



City of Palm Springs

Department of Planning Services

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Topic: HOW TO APPLY THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR HISTORIC DESIGNATION

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE, HISTORIC CONTEXT & HISTORIC INTEGRITY.

(This bulletin provides clarification on the differences between the local and national criteria for evaluating historic significance and explains how to apply the local criteria when making an application for local historic designation.)

BACKGROUND:

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance is Section 8.05 of the Municipal Code and can be found on line at the following link: ([Chapter 8.05 HISTORIC PRESERVATION \(qcode.us\)](#)). In 2018, the City Council also adopted "The Citywide Historic Context Statement" which can be found under "Historic Resources" on the Planning home page of the City website ([www.palmspringsca.gov](#)). These two documents provide the regulatory framework upon which the City's Historic Preservation program is based. The City considers three aspects when evaluating an application for historic designation: Historic significance, integrity, and context.

The City's historic preservation ordinance provides seven (7) criteria for evaluating historic *Significance*. The criteria are similar but evaluated slightly differently from the criteria used by the National Park Service ("NPS") for evaluating nominations for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

THE PALM SPRINGS CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE:

PSMC 8.05.070: The site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic significance and meets one or more of the criteria listed below:

- (i) The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community;*
- (ii) The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history;*
- (iii) The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history;*
- (iv) The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;*
- (v) The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age, or that possesses high artistic value;*
- (vi) 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;*
- (vii) The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

The key differences between the National Park Service ("NPS") and Palm Springs ("PSP") criteria are outlined below with instructions on how to apply the Palm Springs criteria.

The NPS has four (4) criteria (A, through D.)	PSP has seven (7) criteria. (i through vii.)
NPS evaluates “series of events” or “trends” under “events” (Criterion “A”).	PSP evaluates only individual events under Criterion i (“Events”), Use Criterion iii (“Period”) when evaluating a site relative to a series of events, a particular period in history or an architectural style or trend that exemplifies a particular period. When evaluating whether a particular site or building is an outstanding reflection of a certain period, it must identify the “historic context” (further explained below).
NPS evaluates “persons” under Criterion “B”.	PSP evaluates “persons” the same as the NPS. Use Criterion ii.
NPS places all the following under one criterion (Criterion “C”): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design significance,• Construction significance,• Association with a master,• Artistic value and• Entities with components that lack individual distinction.	PSP evaluates design significance under either “period” (Criterion “ii”) or “high artistic value” (Criterion v). PSP evaluates construction eligibility of type, period or method of construction under Criterion iv.) PSP evaluates the work of a master (i.e. master builder, designer, artist or architect) under Criterion v. A key characteristic of the PSP criterion v is that it must be demonstrated that the persons’ “individual genius has influenced his/her age”; meaning the individual must meet the definition of a “master”, <u>and</u> his talent must also have influenced others in his respective profession or craft. PSP evaluates an entity with components that lack distinction under Criterion vi.
NPS evaluates “information potential” i.e. “pre-history” under Criterion “D”.	PSP evaluates “information potential” i.e. “pre-history” under Criterion vii.

THE PALM SPRINGS CRITERIA FOR DEFINING HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Historic Context. An application for historic designation must identify the historic context within which the subject property is being evaluated. “Context” is generally defined as the interrelated conditions in which something is created, exists or occurs. “Historic Context” is the social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental conditions that influence the creation of things, events or trends.

The Citywide Historic Context Statement defines Context relative to periods in time (example: “Between the Wars: 1919 – 1941”). Historic Contexts are then further characterized by “Themes”. The themes are organized by type of development (example: residential, commercial) and other factors (example: the entertainment Industry) that influenced the character and development of a particular place at a particular time in history.

Refer to the Citywide Historic Context Statement and select the appropriate context and/or theme(s) for the property being evaluated.

THE PALM SPRINGS CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING HISTORIC INTEGRITY:

Integrity is generally defined as the state of being whole, entire, or undiminished. Historic Integrity therefore is an evaluation of a site’s authenticity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resources’ period of significance that convey or contribute to its historic significance. Historic integrity is evaluated based on a site’s location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. See the National Park Service Bulletin “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation”, Part VIII on how to evaluate the integrity of a potentially historic property.)

For more information contact the City of Palm Springs Planning Department at 760 323 8245 / www.palmspringsca.gov