




CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING SERVICES
MEMORANDUM

Date: 8 March 2016

To: Historic Site Preservation Board

From: Flinn Fagg, AICP 
Director of Planning Services

Subject: Case 3.3377 – HSPB 33D – AV Upgrades in the City Council Chamber & Dais Renovation

The HSPB reviewed this project at their meetings of 12 January 2016 and 9 February 2016; the board voted to approve Option A1-4 at the February meeting, subject to conditions. In response to the issues raised by the HSPB, the consultant has provided the following additional details and drawings:

1. Floor plan, showing the location of cameras, lighting, and TV monitors;
2. Renderings of the Council dais and staff desk;
3. Details of the main video display; and
4. Details and rendering of the 60" monitors.

In addition, the consultant will provide material samples at the meeting for review by HSPB members.

The City Council discussed the status of the renovation project at their meeting of 2 March 2016, and voted to form a subcommittee of Council members (Mills, Roberts) to review the details of the project. The Certificate of Approval and final recommendations of the HSPB relative to the project will be forwarded to the Council subcommittee.

Attachments:


1. HSPB Memo – February 9, 2016
2. HSPB Staff Report – January 12, 2016
3. Floor plan, renderings, details



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING SERVICES

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 9, 2016
To: Historic Site Preservation Board
From: Ken Lyon, RA, Associate Planner 
Subject: Case 3.3377 - HSPB 33D – AV Upgrades in the City Council Chamber & Dais Renovation

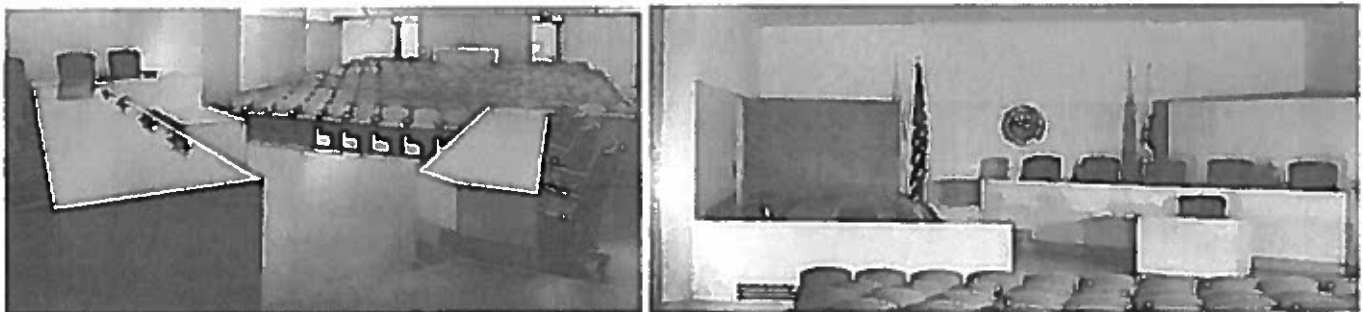
This project, which the HSPB reviewed in January 2016 is one for which the applicant (City) is seeking a certificate of approval to upgrade the AV systems in the Council Chamber and large conference room. The stated goal of the project is:

... to assure "...the Council dais is treated with the appropriate detail and refinement necessary to preserve the architectural integrity of the City Council Chambers."

At its January 2016 meeting, the Board reviewed the above project and voted to continue it to the February meeting with direction to the applicant (City) to provide a design scheme for the council dais that is more reflective of the original Frey-designed furnishings and interior and to:

"...direct staff to provide additional interior elevations, photo-simulations, sections and/or scaled details in advance of (the next) meeting as necessary to fully convey the actual integration of the AV equipment and components into the architecture of the council chamber. Incorporate the City seal in the design of the dais."

The Board suggested the designer should attempt to incorporate the minimalist aesthetic and simplicity of form and material detailing evident in the photos of the original dais and Council Chamber.



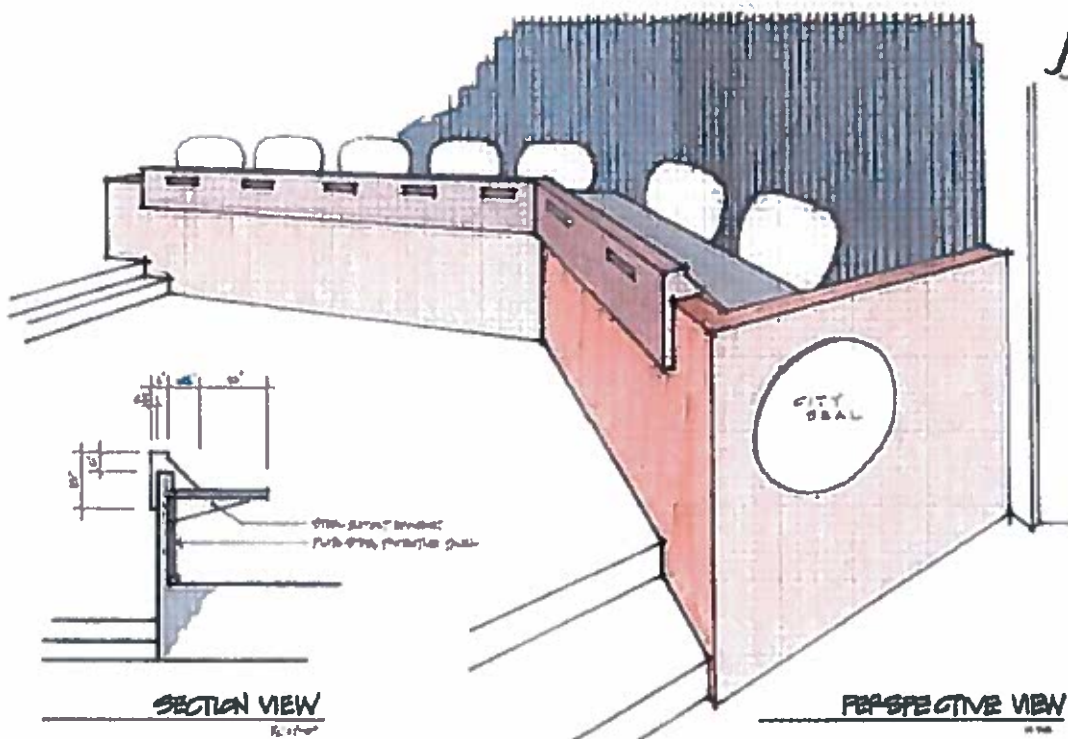
ORIGINAL INTERIOR DESIGN OF COUNCIL CHAMBER – (Photo credit: Julius Shulman)

The City's design consultant has produced a fourth scheme in an effort to respond and incorporate the HSPB's recommendations. The fourth scheme is attached herein with a description below provided by the designer:

Council Dais design A1 – 4 Concept Description:

Responding to the direction from the HSPB, this design takes into account the concepts of Albert Frey when he originally designed the Council Chambers. The streamlined wood skinned forms delineate the dais as per Frey's design. A "curb" is added to the top of the desk to hide the paper work and desktop mess that is so noticeable from a TV camera view that was not a concern back in the 1960's, and now the addition of the angled technology unit which is intended to simply wrap over the top of the dais stations and provide a name plate (static or digital) location on the 18" drop apron facing the audience. The re-introduction of the City's official seal is positioned on the audience-facing surface next to the Mayor's position at the dais. Materials are wood veneers in two different finishes.

Dais Option A1-4



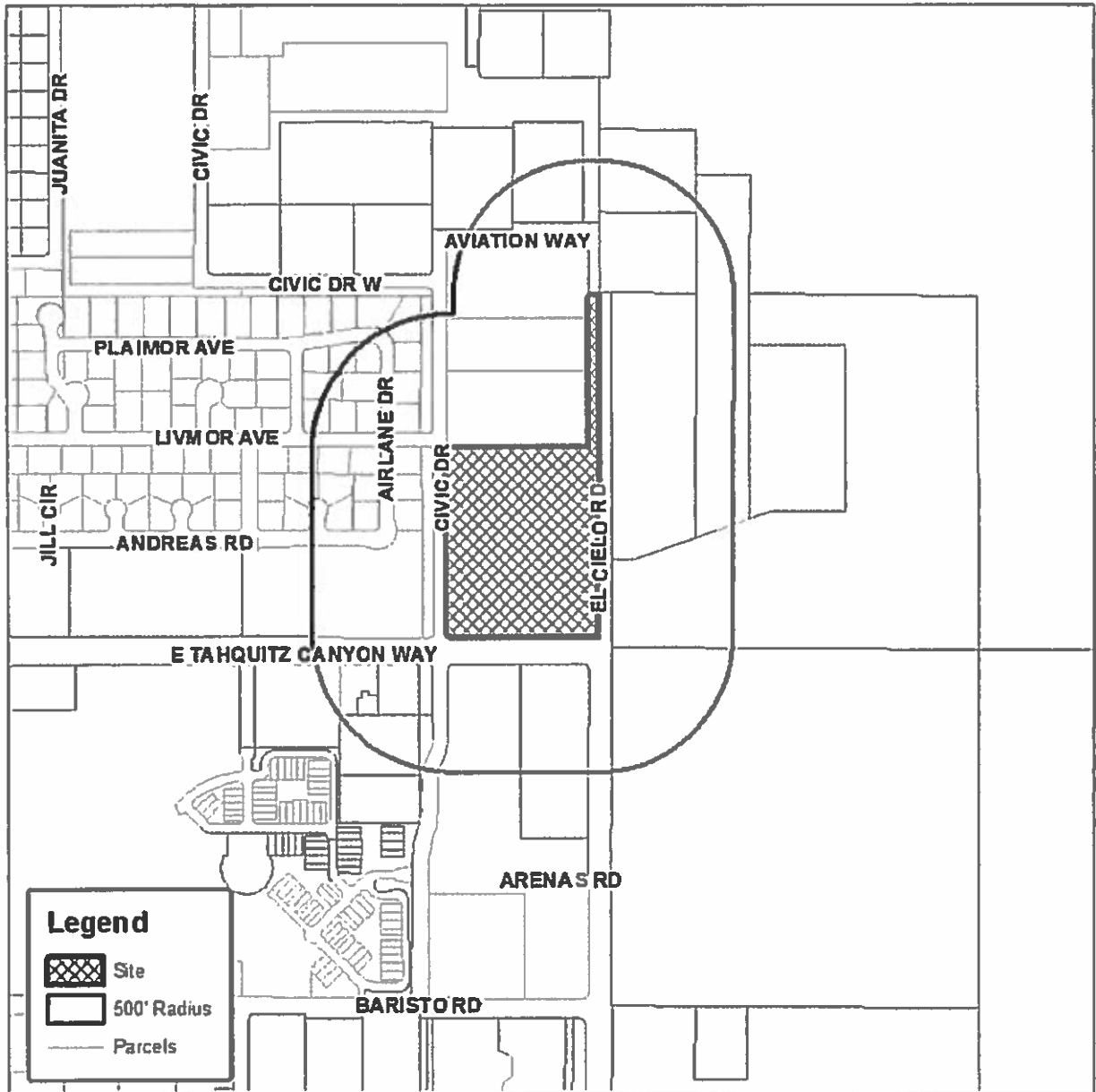
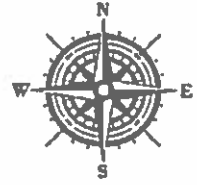
The design proposes a desk for the Council members that is similar in material, color tones and detailing as that seen in the original photos. Planning staff recommends the Board grant a certificate of approval only for the reconstruction of the Council desk & furnishings as shown at this time.

No additional information has been provided showing how the other A/V components are to be integrated into the Council Chamber. Planning Staff recommends these details be provided to the HSPB in March in order to make a fully informed decision on the appropriateness of the integration of the new A/V system in the Council Chamber.

Attachment: Vicinity Map
January 2016 Staff report excerpt.



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS



HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 12, 2016 NEW BUSINESS

SUBJECT: A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST FROM THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS FOR REMODELING OF PORTIONS OF THE COUNCIL CHAMBER DAIS AT THE PALM SPRINGS CITY HALL, A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE LOCATED AT 3200 EAST TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY. (CASE 3.3377 MAA / HSPB 33-D, ZONE C-U (CIVIC USES). (KL)

FROM: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

The City's Public Works Department is overseeing implementation of a Council-initiated renovation of the audio/visual system in the City Council Chambers. An interior design consultant has been retained to assure *"...the Council dais is treated with the appropriate detail and refinement necessary to preserve the architectural integrity of the City Council Chambers."*

The current furnishings and interior décor of the chamber were installed in the 1980's as part of a comprehensive interior remodeling of City Hall.

The interior design consultant has developed three design schemes would significantly alter the appearance of the front-panel of the council desk component of the dais. Numerous surface mounted components (lights, cameras, video monitors, etc.) are proposed throughout the council chamber and on the dais.

Pursuant to PSMC 8.05.195, alterations to the interior of publicly-owned Class 1 historic sites require a certificate of approval from the HSPB. The Board is to evaluate the three options against the guidelines for granting a certificate of approval and against the United States Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide comments to staff and continue the matter to a date certain of the February 9, 2016 HSPB meeting and direct staff to provide additional interior elevations, photo-simulations, sections and/or scaled details in advance of that meeting as necessary to fully convey the actual integration of the A/V equipment and components into the architecture of the council chamber.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

The City Council chamber is an integral part of the original City Hall building, designed in a collaborative effort by master architects Albert Frey, John Porter Clark, and Robson Chambers and was constructed between 1952 and 1956.¹

The Palm Springs City Hall has been recognized as a historically significant building not only at the local level, but also at the State and national level, having been placed in the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior in 2015.

Below are images (credit: Julius Shulman) of the original configuration of the Council chambers shortly after the building was constructed. The dais, which, by definition includes the entire raised platform at the front of the chamber, is comprised of the following basic functional components:

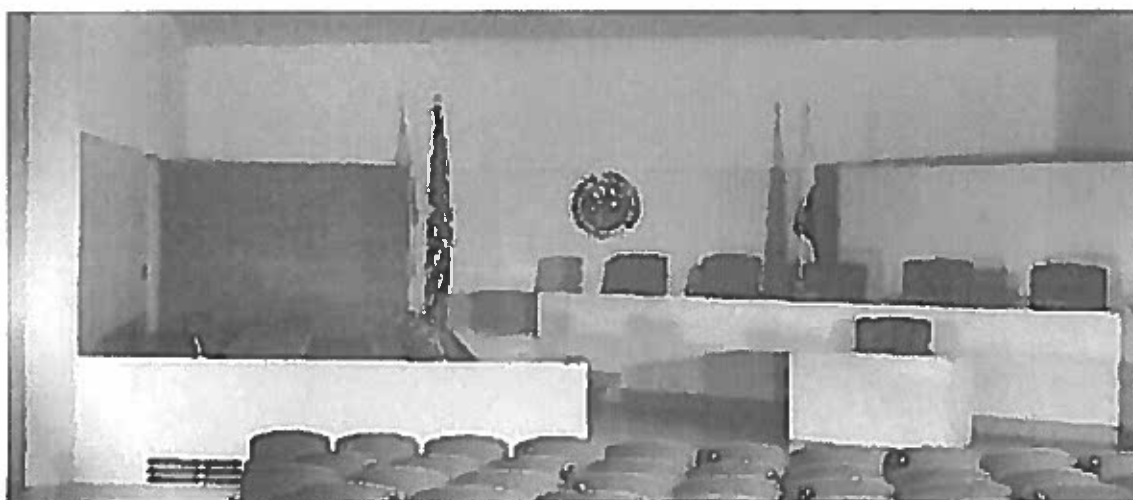
- (1) the city council desk,
- (2) the staff desk,
- (3) A/V components (screens, projectors, computers, etc.),
- (4) a podium at which the public may address the council.

As can be seen in the images below, the original dais also included a small desk immediately in front of the council desk for the recorder/secretary (this function in the current configuration has been subsumed in the staff desk). The original desk-front panels were comprised of vertically-grained clear-finished plywood with what appears to be a fine-grained face veneer run in a vertical orientation. Across the back wall of the dais were acoustical panels, a cork board, and a projection screen.

¹ Palm Springs City Hall was built in phases, the first between 1952 and 1956, with two large additions at the rear; one in 1956 designed by Clark, Frey & Chambers and one in 1965 designed by Williams, Clark, and Williams. In 1972 another smaller addition was constructed, designed by Williams & Williams for the Emergency Operations Center, and in 1984 a substantial remodeling and another large addition designed by Williams, Clark & Williams was added which included the part of the building presently occupied by Development Services.



ORIGINAL INTERIOR DESIGN OF COUNCIL CHAMBER – LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE DAIS



CLOSE-UP VIEW OF ORIGINAL INTERIOR DESIGN OF COUNCIL CHAMBER DAIS



ORIGINAL INTERIOR DESIGN OF COUNCIL CHAMBER - LOOKING NORTH TOWARD THE DAIS

The images below portray the current dais as renovated in the 1980's. The 1980's renovation introduced a design aesthetic for the dais furnishings based on a "panelized" look created with a grid of painted wood trim pieces mounted across the desk-front panels. It also introduced a public speaker's podium attached to the edge of the staff desk. Across the back of the dais a series of rolling "presentation boards" integrated into soffits and flanking screen walls with painted vertical wood trim and a motorized projection screen. Behind the east screen wall is a storage / utility closet that may be needed to accommodate some of the A/V components.



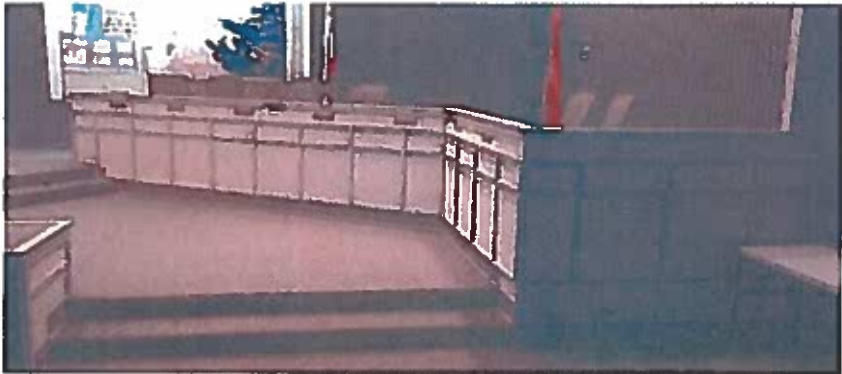
CURRENT VIEW OF COUNCIL CHAMBER DAIS (RENOVATED IN 1984)



CURRENT CONDITION LOOKING SOUTH FROM THE DAIS



CURRENT CONDITION LOOKING TOWARD THE DAIS (RENOVATED IN 1984)



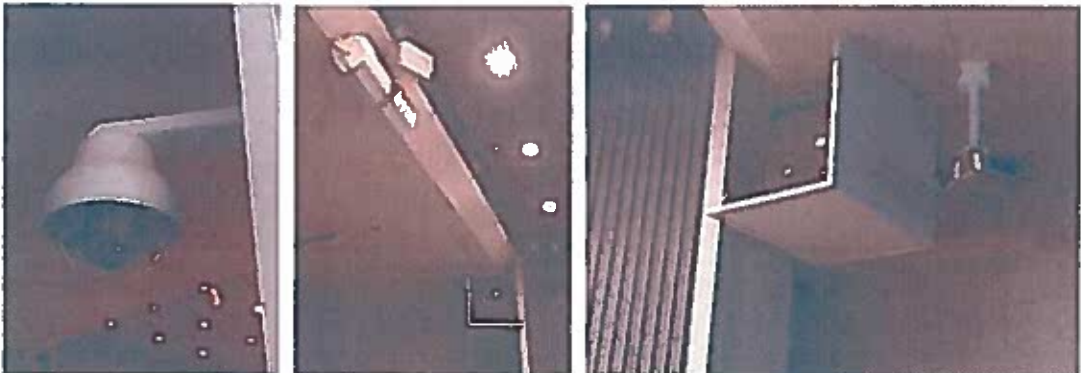
CLOSE UP VIEW OF CURRENT DAIS FROM 1984 RENOVATION



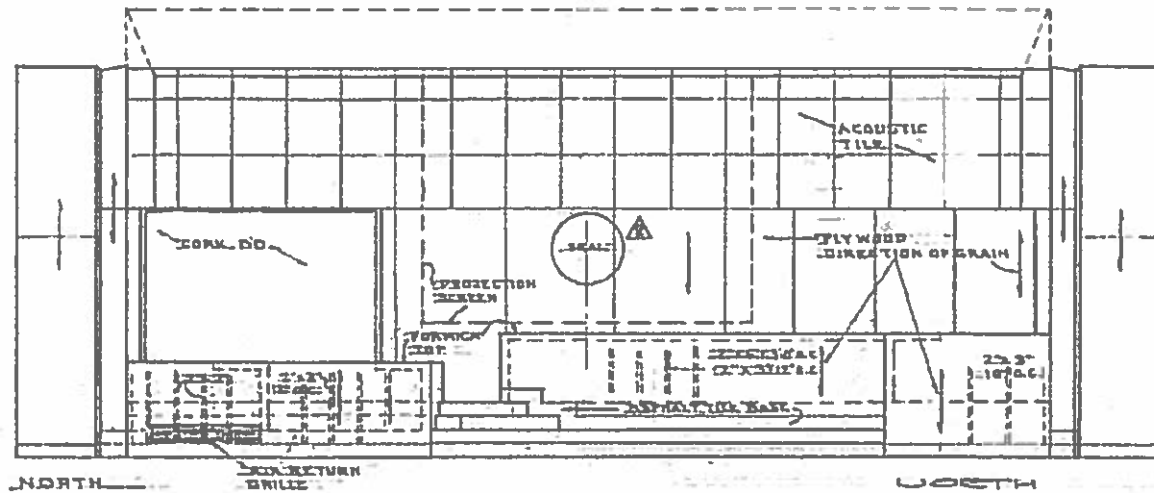
CURRENT VIEW OF COUNCIL CHAMBER DAIS



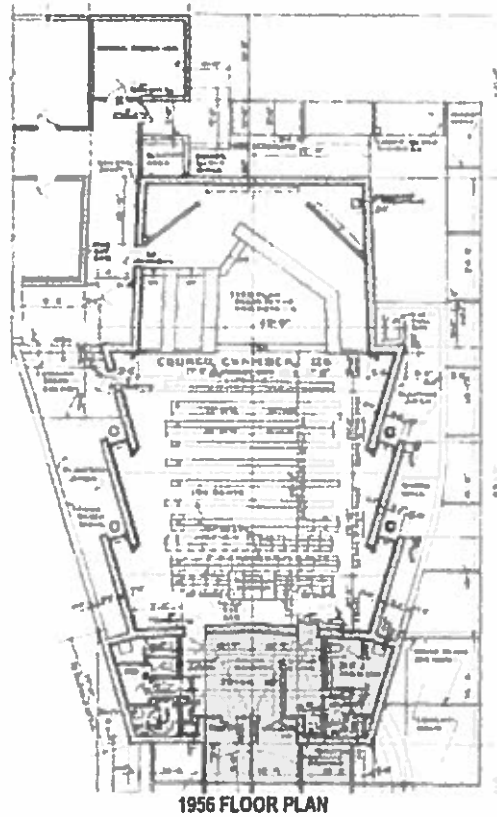
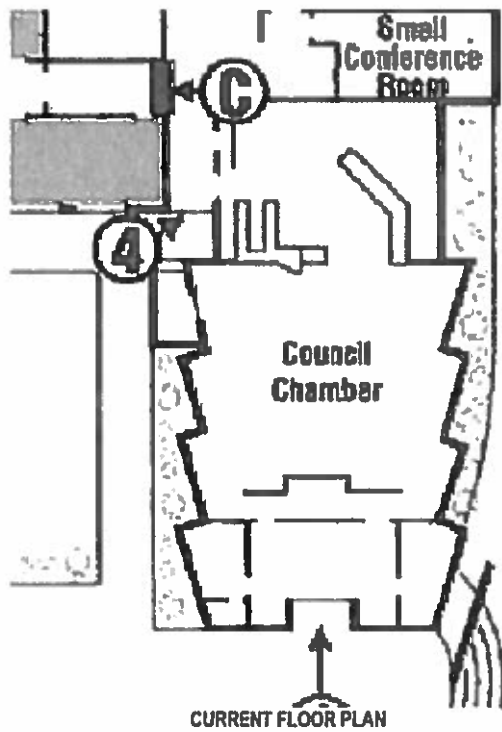
EXISTING LOBBY VIDEO MONITOR



EXISTING CAMERAS, SPEAKERS, TV MONITORS AND PROJECTION EQUIPMENT WILL BE REMOVED AND REPLACED.



1956 ELEVATION DRAWING OF FRONT OF DAIS



COUNCIL CHAMBER FLOOR PLANS

In March of 2014, the City Council hired Triton Technologies to design and install a new audio visual system for the Police Training Center Building on South Civic Drive. In July 2014, the City Council approved an addenda (#1) to expand Triton's scope to include complete replacement of the A/V system in the City Council chambers, the Large Conference Room, and the City's Television Studio & Production Center. In February

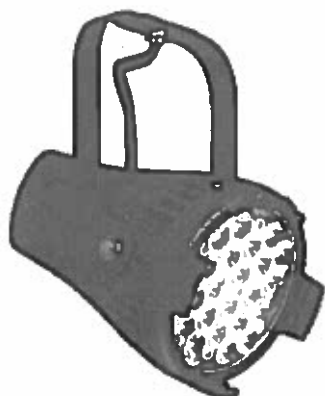
2015, addenda #2 was approved expanding the technological scope and adding interior design / architectural services to

"...support the design effort to ensure the installation of audio/visual equipment into the City Council Chambers, as well as added to the Council dais, is treated with the appropriate detail and refinement necessary to preserve the architectural integrity of the City Council Chambers."

At this time, the actual modifications that are necessary to install the new A/V components have not been fully identified, but there will be new built-in monitors at all workstations that will necessitate modification of all the dais furnishings and workstations.



At the ceiling, there will be new surface-mounted cameras and ceiling mounted special lighting fixtures necessary to provide proper lighting of the individuals at the dais (see images below).



**DESIRE D22 TUNGSTEN LED
CEILING SURFACE MOUNTED LIGHT FIXTURE**



**PANASONIC AW-HE130K
CEILING SURFACE MOUNTED CAMERA**

The existing two small ceiling-mounted video monitors oriented toward the audience at the ceiling will be replaced with four, 60 inch flat screen ceiling / wall-mounted video

monitors². The existing projection screen at the back of the dais will be replaced with an 80 inch diagonal flat screen video monitor.

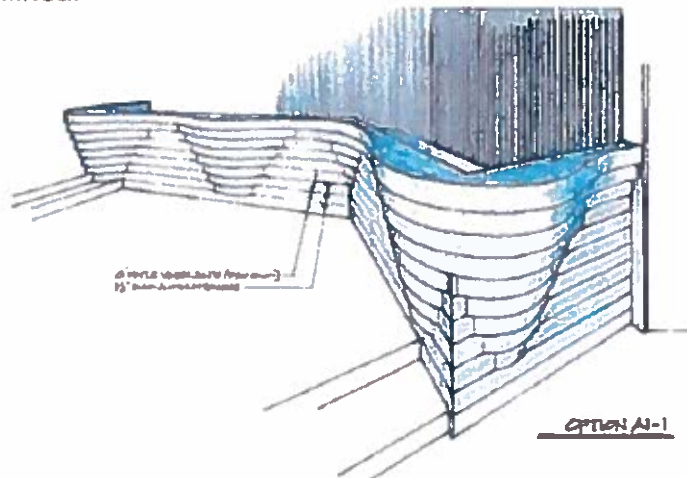


**LARGE 60 INCH FLAT SCREEN VIDEO MONITORS
WILL REPLACE THE EXISTING SMALL AUDIENCE-FACING CEILING MOUNTED MONITORS
AND THE PROJECTION SCREEN AT THE BACK OF THE DAIS WILL BE REPLACED WITH A RECESSED 80-INCH MONITOR**

It is assumed wiring, conduit, new digital projection screens cameras, lights, and equipment racks or closets may be part of the new A/V system. It is not clear what architectural impact or changes would be necessary to the perimeter walls and ceiling finishes to integrate and accommodate the new A/V system.

The interior design consultant has developed three schemes which are shown below with a short explanation / description provided by the designer.

Option A1-1 "Curvilinear"

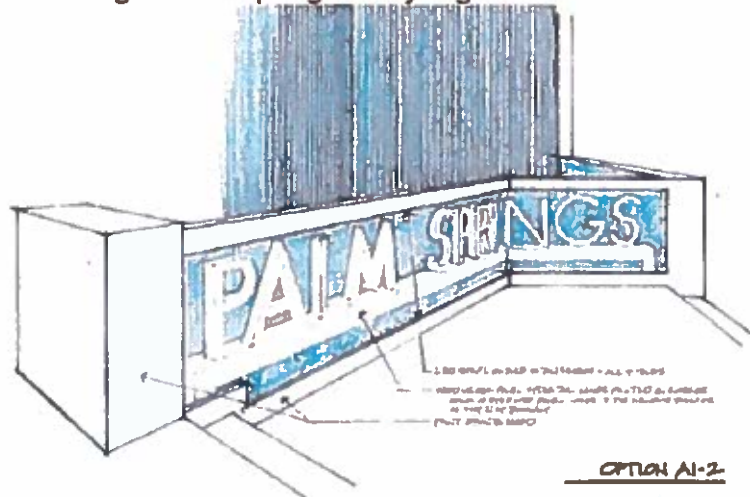


"Configured on the same footprint as the existing dais, this design features 6" white oak "bands" that attempt to interpret a freeform and fluid approach to the City's business by the various Councils that will be using the dais. The bands are separated by 1/8"

² Certain aspects of the subject project are necessary upgrades to address existing deficiencies in compliance with the ADA.

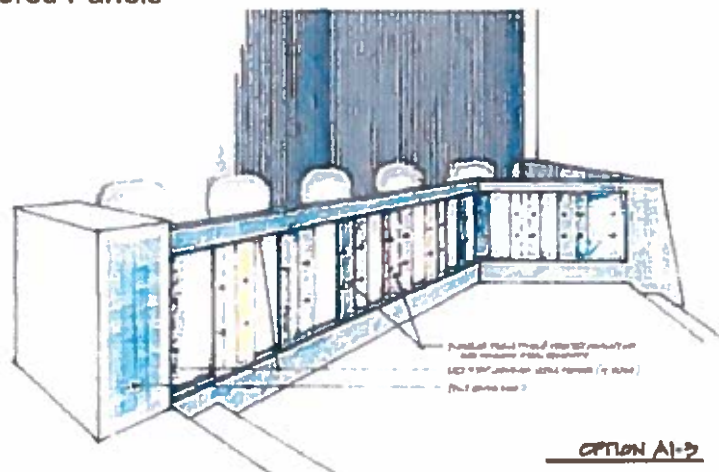
blackened metal sheets that emphasize the individual bands as well as finish the bottom surface of the cantilevered surfaces as they appear. The white oak is to be dyed a complimentary color tone similar to the existing colors within the Chambers."

Option A1-2 "Photo Image Palm Springs Entry Sign"



"This option also utilizes the same footprint as the existing dais but includes a raised surface counter for staff to utilize at the display boards. The dais face introduces a digital photo image of the Palm Springs entry sign at Tramway that has been printed on white oak and recessed 3" to enable the positioning of a continuous LED perimeter light to frame and illuminate the image. The design was generated as an attempt to give the dais a Palm Springs specific identity instead of being generic. The image is recognizable and memorable. The photo image will be a one color mono-tone (in the compatible coloration of the Chambers) where the balance of the dais will be paint grade to match the existing color palette."

Option A1-3 "Colored Panels"



"Although this option sits on the existing footprint of the dais it does project a "battered"

or angled surface along the arm that faces the audience to give this option a more significant, or monumental shape. This option also has a raised counter surface at the display wall for staff to utilize (as in option A1-2). The unique aspect of this option is the use of several ¼" multicolored acrylic panels that overlap as they fill a 5" recessed surface that is lighted from the perimeter by a continuous LED strip light. The panels are matte finished with polished edges to receive and highlight the panel colors. There is a grid of stainless steel "standoffs" that will be used as mounting hardware for the panels. The design concept here is to emphasize the creativity and diverse composition of the citizenry of Palm Springs while using similar materials to the new City median entry signage. The dais is to be fabricated in paint grade MDF and colored compatibly with the Chambers' palette. The surface behind the panels will be painted white to let the color of the acrylic come through."

As with all 3 of the options, the new electronics are to be featured at each one of 7 dais positions, set within an angled surface utilizing plastic laminate as the counter material for durability and cost effectiveness."

The interior design consultant has not provided a description on how the three options achieve the stated goal of preserving the architectural integrity of the chamber.

Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc...	
1952	Construction of the first phase of City Hall
1956	Construction of addition to the north of original building.
1965	Construction of a second addition to the north of the original building.
1972	Construction of Emergency Operations Center Addition
1984	Comprehensive remodeling and addition of Development Services annex
1996	City Council designates City Hall as a Class 1 historic site. (CC Resolution #18907)
2010	South parking lot renovation
2012	City Council clarifies the Class 1 designation of City Hall to include the site (CC Resolution #23016)
2013	HSPB approves certificate of approval for installing exterior conduit for connection of a traffic management system.
2014	Partial landscape changes & repaving of parking lots.

Notification	
	Neighborhood organizations were provided the agenda for this meeting pursuant to the noticing requirements outlined in PSZC 94.04.

ANALYSIS

Certificates of approval applications are evaluated by the HSPB against the guidelines of PSMC 8.05.190 "Factors to be considered upon application". As noted above, the stated goal of adding interior design services to the AV consultant's contract was to:

"...support the design effort to ensure the installation of audio/visual equipment into the City Council Chambers, as well as added to the

Council dais, is treated with the appropriate detail and refinement necessary to preserve the architectural integrity of the City Council Chambers.”

In reviewing and acting upon each application, the historic site preservation board shall consider:

(1) The historic value and significance, or the architectural value and significance or both, of the structure and its relation to the historic value of the surrounding area;

The historic and architectural significance of the Palm Springs City Hall has been well documented as an outstanding example of mid-century modern architecture and the work of master architects Clark, Frey & Chambers. The functional components and arrangement of the Council Chamber dais have remained relatively unchanged since the building's construction. Neither the current furnishings and desk-fronts on the dais nor the three proposed options reflect the original minimalist architectural aesthetic of the council chamber that can be seen in the Shulman photos. While the three options are creative and interesting, it is not clear how they achieve the stated goal of preserving the architectural integrity of the chamber.

(2) The relationship of the exterior architectural features of any structure to the rest of the structure itself and to the surrounding area;

The subject project does not impact the exterior of the building. The scope is limited to the Council Chamber and dais.

(3) The general compatibility of exterior design, arrangement, texture and material which is proposed by the applicant;

As noted, the proposed project impacts only one of the key public spaces within City Hall –the City Council chambers. Neither the current condition as renovated in the 80's nor the three schemes for the council desk-front reflect the Clark & Frey's minimalist architectural aesthetic of the chamber. More information is necessary to fully convey the visual impact of the new large LED monitors, surface mounted cameras, lighting and other components.

(4) Archaeological or ecological significance of the area.

There are no known archaeological or ecological significance to the subject site.

CONCLUSION

It would be helpful for the projects' consultant to clarify what physical impact integration of the new A/V equipment will have on the architectural integrity of the council chamber. In doing so, it would likely help clarify what modifications are necessary to adapt the

furnishings and architectural treatment and finishes in the chamber to accomplish the A/V upgrades. And, although the 1980's remodeling diminished the architectural and historic integrity of the Clark & Frey-designed council chamber, the current project presents an opportunity for the City to begin to restore key components of the chamber in a way that would be more respectful of the original design aesthetic of the space.

Staff does not believe the current three design options achieve this goal.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) allows for a categorical exemption determination to be made in cases where alterations to historic resources are made in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Guide for the Treatment of Historic Resources. The original interior aesthetic treatment of the chamber and the furnishings on the dais were materially impaired with the 1980's remodel. The current project could potentially change the aesthetic of the council chamber dais, but would not likely further impair the historic integrity of the space.



Ken Lyon, RA,
Associate Planner

Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services

Attachments:

Vicinity Map
Application materials