



HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: January 14, 2020

NEW BUSINESS

SUBJECT: GLENN AND JUDITH HUDGENS, OWNERS, REQUESTING APPROVAL FOR ALTERATION OF THE LANDSCAPE, HARDSCAPE AND PERIMETER GARDEN WALLS AT THE HUGH STEPHENS RESIDENCE, CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE #76, LOCATED AT 645 EAST MORONGO ROAD (KL)

FROM: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

The owners are requesting approval to make improvements to the landscape, replace a badly deteriorated driveway, hardscape changes, add a fountain feature, and improve security and privacy with new perimeter garden walls, fences and gates.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the alterations as proposed with the following conditions:

1. Pursuant to Zoning Code Section 93.02.00, ("Walls, Fences and Landscaping") Walls and fences along Morongo Road within five (5) feet of the property line shall not exceed 4.5 feet in height. Walls set back at least five (5) feet shall not exceed 5 feet in height. Walls and fences along Calle Palo Fierro may not exceed 6 feet in height.
2. An encroachment agreement between the property owner and the City is required for walls and fences proposed in the roadway right-of-way.
3. Gates and fences to be painted the dark brown sample color.
4. Decorative gravel at the perimeter shall be natural sand color, ("Palm Springs Gold", "Brimstone" or equal) not dark grey, consistent with the City's Technical Assistance Guide.

PRIOR ACTIONS:

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
2010	City Council designated the Hugh Stephens Residence a "Class 1 historic site .
2018	The City Council approved a Mills Act historic property preservation agreement for the property.
2018	The HSPB approved proposed alterations to add an accessory dwelling unit and an addition to the primary residence including removal of roof-

mounted mechanical equipment.

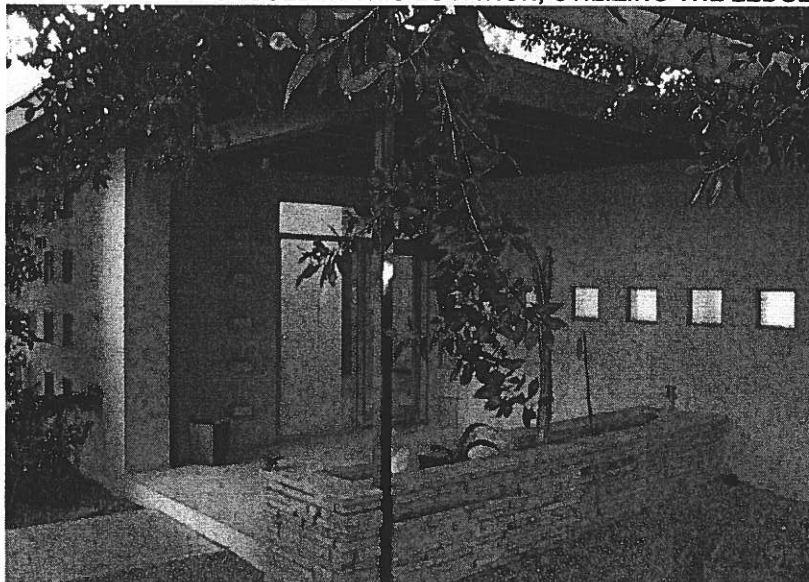
BACKGROUND:

In 1949, Dr. Hugh Stephens commissioned the architectural firm of Clark & Frey to design the single family dwelling at 645 Morongo Road. The historic resources report (“the 2010 report”) authored by Patrick McGrew attributes the design of the home to architect John Porter Clark. Stephens lived in the home until his death in 1984. Page 13 of the 2010 report notes, “*The property is heavily landscaped rendering the home virtually invisible from the street. So important is the building’s setting that the entire feeling and association of the building to its site would be seriously compromised if the property were sub-divided.*” However no drawings or early photographs are known to exist that show the original landscape design intent for the property.

Following is a chronology of construction and additions made to the Hugh Stephens Residence:

- 1951: Construction of the Hugh Stephens Residence was completed.
- 1956: A swimming pool was added.
- 1986: A front porch roof, ledgestone planter and column were added.
- 2002: A fire substantially damaged parts of the home and building permits were issued for its reconstruction.
- 2005: A spa and perimeter block wall were added.
- 2010: Class 1 historic site designation by the City Council.
- 2014: A photovoltaic system was added to the roof of the home.
- 2018: The HSPB issued approval for additions to the Stephens Residence including bedrooms, an accessory dwelling unit and relocation of mechanical units from the roof.

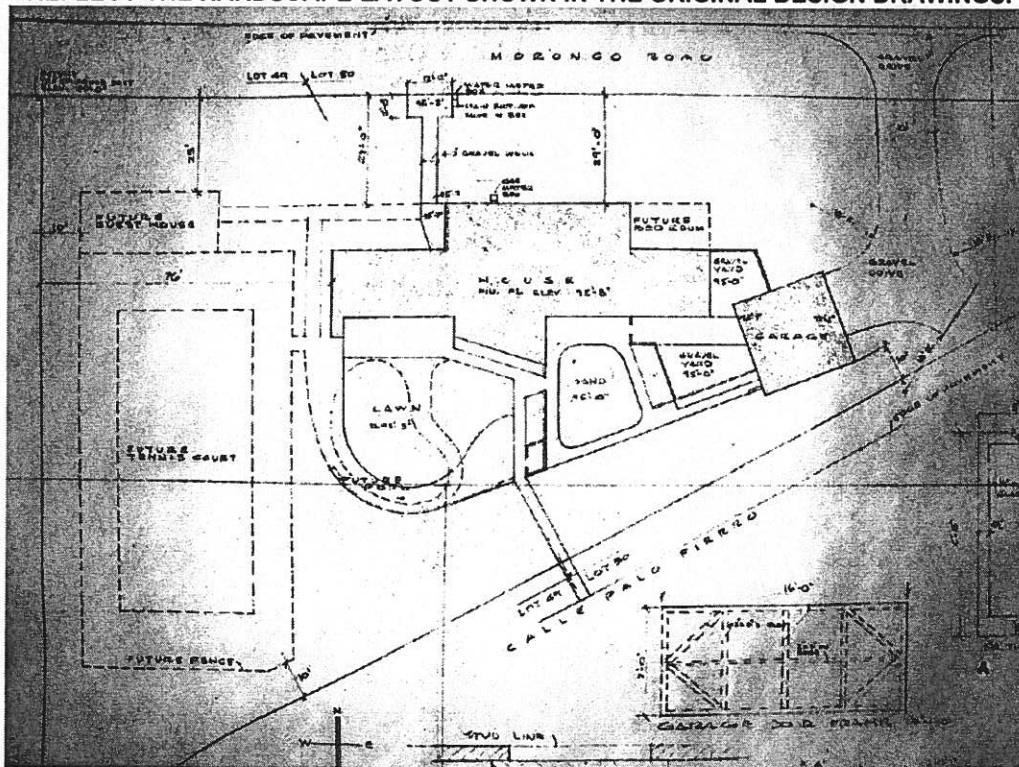
BELOW THE FRONT ENTRANCE PORCH ROOF COLUMN AND STONE PLANTER WERE ADDED IN 1986. A NEW FOUNTAIN FEATURE IS PROPOSED IN THIS LOCATION, UTILIZING THE LEDGESTONE PLANTER.



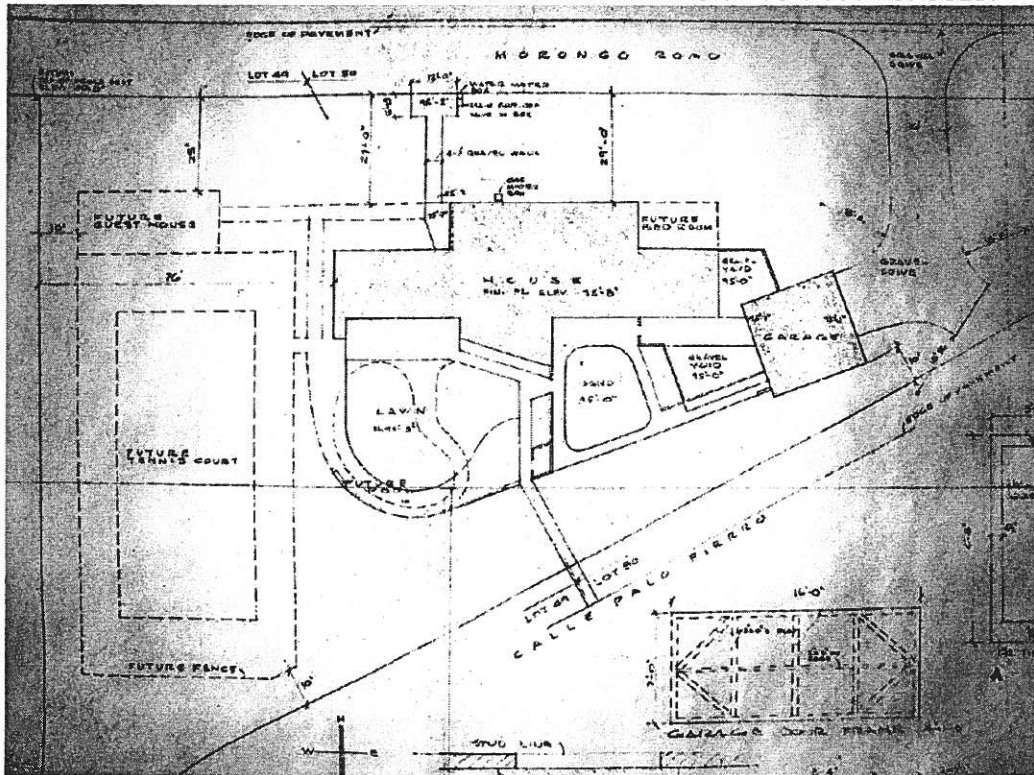
THE AERIAL PHOTO BELOW SHOWS THE OUTLINE OF THE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED CASITA (UPPER RIGHT) AND THE LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE AS IT PRESENTLY EXISTS.



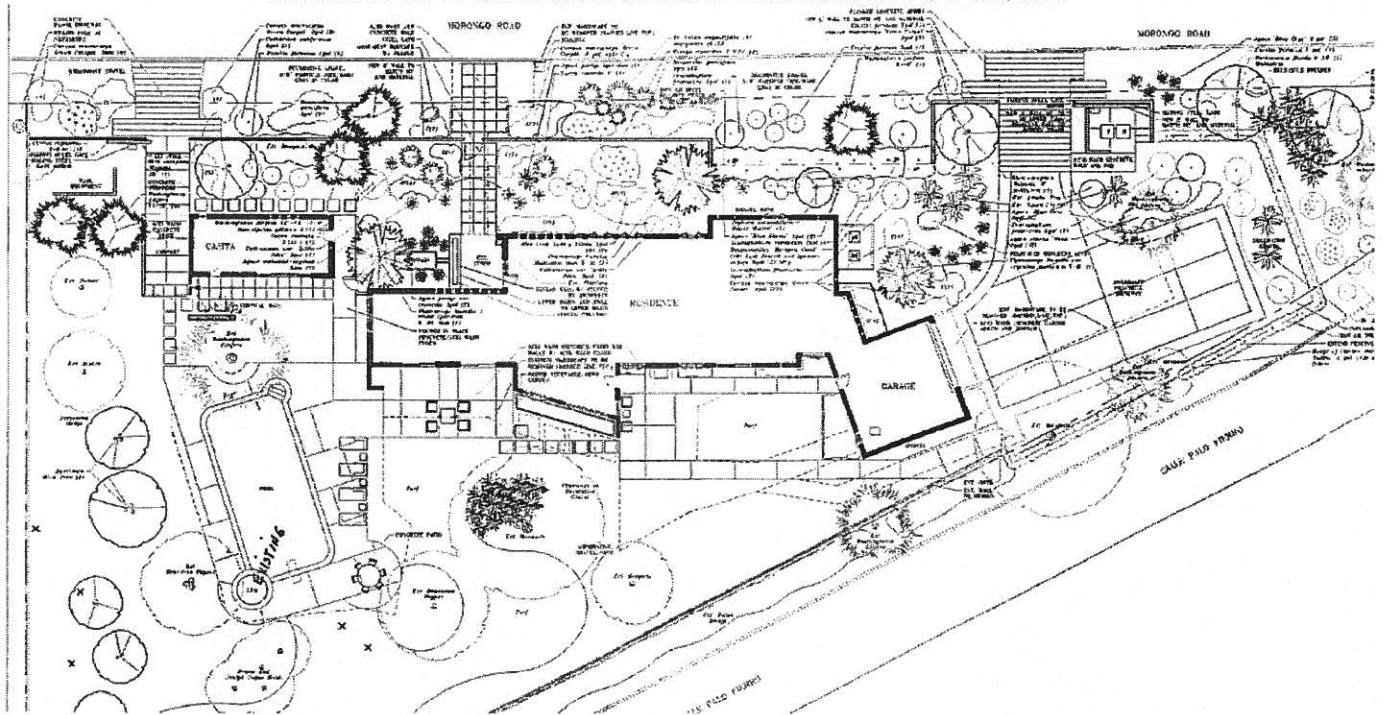
THE DRAWING BELOW SHOWS THE ORIGINAL SITE LAYOUT. THE EXISTING HARDSCAPE ABOVE DOES NOT REFLECT THE HARDSCAPE LAYOUT SHOWN IN THE ORIGINAL DESIGN DRAWINGS.



BELOW IS A COMPARISON OF THE ORIGINAL SITE DESIGN TO THE PROPOSED.



BELOW IS THE PROPOSED LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE DESIGN.



The proposed hardscape design is more rectilinear than the original, however panels of turf surrounded by walkways are evident in both the original site plan and that which is currently proposed. The swimming pool was constructed where the tennis court was originally shown. The proposed square walkway slabs are reflective of the pattern of square openings seen on the main structure. The direct walkway approach from the street to the main entry is consistent with the original plan. The proposed seating patio south of the living room is consistent with the original hardscape plan also.

A new raised vegetable and herb garden is proposed immediately south of the kitchen windows, a small fountain is proposed in the ledgestone planter that was added in 1986, and new concrete flatwork is proposed around the swimming pool. The proposed new perimeter walls and fences are proposed in earth tone colors that are complementary to those currently on the original house, although it is not known whether the home's current colors reflect the original colors. Although the existing hardscape and current landscape are not entirely consistent with the original site plan, the proposed plan has many aspects that reinforce and enhance the layout and features of the original Clark & Frey site plan.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed alterations involve new landscaping, hardscape (including a new driveway sidewalks and patios), new perimeter garden walls, fences and gates, and a new fountain at the main entrance.

Pursuant to Palm Springs Municipal Code ("PSMC") 8.05.110 ("*Alterations to Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Sites*"), part "E"; "*Criteria and Findings for Alteration of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources*", in considering a request for alterations to a Class 1 historic site, the HSPB shall evaluate the application and make findings for conformance to the following criteria:

1. *That the proposed alteration does not significantly impact or materially impair the character-defining features of the historic resource as listed in the resolution for historic designation, or, where a character-defining feature may be impacted, the proposed alteration minimizes that impact as much as possible.*

The City Council resolution designating the Hugh Stephens Residence as a Class 1 historic site identified the following character-defining features:

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

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

The project proposes to enhance the landscape with new drought-tolerant species, replace deteriorated concrete drives and walkways, and install new perimeter garden walls, fences and gates. The existing landscape and hardscape are not defining characteristics of the site, nor do they appear to be original when compared to the site plan shown earlier in this staff report. For these reasons, the proposed alterations do not significantly impact the character-defining features of the site. The heavily landscaped condition described in the 2010 report will be enhanced by the addition of new drought-tolerant plants and trees. The project thus conforms to this finding.

2. *That the proposed alteration will assist in restoring the historic resource to its original appearance where applicable, or will substantially aid its preservation or enhancement as a historic resource.*

The proposed alterations will substantially enhance the Hugh Stephens Residence by replacing a badly deteriorated asphalt driveway, increasing the amount of trees and plants on the site, creating hardscape features (walkways and patios) that strengthen the integration of the new casita with the existing house and swimming pool, and the walls and fences will enhance the security and privacy of the site. The proposed alterations conform to this finding.

3. *That any additions to the historic resource are consistent with the massing, proportions, materials, and finishes of the existing historic resource, and: (i) can be distinguished from the existing historic resource as may be appropriate; or (ii) are indistinguishable from the historic resource as may be appropriate, and where such alterations are clearly documented in the City's archival file for the historic resource as being non-original to the historic resource.*

There are no additions proposed. The current landscape and hardscape bear little resemblance to the hardscape shown on the original design drawings. The proposed landscape and hardscape enhance the livability of the site, replace a badly deteriorated asphalt driveway with a new concrete drive and generally are more reflective of the original site plan than what currently exists on the site. Thus the proposed alterations conform to this finding.

4. *That, in cases where Federal funds are to be utilized in financing the proposed alterations, the alterations are consistent with the Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, as put forth by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.*

There are no federal funds associated with the subject project.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The proposed exterior alterations to the Hugh Stephens Residence are deemed a project under the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Pursuant to Section 15064.5 “*Determining the Significance of Impacts on Historical and Unique Archeological Resources*”, the property is deemed a historic resource under CEQA because the Hugh Stephens Residence is a listed Class 1 historic site (HSPB #76).

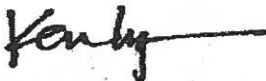
According to CEQA, a project with an effect that may cause a “*substantial adverse change*” in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a “significant effect” on that resource. “Substantial adverse change” includes alteration of the immediate surroundings of the historic resource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

The proposed alterations involve landscape and hardscape improvements and do not cause a substantial adverse change to the historic resource on the site nor do they materially impair any of the character-defining features on the site.

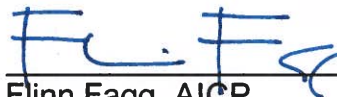
CEQA allows for a Class 31 Categorical Exemption (*Historical Resource Restoration / Rehabilitation*) for projects involving maintenance, repair, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration, preservation, conservation or reconstruction of historical resources in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (1995), Weeks and Grimmer. The City has concluded that the project meets this criterion and therefore has determined that the project is Categorical Exempt from further analysis under CEQA.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed alterations will not adversely impact the character-defining features of the Hugh Stephens Residence. The alterations conform to the required findings outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.110. The proposed hardscape plan is reinforces many aspects of the original site plan that no longer exist in the current conditions at the site. Staff recommends approval subject to conditions.



Ken Lyon, RA, Associate Planner
Historic Preservation Officer



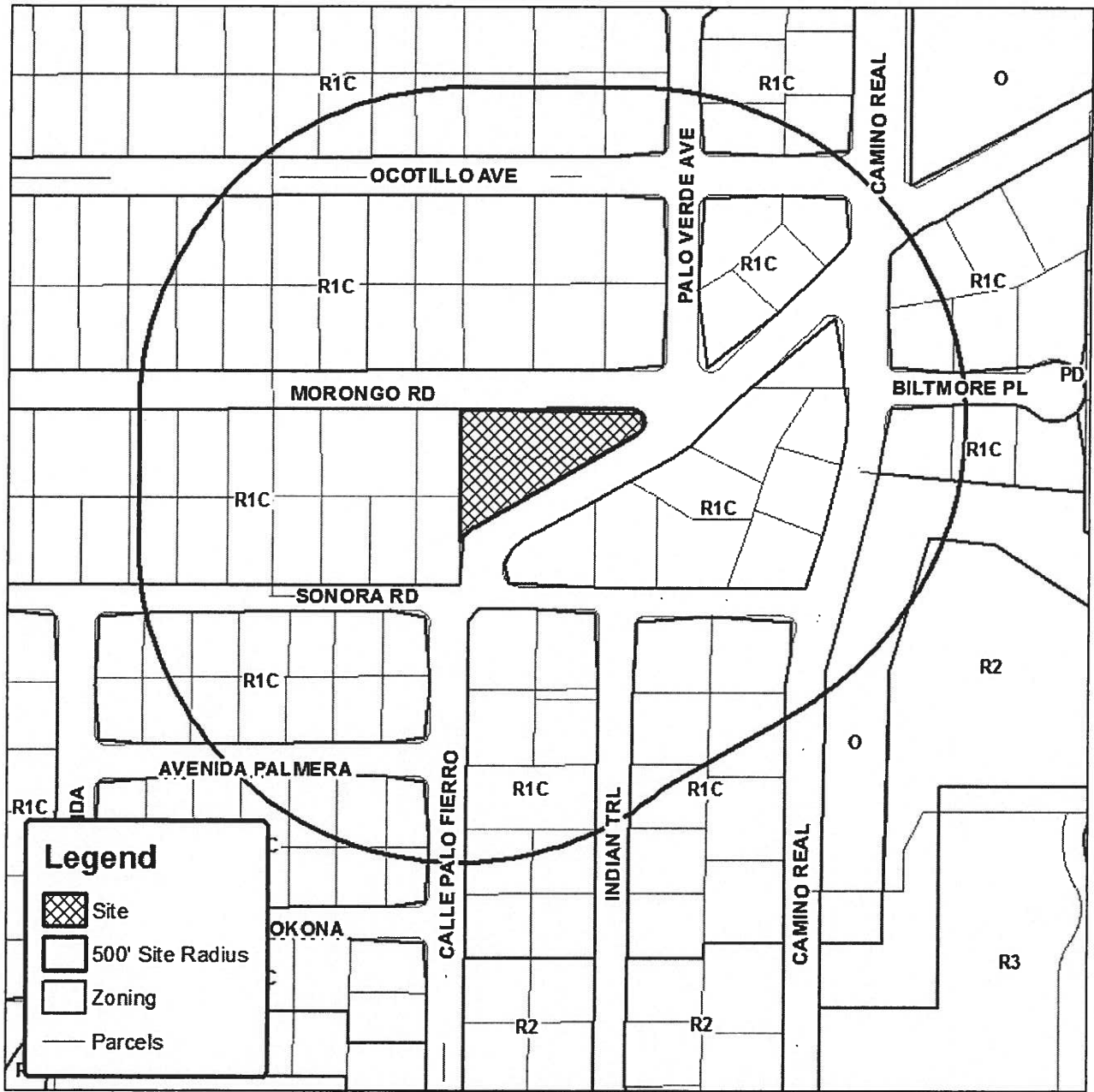
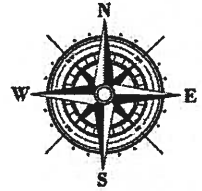
Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Planning Services

Attachments:

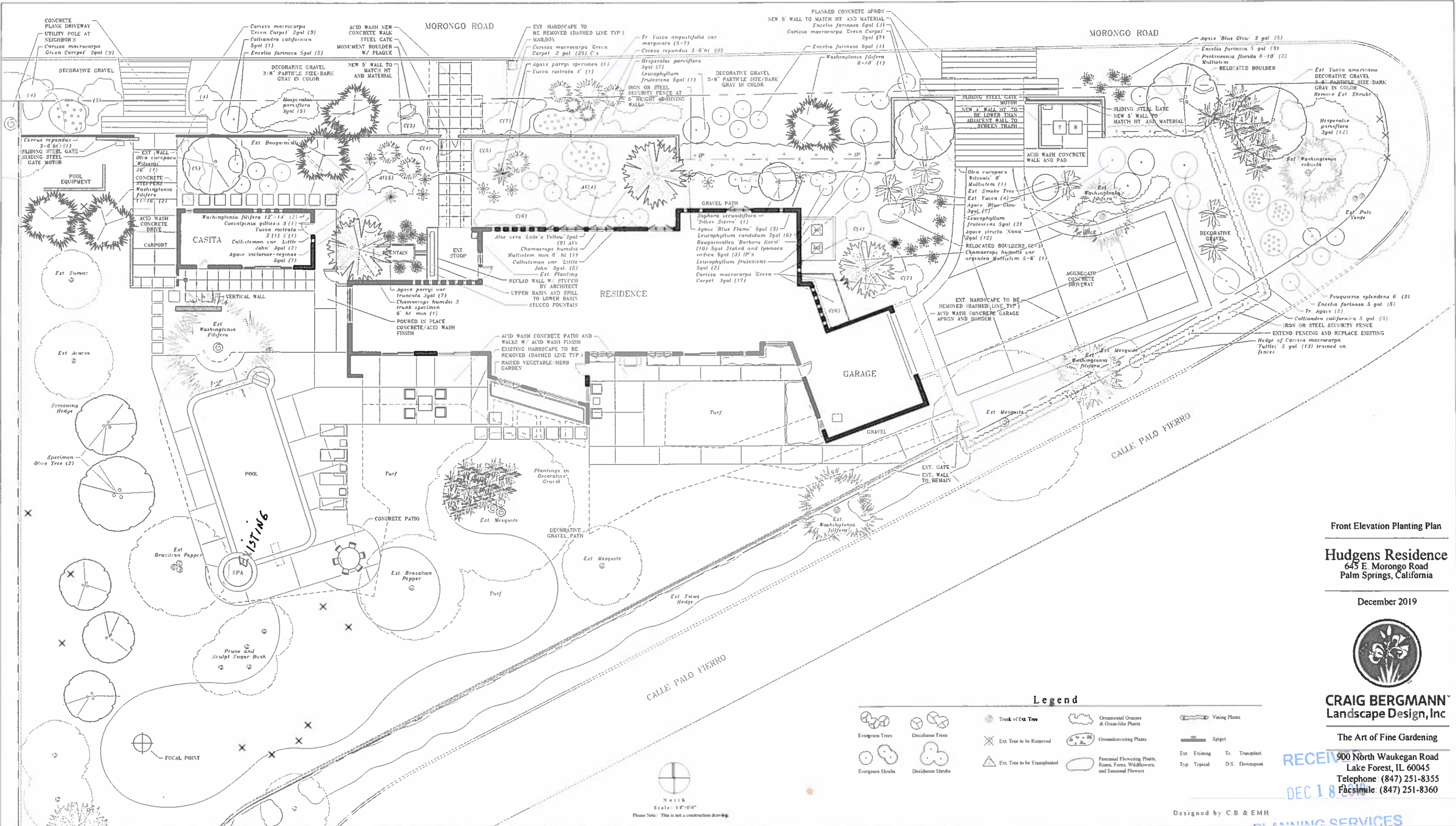
1. Vicinity Map.
2. Site Plan and details
3. Plant list and photos.
4. Color samples for walls, fences and gates.



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
HSPB 76: 645 E MORONGO ROAD



Front Elevation Planting Plan

Hudgens Residence
 645 E. Morongo Road
 Palm Springs, California

December 2019



CRAIG BERGMANN
 Landscape Design, Inc

The Art of Fine Gardening

RECEIVED
 DEC 18 2019
 900 North Waukegan Road
 Lake Forest, IL 60045
 Telephone (847) 251-8355
 Facsimile (847) 251-8360

Legend

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North
 Scale: 1/8"=1'-0"
 Please Note: This is not a construction drawing.

Designed by C.B. & E.M.H.

PLANNING SERVICES
 DEPARTMENT

3.4086

Hudgens Residence - 645 E. Morongo Road Palm Springs, California



Caesalpinia gilliesii



Calliandra californica



Callistemon 'Little John'



Carissa macrocarpa 'Green Carpet'



Carissa macrocarpa 'Tuttlei'



Cereus repandus



Encelia farinosa



Fouquieria splendens



Leucophyllum candidum



Leucophyllum frutescens



Olea europaea 'Wilsonii'



Parkinsonia florida



Sophora secundiflora 'Silver Sierra'



Yucca rostrata



Chamaerops humilis



Chamaerops humilis var. argentea



Washingtonia filifera



Agave 'Blue Flame'



Agave 'Blue Glow'



Agave parryi (Specimen)



Agave parryi var. truncata



Agave stricta 'Nana'



Agave victoriae-reginae



Aloe Vera 'Lode's Yellow'



Hesperaloe parviflora



Bougainvillea 'Barbara Karst'



Ipomoea indica

DRIVEWAY GATES AND FRONT GATE



**CONSTRUCTION WILL BE SIMILAR TO THE GATE PICTURED
AND WILL BE POWDER COATED IN BENJAMIN MOORE'S "BEAR CREEK"**

STUCCO WALL COLOR

GATE COLOR

