

4.7 Context: Architecture and Design, 1870-1976

Tustin's built environment represents an array of architectural types and styles that represent different periods in the city's development. Together, these various architectural styles provide Tustin with distinctive aesthetic qualities and help to define the community's character.

The most common architectural styles in Tustin correspond with major periods in the community's development history. Early development during the last two decades of the 19th century saw growth in the official townsite. Tustin's first small-scale development boom from the 1880s to the early 1900s saw the construction of numerous buildings in Victorian-era styles, from vernacular hipped-roof and gabled-roof cottages to highly articulated styles like Queen Anne. These styles were joined by residences designed in the Arts and Crafts idiom during the first decade of the 20th century, along with a few early examples of Period Revival styles. Arts and Crafts-style residences, particularly modest bungalows, dominated the built environment for the next two decades, though the 1920s and 1930s also saw the construction of Period Revival styles. After the near cessation of construction during the Great Depression and World War II, Tustin saw its greatest boom during the postwar period. During the 1940s the Tustin area saw the construction of three military bases which would boost the city's population and move industry away from agriculture. Unlike many other Southern California communities, it had room to spare for the sprawling residential subdivisions which would come to characterize postwar development in the region. The completion of the Santa Ana Freeway proved the tipping point in Tustin's post-war transformation from a sleepy agricultural community to a dense suburban center. At this time, most of the city's remaining orange groves were developed as subdivisions on various scales, their streets filling with Ranch style single-family residences constructed primarily as tract houses with a smaller number of custom-built properties.

The development periods of Tustin are not evenly represented in today's extant resources. Although Old Town Tustin retains architectural styles characteristic of each period which display a wide range in terms of size, scale, and articulation, outside this area the Ranch style predominates. This reflects the city's patterns of construction and it also reflects the importance of architecture to any current understanding of Tustin and its historical development. The designer known as the "father of the California Ranch style," Cliff May, is known to have designed at least one 1950s subdivision in Tustin, though it does not retain integrity.

For each architectural style that this context identifies, a brief discussion of the style and its origins is provided, followed by a list of typical character-defining features. Character-defining features are defined as those visual aspects and physical features that, together, comprise the appearance of a historic building. They generally include "the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment."²⁵² The National Park Service's (NPS) Preservation Brief 17:

²⁵² National Park Service, Preservation Brief 17: *Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character*, prepared by Lee H. Nelson (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1988), 1.

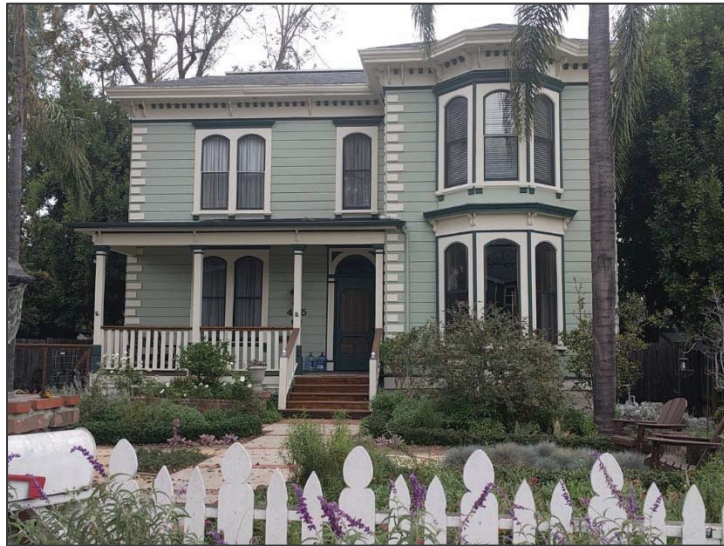
Architectural Character – Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character provides further guidance regarding the identification of character-defining features.

Each of the styles discussed herein is not tailored to a particular property type (though some styles, such as Ranch, may largely be reflected in a single property type). Rather, they are intended to be all-encompassing and applicable to the variety of property types found throughout the city.

Theme: Victorian-Era Architecture

Victorian-era architecture became popular in the United States during the 1860s when new advances in construction (i.e. the creation of the lighter wood “balloon” framing, and wire nails) allowed for more complicated building forms. Victorian styles reflect these changes through their extravagant detailing and complex volumes. Victorian-era architecture was further popularized during the Centennial celebrations of 1876, becoming the dominant architectural idiom of the late 19th century. Victorian architecture is loosely derived from medieval prototypes, typically featuring multi-colored or multi-textured walls, steeply pitched roofs, and asymmetrical façades.²⁵³ By the turn of the century, Victorian styles had moved out of favor, replaced with America’s first truly modern styles, Craftsman and Prairie.

Sub-Theme: Italianate



Example of the Italianate style: 415 W. 6th Street.

The Italianate style began in England as part of the Picturesque movement but was adapted in the United States into a truly indigenous style reacting to the popularity of formal classical ideals. Key features of the style include quoins (masonry or masonry-emulating blocks at the corner of a wall), wide eaves supported by decorative brackets, tall windows with ornamental headers, and balustraded porches. The Italianate style was popularized by pattern books, though it is also likely that Southern Californians embraced this architectural idiom due to similarities to the topography and climate of Southern Europe. Extant Italianate residences in Tustin date from 1875 to 1890, and some feature arched window cornices, a rare detail in Southern California.

²⁵³ Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 239.

Common character-defining features of the Italianate Style include:

- Emphasis on verticality
- Usually two stories in height
- Brick or shiplap exteriors with quoined corners
- Low pitched hipped roofs, sometimes with towers
- Projecting eaves supported by elaborate, three dimensional brackets
- Frequent use of angular bays
- Narrow front porches and second story balconies with thin columns and spindled balustrades
- Tall, narrow windows, usually double-hung
- Heavy articulation of headers over windows and doors

Sub-Theme: Eastlake/Stick



Example of the Eastlake/Stick style: 420 W. Main Street.

The Eastlake or Stick style emerged in the 1860s as a transitional style combining elements of the earlier Gothic Revival style and the subsequent Queen Anne style. The style was influenced by the Picturesque Gothic ideals of Andrew Jackson Downing and popularized through pattern books in the 1860s and '70s. The architectural idiom is largely defined by its decorative details, including multi-textured wall surfaces, horizontal, vertical, and diagonal stickwork, embellished trusses, brackets, and ornamented trim. Eastlake/Stick architecture is rare in Tustin and

Southern California as a whole. The style was rapidly replaced by the Queen Anne style in the 1880s, which was far more influential and widespread.²⁵⁴

Common character-defining features of the Eastlake/Stick style include:

- Steeply pitched gable roofs, typically with cross gables
- Overhanging eaves, often with exposed rafter tails
- Embellished truss detailing
- Brackets (in town house examples of the style)
- Multi-textured, patterned wood cladding
- Horizontal, vertical, and diagonal stickwork detailing applied to wall surfaces

Sub-Theme: Queen Anne



Example of the Queen Anne style: 228 W. Main Street.

The Queen Anne style is a late example of Victorian-era architecture that emerged in the United States in the late 1870s. Pattern books and pre-cut architectural details helped to disseminate the style across the country. Queen Anne architecture is characterized by steeply-pitched roofs, complex and asymmetrical building volumes, partial or full-width porches, textured shingles,

²⁵⁴ McAlester and McAlester 2009, 255-256.

and decorative spindlework.²⁵⁵ Although the style was popular nationwide at the turn of the century, intact Queen Anne style buildings in Tustin are now rare.

Common character-defining features of the Queen Anne style include:

- Two stories in height
- Complex building volumes and asymmetrical façades
- Steeply-pitched roofs of irregular shape
- Dominant front-facing gables
- Patterned wood shingles
- Partial or full-width porches
- Single-pane double-hung wood sash windows
- Decorative spindlework and half-timbering

Sub-Theme: Vernacular Victorian Types



Example of Vernacular Hipped Roof Cottage: 135 S. A Street.

²⁵⁵ McAlester and McAlester (2009), 263-268.



Example of Vernacular Gabled Roof Cottage: 265 Pacific Street.

From the 1870s to the early 1900s, a number of vernacular building styles applied much-simplified elements of more opulent Victorian styles like Queen Anne to modest one-story cottages. These dwellings typically had complex rooflines dominated by either a gable or hipped primary roof, and some adopted features popular in the Arts and Crafts era as well as some basic characteristics of the Queen Anne style. Partial-width or full-width porches are very common features of vernacular Victorian-era buildings. Modest in size and appearance, these dwellings were popular in Tustin at the turn of the 20th century.

Common character-defining features of vernacular Victorian-era architecture include:

- One or one-and-a-half stories
- Box-like shape
- Hipped or gable roof, with or without central dormer
- Wide overhanging eaves, often boxed
- Wood clapboard siding
- Partial or full-width porches
- Single-pane double-hung wood sash windows

Theme: Arts and Crafts Movement

The Arts and Crafts movement emerged in England as a reaction against the materialism brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Led by English designer William Morris, the movement focused on simplicity of form, direct response to site, informal character, and extensive use of natural materials. At the turn of the 20th century, the Arts and Crafts movement had made its way to North America and gained popularity through the efforts of Elbert Hubbard and Gustav Stickley, as well as other designers, architects, and builders who advocated the ideals set forth by Morris. The Arroyo Seco, a valley stretching from the San Gabriel Mountains above Pasadena through northeast Los Angeles, became a major center of the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States. Charles Fletcher Lummis and George Wharton James, along with artists and architects such as William Lees Judson, Frederick Roehrig, and Sumner Hunt, contributed to the development of the Arroyo Culture, the regional manifestation of the Arts and Crafts movement in Southern California.²⁵⁶

The Arts and Crafts movement was popularized throughout Southern California by Pasadena-based brothers Charles and Henry Greene, whose interest in Japanese wooden architecture, training in the manual arts, and knowledge of the English Arts and Crafts movement helped to develop regional Arts and Crafts styles. The styles were then applied to a range of residential property types, ranging from modest, low-slung bungalows to grander and more articulated multi-story houses. The term “bungalow,” derived from the name of typical native dwellings of the Bengal region of India, has come to define the type of house that is most closely associated with modest, everyday interpretations of the Arts and Crafts style. In their earliest form, bungalows featured Indian characteristics such as central living spaces and vast, ventilating porches that had been adapted to suit colonial British tastes.²⁵⁷ By the beginning of the twentieth century, bungalows were deemed well suited for the California climate and soon became a prevailing typology. Promoted by architectural periodicals and made widely available by prefabricated “kits” of building components, bungalows proved to be both affordable and adaptable.

Sub-Theme: Craftsman

²⁵⁶ “Architecture and Engineering, Arts and Crafts Movement, 1895-1930,” Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, prepared for City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, June 2016, 1.

²⁵⁷ Clay Lancaster, “The American Bungalow,” *The Art Bulletin*, 40.3 (1958): 239.



Example of the Craftsman style: 125 Mountain View Drive.

The Craftsman style is largely a California phenomenon that evolved out of the Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the 20th century, a time during which Southern California was experiencing tremendous growth in population, expansion of homeownership, and new aesthetic choices. Craftsman architecture combines Swiss and Japanese elements with the artistic values of the Arts and Crafts movement. The style began to lose popularity in the 1920s with the emergence of Period Revival styles. The Craftsman bungalow remains the prevailing architectural typology from before Tustin's post-WWII boom.

Common character-defining features of the Craftsman style include:

- One or two stories in height
- Building forms that respond to the site
- Low-pitched gabled roofs
- Broad, overhanging eaves with exposed structural members such as rafter tails, knee braces, and king posts
- Shingled exteriors (occasionally clapboard or stucco)
- Broad front entry porches of half- or full-width, with square or battered columns
- Extensive use of natural materials for columns, chimneys, retaining walls, and landscape features
- Casement windows situated into groups
- If the Airplane variation of Craftsman, then has a “pop-up” second story
- If Japanese-influenced, then may have multi-gabled roofs or gables that peak at the apex and flare at the ends
- If Chalet-influenced, then may have single, rectangular building forms, front-facing gabled roofs, second-story balconies, and flat balusters with decorative cutouts or decorative brackets and bargeboards

Sub-Theme: Stone Houses



Example of a Stone Building: 415 W. Main Street.

As the Arts and Crafts movement emphasized natural materials, several of its related architectural styles incorporate natural stone (both unmodified arroyo stone and cut stone) as a common feature. Stone buildings are clad entirely in stone, typically unmodified arroyo stone as seen in groupings adjacent to the Arroyo Seco in Los Angeles and Pasadena; buildings clad in a mix of stone types or entirely in cut stone are less common but still representative examples of this Arts and Crafts-related idiom. These buildings often took a long time to construct and reflected eclectic design influences as well as the idiosyncrasies of the builder; some have distinctive vernacular/folk art elements.

Common character-defining features of the Stone Buildings style include

- One or two stories in height
- Elevations clad fully with natural and/or cut stone
- Hipped or gabled roofs with overhanging eaves
- Small, recessed window openings

Theme: Period Revival

By the late 1910s, Period Revival architecture prevailed throughout Southern California. A range of styles associated with Europe and Colonial America inspired Period Revival architecture in the early 20th century. These styles remained a popular choice for residential design through the late 1930s and early 1940s. By World War II, Period Revival architecture had largely given way to styles such as Minimal Traditional and Mid-Century Modern, which were more pared down and embraced more contemporary materials in lieu of references to the past.

Sub-Theme: American Colonial Revival



A late example of the American Colonial Revival style: 545 W. Main Street.

American Colonial Revival architecture experienced a resurgence during the 1920s population boom in Southern California. The style used elements from a variety of earlier classically-based architectural modes, including Neoclassical, Federal, and Georgian. Early examples of the style were typically single-family residences. Tustin has few high-style American Colonial Revival homes, especially in comparison to Santa Ana and Anaheim; more commonly, restrained Colonial Revival elements were utilized on simple Craftsman cottages. However, at least one example of the rare Dutch Colonial Revival variant, defined by a gambrel roof, can be found in Old Town Tustin.

Common character-defining features of the American Colonial Revival style include:

- Typically one or two stories in height

- Simple building forms
- Symmetrical façades
- Hipped or gable roofs, typically with boxed eaves
- May display multiple roof dormers
- Clapboard or brick exteriors
- Multi-paned double-hung sash windows that are often paired
- Entryways accentuated with classical detailing
- Paneled front door, sometimes with sidelights and transom or fanlight
- Details may include pediments, columns or pilasters, and fixed shutters

Sub-Theme: Spanish Colonial Revival



Example of the Spanish Colonial Revival style: 14611 Prospect Avenue.

Spanish Colonial Revival architecture gained widespread popularity throughout Southern California after the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. The exposition's buildings were designed by architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, who wished to go beyond the popular Mission architectural interpretations of the state's colonial past and highlight the richness of Spanish precedents found throughout Latin America. The exposition prompted other designers to look directly to Spain for architectural inspiration. The Spanish Colonial Revival style was an attempt to create a "native" California architectural style that drew upon and romanticized the state's colonial past.²⁵⁸

The popularity of the Spanish Colonial Revival style coincided with Southern California's population boom of the 1920s. The versatility of the style, allowing for builders and architects to construct buildings as simple or as lavish as money would permit, helped to further spread its popularity throughout the region. The style's adaptability also lent its application to a variety of

²⁵⁸ McAlester and McAlester 2009, 418.

building types, including single- and multi-family residences, commercial properties, and institutional buildings. Spanish Colonial Revival architecture often borrowed from other styles such as Churrigueresque, Italian Villa Revival, Gothic Revival, Moorish Revival, or Art Deco. The style is characterized by its complex building forms, stucco-clad wall surfaces, and clay tile roofs. The Spanish Colonial Revival style remained popular through the 1930s, with later versions simpler in form and ornamentation. Spanish Colonial Revival is a prevalent Period Revival style in Tustin and is typically applied to single-family residential properties around the Cultural Resources District. There are also several commercial and institutional buildings in the city that are designed in the style.

Character-defining features of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture include:

- Complex massing and asymmetrical façades
- Incorporation of patios, courtyards, loggias, or covered porches and/or balconies
- Low-pitched gable or hipped roofs with clay tile roofing
- Coved, molded, or wood-bracketed eaves
- Towers or turrets
- Stucco wall cladding
- Arched window and door openings
- Single and paired multi-paned windows (predominantly casement)
- Decorative stucco or tile vents
- Details often include the use of secondary materials, including wrought iron, wood, cast stone, terra cotta, and polychromatic tile

Sub-Theme: Tudor Revival



Example of the Tudor Revival style: 520 W. Main Street.

The Tudor Revival style was loosely based on a variety of Medieval and 16th- 17th century English building traditions, ranging from thatched-roof Tudor cottages to grandiose Elizabethan and Jacobean manor houses. The first Tudor Revival-style houses appeared in the United States at the end of the 19th century. These houses were typically elaborate and architect-designed. Much like other Period Revival styles, Tudor Revival architecture became extremely popular during the 1920s population boom in Southern California. Masonry veneering techniques of the 1920s and '30s helped to further disseminate the style, as even modest houses could afford to mimic the brick and stone exteriors of traditional English designs.²⁵⁹

Tudor Revival architecture is characterized by its asymmetry, steeply-pitched gable roofs, decorative half-timbering, and prominent chimneys. High style examples are typically two to three stories in height and may exhibit leaded glass diamond-paned windows and slate roof shingles. The popularity of the Tudor Revival style waned during the Great Depression as less ornate building designs prevailed. Although the style continued to be used through the 1930s, later interpretations of Tudor Revival architecture were much simpler in terms of form and design.

Character-defining features of Tudor Revival architecture include:

- Irregular massing and asymmetrical façades

²⁵⁹ McAlester and McAlester 2009, 355.

- Steeply-pitched gable roofs with a prominent front-facing gable and slate, wood shingle, or composition shingle roofing
- Rolled, pointed, and/or flared eaves, sometimes with exposed rafter tails
- Prominent chimneys
- Brick, stone, or stucco wall cladding
- Decorative half-timbering
- Entrance vestibules with arched openings
- Multi-paned casement windows that are tall, narrow, and typically arranged in groups

Sub-Theme: Mission Revival



Example of the Mission Revival style: 560 El Camino Real.

The Mission Revival style, which some consider the first indigenous architectural mode developed after California became part of the United States, was made popular in the Southwest through its use in the design of hotels and stations constructed for the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific Railroad companies. Though a prevalent style for civic architecture in Southern California in the early 20th century, the style lost popularity after the 1915 Panama-California Exposition and the emerging dominance of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture.

Character-defining features of the Mission Revival style include:

- One or more stories in height
- Horizontal emphasis
- Hipped, tile-covered roofs
- Projecting eaves supported by exposed rafters

- Stucco exterior
- Espadañas (bell gables), bell towers, and domes
- Rounded arches and arcades
- Impost moldings and continuous stringcourses around openings
- Verandas, patios, and courtyards
- Buttresses, especially at building corners
- General lack of ornamentation or use of Moorish-inspired decoration

Sub-Theme: Classical Revival



Example of the Classical Revival style: 150-58 W. Main Street.

The Classical Revival style, which includes the variants of Neoclassical Revival, Beaux Arts, and Greek Revival, was very popular across the United States from the turn of the 20th century well into the 1920s. The resurgence of interest in Classical Revival architecture is often attributed to the City Beautiful movement as popularized at the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. This style is characterized by symmetrical facades, columns, and pediments on buildings that are usually two stories in height.

Character-defining features of the Classical Revival style include:

- Massive symmetrical and rectilinear form
- Low pitched roof
- Decorative dentils along eaves
- Triangular pediments supported by classic columns
- Large rectangular windows, usually arranged singularly
- Decorative plaster elements

- Masonry walls
- Color schemes indicative of stone and masonry construction

Theme: Minimal Traditional



Example of the Minimal Traditional style: 335 W. 6th Street.

Minimal Traditional style is a simple residential style historically designed to meet the demand for quick and affordable housing. It first evolved in the 1930s during the Great Depression and continued with increasing vigor in the post-World War II period. The appeal of the style was maximized in the postwar era, as it fit the mold for houses seeking Federal Housing Administration (FHA) financing. As outlined in the FHA's bulletin, *Principles for Planning Small Houses*, as well as in pattern books, the Minimal Traditional style is characterized by its modest size and simplicity in massing and decorative details. Approved embellishments included porches, bay windows, platform steps, and paneled front doors.

Character-defining features of the Minimal Traditional style include:

- Small, typically one-story height
- Simple massing
- Low-pitched, hipped, side-gable, or gable-and-wing roof
- Double-hung windows
- Minimal ornamentation and architectural features, but relating to Tudor, Colonial Revival, or Ranch styles where applied

Theme: Modernism

Modernism is an umbrella term that is used to describe a mélange of architectural styles and schools of design that were introduced in the early 20th century, honed in the interwar years, and ultimately came to dominate the American architectural scene in the decades following World War II. The tenets of Modernism are diverse, but in the most general sense the movement eschewed past traditions in favor of an architectural paradigm that was more progressive and receptive to technological advances and the modernization of society. It sought to use contemporary materials and building technologies in a manner that prioritized function over form and embraced the “authenticity” of a building’s requisite elements. Modernism, then, sharply contrasted with the Period Revival movement that dominated the American architecture scene in years past, as the latter had relied wholly on historical sources for inspiration.

Modernism is rooted in European architectural developments that made their debut in the 1920s and coalesced into what became known as the International style. Championed by some of the most progressive architects of the era – including Le Corbusier of France, and Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe of Germany – the International style took new building materials such as iron, steel, glass, and concrete and fashioned them into functional buildings for the masses. These ideas were introduced to Southern California in the 1920s upon the emigration of Austrian architects Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler. Neutra and Schindler each took the “machine-like” aesthetic of the International style and adapted it to the Southern California context through groundbreaking residential designs. While Neutra and Schindler were indisputably pioneers in the rise of Southern California Modernism, it should be noted that their contributions dovetailed with the work of figures such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Irving Gill, both of whom had experimented with creating a Modern aesthetic derived from regional sources.

Prior to World War II, Modernism was very much a fringe movement that was relegated to the sidelines as Period Revival styles and other traditional idioms prevailed. Its expression was limited to a small number of custom residences and the occasional low-scale commercial building. However, Americans’ perception of Modern architecture had undergone a dramatic shift by the end of World War II. An unprecedented demand for new, quality housing after the war prodded architects and developers to embrace archetypes that were pared down and replicable on a mass scale. As a whole, Americans also gravitated toward an aesthetic that embraced modernity and looked to the future – rather than to the past – for inspiration, an idea that was popularized by John Entenza’s *Arts and Architecture* magazine and its highly influential Case Study House program. Modern architecture remained popular for the entirety of the postwar era, with derivatives of the movement persisting well into the 1970s.

Sub-Theme: Moderne



Example of the Moderne style (PWA Moderne), 300 S. C Street.

Moderne architecture, commonly reflected in the sub-styles of Streamline Moderne, PWA Moderne, or, in its later iterations, Late Moderne, materialized during the Great Depression when the highly-stylized Art Deco mode had become perceived as excessive and overly flamboyant. The architectural mode was relatively inexpensive to build due to its lack of ornamentation and use of less labor-intensive building materials such as concrete and plaster. Inspired by the industrial designs of the time, the Moderne style was popular throughout the country in the late 1930s and continued to be applied, primarily to commercial and institutional buildings, through the mid-1940s. This is evident in Tustin, where all applications of the Moderne style are commercial buildings. Moderne architecture is characterized by its sleek, aerodynamic form and horizontal emphasis.

Character-defining features of Moderne architecture include:

- Horizontal emphasis
- Flat roofs with parapets
- Smooth, typically stucco wall surfaces
- Curved wall surfaces
- Steel fixed or casement windows, sometimes located at corners
- Horizontal moldings (speedlines)

Sub-Theme: Mid-Century Modern



Example of the Mid-Century Modern style: 12881 Newport Avenue.

In Southern California, Mid-Century Modern architecture was prevalent between the mid-1940s and mid-1970s. While the style was a favorite among some of Southern California's most influential architects, its minimal ornamentation and simple open floor plans lent itself to the mass-produced housing developments of the postwar period. Mid-Century Modern architecture typically incorporated standardized and prefabricated materials that also proved well-suited to mass production. Subsets of the Mid-Century Modern style include Googie, which is a highly exaggerated, futuristic aesthetic, typically employing upswept or folded plate roofs, curvaceous, geometric volumes, and neon signage, and Mimetic, which is characterized by its application of objects or forms that resemble something other than a building. The Mid-Century Modern style and its subsets were broadly applied to a wide variety of property types ranging from residential subdivisions and commercial buildings to churches and public schools. Common characteristics of Mid-Century Modern architecture include horizontal massing, open floor plans, wide overhanging eaves, large expanses of glass, exposed structural members, and dramatic rooflines (including A-frames).

Character-defining features of Mid-Century Modern architecture include:

- Horizontal massing
- Expressed post-and-beam construction, typically in wood or steel
- Flat or low-pitched roofs
- Wide overhanging eaves
- Horizontal elements such as fascias that cap the front edge of the flat roofs or parapets

- Stucco wall cladding at times used in combination with other textural elements, such as brick, clapboard, or concrete block
- Aluminum windows grouped within horizontal frames
- Oversized decorative elements or decorative face-mounted light fixtures

Theme: Ranch

Ranch style architecture first appeared in Southern California in the 1930s. Inspired by the Spanish and Mexican-era *haciendas* of Southern California and the vernacular, wood-framed farmhouses dotting the landscape of Northern California, Texas, and the American West, the style projected an informal, casual lifestyle that proved to be immensely popular among the American public. Early iterations of the Ranch style tended to be large, sprawling custom residences that were designed by noted architects of the day. However, after World War II, Ranch style architecture was pared down and also became a preferred style for economical, mass-produced tract housing. By some estimates, nine of every ten new houses built in the years immediately after World War II embodied the Ranch style in one way or another. The style remained an immensely popular choice for residential architecture – and was occasionally adapted to commercial and institutional properties as well – until it fell out of favor in the mid-1970s.²⁶⁰

Cliff May, commonly referred to as “father of the Ranch house,” propelled the style into the public consciousness and, although he did not invent the ranch house, he is the figure most closely associated with the typology’s early popularization. May developed his own distinctive aesthetic that was characterized by open and free-flowing interior plans, a blending of interior and exterior spaces, and a hand-hewn character. Early designs were custom and sprawling, but in the early 1950s, May, in collaboration with the architect Chris Choate, devised a much smaller, scaled-down interpretation of his trademark California Ranch house that was based on a modular plan and could be replicated on a much larger scale. Averaging 950 square feet, these houses are notable for their innovative manufacturing and distributing system; whereas May and Choate designed the models and determined their specifications, the houses’ construction was franchised out to individual builders. Marketed as the “Cliff May Homes,” these economical Ranch houses were constructed in residential tracts across the nation, with notable concentrations in the Tustin area.

Sub-Theme: Traditional Ranch

²⁶⁰ “Architecture and Engineering, The Ranch House, 1930-1975,” Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, prepared for City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources, December 2015, 3-5.



Example of the Traditional Ranch style: 150 Pasadena Avenue.

Traditional Ranch style architecture made its debut in the 1930s and is what is generally considered to be the “quintessential Ranch house.” Buildings designed in the style were awash in historical references associated with the vernacular architecture of 19th century California and the American West, and generally took on a distinctive, rusticated appearance. Examples of Traditional Ranch architecture were prominently featured in general interest publications, notably *Sunset* magazine, which perpetuated the style’s popularity and led to its widespread acceptance among the American public.

The Traditional Ranch style is almost always expressed in the form of a one-story, single-family house, although the style was occasionally adapted to commercial and institutional properties in the postwar era. It is distinguished from other iterations of the Ranch style by the application of elements associated with the working ranches of 19th century California and the American West. Features such as low-pitched roofs with wide eaves, a combination of wall cladding materials including board-and-batten siding, large picture windows, and brick and stone chimneys were commonly applied. Subsets of the Traditional Ranch style include the American Colonial Ranch, which features elements associated with the American Colonial Revival style (symmetrical façades, cupolas, classical details); the Hacienda Ranch, which loosely resembles the *haciendas* of late 19th century California, incorporating clay tile roofing and textured stucco exteriors; the Cinderella Ranch, distinguished by their highlighted and often exaggerated details including scalloped bargeboards and Swiss Chalet details; and the Minimal Ranch, which is a pared down version of the Traditional Ranch, featuring simple floor plans and restrained ornamentation.

Character-defining features of Traditional Ranch style architecture include:

- One-story configuration (two-story Ranch houses are rare)
- Asymmetrical composition with one or more projecting wings
- Horizontal massing
- Low-pitched gable or hipped roof, originally clad with wood shakes
- Wide eaves and exposed rafters
- Brick or stone chimneys
- Combination of wall cladding materials (wood board-and-batten siding is most common)
- One or more picture windows
- Multi-light wood windows, often with diamond panes
- Decorative wood shutters
- Dutch and/or French doors
- Attached garage, often appended to the main house via a breezeway

Sub-Theme: Contemporary Ranch



Example of the Contemporary Ranch style: 13661 Fairmont Way.

Contemporary Ranch architecture emerged after World War II. Buildings designed in the style took on the basic form, configuration, and massing of the Traditional Ranch house, but instead of historically-inspired treatments and details they incorporated the clean lines and abstract geometries associated with Modernism. The Contemporary Ranch style offered an alternative to the Traditional Ranch house and was applied to scores of residential buildings constructed between the mid-1940s and 1970s.

Like the Traditional Ranch houses from which it is derived, the Contemporary Ranch style is almost always expressed in the form of a one-story, single-family house. In lieu of the historicist references and rusticated features that are associated with the Traditional Ranch style, Contemporary Ranch houses exhibit abstract geometries and contemporary details that are most often seen in Mid-Century Modern architecture. Post-and-beam construction was common; carports often took the place of garages; exterior walls tended to be clad in a more simplistic palette composed of stucco and wood; roofs were of a lower pitch and were often more expressive or flamboyant in form; and ornament tended to be more abstract in character and was applied more judiciously. Oriental and Polynesian-inspired motifs were often incorporated into the design of Contemporary Ranch houses.²⁶¹

Character-defining features of Contemporary Ranch style architecture include:

- One-story configuration (two-story Ranch houses are rare)
- Asymmetrical composition with one or more projecting wings
- Horizontal massing and abstract form
- Post-and-beam construction
- Low-pitched gable or hipped roof, sometimes with expressionist qualities
- Combination of wall cladding materials, generally including stucco and wood siding
- Windows and doors are generally treated as void elements
- Abstract ornamental details
- Incorporation of Oriental and Polynesian motifs is common
- Carports are common and often take the place of an attached garage

²⁶¹ "Architecture and Engineering, The Ranch House, 1930-1975," 17-20.

Evaluation Guidelines: Architecture and Design, 1870-1976

Buildings evaluated under this context and its various subthemes are significant (under Criteria C/3/3,4)²⁶² as excellent examples of their architectural styles, types, period, or method of construction; and/or as valuable examples of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; and/or for representing the notable work of a builder, designer, or architect; and/or for possessing high artistic values. This context applies to a wide variety of property types.

Associated Property Types

Residential resources (including various subtypes)

Commercial resources (including various subtypes)

Institutional resources (including various subtypes)

Historic Districts (residential, commercial, and/or institutional)

Significant interpretations of architectural styles can be applied to nearly any property type. In Tustin, examples include single-family residences; multi-family residences; commercial buildings like banks, office buildings, restaurants, and retail buildings; and institutional properties like government buildings, clubhouses, schools, and churches. Concentrations of buildings that collectively convey a significant representation of architectural style(s) or type(s) may be identified as historic districts.

Geographic Location(s)

Individual resources and historic districts associated with the Architecture and Design context/themes are distributed throughout the city.

Integrity Overview

An individual property that is significant must also retain certain aspects of integrity in order to express its historic significance. Determining which aspects are most important to a particular property type necessitates an understanding of its significance and essential physical characteristics. The rarity of a property type and of an architectural style should also be considered when assessing integrity. In general, properties being evaluated for their architectural significance are held to a higher integrity threshold than those being evaluated under other contexts. The following is a guide.

²⁶² The applicable criteria here and in the table below are ordered as national/state/local. See *Section 3* for a full discussion of National Register, California Register, and City of Tustin eligibility criteria.

Criteria	Significance	Integrity Considerations	Registration Requirements
C/3/3,4	An individual property eligible under this theme may be significant: • As an excellent embodiment of an architectural style, type, period, or method of construction; and/or • As the notable work of an architect, designer, or builder; and/or • For possessing high artistic values	An individual property significant for its architecture is eligible if it retains most of the physical features that constitute its style or technique.²⁶³ It should retain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and feeling, at a minimum, in order to be eligible for its architectural merit. A property that has lost a few historic materials or details may still be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its original style and appearance in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. A property is not eligible if it retains some basic features conveying form and massing but has lost the majority of features that originally characterized its style or type. Given the City's ample stock of intact historic architecture, properties that may be significant for their embodiment of an architectural style should be held to a higher integrity standard than those that may be significant as the last, best remaining example of a style or type.	To be eligible under this theme, a resource should, at a minimum: • Represent an excellent or influential example of an architectural style(s) or type, and/or • Be associated with a significant architect or designer, and • Retain the essential character-defining features of the style or type, and • Retain the essential aspects of integrity.
C/3/3,4,7	A historic district eligible under this theme may be significant: • For embodying the distinctive characteristics of	In order for a historic district to be eligible for designation, the majority of the components within the district boundary must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole. Integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling must	To be eligible under this theme, a historic district should, at a minimum:

²⁶³ National Park Service, National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criterion for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990).

	one or more architectural styles or types; and/or • As the notable work of one or more architects or master builders; and/or • For possessing high artistic or aesthetic values.	be strongly present in the district overall, and it should convey a strong sense of time and place. A contributing building must retain integrity of design, setting, materials, and workmanship to adequately convey the significance of the historic district. In general, minor or reversible alterations or in-kind replacement of original features and finishes are acceptable within historic districts. Significant alterations that change the massing, form, roofline, or fenestration patterns of an individual building, alter the original design intent, or that are not reversible may result in non-contributing status for an individual building. In order for a historic district to retain integrity, the majority of its component parts should contribute to its historic significance.	• Represent an excellent or influential concentration of an architectural style(s), and/or • Be associated with a significant architect or designer, and • Retain the majority of the contributors reflecting the architectural style(s), and • Retain the essential aspects of integrity.
--	--	---	---