



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: May 17, 2017

PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: A RECOMMENDATION BY THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD FOR CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION OF 401 WEST MERITO PLACE (CASE HSPB #106; APN 505-294-006, ZONE R-1-A).

FROM: David H. Ready, City Manager

BY: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

This is a recommendation by the Historic Site Preservation Board ("HSPB") for Class 1 historic designation of 401 West Merito Place.

The current property owner, Alex Soleimani, representing the Soleimani 2011 Irrevocable Trust, has listed the property for sale, and on December 21, 2016, applied for a permit to fully demolish the structure. The structure, by virtue of its date of construction (prior to 1969), is automatically designated a Class 3 historic site. Full demolition of Class 3 sites must be reviewed by the HSPB prior to issuance of demolition permits.

The Board considered the demolition request on January 10, 2017, placed a stay on the demolition request and initiated study to determine if the structure was eligible for Class 1 designation. The Board generally found that the site possesses sufficient historic significance and therefore on March 14, 2017, recommended Class 1 designation by the City Council by a vote of 4 to 2 (Johns/Kiser dissenting, Dixon absent).

The owner does not support the recommendation for Class 1 historic site designation.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Open the public hearing and receive testimony.
2. Close the public hearing and adopt Resolution #____, "A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING 401 WEST MERITO PLACE (APN #505-294-006), A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE, HSPB #106 (ZONE R-1-A)".

ITEM NO. 2.B.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

The single-family residence at 401 West Merito Place was constructed in 1928 according to County tax records. According to a survey and report of the site dated February 28, 2017, and an addenda dated April 4, 2017 (“the report”), which were prepared for the City by Architectural Resources Group (“ARG”), the two-and-a-half story structure possesses the stylistic markers of simplified or “vernacular” English Tudor Revival, or “English Tudor Cottage”.

(Below are examples of small homes in the English Tudor Cottage style, the image on the right for comparison is 401 Merito Place.)



<i>Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc.</i>	
December 21, 2016	The City received an application to demolish the structures at 401 W. Merito Place (Case 3.4001 MAA).
January 10, 2017	The HSPB considered the demolition request and placed a stay of up to 120 days on the demolition request and initiated study to inform the board of any possible historic significance in the site.
January 23, 2017	Site inspection by members of the HSPB and City Staff.
January 24, 2017	Staff solicited three firms for proposals for professional services to study the site and prepare a historic resources report.
February 28, 2017	Planning staff received the Historic Resources Report (“the Report”) submitted to the City by Architectural Resources Group (ARG).
March 14, 2017	The HSPB held a public hearing on the case at which time it voted 4 to 2 to recommend Class 1 historic site designation to the City Council.

<i>Ownership Status</i>	
2011	Purchase by current owner.

The Merito Vista Tract. The subject site is located in the Merito Vista Tract which was platted in 1925 by Prescott Stevens, an early land developer in Palm Springs.

Presently, the Merito Vista Tract is considered part of the “Las Palmas” neighborhood; and is located just north of the original village center of Palm Springs.

ANALYSIS:

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:

(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.

In addition to this definition, the Municipal Code established seven (7) criterion against which sites under consideration are evaluated. The historic resources report produced by Architectural Resources Group (“ARG”) dated February 28, 2017 and addenda dated April 4, 2017, provide an evaluation of the subject property in accordance with this definition that is summarized below.

The Report concludes that the home meets the definition of a historic site as being “*unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect.*”

The following seven criteria were used to further evaluate the potential historic significance of a site. A site can be deemed historic if any one or more of these criterion are met:

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

The report concluded that the subject property does not meet Criterion 1.

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

Although the names of some of the past owners of 401 Merito Place are familiar in Palm Springs, the report concludes that none of the individuals associated with the property rise to the level of local, state or national significance and thus the property does not meet this criterion.

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

Beginning on page 23, the report describes the significance of the home and the Merito Vista tract in which it is located relative to the period of the 1920's. During the 20's and 30's, Palm Springs grew rapidly, attracting many wealthy families who built large luxurious estate-like homes designed by notable architects in the latest and popular "revival styles".

The Merito Vista tract by design was different than the other subdivisions under development at the time. The developers of the Merito Vista tract advertised...*"small estates" accessible to would-be buyers of lesser means than the "men of large means who pioneered this treasured spot."* As the report denotes, a 1926 advertisement declared the tract's *"privileges have been made available to those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here."*

401 Merito Place was one of the earliest homes built in the Merito Vista tract and is a rare surviving example of the sort of "unpretentious", modest-sized home on a small estate -- envisioned by the tract's developers. Since most of the Merito Vista tract did not develop with new homes until many years later -- much of it not until after World War II, the early vision of small unpretentious homes for buyers of more modest means was soon forgotten, as homebuilding trends moved toward ever larger and more elaborately-styled homes.

401 Merito Place also is reflective of the period of the 1920's in that it is designed in a "revival" architectural style. During the 1920's picturesque "revival" style architecture was extremely popular throughout the United States.

Additionally, the report states that 401 Merito Place is particularly unique for Palm Springs in that it employed a simplified "Tudor Revival" or "English Tudor Cottage" architectural style. During this period, Tudor Revival and English Tudor Cottage style homes were commonly found in the east and Midwest regions of the U.S., which may explain why the Robinsons, who relocated from Grand Rapids, Michigan, chose this particular style for their Palm Springs home.

Thus, home exemplifies the period of the 1920's when revival style architecture was prevalent. It reflects the vision of the Merito Vista tract developers; that the tract would attract buyers whose homes be constructed in a "modest and unpretentious manner". It is also a rare, and possibly the only surviving example in Palm Springs of a home designed a simplified English Tudor or English Tudor Cottage style of architecture.¹ For these reasons, the report concluded that the subject site meets the definition of a historic site under Criterion 3.

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

Beginning on page 24, the Report notes the building has some "distinctive characteristics related to its method of construction" because it utilized hollow clay tile construction for exterior walls and also it is constructed with hardwood floors laid over floor joists supported by a concrete foundation, rather than the more commonly used "slab-on-grade". Also, as discussed earlier, with its revival-style architecture, 401 Merito Place embodies the distinctive characteristics of the period of the 1920's, and also is notable because it reflects the type of modest-scaled home envisioned by the tract developers.

Yet, given these three factors, the authors of the report did not conclude that the site meets this criterion. They arrived at this conclusion because they noted that the home's condition has been "somewhat eroded" by various alterations. ARG concluded that in its present state, it does not qualify under Criterion 4. This conclusion may be inconsistent with the "threshold" typically used by City Council, and a fair argument could perhaps be made either way that the structure also qualifies as a historic site under Criterion 4².

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;

No information was discovered about the builder or whether there was an architect involved with the design of the home. Lacking clear evidence, the Report concluded that the site does not meet this criterion.

¹ From review of the Citywide historic resource survey from 2004 and the most recent draft survey, no other English Tudor Cottage style structures have been identified in Palm Springs.

² Examples of sites with significantly worse "existing conditions" that have been granted Class 1 historic status based on Criterion 4 include La Serena Villas (HSPB #69), the Kocher-Samson Building (HSPB #79) and most recently, the Town & Country Center (HSPB #51). Thus, based on past actions on properties in similarly "distressed" condition, the Council may, at its option, conclude that the subject site does meet the definition of a historic site as characterized under Criterion 4 despite its "somewhat eroded" condition -- recognizing that the deteriorated conditions are easily reversible, restorable or repairable.

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

The subject property does not meet this criterion.

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

The subject property does not meet this criterion.

INTEGRITY

The report provides an examination of the residence relative to the seven aspects or qualities of integrity, as recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. The seven aspects or qualities include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The report notes on page 28 that while there have been a number of changes and additions made to the structure, (i.e. removal of wood cladding in the gable peak, closure of a side entry door and replacement of some windows on the side of the house), it retains sufficient integrity and still conveys its architectural and period significance as viewed from the public street. Many of the additions and changes that have occurred over time are removable, repairable or restorable pursuant to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures.

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

The physical character-defining historic features of this site include the following:

1. The residential structure with the following features and finishes:
 - The steeply pitched roof with wood shake shingles.
 - The hand-troweled exterior stucco over hollow clay tile walls.
 - The multi-pane wood casement windows;
2. The rock perimeter wall along a portion of the east property line.³

The non-contributing features include the following:

³ The wall is characteristic of property boundary walls erected by early pioneers and settlers to demarcate their landholding. Constructed of locally found rocks and rubble laid up by hand with mortar in a rustic manner, it was a fairly common and affordable way to demarcate one's land. Very few of these early walls survive. A few can be found in the Tennis Club neighborhood but are not protected. For this reason, it is included in the defining characteristics for this site.

1. The site landscaping and hardscape, (including pool deck, etc);
2. The carport, trellises and other additions on the south and west sides of the original structure.
3. The front door and exterior lights.
4. The additions to the structure constructed in the 1980's.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

HSPB Findings. In considering a recommendation for Class 1 historic designation, pursuant to PSMC Section 8.05.145, the Board made findings that the subject property meets the definition of a historic site because (1) it is historically significant because of its unique or rare English Tudor Cottage design, its relatively intact setting and its aesthetic effect and (2) because it meets the definition of a historic as defined in Criterion 3 of Municipal Code section 8.05.020.

City Council Findings. In turn, pursuant to PSMC 8.05.160 the City Council must make the finding 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.

Class 1 designation of the 401 West Merito Place would further the purpose of the historic preservation ordinance because it reflects elements of the City's architectural, social, and cultural history as a site unique or significant because of its design and aesthetic effect and under Criterion 3.

Based on this finding, the designation of 401 West Merito Place as a Class 1 historic site furthers the purpose of the Historic Preservation ordinance.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed historic site designation is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and

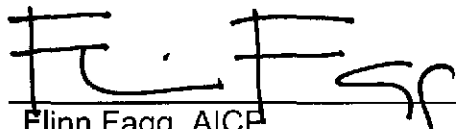
15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical changes to the environment, directly or indirectly.

NOTIFICATION

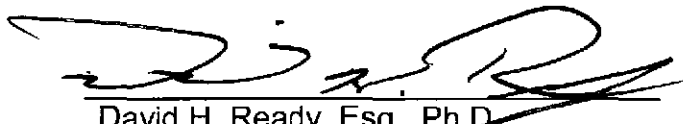
Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation.

CONCLUSION:

As provided in the analysis, the historic resources report identifies that 401 Merito Place meets the definition of a historic site, and such designation would further the purpose of the historic preservation ordinance.


Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services


Marcus L. Fuller, MPA, P.E., P.L.S.
Assistant City Manager/City Engineer


David H. Ready, Esq., Ph.D.
City Manager

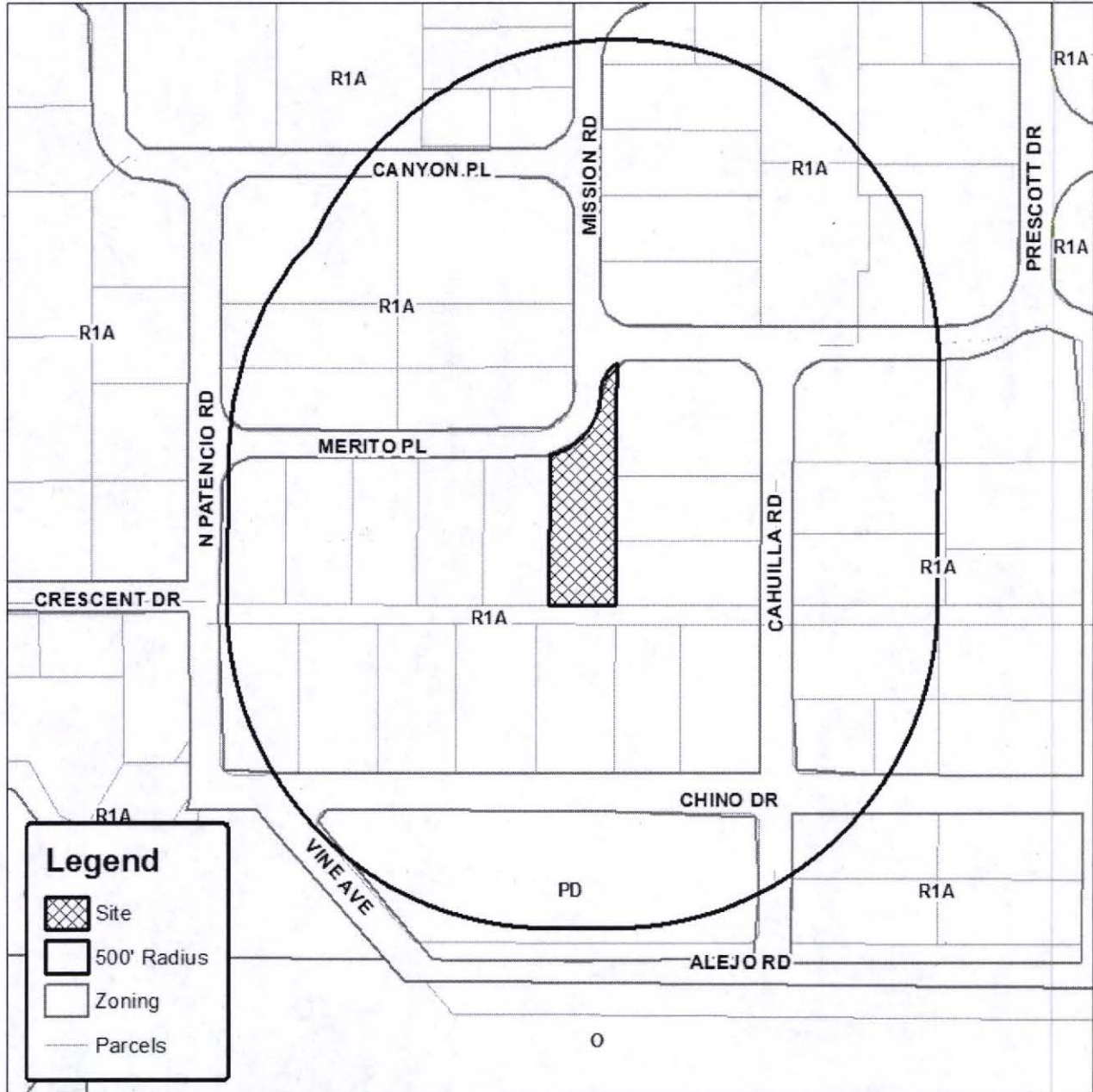
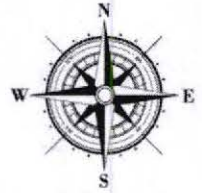
Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map.
2. Draft Resolution.
3. Historic resource report prepared by Architectural Resources Group dated February 28, 2017 with addenda.
4. Exhibit "A" – Supplemental Information on Architectural Styles.
5. Excerpt of HSPB meeting minutes of March 14, 2017.
6. Materials from Property Owner
7. Public Comment Letters.

ATTACHMENT #1



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
401 West Merito Place

ATTACHMENT #2

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING 401 WEST MERITO PLACE (APN #505-294-006), A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE, HSPB #106 (ZONE R-1-A)".

THE CITY COUNCIL FINDS AND DETERMINES AS FOLLOWS:

- A. Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites and districts.
- B. On December 21, 2017, Alex Soleimani, representing the Soleimani 2011 Irrevocable Trust submitted an application for approval to demolish the structures at 401 West Merito Place (Case 3.4001 MAA).
- C. On January 10 2017, members of the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) considered the demolition application and voted to stay the demolition and to initiate study to determine any possible historic significance of the site.
- D. On January 24, 2017, members of the HSPB visited the site, accompanied by City staff to familiarize themselves with the conditions therein.
- E. On February 28, 2017, at the request of the City, Architectural Resources Group ("ARG") prepared a Historic Resource Report dated February 28, 2017 ("report") documenting their research, study and findings of the subject site. An addenda to the report was prepared on April 4, 2017.
- F. On March 14, 2017, a noticed public hearing to consider Case HSPB #106 was held by the HSPB in accordance with applicable law.
- G. The HSPB carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence presented in connection with the hearing on the project, including, but not limited to, the staff report and all written and oral testimony presented, and voted to recommend that the City Council designate 401 West Merito Place as a Class 1 Historic Site.
- H. On May 17, 2017, a noticed public hearing to consider Case HSPB #106 was held by the City Council in accordance with applicable law.
- I. The City Council carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence presented in connection with the hearing on the project, included, but not limited to, the staff report and all written and oral testimony presented.

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS RESOLVES:

SECTION 1. 401 WEST MERITO PLACE MEETS THE DEFINITION OF A HISTORIC SITE. The subject parcel is eligible for consideration as a historic site because it meets the definition of a historic site as established in Palm Springs Municipal Code (PSMC) Section 8.05.020 (“Definitions”) as follows:

(a) *Historic Site.*

An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect.

The addenda to the ARG report dated April 4, 2017 assesses the subject site against this statement. It concludes that the home meets this definition as being “*unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect.*”

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

Beginning on page 23, the report describes the significance of the home and the Merito Vista tract in which it is located relative to the period of the 1920’s. During the 20’s and 30’s, Palm Springs grew rapidly, attracting many wealthy families who built large luxurious estate-like homes designed by notable architects in the latest and popular “revival styles”.

The Merito Vista tract by design, -- was different.

The developers of the Merito Vista tract advertised “*small estates*” accessible to *would-be buyers of lesser means than the “men of large means who pioneered this treasured spot.”* As the report denotes, a 1926 advertisement declared the tract’s “*privileges have been made available to those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here.*”

401 Merito Place was one of the earliest homes built in the Merito Vista tract and is a rare surviving example of the sort of “unpretentious”, modest-sized home on a small estate -- envisioned by the tract’s developers. Since most of the Merito Vista tract did not develop with new homes until many years later – much of it not until after World War II, the early vision of small unpretentious homes for buyers of more modest means was soon forgotten, as homebuilding trends moved toward ever larger and more elaborately-styled homes.

401 Merito Place also is reflective of the period of the 1920's in that it is designed in a "revival" architectural style. During the 1920's picturesque "revival" style architecture was extremely popular throughout the United States.

Additionally, 401 Merito Place is particularly unique for Palm Springs in that it employed a simplified "Tudor Revival" or "English Tudor Cottage" architectural style. During this period, Tudor Revival and English Tudor Cottage style homes were commonly found in the east and Midwest regions of the U.S., which may explain why the Robinsons, who relocated from Grand Rapids, Michigan, chose this particular style for their Palm Springs home.

Thus, home exemplifies the period of the 1920's when revival style architecture was prevalent. It reflects the vision of the Merito Vista tract developers; that the tract would attract buyers whose homes be constructed in a "modest and unpretentious manner". It is also a rare, and possibly the only surviving example in Palm Springs of a home designed a simplified English Tudor or English Tudor Cottage style of architecture.¹ For these reasons, the report concluded that the subject site meets the definition of a historic site under Criterion 3.

SECTION 2. DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS AND NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES:

The physical character-defining historic features of this site include the following:

1. The residential structure with the following features and finishes:
 - The steeply pitched roof with wood shake shingles.
 - The hand-troweled exterior stucco over hollow clay tile walls.
 - The multi-pane wood casement windows;
2. The rock perimeter wall along a portion of the east property line.²

The non-contributing features include the following:

1. The site landscaping and hardscape, (including pool deck, etc);
2. The carport, trellises and other additions on the south and west sides of the original structure.
3. The front door and exterior lights.
4. The additions to the structure constructed in the 1980's.

¹ From review of the Citywide historic resource survey from 2004 and the most recent draft survey, no other English Tudor Cottage style structures have been identified in Palm Springs.

² The wall is characteristic of property boundary walls erected by early pioneers and settlers to demark their landholding. Constructed of locally found rocks and rubble laid up by hand with mortar in a rustic manner, it was a fairly common and affordable way to demarcate ones land. Very few of these early walls survive. A few can be found in the Tennis Club neighborhood but are not protected. For this reason, it is included in the defining characteristics for this site.

SECTION 3. FINDINGS: Pursuant to PSMC 8.05.160 (*“Findings and Decisions – Resolution”*), the City Council must make findings in support of the historic site designation as follows:

“If the city council shall find that the purposes of this chapter are furthered by designation of property as an historic site or district, such findings shall be stated in a resolution designating such property within such historic site or district.”

The purpose of the Historic Preservation Chapter of the Palm Springs Municipal Code is outlined in PSMC Section 8.05.010 as follows:

“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.”

Class 1 historic designation of 401 West Merito Place would further the purpose of the historic preservation ordinance because it meets the definition of a historic site defined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020 and reflects elements of its cultural, social economic political architectural and archaeological history as follows:

“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:”

The addenda to the ARG report dated April 4, 2017 assesses the subject site against this statement. It concludes that the home meets this definition as being *“unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect.”*

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

401 West Merito Place is a rare surviving example of a modestly-scaled revival style home of the type that the developers of the Merito Vista tract envisioned in 1925. Architecturally, it reflects the period of the 1920’s when revival style architecture was popular throughout the United States. Further, its simplified or “vernacular” form of

Tudor Revival (or English Tudor Cottage) reflects a period in Palm Springs when modestly-scaled homes were not typically designed by trained professional architects, but rather by the local builders or the settlers themselves, bringing to the remote desert a layperson's interpretation of architectural styles that may have been familiar to those individuals who were relocating to Palm Springs from cities and towns "back east".

Based on this finding, the designation of 401 West Merito Place as a Class 1 historic site furthers the purpose of the Historic Preservation ordinance.

SECTION 4. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: The City Council finds that the Class 1 historic site designation is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical changes to the environment, directly or indirectly.

Based upon the foregoing, the City Council hereby designates 401 West Merito Place (APN 505-294-006) as Class 1 Historic Site (Case HSPB #105) 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 new buildings 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 submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.

ADOPTED THIS SEVENTEENTH DAY OF MAY, 2017.

David H. Ready, Esq., Ph.D.
City Manager

ATTEST:

Kathleen D. Hart, MMC
Interim City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

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

I, KATHLEEN D. HART, Interim 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:

Kathleen D. Hart, MMC
Interim City Clerk

ATTACHMENT #3



401 West Merito Place Historic Resources Report

(Planning Case #3.4001 MAA)

Prepared for:

City of Palm Springs
Department of Planning Services
3200 Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, California 92263

Prepared by:



Architectural
Resources Group

Pasadena, California

February 28, 2017

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1. Introduction

At the request of the City of Palm Springs' Department of Planning Services, Architectural Resources Group (ARG) has prepared this Historic Resources Report for the property at 401 W. Merito Place, Palm Springs, Riverside County, California.

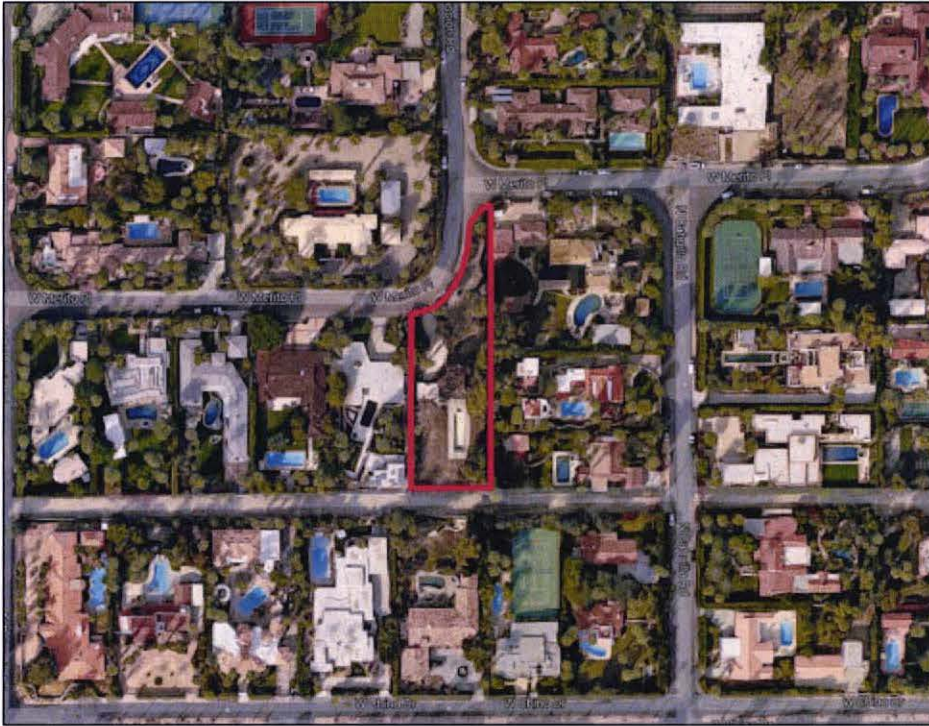
The property at 401 W. Merito Place is a roughly 2/3-acre lot containing a 2½ -story single-family residence constructed in 1928, and a swimming pool and spa added in 1987. ARG has evaluated the property's eligibility for listing as a City of Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site.

Completion of this assessment involved a site visit and visual inspection of the property on February 9, 2017; compilation and review of historic building permits and project documents obtained from the Palm Springs Department of Planning Services; primary and secondary source research conducted through various online repositories; development of applicable historic contexts and themes; evaluation of the building's eligibility under City of Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site criteria; and evaluation of the building's historic integrity. This report was prepared by Katie E. Horak, Principal; Mary Ringhoff, Associate; and Evanne St. Charles, all of whom meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards* for Architectural History.¹

In summary, ARG finds that the property at 401 W. Merito Place is eligible for listing as a City of Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site. The following report provides a contextual basis for analysis and a detailed discussion of how this determination was made.

¹ Katie E. Horak is a Principal and Architectural Historian in ARG's Pasadena office, with 13 years of experience in the field. She is a graduate of the Master of Historic Preservation (now Heritage Conservation) program at the University of Southern California. Mary Ringhoff is an Associate in ARG's Pasadena office, with eight years of experience in the field. She is a graduate of the Master of Historic Preservation (now Master of Heritage Conservation) program at the University of Southern California. Evanne St. Charles is an Architectural Historian in ARG's Pasadena office with 3.5 years of experience in the field. She is a graduate of the Master of Historic Preservation program at the University of Oregon.

2. Architectural Description



Site map. The subject property, 401 W. Merito Pl., is outlined in red. Base map from maps.google.com.

2.1 Site and Setting

The subject property, 401 W. Merito Place, is located in a single-family residential neighborhood west of Palm Canyon Drive in northwest Palm Springs. It lies on the south side of W. Merito Place, near the point where Merito Place meets N. Mission Road. The topography of the immediate area is largely flat, though at the edge of the neighborhood the slope quickly rises toward the San Jacinto mountain range to the west. The neighborhood, originally subdivided as the Merito Vista tract in 1925, features curvilinear (and in some cases, looping), wide streets with no sidewalks; its lots are large and most contain large single-family houses fronted by hedges, walls, and fences. It is commonly referred to Old Las Palmas. Homes from the 1920s and 1930s are present, though most of the homes appear to be from the post-World War II period of development.

The subject property is occupied by a 2½-story, single-family residence on a large (.66 acre), irregularly shaped lot. The house is set well back on its lot, with remnants of front and back landscaping including mature palm trees, evergreens, and shrubs on a mostly bare dirt ground surface.² A low concrete block perimeter wall with a modern driveway gate sits at the front of the lot. A slightly curving, wide concrete driveway leads from the street to the west side of the house. The east side of the lot contains a mortared slump stone wall with portions of chain link fencing, while the south and west sides have segments of both concrete block walls and chain link. The backyard contains a modern concrete swimming pool and spa. The rear of the parcel abuts a utility easement.

2.2 Building Exterior



Overview of subject property from the street. All existing conditions photos were taken by ARG on February 9, 2017.

The Tudor Revival-style house is irregular in plan and clad in stucco with a hand-troweled finish.³ Two articulated volumes are visible from the street: a main 2½-story volume with a smaller one-story volume attached to the west. Both volumes have side-gabled roofs covered with wood shake; the front-facing portions of the roofs are steeply pitched and constitute over half of the building's primary façade. Their gables "break" on their rear portions to become much more shallowly pitched over the second story. Shallow closed eaves with simple bargeboards and gutters

² Pre-2012 aerial photographs show the parcel used to have lawn at both the front and rear.

³ The house reflects a relatively simple and unornamented expression of the Tudor Revival style; modest examples like this are commonly also referred to as "English Revival" or "English Vernacular Cottage." To avoid confusion, this report uses the broader definition of Tudor Revival.

are present. A partially stuccoed brick chimney protrudes from the center of the main volume's gable peak. A partially enclosed carport is attached to the west façade of the smaller volume. The building's rear façade has another projecting volume representing a 1981 enclosure of a first-story patio area and a 1987 second-story addition to existing rooms.



North and west
façades, view to
southeast.

The building's primary (north) façade is asymmetrical, showing the two front volumes. The main volume contains a simple entry with a plain wood door (a replacement), slightly elevated above an open flagstone stoop fronted by a small flagstone planter. An original lantern-style metal light sconce sits next to the door. The rest of the main volume contains two pairs of multi-light wood casement windows. A low concrete block wall supporting a wood pergola has been attached to the east façade and is visible from the north façade. The stucco on the primary façade of the house's main volume contains a number of metal screws as well as markings from climbing vines (since removed). The north façade of the smaller volume contains a canted bay with one pair of multi-light steel casement windows and a hipped hood with wood shake. The carport attached to the west façade of the smaller volume is clad in plywood with vertical grooves and has a hipped pent roof covered with wood shake fronting a flat roof. The flat portion of the roof is covered with an unknown material.

The main volume's west façade contains five window openings. From top to bottom, they are an attic window opening with no apparent window; a second-story awning or casement multi-light wood window; a second-story fixed wood



West façade, view
to east.



Attached carport at
west façade, view
to south.

window (a modern replacement); a first-story fixed wood window with lead caning and stained glass; and a first-story fixed oval wood window. The oval window is in a partially infilled area that once contained a door to the exterior. A metal standpipe is present at the west façade. The smaller volume's west façade contains a group of three metal multi-light awning windows at the first story (replacements), within a shallowly west-projecting area with a hipped roof covered by wood shake. The first story also contains two pairs of plywood doors (garage/storage type) under the carport. The second story of the smaller volume's west façade contains an awning or casement wood multi-light window and a pair of wood multi-light French doors that open onto the carport roof. The area containing the French doors is part of a 1980s second story addition.



South façade, view to north.

The building's rear (south) façade is dominated by additions, with the only visible portions of the original house configuration being the easternmost portion and the gable peak. The carport at the west end of the façade has an enclosed plywood storage volume with a shed roof clad in wood shake. A modern, partially glazed, metal paneled door closes off the carport from the backyard. East from there, the south façade's first story contains a shed-roofed laundry room volume fronted by a wood trellis fence sheltering equipment. The east wall of this room contains a fixed wood multi-light window. East of there is a wood utility door for water heater access. The first story of the south façade also contains a pair of multi-light wood French doors accessing a concrete patio, flanked by matching wood sidelights. A non-original metal light sconce is present. The patio is shaded by a wood pergola

fronting an overhanging hipped/pent roof with wood shake and wide, closed, stucco eaves. East of that is a pair of wood multi-light casements in the house's original volume, and east of that is a small one-story projecting volume with a hipped roof. The second story of the south façade projects from the original house's roofline and is covered by a shed roof with wood shake. It contains three groups of multi-light wood windows (each grouping has a fixed sash flanked by casements) as well as an air conditioning unit.



South façade, view
to northwest.

The north portion of the building's east façade contains original openings and fenestration/doors. A pair of multi-light wood French doors flanked by matching wood sidelights opens to a flagstone and concrete patio with a single flagstone step. The doors are fronted by wood screen doors. As noted above, a low concrete block wall has been added to the north side of the patio, supporting a modern wood pergola. A pair of multi-light wood casements is present to the south of the French doors. The second story here contains two pairs of multi-light wood casement windows, and a wood single-light window (either casement or fixed) sits at the attic level. South of the flagstone patio is a small one-story projecting volume with a hipped roof; its east façade contains a fixed two-light steel window with a wood screen. South of this volume, the east façade's first story contains two pairs of wood multi-light casement windows looking out on a concrete patio shaded by the hipped/pent roof overhang wrapping around from the south façade. The second story contains one pair of multi-light wood casements and a single multi-



East façade, view to northwest.



East and north façades, view to southwest.

light wood casement; their rooflines and configuration suggest the former is part of an addition, while the latter is likely to have been original.

Some alterations to the subject property were noted by ARG staff during the site visit and, where possible, were confirmed with available primary and secondary source documentation. These alterations are identified and discussed in Section 3: Alterations and Chronology of Development.

3. Alterations and Chronology of Development

Upon review of historical building permits, newspaper sources, and original documents provided by a Palm Springs Department of Planning Services report, ARG created the following chronology of development for 401 W. Merito Place. This chronology provides a summary of the property's development as well as a summary of all documented alterations.

- 1928: A single-family residence was constructed at 401 W. Merito Place. Harry M. Robinson and Nellie R. Robinson were the original owners of the property. The 1929 Sanborn fire insurance map shows it had an irregular footprint and was built of hollow clay tile.⁴
- 1938: In a "For Sale or Rent" newspaper ad placed by Harry Robinson, the residence was noted as being stucco-clad and having six rooms (including two bathrooms), two fireplaces, a sleeping porch, a patio, an attic, and a fruit cellar.⁵
- 1939: The Palm Springs city directory listed Raymond Sorum and his wife Nora M. Sorum residing at 401 W. Merito Place; they were presumably renting the property from the Robinsons.⁶
- 1946: The Robinsons sold the property to Raymond and Nora Sorum.⁷
- 1960: The roof was damaged in a fire; a photo of the property shows wood clapboard siding at the west gable end.⁸
- Post-1960 A side entry door leading to the first floor bathroom and fruit cellar was partially infilled and converted into an oval window opening; the wood clapboard siding at the west gable end was removed.⁹
- 1977: Dr. Marvin H. Frankel and wife Carol A. Frankel acquired the property.¹⁰
- 1980: Construction of a slump stone perimeter fence.¹¹

⁴ Sanborn Map Company, *Palm Springs, California, February 1929*, Sheet 8.

⁵ Classified Ad, *The Desert Sun*, 23 September 1938.

⁶ *Palm Springs City Directory, 1939-1940 Season* (Long Beach, CA: Western Directory Company, 1939).

⁷ Chain of Title Guarantee, *First American Title Insurance Company*, December 8, 2016, in Palm Springs Department of Planning Services, *Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report* (City of Palm Springs, 2017).

⁸ *The Desert Sun*, 29 November 1960.

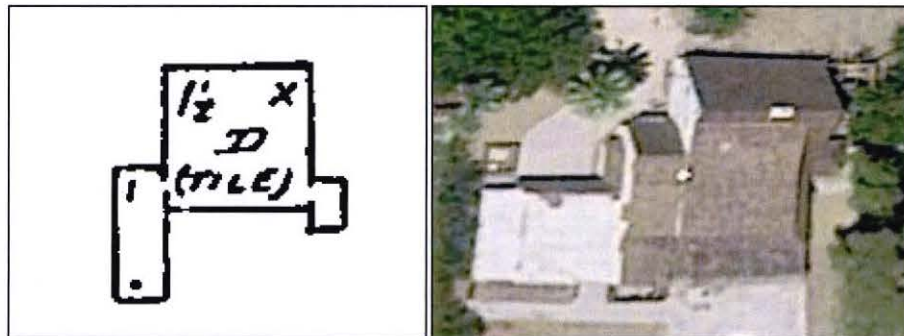
⁹ Comparison of existing conditions with photo from *The Desert Sun*, 29 November 1960.

¹⁰ Chain of Title Guarantee.

¹¹ City of Palm Springs Building Permit No. B4272 in Palm Springs Department of Planning Services, *Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report*. All building permits from this point are from the same report.

- 1981: Enclosure of an existing patio to increase the square footage of an adjoining bedroom. A note on the permit says "This project is a reconstruction of a dilapidated room—new roof line to conform to pitched section."¹²
- 1986: Interior demolition to prepare for a remodel and addition.¹³
Construction of a 15'x50' gunite pool and 7'x7' spa.¹⁴
- 1987: Construction of a two-story addition comprising a first floor family room at the rear of the house and enlargement of upstairs bedroom and bathroom.¹⁵
- 2011: Soheil Alexander Soleimani acquired the property.¹⁶
- 2012: Mr. Soleimani transferred ownership of the property to his trust, the Soleimani 2011 Irrevocable Trust.¹⁷

Property footprint on 1929 Sanborn map (left) and in 2016 Google Earth image (right). The images are not to scale and are for general comparison of footprint changes only.



¹² City of Palm Springs Building Permit No. B3689.

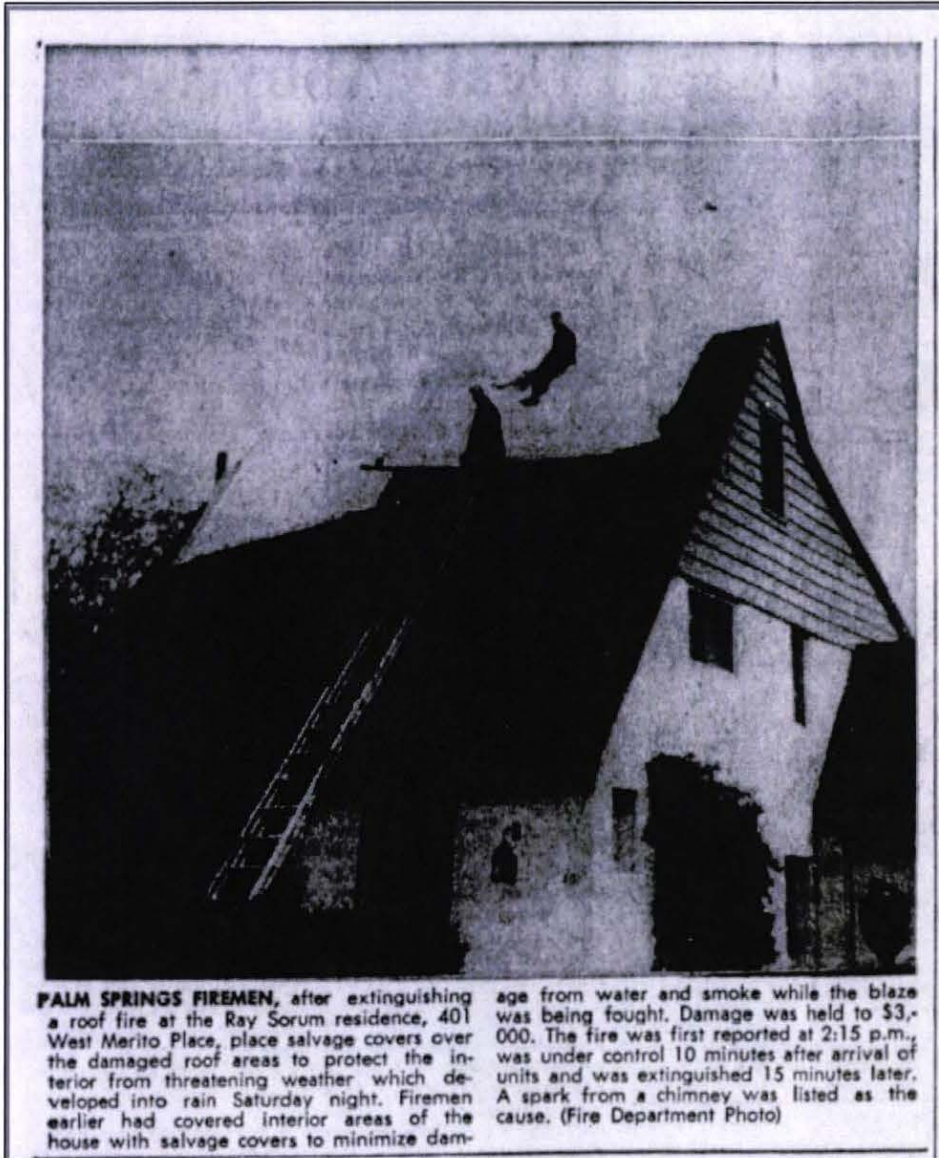
¹³ City of Palm Springs Building Permit No. B08515.

¹⁴ City of Palm Springs Building Permit No. B08378.

¹⁵ City of Palm Springs Building Permit No. B08775.

¹⁶ Chain of Title Guarantee.

¹⁷ Chain of Title Guarantee.



Property as it appeared in 1960; note entry door at side façade (to right of vegetation) and clapboard siding at gable. *The Desert Sun*, 29 November 1960.

In addition to the aforementioned alterations, ARG noted the following additional alterations to the exterior of the building that are not documented in building permits or other source materials. These alterations were identified by visual inspection of the building conducted by ARG staff on February 9, 2017. Most of these alterations are presumed to be roughly contemporaneous with the major additions constructed in the 1980s.

- A partially enclosed carport with storage space was added to the west façade

- Some original windows on the side and rear facades were replaced with wood or metal multi-light fixed and casement windows
- The primary door was replaced
- A wood pergola and low concrete block wall were added to the flagstone patio at the east façade
- A wood pergola was added to the concrete patio at the south façade
- The concrete driveway was expanded or replaced, and a low concrete perimeter wall with driveway gate was added at the front of the lot

4. Historic Contexts

4.1 Early Residential Development of Palm Springs

Originally inhabited by the people of the Cahuilla tribe later known as the Agua Caliente band, Palm Springs was first settled by European Americans as an agricultural town in the last decades of the 19th century. Taking advantage of the region's warm weather, settlers grew fruits and vegetables, which ripened sooner and could reach Los Angeles markets earlier in the season. However, the town's agricultural aspirations were short lived. A flood in 1894, followed by years of drought, devastated the local farming industry. By the early 1900s, Palm Springs' agricultural ambitions were overshadowed by its emergence as a resort destination, a quality that would come to define the desert city.¹⁸

Palm Springs' residential development began in earnest in the 1920s, and tourism played a major role in its development from the start. Hotels, including the Desert Inn (1909), the Oasis Hotel (1925), and the El Mirador Hotel (1928), accommodated wealthy vacationers who came for the warm desert climate and positive health effects.¹⁹ Taken by the leisurely atmosphere of the desert oasis, hotel patrons often considered buying a residence. Most of Palm Springs' early residents were prominent industrialists and Hollywood moguls who bought second homes in the town. The town residents' exclusive parties and various social occasions were often covered and popularized in the *Los Angeles Times* and other newspapers throughout the 1920s.²⁰ By the time Palm Springs incorporated in 1938, it had become famous worldwide as a "winter playground for Hollywood stars, European royalty and business tycoons, all who came to enjoy the endless sunshine and serenity of the desert."²¹

Prior to World War II, most residential development was concentrated in the vicinity of the existing village and its vacation accommodations. The community's earliest residential subdivisions date to the early to mid-1920s and include Las Hacienditas (1923), Vista Acres (1923), Tahquitz Park (1923), Palm Canyon Mesa (1924), Araby Tract (1925), and Merito Vista (1925). Though subdivided and

¹⁸ Alan Hess and Andrew Danish, *Palm Springs Weekend: The Architecture of a Midcentury Oasis* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001), 22-24.

¹⁹ Historic Resources Group, *City of Palm Springs Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings* (City of Palm Springs: Department of Planning Services, 2016), 58; Moya Henderson and the Palm Springs Historical Society, *Palm Springs* (San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 8.

²⁰ Historic Resources Group, 58-59.

²¹ *Draft Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, March 2003), 3-5.

improved in the 1920s, most tracts were left largely undeveloped until the post-World War II period.²²

4.2 Development of the Merito Vista Tract

The residence at 401 W. Merito Place is located in the Merito Vista tract, a residential neighborhood subdivided in 1925 by preeminent prewar developer Prescott T. Stevens. A wealthy cattle rancher from Colorado, Stevens moved with his wife, Frances, to Hollywood in 1912. By 1920, the couple had relocated to Palm Springs, where Stevens purchased substantial acreage north of downtown and shares in the original Palm Valley Water Company, which he then used to form the Whitewater Mutual Water Company and the Palm Springs Water Company. With his partner Alvah Hicks, a noted local carpenter and homebuilder, Stevens subdivided several of the town's earliest tracts, including Vista Acres (1923), Merito Vista (1925), Las Palmas Estates (1926), and Palm Springs Estates (1927). Recognizing the most effective method of selling real estate was through tourism, Stevens, Hicks, and other developers built the El Mirador Hotel (1927), where Stevens persuaded wealthy hotel guests to invest in a second home.²³

Merito Vista was advertised by the Evans-Lee Corporation as "one of the most unique of the exclusive California subdivisions" with large lots made available to the average homebuyer.²⁴ The subdivision was laid out with a curvilinear street pattern, a feature evocative of the suburban residential community plans of Frederick Law Olmsted, and one that later characterized the postwar residential suburb. The Evans-Lee Corporation purported that most lots in Merito Vista had been sold within the first season it opened.²⁵ However, the pace of residential construction within the tract was slow, and much more construction occurred after World War II. Houses that were built in the 1920s and '30s were designed in various Period Revival styles, predominantly Spanish Colonial Revival. Alvah Hicks, noted contractor and partner of Prescott Stevens, built a number of Merito Vista's prewar residences.²⁶

²² Historic Resources Group, 58-59.

²³ Historic Resources Group, 68-69; Ann Greer, "Men on the Forefront," *Palm Springs Life*, accessed February 1, 2017, <http://www.palmspringslife.com/men-on-the-forefront/>.

²⁴ Merito Vista advertisement, *Los Angeles Times*, 7 February 1926.

²⁵ "Desert Acres Jump to \$1500," *Los Angeles Times*, 25 April 1926.

²⁶ Historic Resources Group, 69.

PALM SPRINGS

"OUR ARABY"

If you have not been to Palm Springs, now is the time to go, in order to fully enjoy its sheer natural beauty, its delightfully ideal winter climate and its invigorating elevation.

Men of wealth have always been quick to find and appreciate the beauty spots of America and convert them to their own pleasure, and in the past the development of Palm Springs has been confined to men of large means who pioneered this treasure spot.

With the subdividing, however, of Merito Vista into small estates, its privileges have been made available to those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here.

Go to Palm Springs this month and while there, investigate Merito Vista, one of the most unique of the exclusive California subdivisions.

(By auto, via the Los Angeles-Imperial Valley Route. Daily stage from Union Stage Depot, Los Angeles to Palm Springs.)

MERITO VISTA EVANS-LEE CORPORATION

Exclusive Los Angeles Agents
514 California Bank Bldg.
METropolitan 3148

CREE & CHAFFEY
Exclusive Palm Springs Agents
Palm Springs, California

Display ad in the *Los Angeles Times*, 7 February 1926.

4.3 401 W. Merito Place

The single-family residence at 401 W. Merito Place was built in 1928 for Harry and Nellie Robinson. Harry M. Robinson was born in 1874 in Allegan, Michigan to Freeman and Francis Robinson. In 1908, Harry Robinson married Nellie R. Chamberlain, the daughter of Newton and Ester Chamberlain from Fremont, Michigan. In 1910, he worked as a mechanic at a planing mill and Nellie worked as a homemaker. By 1920, the couple lived in Grand Rapids, and Robinson was employed as a carpenter. Between 1920 and 1928, the Robinsons moved to California. The 1930 U.S. Census lists them living in the unincorporated community of Palm Springs Village, presumably in the house on Merito Place; Mr. Robinson is enumerated as a carpenter/homebuilder. He lived next to and may have been employed by local contractor Alvah Hicks. As such, the house may have been constructed by the Hicks company, or by Robinson himself (original building

permits could not be located to confirm).²⁷ By 1937, Hicks and his wife were living in a new home in the “Little Tuscany” neighborhood of Palm Springs.²⁸

It is unclear how long the Robinsons lived at 401 W. Merito Place, or whether it was their primary or only residence; the 1940 census indicates that they were living in Temple City in 1935 and in Hermosa Beach in 1940.²⁹ In a 1938 classified ad in *The Desert Sun*, Harry Robinson listed the Merito Place property “for sale or rent.”³⁰ By 1939, 401 W. Merito Place was occupied by Raymond and Nora Sorum.³¹

Raymond Sorum, a contractor by trade, helped develop a number of Palm Springs properties in the 1930s and 1940s through his partnership with Raymond R. Wilson, initiated in 1936. The Raymond R. Wilson Company, later renamed Wilson & Sorum, constructed well-known Palm Springs buildings such as the Woman’s Club, the La Paz Guest Ranch (no longer extant), and its own office building at 664 N. Palm Canyon Drive. The firm apparently had an ongoing relationship with prominent local architect John Porter Clark, constructing buildings of his design including the Woman’s Club, the La Paz Guest Ranch, Paul Dougherty Residence at 1860 North Vista Drive (1942), the Florian Boyd Residence at 216 W. Via Lola (1940), and St. Paul in the Desert Episcopal Church at 125 West El Alameda (1942).³²

City directories indicate Sorum served as a manager at the Earl C. Strebe Properties real estate company between 1946 and 1947, and as an architectural superintendent at the office of the noted architecture firm of John Porter Clark and Albert Frey from at least 1948 to 1952.³³ Prior to that, he was very active in local politics in the 1940s, serving on the City Council for three years and as Palm Springs’ first city manager between 1942 and 1945, when he resigned.³⁴ Sorum also served as Chairman of the Riverside County Flood Control District, president of the United School District Board of Trustees, and a member of the Desert Museum Board of Directors.³⁵ In 1946, the Sorums purchased the residence at 401 W. Merito from the Robinsons. The Sorums are presumed to have lived at the subject property continuously between their first known occupation in 1939 until they became its owners in 1946, but research has not been able to confirm this.

²⁷ U.S. Census Records, 1900, 1910, 1920, and 1930.

²⁸ “‘Little Tuscany’ Sites Nearly All Taken; 3 Left,” *The Desert Sun* 9 April 1937.

²⁹ U.S. Census Records, 1940.

³⁰ Classified Ad, *The Desert Sun*, 23 September 1938.

³¹ *Palm Springs City Directory, 1939-1940 Season* (Long Beach, CA: Western Directory Company, 1939).

³² Ron and Barbara Marshall, Paul Dougherty Residence Nomination Application for City of Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site (prepared for the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, February 2014), 19-20; Historic Resources Group, 130, 143.

³³ City Directories, City of Palms Springs, California, 1946-1952.

³⁴ “Ray Sorum Resigns as City Manager,” *The Desert Sun*, 19-26 October 1945.

³⁵ “Obituaries: Sorum,” *The Desert Sun*, January 6, 1975, 2; Palm Springs Department of Planning Services, *Historic Site Designation Application: Paul Dougherty Residence* (City of Palm Springs, 2014), 40.

After the death of Raymond Sorum in 1975, Nora Sorum sold the residence to Dr. Marvin Frankel and his wife Carol in 1977. Marvin Frankel graduated from the State University of New York (SUNY) in 1970 and practiced in Palm Springs for 45 years.³⁶ It was during the Frankels' ownership the subject property received most of its alterations, including interior remodeling; the enclosure of a patio for a bedroom expansion; the construction of a two-story rear addition to accommodate a family room and the enlargement of an upstairs bathroom and bedroom; the construction of a swimming pool and spa; and the erection of a stone fence.³⁷

Due to financial difficulties, the house was foreclosed by HSBC Bank USA, Trustee of J.P. Morgan, in May 2011. In September 2011, Soheil Alexander Soleimani acquired the property, which he transferred to his trust the following year.³⁸

³⁶ Chain of Title Guarantee.

³⁷ City of Palm Springs Building Permits.

³⁸ Chain of Title Guarantee.

5. Regulations and Criteria for Evaluation

5.1 City of Palms Springs Historic Site

The City of Palm Springs administers a local designation program in which individual properties and concentrations of properties can be designated as Historic Sites and Historic Districts, respectively. The designation of Historic Sites and Districts is governed by Title 8, Chapter 8.05, Article III (Procedure for Designation of Historic Sites or Districts) of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, which establishes and authorizes a seven-member Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) to identify, nominate and recommend potential historic sites or districts to the City Council. To facilitate this process, the Ordinance establishes requirements that a property must meet in order to qualify for designation as a historic site.³⁹

Per the Municipal Code, a Historic Site is defined as “a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect.”⁴⁰ A property may be designated a Historic Site if it satisfies one or more of the following seven evaluative criteria:

1. It is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or
2. It is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contributions to national, state or local history; or
3. It reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or
4. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or
5. It represents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or
6. It represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

³⁹ The City of Palm Springs is also a designated Certified Local Government (CLG), which is a preservation partnership between the National Park Service (NPS), the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and local communities with a goal to create local commitments to historic preservation.

⁴⁰ City of Palm Springs Municipal Code, 8.05.020 – Historic Preservation, General Provisions, Definitions.

7. It has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.⁴¹

In order for a property to qualify as a City of Palm Springs Historic Site, it must not only be significant under one or more criteria but also retain integrity, which the National Park Service defines as “the ability of a property to convey its significance.”⁴² While the City of Palm Springs Historic Sites Ordinance does not explicitly include language about integrity, it does state that a historic site’s uniqueness and significance can be determined through its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect.⁴³ In nominating historic sites to the local register, the City of Palm Springs follows guidelines on integrity established by the National Park Service for the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register has identified seven aspects of integrity as follows:

1. **Location:** the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
2. **Design:** the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
3. **Setting:** the physical environment of a historic property.
4. **Materials:** the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
5. **Workmanship:** the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
6. **Feeling:** a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
7. **Association:** the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

To convey historic integrity, a property will possess several, if not most, of these aspects.⁴⁴

Should a property satisfy one or more of the aforementioned criteria and retain integrity, it is categorized into one of the following classifications by the Palm Springs City Council:

⁴¹ City of Palm Springs Municipal Code, 8.05.020.

⁴² National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin #15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria For Evaluation* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, 1990), 44.

⁴³ City of Palm Springs Municipal Code, 8.05.020.

⁴⁴ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin #15, 44.*

Class 1. Structure/site qualified for city designation; may be qualified at the federal, state and/or county level... (Intended for use when the structure or site still exists as it did during the historical period or is restorable).

Class 2. Site qualified for city designation; may be qualified at the federal, state and/or county level... (Intended for use when the site is not occupied by a modern structure or use which is different than that of the historical period or if structure is unusable, nonconforming, unrestorable, or the like).

Class 3. Structure/site was constructed before 1969, or a year to be determined by the City Council, or construction date cannot be confirmed. Eligible for a six-month stay of demolition.⁴⁵

Class 1 Historic Site designation serves as the highest level of local designation in Palm Springs, ensuring that a “structure/site may not be modified nor objects removed without approval of the city council,” while its usage may also be regulated or limited to “the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site.”⁴⁶

⁴⁵ City of Palm Springs Municipal Code, 8.05.125 – Created by Council.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

6. Evaluation of Significance

6.1 Previous Surveys and Designations

The property at 401 W. Merito Place was previously identified for its historical significance in the *Riverside County Historic Resources Survey* (1982-1983, partially updated 1993). Research did not indicate what criteria surveyors used to evaluate the property, and the building was not assigned a California Historical Resource Status Code.⁴⁷ The property was not identified in the *City of Palms Springs Historic Resources Survey Summary Report*, completed by ARG in 2004. The preservation planning firm Historic Resources Group (HRG) recently conducted an updated and more intensive historic resources survey of the City of Palm Springs (completed in 2016). As part of that survey, HRG staff identified 401 W. Merito Place as a potential historic resource. The property has not been formally designated at the local, state, or federal level.

In 2016, the Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) provided recommendations in response to a proposed project at the subject property, proposing the demolition of the single-family residence and other structures on the site. Recommendations included placing a stay of demolition on the subject property (not to exceed 120 days), and initiating further study to further inform the Board on possible historic significance of the building.

6.2 City of Palm Springs Historic Site

Upon evaluation of 401 W. Merito Place against City of Palm Springs Historic Site eligibility criteria, ARG finds that the property appears eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site, as follows:

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

The property at 401 W. Merito Place is not associated with a singular event that has made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state, or community. Research did not indicate that any significant events occurred at the subject property, nor did it reveal that the property's construction occurred as a result of any one event; rather, the residence reflects early residential development patterns. Therefore,

⁴⁷ The California Historical Resource Status Codes are a series of ratings created by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) to identify the historic status of resources listed in the State's historic properties database. They are a shorthand way of stating whether a property has been designated, determined eligible, or left unevaluated for eligibility on national, state, and/or local levels. For more information, see the California State Office of Historic Preservation's Technical Assistance Bulletin #8: *User's Guide to the California Historical Resource Status Codes & Historic Resources Inventory Directory* (2004).

ARG does not find the subject property eligible as a Class 1 Historic Site under City of Palm Springs Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: *It is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contributions to national, state or local history.*

The subject property does not appear to be associated with persons who have made meaningful contributions to national, state or local history. Research indicates that the original owners were Harry and Nellie Robinson; Harry was a carpenter and homebuilder, and may have built the house himself. The Robinsons appear to have only lived at 401 W. Merito Place (and in Palm Springs in general) for a few years. They do not appear to rise to the level of significant persons within the context of national, state, or local history.

Between about 1939 and 1975, the subject property was occupied by Raymond and Nora Sorum, first as renters and then (after 1946) as owners. Raymond Sorum was a contractor who was active in local politics in the 1940s. He was a City Council member (1939-1942) and served as Palm Springs' first city manager (1942-1945). After resigning from the city manager position in 1945, Sorum continued to work in real estate and held other civic leadership positions (school district, flood control district, museum board) over the next few decades. Sorum's involvement with municipal government soon after Palm Springs incorporated suggests he added to the institutional and social fabric of the city, but the available evidence does not indicate he made meaningful contributions to national, state, or local history at the requisite level to be considered a historically significant personage.

The subject property was owned by Dr. Marvin Frankel and Carol Frankel between 1977 and 2011. Marvin Frankel was a prominent local physician, but despite running a long-lived professional practice in Palm Springs, neither he nor his wife appear to rise to the level of significant individuals in the context of national, state, or local history.

ARG finds the property does not appear eligible as a Class 1 Historic Site under City of Palm Springs Criterion 2.

Criterion 3: *It reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history.*

The residence at 401 W. Merito Place is associated with early residential development in Palm Springs, specifically, with the 1920s subdivision boom in the immediate vicinity of the existing Palm Springs village. This was a crucial period in the development of Palm Springs, reflecting investment in the community by new part-time and full-time residents attracted by its climate and new recreational attractions. The city's growth during the 1920s and 1930s was a precursor to the larger boom of the postwar period, and established characteristics of Palm Springs residential areas that remain to this day.

Merito Vista was designed with distinctive curvilinear streets and large lots advertised as “small estates” accessible to would-be buyers of lesser means than the “men of large means who pioneered this treasure spot;” a 1926 newspaper advertisement declared the tract’s “privileges have been made available to those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here.”⁴⁸ Though subdivided and improved in the 1920s, much of Merito Vista was not developed until after World War II. The house at 401 W. Merito Place is one of the few residences constructed immediately after the tract was established. Its small scale and modest style make it a relatively rare example of the kind of unpretentious home on a small estate envisioned by Merito Vista’s developers. As such, the subject property is a direct reflection of a particular period of local history, and exemplifies Palm Springs residential development patterns of the 1920s. For these reasons, ARG finds the property eligible as a Class 1 Historic Site under City of Palm Springs Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: *It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.*

The subject property is recognizable as a single-family residence built in a modest Tudor Revival⁴⁹ style, reflecting one of the popular Period Revival styles seen throughout southern California in the 1920s and 1930s. The building is slightly unusual for its hollow clay tile construction, and is even more unusual for its architectural style; the Spanish Colonial Revival and Mediterranean Revival styles were by far the most popular Period Revival styles in Palm Springs during this time period, as seen in the surviving 1920s-1930s houses in the Merito Vista tract as well as in other parts of the city. The house at 401 W. Merito Place is the only known 1920s Tudor Revival residence in Palm Springs.⁵⁰ While it is notable as a rare or even unique example of its architectural style, the house is not strongly representative of 1920s-1930s residential properties in Palm Springs. Nor is it an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style; the building is modest stylistically and has experienced multiple alterations that have diminished its original design aesthetic. Most of the alterations involve rear additions that are largely not visible from the public right of way, but others are visible, including the addition of an attached carport, the infill/window conversion of a side entry door, the replacement of some original side windows, the addition of a low concrete block patio wall, a second-story rear addition visible on the east façade (with new French doors leading to the carport roof), and the replacement of the primary door. For

⁴⁸ Display ad, *Los Angeles Times*, 7 February 1926.

⁴⁹ As noted above, modest examples of the Tudor Revival style are also commonly referred to as “English Revival” and “English Vernacular Cottage.”

⁵⁰ Other Tudor Revival residences may be present in the city, but if so, they are not visible from the public right-of-way and have not otherwise been reported.

these reasons, ARG finds the property not eligible under City of Palm Springs Criterion 4.

Criterion 5: *It represents the work of a master builder, designer artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or it possesses high artistic value.*

Extensive research has not provided information about the architect/designer or builder of 401 W. Merito Place. Its original owner, Harry Robinson, was a homebuilder and may have built the residence himself, but that is conjecture. The subject property is a modest example of the Tudor Revival architectural style and does not possess high artistic value. As a result, ARG finds the property not eligible under City of Palm Springs Criterion 5.

Criterion 6: *It represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

As the subject property is not part of a district, it does not represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. Therefore, ARG concludes the property is not eligible as a Class 1 Historic Site under City of Palm Springs Criterion 6.

Criterion 7: *It has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

An archaeological assessment was not conducted as part of this study. As a result, the subject property is left unevaluated under Criterion 7.

7. Integrity Analysis

The National Register and California Register have specific language regarding integrity. Both require that a resource retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance. In accordance with the guidelines established by the National Park Service, integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The City of Palm Springs' Historic Preservation Ordinance does not explicitly include language regarding integrity, though it specifies location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and aesthetic effect as qualities that convey the significance and uniqueness of a historic site. However, in nominating historic sites to the register, the City of Palm Springs appears to follow National Register guidelines on integrity.

Following is an evaluation of these aspects at 401 W. Merito Place:

Location

The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.

The residence has not been moved from its original location. Therefore, it retains its integrity of location.

Design

The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.

The subject property has experienced some alterations which have altered its original form and plan. Rear additions and alterations in the 1980s expanded its footprint to the south, enclosed a patio, and greatly enlarged the second story rear volume. An exterior entry door in the west façade was partially infilled and converted to an oval window opening. A partially enclosed wood carport was added to the house's west façade. Some original casement windows were replaced in kind, and the front door is a replacement. Clapboard siding was removed from the west gable wall. And a low concrete block wall and wood pergola were added to the flagstone patio at the east façade.

However, most of the additions and alterations are at the rear and side of the house, leaving the appearance of its structure, style, and aesthetic effect largely unchanged from the public right-of-way. The property is clearly recognizable as a modest Tudor Revival-style residence from the late 1920s, with its dominant stylistic features still intact. Therefore, despite some modifications, the building retains its integrity of design; while it has been somewhat compromised, it is not lost altogether.

Setting

The physical environment of a historic property.

The subject property was constructed in a residential tract subdivided in 1925 but not fully built out until after World War II. The neighborhood is still residential, comprising one- and two-story single-family dwellings sited on large lots often fronted by hedges or walls. They reflect a mix of time periods, with the majority constructed between 1925 and 1960. The scale and character of the immediate neighborhood continues to reflect its residential nature, and the larger setting includes the mountains to the west, which retain their natural appearance as it was in the 1920s. The subject property retains integrity of setting.

Materials

The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.

The subject property has seen minimal replacement of its original materials, limited to the replacement in kind of a few windows at side and rear façades, the replacement of the primary door, and replacement of wood clapboard siding at the attic level with stucco. It retains most of its original materials, including stucco siding, wood and steel multi-light casement windows, a flagstone entry stoop and side patio, and wood shake roof material (which may be replacement in kind, but is appropriate). While the limited replacement of materials has compromised the property's integrity of materials, when viewed as a whole it is evident that this element of integrity remains intact.

Workmanship

The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory... [expressed through] both technological practices and aesthetic principles.

The property's original workmanship is evident through its simplified Tudor Revival architectural style as conveyed by its hand-troweled stucco finish, inset casement windows, hand-set flagstone entry stoop and side patio, steeply pitched rooflines covered with wood shake, and a decorative leaded/stained glass window at the west façade. Not visible but worthy of note is its hollow clay tile construction; this method was most heavily used during the first quarter of the 20th century and is very indicative of that time period. The property retains its integrity of workmanship.

Feeling

A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

With its modest Tudor Revival architectural style, the subject property clearly expresses a 1920s-1930s residential aesthetic, which was dominated in southern California by Period Revival styles. These styles were idealized interpretations of older historic periods, viewed through the romantic lens of the prosperous 1920s. The property continues to convey the period of time during which it was constructed, and its setting, materials, and overall characteristics remain intact. Therefore, 401 W. Merito Place retains its integrity of feeling.

Association

The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property type.

The subject property has been in continuous use as a single-family residence since its construction in 1928, linking it with 1920s residential development in Palm Springs. It largely retains its original appearance and is clearly recognizable as a 1920s Tudor Revival house. Therefore, the property's integrity of association remains intact.

Summary of Integrity

In summary, to be eligible for listing, a resource must retain enough of its historic character or appearance to be recognizable as a historical resource and to convey the reasons for its significance. The property at 401 W. Merito Place retains most aspects of its integrity – location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its integrity of design and materials have been somewhat compromised due primarily to rear additions and alterations dating to the 1980s. Despite these modifications, the property is still able to convey its overall design and historical period. Therefore, the subject property retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance.

8. Conclusion

Documentary and archival research, site analysis, the development of historic contexts, and an evaluation against local eligibility criteria indicate that the property at 401 W. Merito Place meets City of Palm Springs Historic Site eligibility Criterion 3. The subject property also retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance. Therefore, 401 W. Merito Place appears eligible for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site in the City of Palm Springs' Official Register of Historic Sites and Districts.

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401 W. Merito Place Historic Resource Report – April 4, 2017

ADDENDUM

The following addendum is provided to further clarify the discussion of architectural style provided in Architectural Resources Groups (ARG)'s 401 W. Merito Place Historic Resources Report (February 28, 2017). During the discussion at the HSPB public hearing on March 14, 2017, one of the board members commented that the building was more akin to an English Tudor Cottage rather than "full on Tudor Revival." Staff requested ARG to briefly provide further clarification of this distinction, and to add the full definition of Historic Site as defined in 8.05.020.

Tudor Revival and its Variants

The classification "Tudor Revival" is used to encompass a wide variety of architectural types and styles that drew inspiration from Medieval and 16th-17th century English building traditions, ranging from thatched-roof cottages to grandiose Elizabethan and Jacobean manor houses. Tudor Revival has its American origins in the Arts and Crafts movement, whose proponents looked to English domestic architecture for its picturesque qualities and relationship to the natural environment. Early examples were typically elaborate and architect-designed estate houses. Corresponding with a surge in popularity of a wide variety of Period Revival styles, Tudor Revival architecture became extremely popular during the 1920s population boom in Southern California. Masonry veneering techniques of the 1920s and '30s helped to further disseminate the style, as even modest houses could afford to mimic the brick and stone exteriors of traditional designs.¹

Tudor Revival architecture is characterized by its asymmetry, steeply-pitched gable roofs, decorative half-timbering, and prominent chimneys. High style examples are typically two to three stories in height and may exhibit leaded glass diamond-paned windows and slate roof shingles. Although the style continued to be used through the 1930s, later interpretations of Tudor Revival architecture were simpler in terms of form and design.

Typical character-defining features of Tudor Revival architecture include:

- Irregular massing and asymmetrical façades
- Steeply-pitched gable roofs with a prominent front-facing gable and slate, wood shingle, or composition shingle roofing
- Rolled, pointed, and/or flared eaves, sometimes with exposed rafter tails
- Prominent chimneys
- Brick, stone, or stucco wall cladding
- Decorative half-timbering

¹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 355.

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- Entrance vestibules with arched openings
- Multi-paned casement windows that are tall, narrow, and typically arranged in groups

A more whimsical variant of Tudor Revival, which often includes exaggerated rolled eaves, dominant half timbering, decorative brick, and towers and turrets, is sometimes referred to as the Storybook style or Hansel and Gretel cottage.

Another variation of the style, sometimes referred to as English Cottage, English Revival, or Cotswold Cottage, takes its cues from more modest English country houses. This variant, also almost exclusively used in domestic architecture, features picturesque, asymmetrical massing, walls of thick stucco (often absent of half timbering), side gabled-forms with dramatically pitched roofs that appear to extend nearly to ground level, and deeply set window openings.

The property at 401 W. Meriito Place, which was classified by ARG as Tudor Revival in the Historic Resources Report, has characteristics of the English Cottage variation of Tudor Revival.

Definition of Historic Site

The City of Palm Springs Municipal Code 8.05.020 provides the following definition of Historic Site:

An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect and:

- (1) That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or
- (2) That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or
- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or
- (4) That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or
- (5) That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or
- (6) That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (7) That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

Discussion

As discussed in the Historic Resources Report, 401 W. Meriito Place meets Criterion 3 because it exemplifies Palm Springs residential development patterns of the 1920s, specifically the development of

Addenda – 401 West Merlito Place Page 3 of 3

the Merito Vista tract as a subdivision of large lots priced for would-be buyers of lesser means “who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here.”²

It also meets the Historic Site requirement of being “unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect” and as reflecting “a particular period of ... local history.” The property is one of relatively few surviving houses constructed immediately after the subdivision of Merito Vista. It occupies a large lot with remnants of lush landscaping, and its larger setting includes residential properties on curvilinear streets. The house’s design, in a Period Revival style, reflects typical residential development of the period. In Palm Springs, Period Revival architecture tended to reflect Spanish and Mediterranean variations, rather than English as seen in the subject property; however, the use of a Period Revival idiom in general is part of what makes this property reflect a particular period of local development history.

The house’s design, materials, workmanship, and aesthetic effect have been somewhat eroded by multiple alterations, including the removal of wood cladding in the gable peak; additions to the side and rear of the building which have changed its overall massing; infill/window conversion of a side entry door; replacement of some side windows; and replacement of the primary door. For these reasons, despite its rarity, ARG does not conclude that it is significant for embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, specifically the English Cottage style (Criterion 4).

² Display ad, *Los Angeles Times*, 7 February 1926.

If you have not been to Palm Springs, now is the time to go, in order to fully enjoy its sheer natural beauty, its delightfully ideal winter climate and its invigorating elevation.

Men of wealth have always been quick to find and appreciate the beauty spots of America and convert them to their own pleasure, and in the past the development of Palm Springs has been confined to men of large means who pioneered this treasure spot.

With the subdividing, however, of Merito Vista into small estates, its privileges have been made available to those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here.

Go to Palm Springs this month and while there, investigate Merito Vista, one of the most unique of the exclusive California subdivisions.

(By auto. via the Los Angeles-Imperial Valley Route. Daily stage from Union Stage Depot, Los Angeles to Palm Springs.)

MERITO VISTA **EVANS-LEE CORPORATION**

Exclusive Los Angeles Agents
514 California Bank Bldg.
METropolitan 3148

CREE & CHAFFEY
Exclusive Palm Springs Agents
Palm Springs, California

ATTACHMENT #4

Exhibit "A"

Supplemental Information on Tudor Revival and English Tudor Cottage Architectural Styles

HSPB 106 – Consideration of Class 1 historic site designation for 401 West Merito Place.

As the historic resource report accompanying this staff report notes on page 24 and in the addenda, 401 Merito Place exemplifies a simpler version of "Tudor Revival", referred to as "English Tudor Cottage" or a "vernacular" version of Tudor Revival. It lacks many of the more refined stylistic markers such as diamond paned windows, heavy timber wall framing exposed to the outside, brick infill, ornate chimneys and upper floors that slightly overhang the first. As such, defining it as "Vernacular Tudor Revival" or "English Tudor Cottage" more accurately reflects its style. The term "vernacular" in the context of architecture often refers to regionalized, local, or rural variants of a more refined style found in the larger urban areas. Whereas Tudor homes in larger cities in England might be designed by trained professional architects, vernacular forms found in the countryside may have no architect associated with them and often were the stylistic interpretation of a local carpenter or builder who was involved with the home's construction. Such seems to be the case with 401 Merito Place and thus the report concludes that the site meets Criterion 3.

In addition to the report, Staff researched further the distinction between "English Tudor Revival" and "English Tudor Cottage" and found the following information from the Internet.



Tudor revival became especially popular for 1920s suburban homes, loosely based on late medieval prototypes. The style reaches back to England's Tudor period (1500-1559) as a romanticized revival of the timber-frame buildings popular at that time. Many of the revival examples are dominated visually with (ornamental) half-timbering, a medieval English building tradition, often with stucco or masonry veneered walls, steeply pitched roof, and cross-gabled plans. A variant of this is sometimes referred to as the English Cottage, which typically includes a picturesque (asymmetrical) floor plan but without the half timbering.

The English Tudor Cottage - A Simpler and Popular Form of English Tudor.

The English Tudor Cottage or English Revival Cottage is a variation on English Tudor Revival. It differed from the classic Tudor Revival in several ways:

- *These were smaller and more modest homes, built for middle-income families, usually one story.*
- *They were built on smaller lots, typically between the mid 1920s and late 1930s.*
- *The cottage version might have the half-timber over stucco style. But often not. The exterior material might be all stucco, or brick, or even shingle.*
- *The style features long rectangular windows, and often the use of leaded glass windows.*
- *The steeply pitched roof is still a common feature on these homes, as is a cross gable -- where the roof ridgelines run perpendicular to each other, with the gable end facing forward.*

ATTACHMENT #5

EXCERPTS OF MINUTES

At the Historic Site Preservation Board meeting of the City of Palm Springs, held (month day, 2016), the Historic Site Preservation Board took the following action:

2.A. CONSIDERATION OF CLASS ONE HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION FOR 401 WEST MERITO PLACE (APN #505-294-006) ZONE R-1-A, (CASE HSPB #106).

Staff member Lyon summarized the staff report.

There were no questions of staff and the chair opened the public hearing.

STEVEN HANNEGAN, with Berkshire Hathaway Realtors spoke on behalf of the owner opposing the proposed designation.

ALEX SOLIEMANI, owner spoke opposing the designation.

JOHN WALSH, spoke opposing the designation.

JADE NELSON, spoke in support of the designation.

HENRY WEISS, read a statement by SARAH FRANKEL in support of the designation.

Seeing no further speakers, the Chair closed the public hearing.

Member Burkett opined that the request is akin to "Demolition by Neglect". He cited the condition of the home and questioned why it could not be restored. He noted a professional consultant should be commissioned by the owner for an assessment of the structural feasibility of restoring the home.

Member Kiser opined that the board is creating a negative public relations impression by holding up demolition of this structure.

Member La Voie stated he is in support of a recommendation to designate the site. He noted the report characterized the home as "Tudor Revival" however he noted home is more aptly described as "English Vernacular Cottage", which is a subset of the English Tudor Revival style.

He noted that sites under consideration for historic designation do not always reflect current fashion trends in architecture, that tastes change and the subject structure is a record of the architectural styles that were popular during the 1920's, and that is one reason why it is important to

consider.

He further noted that many of the characteristics that are considered “problems” such as the wood shake roof can appropriately be replaced with cementitious shingles that look like wood as long as the replacement is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures. He also noted the State Historic Building Code should be considered in instances such as this for relief from the stringent requirements of the contemporary building codes.

Member Marsh opined that the structure was a rare architectural type for Palm Springs making it significant to the community. He noted the additions that detract from its integrity can be removed, therefore he would support a recommendation to designate.

Member Burkett gave a comparative example noting the historic importance adobe style structures and that there are only one or two surviving in Palm Springs. He noted the board should act carefully to not only see the importance of mid-century modern structures in Palm Springs but other styles such as this one as well. He noted he would support a recommendation for designation.

Member Hays noted that the home is not functionally obsolete, that it is possible for it to be restored and that it is a very unique structure and style for Palm Springs – perhaps the only one of its kind. That feature makes it important for the board to give it careful consideration.

He noted designation is not an “anti-development” action and that he believes the structure is restorable and could be integrated into a new home design on the same lot.

Chair Johns opined that there are pluses and minuses about this potential nomination and he felt “conflicted” in considering whether to support the recommendation for designation.

Member La Voie stated that there are significant misperceptions in the community about historic preservation and Class 1 historic sites and that modifications to Class 1 historic sites are possible. He further clarified that those elements that the Board may deem “non-contributing” are “fair game” to change, remove or alter (such as the additions to the rear of the structure). He noted the concept of retaining the front of the structure doesn’t preclude new development being added behind it in a way that is appropriate in scale, style, and design.

ACTION: M/S/C: La Voie / Hays to recommend that the City Council approve Class 1 historic site designation for 401 Merito Place with the findings as

outlined in the staff report. 4-0-2 (Johns / Kiser opposed).

I, JOANNE BRUGGEMANS, Senior Secretary for the City of Palm Springs, hereby certify that the above action was taken by Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs on the 14th day of March, 2017, by the following vote:

AYES: La Voie, Hays, Marsh, Burkett,
NOES: Kiser, Johns.
ABSENT: Dixon

Joanne Bruggemans
Senior Secretary

ATTACHMENT #6

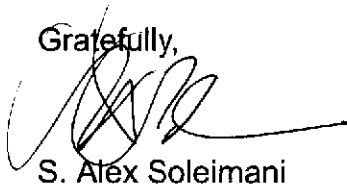
12/15/2016

Dear Ken, many many thanks for your guidance on how to get this off the ground and get some answers to the many questions from buyers interested in this property. Almost everyone interested likes the location and the land but not the house. Everyone inquires if the house can be razed and a modern house built.

Hopefully submitting this application will make the road ahead more clear. At present there is a buyer waiting in the wings. I didn't want to tie up the property until we have some answers.

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me, email me with recommendations, and guide me to other people at the City and elsewhere to help me. I have the completed application and other supporting documents for your review. I hope we make it to Jan 11, 2017 meeting. After your initial review please let me know if I am missing anything and I will do my best to get it to you right away.

Gratefully,



S. Alex Soleimani

PS, my cell is 310 508 6400 if you have any questions.

RECEIVED

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**PLANNING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

3.4001
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PLANNING SERVICES DEPARTMENT
DEC 19 2016

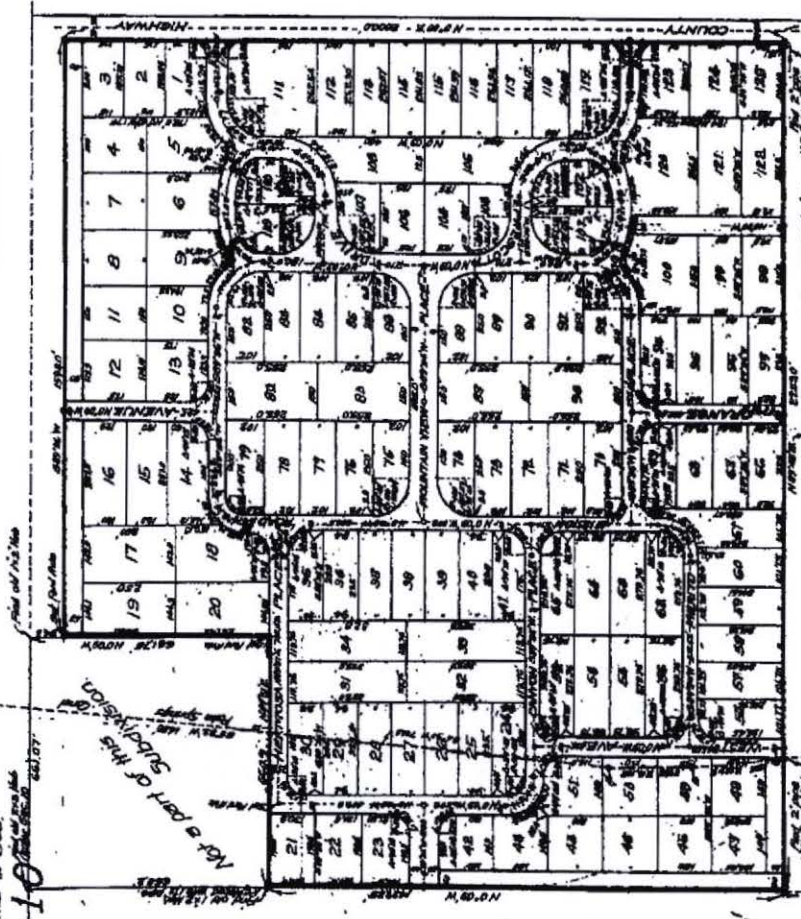
MERITO VISTA

Being a subdivision of a portion of the South-east one-quarter (14) of Section 10 T4S, R4E, S.B.B. & M. Riverside County, California.

Division and Planner, Civil Engineers April 1925.
Scale 1/4" = 200 ft.

1988
FILED
Riverside County
Recorder's Office
F.S. DeWitt, Recorder
Riverside, California

Center of Sec. 10



Formally recorded as 5875307

We hereby certify that we are the owners of the above described property and that we are the only persons who have any right or interest in the same. We have no other children and we have no other heirs. We have no other persons who have any right or interest in the same. We have no other persons who have any right or interest in the same.

By *[Signature]*
Attorney-in-Fact

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, County of Riverside, ss. I, *[Signature]*, County Clerk, do hereby certify that the above described property is the same as that described in the original plat of the same, and that the same is now owned by the persons named in the plat, and that the same is now owned by the persons named in the plat, and that the same is now owned by the persons named in the plat.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, County of Riverside, ss. I, *[Signature]*, County Clerk, do hereby certify that the above described property is the same as that described in the original plat of the same, and that the same is now owned by the persons named in the plat, and that the same is now owned by the persons named in the plat, and that the same is now owned by the persons named in the plat.

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FR.20-167-69

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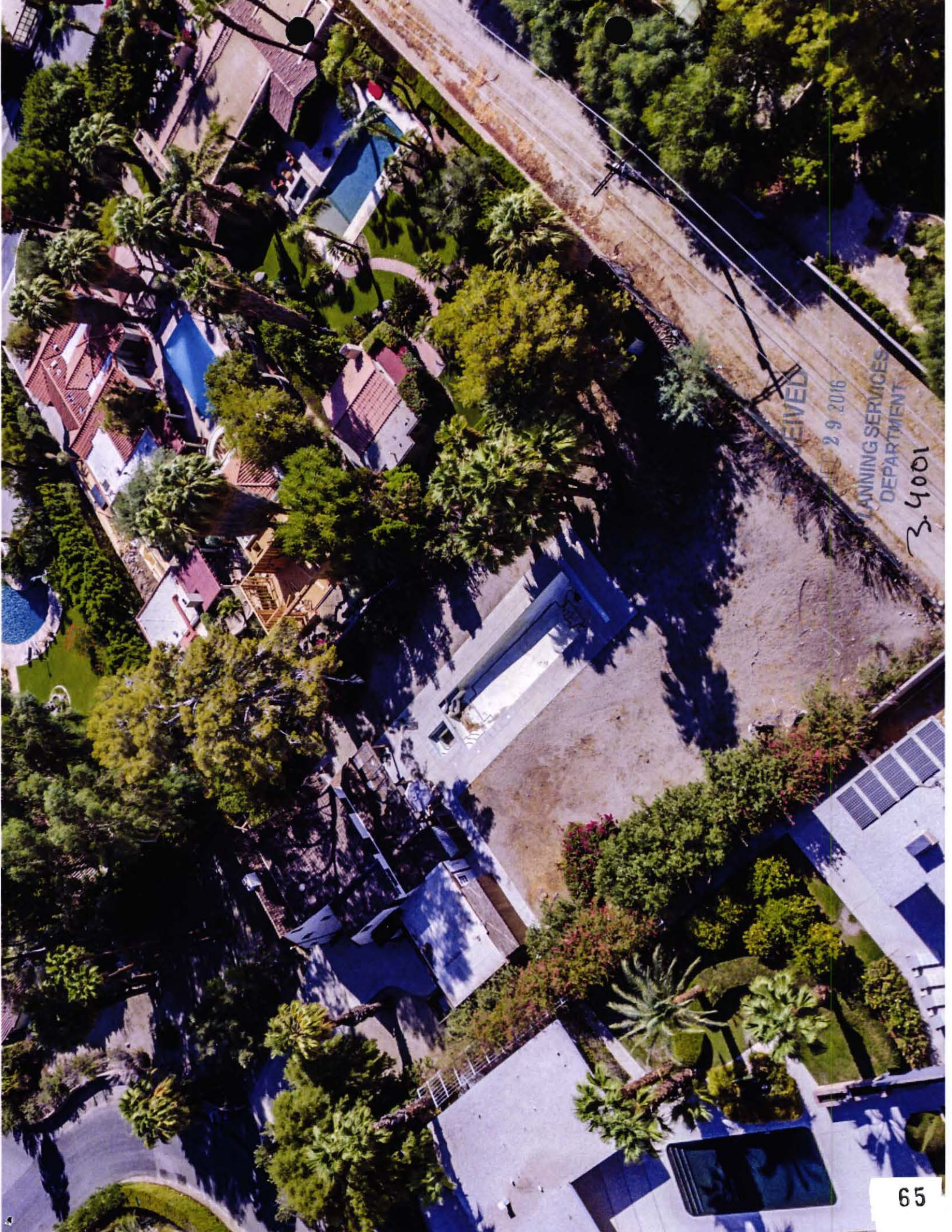
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PLANNING SERVICES

DEPARTMENT





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DEC 29 2016

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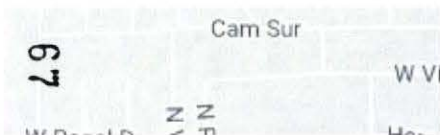
Google Maps 403 W Merito Pl



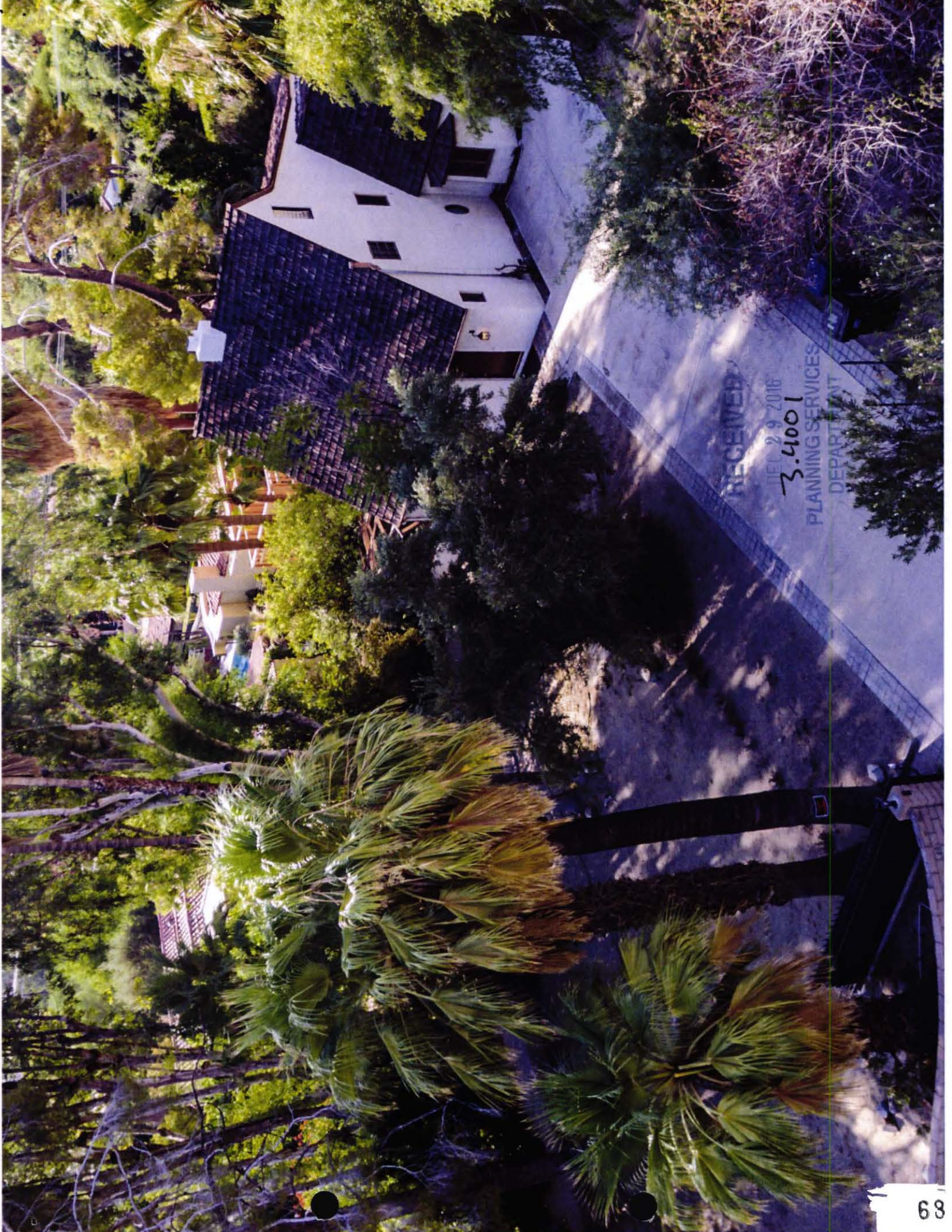
Image capture: Mar 2015 © 2016 Google

Palm Springs, California

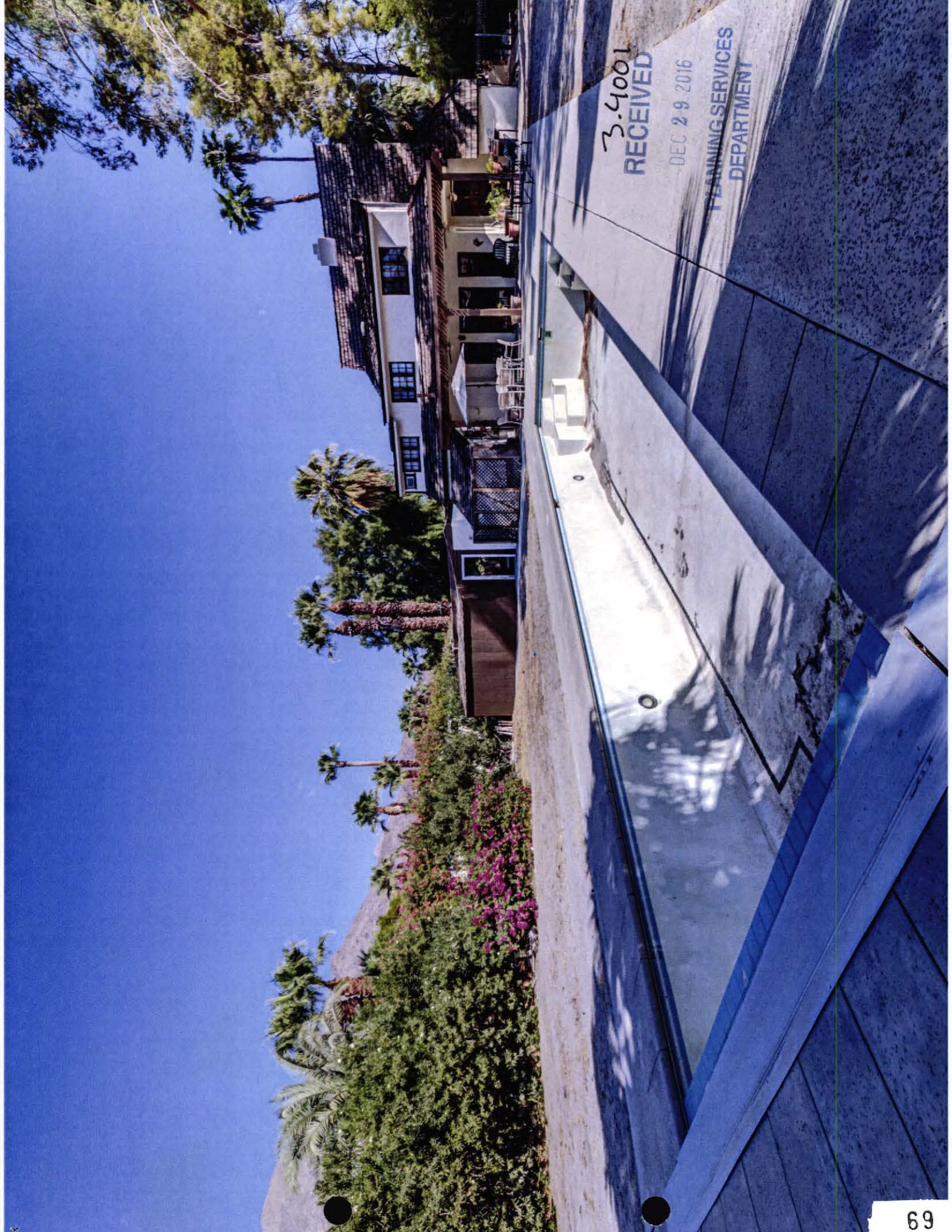
Street View - Mar 2015



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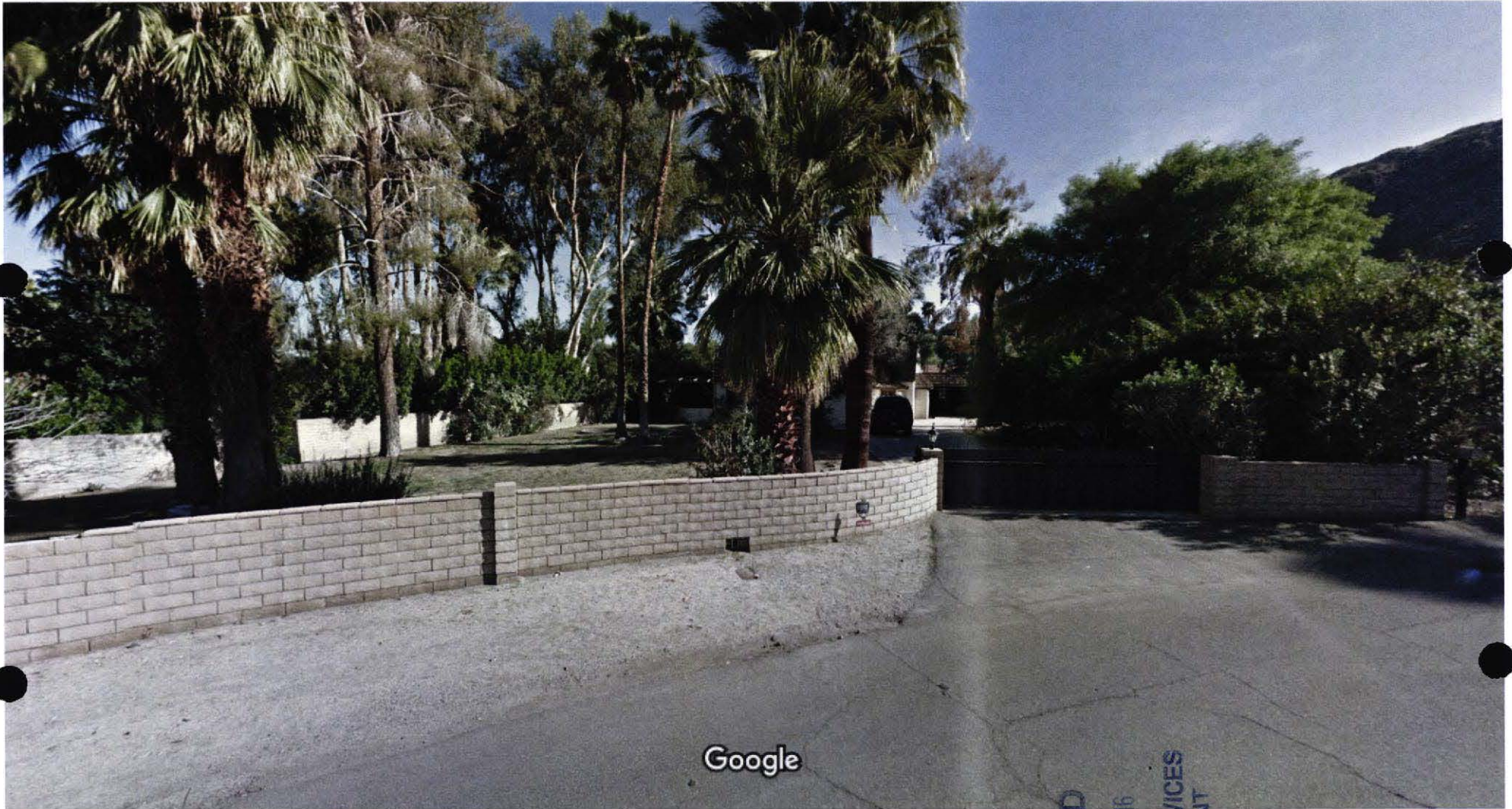
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Google Maps 401 W Merito Pl

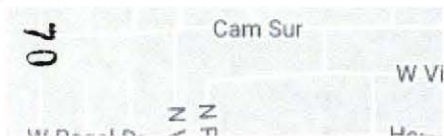


Palm Springs, California

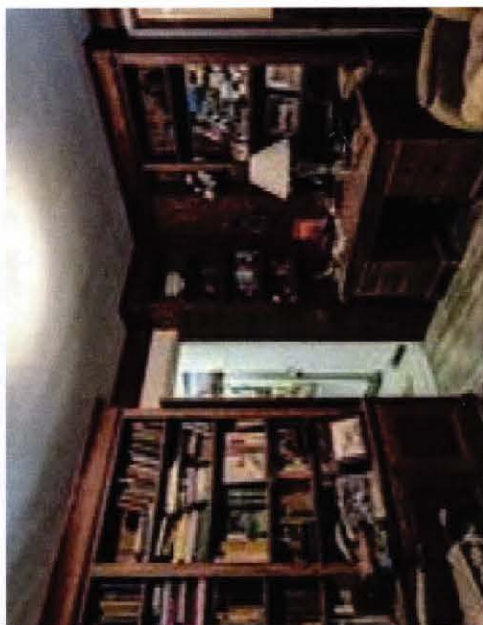
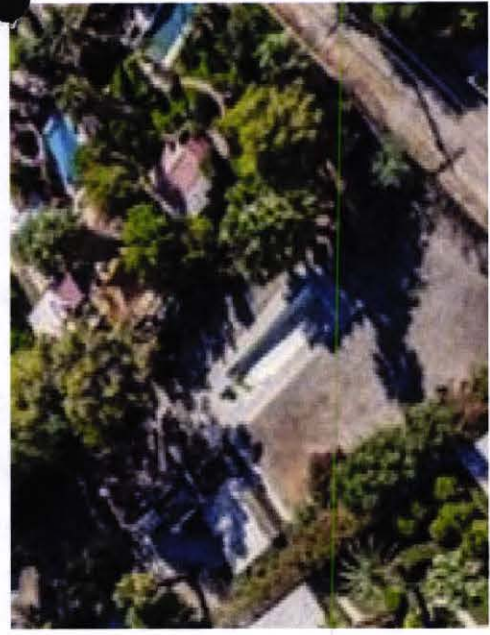
Street View - Mar 2015

Image capture: Mar 2015 © 2016 Google

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 DEC 19 2016
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 DEPARTMENT



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DEPARTMENT OF
RESOURCES



ATTACHMENT #7

Raymond Melvin Sorum

b. Nov. 6, 1898 - d. Jan. 4, 1975

According to his obituary, Ray Sorum was a "pioneer in the city's development and lived in Palm Springs for 42 years."

He arrived in PS 1934, wife Nora, five children – all went to PSHS

First Palm Springs Address: Peterson Road, 1939

Bought 401 Merito Place in 1946

City Councilman, elected April 1940

Public Safety Commissioner, 1942

Director Of Public Works, Jan 1943

Planning Commission, 1943

First PS City Manager, January 1, 1944 - late 1946 (three years)

In 1945, Sorum and then-Mayor Eugene Therieau selected the names for many PS streets

President of Lions Club, April 1947

Flood Commissioner, 1952-1970

Director, Desert Museum Board, 1953

Board of Trustees then later President of PS Unified School District, 1953-55

Worshipful Master, Masonic Lodge, 1955

Chair of Riverside County Flood Control Board, 1957

Interred at Welwood Murray Memorial Cemetery, 1975

By definition of the city ordinance, Sorum was indeed a "person who made meaningful contribution to the community" thereby qualifying his former home at 401 Merito Place under criterion 2 as well as criterion 3, 4 and 7.

Submitted by JADE NELSON, 1/10/17
jadenselson@me.com

**Harry Merrit Robinson, born 1874, Fennville, MI
married Nellie "Nonnie" R. Chamberlain in 1908**

1925 - In December, Harry and Nellie Robinson bought lot 61 of Merito Vista tract (401 Merito Place) from Hellman Commercial Trust and Savings Bank, sold in May that year by developer/landowner Prescott T. Stevens, builder of the El Mirador Hotel (1928) and wife Frances Stevens, the first teacher in the village of Palm Springs.

- Seeing as the Robinsons bought a piece of land, and with his building background, Harry Robinson quite possibly built the Tudor/English Provincial Revival Style residence at 401 Merito Place, likely inspired by similar houses in his home state of Michigan (inhabited by families of English immigrants via New England and New York in the 1830's including his own father, Freeman W. Robinson).

1930 Census - Harry M. Robinson listed as a carpenter/home builder/contractor

- Harry and Nellie resided primarily in Temple City and her 13 year old nephew David Chamberlain was living with them; Harry was affiliated with San Gabriel Valley Lumber Company in Alhambra.
- They resided part time in Palm Springs (then "San Gorgonio Pass") where they maintained 401 Merito Place until at least 1939. The house was possibly rented for the following 6 years (based on a 1938 Desert Sun ad).

1940 census - Robinsons listed in Hermosa Beach, CA

1946 - SOLD 401 Merito Place to Raymond M. Sorum and Nora Sorum

Harry died 1961 in Los Angeles, CA;

Nellie died 1965 in San Diego, CA;

Both interred at Cypress View Mausoleum, San Diego

Note: Perhaps Nellie was related to well-known Palm Springs builder Charles G. Chamberlain. More research is needed.

Submitted by Jade Nelson, 1/10/17
jadenelson@me.com

March 13, 2017

Mr. Ken Lyon, RA, Associate Planner
City of Palm Springs

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DEPARTMENT

Dear Ken,

Thank you and all the dedicated members of the Historic Site Preservation Board for all you do.

I/we also want to thank the Architectural Resource Group for the extensive review of the 401 Merito property.

Most recently we sold a similar style, behind gates and walls, one block away at 831 Mission Street. This particular property has Hollywood history in that I believe it was the prior home of a famous baseball player, and the structure is well maintained and sound. The current owners are able to keep the heritage alive.

In the case of 401 Merito, the property appears to be in such poor condition the structural integrity is most compromised.

As the report commissioned by the Department of Planning Services found, this particular property fails to meet the criterion of Historical Designation in that it is NOT,

1. "Associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community."
2. "Associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to local history."
3. It does not "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction."
4. It does not "present the work of a master builder, designer artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value."
5. It does not meet the criterion of any "significant and distinguishable entity..."

And...

6. It does not "yield, or likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or Pre-history."

To all of the above, the report states "The subject property does not meet this criterion."

The only area that the report identified as a possible, *maybe*, reason to consider or recommend is that it "reflects a particular period of national, state or local history."

As mentioned above, there are better examples in the community than this particular property.

The report refers to the property as an "unpretentious home on a small estate".

It also calls it a popular build in the mid-west and the east. Therefore, according to the 7th criteria for qualifying ... "That (it) reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history" ONLY qualifies for national, possibly Los Angeles, but not Palm Springs.

This appears to be the ONLY reason the Architectural Resources Group could find to remotely designate 401 Merito Class One Historic.

Added to the current health, fire and safety concerns, the lack of construction integrity and the flammable curling shake roof, the current owner is highly opposed to this designation for his family property.

I/we would suggest that it may also devalue the importance of the other such designated sites and districts listed on the Revised February 1, 2017 list.

We would agree.

Sincerely and respectfully,

Steve Hannegan
Louise Hampton

Dear Ken,

Mr Soleimani, our client and the Merito homeowner, purchased the subject property for lot value, with the intention of building a second family home at the site.

We've had experience in working with prospective buyers and their agents in marketing the home for months. Unfortunately, none of the parties have been able to justify the cost to resurrect the existing building.

It is in significant disrepair and may even be a fire hazard. The old shake roof is presently curled up at the edges, with harsh summer temps coming soon.

As a neighbor to the Merito property, we dealt with a similar vacant home down the street. It was a property in disrepair that drew the homeless. The eventual solution at that time was to board it up in order to keep people out of the unsafe environment. That worked for a bit... But the homeless came back, occupied the property and subsequently started a fire that was fortunately brought under control before it damaged or destroyed neighboring homes.

Sadly, the property is functionally obsolete as it stands.

The homeowner of 401 Merito is requesting that the home not be designated as an historic landmark.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Louise Hampton

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MAY 11 2011
PLANNING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

**CLOCK INVESTMENTS, LLC
438 WEST MERITO PLACE, PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262**

March 6, 2017

Kathleen D. Hart, MMC, Interim City Clerk
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262

RECEIVED
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
2017 MAR 13 AM 10:25
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

Re: 401 Merito Place Application for Historic Site (Case HSPB #106)

For the last approximate 83 years, since 1934, our family has owned the two lots and improved properties (Riverside APNs 505-292-004 & 005), totaling approximately 1.4 acres, directly across the street from the applicant.

We strongly object to designation of that derelict, mostly abandoned eyesore, falling down structure as any kind of "historic or preservation site". To the contrary, the most recent occupant – as opposed to owner – Dr. Marvin Frankel walked away from, and allowed a foreclosure against, the property approximately ten (10) years ago, after which the landscaping degenerated and then completely died and became an enormous fire hazard; the drained swimming pool is alligator cracked and a dangerous "attractive nuisance" for anyone who can easily access the property as there are no locked gates or anything to prevent either legal or illegal access; the roof is illegal wood scaffolding in violation of State of California laws and regulations constituting an extreme fire hazard; and nobody has done anything to maintain the eyesore property for the last decade.

In addition, trash and garbage accumulates (which our family members have voluntarily cleaned up since 2007) both on the street, around the mailbox, and all over the derelict interior of the abandoned property at 401 Merito Place. In our opinion, this property should be condemned and not rewarded with HSPB designation.

The Edwin Clock Family

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MAR 13
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Research of the property by Palm Springs Historical Society and others

The house was built in 1928 and has had 4 owners. The owners were:

1928-1946	Mr. Harry M. Robinson and Nellie R. Robinson
1946-1975	Mr. Raymond Sorum and Nora M. Sorum
1975-2011	Dr. Marvin H. Frankel and Carol A. Frankel
2011- Present	Soheil Alexander Soleimani and later by his Trust: The Soleimani 2011 Irrevocable Trust

Visual inspection of the house reveals: the house consists of two stories in the style of English Tudor cottage. The house has a pool. At present the house is vacant and in poor condition. The bathrooms and kitchen don't appear to be original and it's estimated to have been remodeled in the 70s.

No information is available on Mr. and Mrs. Robinson. Dr. Frankel's daughter reports she had heard from her parents the house was built for the Robinson's and at one point was surrounded by orchards. Also, she reports Mr. Nellie Robinson was born and raised in France and immigrated to US as an adult.

Light research by Ms. Renee Brown of Palm Springs Historical Society reveals:

Search through some of our digitized periodicals and I could not find any articles or ads on this address. We have digitized phone books and magazines and have over 30,000 photos in our archives. I checked and we do not have a photo of anything on that address.

Additional detailed research by Ms. Jeri Vogelsang at PSHS has revealed the following:

The home was owned at least from 1946 through 1973 (the last phone book we have until the 1990s) by a Raymond M. Sorum. Sorum is first listed as living in PS on Peterson Avenue in 1939. That was the same year I found in a search of the Limelight News that his firm, Wilson and Sorum, General Contractors, built a home for our first mayor, Florian Boyd on Via Lola. That house was designed by John Porter Clark.

In 1940, Sorum moved to 401 Merito Pl. We have no reverse directories prior to 1952, so I can't tell if Sorum is the first person to live at the house in 1940.

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PLANNING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

In 1942, Wilson & Sorum built the John Porter Clark designed "St. Paul's of the Desert" designed also by John Porter Clark. (still exists)

In 1944, Ray Sorum was City Manager of Palm Springs, at least through 1945 when our Limelights end.

In 1956, it looks like Sorum opened a shop at 471 N. Palm Canyon Dr. Before that, his business is listed at 401 Merito Pl. in his home.

Dr. Marvin Frankel was an east coast transplant. Dr. Frankel graduated from State University of New York Upstate Medical University in 1970 and practiced in Palm Springs for 45 years. He completed a residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He limited his practice to Family medicine and was affiliated with Desert Regional Medical Center, Desert Oasis Healthcare, Eisenhower Medical Center, and John F Kennedy Memorial Hospital. Due to financial difficulty the house was foreclosed by HSBC Bank USA, as Trustee of J.P. Morgan

Soheil Alexander Soleimani purchased the house in 2011. He is a Periodontist and real estate investor living in Los Angeles. A year later he transferred the property to his Trust.

Mr. David Christian the architect who had pulled a permit on the house was interviewed on the phone. He does recall the owners wanted of the property wanted to modify the property but doesn't recall what the plans were. He sold his Architectural firm over 30 years ago and has no access to the plans. He wasn't able to provide any additional information.

Mayor Will Kleindienst was contacted on the phone. Although he knows the house he doesn't recall anything significant from top of his mind.

3-4000

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**PLANNING SERVICES
DEPARTMENT**

The Honorable Robert Moon, Mayor,
councilmembers, Chairman and members, HSPB,
Palm Springs City Hall
3200 E Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

March 14, 2017

Dear Mayor Moon, councilmembers. Chair, Gary Johns and members, Historic Site Preservation Board

Nearly 40 years ago, at the behest of former Palm Springs Mayor, Bill Foster, it was my privilege to research and draft our city's initial Historic Site Preservation Ordinance. Mayor Foster was justifiably dismayed that the original Plaza Theater ticket booth had been suddenly demolished with neither adequate review nor public input. Although Palm Springs was a relatively new city at the time, it was already clear that our architectural and historical treasures were both profound and quite worthy of preservation.

It is reasonable to believe that Bill Foster's vision has played a major role in the Mid-Century Modern movement which helped to inspire the recent (and valuable) renaissance of our remarkably proud community. Because subsequent City Councils have sustained and strengthened that initial ordinance, scores of homes, structures and neighborhoods in Palm Springs have been preserved for future generations.

Please consider this letter as my strongest endorsement in support of a Class 1 Historic Site designation of the home located at 401 West Merito Place in Old Las Palmas. This structure is architecturally unique and powerfully reflects the individual spirit of the Palm Springs pioneers. Since I am well-familiar with this property and even more so with the establishment of the HSP Ordinance, I consider myself to be appropriately qualified to recommend that the structure on 401 West Merito Place receive a Class 1 designation as soon as possible.

Recent research has demonstrated that this property was once owned by Palm Springs city manager, Raymond Sorum. Sorum was largely responsible for negotiating the O'Donnell gift deed to the city during World War II. He is interred (1975) in the Welwood Murray Cemetery, along with scores of Palm Springs pioneers. In 1976, Sorum's widow sold the home to Doctor Marvin Frankel, a physician distinguished by one of the longest tenures to date at Desert Regional Medical Center. Clearly this structure is worthy of preservation.

I am most grateful for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Henry Weiss
Palm Springs

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councilmembers, Chairman and members, HSPB,
Palm Springs City Hall
3200 E Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

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Kind regards,

Henry Weiss
Palm Springs

Ken Lyon

From: Adam Levy <adamvlevy@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 7:55 PM
To: Ken Lyon
Cc: dodgerdaisy14@gmail.com
Subject: Save the Tudor!

Dear Palm Springs City Council,

My name is Adam Levy, I am a Palm Springs native, longtime resident and working professional. Architectural spectacles have and will always be an integral part of the history and future of Palm Springs. Properties such as the “story book” house on Merito Pl is our calling card for tourism to this beloved city. Allowing this historical monument to be torn down would be a sad and disgraceful day for Palm Springs.

This house along with other iconic properties in the Las Palmas neighborhood, defines the charm of our city. Just like the landmark Spadena House located on the corner of Walden Drive and Carmelita Avenue in Beverly Hills. The storybook home on Merito Place is a quintessential attraction in the Las Palmas neighborhood. Class 1 designation is not a want, but a necessity to keep the integrity of our city alive. This home is a celebration of our past and a look into the future of imaginative architectural feats. Please designate the “story book” house on Merito pl a Class 1 historic site.

Sincerely,

Adam Levy

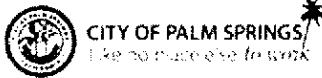
Ken Lyon

From: Kathie Hart
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 10:01 AM
To: Flinn Fagg
Cc: Ken Lyon
Subject: FW: Merito draft email message
Attachments: image002.png; image003.jpg; image004.png; image005.png; image006.png; image007.png; image008.jpg; image009.png

RE: 04-19-2017 – Public Hearing

Kathie

Kathleen D. Hart, MMC
Interim City Clerk



City of Palm Springs (760) 323-8206
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way (760) 322-8332
Palm Springs, CA 92262 Kathie.Hart@PalmSpringsCA.gov

City Hall is open 8 am to 6 pm, Monday through Thursday, and closed on Fridays.

From: Louise Hampton [<mailto:louise@louisehampton.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 03, 2017 4:32 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: FW: Merito draft email message
Importance: High

Dear Ms. Hart,

I am writing to you as a concerned neighbor and the listing agent of the property at 401 Merito in Old Las Palmas. The property is on the Council's agenda for the upcoming April 19 Public Hearing. Would you be kind enough to ensure that a copy of this message and the attached letter is included in the Public Hearing packets for the April 19 Council meeting? It's an agenda item because the Historical Society wants to designate it as "Class One". My assistant, Kathy, spoke with Terri Milton this morning; Terri very kindly suggested that I email my attached letter over for you review and inclusion into the packets.

The homeowner of 401 Merito (Alex Soleimani), myself and the surrounding neighborhood are vigorously opposed to the pending Class One designation of the property.

In brief, our concerns are as follows:

- The property does not meet even two of the many criteria for Class One (in our collective opinion – homeowner, myself & professional real estate colleagues, neighbors, etc.)
- As an experienced real estate professional in Palm Springs for over 35 years, I'm aware that the Merito home is 'functionally obsolete' in its current condition. The buyer we had 'in escrow' (to purchase) cancelled when he realized the property looked to be headed into the restrictive Class One designation. The Buyer had planned a total remodel to update and render the property habitable. All the other agents who either wrote offers on the home or had buyers with a serious level of interest were only offering 'lot value' based upon its obsolete condition. The intention in those instances was to demo the property.
- As a concerned neighbor, I am wary of the property attracting vagrants or vermin which could have both immediate and far reaching consequences for the neighborhood. A few years ago, a neighboring property (also

vacant) at 221 Merito became occupied by vagrants who started a fire. The city ended up requiring the homeowner to tear the 'remains' of the post fire house down (incl. pool removal) at his own cost.

- We have a list of numerous prospective Buyers who have contacted us since the property was put on "Hold" in The MLS. These are folks waiting for the Council's decision in order to decide whether to proceed with an offer.

Thank you very much for your assistance, Ms. Hart.

Sincerely,
Louise Hampton



Louise Hampton, GRI

CalBRE# 00802409
Prudential 25 Year Legend

760-320-4586 (direct)
760-861-5191 (cell)

www.louisehampton.com



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Ken Lyon

From: Terri Milton
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 4:31 PM
To: Ken Lyon; Flinn Fagg
Cc: Kathie Hart; Cindy Berardi
Subject: FW: Historical Site designation

Printed for 4/5/17 meeting

From: JA929JA@aol.com [mailto:JA929JA@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 4:28 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: Historical Site designation

Dear City Council members,

It is my understanding you are entertaining making 401 Merito a "historical site" against the wishes of the owner. I am not sure why I have to write this kind of letter as I thought we lived in a free country. What message does this send to our community when Gestapo tactics are used to diminish the value of ones property. No one in their right mind wants this designation for the their property. A group of people tried to get Gene Autry's home in Studio City changed to this type of site and I told them if they did, I would keep them in court until hell froze over. But many people can't afford to spends hundreds of thousands of dollars to make their point. I could.

Jackie (Mrs. Gene) Autry

Ken Lyon

From: Kathie Hart
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 10:02 AM
To: Flinn Fagg
Cc: Ken Lyon
Subject: FW: 401 Merito

-----Original Message-----

From: Jan Hyman [mailto:janhyman1111@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 9:53 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 Merito

Dear Ms Hart,

Re: Proposal regarding 401 Merito, Old Las Palmas.

Louise Hampton does not speak for us.

We are a neighbor of 401 Merito and we are not opposed to this property being designated as historical.

We believe that Palm Springs needs to retain these older interesting properties to retain the integrity of our beautiful old area.

If you need to contact us please do.

My name is Jan Hyman. 811 N Mission Road.

Thank you so much.

Jan

Sent from my iPhone

Terri Milton

From: jdibella <jim.dibella@earthlink.net>
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 3:54 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: louise@louisehampton.com; sherrod.turner@earthlink.net
Subject: Fw: Immediate Old Las Palmas Neighbors

Dear Ms. Hart,

I understand that an item on the agenda for the upcoming Public Hearing meeting, scheduled for April 19, concerns the property at 401 Merito Dr. in Old Las Palmas. Apparently, the Palm Springs Historical Society would like to designate it as a "Class One" historic property. As a nearby homeowner, I concur with the comments made by my neighbor, Louise Hampton, in her letter to you of April 3rd, (see attached), and respectfully urge a "No" vote by the City Council.

I too fail to see the historic or architectural significance of this property that would warrant such a designation. I have been a homeowner in historic districts for most of my adult life, (i.e., Electric Park in Birmingham, Michigan, the first neighborhood in the nation to have electric streetlights; The Central West End of St. Louis, Missouri, a neighborhood of late 19th and early 20th century homes closely associated with the 1904 World's Fair; and currently, the Bluff Park Historic District in Long Beach, California, a neighborhood of primarily early 20th century Craftsman homes). I have been very active in the historic preservation and renovation of homes in these areas, and have a great deal of respect for efforts to preserve the architecture, craftsmanship and/or significant structures reflective of local history or a particular era for posterity. However, the property in question does not appear to meet any one of these objectives, and a "Class One" designation would be an unnecessary encumbrance upon it, without merit to the homeowner, our Old Las Palmas neighborhood, or the public at large.

I therefore kindly request that you include this message with the Public Hearing packets for the April 19 meeting. Once again, I urge the City Council to vote "No" on this initiative.

Respectfully,

Jim DiBella

420 W. Canyon Pl.

Terri Milton

From: JA929JA@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 4:28 PM
To: CityClerk
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Jackie (Mrs. Gene) Autry

Kathie Hart

From: Terri Milton
Sent: Monday, April 03, 2017 6:09 PM
To: Kathie Hart
Cc: Cindy Berardi
Subject: FW: Merito draft email message
Attachments: Merito Council agenda item - Letter from Louise Hampton.pdf

Importance: High

Printed out.

From: Louise Hampton [<mailto:louise@louisehampton.com>]
Sent: Monday, April 03, 2017 4:32 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: FW: Merito draft email message
Importance: High

Dear Ms. Hart,

I am writing to you as a concerned neighbor and the listing agent of the property at 401 Merito in Old Las Palmas. The property is on the Council's agenda for the upcoming April 19 Public Hearing. Would you be kind enough to ensure that a copy of this message and the attached letter is included in the Public Hearing packets for the April 19 Council meeting? It's an agenda item because the Historical Society wants to designate it as "Class One". My assistant, Kathy, spoke with Terri Milton this morning; Terri very kindly suggested that I email my attached letter over for you review and inclusion into the packets.

The homeowner of 401 Merito (Alex Soleimani), myself and the surrounding neighborhood are vigorously opposed to the pending Class One designation of the property.

In brief, our concerns are as follows:

- The property does not meet even two of the many criteria for Class One (in our collective opinion – homeowner, myself & professional real estate colleagues, neighbors, etc.)
- As an experienced real estate professional in Palm Springs for over 35 years, I'm aware that the Merito home is 'functionally obsolete' in its current condition. The buyer we had 'in escrow' (to purchase) cancelled when he realized the property looked to be headed into the restrictive Class One designation. The Buyer had planned a total remodel to update and render the property habitable. All the other agents who either wrote offers on the home or had buyers with a serious level of interest were only offering 'lot value' based upon its obsolete condition. The intention in those instances was to demo the property.
- As a concerned neighbor, I am wary of the property attracting vagrants or vermin which could have both immediate and far reaching consequences for the neighborhood. A few years ago, a neighboring property (also vacant) at 221 Merito became occupied by vagrants who started a fire. The city ended up requiring the homeowner to tear the 'remains' of the post fire house down (incl. pool removal) at his own cost.
- We have a list of numerous prospective Buyers who have contacted us since the property was put on "Hold" in The MLS. These are folks waiting for the Council's decision in order to decide whether to proceed with an offer.

Thank you very much for your assistance, Ms. Hart.

Sincerely,

Louise Hampton



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Louise Hampton, GRI

CalBRE# 00802409
Prudential 25 Year Legend

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BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY | California Properties
HomeServices

April 3, 2017

Ms. Kathie Hart
Office of the City Clerk, City of Palm Springs

Dear Ms. Hart,

Thank you and the City Clerk Office Staff for all you do!

The homeowner, neighbors and I all appreciate the Council's review of the 401 Merito property.

In the case of 401 Merito, the property appears to be in such poor condition, that the structural integrity is most compromised.

As the report commissioned by the Department of Planning Services found, this particular property fails to meet the criterion of Historical Designation in that it is NOT,

1. "Associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community."
2. "Associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to local history."
3. It does not "embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction."
4. It does not "present the work of a master builder, designer artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value."
5. It does not meet the criterion of any "significant and distinguishable entity..."

And...

6. It does not "yield, or likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or Pre-history."

To all of the above, the report states "The subject property does not meet this criterion."

The only area that the report identified as a possible, *maybe*, reason to consider or recommend, is that it "reflects a particular period of national, state or local history" (7th criteria).

There are better examples in the community than this particular property. Most recently, we sold a similar style, behind gates and walls, one block away at 831 Mission Street. This particular property has Hollywood history in that, I believe it was the prior home of a famous baseball player, and the structure is well maintained and sound. The current owners are able to keep the heritage alive.

The (Merito) report refers to 401 Merito as an "unpretentious home on a small estate". It also calls it a popular build in the mid-west and the east. Therefore, according to the 7th criteria for qualifying ... "That (it) reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history", it qualifies ONLY for national, possibly Los Angeles, but not Palm Springs.

This appears to be the ONLY reason the Architectural Resources Group could find to remotely designate 401 Merito as Class One Historic.

Added to the current health, fire and safety concerns, the lack of construction integrity and the flammable curling shake roof, the current owner is highly opposed to this designation for his family property.

I would suggest that the "Class One" assignment may also devalue the importance of the other such designated sites and districts listed on the Revised February 1, 2017 list.

A few years ago, neighboring property (also vacant) at 221 Merito, became occupied by vagrants who started a fire. The city ended up requiring the homeowner to tear the 'remains' of the post fire house down (incl. pool removal) at his own cost.

As a neighbor to both Merito properties, I (along with many other neighbors) am extremely concerned about vermin and vagrants potentially occupying the subject property and causing serious damage or destruction.

As a real estate agent (and listing agent for 401 Merito), I've had considerable experience with potential buyers for the property. Most all buyers have been interested solely in the property for 'lot value'. The one buyer that was actually in escrow to purchase 401 Merito for the purpose of remodeling, was unwilling to move forward with the transaction, upon finding that it was in jeopardy of being assigned a "Class One" designation. We respectfully request that you not allow this designation which would create a 'no win' situation for the neighborhood, as well as the homeowner.

Sincerely and respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louise Hampton".

Louise Hampton

Terri Milton

From: Megan Abbott <megan@vancouverwomen.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:43 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Louise Hampton
Subject: 401 Merito, Palm Springs

As outlined in Louise Hampton's email of Monday, April 3, we are neighbors who are vigorously opposed to the pending Class One designation of the above property for the reasons in that email. We would like to add our voices to her dissenting voice.

It would be a disservice to the neighbourhood if this property was designated Class One. It would probably mean the property would not be bought because of the prohibitive costs to bring it up to Class One designation and any prospective buyers would drop away for good reason, leaving a derelict property open to problems with the homeless, vagrants and vermin.

We live at 271 Merito. A few years ago we had a problem with the property next to ours, 221 Merito. The homeless moved in and had to be removed by the police. Because it was derelict, it was difficult to ensure at all times that there were no unauthorized people on the property. This resulted in a serious fire. If the wind had been blowing in a different direction, it could have encompassed our house and possibly many other homes in the Old Los Palmos area. The result of this very real and dangerous problem was the city required the homeowner to demolish the house and all surrounding buildings, including the pool removal, for the sake of the neighbourhood.

This problem could very easily arise in the instance of 401 Merito if the property is designated Class One. This property, 401 Merito, is much closer to the neighbors than was the property at 221 Merito.

We strongly urge council to reconsider this planned designation.

Terri Milton

From: Jan Hyman <janhyman1111@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2017 9:53 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 Merito

Dear Ms Hart,

Re: Proposal regarding 401 Merito, Old Las Palmas.

Louise Hampton does not speak for us.

We are a neighbor of 401 Merito and we are not opposed to this property being designated as historical.

We believe that Palm Springs needs to retain these older interesting properties to retain the integrity of our beautiful old area.

If you need to contact us please do.

My name is Jan Hyman. 811 N Mission Road.

Thank you so much.

Jan

Sent from my iPhone

Cindy Berardi

RECEIVED
CITY OF PALM SPRING

From: Terri Milton
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 11:33 AM
To: Kathie Hart
Cc: Cindy Berardi
Subject: FW: Letter for Public Hearing Packet - Merito Property

2017 APR -6 AM 11:40
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

From: Steven Hannegan [mailto:steven_hannegan@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 11:28 AM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Steven Hannegan; Kathy Kendrick; Louise Hampton
Subject: Letter for Public Hearing Packet - Merito Property

Dear Ms. Hart,

As Director of the Buyer Agent Division of The Louise Hampton Team, I've been involved every step of the way regarding the potential Class One designation of 401 Merito.

Louise Hampton, Alex Soleimani (the Merito homeowner) and I greatly appreciate the Council's review of the Class One Historic designation. We've also been in communication with Ken Lyons at the Planning Dept. on this subject. (The Planning Services Dept. found that Merito does not meet most of the criterion for Class One designation.)

The structural integrity of 401 Merito is compromised. There are health, fire and safety concerns as well. The curling shake roof is just one of the fire hazards that comes to mind.

The current owner is highly opposed to this designation for his family property. And given its functional obsolescence, informed buyers and real estate professionals know that Class One restrictions will all but eliminate any potential sale of the property.

It's my hope that the Council Members will agree with the practical arguments put forth by 'many' in opposition to the Class One designation. Please include my letter along with the others in the Public Hearing packets for the April 19 Public Hearing.

Thank you, Kathie!

Sincerely,

Steven Hannegan, MBA

Broker Associate CalBRE #01365316
The Louise Hampton Team
Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices California Properties

Terri Milton

From: W Koch <wekco@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 1:32 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 Merito

Dear Ms. Hart:

I am writing today in regards to the property at 401 Merito in Old Las Palmas, located just down the street from our home. I am in support of the property owner (Alex Soleimani) and his request to not designate the property "Class One". Furthermore, I have read Louise Hampton's letter to you, which I am in full agreement with.

Sincerely,

Walt Koch
735 North Prescott Drive

Terri Milton

From: Roger Neustadyer <rogernn@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 05, 2017 9:58 AM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 W Merito Place

As a neighbor (481 W Merito Place) of the above property, I urge the city council NOT to designate it as a class 1 historical site. The property, as it currently exists does not fit well in the neighborhood from a design point of view. In its current state it is unlivable and an attractive nuisance to vagrants. We have seen what happens to derelict properties in this neighborhood and the problems they cause with fires and police calls.

Please allow the market to determine the highest and best use for this property.

Sincerely,

Roger Neustadter

Sent from my iPad

Terri Milton

From: ps.rollins@gmail.com
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 12:36 PM
To: CityClerk
Cc: Louise@louisehampton.com
Subject: 401 Merito Class One Historic Site designation

Dear Ms Hart,

Will you please add a copy of this message the Public Hearing packets for the April 19 Council meeting?

As neighbors of 401 Merito, we urge the council NOT to vote to designate this property as a Class One Historic Site.

We refer you to the information in the letter written by Louise Hampton, with which we concur.

Sincerely,
Mary and Al Rollins
776 N Mission Rd.
Palm Springs

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

Terri Milton

Subject: FW: Letter for Mayor and Council: 401 W Merito Place

-----Original Message-----

From: Daniel Kiser [mailto:dankiser51@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, March 31, 2017 1:10 PM

To: CityClerk

Subject: Letter for Mayor and Council: 401 W Merito Place

289 W Vereda Sur
Palm Springs, California 92262
March 30 , 2017

Mr. Robert Moon, Mayor, and City Council Members Palm Springs City Hall
3200 Taquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, California 92262

Dear Mayor Moon, Mr. Mills, Ms. Foat, Mr. Kors and Mr. Roberts:

I am writing to urge that you vote against granting a Class 1 Historic Designation to 401 W Merito Place.

The house is neither architecturally nor historically significant. I have read the Historic Resources Report prepared by the Architectural Resources Group of Pasadena. The reasons for designation are sighted on page 5 of their report.

Steeply pitched roof with wood shake shingles
Hand-trowled exterior stucco walls
Multi-pane wood casement windows
Rock perimeter wall along a portion of the east property line

I do not find these reasons adequate to warrant designation, and feel if the designation is granted the importance of Class 1 status in Palm Springs would be greatly diminished.

Further, I have visited the property. The house has been uninhabited for many years and is in deplorable condition. It is virtually unrestorable I believe. It is a magnet for homeless squatters. The landscaping has not been maintained nor watered and the dry conditions are a fire hazard. The wood shake shingle roof is dry and curling ,further adding to the danger of fire. There is no pool equipment and no climate control. Often the house is unsecured.

This property is a blight to the Old Las Palmas neighborhood.

This property was in escrow, but the potential buyer backed out when he learned that historic designation was being considered. So demolition by neglect continues.

I ask you to help our neighborhood rid itself of a long- troubled insignificant property.

Sincerely,
Dan Kiser

Terri Milton

From: Barbara Hoover <barbara@bbhoover.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 09, 2017 5:36 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 Merito, Palm Springs, CA 92262

We are wall-to-wall neighbors of this property. We have witnessed the decline, lack of repair and, finally, complete abandonment of the home and garden. It's only distinction is that of being the most dilapidated property in Old Las Palmas. The safety and security of the residents and neighborhood must prevail. This property is a major fire hazard. The roof is composed of wood shingles, outlawed in most in most cities. All it would take is a spark to have the neighborhood go up in flames.

This email is a plea to deny Historic Designation to the property.

Mr. & Mrs. H. Earl Hoover II
641 No. Cahuilla Road
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Terri Milton

From: Louise Eccard <leccard@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Saturday, April 08, 2017 4:37 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: Proposal to Designate 401 Merito Place Historica Class I Status

Dear City Clerk,

We are writing as 25 year residents of Old Las Palmas. We knew the Frankel's that lived there when we first moved into our home in 1991. The house was a lovely Tudor-Style cottage that always took us back to another time. With a good architect and thought, the home could be restored to reflect both its history and become a beautiful home. There must be a way that the home can be saved. It would be a horrible shame to demolish a home that represents a particular period in Palm Springs history, just because no one-to-date wants to restore it.

There was a Los Angeles Times advertisement February 7, 1926 that specifically refers to the original subdividing of Merito Vista into small estates. It specifically states, "Its privileges have been made available to those who do not necessarily care to erect pretentious homes here." These homes represented the vision and desire of the pioneers and villagers before us.

(Los Angeles Times, February 7, 1926, Historical Newspapers.

It was such a shame that another home was demolished on the same street a few years ago. We do not want to lose another historical home just because it does not "fit" the current Mid-Century theme. We should be custodians of rare examples of our history.

Please designate 401 Merito Place as a Class I Historical site.

Regards,

Ron & Louise Eccard
780 Prescott Drive
Palm Springs, CA 92262
310-254-6468

Terri Milton

From: Louise Hampton <louise@louisehampton.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 06, 2017 6:06 PM
To: Ken Lyon
Cc: thinkalex@gmail.com; Flinn Fagg; Louise Hampton
Subject: Re: Case HSPB 106 - 401 Merito Place to City Council - Hearing Date Change

All: unfortunately that takes this property off the market for the prime selling season! We have a list of buyers waiting for a decision from our city Council! I'm very disappointed! Louise Hampton

Sent from my iPhone

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On Apr 6, 2017, at 5:57 PM, Ken Lyon <Ken.Lyon@palmsprings-ca.gov> wrote:

Dear Alex,

I was informed today that the City Council public hearing on consideration of historic designation on your property at 401 Merito Place which was scheduled for the April 19 City Council meeting, has been rescheduled to the City Council meeting of May 3, 2017.

Give me a call direct at 760 322 8364 x 8786 if you have concerns or questions about this. Thank you.

Ken Lyon, RA
Associate City Planner
Department of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs, California
3200 Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, California 92263
T 760 323 8245 F 760 322 8360

*"Make no little plans,
They have no magic to stir men's blood
And probably won't be realized.
Make big plans
Aim high in work and in hope,
Let your watchword be order,
And your beacon beauty"*

- Daniel Burnham, Architect and Planner

Ray Warman
289 West Vereda Sur, Palm Springs, CA 92262

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 11, 2017
To: The Mayor and Council of the City of Palm Springs
Subject: Contemplated 'Historic' Designation of 401 West Merito Place

As a resident of Old Las Palmas, let me mention how glad I was to learn recently that a neighborhood property might be awarded a 'Class 1 Historic Designation' – that is, until the property in question was identified as 401 West Merito Place!

Really??!!

Though that property undeniably brings Old Las Palmas more than its share of special qualities – as a neglected eyesore ... as a magnet for squatters ... even, I suspect, as a fire hazard –, none of these, I trust, should warrant 'historic' recognition at any level, much less as a 'class 1' property.

As well, even the most casual eye will recognize that the tumbledown house at 401 West Merito Place is not at all representative of Palm Springs. Rather, it stands in a class very much its own – and, until its merciful demolition, in that more dubious 'class' (and not among our city's properties with far greater claim to historic designation) it should stay.

Historic-designation processes generally command public respect insofar as they preserve cherished elements of a community's heritage; contrariwise, to dignify 401 West Merito Place as proposed would constitute, as I and many neighbors see it, a sad travesty inviting ridicule of the program. Please don't make that mistake!

Faithfully yours,
– *Ray Warman*

Terri Milton

From: Jessica Enayati <jessica.enayati@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 14, 2017 11:48 AM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 Merito Place

4/14/2017

Dear Councilmen and and Councilwoman of City of Palm Springs,

I am a homeowner in City of Palm Springs and live within few blocks of 401 Merito Place. I am against the historical designation of this house.

I often walk my dog on this street and in the neighborhood. I am always surprised how badly 401 Merito sticks out compared to the other houses on the street. The houses in the OLP neighborhood are low and discreet allowing for enjoyment of mountain and vista views. However this house is a tall and dominating structure and it takes away from the looks, views and the feel of the neighborhood. I don't think even with extensive hedging and creative landscaping this house can be covered up. Replacing this structure with a new conforming structure will have positive impact on the neighborhood.

Also, the wood shingle roof of the house is a fire danger for the entire neighborhood. Removing this structure gives peace of mind and adds to the safety of the residents.

Thank you,

Jessica Enayati

Terri Milton

From: michael sheffer <mrsheffer@msn.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 16, 2017 7:41 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 MERITO

PLEASE LET MR ALEX SOLIMANI DEMOLISH HIS PROPERTY AT 401 MERITO. THESE HISTORIAL ALIENS COULD BUY THE PROPERTY FROM HIM ATFAIR MARKET VALUE IF THEY ARE SO IN LOVE WITH THE PLACE. YOU SHOULD BE MORE CONCERNED WITH ALL THESE STARTED PROJECTS AROUND TOWN THAT NEVER GET FINISHED WHEN THEY WALK AWAY OR DELAY FOR MONTHS/YEARS BECAUSE YOU DO NOT REQUIRE PERFORMANCE BONDS ON PRIVATE MONEY. MICHAEL SHEFFER 350 WEST VEREDA SUR OLD LAS PALMAS

Terri Milton

From: Gary Hawley <gary@garyrhawley.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 19, 2017 4:15 PM
To: CityClerk; Alex S
Subject: 401 Merito Place

Ms. Hart,

I am sending this email to let you know that we are opposed to the historical designation for 401 Merito Place. This property does not warrant this designation. The structure does not fit in with the community and is actually an eyesore.

How this property received this designation is beyond neighbors understanding. It should be removed from the Historic Designation and allow the owner to put a compatible structure of the neighborhood on his property.

We have a home at 350 N. Via Las Palmas.

Unfortunately, Laguna Beach has done the same things to many homes in our community & there is quite an uproar by the property owners who just had that designation slapped on their property. No reason or notification given as to why.

City Council meeting is this month and you can bet the chambers will be packed.

Your attention to removing this property from the Historic Designation is needed and appreciated.

We look forward to hearing this designation has been removed from this property.

Jim Ardery & Gary Hawley

Thanks,

Gary R. Hawley



(C) 949-887-3822

(O) 949-494-7700

(F) 949-340-2026

gary@garyrhawley.com

CalBRE #00849421

Terri Milton

From: Loren Sanborn <lsanborn@jsco.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2017 7:28 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: 401 Merito

Dear Sir/Madame, As OLP residents we do not understand the vehement desire to cap an historic designation on 401 Merito? It has no desert qualifications and looks considerably out of place as you turn the corner. We love our neighborhood, but do not see any reason to preserve an English Tudor home.

Loren and Peter Wilson
233 Camino Sur
Palm Springs

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy Tablet

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Terri Milton

From: Glenn Mounger <gm@themoungers.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 23, 2017 2:22 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: Re: 401 W Merito Place

Dear Mayor Moon, Councilpersons Roberts, Kors, Foat, Mills,

In the newly released book "Architecture 100 " published by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation and introduced by board members Ron & Barbara Marshall, it states "Class 1 is the most prestigious historic designation."

It follows that Class 1 status should be reserved for the finest architectural and historic properties in Palm Springs.

Please do not diminish the special nature of Class 1 status by designating 401 W Merito Place — a property that is neither historically significant nor architecturally important.

Sincerely,
Glenn & Mary Lynn Mounger / 260 W Vereda Sur

Terri Milton

From: Vik Warren <dvmanla@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, April 23, 2017 1:22 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: Disposition of 401 Merito Palm Springs

Dear Ms. Hart,

My name is Verlon Rawls and I have been helping to maintain 401 Merito for the past few years. I would like to urge the City Council and the Mayor to vote "NO" on a historic designation for this house.

I know first hand the house is in bad condition. With one look at the roof shakes you can see how old and damaged the entire pitched roof is. The shake shingles are dry, brittle and constitutes a significant fire hazard. The exterior stucco is full of cracks and to repair it, it literally needs to be stripped away and completely redone. The bedrooms are small and barely functional. Only a few of the original windows are still there as some are missing and others are cracked or have pieces missing and the rest were removed when an addition was done to the house. The remaining window frames are in poor shape.

To the best of my understanding, research has failed to turn up any significant residents or other reasons this property should be considered as a candidate for any historic designation. If it had been owned by a significant film star or celebrity, or built by an architect of note, that might be of interest. But as nothing like that has been discovered, in my opinion, it is not a candidate for registry.

While it has a modicum of charm from an architectural standpoint, placing it on a historical register seems pointless and not at all in the best interests of the neighborhood.

Thank you,

Verlon Rawls
460 S Calle Encilia #109
Palm Springs Ca 92262

Terri Milton

From: Randi Judge <randi.judge@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 1:34 PM
To: CityClerk
Subject: Save the Tudor!

To whom it may concern,

I'm not a Palm Springs resident but I am a lifelong visitor. Back when I was a young girl, my grandparents would take my brother and I to Palm Springs and we'd always stop first at the Cottage. As kids, it didn't do much for us, but the reward of See's Candy made the trip worth it! My grandparents had a love affair with this home as it reminded them of their time in England and was unlike anything else they saw in Palm Springs. As Granada said "we came for the weather, we stayed for our walks past that house!"

While I didn't have the appreciation for this home as a kid, it's my first stop as an adult. It brings back so many memories of summers with Grandma and Grandpa and is such a special surprise among the mid-century homes around Palm Springs. I always rave about it when someone even mentions taking a trip to Palm Springs. It's a must-see for me and I can't imagine Palm Springs without it. Please save this home!

Best,
Randi

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**

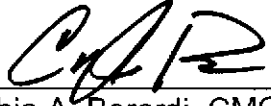


Date: May 17, 2017
Subject: HSPB 106, 401 West Merito Place

AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

I, Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC, Interim Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice was published in the Desert Sun on April 29, 2017.

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




Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC
Interim Chief Deputy City Clerk

AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

I, Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC, Interim Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice 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 April 27, 2017.

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

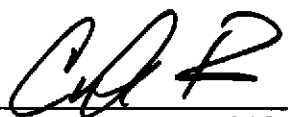


Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC
Interim Chief Deputy City Clerk

AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

I, Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC, Interim Chief Deputy City Clerk, of the City of Palm Springs, California, do hereby certify that a copy of the attached Notice of Public Hearing was mailed to each and every person on the attached list on April 27, 2017, in a sealed envelope, with postage prepaid, and depositing same in the U.S. Mail at Palm Springs, California. (55 notices)

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



Cynthia A. Berardi, CMC
Interim Chief Deputy City Clerk

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

RECOMMENDATION BY THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD
(HSPB) FOR CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION OF 401 WEST
MERITO PLACE (CASE HSPB #106; APN 505-294-006)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, California, will hold a public hearing at its meeting of May 17, 2017. The City Council meeting begins at 6:00 p.m., in Primrose B, Palm Springs Convention Center at 277 North Avenida Caballeros, Palm Springs.

The purpose of this hearing is to consider a recommendation by the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) for Class 1 historic site designation of 401 West Merito Place.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed historic site designation is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical changes to the environment, directly or indirectly.

REVIEW OF INFORMATION: The proposed application and related documents 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.

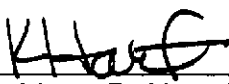
COMMENT ON THIS APPLICATION: Response to this notice may be made verbally at the Public Hearing and/or in writing before the hearing. Written comments may be made to the City Council by email at cityclerk@palmspringsca.gov, or letter (for mail or hand delivery) to:

Kathleen D. Hart, MMC, Interim City Clerk
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Any challenge of the proposed 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 public 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 City Planner, at (760) 323-8245.

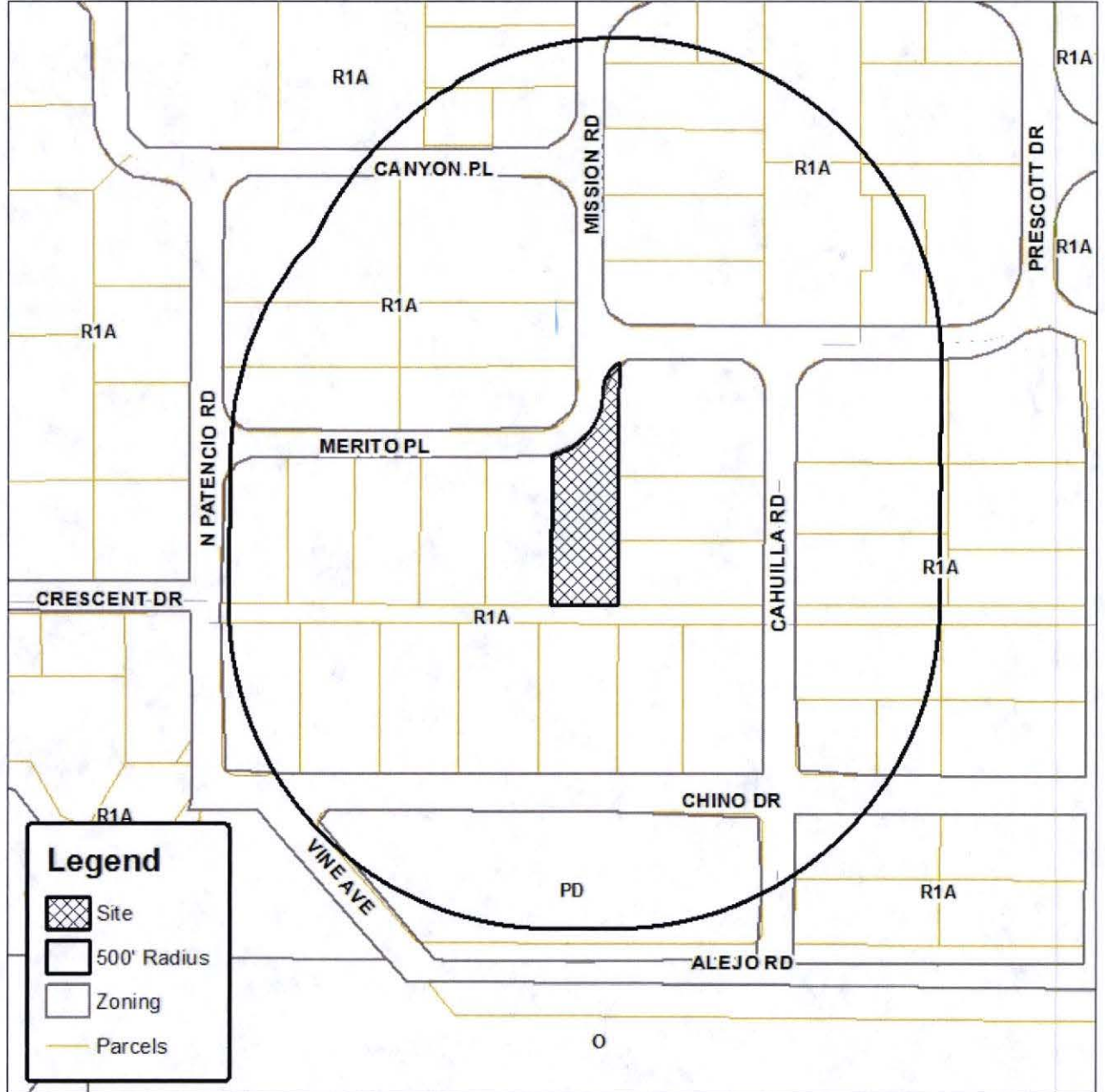
Si necesita ayuda con esta carta, porfavor llame a la Ciudad de Palm Springs y puede hablar con Felipe Primera telefono (760) 323-8253.



Kathleen D. Hart, MMC
Interim City Clerk



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Case HSPB 106 - 401 West Merito Place