71049 EARLY TIMES ROAD, RANCHO MIRAGE, CA

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Completed in 1957, 71049 Early Times Road brings together three of the desert's defining architectural names on a single half-acre. Architects Donald Wexler & Richard Harrison designed the house within Thunderbird North, an intimate Rancho Mirage enclave of just ten homes master-planned by architect William F. Cody, Wexler's former employer. The home is recognized on the Rancho Mirage Register of Historic Places, marked by a bronze plaque beside its street number, and is protected under the Mills Act. It spans approximately 2,270 square feet, with three bedrooms and three full bathrooms, on just over half an acre with open mountain views in every direction.

Donald Wexler learned to build in the desert by studying the sun. In 1952, fresh from working under Richard Neutra in Los Angeles, the 26-year-old architect moved to Palm Springs to join William F. Cody. Later that year he set up his own practice with Richard Harrison. Over the following decade, Wexler & Harrison helped define Desert Modernism: low, lean buildings shaped by deep overhangs, broad glass and a precise reading of light and shadow. Wexler would also go on to pioneer steel residential construction and design the Palm Springs International Airport terminal.

From the street, the residence presents a long, low white facade behind a natural rock wall, with a stone-clad carport and a gated drive. White board-and-batten siding runs the length of the exterior and carries straight indoors. Overhead, the flat-lined roof extends into deep overhangs that shade the glass windows and draw sharp, shifting lines of shadow across the facade. The effect is exactly what Wexler intended: a building that works with its orientation, its views and the desert light from sunrise to sunset.

Inside, floor-to-ceiling glass lines the living room, under a white tongue-and-groove ceiling with exposed beams, and looks across the pool to the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountains. At the center of the room, a hooded steel fireplace rises above a surround of natural stone. Adjacent, a skylit kitchen stretches along a run of pale wood cabinetry and white counters. Nearly every room opens directly to the outdoors: the living room, the bedrooms, even the office.

"This is Desert Modernism at its most essential. Nothing here is decorative for its own sake, and everything here is doing a job: shading the glass, framing a view, pulling you outside," said listing agent John Nelson. "The house has been restored with real restraint. It feels exactly the way Wexler and Harrison meant it to feel."

In 2018, Los Angeles architectural designer Brad Dunning completed a sensitive restoration of the home. He added a pecky cypress screen between the entry and dining area, its weathered grain a quiet counterpoint to the crisp white architecture. The primary suite has floor-to-ceiling glass on two sides, two walk-in closets, and a bath with travertine walls and a glass-walled shower that looks into a private garden of columnar cactus. A guest bath repeats the idea, with

a skylit shower opening onto its own walled cactus courtyard. Outside, the long rectangular pool sits on the home's sunny south side, framed by lawn and stepping-stone pavers set in gravel, with a fire pit, dining terrace and a secluded cactus courtyard for lounging.

Wexler's honors include fellowship in the American Institute of Architects, a Golden Palm Star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars, and the Palm Springs Art Museum retrospective "Steel and Shade." He worked into his late 80s, and many of his early private commissions have since been altered beyond recognition. However, Thunderbird North, and this house in particular, remain largely as the architects imagined them.

PROPERTY SPECIFICS

- 71049 Early Times Road, Rancho Mirage, CA
- Designed in 1957 by Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison within William F. Cody's Thunderbird North; listed on the Rancho Mirage Register of Historic Places with Mills Act Protection
- Asking $2,800,000 with John Nelson and Cat Moe of The Nelson Moe Group at Compass
- Approximately 2,270 Square Feet / 0.55 Acre Property
- 3 Bedrooms / 3 Full Bathrooms
- High Resolution Imagery, Courtesy of CatsEye Real Estate Photography, Available Here

ADDITIONAL LISTING AGENT QUOTES

"From the street, the home presents a modest and simplistic first impression. Then you come through the entryway and the whole house opens up to the grand living areas, stunning pool, lush greenery, and the mountain views. Nearly every room has a door to the outside property, so you're really living across the entire landscape." - Cat Moe

"Wexler said his buildings were meant to live with the environment, and you feel that all day long in this house. The overhangs, the glass, the light moving across the rooms. It's a house that changes with the sun." - John Nelson

"The Thunderbird North community consists of only ten homes, planned by William Cody, and this residence being a Wexler & Harrison original, with historic designation and Mills Act protection, makes it a combination that is a true rarity in the desert." - Cat Moe