

2018 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Mid-Century Modern in the City of Sacramento Historic Context Statement and Survey



Like many other communities throughout the United States, Sacramento experienced significant growth during the 1940s through the 1960s. This growth included suburban housing, commercial, religious, institutional buildings, and schools, many of which incorporated the distinctive architectural style known as Mid-Century Modern (MCM). The City of Sacramento is facing a new period of substantial growth and development. As a result, the City's Mid-Century Modern resources are severely threatened, in part, because the public does not perceive resources from the 1940s through the 1960s as being historical.

The *Mid-Century Modern in the City of Sacramento Historic Context Statement and Survey* identifies and defines key features and characteristics of Mid-Century Modern design in Sacramento, and focuses on the work of local and regional architects and builders. Explored themes within the context include federal programs and housing discrimination, urban renewal, transportation and suburbanization, and commercial development. Five properties were selected for evaluation for local, state, and national historic designation eligibility:

- Gordon D. Schaber Sacramento County Courthouse (architecture and architects)
- Gunther's Quality Ice Cream Company (postwar commercial expansion and development, architecture, and neon sign)
- Iva Gard Shepard Garden & Arts Center (post-World War II patterns in recreation and entertainment, architecture and architect)
- Former Senator Savings & Loan (architecture and architect)

- South Land Park Hills Eichler Historic District (architecture and architects).

The Mid-Century Modern project was a community-focused and collaborative effort with partners from the City of Sacramento's Community Development Department, the California State Office of Historic Preservation, Sacramento Modern, architectural historians GEi Consultants, Inc., Mead & Hunt, and volunteers from the community. Community meetings and extensive media outreach informed the public of the project and gained community support. Of the 50 volunteers that initially came forward, 28 made a commitment to complete the reconnaissance level survey in a compressed and rigid schedule. Volunteers ranged from professional architectural historians and historians with experience conducting built environment field surveys, to citizens with a passion for MCM design. Members of SacMod, a local advocacy and historic preservation group, shared their research and personal archives to assist with identifying local architects, design trends, and property histories.

During spring and summer of 2017, volunteers identified and documented approximately 1800 properties using a *Mid-Century Modern Architecture Field Guide*, and a smart phone inventory recordation app, both of which were designed specifically for the project. The Mid-Century Modern project provides the City of Sacramento with the foundation for similar efforts in the future. It will aid them with planning decisions pertaining to Sacramento's important MCM properties, and it offers an opportunity to educate the public about these unique properties and their place in the architectural heritage of Sacramento.

Learn more about the [*Mid-Century Modern in the City of Sacramento Historic Context Statement and Survey*](#).