



A Guide to the City of Aurora's Historic Architecture

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CITY OF AURORA

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architectural history | preservation planning | digital preservation media



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On the cover. Aurora's huge land mass stretches from the high plains to Denver, making it the Gateway to the Rockies. (*Aurora History Museum*)

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A CONTINUUM OF DEVELOPMENT

Buildings Tell Aurora's Story

On every street in Aurora stand fragments of a story—clues to the complex development of this city beyond those recorded in any text. This *Guide to the City of Aurora's Architecture* is intended as a kind of Rosetta Stone, allowing the observer to decode the built environment, particularly through the trinity of architectural form, type, and style, and to “read” buildings like a book. The result is a more complete representation of Aurora's story than documentary evidence alone can provide, a compelling argument for preserving the city's architectural treasures, even those of the recent past.

Aurora's architecture directly reflects the community's development patterns. A small concentration of Queen Anne and Edwardian homes in northwest Aurora represent the City's origins as the Town of Fletcher. From the early 1900s through the 1920s, there was a flurry of subdivision platting surrounding these early homes. However, lacking a reliable water supply and sufficient demand for new housing, only a few homes, some Classic Cottages and more Bungalows, were constructed. East Colfax Avenue, with its small concentration of one- and two-story brick commercial buildings, was Aurora's main street, serving both shoppers from the town and farmers and ranchers from the agricultural areas east of Aurora's population center. Now, with the exception of the landmarked resources at the DeLaney Farm-Gully Homestead site on Chambers Road, little physical evidence of the city's early agricultural history remains.

Most of Aurora's early twentieth-century growth was military-related. In 1918 the United States Army established Army Hospital No. 21, later known as Fitzsimons Army Hospital, to treat World War I soldiers exposed to toxic gases and trench warfare. This facility—with its Mission Revival style officers' quarters, guardhouses, and barracks—became not only the key economic generator for the community but also a visual landmark on East Colfax Avenue just east of Peoria Street. In response to both the presence of the Fitzsimons medical complex and a general rise in automobile tourism, businesses—especially early service stations, small motor courts, trailer parks, campgrounds, and restaurants—spread eastward on Colfax Avenue. Another military institution, Lowry Field, opened in 1938 on Aurora's boundary with the City of Denver, between 11th and 6th avenues, as an Army Air Corps technical school; the portion of Lowry located within Aurora features mostly utilitarian, temporary military buildings. In 1942 Lowry II, ultimately renamed Buckley Air Force Base and home to distinctive radar “golf balls,” was constructed to train fighter pilots. These two air bases were responsible for encouraging population growth to the south and the east respectively.

As elsewhere in the United States, little residential construction took place in Aurora during either the Great Depression or World War II. During this period the Minimal Traditional house—inexpensive, unornamented, and able to be constructed despite the restrictions of material rationing—was

predominant. Aurora also features a number of long, single-story duplex, triplex, and even quadplex apartment buildings, with stucco siding and steel frame windows; such multi-family housing was constructed in the 1930s and 1940s and likely provided short-term lodging for the families of Fitzsimons patients and civilian workers at all three military complexes.

Aurora is a nearly textbook example of Post-World War II residential and commercial development. Dramatic population increases, highway construction, the continuing influence of established military facilities, and numerous other social and economic factors transformed the built environment, initiating Aurora's shift from a small town into a modern, growing city. Hoffman Heights, Aurora's most researched postwar subdivision, was originally located outside the city limits but later was annexed. It was one of many similar developments full of ubiquitous Ranch homes built on mostly curvilinear streets to accommodate both nuclear family living and the automobile; other Ranches appeared as infill in the city's older neighborhoods. These new subdivisions ushered in new types of commercial architecture, and strip malls, located conveniently within new instant neighborhoods, continued the retail shift away from East Colfax Avenue. Yet, this roadway remained a mainstay of leisure travel since U.S. Route 40 was a major east-west corridor until Interstate 70 through Aurora opened in the 1960s. To attract motorists, owners of restaurants, gas stations, and small motels adopted the non-traditional, exaggerated roof forms and large window expanses of the flamboyant Googie style, dramatic architecture in which the entire building is noticeable, attractive, and serves as an advertisement to attract passing auto traffic; Aurora has not only several excellent examples of Googie-style buildings but also numerous historic signs from this same period.

While the Ranch home is Aurora's most prevalent recent-past residential form, examples of Bi-levels, or "Raised Ranches," and Split Levels also appear in the city's 1950s and 1960s subdivisions. Continuing the multi-family housing trend established in earlier decades, Aurora is home to a number of contemporary duplexes and quadplex housing units that mirror the design trends found in single-family homes. There also are a concentration of distinctive two- or three-story apartment buildings, featuring a large centered window on the façade and simple projections above the main roofline, in the northwest quadrant of the city.

The seemingly endless supply of open land to the south and east of Aurora and the construction of Interstate 225—completed in 1976 to link north-south Interstate 25 to east-west Interstate 70—fueled and continue to encourage the city's physical expansion. Buckingham Square Mall, opened in 1971 as part of a larger complex that also included Aurora's first high-rise International style office buildings, officially shifted the city's commercial center away from East Colfax Avenue. Modern consumers demanded up-to-date, climate controlled, one-stop shopping with plenty of parking for their cars, and the shopping mall type delivered. Subsequent commercial developments, like the Aurora Mall that opened in 1975, followed this same pattern, but Aurora became much too large to have a single retail hub. Large strip malls and Big Box stores, convenient to where shoppers live and work, appear along all of the city's major thoroughfares. Citizens demanded the same convenience and high levels of service from their government, and the City of Aurora constructed new recreational centers, fire stations, libraries, and other municipal facilities within or nearby new residential subdivisions; these buildings feature modern architectural details to convey the message that the

functions performed inside and the city as a whole were current and progressive.

As Aurora expanded ever further away from its origins in what is now the northwest quadrant of the city, architectural character continued to change. The most noticeable trend in this part of Aurora, as elsewhere across the United States during the 1970s and 1980s, was the larger scale and size of both commercial and residential buildings. Cheaper materials, greater use of prefabrication, improved transportation, and personal preferences all contributed to this pattern. In the southern part of the city, especially in the areas adjacent to Interstate 225, different building types emerged. Most of Aurora's hotels—the multi-story evolution of motor courts and early motels, still oriented to the automobile but offering valet or covered parking among other upscale amenities—and office parks—complexes with not only modern, often glass, tall office buildings but also suburban landscaping, large parking lots or parking garages, and open spaces for workers—are located here. The most well-researched and architecturally distinctive 1970s residential subdivision in south Aurora is Mission Viejo. This master-planned community, modeled on a similar development of the same name in California, features Spanish-influenced homes, distinctive bell-shaped street lighting, and greenbelts, and was constructed with its own recreation center and library. In this and other subdivisions there are numerous Split Level homes, but other housing forms, especially the Garage Dominant Block, where shelter for automobiles rather than the actual living space for the home's inhabitants was most visible on the façade, also became popular. One of Aurora's most prevalent building forms of this period is the Neo-Mansard; a revival of the original French roof form was applied to single-family homes, apartment buildings,

restaurants, fire stations, and other new buildings in the late 1960s through the 1980s. The townhouse, a hybrid of the single-family house and apartment building combining multi-story living space with private ownership, is the modern day equivalent of a terrace house or row house, which date to 16th century Europe.

Without an understanding of history, architectural trends, and the interplay between these two influences, modern-day Aurora may seem somewhat disjointed and sprawling. However, this ever-growing community is instead evidence of a continuum of development. The built environment in Aurora today is a testimony to the city's over 100 years of history.

GUIDE PURPOSE

The purpose of this architectural guide is not to provide an exhaustive listing and analysis of all of the buildings found in Aurora. Instead it provides basic background information about the most important architectural trends from the city's past that are still visible today, offering photographic examples to better illustrate the text. The various entries are based upon a selective reconnaissance survey of the vast 154 square miles within the current city limits, focusing on the areas with the highest concentration of resources built prior to 1986.

These examples provide an introduction to the wide variety of styles and building types that comprise Aurora's diverse built environment. This guide is an educational tool to increase overall understanding of and appreciation for Aurora's buildings. Much of the detail about the various styles and types comes from the Colorado Historical Society Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation's *A Field Guide to Colorado's Historic Architecture and Engineering* (July 2008). All date ranges are approximate and do not necessarily conform to

those generally established in national chronologies, but rather represent an estimate of when such buildings appeared in Aurora.

FORM VS. TYPE VS. STYLE

The entries in this guide are grouped into three broad classifications: forms, types, and styles. Architectural historians use all three terms to describe buildings. Form is the overall

shape of the building, including its footprint and such integral features as the roofline. Type relates to a building's original use. Examples of prevalent types in Aurora include gas stations, motor courts, and office parks. Style is the exterior embellishment that decorates the building; many styles can be applied to a form, for instance Craftsman Bungalows or Colonial Revival Ranches. Within each classification, the individual descriptions are arranged roughly chronologically.

SECTION I:

Architectural Forms





SHOTGUN (1890s–1910s)

This small house form is common to the southern United States but relatively rare in Aurora. The term "Shotgun" allegedly originated from the "straight shot" between the front and back doors in this house form. The simple long and narrow rectangular shape is suited to narrow lots and is easily self-built. Houses constructed in the Shotgun form usually have front-gable roofs.

HIPPED-ROOF BOX (1890s–1920s)

This is a simple, single-story box form with a hipped roof. The Hipped-Roof Box is perhaps the most ubiquitous working-class house in the intermountain West. Most have only minimally overhanging eaves and very little ornamentation. There are relatively few examples of this housing form in Aurora; the majority of the houses appear to be located north of Montview Boulevard close to the border with the City of Denver.



FOURSQUARE (1900s–1920s)

The foursquare is a two-story, symmetrical form that was built after 1900 and is ubiquitous throughout Colorado, especially in Denver, where it is sometimes called a "Denver Square." Aurora has only one remaining Foursquare, the landmarked William Smith House. Roofs are usually hipped and have broad, over-hanging eaves. High styles include columns with ornamental freezes (sometimes with dentils).



CLASSIC COTTAGE (1900s–1920s)

This is a one- or one-and-a-half-story, square plan home. It is similar to the Foursquare, but smaller in size and scale. Most Classic Cottages have hipped roofs with flared eaves and a front dormer. Many porches are integrated into the main roof line. Windows are one-over-one. Applied ornamentation can give this form a Classic Revival or Craftsman style. In Aurora, most of these homes are located south of Colfax Avenue and west of Havana Street.





BUNGALOW (1910s–1930s)

This is a one or one-and-one-half story Arts and Crafts home. Bungalows feature dominant side or front gabled roofs with overhanging eaves. Broad front porches usually have battered piers. Other common features include clipped gables, shed dormers, and exposed rafter ends. In Aurora, the highest concentration of Bungalows remain south of Colfax Avenue and between roughly Boston and Havana streets. Different architectural styles can be applied to this basic form, but most high-style Aurora Bungalows appear to be Craftsman (like the landmarked Robidoux House).



MINIMAL TRADITIONAL (1930s–LATE 1940s)

These economical, basic homes were particularly popular prior to, during, and immediately after World War II. They mark a transition between earlier bungalows or cottage forms and the earliest Ranch homes. The small buildings have simple roofs with closed eaves and feature few decorative details, although most have non-operative shutters. Minimal Traditional houses were built with a wide range of exterior siding options, including asbestos shingles, brick, wood, stucco, or metal. Most of these homes appear in Northwest Aurora.





CAPE COD (LATE 1940s–1950s; REVIVAL IN 1960s–1970s)

This inexpensively constructed, adaptable small house form, originally introduced to the United States in the 1700s, experienced a revival during the Great Depression and remained popular throughout the 1950s. This domestic form, with a steeply pitched side gable roof, evolved to meet modern living requirements, featuring enlarged windows, off-center front entries and chimneys, front roof dormers, side wings, and attached garages. Most Cape Cod homes are one-and-one-half story and feature wood, shingle, brick, or stone siding. In Aurora there are a number of simple, 1950s Cape Cod homes on 7th Avenue in the Burns Subdivision and Revival Cape Cods from the 1960s and 1970s in selected subdivisions.

DUPLEXES/ TRIPLEXES (1930s–EARLY 1960s)

Aurora has a vast number and wide variety of multi-family housing forms. Most of these residential buildings are duplexes and triplexes, constructed as either single buildings or in groups of two or three units. The small complexes either appear in two or three rows on the lot or are sited in a “U” or “L” shape around a small shared yard. These rectangular, single-story buildings are found throughout the northwestern and north-central parts of the city. Stylistically, they mirror other buildings with similar dates of construction. For example, the housing units erected in the 1930s and early 1940s tend to feature steel corner windows and glass block ornamentation, with many of these earlier buildings faced in stucco reminiscent of the Mission Revival style. Duplexes and triplexes from the 1950s and 1960s resemble Ranch type single-family homes; many are blonde brick with two-tone brick ornamentation around the lower portion of the building, have low pitched gable roofs with overhanging eaves, and some even display contemporary elements like clerestory windows or Colonial Revival details like decorative shutters and modestly pedimented entries.





RANCH (1950s–1960s)

In Aurora, as elsewhere around the country, the Ranch form is the most common postwar housing choice. The Ranch is inexpensive to build and popular with new homeowners who considered owning one of these houses part of a friendly, simple, and informal lifestyle. The work of Frank Lloyd Wright and the Spanish haciendas of Colonial California represent two of the many influences on Ranch home design. Builders sought inspiration in not only Wright's Prairie homes—with low, horizontal profiles and open plan interiors featuring central fireplaces—but also his economical Usonian designs, with flat roofs, closed facades, and on-slab construction. Spanish influences inspired both the “U” or “L” shaped plans and the concept of indoor-outdoor living many postwar Ranch houses exhibit. California architect Cliff May was the earliest and best known Ranch designer and the general public became familiar with his use of natural materials, low roof lines, exposed beams, prominent fireplaces, and extensive amounts of glass in the pages of *Sunset Magazine*.

Ranch homes are one story, with low-pitched or flat roofs with wide overhanging eaves. Many feature picture windows, low chimneys, and minimal use of decorative wrought iron. Ranch houses have abbreviated front porches with more emphasis on informal patio living in the rear. Many early Ranches were built without a garage, but over time carports and especially attached one- and two-car garages became standard. Also, over time, the low, horizontal façade became increasingly more elongated and total square footage increased. The basic Ranch form is a perfect canvas for a variety of stylistic details such as scalloped gingerbread trim, weeping mortar, or Colonial Revival elements like pedimented entries, pilasters, and decorative shutters.

Ranches are ubiquitous in Aurora, appearing as infill housing in earlier platted subdivisions in the northwest quadrant and dominating in the city's 1950s and 1960s subdivisions, starting with Hoffman Heights and rapidly spreading to the numerous building-boom housing developments platted on vacant parcels to the east and south.

SPLIT LEVEL (LATE 1950s–1980s)

The Split Level is a multi-story alternative to the ubiquitous Ranch home and many families, as their children grew into teenagers, transitioned to this house form. On the exterior, these houses feature low pitched roofs, overhanging eaves, and a horizontal orientation. The three or more staggered floor levels on the interior create three types of space: a noisy living and service area on the partially below grade level (including a family room and often a garage); the mid-level quiet living area (containing the living room, dining room and kitchen); and the upper level or levels with the bedrooms. Most Split Levels have wallboard siding with brick from mid-level to the foundation. Nearly all Split Levels include attached, multi-car garages.





“AURORA MODERN” SMALL APARTMENT BUILDING (LATE 1950s–1960s)

These rectangular, three-story, flat roofed, brick buildings are ubiquitous in the northwest quadrant of Aurora; most are located either north of East Colfax Avenue, between Akron and Peoria streets, or south of East Colfax, between Havana and Moline streets. Anecdotal evidence suggests, at the time of construction, these apartment buildings were particularly popular with pilots and stewardesses from nearby Stapleton International Airport. The main design element, a large double-height window, is centered on the building façade above the primary entrance and extends approximately one-half story above the main roofline. An open staircase, usually with metal railings and offering residents access to apartments on the two upper stories, is visible through the large front window. Some main entries are flush while others are located within a small, flat-roofed vestibule. The buildings south of Colfax Avenue are more likely to have flat roof projections coming off both sides of the central window tower.

BI-LEVEL (1960s–EARLY 1980s)

Also known as a Raised Ranch, this two-story home features a raised or garden level basement with larger, above-grade windows. The lower level usually contains a family room, a bedroom, bathroom, and utility room with the living room, kitchen, bathroom, and additional bedrooms located on the upper level. The entry is at-grade, either centered on the facade or next to an attached garage. The lower portion of the exterior often is faced in brick with the upper level generally sided in wood, vinyl, or aluminum siding.





NEO-MANSARD (LATE 1960s–1980s)

This housing form, a shift back toward traditional architectural details, is very popular in Aurora. It is named for its characteristic roof form. Builders appreciated the dramatic decorative effect of the mansard roof that was also inexpensive to construct. Most Neo-Mansard properties have window openings cut through the lower slope of the mansard roof, forming a recessed window. Later examples of this type, both domestic and commercial, lack the true double slope of the mansard roof and instead look like large pent roofs projecting below a flat roof.



GARAGE DOMINANT BLOCK (1970s–1990s)

These large, square or irregularly shaped homes represent an evolution of the Split Level form, usually with a higher overall square footage. They have a blocky appearance. Most are two-story, with cross-gable roofs. The siding tends to be painted wood or fiberboard with either brick or stone decorative zones flanking the garage, the base of the home, or the front door. The character-defining feature of this form is, as the name applies, the large multi-car garage. On Garage Dominant Block homes the rear of the house is the social zone; most homeowners pull into the garage, operated with a remote control, and enter their home without ever interacting with neighbors.



TOWNHOUSES (1970s–2000s)

The Townhouse form is a rectangular, two- or three-story residential building. Similar to apartments, townhouses are built in complexes, with the individual units arranged in rows or perhaps on small cul-de-sacs. Detached garages, usually one per unit, sometimes resemble multi-car carports. Unlike apartments, each townhouse unit has its own private entrance. The taller, narrower shape of this form is evidence of rising land prices from the 1970s onward. Townhouses have more square footage than apartments, with living space divided among multiple levels, but are much smaller than single-family homes. Other common features include balconies; skylights; and operable, usually gas, fireplaces with minimal stovepipes rather than brick or stone chimneys. A total of nine townhouse-exclusive subdivisions were platted in Aurora between 1969 and 1984, although some mostly single-family home subdivisions also have small enclaves of townhomes within their boundaries.



SECTION II:

Architectural Types





EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY COMMERCIAL (1900s–1940s)

These retail buildings usually have one to five stories and flat roofs. Most are constructed of brick and, beyond decorative brickwork along cornices or parapets, feature very little ornamentation. Entrances can be either flush or recessed and many feature large display windows and transoms infilled with translucent prismatic glass. The pictured example of this type, along Colfax Avenue, has been altered over time; the transoms are covered with boards and many of the brick facades are painted.

OBLONG BOX GAS STATION (1930s–1970s)

This commercial building type marks both the shift from gas stations to service stations and the increasing influence of modern architectural styles on industrial design. Walter Teague produced a series of Oblong Box gas station designs for Texaco that inspired similar corporate and private gas stations throughout the country. The Oblong Box features all the functions of the station, except the actual pumping of gas, within a simple rectangular plan building. The office/sales area is located prominently in the corner, usually facing the adjacent road intersection. The service bays with roll-down, glazed doors are attached to the office portion of the Oblong Box. These stations feature rectangular plans, usually flat roofs, minimal landscaping, and detached lighting and signage. In Aurora, these gas stations appear mostly along busy thoroughfares and in the commercial areas serving 1950s and 1960s subdivisions. Many of the existing stations have removed their gas tanks but are still devoted to auto-related businesses such as car repair or used car sales.





SIGNS (1940s–1970s)

With the shift to automobile usage, business signage needed to be larger and more eye-catching. Most signs are painted metal and feature shapes such as arrows pointing to the business or iconic outlines linked to the name or type of goods sold. These signs tend to employ multiple bulbs or tubes filled with neon (or other gas) to be more visible at night. Some signs became so well associated with the business in question they also appeared in print or television advertisements. Most of the historic signage in Aurora is located along East Colfax Avenue and Havana Street.





STRIP MALL (1950s–1980s)

Strip Malls are single story retail complexes that are usually rectangular or "L" shaped. They feature large display windows, parking lots in front of the stores, and signage visible from nearby streets. Many strip malls are located near or were built in conjunction with new residential subdivisions. In such cases, the architectural details and building materials often reflect the nearby housing as with the stucco and tile roofed Mission Viejo Plaza on South Chambers Road. Groceries often are the anchor stores for larger strip malls.





SHOPPING MALL (1960s–1980s)

Shopping Malls are large retail complexes with multiple anchors, usually department stores, connected by enclosed corridors with smaller commercial enterprises. Massive parking lots surround the entire complex, making the mall appear as an “island” in the center of the parking lot. These climate-controlled environments were constructed not only for shopping but also as community destinations. Aurora’s only remaining shopping mall is the former Aurora Mall, now known as Town Center at Aurora. *(photo courtesy Aurora History Museum)*

BIG BOX RETAIL (LATE 1960s–2000s)

Big Box retail buildings are rectangular, single-story establishments with no windows. As the name implies, the building's sheer size is a key feature of such stores. These shopping venues range in size from at least 50,000 square feet to over four times that square footage. The buildings have standardized facades, relying upon highly visible signs with corporate logos to attract shoppers. Also known as “super stores,” the big box business model relies upon volume sales. To accommodate large numbers of shoppers, massive parking lots with branded cart corrals appear in front of the stores. Most Big Box stores include little or no landscaping. The example below is a big box retail store in the Googie style, a former Safeway.

Currently a Big Box complex sits on the former site of the Buckingham Square Mall, illustrating the rapid evolution of shopping facilities in Aurora. The mall opened in 1971 and, at the time, was expected to complete the shift of Aurora's commercial focus away from East Colfax Avenue. While the mall enjoyed immediate popularity, by the 2000s all of the anchor stores and many of the smaller shops had left. The Mall was demolished in 2007.





OFFICE PARKS (1970s–2000s)

These complexes feature multiple buildings with office space for various tenants. Over time, the office buildings have become increasingly larger and taller. Many appear Miesian in style, with mirrored or tinted glass window walls. In addition to the buildings themselves, office parks also feature internal roadways, landscaping, and distinctive entry signage. Many office parks resemble college campuses, with outdoor gathering spaces, grassy lawns, and public art or fountains included at the most exclusive developments. Large parking lots or multi-story parking garages usually appear adjacent to the office buildings, with marked spaces reserved for both visitors and separate office tenants. Most office parks are situated near transportation hubs or along major freeways. Aurora's first high rise office buildings, Camelot I and II, were constructed in 1971 on South Havana Street. Many later office parks in Aurora appear at major intersections or flank Interstate 225 in the southern part of the city.



TRAVEL AND LODGING: MOTOR COURT (1920s–1960s)

These specialized resources served America's travelers during the pre-interstate age. The earliest examples developed in the 1920s as modest cottages with adjacent parking. By the 1950s most motor lodges, also known as motor courts or auto courts, were built in an "L" or "U" shape, with a series of attached lodging rooms and parking spaces in front of each room. These facilities usually feature a corner office for the on-site manager and prominent, often neon, signage that is visible from the road. As tourism increased, some motor courts, especially those constructed along new interstate highways, added swimming pools and restaurants in order to compete with motels. Historically, Aurora's motor courts were located along Colfax Avenue; the few remaining motor courts along this strip are extremely threatened.





MOBILE HOME PARK OR TRAILER COURT (1920s–1980s)

In Aurora this housing type emerged in the 1920s as an alternative to motor courts or small campgrounds that lodged early automobile tourists. Over time, especially during World War II and the immediate postwar housing shortages, this property type became increasingly and still is popular as a form of affordable housing. Mobile homes retain axles, wheels, and tow hitches despite the fact they are rarely moved once placed on their concrete pads. Early mobile homes were narrow and covered in aluminum siding. Starting in the 1960s, mobile homes became both longer and wider, and most were covered in metal or vinyl. Historically, mobile homes have been located within communities known as trailer parks, ranging in size from only a few mobile homes to hundreds. These developments resemble residential subdivisions, featuring sites in cul-de-sacs or similar suburban arrangements. Many mobile home parks provide amenities such as auto parking, playgrounds, swimming pools, utility connections, and laundry facilities. In Aurora, most existing mobile home parks are located rather far to the east, mostly on or near East Colfax Avenue.

HOTELS (1960s–1980s)

This form of lodging, evolved from motor courts and motels, has multiple stories and is usually located immediately adjacent to busy freeways. Both the height of the building and large, lighted signage on the upper stories make these facilities visible from passing automobiles. Customers enter under a large reception canopy that extends from the hotel's main entrance, surrendering their cars to a valet for parking at a rear lot or attached garage. Hotels offer more upscale amenities than motels—spas, indoor pools, a gym, business center, and a bar or restaurant—and market themselves to business travelers. In Aurora, many hotels are located near the office parks along Parker Road or adjacent to Interstate 225.





GOVERNMENT-MUNICIPAL FACILITIES (1950s–1980s)

As Aurora's population grew the City required more services for its citizens and buildings to house those operations. The earliest municipal buildings still extant, like the former Aurora History Museum and the Hornbein Library, are located in Original Aurora. Even though they are constructed in the oldest portion of town, the buildings served an increasing postwar population as previously platted subdivisions filled with new homes. These former municipal facilities exhibit many characteristics of the Modern Movements time period/ style category: flat roofs, clean lines, horizontal orientation, and recessed entries.

Over time, city facilities, like Aurora's municipal boundaries, were located farther and farther to the south. In 1964 the City built a new library, designed by the architectural firm Eugene D. Sternberg and Associates, at 1298 Peoria Street, to support the nearby subdivision of Hoffman Heights. Other libraries added over time include Mission Viejo (1975) and the Aurora Central Library (1982). New suburban subdivisions often included land for parks, offering home owners nearby play grounds, sports fields, and swimming pools. The city supplemented these amenities with not only community centers, like the Bicentennial Art Center (an example of the Moderne style) and Meadowood Recreation Center, but also numerous municipal swimming pools throughout the city. Fire and Police stations also sprang up in new suburban neighborhoods, offering speedier response times due to their proximity to large residential and commercial developments. Built into the late 1960s through 1980s, Aurora fire stations exhibit flat roofs, brick or stone siding, and large, roll-up garage doors for storage of the engines and other fire-fighting equipment.

Whether built early or in a later period, the overall goal of new city buildings is to portray the government functions inside as being as progressive, modern, and up-to-date as the exterior architectural style. This trend continues to the present day, with many communities building new facilities every thirty to fifty years. *(photos courtesy Aurora History Museum)*

RELIGIOUS

"MODERN" CHURCHES (1950s–1970s)

Churches constructed from the postwar period and into the 1970s are simpler with less extravagant decoration and traditional religious imagery than earlier houses of worship. Borrowing from Modern (and even Postmodern) architecture, these newer religious buildings exhibit dramatic lines and roof forms that soar heavenward. Many of these churches focus on the how the congregation planned to use the space, emphasizing open plan spaces similar to those found in nearby suburban homes and offering multi-use flexibility. Aurora has a number of distinctive Modern churches featuring artistic use of stained glass, rather than more traditional windows representing scriptural scenes; most of these religious buildings are brick with stone or metal details. Many feature recessed, asymmetrical primary entries.



SECTION III:

Architectural Styles





QUEEN ANNE (1880s–1900s)

The Queen Anne is the epitome of all Victorian-era styles. Queen Anne houses mix elements with many stylistic precedents-- turned porch supports, spindlework railings, vergeboards, and gable stickwork. In general, these homes express a sense of verticality and massiveness. They are asymmetrical and usually have a complex gable-on-hip roof. Generally each story has a different wall treatment. Decorative details highlight the porches and gables. The larger of the original Town of Fletcher homes in northwest Aurora are Queen Anne style.

EDWARDIAN (1880s–1910s)

The Edwardian is the last of the Victorian-era styles. It is a simplified version of the Queen Anne, with more standard plans and simplified, more accurate classical decorative elements. Sometimes this style is referred to as the Princess Anne. The smaller original Town of Fletcher homes in northwest Aurora are Edwardian style.





MISSION REVIVAL (1900s–1930s)

The Mission Revival style is based on the original Spanish missions built in California but was made popular by the California Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. This style generally traveled west to east, with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway favoring Mission Revival designs for their depots and facilities. Curvilinear gables are the most common feature of Mission Revival buildings. They also tend to have stucco finish and tiled roofs. The majority of the remaining historic resources from the Fitzsimons Army Hospital, now the Anschutz Medical Campus, are examples of Mission Revival architecture.



CRAFTSMAN (MID 1900s–1930s)

The Craftsman style highlights hand-crafted construction and a renewed connection with nature. Thus, these houses have exposed rafter and perlin ends to express craftsmanship. And they have broad, low porches to provide a transitional space between the indoors and outdoors. Other common elements of Craftsman buildings include large chimneys, exposed knee brackets, battered porch piers, overhanging eaves, and dormers. In Aurora, Craftsman-style ornamentation is most often applied to the bungalow form. Most of these houses are located in northwest Aurora.



PUEBLO REVIVAL (MID 1900s–1940s)

Pueblo Revival buildings imitated the Native American pueblos of the Southwest. They feature flat roofs with roof rafters, called vigas, protruding through the exterior walls. The battered walls are covered in stucco to mimic the appearance of adobe Indian pueblos. With the exception of the former gas station at the corner of Colfax Avenue and Clinton Street, there are few remaining examples of Pueblo Revival style architecture in Aurora.



SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL (1920s–1930s)

Similar to Mission Revival style, elaborate carving and complex, sculptured surfaces distinguish Spanish Colonial Revival buildings. Stucco is the most common exterior finish. Other key features include curvilinear gables, arched entrances and porches, wrought-iron detailing, and heavy tiles roofs. This style is not prevalent in Aurora; local landmark the Italian Villa is the community's best example of a Spanish Colonial Revival home.



ART DECO (MID 1920s—MID 1940s)

Among the most flamboyant modern styles, Art Deco emphasizes the vertical to evoke a powerful, bright future. The style is popular for apartments, schools, and commercial buildings. Art Deco buildings are angular, with linear composition and stepped or set-back façades. This style also uses chevrons, zigzags, and stylized floral or geometric decorative motifs.





MODERNE (1930s–1940s)

Moderne style buildings, also known as Art Moderne and Streamline Moderne, reflect early- and mid-twentieth-century excitement about technological advancements, high-speed transportation, and innovative, new construction techniques. In fact, many of the homes and buildings of this style look like passenger trains or ocean liners, featuring metal details at the corners (“speed lines”) or round port-hole windows. Moderne buildings feature smooth, rounded wall surfaces often covered in stucco. They have flat roofs, steel corner windows, and use glass-block ornament. *(photo courtesy Aurora History Museum)*



INTERNATIONAL (LATE 1930s–1960s; REVIVAL 1970s–1980s)

This austere architectural style is used for a wide variety of buildings, including office towers, hospitals, college academic buildings, and new developments erected as part of urban renewal projects across the country. The International style rejected historic references and ornament, instead displaying the physical structure of the building and emphasizing its functionality with smooth surfaces. International buildings usually feature a prominent grid and bands of windows. With a rectangular footprint, they have flat roofs with no cornices. Earlier examples of the style featured a wider variety of materials, often incorporate panels of precast concrete or vinyl, but as time passed, architects favored steel and large expanses of glass forming expansive window walls. This later type is sometimes referred to as Miesian style, indicating a similarity with the work of Mies van der Rohe.



USONIAN (1940s–1960s)

Usonian is a style Frank Lloyd Wright developed based upon his personal design philosophy and intended to meet the need for affordable middle-class housing. Usonian homes are smaller than Wright's earlier Prairie-style commissions and display less ornamentation. They also are constructed without either basements or attics. Most Usonian buildings have private entries, clerestory windows on the façade, and a more open rear, featuring large picture windows intended to integrate the interior and exterior. Usonian-style buildings are horizontally oriented with flat roofs with broad overhanging eaves.





GOOGIE (MID 1940s–1960s)

Googie style buildings are designed for the automotive age, with the whole edifice intended to be advertising. Buildings of this style feature distinctive roof shapes, large adjacent parking lots, and eye-catching signs, often of neon. The Googie style is a popular choice for coffee shops and restaurants, grocery stores, and automobile showrooms. The large front display windows offer passing drivers a glimpse of the activities and goods inside and, at night, allows light from the well-lit interior to shine out toward the roadway to attract customers. This style is popular in Aurora, especially along Colfax Avenue.

NEO-EXPRESSIONISM (LATE 1950S–1980s)

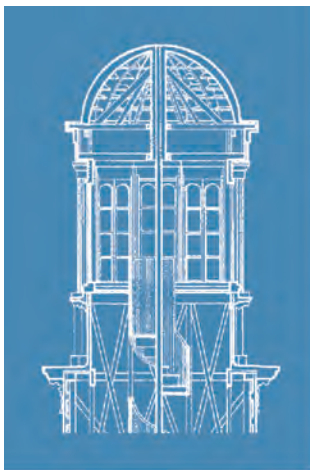
Neo-Expressionism was a reaction against the rectilinear horizontality of the International style and also reflected cultural changes that occurred in the late 1950s and 1960s. This extremely sculptural architecture often featured unusual massing and preferred rounded, organic forms. The buildings were often constructed of brick, concrete, stucco, or glass and relied upon their unusual shape, rather than applied ornament, for visual variety.



NEW FORMALISM (LATE 1960s–1980s)

This Postmodernism style is a combination of the new materials and technologies from International style and the decorative elements of the historic Neo-classical styles. Designed to appear monumental, New Formalism buildings often use expensive materials such as travertine, marble, or granite. Given both their appearance and the cost of construction, New Formalism buildings usually have high profile cultural, institutional, and civic uses. Common design elements include pillars, arches, colonnades, and arcades.





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