

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

Primary # _____
HRI # _____
Trinomial _____
NRHP Status Code _____

Other Listings _____
Review Code _____ Reviewer _____ Date _____

Page 1 of 3 Resource name(s) or number (assigned by recorder) *71-048 Country Club Drive*

P1. Other Identifier:

*P2. Location: Not for Publication Unrestricted

*a. County *Riverside*

*b. USGS 7.5' Quad

Date:

*c. Address *71-048 Country Club Drive*

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 1960 by architects Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison, this is a one-story Desert Modern residence. The building faces south, with a flat-roof over the west half and a low-pitched front-gable topping the east half. Deep overhangs and exposed beams characterize the gabled roofline. Rectangular in plan, the 2,978 square foot home contains three bedrooms and three bathrooms. This is essentially a post-and-beam design. Facades are sheathed in Mexican chink rock veneer on the gabled portion and non-original rough stucco elsewhere. Window types include fixed, clerestory, and some non-original aluminum sliders. Non-original glass block with a narrow transom is located between the entrance and double garage. A recessed porch shades the non-original wood entrance door. An exterior rock-clad chimney is located directly east of the entrance. From busy Country Club Drive, a circular concrete driveway provides access. Clusters of mature palms and shaped hedges provide requisite landscaping. The east half of the house is much more original than the west. Overall the house is in good condition.

*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
August 2002*

*P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources: historic
1960/ Source: Metroscan

*P7. Owner and Address:
*Red Dragon Software
71048 Country Club Drive
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270*

*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

Page 2 of 3

*NRHP Status Code 5S3

*Resource Name or #: 71-048 Country Club Drive

- B1. Historic Name: *Unknown*
B2. Common Name: *71-048 Country Club Drive*
B3. Original Use: *Single-family Residence*
B4. Present Use: *Single-family Residence*

*B5. Architectural Style: *Desert Modern*

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations): *Constructed in 1960.*
Note: No building permits exist prior to incorporation of the City of Rancho Mirage in 1973.
No subsequent permits found.

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

*B8. Related Features: *None.*

B9a. Architect: *Wexler and 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 1960, 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. 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 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).

(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, Chronicle Books, 2001.
Interview with architect Donald Wexler, October 13, 2002.
1972 Palm Springs "Yellow Book" Directory.
Adele Cygelman, Palm Springs Modern, New York, Rizzoli
International Publications, 1999.

B13. Remarks:

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

(This space reserved for official comments.)

Sketch Map

*Date of Evaluation: *September 23, 2002*

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

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."

Although altered, the residence, whose first known owner was H. D. Wright according to the 1972 Palm Springs Directory, is a good example of Wexler and Harrison's approach to Desert Modernism. Particularly notable in this regard are the low-slung front gable, Mexican chink stone veneer, post and beam construction, open floor plan, and the use of glass walls along the rear elevation. Of the ten properties in the cluster, this house was one of only four that have retained sufficient architectural integrity to be noteworthy. While the house does not appear eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or under an existing or proposed local ordinance, it is of local interest (a "5S3" National Register Status Code).