

DONALD A. WEXLER COLLECTION

Finding Aid



101 Museum Drive
Palm Springs, California 92263
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Prepared by Frank Lopez, last updated October 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Title:

Donald A. Wexler Collection

Date (inclusive):

1950-2000 (bulk 1950-1970)

Creators:

Donald A. Wexler

Extent:

2 linear feet and flat file drawers

Repository:

Palm Springs Art Museum, The Lorraine Boccardo Archive Study Center, Palm Springs, California 92263

Conditions Governing Access/Restrictions:

The collection is open to qualified researchers by appointment only.

Literary Copyright/Publication Rights:

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Preferred Citation:

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Name of Cataloger/Date Completed:

Frank Lopez, November 2015; Updated October 2019.

Biographical Note:

Donald A. Wexler FAIA was born in South Dakota in 1926. He remains one of the most influential and famous architects to leave his mark on modern and midcentury architecture in the Palm Springs area. He is known for pioneering the use of steel in residential design. After working for a year in William Cody's office, Wexler joined Richard Harrison to form their practice. Wexler and Harrison became widely recognized for their Steel Development Houses. Wexler's practice began with the design of prefabricated houses and portable classrooms constructed of light gauge steel. The extremes of the desert climate forced Wexler to develop a sustainable architecture, which was not only successful

functionally, but achieved a timeless aesthetic appeal. He pioneered commercial and residential construction using steel and prefabrication. He applied his groundbreaking techniques and unique style to projects for clients such as Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, the Alexander Construction Company, and Walt Disney World Resort. During his career, he designed numerous houses and condominium complexes, as well as banks, office parks, and schools. The Palm Springs Municipal Airport commission, designed in 1963-1964, when he was in solo practice, was a major milestone in his career. He practiced architecture in Palm Springs during what he calls the “golden years” of California architecture. Wexler passed away in Palm Springs in 2015.

Scope and Content Note:

The materials were donated by Donald Wexler and contain two series – Drawings and Research Files.

Series:

I. Drawings

- A. Bank of Palm Springs Center
- B. Canyon Condos
- C. Community Center and Pavilion
- D. Desert Water Agency
- E. El Rancho Vista Estates
- F. Fairway Homes (Alexander Construction Co.)
- G. Indio Hall of Justice
- H. Metal Home Program
- I. Office for Rancho Mirage Financial Group
- J. Palm Springs Desert Museum Theater Box Office (Wexler/E.Stewart Williams)
- K. Palm Springs Medical Clinic addition (1695 N. Sunrise Way) J-6917
- L. Palm Springs Municipal Airport (Acc #30-2012; transferred from Cal Poly Pomona)
- M. Palm Springs Spa
- N. Perlin, Bernard (Los Angeles)
- O. Rheem Steel Home
- P. Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Maurice [Dinah Shore House]
- Q. Steel Home Program
- R. Verbena House [Wexler House] (Acc. #30-2011.1-8; ; transferred from Cal Poly Pomona)

II. – Research Files, 2

Boxes A. Box 1 – 14 folders

- 1. Bank of Palm Springs Centre - brochures
- 2. Coachella Valley Mosquito & Vector Control; Hilton Riviera Conference Center – drawings (copies)
- 3. Desert Hospital Dedication
- 4. Donald A. Wexler Associates – listing of projects
- 5. Legal Arts Building, Norwalk Civic Center
- 6. Magazine and clippings- Dune, Modernism Week, Preservation, Record Houses of 1963

7. Newspaper clippings
8. Renderings – Mobil Project, Palm Springs Junior High School, Palm Springs Medical Clinic, Rancho de Los Penasquitos, Professional Village of Palm Springs (All copies)
9. Residences – Real estate ads, Twin Springs
10. Rheem Home Program: Business and Technical Data for the Federal Housing Administration – B. [Bernard] Perlin, 1961 – tabs Business information, Descriptive data, Technical data
11. Schools – Raymond Cree Jr. High School, Palm Desert Middle School, Palm Springs High School, Lake Tamarisk Elementary School – photographs and images
12. Vintage Club 14 – drawings (copies)
13. Photographs – Wexler includes photographer Michael Childers
14. Indio Juvenile Hall Detention and Treatment Center – Master Plan Study , 1 December 1986

B. Box 2 – Palm Springs Airport (Acc #30-2012; transferred from Cal Poly Pomona) – Primarily photographs (6 folders)

1. Palm Springs Terminal Building – Presentation Book (items removed from spiral book for preservation) includes black/white photographs (many stamped by William K. Plachta, Palm Springs); Descriptive and technical data; Drawings and plans; Concealed identification;
2. Airport color photographs -- snapshots, Poloroids, and negatives – loose or mounted on folder stock
3. Airport black/white photographs (many stamped by William K. Plachta, Palm Springs)
4. Airport color photographs
5. The Plasterer and Cement Mason, October 1966 – Cover image Palm Springs Airport Terminal (6 copies)
6. Airport construction photographs (black/white photocopies), drawings/plans, Palm Springs Life article, Los Angeles Times Desert World January 22, 1965

Indexing – Names

Wexler, Donald A. (1926-2015) - Archives

Indexing – Subjects

Architects – California - Palm Springs
 Architecture – California - Palm Springs
 Palm Springs – Buildings, structures, etc.

Indexing – Geographical

Palm Springs, California