

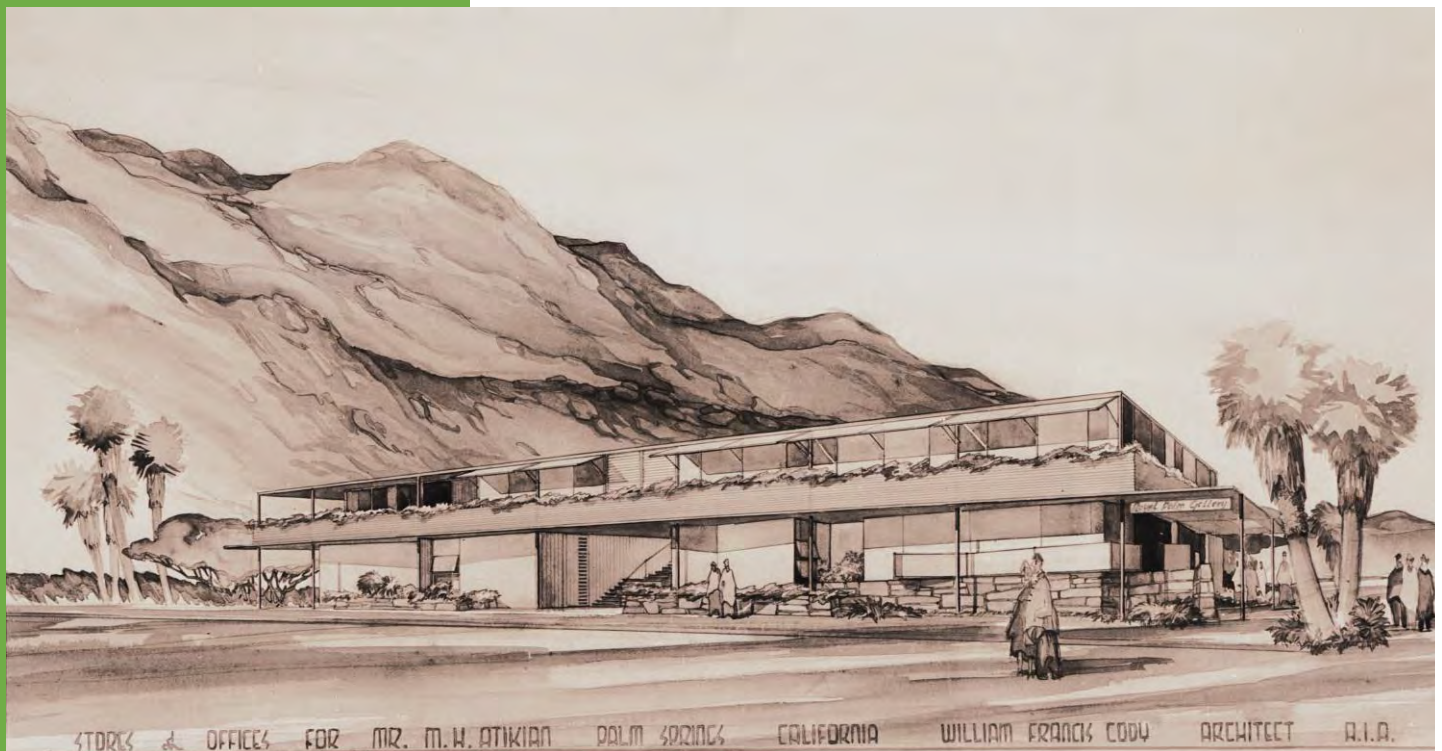
# The M.H. Atikian Building, 1950

120 W Arenas Road

(aka 191-193 S. Palm Canyon Drive)

Palm Springs, CA 92262

**Nomination Application For  
City of Palm Springs  
Class 1 Historic Resource**



**Prepared by**

Steven Keylon

**For the**

Palm Springs Preservation

Foundation

**FINAL May 28, 2022**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

Tracy Conrad; Barbara Marshall; Renee Brown, Palm Springs Historical Society; Cathy Cody.

Special thanks to Ron Duby, copy editor.



*Left to right: Bill Cody, at left, with daughters Lynne and Diane with M.H. Atikian, breaking ground at the Atikian Building's construction site, April 1950. Courtesy Cathy Cody.*

*Cover illustration: William F. Cody's rendering for the M.H. Atikian Building, 1950. Courtesy MS0163 William F. Cody Papers 2, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.*

# CLASS 1 HISTORIC RESOURCE NOMINATION

## TABLE of CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: PAGE 3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PAGE 3

CLASS 1 HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION APPLICATION FORM: PAGE 5

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: PAGE 9

BACKGROUND/HISTORIC CONTEXT: PAGE 30

EVALUATION: PAGE 31

INTEGRITY ANALYSIS: PAGE 33

## APPENDICES

I	Owner's Letter of Support: Page 36
II	Assessor's Map: Page 37
III	Building Permits: Page 38
IV	Historic Images: Page 41
V	Contemporary Images: Page 45

# 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 June 2021, the PSPF board of directors assigned the task of writing the Atikian Building Class 1 Historic Resource nomination to Steven Keylon.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SIGNIFICANCE:

The Atikian Building is a commercial building on South Palm Canyon Drive and Arenas Road which was designed in 1950 by master architect William F. Cody. The structure is a prime example of one of his elegant Mid-Century Modern designs. The Atikian Building is an important example of a custom modernist commercial structure. It exhibits numerous character-defining features that place it within the historical context of the Palm Springs Modern period.

### DESIGNATION CRITERIA:

Criteria for the Designation of a Class 1 Historic Resource: Pursuant to the Palm Springs Municipal Code (PSMC) Section 8.05.070(C.1.): A site, structure, building, or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic resource or a Contributing Resource in a proposed historic district by the Palm Springs City Council, provided both of the following findings are met. Refer to the U.S. Department of the Interior National Register Bulletin “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” of potentially historic resources for further information.

**FINDING 1: The site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic significance and meets the criteria listed below.**

8.05.070 (C.1.a.) paragraph (iii) - ***The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history.*** The Atikian Building, completed in 1950, exhibits many stylistic markers which place it directly in the historic context of Palm Springs’ “Post-World War II Palm Springs” period. The custom-designed commercial structure represents a fine example of significant Post-war architecture for which Palm Springs is internationally known. The Atikian Building may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs’ image as a center of notable Modern architecture, i.e., an historic trend

that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The structure qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Resource on the local registry under Criterion 3.

8.05.070 (C.1.a.) paragraph (iv) - **The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction:** The Atikian Building is eligible for its method of construction, which utilizes a system of custom, sturdy steel tubes to frame the structure—the steel tubes allowed for the thin-framed steel structure, and startlingly thin roof profile. The strong steel frame also allowed for ground floor shop elevations to have dynamic, angled storefronts, as the lower walls weren't supporting the upper floor or roof. Further, an innovative poured gypsum roof deck allowed for the roof's elegantly sleek minimalism, only two to three inches thick. This impossibly thin roof contributed to the overall lightness and horizontality of the structure. The Atikian Building is one of the earliest examples of master architect William Cody's use of what would become one of his most recognizable signatures. It qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion 4.

8.05.070 (C.1.a.) paragraph (v) - **High Artistic Value - The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his or her age, or that possesses high artistic value:** High artistic values may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture. The structure designed by master architect William F. Cody is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up the Mid-Century Modern style. These attributes include a flat-roofed, thin-lined geometric structure; elegantly thin steel supports; horizontal redwood cladding; and bold and dynamic stone planters. As a custom structure artfully designed by Cody, this building rises to a master architect's level with high artistic values. Therefore, for its distinctive characteristics representing the Mid-Century Modern style, as a master architect's work, and its high artistic values, the Atikian Building qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion 5.

SUMMARY: This evaluation finds The Atikian Building eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Historic Resource under 8.05.070 (C.1.a.) paragraphs (iii, iv, and v) of the local ordinance's seven criteria.



---

## CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

### Department of Planning Services

3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Phone 760 323 8245

Fax 760 322 8360

Historic Preservation Officer 760 322 8364 x8786

---

## HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION (HRD)

### **WHEN TO USE THIS APPLICATION:**

Use this application if you are seeking Class 1 or Class 2 historic designation for a property or parcel or for historic district applications.

Use the MINOR ARCHITECTURAL APPLICATION FORM (MAA) if you are seeking approval for alterations to Class 1, Class 2, Class 3 or Class 4 historic sites. (Contact the Planning Department if you are unsure of the classification of your property.)

### **WHO MAY APPLY:**

Any individual or organization may apply to the City for consideration of a request for historic resource designation. Applications must be signed and notarized by the owner(s) of record of the site, structure, building or object for which the designation is sought.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. For proposed historic sites or resources: Refer to Palm Springs Municipal Code ("PSMC") Section 8.05.070 for *Procedures and Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources*. Visit: [www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/municipal\\_code/title\\_8/section\\_8.05 "Historic Preservation"](http://www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/municipal_code/title_8/section_8.05_Historic_Preservation).
2. For proposed historic districts: Refer to Municipal Code Section 8.05.090 for *Procedures and Criteria for Designation of Historic Districts*. Visit: [www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/municipal\\_code/Title\\_8/section\\_8.05 "Historic Preservation"](http://www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/municipal_code/Title_8/section_8.05_Historic_Preservation).
3. Complete all parts of the application and include related reports, mailing labels and back up information in support of the application. Denote "NA" for any line item that is not applicable.
4. Once the application is complete, contact the Planning Department and schedule a pre-application conference with the City's Historic Preservation Officer ("HPO").
5. Submit the completed application and related materials to the Department of Planning Services. A Planning Department case number will be assigned to the application.
6. Applications for historic site / resource or historic district designation are evaluated by staff in the City Planning Department who will prepare the application for consideration by the City's Historic Site Preservation Board ("HSPB") at a noticed public hearing. Applicants should plan on attending the hearing. City staff will schedule site visits for members of the HSPB to become familiar with the site prior to the public hearing. (Exterior review only, interiors are not subject to HSPB review.)
7. At the public hearing, the HSPB will evaluate the application and make a recommendation for City Council action. The City Council will consider the application and the HSPB's recommendation at a second noticed public hearing. The applicant should again attend that hearing.
8. The final action of the City Council to designate will be recorded on the property title with the County Recorder's office.

**FOR HISTORIC SITE / RESOURCE APPLICATIONS, SEE CHECKLIST FOR CLASS 1 AND 2.**  
**FOR HISTORIC DISTRICT APPLICATIONS, SEE CHECKLIST FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS.**





## CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Department of Planning Services  
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262  
Tel 760-323-8245 – FAX 760-322-8360

*For Staff Use Only*

Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

In-Take Planner: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION PLANNING / ZONING GENERAL INFORMATION FORM

TO THE APPLICANT: Complete all parts of this application. Denote "NA" for lines that are not applicable.

#### Project Information:

Applicant's Name: Jane Lundin

Applicant's Address: 650 E Tahquitz Canyon Way, Ste 2, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Site Address: 120 W. Arenas Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262 APN: 513143006

Phone #: 510-778-9055 Email: jmlundin@toast.net

Zone: \_\_\_\_\_ GP: \_\_\_\_\_ Section/Township/Range: \_\_\_\_\_ /X /X

#### Description of Project:

The Atikian Building was designed in 1950 by master architect William F. Cody for San Francisco jewel dealer M.H. Atikian. The structure featured glamorous retail shops on the ground floor, with apartments and office space on the second floor. The apartments have been converted to offices, but the exterior retains a high level of integrity.

Note: For Historic District applications: on a separate page provide a list of all sites/parcels within the proposed historic district boundaries with the same information listed above.

Is the project located on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation? Yes/No: No  
(Refer to the Land Status Map under Tribal Resources on the Planning Department home page)

Construction Date: 1950 ☐ Estimated ☒ Actual (denote source, i.e. building permits)

Architect: William F. Cody

Original Owner: M.H. Atikian

Common/Historic Name of Property: Atikian Building

Other historic associations: Royal Palm Gallery; Leed's Gift Shop; Cody Building

Attach to this application any information, photos, drawings, newspaper articles, reports, studies, or other materials to fully describe the characteristics or conditions that support this application for historic designation.

Architectural Style: Mid-Century Modern

Refer to the Architectural Styles chapter of Citywide Historic Context Statement, under Historic Resources on the Planning Department Home Page: [www.palmspringsca.gov](http://www.palmspringsca.gov).

## HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION APPLICATION (CONT.)

### **Criteria for the Designation of a Class 1 Historic Resource:**

Pursuant to the Palm Springs Municipal Code (PSMC) Section 8.05.070(C,1): A site, structure, building, or object may be designated as a Class 1 historic resource or a Contributing Resource in a proposed historic district by the Palm Springs City Council, provided both of the following findings are met. Refer to the US Department of the Interior National Register Bulletin "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation" of potentially historic resources for further information.

***Provide a written description of how the site qualifies as a historic resource per the following Findings. Please provide answers on a separate sheet or report.***

**FINDING 1:** The site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic significance and meets one or more of the criteria listed below:

- a. The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state, or community. <sup>1</sup>
- b. The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.
- c. The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history.
- d. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.
- e. The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age, or that possess high artistic value.
- f. The resource represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction, as used in evaluating applications for designation of historic districts, for parcels on which more than one entity exists.

**FINDING 2:** The site, structure, building or object retains one or more of the following aspects of integrity, as established in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Provide a written description for each element as listed: Design; Materials; Workmanship; Location; Setting; Feeling; and Association. <sup>2</sup>

---

### **Criteria for the Designation of a Class 2 Historic Resource:**

Pursuant to the Palm Springs Municipal Code (PSMC) Section 8.05.070(C,1): A site, structure, building, or object may be designated as a Class 2 historic resource or a Contributing Resource in a proposed historic district by the Palm Springs City Council, provided the site, structure, building, or object exhibits significance and meets one or more of the criteria listed in Finding 1 above. A Class 2 historic resource is not required to meet the findings for integrity as described in Finding 2.

---

### **Criteria and Findings for Designation of Historic Districts:**

In addition to the criteria listed in Finding 1, to be considered for designation as a Historic District, a defined area must:

- a. Contain contributing resources on a majority of the sites within the proposed district which individually meet the criteria in Finding 1. The defined area may include other structures, buildings, or archaeological sites which contribute generally to the overall distinctive character of the area and are related historically or visually by plan or physical development. *Provide a separate list by address and Assessor Parcel Number (APN) for each site/parcel that meets the criteria outlined in Finding 1.*
- b. Identify non-contributing properties or vacant parcels to the extent necessary to establish appropriate, logical or convenient boundaries. *Provide a separate list by address and APN number for each site/parcel within the proposed historic district that is considered non-contributing to the overall historic significance of the historic district.*

---

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Unlike the National Trust criteria, the City's criterion does not consider "patterns of events". For consideration of "patterns of events", use Criterion "C", reflecting a particular period.

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: Refer to the U.S. Department of the Interior Bulletin for "How to Evaluate the Integrity of a Property".



**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT APPLICATION  
HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION**

**CLASS 1 AND CLASS 2**

**APPLICANT'S REQUIRED MATERIAL CHECKLIST**

The following items must be submitted before a **Historic Resource Designation** application will be accepted. Please check off each item to assure completeness. Provide twelve (12) hard copies and one (1) PDF copy of the following materials unless otherwise noted:

	Applicant Only	City Use Only
<b>Application Information:</b>		
• General Information form (1 copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Notarized letter from property owner consenting to Historic Designation (1 copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Ownership and Address History ("Chain of Title") (1 copy)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Historic Resource Report:</b>		
The following items shall be included in a historic resources report describing the site, structure, buildings, or objects eligible and appropriate for designation per PSMC 8.05.070.		
• Photographs of the exterior of the proposed site, structure, buildings or objects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Aerial photo of the site/resource (from Google Maps or equal).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Information on the architect, designer, and/or developer.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Date and method of construction. Provide copies of building permits.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A detailed assessment of the character defining features describing materials, architectural details/style, landscape elements, or other relevant descriptors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Evaluation of the site relative to the Criteria and Findings for Designation of Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Additional Information:</b>		
• Site Plan: 8-12" x 11" or 11" x 17"	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Public Hearing labels per PSZC Section 94.09.00.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Any other documentation or research as may be necessary to determine the qualifications of the site, structure, building, or objects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Applicants are encouraged to review the bulletin from the U.S. Department of the Interior titled "How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation". (National Register Bulletin 15 (<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>)).

# Statement of Significance

---

## Summary

The M. H. Atikian Office Building, Royal Palm Gallery, and Penthouse Apartment (Cody project number #353) was designed for M. H. Atikian in 1950 by master architect William F. Cody. The steel-framed commercial structure utilized natural granite stonework and redwood siding to add warmth and interest. After a 1979 fire, the building was rehabilitated by master architect Richard Harrison.

## Location

The M.H. Atikian Building is located at 191-193 S. Palm Canyon Drive. (aka 120 West Arenas Road).

## The Architect – William F. Cody

*By Patrick McGrew*

*From the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation's Abernathy Residence Class 1 Resource Nomination, 2012*

There is a fine line between minimalism and boredom. In the glass box high-rises and homes that came to dominate Modernism after World War II, in the buildings that shaved off ornament in the search for a pure concept and pure form, in the homes that became chaste altars on which architects sacrificed the mess and clutter of real life for the thin pleasures of stasis and stillness, a potentially vivid architecture was invented, but one that easily became as dry as the desert sand.

Palm Springs architect William Cody (1917- 1978) played a unique if largely overlooked role. A designer committed to Modernism, to seeking ever more slender and daring expressions, he also brought a huge appetite for life that gave his spare buildings a liveliness and personality that others lacked. From his arrival in Palm Springs in 1942 to his death in 1978, his office was continually busy, but his reputation rarely escaped the Banning Pass. He made little effort to promote his work in the architectural journals, or to seek clients in the greater Los Angeles area; the projects he designed elsewhere were spinoffs from clients or projects he cultivated in Palm Springs—particularly in country club design.

Born in 1916 in Dayton, Ohio, raised in Los Angeles, Cody began in architecture early, working with Cliff May in the late 1930s even as he was going to the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California. He was already doing well, impressing fellow students with his convertible and hiring them on as draftsmen on his projects. Though admired today, May was never trained formally, yet developed residential designs of great warmth; their rambling lines, patios and ranch house imagery struck a lasting chord with westerners. May's designs drew on historic regional ranch and hacienda models as well as modern ways of life and construction techniques.

The same care for warmth and lifestyle, overriding theoretical purity, echo through Cody's work. Modernism at first confused and angered Cody, reports his schoolmate and friend George Hasslein. When it was first introduced into the U.S.C. Architecture School around the time of Cody's third year of design in 1941, it

provoked controversy and arguing matches between Hasslein, who quickly embraced it, and Cody whose design sense was rooted elsewhere. Yet, Cody came around. Greater thinness and more striking elegance became the single-minded focus of his ongoing designs. The sense of gracious spaces remained in his buildings.

This search for elegance was all the more surprising considering his personality. 'Cody overworked and overplayed,' remembers Stewart Williams, but 'he was a fine designer.' Donald Wexler, who first came to the desert from Neutra's office to work for a winter with Cody in 1952, recalls that the boss was never around during the morning hours. The office was a shack—some described it as a cave, some as a tent—in the middle of a palm grove. Wexler describes Cody as having earned the nickname "Wild Bill" from his social life after hours. It was an unignorable aspect of Cody's personality; Hasslein and Cody were considering going into business together, but Hasslein decided he would rather keep Cody as a friend than have him as a partner.

Cody was aware of his contradictions, but he clearly funneled his attention to his designs. 'He was his architecture,' says Hasslein. 'He was also a skilled renderer,' says William Krisel, another U.S.C. schoolmate who went on to make important contributions to Palm Springs in the Alexander subdivisions. Cody could deftly flick a watercolor brush to perfect a rendering. His personal energy can be seen, remarkably disciplined, in the intensity of his designs, in the proportions, the energetic details, the polished compositions, the interwoven spaces. His buildings in the desert never became desiccated abstractions.

Bill Cody moved to Palm Springs to ease his asthma after graduating from U.S.C. in 1942 - the illness made him 4-F for the army in wartime. He had a plan: 'If I go to Palm Springs I'll be doing architecture all over the world,' he told Hasslein. It was true; the kinds of clients he met in Palm Springs had connections, homes, and businesses around the United States and in Havana, while a school board client might be ill at ease with his larger-than-life style compared to someone like J. P. Clark. Cody's best clients were social friends like Robert McCullough, power tool millionaire, with whom he shared an outgoing approach to life. McCullough helped to select Cody to design the clubhouse for the Tamarisk Country Club, which led to the clubhouse for the even more prestigious Eldorado Country Club, designed with San Francisco Bay Area architect Ernest Kump.

One of Cody's first designs for the desert, the 1947 Del Marcos Hotel, fittingly followed the lead of Taliesin West, then less than ten years old. Rubble stone walls contrasted with a framework of angled wood doglegs in a design that rose out of the earth. When Thunderbird Dude Ranch converted to Thunderbird Country Club in 1952, the Gordon Kaufmann-designed clubhouse required renovations and enlargements to the dining room, and Cody was hired. He kept its flavor of 'casual ranch-style' Modern, but in the bungalows he designed around it soon after, he adopted a simpler style: shallow gable roofs for a Modern bungalow. Clubhouses, bungalows and custom homes remained the mainstay of Cody's career in California.

In Huddle's Springs restaurant of 1957 on South Palm Canyon Drive, Cody delved into Modernistic organic design again, with a superb rendition of the Googie style of design then popular in Southern California's roadside coffee shops; Eldon Davis and Louis Armet, prime purveyors of the style, were also Cody classmates at USC Architecture School, and had designed other Huddle's restaurants in Los Angeles. Huddle's design

starts with a plan, a joyful play of oblique angles thrusting the restaurant's winds out into the landscape and creating dynamic polygonal spaces. The structure was equally complex, with wood beams soaring beyond the building line and touching down or doubling back in doglegs to claim the site. They also claim outdoor dining terraces, made pleasant with colorfully striped fabrics stretched between beams as sun shelter.

Like other Coachella Valley architects, Cody worked on designs ranging from churches to gas stations to hotels. When developer Sam Banowit finally convinced the Cahuilla Tribe to lease the town's original springs to him for the 1955 Spa Hotel, he hired Cody and Wexler and Harrison. Cody oversaw the five-story hotel wing.

Although Albert Frey's Tramway gas station has become the better known because of a 1997 preservation battle, Bill Cody also designed one nearby in 1964 that is as strong a piece of architecture. A long, thin, high slab of concrete stretches out over three open bays and an enclosed service bay. The slab is in effect a widened capital, akin to the mushroom-shaped columns Frank Lloyd Wright designed for the Johnson Wax offices in Racine, Wisconsin, though square instead of round. The two elegant gas stations, at the town's north gateway, make a point of announcing the Modern city that Palm Springs proudly considered itself in the late 1950s.

Cody's St. Theresa's Catholic Church is a more expressionistic form; it combines a religious sanctuary, capped by a large spreading pyramidal roof, with surrounding cloister-like forms framed by dramatic concave walls. There is something vaguely oriental, as well as sheltered and mysterious, about the church's modernized stupa form. The thick perimeter walls create meditation courtyards, paved in packed sand. Inside, the great roof canopy is held aloft on an extravagant wood post-and-beam structure that recalls the upward soaring space and structural form of Gothic cathedrals. It is a strongly - and appropriately - introspective building.

Cody's own house also focuses on an interior courtyard. The structure stretches the California ideal of indoor/outdoor living in a loose confederation of pavilions. We have seen these thin roof planes and spindly columns, used time and again in Case Study designs and scores of imitators. But in Cody's work the vocabulary takes on a very personal meaning and energy.

Like the other architects of Palm Springs, Cody's work was varied. He designed motels, custom homes, a carwash, country clubs, mobile home parks, offices, townhouses, shopping centers, gas stations, and so on. Yet a distinct character can be seen in all of them. It is a restless energy that brings liveliness to his plans, elevations and details. The radical thinness of Cody roofs or the daring reach of a cantilever are clearly the result of a wrestling match between the architect and the materials and the laws of physics; that energy and striving remains in the building. This contrasts with the more measured, balanced composition of Neutra, for example. The spirited angles Cody used in plan and elevation show the breadth of his mastery; he could use organic forms as successfully as minimalist forms.

The fact that Cody could take an established vocabulary and style and reinterpret it so vividly ranks him among the best of midcentury California designers - a field already crowded with talents like Eames, Koenig, Ellwood, Lautner, Frey, Neutra, Esherick, Callister, Jones and many others. It is time for his work to become more widely known.

Following a debilitating stroke in 1973 that ended his career, Cody's firm continued under the stewardship of Frank Urrutia until Cody's death in 1978. Leaving behind a legacy of important contributions to what is known today as Desert Modernism; his career continues to serve as an inspiration to successive generations of architects. In addition to the work, his legacy included mentoring; among his apprentices were Richard Holden, William Johnson, Ric Harrison and of course Don Wexler among others. And the work is as fresh and exciting today as it was when it was built. Of Cody's sophistication as a designer, his contemporary E. Stewart Williams said: "He was the best designer of us all... Cody brought 5th Avenue into the Desert." Over time, many important Cody's have been lost to demolitions or inappropriate alterations. During Modernism Week 2012, Cody was awarded a Star on Palm Springs Walk of Fame.

\*\*\*\*\*

In 2021, the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation was co-publisher, along with Monacelli Press, of "Master of the Midcentury: The Architecture of William F. Cody," a biography of William F. Cody written by his daughter Cathy Cody, Jo Lauria, and Don Choi.

## **M.H. ATIKIAN AND THE ATIKIAN BUILDING, 1950**

### **First Owner – M.H. Atikian**

Mesrab Housep ("M.H.") Atikian was born in Kessab, Syria to Housep and Manonshag Atikian on May 15, 1896. They were of Armenian ethnicity.

When he was nineteen, the Armenian Genocide began, making its way to Kessab on July 26, 1915. At first, the people in the town expressed a desire to resist, but the idea failed to become a reality. More than 10,000 Armenians of Kessab and nearby Alexandretta were deported in two directions: one group was deported towards the desert of Deir ez-Zor; while the other group was deported south to the desert of Jordan. During this deportation process, nearly half were killed.<sup>1</sup>

During this most horrible episode in history, Atikian's father Housep died in 1918. Atikian's own experience isn't known, but he left Constantinople for England, and arrived in the United States on January 28, 1920, in Norfolk, Virginia. In April he moved to New York, and he was soon enrolled in the Business program at Columbia University in New York, studying accounting. He graduated in 1924 with a degree in Master of Science—his thesis was titled "The Market for Milk Products; an Investigation of the Market for Milk and Milk Products, and an Historical Account of the Changes in That Market."<sup>2</sup> Other family members followed him to the United States.



In July of 1930, Atikian submitted his Declaration of Intent to become a United States citizen. He was living with his mother Mary, and two brothers in New York at the time. The 1930 census lists his occupation as “jeweler.”

By the early 1930s, Atikian seemed to be doing well as a jeweler, traveling to England and France, staying at fine hotels, and traveling on Mauretania. A 1931 ship’s log shows he has married a woman named Eugenie, another Armenian immigrant born in Turkey in 1906. The marriage was short-lived.



*Prince Alexis Mdivani and his wife Barbara Hutton, who is wearing the infamous jade necklace at the Metropolitan Opera, 1934.*

## **THE JADE NECKLACE**

In late 1933, Atikian became involved in an incident that would garner much attention and international press. Partnering with Chang Wen-Ti, who was described as an “authority on jades and Chinese antiques,” Atikian rented space in Rockefeller Center in New York for the pair to showcase their collections of jade antiquities and jewelry—the exhibit would run from November 1, 1933, through January 31, 1934. The exhibit's star would be “The Altar of the Green Jade Pagoda,” which was most recently displayed at the 1933-34 Chicago World’s Fair.<sup>3</sup> The exhibit got the attention of Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton, who saw a jade choker on display in the window and asked her husband, Prince Alexis Mdivani, to buy it. It was described as “a jade necklace composed of twenty-seven perfectly matched emerald-colored beads,” each bead just one inch in

diameter.<sup>4</sup> On December 20, he purchased the jade choker for the astronomical sum of \$40,000 (\$846,000 in 2022 dollars). Wen-Ti immediately took his inventory and disappeared, leaving Atikian with all the bills for the space, forcing him to close the exhibit early. In January 1934, Atikian sued Chang Wen-Ti for \$4,060 for lost commissions and \$6,100 for breach of contract.<sup>5</sup> When the case went to trial in October 1934, it was revealed that the jade necklace Prince Mdivani bought for his wife for \$40,000 was only worth \$3,500. When Atikian took the stand and was asked the necklace's worth, "Like the high-class gem man he is, Atikian, because of professional ethics, didn't offer to disclose the true value of Princess Barbara's necklace. But he did maintain that he, too, was a victim of Chang. He claims he was cheated of \$10,600 commissions, for which he is suing."<sup>6</sup> On November 2, a "haggard" jury delivered a verdict, awarding Atikian a mere \$180.<sup>7</sup>



*M.H. Atikian shown in a 1935 "Los Angeles Times" article.*

Though he didn't prevail in his lawsuit, he could take advantage of his newfound fame. In 1935, he began touring the country as the famed "gem expert" from the Mdivani scandal. In June of 1935, he set up shop at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, and the *Los Angeles Times* ran an article with his photo. In it, Atikian said, "I have been interested in jewels and their history all of my life. My research convinces me that the first jewels for adornment—in fact, the commencement of their association with romance—occurred along the Euphrates River about 8000 years B.C. The first necklace perhaps a few pieces of ivory, from elephants which abounded

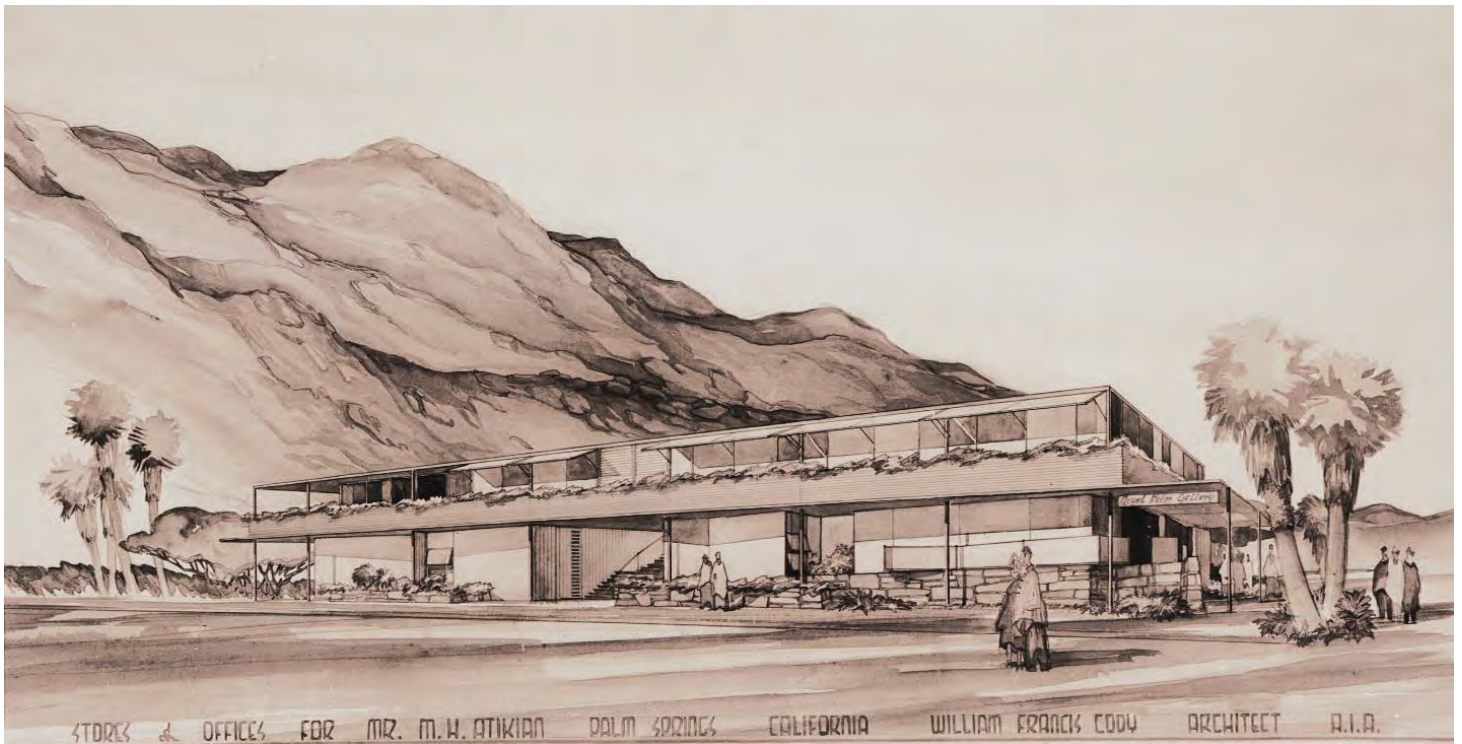
there then, strung on a piece of flax or wool and hung around some maiden's neck. Of all the pieces I have ever handled I think the Countess Haughwitz-Reventlow's jade necklace is the most beautiful—it perhaps took the family which cut and finished those stones hundreds of years to find twenty-seven perfectly matched pieces of jade in the rocks from the Burma Himalayas.” Countess Haughwitz-Reventlow was Barbara Hutton's married name after she divorced Prince Mdivani in March 1935 and married Haughwitz-Reventlow less than twenty-fours after her divorce became final.

In 2014, the famous Hutton-Mdivani jade necklace was sold by Sotheby's for a record-breaking 27.4 million dollars to Cartier. Sotheby's had described the piece as the "greatest jadeite bead necklace of historical importance."<sup>8</sup>



*The infamous jade necklace, at the time of its auction at Sotheby's, 2014.*

In 1938, the Atikian siblings, who had moved to San Francisco from New York, opened Master Photo Engraving, and M.H Atikian was an investor and partner in the firm. The firm advertised “Halftones, Copper, Zinc and Color Plates,” and was located at 812 Howard. At the same time, he opened an antique store at 362 Post Street, and took an apartment at the Hotel Carlton. After World War II, he opened another store, Stewart's Treasure House in the Hotel Carlton, at 1075 Sutter Street.



*When this rendering by Cody was published in the Desert Sun, the caption read, “SOMETHING NEW—The above building, designed by Architect William F. Cody of Palm Springs for M. H. Atikian, is something new in store-apartment design and is nearing completion at the northwest corner of Arenas Road and Palm Canyon Drive. Interesting features are its clever integration of natural rock, steel and glass and its poured gypsum roof deck, one of the very newest applications for desert weather control. The grand opening is planned sometime in November.”*

## THE ATIKIAN BUILDING

Atikian began traveling to Palm Springs after World War II and was charmed by the growing Village. By 1949, he and his mother were living at 249 Mesquite. In the January 26, 1950 issue of *The Palm Springs News and Limelight News*, in a column titled “Good News,” it was reported that the “Good Newsmaker of the week here in the Village is the prominent Bay City jeweler and art collector, M.H. Atikian, who tells us that he has such great faith in the future of our town that he is closing his famous Treasure House in the City by the Golden Gate and moving permanently to Palm Springs. Not only will he reside here, but Atikian is erecting a beautiful modern two-story building on the northwest corner of North Palm Canyon and Arenas Road at an estimated cost of \$100,000. This building, designed by one of our leading contemporary architects, William Francis Cody, will contain many new departures according to Atikian, and will house his Royal Palm Gallery. This Gallery will be patterned somewhat after his Treasure House in San Francisco and feature antique jewelry, precious stones, and objects d’art from Atikian’s fabulous worldwide collection. In addition to his Royal Palm Gallery on the street-facing Palm Canyon Drive, Atikian’s new building will lease additional store space to firms in the creative arts field. On the second floor will be Atikian’s own three-bedroom penthouse



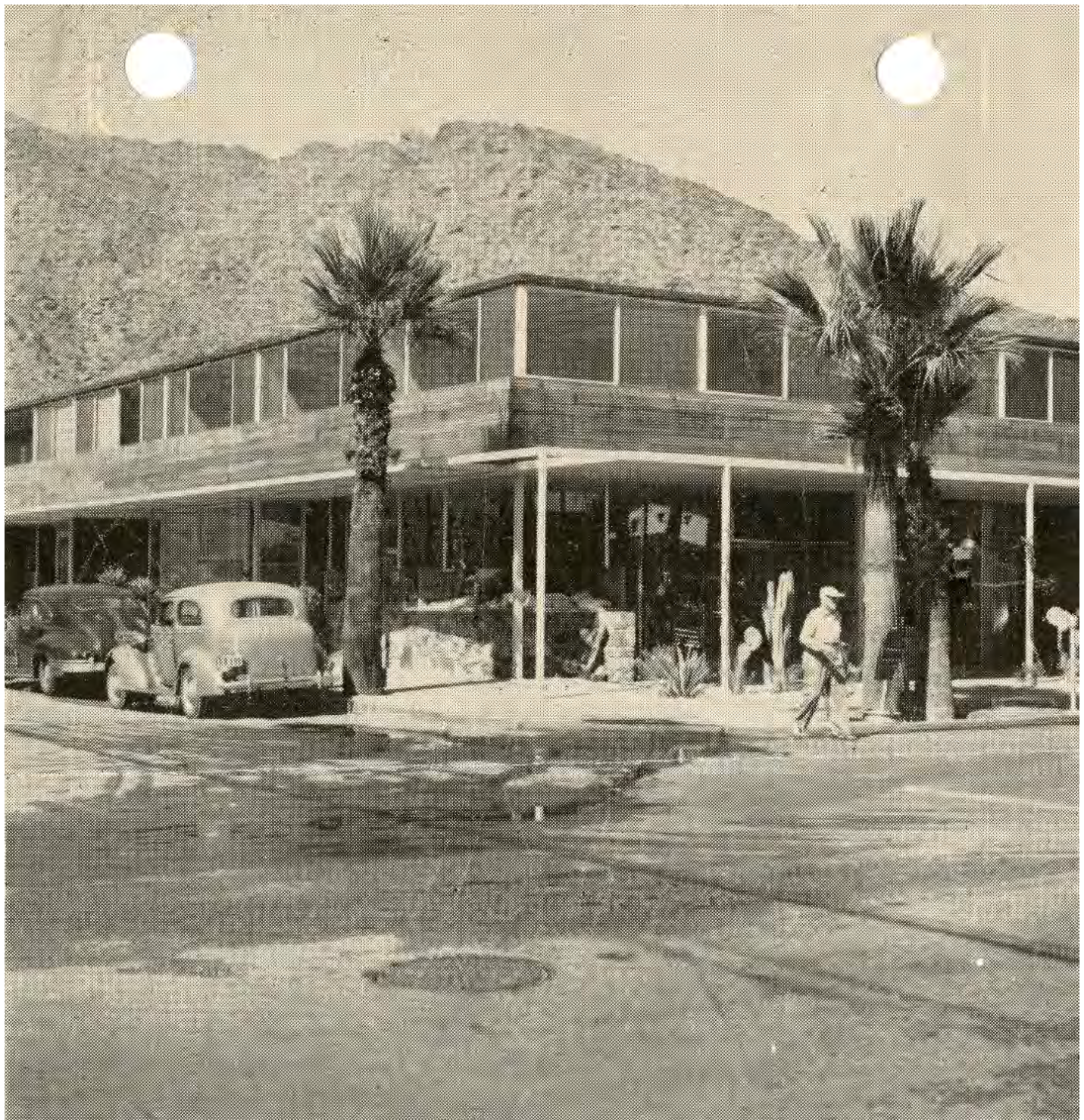
apartment as well as private offices for professional people.”<sup>9</sup> His mother Mary moved into the apartments upstairs before she died in 1952.

The building would be ideally located near the newly-built Bullock’s department store and centrally located to downtown Palm Springs’ nightclubs, shops, restaurants, and the charming apartment hotels of the Tennis Club neighborhood.



*Caption when published in the Desert Sun read, “GROUND BREAKING. M.H. Atikian, owner, left, Diane Cody, Lynne Cody and William F. Cody, architect, break ground for the new Royal Palm Gallery at Arenas and Palm Canyon Drive.*





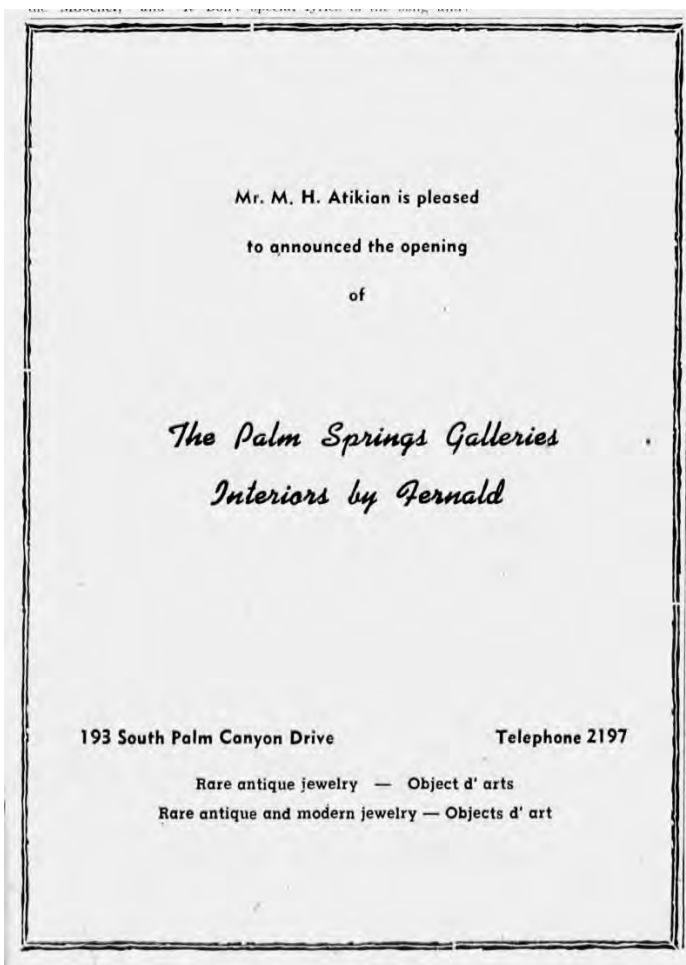
*An early photo of the newly completed Atikian Building. Photo courtesy Cathy Cody.*

“Low bidder on the new building was announced as being L P. Scherer of Redlands in the amount of \$75,000 with contract to be let next Monday and work to commence Tuesday. Building itself will be in contemporary design featuring a great deal of glasswork for more natural lighting. To be a two-storied building the gallery will face Palm Canyon drive while entrance to the offices and penthouse upstairs will be made from Arenas.



Cody announced that all bids submitted were lower than anticipated for the new Village addition and he further said work should be completed “sometime in August.” Cody, who is well-known locally, was recently cited by inclusion of some of his local work in the 1950 yearbook of the Encyclopedia Britannica.”<sup>10</sup>

In November 1954, Atikian’s niece Pat Atikian moved into an apartment in the building and planned to stay an “indefinite time.” She soon began working for her uncle in a new Objets d’Art gallery at the Atikian Building, which would have an interior design department run by Eddie Fernald. Fernald planned to “specialize in a decor that is in keeping with gracious desert living.”<sup>11</sup> In 1955, Pat Atikian married Greg Krikorian, a recent graduate from Annapolis, in San Francisco.



From Desert Sun, November 28, 1954.



M.H. Atikian’s niece Pat married Greg Krikorian in 1955

In 1955, the *Desert Sun* announced, “Morris Guberman, president of Kaufman’s, a leading specialty store in Colorado Springs has taken a long-term lease on the Atikian building on South Palm Canyon Drive and Arenas Road. Guberman, after frequent visits to Palm Springs, said he became convinced that a retail operation in Palm Springs will fit in well with his Colorado enterprise, and hopes to have a subsidiary of Kaufman’s of Colorado Springs in operation here soon. One of the stores in the building now houses Faye Renee Ladies Ready-to-Wear and another has been leased to Andrea Leeds Howard as a new location for her gift shop”



*In 1955, Andrea Leeds Howard opened a branch of her shop Andrea of Palm Springs.*



*from  
around  
the  
world*

*objets d'art - gifts that endure*

*from  
China*



Exquisitely hand-carved ivory Buddha Head—

*THE GODDESS OF MERCY*

Jewels by Ruser

*Andrea*  
OF PALM SPRINGS


*"Where You'll find tomorrow's Heirlooms Today"*

Shoppe No. 1 — HOWARD MANOR

Shoppe No. 2. — 193 S. Palm Canyon Drive

**faye renee**  
*Where the nicest people prefer  
 a shop that features up to the  
 minute designer fashions for her.*  
 DAYTIME - PLAYTIME  
 COCKTAIL - CASUAL  
 C-L-O-T-H-E-S  
*faye-renee*  
 191 S. Palm Canyon Dr.  
 Tel. 2412

FOR A GAYER SOCIAL SEASON —  
 LEARN THE LATEST FASHIONS IN DANCE  
 FOX TROT WALTZ SWING RHUMBA MAMBO  
 TANGO SAMBA AND CHA CHA

*Arthur*  *Murray*

Open 1 to 10 Daily 10 to 6 Saturday  
**CHAMPAGNE HOUR**  
 Every Monday from 10:30 P.M. — El Mirador Kiva Room  
**120 WEST ARENAS** **Phone 2725**  
 Corner of Palm Canyon FOR FREE DANCE ANALYSIS

*Advertisements for businesses at the Atikian Building in the 1950s.*

Andrea Leeds Howard opened her first jewelry store at the Howard Manor, which she owned with her husband. She later opened a branch at the El Mirador Hotel and at 120 W. Arenas, taking the large corner shop. According to Cathy Cody, daughter of architect William F. Cody,

*Interior and furniture designer Maurice Martiné worked with Cody on the interiors of Andrea's fine jewelry store - the ground floor corner shop of Arenas and Palm Canyon. Martiné would work with my*

*father on many projects. Andrea (Leeds) was married to Robert Howard who owned the Howard Manor Hotel. Howard 's dad had owned the racehorse Seabiscuit.*

*Andrea was a friend of my mother, Wini, and for years, I often went with my mother to Andrea's. Another friend of Wini's, Maxine Gerhart, also worked for Andrea and a lady named Violet Babcock worked there as well. Both women worked for Andrea for years and it seems that all three were there every time we visited. Stopping by the store was a cheerful interlude for the ladies.*

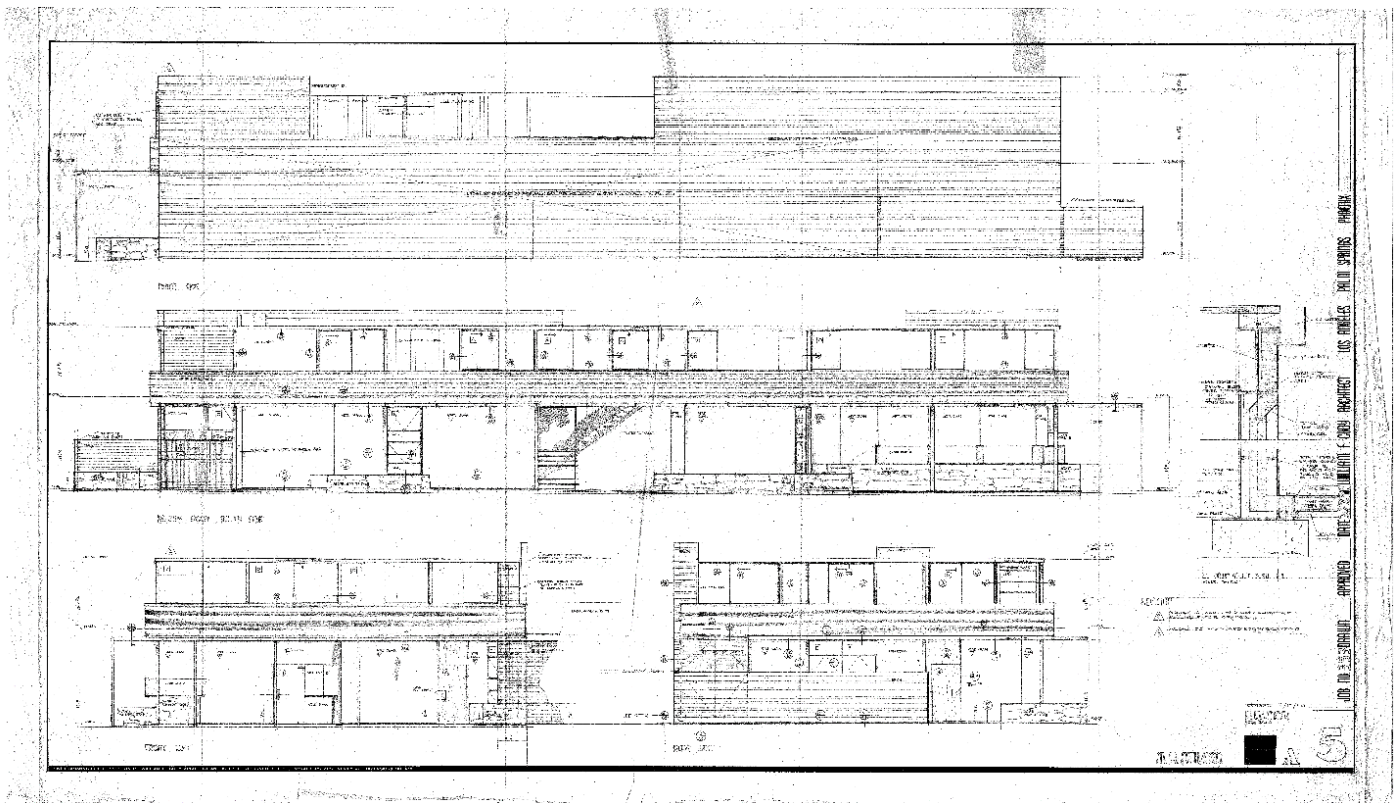
*The sales desks were located on a 1 or 2 step high platform located next to the window on the Arenas Road side towards the back of the store with a good view overlooking the stone planters of the outside as well as of inside the store. The store exuded elegance. It had plush carpet. It wasn't crowded with display cases as you often see in jewelry stores. The jewelry was displayed on black velvet and the cases, again, weren't crowded with items, but featured selected pieces. Opposite the Arenas Road side of the store, there was a bank type vault in the wall where Andrea stored the merchandise. It seemed to be a fabulous place to work. Andrea was very nice.<sup>12</sup>*

## **Subsequent Owners**

At age sixty-five, M.H. Atikian died in Los Angeles on November 25, 1961. After his death, the Atikian Building was left to his remaining siblings--ultimately owned by his final surviving brother Hrandt "Harry" Atikian (1905-1974), the father of Pat Atikian (now Krikorian). Upon his death in 1974, Greg Krikorian and Pat Atikian were the building owners until around the mid-2000s. Eric Ellenbogen is listed on a 2007 permit, and then the building was sold to John Hadley, who did significant renovations to the Atikian Building in 2011.

The building is currently owned by Jane Lundin.





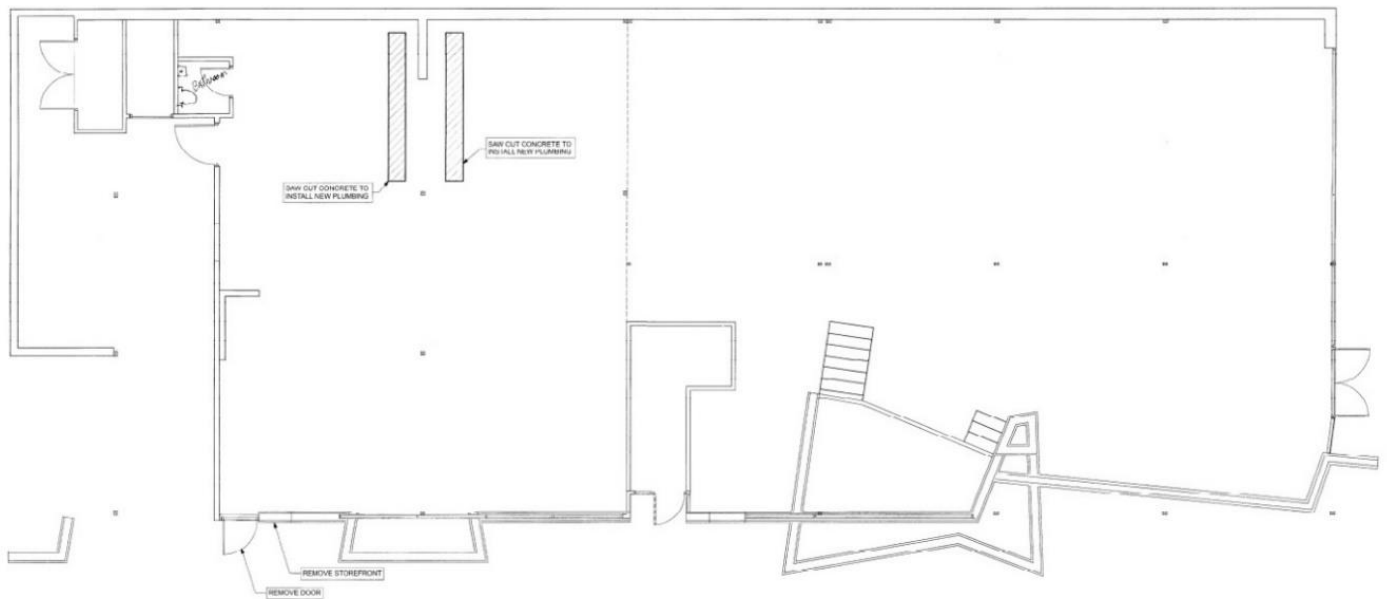
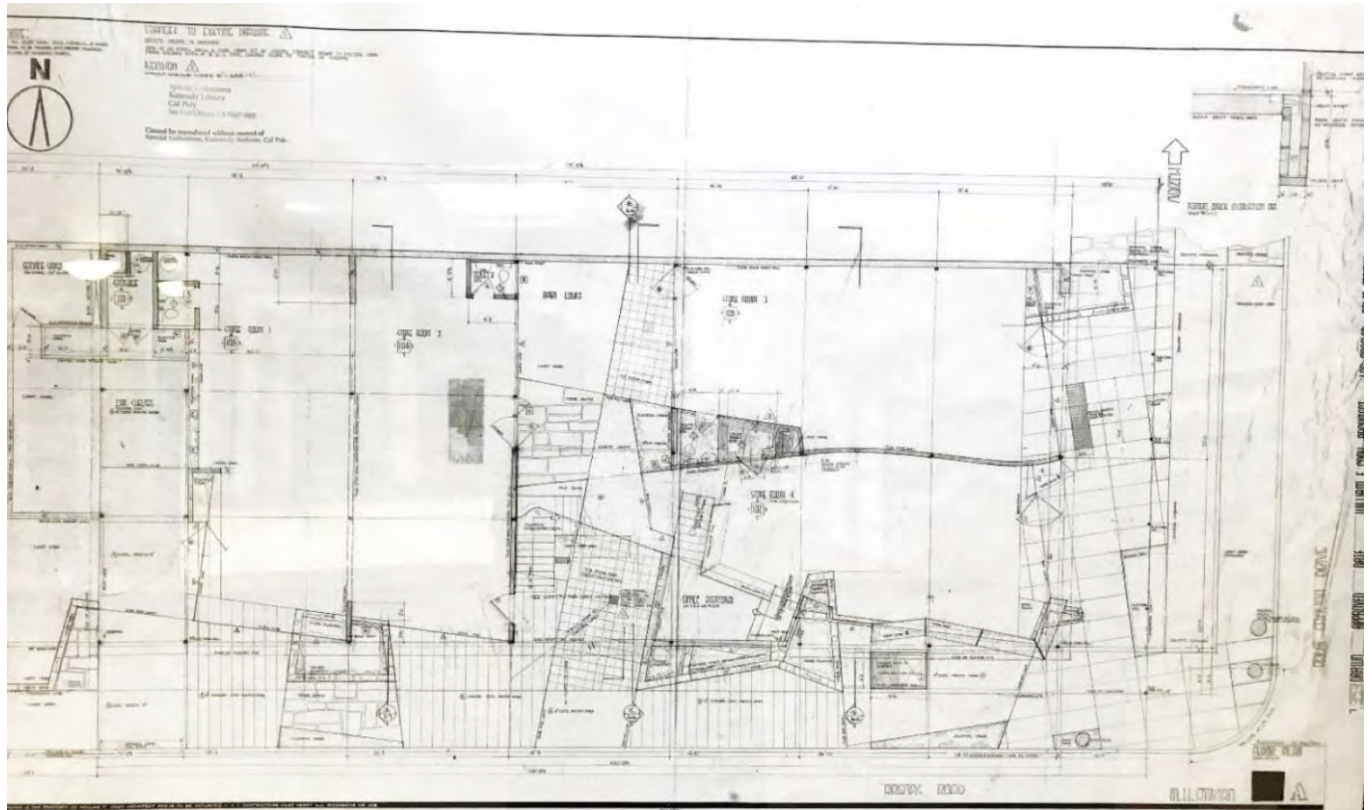
*William F. Cody's drawing of the M.H. Atikian Building, 1950. Courtesy MS0163 William F. Cody Papers 2, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University.*

## THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE ATIKIAN BUILDING

William F. Cody's design for the Atikian Building showcases several of his signature details. Overall, the structure is a relatively simple, geometric cube, with a powerful emphasis on the horizontal line. Cody's famous impossibly thin profiles are made possible with the  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ -inch rectangular half-inch steel tubing, which outlined the building's form and framed the steel awnings along the building's two street-facing elevations. Along Palm Canyon Drive, these awnings were supported by squared 3x3-inch steel poles. The relatively restrained design of the structure's second-floor featured horizontal redwood siding below long ribbons of sliding steel windows, topped by an elegantly slender flat roof. Atikian's apartment had sliding glass doors opening onto a covered balcony.

The ground floor composition was more dynamic, with two separate modules (one module facing Arenas, the other facing Palm Canyon). Each one contained two retail shops, separated by an open court, allowing access to the second-floor apartments and offices. Rather than a typical orthogonal design strategy for the four storefronts, Cody interjected opposing angles into the design, which elevated the street-level experience and turned it into a compelling spatial composition and set the tone for the paving patterns. The two shops along Arenas had sawtooth storefronts with a sloping keystone-shaped rock planter in between. Irregular flagstone paving extended out into the sidewalk from the planter. The open stair court had triangulated paving in square

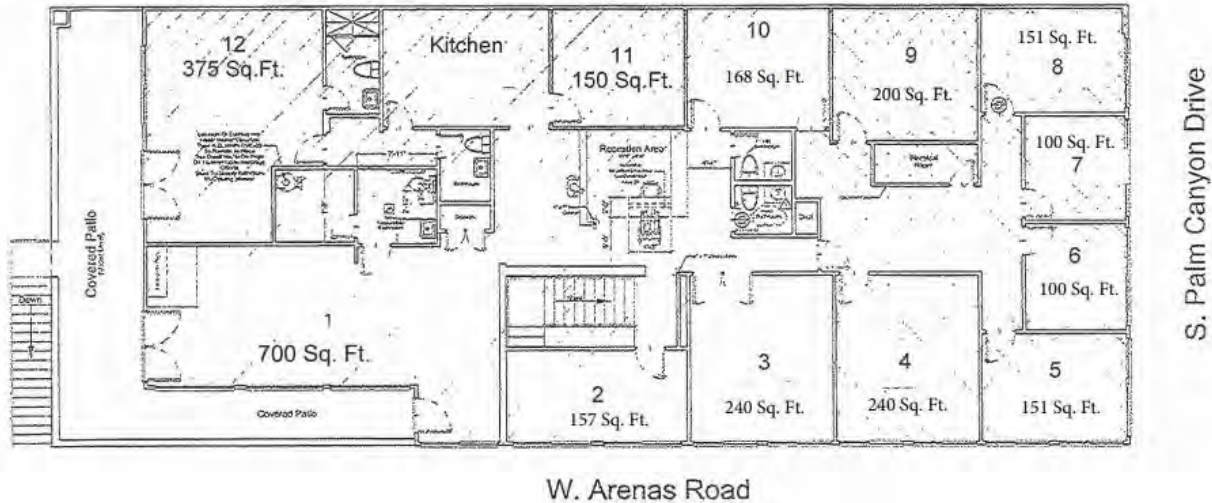
red Mission tile, with an adjacent wedge-shaped area paved in flagstones. Under the stair landing were an open planting area and a fishpond with a small grass panel. To the right of the open court was the most dynamic planter at the building, a large, fractured hourglass shape, jutting out into the sidewalk and back at a rakish angle into the store. Inside, a raised platform filled the profile. The same stone extended a bit higher than the planter, creating the corner at Arenas and Palm Canyon, and was topped with angled glass showcase windows for Atikian's gallery. The glass facades along Palm Canyon also featured a sawtooth pattern and another large stone planter on the northernmost part of the façade. In alignment with the sawtooth storefronts, angled paving extended out to the street, with some areas open for planting. Inside the gallery, Cody worked with designer Maurice Martiné on the interesting showcase displays for his jewelry and objets d'art. The wall separating the two Palm Canyon Stores was an undulating line, further adding to the dramatic effect.



The top image shows William F. Cody's dynamic plan for the stores and associated paving. The highlight was the triangulated hourglass-shaped planter, which became part of the interior architecture, establishing a solid indoor/outdoor relationship. That still exists, as seen in the lower drawing of the existing floorplan. The two stores on Arenas (at left) have changed their storefronts. Along Palm Canyon Drive, two former individual stores with sawtooth storefronts have been combined into one single store with a standard straight aluminum-framed glass façade.

# The William H. Cody Building

120 W Arenas Road  
Upstairs Executive Suites



Second floor existing conditions floorplan.

## Character-Defining Features of the Atikian Building

### Contributing Elements

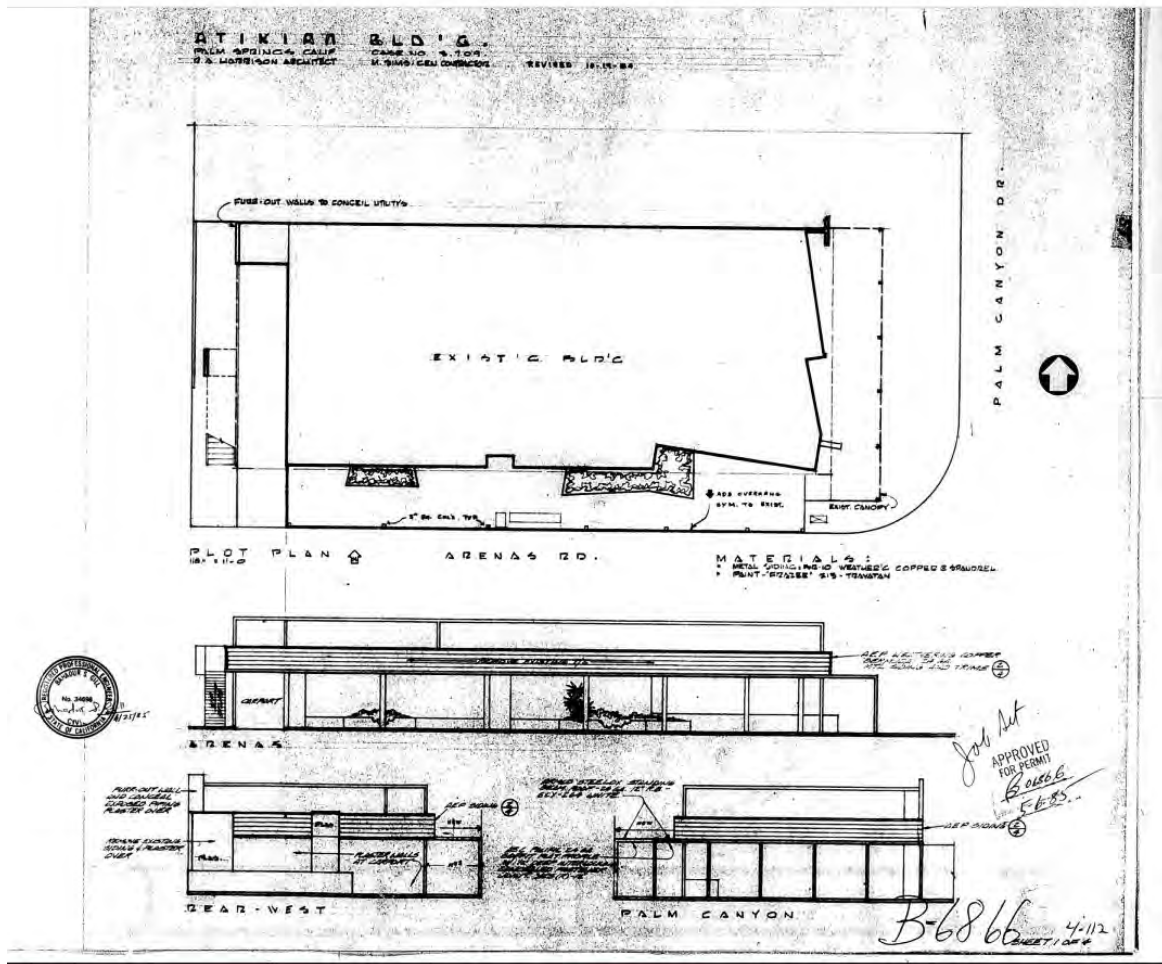
The Atikian Building is an exceptional example of a custom-designed Mid-Century Modern commercial structure. It exhibits numerous extant character-defining features including:

- Flat-roofed two-story structure.
- Thin, square or rectangular steel tubing which outlines the structure and the awnings and their supports.
- Bold, dynamic stone planters.
- Horizontal siding on the lower half of the second-floor façade. This was originally redwood, which didn't survive the harsh desert summers. The current metal horizontal siding is similar in appearance and achieves the same goal of emphasizing the horizontal line.
- Deep overhangs to protect from the sun.
- Stone on lower walls of retail facades.
- Long ribbons of windows on second-story facades (current replacement is similar in appearance to historic).

## **Non-Contributing Elements**

- Outdoor stairs in the former carport.
- Enclosed court with stairs to access the second floor. This area was originally open.
- Paving stones along the Palm Canyon façade (these were installed by the city of Palm Springs to match the rest of the street for the “Walk of Stars”).
- Aluminum-framed storefronts in orthogonal pattern (these were originally angled).





Architect Richard Harrison (former partner of Donald Wexler) was hired to restore the Atikian Building in 1985, following the 1979 fire. In his drawing of the existing building, the two Arenas Road stores have already been modified to remove their sawtooth configuration. The Palm Canyon elevation still features Cody's sawtooth storefronts.

## Changes Over Time

The integrity of the Atikian Building remained primarily intact until 1979, when the building caught fire and suffered internal damage.

The building sat vacant for several years until architect Richard Harrison (formerly of Wexler & Harrison) developed a rehabilitation plan in 1985. It was at this time the horizontal redwood cladding was changed to steel. At the time of the 1979 fire, the horizontal redwood, which had presumably deteriorated, had been covered with a vertical textured T1-11, which was at odds with Cody's emphasis on the horizontal line. Harrison



replaced the redwood with horizontal metal painted brown to resemble the original redwood and match the original configurations.

The rehabilitation work continued into 1986, when the steel canopy along Arenas Road was replaced and swapped like for like, though it was made slightly wider. The canopy along Palm Canyon Drive was refurbished, and the wood decking on the balcony was replaced.

In 1997, a permit was pulled by Greg Krikorian to remove the existing stairway and replace it with a steel-framed stairway. These were constructed with the same rise and run as the original, which was non-compliant with current codes but got a reprieve from the city's Building Official.

In 2011, owner John Hadley conducted the most extensive work to rehabilitate the building. At that time, nineteen second-floor windows were replaced using anodized bronze aluminum frames in the same size and location. The second floor was reconfigured to create office space and ADA-compliant bathrooms, and the open-air stair arcade was enclosed.

The street-level storefronts along Arenas changed from the more dynamic sawtooth configuration to the regular straight line. Still, there are no permits, so precisely when this change occurred isn't known. Similarly, in 1995, two separate stores on the Palm Canyon side became one large store, with a straight façade consisting of aluminum-framed panels and doors. The dynamic indoor-outdoor planter and adjacent angled rock wall have survived, though the glass display case on that corner was removed in the 1995 remodel. Chris Mills was the architect for this 1995 remodel.

Though the street-level glass facades have become less dynamic, and the open stair court has been enclosed, the overall appearance of the Atikian Building still expresses William F. Cody's elegant thin-lined elegance.

## **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. On page 58, the endnotes will indicate specific sources cited.

### **Books**

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

*Master of the Midcentury: The Architecture of William F. Cody,* by Cathy Cody, Jo Lauria, and Don Choi. Monacelli Press, 2021.

## Other Sources Consulted

- Historic Resources Group. *City of Palm Springs Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings*. Pasadena, 2015 (Final Draft, December 2018).
- Architectural Resources Group. *City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey*. San Francisco, 2004.
- Historic Site Preservation Board. *Inventory of Historic Structures*. Palm Springs, 2001.
- [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com) (Desert Sun and Los Angeles Times).
- City of Palm Springs (Planning and Building Departments).
- Ancestry.com.
- Palm Springs Historical Society.
- Riverside County Assessor's Office.

## BACKGROUND / HISTORIC CONTEXT

The relatively short history of Palm Springs can be organized into several distinct periods, as defined by the Historic Resources Group's *Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings*. These include the following:

- Native American Settlement to 1969
- Early Development (1884-1918)
- Palm Springs between the Wars (1919-1941)
- Palm Springs During World War II (1939-1945)
- Post-World War II Palm Springs (1945-1969)

It is within the context of the period "Post-World War II Palm Springs" that the Atikian Building will be evaluated. The following context statement is edited from Historic Resource Group's *Citywide Historic Context Statement & Survey Findings*: **Post-World War II Palm Springs (1945-1969)**:

*This context explores the post-World War II boom and related development that left Palm Springs with what many consider the most extensive and finest concentration of mid-20th century Modern architecture in the United States. Hollywood film stars and Eastern industrialists were joined in the postwar decades by ever-increasing numbers of tourists. The growing prosperity of the postwar years and the rise of the car culture created a leisured, mobile middle class that sought, in Palm Springs, the "good life" that had previously been available only to the wealthy. This surge of visitors and seasonal residents—by 1951 the city's winter population swelled to almost 30,000 from a permanent population of 7,660—coincided with the peak of Modernism's popularity.*

*The population growth accelerated in the 1950s, bringing a demand for civic necessities such as schools, libraries, museums, a city hall and police headquarters, offices, stores, and housing. Palm Springs' growth as a tourist destination brought a demand for inns, resorts, and tourist attractions. Tourism also introduced a demand for affordable second homes for a growing middle class; the construction and financing methods for building such mass-produced housing tracts were already*

*developing in suburban areas of larger cities, including nearby Los Angeles, and found a ready market in Palm Springs. Though Palm Springs was a smaller municipality, this economic climate provided many opportunities for locally-based architects, as well as several Los Angeles architects, to explore and develop a wide range of architectural types and ideas, sometimes influenced by sophisticated global design trends. These conditions and the architects' talents lead to the development of an exceptional group of Modern buildings which later came to be identified as "Palm Springs Modernism" or "The Palm Springs School."*

*The desert climate and casual lifestyle all but demanded unconventional design, and clients were more accepting of, even sought out, a more adventurous style in the resort atmosphere of Palm Springs than they would have in their primary residences. In the two decades after the war, Palm Springs was transformed with new commercial and institutional buildings, custom homes, and a large number of housing tracts.*

## **EVALUATION:**

**CRITERION 1 – Significant Events - The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community:** The Atikian Building is not affiliated with significant events and **does not qualify under Criterion 1.**

**CRITERION 2 – Significant Persons - The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history:** The Atikian Building is not affiliated with significant persons and **does not qualify under Criterion 2.**

## **ARCHITECTURE (Criteria 3 – 6)**

**CRITERION 3 - The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history:** The Atikian Building, completed in 1950, exhibits many stylistic markers which place it directly in the historic context of the "Post-World War II Palm Springs" period. The custom-designed commercial structure represents a prime example of significant Post-war architecture for which Palm Springs is internationally known. As designed by master architect William F. Cody, the structure was an excellent example of the Mid-Century Modern style for which he had become highly respected and sought-after. It is an early example of the gracefully slender steel-framed structures which would mark his later work. Prior to the Atikian Building, Cody's work reflected the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright, with heavy stone masses and forms, and organic materials. The material palette of the Atikian also included organic redwood, but more importantly, exhibited stylistic influences of the International Style. These examples show the diversity of Cody's design skills, that he was able to master a variety of styles with ease. The Atikian Building is an early example of the Modern style of commercial architecture that defines the Palm Springs School. As such, the building may be viewed as an essential component of the historical trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important Modern architecture, i.e., an historical trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. **The structure qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Resource on the local registry under Criterion 3.**

**CRITERION 4 - The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction:** The Atikian Building was built using a steel frame consisting of eight-inch “I” beams. The exterior consists of simple materials such as stone brick, aluminum, glass, and steel. As such, the Atikian Building is noteworthy for its type or method of construction and **qualifies for listing as a Class 1 Historic Resource on the local registry under Criterion 4.**

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

Master architect William F. Cody was widely admired and respected by his peers, many of whom looked up to him as the most talented architectural artist. His work was international, and his influence was felt outside the Coachella Valley. His architectural oeuvre has received renewed attention with the publication of a recent book documenting his life, artistry, and career.

High artistic values may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture. The structure designed by master architect William F. Cody is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up the Mid-Century Modern style. These attributes include a flat-roofed, thin-lined geometric structure; elegantly thin steel supports; horizontal redwood cladding; bold and dynamic stone planters. As a custom structure artfully designed by Cody, this building rises to a master architect's level with high artistic values. Therefore, for its distinctive characteristics representing the Mid-Century Modern style and its high artistic values, **the structure qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource 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 structure **does not qualify under Criterion 6.**

**Criterion 7: (That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to the national, state or local history or prehistory.)** The Atikian Building is not likely to yield information important to the national, state or local history or prehistory. Hence, the structure **does not qualify under Criterion 7.**

**SUMMARY: This evaluation finds The Atikian Building eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Historic Resource under 8.05.070 (C.1.a.) paragraphs (iii, iv, and v) of the local ordinance's seven criteria.**

---

## 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.

### 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 Atikian Building's essential elements of form, plan, space, structures, configuration and style have remained largely intact. Similarly, the structural system; massing; the arrangement of spaces; and the type, amount, and style of detailing have survived with a reasonably large portion intact. William F. Cody's signature elegantly thin-lined steel canopies along Palm Canyon Drive and Arenas Road have been replaced, but were done like-for-like. The large expanses of glass, on both floors, still flood the interiors with natural light. The street-level showcase windows and bold stone planters are extant and in good condition. The original horizontal redwood cladding on the second floor didn't survive the harsh desert weather but has been replaced with horizontal metal cladding replicating the original dimensions, an agreeable alternative.***

### MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a period 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 types of materials and technologies. ***The Atikian Building's materials successfully represent the best of Mid-Century Modern***

***design, with high quality but simple brick, stone, steel, redwood, and glass. Though the redwood cladding was swapped for more durable metal, the same horizontality, massing, and style remain.***

## **WORKMANSHIP**

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a 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 Atikian Building continues to reflect William F. Cody's original as-designed relationship between the structure and site. As is typical of other Cody-designed structures, the Atikian Building was built using high-quality materials, and had an emphasis on the horizontal line. The steel-framed, custom-designed commercial structure uses native granite to root it to the desert. Walls of Roman brick, beautifully executed by expert masons, and contemporary materials like steel, glass, aluminum, and redwood express Cody's forward-thinking modern style.***

## **LOCATION**

Location is the place where a historic property was constructed or the place where a historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understand 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 Atikian Building remains in its original location and therefore qualifies under this aspect.***

## **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 Atikian Building was designed to conform to the existing character of Palm Springs' commercial district, with Cody utilizing natural granite planters to blend his contemporary architecture with the feeling of the desert. Even though the structure is two stories, Cody's emphasis on long, low horizontal lines gives the building a human scale. Thin steel supports with steel overhangs shade the street level, offering passersby a***



*respite from the harsh desert sun and shading the extensive glass walls of the retail shops on the ground floor. The setting of the Atikian Building continues to reflect William F. Cody's original designed relationship of site and structure.*

## **FEELING**

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. 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 Atikian Building is sited on a prominent corner in the downtown commercial district of Palm Springs. The custom-designed contemporary commercial building conveys the feeling of the Mid-Century Modern period for which Palm Springs is internationally known. The Atikian Building has a scale and presence which still blends well into this unique neighborhood. Accordingly, the Atikian Building retains its original integrity of feeling.***

## **ASSOCIATION**

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. For example, a Revolutionary War battlefield whose natural and man-made elements have remained intact since the 18th century will retain its quality of association with the battle. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register. ***The Atikian Building is a fine example of a custom-designed commercial structure by William F. Cody in his signature Mid-Century Modern style. Architectural signatures such as the elegantly thin-lined steel structure, Roman brick, muscular stonework, and large expanses of glass, allows one to recognize the structure as the work of William F. Cody.***

**INTEGRITY SUMMARY:** This integrity analysis confirms that the site and structures of the Atikian Building still possesses seven aspects of integrity. ***Though the Atikian Building has had some relatively minor updates and changes, the key character-defining features that help define the structure as the work of William F. Cody remain. The building represents a successful rehabilitation that respects and honors the essential design features of the past, while bringing the systems and infrastructure up to current standards. In summary, through adaptive reuse, the Atikian Building still possesses a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify for designation as a Class 1 Historic Resource.***

# APPENDICES

## I Owner's Letter of Support

May 18, 2021

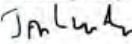
City of Palm Springs  
Historic Site Preservation Board  
3200 Tahquitz Canyon Way  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

Dear Honorable Board,

As the current owner of the Atikian Office Building located at 191 South Palm Canyon Drive, I enthusiastically support the Class 1 Historic Resource 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 contact my representative, Scott Timberlake, at [scottptimberlake@icloud.com](mailto:scottptimberlake@icloud.com).

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
1C0B704A36174A0...

Jane Lundin, Trustee

The Jane Lundin, Trust U/A dated June 16, 1998



### III Building Permits

Date	Owner	Permit Type	Description of Work
1950	M.H. Atikian	Building	Original building permits were not supplied in records request from city of Palm Springs. However ground was broken on the \$75,000 building in April 1950, per <i>Desert Sun</i> .
11.X.55	Atikian	Building	No permit supplied, but <i>Desert Sun</i> reported that Atikian pulled permit to make alterations to an apartment.
12.29.60	M.H. Atikian	Building	No permit supplied, but <i>Desert Sun</i> noted a permit was pulled to repair fire damage.
03.19.62	Nook Gift Shop	Electrical	1 meter loop.
08.25.65	Andrea of Palm Springs	Plumbing	1 sump pump.
08.11.69	Andrea of Palm Springs	Plumbing	Replace evap. Clr. With 4 T gas A.C.
08.26.69	Andrea of Palm Springs	Plumbing	1 sump pump in Building Sewer.
12.18.79	Mr. Atikian	Building	Repair fire damage.
05.02.85	Hrandt Atikian	Building	Permit to carry out demolition for new canopy construction.
06.05.85	Atikian, 999 Green St, SF	Building	Install structural steel canopy along Arenas Rd elevation. Refurbish existing canopy along S. Palm Canyon elevation. Replace wood decking on balcony area of building. Relocate A/C compressor. Ric Harrison, architect; McKinney, contractor.
07.23.85	Atikian	Building	1. Reroute gas service 2. Upgrade electrical service to 4-200 amps and 1-100
11.04.86	Greg Krikorian (married to Pat Atikian, daughter of brother Nabahed)	Building	Strip roof to the plywood, install new roof use 4 layer of felt paper, one felt paper @ 40 – three felt paper @ 15 – with hot tar on top roof apply hot tar and gravel guarantee @ 5 years.
11.26.91	Greg Krikorian	Building	Re-build existing planter.
05.18.92	Greg Krikorian	Building	Remove existing roofing. Install new foam insulating roofing, ICBO 4630.
09.28.94	Maloof	Building	New T bar ceiling and 16 lights.
07.13.95	Atikian	Building	Interior and exterior remodel of art gallery.



07.31.95	Atikian	Building	Non-structural demo permit to prepare for future tenant improvement. No exterior partitions shall be removed.
08.18.95	Atikian	Building	Supplemental to permit #29282. Add t-bar lid and grid. Install track lighting.
08.10.97	Greg Krikorian Christopher S. Mills, architect	Building	Remove existing stairway, install new steel stair.
08.18.97	Greg Krikorian	Building	Replace existing staircase with new. Install light and switch or photocell.
09.15.97	Krikorian	Building Memorandum from Gary Bitterman, Building Official.	<p>At the rear of the Adagio Galleries at the address above, an existing wooden staircase leads from the ground level to the second floor. The staircase rise and run is 8 inches and ten inches respectively. This rise and run complied with the code for the original second floor residential use at the time the building was constructed.</p> <p>Due to the deteriorated state of the wooden stairs, the owner wishes to replace the stairs with steel stairs. Situated very close to the foot of the stairs is a large palm tree and the City right-of-way. Compliance with current code for rise and run would extend the stairs forward so as to require the removal of the tree and encroachment onto the public right-of-way or severe reduction in the size of the required landing at the base of the stairs.</p> <p>A second option would be to install a new switch-back stairs with an intermediate landing. Use of this option would result in the lower portion of the stairway being located closer to the rear property line where opening protection is required, which is prohibited by code.</p> <p>Weighing all the factors involved, it seems more logical to allow the replacement stairs to be constructed with the same rise and run as the original stairs, thereby avoiding an encroachment onto public right-of-way, a</p>

			substandard bottom landing, or construction of additional stairs in the area where opening protection is required.
08.27.07	Eric Ellenbogen	Building	Remove & replace 3 each 4 ton A/C on roof in same place.
03.02.11	John Hadley	Building	Retrofit 19 existing second floor windows with energy efficient – same trim color (bronze aluminum). Same size and location.
03.14.11	John Hadley	Building	Demo carpet, non-supporting partition art walls.
03.16.11	John Hadley	Building	Tenant improvement/interior walls 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor (same tenant, no exterior changes)
04.19.11	John Hadley	Building	Remodel existing offices. Add new accessible bathroom.
05.04.11	John Hadley	Building	Remodel ALL 4 existing bathrooms upstairs to comply with ADA.
05.05.11	John Hadley	Building	Upper level. Framing, new exterior pony wall; 9 additional doors with upgrade style on all 19; west side new retro windows to match; 2 sets of French doors; new gate top of exterior stairs; exterior door lock sets; electrical; drywall; finish carpentry; cabinets. Granite countertops; plumbing; painting; floor coverings; painting exterior and interior.
05.09.11	John Hadley	Building	Demo concrete stairs/form and re pour steps to conform with current code conditions.
05.17.12	Data Unavailable	Building	Install new track lighting.
08.22.19	Lyle Comm Property Mgmt	Building	A/C replacement 5 ton on roof w/ parapet.

## IV Historic Images



*The Atikian Building at left, with Bullock's seen at right. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.*



*Late 1970s photograph shows the Arenas Drive awning had been altered. Courtesy Cathy Cody.*



*Late 1970s photographs courtesy Cathy Cody.*





*Photos by George Aquino, 1980, show the cleanup after the 1979 fire. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.*





*In this 1980 photo following the fire, a later more substantial awning had been installed on the Arenas Road façade near the corner of Palm Canyon. This was later removed. Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society.*

V Contemporary Images – Photos by Author, December 2021



*The east façade along Palm Canyon Drive.*





*The Atikian Building seen from across Palm Canyon Drive.*



*On the Palm Canyon Drive façade, Cody deliberately matched the existing Roman brick on the adjacent building, in size and application, creating a seamless transition.*





*The southeast corner of the Atikian Building, showing the Arenas Road elevation.*



*The corner of the building still has its dynamic stonework and angles.*





*The most dynamic of the stone planters is on Arenas Road. This triangulated hourglass shaped planter continues inside the building, and originally created a platform for a raised area in the showroom. This poorly executed concrete patch is where a door to the basement used to be.*



*The dramatic planter and angled stone wall are the Atikian Building's most interesting feature.*







*This door and stone and aluminum-framed glass wall is where the open stair court used to be. It was enclosed in 2011.*





*This smaller stone planter on Arenas Road was originally between two stores which had angled sawtooth configuration for interest. Those have been replaced by a straight line, with matching stone bases.*



*A new non-contributing staircase near the carport leads to the former apartment of M.H. Atikian, with open balcony.*





*This flagstone paving adjacent to this stone planter is the last remnant of the interesting paving patterns Cody developed for the Atikian Building.*





*Detail of metal awning and supporting post. Cody's design originally had the post and beam meet in a flush configuration.*



*The Arenas Road elevation.*







*The new stair to the Atikian apartment's balcony.*



*From the adjacent parking lot, a view of the back (north) side of the building shows the regular brick construction (vs. the Roman brick selected for the Palm Canyon façade).*



*Contemporary views of the interior.*







*An office facing Palm Canyon Drive.*



*A contemporary view of part of M.H. Atikian's former apartment, with Cody's distinctive angled copper fireplace hood.*



## VI Grant Deed

RECORDING REQUESTED BY:  
WFG Title Company of California

AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:

Jane Lundin  
1400 Pinnacle Court # 411  
Point Richmond Ca 94801

Order No.: 7105826  
Escrow No.: 4200815-SH1  
A.P.N.: 513-143-006-7

DOC # 2013-0515153

10/30/2013 12:46 PM Fees: \$18.00

Page 1 of 2 Doc T Tax Paid  
Recorded in Official Records  
County of Riverside  
Larry W. Ward  
Assessor, County Clerk & Recorder

\*\*This document was electronically submitted  
to the County of Riverside for recording\*\*  
Received by: MGREGSTON

TRA: 011-032

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE IS FOR RECORDER'S USE  
**GRANT DEED**

THE UNDERSIGNED GRANTOR(S) DECLARE(S)

DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER TAX IS \$ 2,090.00

☒ computed on full value of property conveyed, or

☐ computed on full value less value of liens or encumbrances remaining at time of sale.

☐ unincorporated area ☒ City of Palm Springs

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,  
**John W. Hadley and Barbara Anne Hadley, Husband And Wife As Joint Tenants**

hereby GRANT(S) to Jane Magee Lundin, Trustee of the Jane Lundin Trust U/A dtd 6/16/98

the following described real property in the County of Riverside, State of California:

Legally described as: See Exhibit "A" attached hereto

The property more commonly known as: 120 W. Arenas Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262

Dated: August 14, 2013

STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
COUNTY OF Riverside )

On Sept 20 2013 before me,  
Scott Paul Timberlake Notary Public,  
personally appeared John W. Hadley  
and Barbara Anne Hadley

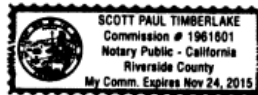
who proved to me on the basis of satisfactory evidence to be  
the person(s) whose name(s) is/are subscribed to the within  
instrument and acknowledged to me that he/she/they executed  
the same in his/her/their authorized capacity(ies) and that by  
his/her/their signature(s) on the instrument the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

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

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

John W. Hadley  
John W. Hadley  
Barbara Anne Hadley  
Barbara Anne Hadley



(This area for official notary seal)

MAIL TAX STATEMENTS AS DIRECTED ABOVE

**Exhibit A**  
**Legal Description**

All that certain real property in the County of RIVERSIDE, State of California, described as follows:

LOTS 27 AND 28 IN BLOCK 20 OF PALM SPRINGS, IN THE CITY OF PALM SPRINGS, COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AS SHOWN BY MAP ON FILE IN BOOK 9, PAGE 432 OF MAPS, IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY.

---

<sup>1</sup> "The Extermination of Ottoman Armenians by the Young Turk Regime (1915-1916)," by Raymond Kevorkian (accessed February 3, 2022: <https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/extermiation-ottoman-armenians-young-turk-regime-1915-1916.html>)

<sup>2</sup> Columbia University. (1924). *Columbia University Bulletin*. New York, NY: Columbia Univ.

<sup>3</sup> "Seek to Attach 'Green Jade Pagoda' in N.Y.," *Chicago Tribune*, January 10, 1934, 1.

<sup>4</sup> "Mdivani Gift Beauty Told," *Los Angeles Times*, June 7, 1935, 6.

<sup>5</sup> "Seek to Attach 'Green Jade Pagoda' in N.Y.," *Chicago Tribune*, January 10, 1934, 1.

<sup>6</sup> "Prince Bilked in Beads For Babs, Says Dealer," *New York Daily News*, October 30, 1934, 295.

<sup>7</sup> "\$40,000 Mdivani Bead Sale Nets Commission of \$180," *New York Daily News*, November 3, 1934, 280; "Chinese Dealer's Big Profit," *Nottingham Evening Post*, Nottinghamshire, England, November 1, 1934, 5.

<sup>8</sup> "Hutton-Mdivani Jadeite Necklace Sells For Record \$27.4 Million," *Forbes Magazine* website, (accessed February 3, 2022: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/anthonydemarco/2014/04/07/hutton-mdivani-jadeite-necklace-sells-for-record-27-4-million/?sh=1b74990c3b11>)

---

<sup>9</sup> "Good News," *Palm Springs News*, January 26, 1950, 1.

<sup>10</sup> "Royal Palm Gallery Newest Local Project," *Desert Sun*, March 24, 1950, 7.

<sup>11</sup> "Objets d'Art at New Galleries," *Desert Sun*, November 25, 1954, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Email to the author from Cathy Cody, April 7, 2022.