

#050584

**City of**  
**Gainesville**

**Inter-Office Communication**

**Planning Division**  
**x5022, FAX x2282, Station 11**

**DATE:** June 20, 2006  
**TO:** Ralph Hilliard, Planning Manager  
**FROM:** D. Henrichs, Planner  
**SUBJECT:** Northeast Residential Historic District Contributing Structures

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This memorandum will describe the basis for the reclassification of 43 new residences as contributing structures within the Northeast Historic District.

The Northeast Residential Historic District is one of the oldest residential neighborhoods in Gainesville with structures surviving from the 1870s to the present. The houses represent a spectrum of architectural styles used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which are good examples of their time and reflect the area's continued evolution as an important neighborhood. The City Commission approved the Northeast Residential Historic District Historic on July 8, 1985 (241ZON-84PB Ordinance #314). Significant construction occurred in the district between 1900 and World War I. Houses between 1900 and 1910 were mainly built in the Original Gainesville Plat section and reflect the transition from the Queen Ann style to the Colonial Revival style. After 1910, the entire area comprising the district was incorporated into the City and new construction was scattered throughout the area. Two new subdivisions had been platted, the Home Investment Company's Additions and the Robertson Addition and Colonial Revival became the predominant style. The 1920s ushered in an economic boom in Florida and a significant amount of new construction in the district occurred. Development in the 1920s reflected the popular architectural styles during this period – the Bungalow or Craftsman, the Mediterranean Revival, the Tutor Revival, the Prairie and the continuing influence of the Colonial Revival.

Unlike the tract developments that followed the Second World War, the Highlands Realty and Investment Company sold the lots without building speculative housing. Consequently, lot owners provided their own architectural designs, which accounts for a tremendous variation of styles in the areas of the historic district, particularly in the expansion areas of the Northeast Residential Historic District adopted by the City of Gainesville Commission in 1998. The Highlands Realty and Investment Company developed the section between NE 9th Avenue and NE 10th Avenue in 1929 and the Highlands subdivision became a popular section for the "well off" of Gainesville and remained an exclusive residential neighborhood in the City of Gainesville throughout the 1930s. These later development styles range from Bungalow or Craftsman to period revival and, finally, ranch (a mid-century style). Peter Rowe, in *Making the Middle Landscape*, has declared these three housing forms as the quintessential architectural style for 20<sup>th</sup> century suburbanizing America.

The open plan of period revival houses became the norm in the better class of dwellings built in the suburbs between the city's core and the countryside. The lot size of the newly built suburbs were much larger than in the older residential areas where restrictions on frontage had permitted at best a square house whose long axis was at right angles to the street with most of the rooms facing the windows of the neighbors. On the large sites it was possible to place the long axis of the house parallel to the street, dividing the lawn into a front lawn and a private yard in the rear. Suburban growth was accelerated as the automobile came into general use, and the dwelling configuration was affected by technological development as the improvement of central heating systems and of gas and electric kitchen appliances.

The National Register of Historic Places nomination form states of the area, "Although not officially zoned a "residential" area until 1932, the Northeast Residential District has remained residential in character since its inception in 1854." Because the area has evolved over more than a century as a residential neighborhood, later construction has been infill of a similar scale of one and two story residential structures.

When a district is adopted, a narrative Statement of Significance is part of the local and National Register form. The statement includes the four Applicable National Register Criteria of which the Northeast Residential Historic District was nominated under Criteria A (Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to our local, state, or national history) and Criteria C (Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction).

The Area of Significance for the Northeast Residential Historic District when it was adopted in 1985 was architecture and community planning with the period of significance through 1930. When the expansion to the district was adopted in 1998 the period of significance was from 1920s to 1952 and the significant dates of 1925 because this is when subdivisions were platted and 1945 because of the resumption of development after the Second World War. The City Commission approved the Expansion of the Northeast Residential Historic District Historic on March 23, 1998 (204ZON-97PB Ordinance #930). The 1998 expansion of the district included mid-century modern residential structures. It is common in Florida to include and expand the dates of significance of a district to encompass a building type that has emerged as an important architectural movement.

A list of the structures now proposed to be added as contributing is attached. Four of the structures date to 1930 or earlier. The structure at 205 N.E. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue dates to 1907 and is not the principal residence but the accessory structure that is considered contributing. The principal residence was included in the original nomination in 1985. The structure at 720 N. E. 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue was built in 1924 and is a modest residence, similar to structures found in the Pleasant Street Historic District, which was not included in the original survey and nomination. The 1927 principal residence again was an overlook structure because of modification that the Historic Preservation Board specifically voted to include as a contributing structure.

Five of the proposed structures date to the 1940s. These should be added to the contributing structures list as the district has already been expanded to include structures up through 1952 when the district was expanded in 1998, in recognition of the historic value that 1940s residences contributes to the evolution of the district.

The next 33 structures on the proposed list are from the 1950s. These residences are all of designs and styles characteristic of the mid-century modern movement. Several attachments to this memorandum describe the growing recognition of the mid-century modern movement in historic preservation. While other mid-century modern houses may be found in other parts of Gainesville, by protecting those in this particular neighborhood, the City is further recognizing and preserving the value of this historic district as it has evolved over time.

There are other Florida cities that have changed the status of historic district structures from the 1940s and 1950s from non-contributing to contributing. For example, Tampa has changed its map of contributing structures to include buildings as recent as 1955. In addition, after a 1995 resurvey of a district originally surveyed in 1977, Pensacola added more recent structures to the district.

At least three other Florida cities (Miami, Miami Beach and Sarasota) have adopted Mid-Century Modern historic/architectural districts with design regulations, and another, Tallahassee, is considering such a district. In addition, Fort Lauderdale recently designated three Mid-Century Modern hotels as historic structures. Beyond the State of Florida, there are many examples in other communities. For example, Wildwood, New Jersey; Guilford Historic District, Baltimore, Maryland; Denver Court Historic District; Galveston, Texas and Joseph Eichler's subdivisions in California, to name a few, have also adopted Mid-Century Modern historic/architectural districts with design regulations.

The Historic Preservation Board recommends the designation of the proposed structures as contributing. The Board discussed the proposed structures and supports protection of the four early 1907-1930 structures on the list, the five 1940s structures, and the remaining 1950s (and one 1961 mid-century modern structure). Mid-century modern is a significant and unique architectural style that reflects not only the architecture, but also the culture values and ideas of its time. For that reason, the Northeast Residential Historic District would benefit from preserving those structures.

### **Certificates of Approval**

Most development, redevelopment, and/or exterior modifications in Historic Districts require a Certificate of Approval (COA) from the City. Section 30-112(d)(5) of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs) describes when COAs are required for both contributing and non-contributing structures. This section also indicates when COAs may be approved by staff and when they must be considered by the Historic Preservation Board (HPB).

Prior to any work being commenced, there is no charge for a COA. The charge for after the fact COAs, however, is \$336. The application form is one page and is available at the City's Planning Division office or from the City's web site. The form should be accompanied by appropriate drawings, photographs and material examples explaining the proposed change. A COA form is attached to this memorandum. To date, the HPB has approved 96% of all COAs it has considered.

### **Non-Contributing Structures**

Non-contributing structures must obtain a COA only if increasing size, adding a floor, adding or changing a fence, adding a parking lot, changing the roof form, or enclosing any porch, carport or other architectural feature. These COA's must go before the HPB and cannot be approved by staff. Approval criteria, given in Section 30-112(d)(6), is the same as for all COA's.

### **Contributing Structures**

Contributing structures do not need to obtain a COA for "ordinary maintenance" as defined in the LDR's. "Ordinary maintenance means work which does not require a building permit and that is done to repair damage or to prevent deterioration or decay of a building or structure or any part thereof by restoring the building or structure or part thereof as nearly as practicable to its condition prior to the damage, deterioration or decay".

COA's are required for any exterior alterations or repairs, any new construction, and any demolition or relocation.

Section 30-112(d)(5)c specifically lists the following as regulated work items requiring a COA:

1. *Abrasive cleaning.* Cleaning of exterior walls by blasting with abrasive materials.
2. *Awnings or canopies.* Installation or removal of wood or metal awnings or wood or metal canopies.
3. *Decks.* Installation of all decks above the first-floor level and/or on the front of the structure.
4. *Exterior doors and door frames.* Installation of an exterior door or door frame, or the infill of an existing door opening.
5. *Exterior walls.* Installation or removal of any exterior wall, including the enclosure of any porch or other outdoor area.
6. *Fencing.* The installation or relocation of wood, chainlink, masonry (garden walls) or wrought iron fencing, or the removal of masonry (garden walls) or wrought iron fencing.
7. *Fire escapes, exterior stairs and ramps for the handicapped.* The installation or removal of all fire escapes, exterior stairs or ramps for the handicapped.
8. *Painting.* Painting unpainted masonry, including stone, brick, terracotta and concrete.

9. *Porch fixtures.* Installation or removal of railings or other wood, wrought iron or masonry detailing.
10. *Roofs.* Installation of new materials, or removal of existing materials.
11. *Security grilles.* Installation or removal of security grilles, except that in no case shall permission to install such grilles be completely denied.
12. *Siding.* Installation of new materials, or removal of existing materials.
13. *Skylights.* Installation or removal of skylights.
14. *Screen windows and doors.* Installation of screen windows or screen doors.
  
15. *Windows and window frames.* Installation of a window or window frame or the infill of an existing window opening.

Section 30-112(d)(5)b.2. regulates when staff may approve a COA and when the HPB, which meets once a month, must consider a COA. This section states:

“If the work is not ordinary maintenance, but will result in the original appearance as defined in this chapter, or meet the design standards in the preservation design and procedure manual for existing historic/cultural resources on file in the department of community development, the certificate of appropriateness may be issued by the city manager or designee.”

Section 30-112(d)(6) gives the criteria for approving COA's.

DH:dh

cc: Tom Saunders, Community Development Director  
John Wachtel, Neighborhood Planning Coordinator



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

PERMIT NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Table with 2 columns and 5 rows for applicant information: Name, Address, City, State, and Phone No. (Home/Work).

I, \_\_\_\_\_, Applicant, certify that I have authority to and hereby request the HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD issue a Certificate of Appropriateness in regard to the proposed project described below, located at \_\_\_\_\_, which has been listed on the Local or National Register of Historic Places or is within a historic district listed on the Local or National Register and in support thereof tender the following information:

A. IDENTIFICATION

Form for identification details including Owner, Contractor/Agent, Address/Zip, Phone (Hm/Wk), Occupant, Agent, and Signature/Date.

B. TYPE OF PROJECT

\_\_\_\_\_ Addition \_\_\_\_\_ Alteration \_\_\_\_\_ Demolition \_\_\_\_\_ Relocation \_\_\_\_\_ New Building \_\_\_\_\_ Repair \_\_\_\_\_ Other

C. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Empty rectangular box for describing the proposed project.

The information on this application represents an accurate description of the proposed project. All required documentation, as described at paragraph 30-112(d)(7), Gainesville Code, is submitted herewith. Applicant understands and agrees that additional material may be required by the Historic Preservation Board and consents to the Historic Preservation Board or their designated staff entering onto applicant's property for the purpose of obtaining additional photographs of the above described project scope, as required. It is understood that approval of this application by the Historic Preservation Board in no way constitutes approval of an "Application for Permit to Build" by the City of Gainesville Building Division.

Signature: Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* Please post this certificate and any attachments at or near front of building. \*\*\*

**FOR BOARD USE**

**Date Application Received** \_\_\_\_\_

**Received by** D. Henrichs, Historic Preservation Planner

If staff approval allows issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness, the basis for the decision was:
Date: _____ Preservation Planner: _____

The HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD considered the application of _____ at the _____ meeting. There were _____ members present. The application was _____ by a _____ vote, subject to the following conditions:

The basis for this decision was:

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*City of Gainesville*  
**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS (COA)**  
**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

A preliminary conference with the Historic Preservation Planner is required before the submission of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application. A preliminary conference with the City of Gainesville Historic Preservation Board is optional. There is **no fee** required to submit an application, however a failure to obtain an approved **COA prior to work** commencing will result in a **\$336.00 fee**. Please provide all documents no larger than 11" x 17". A completed application may include the following, as requested by the Building Official, the Preservation Planner, or the Historic Preservation Board:

1. A drawing giving dimensions of property; location of building(s) showing distances from property lines, names of streets front and sides, and north/south orientation. A current site plan may be submitted for this requirement, if it provides the requested information.
2. A written description of the proposed work and materials.
3. One complete set of plans (with elevations) and specifications for the project.
4. Samples of exterior materials to be used, as requested.
5. Photographs of existing building(s) (all facades or elevations of structure) and adjacent buildings. Photos should clearly illustrate the appearance and conditions of the structure, as well as its relationship with neighboring buildings. The format for photos shall be 3" x 5", colored or black and white prints, with the name of owner and address of structure on back of picture.
6. Specific items, as requested, such as landscape plans, verification of economic hardship, or in the case of demolition, explanation of the future use of the site.
7. Letter of consent from the property owner, if the applicant is a tenant of the property, or is in the process of purchasing the property.

Copies of the City of Gainesville Historic Preservation/Conservation Ordinance and the Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines, both of which are used in the review of Certificate of Appropriateness applications, can be purchased at the Department of Community Development's planning counter on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Thomas Center, Building B.

The Historic Preservation Board meets on the first **Tuesday** of the month at the **Alachua County Housing Authority, 703 N.E. 1<sup>st</sup> Street** at **6:30 pm**.

**After staff or Board approval, a copy of the COA must be posted, along with the Building Permit, in a visible front window or near the construction site.**



2006  
*Historic Preservation Board  
 Application Cut-off Dates & Meeting*

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Certificate of Appropriateness          Application Deadline          Dates</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Historic Preservation Board          Meeting          Dates</i>   <i>(The First Tuesday          Of the Month)</i></p>
<i>December 13, 2005</i>	<i>January 3, 2006</i>
<i>January 17, 2006</i>	<i>February 7, 2006</i>
<i>February 14, 2006</i>	<i>March 7, 2006</i>
<i>March 14, 2006</i>	<i>April 4, 2006</i>
<i>April 11, 2006</i>	<i>May 2, 2006</i>
<i>May 16, 2006</i>	<i>June 6, 2006</i>
<i>June 20, 2006</i>	<i>July 11, 2006</i>
<i>July 11, 2006</i>	<i>August 1, 2006</i>
<i>August 15, 2006</i>	<i>September 5, 2006</i>
<i>September 12, 2006</i>	<i>October 3, 2006</i>
<i>October 17, 2006</i>	<i>November 7, 2006</i>
<i>November 14, 2006</i>	<i>December 5, 2006</i>
<i>December 12, 2006</i>	<i>January 2, 2007</i>

**NORTHEAST RESIDENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**



<b>Parcel Number</b>	<b>Parcel Site Address</b>	<b>Status Change</b>	<b>Build Date</b>
14098-000-000	0205 NE 6TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1907
12271-000-000	0720 NE 4TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1924
12363-001-000	0406 NE 7TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1927
12277-001-000	824 NE BLVD	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1930
12305-000-000	0501 NE 8TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1946
12619-000-000	0619 NE 6TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1946
10390-008-000	0636 NE 10TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1948
10289-000-000	1109 NE 5TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1949
12384-000-000	0217 NE 6TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1949
14813-002-000	0525 NE 5TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1950
10392-000-000	0633 NE 11TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1951
10399-000-000	1205 NE 6TH TER	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1951
10323-000-000	1040 NE 5TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1951
10329-000-000	0506 NE 10TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1951
12315-000-000	0540 NE 7TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1951
10344-000-000	0903 NE BLVD	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1951
12332-000-000	0554 NE 7TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1952
12336-001-000	0622 NE 6TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1952
10349-000-000	0505 NE 10TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1952
10380-000-000	1207 NE 6TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1952
10360-000-000	1114 NE 6TH ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1953
10267-001-000	1115 NE 3RD ST	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1953
12264-000-000	0548 NE 5TH AVE	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1954
12317-000-000	0629 NE BLVD	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1954
12318-000-000	0621 NE BLVD	Non-Contributing to Contributing	1954
10291-000-000	1104 NE 5TH TER	Non-Contributing to	1954



10268-000-000	1105 NE 3RD ST	Contributing	1954
		Non-Contributing to	
		Contributing	
10326-000-000	1031 NE 5TH ST	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
10359-000-000	1115 NE 5TH TER	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
10371-000-000	1005 NE 6TH ST	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
10384-000-000	0625 NE 10TH AVE	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
10266-000-000	1219 NE 3RD ST	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
12260-001-000	0519 NE 5TH ST	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
12405-000-000	0620 NE 7TH ST	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
12617-000-000	0603 NE 6TH AVE	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
12375-000-000	0540 NE 2ND AVE	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
12276-000-000	0302 NE 8TH AVE	Non-Contributing to	1955
		Contributing	
12246-001-000	0714 NE 4TH ST	Non-Contributing to	1956
		Contributing	
14719-000-000	0108 NE 5TH ST	Non-Contributing to	1956
		Contributing	
10257-000-000	1206 NE 3RD ST	Non-Contributing to	1956
		Contributing	
10318-000-000	0416 NE 10TH AVE	Non-Contributing to	1957
		Contributing	
10322-000-000	1032 NE 5TH ST	Non-Contributing to	1957
		Contributing	
14813-001-000	0420 NE BLVD	Non-Contributing to	1961
		Contributing	



# Northeast Historic District

## Gainesville, Florida

-  Contributing Structures
-  Non-Contributing Structures

-  Northeast Historic District Boundary
-  Change in Status (Principle Structure Only)

*(Note: If you are interested in the status of a particular structure within the historic district, please check the "contributing" and "non-contributing" categories on this map. Do not rely solely on the yellow change of status designation.)*



Prepared by the  
 Dept. of Community Development, 10/05  
 ArchProjects-Trade-200505 - Historic Equiglobe Sheet 10-01  
 Historic\_DistrictsNE\_historic\_district.mxd

*This map is for information purposes only.  
 The City of Gainesville does not assume  
 responsibility to update this information or for any  
 error or omission on this map. For specific information,  
 you are directed to contact the City of Gainesville, Florida.*

## Mid-Century Modern

*These excerpts are scanned from pages in the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register, History and Education Bulletin publication Historic Residential Suburbs by David L. Ames of University of Delaware and Linda Flint McClelland of the National Park Service in 2002. This not only chronicles the history of subdivisions from 1830 to 1960 but also discusses nomination identification, evaluation, documentation and registration of historic patterns of suburbanization in the United States.*

### Postwar Suburban House and Yard, 1945-1960:

By 1945, several factors—the lack of new housing, continued population growth, and six million returning veterans eager to start families—combined to produce the largest building boom in the Nation's history, almost all of it concentrated in the suburbs. From 1944 to 1946, single-family housing starts increased eight-fold from 114,000 to 937,000. Spurred by the builders' credits and liberalized terms for VA- and FHA-approved mortgages by the end of the 1940s, home building proceeded on an unprecedented scale reaching a record high in 1950 with the construction of 1,692,000 new single-family houses.

The experience of World War II demonstrated the possibilities offered by large-scale production, prefabrication methods and materials, and streamlined assembly methods. In 1947 developer William Levitt began to apply these principles to home building in a dramatically new way, creating his first large-scale suburb, Levittown on Long Island, which would eventually accommodate 82,000 residents in more than 17,500 houses.

Levitt's idea was to lower construction costs by simplifying the house, assembling many components off-site, and turning the construction site into a streamlined assembly line. The economy of using factory produced building components, such as precut wall panels and standardized mechanical systems, significantly lowered the cost of construction. By adapting assembly line methods for horizontal or serial production, Levitt and Sons was able to systematically and efficiently assemble the components on site. The construction process was divided into 27 steps, each performed in sequence by a specialized crew. The tasks, skills, and manpower to complete each step were precisely defined and each member was trained to perform a set of repetitive tasks, enabling work crews to move efficiently and quickly through each site, thus establishing the firm's reputation for completing a house every 15 minutes.

The vast subdivisions of Cape Cods and later Ranch homes, mocked by critics as suburban wastelands, represent not only an unprecedented building boom, but the concerted and organized effort by many groups, including the Federal government, to create a single-family house that a majority of Americans could afford. Levitt actually perfected a construction process that had been in the making for more than two decades. Other developers did the same, including Harvey Kaiser at Panorama City, near Los Angeles, and Philip M. Klutznick of American Community Builders, Inc., at Park Forest, Illinois. The success of Levitt and others resulted in the emergence of large-scale developers, called "merchant builders," who would apply their successful formulas for building large communities in one location after another, often accommodating changing tastes, economics, and consumer demand in new and improved house designs.

## ***From the FHA Minimum House to the Cape Cod***

The Cape Cod provided most of the low-cost suburban housing immediately following the war and! was built in groups of varying sizes, sometimes numbering the hundreds. Often located on curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs that reflected the FHA guidelines for neighborhood planning, Cape Cods appeared in a variety of materials, including sheets of insulated asbestos shingles available after the war in an increasing assortment of colors.

The Cape Cod that eager prospective renters lined up to inspect in the first Levittown in June 1947 was one-and-a-half stories and built on a concrete slab. Its 750 square feet of living space was divided into a living room, a kitchen, two bedrooms, and a bath. Set on a lot of 6,000 square feet, the exterior of the house-with a steeply pitched gable roof pierced by two dormers above a clapboarded first story-was a variation on a Cape Cod cottage and was a somewhat large version of the FHA minimum house, which had been improved and expanded in FHA's 1940 *Principles for Planning Small Houses*

Large-scale subdivisions not only took form on the periphery of the Nation's largest metropolitan areas, but also around many smaller cities. For middle- and upper-middle-income families, especially in the East, simplified versions of prewar "small house" designs such as brick or clapboarded Cape Cod and other Colonial Revival forms continued in popularity, in large part due to architect Royal Barry Wills, who published numerous plan books, including *Houses for Good Living* (1940), *Better Homes for Budgeteers* (1941), *Houses for Homemakers* (1945), and *Living on the Level* (1955).

## **The Suburban Ranch House**



*Ranch house (1952) in the Denver Court Historic District, Galveston, Texas. Developed by West Coast architects in the 1930s and promoted by Sunset Magazine in books such as architect Cliff May's *Western Ranch Houses* (1946), the sprawling Ranch house attained great popularity and appeared nationwide in the 1950s, often on the unbuilt lots of early subdivisions. (Photo by Lesley Sommer, courtesy Texas Historical Commission)*

The suburban Ranch house of the 1950s reflected modern consumer preferences and growing incomes. With its low, horizontal silhouette and rambling floor plan, the house type reflected the nation's growing fascination with the informal lifestyle of the West Coast and the changing functional needs of families.

In the 1930s California architects Cliff May, H. Roy Kelley, William W. Wurster, and others adapted the traditional housing of Southwest ranches and *haciendas* and Spanish Colonial revival styles to a suburban house type suited for middle-income families. The house was typically built of natural materials such as adobe or redwood and was oriented to an outdoor patio and gardens that ensured privacy and intimacy with nature. Promoted by Sunset Magazine between 1946 and 1958 and featured in portfolios such as *Western Ranch Houses* (1946) and *Western Ranch Houses* by Cliff May (1958), May's work gained considerable attention in the Southwest and across the nation.

In the late 1940s popular magazine surveys indicated the postwar family's preference for the informal Ranch house as well as a desire to have all their living space on one floor with a basement for laundry and other utilities and a multipurpose room for hobbies and recreation. Builders of middle and upper-income homes mimicked the architect-designed homes of the Southwest, offering innovations such as sliding glass doors, picture windows, carports, screens of decorative blocks, and exposed timbers and beams, which derived as much from modernistic influences as those of traditional Southwestern design.

Builders of low-cost homes, however, sought ways to give the basic form of FHA-approved houses a Ranch-like appearance. By late 1949, Levitt & Sons had modified the Cape Cod into a Ranch-like house called "The Forty-Niner," by leaving the floor plan intact and giving the house an asymmetrical facade and horizontal emphasis by placing shingles on the lower half of the front elevation and fitting horizontal sliding windows just below the eaves. Picture windows, broad chimneys, horizontal bands of windows, basement recreational rooms, and exterior terraces or patios became distinguishing features of the forward-looking yet lower-cost suburban home.

In the 1950s, as families grew larger and children became teenagers, households moved up to larger Ranch houses, offering more space and privacy. With the introduction of television and inexpensive, high-fidelity phonographs, increasing noise levels created a demand for greater separation of activities and soundproof zones. The split-level house provided increased privacy through the location of bedrooms on an upper level a half-story above the main living area and an all-purpose, recreation room on a lower level. The Ranch house in various configurations, including the split level, continued as the dominant suburban house well into the 1960s.

### *The Contemporary House*

The influence of Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Richard J. Neutra, Mies van der Rohe, and other modernists inspired many architects to look to new solutions for livable homes using modern materials of glass, steel, and concrete, and principles of organic design that utilized cantilevered forms, glass curtain walls, and post-and-beam construction. The contemporary home featured the integration of indoor and outdoor living area and open floor plans, which allowed a sense of flowing space. Characteristics such as masonry hearth walls, patios and terraces, carports, and transparent walls in the form of sliding glass doors and floor-to-ceiling windows became hallmarks of the contemporary residential design.

The principles of European modernism expressed in the International Style had been introduced to the American public in the 1932 Museum of Modern Art exhibition. The Century of Progress World's Fair at Chicago in 1933 introduced Americans to a number of modern houses, including the House of Tomorrow by George Fred Keck, noted for its polygonal form, innovative use of glass, and showcase of modern building materials.

James and Katherine Ford's *Modern House in America* (1940) and professional magazines, such as the *Architectural Record*, *Progressive Architecture*, and *Architectural Forum*, promoted modernistic architect-built homes and featured the work of a rising generation of modernists including Edward D. Stone, Paul Thiry, William Lescaze, George Howe, Alden B. Dow, Pietro Belluschi, and Gregory Ain. Under the editorship of John Entenza, the Case Study Series in *Arts and Architecture* from 1945 and 1966 included designs for 36 houses that reflected new approaches to domestic design and featured mass production techniques, innovative planning, and new materials. The series not only featured outstanding examples of upper-income homes in California by noted designers such as Charles and Ray Eames, Raphael Soriano, and Ralph Rapson, but also a proposed but never-executed 260-home subdivision in San Fernando Valley, designed by A. Quincy Jones, Jr., and Frederick E. Emmons and co-sponsored by merchant builder Joseph Eichler and the Producers' Council.

Architects and others promoted the development of small houses reflecting modernistic design principles to meet the postwar housing shortage through plan books and detailed instructions that pointed out the construction and space efficiencies offered by modern design. Such books included *The Small House of Tomorrow* (1945) by Los Angeles architect Paul R. Williams; *Tomorrow's House: How to Plan Your Post-War Home Now* (1945) by designers George Nelson and Henry N. Wright; and the Museum of Modern Art's *If You Want to Build a House* (1946) by Elizabeth B. Mock.

Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian houses of the 1930s were forward looking with their horizontal emphasis, flat and sloping roofs, large windows, corner windows, and combination of natural wood and masonry materials. Wright continued to explore the problem of the small home, designing in 1938 an interesting group of quadraplexes, the Suntop Houses, at Ardmore, Pennsylvania. He gave new form to the Usonian house in the 1950s, and published *The Natural House* (1954), where he elaborated on his principles of organic design to create livable dwellings that integrated home and site.

*Contemporary house (1951) with innovative "butterfly" roof and carport by architect-planner Eugen Sternberg for Arapahoe Acres, a postwar suburb in Englewood, Colorado. The contemporary house of the 1950s offered families informal floor plans, window walls that merged interior and exterior spaces, and patios and terraces that provided outdoor rooms. Private organizations, including the Revere Quality House Institute and the Southwest Research Institute, recognized the value of such homes for their efficient arrangement of space, the low cost of construction, and pleasing modernistic design. (Photo by Diane Wray, courtesy of Colorado Historical Society)*



Private organizations, such as the Revere Quality House Institute, Southwest Research Institute, and John D Pierce Foundation, promoted the use of modern principles of design by sponsoring award programs and offering seals of approval for successful innovative designs. These programs encouraged the collaboration of developers and modernist architects and recognized the broadening array of new and innovative home building materials and prefabricated methods of construction. John Hancock Callender's *Before You Buy a House* (1953), a joint publication of the Southwest Research Institute and the Architectural League of New York, was designed to educate prospective home buyers about the efficiency, livability, and low-cost afforded by the "contemporary residential style." The book showcased dozens of communities of small homes from all parts of the country, including Arapahoe Acres in Englewood, Colorado; and many of merchant builder Joseph Eichler's subdivisions in California. In the 1950s AIA sponsored a Homes for Better Living award program in conjunction with *House and Home*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, and the National Broadcasting Corporation. This program recognized successful merchant-built communities such as Hollin Hills in Alexandria, Virginia, which featured the innovative domestic architecture of Charles M. Goodman.

Appealing to an increasingly well-educated and prosperous audience, popular magazines heralded innovations in contemporary house design. The distinction between the Ranch and contemporary house became blurred as each type made use of transparent walls, privacy screens of design concrete blocks, innovations in open space planning, and the interplay of interior and exterior space. *House Beautiful* promoted Wright's designs as well as other upper-income homes in the modernistic styles. *Better Homes* promoted designs to meet the incomes of a wider range of families and



showcased successful owner-built designs alongside those of established architects, such as architect Chester Nagel's home in Lexington, Massachusetts. In the late 1940s *Better Homes* began to recognize outstanding examples, which were showcased as "Five Star Homes." Other magazines offered similar awards, including *Parents' Magazine*, which sponsored the "Best Home for Family Living" competition. Exploring the possibilities inherent in combining modern design and prefabrication methods, architect Carl Koch and John Bemis introduced the popular, mass-produced Tech-built house in the early 1950s. From 1952 to 1956, the U.S. Gypsum Corporation sponsored a well-publicized demonstration project at Barrington Woods, Illinois, which featured model homes by a number of leading designers. In addition, sources such as Koch's *At Home with Tomorrow* (1958) and Jones and Emmons's *Builder's Homes for Better Living* (1957) spurred a whole series of contemporary homes, whose facades by the end of the 1950s were dominated by overhanging eaves, broad gables, transparent walls, and aboveground balconies.

### ***Postwar Suburban Apartment Houses***

Modernism was embraced as the rental housing market expanded in the suburbs of large cities. Title 608 of the National Housing Act, which guaranteed builders 90 percent-mortgages on multiple family projects conforming to FHA standards, continued until the mid-1950s. Publication of Clarence Stein's *Toward New Towns* (1951) revived models for low- and mid-rise apartment villages, such as the Phipps Apartments at Sunnyside Gardens and the modernistic Baldwin Hills in Los Angeles. *Housing Design* (1954) by Columbia University professor Eugene Kluber set forth principles of unit-planning similar to those Kluber had developed for the FHA two decades earlier. FHA began to provide mortgage insurance for apartment buildings having elevators in the late 1940s. By the 1950s apartment buildings were equipped with improved mechanical systems, elevators, up-to-date appliances, central air conditioning, outdoor balconies, and newly available prefabricated components such as steel-framed windows and sliding glass doors.

Unlike their urban counterparts built on the site of cleared slums, high-rise suburban developments, which became increasingly popular in the late 1950s, were modeled after Le Corbusier's vision for the "radiant city" and luxury high-rise apartment houses in American cities, including Mies van der Rohe's Promontory Apartments (1949) and Lake Shore Drive Apartments (1951) in Chicago; Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Company Tower (1952) in Bartlesville, Oklahoma; and 100 Memorial Drive (1950) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, by the firm of Kennedy, Koch, DeMars, Rapson, and Brown. Their location along major expressways leading from the center city was motivated by convenience of location as well as advances in air conditioning, elevator design, mechanical systems, and structural design.

### ***Contemporary Landscape Design***

New directions in landscape design accompanied the development of the Ranch house and contemporary residence in California. Emphasis on the integration of indoor and outdoor living encouraged the arrangement of features such as the patios and terraces, sunshades and trellises, swimming pools, and privacy screens. Several of the Case Study houses in Arts and Architecture featured the landscape work of Garrett Eckbo. Architects such as Paul Williams designed houses "with the living side facing a private garden." Sunset magazine publicized western gardens by Doug Baylis, Thomas Church, and Eckbo, a number of which formed the grounds of Ranch houses designed by Cliff May, and published *Landscape for Western Living* (1956). In addition, Thomas Church's *Gardens Are for People: How to Plan for Outdoor Living* (1955), and Garrett Eckbo's *Landscape for Living* (1950) and *Art of Home Landscaping* (1956) brought to a national audience simple principles for organizing the domestic yard into dignified lawns, private patios, informal garden rooms, and activity areas with simple, easy-to-maintain plants and shrubbery.

The modern style sought to achieve an integration of interior and exterior space by creating lines of vision through transparent windows and doors to patios, intimate garden spaces, zones designed for special uses, and distant vistas. Hedges, freestanding shrubbery, and beds of low growing plants, arranged to form abstract geometrical patterns, reinforced the horizontal and vertical planes of the modern suburban house.

Developers of contemporary subdivisions often secured the services of landscape architects as site planners to lay out their subdivisions and advise on the layout and planting of common areas, street corners, streets, and sidewalks. Others urged homeowners to consult with landscape architects on the design of their suburban yards. The Southwest Research Institute encouraged such collaboration and recognized its achievement in suburban neighborhoods of contemporary homes, such as Hollin Hills in Alexandria, Virginia, where several landscape architects, including Dan Kiley, drew up planting plans for home owners and advised the developer on the planting of common area.

### **Mid-century modern**

*Mid-century modern* is a design term applied most frequently to residential (and some commercial) architecture, interior design and furniture. Related to the Space Age, the International style and Googie, mid-century modern translated the ideology of Modernism into a sleek, cool, yet accessible lifestyle. Mid-century modernism was more organic in form and less serious than the International Style. Scandinavian and Finnish designers and architects were very prolific at this time, with a style characterized by simplicity, democratic design and organic shapes. They had an influence on Mid-century modernism in the rest of the world, including the US. Mid-century modernism has become popular in recent times, and has influenced contemporary modern design profoundly. Standard designers of the mid-century modern era include: Eero Saarinen, Arne Jacobsen, Alvar Aalto, Rudolf Schindler, Richard Neutra, Charles and Ray Eames, George Nelson, Hans Wegner, and Craig Ellwood.

During the Mid Century Modern period - also called the PostWar period (roughly 1945-1960) - designers predicted the shape of things to come. Designers, artists and architects revolutionized design and we still benefit from their imaginations today. The Mid Century Modern movement spawned the popularly accepted image of the atomic age we now live in. When we look to the past we can find our future. Although some of the ideas were far fetched - others were not so: talking cars, electrified homes, automated cooking and computers are all a part of your daily life.

Lounge, Googie, Polynesia and classic Americana have stood the test of time and have all seen a Renaissance recently. T.V. commercials are filled with postwar images. NBC's Fraiser has an Eames chair in his living room and Target ads feature George Nelson - esque clocks. Vintage clothing has been incorporated into everyday wear.

### **This is what a Google Search revealed:**

Results 1 - 10 of about 20,400,000 for mid century modern in Florida.

Results 1 - 10 of about 3,070,000 for Mid-Century Modern