

Other modernist structures in Modesto:

Southwest of the main downtown are two buildings that were among the first in Modesto to cater to California's car culture. First is the truly spectacular:

Drive-In Supermarket • 315 H Street
Safeway Corporation, 1937



According to the *Modesto Bee*, when this Safeway store opened in August 1937, it was a "modern drive-in market." The store is classic streamline art deco with a 45 foot tower. "A feature is the rounded parking lot corner. It

is so designed by cantilever construction that no posts are in the way to block the view. When illuminated, the total effect is like one huge showcase."

Art Deco Building • 325 H Street
Architect Unknown, 1937

Sharing the same parking lot is a classic geometric art deco building that was originally Eddie's Drive-in.

Deco Bridges
Stoddard, College, and Johnson Streets
Frank Rossi, 1938

Beautiful streamline art deco bridges crossing Modesto Irrigation District canal number 4 are often overlooked, though they carry thousands of cars a day. The design continues below water level to the base of the bridge.



Wachovia Bank • 2509 McHenry Avenue
Peters, Clayberg, and Caulfield, 1972

Finally, in north Modesto is one of the city's remarkable buildings. Concrete, corrugated steel, and glass come together to shape an outstanding structure. From the front the building is a soaring right triangle sitting on a glass base. From the back, the building takes on a completely different look with massive concrete bunkers studded by windows. The interior is mysteriously filled with natural light from windows that are not immediately visible from the banking lobby.



MODERNISM

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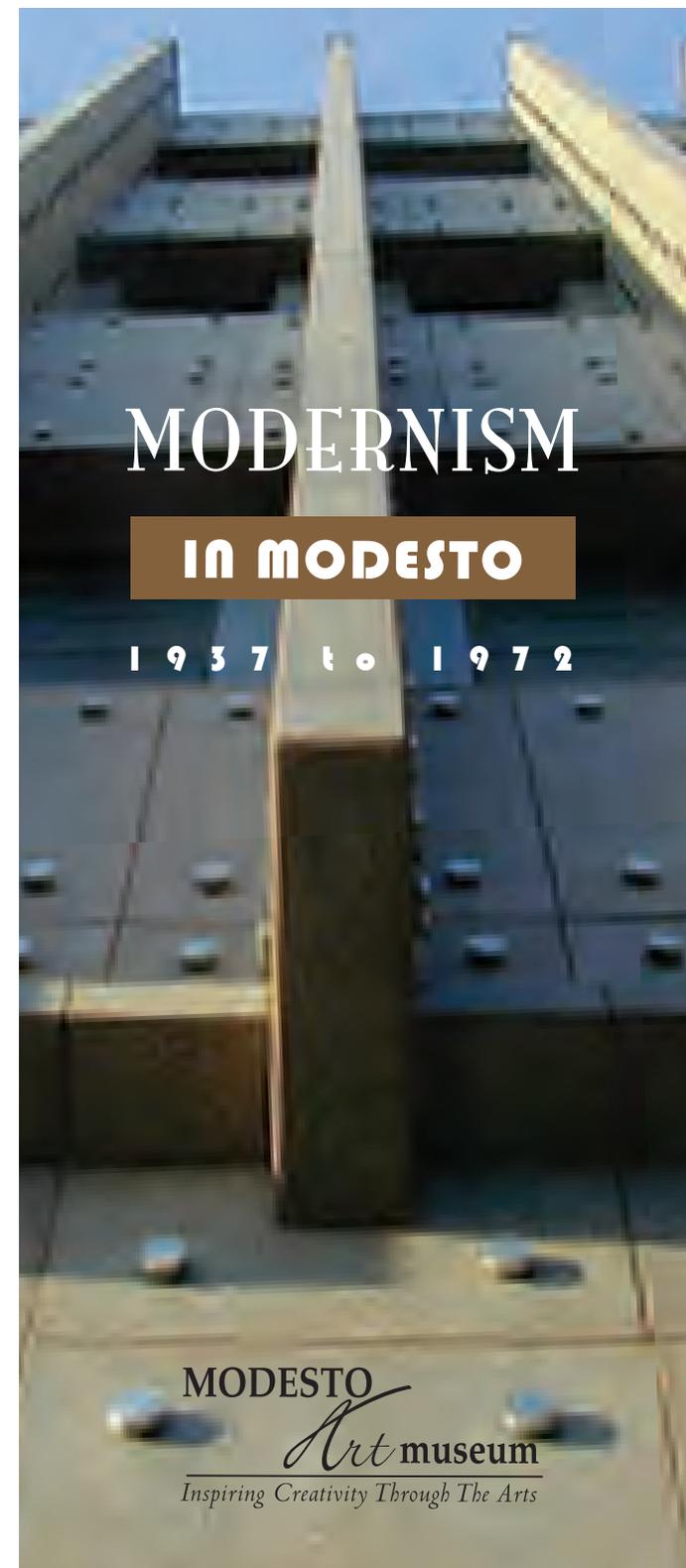
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MODERNISM

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1937 to 1972

MODESTO

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Inspiring Creativity Through The Arts

MODERNISM

IN MODESTO

For decades through the mid 20th century, Modesto was on the cutting edge of modernist architecture in California. Art deco, Bauhaus or International Style, Googie, and mid-century modern are all well represented, and local and world renowned architects designed buildings for Modesto. Though it is impossible to explore every noteworthy building in a guide of this type, completing the walking tour will introduce you to a selection of Modesto's modernist gems built between 1937 and 1972.

**Begin the walking tour at 10th & I Streets.
See the map on the back side.**



1 Wachovia Bank • 833 10th Street Mortensen and Hollstien, 1965

Soaring arches, sculptured ceramic tiles, and a characteristic interior make this a remarkably intact example of modernist classic architecture. Notice the distinctive interior light fixture, bubble ceiling lights, the curving stairway, and the sweeping mezzanine level. The sunburst wall clock is typical of the period, as is the large fluted concrete planter that passes through the glass wall. Be sure to see the arch doorway on the south side of the building. Attractive by day, the building is dazzling when fully lit at night.

2 Modesto City Hall • 801 11th Street Milton T. Pflueger, 1960

In the early 1960s, Modesto's new city government building, designed by the famous San Francisco architectural firm of Milton T. Pflueger, made the cover of *The American City* magazine (May 1961). "Modesto's new municipal building reflects a growing tendency among progressive local governments to make what used to be called "City Hall" into an attractive, charming, and functional civic center. The building, with its garden court and attractive landscaping, sets an example for others who will construct office structures in the city." Unusual terra cotta sun screens are used on the second through fourth floors. The top floor was added in 1978.

3 Stanislaus County Hall of Records • 1100 I Street Russell Guerne De Lappe, 1939

Designed by Modesto architect Russell Guerne De Lappe, this was the first county building in California built in the International or Bauhaus Style. The use of steel, concrete, and glass blocks make for an attractive and well proportioned building. The continuous window strips were unusual at the time.

4 Stanislaus County Library • 1500 I Street Austin, Field, and Fry, 1971

A soaring colonnade on three sides, huge overhanging eaves, and an elevated podium make this a spectacular example of modernist classic architecture. Originally, neo-classical chandeliers similar to the two light fixtures flanking the entrance graced the entire colonnade. Sadly, in a blow to the building's architectural integrity, they were removed in 2006. Notice the sunscreen on the porte-cochere on the back side of the building.



5 Art Deco Office Building • 301 Downey Russell Guerne De Lappe, 1938

Designed as offices for architect Russell Guerne De Lappe and for his physician father, this streamline art deco gem makes use of glass blocks, metal siding, and green and yellow ceramic tiles. This is probably the best preserved art deco commercial building in Modesto. De Lappe designed many government, commercial, and residential buildings in Modesto.



6 Denny's Restaurant • 110 McHenry Avenue Armet and Davis, 1965

Designed by the nationally famous Googie architects Louis Armet and Eldon Davis in 1958, the two Denny's buildings in downtown Modesto (the other is on 6th Street) have the characteristic checkmark roofline. An icon of the 1950s and 1960s, the design was the identifier for Denny's Restaurants across the country.



7 Googie-Style Drive-In • 330 Needham Architect unknown, 1953

The clam-shell curved roof shades the large picture windows that create a light airy interior visible to passing motorists, especially at night.

Originally, this was the Penguin Ice Cream Confectionary.

8 Modernist Office Building • 1313 L Street Architect unknown, 1964

This tiny gem uses concrete blocks, a popular mid-century building material, to create an attractive pattern in the facade. The large picture windows and the overhang add to the building's pleasant lines.



9 AT&T Building • 1025 13th Street Clarence Peterson and Wendell Spackman, 1949

This is one of Modesto's underappreciated architectural gems. The building is massive but elegant. The facade is clad in huge grey ceramic tiles affixed to the building with silver rivets that create a large geometric pattern. The windows are separated by shallow rectangular attached columns, reminiscent of radiator fins that give the building a soaring effect making it look much taller than its four floors.

See photo on front cover.



10 J Street Building • 1317-1325 J Street Architect unknown, 1952

Two of the storefronts in this building are noteworthy. At 1323 there is a glass display case that penetrates the exterior glass and brick wall beckoning passing pedestrians to enter the store. The corner shop, at 1325, is Googie influenced with large picture windows and an unusual tower rising above. It beckons to passing motorists with the usual Googie "look at me" style.

End of walking tour.



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