

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County *Riverside*

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad

Date:

*c. Address *71-049 Early Times Road*

City *Rancho Mirage*

Zip *92270*

*e. Other Locational Data: Assessor's Parcel Number Block: Lot:

*P3a. Description: (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries.)

Designed in 1957 by architects Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison, this one-story, "L"-shaped home faces north. Topped by a flat roof, the building is sheathed with board and batten and medium-smooth stucco. The 2,326 square foot, three bedroom, and three bathroom house is set on .58 acres. Windows types include fixed and aluminum-framed casement. Several domed skylights penetrate the roof, where a battered interior metal chimney is also visible. A square wood post supports the deep overhang of the porch roof that shades the double entrance door. The entry area is enclosed by a low natural rock wall. A board and batten fence matching the board and batten exterior sheathing continues from the northeast corner of the house to the property line. The north-facing natural rock wall of the perpendicular, enclosed, double-car garage supports the exposed beams of the garage roof. A lawn and low shrubs border the concrete driveway, with a slumpstone wall fronting the property at the street. There is no swimming pool. The house appears original and in excellent condition.

*P3b. Resource Attributes: (list attributes and codes) *HP2. Single-family Property*

*P4. Resources Present: Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other



P5b. Description of Photo: (view and date)

*North elevation
August 2002*

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and

Sources: historic
1957/ Source: Metroscan

*P7. Owner and Address:

*Robert S. Walker Sr.
4923 Underwood Avenue
Omaha, NE 68132*

*P8. Recorded by:

*P. Moruzzi, T. Grimes, L. Heumann
Leslie Heumann and Associates
600 N. Sierra Bonita Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90036*

*P9. Date Recorded:

September 23, 2002

*P10. Survey Type:

Intensive Survey .

*P11. Report Citation: (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none")

None.

*Attachments: None Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (list)

BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD

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*NRHP Status Code 5S1

*Resource Name or #: *Skutt Residence*

B1. Historic Name: *Skutt Residence*

B2. Common Name: *Same*

B3. Original Use: *Single-family Property*

B4. Present Use: *Single-family Property*

*B5. Architectural Style: *Modern*

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations): *Constructed in 1957.*

Note: No building permits exist prior to incorporation of the City of Rancho Mirage in 1973. December 2, 1987. Reroof.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: _____ Original Location: _____

*B8. Related Features:

None.

B9a. Architects: *Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison*

b. Builder: *Unknown*

*B10. Significance: Theme *Country Club Era*

Area *Rancho Mirage*

Period of Significance: *1951 - 1973* Property Type: *Single-family Residence* Applicable Criteria: *C*

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity)

Constructed in 1957, this property is notable as one of a cluster of ten homes developed around a communal swimming pool within a park-like setting (the "cluster between Early Times Road and Country Club Drive") and for its original design by architects Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison. According to the city directories, the earliest owners of the house were Larry F. and Helene Skutt, who were identified in the 1957 directory as residents on Early Times Road with no address and in the 1961 directory with this address. Mr. Skutt was associated with Colonial Corporation. The architectural firms of Wexler & Harrison and William Cody designed many of the houses in this small community, erected in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The houses, ranging in size from 2,300 to 3,300 square feet, were built on half-acre lots without individual swimming pools. Instead, rear yards open to the manicured lawns, trees, and shared rectangular swimming pool of the one acre central court. Since construction, several of

(See Continuation Sheet 3 of 3.)

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes) _____

*B12. References:

City of Rancho Mirage Building Permits

Alan Hess and Andrew Danish, Palm Springs Weekend, San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 2001.

Interview with architect Donald Wexler, October 13, 2002.

1957 Palm Springs Directory.

1961 Palm Springs "Yellow Book" Directory.

B13. Remarks:

Sketch Map

*B14. Evaluator: *Peter Moruzzi, Teresa Grimes, Leslie Heumann*

*Date of Evaluation: *September 23, 2002*

(This space reserved for official comments.)

***B10. Significance (continued):**

the houses have added private swimming pools. This is a property type apparently unique to Rancho Mirage in the Coachella Valley area. Privately owned single-family residences sharing grounds and a swimming pool is an unusual permutation of a multi-family residential complex. Additional examples include Tamarisk Fairway on 10th (1969-1970) and Tamarisk Ranchos I and II (1958 and 1961) near the Tamarisk Country Club, and, near the Thunderbird Country Club, the Vista Del Rio tract (1958) and Thunderbird Palms (circa 1961).

Donald Wexler studied architecture at the University of Minnesota. On a visit to California in 1950, he accepted a job working for one of his design heroes, Richard Neutra, at the firm of Neutra and Alexander. In 1952, learning of William Cody's project at the Tamarisk Country Club, Wexler took a winter position in Cody's office where he met Richard Harrison. Not long afterward, the two young architects left to open their own practice in Palm Springs. Over the years, the office would design schools, offices and homes. Wexler is best known for designing a small tract of Modern steel houses for the Alexander Company in the north end of Palm Springs in the early 1960s. According to author and critic Alan Hess, the steel houses "moved beyond a custom expression of the modern machine to actually incorporate the assembly line processes and mass production that were the essence of modern technology." Wexler and Harrison teamed with William Cody in the design of the remarkable 1958 Palm Springs Spa Hotel. The Wexler and Harrison team also designed banks and offices and the dramatic open-air Palm Springs airport. Says Wexler, "We didn't even think of it as Modern in terms of architecture for the desert," it was a matter of designing "to live with the environment, a matter of balancing orientation and views."

The Skutt Residence is an excellent and highly intact example of Wexler and Harrison's use of board and batten for sheathing one of his flat-roofed Modern houses. In addition, the incorporation of slumpstone, natural rock walls, projecting beam ends, and thin square support posts are all hallmarks of their design. Of the ten properties in this cluster, only four retained sufficient architectural integrity to be noteworthy. This property appears eligible for designation under an existing or proposed local ordinance, but does not appear eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (a "5S1" National Register Status Code).