



# HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: October 10, 2017

NEW BUSINESS

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST BY THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN ESTATES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION FOR LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE COMMON AREAS OF THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN ESTATES HISTORIC DISTRICT LOCATED AT 1750 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE, ZONE R-2; HISTORIC DISTRICT #HD-2; HSPB 73 / CASE 3.0182 MAA, (KL)

FROM: Department of Planning Services

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## SUMMARY

The Royal Hawaiian Estates Homeowners Association (RHE HOA) is requesting approval of landscape improvements in the common areas of the Royal Hawaiian Estates Historic District (HD-2). The proposed project replaces aging and overgrown plantings and introduces some new species that enhance the tropical ambiance within the RHE historic district.

## RECOMMENDATION:

Grant the certificate of approval as proposed.

## BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

Royal Hawaiian Estates Condominiums were designed by master architect Donald Wexler (FAIA) and constructed in the early 1960's. The "Polynesian / Tiki" motif and details of RHE reflect America's fascination with Polynesian culture in the late 50's and 60's. The HOA seeks to replace aging and overgrown plant materials with a plant palette that complements and enhances the character of the historic district.

Although the original landscape plans for the complex have not been located, the HOA, through visual inventory of the landscape, and review of limited vintage photographs have identified those plants that it believes are part of the original landscape plan. They have also retained the services of a professional landscape specialist to develop a plant palette that augments the existing mature plantings that are healthy enough to remain with new plantings that enhance the tropical ambiance of the common open areas within the historic district.

Landscape areas that are overgrown, dying, or have had random plants or invasive species added over the years are being replanted with a plant palette that provides a

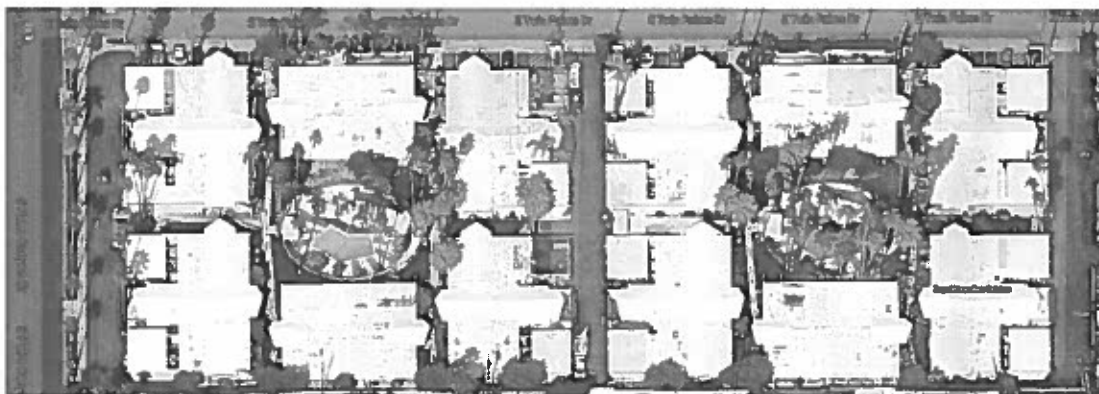
consistent character to all the common areas within the historic district as well as to enhance the “tropical” feeling of the complex.

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
February 3, 2010	City Council designated RHE as Class 1 historic site #74 Historic District #2 (HD-2)
December 2010	HSPB granted certificate of approval for restoration of Tiki-inspired details throughout the historic district. (Tiki apexes & trim on the fascia of the gables throughout the complex).
December 2015	HSPB granted a certificate of approval for modifications to landscape planters adjacent to the two common swimming pools.
July 2016	HSPB granted a certificate of approval for modifications at the pool equipment enclosures.

### DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Alterations to Class 1 historic sites and contributing sites in a historic district require review and approval by the HSPB pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.05.185. In the RHE Historic District, although the common open spaces were not identified as “contributing” elements to the District by the City Council at the time of the designation, the regulations outlined in the council resolution require HSPB approval for alterations to buildings and site areas within the historic district.

The applicant in its Executive Summary dated August 23, 2017, (attached) have outlined the general concept of the project, the methodology, and the goals they seek to achieve in pursuing this project.



AERIAL VIEW OF ROYAL HAWAIIAN ESTATES HISTORIC DISTRICT

### FINDINGS:

Although there are not findings necessary for granting a certificate of approval, pursuant to Municipal Code section 8.05.190, the Board shall consider the following factors in evaluating the application:

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

The proposed landscape revisions are complementary and harmonious with the overall aesthetic of the Royal Hawaiian Estates Historic District. The project integrates to the extent possible existing plant material that appears to be healthy and part of the original plant palette of the complex. It enhances the integrity of the historic district by removing invasive plant species, and those that have reached maturity or are suffering from improper pruning or disease.

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

There are no physical changes proposed to the structures themselves. The project scope is limited to the exterior common areas of the historic district. The proposed new plant materials complement the overall aesthetic of the RHE Historic District.

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

The overall planting and landscape scheme provides a good balance of color, texture, and variation in height of the proposed plantings. Where possible, the applicant has introduced new species that are either consistent with the general "tropical aesthetic" that exists within the RHE HD, or where new drought tolerant species are proposed they are nicely integrated with existing landscape material to remain.

- (4) *Archaeological or ecological significance of the area.*

No known archaeological or ecological significance is associated with the project site.

## CONCLUSION

The proposed landscape improvements have been designed to reflect the lush tropical ambiance of the RHE while introducing plant types that are hardy in the desert climate and reduce overall water consumption for irrigation. The RHE HOA have adopted locally established maintenance standards that should assure proper long term maintenance, pruning and care of the common area landscape areas. Staff recommends approval.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Section 15331 (alterations to Historic Resources in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Structures) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed landscape improvements

are categorically exempt from further environmental review. The proposed project does not materially impair or adversely affect any of the contributing elements in the district and does not impair the historic integrity of the district or any of the contributing elements therein.

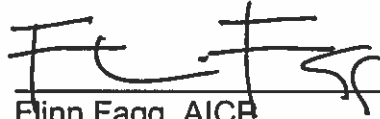
NOTIFICATION

No notification is required for HSPB review of certificates of approval, however the agenda for today's meeting has been provided to the City's Office of Neighborhood Involvement and distributed to designated neighborhood organizations pursuant to PSZC 94.04.00.



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Ken Lyon, RA,  
Associate Planner



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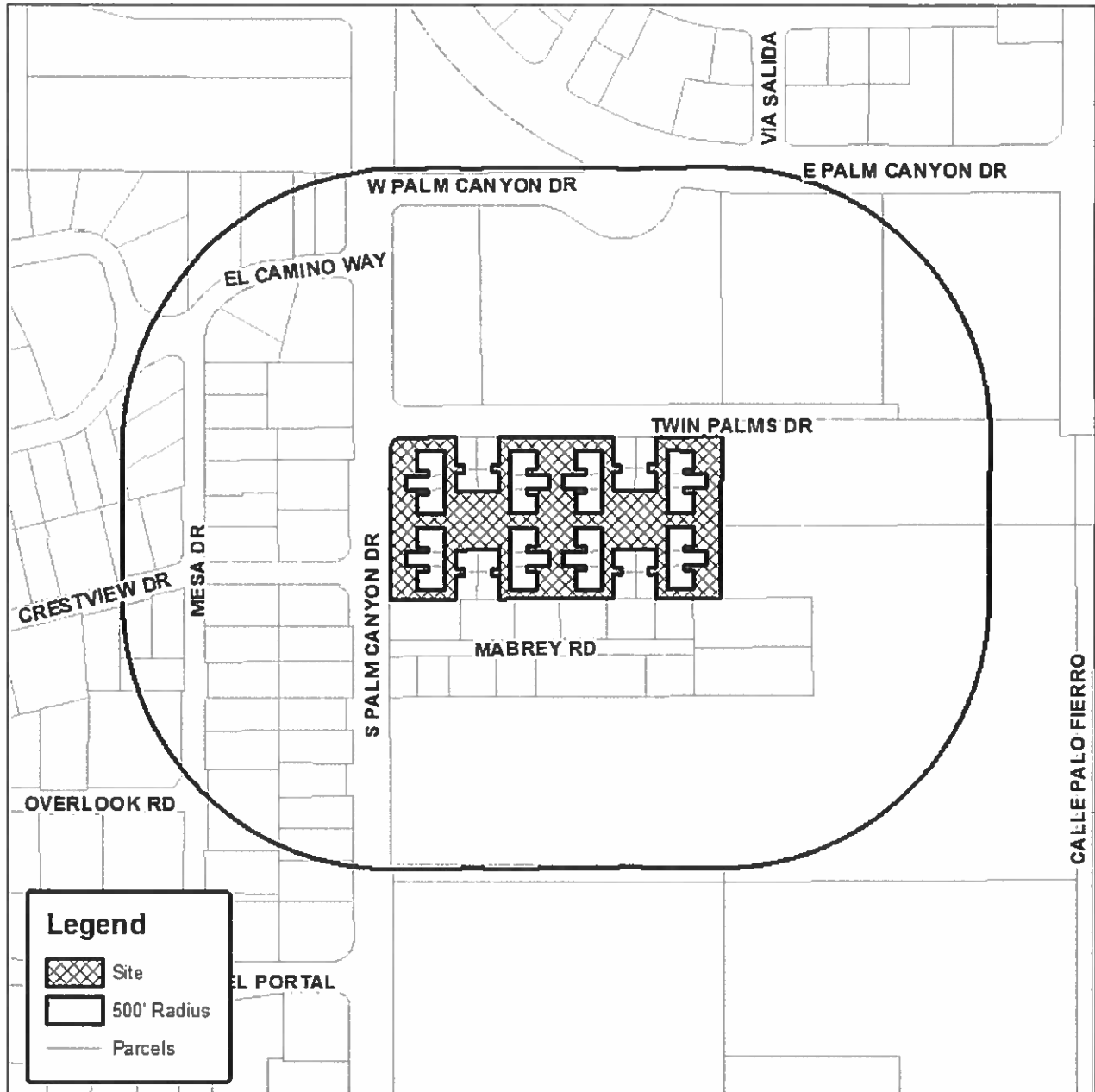
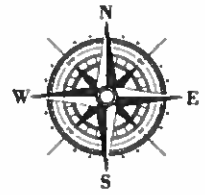
Flinn Fagg, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

Attachments:

- Vicinity Map
- Application materials
- Designating City Council Resolution for HD-2
- Landscape plans and executive summary.



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS  
Royal Hawaiian Estates HD-2



Royal Hawaiian Estates  
Landscape Upgrades / Enhancement Executive Summary  
General Plan

August 23, 2017

The Board of Directors of Royal Hawaiian Estates is pleased to present this Summary and General Plan for the restoration, rehabilitation and long-term maintenance of the landscape areas within the Royal Hawaiian Estates Historic District. (RHE) This summary provides a General Concept, Methodology, and Landscape Goals for the project for which we are seeking City approval.

**General Concept**

1. To restore and rehabilitate the lush, "tropical" feel of the landscape at the RHE consistent with hard and soft features and plantings that were in place when the RHE was built,
2. To establish a long-term plan for the ongoing (and proper) pruning and maintenance of the common area landscape.
3. To remove plantings that have been introduced over time that are not original to the complex or species that are known to be invasive
4. To remove plantings that are destructive to hardscape and sewer systems due to invasive root structure, and those known to cause respiratory problems due to pollen and other allergens.
5. To remove or properly prune those plantings that have become infected, overgrown, or damaged due to improper pruning from past maintenance efforts or are at or beyond their expected life expectancy.

**Methodology.**

1. Determination of existing plant material likely to be original to the complex. Using limited documentation such as pictures from the early 60's when the complex was new and extensive on-site observation of mature plant materials, (the original landscape plans have not been found), it has been determined that the original landscape palette included olive trees, palm trees, Bougainvillea, and citrus trees, as well as areas of grass and other ground covers.

2. Design guidance by a qualified professional. We have retained the services of a qualified landscape specialist, Mr. Paul Ortega, who is not only familiar with typical landscape materials in use at the time the RHE was constructed, but is also able to make recommendations on landscape design, restoration and maintenance protocols that reflect current “best practices” in terms of a respect for mid-century design aesthetics and that integrate contemporary technologies for water conservation.
3. Reference the Secretary of the Interior Standards for proper treatment of historic landscapes and for the appropriate introduction of new plant materials.
4. Balancing conformance with the City’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance with the proper treatment and management of the landscape areas that are recognized as a “contributing feature” of the historic district.

### **Landscape Goals**

The following project goals are based on guidelines provided by the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for preserving, protecting, planning, treatment and management of historic or cultural landscapes.

1. Continue to use the property as it was originally intended --as a “resort” style residential property, that provides for outdoor social activities for residents and guests.
2. Utilize and preserve to the extent possible original or “like” materials and construction techniques for repair and ongoing maintenance of hardscape, (such as pool tiles, pool plaster, pool coping, landscape masonry blocks, structure siding, outdoor lighting, and concrete finish) . Where original materials are no longer available, materials are proposed that provide a like or similar appearance to the original materials. , or
3. Minimize “redesign” of the landscape to only those areas where plantings have become hazardous due to overgrowth or obstructions to walkways or where damage to structures is occurring.
4. Reduce water consumption and retain recent landscape changes that contribute to ongoing water conservation efforts. . Recent improvements include updated planter areas with new ground cover (rock/cobble) and an ongoing replacement of aging irrigation systems with more efficient irrigation components, controllers, and timers.
5. Establish “limited common areas” where individual residents may introduce plantings of their own choosing that are complementary to the overall landscape design of the complex.

The Board of Directors of the Royal Hawaiian Estates Homeowners Association believes the attached landscape project reflects an appropriate, sensitive and responsible approach to the restoration, repair, replacement, re-planting and ongoing maintenance of the common area landscape, a contributing feature within the Royal Hawaiian Estates Historic District and we seek the approval of the HSPB to allow the plan to be implemented.



Representative images of landscape materials  
for common areas  
(September 2017)

Trees and Palms:



Olive  
*Olea europaea*



California Fan Palm  
*Washingtonia filifera*



Mexican Fan Palm  
*Washingtonia robusta*



Citrus  
assorted varieties



Mediterranean Fan Palm  
*Chamaerops humilis*

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Shrubs and Hedges:



Ficus  
*Ficus macrocarpa*



Oleander  
*Nerium oleander*



Red Bird of Paradise  
*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*



Pyracantha  
*Pyracantha coccinea*



Torch Glow  
*Bougainvillea 'Torch Glow'*



Heavenly Bamboo  
*Nandina domestica*



Orange Jubilee  
*Tecoma X 'Orange Jubilee'*

Rocks:



AZ Cobble



Arrowwood Boulder



Lava Cinders, Black



Red Mountain Boulder



Lava Cinders, Red



Three Rivers Boulder

Color:



Bird of Paradise  
*Strelitzia reginae*



Trailing Lantana  
*Lantana montevidensis*



Angelita Daisy  
*Terraneuris acaulis*



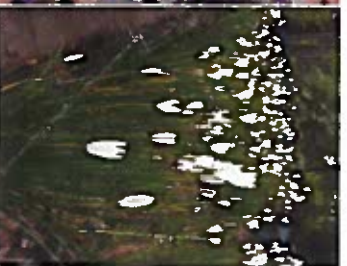
Gazania hybrids  
assorted varieties



Coral Fountain  
*Russelia equisetiformis*



Mexican Petunia  
*Ruellia brittoniana*



Rain Lily  
*Zephyranthes candida*

Accents:



Coral Aloe  
*Aloe striata*



Mexican Grass Tree  
*Dasyliion longissimum*



Madagascar Palm  
*Pachypodium lamerei*



Fountain Agave  
*Agave desmetiana*



Ponytail Palm  
*Beaucarnea recurvata*

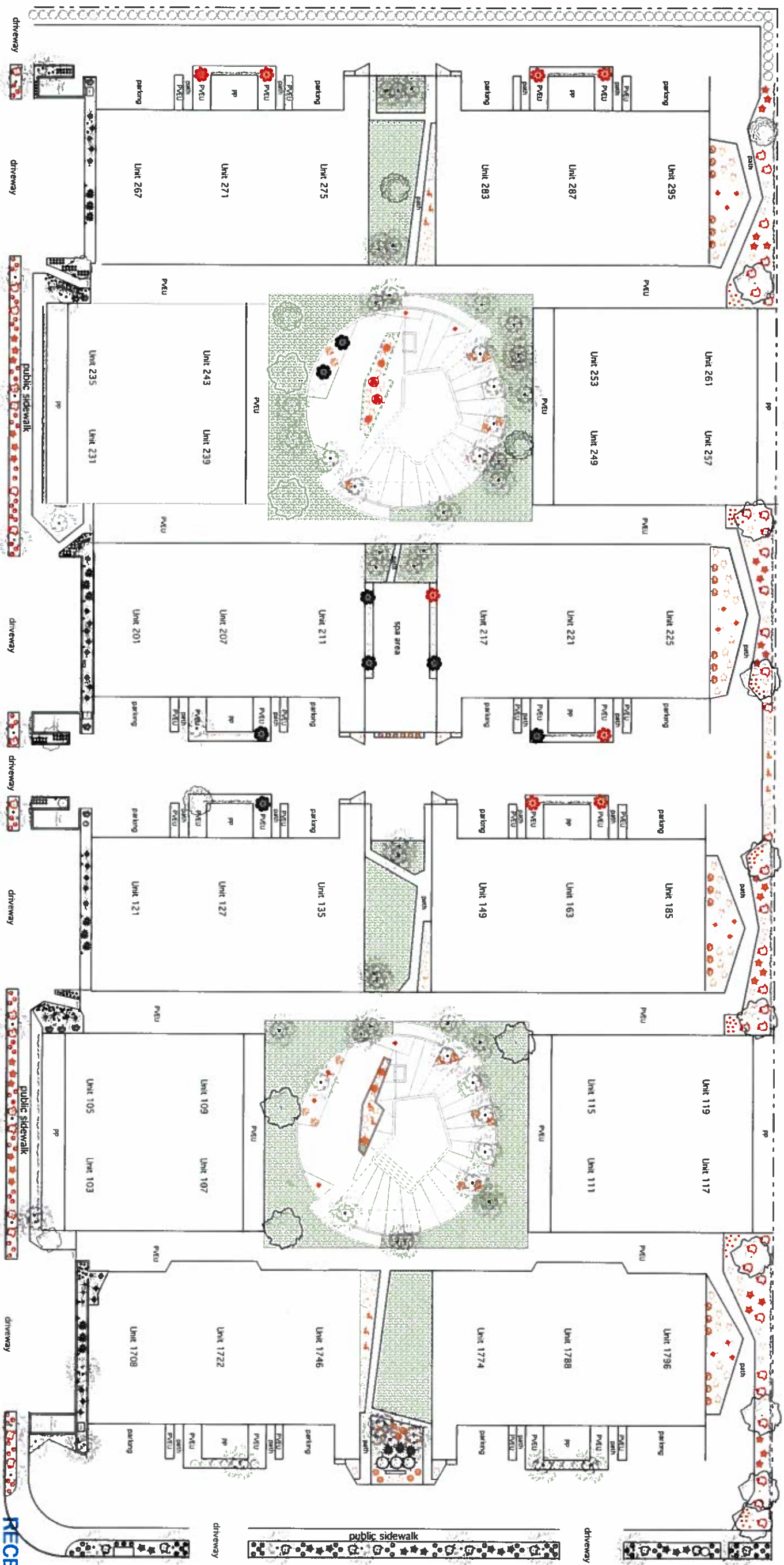


Elephant Food  
*Portulacaria afra*



Lady Slipper  
*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*





Key (black symbol on plan signifies existing, orange symbol on plan signifies proposed):

- Trees and Palms**
- Olive, *Olea europaea* none additional proposed
  - California Fan Palm, *Washingtonia filifera*, or Mexican Fan Palm, *Washingtonia robusta* none additional proposed
  - Citrus: none additional proposed
  - Mediterranean Fan Palm, *Chamaerops humilis* additional eight, 24" box proposed
- Shrubs and Hedges**
- Ficus, *Ficus microcarpa* or Oleander, *Nerium oleander*, as hedge: none additional proposed
  - Red Bird of Paradise, *Caesalpinia pulcherrima* none additional proposed
  - Pyracantha, *Pyracantha coccinea*, or "Torch Glow" Bougainvillee: additional two, 1.5 gal. proposed
  - Heavenly Bamboo, *Nandina domestica* additional twelve, 1.5 gal. proposed
  - Orange Jubilee, *Tecoma X Orange Jubilee*: sixteen, 1.5 gal. espalared, proposed

- Color**
- Bird of Paradise, *Strelitzia reginae*: six, 1.5 gal. proposed
  - Trailing Lanana, *Lantana montevidensis*: additional fifty-nine, five gal. proposed
  - Angelita Daisy, *Tetrameura acaulis* additional fifty-seven, 1 gal. proposed
  - Gazania hybrids: forty-four, 1 gal. proposed
  - Coral Fountain, *Russelia equisetiformis*: sixteen, five gal. proposed
  - Mexican Petunia, *Ruellia brittoniana*: seventeen, five gal. proposed
  - Rain Lily, *Zephyranthes candida*: additional sixty-two, 1 gal. proposed
- Accents**
- Coral Aloe, *Aloe striata*: none additional proposed
  - Mexican Grass Tree, *Dasylirion longostriatum*: additional eighteen, 1.5 gal. proposed

E. Twin Palms Dr.

- Accents, continued**
- Madagascar Palm, *Pachypodium lamerei*: none additional proposed
  - Fountain Agave, *Agave desertica*: additional thirty-three, five gal. proposed
  - Ponytail Palm, *Beaucarnea recurvata*: ten, 1.5 gal. proposed
  - Elephant Foot, *Portulacaria afra*: forty-eight, five gal. proposed
  - Lady Slipper, *Pedicularis macrocarpa*: six, 1.5 gal. proposed
- Other**
- Existing Turf

**NOTES**

- 1) Landscape areas between the adjacent public sidewalks and corresponding public curbs are in public right of way.
- 2) Public View, Exclusive Use (PVEU) are patios and landscape entries adjacent to individual homes visible to the community. Private Patios (PP) are patios adjacent to individual homes not visible to the community.
- 3) Maintenance standards to follow *desert flora MAINTENANCE* (City of Palm Desert landscape maintenance guide).
- 4) Existing irrigation stations to remain; irrigation infrastructure to be modified as needed to accommodate requirements of replacement plantings.

**PVEU, Public View, Exclusive Use**

The following plants are recommended for homeowner consideration in PVEU-designated landscape areas:

**Trees and Palms:** Laurel Leaf Shalwood, *Plumeria*, Mediterranean Fan Palm

**Shrubs and Hedges:** Ornamental Asparagus, Natal Plum, Spider Plant, Heavenly Bamboo

**Color:** Canna, Kaffir Lily, Crown of Thorns, Gazania hybrids, Mexican Petunia, Rain Lily

**Accents:** Aloe, Foxtail Agave, Mother-in-Law's Tongue, Sago Palm, Soft Leaf Yucca, Variegated Mauritius Hemp

**Rocks**

AZ Cobble (available from Southwest Boulder & Stone): 3/8" for raised planting beds where there is no foot traffic; 1/2" - 3/4" alongside walkways and areas where foot traffic is expected; 3/4" - 1 1/2" in planters alongside walkways but away from edge of path, where contrast is desired.

Lava Cinders (available from Southwest Boulder & Stone): Black, 3/4" and 1" - 3" for rock crop areas outside of pool areas, to the north and south; Red, 1" - 3" for planting areas inside of pool and spa areas.

Arrowwood, Red Mountain or Three Rivers Boulders (closest matches available from Southwest Boulder & Stone): 1-2" for raised berm areas alongside pool areas.

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Royal Hawaiian Estates, proposed landscape master plan  
Palm Springs, CA  
Prepared by Paul Ortega, 760-409-4833

Revised 9-14-17  
LANDSCAPE PLAN  
1"=20'  
N

This document is intended as a conceptual design plan only and is not intended for construction drawing or document. It should be constructed as such.

Landscape contractors and installers should always verify quantities and measurement 3) when preparing bid.