

Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4

Historic District Nomination



Prepared by Kerry Stern

2024

Acknowledgements

The author would like to recognize the help and contributions of:

Rebecca Xenos

Darren Shay

Rochelle McCune

Christi Van Cleve

Karen Porter

and

Sandpiper Condominiums 1, 2 and 3 for leading the way and
sharing their applications



And to architect

William Krisel, AIA

A pioneer of Mid-Century Modernism whose vision and determination made
Sandpiper a reality.

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Introduction

On April 6, 2023, the board of directors of the Palm Springs Garden Apartments #4, commonly known as Circle 4, voted to seek historic designation through the City of Palm Desert. (Appendix A). An Ad-Hoc Committee was appointed to pursue the application on behalf of the Association. A motion was made to appoint owners Christi Van Cleve, Karen Porter and Rebecca Xenos to the committee. Due to extenuating circumstances, this committee was unable to complete the project. On June 22, 2024, the Board appointed Kerry Stern to complete the historic portion of the application.

This nomination seeks to have the City designate Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 with historic status, joining the existing Historic District #4 which already encompasses the rest of the Sandpiper Condominiums complex.

Circles 1-4 of Sandpiper Condominiums, constructed between 1958 and 1960, saw architect William Krisel create a template for affordable, modernist architecture in a desert environment that would earn him national acclaim. The design elements and language that Krisel developed in the original four circles would go on to be utilized in the design of subsequent Circles as they were built out in the 1960's.

Sandpiper Circle 4 has been part of several modern home tours, including those conducted during Modernism Week.

“To WINTER in the desert playground of the Palm Springs area has been the dream of all who know California. Now the dream can come true in a simple and interesting manner. On the highway at Palm Desert, midway between Palm Springs and Indio, is The Sandpiper –the ultimate in desert living...these luxury homes, built on an own-your-own basis are now well into their fourth cluster. They provide every privacy and every facility from beautiful enclosed patio gardens to built-in electric kitchens—all combined with the finest in resort hotel service and maintenance. Without a care in the world one may revel in desert sunshine, invigorating clear air, in interesting mountains and wide stretches of golden sand.”

Pictorial California, 1960



City of Palm Desert
Department of Building and Safety
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(760) 776-6420
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Historic District Cultural Resources Nomination Application

1. District Name: Sandpiper Condominiums (Circle 4)

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Preparer: Kerry Stern

Sponsoring Organization (if any): _____

Address: 27091 Calle Caballero Unit B (mailing) (also own 462 Sandpiper)

City San Juan Capistrano State CA Zip 92675

Phone/EMAIL: 951-212-2816 / kcstern@verizon.net

Signature of Applicant (s): *Kerry Stern*

Date form prepared: 11/17/2024

(Attach additional sheets as necessary)

DESCRIPTION

2. Boundary Description: Attached

3. Boundary Justification: Attached

4. Physical Description: Attached

SIGNIFICANCE

5. Theme: Attached

6. Period of Significance: Attached

7. Narrative Statement of Significance: Attached

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

8. References

9. Photographs

Historic District Cultural Resources Nomination Application—Expanded Entries

1. Definition

There are 17 Circles within the Sandpiper Condominium complex with sixteen full Circles (each with a pool) and two half Circles (each with a pool). In Circles 1 through 4, the original Sandpiper Circles designed by Palmer & Krisel (1958-1960), three attached condominium units comprised a building, and eight buildings comprised a Circle. The units are typically mirror images of each other joined at the common wall, with some minor variations designed to add visual interest such as varying heights in the original four Circles. The Circle numbers indicated the approximate order in which the building clusters were built.

Circle 4 was completed around 1960 and represented the start of a western expansion. The ramada was in a triangular shape and was skillfully placed into the landscape. Many of the Sandpiper owners by now were coming from Southern California and using their units as weekend getaways. The Sandpiper was no longer limited to winter use as originally conceived.

2. Boundary Description

The Sandpiper Condominium complex is located south of El Paseo Drive, west of California Route 74, east of Edgehill Way and north of Pitahaya Street. Primary entrances to each complex are on El Paseo Drive.

Currently, the City's Historic District #4 comprises Sandpiper Condominiums Circles 1, 2, 3, 5-10 and 11-12. Circles 5-10 and 11 and 12 are in the center of the Sandpiper Condominium Complex. **This nomination proposes that Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 be added into the Historic District #4.**

Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 is adjacent to Circle 1 (North), Circle 2 (East) and Circle 3 (South). Circles 5-10 are located west of Circle 4. Access to the circle is through the most eastern Gate F off of El Paseo Drive.

The specific Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNS) contained in Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 are sited in Appendix.B and in total constitute a legal description of the

proposed new addition to the Sandpiper Historic District #4 and, by extension, the new boundaries of the district.

3. Boundary Justification

This nomination is specifically written to include Circle 4 of the Sandpiper Condominium.

Unlike some historic districts, which can contain a variety of architectural styles built over an extended period, the Sandpiper Condominium complex represents a concentrated architectural vision with the buildings in each Circle constructed nearly simultaneously, of the same materials, deliberately sited in a coherent plan. Circle 4 is an intrinsic part of this common architectural vision. Included in this historic district nomination is the common area, or courtyard, which is surrounded by the buildings of Circle 4. A pool is in the center of the common area. The pool is surrounded by a large accessible area of landscaping, which serves as a buffer between the pool and the units. A poolside community Ramada was an important part of the original design. The detached carports were added in the 1970s well after the development's completion in 1960 and are not a part of the application for historic status.

4. Physical Description (and History)

Circle 4 is part of the first Circles (1 through 4) designed and constructed of the Sandpiper Condominiums. They were originally built as cooperatives by the construction company of George M. Holstein and Sons along with the Western Land and Capital Company.

The architectural firm of Palmer and Krisel was brought on to design the initial phase (Circle 1) of Sandpiper Condominiums and construction was completed in 1958. While Krisel was directly responsible for the designs of Circles 1-14 of the entire Sandpiper complex, Circles 1-4 were the only ones which were triplexes, the rest being duplexes. Circle 4 was completed around 1960.

The triplex units are typically mirror images of two styles, Y and X, Y being the taller clerestory window and X the lower roof line, with some minor variations designed to add visual interest such as varying heights in the original four Circles. Each 3-unit pod has 3 different types of kitchens, round (Unit A), square (Unit B) and rectangular (Unit C). The specific Riverside County Assessment Number PIN (Property Identification Numbers) are included in Appendix B for Circle 4.

Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 is indicative of Mid-Century Modern Architecture because it's distinctive characteristics such as horizontal lines, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, clerestory windows, passive solar features, use of inexpensive, machine-produced materials, masonry, innovative fixtures and state of the art

appliances echoed that trending style. These embodied the building practices in Palm Desert and the Coachella Valley that were applied to such projects in the 50' and 60's. These came on the heels of the earlier Bauhaus and themes and were explored in the Case House Studies of 1945 until 1966.

Circle 4 uses the myriads of the concrete block patterns developed specifically for this project. While concrete block was used extensively in construction at this time this block was exclusively designed to set the design theme of the Sandpiper Krisel approach. These distinct designs were personally designed by Krisel himself. Uses of concrete feature block, commercially known as "Shadowal," and a pierced concrete screen block.

5. Theme

The concept of a condominium, where the ownership of a building or property is a shared entity is a modern phenomenon, although communal living is not. The first "condominium" was built in the United States in 1960 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The concept grew in popularity and by the end of the decade condominiums were present in all fifty states.

The site planning at Sandpiper is a pin-wheel configuration around a central hub (in this case the pool) and its greenbelt concept draws from 19th century British planner Ebenezer Howard's Garden City. Howard's concept envisioned a world where the best of city and rural life is combined to create a utopian environment. He espoused the need for green belts, to reduce congestion and to create a healthy environment in which to live.

Palmer & Krisel expands Howard's tenet by creating an environment free from cars, a popular symbol of urban distress. Their site planning re-examines not only urban but suburban living. Palmer & Krisel deftly sited all vehicular roads and carports on the perimeter of each circle. Their buildings turn their "fronts" away from the street. The "front porch" no longer faces the street but is moved to look onto the green belt. In this, the pool becomes the "new street scape": the new social gathering place for the complex.

6. Period of Significance

The relatively short history of Palm Desert can be organized into three more or less distinct periods that include Prehistory, the Settlement Period, and the Modern Period. It is within the context of the last period that this building will be evaluated.

Modern Period (1925-1960s): Located in the central portion of the Coachella Valley, Palm Desert was first developed as an agricultural area of date farms. The Modern

Period can be considered to have begun with the construction of Coachella Valley's first "modern" structure, the Paul and Betty Popenoe Cabin designed in 1922 by the Austrian-born American modernist architect Rudolph Schindler (1887-1953). With this building, the area's then predominant architectural style based on Mexican and Spanish Colonial motifs began to change.

The Historical Society of Palm Desert succinctly describes the pre-war and wartime history of the city as follows:

In the 1930s a few homes were built and lots sold in a development north of Highway 111 called Palm Village. World War II brought General Patton to Portola Avenue and to the Colorado Desert to train for African warfare; but no one ever dreamed this would become a world-class destination resort.

After the conclusion of World War II, tourist-based development began to replace agriculture. The first large-scale development was marked by the opening of Shadow Mountain Resort built by the Henderson brothers (Cliff, Randall, Phil, and Carl). This was followed by development of the "El Paseo" commercial strip, which was a former army maintenance camp. Soon afterwards, Palm Desert quickly developed into a resort destination in parallel with its neighbors Palm Springs and Rancho Mirage.

Palm Desert, along with neighboring Palm Springs and Rancho Mirage, are together internationally known as a center of important midcentury architecture. The buildings and site that constitute Sandpiper Condominiums represents an excellent intact example of American Modernist architecture. This midcentury architecture may therefore be viewed as a key component of the historic trend that has come to define the Coachella Valley and one that exemplifies a particular period of the nation, state, or local history.

7. Narrative of Statement of Significance

Sandpiper Condominium Circle 4, completed in 1960 by the Los Angeles-based architectural firm of Palmer & Krisel, exhibits numerous stylistic markers that place them directly in the historic context of Palm Desert's Modern Period. Further, Circle 4 is an excellent example of multi-family residential development in Palm Desert in the mid-1960s. The 24 units and 8 buildings that comprise Circle 4 reflects a coherent vision of modernist architecture rarely found anywhere else in the United States. The siting of the buildings in Circle 4, and the landscape architecture further reinforce a coherent modernist architectural vision that successfully created a leisure lifestyle of "carefree desert living."

Sandpiper Condominium Circle 4 is significant under the theme of Modern Architecture because it possesses distinctive characteristics that make up the many qualities of the

style, such as overall horizontality, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, clerestory windows, use of inexpensive, machine-produced materials, and masonry. Together, the structures and site are an excellent illustration of their type or period of construction and an important example (within its context) of building practices in Palm Desert and the Coachella Valley at midcentury.

Adding to the significance of the Sandpiper Condominium complex, in the late 1950s, and onward, the architectural firm of Palmer & Krisel was quickly recognized as a firm that paid careful attention to the requirements of builders. Specifically, they were remarkably successful in solving the problem of producing superior design while still meeting tight project budgets. This economic system allowed cheaper units which launched the affordable 'second home' trend in Southern California. This was a welcome escape from the winter fogs of the coast and the hectic Los Angeles life. Modern highways were being constructed which drastically cut the travel time.

In the mid-1950s, Palmer & Krisel began to receive substantial professional recognition for their already burgeoning body of work. This recognition ranged from awards bestowed by the local Southern California chapter of the American Institute of Architects to recognition from the influential National Association of Homebuilders. The firm was also listed as one of the "top 100 firms in the nation" by the seminal *Progressive Architecture* magazine. The Los Angeles-based firm Palmer & Krisel produced a large and diverse body of work including housing tracts, office high-rises and shopping centers. In all, 40,000 housing units were produced by the firm.

8. Additional Information

A. Bibliography

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- Kaplan, Wendy. *Los Angeles County Museum of Art. California Design 1930-1965: Living in a Modern Way*. 2011
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- Morazzi, Peter. *Palm Springs Paradise: Vintage Photographs from America's Desert Playground*. 2015
- Pictorial California*, 1960
- Roth, Leland M. *American Architecture: a history*. 2016
- Street-Porter, Tim. *Palm Springs: A Modernist Paradise*. 2018
- Sandpiper Palm Desert 1958-1969*. Historical Society of Palm Desert. 2013

B. Other Sources

City of Palm Desert website
Palm Desert Historical Society
Riverside County Assessor's Office
Sandpiper Circle 1 Nomination, 2021
Sandpiper Circle 2 Nomination, 2021
Sandpiper Circle 3 Nomination, 2021

C. Photographs

Required documentation photographs of Sandpiper Circle 4 and miscellaneous historical photographs and advertisements are contained in the nomination packet.

Appendix A. Action Items

PALM SPRINGS GARDEN APARTMENTS #4

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

APRIL 6, 2023 AT 1:00 P.M.

THE MEETING WAS HELD AT THE CHISHOLM RESIDENCE

Historic Designation Process

President Chisholm announced the Board's intent to seek Historic Designation through the City of Palm Desert. It was noted that Circle 4 is the only Circle that has not sought designation to date. Discussion ensued regarding potential benefits to the Association with the designation, such as tax incentives that may be enjoyed by some owners, as well as the possibility of increased property values. President Chisholm then requested a show of hands of owners present at the meeting that are interested in pursuing Historic Designation for the Association; 14 owners present were in favor and one was opposed.

A motion was then made by Paul Chisholm to proceed as an Association with the application process to obtain the Historic Designation through the City of Palm Desert. The motion was seconded by Art Schneidt and carried.

The Board then discussed the process, and it was agreed that an Ad-Hoc Committee of members should be appointed to handle the administration needed to pursue the designation on behalf of the Association.

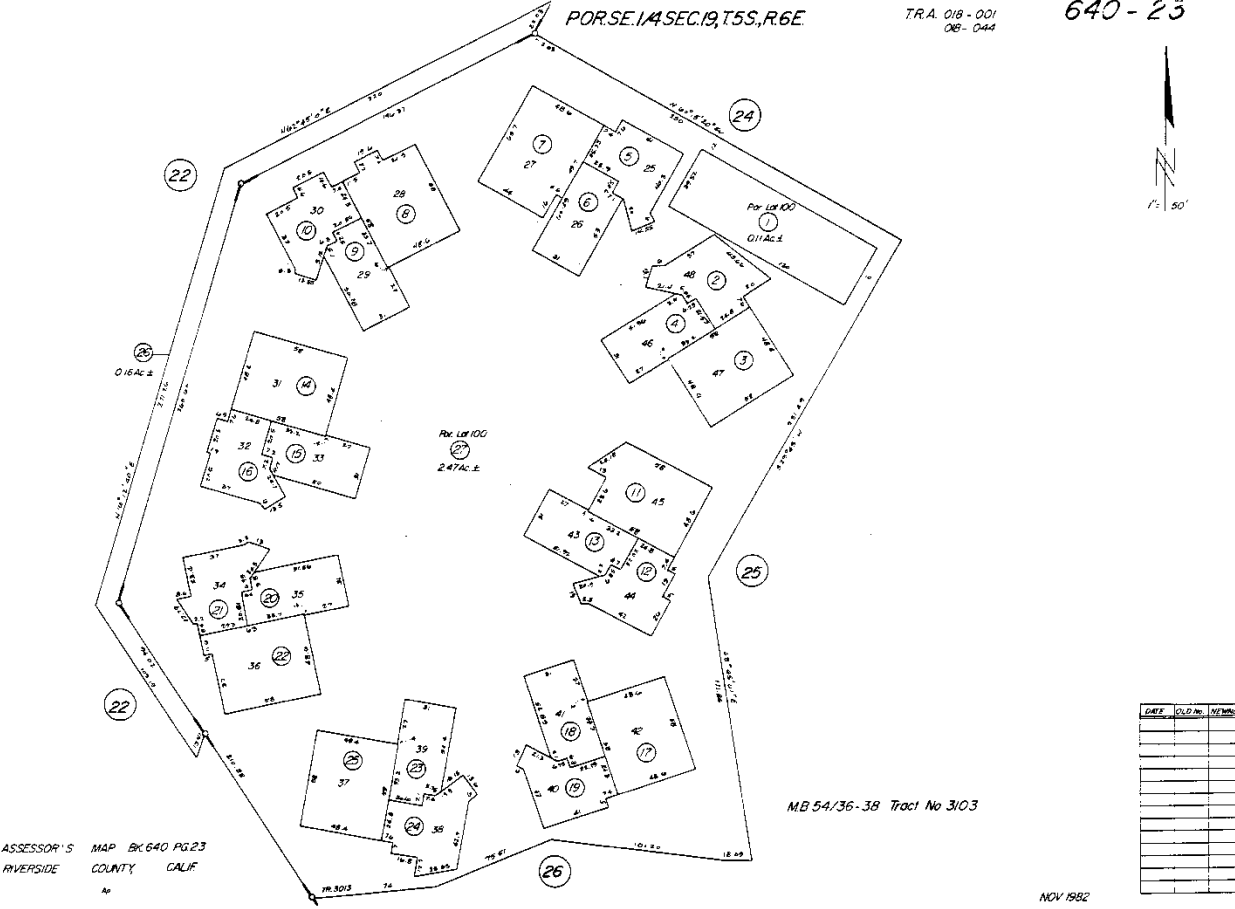
Following discussion, **a motion was made by Art Schneidt to appoint owners Christi Van Cleve, Karen Porter and Rebecca Xenos to the Ad-Hoc Committee to pursue Historic Designation on behalf of the Association. The motion was seconded by Paul Chisholm and carried.**

Appendix B. Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 APNs

The specific Riverside County Assessment Number PIN (Property Identification Numbers) are as follows:

Unit Address	PIN/APN
411 Sandpiper St	640-230-024
412 Sandpiper St	640-230-023
413 Sandpiper St	640-230-025
421 Sandpiper St	640-230-021
422 Sandpiper St	640-230-020
423 Sandpiper St	640-230-022
431 Sandpiper St	640-230-016
432 Sandpiper St	640-230-015
433 Sandpiper St	640-230-014
441 Sandpiper St	640-230-010
442 Sandpiper St	640-230-009
443 Sandpiper St	640-230-008
451 Sandpiper St	640-230-005
452 Sandpiper St	640-230-006
453 Sandpiper St	640-230-007
461 Sandpiper St	640-230-002
462 Sandpiper St	640-230-004
463 Sandpiper St	640-230-003
471 Sandpiper St	640-230-012
472 Sandpiper St	640-230-013
473 Sandpiper St	640-230-011
481 Sandpiper St	640-230-019
482 Sandpiper St	640-230-018
483 Sandpiper St	640-230-017
Circle 4 Common Area	640-230-027

Appendix C. Sandpiper Condominiums Tract Map Circle 4

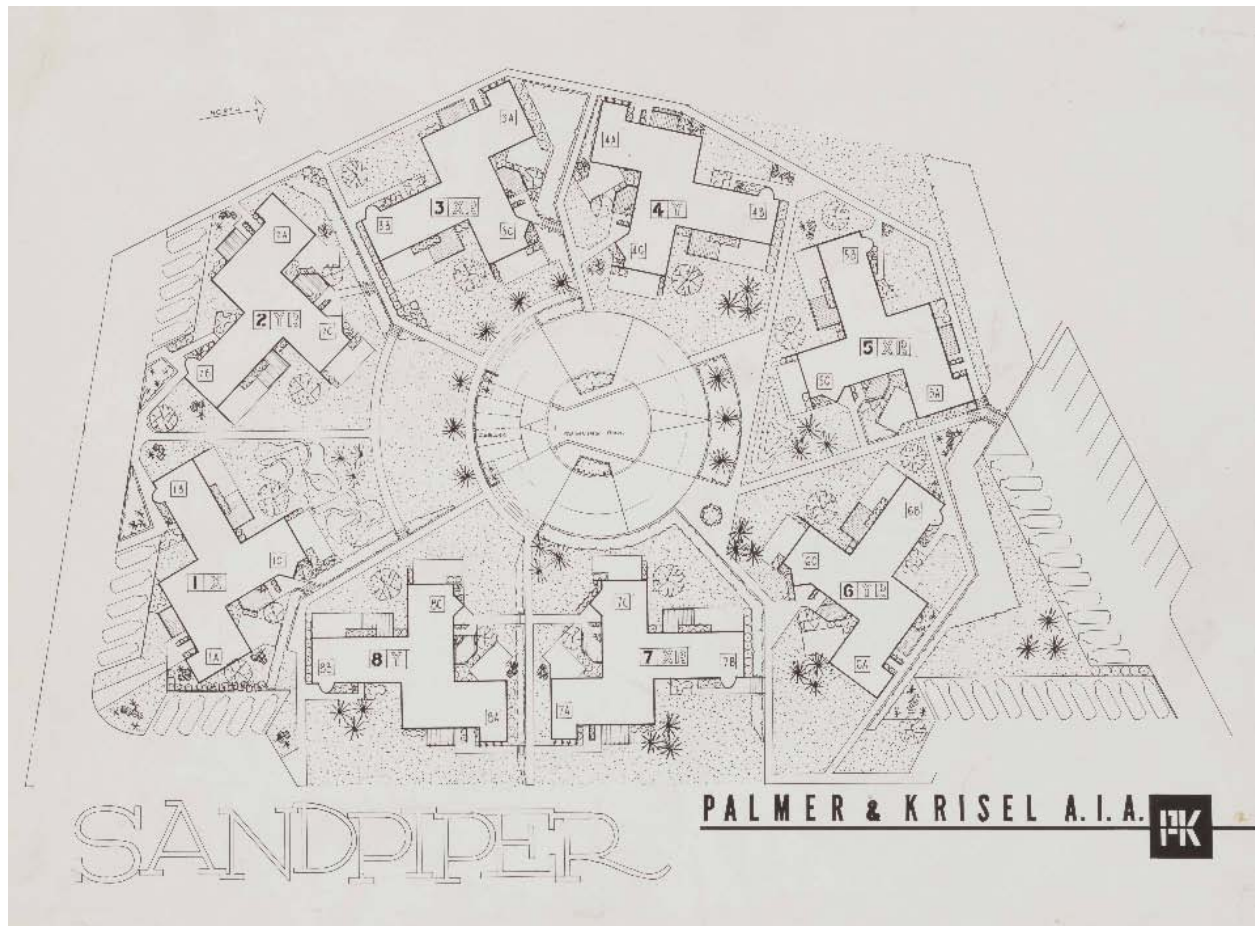


ASSESSOR'S MAP BK 640 PG 23
RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIF
AP

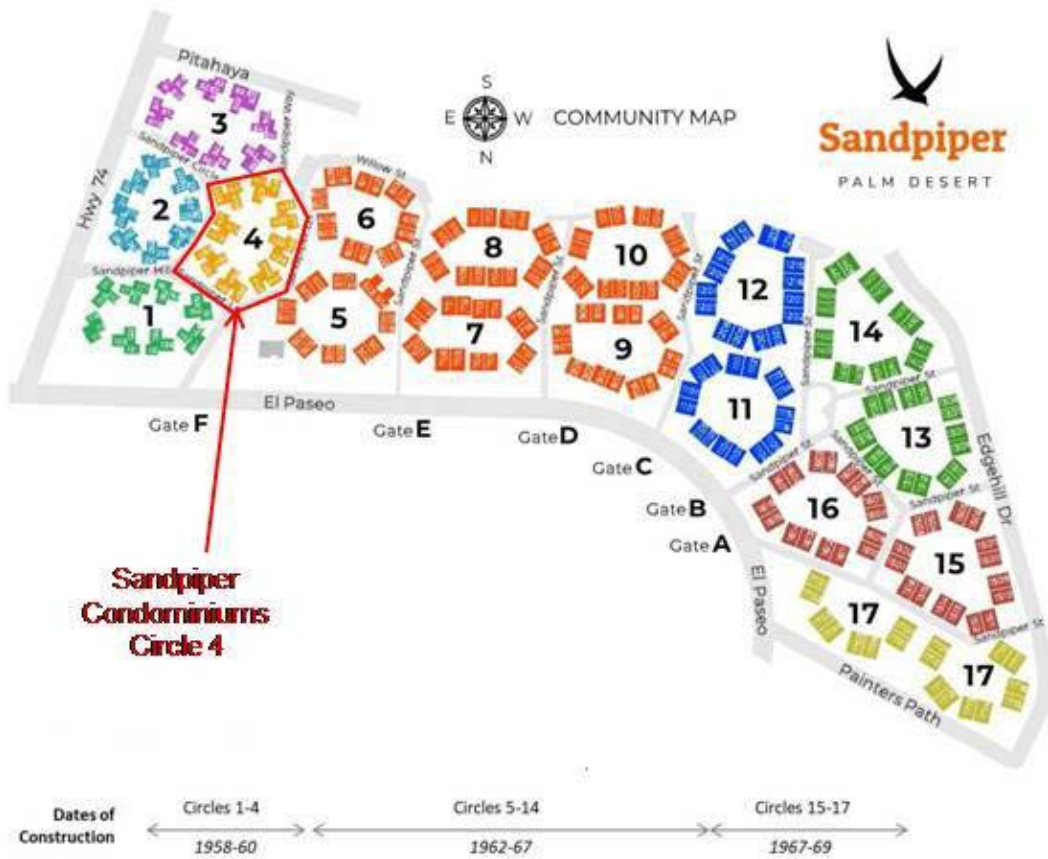
MB 54/36-38 Tract No 3103

NOV 1982

Appendix D. Krisel Site Plan Circle 4



Appendix E. Sandpiper Community Map



Aerial View of Circle 4



Appendix F. Integrity Analysis

INTEGRITY

This 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 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, aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant. The following sections define the seven aspects and explain how they combine to produce integrity.

LOCATION

Location is the place where a historic property was constructed or the place where an historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and people. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved. **Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 remains in its original location and therefore qualifies under this aspect.**

DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. It results from conscious decisions made during the original conception and planning of a property and applies to activities as diverse as community planning, engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture. Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing. **Although the units and site of Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 has seen some alterations, the essential characteristics of form, plan, space, structure and style have survived intact.**

SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves how, not just where the property is situated, and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences. **The setting of the Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 continues to reflect the architects' original design relationship of site and structure.**

MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular 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 indicates the availability of types of materials and technologies. **As mentioned previously, while some of the Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 exterior surface materials have been painted, this change does not constitute a significant loss of the physical elements that expressed the design during the building's period of significance.**

WORKMANSHIP

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is 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 furnishes evidence of the technology of a craft, illustrates 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. **Within the buildings of Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4, the workmanship is comprised of integral ornamental detailing reflected in concrete block, glass and aluminum. The property continues to express a high degree of contemporary period workmanship.**

FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. 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 to the feeling of agricultural life in the 19th century. **When constructed, Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 catered to the aspiring upper middle**

class. As such the “feeling” of the buildings necessarily had to exude urbanity albeit it in a more informal resort location. The late 1950s were a sophisticated, open and optimistic time, a feeling still expressed by the design of this building. Accordingly, Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 retains the integrity of feeling.

ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property’s historic character. For example, a Revolutionary War battlefield whose natural and man-made elements have remained intact since the 18th century will retain its quality of association with the battle. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register. **As previously stated in this nomination, Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 is an important example of midcentury residential development in Palm Desert. The buildings and site represent the city’s overall residential development from the 1950s to the 1960s. Accordingly, it continues its association with a pattern of events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community.**

INTEGRITY SUMMARY: Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 appears to be in excellent condition due largely to the use of construction materials suitable for the harsh desert environment. This integrity analysis confirms that the buildings and site of Circle 4 still possess all seven aspects of integrity. While the buildings have undergone numerous minor alterations since construction and some have been enlarged, virtually all the character-defining features survive. The buildings and site retain a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify them for inclusion in Historic District #4.

Appendix G. Specific Responses to Historic District Designation

Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 meets most of the “Historic District Designation Criteria” from Palm Desert Municipal Code Section 29.50.010.

A. It exemplifies or reflects special elements of cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history; or

Sandpiper Circle 4 exemplifies excellent examples of Mid-Century Modern aesthetics, engineering and architecture.

B. Is identified with persons or events significant in history; or

The Post-World War 2 economic boon signaled a life style change rarely seen in history. Massed produced cars, along with cheap gas and oil products, the massive road projects, technical innovations were created during the war. The production new materials, and vast areas of open real estate would change the fabric of the United States. This was the handwriting on the wall as to what was in store for the Southern California cityscape. Water was being brought in to once arid land. Mass produced housing, suburbia and modern city planning, tract housing and a recreational economy with second homes, coffee shops, and resorts was to become the new norm. City shapes would change forever.

C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or

Roof planks became ceilings with exposed beams serving decoratively. Walls that were merely room dividers or screens allowed in more light while making construction of a fullframed wall unnecessary. Forgoing molding and trim created a contemporary look and saved time and money. Open concepts, indoor/outdoor. Minimal amount of lumber, post and beam construction, flat roofs, large sliding glass doors, clerestory windows, aluminum sash, refrigerated air, matched electrical appliances, modern décor, space age kitchens, swimming pools with dramatic angles, exterior walls of concrete steps, varying roof heights, sun-flaps, putting greens, desert and ‘tropical’ planting. Siting for passive solar was becoming recognized for its value in building in inhospitable climates such as the desert.

D. Represents the work of master builders, designers, or architects; or

The now-iconic Modern Style was started by German architects and designers who immigrated to the United States post-World War II. The mid-century modern movement in the U.S. was an American reflection of the International and Bauhaus movements, including the works of Gropius, Florence Knoll, Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. Although the American component was slightly more organic in form and less formal than the International Style, it is more firmly related to it than any other. Brazilian and Scandinavian architects were also very influential at this time, with a style characterized by clean simplicity and integration with nature. Mid-century architecture was frequently employed in residential structures with the goal of bringing modernism into America's post-war suburbs.

Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius and other master designers/architects tried to bring Modern home design to the masses, but their projects were never constructed on a large scale. To find a midcentury architect who actually brought clean, dramatic design to the middle class, we should look instead to someone like William Krisel, University of Southern California ('49)-trained architect. In an interview, Krisel describes USC in 1945 as a training ground for “a very Modern school.”

The site planning at Sandpiper is a pin-wheel configuration around a central hub (in this case the pool) and its greenbelt concept draws from 19th century British planner Ebenezer Howard's Garden City. Howard's concept envisioned a world where the best of city and rural life is combined to create a utopian environment. He espoused the need for green belts, in an effort to reduce congestion and to create a healthy environment in which to live.

Palmer & Krisel expands Howard's tenet by creating an environment free from cars, a popular symbol of urban distress. Their site planning re-examines not only urban but suburban living. Palmer & Krisel deftly sited all vehicular roads and carports on the perimeter of each circle. Their buildings turn their “fronts” away from the street. The “front porch” no longer faces the street but is moved to look onto the green belt. In this, the pool becomes the “new street scape”: the new social gathering place for the complex.

Although not labeled a master builder, designer or architect, his herculean effort to bring modern home design to the forefront in Southern California, particularly in the Palm Springs area, should be recognized. In the 1950s Krisel helped to nearly double the size of Palm Springs by building 2,500 tract homes that still exist today. He brought over 40,000 total to the greater Southern California area thus cementing the Modern Style to be synonymous with California Style

In 1957, The Case Study House series began to showcase homes commissioned by the magazine, Arts and Architecture, and designed by some of the most influential designers and architects of the era in Southern California, including Charles and Ray Eames, Richard Neutra, Pierre Koenig, and Ed Killingsworth. The residences were intended to be relatively

affordable, replicable houses for post-World War II family living, with an emphasis on “new materials and new techniques in house construction’, much of these gleaned from a recently completed world war.

John Entenza of Arts and Architecture invited William Krisel to participate in the Case Study Houses but Krisel could not find any enthusiastic clients at that time. Palmer and Krisel would have been much more well known if they had a house in this project. Julius Shulman would say “He would have been a valued contributor to this.”

In reality, Krisel did more to spread the ‘spirit’ of the Case Study House Study by providing affordable mass housing sleekly designed with the modern ethos intact. His first, the Corbin Palms in Woodland Hills, in collaboration with Alexander Construction, brought mass produced sleek urban living to Southern California for one of the first times in a suburb 26 miles from the LA center, unheard of at the time. Krisel actually lived in this tract and commuted to his office in Beverly Hill, a pattern that would become more prevalent as the cities of Southern California grew and matured.

Again, according to architectural photographer Julius Shulman, “What Bill Krisel did was bring Modernism to the masses. Krisel packed excellent architecture into houses of modest size, made of modest materials, and he did it on a very thin dime.” At the time, he said, the American Institute of Architects frowned on mass-produced housing, considering the work “not prestigious enough.” Krisel and a handful of others, such as Aia and Eichler, made their names by bringing innovative style to tract developments, a part of the business shunned by the architecture establishment. These prolific Modernists are only lately getting the attention they deserve.

“Krisel spoke the language of builders,” says Palm Springs architecture historian Robert Imber. “He understood that the way to their heart was through their wallet.” Krisel analyzed every detail of construction and produced ideas that assured creative license for him and made money for the builder by keeping costs down.

“Roof planks became ceilings with exposed beams serving decoratively,” Imber says. “Walls that were merely room dividers or screens allowed in more light while making construction of a full-framed wall unnecessary. Forgoing molding and trim created a contemporary look and saved time and money.”

Another Krisel hallmark: He always designed more than the actual building. He created berms, steps, walkways and other hardscaping to balance and enhance his structures. He personally selected all plant material. At USC, Krisel had studied landscape architecture with the legendary Garrett Eckbo. One of the best places to see his merging of architecture and landscape architecture is in the 45-acre Sandpiper Complex. It has remained largely unaltered, making it one of the largest concentrations of intact midcentury architecture anywhere.

Handling both the architecture and landscape architecture fits Krisel's philosophy that an architect should take full responsibility for the total design. "The interior and exterior are all really one entity and shouldn't be done by two different people," he says.

Alan Hess asked the architect if he could explain why Modern design has flourished for more than half a century. Krisel made it clear that Modern Design will continue to do so.

"Modernism is not a style, it's a language," Krisel declared. "And languages don't die out; they adapt."

E. Reflects distinctive examples of community planning or significant development patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, agricultural, or transportation; or

The concept of a condominium, where the ownership of a building or property is a shared entity is a relatively modern phenomenon, although communal living is not. The first "condominium" was built in the United States in 1960 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The concept grew in popularity and by the end of the decade condominiums were present in all 50 states.

The site planning at Sandpiper is a pin-wheel configuration around a central hub (in this case the pool) and its greenbelt concept draws from 19th century British planner Ebenezer Howard's Garden City. Howard's concept envisioned a world where the best of city and rural life is combined to create a utopian environment. He espoused the need for green belts, in an effort to reduce congestion and to create a healthy environment in which to live. Palmer & Krisel expands this idea by creating an environment free from cars, a popular symbol of urban distress. Their site planning re-examines not only urban but suburban living. Palmer & Krisel deftly sited all vehicular roads and carports on the perimeter of each circle. Their buildings turn their "fronts" away from the street. The "front porch" no longer faces the street but is moved to look onto the green belt. In this, the pool becomes the "new street scape": the new social gathering place for the complex.

Beginning in 1956 with their first Palm Springs tract, Twin Palms, Krisel, the firm's lead designer for desert houses, and Alexander Homes, the home developer used variation of orientation and roofline, integration of indoor and outdoor living, and careful use of standardized elements to make modernist design affordable enabling an affordable 2nd home for the escape from the city. This popularized this post-and-beam architectural style in the Coachella Valley. Alexander houses and similar homes feature low-pitched roofs, wide eaves, open-beamed ceilings, and floor-to-ceiling windows. The houses facilitated indoor-outdoor living in the desert with sheltered patios and pools and in some cases breezeways clerestory windows improved air circulation while bringing light into the house.

The interior designs included flexible room dividers to adapt the floorplan to the owners' preferences.

F. Conveys a sense of historic and architectural cohesiveness through its design, setting, materials, workmanship or associations.”

Architect William Krisel of the firm of Palmer & Krisel, has long been given credit for the design and much of the on-site supervision of the Sandpiper Condominium complex. Krisel viewed the architect's job as being that of the “master designer” responsible for designing projects that were comfortable, cost-effective and memorable. Krisel also believed that architects should have respect for the modernist masters and the principles they espoused, including a site plan that created a “built-environment” that attempted to combine the best of city and rural life in a utopian environment.

G. “Is an archaeological, paleontological, botanical, geological topographical ecological or geographical resource that has yield or has the potential to yield important information in history or pre-history.”

This criterion does not apply to this nomination.

DESIGNATION CRITERIA SUMMARY: The foregoing evaluation finds Sandpiper Condominiums Circle 4 (both buildings and site) eligible for listing as a Historic District Under Palm Desert Municipal Code Section 29.50.010 paragraphs A, B, C, D, E and F. Additionally, the buildings and site retain a high degree of integrity.

Appendix H. Historical Documentation

Front page news coverage of Sandpiper project announcement
(Desert Sun, March 21, 1958)

Desert Sun, 21 March 1958

\$6 Million Garden Apartment Project Announced



The Desert Sun
THIRTY FIRST YEAR
VOL. XXXI, NO. 160 The Desert Empire's Daily Newspaper PHONE FA 5-5005
16 Pages Palm Springs, California, Friday, March 21, 1958 Single Copy 10c

PALM DESERT — Construction of a luxurious "own your own home" hotel, which will cost \$6,000,000, was announced today by William L. O'Bryon, president of the Western Land and Capital Company of Newport Beach.

The project will be located on a 45 acre site in Palm Desert, between Highway 111 and the Palms to Pines highway, in the sloping foreground of the Santa Rosa mountains.

PLANNED TO incorporate a score of completely new ideas in luxury desert living, the apartment project will be called the Sandpiper, and will provide "residential privacy with resort hotel service."

Included in the plans that call for 600 one story garden type residences, will be 24 heated swimming pools, eight tournament-size tennis courts, 12 private putting greens, and a dozen uniquely designed and secluded children's play yards.

A COCKTAIL LOUNGE and dining room also is scheduled, and is planned in location near the intersection of Highway 111 and the Palms to Pines Highway.

Outstanding features of the actual apartments will be their attractive design and functional living plans that can accommodate desert entertaining and year round family living. First units will include two bedrooms, two full baths, two dressing areas, and patios off both the bedroom and living areas. Kitchens will be completely pushbutton, compact and modern.

SANDPIPER APARTMENT homes will be sold on a cooperative basis with prices that start at \$17,795. The complete recreational facilities are included in the price, along with arrangement for memberships in the nearby Shadow Mountain Club.

This new concept in desert living will also bring a new car-free existence to the Sandpiper owner, according to O'Bryon. Included will be the same kind of service as offered in the finest resort hotel. Clean linen, Sandpiper monogrammed towels, maid and room service are included, along with a gardener, pool maintenance and other typical hotel services.

TO ADD TO THE leisure living in the desert, each home will have individual privacy, tropical landscaping, complete underground utilities (including TV and telephone).

AT A PRESS conference held at the Shadow Mountain Club today, O'Bryon told newsmen that the investing group was looking forward to a continuing development program in this fast growing desert city. Behind the development is Western Land and Capital Company, substantial investors in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, as well as the San Diego area. This will be their first project in the desert.

Builder of the project will be George M. Holstein and Sons of Costa Mesa, Las Vegas and Beverly Hills. The long time Southland builder has built scores of luxury homes, and has recently completed the Fairway Cottages at Thunderbird Golf Course.

Architects for the company are Palmer and Krisel, AIA, noted for the design of homes and apartments and winner of a score of national awards.

A PANORAMA OF MOUNTAINS and desert in the Palm Desert area provides a backdrop for typical cluster of Sandpiper garden apartments set to get underway within a few weeks in the resort city. The six million dollar development of the Western Land & Capital Company will include nearly 600 apartments and will include individual patios, tennis courts, putting greens and pools. To be sold on the popular "own-your-own" basis, the developers revealed that linen, maid service and other resort hotel luxuries would be included for the Sandpiper owners in keeping with the theme of modern desert leisure. Palmer and Krisel, AIA, are the architects. George M. Holstein & Sons are the builders.

\$6 Million Development Planned For 45 Acre Site in Palm Desert

Plans Call For 600 Homes

Sandpiper advertisement circa 1960



carefree living . . .

SANDPIPER

palm desert's luxury "Own-Your-Own" apartments

A brand new concept in "carefree" desert living in beautiful, restricted Palm Desert. Now you can own-your-own garden apartment . . . enjoy pool, putting green, tennis courts and other Country Club facilities — plus all the personal care of maid service, linens, complete maintenance of a fine resort hotel! Under the palms amidst tropical landscaping with a backdrop of mountain and desert, the SANDPIPER offers residential privacy with the carefree existence of the most luxurious hotel!

**2 bedrooms 2 baths—built-in kitchens — pools — patios
initial garden units \$17,995—reservations now being taken**

A few choice apartments in the first units of the SANDPIPER are still available. For full details and illustrated brochure write the SANDPIPER, P. O. Box 571, Palm Desert or visit The SANDPIPER, El Paseo and Palms-to-Pines Highway, Palm Desert.

**A development of the Western Land & Capital Co., Newport Beach
George M. Holstein and Sons, builders — Palmer & Krisel, A.I.A.**

Sandpiper advertisement circa 1960



The Sandpiper

**own-your-own
garden apartments**

2 bedrooms, 2 baths,
pool, putting green, ramada
ready now for lease
or purchase, \$21,500

Ph. Jack Endors FI 6-6156

Models on Palms to Pines Hwy.
and El Pasco (off 111)

**George M. Holstein & Son,
Builders**

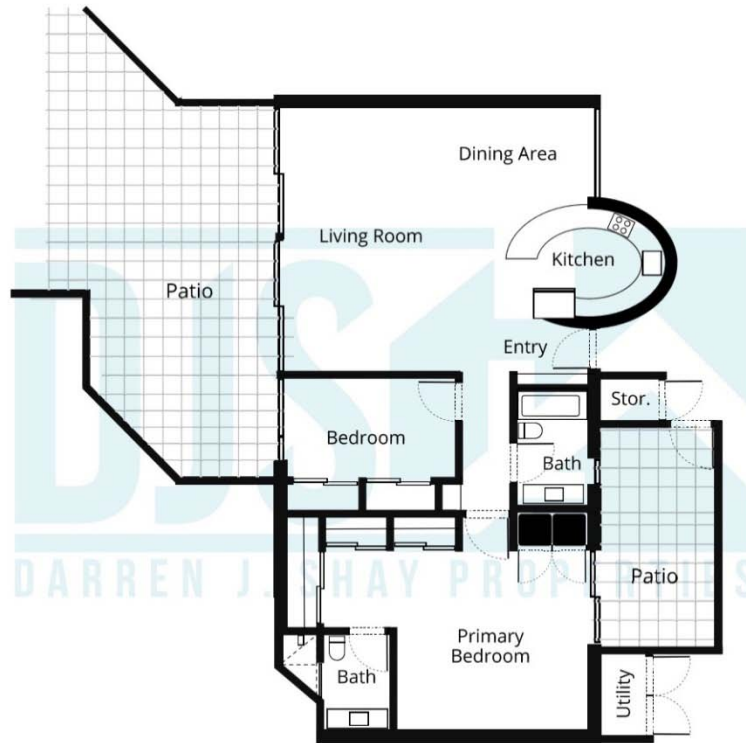
Postcard circa 1960



"These picturesque apartment units a few miles east of Palm Springs provide a perfect winter retreat where one can enjoy the warm winter sun and the lush desert living."

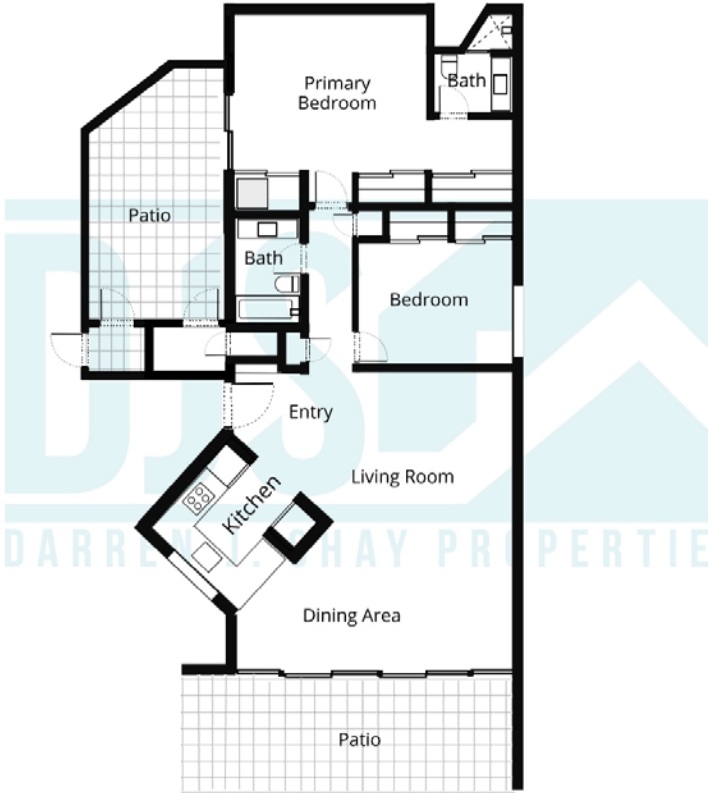
Appendix I. Floor Plans and Unit Photos

Circle 4 "A" Unit Floor Plan



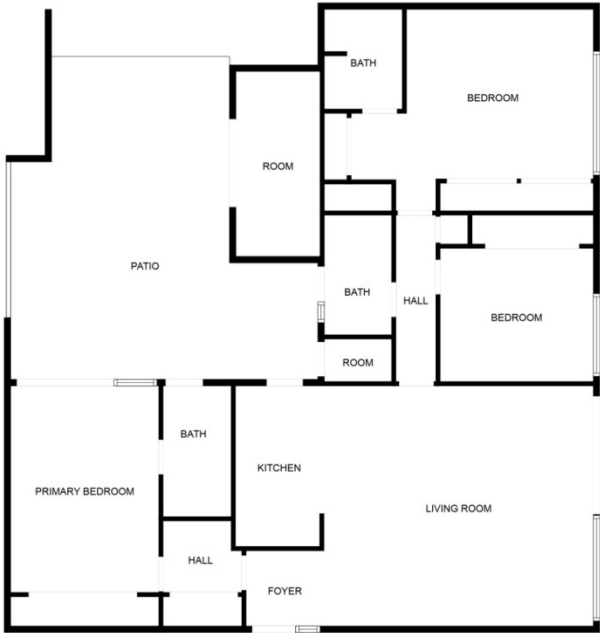
Unit 441

Circle 4 "B" Unit Floorplan



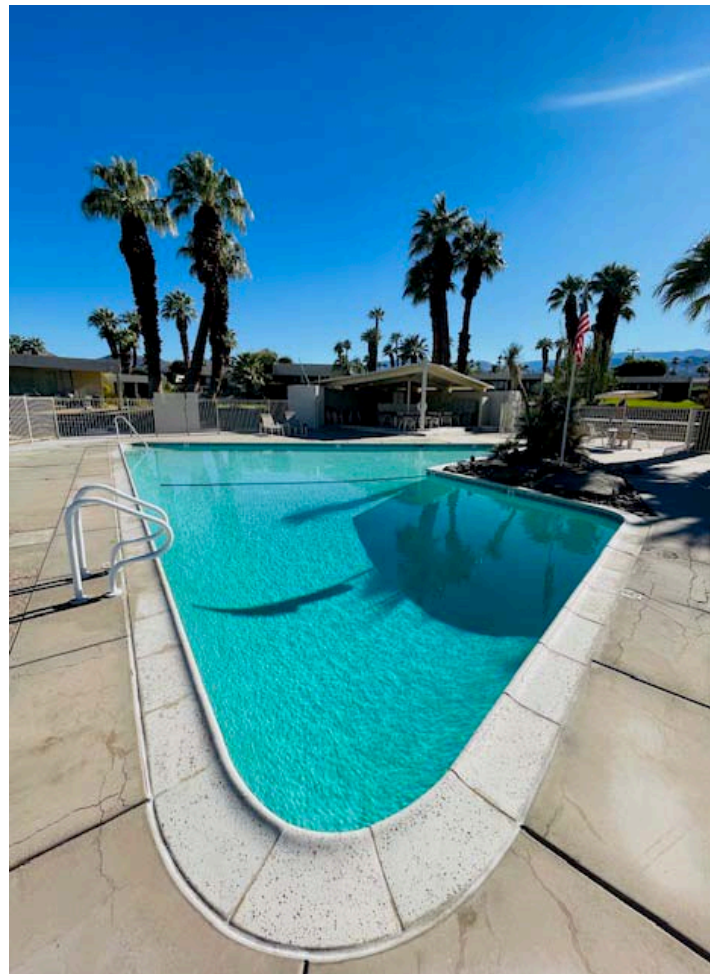
Unit 442

Circle 4 "C" Unit Floorplan



Unit 483

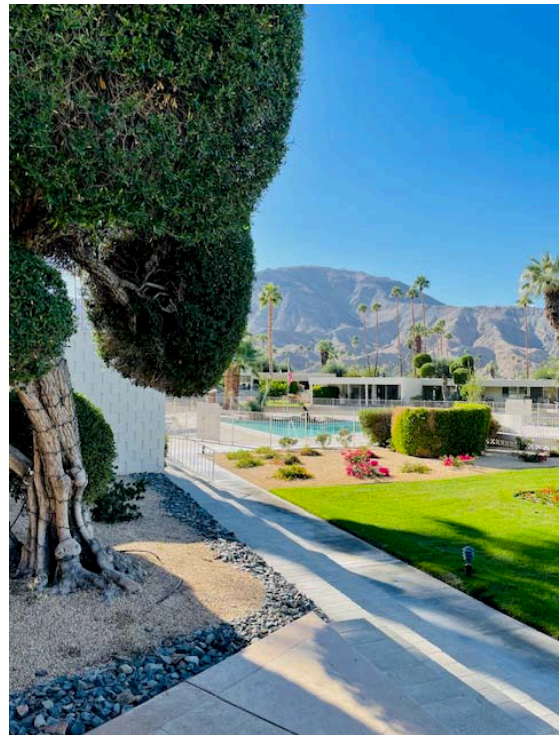
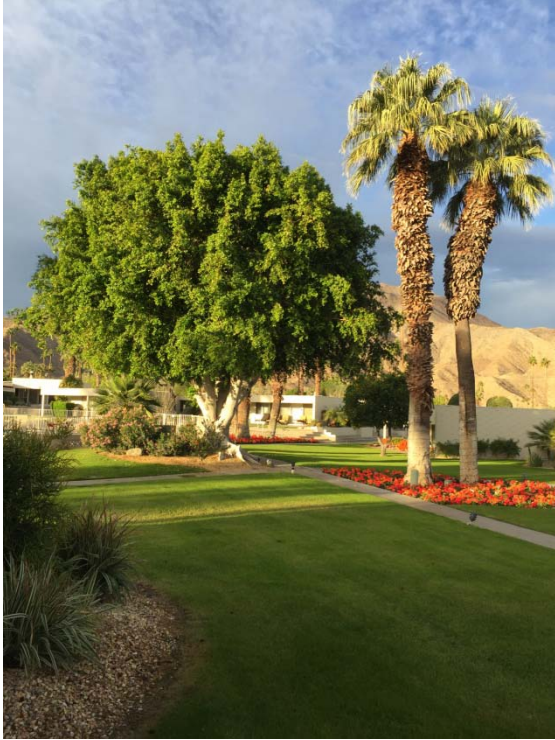
Appendix J. Pool and Ramada





Appendix K. Grounds





Appendix L. Historic Olive Trees

"I don't think of landscape architecture as a separate activity. I would no more ignore that aspect of design or pass it to someone else than I would leave out the climate control or plumbing."

William Krisel

For William Krisel, the harmony of the exterior landscape and gardens with architecture and interior spaces was critical. When looking at the site plan for Circle 4 (Appendix D) a variety of trees, shrubbery, ground cover, and hardscape can be seen. Within the circle, one *Olea Europa* (European Olive Tree) was placed near each of the eight C units. Four of those original trees have survived and still add to the harmony of the exterior landscape.



Unit 473



Unit 423



Unit 433



Unit 483

Appendix M. Decorative Concrete Block

*"Decorative concrete block walls were used extensively. The blocks had sculpted patterns and cutouts, and were sometimes indented for further effect when placed. Palmer & Krisel actively configured the detailed placement of many of these patterns for the Sandpiper. The Superlite Concrete Block Company of Calipatria (in the Salton Sea area) supplied the newly designed block, which was named **Shadowal**."*

William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language of Modernism. 2016, edited by Chris Menrad



Unit 461



Unit 443



Unit 462



Unit 441



Unit 423