

# **The Allan and Mildred Kramer Residence**

**800 East Granvia Valmonte  
Palm Springs, CA 92262**

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



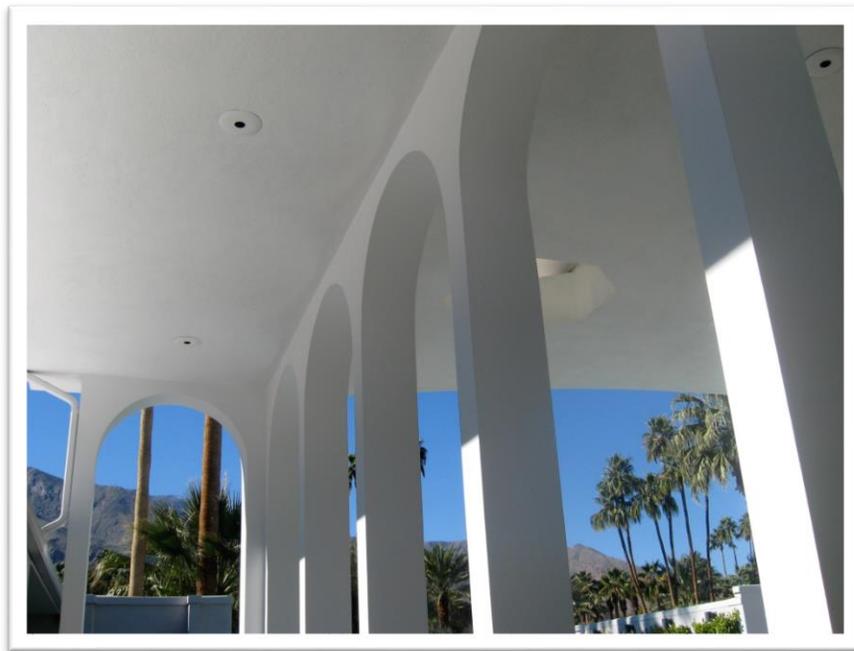
Prepared by  
Steve Vaught  
for the  
Palm Springs Preservation Foundation  
March 2019

# Acknowledgements

The author gratefully wishes to thank the following individuals/organizations for their professional expertise and/or editing assistance:

Barbara and Ron Marshall; Tracy Conrad; Gary Johns; Steven Price; Steven Keylon; Rene Brown, Palm Springs Historical Society; Jim Cioffi, Gayle Bower; Ron DUBY; Martyn Lawrence Bullard; Michael Green, and Daisy.

And a special thank you to Robert Miller who was both a close friend and assistant to James H. McNaughton for 18 years and who provided priceless memories, documents and images to assist in the production of this nomination.



**Front cover: Looking west from the Kramer living room.**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

**Above: Colonnade detail, Kramer Residence.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)

# **The Allan & Mildred Kramer Residence**

## **Class 1 Historic Site Nomination**

### **Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION: PAGE 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PAGE 4

CLASS 1 HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION FORM: PAGE 6

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: PAGE 10

BACKGROUND/HISTORIC CONTEXT: PAGE 33

EVALUATION FOR CLASS 1 SITE DESIGNATION: PAGE 33

INTEGRITY ANALYSIS: PAGE 35

### **APPENDICES**

I	Owner's Letter of Support
II	Assessor's Parcel Map
III	James H. McNaughton Biography
IV	A Listing of Known James H. McNaughton Residences



**The Kramer Residence as seen at night. James H. McNaughton also planned the home's lighting effects as part of his overall design.  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)**

## 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 January 2019, the PSPF board of directors assigned the task of writing the Kramer Residence’s Class 1 Historic Site nomination to Steve Vaught.

The owner’s letter of support is at Appendix I.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **SIGNIFICANCE:**

The Allan and Mildred Kramer Residence (hereinafter referred to as the “Kramer Residence”) is located at 800 East Granvia Valmonte in the Caballeros Estates tract. Completed in 1963, the home was designed in the New Formalist style by James H. McNaughton, a noted desert designer of the period, and is an important example of a custom modernist structure which exhibits numerous stylistic features that place it within the historic context of Palm Springs’ Modern period (1945-1969) as defined in the *Citywide Historic Context & Survey Findings* created by Historic Resources Group. The Kramer Residence rises to particular distinction as an extremely rare residential expression of New Formalism, which was primarily used on more monumental structures. Further, the extensive coverage of the home’s architecture in a wide range of publications from the time of its completion to the present has helped to enhance awareness and appreciation for the quality and diversity of Desert Modernism.

## **DESIGNATION CRITERIA:**

The Kramer Residence is listed as being eligible for Class 1 Historic Site designation by the *Citywide Historic Resource Inventory*.

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

**8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 3, 4 & 5 - Design/Construction:** The Kramer Residence is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it is a rare desert interpretation of New Formalism as adapted to the region’s particular environment. The style’s signature elements such as verticality, a flat roof with deep overhanging eaves, colonnades, symmetrical floorplan, an elevated platform and extensive use of glass, are all evidenced within an architectural design that blurs the line between the indoors and outdoors. As a custom residence skillfully designed by James H. McNaughton, it rises to the level of work by master architects/designers with high artistic values. Therefore, for its distinctive characteristics, as the work of a Master architect/designer, and for its high artistic values, the residence qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Site under Criteria 3, 4 and 5.

**SUMMARY:** This evaluation finds the Kramer Residence eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Historic Site under 8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the local ordinance’s seven criteria. Additionally, the Kramer Residence retains a “high degree” of integrity (see Section 7, “Integrity Analysis”).



**James H. McNaughton, (1912-1979).**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)



# 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](mailto: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 an 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 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: Allan and Mildred Kramer Residence; Kramer Residence  
 Other names: Villa Grigio  
 Address: 800 East Granvia Valmonte/612 Phillips Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262  
 Assessor Parcel Number: 507-202-017 (See Appendix II)  
 Owner Name: Martyn Lawrence Bullard  
 Owner’s Address: 8550 Melrose Avenue  
 City: Los Angeles, CA 90069  
 Telephone:  
 Fax number:  
 E-mail address: [martyn@martynlawrencebullard.com](mailto:martyn@martynlawrencebullard.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
1		<b>Total</b>

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: Private residence

Current Use or Function: Private residence

---

## 4. Description

---

Architect: James H. McNaughton (Designer)

Construction Date and Source: 1963 (Palm Springs Building Permit/Riverside County Assessor)

Architectural Classification: New Formalism

Construction Materials:

Foundation: Concrete slab

Roof: Composition

Walls: Wood and stucco

Other: Terrazzo flooring

Building Description: *Attach a description of the Building/Site/District, including all character defining features, on one or more additional sheets. A thumb drive is provided with this nomination.*

---

**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 Kramer Residence, located at 800 East Granvia Valmonte, was constructed on Lot 27 of the Caballeros Estates tract. The legal description of the parcel is LOT 27 MB 036/041 CABALLEROS ESTATES. It should be noted that the property also bears a second address of 612 Phillips Road, however, it is the Granvia Valmonte address which is used officially.

Originally, this land was a part of the Stevens Estates tract, but was subdivided into Caballero Estates beginning in 1959. The developer, Roy Fey (1915-2000), is considered one of Palm Springs' most prolific developers, responsible for more than 1,200 homes in the Palm Springs area. Fey's original plan for the Caballeros Estates tract was to have all of the homes designed by the firm of Wexler & Harrison. While this concept was not fully realized, the firm is known to have designed at least 8 residences in the tract.



**An artist's rendering of the proposed Caballeros Estates project taken from the *Desert Sun*, November 13, 1959.**

Caballeros Estates was planned as an upscale subdivision with "estate" sized lots of 100'x125' and 100'x135.' Lot 27 was in the latter category and, with its corner setting, remained one of the tract's choicest lots. Lot 27 was purchased at some point prior to 1963 by Mildred and Allan Kramer with the intention of building a new winter home for themselves.

## First Owners, Allan & Mildred Kramer



**Mildred & Allan Kramer (left) are seen in a 1972 image from the *Desert Sun*.**

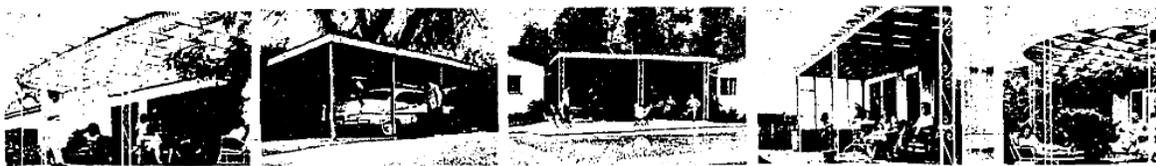
Allan and Mildred Kramer (hereinafter known as the “Kramers”), were residents of Los Angeles who began wintering in the desert starting at least from the late 1950s. From that time onward into the 1980s, the Kramers would be active in valley social and civic affairs as well as being the proprietors of a well known local business, Frank’s Hairstyling, on Palm Canyon Drive.

Kramer had been a successful businessman in two very diverse professions. His first career was in shoes. A native of Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, he was born on May 6, 1905 as the son of a local merchant. By the 1920s, he had relocated to Ohio and it was there that he met his future wife, Mildred. Known as Middy to friends and family, she was born as Mildred May Leponsky on May 25, 1906 in Cleveland, Ohio. Her father Morris, a Russian émigré, later changed the family name to Lepon.

While the details of how they met are presently unknown, the couple were married on December 26, 1927 in Cleveland Heights, Ohio when Allan was 22 and Middy, 21. On their marriage certificate, Middy listed her profession as dance teacher while Allan stated his as merchant. In 1929, the couple welcomed a daughter, Suzanne. She would be their only child.

During the remainder of the 1920s and into the 1930s, Kramer worked as manager of the West 25<sup>th</sup> Street Boot Shop in Cleveland. By 1940, he had done well enough for the couple to move to a comfortable home in the upscale community of Shaker Heights.

The Kramers disappear from the available public record during the 1940s, but resurface in the Los Angeles area at the dawn of the 1950s. By this time, Kramer had left footwear behind and launched an entirely new career as the owner of Bel-Air Engineering. The firm was known for producing various types of patios, carports and outdoor shelters under the banner of Bel-Air Patios. The venture proved a notable success and by the late 1950s Bel-Air Patios was the largest manufacturer of custom-built fiberglass and redwood patios in the country with three manufacturing plants and thirty sales offices throughout California and the west.



*What's different about a Bel-Air patio . . .  
and how we do it at no extra cost*



I'm Allan Kramer of Bel-Air Engineering. We've been building patios, and carports, for six years now. Not for just a few months each year; this is our only business, and we keep at it all year 'round.

Now, I'm no mind-reader, but I expect you folks who are contemplating a patio or carport probably have a number of questions. One question seems to come up more frequently than any other: what's different about a Bel-Air patio . . . and how does it compare in price?

Let's take first things first. The way we see it, your patio is a custom patio. It should be designed to fit your home, your garden, your landscaping, your color scheme, and, most importantly, your living. You can't do all this by choosing from a half-dozen stock designs. That's why we treat each single installation on its own merits. It's the only way we know to make sure you get the kind of patio you want. And that goes whether you want a fifteen-foot budget installation or a fifty-foot "spectacular".

Next. We've known, from the very beginning, that there's absolutely no

point in trying to pinch pennies by using second-grade materials. Grade A redwood, for example, costs a few cents more per beam . . . but you can't have what the poets call "a thing of beauty and a joy forever" if you're looking at knotholes and warping. Same thing with metal posts. Same with our Fiberglass panels; we tested them all, and selected Ripolite as the very best. 5 different patterns, and 8 different colors . . . and believe me, we find it so much easier to work with, and you find it so much nicer to live with, we wouldn't even consider using anything else.

Now, about cost. We're not the cheapest. There's always somebody who can do anything cheaper. But we are definitely low-priced in the quality field. Actually lowest on most competitive bidding. And the reason is not hard to find. With our volume, we order our materials at lower prices. Where others may order by the piece, or by the dozen, we order by carloads. That brings our cost of materials down just as low as it can get. And while our men are the highest paid in the industry, we keep them busy, full time. No customer ever pays for slack time at Bel-Air. There isn't any.

Over the years, we've put up patios

and carports for some 6,024 owners. you'd like to call on them, we'll say neighborhood references, including installations shown in these photographs on request. Bel-Air owners like to others about them.

Here's one more important fact for you to consider. We operate a factory-to-you. You don't pay a penny for middleman commissions broker costs. And our terms are the best in town. No down payment at no payments until June; terms as low as \$5 per month; and F.H.A. financing

There will never be a better for you to make the "Big Switch" from an ordinary back yard to a lightful Bel-Air patio. Phone us, toll free estimate. Absolutely no obligation. We've never believed in "high-pressure" selling, and we certainly don't start in now. So give us a call, and see how we can work something out for you.



**Free Estimate: phone Michigan 8851 today (toll calls collect)**  
**Free 24-Page Booklet: phone or mail this convenient coupon.**

**Remember: no down payment, no payment until June, F.H.A. terms from \$5 monthly.**  
**Licensed Contractors: all installations comply with Los Angeles city building codes.**

Bel-Air Engineering Co., 1238 E. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles, Michigan 8851 San Diego: Alwater 3-2364  
San Fernando Valley: State 6-2719 Pasadena: Sycamore 6-433 Santa Monica Bay Area: Granite 6-7741

Bel-Air Engineering Co.  
1238 E. Olympic Blvd., Los Angeles 21, California  
Gentlemen: Please send free 24-page patio & carport b

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City and Zone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Allan Kramer regularly made himself a centerpiece of the advertising program for Bel-Air Patios as seen in this 1956 ad in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Success in business allowed the Kramers to buy a comfortable home at 2247 Coldwater Canyon Drive just above Beverly Hills and a winter retreat in Palm Springs, both of which were outfitted with Bel-Air patios. The couple's Palm Springs house was a newly-built (1958) Wexler & Harrison residence at 249 Orchid Tree Lane in the Sunmor tract. They would retain this house as a rental property after completing their new residence in 1963.

## Kramer Residence Construction

Construction of the Kramer Residence began with the issuance of Permit #B-6022 on August 30, 1963. The permit called for the construction of an approximately 3,100 sq. ft. main residence, plus an additional 700 sq. ft. for a carport. Construction materials were to be frame and stucco with a composition roof. Total cost of the structure was stated as being \$40,000. Additionally, a separate permit, #B-6244, was issued on December 7, 1963 for the construction of a 17'x33' swimming pool costing \$4,000. The pool was installed by Hoams Construction Co. of Rancho Mirage, which provided a number of valley pools during the same period.

The bare-bones permits did not include the name of either the architect/designer or builder. However, both are known through other sources. The name of the contractor, Eugene F. Shelby, was discovered on the original construction placard, which, remarkably, has remained with the house since 1963 and preserved by current owner Martyn Lawrence Bullard.



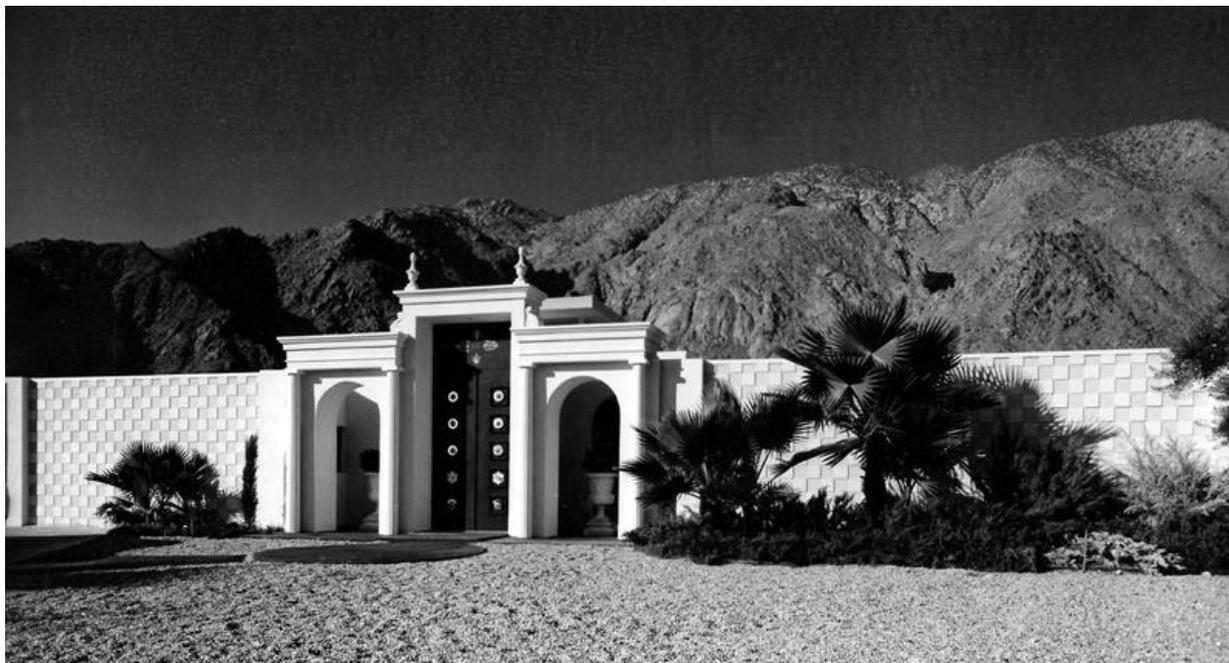
**The Kramer Residence's original construction placard has remained with the house since its 1963 construction.**

(Author Photo. February 2019)

Shelby (1923-1968) and his wife Barbara Magruder Shelby (1922-2008) were well-known Palm Springs residents and landowners in the Little Tuscany tract. The Long Beach-born Shelby had formed his own electronics firm, Shelby Instrument Company, after returning from service in the Army Signal Corps in World War II. After selling the company in the early 1960s, Shelby, his wife and two daughters, relocated to Palm Springs where he continued to pursue electronic and engineering interests. He was a dedicated ham radio operator and did work as an engineer for local UHF television station Channel 36.

Shelby also worked, according to the *Desert Sun*, as a "private builder" and served as the contractor on at least one James H. McNaughton-designed house, the Kramer Residence, although it is likely he did others for McNaughton. The Shelbys appear to be behind the construction of two McNaughton-designed speculative houses in Little Tuscany, 700 Panorama Road (1966) and 595 West Chino Canyon Drive (1967). Eugene F. Shelby died suddenly in his garage workshop at the family home at 526 West Chino Canyon Drive of an unreported cause on October 13, 1968.

## The Designer



**The George Arnold Residence at 893 Camino del Sur (1960), which may have been James H. McNaughton's first Palm Springs commission, readily exhibited many of the stylistic elements that would become hallmarks of his designs. Charming as it appeared, the home had a lurid and tragic history. In 2013, it was remodeled beyond recognition.**

*(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)*

The Kramer Residence was designed by James H. McNaughton, a talented designer who has left a unique and valuable legacy in the history of midcentury architecture in Palm Springs. McNaughton arrived in the village in 1959 after a highly successful career as the award-winning head art director for ABC Television. McNaughton, who is considered to be television's first official art director, helped to transform the fledgling medium through his innovative and imaginative set designs which gave the illusion of height and distance through perspective. (See full McNaughton biography in Appendix III.)

Although he held a degree in architecture, McNaughton was not known to have designed any buildings other than an addition to his New Jersey farmhouse prior to arriving in the desert. However, once he settled in the village, McNaughton set himself up as an architectural and interior designer, offering "total design" services that included all aspects from construction to furnishing.

McNaughton's design philosophy owed as much to his years as an art director/set designer as it did his architectural training in both the United States and Europe. Throughout the 1960s to mid-1970s, McNaughton designed a series of showy, theatrical residences that drew upon classical precedents abstracted and adapted to the desert climate not only in Palm Springs but also in places such as Arizona; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Houston, Texas.

McNaughton knew not only the technical aspects of architecture, he knew the theatrics of it in a way few others did. To him, all houses were stage sets in which their occupants lived out their lives. McNaughton wanted to give them starring roles by creating spaces where they could be seen to their best advantage. The goal was a house that was both impressive to the eye yet wholly livable as well. McNaughton personally liked to label the style of his homes “Desert Classic,” but, officially, his vocabulary ranged from Modern Neoclassicalism, straightforward Midcentury Modern, Hollywood Regency and, in the case of the Kramer Residence, New Formalism.

## The Architecture



**McNaughton’s 1962 design for the Morrill House brought international attention and may have directly led to his engagement on the Kramer Residence.**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

How the Kramers came to select McNaughton as their designer is not known but it likely came as the result of the extensive publicity surrounding the house he designed for Harry and Willa Morrill in 1962. Located at 701 West Panorama Road in Little Tuscany, the house was envisioned as an over-the-top showplace meant to awe visitors and serve as a glamorous setting for social and charitable events. According to Robert Miller, who was both a good friend and assistant to McNaughton for 18 years, the designer always strove to meet his client’s wishes and give them “whatever they wanted.” At 701 Panorama they wanted “awesome” and that is what the designer delivered.

For the Morrills, McNaughton broke with the general trend in desert modernism, which favored horizontality and minimal ornamentation, and produced a design that drew visually from ancient Rome or at least a version abstracted by way of Hollywood. The completed house would be a masterwork of the type of residence McNaughton would become famous for with recognizable hallmarks such as verticality, overhanging eaves, clerestory windows, extensive use of glass, a floorplan that allowed one to see from the entry straight through out to the gardens and landscape beyond, mural work, interior fountains, finials, clear separation of private and public spaces, and classical elements often used in a superficial, purely decorative manner.

Completed in 1962, the Morrill Residence struck an immediate chord with both the public and the press and the house was extensively photographed and written about not only in such local publications as the *Desert Sun* and *Palm Springs Life*, but nationally and internationally as well, including a major layout in *The Architectural Digest*, making it one of the first midcentury Palm Springs homes ever featured in the venerable publication.

The house, which was hailed as “magnificent” and “spectacular” in various publications, gained a new level of interest when it was later purchased by George and Rosalie Hearst. This led wags to begin referring to it as “Hearst Castle Junior.”

All the favorable publicity did not go unnoticed by the Kramers and they saw how the Morrills’ profiles had risen in the desert community as a result of their showplace residence. According to Robert Miller, the couple sought to repeat the Morrills’ success both architecturally and socially. Miller recounted that Earl Wild, the famed pianist who was a lifelong friend of McNaughton’s and a razor-sharp wit, observed the Kramers during the home’s construction and bestowed upon them the nickname of “Mr. I and Mrs. My,” for their way of making everything about themselves.

McNaughton, who had overnight been propelled by the Morrill House into one of the village’s most sought-after designers, was delighted to produce a residence for the Kramers that had the best features of the Morrill House yet was totally unique in and of itself. The home would be an “adults only” occasion as the Kramer’s only child was already grown and living elsewhere. Therefore, it was planned with only two bedrooms, one as the master and the other as a private guest room. However, the Kramers planned on using the house for frequent social and charitable events and its design was geared for entertainment.

Architecturally, McNaughton looked to New Formalism in his design for the Kramer Residence. New Formalism, which had first taken hold in the mid-1950s as a reaction against the International style’s strict vocabulary and rejection of historical precedent, was gaining popularity with such important proponents as Edward Durrell Stone, Minoru Yamasaki, Oscar Niemeyer, and Philip Johnson. During the 1950s-1960s, a number of well-known structures were built in the style including Seattle’s Pacific Science Center (1962); the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion (1964); and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts (1962-1969).

With its emphasis on verticality and monumentality, New Formalism was well suited for high-profile public and institutional buildings. For the Kramer commission, McNaughton sought to reduce it to a residential scale while not losing the timeless nobility it projected.



**Symmetry was a hallmark of New Formalism. For the Kramer Residence, McNaughton created a protective “shell” supported by twin colonnades that served as a cover over the living room and its outdoor extension.**

*(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)*

Classicism was most notably represented in the twin 14-foot high colonnades, which served multiple purposes in the overall design. Most critically, they served as the north and southern walls of the main mass, supporting the large flat roof, which extended outwards over a portion of the central courtyard. Additionally, the colonnades helped to visually draw and guide visitors towards and into the house. That they were extended from outside to inside helped to blur the boundaries between indoor-outdoor spaces, a critical objective of McNaughton’s and of Desert Modernism in general.

The inspiration for the narrow, vertical arches could be traced back to early Roman precedents, particularly in aqueduct design, but according to McNaughton’s assistant Robert Miller, McNaughton referred to these as “Saarinen” arches, perhaps a witty

reference to famed architect Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri, which was nearing completion at the time.



**McNaughton's fascination with the abstracted arch went back to his days in television, using the classic design to create not only depth and height, but an almost Dali-like surreality.**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

The floorplan was skillfully arranged in the form of an H in an east-west axis with wings running along either side of the home's central mass, which was devoted exclusively to the living room. The designer drew a clear distinction between public and private spaces by having the home's kitchen, dining room and study contained in the north wing, while the southern wing was devoted to the Kramers' large master suite and guest room.

Unlike the sloping parcel for the Morrills, the topography of the Kramer lot was flat. McNaughton nonetheless worked to take advantage of the view of the San Jacintos rising in the west, which he achieved through an enormous 14-foot bowed window that served as the focal point of the home's living room. McNaughton aided the view further by elevating the living room onto a platform, which was accessed by a series of steps both from inside and outside the house. McNaughton's, "strict concentration on the vertical line makes one even more aware of the views beyond the garden walls," wrote *The*

*Architectural Digest* in 1965. “All the architectural forms tend to train the eye vertically – to the desert sky and the mountains which surround Palm Springs.”

While having a spectacular mountain view was critical, equally important was privacy and McNaughton arranged the Kramer Residence to be a very sheltered, inward-facing structure, with the spaces opening, not to the street sides but towards inner courtyards. The south-facing façade was virtually free of windows except for two pairs of narrow horizontal strips used to bring southern light into the master bedroom and guest room. However, even these were later removed and today, the Granvia Valmonte-facing façade is almost exclusively a blank wall.



**A 1965 view of the home’s entry. Note the louvered doors, which could be opened to facilitate airflow if desired. These have since been filled in.**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

As he did in all of his designs, McNaughton sought to merge indoor and outdoor spaces. The house contained three separate and distinctive courtyards arranged in a line along an east-west axis. Starting at the front of the property closest to the Phillips Road side, McNaughton created a small, sheltered garden, enclosed by a decorative concrete wall and anchored by a square tile fountain. This space was accessible through a three-part opening that originally could be closed off from the central courtyard by a triple set of louvered doors. In recent years, this garden has been remodeled with the fountain replaced by a spa tub.



**A 1965 view looking towards the front garden from across the pool/central courtyard. Note the four finials, since removed, and the walls, which were incised to appear as square blocks, another McNaughton favorite.**

*(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)*

McNaughton also used louvered doors on either side of the central courtyard, which contained the home's large swimming pool. These doors, which have since been filled in, could be opened if desired to enhance airflow on warmer days and provide views of the front gardens, particularly to those swimming in the pool.

The central court was the heart of the house and McNaughton encouraged its use by extending the main roofline out and over a section of the courtyard, which created an

outdoor living room that was sheltered from the harsh rays of the sun. To keep the space from being too dark, McNaughton added a set of four hexagonal skylights topped with plastic shells, which were lighted for night illumination. McNaughton ensured this space would make a perfect spot for entertaining by making it directly accessible, not only to the living room from two points, but also to the kitchen and adjacent wet bar. Further, he added outdoor breakfast and snack bars that could be serviced from the kitchen by sliding windows.



**McNaughton's extensive use of glass led his designs to be known as "See Through" houses.**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

Separated by the living room from the central courtyard was a third space at the home's eastern end, which, like its western counterpart, was anchored by an identical tile fountain. Designed for intimate gatherings, the eastern courtyard was accessible from the living room, the study and the master bedroom.

For floor surfaces, McNaughton made extensive use of terrazzo both in the indoor and outdoor spaces, with the exception of the bedrooms, which were carpeted. In what became a McNaughton hallmark, the designer hand-painted a large mural on the dining room wall, which, according to *The Architectural Digest*, McNaughton felt “repeated the motif of the house.” It also harkened back to his television set designer days, which created a three-dimension illusion of greater depth.

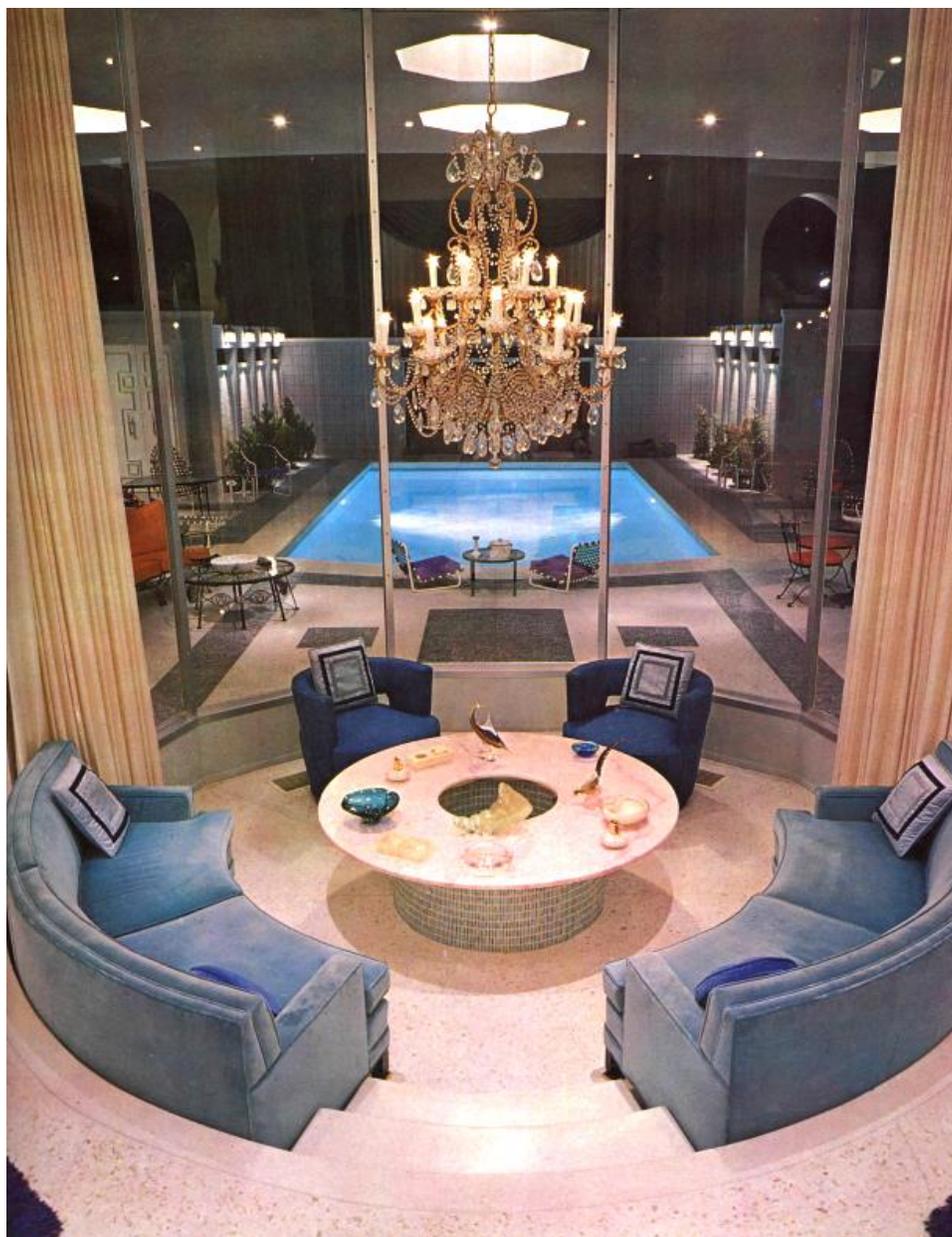


**McNaughton remained a master of perspective and regularly painted murals in his residences that furthered the perception of depth.**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

McNaughton completed his “total” design services for the Kramers in the landscape and interior decorating. A number of the pieces came from the designer’s own collection of antiques and decorative arts. Finally, he designed the lighting effects for the home to illuminate it to its best advantage.

The Kramer Residence was completed at the end of 1963, although it appears likely that final work and decorating extended into 1964. The Kramers, who were reportedly thrilled by the results, did not hold an official housewarming party until the fall, perhaps waiting until finishing touches were completed and the return of the winter residents.

It was reported in the *Desert Sun* that the Kramers sent out a “delightfully unusual” invitation to their November 7<sup>th</sup> housewarming that was created in the form of a theatre ticket, with a stub that could be torn off and sent back as the R.S.V.P. The invite read in part, “KRAMER PRODUCTIONS invites you to the opening of their latest spectacular, ‘The House That Al & Middy Built.’”



The sheer theatricality of the Kramer Residence is evidenced in this image taken from *The Architectural Digest*. Note the careful symmetry not only in the architecture but the furnishings as well. The circular center table remains with the house today.

Theatrical metaphors were wholly appropriate for the Kramer Residence and they showed McNaughton had achieved his desired effect. And the Kramers did as well with their public profile greatly enhanced by the home's completion. After 1964, their names began to appear with regularity in the *Desert Sun*, particularly in attendance at social and civic affairs.

Like the earlier Morrill House, McNaughton's design for the Kramers caught the imagination of the public and began receiving much favorable reaction from local sources such as the *Desert Sun* and *Palm Springs Life*, to the *Los Angeles Times* and beyond, before ultimately being chosen to appear in a major 14-page spread in *The Architectural Digest's* Summer 1965 issue. With two homes featured in the magazine, McNaughton became one of the first and only midcentury Palm Springs' designers of the time to achieve such a distinction.

Over the following decades and through today, the Kramer Residence has continued to be featured in newspaper and magazine articles, books on architecture and design, blog posts, and television. It has had the unique honor of being in *Architectural Digest* on two separate occasions – 1965 and again in 2017 – when it was redecorated and remodeled by the current owner, designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard.

During the Kramers' time at the house, they allowed it to be one of four notable Palm Springs residences included on the 1966 fundraising tour for the American Association of University Women. A popular annual event, the AAUW featured two McNaughton designs with the Kramer Residence and the Morrill House, which was now owned by George and Rosalie Hearst. Also included that year was the home of actor Laurence Harvey and that of Irving P. Krick. McNaughton houses were favorites of the tour guests and in subsequent years the designer even opened his own studio residence at 210 Camino Carmelita as part of the event. It was reported that an estimated 3,000 people toured the Kramer Residence on the 1966 tour.

Not all publicity, however, was welcome. The home's high profile and its accessibility made it a favorite target for burglars during the 1960s with the home being violated on several occasions. Most notably, and frighteningly for the Kramers, was the February 1969 robbery pulled off by a notorious thief nicknamed in the press as the Palm Springs "Cat Burglar," who took an estimated \$9,000 in cash and jewelry while the Kramers were in the house. It was one of three robberies committed that night alone.

Although they lived in the house through the 1960s, the Kramers made several attempts to sell as early as 1966. The house was originally listed at \$200,000, which in 1966 would have been a considerable sum for a village property. By 1969, the house was reduced to \$145,000. It is not known when the Kramers ultimately sold the house but it appears to have been in 1971.

After leaving the residence, the couple relocated to Rancho Mirage where they became active members of the Tamarisk Country Club. Middy even became one of the club's "Tamettes" in 1981. The Kramers continued to be involved in Palm Springs affairs until Middy's death in 1985. Allan Kramer passed away in 1992.

## **Additional Owners**

No formal title search has been conducted on the Kramer Residence. Therefore, a listing of ownership prior to 1988 is incomplete. However, based on other available documentation, particularly past issues of the *Desert Sun* archives, certain names/entities are known to have been associated with the property.

The following is an ersatz chain of title, based on available research. It should be noted that this is only a presumption until a full chain-of-title is conducted.

1963-1971 – Allan and Mildred Kramer  
1971-1973 – Peter J. Sparacino and Frances Luria  
1973 – Trustee’s Sale. California Reconveyance Company, trustee.  
1973-1980 – Arnold Von Wyl, Jr.  
1980-1995 – Frederick W. Robertson\*  
11/8/1995 – Russell S. Schafer\*  
8/14/2014 – Martyn Lawrence Bullard (Current Owner)\*

\*Verified ownership. In the case of Robertson, it can only be officially confirmed back to 1983, however, there is evidence that supports the theory he may have owned the property from 1980.

## **Additional Occupants**

In addition to the above-listed persons, certain other individuals are said to have been associated with the Kramer Residence as possible owners or as renters. These include *Playboy* magazine publisher Hugh Hefner and actors Joan Collins, Roger Moore, and Rory Calhoun. Considering the home’s internationally recognized architecture and its location in an area of celebrity homes, it would not be unreasonable to assume that high-profile individuals have occupied the Kramer Residence over the years. However, definitive documentation on renters can be elusive and research remains ongoing.

## **Current Owner**

It should be noted that the current owner of the Kramer Residence (2014-present), Martyn Lawrence Bullard, is an internationally renowned interior designer who, along with his partner Michael Green, has endeavored to honor McNaughton’s original design and intentions and decorate the property in a manner that captures the spirit of its illustrious past with what he says is, “a mix of swinging 60s with a touch of disco 70s.” Bullard became immediately entranced by the home after seeing the real estate listing. “I thought, *Oh my god, it is so fabulous,*” he told *Palm Springs Life* in 2018. “I called my broker and said, ‘I really need to see this.’ I went in and bought it with a five-minute trip. It was crazy. I just had to have it.”

Bullard’s ownership and decoration of the Kramer Residence, which he has named Villa Grigio, has brought a renewed interest in the home and has resulted in a number of magazine features in such publications as *Palm Springs Life*, *Marie Claire* and *Architectural Digest*. Bullard estimates that the house has appeared in some 45 different

publications through the years. It was also chosen by iconic photographer Tim Street-Porter as the cover property for his book, *Palm Springs: A Modernist Paradise* (Rizzoli, 2018). Street-Porter, who provided both text and photographs, wrote that the Kramer Residence, “is one of the most delightfully modernistic expressions to be found in Palm Springs architecture.”



**Tim Street-Porter who chose the Kramer Residence to grace the cover of his 2018 book, *Palm Springs: A Modernist Paradise* (Rizzoli), also included a section on McNaughton’s Morrill/Hearst House as well.  
(amazon.com)**

## **Changes and Additions to the Kramer Residence**

Unfortunately, a search of extant permits connected to the Kramer Residence conducted by the City of Palm Springs Building and Safety Department failed to yield any permitted work other than the original 1963 permits for house and pool, a 1987 reroof, and the 2015 remodel work conducted by the current owner. However, detailed photographic evidence of the home from 1965 and later, as well as descriptions from various published sources, allows for at least a general picture of notable alterations and modifications through the decades:

- Originally, the Kramer Residence lacked a garage, but rather, featured a 700 sq. ft. carport. The carport may have been the result of Allan Kramer’s work as chief of Bel-Air Patios, which produced such structures. The Kramers had

installed several Bel-Air Patio structures at their former home in Sunmor. At an unknown date, the carport was replaced by the present-day garage.

- Various internal remodelings. It is known that noted interior designer Steve Chase redecorated the home in the 1970s, however, his work appears to have been essentially cosmetic as opposed to structural.
- Enclosure of louvered door openings on the north and south sides of the front garden. Date unknown.
- Removal at unknown date of the decorative finials on the front (Phillips Road) façade.
- Built-in grill structure remodeled and replaced by new grill. Date unknown.
- Removal of original light fixtures and replacement of the external entrance door as well as the front door to the main house. Date unknown.
- Reroof of residence. May 27, 1987. Permit #B-10650. F. Robertson, owner.
- Bathroom, kitchen remodels in 2015.
- Remodel of former master bedroom dressing room/bath into new master bathroom and second guest room with bath in 2015.
- Enclosure of the two pair of narrow horizontal windows on the southern (Granvia Valmonte) façade in 2015.
- Remodel of front garden into a spa, including extending the outer, western wall (Phillips Road frontage) to equal height with the other three walls in 2015. The new work was made to match the original portions.
- Remodel of rear (east) garden terrace, creating a raised section that matched the elevation of the living room and new firepit added in 2015.
- Addition of decorative encaustic tiles at intervals on the walls of the central (pool) courtyard in 2015. The colors were chosen to match that of the original terrazzo flooring.

These changes and additions are either reversible or are stand-alone and do not directly impact the historic or architectural significance of the residence.

### **Local Architectural Context**

The Kramer Residence should not be viewed as part of Palm Springs' modernist tract-house building boom which started in earnest with the arrival of George and Robert Alexander in 1955. Rather, the private residence should be evaluated as part of the trend of unique and custom modernist residences built and/or commissioned by affluent businessmen, Hollywood glitterati, etc.

### **Site Description**

Location. The Kramer Residence is located on a prominent corner lot in the Caballero Estates tract, which is included as part of the historic Movie Colony neighborhood. The residence is bounded on the north by a 1961 Wexler & Harrison residence at 640 Phillips Road. At its eastern boundary is another 1961 midcentury Modern home (architect unknown) at 890 Granvia Valmonte. And across Phillips Road on the west is the James Logan Abernathy Residence (William F. Cody, 1962), a midcentury Modern masterpiece, and Class 1 Historic Site. The topography of the lot is flat. The site includes mature palm trees, olive trees, cacti, succulents, etc.



**General view as seen from Phillips Road showing western façade.  
(Author Photo. February 2019)**



**View from Phillips Road (looking east) at garage addition. Originally, this space was a carport.  
(Author Photo. February 2019)**



**View looking north from Granvia Valmonte.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)



**View looking west from Granvia Valmonte showing mature Olive trees and the home's southern façade.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)



**Looking across pool towards guest rooms and the western colonnade.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)



**View east across central court.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)



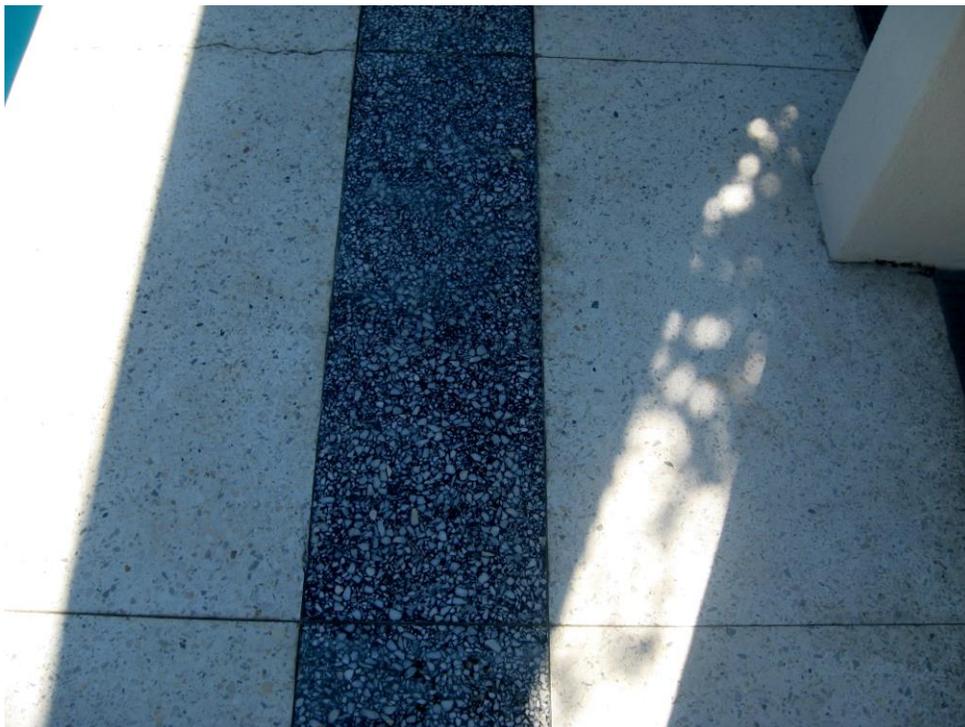
**View looking west across central (pool) court to front terrace/spa area.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)



**Detail of three-bay entry into west terrace spa area. Originally, this entry could be closed off by louvered doors.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)



**Detail of encaustic tiles in central courtyard added by the current owner.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)



**Detail of banded terrazzo flooring.**  
(Author Photo. February 2019)

## BACKGROUND / HISTORIC CONTEXT

The relatively short history of Palm Springs can be organized into three 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 1963, the city had built a reputation for cutting edge architecture with architectural practitioners like John Porter Clark, Albert Frey, E. Stewart Williams, William F. Cody, and Donald Wexler.

## EVALUATION:

**Criterion 2:** Significant Persons. Criterion 2 recognizes properties associated with the lives of persons who made meaningful contributions to the national, state or local history. While certainly prominent individuals, Allan and Mildred Kramer arguably do not rise to the level of locally "important" persons (e.g., compared to a Frank Bogert or Ruth Hardy). Hence, the residence does 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 Kramer Residence, built in 1963, exhibits many stylistic markers which place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' Modern Period. The private residence represents a prime and largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known, in particular as a rare residence completed in the New Formalist style. 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 residence 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 Kramer Residence is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses distinctive characteristics that make up the many qualities endemic to a variation of the style, New Formalism, such as symmetry, verticality, classical references (i.e. arches), colonnades, flat roofs with overhanging eaves, an elevated podium, etc., man-made materials suitable to the harsh desert environment (steel, glass, terrazzo flooring and concrete) and an architectural design that strives to blur the line between the indoors and outdoors. As such, the residence is eligible under this criterion because it represents an important example of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury. *The residence 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:** In the case of the Kramer Residence, the work of James H. McNaughton can certainly be described as the “work of a master” in view of his history of architectural excellence. (See appendices III and IV.)

**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 Kramer Residence certainly articulates the best of residential “lifestyle” modernism to a level of excellence and confidence that, in total, could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal. *For its high artistic values, the residence 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 and as such it does not apply to this nomination. *Hence, the residence 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 Kramer Residence is not likely to yield information important to the national, state or local history or prehistory. Hence, the residence does not qualify 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 Kramer Residence 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. ***The Kramer Residence's essential characteristics of form, plan, space, structure, and style have survived largely intact. Similarly, the***

***structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; and the type, amount, and style of detailing have survived largely intact. The masterful use of arched colonnades throughout the residence creates a unifying design theme that is both decorative and functional and exemplifies a critical characteristic of New Formalism.***

## **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 Kramer Residence continues to reflect the architect'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. ***The Kramer Residence's exterior surface materials, which consist primarily of concrete and stucco over wood framing have remained essentially intact and continue to express the physical elements as designed during the building's period of significance; the pattern and configuration that today forms the residence and contributing structures 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 Kramer Residence is evidenced by extensive use of glass, multi-colored terrazzo flooring and abstracted arched colonnades, all of which were part of the original design/construction. The residence 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. ***The Kramer Residence is sited on a prominent lot which takes advantage of panoramic mountain views to the west. Accordingly, the residence and contributing structures retain their 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. ***The Kramer Residence is an important example of a custom-designed modernist private residence 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 Kramer Residence 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 building and site of the Kramer Residence still possess all seven aspects of integrity. ***Aside from the addition of a garage and some minor sympathetically-designed modifications to the front garden terrace (e.g., heightening the west wall and adding a spa), the original footprint of the Kramer Residence remains intact. In summary, the residence still possesses a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify 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

Brooks, Tim & Earle Marsh. *The Complete Directory to Prime-Time Network TV Shows 1946-Present*. New York, NY; Ballantine Books, 1981.

Cygelman, Adele. *Palm Springs Modern: Houses in the California Desert*. New York, NY; Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1999.

Hess, Alan and Andrew Danish: *Palm Springs Weekend: The Architecture and Design of a Midcentury Oasis*. San Francisco, CA; Chronicle Books, 2001.

McAlester, Virginia & Lee: *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York, NY; Alfred A. Knopf. 1998.

*Palm Springs City Directory*. Long Beach, CA; Western Directory Co., Various dates.

Street-Porter, Tim. *Palm Springs: A Modernist Paradise*. New York, NY; Rizzoli Publications Inc., 2018.

### Magazines

Colton, F. Barrows. "How We Fight with Photographs." *The National Geographic*, VOL. LXXXVI, NO. 3, pp. 257-280, September 1944.

Horwitz, Carolyn. "Urban Exodus: Three L.A.-Based Designers on Their Desert Escapes." *Palm Springs Life*, pp. 35, 40-41, June 2018.

"Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Morrill." *The Architectural Digest*, VOL. XX, NO. 1, pp. 13-21, Spring 1963.

"Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Allan Kramer." *The Architectural Digest*, VOL. XXII, NO. 1, pp. 50-63, Summer 1965.

Rus, Mayer. "Sand Castle." *Architectural Digest*, pp. 158-163, April 2017.

"TV Extravaganza: Paul Whiteman as Nero Fiddles in a Rome That Was Built in Three Days." *Life*, pp. 83-88, June 12, 1950.

### Newspapers

Various issues of:

*Desert Sun*  
*Indiana (Pennsylvania) Gazette*  
*Los Angeles Herald-Examiner*  
*Los Angeles Times*  
*New York Times*

### Internet Resources

Ancestry.com  
Findagrave.com  
Internet Broadway Database (ibdb.com)  
Internet Movie Database (imdb.com)

Oscars.org  
Palm Springs Preservation Foundation  
Realtor.com

### Interviews

Robert Miller (February & March 2019)

### Other Sources Consulted

Palm Springs Historical Society  
City of Palm Springs (Planning and Building Departments)  
Historic Resources Group. *City of Palm Springs Citywide Historic Context Statement; Survey Findings*. Pasadena, 2015 (Final Draft, December 2018).  
Riverside County Assessor's Office

---

## 9. Geographical Data

---

Acreage of Property: Approximately .3 acres (or 13,080 sq. ft.)  
Property Boundary Description: See Appendix II

---

## 10. Prepared By

---

Name/title: Steve Vaught  
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](mailto: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 district's 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

## Owner's Letter of Support

March 10, 2019

City of Palm Springs  
Historic Site Preservation Board  
3200 Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Dear Honorable Board,

As the current owner of the Allan & Mildred Kramer Residence at 800 East Granvia Valmonte, I enthusiastically support the Class 1 Historic Site designation of my property by the city of Palm Springs. I have asked the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation to assist me in the preparation of the required nomination paperwork.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [martyn@martynlawrencebullard.com](mailto:martyn@martynlawrencebullard.com).

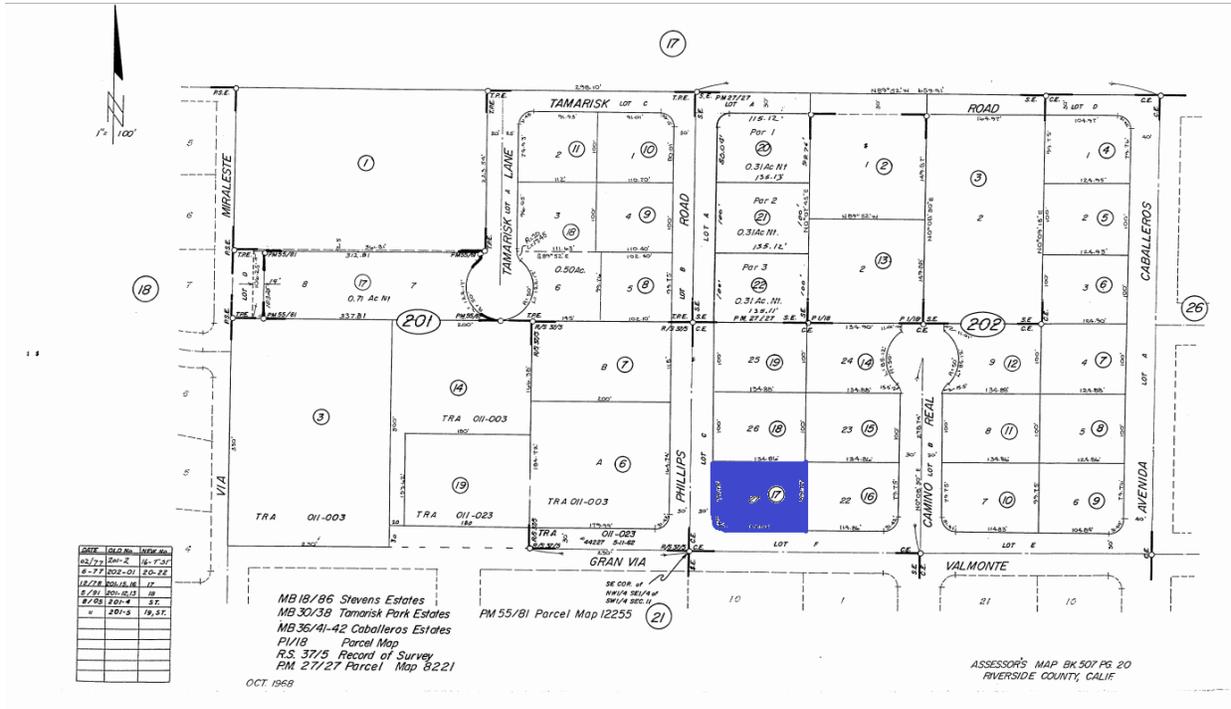
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martyn Lawrence Bullard', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Martyn Lawrence Bullard

# Appendix II

## Assessor Map



## Appendix III

### James H. McNaughton



**James H. McNaughton working on a set design during his early years in television. Note the carefully balanced cigarette.**

(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

James Henry McNaughton, better known as “Jimmy” to his many friends and family, was born on March 7, 1912 in the western Pennsylvania metropolis of Pittsburgh. At the time of his birth, Pittsburgh was the 8<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States and, although it was known for its steel production, it was home to a number of other important industries as well including petroleum and shipbuilding.

McNaughton’s father Edwin was a clerk at a local bank and the family lived comfortably in the city’s upscale Shadyside neighborhood in a large clapboard house at 711 Summerlea Street, which is still extant today. He would be the first of four children born to Edwin and Mary McNaughton and was followed by a sister, Mary Elizabeth, in 1915, and brothers Edwin Jr. in 1920, and Robert in 1922.

Pittsburgh may have been an industrial hub but it had a surprisingly sophisticated arts and cultural scene, much of which had been gifts from major industrialists such as

Andrew Carnegie and Andrew Mellon. Exposure to Pittsburgh's rich cultural heritage may have sparked McNaughton's own creative instincts and, early on, he discovered a passion for art and design as well as dancing. He also had musical talent and became adept at both the piano and pipe organ.

By the time he entered high school, his father had grown successful as the secretary-treasurer of the Mellon-Stuart Company, a major construction firm still in business today. The family's affluence allowed them to move out of the central city and into the more bucolic Bakerstown area where McNaughton attended high school.

After graduation in 1930, he was accepted at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Institute of Technology, today's Carnegie Mellon University, where he pursued a degree in architecture. In his spare time, McNaughton performed with a local ballet troupe and helped pay his tuition by playing the organ at Loew's Penn Theatre. He was also inducted into the Roh chapter of the school's Phi Kappa fraternity.

Carnegie Tech offered an opportunity for McNaughton to study abroad with reciprocal programs at the School of Fine Arts in Paris and the American Academy in Rome. On two separate occasions, 1932 and 1933, McNaughton won medals from the Rome Academy for his exceptional work as a painter and as an architect. McNaughton's European experiences, no doubt, had a strong influence on his later design work, particularly the classic architecture of Rome, which could be seen both in his set designs and architectural plans.

In June 1935, McNaughton received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from Carnegie Tech and, with diploma in hand, headed to New York City where he hoped to pursue a career as a theatrical set designer. McNaughton managed to gain an apprenticeship with famed costume and scenic designer Woodman Thompson and he assisted him on several Broadway productions during this period.



**A candlestick designed by McNaughton for Steuben Glass.**  
(Artnet)

To earn money during this time, McNaughton found work as a designer for the highly prestigious Steuben Glass Works. Steuben was at the time in the process of shifting their

direction towards more modernistic and Art Deco designs, which fit well with McNaughton's extensive training both at Carnegie Tech and in Europe. While at Steuben, McNaughton produced several notable designs that ranged from candlesticks to olive dishes, pieces which are considered highly collectible today.

As promising as his time at Steuben was, McNaughton was not destined to remain a glass designer for long. Sometime around 1937 or 1938, he got an opportunity as a set designer, not on the stage as planned, but on television. In the mid-1930s, the medium was still in its infancy with only a few experimental stations in the entire world.

David Sarnoff, president of RCA, NBC's parent company, was leading an effort to make television into a viable concern. As there were only a few dozen privately-owned television sets in New York at the time, the purpose of the first television programs were experimental, shown to an extremely limited audience of RCA executives and engineers, reporters, and potential advertisers. "The Love Nest," which aired on September 21, 1936, which is considered the first dramatic program written exclusively for television, had an audience of approximately fifty people, not including an unknown number of private set owners who happened to pick up the signal.

This was the state of the television industry when McNaughton started work on his first production – a twenty-minute segment from the current Broadway hit, *Susan and God* which starred Gertrude Lawrence. McNaughton was tasked with recreating Lawrence's bedroom set from the play, but without the budget, space or time. McNaughton, however, jumped at the challenge and, in what would be a hallmark of his television work, came up with a believable setting in record time and on a shoestring budget. As there was no money for actual wallpaper, McNaughton improvised by stenciling the wall to resemble curtains. It looked convincing on camera, but it had one serious problem – the still drying paint stank.



**McNaughton's first set for television was this bedroom scene for the 1938 telecast of *Susan and God*.**  
(Getty Images)

Art Hungerford, who worked with McNaughton as the show's sound engineer recalled that when NBC program vice president John Royal walked in shortly before air time, he

was aghast at the smell and knew it would upset Lawrence and possibly cause the pampered star to refuse to work. So, he reached into his pocket and handed Hungerford fifty dollars. "Royal told me to get a bottle of the star's favorite perfume," Hungerford recalled, "and we sprayed the studio. We probably spent more on the perfume than we had on the damned set."

The broadcast of *Susan and God* went over the airwaves on June 7, 1938 and it not only served as a milestone in the history of early television, it was a fitting introduction to the medium that would make McNaughton a major success as a television pioneer.

McNaughton continued to cut his teeth on early television programs up until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The war put a sudden end to television's fragile growth and McNaughton left to join the U.S. Marine Corps. Originally stationed to the South Pacific, McNaughton was sent home after contracting malaria. Back stateside, officials soon realized his special talents as an architect and designer were actually more valuable to the war effort at home and he was transferred to the Army Map Service to work on special photographic projects.

One of his major tasks was taking groups of individual aerial photos and combining them into one single image. The work that McNaughton and others did at the Army Map Service was highlighted in the September 1944 issue of *The National Geographic* and included a full-page photo of McNaughton pouring intently over a series of images. It would not be the last time he would be featured in a national magazine.

McNaughton had risen to the rank of captain by the time he was mustered out. Although he survived the conflict, he nonetheless suffered the tragedy of losing his younger brother Edwin, who was killed while serving in the Army Air Corps in New Guinea, in 1943.

After completing his service, McNaughton returned to civilian life and set design. Television work was not yet available so he went to Hollywood. McNaughton earned a position in the art department at MGM, working under the venerable Edwin B. Willis, who would become a lifelong friend. During his time in Hollywood, McNaughton assisted on several major productions including *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944); *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945), and *The Ziegfeld Follies* (1945).

Exciting as it may have been, Hollywood proved to be only a short stop. Once television development began anew, he returned east, finding a job with CBS. McNaughton worked at CBS for several years before accepting an offer to serve as Art Director for ABC. McNaughton began his job in May of 1948, a year which is considered the turning point in the development in the medium. It was in that year television branched out for the first time into "networks."

McNaughton's years at ABC spanned what is considered television's first "Golden Age" and his exceptional set designs helped the industry to grow and mature. The studio spaces were bigger than the experimental days at NBC but there was still no more time and barely any more budget than before. Every day, McNaughton broke new ground as there was no real precedent to what he was doing. He was such a pioneer that he is

generally considered television's first true art director with *Look* magazine hailing him as "having developed TV set designing as a unique art."

After doing sets for a number of early ABC shows, McNaughton was given the task of designing the sets for the network's newest variety program – *Paul Whiteman's Goodyear Review* (1949-1952). The portly Whiteman had been one of the world's most famous bandleaders in the 1920s and 1930s, earning the sobriquet of the "King of Jazz." It had been Whiteman who first brought George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" to the fore and the iconic piece was appropriately used as the show's theme.

As a variety show, there would be at least several sets per program. McNaughton managed to do a set every three days for an extremely modest \$2,500. Previously, backgrounds, although they may have been skillfully drawn, still looked one-dimensional and flat. McNaughton became a master of perspective in his designs, giving the illusion of distance and space and "freeing" the program from the confines of the studio. He even painted the studio floor to follow the pattern to draw out the illusion of depth and dimension. And while he may have been employing this concept before, he hit his stride with the Whiteman show.



**An example of McNaughton's masterful ability to create the illusion of depth and height on a television sound stage.**

(Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

The reaction from audiences and critics was immediate and McNaughton became one of the few behind the scenes personnel who was singled out for public attention. He was honored by national and international publications for his exceptional work on the

*Whiteman Revue* and in 1950, the *New York Times* included McNaughton on their Honor Roll of the most outstanding television achievements of 1949.

That same year, McNaughton earned a feature in *Life* magazine, which lauded his settings, particularly one recreating the ancient Roman Forum, which the magazine hailed as “the most spectacular setting TV has ever produced.” McNaughton was making such an impression, *Look* magazine created a whole category in their annual television awards just to honor his notable set designs.

Producing the myriad sets for the *Whiteman Revue* would have been a full-time job for anyone but McNaughton was working on multiple shows for ABC at the same time. He had been such a success that the network made him the head art director overseeing all productions. As a reward he was given a huge salary increase to a reported \$100,000 a year – an enormous sum for television at the time. Perhaps even more importantly, he was given the necessary staff to do his job – 11 assistants, which McNaughton said were the “best in the business.”



**McNaughton’s historic New Jersey farm showing his Regency “Great Room” addition.**  
(Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

To decompress from his hectic schedule, McNaughton found relaxation at his antique-filled Manhattan apartment where he enjoyed playing both the piano and pipe organ. At Christmas in 1954, McNaughton decided to give himself the gift of a country estate with the purchase of the historic Lorulan Farm in bucolic Stockton, New Jersey. In addition to a charming 1832 stone house, the farm featured a large L-shaped barn and several outbuildings set amidst 72 acres, including tillable land, woodland, and an apple orchard. Lorulan Farm became a great joy for McNaughton and a welcome escape from the frenetic pace and lifestyle of New York City.

The farm not only allowed McNaughton relaxation, it gave him space to entertain his many friends, another of his great pleasures. He indulged in his passion for antiques, furnishing the house and the gardens with many rare pieces, much of which came from

the Orient. He also made what appears to be his first concrete foray into architectural design. Although he had graduated with a degree in architecture, he had not used it for permanent structures, but rather for producing temporary stage sets. Here at the farm, he constructed a sizable addition – a Regency-styled “great room” that became the farm’s most popular gathering spot. Elegant yet not off-putting, the gleaming white clapboard addition featured elements of what would become hallmarks of his later designs – a huge window directly in line with the entry to immediately capture visitors’ attention and draw them out towards the landscape, high ceilings, elegant floors, and rare furnishings.

In 1959, McNaughton felt he had experienced all he could in the television business and realized the time was right to retire. McNaughton had seen the industry grow from the experimental stage into a phenomenon. When he started at ABC in 1948, there were 35,000 television sets in the United States. By the time of his retirement, there were 43,950,000.

As a retirement haven, McNaughton looked to the desert resort of Palm Springs. He had visited there numerous times and had many friends, including Paul Whiteman, who maintained either winter or full-time homes. As he did in all his pursuits, McNaughton went all-in, selling his farm and making the village his year-long residence.

McNaughton also decided to channel his talents and creativity into the direction of architecture. His arrival in the desert came at a time when Palm Springs was becoming renowned as a haven for modern architecture. Yearly, the valley was gaining new and impressive designs created by a combination of local talent and practitioners with national reputations. While there was considerable competition, McNaughton brought a wholly unique sensibility to his designs, which were informed by his years as a set designer. He also had a great advantage in speed, learned from years of “three-day deadlines” at the networks. McNaughton could draw plans for a house in record time, both surprising and delighting prospective clients.

In 1961, McNaughton got what is known in the theatrical world as his “big break,” when Harry R. & Willa Morrill engaged McNaughton to design a mansion for themselves on Panorama Road in Little Tuscany. Morrill, who had been in the real estate business for decades, understood the value of “curb appeal” and he wanted a stand-out residence that would impress and possibly even awe. But he wanted it to be on a budget. McNaughton certainly understood that directive and in his design he employed some of the cost-saving techniques he’d learned from television. One of his most inspired ideas was to repurpose more than 60 old, discarded Los Angeles street lights, remade into Roman columns.

Architecturally, the house was variously described as Roman-Grecian or Roman-Palladian. In overall appearance, it did have a strong Roman feel but in the Hollywood sense, which is exactly as McNaughton and the Morrills wanted it. McNaughton preferred to call the style of his homes “Desert Classic,” explaining that they were intended to be of classic architecture as updated and adapted to modern desert living.

Upon its completion, the Morrill House became an instant sensation, garnering praise and coverage not only locally in such venues as *Palm Springs Life* and the *Desert Sun*, but nationally and even internationally as well. In the spring of 1963, the house achieved the great honor of appearing in a 9-page spread in *The Architectural Digest*.



**The Morrill House had all the theatrics of a Hollywood film set.**  
(Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

The Morrills were highly sociable people and they frequently opened the house up for parties and charity functions, which no doubt helped spread its appeal. Starting in 1963, it became one of the featured homes in the annual charity home tour sponsored by the American Association of University Women. In 1964, the Morrills sold the home to George and Rosalie Hearst, causing wags to quickly dub it “Hearst Castle Junior.” The Hearst connection seemed a natural one which began even before their purchase. The impressive fireplace in the living room had been a casting that was purchased from the Hearst collection.

The favorable press surrounding the Morrill house suddenly made McNaughton a sought-after designer in Palm Springs and it directly led to other commissions including the residence for Allan & Middy Kramer in the Caballeros Estates in 1963, which earned

McNaughton a second appearance in *The Architectural Digest*. McNaughton, who was the very first official member of the Palm Springs chapter of the National Society of Interior Designers, advertised himself as providing “total design” from the architecture to the interior decorating. McNaughton also used his artistic talents to enhance homes with murals and trompe l’oeil effects.

Around the same time, McNaughton purchased a home for himself in the Mesa neighborhood at 210 West Camino Carmelita. The residence, which had been built by businessman Marvin Sale in 1936, was a large Spanish home with a guest house in the rear. McNaughton redesigned the guest house into studio space and connected it and the main house together by a U-shaped pavilion with Roman pillars surrounding a large swimming pool.



**A dapper bearded McNaughton poses at 210 Camino Carmelita. Late 1960s.**  
(Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

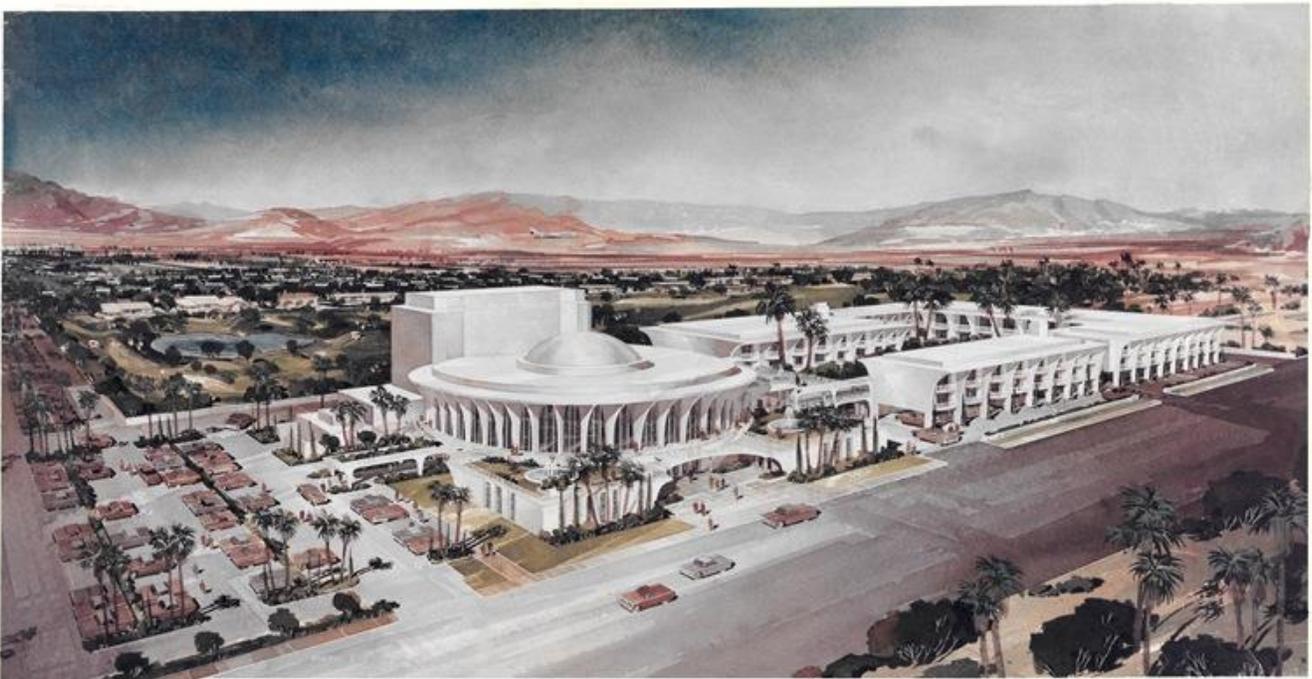
210 Camino Carmelita, which would remain McNaughton’s home for the next decade, became a showcase of his design talent, with each room filled with rare treasures he had collected throughout the years. He also filled the house with his many friends. Outgoing and charming, McNaughton made friends with ease, many of whom were among the top of Palm Springs society including such celebrities as opera diva Lily Pons, and the Gabors.

Some of his desert friends had been with him since his Pennsylvania and New York days, not the least of whom was Earl Wild. The famed pianist had been friends with McNaughton since high school in Pittsburgh and their lives continued to intersect in spite of their separate career paths. In 1939, Wild made history by being the first pianist to perform a recital on American television. In 1997, he achieved another milestone by being the first pianist to livestream a performance over the Internet. Once McNaughton

moved to Palm Springs, Wild came to visit so often he finally decided to relocate there himself, becoming a staple at McNaughton's frequent parties.

The mid-1960s were a heyday for McNaughton's architectural and design practice, with a number of commissions not only in the Palm Springs area but such other places as Las Vegas, Nevada, Houston, Texas, and Scottsdale, Arizona. In the hills above Scottsdale, McNaughton designed a large modern mansion for Carolyn Goldwater Erskine, sister of Senator and 1964 presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. The estate showed McNaughton could design a house in a more strictly modern manner yet while retaining the same hallmarks that had made his other houses so successful. In 1972, Erskine, who was a longtime personal friend of McNaughton, engaged him to design a second home for herself on the slopes of Camelback Mountain.

McNaughton had the unique opportunity to create something of a collection of McNaughton houses when he was engaged by Barbara Shelby to design two homes for her adjacent to the Morrill/Hearst house. Each home was done in a different style but both exhibited the same hallmarks of the typical McNaughton design. The first was at 701 Panorama Road, which was completed in 1966. The second, directly across the street at 595 West Chino Canyon Drive was built a year later. The combination of three McNaughton-designed homes directly across from each other has given rise to what is today called "McNaughton's Corner."



CONVENTION CENTER & HOTEL  
PALM SPRINGS

JAMES Mc NAUGHTON, DESIGNER

**McNaughton offered this plan for a new convention center and hotel for Palm Springs during the late 1960s.**

(Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

Socially, McNaughton was very busy on the party circuit. Whether he was attending or hosting an event, he was always pleasant company. He also participated in numerous charitable ventures and was active with the Opera Guild of the Desert and the Palm Springs Friends of the Philharmonic. He even offered his considerable talents to local theatrical productions, providing the sets for the Palm Desert Players' 1965 production of *No, No Nanette*. McNaughton was also a willing and excellent mentor to aspiring talents with one notable student, Jim Cioffi, going on to a highly successful career himself as a Palm Springs architect.



**McNaughton, Dr. Joe Whiteford and Lily Pons share a laugh and some champagne at the “Champagne on the Rocks,” groundbreaking party for Whiteford’s new home in the Cahuilla Hills. 1969.**  
(Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)

Ofttimes, McNaughton’s architectural and social work intersected with parties celebrating the ground-breaking of a new home. One particular event occurred in 1969 on a barren, rock-strewn hillside of the Cahuilla Hills when McNaughton’s longtime friend Dr. Joe Whiteford threw a festive ground-breaking party that became known as “Champagne on the Rocks.” The party, which was well covered in the press, was attended by such luminaries as Lily Pons, composer Frederick Loewe, and Eva Gabor. And whenever a home was completed, McNaughton was the star attraction of the housewarming party, taking delight in personally showing guests around and pointing out the new home’s many charms.

McNaughton kept up a very active pace until health concerns began to slow him down. His finances, which were always up and down, caused him to look at simplifying his lifestyle and he ultimately sold his longtime home and studio at 210 Camino Carmelita. After several rentals, he purchased an under-construction home on the grounds of the once-famous Bar-B-H Ranch in Desert Hot Springs with the help of his great friend, Robert Miller. McNaughton was able to put his personal imprint on the unfinished house, doubling it in size and filling it with art and antiques. It was to be his last home.

McNaughton's health continued to deteriorate in the last years of the 1970s, but he kept this largely a secret from his many friends. When he died in a San Bernardino hospital on March 26, 1979, the news spread slowly but then it brought an outpouring of shock and loss from friends as well as the citizens of Palm Springs in general. The *Desert Sun*, which had written about McNaughton many times in the previous decades, published a special obituary written by McNaughton's longtime friend Frederick H. Heider. The editor prefaced the obituary by commending Heider's "eloquent, heartfelt eulogy of a talented man and one of Palm Springs' most colorful citizens."

Heider's obituary read in part:

"Jimmy McNaughton came to this desert almost 20 years ago. He brought with him an inexhaustible capacity to love, an ebullient, unflagging joy for people, places and things. He came here to create houses. Creativity was his golden gift. It was his standard, it was his way of life...

In the middle of his life he came to live in the desert, and his luminous talent found new, exciting challenges. He designed many houses. They stand impressive and awesome in the areas of Little Tuscany, Canyon Country Club, Thunderbird Heights, Andreas Hills, Southridge and Ruth Hardy Park. There are others, too, in Scottsdale, Phoenix, Houston and Las Vegas...

These architectural achievements stand as memorials to James McNaughton and along with his gentle heart they are his legacy. Those of us who knew him, and we are legion, have been branded with his warmth and joyful spirit. We have each received a bountiful inheritance."

## Appendix IV

### Known Commissions of James H. McNaughton

Although he received his degree in architecture in 1935, James H. McNaughton didn't begin practicing full-time until his arrival in Palm Springs in 1959. For at least the next 15 years, he produced a series of exotic, theatrical and unique homes in and around Palm Springs as well as locations in Nevada, Arizona and Texas. It is presently unknown how many homes McNaughton designed, but it is believed to be nearly two dozen. Below is a list of known McNaughton designs, but there are likely more yet to be documented.

George Arnold Residence (1960)  
893 Camino del Sur  
Palm Springs (Demolished)

Harry Morrill/George Hearst Residence (1962)  
701 West Panorama Road  
Palm Springs

Allan & Mildred Kramer Residence (1963)  
800 East Granvia Valmonte/612 Phillips Road  
Palm Springs

Carolyn Goldwater Erskine Residence #1 (1965)  
Mummy Mountain  
Paradise Valley, AZ

Spec Residence for Barbara Shelby (1966)  
700 Panorama Road  
Palm Springs

700 Tamarisk Lane (1966)  
Palm Springs

Spec Residence for Barbara Shelby (1967)  
595 West Chino Canyon Road  
Palm Springs

Mr. & Mrs. Martin Lipton Residence (1967)  
690 West Stevens Road  
Palm Springs

Jacobs Residence (1968)  
77 Country Club Lane  
Las Vegas (Demolished)

June and Ernest Linthicum Residence (1969)  
565 La Mirada Road  
Palm Springs

Dr. Joe Whiteford Residence (1969)  
Cahuilla Hills  
Palm Springs

Andreas Hills Residence (w/ Hal Lacy) (1971)  
Palm Springs

Spec Residence for Paul T. Butler (1972)  
1444 Murray Canyon Drive  
Palm Springs

Carolyn Goldwater Erskine Residence #2 (1972)  
Paradise Valley, AZ

Paul T. Butler Residence (1974)  
1100 East Sierra Way  
Palm Springs

Thunderbird Heights (No Date)  
Palm Springs

Las Palmas Residence (No Date)  
Palm Springs

Residence (No Date)  
Houston, Texas

Southridge (No Date)  
Palm Springs



**Carolyn Goldwater Erskine Residence #1 (1965)**  
**Paradise Valley, AZ**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)



**Dr. Jacobs Residence (1968)**  
**Las Vegas, NV**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)



**Dr. Jacobs Residence (1968)**  
**Las Vegas, NV**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)



**Carolyn Goldwater Erskine Residence #2 (1972)**  
**Paradise Valley, AZ**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)



**Paul T. Butler Residence (1974)**  
**Palm Springs, CA**  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)



**Robert Miller & James H. McNaughton at the housewarming party  
for the Jacobs Residence. 1968.  
(Courtesy Estate of James H. McNaughton/Robert Miller)**