

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 1

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### 1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

**Historic Name:** Painted Desert Community Complex

**Other Name/Site Number:** N/A

**Street and Number (if applicable):** 1 Park Road

**City/Town:** Petrified Forest National Park

**County:** Apache

**State:** AZ

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior December 23, 2016

### 2. SIGNIFICANCE DATA

**NHL Criteria:** 1, 4

**NHL Criteria Exceptions:** N/A

**NHL Theme(s):** III. Expressing Cultural Values

5. Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design

**Period(s) of Significance:** 1961-1965

**Significant Person(s) (only Criterion 2):** N/A

**Cultural Affiliation (only Criterion 6):** N/A

**Designer/Creator/Architect/Builder:** Neutra and Alexander  
(Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander)

**Historic Contexts:** Mission 66 program, 1956-1966

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement.** We are collecting this information under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467) and 36 CFR part 65. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to evaluate properties nominated as National Historic Landmarks. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. OMB has approved this collection of information and assigned Control No. 1024-0276.

**Estimated Burden Statement.** Public reporting burden is 2 hours for an initial inquiry letter and 344 hours for NPS Form 10-934 (per response), including the time it takes to read, gather and maintain data, review instructions and complete the letter/form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate, or any aspects of this form, to the Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Mail Stop 242, Reston, VA 20192. Please do not send your form to this address.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

3. WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Does this nomination contain sensitive information that should be withheld under Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act?

\_\_\_ Yes

X No

4. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Acreage of Property: 20.3

2. Use either Latitude/Longitude Coordinates or the UTM system:

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates:

Datum if other than WGS84:

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Point	Latitude:	Longitude:
1	35.068476	-109.779725
2	35.066832	-109.778179
3	35.064316	-109.781847
4	35.065214	-109.784357

NOTE: The points are the vertices of the bounding polygon.

OR

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

3. Verbal Boundary Description:

As shown on the included sketch map, the boundary begins at the west edge of the park access road and the north edge (extended) of the road north of residence block D; thence southeast along the north edge of the road to the intersection of the east edge of the road between the residence blocks and the trailer court; thence southwest along the east edge of the road to the intersection with the north wall of the trailer court; thence southeast along the north edge of the trailer court wall to its intersection with the east wall of the trailer court; thence southwest along the east trailer court wall and the chainlink fence bordering the outdoor recreation area to the intersection with the chainlink fence along the south edge of the recreation area and basketball court; thence northwest along the fence to the east edge (extended) of the parking lot east of the apartment wing; thence southwest and westerly along the east edge of the parking lot and south edge of the access road to the maintenance area and visitor parking lot to the intersection with the west edge of the park access road; and thence northeast along the west edge of the park access road to the point of beginning.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

**Page 3**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

---

### **4. Boundary Justification:**

The boundaries of the district were selected in order to encompass the entire Painted Desert Community Complex. The designated boundary embraces the complex as originally designed and constructed and contains all of the area historically associated with its operation. The recreational vehicle court and concessioner manager's house in the extreme northeast corner are excluded from the district since they were constructed in the mid-1980s, after the period of significance.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 4

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### **5. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **INTRODUCTION: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE<sup>1</sup>**

The Painted Desert Community Complex (PDCC) is nationally significant under the NHL theme “Expressing Cultural Values” and NHL Criteria 1 and 4. The property possesses national significance under National Historic Landmark Criterion 1, for its association with America’s decade-long Mission 66 program to expand and modernize the nation’s park system. Mission 66 represented a major commitment by the National Park Service (NPS) to address postwar park issues resulting from inadequate staffing and budgets, a substantial increase in visitors, and poorly maintained and outdated facilities. With the initiative, the agency adopted progressive ideas and cost effective strategies that reshaped its architectural legacy and improved the entire visitor experience. An important goal of the program was to provide up-to-date facilities, which conveyed a modern image for the National Park System in the postwar era, while limiting impacts to undeveloped areas of the parks. PDCC constitutes the most fully articulated expression of Mission 66 values given the variety of functions housed in the complex as planned by architects Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander. Located in Petrified Forest National Park (formerly Petrified Forest National Monument) in northeastern Arizona, Painted Desert Community Complex is an outstanding example of the challenges and accomplishments of this groundbreaking nationwide program.

The historic district is also significant under Criterion 4 as an exceptional architectural representation of the Modern Movement/International Style. Designed specifically for Petrified Forest National Park by masters of the idiom, Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, the historic district is the largest Mission 66-era headquarters complex and the only one designed to function as an architecturally unified self-contained community. The new complex consolidated park headquarters, visitor center, school, concession, recreation, maintenance, and staff housing functions into one centralized location organized around a central plaza. In so doing, the development simultaneously achieved several Mission 66 goals, including enhancing the visitor experience, minimizing impact on the natural environment, improving park housing and providing easier access to visitor services. The Painted Desert complex superbly illustrates the key design elements of what became known as the Park Service Modern style and its characteristic forms, proportions, plans, and materials. It is an exceptionally important example of Mission 66’s new modern architectural brand for the NPS that abandoned the traditional Rustic style and adopted a streamlined and efficient modernist idiom for new buildings. While many Mission 66 facilities were designed by NPS architects, the agency also engaged private firms for selected individual projects. The Painted Desert Community Complex designed by the partnership of Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander is a nationally important representative of this approach within the park system. The period of significance for the complex extends from 1961 (the start of construction) to 1965 (completion of construction and full occupation and use).

#### **CRITERION 1**

The Painted Desert Community Complex (PDCC) is nationally significant under NHL Criterion 1 in the area of Community Planning and Development for its association with Mission 66, a wide-ranging program initiated by the NPS in 1956 to modernize, strengthen, and expand America’s park system. The selected site was “a clean slate” for design of a new NPS headquarters including visitor, administrative, maintenance, concession,

---

<sup>1</sup> This nomination builds upon and draws from the 2005 National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Painted Desert Community Complex Historic District prepared by Amanda Zeman, Rodd L. Wheaton, and Dawn Bunyak. Amanda Zeman Wallander and Rodd Wheaton are part of the current team which prepared this nomination.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 5

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

educational, and residential facilities.<sup>2</sup> The district embodies the tenets of the program as a rare and intact example of an integrated and centralized national park operation planned as a “community complex.” One of the major development projects of the Mission 66 effort, the complex was designed by Los Angeles architects Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, American masters of the Modern Movement/International style. The hiring of Neutra and Alexander reflected the NPS practice of providing respected architects outside the agency with opportunities to participate in the creation of new facilities funded under the Mission 66 initiative. The architects incorporated many elements from the preliminary plans prepared by NPS architect Cecil Doty, who is credited with numerous Mission 66 visitor centers. In addition, the NPS prepared the final landscape design in consultation with Neutra and Alexander.

Constructed at a cost of \$1.9 million, PDCC represented a substantial NPS commitment to the Mission 66 program. Under the Mission 66 planning process, the park produced a 1956 *Prospectus* and 1960 *Master Plan* describing and justifying the development; both received approval from NPS Director Conrad Wirth. To prepare Petrified Forest National Monument for the postwar era, the agency provided funds to relocate the headquarters from the southern part of the park to the northern, Painted Desert area. This ensured more efficient service for the growing number of visitors anticipated with the planned construction of Interstate 40 near the park’s northern boundary. The new headquarters fulfilled such Mission 66 goals as consolidating park, concession, and staff housing functions; enhancing the visitor experience by erecting a new property type—the visitor center—and other state-of-the-art facilities; and providing a convenient location for visitor services adjacent to a major transportation route. Creation of the new park headquarters was a significant undertaking that embraced a variety of building types: a visitor center/administration building, landscaped plaza, concession facility, attached multi-unit employee housing, school, maintenance and support buildings, a trailer court, and community and recreational facilities for staff in one compact central location, grouped around a central plaza. The compact configuration provided visitors with better information on the park and its resources and modern restrooms in the visitor center and food, gifts, and auto service in the concession building. NPS staff gained on-site housing, recreational facilities, improved office and maintenance areas, and a school for the children of employees.

Sarah Allaback, author of *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, concludes that “the modern aspects of Neutra and Alexander’s plan lay in the organization of spaces and the separation of public areas from administrative and residential zones... In principle, the design achieved the Mission 66 goal of concentrating development in a limited space and therefore conserving natural resources.”<sup>3</sup> Painted Desert Community Complex also represents the varied approaches to site layout and development that Mission 66 embraced in response to local conditions. Neutra and Alexander’s design for Painted Desert Community Complex constitutes a “rare central complex that included employee housing with each residential unit connected around a private courtyard.”<sup>4</sup> Current NPS staff and Mission 66 specialists could not point to another example of a Mission 66 park headquarters with these characteristics. Landscape architect Ethan Carr, author of *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*, considers the headquarters

... the most unusual and atypical national park architecture of the entire era. Sited in a remote desert with a hostile climate, the new community was designed in a compact geometric layout, featuring row houses and apartments all directly attached to the visitor center and maintenance buildings in one large complex. The public buildings and apartments together defined a central,

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, (Washington: National Park Service, 2000), 145.

<sup>3</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 154.

<sup>4</sup> Carr *et al.*, “Mission 66 MPDF,” 20.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 6

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

sheltered courtyard. The private gardens of the row houses were separated by masonry walls, which like other walls in the complex, were intended to block the desert wind.<sup>5</sup>

### CRITERION 4

The Painted Desert Community Complex possesses national significance under NHL Criterion 4 in the area of Architecture as a Mission 66-era national park headquarters representing the Modern Movement/International style as designed by celebrated architects, Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander. According to Ethan Carr Neutra and Alexander's complex embodies "true International style architecture, with unadorned rectangular massing, large featureless façades, and horizontal windows set in long bands."<sup>6</sup> Sarah Allaback explains, by the mid-century both architects had already established "an international reputation for minimalist modern buildings. By hiring Neutra and Alexander to design both the Gettysburg Visitor Center and the Painted Desert Community, Mission 66 planners not only demonstrated faith in modern architecture, but also an unprecedented willingness to experiment with its purest manifestation."<sup>7</sup> The firm's only other national park project, the Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building at the Gettysburg National Military Park, was demolished in 2013. Carr judges Richard Neutra "the most renowned architect to work as a consultant to Mission 66 [and] . . . one of the original figures of the International Style."<sup>8</sup> Neutra's association with the Mission 66 program lent it a certain cachet, as he was a "starchitect" of his day, featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1949, writing numerous books explicating his design philosophy, traveling widely, and maintaining a voluminous worldwide correspondence.

John C. Rollow, who was employed by Neutra and Alexander during PDCC's planning and construction, credits Neutra with the strongest voice in the design of most of the Painted Desert buildings.<sup>9</sup> The architects collaborated on the site planning and layout, with the final scheme benefitting from Alexander's expertise with large-scale projects. Signature architectural elements utilized by Neutra in earlier residential and institutional designs are incorporated in the buildings, including horizontality, flat and widely cantilevered roofs, spider leg roof structures, bands of windows, minimal ornamentation, limited incorporation of walls or panels of natural stone, and use of aluminum and primary paint colors for accents. A covered, connecting walkway and courtyards became integral landscape features continuing the stylistic idiom.

Conceptually, the Painted Desert Community Complex also reflects Neutra's design philosophy of integrating human needs into building design for the natural world. As early as 1927 he featured photographs of indigenous pueblos in his *Wie Baut Amerika?* For the Painted Desert project, he returned to regional indigenous architecture for inspiration, including ruins associated with the Ancestral Puebloans found in the southern part of the park. Neutra carefully considered the desert environment and the character and demographics of the resident staff in preparing plans. Architect Sylvia Lavin studied Neutra's prolific writings and judged him "a determined architectural theorist" and "a founder of environmental design."<sup>10</sup> He was a proponent of "biorealism"—a belief in the necessity of considering human needs and behavior in architectural design, as well as becoming more attuned to the natural setting. Neutra elaborated on the Painted Desert plan in 1964:

---

<sup>5</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 163.

<sup>6</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 163-64.

<sup>7</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 145.

<sup>8</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 162-63. Carr judges Neutra's design for the Cyclorama building at Gettysburg National Military Park "the high point of the entire Mission 66 architectural design effort."

<sup>9</sup> John C. Rollow, Menifee, California, telephone interview by Thomas H. Simmons, 6 March 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Sylvia Lavin, *Form Follows Libido: Architecture and Richard Neutra in a Psychoanalytic Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004), 3 and 14.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 7

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

The housing development for the personnel of the *Petrified Forest National Park* is for men, women, and children who even love nature where it offers only desert, looks threadbare, and is constantly lashed by storms. . . .

With my newly built *plaza*, I wanted to show that today as well as in the past, man must come to terms with the wind. The whole of this desert community is, to a certain extent, a demonstration of this for the visitor to the national park. Here too, a squaw-built wall contrasts shockingly with the predominantly prefabricated steel skeleton construction which, thanks to modern techniques, we could bring to this corner of the desert.

[The NPS leadership and residents] have agreed to the plan of using these large building groups with patio houses, village school, trading center, meeting room, restaurant and lodgings for all the families who take part in the park management, to demonstrate how the human organism can come to terms ecologically with the long developing physical environment and reach a new equilibrium.

In developing the site plan, Neutra and Alexander carefully assessed the harsh desert climate, concluding that “shelter from the wind is the first essential requirement of any plan.”<sup>11</sup> They rotated the axis of the complex from due north to blunt the force of the prevailing wind, with building placement and tall concrete block walls creating sheltered plazas and courtyards. The Neutra and Alexander design established a public zone for park visitors, while orientation of buildings and concrete block screening walls created private space for employee families and NPS work areas. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth describes the PDCC plaza “as a reception space for the public, while residents are sequestered in their own world” and called the design “artful.” He asserted that “the real significance here lies in planning.”<sup>12</sup>

#### **PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX AS A MISSION 66 HISTORIC DISTRICT**

According to the requirements for national significance as outlined in the theme study, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, by Sarah Allaback, the Painted Desert Visitor Center qualifies for National Historic Landmark designation because “it is the work of a nationally or internationally recognized architect or architectural firm, working for the Mission 66 program during the period 1945-1966.”<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, encompassing 20.3 acres and thirty-two resources including the visitor center, Painted Desert Community Complex meets the registration requirements for listing under the 2015 “National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources” Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) for its representation of the property type “Mission 66 historic district.” That document indicates that “most Mission 66 resources should be considered as contributing within historic districts” because individual buildings, such as a visitor’s center, may logically be associated with a complex of buildings forming a district with architectural and landscape cohesion.<sup>14</sup> The MPDF further advises that the presence of other intact individual components may enhance the overall integrity of a district wherein key buildings have integrity issues.<sup>15</sup> Historical and architectural significance may apply to Mission 66 historic districts that are at least fifty years old if they include “a

<sup>11</sup> Robert J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, “Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert,” (Los Angeles: Neutra and Alexander, architects, ca. 1960).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Longstreth, George Washington University, Washington, DC, email to James Jacobs, National Park Service, 3 January 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 277.

<sup>14</sup> Carr *et al.*, “Mission 66 MPDF,” 94.

<sup>15</sup> Carr *et al.*, “Mission 66 MPDF,” 95.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 8

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

representative range of potentially contributing buildings, structures, and cultural landscape characteristics” and the resources “retain overall historic integrity embodied by their historic architecture and significance.”<sup>16</sup>

Exceeding these requirements for National Register listing, the Painted Desert Community Complex encompasses an architecturally and historically cohesive range of buildings erected in 1961-65 as a Mission 66 park community complex designed by master architects Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander in the Modern Movement/International Style. The resources comprise a Mission 66 historic district that incorporates a comprehensively planned and constructed, self-contained district with a wide range of functions, including a visitor’s center, administrative buildings, maintenance facilities, concession buildings, residential areas, a school, recreation resources, and integrated plazas and courtyards. Further, Painted Desert Community Complex is significant as a rare example of a “community complex.”<sup>17</sup> Neutra and Alexander analogized their design to a city with functionally differentiated subareas. The plan acknowledged and incorporated the desert environment, while welcoming park visitors and providing privacy for NPS residents.

### RECOGNITION

The Painted Desert Community Complex also meets the requirements for national significance as a work “recognized as an outstanding example of Park Service Modern design through evidence of national or international awards and honors, critical acclaim by the national or international press, and scholarly evaluation.”<sup>18</sup> Despite its remote location in a national park, which ensured much of the outside world would not immediately be aware of its significant qualities, the PDCC plan received a residential award citation in January 1959 from *Progressive Architecture*. The honor acknowledged “a most exceptional program and an extraordinary site condition” and the “compoundlike grouping of L-shaped houses with wind-shielding walls to the south and west and small high-walled patios where devoted care can produce oases of natural growth.”<sup>19</sup>

The Painted Desert project loomed large in Neutra’s own assessment of his later works. Writing to Swiss architect Willy Boesiger in 1964, Neutra reflected he had “always endeavored to sift together technological and biological insight” and listed PDCC with three other works “which seem to me to be of fundamental importance for an understanding of my conception of the architect’s task.”<sup>20</sup> Boesiger, who edited three volumes on Neutra’s career, devoted twelve pages of discussion and photographs to the Painted Desert project in *Richard Neutra: 1961-66, Buildings and Projects* (1966). He pointed to Neutra’s study of “nature preserves” like Painted Desert around the world and the architect’s conclusion that each is “a demonstration for the multitudes of mutual adaptations of circumstances, which is now so badly disturbed in our life of hectic invention, artificialities, and poorly related progresses.” The PDCC design reflected Neutra’s philosophy of biorealism and

<sup>16</sup> Carr *et al.*, “Mission 66 MPDF,” 98.

<sup>17</sup> Sam Tamburro, Program Manager, Historic Preservation Programs, National Park Service, Intermountain Regional Office, Santa Fe, New Mexico, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 22 October 2015; National Park Service, *Guidelines for Completing National Register of Historic Places Forms, Part B, How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* (Washington: National Park Service, 1991), 14. Sam Tamburro, one of the authors of the MPDF, supports nominating PDCC “as a ‘community complex’ even though that is not an identified associated property type.” The NPS Bulletin addressing MPDFs notes: “Property type analysis is not necessary on this form for unique or rare resources because the information can appear on the registration form within the multiple property submission.”

<sup>18</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 277.

<sup>19</sup> “Residential: Award Citation,” *Progressive Architecture* (January 1959): 146.

<sup>20</sup> W. Boesiger, ed., *Richard Neutra: 1961-66, Buildings and Projects* (Zurich: Verlag für Architektur, 1966), 10. The other projects discussed were the Marine Medical Clinic, Newport Beach, California; Lawrence Public School, Garden Grove, California; and Adelphi University Library, Garden City, New York. Neutra’s attachment to the Painted Desert complex is reflected in the fact he attended its dedication in 1963; hired Phoenix photographer August Beinlich document the site in a series of thirty-three photographs, highlighting the various interior and exterior elements of the property; and made a return visit in 1968 while visiting his son, Raymond, who was working nearby.



# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 9

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

represented an effort to achieve equilibrium and bring human interest to the development by drawing upon lessons learned from the housing designs of the nearby Ancestral Puebloans. Boesiger approvingly described PDCC's sheltered plaza, as well as the residence blocks: "All atrium houses densely huddled together, similarly as Neutra had evolved 30 years ago [in the 1930s]—25 centuries after such dwelling style was common around the Mediterranean, and 400 years after Spanish Colonial Antigua!"<sup>21</sup> Neutra biographer and architectural historian Thomas S. Hines called the facility "dramatically sited" and compared it favorably to Neutra and Alexander's work at St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland.<sup>22</sup>

With a growing appreciation of the work of the Modern Movement and the legacy of Mission 66 emerging in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the Painted Desert Community Complex received new appreciation and increased recognition of its importance to modern architecture within the national park system. In 2005 PDCC was listed in the National Register of Historic Places at a national level of significance. With the 2013 demolition of the Cyclorama building at Gettysburg National Military Park, Pennsylvania, PDCC is the only Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander work extant in the national park system. In October 2014 the National Trust for Historic Preservation recognized the Painted Desert Community Complex as a National Treasure, placing it in "a portfolio of highly-significant historic places throughout the country where the National Trust makes a long-term commitment to finding a preservation solution."<sup>23</sup>

### THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND MISSION 66: OVERVIEW<sup>24</sup>

The conclusion of World War II brought returning veterans, growing families, and a widespread desire to once more experience the pleasures of everyday life. Americans became increasingly mobile, as more households acquired automobiles and took longer, more frequent vacations. With the end of gasoline rationing and more leisure time, people took to the road on excursions that frequently included the national parks. In the first year after the war 100,000 people arrived at Petrified Forest National Monument and by 1955 its annual visitation increased to 441,000; this represented a nationwide trend.<sup>25</sup> Although demands on park resources and visitor services increased dramatically, funding for associated equipment, facilities, and personnel declined even below that of the 1930s in the immediate postwar period.<sup>26</sup> In 1953 Director Conrad L. Wirth noted that the NPS was operating "with 25 percent less manpower than it had in 1941, despite a 10 percent increase in system units and more than twice the number of visitors."<sup>27</sup> National park employees and concession personnel confronted a crisis of diminished quality of visitor experience due to lack of adequate services, staff, and facilities to carry out their mission; soon they faced criticism for failing in their entrusted mission.

The NPS recognized the urgency of formulating a planning and development strategy allowing it to complete long-neglected repair, restoration, and construction projects within the parks, add new employees, and increase

<sup>21</sup> Boesiger, *Richard Neutra: 1961-66*, 92.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture: A Biography and History* (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1982), 236 and 239. Hines reported the St. John's buildings "aroused generally favorable comment at the time of completion (1958)" but had been compromised through poor upkeep. He goes on to observe that "much of the spirit of the Annapolis buildings" was replicated at Painted Desert.

<sup>23</sup> National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Painted Desert Community Complex to be Recognized as a National Treasure at 'Night of Neutra' in Phoenix," press release, 6 October 2014.

<sup>24</sup> This section provides a brief overview of Mission 66. The program is discussed in greater detail in the Mission 66 MPDF, Carr's *Mission 66*, Allaback's *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, and the 2004 Painted Desert Community Complex Historic District National Register Nomination Form, among other sources.

<sup>25</sup> "News Media Fact Sheet" 1963; Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park* (Grand Canyon, Arizona: Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 45.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 10

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

resource protection. This responsibility fell to Director Wirth, who gained his position in December 1951 after serving as the agency's associate director, land planner, and leader of its Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) work in state parks. He believed necessary improvements required a substantial budget increase over a multi-year period similar to the funding for the federal highway program. Wirth conceived of a ten-year program of modernization, growth, and revitalization for the national park system; formed "working" and "steering" committees of key NPS staff; and asked park superintendents to compile "prospectuses" detailing work needed in their locations. The Director advised those planning what he coined Mission 66 to "disregard precedent, policy and present operating and management procedures, traditions, and work habits . . . [and] to remember only the fundamental purpose of national parks, and on this basis to develop operating and development plans that would best meet the problem of park use today and in the future."<sup>28</sup> Landscape architecture professor Ethan Carr observes, "Within eight months the scope of the Mission 66 program was established, including preliminary budget estimates."<sup>29</sup> Wirth presented the innovative plan at a meeting of the President's Cabinet in January 1955, and President Eisenhower voiced his strong support. With the president's encouragement, Congress increased the NPS budget allocation in 1956 to cover costs of the new program for one year; the NPS knew it needed to prove the initiative's success each subsequent year to continue receiving the necessary funding for the ten-year project.

In introducing Mission 66, Wirth described its original purpose as "an intensive study of the problems of protection, public use, interpretation, development, staffing, legislation, financing, and all other phases of park operation, and to produce a comprehensive and integrated program of use and protection that is in harmony with the obligations of the National Park Service under the Act of 1916."<sup>30</sup> The initiative, as summarized on Mission 66 promotional materials, was "a forward-looking program for the National Park System intended to develop and staff these priceless possessions of the American people as to permit their wisest possible use; maximum enjoyment for those who use them; and maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources that give them distinction."<sup>31</sup> Construction, a major and most visible component of Mission 66, would include work on infrastructure, landscape, and architecture for public and administrative use to meet future increases in visitation. Important components included hiring and training programs for staff, expansion of park lands, and construction of visitor centers, then a new type of park property.<sup>32</sup> As NPS Historian Cynthia Walton points out, the planners of Mission 66 believed "engaged and informed visitors were to become stewards and advocates of the parks, but in order to protect resources from overuse, visitor flow needed to be controlled and guided.... The visitor center was crucial to Mission 66 efforts to channel visitor use ... by providing a central location for visitors to learn about park resources and plan their visits."<sup>33</sup> In order to accomplish its intended goals, the NPS initially estimated the cost of Mission 66 at \$786.5 million. Ultimately, the program cost over \$1 billion, including the expense of general operations.<sup>34</sup>

The popular NPS Rustic style, which blended facilities with the landscape and reflected indigenous and often hand-crafted design influences, characterized architecture built in the parks during the 1930s. During the New Deal era the agency benefitted immeasurably from the presence of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers,

---

<sup>28</sup> National Park Service, *Mission 66 for the National Park System* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1956), 9, [nps.history.com/publications/mission66-park-system.pdf](http://nps.history.com/publications/mission66-park-system.pdf) (18 April 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 10.

<sup>30</sup> Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 242.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "Mission 66 for Blue Ridge Parkway," 1956, [docsouth.unc.edu](http://docsouth.unc.edu) (accessed 18 April 2016).

<sup>32</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 10.

<sup>33</sup> Cynthia Walton, "Clingmans Dome Observation Tower," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 256; Carr, *Mission 66*, 335. This is the cost of the initial ten-year program, not the subsequent Parkscape USA initiative.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 11

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

who provided inexpensive labor to continue this design tradition. During the post-World War II period of 1945-56, which the NPS now refers to as pre-Mission 66, construction projects to remedy problems stemming from war-era shortages of funding, staff, and maintenance began. A few began to employ Modern Movement style designs. For example, during this period NPS architects created housing in the new style at Glacier, Zion, and other national parks that would serve as prototypes for park housing built during Mission 66. In addition, Gilbert Stanley Underwood's design of the 1955 Jackson Lake Lodge in Grand Teton National Park, another early Modern Movement park construction project, established a precedent for such design in the parks.<sup>35</sup> The success of the pre-Mission 66 work in the Modern Movement, or Park Service Modern, style and its representation of a national trend in postwar construction led to its adoption as "the premier design idiom" throughout the park system, according to the authors of the MPDF.<sup>36</sup> As the authors judge, "The decision to employ modernism in the parks was not revolutionary for the time; it was revolutionary for the place."<sup>37</sup>

In 1956 *Architectural Record* described Mission 66 designs as creating "simple contemporary buildings that perform their assigned function and respect their environment."<sup>38</sup> The new buildings were planned for efficient construction incorporating streamlined exteriors, horizontal planes, inexpensive materials (concrete, steel, and glass), and minimal or no applied ornament, with associated savings in labor and materials. Architectural historian Sarah Allaback describes the purpose of Mission 66 architecture as "not to design buildings for atmosphere, whimsy, or aesthetic pleasure, but for change: to meet the demands of an estimated eighty million visitors by 1966, to anticipate the requirements of modern transportation, and to exercise the potential of new construction technology."<sup>39</sup> In meeting these challenges, NPS designer Cecil Doty (1907-90) noted the shift in philosophy in the early 1950s, observing "We couldn't help but change—I can't understand how anyone could think otherwise, how it could keep from changing."<sup>40</sup>

In 1956 dozens of projects previously identified as necessary by park superintendents were planned and funded under Mission 66; their success proved the agency's ability to manage and carry out the program, supplemented when necessary with assistance from outside design firms. Mission 66 generated new opportunities for architects and landscape architects who were enthusiastic about designing Modern buildings and structures. Former NPS Architectural Historian Rodd Wheaton notes that

... the Park Service generally strove to provide exceptionally designed developments that at the time of construction were conceived as state-of-the-art facilities for visitor centers, maintenance activities, concession operations, and employee housing. The best structures of the period are those that were designed to meet the specific geographic conditions of their site or were designed to reflect a local style defined by prehistoric or historic architecture. While many of the new buildings and planning projects in the West were designed and constructed by the Park Service out of the San Francisco Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC), which often provided stock designs to meet the high demand, other projects were awarded to private architectural firms.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Carr *et al.*, "Mission 66 MPDF," 2.

<sup>36</sup> Carr *et al.*, "Mission 66 MPDF," 3.

<sup>37</sup> Carr *et al.*, "Mission 66 MPDF," 2.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 12.

<sup>39</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 12.

<sup>40</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Rodd Wheaton and Dawn Bunyak, "Draft Significance Statement: Petrified Forest National Park, Painted Desert Community" (1997).

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 12

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

From its beginning, Mission 66 generated some criticism for its seeming emphasis on new construction rather than a more nuanced set of solutions to the complex problems the parks faced during the postwar era. Some also regretted the discarding of Rustic style architecture, while others simply disliked Modern design and materials. Much opposition came in response to the extensive road development that allowed people greater access to remote areas, which was seen as threatening to the scenic and wilderness qualities of parks. Landscape historian Robin Karson asserts that ironically, “the initiative can also be credited with catalyzing the modern environmental movement that began in the 1960s, largely in opposition to it.”<sup>42</sup> Karson finds the Wilderness Preservation Act of 1964 as “a paradoxical legacy of Mission 66.”<sup>43</sup>

At the end of ten years, Mission 66 achieved much of Wirth’s original vision, including completion of 2,700 miles of roads and more than 900 miles of trails, upgraded park utilities, and hundreds of new buildings for public use, administration, maintenance, and other functions.<sup>44</sup> The number of NPS employees and their professional skills grew, bolstered by new personnel training centers. More than one hundred examples of an extremely popular new building type, the visitor center, graced the parks. In judging the broader legacy of Mission 66 Ethan Carr concluded, “Although the development (or, as was often the case, the redevelopment) of national parks on this scale was almost always beset by controversy, in the end Mission 66 accomplished much of what Wirth intended: the reinvention of the national park system and the National Park Service—and to some extent the national park idea—to meet the exigencies of postwar American society.”<sup>45</sup>

### PETRIFIED FOREST AND MISSION 66 PLANNING

President Theodore Roosevelt designated the Petrified Forest National Monument on 8 December 1906 under the Antiquities Act of 1906 to preserve and protect its unique paleontological resources. The initial reserve encompassed 60,776 acres in what is now the south end of the park holding the majority of the petrified wood deposits.<sup>46</sup> In 1932, the monument was expanded northward to include the Painted Desert and surroundings, encompassing an additional 53,000 acres and a six-mile section of U.S. 66.<sup>47</sup> Smaller in-holdings were purchased from the 1930s through the 1950s, including the Pueblo Revival style Painted Desert Inn (1924/1940), recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1987.<sup>48</sup>

From its creation, development of the park was impacted by the presence and upgrading of transportation routes. The section of U.S. 66 that passed through Arizona, originally a series of travel routes, was improved between 1920 and 1923 under the Federal Aid Road Act.<sup>49</sup> Federal designation of transcontinental routes resulted in U.S. 66, which extended 2,282 miles from Chicago to Santa Monica, California, and included 400 miles in Arizona. Responding to the increased traffic engendered by Route 66, Petrified Forest constructed a checking station along the highway in 1932. By 1933 twice as many people were entering the park at that point as through the original Petrified Forest checking station at Rainbow Forest to the south, illustrating the need for additional NPS facilities within the Painted Desert section of the park.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Robin Karson, “Preface,” in Carr, *Mission 66*, ix.

<sup>43</sup> Karson “Preface,” x.

<sup>44</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 10. Most of the new parks received development under the subsequent Parkscape program.

<sup>45</sup> Carr, *Mission 66*, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Petrified Forest National Monument, “Development Outline: Developed Areas,” 1950, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Petrified Forest National Monument, “Development Outline,” 1.

<sup>48</sup> Dewey Livingston *et al.*, *Historic Structure Report: Painted Desert Inn, Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona* (Denver: National Park Service, October 1994), 3-23.

<sup>49</sup> Teri Cleeland, “Historic Route 66 in Arizona,” National Register Nomination Form, 1988, E-3.

<sup>50</sup> Livingston, *et al.*, *Historic Structure Report*, 7. The Route 66 checking station was removed circa 1953.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 13

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

As rationing and travel restrictions ended following World War II, automobile tourism boomed and national park visits surged. To improve domestic travel and as a defensive measure in the event of war, President Dwight Eisenhower and Congress enacted the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act of 1956 (generally known as the Interstate Highway Bill). The largest public works project undertaken in United States history, the act aimed to build a national network of limited access, four-lane, high speed roadways.<sup>51</sup> As a result of this program, Interstate 40 replaced much of old Route 66 in northern Arizona.

The prospect of the upgraded highway, carrying much higher volumes of vehicles, further strengthened the rationale for a northern headquarters within the Painted Desert area. As early as 1949, NPS administrators began conceptualizing such a facility, but it was not until Mission 66 got underway in 1956 that the project became financially feasible.<sup>52</sup> In 1950, Petrified Forest prepared a Master Plan, which focused on overnight accommodations, employee housing, interpretive facilities, and maintenance areas.<sup>53</sup> This Master Plan emphasized having services at each end of the park, providing a duplicate of the existing overnight facilities of Rainbow Forest at Painted Desert.<sup>54</sup>

Preliminary designs for the Painted Desert development were also prepared as part of this Master Plan, which included conceptual drawings by NPS architect Cecil Doty.<sup>55</sup> He proposed an administrative center, maintenance facility, shops, and apartment building to be grouped around a central courtyard, with a school and duplex apartment to the northeast, beyond which a curvilinear loop road would extend with sixteen residences.<sup>56</sup> Many of the features included in Doty's original design were incorporated into the final Mission 66 plans prepared by Neutra and Alexander. Doty's involvement in the planning and development of the Painted Desert Community Complex is important to note, because he was one of the most prolific NPS post-war designers at WODC and his thirty-five-year-career encompassed both rustic and modernist idioms.<sup>57</sup> Recognized in Sarah Allaback's *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, Doty is considered to be the signature NPS Mission 66 visitor center architect, designing more than forty such buildings in ten years.<sup>58</sup>

Following NPS planning practices of the time, Petrified Forest completed and submitted their Mission 66 prospectus to Washington in April 1956. The proposed Mission 66 improvements were very closely based on the 1950 Master Plan and included new picnic areas, a new visitor and interpretive center at the north end of the park, additional 2- and 3-bedroom housing units for employees, increased concessioner operations, minimal maintenance facilities, circulation improvements, and enlarged parking areas.<sup>59</sup> E.T. Scoyen, NPS Associate

---

<sup>51</sup> Cleeland, "Historic Route 66," E-8.

<sup>52</sup> Petrified Forest National Monument, *Master Plan*, 1950, 2106-B.

<sup>53</sup> Petrified Forest National Monument, "Development Outline: Developed Areas," 1950.

<sup>54</sup> Petrified Forest National Monument, "Development Outline," 1.

<sup>55</sup> Cecil Doty, "Residential and Utility Area, Painted Desert Area: Preliminary Master Plan," 1950, NM-PF-3212.

<sup>56</sup> Doty, "Residential and Utility Area."

<sup>57</sup> Doty was trained as an architectural engineer at Oklahoma A & M (now Oklahoma State), graduating in 1928. His early career was stifled by the Great Depression and met with some failure, but he eventually joined the CCC state parks program where he met and worked closely with Director Herbert Maier. In 1937 Doty moved to the new regional office in Santa Fe, which he designed. Following his success in Santa Fe, Doty worked on several other small national park projects before being transferred to the San Francisco Region Four Office in 1940, and by 1948 was named regional architect. In 1954 Doty was promoted and transferred to the Western Office of Design and Construction (WODC) in San Francisco. Recognized as a "design specialist," he prepared plans for over forty buildings during the 1950s and 60s.

<sup>58</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 257-60.

<sup>59</sup> National Park Service, "Mission 66 for Petrified Forest National Monument," 1956

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 14

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Director, approved the prospectus in February 1957 but reminded the park to use the new information to update and expand their current Master Plan.<sup>60</sup>

The park responded by producing the 1960 “Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Petrified Forest National Monument, Mission 66 Edition.”<sup>61</sup> Like the 1950 Master Plan, the Mission 66 Master Plan also emphasized dual facilities at the north and south ends of the park. The plan described the park as “geographically divided by the Puerco River and each part is again divided and severed by a major transcontinental highway,” but the Mission 66 Master Plan also noted that “U.S. 66 will always contribute the major portion of the traffic. Consequently ... the single facility needed to administer the area is to be located and operated at the Painted Desert.”<sup>62</sup> Further improvement beyond the existing facilities at Rainbow Forest was deemed unnecessary, with the construction of Interstate 40 described as the impetus for refocusing park development.<sup>63</sup> Interstate 40 effectively replaced Route 66 in 1959-60 when it was constructed parallel to and just one mile south of the old road. The proposed Painted Desert complex would serve as a base of administrative operations with consolidated maintenance facilities and improved employee housing.<sup>64</sup> It also was planned as a gateway to the broader Southwest, with interpretive displays introducing the NPS and providing information on other parks and monuments in the Four Corners region.<sup>65</sup> NPS Director Conrad Wirth approved the Master Plan in June 1960.

### SELECTION OF NEUTRA AND ALEXANDER

In 1958 the NPS, on the recommendation of Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC) Supervisory Architect John B. Cabot, selected Los Angeles architects Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander to design the new Painted Desert complex. NPS chose the firm after Neutra and Alexander received a contract in 1957 to prepare plans for the Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building at Gettysburg National Military Park.

In April 1958, Kenneth Saunder, NPS Regional Architect, and Petrified Forest Superintendent Fred C. Fagergren met in San Francisco at WODC to discuss the proposed Painted Desert development and held “preliminary talks . . . with an Architect-Engineering firm.”<sup>66</sup> Five days later, Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander visited Petrified Forest to “obtain the ‘feel’ of the area and to discuss proposed work” and began the “analysis and design phase” of the project.<sup>67</sup> The precise method by which Neutra and Alexander gained the PDCC project is unclear. The firm was already well underway on the Gettysburg Visitor Center project at this time, and PDCC may have been an add-on to that contract. Richard Neutra’s son, Dion, could not recall any formal competition for the PDCC project and believes the firm was simply selected by the NPS.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> E.T. Scoyen, “Notice of Approval, Petrified Forest National Monument,” (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 8 February 1957.

<sup>61</sup> National Park Service, “Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Petrified Forest National Monument, Mission 66 Edition,” 1960.

<sup>62</sup> National Park Service, “Mission 66 for Petrified Forest National Monument,” 1:3.

<sup>63</sup> National Park Service, “Mission 66 for Petrified Forest National Monument,” 1:2 and 7.

<sup>64</sup> National Park Service, “Mission 66 for Petrified Forest National Monument,” 1:5.

<sup>65</sup> National Park Service, “Mission 66 for Petrified Forest National Monument,” 1:5. The Four-Corners refers to the boundary intersection of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah.

<sup>66</sup> *Superintendent Monthly Report*, April 1958.

<sup>67</sup> *Superintendent Monthly Report*, April 1958.

<sup>68</sup> Dion Neutra, Los Angeles, California, email to Raymond Neutra, Albany, California, 8 March 2016. Neutra and Alexander had been working on the Gettysburg project at the time of the WODC meeting; they produced preliminary drawings for it in April 1958.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 15

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

For Richard Neutra the two Mission 66 projects represented the type of commissions he hoped would flow from his partnership with Alexander. Alexander approached Neutra in 1949 in regard to collaboration on the Chavez Ravine housing development in Los Angeles. That project was never built, but the two formed a partnership with a limited scope, as Professor Thomas S. Hines explains:

For almost all of the fifties, “Neutra and Alexander” won commissions of a scale that Neutra alone had somehow never been able to acquire, though the quality of their output frequently fell behind the quantity. The agreed-upon scope of the Neutra & Alexander work was confined to the “big” areas of planning and of public and commercial architecture, conducted in an office on Glendale Boulevard, a block away from Neutra’s Silverlake house.<sup>69</sup>

Neutra continued a separate practice with a small staff at the Silverlake studio focusing on his “acknowledged forté” of residential design. Arthur Drexler, curator and director of the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art, judges that the arrangement with Alexander proved beneficial for Neutra, producing larger commissions and the personnel to handle them. John C. Rollow, who worked for Neutra and Alexander 1958-63, recalls that twenty to thirty employees worked in the Glendale Boulevard office and about half a dozen at Silverlake.<sup>70</sup> For his part, Alexander also benefitted from the partnership through gaining clients attracted by Neutra’s higher profile and star power. In 1932 Alfred H. Barr, Jr., director of the Museum of Modern Art, described Neutra as “second only to Frank Lloyd Wright in his international reputation” among American architects. *Time* magazine featured Neutra on its cover in August 1949, deeming him “one of the world’s best and most influential moderns.”<sup>71</sup>

## PLANNING AND DESIGNING THE COMPLEX

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENERAL LAYOUT AND MASSING

After the Park Service engaged Neutra and Alexander in April 1958, the architects developed an initial plan that they refined from 1958 through 1960. Construction followed from 1961 to 1965. John Rollow credits Neutra with the conceptual plan for the complex.<sup>72</sup> Based on a site visit, and with Cecil Doty’s earlier work in hand, Neutra and Alexander created their initial proposal for the Painted Desert Community. Describing the site as a “desert climate with its high wind conditions which call for sheltered outdoor spaces” their plan called for people to approach the visitor center and enter a “wind sheltered Plaza, paved and shaded by some trees and wind-protected by a two-story building on the south-west side.”<sup>73</sup> In this first plan a grouping of three two-story buildings enclosed the central plaza: the visitor center on the south, an apartment wing for NPS employees on the east, and the concession building on the west. Given the prevailing winds from the southwest, a two-story concession building, with employees housed on the second story above the shop and restaurant, was seen as offering greater wind protection for the plaza to the east.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Thomas S. Hines, *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture: A Biography and History* (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1982), 223-24.

<sup>70</sup> Arthur Drexler, “The Architecture of Richard Neutra,” 20, in Arthur Drexler and Thomas S. Hines, *The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982); John C. Rollow, Menifee, California, Telephone Interview by Thomas H. Simmons, Denver, Colorado, 7 March 2016.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Drexler, “The Architecture of Richard Neutra,” 19; *Time*, 15 August 1949.

<sup>72</sup> Rollow, Telephone Interview by Simmons, 2016.

<sup>73</sup> Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, “Painted Desert National Monument Community and Visitor’s Center,” circa 1958.

<sup>74</sup> The NPS rejected the two-story concession building for financial reasons. The architects then proposed a two-story apartment wing (never constructed) for concessioner employees abutting the north wall of the concession building.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 16

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Neutra insisted the south wall of the concession building remain unfenestrated and unadorned. He did not want the Painted Desert Community Complex to look like a contemporary shopping center with large shop windows facing the parking lot. The architect maintained that no displays or advertisements should appear on the wall because it would distract and detract from the visitor center, and more importantly the view and approach into the central plaza.<sup>75</sup> The concession building was therefore oriented east towards the plaza, with large plate glass windows and doors, and the south wall left unfenestrated.<sup>76</sup> In a June 1958 letter to the Park Service the architects emphasized the enormous benefits of having the visitor center lobby, concession building restaurant and gift shop, and Community Building open onto the central plaza: “The visitor will be induced to linger in the place we have imagined, increasing his enjoyment of the natural wonders he has come to see.”<sup>77</sup> The site plan also included twenty-three attached single-family dwelling units for Park Service employees. The configuration of the residential area proved most controversial and was not fully resolved until 1960-61.<sup>78</sup>

In their ca. 1960 prospectus “Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert” the architects elaborated on their view of the “Painted Desert Village as a microcosm of a city.” The complex is divided into residential, commercial, recreational, and industrial areas, with a centrally located plaza. The area beyond the confines of the community is labeled “the outside world.”<sup>79</sup> Neutra and Alexander explained that wind and the lack of vegetation barriers are the two defining characteristics of the area: “Wind is the most insistent, reliable, forceful natural influence on the site... [and] no reasonable distance will offer the slightest visual privacy in this barren landscape, and planting barriers cannot be relied upon to create man-made privacy.”<sup>80</sup> Based on these two observations, their design emphasized “small, wind-sheltered areas.”<sup>81</sup> The Puebloan influence on the Painted Desert Community is demonstrated by the courtyards around which each residence is oriented, with each group of three or six houses forming a sheltered community. This influence is also observed when entering the central plaza, as emphasized by the apartment wing’s west wall.

The grouping of administrative and visitor service buildings created the sheltered space of the central plaza, protected on its south and west sides by one- and two-story buildings. The plan for the complex grouped the buildings according to use and developed a public/private organization of space. The commercial area of the complex is strategically positioned immediately adjacent to the visitor parking lot and the central plaza. The industrial area lies to the southeast, with a solid concrete block wall facing the visitor parking lot visually screening the NPS maintenance yard. Similarly, the private residential area is located northwest of the central plaza, visually separated from an open area now containing the orientation loop. The siting and design of the residence blocks in the northwest corner created a private space for NPS residents with only small clerestory windows in concrete block on the public facades and interior glazed walls opening into private courtyards screened by tall walls for each unit. The residences were oriented inwards, toward their private courtyards, as opposed to being open to public view. An apartment wing attached to the visitor center similarly turned its rear wall to the central plaza, facing east toward the desert and featuring courtyards with tall privacy walls for the

---

<sup>75</sup> Richard Neutra, draft letter to Thomas Allen, Southwest Regional Director, January 25, 1963, Re: Painted Desert Complex.

<sup>76</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert,” circa 1960.

<sup>77</sup> Robert E. Alexander, Los Angeles, California, letter to Sanford Hill, National Park Service, WODC, San, Francisco, California, 17 June 1958.

<sup>78</sup> Fred C. Fagergren, Superintendent, Letter to Charles P. Hunter, Vice President of the Fred Harvey Company, August 22, 1958. Robert E. Alexander Collection, Collection No. 3087, box 31, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library (hereafter Cornell). NPS later dropped the number of units to eighteen.

<sup>79</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert.”

<sup>80</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert.”

<sup>81</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert.”



# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 17

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

first-story apartments. For its west wall Neutra and Alexander specified stonework inspired by the Ancestral Puebloan dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park.

Architectural historian Thomas S. Hines sees common elements in the Neutra and Alexander plan for St. John's College reflected in the Painted Desert plan. Completed in 1958, the St. John's project involved designing a cluster of interconnected buildings that formed two-and-a-half sides of an open courtyard with existing buildings. Neutra also undertook a project in Puerto Rico during World War II that may have presaged Painted Desert. There the architect was charged with designing health centers, classrooms, and hospitals, a nursing school, and dormitories for medical personnel in rural areas of the island. Neutra planned the buildings as parts of village centers containing an assembly hall, health center, and fountain grouped around a plaza, which he viewed as the "nucleus for rural community life."<sup>82</sup> Architectural historian Barbara Lamprecht concludes Neutra's Puerto Rico buildings "are little known and among his best."<sup>83</sup> Esther McCoy, in her biography of Richard Neutra, noted the Puerto Rico project and explained how the Painted Desert Complex related to Neutra's perception of historic neighborhood planning:

The idea appears ... in a work in progress for Painted Desert, Arizona, where a school, visitors' center, and shops are grouped around a plaza. He likes the inward-turning plan—a deep memory in the human race, whether designed for defense, as in the clusters of stone nuraghi fortresses of Barumini, Sardinia, enclosing circular courtyards, or to achieve serenity for contemplation, as in the plan-around-a-quadrangle of the nunnery at Uxmal, Yucatan.<sup>84</sup>

The 1960 Master plan echoed the language in the complex's 1959 *Progressive Architecture* award,<sup>85</sup> describing Neutra and Alexander's concept for PDCC as an oasis in the desert:

The natural characteristics of any site affect the design or architectural style but in the case of Petrified Forest they are compelling. Insistent wind, lack of vegetation, bright hot sun and rare light rains are typical. Hence only small wind-sheltered areas can be developed successfully and they must be well prepared, very much like the Indians did who lived so close to nature and knew what to do about it when they built and lived in the Park 800 years ago. Compounds constructed and maintained as oasis should be our theme.<sup>86</sup>

In the later planning stages, some elements, including the administrative offices, concession building, apartments, and gas station, were relocated but the essence of the plan was retained.<sup>87</sup> Director Conrad Wirth approved the final plans for the Painted Desert Community in January 1960. The final design included a visitor center/administration building with NPS apartment wing, maintenance building and vehicle storage building, Community Building, concession building and service station, concession apartments (never constructed), entrance station, eighteen residences, six multi-car carports, and a trailer court with associated trailer court building.

Neutra and Alexander discussed the final design for the Painted Desert Community in a summary sent to Interior Secretary Stewart Udall in 1961. Neutra described how he battled to define a common denominator for

---

<sup>82</sup> Esther McCoy, *Richard Neutra* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1960), 21.

<sup>83</sup> Barbara Mac Lamprecht, *Neutra: Complete Works* (Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 2015), 177.

<sup>84</sup> McCoy, *Richard Neutra*, 21.

<sup>85</sup> *Progressive Architecture*, "Residential: Award Citation," 146-47.

<sup>86</sup> National Park Service, "Mission 66 for Petrified Forest National Monument," 1:6.

<sup>87</sup> "Painted Desert Region," 1958. NM-PF-3202.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 18

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

the visitor experience at Petrified Forest, finally settling on the climate: “Man is not different today from what he was many thousands of years ago. He sweats in the sun and heat, or shivers in the blowing wind as he used to. The permanence of nature in us and around us is a great lesson.”<sup>88</sup> The architect recognized the dichotomy of resource protection and visitor accommodation, noting “we must learn to manage masses of people, masses of glittering cars, masses of paper cups thrown away, and still keep our vista into nature clear of it all.”<sup>89</sup>

The complex’s International Style never emerged as an issue in the design process. In selecting Neutra and Alexander the Park Service knew what to expect and embraced it as reflecting the spirit of Mission 66. Neutra justified the complex’s modern design by explaining “architecture of the future will not try to discredit genuine antiques by imitations under open sky ... the best of the old cannot be truly imitated, and imitation makes the genuine appear suspicious.”<sup>90</sup>

### THE RESIDENCE BLOCKS

The characteristics of the residential area in the northwest corner of the complex required the longest discussions and negotiations between the architects and NPS. Neutra and Alexander’s proposal for attached single-family units (essentially rowhouses) proved difficult for the NPS to accept. In a May 1958 letter Thomas C. Vint, NPS Chief of Design and Construction, conveyed Director Wirth’s displeasure to WODC:

The Director does not go along with the proposal to group the housing units as shown on the drawing. It is his thought that with the amount of space available for living quarters and the rolling terrain in which they may be located that it does not seem either necessary or desirable to create living conditions similar to those in an urban subdivision where intensive use of the ground is mandatory. He does not mean that this should be construed to require an acre or more for each unit but that some space should be permitted around the dwellings.<sup>91</sup>

From Neutra and Alexander’s perspective the complex was an island of human development in the desert. In such a setting residences “need each other’s shelter” and should not be situated like those in suburban subdivisions.<sup>92</sup> While the debate over the residences continued, *Life Magazine* published an article in September 1958 citing the advantages of row houses and the possibilities they offered for indoor/outdoor space.<sup>93</sup> Superintendent Fagergren in his monthly report observed the article cited principles “very similar to the proposed housing for the Painted Desert area.”<sup>94</sup> The recognition received by Neutra and Alexander’s design in the January 1959 *Progressive Architecture* may also have softened the NPS’s reluctance toward the attached housing units.

Neutra persuaded NPS Associate Director Eivind T. Scoyen to approve attached housing for the Painted Desert complex by successfully arguing that “shelter and protection from the wind is the first essential requirement of this plan.”<sup>95</sup> A 1960 memorandum from the NPS Director to the Regional Offices mandated that all future park residences were to follow one of five standard housing plans, *except* for the proposed housing at Painted Desert,

---

<sup>88</sup> Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, “Petrified Forest Entrance Station Project,” prepared for Stewart L. Udall, 13 April 13, 1961, 4.

<sup>89</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Petrified Forest Entrance Station Project,” 1961, 5.

<sup>90</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Petrified Forest Entrance Station Project,” 1961, 4-5.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas C. Vint, Chief Design and Construction, National Park Service, Washington, DC, letter to Chief, Western Office, Division of Design and Construction, San Francisco, California, 9 May 1958.

<sup>92</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Petrified Forest Entrance Station Project,” 1961, 4.

<sup>93</sup> “More Livable Homes Part II: Bold New Plan for Best Land Use,” *Life Magazine*, 22 September 1958.

<sup>94</sup> *Superintendent Monthly Report*, Petrified Forest National Monument, March 1960.

<sup>95</sup> Petrified Forest National Park, central files.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 19

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

which was “to be completed in accordance with the approved Neutra plan . . . [as] dictated in the interests of economy and good judgment.”<sup>96</sup>

The grouping of houses surrounding courtyards reflected residential design principles for smaller-scale housing models Neutra developed decades earlier.<sup>97</sup> In the 1949 *Time* cover article on Neutra his domestic architecture was described as “spacious” and “compact.” Residential designs featured “lots of glass and livable porches or patios custom-tailored to the landscape . . . drawing and dining rooms are merged into one low, wide and handsome living area . . . But cellars and attics are eliminated, kitchens made smaller.”<sup>98</sup> These principles were similarly applied to Neutra and Alexander’s design for the Painted Desert houses. In their original configuration, the Painted Desert residences featured large windows, a private courtyard, large living room, and a kitchen with small dinette. Neutra employed a sense of “transparency” in all residential structures he designed after 1942, accomplishing through planning the merging of interior and exterior: “the site entered the house and vice versa.”<sup>99</sup>

Architect Sylvia Lavin argues Neutra sought “to provide shelter and panoramic view simultaneously,” while architectural historian Barbara Lamprecht believes Neutra’s 1930 visit to Japan may have moved the architect’s designs to a greater intimacy with nature through such design elements as “extended terraces, full-height sliding doors (like shoji screens); precise and nuanced transitions between indoors and outdoors; and the use of a layered, rather than a monolithic, approach to materials and methods.”<sup>100</sup> Neutra described his approach to domestic design as follows: “I try to make a house like a flower pot, in which you can root something and out of which family life will bloom. . . . I want every house I build to be a stepping stone to the future, and modern architecture gets a black eye if it’s not backed by minute structural documentation.”<sup>101</sup> Neutra called this quasi-scientific approach “Biorealism”—“the adaptation of structure to the biological realities of those who must use it.”<sup>102</sup> Neutra employed these principles at PDCC through ample windows, wide sliding glass doors opening directly into courtyards, large terraces, and wide door openings on the front and rear of the community building.

### THE CENTRAL PLAZA

In their plans for the Painted Desert Community Complex, Neutra and Alexander established an architectural and landscape design that defined and influenced the visitor’s experience. WODC prepared the final landscape design in 1963. Neutra and Alexander, in consultation with Baldwin, Eriksson and Peters (a southern California landscape architecture firm), completed a preliminary landscape plan showing plant locations and landscaping in 1958. The plan was divided into general categories including lawn, gravel, ground cover, tall shrubs or trees, medium shrubs, contrast or special interest, vines, patio shrubbery, patio trees, shade trees, and areas left to naturalize with native grasses.<sup>103</sup> In September 1961 Neutra wrote to Sanford Hill of WODC to offer

<sup>96</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 152.

<sup>97</sup> Neutra and Alexander, Architects, “Painted Desert Visitors’ Center, Arizona National Park Service” from conversations of Richard Neutra with Mr. Sanford Hill, Western Division, U.S. National Park Service, Mr. Fagergren, Supt. Painted Desert, and Dr. Phil Van Cleave, Naturalist and Head of Interpretations Service.” UCLA, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter UCLA).

<sup>98</sup> “What will the Neighbors Think?” *Time*, 15 August 1949, 58.

<sup>99</sup> Rupert Spade, “Introduction,” in *Richard Neutra*, Library of Contemporary Architects (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 16.

<sup>100</sup> Sylvia Lavin, “Richard Neutra and the Psychology of the American Spectator,” *Grey Room* 1 (2000):49; Barbara Lamprecht, “From Neutra in Japan, 1930, to His European Audiences and Southern California Work,” *Southern California Quarterly* 92 (2010):232.

<sup>101</sup> “What will the Neighbors Think?” 65.

<sup>102</sup> Spade, “Introduction,” 16.

<sup>103</sup> Baldwin, Eriksson and Peters, “Painted Desert Community–Landscape Plan,” Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, 1958.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 20

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

professional landscape services and/or consultation and concluded his letter with a recommended plant list: Mormon Tea, Narrow Leafed Yucca, Sand Sage, Black Sage, Cholla, Evening Primrose, Cliff Rose, Greasewood, Juniper, and Pinyon pine.<sup>104</sup>

As the Painted Desert Complex construction neared completion in 1963, Neutra sent a letter to Thomas Allen, Southwest Regional Director, regarding WODC's landscape proposal. Neutra explained his vision for the complex:

“[The visitor] would follow under a shady roof projection [along] a solid wall without any displays or advertisings to the entrance of the visitor and information center proper and ... would gain a most attractive view into the wind protected and landscaped ‘Plaza.’ Once he had entered this plaza with his interest fixed first on a carefully considered group of plantings, reflecting water, and nightly illumination, all in the southeast [sic] corner of this plaza area he would have to the north before him the entrance and display front of the Fred Harvey Trading Center, Restaurant and Lunch Room.”<sup>105</sup>

Neutra envisioned part of the central plaza as an interpretive landscape, where “visitor[s] could behold the last, dwarfed relatives” of Triassic plants. “These plants and a few clubmosses reaching to a little ‘swamp’ over river gravel and a sand bar, reflecting the mentioned plants, may serve to show all that is left of that Triassic landscape of long ago.”<sup>106</sup> Much, but not all, of the landscape designed by WODC and Neutra and Alexander was implemented. However, funding limitations prevented full realization of the plan. Due to water scarcity and other factors little if any of the original plantings are extant. As Neutra and Alexander noted, a desert oasis can only be maintained by “devoting maximum care to the installation and maintenance of plant material.”<sup>107</sup>

### CONSTRUCTION OF THE COMPLEX

Construction of the Painted Desert Community Complex extended from 1961 through 1965. Each building or group of buildings within the Painted Desert Complex resulted from one of four separate contracts:

- Administration building/visitor center, apartment wing, gatehouse, and entrance station: Kealy Construction Company, Farmington, New Mexico (contract no. 14-10-0333-754), \$320,352<sup>108</sup>
- Maintenance building, vehicle storage building, Community Building, and trailer court building: Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah (contract no. 14-10-0333-841), \$252,965<sup>109</sup>
- Eighteen residences and carports: Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah (contract no. 14-10-0333-777), \$385,817<sup>110</sup>
- Concession building: Packer Construction Company, Phoenix, Arizona, approximately \$500,000<sup>111</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Richard J. Neutra, letter to Sanford Hill, WODC, 28 September 1961. Re: Landscaping.

<sup>105</sup> Richard J. Neutra, draft letter to Thomas J. Allen, Regional Director, 25 January 1963.

<sup>106</sup> Neutra, draft letter to Allen, 25 January 1963.

<sup>107</sup> Neutra and Alexander, “Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert.”

<sup>108</sup> Sanford Hill, memorandum to Southwest Regional Director, 14 October 1964. Re: Painted Desert Community – Petrified Forest, Petrified Forest National Park, Central Files, D3415.

<sup>109</sup> Hill, Memorandum, 14 October 1964.

<sup>110</sup> Hill, Memorandum, 14 October 1964.

<sup>111</sup> *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), 26 April 1963, 9; “News Media Fact Sheet, Dedication of Petrified Forest National Park and New Visitor Facilities,” 17 October 1963; Robert E. Alexander Collection, Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, Collection No. 3087, box 31.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 21

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

The contract for construction of the school and teacherage, initially awarded to Arimexal, Inc., was turned over to the bonding company in 1964 due to non-payment of claims.<sup>112</sup> Additional projects included the central plaza and irrigation system, which were installed by Packer Construction Company, Phoenix, Arizona, for \$42,612.<sup>113</sup> B.L. Gustafson Construction Company, Phoenix, Arizona, built the roads and parking areas for \$80,000.<sup>114</sup> Water, sewer, power, and communication systems were installed by Stratton Brothers Construction Company of Hurricane, Utah, and McCormick Construction Company of El Paso, Texas, for \$406,000.<sup>115</sup> Construction documents indicated that Parker-Zehnder and Associates served as the structural engineers, the mechanical engineer was Boris M. Lemos, and Frumhoff & Cohen were the electrical engineers. In total, the Painted Desert Community Complex cost \$1,987,746.

The original plan for the Painted Desert Community Complex residential blocks included three housing types: two different three-bedroom units and a two-bedroom unit. In February 1960 Sanford Hill sent a letter to Neutra and Alexander recommending that only one of the three-bedroom types be used throughout the complex.<sup>116</sup> Neutra and Alexander used this plan (known as option C) and a re-oriented version (known as Cf) to design the eighteen-unit residential area.<sup>117</sup>

WODC prepared the final landscape plan for the central plaza and nearby areas in 1963. Packer Construction Company of Phoenix completed the project, which included over 3,000 individual plants and 3,430 pounds of grass seed. The contract also included paving the central plaza with exposed aggregate concrete and installing planter boxes with seats and stone walls. Arizona sandstone used in construction was selected from a stone yard in Ashfork, Arizona. In addition, the “Fred Harvey Company purchased four large, white, fiber glass planters which were planted with Russian Olive trees.”<sup>118</sup> The Russian Olives were acquired from the Santa Fe Nursery and Greenhouse in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This contract also included the area between the visitor center and the Residential area, which was contoured and entirely planted with native grasses, trees, and shrubs. All of the plants and related supplies were either purchased from the General Services Administration or acquired by bid from Babbitt Lumber Company, Phoenix Lawn and Garden Supply, Porter-Walton Seed Company, Arkansas Valley Seed Company, Grand Junction Nurseries, or Western Evergreen Nursery.<sup>119</sup>

Components of PDCC were completed in stages. The Interstate 40 interchange south of the complex was completed in 1961, and the visitor center/administration building opened to the public in August 1962. Park staff expressed the hope that open house attendees would include “local citizens who deal with the tourist public

---

<sup>112</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 166. It is not known what firm completed the work.

<sup>113</sup> “News Media Fact Sheet,” October 27, 1963.

<sup>114</sup> “News Media Fact Sheet,” October 27, 1963.

<sup>115</sup> “News Media Fact Sheet,” October 27, 1963.

<sup>116</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 153-4.

<sup>117</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 154. The decision to build all of the residences as three-bedroom units was unusual. Typically three-bedroom units were reserved for senior managerial staff and larger families.

<sup>118</sup> Completion Report-Narrative, Landscaping and Related Work, Painted Desert Headquarters, Petrified Forest National Park, APW-16.

<sup>119</sup> Completion Report-Narrative, Landscaping and Related Work, Painted Desert Headquarters, APW-16PEFO; Chief Park Naturalist Report, March 1966, Petrified Forest National Park [PEFO] library. The park sought specimens from Chile of *Araucaria imbricata* through the American embassy there, but the plants did not survive the trip. Chief Park Naturalist, Philip Van Cleave recorded in his March 1966 monthly report that the “dead trees were the culmination of six month-plus of negotiations and red tape.” No further attempts were made to acquire *Araucaria imbricata*. In 1963, it was commonly thought that *Araucaria imbricata* was closely related to the present-day petrified wood species, but modern research has shown that *Araucaria imbricata* is not as closely related as previously believed and that there are probably no living descendants of the trees that now exist as petrified wood within Petrified Forest National Park.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 22

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

so that they may be in better position to answer the many questions posed to them of the facilities available.”<sup>120</sup> In late April 1963 the Fred Harvey Company’s Painted Desert Oasis, the commercial component of the complex, opened. The \$500,000 building included a hundred-person capacity restaurant and a curio shop.<sup>121</sup> As development progressed, in December 1962, Petrified Forest National Monument became Petrified Forest National Park.<sup>122</sup> Efforts to achieve the change in status began in the 1950s, led by NPS personnel and supported by Representative Stewart Udall (later Secretary of the Interior) and Senator Carl Hayden, both of Arizona.

Although some elements remained unfinished, the Painted Desert Community Complex was dedicated on 27 October 1963. The ceremony was staged in the central plaza with a speaker stand erected at the north end. The occasion marked the completion of the complex and the recognition of Petrified Forest as the nation’s thirty-first national park. Among the more than five hundred attendees was outgoing National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth, as well as his successor George B. Hartzog, Jr., and architect Richard J. Neutra. Edward B. Danson, Museum Director at Northern Arizona University, delivered the dedicatory address and observed: “We owe a debt to all those who preserved this national park. It will enrich the lives of those who will see it in the future, and for those who knew it in the past.”<sup>123</sup> The *Arizona Republic* deemed the dedication of the state’s second national park “a shining milestone in the history of Arizona.”<sup>124</sup> The Painted Desert Community Complex was not fully completed until 1964-65, when the School, Teacherage, and Outdoor Recreation Area opened. The St. Johns School District supervised construction of the educational facilities, which were designed by Robert Alexander without the participation of Neutra.<sup>125</sup>

## LIVING AND WORKING IN THE PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

### CONSTRUCTION DEFECTS EMERGE

The first and most concerning problem in the building and occupation of the Painted Desert Community Complex arose while the buildings were still under construction, when defects became apparent. In February 1962 Superintendent Fagergren wrote to Kealy Construction Company requesting that they repair/replace cracked and damaged blocks in the Administration and Apartment buildings.<sup>126</sup> Later that same year, John Rollow from Neutra and Alexander’s office wrote to Fagergren to explain why the cracks were occurring and how best to fix them, recommending that the blocks be tested to determine if they met the project specifications. In June 1962, five samples of brown concrete block from Superlite Builders Supply were sent to Engineers Testing Laboratories, Inc., in Phoenix, which concluded the blocks met industry standards.<sup>127</sup>

Nevertheless, cracking continued to occur throughout the complex, and in 1964 Sanford Hill, at WODC, wrote a letter to the Southwest Regional Director identifying cracks throughout the Painted Desert Complex caused by

---

<sup>120</sup> *Arizona Daily Sun* (Flagstaff), 23 August 1962.

<sup>121</sup> *Arizona Daily Sun* (Flagstaff), 24 April 1963, 2.

<sup>122</sup> Department of the Interior News Release, 3 April 1958 and Department of the Interior News Release, 7 November 1962.

<sup>123</sup> Edward B. Danson, Dedication Speech, Petrified Forest, 27 October 1963, Robert E. Alexander Collection, Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), 28 October 1963, 1; *Tucson Daily Citizen*, 28 October 1963, 14.

<sup>124</sup> *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), 28 October 1963, 1.

<sup>125</sup> St. Johns, Arizona, is forty-five miles southeast of PDCC.

<sup>126</sup> Fred Fagergren, Superintendent, letter to Harry J. Mills, Kealy Construction Co., 5 February 1962, Re: repairing replacing masonry block, PEFO central files D3415.

<sup>127</sup> Engineers Testing Laboratories, Inc., “Report of Tests on Concrete Masonry Units,” Project PF-W342 by Rasmussen Constr. Co., 4 June 4, 1962, PEFO central files D3415.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 23

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

construction deficiencies, soil movements, or both.<sup>128</sup> There was some debate over whether the masonry cracks were caused by natural subsurface conditions or by irresponsible construction techniques. In a 1965 soil investigation report, LeRoy Crandall & Associates identified inadequate footings that did not extend the recommended depth. In some locations the footings were placed in fill that had not been compacted to the specified degree. The soil investigation report also mentioned the failure of subsurface conditions was compounded by defective construction “so that the structures have very little resistance to differential movement.”<sup>129</sup>

It soon became obvious that Rasmussen Construction Company improperly placed steel reinforcements after the walls were at considerable height or even full height, which prevented proper alignment of the horizontal and vertical reinforcing. WODC’s supervising structural engineer, L. Kucera, completed an investigation of the block walls in 1964 and reported that 76.3 percent of the steel reinforcing bars were ungrouted and misaligned. He reported that “proper construction of the walls would have greatly reduced the size of the cracks and the separations, or might even have eliminated them by distributing the settlement stress over a long length of the wall.”<sup>130</sup> Overall, enough deficiencies due to “poor masonry and shoddy workmanship” were found that the NPS brought a lawsuit against the contractor.<sup>131</sup>

Subsequent investigations showed that all of the buildings in the Painted Desert Community Complex were being affected by these same conditions. In July 1964 Robert Alexander wrote to Sanford Hill recommending the residences be condemned because in the event of an earthquake “many lives would be in danger of immediate extinction. Even a strong wind, which is common at the site, could topple a patio wall.”<sup>132</sup> Rasmussen won the initial appeal, but in August 1964 the Board of Contract Appeals conceded that the repair costs should be divided between NPS and the contractor.<sup>133</sup>

Many of these problems were exacerbated by poor communication between Neutra and Alexander’s office, WODC architects and on-site project supervisors, Superintendent Fagergren, and the contractors. Neutra and Alexander associate John Rollow recalls the firm’s contract did not contain a budget for on-site project supervision and notes NPS provided inspectors to monitor construction. Eugene T. Mott from WODC served as the NPS project supervisor. Sarah Allaback cites subtle aesthetic elements, a lack of finish schedules, funding difficulties, and frustrations on behalf of all parties as reasons why the project progressed slowly and was

---

<sup>128</sup> Hill, letter, 11 September 1964, Re: Preliminary Report of Construction Deficiencies of Buildings at Painted Desert Community – Petrified Forest, PEFO central files D3415.

<sup>129</sup> LeRoy Crandall & Associates, “Report of Supplementary Soil Investigation and Investigation of Settlement, Painted Desert Community Development, Painted Desert, Arizona, for the Department of the Interior, National Parks Service,” 23 August 1965.

<sup>130</sup> L. Kucera, Supervising Structural Engineer, Western Office, Design and Construction, “Petrified Forest National Park, Painted Desert Community: Investigation of Structural Failures of Block Walls of Residences,” 2 October 1964.

<sup>131</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 173-74.

<sup>132</sup> Robert Alexander, letter to Sanford Hill, July 24, 1964, Re: Petrified National Park Installation, PEFO central files D3415.

<sup>133</sup> At least six structural and geotechnical investigations were undertaken at Painted Desert Community Complex between 1964 and 2000. The reports pointed to poor initial construction and differential soil movement as principal causes for the building problems. The studies suggested a variety of possible remedies. Recent major projects to address problems have included: stabilization of the community building foundation with helical piers, replacement of a portion of the concrete floor, and addition of steel and/or grout to about 30 percent of the southwest wall (2009-10); stabilization of the visitor center/administration building southwest wall with micro-piles, replacement of a portion of the concrete floor, addition of steel and/or grout to about 10 percent of the southwest wall, and reconstruction of the boiler room wall (2014-15); and replacement of below-slab plumbing and storm-water drainage improvements around housing Block A (2015-16). Efforts also have attempted to generally improve drainage and keep water away from foundations. Amanda Wallander, “Brief History of Structural/Geotechnical Investigations at the Painted Desert Community Complex,” 28 January 2016; Brad Traver, Superintendent, Petrified Forest National Park, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 13 July 2016.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 24

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

completed over-budget.<sup>134</sup> In addition, some of the drawings and specifications prepared by Neutra and Alexander were imprecise or unclear, resulting in numerous contractor requests for clarifications and construction delays.

#### A NEW MASTER PLAN

In 1924 42,000 people visited Petrified Forest; by 1962 the number soared to 705,000. The Master Plan was once again revised under the Parkscape U.S.A. program that began the day after Mission 66 ended, under the leadership of new NPS Director George B. Hartzog. In this 1966 document, the Painted Desert Community Complex was described as adequate, but the need for additional housing and office space was identified as a critical element. The only proposed building mentioned in the 1966 Master Plan was an apartment building for concession employees, although development plans still called for the removal and replacement of the Painted Desert Inn.<sup>135</sup> Neutra and Alexander had envisioned an apartment wing extending north from the concession building that would have enclosed the west end of what is now the orientation loop.<sup>136</sup>

The 1966 Master Plan also stressed the purpose and function of the Painted Desert Visitor Center because it presented a unique approach to visitor contact. Since visitors could access the visitor center and contact NPS rangers before entering the park, it actually functioned as an information clearinghouse for the entire region. This was the first building designed as a “regional” visitor center.<sup>137</sup> Those who wished to enter the park could view basic information about interpretive and other programs. Visitors who merely wished to make use of the services and depart could do so without being subject to the entrance fee. The original interpretive plan for the visitor center included a large (7' X 14') lighted map in shaded relief showing all National Park Service units within the Four Corners region and accompanying complimentary exhibits. The electric map was lighted by pushing one of three buttons on the console, with each colored light indicating the major categories of the park system.<sup>138</sup>

#### LIVING AT THE PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY CENTER

At the time of the park’s dedication in October 1963 the park’s total staff numbered thirty-four.<sup>139</sup> Phillip R. Iversen, who came to Petrified Forest National Park in 1962 to serve as first Chief Ranger after PDCC was constructed, commented that the new complex with a greatly expanded Fred Harvey operation represented “quite a change from the sleepy little park of the past.”<sup>140</sup> He supervised about a dozen permanent rangers in the early 1960s, and the major challenge they faced at the park was the theft of petrified wood. The Iversen family lived in residence block A, where Superintendent Fagergren also resided. Iversen recalled that a portion of the patio wall to the north had not been properly anchored and thirty to forty feet of wall would sway back and forth. Asked for his general impression of the complex, Iversen commented:

The overall design was convenient for work. We could all walk to the office, maintenance area or entrance station and the finished product was reasonably attractive. The homes were private, safe for small children and [had] pretty good layout design. However, the engineering design was totally incompetent. For example, the exterior/interior walls were unfinished cinder block and the wind would blow right through the walls. In fact, along the hallway to the bedrooms, the wind

<sup>134</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 156-9.

<sup>135</sup> “General Development, Part of the Master Plan,” 1966, NP-PF-2100-E.

<sup>136</sup> This building remains unbuilt.

<sup>137</sup> Edward B. Danson, “Dedication Speech, Petrified Forest, 27 October 1963,” 3.

<sup>138</sup> Supplemental-Project B-6 PEFO, Narrative Statement, building file PD251. The map was prepared by Bill Chapman of Montana in 1965 for \$2,500.

<sup>139</sup> *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix), 28 October 1963, 1.

<sup>140</sup> Phillip R. Iversen, Fountain Hills, Arizona, letter to T. Scott Williams, Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona, 4 April 2005.



## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 25

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

would blow fine sand right through the walls and a small drift of sand would accumulate on the floor.<sup>141</sup>

Lisa Carrico, who arrived with her family at PDCC as a five-year-old in February 1963, recalled their residence in block D as spacious, with an interesting layout, and “unlike anything I lived in before or since.”<sup>142</sup> She described their patio featuring a grass lawn, white landscaping rock, a salt cedar tree, and a swing set. Particularly memorable were the winds which would blow desert sand into the complex.

When the Iversens first moved to PDCC, the school was not completed and their children rode a bus to Sanders, Arizona, for classes. The St. Johns School District oversaw construction of the school, teacherage, and recreational facilities and operated the school. At one time the Painted Desert School enrollment was quite low. Many of the park employees were young singles and hence without children. Iversen remarked, “I don’t think there were over a dozen children in the eight grade [sic] elementary school when it opened and this was a little embarrassing to Supt. Fagergren. . . . Consequently, when any of us on the staff had a vacancy Fred would push us a bit to select the employee with the most children—to fill the school building.”<sup>143</sup>

The Chief Ranger recalled that he and his family had a good social life at PDCC, with parties generally held in the visitor center or the large shop building before completion of the community building. Bicycle riding on park roads became a popular activity for residents. On summer evenings after the loop road closed to traffic, as many as twenty to thirty bicyclists could be seen on the route. Lisa Carrico characterized PDCC “as one of the most social places we lived,” and credited it to the fact that most of the employees were in their late-20s or early-30s and at a similar stage in their lives. The Community Building served as a major focus of social activities, hosting films, dances, and other group activities. Families took turns babysitting and had group dinners. During that era there was no social interaction with park visitors.

Carrico noted most of the park employees were men. Wives did not work outside the home. She recalled her mother doing a lot of housework, including ironing her father’s Park Service uniforms. The women had exercise and book clubs, and the superintendent’s wife hosted occasional teas. Families purchased groceries in Holbrook.

The size of the residences had been reduced due to lower NPS appropriations in 1960. This change concerned Neutra, who was aware that occupants would have difficulty accommodating all of their belongings. In 1963 he sent a memorandum to Painted Desert residents with suggestions for furnishing and decorating their new homes. The architect advised neutral colors were best for rugs and window treatments, and he recommended hanging pictures low on the walls to give the rooms a sense of spaciousness. Residents were told to plant “light blooming plants and shrubs” in their courtyards to “convey the feeling of sun penetrating without any glare into the living areas.”<sup>144</sup> Neutra also compiled a “suggested furnishing schedule” for the Painted Desert Visitor Center, which included colors and furnishings similarly recommended for the Gettysburg Cyclorama. He specified that “furniture shall be of good contemporary design or modern design suitable for a public lounge in contemporary style.”<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> Iversen, letter to Williams, 4 April 2005.

<sup>142</sup> Lisa Carrico, Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve, Colorado, interview by Thomas H. Simmons and Amanda Zeman Wallander, 10 February 2016. Carrico is now superintendent at Great Sand Dunes.

<sup>143</sup> Iversen, letter to Williams, 4 April 2005.

<sup>144</sup> Richard J. Neutra, memorandum to Painted Desert Residents, 25 January 1963, PEFO central files.

<sup>145</sup> Neutra, “Specifications for Lounge furniture in the Public Use Building at Petrified Forest National Monument.”

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 26

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### CHANGES TO THE COMPLEX IN THE 1970S AND 1980S AND LATER DEVELOPMENTS

A number of alterations to the complex occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Continuing structural problems with the buildings, lack of appreciation for their architectural significance, the need for more space, and desire for greater energy efficiency led to inappropriate changes. As the buildings were not yet fifty years old and manifested continuing construction defects, they had few if any champions for their preservation and appeared to be viewed as fair game for utilitarian modifications regardless of the impact to their historic physical integrity. During this period some of the most detrimental alterations to buildings occurred, including: installing pitched roofs on some buildings (such as the visitor center, concession building, and trailer court building); changing fenestration on some of the residence blocks; enclosing the east terrace on the visitor center; shortening the gas station canopy; and replacing the glass curtain wall on the concession building with reverse board-and-batten siding. By 1993, a new park General Management Plan assessed PDCC as a failure requiring prohibitive maintenance costs and recommended its demolition and replacement.

NPS views on PDCC began to shift in the mid-1990s. In 1995, national parks in Arizona were shifted from the Western Regional Office in San Francisco to the newly created Intermountain Regional Office in Denver. That office stopped a proposed alteration to the visitor center that would have negatively impacted its character. In 1999 Michele F. "Micki" Hellickson became park superintendent and began a planning process to preserve and rehabilitate the complex. As part of the discussion, she reached out to architect Dion Neutra. By the early 2000s, with PDCC now fifty years old and enjoying growing popular and professional appreciation for its mid-twentieth century architecture, the park reversed its earlier stance and modified its General Management Plan to recommend retaining and rehabilitating the complex. In 2005 the Painted Desert Community Complex Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places at a national level of significance. In 2006 a *Historic Structure Report and Cultural Landscape Report* provided roadmaps for future rehabilitation work.

Petrified Forest National Park drew 836,799 visitors in 2014. In October of that year the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the Painted Desert Community Complex one of its National Treasures. The Trust agreed to work with NPS to increase the public profile of PDCC, and supply expertise, planning, and fundraising toward its rehabilitation. Most of the earlier alterations to PDCC buildings are reversible, and since 2004 the park has taken significant steps to improve the historic physical integrity of the complex, including:

- restoring the glass curtain wall of the concession building by replacing the current reverse board-and-batten siding (scheduled for completion in the fall of 2016)
- restoring the front of the Painted Desert School
- reversing changes to the Community Building (uncovering the roll-top door, ribbon windows, and east doors and restoring historic interior finishes)
- restoring the pool in the central plaza and making it operational
- restoring the visitor center north terrace bench and planter
- removing a pitched roof from the trailer court building and restoring the original flat roof
- opening up all but two of the carports by removing enclosing walls
- undertaking projects to restore the original color scheme on trim, doors, and structural elements

Other projects mitigated lingering construction defects, such as stabilizing the foundations of three buildings (the Community Building, visitor center, and Residence Block A) and improving drainage in the residence block area. In 2014 Superintendent Brad Traver estimated millions of additional dollars were still needed for restoration projects. Prospective projects include restoring flat roofs to the visitor center and concession

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 27

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

building; restoring at least a portion of the gas station canopy; re-exposing the second-story terrace on the east side of the visitor center; and returning the restaurant in the concession building to its original diner plan.<sup>146</sup>

### THE ARCHITECTS: NEUTRA AND ALEXANDER

In 1949, Neutra joined forces with Robert Alexander, forming a partnership to address large-scale planning and commercial projects.<sup>147</sup> The association endured for about nine years before differences in personality and architectural philosophy led to its dissolution in 1958.<sup>148</sup> At the time of their breakup, Alexander “resolved never to sign another contract with [Neutra],” but they agreed to complete all projects already underway, including the Painted Desert Community Complex.<sup>149</sup>

The two jointly received the 1959 Residential Award Citation from *Progressive Architecture* for the Painted Desert Community Complex. The group honored Neutra posthumously in 1977 with a Gold Medal for being “one of the first architects to apply the findings of the behavioral sciences to the design of the man-made environment.” The award also recognized Neutra as “a pioneer in the use of steel frame construction and prefabricated elements for private homes.”<sup>150</sup> The AIA recognized Alexander with a 25 Year Award in 1972, noting his Baldwin Hills Village project. Biographical sketches of the two principals are provided below.

### RICHARD NEUTRA

#### Early Life and Education

Richard J. Neutra was born on 8 April 1892 in Vienna, Austria, a city his biographer, Thomas Hines, describes as a “source of generative stimulation” and a “center and symbol of cultural energy and achievement.”<sup>151</sup> In Imperial Vienna, before the advent of World War I, Neutra had the opportunity to experience the beginnings of the modern architectural movement through the works of Josef Hoffmann, Otto Wagner, Joseph Maria Olbrich, Adolf Loos, and his friend and contemporary, architect Rudolf M. Schindler. Spurred by the cultural influences around him and unconditional support of his family, in 1911 Neutra entered the Technische Hochschule (Imperial Institute of Technology, founded in 1815) to study architecture. Although called for military service in World War I from 1914-17, he graduated in 1918.<sup>152</sup> While at the Institute, Neutra and Schindler joined the studio/salon of Adolf Loos, an outspoken advocate against traditional uses of ornament. His 1911 design for the Looshaus in Vienna was a controversial and influential design. Through the association with Loos, Neutra and Schindler gained practical experience and learned of American architectural trends and architects, including

---

<sup>146</sup> The proposed rehabilitations of the Painted Desert Oasis, Visitor Center/Administration Building, Maintenance Building, and Apartment Wing are planned in two different projects scheduled for 2021 and 2022. These projects total \$5.7 million and are in the NPS Line Item Construction program. Brad Traver, Superintendent, Petrified Forest National Park, “A New National Treasure,” 20 July 2014, <http://superpefo.blogspot.com> (accessed 8 January 2016).

<sup>147</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 223.

<sup>148</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 246-48. Neutra omitted any mention of Alexander from his autobiography. Alexander objected to Neutra’s efforts to steal the spotlight and felt he unfairly had claimed credit for joint works in a 1958 “Neutra exhibition” at the University of California at Los Angeles.

<sup>149</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 249.

<sup>150</sup> “Neutra to be Honored,” *New York Times*, March 27, 1977.

<sup>151</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 9.

<sup>152</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 20.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 28

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.<sup>153</sup> This introduction to American architecture inspired Schindler, and later Neutra, to establish a career in the United States.<sup>154</sup>

In the same year as his graduation Neutra moved to Switzerland to work for Gustav Ammann, a landscape architect, from whom he learned horticulture techniques and the values of considering “the whole quality of the site upon which a building stands.”<sup>155</sup> In 1921 he settled in Berlin, where he joined the firm of Erich Mendelsohn, a leading proponent of modernism in Germany. Mendelsohn and Neutra worked on several projects, including a commercial center in Haifa, Palestine, and a housing project that dated from 1923. During his time in Berlin, Neutra met Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus in Weimar, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

#### Early Years in America

Neutra was granted an American visa and departed for New York in October 1923.<sup>156</sup> Shortly thereafter he moved to Chicago, which he believed was “the important center for the new architecture.”<sup>157</sup> He quickly gained employment with Holabird and Roche’s architectural firm, known for their contribution to the Chicago School and the development of the skyscraper. While in Chicago, he met Louis Sullivan and later Frank Lloyd Wright. At Sullivan’s funeral in 1924, Neutra accepted Wright’s offer of a job at Taliesin, where he remained until joining Rudolf Schindler in Los Angeles the following year.<sup>158</sup> Schindler and Neutra collaborated on a few projects during 1925 and 1926, including a competition entry for the League of the Nations headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland (1926). Architectural historians Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper described Schindler and Neutra’s work as being the “most progressive in America in the 1920s.”<sup>159</sup> The authors asserted that even without the Bauhaus immigrants of the late 1930s, modernism, as introduced by Schindler and Neutra, would have matured in the United States.

During his early years in California, Neutra worked on his visionary project, “Rush City Reformed,” an intellectual exercise in city planning. In 1926 he published his first book for the European market, titled *Wie Baut Amerika? (How Does America Build?)*. John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown in *The Architecture of America, A Social and Cultural History* observed Neutra’s book revealed that he saw Pueblo architecture as an example of American cubism, evidenced by his display of photographs of Pueblo architecture “adjacent to modern skyscrapers, factories, and industrial products.”<sup>160</sup> Puebloan architecture likewise influenced Neutra and Alexander’s design for the Painted Desert Complex. In addition, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, preeminent U.S. architectural historian of the twentieth century, wrote that Neutra’s first book “...described American steel construction for the benefit of European architects.” Hitchcock described Neutra as Frank Lloyd Wright’s most

---

<sup>153</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 21-22. Adolf Loos was born in Brno, Moravia in 1870. He graduated from the Dresden College of Technology in 1893. Loos was greatly influenced by Louis Sullivan and the Chicago School. In 1896, he moved to Vienna and opened a studio. Hines describes Loos’ style as “lean, spare, and simple, in keeping with his credo, [his buildings] achieved interest and elegance via crisp geometry, the subtle interlocking of interior spaces, the modulation of floor and ceiling levels, and the use of rich interior materials.”

<sup>154</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 23.

<sup>155</sup> Introduction by Rupert Spade, *Richard Neutra*. Library of Contemporary Architects series (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), 11.

<sup>156</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 43.

<sup>157</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 48.

<sup>158</sup> Rodd Wheaton and Dawn Bunyak, “Draft Significance Statement, Petrified Forest National Park, Painted Desert Community,” 1997.

<sup>159</sup> Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture, Volume 2: 1860-1976* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981-83), 127.

<sup>160</sup> John E. Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History* (Boston: Little Brown, 1961) 285.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 29

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

significant pupil and judged he "...displayed a sort of technical research infrequent in America and an integrity of aesthetic expression only found in the best work of Wright..."<sup>161</sup>

Neutra earned his California architectural license in 1926 and started his own practice, designing the Jardinette Apartments the following year. The starkly Modern character of the building led directly to his commission to design the Lovell House (1927-29) in Los Angeles, considered Neutra's masterpiece of early modernist architecture. The Lovell House escalated Neutra to international prominence and became his most published work of architecture. The house, according to architecture writer and editor Sydney LeBlanc, reveals that "'modern' elements prevail: the boxy white modules, the flat walls and roof, the steel frame hung with panels of prefabricated concrete walls, and the standard steel windows."<sup>162</sup> Further, the house is distinguished for stepping up the Hollywood Hills and for its unique structural system where the balconies are hung from the steel roof frame. Architectural historian Kenneth Frampton characterized the house as the epitome of the International Style in the United States and "a technological demonstration comprising a lightweight steel frame."<sup>163</sup> During the construction of the landmark Lovell House, Neutra completed his second book for the European market, *Amerika: Die Stilbildung des Neuen Bauens in den Vereinigten Staaten (America: The Stylistic Development of New Building in the United States)*, published in 1930.

In that year Neutra embarked on a lecture tour through Japan, China, and Europe to "bring the gospel of new architecture to the heathens of the far east."<sup>164</sup> While in Germany, he visited the recently completed Bauhaus and met with Mies van der Rohe to discuss transporting the Bauhaus to America, a plan that never materialized. Neutra was invited to teach at the Bauhaus but declined, partly due to the deteriorating political climate in Germany, which forced the Bauhaus to close in 1933. Returning to the United States, he met Philip Johnson, which led to Neutra's inclusion in the pivotal 1932 modern architecture show at the Museum of Modern Art, where the term "International Style" was coined.<sup>165</sup> "Neutra's greatest gift was in his ability to merge the cool, industrial forms that the International Style favored with a delicate, graceful esthetic that was almost Japanese," judges architectural critic Paul Goldberger.<sup>166</sup>

### Neutra's Most Prolific Period

Returning to Los Angeles in 1931, Neutra began the most prolific period of his life. Between 1932 and 1940, he received commissions for over one hundred residential and commercial buildings, all representing the International Style. He designed numerous residential projects: a model house for Vienna in 1932; his own 1932 house in Los Angeles; the Van der Leeuw (VDL) Research Center, which was used as a show house and featured roof top balconies; the 1934 Scheyer House in Los Angeles; the 1934 Santa Monica Sten House; the internationally famous 1935 Von Sternberg House with its steel panel cladding, built in Northridge, California; the 1937 Miller House in Palm Springs; the 1938 John Nicholas Brown vacation house, Fishers Island, New York; and the 1940 Kahn House in San Francisco. In 1934 he received awards for two houses from *Architectural Forum* and *House Beautiful*. Beyond residential work, Neutra designed commercial structures, office buildings, schools, and apartment blocks such as Los Angeles' 1937 Landfair Apartments and the 1938 Strathmore Apartments in the International Style. The 1934-35 Bell Experimental School built in Los Angeles was featured in the modern architecture retrospective, *Masters of Modern Architecture*.<sup>167</sup> The school,

<sup>161</sup> Henry Russell Hitchcock, *Modern Architecture; Romanticism and Reintegration* (New York: Payson & Clarke, 1929) 204.

<sup>162</sup> Sydney Le Blanc, *20<sup>th</sup> Century American Architecture: 200 Key Buildings* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1993) 52.

<sup>163</sup> Kenneth Frampton, *American Masterworks: The Twentieth Century House* (New York: Rizzoli, 1995) 48.

<sup>164</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 91.

<sup>165</sup> Hines, *Richard Neutra*, 110.

<sup>166</sup> Paul Goldberger, "Restoring Neutra to His Place in History," *The New York Times*, 25 July 1982, 25.

<sup>167</sup> John Peters, *Masters of Modern Architecture* (New York: G. Braziller, 1958).

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 30

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

according to John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, “depended on...sympathetic understanding of materials, their environment, [and] their details as upon functionalism.”<sup>168</sup> This was achieved with outdoor classrooms, movable partitions for flexibility, and sheltering overhangs protecting the glazing. Neutra also completed a planning project for the 1943-44 Channel Heights community, San Pedro, California, built as low-cost, federally financed housing utilizing modular and prefabricated components.<sup>169</sup>

By far, Neutra’s strength was residential design. He secured relatively few large-scale commissions until partnering with Robert Alexander, who afforded Neutra the opportunity to overcome some of the challenges he experienced with translating residential design into large-scale planning concepts. Paul Goldberger indicates, “The problem he [Neutra] had with them [large-scale projects] was, in some ways, a problem with modernism in general. It is a style that has always been able to create masterworks, but it has failed badly in creating a broad-based vernacular, a workable language for entire cities, and a world, or even a downtown, full of Neutra buildings would not have been a pleasant place.”<sup>170</sup>

For Neutra, the 1940s and 50s were trying but rewarding times. *Arts and Architecture* described his work of this period as: “giv[ing] new life ... to traditional materials - wood, brick and glass.”<sup>171</sup> During the 1940s Neutra also completed *The Architecture of Social Concern*. The integration of modernism to the natural environment was addressed in his 1954 *Survival Through Design*. These publications further strengthened his position as the leading advocate of modernism in America, and *Time* magazine recognized Neutra’s success by featuring him on its 15 August 1949 cover.

During this period, he designed schools and residences, including his second most published house, the 1946 Kaufmann House in Palm Springs. John Peters described the house: “Here the outdoors is related to the interior in two ways: Outdoor space is included in the plan, and the desert landscape is present in numerous striking vistas. The design is open, with four wings. A sheltered porch protects the living room from the sun...”<sup>172</sup> Typical for a Neutra work, this house reflected a strong use of low horizontal planning defined by cantilever roofs and ribbon windows, solar screening, and natural stone and plaster wall planes. Sydney LeBlanc describing it as Neutra’s “most famous desert house,” noting its “series of floating planes” roof system and the stone chimney used as an anchor feature.<sup>173</sup> John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown observed “Neutra’s style was changing rapidly in the direction of greater sympathy with the landscape.”<sup>174</sup> This period also included the significant 1948 Tremaine House in Santa Barbara and the 1948 Aloe Medical Supply Building in Los Angeles with its striking banded facade utilizing floor to ceiling windows at the first floor level, a vertical corrugation spandrel, ribboned second floor windows, and a smooth parapet.

During the partnership with Alexander, Neutra continued to produce independent residential designs, including the Moore House built in Ojai, California, in 1952; the Cheuey House, Los Angeles, 1956; and the daring pavilion of the Singleton House, Los Angeles, 1959. After the partnership dissolved, Neutra continued producing notable designs throughout the 1960s, including the 1962 Community Church in Garden Grove, California; the 1963 Mariners Medical Building, Newport Beach, California; the 1966 La Veta Medical Building, Orange, California, with sweeping horizontal banding on the façade; and the 1966 Bucerius House,

---

<sup>168</sup> Burchard and Bush-Brown, *The Architecture of America*, 360.

<sup>169</sup> Peters, *Masters of Modern Architecture*, 118.

<sup>170</sup> Paul Goldberger, “Restoring Neutra to His Place in History.” 26.

<sup>171</sup> “West Coast Architects I: Richard J. Neutra,” *Arts and Architecture*, March 1964.

<sup>172</sup> Peters, *Masters of Modern Architecture*, 207.

<sup>173</sup> LeBlanc, *Twentieth Century American Architecture*, 78.

<sup>174</sup> Burchard and Bush-Brown, *Modern Architecture*, 393.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 31

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Navegna, Switzerland. With his son, Dion Neutra, he reconstructed the VDL Research House that had been damaged by fire in 1963.

Paul Goldberger observed that “the International Style had lost its ability to persuade as an evangelical style, and its promises of the good life were clearly empty ones. There were too many International Style buildings everywhere by the 60’s, and even though most were inferior to Neutra’s, they seemed, somehow, not quite inferior enough to make his buildings of the time seem like those of a great master.”<sup>175</sup> In fact, modernism in general became less marketable in the 1960s, in part because it became clear that modern architecture was more costly than presupposed, “so the claim that modernism made more efficient use of materials and was therefore more congruent with contemporary modes of production was ineffective with a clientele that associated technological efficiency with falling prices.”<sup>176</sup> John M. Jacobus, Jr., observed: “While his houses of the 1950s have almost invariably maintained the suavity of those of the 1940s, the designs have tended toward the rhetorical in the repetition of earlier motifs. In general, in the most recent phase of his career, Neutra’s customarily sensitive works have appeared to have less and less relevance with the constantly changing direction and interest that is to be found in the main stream of building design in the late 1950s and early 1960s.”<sup>177</sup>

Neutra died 16 April 1970 at age seventy-eight while in Wuppertal, Germany, during a European tour of former projects, including the 1968 Pesche House project.<sup>178</sup> He left behind a remarkable legacy as an architect who spanned the years between the early modernism of Louis Sullivan to the so-called post-modern era. Neutra contributed his ideas and inspiration to structures that remain as icons of the period and which were much copied in the use of low slope roofs, cantilevers, ribbon windows and butt glazing, intersecting planes of contrasting materials, “spider leg” steel roof structure, interconnection with the landscape, and open plazas. He was one of the leading proponents of the International Style in America and one of the founders of the California Modern Style that became a national style through his works and those of his followers. As such, Neutra ranks as one of the premier American architects of the twentieth century.<sup>179</sup>

#### **ROBERT E. ALEXANDER**

Robert E. Alexander, born 23 November 1907 in Bayonne, New Jersey, graduated from Cornell University School of Architecture in 1930. He soon relocated to California, where he was licensed in 1934. By 1936, he was a partner in the firm of Wilson, Merrill, and Alexander in Southern California. Their most noteworthy project was undertaken with Reginald Johnson and Clarence Stein in 1937. The resulting Baldwin Hills Village brought Alexander to the nationwide notice of urban planners, and for this project, in which he lived for nine years, Alexander received the coveted American Institute of Architects’ 25 Year Award in 1972. The Baldwin Hills project and the Estrada Court project, a housing development dedicated in 1941, led to Alexander’s appointment to the Los Angeles City Planning Commission in 1945 and to its presidency in 1948. In this position he was heavily involved with the Housing Authority and various housing projects after World War II. During the war, Alexander worked for the Lockheed Corporation.

<sup>175</sup> Goldberger, “Restoring Neutra to His Place in History,” 25.

<sup>176</sup> Sandy Isenstadt, “Richard Neutra and the Psychology of Architectural Consumption,” *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Rejean Legault, ed., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000) 101.

<sup>177</sup> John M. Jacobus, Jr., “Richard Joseph Neutra,” in *Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1964), 215.

<sup>178</sup> “Richard Neutra, Architect, Dies; Helped Shape Modern Outlook,” *New York Times*, 18 April 1970.

<sup>179</sup> Diane Maddex, ed., *Master Builders: A Guide to Famous American Architects* (Washington DC: Preservation Press, 1985), 144-147. Neutra is cited as a “master builder” in this publication.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 32

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

In the late 1940s, Neutra invited Alexander to assist with the downtown redevelopment project in Sacramento, and in turn, Alexander invited Neutra to participate in the proposed housing project of Elysian Park Heights. This Los Angeles project, which eventually succumbed to Un-American Activities investigations as displaying socialist leanings, cemented their association, forming a partnership that included planning for Guam's redevelopment. Neutra's primary contribution to that particular project was the architectural design for the Governor's House constructed in 1952.

The Neutra and Alexander partnership continued through the 1950s, though it was often stormy because of their differing approaches and personalities. In particular, Alexander, who was primarily a planner, did not like Neutra's architectural design philosophy, though they tended to complement each other on projects that involved each of their respective talents. During this period Dion Neutra, Richard Neutra's son, joined the firm. Projects included masterful designs like the 1953 National Charity League building in Los Angeles, which utilized oversized brick contrasting with smooth wall surfaces and consisting of one- and two-story wings around an open courtyard. Other notable projects completed by the partnership included Art and Science Building at St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland (1958); Palos Verdes, California, High School (1961); Miramar Naval Station chapel (1957); United States Embassy, Karachi, West Pakistan (1959); and the Los Angeles County Hall of Records (1962).

Alexander continued to work from the 2379 Glendale Boulevard office, designed by the firm, until 1960 when he moved to a downtown Los Angeles location. Dion Neutra continued to work in Alexander's office where their projects included the Bunker Hill Towers in Los Angeles, the University of California San Diego campus, and the School and Teachers Residence for the Painted Desert Community. Alexander returned to work on the School Building and Teacherage between February 1962 and March 1963, and it is assumed that he also designed the Tennis Court and Ball Field. Later in his career, Alexander's office was extensively involved in the redevelopment of Anchorage, Alaska, following the 1964 earthquake. Alexander retired in 1977 and spent time teaching architectural design. He died on 17 November 1992 in Berkeley, California.

### COMPARABLE PROPERTIES

Few, if any, properties are comparable to the Painted Desert Community Complex of Petrified Forest National Park. Ethan Carr, landscape architect and author of Mission 66, emphasized this point, characterizing PDCC as "sui generis." While other notable Mission 66 properties exist, they generally reflect one or a limited number of the functions embraced by the Painted Desert Community Complex. The diverse functions were aimed at addressing challenges that the Mission 66 program sought to address. Landscape architect Carly M. Piccarello, a co-author of the Mission 66 MPDF, observes that Mission 66 visitor centers were built together with other facilities in other locations, but the array of properties developed was "never quite as dense as the Painted Desert complex."<sup>180</sup> Historian Sam Tamburro, another co-author of the Mission 66 MPDF, judges that what makes PDCC "rare is the mass and density and scale of the development."<sup>181</sup>

To constitute an appropriate comparable property to PDCC, examples should display sufficient size, density of development, and a diversity of resource types constituting a park headquarters, including a visitor center. The following were the best comparable properties identified. However, MPDF co-author and architectural historian Rodd Wheaton asserts that "there is no comparable, east or west," noting that the Horace Albright training center at Grand Canyon is "the only complex that comes close," although it only includes a classroom/office

<sup>180</sup> Carly M. Piccarello, email to Thomas H. Simmons, 26 October 2015.

<sup>181</sup> Tamburro, email, 22 October 2015.



# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 33

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

building with attached maintenance building and detached student housing; it does not have an associated visitor center.

### ***Furnace Creek Visitor Center Historic District, Death Valley National Park, California, 1959-60, SHPO DOE 2010***

Upon approval of Death Valley National Monument's 1958 master plan, which included provisions for a new visitor center and headquarters facilities, a subsidiary the U.S. Borax and Chemical Company donated a 90-acre parcel adjacent to their Furnace Creek Ranch to the NPS in exchange for nearby right-of-way access and water rights. Later the same year, WODC architect Cecil Doty, prepared a preliminary plan and schematics for the Furnace Creek Visitor Center with the financial support of California State Division of Beaches and Parks for construction of museum and auditorium components. The NPS assumed the costs of construction for the administrative office wing and nearby campground. The San Francisco architectural firm of Welton Becket and Associates produced final construction drawings and documents. Building began in spring 1959 and continued through 1960. On 12 November 1960 NPS Director Conrad Wirth and other distinguished guests attended a dedication ceremony for the complex.

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center complex comprises three interconnected buildings—the lobby and exhibit wing, auditorium, and administrative offices surrounding an interior landscaped courtyard. According to a 2001 Determination of Eligibility nomination, architecturally significant features of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center include its “low, horizontal profile; the use of colored, textured concrete block to blend into the natural landscape; and the use of covered walkways and an interior courtyard in order to both promote visitor circulation and provide an architectural unity between the individual building masses.”<sup>182</sup> From the parking lot, visitors approach the complex and enter via a covered walkway structure connecting to the central lobby, which acts as a “glass-walled hyphen between the rectangular Exhibit wing projecting to the south and lozenge-shaped auditorium to the west.” The auditorium stands taller than other buildings further emphasized by a steep gable roof sloping north-to-south. To the north of the lobby is an open courtyard with a diagonal grid of alternating red-and-gray square concrete pavers, four square planting beds featuring various palms and other native plants, and a kidney-shaped reflecting pool. With the exception of a sawtooth-plan concrete block wall to the east, the courtyard is surrounded by buildings and covered walkways. Bounding the central courtyard to the north is a rectangular, one-story administration office building with small interior grassy courtyard for staff.

*Discussion:* With the inclusion of large building masses of textured concrete enclosing a central courtyard, the Furnace Creek Visitor Center complex is comparable to the Painted Desert Community Complex's Commercial Area, though lacking a restaurant function. The concession-operated Furnace Creek Resort is just to the south of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center parking lot, complete with lodging, dining, and gas station. NPS employee residences and other community functions are not part of Furnace Creek, but instead are constructed at Cow Creek four miles to the north as a way to further emphasize the separation of public and private zones. The Furnace Creek Visitor Center complex is not as large and diverse in its buildings and functions as PDCC, and it does not represent a self-contained headquarters community.

### ***Pipestone Mission 66 Development, Pipestone National Monument, Pipestone, Minnesota, 1957-58, 1971, SHPO DOE date unknown***

When Mission 66 began in 1956, Conrad Wirth took particular interest in Pipestone National Monument as the only established national park unit in his home state of Minnesota. This, coupled with Minnesota's upcoming centennial celebration in 1958, afforded Pipestone the opportunity to be one of the first small parks with a

<sup>182</sup> Carey & Co. Inc., “Death Valley National Park Visitor Center, Death Valley, California,” Determination of Eligibility, 28 February 2001, section 8-12.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 34

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Mission 66 project.<sup>183</sup> The Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC) in Philadelphia tasked NPS architect Robert Wilson Harris with the design and construction of the “Visitor Center and Equipment Storage Building” for Pipestone in 1957-58. The building incorporated several functions: visitor services and exhibits, administrative offices, and maintenance facilities, along with a new entrance road, parking lots, and trail improvements leading directly from the visitor center to the quarry sites. Director Wirth attended the dedication ceremony for Pipestone Visitor Center in July 1958 along with other NPS and Minnesota leaders. Subsequent to its dedication, Pipestone welcomed greater involvement of its American Indian community and thus in 1971, the Upper Midwest American Indian Cultural Crafts Center addition was constructed.

Pipestone Visitor Center is an angled, one-story building with long and narrow front and rear elevations, topped with a low pitch gabled roof with wide eaves and exposed beams. All of these features serve to emphasize its horizontality. The building is constructed of concrete block, but with a running bond brick veneer and Sioux quartzite stone facing at the covered portico and primary entry. Visitor functions, including lobby, exhibits, and theater, are located at the south end of the building. Administrative offices are located within the northern half of the building behind the visitor information desk. Further to the north, the maintenance garage is housed within the angled portion of the building. Extending to the east of the visitor center lobby is a connecting vestibule to the Cultural Crafts Center that houses public exhibits and workshops much like the design of the Sitka National Historical Park Visitor Center, Alaska.

*Discussion:* The Pipestone Visitor Center is one of a few Mission 66 visitor centers to incorporate public, administrative, and operational (maintenance) functions under one roof, similar to the PDCC’s visitor center and adjoining maintenance building. However, the Painted Desert Community Complex is remarkable as a large, comprehensive complex that encompasses both public and private zones, including employee housing. Pipestone Visitor Center was not envisioned as a self-contained headquarters community, and its planning did not include details such as courtyards and landscaping. In addition, Pipestone represents the work of a NPS architect, while PDCC reflects the creation of the private firm of Neutra and Alexander.

### ***Headquarters Area Visitor Center, Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho, 1951-58, 1971, SHPO DOE 2001***

The Craters of the Moon Mission 66 headquarters area, completed in 1958, includes a combined visitor center and headquarters, utility building, and five residential buildings (three single-family homes, one duplex, and a four-unit apartment complex). Described as an “early example of Mission 66’s ‘overall package’ approach,” the initial designs for the complex were produced by Cecil Doty in 1951-56.<sup>184</sup> The 1964 Master Plan for Craters of the Moon discussed Doty’s design: “a compact development integrating operation (maintenance), interpretation and management produces better control, great conveniences and a better overall operating efficiency. Furthermore, a closely-knit development of this sort located in a somewhat desolate area makes it possible to group facilities closer together to gain architectural unity in the development.”<sup>185</sup> M.K. Tash of Hurt, Trudell and Capell prepared final design in 1956, while Malone and Hooper planned the utility building and residences.

The Craters of the Moon Mission 66 visitor center and headquarters building features a textured concrete paved entry terrace with a long bench on the west side and a colonnade supporting the building’s projecting awning on the north and east sides. The visitor center is a one-story, L-shaped building constructed of exposed split-face,

---

<sup>183</sup> JoAnn Wilkins and Steven, Donald L., Jr., “Pipestone Mission 66 Development, Pipestone National Monument, Minnesota,” National Register of Historic Places nomination, 21 April 2003; Section 8-7.

<sup>184</sup> Barbara Smith-Steiner, “Visitor Center- Craters of the Moon National Monument, Headquarters Area,” National Register of Historic Places nomination, July 2000; 1.

<sup>185</sup> National Park Service, Columbia Cascades Support Office, *Craters of the Moon NM, Master Plan*, 1964.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 35

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

integrally colored, pumice masonry block with a low-slope roof behind parapets. The building contains a lobby, museum, five administrative offices, a workroom and utility room, one small staff toilet, and two larger restrooms for park visitors. The shed roof utility building is located behind the visitor center and hidden from public view by a wall. The nine-bay building is constructed of split-face pumice ‘gem stone’ blocks with colored mortar joints. The five residential units extend east from the utility building along a half-circle loop road reminiscent of suburban streets of the period, with the interior portion of the loop planted to screen the staff housing from public view. Construction of each of the residences was implemented in accordance with standardized Mission 66 housing plans. All were constructed of the same split-face pumice block as the visitor center.

*Discussion:* WODC architect Cecil Doty’s preliminary design for Craters of the Moon included administration, maintenance, and housing within a single compact development. By contrast, Painted Desert Community Complex included administration, maintenance, commercial, residential, industrial, and recreational areas that embraced many more buildings, structures, and landscape elements. Neutra and Alexander’s design for an interconnected, self-contained complex separated public and private spaces through use of buildings and landscape features rather than physical distance, as at Craters of the Moon.

#### ***Cabrillo National Monument Visitor Center, Cabrillo National Monument, San Diego, California, 1965-66, SHPO DOE 2008***

In 1963 Cecil Doty of WODC was tasked with designing a modernist visitor center, auditorium and exhibit facility, and administrative offices for Cabrillo National Monument. The architect had never visited Cabrillo and thus, upon review, his initial plan was deemed infeasible given site conditions. Comments from local and regional NPS officials agreed that Doty’s massive fort-like design was inappropriate for the landscape of Point Loma. Local representatives voiced their opinion that the building should instead reflect San Diego’s Spanish and mission architectural heritage. Frank L. Hope and Associates, a San Diego architectural firm with experience designing ecclesiastical and institutional buildings, received the commission for design of the new Cabrillo Visitor Center complex. Their plan featured three one-story buildings connected by covered walkways; designers indicated the buildings referenced local architectural traditions through employment of stone facades and copper roofing. The architectural design was augmented by a landscape plan prepared by NPS Landscape Architect Gerry Patten that included several overlooks, a pergola, site walls, pool, and a variety of paving and planting materials. Overall, the design sought to create a “seemingly lush, harmonious exterior space that serves as an extension of the interior spaces.”<sup>186</sup> In 1966, Cabrillo National Monument received a Citation Award from the Society of American Registered Architects (SARA) for the Cabrillo National Monument Visitor Center complex recognizing superior achievement for design and professional excellence. According to the Determination of Eligibility, each landscape feature was carefully executed to reflect regional design elements as follows: “the pool references to the ocean; the posts and flat roof of the pergola mimics the rhythm and form of an ocean pier or dock; the rough texture of the exposed aggregate paving recalls the cobblestone appearance of nearby Guajarras Point.”<sup>187</sup>

As constructed in 1966, the three primary buildings, including the visitor center, exhibits and auditorium building, and administration building are of similar size and shape, grouped around an exposed aggregated concrete courtyard covered by covered wood walkways supported by columns connecting them to the parking lot. The three buildings are one-story, rectangular, wood clad and have hipped roofs. Overlooks are enclosed by

---

<sup>186</sup> National Park Service, *Determination of Eligibility, Cabrillo National Monument Visitor Center, Cabrillo National Monument*, 9 May 2011, Section 8-10.

<sup>187</sup> National Park Service, *Determination of Eligibility, Cabrillo National Monument Visitor Center, Cabrillo National Monument*, 9 May 2011, Section 8-10.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 36

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

low concrete walls and benches with square raised planters. Adjacent to the administration building is a raised red brick pool. A paved walkway extends to the Cabrillo Statue Overlook, also surrounded by a low concrete wall and paved with red brick. To the west of the complex is a circular concrete and brick platform divided into three semi-circular seating areas distinguished by red brick paving.

Discussion: Cabrillo's three one-story Mission 66 buildings grouped around a central landscaped courtyard is similar in design and function to the PDCC's commercial area. The intentional inclusion of regional design elements into the architecture and landscape is reminiscent of Neutra and Alexander's plan for the PDCC, and like it, a non-Park Service architectural firm created the design. However, like Furnace Creek, Cabrillo's three buildings only represent the public zone and did not comprise a self-contained community. Cabrillo as a complex lacks the diversity of functions, scale, and density, as well as the scope of planning represented at Painted Desert.

### CONCLUSION

Painted Desert Community Complex constitutes one of the most significant extant achievements of the National Park Service's Mission 66 program. The 20.3-acre complex in the Arizona desert is the only known example of a park community complex of the era that combines a comprehensive range of functions, including park headquarters, visitor center, concession building, maintenance and storage buildings, school, teacherage, central plaza, community building, recreation area, apartment, entrance station, and residence blocks featuring rows of attached single-family dwellings with private walled courtyards, all of which are grouped around a landscaped plaza. Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander viewed their creation as an oasis in the desert, both for visitors to the park and NPS employees who lived there. Neutra's design considered environmental factors, left a relatively small footprint on the land, and looked to indigenous designs incorporating courtyards and plazas for inspiration. The site planning created zones of public and private space, accommodating the mutual needs of welcoming park visitors and providing homes and work areas for park employees. Concentrating the development on a compact site limited sprawl and preserved sweeping, uncluttered vistas. The loss of other Mission 66 designs, including Neutra and Alexander's Cyclorama building, lends added importance to this nationally significant survivor.

The complex is also an exemplary example of the International Style. Richard Neutra is considered an early master of the International Style. Beginning in the 1920s, he designed iconic examples of residences in what came to be known as that idiom. Neutra successfully incorporated many of the features employed in his earlier residential work in the Painted Desert design. Architectural historian Rodd L. Wheaton summarizes the significance of the complex in a 1997 assessment: "The design elements of this consolidated complex represents all the best of Neutra's architectural design career, his ideas, and his philosophies and is a textbook of Neutra's work from his earliest International Style projects to his later California Modern Style with its responsiveness to the natural environment."<sup>188</sup> *Progressive Architecture* recognized the complex with a residential award citation in 1959, before construction had started.

In 1963 Interior Secretary Stewart L. Udall praised the Painted Desert project, stating that the architects evaluated the conditions of the site, and "when they had taken all of the elements into awareness, Neutra and

---

<sup>188</sup> Rodd L. Wheaton, "The Painted Desert Community," September 1997, document attachment, Rodd L. Wheaton, Architectural Historian, National Park Service, Denver, Colorado, Email to Michele Hellickson, Superintendent, Petrified Forest National Park, 20 July 1999.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 37

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Alexander created a facility of stunning simplicity and essential appropriateness for its desert surroundings.”<sup>189</sup>  
He went on to observe:

In no detail have the architects forgotten the harsh climate, but they have achieved a worthwhile equilibrium of the demands of nature without, and the beauties of nature within the sheltering walls. The project straddles not just a highway, but a millennium. It has extracted the significant elements of the entire history of its environment, and woven them into a new, exciting, and subtle whole.<sup>190</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Steward L. Udall, “Can Federal Architecture Be Creative?” *Arizona Architect* 6 (February 1963): 14.

<sup>190</sup> Udall, “Can Federal Architecture Be Creative?” 17.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 38

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### **6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY**

<b>Ownership of Property</b>	<b>Category of Property</b>
Private:	Building(s):
Public-Local:	District: X
Public-State:	Site:
Public-Federal: X	Structure:
	Object:

Number of Resources within Boundary of Property:

<b>Contributing</b>	<b>Noncontributing</b>
Buildings: 16	Buildings: 6
Sites: 4	Sites: 1
Structures: 2	Structures: 3
Objects: 0	Objects: 0
Total: 22	Total: 10

### **PROVIDE PRESENT AND PAST PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPERTY**

(Please see specific guidance for type of resource[s] being nominated)

#### **LOCATION AND SETTING**

The Painted Desert, an arid landscape named by Spanish explorers for its richly colored display of badlands topography, extends more than 150 miles, from east of the Grand Canyon to the northern portion of Petrified Forest National Park in northeast Arizona. The desert is a sparsely populated land with a dry climate of hot summers, cold winters, and strong winds. Ancient peoples traveled through the area and utilized a fossilized coniferous forest found in the southern portion of the park for making stone tools. In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt designated the southern area, which features one of the largest and most colorful concentrations of petrified wood in the world, Petrified Forest National Monument. The northern desert area, with its brilliantly colored rock formations, came within the monument in increments between 1934 and 1942. Petrified Forest became a national park in 1962. Painted Desert Community Complex (PDCC), the 20.3-acre park complex at an elevation of 5,714', was developed in 1961-65 in the park's northern acreage, a remote area 106 miles east-southeast of Flagstaff, Arizona, and 73 miles west of Gallup, New Mexico. The nearest town, Holbrook, is twenty-six miles distant. The park's primary link with the outside world is Interstate 40, which passes less than a half-mile south of the headquarters.

As the 2015 Mission 66 MPDF discusses, the interstate highway system "sometimes determined the locations of developed areas to provide easy access for visitors to park facilities."<sup>191</sup> In the case of Petrified Forest National Monument anticipated increases in numbers of visitors in the post-World War II era and construction of Interstate 40 along the general alignment of existing U.S. 66, led the NPS to plan for a park headquarters in the northern reaches of the park, replacing an existing facility to the south at Rainbow Forest. The remote location on the southern edge of the Painted Desert necessitated at the time a self-contained facility, and PDCC serves as a consolidated park complex including administrative offices, maintenance facilities, visitor and resident

<sup>191</sup> Carr *et al.*, "Mission 66 MPDF," E4.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 39

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

services, and employee housing.<sup>192</sup> PDCC's dense cluster of twenty-two buildings and other geometrically aligned resources stands isolated on a rise in the expanse of vast desert. Save for the Painted Desert Inn, more than a mile north-northwest, no other substantial buildings are within miles of this location.

### PRESENT PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The nominated area contains thirty-two resources, of which twenty-two are evaluated as contributing. Individual resources within the district are discussed below by functional areas delineated by Neutra and Alexander. Table 1 at the end of this section lists all of the resources within the district and provides contributing status. The included Sketch Map shows the layout of the complex and photograph locations. Alterations to resources are discussed in the individual resource descriptions, while the Integrity section addresses the site as a whole.

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMPLEX

Los Angeles, California, architects Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, then in partnership, produced a 1958 plan for a compact, modern, and elegant park development, analogizing their design for PDCC to a city, with four functionally differentiated subareas corresponding to commercial, industrial, residential, and recreational uses. The partnership designed all of the buildings except the school, teacherage, outdoor recreation area, and basketball court, which were the work of Alexander alone. The commercial area includes the visitor center/administration building, apartment wing, concession building (Painted Desert Oasis, Fred Harvey Restaurant/Curio Store and Service Station), central plaza, and entrance station. The recreation area encompasses the community building, school, outdoor recreation area, and tennis court. The residential area embraces the residence blocks, teacherage, carports, trailer court, and trailer court building. The industrial area contains the maintenance building, vehicle storage building, photovoltaic array, and washstand building. The development's low, horizontal massing and tinted concrete block walls blend into the surrounding desert. Thoughtful placement of buildings; incorporation of a central plaza, residential plazas, and residential courtyards; and use of concrete block screening walls all provide separation of uses and privacy for residents, while minimizing the total footprint of the complex and its impact on the landscape. The site is oriented about 45 degrees east of true north.

The predominant exterior materials employed include concrete block, stucco, steel, glass, and aluminum. While the plans specified many standard construction materials for economy, the concrete blocks were a special order. The concrete blocks, which resemble bricks from a distance characterize the overall composition and appearance of the complex. The predominant concrete blocks used measured 4" high, 8" deep, and 16" long—half the height of a typical block—and contained voids for reinforcing rods. They were acquired from Superlite Builder's Supply in Phoenix, which had started manufacturing blocks using volcanic scoria in 1945. The desired "desert tan" block color was achieved by adding brown mortar tint to the mixture. The architects specified "field sandblasting" of the concrete blocks to produce the desired surface finish.<sup>193</sup>

Most of the glass throughout the complex was a plate glass, specified to be manufactured by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company or its equal. All aluminum extrusions were to be 6063-T5 alloy and all sheets were 5005

---

<sup>192</sup> Lack of water at the headquarters location necessitates pumping of water from the Puerco River, six miles to the south.

<sup>193</sup> Philip VanderMeer, *Desert Visions and the Making of Phoenix, 1860-2009* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2010); Rodd L. Wheaton, Englewood, Colorado, Email to Thomas H. Simmons, 27 April 2016; Completion Report Narrative, Trailer Court, APW, 1964. VanderMeer reported that by 1962 Superlite was the nation's largest manufacturer of concrete blocks. Rodd L. Wheaton, retired NPS architectural historian, recalled the blocks "have a distinctive texture with red scoria-like particles."

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 40

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

alloy with an anodic oxide finish. Stucco was applied over frame walls in three coats, a minimum of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " , and composed primarily of one part cement and three parts sand. No hydrated lime was added to the mix.

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX SITE

The Painted Desert Community Complex is counted as a contributing site (Resource 32), for its importance to the project's overall design in terms of site orientation, division into functional areas, and placement of buildings. The complex extends approximately 1,655' north-south and 671' east-west, with the long axis oriented northeast-southwest.<sup>194</sup> Undertaking a study, Neutra concluded the area's pervasive winds generally came from the southwest and believed the chosen alignment from true north, coupled with proper placement of buildings and freestanding walls, would provide the best shelter. An overview of the nominated area appears below, followed by a detailed discussion of individual buildings organized by functional subarea. Table 1 lists all resources within the district.

A two-lane asphalt entrance road curves a half-mile from the Interstate 40 freeway interchange (outside the nominated area), accessing the nominated area at a visitor parking lot at its southwest corner. At the northeast corner of the parking lot the visitor center/administration building (Resource 1) stands as the two-story focal point of the complex. The one-story concession building (Resource 2) borders the parking lot on the north. The west wall of the visitor center and one-story maintenance building (Resource 28) define the east edge of the parking lot. Past the end of the maintenance building the wall is inset, extends an additional 68', and includes five tall full-height buttressing wall piers.

The park access road proceeds north, where the entrance stations, one new and one original (Resources 7 and 8), are located northwest of the concession building. The access road then continues northward, leaving the nominated area and curving and gaining elevation to reach the Painted Desert Inn National Historic Landmark. It then swings south to cross the interstate via an overpass west of the park interchange to access the Rainbow Forest developed area at the south end of the park. This road configuration provides visitors with various options: bypass the visitor center complex entirely and proceed directly to the park interior; access the concession building, gas station, and restrooms (visitor center restrooms/comfort centers have exterior entrances) and return to the interstate without visiting the park; or avail themselves of the visitor center and concession amenities and proceed with a park experience.

The essentially unfenestrated walls of the buildings abutting the parking lot serve to funnel visitors to an opening between the visitor center and concession building leading to the central plaza (Resource 4), a roughly 140' X 70' concrete-surfaced area with a pool, benches, planters, a number of trees, and a massive petrified wood log. The plaza is sheltered by the visitor center to the south, the concession building to the west, and the rear of the apartment wing (Resource 3) to the east. The two-story apartment wing extends north from the visitor center, facing east toward a staff parking lot and the desert beyond. The building features small courtyards enclosed by concrete block walls located in front of each first-story apartment along the east wall, which are enclosed by concrete block walls. The parking lot contains a photovoltaic solar array (Resource 30) along its eastern edge.

South of the parking lot is the complex's maintenance yard. The yard is enclosed by the visitor center to the north, maintenance building (Resource 28) to the west, vehicle storage building (Resource 29) to the east, and a

---

<sup>194</sup> Although the long axis of the complex is oriented northeast-southwest, to facilitate description this nomination follows the practice of the park and other studies by assuming the long axis is oriented north-south.



## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 41

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

concrete block wall on the south. A small concrete block building (Resource 31) associated with a washing pad is sited farther south.

North of the apartment wing, the one-story community building (Resource 9) has a height equivalent of two stories. A breezeway connects it to the one-story Painted Desert School (Resource 10) to the north. West of the school, north of the concession building, and south of the residence blocks, is the recently created orientation loop (Resource 5), a half-acre landscaped area with gravel paths, interpretive panels, and a covered picnic structure. From the orientation loop south, including the central plaza, concession building, visitor center, parking lot, and entrance station buildings, is a “public” area, open to visitors. While there are no physical barriers restricting access, the remainder of the complex is considered private and is intended for NPS residents and functions.

An open, covered walkway (Resource 6) extends from the northeast corner of the apartment wing along the west walls of the community building and school and then turns west to connect to the southeast corner of the residence block area. The four multi-unit residence blocks lie north of the orientation loop and west of the trailer court—from residence block A in the south to block D in the north (Resources 13 through 16). The residence block area is flanked by three four-car carports on the west (Resources 18 through 20) and three two-car carports (Resources 21 through 23) on the east. The east edge also includes two picnic shelters (Resources 24 and 25) and a small area with playground equipment. To the east is a 1.2-acre trailer court (Resource 26) with twelve trailer pads and utility hookups. The trailer court building (Resource 27), a support building that originally included showers and a laundry, lies at the south end of the trailer court. Immediately south and east of the school is the outdoor recreation area (Resource 11) featuring a baseball backstop and a basketball court now equipped with a volleyball net (Resource 12).

#### COMMERCIAL AREA

What architects Neutra and Alexander designated the “commercial” zone of the complex includes public areas accessible to visitors arriving on the main park road from Interstate 40 and parking in the asphalt lot at the southwest corner of the complex.

#### **Visitor Center/Administration Building, 1961-62 (Resource 1, NPS Number 251, contributing building, Kealy Construction Company, Farmington, New Mexico, contractor)**

The visitor center/administration building is the heart of the Painted Desert Community Complex. Located at the northeast corner of the parking lot, the visitor center borders the south edge of the central plaza and features the administrative level’s second story terrace overlooking this public space. After entering the central plaza, this building becomes the main focus, as the large lobby window wall attracts people by blending indoor and outdoor spaces. By the early 1960s, the NPS had begun to educate visitors to locate and take advantage of a “visitor center,” a resource type arising from Mission 66 that served as an essential first step in accessing a park. The programmatic requirements for all Mission 66 visitor centers included welcoming travelers, serving their needs, and informing them about the park and local amenities. Designs emphasized the centralization of functions, circulation of staff and visitors, and location of modern conveniences in each visitor center. Each Mission 66 visitor center generally provided a standard set of experiences: approach the information desk, discover one’s location on a map, watch a narrated slide or film production, visit a museum or museum exhibits, review available publications, and proceed to the park’s major attractions.<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>195</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 16-17; Jonathan S. Monroe, “Architecture in the National Parks: Cecil Doty and Mission 66” (University of Washington: Master’s Thesis, 1986).

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 42

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Sarah Allaback in *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* emphasized the importance and significance of these facilities:

Although visitor centers typically were sited in relationship to the park's automotive circulation plan, designers explored the potential for visitors to use nearby trails and outdoor spaces once they were out of their cars. Outdoor amphitheaters, roof terraces, and other exterior features all served as functional parts of the visitor center complex. Rest rooms often were designed as separate buildings adjacent to the visitor center, or at least with separate outdoor entrances. Nearby parking lots and site development were integral to the overall procession into and out of the building, and window walls helped break down the division between site and interior space. Short interpretive trails ("nature trails") were often developed to provide an outdoor experience near the visitor center, and outdoor picnic and sitting areas were common as well.<sup>196</sup>

Mission 66 visitor centers handled large numbers of people while maximizing the individual visitor's experience by providing essential services in an efficient and organized manner. In addition to centralizing functions, the exterior of a Mission 66 visitor center served as a physical representation of the NPS and often the individual park through its architecture.

The Painted Desert Visitor Center is an excellent representative of Mission 66 visitor centers in its design and functions. It is a two-story, rectangular building (108' X 59') with a poured concrete foundation, now with a metal clad, shallow hipped roof installed over the original flat roof. The building features structural steel framing, concrete block walls, and interior frame walls. At the west end the visitor center's concrete block wall displays the NPS arrowhead, as well as "Petriified Forest National Park" and "Painted Desert Visitor Center" in aluminum letters. At the northwest corner the wall steps in and contains a recessed entrance with an aluminum frame glass storefront system on the first story and three plate glass windows on the stucco second story. The curtain wall continues on the north, providing visitors in the visitor center lobby with a view of the central plaza and the concession building to the northwest. The second floor cantilevered terrace projects northward and has a solid balustrade clad with ribbed metal panels topped with a planter. The second floor's north wall contains aluminum frame ribbon windows. Projecting from the roof and extending vertically down to grade along the north wall are steel I-Beam supports, known as "spider legs," often used by Richard Neutra as an architectural element rather than a structural element. At the east end, the north wall abuts the apartment wing.

The rear east wall of the visitor center contains a recessed entry with a metal door and a bank of aluminum frame slider windows sheltered by a projecting overhang on the first story. The second story is clad with reverse board-and-batten siding and holds four sliding windows.<sup>197</sup> Courtyards enclosed with concrete block walls infill the area between the building and the parking lot. The south wall is composed of concrete blocks and contains a large louvered panel and, near the southwest corner, three metal doors—two allowing access to the men's and women's restrooms and one providing access to first-floor offices and storage.

The interior features the visitor lobby with information desk, auditorium, and publication display area at the northwest corner. Restrooms are located in the southwest corner, and offices are found on the east. The second

---

<sup>196</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 270.

<sup>197</sup> The existing National Register nomination for the complex uses the term "reverse board-and-batten" in describing nonhistoric siding. The material is actual plywood paneling (typically 5/8"-thick) with vertically sawn grooves that mimic actual stick-built reverse board-and-batten construction.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 43

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

story is accessed by stairs from the lobby and houses park administrative offices and a library/conference room off a double-loaded corridor.

*Alterations.* In 1986-87 changes were made to the east wall: the first story windows were replaced with wood sash windows and reverse board-and-batten siding; on the second story the open viewing terrace with ribbed metal balustrade and spider leg supports was enclosed with reverse board-and-batten siding to create additional office space. In 1989 a shallow hipped metal roof was installed over the entire flat-roofed structure, extending the roofline over the exposed steel “spider legs” and second-story terrace facing the central plaza. In 2004 the original glass doors on the front (west) were exchanged with one of the large storefront windows in order to provide better wind protection for the entrance. In 2015 the planter and bench on the second story north terrace was reconstructed and the primary elevations were repainted following Neutra and Alexander’s original color scheme. The “Petrified Forest National Park” lettering, in the same font as the original words below it, does not appear in 1960s photographs of the building’s façade. Interior alterations include the installation of a drop ceiling (with the original ceiling still in place) in the second-floor hallway circa 1975; construction of a theater at the east end of the lobby in 1979; minimal second-floor office reconfigurations in the late 1970s; and relocation of the visitor center desk in 2000.

### **Painted Desert Oasis, 1962-63 (Resource 2, contributing building, Packer Construction Company, Phoenix, Arizona, contractor)**

The location of the Painted Desert Oasis concession building, immediately west of the central plaza and north of the visitor parking lot, ensures the building is an important part of the visitor experience and a key component of the Painted Desert Community Complex. The roughly elongated U-shaped building (147' X 145') contains a restaurant and gift shop, restrooms, a service station/convenience store, and service areas used for food preparation and for food and merchandise storage. The one-story concession building, extending east-west, is constructed on a concrete slab foundation with concrete block walls. Facing east, it defines the western edge of the central plaza. The front features a glass curtain wall composed of fourteen full-height plate glass windows and two sets of glazed aluminum frame double doors (restored in 2016), in front of which are five columns clad with ceramic tile. The tile (LATCO Candy Stick) was a special order from Los Angeles Tile Jobbers and is applied vertically and arranged in a random pattern of two colors.<sup>198</sup> The roof widely cantilevers to the east over the front wall. The metal clad, low gabled roof is concealed by a parapet except for the east wall.

The south wall is unfenestrated except for a double set of glazed doors at its east end. A 14' full-width cantilevered flat hood projects over the sidewalk on the south wall. The west end of the south wing of the U-plan contains the service station/convenience store, which displays four plate glass windows and a wood door with a large rectangular light and transom. Six pump islands are located to the west; a metal awning supported by metal posts shelters the first set of pumps. The interior of the U-plan serves as a receiving yard, which is partially enclosed on the west by corrugated metal walls. Several standard-size doors and roll-top doors provide access to the building from the receiving yard. The building’s north wall is unfenestrated and has no architectural detail. A concrete block restroom addition, constructed more recently, projects from the north wall near the east end.

*Alterations.* The double set of glazed doors was installed in the south wall near the east end about 1979. The building originally had a flat roof with built up roofing material. The flat roof was altered in 1980 and then re-roofed in 1987 and 1990. Currently, the roof is surmounted by a low pitched metal roof; the parapet is raised slightly to conceal it. In 1982 the east curtain wall was removed and replaced with reverse board-and-batten

<sup>198</sup> John Rollow, letter to the Fred Harvey Company, 30 January 1963. Re: special order ceramic tile.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 44

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

siding holding nine large and one narrow plate glass windows and the two sets of original aluminum frame double doors; the curtain wall was restored in 2016. The cantilevered hood of the south wall originally extended over the gasoline pump islands; it was shortened sometime after 1986 to accommodate oversized vehicles. A concrete block restroom addition was added to the north wall in 1998 using concrete block that is similar but distinct from the rest of the building. Corrugated metal walls were added in the early-1990s to partially enclose the receiving yard at its west end. An addition within the service yard was constructed at the same time to house a walk-in freezer and staff offices. On the interior, the original layout and furnishing plan prepared by Neutra and Alexander was dramatically changed in 1983, when the concessioner updated the interior to meet food service and curio sales needs. Original interior features remaining are the restaurant ceiling, ceramic tile wall behind the cook line, and the glass display case separating the curio store and restaurant.

### **Apartment Wing, 1961-62 (Resource 3, contributing building, Kealy Construction Company, Farmington, New Mexico, contractor)**

The two-story, rectangular (133' X 30') apartment wing abuts the visitor center at the south and extends north, defining the east edge of the central plaza. The building originally contained eight one-bedroom apartments on two levels. Most of the building now functions as offices, but two units are still short-term residences. To provide privacy for its residents, the apartment wing faces east toward a staff parking lot and the high desert landscape beyond. The building is constructed on a poured concrete foundation with concrete block first floor level and frame walls at the second level. The building's flat roof cantilevers over the full-width of the east wall. The east side of the building has courtyards for the four first floor apartments enclosed by approximately 7'-tall concrete block walls. Most of the second story has a ribbon of aluminum frame windows with transoms. The walls are stucco below the window sill line. Sections of both stories (corresponding to Apartments A, C, D, and F) are covered with T1-11 siding and have replacement wood sliding windows. The second story projects over the first story. The northeast corner of the building is notched and contains a partially open stairwell to the second story's west corridor providing access to the upper apartments. The upper portion of the stairwell was glazed after the initial construction.

The concrete block north wall is unfenestrated. The first floor level of the west wall facing the central plaza is clad with sandstone topped by a continuous band of metal louvers. The sandstone came from Reidhead Rock Company in Taylor, Arizona, and Neutra and Alexander submitted drawings showing the desired stonework pattern and referenced the December 1961 *National Geographic* magazine that contained photographs of stonework used in Puebloan dwellings in Mesa Verde National Park as an example of what they wished to achieve.<sup>199</sup> The second story projects out slightly and has stucco walls; a distinctive band of fixed-light ribbon windows extends across the upper part of the wall. The band is a consistent Neutra design detail. Originally, the ribbon window was open to the elements until infilled in February 1964 due to water and snow infiltration.<sup>200</sup>

On the interior, apartments on the upper level are accessed by a single-loaded corridor behind the west wall of the building. Each apartment originally contained three rooms: a living/dining/kitchen area, a bedroom, and a bathroom. The kitchen included a built-in refrigerator, range, and sink. The bathroom was equipped with a bathtub, toilet, and sink, and had a ceramic tile floor and wainscoting. Today, the basic floor plan remains unaltered except for kitchen modifications in apartments A and B. In 2003, apartment G was restored to its 1963 appearance, including historic fixtures and metal cabinets; large aluminum frame slider windows; and all interior finishes, including carpet, tile, paint, and wood. Some original furnishings have also been recovered and

---

<sup>199</sup> John Rollow, letter to Superintendent Fred C. Fagergren, 29 November 1961. Re: Painted Desert Community Admin. Apt. Bldg.

<sup>200</sup> Richard Neutra was specifically commissioned to provide details for the new ribbon windows, which are considered contributing because they were installed during the period of significance and were designed by the building's architect.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 45

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

contribute to the overall historic integrity of this apartment. The north end of the building contains a laundry room on the first level and a utility room on the second story. At the southwest corner of the building the second level corridor connects via a short flight of stairs to the balcony level of the visitor center.

*Alterations.* Most of the building is now used as offices rather than apartments. The aluminum slider windows in apartments A, C, D, and F were replaced with wood sash slider windows ca. 1986, and adjoining sections of wall were clad with T1-11 wood siding.

### **Central Plaza, 1962-63 (Resource Number 4, NPS Number 226, contributing site)**

Neutra and Alexander envisioned PDCC as an “oasis in the desert,” with the central plaza as its focal point. They planned the plaza as a sheltered space from desert winds and surrounded it with one- and two-story buildings.<sup>201</sup> The 0.3-acre central plaza occupies a pivotal site within the complex, bordered by the visitor center to the south, the concession building to the west, and the apartment wing to the east. From the main parking lot visitors are guided toward the central plaza by the south wall of the concession building and the west walls of the visitor center and maintenance building. Upon reaching the southwest corner of the central plaza, visitors may enter the visitor center or the curio shop, or can continue into the plaza. The glass curtain walls of the visitor center and concession building link their interiors to the central plaza’s plantings, seating areas, pool, and petrified wood displays. Conversely, people in the central plaza can observe ongoing activity and items of interest in the lobby of the visitor center and in the restaurant and gift shop of the concession building.

The central plaza consists of textured concrete surfaces, raised Arizona sandstone planter boxes with stone caps serving as seating areas, Arizona sandstone benches, and wood benches. Planting areas contain one large tree near the south end of the plaza and four smaller trees to the west and northeast. The stone used for the walls and benches came from a stone yard in Ashfork, Arizona. At the northeast corner of the plaza is a shallow reflecting pool (recently restored). A massive petrified log is displayed along the eastern edge of the plaza. At the east end of the plaza is a fabric-topped picnic shelter.

*Alterations.* Neutra and Alexander proposed planting the plaza with descendants of prehistoric plants once present in the area. This plan was never fully realized due to a scarcity of water and other factors. The picnic shelter was added after June 2013.

### **Orientation Loop, 2014 (Resource 5, noncontributing site)**

This approximately half-acre area, designated the “Second Plaza, was proposed during the original construction of PDCC as a contoured site with a short grassy loop path accentuated by native plants; however, the plan was never realized. During 2014, park staff recontoured the area and installed a roughly circular gravel path with five interpretive panels and artifacts introducing visitors to major areas of significance for Petrified Forest National Park. In 2015 a fabric canopy was moved to the site and picnic tables/benches were placed beneath it.

*Alterations.* The resource is assessed as noncontributing due to its construction after the period of significance.

### **Covered Walkway, 1964 (Resource 6, contributing structure, Glen D. Plumb, St. Johns, Arizona, contractor)**

The covered walkway connects the commercial zone to the recreational and residential areas of the complex.<sup>202</sup> The open L-shaped walkway extends from the apartment wing north along the west walls of the community building and school for roughly 251’, makes a 90 degree turn when reaching the northeast carport (Resource

<sup>201</sup> To enhance this sense of enclosure, the architects initially proposed the concession building be two stories.

<sup>202</sup> Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, 167.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 46

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

21), and then extends 82' west before terminating at the east end of residence block A. North of the school there is a step down in the roof height to accommodate the change in grade. The poured concrete walkway is covered by a flat roof with a stucco soffit supported by thirty-five pairs of unadorned metal columns spaced approximately 15' apart. The structural system is not visible.<sup>203</sup>

*Alterations.* There are no major alterations to the covered walkway. The concrete sidewalks were replaced in 2005 and have low concrete block retaining walls and trench drains along their west edge.

### **Entrance Station, 1961-62 (Resource 7, contributing building, Kealy Construction Company, Farmington, New Mexico, contractor)**

This historic entrance station (now called the "Gatehouse") faces west at the east edge of the park access road.<sup>204</sup> The building now serves as a staff breakroom with an office area, restroom, and storage area. It is a small (16' X 8') one-story rectangular station with concrete footings and foundation, concrete block walls, and a flat roof. At the west front elevation is an aluminum frame glazed door flanked by large plate glass windows. The south elevation has a single, fixed, aluminum sash window.

*Alterations.* No major alterations are apparent.

### **Entrance Station, 2000 (Resource 8, noncontributing building)**

This building replaced a 1961-62 entrance station in the same location demolished ca. 1983-84. The older facility lacked interior environmental controls and the canopy was unable to accommodate large recreational vehicles and buses, which on occasions collided with its canopy. The current station is a small (16' X 8') one-story, one-room building clad with T1-11 paneling situated between the traffic lanes of the entrance road. Its shed roof has metal standing seam roofing and extends outward to the north over the building entrance. The east and west elevations each have a vinyl-clad sliding window; the south wall contains a single large plate glass window. An off-center metal-clad door is located on the north elevation.

*Alterations.* There are no apparent alterations. The building is assessed as noncontributing due to its construction after the period of significance.

## **RECREATION AREA**

### **Community Building, 1962-63 (Resource Number 9, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

The community building is used for training, community events, and large meetings. This L-shaped concrete block building at the northeast corner of the central plaza has an enclosed two-story auditorium space to the south and a lower one-story section to the north. The covered walkway (Resource 6) extends along the west wall of this building, which is connected to the school on the north by a breezeway leading to the central plaza. The roughly 58' X 46' building faces west toward the central plaza and is constructed on a concrete slab foundation. The front elevation contains a full-bay metal roll-top door and a single aluminum frame glazed pedestrian door to the north; the upper part of the wall is unfenestrated, as is the south elevation. The east wall contains an off-center six-part aluminum frame door sheltered by a flat hood. The center part of the upper east wall is stucco, as is an area north of the entrance. On the north wall the double-height wing has metal doors

<sup>203</sup> Covered walkways were erected at other parks during Mission 66, notably a number at Yosemite Lodge in Yosemite National Park, where the courtyard structure consisted of a shallow gabled roof supported on paired steel pipe columns spanned by steel I-beams.

<sup>204</sup> Once the park opened it soon became apparent that additional capacity was needed, and this entrance station was erected 1961-62.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 47

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

toward the east and features a ribbon of single-light windows on the upper wall. The north wall facing the breezeway contains five concrete block wall piers. The building has a flat roof with parapets.

*Alterations.* In 2011, a large interior staircase was constructed to access the projection booth at the mezzanine on the west end of the building; it replaced a retractable ladder. Between 2004 and 2012 the park uncovered or reestablished all of the historic features of the building concealed during the late-1960s and early-1970s, including revealing the roll top door and ribbon windows. Nonhistoric elements were removed from the interior, and interior finishes were restored or replaced with in-kind materials. The large interior staircase remains in place.

### **Painted Desert School, 1963-65 (Resource 10, contributing building, Arimexal, Inc., St. Johns, Arizona, contractor)<sup>205</sup>**

Robert Alexander designed the school without the participation of Richard Neutra. The educational facilities at the complex were constructed under supervision of the St. Johns School District, St. Johns, Arizona. The building originally contained three classrooms and a U.S. Post Office at the northwest corner; it now is occupied by the park's museum offices and collections and the Post Office. Located north of the community building (Resource 9) and connected to it by a breezeway leading to the central plaza, the school faces east toward the outdoor recreation area (Resource 11) and the desert beyond. The one-story, rectangular (124' X 38'), concrete block building is built atop a concrete slab foundation and has a flat roof with a projecting eave. The front facade is divided into four bays, with a concrete block bay at the south end, above which three beams project from the roof. To the north are three bays terminated by two full-height solid core doors and a vertical panel (all are painted turquoise). Each bay contains three or four aluminum frame plate glass windows with transoms. A white, rectangular panel is below each window. The north wall is unfenestrated. The south elevation (part of which is stucco) contains two solid core doors. The rear elevation opens to the public areas and has a series of concrete block wall piers. A doorway near the north end accesses the post office. The covered walkway (Resource 6) extends along the west wall of the school.

*Alterations.* A merry-go-round and flagpole in front of the building and the raised aluminum letters (spelling out "Painted Desert School") at the end of the east end of the south wall are no longer present. In 2012, the school's front was restored with aluminum frame plate glass windows and transoms, and the building trim was repainted in keeping with the original color scheme.

### **Outdoor Recreation Area, 1964 (Resource 11, contributing site)**

Robert Alexander also designed this area without the participation of Richard Neutra. South of the trailer court area and east of the school is the one-acre outdoor recreation area, built in 1964 at the request of Apache County School District Superintendent Keith Udall. To the north of the present basketball/volleyball court is the ball field, which originally included a baseball diamond with a backstop and volleyball court with a net. Today, all that remains of the ball field is the angled chainlink and steel post backstop. The area is used for storage of construction materials and vehicles.

---

<sup>205</sup> Andrew Gorski and Michael Lovato, *Maintenance Guides for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Petrified Forest National Park* (Tucson, Arizona: National Park Service, Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit and University of Arizona, Preservation Studies, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, June 2005), 108; Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitors Centers*, 166. Allaback reported Arimexal started the project but stopped work due "to non-payment of claims. Gorski and Lovato, on the other hand, identify Arimexal as the contractor without qualification. While Arimexal started the project, it is unclear what firm completed it.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 48

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

*Alterations.* The area currently does not appear to be used for recreational purposes, though it remains as an open space and no major alterations are apparent.

#### **Basketball Court, 1964 (Resource 12, contributing structure)**

Robert Alexander also designed this structure without the participation of Richard Neutra. East of the school is a concrete basketball court consisting of a rectangular area (108' X 48') enclosed by a 12½' chainlink fence on a framework of tubular fence posts and horizontal members. Basketball backboards are located at the east and west ends, and a volleyball net extends across the center. There is a gate on the west fence near the northwest corner. The west part appears to be used for storage.

*Alterations.* The volleyball net is a later addition. It is not known when the chainlink fence was added. No major alterations are apparent.

#### **RESIDENTIAL AREA**

The northwest corner of the PDCC district contains the park staff residential area of the complex, consisting of four linear one-story, multi-unit blocks, a duplex teacherage apartment, three four-car carports, three two-car carports, two picnic shelters, and a small playground area. The residential sector is bordered by paved access roads on the west, north, and east, and is buffered by the landscaped orientation loop to the south. The covered walkway connects the apartment wing, community building, and school to the teacherage and the east end of residence block A. Three plazas separate the four residential blocks, and concrete sidewalks border the blocks on the east and west and flank each building row on the north and south. A playground area east of residence block C (dating to after the district's period of significance) contains an older steel slide and swing and a newer steel and plastic multi-function play structure. A nonhistoric concrete block wall extends along the east edge of the play area.

The four linear residence blocks (A through D), arranged in parallel rows, occupy most of the residential area and contain a total of eighteen units with three L-shaped units in each row. Blocks A and D contain a total of three units, while blocks B and C are composed of six units each. Neutra and Alexander originally proposed three different arrangements (plans A, B, and C) for the individual residential units, with each plan displaying varying square footage and numbers of bedrooms. WODC rejected this idea and suggested using only the features of the C plan, but adding what they called the "Cf" plan. The Cf plan resembles a capital L, whereas in the C plan the capital L is laid on its long end and flipped 180 degrees. This permitted two rows of C- and Cf-plan houses to abut each other, forming rectangular residential compounds of six units.

Each residential unit was originally constructed to contain approximately 1,675 square feet, built on a poured concrete foundation with concrete block walls. All of the blocks originally featured flat roofs. Fenestration of each unit consists of aluminum framed sliding windows and an aluminum sliding door infilling the interior walls of the L-shaped plan that open to a private courtyard. Each 900-square-foot courtyard is shielded from public view by an approximately 7'-high concrete block wall. The arrangement and orientation of each residence was specifically designed to look inward, providing privacy and affording shelter from the wind. As designed, each residence featured large, plate glass windows and doors facing the inner courtyard to the north. Only solid core doors and small clerestory windows were placed on the south walls toward the more public areas. All the main entrance doors open to the south, with the exception of the three north units in blocks B and C, which are accessed from the north via solid core doors in the courtyard walls. Adjacent blocks are separated by an open area forming a residential plaza.



# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 49

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Individual residences have three bedrooms and two bathrooms, a kitchen/dining room, and a living room. Although all residences originally were designed to contain two full baths, the hallway bathroom was downsized to a half-bath during construction in order to reduce costs. These bathrooms were equipped with full-size tubs in 1977.<sup>206</sup> Interior finishes were explicitly defined in a detailed color schedule prepared by Neutra and Alexander, specifying all interior wall paint to be white; natural wood finishes; gray, yellow, brown, and blue interior accent colors; white, gold, and blue ceramic tile; white, pink, and blue laminated plastic countertops; and gold, rust, blue, and yellow exterior accents.<sup>207</sup> Although the concrete block was left exposed on some interior surfaces, the remaining interior walls were finished with gypsum board and plaster. The floors received asphalt-asbestos tiles and the ceilings were drywall.

*Alterations Common to All Residence Blocks.* Common alterations include storage shed additions in the courtyards, which were added in the 1980s; enlargement of kitchen areas in 1981-87; and addition of pitched roofs on Residence Blocks C and D in 1983. Windows were modified in 1983-87. The roof originally cantilevered over the south wall of each building; in the 1980s, a series of decorative metal supports were added beneath the projection. The number of supports has since been reduced in number. In addition to these changes, the interior finishes were altered in almost every residence, with the exception of Residence 208, which is set aside as a restorative model of the three-bedroom housing type. In 1976 the varied exterior accent colors were uniformly painted over with Dunn Edwards Tobacco Brown for all trim and Cliff Brown on all vertical surfaces.<sup>208</sup>

All of the housing blocks are assessed as contributing. While blocks B and C have experienced changes to their design and materials, they retain their original form, orientation, and massing. As such they constitute important elements in the overall design of the Painted Desert Community Complex, illustrating Neutra and Alexander's concept for the facility.

### **Residence Block A, 1961-63 (Resource 13, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

Residence block A (units 201, 202, and 203) contains permanent employee housing. The building block measures 162' X 62' and has three single-family, three-bedroom units with south entrances and enclosed courtyards to the north. Each residence unit in block A is a C-plan house. The walls of residence block A are composed of concrete block and stucco. The building features a flat roof that projects over the concrete walkway to the south and is supported by four round metal columns. The south wall is concrete block from grade to the base of the clerestory windows; above the concrete block the wall is stucco around each ribbon unit of three clerestory windows. The east and west elevations of residence block A are unfenestrated and constructed of concrete block. Each courtyard is accessed by a metal door in the north wall of the block.

*Alterations.* While changes to the design and materials of the courtyard side have occurred, the public south wall is closest to the original appearance of the apartment blocks, and the resource is assessed as contributing. The courtyard alterations are not visible from outside the block; they display varying changes, including kitchen bump outs to the fascia of the projecting roof; changes in window fenestration; and portions of walls clad with reverse board-and-batten siding.

---

<sup>206</sup> David B. Ames, Superintendent, memorandum to the Regional Director, 14 April 1977, PEFO central files D3415. Re: alteration of quarters.

<sup>207</sup> Color Schedule, Painted Desert Community, 7 May 1962, PEFO Central Files.

<sup>208</sup> David B. Ames, Superintendent, letter to Manager of Texaco, Inc., 18 March 1976, PEFO central files D3415. Re: new color scheme.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 50

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### **Residence Block B, 1961-63 (Resource 14, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

Residence block B contains permanent employee housing. The building measures 162' X 115' and consists of six single-family, three-bedroom units constructed back to back. The southern three residences (units 204, 205, and 206) are Cf-plan. They face south and have a flat roof projecting over a concrete sidewalk extending the length of the front. Four metal columns now support the roof. The front (south) elevation is clad with reverse board-and-batten siding. Each unit's elevation, contiguous with its neighbor, has a large tripartite picture window with narrow windows flanking a large plate glass window, two clerestory windows, and three entrances, which open into the interior of the unit, a utility room, and the enclosed courtyard to the north. The northern set of residences (units 207, 208, and 209) abut the first set. They are C-plan houses that face north onto the enclosed courtyards; each unit is accessed by a single metal door in the north wall of the courtyard. The east and west walls of residence block B lack fenestration and are constructed of concrete block. NOTE: Since Unit 208 still retains its original interior features, it has been set aside as a restorative example of this residential type, as it still possesses the following character defining features: a 7-foot concrete block courtyard wall to the north; an original floor plan; a flat roof; historic windows and original fenestration; historic fixtures, metal kitchen cabinets and the original countertop; original interior finishes, including tile, paint, and exposed concrete block walls on the interior.

*Alterations.* The fenestration of the public south wall was substantially altered in the 1980s through removal of sections of the concrete block wall, framing those areas and adding large plate glass windows with narrow flanking windows, and re-cladding of the entire wall with reverse board-and-batten siding. The courtyard elevations display changes similar to those described for block A.

### **Residence Block C, 1961-63 (Resource 15, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

Residence block C is used for seasonal or shared employee housing and contains office space for the Petrified Forest Museum Association. The building measures 162' X 115' and is composed of six, three-bedroom single-family units constructed back to back. The east and west facades of residence block C are unfenestrated and constructed of concrete block. The southern set of residences (units 210, 211, and 212) are Cf-plan units, face south, and have a low pitched roof that projects over a concrete sidewalk extending the length of the south façade. Five paired square metal rods now support the roof. The front is clad with reverse board-and-batten siding. Each unit's elevation, contiguous with its neighbor, has a large tripartite picture window with narrow windows flanking a large plate glass window, two clerestory windows, and three entrances, which open into the spaces described for block B. Enclosed courtyards lie to the north. The northern residences (units 213, 214, and 215) abut the south dwellings. They are C-plan units and are accessed from the north through enclosed courtyards. A single metal door in each courtyard wall provides access to each residence.

*Alterations.* A low pitched roof was added in the 1980s over the original flat roof. The fenestration of the public south wall was substantially altered in the 1980s in like manner as block B, through removal of sections of the concrete block wall, framing those areas and adding large plate glass windows with narrow flanking windows, and re-cladding of the entire wall with reverse board-and-batten siding. The courtyard elevations display changes similar to those described for block A.

### **Residence Block D, 1961-63 (Resource 16, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

Two of the three units of residence block D have structural problems and are unoccupied; the third unit is used as an office. The building measures 162' X 61' and is composed of three, Cf-plan, three-bedroom, single-family

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 51

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

units that face south, with enclosed courtyards to the north. The east, west, and north walls of residence block D are unfenestrated and constructed of concrete block. The front (south) wall of residence block D still features sizable sections of concrete block, as well as two stucco bays and one of reverse board-and-batten siding. The block features a low pitched roof that projects over a concrete sidewalk to the south. Four metal columns along the sidewalk support the projecting roof. Each of the units contains two clerestory windows and three doors, accessing the same spaces as blocks B and C. The two western residences (units 217 and 218) each have a sliding window in the sections not composed of concrete block, while the eastern unit displays a large picture window flanked by narrower windows.

*Alterations.* The low pitched roof was added over the original flat roof in the 1980s. At the same time other exterior changes occurred to the front of the building (removal of sections of concrete block, replacement with stucco or reverse board-and-batten siding, and installation of windows in those areas). The courtyard elevations display changes similar to those described for block A. The south wall still displays significant sections of original concrete block, as well as the fenestration of doors and clerestory windows, and is less altered than blocks B and C. The building is assessed as contributing.

### **Teacherage, 1963-64 (Resource 17, contributing building, Arimexal, Inc., St. Johns, Arizona, contractor)<sup>209</sup>**

The school, teacherage, and outdoor recreation area were all designed by Robert Alexander in 1963 without the participation of Richard Neutra. Lodging for teachers became necessary once the headquarters complex gained a school. The two-unit teacherage faces south, between a carport to the south (Resource 21) and a picnic shelter to the north (Resource 24). One unit houses a permanent employee and the other a short-term resident. The trailer court building is to the east. Constructed on a poured concrete slab, the small (53' X 33'), rectangular, one-story building has concrete block walls and a flat roof that projects widely over the south facade. The two apartments each contain a bedroom, bathroom, living room, and kitchen/dining area. At the entrance to each apartment are paired doors that include a solid core door into the apartment interior and a similar door with louvered panels providing access to a utility room. Two clerestory windows are set within a narrow band of stucco. The east and west walls are unfenestrated. The interior of the east apartment (Unit J) retains its original floor plan, historic fixtures, wood cabinets, original countertop, and interior finishes, including carpet, tile, and paint.<sup>210</sup>

*Alterations.* In 2005 the wood privacy fence enclosing the units' patios was replaced with a concrete block wall.

### **Four-Car Carport (South), 1961-62 (Resource 18, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

This is the southernmost of the three four-car carports located west of the residential housing blocks. Originally, each carport was assigned to a specific residential unit based on proximity. Each carport is positioned to shield the plazas between the residential housing blocks from public view. The carport measures 47' X 27', opens to the west driveway, and has concrete block rear and side walls, a flat roof that projects across the front, and four open bays without interior walls.

*Alterations.* No alterations are apparent.

---

<sup>209</sup> As noted for the school earlier, Arimexal received the contract for the teacherage but stopped work. It is not known how much of the work was completed or what firm completed the project.

<sup>210</sup> The park has set Unit J aside as a restorative example of this residential type.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 52

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### **Four-Car Carport (Center), 1961-62 (Resource 19, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

This is the center of the three four-car carports located west of the residential housing blocks. It is identical in design to the south carport.

*Alterations:* No alterations are apparent.

### **Four-Car Carport (North), 1961-62 (Resource 20, noncontributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

This is the northernmost of the three four-car carports located west of the residential housing blocks. Due to damage the building is presently vacant. The carport, built of concrete block on a concrete foundation, measures 47' X 27' and opens to the west driveway. The carport's west front is enclosed with panels of T1-11 siding. Each bay contains a wood pedestrian door.

*Alterations:* The originally open carport bays are enclosed. It is assessed as noncontributing due to alterations occurring after the period of significance.

### **Two-Car Carport (South), 1961-62 (Resource 21, noncontributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

Like the four-car carports west of the residence block, the east two-car carports are positioned at each end of the residential plazas, somewhat shielding the plazas from public view. The one-story rectangular (28' X 25') building is the southernmost of the three, two-car carports. It faces onto the east driveway. Typically, it has a poured concrete slab foundation, with its south, and west (rear) walls composed of concrete block. The original open carport is now enclosed at the east front and north with reverse board-and-batten siding. The construction extends to the fascia of the projecting flat roof; each bay has an overhead garage door. The building is now used for administrative storage.

*Alterations.* At an unknown date after the period of significance, both bays of the building were enclosed with reverse board-and-batten siding and garage doors were installed. The building's function has changed from vehicle parking to storage. The carport is assessed as noncontributing due to alterations occurring after the period of significance.

### **Two-Car Carport (Center), 1961-62 (Resource 22, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

This one-story rectangular (28' X 25') building is the center building of the two-car carports. It faces onto the east driveway, has a poured concrete slab foundation, and features south and west walls composed of concrete block; the east and north walls are open. Two metal columns support a beam across the width of the building. The flat roof cantilevers beyond the front of the building. It is still used for vehicle parking.

*Alterations.* In 2011 this carport, which had been enclosed, was restored to its original appearance.

### **Two-Car Carport (North), 1961-62 (Resource 23, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company)**

The northernmost of the two-car carports is identical to the center two-car carport.

*Alterations.* In 2011, this carport, which had been enclosed, was restored to its original appearance.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 53

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### **Picnic Shelter (South), ca. 1990 (Resource 24, noncontributing structure)**

North of the teacherage and south of a second picnic shelter is a metal picnic shelter that serves as an outdoor gathering space for residents. The picnic shelter measures about 29' X 25' and features a poured concrete slab with nine, 3"-square metal columns supporting a corrugated metal roof. The shelter contains metal picnic tables and benches and trash cans. Eight steel outdoor grills are aligned in pairs in an east-west row between this shelter and the one to the north.

*Alterations:* No alterations are apparent. The south picnic shelter is assessed as noncontributing due to its construction after the period of significance.

### **Picnic Shelter (North), ca. 1990 (Resource 25, noncontributing structure)**

The north picnic shelter is identical to the south one. It lies between south picnic shelter (Resource 24) and the center two-car carport (Resource 22).

*Alterations:* No alterations are apparent. The north picnic shelter is assessed as noncontributing due to its construction after the period of significance.

### **Trailer Court, 1961-63 (Resource 26, contributing site)**

The rectangular 1.2-acre trailer court is positioned in the northeast corner of the complex, surrounded on three sides by a 6'-high unadorned concrete block wall, stepped to accommodate changes in grade. The trailer court building (Resource 27) completes the enclosure on the south. The north wall has a gap, through which a north-south paved road enters, bisecting the court. Twelve original concrete trailer pads (six on each side) with utility hookups flank the road. A gap in the east wall adjacent to the trailer court building affords pedestrian access.

*Alterations.* The trailer court has accommodated trailers since its construction primarily as staff seasonal housing for those who tow their own accommodations to the park. The trailers present today do not date to the period of significance. Trailers are not included in the resource count because they are impermanent structures placed onsite and are temporary in nature.

### **Trailer Court Building, 1961-63 (Resource 27, noncontributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

The trailer court building encloses the south end of the trailer court. It originally contained a laundry and shower room for trailer court residents but is now used as a fitness center, recreation hall, and paleontological laboratory. The rectangular, one-story building (134' X 27') faces north towards the trailer court, has a concrete foundation with poured concrete floors, and displays concrete block walls. The building features a flat roof that cantilevers over the tinted concrete walkway extending the full length of the north facade. The eastern section of the facade contains a pair of metal-clad doors. What was a central courtyard is filled in with reverse board-and-batten siding with a pedestrian door. To the west, the concrete block section contains a fixed-light window and a pedestrian door. The east elevation has a pair of metal-clad doors opening onto an outdoor area enclosed on two-and-a-half sides by a 6'-high concrete block wall. This area originally served as the "drying yard" associated with the laundry facility; it is now used for general storage but still contains two T-shaped metal clothesline posts. The west and south walls of the building are unfenestrated, and the south wall functions to set the trailer court area apart from the outdoor recreation area to the south.

*Alterations.* In 1972 the courtyard extending through the center of the building was roofed and enclosed on the north with reverse board-and-batten siding containing a single pedestrian door. An east window is not original and may also date to ca. 1972. The interior is altered with application of textured drywall over historically

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 54

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

exposed concrete block interior walls and installation of carpeting on floors. The building is assessed as noncontributing due to alterations occurring after the period of significance.

### INDUSTRIAL AREA

What Neutra and Alexander designated the “industrial” zone of PDCC lies east of the visitor parking lot and visitor center in the southeast area of the complex. It includes the maintenance building, vehicle storage building, photovoltaic array, and washstand building. The concrete block rear wall of the maintenance building continues farther south, serving as a physical separator between the visitor parking lot and private NPS space and concealing the maintenance yard from public view. Vehicular access into the maintenance yard is from the south end of the visitor parking lot.

### **Maintenance Building, 1961-63 (Resource 28, contributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

The maintenance building extends south from the south elevation of the visitor center. The building contains the administrative office for the maintenance department; carpenter shop, auto, welding and road/trails/sign shop; and the fire truck bay. The maintenance building faces east across an asphalt-paved maintenance yard toward the vehicle storage building (Resource 29); the yard is further enclosed by concrete block walls to the north and south. The one-story, rectangular building (222' X 34') is constructed on a concrete slab foundation with concrete block walls and has a flat roof that widely projects across the front elevation.

The north end of the east front, adjacent to the visitor center, contains a pair of metal doors below a louvered vent. The south section of the east front has fifteen bays. From north to south, two bays are infilled with T1-11 wood paneling with a solid core pedestrian door and two windows. The next bay has a metal roll-top garage door. Three bays are clad with metal ribbed panels and have large plate glass clerestory windows, with the south bay having a pedestrian door. The adjacent bay is filled with panels with a pedestrian door and two small fixed-light windows; the upper part of the bay and the bay to the south is filled with double operable panels. The next bay is clad with metal ribbed panels and features a door to the south with a tall overlight. Three subsequent bays have metal roll-top garage doors. The adjacent bay has a shed-roofed plywood-clad projection extending beyond the eave of the roof and is infilled with aluminum sliding windows on the east and north walls. The southernmost bay extends to the fascia of the roof overhang and has a metal roll-top garage door and a solid core pedestrian door. The rear (west) elevation concrete block wall is unfenestrated. Beyond the maintenance building, the wall is slightly inset, extends 68' farther south, and has five projecting concrete block wall buttresses. At the east side, the wall has five bays used for open storage divided by lower concrete block walls.

*Alterations.* Two gas pumps on a central concrete island were removed from in front of the building at an unknown date. The two north bays that once held garage doors are filled in. The shed-roofed frame projection toward the south end of the building dates to the 1980s, as does the extension of the last bay to the edge of the roofline to accommodate larger fire equipment vehicles. Replacement garage doors, selected to match the originals, were installed in 2008; the original doors tilted up. Large plate glass clerestory windows were also installed in some bays in 2008. The metal exhaust stack on the roof at the north end of the building was added in 2010.

### **Vehicle Storage Building, 1961-63 (Resource 29, noncontributing building, Rasmussen Construction Company, Orem, Utah, contractor)**

The one-story, rectangular (205' X 25') vehicle storage building defines the eastern boundary of the maintenance yard and faces west toward the maintenance building. Originally used for storing NPS vehicles in open bays, the building now houses the plumbing and electrical departments, as well as enclosed and open

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 55

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

storage. The building is constructed on a concrete slab with unfenestrated concrete block walls at the north, south, and east elevations. The center portion of the west front contains six open bays defined by metal columns. The two north bays have been enclosed with reverse board-and-batten and T1-11 siding with two solid core doors and two sliding windows. The southern bay is enclosed in a similar manner and has double solid core doors with a transom. An addition to the south is clad with similar materials and has a pedestrian door in the north section and two small single-light windows on each of its walls.

*Alterations.* The principal alterations to this building date to the 1980s, including: infilling bays with reverse board-and-batten siding (two bays at the north end and one at the south end) and extending the building about 22' on the south to create work and storage space. The building is assessed as noncontributing due to alterations occurring after the period of significance.

### **Photovoltaic Array/Covered Parking, 2014-15 (Resource 30, noncontributing structure)**

Located in the parking lot east of the apartment wing and northeast of the vehicle storage building, this photovoltaic array/covered parking structure was erected 2014-15 over the lot's east row of parking spaces. The open, one-story, rectangular shed-roofed structure (183' X 21') features metal I-beam supports. Photovoltaic panels are mounted on the roof and provide solar generated electricity for the community building and apartment wing.

*Alterations.* No alterations are apparent. This resource is categorized as noncontributing due to its erection after the period of significance.

### **Washing Pad Building, ca. late 1990s-early 2000s (Resource 31, noncontributing building)**

This small (8' X 8') concrete block building lies south of the maintenance yard in the center of a concrete pad and is used for washing maintenance equipment. The building has a shallow gable roof with flush eaves and standing seam metal roofing. The front (west) contains a solid core pedestrian door; the other walls are unfenestrated. The gable faces are clad with T1-11 type paneling.

*Alterations:* It is not known if the roof shape is original. The building is assessed as noncontributing due to its construction after the period of significance.

## HISTORIC PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The overall layout, massing, scale, and design of the Painted Desert Community Center remains essentially as planned by Neutra and Alexander in the late 1950s and constructed in 1961-65. The complex has experienced only one demolition and no moved buildings. There are a handful of small-scale newer buildings and a few changes to building footprints:

*Demolitions.* Only one original building was demolished. The original entrance station in the middle of the park access road was removed about 1983-84. The original entrance station became a hazard because of increasingly larger recreational vehicles and buses.

*Relocations.* No buildings or structures were moved within or into the complex.

*Changes to Building Footprints.* A few additions to buildings have occurred, including a frame addition to the south end of the vehicle storage building, an addition to one of the units of the teacherage, a small restroom addition to the north elevation and an addition to the west elevation of the concession building, and dining room and storage bump-outs on units in the residence area.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 56

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

*New Construction.* Five resources (mostly small) were erected within the complex, including: ca. 1990, two open picnic shelters (Resources 24 and 25); 2000, a small entrance station (Resource 8); ca. late 1990s-early 2000s, a small washstand building (Resource 31); and 2014-15, a photovoltaic array (Resource 30). The 183' X 21' array is the largest new resource, but is not visible from the main public area.

Alterations to the design and materials of resources presents a larger issue, including such modifications as: changes to fenestration; filling in open areas (such as terraces, courtyards, and open carports) to gain additional space; and installation of pitched roofs over flat roofs. Since at least 2004, the park has worked to reverse many earlier inappropriate changes to buildings, including reopening enclosed spaces, removing pitched roofs and restoring flat roofs, removing nonhistoric wall-claddings to uncover historic material, and reconstructing missing historic features (such as the glass curtain wall on the front of the concession building). The park has also been addressing ongoing maintenance issues related to problems in its initial construction.

*Landscaping.* By the 1980s, most of the original 1963-65 plantings reached maturity, thereby fulfilling WODC's and Neutra & Alexander's vision for a desert oasis. Though some of the original plants specified in the 1963 landscape plan were never planted and others were substituted for more readily available native species, the landscaping plan was by-in-large implemented within "public" spaces, including the Central Plaza, Recreation Area, and the shared residential plazas between each housing block. Photographs from the era illustrate a number of large shade trees, sparse yet grassy lawns, and a selection of bushes and low groundcover plantings throughout. While NPS's attempt to exhibit relic species from the Triassic proved unsuccessful, most other plants specified for the Central Plaza grew to maturity, creating a shady space sheltered from the sun and wind. Likewise, many of the originally specified trees and shrubs bordering the Recreation Area and open area between the Central Plaza and Block A were also implemented as designed, along with the semi-public plazas of the Residential Area, each of which featured 6 trees and a sparsely planted grassy lawn. The only public area of the PDCC not wholly implemented during the period of significance is today's Orientation Loop, which was originally conceived of as an extension of the Central Plaza featuring a roughly circular path accented by native plants. In contrast, realization of WODC's landscape plan within "private" spaces was implemented to varying degrees. A variety of flowering fruit trees and other colorful, ornamental plants were specified for the residential and apartment courtyards, but anecdotal evidence suggests that most of what was planted within these private courtyards was actually left to the discretion of the residents.

During the period between 1963 and the early-1990s, non-native plantings within the PDCC (both public and private spaces) were sustained by artificial watering. In the early-1990s, Petrified Forest National Park began purchasing water from the Navajo Indian Reservation, and in an attempt to reduce the high overhead costs associated with watering ornamental plants not adapted to the local desert environment, artificial watering ceased, and as a result all of the non-native vegetation died. Today, all that remains of the original landscape are 46 native trees and bushes, and a variety of bunchgrasses. In contrast to the surrounding treeless terrain, PDCC remains an oasis in the desert, and recent efforts by the park have sought to enhance the oasis setting using native plant varieties.

### INTEGRITY

The Painted Desert Community Complex retains a high degree of integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, association, and workmanship. Some alterations, many of them reversible, impact the present level of integrity of materials of individual buildings, but the overall complex still strongly conveys the historic character of its cohesive design. The NPS is working to restore some buildings with design and materials issues. Architectural



# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 57

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

historian and advocate for modernism, Christine Madrid French provided her assessment of the integrity of the complex in 2014: “Virtually all of the original buildings remain at the site and continue to serve many of the same functions today. While some buildings have suffered from structural damage, inappropriate alterations, and deferred maintenance, the overall character of the complex remains remarkably intact.”<sup>211</sup>

*Location.* The Painted Desert Community Complex and all contributing buildings, sites, and structures contained within, retain integrity of location. The complex remains on its original site and no buildings or structures have been moved or relocated.

*Design.* The district as a whole retains a high level of integrity of design that conveys the original Neutra and Alexander vision for a national park headquarters in a remote desert area. The complex maintains its original massing and spatial layout, as well as building forms, vehicular and pedestrian approaches and circulation, organization of spaces and functions, proportion, scale, and construction technology. Integrity of these elements is vital in conveying the original, all-encompassing design for the complex. Principal modifications to the design include installation of pitched roofs over original flat roofs on some buildings, most notably on the visitor center/administration building, where the roof was extended over the second story terrace facing the central plaza, partially obscuring the signature Neutra spider leg roof structure. Residence blocks C and D and the concession building received pitched roofs. Some formerly open spaces have been enclosed (generally with reverse board-and-batten or T1-11 siding) in order to provide necessary working and storage space without adding new buildings, as in the case of the visitor center’s second story east viewing terrace, central courtyard of the trailer court building, several bays on the vehicle storage building, and two carports.

Fenestration patterns were altered on part of the east wall of the apartment wing and buildings in the residence block to accommodate the preferences of residents. The original unfenestrated south wall of the concession building received a set of glazed double doors at its east end to facilitate direct visitor access from the parking lot. Some room extensions occurred in the private courtyards of the residence blocks and one teacherage apartment; these alterations are not visible from outside the courtyards. Nearly all of these alterations are reversible.

*Setting.* The Painted Desert Community Complex retains a high level of integrity of setting. As was Neutra and Alexander’s original intent, the Painted Desert Community Complex is situated on the high desert prairie between Interstate 40 and the Painted Desert, with the White Mountains in the distance to the south. Upon approach, the complex appears essentially as it did when photographed at the time of its completion. The surroundings, then as now, are characterized by relatively flat topography with shortgrass and scrub brush being the dominant vegetation types in the arid landscape. The larger setting is not adversely impacted by newer development. The site topography, manmade features, and relationship between buildings and other resources or open space has not changed or been adversely impacted since the initial construction. The setting continues to convey the arid environment, the remote location, and the complex’s creation as “an oasis in the desert.”

Within the central plaza the original plantings and some landscape planned by the Western Office of Design and Construction, in cooperation with Neutra and Alexander, is largely lost due to water scarcity and other climatic factors, neglect, and insensitive changes. However, the stone and concrete planters remain intact. Not all elements of the plan were realized. Completed elements of the landscape plan were preserved until Petrified Forest National Park began purchasing water from the Navajo Nation in the early 1990s. In an attempt to reduce high overhead costs associated with watering ornamental plants not adapted to the local desert environment,

---

<sup>211</sup> Chris Madrid French, “Preserving Mission 66 Modernism,” 10 July 2014, Preservation Leadership Forum, <https://forum.savingplaces.org/connect/blogs>.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 58

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

artificial watering ceased and all of the non-native vegetation died. However, the complex's setting as an "oasis in the desert" remains high because Neutra and Alexander's design of wind- and sun-protected "oasis" spaces, such as the walled plaza and courtyards and shaded walkways, remains intact.

*Materials.* Painted Desert Community Complex displays a high level of original materials, which were carefully considered and selected by Neutra and Alexander to convey their architectural concept and in keeping with the Mission 66 spirit. Most of the original materials are present and serve as cohesive, character-defining elements of the Modern-style complex, including concrete block, aluminum frame glass windows, stucco, stonework, steel framing, and ceramic tiles. The architects planned aspects of each material to emphasize the complex's style and to relate to the local environment. Some alterations are present, including instances of the reversible application of nonhistoric materials such as T1-11 and reverse board-and-batten siding, placement of interior drywall over original exposed concrete block walls, and modification of various roofing materials. Where recent repairs have been made to historic materials, original design and in-kind replacements were used. The nonhistoric siding applied is reversible and in some cases in recent years has been removed, re-exposing historic materials. Some historic materials, particularly concrete block walls and concrete sidewalks, are in poor condition, but this does not impact their ability to convey their original appearance.

*Workmanship.* Workmanship in the Painted Desert Community Complex retains a high level of integrity and is reflected in the assembly and application of mass-produced modern materials, such as concrete block, steel, aluminum, and glass. Typically, these modern materials do not exhibit individual craftsmanship; however, they do reflect the time period in which these buildings were constructed and the challenge of erecting a national park headquarters in an isolated desert location. Examples of this can be seen throughout the complex in the assemblage of the materials that provide a simplicity of design with clean lines enhanced by the functional application of materials, and the choice of materials throughout, such as standardized use of concrete blocks. The only examples where "traditional craftsmanship" is exhibited are the stone facing on the apartment wing's west façade and in the fabrication of stone benches and planters throughout the central plaza.<sup>212</sup>

*Feeling.* A high level of integrity of feeling of this Park Service Modern style Mission 66 complex is maintained. The presence of the original physical features of the complex, including the buildings displaying their original Modern Movement/International style; materials such as concrete block, steel, and glass; and the undisturbed setting support its integrity of feeling and historic character. Typically, Mission 66 public buildings were designed to present "a bold commercial appearance to entice and attract visitors."<sup>213</sup> Architectural historian Christine Madrid French observed:

Modern materials and design characterized the new park architecture, with open interior spaces and expansive areas of glazing to provide views of nearby natural and cultural resources. The strikingly contemporary buildings in the parks symbolized, for the visiting public and the agency itself, the achievements of the Mission 66 program and a new era in the National Park Service.<sup>214</sup>

The Painted Desert Community Complex continues to promote this ideal through the design, materials, workmanship, and orientation of these unmistakably modernist buildings. The clear organization of space,

---

<sup>212</sup> Post-construction defects resulting in building deterioration is attributable to the overall construction approach and practices of low-bid contractors, inadequate construction supervision by WODC and the architects, and the problematic soil conditions at the site.

<sup>213</sup> Christine Madrid French, "What Is Mission 66?" *Mission 66: Modern Architecture in the National Park*, 2002.

<http://www.mission66.com>.

<sup>214</sup> Madrid French, "What Is Mission 66?"

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

**Page 59**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

---

relationship to the site, and divided uses within the complex, convey its integrity of feeling, which augments the visitor experience and promotes NPS ideals for visitors and park staff alike.

*Association.* The Painted Desert Community Complex maintains a high level of integrity of association. It is still owned and operated by the National Park Service and still serves as the headquarters of Petrified Forest National Park. The complex still manifests the functional subareas originally envisioned by Neutra and Alexander, with all of the groupings of buildings necessary for a self-contained national park headquarters in a remote area. The Modern Movement/International style represented by buildings and the varied uses, especially facilities such as the visitor center, a new building type for its era, convey the district's association with the Mission 66 effort. Together, the characteristics of the buildings and site convey the historic character and provides a direct link to the NPS's efforts to improve and expand its facilities, educate the public, and preserve resources during the period of significance.

**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION**

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 60**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Table 1. Contributing/Noncontributing Status of Resources

<b>Resource Number</b>	<b>Resource Name</b>	<b>Year Built</b>	<b>Resource Type</b>	<b>Contributing Status</b>
1	Visitor Center/Administration Building	1961-62	Building	Contributing
2	Painted Desert Oasis, Fred Harvey Restaurant, Curio Shop, and Service Station	1962-63	Building	Contributing
3	Apartment	1961-62	Building	Contributing
4	Central Plaza	1962-63	Site	Contributing
5	Orientation Loop (interpretive area)	2014	Site	Noncontributing
6	Covered Walkway	1964	Structure	Contributing
7	Entrance Station	1961-62	Building	Contributing
8	Entrance Station	2000	Building	Noncontributing
9	Community Building	1962-63	Building	Contributing
10	Painted Desert School	1963-65	Building	Contributing
11	Outdoor Recreation Area	1964	Site	Contributing
12	Basketball Court	1964	Structure	Contributing
13	Residence Block A	1961-63	Building	Contributing
14	Residence Block B	1961-63	Building	Contributing
15	Residence Block C	1961-63	Building	Contributing
16	Residence Block D	1961-63	Building	Contributing
17	Teacherage	1963-64	Building	Contributing
18	Four-Car Carport (South)	1961-62	Building	Contributing
19	Four-Car Carport (Center)	1961-62	Building	Contributing
20	Four-Car Carport (North)	1961-62	Building	Noncontributing
21	Two-Car Carport (South)	1961-62	Building	Noncontributing
22	Two-Car Carport (Center)	1961-62	Building	Contributing
23	Two-Car Carport (North)	1961-62	Building	Contributing
24	Picnic Shelter (South)	ca. 1990	Building	Noncontributing
25	Picnic Shelter (North)	ca. 1990	Building	Noncontributing
26	Trailer Court	1961-63	Site	Contributing
27	Trailer Court Building	1961-63	Building	Noncontributing
28	Maintenance Building	1961-63	Building	Contributing
29	Vehicle Storage	1961-63	Building	Noncontributing
30	Photovoltaic Array/Covered Parking	2014-15	Structure	Noncontributing
31	Washstand Building	ca. late 1990s-early 2000s	Building	Noncontributing
32	Painted Desert Community Center site	1961-65	Site	Contributing

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 61

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### 7. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

#### Books

- Allaback, Sarah. *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2000.
- Anderson, Michael F. *Polishing the Jewel: An Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park*. Grand Canyon: Grand Canyon Association, 2000.
- Benevolo, Leonardo. *History of Modern Architecture. Volume Two: The Modern Movement*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1966.
- Boesiger, W., ed. *Richard Neutra: 1961-66, Buildings and Projects*. Zurich: Verlag fur Architektur, 1966.
- Brand, Stewart. *How Buildings Learn: What Happens after They're Built*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.
- Burchard, John E. and Albert Bush-Brown. *The Architecture of America: A Social and Cultural History*. Boston: Little Brown, 1961.
- Carr, Ethan. *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007.
- Carr, Ethan. *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- Ching, Francis D.K. *A Visual Dictionary of Architecture*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997.
- Drexler, Arthur and Thomas S. Hines. *The Architecture of Richard Neutra: From International Style to California Modern*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982.
- Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture*, edited by Gerd Hatje. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1964.
- Frampton, Kenneth. *American Masterworks: The Twentieth Century House*. New York: Rizzoli, 1995.
- Giedion, Sigfried. *Space, Time and Architecture*. 4th ed. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963.
- Gorski, Andrew and Michael Lovato. *Maintenance Guides for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Petrified Forest National Park*. Tucson, Arizona: National Park Service, Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit and University of Arizona, Preservation Studies, College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, June 2005.
- Hines, Thomas S. *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.
- Hitchcock, Henry Russell. *Modern Architecture; Romanticism and Reintegration*. New York: Payson & Clarke, 1929.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 62

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

- Isenstadt, Sandy. "Richard Neutra and the Psychology of Architectural Consumption." *In Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, edited by Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Rejean Legault. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2000.
- Jacobus, John M., Jr. "Richard Joseph Neutra." In *Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1964.
- Jester, Thomas C., editor. *Twentieth-Century Building Materials: History and Conservation*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.
- Kaufmann, Jr., Edgar. *What is Modern Design?* Introductory Series to the Modern Arts. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1950.
- Lamprecht, Barbara M. *Neutra: Complete Works*. Cologne, Germany: Taschen, 2015.
- Lavin, Sylvia. *Form Follows Libido: Architecture and Richard Neutra in a Psychoanalytic Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2004.
- LeBlanc, Sydney. *20th Century American Architecture: 200 Key Buildings*. New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1993.
- Lee, Ronald F. *Public Use of the National Park System, 1872-2000*. National Park Service. 2002.  
[http://www.npshistory.com/publications/public\\_use/lee1.htm](http://www.npshistory.com/publications/public_use/lee1.htm).
- Long, Christopher Long. *The Looshaus*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2012.
- Longstreth, Richard. "A Modernist's Tribute to Lincoln and the Remembrance of the War: Richard Neutra's Visitor Center at Gettysburg." In *Looking Beyond the Icons: Midcentury Architecture, Landscape, and Urbanism*, edited by Richard Longstreth. Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2015.
- Maddex, Diane, ed. *Master Builders: A Guide to Famous American Architects*. Washington DC: Preservation Press, 1985.
- Marlin, William, ed. *Nature Near: Late Essays of Richard Neutra*. Santa Barbara, California: Capra Press, 1989.
- McCoy, Esther. *Case Study Houses, 1945-1962*. 2nd ed. Santa Monica, California: Hennessey+Ingalls, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Richard Neutra*. Masters of World Architecture Series. New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1960.
- Monroe, Jonathan Searle. "Architecture in the National Parks: Cecil Doty and Mission 66." Master's thesis, University of Washington, 1986.
- Neutra, Richard J. "Foreword," xi-xiii. In David H. Engel, *Japanese Gardens for Today* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Life and Shape*. Los Angeles: Atara Press, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Survival Through Design*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 63

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Wie baut Amerika? (How Does America Build?)*. Stuttgart, Germany: Julius Hoffmann, 1927; reprint Munich, Germany: Kraus-Reprint, 1980. [In German]
- Noll, William. "Mission 66: The National Park Service Program for the Revitalization of America's National Parks, 1955-1966." Kansas State University, M.A. Thesis, 1992.
- Pehnt, Wolfgang, ed. *Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1964.
- Peters, John. *Masters of Modern Architecture*. New York: G. Braziller, 1958.
- Richard Neutra*. Library of Contemporary Architects. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.
- Sack, Manfred. *Richard Neutra: with an essay by Dion Neutra, Memories of my Years with Richard Neutra*. Zurich: Verlag für Architektur, 1992.
- Shulman, Julius. *Photographing Architecture and Interiors*. Los Angeles: Balcony Press, 2000. [With an introduction by Richard Neutra.]
- Spade, Rupert. "Introduction." *Richard Neutra* by Yukio Futagawa. Library of Contemporary Architects, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971.
- VanderMeer, Philip. *Desert Visions and the Making of Phoenix, 1860-2009*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2010.
- Whiffen, Marcus and Frederick Koeper. *American Architecture, Volume 2: 1860-1976*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981-83.
- Wirth, Conrad L. *Parks, Politics, and the People*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.
- ### Journal and Newspaper Articles
- Goble, Emerson. "Architecture (?) for the National Parks: Mission 66 Program Promises 10 Years of Opportunities and Arguments in the World's Most Wonderful Sites." *Architectural Record*, January 1957.
- Goldberger, Paul. "Restoring Neutra to His Place in History." *New York Times*, 25 July 1982.
- Hartzog, George B. "Tomorrow in our National Parks: Parkscape U.S.A." *National Geographic*, July 1966.
- Lamprecht, Barbara. "From Neutra in Japan, 1930, to His European Audiences and Southern California Work." *Southern California Quarterly* 92 (2010): 215-42.
- Lavin, Sylvia. "Richard Neutra and the Psychology of the American Spectator." *Grey Room* (Autumn 2000): 43-63.
- Longstreth, Richard. "I Don't Understand It, It Doesn't Look Old to Me." *Common Ground* (Summer 2003): 10-15.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 64

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Madrid French, Christine. "What is Mission 66?" *Mission 66: Modern Architecture in the National Parks*, 2002. <http://www.mission66.com>.

"More Livable Homes Part II: Bold New Plan for Best Land Use." *Life Magazine*, 22 September 1958.

"Nature Is My Goal." *Newsweek*, 28 May 1951. 54.

"Neutra to be Honored." *New York Times*, 27 March 1977.

"Residential: Award Citation." *Progressive Architecture*. January 1959.

"Richard Neutra, Architect, Dies; Helped Shape Modern Outlook." *New York Times*, 18 April 1970.

Udall, Steward L. "Can Federal Architecture Be Creative?" *Arizona Architect* 6 (February 1963): 12-19.

Vint, Thomas. "National Park Service Master Plans." *Planning and Civic Comment*, circa 1946.

"West Coast Architects I: Richard J. Neutra." *Arts and Architecture*, March 1964.

"What will the Neighbors Think?" *Time*, 15 August 1949.

### Correspondence (listed in chronological order)

E.T. Scoyen, "Notice of Approval, Petrified Forest National Monument." Washington, DC: National Park Service, February 8, 1957. Petrified Forest National Park, PEFO 33784.001.0033, "Historic Records and Central Files, PEFO ACC 00784." National Park Service: Western Archeological and Conservation Center, Tucson, Arizona. (hereafter WACC).

Letter from Fred C. Fagergren, Superintendent, to Charles P. Hunter, Vice President of the Fred Harvey Company, on August 22, 1958. Re: employee housing. Cornell #3087 box 31. "Robert Evans Alexander Papers, 1935-1993, Collection Number: 3087." Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library (hereafter Cornell).

Scoyen, "Notice of Approval" and National Park Service, "Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Petrified Forest National Monument, Mission 66 Edition." 1960. PEFO 33784.003.002. WACC.

Letter from Richard J. Neutra to Sanford Hill, WODC on September 28, 1961. Re: Landscaping. PEFO 33784.003.250. WACC.

Letter from John Rollow to Superintendent Fred C. Fagergren on November 29, 1961, Re: Painted Desert Community Admin. Apt Bldg. PEFO 33784.003.250. WACC.

Letter from Fred Fagergren, Superintendent, to Harry J. Mills, Kealy Construction Co., on February 5, 1962, Re: repairing replacing masonry block. PEFO 33784.003.157. WACC.

Letter from Richard Neutra to Philip F. Van Cleave and Fred C. Fagergren on February 17, 1962, Re: landscaping plan. "Richard and Dion Neutra papers, 1925-1970, Collection #1179." UCLA, Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library. (hereafter UCLA)



## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 65

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Draft letter from Richard Neutra to Thomas Allen, Southwest Regional Director, on January 25, 1963, Re: Painted Desert Complex. PEFO 33784.003.250. WACC.

Memorandum from Richard J. Neutra, architect to Painted Desert Residents, January 25, 1963. PEFO 33784.003.250. WACC.

Letter from John Rollow to the Fred Harvey Company on January 30, 1963, Re: special ceramic tile. PEFO 33784.003.157. WACC.

Letter from Thomas J. Allen to Richard J. Neutra on February 12, 1963, Re: project budget for landscaping. PEFO 33784.003.250. WACC.

Letter from Robert Alexander to Sanford Hill, July 24, 1964, Re: Petrified National Park Installation. PEFO 33784.003.162. WACC.

Letter from Sanford Hill to Southwest Regional Director on September 11, 1964, Re: Preliminary Report of Construction Deficiencies of Buildings at Painted Desert Community – Petrified Forest. PEFO 33784.003.163. WACC.

Memorandum from Sanford Hill to Southwest Regional Director on October 14, 1964, Re: Painted Desert Community – Petrified Forest. PEFO central files D3415. WACC.

Letter from Richard Neutra to Mrs. August Beinlich on December 4, 1964, Re: photographs. UCLA.

Letter from David B. Ames, Superintendent, to Manager of Texaco, Inc. on March 18, 1976. Re: new color scheme. PEFO central files D3415. WACC.

Memorandum from David B. Ames, Superintendent, to the Regional Director on April 14, 1977. Re: alteration of quarters. PEFO 33784.003.167. WACC.

Memorandum from Director of the National Park Service to the Washington Office and All Field Offices, June 27, 1995, Re: Mission 66, Progress and Procedures. [GRCA 80025]. WACC.

### Reports and Other Unpublished Materials

Architecture 2000, P.C., *Historic Structures Report, Painted Desert Community Complex, Petrified Forest National Park, Apache County, Arizona*. Denver, CO: National Park Service Intermountain Regional Office, November 20, 2006.

Baldwin, Eriksson and Peters. “Painted Desert Community—Landscape Plan.” Richard J. Neutra and Robert E. Alexander, 1958.

Caption List of Photographs for Painted Desert and Petrified Forest Visitors’ Center & Community, Architects: Neutra and Alexander. UCLA.

Carr, Ethan, Elaine Jackson-Retondo, Len Warner, Rodd Wheaton, John D. Feinberg, Carly M. Piccarello, and Sam Tamburro. “National Park Service Mission 66 Era Resources.” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. March 2015.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 66

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Carrico, Lisa. Great Sand Dunes National Monument and Preserve, Colorado. Interview by Thomas H. Simmons and Amanda Zeman Wallander. 10 February 2016.

Chief Naturalist Monthly Reports.

Cleeland, Teri. "Historic Route 66 in Arizona." National Register Nomination, E-3, 1988.

Color Schedule, Painted Desert Community [Residences], May 7, 1962. PEFO Central Files. WACC.

Color Schedule, Painted Desert Community, Community, Maintenance & Trailer Park Buildings, October 29, 1962. PEFO Central Files. WACC.

Completion Report Narrative, Trailer Court, APW, 1964.

Completion Report Narrative, Landscaping and Related Work, Painted Desert Headquarters, APW-16 PEFO. WACC.

Danson, Edward B. "Dedication Speech, Petrified Forest, October 27, 1963."

Department of Interior, National Park Service. "Annual Report of the Director National Park Service to the Secretary of Interior for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1956."

Department of Interior. News Release. 3 April 1958 and 7 November 1962.

Doty, Cecil. "Residential and Utility Area, Painted Desert Area." Preliminary Master Plan. 1950. NM-PF-3212.

"Interpretive Plan, Part of the Master Plan." 1949. 2106-B.

Invitation for Bids, Project No. PF-W 324. Western Office of Design and Construction, April 25, 1961.

Iversen, Phillip R. Fountain Hills, Arizona. Letter to T. Scott Williams, Petrified Forest National Park. 4 April 2005.

John Milner Associates, Inc. in association with Woolpert, LLP. *Painted Desert Community Complex Historic District: Cultural Landscape Report*. Petrified Forest National Park: National Park Service, November 2005.

LeRoy Crandall & Associates. "Report of Supplementary Soil Investigation and Investigation of Settlement, Painted Desert Community Development, Painted Desert, Arizona, for the Department of the Interior, National Parks Service." August 23, 1965.

Livingston, Dewey *et al.* "Historic Structure Report: Painted Desert Inn, Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona." Denver: National Park Service, October 1994, 3-23.

L. Kucera, Supervising Structural Engineer, Western Office, Design and Construction, "Petrified Forest National Park, Painted Desert Community: Investigation of Structural Failures of Block Walls of Residences." October 2, 1964.

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 67

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

---

Madrid French, Christine. "The Mission 66 Visitor Centers, 1956-66: Early Modern Architecture in the National Park Service." M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1998.

National Park Service, "Mission 66 for Petrified Forest National Monument." 1956.

"News Media Fact Sheet, Dedication of Petrified Forest National Park and New Visitor Facilities." October 27, 1963. Cornell #3087 box 31.

Neutra and Alexander. "Visitors' Center, Petrified Forest, U.S. National Park Service." Circa 1961. UCLA.

Neutra and Alexander. "Homes for National Park Service Families on a Wind-Swept Desert." Circa 1960.

Neutra and Alexander. "Painted Desert National Monument Community and Visitor's Center." Circa 1958.

Neutra and Alexander. "Petrified Forest Entrance Station Project." Prepared for Mr. Stewart L. Udall on April 13, 1961.

Neutra and Alexander. "Painted Desert Visitors' Center, Arizona National Park Service." From conversations of Richard Neutra with Mr. Sanford Hill, Western Division, U.S. National Park Service, Mr. Fagergren, Supt. Painted Desert, and Dr. Phil Van Cleave, Naturalist and head of Interpretations Service. UCLA.

Neutra and Alexander and Saul Bass, Designer. "Graphic Design for the Painted Desert Community in the Petrified Forest National Monument." November 10, 1958.

Neutra, Raymond. Neutra Studio and Residences. Draft National Historic Landmark nomination form based on National Register of Historic Places Form by Lauren Weiss Bricker. 5 April 2013.

Petrified Forest National Monument, Development Outline, 1950.

Petrified Forest National Monument, Master Plan, 1950, 2106-B.

Petrified Forest National Monument, "Painted Desert Region, Part of the Master Plan." 1958. NM-PF-3202.

Petrified Forest National Park, "General Development, Part of the Master Plan." 1966. NP-PF-2100-E.

"Report of Tests on Concrete Masonry Units," Engineers Testing Laboratories, Inc., for Project PF-W342 by Rasmussen Constr. Co., June 4, 1962. PEFO central files D3415. WACC.

Rollow, John C. Menifee, California. Interview by Thomas H. Simmons. 7 March 2016.

Specifications for Fred Harvey Concessions. PEFO central files. WACC.

Superintendent Monthly Reports.

Specifications for Lounge furniture in the Public Use Building at Petrified Forest National Monument.

Supplemental-Project B-6 PEFO, Narrative Statement, [from building file PD251].

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

Wallander, Amanda. "Brief History of Structural/Geotechnical Investigations at the Painted Desert Community Complex." 28 January 2016.

Wheaton, Rodd L. "The Painted Desert Community." September 1997. Document attachment. Rodd L. Wheaton, Architectural Historian, National Park Service, Denver, Colorado. Email to Michele Hellickson, Superintendent, Petrified Forest National Park. 20 July 1999.

Wheaton, Rodd and Bunyak, Dawn. "Draft Significance Statement: Petrified Forest National Park, Painted Desert Community." 1997.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

X Previously listed in the National Register (fill in 1 through 6 below)

\_\_\_ Not previously listed in the National Register (fill in only 4, 5, and 6 below)

- 1. NR #: 05000284
- 2. Date of listing: April 15, 2005
- 3. Level of significance: National
- 4. Applicable National Register Criteria: A X B \_\_\_ C X D \_\_\_
- 5. Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D \_\_\_ E \_\_\_ F \_\_\_ G X
- 6. Areas of Significance: Community Planning and Development, Architecture

Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register: Date of determination:  
 \_\_\_ Designated a National Historic Landmark: Date of designation:  
 \_\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: HABS No.  
 \_\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: HAER No.  
 \_\_\_ Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: HALS No.

Location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office:  
 Other State Agency:  
 Federal Agency: National Park Service, Petrified Forest National Park  
 Local Government:  
 University:  
 Other (Specify Repository): Western Archeological and Conservation Center, Tucson, Arizona

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 69

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### **8. FORM PREPARED BY**

Name/Title: Thomas H. Simmons and R. Laurie Simmons, Architectural Historians

Address: Front Range Research Associates, Inc.  
3635 West 46th Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80211

Telephone: 303-477-7597

E-mail: [fraden@msn.com](mailto:fraden@msn.com)

Name/Title: Amanda Zeman Wallander, Historic Preservation Specialist & Principal Investigator

Address: Center for Environmental Management of Military Lands  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colorado 80523

Telephone: 970-491-2769

E-mail: [Amanda.Wallander@colostate.edu](mailto:Amanda.Wallander@colostate.edu) and with editorial contributions by

Name/Title: Rodd L. Wheaton, Architectural Historian

Address: 3021 South Cornell Circle  
Englewood, Colorado 80113

Telephone: 303-789-9550

E-mail: [tsarrodd@aol.com](mailto:tsarrodd@aol.com)

Date: June 13, 2016

Edited by: Greg Kendrick, Assistant Regional Director, Partnerships & External Relations and  
Christy Dickinson, Historian, Heritage Partnerships Program  
National Park Service, Intermountain Regional Office  
12795 W. Alameda Parkway  
Denver, CO 80225

Telephone: (303) 987-6690

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 70

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### Figures Log

#### Location Map

Figure 1. The low, horizontal Painted Desert Community Complex blends into the surrounding desert landscape, as shown in this early view to the south. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, Phil Stitt, photographer, 1963.

Figure 2. This oblique aerial view east shows the complex ca. 1968-70. Interstate 40 and sewage lagoons are in the upper right, and the park access road crosses diagonally in the lower part of the image. The visitor center/administration building is the taller building at the corner of the parking lot. The angle of the photograph gives a good perspective on the nature of the courtyards within the residence blocks (the four large buildings in the left center of the image). Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 3. The visitor center/administration building is the focus of this 1963 photograph, with its glass curtain wall and second-story terrace with spider legs. The Painted Desert Oasis concession building is to the left. The apartment wing and plaza are visible in the opening between those two buildings. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, Philip Hyde, photographer, 1963.

Figure 4. The Painted Desert Oasis concession building displays its glass curtain wall in this view; the narrow ceramic tiles have not yet been installed on the circular columns in front. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, ca. 1963-64.

Figure 5. The front (east wall) of the apartment wing featured a band of windows on the second story and walled courtyards for the ground floor units. The community building is to the right in this ca. 1960s photograph. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 6. This overview of the central plaza shows the visitor center/administration building to the left and the Painted Desert Oasis concession building to the right. The pool is in the foreground. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, Philip Hyde, photographer, 1963.

Figure 7. This ca. 1960s view from the roof of the apartment wings provides an overview of the central plaza, with the Painted Desert Oasis concession building to the left and the residence blocks in the distance, with block A the nearest. The area between the concession building and the residence block now holds the orientation loop. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 8. The entrance station in the middle of the road (no longer extant) is to the left and the entrance station at the edge of the road (right) are shown in this 1960s image. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 9. The four residence blocks are shown in this view from the roof of the apartment wing, ca. 1960s. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 10. The four residence blocks and their flanking carports are shown in this annotated drawing. Neutra and Alexander's layout options are indicated in the plan labels: Block A reflects the C option and D the Cf Plan, while B and C display the Cf plan for the three south units and the C plan for the three north units. Courtesy of Gorski and Lovato, *Maintenance Guides for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Petrified Forest National Park* (2005), 62 (annotated).

## NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

### PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 71

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

---

Figure 11. The Painted Desert School lies to the right and the community building to the left in this ca. 1960s view. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 12. The front of the community building featured a wide roll-up door. The apartment wing is to the right. The Painted Desert School and the breezeway connector are not yet present on the left in this ca. 1963-64 view. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 13. The long maintenance building lies at the west side of the maintenance yard with the visitor center/administration building in the distance to the right in this ca. 1960s image. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 14. The vehicle storage building consisted of a series of open bays. This ca. 1960s view also shows the community building in the distance. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

Figure 15. The front wall of the Painted Desert Oasis facing the central plaza will be restored in the fall of 2016. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Express Foundation contributed \$150,000 to the effort. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, Painted Desert Oasis, Restore Storefront Elevations, 50% Drawing, 9 May 2016.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 72

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### Location Map



The black bordered trapezoid shows the area of the bounding polygon.

Point	Latitude:	Longitude:
A	35.068476	-109.779725
B	35.066832	-109.778179
C	35.064316	-109.781847
D	35.065214	-109.784357

Image Date: 5 June 2014

Datum: WGS84





# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 73

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

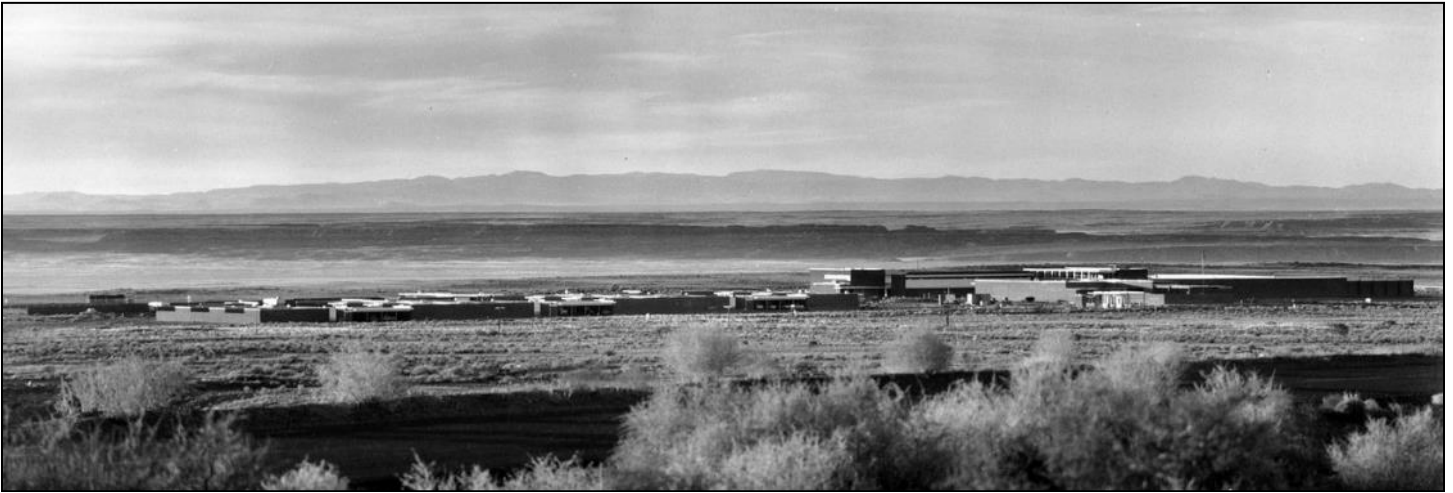


Figure 16. The low, horizontal Painted Desert Community Complex blends into the surrounding desert landscape, as shown in this early view to the south. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, Phil Stitt, photographer, 1963.



Figure 17. This oblique aerial view east shows the complex ca. 1968-70. Interstate 40 and sewage lagoons are in the upper right, and the park access road crosses diagonally in the lower part of the image. The visitor center/administration building is the taller building at the corner of the parking lot. The angle of the photograph gives a good perspective on the nature of the courtyards within the residence blocks (the four large buildings in the left center of the image). Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 74

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 18. The visitor center/administration building is the focus of this 1963 photograph, with its glass curtain wall and second-story terrace with spider legs. The Painted Desert Oasis concession building is to the left. The apartment wing and plaza are visible in the opening between those two buildings. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, Philip Hyde, photographer, 1963.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 75

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 19. The Painted Desert Oasis concession building displays its glass curtain wall in this view; the narrow ceramic tiles have not yet been installed on the circular columns in front. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, ca. 1963-64.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 76

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 20. The front (east wall) of the apartment wing featured a band of windows on the second story and walled courtyards for the ground floor units. The community building is to the right in this ca. 1960s photograph. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 77

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 21. This overview of the central plaza shows the visitor center/administration building to the left and the Painted Desert Oasis concession building to the right. The pool is in the foreground. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, Philip Hyde, photographer, 1963.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 78

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 22. This ca. 1960s view from the roof of the apartment wings provides an overview of the central plaza, with the Painted Desert Oasis concession building to the left and the residence blocks in the distance, with block A the nearest. The area between the concession building and the residence block now holds the orientation loop. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 79

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 23. The entrance station in the middle of the road (no longer extant) is to the left and the entrance station at the edge of the road (right) are shown in this 1960s image. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 80

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 24. The four residence blocks are shown in this view from the roof of the apartment wing, ca. 1960s. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.



NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 81

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

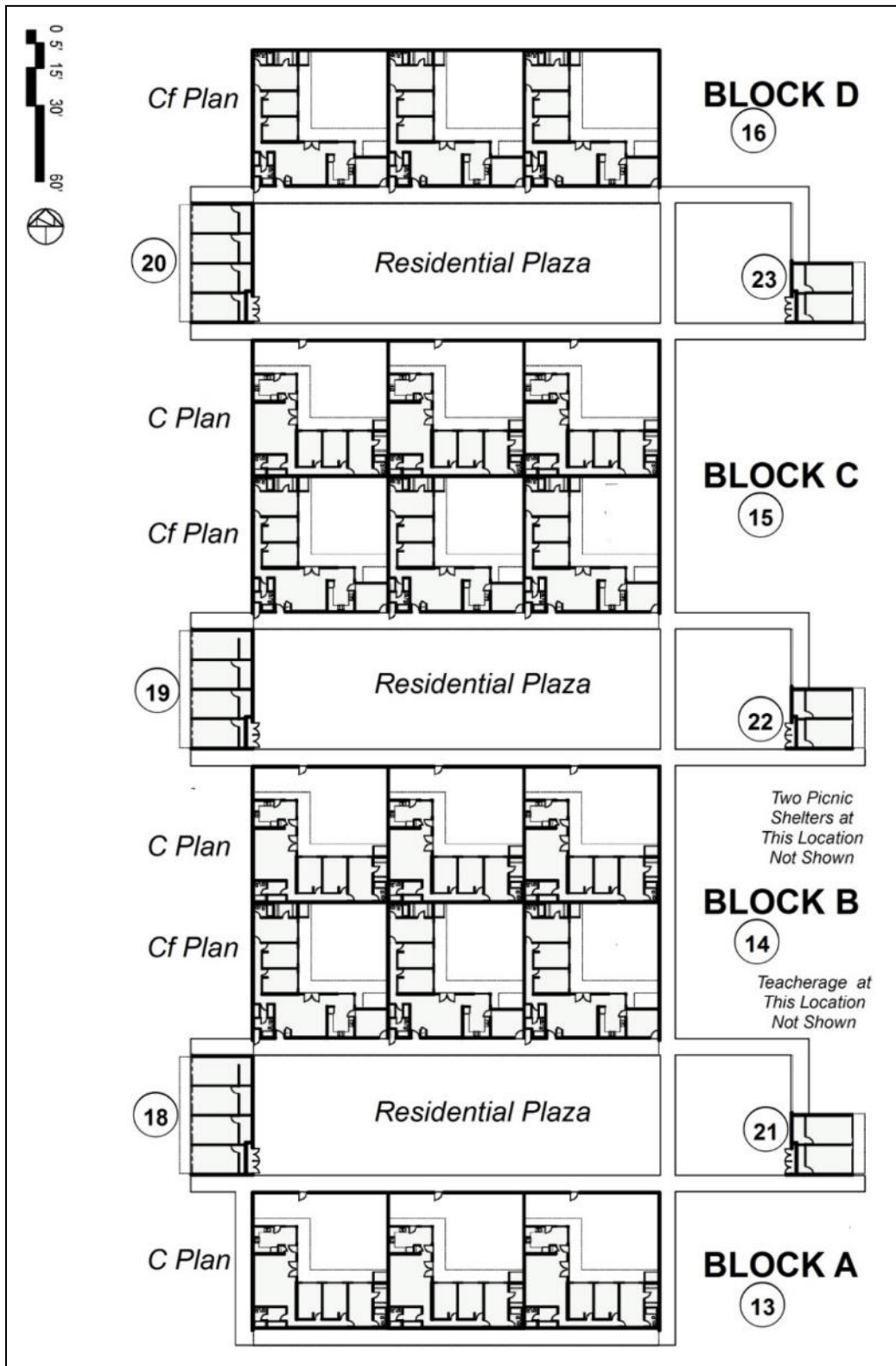


Figure 25. The four residence blocks and their flanking carports are shown in this annotated drawing. Neutra and Alexander’s layout options are indicated in the plan labels: Block A reflects the C option and D the Cf Plan, while B and C display the Cf plan for the three south units and the C plan for the three north units. Courtesy of Gorski and Lovato, *Maintenance Guides for the Treatment of Historic Properties, Petrified Forest National Park* (2005), 62 (annotated).

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 82

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 26. The Painted Desert School lies to the right and the community building to the left in this ca. 1960s view. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.



Figure 27. The front of the community building featured a wide roll-up door. The apartment wing is to the right. The Painted Desert School and the breezeway connector are not yet present on the left in this ca. 1963-64 view. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 83

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Figure 28. The long maintenance building lies at the west side of the maintenance yard with the visitor center/administration building in the distance to the right in this ca. 1960s image. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.



Figure 29. The vehicle storage building consisted of a series of open bays. This ca. 1960s view also shows the community building in the distance. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, photographic archives, undated.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 84

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

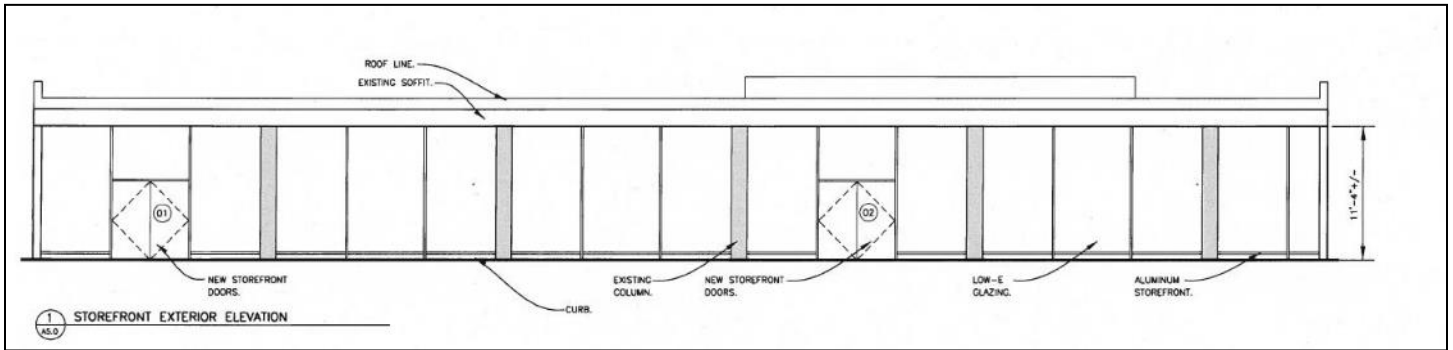


Figure 30. The front wall of the Painted Desert Oasis facing the central plaza will be restored in the fall of 2016. The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Express Foundation contributed \$150,000 to the effort. Courtesy Petrified Forest National Park, Painted Desert Oasis, Restore Storefront Elevations, 50% Drawing, 9 May 2016.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Page 85

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

### PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Name of Property: Painted Desert Community Complex  
City or Vicinity: Petrified Forest National Park  
County: Apache  
State: Arizona  
Photographer: Thomas H. Simmons (unless otherwise noted)  
Date: January 2016 (unless otherwise noted)

#### Number, camera direction, description of photograph:

- 1 of 38, view south, overview of complex and its setting from the park access road to the north.
- 2 of 38, view southeast, visitor center (Resource 1) in distance with Painted Desert Oasis concession building to left (Resource 2).
- 3 of 38, view south-southeast, visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), entrance/lobby at northwest corner.
- 4 of 38, view south-southeast, visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), north wall.
- 5 of 38, view southeast, visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), north terrace (second story).
- 6 of 38, view southeast, visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), second-story library. Note steel beam and original shelving.
- 7 of 38, view north, Painted Desert Oasis (Resource 2), front (east wall). Note columns clad with tile.
- 8 of 38, view east, Painted Desert Oasis (Resource 2), south wall.
- 9 of 38, view east-southeast, Painted Desert Oasis (Resource 2), service station/convenience store (west wall) and south wall to right.
- 10 of 38, view north-northeast, apartment wing (Resource 3), west wall, and central plaza (Resource 5).
- 11 of 38, view south-southwest, apartment wing (Resource 3), north and west wall. Visitor center/administration building is to the right.
- 12 of 38, view west-southwest, apartment wing (Resource 3), east wall, with east wall of visitor center/administration building to left.
- 13 of 38, view southwest, central plaza (Resource 4), with visitor center/administration building (center), Painted Desert Oasis (right), and apartment wing (left). Note sandstone bench to left.
- 14 of 38, view east-northeast, central plaza (Resource 4) from second-story north terrace of visitor center/administration building.
- 15 of 38, view south-southeast, central plaza (Resource 4), pool, with apartment wing to right and community building to left. Raymond Neutra, photographer, October 2015
- 16 of 38, view north-northeast, orientation loop (Resource 5), Residence Block A (Resource 13) in the background.
- 17 of 38, view north, covered walkway (Resource 6), with residence blocks A and B to left (Resource 13 and 14, respectively) and carport (Resource 21) to right. Brad Traver, photographer, June 2016.
- 18 of 38, view east-northeast, entrance station (Resource 7), with residence blocks in the background.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 86

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form

- 19 of 38, view south, community building (Resource 9), north and west walls, with apartment building to right and school to left.
- 20 of 38, view north, community building (Resource 9), with school to right and apartment wing to left.
- 21 of 38, view west-southwest, Painted Desert School (Resource 10), with community building to left.
- 22 of 38, view south-southwest, Painted Desert School (Resource 10), rear, with covered walkway in foreground and community building in distance to right.
- 23 of 38, view south-southwest, basketball court (Resource 12) with the photovoltaic array (Resource 30) to the right.
- 24 of 38, view southwest, residence block showing east walls of blocks A through D (left to right, Resources 13, 14, 15, and 16).
- 25 of 38, view north-northwest, residence block A (Resource 13), front (south wall) and part of east wall, with 2016 drainage improvements in foreground.
- 26 of 38, view north-northwest, residence block B (Resource 14), south and east walls, with carport (Resource 18) at far left, with 2016 drainage improvements in foreground.
- 27 of 38, view east-northeast, residence block C (Resource 15), front (south wall).
- 28 of 38, view north-northwest, residence block D (Resource 16), front (south wall).
- 29 of 38, view west-southwest, rear (north wall) of residence block D.
- 30 of 38, view north, teacherage (Resource 17).
- 31 of 48, view east-northeast, four-car carport (Resource 18), front (west) and south walls.
- 32 of 38, view west-southwest, two-car carport (Resource 21) with covered walkway (Resource 6) to left.
- 33 of 38, view north-northwest, two-car carport (Resource 23).
- 34 of 38, view west, picnic shelters (Resources 24 and 25, left and right, respectively), with the teacherage (Resource 17) to the left.
- 35 of 38, view northeast, trailer court (Resource 26), view down central access road from south end.
- 36 of 38, view west, trailer court building (Resource 27), front (north wall).
- 37 of 38, view west, maintenance building (Resource 28), front (east wall).
- 38 of 38, view south, vehicle storage building (Resource 29), front (west wall).

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 87

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 1. Overview of complex and its setting from the park access road to the north.



Photograph 2. Visitor center (Resource 1) in distance with Painted Desert Oasis concession building to left (Resource 2).

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 88**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 3. Visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), entrance/lobby at northwest corner.



Photograph 4. Visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), north wall.



NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 89**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 5. Visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), north terrace (second story).



Photograph 6. Visitor center/administration building (Resource 1), second-story library. Note steel beam and original shelving.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 90**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 7. Painted Desert Oasis concession building (Resource 2), front (east wall). Note columns clad with tile.



Photograph 8. Painted Desert Oasis concession building (Resource 2), south wall.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 91**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 9. Painted Desert Oasis concession building (Resource 2), service station/convenience store (west wall) and south wall to right.



Photograph 10. Apartment wing (Resource 3), west wall.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 92

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 11. Apartment wing (Resource 3), north and west wall. Visitor center/administration building is to the right.



Photograph 12. Apartment wing (Resource 3), east wall, with east wall of visitor center/administration building to left.

# NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

## PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

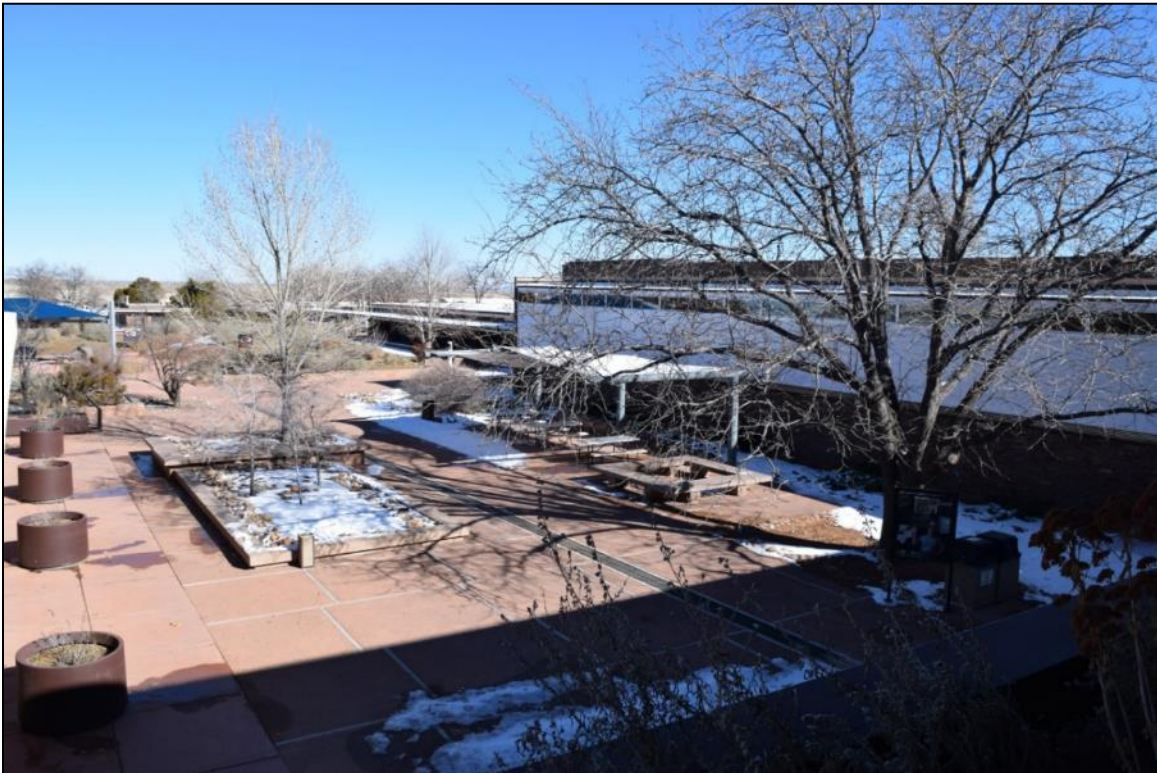
Page 93

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 13. Central plaza (Resource 4), with visitor center/administration building (center), Painted Desert Oasis (right), and apartment wing (left). Note sandstone bench to left.



Photograph 14. Central plaza (Resource 4) from second-story north terrace of visitor center/administration building.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 94**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 15. Central plaza (Resource 4), pool, with apartment wing to right and community building to left.



Photograph 16. Orientation loop (Resource 5), residence block A (Resource 13) in the background.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 95**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 17. Covered walkway (Resource 6), with residence blocks A and B to left (Resource 13 and 14, respectively) and carport (Resource 21) to right.



Photograph 18. Entrance station (Resource 7), with residence blocks in the background.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 96**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 19. Community building (Resource 9), north and west walls, with apartment building to right and school to left.



Photograph 20. Community building (Resource 9), with school to right and apartment wing to left.



NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 97**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 21. Painted Desert School (Resource 10), with community building to left.



Photograph 22. Painted Desert School (Resource 10), rear, with covered walkway in foreground and community building in distance to right.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 98**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 23. Basketball/volleyball court (Resource 12) with the photovoltaic array (Resource 30) to the right.



Photograph 24. Residence block showing east walls of blocks A through D (left to right, Resources 13, 14, 15, and 16).

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 99

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 25. Residence Block A (Resource 13), front (south wall) and part of east wall with 2016 drainage improvements in foreground.



Photograph 26. Residence block B (Resource 14), south and east walls, with carport (Resource 18) at far left, with 2016 drainage improvements in foreground.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 100**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 27. Residence block C (Resource 15), front (south wall).



Photograph 28. Residence block D (Resource 16), front (south wall).

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 101**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 29. Rear (north wall) of residence block D.



Photograph 30. Teacherage apartment (Resource 17).

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

Page 102

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 31. Four-car carport (Resource 18), front (west) and south walls.



Photograph 32. Two-car carport (Resource 21) with covered walkway (Resource 6) to left.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 103**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 33. Two-car carport (Resource 23).



Photograph 34. Picnic shelters (Resources 24 and 25, left and right, respectively), with the teacherage (Resource 17) to the left.

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 104**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 35. Trailer court (Resource 26), view down central access road from south end.



Photograph 36. Trailer court building (Resource 27), front (north wall).



NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

**PAINTED DESERT COMMUNITY COMPLEX**

**Page 105**

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form



Photograph 37. Maintenance building (Resource 28), front (east wall).



Photograph 38. Vehicle storage building (Resource 29), front (west wall).