

RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE STYLES IN SCOTTSDALE FROM 1930-1973

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REVIVAL STYLES

Religious buildings, like every other building type, can be based upon past traditional architectural styles with the builder, designer or architect reviving the characteristics and elements of a specific past architectural style. Past religious architectural styles span thousands of years and include Roman, Greek, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Colonial, Spanish Colonial, Mission, Art Deco, Art Nouveau and many others. Revival styles were most popular in the early decades of the 20th century but faded by mid-century as modern architecture became dominant. Since Scottsdale only became incorporated in 1951 and experienced major growth in the decades following incorporation, revival style religious buildings are scarce in Scottsdale but were much in evidence in older Arizona cities.

International Example: Sagrada Familia by Antonio Gaudi, Barcelona, Spain

Arizona Examples: Brophy Chapel by John R. Kirby, Phoenix; San Xavier del Bac by Ignacio Gaona, Tucson area, St Philip's in the Hills by Josias Joesler, Tucson; Arizona Temple of LDS by Don Carlos Young, Jr., Mesa; Grace Lutheran Church, Phoenix

Local Example: OLP Mission Church (Old Adobe Mission) by Robert T. Evans

TRADITIONAL VERNACULAR CHURCH STYLE

Vernacular projects are constructed by builders of commonly available materials without any architect being involved. Traditional and widespread or common methods of building are used. Some religious buildings are classified as Vernacular buildings due to a general lack of any features associated with architectural style categories. A campus of religious buildings may include vernacular classroom buildings that could just as well have been a residential or retail use rather than representing a 'sacred' style building. The place of worship or sanctuary may also be called vernacular if a traditional rectangular form with a gable roof is used without any custom stained glass or other elements characteristic of religious architecture.

Local Examples: Ascension Lutheran Church (original); Open Arms – A Wesleyan Church; St Mark Coptic Orthodox Church; Arizona Southern Baptist Convention; Scottsdale Christian Church

RESIDENTIAL OR DOMESTIC STYLE

Some religious buildings use the form, materials, and details of residential houses from the same period. In some cases a rectangular house with a gable roof may have been acquired for religious use. In other cases the religious group simply uses the vernacular house form and materials to build a place of worship inexpensively without using an architect. Doors, windows and light fixtures are the same as those found on mid-century homes although colored glass may be used in place of clear glass.

Ranch House Style - In Arizona and Scottsdale, the typical post World War II home was a single-level, ranch style house, with walls of concrete block, floors of concrete and low-pitched roofs covered with asphalt shingles. Most roof styles were gable, hip, or a modified hip shape with the broadside parallel to the street. The Scottsdale study of single family detached homes identified seven sub-types of ranch style homes including: Simple, California, Character, Contemporary, Tri-Level, Los Ranchos and Post Ranchos. In most cases, the variations were subtle modifications to the basic ranch style, usually obtained by adding a new material or rearranging materials on the front façade.

Local Examples: Bethany Lutheran Church; Nazarene Church (Character Ranch)

MODERN CHURCH STYLES

According to some architectural writers and critics, Modern styles differ from other architectural styles in at least three characteristic ways: 1. ornament is typically avoided because it is considered artificial, 2. twentieth-century materials and structural techniques are utilized in contrast to those used historically, and 3. the structure of the building is visible or the way it is put together is displayed, not disguised. These three characteristics are very evident when looking at a steel and glass curtain-walled modern office building from past decades. However, the characteristics of the bare bones modern style used in religious buildings, devoid of any ornament, is less evident when looking at local and regional examples of sacred architecture.

There are no all steel and glass or rough textured concrete walled churches in Scottsdale from this period. Some do utilize curved thin-shelled reinforced concrete structures or incorporate extensive glass on specific walls. There are places of worship in Scottsdale that clearly contain characteristics of modern styles and these buildings are distinct from the vernacular or domestic styles described above. Many religious buildings in Scottsdale, if they have a recognizable style, seem to fit within the modern architecture category but they are not totally devoid of all ornament or historic references – plus their walls are often stucco, not steel or concrete. Churches, Synagogues and Temples often have custom designed doors and stained glass windows.

National Examples: First Unitarian Church by Louis Kahn, Rochester, NY; First Baptist Church by Harry Weese, Columbus, IN

Arizona Examples: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix by Blaine Drake, Paradise Valley; Paradise Valley United Methodist Church Chapel by Ralph Haver, Paradise Valley; St Barnabas Episcopal Church by T. S. Montgomery, Paradise Valley

Local Examples: Scottsdale United Methodist Church by T. S. Montgomery; Palm Lane Christ Reformed

Modern architecture from the mid-century can also be described in terms of several different sub-styles with names commonly used by architectural critics and historians. However, there is often no consensus among architects, critics and historians about the typology of modern architecture or what sub-style a specific building represents. The National Register of Historic Places often just uses the term 'Modern' to describe the architectural style of buildings on the register, without listing any sub-style. One reason for this lack of consensus is that a characteristic of modern architecture and architects is that, after the profession rejected preceding styles and using revival styles, architects were free to develop their own designs and individual style without being bound by prior traditions. A local church may be considered a good representation of the work of a particular prominent architect but its design may not fit neatly into any sub-style category. That is just fine with some architects who appreciate the new freedom of modern or late modern architecture and do not want their work classified.

International – Typically with smooth stucco, block or brick walls, no applied ornament, flat roof with broad eaves or cantilevered, large picture windows, window walls or bands of windows, clerestories, simple posts and attention to refined detail. Building forms emphasize horizontal rectangular forms with board eaves or cantilevers, and unadorned walls. Buildings may have an austere or formal appearance and do not typically relate to any local context.

National Example: First Christian Church by Eliel Saarinen, Columbus, IN

Local Examples: Salem Lutheran Church

Southwest Modern – Buildings relate to the context of the region. Smooth stucco walls, limited ornament on walls or around doors and windows, tall window openings, flat roofs, both vertical and horizontal lines may be emphasized with raised or indented materials, custom metal may be used, and may include screen walls of decorative block, metal or wood. Large rectangular freestanding forms with a stucco finish may emphasize entries. The style borrows elements from Spanish Colonial - frequently stucco walls, red tile roofs and arches – but the overall appearance is more modern than popular revival style.

Arizona Examples: Valley View Bible Church by Ralph Haver et al, Paradise Valley; Christ Church of the Ascension by Benny Gonzales, Paradise Valley
Local Examples: First Church of Christ Scientist by T. S. Montgomery; First Christian Church by Richard Caviness, Cooper Downs & Associates; OLPH Sanctuary (new one on Miller) by Francis Schultz

Prairie School/Wrightian – Very low pitched hip or modified hip roof with broad overhanging eaves; multiple organic materials (wood, stone, adobe, brick) on walls, planters, surrounds; decorative door and window treatments including craft style entry door, sidelights; corner windows, wooden or brick sills. Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright.

National Examples: Unity Temple by FLW, Chicago, IL; Pfeiffer Chapel by FLW, Lakeland, FL;

Arizona Examples: First Christian Church by FLW, Phoenix; Ascension Lutheran Church (new) by William Wesley Peters, Paradise Valley

Local Example: Arizona Conference Seventh Day Adventists, Swaback Partners, PLLC; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (on 74th)

Expressionist – Buildings that have curving thin shelled reinforced concrete walls or hyperbolic paraboloid roofs are very sculptural in form and the roof or wall material is 'expressed' by the building – the structure and material are both very apparent on the exterior. The architecture may use a defined geometric shape such as round or elliptical arches, domes, barrel vaults or may use more of a free form for the resulting building.

International Examples: Notre Dame du Haut Chapel by Le Corbusier, Ronchamp, France; National Cathedral by Oscar Niemeyer, Brasilia, Brazil; Church of Santa Maria Miraculosa by Felix Candela, Mexico; St Mary's Cathedral by Kenzo Tange, Japan

National Examples: U.S. Air Force Academy by Skidmore Owings and Merrill, Colorado Springs, CO; Beth Shalom Synagogue, Elkins Park, PA and Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Wauwatosa, WI by Frank Lloyd Wright;

St. Mary's Cathedral, Pietro Belluschi and Pier Luigi Nervi ; San Francisco;
Local Examples: Los Arcos Methodist Church (renamed Valley Plaza Methodist Church) by Cartmell and Rossman; St Maria Goretti by Wendell E. Rossman; Holy Cross Lutheran by William D. Knight, Jr.

Brutalist – Buildings are often made from exposed concrete, revealing the texture of wooden forms or scoring of the surface, but could also be masonry or brick, with striking repetitive angular geometric forms, often with the forms showing the building's functions, and a rough blocky appearance expressing its structural materials.

National Example: St. John's Abbey Church, Marcel Breuer, Collegeville, MN

Arizona Example: Chapel of the Holy Cross by Anshen Allen, architect and Marguerite Brunswig Staude, artist, Sedona

Local Examples: Scottsdale Baptist Church (new); Christian Science Reading Room