



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: June 9, 2009

Case No.: HSPB – 51 The Town and Country Center

Application Type: Application for Classification of Historic Resource

Location: 146-174 N. Palm Canyon Dr. and 167-181 N. Indian Canyon Dr.

Applicant: The City of Palm Springs

Zone: CBD (Central Business District)

APN: 513-143-003, -009, and 010

From: Craig A. Ewing, AICP, Director of Planning Services

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An application by the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the property at 146-174 North Palm Canyon Drive and 167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive, known as the Town and Country Center, as a "historic site" per Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.a, and determination of either a Class 1 or Class 2 designation, as defined by Code Section 8.05.125.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the HSPB recommend to City Council that the property at 146-174 North Palm Canyon Drive and 167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive, known as the Town and Country Center, be declared a historic site. Further, it is recommended that the HSPB recommend to the City Council that the Town and Country Center be assigned a Class 1 designation. Such designation would:

1. Place the subject property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05

2. Require present and subsequent owners to maintain the building consistent with that ordinance,
3. Grant possible property tax reduction opportunities to the owner under the State of California Mills Act.

A draft resolution is attached for the Board's consideration.

PRIOR ACTIONS

On December 12, 2006, the Board directed staff to conduct an investigation in order to allow the Board's consideration of a historic designation for the subject property.

BACKGROUND

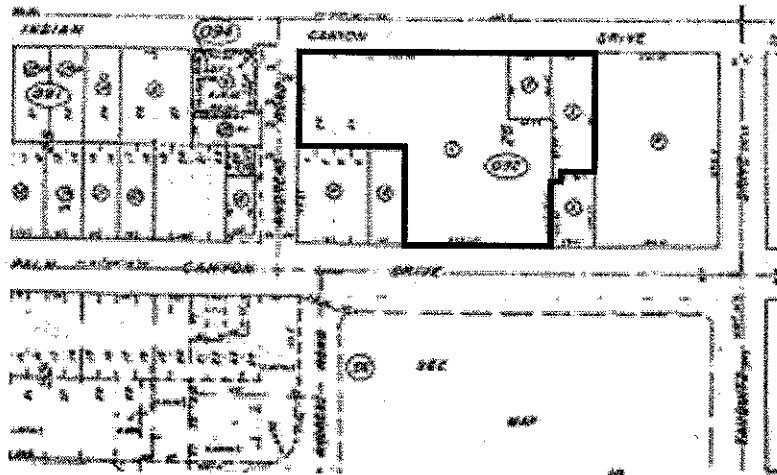
Designation of Historic Sites.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code, the City Council is authorized to designate historic sites. The Code also requires that Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) make recommendations to the City Council prior to Council designation. Further, the HSPB may initiate studies, surveys and investigations it deems necessary to adequately gather information in consideration of a recommendation.

The action to designate a site or property as historic requires two decisions: First, the Council must determine if the site or property is "historic" under the definition of Section 8.05.020.a. Second, the Council must decide if the site is to be designated Class 1 or Class 2, under the definitions of Section 8.05.125. This report provides an analysis of the Town and Country Center in light of these two questions, and offers a recommendation on each so that the HSPB may consider and adopt its recommendations to the City Council.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The site is 2.21 acres located between North Palm Canyon Drive and North Indian Canyon Drive, approximately 300 feet north of Tahquitz Canyon Way. Three parcels comprise the "through-lot" site, which are fully developed. The site is irregularly shaped, with frontage on N. Palm Canyon Drive of approximately 225 feet and frontage along N. Indian Canyon Drive of approximately 430 feet. The site is generally flat, with a minor slope from west to east, consistent with the surrounding urban area.



The site is fully developed with five multi-tenant buildings, each having one or two stories. The total developed floor area of the site is 50,092 square feet.

According to the City's 2004 survey¹, the site's development is described as follows:

"Designed in the late Moderne architectural style, "The Center" is comprised of three, two-story, flat-roofed buildings configured around the central open-air courtyard where a wide staircase leads to a second level restaurant space, originally the upscale Town and Country Restaurant. The two street-facing elevations vary in style, materials, and appearance. The west elevation (along North Palm Canyon) features a flat roof with a wide cornice treatment composed of vertically hung corrugated aluminum panels painted brown, and concrete brick wall sections separating a series [of] storefront spaces with metal-framed window walls shaded by uniform awnings. The east elevation (fronting North Indian Canyon) features a series of projecting cornices at the first and second floors, and is principally defined by a wide plain frieze with the historic signage stating "the CENTER" located near the rear entrance. Exterior building materials along the east elevation include painted concrete and stucco walls with an uncoursed fieldstone veneer along the northern half of the building. Fenestration consists of fixed metal-framed storefront windows and window wall sections along the ground floor and single or double-hung multi-pane sash windows along the northern half of the second floor."

Two additional building are located on the property not included in the survey. These are described in the 2008 Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan EIR, Appendix C:

"One of these, formerly a Bank of America branch, is located at 146-150 North palm Canyon Drive, and is connected to the west-side storefronts...by a small addition at 152 North Palm Canyon Drive. The other one is a concrete building at 168 North Palm Canyon Drive, which

¹ "Citywide Historic Resources Survey", prepared by Architectural Resources Group, June 2004

has evidently been added to the interior courtyard of the complex at a later date. These two buildings are described below:

“146-152 North Palm Canyon Drive *This portion of the Town and Country Center complex consists of a two-story, Modern-style commercial building of reinforced concrete construction and a one-story “hyphen” of similar architectural characteristics. The two-story building, the former home of the Bank of America branch, has been subdivided into three retail units. Irregular but somewhat L-shaped in plan, the building sports a set of angled vertical louvers separated by mirrored glass on the upper level of its primary façade which faces Palm Canyon Drive on the west. The upper-level façade is painted dark brown while aluminum-framed glass doors and display windows of the storefronts dominate the street level. The two levels of the primary façade are divided by a tan-colored sunbreak that also serves as a marquee bearing the names of the stores. The rear of the building is mostly clad in tan-colored stucco, with two groups of aluminum-framed glass doors and fixed windows at a pair of rear entrances, one of the east-facing façade and the other on the north-facing side of a projecting rear wing. A bank of metal-framed windows with fixed sashes, sandwiched between rectangular brown panels, extends across the upper level of the north-facing side of the wing.*

“168 North Palm Canyon Drive *This rectangular, one-story concrete “box,” currently vacant, is set against other buildings in the complex to the west and the south, and features on the other two elevations several spans of solid concrete walls scored into large, square blocks. The concrete walls are interspersed with floor-to-ceiling fixed windows and two aluminum-framed entrance assemblages facing the east and the north. All of these contrasting elements of the exterior walls are unified under a wide, grooved cornice band surrounding the flat roof. The extremely simple appearance of this building, a later addition to the complex, stands out against its companions, which themselves are characterized by the functionalism of their design and the general lack of traditional ornamental elements.”²*

The City’s 2004 survey’s description also notes that, “...the focal point of this shopping center is the landscape courtyard surrounded by storefronts...” According to the submission by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation:

² Cultural Resources Survey Report (Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan EIR, Appendix C); CRM TECH (Tang / Hogan); May 2008

“As designed, the subject complex was configured to feature an enclosed courtyard with street front elements facing Palm Canyon Drive on the west and Indian Canyon Drive on the east. Linked to the streets by passageways, the focal point of the center is the landscaped courtyard in the center of the property that was surrounded by shops. Additional shop fronts also faced the street fronts.”³

The courtyard is an irregularly-shaped open area, ringed by the buildings of the Center. Two open pedestrian corridors lead to the exterior streets – one to N. Palm Canyon Dr. and one to N. Indian Canyon Dr. – and the courtyard opens to a parking lot to the south. The courtyard space is defined by a central raised garden platform, which presents an asymmetrical arrangement of off-set square and rectangular planters. The platform is edged by a series of concrete steps that ascend two to five steps from the perimeter pedestrian sidewalk. From the platform, an open staircase ascends to the second floor “Zeldaz” nightclub, formerly the Town and Country Restaurant and other uses.

Project History

The Town and Country Center was built by the Palm Springs Corporation on property owned by the Bank of America beginning in about 1948. The Center was designed to accommodate a mixture of uses, including retail stores, The Town and Country Restaurant, a Bank of America branch, the *Desert Sun* newspaper, offices and residential apartments. The most recent building – 168 North Palm Canyon Drive – was constructed in 1955. City records list hundreds of building and other permits for the structures, including tenant improvements and re-roofs. However, major exterior remodels are shown to have occurred in 1949, 1952 and 1979; the restaurant courtyard and second floor balcony were enclosed in the 1980's⁴.

Over the course of the project's life, tenants have included Patterson Drug Store, Palm Springs Spirits, Tony and Marilyn's Fountain Grill, The French Bootery, George Weill's Fashions, Kelley's Furnishings, Jewels by Alchian, Village Flower Shop, Warren Imports, The Kings Quarters, Center Beauty Salon, Mary Helen Teen Shop, F. Scott's restaurant / bar, KDES Radio Broadcasting, Cameron Broadcasting, the Southern Pacific Company, *The Palm Springs Villager*, and *The Palm Springs Guide*, in addition to the restaurant, bank and newspaper noted above.

Today, the Town and Country Center retains its basic design elements, with modifications and alterations occurring to accommodate various tenants over the years. Three noteworthy changes include, 1) the 1955 concrete building addition, 2) the enclosure of the second-floor restaurant entry and adjacent balcony, and 3) the repainting of the Palm Canyon Drive façade of the former Bank of American building.

³ Historic site Nomination for the Center; Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (McGrew); April 2009

⁴ CRM TECH (Tang / Hogan)

As noted in the CRM TECH report, "It is worth noting that it was these last two areas that exemplified the bold Modernist statement in Jones and Williams' original design."⁵

Current Conditions

According to the City's 2004 survey, the project is described in "fair" condition.⁶ As noted by the Specific Plan EIR study:

"...the long history has also taken its toll on the appearance and appeals of the complex, both physically and commercially. The scattered structural deterioration noted during the field survey, for example, detracts from the property's historic integrity in the aspect of workmanship. Meanwhile, the widespread vacancies and the conversion of the former Bank of America into retail stores inevitably compromised the historic feeling and association of the complex.

"Like the vacancies, the current use of a portion of the complex's Indian Canyon Drive frontage as low-end apartments, which creates a generally unkempt appearance on that side of the property, diminishes the Town and Country Center's former image of a busy social, retail, and work center with a myriad of salons, stores and eateries. The use of the "turret" in the courtyard, which was clearly intended to be a prominent showcase, as storage space also contributes to the change in the property's historic feeling.

"...today the focal point of the Town and Country Center has shifted from the interior courtyard to the storefronts facing outward, especially those on Palm Canyon Drive. That transition may be traced back to 1955, when the addition of the building at 168 North Palm Canyon Drive greatly reduced the size of the courtyard. The design, materials, texture and general appearance of this building are not entirely consistent to the rest of the buildings, further compromising the coherent historical characteristics of the complex."

In short, the Center has been modified over the years in numerous minor ways – and a few major ones – to accommodate new tenants and usages that are inevitable in the life of multi-tenant developments. However, in the case of the Town and Country Center, most of these changes have led to an incremental deterioration of the site to its present "fair" state.

While the property has been modified over the years, much of it has not been significantly improved in recent years. Consequently, the property is likely out of

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ There does not appear to be an official definition for the word "fair" in this usage. However, the City's own application for historic designation uses a range for determining present condition, as follows: Excellent – Good – Fair – Deteriorated – Destroyed.

compliance with current regulatory provisions, especially regarding access for the disabled, asbestos removal, and abatement of lead-based paint. Any refurbishment of the site from this point forward will require certain mandatory actions to assure that current code requirements are met for these and other issues (structural load, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, etc.)

Determination of Historic Significance – The Architects

The project is being considered for potential designation as a historic resource, and one basis for such designation is the prominence of the project designer(s). As noted in several sources used for this report, the Town and Country Center was designed by a collaboration of two prominent Southern California architects: Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones. These two men are established names in the architectural history of the region, having contributed to the modern design movement that invigorated much of the residential, commercial and institutional development that occurred in the post-World War II era of greater Los Angeles:

“Archibald Quincy Jones (1913-1979) was noted for designing university and office buildings towards the end of his career, but he first gained recognition for his residential work. As a participant in John Entenza’s Case Study House Program, Jones became deeply devoted to the experiment’s goal of reinventing houses to reflect how people lived in the post-World War II era. His conviction that the quality of life could be improved through architecture let him to introduce new materials and design elements to modern homes, such as glass walls, usable atriums, high ceilings and post-and-beam construction in his larger building Jones was recognized as an innovator and master of improving the integration and efficiency of mechanical systems while maximizing usable space.

“While Jones is known for elevating the lowly post-war tract house to an art form, Paul Revere Williams (1894-1980) is best remembered as a designer of elegant mansions for the rich and famous of Hollywood. Among his clients were Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Tyrone Power, Barbara Stanwyk, Danny Thomas and Lon Chaney, Sr. Among his most easily recognized buildings in southern California are the Beverly Hills and Ambassador Hotels, Chasen’s and Perino’s restaurants, the ultra-modern theme building at the Los Angeles International Airport, Saks Fifth Avenue, and the Music Corporation of America building. In all, Williams designed or participated in over 3,000 projects.”

In Palm Springs, the two collaborated on the Palm Springs Tennis Club restaurant in 1946 and Romanoffs on the Rocks restaurant in 1950.⁷

In order to determine the importance of the property’s association with Williams and Jones as a basis for determining its historic significance, staff notes the following comments from the CRM TECH report:

⁷ CRM TECH (Tang / Hogan); with references to Buckner and Hudson, q.v.

“Architecturally, the original Town and Country Center complex, as built in 1948, is known to be among the collaborative works of innovative and acclaimed architects A. Quincy Jones and Paul R. Williams, both of whom individually earned national distinction during their careers. However, there is no evidence that it constitutes a particularly important example of their sizable body of works by either. Similarly, it does not appear to represent a particularly important milestone in the development of its architectural style, property type, period, or method of construction...”

Comments from the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation’s submittal offer a more supportive point of view:

“Although there is no mention of the subject building in Williams’ monograph, it is featured prominently in Cory Buckner’s recent Phaidon monograph “A. Quincy Jones”. Contrary to the opinion presented in the Museum Market Plaza EIR, The Center complex does appear to represent a particularly important milestone in the development of Jones’ architectural style. It is an unusual property type for Jones and is a good expression of its period, and method of construction. Additionally, it remains a good example of an International Style commercial building that contributes materially to the historical fabrics of “the Village” and to Palm Springs’ well-established status as a center of Mid-Modern architecture.”⁸

In a review of the cited article in Buckner’s “A. Quincy Jones”, the project is identified as a restaurant “remodel” commissioned to Jones and Williams. It was further noted to be a “...first step in a remodeling project for a commercial property...” The essay concludes with the statement. “The remodel and the building housing it are often cited as an early example of a corner mall.”⁹ Staff believes that the project does not rise to the level of an “important milestone” in A. Quincy Jones’ substantial opus, because there is no evidence that it either represented a significant break with his work up to that time or included new or previously-untried design elements. Nevertheless, it remains of historic interest as one of few local examples of Williams and Jones’ celebrated design talents.

Determination of Historic Significance – The Design

Another basis for evaluating the property’s historic value is how much it represented unique artistic, material or technical values. The east building’s dramatic exterior staircase, the north building’s curved face and first-floor eave, the west building’s vertical louvers, the stylized courtyard garden and other elements clearly show the architects’ intent to make dramatic architectural statements within a small and mostly inwardly-oriented development.

⁸ Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (McGrew)

⁹ A. Quincy Jones; Buckner, Cory; Phaidon Press, 2002

As noted in the CRM TECH report about the growth of architecturally dramatic buildings in Palm Springs (including The Oasis Hotel, the Desert Inn's new lobby and the El Mirador Hotel):

"This intense stylization of the desert in to a "first-class" environment resulted in its "discovery" by the rich and famous of Hollywood in the 1920s-1930s, making Palm Springs the favored getaway destination. The new buildings in pre-WWII Palm Springs were predominantly Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival in style, inspired by both the arid natural landscape and a romanticized vision of California history. Palm Canyon Drive was the center of this architectural expansion, as newly constructed markets, hotels, and retail shops increasingly defined the downtown cityscape...."

"In the post-WWII era, a major shift took place in the architectural aesthetic of Palm Springs as the city sought to accommodate the voguish tastes of wealth visitors who desired private vacation homes in the secluded desert. Viewing the traditional Mission-and Spanish-style buildings then dominant in the area as too old-fashioned, this new clientele demanded a type of architecture for their homes that was more explicitly "modern." The result was a "home-grown" style known as Desert Modernism, inspired in part by the clean lines, flat roofs, glass walls, and unornamented facades of the International Style-buildings made famous by architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, and in part by the desert landscape and harsh climate in which these homes were built."

"The attention given to the desert landscape fostered a unique aesthetic in which the austerity of the International Style is softened by the inclusion of natural elements such as rock, granite, and wood on the interior and exterior, and by the use of neutral colors to better help the buildings blend into the surrounding environment."¹⁰

The Town and Country Center fits into the post-World War II style of development in Palm Springs. The buildings display a set of conscious design intentions around the Modern style, as well as a recognition of the need to provide shade from the desert sun and relief from the street noise of the two major roads close by. The dramatic outdoor stairway and upper level design features helped overcome the disadvantages inherent in second-story commercial floor space. While the Center does not present a unified design statement – the curving lines of the north building diverge from the angular facets of the east building and garden platform, which themselves differ from the vertical louvers of the former Bank of America building – together they provide in a small space a collection of Desert Modern design features that captures much of the spirit of the times.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

Determination of Historic Significance – The Period

Another basis for reviewing the property's potential historic significance is its contribution to, or reflection of, a distinctive period in history. As noted in the CRM TECH report within the Museum Market Plaza Specific Plan EIR:

"One of the most compelling aspects of the Town and Country Center's past is its close ties with a pattern of events that contributed significantly to local and regional history, namely the rapid growth of downtown Palm Springs as the dominant urban center in the Coachella Valley during the 1940s-1950s. Situated prominently at the very heart of downtown Palm Springs, this multi-use commercial complex, with its bold Modern-style architecture, trendy restaurant, and appealing courtyard, exploited and boosted the post-WWII tourist boom that perpetuated the City's claim as one of America's leading winter resorts. For this historical contribution, the Town and Country Center holds a unique place in the post-WWII development of the City and continues to be a well-know local landmark that enjoys a high level of historical interest in the community."¹¹

The Golden Age that was Palm Springs after World War II has been well-documented. This is, of course, a hindsight view of the 1940's, -50's and -60's from a subsequent time. However, it is a view shared by most residents and visitors today, and demonstrates a widely-held belief that many aspects of public life in Palm Springs were playing out together in a successful and even exuberant way – from social affairs, including parades, rodeos and a baseball stadium, to retail activities, including dining, shopping and entertainment, to architectural design and development.

During those years, some of the earlier remnants of the village of Palm Springs were torn down and replaced with the new, modern city of Palm Springs. The Town and Country Center was part of that growth and renewal, as it was partially constructed on the foundations of an earlier building on the site.¹² In addition, the Center was located directly across North Palm Canyon Drive from the renowned Desert Inn, until the resort was demolished in the late 1960's. The Center's prominent role in providing an upscale shopping and dining experience during Palm Springs' heyday was due large in part to its central location, and especially to its strategic proximity to Nellie Coffman's world-famous resort.

REQUIRED FINDINGS FOR DETERMINATION OF HISTORIC SITE

As noted above, the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site, as follows:

¹¹ CRM TECH (Tang / Hogan)

¹² *ibid.*

8.05.020.a Definitions - 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.*

Based on the analysis contained in this report and the attached exhibits, staff has concluded that the Town and Country Center meets the definition of a historic site because its location, design, setting, materials, and aesthetics are significant.

Furthermore, the staff has concluded that the property possesses qualities defined under criteria 3, 4, 5 and 6 from Municipal Code Section 8.05.020 as noted below:

- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history as follows:*

The Town and Country Center both reflected and exemplified the post-World War II era of commercial development in downtown Palm Springs. During that time, the Center was the home of a prominent pharmacy, a leading restaurant, the local newspaper and other shops and uses. Its central location and proximity to the Desert Inn made it a fashionable retail center, which was supported by the distinctive Desert Modern design of the buildings and open space.

- (4) That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction:*

The Town and Country Center displays numerous features of the type, period and method of construction of the Desert Modern style. The north building is defined by the curving line of its south elevation and south-facing eave, while the west building faces North Palm Canyon Drive with prominent vertical aluminum louvers. The east building shows a collection of angles arranged in

a formal asymmetry, both on its Indian Canyon Drive elevation and especially facing the interior, including the dramatic, open outdoor staircase. The interior garden presents an arrangement of square and rectangular planters set in a raised platform defined by sharp lines of low ascending steps.

- (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:*

The Town and Country Center is the product of two prominent architects who practiced in Southern California through much of the middle of the twentieth century: Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones. The Center does not appear to represent these two designers' very highest level of work, and may have been a "remodel" project in certain respects; however, the architects' places as prominent designers and major influences on the post-World War II development of Southern California is well-documented.

- (6) *That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.*

The Town and Country Center is composed of four separate buildings, each exhibiting one or more features out of the Desert Modern design idiom. Taken separately each building is distinctive. Together, the Center creates a juxtaposition of Desert Modern ideas which are not entirely resolved. This is especially true of the 1955 building addition. However, the interior courtyard space is an important outcome of the placement and design of the four buildings and its own arrangement and design contributes to the significance and distinction of the property.

ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC CLASSIFICATION

As described above, staff has concluded that the property meets the definition of a historic site under Section 8.05.020.a of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. The next question is to determine if the property merits a Class 1 or Class 2 designation. Section 8.05.125 defines Class 1 and Class 2, as follows:

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).

Staff notes the following distinctions between Class 1 and Class 2:

- Properties designated Class 1 are subject to review for modifications of their exteriors.¹³ Modification may include “removal”, which can mean demolition. Class 2 properties are not subject to such additional review.
- A Class 1 site shall be plaqued; a Class 2 site may be plaqued.
- Class 1 designation is intended for properties that exist as they were during their historical period – or are restorable.
- Class 2 designation is intended for properties that no longer exist, are modified from their historical period, or are unusable, non-conforming or unrestorable.¹⁴

In review of the analysis of the Town and Country Center, staff has concluded that the Town and Country Center generally exists as it did during its historical period. Of the many changes have occurred, three are significant:

- The construction of the 1955 concrete building,
- The enclosure of the stairway entry and balconies on the second floor of the eastern building (“Zeldaz”), and
- The painting of the aluminum louvers on the westerly building (former Bank of America).

Staff believes the first change is of major concern for the historic value of the property and that its removal would bring the center back to its original design concept and historic value. However, it also would further reduce the potential revenue of the property and require significant expenditures to do so. Alternatively, the 1955 addition may be viewed as a historic element of the property, notwithstanding its mismatched design. The other two modifications, especially painting the louvers, may be more easily and affordably remedied.

¹³ This is implemented by Sections 8.05.180 thru 8.05.230, which allows the HSPB to grant approvals for modifications, subject to appeal to the Council.

¹⁴ The key questions in determining whether to assign and Class 1 or Class 2 designation are these:

- Does the property exist as it did during its historical period?
 - If so, then it may be designated Class 1.
 - If not, then is it “restorable”?
 - If so, then it may be designated Class 1.
 - If not, then it may be designated Class 2.

If the property no longer exists as it did during its historical period – or – if it is unusable, non-conforming or unrestorable, then it may be designated Class 2.

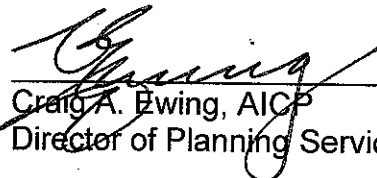
Staff notes that it is possible for current codes to pose such high costs on the building that the project proves to be unrestorable from financial feasibility standpoint; that is, the cost to bring the property to current code would exceed reasonable expectations for rental income. However, staff has no information to indicate what the "pro forma" would be like for a restoration project. Absent such information, staff believes that the project is generally restorable and qualifies as a Class 1 designation.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Section 15331 (Historical Resources Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed designation is categorically exempt from environmental review as the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource.

NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation. All written comments received prior to the completion of this report are attached.



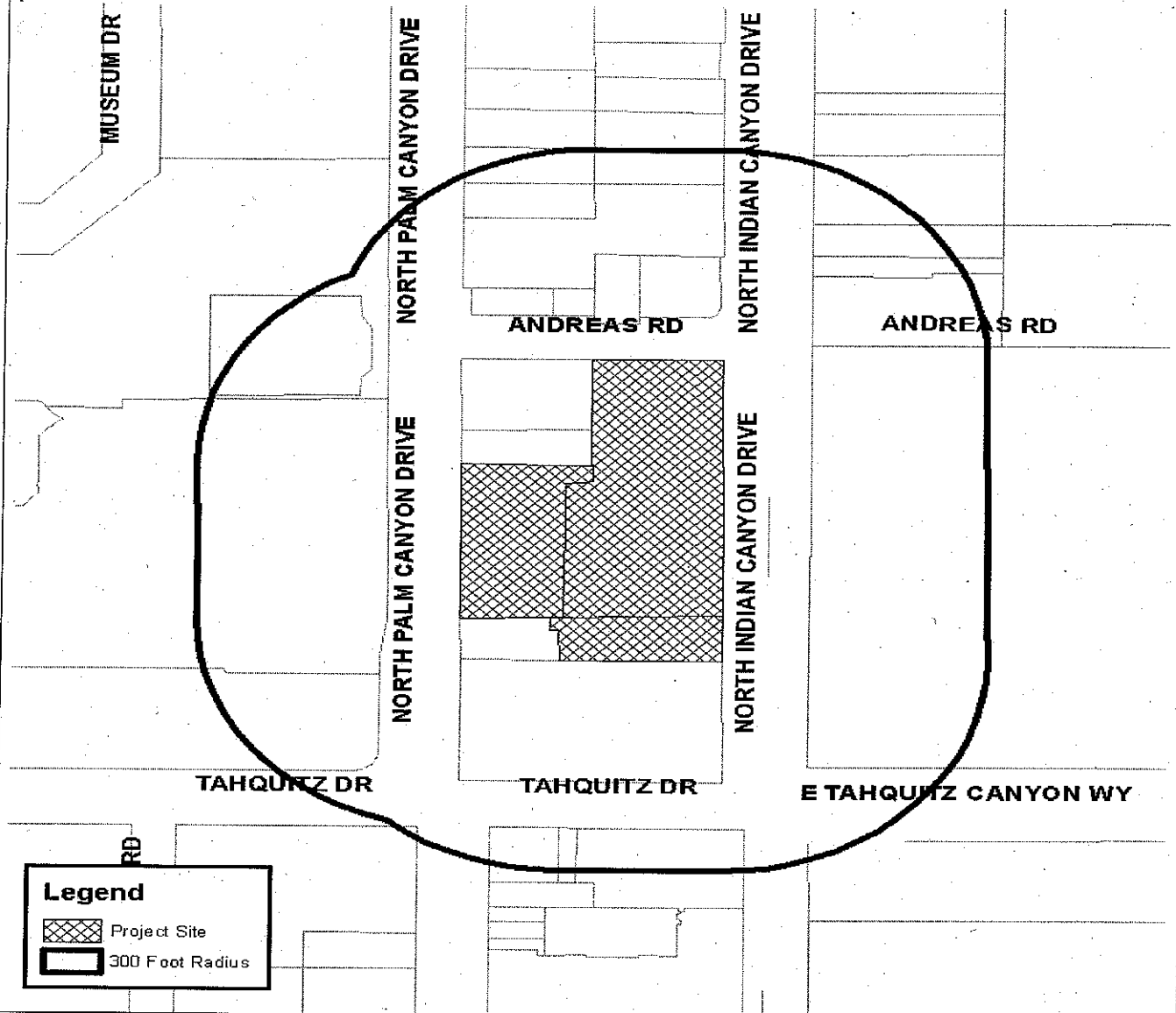
Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Citywide Historic Resources Survey Record – Town & Country Center (2004)
4. Cultural Resources Survey Report; CRM TECH (Tang / Hogan) May 9, 2008
5. Historic Site Nomination for The Center; Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (McGrew) April 2009
6. *A. Quincy Jones*; Buckner, Cory; Phaidon Press London, 2002
7. HSPB minutes of December 12, 2006
8. Letter from Property Owner (Michael Braun); December 12, 2006
9. Petition from Former Presidents of Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce; May 12, 2009



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB #51
Town & Country Center

APPLICANT: City of Palm Springs

DESCRIPTION: To consider designating the Town & Country Center as a Class 1 Historic Site (Case No. HSPB 51). The subject site is addressed as follows: 146 through 174 North Palm Canyon Drive and 167 through 181 North Indian Canyon Drive.
APNs: 513-092-003, 513-092-009 and 513-092-010

RESOLUTION NO. 51

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD
OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL
DESIGNATE THE TOWN AND COUNTRY CENTER
(146-174 NORTH PALM CANYON DRIVE, AND 167-
181 NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE, AS CLASS 1
HISTORIC SITE - 51.

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

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board initiated an application for Historic Site Designation of the Town and Country Center, located at 146-175 North Palm Canyon Drive and 167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive on December 12, 2006; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the Town and Country Center as a Class 1 historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on June 9, 2009, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Town and Country Center as a Class 1 historic site; and

WHEREAS, the designation of Town and Country Center shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of Town and Country Center shall promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report of June 9, 2009 and all attachments, application materials, historical research, and all written and oral testimony presented

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Town and Country Center meets the definition of a historic site in accordance with Section 8.05.020.a because its location, design, setting, materials and aesthetics, as described in the staff report of June 9, 2009 and all attachments, are significant examples of the Desert Modern design idiom of the post-World War II era, as expressed in a small, commercial

retail project setting, as well as the specific definitions contained in Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.a.3, 4, 5 and 6, as follows:

- A. The Town and Country Center reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history, because it both reflected and exemplified the post-World War II era of commercial development in downtown Palm Springs. During that time, the Center was the home of a prominent pharmacy, a leading restaurant, the local newspaper and other shops and uses. Its central location and proximity to the Desert Inn made it a fashionable retail center, which was supported by the distinctive Desert Modern design of the buildings and open space. (PSMC Section 8.05.020.a.3)
- B. The Town and Country Center embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, because it displays numerous features of the type, period and method of construction of the Desert Modern style. The north building is defined by the curving line of its south elevation and south-facing eave, while the west building faces North Palm Canyon Drive with prominent vertical aluminum louvers. The east building shows a collection of angles arranged in a formal asymmetry, both on its Indian Canyon Drive elevation and especially facing the interior, including the dramatic, open outdoor staircase. The interior garden presents an arrangement of square and rectangular planters set in a raised platform defined by sharp lines of low ascending steps. (PSMC Section 8.05.020.a.4)
- C. The Town and Country Center presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value, because it is the product of two prominent architects who practiced in Southern California through much of the middle of the twentieth century: Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones. The Center does not appear to represent these two designers' very highest level of work, and may have been a "remodel" project in certain respects; however, the architects' places as prominent designers and major influences on the post-World War II development of Southern California is well-documented. (PSMC Section 8.05.020.a.5)
- D. The Town and Country Center represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, because it is composed of four separate buildings, each

exhibiting one or more features out of the Desert Modern design idiom. Taken separately each building is distinctive. Together, the Center creates a juxtaposition of Desert Modern ideas which are not entirely resolved. This is especially true of the 1955 building addition. However, the interior courtyard space is an important outcome of the placement and design of the four buildings and its own arrangement and design contributes to the significance and distinction of the property. (PSMC Section 8.05.020.a.6)

2. The Town and Country Center meets the requirements for a Class 1 designation, as described in Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 8.05.125, because the property generally exists as it did during its historical period, and that alterations which have occurred to the property in intervening years, including enclosure of the second story features and the painting and other modifications of the buildings' exteriors, are generally restorable.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council designate The Town and Country Center at 146-174 North Palm Canyon Drive and 167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California as HSPB Class 1 Historic Site 51 subject to the following conditions;

1. The City shall demark the building 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 historic marker in the location installed and pay for the replacement cost if the plaque is lost, stolen, or otherwise removed from the property.
2. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall require Architectural Approval pursuant to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Ordinance and Historic Site Preservation Board review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.
3. No permit for the alteration of the exterior, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics shall be issued without prior approval by the Historic Site Preservation Board.
4. All restoration shall follow the requirements of the report filed by the Development Services Department and Fire Department of the City of Palm Springs dated June 26, 2008.

5. All restoration shall follow the requirements of the Secretary of Interior Standards.
6. That the City Clerk shall submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.
7. All previously permitted and approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

ADOPTED this 9th day of June, 2009.

AYES:
NAYS:
ABSENT:
ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Craig A. Ewing, AICP
Director of Planning Services

Loretta Moffett
Historic Site Preservation Board Secretary

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI #
Trinomial
NRHP Status Code 583

Other Listings
Review Code Reviewer Date

Page 1 of 3 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) The Town & Country Center

P1. Other Identifier: The Center

P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted a. County Riverside

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. USGS 7.5' Quad Palm Springs Date 1996 T ; R ; 1/4 of 1/4 of Sec ; B.M.

c. Address 174 North Palm Canyon Drive City Palm Springs Zip

d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 11; mE/ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)

City of Palm Springs Section 15

Parcel No. 513 092 010

P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

The Town & Country Center of 1948 was designed by Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones. Linked to Palm Canyon Drive by a narrow arcade, the focal point of this shopping center is the landscaped courtyard surrounded by storefronts with additional storefronts along the 100 Blocks of Indian Canyon Drive to the east and Palm Canyon Drive to the west. Designed in the late Moderne architectural style, "The Center" is comprised of three, two-story, flat-roofed buildings configured around the central open-air courtyard where a wide staircase leads to a second level restaurant space, originally the upscale Town and Country Restaurant. The two street-facing elevations vary in style, materials, and appearance. The west elevation (along North Palm Canyon) features a flat roof with a wide cornice treatment composed of vertically hung corrugated aluminum panels painted brown, and concrete brick wall sections separating a series storefront spaces with metal-framed window walls shaded by uniform awnings. The east elevation (fronting North Indian Canyon) features a series of projecting cornices at the first and second floors, and is principally defined by a wide plain frieze with the historic signage stating "the CENTER" located near the rear entrance. Exterior building materials along the east elevation include painted concrete and stucco walls with an uncoursed fieldstone veneer along the northern half of the building. Fenestration consists of fixed metal-framed storefront windows and window wall sections along the ground floor and single-or-double-hung multi-pane sash windows along the northern half of the second floor. Overall the entire Town and County Center complex appears to be in fair condition.

b. Resource Attributes: HP6 - 1-3 Story Commercial Building

P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)

View Northeast
August 2003

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:

Historic Prehistoric Both
c.1948

P7. Owner and Address:

Wessman Holdings
300 S Palm Canyon Drive
Palm Springs CA 92262

P8. Recorded by:

Maley/Petrin/Tinsley/Watson
Architectural Resources Group
Pier 9, The Embarcadero
San Francisco, CA 94111

P9. Date Recorded: August 2003

P10. Survey Type (Describe)

Reconnaissance Survey

P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Architectural Resources Group, City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey Summary Report, 2004. -

Attachments:

- None
- Continuation Sheet
- Location Map
- Building, Structure, and Object Record
- Sketch Map
- Archaeological Record
- District Record
- Linear Feature Record
- Milling Station Record
- Rock Art Record
- Artifact Record
- Photograph Record
- Other (List)

BUILDING STRUCTURE AND OBJECT RECORD

Page 2 of 3

NRHP Status Code 553

Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) The Town & Country Center

B1. Historic Name: The Town & Country Center

B2. Common Name: The Town & Country Center

B3. Original Use: Commercial

B4. Present Use: Commercial

B5. Architectural Style: Streamline Moderne (Late Moderne)

B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

This complex of buildings was constructed in 1948.

B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____

Original Location: _____

B8. Related Features:

Related features include a narrow arcade leading from the street to a landscaped courtyard with a wide open-air staircase.

B9a. Architect: Paul Williams & A. Quincy Jones

b. Builder: Unknown

B10. Significance: Theme commercial architecture/development

Area Palm Springs

Period of Significance 1940-1960

Property Type commercial building

Applicable Criteria A, C

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

For centuries the habitat of the Agua Caliente band of Cahuilla Indians, Palm Springs, site of natural hot springs and sunny desert climate, drew its first non-Indian visitors in the late 19th century. For reasons of improved health and recuperation, the first settlers established early hotels and inns. Not until 1938 did the village of Palm Springs incorporate, setting out a gridded street plan and zoning controls. By then Palm Springs had already acquired an identity as a winter retreat for Hollywood stars and the wealthy, as evidenced by the exclusive older neighborhoods of Old Las Palmas, the Movie Colony, Little Tuscany, and the Tennis Club quarter, initially built for winter residents. Defined by elegant, grand architecture in predominantly Spanish and Mediterranean styles, these and other neighborhoods were later filled in with mid-century Modern homes by the end of the 1960s.

During the post-WWII era, the City of Palm Springs prospered, relying on tourism, resorts, and the appeal of golf, tennis, polo, and other sports to fuel the economy. During the Palm Springs heyday, tourists and Hollywood discovered the desert oasis and full-scale hotels, smaller inns, nightclubs and restaurants prospered. Concurrently, from the 1940s through the 1960s, Palm Springs was transformed into an increasingly urban environment, building schools, hospitals and an airport and other civic amenities. The commercial core of the City, long concentrated along the main thoroughfares of Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive, flourished. Expanding residential development began in the early 1960s when large tracts of popular, reasonably priced, Modernist-style homes were constructed by Jack Meiseiman and later, George and Robert Alexander throughout Palm Springs. Tract subdivision development was followed by the establishment of condominiums, initially as second-homes in the 1960s. (See Continuation Sheet)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: HP6 - 1-3 Story Commercial Building

B12. References:

Architectural Resources Group, *City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey Summary Report*, 2004. (report contains full bibliography)

B13. Remarks:

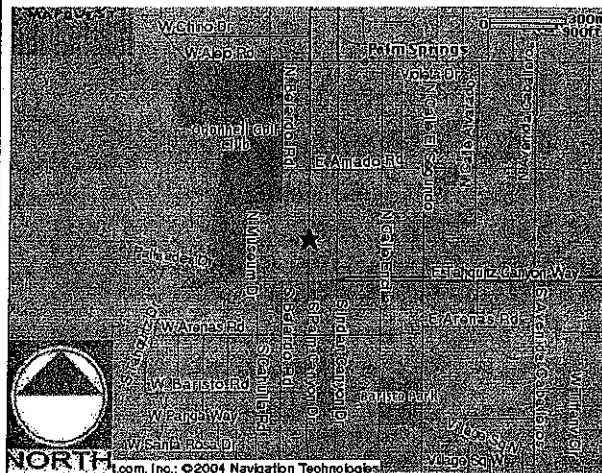
Maley/Petrin/Tinsley/Watson

B14. Evaluator: Architectural Resources Group

Date of Evaluation: August 2003

(This space reserved for official comments.)

(Sketch Map with north arrow required.)



CONTINUATION SHEET

Page 3 of 3

Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) The Town & Country Center

Recorded by Maley/Petrin/Tinsley/Watson Arch. Resources Group Date August 2003 Continuation Update

B10. Significance Continued

A rare and excellent example of the late Moderne style, incorporating multiple volumes and a sculptural quality with the flat roofs of the International style, this complex reflects the context of commercial development in this area from the 1940s to the 1960s. The building was built in 1948. The structure retains a good degree of integrity; the location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association appear to remain unchanged since the building was constructed.

The commercial complex at 174 North Palm Canyon appears to meet the level of significance necessary for individual National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources eligibility at the local level. An interesting example of commercial architecture, the building represents the overall commercial development of downtown Palm Springs from the 1940s to the 1960s and contributes to the character and scale of the main commercial street. Further, the building is the work of master architects, Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones, thus has an elevated level of significance for its association with prolific local architects of national prominence. This is an exceptional example of its type, period, or method of construction.

Because of the building's visual quality, history, intact setting, and fair to high integrity, and as an outstanding example of commercial architecture in the late Moderne style, the building represents the overall commercial development of downtown Palm Springs during the post-war era and contributes to the mid-century modernist character so strongly identified with Palm Springs.

CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT
THE MUSEUM MARKET PLAZA PROJECT

**Downtown Area, City of Palm Springs
Riverside County, California**

For Submittal to:

Department of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Prepared for:

Nicole Sauviat Criste
Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc.
400 South Farrell Drive, Suite B-205
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Prepared by:

CRM TECH
1016 East Cooley Drive, Suite A/B
Colton, CA 92324

Bai "Tom" Tang, Principal Investigator
Michael Hogan, Principal Investigator

May 9, 2008
CRM TECH Contract No. 2181

NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE INFORMATION

Author(s): Bai "Tom" Tang, Principal Investigator/Historian/ Architectural Historian
Terri Jacquemain, Historian/ Architectural Historian

Consulting Firm: CRM TECH
1016 East Cooley Drive, Suite A/B
Colton, CA 92324
(909) 824-6400

Date: May 9, 2008

Title: Cultural Resources Survey Report: the Museum Market Plaza Project, Downtown Area, City of Palm Springs, Riverside County, California

For Submittal to: Department of Planning Services
City of Palm Springs
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 323-8259

Prepared for: Nicole Sauviat Criste
Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc.
400 South Farrell Drive, Suite B-205
Palm Springs, CA 92262
(760) 320-2760

USGS Quadrangle: Palm Springs, Calif., 7.5' quadrangle (Section 15, T4S R4E, San Bernardino Base Meridian)

Project Size: Approximately 4.5 acres

Keywords: Palm Springs, Riverside County; Phase I cultural resources survey; Assessor's Parcel Numbers 513-092-003, -009, and -010; 513-141-004 and -013; 513-143-009 (partial) and -017; and 513-560-002, -004, and -007 to -009; Town and Country Center (1948); Paul R. Williams; A. Quincy Jones; Patterson's Drug Store (Site 33-7545); Desert Fashion Plaza (1967-1985); former site of the Desert Inn (Site 33-9714; California Point of Historical Interest No. Riv-044); locally designated "historic sites"

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Between December 2007 and May 2008, at the request of Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc., CRM TECH performed a cultural resources survey in the City of Palm Springs, Riverside County, California. The survey covers 12 parcels of urban land in the downtown area of the city, known historically as "the Village." The parcels are grouped to form a four-part, non-contiguous project area, located on the 100 block of North Palm Canyon Drive and North Indian Canyon Drive and the 100 and 300 blocks of West Tahquitz Canyon Way, in the east half of Section 15, T4S R4E, San Bernardino Base Meridian.

The survey is part of the environmental review process for a proposed redevelopment project known as Museum Market Plaza. The City of Palm Springs, as the Lead Agency for the project, required the study in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. The purpose of the study is to provide the City with the necessary information and analysis to determine whether any "historical resources," as defined by CEQA, are present within the project area and may be affected by the proposed project. In order to identify and evaluate such resources, CRM TECH conducted a historical/archaeological resources records search, pursued historical background research, carried out a systematic field survey, and sought consultation with the local community.

As a result of these research procedures, two commercial complexes were noted within the project area: the Desert Fashion Plaza at 123 North Palm Canyon Drive, and the Town and County Center at 146-174 North Palm Canyon Drive/167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive. The Desert Fashion Plaza, built in 1967-1985, is modern in age and does not demonstrate any extraordinary architectural or aesthetic merit. Therefore, it does not appear to meet the definition of a "historical resource." However, the property it occupies contains two "historic sites" designated by the City of Palm Springs. One of these is the former site of the Desert Inn, one of the earliest and most famous Palm Springs resorts from the early 20th century. It became a registered California Point of Historical Interest (No. Riv-044) in 1973 and was designated a "historic site" by the City in 1985. The other, also designated by the City in 1985, encompasses the former locations of Zaddie Bunker's Garage, the Village Theater, the Palms Springs Hotel, and the Rock House, all of which were demolished along with the Desert Inn to make way for the new shopping mall in the mid-1960s.

Since they are included in an officially established local register of historical resources, these two "historic sites" on the Desert Fashion Plaza property by definition qualify as "historical resources" under CEQA provisions. However, these sites are purely commemorative in nature, and the property today bears no physical vestiges of its former occupants. Furthermore, given the extensive ground disturbances associated with the construction of the existing buildings, it is unlikely for any substantial and intact archaeological remains to have survived from the previous period. Therefore, the redevelopment of this property will not cause an adverse effect to the significance of the sites as long as on-site commemorative signs or displays to recognize their local historic value are incorporated into the proposed project.

The other commercial complex in the project area, the Town and Country Center, was originally constructed in 1948 as an important component of Palm Springs' downtown commercial center. The property was previously evaluated for historical significance in 2003, and was determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources with a local level of significance. The significance of the property, according to the 2003 study, stems from its close association with the tourism-driven urban growth of Palm Springs in the post-WWII years and its architectural merits as an excellent example of the Modern style.

The results of the present study confirm that, due to its unique location at the heart of "the Village," the early history of the Town and Country Center represents a notable chapter in the rapid growth of downtown Palm Springs as the dominant urban center in the Coachella Valley during the 1940s-1950s, an important theme in post-WWII regional history. Architecturally, while its designers, A. Quincy Jones and Paul R. Williams, were both architects of national renown, the Town and Country Center does not appear to be a recognized milestone in their long and prolific careers or an important example of its

style, type, period, or method of construction. However, it remains a good example of Modern-style commercial buildings that contributes materially to the historical characteristics of "the Village" and to Palm Springs' well-established status as the capital of the "home-grown" Desert Modern architecture.

In light of these findings, CRM TECH concurs with the previous determination that the Town and Country Center is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources with a local level of significance. Although its historic integrity has been compromised to some extent due to deterioration and past alterations, overall the property retains enough of its original characteristics in terms of location, design, setting, and materials to relate to its period of significance. Therefore, it appears to meet CEQA's definition of a "historical resource." Pursuant to PRC §21084.1, the demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the complex would constitute "a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource" and "a significant effect on the environment" unless properly mitigated.

In protecting a significant historic building, one of the most common options is to preserve the building at its existing location and in its existing conditions. In the case of the Town and Country Center, however, simply preserving the complex in the existing condition does not best serve the fundamental objective of conveying the important aspects and period in its history and the history of downtown Palm Springs due to its compromised integrity, especially in terms of workmanship, feeling, and association. To accomplish that objective, restoration of the buildings in the complex to their original appearance, as shown in historic photographs and, if available, Jones and Williams' original design would be more desirable.

Based on these considerations, and in order to prevent or mitigate the proposed projects' potential effect on the Town and Country Center, CRM TECH recommends the following project alternatives to the project proponent and the City of Palms Springs:

- *Alternative 1:* The Town and Country Center complex be preserved, rehabilitated, restored to its historic appearance, and incorporated into the project, if feasible;
- *Alternative 2:* The following mitigation measures be implemented if the demolition, destruction, relocation, or substantial alteration of the Town and Country Center complex cannot be avoided:
 - A comprehensive documentation program be completed on the complex prior to redevelopment of the property;
 - Any future construction on the property be carefully crafted and reviewed to ensure compatibility with the historical character of the Town and Country Center and the surrounding area of downtown Palm Springs in terms of size, scale, material, texture, architectural features, and aesthetic feeling;
 - The local historic value of the Town and Country Center be recognized through commemorative signs or displays at its current site;
 - The project proponent and/or the City pursue further consultation with cultural representatives of the local community for other means to minimize or mitigate the proposed project's potential impact on the historical characteristics of the property and the surrounding neighborhood.

If either of these alternatives is incorporated into the proposed project, CRM TECH further recommends to the City of Palm Springs that potential effect on the Town and Country Center, a "historical resource" under CEQA, will have been prevented or mitigated to a level less than significant. Accordingly, the project may then be cleared to proceed in compliance with CEQA provisions on cultural resources and the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Finally, in recognition of potential cumulative effect of recent redevelopment and infill development in the downtown Palm Springs area on the integrity of the City's unique historical and architectural heritage, CRM TECH recommends that the City of Palm Springs pursue an intensive, systematic historical resources survey to document and evaluate the area traditionally known as "the Village" in its entirety as a potential historic district. Due to the size and complexity of the area, a systematic effort like this would be necessary to ensure the proper identification of its historical characteristics and essential elements, and to facilitate the effective assessment of cumulative effects of future projects.

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INTRODUCTION

Between December 2007 and May 2008, at the request of Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc., CRM TECH performed a cultural resources survey in the City of Palm Springs, Riverside County, California (Fig. 1). The survey covers 12 parcels of urban land in the downtown area of the city, known historically as "the Village" (Figs. 2, 3; Table 1). The parcels are grouped to form a four-part, non-contiguous project area, located on the 100 block of North Palm Canyon Drive and North Indian Canyon Drive and the 100 and 300 blocks of West Tahquitz Canyon Way, in the east half of Section 15, T4S R4E, San Bernardino Base Meridian (Figs. 2, 3).

The survey is part of the environmental review process for a proposed redevelopment project known as Museum Market Plaza. The City of Palm Springs, as the Lead Agency for the project, required the study in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; PRC §21000, et seq.) and the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance (Palm Springs Municipal Code §8.05.020). The purpose of the study is to provide the City with the necessary information and analysis to determine whether any "historical resources," as defined by CEQA, are present within the project area and may be affected by the proposed project. In order to identify and evaluate such resources, CRM TECH conducted a historical/archaeological resources records search, pursued historical background research, carried out a systematic field survey, and sought consultation with the local community. The following report is a complete account of the methods, results, and final conclusion of the study.

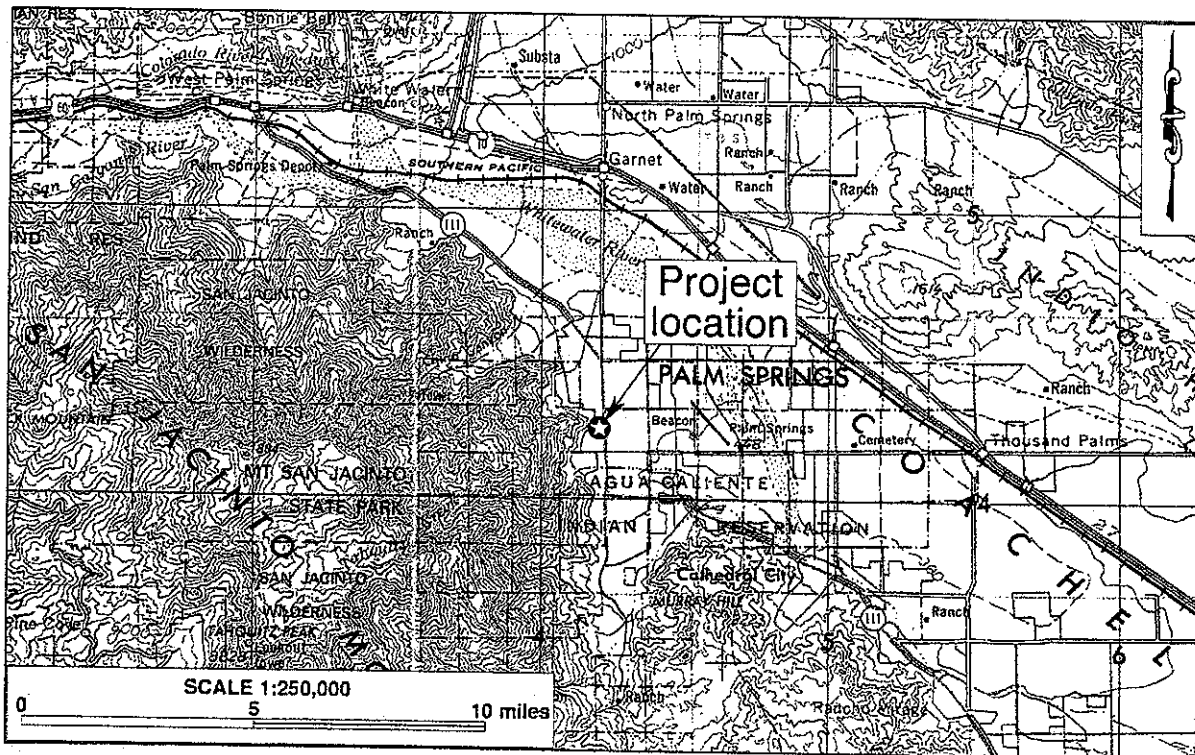


Figure 1. Project vicinity. (Based on USGS Santa Ana, Calif., 1:250,000 quadrangle [USGS 1979])

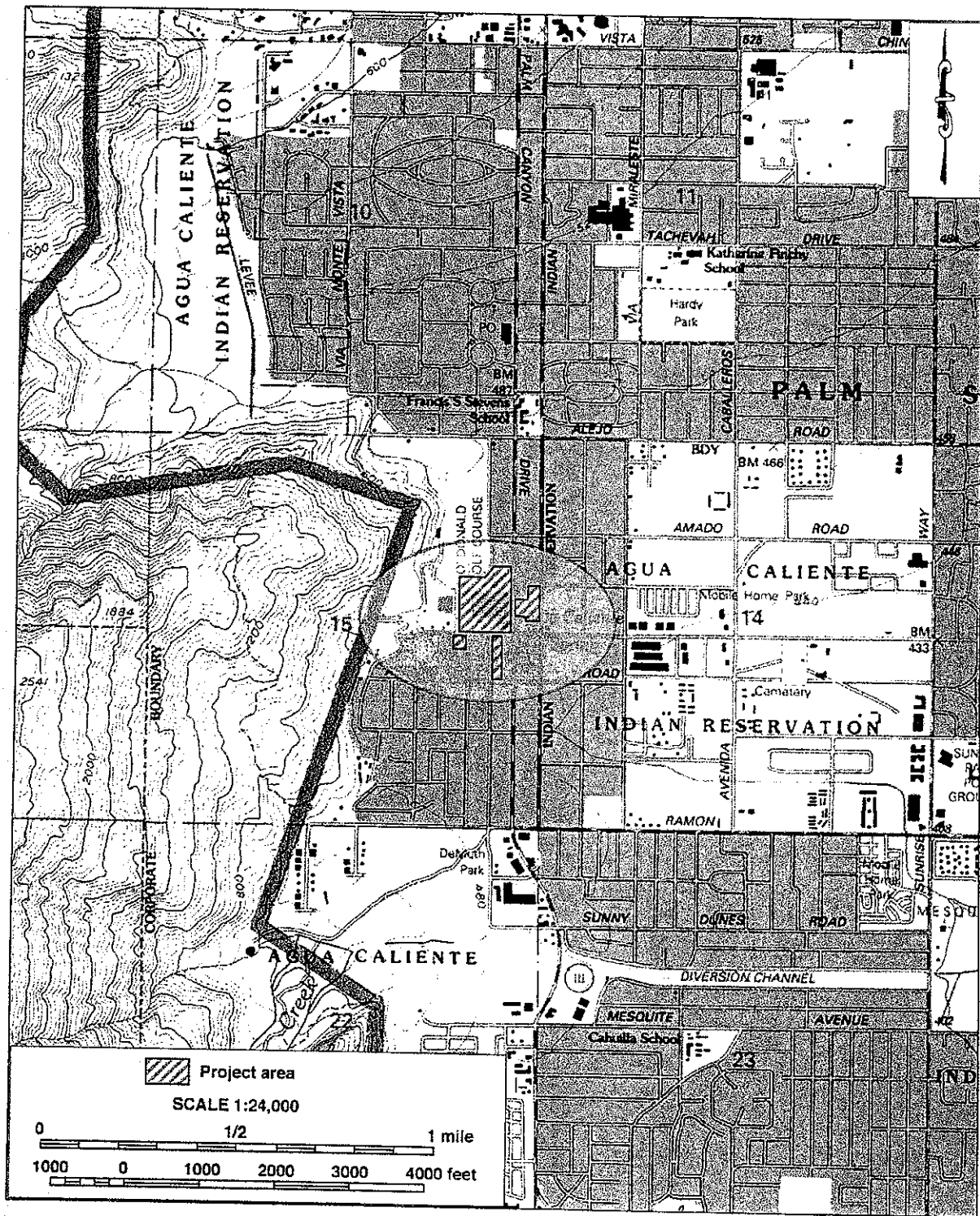


Figure 2. Project location. (Based on USGS Palm Springs, Calif., 1:24,000 quadrangle [USGS 1996])

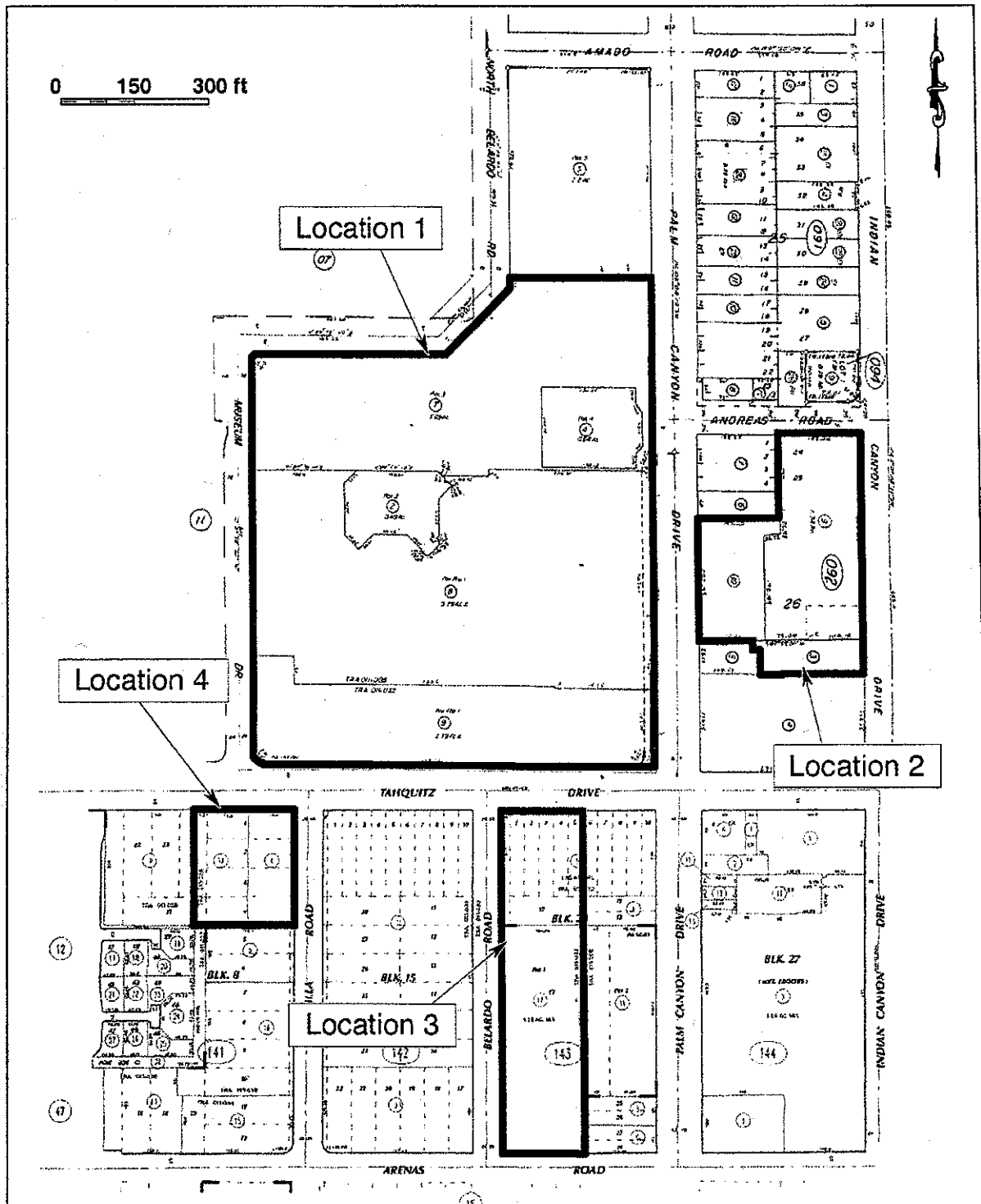


Figure 3. Project boundaries.

Location No.*	Assessor's Parcel No.	Address(es)	Current Occupant(s)
Location 1	513-560-002, -004, and -007 through -009	123 N. Palm Canyon Drive	Desert Fashion Plaza
Location 2	513-092-003, -009 and -010	146-174 N. Palm Canyon Drive and 167-181 N. Indian Canyon Drive	The Center (Town and County Center)
Location 3	513-143-009 (partial) and -017	100 block of W. Tahquitz Canyon Way	Parking lot
Location 4	513-141-004 and -013	300 block of W. Tahquitz Canyon Way	Vacant

* See Fig. 3

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The City of Palm Springs, the leading urban center in the Coachella Valley and the "capital" of the region's important tourist industry, owes its origin to the early development efforts led by John Guthrie McCallum, who began purchasing land in the area in 1872. The townsite was surveyed and subdivided in 1884, initially under the name of "Palm City." After a resurvey in 1887, the name was changed to the Village of Palm Springs. The Palm Springs subdivision was an instant success despite its location in the heart of the southern California desert, thanks to an eight-mile-long irrigation ditch that McCallum built from the Whitewater River to the townsite. Alfalfa, grape, corn, fig, apricot, grapefruit, and orange were among the successful crops harvested (Bogert 2003:55).

Almost from the beginning of the town, Palm Springs showed signs of becoming a resort community. After leasing the famed Agua Caliente hot springs from the local Native Americans around 1892, Welwood Murray built a wood-and-adobe, 26-person health lodge, Murray's Palm Springs Hotel (Presley 1996:10). In a marketing move that forecast the glitz and glamour that would help define Palm Springs' later development, Murray bought a camel and hired local Native American Willie Marcus to dress in Arab garb and go to the Seven Palms railway station, where he and the camel were to greet arriving visitors with pamphlets extolling the virtues of Murray's hotel (Starr 1997:23).

Murray's hotel persevered as a haven for the sick and convalescing, but dwindling water supplies and a withering drought that lasted for more than a decade forced all but a handful of permanent residents, white and Native alike, to leave the area (Bogert 2003:60; Presley 1996:20). The rains returned in 1905, but by then agriculture as a serious industry had moved on. In 1909, Harry and Nellie Coffman opened their sanitarium, the Village Inn, one block south of the site of today's Desert Fashion Plaza (City of Palm Springs 1985a).

The daughter of a hotelier, Nellie Coffman was well-versed in the hospitality business, and soon the couple was hosting as many vacationers as patients (Presley 1996:20). When they later parted ways, Nellie Coffman became sole owner of the Village Inn, expanded her holdings to the north, and built the famed Desert Inn, initially furnished in part with tents. Along with Murray's Palm Springs Hotel, these early health lodges defined the core of Palm Springs at the intersection of Main and Spring Streets, today's Palm Canyon Drive and Tahquitz Canyon Way.

Organized around the hot springs, the spectacular scenery, and the dry desert climate, Palm Spring's reputation continued to grow not only as a health spa but also as a winter resort for the affluent. The transition become most apparent when, in 1924, Pearl and Austin McManus commissioned Lloyd Wright, son of Frank Lloyd Wright and a celebrated architect in his own right, for a new hotel named The Oasis (Starr 1997:24).

With its thick, white concrete walls, 90-foot dining room heated by charcoal braziers, huge fountain, and other luxurious appointments (Starr 1997:24), The Oasis rose unapologetically from the desert floor in a dramatic departure from the earlier rustic wooden inns and tent cabins. Not to be outdone, a year later the Desert Inn, now sprawled over some 35 acres, added a Spanish-style main lobby and other buildings. Then on January 1, 1928, the impressively luxurious El Mirador Hotel, with its famed bell tower, open to much fanfare (Lech 2005:108, 112).

This intense stylization of the desert into a "first-class" environment resulted in its "discovery" by the rich and famous of Hollywood in the 1920s-1930s, making Palm Springs the favored getaway destination. The new buildings in pre-WWII Palm Springs were predominantly Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival in style, inspired by both the arid natural landscape and a romanticized vision of California history. Palm Canyon Drive was the center of this architectural expansion, as newly constructed markets, hotels, and retail shops increasingly defined the downtown cityscape.

The urbanization of the downtown area was reflected in the early 1940s by the adoption of new street names with a more sophisticated flair, many of them after local Native American families (County Assessor 1939-1944). Between 1939 and 1944, among the east-west streets, Lemon Street became Amado Road, Lawn Street became Andreas Road, Spring Street became Tahquitz Drive, and Lime Street became Baristo Road. Along the north-south axis, West Avenue became Patencio Road, Orange Avenue became Cahuilla Road, Palm Avenue became Belardo Road, and Main Street became Palm Canyon Drive.

In the post-WWII era, a major shift took place in the architectural aesthetic of Palm Springs as the city sought to accommodate the voguish tastes of wealthy visitors who desired private vacation homes in the secluded desert. Viewing the traditional Mission- and Spanish-style buildings then dominant in the area as too old-fashioned, this new clientele demanded a type of architecture for their homes that was more explicitly "modern." The result was a "home-grown" style known as Desert Modernism, inspired in part by the clean lines, flat roofs, glass walls, and unornamented facades of the International Style-buildings made famous by architects such as Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, and in part by the desert landscape and harsh climate in which these homes were built.

The attention given to the desert landscape fostered a unique aesthetic in which the austerity of the International Style is softened by the inclusion of natural elements such as rock, granite, and wood on the interior and exterior, and by the use of neutral colors to better help the buildings blend into the surrounding environment. Water is also a predominant feature of Desert Modernist buildings, as many include pools, fountains, ponds, and waterfalls. Much of the downtown Palm Springs area today reflects this latter phase of architectural transformation since a large number of buildings from this period are still extant.

Desert Modernism remained the predominant architectural style in Palm Springs throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It began to decline after 1970 due to a general fatigue of modernist simplicity and a new demand for decorative, opulent styles more reflective of the prosperous economy of the time. Today, the term Desert Modernism has been applied not only to buildings in the Palm Springs area, but also to buildings in the same general style located in desert communities throughout southern California and Arizona.

RESEARCH METHODS

RECORDS SEARCH

On December 20, 2007, CRM TECH archaeologist Nina Gallardo (see App. 1 for qualifications) conducted the historical/archaeological resources records search at the Eastern Information Center (EIC), University of California, Riverside. During the records search, Gallardo examined maps and records on file at the EIC for previously identified cultural resources in or near the project area, and existing cultural resources reports pertaining to the vicinity. Previously recorded cultural resources include properties designated as California Historical Landmarks, Points of Historical Interest, or Riverside County Landmarks, as well as those listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources, or the California Historical Resource Information System.

In addition to EIC's files, CRM TECH historian/architectural historian Terri Jacquemain (see App. 1 for qualifications) consulted the records of the Department of Planning Services, City of Palm Springs, for information on historic sites designated by the City and City-sponsored cultural resources studies in the project vicinity. Findings from both the EIC records and the City records are presented in the sections below.

FIELD SURVEY

Between February 7 and April 1, 2008, Terri Jacquemain carried out the field survey of the project area, focusing in particular on inspecting all existing buildings on the subject properties. In order to facilitate the proper identification, recordation, and evaluation of potentially historic buildings, Jacquemain made detailed notations and preliminary photo-recordation of the structural and architectural characteristics and current conditions of all buildings that appeared to be more than 45 years old and their associated features. Jacquemain's field observations and photographic records formed the basis of the structural descriptions and the historic integrity assessment presented below.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

In conjunction with the records search and the field inspection, Terri Jacquemain pursued historical and architectural background research for the purpose of determining the development histories of the project area and establishing the existing buildings' dates of construction, later alterations, roles and uses over the years, and possible associations with important historic figures and/or events. Sources consulted during the research include the following:

- Published literature in local and regional history, including architectural history, such as *Palm Springs: First Hundred Years* (Bogert 2003), *Palm Spring Modern* (Cygelman 1999), *Palm Springs Weekend: The Architecture and Design of a Midcentury Oasis* (Hess and Danish 2001), and relevant pamphlets by the Palm Springs Historical Society and the City of Palm Springs;
- Archival records of City of Palm Springs and the County of Riverside, particularly the City's building safety records and the County's real property tax assessment records;
- Historic maps and aerial photographs of the Palm Springs area;
- Local history materials on file at the at the Palm Springs Public Library.

CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY

On March 26 and April 2, 2008, Terri Jacquemain sent written requests to Sally McManus, director of the Palm Springs Historical Society, Jeri Vogelsang, Ms. McManus' assistant, and Peter Moruzzi, chairman of the Palm Springs Modern Committee and member of the Friends of the Town and Country Center, for supplementary information on the history of the project area and for community input on the potential historic significance of the buildings on the subject properties. Comments and information from these community representatives are incorporated into the research results presented below.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

PREVIOUS CULTURAL RESOURCES STUDIES IN THE VICINITY

According to the records of the Eastern Information Center and the City of Palm Springs, the project area had not been surveyed systematically and intensively for cultural resources prior to this study, but was included in three reconnaissance-level surveys that were completed in 1983, 2001, and 2004. As a result of these surveys, two historic-period sites in the project area were previously recorded into the California Historical Resource Information System. Additionally, the City of Palm Spring has, by resolution of the City Council, formally designated two historic sites within the project area.

Of the two sites formally recorded into the California Historical Resource Information System, Patterson's Drug Store (33-7545), once located at 160 North Palm Canyon Drive, was a popular gathering spot during the historic period (Henderson and Hough 1983). The store has long since ceased operation, but the building it occupied remains extant today as a part of the Town and Country Center complex. The other is the site of the Desert Inn (33-9714), now occupied by the Desert Fashion Plaza. In 1973, the Desert Inn site became a registered California Point of Historic Interest (No. Riv-044; State of California 1973).

In 1985, the former location of the Desert Inn was designated a historic site by the City of Palm Springs (City of Palm Springs 1985b). The second historic site designated by the City, also approved in 1985, encompasses the former locations of Zaddie Bunker's Garage, the Village Theater, the Palms Springs Hotel, and the Rock House, all of which were demolished along with the Desert Inn to make way for the Desert Fashion Plaza in the mid-1960s (City of Palm Springs 1985a; 1985c). As delineated by the City Council resolution, this historic site lies partially within the current project boundaries (City of Palm Springs 1985c).

In addition to these formally recorded or officially designated sites, City records indicate that the Town and Country Center complex was also recorded as a potential historical resource in 2003 (Maley et al. 2003), during a City-sponsored reconnaissance survey, but the site record forms evidently have not been submitted for inclusion in the California Historical Resource Information System. The site record, on file at the City, states that the Town and Country Center qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Places with a local level of significance (*ibid.*:3). The significance of the property, according to that study, stems from its close association with the tourism-driven urban growth of Palm Springs in the post-WWII years and its architectural merits as an excellent example of the Modern style (*ibid.*).

In December 2006, the Town and Country Center was reportedly nominated by the City of Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board for designation as a Class 1 historic site (FTCC n.d.). However, no documentation was found in City records to suggest further actions on the nomination.

Outside the project boundaries but within a half-mile radius, at least 19 site-specific cultural resource studies have been reported to the EIC (Fig. 4). As a result of these and other similar studies, a total of 75 archaeological sites and historic-period buildings were formally recorded within the scope of the records search. Three of the archaeological sites were prehistoric—i.e., Native American—in nature, and included surface scatters of artifacts, bedrock milling features, and a burial site reported on the edge of downtown Palm Springs. The other sites dated to the historic period, including a number of structural

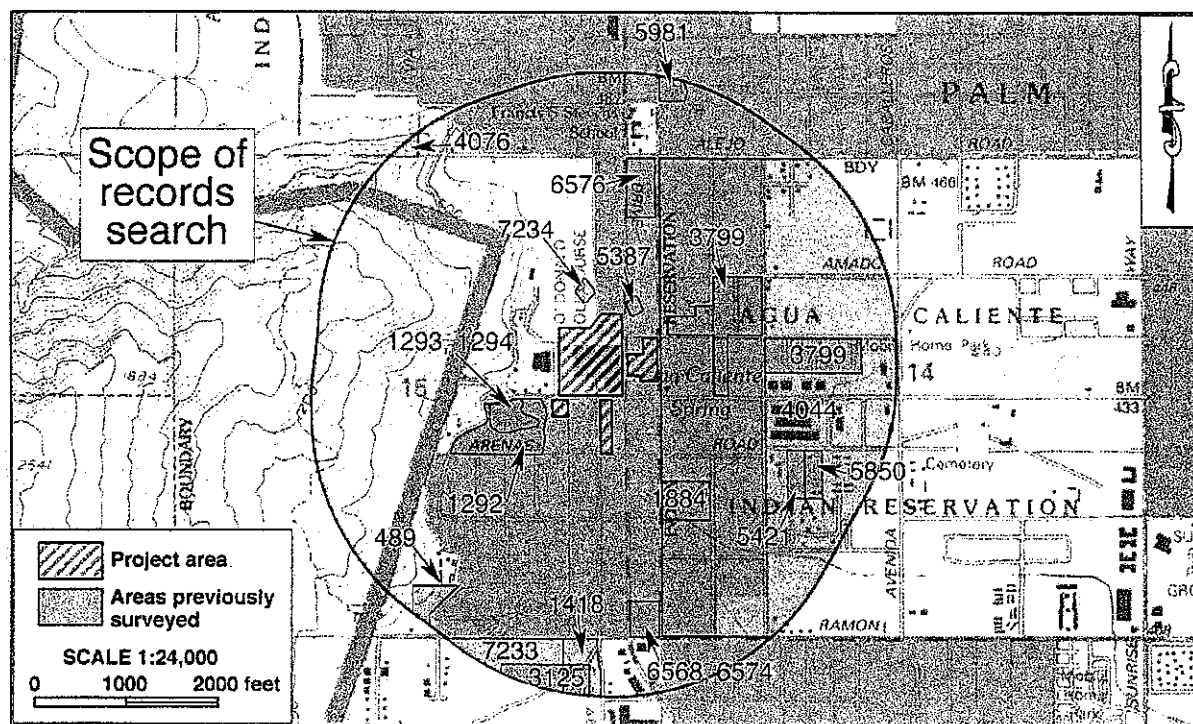


Figure 4. Previous cultural resources studies in the vicinity of the project area, listed by EIC file number. Locations of historical/archaeological sites are not shown as a protective measure.

foundations of demolished buildings on the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation, the site of the Cornelia White House, and the site of the Agua Caliente hot springs, a California Point of Historical Interest (No. Riv-025) since 1969.

The recorded historic-period buildings were predominantly concentrated in downtown Palm Springs, many of them within a few blocks of the project location. Among these were a number of historic-period hotels, including the El Morocco Hotel, the Spanish Inn, the Estrella Inn, the Mountain View Inn, and the Arenas Lodge. Other buildings recorded within the scope of the records search included Our Lady of Solitude Catholic Church, the Palm Springs Woman's Club, and various commercial buildings and residences of historical or architectural note. The large number of known historical/ archaeological sites in the surrounding area attests to a high sensitivity for cultural resources in the project vicinity, especially those from the historic period.

Many of the recorded historical/ archaeological sites are located on properties that are adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of the project area. These include the O'Donnell Golf Course, the town's first 18-hole course, built in the 1930s (33-5739); the Welwood Murray Memorial Library (33-7557), built in 1941 on land donated by the family of Welwood Murray; Lykken's Department Store, built in 1914 (33-7547); and the Carnell Building (33-7548), built in 1936.

Lykken's Department Store, the home of the town's first telephone and post office for many years, is also a City-designated historic site. Additionally, the Carnell Building property was previously occupied by the First Community Church, which had stood since circa 1906. The church site, but not the Carnell Building, was designated a historic site by the City of Palm Springs. Other buildings in the immediate vicinity of the project area that have been identified by the City's Historic Site Preservation Board as potentially of local historic significance include the former residence of George B. Roberson, Nellie Coffman's son, built around 1927, and the Oasis Commercial Building, a 1952 expansion of the Oasis Hotel, designed by famed local architect E. Stewart Williams (City of Palm Springs 2005).

LOCAL COMMUNITY INPUT

As stated above, Sally McManus and Jeri Vogelsang of the Palm Springs Historical Society and Peter Moruzzi of the Palm Springs Modern Committee were contacted by CRM TECH regarding the proposed project. To date, neither McManus nor Vogelsang has responded to the inquiries. In a telephone interview on March 26, 2008, and in subsequent e-mail correspondence, Moruzzi agreed that the Desert Fashion Plaza property was in need of redevelopment, but stressed the local historic significance and architectural importance of the Town and Country Center.

Moruzzi referred CRM TECH to a website maintained by the Friends of Town and Country Center, a group organized to "explore a creative alternative" in order to save the Town and Country Center from complete demolition (FTCC n.d.). On the website, members of the group expressed strong feelings in favor of the preservation of the Town and Country Center, contending that "the Center could fit in well with a proposal for commercial/retail mixed-use since it originally featured retail stores on the ground floor and apartments above" (*ibid.*).

POTENTIAL HISTORICAL RESOURCES IN THE PROJECT AREA

The project area consists of two commercial complexes, the Desert Fashion Plaza and the Town and Country Center, as well as a parking lot on the east side of Belardo Road and a vacant lot on the southwest corner of Tahquitz Canyon Way and Cahuilla Road (Table 1; Fig. 3). According to historic maps and aerial photographs, both the parking lot and the vacant lot once contained buildings that dated at least to the late historic period (Fig. 5), but none of these buildings remains in existence today.

During the field survey, the remains of a swimming pool and a small octagonal concrete foundation, likely the remnant of an ancillary building or structure, were noted on the vacant lot. These minor features, a common occurrence in older urban neighborhoods, demonstrate little potential for important archaeological data and, due to the removal of the buildings at the location, retain little ability to relate to the historic period. Therefore, they are not considered potential "historical resources," and require no further study.

Further research indicates that the Town and County Center at 146-174 North Palm Canyon Drive/167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive was constructed in the late historic period. The Desert Fashion Plaza at 123 North Palm Canyon Drive is modern in origin, but the property it occupies contains two historic sites designated by the City of Palm Springs, as mentioned above. Both of these properties, therefore, are considered potential "historical resources" and are discussed further below.

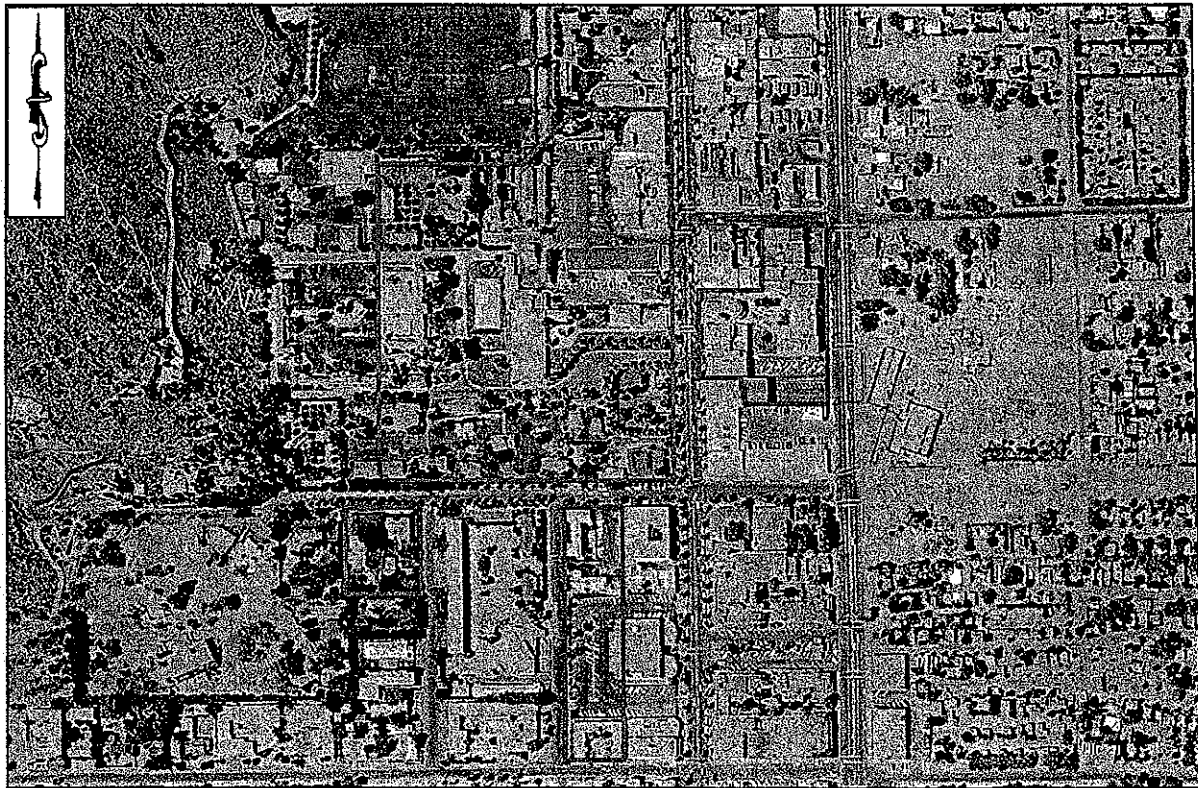


Figure 5. Aerial view of downtown Palm Springs in 1959, with the project area outlined in red. (Source: Aerial photograph 1959)

Desert Fashion Plaza Property

The Desert Fashion Plaza, a typical enclosed shopping mall (Fig. 6), was originally constructed in 1967 on the former site of the Desert Inn and other historic-period buildings (City of Palm Springs 1967; 1985a). It underwent significant remodeling in 1973 and again in the mid-1980s (City of Palm Springs n.d.). Modern in origin and demonstrating no exceptional architectural or aesthetic qualities, the buildings comprising the mall do not constitute a potential "historical resource."

Nevertheless, the property overlaps or partially overlaps with two historic sites designed and delineated by the City of Palm Springs: the former location of the Desert Inn, located on the west side of Palm Canyon Drive between Andreas Road and Tahquitz Canyon Way, and the former locations of Zaddie Bunker's Garage, the Village Theater, the Palms Springs Hotel, and the Rock House, bounded by Palm Canyon Drive, Amado Road, Belardo Road, and the extension of Andreas Road (City of Palm Springs 1985b; 1985c).

From its humble beginnings as Harry and Nellie Coffman's convalescent home in 1909 to the glamorous playground of the healthy, wealthy and very famous, the Desert Inn stood as an iconic ambassador of Palm Springs as a resort destination well into the 1960s. Nellie Coffman's sons, Earl Coffman and George Roberson, were owners of the Desert Inn in 1955 when Marion Davies, Hollywood starlet and mistress to publisher William Randolph Hearst, decided it would be "fun" to own an inn, and set her sights on the Desert Inn. In his book, *Palm Springs Confidential*, Howard Johns describes the sale:

Attorneys Greg Bautzer and Arnold Grant reportedly negotiated the sale of the thirty-three-acre property, numbering 100 hotel rooms, an a la carte restaurant, beauty shop, barber salon and parking garage for the giveaway price of \$1,750,000, which Davies paid owners Earl Coffman and his brother George Roberson. The brothers cried when they signed the legal papers giving up the old homestead that had been in their family for three generations. (Johns 2004; 115)

Five years later, Davies sold the Desert Inn, still intact, for 2.5 million (Johns 2004:116). By 1967 it had become the property of Home Savings and Loan, the same year the company

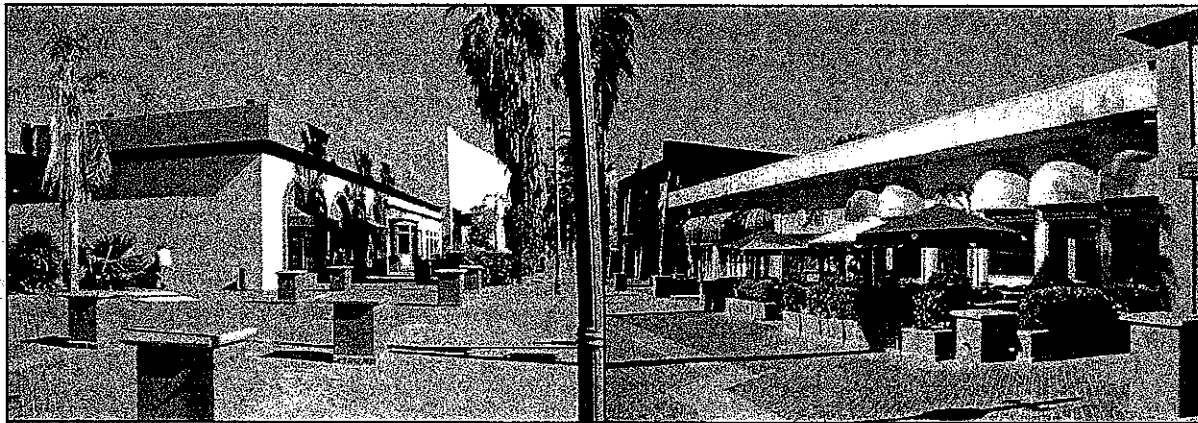


Figure 6. The Desert Fashion Plaza's Palm Canyon Drive façade. *Left:* near the northern end of the mall; *right:* storefronts in the middle portion. (Photographs taken on April 1, 2008)

secured a permit to construct a 19,920-square-foot masonry and steel shopping center (City of Palm Spring 1967). The flagship store, I. Magnin & Company, hired Gianni Associates for the plans (*ibid.*). Soon afterwards, the Desert Inn, a venerable Palm Springs institution, saw the end of its colorful history when the "front" portion of the property was razed for the construction of the Desert Fashion Plaza, while the "rear" portion is now occupied by the Palm Springs Desert Museum (City of Palm Spring 1985a).

Also demolished at that time were the four buildings associated with the other historic site at this location: Zaddie Bunker's Garage (ca. 1916), the first automobile service garage in the desert town; the Village Theater (ca. 1932), built and operated by prominent local businessman Earle C. Strebe; the Palms Springs Hotel (ca. 1934, not to be confused with Welwood Murray 1890s establishment at the hot springs), a Mission Revival-style building commissioned by San Francisco hotelier George Keroley; and the Rock House (ca. 1918-1922), a cobblestone cottage built by Italian stone mason John Barone (City of Palm Spring 1985a). The histories of these buildings are well-documented in City records associated with the designation of the historic site (*ibid.*; City of Palm Spring 1985c), and requires no further discussion.

Town and Country Center

A portion of the Town and Country Center, once occupied by Patterson's Drug Store at 150 North Palm Canyon Drive, was first recorded into the California Historical Resource Information System in 1983 and subsequently designated Site 33-7545, as stated above. The site record from that survey offers a rather sketchy description of that portion of the complex:

This modern commercial building has stucco walls with a flat roof. It has small four pipe designs on stucco panels on the second story while the first story consists of a store front. (Henderson and Hough 1983:1)

The 2003 site record on file at the City provides a much more extensive description of the complex:

Linked to Palm Canyon Drive by a narrow arcade, the focal point of this shopping center is the landscaped courtyard surrounded by storefronts with additional storefronts along the 100 Blocks of Indian Canyon Drive to the east and Palm Canyon Drive to the west. Designed in the late Moderne architectural style, "The Center" is comprised of three, two-story, flat-roofed buildings configured around the central open-air courtyard where a wide staircase leads to a second level restaurant space, originally the upscale Town and Country Restaurant. The two street-facing elevations vary in style, materials, and appearance. The west elevation (along North Palm Canyon) features a flat roof with a wide cornice treatment composed of vertically hung corrugated aluminum panels painted brown, and concrete brick wall sections separating a series [of] storefront spaces with metal-framed window walls shaded by uniform awnings. The east elevation (fronting North Indian Canyon) features a series of projecting cornices at the first and second floors, and is principally defined by a wide plain frieze with the historic signage stating "the CENTER" located near the rear entrance. Exterior building materials along the east elevation include painted concrete and stucco walls with an uncoursed fieldstone veneer along the northern half of the building. Fenestration consists of fixed metal-

framed storefront windows and window wall sections along the ground floor and single-or-double-hung multi-pane sash windows along the northern half of the second floor. Overall the entire Town and County Center complex appears to be in fair condition. (Maley et al. 2003:1)

Field observations during this survey suggest that no major alterations have occurred to the exterior characteristics of the buildings described in the 2003 site record (Figs. 7, 8). However, the 2003 description pertains only to three of the five buildings present in the Town and Country Center complex, corresponding to 156-166 and 170-174 North Palm Canyon Drive and 167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive. Two additional buildings, in the southwestern portion of the complex, are not mentioned in the description. One of these, formerly a Bank of America branch, is located at 146-150 North Palm Canyon Drive, and is connected to the west-side storefronts described above by a small addition at 152 North Palm Canyon Drive (Fig. 9). The other one is a concrete building at 168 North Palm Canyon Drive, which has evidently been added to the interior courtyard of the complex at a later date (Fig. 10). These two buildings are described below:

- **146-152 North Palm Canyon Drive** This portion of the Town and Country Center complex consists of a two-story, Modern-style commercial building of reinforced concrete construction and a one-story "hyphen" of similar architectural characteristics. The two-story building, the former home of the Bank of America branch, has been

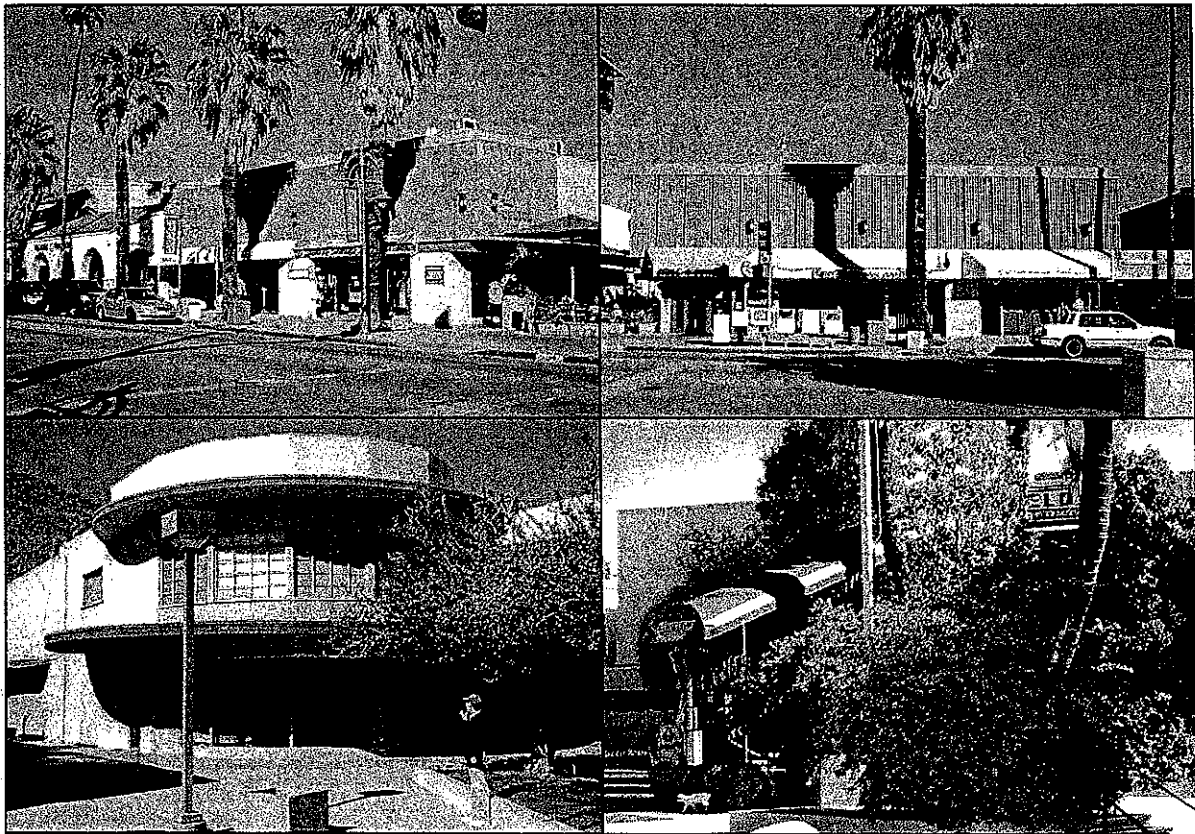


Figure 7. The Town and Country Center's Palm Canyon Drive façade, top, and interior courtyard, below.

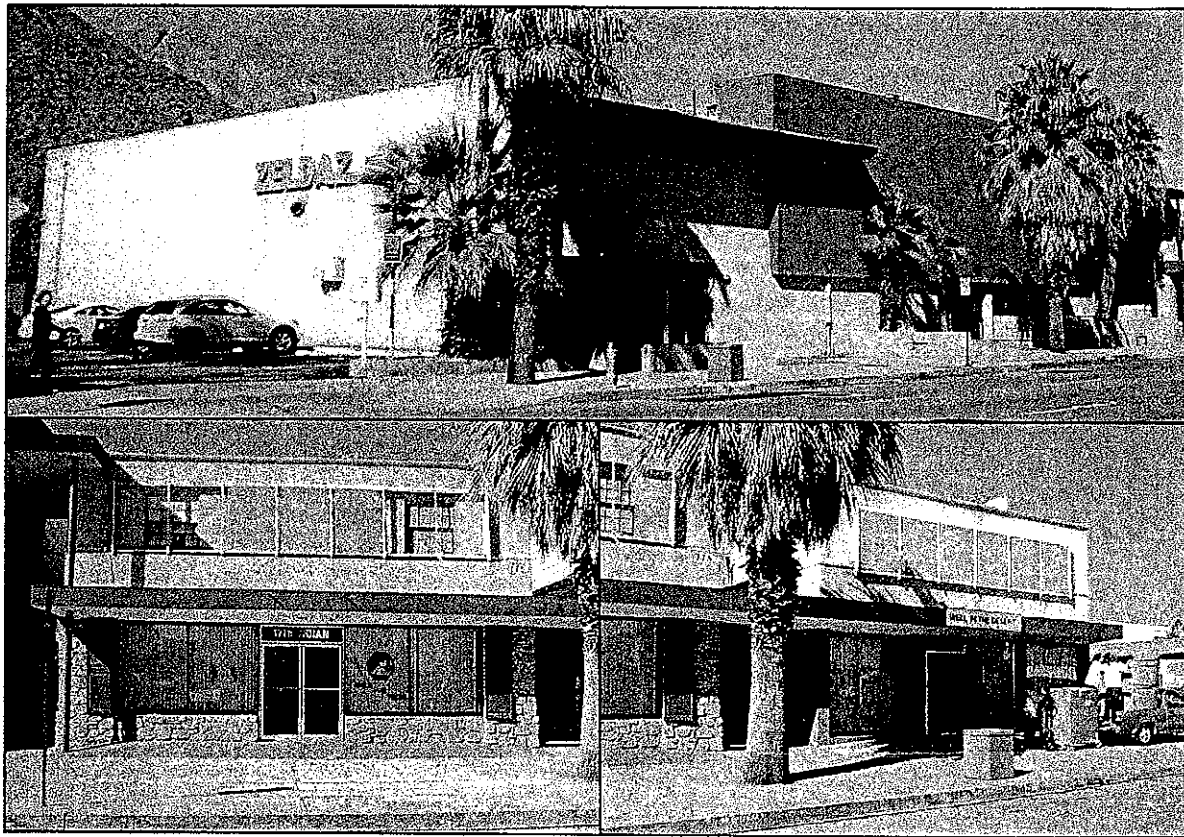


Figure 8. The Town and Country Center's Indian Canyon Drive façade, including the former Town and Country Restaurant (now Zeldaz), top, and two apartment/office buildings.

subdivided into three retail units (Fig. 9). Irregular but somewhat L-shaped in plan, the building sports a set of angled vertical louvers separated by mirrored glass on the upper level of its primary façade, which faces Palm Canyon Drive on the west. The upper-level façade is painted dark brown while aluminum-framed glass doors and display windows of the storefronts dominate the street level. The two levels of the

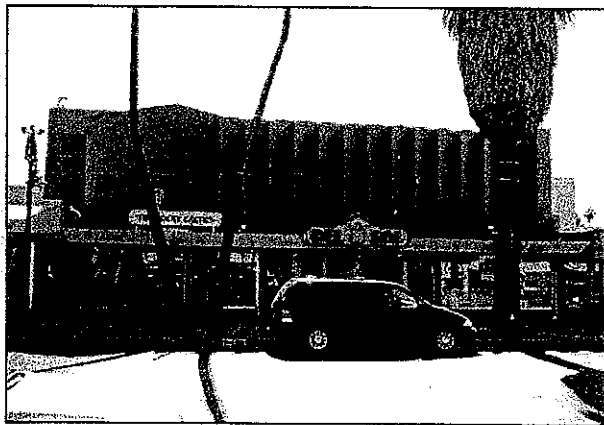


Figure 9. The former Bank of America building at 146-150 North Palm Canyon Drive.

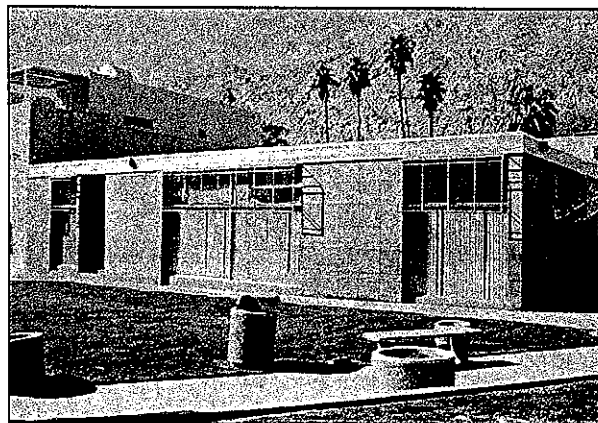


Figure 10. Concrete building at 168 North Palm Canyon Drive.

primary façade are divided by a tan-colored sunbreak that also serves as a marquee bearing the names of the stores. The rear of the building is mostly clad in tan-colored stucco, with two groups of aluminum-framed glass doors and fixed windows at a pair of rear entrances, one on the east-facing façade and the other on the north-facing side of a projecting rear wing. A bank of metal-framed windows with fixed sashes, sandwiched between rectangular brown panels, extends across the upper level of the north-facing side of the wing.

- **168 North Palm Canyon Drive** This rectangular, one-story concrete "box," currently vacant, is set against other buildings in the complex to the west and the south, and features on the other two elevations several spans of solid concrete walls scored into large, square blocks (Fig. 10). The concrete walls are interspersed with floor-to-ceiling fixed windows and two aluminum-framed entrance assemblages facing the east and the north. All of these contrasting elements of the exterior walls are unified under a wide, grooved cornice band surrounding the flat roof. The extremely simple appearance of this building, a later addition to the complex, stands out against its companions, which themselves are characterized by the functionalism of their design and the general lack of traditional ornamental elements.

Born of a collaboration between acclaimed Los Angeles architects Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones, the Town and Country Center was built by the Palm Springs Corporation on property owned by Bank of America in or around 1948 (City of Palm Springs 1946; County Assessor 1945-1950; ARG 2004:3). Around the same time, the duo also teamed to design the Palm Springs Tennis Club restaurant in 1946 and Romanoffs on the Rocks, a local restaurant, in 1950 (Buckner 2002).

Archibald Quincy Jones (1913-1979) was noted for designing university and office buildings towards the end of his career, but he first gained recognition for his residential work. As a participant in John Entenza's Case Study House Program, Jones became deeply devoted to the experiment's goal of reinventing houses to reflect how people lived in the post-World War II era (*ibid.*). His conviction that the quality of life could be improved through architecture led him to introduce new materials and design elements to modern homes, such as glass walls, usable atriums, high ceilings and post-and-beam construction. In his larger buildings, Jones was recognized as an innovator and master of improving the integration and efficiency of mechanical systems while maximizing usable space (*ibid.*).

While Jones is known for elevating the lowly post-war tract house to an art form, Paul Revere Williams (1894-1980) is best remembered as a designer of elegant mansions for the rich and famous of Hollywood. Among his clients were Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Tyrone Power, Barbara Stanwyk, Danny Thomas, and Lon Chaney, Sr. (Hudson 1993). Among his most easily recognized buildings in southern California are the Beverly Hills and Ambassador Hotels, Chasen's and Perino's restaurants, the ultra-modern theme building at the Los Angeles International Airport, Saks Fifth Avenue, and the Music Corporation of America building. In all, Williams designed or participated in over 3,000 projects (*ibid.*).

Owing in particular to its trendy restaurant and proximity to the famed Desert Inn across the street, "the Center" was an instant hit among fashionable circles of post-World War II Palm Springs. Like architect Harry Williams' multi-use La Plaza center down the street, the

Town and Country Center was designed to accommodate a mixture of retail stores, offices, and apartments. Patterson's Drug Store, the second pharmacy to open in Palm Springs, was among the first tenants in the complex (Henderson and Hough 1983). The pharmacy also housed Palm Springs Spirits and Tony and Marilyn's Fountain Grill (FTCC n.d.). Other tenants in the complex over the years included The French Bootery, George Weill's Fashions, Kelley's Furnishings, Jewels by Alchian, Village Flower Shop, Warren Imports, The Kings Quarters, Center Beauty Salon, Mary Helen Teen Shop, *The Desert Sun*, *The Palm Springs Villager*, *The Palm Springs Guide*, KDES Radio Broadcasting, Cameron Broadcasting, and the Southern Pacific Company (*ibid.*).

Besides the advantages of having frontages along both Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive in the very heart of town, the complex had additional retail or office suites surrounding the interior courtyard. During its heyday, the dramatically landscaped courtyard formed the focal point of the shopping center, with a large, rounded "turret" on one side and an angled exterior staircase on the other (Figs. 7, 11). The broad concrete stairs, resting on a multi-level asymmetrical podium and accompanied by a hefty planter jutting out from the building behind, led to a rectangular balcony across the front of the Town and Country Restaurant (now Zeldaz). The interaction among the various "clean" geometric shapes and intersecting planes around the main entrance to the restaurant represented one of the most notable character-defining elements of the Town and Country Center's Modernist design.

Today, the courtyard has been significantly reduced in size by the building at 168 North Palm Canyon Drive and, with almost all of the suites around it vacant, is no longer conceptually the focal point of the complex. The "turret" remains intact but, being used for storage, has lost much of its charm. The once-impressive entry to the restaurant has also been compromised through the enclosure of the balcony for more interior space, the apparent truncating of the planter at the end, the partition of the staircase in the middle, the addition of a canopy over the stairs, and the presence of overgrown foliage (Figs. 7, 11).

The former Bank of America building was a highly stylized and eye-catching commercial building when first constructed (Fig. 12). Historic photographs show the original main façade of the building to be aggressively Modernist in design, articulately expressed through the contrast between the array of large concrete louvers, then painted blue, and the massive sand-colored "towers" that anchored both ends of the façade. The name of the bank was spelled across the top of the sunbreak in white, widely spaced letters. The bold architectural character of this façade has been muffled to some degree by the uniform coat of dark brown paint across the upper level, and the subdivision of the former bank into three separate storefronts, each with its own signage, also inevitably altered the general appearance of the building (Figs. 9, 12).

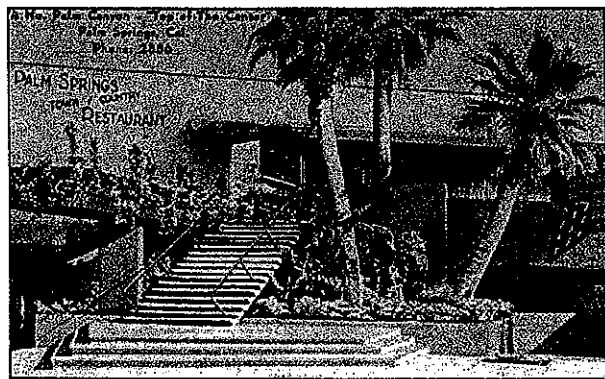


Figure 11. Main façade of the original Town and Country Restaurant.

Separated by a narrow alley, the two buildings at 156-166 and 170-174 North

Palm Canyon Drive are nearly identical in the street-facing façade (Fig. 7), but the northern building, with its rear wing extending east-west across the entire property and forming the northern "wall" of the courtyard, contains by far the most storefronts and suites among all buildings in the complex. In comparison to the restaurant and the former bank, these two buildings were, and remain today, relatively plain and understated in design, although the "turret" in the rear of the northern building, with its curved sunbreaks and large ribbon windows on both levels, were undoubtedly intended to be one of the architectural highlights of the courtyard (Fig. 7).

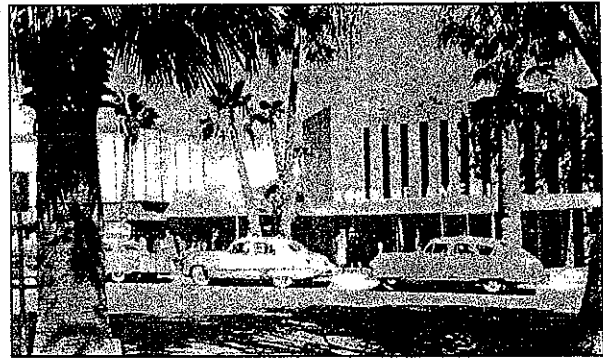


Figure 12. Original appearance of the Town and Country Center on Palm Canyon Drive.

These two buildings appear to retain most of their original characteristics. However, based on the differing descriptions from 1983 and 2003, especially in comparison to historic photographs, the corrugated aluminum panels covering the upper level of their street-facing façades were evidently installed sometime after 1983, replacing or covering the original stucco panels (Henderson and Hough 1983:1; Maley et al. 2003:1; Figs. 7, 12). Meanwhile, the current condition of these two buildings serves to embody the aging of the Town and Country Center complex and its decline in prestige, as attested by the many vacant suites in the rear wing of the northern building and a section of sagging sunbreak in the alley.

The City of Palm Springs' building safety records documented hundreds of permits issued on the Town and Country Center property. Besides the permits for the construction of the original buildings in the complex, the Palm Springs Corporation also secured in 1955 a permit to construct a 12-foot-tall concrete office building in the southwest portion of the courtyard, which demonstrates the age of the added building at 168 North Palm Canyon Drive (City of Palm Springs 1955). Originally intended for a business office, it later served as a women's apparel shop (*ibid.*; City of Palm Springs 1989).

The other permits recorded in City files chronicle the many physical modifications to the buildings in the Town and Country Center complex, most all of them to accommodate changes in tenancy and usage in the shops, such as storefront remodeling, enlarging or extending display windows, or combining or dividing retail units. Those that appear to involve large portions of the complex's Palm Canyon Drive façade include altering 140 feet of street frontage in 1949 and remodeling/reroofing eight of the stores in 1952 (City of Palm Springs 1949; 1952).

The façade facing Indian Canyon Drive was remodeled in 1979 (City of Palm Springs 1979). In addition, the restaurant building was nearly gutted in 1977-1978 to accommodate the installation of dance floors (City of Palm Springs 1977-1978). The balcony at the restaurant's courtyard entrance was modified and enclosed during another round of renovations in the early 1980s (City of Palm Springs 1980-1983). Around the same time, a nightclub or restaurant named F. Scott's was merged into Zeldaz, the building's current

occupant (City of Palm Springs 1980-1983). The building was reroofed in 1983 and 1992 (City of Palm Springs 1983; 1992).

DISCUSSION

Based on the research results discussed above, the following sections present CRM TECH's conclusion on whether the proposed project would affect any "historical resources," as defined by CEQA.

DEFINITION

According to PRC §5020.1(j), "'historical resource' includes, but is not limited to, any object, building, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which is historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California." More specifically, CEQA guidelines state that the term "historical resources" applies to any such resources listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, included in a local register of historical resources, or determined to be historically significant by the Lead Agency (Title 14 CCR §15064.5(a)(1)-(3)).

Regarding the proper criteria of historical significance, CEQA guidelines mandate that "a resource shall be considered by the lead agency to be 'historically significant' if the resource meets the criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources" (Title 14 CCR §15064.5(a)(3)). A resource may be listed in the California Register if it meets any of the following criteria:

- (1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
- (2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
- (3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.
- (4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (PRC §5024.1(c))

A local register of historical resources, as defined by PRC §5020.1(k), "means a list of properties officially designated or recognized as historically significant by a local government pursuant to a local ordinance or resolution." For properties within the City of Palm Springs, the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance provides the designations of "historic sites" and "historic districts" as officially recognized local historical resources (PSMC §8.05.020).

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

Desert Fashion Plaza Property

A shopping mall of modern origin that demonstrates no extraordinary architectural or aesthetic merit, the Desert Fashion Plaza at 123 North Palm Canyon Drive does not meet

any of the criteria for listing in the California Register, and does not constitute a "historical resource." However, the parcels occupied by the shopping mall are known to contain two "historic sites" that were officially designated by the City of Palm Springs. One of the sites represents the former location of the iconic Desert Inn, which is also a registered California Point of Historical Interest (No. Riv-044), and the other encompasses the former locations of four buildings of local historical interest. Since they are included in an officially established local register of historical resources, these two "historic sites" on the Desert Fashion Plaza property by definition qualify as "historical resources" under CEQA provisions.

Town and Country Center

As stated above, the Town and Country Center was originally constructed in 1948 as an important component of Palm Springs' downtown commercial center. The complex was previously evaluated for historical significance in 2003, and was determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources, with a local level of significance, because of its association with the tourism-driven urban growth of Palm Springs in the post-WWII era and its architectural merits as an excellent example of the Modern style (Maley et al. 2003:3).

One of the most compelling aspects of the Town and Country Center's past is its close ties with a pattern of events that contributed significantly to local and regional history, namely the rapid growth of downtown Palm Springs as the dominant urban center in the Coachella Valley during the 1940s-1950s. Situated prominently at the very heart of downtown Palm Springs, this multi-use commercial complex, with its bold Modern-style architecture, trendy restaurant, and appealing courtyard, exploited and boosted the post-WWII tourist boom that perpetuated the City's claim as one of America's leading winter resorts. For this historical contribution, the Town and Country Center holds a unique place in the post-WWII development of the City and continues to be a well-known local landmark that enjoys a high level of historical interest in the community.

Architecturally, the original Town and Country Center complex, as built in 1948, is known to be among the collaborative works of innovative and acclaimed architects A. Quincy Jones and Paul R. Williams, both of whom individually earned national distinction during their careers. However, there is no evidence that it constitutes a particularly important example among the sizable body of works by either. Similarly, it does not appear to represent a particularly important milestone in the development of its architectural style, property type, period, or method of construction, especially in its current, altered conditions. However, it remains a good example of Modern-style commercial buildings that contributes materially to the historical fabrics of "the Village" and to Palm Springs' well-established status as the capital of the "home-grown" Desert Modern architecture.

Now 60 years old, the Town and Country Center undoubtedly represents an established and familiar visual feature in downtown Palm Springs. On the other hand, the long history has also taken its toll on the appearance and appeals of the complex, both physically and commercially. The scattered structural deterioration noted during the field survey, for example, detracts from the property's historic integrity in the aspect of workmanship. Meanwhile, the widespread vacancies and the conversion of the former Bank of America

into retail stores inevitably compromised the historic feeling and association of the complex.

Like the vacancies, the current use of a portion of the complex's Indian Canyon Drive frontage as low-end apartments, which creates a generally unkempt appearance on that side of the property, diminishes the Town and Country Center's former image of a busy social, retail, and work center with a myriad of salons, stores, and eateries. The use of the "turret" in the courtyard, which was clearly intended to be a prominent showcase, as storage space also contributes to the change in the property's historic feeling.

As noted above, today the focal point of the Town and Country Center has shifted from the interior courtyard to the storefronts facing outward, especially those on Palm Canyon Drive. That transition may be traced back to 1955, when the addition of the building at 168 North Palm Canyon Drive greatly reduced the size of the courtyard. The design, materials, texture, and general appearance of this building are not entirely consistent to the rest of the buildings, further compromising the coherent historical characteristics of the complex.

In terms of architectural integrity, the Town and Country Center complex retains most of the basic elements of its Mid-Century Modernist design, although the storefronts have evidently been altered to various degrees, as is the common practice among retail-oriented commercial properties. Other than the additional building in the courtyard, the greatest alteration to the complex's architectural character occurred in the once dramatically angular façade of the restaurant and the colorful palette of the former bank building, as described previously. It is worth noting, however, that it was these two areas that exemplified the bold Modernist statement in Jones and Williams' original design.

Despite these alterations to its historic integrity, overall the Town and Country Center retains enough of its original characteristics in terms of location, design, setting, and materials to relate to the early post-WWII period. Based on the foregoing analysis of the property's historic significance and integrity, CRM TECH concurs with the previous determination that the Town and Country Center is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources with a local level of significance. Therefore, it appears to meet CEQA's definition of a "historical resource."

PROJECT EFFECT ASSESSMENT

CEQA establishes that "a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment" (PRC §21084.1). Since the two locally designated "historic sites" on the Desert Fashion Plaza property and the Town and Country Center complex have been determined to qualify as "historical resources," any "substantial adverse change" that the proposed project may cause to these properties will be considered "a significant effect on the environment." "Substantial adverse change," according to PRC §5020.1(q), "means demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration such that the significance of a historical resource would be impaired."

As created by the City of Palm Springs, the two "historic sites" on the Desert Fashion Plaza property are purely commemorative in nature, and the property today bears no physical vestiges of its past associated with the significance of the sites. Furthermore, given the

extensive ground disturbances that occurred with the construction of the existing buildings, it is unlikely for any substantial and intact archaeological remains to have survived from the historic period. Therefore, the redevelopment of this property will not cause an adverse effect to the significance of the two "historic sites" as long as their presence and local historic value are properly recognized and acknowledged by the proposed project.

On the Town and Country Center property, the current project plans call for the demolition of all existing buildings in preparation of redevelopment, which clearly constitutes a "substantial adverse change" in the significance and integrity of this "historical resource." In order for the project to proceed in compliance with CEQA provisions on cultural resources, the prevention or mitigation of its potential effect on the Town and Country Center complex will be required, as outlined below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to prevent or mitigate the proposed project's potential effects on the Town and Country Center and the two "historic sites" on the Desert Fashion Plaza property, CRM TECH presents the following recommendations to the project proponent and the City of Palm Springs:

DESERT FASHION PLAZA PROPERTY

Since no physical remnants of the buildings commemorated through the designation of the two "historic sites" on this property are present today, project effect on these sites can be easily avoided by recognizing and promulgating the significance of the property in local history. For that purpose, CRM TECH recommends the dedication or rededication, as the case may be, of on-site commemorative signs or displays at the approximate locations as part of the proposed project.

TOWN AND COUNTRY CENTER

In protecting a significant historic building, one of the most common options is to preserve the building at its existing location and in its existing conditions. In the case of the Town and Country Center, however, simply preserving the complex in the existing condition does not best serve the fundamental objective of conveying the important aspects and period in its history and the history of downtown Palm Springs due to its compromised integrity, especially in terms of workmanship, feeling, and association. To accomplish that objective, restoration of the buildings in the complex to their original appearance, as shown in historic photographs and, if available, Jones and Williams' original design would be more desirable.

Based on these considerations, and in order to prevent or mitigate the proposed projects' potential effect on the Town and Country Center, CRM TECH recommends two project alternatives with regards to this property, as listed below.

- *Alternative 1:* The Town and Country Center complex be preserved, rehabilitated, restored to its historic appearance, and incorporated into the project, if feasible.

The goal of this alternative is to restore the original characteristics of the complex during its heyday as a bustling center of commerce at the heart of downtown Palm Springs. If carried out in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, such restoration may qualify the Town and Country Center property for future tax benefits under various federal and state historic preservation incentive programs.

Despite the widespread changes that occurred over the past six decades, the majority of the crucial structural and architectural alterations to the complex are superficial and potentially reversible, with the possible exception of the added building occupying part of the courtyard. However, a detailed adaptive use study may be needed in order to identify systematically all existing structural and architectural features to be preserved, restored, "tolerated," or eliminated. In addition, the structural integrity of the existing buildings and the economic feasibility of revitalizing the Town and Country Center, a vital step in restoring the historic feeling of the property, remain to be explored by the appropriate experts.

- *Alternative 2:* The following mitigation measures be implemented if the demolition, destruction, relocation, or substantial alteration of the Town and Country Center complex cannot be avoided:
 - A comprehensive documentation program be completed on the complex prior to redevelopment of the property.

Due to the local nature of the complex's significance, procedures comparable to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), which are often applied in similar documentation of historical buildings, do not appear to be an appropriate approach in this case. Instead, the recommended scope of work consists of detailed architectural description, photographic recordation, scaled mapping, and compilation of the history of the property. Some of these procedures, namely the building description and the historical research, have in fact been completed through previous recordation and the present study. The results of the documentation program should be curated at the appropriate local cultural resources information repositories for easy public access, such as the City of Palm Springs and the Eastern Information Center.

- Any future construction on the property be carefully crafted and reviewed to ensure compatibility with the historical character of the Town and Country Center and the surrounding area of downtown Palm Springs in terms of size, scale, material, texture, architectural features, and aesthetic feeling.
- The local historic value of the Town and Country Center be recognized through commemorative signs or displays at its current site.
- The project proponent and/or the City pursue further consultation with cultural representatives of the local community for other means to minimize or mitigate the proposed project's potential impact on the historical characteristics of the property and the surrounding neighborhood.

If either of these alternatives is incorporated into the proposed project, CRM TECH further recommends to the City of Palm Springs that potential effect on the Town and Country Center, a "historical resource" under CEQA, will have been prevented or mitigated to a level less than significant. Accordingly, the project may then be cleared to proceed in compliance with CEQA provisions on cultural resources and the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

EVALUATION OF "THE VILLAGE" AS A POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

In analyzing the historic significance of the Town and Country Center in the context of Modernist architecture in downtown Palm Springs, CRM TECH recognizes that over the past few decades a number of buildings that contributed materially to the Modernist character of the area have been demolished or significantly altered. While individually the significance of the "loss" of these buildings varies greatly, the cumulative effects of this development on the architectural heritage of downtown Palm Springs has yet to be studied adequately. As the remaining mid-20th century Modernist buildings continue to age, and as the pressure to revitalize prime downtown commercial properties continues to mount, more redevelopment proposals involving such buildings can be anticipated.

In order to facilitate the effective assessment of cumulative effects of past and future redevelopment and infill development projects on Palm Springs' well-recognized Modernist architectural heritage, CRM TECH recommends that the City of Palm Springs pursue an intensive, systematic historical resources survey to document and evaluate the area traditionally known as "the Village" in its entirety as a potential historic district. Due to the size and complexity of the area, a systematic effort like this would be necessary to ensure the proper identification of its historical characteristics and essential elements for future cultural resources management considerations.

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**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/HISTORIAN/ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN
Bai "Tom" Tang, M.A.**

Education

- 1988-1993 Graduate Program in Public History / Historic Preservation, UC Riverside.
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1993-1994 Adjunct Professor, Riverside Community College, Mt. San Jacinto College, U.C. Riverside, Chapman University, and San Bernardino Valley College.
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- 2003- Historian/Report Writer, CRM TECH, Riverside/Colton, California.
• Writer/co-author of cultural resources reports for CEQA and NHPA Section 106 compliance;
• Historic context development, historical/archival research, oral historical interviews, consultation with local historical societies;
• Historic building surveys and recordation, research in architectural history.
- 2002-2003 Teaching Assistant, Religious Studies Department, University of California, Riverside.
- 1997-1999 Reporter, *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, Ontario, California.
1991-1997 Reporter, *The Press-Enterprise*, Riverside, California.

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• Surveys, excavations, mapping, and records searches.

Honors and Awards

- 2000-2002 Dean's Honors List, University of California, Riverside.

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- 2003- Historian/Report Writer, CRM TECH, Riverside/Colton, California.
• Writer/co-author of cultural resources reports for CEQA and NHPA Section 106 compliance;
• Historic context development, historical/archival research, oral historical interviews, consultation with local historical societies;
• Historic building surveys and recordation, research in architectural history.
- 2002-2003 Teaching Assistant, Religious Studies Department, University of California, Riverside.
- 1997-1999 Reporter, *Inland Valley Daily Bulletin*, Ontario, California.
1991-1997 Reporter, *The Press-Enterprise*, Riverside, California.

Memberships

- California Council for the Promotion of History.
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PROJECT ARCHAEOLOGIST
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Education

- 2004 B.A., Anthropology/Law and Society, University of California, Riverside.

Professional Experience

- 2004- Project Archaeologist, CRM TECH, Riverside/Colton, California.
• Surveys, excavations, mapping, and records searches.

Honors and Awards

- 2000-2002 Dean's Honors List, University of California, Riverside.