



MID-CENTURY MODERN PERIOD

1940 - 1960s



The Mid-Century Modern period is one of great change in the architecture of California. It is also one that put California on the forefront of architecture in the country. As with the Pre-War period architecture took hold in California and spread to other parts of the country, rather than architecture spreading to California. Starting with Frank Lloyd Wright in 1920, some of the country's greatest architects came to California, which was booming, to practice architecture. R.M. Schindler, Richard Neutra, Lloyd Wright, John Lautner, Jock Peters, Cliff May, and William Krisel were all based in California.

Many of these styles represented what was unique to culture of California. The Googie style showcased Californian's love of the automobile and helped define the California "Car Culture". The California Ranch showcased the modern casual living that was California and expanded on the outdoor living that started with the Craftsman homes of the Pre-War period. Modernism impacted California and changed the way California developed.

USONIAN ARCHITECTURE

MINIMAL TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

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CALIFORNIA RANCH ARCHITECTURE

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MID-CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE

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EARLY POST-WAR TRACT ARCHITECTURE

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CORPORATE INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE

GOOGIE

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EARLY POST-WAR TRACT ARCHITECTURE

1940S-1960S



The Early Post-War Tract style has its roots in the International and Minimal Traditional styles of architecture, which were popular in the late 1930s and the early 1940s. It was also the precursor to the modern residential tract home of today. After World War II, the demand for housing was high and developers began creating tracts of homes with similar plans and elevations. This was the first time that housing was mass-produced. Southern California was at the center of this housing boom and has many early tract homes. The unique feature of this style home was that they were not unique. Prior to World War II, new subdivisions were either custom or semi-custom homes. This allowed homes to still retain their unique character. After World War II, pressure for housing pushed developers to offer limited options for house designs, making street after street of look-a-like houses. Unfortunately, the backlash of this practice has caused many of these homes to be altered over the years and made unique from their neighbors destroying their original appearance and architectural character. This style, along with the California Ranch is also important for introducing an important new home feature to the average home buyer...the attached garage. No longer was the porch an important feature of the home. Instead it was replaced with the one-, and later, two-car garage with a wide driveway directly connecting house to street.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

- Stucco exterior walls
- Low-pitched gable or hipped roofs
- Small porches, if any
- Front or side facing garages
- Very few exterior details
- Single story
- Attached, front facing garage

MASSING AND PLAN

- Predominantly one-story
- Two-story version rare, built late in style
- Front or side facing garages
- Side facing garage out in front of the house
- Small mass because of low roof pitch

FACADES

- Stucco walls with some siding elements possible
- Lack of decorative elements

PAINT COLORS

- Colors were vast and varied
- Pastel colors common

ROOFS

- Low pitched
- Gable or hipped roofs

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

- Very few exterior details
- Window trim and decorative features were rare
- Clapboard siding on lower half of the structure in prominent areas of the house the exception

DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Single panel doors
- Aluminum sliding windows
- Single-hung or casement windows used in early examples because lack of metal windows
- No window trim.

PORCHES

- Stoop common
- Early examples may have small porches
- Porches phased out

FENCES AND WALLS

- Simple wood fences
- Fences separate front yard from side and rear yards
- Separates formal public view and private space
- Not in front yard.

