



Historic Site Preservation Board Memo

Date: October 13, 2009

Case No: HSPB – 74

Application Type: Class 1 Designation Application - New

Location: 1070 East Apache Road

Applicant: Chris Menrad - Owner

Zone: R-1-C

APN: 511-032-013

From: Glenn Mlaker, Assistant Planner *GM*

The Planning Department has received a request for a Class 1 designation of a single-family home located at 1070 East Apache Road in the Twin Palms neighborhood. The house was constructed in 1957 by the Alexander Construction Company and designed by architect William Krisel. The house can be described as a floating butterfly design with original exterior walls, doors, and paint color.

Staff is recommending that a committee of two or more Board members be appointed in order to conduct a site visit and review the background materials. At a future meeting a public hearing will be conducted and the committee's report will be part of the record. The Board will determine if the application meets the criteria and findings to be designated as a Class 1 historic site.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Letter from Homeowner
2. Newspaper Article on House
3. Site Photographs
4. Letter from William Krisel

City of Palm Springs
Historic Site Preservation Board

Re: 1070 Apache Road, Palm Springs California

I, Chris Menrad (owner) would like to submit my home for consideration by the Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board for Class One historic designation. The property is located at 1070 Apache Road, Palm Springs. I have included a brief history of the house below:

The house represents one model of a tract home that was built in the neighborhood now commonly know as Twin Palms. The houses were all designed by William Krisel, Architect of the firm Palmer and Krisel, AIA and constructed by the Alexander Construction Company between 1957 and 1958. The house is part of the first phase of homes that the Alexander Construction Company built in Palm Springs. The tract was initially called Smoke Tree Valley Estates. Subsequent tracts in this area were called, in order of construction, Twin Palm Estates and El Camino Estates. Over time, the entire neighborhood became know as Twin Palms.

William Krisel first met Bob Alexander at USC where he was studying for his degree in architecture. They soon become friends. Bob's father, George Alexander, was a builder. After college, Bob proposed to his father that homes done in the modern style (by his friend Krisel) would sell well, differentiate the firm from other builders and be less expensive to construct. Hesitant at first, George gave his son Bob a tract of 10 lots in the San Fernando Valley to test his ideas. Bob engaged Krisel, who had set up an architectural practice with his partner Dan Palmer after university, to design the homes. Called Corbin Palms, they had open floor plans and lots of glass with wing walls and roofs flowing from inside to out, but still retained a conventional pitched roof. The homes sold very well, and made their builder good money due to unique and efficient construction techniques developed by Palmer and Krisel. Because of this success, Bob built additional homes in the area of modern design, all created by Palmer and Krisel.

George Alexander came frequently to Palm Springs due to health reasons. While in Palm Springs, he realized that no one was doing mass housing development there. Everything was custom. So with little competition, he reckoned, there existed an opportunity make some money. The firm acquired land in the then remote part of Palm Springs south of East Palm Canyon Drive. They decided to build a destination resort first to attract people to the area. Called the Ocotillo Lodge and designed by Krisel, it was an immediate success and catered to many prominent people and celebrities and sported one of the finest dining rooms in the Valley called the Candlewood Room.

After acquiring additional land just south of the Ocotillo, the Alexanders asked Krisel to design homes for a new housing tract. Hoping to duplicate the success at Corbin Palms in the San Fernando Valley, the Alexanders asked for something that was new, unique and inexpensive to build. Bob Alexander specifically asked that some of the features that Krisel incorporated in his own home in Brentwood, designed in 1955, be incorporated

into these desert homes. Although the houses that Krisel had designed for the Alexanders in the San Fernando Valley were modern, they were marketed as primary residences and thus they were still somewhat conventional. The Palm Springs homes were to be marketed as second or vacation homes and could, therefore, be more daring and unique in their design. These first Palm Springs homes by Krisel represent the first truly modern tract homes in the desert. They incorporated such things as clerestory windows; interior atriums, soaring butterfly roofs, and sun flaps. Nothing like them had ever been seen and they created a sensation. The homes sold like hotcakes. Many to prominent and successful people from the professional, business and entertainment worlds who were just starting to experience desert resort living. In fact, according to Krisel, there was never even a brochure produced. The homes just sold on their own, many to Ocotillo Lodge guests.

After the great success that the Alexander Company had with these first homes, the company went on to construct approximately 2000 homes in Palms Springs (many designed by Krisel). The Alexander Construction Company built neighborhoods such as Mountain View Estates, Vista Las Palmas and Racquet Club Road Estates during this period. The Alexander houses became an important catalyst to the post war population growth of the city in the 1950s and 1960s and changed the fabric and look of Palm Springs forever. Their success was emulated by other builders such as Fey and Meiselmann, who added to the now famous mid-century look of the city with modern designs for their residential developments developed by well know architects such as Wexler and Harrison and Cody. Fey also commissioned Krisel for work in the mid '60s to create Canyon View Estates.

Krisel's architectural practice flourished in the years following Twin Palms. He went on to design many tract houses, custom homes, apartments, condominiums, and offices in many locations throughout the US. The archive of William Krisel's work has recently been acquired by the Getty Museum in Los Angeles for preservation and research.

Twin Palms, as the tract is now known, was built in three phases. Although they all have the same footprint, and essentially the same floor plan (which simplified construction and cut costs), the genius of these homes is that Krisel designed them to have a custom look. This was achieved through the use of various rooflines and exterior finishes as well as rotating the house on its axis so that the front door opened to either the street or an entry courtyard. Mr. Krisel carefully planned the neighborhood so that no two homes of the same type would face one another, and exterior finishes and paint colors were carefully chosen so that the casual visitor had no idea that they are all essentially the same 40' x 40' plan thus achieving variety and a custom look.

This particular home has the now famous Floating Butterfly roof (as differentiated from the extended Butterfly Roof). The Floating Butterfly roof model was never repeated in any of the other neighborhood that were built by the Alexanders in Palm Springs, therefore the 12 that exist in the Twin Palms neighborhood (in various states of preservation/alteration) are unique. The home has never had any additions done to it over the years and still retains all the original glass, doors, stucco. The current paint color is

original to the house. The house is on the city-wide Historic Site Survey. In 2006, Krisel designed the front yard landscaping for this house.

The neighborhood and its Krisel designed homes has been the subject of articles in Flaunt Magazine (October of 2000), CA Modern (Fall, 2005), Metropolis Magazine (July 17, 2006) and various articles in the Los Angeles Times, New York Times and Desert Sun and the books Palm Springs Weekend by Andrew Danish and Alan Hess, Forgotten Modern by Alan Hess as well as Palm Springs Holiday by Peter Moruzzi.

Enclosed are the following exhibits:

- 1) 8 sets of photographs showing each elevation of the property
- 2) A neighborhood site plan showing the location of the property
- 3) A property site plan showing the house on its lot
- 4) A copy of a rendering of the house and its floor plan done by William Krisel
- 5) An article in Progressive Architecture Magazine, March 1958, about the unique features of the homes and neighborhood
- 6) An article in Palm Springs Villager, c. 1961 about the Alexanders
- 7) An article from Flaunt Magazine, October 2000 about Krisel and the Alexander Homes
- 8) An article from the Desert Sun Newspaper, October 7, 2006 featuring this home
- 9) A Letter of recommendation from William Krisel, AIA

In addition, the following books were consulted:

Palm Springs Weekend, Danish and Hess, 2001
Forgotten Modern, Hess, 2007

PRIMARY RECORD

Primary #
HRI
Triennial
NRHP Status Code

Other Listings
Review Code Reviewer Date

Page 1 of 1 Resource Name or #: (Assigned by recorder) Twin Palms District Contributor

P1. Other Identifier:

P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted a. County Riverside

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

b. USGS 7.5' Quad Palm Springs Date 1996 T ; R ; 1/4 of 1/4 of Sec ; B.M.

c. Address 1070 East Apache Road City Palm Springs Zip 92263

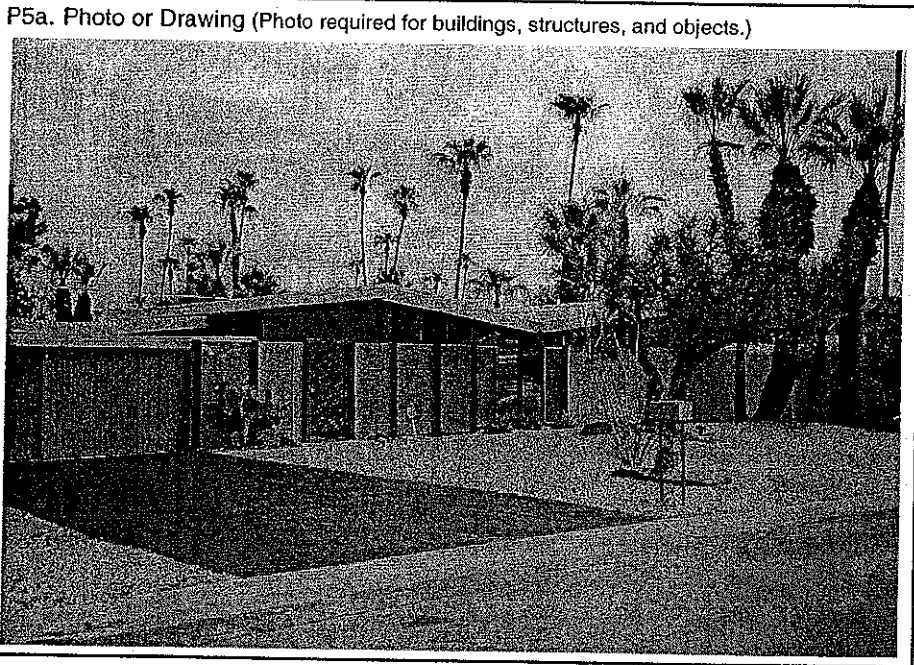
d. UTM: (Give more than one for large and/or linear resources) Zone 11; mE/ mN

e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
City of Palm Springs Section 26 Parcel No. 511 032 013

P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)
Originally constructed in approximately 1957 as part of the Twin Palms Royal Desert Estates Subdivision, this single-story, single-family residence is setback approximately twenty-five feet from the street behind a planted rock bed containing palm trees, boulders, and desert cacti. The residence has a low-pitched, butterfly-style roof with closed eaves and metal flashing, exterior wall sections comprised of painted green stucco, green-toned smooth concrete block, and green textured concrete panels hung horizontally in a wood frame, and metal-framed clerestory windows recessed below the front façade, and a wood-or-metal-framed window wall section beneath the "V" of the roof. A two-car garage is adjacent to north side of the residence and features two sliding barn-style doors built of vertical wood siding, with a short asphalt drive. The garage appears to have a flat roof with an extremely low-pitched butterfly roof above. An iron gate encloses a walkway between the residence and the garage and is flanked on each side by additional green-toned textured concrete panels. Overall, the residence appears to be in good condition.

P3b. Resource Attributes: HP2 - Single Family Property

P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (isolates, etc.)



P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)
P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
View East
August 2003

P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:
 Historic Prehistoric Both
c.1957
Date of Subdivision

P7. Owner and Address:
Chris Eugene Menrad
31895 9th Avenue
Laguna Beach CA 92651

P8. Recorded by:
Maley/Petrin/Tinsley/Watson
Architectural Resources Group
Pier 9, The Embarcadero
San Francisco, CA 94111

P9. Date Recorded: August 2003

P10. Survey Type (Describe)
Reconnaissance Survey

P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")
Architectural Resources Group, City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey Summary Report, 2004.

Attachments:
 None Continuation Sheet District Record Rock Art Record Other (List)
 Location Map Building, Structure, and Object Record Linear Feature Record Artifact Record
 Sketch Map Archaeological Record Milling Station Record Photograph Record

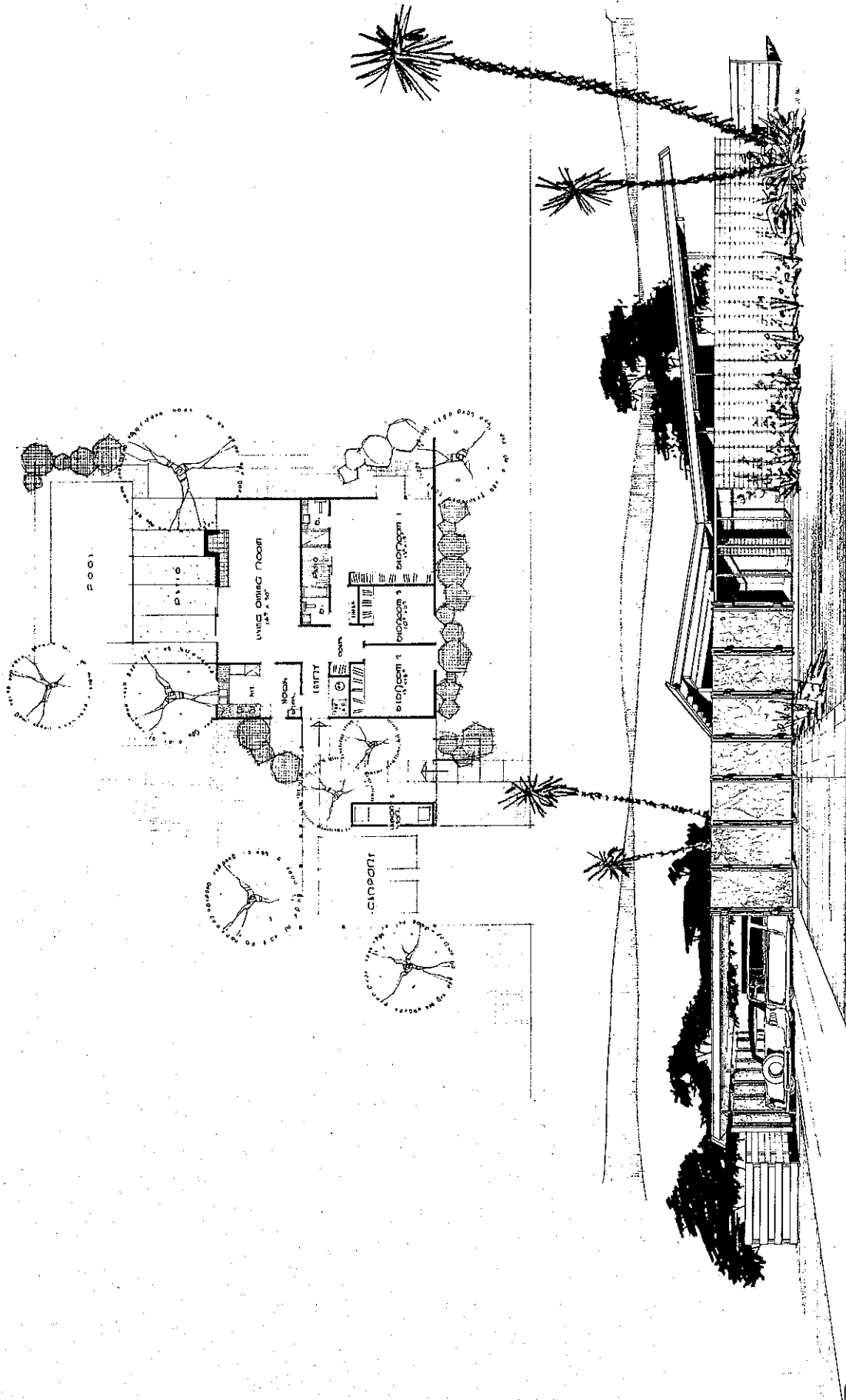
CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR DETERMINING CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR
POSSIBLE HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION

Site Address / APN No.: 1070 Apache Road / APN 511-032-013-6

This site is historically significant because (check all that apply):

- It includes a building, structure or archaeological condition that is unique or significant due to its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship or aesthetic effect. Explain: Unique floating Butterfly roof, post and beam mid-century modern construction.
- It is known to be associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community. Explain: First post-war tract homes built by Alexander Construction Co. Company would transform look & character of PS in future years
- It is known to be associated with lives of persons who made meaningful contribution to national, state or local history. Explain: _____
- It reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. Explain: Fine example of post and beam construction and design now commonly known as mid century style.
- It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Explain: Post + beam construction, easily repeatable but infinitely customizable design.
- It presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or that possesses high artistic value. Explain: Designed by Architect William Krisel, AIA who went on to design many more homes, offices, high rises throughout the country.
- It represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction such as a historic district, etc. Explain: _____
- It has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory. Explain: A significant development in the history of Palm Springs was the construction of modern mass housing.
- The property owner supports the nomination of this site for historic designation.

Exhibit 4



TITLE



PALMER & KRISSEL A.I.A.

ARCHITECTS AND ENGINEERS

15000 San Vicente Boulevard / Los Angeles 49, California

OWNER

DESIGN

MODEL

AA

SHEET

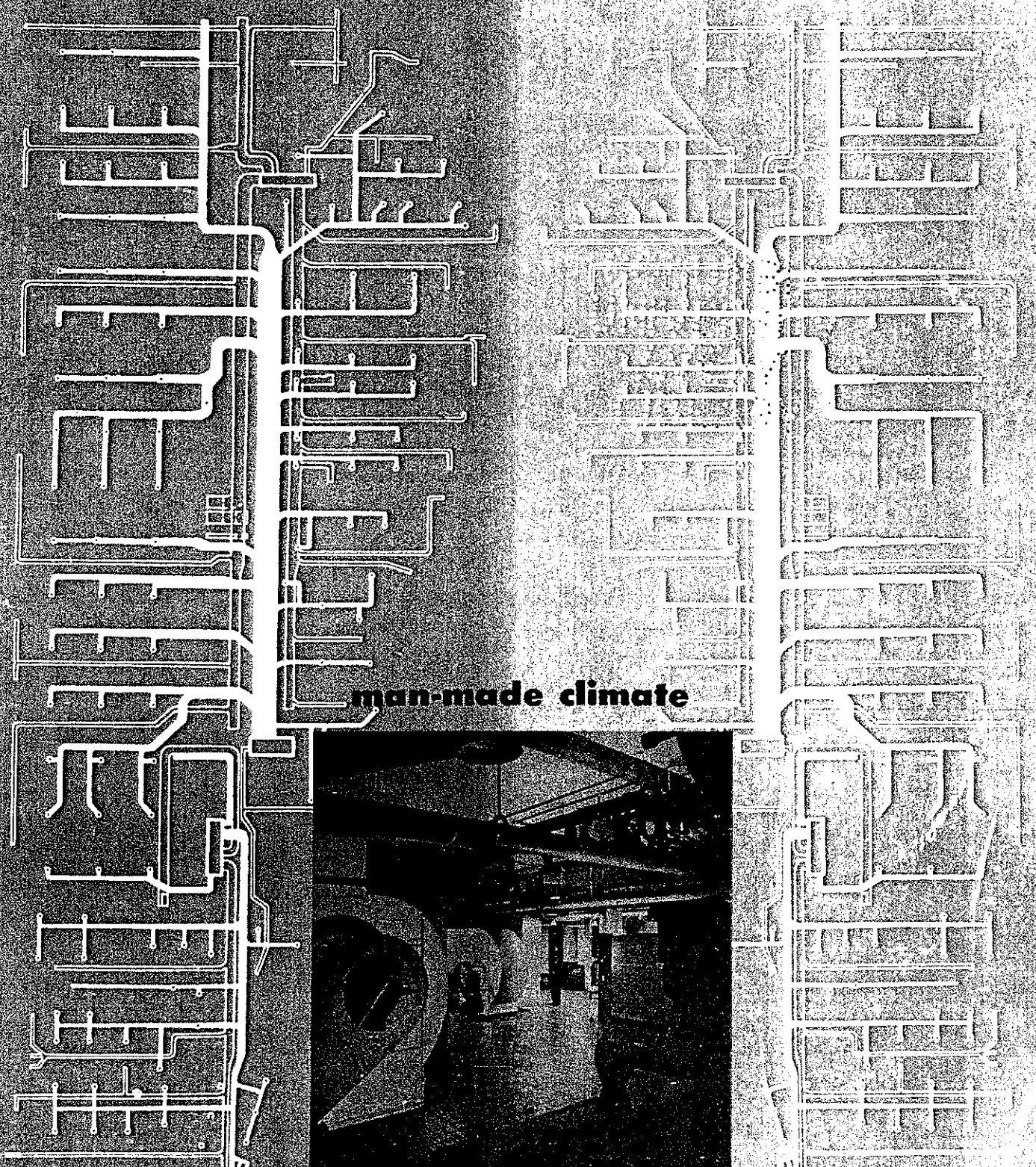
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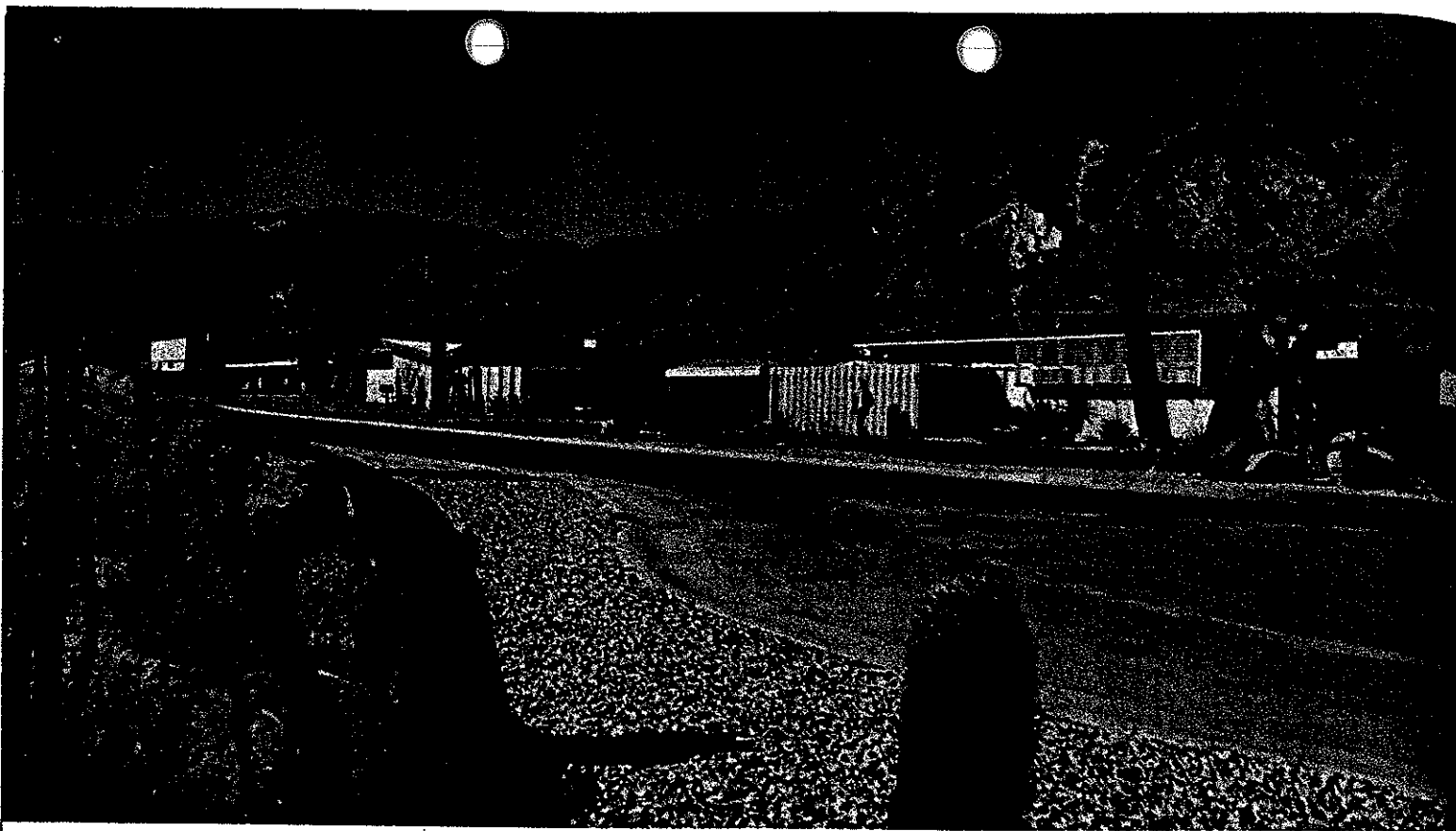
march 1958

world's largest architectural circulation

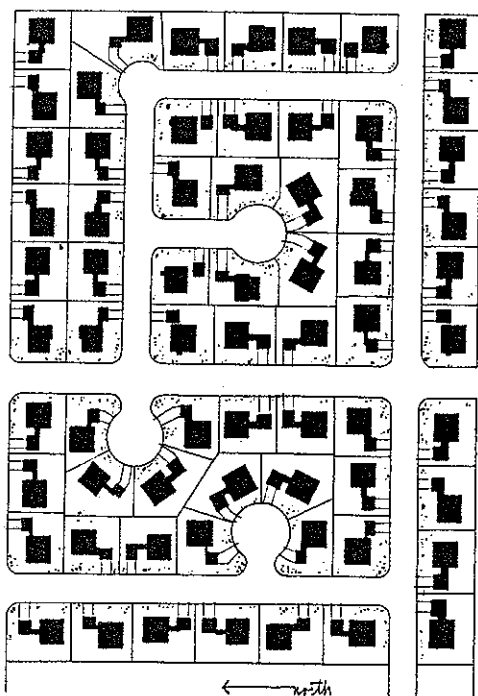
PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE



man-made climate



Speculative Builder Houses: Palm Springs, California

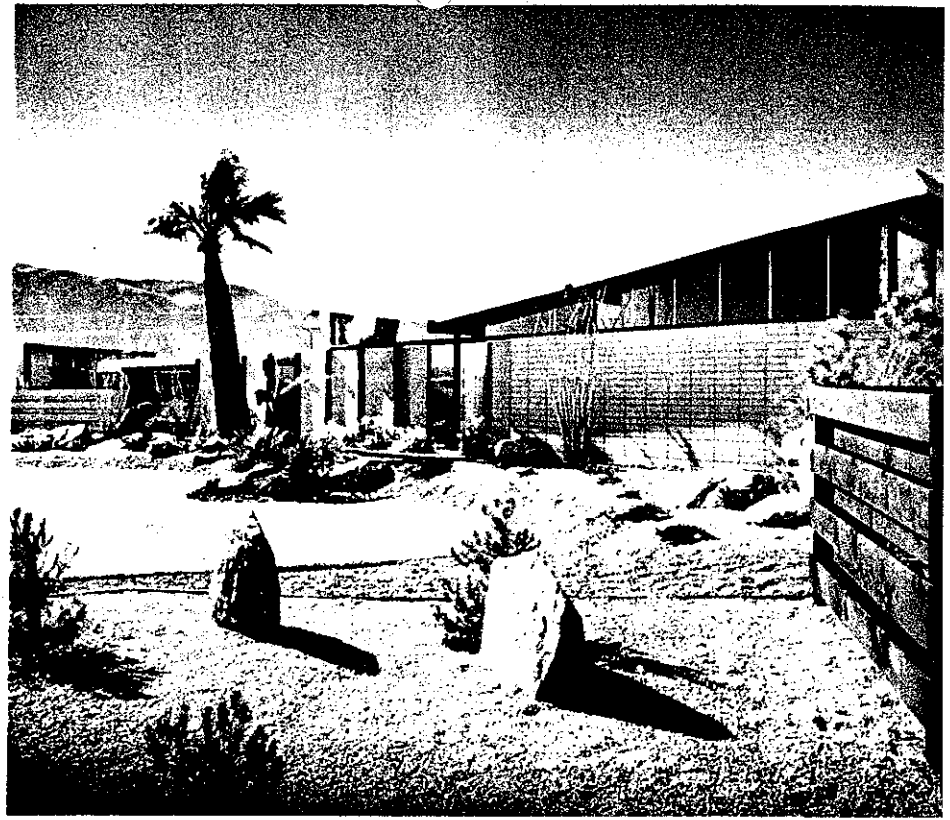
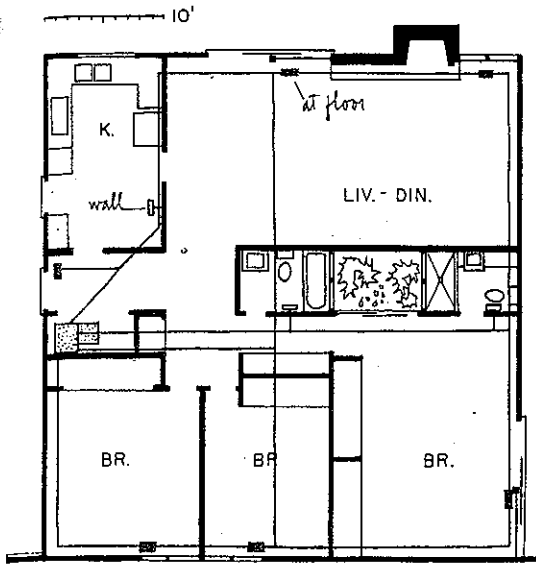


This entire group of 66 air-conditioned houses constituting Smoke Tree Valley Estates, in Palm Springs, is developed around a single floor plan with variations—reversal of location of bath and air-conditioning space; variations in orientation and fenestration; “flopping” of the plan; different roof lines and finish materials. This was consciously done to minimize the “tract” look, since the houses are in a price range greater than that of usual tract houses. Palmer & Krisel were Architects, Engineers, and Interior Designers; William Krisel, Landscape Architect; and Doris Palmer, Color Consultant. General Contractor, Builder, and Owner is George Alexander Company. The program called for 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom houses, suitable for desert living, that would be used mainly as weekend or second homes for families living elsewhere. The site is level, with magnificent views to the mountains on every hand.

Air conditioning is completely automatic, controlled from a thermostat on the in-

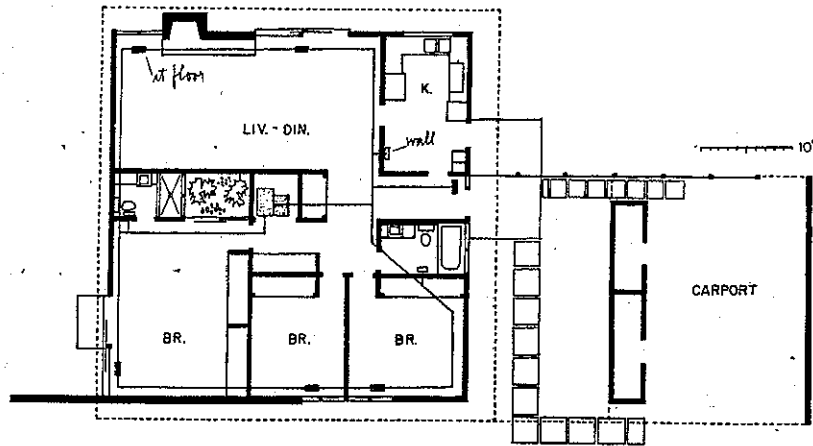
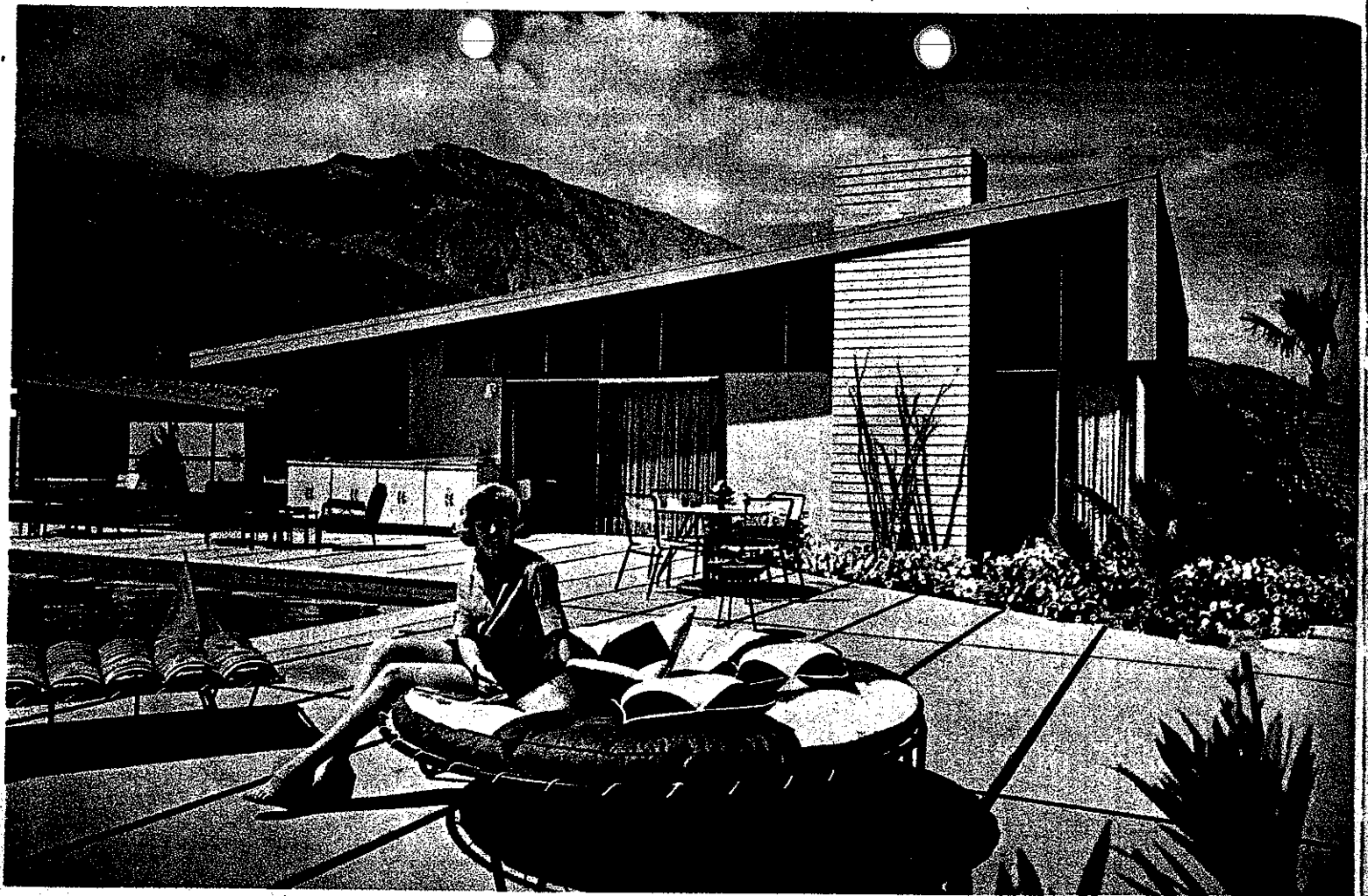
terior of the house and an anticipator outdoors. Local conditions are such that cooling may be required in daytime, and heating at night. A gas-fired, forced-air heating unit and an air conditioner that cools air by means of chilled water are located in each of the mechanical alcoves; as variously activated by the inside and outside controls, these furnish warm or cool air to a perimeter-loop system of ducts (beneath the floor slab) which feed registers in the different rooms.

The structural system is post-and-beam with exposed 2-in. T&G sheathing for the roof. No interior walls are bearing, since the floor system consists simply of a perimeter footing, slab floor, and concrete piers located to support structural columns on the interior. In the attempt to create variety mentioned above, exterior wall finishes include stucco, siding, concrete block, and stone. Rock-surfaced composition roofs are treated in various colors. Natural light is variously controlled by roof overhangs and “sun flaps.”



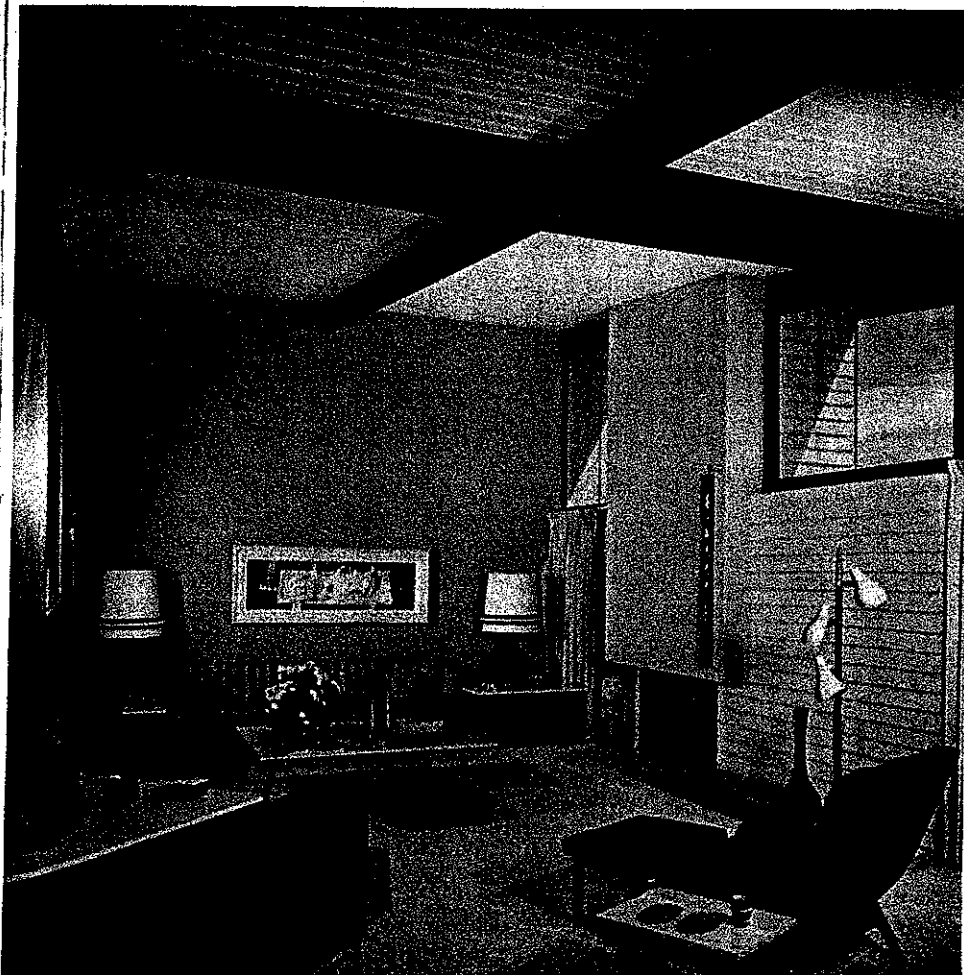
Different roof lines, various exterior wall materials, and a carefully considered color scheme; all contribute to avoiding uniformity.

Photos: Julius Shulman





The houses—in the \$30,000 to \$32,000 price range (complete with lot, swimming pool, terraces, air conditioning, and built-in equipment)—were all sold before completion.



Submit



Shower solution
 Tips on how to repair pans once they rot out and leak
INSIDE, P. 9

The Desert Sun
 SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2006 Section F

DESERT HOME

FEATURES EDITOR Barbara Lowell PHONE 778-4544 FAX 778-4554
 EMAIL barbara_lowell@desertsun.com HOME DELIVERY ASSISTANCE 322-5555

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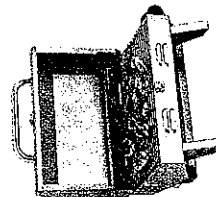
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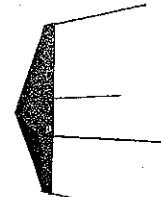
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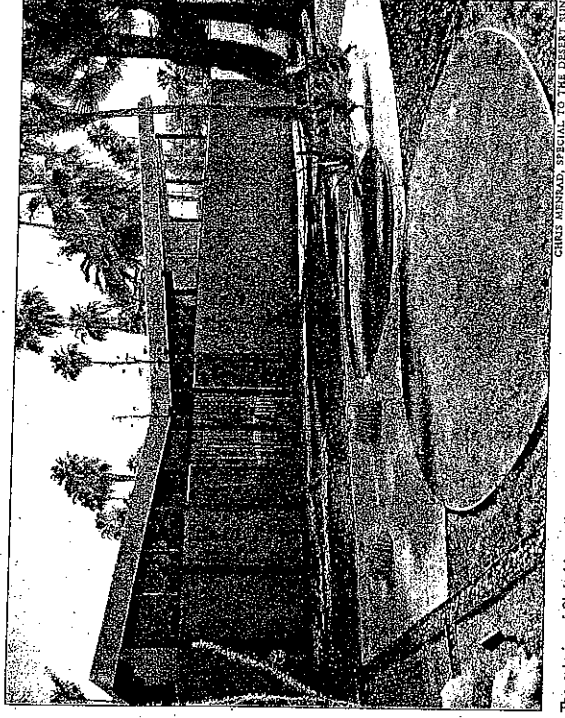
MEGLATCHY-TRUBINE



MEGLATCHY-TRUBINE



MEGLATCHY-TRUBINE



THE exterior of Chris Menrad's home features landscaping designed by Bill Krisek, the home's original architect.

Alexander the Great
 Learning more about this desert design

BY CHRIS MENRAD
 SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN

To even the most casual observer of the Valley's desert modernist architecture, Alexander homes may register a slight blip on their radar screen. But for serious aficionados of Alexanders, the name Bill Krisek inspires excited praise. Krisek, the lead architect of the famed Alexander homes that were built in and around Palm Springs in the 1950s, unwittingly created what can best be described as the "Alexander phenomenon."

The Alexanders, father George and son Robert, were successful developers in the San Fernando Valley.

In the mid-1950s, Robert came up with the idea of doing a project in Palm Springs where there had been a long-standing trend among celebrities to gravitate for rest and relaxation. He reasoned that it was an ideal location for affordable second homes for middle-class families. Robert turned to his friend Bill Krisek and his partner Dan Palmer of Palmer & Krisek, a young architectural firm in Los Angeles.

As the lead architect on the project, Krisek designed four classic modernist styles of post-and-beam construction with wide expanses of glass and four distinctive roof styles — butterfly, long gable, folded plate and barrel vault. The homes were also innovative in their form and function — integrating indoor and outdoor living — a concept that was perfect for the desert environment.

The first tract of homes was called Twin Palms because each house received two palms as starter landscaping. Priced at less than \$20,000 for a 1,200 square-foot house and \$39,000 for a 2,200 square-foot house, the development was so successful that it sold out immediately.

After this success, the Alexander team went on to build more than 2,500 homes in Palm Springs.

The legacy continues

Tragically, the era came to an abrupt end in 1965 when the entire Alexander family, except a 13-year-old daughter, were killed in an airplane crash. Their legacy continues as the popularity of Krisek's Alexanders have soared and are now selling in the millions. Krisek believes that "architecture" is an agent of change, to make a positive impact on society.

One thing is certain, his designs have stood the test of time. And if imitation is the highest form of flattery, Krisek can be further proud of his achievement as his designs have inspired a new generation of "Alexander-style" projects.



Bill Krisek

Chris Menrad is a stock trader who divides his time between New York and Palm Springs. He is also treasurer of the Palm Springs Modern Committee.

My own private Alexander

My relationship with the Twin Palms neighborhood began decades later when I was looking for a second home in the desert.

I came across the Twin Palms neighborhood quite by accident and fell in love with the architecture and the individuality of the neighborhood.

There was an open house at the house that eventually became mine.

I fell in love with it upon entering the front door.

After looking at about 60 houses from Palm Springs to La Quinta over the next two months, I kept coming back to this particular house. I bought my Alexander in March of 1999.

The kitchen had just been renovated through Home Depot, and while I knew then that it did not fit the character of the house, I lived with it for the next 5 years.

In 2005, I decided to renovate. I wanted it to be as authentic as possible and to achieve this, I consulted Mr. Krisek personally.

The kitchen was the first target. I hired Phil Smith of the Art Office and showed him a color photograph by Julius Shulman of the original kitchen.

After the extensive renovations, I showed Mr. Krisek the interior updates, and he was very pleased and gave his blessing to what I had done. He said I got the William Krisek first prize for renovation.

After the interior was complete, it was clear that the landscaping also needed work. I knew that Mr. Krisek was also a landscape architect. He won an award for his work at the Sandpiper project that he did in Palm Desert. So once again, I consulted the master and he agreed to offer his guidance. The result is a living testament to Krisek's Alexander phenomenon and why his designs have captured the imaginations of people around the world.

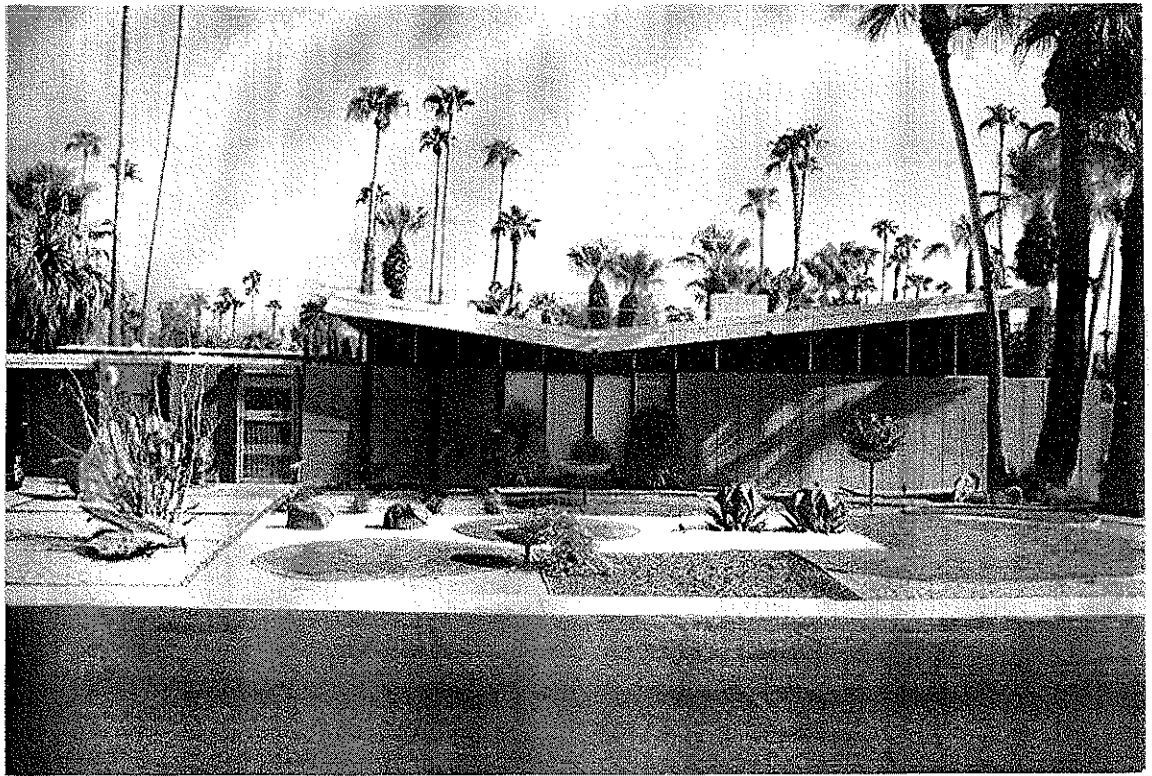
For his brilliant designs that still resonate 50 years later, Krisek will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Palm Springs Modern Committee at the 2006 Preservation Awards Luncheon on October 14 at the Parker Palm Springs.

2006 Preservation Awards Luncheon

When: Oct. 14 from noon to 2 p.m.
 Where: Parker Palm Springs
 Tickets: \$50 per person; tickets may be purchased online at preservation.org or 409-6906



CHRIS MENRAD, SPECIAL TO THE DESERT SUN
 Both the living room and bedroom in Chris Menrad's home include period furniture.



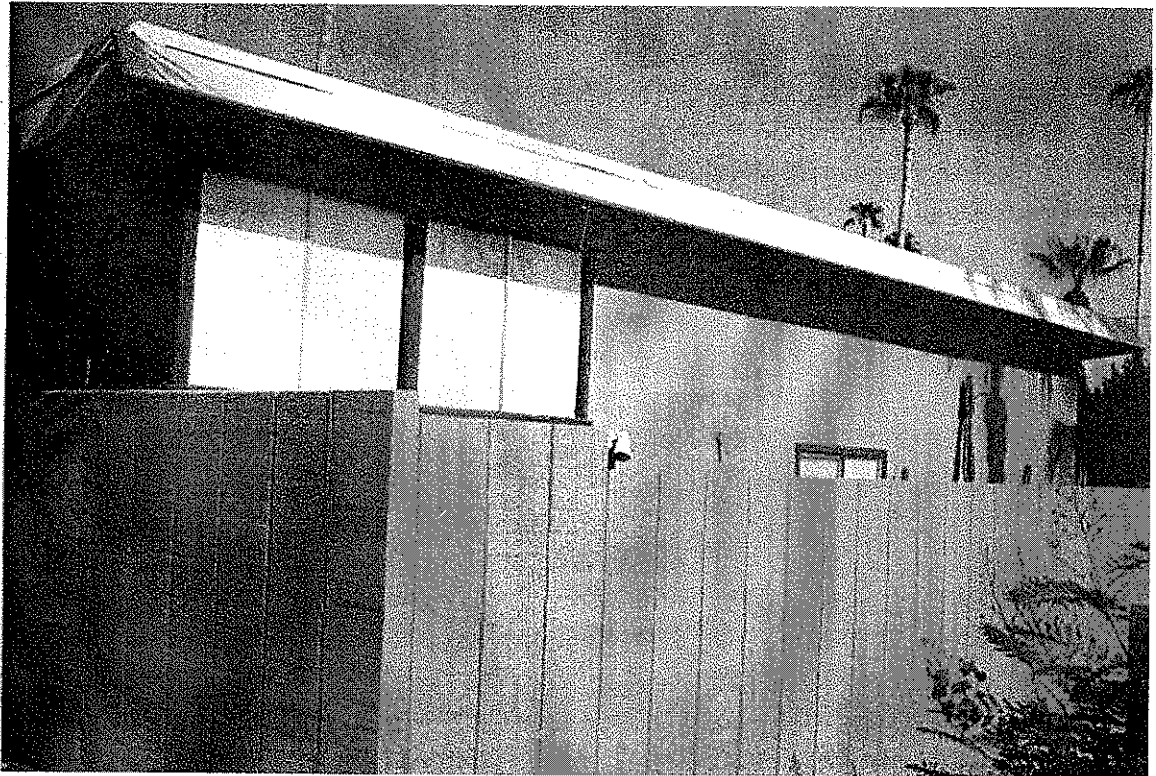


Exhibit (9)

William

KRISEL

A.I.A. ARCHITECT

568 Tigertail Road

Los Angeles California 90049

Telephone (310) 824-0441

Fax: (310) 476-2576

SEPTEMBER 4, 2009

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD
C/O DEPT. OF PLANNING SERVICES
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
3200 E. TAHQUITZ CANYON WAY
PALM SPRINGS, CA., 92262

RE: 1070 APACHE ROAD, PALM SPRINGS

I AM WRITING TO WHOLEHEARTIDLY ASK YOU TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION OF MR. CHRIS MENRAD FOR CLASS ONE HISTORIC DESIGNATION FOR THE SITE AT 1070 APACHE ROAD, PALM SPRINGS.

I AM THE ARCHITECT WHO DESIGNED THE TWIN PALMS TRACT FOR THE ALEXANDER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY IN 1957 WHEREIN THIS HOUSE IS LOCATED. THIS HOUSE WAS ONE OF EIGHT DIFFERENT ELEVATIONS OF MY DESIGN KNOWN AS "MODEL A-4" AND REFERRED TO AS A "FLOATING BUTTERFLY ROOF MODEL".

MR. MENRAD HAS FAITHFULLY AND ACCURATELY RESTORED THIS RESIDENCE TO THE ORIGINAL DESIGN, COLORS, BOTH INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR, ALONG WITH THE FURNISHINGS. ALL DONE IN ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE ORIGINAL MID-CENTURY-MODERN LANGUAGE. FURTHERMORE, IN 2006 I DESIGNED THE FRONT YARD LANDSCAPING, AND MR. MENRAD ACCURATELY INSTALLED THE WORK IN COMPLETE ACCORDANCE WITH MY PLANS. AGAIN REFLECTING THE SPIRIT OF MY ORIGINAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN.

IN MY OPINION, THIS HOUSE REPRESENTS THE BEST RESTORATION OF ONE OF MY HOUSES DESIGNED FOR THE ALEXANDERS IN THE 1950-1960 ERA. PLEASE APPROVE THIS APPLICATION.

YOURS VERY TRULY,


WILLIAM KRISEL, A.I.A., ARCHITECT