



Figure 1 Hugh Stephens Residence, 645 Morongo Road

HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION APPLICATION

Prepared for
HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD
City of Palm Springs
Department of Planning Services
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way
Palm Springs, California 92264

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FEBRUARY 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SIGNIFICANCE: The Hugh Stephens Residence was designed in 1949 by the firm of Clark & Frey. The building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs Modern Period. Although not well-known, the house is a prime intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs image as a center of important mid-century architecture, an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history

DESIGNATION CRITERIA:

The Hugh Stephens Residence has not been previously evaluated for Class 1 eligibility. A summary of the analysis contained in this report is as follows:

8.05.020 (a) paragraph 1 - Events: as the gradual rise of a city's prominence in architectural excellence, an important pattern of events within the associated context. The Stephens Residence is associated with this pattern of events, but this may be better expressed under Criterion 3 for its ability to exemplify a particular period of the national, state or local history, i.e. the building is not eligible under this criterion.

8.05.020 (a) paragraph 2 - Persons: Hugh Stephens was from a prominent family that made a meaningful contribution to local history, and his own contribution as the first full-time physician in Palm Springs is important, rising to the level sufficient to qualify the building's eligibility for local listing under persons significant in our history, i.e. the building is eligible under this criterion

8.05.020 (a) paragraphs - 3, 4 & 5 Design / Construction: The building is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses distinctive characteristics that make up the many qualities of the style, such as flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, idiosyncratic use of masonry, etc. Additionally, Clark must be considered a Master architect because of his increasingly recognized greatness at his chosen profession. Further, the Stephens Residence is a signature representation of his career at mid-point. As mentioned above, as an example of Clark's mature modern style, the building articulates Clark's own brand of modernism to a level of excellence that could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal. As the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, The building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 site on the local registry under Criteria 3, 4, and 5.

8.05.020 (a) paragraphs - 6 District Eligibility & 7 Archeological Significance: The site was not evaluated for potential historic district eligibility (Criterion 6) or archeological significance (Criterion 7) as these were not applicable.

SUMMARY: Although the analysis did not find the building eligible under Criteria 1, the review and analysis contained herein does find that the building eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Class I Historic Site under 8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 2, 3, 4 & 5 of the local ordinance's seven criteria. Additionally, the building was found to retain a high degree of architectural integrity.

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CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Department of Planning Services

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA

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8360

Public Works & Engineering ~ 760-323-8253

Fire Department ~ 760-323-8187

Building & Safety ~ 760-323-8242

Building Inspections ~ 760-323-8243

Code Enforcement ~ 760-778-8434

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION

The City of Palm Springs allows for the local designation of historic buildings, sites or districts within the City (Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.) This application packet is to be completed in order to request a historic designation. For additional information, please contact the Department of Planning Services at 760-323-8245 or planning@palmspringsca.gov.

APPLICATION

The completed application and required materials may be submitted to the Department of Planning Services. The submittal will be given a cursory check and will be accepted for filing only if the basic requirements have been met.

A case planner will be assigned to the project and will be responsible for a detailed review of the application and all exhibits to ensure that all required information is adequate and accurate. Incomplete applications due to missing or inadequate information will not be accepted for filing.

Applicants may be asked to attend scheduled meetings pertaining to their project. These will include the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) and the City Council.

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD (HSPB)

Once the application has been determined to be complete, the HSPB will review the application to determine whether the site meets the minimum qualifications for designation pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. If such determination is made, a public hearing will be scheduled for a future meeting.

A public hearing will be held by the HSPB to receive testimony from all interested persons concerning the Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the HSPB will make a recommendation to the City Council. Notice will be provided as indicated below.

CITY COUNCIL

After receiving the recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board, a public hearing will be held by the City Council to receive testimony from all

interested persons concerning the requested Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the City Council will then conditionally approve, deny, or approve the application as submitted. The City Council's decision on the application is final.

NOTIFICATION

Prior to consideration of the application by the HSPB and the City Council, a notice of public hearing for a Historic Site Designation request will be mailed to all property owners within 400 feet of the subject property a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the hearing dates.



Office Use Only

Date:
Case No.
HSPB No.
Planner:

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Department of Planning Services**

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION

TO THE APPLICANT:

Your cooperation in completing this application and supplying the information requested will expedite City review of your application. Application submitted will not be considered until all submittal requirements are met. Staff may require additional information depending upon the specific project. Please submit this completed application and any subsequent material to the Department of Planning Services.

This form is to be used to nominate individual properties for Class 1 or 2 historic designation, or to nominate the formation of historic districts. Applicants are encouraged to review two bulletins from the US Department of Interior for additional information:

- "How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form" (National Register Bulletin 16A / <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>); and
- "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" (National Register Bulletin 15; <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>).

Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions in the Bulletins.

1. Property Information

Historic name: Hugh Stephens Residence

Other names: None

Address: 645 East Morongo Road

Assessor parcel number: 508323010

Owner's name: Robert C Metcalf and David R Skousen

Owner's Address: PO Box 65

Laguna Beach, California 92652

Telephone: 949 633-0393

E-mail address: robertcmetcalf@ hotmail.com

Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for listing)

Events

- (1) Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Persons

- (2) Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Architecture

- (3) That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, State or local history, or
- (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or
- (5) Represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or
- (6) Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Archeology

- (7) Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- removed from its original location.
- a birthplace or a grave.
- a cemetery.
- a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- a commemorative property.
- less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

5. Statement of Significance

Attach an explanation of any of the numbered criteria selected in Section 5 (above).

Significant Event (Complete if Criterion 1 is marked above)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion 2 is marked above)

Significant Architecture (Complete for each of Criteria 3, 4, 5 and / or 6 marked above)

Significant Archeologically (Complete if Criterion 7 is marked above)

7. Integrity Analysis

Attach an analysis of the Building / Site / District's integrity based on the criteria in this section.

In addition to being determined eligible under at least one of the Applicable Criteria listed above, the building / site / district must also retain its architectural integrity. Integrity is based on significance: Why, where, and when a property is important. Only after significance is fully established can a determination be made with regard to the issue of integrity.

There are seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity: **Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling and Association.** To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance.

Building permits located in the Palm Springs Department of Building and Planning Services confirm that the building was extensively damaged by fire and reconstructed utilizing the original plans. Consequently, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

8. Bibliography

Attach a list of all books, articles, and other sources cited or used in preparing this application. Also, identify any previous surveys that cite the subject property, or any other documentation that may be on file.

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.71 Acre

Property Boundary Description. Attach a description of the boundaries of the property. Or
all of Assessor's Map 508 Block 325 Lot 10 (Old lots 49 & 50)

District Boundary Description: Attach an explanation for the selection of the district boundaries.

10. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Patrick McGrew

Organization: McGrew / Architecture

Street address: 674 South Grenfall Road

City: Palm Springs, California 92264

Telephone: 760 416-7819

E-mail address: patrickmcgrew2@gmail.com

11. Required Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed application form. **Do not mount any exhibits on a board.**

1. **Attachment Sheets.** Include all supplemental information based on application form (above).
2. **Maps:** For Historic Districts, include a sketch map identifying the proposed districts boundaries.
3. **Photographs:** Eight (8) sets of color photographs showing each elevation of the property and its surroundings.
4. **Non-owner's Notarized Signature:** If the applicant is not the owner, a notarized affidavit shall be provided (see following page).
5. **Site Plan:** One 1/8" to 1/4" scale drawing of the site, and eight reduction copies (8 1/2 x 11 inches) The site plan shall show all of the following: Property boundaries, north arrow and scale, all existing buildings, structures, mechanical equipment, landscape materials, fences, walls, sidewalks, driveways, parking areas showing location of parking spaces, and signs. **Indicate the square footage and use of each building and the date(s) of construction.**
6. **Public Hearing Labels:** Three (3) sets of typed self-adhesive labels of all property owners, lessees, and sub-lessees of record. **The labels shall include the Assessor's parcel number, owner's name and mailing address of each property with 400 feet from the exterior limits of the subject property.** Additionally, all Assessor Parcel Maps clearly indicating the 400-foot radius and a certified letter from a title company licensed to conduct business in Riverside County, California shall be submitted.

Note: If any property on this list is owned by the United States Government in trust for the Agua Caliente Indian Tribe or individual allottee, copies of notices with postage paid envelopes will be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to notify the individual Indian land owners of the public hearings.

NON-OWNER AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE) ss

I (We), _____ being duly sworn, depose and say that I (we) am (are) the person(s) herein named and that the foregoing statements and answers herein contained and the information herein submitted are in all respect true and correct to the best of my (our) knowledge and belief.

Name: (Please print) _____

City, _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Signatures

Who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed the same in his/hr/their authorized capacity(ies), and that by his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the person(s), or the entity upon behalf of which the person(s) acted, executed the instrument.

I certify under PENALTY OF PERJURY under the laws of the State of _____ that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

WITNESS my hand and official seal this _____ day of _____, 20____.

Notary Public in the State of _____

with principal office in the

County of _____

Place Notary Seal Above

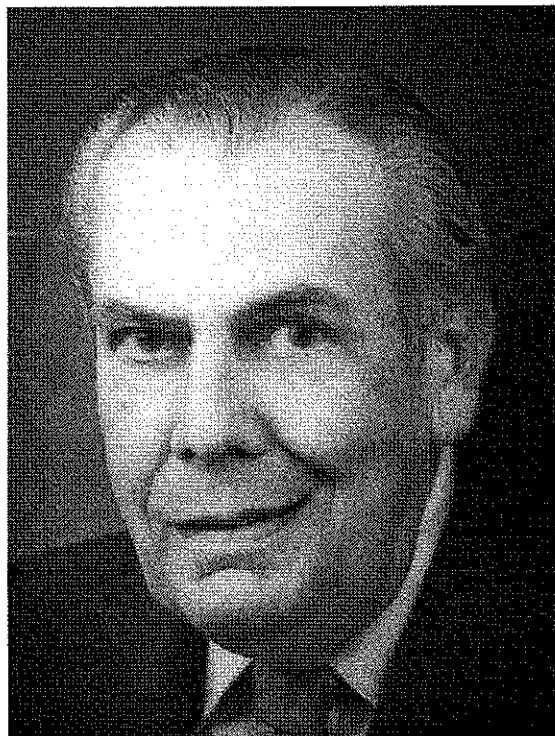


Figure 2 Portrait of Dr. Hugh Stephens (1947)

House History

The Hugh Stephens Residence was designed in 1949 by the firm of Clark & Frey. The title block on the drawings indicate the drawings were drawn by John Porter Clark and checked by Robson Chambers. Construction was completed in 1950. The building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of the Palm Springs Modern Period. Although not well-known, the house is a prime intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such, it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trend that has come to define Palm Springs as a center of important mid-century architecture – an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history

Dr. Hugh E. Stephens (1915 -1984), for whom the house was built, was the son of a Kansas City insurance agent. After completing his formal education, he began his professional career in Santa Barbara at Cottage Hospital, but eventually relocated to Palm Springs. As described by his daughter Mary Jo Churchwell:

"Which brings me to March 1946, when my father, Hugh E. Stephens, M.D., a latter-day health-seeker (emphysema plagued him all his adult life) moved us to Palm Springs: pop 7,157 according to the new census. Apparently we arrived just in time. The Community Desert Hospital¹ had just opened for business, an event the [Desert] Sun greeted with a 'sigh of relief,' for no longer would the police have to load accident victims into the 'one-stretcher ambulance and drive them 'hell-bent for election' to Indio or Riverside, 'while the victim's screams of pain mingled with that of the siren.'" ² Stephens is known as the first M. D. to maintain a year-round practice

¹ This was originally the El Mirador Hotel, and is now the Desert Regional Hospital, of which Stephens was only the second president, beginning in 1947.

² Palm Springs: The Landscape, the History, the Lore." P 52.

in Palm Springs.

Churchwell continues: "My dad's cousin Sallie, having moved here years earlier from Los Angeles, paved the way for our move from Santa Barbara. Her realtor husband, Culver 'Nick' Nichols built my dad's small office on [863 North] Palm Canyon Drive [within walking distance of the Hospital] and sold him (for \$16,500) the house with the red shutters [226 Morongo Road]³ in the relatively wind-free south end of town. My dad's profession automatically made him a respected citizen of the town, professional men in those days being the embodiment of intelligence, training, self-reliance, and saintly dedication.⁴

"Issues of ancestry were never important to my dad, or therefore to me. But, one evening, among the usual dinnertime clatter, he constructed our family tree, and in doing so passed along an intriguing fact about Cousin Sallie [Stevens Nichols], namely, that her father was the Prescott 'P. T.' Stevens, Colorado cattleman turned Hollywood realtor turned Palm Springs developer. Stevens (who had married a Stephens⁵ just to confuse things) came to the village in 1912, purchased a thousand acres from the railroad – indeed most of the land in the north end of town – and became one of the village's most active citizens, recognized on sight upon emerging from his long chauffeured Marmon limousine, the message 'Palm Springs and Hollywood' scripted on the doors so he'd get a lot more recognition. Stevens stabilized the public water system and developed the first golf course, and thereby got his name in all the local history books. Unfortunately, he is remembered most as a principal backer of the El Mirador Hotel. I say 'unfortunately' because four years after its grand opening on New Year's Eve 1927, the hotel failed, saddling Stevens with a burden of debt. With his last days on earth underway, he sold out to the bond-holders. When it comes to founding fathers, I can't help but feel somewhat disappointed."

It was the Nichols's who, during the years following the depression, also invited John Porter Clark to move to Palm Springs and establish his practice. As landowners and developers, the family had faith in the town's future, and ultimately commissioned several projects by Clark, including the Nichols Building where Hugh Stephens' first Palm Springs office was located.

Dr. Stephens was one of the desert's earliest physicians. Stephens, together with his wife Mary (Paradise), raised their five children (Mary Jo, Sally, Nan, Beth and Jim) in the subject property at 645 Morongo Road. He resided in the home until his death in 1984. In 2002, a few years after the sale, the home was nearly destroyed by a fire caused by an unattended candle. The house's survival was largely due to its masonry construction, although the roof structure was completely destroyed. Fortunately, the house was reconstructed utilizing the original drawings. Other properties associated with Dr. Stephens that are known to survive include the Nichols Building, 863 North Palm Canyon Drive, the family's first home, 226 Morongo Road and Dr. Stephens Offices at 1785 Tahquitz Canyon Way – now the location of John Henry's Restaurant. John Porter Clark was also responsible for the design of Dr. Stephens's office.

Description of Building and Setting

Setting: The building is sited on two lots in the Palo Verdes Tract in the south side of Palm Springs. The parcel is triangular in shape, the hypotenuse having been formed by a wash that eventually became Calle Palo Fierro. The property is heavily landscaped rendering the home virtually invisible from the street. A sidewalk from Morongo Road leads directly to a covered porch and the formal entrance to the house. So important is the building's setting that the entire feeling and association of the building to its site would be seriously

³ The Stephens family lived here until the subject property was built, but today there is no such address.

⁴ Stephens was also known as a very humanitarian man in the years when racial discrimination was the norm.

⁵ P. T. Stevens married Frances Stephens. Her brother was Hugh Stephens, Sr.

compromised if the property were sub-divided.

The single story, three-bedroom two and one-half bathroom house is generally an elongated rectangular form with an east to west orientation (see site plan attached). The principal façade is set back 25' from Morongo Road. A garage located at the eastern end of the property is attached to the main house via a breezeway – the garage, with its sloping roof is set at an angle to the main house, and is accessed via a driveway from Morongo Road. The roof above the living area at the west end of the house slopes up from an otherwise flat tar and gravel roof. The eaves extend beyond the walls of the house to provide overhangs that shade the house from the desert sun; the wood framing for the roof structure is visible both inside and out.

The walls are painted concrete masonry units, approximately 6" x 16" x 8" deep that form both the exterior and interior walls of the building, and are set in a running bond. Patterns of evenly spaced blocks are used in various locations around the house to give it more visual interest. Door and window openings are trim less and frameless; windows are steel-framed, used in a combination of casements and fixed panes while the sliding doors are aluminum framed; 18" square glass blocks are also used in vertical rows to bring light to the interior and also as a design feature. An occasional masonry wall extends to the edge of the overhang, and is punctured by 18" square openings –a repeat of the design elements found elsewhere on the house. A wooden single-light French door with a sidelight and transom are features of the covered entry, along with a large stone planter. A freestanding steel post supports the overhanging roof at the entry.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

To qualify as a Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Site, a property must be significant; that is, it must represent a significant part of the history, architecture, or archeology, of an area, and it must have the characteristics that make it a good representative of properties associated with that aspect of the past. The significance of an historic property can be properly understood when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history is made clear. In order to decide whether a property is significant within its historic context, it must be determined which facet of history the property represents; the significance of that facet of history; whether the subject property has relevance in illustrating the historic context; how the property illustrates that history; and an analysis of the physical features the property possesses to determine if it conveys the aspect or history with which it is associated.

If the subject property represents an important aspect of the area's history (under any of the seven criteria recognized by the Municipal Code) and possesses the requisite quality of integrity, it then qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Site.

BACKGROUND / HISTORIC CONTEXT

Most historians generally agree that relatively short history of Palm Springs can be organized into three more or less distinct periods that include Prehistory, the Settlement Period, and the Modern Period. It is within the context of these last two periods that the buildings of Palm Springs can be evaluated.

Pre-History Period For centuries Palm Springs was the home of the Agua Caliente Indians. As the site of natural hot springs and a dry and sunny desert climate, the area drew its first non-Indian visitors in the late 19th century. Of Palm Springs' Pre-History Period the only remaining objects are likely to be archeological in nature as no buildings or physical structures from that period survive.

The Settlement Period (1880-1925) There is general agreement that this period began with the 1880 land purchase from the Native American Pedro Chino to the first white land owners W E. Van Slyke and M. Byrne. That land was subsequently purchased by Judge John Guthrie McCallum who established a ranch and built his home in Palm Springs in 1887. Through the efforts of McCallum and others, an infrastructure was built that supported the development of small village. Many settlers followed, and by the 1920s, the local climate, mineral springs and beauty combined fostered the development of the town as a health resort.

The Modern Period (1925- 1960s). This period might be considered to have begun with the construction of the town's first "modern" structure, the Oasis Hotel in 1925. It was commissioned by McCallum's daughter Pearl McManus, and designed by architect Lloyd Wright. With this building, the town's original architectural style that was based primarily on Mexican and Spanish Colonial motifs that were already well-established in Southern California, would begin to change.

Incorporation of the town followed in 1938. During the post-WWII era, Palm Springs prospered through its reliance on tourism to fuel the economy. Hollywood celebrities and other tourists discovered the desert oasis and patronized its hotels, inns, nightclubs and restaurants. Palm Springs was transformed from a sleepy village into an increasingly cosmopolitan environment that saw the construction of schools, hospitals an airport and other important public works projects.

The commercial core along Palm Canyon Drive (originally Main Street) flourished. In the 1950s the downtown core was augmented by the cross-axis of Tahquitz-McCallum Way that extended from the center of the original settlement to the airport, spurring new development along the way. Early private residential development expanded into outlying sub-divisions composed of high-style second homes in the flat lands surrounding the town's original core.

Today, Palm Springs is increasingly known for its mid-20th Century architectural "Golden Age." Important buildings from the Modern Period reflect regionally oriented contemporary architecture inspired by the International Style that are now popularly called "mid-century modern." This is an important theme in the city's contemporary history. Local architectural practitioners whose names permeate the town's collective consciousness include John Porter Clark, Albert Frey, E. Stewart Williams, William F. Cody and Donald Wexler, who were among the first licensed architects to discover the opportunities for creating modern architecture that was Palm Springs in the 1940s, '50s and '60s. It is against this context that the Hugh Stephens Residence will be evaluated.

EVALUATIONS for CLASS 1 ELIGIBILITY UNDER PALM SPRINGS CRITERIA:

HISTORY

Criterion 1: *(associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community.)* To be considered for listing under this criterion, a property must be associated with one or more events important in the defined historic context. Criterion 1 recognizes properties associated with events or *patterns of events or historic trends*, such as the gradual rise of a city's prominence in architectural excellence, an important pattern of events within the associated context. The Stephens Residence is associated with this pattern of events, but this may be better expressed under Criterion 3 for its ability to exemplify a particular period of the national, state or local history. Therefore, the building does not qualify for listing on the local registry as a Class 1 Site under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2: *(associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national state or local history.)* This Criterion applies to properties associated with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented. Persons "significant in our past" refers to individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, State, or national historic context. The criterion is generally restricted to those properties that illustrate a person's important achievements. In order to determine whether a property is significant for its associative values under Criterion 2, the importance of the individual must be established along with the length and nature of his/her association with the subject property and any other properties associated with the individual. Although Stephens was from a prominent family that made a meaningful contribution to local history, and his own contribution as a physician is important, his personal history does not rise to the level sufficient to qualify the building's eligibility for local listing. The building does not qualify for listing Class 1 Site on the local registry under Criterion 2.

ARCHITECTURE (Criteria 3 – 6)

Criterion 3: *(That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history.)*

The Hugh Stephens Residence was designed in 1949 by the firm of Clark & Frey. The title block on the drawings indicated that the drawings were authored by drawn by John Porter Clark and checked by Robson Chambers. Construction was completed in 1950. The building's stylistic markers place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs Modern Period. Although not well-known, the house is a prime intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such it may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs image as a center of important mid-century architecture, an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Site on the local registry under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: *(That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or) Type, Period, and Method of Construction:* "Type, period, or method of construction" refers to the way certain properties are related to one another by cultural tradition or function, by dates of construction or style, or by choice or availability of materials and technology. To be eligible under this Criterion, a property must clearly illustrate, through "distinctive characteristics" a pattern of features common to a particular class of resources. "Distinctive characteristics" are the physical features or traits that commonly recur in individual types, periods, or methods of construction. To be eligible, a property must clearly contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction. Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials.

The building is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses distinctive characteristics that make up the many qualities of the style, such as flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, idiosyncratic use of masonry, etc. The structure is eligible as a specimen of its type or period of construction because it is an

important example (within its context) of building practices in Palm Springs at mid-century. The building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Site on the local registry under Criterion 4.

Criterion 5: [That a) presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or) b: that possesses high artistic value.]

5a: WORKS OF A MASTER

A master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill. The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his work, or a particular idea or theme in his craft.

A property is not eligible as the work of a master, however, simply because it was designed by a prominent architect. For example, not every building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is eligible under this portion of Criterion 5, although it might meet other portions of the Criterion.

Although John Porter Clark's career has been somewhat eclipsed by his more famous early partner, Albert Frey, he remains important because he was the first licensed architect in the Coachella Valley and among the earliest practitioners of Modernism in the desert; Clark's career bridges the replacement of eclecticism with the emergence of modernism. Scholars are beginning to take a deeper interest in this enigmatic early practitioner, and the authorship of many of the firm's projects has recently been undergoing a reassessment. A short biographical study of Clark's work may be found in the attachments to this nomination. In short, Clark must be considered a Master architect because of his increasingly recognized greatness at his chosen profession. Further, the Stephens Residence is a signature representation of his career at mid-point. All traces of the eclecticism of his early ranch style homes that were built in Rancho Mirage and Smoke Tree Ranch have been removed, leaving his sense of proportion, massing and refinement in an emerging modern vernacular. His own signature modern style that makes simple materials appear elegant through the manipulation of solids and voids in the masonry block units and in the general massing and detailing of the buildings, define this period in Clark's style. Clark is clearly an architect of consummate skill and this project in particular exemplifies all of the markers of his emerging modernism.

5b: PROPERTIES POSSESSING HIGH ARTISTIC VALUES

High artistic values may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture. A property is eligible for its high artistic values if it so fully articulates a particular concept of design that it expresses an aesthetic ideal. As mentioned above, as an example of Clark's mature modern style, the building articulates Clark's own brand of modernism to a level of excellence that could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal. As the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, The building qualifies for listing as a Class 1 site on the local registry under Criterion 5.

Criterion 6: (That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or). This Criterion was created to address the resources contained within a potential historic district. Since no claim has been brought forward regarding an historic district in this tract, The building does not qualify for listing as a Class 1 Site on the local registry under Criterion 6.

ARCHEOLOGY

Criterion 7: (That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.) The building does not qualify for listing on the local registry under Criterion 7.

APPENDIX I

John Porter Clark Biography (1905-1991)

John Porter Clark is one of the seminal figures in the history of Palm Springs early modernist architecture, and yet for many, he remains the least known and possibly the most under-appreciated.

Clark was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa. His family soon relocated to Pasadena, California where he completed his high school education (1919-23). During those years he worked part-time with Pasadena architects Marston, Van Pelt & Maybury; it was Sylvanus Marston, a Cornell graduate himself who suggested that Clark study architecture at Cornell University. Clark was accepted at the Ithaca, New York University and devoted himself to the study of architecture, graduating in 1928 with a Bachelor of Architecture degree. He then returned to Pasadena where, from 1932 to 1935 he completed his apprenticeship in the office of Van Pelt and Lind.

"Marston, Van Pelt & Maybury were known for their traditional, if nascent modern designs. And Clark's apprenticeship there had served him well. But, by the time Frey and Clark met, there existed a shared compatibility in their mutual interest in simple, steel structures that would be applicable to both homes and educational facilities. While most clients did not yet understand the potential for steel houses, school boards were open to the efficiencies, cost-savings, and low-maintenance of steel construction. This was a kind of Modernism that the town could buy in to."⁶

In 1935, Clark met the important Palm Springs landowners and developers Sally and Culver Nichols who maintained a residence in Pasadena as well. Because of their faith in Palm Springs' future, they suggested that Clark's career might benefit by relocating to Palm Springs. In time they and their families became important clients of Clarks. Clark, who was unlicensed at the time, began his Palm Springs career utilizing Van Pelt & Lind's license – with their permission. In fact, all the work that Clark & Frey did together, from 1935-37 was under the firm name Van Pelt and Lind Architects.

In 1935 Palm Springs was still a very small town at that time. It was probably inevitable that the two gifted architect Clark and Frey would meet when Frey was living briefly in town to supervise the construction of the Kocher-Samson Office Building on Main Street (now North Palm Canyon Drive.) With the completion of the Kocher-Samson building, Frey's earlier partnership with Lawrence Kocher came to an amicable end due to a lack of work. Clark and Frey then established a short-lived partnership but, intrigued by an offer from Phillip Goodwin, Frey returned to New York for a couple of years to work on the Museum of Modern Art.

1939-52 Clark & Frey: Clark continued his practice in Palm Springs, and in 1939, Clark invited Frey to return to Palm Springs and revive their partnership as he was close to receiving his license and was now getting public commissions. Frey accepted and returned to Palm Springs. Clark soon completed his Licensing Exam and in 1940 established his firm as a sole proprietorship, John Porter Clark, Architect, Palm Springs. With this firm, he is considered to be the first licensed architect to open a practice in Palm Springs. Clark was then able to obtain public commissions and upgrade the quality of the firm's projects to include schools and later, larger commercial buildings⁸. He and Frey completed several projects under the Van Pelt & Lind license before passing the licensing exam.

In 1939 Frey returned to the California desert to begin his collaboration with Clark in earnest, a business partnership that was to last for nineteen years. Palm Springs' experienced a building boom by the end of World War II and emerged post-war as an important resort destination. As one of the few architectural firms then practicing in Palm Springs, Clark & Frey were well-positioned to receive numerous commissions. Much of the

⁶ Stern and Hess, *Julius Shulman*.

⁷ Frey received his license in 1943.

⁸ Rosa, *Albert Frey, Architect*, p 75

work produced in the partnership was of a low-keyed, generally refined modernism – a version of modern that came to dominate the American architectural scene in the 1950s and 1960s.⁹ Important projects from this period include the Villa Hermosa Apartments (1945), American Legion Post # 519 (1948); Class 1 Historic site # 36 and the Raymond Loewy residence (1946); Class 1 Historic site #33-01.

It should be recognized that the late thirties and early forties were a time when it was hard to keep an architectural office open on modern work alone. As related to Rosa by Frey, the firm did both traditional and modern work, indicating that: "If a client were receptive to modern architecture, Frey would design the building, but if a traditional or Mission Style building was preferred, Clark would design it. This allowed both of them to work on what they wanted and kept the office financially sound. When he was not working on modern houses, Frey would assist Clark with detailing and sometimes worked on plans for his traditional California ranch and Spanish colonial houses. Clark, in return would assist Frey in the details on the modern homes."¹⁰ The early years of the collaboration included projects in both styles.

However this view of the firm's output may not be completely accurate. Another view of the distribution of the work in an architectural partnership is the often unspoken understanding that the projects are usually designed by the partner that brought in the client. While it may be convenient to sort a firm's output along stylistic lines, an examination of the records suggests that both of the partners were equally proficient designers who were qualified to create in both modern and traditional styles. For example, Clark's own 1939 residence, an early high-style essay on Modernism, quite possibly influenced by Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye, most have sprung from his own imagination. It would be an extremely rare architect who would give a partner the responsibility of designing his own personal residence: "Clark's house is as direct and imaginative in its manipulation of few forms and materials as Frey's first two houses. It is also a rectilinear box clad in corrugated metal, but here Clark raises the box above the ground on angles supports, instantly and inexpensively doubling the usable living space of the house by creating a shady open patio. As Clark's family grew, a one-story wing with more bedrooms was added to enclose the yard. According to his colleagues, Clark was a capable architect who worked well with the pragmatic requirements and constraints of a school board client. He was an equally capable designer, as demonstrated in his own house, built before Frey's first house."¹¹

It is safe to say that, regardless of which partner was the design principal, "Clark & Frey's projects, both before and after WWII were important contributions toward placing Palm Springs architecture on the map as a new frontier for the modern spirit." Rosa p 70 "The influx of soldiers and their families led to a post-war building boom in PS and adjacent areas, Clark & Frey received numerous commissions for houses and commercial projects from war workers who decided to stay in the desert and start small businesses. Smoke Tree Ranch, a private resort community was the site of many Clark and Frey houses. The Ranch had a very specific design code that required all private residences to be built in traditional ranch style with a pitched shingle roof¹²

Between the years 1939-42 and 1949-58, Clark served on the Palm Springs Planning Commission. During the WWII years of 1942-45, he served in the Corps of Engineers of the U.S. Army.

The partnership changed in 1952 when Robson C. Chambers (1919-1999), who had been an employee of the firm since 1946 was made a partner. The Los Angeles-born Chambers was raised in Banning, and received his Bachelor of Architecture from USC in 1941, after which he immediately began working for Clark & Frey. After only four years, the partnership of Clark, Frey & Chambers was dissolved during the most lucrative year of Clark and Frey's nineteen years together. Clark, who was responsible for the business aspects of the firm, felt it necessary to focus on the more profitable commercial, public and institutional structures and minimize the labor intensive but largely unprofitable residential work.

⁹ Rosa, *Albert Frey, Architect* p 8

¹⁰ Rosa, *Albert Frey, Architect* 37.

¹¹ Stern and Hess, *Julius Shulman*.

¹² Rosa, *Albert Frey, Architect* p73.

Clark then became partners with Stewart and Roger Williams, practicing under the firm name Williams, Clark & Williams. Stewart Williams praised Clark, 'not just as a designer, but as a salesman, engineer...John Clark was the most trusted man in the Valley...he made people recognize that architects were an important part of the community.'¹³ It was during this period that the firm's largest project, the Palm Springs City Hall; Class I Historic site # 33-04, was completed.

The former partners remained cordial as evidence by their collaboration in 1963, on the Valley Station of the Aerial Tramway project which was a joint venture of Frey & Chambers, with Williams & Williams who designed the Mountain Station and Clark who acted as the coordinating architect. "The surefooted design reflects Clark's experience in designing many schools with steel. Trusses form the flat roof and wide overhangs for shade. The metal panels are set in, and the entry is marked by simple curved concrete block walls and landscaping. The regular steel system is treated almost like wallpaper, sliced off at the point it is no longer needed; it continues into the landscape as a frame past enclosing walls. The concept is modest but strong. Where lesser architects used Modernism's simplicity to cut corners, Clark makes the most of a limited palette of Materials and Shapes."¹⁴

¹³ Stern and Hess, *Julius Shulman*.

¹⁴ Stern and Hess, *Julius Shulman*.

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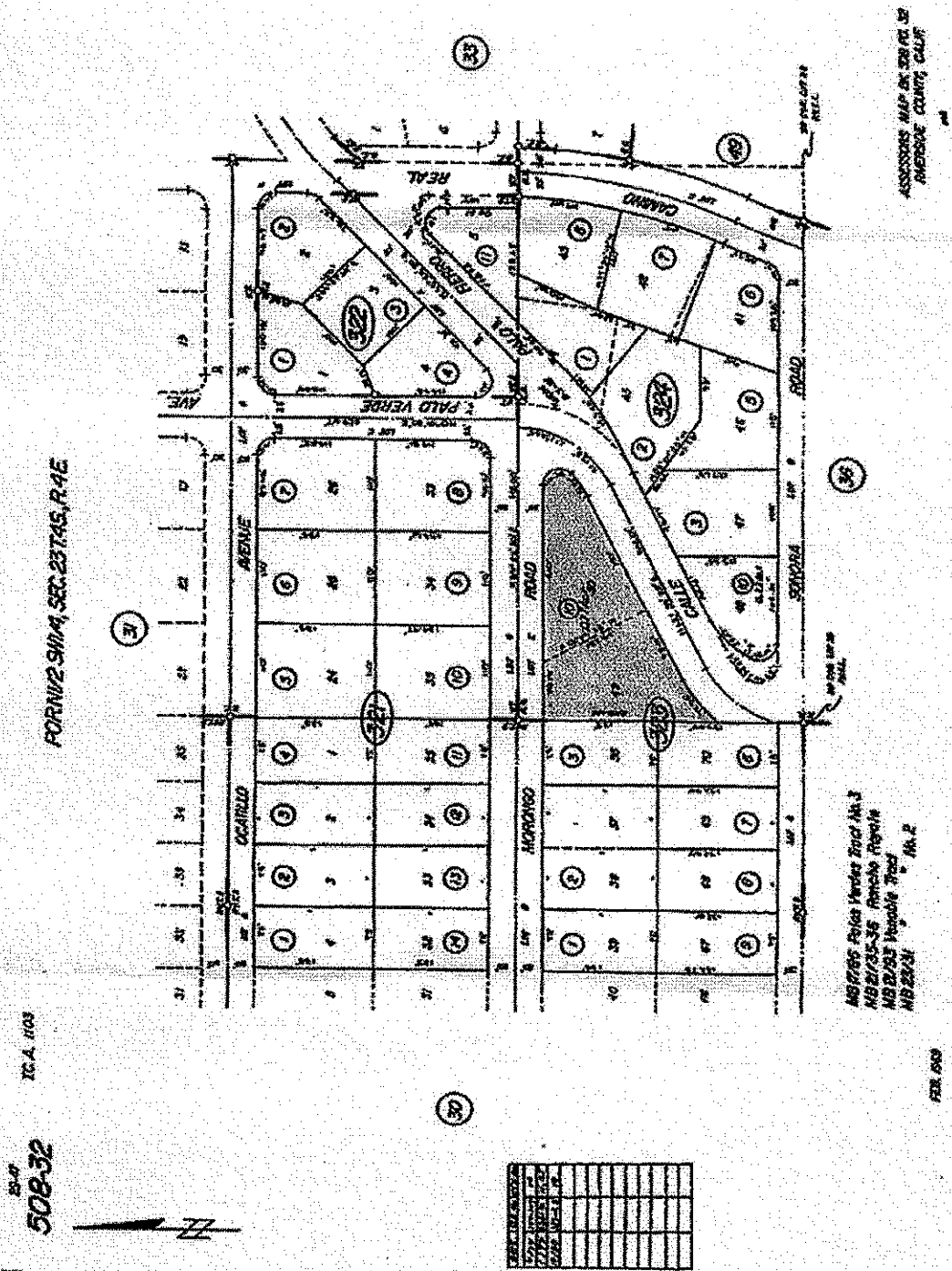
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APPENDIX IV: ASSESSOR'S MAP



APPENDIX V: PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

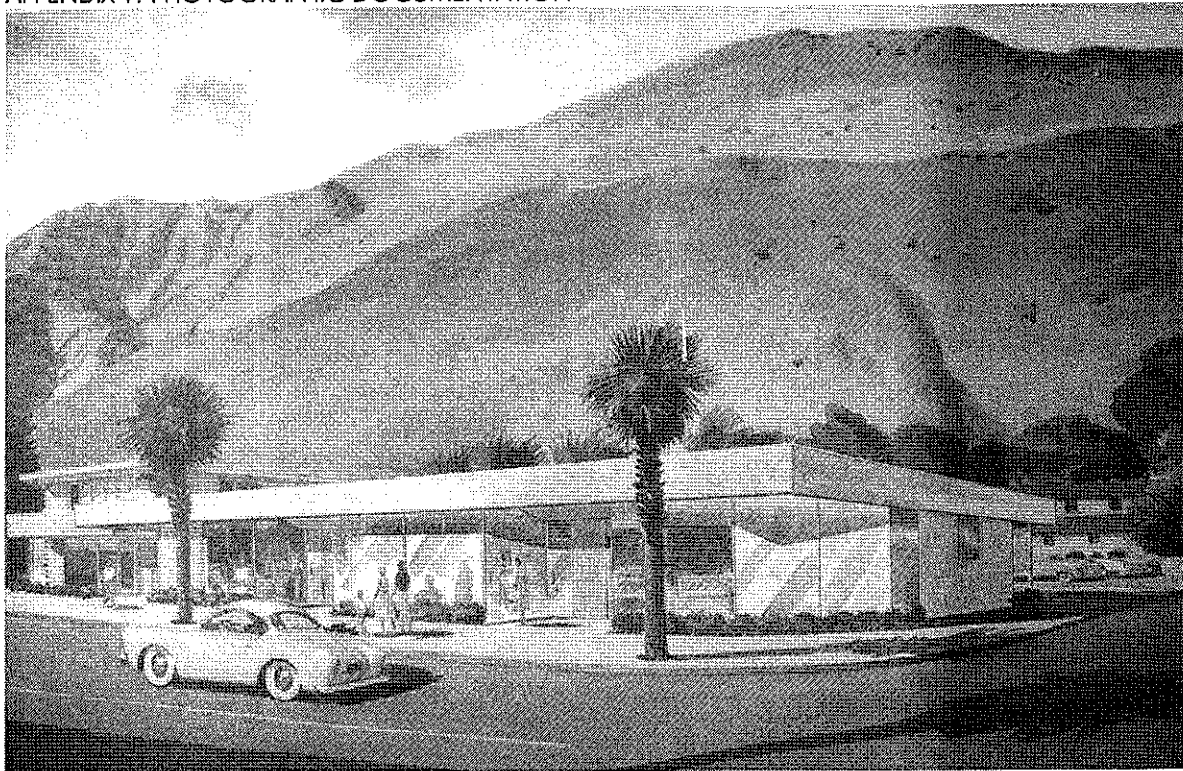


Figure 3 Nichols Building rendering - Location of Dr. Stephens first Palm Springs office.



Figure 4 Stephens' family's first Palm Springs home.

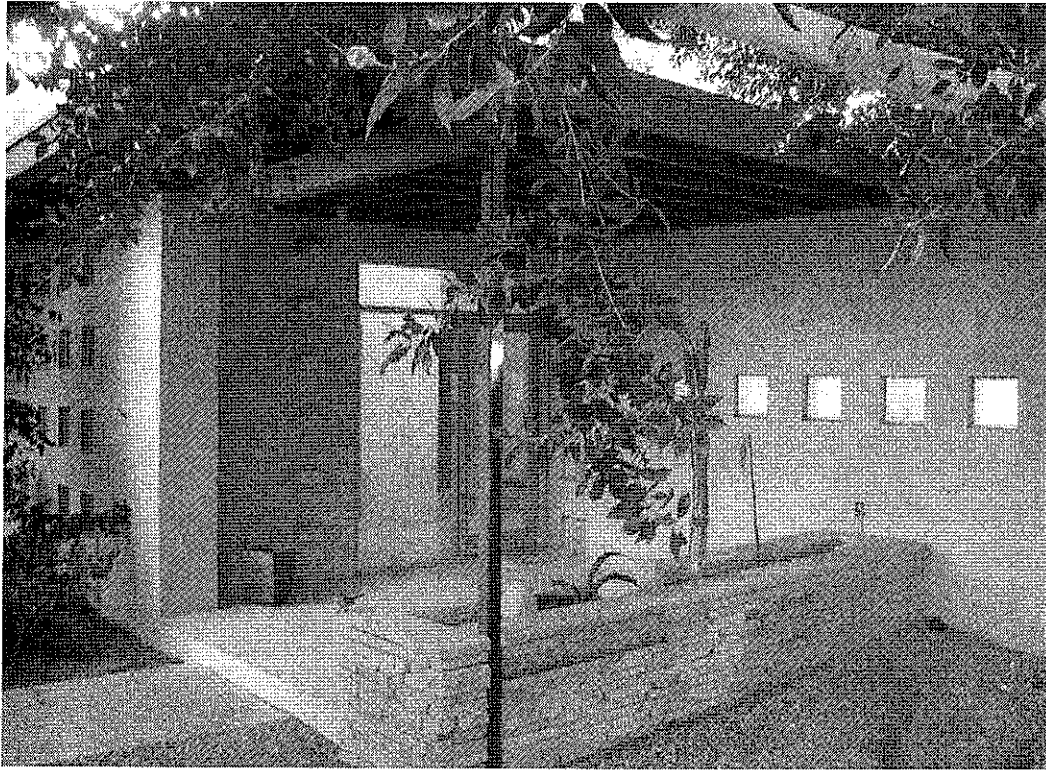


Figure 5 Signature details of subject property

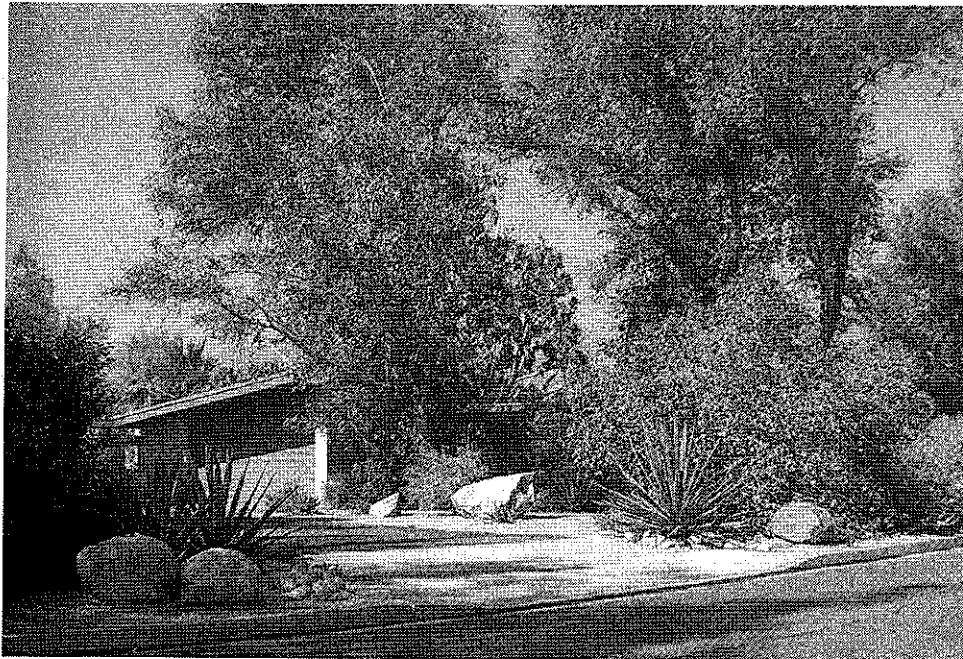


Figure 6 Driveway and Garage of subject property

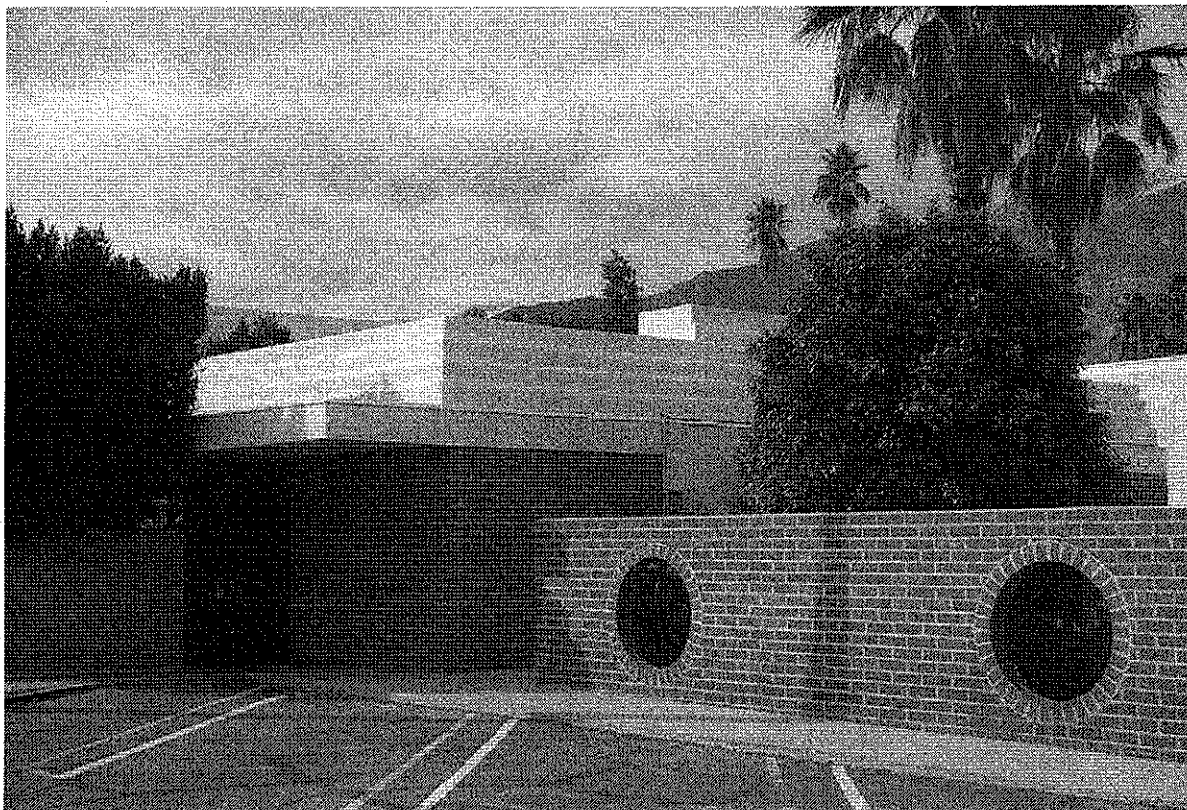


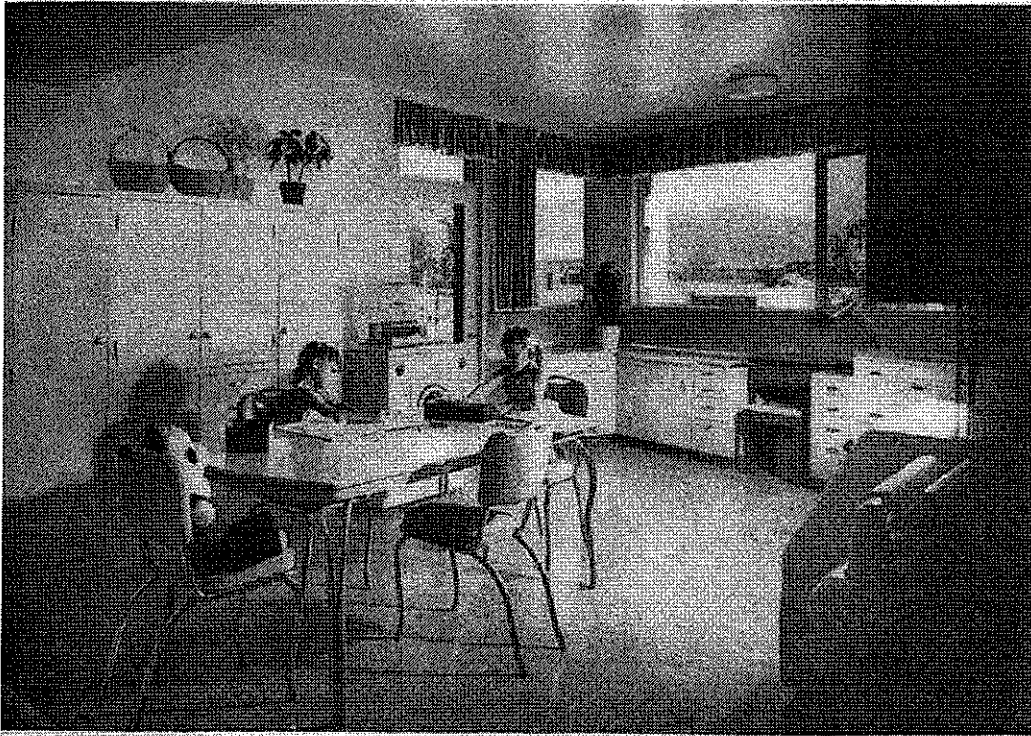
Figure 7 Dr. Stephens Medical Building (1955, John Porter Clark)

House Beautiful September 1955

Another postwar development:

THE FAMILY ROOM

It takes many forms. But above all it's a room that can change its character from day to day and year to year. Here is a hard-working example

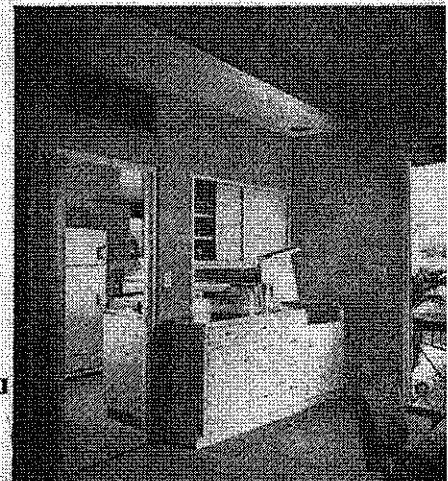


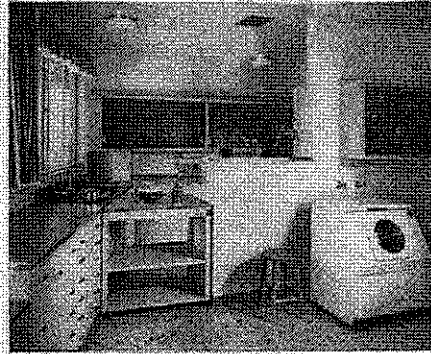
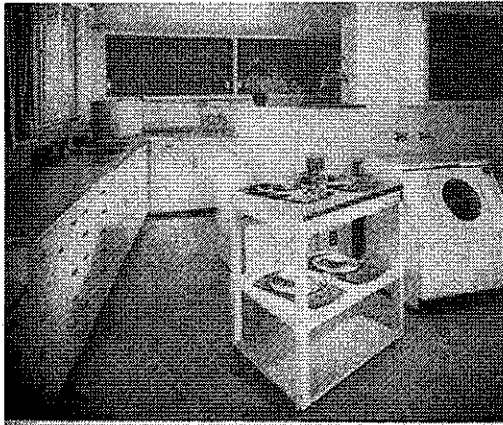
This family room belongs spiritually and visually to the kitchen. But it catches a lot of rough living that goes on, in many houses, in other rooms. It's playroom, sewing room, laundry plus kitchen.

1. A pass-through and two-way china cabinet unite the dining area with kitchen. The counter on both sides is in the same architectural grammar as the family room. (See plan opposite.)

2. From her compact cooking center, Mrs. Stephens can easily serve food on the patio, to the dining area of the living room and also in the family room. Cleaning up is simple.

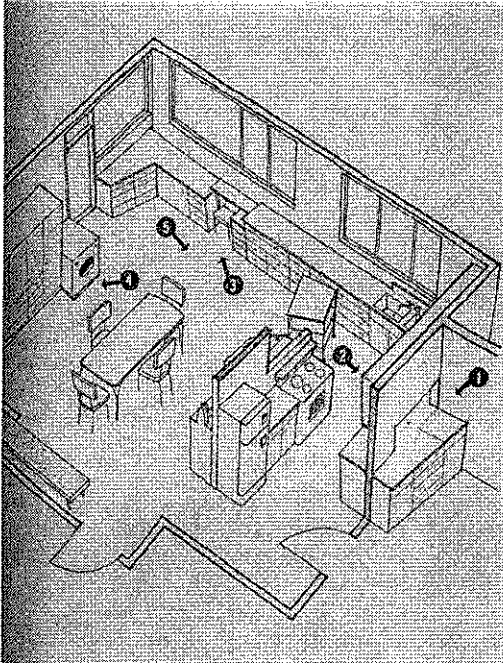
3. Every detail was thought out in advance to make the sewing corner as efficient as possible. Notice how the ironing board pushes back under the counter into what is usually dead storage.





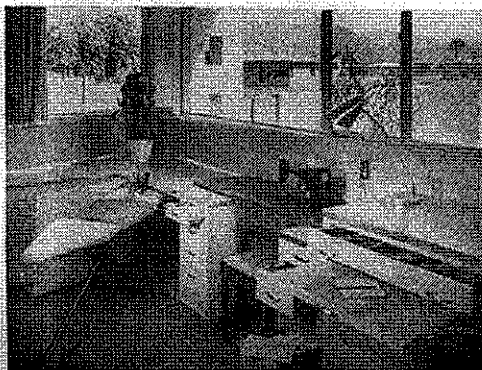
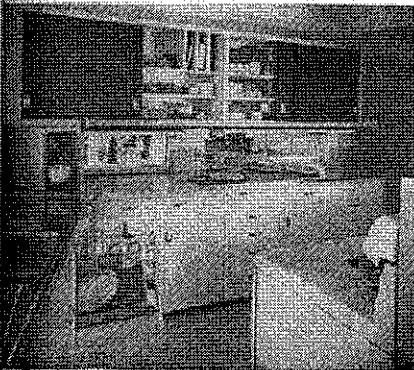
Clark and Frey, architects
Dr. & Mrs. Hugh Stephens, owners

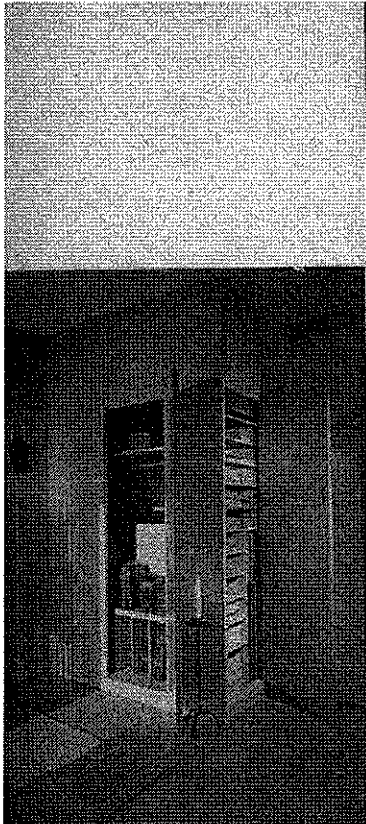
5. Movable shelves scaled to counter height and made to wedge precisely between the stove and sink enclose the cooking area, making it into more workable space. When the children were toddlers, shelves blocked their route to the stove. Now they operate like a tea cart.



4. By analyzing her own work habits and deciding all the various kinds of jobs she'd be doing in the family room, Mrs. Stephens designed a storage cabinet that will hold such awkward but necessary household items as a dressmaker's dummy, unneeded clothes and toys.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAYBRAND PARKER

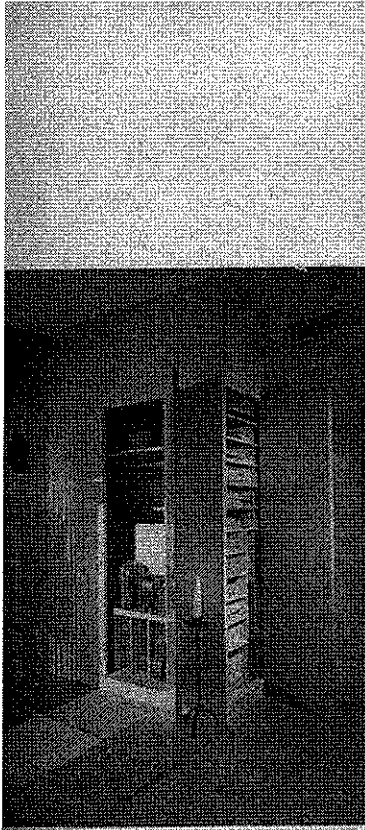




CLARK AND FREN, ARCHITECTS



Performing in a home orchestra is a fine way, Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Stephens of Palm Springs, Calif., have found, to educate their three daughters to good music. The little girls practice harder and enjoy a piece more when they know the whole family will play it together. Music for them is an every-day activity that takes no more preparation than going to the music cabinet and selecting a number. Convenient storage for the violins and violas was worked into the guest closet (left). Narrow shelves keep sheet music available, clearly catalogued.



CLARE AND TRACY, ARCHITECTS



Performing in a home orchestra is a fine way, Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Stephens of Palm Springs, Calif., have found, to educate their three daughters to good music. The little girls practice harder and enjoy a piece more when they know the whole family will play it together. Music for them is an every-day activity that takes no more preparation than going to the music cabinet and selecting a number. Convenient storage for the violins and violas was worked into the guest closet (left). Narrow shelves keep sheet music available, clearly catalogued.

Appendix VI: Historic Consultant Qualifications

Professional Qualifications Standards: The Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61 defines the minimum education and experience required to perform historic preservation identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities. The minimum professional qualifications in architecture are a professional degree in architecture plus at least two years full-time experience in architecture; or a State license to practice architecture.

Patrick McGrew received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oklahoma in 1965. He has been actively engaged in the architectural profession, specializing in historic preservation, since then. McGrew has been a licensed architect in the State of California since 1970, as well as a holder of the NCARB (national licensing) certificate. He possesses an in-depth knowledge of all procedures and standards utilized in the identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment of historic properties as evidenced by his lengthy career known for the depth and breadth of accumulated architectural / historical knowledge. He places a high value on the objectivity and completeness of his written works. He has several years experience in research, writing, practicing and teaching architecture with an academic and historical agencies and institutions. He has made a substantial contribution through research and publication of a body of scholarly knowledge in the field of California architectural history. His experience has included the preparation of numerous historic research reports, National Register nominations, and San Francisco and Palm Springs historic site nominations, as well as the preparation of plans and specifications for architectural preservation projects. He regulates his firm through the use of ethics standards developed by the Society of Architectural Historians.

Patrick McGrew's knowledge and reputation in the field of historic preservation provided the basis his public service as the long-time President of San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board, which extended over an eighteen year span beginning in 1978 when he was first appointed by then-Mayor George Moscone; he served the next ten years under Mayor Dianne Feinstein. Although he served less than a year under Mayor Art Agnos, it was Agnos who declared November 17, 1991 "Landmarks of San Francisco Day" to honor the publication of McGrew's first book, *Landmarks of San Francisco* (Harry Abrams, New York, 1991). Reappointed in 1992 by Mayor Frank Jordan, McGrew served four more years on San Francisco's Landmarks Board. McGrew's second book, *Landmarks of Los Angeles* was published by Abrams in 1994. His acknowledgment by government and/or regulatory agencies, combined with Mr. McGrew's impressive list of publications on California's historic architecture, is a testament to his proficiency as a leading expert in California architectural history. He is a member of the Society of Architectural Historians, and has received many awards for his work during a distinguished career. In 1995, his book *The Historic Houses of Presidio Terrace*, received an award of honor from the California Heritage Council.

Upon the occasion of Mr. McGrew's induction into the City Club of San Francisco's Wall of Fame, Mayor Willie Brown declared November 30, 2003 as 'Patrick McGrew Day' in San Francisco, and a Commendation from the United States Senate was presented in recognition of McGrew's 'distinguished career and outstanding contributions to the City of San Francisco.' Patrick McGrew moved to Palm Springs, California in 2005. Recently McGrew has presented lectures on architects William F. Cody and is currently preparing a lecture on architect Hugh Kaptur, both for the Palm Springs Art Museums' Architecture and Design Council and in January 2010 completed a monograph entitled *Donald Wexler, Architect*. Previous Class 1 Nominations prepared by McGrew include the Oasis Commercial Building; The (Town & Country) Center; the Kocher-Samson Building; the Sidney Noles / Kirvin Satterwhite Residence; the Rachael de Berbrant Residence; and the Royal Hawaiian Estates Historic District Nomination.

Memberships and Affiliations:

Board Member & Lecturer: Architecture & Design Council, Palm Springs Art Museum
Board Member: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation
Palm Springs Architectural Advisory Committee
Palm Springs Historical Society
Society of Architectural Historians, Southern California Chapter
California Preservation Foundation
National Trust for Historic Preservation