



# HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: July 10, 2018 NEW BUSINESS

SUBJECT: A CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL REQUEST BY HAL HALL, OWNER, FOR ALTERATIONS TO "THE J.W. ROBINSON'S BUILDING", A CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE, LOCATED AT 333 SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE, ZONE CBD, (CASE 3.1903 MAA HSPB 84).

FROM: Department of Planning Services

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## SUMMARY

In an effort to create additional divisible space within the J.W. Robinson's Building, the owner is seeking approval to install one set of storefront doors, reconfigure a trash enclosure and construct a block wall to serve as a screen for shopping carts.

## RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the Certificate of Approval as proposed.

## PRIOR ACTIONS:

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
1958	Date of construction.
1972	Department Store Addition
2013	City Council designated the J.W. Robinson Department Store a Class 1 historic site (HSPB 84, Council Resolution No. 23288).
2016	Permits issued for cosmetic changes to restore building and create divisible space.

## BACKGROUND:

The 14,500 square foot J.W. Robinsons Department Store in Palm Springs was constructed in 1958 with a 13,400 square foot addition attached to the south of the building in 1972. The building was designed by the notable architectural firm of Charles Luchman Associates and William L. Pereira. It was recognized nationally as an architecturally significant commission in published articles in Architectural Forum magazine in 1958. It also received the First Honor Award in 1958 in the Journal of the American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.) and the Triennial Honor Award in 1960 by the Southern California Chapter of the A.I.A. It was designated a Class 1 historic site by the Palm Springs City Council on January 16, 2013.



**AERIAL PHOTO OF EXISTING SITE**



**STREET VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST VANTAGE POINT**

In the 2012 staff report regarding the proposed Class 1 designation of the building, staff noted the following as the defining characteristics of the building that contribute to its historic significance:

- It is a pavilion-style building set up on a “plinth”. A wide expanse of gently sloped stairs along the north and east elevations connect the building on a pedestrian scale to the street.
- Expansive glass curtainwall “storefront” along the east and north elevations (and portions of the west) that functioned as a display window for the original department store.
- A central raised roof element with clerestory windows.
- Broad roof overhangs supported by 4-inch finned steel pipe columns.
- Cylindrical spun-aluminum exterior light fixtures.
- Gold-anodized aluminum fascia (currently painted).
- Concrete decorative tile fascia in a three-dimensional horizontal diamond pattern on three elevations.

#### ANALYSIS:

The owner proposes to complete minor renovations to the building to create divisible floor space for leasing purposes. The scope of exterior work is as follows:

1. East (front) elevation – Replace two existing storefront windows with dual entry doors consistent with existing dark anodized bronze frames and clear glazing;
2. West (rear) elevation –
  - a. Add metal entry door between Unit #5 and Unit #6, and paint to match existing metal service doors;
  - b. Replace existing single trash enclosure with two trash enclosures, including new 8”x8”x8” concrete masonry unit (CMU) 6-foot high walls to match existing; and
  - c. Construct new shopping cart enclosure adjacent to Unit #4, consisting of 8”x8”x8” CMU at 4-foot height to match existing.

The proposed project involves minor changes to the exterior of the facades. All colors and materials are proposed to match existing. The trash enclosures and shopping cart enclosure will match the design and construction of the existing enclosure, and can easily be removed at a later date with no impact to the building. The rhythm and spacing of the window glazing and curtainwall storefront on the east elevation will remain as currently exists; the new storefront doors will be inserted into one of the existing bays and will utilize the same proportions and details as the other storefront doors. There will be no changes to the raised roof elements, clerestory windows, broad overhangs, cylindrical light fixtures, aluminum fascia, decorative concrete fascia tiles or entry stairs, nor will the view these elements be visually impeded by the proposed changes. Therefore, the proposed changes will not impact the important elements contributing to the property’s historic significance.

Evaluation of the proposed project:

There are no specific findings required to grant a Certificate of Approval, however, according to Section 8.05.190 of the Municipal Code, the HSPB shall consider the following in reviewing and acting upon a certificate of approval 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 historic value and significance of the building is well documented in the historic resources survey submitted by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation. The alteration of the exterior is proposed in a manner that is respectful to the architectural significance and detailing of the structure. The building's defining characteristics will be retained and there will be no impediments to overall visual experience of these elements.

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

The modifications are proposed using materials, forms, and colors that are consistent with the original details of the building. The changes will result in little noticeable difference from the previous conditions and allow the owner additional options when establishing tenant spaces within the historic structure.

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

The proposed alteration is compatible in color, material, scale, proportion, and overall aesthetic of the original historic J.W. Robinson's building. It allows additional divisible tenant space and smaller "specialty" retailers wishing to occupy prime locations in the City's Central Business District.

4. *Archaeological or ecological significance of the area.*

There is no known archeological or ecological significance at this site.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed alteration to the Robinson's Department Store Building is deemed a Project under the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to Section 15064.5 "Determining the Significance of Impacts on Historical and Unique Archeological Resources", Robinsons' is a "historic resource" under CEQA because it is listed in the local register of historic resources (Class 1, HSPB #84).

According to CEQA, a project with an effect that may cause a "substantial adverse change" in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a

According to CEQA, a project with an effect that may cause a “*substantial adverse change*” in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a “*significant effect*” on that resource. “Substantial adverse change” includes alteration of *the immediate surroundings* of the historic resource such that the significance of the resource would be *materially impaired*.

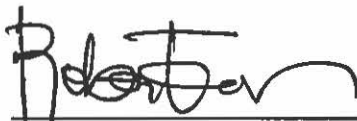
The proposed project affects the historic resource by replacing two storefront windows with dual entry doors; replacing a large trash enclosure with two new enclosures; and installing a shopping cart enclosure wall. All new materials are proposed to match existing.

CEQA allows for a Class 31 Categorical Exemption (*Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation*) for projects involving maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (1995), Weeks and Grimmer.

The project will not impact the site to the level of “a substantial adverse change” nor will it “materially impair” the significant defining historic characteristics of the building. Therefore, pursuant to Section 15331 (Historical Resource Restoration/Rehabilitation) of CEQA, a Class 31 Categorical Exemption is proposed for the project.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed project sensitively alters this Class 1 historic site with the use of materials, colors and material design that is consistent with existing conditions. The proposed updates are consistent with the City’s Municipal Code for granting a certificate of approval. Therefore, staff recommends approval as presented.

  
FOR \_\_\_\_\_  
David A. Newell, AICP  
Associate Planner

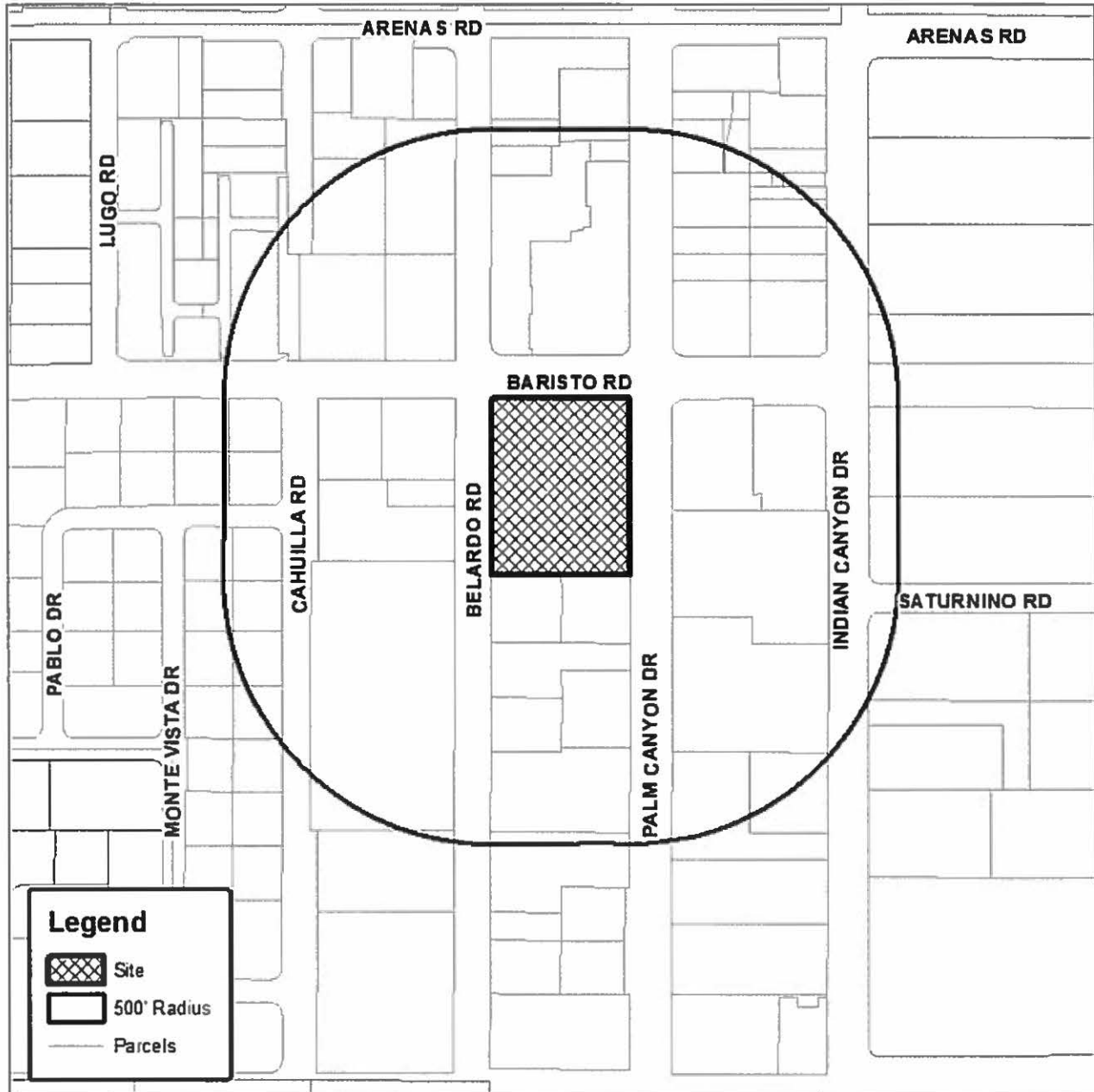
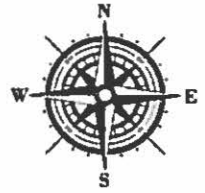
  
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Flinn Fagg, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

Attachments:

1. Vicinity map
2. City Council resolution designating the building a Class 1 historic site
3. Site Photographs
4. Proposed plans (existing site, proposed site and elevations)



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS



**RESOLUTION NO. 22820**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA DESIGNATING THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 645 E. MORONGO ROAD (RESIDENCE HUGH STEPHENS RESIDENCE) AS A HISTORIC SITE, CLASS 1 (HSPB 76).**

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

**WHEREAS, the current property owners, Robert C. Metcalf and David R. Skousen, filed an application for Historic Site Designation; and**

**WHEREAS, on August 10, 2010, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Hugh Stephens Residence as a historic site; and**

**WHEREAS, at said hearing, the HSPB adopted Resolution #76 to recommend to City Council designation of the property located at 645 E. Morongo Road ("Hugh Stephens Residence") as a Historic Site, Class 1; and**

**WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the property located at 645 E. Morongo Road ("Hugh Stephens Residence") as a Historic Site, Class 1 was issued in accordance with applicable law; and**

**WHEREAS, on November 3, 2010 the City Council conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the property located at 645 E. Morongo Road ("Hugh Stephens Residence") as a Historic Site, Class 1; and**

**WHEREAS, the designation of the property located at 645 E. Morongo Road ("Hugh Stephens Residence") as a Historic Site, Class 1 shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05 and promotes the sensitive preservation of said site; and**

**WHEREAS, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the designation of a historic site is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15331 for the preservation of historical resources; and**

**WHEREAS, the City Council has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report, application and historical research, all written and oral testimony presented and notes the following:**

- 1. In 1949, Dr. Hugh Stephens commissioned the architectural firm of Clark and Frey to design a single family dwelling at 645 E. Morongo Road, and the building, including garage was completed in 1951; and**

2. The defining characteristics of this home include:

- Low-pitched roof with extended eaves,
- Rambling one-story floor plan,
- Simple planar building lines (including occasional use of obtuse angles),
- Stacked-bond concrete block walls,
- Repetitive rectilinear patterns using glass blocks, wall openings, and masonry block protrusions, and
- Metal-framed casement windows.

Further, an entry cover and planter were added in 1986 and introduce new materials – metal pole and flagstone - but these materials can also be considered modern and do not compromise the basic architectural integrity of the dwelling; and

3. The structure's design was the product of the firm of Clark and Frey, which practiced in Palm Springs from 1939 to 1952; John Porter Clark checked the drawings prepared by Robson Chambers; and Clark, Chambers and Frey are names associated with many mid-century modern buildings in the Palm Springs area, and were among the most prolific local architects during the advance of mid-century modern desert architecture; and

**THE CITY COUNCIL DOES HEREBY RESOLVE:**

**SECTION 1:** Pursuant to CEQA, the City Council finds that the designation of portions of the Orchid Tree Inn as a Class 1 and Class 2 historic sites is categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15331 whereby this designation is for the preservation of a historical resource.

**SECTION 2:** Pursuant to Section 8.05.020 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, the City Council does hereby make the following findings regarding the property at 845 E. Morongo Road ("Hugh Stephens Residence") to support designation as a Class One historic site:

- A. The property reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history, because the architectural style of the dwelling reflects the mid-century modern era for which Palm Springs is widely known. While not the earliest example of a "desert modern" dwelling, the structure's 1951 completion pre-dates many of the modern-style homes built in the late 1950's and early '60's. Consequently, the dwelling can be considered one of the important precursors to the wave of modernism that would bring acclaim to the community. The grounds have been altered by the addition of a pool, spa and block wall, and therefore do not possess the historical integrity of the dwelling.



B. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because it possesses important architectural characteristics that typify the modern idiom:

- Low-pitched roof with extended eaves,
- Rambling one-story floor plan,
- Simple planar building lines (including occasional use of obtuse angles),
- Stacked-bond concrete block walls,
- Repetitive rectilinear patterns using glass blocks, wall openings, and masonry block protrusions, and
- Metal-framed casement windows.

The added entry cover and planter introduce new materials, but these materials can also be considered modern and do not compromise the basic architectural integrity of the dwelling. Further, these additions could be removed without adversely affecting the original structure.

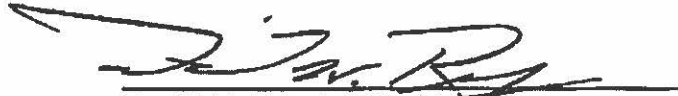
C. The property presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value, because the structure's design was the product of the firm of Clark and Frey, which practiced in Palm Springs from 1939 to 1952. John Porter Clark checked the drawings prepared by Robson Chambers. Clark, Chambers and Frey are names associated with many mid-century modern buildings in the Palm Springs area, and were among the most prolific local architects during the advance of mid-century modern desert architecture. Though not well-known, the dwelling is a complete and coherent example of the modern style.

SECTION 5: Based upon the foregoing, the City Council does hereby designate as a Class 1 Historic Site the property at 645 E. Morongo Road ("Hugh Stephens Residence"), subject to the following conditions;


1. The property owner shall permit the City to demark the designated sites as a historic site with a marker of the City's choosing. The historic 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 marker is lost, stolen, or otherwise removed from the property.
2. All modifications of existing structures, including walls, gates, landscaping (excluding routine maintenance) and pool, as well as any new structures shall be subject to HSPB review. pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.
3. All requirements of the Palm Springs Zoning Code shall be met.
4. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.

5. Any alterations or modifications to the exterior approved prior to the designation of this site by the City Council shall be deemed acceptable.

ADOPTED THIS 3<sup>rd</sup> DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2010.

  
David H. Ready, City Manager

ATTEST:

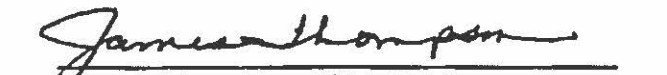
  
James Thompson, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

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

I, JAMES THOMPSON, City Clerk of the City of Palm Springs, hereby certify that Resolution No. 22820 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 the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of November, 2010, by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmember Foat, Councilmember Mills, Councilmember Weigel,  
Mayor Pro Tem Hutcheson, and Mayor Pougnet.  
NOES: None.  
ABSENT: None.  
ABSTAIN: None.

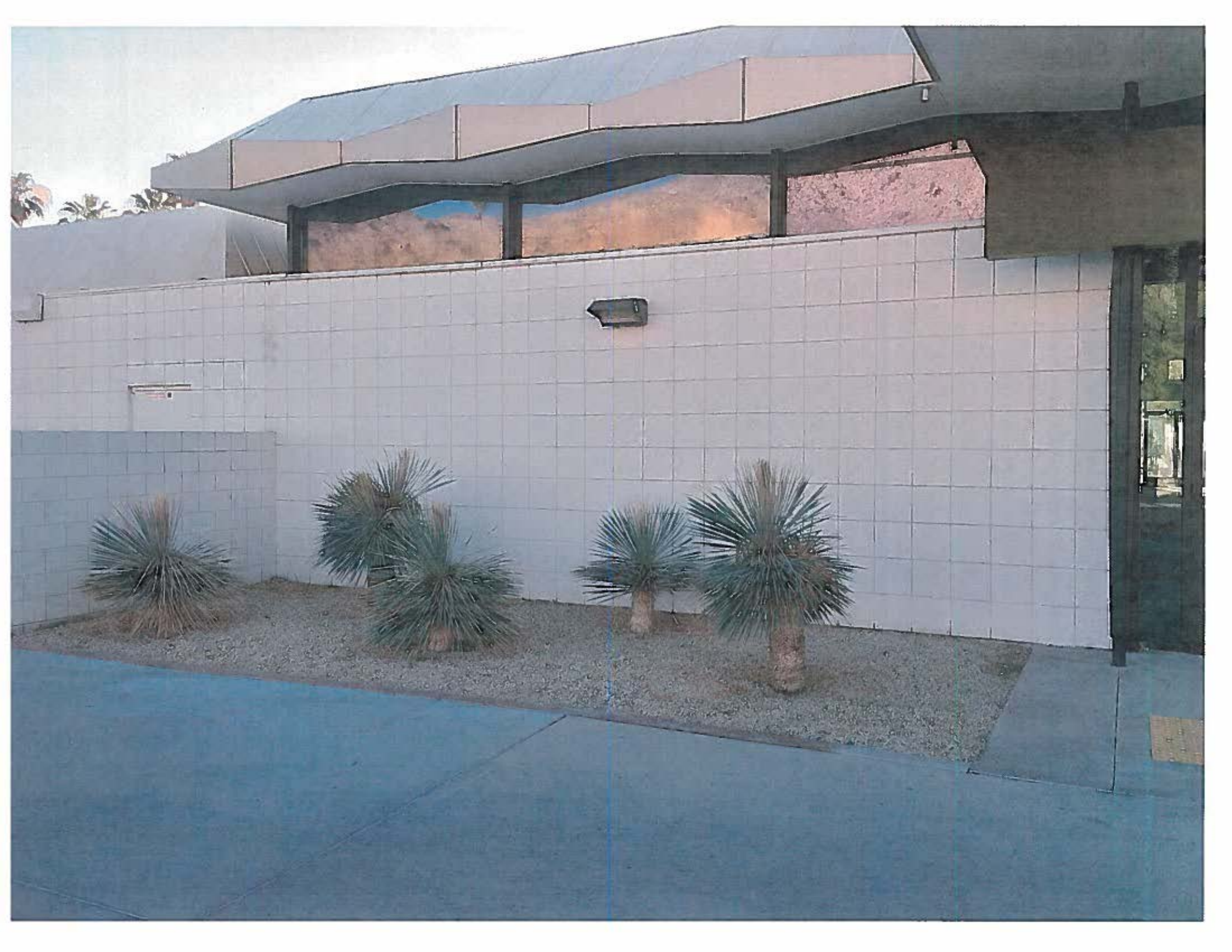
  
James Thompson, City Clerk  
City of Palm Springs, California 11/16/2010















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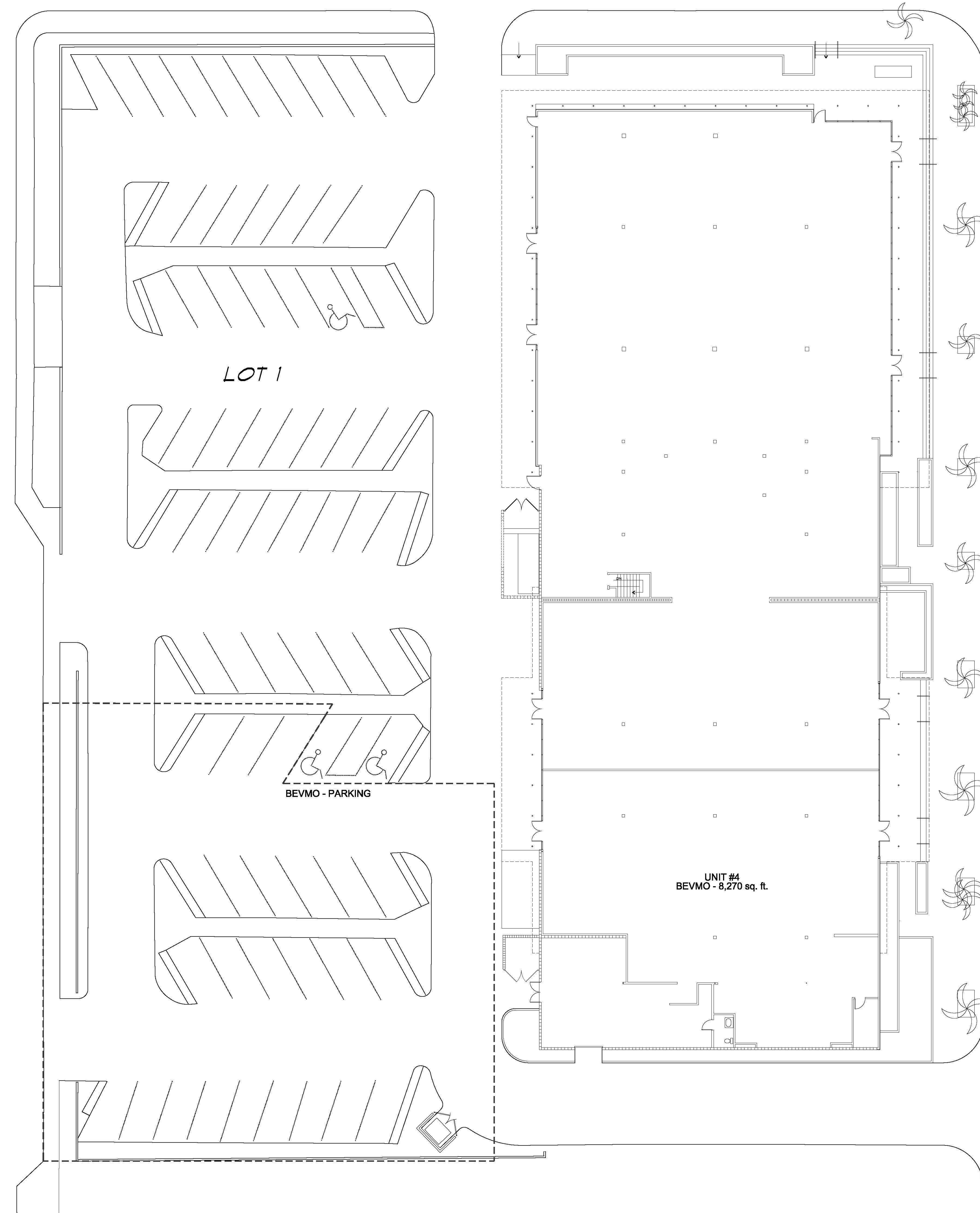


APN: 513-203-013-8

BARISTO ROAD

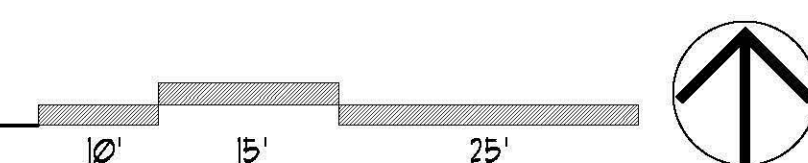
BELARDO ROAD

SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE



EXISTING SITE PLAN  
SCALE: 1/16"=1'-0"

TOTAL: 28,196 SQ. FT. (EXISTING)



**Cioffi**  
ARCHITECT

A RENOVATION FOR THE:  
**333 BUILDING**  
333 S. PALM CANYON DRIVE  
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

JAMES CIOFFI ARCHITECT  
2121 E. TACQUITZ CANYON WAY - SUITE 3  
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 92262  
TELEPHONE 760-322-1557



Δ	REVISION

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

PROJECT NO: 1718

FILE: 1718-SITE

SHEET

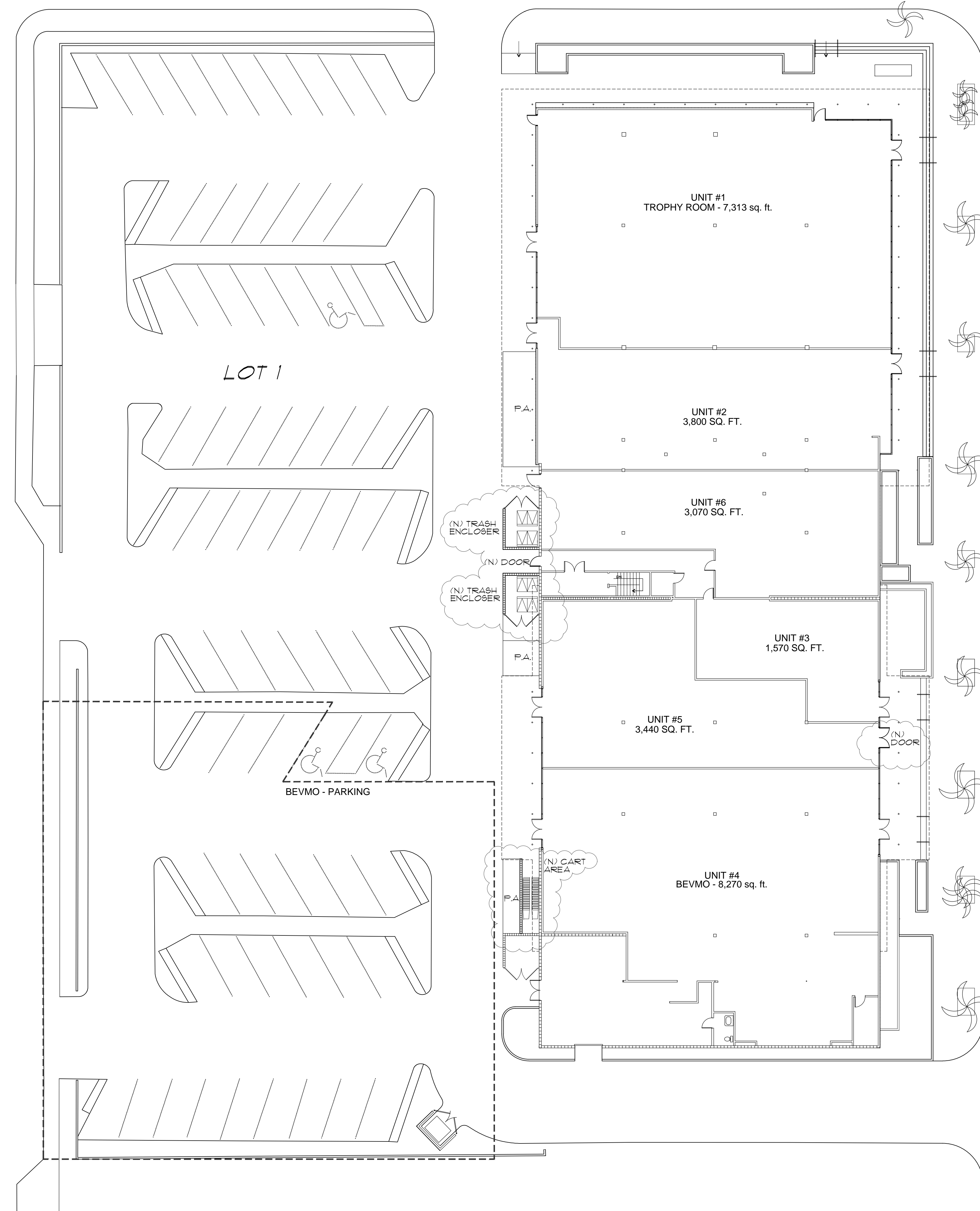
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APN: 513-203-013-8

BARISTO ROAD

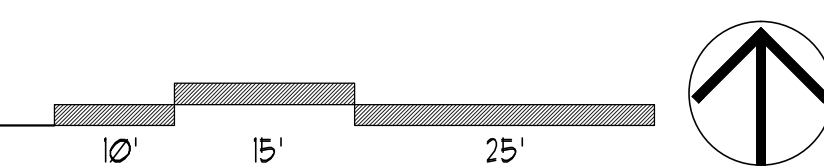
BELARDO ROAD

SOUTH PALM CANYON DRIVE



PROPOSED SITE PLAN  
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

TOTAL: 28,196 SQ. FT. (EXISTING)



**Cioffi**  
ARCHITECT

A RENOVATION FOR THE:  
**333 BUILDING**  
333 S. PALM CANYON DRIVE  
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

JAMES CIOFFI ARCHITECT  
2121 E. TROQUITE CANYON WAY - SUITE 3  
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA 92262  
TELEPHONE 760-322-1557



Δ	REVISION

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

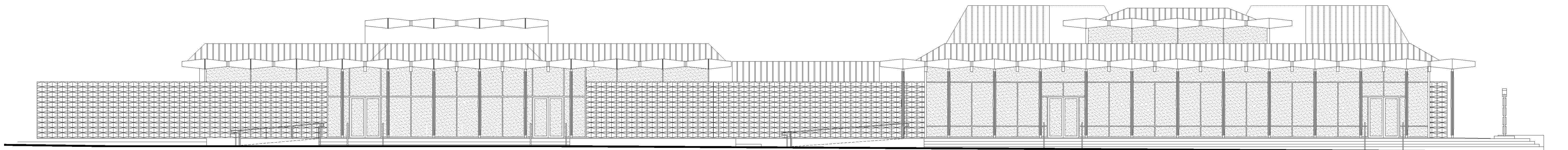
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FILE: 1718-SITE

SHEET

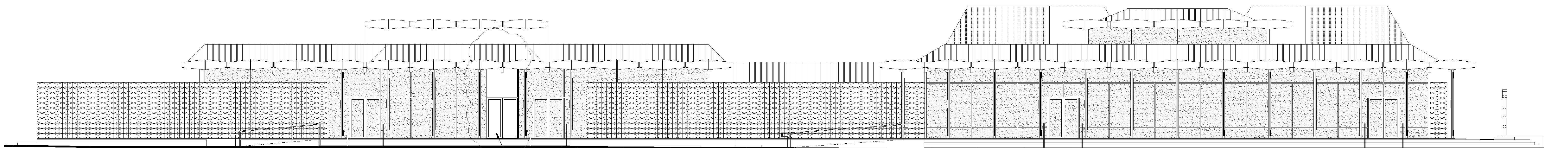
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EXISTING EAST ELEVATION (333 SOUTH PALM CANYON DR)

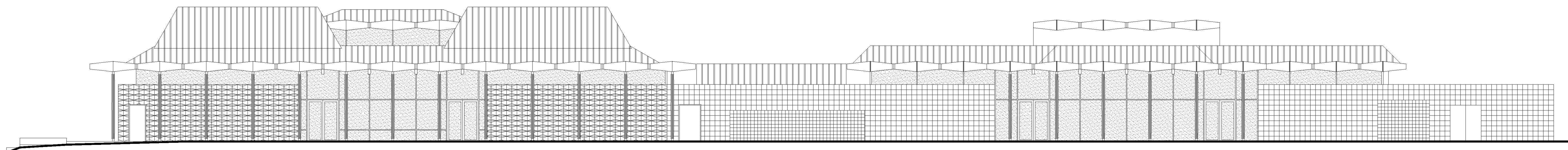
ALL AREAS NOT TO BE REMODEL TO BE PROTECTED IN PLACE DURING CONSTRUCTION



NEW STOREFRONT TO MATCH EXISTING  
DARK ANODIZED BRONZE FRAMES  
CLEAR GLAZING

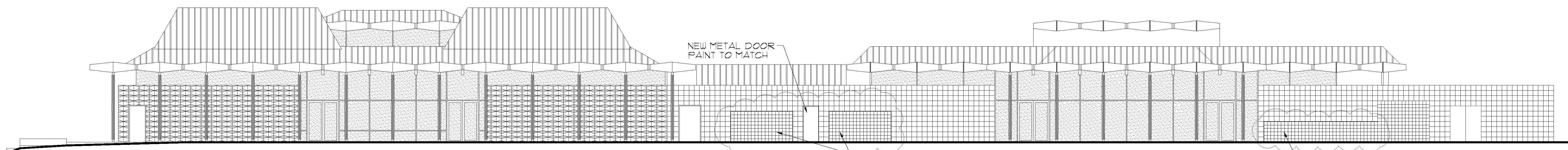
RE-MODEL EAST ELEVATION (333 SOUTH PALM CANYON DR)

ALL AREAS NOT TO BE REMODEL TO BE PROTECTED IN PLACE DURING CONSTRUCTION



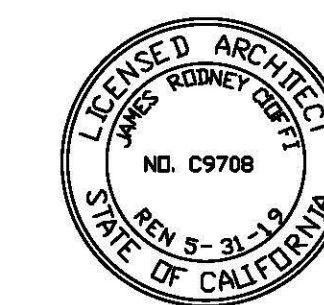
EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

ALL AREAS NOT TO BE REMODEL TO BE PROTECTED IN PLACE DURING CONSTRUCTION



RE-MODEL WEST ELEVATION

ALL AREAS NOT TO BE REMODEL TO BE PROTECTED IN PLACE DURING CONSTRUCTION



Δ	REVISION

SCALE: 1/10" = 1'-0"

PROJECT NO: 1718

FILE: 1718-ELEV

SHEET

**A-1.3**