



April 17, 2012
– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

Architects' Open Letter to School District

The Palm Springs Preservation Foundation announced today that it is releasing an “Architects’ Open Letter” to the Palm Springs Unified School District. The letter, signed by 22 local and California architects, asks school district officials to “abandon” their summer plans to demolish the modernist Palm Springs High School Administration Building. The building is slated for demolition to make way for a new Performing Arts Building. According to the letter, the Administration Building, built in 1957 and designed by the architectural firm of Wexler & Harrison, “is an excellent example” of the modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is internationally famous.

According to foundation board member and architect Susan Secoy Jensen, the open letter shows a remarkable degree of professional unanimity of opinion on the topic and represents a collective distaste with the idea of demolishing such an important and intact building. It likewise attests to the esteem with which architect Don Wexler and his work is held. According to Jensen, “There is also a sense among many of my fellow architects that it is wrong to demolish a perfectly good and serviceable building. It’s not green, it may not make economic sense and we are unconvinced that the school district has seriously explored alternatives to demolition, including adaptively reusing the Administration Building.”

PSPF president Ron Marshall said that topic of the scheduled demolition had been placed on the Board of Education’s May 8th meeting agenda. He said that while the foundation enthusiastically supports the need for a new Performing Arts Building, they are very skeptical that the Administration Building needs to be sacrificed. Marshall said that an earlier version of the Architects’ Open Letter was provided to school officials in late March.

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NEWS RELEASE

ARCHITECTS' OPEN LETTER

to the

PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARCH 2012



We, the undersigned architects, support the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation's efforts to ensure the preservation of the Palm Springs High School Administration Building (1957).

Accordingly, we request that the Palm Springs Unified School District abandon its plans for the summer 2012 demolition of the building.

Designed by the architectural firm of Wexler & Harrison, the Administration Building is an excellent example of the modernist architecture for which the city of Palm Springs is known throughout the world.

We strongly encourage the Palm Springs Unified School District leadership to find alternate siting for the new campus development and to pursue the adaptive reuse of the still highly-intact Administration Building.

Preserving the Palm Springs High School Administration Building will be a tangible symbol of the Palm Springs Unified School District's commitment to the community to protect the city's important historical resources and follow the principles of sustainability.

As of April 16, 2012

James R. Harlan
Architect

Patrick McGrew
Architect

Susan Secoy Jensen, AIA
Secoy Architects, Inc.

Doug Hudson
Doug Hudson Design

Lance C. O'Donnell, AIA
o2 Architecture

Craig M. Hammond, Assoc. AIA
o2 Architecture

Eric Corey Freed
organicArchitect

William Krisel, AIA
Architect

James Cioffi
James Cioffi Architect

James Schmidt, AIA
Schmidt Architecture

Ana Escalante, AIA
Escalante Architects

Rick Phillippe
Callison Architecture

Christopher L. Sahlin, AIA
Chris Sahlin Architects

William Fauber
Architect (retired)

Stephen Michael Rose
Architect (retired)

Hugh Kaptur
Architect

Michael Darner
Architect (retired)

Anna Marie Howell
Architect

John Gilmer, AIA
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Philip de Cancio
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