

Palm Springs High performing arts building

Public should have been made aware

Re: Performing arts building fiasco

Just about everyone knows that architect Donald Wexler is considered a "god" in Palm Springs.

A public agency that assumes it can demolish one of his buildings (notable or not) without facing repercussions from design professionals and enthusiasts alike appears to have no common sense.

If this project had involved the community in a transparent way at the outset, this "Pandora's box" would not be opening today.

Students and their parents who are concerned that their project will be delayed, and possibly lose funding, have a right to be angry, but not at preservationists and activists.

Their frustration should be directed at the school administrators, who have bungled this project from the beginning.

According to The Desert Sun, the school district is just finishing their "historical analysis," to be included with their response to the Cahuilla Indians (who consider this project to be within their tribal use area).

However, the district has already paid \$385,000 of taxpayer money in fees to an architectural firm in the San Diego area for the design of a new building.

This evidence indicates to me that this study is a ruse and an afterthought, since the decision to tear down the existing building was made well before the study's so-called completion.

The best interests of the city of Palm Springs and the school district would be served by the following: From the many local design professionals, select a firm that can produce a master plan and building inventory and, in particular, quantify the value of the existing midcentury modern buildings on campus with an eye toward rehabilitating and repurposing them in a functional and eco-friendly manner.

This would improve the school district's tarnished image and reinforce the tourism-industry goal of presenting the city as a mid 20th century architectural mecca.

Modernism Week, anyone?

— Brandt Hollinger, Palm Springs