

State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
PRIMARY RECORD

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
CHR Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 3

Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder)

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County *Riverside*

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad

Date:

*c. Address *70-401 Los Pueblos Way*

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.)

Capped by a low-pitched gabled roof, this one-story residence is reflective of the Modern architectural style. Of wood frame construction and L-shaped in plan, the house is sheathed primarily in smooth stucco. Fixed and metal-framed windows punctuate its street-facing and side elevations while its rear (south) elevation is characterized by large floor to ceiling fixed and sliding glass doors. The front entry porch is shaded by a deep overhang. An interior chimney appears near the ridgeline. A concrete driveway leads to an enclosed two-car garage. Landscaping consists of a grassy lawn, clipped hedges, mature citrus trees, and other plants. The dwelling appears mostly original with few visible alterations.

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

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

P5a. Photo



P5b. Description of Photo: (view and date)

*South elevation
October 2008*

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: historic
1958/ Source: Tax Assessor

*P7. Owner and Address:
Private

*P8. Recorded by:
*Peter Moruzzi
Moruzzi Historic Resources Consulting
2935 Angus Street
Los Angeles, CA 90039*

*P9. Date Recorded:
October 2008

*P10. Survey Type:
Intensive Survey.

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

City of Rancho Mirage, Historic Resource Survey, Leslie Heumann & Associates, 2002-2003.

*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

Page 2 of 3

*CHR Status Code 5S1

*Resource Name or #: 70-401 Los Pueblos Way

- B1. Historic Name: *None*
- B2. Common Name: *70-401 Los Pueblos Way*
- 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 1958.

Note: No building permits exist prior to incorporation of the City of Rancho Mirage in 1973.

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

*B8. Related Features:

None.

B9a. Architect:

b. Builder: *Devon Construction Co.*

*B10. Significance: Theme *Country Club Era*

Area *Rancho Mirage*

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

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

The subject property, a component of Tamarisk Ranchos I, is a representative example of a cooperative single-family residence (SFR), which is a property type apparently unique to Rancho Mirage in the Coachella Valley. Each of the cooperative's 16 dwellings is privately owned yet all share a common design philosophy, similar floor plans, amenities, and relationship to the communal grounds and swimming pool. The complex was erected in 1958 by Lou Halper's Devon Construction Company with plans originally drawn by architect William Krisel, but the Los Angeles-based developer utilized in-house architects in designing the houses that were ultimately built. Halper erected 16 modest houses around beautiful parklike grounds and a swimming pool so that the residents – all members of the nearby Tamarisk Country Club – could easily socialize in a communal setting. Halper also subdivided Tamarisk Ranchos II to the north, which he sold the property to another developer who subsequently constructed the houses and communal facilities in 1961.

The history of Tamarisk Ranchos centers around a small group of the founding members of the Tamarisk Country Club: developer Lou Halper, City National Bank owner Al Hart, comedian Groucho Marx, producers Alfred Tugend and Harry Robbin, and attorney Philip Eisendrath. Instead of each building custom houses along the golf course, they decided to have Lou Halper build modest houses around a communal park and swimming pool on property one block west of the golf course.

(Continued on page 3)

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

Sketch Map

*B12. References:

Alan Hess and Andrew Danish, Palm Springs Weekend, San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 2001. Adele Cygelman, Palm Springs Modern, New York, Rizzoli International Publications, 1999. Rita Terras, A History of Tamarisk Ranchos, self-published research, 2002.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: *Peter Moruzzi*

*Date of Evaluation: *October 2008*

D6. Significance (continued)

During the 1960s and 1970s, other Tamarisk Country Club members purchased houses at Tamarisk Ranchos including agent Jules Goldstone, Oscar-winning producer/screenwriter Larry Weingarten, J.A. Minow, Joseph Checkers of Chicago, Oscar-winning director Alfred Lushing, Hal Meyers, and attorney Hy Raskin. Raskin had co-chaired Adlai Stevenson's election campaign and later served as West Coast campaign manager for John F. Kennedy. Many were also members of the Hillcrest Country Club in Los Angeles.

Barbara Marx purchased Groucho Marx' house after her divorce from Zeppo Marx. The house remained in her name after her marriage to Frank Sinatra. The manager's house at 70-476 Tamarisk Lane was occupied by several couples until it was sold when an outside property management firm took over. Until 1968, other than the managers, there had been no full-time residents living at Tamarisk Ranchos. Today most of the owners are full-time residents. The original CC&Rs stipulated that prospective buyers be interviewed as to their suitability, a policy which has since been eliminated. Longtime resident Lois Jacobs, daughter of previous owner Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Checkers, remembers that residents "had families with young children and grandchildren" and that "vacations of weekends in Rancho Mirage meant fun around the pool with games and picnics." Resident historian Rita Terras concludes, "As a community we are older and less sociable. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to bring back the friendly community spirit that, in the early days, seems to have been the key to the well-being of Tamarisk Ranchos' owners and occupants."

Approximately six Cooperative SFRs were developed in Rancho Mirage. In addition to Tamarisk Ranchos I and II, the Tamarisk Fairway on 10th Cooperative SFRs consists of eight large houses sharing communal grounds, a swimming pool, driveways, and carports and was built in 1969-1970. Near Thunderbird Country Club, architect Richard R. Leitch designed the 39 single-family residences with a common recreational area including swimming pool, dressing rooms, and volleyball court in the Tierra Del Sol Tract in 1958. Says Leitch, the communal recreation area, "new at the time," was the first of a number of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) that were the forerunners of condominiums.

Also near Thunderbird, the Early Times Road/Country Club Drive Cooperative SFR (1957) consists of ten houses, many quite large, arranged around a squared "O" with rear elevations opening to the shared park and swimming pool. In subsequent years several homeowners have added private swimming pools to their homes. Finally, the Thunderbird Palms grouping (circa 1961) consists of 28 residences scattered within a large area and sharing several swimming pools and common grounds.

Each of these Cooperative SFRs were experiments at combining the best aspects of single-family housing and community living. Inherent in the cooperative plan is the belief that a country club/resort atmosphere naturally encourages socializing in common areas before retreating to private dwellings. It speaks of a time when communal swim parties, afternoon barbecues, and evening cocktails were appropriate resort activities. In the case of both Tamarisk Ranchos I and the Tamarisk Fairway on 10th groupings, the initial owners were almost all members of the Tamarisk Country Club, hence the built-in social connection. Evidently, however, the concept of Cooperative SFRs gave way to condominiums with their increased density, common walls, and apartment-like atmosphere.

As an excellent example of this new type of Modern tract housing that characterized Rancho Mirage from the late 1950s to the late 1960s, the subject dwelling at 70-401 Los Pueblos Way was designated as a local landmark in 2008 (a "5S1" California Historic Resources Status Code).