

Koerner Residence
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

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: WOOD, BRICK, GLASS

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 Koerner Residence was designed in 1955 by E. Stewart Williams for the Vancouver-based couple of Leon and Thea Koerner in the Deepwell neighborhood of Palm Springs. The house was placed on a flat parcel with a panoramic view of Mt. San Jacinto to the west, sharing the upswept roof of Williams' earlier Edris Residence. Floor to ceiling windows bring abundant light into the wood post-and-beam dwelling. Internal courtyards wrapped in glass enclose planting and water features. The ubiquitous swimming pool outside of the living room features a shaded resting area near the pool steps. The celebrated Los Angeles-based firm of Eckbo, Royston and Williams designed the property's landscaping, much of which remains extant. Overall, the Koerner Residence exhibits a high level of integrity.

Narrative Description

The Koerner Residence is typical of the dwellings designed by E. Stewart Williams throughout his career. It is of post and beam construction with a shed roof, deep overhangs, large expanses of fixed glazing, sliding glass doors, and a generous incorporation of exposed wood for ceilings, walls, and built-in cabinets. L-shaped in plan, the sprawling house is situated on four parcels straddling the block from South Calle de Maria on the east to South Driftwood Drive on the west.

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The south end of the primary (east) elevation projects toward the street and consists of slumpstone cladding topped by wood post-and-beam construction with translucent clerestory windows. A shed roof gently rises eastward, capping this portion of the house. The north end of the east elevation features the board-and-batten wall of a two-vehicle carport. Board-and-batten siding also clads other portions of the house along with painted slumpstone. Occupying the inner portion of the "L" is the main entrance accessed via a sandstone walkway. Water features flank the walkway with a narrow pond on the left that enters the house beneath a sidelight, and a larger pond to the right centered by a rectangular concrete island of palms with three metal saucers forming a pleasant fountain. The stone cladding of the concrete island and the bottom of the shallow pond have been replaced with newer materials.

At the rear of the house, the west and south elevations consist almost entirely of floor-to-ceiling glazing. As is common with Williams-designed residences, the living room opens onto an outdoor patio sheltered by an extended post-and-beam shed roof overhang. Openings for palm trees adjacent to a series of wood slats provide filtered sunlight to the patio area. Just off the dining room on the south elevation is a small sunroom that opens to the garden. In 1973, both the living room and dining room/sunroom were extended outward eight feet under the existing roof.

The swimming pool steps begin at the covered patio. The same sandstone used for the entrance walkway surrounds the perimeter of the swimming pool. An original concrete deck shuffleboard remains adjacent to the pool on its south side. Occupying the pool's north end is an expansive wood shelter with built-in seating, a fireplace, and barbeque for entertaining. All of the landscaping was originally designed by the noted Los Angeles firm of Eckbo, Royston and Williams. Their work can still be seen in the entrance water features such as the palm island with trio of metal saucers and, on the south side of the property, a terraced garden area with similar but much larger metal saucer fountains integrated into natural rock outcroppings.

The bedrooms occupy the north end of the house with two west-facing guestrooms illuminated by a mix of plate glass, clerestories, and opaque jalousie windows. Each room also features Williams' characteristic natural wood built-in cabinets, credenzas, vanities, and dressers. The central hallway leading to the bedrooms is also lined on one side with closets faced with natural wood veneer. Continuing with the theme of integrating water features into the overall design, a rock garden and interior pond with three-tiered metal fountain and contemplative seating area is located on the south side of the master bedroom separated by glass. Wood ceiling slats and clerestories illuminate this quiet space. Slumpstone walls enclose both the bedroom and rock garden except for the sliding glass doors on the north elevation. Just outside the master bedroom is an in-ground spa installed in 1978.

At the south end of the house are the living and dining rooms. As noted, both of these rooms were expanded outward eight feet in 1973. The work, was designed and supervised by the Williams architectural office as documented by original plans in the possession of the current owners.¹ Therefore, it is unsurprising that the design, materials, and workmanship used for both

¹ The original plans submitted by the Williams office are dated 10-15-73, Permit # 6816, Department of Building and Safety, City of Palm Springs.

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room expansions—exposed wood ceilings, board-and-batten walls, and plate glass windows with sliding glass doors—match the original. As a result, these modifications designed and implemented by the original architect in 1973 are entirely in keeping with the initial design and do not adversely affect the physical integrity of the dwelling.

The original building permit dated 1955 reveals that the 3,250 square foot, seven-room dwelling cost approximately \$101,000 to construct, a substantial sum for a house in Palm Springs at that time. Overall, the property retains the essential physical features associated with the residential work of E. Stewart Williams, melding natural materials with modern design that was the essence of Williams' architectural philosophy. The Koerner Residence is an excellent example of an E. Stewart Williams-designed residence in Palm Springs retaining all aspects of integrity and fully conveying its architectural significance.

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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

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance
1955

Significant Dates
1955

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Williams, E. Stewart

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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.)

The Koerner Residence is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C at the local level of significance in the area of Architecture. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of mid-century residential architecture as interpreted by E. Stewart Williams. In addition, the property meets *The Architecture of E. Stewart Williams* Multiple Property Submission registration requirements for residential buildings in association with the historic context “Architecture as environmental expression in the greater Coachella Valley, 1946-1976.” The period of significance corresponds with the building’s date of construction, 1955.

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

The Koerner Residence exhibits the distinctive characteristics of dwellings Williams designed from 1947 through the 1960s. Specifically, a shed roof, deep overhangs, large expanses of glazing with sliding glass doors for indoor-outdoor flow. As important, natural wood is integrated into the design including its post-and-beam construction, board-and-batten cladding, and fine wood finishes for interior cabinets, closets and built-in furniture. In addition, most of the original landscaping features by the renowned firm of Eckbo, Royston and Williams that are incorporated into the overall design remain remarkably intact.

The Koerner Residence is significant within the oeuvre of E. Stewart Williams and fits within the historic context presented in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, “Architecture as environmental expression in the greater Coachella Valley, 1946-1976.” The Koerner Residence retains a high level of integrity, exemplifying Williams’ philosophy that modern design should express the natural environment in which it is located. As a result it is readily identifiable as the work of E. Stewart Williams, meeting National Register Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of residential buildings associated with the master architect.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

As indicated in *The Architecture of E. Stewart Williams* Multiple Property Documentation Form.

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
- 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 of California, Santa Barbara
- Other

Name of repository: Palm Springs Art Museum, Architecture and Design Center

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

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

1. Latitude: 33.806150 Longitude: -116.532995

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

Property is located at 1275 South Calle de Maria, Palm Springs, Riverside County, California. The property, consisting of four parcels, fronts a portion (210 feet) of South Calle de Maria and a portion (210 feet) of Driftwood Drive. Its legal description is LOTS 2, 3, 10 & 11 MB 028/069 DEEP WELL. APN 508-403-003

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Property includes the entire property historically associated with the Koerner Residence.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Peter Moruzzi/Architectural Historian
organization: _____
street & number: 2018 Griffith Park Blvd., #114
city or town: Los Angeles state: CA zip code: 90039
e-mail petermoruzzi@gmail.com
telephone: (213) 706-0151
date: April 2016

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: Koerner Residence
City or Vicinity: Palm Springs
County: Riverside
State: CA
Photographer: Peter Moruzzi
Date Photographed: March 2016

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

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- 1 of 16 Context view, east elevation, camera facing southwest
- 2 of 16 East and north elevations, camera facing southwest
- 3 of 16 East elevation, camera facing west
- 4 of 16 East and north elevations, camera facing southwest
- 5 of 16 Main entrance, east elevation, camera facing west
- 6 of 16 Entrance water feature, camera facing northwest
- 7 of 16 West elevation, camera facing northeast
- 8 of 16 West-facing overhang, camera facing northwest
- 9 of 16 South elevation, camera facing northwest
- 10 of 16 North and west elevations, camera facing southeast
- 11 of 16 Main entrance, camera facing east
- 12 of 16 Living room, camera facing south
- 13 of 16 Dining room, camera facing southeast
- 14 of 16 Central corridor, camera facing north
- 15 of 16 Interior hallway, camera facing northeast
- 16 of 16 Master bedroom, camera facing southeast

Index of Figures; Photos by Julius Shulman, 1956

Figure 1 West elevation, looking southeast

Figure 2 Beneath west-facing overhang, looking southwest

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.

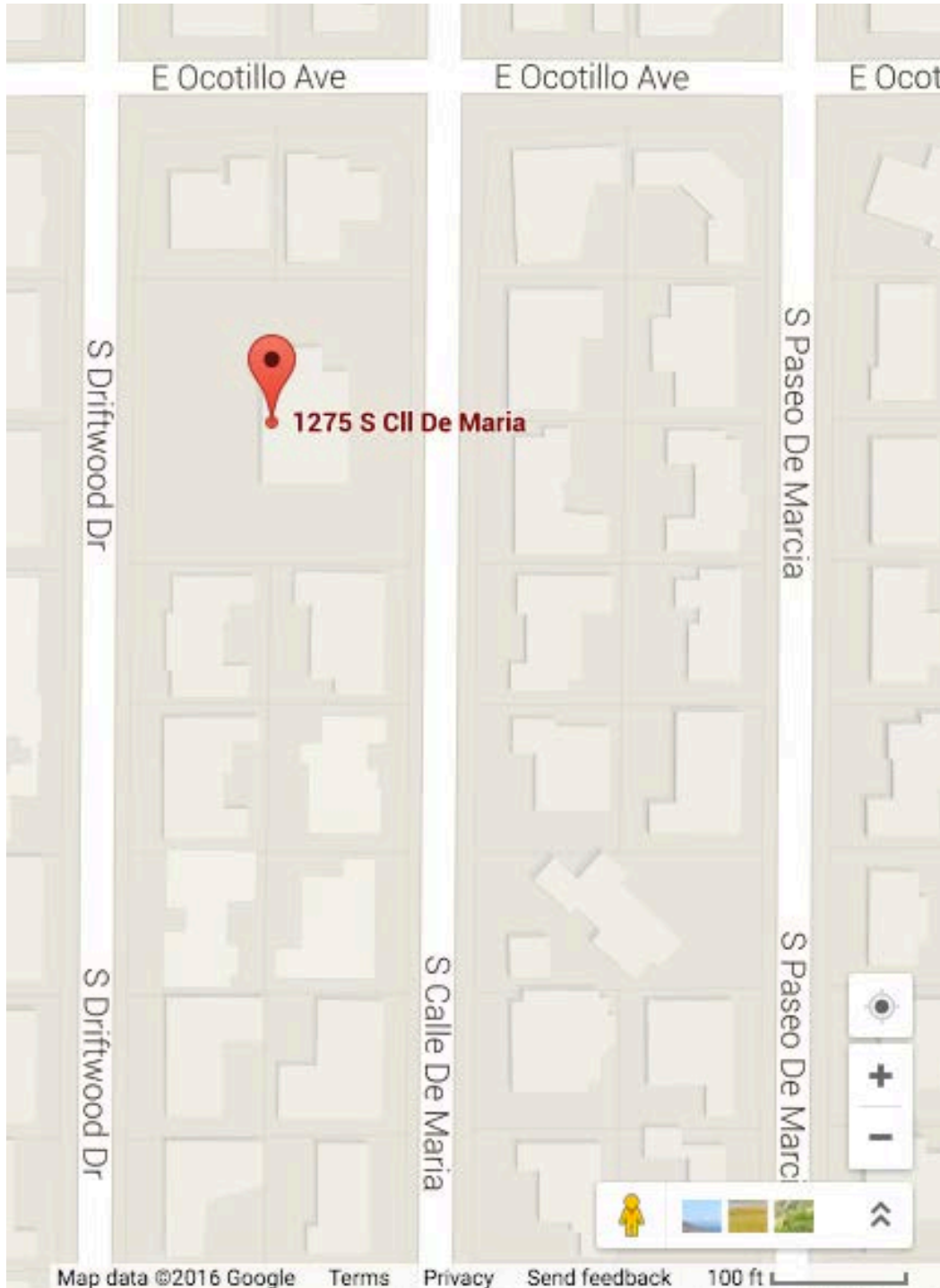
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Location Map

Latitude: 33.806150

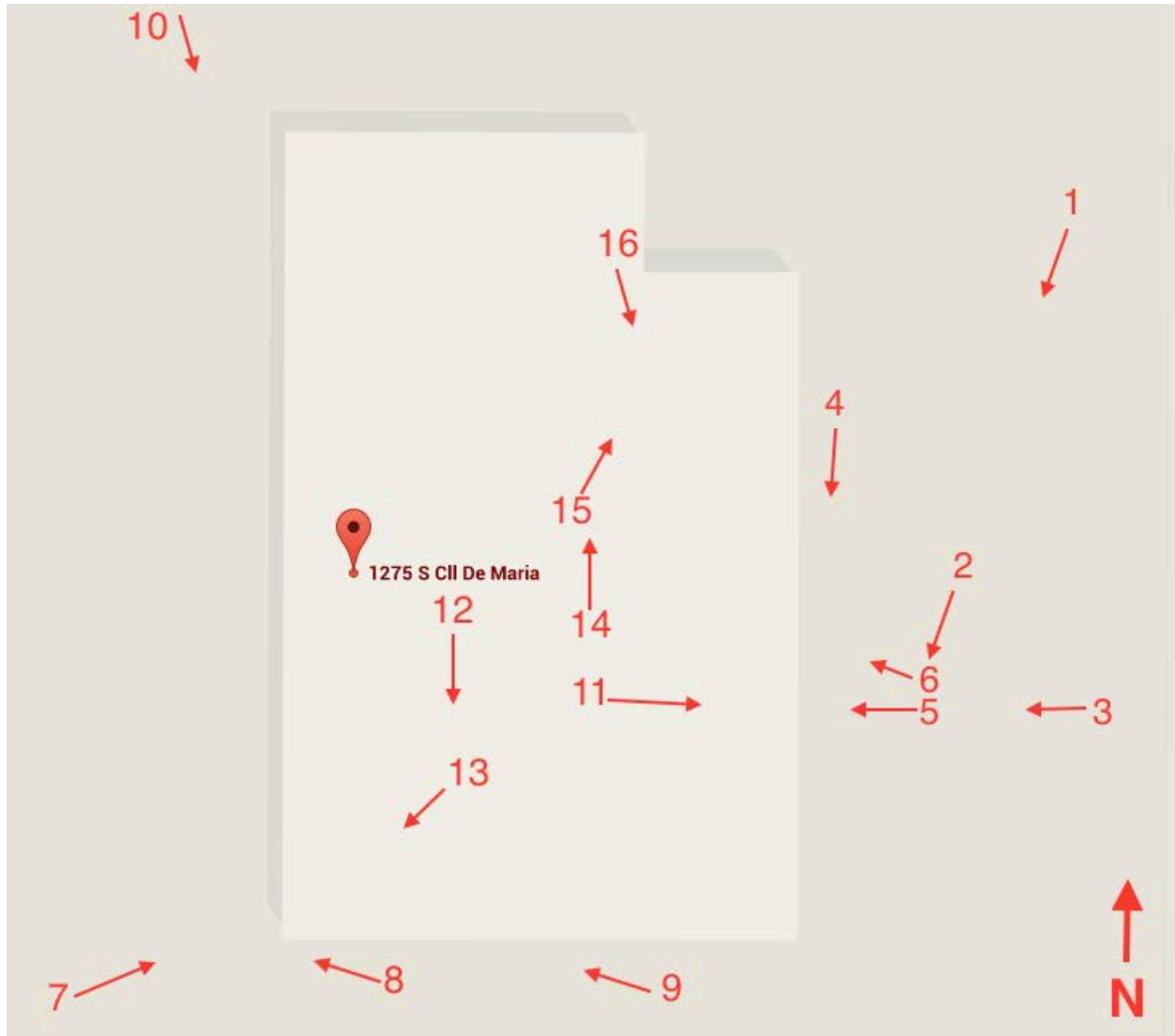
Longitude: -116.532995



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Sketch Map/Photo Key



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Figure 1. West elevation, looking southeast, 1956



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Figure 2. Beneath west-facing overhang, looking southwest, 1956



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