

Post War Commercial Strip Center



Post World War II commercial strip centers first emerged in Los Angeles and the western United States after WW II and were popular in Los Angeles into the 1970s.

The Post War strip center evolved from the smaller street corner malls that first appeared in Los Angeles during the 1920s. These centers laid out in an L plan facing a small parking lot often contained a grocery market and a couple of other related businesses catering to the emerging automobile customer.

Commercial strip centers are typically located on large corner lots in an L shaped plan or sometimes in the middle of a commercial block with a linear plan, and were sometimes built up to the sidewalk with parking in the rear or set back with a generous parking lot in front. Facades were often marked by perpendicular intersecting planes or walls and concrete walkways and pathways sheltered by broad overhanging canopies were typical of these developments. These centers often have open air pedestrian courts with small shops running between two sections or wings and covered with wood or metal pergolas. Modern landscaping with built in planters and seating are also common, as are decorative fountains with abstract expressionist sculptural elements and subtropical plantings of yuccas and palms. Other common interpretations are rusticated Ranch style or Town & Country centers with vertical wood siding, Spanish tile roofs and oak trees.

Features of the strip center often share design elements with small professional office complexes and even high school campuses from the same period.

Post War Commercial - Common character defining features

Windows (pg. 107)

- Large fixed pane
- Floor to ceiling fixed "walls of glass"
- Sliding glass usually with steel framing
- Casement
- Louvered
- Clerestory
- No decorative moldings or framing

Entryways (pg. 104)

- Defined by extending roof plane or canopy
- Sometimes no porch at all
- Plate Glass

Roofs (pg. 110)

- Broad extended roofs with exposed beams
- Flat or gently pitched
- Folded plate

Building Materials (pg.114)

- Stucco
- Concrete
- Brick
- Wood

Notes on styles section:

Additional graphics:

This text may be customized to include information related to this architectural style that is unique to your HPOZ. Although you may use an alternate approach, you may wish to review the recommended five paragraph approach towards writing this section as outlined below:

- *The first paragraph contains an overview of the period of development of the style. You might want to include information about the dates such styles were popular regionally and more specifically within your HPOZ.*
- *The second paragraph contains background information about the style's development. It may include a description of the origin of the style and its relationship to other contemporary movements.*
- *The third paragraph includes information on the identifying hallmarks of the style. This is where you describe the main components of this style that differentiate it from others.*
- *You may wish to add a fourth paragraph to detail more specific examples of this style within your HPOZ, including a discussion of any prominent local architects who worked in this style. Other related information regarding your local HPOZ could be added. This paragraph will most likely be unique to your HPOZ only.*
- *The last paragraph discusses the styles with which this style is commonly found mixed. It is important to illustrate how styles are not necessarily exclusive of each other, and that elements of many different different styles may be found a single structure.*

Suggested graphics are included to help illustrate the text. They may be replaced or augmented by the graphics to the right, or you may wish to substitute local photos or other graphics illustrating buildings or styles within your HPOZ.

The chart to the left contains information to help identify buildings of this style in the community. There may be additional unique locally occurring features that characterize this style in your neighborhood which you may wish to add.