PUBLIC COMMENT BY PSPF PRESIDENT RON MARSHALL
Where: Architectural Advisory Committee
When: September 22, 2008 (Monday)
Subject: Proposed addition to Kocher-Samson Building

Good afternoon gentlemen,

I'm Ron Marshall from the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation and I'd like to comment on the proposed addition to the Kocher-Samson building.

If the issue today were the demolition of the Class 3 Kocher-Samson this matter would be in front of the Historic Site Preservation Board.

But what we have here today is something far more subtle and insidious, that is, yet another unsympathetic modification to the Kocher-Samson. You have in front of you Patrick McGrew's application for Class 1 designation for the building so I don't need to tell you how architecturally and historically important this building is.

However, I'd like to appeal to this committee's tradition of providing good advice to the applicant and ask you to do your best to understand the applicant's design rationale…why this awning? Is it for sun protection…is it to bring design unity to the street front? Hopefully you'll suggest some clever alternatives or even reject the idea completely. In no case should this awning be allowed to physically connect to the Kocher-Samson building.

The Kocher-Samson is probably the most important building in the city that we drive by everyday and don't notice. But that has not always been the case. Seventy years worth of dreadful design missteps have been layered onto this beautiful building. The second story railing and "bean pole" support have both been boxed in and stuccoed over, the front doors have been relocated, dark window framing has been installed, and I could go on and on.

Fortunately, all of these missteps could be undone. In fact the monies being spent on the proposed giant awning could go a long way to restoring this building to its original design. The Kocher Samson building's history is thoroughly researched and documented and a restoration could be well-informed.

Our city is internationally recognized for its modernist architectural treasures. There is a very real potential for significant embarrassment to the city if you allow this ill-advised and unsympathetic addition to proceed. We can not tout ourselves as an architectural "destination" and then casually let our architectural resources be mistreated. I ask that you direct the applicant to consider alternatives to the proposed addition.

Thank you.