

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT

THE PETERSON HOUSE 1948

73535 Joshua Tree Street, Palm Desert, CA

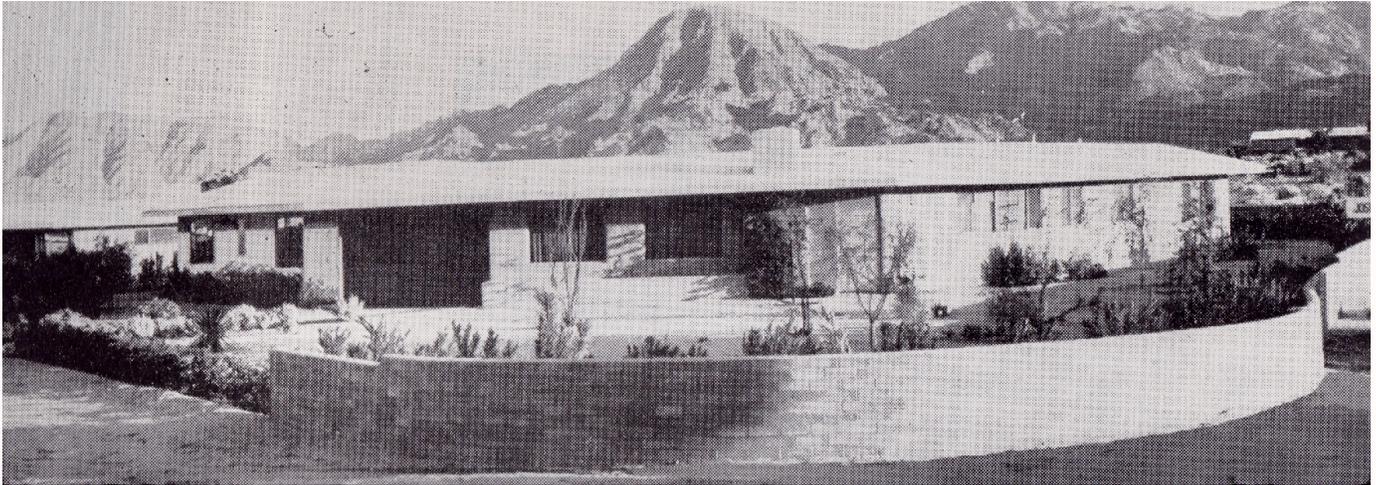


Photo: Sunspots 5th Anniversary

Albert (Al) and Edythe Peterson, along with their next door neighbor, Millie Mitchell, were the first to purchase a lot in the Shadow Mountain area from the Palm Desert Corporation.

Their home was among the first homes Walter S. White designed in the area. This 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom 1,917 square foot house is an L-shaped building sited diagonally on the lot,

Today the house is screened from the street by a tall hedge.

ARCHITECT:
WALTER S. WHITE

ORIGINAL OWNERS:
MR & MRS ALBERT
PETERSON



modernism week

Official Modernism Week Event



THE HOUSE



Photos: zillow.com

Walter S. White was born in San Bernardino in 1917. Between 1933 and 1936 he attended San Bernardino High School. White learned how to build from his father, who owned a construction business in San Bernardino, California; honed his technical skills in a Southern California airplane factory during World War II; and worked in the offices of noted architects Rudolf M. Schindler, Harwell Hamilton Harris, and Albert Frey. By the mid-1940s White was a designer, builder, and developer to the growing number of desert dwellers in California's Coachella Valley. With nearly 50 homes in Palm Desert alone attributed to White, he quickly became the "go to" designer for homes in the Shadow Mountain neighborhood.

Walter S. White

After moving to Colorado Springs in 1960, White designed many of the private residences in the exclusive Kissing Camels Estates. In the 1970s he established a reputation for designs that relied on passive solar energy.

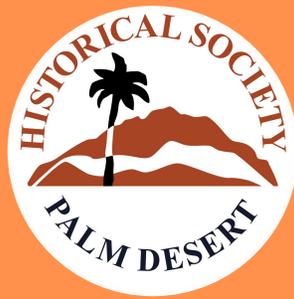
White's career is notable for three major areas of focus: inexpensive, even DIY architecture; innovation in construction and materials; and concern for nature and sustainability. In the early years of his practice, right after World War II, White focused on designing minimal and small, inexpensive houses. These include his affordable wooden cabins for returning G.I.s, small concrete-block houses in the desert, and prefab steel and wood cabins for mountain sites. White had an abiding interest in the construction of buildings and was fearless in his experimentation. He held patents for innovative construction methods, including one for hyperbolic-paraboloid roofs. White's concern for the local landscape and the earth's environment led him to design buildings that took advantage of their natural settings while also caring for nature and sitting lightly on the land. Especially in the 1970s, the efficiency of his buildings and their effect on man's energy consumption became a focus of his practice.

Walter S. White died in 2002, at the age of 85.

Source: Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara

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One in a series of monographs created by the Historical Society of Palm Desert's Architecture and Design Committee celebrating the many architecturally-significant homes in Palm Desert.



Museum Address:

Located in the Old Palm Desert Fire Station
72-861 El Paseo Drive, Palm Desert

Open Friday - Monday October through May
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Free Admission

Mailing Address:

PO Box 77, Palm Desert CA 92261-0077

www.hspd.org

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