Hawaii Modernism Context Study

A. Styles
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The definition of “styles” vary among regions, academics, historians, architects, and just about everyone involved in the field of architecture and architecture history. Even the use of defined styles is often debated. Therefore it should be noted that these styles are not meant to be taken as the academic declaration of style, but will be used for the purposes of categorizing character defining features for evaluating a property’s integrity. A particular structure may not feature all the characteristics of one particular style and may feature characteristics of more than one style.

Mid-Century Modernism

While the modern era architects, designers, landscape architects, engineers and artists created varying styles, the overarching characteristics were the perceived rejection of the past and avoidance of historicism, the acknowledgement of science and the increased exposure and level of scientific discoveries, and an acceptance of Louis Sullivan’s creed “form follows function.” This was demonstrated through the various features noted below:

- “Honesty” of materials, no applied details
- Use of new technology, such as pre-stressed concrete, folded plate roofs, large concrete domes, mushroom cap columns, large cantilevers or other construction technology
- Often use of sun screens, commonly decorative concrete masonry units, decoration that has function
- Use of standard sized modules that were factory made such as the decorative concrete masonry unit (CMU) and pre-cast concrete units
- Often include canted windows or wing walls
- Often use of contrast in textures
International Modernism or Bauhaus Modernism

This style embraced machinery and industrialized mass-production techniques, relying on the use of iron and steel, reinforced concrete, and glass. The style was rooted in Europe and popularized by Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler. It was further refined in the United States when many of these pioneering architects immigrated from Europe, some fled from the impending Nazi invasions in the 1930s. The use of standardized units and cheapness of construction eventually led to a plethora of poor imitations during the 1960s and 1970s, which eventually led to Post-Modernism.

- Simple geometric forms in plan and elevation
- Use of corner windows
- Use of spandrel glass
- Windows with thin or no frames usually large and rectangular, displaying a regular pattern
- Ribbon windows often used to emphasize the horizontal
- Designed based on rationality and composition, utilizing composition to define spaces. For example the definition of entry by raising the height of the form, or by a cantilevered concrete awning.
- Usually flat roofs
- Buildings connected to nature through use of courtyards or large glazed areas to extend living area into the landscape.
- No decorative elements
Bachman Hall
Vladimir Ossipoff (1949), 2444 Dole St.

Liberty Bank Building
Vladimir Ossipoff (1952), 99 N. King St.
Miesian

This style is also called Corporate Modern in the San Francisco modern context statement. It is a later branch of International Modernism with its use of glass curtain walls forming a smooth or “slick skin” appearance. Miesian structures were mostly built in the 1950s and on; it was a structure that was poorly imitated and thus later fell out of favor. A true Miesian building will be extremely well detailed.

- “Less is More”
- “God is in the Details” – use of reveals at joints between materials
- Most commonly used in high rise construction
- Use of simple rectilinear and planar forms and clean lines
- Use of glass and curtain wall construction
- Open plans / Universal space
- Exposed structural supports
- *Pilotis* often form the base of the building
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Campbell Estate Building
Leo Wou (1967), Fort and Merchant St.

Diamond Head Apartments
Vladimir Ossipoff (1957), 2957 Kalakaua Ave.
**Neo-Formalism**

Neo-Formalism was developed in the mid-1950s as a reaction against what was viewed as a rigid version of the International Style. It was most often used for institutional and civic buildings, the use of various materials and references to Classicism are used to express monumentality.

- Some reference to Classicism, such as use of evenly spaced columns, repetitive patterns, arches and use of decoration
- Symmetry
- Monumental scale
- Formal landscape; often use of pools, fountains, sculpture within a central plaza
- Use of traditionally rich materials, such as travertine, marble, and granite or man-made materials that mimic their luxurious qualities

Hawai‘i State Capitol Building
Belt, Lemmon & Low, John Carl Warnecke (1969), 415 S. Beretania St.
National Cemetery of the Pacific at Punchbowl
Robert O. Thompson & Catherine Jones Richard Thompson (1948), 2177 Puowaina Dr.
Brutalism

Brutalism involved the use of “raw” concrete, hence the term brut (French for raw). This style developed in the later years of modernism from the 1960s. The term Brutalism has come to be associated with the English concept of brutal or inhumane. The style was developed as a response to the glass curtain wall, and it offered more climate control and sense of permanence (and privacy) to large buildings

- Heavily textured exposed aggregate concrete.
- Board forms easily visible
- Not used in intimate scale
- Deeply recessed windows
- Geometric forms created in an asymmetric composition
- Poured concrete often rounded forms utilized
- Often together with public plaza

Ward Plaza
Bank of Hawaii Building and Financial Plaza of the Pacific
Leo S. Wou (1968), 130 Merchant St.
Organic

The term Organic Architecture was coined by Frank Lloyd Wright as a style of architecture to be in harmony with nature. It is a style that “grows,” being designed from the inside out, getting inspiration not just from the view of nature, but by the shapes and land forms of nature and by the characteristics of the site. In Hawaii, not only are architects influenced by the internationally published Wright, but a number of local architects studied at University of Oklahoma under Bruce Goff, another well-known and highly unique architect working in the Organic style.

- Low horizontal proportions, flat- or low-pitched roofs, horizontal emphasis
- Influenced by forms and materials from nature
- Deep roof overhangs
- Use of large cantilevers
Liliha Library
Stephen Oyakawa (1966), 1515 Liliha St.
Neo-Expressionist or Expressionist Modern

The style included iconic architecture to symbolize or express an emotion as in Eero Saarinen’s TWA terminal. Expressionism was developed in Europe very early, in the 1910s along with its corresponding art form. In the 1950s, with the development of easily accessible technology, this style became more utilized in the United States. Neo-Expressionist is an iconic style that is often used for ecclesiastical architecture; it could be considered the precursor to Deconstructivism.

- Often characterized by unusual shaped roofs
- An underlying effort at achieving the new, original, and visionary.
- Use of natural themes such as caves or birds of flight
- Concept of architecture as a work of art
Mililani Memorial Park & Mortuary at Waipio, Makai Chapel
94-560 Kamehameha Hwy.
“Contractor” Modern or Hawaii Ranch House

This category refers to tract homes, often without an identified architect, where all houses in a neighborhood are built in almost identical style, plan, etc. In Hawaii, there is a definite style that developed in Hawaii’s tract neighborhoods, in much the same way as the plantation houses are now considered a style. These homes have Mid-Century modern features, sometimes Asian influenced details, but are inexpensively constructed. Most of these tract homes, generally constructed in the early 1960s, have distinctive features as noted below.

- Box- or rectangular-shaped single-story dwellings
- Single wall construction, use of redwood
- Picture windows
- Wood and glass jalousies
- Low-pitched gable roof
- Exposed rafters, ceiling
- Carport
Niu Valley Residence, (1968)

Niu Valley
Harold Hicks (1957)
Pop Architecture

Related to Pop Art, the style reflected the exuberance, enthusiasm, optimism, and faith in the future and technology prevalent in the 1950s. It borrowed heavily from popular culture and the Space Age, and is often described as a combination of the Flintstones and the Jetsons. Included in this style is Googie, Roadside and Tiki architecture. Historical and cultural events — the assassination of President Kennedy, the Vietnam War, social unrest — combined to temper the optimistic attitudes of the 1950s. Many “serious” architects also criticized the style as frivolous, crass, and kitschy. During the Hawaiian Renaissance of the 1970s and 80s, Tiki Architecture was criticized as a cartoon version of Hawaiian culture and fell out of favor.

- Bright colors often used
- A building design relating to a theme, such as the Space Age or Atomic Age
- Work responding to High Tech and Archigram-promoted images.

Occidental Life Insurance Building
Lemmon, Freeth & Haines (1951), 1163 s Beretania St.
AKA TIKI ARCHITECTURE

ROMANTIC VERSION OF HAWAII

La Mariana
50 Sand Island Access Rd.
taken from: http://critiki.com/pictures/?loc_id=74#/10
Regional Modernism

Regional style architecture was prevalent in Hawaii from the 1930s as the multi-cultural diversity and the mild climate of Hawaii became important considerations for the designer. Early architectural evidence of regional thought is seen in buildings such as the Alexander and Baldwin Building, the Honolulu Academy of Arts or the C. Brewer Building. Following World War II, much architecture was influenced by the national trend towards modernism and Hawaii adopted many of the features and characteristics of the “California Modern” or the “Tropical Modern.” Hawaii, more than many states seemed to embrace Modernism as a style for the general population. Nationally, most home owners preferred more traditional forms of architecture, particularly in residential buildings; however entire subdivisions constructed in the early 1960s were built in a modern style such as “Hawaii Ranch House.”

- Blurring of interior/exterior delineation/influence of Hawaii’s benign climate and views with use of large openings
- Sited to take advantage of views or climate situations such as tradewinds
- Influence of cultural diversity in Hawaii

First Methodist Church
Alfred Preis (1953), 1020 S. Beretania St.
United Chinese Society Building
Clifford Young (1954), 42 N. King St.

INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY
A-Frame

The A-Frame was made popular as a vacation home in the 1950s and 60s due to a rise in disposable income after WWII and its ease of standardization and inexpensive construction techniques.

- Low hanging eaves, roof and wall act as one
- A-shaped, steeply pitched roof
- Windows at gable ends

Utilitarian Vernacular

- Butler buildings, tilt-up warehouses, etc. may fall into the Utilitarian Vernacular.