

CRPC24-0005 Landmark Designation Sandpiper Circle 4

PALM DESERT CITY COUNCIL

APRIL 24, 2025

Project Request

Project Description: Sandpiper – (Kerry Stern) Request for historic district designation for “Circle 4 Condominiums” within Sandpiper community (CRPC24-0005).

CRPC Recommendation: At its February 26, 2025 regular meeting, the CRPC recommended City Council designate the property, pursuant to Palm Desert Municipal Code (PDMC) Section 29.50.010 under Criteria A and E

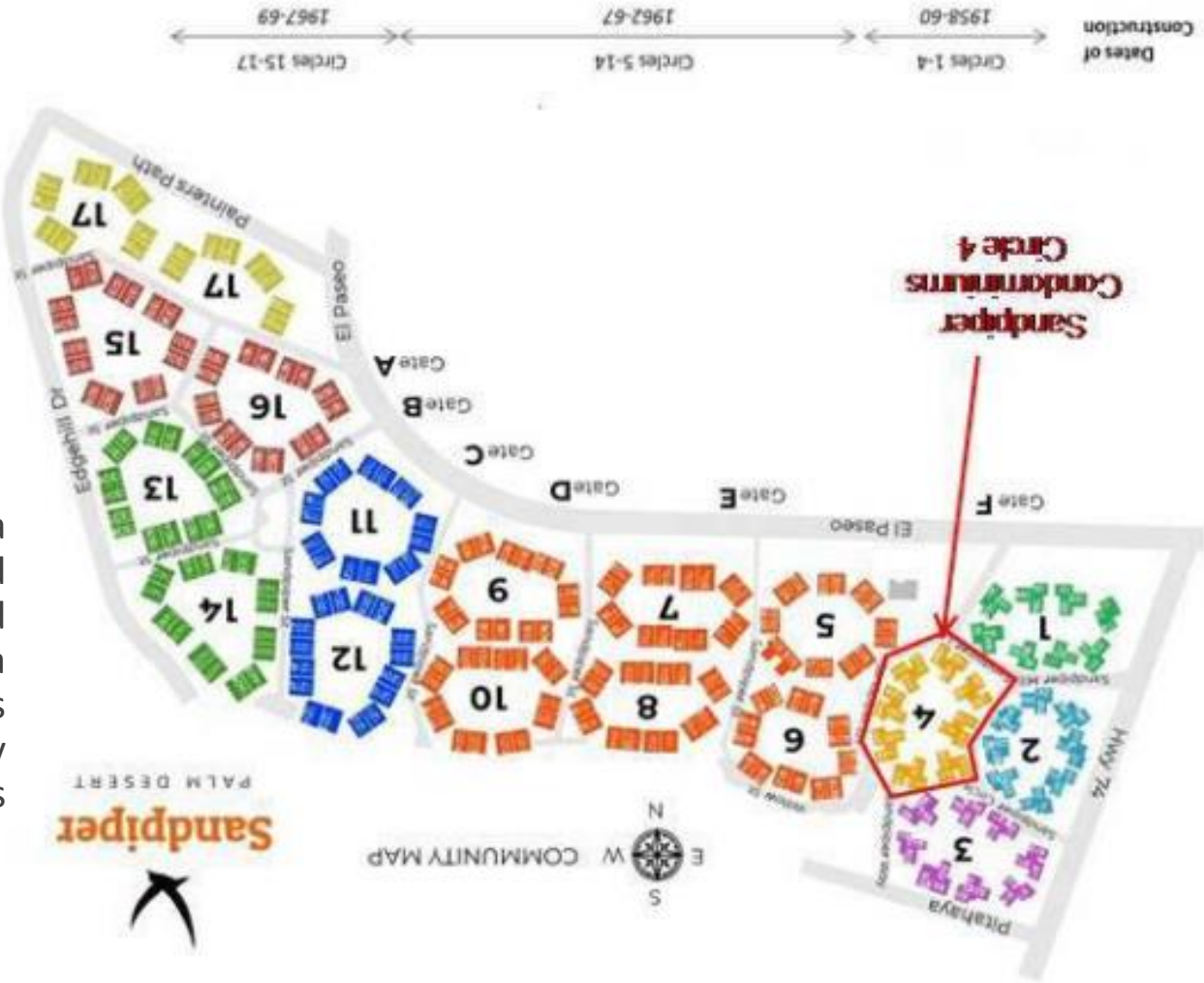
- **Criteria A:** Exemplifies or reflects special elements of cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural, or natural history; .
- **Criteria E:** Reflects distinctive examples of community planning or significant development patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, agricultural, or transportation;

Background

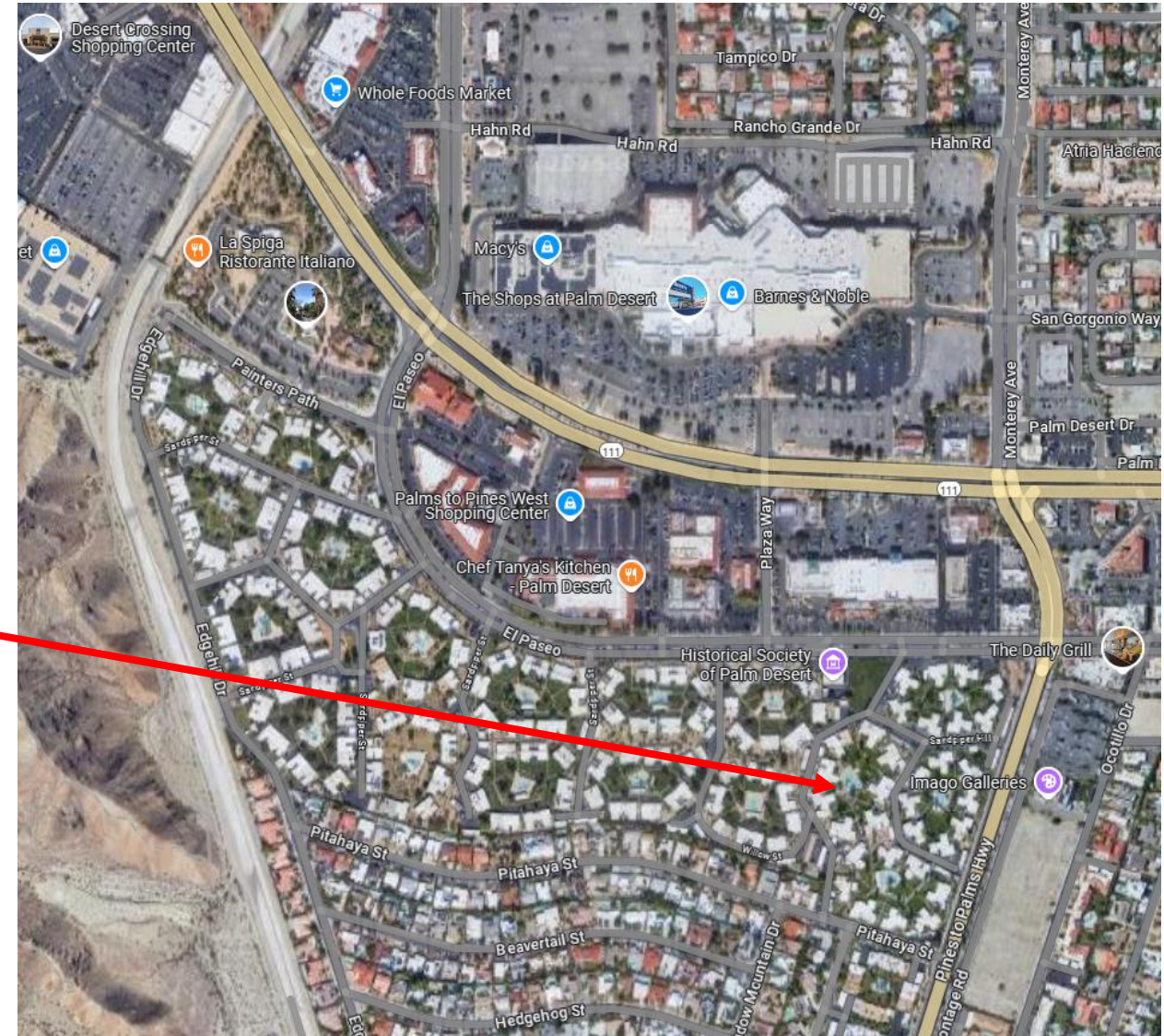
Table 1 – Sandpiper Historic Designation Summary

Sandpiper Circle Number	Designation Date
Circle 1	4/14/2022
Circle 2	2/10/2022
Circle 3	2/10/2022
Circles 5-10	3/23/2017
Circles 11 & 12	5/23/2013

The Sandpiper condominium complex was developed with a total of 16 full circles and two half circles, originally designed and constructed from 1958-1960. Circle 4 was completed around 1960 and was meant to represent the start of a western expansion. The entirety of the Complex was constructed with a singular architectural vision where nearly every Circle was built simultaneously with similar materials and design.



Vicinity Map

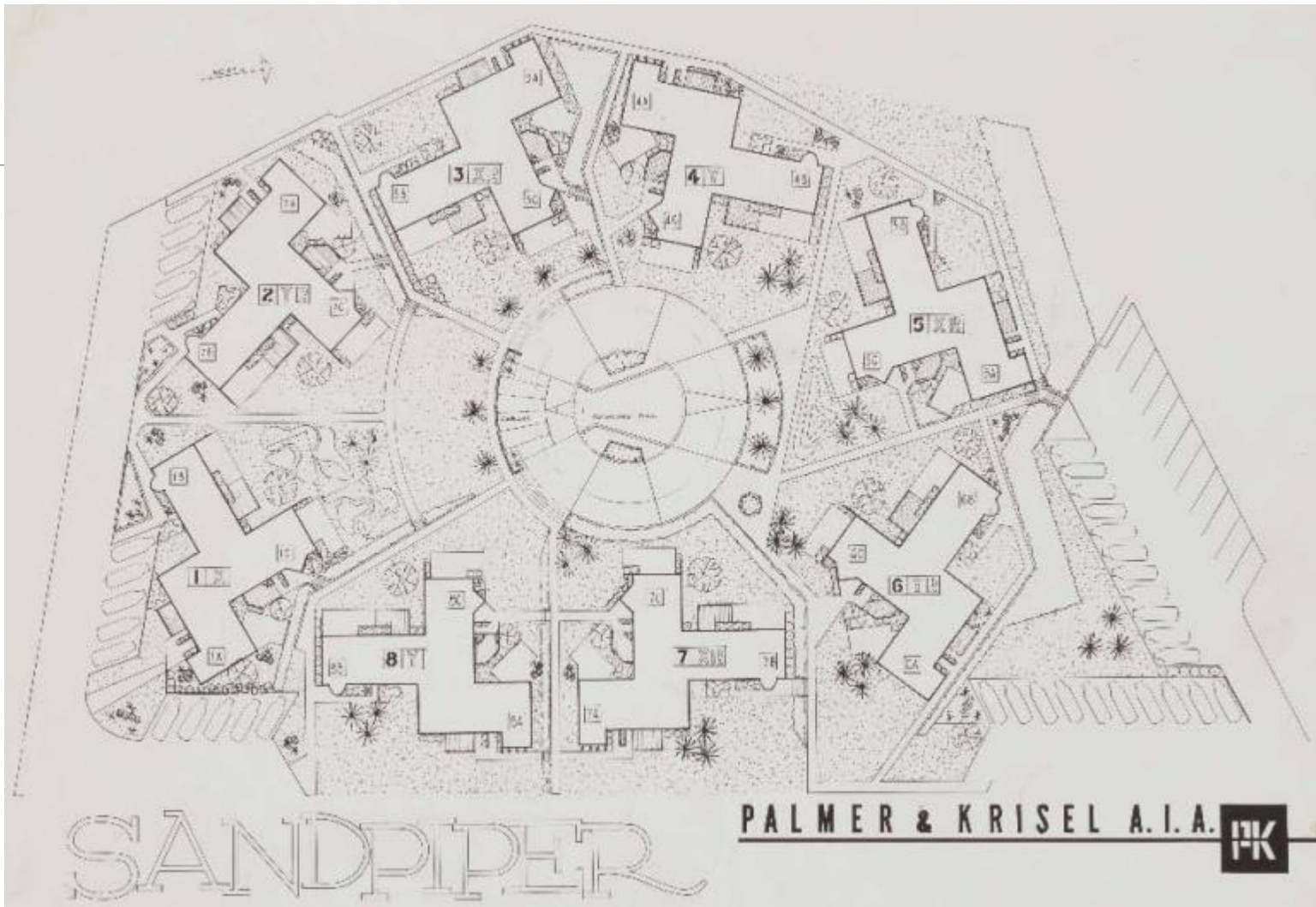
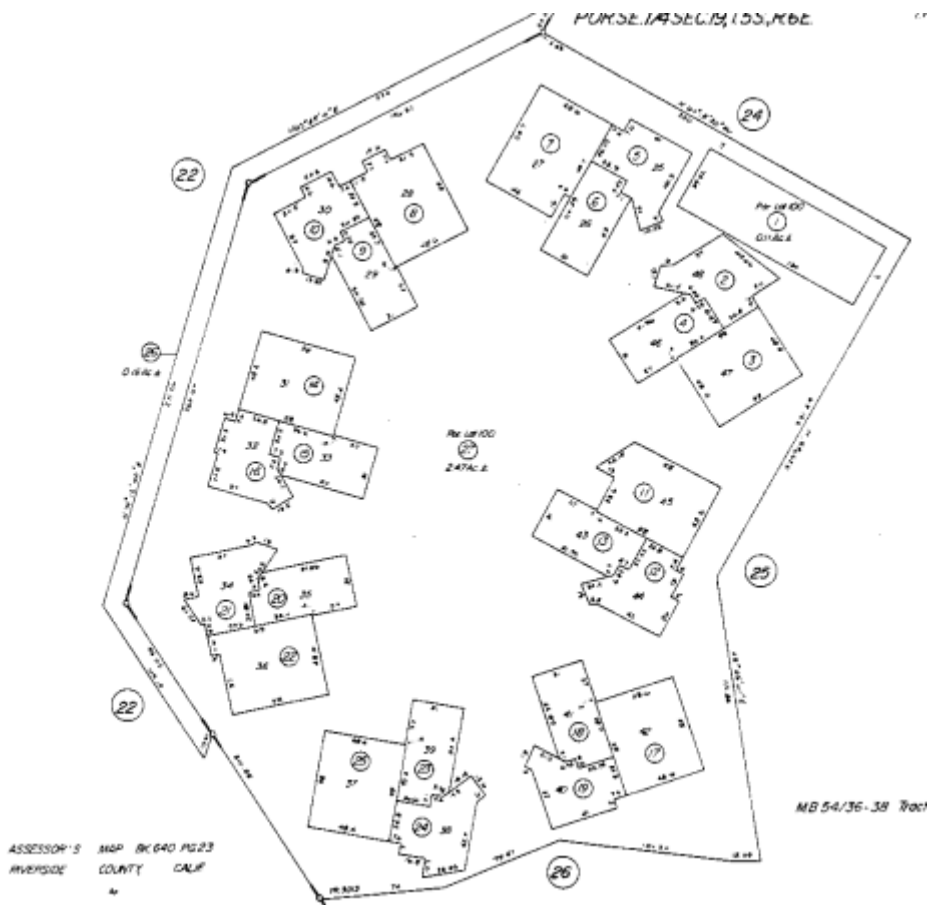


Project Request

The proposal is to include Circle 4 to the rest of the approved historic districts within the Complex. Circle 4 was built with a similar vision, architecture, and materials as the rest of the Complex. The nomination includes the common area, a large pool with a poolside community that is consistent amongst each individual circle within the Complex, and surrounding landscaping.

Circle 4 is a part of the first Circles (1-4) that were originally built and are the only circles with triplexes. Circle 4 has architectural characterizing features of mid-century modern architecture that is consistent with the rest of the Complex and with architecture practices of Palm Desert in its time period.

Analysis



Analysis



carefree living . . .

SANDPIPER

palm desert's luxury "Own-Your-Own" apartments

A brand new concept in "carefree" desert living in beautiful, restricted Palm Desert. Now you can own-your-own garden apartment . . . enjoy pool, putting green, tennis courts and other Country Club facilities — plus all the personal care of maid service, linens, complete maintenance of a fine resort hotel! Under the palms amidst tropical landscaping with a backdrop of mountain and desert, the SANDPIPER offers residential privacy with the carefree existence of the most luxurious hotel!

2 bedrooms 2 baths—built-in kitchens — pools — patios
initial garden units \$17,995—reservations now being taken

A few choice apartments in the first units of the SANDPIPER are still available. For full details and illustrated brochure write the SANDPIPER, P. O. Box 571, Palm Desert or visit The SANDPIPER, El Paseo and Palms-to-Pines Highway, Palm Desert.

A development of the Western Land & Capital Co., Newport Beach
George M. Holstein and Sons, builders — Palmer & Krisel, A.I.A.

Front page news coverage of Sandpiper project announcement

(Desert Sun, March 21, 1958)

Desert Sun, 21 March 1958

\$6 Million Garden Apartment Project Announced



The Desert Sun

VOL. XXXI, NO. 148 The Desert Empire's Daily Newspaper PHONE RA 5-5005
16 Pages Palm Springs, California, Friday, March 21, 1958 Single Copy 10c

PALM DESERT — Construction of a luxurious "own your own home" hotel, which will cost \$6,000,000, was announced today by William L. O'Brien, president of the Western Land and Capital Company of Newport Beach.

The project will be located on a 45 acre site in Palm Desert, between Highway 111 and the Palms to Pines Highway, in the slopes foreground of the Santa Rosa mountains.

PLANNED TO incorporate a score of completely new ideas in luxury desert living, the apartment project will be called the Sandpiper, and will provide "residential privacy with resort hotel service."

Included in the plans that call for 600 one story garden type residences, will be 24 heated swimming pools, eight tournament-size tennis courts, 12 private putting greens, and a dozen uniquely designed and arched children's play yards.

A **COCKTAIL LOUNGE** and dining room also is scheduled, and is planned on location near the intersection of Highway 111 and the Palms to Pines Highway.

Outstanding features of the actual apartments will be their attractive design and functional living plans that can accommodate desert entertaining and year-round family living. First units will include two bedrooms, two full baths, two dressing areas, and patios off both the bedroom and living areas. Kitchens will be

completely modern, compact and modern.

SANDPIPER APARTMENT houses will be sold on a cooperative basis with prices that start at \$17,995. The complete recreational facilities are included in the price, along with arrangement for membership in the nearby Shadow Mountain Club.

This new concept in desert living will also bring a new car-free existence to the Sandpiper owner, according to O'Brien. Included will be the same kind of service as offered in the finest resort hotel. Clean linen, Sandpiper programmed towels, maid and room service are included, along with a gardener, pool maintenance and other typical hotel services.

TO ADD TO THE leisure living in the desert, each home will have individual privacy, tropical landscaping, complete underground utilities including TV and telephone.

AT A PRESS conference held at the Shadow Mountain Club today, O'Brien told newsmen that the investing group was looking forward to a continuing development program in this fast growing desert city. Behind the development is Western Land and Capital Company, substantial investors in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, as well as the San Diego area. This will be their first project in the desert.

Builder of the project will be George M. Holstein and Sons of Costa Mesa, Las Vegas and Beverly Hills. The long time Southern builder has built scores of luxury houses, and has recently completed the Fairway Cottages at Thunderbird Golf Course.

Architects for the company are Palmer and Krisel, A.I.A., noted for the design of homes and apartments and winner of a score of national awards.

\$6 Million Development Planned For 45 Acre Site in Palm Desert

Plans Call For 600 Homes

Analysis



Analysis



Analysis

Criteria A:

Applicant's Response:

Sandpiper Circle 4 exemplifies excellent examples of Mid-Century Modern aesthetics, engineering and architecture.

The project exemplifies special elements of culture, social, economic, aesthetic, and architecture, as outlined in the Application. Circle 4 represents an excellent intact example of American Modernist architecture. Sandpiper Condominium Circle 4, completed in 1960 by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Palmer & Krisel, exhibits numerous stylistic markers that place them directly in the historic context of Palm Desert's Modern Period. Circle 4 has horizontal lines, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, clerestory windows, and other characterizing features of mid-century modern architecture that is consistent with the rest of the Complex. The Circle layout, complete with a centralized pool and a "pin-wheel" green belt configuration is a critical theme of Circle 4 and the rest of the Complex, which is a concept derived from 19th century British planner Ebenezer Howard.

As noted, 11 other Circles within Sandpiper have previously been approved as historic districts based off Criteria A, and Circle #4 has all of the same architectural and design components as those previously approved.

Criteria E:

Applicant's Response:

The concept of a condominium, where the ownership of a building or property is a shared entity is a relatively modern phenomenon, although communal living is not. The first "condominium" was built in the United States in 1960 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The concept grew in popularity and by the end of the decade condominiums were present in all 50 states.

The site planning at Sandpiper is a pin-wheel configuration around a central hub (in this case the pool) and its greenbelt concept draws from 19th century British planner Ebenezer Howard's Garden City. Howard's concept envisioned a world where the best of city and rural life is combined to create a utopian environment. He espoused the need for green belts, in an effort to reduce congestion and to create a healthy environment in which to live. Palmer & Krisel expands this idea by creating an environment free from cars, a popular symbol of urban distress. Their site planning re-examines not only urban but suburban living. Palmer & Krisel deftly sited all vehicular roads and carports on the perimeter of each circle. Their buildings turn their "fronts" away from the street. The "front porch" no longer faces the street but is moved to look onto the green belt. In this, the pool becomes the "new street scape": the new social gathering place for the complex.

Beginning in 1956 with their first Palm Springs tract, Twin Palms, Krisel, the firm's lead designer for desert houses, and Alexander Homes, the home developer used variation of orientation and roofline, integration of indoor and outdoor living, and careful use of standardized elements to make modernist design affordable enabling an affordable 2nd home for the escape from the city. This popularized this post-and-beam architectural style in the Coachella Valley. Alexander houses and similar homes feature low-pitched roofs, wide eaves, open-beamed ceilings, and floor-to-ceiling windows. The houses facilitated indoor-outdoor living in the desert with sheltered patios and pools and in some cases breezeways clerestory windows improved air circulation while bringing light into the house. The interior designs included flexible room dividers to adapt the floor plan to the owners' preferences.

The response provided by the Applicant provides satisfactory evidence towards meeting the requirements of Criteria E. Additionally, 11 other Circles within Sandpiper have previously been approved as historic districts based off Criteria E, and Circle #4 has all of the same components as those previously approved.

Public Input + CEQA

Public notification was provided with a 10 day notice and publication in Desert Sun and no comments were received

CEQA:

Designation of a historic district is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15060(c)(2), the general exemption rule, of the CEQA Guidelines as the proposed project will not result in any foreseeable indirect change in the environment. The project is also exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) as the activity is not considered a project as defined under Guidelines Section 15378 as has no potential for resulting in any indirect or direct physical changes to the environment.

Recommendation

Adopt a Resolution entitled, “A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT DESIGNATING THE SANDPIPER CIRCLE 4 CONDOMINIUMS, LOCATED SOUTH OF EL PASEO DRIVE, AS A HISTORIC LANDMARK DISTRICT PURSUANT TO CRITERIA A AND E IN PALM DESERT MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION 29.50.010 (ASSESSOR’S PARCEL NUMBERS 640-230-002 THROUGH 640-230-027).”