Architectural Styles

Introduction

Palm Springs has representative examples of architectural styles from each period of development. Although the city has a particularly strong collection of Modern architecture constructed after World War II, there is a rich collection of prewar buildings, representing both high style and more rustic, vernacular examples. As outlined in the registration requirements for each context/theme, buildings that are significant for the embodiment of the distinguishing features of an architectural style or method of construction and/or as a significant work of an architect or designer are evaluated under the following criterion:

C/3/4,5 (Architecture)[777]	As a good or excellent example of an architectural style or method of construction from the relevant period, or as the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect.

There is a large number of prominent architects, designers, builders, and landscape architects who worked in Palm Springs through each period of development. A list of known practitioners who designed properties in the city, along with brief biographies, are included in Appendix C.

There may be properties that are eligible for their architectural merit or as the work of an important architect that have not reached 50 years of age, which is the generally accepted threshold for assessing historic significance. A property that is less than 50 years old can be listed in the National Register of Historic Places if it meets Criteria Consideration G which states that "a property which has achieved significance within the past 50 years is eligible if it is of exceptional importance." The California Register does not have a specific criteria consideration related to age, but the guidelines state that significant time must have passed for the development of a scholarly perspective on the potential resource. There is no age limitation for local designation of Class 1 or Class 2 structures; Class 3 structures generally must be constructed prior to 1969.[778]

A property that is eligible for designation as an excellent example of its architectural style retains most - though not necessarily all - of the character-defining features of the style, and continues to exhibit its historic appearance. A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.[779] 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.[780] For guidance on the proper treatment of historic resources and appropriate alterations to specific

[777] Note that eligibility criteria are listed in the standard format National Register/California Register/Local.
[778] Class 3 designation encompasses resources or structures whose significance is based on date of construction. For more information, see City of Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 8.05.
[779] *National Register Bulletin 15.*
[780] *National Register Bulletin 15.*

architectural styles, refer to *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*.

The architectural character of Palm Springs reflects changes in popular taste over the course of the 20th century. Represented styles include:

- 19th Century Methods of Construction & Architectural Styles
    - Adobe Construction
    - Residential Vernacular
- Period Revival styles, including:
    - Spanish Colonial Revival
    - Mediterranean Revival
    - Pueblo Revival
    - Monterey Colonial Revival
    - English Revival
- Early Modern styles, including:
    - International Style
    - Streamline Moderne
- Minimal Traditional
- Ranch
- Regency Revival
- Modern styles of the post-World War II era, including:
    - Late Moderne
    - Mid-century Modern
    - Organic Architecture
    - Expressionist Architecture
    - New Formalism
    - Googie
    - Tiki
    - Brutalism
    - Late Modern

Adobe Construction

Early adobe buildings were typically small, single-story structures, with thick adobe walls, flat roofs framed with *vigas*, and usually a long covered porch supported on wood posts, called a *corredor*, along one or more sides. Adobe construction consists of thick walls composed of large sun-dried bricks, usually made from mud and straw and covered with earth plaster to protect the unfired bricks. The unreinforced adobe walls typically vary from one and one-half to six feet thick, resting on a dirt or rock foundation. Door and window openings are usually framed with heavy timber lintels, often left exposed. Adobe construction demonstrates a continuation of indigenous building traditions that were passed down from generation to generation of craftsmen. Adobe construction used locally available resources, and was appropriate for the climate in the Southwest, staying cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Following California's cession to the United States in 1850 there was a migration of settlers from the east. During this period many adobe structures were destroyed to make way for new development. Others were altered with the addition of steep gable or hipped roofs, usually clad in wood shakes but occasionally in clay tiles, and wood framed wings. Some adobes were clad in clapboard siding with Federal or Greek Revival decorative details and double hung windows to create a more Anglicized appearance. In some cases, adobes were covered with a cement plaster finish.

Adobes constructed in Palm Springs in the late 19th and early 20th centuries exhibited the elements of this later, Anglicized interpretation. They typically featured simple rectangular plans, thick adobe walls, gable roofs clad in wood shakes, wood lintels at window and door openings, wood double hung or casement windows, and *corredores* with simple wood posts along one or more sides. The few surviving examples include the McCallum Adobe (1884, HSPB-5) and the Reginald Pole adobe on the grounds of the Casa Cody Inn (1916, HSPB-59).

Character-defining features include:

- Rectangular or L-shaped plan with simply arranged interior spaces
- Thick masonry walls of adobe brick
- Simple, unadorned exteriors (often with cement plaster veneer)
- Few, small window and door openings with wood lintels
- Double hung, wood sash windows
- *Corredores* along one or more sides

The McCallum Adobe (1884, HSPB-5). Source: Palm Springs Historical Society.

Residential Vernacular

The term "Residential Vernacular" is used to describe simple, utilitarian houses or cottages with little or no distinguishing stylistic features. These buildings are characterized by their simplicity and lack of any characteristics of recognizable styles. In Palm Springs, many examples are constructed of readily-available local materials, or feature details using local or salvaged materials. Most of the early buildings in Palm Springs constructed by the first settlers would fall into this designation; some were even constructed of recycled materials from previous structures. Surviving examples are extremely rare. One such is the Cornelia White House (c. 1890, HSPB-4), constructed of railroad ties salvaged from the abandoned Palmdale Railroad.

Character-defining features include:

- Simple square or rectangular form
- Gabled or hipped roof with boxed or open eaves
- Wood exterior cladding
- Simple window and door surrounds

The Cornelia White House (c. 1890, HSPB-4) is a rare surviving example of residential vernacular architecture in Palm Springs. Source: Palm Springs Historical Society.

Spanish Colonial Revival

The Spanish Colonial Revival style attained widespread popularity throughout Southern California following the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, which was housed in a series of Spanish Baroque-inspired buildings designed by chief architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue. The style lent itself to monumental public edifices, churches, and exuberant commercial buildings and theaters, but was less suited to residential or smaller scale commercial architecture. For those, architects drew inspiration from provincial Spain, particularly the arid southern region of Andalusia, where many young American architects were diverted while World War I prevented their traditional post-graduate "grand tour" of Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany. The resulting style was based on infinitely creative combinations of plaster, tile, wood, and iron, featuring plaster-clad volumes arranged around patios, low-pitched tile roofs, decorative details of iron, wood, and glazed ceramic tile, and a sprawling, horizontal orientation. It was a deliberate attempt to develop a "native" California architectural style and romanticize the area's colonial past, though it drew directly from Spanish and other Mediterranean precedents and bore little resemblance to the simple missions and rustic adobe ranch houses that comprised the state's actual colonial-era buildings.

In Palm Springs in the 1920s and 1930s the Spanish Colonial Revival style was often simplified and reduced to its most basic elements for residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. The result was a simpler, more rustic style reminiscent of traditional southwestern adobes and haciendas that was believed to be better suited to the desert climate and casual, resort lifestyle. These tended to be informal one- or two-story buildings finished in plaster, with simple rectilinear plans, low-pitched gable or hipped roofs clad in barrel tile or wood shakes, wood or steel sash windows, and little or no ornamentation. This minimalist Spanish trend continued into the post-World War II years; the city has houses and commercial buildings from the 1940s that feature red clay tile roofing and steel casement windows.

Examples of high-style Spanish Colonial Revival residential architecture in Palm Springs include The Willows (1924, HSPB-34) and *Ojo del Desierto* (1925, HSPB-19). Commercial examples include the El Paseo Building (1930, HSPB-27) and the La Plaza Center and Theatre (1936, HSPB-22). Examples of the more typical simplified Spanish Colonial Revival style include the Crawford Apartments (1945, now the Village Inn) at 855 N. Indian Canyon Drive, and the single-family residence (c. 1930) located at 545 S. Calle Santa Rosa.

Character-defining features include:

- Asymmetrical façade
- Irregular plan and horizontal massing
- Varied gable or hipped roofs with clay barrel tiles; occasionally flat roofs
- Plaster veneered exterior walls forming wide, uninterrupted expanses
- Wood-sash or steel casement or double-hung windows, typically with divided lights
- Round, pointed, or parabolic arched openings
- Arcades, colonnades, or *corredores*
- Decorative grilles of wood, wrought iron, or plaster
- Balconies, patios or towers
- Decorative terra cotta or glazed ceramic tile work

The Stephen Willard House (1929), located at 1735 S Palm Canyon Drive. Source: Slim Moorten and the *Desert Sun*.

El Paseo Building (1930, HSPB-27). Source: Mott Collection, California State Library.

Mediterranean Revival

The Mediterranean Revival style is distinguished by its eclectic mix of architectural elements from several regions around the Mediterranean Sea, including Spain, Italy, southern France, and North Africa. By the 1920s, the lines between these individual styles were frequently blurred and their distinguishing characteristics blended by architects who drew inspiration from throughout the Mediterranean region. These imaginative combinations of details from varied architectural traditions resulted in the emergence of a distinct Mediterranean Revival style. The Mediterranean Revival style is often more formal and usually more elaborately composed and ornamented than the simpler, more rustic Spanish Colonial Revival style. Typical features of the Mediterranean Revival style include arched entrance doorways with richly detailed surrounds; arcades and loggias; stairways and terraces with cast stone balustrades; and Classical decorative elements in cast stone or plaster, including architraves, stringcourses, cornices, pilasters, columns, and quoins.

There are relatively few residential examples of the Mediterranean Revival Style in Palm Springs, where houses in the 1920s and 1930s tended to be more rustic and informal. An especially fine commercial example is the Pacific Building (c. 1936, HSPB-13) at 766-798 N Palm Canyon Drive.

Character-defining features include:

- Frequently symmetrical façade
- Rectangular plan and two-story height
- Hipped roof with clay barrel tiles and wide boxed or bracketed eaves, or eave cornice
- Exterior walls veneered in smooth plaster
- Wood or steel sash casement windows, typically with divided lights; sometimes double-hung windows
- Palladian windows or other accent windows
- Arched door or window openings; elaborate door surrounds
- Arcades, colonnades, or loggias
- Terraces and stairs with metal or cast stone balustrades
- Cast stone or plaster decorative elements including architraves, stringcourses, cornices, pilasters, columns, and quoins
- Decorative grilles of wood, wrought iron, or plaster
- Balconies, patios or towers
- Decorative terra cotta or glazed ceramic tile work

The Pacific Building (1937, HSPB-13). Source: California Desertart.

Monterey Colonial Revival

The Monterey Colonial Revival style is based upon the distinctive style of residential architecture that developed in California beginning in the 1830s, as more and more Yankee merchants and settlers arrived in Alta California and adapted the Anglo building traditions of the East Coast to local Hispanic customs. As its name implies, the style developed in and around Monterey and combined vernacular adobe construction with elements of American Federal and Greek Revival architecture, including multi-light sliding sash windows, louvered shutters, paneled doors, and Classical details executed in wood. The style's most distinguishing characteristic is a second-floor covered wood balcony, often cantilevered, extending the length of the primary façade and sometimes wrapping one or two sides as well. The best-known example of the style, and one of the earliest, is the Thomas Larkin adobe, constructed beginning in 1834 and one of the first two-story dwellings in Monterey.[781]

The style was revived beginning in the mid-1920s and was favored by architects and homeowners who perhaps found the fantastical Spanish and Mediterranean revivals too exotic and too different from the building traditions familiar to most Americans. The Monterey Colonial Revival style replaced adobe construction with wood framed walls veneered in smooth plaster and devoid of surface ornament, and featured second-story balconies, low-pitched gable or hipped roofs, and double-hung wood windows. Examples of the style are rare in Palm Springs, and mostly date from the height of the revival phase during the 1930s. A good local example is 421 Santa Rosa Drive (1938).

Character-defining features include:

- Usually asymmetrical façade
- Two-story height
- Rectangular or L-shaped plan
- Low-pitched hipped or side gable roofs with wood shakes or clay tiles
- Plaster-veneered exterior walls devoid of surface ornament
- Second-floor covered wood balcony, sometimes cantilevered, across primary façade and occasionally wrapping one or more sides, with simple wood posts and wood or metal railing
- Wood-sash double-hung windows, typically with divided lights
- Louvered or paneled wood shutters
- Recessed entrances with paneled wood doors

[781] Monterey County Historical Society, "Monterey's Larkin House Adobe and Garden," http://www.mchsmuseum.com/larkinhouse.html (accessed September 17, 2013).

421 Santa Rosa Drive (F. Nelson Breed, 1938).

Pueblo Revival

The Pueblo Revival was the southwestern counterpart of Mission Revival, developed concurrently with a similar intent to define an architecture suited to the region's history, climate, and lifestyle. Only a handful of architects explored this style in southern California, most prominently Robert Stacy-Judd, an architect most well-known for his promotion of Pre-Columbian revivalism.

Pueblo Revival buildings represent another attempt to create an architecture specifically suited to location and regional history, rather than relying on modes of design and construction imported from elsewhere. Like Mission Revival buildings, Pueblo Revival designs looked at precedents set by native builders and early settlers, both through indigenous traditions and as interpreted by the Spanish colonists. Later Pueblo Revival buildings may also have reflected Hollywood's fascination with and embellishment of Native American culture. Intact examples of Pueblo Revival buildings are significant for their representation of these influences. They are also significant, in Palm Springs, for their rarity.

Pueblo Revival buildings are generally residential in type, most commonly single-family residences. Their exterior walls are veneered in plaster to suggest adobe construction, an impression which is heightened by the cubic quality of the massing. Roofs are flat, with *vigas* often punctuating the parapets. Walls are unornamented and windows may be limited in surface area. Pure examples of Pueblo Revival are infrequent in Palm Springs; features associated with other styles, especially Spanish Colonial Revival, may also be present.

Well-articulated examples of the Pueblo Revival in Palm Springs are rare, and mostly occurred during the height of the revival phase in architecture during the 1930s. An example of Pueblo Revival residential architecture in Palm Springs is 1850 W. Crestview Drive (1930).

Character-defining features include:

- One or two stories
- Flat roof shielded by parapet extensions of exterior wall surfaces
- Rows of projecting *vigas* below the top of the parapet
- Cubic massing
- Plaster exterior wall cladding, simulating adobe construction
- Casement windows
- Lack of ornamentation
- May be used in conjunction with Spanish Colonial Revival, Adobe Revival, and Pre-Columbian/Mayan Revival styles

1850 W. Crestview Drive (1930).

English Revival

The English Revival style is a sub-type of the Tudor Revival style, which is loosely based on a variety of late medieval English building traditions including Perpendicular Gothic, Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean. It has its origins in the late 19th-century English Arts and Crafts movement, whose leaders drew inspiration in part from English domestic architecture of the 16th and 17th centuries because of its picturesque qualities and sympathetic relationship to the natural landscape. The earliest examples of the style appeared in the United States in large estates of the 1890s. The Tudor Revival style grew in favor after World War I and reached its peak of popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, as architects and developers adapted it to the country's rapidly growing suburban residential communities and advancements in masonry veneering techniques allowed even the most modest examples to emulate the brick and stone exteriors of English prototypes.

English Revival houses are simpler than their high-style Tudor Revival counterparts. They are typically two stories in height with steeply-pitched, multi-gable roofs usually clad in wood shakes or composition shingles. The buildings are usually rambling compositions of multiple volumes in a variety of sizes and shapes. Exterior walls are usually veneered in plaster, with brick or stone used only at the chimney or around the primary entrance. Half-timbering, if used at all, is usually limited to a primary front-facing gable if featured. Tall, narrow casement windows, sometimes with leaded diamond-shaped lights, are frequently set in horizontal groupings or projecting bays. Projecting exterior chimneys, usually brick or stone, are frequently used as prominent design features.

Character-defining features include:

- Asymmetrical façade and irregular massing
- Steeply-pitched gable roof with wood shake or composition roofing
- Plaster exterior wall cladding; decorative half-timbering or brick details are usually limited or omitted
- Tall, narrow divided-light windows, usually casement, often grouped horizontally or in bays; may have leaded diamond-shaped lights
- Prominent chimney

401 W. Merito Place (1928).

EARLY MODERNISM

International Style

The International Style – an architectural aesthetic that stressed rationality, machined materials, and a break with the past – emerged in Europe in the 1920s with the work of Le Corbusier in France, and Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe in Germany. The United States became a stronghold of Modern architecture after the emigration of Gropius, Mies, and Marcel Breuer. Two Austrian emigrants, Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler, helped introduce International style modern architecture to Southern California in the 1920s. Their buildings were minimalist in concept, stressed functionalism, and (at least initially) were devoid of regional characteristics and nonessential decorative elements. In 1932, the Museum of Modern Art hosted an exhibition, titled simply "Modern Architecture," that featured the work of fifteen architects from around the world whose buildings shared a stark simplicity and vigorous functionalism. The term International Style was coined by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in the accompanying exhibition catalogue.

International Style modernism made its first appearance in Palm Springs in 1934, with the construction of the Kocher-Samson Building (altered; HSPB-79) designed by New York architect A. Lawrence Kocher and his Swiss-born business partner, Albert Frey, for Kocher's brother. In response to its desert setting Frey designed the building as a cluster of cubist volumes around a series of landscaped patio courtyards. Frey traveled to Palm Springs at the end of 1934 to supervise its construction and in 1935 formed a partnership with a young California architect, John Porter Clark. Clark and Frey promoted Modern design in Palm Springs, as seen in the Guthrie House (1935-37, altered), Halberg House (1935-37, demolished), and particularly in Clark's own house (1939). One of the finest remaining examples of International Style architecture in Palm Springs is the Grace Miller house (HSPB-45) by Richard Neutra.

Character-defining features include:

- Rectangular massing
- Balance and regularity, but not symmetry
- Clear expression of form and function
- Steel frame structure used as an organizing device
- Elevation of buildings on tall piers (piloti)
- Flat roofs
- Frequent use of glass, steel, concrete, and smooth plaster
- Full-height glass curtain walls
- Horizontal bands of flush windows, often meeting at corners
- Absence of ornamentation
- Column-free interior spaces

The Grace Miller House (1937, HSPB-45) by Richard Neutra. Source: Julius Shulman Archives, Getty Research Institute.

The Kocher-Samson Building (1934, HSPB-79). Source: *Palm Springs Life* Desert Treasures Gallery.

Streamline Moderne

The architecture of the Art Deco movement rejected the rigid organizational methods and classical ornamentation of the Beaux Arts style. Instead it emphasized a soaring verticality through the use of stepped towers, spires, and fluted or reeded piers, and embraced highly stylized geometric, floral and figurative motifs as decorative elements on both the exterior and interior. Ornate metalwork, especially aluminum, glazed terra cotta tiles, and bright colors were hallmarks of the style. By the mid-1930s, in the depths of the Great Depression, the highly decorated style was already viewed as garish and overwrought, and it was soon abandoned in favor of the cleaner, simpler Streamline Moderne style.

Characterized by smooth surfaces, curved corners, and sweeping horizontal lines, Streamline Moderne (also known as Art Moderne) is considered to be the first thoroughly Modern architectural style to achieve wide acceptance among the American public. Inspired by the industrial and transportation designs of the period, the style was popular throughout the United States in the late 1930s, particularly with the Federally-funded projects of the Works Progress Administration. Unlike the highly-ornamental Art Deco style, Streamline Moderne was perceived as expressing an austerity more appropriate for Depression-era architecture, although Art Deco and Streamline Moderne were not necessarily opposites. A Streamline Moderne building with a few Deco elements was not uncommon, but the prime movers behind the Streamline Moderne style such as Raymond Loewy, Walter Dorwin Teague, Gilbert Rohde, and Norman Bel Geddes all disliked Art Deco, seeing it as falsely modern.

Streamline Moderne is relatively rare in Palm Springs, where a simplified Spanish Colonial Revival style remained popular into the 1940s. Surviving examples include the Cork n' Bottle (1935-36, HSPB-31) originally Simpson's Radio and Frigidaire Company, and the Davidson House (1936, HSPB-47), known as "the Ship of the Desert," designed by Los Angeles architects Webster and Wilson.

Character-defining features include:

- Horizontal emphasis
- Asymmetrical façade
- Flat roof with coping
- Smooth plaster wall surfaces
- Curved end walls and corners
- Glass block and porthole windows
- Flat canopy over entrances
- Fluted or reeded moldings or stringcourses
- Pipe railings along exterior staircases and balconies
- Steel sash windows

"The Ship of the Desert" (1936, HSPB-31). Source: Los Angeles Public Library.

Simpson's Radio and Frigidaire Company (now the Cork n' Bottle, 1935-36, HSPB-31). Source: Palm Springs Historical Society.

MINIMAL TRADITIONAL

The Minimal Traditional style is defined by a single-story configuration, simple exterior forms, and a restrained use of traditional architectural detailing. The style had its origins in the principles of the Modern movement and the requirements of the FHA and other Federal programs of the 1930s. Its open plan reflected the developer's desire for greater efficiency. Modern construction methods addressed the builder's need to reduce costs and keep homes affordable to the middle class. Conventional detailing appealed to conservative home buyers and mortgage companies. The Minimal Traditional house was immensely popular in large suburban residential developments throughout the United States during the 1940s and early 1950s. In Southern California, the style is closely associated with large-scale residential developments of the post-World War II period. Primarily associated with the detached single family house, Minimal Traditional detailing may also be applied to apartment buildings of the same period.

In Palm Springs, Minimal Traditional houses are frequently found as later infill construction in pre-World War II tracts, such as the single-family residence at 140 E Ocotillo Avenue (1947) in the Palos Verdes Tract.

Character-defining features include:

- One-story configuration
- Rectangular plan
- Medium or low-pitched hip or side-gable roof with shallow eaves
- Smooth stucco wall cladding, often with wood lap or stone veneer accents
- Wood or steel sash multi-light windows (picture, double-hung sash, casement)
- Projecting three-sided oriel
- Shallow entry porch with slender wood supports
- Wood shutters
- Lack of decorative exterior detailing

140 E Ocotillo Avenue (1947), located in the Palos Verdes Tract.

RANCH

The Ranch style emerged from the 1930s designs of Southern California architects and designers such as Cliff May who merged modernist ideas with traditional elements of the working ranches of the American West and in particular, the rustic adobe houses of California's Spanish- and Mexican-era *ranchos*.[782] Early Ranch-style houses feature board-and-batten exterior cladding and low-pitch gable roofs with wood shakes. The 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.

In 1930s Palm Springs the Ranch house took on the simpler, more rustic style of traditional southwestern adobe, hacienda, and wood vernacular types that was believed to be better suited to the desert climate and casual lifestyle. These tended to be informal one-story houses finished in plaster, brick, or board-and-batten siding, with irregular or rambling plans, low-pitched tile or wood shake roofs, wide verandas, wood or steel windows, and minimal ornamentation. The Ranch-style house proved popular both before and after the war, combining as it did modernist ideas of open interior space with traditional imagery of working ranches and Spanish ranchos. Many such residences can be found in pre-war residential tracts such as Las Palmas Estates, including 365 Camino Norte and 523 Camino Sur, both constructed in 1936.

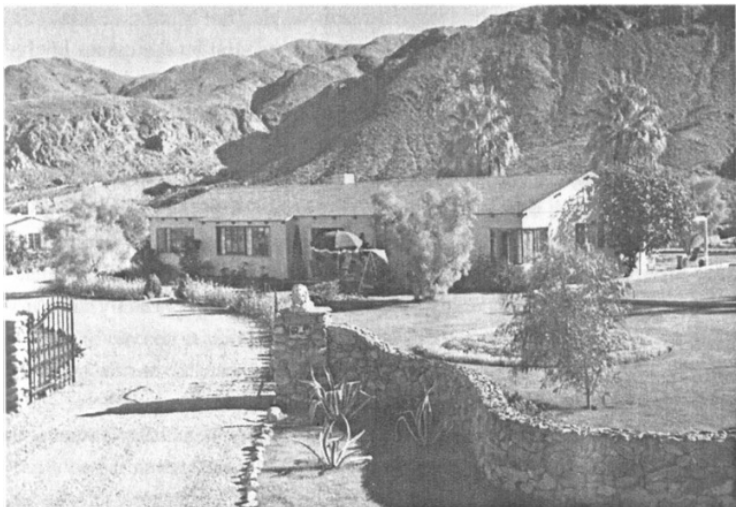
The Ranch house became increasingly popular in the post-World War II era. The architectural style embodied the mid-20th century ideal of "California living." It was more conservative than other modern residential architecture of the period, often using decorative elements based on historical forms and 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, making it ideally suited to Palm Springs. A common Ranch variation in Palm Springs was the Modern Ranch, which was influenced by Mid-century Modernism. Modern Ranches emphasized horizontal planes, 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, such as flared roof ridges, decorative chinoiserie-style fretwork screens, and double doors with over-scaled round escutcheons, resulted in Japanese- or Asian-inspired variations.

Character-defining features include:

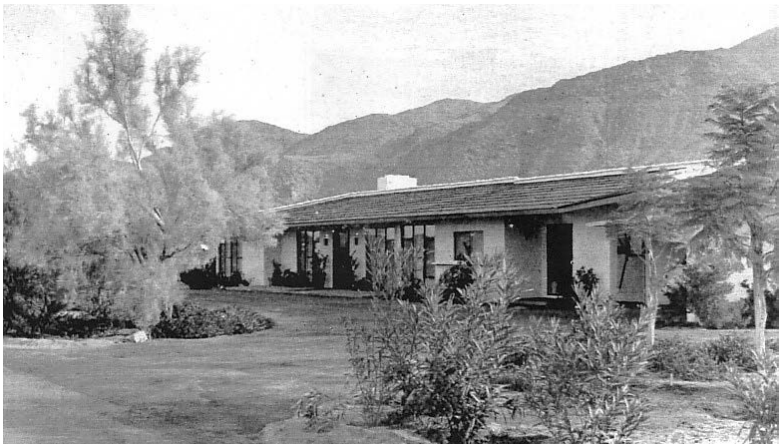
- One-story
- Sprawling L- or U-shaped plan, often with radiating wings
- Low, horizontal massing with wide street façade
- Low-pitched hipped or gable roof with open overhanging eaves and wood shakes
- Plaster, wood lap, or board-and-batten siding, often with brick or stone accents
- Divided light wood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

[782] Description of Ranch style architecture largely based on the scholarship of Alan Hess, including his book *Ranch House* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004); and the work of Cliff May, particularly as described in Paul C. Johnson, ed., *Western Ranch Houses* (Los Angeles: Hennessey + Ingalls, 1997).

- Details such as wood shutters, attic vents in gable ends, dovecotes, 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



The Richards House in Smoke Tree Ranch reflects the rustic Ranch-style seen in Palm Springs. Source: Palm Springs Historical Society.



The George Miller Residence (c. 1950, Wallace Neff) in Smoke Tree Ranch. Photograph by Hal Waltz. Source: *Palm Springs Villager*.

REGENCY REVIVAL

The Regency Revival style, also known as Hollywood Regency, is seen almost exclusively in the design of single-family and multi-family residential architecture from about the mid-1930s until about 1970; most examples in Palm Springs date to the 1960s. The style references in part the architecture and design that developed in Britain in the early 19th century. Like the original Regency style, Regency Revival includes elements of Neoclassical and French Empire design; however, its attenuated classical ornament and simple surfaces reflect the influence of the Modern Movement. The style first appeared in the United States in the mid-1930s as a stripped-down version of Neoclassicism that exhibited both the influence of Streamline Moderne and the simplified yet exaggerated qualities of Hollywood film sets. Its early development was interrupted by World War II and the resulting halt of private construction. It resumed after the war with the work of architects such as John Elgin Woolf, whose designs emphasized symmetry, privacy, exaggerated entrances and prominent mansard roofs. Post-World War II Regency Revival buildings are characterized by theatrical arched entrances with an exaggerated vertical emphasis, usually positioned in projecting pavilions with high, steep roofs; symmetrical, largely blank primary façades; and eccentrically detailed, unconventionally proportioned Classical columns and ornamentation juxtaposed against large expanses of blank wall.

In Palm Springs, Regency Revival design can be found in custom residences, such as that at 2205 Yosemite (c. 1965), as well as in multi-family developments. In some cases a Regency Revival portico was tacked on to dress up an otherwise standard tract home, as at 2996 Avery Drive in Araby Estates. Designer James McNaughton was a local practitioner of the style.

Character-defining features include:

- Symmetrical façade
- Tall, steeply pitched mansard, hipped or gable roofs, especially over entrance; frequently a flat roof over remainder
- Blank wall surfaces veneered in smooth plaster; some examples may have brick veneer or wood
- Vertically exaggerated arched entrance doors, sometimes set in projecting pavilions
- Tall, narrow windows, often with arched tops
- Eccentrically detailed and unconventionally proportioned Neo-Classical features including double-height porticoes, thin columns, pediments, fluted pilasters, niches, and balconettes with iron railings
- Exaggerated applied ornament, such as large lanterns or sconces

Araby Estates Model Home 1 (1965-1966) at 2996 Avery Drive.

POST-WORLD WAR II MODERNISM

Late Moderne

The Late Moderne style incorporates elements of both the Streamline Moderne and International styles. While the earliest examples appeared in the late 1930s, the style reached its greatest popularity in large-scale commercial and civic buildings of the late 1950s and 1960s. The Late Moderne style is frequently identified by the use of the bezeled window, where horizontal groupings of windows are outlined in a protruding, bezel-like flange, often in a material and color that contrasts with the surrounding wall surface. An example of the Late Moderne style in Palm Springs is the Dollard Building (1947) at 687 N. Palm Canyon Drive, by John Porter Clark and Albert Frey.

Character-defining features include:

- Horizontal emphasis
- Exposed concrete or cement plaster veneer
- Flat roofs
- Horizontal bands of bezeled windows, sometimes with aluminum louvers
- Operable steel sash windows (casement, awning, or hopper)
- Projecting window frames

The Dollard Building (Clark & Frey, 1947) at 687 N. Palm Canyon Drive.

Mid-century Modern

Mid-century Modern is a term used to describe the post-World War II iteration of various Modern styles in both residential and commercial design, including the International Style. International Style architecture is 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, new building technologies (such as modular materials and structural systems), and to the postwar need for efficiently-built, moderately-priced homes. In Palm Springs, 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. It was adapted to Palm Springs by the use of concrete block, perforated concrete, and other forms of wood, concrete, and metal screens to shield against the intense desert sun while allowing for air flow.

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, and Harwell Hamilton Harris, to name a few. Mid-century Modernism was adapted to Palm Springs by prominent local architects including John Porter Clark, William Cody, Albert Frey, Donald Wexler, and E. Stewart Williams, as well as Los Angeles architects such as Dan Palmer and William Krisel. These postwar architects developed an indigenous Modernism that was born from international Modernism and but matured into a fundamentally regional style, fostered in part by *Art and Architecture* magazine's pivotal Case Study Program (1945-1966), along with specific local conditions. The style gained popularity because its use of standardized, prefabricated materials permitted quick and economical construction. It became the predominant architectural style in Palm Springs 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; some examples have folded plate roofs
- Unadorned wall surfaces
- Wood, glass, plaster, concrete, steel, brick or stone used as exterior wall panels or accent materials
- Flush-mounted metal frame fixed windows and sliding doors, and clerestory windows
- Concrete, wood, or metal screens
- Little or no exterior decorative detailing
- Expressionistic/Organic subtype: sculptural forms and geometric shapes, including butterfly, A-frame, folded plate or barrel vault roofs

Frank Sinatra's Twin Palms (1947, E. Stewart Williams; HSPB-77). Photograph by Julius Shulman. Source: The J. Paul Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. Digital Photo Collection.

Ocotillo Lodge (Palmer and Krisel, 1956). Source: *The Alexanders: A Desert Legacy*.

Organic Architecture

Frank Lloyd Wright first used the term 'organic architecture' in an article for *Architectural Record* in August 1914.[783] Wright applied the word organic to "'living' structure – a structure or concept wherein features or parts are so organized in form and substance as to be, applied to purpose, integral. Everything that 'lives' is therefore organic."[784] Organic architecture meant a living architecture in which every composition, element, and detail was deliberately shaped for the job it was to perform. Wright stressed the unity of building, structure, furnishings, and environment in an "organic-entity, as contrasted with that former insensate aggregation of parts…One great thing instead of a quarrelling collection of so many little things."[785] Wright expressed his concept of Organic design through crystalline plan forms, the possibility of growth by asymmetrical addition, the relationship of composition to site and client, and the use of local materials.[786]

The chief concept of Organic architecture is the merging of building and nature, so that the design responds to the environment rather than imposing itself upon it. Organic architecture grew out of the site from within, employing natural shapes, complex geometries, and new building materials and technologies to unify all elements of the design – site, structure, spaces, fixtures, finishes, and furnishing - into a single harmonious unit.[787]

One of the most significant examples in Southern California is the Arthur Elrod House (1968) by John Lautner. The house incorporates Organic and Expressionist influences by using concrete to blend the home into its rocky cliffside site. The chief concept of Organic architecture is the merging of building and nature, so that the design responds to the environment rather than imposing itself upon it. Expressionism repudiated modern rationalism and emphasized abstraction of form to symbolically express subjective interpretation of inner experience. Both employed natural shapes, complex geometries, and new building materials and technologies. The Elrod House site, a prominent ridgeline above the city, was excavated to reveal rock outcroppings which helped to shape and define the main living area, a 60-foot diameter, split-level open space surmounted by a shallow, conical concrete dome with skylights.

Character-defining features include:

- Merging of building and nature
- Use of natural shapes and complex geometries
- Use of innovative building materials and technologies
- Unification of all elements of the design into a single harmonious unit

[783] Adapted from "Wright – Organic Architecture," *Frank Lloyd Wright Trust*, http://www.flwright.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Wright-Organic-Architecture.pdf (accessed August 2015).
[784] Frank Lloyd Wright, *Modern Architecture; Being the Kahn Lectures for 1930* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1931), 27.
[785] Ulrich Conrads, *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th-century Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1999), 25.
[786] Peter Collins, "The Biology of Analogy," *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture 1750-1950* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965).
[787] Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 656.

The Arthur Elrod House (John Lautner, 1968; listed in the National Register) at 2175 Southridge Drive. Source: *Palm Springs Life*.

Expressionist Architecture

Expressionist architecture is loosely based on the German Expressionist movement of the early twentieth century.[788] Expressionism is a rejection of the rationalist ideals embodied in Miesian buildings. The architecture is meant to evoke an emotional, rather than intellectual, response. Expressionism repudiated modern rationalism and emphasized abstraction of form to symbolically express subjective interpretation of inner experience. Forms were frequently inspired by natural phenomena including caves, crystals, rocks, and other organic, non-geometric forms to produce "an architecture of motion and emotion, ambiance, radicalism, and sweeping change."[789] Innovative building materials such as concrete, plastics, and laminates are often incorporated in the design to achieve the artistic forms. Examples of Expressionist architecture in Palm Springs include the Arthur Elrod House (John Lautner, 1968; 2175 Southridge Drive; listed in the National Register) and St. Theresa Roman Catholic Church (William F. Cody, 1968; 2800 E Ramon Road).

Character-defining features include:

- Abstract, non-geometric forms inspired by natural phenomena
- Use of innovative building materials such as concrete, plastics, and laminates

St. Theresa Catholic Church (William Cody, 1968) at 2800 E. Ramon Road.

[788] Adapted from "Modern Movement: Neo-Expressionism (1955-Present)," Alaska Department of Natural Resources: Office of History & Archaeology, http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/styleguide/neoexpressionism.htm (accessed August 2015).
[789] Adrian Sheppard, FRAIC, "The Return of Expressionism and The Architecture of Luigi Moretti," 1-2, www.mcgill.ca/architecture/files/architecture/ExpressionismMoretti.pdf (accessed August 7, 2015).

Googie

Googie has been described as Modernism for the masses. With its swooping lines and organic shapes, the style captured the playful exuberance of postwar America. Named for the John Lautner-designed Googie's Restaurant in Los Angeles, the style was widely employed in automobile-oriented commercial architecture of the 1950s, including coffee shops, bowling alleys, and car washes. It exaggerated the vocabulary of Mid-century Modern design to catch the eye of passing motorists with dramatic sculptural rooflines, shimmering walls of glass, abstract shapes, and prominent integral signage. Restaurants along Highway 111 entering and leaving the center of Palm Springs were designed in the Googie style. The Springs restaurant (1957; demolished) by William Cody was one of the most sophisticated examples in the nation of this Modernist type. A Denny's coffee shop by Los Angeles architects Armét and Davis (701 E. Palm Canyon Drive, now the King's Highway) used an extended version of the Denny's prototype design as part of a motel complex (now the Ace Hotel).

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

L: Denny's Restaurant (Armét and Davis, 1965) at 701 E. Palm Canyon Drive.
R: Las Palmas Liquors (c. 1958) at 1595 N. Palm Canyon Drive.

Tiki

The Tiki style is a themed architecture, loosely inspired by Polynesian precedents. It was first popularized in California the 1930s with the founding of two successful Polynesian themed restaurants, Don the Beachcomber in Hollywood and Trader Vic's in Oakland, both of which featured exotic rum-based cocktails, flaming torches, and carved wood statues. In the years after World War II the fad for Polynesian-themed kitsch was fueled in part by the stories and souvenirs of soldiers returning from service in the Pacific. It was disseminated on a much wider level by Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl's sensational 1947 voyage from South America to Polynesia on a raft called Kon-Tiki, and by *Tales of the South Pacific*, James Michener's 1948 Pulitzer Prize winning collection of short stories that was adapted into the hit Broadway musical *South Pacific*. In the 1950s and 1960s the romanticized exoticism of Tiki design found its way into restaurants, bars, motels, apartment buildings, and even private homes with towering A-frame rooflines, carved wood beams, lava rock walls, and bamboo trim.

The tropical-themed style somewhat incongruously found its way to the desert environment of Palm Springs, with examples such as the Tropics Motor Lodge (1964; now the Caliente Tropics Hotel, 411 E. Palm Canyon Drive). Though often superficial and frequently kitschy, Tiki elements were sometimes highly refined and incorporated into exceptional Mid-century Modern designs such as Wexler & Harrison's Royal Hawaiian Estates (1961-1962; HSPB-73, Historic District No. 2).

Character-defining features include:

- Prominent A-frame roofs
- Flared ridge beams, eaves, and rakes
- Carved wood ridge beams and outriggers
- Lava rock veneer
- Bamboo trim
- Polynesian-themed decorative features including tiki statues, patterned panels, friezes and murals, and torches
- Tropical landscaping including palm trees

Caliente Tropics Hotel (William Cody, 1964) at 411 E. Palm Canyon Drive.

Royal Hawaiian Estates (Wexler & Harrison, 1960; HSPB-73, HD-3) at 1744 S. Palm Canyon Drive. Source: Kenneth Caldwell.

New Formalism

New Formalism 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 Durell Stone, who melded his Beaux Arts training with the stark Modernism of his early work; Philip Johnson; and Minoru Yamasaki. All three had already achieved prominence working within the International Style and other Modernist idioms.

In Palm Springs New Formalism is best represented by E. Stewart Williams' distinctive design for the second Coachella Valley Savings & Loan (1961; HSPB #53), clearly inspired by Oscar Niemeyer's Alvorada Palace in Brasilia. It emphasizes its public role with dramatic concrete columns with curved bases, lifted above a pool of water with a string of fountains.

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

The second Coachella Valley Savings and Loan (E. Stewart Williams, 1961, HSPB-53) at 499 S. Palm Canyon Drive. Source: Julius Shulman Archives, Getty Research Institute.

Brutalism

In contrast to the International Style's often light and skeletal appearance, Brutalism created massive, monolithic structures that stretched the limits of concrete construction. More properly known as "New Brutalism," the name was derived from *béton brut*, the concrete casting technique that left a roughly finished surface bearing the imprint of the formwork, used by Le Corbusier in the *Unité d'Habitation*, Marseille, France (1952). One of the style's most significant American promoters was John Portman, who designed several enormous atrium hotels and office clusters known for their spectacular spatial effects, including the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles. The style was particularly popular in the construction of government, educational, and financial buildings. Other well-known examples of the style in Southern California include the Salk Institute in La Jolla (1959) by Louis Kahn, and the Geisel Library at the University of California, San Diego (1969) by William Pereira.

Examples of Brutalism are rare in Palm Springs, but one distinctive example is Robert Ricciardi's Gas Company building (1969), composed of solid rectangular volumes with tall concrete walls finished in a rugged hammered texture.

Character-defining features of Brutalism include:

- Bold geometric shapes
- Sculptural façade articulation
- Exposed, roughly finished cast-in-place or pre-cast concrete construction
- Window and door openings as voids in otherwise solid volumes
- Raised plazas and base articulation

The Gas Company Building (Robert Ricciardi, 1969) at 211 N. Sunrise Way.

Late Modern

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. A Palm Springs example from the 1960s is the Alan Ladd building at 500 S. Palm Canyon Drive.

Character-defining features 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

The Alan Ladd Building (1968, Kaptur-Lapham & Associates) at 500 S. Palm Canyon Drive. Source: *Palm Springs Life*.