

Post-World War II Modernism/Regional Modernism

MID-CENTURY MODERN

Mid-Century Modern is a term used to describe the post-World War II iteration of the International Style in both residential and commercial design. The International Style was characterized by geometric forms, smooth wall surfaces, and an absence of exterior decoration. Mid-Century Modern represents the adaptation of these elements to the local climate and topography, as well as to the postwar need for efficiently-built, moderately-priced homes. In Southern California, this often meant the use of wood post-and-beam construction. Mid-Century Modernism is often characterized by a clear expression of structure and materials, large expanses of glass, and open interior plans.

The roots of the style can be traced to early Modernists like Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler, whose local work inspired “second generation” Modern architects like Gregory Ain, Craig Ellwood, Harwell Hamilton Harris, Pierre Koenig, Raphael Soriano, and many more. These postwar architects developed an indigenous Modernism that was born from the International Style but matured into a fundamentally regional style, fostered in part by *Art and Architecture* magazine’s pivotal Case Study Program (1945-1966). The style gained popularity because its use of standardized, prefabricated materials permitted quick and economical construction. It became the predominant architectural style in the postwar years and is represented in almost every property type, from single-family residences to commercial buildings to gas stations. Character-defining features include:

- One or two-story configuration
- Horizontal massing (for small-scale buildings)
- Simple geometric forms
- Expressed post-and-beam construction, in wood or steel
- Flat roof or low-pitched gable roof with wide overhanging eaves and cantilevered canopies
- Unadorned wall surfaces
- Wood, plaster, brick or stone used as exterior wall panels or accent materials
- Flush-mounted metal frame fixed windows and sliding doors, and clerestory windows
- Exterior staircases, decks, patios and balconies
- Little or no exterior decorative detailing
- Attached carport or garage
- Expressionistic/Organic subtype: sculptural forms and geometric shapes, including butterfly, A-frame, folded plate or barrel vault roofs

Mid-Century Modern: Extant Examples



Tate Motors, 888-896 E. Holt Avenue (1956).



Westmont United Methodist Church, 1781 W. 9th Street (1948-1951).



1120 Hillcrest Drive (1957).



1248 N. White Avenue (1959).

GOOGIE

Googie has been described as Modernism for the masses. With its swooping lines and organic shapes, the style attempted to capture the playful exuberance of postwar America. Named for the John Lautner-designed Googie's Restaurant in Los Angeles, the style was widely employed in roadside commercial architecture of the 1950s, including coffee shops, bowling alleys, and car washes.

Character-defining features include:

- Expressive rooflines, including butterfly, folded-plate, and cantilevers
- Organic, abstract, and parabolic shapes
- Clear expression of materials, including concrete, steel, asbestos, cement, glass block, plastic, and plywood
- Large expanses of plate glass
- Thematic ornamentation, including tiki and space age motifs
- Primacy of signage, including the pervasive use of neon

Googie: Extant Examples



1280 E. Holt Avenue (1959).



1057 E. Mission Boulevard (1954).

PROGRAMMATIC/MIMETIC

Programmatic/Mimetic buildings are a commercial architectural type which evolved between 1918 and 1950 as a device to call the attention of passing motorists to a commercial building by having the building itself take the form of non-architectural objects at an altered scale. The term “programmatic” refers to a structure which takes its form directly from the product sold, while the term “mimetic” refers to a structure that mimics a form which is not directly related to the product provided, but may reflect the name or spirit of the business or housed within.

Programmatic/Mimetic buildings are, above all, objects intended to be viewed in three dimensions via the passenger car. The speed of vehicular traffic gave the large-scale advertising innate in the Programmatic/Mimetic form an advantage over the more discreet signage employed prior to the automobile era. Programmatic/Mimetic roadside buildings were constructed throughout the country but were particularly well-suited to Southern California. The local tradition of inexpensive stucco-on-wood-frame construction made them easy and cheap to build and allowed for a greater freedom of form than could be achieved with the masonry or clapboard exteriors typical elsewhere in the nation. During the late 1920s and early 1930s the demand for Programmatic/Mimetic forms became so strong that a number of patents were issued to designers for particular types of structures. The popularity of Programmatic/Mimetic architecture continued into the early 1930s.

Character-defining features include:

- Low-scale commercial building
- Building form adapted to convey advertising message
- Original use was as a restaurant, food stand, or retail store
- Layouts allows for viewing from an automobile
- May be linked to particular companies and/or designers

Mimetic: Extant Example



1175 E. Holt Avenue (1970).

RANCH

The Ranch style emerged from the 1930s designs of Southern California architect Cliff May, who merged modernist ideas with traditional notions of the working ranches of the American West and in particular, the rustic adobe houses of California's Spanish- and Mexican-era *ranchos*. The resulting architectural style – characterized by its low horizontal massing, sprawling interior plan, and wood exterior detailing – embodied the mid-20th century ideal of “California living.” The Ranch style enjoyed enormous popularity throughout the United States from the 1940s to 1970s. It epitomized unpretentious architecture and dominated the suburbs of the post-World War II period. It was more conservative than other modern residential architecture of the period, often using decorative elements based on historical forms and capitalizing on the national fascination with the “Old West.” The underlying philosophy of the Ranch house was informality, outdoor living, gracious entertaining, and natural materials.

The most common style of Ranch house is the California Ranch. It is characterized by its one-story height; asymmetrical massing in L- or U-shaped plans; low-pitched hipped or gabled roofs with wide overhanging eaves; a variety of materials for exterior cladding, including plaster and board-and-batten; divided light wood sash windows, sometimes with diamond-shaped panes; and large picture windows. Decorative details commonly seen in California Ranch houses include scalloped bargeboards, false cupolas and dovescotes, shutters, and iron or wood porch supports. The California Ranch house accommodated America's adoption of the automobile as the primary means of transportation with a two-car garage that was a prominent architectural feature on the front of the house, and a sprawling layout on a large lot. Floor plans for the tracts of Ranch houses were usually designed to meet the FHA standards so that the developer could receive guaranteed loans.

Another variation on the Ranch house is the Modern Ranch, which was influenced by Mid-Century Modernism. Modern Ranches emphasized horizontal planes more than the California Ranch, and included modern instead of traditional stylistic details. Character-defining features included low-pitched hipped or flat roofs, prominent rectangular chimneys, recessed entryways, and wood or concrete block privacy screens. Other stylistic elements resulted in Asian variations. Character-defining features include:

- One-story
- Sprawling plan
- L- or U-shaped plan, often with radiating wings
- Low, horizontal massing with wide street façade
- Low-pitched hipped or gable roof with open overhanging eaves and wood shakes
- Plaster, wood lap, or board-and-batten siding, often with brick or stone accents
- Divided light wood sash windows (picture, double-hung sash, diamond-pane)
- Wide, covered front porch with wood posts
- Attached garage, sometimes linked with open-sided breezeway

- Details such as wood shutters, attic vents in gable ends, dovescotes, extended gables, or scalloped barge boards
- Modern Ranch sub-type may feature flat or low-pitched hipped roof with composition shingle or gravel roofing; metal framed windows; wood or concrete block privacy screens

Ranch House: Extant Examples



2393 Deodar Road (1955).



1120 Val Vista Street (1951).



370 E. La Verne Avenue (1961).



2351 Deodar Road (1955).

NEW FORMALISM

New Formalism is a sub-type of Late Modern architecture that developed in the mid-1950s as a reaction to the International Style's strict vocabulary and total rejection of historical precedent. New Formalist buildings are monumental in appearance, and reference and abstract classical forms such as full-height columns, projecting cornices, and arcades. Traditional materials such as travertine, marble, or granite were used, but in a panelized, non-traditional form. In Southern California, the style was applied mainly to public and institutional buildings. On a larger urban design scale, grand axes and symmetry were used to achieve a modern monumentality. Primary in developing New Formalism were three architects: Edward Durrell Stone, who melded his Beaux Arts training with the stark Modernism of his early work; Philip Johnson; and Minoru Yamasaki. All three had earlier achieved prominence working within the International Style and other Modernist idioms.

Character-defining features of New Formalism include:

- Symmetrical plan
- Flat rooflines with heavy overhanging cornices
- Colonnades, plazas, and elevated podiums used as compositional devices
- Repeating arches and rounded openings
- Large screens of perforated concrete block, concrete, or metal

New Formalism: Extant Examples



Home Savings & Loan, 100 W. 2nd Street (1963).



Lytton Savings and Loan, 300 W. 2nd Street (1964).

LATE MODERNISM

Late Modern is a blanket term used to describe the evolution of Modern architecture from the mid-1950s through the 1970s. It is typically applied to commercial and institutional buildings. Unlike the straightforward, functionalist simplicity of International Style and Mid-Century Modernism, Late Modern buildings exhibit a more deliberate sculptural quality with bold geometric volumes, uniform surfaces such as glass skin or concrete, and a sometimes exaggerated expression of structure and systems. Significant architects who produced works in the style include Marcel Breuer, Philip Johnson, Cesar Pelli, Piano and Rogers, and John Portman.

Character-defining features of Late Modern style include:

- Bold geometric volumes
- Large expanses of unrelieved wall surfaces
- Uniform use of cladding materials including glass, concrete, or masonry veneer
- Exaggerated expression of structure and systems
- Hooded or deeply set windows
- Little or no applied ornament

Late Modern: Extant Examples



Cal Poly Pomona School of Environmental Design (1971).



Pomona City Hall, 505 S. Garey Avenue (1969; Pomona Civic Center Historic District).

Eligibility Standards

Summary Statement of Significance

Properties significant for their architectural merit are evaluated under this context, which includes separate themes for the predominant architectural styles found in the city. Properties eligible under the Architecture and Design context may be significant as an excellent or rare example of an architectural style, property type, or designed landscape; or as an important example of the work of a notable builder, designer, landscape architect, or architect. Many resources that are eligible under this context may also be significant under other contexts as well.

Period of Significance 1837-1980

Period of Significance Justification Reflects the extant built landscape in Pomona from the earliest known resource through the close of the period of significance for this study, which may be extended over time.

Geographic Location Citywide.

Associated Property Types Properties eligible under this context may be any property type: Residential, Commercial, Institutional, or Industrial.

Integrity Considerations:

- Should retain integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling
- Additions may be acceptable if not within public view, do not alter the original roofline, and are subordinate to the original design intent
- Replacement of some windows may be acceptable if the openings have not been changed or resized
- If it is a rare surviving example of its style or type, a greater degree of alteration may be acceptable

Registration Requirements:

To be eligible under this criterion a property must:

- Date from the period of significance; and
- Represent a good/excellent or rare example of a style or type; and
- Display most of the character-defining features of the style or type; and
- Retain the essential aspects of integrity.