

Palm Springs school district

No local architects considered

Re: "Palm Springs parents and students: Tear down Wexler building," Mariecar Mendoza, April 25.

In the ongoing debate whether to renovate or demolish the Palm Springs High School Administration Building, it should be noted that the architectural firm hired by the Palm Springs Unified School District to build the new project is based in San Diego with no association to a local architect. In fact, no local architects were even considered for the new school project, primarily because there are no local architects on the school board's approved list.

In the 1950 and '60s, only local architects were hired for the city's school projects, such as E. Stewart Williams, Albert Frey and the master of school buildings, Donald Wexler, who designed 31 schools and more than 100 projects. These men were involved members of the community. They owned homes here and raised families here. Their vision for the schools they built came from that community involvement. We are a better city for it.

Fifty years later, a new crop of talented architects are living in Palm Springs. They are involved members of the community, raising families here and contributing to society. And, like the architects that came before them, that community experience helps shape their vision. They should be building our schools.

The school district needs to review their selection process and return to hiring local architects. We will remain a better city for it.

— Gary Johns, Palm Springs