



HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE: OCTOBER 6, 2020

PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: AN APPLICATION BY THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS FOR POSSIBLE HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION OF THE PALM SPRINGS RACQUET CLUB, LOCATED AT 2743 NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE (APN'S 504-040-038, and 504-133-002), CASE HSPB #83. (KL).

FROM: Development Services Department

SUMMARY

In 2017, the HSPB voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council designate the Palm Springs Racquet Club as a Class 1 historic site. The recommendation was based upon a historic resources report written by the John Ash Group in 2004. The property owner had the property listed for sale and requested that the City Council Public Hearing be postponed. The property is still for sale, however at its September 2019 meeting, the HSPB again requested staff to prepare the HSPB's recommendation for City Council consideration.

Because of the length of time since the Ash Group's report was completed, the City commissioned a professional services firm to provide an updated analysis and report about the site to determine whether, in its current condition, the site is still eligible for consideration as a historic resource.

The report finds that the Racquet Club has historic significance, however it lacks historic integrity that would qualify it as a Class 1 / Landmark historic site. Rather, it is more appropriately considered eligible for designation as a Class 2 / Historic Merit historic resource.

The property owner does not support possible historic designation of the Racquet Club.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Open the public hearing and receive public testimony.
2. Close the public hearing and adopt Resolution HSPB #83-2020 "A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE "THE PALM SPRINGS RACQUET CLUB" LOCATED AT

2743 NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE AS A CLASS 2 / HISTORIC MERIT HISTORIC SITE, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS (APN 504-040-038 AND 504-133-002) HSPB #83.”

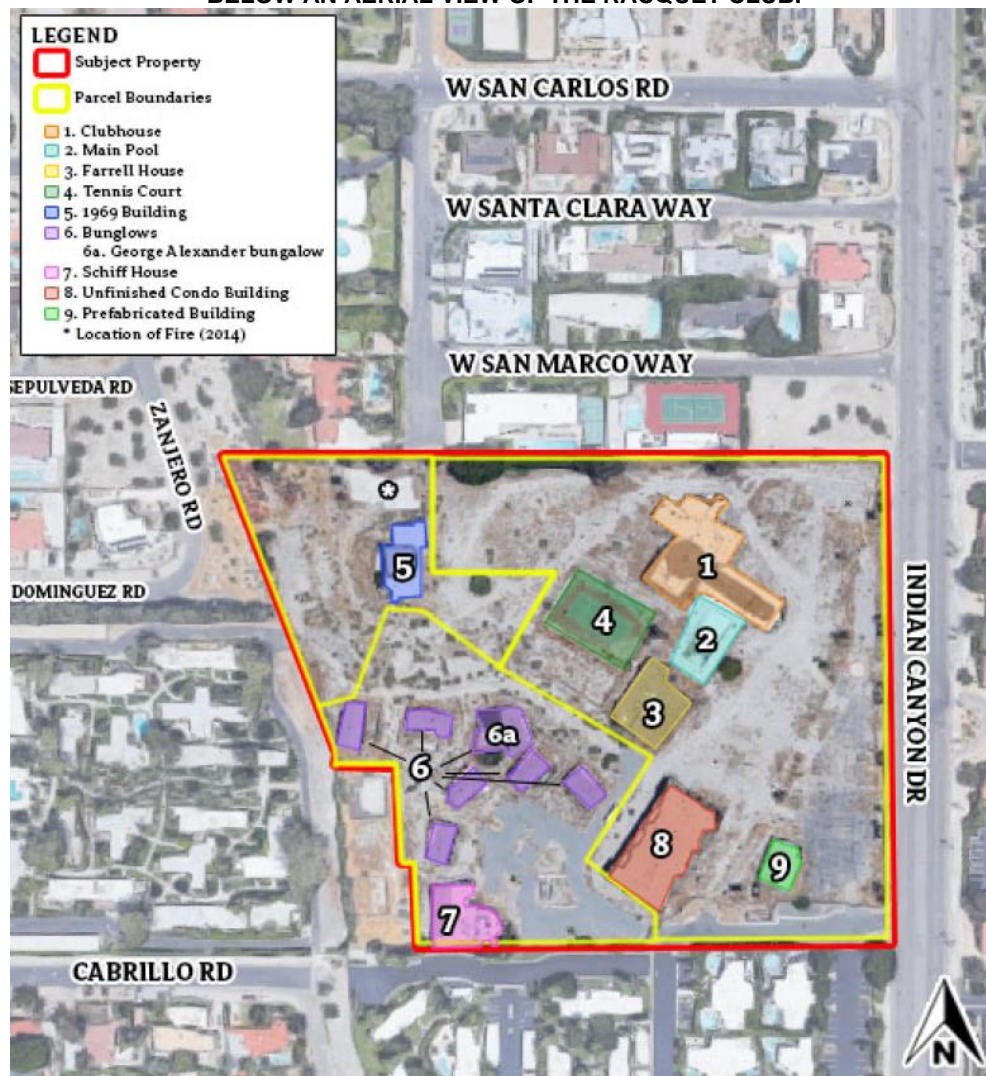
BACKGROUND AND SETTING:

A historic resources report prepared by Historic Resources Group (“HRG”) dated July 14, 2020 (“the report”) is the basis of this staff report.

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
September 2020	Site inspection by members of the HSPB and City Staff.

<i>Ownership Status</i>	
2011	Purchase by the current owner.

BELOW AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE RACQUET CLUB.



Currently the following buildings and features exist at the Racquet Club:

1. The Clubhouse (containing the Bamboo Room, the Bogert Dining Room and kitchen).
2. Swimming Pool.
3. Charlie Farrell Residence.
4. Tennis Court.
5. 1969 Apartment Building.
6. Seven Bungalows.
7. The Schiff Bungalow.
8. Unfinished Condominium Building.
9. Modular Construction Office Building.

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc...</i>	
Oct. 4, 2004	The owner commissioned the John Ash Group (“JAG”) to conduct a historic resource survey and report as part of a redevelopment proposal (Case 5.1052 PDD 313).
Sept. 13, 2005	HSPB reviewed a proposed mixed-use redevelopment of the Racquet Club (Case 5.1052) and recommended approval by the Planning Commission. ¹
May, 2012	HSPB initiated study on the Racquet Club site including the Charlie Farrell Residence to determine possible historic significance of the site.
Nov., 2013	Staff presented preliminary results of its study on the Racquet Club and the HSPB directed staff to provide further summary of its analysis.
Dec. 3, & Dec 16, 2013	Staff communicated with the owner by phone and in writing of the Board’s interest in further consideration of the historic significance of the site.
Dec. 10, 2013	Staff provided a report to the HSPB summarizing the potential historic significance of the site.
March 11, 2014	HSPB directed staff to contact the owner to arrange site visits.
May 13, 2014	Staff provided the HSPB with correspondence from the owner dated May 5, 2014 requesting that the HSPB not pursue a recommendation for Class 1 historic site designation until their redevelopment of the site was complete and declined the request for HSPB site visits. The HSPB tabled further study.
Oct. 6, 2016	HSPB included the Racquet Club in its top six work plan priorities for FY16/17.
Nov. 2, 2016	Staff sent written correspondence to the owner of the HSPB’s work plan.

¹ The Planning Commission referred the project to the HSPB for review and recommendation. A certificate of approval was not required because the Racquet Club was not a Class 1 site at that time.

April 11, 2017	HSPB directed staff to schedule site visits and schedule the matter for a noticed public hearing of the HSPB to consider possible recommendation to City Council.
April 20, 2017	Staff attempted contact with the real estate listing agent (Colliers) to seek permission to access the site, but received no response.
April 27, 2017	Staff sent written correspondence to the owner regarding the Board's intent to review the site at a public hearing on May 9, 2017.
May, 2017	Members of the HSPB observed the site from the public right-of-way.
May 9, 2017	HSPB voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council designate the Racquet Club as a Class 1 historic site.
June 21, 2017	The City Council directed the City Clerk to re-notice the public hearings due to noticing errors. (The public hearing of the City Council was not scheduled at the request of the property owner.)
Sept., 2019	The HSPB again requested staff to schedule site visits and schedule a public hearing for the board to consider making a possible recommendation to City Council for historic designation.
Sept. 2020	The HSPB conducted site visits accompanied by City staff.

ANALYSIS:

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

"...to stabilize and improve buildings, structures or areas which are considered to be of historical, architectural, archaeological or ecological value, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of historic resources for the education and welfare of the citizens."

Standard Conditions that apply to Class 2 Historic Sites or Resources

The following would apply to a Class 2 Historic Site or Resource:

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

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

Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources. A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic resource, provided both of the following findings (“a” and “b”) are met:

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

The report states that the Racquet Club exhibits exceptional historic significance as an early example of commercial recreational development in Palm Springs with a direct association with the tourism industry and the Hollywood social scene in the City, and for its association with actor, developer and former mayor Charlie Farrell. Beginning on page 30, the report evaluates the Racquet Club relative to the criteria findings in the City’s Municipal Code.

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

The report notes that the Racquet Club was host to several tennis tournaments in the 1950’s. Although previous surveys acknowledged that the tennis tournaments contributed to the allure and reputation of Palm Springs as a sophisticated glamorous destination, the HRG report notes these tournaments were consistent with other golf and tennis events occurring in Palm Springs and were not the primary reason that the Club achieved significance. Thus the report does not list “events” as a qualifying criterion.

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

The report identifies Charlie Farrell (1900 - 1990) as a person who made a meaningful contribution to local and national history both as owner, developer and manager of the Racquet Club, as an important person in the entertainment industry and as mayor of Palm Springs from 1947 to 1955. The report asserts that the Racquet Club is “*inextricably tied to Farrell’s productive life, being both his business and his primary residence for over twenty years.*” It notes that Farrell continued to appear in films and on television during his ownership of the Club and the Club even served as the setting for his television show. From 1938 until 1959 the Farrell’s lived in a single family residence at the Racquet Club.² Thus the Palm Springs Racquet Club qualifies as a historic resource under Criterion 2 for its association with Charlie Farrell.

² After Farrell sold the Racquet Club in 1959, the residence was renovated and expanded to accommodate commercial-recreational uses associated with the Club.

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

The report describes the Racquet Club as a unique example of recreational development in Palm Springs between the two World Wars. It was developed by celebrities to cater to a celebrity clientele and exemplifies Palm Springs' history as a getaway for the Hollywood elite from the 1930's through the 1960's.

The Racquet Club began as a small tennis club with a simple viewing gallery which drew its membership from celebrity friends and colleagues of original owners Charlie Farrell and Ralph Bellamy. In the 1940's the Club added its first overnight guest accommodations. Fifteen simple bungalows designed by master architect Albert Frey were constructed on the south side of a small, mostly dry water feature called "Netcher's Creek". These bungalows and many more that followed in the ensuing decades created quiet, secluded and private accommodations that were in contrast with the social hub of the Club which focused around the courts, a swimming pool, restaurant and the famous "Bamboo Room" cocktail lounge. Although the historic integrity of the bungalows has been compromised, collectively along with the commercial buildings on site, they contribute to an understanding of the Racquet Club's period of significance, as it evolved from a simple tennis club to an exclusive multi-faceted resort with a variety of guest accommodations and social and recreational amenities.

The report notes that the Racquet Club's significance continued through the post World War II period as services, amenities and features continued to be added to meet the increasing demand and interests of its celebrity clientele. The report defines the period of significance for the Racquet Club from 1934 to 1969.³ The Racquet Club is historically significant because it reflects the period in which Palm Springs was a favored getaway for celebrities from the movie industry which cemented Palm Springs' reputation as a glamorous resort destination. As such the report asserts that the Racquet Club qualifies as a historic site under Criterion 3, exemplifying the period in history when Palm Springs' rose in prominence as a favored destination for celebrities and those associated with the movie industry.

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

Most of the early buildings at the Racquet Club were constructed in a casual ranch style architecture with board and batten siding and wood shake shingle roofs that were popular in Palm Springs in the 1930's. This is best characterized in the Farrell residence shown below. The buildings are modest in scale with simple detailing.

³ Previous studies of the Racquet Club defined period of significance through 1960, however post-war improvements including the Schiff House and construction of additional tennis courts continued through 1969.

According to earlier historic resource reports, the bungalows were also originally clad in board and batten siding and wood shake roofs, however they are currently clad in stucco with cementitious shingle roofs. The extensive alterations that occurred on most of the buildings over time have significantly impaired their historic integrity and thus, the report concluded that the Racquet Club does not exhibit historic significance under Criterion 4.

BELOW BOARD AND BATTEN DETAILING AND WOOD SHAKE ROOF ON THE FARRELL RESIDENCE.



PHOTO CREDIT THE 2004 JOHN ASH GROUP REPORT

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

Beginning on page 33, the report discusses the association of the Racquet Club with master architect Albert Frey. Between 1945 and 1951, Frey designed fifteen (15) modest bungalows along the southern portion of the Racquet Club property. Eight of those including one referred to as “The Schiff Residence” remain on the site and the others have been demolished. The report states that the bungalows are “*simple, utilitarian buildings, and do not exemplify Frey’s groundbreaking work in Desert Modernism.*” In 1955, one of the bungalows was purchased by the Schiff family. The Schiffs commissioned Frey in 1961 to design an addition, which included a unique semi-circular glass-walled pool enclosure which featured a series of large round skylights in its roof. Although past reports on the Racquet Club asserted that the 1961 Schiff House additions were more reflective of Frey’s Modernist-inspired commissions, the current report does not make that assertion. It states that the extant bungalows at the Racquet Club do not represent an outstanding example of Frey’s work. As such, the report did not list the Racquet Club’s association with Albert Frey as sufficient to qualify the site as a historic resource under Criterion 5.

(Criterion 6) The resource represents a significant and distinguishable

entity whose components may lack individual distinction, as used in evaluating applications for designation of historic districts, for parcels on which more than one entity exists; or

In contrast to past reports, the current report does not assert that the Racquet qualifies under Criterion 6.

In the analysis done in 2017 on the Racquet Club, it was noted that the individual buildings, (the clubhouse containing the Bamboo Lounge, the Farrell residence, the “Bogert Room”, the swimming pool, and remaining tennis court) are rather conventional and unremarkable in their architecture, aesthetic effect and method of construction, however collectively they are the remains of the “social hub” area of the Racquet Club.

It noted that the Frey-designed cottages, which are also conventional and unremarkable in their architecture and method of construction, were sited away from the social hub. Collectively they are the remains of the “secluded and private guest accommodation” element of the Club, and stand in notable contrast to the social hub. Thus although the 2017 report asserted that the historic significance of the Racquet Club is best understood as a “distinguishable entity” of which many of the individual components lack individual distinction, the current report did not substantiate this finding.

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

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

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

The report includes an evaluation of the site relative to the seven aspects or qualities of integrity, as recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. The seven aspects or qualities include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The site’s Integrity was evaluated using the publication “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation”, as published by the U.S. Department of the Interior (“the bulletin”).

As noted in the bulletin, for a conclusion to be drawn that a building has a high degree of historic integrity, it will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects of integrity. “*Determining which of the seven aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where and when the property is significant.*” The report concludes that the Racquet Club lacks sufficient integrity to qualify as a Class 1 /

Landmark historic site. This conclusion is further explained below.

1. Location:

The remaining buildings and elements at the Racquet Club remain on their original site, thus it retains integrity of location.

2. Design:

The report notes that the Racquet Club has been significantly altered since the end of its period of significance. At least fifteen (15) buildings constructed during the period of significance and nearly all the landscape and hardscape features have been demolished, including eleven of the twelve tennis courts that were the very genesis for creation of the club. Furthermore, the buildings that do remain have been substantially altered. Thus the report concludes that the Racquet Club lacks integrity of design.

3. Setting:

Historic photographs in the report show lush landscaping with mature trees dense shrubs and wide lawns with clusters of buildings connected by curvilinear roads and walkways. Nearly all the landscape and most of the buildings have been demolished. Therefore the report concludes that the site lacks integrity of Setting.

4. Materials:

The report notes that due to the substantial amount of alteration and demolition at the Racquet Club, the surviving buildings lack integrity of materials. However there is a certain amount of material integrity that still exists because the exterior materials of the Farrell Residence and the restaurant / bamboo room building retain their board and batten siding and wood shake roofs. The bungalows do not retain material integrity, since the wood shake roofs have been replaced with cementitious shingles and the board and batten siding has been replaced with stucco.

5. Workmanship:

The report notes that to retain integrity of workmanship, a property must retain the physical evidence of the crafts and construction techniques from its historic period. As noted above, since there is very little material integrity remaining on most of the buildings, the Racquet Club has insufficient evidence to retain integrity of workmanship.

6. Feeling:

The report notes that due to the significant loss of setting, design, materials and workmanship, the demolition of numerous buildings and the destruction of the landscape, the Racquet Club has lost its integrity of feeling.

7. Association:

The presence of the remnant features: the clubhouse (including the Bamboo Room), the Farrell residence, the bungalows, tennis court and the main pool, continue to convey their association with the Racquet Club and the recreational and resort development in Palm Springs from the period of the 30's through the 60's. Therefore the remnant features retain integrity of association

Although the Racquet Club retains integrity of Location and Association, it lacks integrity of Setting, Design, Materials, Workmanship, and Feeling. Thus the report concludes that the Racquet Club is eligible as a Class 2 / Historic Merit historic site, but lacks sufficient integrity to qualify as a Class 1 / Landmark historic site.

CONTRIBUTING FEATURES AND DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

On page 38, the report identifies that all the surviving buildings and features from the period of significance collectively contribute to the Racquet Club's eligibility as a Class 2 / Historic Merit historic site. The report notes that although these surviving remnants are either badly deteriorated or have suffered substantial alterations that significantly impair their historic integrity, they collectively convey an important aspect of the City's historic development that is deserving of official recognition.

Staff generally concurs with this recommendation with the exception of the 1969 Building which we believe is not relevant to the historic significance of the Racquet Club.

Thus the eligible buildings and features would include:

- The Tennis Court.
- The Main Pool.
- The Farrell Residence (excluding the 1985 addition).
- The Schiff Residence (including the 1961 addition).
- The seven bungalows.
- Portions of the Clubhouse that contain the Bamboo Room.

Non-contributing features would be

- The 1969 Building (and the parcel on which it is located identified by APN #504-133-001).
- The 2005 Condominium Building.
- The modular construction office building.
- Portions of the Clubhouse not associated with the Bamboo Room.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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

NOTIFICATION

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

CONCLUSION:

The Racquet Club and the personages associated with it played an important role in cementing Palm Springs' reputation as a glamorous recreational destination that attracted many celebrities associated with the Hollywood movie industry. The report concludes that despite its deteriorated and much-altered condition, the surviving buildings and features collectively convey exceptional historic significance. According to the report, the Racquet Club is eligible for designation as a Class 2 / Historic Merit historic site. If designated, the parcels on which the contributing buildings and features are located would be eligible for the application of a Mills Act contract.



Ken Lyon, RA, Associate Planner
Historic Preservation Officer



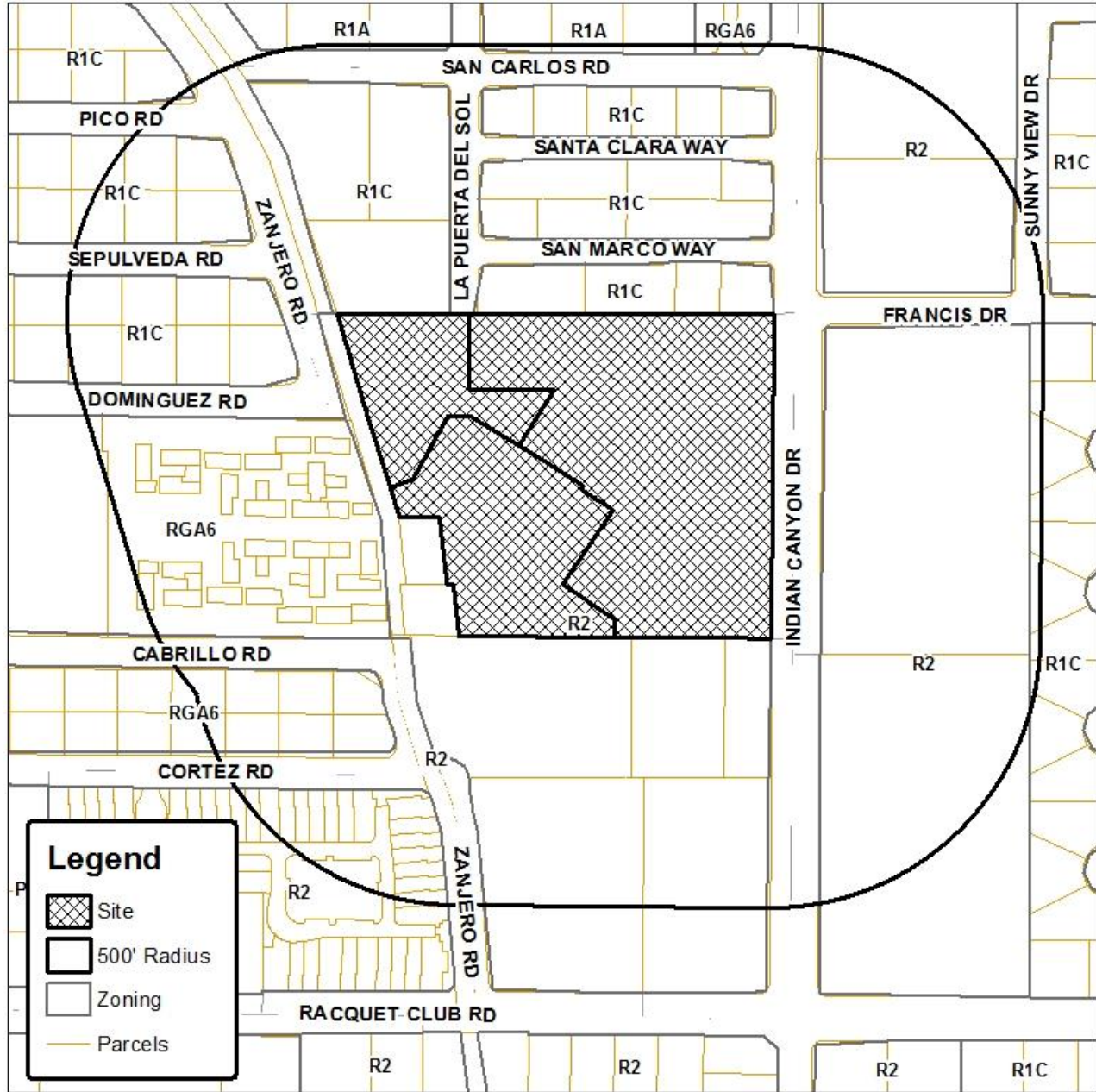
for Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Development Services

Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
 2. Draft Resolution
 3. Application, related background materials, photos (under separate cover).
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Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
2743 N INDIAN CANYON DRIVE

RESOLUTION NO. HSPB 83-2020

A RESOLUTION OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DESIGNATE “THE RACQUET CLUB” LOCATED AT 2743 NORTH INDIAN CANYON DRIVE, A CLASS 2 (HISTORIC MERIT) HISTORIC RESOURCE, (HSPB #83), (APN’S 504-040-038, and 504-133-002).

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD (“HSPB”) FINDS AND DETERMINES AS FOLLOWS:

- A. WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites and districts; and
- B. WHEREAS, at its September, 2019 meeting, the City’s Historic Site Preservation Board (“HSPB”) requested staff to prepare the Racquet Club case for consideration by the City Council as a historic resource; and
- C. WHEREAS, at the request of the City, a historic resources report was prepared by the firm Historic Resources Group (“HRG”) dated July 14, 2020, analyzing the Racquet Club’s eligibility as a historic resource pursuant to the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance (PSMC 8.05); and
- D. WHEREAS, on October 1, 2020, members of the HSPB conducted site inspections of the proposed historic resource, accompanied by City staff; and
- E. WHEREAS, On October 6, 2020, a noticed public hearing of the HSPB to consider Case HSPB #83 was held in accordance with applicable law; and
- F. WHEREAS, The HSPB carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence presented in connection with the hearing on the project, including, but not limited to, the staff report and all written and oral testimony presented.

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS RESOLVES:

SECTION 1: FINDINGS – PART “A”, CRITERIA FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES.

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

Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources. A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic resource, provided both of the

following findings (“a” and “b”) are met:

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

The report states that the Racquet Club exhibits exceptional historic significance as an early example of commercial recreational development in Palm Springs with a direct association with the tourism industry and the Hollywood social scene in the City, and for its association with actor, developer and former mayor Charlie Farrell. Beginning on page 30, the report evaluates the Racquet Club relative to the criteria findings in the City’s Municipal Code.

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

The report notes that the Racquet Club was host to several tennis tournaments in the 1950’s. Although previous surveys acknowledged that the tennis tournaments contributed to the allure and reputation of Palm Springs as a sophisticated glamorous destination, the HRG report notes these tournaments were consistent with other golf and tennis events occurring in Palm Springs and were not the primary reason that the Club achieved significance. Thus the HSPB finds that the Racquet Club does not qualify as a historic resource relative to the criterion of “events”.

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

The report identifies Charlie Farrell (1900 - 1990) as a person who made a meaningful contribution to local and national history both as owner, developer and manager of the Racquet Club, as an important person in the entertainment industry and as mayor of Palm Springs from 1947 to 1955. The report asserts that the Racquet Club is *“inextricably tied to Farrell’s productive life, being both his business and his primary residence for over twenty years.* It notes that Farrell continued to appear in films and on television during his ownership of the Club and the Club even served as the setting for his television show. From 1938 until 1959 the Farrell’s lived in a single family residence at the Racquet Club.¹ Thus the HSPB finds that the Palm Springs Racquet Club qualifies as a historic resource under Criterion 2 for its association with Charlie Farrell.

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

The report describes the Racquet Club as a unique example of recreational development in Palm Springs between the two World Wars. It was developed by celebrities to cater to a celebrity clientele and exemplifies Palm Springs’ history as a getaway for the Hollywood elite from the 1930’s through the 1960’s.

¹ After Farrell sold the Racquet Club in 1959, the residence was renovated and expanded to accommodate commercial-recreational uses associated with the Club.

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The report notes that the Racquet Club's significance continued through the post World War II period as services, amenities and features continued to be added to meet the increasing demand and interests of its celebrity clientele. The report defines the period of significance for the Racquet Club from 1934 to 1969.² The Racquet Club is historically significant because it reflects the period in which Palm Springs was a favored getaway for celebrities from the movie industry which cemented Palm Springs' reputation as a glamorous resort destination. As such the HSPB asserts that the Racquet Club qualifies as a historic site under Criterion 3, exemplifying the period in history when Palm Springs' rose in prominence as a favored destination for celebrities and those associated with the movie industry.

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

Most of the early buildings at the Racquet Club were constructed in a casual ranch style architecture with board and batten siding and wood shake shingle roofs that were popular in Palm Springs in the 1930's. This is best characterized in the Farrell residence. The buildings are modest in scale with simple detailing.

According to earlier historic resource reports, the bungalows were also originally clad in board and batten siding and wood shake roofs, however they are currently clad in stucco with cementitious shingle roofs. The extensive alterations that occurred on most of the buildings over time have significantly impaired their historic integrity and thus, the HSPB concluded that the Racquet Club does not exhibit historic significance under Criterion 4.

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

Beginning on page 33, the report discusses the association of the Racquet Club with master architect Albert Frey. Between 1945 and 1951, Frey designed fifteen (15) modest bungalows along the southern portion of the Racquet Club property. Eight of those including one referred

² Previous studies of the Racquet Club defined period of significance through 1960, however post-war improvements including the Schiff House and construction of additional tennis courts continued through 1969.

to as “The Schiff Residence” remain on the site and the others have been demolished. The report states that the bungalows are “*simple, utilitarian buildings, and do not exemplify Frey’s groundbreaking work in Desert Modernism.*” In 1955, one of the bungalows was purchased by the Schiff family. The Schiffs commissioned Frey in 1961 to design an addition, which included a unique semi-circular glass-walled pool enclosure which featured a series of large round skylights in its roof. Although past reports on the Racquet Club asserted that the 1961 Schiff House additions were more reflective of Frey’s Modernist-inspired commissions, the current report does not make that assertion. It states that the extant bungalows at the Racquet Club do not represent an outstanding example of Frey’s work. As such, the HSPB determined that the Racquet Club’s association with Albert Frey is insufficient to qualify the site as a historic resource under Criterion 5.

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

In contrast to past reports, the current report does not assert that the Racquet qualifies under Criterion 6.

In the analysis done in 2017 on the Racquet Club, it was noted that the individual buildings, (the clubhouse containing the Bamboo Lounge, the Farrell residence, the “Bogert Room”, the swimming pool, and remaining tennis court) are rather conventional and unremarkable in their architecture, aesthetic effect and method of construction, however collectively they are the remains of the “social hub” area of the Racquet Club.

It noted that the Frey-designed cottages, which are also conventional and unremarkable in their architecture and method of construction, were sited away from the social hub. Collectively they are the remains of the “secluded and private guest accommodation” element of the Club, and stand in notable contrast to the social hub. Thus although the 2017 report asserted that the historic significance of the Racquet Club is best understood as a “distinguishable entity” of which many of the individual components lack individual distinction, the HSPB did not substantiate this finding.

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

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

SECTION 2: FINDINGS – PART “B” – ANALYSIS OF INTEGRITY.

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

workmanship, location, setting, feeling, or association.

The report includes an evaluation of the site relative to the seven aspects or qualities of integrity, as recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. The seven aspects or qualities include location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The site's Integrity was evaluated using the publication "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation", as published by the U.S. Department of the Interior ("the bulletin").

As noted in the bulletin, for a conclusion to be drawn that a building has a high degree of historic integrity, it will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects of integrity. "*Determining which of the seven aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where and when the property is significant.*" The report concludes that the Racquet Club lacks sufficient integrity to qualify as a Class 1 / Landmark historic site. This conclusion is further explained below.

1. Location:

The remaining buildings and elements at the Racquet Club remain on their original site, thus the HSPB concluded that the Racquet Club retains integrity of location.

2. Design:

The report notes that the Racquet Club has been significantly altered since the end of its period of significance. At least fifteen (15) buildings constructed during the period of significance and nearly all the landscape and hardscape features have been demolished, including eleven of the twelve tennis courts that were the very genesis for creation of the club. Furthermore, the buildings that do remain have been substantially altered. Thus the HSPB concludes that the Racquet Club lacks integrity of design.

3. Setting:

Historic photographs in the report show lush landscaping with mature trees dense shrubs and wide lawns with clusters of buildings connected by curvilinear roads and walkways. Nearly all the landscape and most of the buildings have been demolished. Therefore the HSPB concludes that the site lacks integrity of Setting.

4. Materials:

The report notes that due to the substantial amount of alteration and demolition at the Racquet Club, the surviving buildings lack integrity of materials. However there is a certain amount of material integrity that still exists because the exterior materials of the Farrell Residence and the restaurant / bamboo room building retain their board and batten siding and wood shake roofs. The bungalows do not retain material integrity, since the wood shake roofs have been replaced with cementitious shingles and the board and batten siding has been replaced with stucco. Thus the HSPB determined that the Racquet Club lacks integrity of materials.

5. *Workmanship:*

The report notes that to retain integrity of workmanship, a property must retain the physical evidence of the crafts and construction techniques from its historic period. As noted above, since there is very little material integrity remaining on most of the buildings, the HSPB concluded that the Racquet Club has insufficient evidence to retain integrity of workmanship.

6. *Feeling:*

The report notes that due to the significant loss of setting, design, materials and workmanship, the demolition of numerous buildings and the destruction of the landscape, the Racquet Club has lost its integrity of feeling. The HSPB concurs with this determination.

7. *Association:*

The presence of the remnant features: the clubhouse (including the Bamboo Room), the Farrell residence, the bungalows, tennis court and the main pool, continue to convey their association with the Racquet Club and the recreational and resort development in Palm Springs from the period of the 30's through the 60's. Therefore the HSPB concluded that the remnant features retain integrity of association

Although the Racquet Club retains integrity of Location and Association, it lacks integrity of Setting, Design, Materials, Workmanship, and Feeling. Thus the HSPB concludes that the Racquet Club is eligible as a Class 2 / Historic Merit historic site, but lacks sufficient integrity to qualify as a Class 1 / Landmark historic site.

SECTION 3: DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS AND NON-CONTRIBUTING FEATURES.

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

On page 38, the report identifies that all the surviving buildings and features from the period of significance collectively contribute to the Racquet Club's eligibility as a Class 2 / Historic Merit historic site. The report notes that although these surviving remnants are either badly deteriorated or have suffered substantial alterations that significantly impair their historic integrity, they collectively convey an important aspect of the City's historic development that is deserving of official recognition.

The HSPB generally concurs with this recommendation with the exception of the 1969 Building

which it believes is not relevant to the historic significance of the Racquet Club.

Thus the eligible buildings and features include:

- The Tennis Court.
- The Main Pool.
- The Farrell Residence (excluding the 1985 addition).
- The Schiff Residence (including the 1961 addition).
- The seven bungalows.
- Portions of the Clubhouse that contain the Bamboo Room.

Non-contributing features are

- The 1969 Building (and the parcel on which it is located identified by APN #504-133-001).
- The 2005 Condominium Building.
- The modular construction office building.
- Portions of the Clubhouse not associated with the Bamboo Room.

SECTION 4: ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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

SECTION 5: CONDITIONS THAT APPLY TO CLASS 2 HISTORIC SITES.

According to Section 8.05 of the Municipal Code, the following shall apply to a Class 2 Historic Resource:

1. It shall meet the definition of a Class 2 historic site as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.
2. An archival file shall be maintained on the property by the City.
3. It may be qualified as 'historic' at the federal, state, and/or county level.
4. The structure/site may not be modified nor objects removed without following the procedures outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.110 "Demolition or Alteration of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources – Certificate of Appropriateness".
5. A marker explaining the historic nature of the site may be installed at the site in a location viewable from the public way.
6. Compliance with all rules and regulations for Historic Sites and Historic Districts under Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code shall be required.

7. Upon final action by the City Council on the HSPB's recommendation, the City Clerk shall submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of the Council's resolution.

Based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council designate "The Racquet Club" located at 2743 North Indian Canyon Drive, a Class 2 (Historic Merit) Historic Resource (Case HSPB #83).

ADOPTED THIS SIXTH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2020.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Flinn Fagg, AICP
Director of Development Services