



July 7, 2017

Historic Site Preservation Board  
City of Palm Springs  
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Subject: Item 4.A. Application to Demolish 252 N. Sunset Way (CASE 3.4039 MAA)

Dear Board Members,

We have reviewed the subject staff report and strongly recommend that the Historic Site Preservation Board deny the application for demolition.

The city has previously designated two similar architect-designed tract houses as Class 1 Historic Sites (see HSPB-74 and HSPB-85). These houses met multiple criteria for designation under Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs municipal code and we believe 252 N. Sunset Way, a Palmer & Krisel-designed Alexander Construction Company (ACC) tract house, would likewise meet those criteria. Our tribute journal, *The Alexanders: A Desert Legacy* by architect Jim Harlan, explains the importance of these tract houses to the city's architectural history. Tellingly, our journal includes a chapter on the Sunmor-Enchanted Homes tract. The draft 2015 Citywide Historic Resources Inventory recognizes the 252 N. Sunset Way's neighborhood as "potentially eligible as a historic district" and further identifies this house as "contributing." The inventory also attributes designs in the Enchanted Homes ACC tract to Palmer & Krisel, not Wexler & Harrison.

It appears that the only integrity issue of substance mentioned in the staff report is the "illegal enclosure of the carport to a garage." As this is a readily reversible condition, it seems a poor basis upon which to rationalize a demolition. Dozens, if not hundreds, of midcentury tract homes in far worse physical condition have been successfully rehabilitated throughout Palm Springs.

Lastly, recent decisions by the city council have indicated they have a low tolerance for this sort of "speculative" demolition. They understand the pernicious effect such demolitions can have on the integrity of our city's neighborhoods. All too frequently such demolitions lead to ill-advised new construction that is out of scale and out of character with the surrounding neighborhood. In short, the replacement is never as good as the original.

If you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance, please contact the foundation at (760)-837-7117 or at [info@pspreservationfoundation.org](mailto:info@pspreservationfoundation.org).

Sincerely,

Erik Rosenow  
President