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## ARCHITECTURE CONTEXT

# HISTORIC CONTEXT: ARCHITECTURE

## INTRODUCTION

An architecture context is a tool to facilitate the identification and evaluation of resources within a survey area and is not intended to be a comprehensive narrative of architectural history. There is no one definitive list of architectural styles, and there are numerous books and publications on architectural history and styles; however, the styles for this survey are largely based on the list in the Texas Historical Commission's (THC's) survey form and Virginia Savage McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, which is recognized by historic preservation professionals as the industry standard for residential architecture.<sup>1</sup> Both the THC and McAlester recognize that all buildings have a form, but not all buildings have a style. Furthermore, many buildings loosely reference a style but do not embody the characteristics of a style. Additionally, some buildings are transitional examples that reflect influences from multiple architectural styles.

The survey area was generally developed from the 1910s through the late 1960s. Few buildings that predate neighborhood development are extant. As such, this context focuses on prevalent styles in Austin from c. 1910 to c. 1970. Surveyors were instructed to reference McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses* for additional information about styles, further examples, and information about uncommon styles not described in this context.

## LATE VICTORIAN ERA

The period from 1860 to 1900 is generally referred to as the Victorian era of architecture in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> During this period, new balloon-frame building methods allowed houses to take on more complex forms, and industrialization provided mass-produced decorative detailing and components like windows and

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<sup>1</sup> "Historic Resources Survey Form," Texas Historical Commission, version 3/2013, <https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/survey/survey/THC%20survey%20form.pdf>; Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses, Second Edition* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 312.

doors at an affordable cost. Modest and middle-class houses began to have building complexity and elaborations—elements that were once restricted to only the wealthiest homeowners. Pattern books also began to be widely disseminated throughout this period, introducing local builders to new kinds of styles and plans.<sup>3</sup> Victorian-era design and mass-produced architectural details became readily available in Austin in the early 1870s with the arrival of the railroad. Though Victorian styles generally fell out of favor around the turn of the century, in Texas, where historical architectural trends were generally behind nationwide trends, Victorian styles were still constructed until about 1910.

## QUEEN ANNE

The Queen Anne style originated as an architect-designed style for wealthy clients, but after advances in industrialization, the form and materials could be mass produced and the style became available to all socio-economic classes. As a result, it became the most prevalent style of architecture in the U.S. from about 1880 to 1900. Identifying features of a Queen Anne residence include:

- Asymmetrical façade, often with a canted or rounded bay
- Steeply pitched, complex roof, frequently with a pent roof enclosing a gable
- Wood siding with accents of textured shingle cladding
- Partial- or full-width porch that often wraps around to a side elevation
- Decorative detailing, such as spindlework, roof cresting, brackets, finials, and dentils<sup>4</sup>

Spindlework and Free Classic are two common subtypes of the Queen Anne style. The Spindlework subtype is characterized by turned-wood porch supports and spindlework or “gingerbread” detailing and other fabricated ornamentation like finials, gable ornamentation, roof cresting, and brackets (Figure 1). The Free Classic subtype is distinguished from other subtypes by their classical-order columns (Figure 2). They may also have other Classical references like Palladian windows and cornice-line dentils.<sup>5</sup>

### *Occurrence*

A few scattered examples of Queen Anne houses are in the survey area. Most examples were moved to their current locations from elsewhere in Austin or neighboring communities.

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<sup>3</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 312.

<sup>4</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 342–350.

<sup>5</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 346.



Figure 1. A c. 1905 Queen Anne–style residence at 3503 Hollywood Avenue in Cherrywood (Survey ID 209201\_01). The turned-wood porch supports and ornamentation make this building an example of the Spindlework subtype. Like many other Victorian-era residences in the survey area, this building was moved to its current location. Photo: CMEC.



Figure 2. A Free Classic subtype of the Queen Anne style in Hancock (506 Texas Ave, Survey ID 211658\_01). The Wupperman House, constructed c. 1910, features the asymmetrical façade and wraparound porch characteristic of the Queen Anne style, and classical-order columns. Photo: Terri Myers.



## FOLK VICTORIAN

The Folk Victorian style is defined by the presence of Victorian decorative detailing on a simple folk house form (Figure 3). Decoration, which can include spindlework, jigsaw trim, and brackets, is most commonly applied to the porch and cornice line. Folk Victorian residences may be one or two stories with a cross-gabled, front-gabled, side-gabled, or pyramidal roof. The decorative elements on a Folk Victorian residence are generally inspired by the more complex Queen Anne style; however, Folk Victorian residences can be differentiated from a Queen Anne by a lack of varied wall treatments and a simplified form and roof.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 3. A c. 1900 Folk Victorian–style residence at 5212 Avenue H in North Loop (Survey ID 221600\_01). The building has a simple gable-wing folk house plan with turned-wood porch supports. Photo: CMEC.

Identifying characteristics of this style include the following:

- Simple folk house form
- One or two stories
- Spindlework or jigsaw trim on the porch
- Brackets under eaves

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<sup>6</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 396–398.

### *Occurrence*

A few, scattered examples are in the survey area. Most examples were moved to their current locations from elsewhere in Austin or neighboring communities.

## ECLECTIC ERA

After the Victorian era, the next major movement in residential architecture in the U.S. and Austin was the Eclectic era, which occurred from 1880 to 1940. Residences in the U.S. began to emulate the historical styles of domestic buildings in Europe, including traditionally Greek/Roman, English, French, and Mediterranean/Spanish designs. Though the movement began in the 1880s, there was a resurgence in the 1920s after World War I soldiers returned home inspired by traditional European architecture. At the same time, improved photographic reproduction technologies enabled pictures of historic houses to spread more readily. By the 1920s, thin brick and stone veneers were introduced to the market, which made it easier and more affordable to mimic the traditional masonry of historic European styles.<sup>7</sup> Examples in the survey area date to the 1920s or later, reflecting the Eclectic era's second phase. Eclectic Era styles common in the survey area are the Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Mission Revival, and Spanish Colonial Revival styles. Collectively, these styles may be referred to as Period Revival styles.

## CLASSICAL REVIVAL

The Classical Revival style, also called Neoclassical, is rooted in ancient Greek and Roman architecture. The style was first popular in the U.S. from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. It was reintroduced at the Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago and at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo and subsequently experienced a second resurgence. It was at the height of its popularity in the first decades of the twentieth century but continued to be constructed into the mid-1950s. With their symmetrical façades, classical-order columns, and regimented fenestration, Classical Revival buildings convey a sense of gravity and stateliness that contrasts with Victorian-era styles (Figure 4).

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<sup>7</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 406–407.



Figure 4. Two-story residence at 809 Park Boulevard with elements of the Classical Revival style, including a symmetrical façade, full-height porch, and broken-pediment door surround (Survey ID 214875\_01).  
Photo: CMEC.

Identifying features of Classical Revival residences include:

- Prominent full-height porch supported by classical columns or simple boxed columns
- Symmetrical façade
- Central door with decorative surround
- Double-hung sash windows<sup>8</sup>

Examples range from high-style, architect-designed buildings to more modest examples. Two-story examples tend to dominate their sites and streetscapes due to their imposing size and massing, especially if they also feature half-story dormers projecting from the primary roof plane. One-story examples, which may be referred to as “Classical Revival cottages” are shorter, smaller, and less-imposing variations of their two-story counterparts. Nevertheless, they possess many of the same design elements, including symmetrical façades and deep full- or half-façade porches supported by classical or boxed columns. Like two-story versions of the style, they may have centered hipped or gabled dormers projecting from front and side roof planes. Some with centered entry doors may have central hall plans. Others have off-center entrances that defy their otherwise symmetrical appearance.

<sup>8</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 434–436.

*Occurrence*

Within the survey area, Classical Revival-style residences are primarily found in Hancock, as well as Cherrywood and Ridgetop (Figure 5). Most examples modestly reference the style. Later examples, combined with the Post-war Modern style, are found in Delwood Duplexes. The style is also observed on multi-family residential buildings.



Figure 5. One-story version of a Classical Revival residence at 3311 Lafayette Avenue in Cherrywood (Survey ID 207138\_01). This example features a hipped roof, centered dormers, and boxed column porch supports. Photo: CMEC.

## COLONIAL REVIVAL

The Colonial Revival style, also called American Colonial Revival, references early English and Dutch architecture in colonial America. It became the most popular style of residential architecture during the first half of the twentieth century, though it was not as widely used in Texas. The balanced façades of Colonial Revival dwellings are relatively undecorated except for an accentuated entry bay (Figure 6). Colonial Revival residences may be one or two stories, high style or modest, and can have a variety of roof types, although side-gabled is the most common.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 408–414.





Figure 6. A c. 1937 Colonial Revival–style residence at 721 Park Boulevard in Hancock (Survey ID 214867\_01). The symmetrical façade, simple form, accentuated door, and double-hung windows are characteristics of the style.  
Photo: CMEC.

Identifying features of the style include:

- Symmetrical façade with central door and balanced windows
- Door accentuated with a pediment or a portico, fanlights, and/or sidelights
- Double-hung windows, usually with divided lites in one or both sashes
- Simple building forms
- Simple classical detailing
- May have roof dormers
- Details may include pediments, columns or pilasters, paneled front doors, and shutters

Modest Colonial Revival–style houses may have wood weatherboard siding, whereas high-style examples may have masonry walls. Late examples of the style (after 1940) are more simplified than earlier versions and may merely reference colonial elements rather than attempting to reproduce original colonial American architecture.<sup>10</sup>

Common subtypes of the Colonial Revival style include the Georgian Revival subtype, Cape Cod subtype, and Dutch Colonial Revival subtype, though these styles were less popular in Texas than in other parts of

<sup>10</sup> Teresa Grimes and Elysha Paluszek, “Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement; Context: Architecture and Engineering, Theme: American Colonial Revival, 1895–1960,” SurveyLA Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey (Office of Historic Resources, Department of City Planning City of Los Angeles, December 2015), 16, [https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/d26d7637-d6da-4466-aa74-992d63a284dc/American%20Colonial%20Revival%2012-2-15\\_0.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/d26d7637-d6da-4466-aa74-992d63a284dc/American%20Colonial%20Revival%2012-2-15_0.pdf).



the U.S. Georgian Revival residences more closely mirror colonial American antecedents than Colonial Revival residences and are generally two stories, clad in brick, and have symmetrical façades.<sup>11</sup> The Cape Cod subtype, the most common subtype in the survey area, is characterized by small, side-gabled or hipped-roof residences with gabled dormers (Figure 8). Dutch Colonial Revival residences are defined by their gambrel roof forms.



Figure 7. An example of a 1935 Colonial Revival bungalow at 1006 East 44th Street (Survey ID 213306\_01). The primary characteristics that make this identifiable as Colonial Revival style are the nearly symmetrical façade, central door, and hood over the front door. Photo: CMEC.

### *Occurrence*

In the survey area, Colonial Revival–style residences are primarily located in Hancock and Cherrywood (Figure 8). Most examples modestly reference the style.

<sup>11</sup> “Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement,” 9.



Figure 8. Cape Cod subtype of the Colonial Revival style at 821 Harris Avenue, identified by the one-story height, simple form, wood cladding, side-gabled roof, and roof dormers (Survey ID 210632\_01). Though this example has a full-width porch, a stoop is more typical of Cape Cod houses. Photo: Terri Myers.

## TUDOR REVIVAL

The Tudor Revival style is one of the most common Revival styles in the survey area. Based on early English building traditions, it became very popular in the U.S. in the 1920s after World War I. Tudor Revival-style residences have a picturesque quality, though earlier examples may be more formal in appearance, and they have an asymmetrical design that allowed for flexibility in the floorplan. Character-defining features of the style include:

- Steeply pitched roof
- One or more prominent, generally steeply pitched, front-facing gables
- Tall, narrow windows, commonly grouped with divided lites
- Massive chimneys
- Entry stoop or small porch with a rounded arch entrance
- Decorative half-timbering on some examples<sup>12</sup>

In America, residential examples of the Tudor Revival style range from architect-designed high-style buildings with impressive use of brick, stone, and other cladding and features like cast-stone trim, side porches, overhanging gables, wing walls, oriel windows, and leaded glass lites to sturdy middle-class houses with fewer design elements than their high-style counterparts. The adaptable style could even be

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<sup>12</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 548–555.

applied to working-class residences, for example, by incorporating a steeply pitched front gable on a simple wood-clad cottage.

*Occurrence*

Tudor Revival–style residences are common in the Hancock survey area, including some high-style examples (Figure 9–Figure 12). They are also found in Cherrywood.



Figure 9. High-style c. 1935 Tudor Revival residence at 817 E. 37<sup>th</sup> Street (Survey ID 210600\_01).  
Photo: Terri Myers.





Figure 10. Example of a brick-clad Tudor Revival–style residence at 808 East 32<sup>nd</sup> Street constructed in 1941 (Survey ID 208839\_01). Photo: CMEC.



Figure 11. Example of a Tudor Revival–style residence at 3403 Hollywood Avenue (Survey ID 209176\_01). Constructed in 1938, when the style was fading from favor and the Depression limited building design, the residence modestly references the style with its sloped roof extending over the arched porch opening. Photo: CMEC.



Figure 12. Example of a Tudor Revival–style duplex constructed in 1933 at 2909 Beanna Street (Survey ID 208789\_01). Photo: CMEC.

## MISSION REVIVAL

Mission Revival buildings mimic Spanish Colonial mission buildings found in the Southwest U.S. They feature typical Hispanic design elements like shaped parapets, arches, and quatrefoil windows on symmetrical or asymmetrical façades. Identifying features include:

- Shaped parapet or dormer
- Smooth stucco walls
- Rounded arches and arcades
- Patio/courtyard
- Lack of ornamentation or Moorish-inspired ornament
- Clay tile roof cladding<sup>13</sup>

The style is less common in Austin than in other parts of Texas where Spanish missions were constructed. Most examples in Austin date from the 1920s. Mission Revival architecture emerged again in Texas in the 1960s and 1970s when it was more frequently applied to commercial buildings and apartment buildings rather than single-family residences or apartment houses. It was also a more stripped-down version of the style that was frequently combined with modern architecture styles like Post-war Modern, Mansard, or New Formalism.

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<sup>13</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 510–512.



*Occurrence*

Mission Revival style buildings are uncommon in the survey area (Figure 13). Most examples are in the Hancock survey area.



Figure 13. Mission Revival–style residence built in 1925 at 711 East 32<sup>nd</sup> Street in Hancock (Survey ID 208714\_01). The building has a subtle Mission-like roof parapet. Photo: CMEC.

## SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL

The Spanish Colonial Revival style evolved from the Mission Revival style and became popular for houses from approximately 1915 to 1940. Whereas Mission Revival architecture mimics Spanish mission buildings, Spanish Colonial Revival architecture reflects vernacular building traditions and decorative details from the entire history of Spanish architecture, which may include Moorish, Byzantine, Gothic, or Renaissance influences.<sup>14</sup> The style was popular in the southwestern U.S. due to the area's ties to Spain and a climate comparable to that in the Mediterranean. In Austin, the style is less common than in other parts of Texas. Characteristics of the style include:

- Asymmetrical façade
- Varied, horizontal building masses
- Stucco walls
- Wall surface extends into gable without break
- Little or no roof eave
- Medium- to low-pitched roof, sometimes flat

<sup>14</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 520–525.

- Clay tile roof cladding or roof trim
- Arches above doors, principal windows, or as porch supports
- Minimal decoration; may have clay tile or pipe attic vents, decorative tile details, cast-stone elements, or wrought iron or wood grilles over windows or other wall openings
- Patios, courtyards, and balconies

Like other Revival styles, the Spanish Colonial Revival style was adaptable and could be applied to architect-designed and high-style single-family residences, modest bungalows, or duplexes. The style was popular in pattern books of the era.

Like the Mission Revival style, modern examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival style reemerged in Texas in the 1960s and 1970s. This modern variation was commonly applied to apartment buildings of the era that evoked Spanish origins through their Spanish names, courtyard plans, clay tile roofs, and arched details. One 1970 *Austin American-Statesman* apartment rental section features ads for El Coronado, La Plaza, Spanish Oaks, Gala Villa, Las Casitas, and Spanish Trace, featuring “furnishings handcrafted in Old Mexico,” among others.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Occurrence*

Spanish Colonial Revival–style buildings are uncommon in the survey area. Single-family houses in this style, including some high-style examples, are mostly observed in the Hancock survey area (Figure 14–Figure 16). Modern variations of the style from the 1960s and 1970s are found throughout the survey area, primarily on apartment buildings along major corridors.

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<sup>15</sup> Rentals, *Austin American-Statesman*, February 1, 1970: E11.



Figure 14. A c. 1926 high-style example of a Spanish Colonial Revival–style residence designed by Hugo Kuehne as his personal residence. The building, located at 500 East 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, is an Austin Historic Landmark (Survey ID 208693\_01). Photo: CMEC.



Figure 15. A 1935 Spanish Colonial Revival–style residence at 605 Park Boulevard (Survey ID 214858\_01). The building is an example of the flat roof with parapet subtype of the style. Photo: Terri Myers.





Figure 16. An example of a 1970 apartment building at 4210 Red River Street that blends elements of Post-war Modernism and the Spanish Colonial Revival style (Survey ID 214976\_01). The clay tile roof, arched openings, courtyard plan, and unadorned walls reflect Spanish Colonial Revival influences. Photo: CMEC.

## OTHER REVIVAL STYLES

Other Revival styles less common in Austin and the survey area include Mediterranean Revival, Italian Renaissance, and Monterey Revival. Like other Revival styles, the Mediterranean and Italian Renaissance styles reference historical prototypes in Europe and generally have a formal, stately appearance. The Monterey Revival style is a variation of the Spanish Colonial Revival style that is characterized by a broad, second-story balcony that is usually inset under the principal roof and cantilevered over the lower level.<sup>16</sup>

### *Occurrence*

Other Revival-style buildings are uncommon in the survey area, with scattered examples found in Hancock.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT/EARLY MODERNISM

The Arts and Crafts Movement and Early Modernism occurred concurrently with the Eclectic era from 1900 to 1935. Both of these movements were defined by a rejection of the exuberance of Victorian and Eclectic-era architecture and historical references in favor of basic functional forms, flowing interior spaces, and the use of local materials. Styles from the Arts and Crafts Movement include the Prairie style

<sup>16</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 537–539.

and the Craftsman style, and styles from Early Modernism include the Art Deco style and the Moderne style. Of these, the Craftsman style was by far the most prevalent.

## PRAIRIE

The Prairie style originated in Chicago and was developed by a group of architects who later became known collectively as the Prairie School. The famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright is considered to be the preeminent master of the style. His early work, from 1893 to approximately 1913, is executed in the Prairie style. The style, which is characterized by simple rectangular forms and horizontal planes, marked a drastic departure from the ornate Victorian-era architecture that proliferated at the time. Other architects, primarily in Chicago and the Midwest, adopted the style, and it eventually reached other parts of the country through pattern books, where it was reproduced in a more vernacular manner through approximately 1920. Defining characteristics of the Prairie style include:

- Low-pitched roof, often hipped
- Wide, typically boxed, eaves
- Typically two-story boxy masses, sometimes with one-story wings
- Stucco cladding common
- Horizontal rows of windows and horizontal banding
- Massive porch supports
- Private entrance
- Integrated planters, pedestal urns, and stylized/geometric decorative details

The style was not widely adopted and examples in Texas are rare, especially examples that truly embody the characteristics of the style. Many vernacular examples have a four-square form, which is a two-story house with a square footprint, and they modestly reference the style through a low-pitched roof, wide eaves, and heavy porch supports.<sup>17</sup>

### *Occurrence*

Buildings that reference the Prairie style are rare in the survey area, with limited examples in Hancock (Figure 17).

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<sup>17</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 550–564.





Figure 17. This residence at 719 Carolyn Avenue references the Prairie style with its boxy, horizontal massing, wide eaves, and private entrance with a massive support (210562\_01). It is a late example, constructed in 1937.  
Photo: CMEC.

## CRAFTSMAN

The Craftsman style is rooted in the Arts and Crafts Movement that began in Britain in the latter part of the nineteenth century and spread to America by the turn of the twentieth century. Its founders and early practitioners extolled the beauty, utility, and moral virtue of handcraft in the production of decorative arts and architecture. Highly critical of the social and cultural upheaval brought about by the Industrial Revolution, they believed that skilled craftsmanship and quality materials rendered everyday items both functional and aesthetically pleasing in a way that was more enduring and far preferable to mass-produced, often poor quality, goods manufactured by machines. Ironically, when the movement made its

way to America, manufacturers found the Craftsman aesthetic well suited to mass production and put their factories to work churning out replicas of the beautiful, handcrafted originals for widespread distribution to consumers across the country.

Early Craftsman architecture in America remained true to the British model as interpreted by the California firm Greene and Greene, which was largely responsible for its popularization in the U.S. in the 1900s and 1910s. Greene and Greene created unique homes of exceptional beauty and quality, often displaying influences of Asian-inspired design and form. From California, the Craftsman style quickly spread throughout the country where it rose to enormous popularity by the late 1910s, supplanting the older Victorian and Classical styles in residential design. The public embraced the Craftsman style for its “honest” construction and open room and window arrangement that allowed for better light and ventilation and brought the outside, natural environment to the interior spaces of the house. The Craftsman aesthetic had broad public appeal with both elaborate, “high-style” Craftsman houses (though these are uncommon outside of California) and more modest versions of the aesthetic as Craftsman bungalows, which remained the most common house type and style in working- and middle-class suburban neighborhoods in America through the 1920s and into 1930s.

The Craftsman style is characterized by its low- to medium-pitched roof with wide eaves to shade the house and exposed wood elements such as rafter tails, knee braces, and faux half-timbering, usually set against stucco in the front and/or side gable ends. Most Craftsman residences have a front- or side-gabled roof, though some have cross-gabled or hipped roofs. Typically, fenestration consists of paired or tri-partite double-hung sash windows arranged on opposite walls to allow air to pass freely through, thereby cooling and ventilating the house. Porches are prominent features of Craftsman design and function as shaded outdoor “rooms.” Porches may be inset or attached and are usually supported by tapered wood posts on brick or wood piers, by paired or tripled wood posts, or by cross-beams set on piers or porch walls.

As was true of the national trend, earlier Craftsman houses in Austin tend to be more elaborate than later, more-modest versions of the style. They typically have more complex roof forms, multi-level porches or

## The Bungalow Form

The bungalow form, a common historical form during the early 1900s, is mostly rectangular and deeper than it is wide. The form was well suited for the narrow, pedestrian-friendly lots of streetcar suburbs. The bungalow plan was adapted to a wide range of historical architectural styles, including the Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, and Craftsman styles; however, it was most commonly associated with Craftsman residences.

Though Craftsman-style bungalows fell out of favor c. 1930 when building construction slowed as a result of the Great Depression, the bungalow form remained prolific through the 1930s and early 1940s, especially in pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods that had been platted with narrow lots. These buildings have the same long, narrow form as a Craftsman bungalow, but lack Craftsman-style elements like tapered porch supports, decorative braces, or natural material details. These buildings are categorized in historic resources surveys as having a bungalow form and no style.

terraces, and pronounced structural elements such as oversized knee braces, faux half-timbering, or heavy, exposed cross-beamed porch supports. Though less elaborate in form and detail than earlier and architect-designed versions, the Craftsman bungalow retained the essential features of the style, including exposed wood rafter tails, triangular knee braces, and half- or full-width porches supported by tapered wood porch posts set on brick piers.

Identifying features of the style include:

- Decorative beams or braces under gables
- Low-pitched roof
- Exposed rafter tails
- Wide eaves
- Partial- or full-width porch
- Tapered columns and piers for porch supports
- Natural materials (wood, stone, brick, or concrete block)
- Grouped windows
- Broad, low chimney

Most Craftsman-style buildings are single-family residences; however, apartment houses, which are apartment buildings that have a similar scale, massing, and appearance to single-family residences, including duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, were sometimes constructed in the style. Multi-family Craftsman examples are less common in Austin than in other parts of the country.

#### *Occurrence*

Craftsman-style residences are common in the survey area in Hancock because the style was at the height of its immense national popularity when the neighborhood experienced its most intensive period of development, from the late 1910s through the 1930s (Figure 18–Figure 21). Additional examples are found in North Loop, Ridgetop, and western Cherrywood.





Figure 18. An early example of a Craftsman-style residence at 3110 Harris Park Avenue (Survey ID 208687\_01). Built in 1912, the house lacks a front porch but has other hallmarks of early Craftsman-style houses, including wood shingle siding, foundation skirting, oversized faux knee braces, and exposed rafter tails. The building was constructed by builder A. W. Johns, and architect Samuel Edward Gideon built additions in the 1930s.

Photo: CMEC.



Figure 19. Typical example of an early 1920s Craftsman bungalow at 722 Sparks Ave (Survey ID 208723\_01). The building features two front-facing clipped gables, a partial-width porch with tapered supports on brick piers, brackets and exposed rafter tails, a prominent brick chimney, and decorative window screens. Photo: CMEC.





Figure 20. An example of a late 1930s Craftsman-style residence at 3909 Becker Avenue (Survey ID 211840\_01). In comparison to earlier versions of the Craftsman style, later examples are simplified and have fewer stylistic elements. Photo: CMEC.



Figure 21. An example of a Craftsman-style apartment house at 604 Harris Avenue built in 1930 (Survey ID 211696\_01). Photo: CMEC.



## ART DECO

The Art Deco style emerged from architect Eliel Saarinen's unbuilt 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower design, a simplified modernist skyscraper that marked a departure from older Classical and Revivalist schools of thought. It emphasized verticality, smooth wall surfaces, and decorative motifs. Saarinen's design, which was highly published and influential, was coined the Art Deco style in 1925. The Art Deco style was popular for institutional, civic, and commercial buildings; residential examples are rare. Art Deco persisted through the early 1930s, before being supplanted by the Moderne style (discussed in the next section). Characteristics of the Art Deco style include:

- Smooth wall texture, often in stucco
- Decorative motifs including zigzags, chevrons, and geometric shapes
- Vertical emphasis, often with the use of vertical projections or towers on the roof<sup>18</sup>

### *Occurrence*

Art Deco style buildings are rare in the survey area (Figure 22).



Figure 22. The Art Deco style Russell Lee School in Hancock completed in 1939 (Survey ID 210527\_01). Photo: CMEC.

<sup>18</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 580–582.

## MODERNE

In the 1930s, industrial design, reminiscent of ships, airplanes, and automobiles, began to influence new architecture. These buildings had a streamlined appearance with a horizontal emphasis and rounded corners, evoking movement. This new architectural style, called Moderne, Art Moderne, or Streamline Moderne, is seen from about 1930 to 1950. Because of its transportation influences, the Moderne style was commonly applied to gas stations and other automotive-related businesses, but it was also used for commercial, civic, and social buildings. Residential examples are uncommon. Identifying features of the style include:

- Smooth wall texture, often in stucco
- Flat roof
- Asymmetrical façade
- Emphasis on horizontality, often with the use of horizontal lines or indentions in the exterior walls
- Round windows, glass block windows, and windows that turn a corner

### *Occurrence*

Moderne style buildings are rare in the survey area (Figure 23).



Figure 23. A former gas station constructed in the Moderne style in 1951 at 3421 North Interstate 35 (Survey ID 209064\_01). The rounded canopy and roof fins and smooth, unadorned walls are characteristics of the style.

Photo: CMEC.

## BANKERS MODERN

Residential building construction in the U.S. came to a standstill during the Depression. To facilitate the construction of homes for the average American family, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was established in 1934. The FHA provided insurance for long-term, low-interest mortgages for new residences and produced guidelines for how to design a small house most effectively. Houses built to their specifications qualified for FHA-backed mortgages.<sup>19</sup> Because they could be quickly and cheaply constructed, the FHA favored the Minimal Traditional style, and later, the Ranch style. These “Bankers Modern” styles were considered traditional on the outside and modern on the inside, which the agency believed was suitable for the American population.<sup>20</sup> The FHA also established guidelines for neighborhood plans, and entire new subdivisions were built with Minimal Traditional and Ranch residences. In established neighborhoods, these building styles were also constructed as infill, providing a contrast to their more traditional and Craftsman-style neighbors.

## MINIMAL TRADITIONAL

The Minimal Traditional style was developed beginning in the mid-1930s as a response to changes in the housing market due to the Great Depression. In order to stimulate the building industry, the federal government established the National Housing Act of 1934 to provide home loans financed by the government. The FHA also established guidelines for house designs with the a goal of providing uniform standards for construction of homes that were accessible to as many Americans as possible.<sup>21</sup> In their 1936 publication on house designs, *Principles of Planning Small Houses*, the FHA promoted the basic principle of “providing a maximum accommodation within a minimum of means, and, consequently, cost.”<sup>22</sup> This translated to a basic one-story small house form that lacked non-essential features like complex roof forms, dormers, cornices, or variations in cladding. The affordable and efficient designs provided housing during the Depression, and because they could be quickly constructed, they met the demand for housing from returning World War II veterans.

Minimal Traditional houses are characterized by the following:

- Compact form
- Commonly side-gabled or side-gabled with a front-gable wing
- Low or moderately pitched roof
- Little or no roof eave
- One-story height

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<sup>19</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 588–589.

<sup>20</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 548–549.

<sup>21</sup> David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places*, (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, September 2002), [https://shpo.nv.gov/uploads/documents/NR\\_Bulletin\\_Suburbs-compressed.pdf](https://shpo.nv.gov/uploads/documents/NR_Bulletin_Suburbs-compressed.pdf), 60–62.

<sup>22</sup> Ames and McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs*, 61.



- Small entry porch or stoop
- Garages, if present, are generally detached
- Minimal architectural detailing; if present, modestly reflects traditional styles like Colonial Revival or Tudor Revival
- Lacks non-essential elements like multiple gables; roof dormers uncommon

Neighborhoods of Minimal Traditional residences were constructed between c. 1935 and c. 1950; sometimes one developer would build an entire neighborhood with factory-like methods and speed. Because of their small scale, Minimal Traditional residences were also suitable for infill development on the narrower lots of established neighborhoods.

Because of the simplicity of the style, a Minimal Traditional residence's integrity can be diminished by alterations that might not overwhelm a larger, more complex building. Due to this simplicity and their ubiquity, individual Minimal Traditional-style residences often do not rise to the level of significance necessary for historic designation under Architecture; however, neighborhoods of Minimal Traditional-style residences may be eligible as a historic district. The Minimal Traditional style is occasionally applied to non-residential buildings.

#### *Occurrence*

Minimal Traditional-style buildings are numerous in the survey area, including many examples in North Loop, Ridgeway, and Delwood I and II (Figure 24**Error! Reference source not found.**). They are also found as infill in areas of Hancock and Cherrywood, including in areas of these neighborhoods that developed from c. 1935 to c. 1955.



Figure 24. Example of a 1946 Minimal Traditional residence with a gable-and-wing roof at 3510 Hollywood Avenue (Survey ID 209163\_01). Note the small and compact form, shallow eaves, small stoop with a simple prefabricated

porch support, and lack of decoration except for the scalloped vertical cladding detail in the front gable.  
Photo: CMEC.



Figure 25. Example of a hipped-roof Minimal Traditional-style residence constructed in 1948 at 913 East 48<sup>th</sup> Street (Survey ID 216435\_01). Characteristics of the style include the small form, low-pitched and simple roof form with small eaves, small entry stoop, one type of cladding, and lack of decoration. Photo: CMEC.

## RANCH

The Minimal Traditional style evolved into the Ranch style. The Ranch style was developed in Southern California in the mid-1930s and was one of the small house types favored by the FHA in the 1940s, which made it easier to finance a Ranch-style house than other styles of houses.<sup>23</sup> Promoted as modern on the inside and traditional on the outside, the Ranch house was considered a conservative approach to modernism. The Ranch style became the most common style of house built in the 1950s and 1960s, and houses were typically developed together as part of an automobile-oriented neighborhood. The form of the Ranch house reflects the rise of automobile ownership in the U.S. Whereas houses used to be compact and located on narrow lots to facilitate walking, the automobile allowed the Ranch house to sprawl across wider lots. Ranch houses generally date from c. 1935 to 1975.

Identifying characteristics of this style include:

- One-story plan
- Low-pitched roof with moderate-to-wide roof overhang
- Emphasis on horizontality

<sup>23</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 602–603.

- Asymmetrical façade
- Off-center, recessed front entry
- Attached garage at principal façade
- Large picture window on principal façade

The Ranch style was most commonly applied to single-family residences (Figure 26 and Figure 27), but multi-family examples (mostly duplexes) and low-rise commercial examples were also constructed (Figure 28). Like the Minimal Traditional style, most Ranch-style houses were not architect designed. Developers commonly built entire neighborhoods of the style, but Ranch residences can also be found as infill in older neighborhoods, where the form may be adapted to accommodate a narrow lot. Also like Minimal Traditional-style houses, Ranch-style houses are so ubiquitous in the U.S. that they are infrequently individually eligible for historic designation in the area of Architecture. They are more commonly eligible for historic designation as part of a district.

Variations of the Ranch style include the Minimal Ranch and the Styled Ranch (discussed next).



Figure 26. Typical example of a Ranch-style residence at 1708 East 38 ½ Street (Survey ID 209433\_01). Constructed in 1951, the building has a horizontal profile, a low-pitched roof with wide eaves, a large picture window, an attached carport, and wall cladding that changes below the window line. A blade supporting the carport modestly references the Post-war Modern style. Photo: CMEC.





Figure 27. Another typical example of the Ranch style at 4017 Vineland Drive (Survey ID 209498\_01). Constructed in 1962, this example has an attached garage, which was more common for the style in the 1960s than a carport.  
Photo: CMEC.



Figure 28. An example of a 1968 Ranch-style duplex at 3214 Hemlock Avenue (Survey ID 205416\_01). Units of Ranch-style duplexes are commonly separated by a carport or garage. Photo: CMEC.



*Minimal Ranch*

Early, smaller examples of the Ranch style may be referred to as Minimal Ranch, Ranchette, or Transitional Ranch.<sup>24</sup> In addition to their small scale, these buildings generally lack a broad overhanging roof and other elaborations that may be found on Ranch-style buildings (Figure 29 and Figure 30). Minimal Ranches are commonly found in or near the same neighborhoods as Minimal Traditional-style residences and may be very similar to Minimal Traditional-style residences. The distinction between the two is often a matter of judgment.<sup>25</sup> Minimal Ranches may have a broader profile and more horizontal composition than Minimal Traditionals. They may also be differentiated from a Minimal Traditional house by the presence of an aspect of the Ranch style, such as a large picture window, horizontal sash double-hung windows, eaves, brick skirting, or an attached garage.<sup>26</sup> The categorization of a building as Minimal Traditional versus Minimal Ranch can be a matter of semantics since the styles share common architectural qualities and common themes related to FHA architectural guidelines and efforts to house the masses. Furthermore, a building in either style will rarely possess sufficient architectural qualities for individual historic designation under Architecture.<sup>27</sup> For an entire neighborhood of Minimal Traditional or Minimal Ranch houses built at once by the same developer, the distinction may be more relevant but also clearer because the amount of building stock makes an overall categorization more readily apparent.



Figure 29. A Minimal Ranch house at 1404 Bentwood Road constructed in 1948 (Survey ID 215045\_01). This house, like many others in the Delwood II neighborhood, was constructed of concrete block walls and clad in stucco, which was uncommon in Austin. The smooth walls, along with features like the corner windows, low-pitched roof,

<sup>24</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 600–602.

<sup>25</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 602.

<sup>26</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 602.

<sup>27</sup> Though a Minimal Traditional or Minimal Ranch style building will rarely be designated for individual historic designation under Architecture, they may be considered significant under Architecture in conjunction with other criteria.

wide eaves, broad chimney, and simple porch support, give the building a more modern appearance than typical Minimal Ranch houses. Photo: CMEC.



Figure 30. A 1950 Minimal Ranch-style house at 3511 Banton Road (Survey ID 207578\_01). The blade porch support and the subtle horizontality differentiate this building from a Minimal Traditional-style house. Photo: CMEC.

### *Styled Ranch*

Another subtype of the Ranch style is the Styled Ranch, which is a Ranch house with historical or modern stylistic elements (Figure 31). In the 1960s and 1970s, as developers and consumers tired of standard Ranches, builders began to produce Spanish Colonial Revival Ranches, Colonial Revival Ranches, Tudor Revival Ranches, Contemporary Ranches, Neoclassical Ranches, Traditional Ranches, and other types of Styled Ranches.<sup>28</sup> Some Styled Ranches are architect-designed.

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<sup>28</sup> McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 695–704.





Figure 31. A 1963 duplex in the Neoclassical Ranch style, a type of Styled Ranch (1720 E 32<sup>nd</sup> Street, Survey ID 205430\_01). The roof pitch and form reflect the Ranch style, and the full-façade porch and symmetry are characteristics of the Neoclassical style. Photo: CMEC.

### *Occurrence*

Ranch-style residences are common to the survey area. The Schieffer Willowbrook and Wilshire Wood neighborhoods were developed as Ranch-style neighborhoods. The style is also found in substantial numbers in Cherrywood, Ridgetop, and Hancock. Minimal Ranch-style residences are likewise prevalent in the survey area. Delwood II was primarily developed as a Minimal Ranch-style neighborhood. The style is also commonly found in Cherrywood and North Loop and is scattered throughout other neighborhood survey areas. Styled Ranches, though found in other parts of Austin, are not found with frequency in the survey area because the style became popular after the survey area's period of development. There are no neighborhoods of Styled Ranches in the survey area, but scattered infill examples occur.

## MODERNISM

In the 1920s and 1930s, when historicized Revival styles dominated America, architects in Europe were experimenting with new, more daring, modern ideas, with the most influential work coming out of the Bauhaus, a German art school that operated from 1919 to 1933. Their approach, which reduced buildings to their most basic functional forms, stripped of ornament, was spread in the U.S. by architects who emigrated from Europe and was influenced by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's forward-thinking designs. Eventually, most architecture schools in the U.S. abandoned their Classical curriculum in favor of modernism, and modern styles became preferred by most American architects. Though architects embraced it, modernism was less appreciated by the general public and bankers, who saw it as too daring and risky for a home loan. As a result, many examples were constructed for wealthy clients who did not

need a loan or for non-residential projects where modernism was seen as more appropriate. Some architects, believing strongly in the merits of residential modern design and dismayed by the Minimal Traditional and Ranch houses proliferating throughout the U.S., developed modern house models that could be quickly and cheaply constructed for the working- and middle-classes. Still, modernism for the masses did not catch on in the way architects had hoped, and the number of modern house neighborhoods constructed in the U.S. pales in comparison to the number of neighborhoods with traditional-style houses.

Modernism evolved into different styles with the development of new materials, advances in building technologies, and shifting influences and preferences. Early examples include Early Modernism and the International style. These styles developed into the 1950s to 1960s-era Post-war Modern style and Googie style. Styles such as Late Modern, New Formalism, Brutalism, and Postmodernism, among others, followed through the 1970s. The modern styles most common to Austin are Post-war Modern and New Formalism, described next.

## POST-WAR MODERN

After WWII, a boom in the construction industry and newly available materials allowed architects to experiment with designs and materials and refine modern architecture. Post-war Modern is a term used to generally describe mid-twentieth-century architecture built in the United States from approximately 1945 through the late 1960s. It can also be called Mid-century Modern or Contemporary architecture.

It rejects decorative ornamentation on the building exterior and instead focuses on interior plans, integration of indoor and outdoor spaces, and view from the interior. Post-and-beam construction was common. The style was applied to buildings of all functions, including commercial buildings, churches, schools, medical offices, gas stations, restaurants, and single-family and multi-family housing, but because it was seen as daring and unconventional by the FHA, it was not readily used for FHA-backed middle-class and working-class houses.

Post-war Modern-style houses were oriented toward private outdoor spaces rather than the front yard. The façade turned away from the street with expanses of unadorned wall surfaces; small, strategically placed windows; screening elements like a breeze block wall; and a minimal and sometimes obscured entrance (Figure 32). The houses opened up to the rear and side with large expanses of glass overlooking private back yards and side yards. Multiple courtyards or patios were common, and some even had internal courtyards. Unlike Ranch houses, the Post-war Modern house was well suited for irregular terrain, including hillsides, as well as for two-story buildings.

Identifying characteristics of this style include the following:

- Horizontal emphasis, typically asymmetrical
- Lack of ornamentation
- Box-like forms
- Uninterrupted spans of wall on the front façade

- New building materials/methods
- Natural materials (wood, stone, brick, or concrete block)
- Large planes or bands of glazing; windows at gabled ends
- Flat or low-pitched roof; often with widely overhanging eaves
- Recessed or obscured entry door
- Integrated planters
- Residential examples may include a broad low chimney and carport

Architects of the era favored the style and many commercial, institutional, educational, religious, financial, and upper-middle-class and upper-class housing examples are architect-designed. Some builders incorporated modest Post-war Modern elements to otherwise Ranch-style houses (called Contemporary Ranches, a type of Styled Ranch), and the style could readily be achieved by builders of commercial buildings through the use of a rectangular form, glassy storefront, and flat or low-pitch roof.

#### *Occurrence*

Most examples of the Post-war Modern-style are commercial buildings, apartment complexes, and infill single-family residences scattered throughout the survey area, of which the better-executed examples may be designed by an architect. Large concentrations are found in the Medical Arts Square in Hancock designed by Page, Southerland, Page and the Delwood Duplexes neighborhood, where the Post-war Modern style is paired with stripped-down Classical Revival elements and other Revival elements (Figure 34).



Figure 32. Post-war Modern-style single-family residence at 4209 Parkwood Road constructed in 1955 (Survey ID 213467\_01). Characteristics of the style include the low-pitched roof with wide eaves, planes of unadorned wall materials, the use of natural materials, a non-obvious entrance, and strategically placed and sized windows on the façade to provide light and views but allow for privacy from the street. Photo: CMEC.





Figure 33. An example of a small house constructed in the Post-war Modern style, an uncommon style for working-class housing. The building, constructed in 1949 at 3506 Banton Road, features unadorned walls, wide eaves, and expanses of glass that turn the corner of the building (Survey ID 207549\_01). Photo: CMEC.



Figure 34. A duplex building in the Delwood Duplex neighborhood constructed in 1948 (Survey ID 210703\_01). The buildings in this neighborhood feature a blend of Post-war Modernism and historical styles. In this example, the unadorned smooth walls, steel casement windows, simple porch supports, and boxy massing reflect modern influences, and the pedimented side gable and full-height and full-façade porch reflect Classical Revival influences. Photo: CMEC.



Figure 35. Post-war Modern-style commercial building at 3724 Airport Boulevard constructed in 1968 (Survey ID 207581\_01). The post-and-beam construction typical of the style is evident in the exposed purlins and rafter tails near the primary entrance. Photo: CMEC.



Figure 36. Post-war Modern-style office building at 4000 North Interstate Highway 35 constructed in 1956 (Survey ID 211825\_01). The building's flat roof, boxy form, horizontal lines, wide eaves, and integrated planters are characteristic of the style. Photo: CMEC.





Figure 37. Post-war Modern–style gas station built c. 1953 at 5253 North Lamar Boulevard (Survey ID 223221\_01). Many gas station companies adopted the Post-war Modern style in the 1950s. Photo: CMEC.

## NEW FORMALIST

New Formalist architecture was an updated take on Classical architecture that emerged in the 1950s. The style was primarily applied to commercial and civic buildings, and it lasted through approximately 1970. New Formalist buildings have a Classically inspired proportion and scale that give them a formal and monumental appearance, but their smooth wall surfaces and expanses of glass create a more modern style. Many have slender and elegant columns or arched colonnades that reflect the repetition, rhythm, and formality of their classical-order precedents. Characteristics of the style include:

- Symmetrical façade
- Monumental appearance, sometimes set on a podium
- Smooth wall surfaces, often stone
- Slender columns, often elongated arches
- Ornament consists of patterned screens or grilles
- Formal landscape

### *Occurrence*

High-style examples of New Formalism are rare in Austin. The survey area has limited examples of buildings that loosely reference the style (Figure 38).





Figure 38. This 1969 apartment building at 1230 East 38 ½ Street is an example of New Formalism (Survey ID 210821\_01). The arched colonnade with its slender and rhythmic supports is characteristic of the style. Photo: CMEC.

## COMMERCIAL

The THC uses the term “Commercial style” to categorize one- and two-part commercial block buildings that do not have features of any other architectural style. (Figure 39). Commercial-style buildings may be standalone buildings or attached in a commercial row. They can be one story or several stories. Their primary characteristic is that their façades are dominated by one or more storefronts.



Figure 39. Example of a Commercial-style building at 906 East 47<sup>th</sup> Street (Survey ID 216362\_02). Commercial-style buildings are commercial buildings with no stylistic influences. Photo: CMEC.

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