

CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION



The Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée

PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA — A HISTORIC DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

A HISTORIC DESIGNED LANDSCAPE, CONCEIVED IN 1949
AND EXTENDED IN CAMPAIGNS THROUGH c. 1963



WRITTEN BY STEVEN KEYLON FOR THE PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION



Cover: "Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs, California," natural color card from Kodachrome,
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Class 1 Historic Site Nomination

The Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée

Palm Springs, California — a historic designed landscape

Name: The Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée.

Location: Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, Riverside County, California — the double rows of palms along the public right-of-way.

Resource type: Historic designed landscape (a designed civic streetscape / planted allée), including its living material, its integrated street-lighting scheme, and its associated commemorative monument.

Date of creation: 1949, extended in campaigns through c. 1963.

Proposed period of significance: 1949 – c. 1963.

Document version: FINAL August 2, 2026.

Application

The City of Palm Springs Historic Resource Designation application follows.



(to be completed by Planning staff:)

Date:
Case No.
HSPB No.
Planner:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Department of Planning Services

HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION (HRD)

TO THE APPLICANT:

Complete all parts of this application. Denote "NA" for lines that are not applicable.
Submit the completed application with attachments to the Department of Planning Services at
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262 Phone: 760-323-8245 Fax: 760-322-8380

This application is for a proposed: (Check one) ☒ Historic Site / Resource ☐ Historic District:

Applicant's Name: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

Please Print

☐ Owner ☐ Lessee ☐ Authorized Agent ☐ City ☒ Other

Applicant's Address: 1775 East Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 110-195

Number and Street Name or P.O. Box

Palm Springs

California

92264

City

State

ZIP

Telephone Nos: (213) 364-3577 (Steven Keylon, cell) • (760) 837-7117 (PSPF voicemail)

Residence

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Note: For Historic District applications: On a separate page, provide a list all sites / parcels within the proposed historic district boundaries with the following information provided for each parcel / APN.

Site Address: Palm Canyon Drive public right-of-way (State Highway 111), Tramway Road to east of William Krisel Way

APN None (public ROW) Zone: Multiple Section: Multiple Gen'l Plan Land Use Desig. Public ROW

Is the project is located on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation? In part (see report)
(Refer to the Land Status Map under Tribal Resources on the Planning Department home page.)

Construction Date: 1949 – c. 1963 ☐ Estimated ☒ Actual (denote source, i.e. bldg. permits)

Architect: E. Stewart Williams (committee chairman) Builder: Earl Neel, Neel's Nursery / City of Palm Springs

Present Owner: City of Palm Springs (public right-of-way)

Present Owner Address: 3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Original Owner: City of Palm Springs

Other notable past owners: None — in continuous City ownership since 1949

Other Historic Associations: Ruth Hardy; E. Stewart Williams; Clarence C. Neel; Earl Neel; Lawrence Crossley

Common Name of Property: The mile of palms; the Palm Canyon Drive palms

Historic Name of Property: Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée

Attach to this application any information, photos, drawings, newspaper articles, reports, studies, or other materials to fully describe the characteristics or conditions that support this application for historic designation.

Architectural Style: N/A — historic designed landscape (allée); NPS Preservation Brief 36
(Refer to the Architectural Styles chapter of the Citywide Historic Context Statement, under Historic Resources on the Planning Home page (www.palmspringsca.gov)).

Period of Significance: 1949 – c. 1963

(See the Citywide Historic Context Statement Document.)

Please list any informational reference sources used to complete this application:

See Section 10 (Sources) and the footnotes of the attached nomination report.

PSMC 8.05.070 (C,1): Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 Historic Resources.

A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic resource or a Contributing Resource in a proposed historic district by the Palm Springs City Council, provided both of the following findings are met.

Provide a written description of how the site qualifies as historic resource under one or more of the following criterion:

FINDING 1: The site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic significance and meets one or more of the criteria listed below:

- i. The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community.¹
- ii. The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.
- iii. The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history.
- iv. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction, a period of construction or a method of construction.²
- v. The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age, or that possesses high artistic value.
- vi. The resource represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, as used in evaluating applications for designation of historic districts, for parcels on which more than one entity exists.
- vii. The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

¹ NOTE: Unlike the National Register criteria, The City's criterion does not consider "patterns of events". For consideration of "patterns of events", use Criterion "iii", reflecting a particular period.

² Unlike the National Register criteria "type, period of method of construction relates to construction only" For design theme or characteristics use Criterion "iii" (period) or Criterion v (high artistic value).

FINDING 2: The site, structure, building or object retains most if not all of the following aspects of Integrity, as established in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards³: Design, Materials, Workmanship, Location, Setting, Feeling, Association.

PSMC 8.05.070 (C.2) Criteria for the Designation of Class 2 Historic Resources.

A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 2 historic resource, or a Contributing Resource to a proposed historic district by the Palm Springs City Council provided the site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic significance and meets one or more of the criteria listed in Finding 1 above. A Class 2 historic resource is not required to meet the findings for integrity as described in Finding 2 (above).

PSMC 8.05.090 (C) Criteria and Findings for Designation of Historic Districts.

In addition to the criteria listed in Finding 1, to be considered for designation as a Historic District, a defined area must:

- a. Contain contributing resources on a majority of the sites within the proposed district which individually meet the criteria in Finding (1). The defined area may include other structures, buildings, or archaeological sites which contribute generally to the overall distinctive character of the area and are related historically or visually by plan or physical development.
(Identify list by address and APN number each site / parcel that meets the criteria outlined in Finding 1 above and document how each meets the criteria.
- b. Identify non-contributing properties or vacant parcels to the extent necessary to establish appropriate, logical or convenient boundaries.
(Identify list by address and APN number each site / parcel within the proposed historic district that is considered non-contributing to the overall historic significance of the historic district.)

Please attach any additional information related to the application as necessary.

Questions: Contact the Palm Springs Planning Department at 760 323 8245.

³ Refer to the U.S. Department of the Interior Bulletin for How to Evaluate the Integrity of a Property.

1. Introduction

1.1 What is an allée?

An allée is a double row of trees planted at fixed intervals along both sides of a road or walk, close enough and even enough that the two rows stop reading as trees and start reading as one thing: a corridor with a beginning, a length, and an end. The word is French and the form began in the garden — the long green corridors of Renaissance and Baroque estates — before seventeenth-century designers carried it past the garden wall and into the town. Its history as a civic form, and the California examples Palm Springs had in front of it, are set out at Section 3.3.

Three things separate an allée from a street that happens to have trees on it. The trees are of the same or similar species and scale. They stand on both sides, facing each other across the space. And they are set on a stated interval, so the eye reads rhythm rather than accident.

Palm Canyon Drive has all three: two ranks of filifera and robusta fan palms facing each other across the street on a module of roughly thirty-five feet. It has something more besides. An allée is often aimed at something, and this one is aimed towards the south at the mountains, which closes the view, so that moving along its length is a procession rather than a drive. That is the object this nomination proposes to designate — not hundreds of palm trees, but the composition they make.

1.2 Summary

The Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée is a designed, engineered, authored, dedicated, and illuminated civic landscape, conceived and built beginning in 1949 as the centerpiece of a voter-ratified municipal beautification program, and the design extended in later campaigns through about 1963, with later planting continuing beyond it. It is significant as a **historic designed landscape** — a planted allée executed to a written specification and species schedule, advertised for bids and, when none came, built by the city's own day labor under a supervising nurseryman, and wired as it was planted for a lighting scheme installed the following year¹ — and for its **association with the postwar civic beautification of Palm Springs and with Councilwoman Ruth Hardy**, the first woman on the Palm Springs City Council and the driving figure of the project. The allée gave the resort its signature approach and remains the defining feature of its main street.²

The significance rests on the **composition** — the double-row rhythm, the procession and gateway character of the drive, the two-species play, and the lighting designed around the fronds — and on the **documented civic intent** behind it, not on any single count of trees or any one maintenance practice.

1.3 Period of significance

1949 – c. 1963. The core allée was authorized, funded, planted, and dedicated in 1949; later campaigns (a 1954 property-owner phase, South Palm Canyon in 1956–57, further design and planning work to 1962) extended the planting along the drive.³ The counts are a documented progression, not a single figure — a contract estimate of about 308 (roughly 150 of each species), a planted count in the low 320s by late September 1949, a lit count near 322, “345” in a 1950 year-in-review, “400” in the lighting-era coverage, and additional trees in the 1956–57 and 1962 campaigns — and each count should be footnoted to its source rather than averaged.⁴

The closing date is set by the completion of the extension planning and design campaigns, not by an event. Later plantings that completed the allée or continued the rows are compatible with the design and are addressed in Section 6.5; they are the continuation of a practice rather than a new one, which is why the treatment recommendation at Section 8.3 is preservation of the continuum rather than restoration to a single year.

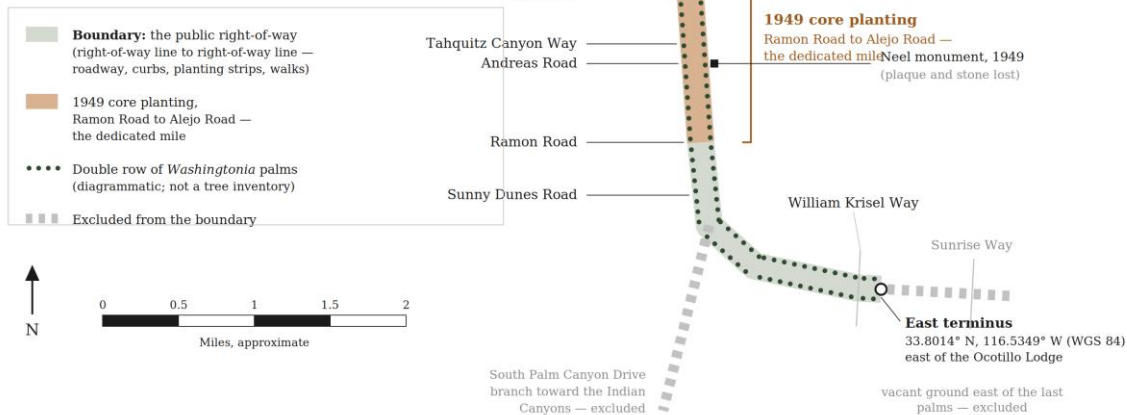
1.4 Boundary

The resource is the public right-of-way of Palm Canyon Drive — State Highway 111 through Palm Springs — from Tramway Road on the north to the eastern end of the double row on East Palm Canyon Drive, a short distance east of William Krisel Way, at 33.8014° N, 116.5349° W (WGS 84). It is one continuous run of approximately 4.7 miles: North Palm Canyon Drive south from Tramway, through the downtown mile, and then east as the highway bends into East Palm Canyon Drive. The mile authorized, planted, and dedicated in 1949 is the first of those miles; the rest is the work of the extension campaigns of the 1950s (Section 3.7). The boundary runs from right-of-way line to right-of-way line and so takes in the roadway, the curbs, the planting strips in which the palms stand, and the walks. The boundary is shown at Map 1.

Map 1. Boundary of the Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée

Palm Springs, California. Diagrammatic locator map — distances approximate, not a survey.

The nominated resource is the continuous double row of *Washingtonia* palms within the public right-of-way of Palm Canyon Drive, from Tramway Road on the north, south through downtown Palm Springs, and east to 33.8014° N, 116.5349° W (WGS 84), east of the Ocotillo Lodge — one continuous run of approximately 4.7 miles. The South Palm Canyon Drive branch toward the Indian Canyons and the vacant ground east of the last palms are outside the boundary.



Map 1. Boundary of the Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée. The nominated resource is the public right-of-way of Palm Canyon Drive from Tramway Road on the north, south through downtown, and east to 33.8014° N, 116.5349° W (WGS 84), east of the Ocotillo Lodge — approximately 4.7 miles. The 1949 core planting between Ramon Road and Alejo Road is shown in color. The South Palm Canyon Drive branch toward the Indian Canyons and the vacant ground east of the last palms are outside the boundary. Diagrammatic locator map; distances are approximate and the drawing is not a survey.

The eastern terminus is set by the trees. The allée ends at the last point where palms stand on both sides of the drive, on the frontage east of the Ocotillo Lodge; beyond it is open ground carrying no planting. That line can be walked and checked. No street name would serve, because there is no through street at the point where the double row stops, which is why the terminus is given as a coordinate as well. William Krisel Way is the nearest named locator, and an apt one: the Ocotillo Lodge is Palmer and Krisel's, of 1957, within the period of significance.

Two reaches are outside the boundary. The vacant ground east of the last palms is excluded, and it is worth saying why the allée stops there: it stops where the town of the 1950s stopped. The eastern extension reached the Ocotillo Lodge and the frontage beside it and went no further, short of the terminus at Araby Point that the Council priced in 1958 and never built (Section 3.7). The boundary follows a historical cause rather than an arbitrary line. And the branch of South Palm

Canyon Drive that continues south toward the Indian Canyons is excluded: palms stand along it, but they are scattered and do not form a double row on a module. The 1956–57 campaign documented at Section 3.7 planted the reach from Ramon toward Indian Trail, which lies on the highway alignment and within this boundary, not on that branch.

The boundary is drawn to what survives, not to what was intended. The documented intent was the whole length of the drive, from the northern to the southern city limits, and the record of that ambition is part of the significance (Section 3.7). But intent is not extent, and a boundary should enclose the resource that retains integrity rather than the one that was hoped for.

The extent has been stable for half a century. The 1978 aerial at Appendix C shows the continuous allée running along East Palm Canyon to the Ocotillo Lodge, with single frontage rows beyond it and no double row east of that point. Field observation in 2026 finds the same terminus. Forty-eight years separate the two records and they agree on where the composition ends — which is a finding about integrity as much as about boundary.

Two things within the line are noted rather than claimed. Designation is sought over the city-owned right-of-way only; the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians is the appropriate authority as to any land held in trust, and nothing here is intended to reach it (Section 5.2). And the surviving 1950 lighting equipment mounted on private building faces under the licenses and recorded easements described at Section 3.5 lies outside the right-of-way; it is an associated feature of the lighting scheme rather than a component within the boundary.

2. Description

Palm Canyon Drive is Palm Springs' principal street, and through downtown it runs between two ranks of fan palms set at regular intervals along both sides — a double row, an allée. The planting is deliberately of two species: the native California fan palm (*Washingtonia filifera*), stout-trunked and holding its dried-frond skirt, and the taller, slimmer Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*).⁵ During the first 1949 campaign, they were set about thirty-five feet on center, at heights running from roughly twelve to thirty-five feet and averaging near twenty, and they were planted in near-equal numbers — a hundred and fifty-four *filifera* and a hundred and fifty-five *robusta*, three hundred and nine trees, under the April 1949 specification and under the executed contract alike.⁶

Several things make the drive a composition rather than a row of trees. The rhythm of the double row — palms set at regular intervals along both curbs, roughly thirty-five feet on center — turns the street into a procession and gives the town a gateway, the approach a visitor meets entering from the north. The species pairing sets two forms against each other down the length of the drive: the stout, skirted trunk of the native *Washingtonia filifera* against the tall, clean shaft of the *Washingtonia robusta*, the fat and the slim alternating in the ranks. The heights were staggered by design, not accident — the original planting ran from a twelve-foot minimum to a thirty-five-foot maximum, averaging near twenty — so the crowns broke any flat line and read as a living colonnade. An integrated lighting scheme — its conduit trenched in with the water line as the trees went in, the distribution system advertised that December and the fixtures separately after⁷ — throws light up into the fronds after dark, so the palms do not vanish when the sun drops behind Mount San Jacinto. And a commemorative monument — a plaque set in a stone base at the foot of three palms at Andreas and Palm Canyon, dedicating the mile of palms to the pioneer nurseryman Clarence C. Neel — anchored the composition at its ceremonial center. The palms and the lighting survive and remain in civic use; the Neel plaque was removed by vandals before 1963, and its stone base has gone since; both are documented former features, not survivors.

The whole was purpose-built and publicly owned, and it was not laid on bare ground. A count taken for the Council in June 1949 found sixty-two large palms, most of them *filifera*, already standing between Ramon and Alejo, with forty-two palo verdes among them. What the drive lacked was a continuous planting: a 1938 view was remembered as “just telephone poles and parked jalopies on the only paved street in town.”⁸ The 1949 work regularized an incomplete line and brought the older trees onto the same water and light system — three hundred and twenty-three light connections against three hundred and nine new trees.⁹

3. Historic context

3.1 The native ground: the Cahuilla and the fan palm

Before any of this was a civic form, the tree was native here. *Washingtonia filifera*, the desert fan palm, is the only palm native to California, and its two largest naturally occurring oases stand in Palm Canyon and Andreas Canyon, in the Indian Canyons at the south end of Palm Springs; Palm Canyon is the largest undisturbed palm oasis on Earth.¹⁰ The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians lived at these groves for thousands of years, and the palm supplied much of a life — fruit eaten fresh or ground into meal, fronds worked into shelter and utensils, seeds sealed in gourds for rattles — while the tree itself, rooted only where it found water, marked the springs.¹¹ The oases

were not only found but made: the Cahuilla burned the groves to force a heavier crop and carried the seed to new springs, so that the valley's palms and the people's presence spread together.¹² The Agua Caliente tell the palm's beginning as their own, in more than one telling — an aging first man, Ma-ul, who becomes the first palm at a spring; or Moul of the Sungrey, who makes the change at Indian Wells and whose traded seeds populate the valley.¹³ When the town set fan palms down its main street, then, it was not importing an ornament to the desert. It was lining a road already named Palm Canyon, after the Cahuilla's palm canyons, with the desert's own tree.

3.2 The two fan palms

Two palms stand in the 1949 allée, and they reached Palm Canyon Drive by different roads. The native one was seen first. Major W. H. Emory's reconnaissance party, coming down toward San Diego, reached Carrizo Creek in November 1846 and found what the Florida veterans among them recognized as cabbage trees, marking a spring.¹⁴ Seven years later W. P. Blake's railroad surveyors came through the San Geronimo Pass to a nook under San Jacinto Mountain, later called Agua Caliente and later still Palm Springs, where Blake noted a young palm spreading its fan-like leaves among the willows and mesquite.¹⁵ Neither man named it. That waited until 1879, when the German palmographer Hermann Wendland, working from seedlings raised in a Ghent nursery, named the genus *Washingtonia* — in his words, in honor of the great American.¹⁶

Four years later Wendland named a second species, *robusta*, from young plants grown at another Ghent house, and gave its origin as the borders of the Sacramento River — a place, as the botanist S. B. Parish observed in 1907, where no palm grows. Parish thought he knew where the seed had come from: collectors had begun buying palm seed at Palm Springs in exactly those years, and he was convinced that Palm Springs was the true source of Wendland's second type.¹⁷ The town is entangled in the naming of both palms.

What followed was thirty years of confusion, and Parish's account of it is unsparing. Dealers filled orders for either species from the same drawer, the only difference being the price; by 1907 he could write that neither of the palms known in California as *filifera* and *robusta* bore its true name, and he added a third, *W. gracilis*, for the slim fast palm the nurseries were selling as *robusta*.¹⁸ The caution outlived the name. Ralph Cornell, writing as a professional landscape architect in 1938, still identified the tall slender-trunked palm most commonly seen in cultivation as *Washingtonia filifera robusta* — Parish's combination, thirty-one years on.¹⁹ In 1942 a *Los Angeles Times* garden writer was telling readers that the popular tall palm was *W. gracilis*, "called robusta by nurserymen."²⁰ Period documents naming a *Washingtonia* by species are therefore

evidence of what the writer believed, not of what stood in the ground — a caution that cuts against any argument resting on a species label alone, the city’s included.

The *filifera*’s signature is its skirt: dead fronds fold down against the trunk instead of dropping, forming the dense “petticoat” that gives the species its common name — a skirt that clings, in one horticultural account, “unless reduced by fire or an overzealous gardener.”²¹ It is a stout, relatively short palm that holds that skirt; the *robusta* beside it is a tall, slim, faster-growing Mexican species that tends to a cleaner, self-scarring trunk.²² The distinction matters twice over: it is the visual play the 1949 design exploited, and it means the skirt on a *filifera* is the tree’s natural state, not a groundskeeper’s affectation (Figures 1 and 2). Palm Springs’ own planning documents have repeatedly treated the native *filifera*, skirt and all, as the preferred civic palm — the 2007 General Plan, the 2009 council resolution, and the 2014 Section 14 Specific Plan all point the same way, toward *filifera* and away from *robusta*.²³



Figures 1 and 2. The two trees, away from Palm Canyon Drive. Left: *Washingtonia filifera* at the Oasis of Mara, Joshua Tree National Park — the dead fronds folded down against the trunk in a dense thatch, reaching almost to the base on a tree nobody has trimmed, with the fallen petioles lying at its foot. The fresh tan collar under the crown and the weathered grey below it are the same skirt at different ages. Photograph by Bernard Gagnon, 19 March 2013; Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0). Right: *Washingtonia robusta* lining both sides of Catalina Avenue, Los Angeles, looking north from 1st Street — the same genus on a tall, clean, self-scarring shaft, which is what the Mexican palm does at maturity. Photograph by Downtowngal, 4 February 2021; Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0). Neither tree is part of the resource.

Robusta took the other road, through the nursery trade and the street department. By the mid-1920s it was so thoroughly the default that the Los Angeles horticulturist Ernest Branton could call it, in passing and without explanation, the street fan palm.²⁴ In 1927 Frances Duncan recommended it to Arbor Day planters because it takes little more side-room than a telegraph pole, and made the regional argument plainly: plant what thrives peculiarly well here and is distinctively southern in character, rather than what one may see east as well as west, because the region has so distinctive a character that it is worth not blotting out.²⁵ The federal government agreed on the facts. The Department of Agriculture called *Washingtonias* a very conspicuous feature of street and ornamental planting in southern California and observed that palms are

sometimes effective as a formal street decoration but can hardly be considered shade trees.²⁶ A palm allée is a form. Whatever else it was for it was never for shade.

Then came the program that put the palm on the Southland's skyline, and it had a deadline. Los Angeles had the 1932 Olympic Games coming. In March 1931 the city opened a beautification campaign sized to the occasion — four hundred men employed six months, thirty to forty thousand trees along a hundred and fifty miles of thoroughfare, a hundred thousand dollars out of an unemployment bond issue — and stated the order of work plainly: the main traffic arteries that serve as entrances to the city would be planted first. First on the list of species named appropriate for closely built sections was the *Washingtonia robusta* fan palm.²⁷ That October, the city finished palming Flower Street, opening the shortest route from downtown to the Coliseum for the Games the following year; the property owners' stated expectation was that in a few years the trees would be a marked attraction to tourists.²⁸ Entrance roads, one fast-growing palm, a fixed date, public money, and arriving visitors — eighteen years before Palm Springs did the same thing on its own entrance road, and coordinated it with the state's resurfacing of that highway.

By 1933 the practical knowledge had hardened into specification, and it ran against the native tree. L. Glenn Hall, who had run the Los Angeles forestry division through the planting campaign, wrote that *filifera* was less desirable for street parkway use than its Mexican cousin, which was particularly suited to wide boulevards at forty to fifty feet apart.²⁹ Brauntton went further in 1939: do not plant the California fan palm, he wrote, they are natives to the desert and do not belong in our general climate.³⁰ Every one of those objections is a coastal objection. The Department of Agriculture put it plainly — *robusta* requires less heat, and even in California is distinctly preferable for localities near the coast, while near San Diego the leaves of *filifera* become badly infested with a fungus that does not attack *robusta*.³¹ None of it has purchase in Palm Springs, which is the desert, and where the tree grows wild three miles from the street in question. Ruth Hardy had them planted at thirty-five feet rather than Hall's forty to fifty, and took both palms in equal number rather than the better street tree. Both departures are decisions, and both are legible against this record.

Nor was the town working from Los Angeles gardening columns alone. *California Arts & Architecture* was covering desert gardens through the late thirties, and what it printed argued for the native palm. In February 1937 the landscape architect J. A. Gooch wrote that among the trees we must not forget those which give Palm Springs its name: the native palm is the California fan

palm, *Washingtonia filifera*, distinguished from the Sonora fan palm, which grows taller and more slender.³² In November 1938 the landscape architect Dorothy Wright published “Desert Integrity,” which is the argument the allée would make in trees. It is quite possible, she wrote, to annex the desert, curb it, embellish it and adorn it into a Junior Beverly Hills — but the desert will never willingly accept the alteration; and if one wants to go authentically native, nothing could be more so than a fan palm silhouetted against the last of the sun.³³

The palm was never only a tree, and the period sources are unembarrassed about it. Branton, writing in 1936, put it plainly: the palms arrest the attention of the first-time visitor and are frequently a major factor in wooing him to return.³⁴ In November 1947, two years before the allée, Ruth Dudley opened a column with the premise the whole enterprise rests on — California without palms is unthinkable; it is the palms that first attract the attention of northern visitors, and that add an aura of enchantment.³⁵ The resort towns understood the mechanism exactly. In August 1949, the month Hardy’s palms were going into the ground, the *Times* described La Jolla, a barren sagebrush slope as recently as 1887, where thousands of palms and cedars had been set out to help promote the sale of the resort development. Most of the cedars died. The palms lived, and an impressive row of *Washingtonias* now stood like sentinels directing the way to the cove park.³⁶ So when Neel’s Nursery delivered the trees — a hundred and fifty-four *filifera* and a hundred and fifty-five *robusta* — the town was choosing between two trees that had come to mean different things. The Mexican palm was the Southland’s civic instrument — the Olympic palm, the boulevard palm, the arrival palm, the one a city forester specified for wide streets and the one neither the trade nor the profession could name consistently. The native palm was the one growing in the largest natural grove of palms in the United States three miles up the road, the one that gave the town its name, the one two landscape architects had argued for in print in the preceding decade, and the one that keeps its skirt.³⁷ Palm Springs took both, in alternation, down a single street. Neither half of that is accidental.

3.3 The street-tree allée as a designed form

The double row of trees lining a street has a name older than any American city — the allée — and when Palm Springs set two ranks of fan palms down Palm Canyon Drive in 1949, it was working in a form with a long and specific pedigree. It was not inventing one.³⁸ The form began in the garden, in the long green corridors of Renaissance and Baroque estates, and stepped outside when seventeenth-century French designers carried it past the wall into the town; the English did the same with their tree-lined public walks, “essentially garden allées outside the garden.”³⁹ In the street it carried a meaning beyond shade: to lay out a long, straight row of trees down a major

urban space was to make a civic claim visible, and the autocrats of the age “delighted in planting allées of trees in the urban landscape as a show of their power.”⁴⁰ The nineteenth century turned the allée from an ornament at the city’s edge into the city’s fabric — the promenades that had ringed the walls became internal streets; Haussmann’s Paris gave *boulevard* its modern meaning; Olmsted’s American parkways were meant “to bring parklike qualities into the whole city landscape.”⁴¹ That this was the recognized pedigree of the civic tree-lined street, and not a local notion, is plain in the planning literature of the day: writing in a 1915 city plan for Oakland and Berkeley, Werner Hegemann named the same lineage — the Champs-Élysées, Berlin’s Unter den Linden, the Mall in Washington, and the boulevards cut from old fortifications — as the “treasures of past ages” that modern American city-making inherited.⁴² And it became a civic project carried by citizens: by the 1870s American civic-improvement associations were pressing towns to plant their streets, and tree-planting “became for some a civic obsession,” producing the named ceremonial avenues — Fifth, Euclid, St. Charles.⁴³

That impulse hardened, at the century’s turn, into the City Beautiful movement. What it asked was, for American cities, new: that a city’s appearance was a public responsibility, not a private luxury. Its most-read theorist, Charles Mulford Robinson, held that civic art served the town and not the artist, insisted that “cities are not made to be looked at, but to be lived in,” and gave the movement its motto, from New York’s Municipal Art Society — “To make us love our city we must make our city lovely.”⁴⁴ It was no fringe enthusiasm: by 1904 Robinson could count upwards of twelve hundred local improvement societies in the United States, with Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce working toward the “City Beautiful.”⁴⁵ The instrument it reached for, over and over, was the tree-lined avenue — the old “narrow, treeless” streets giving way to “broad new boulevards with trees and turf.”⁴⁶

The impulse reached California and found a climate that would grow almost anything. Pasadena became the Southland’s exemplar: a street-tree pattern set by Jeanne Carr as early as the 1870s, a program pressed by the architect Arthur Heineman in 1907 “in the full spirit of the City Beautiful movement,” a municipal nursery in 1909, and a policy of designating a species for each street, so that an ordinary block became a corridor — sometimes an arching tunnel — of a single kind of tree.⁴⁷ Among those species, the palm did particular work: *filifera* alternating with magnolias on Orange Grove Boulevard, a *filifera* row along Raymond Avenue at Memorial Park.⁴⁸ The palm had by then become the Southland’s civic signature — fan palms on Riverside’s Victoria Avenue in 1877, Euclid Avenue laid out from Ontario to Cucamonga in 1882, palms lining the streets into

nearly every new development through the 1920s and '30s.⁴⁹ The form even carried the names of the movement's leading designers: in their 1914 plan for Torrance, the Olmsted Brothers gave Cabrillo Avenue a central median of native California palms.⁵⁰ The two 1915 expositions fixed the image — Balboa Park's El Prado ran on an allée of black acacias, and the San Francisco fair's Avenue of Palms set some 350 palms in alternating double rows — and the lush, water-fed landscape they made popular “cast its influence over a century of planting in Southern California.”⁵¹ Euclid Avenue in particular would be the example Palm Springs' own press named when the campaign began (see Section 3.4).

Where Pasadena's program was municipal, Beverly Hills's belonged to a private company, and it came with a plan. The Rodeo Land and Water Company recorded its subdivision in October 1906 and engaged Wilbur David Cook, Jr. to lay it out. Cook had worked in the Olmsted office — the Columbian Exposition, parks in Boston and Chicago, the White House grounds in 1902 — and left it in 1905 for the Oakland park system before coming to Los Angeles. He was the first professionally trained landscape architect to practice in Southern California, at a moment when the profession itself was barely a decade old.⁵² Planting the public right-of-way was integral to what he drew, and the company engaged the nurseryman John Reeves to carry it out. Reeves specified that a different kind of tree be planted the full length of every street, and built a ten-acre nursery to grow the stock; the trees went into the ground ahead of the lot sales, to give the place an identity before there was anything to identify. By the end of 1906 the new drives — Rodeo, Canon, Crescent, Beverly — were bordered with palms, acacias and peppers.⁵³ Six years on, the trees were doing promotional work: an advertisement for the subdivision offered readers parklike driveways lined with pepper and palm trees, laid out, against the monotonous checkerboard elsewhere, to an artistic plan by one of America's best landscape engineers.⁵⁴

The division of labor is the part worth noticing. A trained designer set the framework; a nurseryman chose the species and grew them. Palm Springs filled the same two roles forty-three years later, when Williams's committee fixed the line, the spacing and the services, and Neel's Nursery supplied and planted the trees (Section 3.6).

And on Beverly Drive, the trees were two rather than one. *Washingtonia robusta* and *Phoenix canariensis* run alternately down both sides — robusta, canariensis, robusta, canariensis — so that a fan palm and a date palm trade places the whole length of the drive (Figure 3). Two species, one rhythm, on a principal approach, four decades before Palm Canyon Drive.⁵⁵



Figure 3. Palms on Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, in a real photo postcard. *Washingtonia robusta* and *Phoenix canariensis* alternate down both sides of the drive. The street-tree scheme was laid out for the Rodeo Land and Water Company from 1906, a different tree to each street; Beverly Drive received two. Los Angeles Photo Post Card Co.

And Palm Springs had the form at its own gate. When Nellie Coffman rebuilt the Desert Inn in the mid-1920s with the designer William Charles Tanner, the wide curved entrance drive was “lined with an allee of native *Washingtonia filifera* palms”; Coffman’s Desert Inn landscape became the model the town measured itself by — and the one Ruth Hardy, running her own inn a few blocks off, knew by heart.⁵⁶ A postcard mailed from the town in June 1943 shows the drive as visitors met it: two files of *filifera* curving in under the mountain, the trunks carrying their thatch well down (Figure 4).⁵⁷

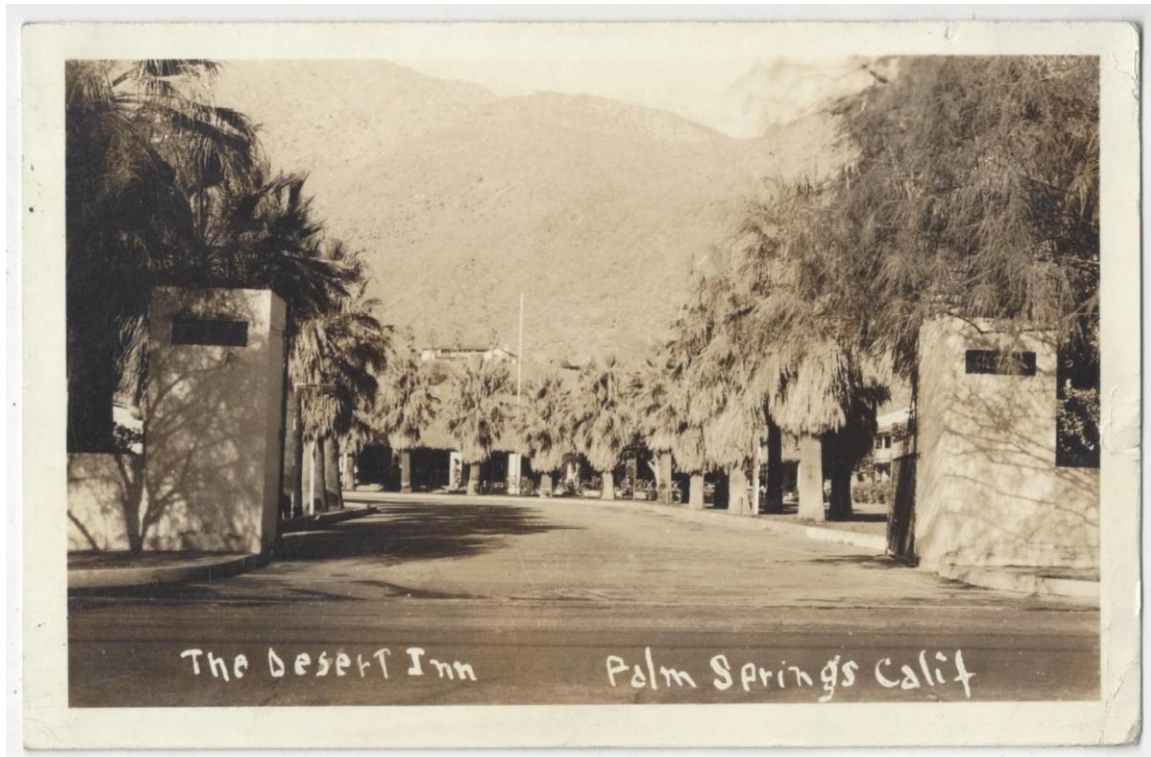


Figure 4. The entrance drive of the Desert Inn, on a real photo postcard mailed from Palm Springs on June 17, 1943. The filifera carry their thatch well down the trunk, and the shaggiest of them are skirted almost to the base. This was the landscape the town measured itself by in the years before the Palm Canyon Drive planting. Photographer unidentified.

3.4 The idea in the papers (1948)

The form did not arrive in Palm Springs as a municipal decision. It arrived first in the newspaper, as an argument. In September 1948 — nine months before the Council acted — the *Desert Sun* columnist R. F. “Phat” Graettinger made the case in *This Side of the Sun*: “How about a move to plant palm trees along the curb at stated intervals on Palm Canyon drive? ... This is Palm Springs and it is Palm Canyon drive ... Ever see Euclid avenue in Ontario?” He wanted the drive made “a real oasis.”

The reference is exact, and it matters. Euclid Avenue in Ontario — laid out in 1882 as a double-rowed, palm- and pepper-lined boulevard — was the Southland’s best-known civic parkway, and Graettinger named it as the model Palm Springs should follow (Figure 5). The regional precedent the nomination sets out above was therefore not inferred after the fact; it was the precedent the town’s own booster press pointed to, by name, before a single tree went in. Graettinger would

keep at it: he is credited in later civic tributes with pushing the palm-planting campaign through his column, and he returns to the story as an early advocate rather than a bystander.



Figure 5. *Euclid Avenue, Ontario, California — the boulevard R. F. “Phat” Graettinger named in the Palm Springs press as the model Palm Springs should follow. Fan palms stand in the central parkway and along the flanking roadways, several carrying dried-frond thatch on the upper trunk. The printed caption calls it “the famous tree-shaded thoroughfare that extends to the foothills.” Real photo postcard, Frashers Inc., Pomona, California, negative F4174; undated. Euclid is a divided boulevard with a planted median, where Palm Canyon Drive carries two curbside rows; what the two share is the continuous double file down a long straight civic corridor.*

The idea gathered civic weight over the winter. A Chamber of Commerce “Unite-Promote-Protect” survey in December 1948 tallied residents’ wishes for the town, and among the improvements the returned cards asked for was “a planting program for general beautification such as many more Palm trees along Palm Canyon Drive.” By the time Ben Shearer of the Park Commission was reported in early 1949 to have started the movement to plant palm trees along Palm Canyon Drive, he was carrying forward an idea already in public circulation. Shearer began the municipal project; the wish itself was a year older, and it was Graettinger who first put Euclid Avenue beside Palm Canyon Drive in print.

3.5 The 1949 civic beautification: authorization, design, planting, lighting, dedication

The move to line the drive with palms surfaced early in 1949, when Ben Shearer of the Park Commission was reported to have “recently started the movement for palm trees along Palm Canyon drive” — part of one coordinated beautification effort that also produced the year’s sign ordinance, meant to keep the Village “on a resort caliber with a minimum of commercialism.”⁵⁸

It moved from talk to a council action on February 2, 1949, under the minute-book heading “Beautification of Palm Canyon Drive with Palm Trees.” A special citizens committee headed by Shearer had been investigating the need and cost of trees on the drive, and the Park and Recreation Board had met specially two days before to settle a recommendation; on Ruth Hardy’s motion the Council adopted Resolution No. 2503, approving the planting of palms along Palm Canyon Drive from Tamarisk Road to Ramon Road and authorizing advertising for bids immediately.⁵⁹ The resolution states the design at its origin: palms along both sides of the drive, in the parkways adjacent to the curbs, some 250 of them for about \$15,000, “spaced approximately 35 feet apart,” under plans and specifications to be prepared by the City Engineer. And in the same breath it states the whole-length intention — that “each of the following years additional areas to the north and south of the original strip likewise be planted to palm trees.” The phased extension described at Section 3.7 is not a later idea. It is in the founding resolution. In the same session it authorized twenty more sidewalk benches for the village, at the request of the Business Women’s club — the trees and the street furniture moving together as one program.⁶⁰ What made it a designed landscape rather than a wish was a document: in April 1949 the Council approved written “**Specifications for Furnishing and Planting Palm Trees on Palm Canyon Drive,**” a plan set showing tree locations, filed with the Planning Department, and it was put out to competitive bid.⁶¹ The money came from the voters. The city’s \$950,000 municipal-improvement bond, adopted by Council in March and ratified at a special election on April 26, 1949 — the trees-and-lights proposition carrying 1,015 to 267 of 1,282 cast⁶² — carried a line for street-tree planting, lighting, and landscaping along Palm Canyon Drive “from the northern to the southern city limits,” coordinated with the state’s summer resurfacing of the highway.⁶³

The first bid attempt drew nothing. Bids closed at ten in the morning on April 30, 1949, and none was received; a second call also failed. On June 8 the Council found the work could be done more economically by day labor, authorized the City Manager to buy the trees in the open market and hire the labor himself, and set him a ceiling of twenty thousand dollars — against an anticipated

total of twenty-five thousand that expressly included the irrigation water and the tree lighting. Earl J. Neel of Neel's Nursery was engaged to supervise, at a fee of twenty percent of the amounts expended, with each tree to be located by the City Manager and the Tree Committee of the Park and Recreation Board. The allée was therefore not built under a construction contract at all, which is why the paper trail is so granular: every load of trees passed through the city's own register of demands.⁶⁴ The plan itself was specific. The bid invitation called for approximately a hundred and fifty-four *Washingtonia filifera* and approximately a hundred and fifty-five *Washingtonia robusta* — three hundred and nine trees, one more *robusta* than *filifera*, the two species alternating by design — along Palm Canyon Drive between Tamarisk Road and Ramon Road. That is the April specification, and it is the last statement of that extent in the record: every statement of the planted run after June 1949 names the shorter reach from Ramon Road north to Alejo Road, and it was that reach the city dedicated and called “the mile.”⁶⁵ At a joint meeting at the Chi Chi in late May, called by Hardy — who chaired the Council's Boards and Commissions Relations Committee, which held Parks, and served as secretary of the Park and Recreation Board that Ben Shearer chaired — and presided over by tree-committee chairman Stewart Williams, the crew set the working details: the trees spaced to allow eventual three-foot curb setbacks on each side, and — at Hardy's insistence — a permanent one-inch water line with an outlet at every tree rather than water carted by wagon. “Even if we plant only one city block with trees, let's do it right.” In June the costs were fixed: Earl Neel of Neel's Nursery at two dollars a foot, some three hundred and eight twenty-foot trees, about twelve thousand dollars for trees and four thousand for labor.

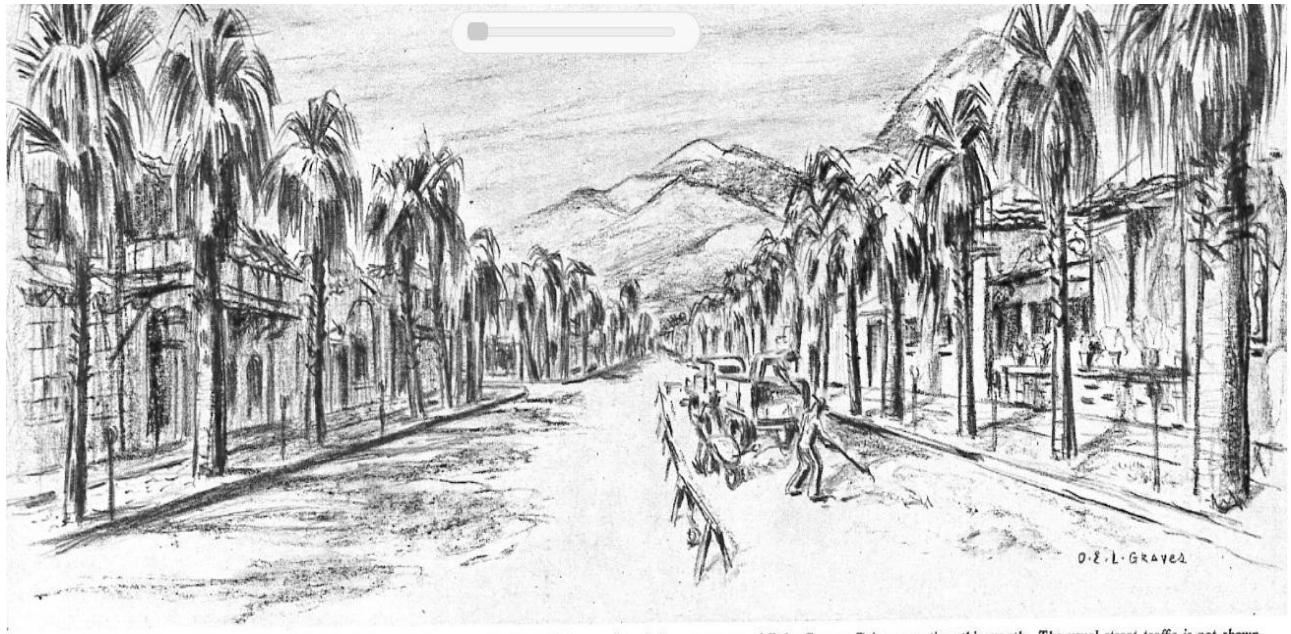
The design was settled at a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and the Park and Recreation Board on June 3, 1949, and the Council adopted it five days later as Resolution No. 2587: six numbered conditions, the plan of record for everything planted after that date. Between Alejo Road and Arenas Road the new trees were to be set so as to maintain the approximate line of the palms already standing. North of Alejo and south of Arenas they were to be set back three feet, against a widening of the pavement then anticipated. Where physical conditions made a deviation necessary — and the Council inserted the words “or preferable,” so that a frontage set back for a large building could govern — the Tree Committee was authorized to determine the proper location. Water was to be supplied to each tree by pipeline. Conduit for lighting was to be installed at the time of trenching for that pipeline. And the sixth condition named the committee: “Tree Planting Committee — Stewart Williams, chairman, to work with the City Manager in expediting planting of trees immediately.”⁶⁶

Three things follow. The setback was selective rather than uniform, which is why the alignment through the commercial core still reads differently from the reaches beyond it. The irregularities in the spacing have a documented cause in the Tree Committee's discretion, exercised tree by tree. And the lighting was not an addition to a row of trees: it was a founding requirement of the design, adopted by resolution before the first palm went in.

The first palm — a *Washingtonia robusta*, the “No. 1 Tree” — went in one Monday morning in late June at the southeast corner of Ramon Road and Palm Canyon Drive, before the park board, the planning commission, and a crowd of civic leaders; the planting ran north from Ramon toward Baristo, with an individual water outlet and a light conduit brought to each tree.⁶⁷ The *Desert Sun*, printing the photograph of the group beside it, said the occasion had brought out a great many city leaders to see the first tree installed, and that the project when finished “will change the entire appearance of Palm Springs’ main thoroughfare.”⁶⁸

The *Palm Springs Villager* set out the specification for its readers that summer, and its account is the fullest single statement of what was intended: through July and August, 308 *Washingtonia* palms, half *robusta* and half *filifera*, to be planted along Palm Canyon Drive between Tamarisk Street at the El Paseo Theatre corner and Ramon Road south of the Village Market; spaced thirty-five to forty feet apart; varying in height from twelve to twenty-five feet; water lines installed to water all the trees simultaneously and semi-automatically; and conduit laid for a street lighting system to be installed later, the lights to be fixed to the trunks so as to give “a soft lighting on sidewalks and streets.” The state would resurface the drive from the north city limits to Ramon Road at the same time.⁶⁹

The magazine ran the plan with a drawing by its cover artist, O. E. L. Graves — his impression of how the drive would look, with the usual street traffic left out. It is the design intent of the allée in a single image, drawn before the trees were in the ground: a double row of skirted palms in even rank down both sides of the street, crowns closing overhead, the mountain at the end of the corridor (Figure 6).



The Villager's distinguished cover artist draws his impression of the appearance of Palm Canyon Drive some time this month. The usual street traffic is not shown.

Figure 6. “More Than A Mile of Trees To Beautify Palm Canyon Drive” — O. E. L. Graves’s impression of the finished allée, drawn for the Palm Springs Villager in July 1949, before the planting began. The palms are drawn sketched. Palm Springs Villager, July–August 1949, 20–21.

The lighting was not an afterthought but a designed element. City Engineer George Minturn had it built around the fronds, to keep the palms from vanishing after the sun drops behind Mount San Jacinto.⁷⁰ The scheme is inseparable from the skirted silhouette it was designed to light. The planting ran through the summer. By the end of September, City Engineer Minturn could report three hundred and fourteen trees in the ground with ten to go, all set by September 30 — each with its own switch box and hose connection, three hundred and seven of each by then — at an average cost to date of \$68.79 a tree.

The lighting was the part that would not be rushed, and the record of getting it right is the clearest evidence that the allée was meant to be a designed nocturnal spectacle and not merely a row of shade trees. The conduit was in the ground with the trees in 1949, but the fixtures took another year of trial. Through the winter and spring of 1950 the Park Board tested some six styles of fixture on the four hundred-odd palms, at an estimated fifteen to eighteen thousand dollars, and City Manager Russell Rink told the town plainly that “aesthetics figure prominently” in the choice. Minturn staged a preview at his own home — a “jigger-type” fixture that threw light up into the fronds and down onto the walk — so the board could see the effect before committing. The fixture

finally chosen in August 1950 was, in Minturn's words, a "tailor-made job to fit the height, girth and distance of the fronds from the light source," not a "hand-me-down job"; it was "spectacular in the manner of illumination," came in near twelve thousand dollars, below estimate, and was set so that "none of the lights will be on a straight line down Palm Canyon drive," with up-and-down fixtures at the corners and crosswalks. The purchase itself is dated and priced in the city's own record. On September 13, 1950 the Council bought five hundred and twenty fixtures from two manufacturers for \$3,496.80: a hundred and ten double-ended and fifty single-ended fixtures of special design from Moore-Montroy Electric of Los Angeles, and three hundred and sixty standard commercial fixtures from Shalda Manufacturing of Burbank. The bid tabulation quotes the lens by name — Herculite, Pyrex, heat-resistant, tempered, one type at a premium for ventilation. These were lensed, gasketed, heat-managed enclosures, specified for a desert and aimed up into dry fronds. Whoever wrote that specification was thinking about temperature.⁷¹ The whole scheme was built around the fronds — designed to keep the palms, which hang "like a ghostly shadow on moonless nights," from disappearing after dark. It cannot be stripped of its skirts without destroying the very thing the lights were made to create.

The system was not free-standing. Its service, its metering and its switching lived on the fronts of privately owned commercial buildings along the drive, and the city had to ask. Between January and May 1950 fifteen frontage owners signed licenses permitting the city to install "insulators to support electric wires, meter sockets, switches, automatic switch controls and conduit encasing wire" on their buildings, under a drawing attached to each agreement and titled "Plan for License Agreement," removable on sixty days' notice in writing. Among them were the Desert Inn through Earl Coffman; Pearl McManus, twice over, behind two different lessees; Earle C. Strebe; Irwin S. Schuman; Palm Springs Corporation, Ltd.; and Stephen H. and Beatrice Willard, whose photographs are half the visual record of this landscape. Not one refusal is recorded. For a nomination arguing that the allée was a civic work the whole town took part in, that is not an inference. It is fifteen signatures.

The rest is a contractor's year. The distribution system was awarded on January 20, 1950 to Arthur Brudvik dba Coast Electric and Refrigeration Company at \$19,012.14, payable from the same bond fund that had bought the trees. Twelve days later the Council struck the contract's liquidated-damages and bonus clauses as "unnecessary in this particular contract," so that nothing obliged anyone to hurry — the likeliest reason being that no fixture had yet been chosen. In February a change order moved the service box onto city-owned land and eliminated an aerial drop, honoring

on this one street the undergrounding policy the Council had adopted in April 1949. In May the half-inch conduit and the tree circuits running up the trunks from pull boxes at the base were deducted from the contract, and the photo-electric switch control was raised high on poles at the power company's insistence, for safety — which fixes the allée on automatic dusk-to-dawn control from its first night. In July, three weeks after Korea began, the city bought pipe “to complete palm tree lighting system conduit” expressly “in view of the unsettled war situation.” The fixtures were advertised in August and bought in September. Fifteen months separate the first palm from the last lamp, and a war is what finished it.⁷²

The photographic record shows the scheme working as designed, and shows it early. A night view of the drive in front of the Oasis Commercial Building — E. Stewart Williams's own building, and the offices of Williams, Williams and Williams — catches the fixtures throwing light up into the crowns, each palm lit individually from its own standard, the fronds carrying the light and the trunks dark below (Figure 7). Williams's committee had set the palms three years before he built behind them: the building was finished in 1952, and the view is dated 1953. The palms have been in the ground four summers and carry no thatch. That is what a young transplanted fan palm looks like. It arrives with its crown cut back for the move, spends several seasons rebuilding a full head, and can begin to hold dead fronds only once the crown has risen clear of the walk and the clearance trimming stops. The lighting was aimed at the crown before there was a skirt to light. The skirt grew into a scheme already built around the fronds.⁷³

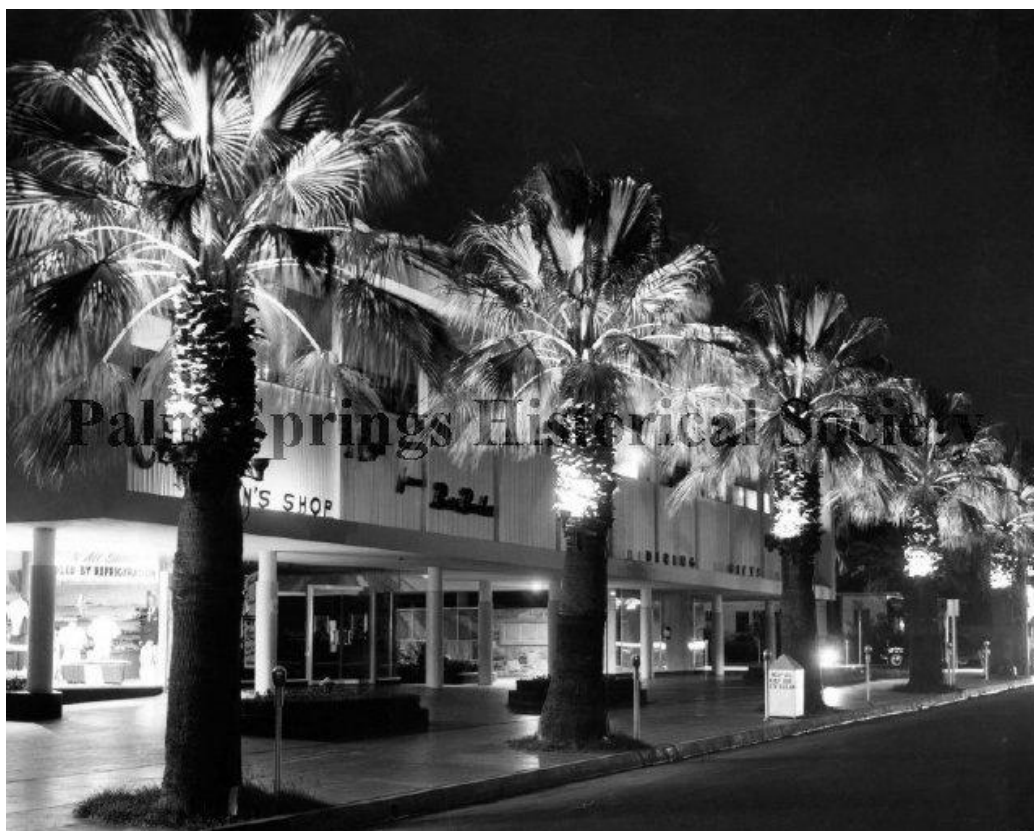


Figure 7. *The lighted palms on Palm Canyon Drive in front of the Oasis Commercial Building, designed by E. Stewart Williams and housing the offices of Williams, Williams and Williams; the building was completed in 1952. The fixtures throw light up into the crowns. The view is dated 1953 — the palms four summers in the ground, the trunks still clear. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.*

On Saturday, October 1, 1949, the completed mile was dedicated — in the city’s own words, “the mile of palm trees planted along Palm Canyon Drive between Ramon Road on the south and Alejo Road on the north”, and timed to the ceremonial opening of the winter season, so the trees became the town’s public face for the year ahead. The rite was a “Blessing of the Trees,” staged in what the paper called an old Spanish custom. Nearly every downtown merchant dressed a window for the occasion; a platform went up at the southeast corner of Andreas and Palm Canyon, before a grouping of three palms lit for the ribbon-cutting, typical of the planting down the drive. The advance notices set out the program: the clergy and the city officials gathering at the stand at five o’clock, Mayor Charles Farrell pulling a ribbon strung from the speakers’ stand to the crowns of the palms, the lights flashing on in the fronds, and the lights burning all night. The papers also set out who was to stand where — Ben Shearer, head of the park board, “credited with pushing the tree-planting idea to fulfillment,” and Councilwoman Ruth Hardy, “in charge of the official work on the planting program.”⁷⁴⁷⁵

At about quarter to five that afternoon the high school band played under Gustave Patzner; Wall Spalding, “originator and coordinator of the plan,” and Bob Bennett introduced it; Father Michael O’Connor, of Our Lady of Solitude, blessed the trees in the Spanish custom and the Rev. James H. Blackstone gave the benediction; and Hardy, tree-committee chairman Stewart Williams, and Muriel Fulton “responded with appropriate words of the beauties of the trees.” The ceremony’s heart was the dedication of the mile to the memory of Clarence C. Neel, the pioneer nurseryman — “pioneer Villager and desert landscaper,” as the *Limelight* had it — who had died that spring. A plaque attesting the year of planting was presented to his widow, Mrs. Verne Neel, for emplacement in a stone monument at that corner, at the base of the three *Washingtonia robusta* planted there: the same grouping of three that was lit at the ribbon-cutting. Three is the count the advance notices give, one of them naming the species as well; the report published after the event says only that the plaque was for the base of the trees. The trees were his son Earl’s work. More than seven hundred were said to have been served at the barbecue that opened the day.



Figure 8. *The Blessing of the Trees — the dedication of the mile of palms, Palm Canyon Drive, October 1, 1949. Several hundred people stand around the platform and the newly planted palm. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.*

The design did not stop at the trunks. Three days before the dedication the Council had already adopted the Park and Recreation Board's recommendations for the mile: that the electric boxes at the base of the trees be camouflaged with brown paint, and that funds be allocated for a flower planting project at the base of the trees and for its maintenance.⁷⁶ Days after the dedication, Hardy was named to investigate flower plantings for the tree bases, in the stated ambition to make Palm Canyon Drive "the most beautiful thoroughfare in the country." The underplanting became its own small campaign. In the spring of 1950 the Council took up "posies for the palms" on Hardy's motion; the Park Board weighed petunias, African daisies, and lantana for the unpaved ground around each tree, and settled on bougainvillea set at the trees — two vines to a palm, one trained to cover the electrical switch box that served its light. The beautification was conceived whole: trunk, frond, light, and flowering base, each considered as part of the single composition down the drive.

3.6 The makers of the allée

A row of trees planted by a public crew is maintenance. A row of trees with named authors, a chosen species mix, an engineered spacing, a purpose-built lighting scheme, and a dedication is a designed landscape — and the significance of the allée rests on the second reading, not the first. No single hand drew it; like most civic landscapes of its moment it came from a small group working in concert, and the record supports naming six contributions.



Figure 9. The park board and city officials at the setting of the first palm, Ramon Road and Palm Canyon Drive, June 1949. *The Desert Sun*, publishing its own photograph of the group that day, named them as Roland Vaile, John Connell, Herbert Burns, Councilwoman Ruth Hardy (chairman), and Hilton McCabe of the park board, City Manager William Alworth, and tree-committee chairman Stewart Williams. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.

Ruth Hardy was the will behind it. Others raised the idea — Shearer’s citizens committee was investigating the cost of trees on the drive that winter — but it was her motion the Council adopted on February 2, 1949, and hers is the hand on every stage after. The city manager brought the planting recommendation forward at her request. She called the joint meeting at the Chi Chi that fixed the species and the spacing. When the watering question arose she insisted on a permanent line with an outlet at every tree: “Even if we plant only one city block with trees, let’s do it right.” She held the first planting until Stewart Williams could get back to town for it. Days after the dedication she was named to look into flower plantings at the bases of the trees, and the following spring she moved to put them in. Elected in 1948 as the first woman on the Palm Springs City Council and returned unopposed in 1952 and 1956, she served twelve years — longer than anyone else had then sat on that body — and was still in office when the palms were carried south in the 1955–56 campaign.⁷⁷ She did not let go of them afterward. At an association meeting late in 1964, four years out of office, she raised the fact that the palms had been only half trimmed — the routine

clearance hem, left half done — telephoned the mayor and several councilmen, and the trees were trimmed.⁷⁸ When she died the following January the *Desert Sun* called the lighted palms her greatest memorial, and within three weeks the Council renamed the city's first park for her.⁷⁹

E. Stewart Williams chaired the tree-planting committee that gave the 1949 planting its form. The contemporary record is explicit: reporting the joint planning-commission and park-board meeting that set the final plan, the *Desert Sun* stated that “the tree committee is headed by Architect Stewart Williams.”

He was thirty-nine that summer and three years into practice here. Born in Dayton in 1909 to the architect Harry Williams, he took his degree at Cornell in 1932 and a master's at Pennsylvania the following year, where he held the Chandler Fellowship. The Depression took his father's firm and nearly took the son out of architecture altogether: he spent four years teaching art and design at Bard, selling etchings and watercolors to make up the salary, and won the Zabriskie Prize at the American Watercolor Society. In 1938 he went to Europe. Germany left him cold — the celebrated modernist houses at Stuttgart stood empty while the cheap ones nearby were full — and it was Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and the softer forms and warm materials of Aalto and Asplund, that he built with afterward. He came home with a Swedish wife, Mari Schlytern, and a way of working. He spent the war at Mare Island supervising the design and construction of dry docks for the Navy, and in 1946 joined his father and his brother Roger in Palm Springs. The Sinatra house came out of his first years here.⁸⁰

None of that is incidental. Three years after his committee set the palms, Williams built behind them: the Oasis Commercial Building of 1952, his design and his firm's offices, stands behind the lit trees in Figure 7. In the same weeks of 1949 he was in charge of the ball park work at the Field Club, on a plan by Ralph Cornell. The man who fixed the line of the rows, the curb-setback logic, and the requirement that irrigation outlets and lighting conduit be built in at the moment of planting was a painter by training, a builder by war service, and one of the architects who would define Palm Springs modernism. An allée whose design was set by that hand is a designed object, not a public-works default.



Figure 10. At the planting of the first palms on Palm Canyon Drive, June 1949. From left: the architect Albert Frey; Councilwoman Ruth Hardy; the architect E. Stewart Williams, chairman of the tree-planting committee. The palm behind them has arrived with its crown cut back and tied for transport. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society; identification per Brown and Keylon, “The Founding Mothers of Palm Springs.”

Clarence C. Neel was the nurseryman. He was born at Gap Mills, in Monroe County, West Virginia, in February 1882, and by 1905 he was in the Colorado Desert working one of the first ranches near Coachella. That year the Colorado River broke through and began filling the Salton sink. His ranch went under and stayed under; by 1949 the paper could report that the whole of it lay beneath the Salton Sea. He stayed in desert country — Moapa, Nevada in 1910, Independence in the Owens Valley in 1920 — and came to Palm Springs about 1927, opening Neel’s Nursery at 330 North Indian Avenue the following year. He was selling ten-foot palms two years before the first tree went in on Palm Canyon Drive. He held no office and belonged to no club; the *Desert Sun* credited his standing in the village to personal contact and friendliness, and remembered him saying of people who disliked the desert that they could leave by the road they came in on.⁸¹

He died at home on the night of March 1, 1949, at sixty-seven — three weeks before the Council put the bond on the ballot, and four months before the first palm went in the ground. The Council opened its next meeting with a minute of silence, and some three hundred people came to the funeral at the Community Church that Friday.⁸² The city's answer was to make the memory of him part of the landscape: the one-mile row was dedicated to him, with a plaque set in a stone monument at the base of the three palms at Andreas and Palm Canyon. That dedication is what makes the allée commemorative and not merely ornamental — a second, independent ground of significance. The plaque was pried from the rock by vandals before 1963 and its fate is unrecorded, and the rock itself has gone since; both are documented former contributing features. Two robusta stand at that corner today, and have since at least 2008. Whether the third was lost or the count was never three, the record does not say.⁸³

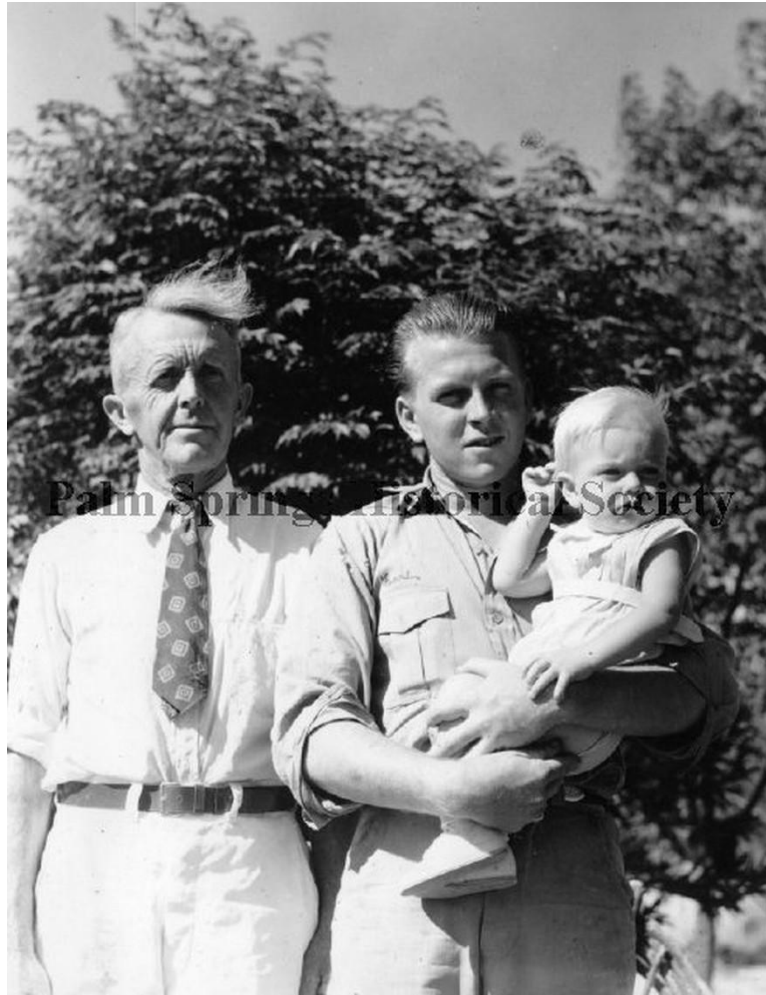


Figure 11. Clarence C. Neel, left, with his son Earl; the child is unidentified. Palm Springs Historical Society, Lykken Family Collection, object 2010.3.400, other no. 36-400, from scrapbook 97-084; Earl Neel married Jane Lykken, whose family assembled the scrapbook. Undated. The Society's record gives the son's name in one line as Earl and in another as Carl, and states that Clarence Neel planted the palms along Palm Canyon Drive. He did not: he died on March 1, 1949, four months before the first palm went into the ground, and the planting was his son's work. The dedication of the mile to his memory was a memorial, not a record of who set the trees.



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Figure 12. *Neel's Nursery advertisement, Palm Springs Villager, July–August 1949 — the summer the palms went in. The photograph shows the Ingleside Inn, Ruth Hardy's hotel, captioned "Landscaping by Neel's Nursery." The nurseryman who supplied the allée had made the grounds of the councilwoman who drove it.*

Earl Neel carried his father's work into the ground, and he is the reason the allée reads as one sustained work rather than a single event. He was born in 1917 on a homestead at Independence established by his mother, and raised on the family ranch at Coachella; his parents came to Palm Springs in 1927 and opened the nursery the following year. He married Jane Lykken, daughter of the desert pioneer Carl Lykken, served four years in the Navy in the Second World War, and came home in 1946. Three years later his father died in March and the city dedicated a mile of palms to

his memory in October — planted, that summer, by the son who had taken over the business between those two dates.⁸⁴

The same hand returns across every phase: 308 trees at two dollars a foot in 1949; two dollars a foot again in 1955 for the Alejo–Ramon trees; roughly two hundred more of *robusta* and *filifera* at eight dollars a foot for the 1956–57 South Palm Canyon extension, with a further fifty the city itself brought from Arizona for Neel to set; and the DeMuth Park tree-moving in 1962. Some of the stock came off his own ground. The nursery he built on East Palm Canyon Drive was a tree farm before it was anything else, and a later account of the property records that it once carried a full farm of palms, many of which went into Palm Canyon Drive.⁸⁵

What he did afterward matters to the nomination as much as what he planted. Neel served two decades as the landscape expert on the city’s Architectural Advisory Committee — the body that reviewed design — then on the Planning Commission from 1986, and on the City Council from April 1988 to April 1992. He helped raise the money for the Living Desert Reserve and for the Desert Museum. He died on August 11, 2001, at eighty-three, and was buried at Welwood Murray Cemetery. The man who set the trees spent the next fifty years sitting on the boards that decided how the town would look, and his own house on East Palm Canyon has since been named a historic resource by the same city.⁸⁶

One family, one nursery, three campaigns — the continuity of the maker is part of what lets the whole length read as one designed resource.

The city staff and the electrical engineers made the light — the strand of authorship that most decisively answers the “it’s only trees” objection, because the lighting was engineered around the fronds. City Engineer **George Minturn** described the fixtures as a “tailor-made job to fit the height, girth and distance of the fronds from the light source,” not a “hand-me-down job,” staggered so that no two lights fell in a straight line down the drive, built to keep the palms from vanishing after the sun drops behind Mount San Jacinto. Each palm was set with its own conduit and its own water outlet. Palm Springs Electric supplied the eight thousand feet of inch-and-a-quarter conduit that summer, at \$4,426.43 — the raceway, not the light. The distribution system that would energize it was advertised that December and awarded on January 20, 1950 to Arthur Brudvik dba Coast Electric and Refrigeration Company at \$19,012.14; the fixtures were bought separately in September 1950 for \$3,496.80. Three purchases, three contractors, three figures,

and they should not be collapsed into one.⁸⁷ The scheme is inseparable from the skirted silhouette it was designed to light — which is affirmative evidence that the skirt is the intended historic character, not an accident of neglect. The engineering did not end with the core: it was Public Works Director Frank Hamerschlag who, in 1958, costed the extension of the same palms-lights-and-water composition out to Araby Point, carrying Minturn’s design intent down the length of the drive.

Lawrence Crossley kept them alive. Eleven months after the trees went in, the City Manager reported that maintenance of the palms on Palm Canyon Drive and of the landscaping at the Polo Grounds “require more attention than it is possible to supply through the City’s three-man street crew,” and recommended engaging Crossley as an independent contractor at a hundred dollars a month to attend to the watering of the trees and the maintenance of the irrigation ditches. The Council agreed on May 3, 1950. Until that resolution the irrigation of the allée was a budget line — nineteen hundred dollars in tree utilities against a hundred and eighty in tree maintenance in the first General Fund appropriation of November 1949, a ratio that says the water was running and nothing about who ran it.⁸⁸

One further measure of what the town was buying that summer. In the same weeks the palms were going into Palm Canyon Drive, the City of Palm Springs was engaging a landscape architect for its two civic parks. Ralph D. Cornell — who had designed the Bettye Cree studio grounds here in 1927, landscaped the Palm Springs Biltmore in 1948, and drawn the master plan of Griffith and Elysian parks in Los Angeles — was interviewed before the council, the city planners, and Ruth Hardy’s park board in the week of June 24, 1949; chosen unanimously as designer for the Field Club, now Sunrise Park, on June 30; and retained on July 22 for the north-end park the city now calls Ruth Hardy Park, at roughly \$133 an acre. Harry Williams Architects was engaged the same evening for the buildings, with E. Stewart Williams — chairman of the allée’s tree-planting committee — in charge of the ball park work. The same page of that week’s *Desert Sun* that carried the council’s approval of Cornell’s plan carried the award of the contract for the conduit that would one day light the allée’s palms.⁸⁹ Cornell had no part in the allée, and this nomination does not suggest he did. The point is the milieu. A town that in one season commissioned professional landscape plans for two parks and a lit, spaced, two-species allée down its main street was not gardening.

3.7 Extension: the whole-length allée (1954 – c. 1963)

The 1949 mile was the core, not the whole. From the outset the design was conceived for the full length of the drive: the bond called for palms “from the northern to the southern city limits with accessory lighting.” That whole-length intent is itself part of the historic design — what the city set out to make, documented in its own authorizations — and through the 1950s it carried the planting outward in named campaigns, in every direction, with the same figures recurring: Ruth Hardy still driving it, the same civic associations organizing it, and Neel’s Nursery still supplying it. Each campaign is documented at the point that matters for a designed landscape — the intent, the authorization, the funding, and the makers — whether or not a completion notice survives for every reach.

North. The north end was carried by a property-owners’ movement working hand in hand with the city, and its organizers were among the resort’s prominent residents. In 1954 the city opened a property-owner phase — thirteen owners applied for palms donated by A. M. Liebling, the city planting them free and owners maintaining them. The Palm Springs Miracle Mile Association formed in 1955 to plant palms on North Palm Canyon Drive between Stevens and Alvarado; the Central Palm Canyon Drive Association organized in 1957 to extend the illuminated palms from Tamarisk toward Stevens, calling the reach the “Gateway to the City,” with the motion-picture producer Sol Lesser and George Gannon as vice chairmen under chairman Culver Nichols. By 1958 the North Palm Canyon Drive Association had named a rights-of-way committee — Lesser again, with Harold Hicks, Armand Tuornnet, and Culver Nichols — and Lesser and Nichols wrote the membership that Mayor Frank Bogert was “100 percent for an improvement program” of “widening and paving, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, palm trees, and street lighting.” The financing was worked out as a three-step program: an assessment district for the curbs, gutters, and sidewalks; the state to pave the street to the new curbs; and “a bond issue could go to the people for the planting of palm trees from Alejo north,” the reach running from Alejo to the old city gates. The city put its own weight behind that in February 1958, resolving to recommend to the State Division of Highways that the unimproved reach of State Sign Route 111 — North Palm Canyon Drive, south of San Rafael Drive and north of the improved roadside — be widened to four lanes with concrete curbs and gutters. The recitals set out the case: more than five thousand vehicles a day, an unimproved stretch running into the developed town and inducing speed, and no curbs to protect the pedestrian or any improvements installed in the right-of-way. Assessment-district financing was closed to the abutting owners because the road belonged to the state — and those owners had “indicated a desire to improve the State right-of-way with the installation of sidewalks

and street trees, with ornamental lighting.” The resolution also records what the finished part of the street was by then called: a portion of the highway “has been improved to the extent that it has been called ‘the most beautiful Main Street in the world,’” while the unimproved portions “reflect to the discredit of the State as much as the beautified portions redound to the credit of the State.”⁹⁰ The division of labor was explicit — City Manager Peterson said the association would install the palm trees and the city would contribute funds for improvement and beautification — and the gate itself had a location: in May 1958, on Councilwoman Mary Carlin’s initiative, the Council moved to light the clumps of palms on both sides of the drive at San Rafael Drive, “where the old entrance to the city is located,” at a cost near \$1,370, to “effect a welcome to visitors.” The trees planted north of Tamarisk stood farther apart than those in the 1949 core, averaging about sixty feet.

South. The southern extension was the one carried to the voters. It rode the 1955–56 municipal bond campaign — the public hearings of December 1955, the Council’s approval of a \$3.5-million issue in January 1956, and the election of February 14, 1956, at which most of the package failed but the palms carried. Amid a taxpayer revolt that voted down the airport, the golf course, the sewer expansion, and the new DeMuth Park, the proposition for palm trees and lights on South Palm Canyon Drive (with lighting on Indian Avenue) passed at 67.4 percent — the townspeople taxing themselves for the palms while rejecting nearly everything else. The city then met the practical problems of scale: it advertised for 197 trees and found “not a supplier in the Southland who can sell this number at one time,” specifying 15-to-20-foot *Washingtonia filifera* and *robusta*; it let the E. L. Yeager Company contract for the waterlines and conduit; and it engaged Neel’s Nursery, at eight dollars a foot, to set roughly two hundred more palms along South Palm Canyon from Ramon toward Indian Trail, Earl Neel to finish by August 1957. As north of Tamarisk, the southern spacing averaged about sixty feet. The campaign has a documented close. In May 1958 the Council recorded that the bond fund raised for the Indian Avenue street lights and the trees on South Palm Canyon Drive had done its work — “which projects have been completed” — and directed the unexpended balance of \$19,455.82 into the 1956 Bond Retirement Fund.⁹¹

East. The eastern reach was Hardy’s again, a decade after the core. In May 1958, in the wake of the sewer bond election, Councilwoman Hardy asked the Director of Public Works to draw plans and costs for a further bond to complete the palm-tree lighting of the drive and to continue the planting “at the end of the trees now on East Palm Canyon Drive and take them out to Araby

Point.” A week later the plan had a price: Public Works Director Frank Hamerschlag reported to the Council an investigation into lighting both sides of the drive “to complete it from the old city limits to Araby Point,” at \$49,000 a mile for trees, lights, and water lines. The design intent had moved into engineering and budget: a costed, council-level plan to carry the full composition — palms, lighting, and irrigation together — to the town’s eastern edge. That the palms already stood on East Palm Canyon Drive by 1958, and that the Council priced their extension to Araby Point, documents the authored, Hardy-led program reaching east a full decade past the 1949 core.

Two things run underneath all of it. The first is that the city had a name for what it was doing. In October 1955, between the two bond issues, the Council bought forty mature palms that a paving contractor was pulling out of a street-widening job in the Colton–Riverside area, for the cost of removal and freight — and it bought them expressly for “the City’s Palm Canyon Drive Palm Tree Planting program,” against a balance of some sixteen thousand dollars then standing in a Street Tree Fund. A named, funded, standing program was running between the campaigns. The two bond issues are two fundings of one continuous work, not two separate projects. The second is that some of these palms are salvage: forty out of a Riverside road widening in 1955, and fifty of the two hundred and fifty in the 1956 award to be acquired by the city from Arizona and planted by Neel at half the rate that included furnishing. The trees on this drive were sourced wherever mature stock could be had.⁹²

And the city learned from the 1950 licenses. Building the southern half in 1956 it stopped borrowing walls: instead of permission removable on sixty days’ notice, it took recorded grant-deed easements across the frontages, running with the land, each reciting that conduit was to be installed in South Palm Canyon Drive for the lighting of palm trees. That change is the clearest evidence available that the 1950 arrangement was understood at the time to be a weakness — and it means the southern lighting easements are recorded instruments, findable in the County Recorder.⁹³

The supply behind all of this was increasingly the city’s own. In 1957 the Park and Recreation director O. R. Crabtree launched a municipal palm nursery at the sewage-disposal plant, irrigated with plant water and grown on for future street planting, and in January 1958 the Council authorized the purchase of a thousand two-year-old palms for it. Meanwhile mature palms were moved as the town reshaped itself: the historic Coffman palms shifted from the Indian-Tahquitz corner to Cameron Center in 1955, the Tahquitz Drive palms lifted for street widening in 1957,

and trees relocated from the old DeMuth Park site by Earl Neel. The resource is therefore a whole-length allée built in phases and directions, its core dedicated in 1949 and its extensions carried through about 1963 — one authored civic landscape, developed over a decade and a half.⁹⁴



Figure 13. A palm being set by crane on North Palm Canyon Drive near Vista Chino, 1960 — the same operation, eleven years on. The crown is bound for transport, as it was in 1949 (compare Figure 10), and the light standards are already installed along the walk: trees and lighting continued to go in as one composition. Photograph by Gayle Photo, Palm Springs; courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.

The whole-length intent was shared by the state: in 1958 the highway district, with the city’s planning consultant Simon Eisner, pressed to improve “the entire street from Tamarisk to the city gates in one project,” Councilwoman Carlin urging that the widening be done first and “follow with sidewalks, palm trees and light improvements later.” The town’s reverence for the tree extended to its oldest specimens: in 1958 the roughly two-century-old palms at the mineral baths

— reported by local Cahuilla accounts to have grown from seed dropped by birds at the springs, once the only palms in Palm Springs — were lifted and moved by Millard Wright to be replanted when the new desert spa was complete.

By the end of the decade the result was already understood as the town's emblem. A 1958 Chamber of Commerce feature called Palm Canyon Drive one of the most beautiful shopping streets in the world and, picturing the lit rows at night, wrote that the "lighted palm trees, symbolic of Palm Springs" were what added to the drive's attractiveness after dark — that "beauty has become synonymous with Palm Springs, and the Village has become synonymous with beauty." A decade after the first tree went in, the lit allée was not one civic amenity among many; it was the image the town used to describe itself.

The town took the allée as its own almost at once. Within six years of planting, commercial postcard publishers were selling the street by its trees: "palm lined setting for many of the world's smartest shops," "this exciting palm-bordered avenue," "the famous palm-lined main thoroughfare," "this beautiful palm-lined throughfare" [*sic*]. Four publishers, three decades, the same defining feature — the palms, not the shops or the mountain, are what the postcards were selling.⁹⁵

The allée was also the town's ceremonial ground. During Desert Circus week the banners were strung across the drive between the palms, and the Desert Circus parade — floats, bands, caparisoned horses, the reigning Queen at its head — ran along Palm Canyon Drive itself.⁹⁶ The trees framed the processions they had been planted to make.



Figure 14. Palm Canyon Drive during Desert Circus week, April 18–22, 1956, with the festival banners strung between the palms. The two foreground filifera carry well-developed skirts. The souvenir lettering is part of the artifact: this is how the resort sold its own main street. “Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California,” no. PS-125, *Post Cards of the Desert, Palm Springs*; Curteichcolor. The view is fixed to a five-day window by the banner dates; postally used January 24, 1961.

3.8 The founding mothers of Palm Springs

Ruth Hardy did not appear from nowhere. She belongs to a generation of women who made Palm Springs — who arrived with little, bought land, built the hotels and the institutions, and ran a great deal of the town for half a century. That generation is the context in which her twelve years on the Council should be read, and it is set out here because the city has never set it out for itself. Riverside has documented the equivalent pattern next door, in an adopted context statement: clubwomen, a City Beautification Committee, the beautification of Magnolia Avenue.⁹⁷ Palm Springs has nothing of the kind.

The generation is documented, and it is wider than beautification. Lavinia Crocker opened the first sanatorium in 1893, and the women who followed her came for a sick husband or a sick lung and stayed to build businesses. Nellie Coffman opened the Desert Inn in 1909 and made its thirty-five-acre garden the model every desert resort that followed copied — a palm court, a cactus garden, courts set among the plantings. Ernie Pyle wrote in 1942 that the whole vogue of desert

vacationing “was built on one woman’s spiritual love of the desert.” She sat on the school board for all but two years between 1923 and 1946, founded the Welfare and Friendly Aid Society, and helped establish the Palm Springs Woman’s Club in 1938. Pearl McCallum McManus bought back most of her father’s land, built the Oasis Hotel in 1924, the first apartment house, the first subdivision and the Tennis Club she thought her best work — and in 1937 gave the Woman’s Club the ground at Baristo and Cahuilla for its clubhouse, where the landscape architects Bashford and Barlow anchored the patio with clusters of native *Washingtonia filifera* set against the mountain. Cornelia White bought land in the middle of town, deeded part of it to the Desert Museum in 1947, and left her 1893 house to the Historical Society; it stands on the Village Green. Her sister Florilla, a physician, served as village health officer and brought nurses down from Riverside to meet the influenza epidemic of 1918. Zaddie Bunker ran a garage, took the first chauffeur’s license issued to a woman in California, and became one of the village’s largest landowners. Harriet Cody, widowed and living in a tent in Tahquitz Canyon with two horses, built them into a string of thirty-five and opened the first riding stable in Palm Springs, then turned the profits into land and built Casa Cody.⁹⁸

Melba Bennett was the one who wrote it down. She founded the Palm Springs Garden Club in 1946 and was the first to write at length about what would and would not grow in this valley, running a monthly column in the *Villager* called “Through the Garden Gate” and, in 1956, writing, illustrating and publishing *The Palm Springs Garden Book* with the Club — a chapter on trees, palms among them, beside chapters on shrubs, bulbs, vines and ground covers. She founded the Palm Springs Historical Society in 1955 and served as its president, and she wrote two books on the poet Robinson Jeffers besides. Nellie Coffman, watching her take on one more office, wrote to her: “From one busy woman to another... remember that you’re not made of steel or iron. Ease up a little, girl, ease up.”

One more body of women was governing in Palm Springs in these years, and no account of the founding mothers is complete without it. Vyola Olinger — later Vyola Ortner — was elected to the Tribal Council of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians in 1952, and in 1954 was elected chairman of an all-woman council, with Eileen Miguel, LaVerne Saubel, Flora Patencio and Elizabeth Pete Monk. Fully female councils followed for several years. What they governed was the ground the city was pressing on: Section 14, six hundred and forty acres at the center of town, where workers kept out of Palm Springs housing by redlining and by price lived on short leases without reliable water or power, and which the town’s boosters had been trying to get hold of since

the 1920s. Ortner testified against termination in 1954 against a developer appearing for the City of Palm Springs; she carried the case for longer leases to Congress, put a counter-plan before public hearings in Palm Springs, and by 1959 the tribe had the legislation that made development of its own land possible. She retired from the council that year. In 1980 she became the first tribal member elected to the Palm Springs City Council.⁹⁹

Hardy is the last of that line and the first of another. She is the one who carried the instinct out of the hotels and the clubs and into elected office — the first woman on the Palm Springs City Council, in 1948, in a town where women had built a good deal of what there was to govern. Mary Carlin followed her in 1958, Vyola Ortner in 1980, and there has been a woman on the Council for most of the years since. Her twelve years, and her work, are set out at Section 3.6 and Appendix B. What this section supplies is the reason they were possible.¹⁰⁰

A recommendation to the City. The material in this section is drawn from newspapers, periodicals, and books. It ought to be drawn from an adopted historic context statement, and it cannot be, because Palm Springs has not commissioned one. The city has no framework for evaluating the resources associated with the women who made it — no statement of themes, no periods, no property types, no registration requirements. Every such resource must therefore be argued from the ground up, one nomination at a time, which is exactly what this document is doing for Ruth Hardy.

Riverside has done the work. Its Women's Historic Context Statement, prepared in January 2026 by Historic Resources Group — the firm that has done survey work for Palm Springs — sets out the city's women's history as a series of evaluable themes, each with its own periods, property types and registration requirements. Civic beautification is one of them: the clubwomen, the City Beautification Committee and the beautification of Magnolia Avenue, assembled into a context against which any individual resource can be measured. It is a working model, by a consultant Palm Springs already knows, forty-five miles away.¹⁰¹

The City of Palm Springs should commission a Historic Context Statement on the founding mothers of Palm Springs. It should be scoped to the whole of the subject: the innkeepers, landowners and entrepreneurs of the first generation — Crocker, Coffman, McCallum McManus, the White sisters, Bunker, Cody; the second generation who worked through landscape and institutions — Bennett, Hardy; the councilwomen who followed Hardy from 1958 onward;

and, prepared in consultation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and its Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, the women of the all-woman Tribal Councils of the 1950s. The associated resources are still standing: the Ingleside Inn, the Palm Springs Woman’s Club, the Tennis Club, Casa Cody, the Cornelia White house on the Village Green, Ruth Hardy Park, the Desert Inn gates, the Agua Caliente Spa site — and this allée. A context statement would let the city weigh all of them against one adopted standard rather than a series of one-off arguments, and it would put on the record, in the city’s own language, what this nomination has had to assemble out of a variety of sources.

4. Character-defining features

Under the standard vocabulary for a designed landscape — spatial organization, vegetation, circulation, and site furnishings and objects — the allée’s defining features are:¹⁰²

4.1 Spatial organization

- The continuous **double row** along both sides of Palm Canyon Drive, the two ranks facing each other across the street and reading as a single composition.
- A **module of roughly thirty-five feet on center**, specified in 1949 as thirty-five to forty feet, held consistently along the length of the drive. Later campaigns averaged sixty feet.
- **Staggered crown heights.** The original planting ran from a twelve-foot minimum to a thirty-five-foot maximum, averaging near twenty, so that the crowns break any flat line and the rows read as a living colonnade rather than a fence.
- The **procession and gateway character** of the corridor — the approach by which the town is entered from the north — continuing down South Palm Canyon and terminating on East Palm Canyon Drive.
- The **setback relationship** of the rows to curb and sidewalk, fixed by the Council on June 8, 1949: through the commercial core between Alejo and Arenas the new trees were aligned to the mature palms already standing, and north of Alejo and south of Arenas they were set back three feet against a widening then anticipated.

4.2 Vegetation

- The **two Washingtonia species in deliberate combination** — the native *Washingtonia filifera* and the *Washingtonia robusta* — planted half and half under the 1949 contract.

- The **contrast of trunk and crown** the pairing produces: the stout, skirted shaft of the *filifera* against the tall, clean shaft of the *robusta*, alternating down the ranks.
- The **maintained skirted silhouette** of the *filifera* — tapered at the bottom and full above twelve feet — which the trees grew into as they gained height (see Section 7).
- **Mature stock.** The allée was installed with boxed palms bought on the open market and crane-set, not with nursery whips, so the composition read as complete in its first season. Neel's own tree farm on East Palm Canyon Drive is the likeliest source of much of the stock.

4.3 Circulation

- The **linear axis of Palm Canyon Drive** itself, which the planting frames and defines.
- The **public right-of-way as the resource's ground.** This is a street landscape: the rows are read from the roadway and from the sidewalk both, and the palms stand in public ownership and public use.

4.4 Site furnishings, objects, and systems

- The **tree-mounted lighting scheme**, with fixtures made to the height, girth, and distance of the fronds and aimed up into the crowns, so that the palms hold the street after dark.
- The **staggering of the fixtures**, so that no straight line of lights runs down the drive, with the up-and-down treatment at the corners.
- **Lighting conduit laid at the moment of planting** rather than retrofitted afterward.
- The **photo-electric switch control** that put the whole mile on automatic dusk-to-dawn operation from its first night, raised high on poles at the power company's insistence for safety.¹⁰³
- The **service, metering and switching mounted on the abutting commercial buildings** under fifteen licenses signed by the frontage owners in 1950 — the physical hardware most likely to survive, and the record of the town's participation in the work.¹⁰⁴
- **Individual irrigation** — a permanent water line with an outlet at every tree.
- The **Neel commemorative monument** at Andreas Road and Palm Canyon Drive: a plaque set in a stone base at the foot of a grouping of three *Washingtonia robusta*, dedicating the first mile to the pioneer nurseryman Clarence C. Neel. The plaque was stolen and the stone base has gone since; two of the palms remain. A replacement plaque, on a new base at the same corner, is recommended.

5. Evaluation

5.1 The standard applied

Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code requires two findings for a Class 1 historic resource. Under section 8.05.070(C)(1)(a), the resource must exhibit **exceptional historic significance** and meet one or more of seven enumerated criteria. Under section 8.05.070(C)(1)(b), it must be evaluated for **integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association**, according to the National Park Service bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Significance is addressed in this section; integrity in Section 6.¹⁰⁵

Three features of the ordinance bear on a landscape nomination. The code's own definition of a Class 1 historic resource extends to a resource having "aesthetic significance," and provides that such a resource "may include all or a portion of the site itself" — so the category is not confined to buildings. The application requirements ask for an assessment of character-defining features naming "landscape elements" among them. And both the Historic Site Preservation Board's resolution and the Council's must carry a list of the character-defining features; the list at Section 4 is drafted to be adopted.¹⁰⁶

5.2 Evaluation against the criteria

(i) Associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community. — MET. The allée is the surviving centerpiece of the 1949 municipal beautification program, a \$950,000 bond measure placed before the voters in March 1949 and ratified by them. The planting was the program's first project, put to bid in February on Councilwoman Hardy's recommendation, and it was carried out as one coordinated effort with the sidewalk benches authorized in the same session and with the year's sign ordinance, meant to hold the village "on a resort caliber with a minimum of commercialism."¹⁰⁷ The project then continued on North, South, and East Palm Canyon Drives, in phases. The bond program's other works have been altered, replaced, or absorbed. The allée remains.

(ii) Associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history. — MET. The allée is an authored landscape, and four of its makers are documented by name in the contemporary record (Section 3.6).

Ruth Hardy was the first woman elected to the Palm Springs City Council, in 1948, and served twelve years, longer than anyone then to have sat on that body. It was her motion the Council adopted on February 2, 1949; she called the joint meeting that fixed species and spacing, insisted on a permanent water line with an outlet at every tree, held the first planting until the tree-committee chairman could attend, and was still calling councilmen about the trees in 1964. At her death the *Desert Sun* named the lighted palms her greatest memorial. The allée is her most visible civic work, and it is the principal surviving work of the founding-mothers generation of civic beautification in Palm Springs.

E. Stewart Williams was one of the architects who defined Palm Springs modernism, and in 1949 he chaired the committee that set the allée's design. Cornell- and Pennsylvania-trained, four years a teacher of art and design, three years into a Palm Springs practice that had already produced the Sinatra house, he was named at the time by the *Desert Sun* as head of the tree committee. The six conditions the Council adopted as Resolution No. 2587 on June 8, 1949 are his committee's work: the line of the rows, the three-foot setback, water to each tree by pipeline, and conduit for lighting laid at the moment of trenching.

Clarence C. Neel, the pioneer desert nurseryman, is the person to whose memory the first mile was formally dedicated on October 1, 1949 — an association created by the city itself, by resolution and public ceremony, and marked by a plaque set in a stone monument. His son **Earl Neel** supplied and set the trees across the 1949, 1955 and 1956–57 campaigns, much of the stock coming off his own tree farm, and then spent two decades as the landscape expert on the city's Architectural Advisory Committee, sat on the Planning Commission from 1986, and served on the City Council from April 1988 to April 1992. The man who planted the allée spent the rest of his life on the bodies that decided how the town would look.

(iii) Reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history. — MET. The allée exemplifies the postwar remaking of Palm Springs from winter village to year-round resort city, and it does so as a late and unusually intact expression of the City Beautiful impulse reaching a Southern California resort main street (Sections 3.3 and 3.8). Its period is legible in its fabric: the two-species schedule, the regular module, the individual water service, and above all the tree-mounted lighting, which was a 1949–50 solution to a 1949 problem — how to make a desert main street a nocturnal spectacle for a season that began in October.

(iv) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. — MET. The type is the allée, a designed form with a documented lineage set out at Section 3.3.¹⁰⁸ The distinctive characteristics are present and measurable: a double row on both curbs; a module of roughly thirty-five feet, specified as thirty-five to forty; a deliberate two-species alternation of *Washingtonia filifera* and *Washingtonia robusta*, half and half, for variation in trunk and crown; a specified planting height range; individual irrigation outlets at each tree; and lighting conduit laid at the moment of planting rather than retrofitted.¹⁰⁹

The method of construction is equally distinctive and is documented photographically: mature palms boxed at a local nursery, hauled to site, crane-set into prepared holes with crowns bound for transport, each receiving its own water outlet and light conduit as it went in (Figures 9, 10, 13). This is not the planting of nursery whips along a curb. It is the installation of a mature designed landscape in a single season at a massive scale. The planting of the palm tree allée would carry on in phases through the early 1960s.

(v) Presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age, or possesses high artistic value. — MET, on the second limb. The allée is not a signed work of a master in the way a building is signed. Williams chaired the committee that set the design and is a recognized master of Palm Springs architecture, and his role is documented; he presided over a design settled in committee.

The criterion's second limb is the stronger ground, and it is independent of authorship: the allée possesses high artistic value. Its composition was consciously pictorial — a procession of paired rows converging on the mountain, drawn in advance by the *Villager's* cover artist and built substantially as drawn (Figure 6). Its illumination was designed as an artistic effect: fixtures tailor-made to the height, girth and distance of the fronds, staggered so that no line of lights ran straight down the drive, and aimed to keep the crowns hanging “like a ghostly shadow on moonless nights.” The city's own manager said plainly that aesthetics figured prominently in the choice. Within six years four separate commercial publishers were selling the street to visitors by its palms (Section 3.8). A landscape whose artistic effect is that legible, that deliberate, and that widely reproduced possesses high artistic value on any ordinary reading of the phrase.

(vi) Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. — MET. No single palm on Palm Canyon Drive is distinguished. The allée is. This criterion describes the resource more exactly than any other in the ordinance, because the significance lies in the row and not in any member of it.

(vii) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory. — NOT CLAIMED. No archaeological or informational potential is asserted for the planting itself. Nothing in this nomination should be read as a statement about subsurface resources within the right-of-way, which are a separate question and one on which the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, whose Tribal Historic Preservation Officer receives the application under section 8.05.070(B)(1), is the appropriate authority.¹¹⁰

5.3 The threshold: exceptional significance

The ordinance does not ask only whether a resource is significant; it asks whether the significance is exceptional.¹¹¹ Five things carry the allée over that threshold.

It is documented to an unusual degree. The design intent, the species schedule, the spacing, the irrigation and lighting requirements, the contractor and the unit price, the first tree, the dedication, the lighting trials, and the maintenance policy are each fixed to a dated primary source. Few designed landscapes of the period in this city can be reconstructed in that detail.

It is the city's own signature. The allée is not merely a well-preserved example of a type; it is the image by which Palm Springs has sold and represented itself continuously from 1949 to the present — on postcards from the mid-fifties, in the city's own promotional language, and in the ordinary understanding of residents and visitors. The *Desert Sun* said on the day the first tree went in that the project would change the entire appearance of the town's main thoroughfare.¹¹² It did.

It was paid for by everyone. The city's property tax rate for 1949–50 was \$1.31 per \$100 of assessed valuation, of which thirty-one cents serviced the bonds authorized at the April election; for 1950–51 the rate was \$1.28, of which twenty-eight cents did. Better than a fifth of the tax bill of Palm Springs carried the propositions that bought the palms — and the whole Palm Tree Project, distribution system, change orders and fixtures together, came to \$21,718.03, roughly what the

city spent that same year lighting one baseball diamond. The allée was not a line in a beautification budget. It was carried on a dedicated levy every property owner paid.¹¹³

It is a commemorative landscape as well as an ornamental one. The dedication of the first mile to Clarence C. Neel gives the resource a second and independent ground of significance, created deliberately by the city.

And it survives as a composition. In some cases, individual trees have been replaced; the composition has not been broken. What was designed in 1949 can still be read on the ground in 2026 — which is the subject of Section 6.

5.4 Summary

The Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée is eligible for designation as a Class 1 Historic Resource under PSMC 8.05.070(C)(1). Criteria (i) through (v) are each independently met: the allée is the surviving centerpiece of the 1949 municipal beautification program; it is associated with Ruth Hardy, E. Stewart Williams, and Clarence C. and Earl Neel; it exemplifies the postwar remaking of Palm Springs; it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the allée as a designed form; and it possesses high artistic value. Criterion (vi) describes the resource more exactly than any other in the ordinance and is met, subject to confirmation that the city reads it as available to a linear resource in the public right-of-way. Criterion (vii) is not claimed. The significance is exceptional within the meaning of section 8.05.070(C)(1)(a), for the reasons given at Section 5.3.

6. Integrity

6.1 The standard

Section 8.05.070(C)(1)(b) requires the resource to be evaluated for integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, following the National Park Service bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.¹¹⁴¹¹⁵ Integrity is not condition, and it is not perfection. It is the survival of the physical characteristics that convey the significance claimed — so the question here is whether the allée still conveys a designed civic landscape of 1949 authored by the people named in Section 5.2, and it is answered against that claim and no other.

Two points of guidance govern how the test applies to living material. Preservation Brief 36, *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic*

Landscapes, directs that in evaluating integrity, care should be taken to consider change itself, and offers a directly comparable case: at Port Oneida, in Michigan, the surface material of the roads has changed, and integrity is sustained by the surviving alignment, width, and rows of sugar maples.¹¹⁶ The California guidance is more explicit still: the integrity of a landscape's vegetation may be considered reasonably intact where the original vegetation is present *regardless of appearance*, and original plants altered by natural processes do not normally cause a loss of vegetative integrity even where the change is visually marked.¹¹⁷ A landscape is judged as a landscape, not as a building that happens to grow.

6.2 The seven aspects

Location. Retained in full. The allée stands where it was planted, in the public right-of-way of Palm Canyon Drive, on the alignment fixed by the Council on June 8, 1949 — rows on both curbs, aligned to the standing palms through the commercial core and set back three feet beyond it. Nothing has been relocated except the three palms shifted at Andreas Road within weeks of planting, by resolution, to correct a jog in the curb line.

Design. Retained. The elements that constitute the design are the double-row composition, the module of roughly thirty-five feet, the two-species alternation, the setback relationship to curb and walk, and the integration of irrigation and lighting at the moment of planting. Each survives and can be measured on the ground (Figure 15). The one design question that has been raised — the skirted silhouette — is addressed at Sections 7 and 6.3(b), where the record shows it to be the intended appearance rather than a departure from it.

Setting. Retained, with the ordinary change of a working downtown. The allée still performs the two spatial functions it was built for: it frames the town's principal commercial street, and it forms the gateway and procession by which the town is entered from the north. The mountain terminus that the 1949 drawing put at the end of the corridor is unchanged. Individual buildings along the drive have been altered, replaced, and re-fronted many times, and will be again. That churn is the condition of a living main street, and the allée was designed against it: the palms are the constant element, and the storefronts the variable one.

Materials. Retained, with documented replacement of individual trees. The material of this resource is living, and is discussed at Section 6.3(a). The non-living material — the irrigation and the lighting infrastructure, in their successive generations — is addressed at Section 6.5.

Workmanship. Retained and legible. The workmanship of a designed landscape is read in the precision of its execution. Here it is visible in the regularity of the module across a mile and more; in the engineered provision of an individual water outlet and light conduit to every tree; and in the lighting fixtures, tailor-made to the height, girth and distance of the fronds, staggered so that no straight line of lights ran down the drive, and up-and-down at the corners. The photographic record of the installation — boxed stock, crane, bound crowns, prepared holes (Figures 9, 10, 13) — documents the standard of work.

Feeling. Retained. The allée conveys the ambition of the moment that made it: a resort village dressing its main street for a season, at scale, in a single summer, and lighting it for the evening. A visitor entering from the north today experiences the procession the 1949 program was built to produce.

Association. Retained and documented. The link to Ruth Hardy, to E. Stewart Williams, to the 1949 municipal beautification program, and to the memory of Clarence C. Neel is not inferred; it was established publicly at the time, by council action, by ceremony, and by a commemorative monument. The association survives the loss of the plaque itself (Section 6.5).

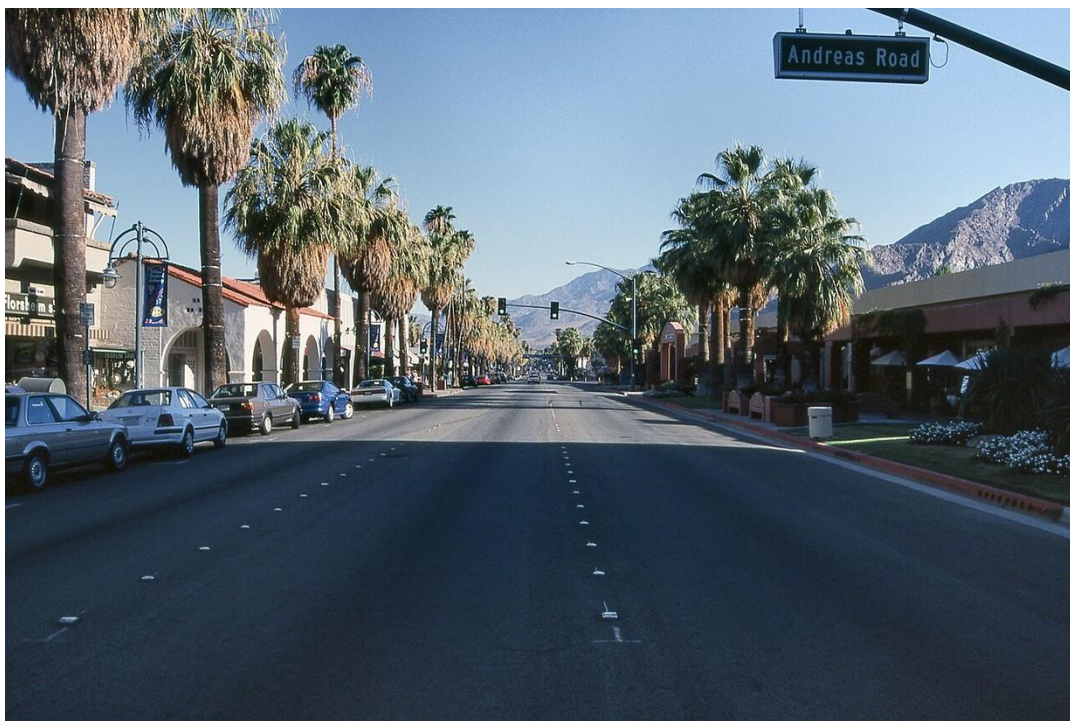


Figure 15. Palm Canyon Drive looking south from Andreas Road, August 1995. The two files face each other across the street on the module set in 1949, and the corridor closes on the mountain. The palms along the left carry full collars of dried fronds beneath green crowns — the maintained skirt, thirteen years after Minute Order 3116 and fourteen before Resolution 22475, and in the same year a council member, asked why the dead fronds were left, answered that it was the Palm Springs image (Appendix A). The street sign fixes the location: Andreas Road is the corner where the plaque to Clarence C. Neel stood in a stone monument at the base of the grouping of *Washingtonia robusta* (Section 3.6). Both plaque and stone are gone; two of the palms remain. Compare Figure 6, the effect drawn for the Villager before the trees were in the ground. Photograph by Giorgio Galeotti, August 1995; Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0).

6.3 Three anticipated questions

(a) The trees have been replaced. Some have — and the record shows the city managing that from the first decade. In 1959 the Council heard that palms in the core were failing, worst on South Palm Canyon between Baristo and Ramon; the Park and Recreation director diagnosed chlorosis under treatment, and Mayor Bogert’s specialists reported the trees “thirsty,” the water “not getting to the roots” for want of irrigation space. That episode cuts both ways, and both ways favor the resource: the city diagnosed and treated rather than let the planting go, and the failure was read as too little watering — confirming that individual irrigation was integral to the design.

The governing principle is settled. Where original plant material is lost, integrity is preserved by comparable plantings of similar species conveying the visual effect of the original; and where planting values lie in an expression of technology such as the spacing between plants, preserving the qualities that exhibit those values maintains integrity.¹¹⁸ On this street the module and the species pairing are the integrity-bearing qualities, and both are intact. The proportion of surviving 1949 stock is a question for the palm-by-palm inventory recommended at Section 8.5; it is not a question on which designation turns, and no nomination of a seventy-seven-year-old planted landscape could sensibly be made to turn on it.

(b) The trees do not look as they did in the early photographs. They do not, and the reason is that they have grown. A *Washingtonia filifera* planted at twenty feet and standing at sixty carries a skirt; the same tree at twenty feet, freshly transplanted with its crown cut back and bound, could not. Change produced by the natural processes of the plant does not constitute a loss of vegetative integrity even where it alters appearance.¹¹⁹ The skirted silhouette is also the documented intended appearance, stated in print in the year of planting and in city policy from 1959 (Section 7).

(c) The street has been rebuilt around them. It has. Palm Canyon Drive was resurfaced by the state in the summer the palms went in, and has been resurfaced, re-curbed, re-signed, and relit repeatedly since. The California guidance addresses working transportation corridors directly: a resurfaced and slightly widened road may retain integrity where its alignment and essential features remain.¹²⁰ The alignment, the rows, and the interval remain. What has changed is the surface between them.

6.4 Integrity distinguished from condition

Both must be addressed, and they are not the same test. Integrity is lost when features are removed or altered; condition can be poor while integrity remains high — a neglected garden may have both.¹²¹ Some palms in the allée are in indifferent health, some have been trimmed harder than policy contemplates, and the lighting has been renewed more than once. Those are matters of condition, and they bear on treatment (Section 8) rather than on eligibility. They are not arguments against designation; if anything they are arguments for it, since designation is what brings a maintenance standard with it.

6.5 Contributing, non-contributing, and former features

For the resolution's list of character-defining features, see Section 4. For the purposes of integrity the components sort as follows.

Contributing. The palms of the 1949 planting and of the extension campaigns through about 1963, in their surviving rows; the alignment and module; the two-species composition; the maintained skirted silhouette; the irrigation provision to individual trees; and the tree-mounted lighting scheme as a system. The robusta surviving at the southeast corner of Andreas Road are part of that fabric and carry the commemorative association, the monument having gone from between them.

Contributing in kind. Replacement palms of the same or similar species set on the historic module and in the historic pairing. To maintain the designed mix of palms, as trees need to be replaced, it is recommended that *filifera* be replaced with *filifera*, and that *robusta* be replaced with *robusta*. These sustain rather than dilute the composition, on the principle set out at Section 6.3(a).

Non-contributing. Later plantings that depart from the module, the species schedule, or the double-row arrangement; and street furniture, signage, and lighting introduced after the period of significance that is unrelated to the tree-lighting system.

Former contributing features. The Neel commemorative plaque, set in a stone monument at Andreas Road and Palm Canyon Drive at the base of three *Washingtonia robusta*, removed by vandals before 1963 and of unrecorded fate; the stone base that carried it, which no longer stands; and the original 1950 light standards and fixtures, to the extent they have been replaced. All are documented.

The loss of the plaque reduces the resource but does not undo it. The dedication it recorded is documented in the public record and in the press, and the trees it stood among are the memorial that survived.

6.6 Summary integrity finding

The allée retains integrity in all seven aspects. It stands where it was planted, on the alignment fixed in 1949. The double row, the module, the two-species composition, the irrigation provision,

and the lighting survive and can be measured on the ground. A visitor entering from the north experiences the procession the 1949 program was built to produce. Individual palms have been replaced across seventy-seven years, as any planted landscape of that age requires, and replacements set on the historic module and in the historic pairing sustain the composition rather than dilute it. The resource clearly conveys the designed civic landscape of 1949 described at Section 5, and it meets the integrity requirement of section 8.05.070(C)(1)(b).

7. The maintained skirt

The July 2026 city policy authorizing skirt removal rests its aesthetic case on a single assertion — that Palm Springs “does not have a long history of keeping palm tree skirts” — supported by one frame from a 1960s tourist film showing downtown palms trimmed clean.¹²² The record answers it.

The skirts were not left untouched. From the start the palms got a regular “light trim,” and the character-defining feature is the maintained skirted silhouette — the full petticoat kept, with only the lowest fronds sheared for clearance and to keep the lights unobstructed. That is the balance the city itself struck and held for decades: a documented policy of natural skirts trimmed only to “aerial safety,” carried from the 1950s through the 2009 resolution, with the 1949–50 lighting built around the fronds and inseparable from them. The full policy record is set out in Appendix A.

Start where the claim is made. The assertion is about Palm Springs, so the first evidence should come from Palm Springs — and it is older than the allée. In December 1940 the Palm Springs Desert Museum published an account of the native palm in the *Desert Sun*, written by its director, Lloyd Mason Smith. The dead leaves, he wrote, turn down and lie flat against the trunk in a thick gray-brown thatch; this “thatching gives a skirt effect to the palms,” and it is why Hawaii calls them hula palms. The museum thought the piece worth running again on March 12, 1943, when Smith had entered the armed service and Sam Hinton held the directorship — reprinted, Hinton explained, because the museum kept being asked about the native palm.¹²³ Three months after that reprint, a serviceman on a day’s leave posted a card home from Palm Springs. On the front was the entrance drive of the Desert Inn, its *filifera* carrying thatch well down the trunk (Figure 4). The skirt was not a habit that crept in later. It was on the drive the town was proudest of, six years before the allée was planted and eleven before the first trim the record documents.

Smith returned to the subject in the *Desert Sun* of April 5, 1946, and this time he named the aesthetic question outright. In the natural state, he wrote, the thatch reaches the ground; in gardens and along streets, where the tree is now cultivated worldwide, that skirt is often “trimmed quite far up, giving a denuded, bare appearance.” He called the untrimmed skirt picturesque. The column carried the Desert Museum’s copyright, and it ran three years before the first palm went into Palm Canyon Drive.¹²⁴

That is the answer to the city’s claim, and it is a local answer. The standard the 2026 policy says has no long history here was published here, by the town’s own museum, in the town’s own newspaper, twice, before these trees existed — and it treats the full skirt as the tree’s own condition and the trimmed trunk as the undesirable thing done to it. What follows in 1949 and after is continuity with that view: the *Villager*’s specification in the summer of the planting, the natural-look policy the Council adopted a decade later, the 2009 resolution, and the fifty-year record of trimming for clearance rather than skinning that Appendix A sets out.

One species, and by design. The skirt is not a *Washingtonia* trait but a *filifera* one. Among roughly 2,600 palm species, the desert fan palm is the one whose leaf stems hold to the trunk through the life of the tree, so that absent fire the thatch reaches the ground; the *robusta* beside it sheds — by wind, by age, by height — and stands at maturity on a clean shaft. Everything set out here concerns the native tree. The city’s own 2009 resolution drew the same line, keeping natural skirts on *filifera* and directing skinning only for *robusta*.¹²⁵

That line is what makes the 1949 planting a composition rather than a row. The committee bought two silhouettes and set them alternating down both curbs: the stout, skirted trunk of one of the very few palms in the world that keep their leaves, against the tall, clean shaft of one that does not. To skin the *filifera* is not to tidy the allée. It is to remove one of the two terms the design was built on and leave a mile of repeated form. The alternation is the character-defining feature, and the skirt is what makes the alternation legible. The contrast between the trees is by design.

The wider literature had been saying the same thing for forty years, and it is worth setting out because the city’s policy invokes professional practice. The botanist S. B. Parish stated it directly in 1907: a naked trunk crowned with living leaves, a mass of dead ones hanging beneath it, is not the natural aspect of the tree; left alone, the spent fronds would sheathe the trunk for most of its

length in a gray thatch, an ideal protection against the parching desert air. It is cultivated trees, he noted, from which the dead leaves are kept cut away.¹²⁶

Ralph Cornell said the same thing in 1938, in a volume titled *Conspicuous California Plants*, subtitled *with Notes on Their Garden Uses*, and named the motive. If undisturbed, he wrote, the thatch will cling to the trunk almost indefinitely; but because the dry material is inflammable it is seldom that one sees a palm in this natural state, and the modern gardener, planting California fan palms in his garden, all too often removes the dead leaves and peels the trunk to give it a clean appearance. Elsewhere in the same chapter he described the skirt as hanging naturally and clothing “the otherwise nakedness of the trunk.” The City’s 2007 General Plan directs the skinning of trunks in the right-of-way to create a more maintained appearance.¹²⁷ Cornell had described that act, in a book of professional garden guidance, as something a gardener does all too often — and he was, in the same years, the landscape architect this city engaged for Sunrise Park and for the park it now calls Ruth Hardy Park (Section 3.6).

Between the two, the popular press said it twice. A 1929 *Los Angeles Times* photo essay noted that the state’s one indigenous palm stood tall and stately in spite of its petticoats of dried fronds. In 1942 a *Times* garden feature went further: the dead leaves of past seasons hang against the trunk and remain for years as a light brown thatch, and unfortunately this botanical hula skirt is seldom seen, as neatness demands that the dead leaves be cut away each season.¹²⁸ That was published seven years before these trees were planted. What the city advances as settled professional practice was being regretted in print before the allée existed.

Cornell also supplies the objection and its answer. The reason gardeners strip, he wrote, is that the dry material is highly inflammable — and then, in the next sentence, that it is very interesting that fire does not kill the palms, so that one commonly sees them in their desert habitat with slender, fire-blackened trunks lifting crowns of fresh green leaves into the heat of a summer day. Parish, thirty years earlier, called the trees’ survival of repeated burning evidence of their vitality.¹²⁹ Fire is a real question, and the targeted maintenance described in Section 8.4 answers it. It is not an argument about appearance.

What that trim was, in the early years, was a hem — and it was a hem for a reason. The 1949 trees went in between twelve and thirty-five feet and averaged near twenty, and the native *filifera* carries a wide canopy on a short trunk. On a young tree of that size the lowest fronds hang into

the sidewalk. The trees also began stripped: the photographs of the 1949 planting show the palms arriving with their crowns cut back and tied for transport, which is ordinary practice in moving a fan palm (Figure 10). Several seasons had to pass before a tree so handled carried a full crown again, and a skirt cannot begin to form until it does. Through the first decade the crews cut the bottom of the skirt back to clear the walk beneath and to keep the fronds off the light fixtures — which is why photographs from those years show cleaner trunks than the drive carries now, and it is a photograph from exactly that period that the 2026 staff report puts forward as proof of the city’s taste. The 1959 policy states the logic outright: the palms were to develop a natural look, complete with frond skirts, with young trees trimmed only until their fronds lifted to “aerial safety.” The clearance trim was a condition of youth, not the intended appearance. What the mature tree was meant to look like was stated in print in the year of the planting. In December 1949, two months after the dedication, Edmund C. Jaeger — the desert naturalist, writing in the *Palm Springs Villager* — described the native fan palm and noted, in the same article, that the tree had recently been planted along the streets of the Palm Springs business district beside the robusta. Palm groups, he wrote, always look best when there are “thick, unmolested skirts of down-turned, dead leaves” hiding the trunks; in the dry desert air those attached dead leaves turn silver-gray or fawn, a color unknown to palms of damper climates, and the thatch makes an attractive contrast with the green leaf-tuft above.¹³⁰

That is a contemporary aesthetic standard for these trees, published locally, within the period of significance, by an author the town treated as an authority — and it describes the skirt not as neglect but as the condition in which the palm looks best. The 1959 policy did not invent the preference. It wrote down what had been the stated local taste since the year the allée went in. As the palms gained height the skirts were allowed to form. A postcard view of the drive produced in 1956 — seven years after planting — shows the change under way: collars of dried fronds held beneath the crowns of the taller palms, clean trunks on the shorter ones in the same block, on the same day, under the same maintenance (Figure 16). Whatever the city’s practice was that morning, it produced both conditions at once, and the difference between the trees is height.¹³¹

That variation is original. The 1949 trees went in between twelve and thirty-five feet, each arriving with its crown cut back for the move; each needed several seasons to rebuild a full head; and until a crown had risen clear of the walk the lower fronds were cut away for pedestrian clearance as a matter of course. Every tree therefore began holding its thatch in a different year, and no two were ever going to match. The unevenness along the drive is not a maintenance failure to be corrected.

It is the condition of a planting made from transplanted stock of mixed size, and it is why a single trimming standard applied across the allée would flatten a characteristic these palms have carried since the 1950s.



Figure 16. Looking north on Palm Canyon Drive, produced 1956. Collars of dried fronds are held beneath the crowns of the taller palms while shorter trees in the same block carry clean trunks — the clearance hem of youth and the forming skirt of maturity in a single view. “Looking North, on Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California,” no. PS-120, *Post Cards of the Desert, Palm Springs*; Curteichcolor, production code 6C-K945, printed 1956.



Figure 17. *Palm Canyon Drive at night, looking north to Mount San Jacinto. Fixtures on the trunks throw light up into the crowns, the fronds carrying the light while the trunks stand dark beneath them — the scheme City Engineer Minturn specified in 1950, tailor-made to the height, girth and distance of the fronds from the light source, working on mature trees that now carry their skirts. Compare Figure 7, the same effect on newly planted, bare-trunked palms in 1949. “Picturesque Palm Canyon Drive at Night, Palm Springs, California,” no. FS-228, Western Resort Publications, 1320 N. Broadway, Santa Ana; color photograph by Al Taylor; copyright Ferris H. Scott, Santa Ana. Undated; a postally used copy of 1958 fixes the latest possible date of the view, and the automobiles suggest earlier in the decade.*

The Council was applying that test a year before it wrote it down. In August 1958 bids came in for trimming five hundred palms on Palm Canyon Drive and skinning some others. The Council declined the scale of the work — it was “of the consensus that at this time it is unnecessary to authorize the amount of work recommended” — and authorized instead a contract for “trimming only those palm trees on Palm Canyon Drive where the work is necessary because of obstruction to lights,” for not more than three hundred trees. The skinning was not authorized. The test was the light, not the look of the trunk, which is the rule Bogert stated the following year in almost the same words. The resolution also puts fixtures on the trees in the year to which Figure 16 is dated.¹³² That is what Ruth Hardy was asking for in 1964. Late that year, fifteen years after the planting and four years out of office, she told the Hotel and Apartment Association that the palms along the drive had been only *half* trimmed. She telephoned the mayor and several councilmen, and the

trees were trimmed. She was not asking anyone to take the skirts off. She was asking the city to finish the routine hem it had been performing since 1949 and had that year left half done. The woman who drove the planting wanted the palms clear at the bottom and full above — the maintained silhouette, which is neither of the two positions the present debate offers.¹³³



Figure 18. North Palm Canyon Drive at Louise’s Pantry, the Plaza Theatre, and the Patio Book Shop. The palm at the center carries a full skirt; the publisher’s caption on the reverse calls this “a typical scene on North Palm Canyon Drive.” Color photo by Jim Burke, published by Petley Studios, Inc., Phoenix, Ariz.; printed by Dexter Press, West Nyack, N.Y., no. 45025-C. Undated; postally used November 22, 1976, which fixes the latest possible date of the view.

The city solved the falling-frond problem decades ago with a targeted “aerial safety” trim that keeps both the skirt and the lights clear — the exact balance the 2026 policy claims has no solution but total removal.

8. The landscape guidance: property type, change, and maintenance

The city’s Class 1 criteria govern the designation. But the allée is a landscape, and the federal and state guidance on landscapes settles several questions the ordinance does not reach — what kind of property this is, how integrity is judged when the fabric is alive, and what maintenance of a designated landscape is supposed to mean.

8.1 The property type

Preservation Brief 36 defines a historic designed landscape as one consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or by an amateur working in a recognized style or tradition, and notes that aesthetic values play a significant role in such landscapes.¹³⁴ The allée answers the definition clause by clause. The design was overseen by a master architect — E. Stewart Williams, chairman of the tree-planting committee — and executed by a horticulturist, Earl Neel. It was built to a written specification adopted by the Council in April 1949, fixing species, spacing, setback, irrigation, and lighting conduit. And the allée is a recognized tradition with a documented lineage, set out in Section 3.3.

California's guidance agrees on the category. Caltrans describes designed landscapes as conscious works in a recognized style or tradition in which aesthetic values often play an important role, and lists parkways and designed scenic highways among them.¹³⁵ A planted civic thoroughfare is that kind of property.

Both documents also settle a question of scope. Brief 36 counts furnishings — benches, lights, sculptural objects — among the components of a cultural landscape, and Caltrans lists benches, lights, signs, and monuments as site furnishings that may form part of a coordinated system. The 1949 tree lighting, the twenty sidewalk benches authorized alongside the planting on February 2, 1949, and the Neel monument are therefore not adjuncts to the resource. They are components of it.

The category is not applied to this landscape retrospectively. The city was buying designed landscapes at the time, and it understood what a landscape plan was for. Describing the making of the north-end park in March 1952, the *Desert Sun* set out the sequence in the city's own terms: Ralph Cornell was employed to design the park, and kinds of trees, quantity and location of pipe all could not be determined until the landscape plan had been completed.¹³⁶ That is the order of operations a designed landscape follows — plan first, then species, then the infrastructure that serves them. It is also, precisely, the order Palm Canyon Drive followed in 1949: a specification of roughly one hundred and fifty *filifera* and one hundred and fifty *robusta* at thirty-five feet on center, a plan filed with the Planning Department, and an individual water outlet and light conduit for every tree.

8.2 Integrity, and the place of change

Brief 36 is explicit that in evaluating integrity, care should be taken to consider change itself, and its own example is close to this one: at Port Oneida, in Michigan, the surface material of the roads has changed, yet the character-defining alignment, width, and rows of sugar maples remain intact, and integrity holds.¹³⁷ Caltrans makes the same point for working transportation corridors — a resurfaced and slightly widened road may retain integrity where its alignment and essential features remain.¹³⁸ Palm Canyon Drive was resurfaced by the state in the summer the palms went in, and has been resurfaced and altered many times since. The rows, the interval, and the alignment are what carry the design, and they survive.

On living material the state guidance is more direct still, and it bears on the central dispute. The integrity of a landscape's vegetation may be considered reasonably intact if the original vegetation is present *regardless of appearance*; and original plants changed by natural processes do not normally cause a loss of vegetative integrity even where the change has produced visual alteration.¹³⁹ A palm that has grown from twenty feet to sixty, and now carries the skirt its species carries at that height, is the tree that was planted. Its changed appearance is not a loss of integrity but the ordinary evidence of a landscape being alive.

Caltrans separates two things that are often confused in this debate. Integrity is lost when features are removed or altered; condition is a different matter, and a neglected garden may have high integrity and poor condition at once.¹⁴⁰ How the palms presently look, and how well the city has kept them, are questions of condition, not of integrity.

8.3 Preservation as the primary treatment

Of the four treatments in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, the one this landscape calls for is preservation. Brief 36 recommends it where integrity and authenticity are high, and describes it as protection, stabilization, cyclical maintenance, and repair of character-defining features; changes that form part of the landscape's continuum and are significant in their own right may be retained.^{141 and 142}

That last clause is why preservation and not restoration. Restoration would mean depicting the landscape at a single moment and removing what came after — and what came after 1949 is the rest of the allée, the campaigns of 1954 to about 1963 that carried the rows north, south, and east. Those extensions are significant in their own right. The continuum is the resource.

Brief 36 also warns against false historicism in any treatment. For this landscape that means not manufacturing a uniformity the drive never had: the two species were meant to read differently, and the trees were planted at varying heights and have aged unevenly.

8.4 Trimming as cyclical maintenance

The clearest sentence in the federal guidance for the present dispute is in its maintenance section. Preservation maintenance practices differ from standard maintenance practices, Brief 36 says, because the focus is on perpetuating the historic character or use of the landscape rather than beautification.¹⁴³ That is precisely the line at issue on Palm Canyon Drive. Removing the skirts to make the trunks look tidy is beautification. Keeping the skirt and clearing the lowest fronds is preservation maintenance. The two are not variations of the same practice; the guidance treats them as opposites.

Brief 36 further expects a preservation maintenance program for vegetation to set thresholds for growth or change in character, and to specify pruning methods, propagation, and replacement procedures, with a record kept of the work performed.¹⁴⁴ Designation should therefore be accompanied by an adopted maintenance guide for the allée, stating in writing what the city has in practice followed since 1949 and set down in policy since 1959:

- the skirt is retained as the character-defining silhouette;
- the lowest fronds are cleared as needed for pedestrian and vehicle clearance and to keep the lighting unobstructed;
- the palms are not skinned to a bare trunk;
- trimming is cyclical, on a stated interval, and recorded.

8.5 Replacement and propagation

A living landscape loses individuals. The guidance is specific about how they should be replaced. Caltrans holds that replacements should preferably be the same or a similar species, and — where the original material is genetically important — may be grown from seed collected from the original plants.¹⁴⁵ It also treats the spacing between plants as an expression of the design's technology whose preservation maintains integrity: on this street the roughly thirty-five-foot module and the two-species pairing are integrity-bearing, and replacements belong on that module and in that pairing.

Brief 36's historic plant inventory describes the method: identify each plant by genus, species, common name, age, and size, record its condition, and propagate significant plants rather than substitute commercial stock where the material is rare or historically associated.¹⁴⁶ Its birch allée at Stan Hywet Hall is the working precedent — a phased preservation treatment carried out over fifteen years in which the original rootstock and genetic material were preserved.

Two things follow for this nomination. A palm-by-palm inventory should be made, keyed to species and to planting campaign, as the baseline record of the resource. And whenever a tree needs to be replaced, it should be like for like, *robusta* for *robusta*, *filifera* for *filifera*.

Neither recommendation is new to this city. Palm Springs ran its own palm nursery at the sewage-disposal plant from 1957, growing stock on for street planting, and in January 1958 bought a thousand two-year-old trees for it at fifty-five cents each (Section 3.7). Growing its own stock for this street is something the city has already done.

9. Conclusion

The Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée is the surviving centerpiece of the 1949 municipal beautification program — a landscape built to a written specification and species schedule, twice advertised without a satisfactory bid and then built by the city's own day labor under a supervising nurseryman, planted in a single season with mature stock, wired as it went in and lit the following year, and dedicated to the memory of the nurseryman whose son set the trees. It was carried outward in authorized campaigns until the double row ran the length of the drive.

It meets criteria (i) through (v) of section 8.05.070(C)(1)(a) independently, and criterion (vi) describes it more exactly than any other in the ordinance. Its significance is exceptional. The design intent, the spacing, the irrigation and the lighting, the contractor and the unit price, the first tree and the dedication are each fixed to a dated primary source; and from the year it was planted the allée has been the image by which Palm Springs has represented itself.

The composition survives. Individual palms have been replaced across seventy-seven years, the street has been resurfaced and re-lit more than once, and the storefronts have turned over many times — and the double row, the module, the two-species pairing, and the procession that ends in the mountain can all still be measured on the ground. The Neel plaque is gone; the trees it stood among are the memorial that survived.

One recommendation reaches past this resource. The City should commission a Historic Context Statement on the founding mothers of Palm Springs (Section 3.8). Ruth Hardy is being argued here from first principles because there is no adopted framework to argue her from, and she is not the only one.

The character-defining features at Section 4 are written so that the Historic Site Preservation Board and the City Council can adopt them as they stand. Designation carries a maintenance standard with it, which is what a living landscape of this age most needs. The Palm Canyon Drive Palm Allée merits designation as a Class 1 Historic Resource.

10. Sources

Desert Sun and *Palm Springs Limelight News* items are cited by headline, date, and page. Secondary sources carry full citations and page pins.

Guidance documents are cited in full at first use in Section 8: Preservation Brief 36, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards with the Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, and the Caltrans *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (1999).

Postcard views are cited by title, publisher, card number, and, where a printed production code or copyright line survives, the year of production. Cover: "Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs, California," natural color card from Kodachrome, Mike Roberts Color Production, Berkeley, Calif., no. C6033; printed before mid-1963 on the evidence of the pre-ZIP postal zone in the imprint.

The period horticultural and design literature drawn on in Sections 3.2 and 7 is cited in full at first use: *Los Angeles Times* garden features and photo essays, 1925–1949; *California Arts & Architecture*, 1930–1938; S. B. Parish's monograph on the genus in the *Botanical Gazette* (1907); U.S.D.A. *Farmers' Bulletin 1208*; and Ralph D. Cornell's *Conspicuous California Plants* (San Pasqual Press, 1938). Cornell is cited from the 1938 first edition; where a reader consults the 1978 revised edition, the fan palm chapter is renumbered from XXI to XXII and repaginated.

Appendix A. The maintained-skirt policy record

This appendix collects the documentary record behind the compact conclusion in Section 7, so the body of the nomination stays on significance rather than current policy. The spine of the record runs 1954 → 1958 → 1959/1963 → 1982 → 1995 → 2009.

By 1959 the Council, on the planning commission's recommendation, had adopted a policy that the Palm Canyon palms "develop a natural look, complete with frond skirts," with Mayor Frank Bogert stating the rule plainly: "We don't want them covering the lights, but they shouldn't be skinned to a bare top" — young trees trimmed only until their fronds lifted to "aerial safety." The city's first written trimming policy, Minute Order 3116 of 1982, likewise called the skirt "enhancing" the palms' appearance; the 2009 resolution kept natural skirts on the filifera; and the city's planning documents have preferred the native skirted filifera ever since. The lighting design of 1949–50 was built around the fronds, and cannot be stripped without destroying what the lights were made to create.

The record below runs from the founding design through the end of the century. Read together, it shows a city that kept its palms skirted as a matter of settled practice, trimming the lowest fronds for clearance and safety while defending the frond itself — and that treated the skirted silhouette, by its own account, as "the Palm Springs image."

1949 — the design. The tree-planting committee, chaired by the architect E. Stewart Williams, required that lighting conduit be installed at the time of planting; the 1950 fixture chosen by City Engineer Minturn was a "tailor-made job to fit the height, girth and distance of the fronds from the light source." The illumination was built around the fronds from the start.

1954 — the first recorded trim, and it is a hazard abatement. On August 3, 1954, five years after the planting, the Council appropriated approximately \$300 from its contingency account for trimming the palms on Palm Canyon Drive — on the City Manager's recommendation, "as a safety measure," to overcome "an existing public safety hazard," the work to be done with city personnel. The resolution describes a trim over a state highway and a public sidewalk; it does not describe skinning a trunk. And nothing in the whole run of the city's resolutions prunes these trees at all before that date. The first documented act of care for the allée came five years after it was planted, cost three hundred dollars, was done in-house, and was framed as abating a hazard. That is an episodic liability trim, and it is the earliest datum in the maintenance chronology — not a practice of routine skinning.¹⁴⁷

1958 — the Council narrows a trim. In August 1958 the City Manager reported bids for trimming five hundred Palm Canyon Drive palms and skinning some other trees, and recommended award

to the low responsible bidder. The Director of Parks and Recreation had described the trimming as “primarily a matter of public safety.” The Council found it “unnecessary to authorize the amount of work recommended” and cut the contract back to “trimming only those palm trees on Palm Canyon Drive where the work is necessary because of obstruction to lights,” for a total not in excess of three hundred trees. Two things are on the record a year before the natural-look policy was written down: the criterion for trimming was obstruction of the lights, and the skinning in the bid was not authorized.¹⁴⁸

1959–63 — the natural-look policy. On the planning commission’s recommendation the Council adopted a policy that the Palm Canyon palms develop a natural look, “complete with frond skirts,” with Mayor Frank Bogert’s rule: “We don’t want them covering the lights, but they shouldn’t be skinned to a bare top” — young trees trimmed only until their fronds lifted to “aerial safety.” (Both a Nov. 6, 1959 and a Sept. 25, 1963 *Desert Sun* item carry this language.)

1966 — lights and silhouette as one system. Coverage of the palm lighting — a roughly \$14,000-a-year, 1,158-bulb system — treats the illumination and the trimmed frond shape as a single visual effect, the lights drawing the eye to each tree’s crown.

1970 / 1973 — the public and the planners defend the frond. A 1970 letter protests palms “being denuded and left looking like plucked chickens,” defending the fronds as shade for new growth and shelter for nesting birds. In the 1973 “mini versus maxi” frond flap, the *Desert Sun* reported that “the city’s chief planner and many on his staff appear to feel the ‘maxi’ look is more becoming to local palm trees,” with the opposition coming narrowly from downtown retailers whose store signs the un-scalped palms obscured. About 1,700 city-owned palms at that date.

1974 — the city describes its own practice. Reporting a targeted trim of some 380 Palm Canyon Drive palms, City Manager Don Blubaugh admitted that a “long-time city policy of keeping palm fronds at least 12 feet above ground level had been ‘loosely enforced.’” That is the maintained skirt described in the city’s own words: a standing twelve-foot-clearance rule, applied with restraint — skirts kept, the lowest fronds cut only as needed. An August 1974 inventory valued the roughly 1,800 street palms at over \$630,000.

1980 — the clearance rule is “long-standing.” Under a \$21,550 contract, the city trimmed about 750 palms citywide. Community Services director Bert Wills described the “long-standing City

Council policy”: fronds hanging within twelve feet of the ground are trimmed, and higher fronds only if “unsightly and tattered.” The work is framed as clearance and fire safety, not aesthetic skinning.

1981 — a sustained constituency, and a counter-voice. A resident’s “annual” letter again deplores stripping the palms to look “like plucked chickens” as “an aesthetic crime.” A rebuttal the following week argues the opposite — that untrimmed palms harbor vermin and should be cut yearly. The debate was real and two-sided; the city’s settled practice fell on the side of the maintained skirt.

1982 — the first written policy. Minute Order 3116, the city’s first written trimming policy, called the skirt “enhancing” the palms’ appearance and set a twelve-foot clearance with committee review for exceptions.

1995 — “the Palm Springs image.” A resident’s complaint about unremoved dead fronds records a telling answer: asked why the fronds were left, a council member replied that “That’s the Palm Springs image.” Even a critic of the practice thus confirms that, by the mid-1990s, the skirted palm was understood as the city’s deliberate civic image — the very “history of keeping skirts” the 2026 policy denies.

2009 — the policy holds. Resolution 22475 kept natural skirts on the native *filifera*, the position the city’s planning documents had pointed toward for decades.

The conclusion is narrow and documented: across fifty years, the city trimmed for clearance and safety and kept the skirt — and said so, repeatedly, in its managers’ words and its written policy. The 2026 assertion that Palm Springs “does not have a long history of keeping palm tree skirts” is contradicted by the city’s own record.

Appendix B. Ruth Hardy (1892–1965)

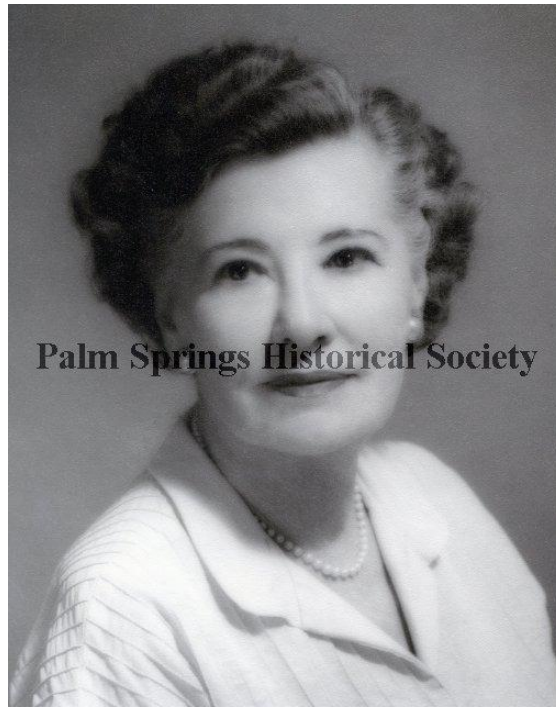


Figure 19. *Ruth Hardy, first woman to sit on the Palm Springs City Council. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.*

Ruth Hardy was born Ruth Herdrich on May 6, 1892, at Lebanon, Indiana, the daughter of Benjamin and Cora Herdrich. She took a degree from Indiana University in 1915, and the university later honored her for her work on its behalf. She married Henry Hughes Miller in Indiana in 1917; a son, Jackson, was born at Waco, Texas, in 1920. In 1930 she married Jackson H. Hardy, and in 1932 the two came to Palm Springs and bought the Casitas del Monte Hotel.¹⁴⁹ In October 1940 they bought the Birge Estate — a 1925 house attributed to William Charles Tanner, built by Alvah Hicks — and in two months turned it into a hotel of twenty-one rooms, nine of them with fireplaces, which gave it its name. Working with Neel's Nursery, Hardy filled out the grounds with flowering shrubs, put a lily pond in the courtyard, and moved trees to open the view to the mountain. The Ingleside Inn opened on December 5, 1940. She filed for divorce soon after and ran it alone for the next twenty-five years.¹⁵⁰ She kept a hedge of poinsettias around it and gave cuttings away every spring, so that patches of color all over town came out of her garden.¹⁵¹

She was elected to the city council in 1948, the first woman to sit on it, and returned in 1952 and 1956, unopposed both times — twelve years, longer than anyone else had then served on that body. She turned down her colleagues when they asked her to become mayor. At her last regular meeting, in 1960, they voted her mayor for a night. When she declined another term the attempts to draft her failed, and she put her support behind Harry Paisley, who took her seat.¹⁵² She was instrumental in establishing the city's Parks and Recreation Commission, and was one of the originators of Tamarisk Park, the city's first, which Ralph Cornell laid out and which she fought for.¹⁵³

Her work on the allée is set out in Sections 3.5 and 3.6. Frank Bogert, mayor when she died, said she thought up the idea of the palms and worked like the dickens to see them placed.¹⁵⁴ The first half is a tribute: others had raised the idea, and the 1949 papers credit Ben Shearer with starting the movement. The second half is exact, and it is the half that matters. The trees are there because Ruth Hardy took an idea other people had raised and made the city carry it out.

She died at the Ingleside Inn on Saturday, January 9, 1965, of a heart attack, at seventy-two. The funeral was at St. Paul's in the Desert, the Rev. Frederick A. Barnhill officiating, and she was buried in Welwood Murray Cemetery. She left her son Jackson, of Canoga Park; a brother, O. C. Herdrich, of Indianapolis; and three grandchildren.¹⁵⁵ Within three weeks the Council voted unanimously to rename Tamarisk Park for her, and the parks commission proposed a bronze plaque giving the name and something of her history.¹⁵⁶ The editorial page had already named the other memorial: the palms along Palm Canyon Drive, it said, and their shaded lights in the evening, would remain as a living memorial to her.¹⁵⁷



Figure 20. *The audience at the Blessing of the Trees, Palm Canyon Drive, October 1, 1949. Ruth Hardy is seated right of center, in the striped jacket; the papers that week described her as in charge of the official work on the planting program, and at the ceremony she “responded with appropriate words of the beauties of the trees.” Next to her, in the light jacket with a spray of foliage in her lap, is Verne Neel — Clarence Neel’s widow, to whom the plaque attesting the year of planting was presented that afternoon (Section 3.5). At the right of the same row, in the white shirt, is Mayor Charles Farrell. In the row behind, at the left, is the designer Herbert Burns; the man between him and Hardy, with his hand to his forehead, is believed to be Earl Neel, who set the trees, seated behind his mother. Palm Springs Historical Society, Dedications / Presentations collection, object 2008.41.118, other no. 44-118. The Society’s record gives the occasion as the planting of the palm trees; the planting ran through that summer, and October 1 was the dedication.*

Appendix C. The historic aerial record (1953–1978)

The four vertical aerial photographs below document the phasing described in Section 3.7 — where the palms had reached, and where they had not, at four moments across the resource’s development. They were read block by block against present conditions.

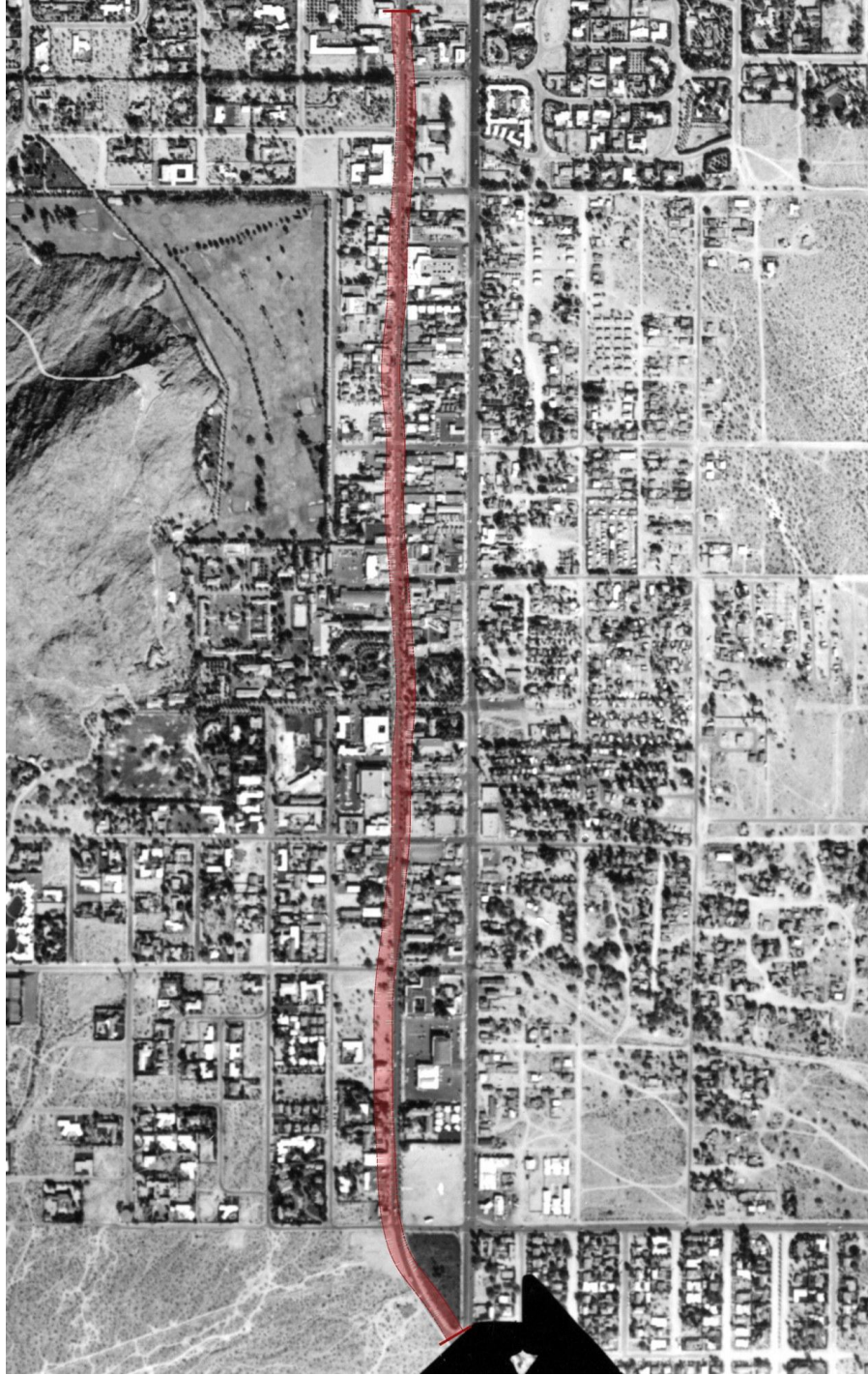


Figure C-1. *Palm Canyon Drive, 1953. The double file runs south through the commercial core and stops at Ramon Road; the ground south and east of Ramon is open desert. The dark irrigated wedge at Ramon is the early DeMuth Park (graded 1952, on leased Agua Caliente land), then about a year old. This frame is the “before” for both the 1954 phase and the 1956–57 southern extension. The band marks the reach of the allée in this frame.*



Figure C-2. North Palm Canyon Drive, 1967. The allée runs north through open desert to the edge of town, arriving ahead of development — where the corridor crosses unbuilt ground the planting can only be public work, since no private frontage owner was there to do it. The dating is a terminus (in by 1967), not a completion year. The band marks the reach of the allée in this frame.



Figure C-3. South and East Palm Canyon Drive, 1978. One continuous allée runs down South Palm Canyon and along East Palm Canyon to the Ocotillo Lodge; east of there, single frontage rows stand before Smoke Tree and the Diplomat, short of the intended terminus at Araby Point (at right). Intent and achieved extent appear in one frame. The band marks the reach of the allée in this frame.

Appendix D. Preservation Brief 36

Attached in full is *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*, Preservation Brief 36, written for the National Park Service by the landscape architect Charles A. Birnbaum and published in September 1994. It is the standard federal guidance on how a designed landscape is documented, evaluated, treated and maintained, and it is the guidance this nomination applies at Section 8.

It is attached because a planted civic landscape is not a building, and the tests that suit a building do not transfer. A building's materials are meant to stay as they were set. A landscape's materials grow, age, and are replaced within the design — and the Brief is the document that explains how integrity is judged when the fabric is alive. Its guidance is professional rather than binding; Palm Springs Municipal Code chapter 8.05 governs this nomination. But it is the recognized national standard, it is cited throughout Section 8, and it is short enough to read.

Four passages bear directly on the Palm Canyon Drive allée.

Page 2 defines a historic designed landscape: one consciously laid out by a landscape architect, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, in which aesthetic values play a significant role. The same page lists the components of such a landscape, furnishings and lights among them. This resource was laid out by a committee chaired by an architect, planted by a horticulturist, and lit by a fixture designed to its foliage.

Page 10 sets out the seven aspects of integrity and adds the sentence that matters most for a living resource: when evaluating these qualities, care should be taken to consider change itself. Growth is not loss. A palm that has grown from twenty feet to sixty has not departed from the design; it has performed it.

Page 13 describes the four treatments and states that a landscape with a high level of integrity may suggest preservation as the primary treatment, emphasizing protection, stabilization, cyclical maintenance, and repair of character-defining features. That is what Section 8 recommends here. The same page warns against false historicism — against making a landscape look like a period it never had.

Pages 14 and 16 to 19 are the practical half. Figure 27 records the birch allée at Stan Hywet Hall, where a failing allée was preserved over fifteen years by phased thinning and regrowth, with the original rootstock and genetic material kept — the working precedent for the replacement and propagation recommended at Section 8.5. Pages 16 to 19 distinguish preservation maintenance from ordinary beautification and set out the record-keeping a landscape needs: a field inventory, a feature data sheet, a seasonal calendar, and a record sheet for each feature. That is the model for the palm-by-palm inventory and the maintenance guide this nomination recommends.

The Brief is a federal publication and is not copyrighted; the National Park Service asks only that credit be given. The copy attached is the complete printed edition of September 1994. It is also available at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-36-cultural-landscapes.pdf> (accessed July 27, 2026). The edition posted in web-page form at nps.gov is not the same document: it says at its head that captions are simplified and that some complex charts have been omitted, and among the omissions are the documentation matrix at page 6 and the preservation maintenance guide at pages 18 and 19 — the two parts most useful to a city deciding how to look after these trees.

36 PRESERVATION BRIEFS

Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes

Charles A. Birnbaum, ASLA



U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources
Preservation Assistance



Cultural landscapes can range from thousands of acres of rural tracts of land to a small homestead with a front yard of less than one acre. Like historic buildings and districts, these special places reveal aspects of our country's origins and development through their form and features and the ways they were used. Cultural landscapes also reveal much about our evolving relationship with the natural world.

A **cultural landscape** is defined as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: *historic sites*, *historic designed landscapes*,

historic vernacular landscapes, and *ethnographic landscapes*. These are defined on the Table on page 2.¹

Historic landscapes include residential gardens and community parks, scenic highways, rural communities, institutional grounds, cemeteries, battlefields and zoological gardens. They are composed of a number of character-defining features which individually or collectively contribute to the landscape's physical appearance as they have evolved over time. In addition to vegetation and topography, cultural landscapes may include water features such as ponds, streams, and fountains; circulation features such as roads, paths, steps, and walls; buildings; and furnishings, including fences, benches, lights and sculptural objects.



Figure 1: The New York Peace Monument atop Lookout Mountain in the 8,100 acre Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Chattanooga, Tennessee, commemorates the reconciliation of the Civil War between the North and South. The strategic high point provides panoramic views to the City of Chattanooga and the Moccasin Bend. Today, it is recognized for its cultural and natural resource value. The memorial, which was added in 1910 is part of this landscape's historic continuum. (courtesy Sam Abell and National Geographic).

DEFINITIONS

Historic Designed Landscape - a landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.

Historic Vernacular Landscape - a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. They can be a single property such as a farm or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. Examples include rural villages, industrial complexes, and agricultural landscapes.

Historic Site - a landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person. Examples include battlefields and president's house properties.

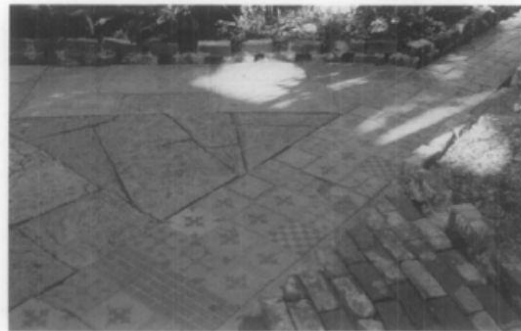
Ethnographic Landscape - a landscape containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Examples are contemporary settlements, religious sacred sites and massive geological structures. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence and ceremonial grounds are often components.

Most historic properties have a cultural landscape component that is integral to the significance of the resource. Imagine a residential district without sidewalks, lawns and trees or a plantation with buildings but no adjacent lands. A historic property consists of all its cultural resources — landscapes, buildings, archeological sites and collections. In some cultural landscapes, there may be a total absence of buildings.

This Preservation Brief provides preservation professionals, cultural resource managers, and historic property owners a step-by-step process for preserving historic designed and vernacular landscapes, two types of cultural landscapes. While this process is ideally applied to an entire landscape, it can address a single feature such as a perennial garden, family burial plot, or a sentinel oak in an open meadow. This Brief provides a framework and guidance for undertaking projects to ensure a successful balance between historic preservation and change.

Developing a Strategy and Seeking Assistance

Nearly all designed and vernacular landscapes evolve from, or are often dependent on, natural resources. It is these interconnected systems of land, air and water,



Figures 2-4: Character-defining landscape features (top to bottom): "Boot Fence" near D. H. Lawrence Ranch, Questa, New Mexico, 1991 (courtesy Cheryl Wagner); paving detail at Ernest Hemingway House National Historic Site, Key West, Florida, 1994 (courtesy author); and, tree planting detail for Jefferson Memorial Park, St. Louis, Missouri (courtesy Office of Dan Kiley)

vegetation and wildlife which have dynamic qualities that differentiate cultural landscapes from other cultural resources, such as historic structures. Thus, their documentation, treatment, and ongoing management require a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach.

Today, those involved in preservation planning and management for cultural landscapes represent a broad array of academic backgrounds, training, and related

project experience. Professionals may have expertise in landscape architecture, history, landscape archeology, forestry, agriculture, horticulture, pomology, pollen analysis, planning, architecture, engineering (civil, structural, mechanical, traffic), cultural geography, wildlife, ecology, ethnography, interpretation, material and object conservation, landscape maintenance and management. Historians and historic preservation professionals can bring expertise in the history of the landscape, architecture, art, industry, agriculture, society and other subjects. Landscape preservation teams, including on-site management teams and independent consultants, are often directed by a landscape architect with specific expertise in landscape preservation. It is highly recommended that disciplines relevant to the landscapes' inherent features be represented as well.

Additional guidance may be obtained from State Historic Preservation Offices, local preservation commissions, the National Park Service, local and state park agencies, national and state chapters of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation, the National Association of Olmsted Parks, and the Catalog of Landscape Records in the United States at Wave Hill among others.²

A range of issues may need to be addressed when considering how a particular cultural landscape should be treated. This may include the in-kind replacement of declining vegetation, reproduction of furnishings, rehabilitation of structures, accessibility provisions for people with disabilities, or the treatment of industrial properties that are rehabilitated for new uses.

Preservation Planning for Cultural Landscapes

Careful planning prior to undertaking work can help prevent irrevocable damage to a cultural landscape. Professional techniques for identifying, documenting, evaluating and preserving cultural landscapes have advanced during the past 25 years and are continually being refined. Preservation planning generally involves the following steps: historical research; inventory and documentation of existing conditions; site analysis and evaluation of integrity and significance; development of a cultural landscape preservation approach and treatment plan; development of a cultural landscape management plan and management philosophy; the development of a strategy for ongoing maintenance; and preparation of a record of treatment and future research recommendations.

The steps in this process are not independent of each other, nor are they always sequential. In fact, information gathered in one step may lead to a re-examination or refinement of previous steps. For example, field inventory and historical research are likely to occur simultaneously, and may reveal unnoticed cultural resources that should be protected.

The treatment and management of cultural landscape should also be considered in concert with the management of an entire historic property. As a result, many other studies may be relevant. They include management plans, interpretive plans, exhibit design, historic structures reports, and other.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORTS

A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) is the primary report that documents the history, significance and treatment of a cultural landscape. A CLR evaluates the history and integrity of the landscape including any changes to its geographical context, features, materials, and use.

CLR's are often prepared when a change (e.g. a new visitor's center or parking area to a landscape) is proposed. In such instances, a CLR can be a useful tool to protect the landscape's character-defining features from undue wear, alteration or loss. A CLR can provide managers, curators and others with information needed to make management decisions.

A CLR will often yield new information about a landscape's historic significance and integrity, even for those already listed on the National Register. Where appropriate, National Register files should be amended to reflect the new findings.

These steps can result in several products including a Cultural Landscape Report (also known as a Historic Landscape Report), statements for management, interpretive guide, maintenance guide and maintenance records.

Historical Research

Research is essential before undertaking any treatment. Findings will help identify a landscape's historic period(s) of ownership, occupancy and development, and bring greater understanding of the associations and characteristics that make the landscape or history significant. Research findings provide a foundation to make educated decisions for work, and can also facilitate ongoing maintenance and management operations, interpretation and eventual compliance requirements.

A variety of primary and secondary sources may be consulted. Primary archival sources can include historic plans, surveys, plats, tax maps, atlases, U. S. Geological Survey maps, soil profiles, aerial photographs, photographs, stereoscopic views, glass lantern slides, postcards, engravings, paintings, newspapers, journals, construction drawings, specifications, plant lists, nursery catalogs, household records, account books and personal correspondence. Secondary sources include monographs, published histories, theses, National Register forms, survey data, local preservation plans, state contexts and scholarly articles. (See Figures 5-7, page 4.)

Contemporary documentary resources should also be consulted. This may include recent studies, plans, surveys, aerial and infrared photographs, Soil Conservation Service soil maps, inventories, investigations and interviews. Oral histories of residents, managers, and maintenance personnel with a long tenure or historical association can be valuable sources of information about changes to a landscape over many years. (Figures 8-9, page 4) For properties listed in the National Register, nomination forms should be consulted.



Figures 5-7: Atlases and aerial photographs were useful for understanding the evolution of burial grounds in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Comparing the plans from the 1864 and 1875 atlases (courtesy Lancaster County Historical Society) with a 1980 aerial photograph (courtesy Lancaster County Planning Commission) revealed the growth and development of Woodward Hill Cemetery and its geographic context for over a century.

Figures 8, 9: Mary Smith Nelson spent her childhood at the Zane Grey family compound in Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania. Recently, her recollections of nearly eighty years ago helped landscape architects to document the evolution of this cultural landscape. These oral memoirs have since been confirmed by archeological and archival findings. (courtesy National Park Service, Zane Grey House Archives and LANDSCAPES)



Figure 10: Traditional land uses are often the key to long term preservation. Therefore, a knowledge of prior landscape management practices is essential as part of the research phase. Land use patterns were often the result of traditional activities such as agriculture, fishing or mining. In Hanalei, Hawaii for example, taro fields are important because they reflect the continuity of use of the land over time. (courtesy Land and Community Associates)

Preparing Period Plans

In the case of designed landscapes, even though a historic design plan exists, it does not necessarily mean that it was realized fully, or even in part. Based on a review of the archival resources outlined above, and the extant landscape today, an *as-built period plan* may be delineated. For all successive tenures of ownership, occupancy and landscape change, *period plans* should be generated (see Figure 13, page 6). Period plans can document to the greatest extent possible the historic appearance during a particular period of ownership, occupancy, or development. Period plans should be based on primary archival sources and should avoid conjecture. Features that are based on secondary or less accurate sources should be graphically differentiated. Ideally, all referenced archival sources should be annotated and footnoted directly on *period plans*.

Where historical data is missing, period plans should reflect any gaps in the CLR narrative text and these limitations considered in future treatment decisions (See Treatments for Cultural Landscapes on page 13.)

Inventorying and Documenting Existing Conditions

Both physical evidence in the landscape and historic documentation guide the historic preservation plan and treatments. To document existing conditions, intensive field investigation and reconnaissance should be conducted at the same time that documentary research is being gathered. Information should be exchanged among preservation professionals, historians, technicians, local residents, managers and visitors.

To assist in the survey process, National Register Bulletins have been published by the National Park Service to aid in identifying, nominating and evaluating designed and rural historic landscapes. Additionally, Bulletins are available for specific landscape types such as battlefields, mining sites, and cemeteries.⁶

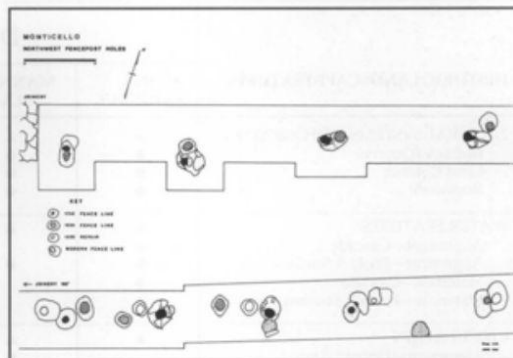


Figure 11: Landscape archeology is an important research tool that can provide location, dating and detail verification for landscape features. At Monticello, the estate of Thomas Jefferson in Charlottesville, Virginia, archeological research has employed both excavational and non-invasive methods. This has included aerial photography, soil resistivity, transect and stratified sampling and photogrammetric recording. As illustrated in the plan above, fence post spacing and alignment can be confirmed with a transect trenching technique.³ (courtesy Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation)

Although there are several ways to inventory and document a landscape, the goal is to create a baseline from a detailed record of the landscape and its features as they exist at the present (considering seasonal variations).⁷ Each landscape inventory should address issues of boundary delineation, documentation methodologies and techniques, the limitations of the inventory, and the scope of inventory efforts. These are most often influenced by the timetable, budget, project scope, and the purpose of the inventory and, depending on the physical qualities of the property, its scale, detail, and the interrelationship between natural and cultural resources. For example, inventory objectives to develop a treatment plan may differ considerably compared to those needed to develop an ongoing maintenance plan. Once the criteria for a landscape inventory are developed and tested, the methodology should be explained.

Preparing Existing Condition Plans

Inventory and documentation may be recorded in plans, sections, photographs, aerial photographs, axonometric perspectives, narratives, video—or any combination of techniques. Existing conditions should generally be documented to scale, drawn by hand or generated by computer. The scale of the drawings is often determined by the size and complexity of the landscape. Some landscapes may require documentation at more than one scale. For example, a large estate may be documented at a small scale to depict its spatial and visual relationships, while the discrete area around an estate mansion may require a larger scale to illustrate individual plant materials, pavement patterns and other details. The same may apply to an entire rural historic district and a fenced vegetable garden contained within. (See Figures 14-15, page 8).

When landscapes are documented in photographs, *registration points* can be set to indicate the precise location and orientation of features. Registration points should correspond to significant forms, features and spatial relationships within the landscape and its surrounds (see

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE FEATURES	DEGREE OF DOCUMENTATION					
	SITE EVIDENCE	MANNING PLAN	HISTORIC PHOTOS	LETTERS 1914-1946	1955-1993 RECORDS	SECONDARY SOURCES
NATURAL SYSTEMS/TOPOGRAPHY Bedrock (Quarry) Land Contour Rockwork	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	?
WATER FEATURES Alignment—Cascade Alignment—Pools & Streams Materials—Cascade Materials—Pools & Streams	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	?
CIRCULATION Alignment—Upland Area Alignment—Perimeter Paths Alignment—Internal Paths Materials—Upland Area Materials—Perimeter Paths Materials—Internal Paths	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	?
SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS Garden Site (Quarry) Viewshed (Cuyahoga Valley) Vista over Garden from Terrace Views within Garden Views within Upland Views from Croquet Lawn	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	?
VEGETATION Native Forest Trees Ornamental Shrubs in Garden Groundcovers in Garden Herbaceous Plants in Garden	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ●	?
SITE FURNISHINGS Lanterns Seats	▲ ● ●	▲ ● ●	▲ ● ●	▲ ● ●	▲ ● ●	?
STRUCTURES Torii Gate Cistern Stone Wall Concealing Cistern Lagoon Bridges Umbrella House Trellis/Lattice	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	▲ ● ● ● ● ●	?

Figure 12: This chart measures available documentation for character-defining features in the Japanese Garden at Stan Hywet Hall, Akron, Ohio designed by Warren Manning. Areas with little or no historic documentation are noted, thus identifying areas where future treatment options may be restricted. As illustrated, restoration or reconstruction are viable alternatives based on the rich research findings. (courtesy Stan Hywet Hall Foundation, Inc. and Doell and Doell)



Figure 13: Period plans show the evolution of Aspet, the home of Augustus St. Gaudens, Cornish, New Hampshire. Plans were developed at two scales: first for the entire estate's development, and second for the core area around the house, studio and gardens. For both, plans were generated for five time periods: 1885-1903, 1903-1907, 1907-1926, 1926-1965 and 1965-1992. Illustrated above are the 1885-1903, 1907-1926, and the 1926-1965 plans for the core area. (courtesy National Park Service, North Atlantic Region and Pressley Associates)

READING THE LANDSCAPE

A noted geographer stated, "The attempt to derive meaning from landscapes possesses overwhelming virtue. It keeps us constantly alert to the world around us, demanding that we pay attention not just to some of the things around us but to all of them—the whole visible world in all of its rich, glorious, messy, confusing, ugly, and beautiful complexity."⁴

Landscapes can be read on many levels—landscape as nature, habitat, artifact, system, problem, wealth, ideology, history, place and aesthetic.⁵ When developing a strategy to document a cultural landscape, it is important to attempt to read the landscape in its context of place and time. (See Figures 16-17, page 8)

Reading the landscape, like engaging in archival research, requires a knowledge of the resource and subject area as well as a willingness to be skeptical. As with archival research, it may involve serendipitous discoveries. Evidence gained from reading the landscape may confirm or contradict other findings and may encourage the observer and the historian to revisit both primary and secondary sources with a fresh outlook. Landscape investigation may also stimulate other forms of research and survey, such as oral histories or archeological investigations, to supplement what appeared on-site.

There are many ways to read a landscape—whatever approach is taken should provide a broad overview. This may be achieved by combining on-the-ground observations with a bird's-eye perspective. To begin this process, aerial photographs should be reviewed to gain an orientation to the landscape and its setting. Aerial photographs come in different sizes and scales, and can thus portray different levels of detail in the landscape. Aerial photographs taken at a high altitude, for example, may help to reveal remnant field patterns or traces of an abandoned circulation system; or, portions of axial relationships that were part of the original design, since obscured by encroaching woodland areas. Low altitude aerial photographs can point out individual features such as the arrangement of shrub and herbaceous borders, and the exact locations of furnishings, lighting, and fence

alignments. This knowledge can prove beneficial before an on-site visit.

Aerial photographs provide clues that can help orient the viewer to the landscape. The next step may be to view the landscape from a high point such as a knoll or an upper floor window. Such a vantage point may provide an excellent transition before physically entering the cultural landscape.

On ground, evidence should then be studied, including character-defining features, visual and spatial relationships. By reviewing supporting materials from historic research, individual features can be understood in a systematic fashion that show the continuum that exists on the ground today. By classifying these features and relationships, the landscape can be understood as an artifact, possessing evidence of evolving natural systems and human interventions over time.

For example, the on-site investigation of an abandoned turn-of-the-century farm complex reveals the remnant of a native oak and pine forest which was cut and burned in the mid-nineteenth century. This previous use is confirmed by a small stand of mature oaks and the presence of these plants in the emerging secondary woodland growth that is overtaking this farm complex in decline. A ring count of the trees can establish a more accurate age. By *reading* other character-defining features—such as the traces of old roads, remnant hedgerows, ornamental trees along boundary roads, foundation plantings, the terracing of grades and remnant fences—the visual, spatial and contextual relationships of the property as it existed a century ago may be understood and its present condition and integrity evaluated.

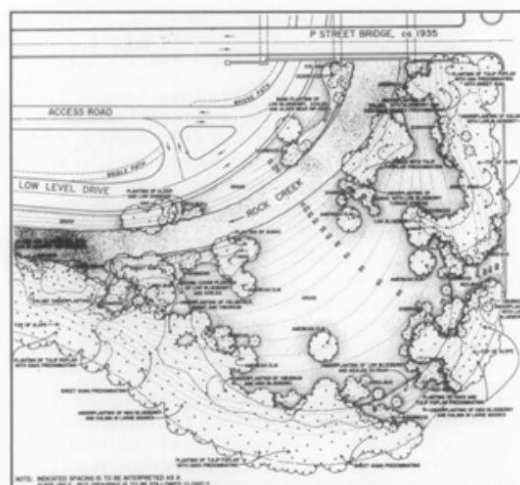
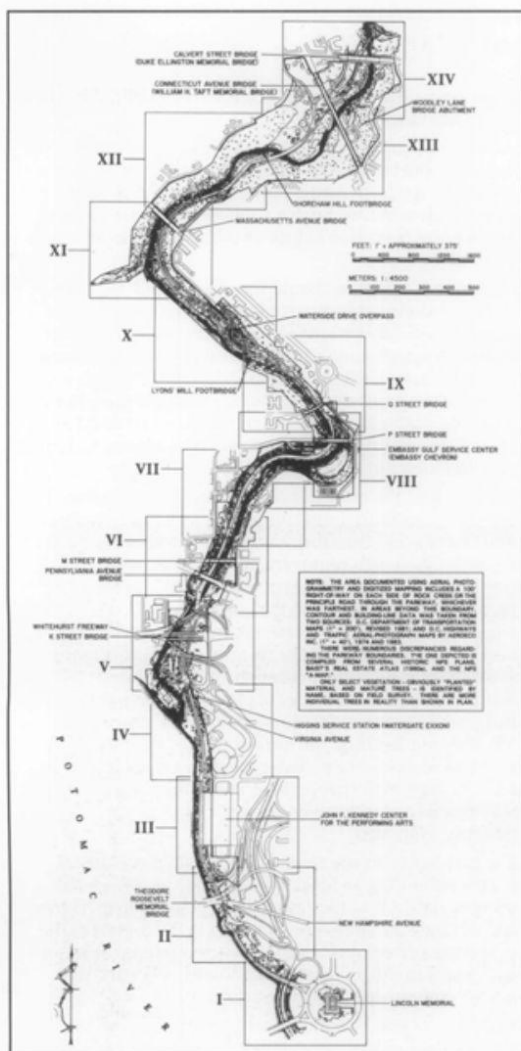
The findings of on-site reconnaissance, such as materials uncovered during archival research, may be considered primary data. These findings make it possible to inventory and evaluate the landscape's features in the context of the property's current condition. Character-defining features are located in situ, in relationship to each other and the greater cultural and geographic contexts.

Figure 22, page 11 for an example.) The points may also correspond to historic views to illustrate the change in the landscape to date. These locations may also be used as a management tool to document the landscape's evolution, and to ensure that its character-defining features are preserved over time through informed maintenance operations and later treatment and management decisions.

All features that contribute to the landscape's historic character should be recorded. These include the physical features described on page 1 (e.g. topography, circulation), and the visual and spatial relationships that are character-defining. The identification of existing plants, should be specific, including genus, species, common name, age (if known) and size. The woody, and if appropriate, herbaceous plant material should be accurately located on the existing conditions map. To ensure full representation of successional herbaceous plants, care should be taken to document the landscape in different seasons, if possible.

Treating living plant materials as a curatorial collection has also been undertaken at some cultural landscapes. This process, either done manually or by computer, can track the condition and maintenance operations on individual plants. Some sites, such as the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, in Brookline, Massachusetts have developed a field investigation numbering system to track all woody plants. (See Table, page 9) Due to concern for the preservation of genetic diversity and the need to replace significant plant materials, a number of properties are beginning to propagate historically important rare plants that are no longer commercially available, unique, or possess significant historic associations. Such herbarium collections become a part of a site's natural history collection.

Once the research and the documentation of existing conditions have been completed, a foundation is in place to analyze the landscape's continuity and change, determine its significance, assess its integrity, and place it within the historic context of similar landscapes.



Figures 14 and 15: Existing conditions plans for large corridor landscapes can employ a variety of documentation methodologies. For the 2-1/2 mile Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Washington, D.C., the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) used aerial photographic photographs as the basis for digitized mapping and delineated drawings. Overall documentation was done at a scale of 1" = 40' with a 100' either side geographic context. Contours were shown at 2' intervals, tree canopy with trunk placement for specimen species, bridges (also drawn in detail), roads, and the creek itself. In all, there are 36 drawings measuring 34" x 44" for the project. These two sample drawings include the index to plans (above) and an area of existing conditions documentation (opposite top). (courtesy Historic American Buildings Survey)



Figures 16 and 17: Landscapes cannot be inventoried in a vacuum. Therefore, an understanding of its geographic context or setting should be part of inventory process. At Rancho Los Alamitos, Long Beach, California (middle and bottom opposite), a comparison between the 1936 aerial view with a present day aerial photograph illustrates the encroachments and adjacent developments that will affect the future treatment of visual and spatial relationships. (courtesy Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation)

HISTORIC PLANT INVENTORY

Within cultural landscapes, plants may have historical or botanical significance. A plant may have been associated with a historic figure or event or be part of a notable landscape design. A plant may be an uncommon cultivar, exceptional in size, age, rare and commercially/unavailable. If such plants are lost, there would be a loss of historic integrity and biological diversity of the cultural landscape. To ensure that significant plants are preserved, an inventory of historic plants is being conducted at the North Atlantic Region of the National Park Service.⁸ Historical landscape architects work with landscape managers and historians to gather oral and documented history on the plant's origin and potential significance. Each plant is then examined in the field by an expert horticulturist who records its name, condition, age, size, distribution, and, any notable botanic characteristics.

Plants that are difficult to identify or are of potential historical significance are further examined in the laboratory by a plant taxonomist who compares leaf, fruit, and flower characteristics with herbarium specimens for named species, cultivars and varieties. For plants species with many cultivars, such as apples, roses, and grapes, specimens may be sent to specialists for identification.

If a plant cannot be identified, is dying or in decline, and unavailable from commercial nurseries, it may be propagated. Propagation ensures that when rare and significant plants decline, they can be replaced with genetically-identical plants. Cuttings are propagated and grown to replacement size in a North Atlantic Region Historic Plant Nursery.



1. The Arnold Arboretum's preservation technician, lilac specialist, and horticulturist compare lilacs from the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site in Hyde Park, New York with lilac specimens in the Arboretum's living collection. (courtesy Olmsted Center)



3. The Arnold Arboretum's horticulturist, landscape historian, and preservation technician examine shrubs at the Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge, MA. (courtesy Olmsted Center)



2. The Arnold Arboretum's horticulturist and preservation technician examine an enormous black locust tree at the Home of F.D. Roosevelt National Historic Site in Hyde Park, NY. (courtesy Olmsted Center)

Site Analysis: Evaluating Integrity and Significance

By analyzing the landscape, its change over time can be understood. This may be accomplished by overlaying the various period plans with the existing conditions plan. Based on these findings, individual features may be attributed to the particular period when they were introduced, and the various periods when they were present.

It is during this step that the *historic significance* of the landscape component of a historic property and its integrity are determined. Historic significance is the recognized importance a property displays when it has been evaluated, including when it has been found to meet National Register Criteria.⁹ A landscape may have several areas of historical significance. An understanding of the landscape as a continuum through history is critical in assessing its cultural and historic value. In order for the landscape to have integrity, these character-defining features or qualities that contribute to its significance must be present.

While National Register nominations document the significance and integrity of historic properties, in general, they may not acknowledge the significance of the landscape's design or historic land uses, and may not contain an inventory of landscape features or characteristics. Additional research is often necessary to provide the detailed information about a landscape's evolution and significance useful in making decision for the treatment and maintenance of a historic landscape. Existing National Register forms may be amended to recognize additional areas of significance and to include more complete descriptions of historic properties that have significant land areas and landscape features.

Integrity is a property's historic identity evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics from the property's historic or prehistoric period. The seven qualities of integrity are location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship and materials.¹⁰ When evaluating these qualities, care should be taken to consider change itself. For example, when a second-generation woodland overtakes an open pasture in a battlefield landscape, or a woodland edge encloses a scenic vista. For situations such as these, the reversibility and/or compatibility of those features should be considered, both individually, and in the context of the overall landscape. Together, evaluations of significance and integrity, when combined with historic research, documentation of existing conditions, and analysis findings, influence later treatment and interpretation decisions. (See Figure 21-23)

Developing a Historic Preservation Approach and Treatment Plan

Treatment may be defined as work carried out to achieve a historic preservation goal—it cannot be considered in a vacuum. There are many practical and philosophical factors that may influence the selection of a treatment for a landscape. These include the relative historic value of the property, the level of historic documentation, existing physical conditions, its historic significance and integrity, historic and proposed use (e.g. educational, interpretive, passive, active public, institutional or private), long- and short-term objectives, operational and code requirements (e.g. accessibility, fire, security) and costs for anticipated capital improvement, staffing and maintenance. The value of any significant archeological and natural resources



Figure 18: At Lauenfield, the home of President James A. Garfield near Cleveland, Ohio, the Sugar Maple that shadowed the porch during Garfield's 1880 "Front Porch Campaign" is in decline. Cuttings were taken from the historically significant tree by the Holden Arboretum and the National Park Service for eventual in-kind replacement. (courtesy NPS, Midwest Region)



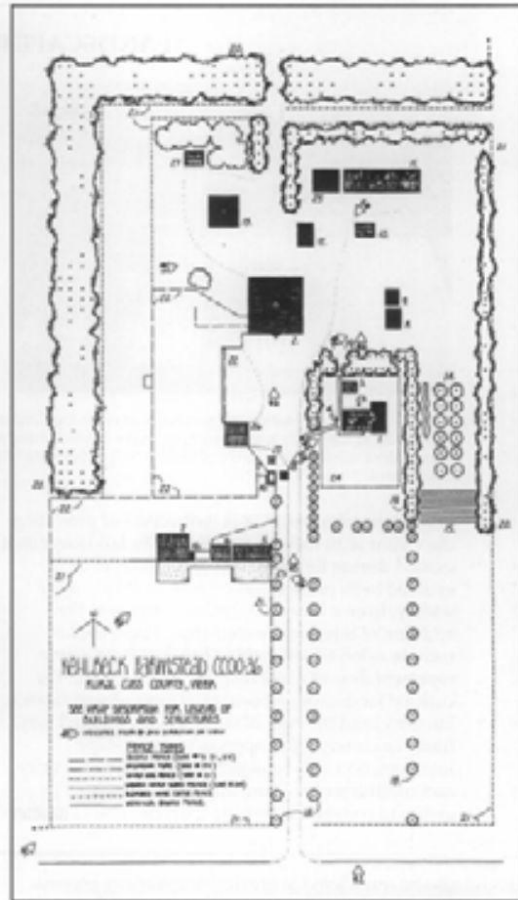
Figure 19: The landscape of Lyndhurst, Tarrytown, New York is significant in American culture and meets Criterion C of the National Register because it embodies the distinctive character of a type and period in American landscape architecture, known as early Picturesque; it possesses high artistic value; and it is the work of a recognized master gardener, Ferdinand Mangold. (courtesy National Trust for Historic Preservation)



Figure 20: Cultural landscapes often contain plant communities such as orchards or meadows—both of which may or may not require a management intervention. When analyzing a landscape, it is important to recognize the present-day biodiversity of these resources—for example at the Fruita Rural Historic District in Capitol Reef National Park in Utah, the landscape contains 2,500 fruit trees associated with settlement and agriculture on the Colorado Plateau (courtesy D. White).



Figure 21: Integrity can involve both continuity and change. This can be evidenced by a detailed review of materials. Although the surface material has changed on some roads through the Port Oneida (near Empire, Michigan) community, the character-defining alignment, width and rows of Sugar Maple trees remain intact. (courtesy NPS, Midwest Region).



Figures 22 and 23: The plan for the Kehlbach Farmstead, located in Cass County in Southeastern Nebraska, illustrates a well-planned, and aesthetically arranged general farm complex of the twentieth century. The farmstead is composed of 23 contributing and 5 non-contributing resources. Integrity was judged uniformly high because many character-defining resources were present and the visual and spatial relationships intact. Note the varied graphic techniques used to document a variety of fence types, and, the key to photographs illustrating the various landscape features and spatial relationships. The photograph above, labeled #3 on the farmstead, is looking north along the farm lane alley. (courtesy National Register Files)

LANDSCAPE INTERPRETATION



Figures A and B: Archeology and restoration of the Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace gardens, England. The project is being interpreted to the public in the garden, an indoor exhibition and a multimedia show. The outdoor interpretive display, (above left) includes period plans, aerial photographs and historic images that detail the history of the garden and current work, 1994. (courtesy the author)

Landscape interpretation is the process of providing the visitor with tools to experience the landscape as it existed during its period of significance, or as it evolved to its present state. These tools may vary widely, from a focus on existing features to the addition of interpretive elements. These could include exhibits, self-guided brochures, or a new representation of a lost feature. The nature of the cultural landscape, especially its level of significance, integrity, and the type of visitation anticipated may frame the interpretive approach. Landscape interpretation may be closely linked to the integrity and condition of the landscape, and therefore, its ability to convey the historic character and character-

defining features of the past. If a landscape has high integrity, the interpretive approach may be to direct visitors to surviving historic features without introducing obtrusive interpretive devices such as free-standing signs. For landscapes with a diminished integrity, where limited or no fabric remains, the interpretive emphasis may be on using extant features and visual aids (e.g. markers, photographs, etc.) to help visitors visualize the resource as it existed in the past. The primary goal in these situations is to educate the visitor about the landscape's historic themes, associations and lost character-defining features or broader historical, social and physical landscape contexts.

should also be considered in the decision-making process. Therefore, a cultural landscape's preservation plan and the treatment selected will consider a broad array of dynamic and interrelated considerations. It will often take the form of a plan with detailed guidelines or specifications.

Adopting such a plan, in concert with a preservation maintenance plan (page 18-19), acknowledges a cultural landscape's ever-changing existence and the interrelationship of treatment and ongoing maintenance. Performance standards, scheduling and record keeping of maintenance activities on a day-to-day or month-to-month basis, may then be planned for. Treatment, management, and maintenance proposals can be developed by a broad range of professionals and with expertise in such fields as landscape preservation, horticulture, ecology, and landscape maintenance.

The selection of a primary treatment for the landscape, utilizing the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, establishes an overall historic preservation approach, as well as a philosophical framework from which to operate. Selecting a treatment is based on many factors. They include management and interpretation objectives for the property as a whole, the period(s) of significance, integrity, and condition of individual landscape features.

For all treatments, the landscape's existing conditions and its ability to convey historic significance should be carefully considered. For example, the life work, design philosophy and extant legacy of an individual designer should all be understood for a designed landscape such as an estate, prior to treatment selection. For a vernacular landscape, such as a battlefield containing a largely intact mid-nineteenth century family farm, the uniqueness of that agrarian complex within a local, regional, state, and national context should be considered in selecting a treatment.

The overall historic preservation approach and treatment approach can ensure the proper retention, care, and repair of landscapes and their inherent features.¹¹ In short, the Standards act as a preservation and management tool for cultural landscapes. The four potential treatments are described in the box opposite.

Landscape treatments can range from simple, inexpensive preservation actions, to complex major restoration or reconstruction projects. The progressive framework is inverse in proportion to the retention of historic features and materials. Generally, preservation involves the least change, and is the most respectful of historic materials. It maintains the form and material of the existing landscape. Rehabilitation usually accommodates contemporary



Figure 24: On some occasions, especially larger landscapes, it is possible to have a primary treatment, with discrete, or secondary areas of another treatment. This is most common for an individual feature in a larger landscape. At the Eugene and Carlotta O'Neill Historic Site, Davisville, California the primary treatment selected for the courtyard was restoration. When accommodating universal accessibility requirements, the introduction of a grass paver walk was installed which warranted the removal of a few historic shrubs. This discrete project would be considered a rehabilitation treatment. (courtesy Patricia M. O'Donnell)

TREATMENTS FOR CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Prior to undertaking work on a landscape, a treatment plan or similar document should be developed. The four primary treatments identified in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties²², are:

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical or cultural values.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.



Figures 25 and 26: When the American Elm (*Ulmus americana*) was plagued with Dutch Elm Disease many historic properties relied on the Japanese Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*) as a substitute plant. As illustrated, the overall form and scale of these trees is really quite different, and would therefore not be an appropriate substitute plant material under a restoration or reconstruction treatment.

alterations or additions without altering significant historic features or materials, with successful projects involving minor to major change. Restoration or reconstruction attempts to recapture the appearance of a property, or an individual feature at a particular point in time, as confirmed by detailed historic documentation. These last two treatments most often require the greatest degree of intervention and thus, the highest level of documentation.

In all cases, treatment should be executed at the appropriate level reflecting the condition of the landscape, with repair work identifiable upon close inspection and/or indicated in supplemental interpretative information. When repairing or replacing a feature, every effort should be made to achieve visual and physical compatibility. Historic materials should be matched in design, scale, color and texture.

A landscape with a high level of integrity and authenticity may suggest preservation as the primary treatment. Such a treatment may emphasize protection, stabilization, cyclical maintenance, and repair of character-defining landscape features. Changes over time that are part of the landscape's continuum and are significant in their own right may be



Figure 27: The historic birch alley at Stan Hywet Hall, Akron, Ohio was suffering from borer infestation and leaf miner. Dying trees were topped and basal sprout growth encouraged. Next, trees were selectively thinned, and ultimately, when the new growth matured, older trunks were removed. Original rootstock and genetic material were preserved. As illustrated, this preservation treatment took fifteen years to realize. (courtesy Child Associates)



Figure 28: Patterns on the land have been preserved through the continuation of traditional uses such as the grape fields at the Sterling Vineyards in Calistoga, California. (courtesy author)



Figures 29: Rehabilitation was selected as the primary treatment for Columbus Park, Chicago, Illinois. Originally designed and executed between 1917 and 1920 by Jens Jensen, the waterfall, cascades, rocky brook and associated landscape, are well documented and possesses a high level of integrity. (courtesy author)

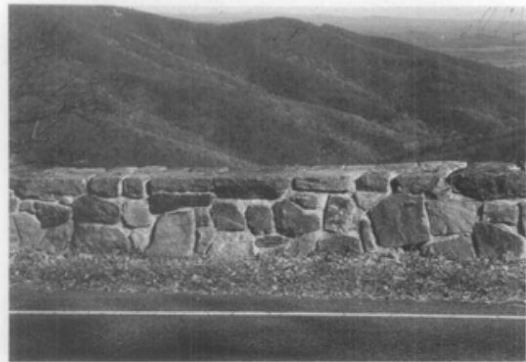


Figure 30, 31: A 75-mile portion of Skyline Drive at Shenandoah National Park overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia required the rehabilitation of a 22'-high, dry-laid stone wall. The new wall was built to a height of 27" - code normally requires a height of 36". The wall was constructed of precast concrete, clad with split stone and mortar joints. To achieve visual compatibility recessed mortar joints were arranged in a random pattern (courtesy Robert R. Page)



retained, while changes that are not significant, yet do not encroach upon or erode character may also be maintained. Preservation entails the essential operations to safeguard existing resources. (Figures 27-28)

Rehabilitation is often selected in response to a contemporary use or need—ideally such an approach is compatible with the landscape's historic character and historic use. Rehabilitation may preserve existing fabric along with introducing some compatible changes, new additions and alterations. Rehabilitation may be desirable at a private residence in a historic district where the homeowner's goal is to develop an appropriate landscape treatment for a front yard, or in a public park where a support area is needed for its maintenance operations. (Figures 29-31)

When the most important goal is to portray a landscape and its character-defining features at an exact period of time, restoration is selected as the primary treatment. Unlike preservation and rehabilitation, interpreting the landscape's continuum or evolution is not the objective. Restoration may include the removal of features from other periods and/or the construction of missing or lost features and materials from the reconstruction period. In all cases, treatment should be substantiated by the historic research findings and existing conditions documentation. Restoration and reconstruction treatment work should avoid the creation of a landscape whose features did not exist historically. For example, if features from an earlier period did not co-exist with extant features from a later period that are being retained, their restoration would not be appropriate. (Figures 32-34)

In rare cases, when evidence is sufficient to avoid conjecture, and no other property exists that can adequately explain a certain period of history, reconstruction may be utilized to depict a vanished landscape. The accuracy of this work is critical. In cases where topography and the subsurface of soil have not been disturbed, research and existing conditions findings may be confirmed by thorough archeological investigations. Here too, those features that are intact should be repaired as necessary, retaining the original historic features to the greatest extent possible. The greatest danger in reconstruction is creating a false picture of history.

False historicism in every treatment should be avoided. This applies to individual features as well as the entire landscape. Examples of inappropriate work include the introduction of historic-looking benches that are actually a new design, a fanciful gazebo placed in what was once an open meadow, executing an unrealized historic design, or designing a historic-looking landscape for a relocated historic structure within "restoration."

Figure 32-34: Tower Grove Park in St. Louis, Missouri, is a National Historic Landmark. The music pavilion, just north of the main drive is a circular lawn area with radiating walks, white marble busts of eminent composers, walks, and curb. The area was in general decline, especially the marble busts which were suffering from acid rain damage. Based on the excellent documentation in nineteenth century annual reports, postcards and photographic images, this area was recently restored. Illustrated above are a sample historic view, work in progress and the completed restoration project. (courtesy Tower Grove Park)

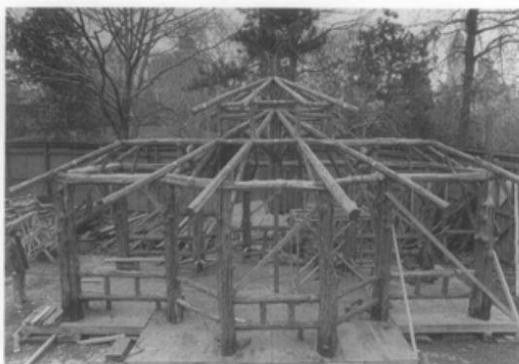


Figure 35-37: Central Park has developed an in-house historic preservation crew to undertake small projects. A specialized crew has been trained to specifically repair and rebuild rustic furnishings. As illustrated, the restoration of the Dene rustic shelter was achieved by constructing it in the Ramble compound, moving in-place opposite 67th street and completed. (courtesy Central Park Conservancy)

Developing a Preservation Maintenance Plan and Implementation Strategy

Throughout the preservation planning process, it is important to ensure that existing landscape features are retained. Preservation maintenance is the practice of monitoring and controlling change in the landscape to ensure that its historic integrity is not altered and features are not lost. This is particularly important during the research and long-term treatment planning process. To be effective, the maintenance program must have a guiding philosophy, approach or strategy; an understanding of preservation maintenance techniques; and a system for documenting changes in the landscape.

The philosophical approach to maintenance should coincide with the landscape's current stage in the preservation planning process. A Cultural Landscape Report and Treatment Plan can take several years to complete, yet during this time managers and property owners will likely need to address immediate issues related to the decline, wear, decay, or damage of landscape features. Therefore, initial maintenance operations may focus on the stabilization and protection of all landscape features to provide temporary, often emergency measures to prevent deterioration, failure, or loss, without altering the site's existing character.

After a Treatment Plan is implemented, the approach to preservation maintenance may be modified to reflect the objectives defined by this plan. The detailed specifications prepared in the Treatment Plan relating to the retention, repair, removal, or replacement of features in the landscape should guide and inform a comprehensive preservation maintenance program. This would include schedules for monitoring and routine maintenance, appropriate preservation maintenance procedures, as well as ongoing record keeping of work performed. For vegetation, the preservation maintenance program would also include thresholds for growth or change in character, appropriate pruning methods, propagation and replacement procedures.

To facilitate operations, a property may be divided into discrete management zones (Figure 41). These zones are sometimes defined during the Cultural Landscape Report process and are typically based on historically defined areas. Alternatively, zones created for maintenance practices and priorities could be used. Examples of maintenance zones would include woodlands, lawns, meadow, specimen trees, and hedges.

Training of maintenance staff in preservation maintenance skills is essential. Preservation maintenance practices differ from standard maintenance practices because of the focus on perpetuating the historic character or use of the landscape rather than beautification. For example, introducing new varieties of turf, roses or trees is likely to be inappropriate. Substantial earth moving (or movement of soil) may be inappropriate where there are potential archeological resources. An old hedge or shrub should be rejuvenated, or propagated, rather than removed and replaced. A mature specimen tree may require cabling and careful monitoring to ensure that it is not a threat to visitor safety. Through training programs and with the assistance of preservation maintenance specialists, each property could develop maintenance specifications for the care of landscape features.

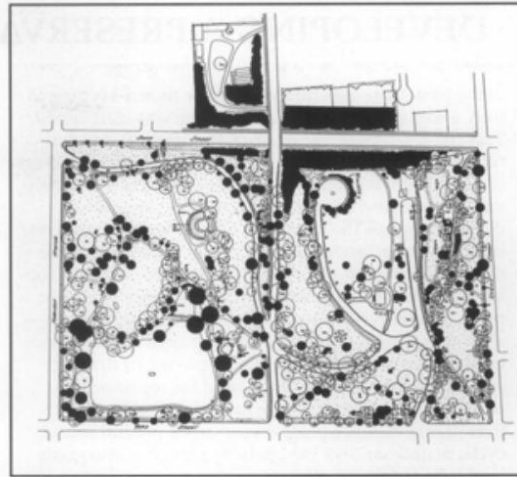
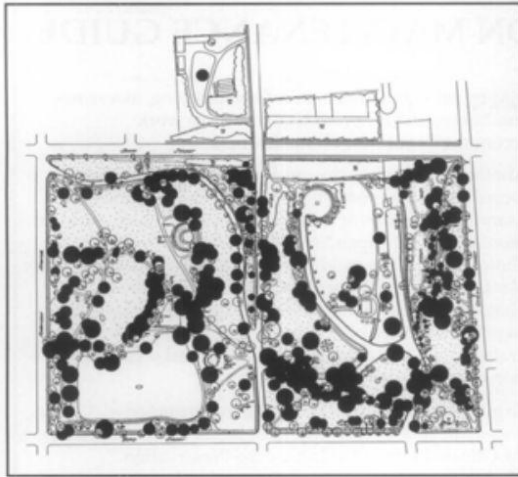
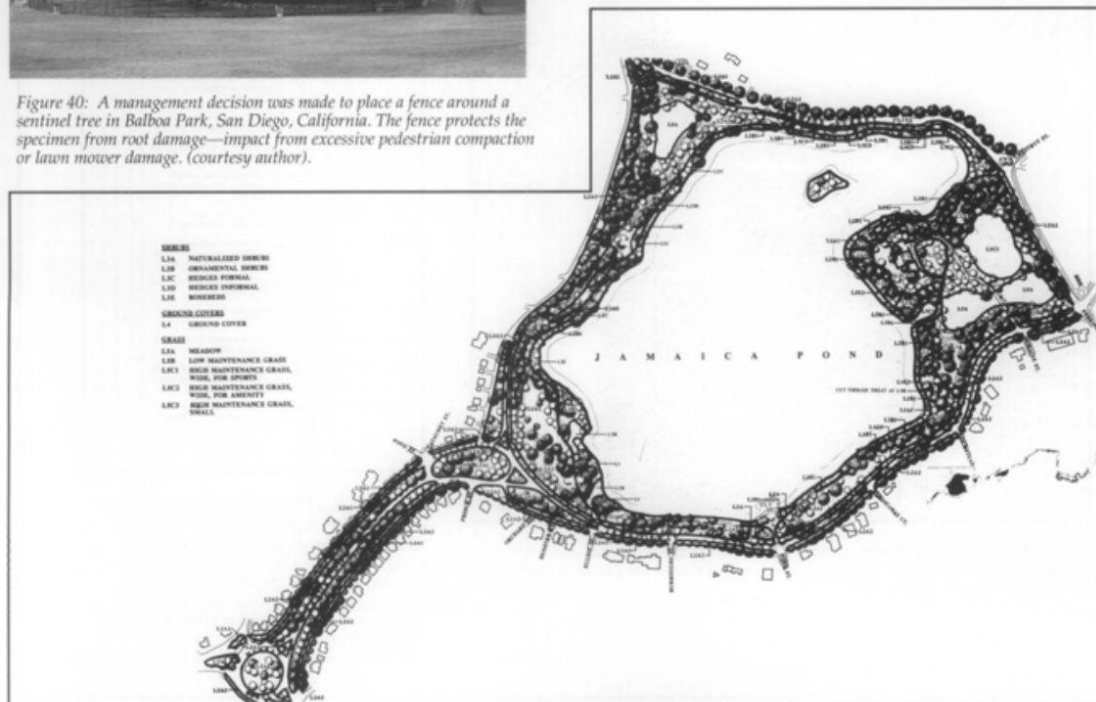


Figure 38 and 39 (above, left and right): The importance of landscape analysis and its ability to inform treatment and maintenance decisions is reflected in these two plans for Downing Park, Newburgh, New York. The plan, rendered in black, top left, illustrates all extant historic plants, while the plan, top right, depicts plantings which are non-historic or invasive for removal or relocation outside of the historic park. (courtesy LANDSCAPES)



Figure 40: A management decision was made to place a fence around a sentinel tree in Balboa Park, San Diego, California. The fence protects the specimen from root damage—impact from excessive pedestrian compaction or lawn mower damage. (courtesy author).

Figure 41 (below): A small property of under an acre may only have a few management zones including lawn, trees over lawn, shrub and herbaceous borders. Larger, more complex landscapes such as Jamaica Pond Park, Boston and Brookline, Massachusetts, contains a broader range of management zones including: forests, trees over grass—broad areas, trees over grass—narrow areas, meadows, and mowed grass for active recreation amenities or passive use. (courtesy Walmsley/Pressley Joint Venture)



DEVELOPING A PRESERVATION MAINTENANCE GUIDE

In the past, there was rarely adequate record-keeping to fully understand the ways a landscape was maintained. This creates gaps in our research findings. Today, we recognize that planning for ongoing maintenance and on-site applications should be documented—both routinely and comprehensively. An annual work program or calendar records the frequency of maintenance work on built or natural landscape features. It can also monitor the age, health and vigor of vegetation. For example, on-site assessments may document the presence of weeds, pests, dead leaves, pale color, wilting, soil compaction—all of which signal particular maintenance needs. For built elements, the deterioration of paving or drainage systems may be noted and the need for repair or replacement indicated before hazards develop. An overall maintenance program can assist in routine and cyclic maintenance of the landscape and can also guide long term treatment projects.

To help structure a comprehensive maintenance operation that is responsive to staff, budget, and maintenance priorities, the National Park Service has developed two computer-driven programs for its own landscape resources. A Maintenance Management Program (MM) is designed to assist maintenance managers in their efforts to plan, organize, and direct the park maintenance system. An Inventory and Condition Assessment Program (ICAP) is designed to complement

MM by providing a system for inventorying, assessing conditions, and for providing corrective work recommendations for all site features.

Another approach to documenting maintenance and recording changes over time is to develop a manual or computerized graphic information system. Such a system should have the capability to include plans and photographs that would record a site's living collection of plant materials. (Also see discussion of the use of photography under Preparing Existing Conditions Plans, page 5.) This may be achieved using a computer-aided drafting program along with an integrated database management system.

To guide immediate and ongoing maintenance, a systematic and flexible approach has been developed by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. Working with National Park Service landscape managers and maintenance specialists, staff assemble information and make recommendations for the care of individual landscape features.

Each landscape feature is inspected in the field to document existing conditions and identify field work needed. Recommendations include maintenance procedures that are sensitive to the integrity of the landscape.

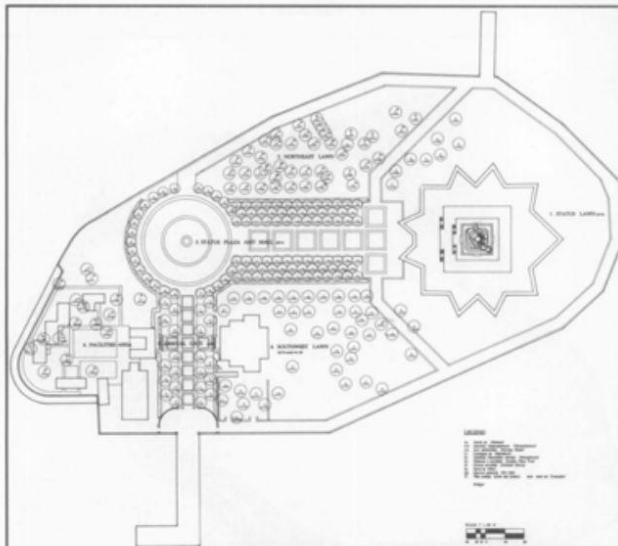


Figure A- Existing Conditions: A map of the existing trees at the Statue of Liberty National Monument is used to indicate necessary preservation maintenance work (Drawn by Margaret Coffin, 1992)

Category - Specimen Tree	Field ID	Tree Name and Field ID	Comments on site, age, condition, field diagnosis and work needed	Work Needed	Notes
London Plane Tree 4-0-26	1-2	1-2	Large scar from branch split, irregularly weak tree, remove branches with decay at base, plan for replacement	20	P
London Plane Tree 4-0-27	1-3	1-3	lower, crowded by larger adjacent tree, remove dead branches	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-28	1-4	1-4	internal decay, remove large dead branches	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-29	1-5	1-5	fair condition, remove dead water sprouts from trunk and dead branches	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-30	1-6	1-6	good condition, remove water sprouts from trunk	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-31	1-7	1-7	fair condition, needs structural pruning at top of crown, remove those dead broken branches	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-32	1-8	1-8	good overall condition, remove one dead branch	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-33	1-9	1-9	lower, remove two of five lower branches	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-34	1-10	1-10	remove water sprouts from trunk, re-cut dead branch spur	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-35	1-11	1-11	remove water sprouts from trunk, re-cut structural pruning throughout	20	+
London Plane Tree 4-0-36	1-12	1-12	in decline, detach throughout, safety hazard, remove all dead wood, plan for replacement	20	P

Figure B - Field Inventory, Inspection, and work needed: Within areas of the landscape, each feature is assigned a field identification number. An inspection is conducted to assess the condition, potential problems, such as deadwood or internal decay, and specify work needed. A map (above) is used to locate features that require attention

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Because landscapes change through the seasons, specifications for ongoing preservation maintenance should be organized in a calendar format. During each season or month, the calendar can be referenced to determine when, where, and how preservation maintenance is needed. For example, for some trees structural pruning is best done in the late winter while other trees are best pruned in the late summer. Serious pests are monitored at specific times of the year, in certain stages of their life cycle. This detailed calendar will in turn identify staff needs and work priorities.

Depending on the level of sophistication desired, one approach to documenting maintenance data and recording change over time is to use a computerized geographical or visual information system.¹³ Such a system would have the capability to include plans and photographs that would focus on a site's landscape features.

If a computer is not available, a manual or notebook can be developed to organize and store important information. This approach allows managers to start at any level of detail and to begin to collect and organize information about landscape features (see Box opposite and above). The value of these maintenance records cannot be overstated. These records will be used in the future by historians to understand how the landscape has evolved with the ongoing care of the maintenance staff.

Recording Treatment Work and Future Research Recommendations

The last and ongoing step in the preservation planning process records the treatment work as carried out. It may include a series of as-built drawings, supporting photographic materials, specifications and a summary assessment. New technologies that have been successfully used should be

highlighted. Ideally, this information should be shared with interested national organizations for further dissemination and evaluation.

The need for further research or additional activities should also be documented. This may include site-specific or contextual historical research, archeological investigations, pollen analysis, search for rare or unusual plant materials, or material testing for future applications.

Finally, in consultation with a conservator or archivist—to maximize the benefit of project work and to minimize the potential of data loss—all primary documents should be organized and preserved as archival materials. This may include field notes, maps, drawings, photographs, material samples, oral histories and other relative information.

Summary

The planning, treatment, and maintenance of cultural landscapes requires a multi-disciplinary approach. In landscapes, such as parks and playgrounds, battlefields, cemeteries, village greens, and agricultural land preserves—more than any other type of historic resource—communities rightly presume a sense of stewardship. It is often this grass roots commitment that has been a catalyst for current research and planning initiatives. Individual residential properties often do not require the same level of public outreach, yet a systematic planning process will assist in making educated treatment, management and maintenance decisions.

Wise stewardship protects the character, and/or spirit of a place by recognizing history as change over time. Often, this also involves our own respectful changes through treatment. The potential benefits from the preservation of cultural landscapes are enormous. Landscapes provide

scenic, economic, ecological, social, recreational and educational opportunities that help us understand ourselves as individuals, communities and as a nation. Their ongoing preservation can yield an improved quality of life for all, and, above all, a sense of place or identity for future generations.

Selected Reading

- Birnbaum, Charles A, guest editor. *Preservation Forum*. "Focus on Landscape Preservation". Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, Volume 7, No. 3, May/June 1992.
- Buggey Susan, guest editor. *APT Bulletin. Special Issue: Conserving Historic Landscapes*. Fredericksburg, VA: Association for Preservation Technology International, Volume XXIV, No. 3-4, 1992.
- Burns, John A, and the Staff of HABS/HAER. *Recording Historic Structures*. American Institute of Architects Press, 1989. (Includes chapter on the documentation of Meridian Hill Park, pp. 206-219.)
- Diehl, Janet and Thomas S. Barrett, et al. *The Conservation Easement Handbook. Managing Land Conservation and Historic Preservation Easement Programs*, The Land Trust Exchange (now Alliance) and the Trust for Public Land, 1988.
- International Committee of Historic Gardens and Sites, ICOMOS-IFLA. *Jardins et Sites Historiques*. Scientific Journal. ICOMOS 1993. Compilation of papers on the subject, in both english and french.
- Kelso, William M., and Rachel Most. *Earth Patterns: Essays in Landscape Archaeology*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1990.
- Stokes, Samuel, N., et al. *Saving America's Countryside: A Guide to Rural Conservation*. Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Tishler, William, editor. *American Landscape Architecture, Designers and Places*. Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1989.
- Several publications available from the National Park Service deal directly with the preservation of historic landscapes. These include:
- America's Landscape Legacy*, Brochure, Preservation Assistance Division, 1992.
 - Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes*, Preservation Assistance Division, 1992 (Draft).
 - Case Studies in Landscape Preservation*, Preservation Assistance Division in cooperation with the Alliance for Landscape Preservation, 1995.
 - Cultural Landscapes Bibliography: An Annotated Bibliography of Resources in the National Park System*, Park Historic Architecture Division, 1992.
 - Historic Landscape Directory: A Source Book of Agencies, Organizations, and Institutions Providing Information on Historic Landscape Preservation*, Preservation Assistance Division, 1991.
 - CRM, Cultural Resource Management, Thematic Issues: *The Preservation of Cultural Landscapes*, Volume 14, No.6,

1991; *A Reality Check for Our Nation's Parks*, Volume 16, No. 4, 1993; *Historic Transportation Corridors*, Volume 16, No. 11, 1993; and, *The Interpretation of Cultural Landscapes*, Volume 17, No. 8, 1994.

Pioneers of American Landscape Design: An Annotated Bibliography, Preservation Assistance Division, 1993 (ISBN:0-16-041974-3).

Making Educated Decisions: A Landscape Preservation Bibliography, Preservation Assistance Division, 1994 (ISBN:0-16-045145-0)

National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes; *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*; *National Register Bulletin 40: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Battlefields*; and, *National Register Bulletin 41: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries*, Interagency Resources Division.

Endnotes

- ¹ The cultural landscape definitions are contained in NPS-28, *Cultural Resource Management Guideline*, Release No. 4, 1994, National Park Service.
- ² For an expanded list of offices to contact, see *America's Landscape Legacy* brochure. Free from the National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division.
- ³ From Kelso, William, *A Report on the Archeological Excavation at Monticello, Charlottesville, VA, 1979-1981*, Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1982.
- ⁴ Lewis, Pierce, "Common Landscapes as Historic Documents," Lubar, Steven and Kingery, W. David (eds.), *Essays on Material Culture*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC, 1993, p. 138.
- ⁵ Meinig, D. W. "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene." *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979, pp. 33-48.
- ⁶ See National Park Service *National Register Bulletins* under Selected Reading (opposite).
- ⁷ The Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, has generated standards for landscape documentation that they now utilize on a number of projects. Specifically, a case study on recording historic landscapes is included in *Recording Historic Structures*, pp. 206-219. See Selected Reading (opposite).
- ⁸ This is being undertaken with technical assistance from the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation a partnership between the National Park Service and the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University that provides cultural landscape technical assistance, technology development and training.
- ⁹ See *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, 1991.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ The standards are general principles for the treatment of buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts and landscapes. The treatment standards are one set of standards included in the broader group known as the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*.
- ¹² The Secretary of the Interior is responsible for establishing professional standards and providing advice on the preservation and protection of all cultural resources listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. For a copy of the brochure, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, 1992 contact the National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division (424) Box 37127 Washington, DC 20013-7127.
- ¹³ A visual information system, a computer-aided mapping program with a linked database, has been developed for the historic landscape at the Frederick Olmsted National Historic Site. Data can be accessed directly from a digitized map such as information on each plant including identification, age, location, size, condition, and maintenance history.

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September 1994

Endnotes

- ¹ Resolution No. 2545, adopted April 6, 1949, resolution book pp. 373–374 (approximately 154 *Washingtonia filifera* and approximately 155 *Washingtonia robusta*); Resolution No. 2588, adopted June 8, 1949, pp. 410–411, and Minutes of the City Council, June 8, 1949, minute book p. 175 (no satisfactory bid received; the work done by force account, trees bought in the open market and labor hired by the city, with Earl J. Neel dba Neel’s Nursery engaged cost-plus at twenty percent and the Tree Committee of the Park and Recreation Board siting the trees). The City Engineer’s accounting of September 28, 1949 puts the project at \$40,797.06, of which \$19,195.92 was water lines and light conduit: Minutes, September 28, 1949, minute book p. 249.
- ² The significance case is developed at Sections 3 and 5.
- ³ Section 3.7 below.
- ⁴ The count progression: contract estimate ~308 with ~150–154 of each species (notes 6 and 64); “314 planted, 10 to go” (“Ten More Trees to Go Says Minturn,” *DS*, Sept. 28/30, 1949); lit count ~322 (same); “345, Ramon–Tamarisk” (1950 year-in-review); “400” in the lighting-era coverage; South Palm Canyon 1956–57 (~100–196) and 1962 moves (Section 3.7).
- ⁵ On the two species and their contrast, see Section 3.2 and notes 21–22.
- ⁶ Spacing, heights, and the even species split: “Palm Trees Go in Along Drive Today,” *DS*, June 21, 1949; “Tree-Planting Program Slated for Early Start,” *DS*, May 24, 1949, 1 (~150 *filifera* + 150 *robusta*); “Invitation to Bidders,” *Limelight* (~154 each).
- ⁷ Resolution No. 2617, adopted July 6, 1949, resolution book p. 435, and Resolution No. 2634, adopted July 20, 1949, p. 448 (8,000 feet of 1¼-inch rigid steel conduit, Palm Springs Electric Company, \$4,426.43); Resolutions Nos. 2762 and 2763, adopted December 14, 1949, pp. 58–59 (distribution system and fixtures advertised separately; notice published in the *Palm Springs Limelight News*, December 30, 1949 and January 5, 1950; bids to open January 17, 1950). The mile was dedicated before any lamp was bid.
- ⁸ “It was a zoo out there on Palm Canyon,” *DS*, Nov. 8, 1998 (retrospective).
- ⁹ Minutes of a Special Meeting of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, June 8, 1949, minute book pp. 174–175 (a count from Ramon Road to Alejo Road showing sixty-two large trees, most of them *Filiferas*, and forty-two palo verdes); Minutes, September 7, 1949, minute book p. 243 (water and light installations extended to trees existing prior to planting; 212 light connections complete of a total of 323).
- ¹⁰ Kate Anderson, “Moul: The Man, the Tree, the Legend,” *me-yah-whae* (Spring/Summer 2017): 49–51; Kristina Sigler, “The Cahuilla and the Palm: A Harmonious Lineage,” *me-yah-whae* (Spring/Summer 2015): 72, 76.
- ¹¹ Sigler, “Cahuilla and the Palm,” 76; Anderson, “Moul,” 49. The fruit-as-drink detail is attributed by Anderson to “Robert James Hepburn, *Plants of the Cahuilla Indians*”; the standard Cahuilla ethnobotany is Bean and Saubel, *Temalpakh*, 1972).
- ¹² Sigler, “Cahuilla and the Palm,” 74–76 (Francisco Patencio; James W. Cornett, *Desert Palm Oasis*); Anderson, “Moul,” 50–51.
- ¹³ Sigler, “Cahuilla and the Palm,” 76 (Ma-ul); Anderson, “Moul,” 49, following Francisco Patencio and Margaret Boynton, *Stories and Legends of the Palm Springs Indians*. Both tellings are reported as such.
- ¹⁴ S. B. Parish, “A Contribution Toward a Knowledge of the Genus *Washingtonia*,” *Botanical Gazette* 44, no. 6 (December 1907): 408 (Emory’s party at the “little pools,” November 28, 1846), 431 (bibliography: Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance*, 1848, noting “cabbage palms” seen at Carrizo Creek).
- ¹⁵ Parish, “Genus *Washingtonia*,” 408 (Blake’s surveyors, November 15, 1853, at the nook “afterward came to be known as Agua Caliente, and more recently as Palm Springs”).
- ¹⁶ Parish, “Genus *Washingtonia*,” 409 (Wendland, 1879, naming the palms grown at Ghent by the house of Linden *Washingtonia*, “in honor of the great American”).
- ¹⁷ Parish, “Genus *Washingtonia*,” 415 (*W. robusta* founded by Wendland in 1883 on young plants grown by Van Houtte at Ghent; the ascribed source, “the borders of the Sacramento River,” “manifestly apocryphal”; “I am convinced that this place was the true source of Wendland’s second type”), 420.
- ¹⁸ Parish, “Genus *Washingtonia*,” 416 (dealers filling orders “for either from the same drawer, the only difference being in the price”; “neither of the palms known in California as *W. filifera* and *W. robusta* bears its true name”), 420, 422 (*W. gracilis*, n. sp., “extensively planted in recent years in southern

California, under the mistaken name of *W. robusta*"). Parish's *gracilis* is not accepted in current taxonomy; he is cited here for the unreliability of the trade names, not as authority for a third species.

¹⁹ Ralph D. Cornell, *Conspicuous California Plants, with Notes on Their Garden Uses* (Pasadena: San Pasqual Press, 1938), 132.

²⁰ Weldon F. Heald, "Fashions in Trees," *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, June 14, 1942, 13.

²¹ Northwest Horticultural Society, "Washingtonia: A Pair of Desert Jewels" (2024) (the skirt clings "unless reduced by fire or an overzealous gardener"; the species' oases "in the vicinity of...Palm Springs"); the epithet *filifera*, "thread-bearing" (H. Wendland, 1879).

²² UF/IFAS ST-669 (Gilman & Watson) on *W. robusta*; Northwest Horticultural Society (2024) and *Trees of Stanford and Environs* (Bracewell, 2005) on the *filifera/robusta* contrast; the two hybridize as *W. × filabusta*.

²³ Palm Springs Section 14 Specific Plan (July 2014), 25, 55, 161 (replacing *robusta* with *filifera*; *filifera* the specified palm); 2007 General Plan goals CD7.3/CD7.4; Resolution 22475 (2009) (*filifera* keep natural skirts).

²⁴ Ernest Brauntun, "The Garden Beautiful in Southern California," *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1925, sec. "Street Palms" ("*Washingtonia robusta*, the street fan palm, proves too rank of growth" for a narrow street or private drive).

²⁵ Frances Duncan, "Arbor Day Possibilities for Southern California," *Los Angeles Times*, March 6, 1927 (*W. robusta* taking "little more side-room than a telegraph pole"; Washingtonias "planted alternately" along Whittier Boulevard; planting trees "distinctively southern in character, rather than those which one may see east as well as west," because "the region has so distinctive a character" that "it is well to try not to blot it out, but to keep it").

²⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Trees for Town and City Streets*, Farmers' Bulletin 1208, 23 ("Though sometimes effective as a formal street decoration (fig. 22), they can hardly be considered shade trees"), 24 ("*Washingtonia* palms are a very conspicuous feature of street and ornamental planting in southern California"; fig. 22, a formal palm planting on a city street at Redlands). The palm entries rest on notes furnished by O. F. Cook of the Bureau of Plant Industry.

²⁷ "Tree-Planting Program Opens: City-wide Beautification to Start Immediately," *Los Angeles Times*, March 29, 1931 ("under the plans of procedure main traffic arteries that serve as entrances to the city will be planted first"; four hundred men for six months, 30,000–40,000 trees along 150 miles; \$100,000 from the unemployment bond issue; the "*Washingtonia Robusta* Fan Palm, which is the tallest fan palm," heading the list of species for closely built sections). On the ten-year master plan of 71,000 trees including 15,000 palms, and the Wilshire proposal, see Helen W. King, "Living Canopies for Shade," *Los Angeles Times Farm and Garden Magazine*, August 30, 1931, 12.

²⁸ "Flower Street Link Open," *Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 1931 (the new artery from downtown to the Coliseum, for the sports events that year "and for the Olympic Games next year"; planting of "native California palms, the *Washingtonia robusta*," completed by the city park department; property owners declaring the trees "will be a marked attraction to tourists"). That the mass plantings of *robusta* were timed to the 1932 Games is treated in Jared Farmer, *Trees in Paradise: A California History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013).

²⁹ L. Glenn Hall, "Mexican Fan Palm Found Suitable Here," *Los Angeles Times*, May 14, 1933 (the native *W. filifera* "not as desirable for street parkway use as its cousin from Mexico"; the Sonora type "particularly suited for planting on wide boulevards, where they should be spaced from forty to fifty feet apart"). Hall's account also places the 1846 discovery in Palm Canyon near Palm Springs; the discovery was not made there.

³⁰ Ernest Brauntun, "Kings of the Garden," *Los Angeles Times Southland Homes and Gardens*, April 23, 1939 ("Do not plant the California fan palm, for we have too many of them now. They are natives to the desert and do not belong in our general climate").

³¹ USDA, *Farmers' Bulletin 1208*, 24 ("*Washingtonia robusta* requires less heat than *W. filifera* ... Even in California *Washingtonia robusta* is distinctly preferable for localities near the coast"), 25 (near San Diego the leaves of *filifera* "become badly infested with a parasitic fungus that does not attack *Washingtonia robusta*").

³² J. A. Gooch, "An Oasis Must Have Plants," *California Arts & Architecture*, February 1937, 33 ("While speaking of trees we must not forget those which give Palm Springs its name. The native palm is the California Fan Palm (*Washingtonia filifera*"); "They differ from the Sonora Fan Palm which grows taller and more slender").

³³ Dorothy Wright, "Desert Integrity," *California Arts & Architecture*, November 1938, 29.

³⁴ Ernest Branton, “1000 Palms (An Odd Family!),” *Los Angeles Times Southland Homes and Gardens*, November 29, 1936, 24 (palms arresting the attention of the first-time visitor and “frequently major factors in wooing him to return”).

³⁵ Ruth Dudley, “What a Lovely Heritage,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1947, 25 (“California without palms? Unthinkable”; “it’s our palms that first attract the attention of northern visitors, that add an aura of enchantment”; the California fan palm “quite commonly used, especially as a street tree”).

³⁶ Tony Adams, “The Trees of La Jolla,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1949 (“thousands of palms and cedars were set out to help promote the sale of this resort development”; “There is today an impressive row of Washingtonias (Mexican fan palm) standing like sentinels to direct the way to the ocean’s cove park”).

³⁷ Cornell, *Conspicuous California Plants*, 132–33 (“By far the finest and most famed grove of Washingtonias is that located in Palm Canyon near Palm Springs ... This is the largest grove of palms to be found naturally anywhere within the United States”).

³⁸ Henry W. Lawrence, *City Trees: A Historical Geography from the Renaissance through the Nineteenth Century* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 6 (the double row “known almost everywhere as an allée”).

³⁹ Lawrence, *City Trees*, 30–31 (urban allées from French garden design), 51 (British walks “essentially garden allées outside the garden”).

⁴⁰ Lawrence, *City Trees*, 58.

⁴¹ Lawrence, *City Trees*, 68 (external promenades becoming internal streets), 236, 238 (*boulevard/avenue* under Haussmann), 244 (Olmsted’s parkways).

⁴² Werner Hegemann, *Report on a City Plan for the Municipalities of Oakland & Berkeley* (Oakland and Berkeley: Municipal Governments of Oakland and Berkeley et al., 1915), 15 (naming the Champs-Élysées, Berlin’s Unter den Linden, the Mall of Washington, and the boulevards transformed from old fortifications — the Grand Boulevards of Paris, the Ring of Vienna, the Königsallee of Düsseldorf — as “treasures of past ages” inherited by modern city-making).

⁴³ Lawrence, *City Trees*, 246.

⁴⁴ Charles Mulford Robinson, *Modern Civic Art; or, The City Made Beautiful*, 2nd ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1904 [1903]), 26–29, 35.

⁴⁵ Robinson, *Modern Civic Art*, Preface to the Second Edition, iii–v.

⁴⁶ Robinson, *Modern Civic Art*, 6, 8, 20. That the movement’s origins are usually dated to the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, with real roots in the earlier civic-improvement associations: Lawrence, *City Trees*, 254, 266.

⁴⁷ Ann Scheid, “The Legacy of Pasadena’s Trees,” *Eden* 16, no. 2 (2013): 4 (Heineman, 1907), 6 (Carr; 1909 nursery; species-per-street; Skutt; 1940 Street Tree Plan, 392 streets). Matt Ritter, “The Trees in California’s Cityscapes,” *Eden* 16, no. 2 (2013): 2 (the uniform “allée effect”).

⁴⁸ Scheid, “Legacy of Pasadena’s Trees,” 7 (*filifera* and magnolia, Orange Grove; camphor and *robusta*, Prospect; incense cedar and *robusta*, Rutan Way), 8 (the *filifera* row at Memorial Park).

⁴⁹ Marlea Graham, “California Tree Trends — A Brief Summary,” *Eden* 7, no. 2 (2004): 10–11.

⁵⁰ *Olmsted Tract Historic Context Statement*, in City of Torrance, 2011–2013 *Survey of Historic Resources*, sec. F.2 (Cabrillo Avenue’s median “lined with native California Palms,” Olmsted Brothers’ 1914 plan) and sec. A (Olmsted Jr. and Irving Gill at the 1893 fair).

⁵¹ Nancy Carol Carter, “The Accidental Landscapers of San Diego’s 1915 Panama-California Exposition,” *Eden* 18, no. 3 (2015): 4, 8–9; Laura A. Ackley, “John McLaren: Landscape Magician of the 1915 Exposition,” *Eden* 18, no. 3 (2015): 11; Janet Barton, “Nursery Order for the Avenue of Palms,” *Eden* 18, no. 3 (2015): 14.

⁵² City of Beverly Hills, *Street Tree Master Plan* (1996), historical background on the Rodeo Land and Water Company and on the city’s urban forest, for Cook’s engagement and his work in the Olmsted office, the Columbian Exposition, the Boston and Chicago parks, the White House grounds in 1902, and the Oakland park system. Cook’s standing as the first trained landscape architect and city planner to work in the Los Angeles area follows a report of the Environmental Planning Branch of the California Department of Transportation.

⁵³ *Ibid.* Reeves’s instruction that a different kind of tree be planted the full length of every street, the ten-acre Beverly Hills Nursery established as the source of stock, and the planting of street trees in advance of lot sales are recorded there; the subdivision was recorded on October 22, 1906.

⁵⁴ Advertisement, W. M. Garland & Co., general selling agents, *Los Angeles Times*, August 1, 1912, part 4, p. 6.

⁵⁵ The alternation is documented photographically (Figure 3).

⁵⁶ Brown and Keylon, "Founding Mothers of Palm Springs," *Eden* 20, no. 4 (2017): 8–9, 6.

⁵⁷ Real photo postcard, "The Desert Inn, Palm Springs Calif.," postmarked Palm Springs, June 17, 1943; the message is from a serviceman spending the day in the town. Photographer and publisher unidentified. The postmark dates the mailing, and so establishes the view as no later than June 1943.

⁵⁸ *DS*, Feb. 18, 1949 (Ben Shearer "recently started the movement for palm trees along Palm Canyon drive"; "resort caliber with a minimum of commercialism").

⁵⁹ Resolution No. 2503 of the City Council of the City of Palm Springs, adopted February 2, 1949, resolution book pp. 331–332; Minutes of the City Council, February 2, 1949, minute book p. 88, under the heading "Beautification of Palm Canyon Drive with Palm Trees," recording the Park and Recreation Board's recommendation from its special meeting of January 31, 1949, Ben Shearer's bid for trees of twenty to thirty feet at \$15,000 against the \$75,000 appropriated for park and recreation purposes, and the City Attorney's advice that the work, being repair and improvement of city streets, had to go out to bid. The Council's action was reported in the *Desert Sun* two days later, which is the source of the February 4 date in circulation. Councilman Veith had left the meeting before the vote.

⁶⁰ "Trees and 20 More Benches Authorized," *DS*, Feb. 4, 1949, 1 (Hardy's recommendation approved; advertising for bids authorized immediately; twenty additional sidewalk benches at the request of the Business Women's club; Hardy's recommendation followed an investigation by a special citizens committee headed by Ben Shearer on the need and cost of trees on the drive).

⁶¹ "Specifications for Furnishing and Planting Palm Trees on Palm Canyon Drive," approved by Council; plan filed with the Planning Department, *DS*, April 6, 1949.

⁶² Resolution No. 2553, adopted May 3, 1949, resolution book pp. 379–383, canvassing the special municipal bond election of April 26, 1949: Proposition 4, trees and lights, 1,015 yes and 267 no of 1,282 cast, by precinct 375–102, 274–38 and 366–127. It was the narrowest of the five propositions. A round "five to one" describes the package, not this proposition.

⁶³ "\$950,000 Bond Issue Approved by Council," *DS*, March 18, 1949, 1 (Council adoption; special election April 26; street-tree line for Palm Canyon Drive "from the northern to the southern city limits"); bond advertisement, "These Municipal Improvements Are Vitrally Needed," *DS*, April 26, 1949 (city beautification; palms full length with accessory lighting); the paper reported approval by about five to one, which describes the package rather than the trees-and-lights proposition — see note 62.

⁶⁴ Resolution No. 2545, adopted April 6, 1949, resolution book pp. 373–374, with the Invitation to Bidders published in the *Palm Springs Limelight News*, April 12 and April 19, 1949: approximately 154 *Washingtonia filifera* and approximately 155 *Washingtonia robusta*, between Tamarisk Road and Ramon Road; specifications dated April 6, 1949, obtainable at the City Clerk's office, 3200 McCallum Way; a detailed plan showing the locations of the trees on file in the Planning Department, 3280 McCallum Way; bids to close at 10:00 a.m., April 30, 1949. Resolution No. 2588, adopted June 8, 1949, resolution book pp. 410–411, and Minutes, June 8, 1949, minute book p. 175: no satisfactory bid received; the work found capable of being performed more economically by day labor; the City Manager authorized to buy the trees in the open market, employ the necessary labor, and expend up to \$20,000, against an anticipated total of \$25,000 "such cost to include installation of irrigation water and tree lighting facilities"; Earl J. Neel dba Neel's Nursery engaged at a fee of twenty percent of amounts expended, the trees to be located by the City Manager and the Tree Committee of the Park and Recreation Board. The *Desert Sun* report of an April 29 closing date is a day early.

⁶⁵ Two extents, in two instruments, and both are the city's own. The planting was specified from Tamarisk Road to Ramon Road: Resolutions Nos. 2503 and 2545, in each recital and again in the published notice. The bond authorized trees along Palm Canyon Drive and State Highway Route No. 111 without any terminus, and street lights only between Alejo Road and Ramon Road: Resolution No. 2530, adopted March 16, 1949, resolution book pp. 359–360. After June 1949 every statement of the planted extent names Ramon to Alejo — Resolutions Nos. 2617 (July 6), 2661 (August 17), 2696 and 2699 (September 28), 2762 and 2763 (December 14, 1949), and the lighting licenses of January 1950, Nos. 2777 and 2792. Tamarisk Road is not named again after April 6, 1949. The record does not say whether the extent was pulled back when the bids failed and the job went to day labor under a \$20,000 ceiling, or whether Tamarisk to Alejo was always a later phase, which is what Resolution No. 2503 contemplates.

⁶⁶ Resolution No. 2587, adopted June 8, 1949, resolution book p. 410, approving the proposals of the joint meeting of the City Planning Commission and the Park and Recreation Board held June 3, 1949, "with the addition, however, of the word 'preferable' inserted in Item (b) 3 after the word 'necessary';" the six conditions themselves are set out in the Minutes of the City Council, June 8, 1949, minute book p. 175, —

which the resolution adopts by reference. The same page records the count taken from Ramon Road to Alejo Road — sixty-two large trees, most of them *Filiferas*, and forty-two palo verdes — and Mrs. Hardy's explanation that the Tree Committee's discretion was to govern unless a setback ran for a block, a half block or a third of a block, or there was one large building, "such as new Strebe Building."

⁶⁷ "Happy Surprise in Store For Villagers" and "NO. 1 TREE" photo/caption, *DS*, July 1, 1949, 1 (first *robusta* set at Ramon & Palm Canyon; Ramon-to-Baristo first section; individual water outlets and tree lighting; Hardy, Vaile, Connell, Burns, McCabe, Alworth, Williams).

⁶⁸ "NO. 1 TREE" photograph and caption, *DS*, July 1, 1949, 1; see note above.

⁶⁹ "More Than A Mile of Trees To Beautify Palm Canyon Drive," *Palm Springs Villager*, July–August 1949, 20–21; see note above.

⁷⁰ "Efficient and Ornamental Type Chosen," *DS*, Aug. 4, 1950, 1, 6 (City Engineer Minturn: "tailor-made job to fit the height, girth and distance of the fronds"; not a "hand-me-down job"; fixtures staggered so "none of the lights will be on a straight line down Palm Canyon drive"; fronds "like a ghostly shadow on moonless nights"). Lighting authorized: "Tree Light Job Okayed By Council," *DS*, July 8, 1949 (Palm Springs Electric, low bid \$4,426.43, for 308 palms).

⁷¹ Resolution No. 2948, adopted August 2, 1950, resolution book pp. 191–192, directing publication of a notice inviting bids for palm tree lights against the specification entitled "Specifications, Proposal and Contract for Furnishing Lighting Fixtures to City of Palm Springs, California," on file in the office of the City Engineer; Resolution No. 2980, adopted September 13, 1950, pp. 213–214, recommending purchase of palm tree lighting fixtures — 110 double-ended at \$15.05 and 50 single-ended at \$11.05 from Moore-Montroy Electric Co., 4165 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, and 360 standard commercial fixtures at \$3.58 from Shalda Mfg. Co., 825 San Fernando Road, Burbank, the tabulation quoting Herculite, Pyrex, heat-resistant and tempered lens options and a ventilated variant at a premium. The figure of about \$12,000 reported in "Efficient and Ornamental Type Chosen," *Desert Sun*, August 4, 1950, cannot be reconciled with the resolution, and two days before that article the same Council appropriated exactly \$12,000.00 for the planning consultant Gordon Whitnall (Resolution No. 2945, adopted August 2, 1950, p. 189). The resolution governs. Nothing in the resolution states a per-tree count, and none should be inferred from the 360.

⁷² Resolution No. 2777, adopted January 4, 1950, resolution book pp. 68–69 (eight licenses and the form of agreement, covering the installation of lighting equipment in the palm trees "from Ramon Road on the south to Alejo Road on the north," the equipment depicted in an attached "Plan for License Agreement" and removable on sixty days' notice in writing); Resolution No. 2792, adopted January 20, 1950, pp. 83–84 (six more); Resolution No. 2867, adopted May 3, 1950, p. 140 (the fifteenth). Resolution No. 2788, adopted January 20, 1950, pp. 79–80 (award to Arthur Brudvik dba Coast Electric and Refrigeration Company at \$19,012.14, payable from Municipal Improvement Bond Fund No. 4; no other bidder is named); Resolution No. 2799, adopted February 1, 1950, p. 89 (paragraphs 31 and 32, liquidated damages and bonus, struck as "unnecessary in this particular contract"); Resolution No. 2805, adopted February 15, 1950, p. 93 (Change Order No. 1); Resolution No. 2880, adopted May 17, 1950, p. 149 (Change Order No. 2); Resolution No. 2933, adopted July 19, 1950, pp. 181–182 (pipe advertised to complete the palm tree lighting system conduit, "in view of the unsettled war situation"). No completion, acceptance or notice of completion for the Palm Tree Project appears anywhere in the 1950 resolution record. The "Plan for License Agreement" and the City Engineer's December 1949 plan set, issued on a ten-dollar refundable deposit under Resolution No. 2762, are the two drawings of the lighting still to be found.

⁷³ Photograph, lighted palms before the Oasis Commercial Building, Palm Springs Historical Society. Brown and Keylon, "The Founding Mothers of Palm Springs," publish a night view of the lit allée before the Oasis Commercial Building dated 1953, which is four growing seasons after the 1949 planting. The Oasis Commercial Building was completed in 1952.

⁷⁴ Resolution No. 2696, adopted September 28, 1949, resolution book p. 498, and Minutes, September 28, 1949, minute book p. 249: the Retail Merchants Association of Palm Springs having planned the ceremony and invited the Council, the Council resolved to take part and "to request that the said mile of palm trees be dedicated to the memory of the late C. C. Neel," and directed the City Manager to procure "an appropriate bronze plaque fittingly inscribed to be used and placed as part of the said ceremony." The merchants planned the ceremony; the Council attached Neel's name to it, three days before, on its own motion.

⁷⁵ "Palm Trees To be Center Of Ceremony," *DS*, Sept. 23, 1949 (program; platform at the southeast corner of Andreas & Palm Canyon; grouping of three trees lit at the ribbon-cutting); "Palm Lights" (cont. from p. 1), *Palm Springs Limelight News*, Sept. 23, 1949, 13 (Rev. Michael O'Connor of Our Lady of Solitude; —

Mayor Farrell to pull a ribbon from the speakers' stand to the tops of the palms; lights to flash on and remain on all night; "pioneer Villager and desert landscaper"); "Palm Trees Dedication Main Event," *DS*, Sept. 27, 1949, 1 (ceremony at five o'clock; plaque ready for installation at the base of the three *Washingtonia robustae* at the corner; Shearer "credited with pushing the tree-planting idea to fulfillment"; Hardy "in charge of the official work on the planting program"; Sinatra scheduled as master of ceremonies). The ribbon-pull and the lights are the announced program.

⁷⁶Resolution No. 2699, adopted September 28, 1949, resolution book p. 501, approving the Park and Recreation Board's recommendations of September 19 on "the mile of palm trees": that electric boxes at the base of the trees be camouflaged with brown paint, that funds be allocated for a flower planting project at the base of the trees and its maintenance, and that a shrubbery seedlings nursery be maintained at the sewage disposal plant against future transplanting. Whether the boxes were ever painted is an open question: painting was carried in the 1950 lighting contract and deleted from it for a credit of \$325.00 by Change Order No. 2, Resolution No. 2880, adopted May 17, 1950, resolution book p. 149.

⁷⁷"Mrs. Hardy Dies at 72" (cont. from p. 1), *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 2 (elected 1948, 1952, and 1956, unopposed the last two times; served 1948–1960; declined the mayoralty; voted "mayor for a night" in 1960; supported Harry Paisley to succeed her); "Palm Springs Loses a Good Friend" (editorial), *DS*, Jan. 13, 1965, 15 (twelve years, longer than any other public official had served on that body).

⁷⁸"Mrs. Hardy Dies at 72," *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 2, quoting Harold Flannery, president of the Palm Springs Hotel and Apartment Association: two meetings before her death Hardy raised that the palm trees were only half trimmed, telephoned the mayor and some of the councilmen, and the trees were trimmed.

⁷⁹"Palm Springs Mourns 'First Lady' of Service," *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 1 (Bogert; "Mrs. Hardy's greatest memorial will be the lighted Palm Trees that grace Palm Canyon Drive"); "Tamarisk Park Gets Mrs. Hardy's Name," *DS*, Jan. 27, 1965, 1.

⁸⁰Andy Sotta, biography of E. Stewart Williams, in *E. Stewart Williams: A Tribute to His Work and Life* (Palm Springs: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2005), 55–56, for the birth and parentage, the Cornell and Pennsylvania degrees and the Chandler Fellowship, the Bard years and the Zabriskie Prize, the 1938 European tour, the marriage to Mari Schlytern, the Mare Island service, and the 1946 partnership with Harry and Roger Williams. The characterization of the Scandinavian work follows Sotta, quoting Alan Hess, *Julius Shulman: Palm Springs Modern*.

⁸¹"Mile of Palms Along Drive to be Dedicated Tomorrow in Memory of Clarence C. Neel," *DS*, Sept. 30, 1949, 1 (Coachella ranch, 1905; the ranch now covered by the Salton Sea; nursery started in the Village in 1928; belonged to no club; the remark about those who disliked the desert); "Death Comes Suddenly to C. C. Neel," *DS*, March 4, 1949 (born Feb. 25, 1882, at Gap Mills, West Virginia; twenty-two years a resident; Neel Nursery, 330 N. Indian Avenue); U.S. Federal Census, 1900 (Sweet Springs, Monroe Co., W. Va.), 1910 (Moapa, Clark Co., Nev.), and 1920 (Independence, Inyo Co., Cal.); Neel's Nursery advertisement, *DS*, June 20, 1947, 7 (330 North Indian Avenue).

⁸²"Death Comes Suddenly to C. C. Neel," *DS*, March 4, 1949 (died at home the night of Tuesday, March 1, at 10:00; Council opened its meeting with a minute of silent meditation); "Final Tribute Paid C. C. Neel, Pioneer Desert Nurseryman," *Palm Springs Limelight News*, March 8, 1949 (some 300 villagers at the funeral Friday at the Community Church; interment Palm Springs cemetery); California Death Index, 1940–1997 (d. March 1, 1949).

⁸³Field observation at the southeast corner of Andreas Road and Palm Canyon Drive: two *Washingtonia robusta* stand there, set in a V, with no stone base between them. Street-level imagery from 2008 onward shows the same pair. The arcaded building behind them is the building behind the platform in Figure 8, which fixes the location.

⁸⁴Obituary, "Nursery owner Neel dies at 83," *Desert Sun*, August 16, 2001, 12 (a 74-year resident of Palm Springs, died August 11, 2001, at eighty-three; born 1917 to Clarence Clark and Vern Beatrice Hobbs Neel on a homestead in Independence established by his mother; raised on a ranch in Coachella; nurseries at Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage and Indio; four years in the United States Navy during the Second World War; two decades as landscape expert on the Architectural Advisory Committee and as a planning commissioner; City Council April 1988 to April 1992; a founding member of the Living Desert Reserve and a fundraiser for the Palm Springs Desert Museum; interment Welwood Murray Memorial Cemetery). Gail Butler, recollection, *Desert Sun*, January 29, 2012, 66 (C. C. and Vern Neel came to Palm Springs in 1927 and founded Neel's Nursery; Earl Neel married Jane Lykken, daughter of the desert pioneer Carl Lykken; "Uncle Earl took over the nursery when C.C. died"). Obituary, "Barbara Neel, 70," *Desert Sun*, June 8, 2000, 12 (married Earl Neel in 1965 at Las Vegas). Two claims in circulation are not carried here. The 2001 obituary states that the Neels "donated" the mile-long row; the city's own instruments show it

bought the trees on the open market at two dollars a foot and paid Neel a fee of twenty percent to supervise the planting, from Municipal Improvement Bond Fund No. 4. The same obituary describes the row as *Washingtonia filifera*; the April 1949 specification is 154 *filifera* and 155 *robusta*. A paid political advertisement of April 1988 has him owning the nursery “since 1935” and planting the palms “as a youth”; he was born in 1917, his father founded the business, and he was thirty-two in 1949. Campaign copy, and not evidence.

⁸⁵Lou Hirsh, “Artist colony, nursery may seek relocation,” *Desert Sun*, March 9, 2004, 35: Palapas of Araby Cove “sits on what was once the much larger Neel’s Nursery, a tree farm and nursery started in the 1940s by Earl Neel,” which “once included a full farm of palm trees. Many of the palms now lining Palm Canyon Drive came from Neel’s property.” The fourteen-acre Palm Springs property at 3255 East Palm Canyon Drive was sold in the early 1990s and became the Palapas of Araby Cove art colony and garden center in 1995; it was sold again in 2004 to a developer for fifty-six houses. The claim is a newspaper’s, made fifty-five years after the fact, and is not relied on here. It is consistent with the force-account arrangement, under which the City Manager bought the trees in the open market rather than under a supply contract.

⁸⁶Katie Ruark, “Restored from the ground up,” *Palm Springs Sun*, June 1, 2007 (the Neel House, a Spanish-style house of 1924 on four acres in south Palm Springs, listed ninth among nine buildings named historic by the city; the Ingleside Inn appears seventh on the same list).

⁸⁷Resolution No. 2617, adopted July 6, 1949, resolution book p. 435, and Resolution No. 2634, adopted July 20, 1949, p. 448 (8,000 feet of 1¼-inch rigid steel conduit and fittings; three bids, Palm Springs Electric Company low at \$4,426.43 with immediate delivery); Resolution No. 2788, adopted January 20, 1950, pp. 79–80 (the distribution system, Brudvik, \$19,012.14); Resolution No. 2980, adopted September 13, 1950, pp. 213–214 (520 fixtures, \$3,496.80). The three are separate purchases and the figures must not be collapsed. “Tree Light Job Okayed By Council,” *Desert Sun*, July 8, 1949, reporting the \$4,426.43 award as being “for lighting the 308 palms,” describes the conduit purchase.

⁸⁸Resolution No. 2863, adopted May 3, 1950, resolution book pp. 137–138. The recital names both the Palm Canyon palms and the Polo Grounds landscaping as the pressure that produced the hiring, but the operative description of the work is “the watering of trees and the maintenance of irrigation ditches in the north end of the city,” which read narrowly may be less than the whole mile.

⁸⁹“Cornell Considered for Field Club Job,” *Desert Sun*, June 24, 1949, 8 (interviewed “before the city council, city planners and the park board”); “Cornell to Map Plans for Field Club Development As City Recreation Center,” *DS*, July 8, 1949, 1 (the June 30 council meeting; “Chosen unanimously”; “Designer of the master plan of Griffith and Elysian parks, Los Angeles”; Harry Williams Architects selected the same evening, “Stewart Williams will be in charge of the ball park work while Roger Williams will have the rest of the assignment concerning the rodeo and horse show grounds” — the paper prints “Ralph B. Cornell,” an error for Ralph D.); “Green Light Given Parks Development” and, in the adjacent column, “Tree Light Job Okayed By Council,” *DS*, July 22, 1949, 1 (the Field Club plan approved “as presented by Planning Expert Ralph Cornell”; Cornell retained the same evening for the north-end park at “approximately \$133 per acre, or roughly \$2800 total”; Palm Springs Electric awarded \$4,426.43 for lighting the 308 palms on Palm Canyon Drive, “a job nearing completion”); “New Palm Springs Biltmore to Open Doors on Tuesday,” *DS*, February 6, 1948, 24 (“Landscaping is by Ralph D. Cornell”); “Park Board Shows Plans At Preview,” *DS*, July 14, 1950, 1 (meeting called by Councilwoman Ruth Hardy to inspect “preliminary landscape plans drawn by Ralph Cornell and associate Herbert Kopp”). On the Cree studio, Ralph D. Cornell, “The Wedding of Desert and Garden: Desert Art Galleries of Mrs. Bettye K. Cree At Palm Springs, California,” *California Arts & Architecture* 37, no. 5 (May 1930): 47–48 (plot plan dated November 1927, “Cook, Hall & Cornell, Landscape Architects — By Ralph D. Cornell”).

⁹⁰City of Palm Springs, Resolution No. 5009, recommending to the Division of Highways of the State of California certain improvements of State Sign Route 111 (North Palm Canyon Drive) within the city limits, adopted February 11, 1958. Public portal, 1958 resolutions (document id=507136), viewer pp. 33–34; certification at book p. 395.

⁹¹City of Palm Springs, Resolution No. 5097, “Directing Transfer of Funds from 96 Bond Fund to 1956 Bond Retirement Fund,” adopted May 28, 1958. Public portal, 1958 resolutions (document id=507136), viewer p. 111. Bond Fund 96 is identified in the resolution as the fund established for the Indian Avenue street lights and the trees on South Palm Canyon Drive — the works carried by the proposition of February 14, 1956.

⁹²Resolution No. 4451, certified October 18, 1955 (the offer by the paving contractors Matich Bros. of forty palms from a street-widening project in the Colton–Riverside area, for the cost of removal and

transportation, “providing the trees prove suitable for planting under the City’s Palm Canyon Drive Palm Tree Planting program”; an estimated total of about \$3,000 against a balance of some \$16,000 then standing in the City’s Street Tree Fund; the purchase authorized conditional on the City Manager’s inspection). Resolution No. 4689, certified December 12, 1956 (award to Neel’s Nursery for approximately 200 palms at \$8 per foot, and for preparing the site and planting 50 more at \$4.50 per foot “if acquired by City from Arizona”). Whether the forty salvaged palms were ever accepted and planted is not recorded.

⁹³Resolutions Nos. 4634 and 4657, certified September 11 and October 24, 1956, accepting grant deeds of easement across the north five feet of lots in the Palm Highlands Subdivision (Map Book 19, page 10, Riverside County), each reciting that “electrical conduit lines are to be installed in South Palm Canyon Drive for the purpose, use and maintenance of electrical service for lighting Palm Trees and installing Street Lights in said location”; Resolution No. 4667, certified November 14, 1956, a change order under a contract with the E. L. Yeager Company for a portion of the water lines and underground conduit “incidental to the installation of palm trees, South Palm Canyon Drive, Phase II.” Further easements in the series should be searchable in the County Recorder whether or not the resolutions surface.

⁹⁴Council minutes, January 8, 1958, Minute Order No. 310, on the report of the Director of Parks and Recreation that a thousand two-year-old palms could be had at fifty-five cents each, “a reasonable price and a good investment”; \$600 appropriated from Unappropriated Reserve on the motion of Councilwoman Hardy, seconded by Boyd, adopted by record vote with no dissenting vote, Miller absent. Public portal, 1958 minutes (document id=346699), viewer p. 8. Reported as “City to Buy 1000 Palm Trees For Nursery,” *Desert Sun*, January 8, 1958, 17 (the Park Department authorized to purchase 1,000 two-year-old palm trees for \$600; “the trees will be planted at the city’s new palm tree nursery near the sewer plant”).

⁹⁵“Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs, California,” Mike Roberts Color Production, Berkeley, no. C6033; “Palm Springs, California” [looking south along Palm Canyon Drive], color photo by H. Lowman, Mirro-Krome card by H. S. Crocker Co., San Francisco, no. PS-24, copyright 1955 Ferris H. Scott, Santa Ana; “Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, California,” no. PS-125, Post Cards of the Desert, Palm Springs; “Palm Canyon Drive,” color photo by Jim Burke, Petley Studios, Phoenix, no. C25277. Full descriptions in the project image inventory.

⁹⁶“Big Top Ball Popularity Evidenced by Reservations,” *DS*, April 10, 1956, 6 (20th annual Desert Circus, April 18–22, 1956; the traditional Desert Circus parade on Palm Canyon Drive, Saturday, April 21, at 10:30 a.m., with floats, bands, silver caparisoned horses, and Queen Anita Ekberg at the head of the line). No other year in the clipping record carries the April 18–22 dates, which fixes Figure 14 to that week.

⁹⁷Riverside Women’s Historic Context Statement (HRG, Jan. 2026), 30, 37, 79 (clubwomen, City Beautification Committee, Magnolia Avenue). On the founding-mothers generation, Brown and Keylon, “Founding Mothers of Palm Springs,” *Eden* 20, no. 4 (2017).

⁹⁸Renee Brown and Steven Keylon, “The Founding Mothers of Palm Springs,” *Eden: Journal of the California Garden & Landscape History Society* 20, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 4–17, on Coffman, McCallum McManus, Bennett and Hardy; Steven Keylon, “The Landscape of the Palm Springs Woman’s Club,” same issue, 18–21, on the 1939 clubhouse and the *Washingtonia filifera* clusters Bashford and Barlow set in its patio. Rita Strombeck, “Women With Vision,” *Palm Springs Life*, February 27, 2013, on Lavinia Crocker’s sanatorium of 1893, Cornelia and Florilla White, Zaddie Bunker, and Harriet Cody’s riding stable at Palm Canyon Drive and Ramon Road. City of Palm Springs and Palm Springs Historical Society, “The women who built this City” (presentation), on the succession of councilwomen from 1948. That presentation and the *Palm Springs Life* feature both date Hardy’s purchase of the Ingleside estate to 1935; the contemporary newspaper record puts the sale in October 1940 and the opening on December 5, 1940 (Appendix B). Prefer the newspaper.

⁹⁹Julia Sizak, “The All-Woman Tribal Council,” Coachella Valley History Museum, from *The Periscope* series (Coachella Valley Historical Society), for the 1952 and 1954 elections, the roster of the first all-woman council, the 1954 termination hearing, Public Law 255 of 1955, the engagement of Victor Gruen for a Section 14 land-use plan, HR 13323 of 1958, the 99-year lease legislation of 1959, and Ortner’s retirement that year; Ortner died in February 2017 at ninety-five. The 1980 City Council election is from the City’s own presentation. The presentation gives the fifth councilmember as Eileen McGill where the museum account gives Eileen Miguel. Two of the surnames on the 1954 council, Patencio and Saubel, are also the surnames of the allottees from whom the City took leases in 1950 after finding it occupied their land without authority (Resolutions Nos. 2879 and 2966). Whether these are the same families is a research question and is not asserted here. Any use of this material should be reviewed with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians. On the city’s side of the same years, and recorded in its own

resolutions: the Council took leases for an airport runway and a police pistol range from Agua Caliente allottees in 1950 after finding it had occupied both “under the erroneous impression” that it held them (Resolutions Nos. 2879 and 2966), and on September 28, 1949 — the same evening it directed that flowers be planted at the base of the palms — adopted a recommendation that preliminary work be done toward a park and pool on Section 14 “for use of Mexican and Colored people” (Resolution No. 2699(b)3). Recorded here rather than in the text, because it belongs to the history of the city government and not to the history of these women.

¹⁰⁰City of Palm Springs and Palm Springs Historical Society, “The women who built this City” (presentation): Ruth Hardy, first woman elected to the Council, 1948; Mary Carlin, twenty-nine, the youngest, 1958; Vyola Ortner, 1980; Deyna Hodges, 1990–2004; Ginny Foat, 2003–2017; Lisa Middleton, 2017; Grace Garner, 2019; Christy Holstege, 2019, and in 2020 the first woman to serve as Mayor.

¹⁰¹Riverside Women’s Historic Context Statement (Historic Resources Group, January 2026), 30, 37, 79, treating women-led civic beautification — clubwomen, a City Beautification Committee, the beautification of Magnolia Avenue — as an eligibility theme with its own periods, property types and registration requirements.

¹⁰²Caltrans, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (1999); NPS National Register Bulletin 18, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (Keller & Keller).

¹⁰³Resolution No. 2880, adopted May 17, 1950, resolution book p. 149 (Change Order No. 2, raising the photo-electric switch control to a high position on poles at California Electric Power Company’s requirement, for safety, and installing a switch in the power circuit ahead of it).

¹⁰⁴Resolutions Nos. 2777, 2792 and 2867, adopted January 4, January 20 and May 3, 1950, resolution book pp. 68–69, 83–84 and 140. Surviving 1950 hardware on the street elevations between Ramon and Alejo — insulators, meter sockets, switch enclosures, surface conduit — would be a contributing object with a dated adopting resolution behind it. In 1956, building the southern half, the city abandoned the revocable license and took recorded grant-deed easements instead: Resolutions Nos. 4634 and 4657, certified September 11 and October 24, 1956.

¹⁰⁵Palm Springs Municipal Code § 8.05.070(C)(1) (criteria and findings for designation of Class 1 historic resources: exceptional historic significance under one or more of seven criteria at subsection (a); evaluation for integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association under subsection (b), according to the National Park Service bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*); § 8.05.070(A)(3)(a)(iv) (documentation to include a detailed assessment of character-defining features, including landscape elements); § 8.05.070(B)(4)–(5) (HSPB and City Council resolutions to list the character-defining features); § 8.05.020 (definition of a Class 1 historic resource, which may comprise all or a portion of the site itself and may rest on aesthetic as well as historic, architectural, archaeological or cultural significance). Ord. 1970 § 2, 2019; Ord. 2030 § 2, 2020.

¹⁰⁶PSMC § 8.05.070; see note above.

¹⁰⁷DS, Feb. 18, 1949; see note 58.

¹⁰⁸On designed landscapes as an evaluable class and the character-defining-feature vocabulary, see Caltrans, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (1999), distilling NPS practice; and NPS National Register Bulletin 18, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (Keller & Keller).

¹⁰⁹“More Than A Mile of Trees To Beautify Palm Canyon Drive,” *Palm Springs Villager*, July–August 1949, 20–21 (308 *Washingtonia* palms, half *robusta* and half *filifera*, between Tamarisk Street and Ramon Road; thirty-five to forty feet apart; twelve to twenty-five feet in height; water lines for simultaneous semi-automatic watering; conduit for a street lighting system to be installed later, the lights attached to the trunks to give a soft lighting on sidewalks and streets; state resurfacing from the north city limits to Ramon Road). The *Villager* gives the height range as twelve to twenty-five feet; the *Desert Sun* of June 21, 1949 gives twelve to thirty-five, averaging about twenty.

¹¹⁰PSMC § 8.05.070; see note above.

¹¹¹PSMC § 8.05.070; see note above.

¹¹²“NO. 1 TREE” photograph and caption, DS, July 1, 1949, 1 (first *Washingtonia robusta* set Monday morning at Ramon Road and Palm Canyon Drive; those shown named as above; the project “will change the entire appearance of Palm Springs’ main thoroughfare”).

¹¹³Resolution No. 2654, adopted August 3, 1949, resolution book pp. 461–463 (the 1949–50 rate of \$1.31 per \$100, of which thirty-one cents serviced the bonds authorized at the April 26, 1949 election);

Resolution No. 2958, adopted August 2, 1950, pp. 198–199 (the 1950–51 rate of \$1.28, of which twenty-eight cents serviced the same bonds and eleven cents was a standing levy for parks, music and advertising under Ordinance No. 192). Resolution No. 2788 charges the lighting to Municipal Improvement Bond Fund No. 4, the fund of the trees-and-lights proposition; bond money could not lawfully be moved between funds, so Fund No. 4 is a closed ledger of this resource alone.

¹¹⁴ PSMC § 8.05.070; see note above.

¹¹⁵ *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Register Bulletin 15 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service), on the seven aspects of integrity and on evaluating integrity against the significance claimed. Incorporated by reference at PSMC § 8.05.070(C)(1)(b).

¹¹⁶ Charles A. Birnbaum, *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*, Preservation Brief 36 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, September 1994), 2 (definition of a historic designed landscape; furnishings as landscape components), 9 (historic plant inventory), 11 (Port Oneida, Figure 21), 13 (preservation as primary treatment; false historicism), 14 (the birch allée at Stan Hywet Hall, Figure 27), 16 (preservation maintenance distinguished from beautification; thresholds, pruning, propagation and replacement procedures). The Brief is a federal publication and is not copyrighted. The complete printed edition is reproduced at Appendix D and is available at <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-36-cultural-landscapes.pdf> (accessed July 27, 2026); the web edition at nps.gov omits several of the charts, including the preservation maintenance guide at pages 18–19.

¹¹⁷ Dorene Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Sacramento: California Department of Transportation, Environmental Program, February 1999), 6 (designed landscapes as conscious works in a recognized style or tradition; parkways and designed scenic highways), 8 (landscape characteristics; site furnishings and objects as a coordinated system), 13 (vegetation integrity regardless of appearance; natural processes and visual alteration; replacement species and seed collected from original plants; spacing as an expression of technology; continuing use and the resurfaced, slightly widened road; integrity distinguished from condition).

¹¹⁸ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹¹⁹ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹²⁰ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹²¹ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹²² City of Palm Springs, Staff Report for the palm-trimming policy (adopted July 8, 2026), asserting the city “does not have a long history of keeping palm tree skirts,” citing *The Palm Springs Scene* (Jack Douglas / Periscope Film), ~0:29.

¹²³ “The Desert Palm: *Washingtonia Filifera*,” Hammada, *The Desert Sun*, Dec. 13, 1940, by Lloyd Mason Smith, then director of the Palm Springs Desert Museum; reprinted with an editor’s note by Sam Hinton, *The Desert Sun*, March 12, 1943, 7. The 1943 reprint is the copy in hand.

¹²⁴ Lloyd Mason Smith, “The Desert Palm: *Washingtonia Filifera*,” Hammada, *The Desert Sun*, April 5, 1946, 21 (copyright 1946 by the Desert Museum). The 1943 note has Smith leaving the directorship for military service.

¹²⁵ James W. Cornett, *Desert Palm Oasis*, 17 (the skirt of dead leaves, or petticoat, as the most distinctive characteristic of the desert fan palm; unlike the roughly 2,600 other palm species, the petioles adhere to the trunk throughout the palm’s life; the dead hanging leaves adding as much as two meters to the tree’s diameter, so that a skirted palm reads as the larger object). Resolution 22475 (2009) is set out in Appendix A. On *Washingtonia* as one of the few palms whose dead leaves persist and obscure the trunk in a “weather-proof skirting” or petticoat, and on the leaves hanging on in young palms that have not attained loftiness, see E. J. H. Corner, *The Natural History of Palms*, 83.

¹²⁶ Parish, “Genus *Washingtonia*,” 426–28 (“A naked trunk, crowned with living leaves, beneath which is a mass of dead ones deflexed, is not the natural aspect of the tree”; the spent leaves, if not artificially removed, concealing the trunk “beneath a gray thatch, an ideal protection against the parching air of the desert”; “The dead leaves are usually kept cut away from cultivated trees”).

¹²⁷ Cornell, *Conspicuous California Plants*, 131 (“If undisturbed, this thatch of leaves will cling to the trunk of the plant almost indefinitely ... But since this dry material is highly inflammable it is seldom that one

sees a palm tree in this natural state. The early California Indians used to burn them to get the seeds and the modern gardener, when he plants California fan palms in his garden, all too often removes the dead leaves and peels the trunk to give it a clean appearance”), and 133 (the Hawaiian “hulu palm,” from “the brown, grass skirt that naturally hangs below the growing fronds and clothes the otherwise nakedness of the trunk”). The passage is verified in the 1938 first edition and is unchanged in the 1978 revised edition, where it appears at 162. City of Palm Springs, 2007 General Plan, goal CD7.3, as quoted in City Council Staff Report, July 8, 2026, 2 (skinning of *robusta* trunks in the right-of-way “to create a more maintained appearance”).

¹²⁸ George B. Bowers, “Growing Ornamental Palms in Southern California,” *Los Angeles Times Farm and Orchard Magazine*, June 9, 1929 (photo caption: the *Washingtonia filifera* standing “tall, stately, in spite of their ‘petticoats’ of dried fronds”); Heald, “Fashions in Trees,” 13 (“The dead leaves of past seasons hang downward, closely pressed against the trunk, where they remain for years as a light brown thatch. Unfortunately, this botanical hula skirt is seldom seen as neatness demands that the dead leaves be cut away each season”).

¹²⁹ Cornell, *Conspicuous California Plants*, 131 (“It is very interesting that fire does not kill the palms, so that one commonly sees them in their desert habitat with slender, fire-blackened trunks lifting the crowns of fresh green leaves into the brilliant heat of a summer day”); Parish, “Genus *Washingtonia*,” 428 (the burning of the leaves by the Cahuilla “purely utilitarian,” to facilitate gathering the fruit and increase fruitfulness, and the trees’ survival of repeated burnings “evidence of their wonderful vitality”).

¹³⁰ Edmund C. Jaeger, “Our Desert Fan Palm: The *Washingtonia Filifera*,” *Palm Springs Villager*, December 1949, 20–21 (the tree recently planted along the streets of the Palm Springs business district beside the *robusta*; palm groups look best with “thick, unmolested skirts of down-turned, dead leaves” hiding the trunks; the dead leaves turning silver-gray or fawn in the dry desert air, an attractive contrast with the green crown). Jaeger also holds that *Washingtonia robusta* is a misnomer for *W. filifera* var. *gracilis*; the nomination follows the name used in the 1949 city record and in current usage.

¹³¹ Planting heights and spacing: “Palm Trees Go in Along Drive Today,” *DS*, June 21, 1949, 1 (twelve-foot minimum to thirty-five-foot maximum, averaging about twenty, at roughly thirty-five feet on center). The 1959 policy and Bogert’s rule are set out in Appendix A. On the staff report’s use of a 1960s film frame, see note 122. Figure 16 is dated by its Curt Teich production code, 6C-K945: in the Teich system the letter gives the decade (C = the 1950s) and the preceding digit the year within it, so 6C is 1956. Curt Teich Company Postcard Dating Guide, Curt Teich Postcard Archives Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

¹³² City of Palm Springs, Resolution No. 5189, “Authorizing Award of Contract for Trimming Certain Palm Trees on Palm Canyon Drive,” adopted August 27, 1958; certified by City Clerk Mary G. Ringwald. City of Palm Springs public portal, 1958 resolutions (document id=507136), viewer p. 191.

¹³³ “Mrs. Hardy Dies at 72,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 2, quoting Harold Flannery; see note above.

¹³⁴ Birnbaum, Preservation Brief 36; see note above.

¹³⁵ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹³⁶ “Action on City Park Now to Be Speeded Up,” *Desert Sun*, March 27, 1952, 1, continued at 3 (“Ralph Cornell, landscape architect was employed by the city to design the park with the assistance of the park board. Considerable study was necessary to design the park for the future. Kinds of trees, quantity and location of pipe all could not be determined until the landscape plan had been completed”). On the 1949 specification and the per-tree conduit and water outlet, see Section 3.5 and notes there.

¹³⁷ Birnbaum, Preservation Brief 36; see note above.

¹³⁸ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹³⁹ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹⁴⁰ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹⁴¹ Birnbaum, Preservation Brief 36; see note above.

¹⁴² *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service), Introduction (the four treatments; preservation requiring retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, including the landscape’s historic form, features, and details as they have evolved over time).

¹⁴³ Birnbaum, Preservation Brief 36; see note above.

¹⁴⁴ Birnbaum, Preservation Brief 36; see note above.

¹⁴⁵ Clement, *General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes* (Caltrans, 1999); see note above.

¹⁴⁶ Birnbaum, Preservation Brief 36; see note above.

¹⁴⁷ Resolution No. 4089, certified August 3, 1954, “authorizing appropriations from Contingency Account (50-28) for trimming of palm trees on Palm Canyon Drive”: the City Manager recommending, “as a safety measure,” that the palms on Palm Canyon Drive be trimmed “to overcome an existing public safety hazard,” at an estimated cost of approximately \$300.00 for trimming with City personnel. The figure is an estimate for a single intervention and is not an annual maintenance cost. The resolution does not describe what was cut.

¹⁴⁸ Resolution No. 5189, adopted August 27, 1958; see note above.

¹⁴⁹ “Palm Springs Mourns ‘First Lady’ of Service,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 1–2; “Mrs. Hardy Dies at 72,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 2 (Lebanon, Ind.; University of Indiana, 1915; came to Palm Springs in 1932); Indiana, Marriages, 1810–2001 (Ruth Herdrich and Henry Hughes Miller, Sept. 12, 1917); Brown and Keylon, “Founding Mothers of Palm Springs,” *Eden* 20, no. 4 (Fall 2017) (marriage to Jackson Hardy, 1930; Casitas del Monte, 1932).

¹⁵⁰ Brown and Keylon, “Founding Mothers of Palm Springs.”

¹⁵¹ “Palm Springs Loses a Good Friend” (editorial), *DS*, Jan. 13, 1965, 15.

¹⁵² “Mrs. Hardy Dies at 72,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 2; “Palm Springs Loses a Good Friend,” *DS*, Jan. 13, 1965, 15.

¹⁵³ “Mrs. Hardy Dies at 72,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 2; “Tamarisk Park Gets Mrs. Hardy’s Name,” *DS*, Jan. 27, 1965, 1; Brown and Keylon, “Founding Mothers of Palm Springs” (Ralph Cornell’s plan for Northend Park, later Tamarisk Park).

¹⁵⁴ “Palm Springs Mourns ‘First Lady’ of Service,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 1.

¹⁵⁵ “Palm Springs Mourns ‘First Lady’ of Service,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 1; “Mrs. Hardy Dies at 72,” *DS*, Jan. 11, 1965, 2; California Death Index, 1940–1997 (d. Jan. 9, 1965, Riverside County).

¹⁵⁶ “Tamarisk Park Gets Mrs. Hardy’s Name,” *DS*, Jan. 27, 1965, 1.

¹⁵⁷ “Palm Springs Loses a Good Friend” (editorial), *DS*, Jan. 13, 1965, 15.