

THE SIEMON RESIDENCE, 1967

WILLIAM F. CODY, FAIA, ARCHITECT

755 CAMINO NORTE, PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262



Nomination Application For City of Palm Springs Class 1 Historic Resource

Prepared by Steven Keylon

For the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation – FINAL March 6, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Designed by William F. Cody and built in 1967, the William and Margaret Siemon Residence represents a mature phase of Desert Modernism in which structure, enclosure, and landscape are reduced to their most essential elements. The house is conceived as a lightly framed glass pavilion sheltered beneath a remarkably thin horizontal roof plane. Continuous floor-to-ceiling glazing and terrazzo paving extending from interior to exterior create a unified spatial field rather than a series of enclosed rooms. This emphasis on structural lightness, planar clarity, and the seamless blending of interior and exterior spaces defines the property's architectural significance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Siemon Residence, located at 755 Camino Norte and designed in 1967 by architect William F. Cody, FAIA, is an excellent and highly intact example of late Desert Modernist residential architecture in Palm Springs. Constructed during the City's defined Post-World War II period of significance (1945–1969), the house embodies the key design principles that came to characterize the Palm Springs School of Architecture, including structural lightness, expansive glazing, strong indoor–outdoor relationships, and climate-responsive planning including a dual-bath primary suite with separate dressing rooms and a private walled sun court accessed directly from the bathing area. Its location within Palm Vista Estates reflects the historic pattern of architect-designed custom homes in prestigious foothill subdivisions that contributed to Palm Springs' emergence as an internationally recognized center of Modern design. As a mature residential work of William F. Cody — one of the leading architects associated with the city's postwar architectural identity — the residence retains a high degree of integrity in design, materials, setting, and feeling. The property is therefore eligible for designation as a Class I Historic Resource under PSMC 8.05.070(C) Criteria (iii), (v), and (vi).



(to be completed by Planning staff:)

Date:
Case No.
HSPB No.
Planner:

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Department of Planning Services

HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGNATION (HRD)

TO THE APPLICANT:

Complete all parts of this application. Denote "NA" for lines that are not applicable.
Submit the completed application with attachments to the Department of Planning Services at
3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262 Phone: 760-323-8245 Fax: 760-322-8380

This application is for a proposed: (Check one) Historic Site / Resource Historic District:

Applicant's Name: PETER WATERLOO _____
Please Print

Owner Lessee Authorized Agent City Other

Applicant's Address: 755 CAMINO NORTE _____
Number and Street Name or P.O. Box
PALM SPRINGS CA 92262
City State ZIP

Telephone Nos: 415-994-1993 _____
Residence Cell Work

E-Mail address: Peter.Waterloo@morganstanley.com _____

Note: For Historic District applications: On a separate page, provide a list all sites / parcels within the proposed historic district boundaries with the following information provided for each parcel / APN.

Site Address: 755 CAMINO NORTE, PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262 _____

APN 505053005 _____ Zone: _____ Section: _____ Gen'l Plan Land Use Desig. _____

Is the project is located on the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Reservation? _____
(Refer to the Land Status Map under Tribal Resources on the Planning Department home page.)

Construction Date: 1967 _____ Estimated Actual (denote source, i.e. bldg. permits)

Architect: WILLIAM F. CODY _____ Builder: UNKNOWN _____

Present Owner: PETER WATERLOO AND JON TAYLOR _____

Present Owner Address: 755 CAMINO NORTE, PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262 _____

Original Owner: WILLIAM AND MARGARET SIEMON _____

Other notable past owners: _____

Other Historic Associations: _____

Common Name of Property: CODY GLASS HOUSE _____

Historic Name of Property: WILLIAM AND MARGARET SIEMON RESIDENCE _____

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: MIDCENTURY MODERN _____
(Refer to the Architectural Styles chapter of the Citywide Historic Context Statement, under Historic Resources on the Planning Home page (www.palmspringsca.gov).

Period of Significance: 1967 _____
(See the Citywide Historic Context Statement Document.)

Please list any informational reference sources used to complete this application:

PSMC 8.05.070 (C.1): Criteria for the Designation of Class 1 Historic Resources.

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.

Provide a written description of how the site qualifies as historic resource under one or more of the following criterion:

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

- i. The resource is associated with events that have made a meaningful contribution to the nation, state or community.¹
- ii. The resource is associated with the lives of persons who made a meaningful contribution to national, state or local history.
- iii. The resource reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, state or local history.
- iv. The resource embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type of construction, a period of construction or a method of construction.²
- v. The resource presents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age, or that possesses high artistic value.
- vi. 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.
- vii. The resource has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to national, state or local history or prehistory.

¹ NOTE: Unlike the National Register criteria, The City's criterion does not consider "patterns of events". For consideration of "patterns of events", use Criterion "iii", reflecting a particular period.

² Unlike the National Register criteria "type, period of method of construction relates to construction only" For design theme or characteristics use Criterion "iii" (period) or Criterion v (high artistic value).

FINDING 2: The site, structure, building or object retains most if not all of the following aspects of Integrity, as established in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards³: Design, Materials, Workmanship, Location, Setting, Feeling, Association.

PSMC 8.05.070 (C,2) Criteria for the Designation of Class 2 Historic Resources.

A site, structure, building or object may be designated as a Class 2 historic resource, or a Contributing Resource to a proposed historic district by the Palm Springs City Council provided the site, structure, building or object exhibits exceptional historic 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 (above).

PSMC 8.05.090 (C) 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.
(Identify list by address and APN number each site / parcel that meets the criteria outlined in Finding 1 above and document how each meets the criteria.)
- b. Identify non-contributing properties or vacant parcels to the extent necessary to establish appropriate, logical or convenient boundaries.
(Identify list by address and APN number each site / parcel within the proposed historic district that is considered non-contributing to the overall historic significance of the historic district.)

Please attach any additional information related to the application as

necessary. Questions: Contact the Palm Springs Planning Department at 760-

323-8245

³ Refer to the U.S. Department of the Interior Bulletin for How to Evaluate the Integrity of a Property.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period of significance for the Siemon Residence is 1967, the year the house was designed and constructed. This date falls squarely within the City of Palm Springs' adopted historic context for **Post-World War II Residential Development (1945–1969)**, when the city experienced rapid growth and achieved national recognition for architect-designed Modern residential architecture. The residence represents a mature expression of William F. Cody's Desert Modernist work during this formative era. Although minor alterations have occurred since construction, the property continues to convey the architectural design, materials, spatial organization, and indoor–outdoor relationships established at the time of its completion in 1967.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & HISTORIC CONTEXT

William F. Cody and the Siemon Residence

Throughout his career, William F. Cody pursued an architectural practice that minimized the boundary between interior and landscape while emphasizing structural clarity and environmental responsiveness. His residential work frequently employed slender steel framing, deep overhangs, and expansive glazing to create lightly enclosed living environments suited to the desert climate. The Siemon Residence embodies these principles in distilled form, with a thin horizontal roof plane and continuous glass walls that define space with minimal visual weight.

Designed in 1967, the house is part of a mature phase of Cody's practice, in which decades of experimentation with steel framing, indoor–outdoor planning, and site-specific design were synthesized into highly resolved compositions. Unlike earlier projects that combined heavier masonry forms with glazing, the Siemon Residence presents a refined glass pavilion organized on a disciplined structural grid and closely integrated with its landscape setting. It stands as a clear late-career expression of Cody's residential design philosophy.

Historic Context — Post-World War II Residential Development in Palm Springs (1945–1969)

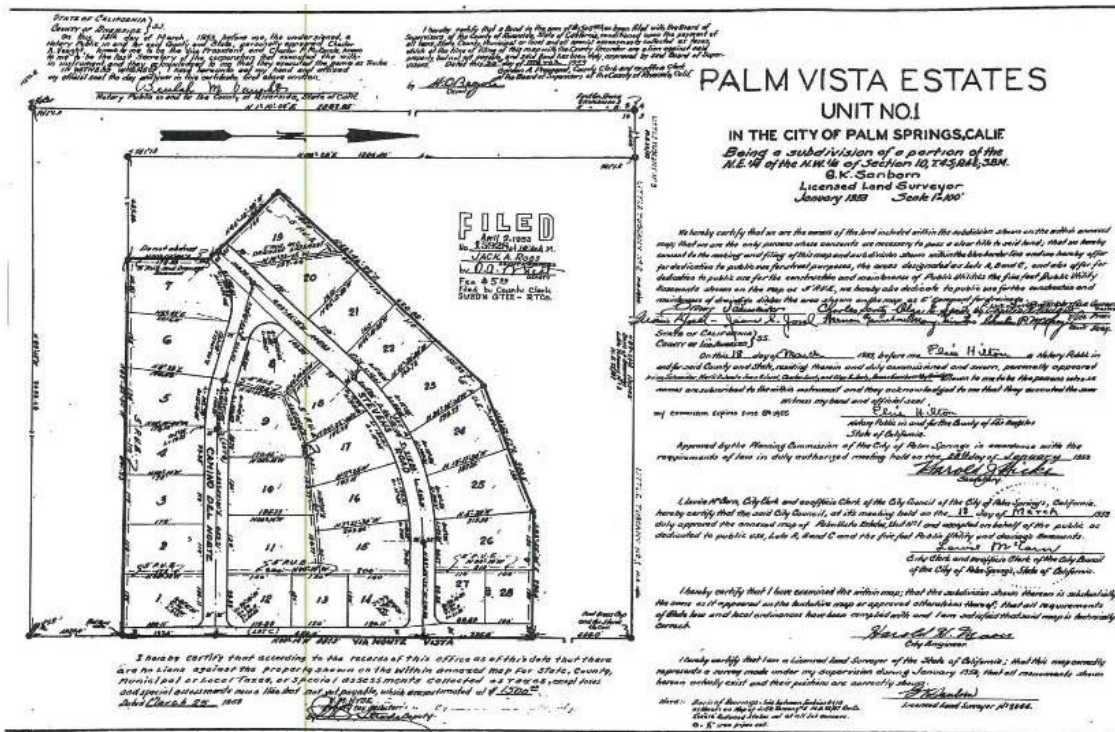
The Siemon Residence was constructed in 1967 during the period identified in the City of Palm Springs' adopted historic context statement as **Post-World War II Palm Springs (1945–1969)**. In the decades following World War II, Palm Springs underwent rapid transformation from a seasonal resort into a year-round residential and leisure community. Population growth, expanded tourism, and rising prosperity created demand for new housing types that reflected both modern lifestyles and the realities of the desert climate. During this period, Palm Springs developed what is now recognized as one of the nation's most significant concentrations of mid-century Modern residential architecture.

Postwar residential design in Palm Springs emphasized indoor–outdoor living, expansive glazing, thin or planar roof forms, and direct integration of architecture and landscape. Architects responded to the desert environment through deep overhangs for shade, carefully oriented openings, and the extension of interior

materials into exterior living spaces. The city's resort identity and relaxed social atmosphere encouraged architectural experimentation, and clients often commissioned forward-looking designs not typically accepted in more conservative urban settings. Custom homes became especially important in shaping Palm Springs' architectural identity during this period.

Foothill and hillside subdivisions played a key role in this development pattern. Large parcels, dramatic mountain backdrops, and privacy made these areas desirable for architect-designed custom residences. Developments such as Palm Vista Estates reflect this postwar trend toward low-density, high-end residential enclaves where modern architecture was used to express leisure, climate responsiveness, and visual connection to the desert landscape. The Siemon Residence is a product of this historic pattern of development.

THE TRACT - PALM VISTA ESTATES



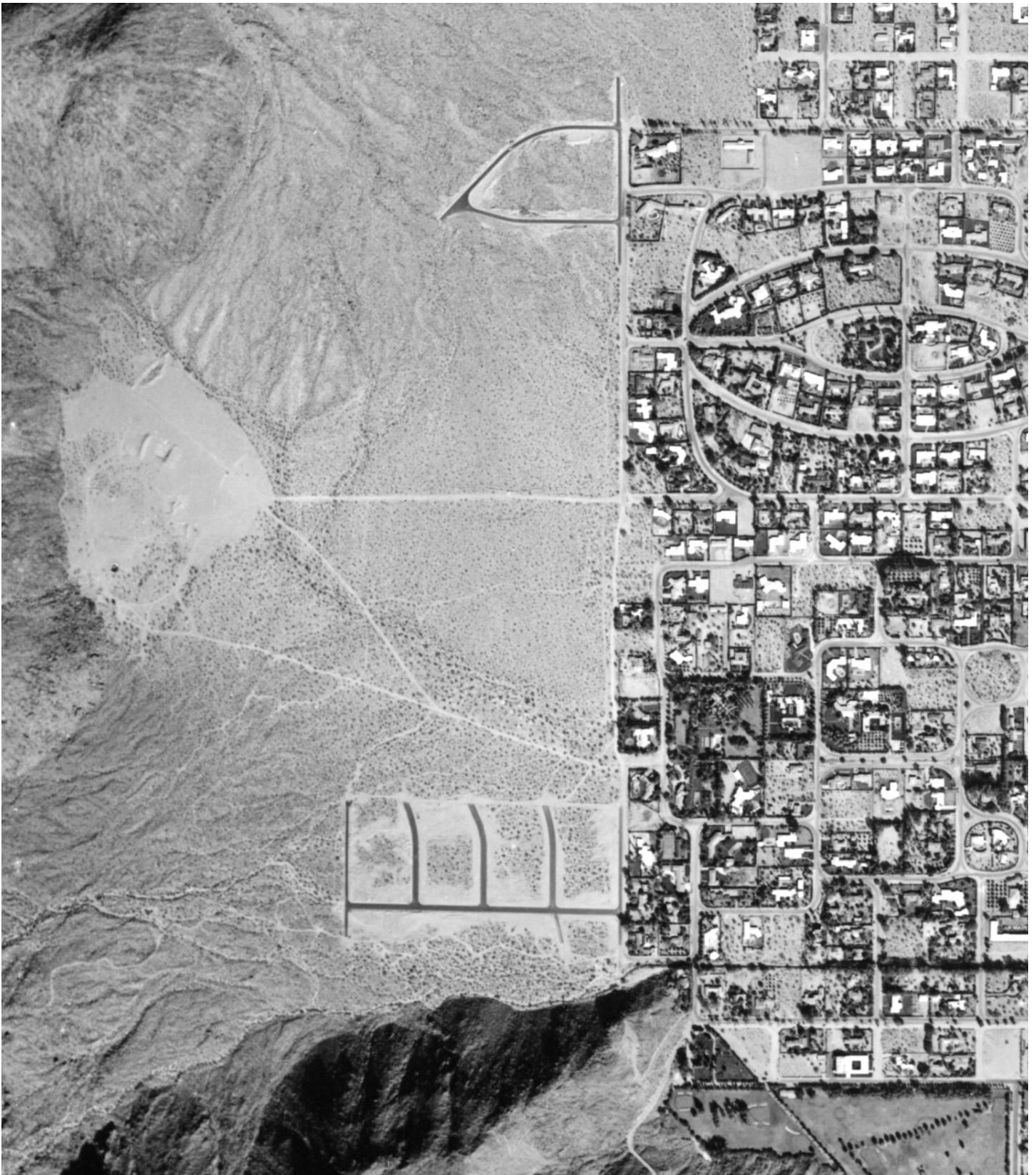
Palm Vista Estates was established in 1953 during a period when Palm Springs was rapidly redefining itself as a landscape of prestigious residential enclaves climbing into the foothills above the desert floor. Developed by Harold Hicks & Associates as part of an investor consortium, the subdivision reflects a postwar shift away from single-builder tracts toward land syndicates that financed, subdivided, and promoted high-value homesites before substantial construction occurred. Rather than offering modest tract housing, Palm Vista Estates was conceived from the outset as an estate district — a place where architecture, setting, and social standing were meant to align.¹

Palm Vista Estates emerged during the early 1950s as part of the broader postwar movement toward foothill residential development in Palm Springs. Marketed for its large lots, scenic setting, and proximity to established high-end neighborhoods, the subdivision reflects the period trend of creating architecturally distinguished custom homes in hillside environments. Although early sales were slow, later construction — including the Siemon Residence — illustrates the gradual realization of the subdivision’s intended character as a setting for high-quality Modern residential architecture integrated with the desert landscape. The breathtaking views from the Siemon Residence typify the qualities of this type of development. This development pattern is consistent with the residential growth trends documented in the City’s postwar historic context.

¹ Information from Historic Resources Group’s Historic Resources Inventory & Context Statement, Overview of Tract Development; Also see coverage of luxury foothill residential development trends in *The Desert Sun*, February 23, 1957.



1939 aerial shows Old Las Palmas at the right, with no development at all west of N. Via Monte Vista.



In this 1953 aerial, Palm Vista Estates is being developed near the top, while the streets for Mountain View Estates have been graded and paved below.



In this detail from the 1953 aerial photograph, Camino Norte and W. Stevens Road, the two streets in the Palm Vista Estates tract, have been graded and paved.

Palm Springs Newest
**RESIDENTIAL
SUBDIVISION**



WIND FREE HALF-ACRE SITES

Introducing rugged, dramatic, Palm Vista Estates (adjoining Little Tuscany Estates and extending above world-famous Las Palmas Estates, the finest established residential districts in entire desert area.) The gentle elevation of beautiful Palm Vista gives every estate site a magnificent panoramic view of the entire city and valley beyond. A setting of natural beauty in the foothills of Mt. San Jacinto. Estate sites priced from \$5,000 to \$8,500 for introductory offering only. Maps and details on request.



Associates: Burnham Bigelow, Mildred Jackson, Ken Herman, Ray Baur
Phone 2736 - 813 No. Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, Calif.

From Palm Springs Villager, April 1954

**YOUR OFFER MAY BRING YOU
THIS FABULOUS CASTLE IN THE AIR**



In Palm Springs' New...

PALM VISTA ESTATES

Adjoining and Overlooking Las Palmas Estates

A Home Supreme in Its Elegance

- Cantilevered construction separates house from rocky terrain... It literally floats in the air.
- Picture frame glass walls of living area provide spectacular panoramic desert vistas in every direction.
- Modern Chinese decor.
- Master suites with generous wardrobes, dressing rooms and private sun terraces.
- Cantilevered terrace with gas fired automatic barbecue.
- Custom line built-in stainless steel kitchen equipment with Oriental ash and white Formica cabinets.
- Terrazzo Roman baths set in the midst of lush tropical plantings.
- Dual-zone refrigerated air conditioning throughout plus two forced air furnaces.

GANNON REALTY COMPANY

EXCLUSIVE AGENTS

1201 North Palm Canyon Drive Telephone 2772

"The Most Complete Real Estate Service in Palm Springs"



Just Completed

**FIRST HOME IN THE FABULOUS
AND TOWERING**

Palm Vista Estates

Adjoining and Overlooking Las Palmas Estates

**A NEW PLANNED DEVELOPMENT
PRESENTING HOMES IN THE
\$150,000 TO \$200,000
BRACKET ONLY**

**Modern Chinese Decor. Novel Construction
creates illusion of floating in air. Spectacular
desert vistas spring at you from each room.**

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"The Most Complete Real Estate Service in Palm Springs"

Middle 1950s ads for the Palm Vista Estates tract from The Desert Sun.

The subdivision occupied a dramatic position above Stevens Road, bounded by Camino Norte to the south and Via Monte Vista to the west, directly adjacent to two of Palm Springs' most prestigious residential districts, Little Tuscany and Las Palmas Estates (Old Las Palmas). Marketing material made clear that this was not a peripheral tract but an intentional extension of the city's most desirable foothill address. Lots were promoted as large, "wind-free" half-acre sites with panoramic views over the valley and toward Mount San Jacinto. Advertisements emphasized elevation, privacy, and scenery — qualities associated with custom estates versus speculative suburban housing.

The promotional tone was notably aspirational. One contemporary advertisement explicitly compared Palm Vista Estates to Bel Air, then widely regarded as the most fashionable and exclusive residential district in Los Angeles. This comparison positioned Palm Vista Estates not merely within the Palm Springs market but within a broader Southern California hierarchy of elite hillside communities. The implication was that Palm Springs could now offer a residential environment equal in prestige to the finest Los Angeles enclaves, but with the added allure of desert scenery and resort culture.

Despite this ambitious vision, early build-out was slow. The development model depended on selling premium lots to custom home builders, a process that typically lagged behind the pace of flatland tract construction. Nearly two years after sales began, the subdivision remained largely undeveloped, underscoring both the speculative nature of the enterprise and the higher costs associated with hillside construction and architect-designed residences.

The first home documented in the subdivision was built for Dr. Benjamin Goldberg and his wife at 787 West Stevens in 1954. However, a key milestone came in 1957 with the construction of a speculative modern residence designed by Howard Lapham. Its presence, however, was symbolically important. Lapham was a prominent Palm Springs modernist architect, and his involvement signaled the subdivision's architectural ambitions. The house demonstrated how modern design could be integrated with the rocky hillside terrain, expansive glazing, and panoramic desert views—precisely the qualities that Palm Vista Estates advertisements had promised.

Palm Vista Estates, therefore, represents a distinct mid-century development pattern in Palm Springs: the investor-backed, prestigious hillside subdivision marketed through imagery of exclusivity, scenery, and architectural sophistication. Its early history illustrates the gap that often existed between promotional vision and immediate construction, while the involvement of a major modernist architect confirms the level of design quality the developers sought to attract. Within the broader narrative of Palm Springs's growth, Palm Vista Estates exemplifies how the city's identity expanded upward into the foothills, aligning desert modernism with the social and spatial ideals of Southern California's most elite residential districts.

FIRST OWNERS (1967-2005)

William Manning Siemon (1922–2001) and Margaret T. Siemon (née O'Connell) (1919–2005)

William Manning Siemon's life followed the arc of Southern California's transformation across three generations — from citrus agriculture to roadside commerce to postwar residential development.

He was born October 17, 1922, in Whittier, California, to Manning Edward Siemon and Bernice Madeline Frantz.² Siemon's grandfather, William (Wilhelm) Siemon (1851–1952), belonged to the late nineteenth-

² California Birth Index; U.S. Census Records; family data compiled via Ancestry.com.

century agricultural settlement of the Whittier–Ontario region, where citrus cultivation formed the backbone of the local economy.³

His father, Manning Edward Siemon, represented the next phase of Southern California’s development. He operated service stations in the Whittier area, placing the family within the emerging automobile-service economy. William grew up immersed in this environment and worked at his father’s gas station as a teenager, gaining hands-on experience in mechanics, customer service, and small-business operations — practical knowledge that later informed his career in construction and development.⁴

During World War II, Siemon served in the United States Naval Reserve, receiving a commission as an Ensign in 1944.⁵

Builder and Developer

By 1949, Siemon had established himself as a general contractor, entering the building trades at the start of Southern California’s suburban expansion. Over the following decades he developed custom homes, residential tracts, apartment buildings, and commercial properties, primarily in the South Bay and greater Los Angeles region.⁶

The woman who was to become his wife, Margaret O’Connell, was born September 16, 1919, to Edmund Joseph O’Connell and Mary Grady O’Connell. After her father’s death in 1926, she grew up in Cleveland and East Cleveland, Ohio. By 1940 she was working as an office employee.⁷ By 1950 she had relocated to Manhattan Beach, California, where she was employed as a stewardess for American Airlines.⁸

Margaret O’Connell married William Manning Siemon on September 12, 1951, in Los Angeles.⁹ Newspaper accounts from the early 1950s describe the couple traveling internationally, particularly to Mexico City, Acapulco, and Taxco.¹⁰

Palm Springs: Land Purchase and Later Construction

In 1959, William and Margaret Siemon purchased the parcel at 755 Camino Norte in Palm Springs.¹¹ Notably, they did not build immediately. By the early 1960s, the couple had a condominium at 1730 N. Via Miraleste, and the telephone directory listed that address for the Siemon Land Company. This is the Park Imperial Riviera complex, designed in 1961 by architect Barry Berkus. The Siemon Land Company also shows up in newspaper articles from the late 1950s in Torrance, where Siemon was building at the time.

³ Obituary and regional historical notices regarding early Siemon family settlement; Ancestry.com family records.

⁴ U.S. Census occupation listings and family records, Ancestry.com.

⁵ U.S. Navy officer commissioning notice, wartime service listing; Ancestry.com military records.

⁶ Business listings and contractor advertisements in regional newspapers, 1950s–1970s.

⁷ U.S. Census Records (1930, 1940); Ancestry.com

⁸ 1950 U.S. Census occupation listing; Ancestry.com.

⁹ California Marriage Index; Ancestry.com.

¹⁰ Society and travel columns, early 1950s newspaper clippings.

¹¹ Riverside County property records (chain of title), Palm Springs parcel purchase, 1959.

The William F. Cody archives at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo has plans and elevations for an earlier house for William and Margaret Siemon, for the Desert Bel Air tract in Indian Wells, directly across from the entrance to Eldorado Country Club. It is unclear if this house was actually built.¹²

Construction of their Palm Springs residence began in 1967. By that time, Siemon was an experienced builder and developer, and his selection of Cody reflects a client capable of recognizing design innovation and technical sophistication. The house stands as both an example of Cody's work and evidence of the Siemons' place within Palm Springs' mid-century architectural culture.

20-A Van Nuys, California **NEWS** Sunday, Dec. 13, 1953



VACATIONING IN MEXICO CITY and stopping at the fashionable Hotel Bamer are Mr. and Mrs. William Siemon of 6851 Ranchito Ave., Van Nuys. The Siemons plan to spend one month in Mexico visiting Acapulco and Taxco before returning home. Prior to her marriage two years ago, Mrs. Siemon was a stewardess for American Air Lines and was a frequent visitor to Mexico.

¹² The author contacted Linda Blank, president of the Indian Wells Preservation Foundation, who believes the house was one of six Codys built on Altamira Drive in Indian Wells, near the home of William F. Cody's own brother. The author compared the floor plan from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with the homes that now line Altamira Drive, but none are comparable in their current state. The rendering of the house is shown in the William F. Cody book *Master of the Midcentury*, though no address is given. When asked, Cody's daughter Cathy wasn't sure either, but said that some of the houses have had significant alterations.

Later Years

William and Margaret later divided their time between Palm Springs and the South Bay coastal region, including residences in Rolling Hills Estates and Redondo Beach.

William Manning Siemon died in Palm Springs on May 26, 2001, at age 78. His death certificate records the cause of death as a self-inflicted gunshot wound, and the manner of death was ruled suicide.¹³ Margaret continued to own the house until the time that she died on December 17, 2005, at age 86, and was buried in Palm Springs.



This 2008 Google Maps Street View shows the house before any changes had taken place.

ARCHITECT: William F. Cody (1916–1978)

William F. Cody was one of the most important architects shaping the built environment of Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley during the mid-twentieth century. A committed modernist with a distinctive sense of elegance and structural refinement, Cody produced a diverse body of work that helped define the character of Desert Modernism from the 1940s through the 1970s.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, and raised in Los Angeles, Cody studied architecture at the University of Southern California in the late 1930s. While still a student, he worked with designer Cliff May, whose emphasis on relaxed, livable environments left a lasting impression on Cody's approach to residential design. Though initially skeptical of the emerging International Style modernism being introduced at USC, Cody ultimately embraced its principles, interpreting them through a lens of warmth, proportion, and lifestyle rather than rigid formal doctrine.

Cody relocated to Palm Springs in 1942, drawn in part by the desert climate, which alleviated his chronic asthma. There he established an architectural practice that would remain active for more than three decades.

¹³ California Death Index and death certificate record; Ancestry.com.

Unlike many Southern California architects who sought recognition in national journals or pursued work in Los Angeles, Cody concentrated his efforts in the desert region. His reputation grew through client relationships, particularly among business leaders and country club developers, leading to major commissions that included clubhouses, hotels, restaurants, religious buildings, and private residences.

Cody's early work in Palm Springs demonstrated a sensitivity to site and climate, often blending rustic materials with modern forms. By the 1950s and 1960s, his architecture evolved toward increasing structural lightness and formal clarity. He became known for compositions defined by thin roof planes, slender steel supports, deep overhangs, and expansive glazing—features that allowed buildings to open fluidly to the landscape while remaining carefully shaded and proportioned for desert living. Throughout his career, Cody balanced refinement with livability, producing modern buildings that felt open and elegant yet welcoming and human in scale.

His portfolio was notably diverse. He designed influential country club facilities such as the Tamarisk and Eldorado clubhouses; hospitality projects including the Del Marcos Hotel and work at the Spa Hotel; commercial buildings ranging from restaurants to gas stations; and religious structures such as St. Theresa Catholic Church. Across these varied commissions, a consistent architectural sensibility emerged: disciplined structure, dynamic spatial relationships, and a strong integration of indoor and outdoor environments.

Cody was also a mentor to a younger generation of architects, including Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison, who would themselves become significant figures in Desert Modernism. Despite the quality and range of his work, Cody remained less widely known than some of his contemporaries, in part because he focused his practice locally instead of cultivating national publicity. Nevertheless, within Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley, his influence was profound.

After suffering a stroke in 1973, Cody's practice continued under the direction of associates until his death in 1978. Although some of his buildings have since been altered or lost, many remain important landmarks that demonstrate his lasting impact on the architectural identity of the desert. In recent decades, renewed scholarship and preservation efforts have brought increased recognition to Cody's legacy as a master of refined, site-responsive modern design.¹⁴

Relevance of William F. Cody to the Siemon Residence

The Siemon Residence represents a mature expression of William F. Cody's architectural philosophy and stands within the final and most refined phase of his residential work. By this point in his career, Cody had moved beyond the heavier masonry-and-wood compositions of his early desert projects and had fully developed a vocabulary based on structural lightness, expansive glazing, and a close integration of architecture with climate and landscape. The house's attenuated roof plane, slender steel support system, and floor-to-ceiling glass walls exemplify Cody's pursuit of buildings that appear delicately poised within their environment rather than firmly anchored to it.

¹⁴ Patrick McGrew, "William F. Cody," in *The Architecture of William F. Cody: A Desert Retrospective* (Palm Springs, CA: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2004); Catherine Cody, Jo Lauria, and Don Choi, *Master of the Midcentury: The Architecture of William F. Cody* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2021).

Equally characteristic is the seamless continuity between interior and exterior space. The use of identical terrazzo paving inside and out, broad sliding glass openings, and carefully shaded terraces reflects Cody's long-standing interest in dissolving the boundary between living space and landscape. In the Siemon Residence, these ideas are resolved with exceptional clarity, producing a glass pavilion organized on a disciplined twelve-foot by twelve-foot structural grid and oriented toward controlled views and outdoor living. As such, the house illustrates Cody working at full professional maturity, synthesizing decades of experimentation with desert siting, structural expression, and indoor–outdoor planning into a highly refined residential composition.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION — AS BUILT CONDITIONS (1967)

The following description documents the Siemon Residence as designed and constructed in 1967. All references are to original conditions. Changes made after the period of significance are documented separately in the Changes Over Time section.

Parcel and Site

The Siemon Residence occupied an approximately half-acre parcel (0.47 acres) within Palm Vista Estates, a foothill subdivision characterized by large, irregular lots stepping up the lower slopes north of central Palm Springs. The neighborhood was defined by winding streets that followed natural contours, substantial setbacks, and houses sited to take advantage of elevation and views over rigid street grids.

The lot sloped markedly downward from Camino Norte toward the south, where the terrain fell away into a natural ravine. This topography created both physical separation from neighboring properties and expansive views across the Coachella Valley and toward the surrounding mountain ranges. Pre-construction soils and engineering reports document controlled fill placement and compaction, confirming that the building pad and terrace areas were deliberately engineered to stabilize the hillside and create usable outdoor living surfaces.

The house was sited near the northern edge of the parcel, close to the street — a placement that minimized grading at the steeper rear of the lot while maximizing southern exposure and long-distance views. From the street, the building presented a low, horizontal profile, allowing the landscape and sky to remain visually dominant. To the south, the structure opened toward the descending terrain, where terraces and outdoor living areas extended along the slope, orienting daily activity toward the valley panorama.

Floor Plan

The residence was organized as a single-story, courtyard-oriented modern plan, with circulation, outdoor space, and interior zoning tightly integrated. City building permit records indicate approximately 2,600 square feet of living area, with an attached 660-square-foot open carport. The house presented a relatively sheltered face to the street, with the carport positioned to the left (east) of the entry court. Arrival was choreographed through a sequence of walls, paving, and planted elements rather than a direct view into the interior.

Entry Court Sequence

Pedestrian entry occurred through a louvered gate set within a privacy wall, leading into an enclosed front court. A built-in planter immediately outside the gate established landscape as an architectural element from the outset. From there, a long terrazzo walkway extended inward, guiding visitors toward the front door. At

the entry itself, the paving expanded into a broad terrazzo terrace flanked by built-in slumpstone planters — an outdoor anteroom that functions simultaneously as a threshold and a living space.

Interior Organization

The terrazzo paving continued seamlessly indoors, forming a central circulation spine running laterally across the plan. This material continuity — identical white terrazzo used inside and out — was the design's primary spatial device, deliberately dissolving the boundary between interior and exterior. Directly ahead from the front door was the primary living space, a large, combined living room and den originally finished in wall-to-wall carpeting, distinguishing it as the softer, more intimate heart of the house. The living room opened directly to the rear garden through floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors, where a broad terrazzo terrace and rectilinear swimming pool extended the interior geometry into the landscape.

East Wing — Public and Service Areas

To the left of the entry, the plan transitioned into the dining and service areas. The dining room was finished in terrazzo, reinforcing its role as a semi-public extension of the circulation zone. Beyond it lay the kitchen, connected to a laundry room along the carport side of the house. A service corridor labeled "Passage" on the original drawings ran from the carport to the kitchen, allowing deliveries and household work to proceed without passing through the formal entry or living areas. A guest bedroom and adjacent terrazzo-floored bathroom occupied the far end of this wing, positioned to serve visiting family or household staff while remaining separate from the primary suite.

West Wing — Private Bedroom Suite

To the right of the entry, the terrazzo-floored hallway marked the transition into the private bedroom wing. The primary suite was organized with notable spatial subdivision: separate "His" and "Hers" dressing rooms, each connected to its own bathroom, creating parallel bathing suites instead of a shared arrangement. From one of these bathrooms, sliding glass doors opened directly to a walled Sun Court — a small enclosed outdoor space, likely grass-surfaced, intended for private sunbathing. This direct bathroom-to-outdoor-court relationship was a distinctly Southern California modern feature, combining climate, privacy, and health-oriented living.

Spatial Character

Rather than relying on symmetry, the design achieved order through movement, material continuity, and carefully sequenced spatial transitions. The plan demonstrated layered thresholds (street, entry court, terrace, interior), clear functional zoning separating living, service, guest, and sleeping areas, and a gradation of privacy from the open social spaces at the center to the highly individualized primary suite. Landscape was treated as a series of purposeful outdoor rooms — the entry court, rear garden terrace, pool court, and private Sun Court — over residual yard space.

Exterior Architectural Description

Primary Façade and Entry Court (North Elevation)

Approaching from Camino Norte, the house presented a low, planar, and deliberately private street façade characteristic of Cody's desert work. The open carport sat to the left (east); the remainder of the façade was screened by white-painted slumpstone walls extending laterally to frame the entry court. A louvered pedestrian gate punctuated the wall, establishing a layered transition from public street to private domestic landscape.

Inside the court, floor-to-ceiling glazing appeared behind the sheltering walls — the house experienced in fragments instead of all at once. The open carport wall was finished in vertical board-and-batten siding. A long white terrazzo walkway led from the gate to a broad terrazzo entry terrace flanked by built-in slumpstone

planters. The same terrazzo continued through the front door and into the interior, underscoring the modernist intent to erase the threshold between inside and out. The original landscape was minimalist and planar: gravel groundcover, large native ledgestones, mature multi-trunk olive trees providing filtered shade, and low plantings used as restrained sculptural accents.

West Façade (Bedroom Wing)

Along the west perimeter, a gravel path ran parallel to the slumpstone boundary wall, leading to a sequence of small private patios serving the bedroom wing. The façade here was composed of stucco wall planes, board-and-batten infill panels, and floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors, all shaded by the deep, thin roof overhang. Each patio was modest in scale and enclosed by walls and planting, creating private outdoor rooms for individual bedrooms. At the far end of this wing, a walled Sun Court was accessible directly from one of the primary bathrooms via sliding glass doors. The Sun Court wall was finished in stucco — with wood siding on the interior walls— and the space was likely grass-surfaced, intended for private sunbathing and open-air relaxation.

Rear Façade, Garden, and Pool (South Elevation)

The rear elevation was the architectural climax of the house and the clearest expression of Cody's indoor-outdoor room concept. An extraordinarily thin horizontal roof plane, carried on slender steel posts, shaded a continuous wall of floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors and fixed panels corresponding directly to the living room and den. Structure was reduced to the minimum necessary to hold the roof aloft; the façade read as a transparent pavilion. A disciplined steel column grid on a twelve-foot-by-twelve-foot module ordered the entire composition, allowing the roof to read as a floating plane versus a conventional ceiling.

Immediately outside the glass wall was a broad white terrazzo terrace sized to match the footprint of the living room, creating an outdoor counterpart to the primary interior room. Set within this terrace was a compact rectangular swimming pool, embedded as a geometric element within the paving plane rather than placed separately in the landscape. Beyond the terrace, the garden transitioned to gravel and low drought-tolerant plantings arranged in loose drifts. The site fell away at the south edge into a deep ravine, with retaining walls stabilizing the grade and the restrained planting palette allowing long views toward the mountains.

Note: Although the original permit card generically lists "wood-frame construction," field evidence and architectural documentation confirm that the primary structural expression is a slender steel post-and-beam system typical of Cody's late residential work, with wood framing used for enclosure and interior walls.

East Façade (Service and Guest Wing)

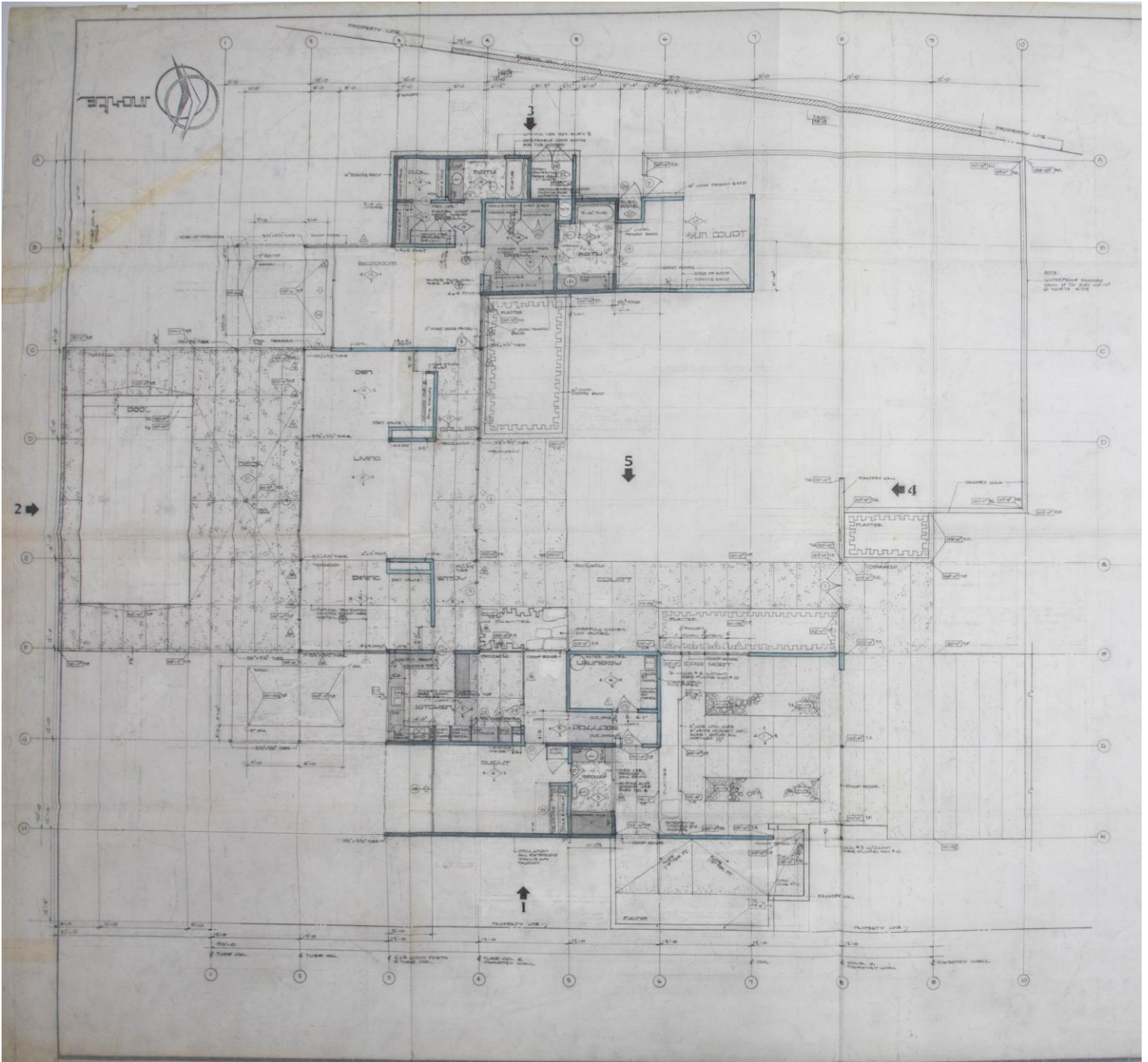
The east elevation was more solid than the garden-facing sides, with a greater proportion of stucco wall planes and fewer expansive glass openings. This façade contained the kitchen, laundry room, guest room, and open carport. Service patios and the covered passage corridor ran along this side, screened from view. The contrast between this more closed elevation and the transparent garden façade reinforced the clear zoning of public and private, service and social, that organized the plan.

Architectural Character

At its core, the house was an exercise in structural restraint and spatial continuity. A minimal steel framework supported an attenuated roof plane, while nearly uninterrupted glazing dissolved conventional enclosure. Rather than composing façades as solid walls punctured by openings, the design treated enclosure as secondary to the experience of shade, air, and view. The result was a residence in which architecture operated as a calibrated framework for desert living — a defining characteristic of high-level Desert Modernism in the late 1960s.

The house was defined throughout by a consistent material palette: white terrazzo used inside and out; slender steel structure; white-painted slumpstone garden walls; board-and-batten and stucco wall planes; and extensive floor-to-ceiling glazing in anodized aluminum frames. The landscape continued this restraint — gravel ground plane, native ledgestones, olive trees, palms, and low drought-tolerant plantings — allowing architecture and desert setting to read as a single composition.

CHANGES OVER TIME



Residence for Mr. and Mrs. William Siemon, 1966-67 floor plan and details, Palm Springs, 007-3-c-ff176-03-01. Courtesy William F. Cody Papers, Special Collections and Archives, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA.

The following documents all known alterations to the Siemon Residence after the 1967 period of significance. The description proceeds chronologically by ownership period.

Early Post-Construction Phase (1970s)

A 1971 permit (B-1075) indicates minor post-construction work; the exact scope is not fully legible on microfilm but suggests minor alteration rather than structural reconfiguration.

Maintenance Phase (2005–2009)

Following the death of Margaret Siemon in 2005 and a brief period of ownership by Edmund Karp, routine maintenance work was carried out. In June 2005, the roof was replaced using a built-up hot mop system, with minor associated drywall repair (Permit C12682, valuation \$11,000). These were maintenance actions and did not alter the architectural character of the property.

Carport Enclosure (2008)

The original open carport was enclosed to form a garage (Permit C22970, 2008, valuation \$15,200). Although this altered the original open parking condition, the work retained the existing roofline, massing, and proportions, preserving the house's defining horizontal profile. A subsequent garage roof replacement (Permit C25706, 2010, valuation \$2,380) addressed maintenance needs without altering form. The garage doors were introduced along a contemporary aluminum support detail. The open carport — a character-defining feature of the 1967 design — was eliminated by this change.

Kitchen Expansion

During the same period, the kitchen was modestly enlarged to improve circulation and functionality. This expansion remained within the service wing zone and did not alter the central living pavilion.

Interior Restoration

Interior surfaces were refinished to maintain the house's original restrained palette. No permits indicate reconfiguration of the central living gallery or removal of structural elements.

Solar Installation (2011)

A 30-panel rooftop solar photovoltaic system was installed (Permit C29491, 2011, valuation \$18,653). This intervention did not affect the primary massing or architectural character of the house.

pool, the replacement remains integrated into the terrazzo plane and maintains the rectilinear geometry central to Cody's composition.

Engineered Retaining Walls (2021)

A total of 187 linear feet of engineered poured-in-place retaining wall was constructed (Permit 2021-4526, valuation \$45,000) to address hillside stabilization. This work did not alter the primary massing, roof profile, or glass pavilion character of the house.

2022–2023 Bedroom Wing and Service Wing Reconfiguration

Permits issued between 2022 and 2023 document a second major phase of interior reconfiguration (Permits 2022-567 and 2023-862, combined valuation \$200,000). In the primary suite, the dual "His and Hers" bathroom arrangement that Cody designed was consolidated into a single primary bathroom. The two original dressing room zones were retained but reworked as separate closets serving one bath. Although this altered Cody's original dual-suite planning concept, the work remained within the historic bedroom wing footprint.

The bedroom created in the 2010 remodel within the former Sun Court area was further subdivided and reorganized into an office, a new bathroom, and an additional bedroom. Partitions were kept aligned with the existing structural grid.

In the service wing, the kitchen and adjacent utility areas were reworked to introduce a breakfast area and informal den. Daniels maintained Cody's restrained palette of stucco, board-and-batten surfaces, and large glazing openings throughout, and displaced board-and-batten siding was reused in new locations. New glazing openings and wall adjustments were detailed to align with the original structural rhythm.

Front Entry Gate Restoration

A contemporary aluminum and frosted-glass pedestrian gate — introduced during the Zippel-Johnston period to match the modern garage doors — was removed and replaced with a steel louvered gate consistent with the type used in Palm Springs Modernist residential design during the 1960s. This change improved the compatibility of the entry sequence with the original architectural character.

Additional Work (2022–2024)

Additional work in this period includes a full roof tear-off and replacement with a single-ply membrane system (Permit BLDR-2023-1033), expanded rooftop solar installations (Permits 2022-1772 and 2023-1230), and construction of additional site walls totaling approximately 73 linear feet (Permits BLDR-2024-4220 and BLDR-2024-4235). These interventions addressed building performance and site stabilization and did not alter the house's primary massing, roof profile, or glass pavilion character.

Summary of Changes

Taken together, the alterations to the Siemon Residence fall into two categories. The first — loss of original features — includes the enclosure of the open carport (2008), the elimination of the Sun Court and its bathroom-to-outdoor relationship (2010), and the consolidation of the dual primary bathroom suite into a single bath (2022–2023). Each of these removed a characteristic element of Cody's 1967 design.

The second category — compatible modifications — includes the terrazzo terrace expansion, the reconfiguration of the swimming pool, the interior service wing reworking, and the replacement of the incompatible front gate with a period-appropriate louvered steel gate. These changes have generally respected Cody's structural grid, material palette, and spatial logic. Architect Mark Daniels' approach of working from Cody's original drawings and reusing original materials where possible represents a conscientious stewardship of the design.

Despite these changes, the defining architectural features of Cody's design remain clearly legible: the thin horizontal roof plane, slender steel structural grid, continuous glazing, transparent central living pavilion, and the indoor-outdoor material continuity established by the white terrazzo. The residence continues to convey its significance as a mature 1967 glass house and an important example of late Desert Modernist residential design in Palm Springs.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Site Planning & Overall Form

- **Single-story, low-slung horizontal massing** organized as a linear pavilion with projecting wings
- **Courtyard-based spatial sequence:** street → walled entry court → glass living pavilion → rear garden and pool
- **Strong axial entry progression** defined by walls, paving, and controlled views
- Building positioned to engage **mountain views** and dramatic topography, including the rear ravine

Structural & Architectural System

- **Thin, flat roof plane** with deep overhangs
- **Slender steel posts and beams** expressing a light structural frame
- Emphasis on **horizontal roof line floating above transparent walls**
- Minimal structural expression supporting a pavilion-like glass volume

Exterior Walls & Materials

- **White-painted slumpstone walls** forming the street façade and garden courts
- **Board-and-batten siding panels** used as contrasting planar surfaces
- Smooth **stucco wall planes** in secondary elevations
- Restrained, limited materials palette emphasizing **surface, plane, and lightness**

Glazing & Openings

- **Floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors** along the primary living elevations
- **Fixed floor-to-ceiling glass panels** integrated with sliding systems
- Original **anodized aluminum door frames and hardware** (where extant)
- Extensive glazing creating **visual and physical continuity between interior and exterior**

Entry & Circulation Features

- **Long axial terrazzo walkway** from street to front door
- **Expanded terrazzo entry terrace** functioning as an outdoor foyer
- Continuous **terrazzo flooring extending from exterior into interior circulation spine**

- **Terrazzo flooring extended into the dining room**, reinforcing its role as a transitional social space between circulation spine and kitchen.

Interior–Exterior Relationship

- Direct alignment of **living room/den with rear terrace and pool**
- **Same terrazzo paving material inside and out**, dissolving spatial boundaries
- Sliding glass walls allowing living spaces to open fully to the landscape
- Outdoor spaces designed as **extensions of interior rooms**, not residual yard

Landscape & Hardscape

- **Minimalist desert landscape design** with gravel ground plane
- Use of **large native ledgestones/boulders** as sculptural landscape elements
- **Mature multi-trunk olive trees** and palms providing filtered shade
- Low, drought-tolerant planting arranged in restrained drifts
- **Integrated built-in slumpstone planters** at entry terrace

Rear Garden & Pool Composition

- **Large white terrazzo rear terrace** corresponding to the living room volume
- Pool, paving, and roof overhang forming a **unified geometric composition**
- Open garden edge engaging long views toward mountains and ravine

Bedroom Wing & Private Outdoor Rooms

- **Sequence of small, walled private patios** along bedroom wing
- Direct bedroom access to outdoor space reinforcing modernist living patterns
- Original private “Sun Court” accessed directly from a primary bathroom via sliding glass doors, likely grass-surfaced and intended for secluded sunbathing (now altered but legible in plan history)

Service/Guest Wing Features

- Secondary, more solid façade containing **kitchen, laundry, and garage**
- Clear distinction between **public glass pavilion** and **private/service zones**
- Guest bedroom and adjacent bathroom with terrazzo flooring located within the service wing near kitchen and laundry

Features That Support but Are Altered (Still Contributory to Design Intent)

These elements are not fully original but reinforce the architectural character:

- **Bedroom addition within former Sun Court footprint**, using compatible materials (glass, board-and-batten, terrazzo)
- **Extended rear terrazzo terrace**, maintaining original material and indoor–outdoor concept
- **Reconfigured elongated pool**, still rectilinear and architecturally integrated
- **Enclosed former carport**, retaining original massing and roofline

Features That Would Be Considered Non-Character Defining

(typically excluded from significance unless historic documentation proves otherwise)

- Mechanical equipment and screening along service corridors
- Recent garage door mechanisms
- Minor landscape infill planting not part of original or early design

EVALUATION UNDER PSMC 8.05.070(C)

The Siemon Residence is evaluated within the City’s adopted historic context for Post-World War II Residential Development (1945–1969), a period during which Palm Springs achieved national and international recognition for architect-designed Modern residences that responded directly to climate, landscape, and leisure-oriented living patterns. The residence embodies the defining characteristics identified in that context, including low horizontal massing, expansive glazing, strong indoor–outdoor relationships, and climate-responsive features such as deep overhangs and shaded terraces.

Criterion (i) – Association with Significant Events

Not Eligible

The property is not known to be associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local, regional, or national history. While it was constructed during Palm Springs’ postwar expansion, its importance derives from architectural design rather than association with a specific historic event.

Criterion (ii) – Association with Significant Persons

Not Eligible

Although the residence was commissioned by William and Margaret Siemon, research does not indicate that they made contributions of recognized historical importance at the local, state, or national level. The property’s significance is therefore not derived from association with a historically significant person.

Criterion (iii) – Reflects or Exemplifies a Particular Period of History

Eligible

The Siemon Residence is significant under Criterion (iii) as an outstanding and highly intact example of late Desert Modernist residential architecture in Palm Springs. Designed in 1967 by William F. Cody and constructed within the City’s defined Post-World War II period of significance (1945–1969), the house directly reflects the defining characteristics of that era: structural lightness, planar roof forms, expansive glazing, and the seamless integration of indoor and outdoor living space.

The house is organized as a steel-framed glass pavilion beneath a remarkably thin horizontal roof plane. Floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors form the primary enclosure along the garden façade, while deep overhangs provide solar control. Continuous terrazzo paving extends from interior circulation areas to exterior terraces, dissolving the boundary between house and landscape. The plan demonstrates clear functional zoning — public living spaces opening to the rear terrace and pool, a dual-bath primary suite with separate dressing rooms and individual bathrooms, one of which opened directly to a private walled sun court, and a more solid service wing — all organized along a disciplined twelve-foot-by-twelve-foot structural grid.

Outdoor rooms, courts, and the pool are treated as architectural elements rather than residual yard space, reinforcing the modernist concept of the house as an environmental framework for daily life. Its location within Palm Vista Estates reflects the historic pattern of architect-designed custom homes in prestigious foothill subdivisions that contributed to Palm Springs' emergence as an internationally recognized center of Modern design. These qualities make the Siemon Residence an excellent local example of postwar residential architecture during this formative period.

Criterion (iv) – Embodies Distinctive Characteristics of a Type, Period, or Method of Construction

Not Eligible as Evaluated by the City of Palm Springs

The Siemon Residence clearly embodies the distinctive characteristics of Desert Modernist residential construction at the height of its development. The slender steel post-and-beam structural system, attenuated horizontal roof plane, continuous floor-to-ceiling glazing in anodized aluminum frames, and the use of identical white terrazzo paving inside and out are hallmarks of the construction vocabulary Cody and his contemporaries refined during the 1950s and 1960s. The engineered hillside pad, pre-construction compaction documentation, and zoning adjustment for steep topography further illustrate the construction methods typical of custom foothill residential development in mid-1960s Palm Springs.

Under a standard reading of this criterion, the residence would be eligible. However, the City of Palm Springs interprets Criterion (iv) narrowly, limiting it to construction that is innovative or novel in its type, period, or method. The Siemon Residence, while an exceptionally refined example of Desert Modernist construction, represents a mature and accomplished use of established techniques rather than an experimental or pioneering structural approach. It therefore does not meet Criterion (iv) as the City applies it. The property's significance under these construction characteristics is more appropriately captured under Criteria (iii) and (v).

Criterion (v) – Work of a Master

Eligible

The Siemon Residence is a significant work of William F. Cody, FAIA, a master architect whose contributions were instrumental in shaping the architectural identity of Palm Springs during the postwar period. Within the City's adopted historic context, Cody is recognized as a leading figure of Desert Modernism, known for refining modernist principles into climate-responsive designs characterized by structural clarity, thin roof planes, extensive glazing, and integrated landscape planning.

Designed in 1967, the residence represents a mature expression of Cody's residential work. Compared to earlier projects that combined heavier masonry with modern detailing, the Siemon Residence demonstrates a fully developed vocabulary of slender structural members, planar roof forms, and transparent enclosure. The

disciplined twelve-foot-by-twelve-foot structural grid, floating roof plane, and seamless terrazzo floor transitions exemplify Cody's late-career pursuit of spatial continuity and structural lightness.

As a highly resolved and largely intact example of Cody's work in Palm Springs, the Siemon Residence clearly meets Criterion (v) as the work of a master architect whose individual genius influenced his age and whose buildings possess high artistic value.

Criterion (vi) – Significant and Distinguishable Entity

Not Applicable

Criterion (vi) applies to the evaluation of historic districts and parcels containing more than one significant entity. The Siemon Residence is a single-parcel, single-structure nomination, and this criterion is therefore not applicable.

Criterion (vii) – Information Potential

Not Eligible

Although the residence demonstrates characteristic construction methods of mid-century Modern residential architecture, it is not expected to yield important new information about construction technology, building methods, or cultural practices beyond what is already well documented for the period. The property does not represent a rare or experimental structural system, and therefore does not meet Criterion (vii) as interpreted by the City of Palm Springs.

Summary of Eligibility

The Siemon Residence meets the criteria for designation as a Class I Historic Resource under Criteria (iii) and (v). It is not eligible under Criteria (i), (ii), (vi), or (vii). Although the residence would satisfy Criterion (iv) under a standard reading, the City of Palm Springs interprets that criterion to require innovative or novel construction, and the property therefore does not qualify under it as locally applied. The property's architectural integrity, relationship to its site, and clear expression of William F. Cody's mature design philosophy allow it to strongly convey its significance within Palm Springs' Post-World War II Modern architectural heritage.

INTEGRITY ANALYSIS

The period of significance for the Siemon Residence is **1967**, the year of its design and construction. The property retains the essential character-defining features of Post-World War II Modern residential architecture as described in the City's adopted historic context, including low horizontal massing, glass-dominated façades, climate-responsive overhangs, and strong integration of architecture and landscape. Despite limited later modifications, the residence clearly conveys its significance as a work of William F. Cody and as a representative example of Palm Springs' mature Desert Modernism within the 1945–1969 period.

Location

The residence remains in its original location at 755 Camino Norte within Palm Vista Estates. It has not been moved. The relationship between the house, its foothill lot, and its orientation toward views of the

surrounding desert and mountains remains intact, preserving the locational context typical of postwar custom hillside residences.

Design

The property retains the fundamental design characteristics that express Cody's architectural intent and the broader design principles of postwar Palm Springs Modernism. The linear pavilion form, thin projecting roof plane, exposed structural expression, and the arrangement of living spaces opening directly to terraces and pool areas remain clearly legible. The plan's zoning of public, private, and service areas, organized along a disciplined structural grid, continues to be evident. Later alterations — including enclosure of a former open sun court, terrace modifications, and the conversion of the carport to enclosed space — are compatible in scale, form, and materials. Recent work was designed by architect Mark Daniels after review of William F. Cody's original drawings, and was intentionally detailed to align with Cody's structural grid, glazing rhythms, and restrained materials palette. These changes do not obscure the overall design concept or the indoor–outdoor spatial organization that defines the house's architectural significance..

Setting

The surrounding setting continues to reflect the low-density, architect-designed residential character associated with Palm Vista Estates and other postwar foothill subdivisions. The property retains its generous lot size, desert landscaping character, and visual relationship to the mountain backdrop. While some neighboring properties have undergone change, the immediate environment still conveys the historic pattern of custom Modern homes in a hillside desert setting.

Materials

Many of the original character-defining materials remain in place, including the slender structural system, extensive glazing, terrazzo paving that visually links interior and exterior spaces, extends into the dining room, and appears in select bathrooms, slumpstone and stucco wall surfaces, and board-and-batten detailing. Some materials, such as sections of glazing and roofing, have been replaced or repaired over time; however, these updates generally replicate the original appearance and do not diminish the property's ability to convey its architectural character.

Workmanship

The residence continues to display the craftsmanship associated with high-quality mid-century modern construction, including precise structural detailing, careful integration of glazing systems, and the execution of terrazzo finishes and built-in landscape elements. These features reflect both Cody's design approach and the construction standards typical of custom Modern residences of the period.

Feeling

The property strongly conveys the feeling of a late-1960s Desert Modernist residence. The experience of moving from the entry sequence into a transparent pavilion that opens to shaded terraces, desert plantings,

and the swimming pool remains intact. The house continues to express the openness, horizontality, and climate-responsive design that characterized Palm Springs residential architecture during the postwar period.

Association

The residence retains a clear association with its 1967 construction date and with the work of William F. Cody, one of the key architects of Palm Springs' postwar Modern movement. The building's physical features continue to illustrate the historic design principles identified in the City's context statement for the 1945–1969 period, maintaining its ability to communicate its architectural and historical significance.

CONCLUSION

Constructed in 1967, the Siemon Residence stands as a refined and mature expression of **William F. Cody's** Desert Modernist design philosophy. Conceived as a lightly framed glass pavilion beneath an attenuated horizontal roof plane, the house embodies the essential principles that came to define postwar residential architecture in Palm Springs: structural lightness, planar clarity, expansive glazing, and a seamless integration of interior living space with the desert landscape.

Although the property has evolved over time, the sequence of changes reflects continued residential use rather than a loss of architectural identity. Alterations undertaken during the Zippel–Johnston stewardship and by subsequent owners have largely respected Cody's structural grid, material palette, and minimalist vocabulary. Even where modifications have occurred — including enclosure and later reconfiguration of the former Sun Court, expansion of the rear terrace, and reconstruction of the pool — the defining features of the design remain clearly legible. The thin floating roof plane, slender steel framing, continuous glass walls, and the spatial relationship between pavilion and landscape continue to convey the house's original architectural intent.

Importantly, the residence retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Its foothill setting within Palm Vista Estates remains intact, and the experience of moving from the walled entry court into a transparent living pavilion opening onto terraces, water, and mountain views still communicates the climate-responsive and leisure-oriented ideals of Palm Springs Modernism.

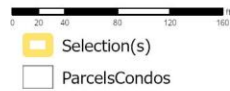
As a highly intact late residential work of William F. Cody and a representative example of the city's internationally recognized Desert Modernist tradition, the Siemon Residence clearly conveys its architectural significance. The property therefore merits designation as a Class I Historic Resource under the applicable criteria, preserving an important chapter in Palm Springs' mid-century architectural heritage.

APPENDICES

I. Assessor's Map and Aerial

General Information

Property Address	755 CAMINO NORTE PALM SPRINGS, CA 92262
Assessment No. (PIN)	505053005
APN (GeoCode)	505053005
Property Type	Residential Exceptional
TAG	011-003 PALM SPRINGS
Acreage	0.47
Doing Business As	
Business Use	
Legal Description	
LOT 5 MB 026/009 PALM VISTA ESTATES UNIT 1 Lot 5 SubdivisionName PALM VISTA ESTATES UNIT 1 LotType Lot RecMapType Map Book MapPlatB 026 MapPlatP 009	



2/6/2026

This map and the data contained herein is for demonstration purposes only. Aumentum Technologies assumes no liability whatsoever associated with the use or misuse of such data, and disclaims any representation or warranty regarding the completeness or accuracy of the data. Note: Acreage and Square Footage data shown are approximate and may not be consistent with records maintained for appraisal purposes. ©2020 Aumentum Technologies. Data sources: Aumentum Technology Customers Geospatial Commons (GASC), U.S. Census, etc.

The best public portal solution for valuation information!

Source: Esri, Vector Block, Geographics, and the GIS User Community



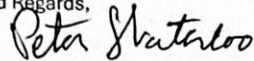
II. Owner's Letter

Peter Waterloo
Jon Taylor
755 Camino Norte
Palm Springs, CA 92262

To Whom It May Concern:

The owners of 755 Camino Norte Palm Springs CA request the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation to complete the application for Class 1 status on this property. As the owners, we support this effort.

Kind Regards,



Peter Waterloo, owner 2/5/2026



Jon Taylor, owner 2/5/2026

III. Chain of Title

Property: 755 Camino Norte, Palm Springs, California

APN: 505-035-005

Historic Ownership Narrative

The property at 755 Camino Norte in Palm Springs was first conveyed into private ownership in 1959, when William Manning Siemon and Margaret T. Siemon acquired the home from the subdivision trustee, Security First National Bank. The Siemons would remain associated with the property for more than four decades, establishing the longest period of continuous ownership in the home’s history. Their tenure spans the primary historic period of the residence and reflects stable, long-term residential occupancy typical of Palm Springs’ postwar neighborhood development.

In 1981, the Siemons recorded a deed confirming their vesting as joint tenants, a common estate-planning step that did not change occupancy or use. Following the death of William Manning Siemon in 2001, full ownership vested in Margaret T. Siemon. Later that year, she transferred the property into the Margaret T. Siemon 2001 Trust, again as part of estate planning versus a change in residency.

The first transfer outside the Siemon family occurred in 2006, when the successor trustee conveyed the property to Edmund Karp. His ownership was relatively brief. By 2009, the property had transferred to David Zippel and Michael Johnston. This transaction marked the continuation of private residential use without known alterations affecting the historic character of the resource.

In 2019 the house was sold to the current owners, Jon Taylor and Peter Waterloo. Throughout its history, the home has remained in consistent residential use, with ownership transitions largely reflecting estate planning or trust administration rather than changes in function. The long tenure of the Siemon family, in particular, anchors the property’s historic period and contributes to its integrity of feeling and association within the neighborhood’s mid-century development context.

Chronological Chain of Title

Date	Grantor	Grantee	Instrument
March 11, 1959	Security First National Bank, Trustee	William M. Siemon & Margaret T. Siemon	Grant Deed
November 2, 1981	William M. Siemon & Margaret T. Siemon	Same, as Joint Tenants	Individual Grant Deed
May 24, 2001	—	Margaret T. Siemon (survivor)	Affidavit – Death of Joint Tenant
August 29, 2001	Margaret T. Siemon	Margaret T. Siemon	Grant Deed

		2001 Trust	
February 21, 2006	Margaret T. Siemon 2001 Trust (Successor Trustee)	Edmund Karp	Grant Deed
September 28, 2009	Edmund Karp	David Zippel and Michael Johnston	Grant Deed
January 14, 2019	David Zippel and Michael Johnston	Jon David Taylor and Peter Waterloo	Grant Deed

IV. Permit History

Pre-Construction Entitlements

November 22–23, 1966

Administrative Minor Modification (Zoning Adjustment)

Before any building permit was issued, the owner obtained approval for a **minor modification to rear yard setback requirements**.

- Property located within **R-1A (Single Family Residential)** zoning
- Adjustment justified by **steep lot topography and grade differential**
- Approval allowed a reduced rear yard setback averaged across the lot
- This action effectively **defined the building envelope** and confirms the house was custom-sited to respond to terrain rather than placed in a standard subdivision footprint

Site Preparation & Engineering

February 1967

Southern California Testing Laboratory – Compaction Report (Job PS2-4-67)

Engineering documentation shows the site required **engineered fill and compaction** prior to foundation work.

Key points documented in the report:

- Multiple fill depths tested across the building pad
- Field density tests verified soil stability
- Confirms the house sits on a **graded and engineered hillside pad**, typical of Palm Springs foothill residential development in the mid-1960s
- Reinforces that the residence was part of the **custom hillside residential expansion** occurring in this area during this period

Original Residential Construction

1967 — Building Permit B-07957

Construction of Single-Family Residence with Attached Garage

This is the **primary construction permit** establishing the house.

Permit details recorded on the job card:

- **Owner:** Wm. (William) Siemon
- **Use:** Single-family residence
- **Structure type:** Wood-frame construction
- **Garage:** Attached
- **Valuation: \$55,000** (high for Palm Springs residential construction in 1967, confirming a substantial custom home rather than a tract house)
- City building permit records indicate the residence contained approximately 2,600 square feet of living area at the time of construction, with an attached 660-square-foot open carport.

Original Plumbing Permit (1967)

Issued in conjunction with the building permit.

Fixtures listed include:

- 3 bathtubs
- 3 lavatories
- 3 water closets (toilets)
- Shower
- Kitchen sink
- Dishwasher
- Clothes washer
- Water heater
- Multiple gas outlets

Original Electrical Permit (1967)

Permit covers full-house electrical installation:

- Service panel installation
- Branch circuits
- Lighting and receptacle outlets
- Appliance circuits

Original Swimming Pool Construction

1967 — Swimming Pool Permit

A separate job card documents the construction of an in-ground swimming pool, clearly contemporaneous with the house.

Inspection stages listed include:

- Steel reinforcement inspection
- Bonding inspection
- Underground piping/electrical
- Gas pressure test
- Equipment housing
- Final inspection sign-off

Early Post-Construction Permit

December 10, 1971 — Permit B-1075

A separate job card dated **12-10-71** records a later permit.

- Exact scope not fully legible on the microfilm
- Format indicates **alteration or addition** rather than new construction
- No indication of major structural expansion
- Likely minor work such as patio enclosure, mechanical upgrade, or interior alteration (common for early 1970s permits)

Sewer Infrastructure Upgrade (Work Not Done)

Mid-1970s — Permit B-5240

“Sewer – House to Main Connection”

This permit documents connection of the residence to the **municipal sewer system**. The house remains on a septic tank today, so this work was never completed.

LATER PERMITS

June 1, 2005 — Permit C12682

Re-roof residence (built-up hot mop system) with minor drywall repair.

Valuation: \$11,000

Oct 22, 2008 — Permit C22970

Carport enclosed to create garage space; sliding glass doors and new code-compliant garage door added.

Valuation: \$15,200

Jan 6, 2010 — Permit C25706

Garage roof replacement (maintenance).

Valuation: \$2,380

June 10, 2010 — Permit C28033

Interior remodel and **320 sq ft addition**, including new guest bathroom.

Valuation: \$25,000

May 7, 2011 — Permit C29491

Installation of 30-panel rooftop **solar PV system**.

Valuation: \$18,653

Oct 7, 2021 — Permit 2021-4526

187 linear feet of engineered poured-in-place retaining wall.

Valuation: \$45,000

Oct 25, 2021 — Permit 2021-4712

Demolition of original pool; construction of new gunite pool and detached spa.

Valuation: \$100,000

Feb 16, 2022 — Permit 2022-567

Addition and remodel: master bath/closet expansion, glazing upgrades, new openings, 15'×12' pavilion.

Valuation: \$100,000

2022 — Permit 2022-1772

Additional rooftop solar installation (with later revision).

Mar 2, 2023 — Permit 2023-862

Revision to 2022 remodel: interior wall reconfiguration, HVAC relocation, structural framing changes, reduction of some additions.

2023 — Permit 2023-1230

Additional solar PV installation.

2023 — Permit BLDR-2023-1033

Roof tear-off and replacement (single-ply membrane system).

July 1, 2024 — Permit BLDR-2024-4220

Approx. 73 linear feet of 5'-0" high city-standard wall.

2024 — Permit BLDR-2024-4235

Construction of additional 5'-0" high retaining wall.

V. December 2025 Photographs by the Author

PRIMARY FAÇADE FROM STREET



The primary façade from Camino Norte, facing south. Garage to the left; long white terrazzo path leading to front gate, which is louvered steel. White-painted slumpstone walls enclose the front garden court. Note simple landscape consisting of gravel, large native ledgestones, mature palms, and multi-trunk olive tree.



Looking southwest towards garage and driveway, and path leading to front gate, with slumpstone wall.



Two more views looking towards the primary façade from Camino Norte. This multi-trunk olive tree is a later addition, but is in keeping with Cody's original landscape plant palette.



Views of front garden showing white-painted slumpstone walls and minimalist landscape. Note slumpstone planter to right of front gate.



The front steel louvered gate, and view of the inner garden court from the front gate. The mature multi-trunk olive trees here are original to the landscape plan and show in early aerials. House and landscape are both kept elegantly restrained.



View looking northeast towards front gate shows wall of garage, created using a contemporary interpretation of board-and-batten. The floor to ceiling fixed glass panes of garage are textured obscure glass.



Detail of textured obscure glass and board-and-batten detailing on garage wall inside the garden court. The long white terrazzo path leads from the street, through the gate, directly to this large white terrazzo patio.



The top shows the detail of the original anodized aluminum sliding glass doors, most of which are extant. The bottom photo shows the addition of a second bedroom in the basic footprint of the original “Sun Court” (though square footage was added). The floor-to-ceiling windows to the left of that wing are where the original primary dressing room and bath were located. The wall there was originally board-and-batten. When the new bedroom was added in the footprint of the “Sun Court,” the board-and-batten detail was maintained there, and the fixed glass panels replaced the original detail, maintaining Cody’s original material vocabulary.

Previously, that Sun Court wall was stucco (though it was called out as “wood siding” in the original site plan drawing).

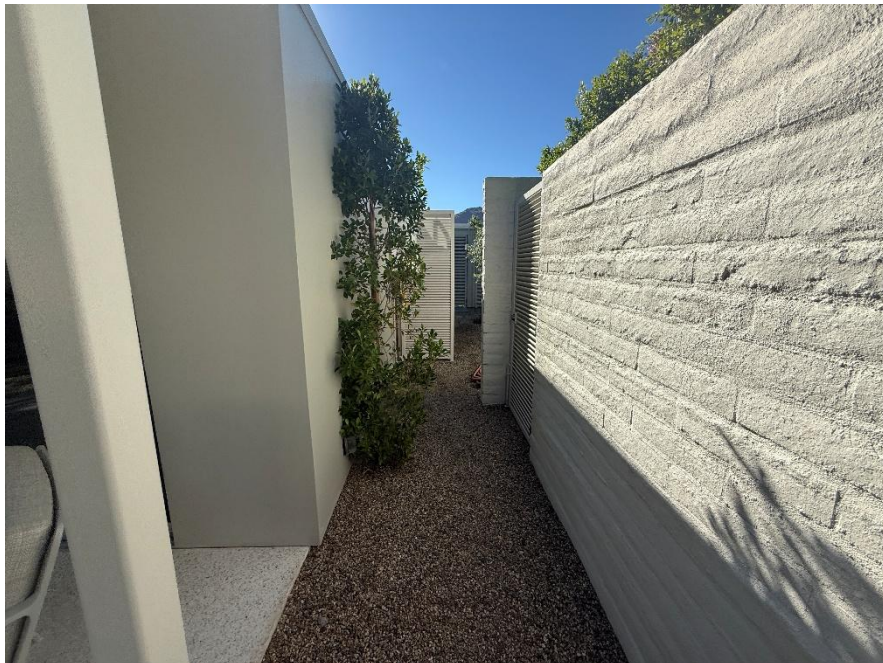


Two views of the garden court, mature olive trees, and the new bedroom addition.



The new bedroom addition uses the same materials palette as the rest of the house: white terrazzo, steel, aluminum, and glass.

THE WEST FACADE



Along the west perimeter of the property, a gravel path travels along the slumpstone wall towards the bedroom wing private patios.



The small private patios of the bedroom wing on the west elevation.

THE REAR FAÇADE, GARDEN, AND POOL



Exiting the corridor along the west perimeter, one enters the rear garden.



Views of the rear garden with swimming pool. Because of the steep slope at the back of the lot, retaining walls and a deep ravine at the far south of the parcel.



The original rectangular swimming pool was inset into a large panel of white terrazzo, that corresponded to the volume of the large living room/den. In the last remodel, the new owners extended the white terrazzo the length of the back of the house—it originally was a mix of terrazzo and concrete. As part of that, the pool was redesigned to be a longer, narrower rectangle, which now corresponds to the geometries of the floor plan.



The deep overhang at the rear of the house with Cody's signature impossibly thin steel posts and beam, shading the rear wall of the house, which is entirely floor-to-ceiling glass.



More views of the deep ravine at the south edge of the lot, and the restrained plant palette.



More views of the rear of the house. Beyond the living room, the façade retreats, the kitchen area beyond.



More views showing the material palette: white terrazzo, board-and-batten, steel, aluminum, stucco, and glass.



The rear terrazzo deck with deep overhang above.



More details: original aluminum hardware on the original anodized aluminum sliding glass doors; walls of floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors and fixed panels of glass.

THE EAST FAÇADE



The east façade houses a guest room, as well as the kitchen, laundry room, and garage.



The series of private patio areas along the corridor of the east façade.



HVAC equipment and other systems in the corridor along the east façade. When the carport was enclosed and turned into a garage, the doors slide along this aluminum-clad spider leg detail.



Garage door detail.