

FINAL DRAFT – FOR CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL

City of Palm Springs
Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings
December 2018

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP

PREPARED FORHJ

City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262



Historic Resources Group

Adopted by the Palm Springs City Council by
Resolution No. _____ on _____, 2019

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Executive Summary

In 2014, the City of Palm Springs commissioned a citywide historic context statement and historic resources survey of built resources as part of the ongoing historic preservation planning efforts in the city. The City initiated its first comprehensive historic resources survey in 1976 as a result of the community's desire to identify and document its rich architectural heritage. Citywide surveys undertaken in 1983 and 1987 resulted in the creation of a base list of potential architectural and historical resources throughout the city. These surveys were updated in 2001 and 2004. In 2014, the City of Palm Springs became a Certified Local Government; maintaining and updating historic resources surveys of the built environment undertaken by qualified historic preservation professionals is a requirement of that program.

The 2014 project included the development of a comprehensive citywide historic context statement and survey update of buildings constructed through 1969. The project was conducted between July 2014 and June 2016; the Ethnic Minorities chapter was commissioned by the City in 2017 and is included at the end of the citywide context statement. The historic context statement follows guidelines established by the National Park Service and the California Office of Historic Preservation, and outlines the major development patterns in the city for use in identifying and evaluating potential historic resources. The survey component of the project reviewed the properties that collectively comprised the City Historic Resources Database, and identified additional properties and neighborhoods that may be eligible as historic resources for inclusion on the City's inventory. These properties were assessed from the public right-of-way using current preservation standards and practices. Each property was evaluated for potential eligibility for listing at the federal, state, and local levels according to the registration requirements developed for each context/theme in the historic context statement. The result is an updated citywide inventory of properties and neighborhoods with potential historic significance that will satisfy the requirements of the Certified Local Government program; provide baseline information for planning purposes and environmental review in the City of Palm Springs; and assist property owners and the Historic Site Preservation Board in the identification of properties for local designation. Note that this study covers the built environment in Palm Springs; archaeological and other subterranean resources are outside the scope of this project and were not surveyed.

Introduction



Aerial photograph of downtown Palm Springs, c. 1950. Source: Eric G. Meeks.

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INTRODUCTION

As part of the ongoing efforts to identify and evaluate the City's historic resources, in 2014 the City of Palm Springs embarked on a citywide historic resources survey and development of a comprehensive historic context statement. The context was developed by Historic Resources Group (HRG), including Christine Lazzaretto, Principal; John LoCascio, AIA, Senior Architect; Molly Iker, Architectural Historian; and sub-consultants Sian Winship, Architectural Historian; and Alan Hess, Architect and Architectural Historian. Local historian Steve Vaught was an advisor and contributor to the project. The field study was conducted by HRG staff Christine Lazzaretto; Paul Travis, AICP, Principal; Robby Aranguren, Planning Associate; John LoCascio, AIA, Senior Architect; and sub-consultant Sian Winship. All HRG staff meet the Secretary of the Interior's qualifications in historic preservation.¹ The City Planning Department was responsible for management and coordination of the project with input provided by the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB).

Historic Context Statement: Purpose

In order to understand the significance of the historic and architectural resources in the City of Palm Springs, it is necessary to examine those resources within a series of contexts. The purpose of a historic context statement is to place built resources in the appropriate historic, social, and architectural context so that the relationship between an area's physical environment and its broader history can be established.

A historic context statement analyzes the historical development of a community according to guidelines written by the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and the National Park Service, as specified in *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* and *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys*. Bulletin 16A describes a historic context as follows:

Historic context is information about historic trends and properties grouped by an important theme in pre-history or history of a community, state, or the nation during a particular period of time. Because historic contexts are organized by theme, place,

¹ Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 190, p. 44738-44739, September 29, 1983.

and time, they link historic properties to important historic trends. In this way, they provide a framework for determining the significance of a property.²

A historic context statement is linked with tangible built resources through the concept of “property type,” which is a grouping of individual properties based on shared physical or associative characteristics.³ It should identify the various historical factors that shaped the development of the area, including:

- Historical activities or events
- Historic personages
- Building types, architectural styles, and materials
- Patterns of physical development

A historic context is not intended to be a comprehensive history of a city. Rather, its purpose is to highlight trends and patterns critical to the understanding of the built environment. It identifies the various historical factors that shaped the development of the area, including historic activities or events, important people, building types, architectural styles, and patterns of physical development. The historic context provides a framework for the continuing process of identifying historic, architectural, and cultural resources in the city. It is meant to serve as a guide to enable citizens, planners, and decision makers to evaluate the relative significance and integrity of individual properties and neighborhoods. Specific examples referred to in this context statement are included to represent significant examples of a pattern of development; architectural style; the work of a significant architect; or to illustrate physical and associative characteristics of a particular resource type. The survey findings included in Appendix C (individual properties) and Appendix D (historic districts) indicate which properties appear eligible for designation under each context and theme as a result of this study.

Historic Context Statement: Methodology

The historic context statement and survey uses the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Submission (MPS) approach, and covers each significant phase of the city’s built environment, from the

² National Park Service, “National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form,” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1997.

³ National Park Service, “National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys,” Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1977; revised 1985.

19th century through 1969.⁴ Existing studies, contexts, and survey evaluations were used in the development of this document. These were supplemented by additional research using both primary and secondary sources and consultation with local experts to develop the historical narrative of Palm Springs, and provide additional information about significant individual properties, tract developments,⁵ and neighborhoods.

Research efforts to inform both the context and field study included:

- Literature review of published and online sources for property-specific information about potentially architecturally or culturally significant properties in Palm Springs.
- Review of the 2004 survey.
- Review of relevant building permits, tax assessor data, Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (available for select areas in 1929 with a 1962 update), and aerial photographs. Note that City of Palm Springs historic building permits do not list the name of the architect, making attribution difficult in many cases.
- Development of study maps illustrating the growth of Palm Springs by decade in order to review development and settlement patterns.
- Mapping of residential tracts in Palm Springs subdivided prior to 1969 using the Riverside County Land Information system, tract maps, and survey records.
- Research on ownership of all tracts to confirm individuals, developers, or investor consortia.
- Search of the *Palm Springs Villager* for key developments, owners, architects, and other historic personages.
- Search of the clippings files at the Palm Springs Historical Society.
- Search of the clippings files at the Palm Springs Library.
- Search of Palm Springs Historical Society Photo Collection.
- Online and manual search of Palm Springs City Directories up to 1970, as available.
- Selected reading and research of the *Desert Sun* on microfilm and online. Note that the *Desert Sun* did not become available online until after the development of the first draft of the context

⁴ A significant context in Palm Springs is the influence of the LGBT community; however, much of the documented history dates to the recent past and therefore was outside the scope of this project. Early associations with the LGBT community are largely based on undocumented rumors that should be confirmed as part of a comprehensive study of the LGBT community in the city.

⁵ Note that research into the tract development of Palm Springs was undertaken by the project team in order to understand the residential development patterns in the city, and to aid in development of the historic context narrative and the identification of potential historic districts. A complete history of each tract subdivided in a city is not typically included in a historic context statement, which is meant to document overall patterns and trends, and it was outside the scope of this project. All tract research that was compiled as part of this project is included, either in the historic context statement, in the Overview of Tract Development in Appendix B, or as part of the statement of significance for a potential historic district.

statement and the completion of the reconnaissance survey, limiting the availability of information from this primary source to the project team.

- Review of *Palm Springs Life*.
- Online searches of the Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals and review of articles generated.
- ProQuest searches of the *Los Angeles Times* and other publications, including period trade publications.
- Searches of the *Desert Sentinel*, *San Bernardino County Sun*, and other Inland Empire newspapers available online.
- Review of American Institute of Architects (AIA) membership files.
- Review of all HOA websites and outreach to selected HOAs for historical information.
- Review of selected neighborhoods in U.S. Census.
- Field trips to relevant architectural archives including the Getty Research Institute, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), Cal Poly Pomona, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), University of Southern California (USC), and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.
- Review of photo databases including Calisphere, Los Angeles Public Library, the Mott Collection, USC Digital Archive, UCLA Digital Archive, and Getty Images.
- Email outreach to architects William Krisel, Paul Thoryk, Roger Bray, Peter Munselle, Gruen Associates, and B3 Architecture Studio.
- Outreach (email/in person) for the residential development sections includes: Peter Moruzzi, Chris Menrad, Nicole Wenzell, Renee Brown, Lauren Weiss Bricker, Volker Welter, and Hicks Stone.
- Outreach/consultation for the architectural history sections includes: Palm Springs Modernism Committee; Palm Springs Art Museum/Architecture + Design Center (Sidney Williams, J.R. Roberts, Beth Edwards Harris); Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (Ron Marshall, Barbara Marshall, Tracy Conrad, Susan Secoy Jensen); Palm Springs historians, preservationists, architects: Jim West; Mark Davis; William Kopelk; Michael Stern; Brad Dunning; Volker Welter; Eric Williams; William Krisel, architect; Hugh Kaptur, architect; Donald Wexler, architect; Cal Poly Pomona (Lauren Bricker, archivist); Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (Jessica Holada, archivist); and landscape historian (and Herbert Burns expert) Steven Keylon.
- Comments on the first draft were received from John Sanborn and Will Kleindienst.
- Comments on the second draft were received from the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.
- Significant input on both drafts provided by members of the HSPB and Marvin Roos. HSPB members additionally consulted with Kitty Keiley Hayes, Steve Nichols, and Moya Henderson.

Historic Resources Survey: Methodology

Following an initial research period to review existing documentation about historic resources in the city, including the 2014 City Historical Resource Database, the project team conducted a citywide, street-by-street reconnaissance survey. The reconnaissance survey helped to inform the development of the context statement and was used to identify specific local conditions, the number and type of extant resources in the area, and the overall character of the commercial and residential neighborhoods within the city. The development of evaluation criteria, integrity thresholds, and registration requirements for evaluating historic resources in Palm Springs for eligibility at the federal, state, and local levels was also informed by information gathered during the initial field study. Based on this information and research efforts for the context statement, a study list of properties was developed for further review and documentation. Additional field study and research was conducted on all properties on the study list, which was then updated and revised to comprise the final inventory list. In general, only those properties or neighborhoods identified as eligible for designation were documented as part of this survey. The exception is those properties that were on the City Historical Resource Database but that are no longer eligible for designation; those properties have been documented in the database for reference by City staff. Note that this study covers the built environment in Palm Springs; archaeological and other subterranean resources are outside the scope of the project.

All properties and neighborhoods that were documented as part of this project were observed and photographed from the public right-of-way. A considerable obstacle in Palm Springs is that many potentially significant properties are not visible from the street. Those properties that are not fully visible, but for which there is a known historic association, were documented in the database with all available information. There are several significant subdivisions and neighborhoods, including Southridge Estates and Smoke Tree Ranch, which are not included in the survey findings as those neighborhoods are not accessible to the public. Those areas should be included in future studies, if possible.

Data Management

All property-specific information was documented in an Access-based database which includes a digital photograph; general property information (Assessor parcel number, address, date of construction, architect (if known); significant owners (as needed); documentation of alterations (based primarily on field observations); identification of architectural features; and a current evaluation. An electronic version of the database accompanies this report. Data can be sorted for further analysis and/or linked with the City's internal mapping and database systems. The database includes properties that were included on the City's Historic Resources Database and additional properties and neighborhoods identified as part

of this study. Individual property data sheets were generated from the database for reference purposes for City staff.

Analysis

Properties documented in the database were analyzed based on the contexts/themes and the registration requirements for each developed as part of the historic context statement; in general, only eligible properties were documented. This context-based methodology is preferred by OHP and follows established guidelines for the multiple property documentation approach. This allows for the evaluation of a large number of resources specifically tied to development patterns in the city. The documentation in the database includes an identification of the relevant context/theme from the Palm Springs Historic Context Statement, a concise significance statement indicating why the property may be significant under that context/theme, and brief additional information (where applicable) supporting the recommendation. This approach is consistent with current historic preservation practice, and was approved by City staff and the OHP for this project.⁶

For additional information about evaluating potential historic resources, please see the registration requirements included at the end of each context/theme in the historic context statement. In general, the analysis considers historic integrity; architectural style; rarity of type; historic association; neighborhood cohesion; and relationships to larger development patterns in the area. Each surveyed property was evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register, for local designation as a Class 1 Historic Site, and/or as part of a historic district. Each property has been assigned a [California Historical Resource Status Code](#) (Status Code). Additional information about the Status Codes and the survey findings can be found in Appendix C (individual properties) and Appendix D (potential historic districts). Note that this survey identifies a small number of planning districts; these are areas that do not retain sufficient integrity for designation as historic districts, but that represent a specific type or period of development and contain features that warrant consideration in local planning.

Maps

The survey findings map contained in this report, and provided to the City in digital format, represents those properties identified by this study as potential historic resources within the City of Palm Springs. The boundaries for the identified potential historic districts are included on the survey findings map; individual maps of each district identifying the contributors and non-contributors are also included in

⁶ Office of Historic Preservation, letter to City staff, August 17, 2015.

this report. Standard preservation practice defines the boundaries of an historic property as the parcel on which an historic structure is situated. Specific boundaries of a historic property should be clearly defined at the time of designation. Additional maps are included with this report for reference purposes, these include a map of the known tract boundaries to illustrate the pattern of residential development in Palm Springs, and a map illustrating the development by decade of parcels within the city. All maps were generated using data from the County of Riverside Tax Assessor.



Study Area

The study area for the project is the current boundary of the City of Palm Springs. Palm Springs is located in Riverside County, California. It is approximately 60 miles east of the City of Riverside, and 100 miles east of Los Angeles. It is located in the Coachella Valley, with the Mojave Desert to the north. Access to Palm Springs from the west is via the I-10 Freeway which passes through the San Geronio Pass. Palm Springs is one of nine adjacent cities that make up the Coachella Valley, and is sheltered by the San Bernardino Mountains to the north, Santa Rosa Mountains to the south, San Jacinto Mountains to the west, and Little San Bernardino Mountains to the east. A map indicating the general geographic location is included above; a map with the City boundaries (and illustrating major development periods) is included in Figure 1.

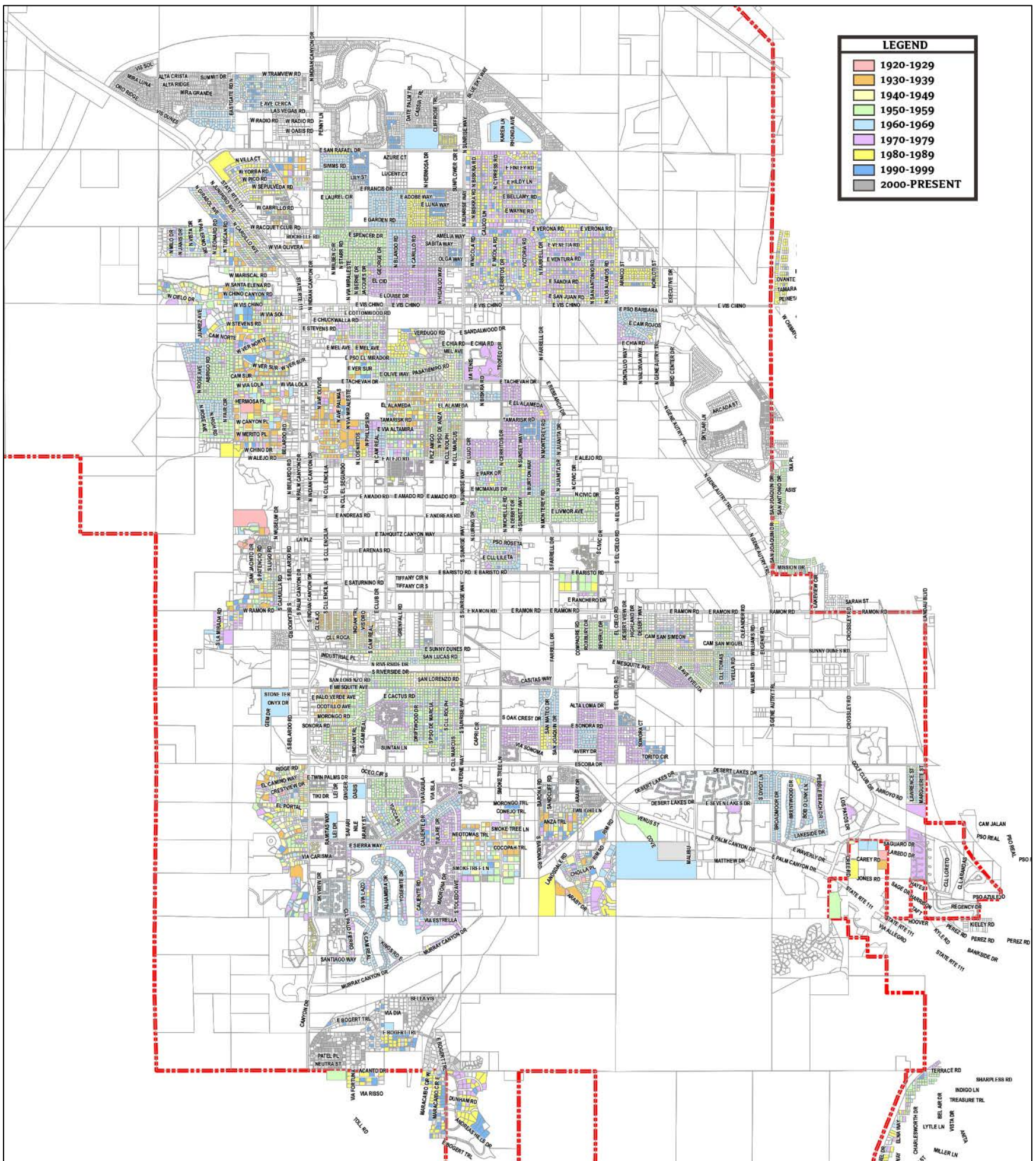
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FIGURE 1: CITY MAP



REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The identification and protection of historic resources is supported by Federal and state regulations. It is important to note that portions of the City of Palm Springs are situated within the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians maintains an active Tribal Historic Preservation Office promulgated through the National Historic Preservation Act.

National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which was most recently amended in 1992, created the framework for preservation activity in the United States. The NHPA redefined and expanded the National Register of Historic Places which had been established by the Historic Sites Act of 1935; created the position of State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) to administer state and tribal historic preservation programs; established the Certified Local Government Program; and set up the Historic Preservation Fund to fund the provisions of the Act.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, through a consultation process with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, mandates that the effects of all federal undertakings on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register be taken into account.

National Environmental Policy Act

The intent of the National Environmental Policy Act is to protect the natural and built environment, including historic properties, from adverse effects resulting from federal actions. Before a federal agency may proceed with a proposed action, it must first perform an environmental assessment to determine whether the action could have any significant effect on the environment. If it is determined that the action may have an effect on the environment, the agency must then prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which identifies all environmental impacts resulting from the action and lists mitigation measures and project alternatives which avoid or minimize adverse impacts.

Impacts involving historic properties are usually assessed in coordination with the process established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Normally, the Section 106 process must be completed before the Environmental Assessment or EIS can be finalized.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was enacted in 1970 and most recently modified in 2016. The basic purpose of CEQA is to inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potential significant adverse effects, if any, of proposed activities and projects. As environmental policy, CEQA requires that environmental protection be given significant consideration in the decision-making process; historic resources and tribal cultural resources are included under environmental protection. When the California Register of Historical Resources was established in 1992, the Legislature amended CEQA to clarify which cultural resources are significant; and more recently, CEQA has been amended to define tribal cultural resources.

For purposes of CEQA, the term "historical resource" includes the following:

- A resource listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources;
- A resource included in a local register of historical resources; or
- A resource identified as significant in an historical resource survey.

For purposes of CEQA, the term "tribal cultural resource" includes the following:

- A site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place;
- A resource listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the California Register of Historical Resources;
- A resource included in a local register of historical resources;
- A resource that the lead agency chooses, in its discretion, to treat as a tribal cultural resource;
- A cultural landscape that meets the criteria of subdivision (a) is a tribal cultural resource to the extent that the landscape is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape; or
- A historical resource described in §21084.1, a unique archaeological resource as defined in subdivision (g) of §21083.2, or a "nonunique archaeological resource" as defined in subdivision (h) of §21083.2 may also be a tribal cultural resource if it conforms with the criteria of subdivision (a).

For more information regarding the implications of CEQA on local historical resources and tribal cultural resources, see [*Technical Assistance Series #1: California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\) and Historical Resources*](#), published by OHP.

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATION

A property may be designated as historic by National, State, and local authorities. In order for a building to qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or as a local Class 1 historic site, it must meet one or more identified criteria of significance. The property must also retain sufficient historic integrity to evoke the sense of place and time with which it is historically associated. This historic context statement will provide guidance for listing at the federal, state, and local levels, according to the established criteria and integrity thresholds.

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National Historic Landmark

The National Historic Landmark program is conducted by the National Park Service to identify, designate, and protect cultural resources of national significance that commemorate and illustrate United States history and culture. (National Historic Landmarks are identified by special theme studies prepared by National Park Service professionals as an additional level of documentation in the National Register designation process.) Information is compiled on the history, significance, and integrity of the property and a statement on its relationship to the criteria for determining significance is prepared. Nominations are then reviewed by the National Park Service Advisory Board, which forwards recommendations for designation to the Secretary of the Interior for a final decision. National Historic Landmarks are afforded the same limited protections and benefits as properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is an authoritative guide to be used by Federal, State, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the Nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment.⁷ The National Park Service administers the National Register program. Listing in the National Register assists in preservation of historic properties in several ways, including: recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community; consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects; eligibility for federal tax benefits; and qualification for Federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

To be eligible for listing and/or listed in the National Register, a resource must possess significance in American history and culture, architecture, or archaeology. Listing in the National Register is primarily honorary and does not in and of itself provide protection of a historic resource. The primary effect of listing in the National Register on private owners of historic buildings is the availability of financial and tax incentives. In addition, for projects that receive Federal funding, a clearance process must be completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. State and local regulations may also apply to properties listed in the National Register.

The criteria for listing in the National Register follow established guidelines for determining the significance of properties. The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

⁷ 36CFR60, Section 60.2.

- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.⁸

Standard preservation practice evaluates geographically contiguous collections of buildings from similar time periods and historic contexts as historic districts. The National Park Service defines a historic district as “a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.”⁹

Integrity

In addition to meeting any or all of the designation criteria listed above, the National Park Service requires properties to possess historic integrity. Historic integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance and is defined as “the authenticity of a property’s historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s historic period.”¹⁰

The National Register recognizes seven aspects or qualities that comprise integrity, which are also referenced in the City’s local ordinance: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. These qualities are defined as follows:

- *Location* is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event took place.
- *Design* is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- *Setting* is the physical environment of a historic property.
- *Materials* are 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.

⁸ 36CFR60, Section 60.3. Criterion D typically applies to archaeological resources, which is outside the scope of this project.

⁹ National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1995.

¹⁰ *National Register Bulletin 16A*.

- *Workmanship* is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- *Feeling* is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- *Association* is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.¹¹

In assessing a property's integrity, the National Park Service recognizes that properties change over time. *National Register Bulletin 15* provides:

To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. It is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity.

A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.¹²

A property that has sufficient integrity for listing at the national, state, or local level will typically retain a majority of the identified character-defining features, and will retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance. The required aspects of integrity are dependent on the reason for a property's significance. Increased age and rarity of the property type are also considerations when assessing integrity thresholds. For properties that are significant for their architectural merit (Criterion C), a higher priority is placed on integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. For properties that are significant for their association with important events or people, integrity of feeling and/or association may be more important.

¹¹ *National Register Bulletin 15.*

¹² *National Register Bulletin 15.*

For properties which are considered significant under National Register Criteria A and B, *National Register Bulletin 15* states:

A property that is significant for its historic association is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with the important event, historical pattern, or person(s).

A property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique.¹³

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register is an authoritative guide in California used by State and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the State's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change.¹⁴

The criteria for eligibility for listing in the California Register are based upon National Register criteria. These criteria are:

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.¹⁵

The California Register consists of resources that are listed automatically and those that must be nominated through an application and public hearing process. The California Register includes the following:

- California properties formally determined eligible for (Category 2 in the State Inventory of Historical Resources), or listed in (Category 1 in the State Inventory), the National Register of Historic Places.

¹³ *National Register Bulletin 15*.

¹⁴ California PRC, Section 5023.1(a).

¹⁵ Criterion 4 typically applies to archaeological resources, which is outside the scope of this project.

- State Historical Landmarks No. 770 and all consecutively numbered state historical landmarks following No. 770. For state historical landmarks preceding No. 770, the Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) shall review their eligibility for the California Register in accordance with procedures to be adopted by the State Historical Resources Commission.
- Points of historical interest which have been reviewed by the OHP and recommended for listing by the commission for inclusion in the California Register in accordance with criteria adopted by the commission.¹⁶

Other resources which may be nominated for listing in the California Register include:

- Individual historical resources.
- Historical resources contributing to the significance of an historic district.
- Historical resources identified as significant in historical resources surveys, if the survey meets the criteria listed in subdivision (g) of Section 5023.1 of the Public Resources Code.
- Historical resources and historic districts designated or listed as city or county landmarks or historic properties or districts pursuant to any city or county ordinance, if the criteria for designation or listing under the ordinance have been determined by the office to be consistent with California Register criteria.
- Local landmarks or historic properties designated under any municipal or county ordinance.¹⁷

California Points of Historical interest

The California Point of Historical Interest Program was established in 1965 to accommodate an increased interest in recognizing local historic properties not able to meet the restrictive criteria of the State Historical Landmarks program. The criteria for the Points are the same as those that govern the Landmark program, but are directed to local (city or county) areas. California Points of Historical Interest do not have direct regulatory protection, but are eligible for official landmark plaques and highway directional signs.

Local Designation

The seven-member Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB), established by the Palm Springs City Council in May 1981, identifies, nominates, and recommends potential historic sites and districts to the City Council while fostering public awareness and appreciation of the City's rich cultural

¹⁶ California PRC, Section 5023.1(d).

¹⁷ California PRC, Section 5023.1(e).

and architectural heritage. The purpose and authority of the HSPB as outlined in section 8.05 of the Municipal Code is 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 of Palm Springs.¹⁸

In 2014, the City of Palm Springs became a Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG program is a preservation partnership between local, state, and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in each state, with each local community working through a certification process to become recognized as a CLG. CLGs then become active partners in the Federal Historic Preservation Program and the opportunities it provides.

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance is codified in section 8.05 of the Municipal Code. The Historic Preservation Ordinance defines the criteria for designating historic resources in the City:

(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 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.

¹⁸ City of Palm Springs, "Historic Resources," <http://www.ci.palm-springs.ca.us/index.aspx?page=495> (accessed January 2015).

(b) Historic District. Any area of the city of Palm Springs containing a number of structures, natural features or sites having historic, architectural, archaeological, cultural or aesthetic significance and designated as an historic district under the provisions of this chapter. (Ord. 1320 § I, 1988; Ord. 1140 §I (part), 1981).

Designations are made by the City Council by categorizing nominated sites and districts into one of the following classifications and such other categories as may be designated by resolution:

Class 1. Structure/site qualified for city designation; may be qualified at the federal, state and/or county level. Archival file will be maintained. Structure/site may not be modified nor objects removed without the approval of the city council; usage may be limited by the city council to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site. Site will be plaqued. (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. Archival file will be maintained. Site is eligible for plaquing. (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. Action of the HSPB may include recommendation to reclassify. All structures built prior to the subject date would be automatically so classified.

Historic District. Qualified for city designation; may be qualified at the federal, state and/or county level. Archival file will be maintained and shall contain a map delineating contributing and noncontributing structures or sites. Contributing structures/sites shall be subject to Class 1 regulations until such time that they may be reclassified. Noncontributing structures/sites shall be subject to review by the HSPB before demolition or construction. A specific plan, containing special regulations pertaining to the subject area, may be adopted for each district. (Ord. 1320 §5, 1988; Ord. 1140 § I (part), 1981).

In order to complete the designation process, the City Council must make a finding according to 8.05.160 of the Municipal Code:

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. From and after the adoption of such resolution, all property within such historic site or district shall be subject to the rules and regulations governing the demolition, preservation, rehabilitation or alteration of historic sites. (Ord 1140 § 1, 1981).

A list of locally-designated Class 1 and Class 2 historic sites and historic districts are available on the City's website at <http://www.palmspringsca.gov/home/showdocument?id=58223>. Buildings, natural

sites, and archaeological sites in Palm Springs that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places can be found on the National Park Service website at <http://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp/SearchResults/>. In general, designated properties were not re-evaluated as part of this study.¹⁹

Palm Springs Historic Resources Surveys

The City initiated its first comprehensive historic resources survey in 1976 as a result of the community's desire to identify and document its rich architectural heritage. During that effort, primarily Native American sites were identified. Citywide surveys undertaken in 1983 and 1987 resulted in the creation of a base list of potential architectural and historical resources throughout the city. These surveys were updated in 2001 and 2004. As a result of these previous surveys and a variety of other efforts, the City has a list of approximately 700 properties included in the City Historic Resources Database. Previous surveys are housed in the City Planning Department. The 2014-2016 survey project reviewed all properties on the City Historic Resources Database list for potential significance, and identified additional properties and neighborhoods that may be eligible as historic resources. The result of the 2014-2016 survey is an updated citywide inventory of properties and neighborhoods with potential historic significance for use as a planning tool by the City.

¹⁹ With the exception of the Las Palmas Business Historic District, which was resurveyed at the request of the City. The findings of this study are included in Appendix E.

Historic Context: Summary



Aerial photograph of Palm Springs, Smoke Tree Ranch in the 1950s. Source: Eric G. Meeks.

FINAL DRAFT – FOR CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL

City of Palm Springs

Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP

HISTORIC CONTEXT: SUMMARY

The historic context statement provides a narrative historical overview of the overarching forces that shaped land use patterns and development of the built environment of the City of Palm Springs, and provides a framework for the identification and evaluation of potential historic resources in the city. The context is organized chronologically, and the relevant themes are organized by type of development (single- and multi-family residential, commercial, and civic/institutional) within each chronological period. The themes outline the historical development patterns, significant events or activities, and important individuals in Palm Springs' history in order to establish the potential historical significance of properties associated with each context and theme.²⁰ At the conclusion of each theme is a discussion of the relevant criteria, integrity considerations, and registration requirements for determining whether a property may be eligible for designation at the federal, state, and local levels under that theme.

Five broad periods of development have been identified to provide the framework for evaluating resources within the City of Palm Springs. These comprise the contexts:

- Context: Native American Settlement (through 1969)

The earliest inhabitants of the Coachella Valley were the Cahuilla Indians, who established summer settlements in the palm-lined mountain canyons around the valley, moving each winter to thatched shelters clustered around the mineral hot springs on the valley floor. The history of the Cahuilla in the Coachella Valley is critical to the development of Palm Springs and is included as a separate context.

- Context: Early Development (1884-1918)

This context explores the first Anglo-American settlers of the area, the founding of what would become the town called Palm Springs, and its subsequent development into a winter health spa for patients afflicted with asthma, tuberculosis, and other respiratory diseases.

- Context: Palm Springs Between the Wars (1919-1941)
 - Theme: Single-Family Residential Development (1919-1941)
 - Theme: Multi-Family Residential Development (1919-1941)
 - Theme: Trailer Park/Mobile Home Community Development (1917-1944)
 - Theme: Commercial Development (1919-1941)
 - Theme: Civic & Institutional Development (1919-1941)
 - Theme: Influence of the Entertainment Industry (1919-1941)

²⁰ Note that there is a significant association with the LGBT community in Palm Springs. This history largely dates to the recent past as early associations are undocumented; therefore, an LGBT context is outside the identified period of study for this survey. It is recommended that a detailed examination of the role of the LGBT community in the development of Palm Springs be included in future studies.

This context explores the transformation of Palm Springs from a modest spa town into a luxury winter resort in the years between the First and Second World Wars. During the 1930s, Palm Springs became the winter weekend getaway destination for a growing number of Hollywood celebrities, and more and more development sprang up to house and entertain them.

- Context: Palm Springs During World War II (1939-1945)
 - Theme: The War Effort in Palm Springs (1939-1945)

Palm Springs and the surrounding desert played an important role in the war effort: what would become Palm Springs International Airport was established as an Air Corps landing field;²¹ in March of 1942 General George S. Patton established the Desert Training Center at Camp Young, an hour east of Palm Springs at Shaver Summit (between Indio and Desert Center; now called Chiriaco Summit), to train his army for combat in North Africa;²² and the El Mirador Hotel was temporarily converted into Torney General Hospital, a 1,600 bed military hospital. But following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, significant material resources and labor were dedicated to the war effort, and nearly all private construction ceased for the duration of the conflict.

- Context: Post-World War II Palm Springs (1945-1969)
 - Theme: Post-World War II Single-Family Residential Development (1945-1969)
 - Theme: Post-World War II Multi-Family Residential Development (1945-1969)
 - Theme: Post-World War II Commercial Development (1945-1969)
 - Theme: Post-World War II Civic and Institutional Development (1945-1969)
 - Theme: Influence of the Entertainment Industry (1945-1969)

This context explores the post-World War II boom and related development that left Palm Springs with what many consider the largest and finest concentration of mid-20th century Modern architecture in the United States. Hollywood film stars and Eastern industrialists were joined in the postwar decades by ever-increasing numbers of tourists.

- Architectural Styles & Local Practitioners

This section provides information about the architectural styles and local practitioners in Palm Springs. An overview of each style is provided, along with the significant character-defining features. A brief biography of each known practitioner is included for reference in Appendix A.

²¹ This would be the city's second municipal airport. The first, founded in 1934, was located on leased land in Section 14, on a parcel bounded by Alejo Road, Sunrise Way, Tahquitz Canyon Way, and Avenida Caballeros.

²² "Chiriaco Summit History," *Chiriaco Summit*, <http://chiriacosummit.com/about-us/> (accessed June 22, 2015).

