

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PALM DESERT

# THE MELVYN BRADFORD HOUSE 1952

73576 Pinyon Street, Palm Desert, CA



Photos: Zillow.com

Melvyn Bradford, President of Metro Homes, commissioned Walter White to design a Palm Desert residence in 1952.

The 3 Bedroom, 4 Bath 3,086 square foot home sits on a a 1/2 acre lot.

The house is a larger version of the standard Metro Homes style with the Walter White signature elements including the large overhanging roof, clerestory windows and the home angled on the lot.

**ARCHITECT:**  
WALTER S. WHITE

**BUILDER:**  
MELVYN BRADFORD,  
METRO HOMES

**ORIGINAL OWNERS:**  
MR & MRS MELVYN  
BRADFORD

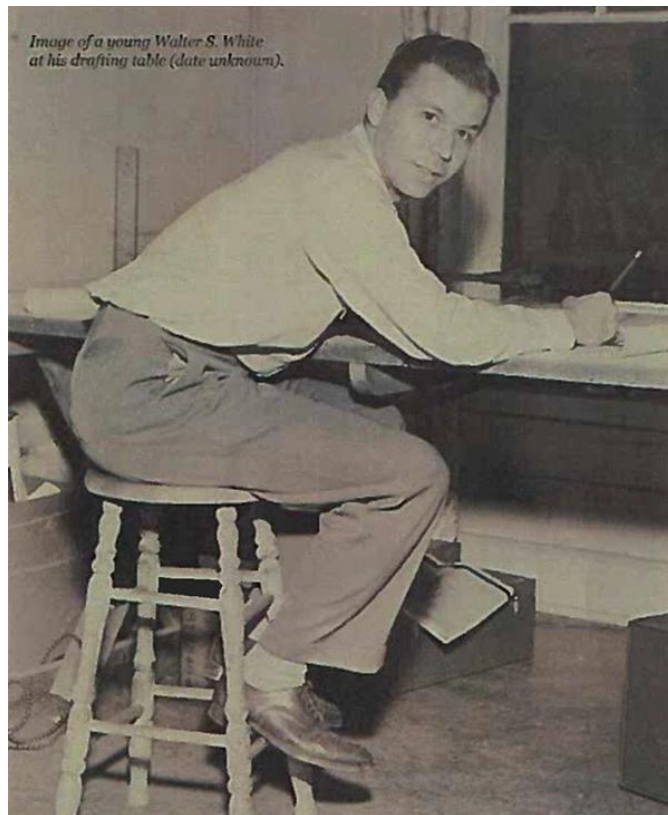


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Walter S. White was born in San Bernardino in 1917. Between 1933 and 1936 he attended San Bernardino High School. White learned how to build from his father, who owned a construction business in San Bernardino, California, honed his technical skills in a Southern California airplane factory during World War II, and worked in the offices of noted architects Rudolf M. Schindler, Harwell Hamilton Harris, and Albert Frey.

By the mid-1940s White was a designer, builder, and developer to the growing number of desert dwellers in California's Coachella Valley. With nearly 50 homes in Palm Desert alone attributed to White, he quickly became the "go to" designer for homes in the Shadow Mountain neighborhood,

## Walter S. White



After moving to Colorado Springs in 1960, White designed many of the private residences in the exclusive Kissing Camels Estates. In the 1970s he established a reputation for designs that relied on passive solar energy.

White's career is notable for three major areas of focus: inexpensive, even DIY architecture; innovation in construction and materials; and concern for nature and sustainability. In the early years of his practice, right after World War II, White focused on designing minimal and small, inexpensive houses. These include his affordable wooden cabins for returning G.I.s, small concrete-block houses in the desert, and prefab steel and wood cabins for mountain sites.

White had an abiding interest in the construction of buildings and was fearless in his experimentation. He held patents for innovative construction methods, including one for hyperbolic-paraboloid roofs. White's concern for the local landscape and the earth's environment led him to design buildings that took advantage of their natural settings while also caring for nature and sitting lightly on the land. Especially in the 1970s, the efficiency of his buildings and their effect on man's energy consumption became a focus of his practice.

Walter S. White died in 2002, at the age of 85.

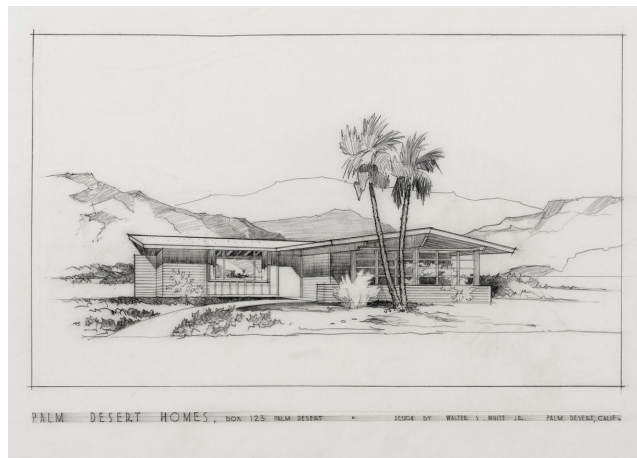
Source: Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara

# Metro Homes

White worked with the Metro Homes company to design small homes for subdivisions throughout California. In Palm Desert, Metro Homes (also known as "Palm Desert Homes") developed standardized small, affordable one- or two-bedroom homes (either oblong or T-shaped) with and without attached carports.

A large development was planned just south of the Sandpiper, however, the Palm Desert Corporation, the landowner, did not allow only one architect and developer to design houses for an entire neighborhood, so only a small number of homes were built.

Melvyn Bradford, President of Metro Homes, commissioned Walter White to build his personal residence on Pinyon Street in Palm Desert. It is a larger version of the basic Metro home.



Source: Walter S. White papers, Architecture and Design Collection; Art, Design & Architecture Museum; University of California, Santa Barbara

Historical Society of Palm Desert  
[www.hspd.org](http://www.hspd.org)

