



ARCHITECTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 18, 2020

SUBJECT: REQUEST BY LAS PALMAS MEDICAL PLAZA, FOR A MINOR ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW FOR A PHASED RENOVATION OF ALL CAMPUS PLANTER AREAS INCLUDING THE PARKING LOT LOCATED AT 555 EAST TACHEVAH DRIVE, ZONE PD 72, SECTION 11 (CASE NO. 3.0094 MAA). (GM)

FROM: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

This is a request for the Architectural Advisory Committee to review a Minor Architectural Application for a phased renovation of all campus planter areas within the Las Palmas Medical Plaza. The project is proposed to be completed in five (5) phases divided into the perimeter streetscapes, interior courtyards, and parking lot area. The current landscaping has become overgrown, needing constant maintenance and the new landscape plan will enhance the Mediterranean architectural style and provide shade trees for the parking lot areas.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend approval to the Planning Director with the following condition:

1. Trees removed along the street frontages to be replaced at a one for one ratio.

BACKGROUND:

<i>Most Recent Ownership</i>	
09/10/2002	Desert Healthcare District
<i>Notification</i>	
05/14/2020	Email notification sent to the Little Tuscany, Racquet Club West, Racquet Club Estates, Vista Norte, Rancho Vista Estates, Rogers Ranch, El Mirador, Movie Colony East, The Movie Colony, Old Las Palmas, Vista Las Palmas, Mid Town, Baristo, Casa del Sol, and Sunrise Park Neighborhood Organizations.
<i>Field Check</i>	
May 2020	Staff visited site to observe existing conditions
<i>Site Area</i>	
Net Area	4.13-acres

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Las Palmas Medical Plaza which was built in 1978 can be described as an excellent example of desert Mediterranean architecture with the use of clay barrel tile roofs, smooth white stucco, heavy dark wood beams with wide eaves, metal work for railings and light fixtures, wide arches, Spanish tile, and brick accents. The landscaping within the various courtyards, planter beds, parking lot, and perimeter areas has become overgrown and is lacking in areas. A significant number of existing trees have reached maturity and have been severely trimmed over the years and/or are in the process of dying.

The applicant seeks approval to renovate the entire landscape area to include the removal of multiple mature trees to be replaced with new trees within 24" and 36" boxes. Understory plants in raised beds and along the streetscapes will be replaced with a variety of accents and shrubs. The applicant describes the project in the justification letter and states that the goal is to provide year round color with the removal of old overgrown shrubs currently obstructing the architectural style to be replaced with water efficient plants that create outdoor plazas that are natural extensions of the indoor spaces. The landscape renovation project is to be completed in five (5) phases as described below.

Via Miraleste Streetscape – Phase 1 (see Sheets L-2, LM-1, and L-1.2)

The streetscape along Via Miraleste is a wide planter area between the street sidewalk and an existing low masonry wall on the east side of the property. The proposal will remove seven (7) Bottle trees and two (2) African Shumac trees as well as other understory plantings. The replacement plan will include four (4) Chilean Mesquite trees in a 24" box plus two (2) new fan palms and many understory plants like Agave, Desert Spoon, Green Carpet, Lantana, Rosemary, and Yellow Bells. Hardscape to include 2"-4" diameter mortar in cobble stone along with 2" minimum layer of Mohave Gold decomposed granite, boulders and rubble. *Phase 1 to be completed in first month.*

Staff recommends that two (2) additional shade street trees be planted to replace trees being removed.

Tachevah Drive Streetscape – Phase 2 (see Sheets L-16, LM-1)

Phase 2 will renovate the most visible portion of the project which fronts along Tachevah Drive. The medical building sits about twenty-five (25') feet back from the sidewalk leaving large flat areas for landscaping which is currently void of vegetation other than several mature trees and palms. The proposal will be to remove fourteen (14) Jacaranda and Bottle trees to be replaced with five (5) Mesquite, and six (6) Fruitless Olives. Under story plants include Bougainvillea, Little John, Mexican Tree Grass, Yellow Bells and others.

The plan shows the use of mounding at eighteen (18") inches high to break up the large area and provide interest and variety. Hardscape to include 2"-4" diameter mortar in cobble stone along with 2" minimum layer of Mohave Gold decomposed granite, boulders and rubble. *Phase 2 to be completed in 1-2 months out.*

Interior Courtyards – Phase 3 (see Sheets LM-1, L-3.0, L-3.1, L-3.2)

The interior courtyards consist of wide covered arcades with large raised red brick planter beds, arches, and stone fountains (non-functioning). The landscaping currently is a variety of overgrown shrubs that do not have a common theme or relationship. The proposal is to remove the smaller plants leaving the larger palms and replace them with understory plants to include Carissa, Boxwood, Trailing Elephant, Yucca, Yellow Bells, Desert Rose, Salvia, and Duranta. The planter beds will be filled with 2” minimum layer of Mohave Gold decomposed granite. *Phase 3 to be completed in 1-2 months out.*

Parking Lot – Phase 4 (see Sheets L-2, LM-1, D-1, L-1.1, L-5)

The large parking lot which is located behind the medical buildings is accessed through a main entrance driveway which has a guardhouse and a motor plaza with a fountain (non-functional). The existing Date Palms that line the main entrance will remain with understory plants replaced. The parking lot has many islands that currently contain Yellow Oleander which will be replaced with 24” box Tipu trees providing shading along with other plants to include Bougainvillea, Red Yucca, Little John, Elephant Bush, or Carissa. *Phase 4 to be 4 months out.*

The Alley – Phase 5 (see Sheets L-2, L-2.8, L-2.9)

The Alley is the landscape area between the parking lot and Via Eytel Drive which is the boundary to The Movie Colony neighborhood and includes a pedestrian walkway leading from Avenida Palos Verdes to Tachevah Drive. The proposal includes leaving existing Eucalyptus, Bottle, and African Shumac trees and adding Green Carpet, Duranta, and other understory plantings. Groundcover will be 3/8” Mohave Gold decomposed granite. *Phase 5 to be 2 months out.*



Aerial of Las Palmas Medical Plaza

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW GUIDELINES:

The Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) shall review the proposed project in accordance with the guidelines stated in Section 94.04.00(D) of the Palm Springs Zoning Code:

Table 2.1 Architectural Review (Section 94.04)			
	Guidelines	Compliance	Staff Evaluation
1	Does the proposed development provide a desirable environment for its occupants?	Yes	The Las Palmas Medical Plaza is a large 4-acre site with many opportunities to provide lush and efficient landscaping. The proposed renovation will replace dead and overgrown plants with new trees, shrubs and understory plants providing color and variety. New trees planted within the large parking lot area will provide shade for vehicles thus enhancing the environment for visitors and tenants.
2	Is the proposed development compatible with the character of adjacent and surrounding developments?	Yes	The project proposes desert landscape, which is compatible with the landscaping across the street in the City park on the east side of Via Miraleste and with the Desert Regional Hospital across Tachevah Drive. The proposed drought-tolerant plants is compatible with the character of other development in the site's vicinity.
3	Is the proposed development of good composition, materials, textures, and colors?	Yes	The medical plaza complex has a large corner street frontage with wide and varied areas for plantings. The proposed water efficient plants are appropriate and of good composition in an area adjacent to a public street consistent with City guidelines.
4	Harmonious relationship with existing and proposed adjoining developments and in the context of the immediate neighborhood / community, avoiding both excessive variety and monotonous repetition, but allowing similarity of style, if warranted.	Yes	The project proposes the use of drought-tolerant materials that are commonly observed in landscape projects in the City. The proposed desert landscape will visually distinguish the project site from its surroundings without compromising compatibility.
5	Consistency of composition and treatment	Yes	The project proposes similar landscape composition and treatment throughout the site.


	Guidelines	Compliance	Staff Evaluation
6	Location and type of planting, with regard for desert climate conditions. Preservation of specimen and landmark trees upon a site, with proper irrigation to insure maintenance of all plant materials	Yes	The proposed plant materials are generally consistent with the materials recommended by the Coachella Valley Water District and are appropriate for the local climate and landscape. With proper irrigation and maintenance practice, the project will further enhance the aesthetics of the property.

CONCLUSION:

The proposed project is consistent with Section 94.04 (Architectural Review) and Section 8.60.060 (Water Efficient Landscaping - Landscape Design Plan) of the City of Palm Springs Municipal Code, as well as the Technical Assistance for Turf Removal and Water Efficient Landscapes guidelines. Staff recommends approval of the proposed project with the addition of two (2) trees to be added to the proposed in Phase 1 along Via Miraleste.



Glenn Mlaker, AICP
Associate Planner



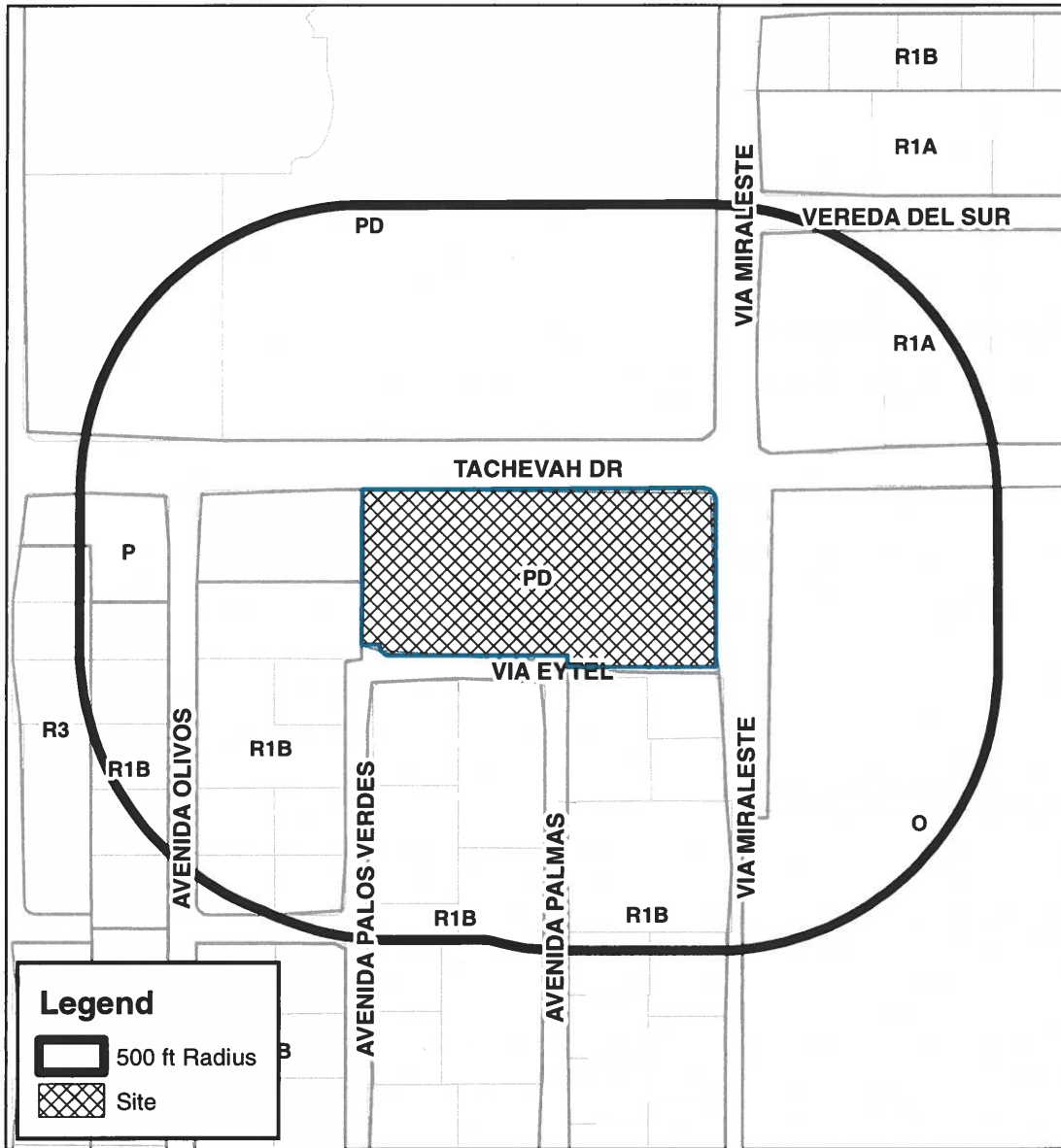
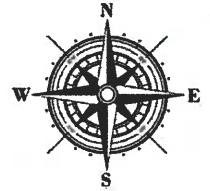
David Newell, AICP
Principal Planner

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity maps
2. Justification Letter
3. Site Photos
4. Phasing Plan
5. Landscape Plans



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Case # 3.0094 MAA
Las Palmas Medical Plaza
555 East Tachevah Drive

LANDSCAPE DESIGN THEME LAS PALMAS HEIGHTS MEDICAL PLAZA

Over time, the landscape has elapsed into a mixture of different styles and lacks an overall theme. Our goal is that the new landscape theme will maintain and enhance the Mediterranean architectural style.

To set the Medical Plaza apart, Olive Trees, Mediterranean fan palms, Carissa 'Green Carpet' and Bougainvillea plants for all year around color are part of the streetscapes area as the signature design for the project.

Tired old Jacaranda trees, old overgrown shrubs and old vines which are now obstructing the architectural style, will be removed and replaced with lush and efficient desert appropriate plant material to create repetition and continuity within the Medical Plaza.

The new landscape theme is intended to continue a cohesiveness that is peaceful, current and water efficient while enhancing the architecture and lifestyle of the project.

Design Objectives at the Las Palmas Heights Medical Plaza:

The following are the main objectives used for landscape and site design:

- a. To create landscape that is appropriate to the desert and reinforces the architectural image.
- b. To create outdoor plazas that are natural extensions of the indoor spaces, that are lush, fragrant and colorful for the patients to experience the healing of the space.
- c. To create outdoor spaces that ameliorate the climate by providing shade, shadow, texture and capture breezes.
- d. To utilize plants, that draw upon the region's heritage and respond to the unique climate and setting.
- e. To utilize plant palettes that are sensitive to water conservation and recognizing that this is not only responsible but also responds to an emerging trend in the desert communities, as is evident in local regulations.
- f. Canopy Trees were added in all the planters for the parking lot to provide shading.
- h. Boulders to match the existing earth tone ones were added along with earth tone color mortar in cobble and Mohave Gold Decomposed Granite on all planters.
- g. Up lights for the Canopy Trees along the Tachevah and Via Miraleste streetscape were added.

WARNING



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Neighbors are Watching to Report Suspicious Activity to Our Law Enforcement Agency



12/05/2020



12/05/2020



12/05/2020



12/05/2020

LAS PALMAS
MEDICAL
PLAZA

12/05/2020



12/05/2020



NO SMOKING

NO SMOKING

KEEP OFF GRAVEL

NO SMOKING

12/05/2020



← SW-101
CIVIL MUSEUM
MEDICAL GROUP

12/05/2020



12/05/2020



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