



HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD

DATE: July 9, 2019

PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: AN APPLICATION BY MARTYN LAWRENCE BULLARD, OWNER, REQUESTING CLASS 1 HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION OF "THE ALLAN AND MILDRED KRAMER RESIDENCE" LOCATED AT 800 EAST GRANVIA VALMONTE, (APN# 507-202-017), CASE HSPB #119. (KL).

FROM: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

Martyn Lawrence Bullard, owner, is seeking Class 1 historic resource designation for "The Allan and Mildred Kramer Residence" and has commissioned the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation ("PSPF") to prepare a historic resources report dated March, 2019, in support of the application which is the basis of this staff report.

The Kramer Residence qualifies as a Class 1 historic site because it possesses a good degree of historic integrity, it exemplifies a particularly important period in local history, it possesses distinctive design characteristics of an architectural style referred to as "New Formalism" which is uncommon in Palm Springs, and it is a noteworthy example of the design talent of James H. McNaughton, whose design for the Kramer residence reflects his unique career in which he blended formal architectural education with television and theater set design.

If designated as a Class 1 resource, the property would be subject to the regulations outlined in Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. In addition, as a Class 1 historic resource, the property owner may apply for a historic property preservation agreement, commonly referred to as a Mills Act Contract.

RECOMMENDATION:

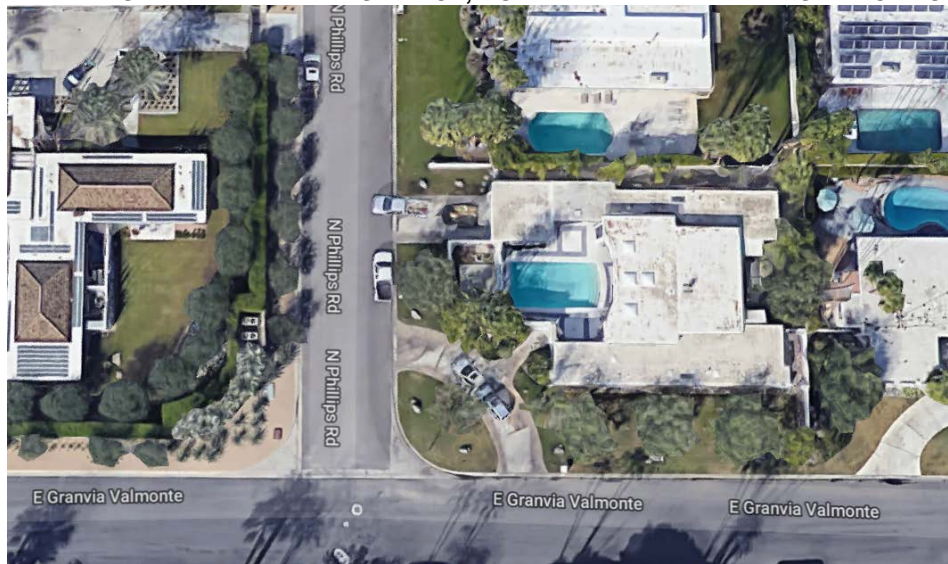
1. Open the public hearing and receive public testimony.
2. Close the public hearing and adopt Resolution HSPB #119, "A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM

SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE “THE ALLAN KRAMER RESIDENCE” LOCATED AT 800 EAST GRANVIA VALMONTE AS CLASS 1 HISTORIC RESOURCE HSPB #119, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS. (APN 507-202-017)”

BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

A historic resource report (“the report”) prepared by Steven Vaught for the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, dated March 2019 is the basis of the analysis in this staff report.

BELOW AERIAL VIEW OF THE KRAMER RESIDENCE, NOTE THE ABERNATHY RESIDENCE TO THE LEFT.



BELOW THE OUTDOOR LIVING AREA AND ONE OF TWO ARCHED COLONADES.



<i>Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
June, 2019	Site inspection by members of the HSPB and City Staff.

<i>Ownership Status</i>	
2014	Purchase by the current owner.

ANALYSIS:

Historic Preservation activities in Palm Springs are regulated under Municipal Code Section 8.05 (“*Historic Preservation*”). The purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance is:

“...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 historic resources for the education and welfare of the citizens.”

Standard Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites or Resources

The following shall apply to a Class 1 Historic Site or Resource:

1. It shall meet the definition of a Class 1 historic resource as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020 including the findings outlined in Section 8.05.070 (C).
2. An archival file shall be maintained on the property by the City.
3. It may be qualified as ‘historic’ at the federal, state, and/or county level.
4. A marker explaining the historic nature of the site may be installed at the site in a location viewable from the public way.
5. Compliance with all rules and regulations for Historic Resources and Historic Districts under Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code.
6. If designated, the findings in support of designation shall be stated in a resolution of the City Council that shall be recorded with the County Recorders’ office within 90 days of the effective date of the Council’s resolution.

Evaluation of the Application. Pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.05.070 (C,1,a), the HSPB shall evaluate the application and make findings in conformance with the following criteria:

Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 Historic Resources. A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic resource, provided both of the following findings (“a” and “b”) are met:

- a. *The site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic significance and meets one or more of the criteria listed below:*

The Kramer Residence exhibits exceptional historic significance because of its unique “New Formalism” architectural characteristics.

(Criterion 1) The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community;

The report does not identify any significant events associated with the Kramer Residence. It does not qualify as a historic resource under Criterion 1.

(Criterion 2) The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history;

The report notes that although the Kramers were active socially in the Palm Springs community, they do not rise to the level of having made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history and thus it does not qualify as a historic resource under Criterion 2.

(Criterion 3) The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history;

The Kramer Residence exemplifies the post WWII Modern Period in the development of Palm Springs (1945 – 1969) because it is a significant example of a custom-built residence designed in the “New Formalist” style; a derivative of what is widely referred to as Mid-Century Modern architecture, a style that flourished in Palm Springs after World War II and for which Palm Springs has become internationally known. The Kramer Residence qualifies under Criterion 3.

(Criterion 4) The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;

On Page 34, the Report asserts that the Kramer Residence possesses numerous characteristics common to the “New Formalist” architectural style. These characteristics include symmetry, verticality, buildings set upon a plinth or podium, to evoke monumentality, and use of classical references such as colonnades and repetitive arches, and were used to evoke a sense of wealth and gravitas. New Formalism cast off the modernist mantra of “less is more” and embraced often elaborate forms of ornament applied to otherwise modernist structures. As such the Kramer Residence qualifies under Criterion 4.

(Criterion 5) The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age, or that possesses high artistic value;

In the Kramer Residence designer James H. McNaughton merges his formal architectural training with his creativity in television set design, creating as he described

it “a dramatic stage set for his clients.” Although not listed among the architectural “masters” of New Formalism such as Edward Durell Stone, Morris Lapidus, Welton Becket & Associates, William Pereira, and Minoru Yamasaki, McNaughton’s work was well recognized in a number of national architectural publications and as such could be considered to have influenced his age with the high artistic value of his designs. The Kramer Residence thus conforms to Criteria 5.

(Criterion 6) The resource represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, as used in evaluating applications for designation of historic districts, for parcels on which more than one entity exists; or

The report does not assert that the Kramer Residence qualifies under Criterion 6.

(Criterion 7) The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

No information has been provided in the historic resources report on any pre-historic significance of the site.

Analysis of Integrity. (PSMC 8.05.070 (C,1,b). The site, structure, building or object retains one or more of the following aspects of integrity, as established in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards: integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, or association.

The application includes an evaluation of the site relative to the seven aspects or qualities of integrity, as recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. The seven aspects or qualities include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The application concludes that the Kramer Residence retains a high degree of integrity. Below is staff’s evaluation of the site’s integrity.

1. Location:

The Kramer Residence remains in the same location that it was constructed, thus it retains integrity of location.

2. Design:

As the report notes most of the design characteristics of the Kramer residence remain intact. The site continues to convey the significance of the design as an example of New Formalism.

3. Setting:

The setting of the Kramer residence, that of a custom home in a neighborhood of custom homes remains intact, thus the site retains the integrity of Setting.

4. Materials:

The Kramer residence was constructed of standard frame and stucco construction, however finer finishes and materials present from the original construction are still evident such as an extensive use of terrazzo, and large expanses of glass. Some alterations have diminished the integrity of materials at the Kramer Residence. Materials, such as patterned ceramic tile covering the otherwise simple scored-face concrete masonry units, loss of original light fixture sconces, front door / gate changes, loss of decorative finials, and infill of louvered doors at the courtyard have diminished the material integrity of the Kramer Residence. Many of these changes could be redone such that the material integrity of the home could be strengthened.

The report does not provide any detail as to the original colors of the home, however from the early black and white photos in the report, it appears the body of the home was a tan or grey with doors, trim, and fascia in white. Currently the home is painted entirely white. Although more information is not provided relative to the original color of the home, staff asserts that the home's historic significance is not materially impaired by its present all white color palette.

5. Workmanship:

The Kramer Residence exhibits typical workmanship and quality levels as found in a custom designed and built home. It retains integrity of workmanship.

6. Feeling:

The Kramer Residence maintains a feeling of luxury and elegance consistent with its original design concept.

7. Association:

The Kramer Residence is associated with the post World War II boom in Palm Springs as many middle class families and wealthy individuals chose Palm Springs for building second homes and establishing the City as a favored vacation destination.

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

In considering a recommendation for historic resource designation it is important to distinguish those physical elements that are original or from the period of significance that contribute to the resource's historic significance from alterations, additions or features that were added at a later time that may be sympathetic to the original character, but which may create a false sense of historicity. Distinguishing original

character-defining features from non-original elements aids the HSPB when it is tasked with evaluating future alterations to the historic resource.

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

1. Flat roofed-structures with thin edge fascia.
2. The open, dual arched column colonnade flanking both sides of the outdoor living room and swimming pool.
3. The curved edge of the roof fascia of the outdoor living area which follows the curved steps of the swimming pool.
4. The open covered living area between the colonnades with the round skylights in the roof.
5. The screenwall dividing the pool from the hot tub area (ceramic tile not original.)
6. The full-length segmented “bay window” on axis with the swimming pool adjacent to the sunken seating area in the living room.
7. The terrazzo floor at the pool deck and outdoor covered living area.
8. Scored concrete masonry units at courtyard wall.
9. Narrow frame natural anodized aluminum door and window frames.
10. Clerestory windows.

The non-contributing features include the following:

1. The garage and driveway
2. The landscape.
3. The canvas shade awnings.
4. Ceramic tile clad walls adjacent the pool.
5. Exterior wall sconce light fixtures at entry door / gate.
6. The spa.

As observed in the photographs below, there are some areas where original details have been removed or obscured by later additions and alterations. The report on page 26 outlines the various building-permit-related changes and alterations.

1. Re-roof,
2. Garage added.
3. Removal of louvered doors on the north and south sides of the front garden.
4. Removal of finials on Phillips Road façade.
5. Removal of two windows Granvia Valmonte (south) façade.
6. Conversion of front entry garden to spa, increase in height for west wall.
7. Removal of east garden terrace, new firepit and raised segment of garden.
8. Scored block CMU covered with “encaustic” tiles¹.

¹ Encaustic tiles are those in which the pattern or figure is not a product of the glaze, but rather different colors of clay. The tiles enjoyed popularity first in the 13th century and later in the Gothic revival era of the 1920's.

BELOW ONE CAN OBSERVE THE CHANGES AT THE FRONT ENTRY GATE AND SCREEN WALLS.



ORIGINAL DOOR, HARDWARE, WALL SCONCE AND FINIALS ABOVE THE DOOR ARE MISSING.



BELOW ORIGINAL SCREEN WALL BETWEEN FORECOURT AND SWIMMING POOL



BELOW NON-ORIGINAL CERAMIC TILE COVERED OVER SCORED CMU WALL, FINIALS MISSING.



ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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

NOTIFICATION

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

CONCLUSION:

The Kramer Residence meets the definition of a historic resource based on Criteria 2, 3, 4, and 5 and retains a reasonable degree of historic integrity. Staff has concluded that the resource qualifies as a Class 1 historic site.



Ken Lyon, RA
Associate Planner,
Historic Preservation Officer

Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services

Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Application, related background materials, photos.