest portion of the acre-sized parcel at approximately the same time as the main house, was split off and sold as a separate parcel with its own tax number and address of 1120 North Via Miraleste.

Charlie Farrell and his wife Virginia purchased the main house at 630 Tachevah in 1952 and lived there until their deaths. It appears that the Farrell's first permanent recorded residence in Palm Springs was a home that Charlie had built for the couple at the Palm Springs Racquet Club in 1938. The Farrell's lived at the Racquet Club until 1951, when records show they moved briefly into the Grace Lewis Miller House at 2311 North Indian Canyon Drive. Charlie Farrell is a person of local and national significance, having built a relatively successful career as an actor, starting in the silent movie era of the 1920's. Farrell is also a very significant person in Palm Springs because of the Palm Springs Racquet Club, which he and fellow actor Ralph Bellamy began in 1932. For decades, the Palm Springs Racquet Club was "the" desert playground for Hollywood actors and celebrities; and was almost singularly responsible for Palm Springs' world renowned reputation as a star-studded exclusive getaway for the rich and famous. In addition Farrell served as mayor from 1948 until 1953. Farrell and his wife Virginia lived in the house on Tachevah from 1952 until their deaths in 1990 and 1968, respectively.

After being split off from the main house in 1947, the guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste went through a number of owners also. From 1954 until 1960 the guest house was owned by Mr. Gayle Thomson and his wife Violet. Thomson was a photographer who, through his friendship with Farrell, became somewhat well-known for his photographs taken of the celebrities who were lounging and enjoying time at the Racquet Club.

Although the two houses remain on separately defined parcels since 1947, they have been purchased and sold to the same owners since about 1980 when Bank of America took ownership of both homes as Trustee for Farrell. The parcels however remain separate, each with its own APN, separate lot and address.

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

The Charlie Farrell House is constructed in a relatively modest "vernacular" version of Spanish Colonial Revival. It has been extensively renovated by the current owner with a number of new elements added that are "sympathetic" of the style, but not necessarily authentic. What is noteworthy is that the overall scale and detailing of the house is rather modest. Although interior features of privately-owned sites are not considered as part of evaluation of possible historic designation; staff notes that most of the rooms in the home are of a very modest, almost "cozy" in dimension and scale and were not created on a grand or "opulent" scale. It appears it was created as a casual, comfortable home to be enjoyed by its residents and their friends and guests in small numbers. It is not a house that, "in its day" would lend itself to large-event parties or entertaining.

The physical character-defining historic features at 630 East Tachevah Drive include the following:

1. Half-round terra cotta clay tile roof.
2. Thin, wrought iron window grills.
3. The wrought iron-enclosed "window seat" and its associated roof.
4. The "CDF" steel emblem welded into the ironwork over the main entry archway.
5. The smooth stucco exterior walls.
6. The heavy timber rafter tails and projecting eaves.
7. The clay tile chimney caps.
8. The stucco extended sill at the windows.
9. The open archway at the entry separating a guest wing (formerly the garage) from the main house.
10. The original painted steel sash casement windows.
11. The courtyard/rose garden on the east side of the home.

Elements that appear to have been added or modified and are deemed "non-contributing" include the following:

1. The pavers in the driveway.
2. The new garage.
3. The heavy iron gates at the main pedestrian entry (original photos show this as a wood gate).
4. The replacement windows and doors with insulating dual-pane glass.
5. Light fixtures in the entry archway cannot be confirmed as original
6. The courtyard fountain.
7. The wood timbered back porch (north elevation).
8. The swimming pool.
9. The half-height partitions enclosing the outdoor kitchen and grill.
10. The extensive grassy lawn.
11. Infill of several windows (west façade).
12. The decorative antique wood brackets on the rose garden perimeter walls.
13. The pairs of wood doors with multi-paned windows across the north side of the home.

The "Guest House" at 1120 North Via Miraleste, although records denote it was constructed at roughly the same time as the main house, has also had numerous modifications over the years. The HSPB's evaluation of the guest house physical characteristics that may be deemed "original" is as follows:

1. The half-round terra cotta clay roof tiles.
2. The glazed decorative tile around the main front door.
3. The stucco molding around the windows.
4. The wrought iron window grills.
5. The clay tile chimney caps.

Elements that do not appear original or are “non-contributing”.

1. The vinyl thermalpane windows and other “replacement” windows and doors.
2. The aluminum sliding window on the north façade.
3. The garage.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

In considering a recommendation for Class 1 historic designation, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.05.160, the Board and the City Council shall find that the purposes of the Historic Preservation chapter are furthered by designation of such property as a historic site or district. The purpose of the Historic Preservation chapter of the Municipal Code is outlined in PSMC 8.05.010:

This chapter is adopted pursuant to the authority of (California) Government Code Section 37361 for the purpose of preserving areas and specific buildings of the city which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political, architectural and archaeological history. This chapter is intended to stabilize and improve buildings, structures or areas which are considered to be of historical, architectural, archaeological or ecological value, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of specific buildings for the education and welfare of the citizens. (Ord. 140 §

The conclusion of this report from the research and information found, is that the main house at 630 East Tachevah is historically significant, pursuant to the Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 8.05 in the following ways:

1. The home is representative of a particular period in history: the early era of resort development in Palm Springs (1900 through 1940), when large estate-sized homes built by actors, merchants and celebrities brought a wealthy and sophisticated population to the small village, and who in turn influenced its commercial, retail, and architectural development, as well as its cultural and social underpinnings in an exclusive and affluent way.

The site appears to possess sufficient historic significance that if designated as a Class 1 historic site, would contribute to the purpose and intent of the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, that is,

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

Of lesser significance is the association of the guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste with photographer Gayle Thomson. Who, through his association and friendship with Farrell developed an extensive portfolio of photographs of the stars and celebrities enjoying time at the Racquet Club.

Although both structures were at one time a single estate, the land on which the guest house is sited was separated from the main house in 1947. As a "stand-alone" structure, although it is similar in its architectural style, it does not rise to the same level of historic significance as that of the main house at 630 East Tachevah.

Class 1 designation of the Charlie Farrell Residence at 630 East Tachevah Drive would further the purpose of the historic preservation ordinance because it reflects elements of the City's architectural, social, and cultural history as follows:

1. *That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history*

It is associated with a person of significance at the local, state, and national level: Charlie Farrell. Farrell was a relatively successful actor whose career began during the silent movie era. Farrell and his actor friend Ralph Bellamy, both avid tennis players, created the Palm Springs Racquet Club in 1933 which became "the" Hollywood and celebrity hangout for decades. The Racquet Club contributed significantly to Palm Springs' worldwide reputation as a playground for actors, celebrities and the wealthy. Farrell also served two terms as mayor of Palm Springs from 1948 to 1953.

2. *That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or*

It is a classic example of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture, reflective of the large haciendas (estates) or "quintas" (country homes) of the Spanish Colonial era built in the southwestern part of the United States and parts of Mexico.

3. *That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value;*

Also of lesser significance is the association of this site with notable architect Albert Frey, who designed a number of minor additions to the home. These additions appear to have been substantially modified and are not noteworthy relative to the development of Frey's design aesthetic or his emergence as an architect of national and international significance.

4. *That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*

The Charlie Farrell Residence was constructed around 1934 in the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style. It reflects the period in Palm Springs when many actors and celebrities built large exclusive estate-like homes in Palm Springs.

CONCLUSION

The "main house" at 630 East Tachevah Drive (HSPB-80) is historically significant in a number of ways and its designation as a Class 1 historic site would further the purpose of the Historic Preservation ordinance.

The "guest house" at 1120 North Via Miraleste (HSPB-81), although of a similar architectural style and construction date, was split off from the main house in 1947 and exists today as a completely separate parcel. As a stand-alone site, it does not reflect the same estate-like sprawling "hacienda-like" setting and qualities as the main house. Furthermore, although owned and occupied for around eight years by photographer Gayle Thomson, staff does not believe Thomson rises to the level of a person of local, state or national significance.

The HSPB does not believe the guest house when analyzed by itself and on its own merit, would further the purposes of the Historic Preservation ordinance. If merged with the same parcel as the main house, it could be reasonably argued that the guest house would then contribute as an accessory structure to the physical setting and significance as a notable example of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style and the grand hacienda-like quality of the main house site. As such, the HSPB's recommendation includes a condition of approval that if the parcel on which the guest house is sited were merged again with the main house, it would contribute to the historic significance of the entire site. Under those circumstances, it would be logical to grant Class 1 status to both structures on one contiguous site.


As a separate stand-alone parcel, the HSPB recommends that no action be taken on recommending Class 1 historic status for the guest house, (1120 North Via Miraleste, HSPB-81).

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

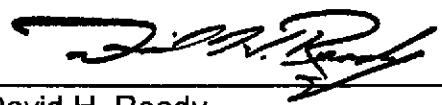
In accordance with Section 15331 (Historical Resources Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed designation is categorically exempt from environmental review as the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource (Class 31 Categorical Exemption).

NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation. Letters of public comment are attached to this staff report.



Douglas R. Evans,
Interim Director of Planning Services



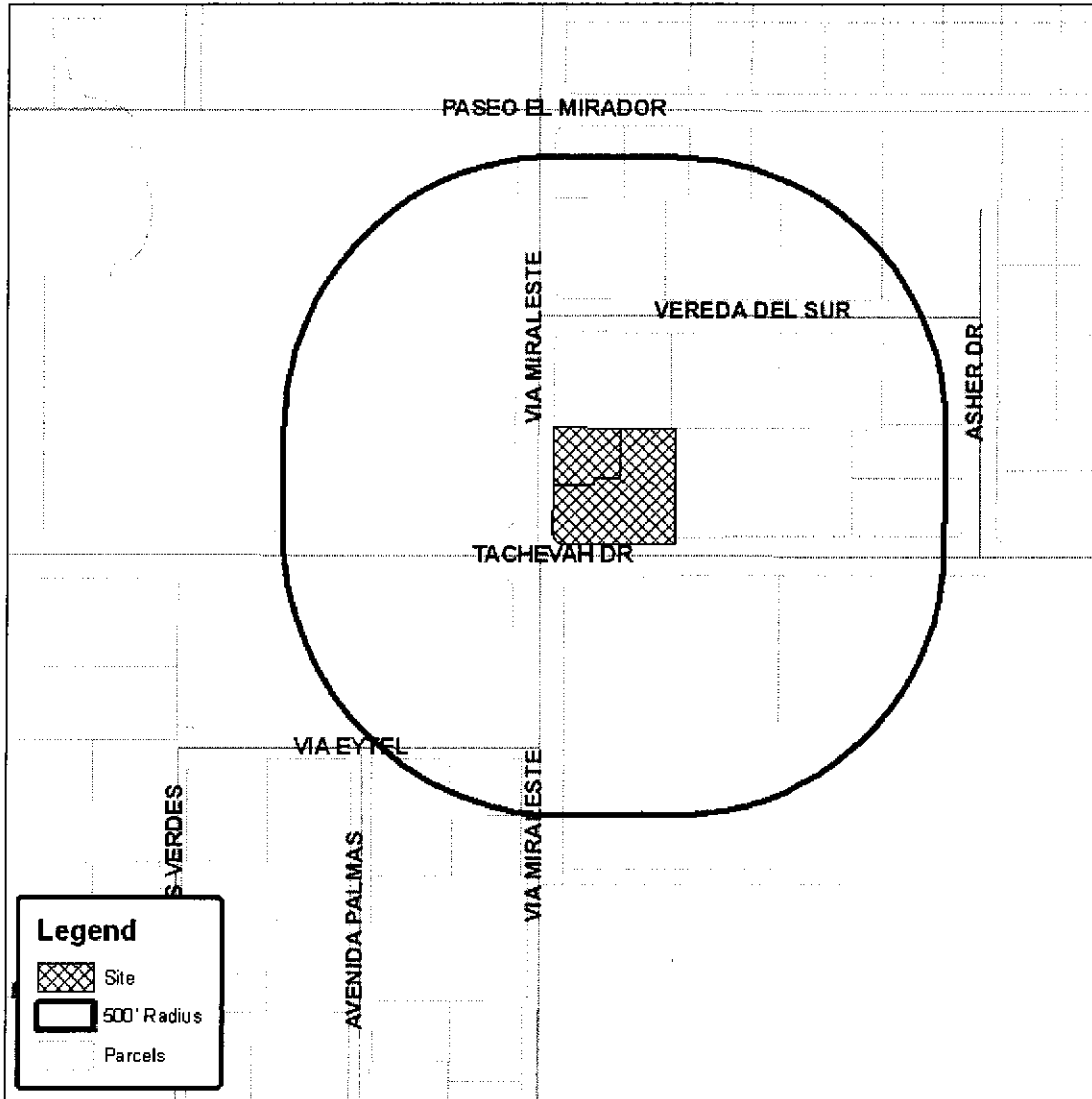
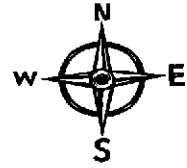
David H. Ready
City Manager

Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Historic Resources Survey with attachments
4. Property Information Reports.
5. Letter of support from the owner.
6. Excerpt of HSPB minutes of July 8, 2014 and May 8, 2012.
7. Public Comment letters.



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO's:
HSPB 80 and HSPB 81

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: Application by the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board for Class 1 historic designation of 630 East Tachevah Drive, (APN 507-092-008) known as "The Charlie Farrell House" and 1120 North Via Miraleste, known as "The Guest House", (APN 507-092-009).

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 630 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE, ("THE CHARLIE FARRELL HOUSE") AS CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE, (HSPB #80)

WHEREAS, on May 8, 2012, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.05.135, the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) initiated investigation and study of "The Charlie Farrell Residence" at 630 East Tachevah Drive (HSPB Case #80) (APN #507-092-008) and the associated guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste (HSPB Case #81) (APN# 507-092-009) for possible historic designation; and

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

WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board to consider a recommendation for Class 1 historic designation of The Charlie Farrell House (HSPB #80) and "The Guest House (HSPB #81) was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on July 8, 2014, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing on the subject applications in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, 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, and all written and oral testimony presented and voted 6-1 (Ploss opposed) to recommend that

- (a) the City Council designate "The Charlie Farrell House" at 630 East Tachevah Drive as Class 1 historic site "HSPB #80"; and
- (b) the City Council take no action on "The Guest House" at 1120 North Via Miraleste "HSPB #81", and
- (c) only as a condition of approval, the Board would recommend that if the applicant merges the two parcels on which the Charlie Farrell House (HSPB #80) is located with the parcel on which "The Guest House" (HSPB #81) is located, that the Guest House be included in the Class 1 designation.

WHEREAS, a notice of public hearing of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California to consider a recommendation for Class 1 historic designation of "The Charlie Farrell House" (HSPB #80) and "The Guest House" (HSPB 81) was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on September 3, 2014, the City Council conducted a public hearing on the subject application in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, 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, and all written and oral testimony.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1:

The subject sites are located in the Movie Colony Neighborhood at 630 East Tachevah Drive (HSPB #80, "The Charlie Farrell House" APN 507-092-008) on a roughly 36,055 square foot lot and at 1120 North Via Miraleste (HSPB #81, "The Guest House" APN 507-092-009) on a roughly 12,497 square foot lot.

SECTION 2:

The Charlie Farrell House at 630 East Tachevah Drive is historically significant because

- (a) It is associated with Charlie Farrell, a person of local, state and national significance. Farrell lived in the home from 1952 until his death in 1990. Farrell was a person of significance because of (1) his long career as a television and movie star beginning in the 1920's in the silent movie era, (2) his association as co-founder and long time manager of the Palm Springs Racquet Club, an entity that contributed to Palm Springs' reputation as a playground for celebrities and movie stars, (3) and his tenure as Mayor of Palm Springs from 1948 until 1952.
- (b) It presents an excellent example of the architecture of a large Spanish Colonial Revival Estate. On this particular parcel can be found the following defining architectural features and characteristics:
 - 1. A rambling floor plan with various parts of the house connected by open archways and courtyards,
 - 2. Half-round terra cotta clay roof tiles.
 - 3. Thin, wrought iron window grills.
 - 4. The wrought iron-enclosed "window seat" on the south façade and its associated roof.
 - 5. The "CDF" steel emblem welded into the ironwork over the main entry archway.
 - 6. The smooth stucco exterior walls.
 - 7. The heavy timber rafter tails and projecting eaves.
 - 8. The clay tile chimney caps.
 - 9. The stucco extended sill at the windows.
 - 10. The open archway at the entry separating a guest wing (formerly the garage) from the main house.
 - 11. The original painted steel sash casement windows.
 - 12. The courtyard/rose garden on the east side of the home.
- (c) It presents a particular style or type of development that was prevalent in Palm Springs when it emerged in the 1930's and 40's as an exclusive 'get-away'

destination for wealthy industrialists and celebrities from the Hollywood Movie industry.

- (d) It has a minor association with notable architect Albert Frey, who designed modest additions to the home in the 1940's.

SECTION 3:

Class 1 designation of the Charlie Farrell House at 630 East Tachevah Drive would further the purpose of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Municipal Code Section 8.05), which is:

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

SECTION 4:

Those elements of the site that appear to have been added or modified and are hereby deemed "non-contributing" include the following:

1. The pavers in the driveway.
2. The new garage.
3. The heavy iron gates at the main pedestrian entry (original photos show this as a wood gate).
4. The replacement windows and doors with insulating thermalpane glass.
5. Light fixtures in the entry archway cannot be confirmed as original.
6. The courtyard fountain.
7. The wood timbered back porch (north elevation).
8. The swimming pool.
9. The half-height partitions enclosing the outdoor kitchen and grill.
10. The extensive grassy lawn.
11. Infill of several windows (west façade).
12. The decorative antique wood brackets on the rose garden perimeter walls.
13. The pairs of wood doors with multi-paned windows across the north side of the home.

SECTION 5:

The "guest house" at 1120 North Via Miraleste (HSPB-81), although of a similar architectural style and construction date as the main house, was split off from the main house in 1947 and exists today as a completely separate parcel. As a stand-alone site, it does not reflect the same estate-like sprawling "hacienda-like" setting and qualities as the main house nor is it a significant example of a style of architecture or a period of construction. Only when evaluated as an integral part of the larger estate does it contribute to the conveyance of historical significance. Furthermore, although owned

and occupied for around eight years by photographer Gayle Thomson, Thomson does not rise to the level of a person of local, state or national significance.

The guest house, when considered by itself and on its own merit, would not further the purposes of the Historic Preservation ordinance. If merged with the same parcel as the main house, the guest house would then contribute as an accessory structure to the physical setting and significance as a notable example of the Spanish Colonial Revival architectural style and the grand hacienda-like quality of the site. As such, the Council hereby includes a condition of approval that if the parcel on which the guest house is sited were merged again with the main house, it would contribute to the historic significance of the entire site and the granting of Class 1 status would be conveyed to both structures on one contiguous site.

SECTION 6:

The "Guest House" at 1120 North Via Miraleste, although records denote was constructed at roughly the same time as the main house, has had numerous modifications over the years. Thus, if the parcels are merged, the guest house physical characteristics that may be deemed "contributing" are as follows:

1. The half-round terra cotta clay roof tiles.
2. The glazed decorative tile around the main front door.
3. The stucco molding around the windows.
4. The wrought iron window grills.
5. The clay tile chimney caps.

Elements that are "non-contributing":

1. The vinyl "dual-pane" windows and other replacement windows and doors.
2. The aluminum sliding window on the north façade.
3. The garage.

SECTION 7:

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 (Class 31 Categorical Exemption).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the City Council does hereby designate the entire site located at 630 East Tachevah Drive, "The Charlie Farrell House", as Class 1 Historic Site HSPB #80, 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,

- damaged or otherwise removed from the property.
2. All future modifications of the existing structures as well as any alterations, additions or new structures proposed on the site shall require HSPB review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.
 3. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.
 4. The City Clerk shall submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
 5. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be considered legal, non-conforming only as to Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.
 6. This Class 1 designation applies to 630 East Tachevah Drive. The Class 1 designation does not apply to 1120 North Via Miraleste unless the two parcels are merged within 60 days of this action and prior to the recordation of this action with the County Recorder. Written proof of the completion of such merger shall accompany, and be made a part of the documentation submitted to the City Clerk for recordation with the County Recorder's Office.

ADOPTED this 3rd day of September, 2014

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

James Thompson, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

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

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

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

James Thompson, City Clerk
City of Palm Springs, California



City of Palm Springs

Department of Planning Services

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way • Palm Springs, CA 92262
Tel: 760-323-8245 • Fax: 760-322-8360

HISTORIC RESOURCE REPORT

FOR THE RESIDENCES LOCATED AT 630 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE
"THE CHARLIE FARRELL HOUSE" (HSPB-80)
AND
1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE
"THE GUEST HOUSE" (HSPB-81)

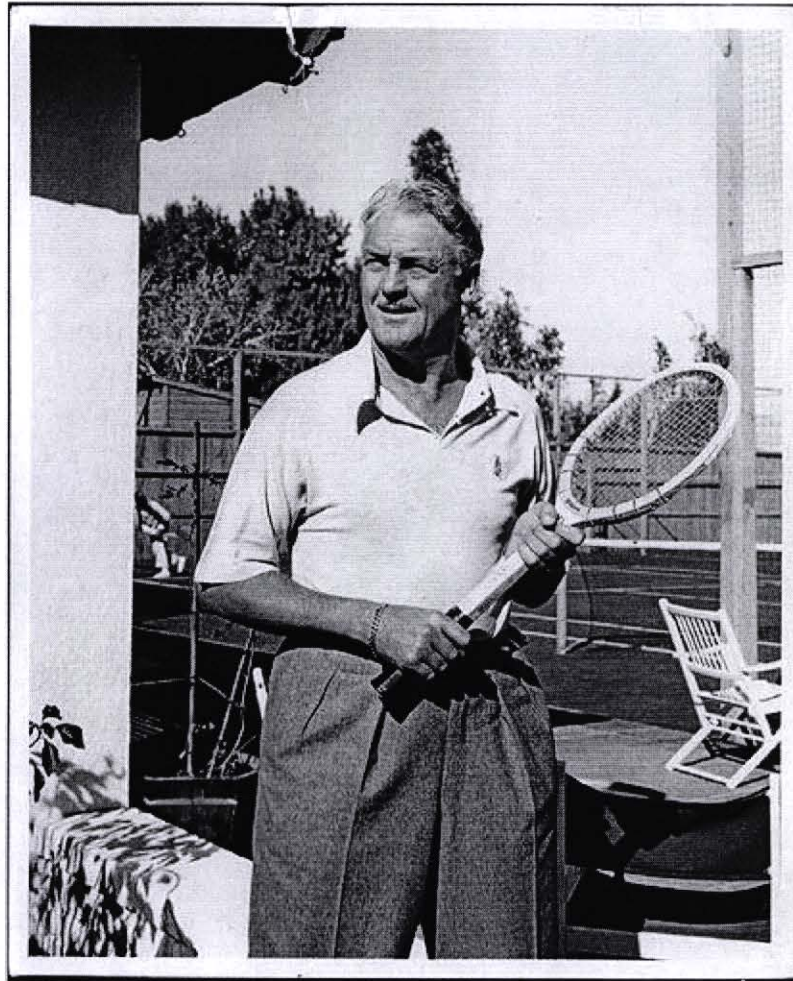
FOR CONSIDERATION OF CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION

**HSPB Case #80 – 630 East Tachevah Road
"The Charlie Farrell House"
(APN #507-092-008)**

And

**HSPB Case #81 – 1120 North Via Miraleste
"The Guest House"
(APN 507-092-009)**

June, 2014



CHARLES FARRELL 1901 - 1990

INTRODUCTION.

On May 8, 2012, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.05.135, the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) initiated investigation and study of "The Charlie Farrell House" at 630 East Tachevah Drive (HSPB Case #80) and the former guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste (HSPB Case #81).

Investigation on the subject parcels was conducted, and information compiled by HSPB board member Roxann Ploss, architectural historian Patrick McGrew, former Palm Springs Planning Director Craig A. Ewing, AICP and edited by staff member, Ken Lyon, RA, associate planner.

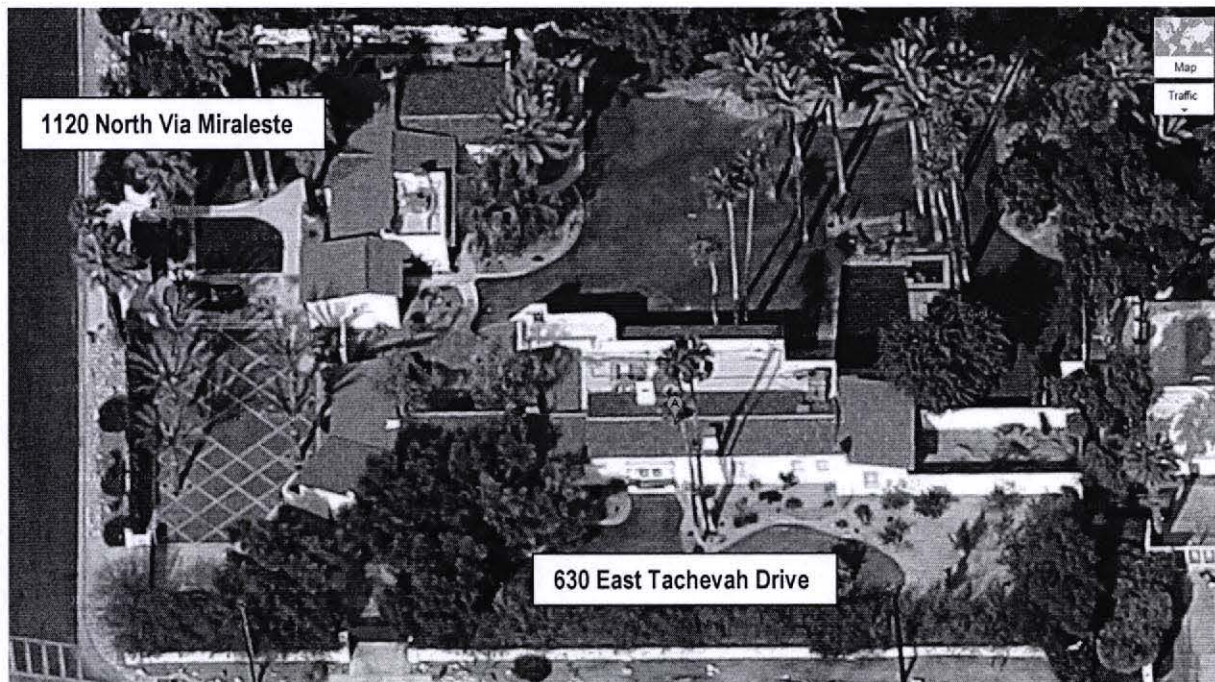
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The home at 630 East Tachevah was constructed around 1934 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style reflective of the large sprawling Spanish “haciendas” (estates) or “quintas” (country homes) of the Spanish Colonial era in the southwestern region of the United States and much of Mexico.



AERIAL PHOTO OF 630 EAST TACHEVAH AND 1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE

It appears that the lot was purchased in 1933 and the home was built in 1934 by local builder/developer Ernst Off and sold in 1935 to a Beverly Hills investment broker named Alexander Ellwood Henry. The roughly acre-sized parcel was part of a very large landholding on the north side of Palm Springs that local developer Prescott Thresher "P.T." Stevens had purchased from the Southern Pacific Railroad. Stevens was a cattleman from Colorado who was born in 1846. P.T. Stevens and his wife Francis Stevens (after whom Francis Stevens School is dedicated), moved to Palm Springs shortly after 1912 due to Mrs. Stevens' respiratory problems. After his death in 1932, P.T.'s daughter Sally and husband Culver Nichols subdivided much of the land and sold the roughly acre-sized parcel which is the subject of this report to Off in 1933.

The home changed hands several times through the thirties and forties. In around 1946 the home was bought by S.E. and Dorothy Henderson and in 1947, a guest house that had been built on the northwest portion of the acre-sized parcel (date of construction for the guest house is shown in the county database as 1934) was split off and sold as a separate parcel of approximately 10,019 square feet, with its own tax number and address of 1120 North Via Miraleste.

Charlie Farrell and his wife Virginia purchased the main house at 630 Tachevah in 1952 and lived there until their deaths (Charlie in 1990 and Virginia in 1968). Charlie Farrell is a person of local and national significance, having built a relatively successful career as an actor, starting in the silent movie era of the 1920's. Farrell is also a very significant person in Palm Springs because of the Palm Springs Racquet Club, which he and fellow actor Ralph Bellamy began in 1932. For decades, the Palm Springs Racquet Club was "the" desert playground for Hollywood actors and celebrities; and contributed significantly to Palm Springs' world renowned reputation as a star-studded exclusive getaway for the rich and famous. Farrell was also Mayor of Palm Springs from 1948 until 1952.

After being split off from the main house in 1947, the guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste went through a number of owners also. From 1954 until 1960 the guest house was owned by Mr. Gayle Thomson and his wife Violet. Thomson was a photographer who, through his friendship with Farrell, had rather exclusive access to photograph the actors and celebrities who were lounging and enjoying time at the Racquet Club.

Although the two houses remain on separately defined parcels since 1947, they have been purchased and sold together since about 1980 when Bank of America took ownership of both homes as Trustee for Farrell. The present owners, John and Jull Manly purchased both properties in 2011. Manly is an attorney.

The conclusion of this report from the research and investigation conducted, is that the main house at 630 East Tachevah is historically significant, pursuant to the Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 8.05 in the following ways:

1. The home is representative of a particular period in history: the early era of resort development in Palm Springs (1900 through 1940), when large estate-sized homes built by actors, merchants and celebrities brought a wealthy and sophisticated population to the small village, and who in turn influenced its commercial, retail, and architectural development, as well as its cultural and social underpinnings in an exclusive and affluent way.
2. It is a well-maintained example of Spanish / Mediterranean Revival architecture, reflective of the large haciendas (estates) or "quintas" (country homes) of the Spanish Colonial era built in the southwestern part of the United States and parts of Mexico.
3. It is associated with a person of significance at the local, state, and national level: Charlie Farrell. Farrell was a relatively successful actor whose career began during the silent movie era. Farrell and his actor friend Ralph Bellamy, both avid tennis players, created the Palm Springs Racquet Club in 1933 which became "the" Hollywood and celebrity hangout for decades. The Racquet Club contributed significantly to Palm Springs' worldwide reputation as a playground for actors, celebrities and the wealthy. Farrell also served two terms as mayor of Palm Springs from 1948 to 1953.
4. Of lesser significance is the association of this site with notable architect Albert Frey, who designed a number of minor additions to the home. These additions are not particularly noteworthy relative to the development of Frey's design aesthetic or his emergence as an architect of national and international significance.

The site appears to possess sufficient historic significance that if designated as a Class 1 historic site, would contribute to the purpose and intent of the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, that is,

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

Also of lesser significance is the association of the guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste with photographer Gayle Thomson. Who, through his association and friendship with Farrell developed an extensive portfolio of photographs of the stars and celebrities enjoying time at the Racquet Club.

Although both structures were at one time a single estate, the land on which the guest house is sited was separated from the main house in 1947. When analyzed on its own merit as a "stand-alone" structure, although it is similar in its architectural style, it does not rise to the same level of historic significance as that of the main house at 630 East Tachevah.

II. CHRONOLOGY OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND OWNERSHIP OF THE SITE

As noted above, the roughly acre parcel was initially part of the massive land grant given from the United States Government to the Southern Pacific Railroad in exchange for the railroad's investment in developing a rail line through the southwestern United States to promote development of the country's newly acquired southwest territory.

The initial purchase of the land from the railroad was by P.T. Stevens. Stevens amassed rather large landholdings on the north side of Palm Springs by the 1920's. After his death in 1932, his heirs, (daughter Sally and her husband F. Culver Nichols) subdivided and sold off most of the extensive land holdings. The subdivision in which the subject parcel is located was named "El Mirador Estates".

About The El Mirador Hotel and El Mirador Estates.

In the mid 1920's, Stevens, formed a company with Alvah Hicks and other developers to construct the El Mirador Hotel, which opened in 1927. The El Mirador Hotel brought a new level of luxury and amenities to the hotel choices available in Palm Springs at that time and was a favorite hotel of many movie stars and others of the "Hollywood Elite".



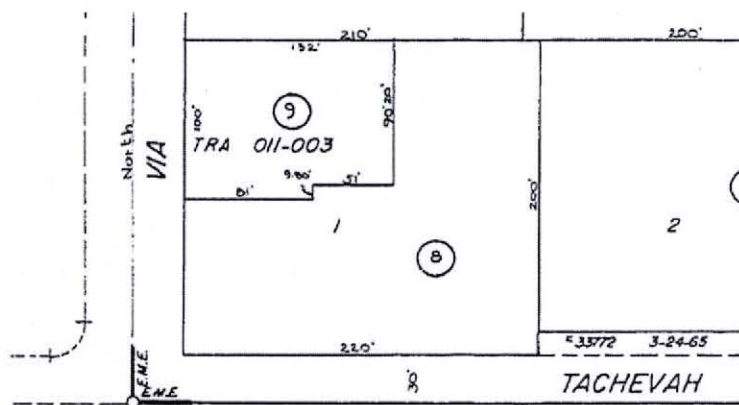
THE EL MIRADOR HOTEL.

The subdivision, comprised of large acre-sized parcels became a favorite location for many wealthy persons to build large estate style homes. In the contemporary aerial photo below, one can see the Desert Regional Medical Center. This was the site of the El Mirador Hotel. One can see that the parcel that is the subject of this report was a highly desirable lot, literally out the back door of what was then the El Mirador Hotel.



AERIAL PHOTO SHOWING THE SITE IN PROXIMITY TO THE DESERT REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, THE MEDICAL CENTER WAS ORIGINALLY THE EL MIRADOR HOTEL (ONE CAN JUST BARELY MAKE OUT THE BELL TOWER IN THE LOWER LEFT CENTER OF THIS PHOTO WHICH IS A REPLICA OF THE ORIGINAL TOWER AT THE HOTEL.)

The 1936 County of Riverside archival records show that Nichols sold Lot #1, which is currently listed as 630 East Tachevah Drive to Ernst Orst. Ernst Off purchased the roughly acre-sized parcel in 1933, constructed the home in roughly 1934 and sold it to Alexander Henry in 1935, who appears to have been the first occupant of the rambling Spanish Colonial Revival home. It appears Off had a long history as a "solid builder" in the town for several decades and apparently built this particular home for a Mr. Alexander Henry, an investment broker/banker from Beverly Hills.



DATE	OLD No.	NEW No.
5/78	092-802	10
3/79	092-801	11
7/80	094-10	13, 51
10-96	5, 6	092-12
"	096-12	13-15

PM188/19-20 Parcel Map No. 28119
 MB18/76 El Mirador Estates
 R/S 15/55 (Wilbur May Tract)

PORTION OF TRACT MAP 28119 SHOWING SUBJECT PARCELS.

Below is a chart showing the chain of title and the pattern of ownership of the parcels after construction of the home(s). The column on the left represents dates of ownership provided by the County of Riverside Archivist from its Robert J. Fitch Archives for the "main house" at 630 East Tachevah Drive. Some time around 1947, a lot split was recorded and the guest house was separated onto its own parcel and sold; given its own assessor parcel number for tax identification purposes and a separate address of 1120 North Via Miraleste.

**III. SUMMARY OF CHAIN OF TITLE FOR 630 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE
AND 1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE:**

YEAR	CHAIN OF TITLE - MAIN HOUSE (630 TACHEVAH) (Archives)	CHAIN OF TITLE – GUEST HOUSE (1120 North Via Miraleste)
1935 ¹	Ernst Ooff (builder)	Listed as part of 630 Tachevah
1936-40	Alexander E. Henry, investments	(same)
1941	Goldie Adams *	(same)
1942-45	Goldie and R.R. Adams	(same)
1946	Philip and Mary J. Delano	(same)
1947-48	S.E. Henderson (contractor)	1947: J.P. and Erna Lawler
		1948-50 June Osborne
1951	Benson J. Benjamin	1951-2 Joseph H. Norman
1952-80	Bank of America ² (for Farrell)	1953 Roy Burton & I. Hoffman
		1954-60 Gayle & Violet R. Thompson (photographer)
		1968-70 Salvatore & Jeannette Buscemi
		(no records) ³
		1971 Nina Kriegbaum
		1972 Ownership transfer to B of A (and in '76 from B of A back to Kriegbaum for some reason not noted in the title report)
2/22/1980	Transfer title to Charles Farrell ⁴	All transfers hereafter are the same for both parcels.
2/22/1990	Transfer title to Jet-Air, Inc. ^{5,6}	

¹ Documents conflict here: One says house built in 1933, but lot not sold until '34. First recording of ownership was on the 1935 County Assessor's Office records.

² Note: In that the Farrells had no children, it may be logical to assume that B of A acted as their trustees for the property. Farrell signed over title, the same day B of A transferred it to him, with the understanding that he could occupy the house until he died. Upon Farrell's death in 1990, title was issued to Group Starza (the successor to the now-defunct Jet-Air, Inc.)

³ No records were found for this period.

⁴ Official records, grant deed, document #1980-034826

1990 **	Jet-Air owner's heirs (Group Straza) ⁷	
	Bequest to Desert Hospital	
1994	Gerard Grence	
2011	John C. and Jill A. Manly ⁸	

IV. ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF 630 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE AND 1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE.

This property possess many details and characteristics found in the Spanish Colonial Revival style that was popular in the southwestern United States throughout the 1930's and 40's. Although the architect of this home has not been determined, the home illustrates, through its "distinctive characteristics" and high-quality materials, a structure that was well detailed and constructed. Many such large estate style homes were built in Palm Springs during the early period of its development as an exclusive resort for wealthy celebrities and business moguls. Elements found throughout the house include stucco-over-wood walls, hand-made clay tile roofs, deep set windows, metal gates, unique chimneys and caps, the and extensive use of wrought iron metal work in the form of railings, grills, gates, fences, and other metal ornament.

The picturesque Spanish Colonial Revival / Mexican "hacienda" feeling is seen in the rambling lay-out, white rustic stucco arches and breezeways, and the distinctive separation of the various parts of the house. The central courtyard (back yard) element includes a pool area that can either be accessed through a grand main entry archway or doors from the main rooms of the house that give generous views and visual connection to the courtyard from many parts of the home.

The home is comprised of a main house that is connected to a "west guest wing" to the west (not to be confused with the separate Guest House) via a grand covered arched entry portico. Old photos indicate a pair of heavy wood doors/gates were on this archway. The doors do not exist today and instead there are heavy iron gates. The west guest wing was originally a garage and was converted legally in 1946 to create the guest rooms that are there today. Although not part of the evaluation for historic designation, the interior is comprised of a number of rather modest-sized rooms: a living room with beamed vaulted ceiling, a library, numerous bedrooms, and at the easternmost end a master bedroom, also with vaulted and beamed ceilings. To the east of the master bedroom is a small walled in courtyard that contains a rose garden. (it is said that Virginia Farrell established a rose garden in this courtyard and the present

⁵ In a paper written by the late architectural historian Patrick McGrew, owners in the early 40's were listed as Rexford and Lois Shea. He does no reference or source for this information is cited and this does not coincide with the title records in the Riverside County Archivist's office.

⁶ *Official Records, Grant Deed, document #1980-0344828*; Jet-Air, Inc. produced jet engine parts, held patents on golf-club heads and was owned by a George T. Straza.

⁷ *Official Records, Termination of Life Estate, Document #1990-255150*

⁸ *Official Records, deed of transfer, document #2011-0233530*

owner has replanted a rose garden in this courtyard). On the north wall of main building, an addition (by Albert Frey) was added with a bay window/door area opening onto the courtyard. Pairs of wood doors with multi-paned thermally insulated glass run along the north façade of this addition and are clearly not original to the addition or to the home. Building permit records denote the main building and the converted garage were connected by a carport in 1962, which does not exist today.

This home is a particularly well maintained and intact example of the homes in the areas now called "The Movie Colony" and "Old Las Palmas". These homes were notable for the degree of simple, yet authentic detailing. Although built as a large comfortable home with many bedrooms the home does not reflect an "opulence" or "pretentiousness", but instead is rather cozy and comfortable in its scale and detailing. Although major film stars, studio bosses, and other celebrities and wealthy individuals often built vacation homes such as this as "backdrops" for staging parties, gatherings, and well-heeled seasonal "getaways", this home, although large and well appointed, reflects a casual "homey-ness".

To provide comfortable accommodation for friends and guests while still conveying a sense of privacy for the homeowner, many of the large Palm Springs homes of the Depression era have "guest wings" and sometimes even separate stand-alone "casitas", in addition to accommodation for servants and staff. This home is reflective of this pattern of construction.

Integrity of the building

According to County of Riverside historical records, the house and grounds at 630 East Tachevah Drive were recommended for landmark status by the County's district review and the County Historical Commission. (reference: UTM 11/542620/3744040.)

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

The Charlie Farrell House is constructed in a relatively modest "vernacular" version of Spanish Colonial Revival. It has been extensively renovated by the current owner with a number of new elements added that are "sympathetic" of the style, but not necessarily authentic. What is noteworthy is that the overall scale and detailing of the house is rather modest. Although interior features of privately-owned sites are not considered as part of evaluation of possible historic designation; staff notes that most of the rooms in the home are of a very modest, almost "cozy" in dimension and scale and were not created on a grand or "opulent" scale. It appears it was created as a home to be enjoyed by its residents and their friends and guests in small numbers. It is not a house that, "in its day" would lend itself to large-event parties or entertaining.

The physical character-defining historic features at 630 East Tachevah Drive include the following:

1. Half-round terra cotta clay tile roof.

2. Thin, wrought iron window grills.
3. The wrought iron-enclosed "window seat" and its associated roof.
4. The "CDF" steel emblem welded into the ironwork over the main entry archway.
5. The smooth stucco exterior walls.
6. The heavy timber rafter tails and projecting eaves.
7. The clay tile chimney caps.
8. The stucco molding around the windows
9. The open archway at the entry separating a guest wing (formerly the garage) from the main house.
10. The original painted steel sash casement windows.
11. The courtyard/rose garden on the east side of the home.

Elements that appear to have been added or modified and are deemed "non-contributing" include the following:

1. The pavers in the driveway.
2. The new garage.
3. The heavy iron gates at the main pedestrian entry (original photos show this as a wood gate).
4. The replacement windows and doors with insulating thermalpane glass.
5. Light fixtures in the entry archway cannot be confirmed as original
6. The courtyard fountain.
7. The wood timbered back porch (north elevation).
8. The swimming pool.
9. The half-height partitions enclosing the outdoor kitchen and grill.
10. The extensive grassy lawn.
11. Infill of several windows (west façade).
12. The decorative antique wood brackets on the rose garden perimeter walls.
13. The pairs of wood doors with multi-paned windows across the north side of the home.

V. PERSONS OF SIGNIFICANCE ASSOCIATED WITH THE MAIN HOUSE **(630 East Tachevah Drive).**

Alexander E. Henry (1892-1979) the first owner of the home is said to have been a "wealthy, Beverly Hills investment broker". Little more is known about him and for purposes of this analysis he is not considered a person of significance.

S.E. Henderson (owner 1947 – 1948) is believed to have been a prominent contractor in Palm Springs in the late 40's and 50's, his name is found as the listed contractor on many building permits found during this period of time, however for purposes of this analysis, he also does not rise to the level of categorizing as a person of significance.

By far, the most influential person associated with the subject site, and the one with the longest residency was movie star, businessman and former mayor, Charles Farrell.

Farrell's "period of significance" relative to the subject site is roughly from its purchase in 1952 until his death in 1990, however Farrell's period of significance in Palm Springs would most likely be established from about 1930 when he and fellow actor Ralph Bellamy and other Hollywood friends stayed at the El Mirador Hotel. It has been said that the two avid tennis players "hogged the courts", which led to their eventual purchase of land in 1932 on the north side of Palm Springs and development of the Palm Springs Racquet Club. Farrell dedicated the remainder of his life to the development and management of the Racquet Club and served as mayor of Palm Springs twice. His period of significance therefore could be said to have been from 1930 until his death in 1990.



CHARLIE FARRELL c. 1920's.

Charles Farrell had had a substantial career in silent movies, co-starring with the first Best Actress Oscar winner Janet Gaynor in *Street Angel* and *7th Heaven*. During the period when movies transitioned from "silents" to "talkies", Farrell and fellow movie star Ralph Bellamy visited Palm Springs often staying for a month at a time at the well-known El Mirador Hotel.



In 1932-33, the two bought 53 acres of land about a mile north of the El Mirador Hotel from builder and real estate speculator, Alvah Hicks.⁹ There they built what would become the world-renowned Racquet Club. At the beginning, the Club consisted of only two tennis courts, a perimeter fence and a three-sided shelter/wind break for spectators and those waiting to get on a court. Over time, their venture grew, adding more courts, a pool, bungalows, clubhouse and dining room.¹⁰

To help offset costs of building and maintaining the Racquet Club, Farrell and Bellamy began selling increasingly more expensive memberships to their friends from Hollywood. Early memberships were offered at a mere \$50 but still few of their friends joined. Soon, however, as they continued to incrementally increase the cost of membership to \$600 a year, they quickly sold out.

As talking movies increased in popularity, Farrell's found it increasingly difficult to land new role, due in part to his "reedy and untrained voice". In 1931, Charlie Farrell married Virginia Valli, of Yonkers New York, and after a few nondescript films the newlyweds tried their luck at moviemaking in Europe (1936-38). Prospects weren't as good as they had hoped, however, so they returned to U.S. Meanwhile, the RC continued to increase in its popularity and success among the young movie-stars and "starlets", drawing tennis-loving, privacy-seeking stars to the new desert hideaway. (At this time choices in the mode of travel from Los Angeles to Palm Springs were limited to either train or a nearly four-hour drive along an unlit, two-lane highway. Unfortunately during Farrell's absence from the club, it had faced major personnel (and theft) problems. It was reportedly bubbling over with paying guests eight months of the year and yet was losing money by the truckload.¹¹

Bellamy, who had been running the club alone during Farrell's tenure in Europe, admitted to being a lousy businessman, and in 1938 sold his shares to Charlie who then hired former cowboy, future mayor and the "forever proselytizer" of Palm Springs: Frank Bogert to manage the place. During the remainder of their life, Farrell and his wife never strayed far from the Racquet Club, even after Charlie sold the Club in 1959. The long-running success of the Racquet Club is credited to Charlie's continuing watchful eye and gracious hosting, as well as Virginia's good taste in decorating. The Farrells stayed geographically close to the Club, trying out several residences before settling in 1952 on 630 Tachevah (where, Virginia would pass away a little more than a decade later in 1968).

Farrell was serving a second term as Mayor when they moved into the house at 630 East Tachevah. He chose not to run again when he became a surprise hit playing Gale Storm's flustered but loving dad on *My Little Margie*. When the series ended, he had his own fictionalized "A Day at the Racquet Club"-themed show. Charlie's continued

⁹ Burke

¹⁰ Farrell, as quoted in Niemann, pg. 133

¹¹ Niemann, pg. 133

association the Racquet Club and Palm Springs brought ever more attention to Palm Springs as a glamorous getaway for well-known and well-heeled personages.

When the shows ended, Farrell devoted his full time to running the everyday business of the Club and its guest rooms. By all accounts, it appears he was very good at it. He slowed down after the death of his wife, to whom he was quite devoted, ultimately fading away from the Racquet Club and becoming, in his last decade, a reclusive resident of this house literally to the end of his life. By the 1980's the Palm Springs Racquet Club was no longer an exclusive private club and was now open to the public. Soon, losing its exclusive cachet, it struggled with ever less success to survive. In time, the "old time glamour" was gone and the Racquet Club closed down in the 1990's.

It would be difficult to put a value on Charles Farrell's contribution to the worldwide name recognition that Palm Springs enjoys today. Hollywood "found" Palm Springs - to a great degree because of the charismatic force that Charlie Farrell brought to it with his and Ralph Bellamy's creation of the Palm Springs Racquet Club. Seeing the famous actor with his mane of white hair cruising around town in his Thunderbird, grinning and waving at residents and tourists alike was a sight that those who knew him and fondly referred to him as "Mr. Palm Springs" - would not easily forget.



TWO NAMES THAT IN PALM SPRINGS COULD NOT BE MORE SYNONYMOUS WITH EACH OTHER



CHARLIE FARRELL IS BURIED AT THE WELLWOOD MURRAY CEMETERY IN PALM SPRINGS

VI. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE ASSOCIATED WITH THE GUEST HOUSE **1120 North Via Miraleste (HSPB-81):**

The guest house (HSPB-81) is located on a separate parcel of roughly 10,019 square feet. The architect of the guest house is unknown and the county tax records list its date of construction as 1934.

Physical characteristics of the Guest House.

The "Guest House" at 1120 North Via Miraleste, although records denote it was constructed at roughly the same time as the main house, has also had numerous modifications over the years. The guest house is constructed with similar half round terra cotta clay roof tiles and lightly textured stucco walls. The windows are currently a variety of replacement windows, some vinyl clad, others aluminum. The front windows have wrought iron grills similar to those found on the main house. A garage was attached to the guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste by the current owner in 2011 and it appears an addition may have been constructed on the east side of the guest house.

From evaluation of the guest house physical characteristics that may be deemed "original" would be as follows:

1. The half-round terra cotta clay roof tiles.
2. The glazed decorative tile around the main front door.
3. The stucco molding around the windows.
4. The wrought iron window grills.
5. The clay tile chimney caps.

Elements that do not appear original or are "non-contributing".

1. The vinyl thermalpane windows.
2. The aluminum sliding window on the north façade.
3. The garage.

Architecturally the guest house does not possess the same physical feeling or “hacienda-like” characteristics as the main house. On its own, its ability to meet the findings outlined in Palm Springs Municipal Code in furthering the purpose of the historic preservation ordinance is much less persuasive. If the two parcels were again merged into one parcel, it could be evaluated as an integral part of the main house site, and by association it could be argued contributes to the estate-like quality of the main house, but as a separate structure on its own parcel, it is architecturally not significant.

Persons associated with the Guest House.

From 1954 to 1960, Gayle Thomson and his wife Violet lived in the little (one bedroom, one bath) “guest house”, at 1120 North Via Miraleste. Mr. Thomson was a photographer, whose friendship with the Farrells afforded him rare access to the stars and celebrities who frequented the Racquet Club. This access to celebrities helped Thomson develop a thriving photography business and he opened his studio on Palm Canyon. Most of the stars and celebrities who frequented Palm Springs did so to get away from the studio publicity mill; thus Thomson and a small handful of other local photographers were particularly sensitive to their desire for privacy.

Thomson was fortunate to cover the “goings-on” at the Racquet Club and throughout the town for the local and international media and it is said that Frank Bogert in his capacity of manager of the Racquet Club, would often use Thomson’s “Racquet Club shots” for the Club’s publicity packets.

As noted earlier, in 1947 the land on which the guest house is sited was separated from the main house and sold. During most of the period of significance when Charlie Farrell resided in the main house at 630 East Tachevah (1952 – 1990), the guest house was under separate ownership and remained so until 1972 when title records show Bank of America held title for both parcels. Today, both homes remain on separated parcels. Although the guest house is of a similar architectural style, and Gayle Thomson did garner some significance as a photographer, the guest house, when analyzed on its own, is of much lesser historic significance than the main house.

As a separate structure on a very small lot, the guest house fails on its own to convey the estate-like feel of the main house.

A “condition of approval” on a possible Class 1 designation on the main house at 630 East Tachevah Drive might be that if the parcel associated with the guest house at 1120 North Via Miraleste were merged again with the parcel on which the main house is sited, it would automatically take on and enjoy the potential Class 1 historic status of the

main Charlie Farrell House. Such merger could be made as a condition on designation of the main house.

VII CONCLUSION.

The main house at 630 East Tachevah Drive possess many historically significant characteristics, both in its architecture, design and physical setting as well as association with a person of significance: actor, mayor, and owner of the Palm Springs Racquet Club, Charlie Farrell.

The guest house when evaluated on its own as a separate structure on a separate parcel, lacks adequate physical characteristics to rise to the level of significance architecturally or in its setting. Although it is associated with photographer Gayle Thomson, Thomson does not rise to the level of a person of significance sufficient enough to recommend historic designation.

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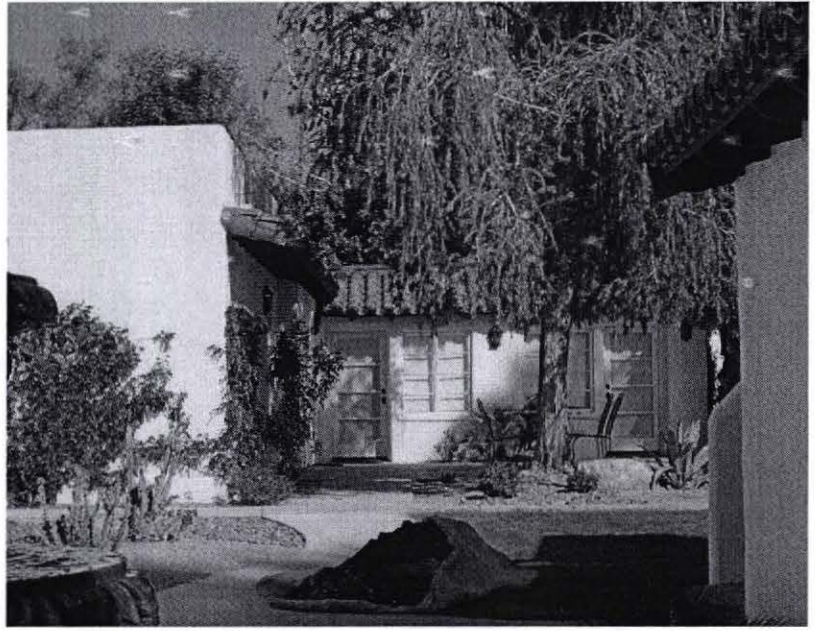
- Permits courtesy of Palm Springs Building Department archives
- Resource card, #15.117-05.05/507-092008-7, courtesy Palm Springs Planning Department
- City Directories, 1944-56 courtesy of Palm Springs Historical Society
- Photos in the appendix of property in its current state were taken on 19 February 2014 by Jana Ploss and edited by Roxann Ploss.

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- 1963-64 Palm Springs Life Article on Charlie Farrell
- Reference notes and Summary of Charlie Farrell edited by Craig Ewing, AICP, from "Lucky Stars" by Sarah Baker and "Charles Farrell and Palm Springs from "When the Smoke Hit the Fan" by Ralph Bellamy
- Facts about the Life of Charles Farrell 1900-1990 summarized by Craig Ewing, AICP



Courtyard and fountain (not original)



Back of Guest House (at left is garage added in 2011)



West façade of guest house (windows and doros not original)



Stair at rear of main house to roof deck.



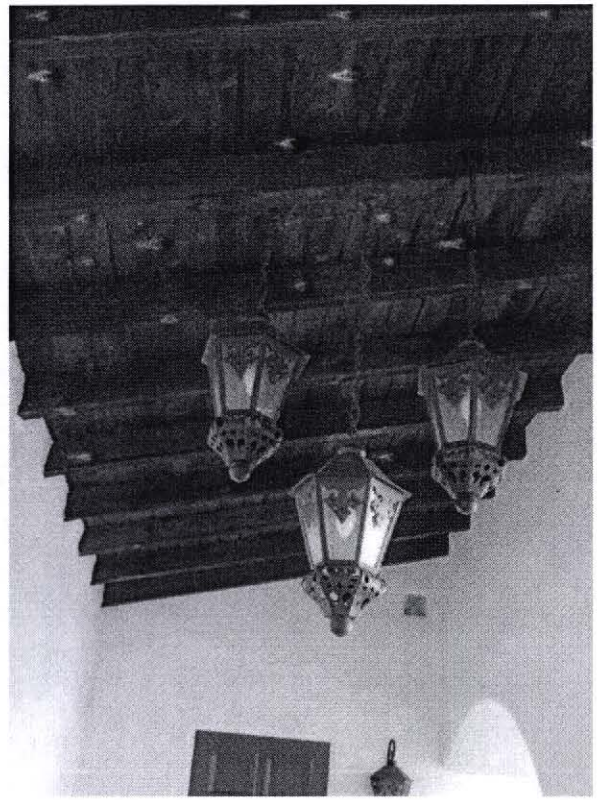
Rear covered patio of main house (roof and doors not original)



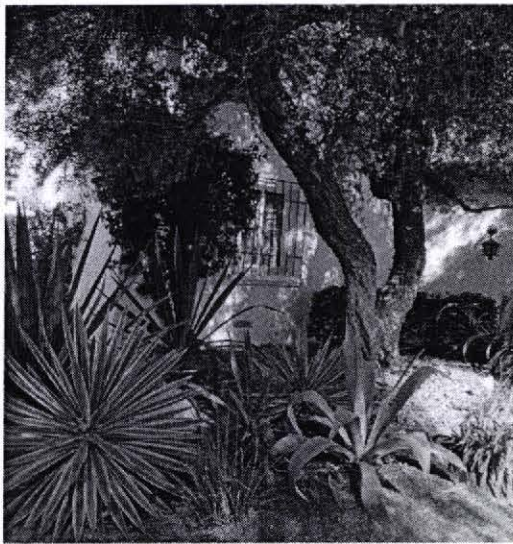
Back of garage at guest house (not original)



Entry arch at main house (CDF above archway)



Light fixtures (not original) at entry arch main house.



Portion of south façade – main house



Balcony with wrought iron and extended stucco sill at window (main house).

COMPILED BY
CRAIG EWING, AACP

Facts about the Life of Charles Farrell – 1900 to 1990

Charles Farrell Date of Birth (Walpole, MA)	08-09-1900
"Old Ironsides" Released (Silent)	12-26-1926
"Seventh Heaven" Released (Silent)	06-04-1928
CF Visits Palm Springs for Voice Lessons (?)	1929
"Lucky Star" Released (Silent and Talking Versions)	08-18-1929
CF Marries Virginia Valli (Yonkers, NY)	02-14-1931
CF #1 Male Box Office Star in US	1932
CF and Ralph Bellamy Purchased 53 acres from Alva Hicks	1932
CF Sells Toluca Lake House to Bette Davis?	1932
Two Tennis Courts and Visitors Gallery Completed	12-25-1933
CF Charter Member of Polo Club?	1934
Two Additional Courts, Swimming Pool and Restrooms Completed	06-xx-1934
Grand Opening of The Racquet Club	12-15-1934
CF Loses Malibu Beach Home in Wildfire	10-23-1935
CF Makes movies in Australia and England	1936 to 1937
CF Buys Out Ralph Bellamy Interest in The Racquet Club	1937
"The Deadly Game" Released (CF's last film)	08-08-1941
CF Enlists in US Navy	06-xx-1942
CF Assigned to Aircraft Carrier USS Hornet	04-19-1944
CF Honorably Discharged from US Navy	11-xx-1945
CF Elected to City Council	04-16-1946
Appointed Mayor	04-20-1948
"Operation Jaguar" Government Take-over Exercise (LA Times)	09-30-1950
CF Recreated "Seventh Heaven" with Janet Gaynor on Lux Radio	04-xx-1952
"My Little Margie" Premieres (on CBS)	06-16-1952
CF Resigned as Mayor	07-31-1953
"My Little Margie" Ends Run (on NBC) Total 126 Episodes	08-24-1955
"The Charles Farrell Show" Premieres (on CBS) Total 12 Episodes	07-02-1956
The Racquet Club Sold by CF to Morton / Murchison	1959
CF Inducted into Hollywood Walk of Fame (2 stars – Movies, TV)	02-08-1960
The Racquet Club Sold to Alexander Family	1965
David Farrell Died (Father)	11-xx-1965
Virginia Farrell Suffered Stroke	Spring 1966
Virginia Farrell Died (Wife)	09-24-1968
CF Misses Annual Grand Opening of The Racquet Club (1st Time)	1975
The Racquet Club Sold to Hotel Coronado	1977
CF Died	05-06-1990
CF Palm Springs Star Dedicated (Among First Five)	02-26-1992
CF Memorial Dedicated at Palm Springs Airport	12-03-1999

Other events without dates

Joins Palm Springs Polo Club

Meets Frank Bogert

Authorizes lighting of Palm Trees

Approves Transfer of Airport from US Military

Supports Boys Club Drive (1966?)

Support Creation of TV Channel 36 (w/ John Conte?)

~Charles Farrell~

Born: August 9, 1900 in Onset Bay, MA, USA

Died: May 6, 1990 in Palm Springs, CA, USA

By Sarah Baker

The man who became matinee idol to millions was born on August 9, 1900 in his neighbors' bedroom. His mother, Estelle Farrell, demanded the only heated room in the Fuller Tavern Annex when she went into labor. And so, she was given her neighbors' apartment to bring little Charles David Farrell into the world.

Charlie's family were working-class Irish immigrants, but using their own innate intelligence and drive, made a mark for themselves in Walpole, MA and later Onset Bay, MA. The Farrell family owned a restaurant and a newspaper stand, and later branched out into the theatre business. Charlie was given jobs in all the family businesses, but he preferred to set up films and sweep up rubbish in the theatre. As a boy, he began dreaming about becoming a film star, as he later recalled:

Even in those surroundings, I knew I was going to be a great motion picture actor. I never sold a ticket to the theater but what I looked the customer in the eye and said to myself, "Some day that person will be going to the theater to see Charlie Farrell."

His father David had other plans, though, and pushed Charlie to Boston University in the hopes Charlie would become a dentist. Charlie compromised by working towards a business degree. Just before his senior year, however, Charlie abruptly dropped out of school to become a valet to Little Billy, a famous vaudeville midget. It wasn't Charlie's ideal gig, but it provided the means to get to Hollywood.

Charlie landed a few bit parts in 1923-1924, but his was a pretty lean existence. He finally signed with Fox Films in 1925 and was promptly loaned to Paramount for the historical epic film, *Old Ironsides* (1926). His performance as the naïve "Commodore" was exceptional, and marked the birth of the Charles Farrell brand of hero: athletic and brawny but at the same

time, naïve and tender. Fox hastened to put Charlie back to work before he was poached by Paramount for good, and assigned him to their most prestigious project, *7th Heaven* (1927). This film marked the beginning of two partnerships: his long-term collaboration with director Frank Borzage, and his long-term romantic partnership with Janet Gaynor.

In 1929, when sound finally took over the motion picture industry, Charlie and his co-star Janet passed the “mic test” with flying colors. But one crucial element changed. Both Charlie and Janet were expected to be singing, talking, dancing musical stars, and they were cast in silly comedies. This was a dramatic departure from their work in silent films, where their parts were poetic, dramatic, and tailor-made to their talents. 1929 marked the death of the Charles Farrell brand of hero, as well. The new matinee idols were brash, hard-hitting, and macho: think Clark Gable or Jimmy Cagney. There was no longer any demand for a hero who was both virile and tender.

Amazingly, Charlie’s popularity never faltered, not with the advent of sound; nor with Janet Gaynor’s infamous strike of 1930; nor with the new vogue of he-man matinee idols. His career at Fox ended abruptly in 1932 when he refused a single role in the film *The Face in the Sky*. After his departure from Fox, Charlie had a successful freelance career and was lured back to Fox a year later for a two-picture deal with Janet Gaynor. However, after making one last film with Janet (*Change of Heart*, 1934), Charlie terminated his contract with Fox. His reasons were personal: he had a terrible fight with his wife, Virginia Valli Farrell, who had discovered one of Charlie’s extramarital affairs. He went to London and Fox bought Charlie’s contract out. He worked as a freelancer in several British films and performed in summer stock. Eventually he made a few more American films, but when WWII broke out, he abandoned his film career and enlisted in the Navy.

Charlie served as the Personnel and Administrative Officer aboard the USS *Hornet*, under the command of Lt. Commander Marshall Beebe. The *Hornet* saw heavy combat in the spring and summer of 1944; indeed, when Charlie returned home in 1945, his hair had turned grey. The men of Task Force 58, which included the crew of the *Hornet*, received a Presidential Unit Citation by President Harry Truman for extraordinary heroism.

Charlie returned to his beloved desert home, Palm Springs, where he had created the Palm Springs Racquet Club in the 1930s. Virginia Valli Farrell,

long reconciled with Charlie, had nurtured the Club in his absence and by the 1950s it became the “playground of the stars.” Further cementing his status as “Mr. Palm Springs,” Charlie was elected Mayor of Palm Springs, and served for six years.

The 1950s also saw Charlie’s return to acting: as a lark he accepted the role of Vern Albright on a television show called My Little Margie. It was supposed to be a mere summer replacement for I Love Lucy, but became a runaway hit. His co-star, Gale Storm, remembered Charlie as “the single most considerate man I have ever known in my life...he had no vanity at all.” When Margie ended in 1956, Charlie had his own show, The Charles Farrell Show, a fictionalized account of life at the Racquet Club. The show ran for two years.

Charlie sold the Racquet Club in 1959 for a hefty profit; but it was a business move that tipped off a depression that lasted the rest of Charlie’s life. Over the years he became more and more reclusive, making public appearances only if Janet Gaynor was at his side. When Janet died in 1984, Charlie’s seclusion was complete; he never granted any interviews or made any public appearances after her death.

Charlie was unfailingly modest and unlike Janet, never fought to maintain his place in film history. He refused to even defend his place in Palm Springs history, though it could be argued that his Racquet Club “founded” Palm Springs as a resort community. When Charlie died in 1990, he was buried in the local Welwood Murray Cemetery next to Virginia Valli Farrell. Following his dying wish, his caretakers buried him, and then alerted the press to his passing over a week later.

Charlie died believing he was alone and forgotten. He was certain that his work lost its relevance over time, but he was wrong. Time and time again, audiences are seduced by the magic of his onscreen partnership with Janet Gaynor and of the power and grace of the Charles Farrell brand of hero.

Written by Sarah Baker

If you want to know more about Charles Farrell and/or Janet Gaynor check out Sarah Baker's new book "Lucky Stars."

Charles Farrell and Palm Springs from "Lucky Stars" by Sarah Baker

CF and Janet Gaynor sent to Palm Springs in spring 1929 for voice training – conversion of "Lucky Star" from silent to sound film – Fox Studios. Farrell may have proposed to Gaynor in Palm Springs, but she did not accept. (page 100)

Frank Bogert was CF's best friend from their first meeting in the late 1920's (p. 125)

CF marries long-time flame Virginia Valli in February 1931 (p. 136)

Early 1930's (1933?) CF spending time with Ralph Bellamy in Palm Springs playing tennis. First, at El Mirador where Marlene Dietrich complained about their overuse by CF and RB. Then they built two courts and a shelter house on 53 acres they owned in PS. First, charged others 50¢ to use courts, then decided to create a tennis club. (p. 164-165)

CF also played polo, becoming charter member of PS Polo Club. Met Frank Bogert and became good friends. (p. 166)

Palm Springs Racquet Club had its grand opening Christmas Day 1934; by the end of 1936 they had to close the membership list to new applicants. (p. 191)

During 1935-36, CF and RB added four courts (to the original two) and a swimming pool, and a bar which was enlarged to a dining room. Initial offering made to 170 friends and acquaintances, with initial membership at \$75 / single and \$100 / family. After first deadline, they had 30 members; as membership costs increased, more joined the club. PS Racquet Club covered five acres, include above facilities plus a clubhouse and two locker and shower rooms. (p. 190-191)

After a stint in England, CF returned in the fall of 1937 to Palm Springs and a Racquet Club faltering under the management of RB. To improve day-to-day operations, CF hired Frank Bogert the Club's General Manager. CF bought out RB's shares and took renewed interest in the Club. Bamboo Room designed by director Mitchell Leisen. Wife Virginia oversaw other interior decorations. CF was expert short-order cook with special interest in restaurant's cuisine. (p. 204-205)

New bartender, Tex Greggson, invented Bloody Mary (originally, "Farrell's Flip") to cure CF's hangovers. Members of Racquet Club included: Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, William Powell, Rudy Vallee, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Mary Pickford, Buddy Rogers, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Robert Taylor, Busby Berkeley, Errol Flynn and Frank Capra. CF was Club's host.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's CF's movie career wound down – one last movie for his long-time studio Fox in 1939 and the last movie of his career in 1941 (Monogram Pictures) (pp 209-201, 220)

CF found happiness in running the Racquet Club, which he managed better than his film career (p. 214)

By 1941, Palm Springs was the Hollywood hang-out that everyone knew, and CF was at the center, including hosting at the RC, playing in weekly polo matches, and acting as associate editor / columnist of a local newspaper.

In 1942, CF enlisted in the US Navy, serving at the Alameda Naval Air Station until assigned to Fighting Squadron 17 on board the *USS Hornet* in April 1944 where he saw action in the Pacific Theater around Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The *Hornet's* air groups were also responsible for sinking Japan's most powerful battleship, *Yamato*. He was honorably discharged in November 1945 as Lt. Commander (p. 221-226).

His wife, Virginia, successfully ran the RC during the war, and CF returned to reclaim his role as the Club's ringmaster. The RC hosted some of Jack Benny's radio shows, with CF as occasional guest (p. 227-228).

In 1945, he ran unopposed for District 6 of the Palm Springs City Council, and was elected mayor in 1947, serving until 1955, when he resigned to spend more time on the *My Little Margie* television and radio productions. He petitioned the CAB (now, FAA) for better airline feeder service, initiated the planting of palm trees on Palm Canyon Drive (pp 227-228, 232).

The Charles Farrell Show ran for two years in the late 1950's, showcasing the Racquet Club and CF, with other Hollywood stars as occasional guests, but CF sold the RC in 1959 for a profit of over a million dollars and he retired from day-to-day operations (p. 232). The RC was never the same afterwards (pp 232, 242)

Into early 1960's, the Palm Springs social season didn't officially begin until the ceremonial bell was rung at the RC each fall (p. 243).

CF began affair with Mousie Powell (wife of actor William Powell) in late 1950's, while still married (p. 243-246). CF joined Alcoholics Anonymous about the same time.

After the war, CF and Virginia moved out of the Farrell House at the Club and built a home at the corner of Via Miraleste and Tachevah. He installed a traffic signal at the corner so he could find his way home while drunk (p. 247).

He lost important family members in the 1960's: His father David in 1965, his sister Ruth in 1966 and his wife Virginia in 1968, two years after she suffered a debilitating stroke. When his Racquet Club contract ended, he withdrew to his house and returned to drinking (p. 248)

He made a few benefit screen appearances in the 1970's with Janet Gaynor, who died September 14, 1984. In the 1980's, CF closed out all friends, including Mousie Powell and Frank Bogert (p 252-258)

CF died May 6, 1990 of a heart attack and is interred at Welwood Murray Cemetery (p. 256)

Charles Farrell and Palm Springs from "When the Smoke Hit the Fan" by Ralph Bellamy

RB met CF in early days at Fox, and renewed acquaintance in 1933 – both loved the desert and rented houses. RB and CF were tennis players and played most every day at the El Mirador Hotel. (p. 173)

RB and CF were horseback riding and saw 53 acres for sale by Alva Hicks. They bought the land for \$3500. After they were kicked off the El Mirador courts, RB and CF decided to build courts on their desert land, hiring the Davis Company from Los Angeles. Sand was brought in from San Pedro to make the court's concrete; two courts were built, as was a nine foot fence (with four additional feet of construction wire) and a three sided shelter. (p. 174-75)

Later that year (1933) utilities were brought in; a toilet and drinking fountain were added, the shelter was enclosed, and a swimming pool with showers and locker rooms were built. Total cost \$78,000. (p. 175)

In summer of 1934, RB wanted to recover some of the costs and he and CF decided to create a club. Two more courts were built and trees were planted as windbreaks. The Racquet Club was formed and 173 friends were mailed invitations: Single membership was \$50; family membership was \$75; plus \$9 per month from September to March. Opening date was September 15, 1934. (p. 175-76)

No one responded to the invitations. A second invitation notified that by October 15, 1934, the dues would increase from \$50 to 75 (single) and from \$75 to 100 (family). Four members joined: Frank Morgan, Charles Butterworth, Reginald Owen and Paul Lukas. (p. 176)

The fee went up \$25 each month. At \$650 per membership (Sept. 1935?), there was a waiting list. A bar was added, made of bamboo and designed by Mitchell Leisen – a director from Paramount. A dining room, dance floor and kitchen were built. (p. 176)

A clock was placed over the bar paid by Louella Parsons' passing the hat that raised \$400. (p. 177)

A circus tent was placed over the number one court on Saturdays, and a portable dance floor, bars were placed for weekly dances during the season. Rudy Vallee's orchestra performed regularly, and wait staff was brought from L.A. (p. 177)

All equipment (tents, dance floors, kitchen equipment, etc.) came used from United Tent and Awning Company, owned by Bearl Murphy, who set up extravagant parties for the moguls and swells of Hollywood. (p. 177)

Tennis pros at the club included Keith Gledhill, Alice Marble, Eleanor Tennant and Lester Stoefen. (p. 177)

CF left the country for two years to make films in England and Australia when club was at its peak; the club membership was full and there was full-time staff. (p. 177)

When CF returned, RB asked to be let out of his original investment. RB was not a good club manager, but CF was made for it, both as a manager and a greeter. (p. 178)

CF and RB like to think that Palm Springs as it is today (1979) began with a horseback ride that led to a \$3500 investment in 53 acres. (p. 178)

CHARLES FARRELL HOME(S) IN PALM SPRINGS

Born in Walpole, Massachusetts, Charles Farrell (1901-1990) began his career in Hollywood as a bit player for Paramount Pictures. Farrell did extra work for films ranging from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with Lon Chaney, Sr., Cecil B. De Mille's *The Ten Commandments*, and *The Cheat* with Pola Negri. Farrell continued to work throughout the next few years in relatively minor roles without much success until he was signed by Fox Studios and was paired with fellow newcomer Janet Gaynor in the romantic drama *Seventh Heaven*. The first Oscar for Best Actress in 1928 went to Gaynor. The film was a public and critical success and Farrell and Gaynor would go on to star opposite one another in more than a dozen films throughout the late 1920s and into the talkie era of the early 1930s. Farrell married former actress Virginia Valli (1898-1968) on February 14, 1931, and the couple was married until her death.

After the opening of the El Mirador Hotel in 1927, Farrell took up residency there for several months and the gravitational pull of his tennis-playing celebrity friends was strong. Frequent visitors included Ralph Bellamy and many others whose common denominator was they all played good tennis and they frequently monopolized the El Mirador court. It became obvious that additional facilities for the game must be acquired, if not at the hotel then elsewhere. Farrell and Bellamy acquired 52 acres from Alvah Hicks located on North Indian Avenue about a mile north of El Mirador where they formed a small club for tennis buffs and named it "The Racquet Club." It consisted of only two courts surrounded by a board fence with a small building that contained lavatory facilities and dressing rooms. Much of the surrounding land was subdivided into small lots on which members could build private cottages. In time it attracted members from all over the globe and became known the world over.

Farrell's career at Fox ended abruptly in 1932 when he refused a single role in the film *The Face in the Sky*. He terminated his contract with Fox, and having problems in his recent marriage, moved to London where he continued to make films from 1935 to 1937. His career in the UK failed to materialize, and after making a few "B" pictures he returned to the US. Given the problems with his faltering career, in 1937 he chose a different path and moved to Palm Springs becoming a full time resident.

Farrell's first listed address in Palm Springs according to the 1937 City Directory was at 362 West Chino Drive.¹ But, with the initial success of the Racquet Club, Farrell was able to embark upon a building program that by 1938 included the extant Club House with its famous "Bamboo Lounge" and a home that the Farrells owned and occupied as the Club managers. The Club address was 2143 (later renumbered to) 2743 North Indian. The name of the architect of the Racquet Club buildings has been lost to time, although, given Farrell's LA connections, it was most likely not designed locally. The Racquet Club building itself reflected a rustic Anglo-Colonial style with white-washed board-and-batten siding, and shingled hipped roofs, topped with cupolas and weathervanes. The Farrell residence was similar, although it featured painted cement plaster walls and an interior courtyard. Virginia Valli Farrell, long reconciled with Charlie, nurtured the Club while Charlie pursued a modest film career in LA and by the 1950s the racquet Club had become the "playground of the stars." The club's success cemented Farrell's status as "Mr. Palm Springs," and in 1948 he ran for public office and was elected Mayor of Palm Springs, a position he held for six years from 1948 to 1953, while still acting and managing the Racquet Club. The Farrells lived in the Racquet Club residence until 1951, when it appears they moved briefly into to the Grace Miller Lewis residence at 2311 North Indian for a year. In 1952 the Farrells purchased and moved into the Charles Ellwood Henry home at Tachevah at Via Miraleste.

The Henry Residence and guest house were built in 1934 in the El Mirador Estates tract for Alexander Henry (1892-1979), a wealthy Beverly Hills investment broker. His parents Thomas B. and Jesse L. Henry immigrated to Los Angeles from Canada in 1886. The property contained a main house at 630 East Tachevah and a guest house at 1120 Via Miraleste. Later owners included Rexford P. and Lois Shea in the Main House and John P. and Edna Lawler in the Guest House in the 1940s. After their purchase of the home in 1952, the Farrells moved into the main house on Tachevah. The Farrells commissioned an addition by Clark & Frey; and a wrought iron arch above the entry bears Farrell's initials. Soon thereafter, the guest house was occupied by

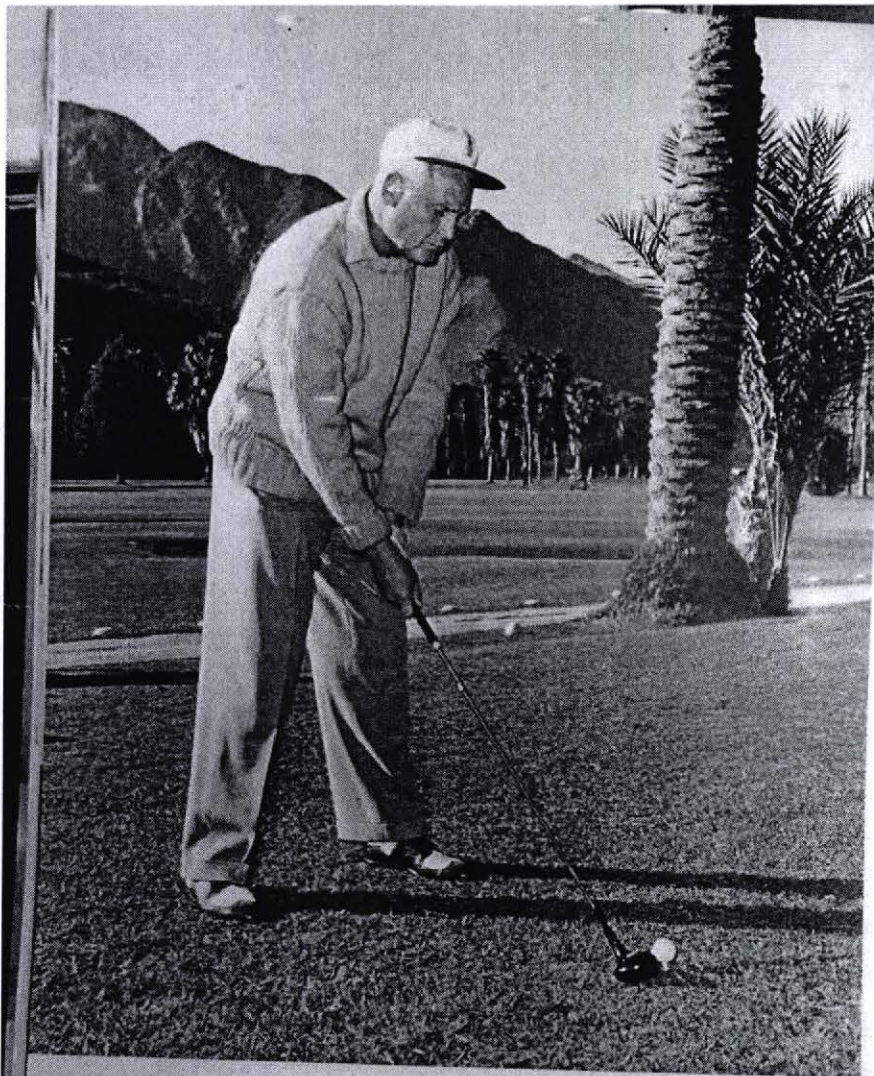
¹ The Riverside County Assessor's office indicates that the current residence at that address was built in 2000, so this is not the building in which the Farrells lived.

photographer Gail B. Thompson and his family. The relationship between the families was very cordial, and Thompson assumed the role of official photographer, endlessly documenting Farrell's numerous public appearances.

In 1952, about the same time as the Farrells moved into the Henry Residence, Farrell also moved into television. He accepted the role of the male lead on a television show called *My Little Margie*. A summer replacement for *I Love Lucy*, it became a runaway hit. During the course of his television career Farrell commuted from Palm Springs to LA via private car and driver. When *Margie* ended in 1956, Charlie was offered his own show, *The Charles Farrell Show*, a fictionalized account of life at the Racquet Club that ran for a year.

Charlie sold the Racquet Club in 1959 for a substantial profit; but it was a business decision that triggered a profound depression that lasted the rest of Charlie's life. Over the years he became more and more reclusive, Charlie died believing he was alone and forgotten. He was certain that his work lost its relevance over time. Today, Farrell's Racquet Club along with its famous Bamboo Lounge where the Bloody Mary was conceived along with four inscribed bar stools reserved for Clark Gable, William Powell, Spencer Tracy and of course Charles Farrell has survived, but is currently vacant. Farrell has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for his contributions to television and is also honored with a star on the Palm Springs Walk of Fame on the west side of Palm Canyon Drive between Tahquitz and Arenas. Palm Springs has a history of naming city streets after popular actors. The tradition started with Charles Farrell. Farrell Drive which runs through a residential area of the city originated as the roadbed of a narrow gauge railway which was original built to serve the early agricultural development called Palm Valley.

Although one of the HSPB Work programs lists the residence at 177 Santa Catalina Road, there is no other record to indicate that the Farrells ever lived at this address, as well as substantial evidence to the contrary. That house was built in 1936 for Mrs. Theodore Arthur (Florence V.) Willard of Beverly Hills who continued to reside there until at least 1953. Arthur Theodore Willard (1862-1943) was an engraver for the *Northwestern Miller* in 1882. However, at about the same time he started experimenting with battery cells. In 1886 he went to Cleveland, Ohio, where he lived with his uncle Archibald M. Willard (an artist who painted the famous "Spirit of '76" portrait) and in the 1890s began the Willard Electric Battery Company, which later became the Willard Storage Battery Company. Shortly after he left Minneapolis, Willard changed his name to T. A. Willard. Willard was also interested in the pre-Columbian art of Central America and wrote and researched extensively on the Mayan civilization. Possibly of minor historic significance for its distant association with Willard, the home has been extensively altered and is no longer capable of reflecting the period of occupancy by the Willards.



CHARLIE FARRELL

Mr. Palm Springs

A JOURNALIST, writing about the exclusive and world famous Racquet Club and its founder, Charles Farrell, once said:

"To many it is Palm Springs . . . What Palm Springs would be without Farrell is hard telling."

The saga of Charles David Farrell, film star, television actor and former Mayor of Palm Springs, is inscribed in every eucalyptus tree and oleander that borders the exclusive Racquet Club; on the tennis courts where on any day one might find a foursome consisting of Dinah Shore, Paul Lucas, Janet Leigh and California Attorney General Stanley Mosk; in the wind swept desert sur-

rounding the club where land has skyrocketed from thirty dollars an acre to eight thousand. And certainly his story is clearly etched — and will always be — in the hearts of those familiar with the history of Palm Springs.

Today at the age of 61, Farrell — the juvenile Chico of "Seventh Heaven" — is considered the best public relations exponent of this city, the man who helped put it on the map and make it a favorable hideaway and home for internationally known celebrities from all walks of life.

Testimony to this is an invitation he recently accepted in Chicago, Illinois.

For one week, Farrell, with August

September, 1963

Kettmann, Palm Springs Police Chief, at his side, spent four hours a day on radio station WIND expounding the good life found in this city; the wonders of the new Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, and spinning tales about the famous residents and visitors who annually mushroom the city's population from 17,000 permanent residents to nearly 100,000.

During his Chicago stay, Farrell received a "Charlie" at the Esquire Theater where a special screening of "Seventh Heaven" was held for 2,000 theater goers.

The "Charlie" was presented by Chicago's leading journalist and television commentators, Irving Kupciner. "Because," Farrell smiled after his return, "he said he remembered me more than all the people who won Oscars for 'Seventh Heaven'. He said I had probably been walking around with an Academy Award acceptance speech for 35 years — and it was time I used it."

Actually, there was some truth in Kupciner's words.

Although Farrell had never expected to win an Oscar that year, he is the first to admit he was practically the only person connected with "Seventh Heaven" who *didn't* win one.

Initial awards presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Art and Sciences were presented to Janet Gaynor for her performance in the film, to Frank Borzage for his direction of "Seventh Heaven", to Benjamin Glazer for writing the screen adaptation, and to desert resident Harry Oliver who was the movie's set designer.

"Actually," Farrell says of his early days in films, "success came too soon for me. I hadn't had the acting experience to go with the star status I suddenly acquired. I think it's one of the reasons that talking pictures frightened me."

Over the years, however, his success not only in films but in television where he co-starred with Gale Storm on the "My Little Margie" series and later on his own TV show emanating from the Racquet Club, more than made up for any lack of ease he may have felt — and kept to himself — during his early acting career.

Farrell first discovered Palm Springs in 1929 after Janet Gaynor (with whom he co-starred in 12 pictures after "Seventh Heaven" including "Street Angel"

Palm Springs life
FARRELL — *Continued*

and "The Man Who Came Back") recommended that he come here to find a possible cure for his hay fever.

"At first I hated it," he says honestly. "I had been going to Arrowhead Springs for my health and preferred it there. But the desert grew on me — as it does so many others — and I learned to love Palm Springs."

His first contact with the local citizenry came when, at Janet Gaynor's suggestion, he looked up realtor Harold Hicks and asked young Hicks (who was just out of college) to show him around the desert and find him a temporary home.

"The Hicks' are a pioneer desert family. Alvah Hicks, Harold's father, came to Palm Springs in the early 1900s and put together the town's first water company.)

"When I first came here," Farrell recalled, "there was a group of us from films who frequented the desert — spending most of our time at the Desert Inn or El Mirador — when we could afford it.

In this group was Virginia Valli, an actress, with whom Farrell fell in love. They were married on Valentine's Day, 1931.

Although celebrities Ginger Rogers, Paul Lukas, Ralph Bellamy, Warner Baxter, Henry Fonda and Gilbert Roland found it an ideal place in which to relax between pictures, there was little or no social life at the time in Palm Springs.

"The only restaurant in town was the Doll House, owned by Jane Manchester on the other side of town, and the only two hotels were the Desert Inn and El Mirador," he recalled.

But the outdoor life was invigorating — and the young players enjoyed horseback riding and tennis.

In 1934 when the Palm Springs Polo Club was founded, Farrell was a charter member. The club was formed to "promote" polo in the desert and of the original members, the only two actually participated in the game (according to an early Polo Club scrapbook) were Farrell and Frank Bogert, who is now Mayor of Palm Springs.

"As for tennis, at first we played at the El Mirador," Farrell continued. "But then the courts became so crowded there wasn't room for us."

This more than any other factor was



When Perry Marshall, left, took a vacation from his disc jockey chores on Chicago radio station WIND, he asked Charlie Farrell, former Mayor of Palm Springs, to pick him for him for one week. The actor spent four hours a day spinning tales about famous Palm Springs residents. Pictured at the Chicago studio are Marshall, Don DeRosa, resident of both Palm Springs and Chicago, Farrell, and August Kettmann, police chief of Palm Springs.



Charlie Farrell in his polo playing days. Today he is an enthusiastic golfer as well as avid tennis player.

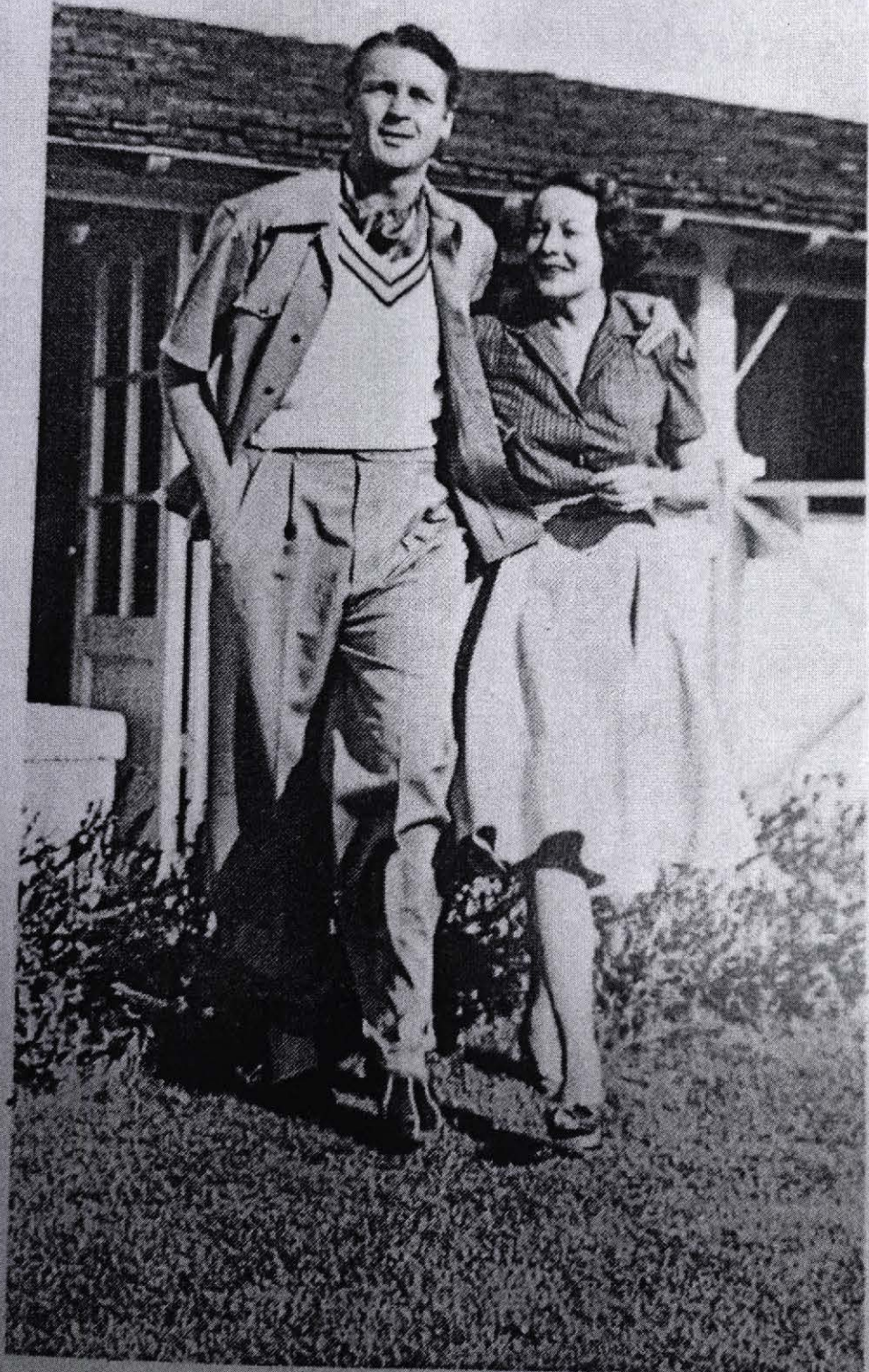


During Charlie Farrell's trip to Chicago, journalist Irving Kupferman presented him with a "Charlie" — for his performance in "Seventh Heaven."

Most publicized photograph taken at the Racquet Club — Spencer Tracy and Farrell play chess with the club's large outdoor chess set.



real estate." ... with ... springs



Mr. and Mrs. Charles Farrell (the

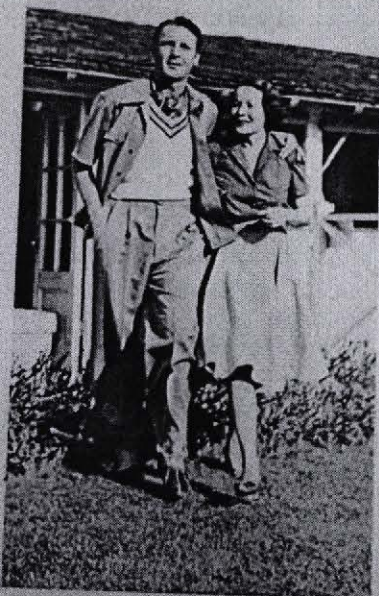
palm springs life

FARRELL — *Continued*

responsible for the birth of the Racquet Club.

By that time, Farrell owned a small house in Palm Springs. He and his close friend, actor Ralph Bellamy, had invested 6,000 dollars in 200 acres of raw desert in what was considered the windy part of Palm Springs.

"At first I wasn't going to buy the land," Farrell admits, "but when I told Bellamy that the land was available at 30 dollars an acre and wasn't under water, he said, 'Why the hell don't you buy it?' And so we found ourselves knee deep in cactus and Palm Springs real estate."



Mr. and Mrs. Charles Farrell (the former Virginia Valli) take a stroll at the Racquet Club. The Farrells built the club in 1934 with Ralph Bellamy.

Today Farrell claims that he and Bellamy had no idea of what they would do with the two hundred acres — except hope that desert land values would go up rather than down.

But Tony Burke, a pioneer desert realtor and former correspondent on the *London Daily Mail*, remembers it another way.

"We heard that Farrell and Bellamy planned to build a tennis club on the property. We couldn't understand why they would build out there or who would want to play in that damnable wind."

Actually, the Racquet Club — like

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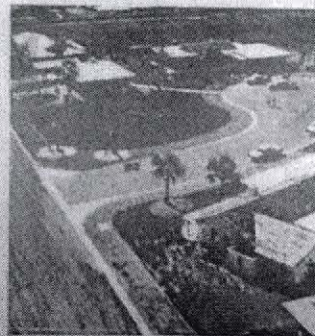
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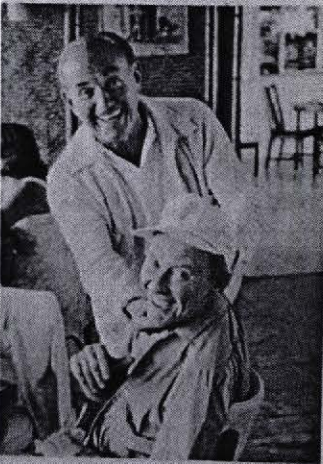
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ESTATES

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Charles Farrell, fourth from left, with members of the Davis Cup Team when they practiced at the Racquet Club in the early 1950's.



Celebrities are as prevalent today at the Racquet Club as they were when Charlie Farrell opened the club thirty years ago. Enjoying a good laugh following a set of tennis are Jack Warner and Burgess Meredith.



A patient at Torney General Hospital is assisted by volunteer Red Cross Nurse Virginia Farrell during the war. Mrs. Farrell was co-founder of the Women's Auxiliary of the Desert Hospital and the auxiliary's first president.

Charlie Farrell, left, imitates his friend, John Barrymore, right. They were in a party at the Doll House.



Harriet Beecher Stowe's story book character Little Eva — "just grewed".

"It wasn't planned at all," Farrell says.

"We had this land and didn't know what to do with it. In the meantime, a group of us from the picture business — Paul Lucas, Charlie Butterworth, Warner Baxter, Carol Lombard, Gilbert Roland, Jack Warner, Ginger Rogers and Mervyn LeRoy — spent time here when we weren't working. We all enjoyed tennis and were constantly on the look out for a place to play.

"The El Mirador would let us on its one court — if we didn't interfere with the paying guests."

After deciding between construction of a court in Farrell or Bellamy's backyard — the two actors decided to build on some of their acreage.

"We hired the best tennis court contractor we could find," Farrell says.

The courts were ready on Christmas Day, 1933, and Farrell and Bellamy charged their friends one dollar for the use of the courts.

"That was for hitting one ball or playing all day," Farrell chuckled.

On that first day, he and Bellamy made eighteen dollars.

In time, the demand for courts grew and improvements, including the construction of restaurant facilities, extra courts, sleeping accommodations and construction of a bar (designed by film director Mitch Leisen) were made.

"The bar was built in its present location at the suggestion of Melba Bennett," Farrell explained. (Mrs. Bennett and her husband, Frank, were owners of Deep Well Ranch at the time the Racquet Club was built.)

Farrell remembers it this way. "I was sitting in the desert watching them build one of our tennis courts, when Melba came by with a group of riders. I said, 'Melba, we've got to do something about building a patio and a bar — but I don't know where to put it.'"

"Put it right where you're sitting," she said — and we did."

By then, Bellamy had decided to return to New York and his acting career, and Farrell found that he and his wife, Virginia, were the sole owners of what was to become a full fledged tennis club.

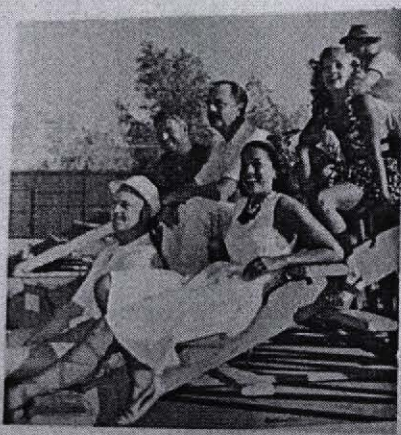
"Originally we charged fifty dollars per membership, then seventy-five and finally one hundred," he said. "It seem-



Charles Farrell was elected Mayor of Palm Springs in 1948. It was before the present City Hall was built and meetings were held on the stage of the El Paseo Theatre. Seated, from left, are city clerk Louise McCavn, city council member Ruth Hardy, Clarence Heyde who had preceded Farrell as Mayor, Farrell, and city council members Ted Martel and Gordon Peeking. Standing, from left, are council members Tom Kieley, Florian Boyd, city attorney Roy Colgate, Bill Veith, and William E. Allworth, city manager.



The Farrells are dog fanciers and until recently owned two Sealyham terriers. Lilly is still with them but Mr. Churchill, pictured here, died last year.



Tennis enthusiasts Charles Farrell, pro Joe Sawyer, William Powell, Gussie Moran and Mrs. William ("Mousie") Powell enjoy a practice set in bleachers at the Racquet Club. The year was 1945.

Bob Hope, third from right, and George Jessel, second from right, arrive at Palm Springs airport in a special United States Army plane after entertaining troops in Korea. The year was 1951 and Mayor Charles Farrell, second from left, welcomes them with city officials, Russell Rink, left, Florian Boyd, Jerry Nathanson, and August Kettmann, right, Palm Springs police chief.



ed the more we charged, the more people wanted to join."

Those familiar with Palm Springs' early days are fond of recalling the good times shared by early visitors to the Racquet Club.

It was the one oasis in the world that was helped, not hindered, by the depression.

"When the gang in Hollywood found they could come here and not spend much money but make their own fun, they began flocking to the desert and Palm Springs," Farrell related.

In those days, impromptu entertainment was provided by such well known later day stars as Bing Crosby, Phil Harris, Alice Faye, and Judy Garland.

"In time these people became institutions and you can't blame them for wanting some privacy and building their own homes," Farrell comments philosophically.

However, the die had been cast. Membership in the Racquet Club was definitely considered a Hollywood status symbol.

Early members speak nostalgically about the past. Mrs. William Powell (called "Mousie" by her friends and who was responsible for launching the weekly Mouseberger tennis tournaments still played at the club on Tuesday nights) says:

"We used to know everyone. Today people come into the club and we don't even know all their names."

Despite the growth of Palm Springs and the change from informality to formality (there isn't a week-end in Palm Springs during the height of its winter season when one person or organization isn't hosting a black tie dinner) the Racquet Club has somehow managed to maintain much of its original informality.

Walls have been knocked out to make rooms larger; the Garden Room—once outdoors—was enclosed some years ago; and after Farrell sold the club to a group of investors including Clint Murchison, Jr. and Robert Morton five years ago, additional suites, an extra swimming pool and tennis courts were added.

However, anyone entering the Racquet Club for the first time is impressed by the busy tennis courts (anyone who think the stars, country's top industrialists and political leaders who

enjoy the Racquet Club can't actually play, have another think coming), the gaiety prevalent at the bar, the fine food and the warmth with which new owner Morton and former owner Farrell, who is now chairman of the board, greet guests.

During the day, most of the members are clad in tennis togs or slacks. Farrell can usually be found table hopping, telling a story here and a story there.

He might be seated with Frederick Loewe, composer of "My Fair Lady", "Camelot", and "Gigi"; former singing star Phil Regan; Howard Duff and Ida Lupino; or David McDonald, president of the United Steelworkers of America — or he and Dinah Shore could be handing out trophies following one of the many tennis tournaments planned throughout the year.

If it's lunch time, he is probably seated quietly with Sherman Hull, who has been manager of the Racquet Club the past seventeen years, at what they refer to as the "family table".

Farrell, who now has white hair but retains his youthful appearance, personality and zest, is fond of reminiscing.

During the last annual Desert Circus he recalled that in the early 1940s the Racquet Club had provided a float for the parade.

"It was symbolic of the Aerial Tramway — and that was twenty years ago," he said. "It should have won. It was designed by Harry Oliver who did the sets for 'Seventh Heaven'."

It has never been publicized, but Farrell contributed generously from his own pocketbook toward making the Aerial Tramway a reality.

Farrell is as popular with the club's employees as its members.

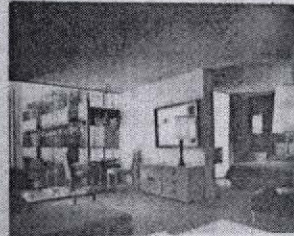
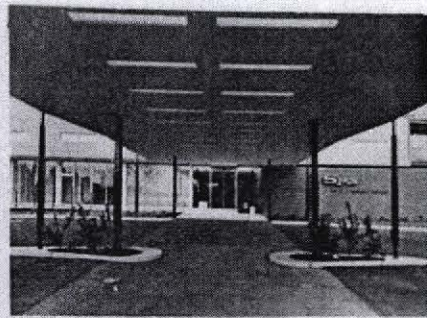
One housekeeper worked there for eleven years; the woman who replaced her has held the same position for fourteen years; Tex Gregg has been bartender since 1936; Cy Hodgen has tended bar for the same length of time; and vice president and general manager Sherman Hull and tennis pro David Gillam are starting their seventeenth year at the Racquet Club.

Part of the Farrell loyalty in Palm Springs is due to his participation — and that of his wife — in community projects. There is no cause too large or small for the Farrells to tackle.

In 1915 when there was a tremendous



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FARRELL — Continued



Actors Charlie Farrell and Mark Stevens on the golf course.

need for living quarters for nurses, Mrs. Farrell was one of a handful of women who organized the Women's Auxiliary of the Desert Hospital.

"We know how difficult it was to get housing accommodations or even to rent an apartment in Palm Springs. And we knew that if we could offer the nurses a lovely place in which to live—working in Palm Springs would be more attractive to them," Mrs. Farrell explained.

She became the Auxiliary's first president and is still a tireless worker for that cause.

Virginia Farrell, dark haired, soft spoken and the epitome of ladylike graciousness, first became active with the hospital during the war. At that time she worked as a nurse's aide with the Red Cross.

During that time Charlie was in the Navy.

Charles Farrell attended Naval Officers Training School and eventually became an administrative officer with Fighting Squadron 17. He served in the Western Pacific with a unit aboard flattops of Fast Carrier Task Force.

An annual event, held in Palm Springs, is the Naval Commandery Dinner. Farrell helped start the Palm Springs chapter of the organization following the war.

Other interests that keep the Farrells busy are the Palette Club, an organization dedicated to promoting an interest in the visual arts, of which Mrs. Farrell is a charter member, and a group that seeks to find shelter for the thousands of dogs left homeless at the end of each winter season.

The Farrells have always been pet lovers and their two sealyhams, "Mr. Churchill" and "Lilly", have been

canine favorites in Palm Springs for many years. Unfortunately, "Mr. Churchill" passed away last year, and the loss was felt by most Racquet Club habitués.

Following World War II, Farrell was persuaded to run for the City Council



John Roosevelt, youngest son of the late President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and owner of the old family home at Hyde Park, enjoys a chat with actor Charles at the Racquet Club in Palm Springs. The two men served aboard the USS Hornet together during the war. Mr. Roosevelt vacationed for several days in the desert spa.

from his district, North Palm Springs.

"Actually," he says, "I was drafted."

And he was. His candidacy was unopposed and he was elected in 1946. His fellow council members elected him Mayor on April 20, 1948—and he was re-elected for a third two year term in April of 1952.

City Council members are not paid, and there are those who say he gave

one of his best performances as the non-salaried Mayor of Palm Springs.

One fellow council member recalls that when Farrell was faced with a particularly difficult issue he would say:

"Now look, Mr. Attorney, what's this all about? We don't have these kind of problems up at the Racquet Club."

According to some citizens, he would show despair over a turn of events by burying his head dramatically in his arms at the council table.

Yet during his term as Palm Springs Mayor, he worked hard, took his job seriously and the city made many improvements.

Many of these were to help beautify Palm Springs.

"At one time, Palm Canyon Drive was lined with fortune tellers and shooting galleries," Ruth Hardy, who served on the city council with Farrell, recalls.

"Beautification of the city was of utmost importance."

It was during Farrell's term in office that the palm trees along Palm Canyon were lit and that Tamarisk Park was created and planted.

"It took seven weeks to light the palm trees," according to Mrs. Hardy. "We would go to Palm Canyon Drive every Monday night following the Council meeting and try the lights in another place."

Farrell fought tooth and nail to retain the city's airport.

There was a group that wanted to subdivide it. I said I'd go all the way to Washington before losing our airport," he boomed — angrily recalling the event.

But perhaps most of all Farrell is remembered for what has often been termed "Farrell's Folly".

An avid sports fan, the actor was certain that Palm Springs would be an ideal place for major league baseball. It was Farrell who spearheaded the construction of the Rodeo grounds and the baseball field.

In later years — with the coming of the Seattle Rainiers and the L.A. Angels, who annually use Palm Springs for spring training—Farrell was proven correct. But until that time, friends referred to the field as "Farrell's Folly".

On July 31, 1953, following his return to television and after a dispute over the status of the city manager, Charles David Farrell resigned as Mayor of Palm Springs.

Palm Springs' most colorful citizen began his life on August 9, 1902 in East Walpole, Massachusetts — several miles south of Boston.

His father (who today lives in Palm Springs) owned three motion picture theaters and Farrell often says he started his career "sweeping popcorn out of the theaters".

Pop Farrell — as most everyone in Palm Springs refers to him — was so pleased when his son starred in "Seventh Heaven" that he ran the film simultaneously at all three theaters.

Prior to becoming an actor, young Farrell worked with a traveling midget act, attended Boston University where he majored in Business Administration (and was the school's heavyweight boxing champion), and worked as an Extra in films.

"I used to walk all the way from my hotel room in downtown Los Angeles to Hollywood — just to save a dime in streetcar fare," he is fond of reminiscing. "And sometimes when I reached the casting office, I was too afraid to ask for work."

For the past twelve years the Farrells have lived in a rambling Spanish house on Tachevah. It is near the El Mirador Hotel and around the corner from the hospital. It has two separate entrances, a large Spanish patio and is filled with antiques that the Farrells collected on their many trips around the world.

"We love our house," Mrs. Farrell says simply.

Several years ago the Farrells, who are always buying and selling land, invested in property in Palm Desert near Eldorado Country Club.

There was a great deal of publicity over the fact that they would eventually sell their Spanish home in the heart of Palm Springs and move to a modern bungalow in Palm Desert — as many of their friends were doing.

But Mr. Farrell said firmly:

"We have no intentions of leaving Palm Springs. No matter how the city builds up around us, this is our home."

And, we might add, Palm Springs loves the Farrells too much to let them go.



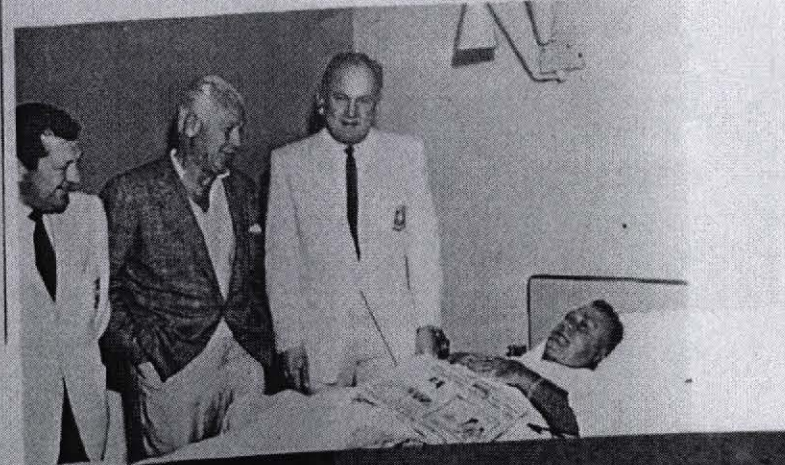
San Francisco Mayor and Mrs. George Christopher visit Charlie at the Racquet Club.

L. C. Smith accepts the Charlie Farrell Racquet Club Perpetual Trophy for the Menlo Circus Club of San Mateo at the Eldorado Polo Field. With Charlie are Millie Iverson, Racquet Club publicist, Mr. Smith, and Palm Springs Life publisher, I. M. F. Taylor.



Nancy Chaffee Kiner kisses Charlie after a successful match.

When Palm Springs Golf Classic officials visited the Desert Hospital to dedicate a new wing donated by the Classic, Charlie Farrell's buddy, Police Chief August Kellmann, was a reluctant patient. Cheering up Gus were Russ Wade, Farrell, and Classic President Bob McCulloch.



Property Detail Report for:



630 E TACHEVAH DR, PALM SPRINGS, CA, 92262-4902

Owner Information:

Owner Name: **MANLY, JOHN C MANLY, JILL A**
 Mailing Address: **206 MORNING CANYON RD, CORONA DEL MAR, CA, 92625-2640**
 Vesting Code: **TRUST** Phone Number:

Location Information:

Legal Description: **POR LOT 1 MB 018/076 EL MIRADOR ESTATES**
 County: **RIVERSIDE** FIPS Code: **06065** Census Trct/Blk: **044602 / 1**
 APN: **507-092-008** Alternative APN: Map Ref: **E7-756**
 Twshp-Rnge-Sect: **- -** Legal Book/Page: Tract No:
 Legal Lot: **1** Legal Block:
 Subdivison: **EL MIRADOR ESTATES**

Last Market Sale Information:

Sale Date: **5/26/2011** Sale Price: **\$1,000,000** 1st Mtg Amount: **\$**
 Sale Doc No: **2011-0233530** Price Per SqFt: **\$274** 1st Mtg Int Type:
 Transfer Doc No: Price Per Acre: **\$1,428,571** 2nd Mtg Amount: **\$**
 1st Mtg Doc No: 2nd Mtg Int Type:
 Sale Type: **FULL AMOUNT COMPUTED**
 Deed Type: **GRANT DEED/DEED OF TRUST**
 Title Company: **FIRST AMERICAN TITLE COMPANY**
 Lender:
 Seller Name: **GRENCE, JEROME M; GRENCE, CARRIE SNYDER**

Property Characteristics:

Building Area: **3,652** Total Rooms: Construction:
 Living Area: **3,652** Bedrooms: **4** Heat Type: **CENTRAL**
 Garage Area: Baths: **4** Air Cond: **CENTRAL**
 Basement Area: Fireplace: No of Stories: **1** Roof Type:
 Parking Type: No of Stories: **1** Roof Material: **TILE**
 Yr Buil/Effective: **1933 /** Quality: Style:
 Pool Code:

Tax and Value Information:

Assessed Value: **\$1,013,000** Assessed Year: **2013** Est Market Val: **\$1,350,500**
 Land Value: **\$253,000** Property Tax: **\$12,845** Assessor Appd Val:
 Improvement Value: **\$760,000** Improvement %: **75**
 Total Taxable Value: Tax Exemption:

Site Information:

Assessor Acres: **0.7** Zoning: **R1A** Land Use Code: **163**
 Assessor Lot SqFt: **30,492** No of Buildings: Land Use Desc: **SFR**
 Lot W/D: **/** Res/Comm Units: **1** County Use Code: **R1**
 Calculated Acres: **0.8277** Sewer Type:
 Calculated Lot SqFt: **36,055** Water Type:

Property Detail Report for:



1120 N VIA MIRALESTE, PALM SPRINGS, CA, 92262-4821

Owner Information:

Owner Name: **MANLY, JOHN C MANLY, JILL A**
 Mailing Address: **206 MORNING CANYON RD, CORONA DEL MAR, CA, 92625-2640**
 Vesting Code: **TRUST** Phone Number:

Location Information:

Legal Description: **POR LOT 1 MB 018/076 EL MIRADOR ESTATES**
 County: **RIVERSIDE** FIPS Code: **06065** Census Trct/Blk: **044602 / 1**
 APN: **507-092-009** Alternative APN: Map Ref: **E7-756**
 Twshp-Rnge-Sect: **--** Legal Book/Page: Tract No:
 Legal Lot: **1** Legal Block:
 Subdivision: **EL MIRADOR ESTATES**

Last Market Sale Information:

Sale Date: **5/26/2011** Sale Price: **\$390,000** 1st Mtg Amount: **\$**
 Sale Doc No: **2011-0233531** Price Per SqFt: **\$230** 1st Mtg Int Type:
 Transfer Doc No: Price Per Acre: **\$1,695,652** 2nd Mtg Amount: **\$**
 1st Mtg Doc No: 2nd Mtg Int Type:
 Sale Type: **FULL AMOUNT COMPUTED**
 Deed Type: **GRANT DEED/DEED OF TRUST**
 Title Company: **FIRST AMERICAN TITLE COMPANY**
 Lender:
 Seller Name: **GRENCE, JEROME; GRENCE, CARRIE**

Property Characteristics:

Building Area: **1,698** Total Rooms: Construction:
 Living Area: **1,698** Bedrooms: **4** Heat Type: **CENTRAL**
 Garage Area: Baths: **3** Air Cond: **CENTRAL**
 Basement Area: Fireplace: Roof Type:
 Parking Type: No of Stories: **1** Roof Material: **TILE**
 Yr Built/Effective: **1934 /** Quality: Style:
 Pool Code:

Tax and Value Information:

Assessed Value: **\$374,000** Assessed Year: **2013** Est Market Val: **\$603,166**
 Land Value: **\$123,000** Property Tax: **\$4,861** Assessor Appd Val:
 Improvement Value: **\$251,000** Improvement %: **67**
 Total Taxable Value: Tax Exemption:

Site Information:

Assessor Acres: **0.23** Zoning: **R1A** Land Use Code: **163**
 Assessor Lot SqFt: **10,019** No of Buildings: Land Use Desc: **SFR**
 Lot WD: **/** Res/Comm Units: **1** County Use Code: **R1**
 Calculated Acres: **0.2869** Sewer Type:
 Calculated Lot SqFt: **12,497** Water Type:

Ken Lyon

From: John Manly <JManly@manlystewart.com>
Sent: Friday, June 20, 2014 9:23 AM
To: Ken Lyon
Cc: My Love; Suzanna Storm; Jackie Storm
Subject: Farrell Estate/Proposed Class 1

Dear Ken, I am aware of the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board's initiation of studies for possible Class 1 designation of the Charlie Farrell House, at 630 East Tachevah Drive and the associated Guest House at 1250 North Via Miraleste. My wife Jill and I own both parcels and am writing to indicate our written support of the proposed designations of both parcels.

I think this would have made Charlie and his wife Virginia very happy.

John Manly

1. CONSENT CALENDAR:

1.A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: JUNE 10, 2014 MEETING.

Approve as amended M/S/C Williamson/Hays (4-1-2) Ploss opposed, Dixon and La Voie abstained.

1.B. REQUEST BY BILL LEWALLEN (OWNER) FOR EXECUTION OF A MILLS ACT HISTORIC PROPERTY PRESERVATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF PALM SPRING, THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN ESTATES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATE AND BILL LEWALLEN FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 283 EAST TWIN PALMS DRIVE, A CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE ELIGIBLE FOR CLASS 1 HISTORIC STATUS WITHIN THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN HISTORIC DISTRICT (HSPB 73 / HD-2).

M/S/C Ploss/Dixon Approve staff's recommendation (7-0).

1.C. REQUEST BY RICHARD COOK AND CHRISTOPHER MACALUSO, OWNERS FOR EXECUTION OF A MILLS ACT HISTORIC PROPERTY PRESERVATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, THE RACQUET CLUB GARDEN VILLAS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION AND RICHARD COOK AND CHRISTOPHER MACALUSO, FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 360 CABRILLO ROAD UNIT 118, A CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE ELIGIBLE FOR CLASS 1 HISTORIC STATUS WITHIN THE RACQUET CLUB COTTAGES WEST HISTORIC DISTRICT, (HSPB 88 / HD-3).

M/S/C Ploss/Dixon Approve staff's recommendation (6-0-1) La Voie recused.

1.D. REQUEST BY MICHAEL FLEMING AND LUIS A. LAVIN, OWNERS FOR EXECUTION OF A MILLS ACT HISTORIC PROPERTY PRESERVATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS AND MICHAEL FLEMING AND LUIS A. LAVIN FOR THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1860 VISTA DRIVE, A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE (HSPB 89).

M/S/C Approve staff's recommendation (7-0).

2. PUBLIC HEARINGS

2.A APPLICATION BY THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS FOR CONSIDERATION OF CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 630 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE KNOWN AS "THE CHARLIE FARRELL ESTATE" (HSPB-80) AND 1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE KNOWN AS "THE GUEST HOUSE" (HSPB-81) ZONE R-1-B.

STAFF MEMBER LYON summarized the staff report.

BOARD MEMBER WILLIAMSON questioned the guest house status as a non-compliant property. Asked if not designating it would leave it vulnerable to future unsympathetic renovations or tear down that would potentially detract from the historic nature of the site on which the main house is sited.

BOARD MEMBER BURKETT questioned whether a house needs to be considered "grand" to qualify for historic designation. He complimented the staff report.

ASSOCIATE PLANNER LYON noted that staff believes that neither persons nor events associated with the guest house warrant Class 1 designation.

BOARD MEMBER PLOSS noted that when Ernst Off built the house, it was one property. When she visited the site, the guest house felt like it is part of the larger estate, not separate. She noted several report corrections including concern about content of the attachments authored by Craig Ewing.

DIRECTOR WHEELER suggested deleting the attachments authored by Craig Ewing.

BOARD MEMBER LA VOIE suggested including Board Member Ploss' comments as an addendum. Page 7 of 10, bullet 8 should say "extended sill" not "molding".

BOARD MEMBER LA VOIE noted that on page 7 of the report, the first 5 items in the non-contributing list are not original to the house; and on page 9, bullet number two, suggested "Classic and exemplary example..." is better language.

BOARD MEMBER HAYS supports including 1120 Via Miraleste in the Class 1 designation and suggested the two parcels should be merged.

BOARD MEMBER PLOSS moved to recommend Class 1 designation for both sites. Second by Board Member La Voie, motion withdrawn.

M/S/C Hays/Dixon Approve staff recommendation recommending Class 1 designation for the Charlie Farrell House at 630 Tachevah Drive and take no action on the Guest House at 1120 N Via Miraleste. (6-1) Ploss opposed.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- 3.A. CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST BY THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS FOR REHABILITATION OF THE EXTERIOR OF THE CORNELIA WHITE HOUSE, A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE LOCATED AT THE VILLAGE GREEN PARK, 225 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE, ZONE CBD AND A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION PURSUANT TO CEQA (HSPB 4).

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

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

Senior Planner Edward Robertson summarized the staff memo.

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

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

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

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

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

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

No report.

10. STAFF & OTHER REPORTS

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

11. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

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

Ken Lyon

From: Margo Wheeler
Sent: Sunday, June 29, 2014 10:53 AM
To: Ken Lyon
Cc: Joanne Bruggemans
Subject: FW: In Support of Historic Designation - The Charles Farrell Estate

M. Margo Wheeler, F.A.I.C.P.
Director of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262
Tel: (760) 323-8269 / Fax (760) 322-8360
Email: Margo.Wheeler@palmspringsca.gov

From: Jay Thompson
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2014 11:19 AM
To: Margo Wheeler; Terri Hintz
Subject: FW: In Support of Historic Designation - The Charles Farrell Estate

From: MCLEConsul@aol.com [mailto:MCLEConsul@aol.com]
Sent: Friday, June 27, 2014 11:14 AM
To: Jay Thompson
Subject: In Support of Historic Designation - The Charles Farrell Estate

TO: The Historic Site Preservation Board
c/o Jay Thompson, City Clerk

Dear Friends:

I fully support historic designation and I write per instructions on the Notice of Intention document which I received today.

This very important step is many years overdue. The Grence's (Jerome and Carrie Grence) the previous owners and caretakers of this beautiful property for some 20 years, would have done it themselves years ago, but for various reasons weren't ready. Also, Jerry Grence was on the Planning Commission for a number of those years, as you may recall, and I believe he held back as possible conflict of interest.

Just thought you all would like to know that from the 1950s, it has been "The Charles Farrell Estate" rather than residence. Locals just say "the Charlie Farrell Estate."

I for one look forward to the property receiving its due. The time is so right for it. Thank you for your great work.

Donna Chaban-Delmas
(760) 449-0021

(and Board Member, RCENO).

Ken Lyon

From: Richard Wilson <rswrswrsw@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 21, 2014 4:35 PM
To: Ken Lyon
Subject: "CHARLES FARRELL ESTATE"

Hello Ken,

Just a quick note to let you know that I support the application for the Farrell Estate as a Class I Historical Site. I live in the El Mirador Neighborhood and feel that it would be a great asset for us as a neighborhood.

Thank you.

Richard Wilson
1466 N Opuntia Rd
Palm Springs 92262

Ken Lyon

From: Margo Wheeler
Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2014 4:21 PM
To: Ken Lyon
Cc: Joanne Bruggemans
Subject: FW: historic preservation board

M. Margo Wheeler, F.A.I.C.P.
Director of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262
Tel: (760) 323-8269 / Fax (760) 322-8360
Email: Margo.Wheeler@palmspringsca.gov

From: Jay Thompson
Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2014 3:55 PM
To: Margo Wheeler; Terri Hintz
Subject: FW: historic preservation board

From: Bridgette Sullenger [<mailto:bridgettesullenger@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 01, 2014 8:52 AM
To: Jay Thompson
Subject: historic preservation board

Hello Jay;
I hope this email finds you well!

As a neighbor I would like to voice my support of the proposed historic dwelling Class I Historic Designation for the home known to neighbors as the "Charlie Farrell House" at 630 East Tachevah and 1120 North Via Miraleste. I believe that allowing this home the Historic Designation will continue to upgrade our neighborhood and allow appropriate preservation (and any future reconstruction) for a home that plays an important role in the history of telling the story of our city. Thank you for your time and if you would like any further insights into why I support this project please contact me.
Bridgette

--
Dr. B.A. Sullenger
760-774-3448

This e-mail, including attachments, may include confidential and/or proprietary information, and may be used only by the person or entity to which it is addressed. If the reader of this e-mail is not the intended recipient or

Cindy Berardi

From: Richard Wilson <rswrswrsw@aol.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 21, 2014 4:39 PM
To: Cindy Berardi
Subject: "CHARLES FARRELL ESTATE"

Hello Cindy,

Just a quick note to let you know that I support the application for the Farrell Estate as a Class I Historical Site. I live in the El Mirador Neighborhood and feel that it would be a great asset for us as a neighborhood.

Thank you.

Richard Wilson
1466 N Opuntia Rd
Palm Springs 92262

RECEIVED
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
2014 AUG 21 PM 4:48
JAMES THORNTON
CITY CLERK

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PUBLIC HEARING NOTIFICATION**



Date: September 3, 2014

Subject: HSPB 80 & 81 "The Charlie Farrell House" and "The Guest House"

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

I, Cynthia A. Berardi, 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 August 23, 2014.

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

Handwritten signature of Cynthia A. Berardi in black ink.

Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

I, Cynthia A. Berardi, 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 on August 21, 2014.

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

Handwritten signature of Cynthia A. Berardi in black ink.

Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

I, Cynthia A. Berardi, 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 August 21, 2014, 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.

Handwritten signature of Cynthia A. Berardi in black ink.

Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC
Deputy City Clerk

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

PROPOSED CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF 630 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE
"THE CHARLIE FARRELL HOUSE" (HSPB#80) AND
1120 NORTH VIA MIRALESTE "THE GUEST HOUSE" (HSPB #81), AND
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM CEQA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California, will hold a Public Hearing at its meeting of September 3, 2014. 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 from the Historic Site Preservation Board for Class 1 historic designation of the property located at 630 East Tachevah Drive (APN 507-092-008) "The Charlie Farrell House" (HSPB #80) and the property located at 1120 North Via Miraleste (APN 507-092-009) "The Guest House" (HSPB #81).

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 designations meet the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource.

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. and 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.

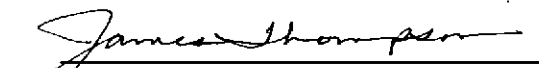
COMMENT ON THIS APPLICATION: Response to this notice may be made verbally at the Public Hearing and/or in writing before the hearing. Written comments may be made to the City Council by letter (for mail or hand delivery) to:

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]).

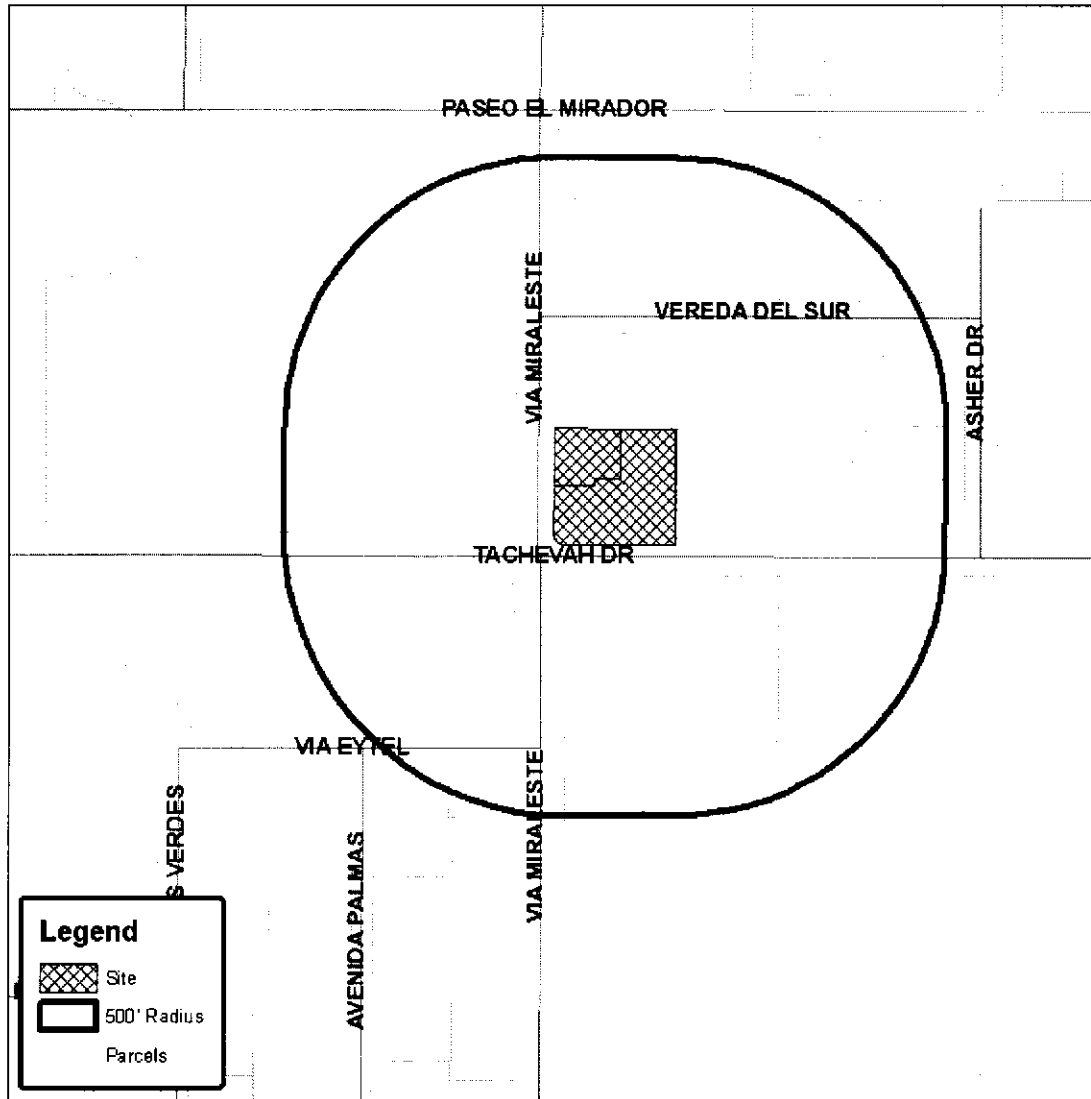
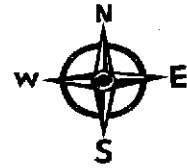
An opportunity will be given at said hearing for all interested persons to be heard. Questions regarding this case may be directed to Ken Lyon, RA, Associate Planner at (760) 323-8245.

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 NOS: HSPB 80 and HSPB 81

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: Application by the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board for Class 1 historic designation of 630 East Tachevah Drive, (APN 507-092-008) known as "The Charlie Farrell House" and 1120 North Via Miraleste, known as "The Guest House", (APN 507-092-009).