



August 9, 2010

The Honorable Steven Pougnet
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Dear Mayor Pougnet,

Re: Welwood Murray Memorial Library (Class 1 Historic Site)

On August 4, 2010 Palm Springs Preservation Foundation board members Ron Marshall and Gary Johns met with members of the Palm Springs city senior staff (i.e., the city manager, assistant city manager, city attorney and director of planning services) to discuss the foundation's concerns regarding the Welwood Murray Memorial Library project. Also present were the chair of the historic site preservation board and the city representative overseeing the project. The meeting was cordial and there was a frank and wide-ranging exchange of views regarding the project. Among the issues raised were:

- failure of the city's "ad hoc" subcommittee charged with the project to include a knowledgeable preservation expert,
- characterization of the project as a minor architectural approval (MAA) rather than a major architectural approval (MAJ) (thereby side-stepping planning commission review),
- minimal solicitation of public comment on the project design,
- failure of the project to meet any of the U.S. Secretary of Interior's standards for the rehabilitation of historic buildings,
- uneven city staff support to the city boards charged with reviewing the project (i.e., the Architectural Advisory Committee and the Historic Site Preservation Board),
- a sense that the project is being "hurried" through the city bureaucracy, and
- PSPF's opinion that because the project constitutes a "significant adverse change" to this historic resource an Environmental Impact Review (EIR) is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

On a positive note, we emphasized our view that there is a unique opportunity for the city to do a first-rate and sensitive restoration of the library. This opportunity is available because:

- as a Class 1 site there is no debate about the historic or architectural importance of the building,
- there is no developer pressuring the city to "tear the building down,"
- as a civic building the city has control over both the building's interior and exterior, and
- the library is still remarkably intact.

Finally, we asked that an "original design" or "minimum impact design" be offered to the city leadership in tandem with the current over-designed proposal.

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We thank the city for allowing us the opportunity to express our concerns. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the foundation at (760) 837-7117.

Sincerely,



Ron Marshall
President

Copy to:

City Council members (Ginny Foat, Lee Weigel, Chris Mills and Rick Hutcheson)
City Manager (David Ready)
City Attorney (Doug Holland)
Historic Site Preservation Board
Palm Springs Historical Society
Palm Springs Modern Committee
Desert Sun (Mariecar Mendoza)