

Glendale Design Guidelines for Residential Buildings in Adopted Historic Districts

ranch style

Ranch Style

The Ranch style was the dominant American residential building type from the 1950s through the 1970s. These houses are characterized by low-pitched roofs, and rambling, one-story forms, use of natural materials, and they may have decorative shutters or porch supports. They are often located on large lots, with small front yards and larger back yards, which in warmer climates become a focal point of family life. Increasing lot sizes and prevalence of the family car enabled the development of these low, rambling houses, many of which featured prominent built-in garages. The Ranch house style, with its roots in pre-War California architecture, epitomizes the rapid growth of suburbs and an altogether new mode of American residential architecture. Subcategories have been dubbed Western Ranch, American Ranch, or California Rambler.

diamond-pane windows on main facade



low-pitched roof covered with original wood shingles

porch recessed under primary roof of main facade

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Siding & Exterior Finishes

character - defining features

- Board-and-batten
- Stucco
- Wood lap or shingle
- Brick may also occur, sometimes in combination with another material.

design guidelines

- Original exterior surface should be preserved and maintained.
- Wood siding of any type should be preserved and should maintain a protective coat of paint.
- Original exterior surface finishes should not be covered with synthetic materials, such as aluminum or vinyl siding or synthetic brick veneer.
- Synthetic spray on stucco is generally not appropriate.
- Ornamentation should not be applied if it did not exist historically.



Above: This Ranch house is clad with wide horizontal board siding.

Below: Brick, stucco, and wood board siding are combined on the exterior walls of this house.

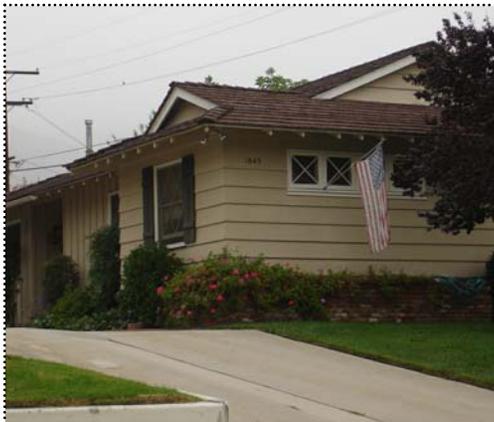


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Above: This Ranch house has a flat roof that draws its influence from the Modern style.

Below: A gable-on-hip roof with open eaves is characteristic of the Ranch style.



Roofs

character - defining features

- Low- to moderate-pitch hipped roofs, or gable-on-hip, are most common.
- Cross gable or flat roofs also occur.
- Roof pitch is generally low or intermediate.
- Eaves generally have moderate or wide overhang and can be boxed or open.
- Cupolas are a typical decorative element on board-and-batten ranch houses.
- Pitched roofs are typically covered with wood or composition shingles.

design guidelines

- The historic roof form should be preserved.
- The historic eave depth and configuration should also be preserved.
- Historic roofing materials should be preserved in place or replaced in kind.
- Replacement roof materials, when necessary, should convey a scale, texture, and color similar to those used originally. Composition shingle is generally appropriate for a full roof replacement.
- Cupolas should be preserved and maintained.
- Roof detail should not be applied if it did not exist historically.

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Porches

character - defining features

- Porches, where they occur, are generally recessed under the primary roof on the main facade.
- Posts may be wood or metal but are typically simplified in form.
- Balustraded porches are uncommon on Ranch houses.

design guidelines

- Historic porches should be preserved.
- Wood and metal elements elements such posts, and rails, should be preserved and maintained with a protective coat of paint. However, any metal elements that were not painted historically should be left unpainted.
- Ornamentation that did not exist historically should not be added.
- Construction of a projecting porch, where it did not exist historically, is rarely appropriate.



Above: The porch on this house is simply recessed beneath the primary roof. The walkway and the chimney are clad with flagstone.

Below: Simple wood posts support the hip roof porch on this house.



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Above: Windows with diamond panes and wood muntins are typical of the style.

Below: This early example of a Ranch house exhibits traditional windows influenced by the American Colonial Revival style.



Windows & Doors

character - defining features

- Windows may be wood, steel or aluminum frame.
- Multi-pane sash or casement windows are common as are single-pane aluminum casements. Windows of different materials generally do not occur on the same structure.
- A picture window or bay window is often located on the primary facade.
- Windows may be arranged in horizontal ribbons or in a more traditional arrangement of one or two windows in each bay.
- Decorative shutters occur on some examples.
- Door may be single or paired. Doors are typically wood and may be paneled or plain.

design guidelines

- The arrangement, size, and proportions of historic openings should be maintained.
- Repair windows or doors wherever possible instead of replacing them.
- Window replacements, when necessary, should match the material and profile of the original windows as closely as possible.
- Vinyl windows generally are not appropriate replacements.
- Decorative elements such as shutters, pediments, and pilasters should be preserved and maintained.
- Door replacements, when necessary, should be solid wood with a pattern of paneling similar to the original.
- Original elements, such as shutters, should be preserved and maintained.

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Architectural Details

character - defining features

- Rooftop cupolas
- Rooftop weathervanes
- Wide brick chimney is common of the front or street-facing facade, often with "weeping" mortar.
- Brick chimney is sometimes painted.

design guidelines

- Original architectural details should be preserved and maintained.
- Original architectural details should not be covered with stucco, vinyl siding, stone, veneers, or other materials.
- Chimneys should be braced rather than removed for seismic concerns.
- Chimney repairs, when necessary, should replicate both the historic bonding and tooling patterns.



Above: Rooftop cupolas like this one are a common detail of the Ranch style.

Below: Short, wide chimneys on the primary facade are common.



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Above: This house has the "rambling" low-profile characteristic of the Ranch style.

Below: Despite the variation in architectural detail, all Ranch houses share an essential horizontality in form and massing.



Massing & Additions

character - defining features

- One story
- Horizontal emphasis, often "rambling"
- Two-car garage is often attached, prominent, and covered by the primary roof.

design guidelines

- Additions should be located at the rear of the property and away from the main façade in order to minimize their visibility from the public right-of-way.
- Second-story additions are strongly discouraged on Ranch style houses. If the addition would be taller than the main building, it should be situated so as not to detract from the primary character-defining facades. The building's overall horizontal massing, the primary character-defining feature of the style, should not be disturbed as a result of any addition.
- Additions should use similar finish materials as the original structure, generally wood or stucco siding. The following exterior finish materials are generally not appropriate for the Ranch style: aluminum or vinyl siding, plywood, synthetic spray on stucco, imitation stone or brick.
- Additional roofing forms and materials should echo those of the original structure. Hipped roofs are generally appropriate for Ranch houses with pitched roofs but they should remain subordinate to the primary roofline visible from the public right-of-way. Rooftop dormers may be appropriate, in some cases, if they do not disturb the overall massing of the façade.
- Ranch-style houses with flat roofs should maintain flat roofs on any additions.
- Windows placement and type should follow a pattern similar to that of the historic building. Because this varies within the style, the Windows and Doors section of the Guidelines should be used to assist in identifying the specific character-defining features of Ranch house windows for a particular structure.

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Multi-Family Ranch Buildings

The Ranch style was used almost exclusively for single-family residences. There are no known examples Ranch-style multi-family residences in Glendale.