

## Theme: Commercial Development

Southern California's postwar population boom and rise in consumer culture spurred retail and commercial development throughout the region. Pomona was no exception. Postwar commercial development was characterized in part by the modernization of existing commercial buildings in an effort to update downtown retail centers. One prominent example in Pomona was Ora-Addies, a women's boutique established by Mrs. Ora Milner and Mrs. Adelaide Tate at 163 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The owners engaged Sumner Spaulding and John Rex to completely redesign the two-story interior of the original building to make it a showcase space. The ultra-modern design featured a floating staircase, mezzanine, and custom cabinetry. The design was featured in the December 1945 issue of *Arts & Architecture*.<sup>425</sup>



Ora-Addies by Sumner Spaulding and John Rex, c. 1945. Photo by Julius Shulman. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

However, most commercial development during this period expanded outside of the original commercial core to provide much-needed services in proximity to the growing suburban communities. In Pomona, commercial growth was seen along Route 66 (present-day Arrow Highway), Garey Avenue, Mission Boulevard, Holt Avenue, Valley Boulevard, and Indian Hill Avenue.

Many of the commercial structures built after the war responded to both the growing middle class and suburban leisure culture, and the automobile: coffee shops, fast food establishments and restaurants, supermarkets, department stores, and specialty retailers all designed to appeal to the passing motorist and conveniently located *away* from downtown. Commercial development along Route 66 picked-up after World War II with the development of properties commonly associated with a tourist corridor: gas stations, motels, and restaurants.<sup>426</sup> As a result, commercial activity in downtown Pomona declined—eventually forcing a large urban renewal project in an attempt to upgrade and revitalize the downtown area.

A more exuberant, expressive Modernism emerged in commercial design after the war, capturing both the zeitgeist and playful exuberance of the moment and appealing to the modern, automobile-oriented consumer. The style became known as Googie, after Googie's Diner in Los

<sup>425</sup> "Small Modern Shop," *Arts & Architecture*, December 1945, 40-41.

<sup>426</sup> Classified Ad, *Pomona Progress Bulletin*, March 12, 1948, 17.

Angeles designed by John Lautner in 1949. The style has been described as Modernism for the masses. It was widely employed in roadside commercial architecture of the 1950s, including coffee shops, bowling alleys, and car washes. Henry's Restaurant and Drive-In (not extant) was one of the premiere local examples of the Googie architectural style. It was located along Route 66, at Garey Avenue and Foothill Boulevard. Henry's was designed in 1957 by architect John Lautner as the fourth location of the Henry's chain of restaurants. It featured a football-shaped plan, with one side arranged for indoor dining/cocktails and the other for carhop service. The roof had an expressionistic shape characteristic of Lautner's architectural vocabulary. As described by author Alan Hess, Henry's was "...a whale with a long dual backbone of laminated timbers arching long and low on doubled concrete columns...large glass walls set well within broad eaves, opened to the dining room."<sup>427</sup> The restaurant was later known as Tiffany's.



Henry's Restaurant and Drive-In, designed by John Lautner, 1954. *Lautner A-Z*.

Perhaps because of its suburban development and reliance on the automobile, Pomona enjoys a wealth of roadside architecture that extended beyond Route 66. These expressive modern buildings, some more elaborately Googie than others, relied on structural expression, large expanses of glass, neon and kinetic signs both to display their goods and services and to lure in motorists. Pole signs often remain at some of Pomona's roadside buildings that have been altered.

To support its burgeoning postwar population, greater Pomona was dotted with a number of fast-food restaurants and coffee shops. McDonald's #8 (1057 Mission Boulevard), constructed in 1954, is the second oldest extant example of the iconic fast-food chain.<sup>428</sup> The McDonald brothers worked with architect Stanley C. Meston on the design. They provided a small rough sketch of two half circle arches, from which the architect refined the forms; he also designed the factory-

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<sup>427</sup> Alan Hess, *Googie Redux: Ultramodern Roadside Architecture*, (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2004), 73.

<sup>428</sup> There is some disagreement between scholars as to whether this is store #7 or #8. The Azusa and Pomona locations were opened nearly simultaneously.

like assembly line kitchen.<sup>429</sup> Although altered, the hamburger stand and the large original roadside golden arches retain their essential form, although the building has now been repurposed to sell donuts.

Other early examples of iconic fast-food restaurants from the postwar period include Der Wienerschnitzel (500 E. Mission Boulevard) and Pioneer Chicken (2250 N. Garey Avenue). There is a 1950s Tastee Freeze (794 E. Mission), with its signature orange A-frame soft serve stand and sign, and a Donahoo's Fried Chicken (1074 Garey Avenue), a Mid-century Modern building from 1966 with its original fiberglass chicken high atop a pole sign advertising "Golden Chicken boxed to go." Two original Arby's in Pomona (2250 N. Garey Avenue and 1175 E. Holt Avenue) with chuckwagon shapes were constructed in 1970.

Another early Googie-style restaurant was the Mission Family Restaurant (demolished). Opened in 1958 at 888 W. Mission Boulevard, the restaurant featured dimensional tilework by Pomona Tile and a "Jury Room," which was used by jurors from the nearby courthouses for meal breaks.<sup>430</sup> The Googie-style diner at 1280 E. Holt Avenue was originally built as a Breakfast at Carl's.



Former McDonalds #8 (top left), Wienerschnitzel (top right), Former Arby's (bottom left), and Former Breakfast at Carl's (bottom right) in Pomona, 2022. HRG.

Mom and pop donut shops and coffee shops were a staple throughout Southern California in the 1950s and 1960s. These modest, freestanding, Mid-century Modern-style shops enjoyed large expanses of glass with plenty of parking. Taylor Maid Donuts (488 E. Mission Boulevard) is a rare

<sup>429</sup> Hess, 152.

<sup>430</sup> The restaurant was originally named the Hull House. It was destroyed in a fire in 2020.

and intact example of one of these buildings. The 1958 Danny's Donuts (2085 Holt Avenue, not extant) by the Googie specialists Armet & Davis did not survive. In 1969, on the southeast corner of Holt and East End Avenue, Van de Kamps built one of its iconic windmill-design coffee shops designed by architect Harold Bissner, Jr. (not extant). Another example of a postwar specialty retailer with a Mid-century Modern-style building is the 1960 Pollock's Flowers (715 Garey Avenue).

Another significant commercial type from the postwar period was the auto showroom. As with other types of commercial development, automobile sales moved outside of downtown commercial centers where they had the space to design eye-catching glass and steel buildings to showcase their sleek, modern wares. In Pomona, Tate Motors (888 E. Holt Avenue), completed in 1957 offered a large, two-story glass rotunda for displaying the latest Cadillacs and Pontiacs. Inside, four "Flying saucer-like hanging fixtures each 12 feet across provided dramatic lighting and added to the out-of-this world look."<sup>431</sup> Designed by Arthur Lawrence Miller and Ted Criley, Jr., the dealership also had a towering sign and a sidewalk garden of exotic plants.



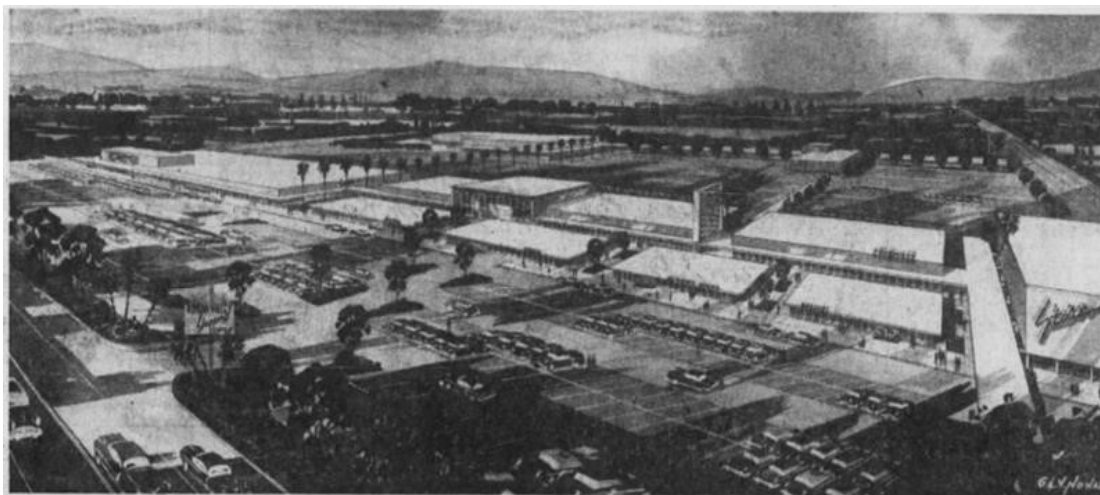
Tate Motors, 1957. Photo by Julius Shulman. © J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (2004.R.10)

In addition to standalone development along commercial corridors, the postwar period was also the era of the shopping center – including both small community shopping centers and larger, more regional shopping malls. Especially popular given Southern California's climate was the development of the open-air mall. Three open-air malls were developed in Los Angeles County in 1955: Los Altos Center in Long Beach, Whittier Downs Center in Santa Fe Springs, and the

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<sup>431</sup> Charles Phoenix, *Cruising the Pomona Valley* (Los Angeles, CA: Horn of Plenty Press, 1999), 112-113.

Pomona Valley Center which straddled the Pomona-Montclair city limits. Pomona Valley Center was designed by Sterling Leach.<sup>432</sup> Anchor stores included the F.C. Nash Department Store, Market Basket supermarket, and Sears.<sup>433</sup> Rows of specialty retailers connected the anchor stores with landscaped pedestrian corridors and generous overhangs. Cars were relegated to the substantial parking areas around the shopping center. In 1967, the mall was extended to the west. A renovation during the 1970s was followed by the enclosure of the mall in the early 1980s when it was renamed Indian Hill Village. The complex ultimately failed to compete with the more popular Montclair Plaza.



Rendering of the Pomona Valley Center, Sterling Leach, 1954. *Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 1954.

As in other Southern California communities, banks and savings and loan companies proliferated in Pomona in the postwar period as a result of the booming real estate industry. Financial institutions would often open branch locations in proximity to new residential subdivisions. These new bank buildings often represented significant community and architectural statements, projecting an image appropriate for a successful financial institution. New postwar bank buildings in Pomona include the 1950 First National Bank of Pomona (401 E. 2nd Street, not extant). In 1956, B.H. Anderson designed the main office for Pomona First Federal Savings (399 N. Garey Avenue), a two-story, Mid-century Modern building that cost \$500,000 to construct. The lobby included a Millard Sheets mural<sup>434</sup> which was later purchased by the American Museum of Ceramic Art.<sup>435</sup> Pomona First Federal Savings was featured in *Architectural Record* in June of that year. In 1957, Anderson designed the First Western Bank and Trust (1095 Garey Avenue) which opened its doors in 1958. That same year, a branch of Bank of America (2475 N. Garey Avenue) was built in north Pomona, designed by architect F.K. Lesan.

<sup>432</sup> "Further Development of New Pomona Valley Center Slated," *Los Angeles Times*, November 12, 1954.

<sup>433</sup> The original Sears at Pomona Valley Center was designed by Stiles O. Clements in 1954 with the red brick, cut green stone, and palm trees that identified the retailer.

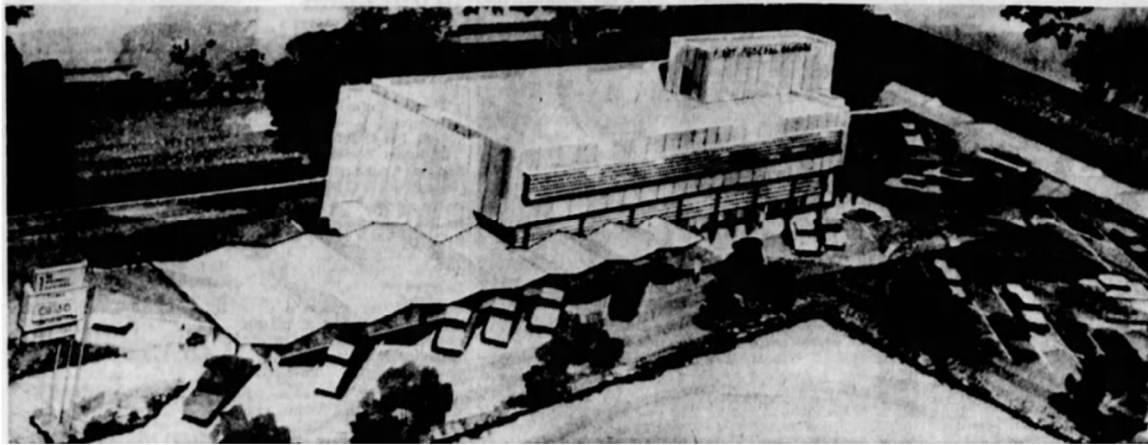
<sup>434</sup> In 1982, the bank built a new ATM carport and commissioned Denis O'Connor, an associate of Sheets, to create a mosaic for the carport.

<sup>435</sup> "Article 20," *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1956, F7.



Left: Rendering of First Federal Savings, 399 N. Garey Avenue, 1956. Right: Interior mural by Millard Sheets, n.d. *Pomona Public Library.*

In 1958, Anderson designed a branch building for Pomona First Federal Savings (originally 550 Alexander Avenue, now Indian Hill Boulevard), which was completed in 1960. The design included decorative patterned brickwork, a folded-plate roof, and electronic pole sign mounted on steel beams. On the south wall of the interior, the building contained a 78-foot-long and 7-foot-high mural by Millard Sheets entitled, “Panorama of the Pomona Valley.” At the time of its completion, it was the largest mural ever painted by Sheets.



Rendering of First Federal Savings, 550 Indian Hill Boulevard, 1958-60. *Pomona Public Library*

## ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

### Summary Statement of Significance

In the post-World War II era, economic activity in the city expanded to serve a growing population. Redevelopment projects were also common during this period, as the City sought to enhance the downtown core. Resources that are eligible under this theme may be significant as an excellent example of post-war commercial development and expansion, as the site of a significant event, or for an association with an ethnic or cultural group or a person important in local, state, or national history. Properties may also be significant as an example of a style or type; architectural styles in Pomona are discussed in the Architecture and Design Section.

|                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Period of Significance</b>               | 1946-1980                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Period of Significance Justification</b> | Broadly covers the period of commercial development in Pomona from 1946 to 1980.                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Geographic Location</b>                  | Citywide.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Associated Property Types</b>            | Commercial: One-story Building; One-story Commercial Storefront Block; Mixed-use Building; Mixed-use Commercial Block; Retail store; Commercial Office; Bank; Restaurant; Theater; Hotel; Recreational Facility; Historic District. |
| <b>Property Type Description</b>            | Commercial property types include malls and shopping centers, department stores, supermarkets, coffee shops, fast-food restaurants, and automobile showrooms.                                                                       |

#### **Criterion A/1/1,9 (Events/Patterns of Development)**

Individual commercial properties that are eligible under this criterion may be significant:

- As the site of an event important in history; or
- For exemplifying an important trend or pattern commercial development, such as an iconic business within the community, a long term business, or community gathering place; or
- As an excellent and rare example of a commercial building type from the period (ex. malls, shopping centers, department stores, supermarkets, coffeeshops, fast-food restaurants).

A collection of commercial properties that are eligible under this criterion as a historic district may be significant:

- For representing an important pattern or trend in commercial development.
- As an intact collection of businesses that represent the growth of Pomona during the period.

Note that some commercial development may span several themes or periods of development. Local designation for historic districts includes Criteria 4, 6, and 8.

**Integrity Considerations:**

In order to be eligible for designation under this criterion, a property must retain sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance.

- Commercial properties from this period should retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, at a minimum, in order to convey their significance.
- An individual property that is eligible for a historic association must retain the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with an event or historical pattern.
- Note that some properties that may not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register may remain eligible for listing at the state and local levels.

For historic districts:

- The majority of the components that add to the district's historic character must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole
  - The historic district must retain a majority of contributors that date from the period of significance.
  - A contributing property must retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, setting, feeling, and association to adequately convey the significance of the historic district.
  - Some alterations to individual buildings, such as replacement of roof materials and windows within original openings may be acceptable as long as the district as a whole continues to convey its significance.

**Registration Requirements:**

To be eligible under this criterion, an individual property must:

- Date from the period of significance; and
- Have a proven association with an event important in history; or
- Represent an important catalyst for a pattern or trend in commercial development; or
- Display most of the character-defining features of the property type or style; and
- Retain the essential aspects of historic integrity.

To be eligible under this criterion, a historic district eligible under this theme must:

- Retain a majority of contributing buildings from the period of significance; and
- Retain significant character-defining features from the period of significance, including any important landscape or hardscape features; and

- Retain the original layout, reflecting planning and design principles from the period; and
- Retain the essential aspects of historic integrity.

### **Criterion B/2/2 (Important Persons)**

Individual commercial properties eligible under this criterion may be significant:

- For an association with persons significant in our past; or
- For a proven association with a specific significant ethnic or cultural group that made a demonstrable impact on the community.

Note that according to National Park Service guidance, persons significant in our past refers to individuals whose activities are demonstrably important within a local, state, or national historic context. A property is not eligible if its only justification for significance is that it was owned or used by a person who is a member of an identifiable profession, class, or social or ethnic group. In addition, the property must be associated with a person's productive life, reflecting the time period when he or she achieved significance.

#### **Integrity Considerations:**

In order to be eligible for designation under this criterion, a property must retain sufficient integrity from the period of significance to convey its association with the important person.

- Commercial properties from this period should retain integrity of design, workmanship, feeling, and association, at a minimum, in order to convey the property's association with the significant person's productive period.
- A general rule is that the property must be recognizable to contemporaries of the person with which it is associated.

#### **Registration Requirements:**

To be eligible under this criterion a property must:

- Have a proven association with the productive period of a person important to local, state, or national history; and
- Display most of the character-defining features of the property type or style from the period of significance (i.e., the period when the property was associated with the important person); and
- Retain the essential aspects of integrity.

### **Criterion C/3/3,5,7 (Architecture and Design)**

Individual commercial properties that are eligible under this criterion may be significant as:

- A good/excellent or rare example of an architectural style, property type, or method of construction; or

- A distinctive work by a noted architect, landscape architect, builder, or designer.

**Integrity Considerations:**

In order to be eligible for designation under this criterion, a property must retain sufficient integrity from the period of significance to convey its architecture.

- Commercial properties significant under this criterion should retain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, at a minimum.
- A property that is eligible for designation as a good/excellent or rare example of its style or type retains most - though not necessarily all - of the character-defining features of the style.
- A property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique. A property can be eligible if it has lost some historic materials or details but retains the majority of the essential features from the period of significance. These features illustrate the style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation.
- A property is not eligible if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.
- Replacement of storefronts is a common and acceptable alteration.
- Setting may have changed (surrounding buildings and land uses).

**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
- Represent quality of design and distinctive details; and
- Retain the essential aspects of integrity.