

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).



GOOGIE ARCHITECTURE

1950S



CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

- One-story in height
- Angled roofs
- Large overhangs
- Roofs that appear to float over building
- Large expressive signage

Often called coffee shop architecture, the Googie style became a dominant style for coffee shops, car washes, drive-ins, and other roadside architecture. The Googie style was flamboyant and expressive. It was the first architectural style that combined America's love of the automobile with the hope and promise of the future. It was space age architecture. It was suburbia. No place did Googie take a bigger hold than in Southern California. The style took elements out of the technological advancements of the time, including jet planes and spaceships. Googie illustrated this new age so well, that the original Tomorrowland at Disneyland was Googie. The original McDonald's and Bob's Big Boy restaurants were a classic example of Googie architecture.

The Googie style was used for commercial buildings primarily restaurants and other roadside architecture.

MASSING AND PLAN

- One story in height.
- Rectangular of L-shaped in plan.
- Sharp angles, and shapes.
- Elements that were low and horizontal combined with soaring angled vertical elements.

FACADES

- Exterior walls were stucco.
- Various elements would be mosaic tile, stone, or metal.
- Exposed decorative steel beams glass block, stainless steel, etc., would be used to accent the building forms.

PAINT COLORS

- Colors varied building to building
- Corporate colors and signage.
- Colors were very bright, great deal of contrast between colors.

ROOFS

- Large roof structures that appeared to float over the walls.
- Roof at angles to make them appear to take off.

TRIM AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

- Simple to non existent.
- Decorative features included exposed decorative steel beams and tile work.

DOORS AND WINDOWS

- Simple doors, and could include glass.
- Doors could also be stained or painted.
- Large single pane picture windows.

PORCHES

- None
- Entryway covered by roof

FENCES AND WALLS

- None except to hide trash and equipment –integrated into building.



SIGNAGE

- Signage part of design.
- Neon was king.
- Signs were bright and big.
- Sometimes, as in the case of Mc Donald's golden arches, the signs were actually part of the building.