



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS

August 4, 2015

California State Parks
Attn: Office of Historic Preservation
Julianne Polanco, State Historic Preservation Officer
1725 23rd Street, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95816

Art Museum

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Dear Ms. Polanco:

I am writing on behalf of the Paul R. Williams Project to strongly support Palm Spring Preservation Foundation's application for the placement of the Town & Country Center, one of the city's most iconic mid-century modern designs, on the California State Register of Historic Places.

The Paul R. Williams Project is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. Its mission is to expand knowledge about Williams (1894-1980), a California native who is arguably our nation's most significant African American architect. Please see our website: www.paulwilliamsproject.org.

The Town & Country Center project, a joint endeavor with the celebrated modernist architect, A. Quincy Jones, is one of a handful completed by Williams in Palm Springs. The Town & Country project was recognized when it opened as an exciting direction in mixed-use urban design. *Architectural Record* wrote about the dramatic "atmosphere-packed patio" that attracted an unanticipated number of visitors and customers. Tucked within the block with relatively narrow access paths, the leafy, colorful garden oasis was a delightful and refreshing gift to its visitors.

In the later 20th century, enclosed malls became the preferred type of commercial development, and Town & Country Center gradually declined. But times have changed again as cities and urban designers recognize the importance of "places" that have unique and identifiable character and inviting spaces. The historic Town & Country Center, which retains its structural and design integrity, is a pioneer of today's mixed-use developments that emphasize human scale with shops, restaurants, services, offices, residences and landscaping that invite casual community gathering.

The unique mid-century modern architectural character of Palm Springs is the city's image around the world. The Town & Country Center exemplifies this image and is one of the rare historic structures as opposed to residences and private buildings that welcomes local visitors as well as dedicated architecture tourists.

The Paul R. Williams Project enthusiastically endorses the placement of the Town & Country Center on the California State Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

Leslie Luebbers, PhD, Project Director
The Paul R. Williams Project