



## Historic Site Preservation Board Memo

Date: November 10, 2009

Case No: HSPB – 73

Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application

Location: 1744 S. Palm Canyon Drive

Applicant: Bill Lewallen - Royal Hawaiian Estates

Zone: R-3

APN: 511-070-001 thru - 141

From: Glenn Mlaker, Assistant Planner *Gl*

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The HSPB at their October meeting instructed Staff to conduct research into the property ownership for the condominium units at the Royal Hawaiian Estates. At the October public hearing the applicant requested that HSPB designate the complex as a historic district and not a historic site. The HSPB could not determine which designation would be appropriate until it is known where each individual condominium property rights end. The question was, does the ownership end at the interior walls or does it include the exterior of the units. This information is important in order to determine if the individual property owner or the homeowners association would control the exterior of the buildings.

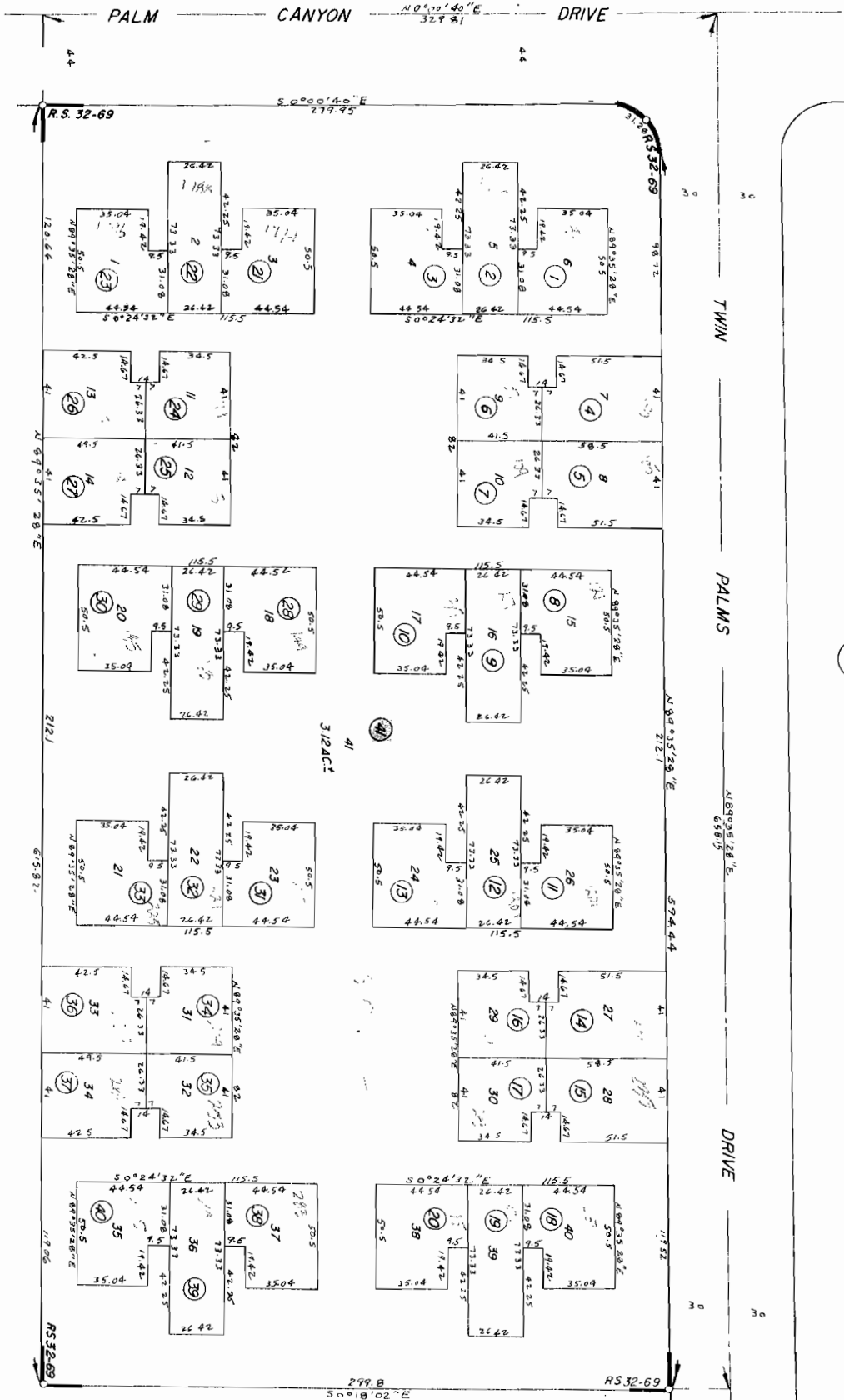
Staff met with Bill Lewallen, the applicant, and HSBP Chair Gilmore on October 21, 2009 to review the property plats showing each individual condominium unit and its dimensions. Mr. Lewallen and Chair Gilmore were to visit the site and measure the exterior walls and compare it to the recorded plat dimensions.

After careful review, the measurements did not conclusively determine the dimensions of the units.

While a detailed property survey or legal review may be needed to conclusively determine the beginning and end points of condominium ownership, Staff is prepared to move forward on the request as directed by the Board.

All previous materials from the public hearing along with a draft resolution is attached.

BK 513



R.S. 32-69  
 DOW: 6 L.O.  
 R.S. 32-3  
 R.S. 32-69

ASSON'S MAP BY 511 PG 07  
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## Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

Date: October 13, 2009  
Case No: HSPB – 73  
Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application  
Location: 1774 South Palm Canyon Drive  
Applicant: Royal Hawaiian Estates  
Zone: R-3  
APN: 511-070-001 to 041  
From: Glenn Mlaker, Assistant Planner

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### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

An application by Royal Hawaiian Estates Condominiums to designate the community at 1774 South Palm Canyon Drive “Royal Hawaiian Estates” as a Class 1 historic site. Such designation would:

1. Place the subject property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05
2. Require present and subsequent owners to maintain the buildings consistent with that ordinance,
3. Grant possible property tax reduction opportunities to the owners under the State of California Mills Act.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) recommend approval to the City Council designating the community at 1772 South Palm Canyon Drive a Class 1 Historic Site. A draft resolution is attached for consideration.

## **PRIOR ACTIONS**

On Tuesday, September 8, 2009 the Board reviewed the application for designation as a historic district and by a vote of 7-0, moved by Gratton and second by DeLeeuw to direct staff to process the request as a historic site.

## **BACKGROUND AND SETTING**

### Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site as follows;

(a) *Historic Site.*

*An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect and:*

- 1. That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or*
- 2. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or*
- 3. That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*
- 4. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or*
- 5. That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value; or*
- 6. That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
- 7. That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

A Class 1 Historic Site may also qualify for historic designation at the federal, state and/or county level.

### Designation of Historic Sites.

The City Council is authorized to designate Historic Sites.

The Historic Site Preservation Board makes recommendations to the City Council that certain sites be designated as Historic Sites in accordance with Section 8.05.135 of the Municipal Code. The Board may initiate studies, surveys and investigations it deems necessary to adequately gather information in consideration of a recommendation.

Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

According to Section 8.05 of the Municipal Code, the following shall apply to a Class 1 Historic Site;

1. It shall meet the definition of an 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 the approval of the City Council.
5. The use may be limited by the City Council to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site.
6. A plaque explaining the historic nature of the site will be installed at the site.
7. Compliance with all rules and regulations for Historic Sites and Historic Districts under Article IV of Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code shall be required.

**DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS**

The site is a 5 acre parcel located south of East Palm Canyon Drive at the southeast corner of E. Twin Palms Drive and S. Palm Canyon Dr. The residential condominium complex was designed by architects Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison and is comprised of forty (40) residential units in twelve (12) buildings that are sub-divided into two (2) symmetrical clusters of six (6) buildings each. The building clusters surround two recreational "oasis" courtyards containing a swimming pool and other leisure activities. The Royal Hawaiian Estates Phase 1 which fronts on South Palm Canyon Drive, was constructed in 1961 and Phase 2, located to the east and is almost identical to Phase 1 was constructed in 1962. Each phase contained four nearly identical three-unit buildings (building type 1) and two four-unit buildings (building type 2).

In 1960, Phillip Short, a local real estate broker, commissioned the architectural firm of Wexler and Harrison to design the condominium project to reflect a Polynesian theme. He named the development Royal Hawaiian Estates and restricted the residents to Jewish adults, fifty-five or older.<sup>1</sup> The design team of Wexler and Harrison were challenged to design a housing complex that would link the idea of indoor/outdoor living in the Polynesian style. Wexler and Harrison shared the same ideas of clean modernist lines of the International Style adapted to the desert scenery and climate.

The one-story buildings are heavily influenced by the idealized Polynesian architecture characterized by a distinctive roofline that combines flat and gabled roof forms with sloping ridgelines and projecting ridge beams that add visual interest. The Type 1 buildings contain covered carports with concrete block walls and low pitch roofs. The interior of the complex facing the courtyards features large expanses of glass looking toward the pool areas, with triangular clerestory windows filling in the gables.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts taken from Historic Designation Nomination Report prepared by McGrew Architecture for Royal Hawaiian Estates, May 2009.

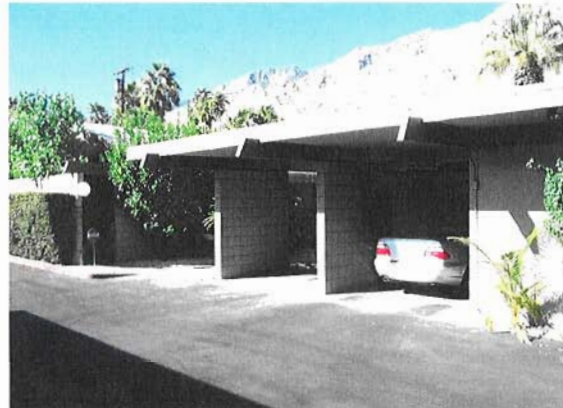
The Type 2 buildings have exterior facing walls that are hidden by mature landscaping with the ends of each of the units containing vaulted ceilings and clerestory windows. The whimsical “Tiki” design which is prevalent throughout the complex is easily visible in the interior facing courtyards. The ends of each of the units include three large vertical beams that angle out from the ground to join the horizontal roof beam which forms a spider-legged span approximating a 30 degree angle. An orange painted triangle is inserted to strengthen the beams from the decks where they meet the horizontal pieces of the roof. These structures called “outriggers” are reminiscent of the stabilizers on the outrigger canoes.<sup>2</sup> (see pictures below)

Exterior building materials for both building types include smooth cement plaster, wood siding laid diagonally, natural rock walls, and stack-bond concrete block walls. The outrigger beams and an orange accent color emphasize the Polynesian theme. Landscaping includes neatly groomed rock beds, manicured hedges, tropical plants, lawns, palm trees and planting beds.

The complex incorporates subtle Polynesian architectural references, including statuary resembling those found on Easter Island which complement the clean lines of the regional International Style that was utilized by the original architects.

## **DEFINING HISTORIC CHARISTICS**

Those portions of the Royal Hawaiian Estates that are good examples of the eclectic Polynesian Tiki-Style design and are contributing factors of this site include:

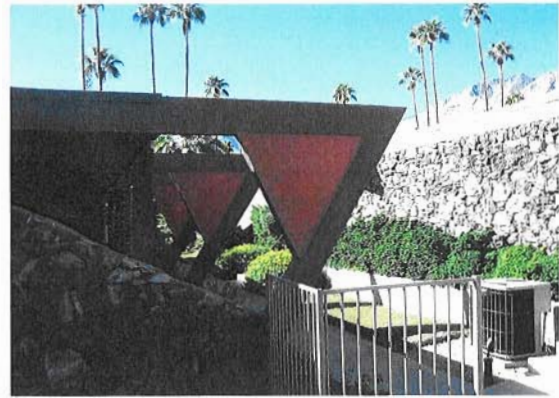
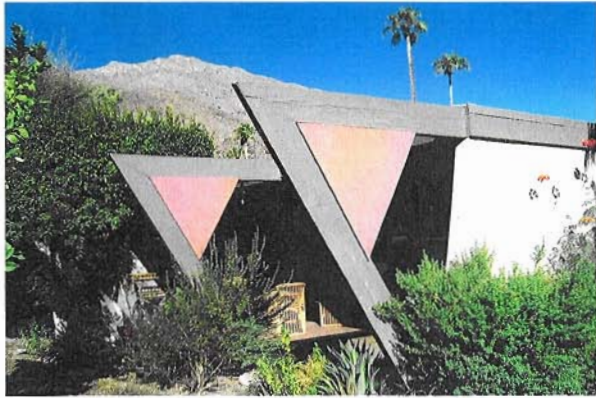


1. Exaggerated gables over the ends of the buildings.
2. Projecting slanted ridge beams on open carports.
3. Elaborately detailed wooden Tiki-Style elements.
4. Triangular clerestory windows and vaulted ceilings.
5. Large stylized “Outrigger”, and “Flying Sevens”.

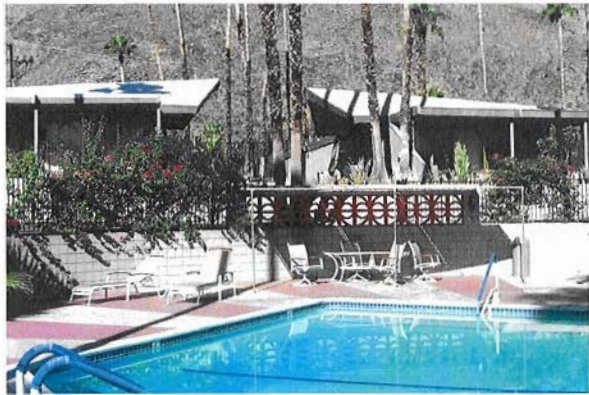
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<sup>2</sup> Desert Polynesia, A Tiki Weekend in Palm Springs: Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Foundation, 2002.





- 6. Orange painted cement plaster triangle as part of “outriggers”.
- 7. Wood diagonal siding.
- 8. Natural rock building walls.



- 9. Concrete block screen at pool painted orange.
- 10. Tiki-Style statues and stone carvings.

## REQUIRED FINDINGS

As noted above in Background and Setting, Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of an historic site: “*An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect*”. Seven other qualities are listed therein and Staff notes that in addition to the finding of the basic definition of a historic site, four of the seven qualities, #2, #3, #4 and #5, can also be associated with the Royal Hawaiian Estates, as follows:

- 2. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.*

In 1960, Phillip Short, a local real estate broker, commissioned the architectural firm of Wexler and Harrison to design a condominium project to reflect a Polynesian theme. He named the development Royal Hawaiian Estates and restricted the residents to Jewish adults, fifty-five or older. The design team of Wexler and Harrison were challenged to design a housing complex that would link the idea of indoor/outdoor living in the Polynesian style. Wexler and Harrison shared the same ideas of clean modernist lines of the International Style adapted to the desert scenery and climate.

- 3. That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*

The Royal Hawaiian Estates unique architectural detailing is an excellent example of its type, period, and method of construction. The complex completed in two phases in 1961 and 1962, as designed by architects Wexler and Harrison reflects a particular period of multi-family development in Palm Springs in the early 1960's. The architect's successful and unique interpretation of Polynesian architectural forms in an International Style, along with their use of bold color and geometric shapes and forms adds to the importance of these buildings.

- 4. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;*

The Royal Hawaiian Estates condominium complex is a significant and distinguished property that possesses a concentration and continuity of distinctive architectural features. Built over a two year period and largely intact, all twelve buildings and the surrounding site has resulted in a grouping of buildings that contain a majority of components that achieve significance. The Desert Polynesia time period which took root in the early sixties advances the idea of indoor/ outdoor living possibilities in Palm Springs. This short-lived popularized fad resulted in the unique architectural elements of the Royal Hawaiian Estates.



5. *That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value;*

The Royal Hawaiian Estates presents the work of one of Palm Springs' (and the Coachella Valley's) most prolific and accomplished architectural team of Donald Wexler and Rick Harrison. Wexler and Harrison's skills as architects in the early 1960's is clearly reflected in the condominium development which is a good example of contemporary Polynesian-influenced design concepts. The complex is one of the few remaining Tiki-Style buildings in Palm Springs and is of exceptional importance as an example of this architectural style as designed by a master architect and builder.

Based on the above analysis and research report, staff has concluded that the Royal Hawaiian Estates at 1774 South Palm Canyon Drive meets the definition of a historic site because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and aesthetic and because the building possesses qualities defined in items 2, 3, 4 and 5 from Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

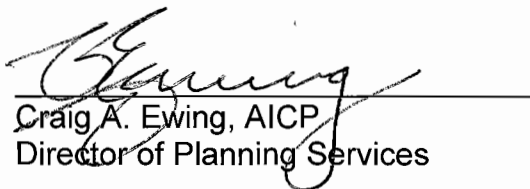
In accordance with Section 15331 (Historical Resources Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed designation is categorically exempt from environmental review as the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within three hundred (300) feet of the subject property have been notified and notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any inquiries on this matter.



Glenn Mlaker, Assistant Planner



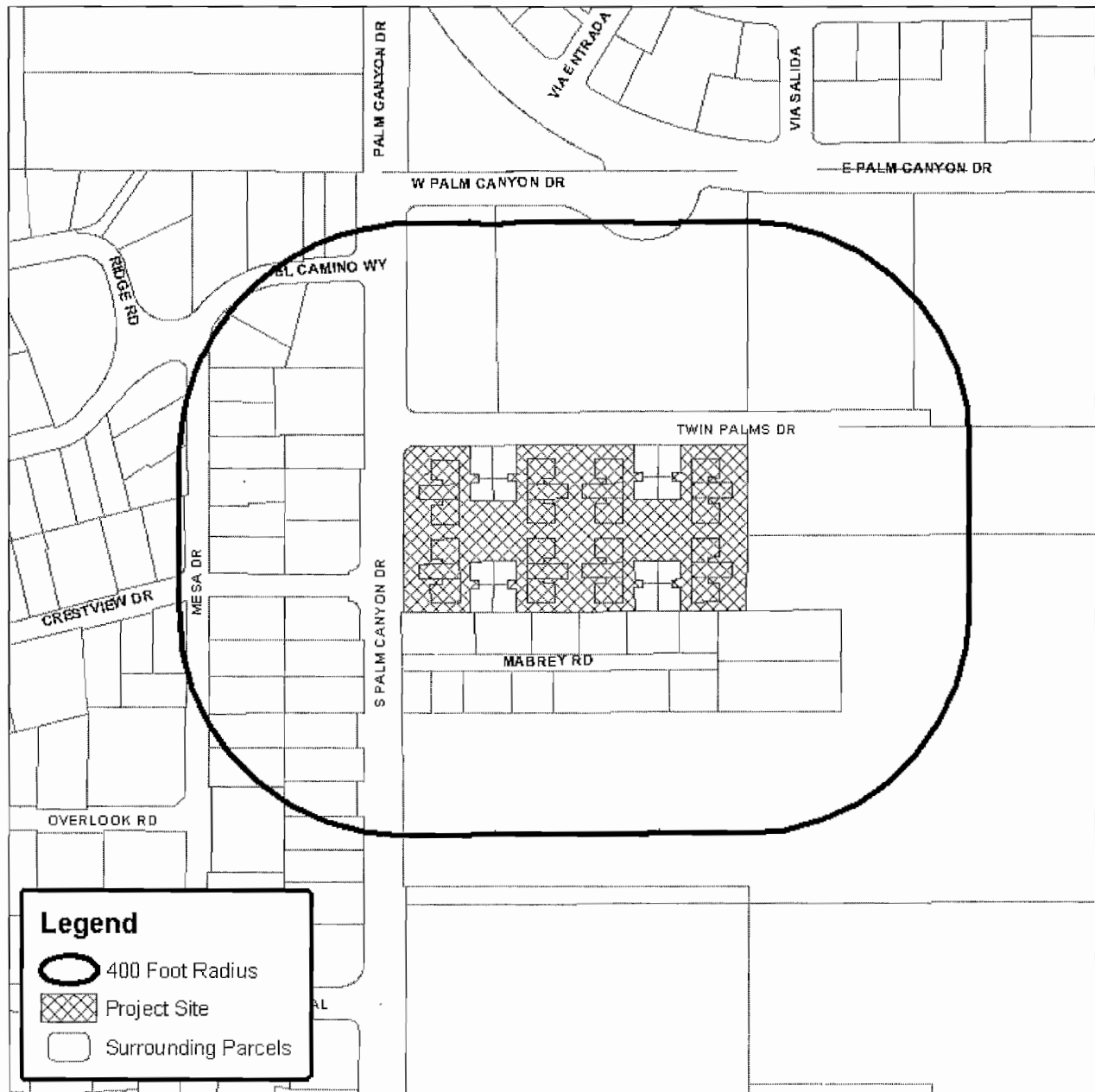
Craig A. Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Vicinity Map
2. Application and historical report
3. Draft Resolution
4. Site Photos



# Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



**Legend**

- 400 Foot Radius
- Project Site
- Surrounding Parcels

## CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

**CASE NO:** HSPB 73

**APPLICANT:** Royal Hawaiian Estates

**DESCRIPTION:** Application for a Class 1 Historic Site Designation at 1772 South Palm Canyon Drive, Zone R-3, Section 26, APN 511-070-001 thru 041



**Figure 1** Royal Hawaiian Estates: Front Elevation for typical Type 1 Building

Royal Hawaiian Estates Condominia  
Historic District Nomination

Prepared for the  
**Royal Hawaiian Estates Homeowners Association**

Prepared by:  
Patrick McGrew  
**McGREW / ARCHITECTURE**  
674 South Grenfall Road  
Palm Springs, California 92264

May 2009

**RECEIVED**

AUG 25 2009

**PLANNING SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT**



Date Received:	8/25/09
Case No.	
HSPB No.	HSPB-73
Planner:	cm

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS**  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING SERVICES  
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, California 92262  
Telephone: 760-323-8245

#### HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION

APPLICATION The completed application and required materials shall be submitted to the Department of Planning Services. The submittal will be given a cursory check and will be accepted for filing only if the basic requirements have been met. Incomplete applications due to missing or inadequate information will not be accepted for filing. Subsequent to the initial cursory check and filing of plans, a detailed review of the application and all reports and exhibits will be made to ensure that all required information has been provided.

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD (HSPB) Once the application has been determined to be complete, the HSPB will review the application to determine whether the site meets the minimum qualifications for designation pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. If such determination is made, a public hearing will be scheduled for a future meeting.

A public hearing will be held by the HSPB to receive testimony from all interested persons concerning the Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the HSPB will make a recommendation to the City Council

Prior to consideration of the application by the HSPB, a notice of public hearing for a Historic Site Designation request will be mailed to all property owners within 400 feet of the subject property a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the hearing date.

CITY COUNCIL: After receiving the recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board, a public hearing will be held by the City Council to receive testimony from all interested persons concerning the requested Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the City Council will then conditionally approve, deny, or approve the application as submitted. The City Council's decision on the application is final.

TO THE APPLICANT: Your cooperation in completing this application and supplying the information requested will expedite City review of your application. Application submitted will not be considered until all submittal requirements are met. Staff may require additional information depending upon the specific project. Please submit this completed application and any subsequent material to the Department of Planning Services.

**PALM SPRINGS HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD  
HISTORIC RESOURCE REPORT and  
HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION**

**HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for Class 1 designations for individual properties and historic districts. Use instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) and *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (National Register Bulletin 15) which have been adopted by the Palm Springs Historic Site Board. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions in the Bulletins.

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**1. Name of Property and Owner**

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Historic name: Royal Hawaiian Estates  
Other names: n/a  
Assessor's parcel number: 511 070 001 to 141  
Current Owner's name: Multiple owners at this address  
Address: 1774 South Palm Canyon Drive  
City: Palm Springs  
State: California  
Zip code: 92262  
Telephone: Contact Bill Lewallen, 760-323-4256  
E-mail address: bill@royalhwaiianestates.org

=====

**2. Location**

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Street & Number:

1796 South Palm Canyon Drive	225 East Twin Palms Drive
1788 South Palm Canyon Drive	221 East Twin Palms Drive
1774 South Palm Canyon Drive	217 East Twin Palms Drive
1746 South Palm Canyon Drive	211 East Twin Palms Drive
1722 South Palm Canyon Drive	207 East Twin Palms Drive
1708 South Palm Canyon Drive	201 East Twin Palms Drive
117 East Twin Palms Drive	257 East Twin Palms Drive
111 East Twin Palms Drive	249 East Twin Palms Drive
107 East Twin Palms Drive	239 East Twin Palms Drive
103 East Twin Palms Drive	231 East Twin Palms Drive
119 East Twin Palms Drive	261 East Twin Palms Drive
115 East Twin Palms Drive	253 East Twin Palms Drive
109 East Twin Palms Drive	243 East Twin Palms Drive
105 East Twin Palms Drive	235 East Twin Palms Drive
185 East Twin Palms Drive	295 East Twin Palms Drive
163 East Twin Palms Drive	287 East Twin Palms Drive
149 East Twin Palms Drive	283 East Twin Palms Drive
135 East Twin Palms Drive	275 East Twin Palms Drive
127 East Twin Palms Drive	271 East Twin Palms Drive
121 East Twin Palms Drive	267 East Twin Palms Drive

City: Palm Springs  
State: California

County: Riverside  
Zip code: 92264



=====  
**3. Classification**  
=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  12  </u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>  12  </u>	<u>      </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
=====

=====  
**4. Function or Use**  
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Multi-unit residential

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Domestic Sub: Multi-unit residential  
=====

=====  
**5. Description**  
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Architect: Wexler & Harrison

Construction Date and Source: Phase 1: Opened in 1961; Phase 2 opened in 1962.]

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Category: Modern Movement; Sub-category: International Style; Other stylistic terminology; Polynesian or Tiki- inspired.

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Concrete slab on grade  
Roof: Tar and gravel  
Walls: Wood Frame and Concrete Block  
Other:

**Building Descriptions** (Describe the historic and current condition of the resource including character defining features on one or more continuation sheets.)

Designed by Palm Springs architects Wexler & Harrison, the Royal Hawaiian Estates is a residential complex on 5 acres comprised of forty units in twelve buildings that are sub-divided into two symmetric clusters of six buildings each; both clusters are centered on an open space containing a swimming pool and related recreational open space. Phase 1, facing South Palm Canyon Drive was constructed in 1961, and Phase 2 which is essentially identical to Phase 1 but located on the eastern half of the property followed in 1962. The site plan illustrates the design with each phase containing four nearly identical three-unit buildings (Building Type 1) and two four-unit buildings (Building Type 2). Phase 2 duplicates this configuration.

The complex combined some of the picturesque exterior details influenced by idealized Polynesian architecture with the clean lines of the International Style. The Royal Hawaiian Estates buildings are all single-story. Building Type 1 contains three units and is characterized by a distinctive roofline that combines flat and gabled roof forms with sloping ridgelines and projecting ridge beams that add visual interest and provide shade. The principal façades incorporate covered carports with concrete block walls and low pitch roofs. The elevations and outer faces of the complex are relatively monolithic while the walls that face the courtyards feature large expanses of glass facing the pool areas that serve as focal points for the surrounding detached multi-unit buildings of the complex. Triangular clerestory windows fill in the space below the gables. Each unit has a spacious private patio at the front and rear.

Building Type 2 is similar except that these contain four-units; the street facades are essentially blank and are concealed behind hedges of *Pyrocantha*. The ends of each individual unit and their shared entrances have clerestory windows at the vaulted ceilings. In addition, patios facing the common areas include rows of large stylized outriggers that join the horizontal roof beams, thus forming "spider-legged" spans at a 30-degree angle. A painted cement plaster triangle strengthens the connection of the beams from the decks where they meet the horizontal pieces from the roof. These structures, called "flying-sevens", are reminiscent of the stabilizers on outrigger canoes; they lend a colorful detail to the complex while providing privacy and sun screening characterize Type 2 buildings.

Exterior building materials for both building types include smooth cement plaster; wood siding laid diagonally, natural rock walls, and stack-bond concrete block party walls. The outriggers beams and an orange accent color emphasize the holiday feeling of the complex and compliment the Polynesian theme. Landscaping elements include neatly groomed rock beds, manicured hedges, tropical plants, lawns, palms trees and planting beds.

The rectangular courtyards each with a large pool at the center comprise the recreational areas. The design of the complex incorporates subtle Polynesian architectural references, including statuary resembling those found on Easter Island, that compliment the clean lines of the regional International Style that was regularly utilized by its architects. Principal facades face onto South Palm Canyon Drive and East Twin Palms Drive; an historic sign marks the entrance of Royal Hawaiian Estates. Due to the buildings' history, visual quality, intact setting, and high architectural integrity, and as an outstanding example of a regional Polynesian variant of International Style architecture, the complex represents an unusual and significant variation of the overall residential development during the post-war era and contributes to the modernist architectural character so strongly identified with Palm Springs.

This property is less than 50 years of age and must be evaluated against *National Register Bulletin 15* Criteria G for properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years. A consideration of exceptional importance for this property must be made to guard against the listing of properties of passing contemporary interest. This post-war condominium development may be the best reflection of contemporary Polynesian-influenced design concepts in the Palm Springs area. The phrase "exceptional importance" does not require that the property be of national significance. It is a measure of a property's importance within its historic context, whether the scale of that context is local, State, or national. The Royal Hawaiian Estates, as one of the few remaining Tiki-Style building complexes in Palm Springs, is eligible for listing in the National Register because of its exceptional importance as an example of that architectural style. This property appears to meet the level of significance necessary for individual National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources eligibility at the local level for its Tiki-inspired architecture and for its example of the pattern of residential development that occurred in Palm Springs in the 1960s and 1970s. The complex is an outstanding example of the design and pattern of residential construction within this context. The Royal Hawaiian Estates is "one of the few examples of Polynesian-influenced architecture left in Southern California. The Polynesian / Tiki theme is undergoing a resurgence, and is more popular now than anytime since its heyday in the 1960s.

## History and Context

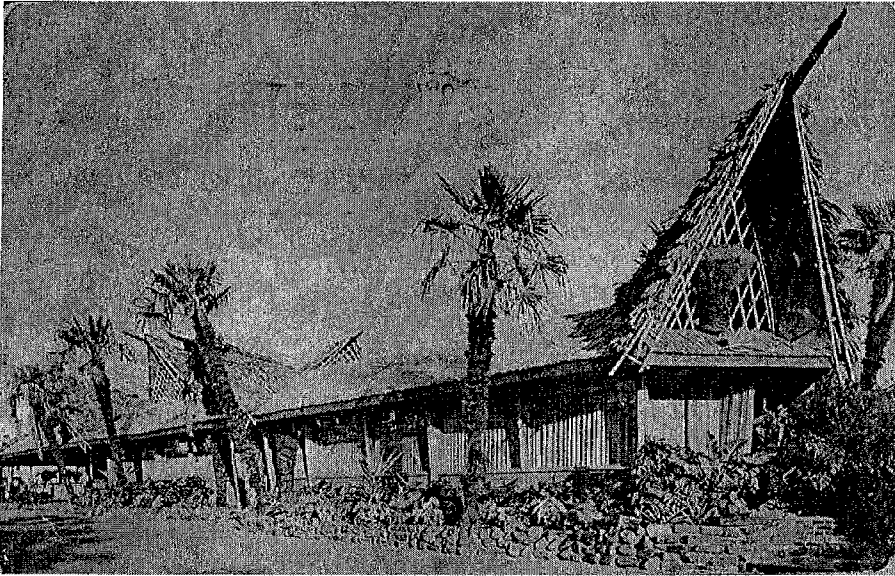


Figure 2 Illustrated above is the Ball Hai Restaurant in New Orleans. It illustrates the character-defining feature of the architectural style – a roof with a sloping ridge line. Variations on this roof form may be found almost universally in all Polynesian-themed American architecture.

**Events (or Patterns of Events) Associated with the Property:** Polynesian culture in the United States (and to a lesser degree, around the world) refers to a 20th-century theme used in Polynesian-style restaurants, clubs and occasionally residential developments. Although inspired in part by vernacular Polynesian architecture, as well as carvings and mythology, the connection is loose and stylistic. Polynesian culture became the basis of a fad popularized in the United States beginning in 1934 with the opening of Don the Beachcomber, a Polynesian-themed bar and restaurant in Hollywood. The proprietor was Ernest Raymond Beaumont-Gantt, a young man from Louisiana who had sailed throughout the South Pacific; later he legally changed his name to Donn Beach. His restaurant featured Cantonese cuisine and exotic rum punches, with a decor of flaming torches, rattan furniture, flower leis, and brightly colored fabrics. Three years later, Victor Bergeron, better known as Trader Vic, adopted a Polynesian theme for his restaurant in Oakland, which eventually grew to become a worldwide chain.

When American soldiers returned home from World War II, they brought with them stories and souvenirs from the South Pacific. James Michener won the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for his collection of short stories, "Tales of the South Pacific", which in turn was the basis for *South Pacific*, the 1949 musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein, also a Pulitzer Prize winner. Hawaiian Statehood further drove interest in the area and Americans fell in love with their romanticized version of an exotic culture. A further factor was the excitement surrounding the Kon-Tiki expedition. *Kon-Tiki* was the raft used by Norwegian explorer and writer Thor Heyerdahl in his 1947 expedition across the Pacific Ocean from South America to the Polynesian Islands. Polynesian design began to infuse aspects of the country's visual aesthetic, from home accessories to architecture. American pop-culture was influenced resulting in such disparate expressions as the "Tonga Room" in San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel, to Honolulu's "Hawaiian Village" hotel compound to the television series "Hawaii Five-O"

**Persons associated with the property:** In 1960 **Phillip Short**, a local real estate broker, commissioned the architectural firm of Wexler & Harrison to design the forty condominium units in South Palm Springs, suggesting that the design reflect a Polynesian theme. He named the development Royal Hawaiian Estates, and restricted the residents to Jewish adults, fifty-five or older. Short launched the project with an advertising media blitz that included a full-page ad in "Grace Line Magazine," a cruise ship line publication

that featured South American and Hawaiian Cruises, as well as many other local and national publications. The development's first resident was Mildred Lupper. In time the development became the retirement home to former Hollywood agent Michael Levee (1891-1972), Oscar-winning cinematographer Milton R. Krasner (1901-1988) for *Three Coins in a Fountain* and the retired Broadway star George Jessel (1898-1981) of the *Jazz Singer*.

**Architecture Associated with the Property:** "During the 1930's and 40's Palm Springs became a haven for Hollywood celebrities and creative, moneyed people followed by a generation new young architects such as Lloyd Wright, John Porter Clark and Albert Frey. In the 1940s and 50, America underwent cataclysmic changes generated by both World War II and the Korean War that led thousands of young men to foreign shores. The returning veterans deserted the nation's large cities for suburbs as they developed an appetite for new sources of recreation and leisure. Dozens of novels and films that portrayed the romance of grass shacks and exotic, tropical settings captured America's emerging fascination with Polynesian culture that featured sunning at poolside and nights of love under the stars.

Some of the first generation of Palm Springs architects saw the opportunity to link the fantasies of Polynesia with indoor/outdoor living possibilities in Palm Springs. Among these was Donald Wexler (1926-present), a graduate of the University of Minnesota who came west and began his apprenticeship in Los Angeles with the famous International Style architect Richard Neutra whose work he admired. Later, curious about William F. Cody's Tamarisk Country Club Project in what is now Ranch Mirage, Wexler relocated to Palm Springs to work with Cody. Although he planned to stay only for one summer, Wexler ultimately relocated permanently to Palm Springs where, in 1953, he formed a partnership with Richard Harrison, a colleague from Cody's office. Their firm, Wexler & Harrison was very successful and lasted until 1961.

Shortly before the firm's dissolution, Wexler & Harrison received a commission to design the subject property, a complex of 40 housing units located on a five-acre site. In the design of the Royal Hawaiian Estates, Wexler & Harrison make a statement that reflected the spirit of their times. Throughout their careers, both Wexler and Harrison shared ideas that have been single-mindedly directed toward the clean, modernist lines of the International Style adapted to the desert scenery and climate. Wexler's apprenticeships with both Neutra and Cody guided this consistent vision of clean horizontal lines leading the eye to open vistas. At the Royal Hawaiian Estates, Wexler & Harrison's aesthetic is expanded through the use of color and Polynesian-derived forms to enhance the recreational aspect of desert architecture.

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**6. Criteria**

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*Applicable Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for listing)*

**Events**

- (1) Property is associated with *events* that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

**Persons**

- (2) Property is associated with the lives of *persons* significant in our past.

**Architecture**

- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national State or local history, or
- (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction, or
- (5) Represents the work of a master, or
- (6) Possesses high artistic values, or
- (7) Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. (Historic Districts)

**Archeology**

- (8) Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- removed from its original location.
- a birthplace or a grave.
- a cemetery.
- a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- a commemorative property.
- less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Events \_\_\_\_\_  
Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance: 1960s.



=====  
**7. Statement of Significance** *(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)*  
=====

The Royal Hawaiian Estates Condominium complex, completed in two phases, in 1961 and 1962, as designed by architects Wexler & Harrison reflects the context of multi-family residential development in Palm Springs in the early 1960s. Due to its unique architectural stylistic detailing, the Royal Hawaiian Estates condominium complex is an excellent example of its type, period, and method of construction. . The subject buildings are the work of master architects Wexler & Harrison as they represent the culmination of their professional relationship. The architects' successful and unique interpretation of Polynesian architectural forms in an International Style context, along with their masterful use of bold color and geometric shapes and forms adds to the singular importance of these buildings. With the architecture of the Royal Hawaiian, the ideal of Polynesian infused contemporary architecture reaches its apogee in Palm Springs - other examples of the genre appear to be "kitschy" by comparison. The Royal Hawaiian Estates condominium complex is a significant and distinguishable entity that possesses a significant concentration, linkage, and continuity of features and buildings by virtue of its architectural expression. Built over a two-year period and largely intact, all twelve buildings and the supporting site development result in a grouping that contains a majority of components that achieve significance both individually and as a whole.

**Event<sup>1</sup>** or Pattern of Events *(Complete if Criterion 1 is marked above)*

(1) This complex is an unusual example of the style and pattern of residential development that occurred in the City of Palm Springs during the 1960s, and as such, qualifies for listing under this Criterion.

**Person<sup>2</sup>** *(Complete if Criterion 2 is marked above)*

(2) Although the complex was home to a few prominent people associated with the entertainment industry, their association with the building had no relation to their period of prominence. No claim is made for significance under this criterion.

**Architecture<sup>3</sup>** *(Complete for each of Criteria 3-7 are marked above)*

(3) Reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national State or local history The Royal Hawaiian Estates condominium complex reflects the context of multi-family residential development in Palm Springs in the early 1960s.

(4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction. Due to its unique stylistic detailing, the Royal Hawaiian Estates condominium complex is an excellent example of its type, period, or method of construction.

(5) Works of a Master: A master is a figure of *generally recognized greatness in a field*, a known craftsman of consummate skill, or an anonymous craftsman whose work is distinguishable from others by its characteristic style and quality. A property must express a particular phase in the development of a master's career, an aspect of his work, or a particular idea or theme in his craft. The subject buildings are the work of master architects Wexler & Harrison as they represent the culmination of their professional relationship. The architects' successful and unique interpretation of Polynesian architectural forms in an

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<sup>1</sup> This Criterion compares to National Register Criterion A and California Register Criterion 1.

<sup>2</sup> This Criterion compares to National Register Criterion B and California Register Criterion 2.

<sup>3</sup> These Criteria compare to National Register Criterion C and California Register Criterion 3.

International Style context, along with their masterful use of bold color and geometric shapes and forms adds to the singular importance of the buildings.

(6) Possess high artistic values: High artistic values may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture. A property is eligible for its high artistic values if it so fully articulates a particular concept of design that it expresses an aesthetic ideal. A property is not eligible, however, if it does not express aesthetic ideals or design concepts more fully than other properties of its type. With the example of Royal Hawaiian, the ideal of Polynesian infused contemporary architecture reaches its apogee in Palm Springs. Other examples of the genre appear to be “kitschy” by comparison.

(7) Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. (Historic Districts)

An historic district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of features, buildings, sites, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district derives its importance from being a unified entity, even though it may be composed of a wide variety of resources. The identity of a district results from the interrelationship of its resources, which can convey a visual sense of the overall historic environment or be an arrangement of historically or functionally related properties. For example, a district can reflect one principal activity, such as a mill or a ranch, or it can encompass several interrelated activities, such as an area that includes industrial, residential, or commercial buildings, sites, structures, or objects.

Significance: A district must be significant, as well as being an identifiable entity. It must be important for historical, architectural, archeological, engineering, or cultural values. Therefore, districts that are significant will usually meet the last portion of Criterion C plus Criterion A, Criterion B, other portions of Criterion C, or Criterion D.

Types Of Features: A district can comprise both features that lack individual distinction and individually distinctive features that serve as focal points. It may even be considered eligible if all of the components lack individual distinction, provided that the grouping achieves significance as a whole within its historic context. In either case, the majority of the components that add to the district's historic character, even if they are individually undistinguished, must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole. A district can contain buildings, structures, sites, objects, or open spaces that do not contribute to the significance of the district.

Conclusion: The Royal Hawaiian Estates condominium complex at South Palm Canyon and Twin Palms Drive is a significant and distinguishable entity that possesses a significant concentration, linkage, and continuity of features, buildings, by virtue of its architectural expression. Built over a two-year period and largely intact, all twelve buildings and the supporting site development result in a grouping that contains a majority of components that achieve significance both individually and as a whole.

Based upon the forgoing analysis, the Royal Hawaiian Estates Historic District appears to meet the level of significance for individual eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historical Resources at the local level under the criteria cited above. Particularly significant for its architecture with the exaggerated gables with projecting ridge-beams, the Royal Hawaiian Estates is an excellent example of a regional variation of International Style architecture in Palm Springs

**Significant Archeologically<sup>4</sup>** *(Complete if Criterion 8 is marked above)*

(8) No claim is made for significance under this criterion.

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<sup>4</sup> This Criterion Compares to National Register Criterion D and California Register Criterion 4.

**Table of Buildings**

P H A S E  1	<b>Building 1</b> Type 1	South Palm Canyon	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 1, 2 & 3 (Now 23, 22, 21)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
	<b>Building 2</b> Type 1	South Palm Canyon	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 4, 5 & 6 (Now 1,2 & 3)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
	<b>Building 3</b> Type 2	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 7, 8, 9 & 10 (Now 4, 5, 6 & 7)	Contributor
	This is a four-unit building with no covered parking			
	<b>Building 4</b> Type 2	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 11, 12, 13 & 14 (Now 24, 25, 26 & 27)	Contributor
	This is a four-unit building with no covered parking			
	<b>Building 5</b> Type 1	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 15, 16 & 17 (Now 8, 9 & 10)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
	<b>Building 6</b> Type 1	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 18, 19 & 20 (Now 28, 29 & 30)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
P H A S E  2	<b>Building 7</b> Type 1	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 21, 22 & 23 (Now 31, 32 & 33)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
	<b>Building 8</b> Type 1	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 24, 25 & 26 (Now 11,12 & 13)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
	<b>Building 9</b> Type 2	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 27, 28, 29 & 30 (Now 14, 15, 16 & 17)	Contributor
	This is a four-unit building with no covered parking			
	<b>Building 10</b> Type 2	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 31, 32, 33 & 34 (Now 34, 35, 36 & 37)	Contributor
	This is a four-unit building with no covered parking			
	<b>Building 11</b> Type 1	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 35, 36 & 37 (Now 38, 39 & 40)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
	<b>Building 12</b> Type 1	Addresses?	Assessor's Map Bk 511, Page 7, Lots 38,39 & 40 (Now 18,19 & 20)	Contributor
	This is a three-unit building with covered parking for five cars.			
<b>Lot 41</b>	The unoccupied portion of the site is listed on the Assessor's Map as lot 41 which contains +/- 3.12 acres. It includes all of the parking, as well as the landscaped areas and the courtyards that contain the swimming pools.			

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## 8. Integrity Analysis

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In addition to being determined eligible under at least one of the Applicable Criteria listed above, the building must also retain its Architectural Integrity. Integrity is based on significance: *why*, *where*, and *when* a property is important. Only after significance is fully established can you proceed to the issue of integrity. Within the concept of integrity, there are seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. The seven aspects of integrity are: Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance.

Location: All buildings are in their original location.

Design: Minor but reversible alterations are insufficient to compromise the building's design, which remains essentially intact.

Setting: the surrounding contemporary development remains essentially unchanged since its original development in the 1960s.

Materials: All of the original materials have survived.

Workmanship: The best example of fine workmanship in the compound is the elaborately detailed wooden elements that give the compound its Tiki character. A few details have been removed, but examples of all of the original details have survived. Replacement or replication of the original details can occur based upon existing models.

Feeling and Association: As a result of a careful and conscientious repair / restoration process by the homeowner's association, the building's original Tiki-influenced feeling and association has survived.

The Royal Hawaiian Estates has benefited from years of care and maintenance and retains a high degree of integrity; the location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association all appear to remain essentially unchanged since the buildings were constructed. All of the original features that represent its significance are intact thus allowing the property to retain the identity for which it is significant.

=====

## 9. Bibliography

*Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets. List any previous surveys that cite the subject property, or any other documentation that may be on file:*

=====

Architectural Resources Group, "Palm Springs Citywide Historic Resources Survey". San Francisco, 2004.

Desert Polynesia: A Tiki Weekend in Palm Springs. Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2004.

Hess, Alan, *A Palm Springs Weekend*. Chronicle book, San Francisco, 2001.

Imber, Robert, "Don Wexler, Palm Springs Pioneer", Desert Magazine, March 2003

Johns, Howard, *Palm Springs Confidential: Playground of the Stars*. Barricade Books: Fort Lee, N. J., 2004.

Kirsten, Sven, *Tiki Modern*. Taschen, Los Angeles, 2007.

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## 10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property: 5 acres (of which 3.12 acres are open space.)

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)  
Portion of the NW/4 NW/4 Section 26 T4S R4E; Riverside County Assessor's Map Bk 511, Pg. 07, Lots 1-41 inclusive.



=====  
**11. Form Prepared By**  
=====

Name: Patrick McGrew  
Organization: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation  
Date: May 2009  
Street address: 674 South Grenfall Road  
City: Palm Springs  
State: California  
Zip code: 92264  
Telephone: 760 / 416-7819  
E-mail: [pmaa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:pmaa@sbcglobal.net)

=====  
**12. Additional Documentation**  
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

REQUIRED MATERIALS - Unless otherwise indicated, do not mount these exhibits on a board

1. Continuation Sheets
2. Maps: A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.
3. Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property. 12 sets of color photographs showing each elevation of the property and its surroundings.
4. Provide an original and 11 copies of a complete and correct Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board - Case Report (attached) along with a notarized signature of the owner<sup>5</sup> or lessee. If the signatory is an authorized representative, this authorization to represent the owner or lessee shall be in written form signed by the owner.
5. Please provide an original and 12 copies of an 8-1/2" x 11" size Plot Plan drawn to scale. If plan is larger than 8-1/2" x 11", submittal of reduced copies is required. The plan shall show the following data: property boundaries, complete legal description, north arrow and scale, all existing buildings, structures, mechanical equipment, landscape materials, fences, walls, sidewalks, driveways, parking areas showing location of parking spaces, and signs (show in light or broken lines). Indicate the square footage and use of each building and the date(s) of construction.
6. Public Hearing Labels: The applicant shall submit three (3) sets of typed self-adhesive labels of all property owners, lessees, and sub-lessees of record. The labels shall include the Assessor's parcel number, owner's name and mailing address of each property with 400 feet from the exterior limits of the subject property. Additionally, all Assessor's parcel maps clearly indicating the 400-foot radius and a certified letter from a title company licensed to conduct business in Riverside County, California shall be submitted.
7. If any property on this list is owned by the United States Government in trust for the Agua Caliente Indian Tribe or individual allottee, copies of notices with postage paid envelopes will be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to notify the individual Indian land owners of the public hearings.

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<sup>5</sup> The following form is not required if the Nomination is made by the property owner, a member of the City Council or a member of the Historic Site Preservation Board

8.

The following form is not required if the Nomination is made on behalf of the property owner(s), a member of the City Council or a member of the Historic Site Preservation Board. Otherwise, must be completed in the presence of a Notary Public.

**OWNER AFFIDAVIT**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA     )  
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE    )ss

I (We) \_\_\_\_\_ being duly  
sworn, depose and say that I (we) am (are) the owners herein named and that the forgoing statements  
and answers herein contained and the information herein submitted are in all respect true and correct to  
the best of my (our) knowledge and belief.

Name (Please print)

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are  
subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in  
his/her/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the  
person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument.

I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of California that the forgoing  
paragraph is true and correct.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this \_\_\_\_\_ Day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20 .

Notary Public in the State of \_\_\_\_\_  
with principal office in the County of \_\_\_\_\_

ATTACHMENTS

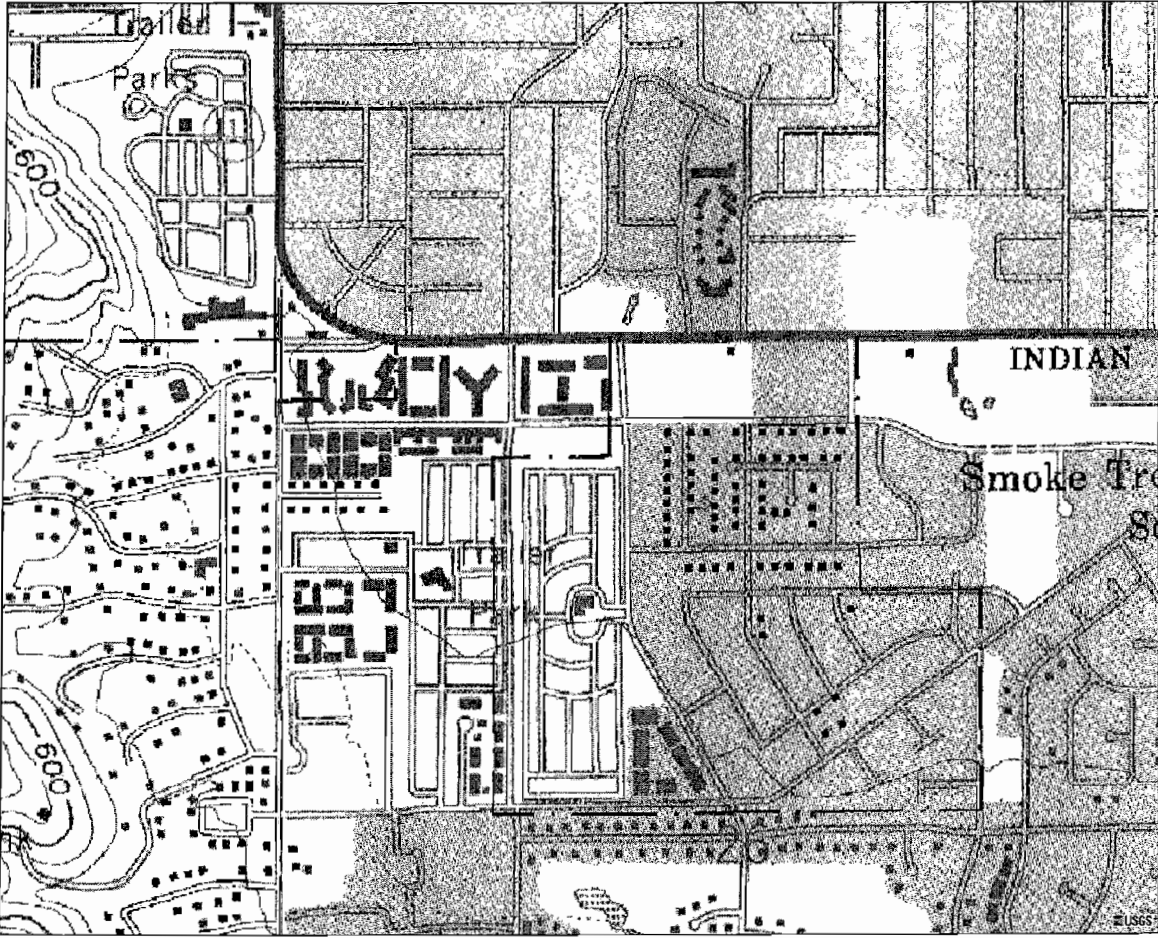
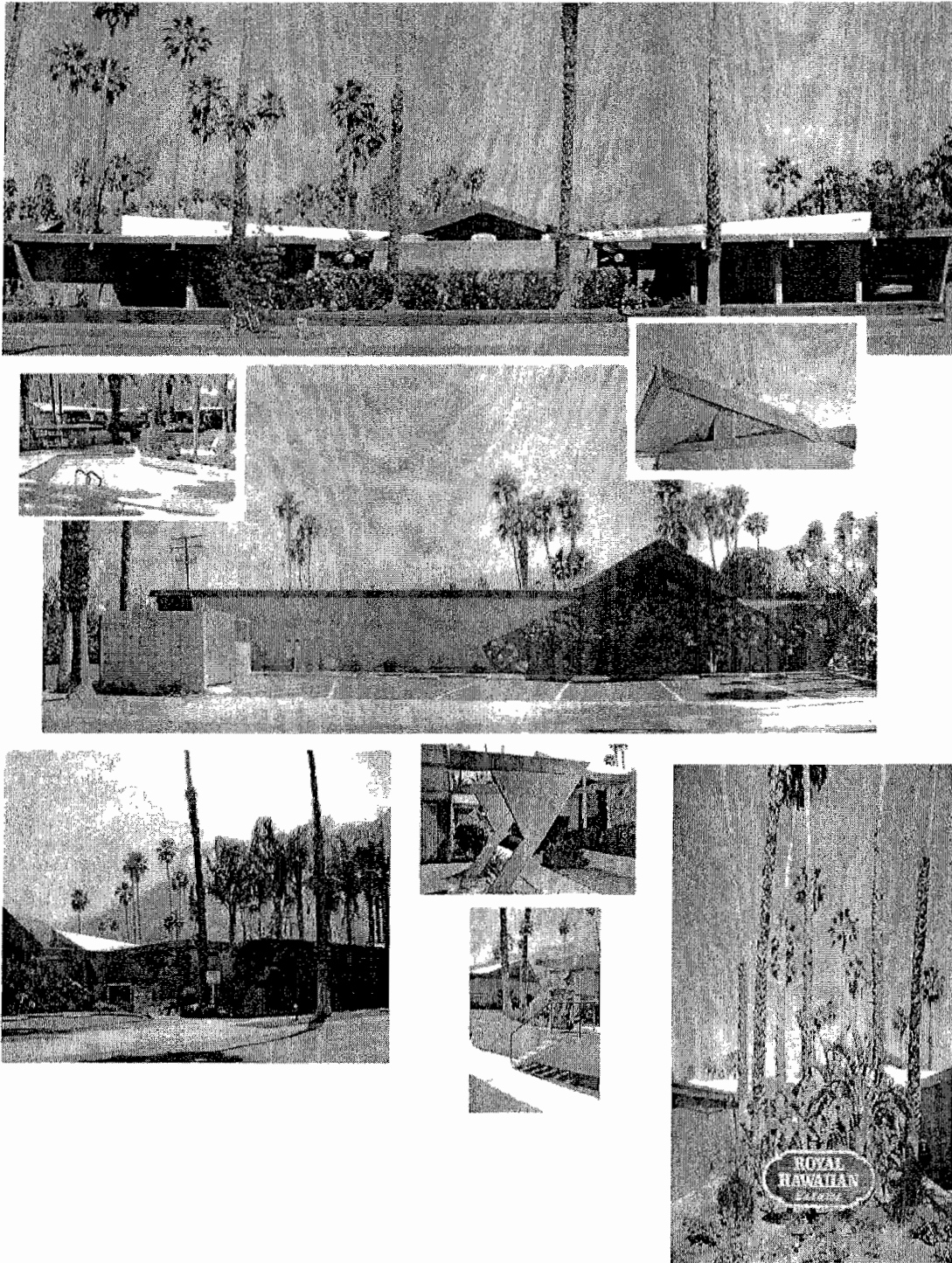


Figure 3 USGS Map

**PHOTOGRAPHS**



**Figure 4** Building Details: Top is Street Elevation of Building Type 1; Pool Detail; Eave Detail; Side Elevation of Building Type 1; Corner Detail of Building Type 2; Outrigger Detail; Rear of Building Type 1; Signage detail.

ASSESSOR'S MAP

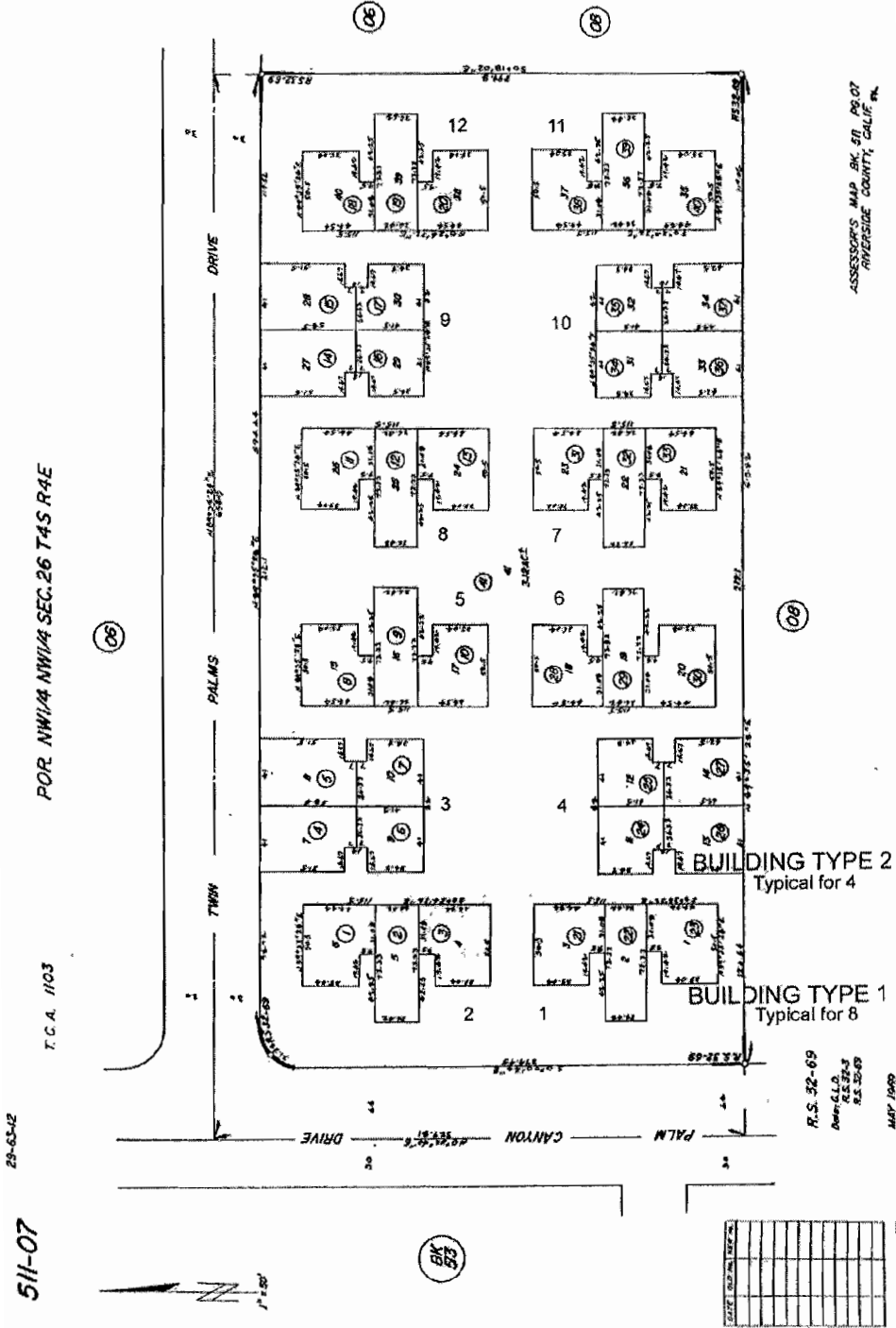


Figure 5 Plot Plan showing layout of buildings, May 1968



# ROYAL HAWAIIAN ESTATES HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION

Sandra Levanson	217	Ronald Levanson 7/28/09 ph.
Nancy Douglas	211	Nancy Douglas <sup>PH.</sup> 7-23-09
Randy Bloom	207	RANDY BLOOM 8.11.09 PH
Steve Wibben	201	Steve Wibben
Arlene Winship	257	
Rene Mercer	249	Rene Mercer 7/29/09
Amanda Arling	239	Amanda Arling <sup>PH</sup> 7/25/09.
Dennis Stevens	231	
Christina Pinetzki	261	Christo Pinetzki
Tim Carey	253	Tim Carey 7-23-2009
Steven Gaglione	243	Steven Gaglione 7/24/09
Rose Tancredi	235	Anna Rose Tancredi 7/24/09
Dimeo/Paquette	295	Edward Paquette 7/24/09.
Ole Jorg	287	Ole Jorg. ph. 7.23.09
Bill Lewallen	283	Bill Lewallen
James Offord	275	
Harriet Baron	271	
David Rasti	267	David Rasti - ph. 7-23-09



RESOLUTION NO.

OF THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD  
OF THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA,  
RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL  
DESIGNATE THE COMMUNITY AT 1774 SOUTH  
PALM CANYON DRIVE, ROYAL HAWAIIAN  
ESTATES, A CLASS ONE HISTORIC SITE

WHEREAS, Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code allows for the designation of historic sites; and

WHEREAS, the Homeowners Association of the Royal Hawaiian Estates filed an application for Historic Site Designation; and

WHEREAS, notice of a public hearing of the Historic Site Preservation Board of the City of Palm Springs to consider designation of the Royal Hawaiian Estates a Class 1 historic site was issued in accordance with applicable law; and

WHEREAS, on October 13, 2009, the Historic Site Preservation Board conducted a public hearing in accordance with applicable law to consider designation of the Royal Hawaiian Estates as a Class 1 historic site; and

WHEREAS, on November 11, 2009, the Historic Site Preservation Board continued discussion on the designation; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Royal Hawaiian Estates shall further the purpose and intent of Chapter 8.05; and

WHEREAS, the designation of the Royal Hawaiian Estates shall promote the sensitive preservation of said site; and

WHEREAS, the Historic Site Preservation Board has carefully reviewed and considered all of the evidence in connection with the designation, including but not limited to the staff report, application and historical research, all written and oral testimony presented, and notes the following:

1. In 1960, a local real estate developer commissioned the architectural team of Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison to design forty condominium units to reflect a Polynesian Tiki-Style theme at 1774 South Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs.
2. The defining historic characteristics of the buildings are the following:

- a. Exaggerated gables over the ends of the buildings.
  - b. Projecting slanted ridge beams.
  - c. Elaborately detailed wooden Tiki-Style elements.
  - d. Triangular clerestory windows and vaulted ceilings.
  - e. Large stylized "Outrigger", "Flying Sevens".
  - f. Orange painted cement plaster triangle as part of "outriggers".
  - g. Wood diagonal siding.
  - h. Natural rock building walls.
  - i. Concrete block screen at pool painted orange.
  - j. Tiki-Style statues and stone carvings.
3. The condominium complex stands as a good example of Desert Polynesia Style representing a distinctive time period in the history of the City.

THE HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD HEREBY FINDS AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: *The Royal Hawaiian Estates is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state, or local history. Reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history;*

In 1960, a local real estate broker, commissioned the architectural firm of Wexler and Harrison to design a condominium project to reflect a Polynesian theme. He named the development Royal Hawaiian Estates and restricted the residents to Jewish adults, fifty-five or older. The design team of Wexler and Harrison were challenged to design a housing complex that would link the idea of indoor/outdoor living in the Polynesian style. Wexler and Harrison shared the same ideas of clean modernist lines of the International Style adapted to the desert scenery and climate.

Section 2: *The Royal Hawaiian Estates embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;*

The Royal Hawaiian Estates unique architectural detailing is an excellent example of its type, period, and method of construction. The complex completed in two phases in 1961 and 1962, as designed by architects Wexler and Harrison reflects a particular period of multi-family development in Palm Springs in the early 1960's. The architect's successful and unique interpretation of Polynesian architectural forms in an International Style, along with their masterful use of bold color and geometric shapes and forms adds to the singular importance of these buildings

Section 3: *The Royal Hawaiian Estates presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value;*

The Royal Hawaiian Estates condominium complex is a significant and distinguished property that possesses a concentration and continuity of distinctive architectural features. Built over a two year period and largely intact, all twelve buildings and the surrounding site has resulted in a grouping of buildings that contain a majority of components that achieve significance. The Desert Polynesia time period which took root in the early sixties advances the idea of indoor/ outdoor living possibilities in Palm Springs. This short-lived popularized fad resulted in the unique architectural elements of the Royal Hawaiian Estates.

3. *The Royal Hawaiian Estates presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value;*

The Royal Hawaiian Estates presents the work of one of Palm Springs' (and the Coachella Valley's) most prolific and accomplished architectural team of Donald Wexler and Rick Harrison. Wexler and Harrison's skills as architects in the early 1960's are clearly reflected in the condominium development which is a good example of contemporary Polynesian-influenced design concepts. The complex is one of the few remaining Tiki-Style buildings in Palm Springs and is of exceptional importance as an example of this architectural style as designed by a master architect and builder.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, based upon the foregoing, the Historic Site Preservation Board recommends that the City Council designate The Royal Hawaiian Estates at 1774 South Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California as a Class 1 Historic Site subject to the following conditions;

1. The property owner shall permit the City to demark the complex as a historic site with a marker of the City's choosing. The historic marker shall be placed in a location visible from the public right-of-way. The owner shall maintain the historic marker in the location installed and pay for the replacement cost if the plaque is lost, stolen, or otherwise removed from the property.
2. All future exterior modifications including but not limited to building, site, landscaping, lighting, walls, and fences shall require Architectural Approval pursuant to Section 94.04.00 of the Palm Springs Zoning Ordinance and Historic Site Preservation Board review pursuant Municipal Code Ordinance 8.05.180.
3. No permit for the alteration of the exterior, including any and all of the defining elements and characteristics shall be issued without prior approval by the Historic Site Preservation Board.
4. That the City Clerk submit the Council Resolution to the County recorder for recordation within 90 days of the effective date of this resolution.

5. All existing or previously approved alterations shall be considered acceptable.

ADOPTED this 10th day of November, 2009.

AYES:  
NAYS:  
ABSENT:  
ABSTENTIONS:

ATTEST:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

---

Glenn Mlaker  
Assistant Planner

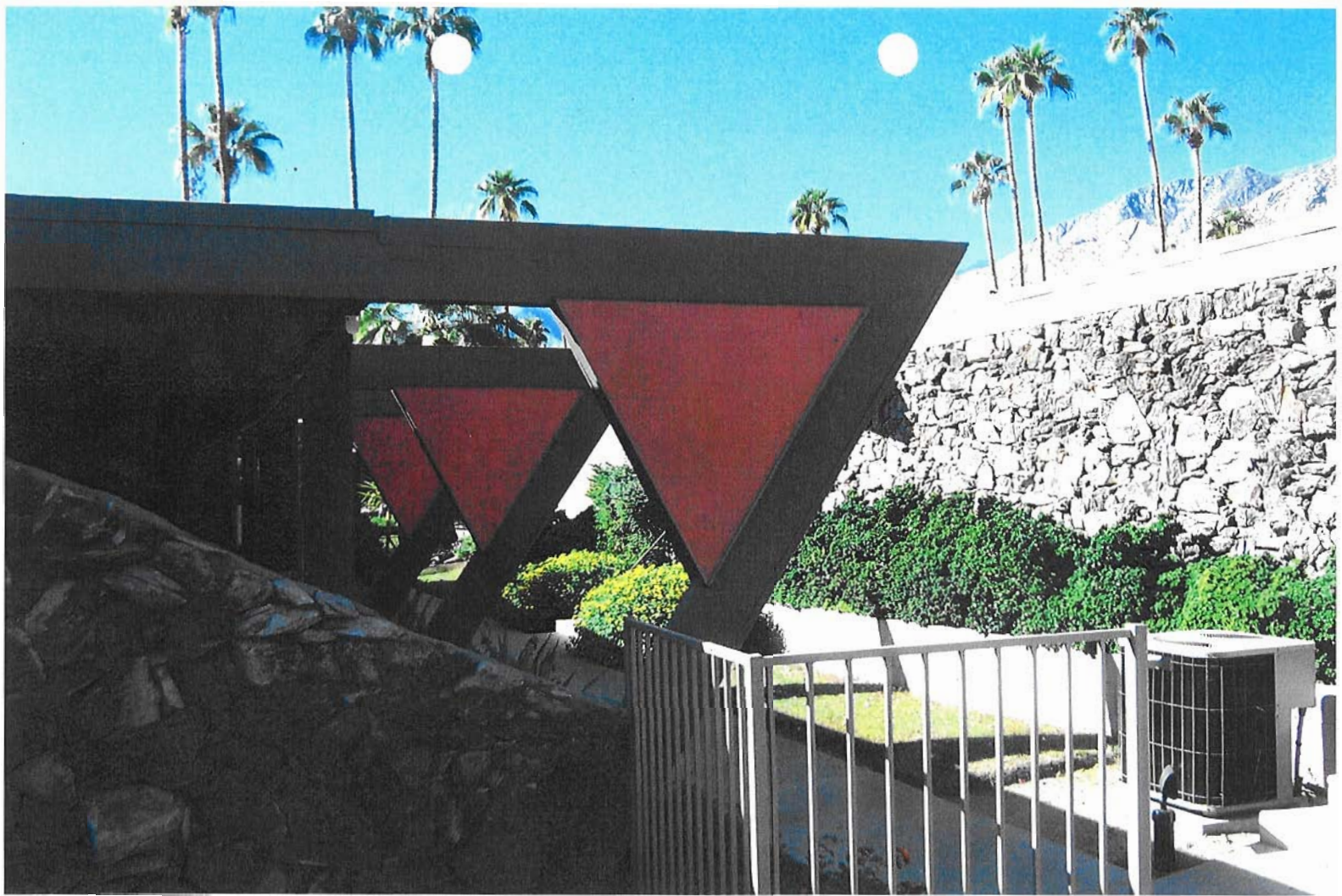
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Craig Ewing, AICP  
Director of Planning Services

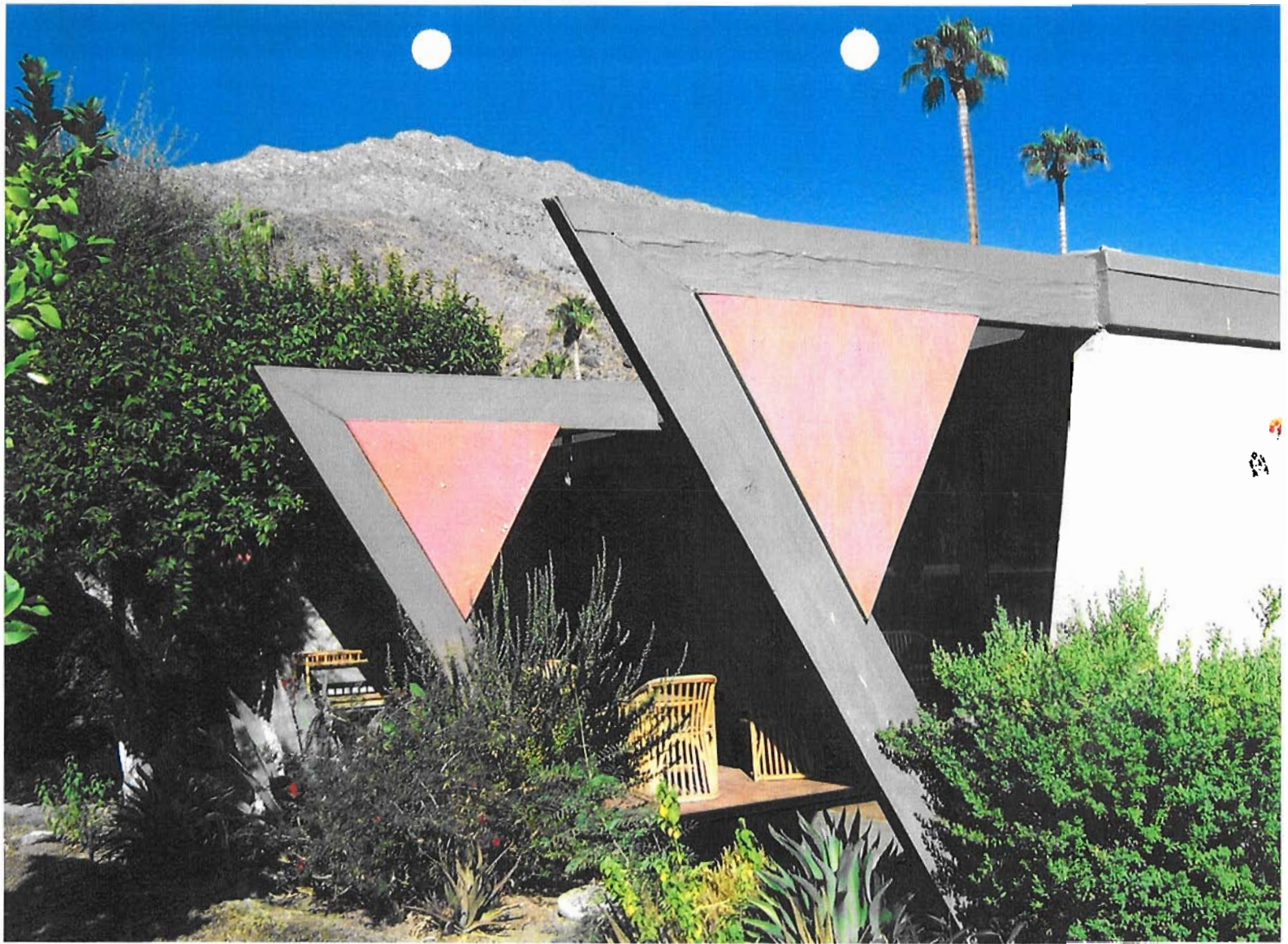
































**PALM SPRINGS  
PRESERVATION  
FOUNDATION**

October 26, 2009

RECEIVED  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

2009 OCT 27 AM 11:00

JAMES THOMPSON  
CITY CLERK

Historic Site Preservation Board (All members)  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: Historic District Status for Royal Hawaiian Estates

Dear HSPB Member:

We strongly and enthusiastically support the application of Mr. Bill Lewallen to have the Wexler/Harrison-designed Royal Hawaiian Estates (RHE) (1960) designated the city's first residential historic district under Chapter 8.05 of the city's municipal code. Additionally, we would like to reiterate some important points we hope you will consider during your upcoming hearing on this subject:

- The RHE is an architecturally significant collection of intact Polynesian-inspired modernist structures with multiple owners.
- The applicant has repeatedly stated verbally and in writing his desire that the RHE be considered an historic district rather than a Class 1 historic site.
- The city's planning director stated that an historic district seemed "to make more sense" versus a Class 1 historic site (September 2009 HSPB meeting).
- There is support for historic district status by 75+% of the affected homeowners.
- There is the necessary "complexity" for an historic district by virtue of the number of structures (12) and number of individual homeowners (40+) (see attachment).
- RHE is similar in scaling to other smaller California historic districts (e.g., the Lowena Drive and Linden Avenue Historic Districts in Long Beach).
- The historic district designation of RHE is consistent with the guidance given by city council during its February 2009 joint study session with the HSPB.

Recognizing that the HSPB has considerable latitude in this determination, we would encourage you to seize this opportunity to recommend to the city council the creation of the city's first residential historic district.

If you have any questions, please contact the foundation at (760) 837-7117 or via email at [info@pspreservationfoundation.org](mailto:info@pspreservationfoundation.org).

Sincerely,

Ron Marshall  
President

Attachment: Structures vs. Ownership "Complexity" Graph

# OWNERSHIP (APNS)

45  
40  
35  
30  
25  
20  
15  
10  
5  
1

Single Condo Building with 30 Units

Class 1 Sites

## Historic Districts

Steel Houses (border line)

Casa Cody (border line)

Oasis Commercial Santa Fe Federal

Class 1 Sites

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

# PHYSICAL STRUCTURES