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Development in Southern California after World War II: Architecture, Photography, & Design

By Joshua Robb Edmundson

Abstract: The midcentury architecture and design phenomenon was born as California's urban landscape exploded in the post-World War II era. It was driven by the arrival of millions of veterans as they returned from the war eager to begin new lives and families. The promise of great economic opportunity, as well as spectacular natural beauty and weather attracted many of these who moved to the Golden State. They attended colleges and universities and helped to build sprawling cities, freeway systems, and suburbs. This massive surge of development created a haven for a generation of architects, designers and photographers who introduced a new way of thinking about the way people lived. This paper explores midcentury modernity from its source in the Bauhaus to its heyday in Palm Springs, perhaps the world's greatest mecca of midcentury architecture. This time of growth sparked the development of entirely new styles in furniture design and manufacture, technology, and fashion that complimented that era of prosperity and optimism. There were many unique professionals who contributed to the legacy of midcentury architecture and design that we pursue, such as; in architecture, Richard Neutra, in photography Julius Shulman and Charles and Ray Eames, each has contributed to the legacy of the era.

Introduction

Being surrounded by spectacular and distinctive architecture in Palm Springs, as well as working as a guide on the Sunnylands estate, have sparked a passion in me for all things midcentury. In this paper, I have traced modernism as it appeared in architecture in Palm Springs to its historical roots, both in terms of the individuals who shaped a distinct midcentury modern aesthetic, and also the social historical context into which that aesthetic was introduced in Southern California. By tracing the emergence of modernist architecture in Palm Springs to its historical antecedents we see that architecture tells us more about a community than just an individual homeowner's or designer's sense of style; it tells us about how individuals viewed their place in the community and in the world at a particular moment in time.



Figure 1. Sunnylands, A. Quincy Jones, 1963, Photo by the author, 2013.

In the years following the end of World War II, the United States underwent a massive social, technical, and domestic transformation. The beaches and year-round sunshine in California attracted millions of veterans in this time of optimism and exponential growth, causing the population of the Golden State to soar. This necessitated a flurry of construction of every kind, from vast suburbs and freeway systems to hospitals, libraries, museums, and schools. In this essay, we will explore this era of building, some of its notable architects, and Palm Springs, a midcentury architectural jewel in the California desert.

The Post WWII Years and the G.I. Bill

Following the end of World War II, the G.I. Bill made it possible for veterans to attend college, and millions of them did. From this opportunity a new generation of upwardly mobile Californians arose, and a new phenomenon called suburbia appeared. This was an era in which anything was possible, from molded fiberglass furniture, to sleek modern steel and glass homes cantilevered over cliffs or canyons. These “space age” homes were filled with gadgets of every kind, each designed for easy living in the modern age. Journalist and architecture expert, Deborah K. Dietsch stated that in the postwar world, “unprecedented prosperity led to a consumer boom in both America and Europe that allowed ordinary people from California to Copenhagen to live better than ever before.”¹

As millions of servicemen and servicewomen returned from the war, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was concerned with the coming

¹ Deborah K. Dietsch, *Classic Modern Midcentury at Home* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 12.

transition of a new generation of veterans who needed to assimilate into a society at peace. The president desired a smoother transition from the wartime to peacetime home front and economy than had occurred after World War I. According to a Special Series report on NPR Radio Diaries, during the Great Depression millions of World War I veterans across the United States became homeless; our wartime heroes were starving and desperate for help from the government for which they had sacrificed so much. As a result, thousands of veterans converged on Washington D.C. to demand early payment of a promised veteran's bonus, thus becoming known as The Bonus Army. They set up camps throughout the capitol, which soon caused panic in the Hoover administration. Federal troops were sent in to disperse the veterans, which led to bloody clashes, the death of two veterans, and the torching of the Bonus Army's encampments. Images of the mayhem quickly spread, causing outrage across the nation.

Understandably, President Roosevelt was eager to avoid another similar disaster. This led to the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, more commonly known as the G.I. Bill, which had unexpected popularity, and "more than 2,250,000 American veterans received...their college education as a result of legislation known as the G.I. Bill."² These college graduates became engineers, teachers, scientists, doctors, and other well-paid professionals, who were in many cases in positions to purchase larger and more luxurious private single-family dwellings than had previously been the case for many Americans. Midcentury architects like Richard Neutra, A. Quincy Jones, and William Cody provided the modern designs that became the homes of the new American workforce.

The Building Boom: New Styles for a New Generation

The Great Depression had an enormous impact on the lives of people across America. Many lost their homes; those who did not often lived in multi-generational dwellings or remained in old housing. Due to these problems, housing construction slowed significantly and came to a near standstill during the war years when resources were funneled to support the war effort. The result of this phenomenon was that the affluent and growing generation of educated Californians after WWII found a shortage in housing, which created a demand for quick, easy-to-build single-family dwellings. According to the United States Census Bureau's website, the post-WWII surge in homeownership was remarkable. Specifically, "a booming economy, favorable tax laws, a

² Michael D. Haydock. "The G.I. Bill," *American History* (March 1996): 52.

rejuvenated home building industry and easier financing saw homeownership explode nationally.”³

This demand for housing created a market for an innovative group of young, well-educated architects who were ready to provide an entirely new living experience at this time. The concept was based on a new way of thinking about how people live, about how people built their homes, and about our interaction with nature. There was experimentation with prefabricated modular housing units that included sections of walls and windows that could easily assemble on a flat concrete pad with a steel frame in a matter of days, as well as large, mass-produced housing developments.

Americans had been widely introduced to new industry during the war, and in the post-war environment the prevailing attitude was that anything was possible. It was the beginning of what is commonly known as the “Atomic Age.” This environment created a market in which, according to Deitsch, “buoyed by the victory of war and a booming economy, many consumers were attracted to the idea of starting afresh in spaces as sleek as a fighter plane.”⁴ The combination of all these factors created what is today called the midcentury modern architectural movement, which will be referred to as midcentury moving forward.

Modern architecture flourished in California, as millions flocked to its beaches, mountains, and deserts to enjoy the sun, economic opportunity, and spectacular natural beauty for which it is renowned. The following is an eloquent passage that summarizes the aesthetics of the midcentury architectural movement: “American modernism was based on the international style, but rejected its austere rationalism in response to the fanciful and optimistic postwar art of living in the United States. Landscapes intermingle with inner spaces through the use of materials and techniques such as native rock, immense walls of glass, refined aluminum lines [and] ethereal butterfly-winged roofs.”⁵ These elements complemented the dramatic and rugged natural environment of California, and the preface of *Beautiful Homes and Gardens in California* captures this spirit as well: “California architecture [expresses] forms of a new environment out of a freer way of life, out of a new totality of garden and house.”⁶

³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Historical Census of Housing Tables 1900-2000,” prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC, 2011.

⁴ Deitsch, 12.

⁵ Alaine Coquelle, *Palm Springs Style*, trans. Sharon Grevet (New York: Assouline Publishing, 2005), 16.

⁶ Herbert Weiskamp, *Beautiful Homes and Gardens in America*, trans. Herbert Weiskamp. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1964), 3.



Figure 2. Steel House, Donald Wexler, Early 1960's, Photo by the author, 2014

The Case Study House Program and Julius Schulman

In the January 1945 issue of *Arts & Architecture Magazine*, owner and editor John Entenza wrote about proposing to begin the study, planning, design, and construction of eight houses, each to fulfill the specifications of a special living problem in the Southern California area. Nationally known architects, chosen not only for their obvious talents, but also for their ability to realistically evaluate housing in terms of need, were commissioned to create “good” living conditions for eight American families. Due to the popularity of the project, 36 homes were ultimately designed. In all, 24 houses were built in the Los Angeles area between 1948 and 1962.

When the first six Case Study houses were completed, they were furnished with modern furniture and opened to the public for display. This ingenuity in building design included entirely new concepts in furniture as well. Designers like Charles and Ray Eames, Eero Saarinen, and Harry Bertoina used new materials like molded fiberglass, plywood, plastic, and woven chrome to create designs that often looked like they might have come from a sculpture garden rather than a furniture showroom or catalogue. All this, along with new clothing, automobiles, and gadgets designed for every task helped to create the entirely new midcentury experience.

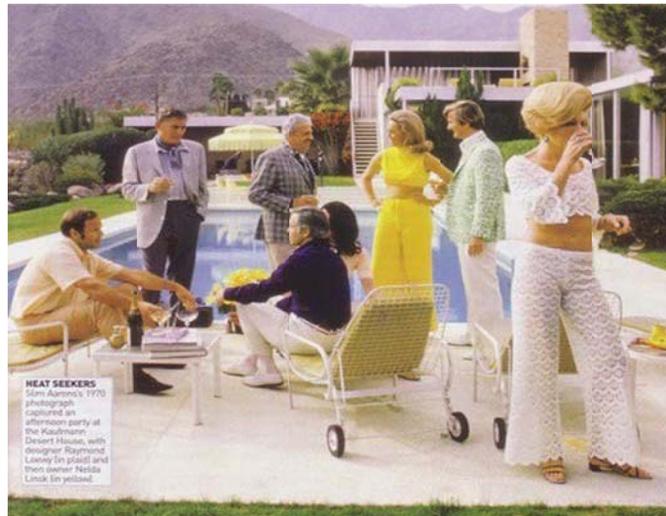


Figure 3. Kaufmann residence in Palm Springs, Richard Neutra, 1946, photograph by Julius Shulman, 1947

According to Esther McCoy, who was an editor at *Arts & Architecture Magazine*, the buildings were modular, rectilinear, and built on a flat slab; they were distinct from their sites, and they used standardized elements to reduce the costs, but that turned out to be unsuccessful. During the time the houses were open, a staggering 368,544 persons visited them, and the critical success of the houses removed more than one obstacle in the way of public acceptance for experimental design. McCoy declared in the magazine that the Case Study Houses influenced building practices across America during the 1950s and 1960s. Open floor plans, incorporation of materials such as plywood and plastic, built-in storage facilities, flat roofs, skylights, and steel framing were all legacies of the program.

Entenza used his magazine to promote modernism as a forum for designers and architects and challenged architects to design and build new homes that were revolutionary in their materials, design, and construction. "In 1945, the Case Study House Program...commanded the attention of the national and international community with its unprecedented visions of domestic space in Southern California."⁷

⁷ Pierluigi Serriano, *Julius Schulman Modernism Rediscovered* (Cologne: Taschen, 2009), 6.



Figure 4. Case Study House #22, Pierre Koenig, 1960, Photo by the author, 2012

Architectural expert Elizabeth Smith states that the Case Study House program remains one of America's most significant contributions to architecture at mid-century. Conceived as low-cost experimental modern prototypes, the thirty-six designs of the program epitomized the aspirations of a generation of modern architects. It was very much a lifestyle, marked by a focus on "the essentials, perhaps in recognition of the preceding years of recession and war...modernism is perhaps the best expression of the golden rules of Mies van der Rohe – 'Less is more' – and Charles and Ray Eames – 'Doing the most with the least.'"⁸ The Case Study House program, *Arts & Architecture Magazine*, and the iconic photography of Julius Shulman were major vehicles driving mid-century architecture. Through his brilliant photography, Julius Shulman exposed the world to this chic new way of life.

Shulman's legendary photography captured the spirit of the era; his two most famous photos are of Richard Neutra's Kaufmann House (1947 in Palm Springs, and Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #22 (1960 in Los Angeles. These images are icons of post-WWII life in California and have been circulated extensively in print and film media worldwide. They were more than just photographs of houses – they included sleek modern furniture, the glamorous homeowners, and even their modern cars, which brought life to the vignettes Shulman was creating. The stylishly dressed models testified to the luxurious, elegant, and sun-filled lives of this new modern generation. Shulman's career far

⁸ Coquelle, 20.

exceeded those two residences: between 1936 and 1986, he “completed some 6,000 photographic assignments in North America.”⁹

Shulman was so well known, and so respected for his talents, that for decades he was the primary photographer to document significant new modern architectural projects. Shulman’s brilliant juxtaposition of architecture, furniture, and art intrigued and fascinated millions of people worldwide and made them want to emulate the subjects of his photos. Many of his photographs were shot in black and white and feature dramatic plays of light and shadow. Without Shulman’s photography, the midcentury modern movement, including not only architecture but also art and fashion, might not have grown into the international phenomenon for which it is famous.

The Roots of Midcentury Architecture



Figure 5. Villa Savoye, Le Corbusier, 1931

The American midcentury architectural movement traces its roots to early twentieth-century Europe where artists and architects were reacting to the modernization of the industrial age. In 1919, Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus, an art school in Germany which was famous for the way it combined crafts and the fine arts. The Bauhaus became one of the most influential precursors to modern architecture and design. According to midcentury architecture expert Janice Lyle, everything had to be “white, everything had to be smooth, the rooms had to be square. From his studio in Paris, architect Le Corbusier re-purposed utilitarian

⁹ Serriano, 6.

items like factory window frames and railings for use in homes and office buildings.”¹⁰ A generation of intellectuals, including architects like Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, and Marcel Breuer fled the Nazi regime in the 1930s, where the Bauhaus was “shut down under pressure from the ‘National Socialists.’”¹¹ These architects came to America and developed their craft into the midcentury architectural movement, taking cues from a prolific American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, who turned away from conventional architecture and created a style of his own that is marked by craftsmanship, linear structures, and the use of native stone and wood.



Figure 6. Frank Lloyd Wright home, Oak Park, Illinois

The community of Oak Park in Illinois contains the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the world, including his home and studio. The author visited Oak Park and was struck by the simplicity and elegance of Wright’s designs. The spacious structures with their decorative carved wood and stained glass elements convey a sense of harmony. Fallingwater, the famous home Wright designed in 1935 for Edgar Kauffman Sr. in rural Pennsylvania is cantilevered over a waterfall. Falling Water is a remarkable precursor to the new midcentury architectural style that was on the horizon, with its flat roofs, and horizontal quality with wide overhanging eaves and ledges.

¹⁰ Janice Lyle, *Roots of Modernism* (California: Hillman & Carr Incorporated, 2012).

¹¹ Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, “The Bauhaus Building by Walter Gropius,” accessed November 24, 2013, <http://www.bauhaus-dessau.de/bauhaus-building.html>.



Figure 7. Falling Water, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1935

Wright heavily influenced the new generation of designers like Richard Neutra, who worked for Wright for a few months before becoming disillusioned by his heavy style. Neutra moved to Los Angeles in 1925 to pursue his own interests. There he joined his old school friend R.M. Schindler. The two had attended the Vienna Technical University and together they founded the new school of Los Angeles modernism, until “professional and personal incompatibilities drove them apart.”¹² Architectural historian Sidney Williams wrote about how “their respective offices functioned as studios for young designers – both local and recent arrivals to Los Angeles. Neutra’s fame began with his widely published Lovell Health House (1927-1929) in the Hollywood Hills, considered to be the first steel-frame residence in America.”¹³ Neutra and Schindler were the first of this group of young architects from around the globe, who would come to define what we today call the midcentury modern architectural movement. They were of varying degrees of education, and came from diverse backgrounds and ideologies. Many of them were outrageous in their ambitions and several were known for their tempers or uncompromising natures. They all believed in one thing, however, modern design using modern materials and American ingenuity.

¹² Barbara Lamprecht, *Neutra*, (Cologne: Taschen, 2006), 9.

¹³ Lauren Weiss Bricker and Sidney Williams, *Steel and Shade: The Architecture of Donald Wexler*, (Berlin: Kehrer Heidelberg Berlin, 2011), 11.



Figure 8. Lovell Heath House, Richard Neutra, 1929

In the end, these brilliant, futuristic homes turned out to be too iconoclastic for the average Californian. Most ordinary citizens, when given the choice between a sleek modernist home and a more familiar, traditionally designed home, chose the traditional. Thousands of Spanish bungalows and sprawling suburbs filled with ranch-style houses spread out across the urban landscape. Also, as inflation rates rose and prices soared, individually designed small homes became too expensive for most people, and so, the movement aimed at giving people a new living experience became more rarified; a luxury more in the reach of wealthier individuals. According to Esther McCoy, “by 1962 it became clear that the battle for housing had been won by the developers...only one Case Study House architect designed prototypes for a developer – A. Quincy Jones planned tracts for Eichler Homes which were models of good land planning and design.”¹⁴ Even today, “the majority of houses...are still mostly wood stud, sheetrock, and stucco, appearing in a sprawl of unending suburbs.”¹⁵ The urban sprawl continues to stretch further across the state, growing larger year by year, so much so, that the tiny resort town of Palm Springs may indeed become a suburb of Los Angeles in the near future.

¹⁴ Esther McCoy, *Case Study Houses: 1945-1962* (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1977), 3.

¹⁵ Cathy Lang Ho and Raul A. Barreneche, *House American Houses for the New Century* (New York: Universe Publishing, 2001).

Palm Springs and the “Golden Age of Architecture”

Many of these modern architects who gained fame for their midcentury architectural innovation around the world had gravitated to California and later produced buildings in the tiny California desert community of Palm Springs. There they created what today is the greatest concentration of midcentury architecture in the world. This seasonal resort town had been filled with millionaires and movie stars for years. The earlier Spanish Colonial style, with its elaborate plasterwork, thick adobe walls, arched windows and doorways had fallen out of fashion. The leisure class who frequented Palm Springs wanted to build their homes and estates in the newest style, which produced a lively market for midcentury architecture. Elaine Coquelle wrote that it was not until “John Porter Clark and Albert Frey, as well as Richard Neutra, John Lautner, William F. Cody, Stewart Williams, Donald Wexler, A. Quincy Jones, and William Krisel [arrived] that modern architecture truly arrived in Palm Springs.”¹⁶ This group of architects began to design not only private homes in Palm Springs, but also the commercial and civic infrastructure of the city. One of the most prolific, Donald Wexler, was the designer of numerous public buildings including the tent-like Palm Springs airport. Coquelle writes that to Wexler, modernism is an “interplay of multiple experiments with emphasis on new technologies: metal framing, steel joinery, sliding glass walls extending to infinity, prefabricated modules, concrete slabs, etc. Wexler called the era ‘the golden years of architecture.’”¹⁷

¹⁶ Coquelle, 16.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.



Figure 9. Palm Springs City Hall, Albert Frey, 1952, Photo by the author, 2014

To paraphrase from the book *Palm Springs Modern*, by Adele Cygelman, in the 1950s, golf was gaining popularity, and along with it, the idea of the golf course lifestyle. Homes would actually be constructed right on the fairway, with a whole culture built around this novel concept of living on the golf course, being part of a country club community, and being able to golf every day with ease. Developers planned seasonal golf resort country club communities and put the lots around the fairways up for sale with great success. Celebrities like Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Desi Arnez, and Lucille Ball, along with powerful politicians like Dwight Eisenhower and Gerald Ford all purchased homes in Palm Springs. Billionaire philanthropists Walter and Leonore Annenberg built a 200-acre walled estate with their own private golf course and invited their close friends, like Presidents Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, to take working vacations from the White House to relax and golf in luxury and privacy. Even the Queen of England visited them at their iconic A. Quincy Jones-designed home in Rancho Mirage.



Figure 10. Sunnylands, A. Quincy Jones, 1963, Photo by the author, 2014

Through all these developments, the fame and luster of the enclave of Palm Springs became cemented in the American psyche forever. The creation of this entirely new community and luxurious way of life was brought about by a group of wealthy individuals who were accustomed to having their homes custom-built and decorated. They were a leisure class who could afford to invest in spectacular, innovative resort experiences, private walled estates, or austere glass pavilions filled with exquisite modern furniture. They golfed, swam, and played tennis daily, before balmy evenings spent dining poolside in the latest fashions purchased in the glamorous Wurdeman and Becket-designed Bullocks Wilshire on Highway 111 in downtown Palm Springs.

Palm Springs for the Average American

According to the Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism's website, "with the advent of the air conditioner, the desert as a year-round destination and residential community became possible for the first time."¹⁸ People who were not necessarily wealthy enough to own a home in the desert to occupy for a few months each year could now live in the desert full time, and the dynamics of the tiny community began to change to include a

¹⁸ Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism, "Visit Palm Springs," accessed November 24, 2013, <http://www.visitpalmsprings.com/page/palm-springs-history/8180.html>.

broader spectrum of residents beyond the wealthy and those in the service industry, who catered to the seasonal influx. Albert Frey was one of the midcentury architects who made his home permanently in Palm Springs, and for the rest of his life he lived in his own minimalist glass box perched on a cliff overlooking downtown Palm Springs.



Figure 11. Frey House II, Albert Frey, 1964

As Donald Wexler had discovered, the desert was a perfect vehicle for new building methods like prefabricated panels and units, and modern materials, such as steel, glass, and concrete. In an article published in the *Toronto Star* on Palm Springs modernism, Christopher Hume states that many of the new structures, from private homes to public and commercial spaces, were held up by steel beams; these structures contained large open spaces and had windows for walls. The casualness of American life was reflected in the architecture; the rigid hierarchy of traditional housing gave way to a human-scaled flow of rooms and a sense of connection, interior and exterior. E. Stewart Williams, one of the most prolific architects of Palm Springs' iconic public landmarks, had the philosophy that "the character of the site should be the generator of the form of the architect's solution. The architecture should be an expression of the form that surrounds it."¹⁹ This is an excellent example of the sentiment of modernist architects, as opposed to traditional architecture. Williams is also quoted in the pamphlet from the Palm Springs Modern Committee on the Iconic Home Tour, February 2013, stating that he thought that a house ought to look like it grew from the ground, rather than falling from the sky.

¹⁹ Michael Stern, *E. Stewart Williams A Tribute to His Work and Life* (Palm Springs: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2005), 2.

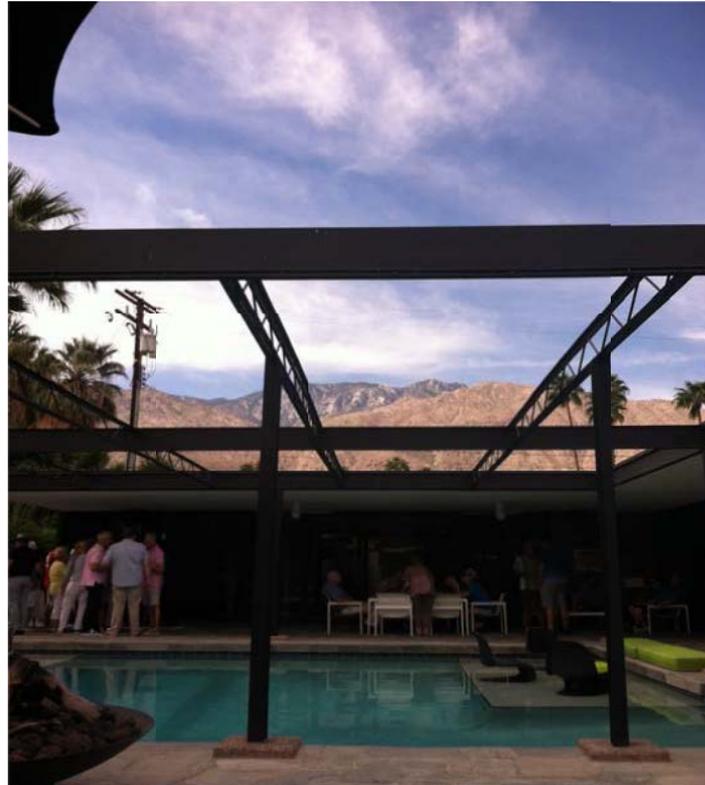


Figure 12. Private Home, E. Stewart Williams, 1959, Photo by the Author, 2014

The scene unfolded over years, as the population of seasonal wealthy elite converged on Palm Springs every winter, the year-round population slowly grew. Middle-class retirees moved into the valley to enjoy the hot climate, quiet life, and ample golf. The architectural experience continued to awe any who encountered it. Architects learned how to build in the heat and sun of the desert environment. “Don’t use wood on exteriors since it expands, contracts, and disintegrates rapidly. Avoid stucco and plaster – they crack easily. Use only steel, concrete, stone, [and] glass. Build the house low on the ground and let it conform to the landscape. Make the outdoors as much a part of the indoors as possible.”²⁰ This was the mantra of the time, but part of the human experience is that every generation wants to make its own mark, and so, by the 1970s, the midcentury style became dated.

²⁰ Alaine Cycleman, *Palm Springs Modern* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2009), 23.



Figure 13. Coachella Valley Savings and Loan, E. Stewart Williams, 1961

Palm Springs fell off the international radar. Many of the once-famous desert midcentury structures and dwellings fell into disrepair while some were destroyed to make way for newer developments and the city turned into a virtual ghost town, with empty shops filling the once-glamorous streets of downtown. The economic decline, however, actually saved an exceptional number of the historic structures from alteration. Many were abandoned, sat empty, or lived in as they were for decades, preserved in the desert heat.

In the past ten years, Palm Springs has become a popular destination for midcentury enthusiasts from around the world, as the design-minded community at large once again relishes the sleek, clean lines and minimalist design ethos of the midcentury era. A new generation is striving to recapture some of that bright optimism of America in the 1950s and 1960s, and they have been coming to Palm Springs to do it.

Conclusion: Restoration, Preservation, and Rebirth

The midcentury era was a product of the post-World War II boom that swept across America and Europe. It was a time of optimism and change that manifested itself in architecture and design. This dramatically changed many aspects of people's lives, from their clothing, hairstyles, and furniture to their houses, cars, and more. This boom took ideas born in the Bauhaus and the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright and developed them into an architectural concept that was based on clean lines, simplicity, and industrially manufactured materials that were standardized for efficiency in a rapidly expanding society. Southern

California became home to millions of veterans, who built communities across the landscape, and brilliant architects were drawn to its sunny coasts and dramatic deserts. They designed a plethora of homes, libraries, airports, gas stations, and more before the fickle public eye turned to the next fad, the shag carpets and avocado appliances of the 1970s.

The desert oasis of Palm Springs had long been a haven for the wealthy who had flocked there to enjoy the warm winters for decades. They largely abandoned the town when the boom ended, however, and the sleek homes and chic designs of the era fell out of fashion. These homes sit largely unappreciated, but there is a vibrant community hard at work, concerned with preserving and restoring these relics of an optimistic and experimental time in Southern California history. Once more those interested in good design gravitate to Palm Springs, and a multitude of the surviving structures are being restored to their original state. We can be sure they will be appreciated for generations to come, and the ingenuity and optimism of the post-WWII boom in Southern California will not be forgotten. This is important because it reminds us that the modern built environment can be simple and effective as well as aesthetically pleasing. In our modern age of featureless strip malls and endless swathes of tract housing, this legacy may prove to be an enduring beacon of inspiration for the future.

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Author Bio

Southern California native Joshua Robb Edmundson is a senior at California State University San Bernardino and will graduate in June 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history with a concentration United States history. He plans to pursue a Ph.D. in museum studies with a concentration in curating and historic preservation. He is currently working on an honors thesis on Ming and Qing dynasty Chinese art history. Josh lives in Palm Springs with his partner Kenneth and dog Asta, where he serves his community as a commissioner on the Public Arts Commission. He also works as a guide at Sunnylands, the historic estate of Walter and Leonore Annenberg, a job that helped fuel his lifelong passion for the arts, history and architecture. Beyond his studies, Josh enjoys hiking, swimming, cooking, travel and improving his midcentury home in the desert. He would like to thank everyone at The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands as well as the history department at CSUSB, particularly Dr. Cherstin Lyon and Dr. Jeremy Murray for their boundless inspiration, outstanding example, encouragement and support.



