



# CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING SERVICES

### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 11, 2017  
**To:** The Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB)  
**From:** Ken Lyon, RA, Associate Planner *Ken Lyon*  
**Subject:** HSPB #83 – The Palm Springs Racquet Club  
2743 North Indian Canyon Drive

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#### SUMMARY:

At its meeting of May, 2012 the HSPB initiated study pursuant to PSMC Section 8.05.135 to inform itself of possible historic significance of the Palm Springs Racquet Club.

The Board's 2016/17 work plan included the Racquet Club among its priorities for the year. The Historic Resources Report by the John Ash Group from 2004 and the Staff summary from December 3, 2013 remain a complete analysis of the site. The ownership of the property has not changed since the Board's last action in 2014 and the owner has not responded to Staff's latest written correspondence, therefore, site observation may be limited to what can be seen from the public right-of-way, aerial photos, and the descriptive narrative in the 2004 John Ash Group Historic Resources Report.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

Provide Direction to Staff as to how the Board wishes to proceed with this application.

#### BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

The most recent development proposal for the site was Case 5.1052 / PDD 313 / Tentative Tract Map 33334 for the development of a mixed-use project comprised of 71 dwelling units, a spa / gym, convenience store, and restaurant/cocktail lounge. The project's Final PDD entitlement, which was approved by the Planning Commission in 2007, has since expired and no new proposals or submittals have been received by the City since matter was last before the Board in 2014. The property is again listed for sale.

RELEVANT PAST CITY ACTIONS	
Date	Action
2004	The Palm Springs Racquet Club ("PSRC") was identified in the Citywide Historic Resource Survey as potentially eligible at the local, state and national level as a historic resource.
October 8, 2004	At the request of the City Planning Department as part of a redevelopment proposal submitted by then owner / developer Palm Springs Property, LLC, a Historic Resources Report prepared by the John Ash Group was provided to the City.
February 9, 2005	A proposed redevelopment of the Racquet Club was presented by Architect Michael Mueller and Scott Jones, owner, for information only to the Board. No action was taken.
October 11, 2005	The Board voted to approve the proposed redevelopment ("Certificate of Approval") as described in Case 5.1052 PD 313 / TTM 33334.
February 15, 2006	The City Council adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration under CEQA and approved Case 5.1052 PDD-313 and Tentative Tract Map 33334 for a mixed-use development of 71 dwelling units, spay & gym, convenience store and restaurant / cocktail lounge.
May 16, 2007	The Planning Commission approved the Final Planned Development District for Case 5.1052 PD-313; a mixed-use development of 71 dwelling units, spa & gym, convenience store and restaurant / cocktail lounge.
May, 8, 2012	The HSPB initiated study of the Charlie Farrell House and the Racquet Club pursuant to PSMC 8.05.135.
November 12, 2013	HSPB reviewed preliminary results of study and directed staff to return with more information on the Racquet Club property.
December 10, 2013	Staff provided an analysis of the PSRC dated December 3, 2013 to the HSPB. The board directed staff to conduct further outreach to the owner on code enforcement actions and on furthering the Class 1 application and study.
March 11, 2014	The HSPB discussed the matter and directed staff to conduct site visits for board members.
April 7, 2014	Staff reported the applicant had been unresponsive to requests for site visit access, but staff would continue the effort.
May 13, 2014	Staff reported it had made contact with the owner and the owner had requested that the Board not pursue Class 1 designation at this time because of pending redevelopment plans. The HSPB voted to table the matter.
October 11, 2016	The HSPB finalized its work plan priorities for FY 16/17 continuing the Racquet Club as one of their priorities for pursuing a recommendation to City Council on Class 1 historic site designation.
November 2, 2016	Staff initiated written contact with the owner on the Board's intent to re-activate the Racquet Club study (no response was received.)
Present:	No further development activity has occurred since the Board last considered the Class 1 nomination in 2014, and the property is again listed for sale.

Updates or revisions to the historic resource survey findings.

Since the last site analysis in 2013, (attached) the structures on the site have continued to receive little care and maintenance and a fire in 2014 destroyed one of the existing buildings. (The building that was destroyed was identified in the 2004 survey as “not significant”; see figure 5.0 of the report).

The potential historic significance of the site, which focuses on “significant events”, “significant persons”, “significant period” and “significant architect” remains valid (Criteria 1, 2, 3 and 5 from the definition of a historic site).

The potentially significant structures or physical components on the site that visually contribute to one’s understanding of the historic significance of the site remain generally intact as follows:

- The Charlie Farrell Residence.
- The Schiff Residence.
- The Tennis Court and Swimming Pool.
- The Commercial Structure that includes the Bamboo Room.
- The Albert Frey-designed cottages.



2017 AERIAL VIEW OF THE PALM SPRINGS RACQUET CLUB (2743 NORTH INDIAN CANYON.)

Attachments:

- DPR sheets and detail on the Racquet Club
- Historic Resources Report dated October 4, 2004 by the John Ash Group (by Disk).
- Staff preliminary analysis of the site against PSMC 8.05.020 dated December 3, 2013.





# City of Palm Springs

Planning Services Department

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

## CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR DETERMINING CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR POSSIBLE HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION (Pursuant PSMC 8.05.020):

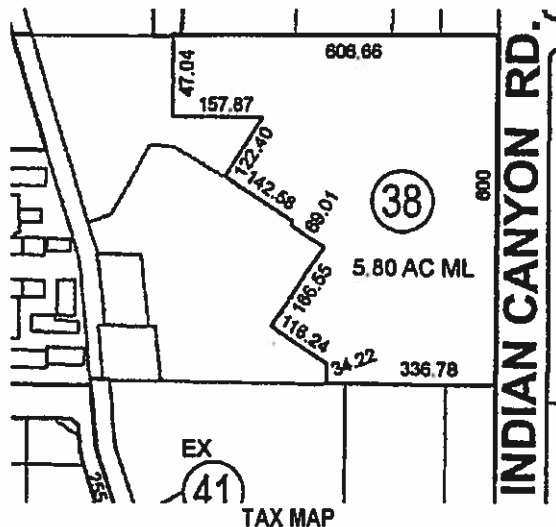
December 3, 2013.

Prepared by: Ken Lyon, RA, Associate Planner

Site Address / APN No.: 2743 North Indian Canyon Drive The Palm Springs Racquet Club



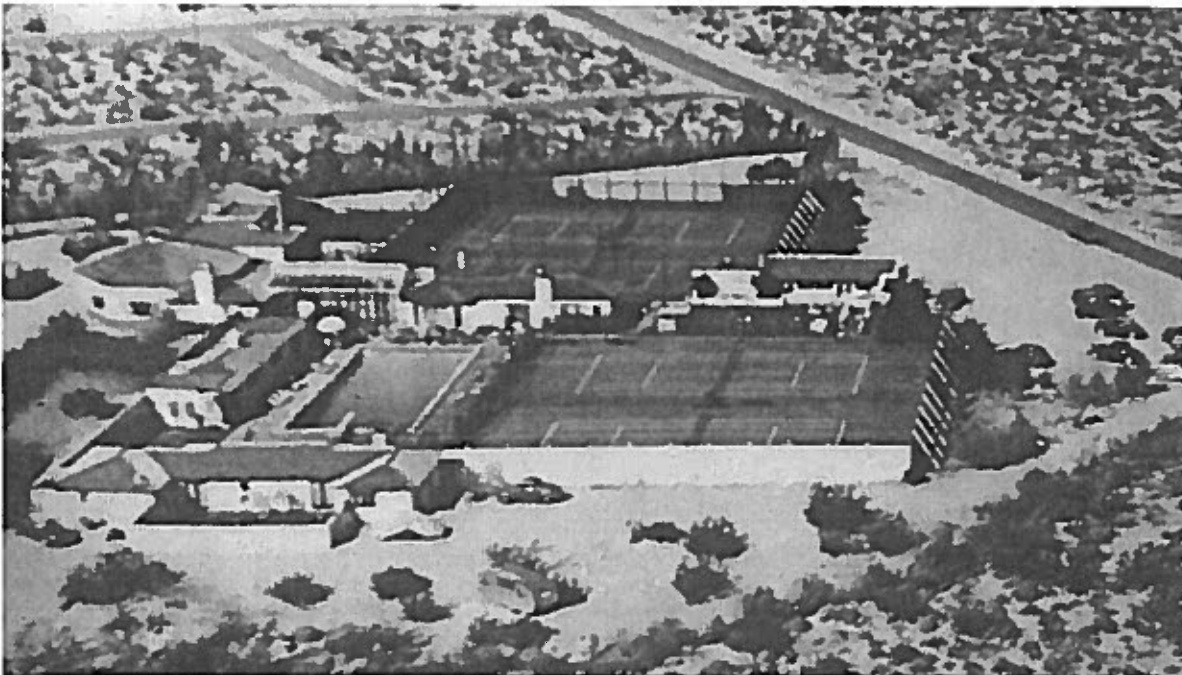
AERIAL PHOTO (c.2013) Showing parcels that comprise the current Racquet Club property.



A significant amount of historic research was conducted in 2004 and a historic resources report dated October 8, 2004 was prepared by the John Ash Group Architects. That report comprehensively surveyed and documented the historic significance of the Palm Springs Racquet Club. Much of the information contained in the responses to this checklist were taken from that historic resources report.



**AERIAL PHOTO LOOKING SOUTHWEST c.1934 showing original 4 courts, swimming pool and restaurant, (note the octagonal Bamboo room had not yet been constructed. Indian Canyon Drive in the lower part of photo)**



**AERIAL PHOTO LOOKING NORTHEAST (c.1940) original tennis courts, pool, Farrell residence, restaurant, Garden Room, dressing rooms, and octagonal Bamboo Room. (Indian Canyon Drive is to the right in this photo).**





**Current Conditions Exhibit 1:**

(from top to bottom:) – Clubhouse with octagonal Bamboo Lounge, swimming pool, tennis court (c. 1934) and Farrell House (c. late 1930's. Lower left are the Albert Frey-designed cottages (c. late 1940's).



**Current Conditions Exhibit 2:**

(from top to bottom:) Charley Farrell House (c. late 1930's), Albert Frey-designed bungalows (c.late 1940's) , New two-story condo building (right side, c.2005), Schiff House lower left with Frey-designed enclosed pool addition (c.1960). (The two square structures at the lower left are DWA-owned structures and not a part of the Racquet Club).

This site is historically significant because (check all that apply):

- ✓ It includes a building, structure or archaeological condition that is unique or significant due to its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect. Explain:

Although none of the surviving buildings at the Racquet Club are particularly significant in terms of design, materials or workmanship, collectively the Setting of the Club that is created by the surviving buildings is significant - which was a casual, informal place for movie stars, directors, producers and other celebrities in Hollywood to get away from the business of the movie industry for socializing and recreation.

Construction of the Palm Springs Racquet Club began in 1933 with the construction of two tennis courts and a simple three-sided wood wind shelter. Shortly thereafter in 1934, two more tennis courts, and a swimming pool were added. In the same year, the wind shelter was replaced with a clubhouse building with a restaurant and lounge that included a dance floor. The clubhouse also included a bar area which had an octagonal roof and was dubbed "The Bamboo Room". The design of the Bamboo Room is credited to film director Mitch Leisen, a friend of Charlie Farrell and Ralph Bellamy. In the late 1930's a ranch style home was constructed just south of the swimming pool. This became the residence of Charlie and Virginia Farrell until 1951. (In 1952, the Farrells purchased and moved to the Alexander Henry residence in the Movie Colony neighborhood at 630 East Tachevah). Most of the structures at the Racquet Club were built in a rustic "California Ranch" vernacular style.

- ✓ It is known to be associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community. Explain:

From its beginnings in the mid 1930's the Palm Springs Racquet Club was "the" social gathering place for celebrities and well-known persons associated with the Hollywood movie industry. Its period of significance spans from its initial construction in 1934 through roughly 1960. During this period, the celebrity status of the Racquet Club contributed to putting Palm Springs "on the map" as an exclusive and glamorous getaway. Events including internationally publicized tennis tournaments occurred at the Racquet Club.

- ✓ It is known to be associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history. Explain:

The Palm Springs Racquet Club was created by the business partnership of nationally known movie actors Ralph Bellamy and Charlie Farrell. Initially constructed to give the two avid tennis players courts with "unlimited play time". They quickly created a private tennis and social club and sold memberships to their friends and associates in the movie industry. It became a place where the Hollywood social set could satisfy their need for privacy and recreation away from the business of making movies. Holding a membership in the Palm Springs Racquet Club was a status symbol at the time. Among the countless famous "persons of local and national significance" who were guests of the Racquet Club were: actors Judy Garland, Clark Gable, Spencer Tracy and Alice Faye, singer Bing Crosby, and singer/songwriter Phil Harris. By the 40's membership in the club evolved and it became popular with top business, political and society leaders as well.

In particular, however Charlie Farrell's name is synonymous with the Palm Springs Racquet Club. Farrell managed the club for many years and was elected mayor of Palm Springs twice: first in 1948 and again in 1953. Farrell is a person of local significance in that his creation of the Racquet Club helped transform Palm Springs in to a world-renowned exclusive resort community.



- ✓ It reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. Explain:

The Racquet Club contributed to a period of tremendous growth of Palm Springs and in development of the City's reputation as a glamorous and exclusive resort destination. Its period of significance is documented from 1934 to about 1960. Palm Springs' exclusive resort reputation grew, due in part to the star-studded social scene at the Racquet Club, and so too did the City's permanent and seasonable population.

- ✓ It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Explain:

(Does not apply).

- ✓ It presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value. Explain

Internationally known architect Albert Frey and the firm Clark and Frey designed several buildings at the Racquet Club including several quest bungalows in the 1940's and in 1960 Frey designed an enclosed pool addition to the Schiff House in the southwest corner of the Racquet Club property.

- ✓ It represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction such as a historic district, etc. Explain:

The Palm Springs Racquet Club is a significant and distinguishable entity, in that it was a popular destination that drew many persons of significance to Palm Springs, most notably well-known movie stars, movie production studio executives and others associated with the movie industry in Hollywood.

- ✓ It has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory. Explain:

(Does not apply).

- ✓ The property owner supports the nomination of this site for historic designation.

The owner was notified in writing on December 3, 2013. No response has been received received at the time of this writing.

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary #  
HRI #  
Trinomial 33  
NRHP Status Code 35

Other Listings  
Review Code

Reviewer

Date

Page 1 of 9

\*Resource Name or #: Palm Springs Racquet Club

**P1. Other Identifier:**

\*P2. Location:  Not for Publication  Unrestricted

\*a. County: Riverside

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

\*b. USGS 7.5' Quad:

Date:

T

; R

;

¼ of

¼ of Sec

; M.D.

B.M.

c. Address: 2743 N. Indian Canyon Drive

City: Palm Springs

Zip: 92262

d. UTM: Zone: 11 ; 542100 mE/ 3746060 mN (G.P.S.)

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate) Elevation:

Assessor's Parcel No's: 504-040-038, 504-133-001, 504-133-002, 504-360-002

\*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Palm Springs Racquet Club was constructed as a resort hotel composed of numerous separate buildings and structures. The general architectural style is California Ranch. Unless otherwise noted, all structures are wood-framed, one-story construction w/ stucco siding and wood shingle roofs in the California Ranch style.

Historically significant buildings include:

- 1) Lobby and Office Building: Was originally a shed roof building with an L-shaped perimeter wall w/ one side of the wall as the main entrance to the resort. This building has a significant office addition at the rear and significant interior alterations.
- 2) Clubhouse (Bamboo Lounge/ Pro Shop): The first of any building in the resort, it has a hip roof (w/ flat, built-up roofs at the additions) and was the site of the original Bamboo Lounge. The building has had several major additions to widen and lengthen the original building and significant interior alterations. However, the additions have achieved their own level of significance.
- 3) Kitchen and Dining Building (Kitchen/ Bogart Room): Now connected to the Clubhouse, the predominately masonry building was originally a smaller, separate octagonal building. The building has had several additions on all sides, expanding the dining room and kitchen areas.
- 4) Farrell House: Originally a "U"-shaped building that served as a personal residence for the Club's owners, Charles and Virginia Farrell, the building has been significantly altered to convert it to a large banquet room with a locker room wing. The building is currently rectangular in shape and has lost all of its interior integrity.
- 5) Cottage Building (Maintenance Office/ Early Cottages): This "L"-shaped building is vernacular in style with composition asphalt-shingled gabled roof, horizontal wood siding, and sash windows. It is composed of separate resident rooms, several of which have been significantly altered.
- 6) Bungalows (Albert Frey designed): Mostly rectangular in plan, the eleven remaining bungalows were originally designed by Albert Frey. Each bungalow is composed of 3 units. Although most of the finishes have been replaced, the interior layouts remain largely the same. Two of the units have been significantly altered to serve as conference rooms.
- 7) Schiff House (Albert Frey- remodeled bungalow): originally one of the bungalows with an addition and desert modern alterations including a quarter-round curved eave, kidney-shaped glass-enclosed pool w/ circular skylights.

\*P3b. Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) HP5

\*P4. Resources Present:  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

**PRIMARY RECORD**

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)  
Front Office and Lobby Building



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)  
Front of Lobby and Office Building, 8/12/04, palmsprings 012  
Rear of Lobby and Office Building, 8/28/04, palmsprings3 062

**PRIMARY RECORD**

Page 3 of 9

Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) \_\_\_\_\_

**\*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: XHistoric**

Prehistoric     Both

1934-1960 Period of Significance. Buildings constructed and altered over a period of time. Dates are factual based on select pamphlets, publications and building permit records.

**\*P7. Owner and Address:**

**\*P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)

Dick Gee, AIA  
JAG Architects  
304 S. Broadway, Suite 596  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
(213) 620-0800

**\*P9. Date Recorded:** 3/6/07

**\*P10. Survey Type:** (Describe)

Intensive Survey

**\*P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Palm Springs Racquet Club Historic Report, dated October 8, 2004. Prepared by Dick Gee, Jag Architects. Prepared for Palm Springs Property, LLC and Mueller Design, Inc.

**\*Attachments:**  NONE     Location Map     Sketch Map     Continuation Sheet     Building, Structure, and Object Record  
 Archaeological Record     District Record     Linear Feature Record     Milling Station Record     Rock Art Record  
 Artifact Record     Photograph Record     Other (List):

State of California — The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

Primary #  
HRI#  
Trinomial 33

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\*Resource Name or # Palm Springs Racquet Club (Assigned by recorder)

\*Recorded by: Dick Gee

\*Date: 3/7/07

Continuation

Update

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)  
Clubhouse (Bamboo Lounge and Pro Shop)

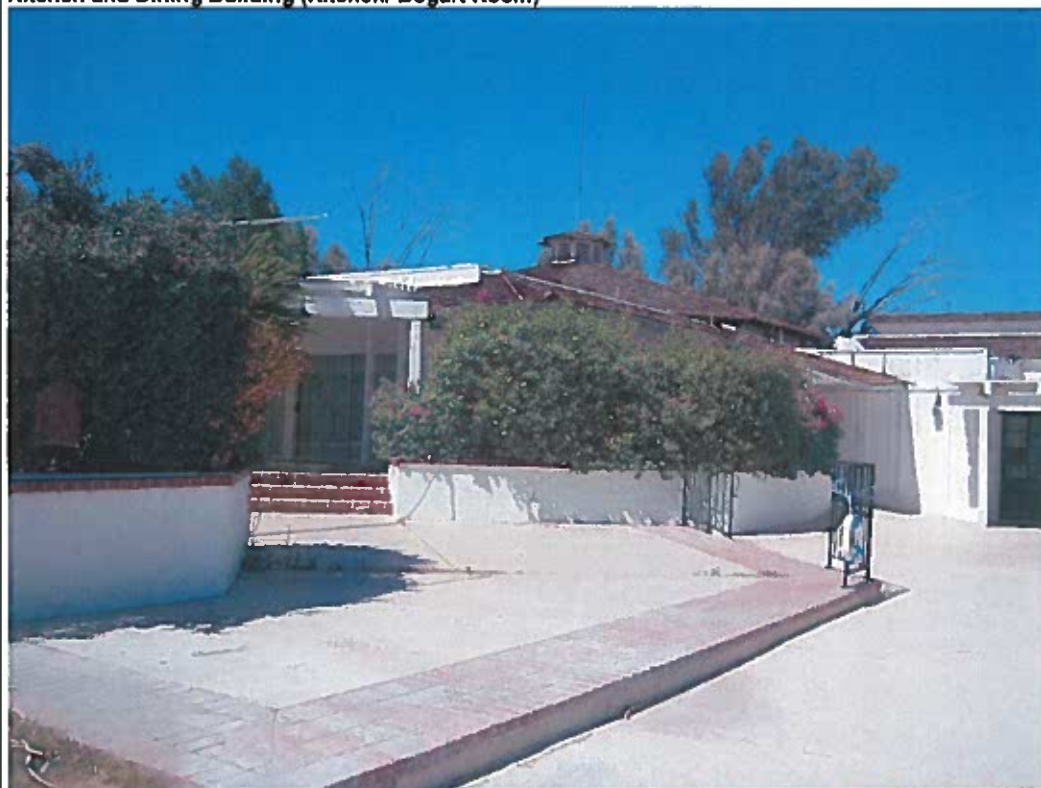


P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)  
South of Clubhouse, 9/01/04, clubhouse 001  
North of Clubhouse, 10/05/04, clubhouse 002



**P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)**

**Kitchen and Dining Building (Kitchen/ Bogart Room)**



**P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)**

South of Kitchen and Dining Building, 8/28/04, palmsprings3 256

North of Kitchen and Dining Building, 10/05/04, kitchen 001



**P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)**

Farrell House



**P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)**

Front of Farrell House, 8/20/04, palmsprings 126

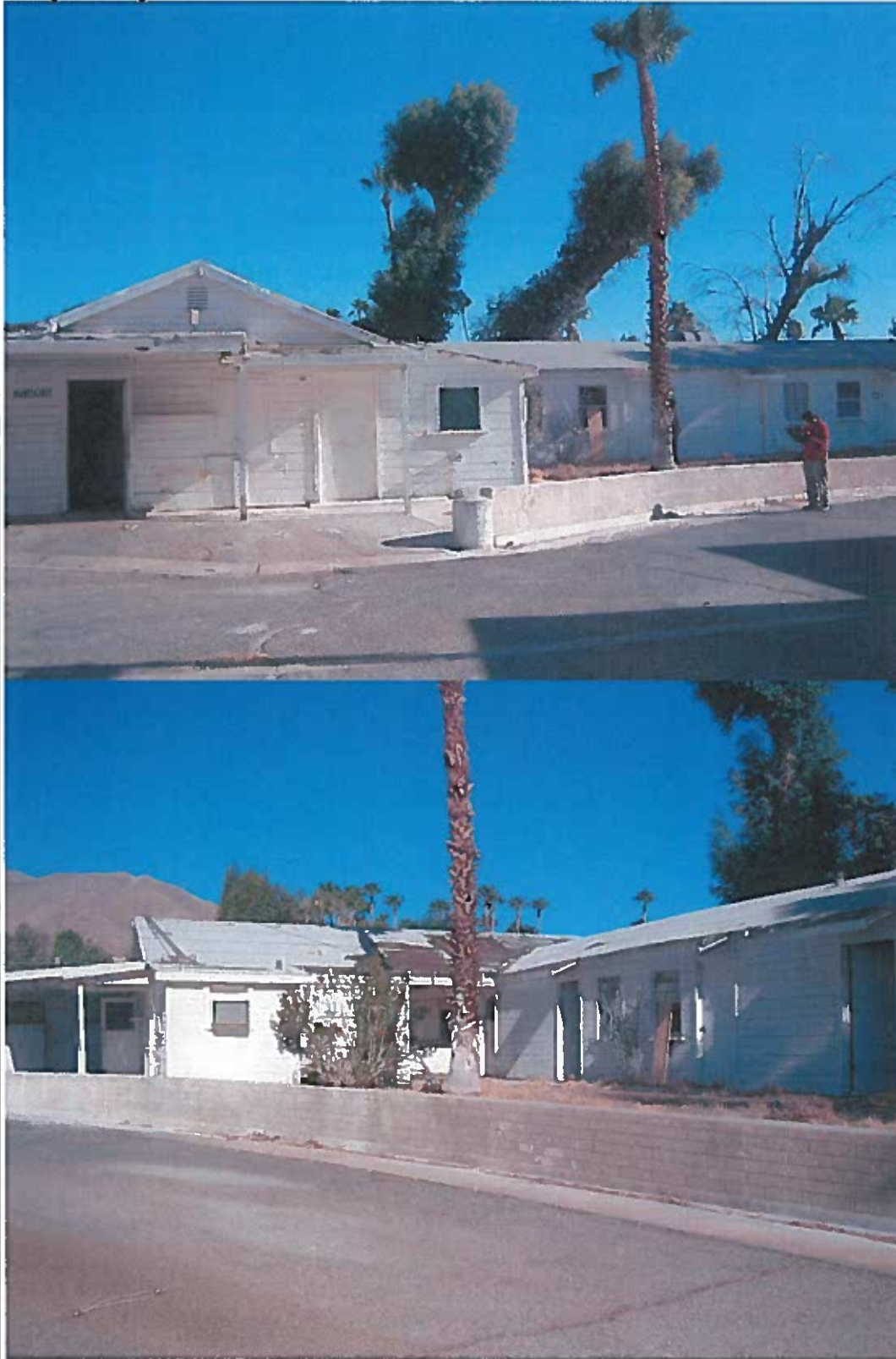
Rear of Farrell House, 8/20/04, palmsprings 146

DPR 523L (1/95)

\*Required information

**P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)**

**Cottage Building**



**P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)**

Front of Cottage Building, 8/28/04, palmsprings3 357

Front/Side of Cottage Building, 8/28/04, palmsprings3 414

DPR 523L (1/95)

\*Required information



**P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)**  
Bungalows



**P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)**  
Front of Typical Bungalow, 8/28/04, palmsprings3 656  
Rear of Typical Bungalow, 8/28/04, palmsprings 053  
DPR 523L (1/95)

**P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)**

Schiff House



**P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)**

Front of Schiff House, 8/12/04, palmsprings 046

Swimming Pool of Schiff House, 8/20/04, palmsprings 235

DPR 523L (1/95)

\*Required information



**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

\*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder)

- B1. Historic Name: Palm Springs Racquet Club
- B2. Common Name: Palm Springs Racquet Club
- B3. Original Use: Commercial (Resort Hotel)
- B4. Present Use: Residential (Single Family/ Multiple Family)
- \*B5. Architectural Style: California Ranch House Style
- \*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)  
See attached Construction History Overview

- \*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: Original Location:
- \*B8. Related Features: Tennis Courts, Pool, Foot bridge

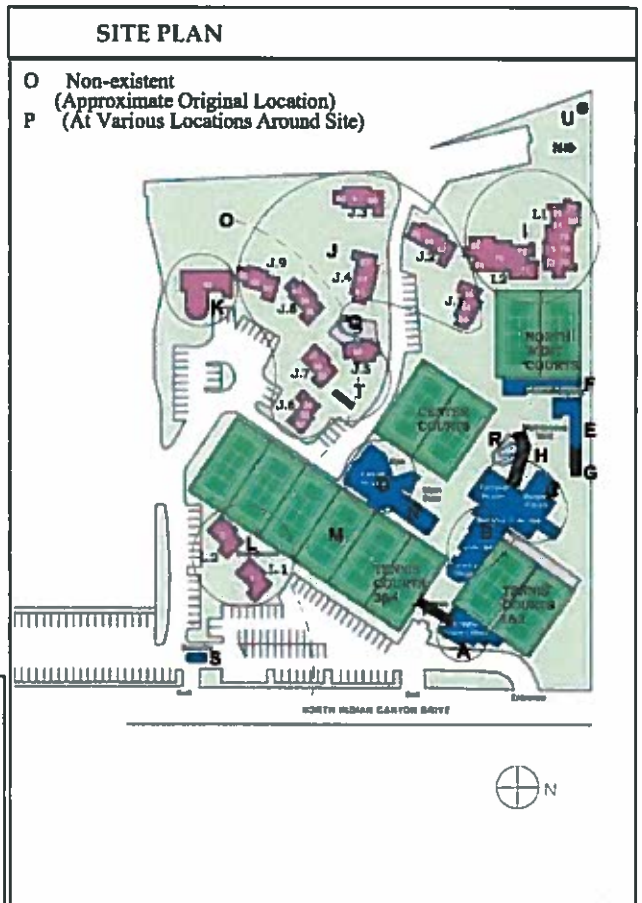
B9a. Architect: Unknown, additions by Clark & Frey, alterations by Albert Frey b. Builder: Unknown

- \*B10. Significance: Theme: Resort Architecture Area: Palm Springs  
Period of Significance: 1934-1960 Property Type: Resort Applicable Criteria:  
(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

The Racquet Club played a vital role in the history of Palm Springs since its original owners, Charles Farrell and Ralph Bellamy first constructed and opened the club in 1934. It is significant for its role as a haven for movie stars throughout its period of significance, promoting the development of Palm Springs. An example of hotel architecture during the early and mid-twentieth century, it also contains examples of Architect Albert Frey's work. Overall, the resource has retained most of its integrity, although several buildings within the resort have been significantly altered.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) (HP2)-Farrell House, Schiff Residence, (HP5)

(This space reserved for official comments.)



## BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 2

Resource Name or #\* (Assigned by recorder) \_\_\_\_\_

### BUILDING INDEX

- A Lobby and Office Building
- B Clubhouse (Bamboo Lounge/ Pro Shop)
- C Kitchen and Dining Building (Kitchen/Bogart Room)
- D Farrell House
- E Cottage Building (Maintenance Office/Early Cottages)
- F Housekeeping Building
- G Shed Building (Storage Building)
- H Maintenance Buildings/Storage Extension
- I Contemporary 2 Story Buildings
  - (I1) – Units 73-81
  - (I2) – Units 68-72
- J Bungalows (Albert Frey),
  - (J1) – Bungalow Units 54, 55 and 56
  - (J2) – Bungalow Units 57, 58 and 59
  - (J3) - Bungalow Units 60, 61 and 62
  - (J4) - Bungalow Units 63, 64 and 65
  - (J5) - Bungalow Unit 66
  - (J6) – Bungalow Units 32, 33 and 34
  - (J7) – Bungalow Units 35, 36 and 37
  - (J8) – Bungalow Units 38, 39 and 40
  - (J9) – Bungalow Units 41, 42 and 43
- K Schiff House (Albert Frey Addition)
- L Boardroom Buildings (Albert Frey, Remodeled)
  - (L1) – Boardroom 1
  - (L2) – Boardroom 2

### SITE FEATURES

- M Tennis Courts
- N Main Pool
- O Netcher's Creek
- P Landscaping and Hardscape
- Q Pool at Cottage (Unit 66)
- R Spa

### ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

- S Security Shack
- T Netcher's Creek Covered Footbridge
- U Gazebo

#### \*B12. References:

Rippingale, Sally Presley. "The History of the Racquet Club of Palm Springs", Yucaipa, California: Business Specialites 1985.  
Personal interview with Frank Bogert, former manager of Racquet Club and mayor of Palm Springs, Sept. 28, 2004.

#### B13. Remarks:

Previous reconnaissance survey prepared in 1982 for the City of Palm Springs by P. Young.

\*B14. Evaluator: Dick Gee, AIA (historic architect)

\*Date of Evaluation: 10/8/04



State of California — The Resources Agency  
 DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION  
**LOCATION MAP**

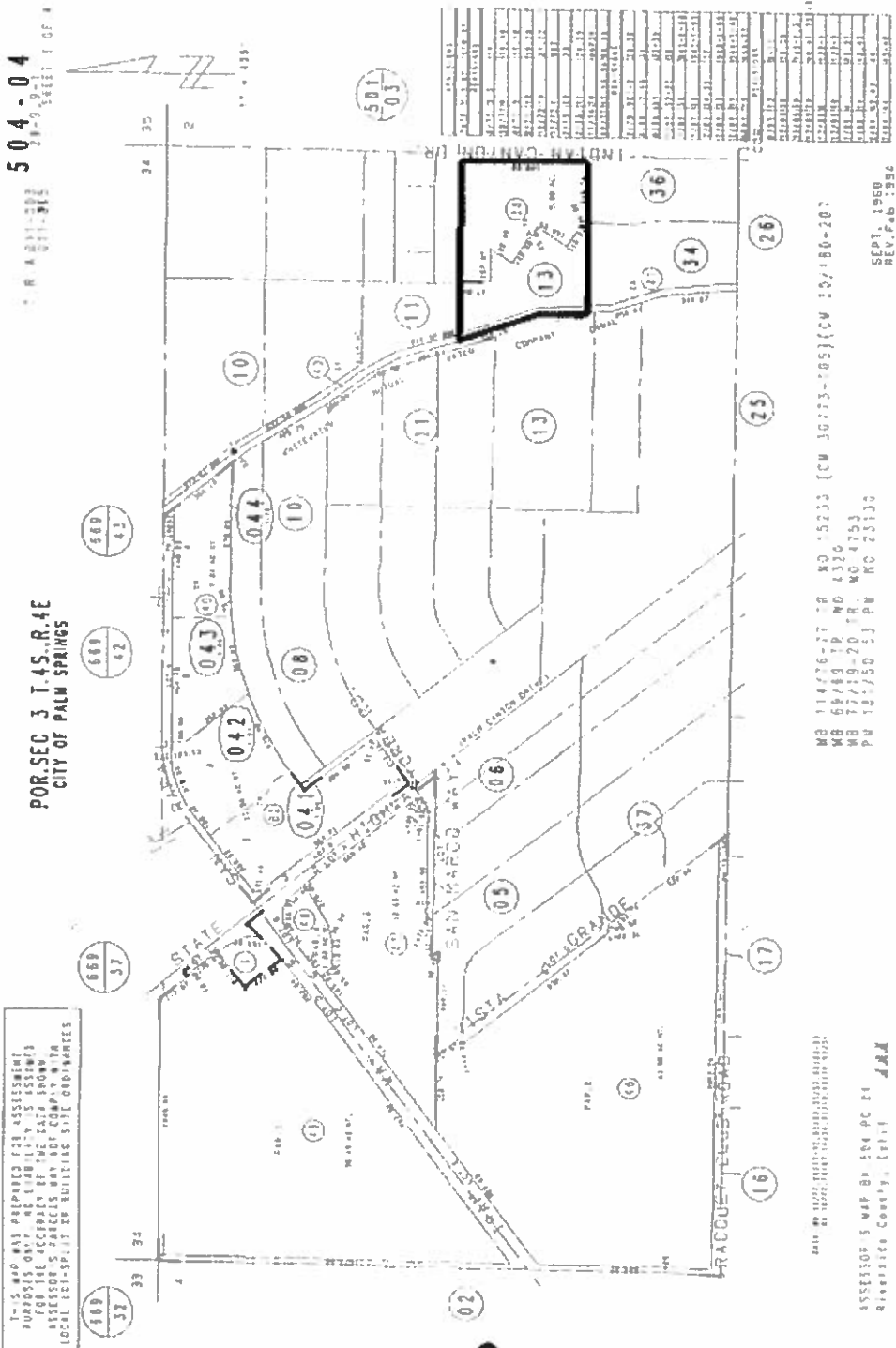
Primary #  
 HRI#  
 Trinomial

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\*Resource Name or #: Palm Springs Racquet Club

\*Map Name: Assessor's Parcel Map 504-040-038  
 DPR 523J (1/95)

\*Scale: No scale \*Date of Map: Feb 1994 (outline 3/7/07)  
 \*Required information



**PRIMARY RECORD**

Primary# \_\_\_\_\_  
HRI# \_\_\_\_\_  
Trinomial \_\_\_\_\_  
NRHP Status Code 5S3

Other Listings \_\_\_\_\_  
Review Code \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Page 1 of 3 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Racquet Club

**P1. Other Identifier:**

**P2. Location:**  Not for Publication  Unrestricted a. County Riverside

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. USGS 7.5' Quad Palm Springs Date 1996 T \_\_\_\_\_; R \_\_\_\_\_; 1/4 of \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4 of Sec \_\_\_\_\_; B.M. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Address 2743 North Indian Canyon Drive City Palm Springs Zip 92262

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 11; mE/ \_\_\_\_\_ mN \_\_\_\_\_

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)  
City of Palm Springs Section 3; APN: 504 040 038; 504 133 001, 002; 504 361 002

Parcel No. See box P2.e

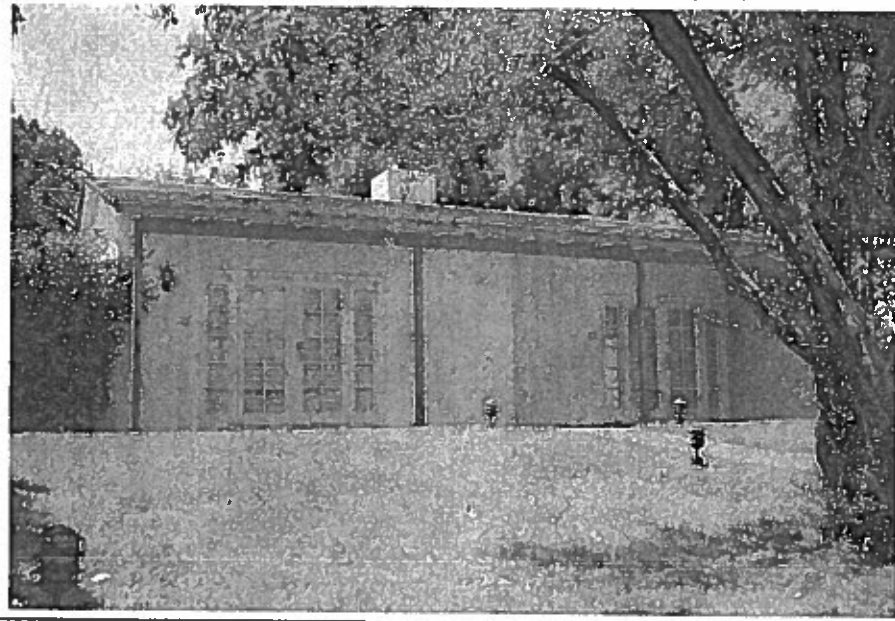
**P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Racquet Club at 2743 North Indian Canyon is an expansive compound dating to the early 1930s with renovations that have spanned the 20th century. Once of one Palm Springs most posh and popular destinations, the club consists of a clubhouse with tennis courts and pool and numerous residences and small bungalows with as many as three individual units in each, though some are self contained. Architectural styles within the Racquet Club range from the simple vernacular bungalow type structures to Streamlined Moderne. The clubhouse has a flat red tile roof with projecting eaves and exposed rafter beams; exterior walls are generally covered in white stucco; the main entrance to the Racquet Club clubhouse and tennis courts is located under a white trellis awning and through a set of multi-lite French doors. The bungalows comprise most of compound and were typical of the club's early ranch setting. Built in a simple vernacular style, they have a low-pitched side-facing gable roof covered with flat red tiles; a deep eave with exposed rafter beams projects to create a small porch along the main facade. The porch supports are squared posts of wood. Concrete walls extend from some of the end units to form privacy walls and semi-enclose patios; the structures are painted white. One of the compound's most interesting features is a modern bungalow designed by Albert Frey that incorporates a large pool which is enclosed with glass walls and covered by a flat roof with multiple circular punched-out skylights that provide natural light. The skylights, together with the circular wall of clear glass that surrounds the pool create an open-air feeling, though an exterior fence of corrugated panels prevents views out. Benefiting from large acreage, the club buildings are set amid mature landscaping.

**P3b. Resource Attributes:**  HP39 - Country club  HP5 - Hotel/Motel

**P4. Resources Present:**  Building  Structure  Object  Site  District  Element of District  Other (Isolates, etc.)

**P5a. Photo or Drawing** (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



**P5b. Description of Photo:**  
(View, date, accession #)  
View West  
August 2003

**P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:**

Historic  Prehistoric  Both  
1935: Palm Springs HSPB List (1987)  
with additions c1945, 1960s

**P7. Owner and Address:**

Palm Springs Prop.  
2743 N Canyon Dr.  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**P8. Recorded by:**

Maley/Petrin/Tinsley/Watson  
*Architectural Resources Group*  
Pier 9, The Embarcadero  
San Francisco, CA 94111

**P9. Date Recorded:** August 2003

**P10. Survey Type** (Describe)  
Reconnaissance Survey

**P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Architectural Resources Group, City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey Summary Report, 2004.

**Attachments:**

- None  Continuation Sheet  District Record  Rock Art Record  Other (List)
- Location Map  Building, Structure, and Object Record  Linear Feature Record  Artifact Record
- Sketch Map  Archaeological Record  Milling Station Record  Photograph Record

**BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD**

Page 2 of 3

NRHP Status Code 5S3

Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Racquet Club

B1. Historic Name: The Racquet Club

B2. Common Name: The Racquet Club

B3. Original Use: Country Club and Hotel

B4. Present Use: Vacant

B5. Architectural Style: Streamlined Modern, Modern, Ranch Vernacular

B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Buildings within the complex were constructed as early as 1934, 1945, and 1960s (addition).

B7. Moved?  No  Yes  Unknown Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Location: \_\_\_\_\_

B8. Related Features:

Related features include a clubhouse with tennis courts and pool and numerous residences and small bungalows in a ranch-type setting. Benefiting from large acreage, the club buildings are set amid mature landscaping.

B9a. Architect: various including Albert Frey, William Krisel

b. Builder: Davis Contractors

B10. Significance: Theme recreational

Area Palm Springs

Period of Significance 1920s-1960s

Property Type tennis club

Applicable Criteria A, C

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

For centuries the habitat of the Agua Caliente band of Cahuilla Indians, Palm Springs, site of natural hot springs and sunny desert climate, drew its first non-Indian visitors in the late 19th century. For reasons of improved health and recuperation, the first settlers established early hotels and inns. Not until 1938 did the village of Palm Springs incorporate, setting out a gridded street plan and zoning controls. By then Palm Springs had already acquired an identity as a winter retreat for Hollywood stars and the wealthy, as evidenced by the exclusive older neighborhoods of Old Las Palmas, the Movie Colony, Little Tuscany, and the Tennis Club quarter, initially built for winter residents. Defined by elegant, grand architecture in predominantly Spanish and Mediterranean styles, these and other neighborhoods were later filled in with mid-century Modern homes by the end of the 1960s.

During the post-WWII era, the City of Palm Springs prospered, relying on tourism, resorts, and the appeal of golf, tennis, polo, and other sports to fuel the economy. During the Palm Springs heyday, tourists and Hollywood discovered the desert oasis and full-scale hotels, smaller inns, nightclubs and restaurants prospered. Concurrently, from the 1940s through the 1960s, Palm Springs was transformed into an increasingly urban environment, building schools, hospitals and an airport and other civic amenities. The commercial core of the City, long concentrated along the main thoroughfares of Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive, flourished. Expanding residential development began in the early 1960s when large tracts of popular, reasonably priced, Modernist-style homes were constructed by Jack Meiselman and later, George and Robert Alexander throughout Palm Springs. Tract subdivision development was followed by the establishment of condominiums, initially as second-homes in the 1960s. (See Continuation Sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: HP39 - Country club

HP5 - Hotel/Motel

B12. References:

Architectural Resources Group, City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey Summary Report, 2004. (report contains full bibliography)

B13. Remarks:

Maley/Petrin/Tinsley/Watson

B14. Evaluator: Architectural Resources Group

Date of Evaluation: August 2003

(This space reserved for official comments.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

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Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Racquet Club

Recorded by Maley/Petlin/Tinsley/Watson Arch. Resources Group

Date August 2003

Continuation  Update

B10. Significance Continued

Located on the northern end of Palm Springs, the Racquet Club reflects the context of recreational development of Palm Springs from the 1920s through the 1960s and was instrumental in establishing the identity of Palm Springs as a "desert playland" during the City's hey day. The club was first established in the mid-1930s by Hollywood actors Charlie Farrell and Ralph Bellamy and became a favorite retreat from Hollywood and remained popular throughout the 1940s and 50s as a high style resort during the "season" for annual winter guests. The club began with several tennis courts and a clubhouse; a dining room, white-washed bungalows and entertainment soon followed. New buildings were added throughout the years with additions dating to 1945 and c. 1960. Considering these changes, the compound still retains a good degree of integrity; the location, setting, design, feeling, and association retain much of the original flavor of the original ranch style setting. At the Racquet Club, architectural styles range from the simple vernacular bungalow type structures to Streamlined Moderne and present the work of some of Palm Springs most well-known architects, including Albert Frey. The materials, design and workmanship of later additions are different from but compatible with the older structures of the Racquet Club. Most of the structures that comprise the Racquet Club are intact and contribute to the setting of the compound.

This club appears to meet the level of significance necessary for individual National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources eligibility at the local level. It is typical of the pattern of development that occurred in the City of Palm Springs and became one of the most famous tennis clubs in the world. Its tournaments brought the city worldwide notoriety. Further, it is associated with some of Palm Springs most notable personalities, Hollywood celebrities and early promoters, in addition to being the site of work of significant architects. Significant as an interesting example of a recreational building type and compound, the structure represents the overall development of Palm Springs, from rural desert village to urban town and contributes to the character of Palm Springs.