

The George and Sadie Gillman Residence, 1948

574 West Mariscal Road

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

November 1, 2021

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Cover illustration: The rehabilitated Gillman Residence. Photograph by Lance Gerber.

CLASS 1 HISTORIC RESOURCE NOMINATION

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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 July 2020, the PSPF board of directors assigned the task of writing the Gillman Residence Class 1 Historic Resource nomination to Steven Keylon.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SIGNIFICANCE:

The residence of Dr. George Gillman and his wife Sadie is in the Chino Mesa Estates neighborhood at 574 West Mariscal Road. The house was designed by Palm Springs architectural designer Herbert W. Burns and is a prime example of one of his custom Late Moderne designs. The Gillman Residence is an important example of a custom modernist structure and exhibits numerous character-defining features that place it within the historical context of 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 Gillman Residence, completed in 1949, 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 private residence represents a prime example of significant Post-war architecture for which Palm Springs is internationally known. As such, the residence may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs’ image as a center of important Modern 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 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 Gillman Residence is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinct features that make up the Late Moderne style. There are few remaining examples of Late Moderne architecture in the Coachella Valley. This home exhibits many character-defining Late Moderne features and is a prime example of the style. As a custom Late Moderne residence designed by Herbert W. Burns, using simple but high-quality materials, it has significance for its distinctive characteristics and qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion iv.

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 architectural designer Herbert W. Burns is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up the Late Moderne style. These attributes include a flat roof; an emphasis on intersecting horizontal lines and planes; stucco walls; unique wall comprised of a box grid filled with obscure glass; Arizona sandstone fireplace pylons and opposing piers; uplit eyebrow soffits over interior doors and windows; and a splayed, asymmetrical layout. As a custom structure artfully designed by Burns, this building rises to a master architect's level with high artistic values. Therefore, for its distinctive characteristics representing the Late Moderne style, as a Master architect's work, and its high artistic values, the residence qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion v.

SUMMARY: This evaluation finds The Gillman Residence 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".
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".
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: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation

Applicant's Address: 1775 East Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 110-195, Palm Springs, CA 92264

Site Address: 574 West Mariscal Drive APN: 504281012

Phone #: (760) 837-7117 Email: srk1941@gmail.com

Zone: _____ GP: _____ Section/Township/Range: _____/X____/X_____

Description of Project:

The Gillman Residence was designed by architectural designer Herbert W. Burns in 1948 for Dr. George and Sadie Gillman. It is today a 5- bedroom, 5-bathroom, 4,700 square foot house, on a nearly 23,000 square foot lot in Chino Canyon, and was designed in 1948.

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: _____
(Refer to the Land Status Map under Tribal Resources on the Planning Department home page)

Construction Date: 1948 Estimated Actual (denote source, i.e. building permits)

Architect: Herbert W. Burns

Original Owner: Dr. George and Sadie Gillman

Common/Historic Name of Property: The Gillman Residence

Other historic associations: N/A

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: Late Moderne

Refer to the Architectural Styles chapter of Citywide Historic Context Statement, under Historic Resources on the Planning Department Home Page: 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. 1
- 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. 2

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.*

1 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.

2 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
Application Information:		
• 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"/>
Historic Resource Report:		
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"/>
Additional Information:		
• 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/>)).

6. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Dr. George and Sadie Gillman Residence, located at 574 West Mariscal Road, was designed by architectural designer Herbert W. Burns in 1948. The custom residence is a prime example of the Late Moderne style, which are rare in the Coachella Valley.

Location

The Dr. George and Sadie Gillman Residence is located at 574 West Mariscal Road.

BACKGROUND/HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Architectural Designer – Herbert W. Burns

The Gillman Residence was designed by architectural designer Herbert W. Burns (1897-1988). Burns was born Herbert William Bromund in Bridgeton, New Jersey to Gustave and Wilhelmina Bromund. He graduated with a degree in electrical engineering and joined his father in the firm Bromund & Son, designing custom lighting fixtures. During World War I, he served in the 472nd Regiment of Engineers, an elite group that made military maps used for combat. There, he learned surveying and drafting, which, combined with his electrical engineering background, would serve him well as an architectural designer later in life.

In 1927, Herbert W. Bromund changed his name to Herbert W. Burns and moved his entire family to Los Angeles. Besides his parents, his family now included a wife Mildred, son Herbert, Jr. and daughter Verna. In Los Angeles, Burns became a successful stockbroker, even after the Stock Market Crash of 1929. He was so successful that in the early 1930s, he bought an airplane and got his pilot's license. Shortly after that, he met a young aviatrix, Gayle Dai Stewart, and a romance blossomed. Mildred filed for divorce and Burns married Gayle Stewart in 1937. Burns once again switched gears and became a building contractor in the Los Angeles area, working until the advent of World War II. After a period teaching young men to fly, after World War II the Burnses decided to move to Palm Springs, where Burns opened an office, offering his services as Palm Springs' only architectural designer (at that time) devoted exclusively to modern design.¹

His first project in the desert was the Town & Desert Apartment Hotel, which opened in late 1947. Burns designed a large living unit for he and Gayle, with wings attached containing self-contained hotel rooms with kitchenettes and bathrooms. Having kitchenettes allowed guests to stay for extended periods, generally without relying on room service or restaurants for their meals. From 1947 until the 1970s, starting with his Town & Desert Apartment Hotel, Burns was in high demand for his architectural services and would design several apartment hotels, commercial structures, and custom residences, typically in the Late Moderne style. Many of these were built in the historic Tennis Club neighborhood, with a group clustered along or near West Arenas Road.

Both Herbert and Gayle Burns were regularly active in civic affairs in Palm Springs, and Burns ran for City Council in 1950, though he lost to incumbent Thomas Kieley. Herbert W. Burns died in Palm Springs in 1988 at age 90.

Herbert Burns' Town & Desert Apartment Hotel, renamed The Hideaway, was named a Class 1 Historic Resource in 2014. Burns' Village Manor Apartment Hotel, now called The Orbit In, was named a Class 1 Historic Resource in 2015. His Crockett Residence was approved as a Class 1 Historic Resource in July 2021.

The Late Moderne Style

Beginning with his Town & Desert Apartment Hotel, Herbert Burns utilized the Late Moderne style for nearly all his built structures. The style was popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s. In contrast to the International Style (exemplified by Richard Neutra's Kaufmann Desert House) and the post-and-beam style, Late Moderne is mellower, with a finer sense of ornamentation. Speaking about the Late Moderne style, architectural historian Alan Hess has said, "Like Streamline Moderne, they emphasized solid volumes, but usually with more sophistication than the idiomatic curved corners of that popular commercial style. Influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright and the vernacular buildings of rural California, they were drawn to natural wood and unpainted brick."²

Late Moderne was influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, with its bold vertical stone pylons and piers and long cantilevered balconies, and his 1930s Usonian Homes, with their dynamic horizontal planes intersecting with contrasting verticals. Wright's rich organic palette of materials that were often indigenous to the site and colors inspired by their surroundings, rooted his designs to their site.

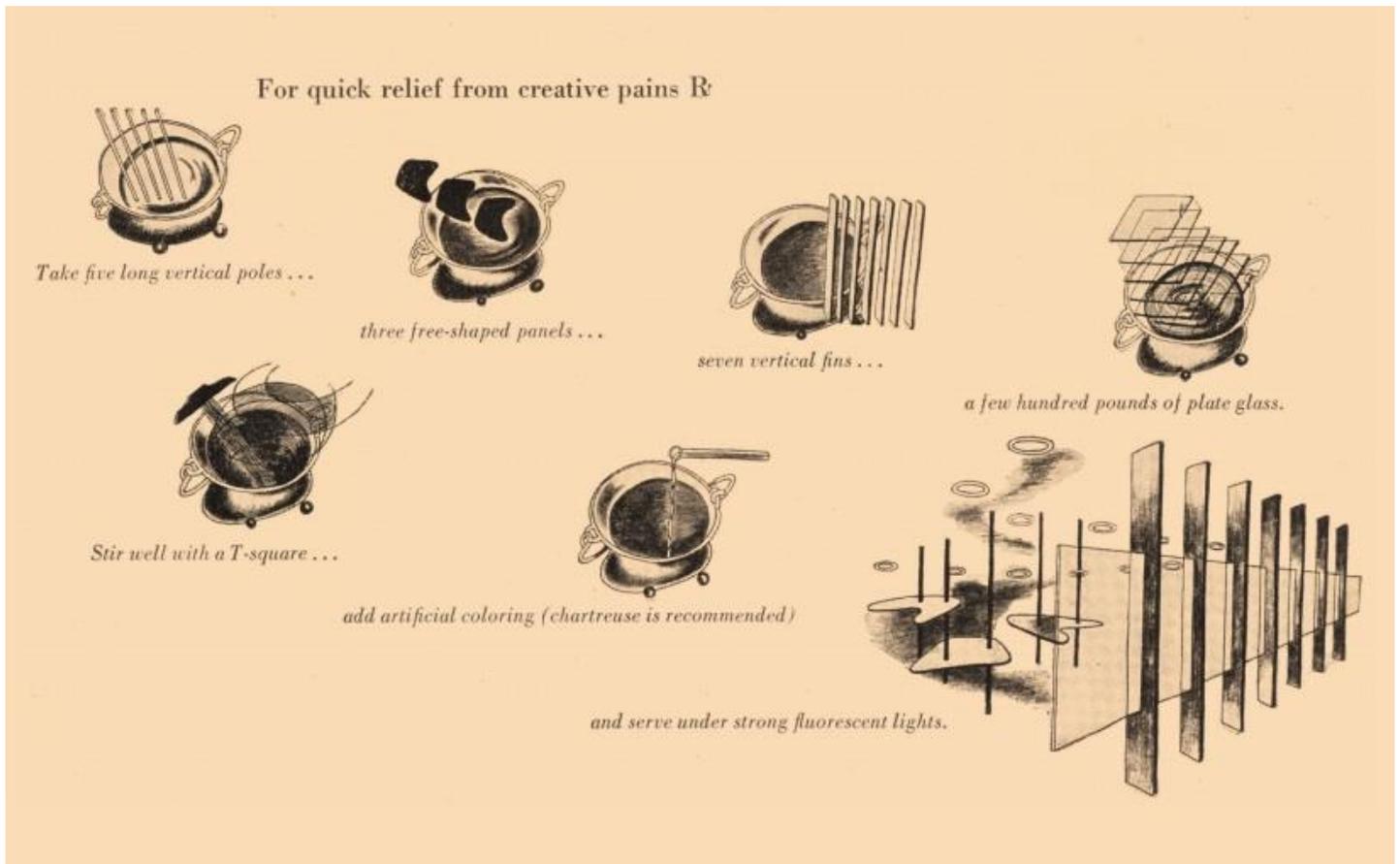
To this, a mix of decorative elements was used to enliven the architecture, some of which were given humorous names by architect Morris Lapidus. These included:

- Vertical steel poles ("beanpoles").
- Biomorphic ceiling coves or trays for indirect light ("woggles").
- Geometric cutouts ("cheese holes").
- Vertical louvers, either in wood or metal.
- Weldtex, plywood sheets striated with an irregular incised texture.
- Long redwood shiplap balconies or planter boxes, tapering down at the end.
- Heavily corrugated architectural glass or asbestos panels
- Bold geometric screens.

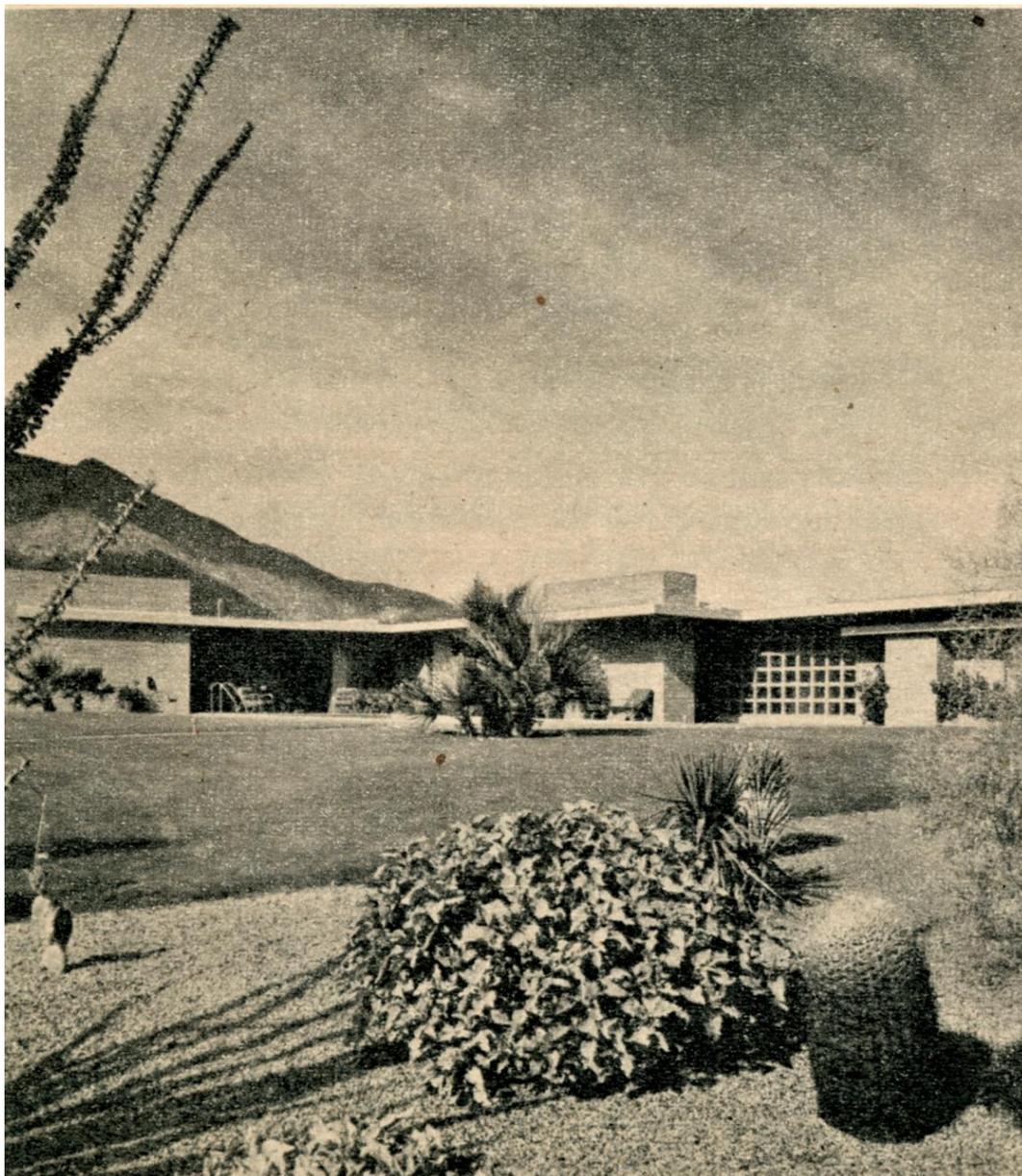
Herbert Burns utilized many of these in his designs, and specifically at the Gillman Residence:

- Long, splayed, horizontal volume organized around Arizona sandstone pylons, piers and planter box.
- Interior cantilevered soffit tray for indirect light.
- Redwood louver detailing.
- Wall of geometric eggcrate grid screen, with fluted obscure glass panels.

NOTE: For more on the Late Moderne style, see the chapter on the subject from the author's book *The Design of Herbert W. Burns*, published by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation in 2018. Section VII, page 61 of this document.



Architect Victor Gruen's humorous "recipe" for a Late Moderne storefront. From "Architectural Record," May 1948.



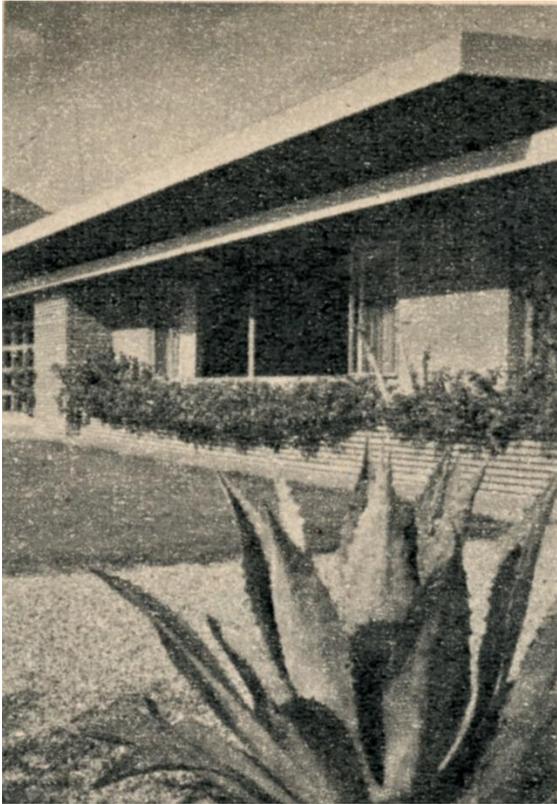
*“Landscaping of the Gillman house features cactus in beds of gravel, oleanders, smoke trees, a close-clipped lawn.”
Original photo caption from the “Los Angeles Times Home Magazine,” 1951. Sid Avery photo.*

**The Gillman Residence, 1948
574 West Mariscal Road, Palm Springs, California.**

Designed in 1948 and completed in 1949, the Gillman Residence is sited on the northwest parcel at the terminus of Mariscal Road in the Little Tuscany neighborhood. Mariscal Road rises into Chino Canyon from North Via Norte, and the large boulders moved to grade for the house remain around the parcel’s perimeter. The property is just over half an acre and Burns sited the splayed “L” shaped house to hug the northwest corner of the parcel, which thereby provided views towards the nearby mountains. Before trees had matured, the site also commanded spectacular views over the Coachella Valley.



"City sophistication combines with simplicity of the desert in this long, low house of stucco, glass, redwood, and flagstone, built around a pool." Photo by Sid Avery, 1950.



Left: An Arizona sandstone pier supports one end of a floating secondary roofline, which levitates over a sandstone planting bed. The roofline terminated on the other side with a series of vertical steel poles. Right: "Front door opens into a hall leading past redwood storage space to bedroom." Note the curved planter, which offered enclosure to the living room, with curved vertical redwood slats above. Photos by Sid Avery for the "Los Angeles Times Home Magazine," 1950.

The Architecture

In 1948, Dr. George Gillman and his wife Sadie bought an empty parcel at 574 West Mariscal Road. Appreciative of good modern architecture, they hired architectural designer Herbert W. Burns to design their new desert home. In July of 1948, Dr. Gillman applied for a permit to build a \$19,000 home.³ When completed in 1949, the house was a relatively large one-bedroom, two-bathroom home with a den adjacent and open to the living room. Burns' design for the home utilized the Late Moderne toolbox of materials and decorative features for which he had become recently well-known in the desert, with his design for the Town & Desert Apartment Hotel. The detailing of the Gillman Residence is some of the finest and most unique of Burns' career.

In a 1951 article about the home in the *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, author Jean Burden wrote, "those who come to the desert from cosmopolitan centers often bring with them a taste for sophisticated surroundings. The house of Dr. and Mrs. George Gillman in Palm Springs is an example of this interweaving of opposites. Elements of stucco, glass and redwood have been fashioned into a smoothly flowing house of long,

low lines, broken by balanced vertical masses of flagstone. Set far back from the road against a mountain silhouette, it encircles a swimming pool with all rooms opening onto the concrete terrace.”⁴

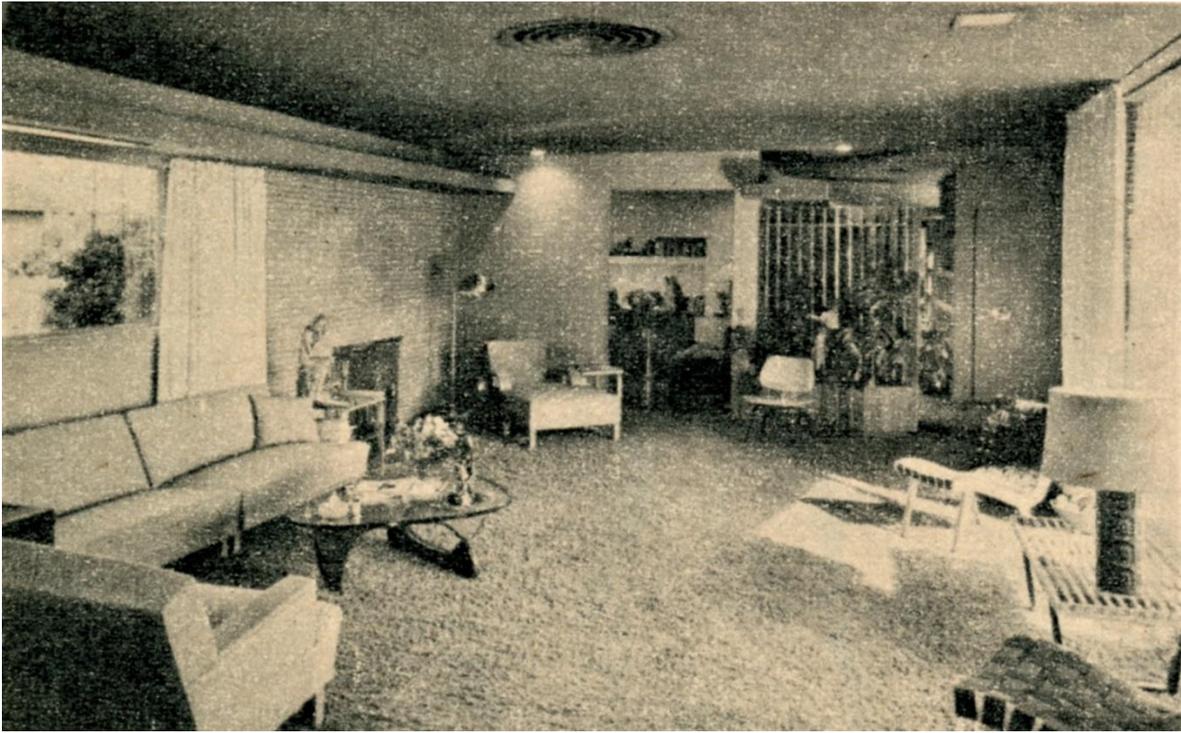
As is typical of other Burns structures, the design of the Gillman Residence is anchored by a series of Arizona sandstone pylons and piers. Opposing sandstone pylons are on the east and south facades, with a sandstone pier and adjacent planting box to the right of the south-facing pylon. This pier supports a long, cantilevered secondary roofline, further emphasizing the horizontality of the low-slung house. This roofline continued over the bedroom windows and was supported by a series of vertical steel poles. On the east-facing façade, the fascia appears to slice the Arizona sandstone pylon, showcasing Burns’ celebrated juxtaposition of vertical and horizontal planes and volumes.

The composition's most dynamic and distinctive touch was a floor-to-ceiling wooden box grid near the front door. Into each opening in the grid, a piece of horizontally fluted obscure glass was placed. Inside, adjacent to this, was a planting bed set into the concrete slab, bathed in soft light. The front door featured a large offset doorknob with a decorative escutcheon.

Another attractive Late Moderne motif was in the exterior dining nook near the kitchen – that featured a ceiling adorned with decorative redwood louvers.

In comparison, the secondary elevations to the west and north are relatively simple, set at rakish angles and sheltered by a deep overhang, with stucco walls pierced by windows and sliding glass doors.

The landscape for the home was designed by O.E.L. “Bud” Graves (1897-1971), a good friend of Burns and a well-known painter and sculptor in Palm Springs, and frequent illustrator for the covers of *Palm Springs Villager* magazine. Graves often created dynamic presentation drawings of Burns’ designs. As described by author Burden, “the landscaping deserves special mention. Inside a low wall of concrete blocks are gravel beds of oleanders, palms and smoke trees. A border of neat lawn around the pool and beds of flowers beneath the glass areas soften the angles of the house.”⁵



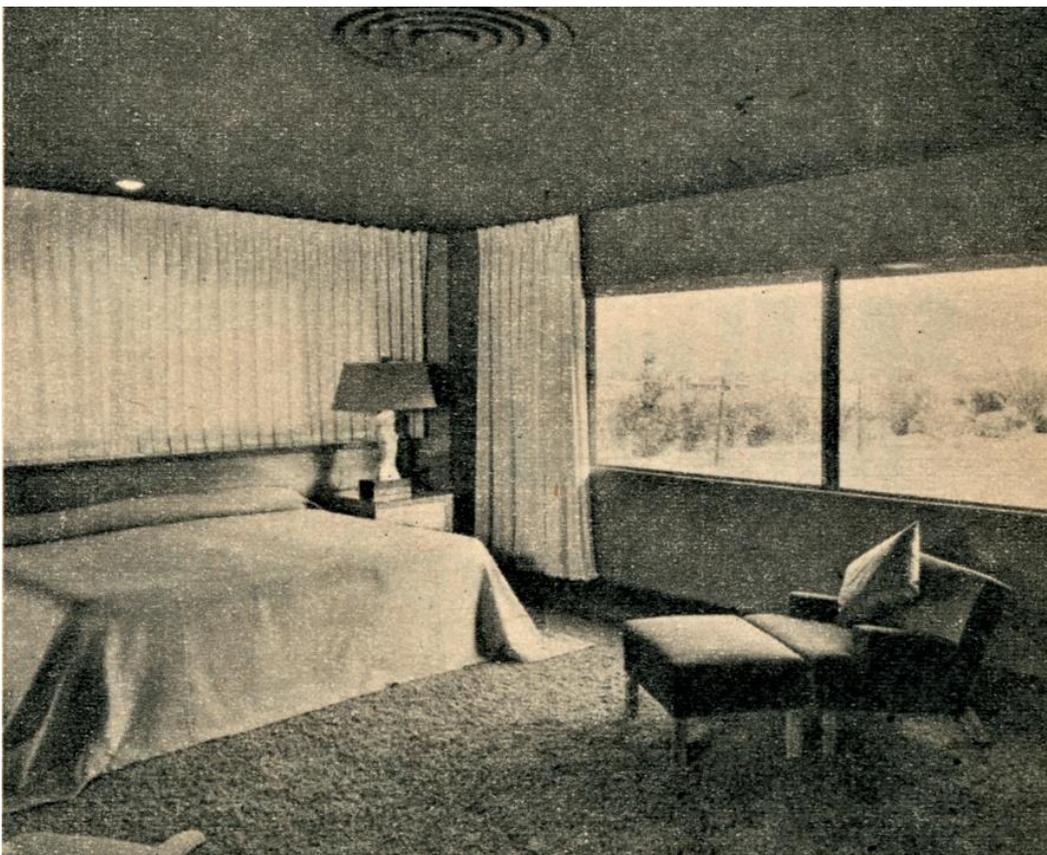
“An aqua easy chair fills corner by the fireplace, sectional sofa is straw yellow. Door at the rear leads into a small oak-paneled den with cork floor.” The room features primarily Herman Miller furniture, designed by George Nelson, Charles and Ray Eames, and Isamu Noguchi. Webbed chairs are designed by Jens Risom for Knoll. Interior designer was Charles Drawbolt of Frank Bros. in Long Beach.



*“Carpet is gray wool turf, webbed chairs are brown; the door at the right, rear, leads to dinette and kitchen.”
Sid Avery photos, 1950.*



"The snack bar separates dinette from yellow kitchen. Note glass brick above sink." Sid Avery photo, 1950.



"Turquoise-covered bed sits against a walnut headboard; walls are turquoise, the carpet gray, the chaise wine" Sid Avery photo, 1950.

Burns, a well-respected color consultant as well as architectural designer, created a palette for the exterior of the home in tones of tan and brown, punctuated by a lively turquoise front door. “In the same tonal harmony as the desert itself, the colors of the interior never detract from the soft shadings of the landscape.”⁶ These colors included neutral shades of clays, browns, and grays accented with sand-yellow, gray-green, and turquoise. The entire house was carpeted in a textured gray wool. The Gillmans worked with interior designer Charles Drawbolt, from the famed modernist showroom Frank Bros. in Long Beach. The furniture selected was drawn primarily from the Herman Miller Furniture Company’s postwar catalog of designs by George Nelson, Charles and Ray Eames, and Isamu Noguchi, classics today.



The Gillman Residence was featured in the January 14, 1951 issue of the “Los Angeles Times Home Magazine.”

Character-Defining Features of the Gillman Residence

Contributing Elements

The Gillman Residence is an exceptional example of a custom-designed Late Moderne house. It exhibits numerous extant character-defining features including:

- Flat-roofed one-story structure.
- Splayed, asymmetrical “L”-shaped layout that hugs the northwest part of the site, maximizing outdoor living space.
- Arizona sandstone pylons, piers, and planting boxes. Arizona sandstone fireplace and interior indoor/outdoor wall.
- Giant box grid with horizontally fluted obscure glass.

- Deep overhangs to protect from sun.
- Burns' signature floating "secondary roofline" supported by sandstone pier.
- Redwood louvered ceiling in outdoor dining porch.
- Cantilevered floating uplit soffits in living room.
- Mature native California *Washingtonia filifera* palm trees.

Non-Contributing Elements

- Aluminum-framed windows and sliding glass doors.
- Drought-tolerant landscaping at the front of the house.



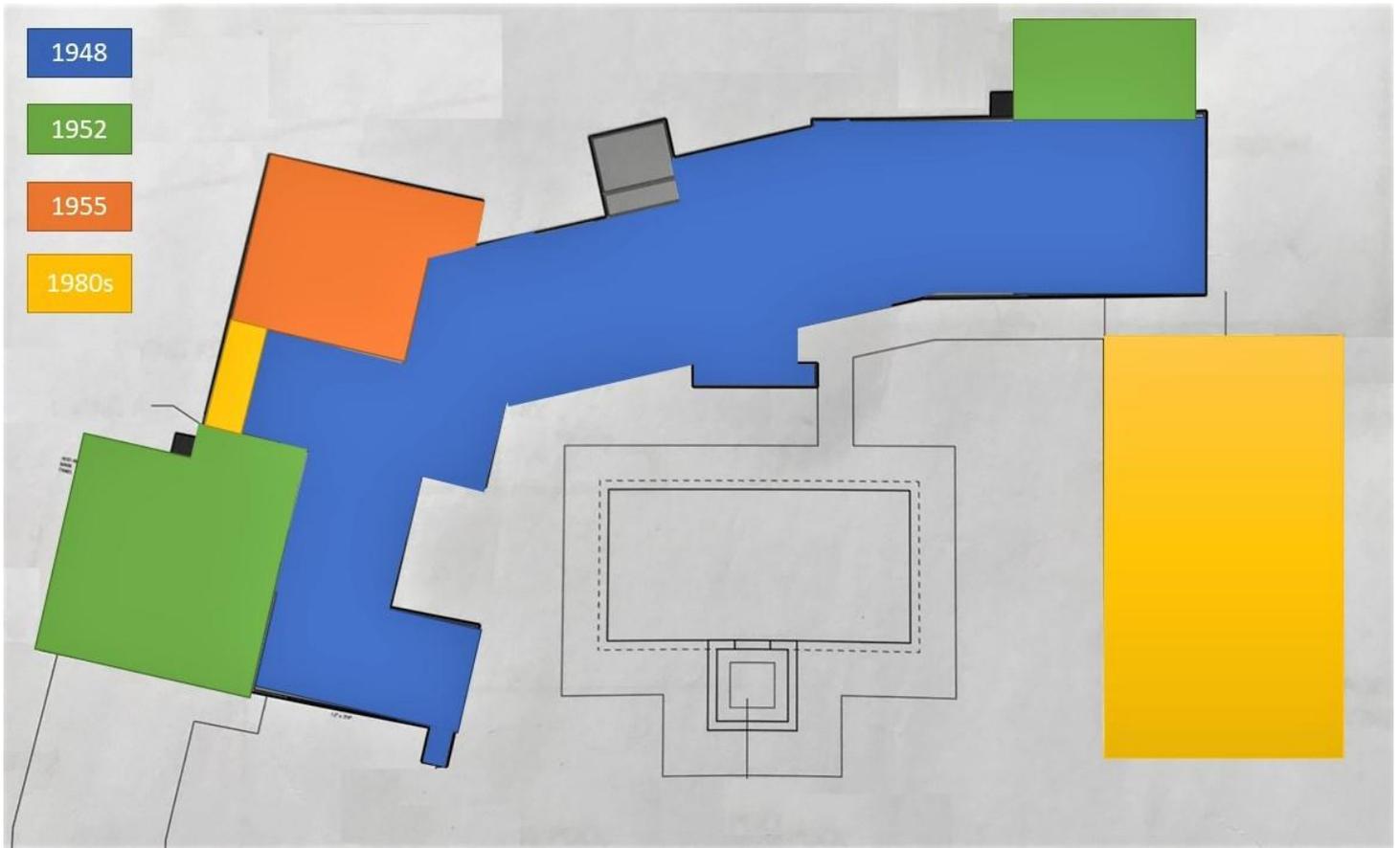
1953 aerial photograph, showing the 1952 bedroom addition to the left of the garage.

Changes Over Time

During the years the Gillmans lived in the home (1949-1968), a few changes took place to expand the home. In 1952, the garage was turned into a bedroom, and a new two-car garage was built adjacent to it. Also, the Gillmans had a sleeping porch added to the north side of their bedroom. In 1955, a large "Play Room" with full bathroom was added to the house's northwest corner, adjacent to the existing living room.⁷ Herbert W. Burns presumably designed these updates – they are compatible with the designs of the original residence and exhibit Burns' signature elements.

In the 1980s, an unpermitted, detached Jazzercise studio was added to the east side of the parcel. This was later permitted. Another 1980s unpermitted modification – a relatively minor expansion of the kitchen - was also later permitted. In addition, an elaborate rock hill, moat with bridge, and arch was built in front of the house along Mariscal Road, obscuring it from the street. This unattractive and incompatible feature was recently removed.

Today, the 4,660 square foot house has five bedrooms and four and a half bathrooms.



This color-coded site plan shows the changes that have taken place at the Gillman Residence. The original 1948 residence is blue, while changes during the period of significance (1948-1968) are represented in green and orange. A Jazzercise studio was added in the 1980s, as well as a relatively minor addition to the kitchen.

First Owners – Dr. George and Sadie Gillman

The couple who commissioned the home were Dr. George Gillman and his wife Sadie. The Gillmans were well-respected leaders of the Jewish community in Palm Springs, and active at the Jewish Community Center, and later, Temple Isaiah. Their donation of \$50,000 ensured that Temple Isaiah was built.⁸

Born in New York on June 16, 1885, to Russian-born parents, little is known about Gillman's early life or education. However, it becomes clear that he was trained as a bacteriologist, with graduate degrees in

pharmacy and chemistry. In the June 10, 1910, issue of the medical journal *Medical Record*, Gillman published "The Principles and Technique of the Wasserman Reaction," a paper describing the Wasserman antibody test for syphilis, developed in 1906 by bacteriologist August von Paul Wasserman. He would publish many other peer-reviewed articles during these years.

Gillman's expertise in the Wasserman Reaction undoubtedly played a role in naming the business he formed, Pacific Wasserman Laboratories. Gillman was director of the San Francisco office, with partners Edward Johnson overseeing the Oakland branch, and Samuel Levin in charge of the Los Angeles office.

xvi

STATE JOURNAL ADVERTISER

An Open Letter to the Profession

<small>SAN FRANCISCO 518 Pacific Bldg. GEORGE GILLMAN, Director Tel. Sutter 530 Night or Emergency Phone Sutter 1524</small>	<small>OAKLAND 412 Physicians Bldg. EDWARD JOHNSON, Director Tel. Oakland 1525</small>	<small>LOS ANGELES 326 California Bldg. SAMUEL LEVIN, Director Tel. Main 7333</small>
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FORMERLY OF THE GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES
CLINICAL LABORATORY EXPERTS

Pacific Wassermann Laboratories

CLINICAL CHEMICAL BACTERIOLOGICAL

December 1st, 1912.

Dear Doctor:

As a fair and liberal minded physician, we beg of you to consider the following facts:

The Pacific Wassermann Laboratories have established laboratories in San Francisco, Oakland and Los Angeles. These laboratories are strictly ethical, complete in every respect and in charge of thoroughly competent men.

Consider that we do nothing but laboratory work and do that thoroughly; that we are well established and have won our well earned success through the confidence placed in us by hundreds of physicians and that we have won this confidence through our competency, accuracy and reliability.

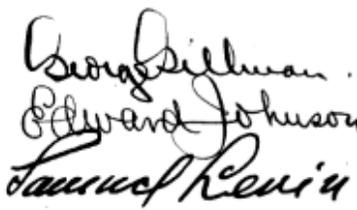
The establishment of our three laboratories under one head offers us unequalled facilities and advantages which enable us to carry out our work on a large scale. This assures you of the most reliable and prompt work for but a reasonable fee.

Our policy has been to make our fees reasonable and within reach of all and to render absolutely reliable reports with the utmost service.

As to our reliability, let it suffice to say that we have had years of experience and training in our specialty and the success of our undertaking speaks for itself.

Asking your support of our worthy cause, we beg to remain

Yours sincerely,
PACIFIC WASSERMANN LABORATORIES



A. M. A. Principles of Ethics.
"It is equally derogatory to professional character for physicians to dispense or promote the use of secret remedies."

Letter published in the State Journal Advertiser in 1913 advertising Pacific Wasserman Laboratories, a company co-owned by Dr. George Gillman.



Sadie Gillman, ca. 1910. From Ancestry.com

In Portland, Oregon on July 5, 1912, Gillman, then twenty-seven, married twenty-year-old Sarah “Sadie” Morris, the daughter of Abraham and Yetta Morris, both Austrian-born, of Portland.⁹ The couple would make their home in San Francisco.

By 1916, Gillman is listed as an Associate Professor of Serology and Vaccine Therapy at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in San Francisco. He would often be called to testify in murder trials as an expert chemist.

In 1928, Gillman formed a partnership with Edwin E. Hutshing and Samuel Levin to form Pacific Health Audit Service in San Francisco.¹⁰ By the middle 1930s, the Gillmans had moved to Los Angeles, where Gillman opened Pacific Medical Laboratories. Enthusiasts of modern architecture, by 1937 the Gillmans lived in Milton J. Black-designed Streamline Moderne apartments at 3530 W. 7th Street, near Wilshire and Western. They would maintain this residence for many years, spending summers there after building their Palm Springs home

in 1948. After World War II, Gillman decided to retire, selling Pacific Medical Laboratories to Sadie's nephew Robert Pfeifer.¹¹

The Herbert W. Burns-designed Gillman residence was completed in 1949, and they were soon active with the local Jewish community. Dr. Gillman was elected to the Board of Directors of the Jewish Center in 1951, turning the first spade at the Jewish Center's addition on May 25, 1951. A dinner was held in the Gillmans honor following the groundbreaking for the new expansion, which was later named "Gillman Hall." They later became primary donors to Temple Isaiah, which architect E. Stewart Williams designed.¹²

In March 1958, the *Desert Sun* reported that Sadie Gillman had been admitted to the Desert Hospital, "seriously ill." She died March 20, 1958.

On September 10, 1958, Dr. Gillman married Yolanda Korda (1913-1996) in Los Angeles. The Gillmans sold the house at 574 West Mariscal in 1968.

Dr. George Gillman died May 6, 1975 in Los Angeles.



*Dr. George Gillman, 1961.
Photo from the "Desert Sun."*



LOCALE OF A DELIGHTFUL cocktail party honoring Alderman Patrick I. Cullerton, of Chicago and his wife was the home of Dr. and Mrs. George Gillman, 574 Mariscal Road. Enjoying the affair in the beautiful living room and cocktail lounge of the Gillman home were: the Alfred Oppenheimers, Edwards Trinzs, Albert Tylers, Joseph Grabiners, Mort Kalisses, Charles Mendelsons and Sydney Mendelson, Garnet M. Sixsmiths, Tom Lauryes and niece, Selma Survant and Clarie Survant. Also present was Father John Dempsey of Buffalo, New York. Pictured above, left to right are: Mrs. George Gillman, Clarie Survant, Mrs. Cullerton, Alderman Cullerton, who is assistant to the Mayor of the City of Chicago, John Ward, chief of the purchasing department of the City of Chicago, and Dr. George Gillman. Cullerton is a winter home owner in Palm Springs. (Desert Sun Photo).

In this photo published in the "Desert Sun" on February 12, 1957, Sadie Gillman (far left) and Dr. George Gillman (far right) entertain in their Herbert Burns-designed home.



Helping to cut the ribbon for the opening of the new branch of Nurses Training Institute are, from left, Joe Walling, president of the Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce; George Gillman, supervisor of the institute; Herb Spurgin from the chamber, and Yolanda Gillman, supervisor.

From the Venice, California "Evening Vanguard," March 24, 1967. Dr. George Gillman is pictured second from left, with second wife Yolanda Gillman at right.

Significant Subsequent Owner



Gary Cockrell (1932-2018)

Gary Allen Cockrell was born December 4, 1932, in St Louis, Missouri. Cockrell was a gymnast and athlete at school, who developed his interest in dance as a teenager after seeing the 1948 film “The Red Shoes.” Moving to New York to learn dance, he was in the 1957 Broadway production of “West Side Story,” and then moved with the show to Great Britain the following year. He left “West Side Story” for an acting role in “Orpheus Descending” and throughout the 1960s was a familiar face on British TV as one of its 'go-to' Americans in the likes of “The Saint” and “The Persuaders” as well as appearing in American films, including “Lolita,” “The Americanization of Emily,” and “The Bedford Incident.”

In 1964 he opened a dance studio in London which he ran for thirteen years until 1977 when it became a health spa. Gary retired from acting and choreography in 1980 to move with his wife Pat to Palm Springs, where they lived at 574 West Mariscal and built a separate dance studio, where he taught Jazzercise and Freestyle Jazz. The couple divorced in 1984. In 1988, Cockrell moved from Palm Springs to the Caribbean Island of St. Lucia, where he opened a hotel and married Marie Thecia in 1989. The Cockrells returned to St. James, Missouri in the mid-1990s to help care for Gary's aging mother. They remained there for well over a decade and ran a small dance studio together during that time. Gary also offered acting and tumbling classes at the studio.¹³ In 2003 they returned to St. Lucia.

Cockrell died in Davenport, Florida, on October 26, 2018.

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 61, 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.

The Design of Herbert W. Burns, by Steven Keylon, Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2018.

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 (*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 Gillman Residence 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 2 – Significant Persons - The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history. The Gillman Residence 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 Gillman Residence, completed in 1949, 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 private residence represents a prime example of significant Post-war architecture for which Palm Springs is internationally known. As such, the residence may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs’ image as a center of important Modern 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 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 Gillman Residence is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up the Late Moderne style. There are few remaining examples of Late Moderne architecture in the Coachella Valley, and this home exhibits many character-defining Late Moderne features and is a prime example of the style. As a custom Late Moderne residence designed by Herbert W. Burns, using simple but high-quality materials, it has significance for its distinctive characteristics and qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource 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: Though the work of Herbert W. Burns possesses a high artistic value, his influence did not extend far beyond the Coachella Valley, therefore the structure does not qualify under Criterion 5(a).

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. The structure designed by architectural designer Herbert W. Burns is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up the Late Moderne style. These attributes include a flat roof; an emphasis on horizontal lines and planes; stucco walls; louvered redwood ceiling; Arizona sandstone fireplace pylons and opposing piers; uplit eyebrow soffits over interior doors and windows; box grid with obscure glass panes; and a splayed, asymmetrical layout. As a custom structure artfully designed by Burns, this building rises to a master architect's level with high artistic values. Therefore, for its distinctive characteristics representing the Late Moderne style, and for its high artistic values, the residence qualifies as a Class 1 Historic Resource under Criterion 5(b).

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 Gillman 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.

SUMMARY: This evaluation finds The Gillman Residence eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Historic Resource under 8.05.070 (C, 1,a) paragraphs 3, 4, and 5b of the local ordinance's seven criteria.

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.

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 Gillman Residence's essential characteristics of form, plan, space, structures, configuration, and style have survived largely intact. Similarly, the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; and the type, amount, and style of detailing have survived with a reasonably large portion intact (minus the addition from the 1980s). Herbert W. Burns' signature Arizona sandstone, used as pylons and piers, are extant or restored. The critical and distinctive decorative wall featuring a box grid with obscure glass panes has been restored. These character-defining features remain intact or have been thoughtfully restored. Two sets of investors very nearly destroyed the Gillman Residence, and much of the interior of the house was gutted. However, the rehabilitation thoughtfully restored the missing key character-defining features that help immediately distinguish the structure as the work of Herbert W. Burns.*

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 Gillman Residence's materials successfully represent the best of Late Moderne design, with high quality but simple stucco, sandstone, wood, and glass.*

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 Gillman Residence continues to reflect Herbert W. Burns' original as-designed relationship between the structure and site. The custom-designed home uses materials to root it to the desert—bold monoliths of Arizona sandstone, beautifully executed by expert masons; contemporary materials like obscure glass, stucco, steel express Burns' forward-thinking contemporary 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 Gillman Residence 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 Gillman Residence was designed to conform to the existing character of the Chino Mesa Estates neighborhood, with Burns utilizing natural Arizona sandstone detailing to blend his contemporary architecture with the feeling of the desert. The long, low horizontality and colors inspired by the colors found at the site helped the structure fit naturally into their surroundings, contrasting with the mountains and large boulders. The setting of The Gillman Residence continues to reflect Herbert W. Burns' 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 Gillman Residence is sited on a large lot in the Chino Mesa Estates neighborhood, which takes advantage of panoramic mountain views to the south, east, and north. The custom-designed home in the Late Moderne style conveys the feeling of the mid-century modern period for which Palm Springs is internationally known. The Gillman Residence has been restored to convey Herbert W. Burns' stylishly informal and contemporary design, which still blends well into this unique neighborhood. Accordingly, the residence 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 Gillman Residence is a fine example of a custom-designed home by Herbert W. Burns in his signature Late Moderne style. Architectural signatures such as the secondary roofline, Arizona sandstone piers and pylons, and bold box grid wall with obscure glass panes, allows even the most casual observer to recognize the home as the work of Burns instantly.*

INTEGRITY SUMMARY: This integrity analysis confirms that the site and structures of the Gillman Residence still possesses seven aspects of integrity. *Though the Gillman Residence suffered near demolition, the key character-defining features that help define the home as the work of Herbert W. Burns have either been restored or replicated. The home represents a successful rehabilitation which respects and honors the essential design features of the past, while bringing the systems and infrastructure up to current standards. The home could have easily been remodeled into oblivion, but the rehabilitation by Jackie Thomas and DeeAnn McCoy of Thomboy Properties sought to thoughtfully honor the original design by architectural designer Burns wherever possible, ensuring that one of his most important designs would live on in its current life. In summary, through adaptive reuse, the residence still possesses a degree of integrity sufficient to qualify for designation as a Class 1 Historic Resource.*

APPENDICES

I Owner's Letter of Support

March 2, 2021

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

Dear Honorable Board:

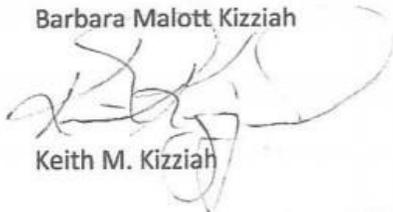
We are thrilled to have bought the house at 574 W. Mariscal Road, designed by Herbert Burns in 1948 and recently restored to its original glory in 2020 by Thomboy Properties. We are delighted to support the Class 1 Historic Site designation of our property by the City of Palm Springs. We have asked the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, and Vice President Steven Keylon in particular, to assist us in the preparation of the required nomination paperwork and are most grateful for their efforts on our behalf.

Please reach out directly to us for any reason. We can be reached at 312-882-1128.

Sincerely,



Barbara Malott Kizziah



Keith M. Kizziah

Property Address	574 W MARISCAL RD PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262
Assessment No. (PIN)	504-281-012
Acreage	0.52
Legal Description	
LOT 12 MB 020/058 CHINO MESA ESTATES Lot 12 Subdivision Name CHINO MESA ESTATES	

IV Chain of Title

Primary sources show the chain of ownership for the Gillman Residence as follows (note that the 1948 sale of the parcel was not included with the chain of title):

- 09-04-56 George Gillman, a married man, to George Gillman and Sadie Gillman, husband and wife as joint tenants.
- 03-18-68 George Gillman to Lecam Land Developments, Ltd.
- 03-03-69 Lecam Land Developments, Ltd., a corporation, to Lloyd T. Campbell and Elsie C. Campbell, husband and wife as joint tenants.
- 03-07-73 Lloyd T. Campbell and Elsie C. Campbell, husband and wife, to Eugene Clifford Finch and Joyce D. Finch, husband and wife as joint tenants,
- 12-19-80 Eugene C. Finch and Joyce D. Finch, as joint tenants, to Pico Rental Company. (Gary Cockrell)
- 07-31-87 California Federal Savings and Loan Association, to MCCI-I, A California Limited Partnership (There appears to be a gap in the chain between Gary Cockrell and California Federal).
- 08-26-88 MCCI-I, a California Limited Partnership, to Morgan D. Peterson and Phyllis J. Peterson, husband and wife as joint tenants.
- 02-27-94 Morgan D. Peterson, to Morgan D. Peterson (Affidavit – Death of Spouse; Phyllis Peterson died January 27, 1994).
- 10-01-99 Morgan D. Peterson, a Widower, to Morgan D. Peterson, or his successor, as Trustee Of The Morgan D. Peterson Living Trust.
- 05-23-03 Morgan D. Peterson, Trustee of the Morgan D. Peterson Living Trust, to Morgan D. Peterson, widower.
- 12-23-16 Morgan D. Peterson, a widower, to Nelco Properties, LP, a California Corporation
- 10-05-17 Nelco Properties, LP to 574 Mariscal, LLC.
- 02-01-18 574 Mariscal, LLC, a Wyoming LLC, to 574 Mariscal Fund, LLC, a Wyoming LLC.
- 03-12-19 Geraci Law Firm, a Trustee (Foreclosing Beneficiary) to WRCOG Asset Trust 2017-2
- 06-21-19 WRCOG Asset Trust 2017-2 to Thomboy Properties, Inc.

V Building Permits

Date	Owner	Permit Type	Description of Work
06-17-48	Geo Gillman	Electrical	Temporary service
07-02-48	Mr. and Mrs. Geo Gillman	Building	Dwelling – 5 room – frame & stucco – garage – comp roof. Total value of work \$19,000
07-09-48	Mr. & Mrs. Geo Gillman	Plumbing	1 bathtub; 1 gas outlet; 3 lavatories; 1 laundry tray; 2 showers; 1 sink; 3 toilets; 2 water heaters
10-01-48	Mr. & Mrs. Geo Gillman	Building	Paddock Engineering – 17 x 34 swimming pool
10-01-48	Dr. Geo Gillman	Plumbing	Paddock Engineering – 1 cesspool; 1 water piping
06-28-49	Dr. Gillman	Electrical Installation	124 outlets; 42 fixtures; 1 heater; 1 range
03-11-51	Dr. G. Gillman	Electric Installation	3 outlets; 3 light fixtures
02-26-52	Mr. & Mrs. Geo Gillman	Building	Addition to dwelling: Convert garage to bedroom and add 2 car garage and add sleeping porch
03-11-52	Gilman	Electrical Installation	12 outlets; 3 fixtures
04-09-52	Mr. & Mrs. Geo Gillman	Plumbing	1 gas outlet; 1 gas piping
10-07-55	Geo Gilman	Building	Add bedroom and bath; frame and stucco; compo roof. Arthur Coffey contractor
10-17-55	Gilman (Coffey)	Plumbing	1 lavatory; 1 shower; 1 sink; 1 toilet; 1 water piping
12-16-55	Dr. Gilman	Plumbing	1 cesspool; 1 sewer piping
03-08-57	Dr George Gilman	Building	Covered patio: addition of a covered patio, frame const., fibre glass roof. Bel Air Engineering, Contractors
05-06-77	Fred Elg	Electrical	1 meter relocate
11-15-77	Fred Elg	Plumbing	Replace gas line
01-16-78	Fred Elg	Sewer	Connect sewer
08-15-86	Gary Cockrell	Violation Letter	Dance studio building addition unpermitted and in violation of building code.
09-13-88	Mr. and Mrs. Peterson	Electrical	Electrical Load Calculations.
10-12-88	M.D. Peterson	Building	Remove west wall of kitchen for kitchen expansion. Relocate kitchen sink and window. Install dishwasher and trash compactor. Replace existing water heater with model to be approved. William J. Diggs Enterprises.
10-27-88	Morgan D.	Building	Permit to carry out corrections listed on resale

	Peterson		inspection report dated June 6, 1986, for guest house on east side of property, built without permit. Code Compliance File #8604-30.02. Guest house approved without kitchen. Guest house noted at 1125 square feet.
11-15-88	Mr. Peterson	Building	Remove existing roof over main house and reroof with urethane foam per contract. Replace kitchen cabinets and change out sink and dishwasher in same location.
03-16-89	Morgan D. Peterson	Building	Install solar heating system for swimming pool.
01-25-91	Phyllis Peterson	Building	Construct foot bridge in front yard to span pond. Alter roof layout of decorative spandrel adjacent to pond. No electrical, plumbing, or mechanical work included with this permit.
12-07-92	Morgan Peterson	Building	Replace 2 air conditioning and heating in equipment room. Not rooftop replacement.
12-28-17	n/a	Building Code Violation Correction	Letter from city of Palm Springs documenting that the building code violation filed August 22, 1986 has now been corrected, and no violation now exists.
02-27-18	Down Kicker	Building	Full remodel to reconstruct layout of residence; addition of a new laundry room, create 2 new bathrooms and relocate kitchen and utility rooms; remodel casita to include creating new theater all within footprint of existing residence.
02-27-18	Down Kicker	Building	Demolish existing decking around swimming pool.
08-29-19	Thomboy Property Inc.	Building	Revision to permit 2018-759. New plan to supercede previous plan and permit. Full remodel of residence to include laundry room addition and water heater closet addition. Laundry 44 S.F. Water heater closet 14 S.F. Add separate ¾ gas line to fire pit.
08-29-19	Thomboy Property Inc	Building	Non structural demo for plan check 2019-3439 to remodel, kitchen, baths, BR, addition of laundry room.
09-26-19	Thomboy Property Inc	Building	HVAC change out 3 splits/1 pkg.
11-18-19	Thomboy Property Inc	Building	REVISED: Install 5' high perimeter walls around front property lines, using city garden wall detail, observing 30' corner cutback, install 4' high retaining wall with 5 decorative iron on top along north property line using city detail. Walls on the inside of property line per licensed city survey.
12-11-19	Thomboy Property Inc	Building	Add new spa to existing pool per attached engineering and replacing pool equipment.

V Supplemental Description

1980s: Owner Gary Cockrell's modifications

During the years dancer Gary Cockrell and his wife lived at 574 West Mariscal, they made significant changes without first obtaining building permits. In a three-page violation letter dated June 24, 1986, to owner Gary Cockrell, the city of Palm Springs claimed that in a resale inspection, a number of serious violations had been identified. These included:

- The 1,125 square foot dance studio was built without permits. The city said that provisions for an inspection must be provided, and plans and a building permit will be required. The west wall of the dance studio was noted to be below grade, and exhibited water damage. Inadequate electrical outlets had been installed, the air conditioner compressor pad was not large enough to support the unit.
- On the south side of the parcel, along Mariscal: Stone pillars, wading pond, stone retaining wall. The letter claimed the structures were built without the proper building permits, and due to the lack of verification of structural requirements, the structures will need to be removed. Specific violations noted were:
 - Electrical wiring for the waterfall built without permit and must be removed.
 - A gas line had been installed along the bottom of the wading pond to a barbecue. It didn't meet code and must be removed.
 - Stone steps leading to the top of the waterfall are not to code.
 - Wooden bridge and steps installed over the pond are not structurally adequate, and must be removed.
- Patio cover around the pool perimeter: A lightweight shade structure with a fiberglass roof had previously been granted a building permit. The letter documented a violation, whereby this lightweight structure had been altered with the addition of a stucco soffit, permanent roof covering, and stairs for access. A mist system powered by an extension cord was also noted. "The patio cover must be restored to its original condition and the steps removed."
- Room addition at northeast corner of the building: required six-inch clearance for wood above grade not observed; exposed romex wiring on exterior; window sill heights are in excess of 44 inches above the floor (precludes their use as bedroom); insufficient number of electrical outlets; 2x4 rafters are overspanned and exhibit water damage. It is recommended room be removed, as no permits were obtained and too many repairs would be needed to meet code.
- Lattice structure, fountain and spa at northwest corner of building: All were installed without permits.
- Greenhouse on west side of building: Constructed without permits, and outside of required setbacks. Must be removed.
- Mechanical equipment enclosure installed within setback, must be removed.
- Forced air unit closet on north side: Romex wiring must be installed within conduit; rafter cut when installing ductwork; unprotected iron gas piping installed [sic] buried directly in earth. Must fix.

- Roof area: Interior water damage indicates roof is not weathertight; ductwork on rooftop and installation of west greenhouse was creating water ponding on roof; permits for installation of ductwork across roof have not been verified. All must be alienated. [sic]
- Kitchen area: exterior kitchen wall extended toward greenhouse by approximately four feet, without permit. Extension cord wiring installed into this area and greenhouse. Exposed Romex wiring installed on the kitchen side of old wall. Framing at the opening is in question. The extension must be reconverted to its original condition.

2016-2019: Proposed Demolition

NELCO PROPERTIES, LP (2016-2017)

On December 23, 2016, Morgan D. Peterson, who had lived at 574 Mariscal since 1988, sold the home to Nelco Properties, LP, a California corporation led by “entrepreneur” Curtis Nelson, who flipped houses using money from assorted investors. The house was sold off the market for \$750,000. Shortly thereafter, demolition crews began dismantling the interiors of the home.

While researching my book about Herbert Burns, I monitored 574 Mariscal because of the terrible condition it was in. When I realized in February 2017 that the house had quietly changed hands, I drove over to see if anything was happening. I was concerned that a new owner might not appreciate the home’s architectural history. Finding no one there, I went in and took photos of the progress of the interior demolition. Several of Burns’ signature features, like the floating soffits, had been ripped out. Giant red “X”s had been spray-painted on the pylons of Arizona sandstone, indicating that they were targets of future demolition. However, other key details remained extant, such as the eggcrate grid wall of obscure glass. It was clear that Burns’ design was going to be erased. Later, I spoke to the man in charge of the demolition and explained to him the significance of the house. I asked what the new owners were intending. He said that the new owner had been informed that Herbert Burns had designed the house and was aware of the apartment hotels Burns had designed in the Tennis Club. But he said that the new owner’s intent was to create an “authentic 1960s Palm Springs Rat Pack style house,” and that he “hoped it would get into *Palm Springs Life*.”

After this first round of gutting the interiors, the work stopped, and the house sat empty and vulnerable, which caused concern to the neighborhood, as the site wasn’t fenced, and homeless people began camping out there. The neighbors had every reason for concern, as evidenced by Nelco’s other shady business practices at a similar property in San Diego.

At this same time, Nelson and his company Nelco were in the process of doing “fix-and-flip” jobs at several other properties, most notably a home in the Ocean Beach neighborhood of San Diego at 2269 Ebers Street. Neighbors there began to complain when safe environmental practices weren’t being followed with asbestos abatement, while another three-story house began to be built elsewhere on the parcel.”¹⁴

The complaints about improper demolition practices weren’t the only problem with the house, as concerned community members discovered. As reported in the *San Diego Reader*, “experienced developers are often able to leverage other people’s money to fund their projects. That money, though, often comes at a high cost

in the form of interest rates of 10 percent or more, compared to common conventional rates in the mid-4 percent range. Still, borrowing 147 percent of a home's sale price is approaching exceptional, and we're just getting started."¹⁵ It isn't uncommon for "fix-and-flip" developers to take high-interest, short-term loans (usually due at the end of one year) to complete work on a speculative remodel. As the *Reader* reported, "It's assumed that in this time a prudent developer will be able to acquire a property, draw plans, pull permits, complete a rehab, and re-sell the home, paying off the loan at the close. The developer usually makes only the interest payment during this time (unless payments are deferred entirely), but once the loan term is up the entire balance and any back interest is due and payable all at once. The industry term for this is a "balloon payment." By the time the first year ran out, the Ebers project was far from complete"¹⁶

At 574 Mariscal, after initially purchasing the home for \$750,000 on December 23, 2016, Nelson took out a \$950,000 commercial loan against the house, in addition to another that same day for \$440,000. He received his first Notice of Default on October 18, 2017.

Because of his failure to complete the various "fix-and-flip" projects he had going (including 574 Mariscal), Curtis Nelson of Nelco had his license suspended "for failure to comply with an Arbitration Award. The suspension occurred on March 23, 2017."¹⁷

The house at 574 Mariscal continued to sit, mostly gutted and vulnerable to vandalism or fire.



The photos on the following pages were taken by the author on February 9, 2017. The interior of the house had been mostly gutted, and red "X"s were painted on features to be demolished. Many of the house's key features on the exterior were still extant. The pool was full of algae, and the unattractive and elaborate rock-covered landforms, arch, pool and moat with bridge were intact.



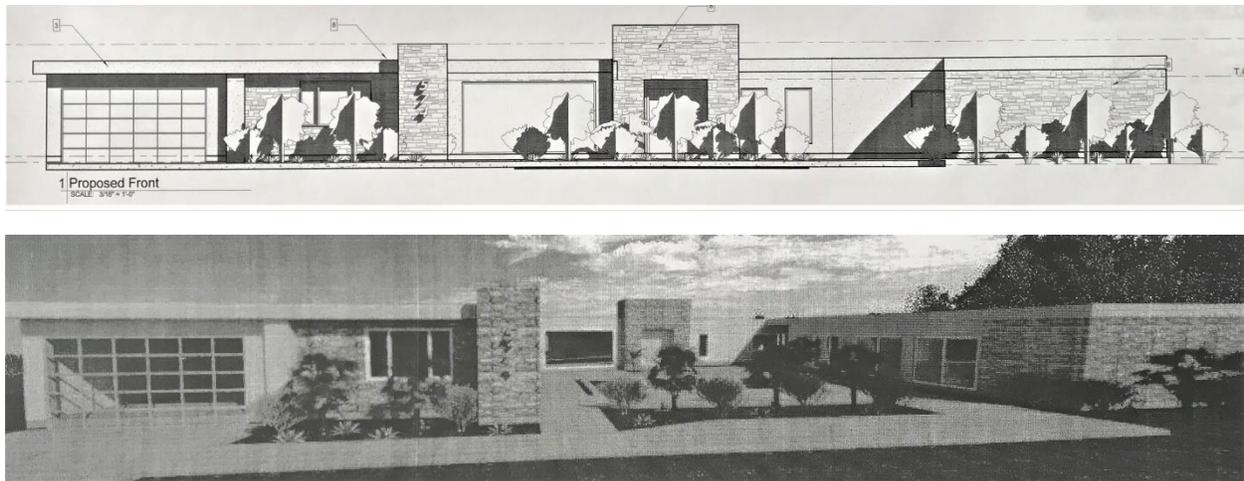


DOWNKICKER INVESTMENTS, INC. (2017-2019)

The five “fix-and-flip” projects around Southern California that Nelco Properties had started work on sat in limbo for most of 2017. In October of that year, Tracy Smith, CEO of Downkicker Investments Inc., a San Francisco-based development company, was asked to review Nelco’s dire situation. Smith soon realized that Nelco had misappropriated funds, and the projects were already in the beginning stages of foreclosure, which put all of the investors at risk of losing everything they had invested. Smith worked with Paradyme Funding (the original funding broker for the Nelco projects) and worked with each individual investor to form a plan for Downkicker to take over the projects, saving them from the certain loss that the foreclosures would have caused.¹⁸ Speaking about one of the properties saved from foreclosure, Smith noted that Nelson had “borrowed an additional 200-300 thousand against the project even after the project had halted and was failing.”¹⁹

Nelco Properties turned over 574 Mariscal in a Quitclaim Deed on October 5, 2017, after which investor Smith formed “574 Mariscal Fund LLC.”²⁰ On February 13, 2018, 574 Mariscal Fund LLC took out a commercial loan for \$1,045,000.

Downkicker created plans to take the nearly-gutted property and developed a new façade, using Everett Smith, a Perris engineer. This design would have obliterated what was left of the Burns design, with “big box” store imitation stacked stone (replacing the authentic Arizona sandstone), including a bold central portal in the middle of the primary façade.



Renderings of Downkicker’s proposed remodel of 574 West Mariscal. These were approved by the Palm Springs Planning Department.

At this stage, more demolition took place to prepare for the reconstruction of the home. All the obscure glass panes were removed from the eggcrate wall near the front door, and the Arizona sandstone wall inside was removed. The extensive and badly done rockwork pond, streams, bridge and portals were demolished and removed, which reestablished the house’s relationship with the street. In June 2018, the plans for the

home were conditionally approved by the city of Palm Springs. However, work halted in the fall of 2018, leaving an entirely gutted shell which was left unfenced, prone to vandalism, with neighbors reporting fires being built inside by homeless people. In November 2018, 574 Mariscal Fund LLC was served with a Notice of Default. The house was sold March 19, 2019, in a foreclosure sale and transferred to the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG).

After the Palm Springs City Council passed a resolution whereby citizens could report blighted properties on the city's website, concerned neighbors began to report the deplorable conditions at 574 Mariscal. I submitted a few complaints and was told that the city attorney was in contact with the property owners. Very shortly after that, on June 14, 2019, the gutted house was listed for sale "as-is" at \$875,000. According to *Wallpaper* magazine, "It was total fate that Thomboy Inc. found the property after a tip-off from a local realtor, and they made an offer after 30 minutes of seeing it."²¹ Four days later it was in escrow, and sold to Thomboy Properties on June 21, 2019, for \$1,005,000.



The mostly gutted house as offered for sale in June, 2019.



Photos of the Gillman Residence at the time Thomboy Properties, Inc. purchased the home in June, 2019.

THE REHABILITATION/RESTORATION

THOMBOY PROPERTIES, INC.

Jackie Thomas and DeeAnn McCoy of Thomboy Properties are well-known in the Coachella Valley for their rehabilitations of architecturally significant homes. Though their projects often start with a house in good but somewhat rundown condition, the completely gutted state of 574 Mariscal would prove to be a challenging change for them.

Because they intended to restore the important Herbert Burns character-defining features that the previous investors had stripped, they asked if I would help consult on that aspect of their rehabilitation. To get the details right, Thomas and McCoy measured extant original character-defining features from my own house, as well as from several other Burns-designed apartment hotels in the Tennis Club. Some of the Burns features that had been removed from the Mariscal house – either during the demolition, or before – that were restored or replicated, include:

- The obscure glass wall near the front door.
- An Arizona sandstone pier supporting a secondary roofline.
- Extension of roof fascia which intersects Arizona sandstone pylon on east façade.
- Arizona sandstone planter on south façade near garage.
- Redwood louvered ceiling in dining patio outside.
- Original color on front door.
- Swimming pool tile was restored, and original pool shape and configuration maintained, with new spa added adjacent.
- Sandblasted remaining Arizona sandstone features to restore natural color.
- An Arizona sandstone wall on the interior of the entry hall.
- Uplit curved floating soffit in living room.

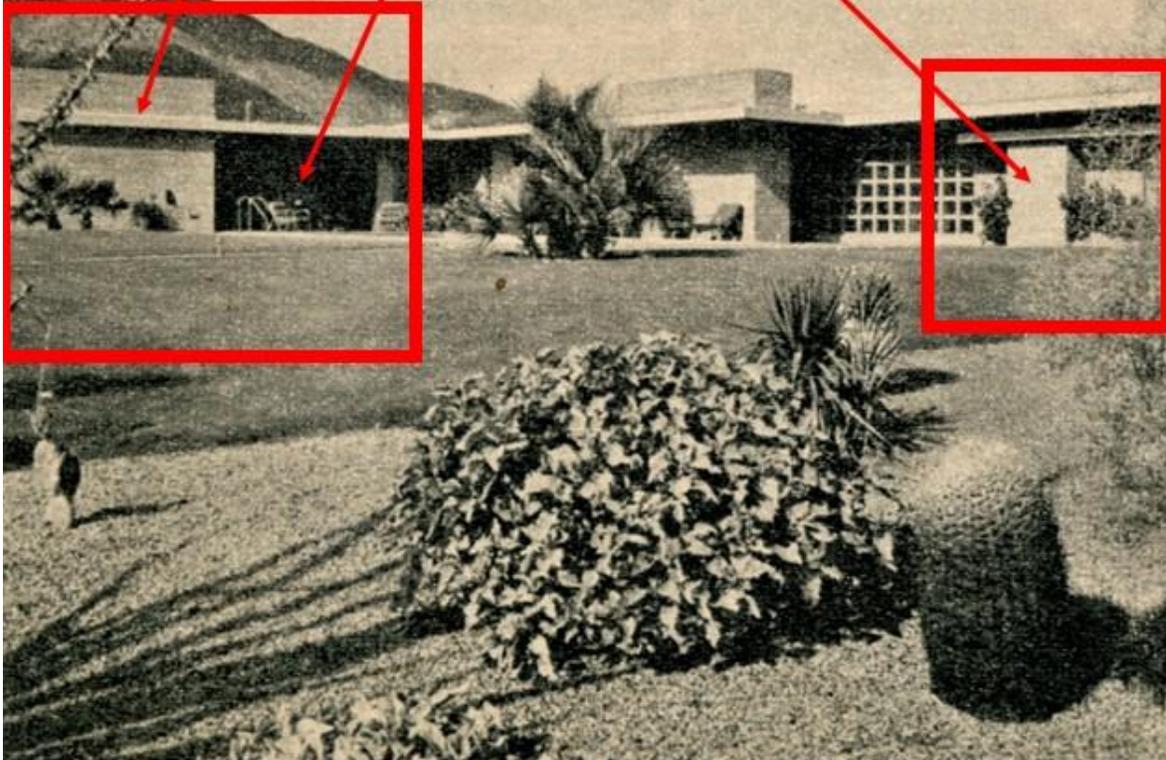
Because the existing steel casement windows had been removed before they took ownership, high-quality aluminum-framed windows and sliding glass doors were used. Terrazzo floors were poured in the public rooms of the main residence, and the former dance studio was turned into a two-bedroom guest house. A block wall (similar to the concrete block wall that originally enclosed the house, though taller) was built to enclose the property, and a new landscape was created by landscape designer Paul Ortega, which references the original design by O.E.L. Graves. This features panels of grass near the swimming pool, and drought-tolerant desert plants in decomposed granite beyond.

The completed home received much attention and press and was the Showcase Home for Modernism Week 2020, and the home's restoration was featured in the Spring 2021 issue of *Atomic Ranch* magazine.

Floating fascia over sandstone pylon was removed during demolition, but restored.

Open air dining patio with redwood louvered ceiling was restored

Sandstone pier supporting secondary roofline was removed at some point and turned into a door. The original configuration has been restored.



Restored Features of the Gillman Residence

BOX GRID AND OBSCURE GLASS DECORATIVE WALL



The distinctive box grid wall near the front door still had its obscure glass when I photographed the house in February 2017.



By the time Thomboy Properties bought the home, the horizontal muntins and obscure glass panes had been removed, leaving only the vertical supports. Photos taken July 9, 2019, as work was beginning on the restoration of the home. From left, Jackie Thomas, the author, and DeeAnn McCoy. Author's photos.



The restored box grid and obscure glass decorative wall. Each pane of glass had to be individually measured and cut, as the sizes varied. Author's photos.

ARIZONA SANDSTONE PIER SUPPORTING SECONDARY ROOFLINE



Top: In this February 2019 photo, the secondary roofline had been recently demolished. This was originally supported by one of Herbert Burns' distinctive Arizona sandstone piers, but that feature had been removed in the past and turned into a doorway.

Bottom: During the restoration, this missing feature was identified as an important character-defining feature to restore. Author's photos.

ROOFLINE EXTENSION INTERSECTING THE ARIZONA SANDSTONE PYLON



Left: In February 2017, the roofline extension was still extant. By the time the house was sold in 2019, that distinctive Burns featured had been removed. It was identified as an important feature to be restored. Author's photos.



The restored roofline extension. Photo courtesy Lance Gerber.

ARIZONA SANDSTONE PLANTER ON SOUTH FAÇADE



In this February 2019 photo, the Arizona sandstone planter had fallen into disrepair, with half of the sandstone missing. Also, unsightly pipes and wires had been installed over the years. Author's photo.



The restored sandstone planter. Author's photo.

FRONT DOOR COLOR RESTORED

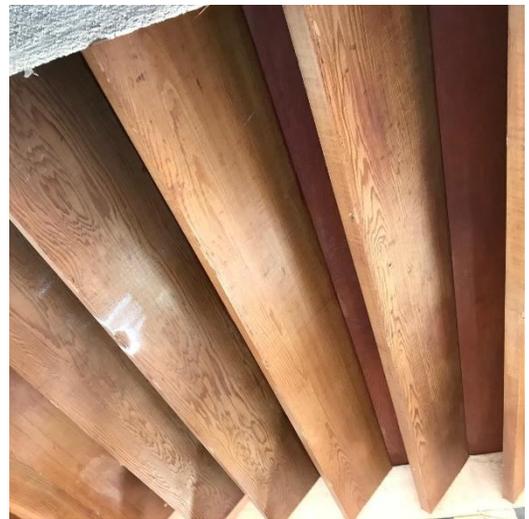


The historic turquoise paint color chosen by Burns for the front door was restored. Exterior paint colors are based on the two-toned tan and brown palette originally used. Photo courtesy Lance Gerber.

OPEN DINING PATIO WITH LOUVERED REDWOOD CEILING



In this February 2019 photo, the original open dining patio had been enclosed with sliding glass doors. The louvered redwood ceiling had been covered with sheetrock, and a ceiling fan installed. Author's photo.



The sliding glass doors were removed, opening the patio once again, and the distinctive Late Moderne louvered redwood ceiling was restored. Photos courtesy Thomboy.

WHITE-PAINTED ARIZONA SANDSTONE RESTORED TO NATURAL COLOR



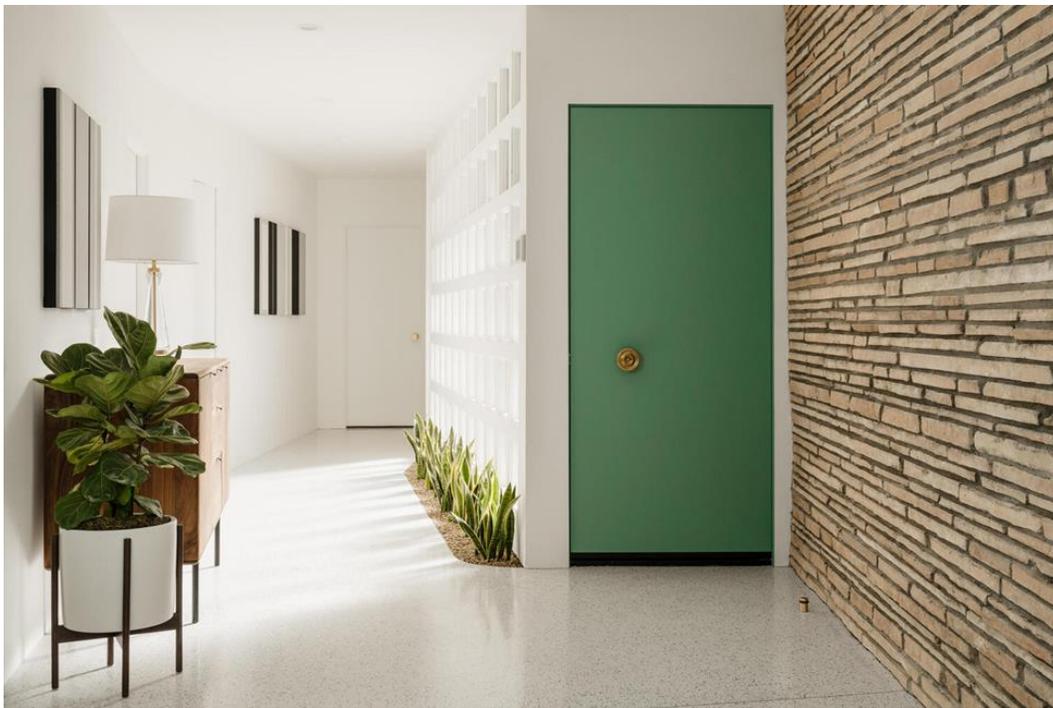
All of the home's Arizona sandstone features had been painted white. They were all carefully sandblasted to reveal their original color. Photo courtesy Thomboy.

IMPORTANT ARIZONA SANDSTONE INDOOR/OUTDOOR WALL



Left: In this February 2017 photo, the Arizona sandstone of the exterior pylon continued inside the entryway, blurring the distinction between indoors and outdoors. Author's photo.

Right: By the time the home was purchased by Thomboy Properties, the interior sandstone wall had been demolished. Stonemasons replicated the original Arizona sandstone wall. Photo courtesy Thomboy.



The restored Arizona sandstone wall, with the restored box grid and obscure glass wall beyond, showing the original interior planting bed. Photo courtesy Lance Gerber.

CURVED UPLIT FLOATING SOFFIT IN LIVING ROOM



Left: In February 2019 photo, Herbert Burns' signature floating soffits had been removed from the interiors of the home. Author's photo.

Right: During the restoration, the Arizona sandstone fireplace was sandblasted to reveal the original finish. The existing soffits at the author's home were measured to replicate the Gillman Residence's soffits. Photo courtesy Thomboy.



The restored fireplace and floating curved soffit. Photo courtesy Lance Gerber.

VI Contemporary Images – Photos by Author, April 2021

Primary elevation (south)





West elevation



East elevation



North elevation



VII. Late Moderne Context Section

(from *The Design of Herbert W. Burns*, by Steven Keylon. Published by the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2018).

DESERT GLAMOUR THE LATE MODERNE STYLE OF HERBERT W. BURNS

Starting with his Town & Desert Apartment Hotel in 1947, Herbert Burns developed a very distinctive design aesthetic, rooted in a more decorative version of Modernism, the Late Moderne style. Popular from the late 1930s through the 1950s, Late Moderne hasn't received the same attention as other iterations of Modernism, particularly in its residential form. It is important though to understand the Late Moderne style to appreciate the Herbert Burns look. Like the designer himself, his architecture had warmth, practicality, vitality, and even a sense of humor.

In reaction to the stark simplicity of the International Style, Late Moderne was mellower, with a finer sense of ornamentation. Writing about the style, architectural historian Alan Hess explains, "While Richard Neutra promoted a more purely European version of Modernism in his light steel-skeleton frame Lovell House in Los Angeles, most progressive West Coast architects looked elsewhere as they evolved Modern ideas. Like Streamline Moderne, they emphasized solid volumes, but usually with more sophistication than the idiomatic curved corners of that popular commercial style. Influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright and the vernacular buildings of rural California, they were drawn to natural wood and unpainted brick."⁷⁷

The Late Moderne style didn't develop solely on the drafting tables of architects. Instead, it evolved through an interpenetration of several disciplines: besides architecture, these

included interior design, industrial design, and decorative arts. James Ford and Katherine Morrow Ford, in their 1942 book *Design of Modern Interiors*, wrote, "Though the origins of modern are manifold, the early insistence upon functionalism and the increasing emphasis upon organism can be accepted as the major or basic factors."⁷⁸

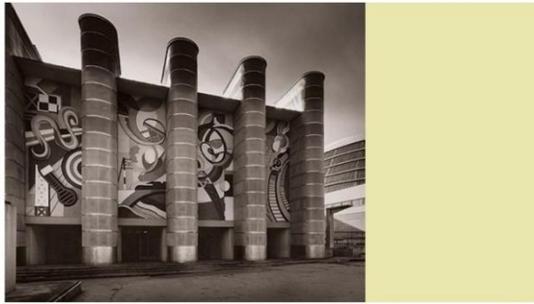
LATE MODERNE INSPIRATIONS: SURREALISM, FANTASTIC MODERN AND FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

One important influence on the Late Moderne style was the forward-thinking design showcased at the 1937 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne (International Exposition of Art and Technology in Modern Life). The goal of the Exposition was to demonstrate that art and technology are not opposite concepts, but are inextricably linked, and that their understanding might promote peace in a world recovering from economic collapse, and on the verge of war.

Many of the Exposition's interiors and exhibits were inspired by Surrealist art, with startling combinations of materials, from rustic to sophisticated. One of the most talked about rooms was at the Polish Pavilion, which had three walls of

⁷⁷ "Julius Shulman: Palm Springs," by Michael Stern and Alan Hess, Rizzoli, New York, 2008, p. 33.

⁷⁸ "Design of Modern Interiors," James Ford and Katherine Morrow Ford, Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1942, p. 6.



⁷⁹ "Modern Interiors, Today and Tomorrow," Emily Genauer, World Publishing Company, Cleveland and New York, 1942, p. 206.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁸² "A Bridge to Postwar American Design," by Phyllis Ross. In "Paris/New York," Museum of the City of New York, 2008, 215. Rohde's furniture prior to 1937 feature French-inspired geometric forms with exotic wood veneers, often with tubular chrome accents. An early advocate of sectional furniture, Rohde's early work was also inspired by the German typenmobel, coordinated modular furniture systems.

⁸³ "A Bridge to Postwar American Design," by Phyllis Ross. In "Paris/New York," Museum of the City of New York, 2008, p. 199-200.

⁸⁴ "Donald Deskey, Decorative Designs and Interiors," by David A. Hanks with Jennifer Toher, Dutton, New York, 1987, p.124.

beautifully grained dark brown wood, contrasted by a fourth wall of boldly patterned marble squares, accented with brass inlay. The elegant marquetry floor was on two levels, straddled by a low sofa. "And if this wasn't unique enough, the couch was covered with a shaggy white material that continued out to form a rug for the lower level," an homage to Dali's melting pocket watch.⁷⁹ Innovations in architecture included Surrealist-inspired entrance surrounds; bold pylons; picture frame moldings surrounding windows or portals; and walls and canopies with cutouts resembling the holes in Swiss cheese.

Speaking about the emerging Late Moderne style, Emily Genauer, influential art and architecture critic for the *New York World*, wrote in 1942 that "it was what happened in Paris which is directly responsible for the present aspect of American modern [design]."⁸⁰ Calling the movement "Fantastic Modern," she observed, "The wave of surrealist art exhibits of the past few seasons may have fanned the fantastic style to new life. Or maybe it comes as an inevitable reaction, on the part of many persons, to the dull perfection of period décor on the one side and the mechanical efficiency of the modernists on the other."⁸¹

The 1937 Paris Exposition was visited by many of America's leading designers and architects, including industrial designer Gilbert Rohde, who was profoundly moved by the theatricality and fantasy he witnessed, saying, "What really makes the fair so good is the fact that two elements – showmanship and beauty – have been successfully consolidated. The French have merged emotion and reason in such a way that a high aesthetic value is attached to the exhibits and not one iota of dramatic value is lost."⁸²

Rohde used these themes — luxurious materials and Surrealist-inspired forms — as inspiration for his interior architecture for the Herman Miller showroom at the Chicago Merchandise Mart in 1939, turning Surrealist art into three dimensions. Keeping the large space open, he utilized a variety of semi-transparent screening devices to suggest rooms — a wall with circular cutouts, another "wall" of vertical steel poles,

and yet another a geometric grid of obscure glass. The most striking of all was a sensuously curved Weldwood-veneered wall with a biomorphic cutout "window," the freeform cut-out piece appearing to levitate over the seating area, highlighted with indirect lighting. Rohde believed that as the country recovered from the economic austerity of the Great Depression, it was appropriate to introduce decorative elements which would cater to the "psychological needs of human beings. There are certain things that have been experienced by human beings for so many ages that we can say they are functional needs...That is why we may now design furniture with some decorative elements that are not needed for physical functioning. It is something unnecessary to the opening of the drawer, but very necessary to the happiness of the soul."⁸³

An additional project contributing to the Late Moderne vocabulary was industrial designer Donald Deskey's "Sportshack," a 1940 Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibit house. Set up as a Modernist hunting cabin, it featured a wall with a grid of circular cutouts, clad in Deskey's innovative new textured plywood "Weldtex," which would become ubiquitous in Late Moderne design. An attractive combed Douglas fir, Deskey believed "This sturdy, striated plywood is as modern as today's airplane in appearance, yet has the nostalgic charm of the weathered wood in an old log cabin."⁸⁴ Weldtex was used immediately by designers and architects, including Frank Lloyd Wright.

The 1930s work of Frank Lloyd Wright was another strong influence on Late Moderne, particularly in its residential form. One of Late Moderne's most identifiable features was the stone-clad pylon. At Fallingwater, Wright used massive pylons and piers to support the long horizontal cantilevered balconies and flat roofed structure. At his Usonian houses, Wright began to make the Prairie house look more modern. Usonian homes were characterized by materials indigenous to the site, in addition to other natural materials like unpainted brick, wood (often horizontal board-and-batten) and stone. There was a conspicuous emphasis on the horizontal line, with flat roofs





and long cantilevered overhangs, sometimes extending to cantilevered “carports,” a term Wright is said to have coined. Another signature feature of Wright’s from this period that would inspire the Late Moderne style were balconies or parapets clad in long, horizontal redwood shiplap planks, tapering down at the end. Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture would serve as the primary inspiration for the work of Herbert Burns.

COMMERCIAL LATE MODERNE

Late Moderne was the leisure architecture of Hollywood night-clubs, Las Vegas and Miami resorts, and, most commonly, high-end retail establishments. Starting before World War II, designers working in retail architecture sought to give shops the elegant geniality and stylish intimacy one would expect to

find in the home of a good friend, albeit one with progressive good taste. The Late Moderne style is largely overlooked by architectural historians today, and one reason may be that it wasn’t taken as seriously at the time. In 1945 *Architectural Forum* consulting editor George Nelson argued, “It is still the fashion in some quarters to affect a belief that commercial building is in some way inferior to ‘fine’ architecture based probably on the notion that the quality of design is in some way related to the nobility of its purpose. If this were true, it would be rather embarrassing to have to explain why we build such good stores and such atrocious churches. Or why our national monument to Thomas Jefferson lacks the interest and integrity of a seed store in San Francisco.”⁶⁵

Developments in technical fields such as air conditioning, acoustics, lighting, color psychology, as well as breakthroughs in materials like plastic, plywood, metals and glass, allowed retail architects to completely rethink what store architecture

⁶⁵ “Contemporary Shops in the United States,” Emrich Nicholson, with foreword by George Nelson, Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1945, p. 11.

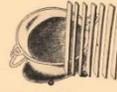
For quick relief from creative pains B



Take five long vertical poles...



three free-shaped panels...



seven vertical fins...



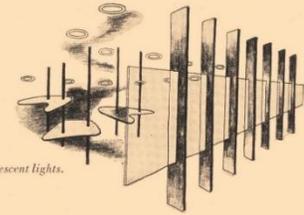
a few hundred pounds of plate glass.



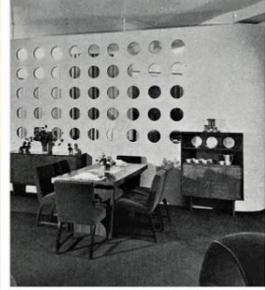
Stir well with a T-square...



add artificial coloring (chartreuse is recommended)



and serve under strong fluorescent lights.



could be. Where storefronts were once closed to the street, with relatively small showcase displays set into traditional building facades, designers began opening the storefronts entirely with walls of glass, making the interior of the store part of the window display. This meant that the store interiors had to be as exciting as the wares on display. Nelson pointed out, "Today we choose to think of the entire shop as the front."⁸⁶

Perhaps the most prolific and successful Late Moderne retail architect was New York designer Morris Lapidus. Using interesting forms, colors and textures, Lapidus sought to infuse his architecture with "the quality of human emotion. People want architecture to give them pleasure. They want human comfort, satisfaction, and warmth."⁸⁷ Architectural Forum understood Lapidus' philosophy, acknowledging "Atmosphere and personality are painful words to architects, but the architects obviously have been convinced that these are of great importance in store planning."⁸⁸

Shunning the tasteful grays and beiges of the past, Lapidus began using exciting color schemes to engage potential shoppers. He also developed the "moth" concept of lighting, creating islands of bright light inside the stores to draw people in, like moths to a flame. Some other expressions in Lapidus' Late Moderne vocabulary included "beanpoles" (vertical steel poles, sometimes canted), "woggles" (biomorphic ceiling coes or trays for indirect lighting), and "cheese holes" (round cutouts provide visual interest in an organic way).

The Late Moderne style in commercial architecture hit its zenith in Southern California in the late 1940s, with Wurdeman and Becket's Bullock's stores in Pasadena and Palm Springs, as well as A. Quincy Jones and Paul R. Williams' Tennis Club and Town and Country restaurant in Palm Springs. Their masterful designs utilized boldly solid volumes with dynamic angles; crisp abstract forms which used a rich but subtle palette of natural materials. Finally, these compositions were enlivened with a sophisticated and theatrical palette of decorative Late Moderne motifs.

By 1948, the Late Moderne vocabulary had become so well-established that Victor Gruen jokingly developed a "recipe" for a Late Moderne storefront, with ingredients such as "five vertical poles, three free-shaped panels, seven vertical fins, a few hundred pounds of plate glass. Stir well with a T-square, add artificial coloring (chartreuse is recommended), and serve under strong fluorescent lights."⁸⁹

With the proliferation of Late Moderne stores, this softer form of Modernism became palatable to a larger cross-section of the population, who were then willing to accept it into their homes.

RESIDENTIAL LATE MODERNE

After World War II, *Arts & Architecture* magazine's Case Study House program, whose architects celebrated the structural form of their designs, dominated people's attention when it came to residential architecture. But there were other parallel iterations of Modern happening at the same time. David Gebhard observed, "In the postwar period, established traditionalist architects either modernized their traditional designs or began to produce modernist buildings. This was the case with Wallace Neff, Roland Coate, Gordon B. Kaufmann, and Ralph C. Flewelling. Generally, in their post-1945 modernist work, these architects used modern elements: simple volumes defined by unadorned, thinly delineated walls; horizontal bands of windows; and flat, projecting roof planes. They also opened up their interiors so that the spaces flowed freely into one another, and they established a close relationship between the interior spaces and the gardens beyond."⁹⁰

Southern California architects such as Paul Laszlo, A. Quincy Jones, Arthur Froehlich, Wurdeman & Becket utilized Late Moderne for their designs for upscale clients, who didn't

⁸⁶ "Contemporary Shops in the United States," Erich Nicholson, with foreword by George Nelson, Architectural Book Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1945, p. 7.

⁸⁷ "MIMO: Miami Modern Revealed," Eric Nash and Randall C. Robinson, Jr., Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2004, p. 70.

⁸⁸ "40 Stores," *Architectural Record*, May 1948, p. 94.

⁸⁹ "Somewhere in Claustrophobia," *Architectural Forum*, May 1948, p. 96.

⁹⁰ "Paul R. Williams, Architect. A Legacy of Style," Karen Hudson, Introduction by David Gebhard, Rizzoli, New York, 1993, p. 25.





necessarily want an austere International Style modern house, but still wanted good contemporary architecture infused with luxury, charm and comfort. The architect who arguably created the most outstanding Late Moderne residential work was Paul R. Williams. He defined the style at the time as "conservative modern." Comparing his earlier work, which he described as having, "precisely defined cubicles" with "solid doors and solid walls," to his later "conservative modern," Williams wrote, "Not so today. Walls are pierced or constructed of transparent, translucent, or highly decorative materials. Doors are being used less and less. In fact, rooms have ceased to be finite cubicles, and have become instead large open areas with indistinct or nonexistent boundaries. The emphasis today is on a feeling of openness and friendliness."⁹¹

One of the first Late Moderne houses to be published was the McCarthy Residence in Bel Air, created in 1941 by architectural designer Burton Schutt. Elizabeth Gordon, the influential editor of *House Beautiful*, who had begun championing a softer version of modernism, wrote an article titled, "Here's Modern Nobody Can Object To." In it, she asserted that the house was significant because it would please traditionalists. "The early protagonists of Modern wanted to make it revolutionary, instead of evolutionary. Consequently, early Modern had no roots or blood lines in our past. But Modern has been changing. Its architecture has shadow lines and texture, jogs and changes of plane. Its materials and design give pattern and eye interest. It has structural simplicity and frankness, but it does not have the mechanical coldness which has made people reject Modern."⁹²

HERBERT BURNS' LATE MODERNE STYLE

Though he wasn't formally trained as an architect, in Herbert Burns' capable hands, his stylishly simple, clean-lined

architecture, was imbued with a feeling of glamour. Burns' confident design sensibilities and masterful use of the Late Moderne vocabulary produced high quality, human-scaled structures. Appropriate to their spectacular desert surroundings, Burns' ground-hugging flat-roofed structures were inspired by the organic materials and horizontality of Frank Lloyd Wright, and enlivened with novel detailing meant to delight the eye.

Though he would become known and sought after for his distinctive style, Burns' creative process started with practicality and function. He prided himself on the livability and comfort in his designs above all, customized specifically to the clients for whom he was designing. He believed, "dissatisfaction is the result of insufficient thought and research on the part of the owner and his planner and their failure to anticipate the future activities of the owner's family."⁹³

After interviewing his clients to determine their needs, he created an initial floorplan which would include the layout of furniture. He wrote, "Furniture and its location in a room is vital and should always be included in the preliminary sketches to eliminate awkward or inconvenient arrangements and to insure correct location of electrical plugs and switches."⁹⁴ The four fundamentals he considered when designing his spaces were "flow of traffic, entertaining, privacy, and uninterrupted conversation," the emphasis on socializing perhaps even more important considerations for the leisure life of the desert. Burns' interiors, with their comfortable theatricality, provided a glamorous backdrop for people.

In creating the site plan, Burns took great care to orient the building for the best sun exposure and cross-ventilation, often using a splayed layout, to maximize views. Once again inspired by Wright, one of the most distinctive and recognizable motifs in Burns' work are his strong stone-clad pylons, most commonly placed in an opposing arrangement, as the means of bookending and balancing his bold asymmetrical compositions. These monoliths were the centerpiece of his

⁹¹ "Paul R. Williams, Architect. A Legacy of Style," Karen Hudson, Introduction by David Gebhard, Rizzoli, New York, 1993, p. 114.

⁹² "Here's Modern Nobody Can Object To," Elizabeth Gordon, *House Beautiful*, November 1943, p. 42-45.

⁹³ "Every Home Owner Strives For the Ultimate... Few Achieve It," by Herbert Burns, *Palm Springs Life*, June-July 1960, pp. 7-12.



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configuration of intersecting planes and volumes. The material — primarily Arizona sandstone — was native to the Sonoran Desert, giving them an indigenous feeling, the long, thin sandstone slabs stacked and mortared in a linear pattern. Built-in planter boxes of the same material, planted with cascading plant material and seasonal color, helped to blur the lines between architecture and landscape. Wright-inspired horizontal redwood shiplap plank parapets, tapering down at the ends, were also used for planter boxes or balcony trim.

To further reinforce the horizontality of his flat, projecting rooflines, a secondary eave and fascia, recessed and slightly narrower in profile than the deep eave and fascia of the roof, floated below and parallel to the primary fascia. These elegantly flat planes appeared to have the surprising power to slice and penetrate the monolithic stone forms or stucco walls.

Burns' structures were typically covered in smooth stucco, but for variety, he often contrasted that with vertical wood board-and-batten for texture, a detail appropriate to the ranch vernacular of Palm Springs. Once his basic design had been established, he went to his trusted toolbox of Late Moderne motifs which, used in varying combinations, invigorated the architecture, providing a vertical counterpoint to the overall theme of horizontality.

The most common of these was his use of vertical steel poles. On building exteriors, poles supporting deep overhangs were grouped in a dynamic syncopated rhythm of three, five, seven or ten. Later, he began using "V" shaped pole supports as an alternative to vertical poles. Another Late Moderne punctuation mark was his use of vertical redwood louvers (usually 2x11), used as a brise-soleil to modulate sun, to support carports, or simply as a decorative device to animate the façade.

INTERIORS

Herbert Burns' interior architecture showed his ability to create glamorous, flexible, intimate environments, while maintaining a natural relationship to the landscape outside. Recognizing the primeval desire to gather around a fire, the heart of most of his interiors was the fireplace, clad in the same Arizona sandstone as the exterior pylons and piers. Burns created further warmth with a variety of materials, like the striated texture of combed plywood (Weldtex).

Burns artfully modulated the interior spaces with the use of lowered ceiling sections and floating eyebrow soffits, creating cozy spaces within a larger room for dining or conversation. These soffits were also used as long "eyebrows" over steel casement windows, extending wall-to-wall, with soft, indirect lighting, bathing ceilings with a warm glow. Having once been a lighting designer and manufacturer, much of the lighting was built-in and recessed into the ceiling, eliminating the need for a lot of lamps. One device he used to create soothing interiors was a recent innovation — the rheostat dimmer. Developed originally for theatrical stage lighting, Burns wrote, "subdued lighting helps to make after-dinner conversation more relaxed. With apologies to the masculine readers who'll hate me for saying so, I must concede this point to the ladies and acknowledge that soft lights are flattering."⁹⁵

Burns was like a kid on Christmas when it came to technological innovations. In an article he wrote for *Palm Springs Life* in 1960, he extolled the virtues of centralized built-in Hi-Fi equipment, with individual controls in each room; infra-red bulbs in the kitchen to keep food warm; Plexiglas skylights and microwave ovens; closed circuit television (which he opined might help save the lives of children); intercoms, built-in food processors, and acoustical walls and ceilings. He also marveled at improvements to air-conditioning and the new central vacuum

cleaners. Not to mention his love for built-in wall clocks.

Aside from aesthetics, Burns demanded the highest quality materials and techniques in his construction. Laguna Beach architect Peyo Michaels, AIA, who owns a condominium at The 500 West was impressed, explaining, "When we opened our walls for renovations I was surprised to see all the wood studs were stamped 'No.1' select kiln dried lumber," important for the dry desert climate, to prevent warping. "The studs were a full 96" in length instead of standard 92 5/8" studs that are used for typical 8' ceiling heights, resulting in ceilings about 3" higher than normal. The HVAC system is one of the best residential ones that I have seen. It has a supply and separate return air register in every room, and the first-floor return ducts are all buried below the concrete floor slabs, which is costly. The original working drawings have a separate sheet solely dedicated to the HVAC system layout,"⁹⁶ which is not really surprising, considering Herbert had studied combustion engineering and designed and sold furnaces at one point in his life.

COLOR

According to his client Joanne Petty, "Herb was a master, not only of lighting, but of color. Herb created the most beautiful, unexpected color palettes, and they were so appropriate for the desert."⁹⁷ He understood what worked in the desert." Aesthetics aside, Burns believed that thoughtful color choices even had psychological benefits. "Colors in a house play a more important part on the serenity of a home than meets the eye. An extensive study undertaken by the U.S. Navy for sub-mariners who were required to live months with the same colors proved harmonious colors contribute to harmonious co-existence."⁹⁸

⁹⁵ "Every Home Owner Strives For the Ultimate... Few Achieve It," by Herbert Burns, *Palm Springs Life*, June-July 1960, pp. 7-12.

⁹⁶ Email from Peyo Michaels, January 8, 2018.

⁹⁷ Interview with Joanne Petty, November, 2017.

⁹⁸ "Every Home Owner Strives For the Ultimate... Few Achieve It," by Herbert Burns, *Palm Springs Life*, June-July, 1960, pp. 7-12.

⁹⁹ "The Sun Sets the Theme," by Julius Shulman, *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, February 27, 1949.

¹⁰⁰ "The Magic Touch For Your House of Beauty," advertisement by Herbert W. Burns in the *Palm Springs Villager*, June, 1951, p. 6.

¹⁰¹ "Every Home Owner Strives For the Ultimate... Few Achieve It," by Herbert Burns, *Palm Springs Life*, June-July, 1960, pp. 7-12.



Burns thoughtfully used the subtle shadings of the desert to more completely integrate his buildings with their native surroundings. Photographer Julius Shulman was inspired, explaining that Burns “literally brought the desert home. He sought there colors in rocks and foliage, then carried them back for the painter to match.” At the Town & Desert, the color of reddish-brown rocks from the nearby Chocolate Mountains were matched for the paint which ran from the underside of the roof overhang to the ceiling inside. Tamarisk and mesquite leaves inspired shades of green for the two-toned treatment on exterior walls, with deep mesquite green painted on recessed walls, to make them further recede, and silvery tamarisk green applied to the forward walls to articulate those. To emphasize the horizontality, another one of Burns’ character-defining features was a raised stucco cornice molding, painted a contrasting color. At the Town & Desert, “the yellowish-green of the Palo Verde” tree was used to accentuate this molding.⁹⁹

Burns believed that in designing a home, “one of the most important decisions of all is the color scheme — for it will be before you constantly, affecting your unconscious self by day and by night. A carefully chosen color harmony is cheering to your heart. It brings a sense of restfulness to your soul. It is a welcome. It gives home the feeling that it is yours, and that it is good. Color is the last but not the least important problem in the construction or remodeling of a home to provide the greatest comfort, relaxation and contentment.”¹⁰⁰

Finally, Burns described his philosophy behind a successfully designed home: “Do not build a house to impress your friends and neighbors nor to show off your success. Such a house is a vulgar display of money. Build a house that is a home — be it ever so humble. A house is made of stone and earth but a home is built of love, understanding loyalty and tolerance. A home is a haven, a place to share joys and sorrows, to feel safe and secure. It is the only place you can be completely relaxed and where you can run the full gamut of your emotions. Live in your home. Enjoy it.”¹⁰¹

¹ Herbert W. Burns opened his office advertising his design services, emphasizing his modern design. Though there were other fine architects doing modernist design at the time (John Porter Clark & Albert Frey; Williams, Williams, & Williams; William Cody), they worked in both traditional and contemporary design. Burns didn’t create any traditional architecture in the Coachella Valley.

² *Julius Shulman, Palm Springs*, by Alan Hess and Michael Stern, 33.

³ “Building Total Tops Three Million With New Homes Begun,” *Desert Sun*, July 13, 1948, 3. In Los Angeles, the Gillmans lived in a Streamline Moderne apartment building designed by Milton Black.

⁴ “Sophisticated Sun Seeker,” *Los Angeles Times Home Magazine*, January 14, 1951, 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ The *Desert Sun* made note in 1956 that the Gillmans had a buffet dinner to celebrate their new “Play Room.” (“Buffet Dinner Opens Play Room.” *Desert Sun*, October 23, 1956, 6.)

⁸ “Architectural Award Given Jewish Community Center,” *Desert Sun*, November 11, 1954, 3.

⁹ On August 29, 1907, eighteen-year-old Sadie married Joseph Spero, a twenty-one-year-old Seattle tailor, who had been born in London. No divorce date was found, nor was a definitive death date for Spero discovered. The 1910 census lists Sadie as “Single.”

¹⁰ *The Recorder*, San Francisco, March 10, 1928, 8.

¹¹ Message from Ancestry.com user Macawlvr, whose father was also Sadie Gillman’s nephew. October 10, 2021.

¹² Board of Directors of Jewish Center (*Desert Sun* February 9, 1951); Dr. Gillman turns first spade at Jewish Center addition. A dinner was held for the Gillmans following the ceremony (*Desert Sun* May 25, 1951) The *Desert Sun* makes note of new “Gillman Hall” later in 1951.

¹³ IMDB (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0168324/bio>) accessed July 3, 2021.

¹⁴ *San Diego Reader*, October 10, 2018.

¹⁵ "A simple fix-and-flip can go horribly wrong," *San Diego Reader*, October 10, 2018

(<https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/2018/oct/10/cover-simple-fix-and-flip-can-go-horribly-wrong/> accessed September 14, 2021)

¹⁶ *San Diego Reader*, October 10, 2018.

¹⁷ "Ebers and Greene Project Contractor Has License Suspended," *OB Rag*, March 27, 2017 (<https://obrag.org/2017/03/ebers-and-greene-project-contractor-has-license-suspended/> accessed September 14, 2021)

¹⁸ "\$7 Million Dollars in San Diego Real Estate Projects Rescued from Failing Developer by Downkicker Investments," PR Web press release, December 11, 2017. (<https://www.prweb.com/releases/2017/12/prweb15001246.htm> accessed September 14, 2021). The four project locations were:

- 574 W. Mariscal Road, Palm Springs, CA
- 2006 Catalina Boulevard, San Diego, CA
- 2173 W. El Norte Parkway, Escondido, CA
- 807 Barr Avenue, San Diego, CA

¹⁹ PR Web press release, December 11, 2017.

²⁰ PR Web press release, December 11, 2017.

²¹ "Herbert W Burns' Gillman Residence renovated in Palm Springs," *Wallpaper* magazine, March 2, 2020 (accessed online October 24, 2021 <https://www.wallpaper.com/architecture/gillman-residence-herbert-burns-thomboy-properties-palm-springs>)