

**CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA**



MINUTES EXCERPT  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009

**1.B. LA SERENA VILLAS DESIGNATION OF THE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 339 SOUTH BELARDO ROAD AN HISTORIC SITE (CASE HSPB-69):**

Craig Ewing, Director of Planning Services, provided background information as outlined in the staff report dated April 15, 2009.

Councilmember Foat commented on the submission of materials, and requested staff address the recommendation of the HSPB designation as a Class 1 site.

Councilmember Weigel requested staff address if a bungalow has been renovated.

Councilmember Mills requested staff address the differences between a Class 1 and a Class 2 designation.

Mayor Pougnet opened the public hearing, and the following speakers addressed the City Council.

MICHAEL GONZALES, representing owners, summarized the contents of his letter and the resources report submitted to the City Council, provided background information on the accumulation of the properties in the 1960's, stated the property does not support the findings as a Class 1 designation, and requested the City Council terminate the proceedings.

CRAIG BLAU, commented on the current blight at the property, the promises of the owners of the property to adjoining neighbors, and stated his support for the historic designation.

PAT STUMPF, commented on the neglect at the property to the surrounding properties, stated she would like the property renovated as soon as possible.

RON MARSHALL, Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, stated the property can be restored and rehabilitated as an historic property, and stated his support for the designation as a Class 1 site.

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DONNA BUCKINGER, stated the property owner has a responsibility to the surrounding owners and the City, and requested the City Council designate the property as a Class 1 site.

SHELLY SAUNDERS, stated her support for the City Council to designate the property as a Class 2 site.

CODY STOUGHTON, stated the City will lose the property as "demolition by neglect," and requested the City Council designate the property as a Class 1 Historic Site.

FRANK TYSEN, stated the property is in neglect, and spoke in support of a Class 1 designation of the property.

No further speakers coming forward, the public hearing was closed.

Councilmember Hutcheson requested staff address the landscaping issues at the property.

Councilmember Foat explained the differences between a Class 1 and the Class 2 designation, stated her support for a Class 1 designation, commented on a recent article in the Desert Sun with respect to the property, the condition of the property, commented on the letter written by Architect Lance O'Donnell, and the findings needed for a Class 1 designation.

Mayor Pro Tem Mills commented on the report from the Building Department that the buildings are a blight and condemnable, commented on the letter submitted by Architect Lance O'Donnell, stated he does not wish to see the building sit in the current state for a long period of time, but the reality is that the property will remain empty and continue to be a blight in the neighborhood, commented on the one-unit that has been renovated, and stated his support for a Class 2 designation.

Councilmember Weigel requested the City Attorney comment on the letter submitted by the property owner's legal counsel, requested the City Council postpone the decision and further study be made on partially designating the site or a portion of the improvements as an Historic Site, and requested the Owner's Attorney address if the property owner would be willing to agree to a stay of demolition.

Councilmember Hutcheson reiterated the facts surrounding the owner's options with respect to the Class 1 or the Class 2 designation, and stated the facts support a Class 1 designation.

Mayor Pro Tem Mills suggested the site plan and the building "style" for the property be designated as a Class 1, and the buildings as a Class 2.

Councilmember Weigel requested the owner's Legal Counsel clarify comments with respect to the demolition of the property.

Mayor Pougnet commented on the blight in the neighborhood, stated the property has met the test as a Class 1 designation.

Councilmember Mills requested the City Attorney address the process of a potential bifurcated designation a portion as Class 1 and a portion as Class 2.

Councilmember Foat commented on the restorability of the property.

Councilmember Weigel requested the City Attorney address the status of demolition if the site is designated a Class 1 site.

**ACTION:** 1) Designate the 'La Serena Villas' at 339 South Belardo Road a Class 1 Historic Site; and 2) Direct staff to prepare a resolution memorializing the record and findings for City Council adoption on May 6, 2009. **Motion Councilmember Foat, seconded by Councilmember Hutcheson and carried 4-1 on a roll call vote.**

**AYES:** Councilmember Foat, Councilmember Hutcheson, Councilmember Weigel, and Mayor Pougnet.  
**NOES:** Mayor Pro Tem Mills.

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA DESIGNATING 339 S. BELARDO ROAD ("LA SERENA VILLAS"), AS CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE - 69.

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

WHEREAS, the City Council initiated an application to consider the property at 339 North Belardo Drive ("La Serena Villas") for designation as a historic property under Palm Springs Municipal Code Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of La Serena Villas a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2008, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of La Serena Villas as a Class 1 historic site; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board, following receipt and consideration of a staff report and written and oral testimony from the public, adopted a recommendation for Class 1 designation of the property; and

WHEREAS, the designation of La Serena Villas as a historic resource shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05 and promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of La Serena Villas a historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2008, the City Council opened a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of La Serena Villas as a historic site, which hearing was continued to February 2 and April 15, 2009 ; and

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

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1: Pursuant to CEQA, the City Council finds that the designation of the La Serena Villas at 339 South Belardo Road as a Class 1 historic site 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.a.3, 4 and 6 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, the City Council does hereby make the following findings;

1. La Serena Villas reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history because, according to a Historic Assessment Report completed for the Orchid Tree Inn, dated April 2005 by PCR Services, smaller hotels in the area initially included the Estrella Inn, (the subject site), which was constructed in 1933. Further, large and small hotels thrived following the end of World War II as the growing popularity of the automobile encouraged the development of tourist courts and bungalow courts designed with the emphasis on automobile accommodation, with the central courtyard of the bungalow court as an internal access with parking provided for each unit. La Serena Villas was an example of the early period of motor-court hotel development in Palm Springs from the 1930s when the Spanish Eclectic style of architecture was popular and prevalent in Palm Springs. La Serena Villas was one of several motor-court hotels that were constructed around the same time, including the House of Murphy, The Hacienda, the Royal Palms Hotel, Tahquitz Vista Hotel, Monte Vista Hotel, and the Orchid Tree Inn. (PSMC Sec. 8.05.020.a.3)

2. La Serena Villas embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction because the site presents a very good example of Spanish Eclectic architecture from the 1930s, including the defining characteristics of the typical asymmetrical facades, stucco, arches over doors and windows, red two-piece clay barrel tiles and low-pitched roofs, and use of towers known to the Spanish Eclectic motor court hotels built during the 1930s. Further, the scale of La Serena Villas fits into both the fabric of the Historic Tennis Club neighborhood and the architectural character that defines both these sections of Belardo Road and Cahuilla Road. (PSMC Sec.8.05.020.a.4)

3. La Serena Villas represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, because the La Serena Villas site is a collection of small, individual cottages forming a motorcourt hotel plan characteristic of the late 1930's through late 1950's. (PSMC Sec. 8.05.020.a.6)

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that, based upon the foregoing, the City Council designate La Serena Villas at 339 South Belardo Road, Palm Springs, California as HSPB Class 1 Historic Site 69 subject to the following conditions;

1. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall be subject to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Code (Architectural Review) and Article IV of Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code (Rules and Regulations for Historic Sites)

2. No permit for the alteration of the exterior, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics, shall be issued without prior review and approval pursuant Article IV of Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code (Rules and Regulations for Historic Sites).
3. All restoration shall follow the requirements of the Secretary of Interior Standards.
4. The City Clerk shall submit the Council Resolution to the County Recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this Resolution.
5. All existing or previously approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

ADOPTED this 15th day of April, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
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. \_\_\_\_\_ is a full, true and correct copy, and was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs on \_\_\_\_\_, by the following vote:

- AYES:
- NOES:
- ABSENT:
- ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Thompson, City Clerk  
City of Palm Springs, California