

Desert modern master: William F Cody's original sketches go on display in LA

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ARCHITECTURE

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BY CHARLOTTE JANSEN

In the 1950s, the quiet, affluent town of Palm Springs, California, became a sanctuary for the extremely rich and very famous. Its proximity to Los Angeles made it the perfect place for Hollywood glitterati to escape the city to or buy a second home in.

William F Cody – an architect from Ohio – was in the right place at the right time. In 1949, his first independent commission in Palm Springs, the Hotel Del Marcos, a 17-room resort built in native stone and redwood, was awarded a Certificate of Honor by the Southern California Chapter of the AIA. The hotel's cutting-edge features – a grandiose asymmetric entrance, glittering floor to ceiling glass and U-shaped plan surrounding the inviting waters of the pool – maximising the vast surrounding landscape with the San

Jacinto mountains as a backdrop, established Cody's name in Palm Springs and he relocated his practice there to capitalise on the opportunity. Among his clients were Walt Disney, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. He would become one of the most prolific and influential exponents of desert modern architecture in its halcyon days.

Cody worked tirelessly before his career was cut short by his sudden death aged 62, in 1978. By then, he was renowned for his outstanding and experimental recreational spaces: country clubs, spas, hotels and restaurants across Southern California, including his Palm Springs Spa Hotel, that he spent a decade renovating and redesigning. Demand was high and he also executed several distinctive projects further afield, such as the Villa Real Country Club and Hotel in Havana, Cuba.

The majority of these buildings, however, have since been demolished. The few examples that still exist today are community buildings, such as the Palm Springs Library and the St Theresa Catholic Church and Convent.

To realign Cody's place in architectural history in the region and to commemorate his legacy, 100 years after his birth, the Architecture and Design Museum, LA presents 'Fast Forward: The Architecture of William F Cody' – reviving some of his lost mid-century modernist designs through photographs, renderings and objects made by students of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

Captions:

Shooting to success in the 1950s, Cody would become one of the most prolific and influential exponents of desert modern

architecture in its halcyon days. Pictured: a page from Cody's project portfolio, 1960

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He also executed several distinctive projects further afield, such as the Villa Real Country Club and Hotel in Havana, Cuba. Pictured: sketch of 'large armchair', designs by Maurice Martiné for Villa Real, Havana, Cuba

Sketches of 'marble table, combination sofa and table, combination bureau and luggage rack', designs by Maurice Martiné for Villa Real, Havana

This exhibition aims to revive some of Cody's lost mid-century modernist designs through photographs, renderings and objects made by students of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

<http://www.wallpaper.com/architecture/midcentury-architect-to-the-stars-william-f-codys-original-sketches-go-on-display-in-los-angeles#txE9fUqJjhgu6UKH.99>