



Historic Site Preservation Board Staff Report

DATE: June 10, 2014 PUBLIC HEARING

SUBJECT: AN APPLICATION BY WAHOO CAL PROPERTIES, LLC (OWNERS) IN COLLABORATION WITH THE PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION, REQUESTING CLASS 1 HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR "THE TOWN AND DESERT APARTMENTS" (CURRENT "THE HIDEAWAY") LOCATED AT 370 WEST ARENAS ROAD, ZONE R-3 (HSPB #90)

FROM: Department of Planning Services

SUMMARY

Wahoo Cal Properties, LLC (owners) in collaboration with the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (PSPF), have submitted an application for Class 1 historic designation for "The Town and Desert Apartments (currently named the "Hideaway") located at 370 West Arenas Road. Such designation would:

1. Place the subject property under the guidance of Municipal Code Section 8.05
2. Require present and subsequent owners to maintain the buildings consistent with that ordinance,
3. Grant possible property tax reduction opportunities to the owners under the State of California Mills Act.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Open the public hearing and receive public testimony.
2. Adopt Resolution HSPB 90, recommending that the City Council approve the designation of 370 West Arenas Road a Class 1 historic site.

<i>Related Relevant City Actions by HSPB, Planning, Fire, Building, etc</i>	
	Site inspection by members of the HSPB and City Staff will be scheduled.

<i>Neighborhood Meeting</i>	
None	

Ownership Status	
2000	Purchase by current owner.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

Historic Preservation activities in Palm Springs are regulated under Municipal Code Section 8.05 ("*Historic Preservation*"). The purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance is:

"... for the purpose of preserving areas and specific buildings of the city which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political, architectural and archaeological history. This chapter is intended to stabilize and improve buildings, structures or areas which are considered to be of historical, architectural, archaeological or ecological value, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of specific buildings for the education and welfare of the citizens."

Definition of an Historic Site.

Section 8.05.020 of the Municipal Code provides the definition of a historic site as follows. Staff has evaluated the site against this definition and provided discussion on each item as it relates to this specific site below.

(a) Historic Site.

An historic site is any real property such as: a building; a structure, including but not limited to archways, tiled areas and similar architectural elements; an archaeological excavation or object that is unique or significant because of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect and:

The Town & Desert Apartments (T&DA) is significant because of its design, setting, and aesthetic effect, as characterized further in this staff report.

- 1. That is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community; or*

Contrary to the historic resources report, staff does not believe the site is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the national state or local community.

- 2. That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history; or*

Although Herbert Burns was a "civic-minded" and socially active resident of Palm Springs from 1946 until his death around 1988 as discussed in more detail below, staff does not believe these activities constitute "a meaningful contribution".

- 3. That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history; or*

The T&DA possesses many of the distinctive characteristics, detailing, and styling of the post-war period of development of resort-based architecture in Palm Springs, when local developers, hoteliers, homeowners and merchants embraced the simple bold, clean lines of the Modern period of architecture, adapted to the intense desert climate.

- 4. That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction;*

The T&DA is a well-preserved and maintained example of the postwar "desert modern vernacular" architecture, emphasizing leisure and outdoor enjoyment, capitalizing on the views and vistas of the nearby mountains, and simple, but stylish architectural detailing that have become "trademarks" of the Palm Springs Mid-century Modern period.

- 5. That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value;*

The TD&A is an intact, easily identified example of the work of Herbert Burns, an architectural designer whose work possesses high artistic value and incorporates many "trademark" design elements such as the "double cantilevered eave", thin ledgestone planters and piers, wide eaves and overhangs; all elements that produce a strong horizontal presence found in many of his local commissions. His effective use of "bris-soliel" to control the intense desert sun as well as the broad cantilevered eaves reflect a respect and understanding of the harsh desert climate in which his designs were placed.

- 6. That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction;*

Staff does not believe the subject property meets this condition.

- 7. That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.*

Staff is unaware of any archaeological or pre-historical relevancy to this site.

Designation of Historic Sites.

Only the City Council is authorized to designate historic sites. When the Historic Site Preservation Board determines that Class 1 historic designation of a certain site or district would further the purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Board may initiate studies, surveys and investigations it deems necessary to adequately gather information in consideration of such a recommendation to the City Council.

Conditions that apply to Class 1 Historic Sites.

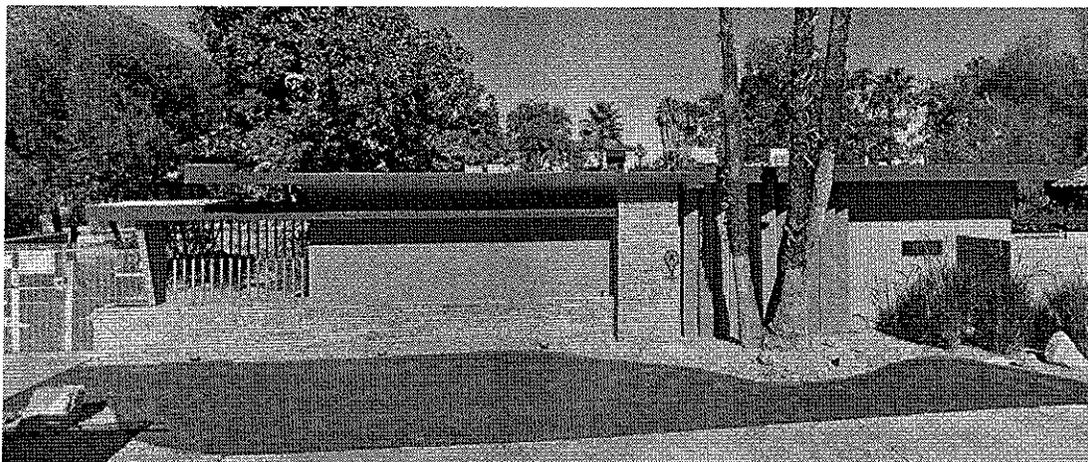
According to Section 8.05 of the Municipal Code, the following shall apply to a Class 1 Historic Site:

1. It shall meet the definition of a historic site as outlined in Municipal Code Section 8.05.020.
2. An archival file shall be maintained on the property by the City.
3. It may be qualified as 'historic' at the federal, state, and/or county level.
4. The structure/site may not be modified nor objects removed without the approval of the City Council.
5. The use may be limited by the City Council to the extent that it may impair the integrity of the site.
6. A marker explaining the historic nature of the site will be installed at the site in a location viewable from the public way.
7. Compliance with all rules and regulations for Historic Sites and Historic Districts under Article IV of Chapter 8.05 of the Municipal Code shall be required.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The subject property is an apartment / hotel building located on an approximately 20,155 square foot lot in the Tennis Club Neighborhood at the northeast corner of Arenas Road and Lugo Road. The building was designed by architectural designer Herbert Burns in what has come to be characterized as "Desert Modern". The building is a single story, flat-roofed structure with a thin fascia. It is clad in sand finished stucco with generous eaves and overhangs, single-pane steel casement corner windows, and "ledgestone" rock planters and vertical "piers", expansive lawn and pool area, and bris-soliel sunscreens.

The building has a strong horizontal feel that is further emphasized with Burns' "signature" "thin, second cantilevered eave" placed just below the eave and overhang of the roof, seen below in the front façade. (This photo also shows the horizontal sandstone planter and accent panel which is balanced and offset by the vertical wood boards forming the bris-soliel and the angled "end panel support" at the left side of the photo).

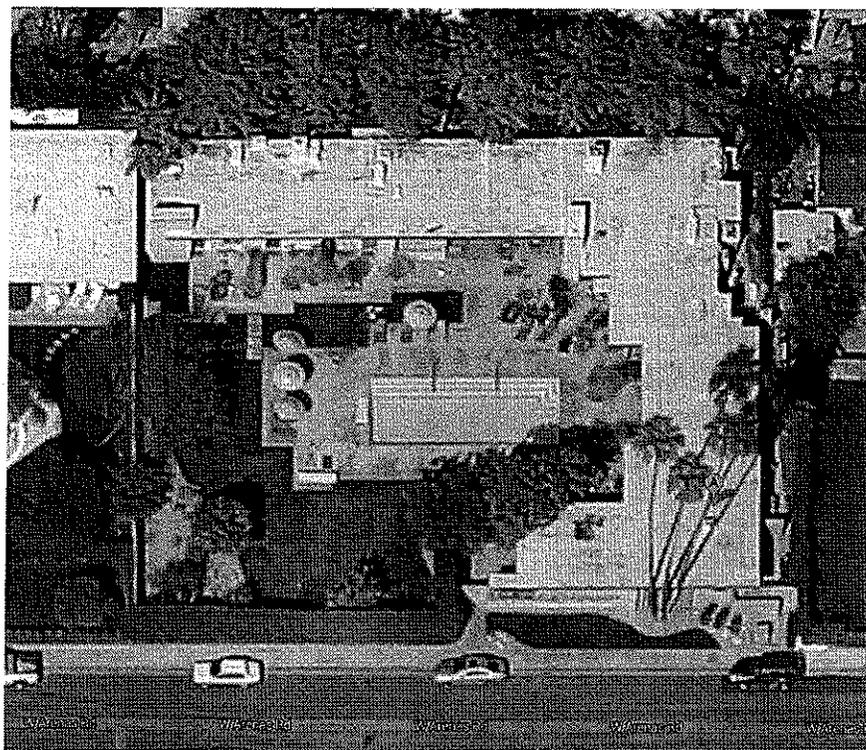


FRONT VIEW OF THE TOWN & DESERT APARTMENTS

It was originally configured as an L-shaped structure with five efficiency apartments, an owners unit with guest room and maids quarters, a garage, and an office. The Town & Desert Apartments (T&DA) were designed with comfort and leisure in mind, and reflected (for its time) a "high end" type of vacation accommodation for those who may have chosen to spend the entire winter season in Palm Springs, as opposed to a simple hotel room that might be rented for a weekend or week.

The building received national attention in 1948 when it was included in an Architectural Record magazine article entitled, "California Hide-Away, Motel Style" and numerous other nationally circulated publications and books about motel and hotel architecture.

Numerous modifications over time have included conversion of the garage to living space and additions. These changes do not appear to have adversely impacted the integrity of the site. The building is set back on the lot and surrounds a large courtyard area and pool. There is no off-street parking.



AERIAL PHOTO OF 370 WEST ARENAS ROAD - THE TOWN & DESERT APARTMENTS

The building was designed by Herbert Burns and he and his wife were the owner and operator of the property from its construction in 1947 until 1954. Although little biographical information is available about Burns, he is credited for having designed numerous hotels, residences and other commercial buildings in Palm Springs in the late 40's and 50's. The historic resources report dated March 2014 notes that Burns was not a licensed architect, but the stylish and comfortable hotels and other buildings in Palm Springs whose design is credited to Burns attest to his design competency.

Herbert Burns (1897 – 1988) arrived in Palm Springs with his wife Gayle in 1946, having completed a term of service in the Army Air Corps. He was a building designer in Los Angeles at the time. The Burns were active in civic and social life in Palm Springs, Herbert served on the Chamber of Commerce Board, the Palm Springs Hotel and Apartment Association and made an unsuccessful run for mayor in 1950.

DEFINING HISTORIC CHARACTERISTICS

The physical character-defining historic features of this site include the following:

1. Strong horizontality in its design, emphasized by the low, flat horizontal roof line and thin fascia.
2. The thin ledgestone/standstone planters and vertical “piers”.
3. The “second fascia and eave” cantilevered and placed below the cantilevered eave of the roof.
4. Angled “end panel” at the secondary eave (front façade).
5. The steel-sash corner casement windows.
6. The “bris-soliel” sun screens.
7. The lush, expansive lawn area surrounding the large swimming pool.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

In considering a recommendation for Class 1 historic designation, pursuant to Municipal Code Section 8.05.160, the Board and the City Council shall find that the purposes of the Historic Preservation chapter are furthered by designation of such property as a historic site or district. The purpose of the Historic Preservation chapter of the Municipal Code is outlined in PSMC 8.05.010:

This chapter is adopted pursuant to the authority of (California) Government Code Section 37361 for the purpose of preserving areas and specific buildings of the city which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, political, architectural and archaeological history. This chapter is intended to stabilize and improve buildings, structures or areas which are considered to be of historical, architectural, archaeological or ecological value, to foster civic beauty, to strengthen the local economy and to promote the use of specific buildings for the education and welfare of the citizens. (Ord. 140 §

Class 1 designation of The Town & Desert Apartments would further the purpose of the historic preservation ordinance because it reflects elements of the City's architectural, social, and cultural history as follows:

1. *That is associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history*

The T&DA is associated with Herbert & Gayle Burns, who arrived in Palm Springs in 1946 and were active in civic and social life during the remainder of their time here. Although not including serving on the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce Board, the Hotel and Apartment Association. Staff considers this a minor aspect in the overall analysis of the property.

2. *That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or*

The Town & Desert Apartments embodies the distinctive characteristics of the local vernacular architecture during the postwar period, which has become known as "Desert Modernism". Featuring generously appointed units for the period, an emphasis on poolside leisure, advantageously oriented to take advantage of the commanding views of the San Jacinto Mountains, and simple but stylish architectural detailing.

3. *That presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value;*

The TD&A is a well-preserved example of the architecture and design of Herbert Burns. Whose numerous local commissions can often be easily spotted by their strong horizontal lines, ample use of thin sandstone/ledgestone planters and accent panels, and his "signature" "second eave" placed just below the cantilevered roof overhang. Burns' philosophy behind his designs emphasized comfort and leisure and "raised the bar" in terms of creating hotel accommodations that were well-appointed and ample enough for an extended seasonal stay.

CONCLUSION

The Town & Desert Apartments meets the definition of a historic site as outlined in the Municipal Code in several ways. The designation of the Town & Desert as a Class 1 historic site will further the purpose of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

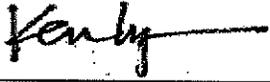
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Section 15331 (Historical Resources Restoration/Rehabilitation) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed designation is categorically exempt from environmental review as the proposed designation meets the conditions outlined for preservation of a historic resource (Class 31 Categorical Exemption).

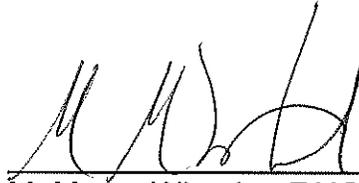
NOTIFICATION

Pursuant to section 8.05.140 of the Municipal Code of Palm Springs, All property owners within five hundred (500) feet of the subject property have been notified and

notice was made in a newspaper of general circulation. As of the writing of this report, staff has not received any inquiries on this matter.



Ken Lyon, RA,
Associate Planner



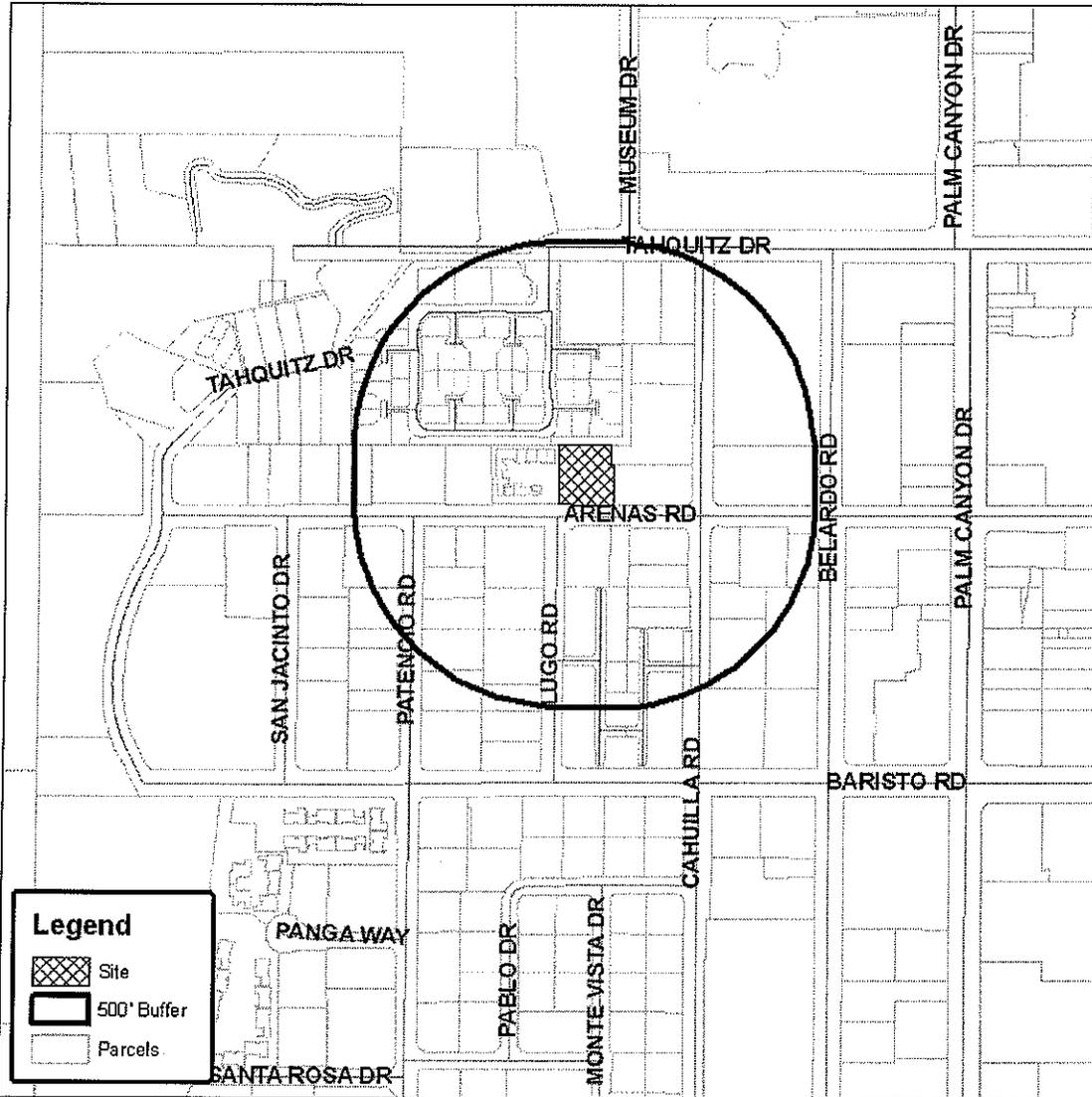
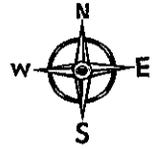
M. Margo Wheeler, FAICP
Director of Planning Services

Attachments:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Draft Resolution
3. Historic Resources Survey, Application, letter of support from the owner, and related documents.
4. DPR form from 2004 Citywide Historic Resource Reconnaissance Survey



Department of Planning Services Vicinity Map



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

CASE NO: HSPB 90

APPLICANT: Wahoo Cal Hotels, LLC

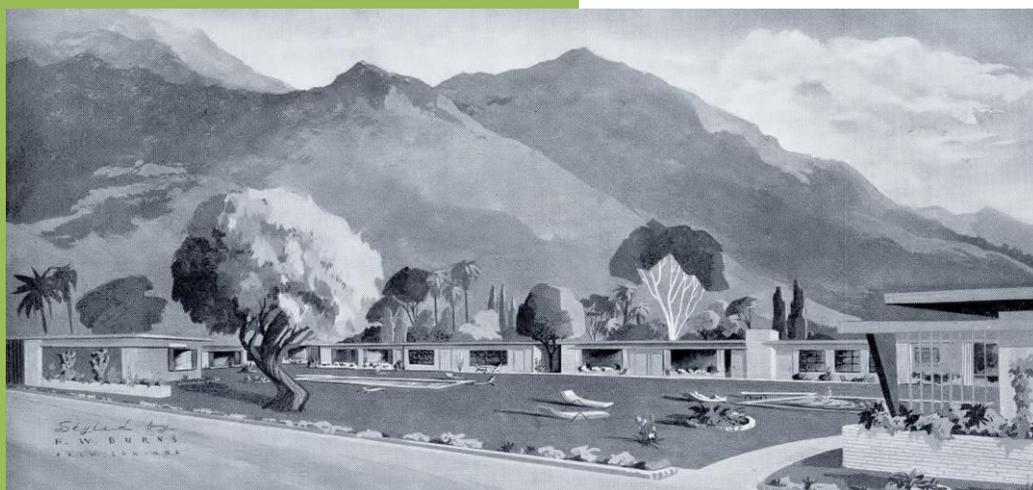
DESCRIPTION: An application by Wahoo Cal Hotels, LLC, (owners) in collaboration with the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, requesting that the Board recommend approval of a Class 1 historic site designation by City Council of the Town & Desert Apartments located at 370 West Arenas Road, Zone R-3.

Town & Desert Apartments

(today the "Hideaway")

370 West Arenas Road
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**Nomination Application
for City of Palm Springs
Class 1 Historic Site**



Prepared by

Ron & Barbara Marshall

for the

Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

March 2014

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the following individuals for either research or editing assistance:

Ron Duby
Susan Secoy Jensen
Lance C. O'Donnell, AIA
and
Jeri Vogelsang



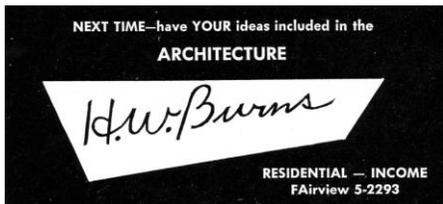
PUTTING ON THE GREEN

—Pospesil Photo

This photo appears in the April 1954 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine, the caption reads (in part): “When Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wills of Seattle returned to Town & Desert for their sixth season of desert vacationing, a mock house warming party was given by owners Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Burns....Tex Kidwell entertained with songs of the west....”

(Photo by Paul Pospesil, Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

Cover Image: December 1955 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine
(Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)



Town & Desert Apartments

CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE NOMINATION - TABLE of CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: PAGE 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PAGE 4

CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION FORM: PAGE 5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: PAGE 9

EVALUATION for CLASS 1 SITE DESIGNATION: PAGE 21

INTEGRITY ANALYSIS: 23

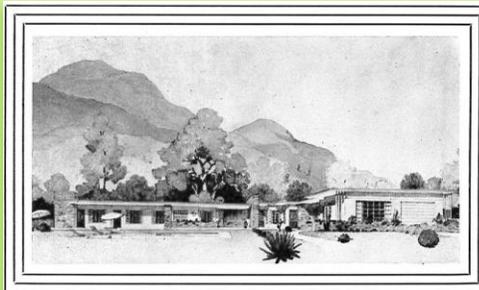
APPENDICES

- I Owner's Letter of Support
- II 2000 Grant Deed (includes Legal Description)
- III Assessor's Map
- IV Photographic Documentation of Building and Site
- V Architectural Details
- VI Miscellaneous Historical Photographs & Ephemera

Introduction

The Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (PSPF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to educate and promote public awareness of the importance of preserving the historical resources and architecture of the city of Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley area.”

In March 2014 the PSPF board of directors, in consultation with the owners of the Town & Desert Apartments, assigned the task of writing the property’s Class 1 Historic Site nomination to board members Ron and Barbara Marshall.



Palm Springs Finest

TOWN & DESERT is offering a new beauty and comfort to a discriminating clientele appreciating spacious and quiet living – in the center of the Village.

The personal attention of Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Burns, the managing owners, will be given inquiries for accommodations. These may be made by writing, telephoning or telegraphing Town & Desert, 370 West Arenas (two blocks toward the mountains from Bullocks new store). Telephone 9001

TOWN & DESERT

Advertisement in December 1947 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine
(Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SIGNIFICANCE: The Town & Desert Apartments were designed by “architectural designer” Herbert Burns in 1947. As an important and largely intact example of a desert modernist resort hotel structure, the complex exhibits numerous stylistic markers that place it in the historic context of Palm Springs’ modern period.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA: The Town & Desert Apartments have not previously been evaluated for Class 1 Historic Site eligibility. However, the Town & Desert Apartments (catalogued as the “Hideaway”) appears prominently in the 2004 Palm Springs Historical Resource Survey Final Report.

A brief summary of the evaluation contained in this nomination is as follows:

8.05.020 (a) paragraph 1 - **Events:** This criterion recognizes properties associated with events or patterns of events or historic trends. In this nomination, the applicable “pattern of events” is the gradual rise of Palm Springs’ prominence in midcentury architectural excellence. The Town & Desert Apartments are an outstanding example of commercial design and the construction of buildings within the context of midcentury desert modernism. The nominated commercial complex is associated with this pattern of events for its ability to exemplify the modern period of the national, state and local history. *The Town & Desert Apartments is associated with this pattern of events, and is associated as well with Criterion 3 for its ability to exemplify a particular period of the national, state or local history. Therefore, the Town & Desert Apartments qualify for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site under Criterion 1.*

8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 3, 4 & 5 - **Design/Construction:** The Town & Desert Apartments is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up the modernist style, including horizontality, expansive amounts of glass, use of natural materials, etc. Additionally, the work of architectural designer Herbert Burns must be catalogued as the work of a “Master” architect because of his record of architectural excellence. *Therefore, for its distinctive characteristics, as the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, the Town & Desert Apartments qualify as a Class 1 Historic Site under Criteria 3, 4 & 5.*

SUMMARY: This evaluation finds the Town & Desert Apartments eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Historic Site under 8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 1, 3, 4 & 5 of the local ordinance’s seven criteria. Additionally, the Town & Desert Apartments retain a very high degree of architectural integrity. The 2004 Citywide Historical Resource Survey opined that “the hotel at 370 West Arenas [i.e., the Town & Desert Apartments] appears to meet the level of significance necessary for individual National Register of Historic Places or California Register of Historical Resources.”



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

**Department of
Planning Services**
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm
Springs, CA 92262
Telephone: 760-323-8245
Fax: 760-322-8360

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@palmsspringsca.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 designations, 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: Town & Desert Apartments (later the “Town and Desert Hotel”)

Other names: Hideaway

Address: 370 West Arenas Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Assessor Parcel Number: 513141011-5

Owner’s Name: Christy Eugenis and Stan Amy (as Wahoo-Cal LLC)

Owner’s Address: 4109 NE 19th Avenue, Suite B

City: Portland State: OR Zip: 97211

Telephone: (503) 880-8573

Fax number: Not applicable

E-mail address: christye@newvillages.com

2. Classifications

Ownership of Property. Fill as many boxes as apply.

- Private
- Public - Local
- Public - State
- Public - Federal

Category of Property. Fill only one box.

- Building (Note can include site)
- District
- Site (Exclusive of Structures)
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property. TOTAL must include at least One (1) in Contributing Column.

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1		Buildings
		Sites
		Structures
		Objects
<hr/>		
1		Total

If the building or site is part of a larger group of properties, enter the name of the multiple-property group; otherwise enter "N/A".

"N/A"

3. Use or Function

Historic Use or Function: Hotel-Apartments

Current Use or Function: Hotel

4. Description

Architect: Herbert W. Burns (architectural designer)

Construction Date and Source: 1947 (multiple sources)

Architectural Classification: International Style - Desert Regional Variation

Construction Materials:

Foundation: Concrete slab on grade

Roof: Composition

Walls: Frame wood construction covered with stucco & sandstone pavers and concrete block

Other:

Building Description: *Attach a description of the Building/Site/District, including all character defining features, on one or more additional sheets. (See pages 15-20)*

5. Criteria *(Fill all boxes that apply for the criteria qualifying the property for listing.)*

Events

- (1) Fill this box if the property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Persons

- (2) Fill this box if the property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Architecture

- (3) Fill this box if the property reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, State or local history, or

- (4) Fill this box if the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or

- (5) Fill this box if the property represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or

- (6) Fill this box if the property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Archeology

- (7) Fill this box if the property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

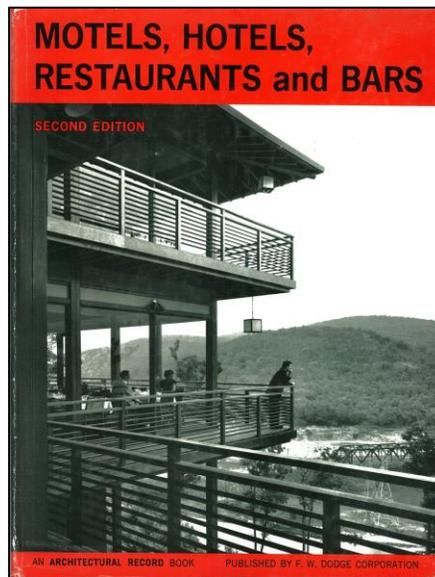
Other Criteria Considerations (Check all the boxes that apply.)

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

6. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Town & Desert Apartments, described as the “apartments of tomorrow,” were designed by Palm Springs architectural designer Herbert W. Burns in 1947. The public opening of the apartment complex occurred on October 1, 1947. The complex almost immediately received national attention when it was published in the May 1948 issue of *Architectural Record* in an article entitled “California Hide-Away, Motel Style.” This



The Town & Desert Apartments were featured in variety of sources including this Architectural Record book *Motels, Hotels, Restaurants and Bars* (shown is the cover of the 1960 second edition).

magazine entry, lavishly illustrated with beautiful photographs by the renowned architectural photographer Julius Shulman, was re-published in an Architectural Record book entitled *Motels, Hotels, Restaurants and Bars* published in 1953 (first edition) and again in 1960 (second edition). The Town & Desert Apartments also appeared in *Motels*, a 1955 hardcover book by George Baker and Bruno Funaro, in an entry entitled “Rental Units Share Owner’s Garden.”

The Architectural Designer

Although “not a registered architect,” architectural designer Herbert W. Burns (1897-1988) is an important figure in the history of Palm Springs’ “built environment.” Because Burns designed both commercial buildings and private residences, many residents, and visitors, have directly experienced Palm Springs’ modernist architecture through his striking buildings.

In a 1968 oral history taken by researcher Rush Hughes, Mrs. Gayle Burns stated that she and her husband Herbert “first came to Palm Springs in 1946.” She also states that before arriving in Palm Springs Herbert Burns was “a major in the [Army] Air Corps” and “a building designer in Los Angeles.”



Architectural Designer Herbert W. Burns at his drafting table in a photograph from the June-July 1960 issue of *Palm Springs Life* magazine
(Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

Though general biographical information about Herbert Burns is extremely scarce (see “Research Note” at the end of this section), not only was he an accomplished architectural designer who garnered many commissions, he and his wife Gayle were also popular innkeepers who were very civic-minded. Additionally, they were heavily involved in the city’s social scene and as a result their names appear frequently in local magazines and the newspaper. As a result we know that Herbert Burns was on the Board of Directors of the Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce (July-August 1948 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine), ran unsuccessfully for Palm Springs city council in the 1950 election coming only 24 votes short of beating incumbent Thomas Kieley (May-June 1950 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine) and was elected President of the Palm Springs Hotel and Apartment Association (June 1951 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine).

Despite a general lack of biographical information about Burns, researchers are fortunate that Burns authored a six-page article entitled, “Every Home Owner Strives for the Ultimate...Few Achieve It,” in the June-July 1960 issue of *Palm Springs Villager*

magazine. In the well-illustrated article Burns expounded on “finding the ideal home,” to wit:

“If you are completely satisfied with your home, you are in the upper five percent of the average homeowner group. Basically dissatisfaction is the result of insufficient thought and research on the part of the owner and his planner and their failure to anticipate the future activities of the owner’s family.”

Most notably, the article does not dwell on philosophical matters and Burns’ “principles” are steeped in practical considerations that give us insight into the mind of an architectural designer acutely aware of the more concrete needs of the average homeowner. Burns seemed so confident of the practicality of his “solutions” that he even provides a notional floor plan intended to maximize livability, efficient traffic flow and the interaction of “conversational groups.” In the article Burns touches on color, furniture placement, air-conditioning, Hi-Fi placement, kitchen design, ceiling heights (and hallway widths), landscaping, etc., yet finally, and rather sentimentally, concludes with:

“Do not build a house to impress your friends and neighbors nor to show off your success. Such a house is a vulgar display of money. Build a house that is a home—be it ever so humble. A house is made of stone and earth but a home is built of love, understanding, loyalty and tolerance. A home is a haven, a place to share joys and sorrows, to feel safe and secure. It is the only place you can be completely relaxed and where you can run the full gamut of your emotions.

Live in your home. Enjoy it.”

Certainly one of the more important, but mostly forgotten, residential commissions that Herbert Burns received was a “spec” house (i.e., “a residence built without a particular buyer in mind or under contract, but designed to appeal to the maximum market possible”) built by Mr. & Mrs. Fay Brainard at 1120 East Alejo Road in 1948 (per Building permit #3392 of February 27, 1948). The Brainard-Robbin residence is located on a large lot immediately to the west of the Frank Sinatra Residence. The house gained some local renown when it was next purchased (and expanded) by Ed & Bertha Robbin (whose primary residence was a huge ranch of “many thousands of acres” in Reno, Nevada). The Brainard-Robbin Residence was prominently featured in the September 1956 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine in an article entitled “The House of Many Views,” by Edith Carlson and featured photographs of the interior design done by Arthur Elrod. The Burns’ design was described as “frame-stucco construction with a trim of Salton Sea rock.”

Placing Burns within the context of his fellow architects and architectural designers, authors Michael Stern and Alan Hess, in *Julius Shulman: Palm Springs*, opined:

“The work of Herbert Burns showed a less austere...approach to Modernism than Frey or Lautner, and...his design’s clean lines, strong composition, warm materials, open plans, and response to the climate reflect a clear and moderate Modernism. Burns was a developer who built houses, inns and offices; he owned and ran the small vacation inns he built. Though not trained in design, he had both a strong respect for and a good grasp of Modern architecture.

Vacationers spending a month, or a season, in the desert would rent small

efficiency apartments such as Burns' Town and Desert....Each visitor had their own comfortable private realm, but it was always connected through large window walls to the semipublic pool area and its social activity, and to the mountain views beyond. Screens of pipe columns or louvers were used to distinguish entries and terraces, or simply as design accents. The openness of the plan allows people to fully enjoy the sunshine and fresh air—the main reasons that Canadians, Midwesterners, or Easterners visited Palm Springs.”

A few of the other projects, similar to the Town & Desert Apartments, designed by architectural designer Herbert Burns include:

- The 400 (at 400 West Arenas Road, a 1954 design by Burns)
- Village Manor (at 562 West Arenas Road, a nine-unit “apartment hotel,” today the “Orbit In” hotel, a 1957 design by Burns)
- Desert Hills (601 West Arenas Road, a 14-unit complex, a 1955 design by Burns)

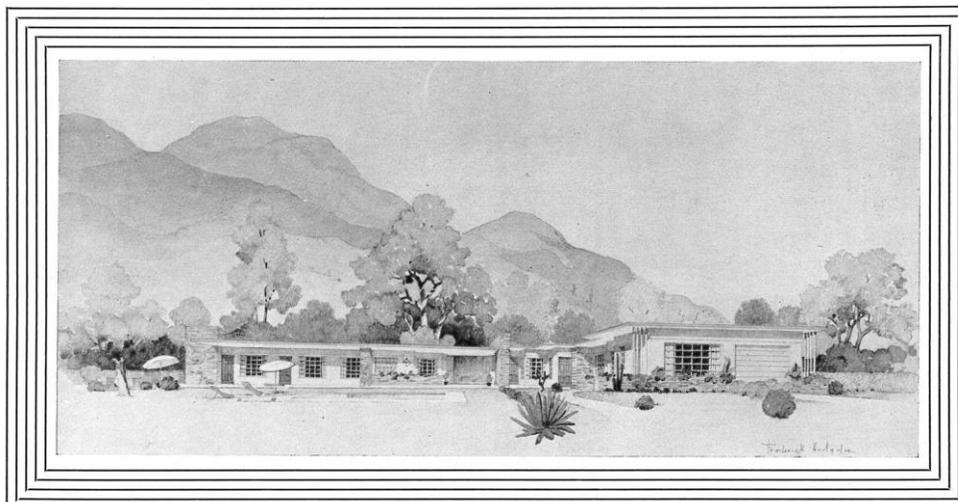
[Research Note: Only a single, uncorroborated source identifies a “Herbert W. Burns” who died in Palm Springs on January 27, 1988. From the standpoint of apparent age, this seems consistent with photographs taken of Burns. Oddly, however, there is no obituary of Burns that could be located in the *Desert Sun* newspaper during the three weeks after his (probable) passing on January 27, 1988. There is an obituary for Herbert’s wife, Gayle, in the *Desert Sun* newspaper’s May 14, 1976 issue. The obituary states that Gayle died on May 7, 1976, leaving Herbert as her widower. Gayle’s address in the obituary is 400 West Arenas (where she and Herbert lived as innkeepers for many years after selling the Town & Desert Apartments in 1954). Further, the obituary states that Gayle was interned in Nebraska (where she had a number of surviving relatives). It is possible that because Gayle pre-deceased Herbert, because they were childless, and because Burns’ career had long since lapsed, Herbert’s death may not have been recorded in the local media. The authors interviewed Ms. Joanne Petty (now 80 years old) former owner of the nearby Desert Hills Apartment Hotel at 601 West Arenas and close (though relatively younger) friend of the Burnses on March 21, 2014. Ms. Petty opined that “the year 1988 for Herbert’s death seems about right.” Ms. Petty commented on the lack of information about Gayle Burns passing, i.e., “nobody knew she had passed or was even sick.” Ms. Petty also confirmed that the Burnses were childless. It appears that Herbert, though renowned for his sociability and his hospitality as an innkeeper, may have been a very private person in later years. More research is suggested.]

Local Historical Context

The city of Palm Springs saw a number of buildings erected immediately after World War II. These were designed by a variety of talented and important architects including Richard Neutra’s Kaufmann House (1947), E. Stewart Williams’ Frank Sinatra Residence (1947), William Cody’s Del Marcos Hotel (1947) and Paul R. Williams’ and A. Quincy Jones’ Town & Country Center (1948) to name just a few. The Town & Desert Apartments (1947, Herbert Burns) must likewise be recognized as a significant example of the city’s modernist architecture designed during the period.

In a 1968 oral history, taken by researcher Rush Hughes, Mrs. Gayle Burns lamented the rarity and high expense of building materials in post-war Palm Springs during the 1947 construction of the Town & Desert Apartments. One of the hardest to obtain and most expensive of these building materials were nails. During the interview Gayle Burns stated that she managed to procure “25 kegs of nails” from her “brothers in the

Midwest.” Gayle Burns also remarks that securing this excessive quantity of nails (far more than was needed for the construction of the Town & Desert Apartments) allowed her and Herbert to barter for other essential building materials.



Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Burns announce the opening in Palm Springs of
TOWN & DESERT on Wednesday, October the First, and
reservations may be arranged for by telephoning Palm Springs 9001

Part of a full-page advertisement in the September 1947 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine
(Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

The September 1947 *Palm Springs Villager* magazine announcement of the opening of the Town & Desert Apartments went on to describe the many amenities of the new accommodation:

“THE NEW TOWN & DESERT is Palm Springs apartments of tomorrow, located at 370 West Arenas Road, in the center of the Village, a block and a half from Palm Canyon Drive.

Its quiet location offers a beautiful view of the foothills of San Jacinto, and its design provides for maximum advantages of the sun. It is air-conditioned throughout, and for cool nights there are ample electric heating facilities. Its many and modern features include individual control of radio service in all units of the building.

A notable feature is a distinctive and varied color theme. All furniture is custom-built and particular care was taken in the purchase of the finest beds obtainable.

The beautifully tiled and illuminated swimming pool is efficiently heated and of unusually large dimensions.

A discriminating clientele will be afforded every possible convenience and comfort at TOWN & DESERT and its limited capacity suggests that reservations be made now for periods during the fall and winter season.”

One of the first recorded quotes of room rate information for the Town & Desert Apartments appeared in an advertisement in the December 1948 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine as follows; “Rates: \$20 and \$25 per day, \$125 and \$150 per week for two persons.” Reflecting the seasonal nature of the local rental market, the May-June 1948 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine indicated “Reduced Rates Until Closing for Summer.”

One of the more interesting events that unfolded at the Town & Desert Apartments occurred just a few months after the property’s grand opening. The February 1949 issue of the *Palm Springs Villager* magazine reported:

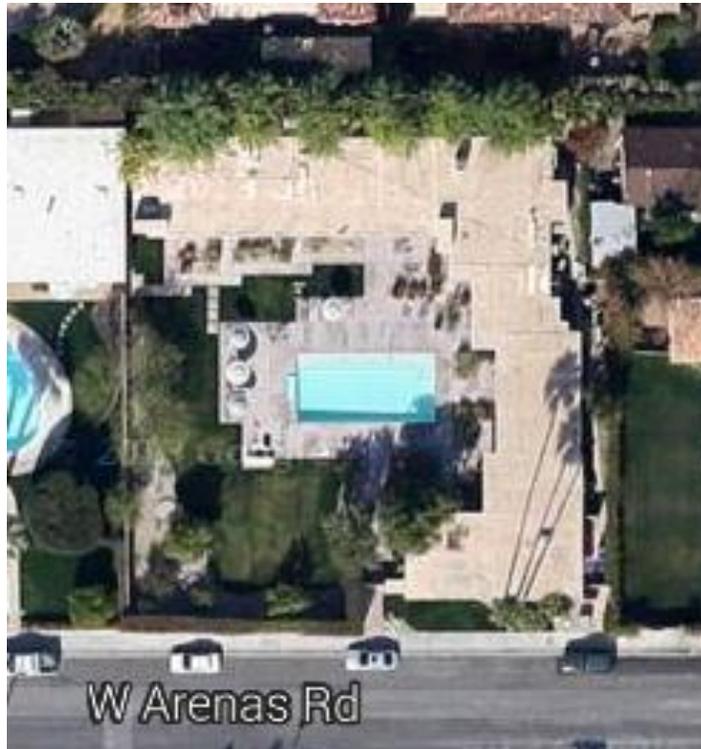
“Stanley Hiller, inventor of the Hiller 360 Helicopter, had a reservation at Town & Desert, landed his helicopter on the lawn where he was greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Burns, managing-owners, and walked a few steps to his room.”

In the early 1950s the Town & Desert Apartments became one of the popular meeting places of the Palm Springs civic and social scene. The “Village Life” column of the June 1954 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine reported that, “The picturesque old mesquite tree on the spacious lawn of the Herbert Burns’ Town & Desert [Apartments] marks the traditional meeting place each spring of the American Association of University Women....Last month some seventy members, their husbands and friends gathered for their annual picnic supper and last meeting of the season.” The year before, at the 1953 meeting of the University Women, the June 1953 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine reported that “Harold Tonne entertained [at the Town & Desert Apartments] with accordion music, featuring a song with music by Lois Lux and favorite songs sung by the guests.”

Whether or not Herbert Burns ever gained the esteem or admiration of local licensed architects seems unclear and is certainly a matter for speculation. However, he apparently was afforded some democratic validation in 1958 when his home at the “400” (located at 400 West Arenas Road) was featured in what is likely one of the earliest “modernist” home tours in Palm Springs. Sponsored by the Palm Springs Branch of the American Association of University Women, proceeds from the house tour raised college scholarship money for local high school students. The house tour featured Herbert and Gayle Burns’ home, and the homes of “Mr. and Mrs. William Cody, A.I.A., 1950 Desert Palm Drive, Mr. Albert Frey, A.I.A., 1150 Paseo El Mirador...and Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Williams, A.I.A., 1250 Paseo El Mirador.” In an article about the home tour, entitled “The Architect...and His Own Home Design,” in the March 1958 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine, the author seemed most intrigued by the Burns’ home with such features as a “cleverly concealed...Hi-Fi,” “infra-red lights in the kitchen to keep food warm; hidden electric blanket controls; built-in clocks in every room...and dimmers to lower living room lights for after-dinner conversation.”

Site Description

Location. The Town & Desert Apartments are located in the historic Tennis Club neighborhood. The complex is bounded by West Arenas Road to the south and various residential and commercial parcels to the east, north and south. The complex is sited around a large pool and takes full advantage of mountain views to the west. Palo verde, lemon and grapefruit trees, bougainvillea, large cacti and expanses of grass can be found on the site. There is no on-site parking. A full legal description of the property is provided at Appendix II and the Assessor's Parcel map is at Appendix III.



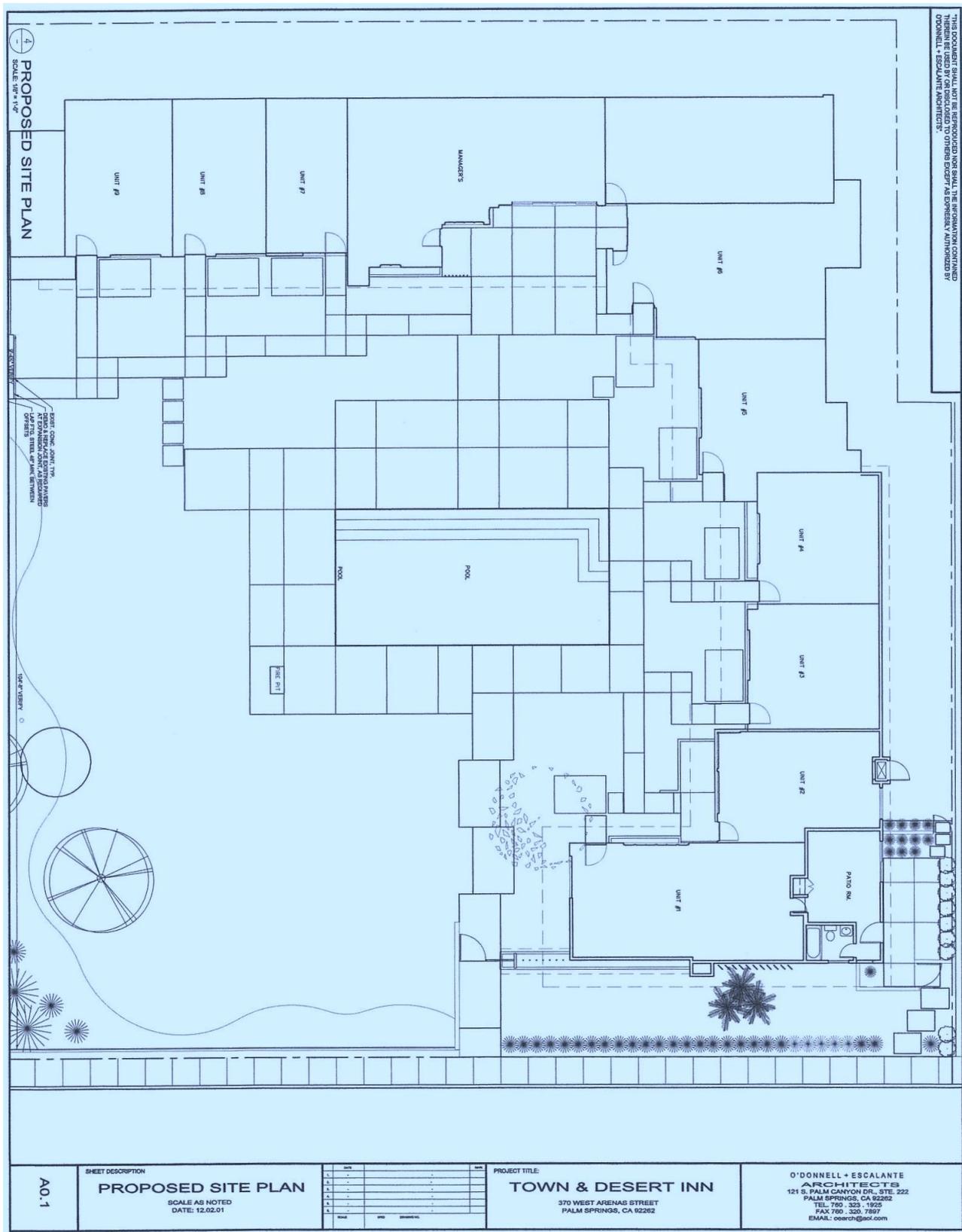
An aerial view of the Town & Desert Apartment complex (oriented north) showing the site and surrounding commercial and residential parcels.

(Google Maps)

The Building Type

While early advertisements by Burns enthusiastically characterized the Town & Desert Apartments as the “apartments of tomorrow,” the May 1948 issue of *Architectural Record* magazine found the Town & Desert Apartments a more difficult building type to characterize:

“If the “motel” is the modern version of a hotel, this one is a similar model of an apartment hotel for a vacation spot. Its rooms are really small apartments, designed for Californians who can afford to get-away-from-it-all in elegant seclusion in Palm Springs. While the convenience and informality notes are clear, this is far removed from the roadside sleeping concept of the more typical motor courts. Its design contemplates a commune-with-nature type of holiday where a swim and a sun bath are the doctor’s prescription.”



Site Plan generated by o2 Architecture during the renovation of the Town & Desert Apartments (today the Hideaway) in 2001 (Courtesy o2 Architecture – Lance O'Donnell, AIA)

In a June 2007 *Travel+Leisure* magazine article entitled “Chic and cheap: The new American motel,” by Charles Gandee and Christine Ajudua, the authors write:

“In a 1940 *American Magazine* article entitled “Camps of Crime,” FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover waged something of a war against motels, which he labeled “a new home of crime in America....” Though Hoover, as we now know, had a penchant for hyperbole, it is nonetheless true that motels — steeped in the utilitarian anonymity of the open road — have had a dubious reputation for decades.”

In short, the late 1940s characterization of the Town & Desert Apartments as “apartments of tomorrow” not only brought an air of modernity but perhaps, more importantly, carried a much more positive connotation than “motel.” Advertisements and mentions of the Town & Desert Apartments repeatedly characterized the property as “High class.” Today, a configuration such as the original Town & Desert Apartments might be described as “serviced apartments” or, merely by virtue of its compact size, a “boutique hotel.”

The Architecture

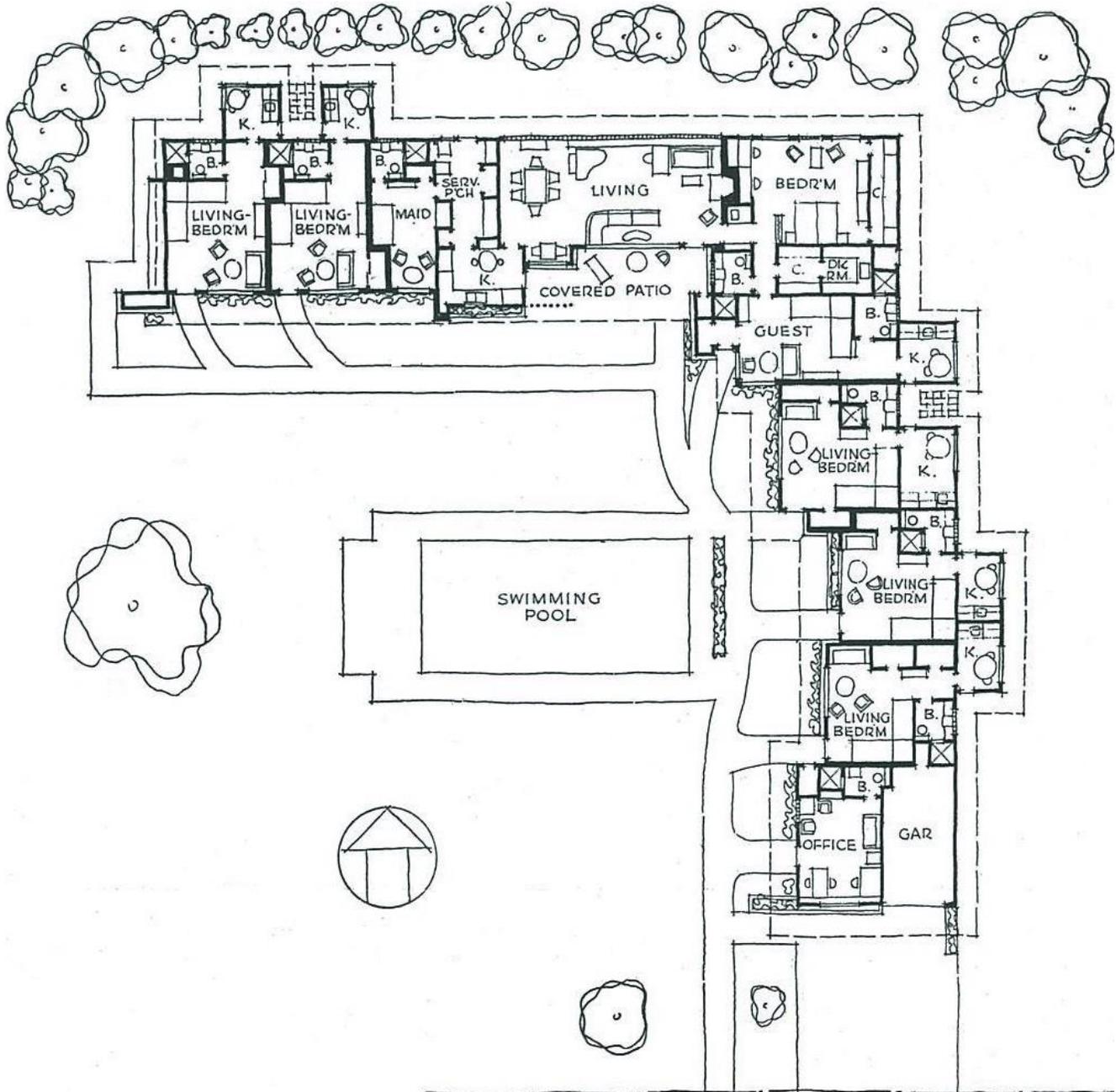
The Town & Desert Apartment complex is a single-story building which was originally configured with five rental units (with small “Pullman-type” kitchens), a large owner’s unit (with guest room and maid’s quarters), an office and a garage. This configuration was modified over the years but the building envelop has remained largely unchanged (except as noted). The units surround a courtyard and large rectangular pool and are oriented to provide stunning views of the pool and nearby mountains.

The West Arenas Road-facing south-facing façade is distinguished by overall horizontality, a deep eave and a variety of materials including cement block, glass block, sandstone, stucco and wood. The façade’s overall horizontality is subtly reinforced by a low planter wall composed of buff-colored sandstone slabs mortared and laid horizontally ledge-style (a popular building material and construction technique found throughout Palm Springs’ built environment during the late 1940s and 1950s). Also found on the south elevation is a vertical *brise-soleil* (i.e., “sun break”) composed of wood planks. The *brise-soleil* not only provides sun protection but provides visual interest by punctuating the strong horizontal planes of the design. Further punctuating the strong horizontal planes created by the roof and sandstone planters are 2-inch steel pipe supports which also serve to express the structure of the building. As seen in the 1947 vintage renderings of this south-facing façade, the original design featured a large casement window and a garage door. This façade was modified at an unknown later date when the garage was converted into office and/or living space. Although there are no extant city records regarding this conversion, it appears that the design was thoughtful and well-executed and consistent with the overall design of the complex.

Throughout the complex, the elements of the south façade are echoed with the addition of casement windows and large piers of mortared sandstone. Some of the casement windows meet at corners and where a steel pipe support can be seen which, aside from its practical use, cleanly integrates the window intersection and exhibits the modernist ideal of “expressed structure.” Aside from the practical use as roof supports, the sandstone piers are syncoated with some piers terminating at the roofline and others

piercing the roof. The apparent massiveness of these sandstone piers helps to visually anchor the structure and the piercing piers additionally serve to break the horizontality of the design. Interestingly, the sandstone piers are quite functional (and largely hollow), providing much needed outdoor and indoor storage space.

Over the years (as indicated from vintage photographs) it appears that additional concrete flatwork has been added around the large pool.



Combined Floor Plan and Site Plan of the Town & Desert Apartments as shown in the May 1948 issue of *Architectural Forum* (oriented north)

The 1955 *Motels* book noted that, “The owner’s apartment has a more deeply recessed terrace and is separated from the neighboring rental units by heavily textured brick buttresses.

In an effort to provide more security to the Town & Desert Apartment complex, some minor additions were designed by o2 Architecture (Lance O’Donnell, AIA) in 2001. These city-approved additions include a solid block wall around much of the site’s perimeter and a steel gate with keypad access.

Chain of Ownership

First American Title Company reports that “H. W. Burns and Gayle S. Burns, husband and wife,” purchased the land on which the Town & Desert Apartments was built from Patricia Cody Rodgers on January 3, 1946. Per title records, the Burnses sold the Town & Desert Apartments to Florence A. Lovett on July 6, 1954. Thereafter, there are 17 modifications to, and changes of, property ownership until the sale to the current owners as Wahoo-Cal, LLC on December 15, 2000.

Permit History

Although city records indicate an extant microfiche file for 370 West Arenas Road, this microfiche file cannot be located. More recent electronic files (related to the remodel completed by the current owner) are also unavailable and city staff opined that those files were likely lost when the Planning Department’s computer system “crashed.” The only document currently on file in the Planning Department’s records is a Certificate of Occupancy dated March 7, 2001.

BACKGROUND / HISTORIC CONTEXT

The 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 the last period that this building will be evaluated.

Modern Period (1925-1960s): This period can be considered to have begun with the construction of the area’s first “modern” structure, Rudolph Schindler’s Paul and Betty Popenoe Cabin in 1922. With this building the area’s predominant architectural style, which was based on well-established Mexican and Spanish Colonial motifs, began to change. Incorporation of the town of Palm Springs followed in 1938. During the post-WWII era, Palm Springs’ economy prospered through tourism. Hollywood celebrities discovered the desert oasis and patronized its hotels, inns, nightclubs and restaurants; celebrity-seeking tourists soon followed, transforming Palm Springs 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 expanded by the construction of 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

also expanded into new sub-divisions composed of midcentury modern second homes in the flat lands surrounding the town's original core.

Palm Springs' Hollywood associations certainly imparted an air of sophistication to the city. By 1964, the city had built a reputation for cutting edge architecture as a result of local architectural practitioners like John Porter Clark, Albert Frey, E. Stewart Williams, William F. Cody and Donald Wexler.

EVALUATION:

Criterion 1: Significant Event (*Completed because Criterion 1 is marked above*).

To qualify 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 the city's prominence in architectural excellence in midcentury modern architecture that is an important pattern of events within this associated context. The Town & Desert Apartment complex is an outstanding example of commercial design and construction of buildings within the context of midcentury desert Modernism. The Town & Desert Apartment complex is associated with this pattern of events for its ability to exemplify the modern period of the national, state and local history. The Town & Desert Apartment complex qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site on the local registry under Criterion 1.*

Criterion 2: Significant Persons. Criterion 2 recognizes properties associated with the lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history. While Herbert and Gayle Burns might be considered individuals of local importance, the documentation for that additional qualification was not deemed necessary for this nomination. Hence, the Town & Desert Apartments do not qualify for listing as a Class 1 Historic 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 Town & Desert Apartment complex (1947) was designed by Palm Springs architectural designer Herbert W. Burns. The stylistic markers of the residence place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' Modern Period. The commercial complex represents a prime and largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such the residence may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture, i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The Town & Desert Apartment complex qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic 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 Town & Desert Apartment complex is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses distinctive characteristics that make up the many qualities of the style, such as overall horizontality, expression of structure, expansive amounts of glass, use of inexpensive, machine produced materials, masonry, etc. As such, the complex is eligible under this criterion because it represents an important example of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury. *The Town & Desert Apartment complex qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site on the local registry under Criterion 4.*

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

5a: Work 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 Criteria.

Herbert Burns is a well-respected and locally-prominent practitioner of modernist architecture whose reputation has continued to gain stature in recent years as Palm Springs' architectural richness has gained national prominence.

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. As an example of the maturing modernist movement, the Town & Desert Apartment complex certainly articulates the best of resort "lifestyle" modernism to a level of excellence and confidence that, in total, they could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal. *As the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, the Town & Desert Apartment complex qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Site on the local registry under Criterion 5.*

Criterion 6: (That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction). This Criterion was created to address the resources contained within a potential historic district. As such, Criterion 6 does not apply. Hence, the complex does not qualify under Criterion 6.

ARCHEOLOGY

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

7. Integrity Analysis (using U.S. Secretary of Interior Standards)

INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the local registry, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. The definition of integrity includes seven aspects or qualities. 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. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant. The following sections define the seven aspects and explain how they combine to produce integrity.

LOCATION

Location is the place where an historic property was constructed or the place where an historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved. ***The Town & Desert Apartment complex remains in its original location and therefore qualifies under this aspect.***

DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. It results from conscious decisions made during the original conception and planning of a property and applies to activities as diverse as community planning, engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture. Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as

aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing. ***Although the Town & Desert Apartment complex has seen some alteration the essential characteristics of form, plan, space, structure, and style have survived intact. Similarly, the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; and the type, amount, and style of detailing, has largely survived. Fortunately, there is extensive documentation in the form of plans and vintage photographs (including those by architectural photographer Julius Shulman) that illustrate the intent of the architectural designer. In addition to the large window in the owner's suite being replaced with a sliding glass door, the 1947 renderings of the south-facing façade show that the original design of the Town & Desert Apartments featured a large casement window and a garage door. At some later date this was modified, converting the garage into office and/or living space. Although there are no city records regarding this conversion, it was likely designed by Burns as the conversion is not only well-executed but thoughtful and consistent with the overall design of the complex (see "The Architecture" portion of this nomination).***

SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the *character* of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves *how*, not just *where*, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences. ***The setting of the Town & Desert Apartment complex continues to reflect the architectural designer's original design relationship of site and structure.***

MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The choice and combination of materials reveals the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of particular types of materials and technologies. ***While some of the Town & Desert Apartment complex exterior surface materials have been painted, this change does not constitute a significant loss of the physical elements that expressed the design during the building's period of significance; the particular pattern and configuration that today forms the building site survives intact.***

WORKMANSHIP

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. Workmanship can

apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques. Workmanship is important because it can furnish evidence of the technology of a craft, illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic or prehistoric period, and reveal individual, local, regional, or national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. ***The workmanship of the Town & Desert Apartment complex is comprised of integral ornamental detailing reflected in stone, concrete block, glass and steel. The property continues to express a high degree of contemporary period workmanship.***

FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district retaining original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the 19th century. ***When constructed, the Town & Desert Apartment complex was sited to take advantage of panoramic views of the mountain and designed around a large central pool creating an intimate resort-like feel. Accordingly, the Town & Desert retains its original integrity of feeling.***

ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it *is* the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. For example, a Revolutionary War battlefield whose natural and man-made elements have remained intact since the 18th century will retain its quality of association with the battle. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register. ***As previously stated in this nomination, the Town & Desert Apartment complex is an important example of a particular building type in Palm Springs. Accordingly, it continues its association with a pattern of events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community.***

INTEGRITY SUMMARY: The Town & Desert Apartment complex appears to be in excellent condition partially due to the use of construction materials suitable for the harsh desert environment. This integrity analysis confirms that the buildings and site of the Town & Desert Apartment complex still possess all seven aspects of integrity. While the apartment complex has had a concrete wall and gate added to create security for the residents, overall, virtually all of the character-defining features survive. The apartment complex and site both retain a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify it for designation as a Class 1 historic site.

8. Bibliography

Attached is a list of books, articles, and other sources cited or used in preparing this application and other documentation that may be relevant.

Books

Architectural Record Book. *Motels, Hotels, Restaurants and Bars*. F. W. Dodge Corporation, New York, 1953

Architectural Record Book. *Motels, Hotels, Restaurants and Bars* (Second Edition). F. W. Dodge Corporation, New York, 1960

Baker, Geoffrey and Bruno Funaro. *Motels*. Reinhold Publishing Corporation, New York, 1955

Hess, Alan and Andrew Danish. *Palm Springs Weekend*. Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2001

Moruzzi, Peter. *Palm Springs Holiday*. Gibbs Smith, Layton, Utah, 2009

Stern, Michael and Alan Hess. *Julius Shulman: Palm Springs*. New York: Rizzoli, 2008

Other Documentary Sources

Architectural Resources Group. *City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey*. San Francisco, 2004

“California Hide-Away, Motel Style.” *Architectural Record*, Vol. 103, No. 5, May 1948: 96-101

National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Oral History #201-054 taken by Mr. Rush Hughes, “Interview of Mrs. Gayle Burns,” conducted on October 31, 1968 (originally recorded on 3” magnetic tape, now digitized)

Palm Springs Life. Annual Pictorial 1959, March 1960, June-July 1960, February 22, 1961 (magazine)

Palm Springs Villager. Midsummer 1947, September 1947, October 1947, November 1947, December 1947, January 1948, February 1948, March 1948, April 1948, May-June 1948, Midsummer 1948, July-August 1948, December 1948, February 1949, April 1949, July-August 1949, March 1950, May-June 1950, December 1950, April 1951, June 1951, December 1951, June 1953, September 1953, April

1954, June 1954, October 1955, September 1956, March 1958 and May 1958
(magazine)

The Palm Springs and Desert Resort Area Story. Palm Springs Chamber of
Commerce, 1955 (pamphlet)

Petty, Joanne. Telephone interview. March 21, 2014.

Other Sources Consulted

- City of Palm Springs (Planning and Building Departments)
- *The Desert Sun*
- Los Angeles Public Library (Central Library)
- Palm Springs Historical Society
- Palm Springs Public Library
- Riverside County Assessor's Office

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Estimated .57 acres (25,000 square feet)

Property Boundary Description: Lot 13 MB 009/432 MAP OF PALM SPRINGS (See
Appendix II)

10. Prepared By

Name/title: Ronald W. & Barbara A. Marshall

Organization: Submitted on behalf of the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

Street address: 1775 East Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 110-195

City: Palm Springs

State: CA

Zip: 92264

Telephone: (760) 837-7117

e-mail address: info@pspreservationfoundation.org

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.

Appendix I: Letter of Owner Support

March 10, 2014

City of Palm Springs
Historic Site Preservation Board
Palm Springs, CA 92262

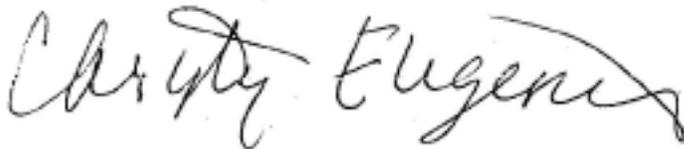
To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to Palm Springs Municipal Code Chapter 8.05, I fully support the Class 1 Historic site nomination of the Town & Desert (today the "Hideaway") at 370 West Arenas Road. The complex, designed by Herbert Burns in 1947, is a fine example of the midcentury modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is world-renowned.

I have asked the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation to represent us in this matter, specifically PSPF board members Ron and Barbara Marshall who can be contacted at (760) 808-6988.

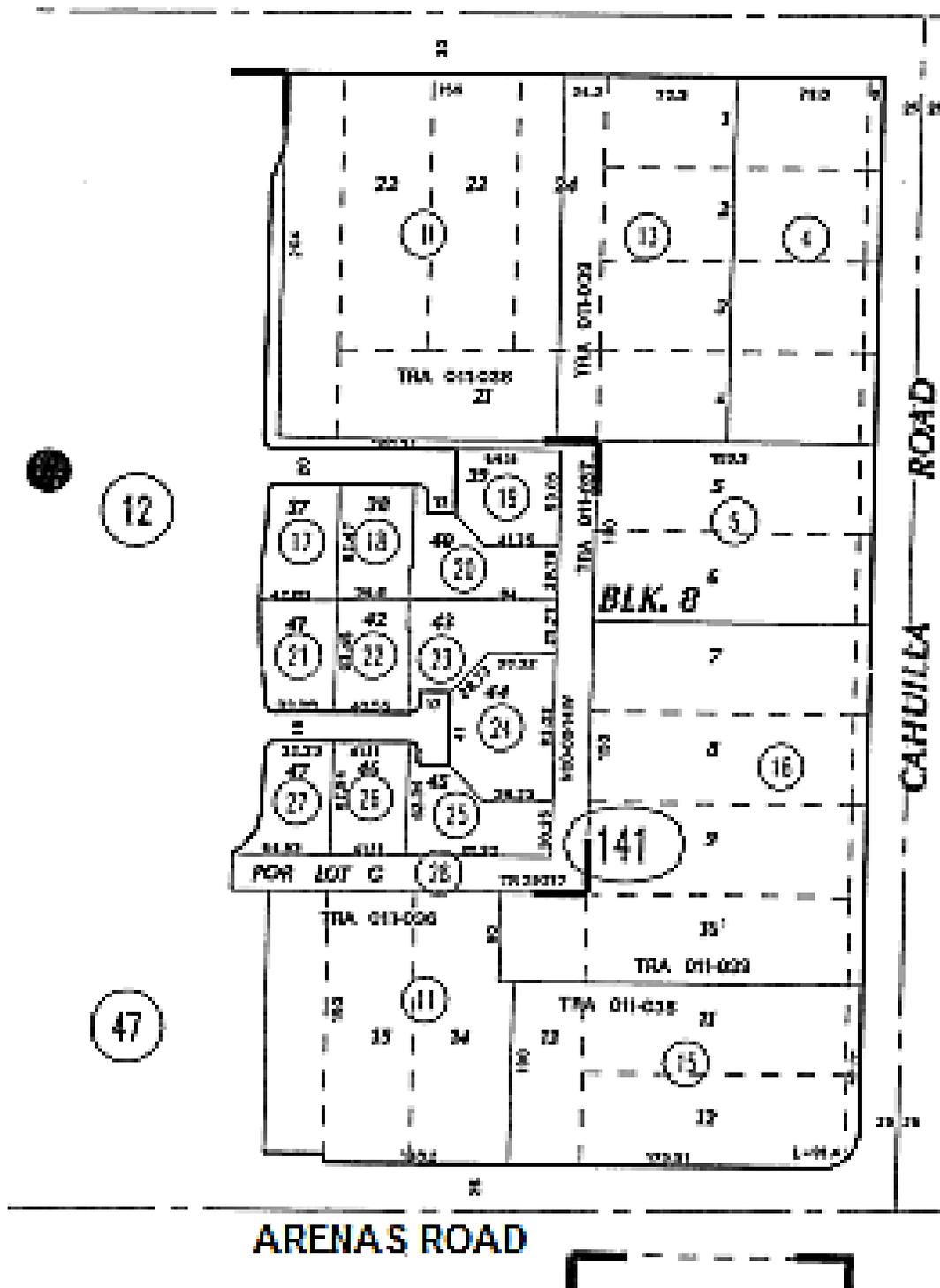
If you have any other questions, please feel to contact me directly at (503) 880-8573, or my email at: christye@newvillages.com.

Sincerely,

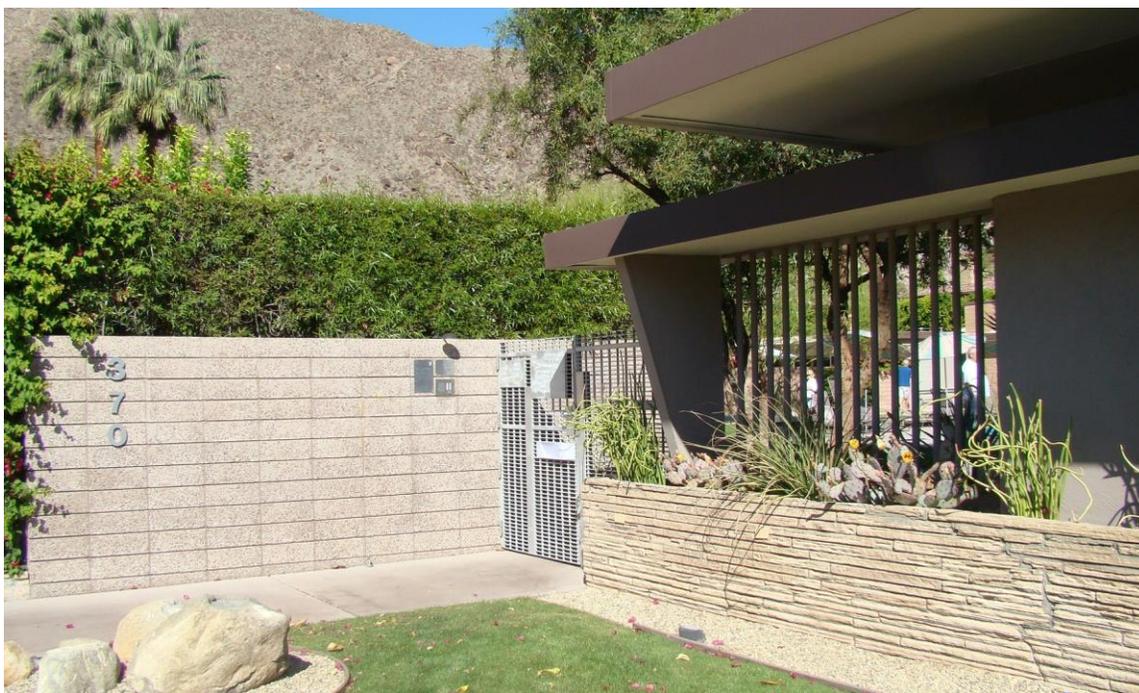


Christy Eugenis, Property Owner
Wahoo Cal Hotels, LLC
C/O New Villages Group, LTD
2314 NW Savier Street
Portland, OR 97210

Appendix III: Assessor's Map



Appendix IV: Photographic Documentation of Building and Site
(Additional photographs provided on a separate compact disc)



The south façade of the Town & Desert Apartments showing 2001 additions (block wall and steel gate structure) made to control access. Also shown is the mortared stacked sandstone wall, laid ledge-style, creating a planter structure and vertical wood *brise-soleil*. Note the artistic perpendicular intersection of the roof planes.



The south and east façades of the Town & Desert Apartments Courtyard



The south courtyard façade of the Town & Desert Apartments



**Portions of the south and east courtyard façades of the Town & Desert Apartments
(Pre-Renovation) circa 2001**

(Courtesy o2 Architecture – Lance O'Donnell, AIA)

Appendix V: Architectural Details



Detail of mortared stacked sandstone laid ledge-style. The length of these sandstone slabs can vary from 4 inches to almost 36 inches



Metal casement windows meeting at a corner with metal pipe support



Stacked sandstone pier housing outdoor storage space



Detail of mortared stacked sandstone planter (left), stacked sandstone pier (far left), stacked sandstone wainscoting (right), metal pipe supports (center), casement windows and glass block



Stacked sandstone pier supporting the roofline plane



Stacked sandstone pier piercing the roofline

Appendix VI: Miscellaneous Historical Photographs & Ephemera



This photo appeared in the May-June 1948 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine. The caption reads: “BONITA GRANVILLE (on lawn lounge) and other guests at a cocktail party held at Town and Desert by Mr. & Mrs. Jack Giba of Beverly Hills.” Bonita Granville (1923-1988) was an accomplished actress best known for role as Nancy Drew, the feisty detective-reporter.
(Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)



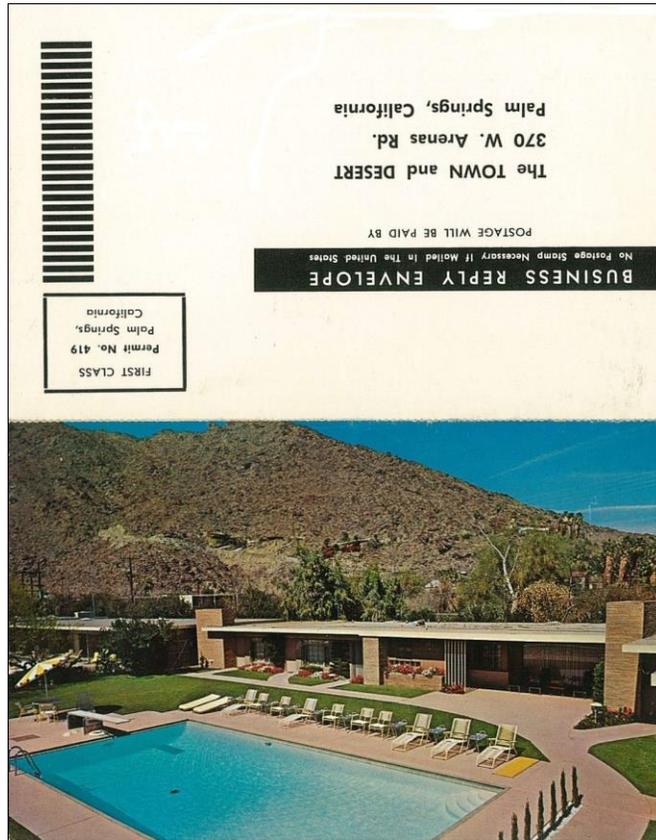
While the February 1948 issue of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine thought it amusing to publish a photograph of “Mrs. Arthur Coffey...[enjoying] a cup of coffee at the Town & Desert pool,” aside from the Eames molded plywood lounge chair, the image showcases multiple architectural features of the building including stacked stone, casement windows and the thin roof profile.
(Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)



This romanticized painting of the Town & Desert Apartments by local artist O. E. L. “Bud” Graves appeared in advertisements in various 1948 issues of the *Palm Springs Villager* magazine. The Burnses were collectors of Graves’ paintings.
(Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)



Portions of the south and east courtyard façades of the Town & Desert Apartments (Pre-Renovation) circa 2001
(Courtesy o2 Architecture – Lance O’Donnell, AIA)



— THE TOWN AND DESERT —

370 W. Arenas Rd. Palm Springs, Calif. Phone 324-9001

RATE SCHEDULE

ACCOMMODATIONS	Dec. 15 to May 1 WINTER	May 1 to June 30 Oct. 1 to Dec. 15 SPRING & FALL	July 1 to Sept 30 SUMMER
STUDIO APTS. All With Pullman Kit. & TV	\$20-\$22-\$25-\$27.50	\$15-\$17.50-\$20-\$22.50	\$10-\$12.50-\$13.50-\$15
SLEEPING ROOMS Twin Beds, TV, Dbl. Bed, TV	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$8.00
MASTER SUITE Tw. Bed Studio, Pullman Kit, Din. Area, Ba. w/ Shower, TV, Adj. Rm. Dbl. Bed, Sh.-Tub, TV	\$40.00	\$30.00	\$21.50

ALL ARE DAILY RATES FOR ONE OR TWO PERSONS, SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.
AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF \$3.00 IS MADE FOR ROLLAWAY BEDS.
WEEKLY AND MONTHLY RATE DISCOUNTS UPON REQUEST . . .
HOLIDAYS EXCEPTED.
WE WILL MEET ALL LOCAL TRAINS OR PLANES BY REQUEST.

THE TOWN & DESERT
370 West Arenas Rd.
Palm Springs, California

Please enter my reservation as follows:

Date _____

From _____ To _____
Arrival Date and Time Departure Date

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION: _____

No. of Persons _____ Rate _____

Name _____ Tel. No. _____
Please Print

Address _____

City _____ State _____

A Deposit of One Day's Rate is Requested Upon Confirmation of Reservations.

This circa 1960 postcard-mailer (both sides shown) lists varying room rates for the Town & Desert Apartments including \$8 per night during the summer season for a modest room type.