



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

July 23, 2019

Mayor Robert Moon
City of Palm Springs
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Via email: cityclerk@palmsspringsca.gov

Agenda Item 4.A - Proposed Grit Development LLC/Section 1090 Settlement

Dear Honorable Mayor Mood and City Councilmembers,

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949 to facilitate public participation in the preservation of our nation's heritage, and to further the historic preservation policy of the United States. With the strong support of its members across the nation, the National Trust works to protect significant historic sites and to advocate for historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.

Through our field office in Los Angeles, the National Trust has worked to preserve some of the region's most iconic architecture and highlight the cultural history of under-represented communities, including several locations in California supported by our ***African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund***. This nationwide campaign has successfully drawn attention to and helped preserve the stories and places that reflect African American activism and achievement over time. One such story is that of Los Angeles-based architect Paul R. Williams, well known for his postwar residential designs for many of Hollywood's elite including multiple high-profile projects in Palm Springs such as the home of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnez, renovations to the El Mirador Hotel, expansion of the Palm Springs Tennis Club and the Town & Country Center.

As one of the better examples of the international-style of architecture in Southern California, the Town & Country Center is one of Palm Springs' iconic architectural assets that enhance the city's sense of place, and image as an national design destination, which is dense with one-of-a-kind buildings commissioned from some of the best architects of the time, including Paul R. Williams and others. Because of the property's legacy, the National Trust asks the City of Palm Springs City Council to seriously consider acquiring the site as part of an equitable remedy for Section 1090 violations currently under negotiation with Grit Development LLC. Unlike the other five parcels in the City's "claw back" settlement proposal, the historic Town & Country Center property has considerable value to the Palm Springs community due to its high architectural integrity and associations with significant architects such as Paul Williams and A. Quincy Jones.

Los Angeles Field Office

811 West 7th Street, Suite 1138 Los Angeles, CA 90017

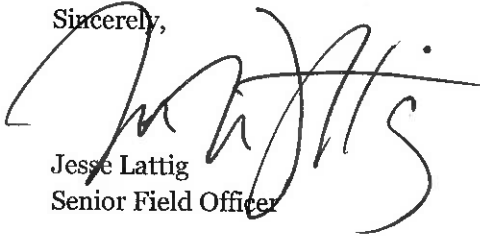
E info@savingplaces.org www.SavingPlaces.org

By taking ownership of the Town & Country Center site, the City has the opportunity to capitalize on this legacy of notable architecture and on the considerable financial incentives available to National Register-designated properties, including the federal 20% Historic Tax Credit and the California Mills Act. Acquisition of the Town & Country Center would better serve the City and its residents by protecting a prominent community asset and ensuring its proper rehabilitation. The settlement negotiations are complex and should not be rushed, and the best possible outcome for the City and its residents should be your priority. The National Trust asks the City Council to reconsider the settlement as currently proposed and instead explore the option of including the Town & Country Center property as one of those acquired in the settlement.

Thank you for taking our comments under consideration.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesse Lattig', is written over the typed name and title.

Jesse Lattig
Senior Field Officer

cc: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation
California Preservation Foundation
Los Angeles Conservancy
Docomomo Southern California