

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

DRAFT

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Town & Country Center

Other names/site number: The Center; Colburn Center; Town & Country Restaurant

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 146, 156-166, 168 & 174 N. Palm Canyon Dr., 167-181 N. Indian Canyon Dr.

City or town: Palm Springs State: CA County: Riverside

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___national ___statewide ___local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

___A ___B ___C ___D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official:</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
<p>_____ Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: International Style

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Foundation: reinforced concrete, Roof: built-up composition, Walls: cement plaster, Storefront: glazing with steel frames, Framing: steel and wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Town & Country Center is an outdoor shopping center with central courtyard designed in the International Style and constructed in 1948. Located in the heart of downtown Palm Springs, the Town and Country Center was designed by two internationally famous architects, Paul R. Williams and A. Quincy Jones. The complex consists of four original buildings and a fifth building designed by Donald Wexler, Architect, constructed in 1955. The two street-facing elevations vary in style, materials, and appearance having varied geometry and quantity of fenestration. They share materials of painted concrete and stucco walls, storefront spaces with metal framed window walls, and other fenestration of fixed framed windows along both east and west elevations are consistent. The buildings are steel framed, with partial basements and concrete foundations. Flat roofs are consistent in all buildings. Along the east side of the courtyard, a wide staircase leads to a second level restaurant space, originally called the Town & Country Restaurant, now vacant. Along the northwest corner of the courtyard is a semicircular element that recalls Erich Mendelsohn's famous and influential International Style De La Warr Pavilion of 1938, considered by some to be Britain's first Modernist building. The 1955 building is constructed of concrete, metal and glass, has a flat roof, and responds to the original design documents produced by Jones and Williams illustrating a future building to be constructed at its

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

location.¹ The Town & Country Center retains all aspects of historic integrity including, location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Narrative Description

The block south of Andreas Road, east of Palm Canyon Drive, west of Indian Canyon Drive, and north of Taquitz Canyon Drive is rich in local history. The village's first church was built on the northwest corner of the block, and next door was the village's first hardware store. Both were located just north of the nominated property. The site of the church is now the location of the Carnell Building, architect Harry Williams' first project in the City of Palm Springs,² and now a site per the City of Palm Springs historic resources inventory.³ Next door, the Lykken & Bartlett Department and Hardware Store of 1914, altered in the 1930s, is also a locally designated site.⁴ A portion of the nominated property was once occupied by Patterson's Drug Store at 160 North Palm Canyon Drive, and was first recorded into the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) in 1983 and subsequently designated Site 33-7545. The site record from that survey notes, "This modern commercial building has stucco walls with a flat roof. It has small four pipe designs on stucco panels on the second story while the first story consists of a storefront." (Henderson and Hough 1983:1)⁵

The transformation of the desert village into a first-class travel destination was the result of its discovery by the rich and famous of Hollywood in the 1920-1930s, making Palm Springs the favored getaway destination. The new buildings in pre-WWII Palm Springs were predominantly Mission Revival and Spanish Colonial Revival in style, inspired by both the arid natural landscape and a romanticized vision of California history. In the post WWII era, a major shift took place in the architectural aesthetic of Palm Springs as the city sought to accommodate the sophisticated tastes of wealthy visitors who desired private vacation homes and upscale shopping in the secluded desert.

Palm Canyon Drive was the center of this architectural transition, as newly constructed markets, hotels, and retail shops increasingly defined the downtown cityscape. Viewing the traditional Mission and Spanish style buildings then dominant in the area as too old-fashioned, this new clientele developed an appreciation for a type of architecture that was more explicitly modern. The result was inspired in part by the clean lines, flat roofs, glass walls, and unornamented façades of the International Style buildings made famous by architects such as Mies van der Rohe, Oscar Niemeyer, Eric Mendelsohn, and Le Corbusier, tempered in part by the desert landscape and climate. The attention given to the desert landscape fostered an aesthetic variation in which the austerity of the International Style is influenced by the inclusion of local natural elements such as rock, granite, and wood on the interior and exterior, and by the use of neutral

¹ Design & construction documents, University of California, Los Angeles, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections: A. Quincy Jones Collection 1692.

² Palm Springs Art Museum, *An Eloquent Modernist: E. Stewart Williams, Architect*, 2014.

³ Palm Springs Historic Site Preservation Board, *Inventory of Historic Structures*, September 2001.

⁴ Architectural Resources Group, *City of Palm Springs Citywide Historic Resources Survey*, 2004.

⁵ California Historical Resources Information System, 1983.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

colors to better help the buildings blend into the surrounding environment. Water is also a predominant feature of these buildings, as many include pools, fountains, ponds, and waterfalls. Much of the downtown Palm Springs area reflects this latter phase of architectural transformation since a number of important buildings from this period are still extant.

The previous buildings on the project site were demolished in phases to make way for the development of the property originally named The Center. The Center became known as Town & Country Center within a year of its construction, due to the popularity of the Town & Country Restaurant placed prominently facing the courtyard of the shopping center. A local publication stated, "A distinguished restaurant in the center of the Village – Famous for its 'Smorgasbord' Lunch and Dinner. Cocktail hour in a delightful setting."⁶

As designed, the complex was configured to feature an enclosed courtyard with street front elements facing Palm Canyon Drive on the west and Indian Canyon Drive on the east. Linked to the streets by passageways, the focal point of the center is the landscaped courtyard in the center of the property that was surrounded by shops. Additional shop fronts also faced the streets (see **Site Plan** and **Sketch Map**).⁷ When the project was built, the two streets had not yet been combined into a one-way couple and both street façades were equally important. Since the introduction of the one-way couple, Palm Canyon Drive emerged as the more important street and the Indian Canyon Drive façade, while architecturally stunning, is considered to be the rear of the building.

In addition to the benefit of frontage along both Palm Canyon and Indian Canyon Drives in the downtown core, the complex had additional retail and office suites facing onto the interior courtyard. When built, the dramatically landscaped courtyard formed the focal point of the shopping center, bordered by a large, glassy semi-circular element on the west side of the courtyard and an angled exterior staircase to the Town & Country Restaurant on the east side.

The original plans referenced the buildings via street address. For simplicity, buildings are identified as A, B, C, D, and E.

156-66 and 170-74 North Palm Canyon Drive (Twin Buildings A & B)

Separated by a 20-foot wide passageway, the two buildings at 156-166 and 170-174 North Palm Canyon Drive have nearly identical street façades. The west elevations of these buildings along North Palm Canyon feature flat roofs with a wide cornice treatment composed of painted vertically oriented corrugated aluminum panels added in the 1980s, and concrete block wall sections that sub-divide a series of storefront spaces. Each is glazed with metal-framed storefront sections. The City of Palm Springs Museum Market Plaza Environmental Impact Report asserts that the building on the right is the remains of the Patterson Drug Store.⁸ While identical on the street façades, the northern building (170-174) extends eastward along the north property line

⁶ Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, *The Palm Springs and Desert Resort Area Story*, 1955.

⁷ Jeffrey Baker and Bruno Funaro, *Shopping Centers: Design, and Operation* (New York: Progressive Architecture Library/Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1951), 6, Figure 3.

⁸ Museum Market Plaza Environmental Impact Report, Cultural Resources Survey Report, May 9, 2008.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

thus forming the northern wall of the courtyard. It contains shops at the street level and offices above. The semi-circular element on the courtyard side of this building, with its curvilinear overhangs and large ribbon windows on both levels, is one of the architectural highlights of the complex.

146-150 North Palm Canyon Drive (Bank of America Building, Building C)

This two-story commercial building of reinforced concrete construction was designed to house a Bank of America branch. Although constructed at the same time and by the same architects as the rest of the project, the building has its own distinct identity.⁹ Rectangular in plan, this building features a set of angled louver-like vertical glazed openings on the upper level of its primary façade. The street level façade is divided by a projecting horizontal band that shades passersby and also served as a marquee bearing the name of the bank. The Bank of America building was a highly stylized and eye-catching commercial building when first constructed. Historic photographs illustrate the original International Style design of the building's principal façade, expressed through the contrast between the array of large concrete louvers painted blue, and the massive sand-colored towers that anchored both ends of the façade. The name of the bank was spelled across the top of the projecting cornice in white, widely spaced letters.

167-181 North Indian Canyon Drive (Building D)

This two-story commercial building was constructed of steel, wood, and plaster.¹⁰ A prominent feature of the building is an angled exterior staircase to the Town & Country Restaurant on the west side. The broad concrete stairs, resting on a multi-level asymmetrical podium and accompanied by a seemingly airborne planter jutting out from the building behind, led to a rectangular balcony across the front of the restaurant. The dynamic interaction among the various geometric shapes and intersecting planes of the building facing onto the courtyard represent the most notable character defining features of the Town & Country Center's International Style design. The east elevation, facing Indian Canyon Drive, is a largely intact composition that features two projecting cornices that interlock into a two-story high, wedge-shaped frieze. Historic signage for "The Center" located near the Indian Canyon entrance remains intact.

E.F. Hutton Building (Building E)

The 1955 addition is a one-story commercial building built of steel and concrete. It is a flat roofed building, with green terrazzo floors. Metal and glass storefronts, green terrazzo floors, and concrete walls are intact. Character defining features include a simple rectangular plan, aluminum storefronts with floor to ceiling glass, poured terrazzo flooring, and a geometric grid pattern of original concrete tile on the two façades facing the courtyard. It is the only single story building in the complex. Unlike the other four buildings of the Town & Country Center, this building faces onto the courtyard, with no other exposure to North Palm Canyon Drive or Indian Canyon Drive. The original function of the building was administration and finance. The building reflects the modern style of the other four buildings, albeit a more understated eloquent

⁹ Design & construction documents, UCLA, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections: A. Quincy Jones Collection 1692.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

and simplistic form, responsive to the pedestrian scale of the courtyard. The interior is vacant and not accessible. The original flooring; a dark green, poured concrete terrazzo, is visible through the windows. It extends to the exterior of the building, a common design feature of midcentury modern structures that exploit the blurred boundaries between interior and exterior spaces.

Alterations

Buildings A and B

The lines and massing remain essentially unchanged from construction. The commercial spaces fronting North Palm Canyon remain intact, still functioning as retail space, and are occupied by retail tenants. Many of the original storefronts remain unchanged, inclusive of original door hardware. An original covered passageway at Building A (see Sketch Map) was enclosed and captured as leasable commercial space circa 1975. The corrugated aluminum panels covering the upper level of their street-facing facades were installed after 1983, covering the original stucco panels. Uniform awnings were placed above the storefronts, circa 1985. The semi-circular element in the courtyard remains intact. The remainder of Building A, easterly towards Indian Canyon Drive is vacant.

Building C

The bold architectural character of the principle façade has been subdued to some degree by the uniform coat of dark brown paint across the upper level, and the subdivision of the former bank into three separate storefronts, each with its own signage that has marginally altered the general appearance of the building. The three retail spaces were developed after the relocation of the Bank of America circa 1973. Tenant signage has been added to the principle façade. This is reversible and does not adversely affect the integrity of the building. The interior of the second floor is not accessible, so it is not possible to describe the physical condition. The exterior materials and fenestration remain unchanged.

Building D

The impressive entry stair to the Town & Country Restaurant was modified through the addition of a canopy above the stairs, and the enclosure of the balcony for more interior space. The interior of the restaurant building was remodeled in 1979, including gutting the restaurant to accommodate the installation of dance floors. The balcony at the restaurant's courtyard entrance was enclosed during another round of renovations in the early 1980s, and the original building remains intact. The original storefront windows have plywood covering the interior spaces along Indian Canyon Drive. The areas of fenestration remain intact.

Building E

Awnings added above the window are torn and faded. These could easily be removed, and do not alter the original lines and fenestration of the building. The interior of the building is not accessible, so physical condition and alterations are unknown.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Integrity

The property owner will not permit access, and is opposed to the listing of the Town & Country Center in the National Register of Historic Places. As a consequence, several doors and windows are covered in plywood. It is not possible to describe the physical condition of the interior spaces with authority. The original design of the Town & Country Center allowed for internal flexibility of tenant spaces and demising walls.

The Town & Country Center represents an established and familiar visual feature in downtown Palm Springs. Its long history of minor changes and deferred maintenance has taken a toll on the buildings, both physically and commercially. The Town & Country Center's integrity remains intact.

City of Palm Springs building safety records documented hundreds of permits issued on the Town & Country Center property. Besides the permits for the construction of the original buildings in the complex, the Palm Springs Corporation also secured a permit to construct a new concrete office building in the southwest portion of the courtyard. Originally intended for a business office, it later served as a women's apparel shop. This is the building designed by Donald Wexler, Architect. The other permits recorded in city files chronicle the physical modifications to the buildings in the Town & Country Center, most of them to accommodate changes in tenancy and usage in the shops, such as storefront remodeling, enlarging or extending display windows, or combining or dividing retail units.

Planting materials throughout the complex have not been maintained; some are missing, others are overgrown. All of these changes are reversible. In summary, the Town & Country Center retains most of the basic features of its International Style architecture, even though some of the storefronts have been altered to accommodate change of tenancy, as is often a common practice among retail-oriented commercial properties. Despite these alterations, the Town & Country Center retains sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, feeling, workmanship, and association to convey that it is a masterpiece of mid-century design.

The Town & Country Center is in its original location, and available evidence suggests that the setting is much the same as it was during the period of significance 1948 to 1955. The primary character defining features of the International Style architecture remain intact. With the exception of some doors and windows, original materials are present, and the original workmanship is evident. The Town and Country Center projects the same striking feeling of modernity as when originally designed by Jones and Williams.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1948-1955

Significant Dates

1948, 1955

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Jones, A. Quincy

Williams, Paul Revere

Frey, Albert

Clark, John Porter

Wexler, Donald

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Town & Country Center is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A at the local level of significance in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with the evolution of Palm Springs from a small scale village into an international desert resort destination, and the basis for its growth into a modern city. Town & Country Center is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture. Previously unaffiliated architects collaborated to bring forth regional modernism, representing a new degree of professional practice in Palm Springs. One of the best examples of the International Style of architecture in southern California, and an important early mixed use development, the property is also architecturally noteworthy for its pedestrian friendly open-air courtyard that creates passage between two prominent streets, Palm Canyon Drive and Indian Canyon Drive. Town & Country Center clearly reflects the collaborative work of two distinguished master architects, A. Quincy Jones & Paul R. Williams, and an additional building later added by a third master Architect, Donald Wexler. There is also evidence, based upon the original drawings of the Town & Country Center, that two other distinguished master architects, Albert Frey and John Porter Clark, collaborated with Jones and Williams on the design of the specialty store and department store commercial spaces fronting North Palm Canyon Drive.¹¹ The period of significance 1948 to 1955 reflects construction of the first four buildings to completion of the center as designed.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Master Architects Jones and Williams, based in Los Angeles, designed the original Town & Country Center, then collaborated with local architects Clark, Frey, and Wexler to further develop the mixed-use center. The success of the Town & Country Center was due largely to a scale that is both pedestrian-friendly and in harmony with its desert and mountain surroundings. Jones and Williams artistically designed the complex as a series of distinct volumes and planes, solids and voids, with a dynamic use of space.¹² It attracted high profile commercial tenants, and the first Town & Country shops to be completed were so busy that the rest of the tenants were pressuring the property owners to finish their spaces so they, too, could benefit from its success.¹³ The Town & Country Center is an example of the courtyard shopping experience that was developed and successful throughout Palm Springs. It is the only midcentury modern example extant within the City.

¹¹ Design & construction documents, UCLA, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections: A. Quincy Jones Collection 1692.

¹² Elizabeth Edwards Harris and Mark Davis, "The Town and Country Center and the Modern Urban Village," in *Modernism*, Winter 2012-13, 64-67.

¹³ Architectural Record Book, MOTELS, HOTELS, RESTAURANTS and BANKS (W. Dodge Corporation, 1950).

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Criterion A: Community Planning and Development

One of the most compelling aspects of the Town & Country Center's history is its close ties with the pattern of events that contributed significantly to the rapid growth of downtown Palm Springs as the dominant urban center in the Coachella Valley during the 1940s to 1950s. Situated prominently at the core of downtown Palm Springs, this multi-use commercial complex, with its bold International Style architecture, stylish restaurant, and appealing courtyard, promoted the post-WWII tourist boom that perpetuated the city's claim as one of America's leading winter resorts.¹⁴ For this historical contribution to community planning, the Town & Country Center holds a unique place in the post-WWII development of the city and continues to be a well-known local landmark.

The Town and Country Center is associated with two general historic trends that made a significant contribution to the development of Palm Springs: the modernization of the courtyard shopping plaza as a uniquely appropriate venue for the city's leisure lifestyle, and the accommodation of much desired luxury services for the city's rapidly growing resort clientele after WWII. Prior to the war, Palm Springs was a retreat destination that provided its well-to-do and celebrity visitors with therapeutic spas, desert tranquility, poolside fun and western styled getaways. After the war the range of resort attractions grew, including the growth of golf and tennis as popular pastimes, and the city began attracting many long-term visitors, particularly snowbirds from the northwest. In addition, it campaigned voraciously for business and convention tourism as a way to extend its season for as long as it could. Hotel expansion abounded and so the city had to also provide this growing visitor base with the luxuries and services they enjoyed at home, including high end shopping and services, restaurants and banks. The Town & Country Center provided for all these needs and in a style that was considered both luxurious and forward thinking.¹⁵

The Town & Country Center was one of the earliest Modern mixed-use complexes to be built in the city's prime downtown center known as the "Village." The center was finished in 1948, at approximately the same time as Bullocks Wilshire by Wurdeman and Beckett, a stand-alone Modern department store no longer extant. The introduction of Modern architecture, with its inherent efficiencies and structural and technical possibilities, allowed the city to build and grow quickly after the war and meet its goals of attracting and serving its burgeoning resort population. Modern became the preferred style for all commercial architecture in the post war years. As one of the last remaining examples of pre-1950 Modern commercial buildings downtown, the Town & Country Center serves as a reminder of this important stylistic transition in the city's overall growth during this pivotal decade. It not only heralded what was to become the dominant aesthetic associated with commercial architecture in the city, its distinctive Modern

¹⁴ Tracy Conrad, "From Soulful to Sexy," in *Desert Magazine*, January 2014, 24-26.

¹⁵ Sidney Williams, ed., *An Eloquent Modernist: E. Stewart Williams, Architect* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 171-184; Tracy Conrad, "From Soulful to Sexy," *Desert Magazine*, January 2014, 24-26; "The History of Palm Springs '50 Golden Years' Excerpts from the book *PALM SPRINGS: First Hundred Years* by Former Palm Springs Mayor Frank M. Bogert" <http://palmsprings.com/history/50years.html> (accessed 14 May 2015).

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

aesthetic became synonymous with the city's leisure identity and eventually a resort attraction unto itself.¹⁶

The Town and Country Center is also a rare example of a courtyard style complex in the midcentury modern style. Courtyard design has a long history in California and the Spanish southwest, a style associated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with individual houses and in the early twentieth century adapted for garden apartments and small shopping complexes. The courtyard plan worked well for an in-town public commercial space as it provided a spacious and protected usable outdoor room removed from busy sidewalks and roadways. The design and siting of the Town & Country Center also enhanced the outdoor experience by providing shade from the harsh desert sun. Although Palm Springs has a few extant Spanish revival courtyard centers, notably La Plaza (1935) and El Paseo (1926), the Town & Country Center is its only modern iteration.

As a commercial enterprise, the Town & Country Center became even more successful than its Spanish predecessors in that it was larger, provided for more commercial space, and was more centrally located. The success of the center was well noted soon after opening, documented in both the 1951 book, *Shopping Centers, Design and Operations* and an *Architectural Record* article in 1950. Even in later decades when the 1980s behemoth indoor shopping mall was failing directly across the street, the Town & Country Center, along with the other smaller courtyard centers, kept a steady following because they allowed visitors to get the services they wanted and still engage in the outdoors in a pedestrian-friendly environment. The Town & Country Center had a decided influence on other Modern buildings that borrowed its planning style, the not the least of which was the E. Stewart Williams's Oasis Hotel built the following year, no longer extant.¹⁷

While a number of smaller midcentury modern storefronts remain in northern and southern parts of Palm Springs, the destruction of the significant modern stores in the Village core, notably Bullocks Wilshire, Saks Fifth Avenue (Welton Beckett, 1958), and Haggerty's Department Store (E. Stewart Williams), makes the Town & Country Center the only midcentury modern retail resource left in the Village core as well as the city's only midcentury modern courtyard complex.

¹⁶ Cory Buckner, "A. Quincy Jones," in *The Desert Modernists: The Architects Who Envisioned Midcentury Modern Palm Springs*, ed. Stewart Weiner (Palm Springs: Modernism Week and Desert Publications, Inc., 2015), 49-51; In addition to many histories that have noted the importance of midcentury modern architecture in the growth of Palm Springs, the city's 2004 Historic Survey attests to this growth. Ironically the importance of the Town & Country Center as a transitional example of the style was also noted in a draft Environmental Impact Report for a project that is slated to raze the building. See the City of Palm Springs City Council/Community Redevelopment Agency Staff Report, December 2, 2009, 32.

¹⁷ Tracy Conrad, "Swanky Banks," *Desert Magazine*, February 2014, 24-26; Sidney Williams, ed., *An Eloquent Modernist: E. Stewart Williams, Architect* (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2015); Alan Hess, "Paul R. Williams," in *The Desert Modernists: The Architects Who Envisioned Midcentury Modern Palm Springs*, ed. Stewart Weiner (Palm Springs: Modernism Week and Desert Publications, Inc., 2015), 119-121; Elizabeth Edwards Harris and Mark Davis, "The Town and Country Center and the Modern Urban Village," *Modernism*, Winter 2012-13, 64-67.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Another broader historic trend that the production of the Town & Country Center exemplified was a time of change in the culture of architectural practice when professionals from separate offices began to collaborate either out of practicality or to take advantage of unique expertise. Prior to this time most architectural practices were based on an atelier model where, regardless of the size of the firm, there was only one master architect who took credit for all work. The Modern practice fostered an atmosphere of shared authority in an environment where junior architects could succeed through the ranks much like a corporation. Stemming from the co-op ethos promoted first at the Bauhaus and later in American educational institutions, post war modern architects unlike pre-war modernists saw themselves as facilitators of the process and did not demand sole credit for the work their offices produced. They were comfortable outsourcing both design and production as needed. This kind of collaboration was a forebear of large corporate architectural firms such as SOM and is still informs the culture of practice today. The Town & Country Center represented a broad collaboration that included two major Los Angeles based architects, A. Quincy Jones and Paul R. Williams, and three local architects, Don Wexler, Albert Frey, and John Porter Clark who worked on tenant improvements, construction and later additions. The Town & Country Center embodies this historic shift in the culture of professional practice.¹⁸

Criterion C: Architecture

The Town & Country Center was originally constructed in 1948 as an important addition to Palm Springs' downtown commercial center, and was a vital component of the tourism-driven urban growth of Palm Springs in the post-WWII era. The architecture is significant for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of the International Style. The architecture further qualifies as the work of five master architects; A. Quincy Jones, Paul Revere Williams, Albert Frey, John Porter Clark and Donald Wexler.

Architecturally, The Town & Country complex, as built in 1948, is among the collaborative works of innovative and acclaimed architects A. Quincy Jones and associated architect Paul R. Williams, both of whom individually earned national distinction during their careers. The Town & Country Center was built by the Palm Springs Corporation on property owned by Bank of America¹⁹ as a collaboration between architects Jones and Williams. At the same time, the architects were also commissioned to design the Palm Springs Tennis Club Restaurant (later the Bougainvillea Room), and in 1950, Romanoff's on the Rocks, a local restaurant.²⁰

Archibald Quincy Jones (1913-1979) was noted for designing university and office buildings towards the end of his career, and he first gained recognition for his residential work. As a participant in John Entenza's Case Study House Program, Jones became deeply devoted to the experiment's goal of reinventing houses to reflect how people lived in the post-World War II era. His conviction that the quality of life could be improved through architecture led him to

¹⁸ Bernard Michael Boyle, "Architectural Practice in America 1865-1965—Ideal and Reality" in *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession*, ed. Spiro Kostof (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 309-344; Dana Cuff, *Architecture: The Story of Practice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1992), 1-17.

¹⁹ City of Palm Springs Building Permit, 1946.

²⁰ Cory Buckner, *A. Quincy Jones* (New York and London: Phaidon, 2002), 166-170.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

introduce new materials and design elements to his residential projects, such as glass walls, usable atriums, high ceilings, and post and beam construction. In his non-residential buildings, Jones was recognized as an innovator and master of improving the integration and efficiency of mechanical systems while maximizing usable space.

While Jones is known for elevating the lowly post-war tract house to high-art architecture, Paul Revere Williams (1894-1980) is best remembered as a designer of elegant mansions for the rich and famous of Hollywood. Among his clients were Frank Sinatra, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, Tyrone Power, Barbara Stanwyck, Danny Thomas, and Lon Chaney, Sr. Among his most easily recognized buildings in southern California are the Beverly Hills and Ambassador Hotels, Chasen's and Perino's restaurants, the theme building at the Los Angeles International Airport, Saks Fifth Avenue, and the Music Corporation of America building. In all, Williams designed or participated in over 3,000 projects.

Although there is no mention of the subject building in Williams' monograph, it is featured prominently in Cory Buckner's Phaidon monograph *A. Quincy Jones*. Town & Country Center does appear to represent a particularly important milestone in the development of Jones' architectural style. It is an unusual property type for Jones and is a good expression of its period and method of construction. Additionally, it remains a good example of an International Style commercial building that contributes materially to the historical fabric of the village and to Palm Springs' well-established status as a center of mid-century modern architecture.

Evidenced by original drawings in the A. Quincy Jones archives,²¹ the architectural firm of Clark and Frey collaborated with Jones and Williams on the Town and Country Center. Albert Frey (1903-1998) was born in Switzerland, and studied architecture there. After graduation, he moved to Paris, and worked in the atelier of visionary modernist architect Le Corbusier, detailing one of Corbusier's masterworks, the Villa Savoy. In 1930, Frey moved to the United States, convinced that it was the land of opportunity for modernist design. He worked for several prominent architects in New York, then moved to Palm Springs in 1939 and formalized a professional relationship with John Porter Clark. Although they collaborated on some early Spanish-infused designs, they became part of the emerging modernist movement. In 1949 Clark and Frey worked with Jones and Williams to develop the commercial spaces in Buildings A and B fronting Palm Canyon Drive.

John Porter Clark (1905-1991) studied architecture at Cornell University, and graduated in 1928. While working in Pasadena, Clark was invited to relocate to Palm Springs, where he became the first important regionalist Modernist to open an office. By 1934 Albert Frey had also arrived in Palm Springs to supervise the construction of the Kocher Samson Office Building. Based upon a shared compatibility and aesthetic, Clark and Frey established their partnership. Palm Springs projects of significance, either collectively or independently, include the Palm Springs Woman's Club Building, several private residences, The Welwood Murray Library, elementary schools,

²¹ Design & construction documents, UCLA, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections: A. Quincy Jones Collection 1692.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Loewy House, Aerial Tramway Station, and the Tramway Gas Station that is now the iconic Visitor Center located at the northern gateway to the City of Palm Springs.

Donald Wexler (b. 1926) is an influential mid-century modern architect whose work is predominantly in the southern California desert. He is known for pioneering the use of steel in residential design. He received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Minnesota, and upon graduation moved to Los Angeles where he worked for Richard Neutra, whose influence can be seen in Wexler's work. In the early 1950s, Wexler established his own practice in Palm Springs, where among his clients were Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, the Alexander Construction Company and Walt Disney World Resort. Wexler's designs for public buildings, including the dramatic Palm Springs Airport, served as both soaring and practical models for other municipalities to emulate. His Steel Development House Number 2 is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Wexler designed the E.F. Hutton Building (Building E), added to the Town & Country Center in 1955.

Donald Wexler still lives in Palm Springs, the town whose growth he influenced so profoundly. His last major works were an annex to the Palm Springs Unified School District Center (1998) and the District Headquarters and Operating Facility in Indio, California (1999).²² He sold his practice in 2000 and donated his archives to California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. His active participation in the field of architecture has concluded.

The Town & Country Center, with its interior courtyard, is a modernist commercial reinterpretation of the hacienda form found in earlier generations of desert architecture. The design provides shelter and shade from the harsh desert sun, and allows fresh air to circulate throughout the open air courtyard. This convergence of interior and exterior space was a common practice in midcentury modern design.

²² Lauren Bricker, *Steel and Shade - The Architecture of Donald Wexler*, Palm Springs Art Museum, 2011, 129.

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

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Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: University of California Los Angeles, Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections: A. Quincy Jones Collection 1692, Boxes 4402, 3829, Folders 133, 134

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.09 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Latitude: 33.492688 Longitude: -116.324629

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

USGS Quad, Palm Springs, 7.5 quadrangle (Section 15, T4S, R45, San Bernardino Base Meridian). Assessor's parcel numbers 513 092 09 and 513 092 10, merged circa 1975 to become 513 092 026.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries that historically encompassed the nominated buildings and the landscaped courtyard, based upon parcel data.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Susan Secoy Jensen, Architect, AIA, M.Arch.
organization: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation
street & number: 160 South Cypress Street
city or town: Orange state: CA zip code: 92866
e-mail secoyarch@sbcglobal.net

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

telephone: (714) 639-4367
date: December 31, 2014; Revised April 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Town and Country Center
City or Vicinity: Palm Springs
County: Riverside
State: California
Photographer: Susan Secoy Jensen
Date Photographed: May 2014 or March 2015 as noted
Location of original digital files: 160 South Cypress St., Orange, CA 92866

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- Photo 1 Palm Canyon Drive, looking south, **Building A** (Twin Building North) in foreground, **Building B** (Twin Building South in Background), May 2014
- Photo 2 Palm Canyon Drive, looking south towards **Building B** (Twin Building South) & **Building C** (Bank of America Building), May 2014
- Photo 3 Palm Canyon Drive, looking east towards **Building B** (Twin Building South) and **Building C** (Bank of America Building), May 2014
- Photo 4 Indian Canyon Drive, looking west towards **Building D** (with a portion of **Building A** to the north), May 2014

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

- Photo 5 In the courtyard, looking east towards **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant), May 2014
- Photo 6 Approaching courtyard, looking east, with **Building A** (Twin Building North) in the foreground; Across the courtyard is rear portion of **Building A**, and **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant), May 2014
- Photo 7 In the courtyard facing east towards **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant), under curved canopy of **Building A** (Twin Building North), May 2014
- Photo 8 In the courtyard, looking southeast towards the upper entry to **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant), May 2014
- Photo 9 In the courtyard looking northwest toward **Building A** (Twin Building North), May 2014
- Photo 10 In the courtyard looking northwest toward **Building E** with **Building A** in background, March 2015
- Photo 11 In the courtyard looking west toward **Building E** with **Building A** in background, March 2015

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

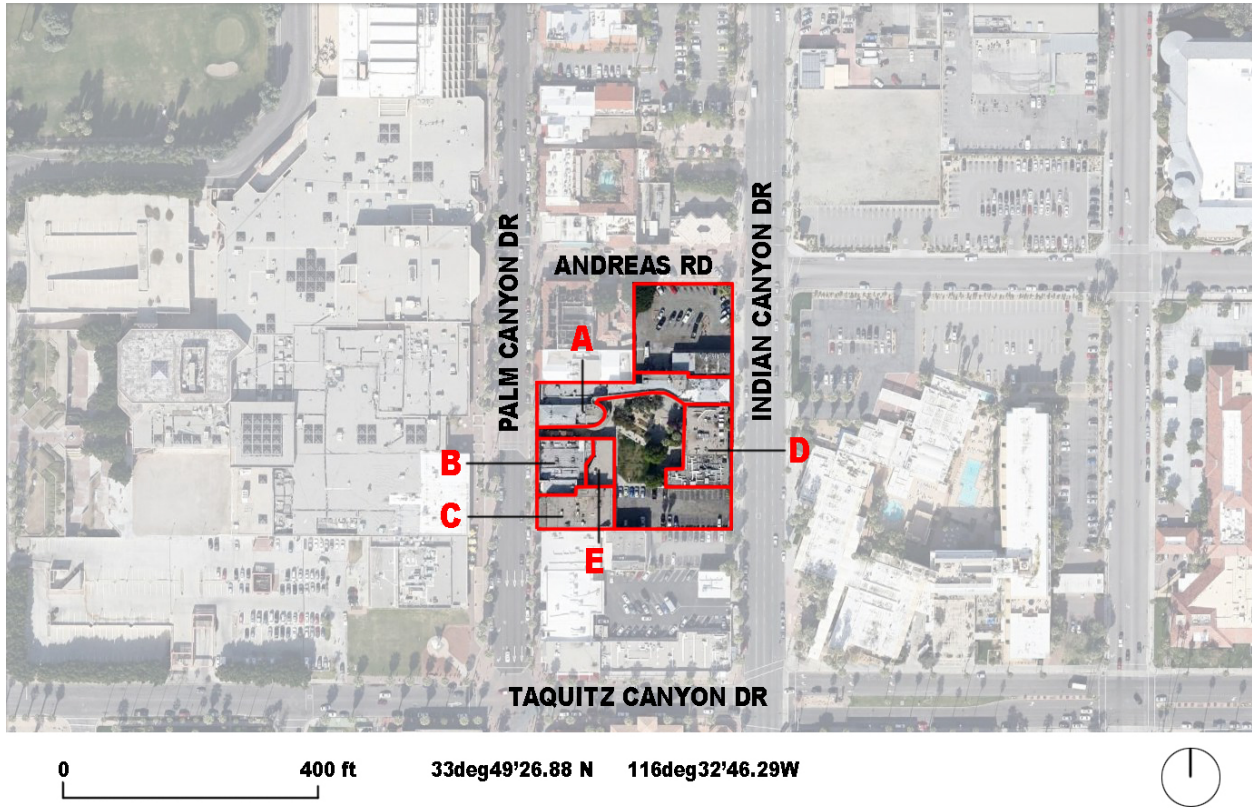
Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Location Map

Latitude: 33.492688

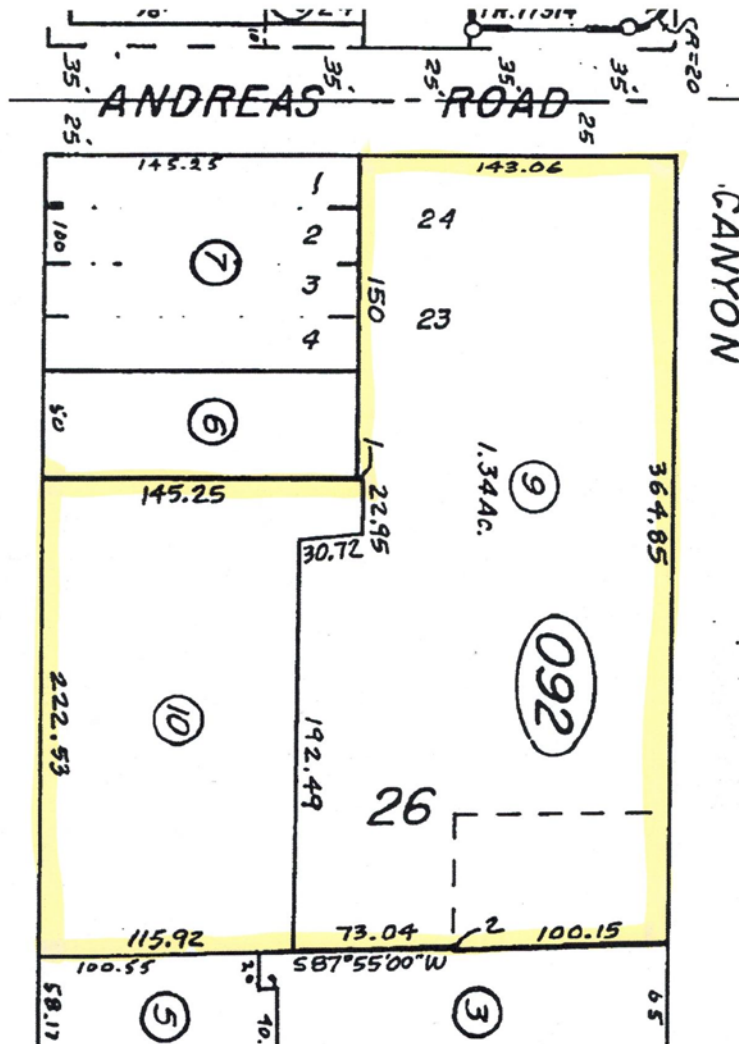
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Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

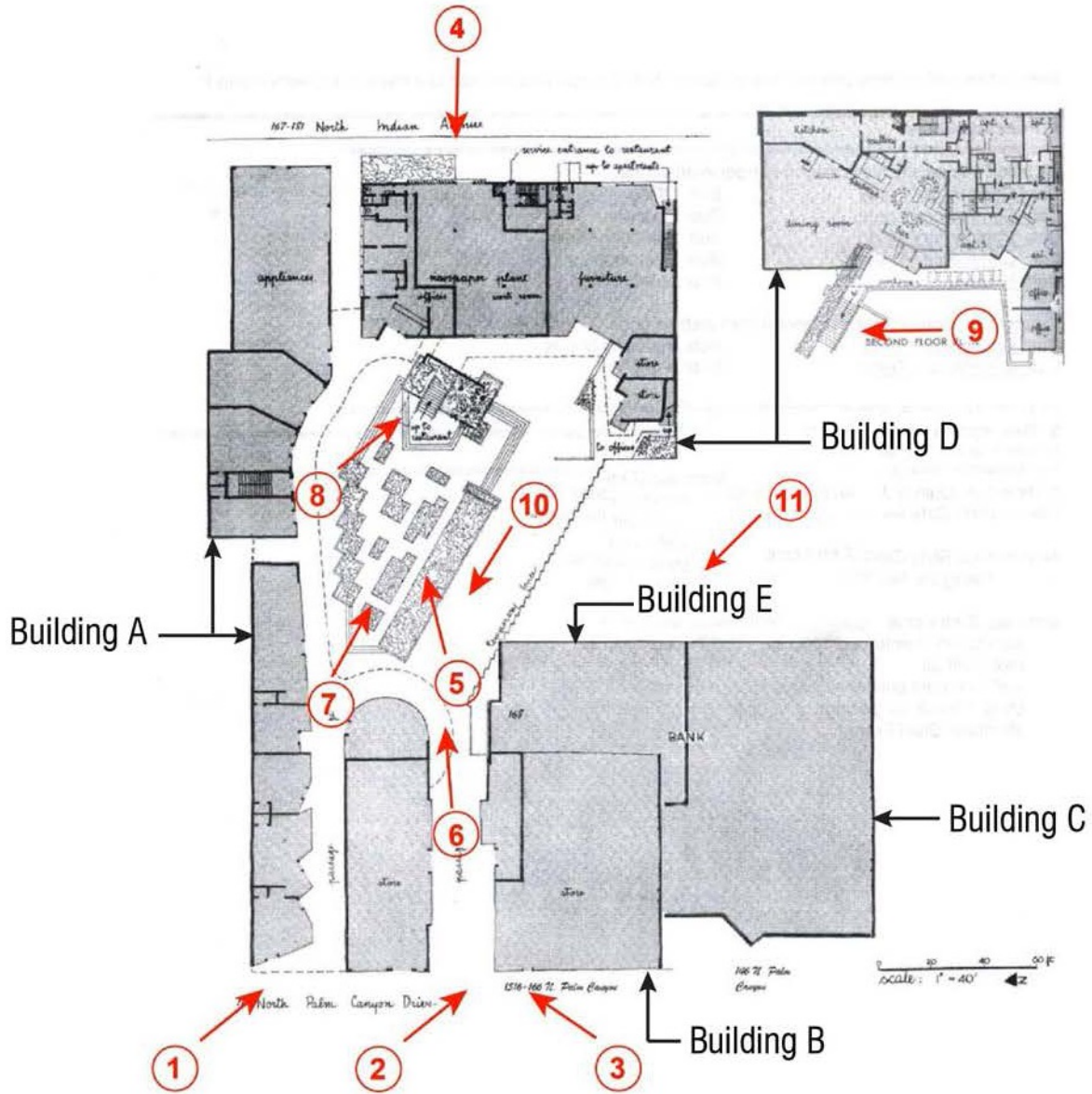
Assessor's Map 513-09, Riverside County, California, 1969



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Sketch Map/Photo Key



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Index of Figures

Name of Property	Town and Country Center
City or Vicinity	Palm Springs
County	Riverside
State	California
Photographer	Paul Pospesil
Date and Source	Circa 1950, provided by Palm Springs Historical Society
Figure 1	Palm Canyon Drive, looking South, Building A (Twin Building North) in foreground, Building B (Twin Building South in Background)
Photographer	Unknown
Date and Source	Circa 1950, provided by Palm Springs Historical Society
Figure 2	Palm Canyon Drive, looking south towards Building B (Twin Building South) & Building C (Bank of America Building)
Photographer	Unknown
Date and Source	Circa 1953, provided by Tracy Conrad Archives
Figure 3	Palm Canyon Drive, looking east towards Building B (Twin Building South), and Building C (Bank of America Building)
Photographer	Unknown
Date and Source	Circa 1950, provided by Palm Springs Historical Society
Figure 4	Colorized postcard image of Figure 3, captioned Palm Canyon Drive
Photographer	Unknown
Date and Source	Circa 1948, provided by Palm Springs Historical Society
Figure 5	Indian Canyon Drive, looking west towards Building D (Town & Country Restaurant) with a portion of Building A to the north
Photographer	Noel W. Frederick, II
Date and Source	Circa 1950, provided by Palm Springs Historical Society
Figure 6	In the courtyard, looking east towards Building D (Town & Country Restaurant)
Photographer	Ferris H. Scott
Date and Source	Circa 1950, provided by Palm Springs Historical Society
Figure 7	Approaching courtyard, looking east, with Building A (Twin Building North) in the foreground. Across the courtyard is the rear portion of Building A , and Building D (Town & Country Restaurant)

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photographer	Julius Shulman
Date and Source	Circa 1950, provided by J. Paul Getty Trust, Julius Shulman Photography Archives, Research Library at the Getty Research Institute
Figure 8	In the courtyard facing east towards Building D (Town & Country Restaurant), under curved canopy of Building A (Twin Building North)
Figure 9	In the courtyard, looking southeast towards the upper entry to Building D (Town & Country Restaurant)
Figure 10	View from upper balcony of Building D (Town & Country Restaurant) looking north towards courtyard and rear portion of Building A (Twin Building North)
Date and Source	Circa 1955, Sketch from <i>The Palm Springs and Desert Resort Area Story</i> , Palm Springs Chamber of Commerce, artist unknown
Figure 11	View from courtyard toward June Madison Candies in Building A (Twin Building North)
Architects	A. Quincy Jones, Paul R. Williams, Albert Frey, John Porter Clark
Date and Source	1947-1949, Courtesy University of California, Los Angeles (A. Quincy Jones Papers, Collection 1692, Boxes 4402, 3829, Folders 133, 134) Charles E. Young Research Library, Special Collections
Figure 12	Site Plan/Leasing Plan, A. Quincy Jones, 1949, annotated with building references by Susan Secoy Jensen
Figure 13	Building B (Twin Building South) Floor Plans, A. Quincy Jones, 1947 with Clark & Frey Architects, 1949
Figure 14	Building B (Twin Building South) Elevations, A. Quincy Jones, 1947 with Clark & Frey Architects, 1949
Figure 15	Buildings A & B (Twin Buildings North & South), Elevations and Details, A. Quincy Jones, 1947 with Clark & Frey Architects, 1949
Figure 16	Building C (Bank of America Building) Elevations, Sections, Details, A. Quincy Jones, 1947
Figure 17	Building D (Town & Country Restaurant) Section and Elevation, A. Quincy Jones, 1947
Figure 18	Building D (Town & Country Restaurant) Elevations, A. Quincy Jones, 1947

Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 5.



Figure 6.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 7.



Figure 8.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 9.



Figure 10.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 11.

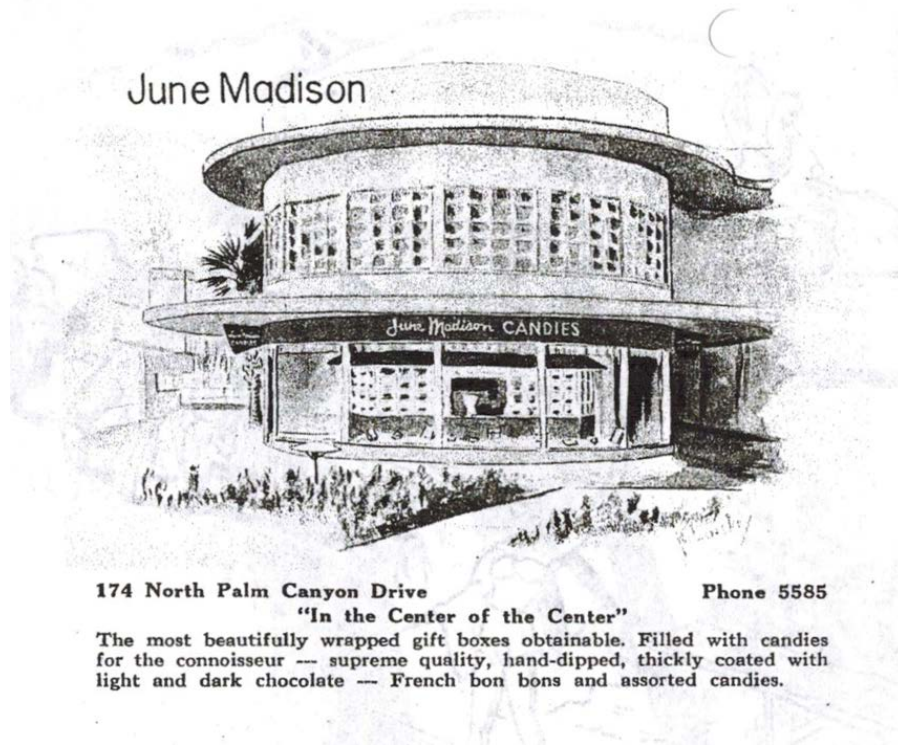
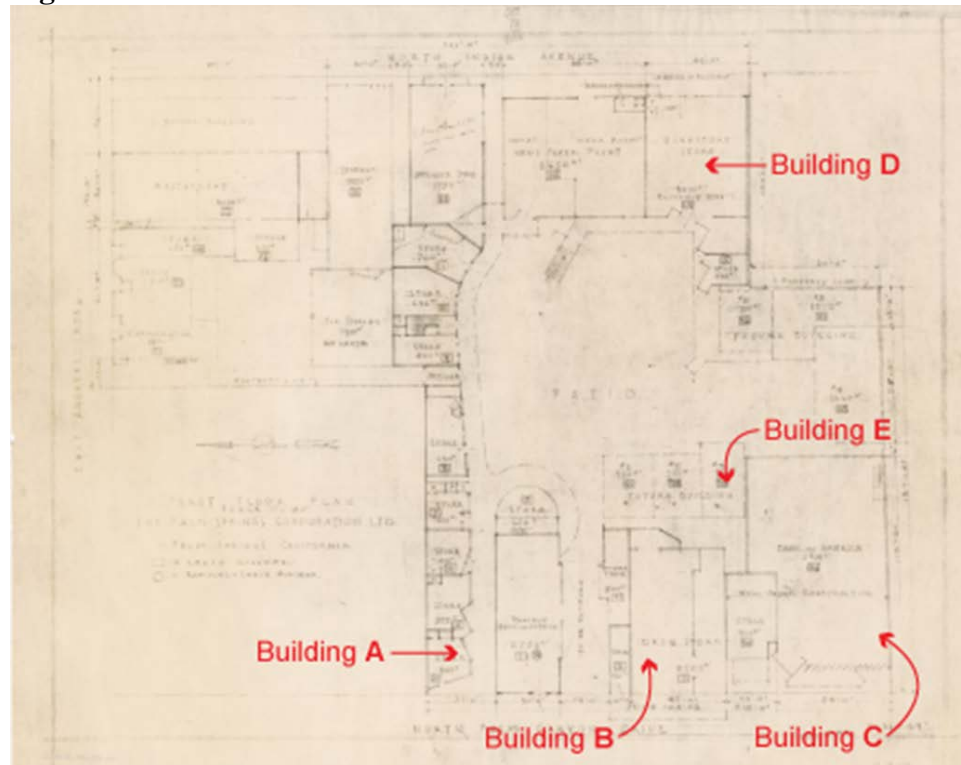


Figure 12.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 13.

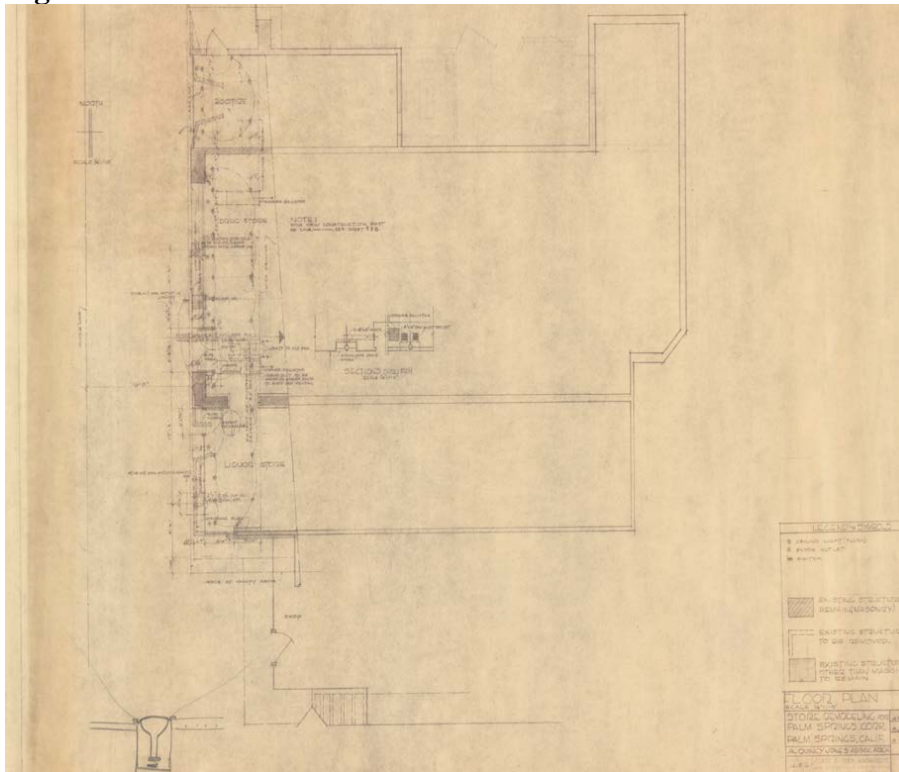
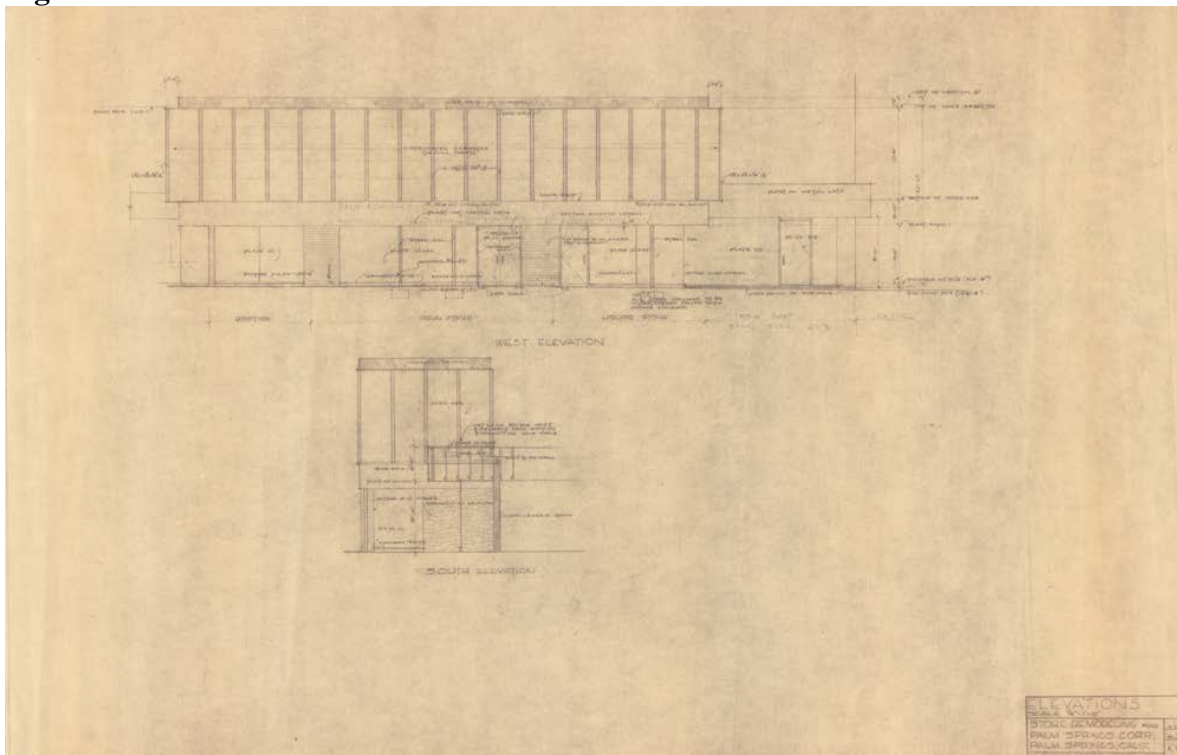


Figure 14.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Figure 17.

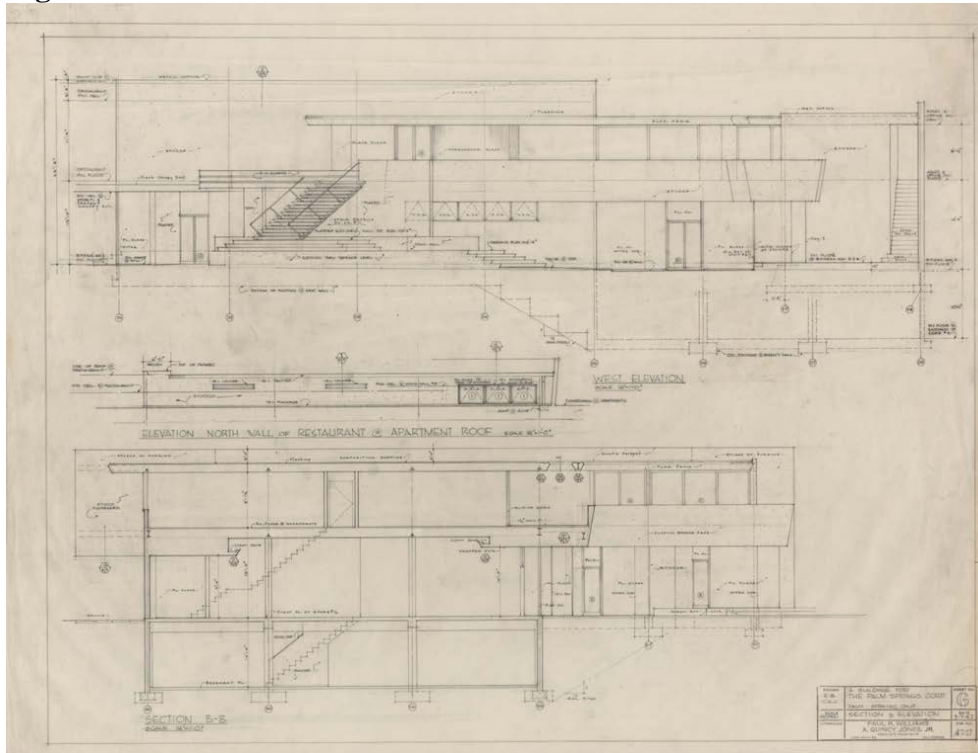
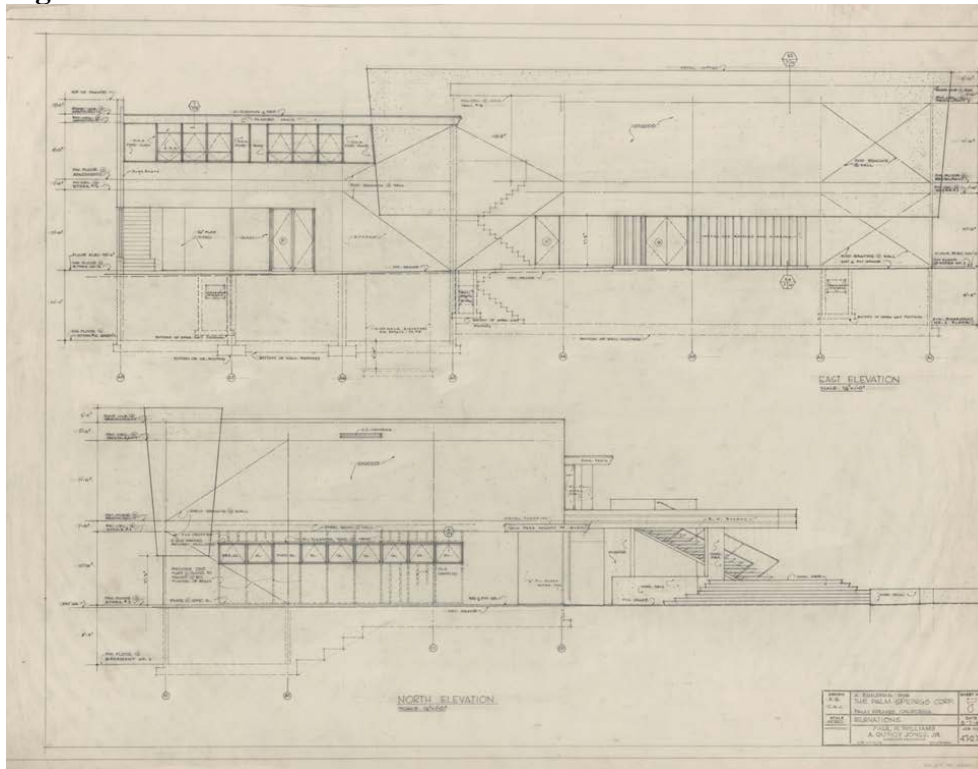


Figure 18.



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 1. Palm Canyon Drive, looking South, **Building A** (Twin Building North) in foreground, **Building B** (Twin Building South in Background), May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 2. Palm Canyon Drive, looking south towards **Building B** (Twin Building South) & **Building C** (Bank of America Building), May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 3. Palm Canyon Drive, looking east towards **Building B** (South Twin Building) and **Building C** (Bank of America Building), May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 4. Indian Canyon Drive, looking west towards **Building D** (with a portion of **Building A** to the north), May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 5. In the courtyard, looking east towards **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant),
May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 6. Approaching courtyard, looking east, with **Building A** (Twin Building North) in the foreground at left; across the courtyard is the rear portion of **Building A**, and **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant), Building E at right, May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 7. In the courtyard facing east towards **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant), under curved canopy of **Building A** (Twin Building North), May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 8. In the courtyard, looking southeast towards the upper entry to **Building D** (Town & Country Restaurant), May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 9. In the courtyard looking northwest toward **Building A** (Twin Building North), May 2014



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 10. In the courtyard looking northwest toward **Building E** with **Building A** in background, March 2015



Town & Country Center
Name of Property

Riverside, California
County and State

Photo 11. In the courtyard looking west toward **Building E** with **Building A** in background,
March 2015

