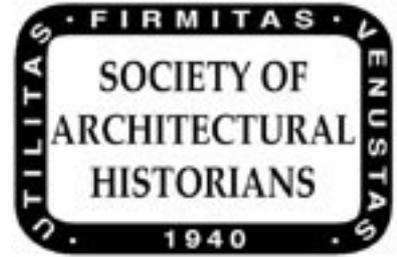




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The Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California (1895-1930)

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By the end of the 1920s the Spanish Colonial Revival had become *the* architecture of Southern California. Block upon block of Los Angeles and other smaller cities of the Southland abounded with builders' versions of America's Hispanic heritage. In communities such as Santa Barbara, Ojai, Palos Verdes, San Clemente, and Rancho Santa Fe, legal and other indirect pressures were leading to the erection of complete "Spanish" towns and cities. The intellectual justification for this revival was admittedly a bit thin, but it would be difficult to deny that the visual results were often impressive.

What is often overlooked in any discussion of the Spanish Colonial Revival in California is that this movement produced not only a wide array of purely eclectic buildings ranging from the wildly bizarre and flamboyant to the highly creative, but also that throughout its existence it served as a continual source of inspiration for the several *avant garde* movements which developed on the West Coast.

The first phase, that of the Mission Revival, became closely interwoven with the American Arts and Crafts movement, with the influence of Sullivan and Wright, and with the work of the early twentieth-century Rationalists, especially that of Irving Gill.¹ Again during the 1920s, the second phase of the Spanish Colonial Revival shared many points in common with the West Coast work of Frank Lloyd Wright, of R. M. Schindler, and of Lloyd Wright. Finally, it can be convincingly argued that there was a meaningful give-and-take between the early "Modern" work of the 1930s—of Richard Neutra, of Gregory Ain—and the late aspect of the Spanish Colonial Revival.

While it can well be demonstrated that the shingle and the redwood board and batten houses were the first archi-

tectural forms which in any way could be thought of as indigenous to California, it was the stucco-sheathed structure—with its broad areas of uninterrupted surfaces—which in fact and in myth have come to typify the buildings of Southern California. Unquestionably, one of the unique qualities of this regional architecture is that it had little, if any, real roots in the historic past of the area. The Spanish Colonial Revival, from its Mission phase on, was almost totally a myth created by newcomers to the area.² Few artificially created architectural myths have succeeded in retaining a firm hold for so long and at the same time have been able to maintain a consistently high quality of design.

Historically, the Spanish Colonial Revival divides itself into two phases, although it should be pointed out that the division between them is not precise. The first of these phases was that of the Mission Revival, which saw its inception in the 1880s and reached its fullest development during the first decade of the twentieth century. As will be pointed out later, the buildings which were labelled as "Mission" even in their own day often had very little to do with the early Spanish ecclesiastical architecture of California. In fact, these Revival buildings were equally inspired by the simple Spanish domestic buildings of adobe, which had been built in California in the late eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth centuries.³ Also occurring

2. Harold Kirker discusses the creation of the Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival myths in his *California's Architectural Frontier*, San Marino, 1960, pp. 120-130. For a defense of the Revival see: Arthur B. Benton, "The California Mission and Its Influence Upon Pacific Coast Architecture," *Architect and Engineer*, xxiv, Feb. 1911, pp. 35-75; George C. Baum, "The Mission Type," in Henry H. Saylor, *Architectural Styles for Country Houses*, New York, 1919, pp. 67-74; George Wharton James, *In and Out of the Old Missions of California*, Boston, 1905; and G. Stanley Taylor, "Mediterranean Architecture for the American Home," *Arts and Decoration*, xxv, Aug. 1926, pp. 34-39, 72.

3. Herbert D. Croly, "The California Country House," *Sunset*, xviii, Nov. 1906, pp. 50-65.

1. The close relationship between *avant garde* architects and the architecture of the Mission Revival style was accurately pointed out as early as 1910 in F. Rud. Vogel's *Das Amerikanische Haus*, Berlin, 1910, pp. 264-267.

within the first phase of the Spanish Colonial Revival was the Pueblo or Santa Fe Revival style, inspired by the provincial Spanish Colonial buildings found in and around the Rio Grande River Valley of New Mexico. As far as longevity is concerned, this Santa Fe style has enjoyed an extremely long life.⁴ Having been initiated in the late nineteenth century, it reached its heyday during the decade of the 1920s, experienced a second renaissance during the late 1930s, and is still going strong in its native habitat.

The second phase of the Hispanic Revival could be properly called Mediterranean, for it assembled architectural elements not only from Spain and Mexico, but from Italy and from the Islamic world of North Africa. It spawned off such local offshoots as the Monterey style. It is this second phase, dating from ca. 1910 through the early 1930s, which most people have come to think of as *the* Spanish Colonial Revival. As the subsequent discussion will indicate, one can understand these seemingly divergent architectural forms by seeing all of its phases as representing a single and coherent statement—an architectural statement which strongly influenced the various *avant garde* movements which developed in California between 1890 and 1940.

For the design of a house, a multistoried hotel, or an automobile salesroom to be based upon the architecture of the Spanish Colonial Mission buildings of California seems at best rather forced, or at worst rather ludicrous. Yet such reliance on precedent is obviously no different from that which made Roman Imperial baths an inspiration for the design of a railroad station or that which caused the designers of a twentieth-century tire-manufacturing plant to seek sources in Assyrian and Babylonian architecture. The Mission Revival in California was neither more nor less an

4. The Pueblo Revival saw its inception in the first decade of the century, although a few scattered examples had been built in California and New Mexico in the 1890s. An early use of this style in California was A. C. Schweinfurt's "Country Hotel Near Montalvo," ill. in *California Architect and Building News*, xv, Apr. 1894, p. 39. One of the first major attempts to utilize this style was a group of buildings at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque (see "Adoption of Pueblo Architecture in University of New Mexico," *Architect's and Builder's Magazine*, xli, Apr. 1909, pp. 282-285). For the 1920s and 1930s, see the work of the firm of H. Rapp, W. M. Rapp, and A. C. Hendrickson, who designed such Pueblo Revival buildings in Santa Fe as: the Museum of New Mexico, the State School for the Deaf and Dumb, Sun Mount Sanitarium, and so on, ill. in *Western Architect*, xxxiii, Jan. 1924. Also, Rose Henderson, "A Primitive Basis for Modern Architecture," *Architectural Record*, liv, Aug. 1923, pp. 189-196; Anon., "Will New Mexico Influence our Architecture?" *Arts and Decoration*, xx, Mar. 1924, pp. 48 and 50. Other examples of the Santa Fe style may be seen in Louis L. Cassidy's "A Hacienda in New Mexico," *California Arts and Architecture*, xxviii, Nov. 1930, pp. 26-27, 64; and in Bainbridge Bunting, "Residence of Mabel Dodge Luhan," *New Mexico Architect*, iii, Sept.-Oct. 1961, pp. 11-13.



Fig. 1. Burnham and Bliesner. Riverside Public Library, Riverside, 1903 (photo: author).

artificial creation than was the Neo-Classicism of McKim, Mead and White or the Neo-Gothicism of Ralph Adams Cram. Neither the essential forms nor the structure of the Mission Revival buildings had anything to do with their supposed prototypes. Instead, the Mission Revival architects conjured up the vision of the Mission by relying on a few suggestive details: simple arcades; parapeted, scalloped gable ends (often with a quatrefoil window); tiled roofs; bell towers (composed of a series of receding squares, normally topped by a low dome); and finally (and most important), broad, unbroken exterior surfaces of rough cement stucco (Fig. 1). Occasionally, even in residences, one will come across a complete Mission façade (a centered, parapeted gable flanked by two bell towers), but this more strict reliance on historical precedent was by no means the norm. Since the original Mission buildings had been somewhat stark in ornamental detail, the Revivals borrowed ornament from the Islamic traditions, from the Richardsonian Romanesque, and directly and indirectly from the design of Louis Sullivan and George Grant Elmslie (Fig. 2).

As one would expect, the plans and much of the interior detailing of these Mission Revival buildings were identical with those found elsewhere in the country. The typical early Mission Revival houses employed an open plan, with a large living hall which was spatially connected to the other first-floor rooms through wide doorways. After 1900, the more characteristic plan reflected the simple boxlike rooms of the Craftsman houses of Gustav Stickley. The translation of the adobe or stone Mission structure into buildings of wood and stucco meant that the walls posed as



Fig. 2. Anon. "Sullivan-esque" house, Los Angeles, California, ca. 1900 (photo: author).

thin planes, rather than sculptural masses. The thinness of the wall plane, accentuated by large windows (often of plate glass), meant that the total form of the building tended to be read in terms of volumes, rather than of masses.

Who developed the Mission Revival style, and where did it develop? These two questions are still unanswered.⁵ George Wharton James in an article on the Mission Style written in 1903, credits the invention of the style to the Los Angeles architect Lester S. Moore.⁶ Whether Moore or any other single individual was solely responsible for the introduction of the style is open to question. By the early 1890s the movement was well on its way, as is attested by A. Page Brown's California Building at the World Columbian Exposition of 1893, and by the more famous Mission Inn (earlier called "Glenwood Inn") in Riverside, the first section of which was designed by Arthur Benton be-

5. Harold Kirker, in his *California's Architectural Frontier*, asserts that, "The first architect to become seriously aware of the possibilities that the missions offered contemporary builders was Willis Polk . . ." (p. 122). This is undoubtedly an oversimplification of the origin of the movement. It is more than likely that the first Mission Revival buildings were designed and built in the Los Angeles area rather than in the Bay region, for the major preachers of the movement were located in the Southland. It was in Los Angeles that Charles F. Lummis published his influential and popular magazine, *Land of Sunshine*. Stephen W. Jacobs discusses the origin of the Mission style in his "California Contemporaries of Wright," in *Problems of the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Princeton, 1963, pp. 44-49, but his emphasis, like that of Kirker, is on Northern rather than on Southern California.

6. George Wharton James, "The Influence of the 'Mission Style' upon the Civic and Domestic Architecture of Modern California," *The Craftsman*, v, 1903, pp. 458-469, 567.



Fig. 3. Arthur Benton. Mission Inn, Riverside, 1890-1901 (photo: author).

tween the years 1890 and 1901 (Fig. 3).⁷ As Harold Kirker has indicated, the desire to discover an architectural form indigenous to California was certainly in the air in the 1880s.⁸ A scattering of what could loosely be called Mission Revival buildings was constructed in both Northern and Southern California during the decade of the 1880s, although it was not until the next decade that the style really caught hold.⁹

By the turn of the century, the enthusiastic interest in the Mission was amplified and reflected in numerous articles and illustrations which appeared in such regional publications as *Sunset*, *Outwest*, and *The Architect and Engineer*, and later in magazines of a national scope, such as the *Craftsman* and *The Western Architect*. By 1910, Southern California had blossomed forth with an array of large resort hotels which were Mission-inspired. In Pasadena the famous Green Hotel, designed first by Frederic Louis Roehrig in 1889, and later in 1901 by John Parkinson, was as much

7. The later sections of the Mission Inn in Riverside were designed by Myron Hunt and G. Stanley Wilson. M. Urmey Sears, "California's Mission Inn," *California Arts and Architecture*, xl, Sept. 1931, pp. 16-21.

8. Kirker, *California's Architectural Frontier*, p. 120.

9. See Robert Koch, *Louis C. Tiffany, Rebel in Glass*, New York, 1964, p. 70. Even in Florida, Carrère and Hastings (with the help of the young Bernard Maybeck and Louis C. Tiffany) were involved in the design of their Ponce de Leon Hotel at St. Petersburg as early as 1886. While basically Spanish in flavor, the design of this hotel was a potpourri of forms culled from Richardsonian Romanesque and from Islamic examples, with a certain admixture of Queen Anne Revival details.



Fig. 4. Frederic Louis Roehrig, with later additions by John Parkinson. Green Hotel, Pasadena, 1889–1901 (photo: Title Insurance and Trust Company of Los Angeles).

Islamic as Mission (Fig. 4); while the equally well-known second Raymond Hotel, designed in 1901, and the Hotel Maryland, designed in 1902 by John Parkinson, more accurately reflected the visual elements which one associates with the Mission style. In Santa Barbara the posh Potter Hotel of 1901 by John Austin (Fig. 5) and the second Arlington Hotel of 1910 by Arthur Benton were appropriately Mission, and so, too, were La Casa Loma Hotel (ca. 1900) in Redlands and the Hotel Ingraham (ca. 1906) in Los Angeles. Even as late as 1912 Elmer Grey was to produce his picturesque adaptation of the Mission in the Beverly Hills Hotel.¹⁰ The enthusiasm for the Mission style was reflected in literally all modes of buildings from complete towns such as that planned for Planada, near Merced, in 1910 by A. H. Stibolt and Wilbur D. Cook, Jr. (Fig. 6),¹¹ to cemetery gateways, schools, libraries, and mile upon mile of tract houses. The downtown area of an older community such as Ojai was completely rebuilt in 1917 in the Mission mode (really a combination of the Mission and the Mediterranean Revival styles) by the firm of Mead and Requa. The architects transferred the image of the Mission church into the post office, and all the stores were grouped behind a wide arcade. A pergola, with low walls, seats, and a fountain screen tied the central park to the other buildings, and at the same time screened the park from the street. The railroads, the Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe, with

their eye upon the eastern tourist, built a great number of their stations throughout the Southwest and Pacific Coast in the Mission style.¹² This same style was also a recurring theme in many Southwestern Fred Harvey houses, the most famous of which was the Alvarado Hotel in Albuquerque, designed in 1901–1905 by Charles F. Whittlesey.¹³

With its widespread popularity, it is surprising that the Mission Revival style almost ceased to exist by the end of the second decade of the century.¹⁴ Some critics have suggested that the style was finally rejected “. . . because it proved impossible to adapt the primitive architecture of a religious order to the commercial and worldly society of the late nineteenth century.”¹⁵ Actually, the Mission style, as it developed, was more and more able to fulfill the needs of buildings ranging from the smallest, unpretentious builder’s house to the largest hotel. Because the specific

12. The Midwestern architect, Harrison Albright, designed many of these railway stations for the Santa Fe Railroad. See an illustration of his station at Ash Fork, Arizona in *Architect and Engineer*, iv, 1906, p. 88.

13. See David Gebhard, “Architecture and the Fred Harvey Houses,” I and II, in *New Mexico Architect*, iv, July–Aug. 1962, pp. 11–17; vi, Jan.–Feb. 1964, pp. 18–25.

14. During the first decade and a half of this century, examples of the Mission Revival style appeared all over the country. In addition to California itself, Arizona, New Mexico, and western Texas experienced a rash of buildings in this style. Many California architects such as Charles Whittlesey did some of their major work in the Southwest. The most interesting local work in the style was accomplished by the El Paso firm of Henry C. Trost and Gustave Trost. They designed not only in the Mission style, but they also produced work which was quite Wrightian and Sullivanesque. See William P. Comstock and C. E. Schermerhorn, *Bungalows, Camps and Mountain Houses*, New York, 1915, pp. 35, 58, 68–69.

15. Kirker, *California’s Architectural Frontier*, p. 125.

10. The most grandiose of all of these Mission Revival buildings was Charles Whittlesey’s project for a sanatorium at Alamogordo, New Mexico. This complex of buildings was illustrated in *Architect and Engineer*, II, Sept. 1905, pp. 24–25.

11. “California to Have a Model Municipality: Planada A City Beautiful,” *Architect and Engineer*, xxv, May 1911, pp. 56–62.



Fig. 5. John Austin. Potter Hotel, Santa Barbara, 1901 (photo: Security National Bank of Los Angeles).



Fig. 6. A. H. Stibolt, [Project]. Bank, Planada, California, 1910 (photo: *Architect and Engineer*, xxv, May 1911, p. 58).

historic elements were few in number and because these elements really had little to do with the plan and structure of the building, the Mission Revival style was one of the most adaptable historic styles utilized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Mission style failed not because it could not adapt to the needs of the time, but rather, because it was too naïve and too puritanical. The Mission style was basically a nineteenth-century style, rather than a twentieth-century style. Like other nineteenth-century revival styles it dealt very loosely with historic forms. With the resurgence of a more archaeological approach in the 1890s—with its urge to be consistent and correct—the Mission Revival could not be expected to last very long. In fact, the only reason that it did continue as long as it did was, first, the fact that it occurred far from the East Coast; and second, that it became closely associated with the Craftsman movement.¹⁶ The sophisticated architects and clients whose tastes were being broadened by education and travel increasingly desired that their buildings more accurately mirror this or that specific historic style.

By the early 1900s the Mission Revival style had become an integral part of the American Secessionist movement. It is especially revealing to note that these Mission buildings were often referred to as Secessionist by writers of the time who sensed the kinship between this work and that of the early Modern architects in Europe.¹⁷ The interior of the characteristic Mission style houses came to embody the ideals of frankness and simplicity of the American Arts and Crafts movement. The Mission house or variations thereon were one of the frequent types illustrated in the pages of the *Craftsman* magazine.

The older generation of California architects, J. C. Newcome, Ernest Coxhead, and others, turned to the Mission style in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The younger, more adventurous designers such as Charles F. Whittlesey frequently produced buildings which combined Mission ideas with other forms and details. The style even crept into the work of Charles and Henry Greene, as can be seen in their 1911 house for Cordelia Culbertson in Pasadena.

But by the second decade of the century it was apparent that the Mission Revival style, the California Bungalow, or the Midwestern Prairie house could not fulfill the desire felt by client and architect for increased opulence and display, and for historical correctness. The simple life was giving way to the affluent life of the 1920s. A majority of the

younger architects who were then entering upon the California scene were the product, not of the office apprentice method of education but of the architectural schools, which by the late 1890s were Beaux-Arts-oriented. These younger men quite naturally sought their source in specific historical examples, not in loose adaptations such as the typical Mission Revival building expressed. The bookish erudition of the architects was increasingly matched by the worldly awareness of their clients, who through actual travel or through reading were at least superficially becoming aware of "correct" architectural styles.

Southern California easily solved the problem by replacing the Mission Revival with the Mediterranean Revival. The Churrigueresque form of Bertram Goodhue and Carleton Winslow Sr.'s buildings for San Diego's Panama California International Exposition of 1915 were far more learned than any Mission building. As Clarence S. Stein wrote at the time: "When the style of architecture to be used at the San Diego Exposition was first under consideration, it was natural that the Missions of California should have been thought of as models. Mr. Bertram G. Goodhue . . . suggested that in spite of its charm this style was too limited in its resources."¹⁸ The San Diego Exposition then came to serve the same purpose for the second phase of the Spanish Colonial Revival in Southern California as had the Chicago Exposition of 1893 for Neo-Classical architecture throughout the whole of America. While it is convenient to think of the San Diego Exposition as the starting point for the second phase of the Spanish Colonial Revival, it would be an error to claim that it really marked the introduction of the style into California. Instances of buildings whose details were derived from Spain or Mexico appeared as early as the 1890s; and by 1900, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego boasted a good number of larger buildings which reflected this mode.¹⁹ As early as 1902, Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson had built the Gillespie house in Montecito with its Spanish-Moorish gardens.²⁰ So the more sophisticated Mediterranean Revival was well on its way before the San Diego Fair of 1915. The outcome of the Fair was to make this mode popular and fashionable.

The Churrigueresque form popularized by the Fair became only one of the Mediterranean styles of the late 1910s and 1920s. It was perhaps best expressed with restraint and

16. Robert Winter, "The Craftsman Movement in Southern California," paper presented at the Annual Meeting, Society of Architectural Historians, Los Angeles, 29 Jan. 1965.

17. Frank Calvert (ed.), *Homes and Gardens of the Pacific Coast*, Los Angeles, Seattle, ca. 1905.

18. Clarence S. Stein, "A Triumph of the Spanish Colonial Style," in Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's *The Architecture and the Gardens of the San Diego Exposition*, San Francisco, 1916, p. 12.

19. R. A. Wynne, "From Hotels of Humble 'Dobe to Million-Dollar Palaces," *Sunset*, xx, Jan. 1908, pp. 243-251.

20. "El Fuereidas," J. M. Gillespie House, Montecito, illus. in *Sunset*, xxxii, May 1914, pp. 1060-1063.



Fig. 7. Carleton Winslow, Sr. Bliss House, Montecito, 1916 (photo: C. Winslow, Jr.).

taste in such work as that of the Bliss house in Montecito, designed immediately after the Fair in 1916 by Carleton Winslow, Sr. (Fig. 7). It was applied with equal sophistication by Albert C. Martin in his St. Vincent's Church in Los Angeles of 1923 (Fig. 8), by Arthur Kelley in his Muma house in Los Angeles, ca. 1920, and by others. During the 1920s the larger Los Angeles architectural firms such as Morgan, Walls & Clements and Marston, Van Pelt & Maybury erected innumerable stores, automobile salesrooms and houses where the Churrigueresque ornament (usually cast in concrete) ran wild over the buildings.²¹ Equally flamboyant were the numerous versions of Moorish architecture which form a fascinating chapter in the architecture of the Southland during the 1920s. Even such a severe, puritanical designer as George Washington Smith occasionally employed Islamic details in his houses (Fig. 9).²² The pure exuberance of many of their buildings certainly

21. Good examples of these Churrigueresque-inspired buildings are the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce Bldg., Hollywood, ca. 1928, and the Star Motor Car Co., Hollywood, ca. 1926, both designed by the firm of Morgan, Walls and Clements.

22. Islamic details occur in the arcade of the central courtyard and in other details of George Washington Smith's Bryce House, Hope Ranch, 1925-1926. See David Gebhard, *George Washington Smith: The Spanish Colonial Revival in California*, Santa Barbara, 1964.

owed much to the emergence of the motion-picture industry in Southern California during the 1920s. The stage-set atmosphere which pervaded so much of this architecture is as much a period piece of the period as the films themselves.

But the more typical Spanish Colonial house of the third decade was inspired by the provincial architecture of Spain (especially Andalusia) and of Mexico. This was the form which was so admirably used as a point of departure by George Washington Smith and James Osborne Craig of Santa Barbara; Wallace Neff of Pasadena; Reginald Johnson, John Byers, Ronald E. Coates, and Gordon Kaufman in the Los Angeles area; and Lillian J. Rice, William Templeton Johnson, and Mead and Requa in San Diego.²³ All of these designers produced buildings which were conceived of as sculptural volumes, closely attached to the land, whereby the basic form of the building was broken down into separate, smaller shapes which informally spread themselves over the site. Detailing, both within and without, was

23. Examples of the works of these architects may be seen in R. W. Sexton's *Spanish Influence on American Architecture and Decoration*, New York, 1926; in Rex Ford Newcomb's *Spanish Colonial Architecture in the United States*, New York, 1937; in H. Philip Staats' *California Architecture in Santa Barbara*, New York, 1929; and in Paul Robinson Hunter and Walter L. Reichardt's *Residential Architecture in Southern California*, Los Angeles, 1939.



Fig. 8. Albert C. Martin. St. Vincent's Church, Los Angeles, 1923 (photo: Security National Bank of Los Angeles).

simple; and the number of materials employed was severely limited. The space within was also treated as a series of independent volumes, where there was very little spatial flow from one area to another. Nor was there any real spatial interchange between interior and exterior space.

While there is little argument that a number of major monuments were realized within this later aspect of the Spanish Colonial Revival, probably its greatest contribution to the architecture of this century was in the larger area of planned groups of buildings, of city planning, and of landscape gardening.²⁴ Entire new communities—Rancho Santa Fe, San Clemente, Palos Verdes Estates—were carefully laid out in this single style.²⁵ Older, established communities such as Santa Barbara and Ojai sought to

24. Many of the Southern California Spanish Colonial Revival gardens are illustrated in W. S. Doby's *California Gardens*, New York, 1931.

25. M. Urmey Sears, "The Village of Rancho Santa Fe," *California Arts and Architecture*, xxxviii, Sept. 1930, pp. 36, 66.



Fig. 9. George Washington Smith. Bryce House, Hope Ranch, 1925–1926 (photo: author).

create a full-blown Spanish Colonial image.²⁶ While much of the resulting architecture was indeed a stage set, still it would be difficult to deny that the coherence of these schemes, their concern for human scale, and the simplicity of their architectural forms often led to highly satisfactory urban planning. Equally successful were the many smaller shopping centers, groups of town houses, or units of professional offices, the quality of which has rarely been equalled since. Even the indigenous California concept of the bungalow court which had first asserted itself in the architectural language of the wood shingle and clapboard Bungalow style, and later in the Mission style, saw its most successful examples realized in the later buildings of the Spanish Colonial Revival, an excellent example being Pierpont and Davis' "Villa d'Este" of 1928 in Hollywood.

As with the earlier Mission style, it is impossible to say that the Spanish provincial or Andalusian aspect of this second phase of the Spanish Colonial Revival started at a specific date. If credit can be given to anyone for its origin, it would probably be divided between the two Santa Barbara architects, George Washington Smith and James Osborne Craig. Smith's first house (later called the Heberton House) of 1916 in Montecito is a full and complete state-

ment of the Andalusian mode (Fig. 10).²⁷ Craig's El Paseo Shopping Center in Santa Barbara of 1922 represents a mature realization of these principles which were applied to a group of old and new buildings (Fig. 11).²⁸

While Smith's buildings in Santa Barbara, Pasadena, and Northern California unquestionably were the most sophisticated of the later Spanish Colonial Revival buildings, there were a number of practitioners, especially John Byers and Wallace Neff, whose work is of a serious order (Figs. 12 and 13). The high point—really the culmination—of the style occurred in the building of the Santa Barbara Courthouse in 1929 (Fig. 14).²⁹ This complex of related structures asserted the full potential of the Spanish Colonial Revival—its ability to realize theatrical and dramatic space—which was public in spirit, and at the same time really dramatic in scale. While the heyday of the Mediterranean Revival was the 1920s, one must not overlook the fact that successful works in this mode were produced by Wallace Neff and others into the late 1930s. But there can be little doubt that

26. M. Urmy Sears, "A Community Approaches Its Ideals," *California Arts and Architecture*, xxxvii, June 1930, pp. 18-21, 70, 72; George H. Reed, "The Civic Improvements at Ojai, California," *Western Architect*, xxvii, Aug. 1918, pp. 63-65, 71, plus pls. The Ojai project reflects both Mission and Mediterranean in style.

27. Gebhard, *George Washington Smith: The Spanish Colonial Revival in California*, 1964, pp. 4-6.

28. Irving F. Morrow, "A Step in California's Architecture," *Architect and Engineer*, lxx, Aug. 1922, pp. 47-59, 101-103.

29. The Santa Barbara County Courthouse was officially designed and built by the San Francisco firm of William Mooser and Co., but the actual design of the building was apparently in the hands of the Santa Barbara architect-painter, J. J. Plunket. Plunket also designed another major monument of the late Spanish Colonial Revival, the Fox-Arlington Theater, Santa Barbara, 1929.



Fig. 10. George Washington Smith. Heberton House, Montecito, 1916 (photo: author).

the depression signaled the end of the whole Spanish Colonial Revival. When building began to resume slowly in the years before the Second World War, the Spanish Colonial style was simply one of many eclectic styles.

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of the Spanish Colonial Revival was its close relationship to the several *avant garde* or Secessionist movements which manifested themselves in California from the late 1890s through the 1930s; and it is worth repeating that this was a give-and-take relationship, with the Secessionists often receiving more than they gave. The initial association of this revivalism with the Secessionists is best represented in the work of Irving Gill, but it may be seen equally well in the designs of Francis T. Underhill of Santa Barbara, and in some of the work of the San Diego firm of Mead and Requa.³⁰ Even Bertram Goodhue was affected by Gill's example, as is amply attested to in his buildings at the New Mexico mining town of Tyrone (1915–1916). The conscious or unconscious task which these men set for themselves was to strip off the specific historic details, and then to think in terms of elemental shapes and forms—the cube, the rectangle, and the arch. Underhill expressed this approach in several of his buildings, notably in his Peabody house in Montecito, 1917 (Fig. 15).³¹ Gill had, of course, realized it far earlier, and he continued to purify the form as his visually severe work at

30. David Gebhard, *Four Santa Barbara Houses*, Santa Barbara, 1963, pp. 11–12. For an illustration of the Secessionist phase of Mead and Requa's work see E. Roscoe Shrader house, *Western Architect*, xxix, June 1920, pl. 2.

31. "Residence of F. F. Peabody, Montecito, California," *Architectural Record*, xliii, May 1918, pp. 395–403.



Fig. 11. James Osborne Craig. El Paseo, Santa Barbara, 1922 (photo: author).

Torrance of 1913 indicates (Fig. 16).³² By 1919, in the Horatio West Court Apartments in Santa Monica, Gill had in fact crossed the dividing line, for these apartments and other late work of his have almost as much in common with the early International style of Europe as they have with the Mission Revival style (Fig. 17).

32. Esther McCoy, "Irving Gill," in *Five California Architects*, New York, 1960, pp. 59–100.



Fig. 12. Wallace Neff. Bourne House, San Marino, 1926.



Fig. 13. John Byers (Edla Muir Assoc.). Miles Memorial Playhouse, Santa Monica, ca. 1926.



Fig. 14. Mooser and Co. Santa Barbara County Courthouse, Santa Barbara, California, 1929 (photo: author).

Another interesting connection was established between the Mission Revival and the Secessionist forms then coming out of Chicago. In fact, certain of the architects in Southern California had either practised in the Chicago area or had received their training in the Midwest. For example, Elmer Grey, Myron Hunt, and Charles F. Whittlesey brought the forms of Louis Sullivan, of Frank Lloyd Wright, and of George Maher to the West Coast. Other local architects picked the mode up from them directly, or indirectly through architectural publications. Thus, throughout the Southland one will find scattered examples of houses whose horizontal lines and hovering roofs are reminiscent of Wright's Prairie style (Fig. 18); other structures obviously reflect the strong massive mode which George Maher so much made his own; and finally, there were many instances of commercial buildings and houses which boast terra-cotta, iron, concrete, or wood ornament whose source was unquestionably derived from the ornamental designs of Louis Sullivan or George Grant Elmslie. All of the architects whose work reflected one or another of these Chicago



Fig. 15. Francis T. Underhill. Peabody House, Santa Barbara, 1917 (photo: author).

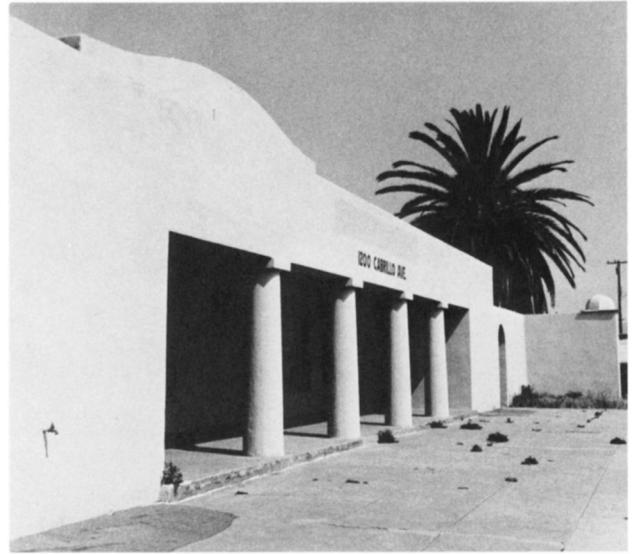


Fig. 16. Irving Gill. Railroad Station, Torrance, California, 1913 (photo: author).



Fig. 17. Irving Gill, Horatio West Apts., Santa Monica, 1919 (photo: E. McCoy).



Fig. 18. Attrib. Charles F. Whittlesey. House, Los Angeles, ca. 1908 (photo: author).

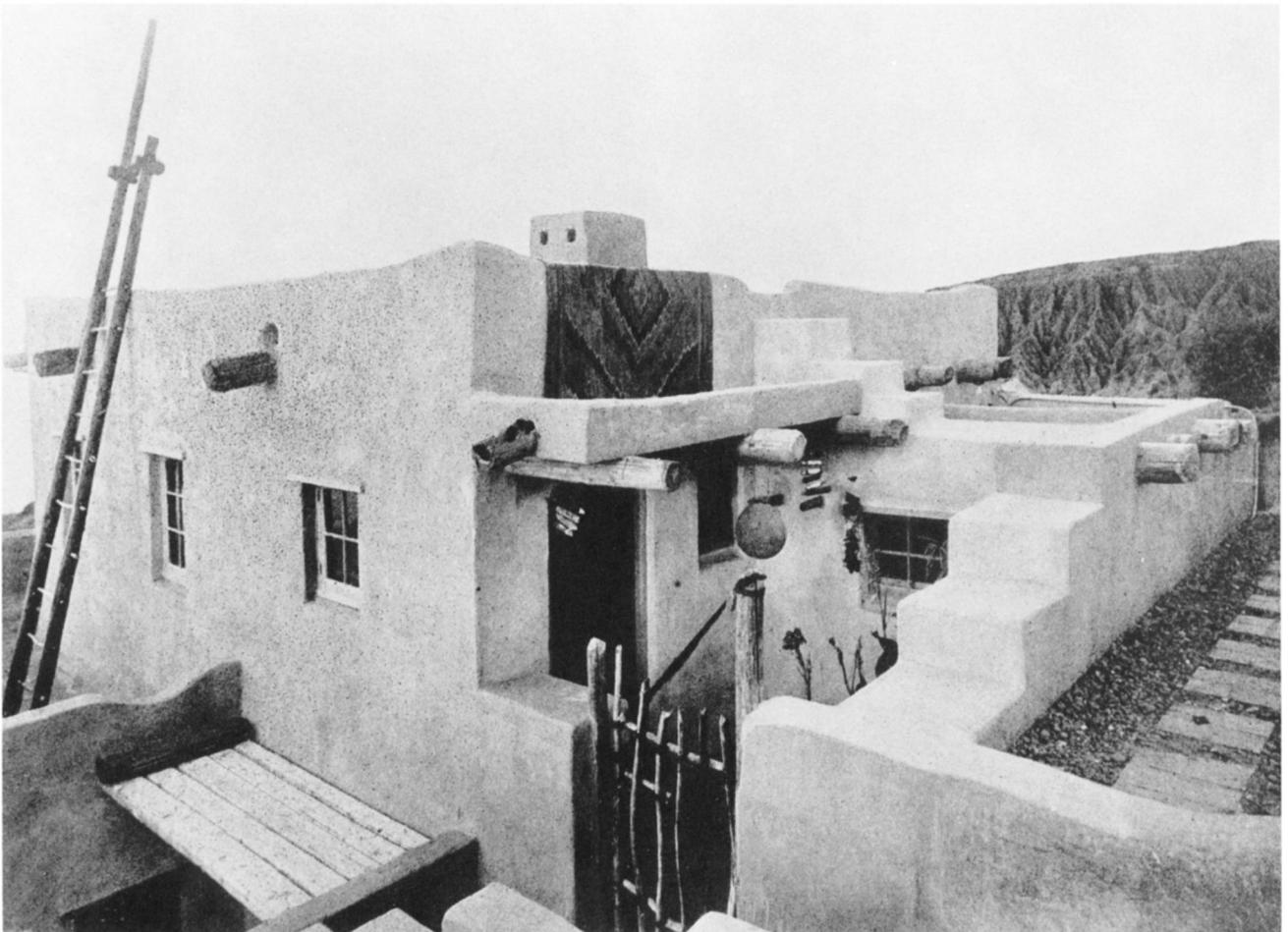


Fig. 19. Mead and Requa. Bailey House, La Jolla, California, 1919 (photo: *Western Architect*, xxx, June 1920, p. 4).

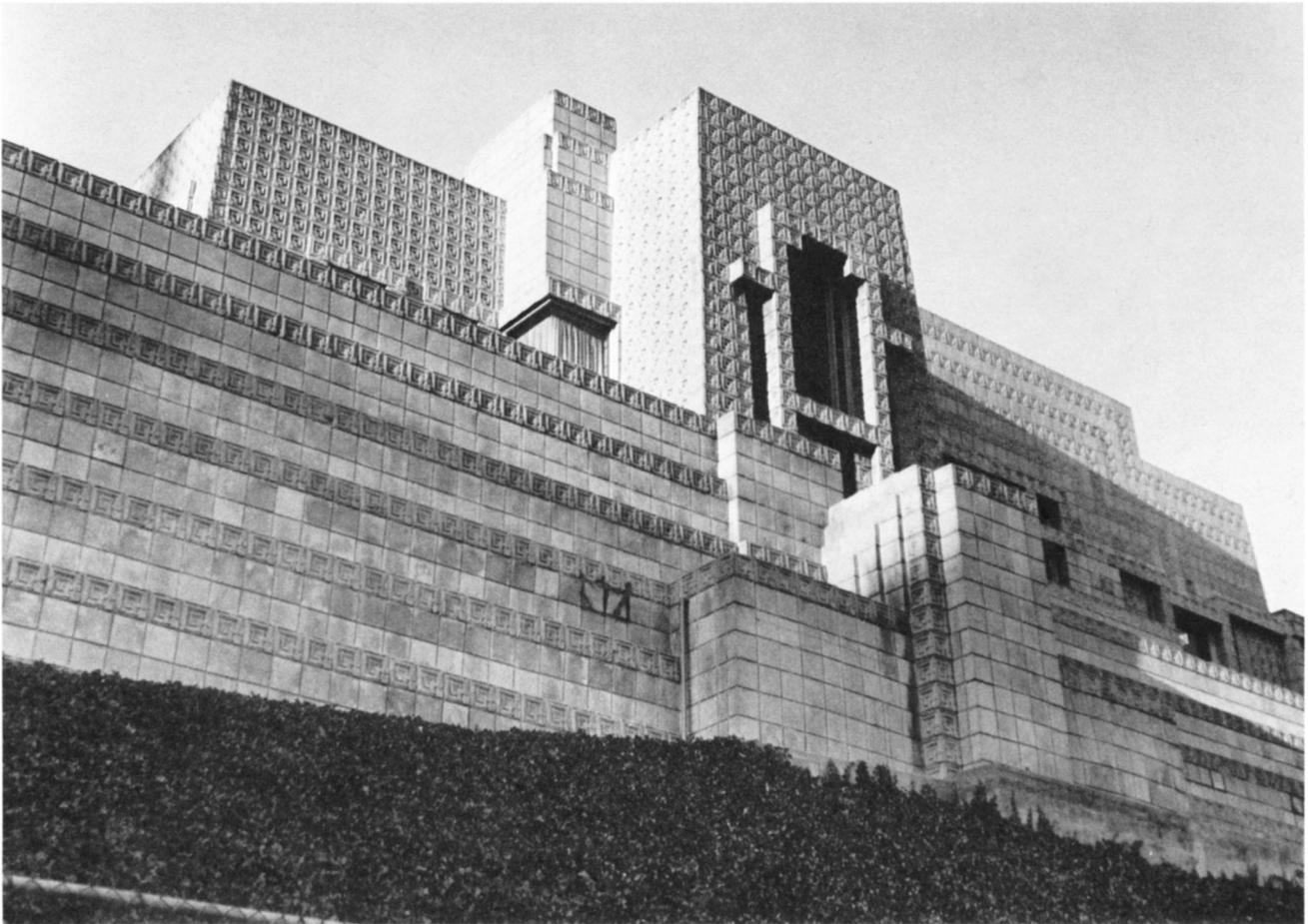


Fig. 20. Frank Lloyd Wright. Ennis House, Los Angeles, 1924 (photo: author).

influences also designed Mission Revival buildings, and even on occasion they went further afield as did Charles F. Whittlesey and Mead and Requa in several of their works which entail features borrowed from the Santa Fe Pueblo Revival style (Fig. 19).³³ The one common element which truly unites the diversity of architectural styles within which these men worked was the Craftsman movement. As Robert Winter has so well demonstrated, the work of these men was through and through an application of its principles.³⁴ While the exterior garb of these houses might be Mission or Midwestern Prairie, their interiors were almost always Craftsman. Their plans tended to be informal, their woodwork was fumed oak heavily articulated, their fireplaces of rough brick or river stones, and so on. There were, as well, several other progressive aspects which provided an experimental flavor to the several phases of the

Spanish Colonial Revival. One of these, which was present from the first years of the century, was the frequent use of reinforced concrete, for large buildings as well as for houses. Charles Whittlesey was the major California advocate of this new material and structural form. He employed it in a number of his Los Angeles houses and in his highly publicized Auditorium Building, Los Angeles (1905).³⁵ The mild climate of California stimulated the architectural profession to design schools which were, to a considerable degree, open-air buildings. Two of the earliest of these were the Polytechnic Elementary School of 1907 in Pasadena by Hunt and Grey, and the Francis W. Parker School of 1913 in San Diego by William Templeton Johnson.³⁶

A good number of these designers were also intrigued and fascinated by the exoticism of Islamic architecture (as

33. "Unique Design in the Pueblo Indian Style," *Architect and Engineer*, xxiv, Mar. 1911, p. 58; "Beach Cottage in Hopi Indian Architecture for W. J. Bailey, La Jolla," *Western Architect*, xxx, June 1920, p. 4.

34. Winter, "The Craftsman Movement in Southern California."

35. Charles F. Whittlesey, "Concrete Construction," *Architect and Engineer*, iii, Dec. 1905, pp. 43-47; "Reinforced Concrete Construction—Why I Believe In It," *Architect and Engineer*, xii, Mar. 1908, pp. 35-57. "California's Largest Reinforced Concrete Building," *Architect and Engineer*, iv, Mar. 1906, pp. 19-27.

36. William C. Hays, "One Story and Open Air Schoolhouses in California," *Architectural Forum*, xxvii, Sept. 1917, pp. 57-65.

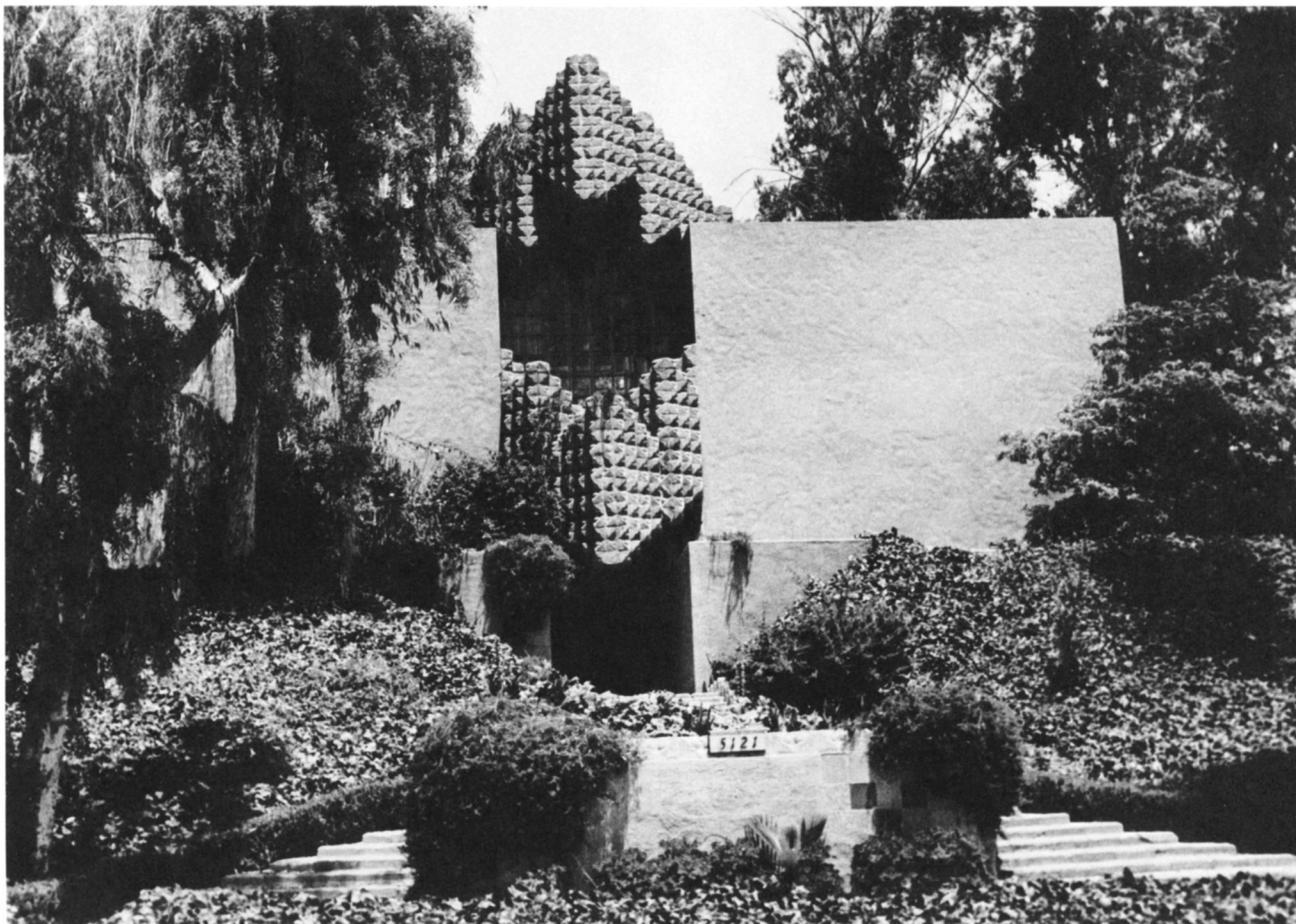


Fig. 21. Lloyd Wright. Sowden House, Los Angeles, 1926 (photo: author).

had been Sullivan and others at a much earlier period in Chicago). Many buildings which were essentially Mission in form but boasted elaborate ornament were referred to as Moorish or Indian. Thus, one will often discover individual buildings whose flavor is Islamic—like the Green Hotel in Pasadena—and whose ornament is really Sullivanesque. The thread of this interest in things Islamic was to intensify itself in numerous Moorish-inspired buildings constructed during the 1920s. The Angeles Abbey in Los Angeles by Hugh R. Davies (1928) is the most unbelievable of these buildings.

The link between the second phase of the Spanish Colonial Revival and *avant garde* architecture during the 1920s was in the strong need felt by both groups to discover meaningful historic roots. In this search for precedent, the Southern California architects were simply reflecting a phenomenon which came to dominate European and American art.

The Neo-Classicism of Picasso's paintings of the 1920s, the new conservatism of American painters such as Marsden Hartley, and the reliance on historical erudition which underlies the poetry of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound in the 1910s

and 1920s was part of the same quest to establish a link between the new and experimental and the art of the past. These painters, writers, and architects quite purposely sought out their historic roots either in the depth of their European heritage (i.e. in the classical world of Greece and Rome) or in one or another of the nonoccidental civilizations. While the usual historical source for Southern California was Hispanic, it is important to note that the *avant garde* as well as many conservative architects turned to the exoticism of the Pre-Columbian architecture of Mexico and Central America.

The best known examples of such borrowing of Pre-Columbian forms is to be found in the West Coast buildings of the second and third decades by Frank Lloyd Wright.³⁷ His Barnsdall house of 1917–1920, and his several precast concrete block houses of the early 1920s, reflect his intense involvement with this specific historical precedent. Wright's Ennis house situated on its hill adjacent to Griffith Park in Los Angeles (1924) is a Mayan temple atop its plat-

37. Dimitri Tselos, "Exotic Influence in the Work of Frank Lloyd Wright," *Magazine of Art*, XLVII, Apr. 1953, pp. 160–169, 184.



Fig. 22. Robert B. Stacy-Judd. Community (now Aztec) Hotel, Monrovia, 1925 (photo: author).

form (Fig. 20). In Wright's case the interest in Pre-Columbian forms had occurred long before he came to California, as may be seen in certain details of his own studio in Oak Park (1895), and above all, in the Midway Gardens in Chicago of 1914. But in his work in Southern California—his five houses, his unrealized Doheny Ranch Development (1921), and several other projects—the Pre-Columbian theme overshadowed everything else.

The same historical precedent was the controlling element in the Los Angeles work of the 1920s of his son, Lloyd Wright. The Sowden house (Los Angeles, 1926) with its central Mayan screen (Fig. 21) and the patterned concrete-block Derby house (Glendale, 1926) aptly illustrate Lloyd Wright's involvement with Pre-Columbian forms. In the cases of Frank Lloyd Wright and of Lloyd Wright, these historic and nonoccidental forms were used as a source to create new forms. Such, though, was hardly the case with other Los Angeles architects. Robert B. Stacy-Judd became the major proponent of the "Mayan" Revival (Fig. 22).³⁸

His Community (now Aztec) Hotel in Monrovia of 1925 is unquestionably the most exotic of these revival buildings. Equally flamboyant and even more characteristic of the period was the Mayan Theater (designed before 1928) by the firm of Morgan, Walls and Clements. More restrained in the use of Pre-Columbian ornament was the Sears, Roebuck and Co. store in Los Angeles by the Chicago firm of George C. Nimmons and Co., ca. 1926.

But the *avant garde* figures in Southern California drew not only upon the Pre-Columbian; they also sought inspiration nearer home in the architecture of the Southwestern Indians. Such borrowing had occurred much earlier in some of the designs of Charles F. Whittlesey and later in the work of Frank Mead and Richard Requa. It was R. M. Schindler, though, who translated the plastic surface effects and the projecting vegas of Pueblo architecture into a highly original form, first in his project for the Martin house at Taos, New Mexico (1915), then in his Pueblo Ribera apartments

³⁸ Robert Stacy-Judd, "Mayan Architecture," *Pacific Coast Architect*, xxx, Nov. 1926, pp. 26–31; and also by Stacy-Judd, "Mayan

Architecture: Architect-Explorer Replies to Critic," *Architect and Engineer*, cxxiv, Feb. 1936, pp. 19–23.

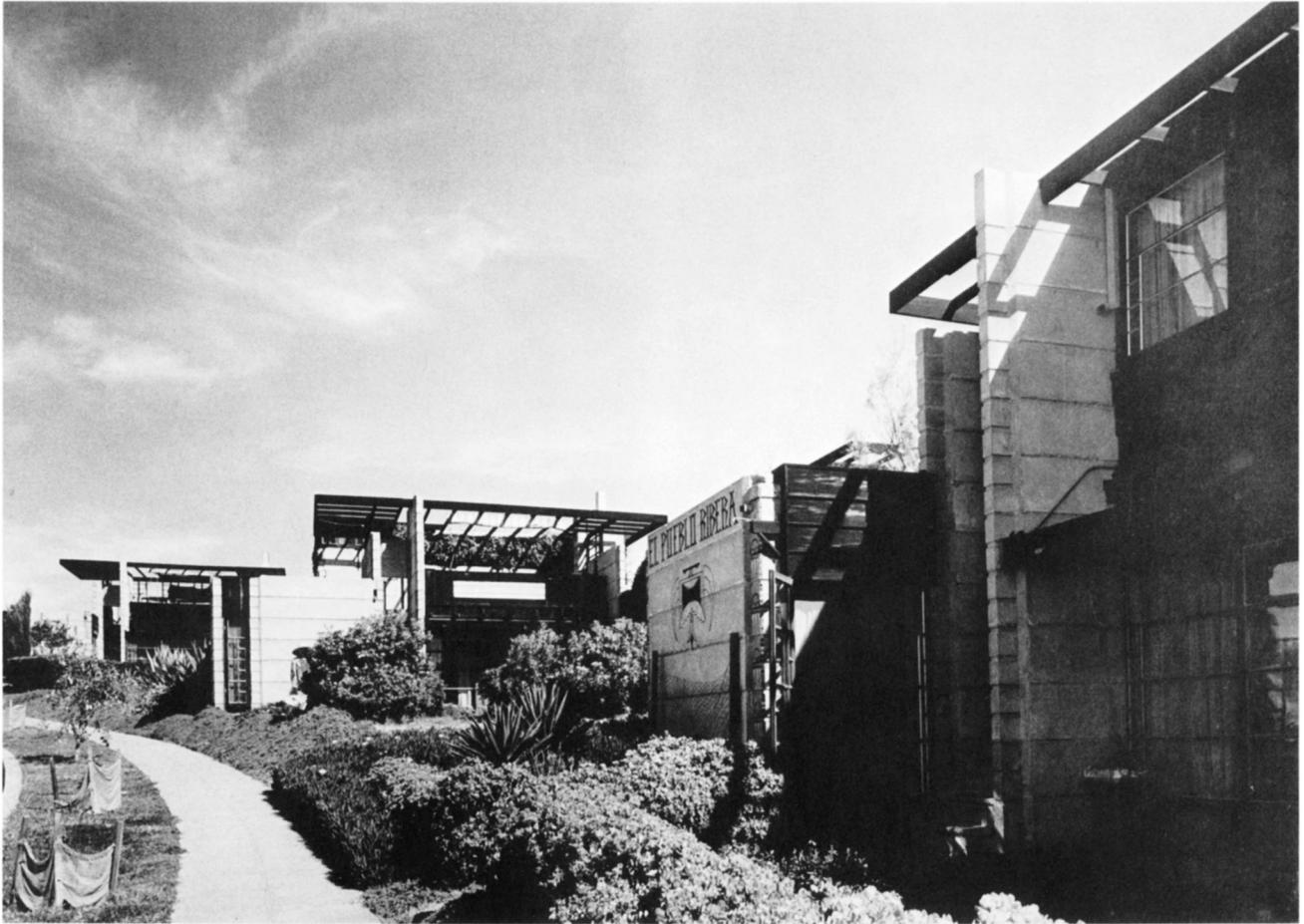


Fig. 23. R. M. Schindler. Pueblo Ribera Apts., La Jolla, California 1923.

at La Jolla (1923) (Fig. 23), and in the concrete walls of his own house in Hollywood (1922).³⁹

The final chapter in the relationship between Secessionist architecture and that of the Spanish Colonial Revival occurred during the 1920s, and extended into the 1930s. The affinity between the two architecture movements became both more subtle and more tenuous. The premises upon which each of the architectures rested were as divergent as one could find. The Spanish Colonial buildings were thought of primarily as sculptural masses existing in space; while the buildings of R. M. Schindler, Richard J. Neutra, and later of Gregory Ain and others were expressive of interior volume defined by thin, rectangular surfaces.⁴⁰ The interior space of the Spanish Colonial building was divided into separate, highly independent spaces; that of the *avant garde*, into a space or spaces which were open and flowing. Exterior and interior space for the Spanish Colonial Revivalist were two separate worlds, for the Secession-

ists they were one. And yet, as Sheldon Cheney pointed out as early as 1930, the work of these Revivalists did indeed share many visual similarities with the more modern buildings.⁴¹ The wood-stud construction meant that the stuccoed wall surfaces of the Spanish Colonial Revival building were not really far different from those of Schindler or Neutra. The limited number of materials and the basic simplicity of brick, wood, and stucco used by the Revivalists led to a simplicity of basic form and a simplicity of detail which was one of the delights of the *avant gardist*. In the end it could be suggested that the Renaissance of modern architecture which occurred in California during the 1930s was due in no small measure to the fact that the visual leap from the Spanish Colonial Revival building to the modern was not a great one. Ironically, the modern movement found its "historic" roots not in the distant past but in the very tradition against which it was supposedly battling.

39. E. McCoy, *Five California Architects*, pp. 157–163.

40. Talbot F. Hamlin, "California Whys and Wherefores," *Pencil Points*, xxii, May 1941, pp. 339–344.

41. Sheldon Cheney, *The New World of Architecture*, New York, 1930, pp. 269–270.