

Design Elements

The period of 1940-1970, in Dayton as well as elsewhere, was influenced by a confluence of forces that shaped Mid-Century Modern style. Technological advances during and after World War II produced new materials and new uses and expressions for traditional materials. New building types resulted from the ascendancy of the automobile and suburban development. A sense of energy and optimism arose after the long period of deprivation caused by the Depression and war. A number of Modern stylistic movements evolved in this period, and the diversity in styles was reflected in various expressions of architectural elements.

Non-residential structures tended to be architect-designed and reflected a broad spectrum of modern styles. A sense of energy and optimism was reflected in bold forms and the forward-looking use of materials. These buildings often featured a juxtaposition of elements, such as horizontal and vertical, glass and solid, and recessed and projecting. Quality and care were reflected in the treatment of architectural elements and forms as well as in the way they were used to interpret and accent style.

The period featured large scale residential construction in the suburbs. Home ownership was seen as the realization of the "American dream," and more and more people were buying their first homes. Residential design generally used more repetitive elements due to the large scale of development. Suburban developers often employed a palette of individual stock treatments that could be repeated to differentiate house models and types. Modern design features found in non-residential buildings were often incorporated into housing as well.

A number of design elements of the Mid-Century Modern era were noted in the surveyed properties.

Canopies

Canopies were one of most prominent features of Modern buildings. Early in the era, canopies were simple, but they tended to become more expressive with forms as styles and technologies evolved. Canopies ranged from those with clean, rational lines to curved, plastic forms that conveyed exuberance along with functionality. Materials used included reinforced and pre-cast concrete, aluminum, steel, and ceramic tile. A wide variety of canopy types was observed in the survey area.



Butterfly

Vandalia Evangelical United Brethren
Church (1963)
200 S. Dixie Dr., Vandalia
MOT-05437-13



Campus

Fairmont East High School (1962-65)
3000 Glengarry Dr., Kettering
MOT-05491-06



Cantilevered with tie rods

Our Lady of Mercy Convent (1959)
220 W. Siebenthaler Ave., Harrison Twp.
MOT-05306-09



Continuous above storefront

Brandt Medical Center (1963)
5173 Brandt Pike, Huber Heights
MOT-05520-14



Continuous above entrance and windows with return
1501 N. Main St., Dayton (1957)
MOT-05343-42



Continuous above overhead doors
Harrison Twp. Fire Station #94 (1958)
5190 Markey Rd., Dayton
MOT-05337-09



Curved
AFL-CIO - The Lakewoods Apartments (1966)
980 Wilmington Ave., Dayton
MOT-05176-62



Drive in
Frisch's Big Boy (1968)
4081 Salem Ave., Dayton
MOT-05266-08



Floating

Wilbur Wright High School Addition (1951)
1361 Huffman Ave., Dayton
MOT-05278-59



Horizontal entrance with ornamental metal posts

Kitty Hawk Elementary (1959)
5758 Harshmanville Rd., Huber Heights
MOT-05518-14



Prow

Our Lady of Mercy Convent (1959)
220 W. Siebenthaler Ave., Harrison Twp.
MOT-05306-09



Sidewalk with angled metal supports

John F. Kennedy Jr. High School (1967)
5030 Polen Dr., Kettering
MOT-05496-06



Scalloped
State Fidelity Building (1963)
2601 Far Hills Ave., Dayton
MOT-05216-24



Stepped
Financial South Office Building (1968)
5335 Far Hills, Kettering
MOT-05494-03

Eaves

One of the most common features of Modern styling is large overhanging eaves. Stylistic eave treatments were observed on both residential and non-residential properties in the Dayton area.



Continuous projecting - angled
Kettering City Hall (1970)
3600 Shroyer Rd., Kettering
MOT-05488-06



Continuous projecting - thick
John F. Kennedy Jr. High School (1967)
5030 Polen Dr., Kettering
MOT-05496-06



Continuous projecting - thin
Rolling Fields Intermediate School (1955)
2900 Acosta St., Kettering
MOT-05490-06



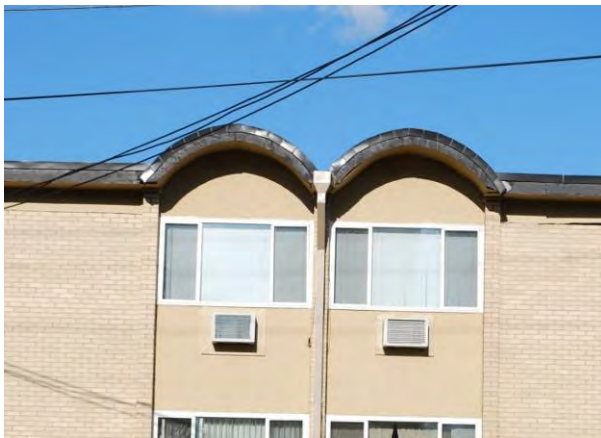
Corner projecting
Ft. McKinley Library (1955)
3735 Salem Ave., Dayton
MOT-05171-09



Prow
Central Christian Church (1957, 1962)
1200 Forrer Blvd., Kettering
MOT-05504-06



Prow - stepped
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (1963)
6540 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05331-09



Scalloped
Fountainhead Apartments (1967)
5610 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05333-09



Exposed roof beams
396 Highland Terr., Kettering (1960)
MOT-05545-06

Entrances

Entrances were one of the most prominent treatments on Modern buildings and were often emphasized by the use of a canopy or other distinguishing feature. They generally were contrasted with the main structure through juxtaposition of different materials, planes, or orientation. The use of curtain wall and storefront entrance systems was commonly found in the Dayton area.



Corner recessed with planter and wing wall
Trotwood Government Center (1970)
3035 Olive Rd., Trotwood
MOT-05469-08



Corner recessed with storefront
General Diaper Service (1955)
1407 Stanley Ave., Dayton
MOT-05506-48



Recessed with storefront
Rolling Fields Intermediate School (1955)
2900 Acosta St., Kettering
MOT-05490-06



Vertical emphasis - projecting with concrete wing walls
Globe Industries, Inc. (1954)
1784 Stanley Ave., Dayton
MOT-05509-48



Vertical emphasis
Board of Education Building (1954)
348 W. First St., Dayton
MOT-05150-15



Vertical emphasis with canopy
State Employment Service (1959)
222 Salem Ave., Dayton
MOT-05256-35



Multi-story entrance with projecting canopy
135 W. Dorothy Ln., Kettering (1963)
MOT-05499-06



Recessed multi-story with canopy
Financial South Office Building (1968)
5335 Far Hills, Kettering
MOT-05494-03

Entrance features

Entrance features reinforced and emphasized a building's style. Projecting planes and relief elements were used frequently to guide the eye to the entrance door. Planters were sometimes situated in or near the entrance area. A number of different entrance features were observed in the survey area.



Ornamental cast stone - relief
Winters National Bank & Trust (1955)
3703 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05341-40



Planter wall at entrance
Rothenburg Medical Building (1963)
1131-33 Salem Ave., Dayton
MOT-05258-42



Vertical pier at entrance
General Diaper Service (1955)
1407 Stanley Ave., Dayton
MOT-05506-48



Wing wall at entrance
State Employment Service (1959)
222 Salem Ave., Dayton
MOT-05256-35

Pilotis

Pilotis were used to elevate the main body of a structure and make the building appear to “float” above ground. This stylistic feature was made popular by Le Corbusier, amongst others. Several examples of pilotis were noted among the non-residential surveyed properties.



Pilotis

Roesch Library, University of Dayton (1969)
300 College Park Ave., Dayton
MOT-05158-60



Pilotis

Fairmont East High School (1962-65)
3000 Glengarry Dr., Kettering
MOT-05491-06



Pilotis with driveway

Anesthesia Associates of Dayton (1964)
1100 S. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05197-60



Pilotis with bank drive-through window

State Fidelity Building (1963)
2601 Far Hills Ave., Dayton
MOT-05216-24

Planters

Planters were used extensively to soften entrances and buildings within a site. Planters noted in the survey often referenced and coordinated with the style of the building. They were found in both residential and non-residential settings. Some residential planters contained a light post.



Brick stack bond

Rolling Fields Intermediate School (1955)
2900 Acosta St., Kettering
MOT-05490-06



Trellised

Third National Bank & Trust (1967)
2951 Salem Ave., Dayton
MOT-05263-40



Porch wall

2512 Arlene Ave., Dayton (1956)
MOT-05361-39



Standalone

Trotwood Government Center (1970)
3035 Olive Rd., Trotwood
MOT-05469-08

Plinth

The plinth used a traditional architectural technique of elevating a building from its surroundings. This stylistic feature was used to “separate and elevate” the rational Modern built environment from the site. Only one plinth was found in the Dayton survey area.



Globe Motors (1968)
2275 Stanley Ave., Dayton
MOT-05513-50

Porch Posts

Several styles of decorative wooden porch posts, dating from the mid-1950s, were found in selected areas of Dayton and Fairborn. In contrast, decorative metal porch posts and railings were extremely common and were found in most of the residential areas surveyed. See also Materials – Decorative Wrought Iron.



Wooden ladder style
1602 Academy Pl., Dayton (1955)
MOT-05219-36



Wooden decorative
1626 Academy Pl., Dayton (1955)
MOT-05227-36



Wooden triangular
1619 Academy Pl., Dayton (1955)
MOT-05224-36



Wooden triangular - corner
20 E. Bonomo Dr., Fairborn (1957)
GRE-01188-10

Porte-Cochere

The expanded use of the porte-cochere reflected the significance of the automotive age. Due to its function, it often reinforced clean, horizontal lines. The treatment was also used to visually soften and screen walls. Most residences in the survey did not feature a porte-cochere because the building had an attached garage or carport. However, porte-cocheres were found in several types of non-residential buildings, including churches, medical offices, and businesses that feature quick drop off/pick up, such as dry cleaners. A specialized version of the porte-cochere was used in banks to shelter the drive-up teller window.



Church - ornamental screen
Calvary Brethren Church (1962)
2850 E. Dorothy Ln., Kettering
MOT-05489-06



Dry Cleaners
Fox Cleaners & Laundromat (1947)
4333 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05339-09



Medical office
3761-63 Salem Ave., Dayton (1952)
MOT-05265-09



Bank drive-up window
Monroe Federal Savings & Loan Assn. (1968)
264 E. National Rd., Vandalia
MOT-05439-13

Railings

Railings were a functional detail used to reinforce the individual style of the building. Railings reflected rational Modernism with lightness and cleanness of lines. Very few of these examples were found in the survey area. Decorative wrought iron railings were found on some 1940s and 1950s non-residential buildings in the survey. For more information on this type of railings, refer to Materials – Decorative Wrought Iron.



Guardrails

135 W. Dorothy Ln., Kettering (1963)
MOT-05499-06



At stairs

135 W. Dorothy Ln., Kettering (1963)
MOT-05499-06

Relief Ornament

Relief ornament provided an accent on public buildings, especially religious and civic structures. It was prominently located, usually on the primary façade. Only two examples were found in the survey.



Cast stone

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church (1963)
6540 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05331-09



Cast stone

Beth Abraham Synagogue (1949-51)
1306 Salem Ave., Dayton
MOT-05293-36

Roofs

Modern era roofs were not only utilitarian elements, but they were used for sculptural effect as well. Many geometric forms and shapes were found, ranging from flat and low-pitched gable to vertically oriented A-frames.



A-Frame

Charles Davis Florist (1968)
3817 Wilmington Pike, Kettering
MOT-05501-06



Asymmetrical

220 Burgess Ave., Harrison Twp. (1960)
MOT-05484-09



Butterfly

Northridge One Hour Martinizing (1968-70)
5901 N. Dixie Dr., Dayton
MOT-05412-09



Multiple butterfly

Fill It Up Car Wash (1970)
5505 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05334-09



Geometric
Fairmont East High School (1962-65)
3000 Glengarry Dr., Kettering
MOT-05491-06



Low pitched gable with porte cochere
Capri Motel & Coffee Shop (1956)
2700 S. Dixie Hwy., Kettering
MOT-05498-06



Low pitched gable with projecting eaves
Siebenthaler Garden Center (1960)
6000 Far Hills Ave., Centerville
MOT-05218-03



With prow gable clerestory window
2421 Sylvester Dr., Kettering (1960)
MOT-05533-06



With prow gable

Riverdale Congregational Christian Church (1959)
2560 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05342-45



With prow gable

4633 Hedgewood, Trotwood (1957)
MOT-05359-39



Varied roof planes

2626 S. Patterson Blvd., Kettering (1957)
MOT-05523-06



Varied roof planes

5764 Barbanna Ln., Trotwood (1955)
MOT-05521-08

Sculpture

Sculpture, sometimes with modern lines and graphic symbolism, was typically attached to civic or religious buildings. Only a few examples were observed in the survey.



Attached ornamental metal - civic
Dayton and Montgomery County
Public Library (1962)
215 E. Third St., Dayton
MOT-05153-15



Attached ornamental metal - religious
St. Rita's Catholic Church (1964)
5401 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05335-09

Towers and Spires

Towers and spires were vertical elements used to emphasize horizontal architectural composition in public buildings or spaces. They featured clean Modern lines in both elevation and plan. Most towers were found on religious structures, but there was one example in a college plaza. Spires were found exclusively on church buildings.



Bell tower

First Church of the Nazarene (1964)
7031 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05330-09



Bell tower with canopy

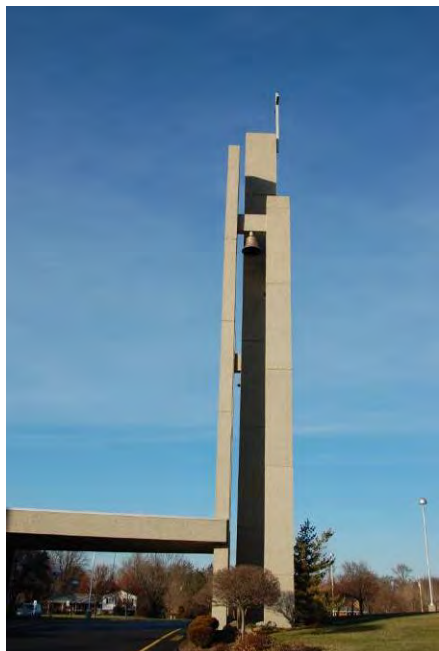
St. Rita's Catholic Church (1964)
5401 N. Main St., Dayton
MOT-05335-09



Tower with ornamental block
Calvary Brethren Church (1962)
2850 E. Dorothy Ln., Kettering
MOT-05489-06



Tower with projecting elongated units
Central Christian Church (1957, 1962)
1200 Forrer Blvd., Kettering
MOT-05504-06



Tower with porte-cochere
Church of the Incarnation (1969)
MOT-05593-03



Spire
Mt. Olive United Church of Christ (1965)
5501 Olive Rd., Trotwood
MOT-05471-08

Wing walls

Vertical projecting wing walls were used to terminate the horizontal expanse of façade or to emphasize the building entrance. Ornamental masonry bonding, especially stack bond, was often found in brick wing walls. This treatment was observed in a number of schools, as well as on commercial and government buildings.



**Elongated brick offset bond
terminating façade**
1711 E. Third St., Dayton (ca. 1960)
MOT-05269-57



Brick stack bond
Wayne High School (1959-75)
5400 Chambersburg Rd., Huber Heights
MOT-05516-14



Multiple brick stacked bond
Fairmont East High School (1962)
3000 Glengarry Dr., Kettering
MOT-05491-06



Angled concrete fins
Kettering City Hall (1970)
3600 Shroyer Rd., Kettering
MOT-05488-06