

**HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA
MINUTES
Regular Meeting of September 5, 2023**

(The subject meeting was conducted via teleconference
pursuant to Assembly Bill 361)

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Hough, Vice Chair Nelson, Members Hansen, Bachman, Herr, Moruzzi.
Absent: Rosenow.
Staff Present: David Newell – Assistant Director of Planning Services, Sarah Yoon – HPO / Associate Planner.

REPORT OF THE POSTING OF AGENDA: The Agenda was available for public access at the City Hall exterior bulletin board (west side of Council Chamber) by 6:00 pm on Thursday, August 31, 2023, and posted on the City's website as required by established policies and procedures.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE AGENDA:

Chair Hough noted the titles indicating City of Palm Springs for the three public hearings was incorrect and that all three applications were initiated by the homeowners as described in the staff reports.

Motion by Chair Hough, seconded by Vice Chair Nelson to accept the agenda as amended.

AYES: Hough, Nelson, Hansen, Bachman, Herr, Moruzzi.
NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: Rosenow.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Staff opened nominations for Chair.
Member Hansen nominated Katherine Hough to position of Chair.
Member Hough nominated Jade Nelson to position of Chair.
Majority of Board supported Katherine Hough as Chair. Vote 6-0.

Staff opened nominations for Vice Chair.
Member Hansen nominated Jade Nelson to position of Vice Chair.
With no other nominations, Jade Nelson was elected to position of Vice Chair. Vote 6-0.

1. **CONSENT CALENDAR:** None.
2. **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**
 - 2.A. **APPLICATION BY THE APPLICANT ERIC ELLENBOGEN, JOHN ENGELMAN, AND THOMAS ENGELMAN, REPRESENTED BY THE PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION, FOR POSSIBLE HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF THE BLANKENHORN/GILMORE RESIDENCE LOCATED AT 1850 SMOKE TREE LANE (HSPB 148) (SY).**

Staff member Yoon provided the background analysis for the application and summarized the staff report.

Member Hansen asked if recognition of the site plan, landscape and view sheds could be included as character-defining features since they are integral to the design of the parcel. Chair Hough supported this suggestion.

Vice Chair Nelson requested clarification on why Criterion 4 was not met for the use of board and batten siding. Staff member Yoon clarified that the use of board and batten was a conventional method of construction for the time period.

Member Moruzzi asked for clarification of the shed roofs and timeline for construction, noting the removal of one of the shed roofs as an important alteration to record. He also wanted to know if the existing chimney was in its historic location. Applicant representative Steve Vaught clarified that one of the shed roofs was subsumed in an early alteration by Albert Frey. Staff member Yoon concurred that this detail will be noted on the record and that the chimney is in its original location.

Chair Hough opened the public hearing.

Steve Vaught described the history of Smoke Tree Ranch, noting this home as the prototype for ranch style homes at Smoke Tree. While Garrett Van Pelt Jr. is not as well known locally, he was notable in Pasadena and other southern California communities.

Eric Ellenbogen identified himself as the owner of the home. He also owns the Abernathy house, which was designated previously by the Board. He described the landscape changes and kitchen addition, noting his intention to restore original details using the original drawings from the Frey office.

David Pritchard and Clifford Bunch are the neighbors to the subject home and appreciate the owner's efforts to restore the home and support the designation. They expressed concern with the maintenance of the view lot owned by the applicant and requested that the non-indigenous trees be removed.

Tracy Conrad, spoke with the descendants of Mac Blankenhorn and said they are delighted at the idea of the designation. She clarified that the view lots are deed restricted and will remain in their current condition.

Chair Hough closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Nelson asked Mr. Ellenbogen if a historic color analysis was conducted as part of the planned restoration. In response, Mr. Ellenbogen said that they will be using historical documentation and research to make an informed decision, with the help of Mr. Vaught. Mr. Vaught mentioned that they will also need to consider the color palette allowed at Smoke Tree Ranch. Ms. Conrad believed it is very close to the original color with trim being yellow and body being ivory-beige color.

Member Hansen thanked the applicants for their stewardship of the property and Mr. Vaught for his thoughtful and thorough report. She noted that in Alan Hess' book *The Ranch House*, Albert Frey is credited for doing half of the remodels inside Smoke Tree and questioned whether a historic district might be considered by the community. She went into more details about the various types of ranch houses. Ms. Hansen supports the designation and would like to incorporate the natural desert setting as a character-defining feature and include lawn and fruit trees as non-contributing features.

Chair Hough supports this nomination and appreciates the families being recognized as important members of our community.

Vice Chair Nelson said Garrett Van Pelt's local office still stands along North Palm Canyon Drive.

Member Moruzzi supports the nomination and suggests the shed roof alteration be identified in the nomination.

Member Hansen requests the previously discussed modifications to the character-defining features and the non-character-defining features be included in the nomination.

Motion by Member Moruzzi, seconded by Member Herr to adopt the revised findings that note the loss of the shed roof, add desert landscape as a contributing element, and add fruit trees and lawn area as non-contributing elements, and recommend that the City Council designate the Blankenhorn/Gilmore Residence, (HSPB #148) as a Class 1 (Landmark) historic site.

AYES: Hough, Nelson, Hansen, Bachman, Herr, Moruzzi.
NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: Rosenow.

2.B. APPLICATION BY THE COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES OF PALM SPRINGS HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, REPRESENTED BY THE PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION, FOR POSSIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION OF "THE COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES" LOCATED AT SOUTH CAMINO REAL AND EAST LA VERNE WAY (HSPB 145 / HD 11) (SY).

Staff member Yoon presented the background and analysis for the application, as outlined in the staff report.

Chair Hough requested clarification on contributing and non-contributing features regarding interior courtyards and have the existing typeface of the signage be listed as non-contributing.

Member Hansen felt the site design, the sliding aluminum doors, the broomed concrete walkways and elements of the landscape plans should be referenced as character-defining features. She also clarified the description of existing glazing should be floor to ceiling.

Member Herr asked if staff is requesting a more enhanced comprehensive design guideline as a condition of approval.

Staff member Yoon explained that the request is for an enhanced set of design guidelines that needs to be reviewed and submitted prior to the City Council meeting.

Member Moruzzi asked if it is common practice to edit the nomination report, and if there is missing or differing information, how that is documented in the record.

Staff member Yoon stated that the nomination report would not be edited but any changes should be documented in the resolution which would be the final guiding document.

Member Moruzzi would like to emphasize the importance of the atrium feature because it was an important character-defining feature for A. Quincy Jones in his residential work.

Vice Chair Nelson questioned if Criterion "b" which speaks the lives of significant persons associated with the resource, should be seen as met through the reference of A. Quincy Jones, and felt that the use of the scored rectangular block meets Criterion "d". He also mentioned that the restoration of the original signage to be important, and he requested additional discussion of the slats in the atrium of the entry courtyards be restored as a defining feature through the design guidelines for the historic district.

Member Hansen stated that the significance of A. Quincy Jones is appropriately recognized in Criterion "e". In addition, she expressed the need for Criterion "c" to recognize the concept of community planning and design as a phenomenon of local social history which was a deliberate planning strategy by the City of Palm Springs in the post-war period.

Chair Hough opened the public hearing.

Steve Vaught, applicant representative, stated that the project exemplifies the genius of A. Quincy Jones because of the masterful details when you look closely at the design, yet the complex is relatively unnoticed from the street because his intent was for the multi-family complex to integrate, not upstage the natural beauty of the site.

Frank Bruno, resident of the Country Club Estates, supports the nomination and addressed the level of enthusiasm over the complex and that it was deserving of recognition and preservation.

Chair Hough closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Nelson described that during the site visits it was noted that a color analysis wasn't completed and would like to condition the motion to require a color analysis and restoration of the slats in the entrance atrium for future modifications.

Chair Hough asked if Mr. Vaught would be assisting with the Design Guideline revisions.

Steve Vaught responded saying several recommendations have been presented and included in the report.

Member Hansen does not support adding conditions to the motion for designation but finds it more appropriate to address those issues as part of the design guidelines.

Vice Chair Nelson agreed it would be important to address in the design guidelines. He also discussed fixing the address numbers to replicate the original typeface and finishes.

Member Moruzzi expressed the importance of highlighting the importance of the atriums and the enclosed atriums and carports as non-contributing features. On page 52 of report, these are missing.

Mr. Vaught clarified that the secondary amenities refer to the putting greens.

Vice Chair Nelson asked that the existing light fixtures on the periphery of the property, the tall cylindrical black poles with the spherical white plastic bowl, be listed as non-contributing element. The original light fixtures have been moved to the interior of the complex and described as a squared off cylindrical glass "lollipop" which should be the basis for restoring this feature in the future.

Mr. Vaught agreed and explained that this was addressed in the report.

Member Moruzzi requested the staff report and the resolution to reflect the importance of the atriums and the carports in the integrity section of both documents.

Vice Chair Nelson would like to include language in the resolution identifying the importance of the landscape design and the retention of the turf or the appearance of the turf as a defining feature of the site design.

Member Hansen suggested the overall site design should be called out as character-defining and working out the details in the Design Guidelines and list the desertscape as a non-contributing feature.

Staff Member Yoon will revise the resolution to include the overall site design as a contributing feature but advised against listing specific landscape features in the resolution.

Motion by Member Hansen, seconded by Vice Chair Nelson to adopt the revised findings that include more information to the integrity findings, add site design, broomed concrete walkways and green spaces to the list of contributing elements and add enclosed interior atriums, non-original signage and non-historic globe streetlamps as non-contributing elements, and

recommend that the City Council designate the Country Club Estates, (HSPB #145) as a Historic District.

AYES: Hough, Nelson, Hansen, Bachman, Herr, Moruzzi.
NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: Rosenow.

2.C. APPLICATION BY DAVID AND KATHERINE WRIGHT, REPRESENTED BY THE PALM SPRINGS PRESERATION FOUNDATION, FOR POSSIBLE HISTORIC DESIGNATION OF “THE KOERNER RESIDENCE” LOCATED AT 1275 SOUTH CALLE DE MARIA” (HSPB 150) (SY).

Staff member Yoon summarized the staff report.

Member Hansen stated that the HSPB resolution should identify the overall site design as a character defining feature and clarify the description of a ranch-style home to say a “contemporary” ranch-style home to better describe the property.

Chair Hough opened the public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Chair Hough closed the public hearing.

Vice Chair Nelson questioned why the hedge was installed in front of the house hiding the home from the street and asked that it be identified as non-contributing feature.

Member Moruzzi agreed with Vice Chair Nelson’s comments regarding the installed hedge. He also mentioned that the report written for the National Register nomination should be recognized in this report.

Member Hansen concurred with Member Moruzzi’s comments about reference to the National Register report and that application should include a clear bibliography.

Motion by Member Hansen, seconded by Vice Chair Nelson to adopt the revised findings listing the front yard hedge as a non-contributing element, and recommend that the City Council designate the Koerner Residence, (HSPB #150) as a Class 1 historic site.

AYES: Hough, Nelson, Hansen, Bachman, Herr, Moruzzi.
NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
ABSENT: Rosenow.

3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

4. NEW BUSINESS: None.

5. DISCUSSIONS:

5.A ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM (SY)

Staff provided background information on the annual work program and a list of recommendations for HSPB input and discussion.

Member Moruzzi supports developing a comprehensive list of potential properties, creating an online database of locally designated historic resources and the code clean-up of the historic preservation ordinance but was opposed to prioritizing the Saks building due to significant alterations to the front façade.

Member Hansen thinks it is a good time to step back and rethink the plan and diversify the list of potential resources to include other themes that address the ethnic cultural historic context of the City and possibly establishing a method of gathering input from the community by developing various outreach strategies, such as a workshop. As a Certified Local Government, annual training is required and Member Hansen would like to know if there is budget for training opportunities for board members and would like to see additional training sessions related to the application of the City's context statements and design criteria.

Chair Hough agrees that a re-evaluation of the workplan is necessary and concurs with the comments provided.

Vice Chair Nelson would be in favor of a dedicated study session to further discuss the upcoming workplan. Regarding the list, he would be in favor of having two or three instead of five City-initiated projects, particularly the Willard/Moorten residence and County Courthouse building. He also mentioned the critical need to create language in the historic preservation ordinance to better address proper maintenance of historic properties on the City's inventory.

Staff member Yoon made mention that the Palm Springs historic preservation ordinance is unique in that it requires all full demolition projects built before 1978 to be reviewed by the Board which helps remove a level of urgency when it comes to designation that many other communities deal with regularly. Based on the comments tonight, she will return with a focused list of topics for the work plan for further discussion.

Member Hansen thought the workplan could be phased from one year to the next and also suggested subcommittees of the Board members to take charge of certain topics.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Chair Hough summarized the August 31st HSPB Study Session outcomes and recommendations. The following points were discussed:

- An April date in 2025 for the next symposium for more lead time to plan and budget the next event.
- One full day with a boxed lunch instead of two half days was proposed.
- Continuation of the HSPB awards and an exhibition of the student architectural models at the event.

- Discontinuation of the complementary private tours after the session due to the number of no-shows.

Vice Chair Nelson requested the historic nomination reports be distributed to the Board members in advance of the site visits, and Member Moruzzi agreed.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff member Newell provided a general update on the Airport Master Plan. In February of 2023, the Airport initiated a comprehensive update to the airport master plan. The goal of the study is to identify the capital needs for the next 20 years, and the related scoping is being done in two phases. The primary goals of the study are as follows: to preserve the existing Wexler Terminal, optimize airport operations and passenger flow, and incorporate sustainability. Staff went over the consultant's findings regarding the projections for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Three preliminary master plan alternatives will be presented at an open house on September 19th, 2023 and to the City Council on September 14th, 2023. The Wexler Terminal is preserved in all three alternatives and the airport group welcomes any comments.

Member Moruzzi stated that the HSPB needs to be involved in the process early if the master plan impacts the Wexler Terminal. He also made mention that there was a letter by Gary Wexler regarding the proposed changes to the Wexler Terminal that would be valuable to share with the Board.

Vice Chair Nelson mentioned renovations to the northwest wing of the Wexler Terminal that may have impacts to character-defining features and wanted them to be reviewed by the HSPB.

Member Hansen agreed that being part of the working group and representing historic preservation needs is important to understand the project.

HSPB agreed to a virtual meeting for October.

ADJOURNMENT: The Historic Site Preservation Board adjourned at 8:25 p.m. to its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 5:30 P.M., virtual meeting on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Christopher Hadwin
Christopher Hadwin
Director of Planning Services