United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum

other names/site number Cabot's Pueblo Museum

DRAFT

2. Location

street & number 67-616 East Desert View Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Desert Hot Springs ☐ vicinity

state California code CA county Riverside code 065 zip code 92240

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ **national** ___ **statewide** ___**local**

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum
Name of Property

Riverside, CA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

	private
X	public - Local
	public - State
	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

X	building(s)
	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	7	buildings
		sites
	2	structures
	1	objects
2	10	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Mixed Use Residence / General Store / Art Gallery / Museum

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Mixed Use: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals / Pueblo

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Conventional wood frame with metal lath and cement plaster; adobe-style blocks (augmented with concrete) on the first floor.

roof: New elastomeric roof

other: Vigas: wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

SUMMARY PARAGRAPH

The 4.77 acre site of "Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum" compound contains several buildings, two of which qualify as historic resources for their association with Desert Hot Springs pioneer Cabot Abram Yerxa. The two buildings are the "Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum Building and the so-called "Nellie's House." Both buildings also qualify as historic resources because they reflect the distinctive characteristics of the Pueblo Revival style in their form, plan, and style, and possess high artistic values as they articulate the concepts of the Pueblo Revival design.

SETTING

The Legend posted on the attached Survey of "Miracle Hill" (as Yerxa named the property) lists 20 distinct elements including buildings, structures, objects and site elements; this legend is used to identify the location of the elements found on the property. The compound is located on a steeply sloping site at the foot of a small canyon. In siting the main buildings, Yerxa undertook a large cut-and-fill project. The soil he excavated from the mountain was used to create the flat area where the Courtyard exists today. Water runoff from the Canyon was routed through the property and is expressed in a system of walkways and small bridges that carried the water through the site. A seventy-foot long retaining wall was built under what is now the eastern wall of the Museum Building to hold back the mountain and provide a flat building site; some portions of the first floor utilize this retaining wall and consequently are below grade. Undisturbed natural vegetation is found throughout the undeveloped parts of the site.

BUILDINGS

This property is a 4.77 acre portion of Yerxa's original 160 acre homestead and contains two buildings (Nos. 1 & 2 on the site plan) which appear to qualify as historic resources. Seven outbuildings (Nos. 3-9), two structures (Nos.10 & 11) and one object (No.13) do not qualify as historic resources. In addition a contemporary Public Restroom facility (No. 19) has been added to the compound that does not qualify as an historic resource. [See Site Plan].

The most significant buildings on the property are the iconic "Cabot's Old Pueblo Museum" (No. 1) and the house Yerxa built for his mother called "Nellie's House" (No. 2); both buildings reflect the Pueblo Revival style. The Well House (No. 3), Barn / 14-Mile shed (No. 4), Tool Shed (No. 5), Trading Post & Gallery (No. 6), Guild (No. 7), Storage Sheds (No. 8), and Outhouse (No. 9) were used to support the construction of the main Pueblo, but do not reflect the Pueblo style and are not otherwise significant on their own. They are vernacular buildings and some have been significantly altered. The two

Ramada-like structures (Nos. 10 & 11) are not original to the compound and are of a fairly recent vintage. The *Waokiye* sculpture (No. 13) is an object that was installed in 1976; the Public Restroom Building (Building No. 9) was built in 2009.

No. 01 "Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum"

Construction started on Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum ("the Museum") main building in 1941; it was completed and opened to the public as a Trading Post, Museum / Art Gallery and personal residence in 1944. Yerxa continued to build on the property,[1] but the original Museum is essentially unchanged since 1944. A later phase of construction included the addition of a west wing that tied the Museum into what is now the Trading Post. These two elements lack the overt Pueblo-style massing and detailing that characterizes the main building. This addition does not seriously compromise the original building's integrity.

The Museum and "Nellie's House" are both contributing buildings that draw from aspects of the historic Pueblos of the Southwestern United States including the 14th Century Cliff Dwellings of Mesa Verde and the 16th century Taos Pueblo. Their massing simulates the multi-tier, flat-roofed, baked-clay dwellings with series of rising dwelling units or terraces assembled one atop another. The design emphasizes the massing of earthen-like walls covered with unpainted cement plaster irregularly textured over adobe bricks. The final appearance suggests hand execution with a "time-battered" patina in homage to the weathered deterioration of the extant historic Pueblo dwellings. The massing simulates the pyramidal forms and volumes of historic models. Other details include blunted and rounded corners and edges of walls utilizing hand construction techniques. In profile, the buildings are stepped upward with setback terraces; heights are staggered so that the building appears to have grown organically over time as demand increased, rather than being built to a preconceived architectural plan. Upper volumes are placed asymmetrically above a low-lying ground floor to appear as a series of individual pods that emphasize the corners of the building. The first floor incorporates garden plots contained within free-standing walls beyond the Museum building, integrating the nearby landscape into the overall composition and giving the impression of an agricultural occupation.

Both buildings were designed and built by Cabot Yerxa using new materials and conventional wood frame construction methods, as evidenced by historic photographs. Aged materials salvaged from earlier buildings on the site and abandoned buildings elsewhere in the area give the Museum an impression of age that belies its actual vintage. Throughout his life, Yerxa had a strong interest in Native American culture. He collected images of Native America dwellings that informed the architecture and design of his buildings. It is not clear if he visited the Hopi Reservation prior to embarking on the building project, but a visit in 1959 has been confirmed. Yerxa built the compound from his own sketches; no licensed architects or architectural drawings were used in the Museum's construction.

01 Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum

The four-level Museum is oriented on a north-south axis with a floor plan of approximately 70' in length by a maximum of 30' in width, expressed as a series of small interlocking rectangles, mostly one room deep; it contains approximately 5000 sq. ft. Interior corridors are non-existent, requiring a number of exterior doors, all of which were handmade from wooden planks. Early photographs reveal the building's conventional wood-frame construction covered with building paper, metal lath and cement plaster. Hand-made adobe-style blocks (augmented with concrete) form portions of the first floor walls, most of which were then partially covered with cement plaster for a picturesquely aged effect. The adobe blocks appear only on the principal facade of the building. False parapets, some utilizing the adobe blocks were also introduced in some instances on the upper levels give the building a more substantial appearance.

Each room is unique in shape and size, and no door, window, floor, or wall is the same. Yerxa salvaged, stored and recycled materials on site for use in the construction of the Museum from abandoned homesteads, businesses, and canal and aqueduct construction around the desert. The facades are typically punctuated by from the inside out with regularly-spaced, projecting, undressed rafters known as "vigas" which suggest a pre-colonial post-and-lintel vernacular construction method. The vigas at the first floor utilize recycled telephone poles, while the upper level vigas

[1] Yerxa built his original home on his homestead in 1913 which he called "Eagle's Nest;" it is no longer extant. In 1960 Yerxa began constructing a second compound called "Eagle's Nest 2", located north of the Museum. While never completed, it occupied Yerxa's time so that no other changes occurred to the Museum building and compound.

use smaller lumber. Rough-surfaced wooden lintels above the windows at the ground floor speak of a pre-industrial age. The upper level windows rely on sheet metal flashing in lieu of lintels and are therefore less accurate in their stylistic interpretation.

The buildings utilize both custom-built and recycled windows that range from a few inches in dimension to several feet. All are wood frame, and paint residue suggests that they were originally painted blue, mimicking the painted trim at the Taos Pueblo. The building contains 150 windows of which the predominant window style makes use of pieces of salvaged glass stitched together into wooden frames of recycled lumber. The building's sixty-five doors are as unique as the windows, no two exactly the same size and many cobbled together from scraps of wood and metal. Nearly all of the original doors and windows remain intact with a few new doors strategically replaced for administrative or safety purposes.

The First Floor served as the original trading post and living quarters. The living room floor is packed earth. A massive stone fireplace was the only source of heat. The dining room, Yerxa's "Kiva room," is important because it symbolized the Native American concept of a prayer room. It housed a simple table, benches, and some Native American artifacts. The rest of the first floor housed the foyer, office, kitchen, workroom, storage rooms and a second well head. All of these remain intact with exception of a former apartment area for guests where Cole Eyraud lived as caretaker from 1968-1994, which has been converted into administrative offices.

The Second Floor interior was decorated for Mrs. Yerxa's use. It contains a kitchen, bedroom, bath, and sitting room. Attached to this area, via a staircase to the third story, is a meditation room. The rest of the second floor was used as exhibition space to house the art work and relics Yerxa collected on his travels. The two areas are connected by a small passageway.

The Third Floor, located above the art gallery, is a large room with open windows running its length. It offers views of the surrounding mountains and was used by Mrs. Yerxa as a classroom. Access is by roof and/ or ladder, as there is no interior access to these rooms. Additionally on this level there are three artist's live/work rooms that were used by visiting artists.

The Fourth Floor consists of only a single room with its own outdoor terrace, accessible only by a ladder.

The original roofs and terraces were a patchwork of wood and tar that have been replaced starting in the mid- 1980s and again in 2005, the last time with an elastomeric waterproof membrane.

02 Nellie's House / Guest House

Built after the Museum building, as a free-standing three-story adjunct to the Museum to which it is connected by a short pathway; this is the only other building in the compound built in the Pueblo style. The flat roofed building has an ell-shaped floor plan (approximately 12' x 20') at the first floor, and a rectangular plan above. It was built of conventional wood framing faced with building paper, metal lath and cement plaster, and is unpainted. Unlike the Museum building, it has no "adobe" blocks. Doors and windows are wood framed and no two are alike. Like the Museum, this building has Vigas at each level, as well as some timbers that extend a few feet beyond the building face that were used as shade structures.

The lowest level contained the Living Room, Kitchen and Bathroom, while the second level was for sleeping. The third level has a single room and an outdoor terrace. In retrospect, the building was not really an appropriate design as the home for an elderly person, although it was built for Yerxa's aged mother Nellie who was invited by Yerxa to live at the compound with her son in 1939. Nellie briefly lived in the building before her death in May, 1942. It is currently vacant pending restoration.

OUTBUILDINGS

03 Well House

The 5' x 15' rectangular, split-level, flat-roofed well house was built in 1949 and houses the second well head on the property. It is a conventional cement plaster faced wood-frame structure with a two-level flat roof and is a vernacular structure with no stylist markers. Soil erosion has resulted in the need for additional structural support for the foundation in the form of a retaining wall of concrete masonry units. This is not the location of the original wells Yerxa discovered when he homesteaded the property. It was built above the Museum site - its location was intended to maximize the effect of gravity when bringing water to the building. The piping was divided into solid and perforated sections.

04 14-Mile Shed / Barn

This 10' x 12' flat-roofed wood-sided building bears a strong resemblance to the original barn Yerxa built on the property in the homesteading years, and for good reason. Yerxa wrote about disassembling the original barn and reusing the lumber to build a new barn at the new location. The barn was used to house burros and had a slightly elevated hay loft. It is now used for storage.

05 Tool Shed

The 9' x 12' gable-roofed tool shed is a wood-framed windowless structure with rough board siding. The building has no finished interior walls but much of the interior framing is faced with discarded tin newspaper plates, as well as other miscellany. The original roof of the tool shed has been replaced with a new roof of corrugated plastic topped with rough boards have been placed above the plastic but not attached to the structure. A jerry-rigged structure composed of unfinished flat boards with a wooden support structure shades the entrance.

06 Yerxa Residence / Trading Post

Early photographs show this building, originally built in 1939, as two sheds used by Yerxa as a sleeping room and garage until construction of the main building was complete. Today, it is a one-story flat-roofed building expanded to approximately 16' deep and 26' long. It lacks any overt stylistic references and appears to have been built from salvaged materials. It bears no resemblance to the original. The roof was resurfaced in 2009 with an elastomeric coating. The use of the building was changed in 2008 when it was converted to "Cabot's Trading Post & Gallery and The Desert Hot Springs Visitor's Center."

07 Guild

The 12' x 16' shed-roofed Guild is a wood frame structure with cement plaster exterior finish and a one-story rectangular plan. Originally conceived as a classroom and artist studio; today it is used for storage. It has an unusual assortment of mismatched windows that appear to have been salvaged from several other buildings. A series of rough-hewn projecting rafters may have originally supported a shade structure along the building's south façade, but today only the badly deteriorated projecting rafters have survived. A hand-made door composed of diagonal boards provides entrance to the building.

08 Metal Sheds

Two 10' x 12' utility sheds with galvanized sheet metal walls and roof are connected to each other with a rustic flat - roofed shade structure that has no walls. The sheds have no stylistic markers. The gable roofs have a slight overhang, and the buildings each have a single-lite window in a wood frame on each wall. Originally thought to be used to house livestock, today the sheds are used to store salvaged building materials.

09 Outhouse

This small (3' x 5') flat-roofed, cement plaster sided, wood-framed structure with a single door is no longer in use. It has the same aged and deteriorated projecting rafters that may have supported a shade structure

10 Ramada

This 7' x 8' structure is made of four recycled telephone poles used as columns that support a roof system of wooden beams and rafters that carry a reclaimed board roof. Traditional Ramadas used Palm fronds for roofs.

11 Lean-to

This lean-to is an 8' x 16' shade structure used as an open air room made of six 6 x 6 posts and wooden beams and rafters that support a reclaimed board roof.

13 Waokiye

"Waokiye" is a 43 foot tall Lakota Sioux Indian totem carved from a 750 year-old Sequoia Redwood created by sculptor Peter Toth. It is the 27th of 70 of the "Whispering Giants" series created by Toth from 1971 to the present. Installed and dedicated in 1978, it is a non-contributing object.

LANDSCAPE FEATURES

There are some original fences, outdoor concrete seating, concrete framed planters, a wooden bridge, and walkways made of concrete and railroad ties between and around the buildings, some of which were created by Cabot Yerxa. There have also been a number of new landscape additions.

INTEGRITY ANALYSIS: With the exception of the previously cited roof resurfacing, new interior doors in the administrative area, and the new Public Restroom facility, no character-defining changes have been made to the contributing buildings since they were built.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [ ] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [x] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [x] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.

Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum
Name of Property

Riverside, CA
County and State

☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

B: Persons

C: Architecture

Period of Significance

1913-1941

Significant Dates

1913-1944

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cabot Yerxa

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Cabot Abram Yerxa

Period of Significance (justification)
The years 1913 to 1941 encompass the homesteading of the property by Yerxa beginning in 1913 and ending with the completion of Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum in 1944. Later construction on the site is considered non-contributing.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph
(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Museum and "Nellie's House" appear to qualify for National Register listing at the local level under Criterion B (Persons) based upon the significance of Cabot Abram Yerxa to the development of the community and Criterion C (Design / Construction) because they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, and period and possess high artistic values.

Criterion B: Cabot Abram Yerxa was an itinerant adventurer whose actual life as a Postmaster and merchant was far overshadowed by his avocations as an artist and a Native American advocate. He was born on the Lakota Sioux Reservation in the Dakota Territories and grew up working in his father's general store. In 1900, at the age of 16, encouraged by his father, Yerxa left his parents' home to establish a cigar store in Nome, Alaska. Later travels included Europe, Cuba, and Central and South America. He homesteaded in California, becoming one of the nine earliest families to settle the Desert Hot Springs area. His discovery of the first hot spring led to the founding of the city of Desert Hot Springs. He built two iconic Pueblo-style buildings, "Cabot's Old Pueblo Museum" and "Nellie's House" remarkable buildings that survive today largely with a high level of architectural integrity.

Criterion C: Both the Museum and "Nellie's House" embody the distinctive characteristics of the Pueblo Revival style in their form, plan, and style, and both also possess high artistic values because they fully articulate the concepts of the Pueblo Revival design. So convincing are these buildings as examples of the style that they are often mistaken for their historic counterparts. In this way, they express the aesthetic ideal of the ancient Pueblos.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

B: Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Cabot Yerxa (1883-1965) was the first of two sons born to Frederick[2] and Nellie Yerxa, in the Dakota Territories. A second son Harry was born in 1885. The family lived at the parents' trading post on the Sioux Indian Reservation. Growing up on the reservation led Yerxa to a lifelong appreciation of Native American culture. In 1900, at the age of 16, encouraged by his father, Yerxa left his parents' home to establish a cigar store in Nome, Alaska. He stayed on in Nome and developed a friendship with the Inupiak[3] Indians who taught him to communicate in their native language. He was able to act as an interpreter for them. It was here that he began his collection of Native American artifacts. He returned to his family in 1901. By 1906 the Yerxa family had relocated to Minneapolis / St. Paul where Frederick Yerxa owned general stores in Fargo and Minneapolis / Saint Paul. While in Minneapolis, Cabot Yerxa met and married Mamie Katherine Carstenson (1885-1956) the daughter of a German immigrant. A subsequent move brought the entire family to southern California where they became prosperous citrus ranchers. By 1910 Yerxa and Mamie (along with his brother Harry) were living in Sierra Madre where he was employed as the Postmaster, a position he held from 1906 until 1912. Cabot homesteaded on his claim in October 1913. In 1914, Yerxa's only son Rodney (1914-1985) was born at Queen of Angels Hospital in Los Angeles. A disastrous freeze in 1913 ended the citrus venture and left the family destitute; Cabot's parents moved to northern California, where Frederick Yerxa died in 1914, a broken man.

[2] Frederick Robinson Yerxa (1861- 1913) was born in New Brunswick, Canada, but moved to Boston as a youngster. He met and married a bookkeeper, Nellie Cabot (1859-1942) of Cambridge and together they moved to the Dakota Territories to operate an Indian Trading Post. He owned mercantile stores (groceries and sundries) in Fargo and Minneapolis / Saint Paul, and made some daring investments including bankrolling his son Cabot's cigar store in Nome, Alaska, real estate investment in Cuba after the Spanish-American War and buying orange groves in California. The citrus freeze of 1913 was his financial undoing. He moved to Northern California "for his health," then died shortly after in Oakland at age 51. The official cause of death was cirrhosis of the liver. He was survived by his wife, Nellie, two sons, Cabot and Harry, and a granddaughter, Jeanetta, Harry's daughter.

[3] The Iñupiat (plural) or Iñupiaq (singular) and Iñupiak (dual) (from iñuk 'person' - and -piaq 'real', i.e., 'real people') or formerly Inupik.

Having lost everything, Cabot Yerxa set out reestablish himself by homesteading in a remote corner of Riverside County, an optimistic choice for a penniless married man. He made his way inland to the present site of Desert Hot Springs where he homesteaded a 160-acre parcel of land, along with nine other families who were among the first settlers in the then unnamed area. The Homestead Act / Desert Lands Act required a claimant to live on the land for at least seven months out of the year and undertake an active search for water. During this period, a chance meeting with early Palm Springs artist Carl Eytel (1862-1925) stimulated Yerxa's artistic leanings, but more importantly, it helped him address the homesteading water requirement. The two became fast friends and occasionally went on "sketching trips" together, hiking the desert and creating drawings and paintings of the sparse landscape. Traveling and creating art became an avocation[4] for Yerxa, who continued to travel, draw and paint for the rest of his life. It was during one of these forays that Yerxa met an older Native American man who told him of the location of a well that was used by his ancestors that was located on Yerxa's property. Digging by hand, at 36 feet, he found water with a temperature that registered a surprising 132 degrees; Yerxa had rediscovered the Native American hot spring that would give the town its name. Fears of arsenic in the hot water well prompted Yerxa to excavate another well 600 feet away from the first. This time he discovered a cold water spring. To commemorate the two wells, in 1914, he named the area "Miracle Hill" for the miracle of hot and cold springs in close proximity to one another. The wells were on either side of a spur of the San Andreas Fault, which had produced the phenomenon.

When not in residence at his homestead, Yerxa found work in Seattle as a machinist's helper to finance life in the desert for the rest of the year. To provide for his family, Yerxa undertook the construction of a family home which he named "Eagle's Nest." It lay just south of the present Museum location on a parcel that is no longer part of the Museum property. It was a one-room partial dugout with a fireplace and a door built of concrete, wood, and stone. Yerxa and his family lived here for four years. The building no longer exists, but photographic documentation of it survives including an image in the Museum archive of young Rodney Yerxa, age 1, being bathed in a small tub in front of the home.

On April 6, 1917, only four years after Yerxa established his homestead, the United States declared war on Germany. In 1918 the Yerxa family had relocated to Seattle where his wife's family was living. He found work there as a machinist's helper in Seattle, but the marriage had deteriorated and the Yerxa's had separated. Yerxa, (at age 36, too old to be drafted, but not too old to enlist) registered for service in the US Army on September 12 of that year. Fortunately, the United States' part of the War and Yerxa's tour of duty were brief. Hostilities ceased on November 11, 1918 and he was released in 1919. Returning to California, he settled at a crossroad near Blythe, about 120 miles east of his homestead, where he once again served as Postmaster and operated a general store until 1924. However, his wartime travels had stimulated his wanderlust and by July 1919 Yerxa obtained a passport for a 3 month trip to Cuba, the West Indies and South & Latin America.

After five years near Blythe, Yerxa returned to "Eagles Nest" for about one year and in May 1925 (at age 42), he boarded up his desert home and embarked upon a year-long solo tour of Europe. The itinerary included Europe (England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales and France via the Channel Islands), Central America (Guatemala), Cuba, Panama and other unnamed places. Equipped with a backpack, $700 and press credentials from four magazine and three newspapers, he secured journalistic discounts for World's Fairs in both Paris and London where he also found time to attend art schools. This trip encouraged his passion for art, a passion that would continue for the rest of his life.

Returning from his European tour, Yerxa relocated to Moorpark, California, in the Simi Valley, about 150 miles west of Desert Hot Springs, once again operating a general store. It was here in November 1932 that Yerxa first encountered L. W. Coffee, a Danish emigrant who had been a successful land developer throughout California. Yerxa's stories about his desert homestead provided the inspiration for Coffee's first visit to the area, although Yerxa had not been there in several years. Coffee made his way to the area and found only two original homesteaders remaining on their property. Coffee visited Cabot's property and was disappointed to discover it in a neglected state; the well had collapsed, the

[4]Yerxa never had a career as a professional artist, although he writes of selling an occasional painting to buy building supplies. He was essentially self-taught although, according to Edan Milton Hughes' *Artists in California (1786-1946),* he is known to have taken classes at the Academies Julian and Colarossi in Paris; he is not listed as a "Notable Graduate" of either institution. He has no exhibition record and his works are not found in museums or important private collections.

windmill had blown down and there was no sign of water. However, he was convinced of the existence of the hot springs and recognized their therapeutic value. For almost twenty years Yerxa's hot spring discovery had been ignored until Coffee realized its value. He soon formed a land trust and opened the first residential subdivisions in the area. Inasmuch as Coffee is not the subject of this nomination, it is sufficient to say that in time he became the founder of the town of Desert Hot Springs. His story is told in *The Waters of Comfort* by John J. Hunt.

Encouraged by Coffee's progress in the area, in 1937 Yerxa returned to the desert and invited his mother to stay part of the year there with him. After completing the Museum building, he built her a separate house (referred to as "Nellie's House") behind the Museum. After her death, Yerxa used the building as a guest house. With this move, he returned to the desert for good, thus beginning the final phase of his life and the creation of his best-known work. Yerxa began construction on a building for use as his temporary residence before he began building the Museum circa 1939; today that original building has been replaced by the Trading Post.

On September 1, 1939, with the invasion of Poland by Germany, WWII began. Attacked by the Japanese in 1941, the United States joined the war effort. This time it was Yerxa's son Rodney who went to war, but Yerxa contributed to this war effort while funding the construction of his Museum by obtaining a position as Post (Maintenance) Engineer at the Torney Army Hospital. The government's need for an army hospital for war casualties was satisfied when the army purchased Palm Springs' El Mirador Hotel, converting it into a hospital, named for a brigadier general.

The same year the U.S. entered the war, Yerxa, then nearly 60 years old, began his greatest achievement. He conceived of a rambling four-story structure he originally called the "Cliff Dweller's Pueblo" to be patterned after those built by the Hopi Indians of the Southwest[5]. Of the construction of the Museum Building Yerxa wrote: "About 1941, I started construction of the Old Indian Pueblo. Alone, and single-handed because there was no money for a man or a machine, I took a pick and shovel, cut down a side of the mountain, put the earth in a wheelbarrow, and filled up a gulch to make a front yard. That took me nearly a year. Then I put the building in the hole that I had mad e, because I wanted the Pueblo to fit into the mountainside."[6] The building program was for a multi-use facility that included a residence, museum, art gallery, and trading post which would combine aspects of Yerxa's lifelong interests. The Museum houses an unusual collection of objects Yerxa acquired in his world travels, working as a merchant, seaman, stagecoach driver, newspaper man, cook, dog-sled driver, prospector and other things. Sealskin boots, Indian buffalo shields, and even a taxidermy armadillo was displayed and a Chinese fly-chaser hung among the many curios on the walls. His goal was to build a Hopi-style structure that displayed Native American pieces made for use and for decoration that would also be a tourist destination, shelter and income. The Museum building was almost entirely hand built by Yerxa, with some help from his son Rodney and occasional help from day laborers.

Designed and built without the use of any formal architectural documents - for all his skills, Yerxa had no formal architectural training - the building is a successful interpretation of the Pueblo Revival style. To give the building a patina of age, many of the "adobe" bricks are left exposed on the primary façade, although this illusion does not occur on the secondary elevations. He even emphasized his attempt at creating an aged appearance for the building by naming the newly completed building "Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo." Completed in 1944, Cabot continued to add other buildings to the compound, including minor additions to the Museum itself as time, health and funds permitted. Yerxa wrote about salvaging and recycling materials from his earlier buildings, as well as from other abandoned homesteads. Near the back of the property he built small warehouses to store the accumulation of recycled materials. He continued to work sporadically on the compound's buildings including the "Eagles' Nest 2" property until his death in 1965.

[5] Prior to the construction of the Pueblo, there exists no documentation regarding any Yerxa visits to Hopi Reservations. He was however a contributor to "the Desert Magazine" which regularly published photographs of Native American dwellings which served as inspiration / information for the design of his Pueblo.
[6] *Cabot Abram Yerxa, On the Desert Since* 1913, p 176.

In 1945 Cabot married his second wife, Portia Graham (1884-1969), a lecturer and teacher of metaphysics and Theosophy at a school she founded in Morongo Valley. She was a member of a well-to-do Texas family, but had spent most of her adult life in California studying and teaching culture, religion, and philosophy. A stabilizing force in Yerxa's life, their home became a destination for metaphysical visitors; Portia became well-integrated into Yerxa's desert life and he into her philosophical life. For the next twenty years their compound attracted thousands of everyday tourists, artists and important visitors, to whom Yerxa would lecture about Native American culture. In 1964 Cabot was Grand Marshall in the Desert Hot Springs Memorial Day Parade. Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum is commemorated by historical markers from the City of Desert Hot Springs and Riverside County where it is listed as Point of Historical Interest No. 54. In 1980 the Museum was designated State of California Point of Historical Interest No. 560.

When Yerxa died in 1965, at the age of 81, the city flags were flown at half-mast and the offices were closed to attend his funeral. His love for the town of Desert Hot Springs was expressed through his civic activities as a founder the American Legion Post and the DHS Improvement Association. He was an authority on the early days of the community and was frequently called upon to relate his experiences of the birth of Desert Hot Springs to clubs and organizations. He wrote a column called "On the Desert", in the now defunct newspaper, the *Desert Sentinel.* A collection of these 280 columns has recently been published in book form as *Cabot Abram Yerxa, On the Desert Since 1913.*

C: Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type and period, and possesses high artistic values.

The Pueblo Revival Style of architecture originated with architect A. C. Schweinfurth's unbuilt design for a hotel in Montalvo, California in 1894; in the next few years he followed up with designs for the Hearst Ranch in Pleasanton and a number of other buildings in the style. Pueblo Revival is considered to be the only architectural style consciously developed to attract tourists. Derived from 18th and 19th Century Spanish Colonial architecture, combined with native Pueblo vernacular and aspects of the Mission Revival, Pueblo style buildings are instantly recognizable and unmistakable. They are generally massive and archless and their single-most character-defining feature is the projecting roof beam or viga, or at least a log professing to be such. The presence of the viga alone is enough to identify the building as Pueblo Style. When not actually built of adobe, Pueblo Revival buildings try to give the appearance of adobe. Some have battered walls, most with blunt angles and irregularly rounded parapets; walls are always faced with cement plaster when they are not of adobe. Roofs are always flat, and if the building is multi-story, the levels are stair-stepped to recall the traditional Indian community house. In the Coachella Valley there were numerous examples of the style, including Harry William's design for the Desert Magazine Building and successful resorts like Ranch Club and the Cahuilla Hotel. Even L. W. Coffee's Bath House in Desert Hot Springs was a simplified Pueblo style building. However, none of these early examples survives.

Distinctive characteristics are the physical features or traits that commonly recur in individual types, periods, or methods of construction. To be eligible, a property must contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type or period. Both the Museum and "Nellie's House" embody the distinctive characteristics of the Pueblo Revival style in their form, plan, and style, and both also possesses high artistic values because they fully articulate the concepts of the Pueblo Revival design. They are often mistaken for their historic counterparts, a circumstance that rarely happens with less convincing examples of the style. In this way, they express the aesthetic ideal of the ancient Pueblos.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

After his death in 1965, Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum was left vacant for four years during which it was abandoned and unmaintained. Cole Eyraud, a member of the DHS City Council and an admirer of Yerxa's, saved the Pueblo from demolition. He purchased the property and restored it to its original state. He continued to offer tours and run the trading post. After Eyraud's untimely death, his family donated the property to the City of Desert Hot Springs to be used as an historic museum and art gallery. Four years after Eyraud's untimely death it was donated to the city. The museum and the collection is owned and maintained by the city. The non-profit "Foundation" operates the gift store, raises funds, and hosts special events. Guided tours are held daily, and museum tours are hosted by staff and volunteers. Artists are welcome in the courtyard to pursue work in pottery, needle arts, photography, papermaking, wood carving, flint knapping, basketry,

Plein Air, and other artistic endeavors. For decades the City of Desert Hot Springs has recognized Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum as the hub of the community and the site of its most celebrated pioneer.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Brown, Richard, H., *Cabot Abram Yerxa, On the Desert Since 1913*. Desert Hot Springs, Cabot Museum Foundation: 2011.

Hughes, Edan Milton, Artists *in California (1786-1946).* Sacramento, Crocker Art Museum: 2002.

Hunt, John J., *The Waters of Comfort: The Story of Desert Hot Springs, California*. Desert Hot Springs: Little Morongo Press. 1997.

Maron, Barbara. *City of Dreams, Desert Hot Springs.* Cabot Foundation, Desert Hot Springs: 2008.

----------. *Cabot Yerxa, A Life In Art.* Cabot Museum Foundation, Desert Hot Springs: 2008.

----------. *Cabot Yerxa, A Life of Compassion.* Cabot Museum Foundation, Desert Hot Springs: 2009.

Wampler, Jan, *All Their Own: People and the Places They Built*. Cambridge: Schenkman Co.: 1977.

Wiffen, Marcus, *American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles*, Revised. Cambridge, MIT Press: 1992.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
____Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.77 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	54738E	3757627	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Rectangular plot 330' X 660', 30' less an offset on East Desert View Avenue (see Site Plan).

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
Riverside County APN: 6420613-0
This 4.77 Acre property is all that survives of the 160 acres that originally comprised the Yerxa Homestead of 1913.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Patrick McGrew
organization McGrew / Architecture date August 2011
street & number 674 South Grenfall Road telephone 760 / 416 7819
city or town Palm Springs state CA zip code 92264
e-mail patrickmcgrew2@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum

City or Vicinity: Desert Hot Springs

County: Riverside State: CA

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ___.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Desert Hot Springs Contact: Jason Simpson. Email: jsimpson@cityofdhs.org
street & number 65-950 Pierson Boulevard telephone 760-329-6411 ext 234

Cabot's Old Indian Pueblo Museum
Name of Property

Riverside, CA
County and State

city or town Desert Hot Springs state CA zip code 92240

MAILING ADDRESS:
City Of Desert Hot Springs
65-950 Pierson Blvd.
Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240-0104

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

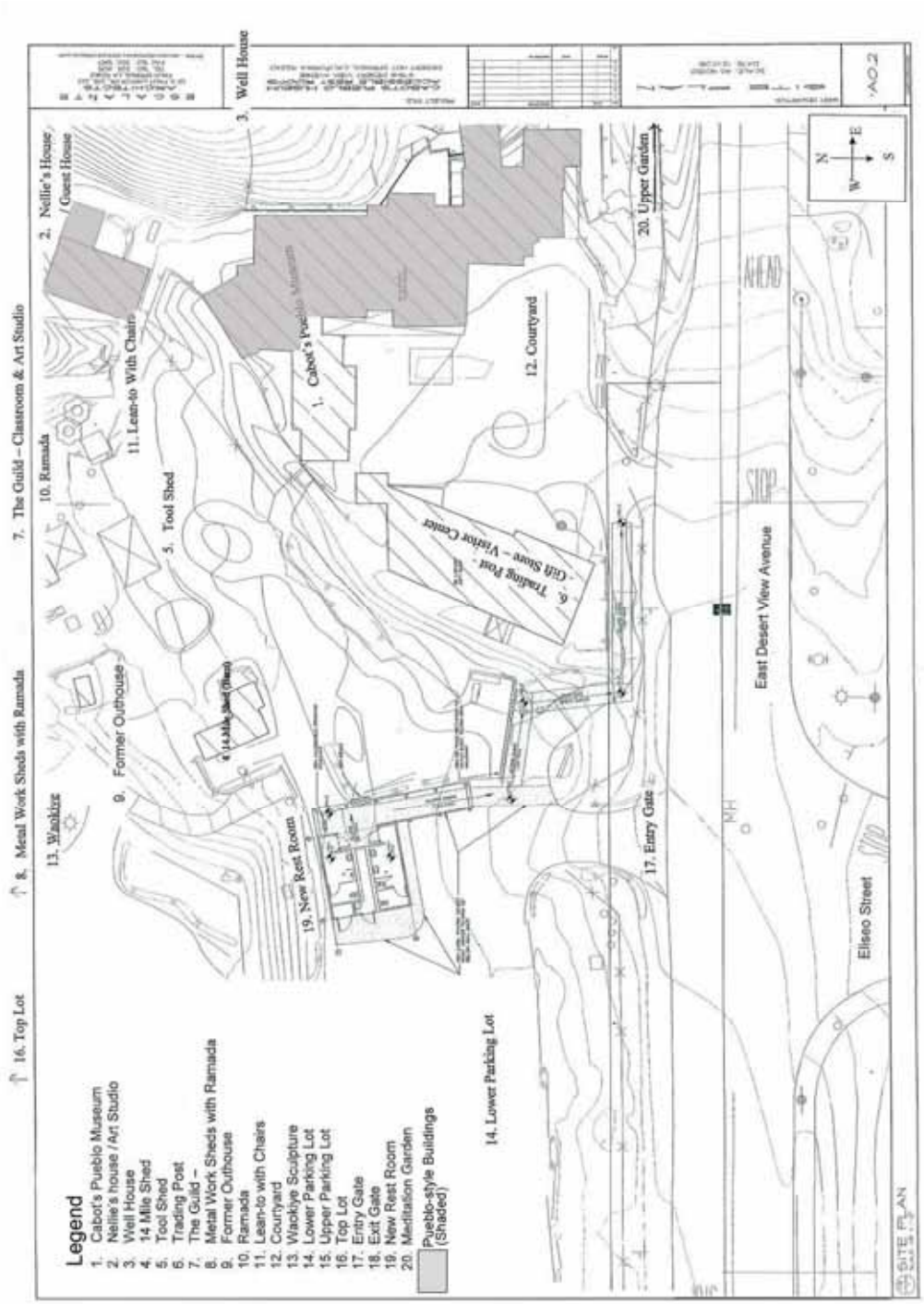
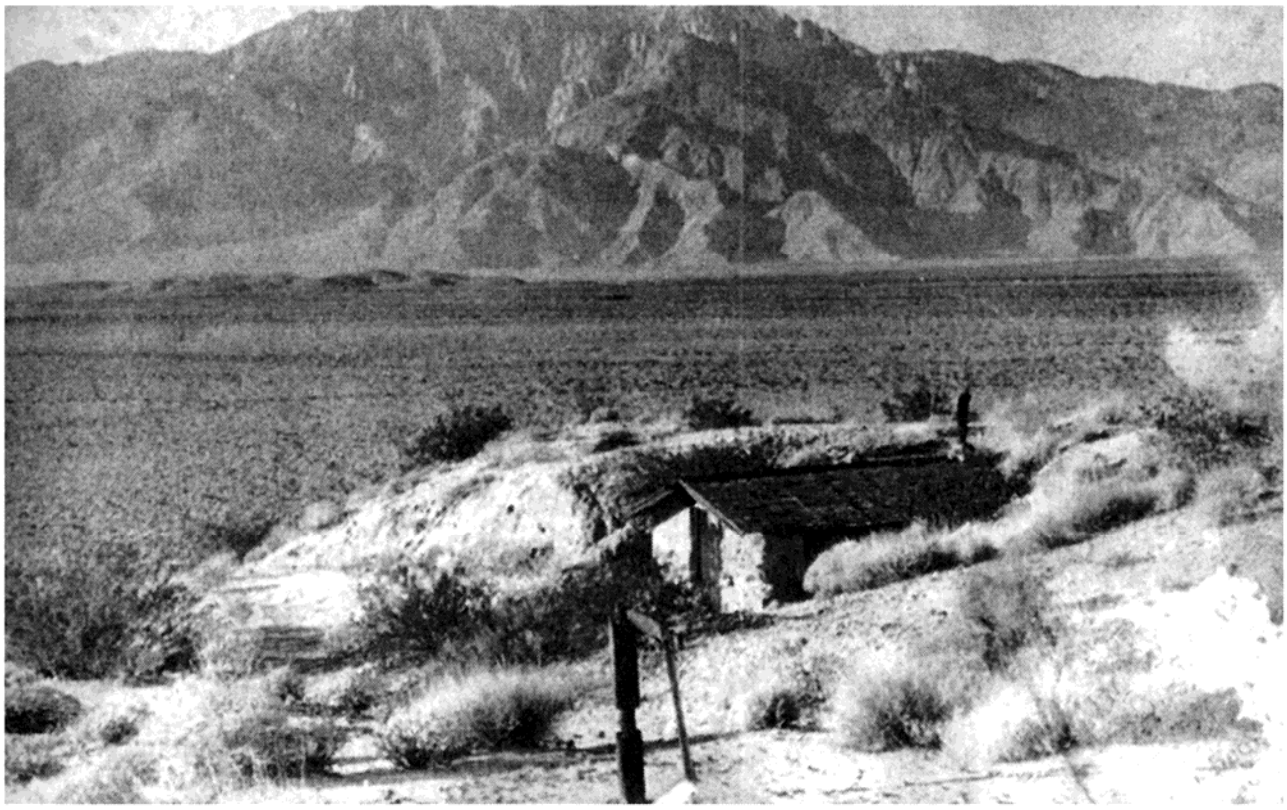
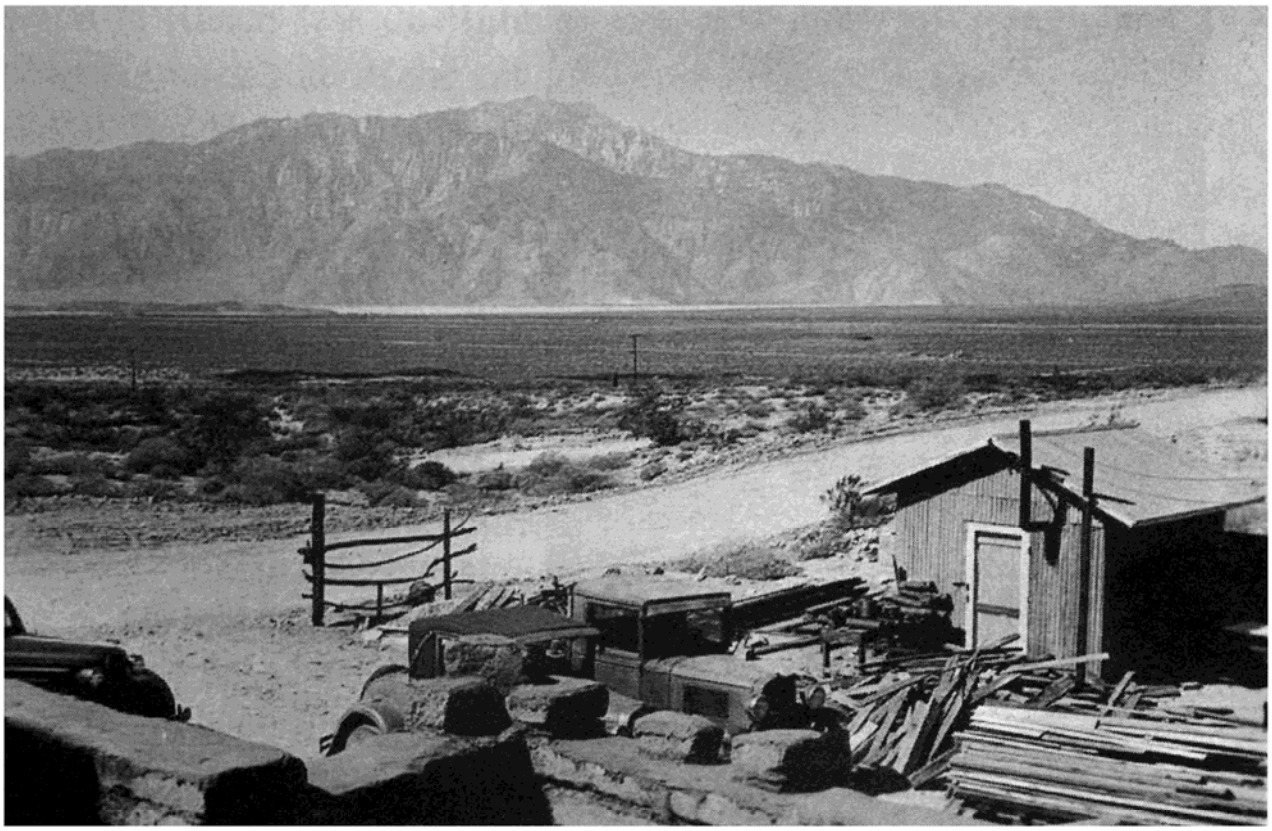
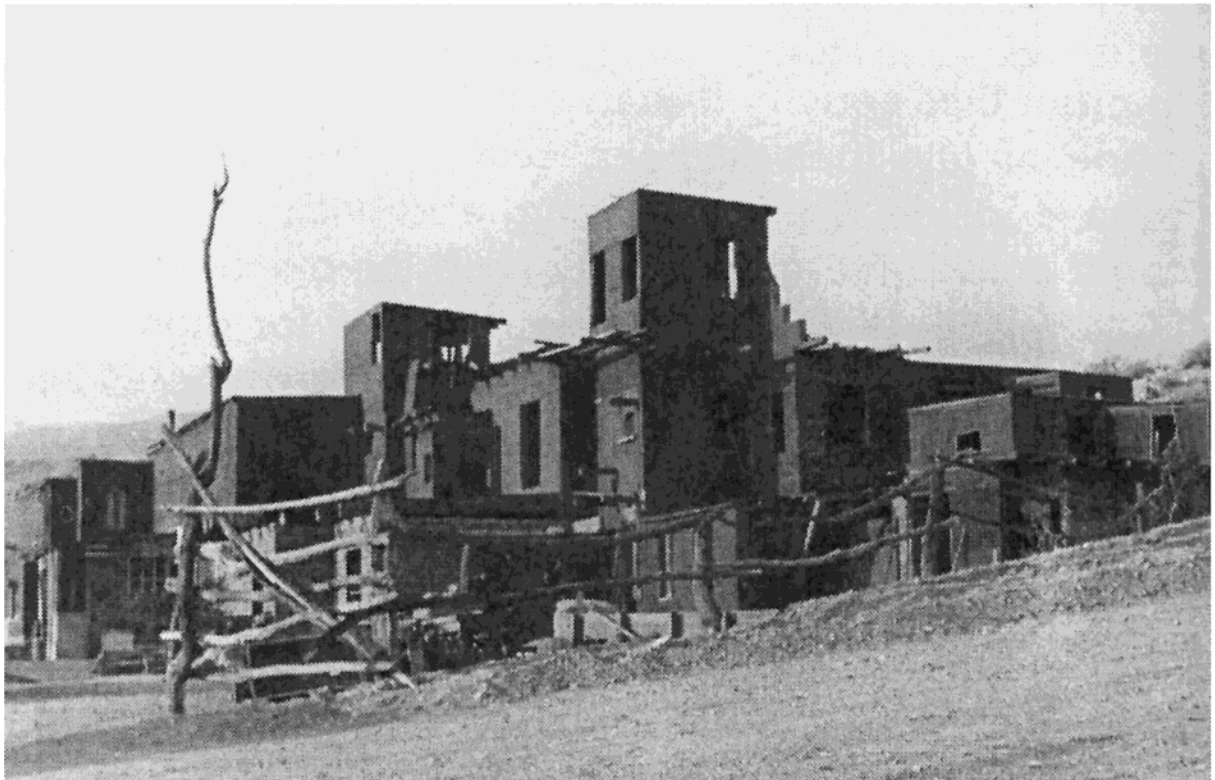
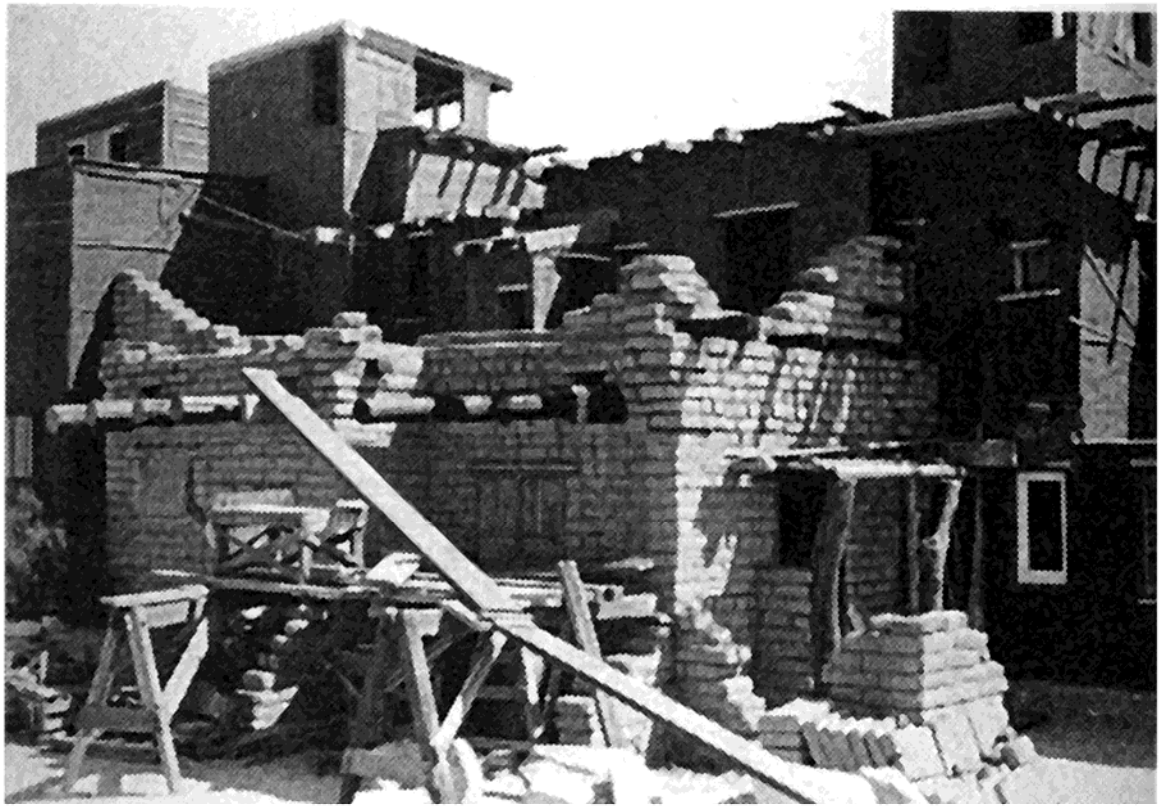
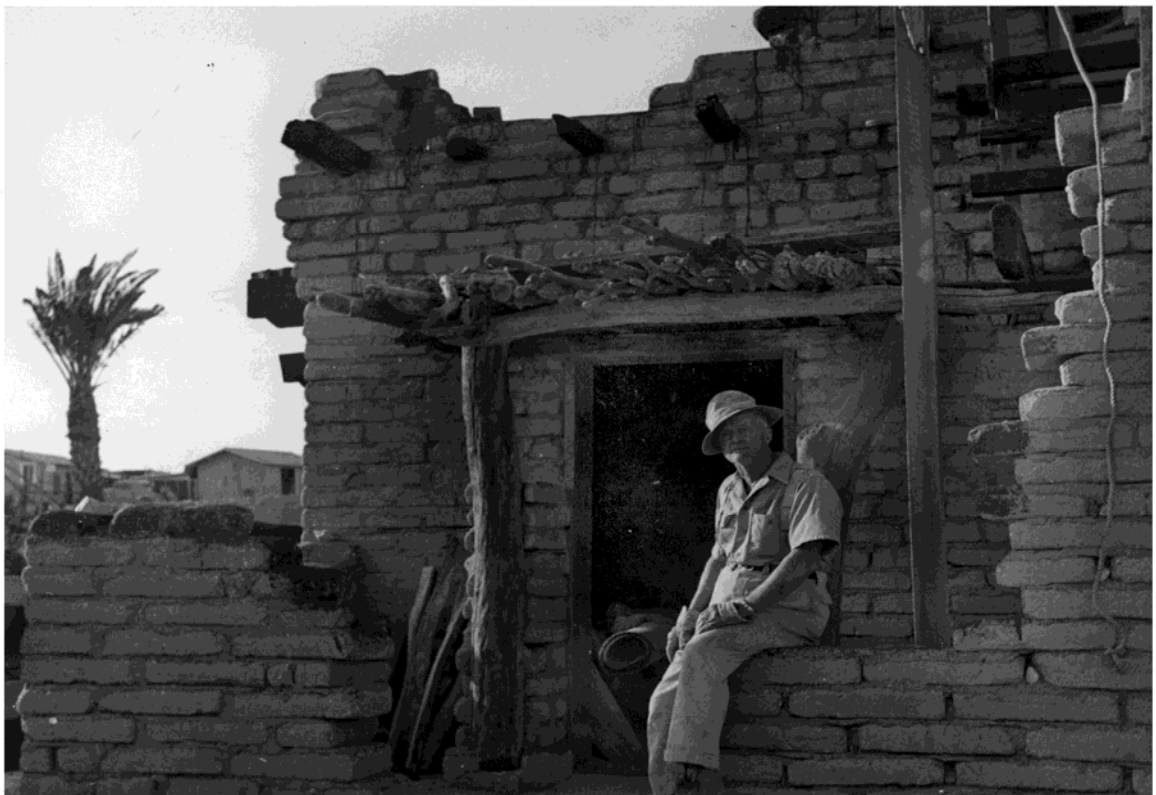


Figure 1: Site Map



Yerxa Residence (Eagles' Nest) circa 1913



Pueblo construction site

Construction Photo, circa 1941