

TREND TO RANCH HOUSES

A national trend away from the tradition in house design and toward contemporary or modern ideas, exploiting broad windows and blending indoor and outdoor living, is now apparent in every section.

Rambling one-story houses, popularly nicknamed ranch houses, are more and more in demand. Even Texas, home of the ranch, has discovered the suburban ranch house, while the name has been stretched so far around New York that a "two-story ranch house" has been advertised.

Here are reports on what homes people want today in the south, southwest far west and midwest:

Midwest Prefers Variety in Styles

By WILLIAM J. CONWAY

AP Newsfeatures Writer

Ranch type homes are growing in popularity in the midwest.

The best market is in houses that sell for \$11,000 or less.

Those are strong style and price trends. But they don't tell the whole story. Midwestern building, like midwestern weather, features variety.

"The day of look-alike, peasant-in-the-pod houses is past in this region," says Martin C. Huggett, executive vice president of the Chicago Metropolitan Home Builders association. "In order to sell, we have to give the public a diversity of design and an inviting appearance."

The site—narrow lots in cities and wide lots farther out—has a big influence on home plans.

"Two-story brick houses still are very salable in the city," Huggett says. "But the one-story house, generally dubbed the ranch type, is gaining. Out in the suburbs and the country, the one-story house is more popular."

Joseph E. Merrion, one of the bigger builders in the midwest and former president of the National Association of Home Builders, says homes in the \$10,000 and \$11,000 class sell readily.

"But," he adds, "the great untapped market is just below those figures. The general idea is to get a house suited to a family with an income of not more than \$60 a week."

If you drive through the midwest, you will see new houses in a wide range of size and style. Most of them are shaped along more or less familiar lines. But there also are houses of the newest fashion—contemporary and modern designs that get away from traditional patterns.

George Fred Keck, noted Chicago architect and modernist whose work takes him around the central states, reports:

"There seems to be a tendency among builders to go into contemporary design more and more. Although the number of modern houses is comparatively small, the influence of these houses is tremendous.

"Up to the '30s most of the architectural schools taught men how to build in the traditional manner. For the past ten years all the young people who came out of these schools had learned to design in the modern manner. This influence is going to be felt."

Texas Rediscovered The Ranch House

By MARVIN BRAU

AP Staff Writer

Texas home building has heard the call of the wide open spaces. The trend is toward ranch and rambler types.

Low-roofed, wide-eaved, ground hugging homes—city cousins of the real Texas ranch houses—are displacing in popularity the high-gabled English style cottage, the stuccoed, tile-roofed Spanish house and the so-called Colonial two-story.

In some instances, subdivisions originally laid out for two-story homes have been re-zoned for ramblers. The style has changed lot sizes. The 50-foot lot is almost forgotten. The most popular now is 70 feet wide.

A bookstore manager said the popularity of the ranch is so great he has difficulty keeping booklets and drawings of this house in stock.

Since early days, Texas ranchers built their homes with wide eaves, breezeways and porches for shade from the burning sun. Prevailing Texas breezes blow off the Gulf of Mexico, so the real ranch houses were built with eels and wings to give every room a southern exposure to snare every zephyr.

The new trend extends even to lower cost homes. Rooms are smaller. Modern gadgets are fewer. But roof lines and floor plans are similar in all price brackets.

The accent is also on windows. Large picture windows are popular. Spacious porches and patios are a rule in the more expensive homes. Though most of Texas is piped for natural gas heating, a hospitable fireplace is a must in homes of medium and higher price levels.

At the same time central heating, formerly found mainly in larger Texas homes, is spreading to all homes. Compact heating units that fit in large closets have made it possible for the average cottage to have this luxury. Ducts used for warm air in winter are used for circulating cool air in summer.

Wiley Roberts, a director of the Dallas Home Builders association, attributes the spread of the ranch style to modern building methods. The tall roof gave way to the material-saving low roof, he says, because of improvements in insulation and air cooling devices.

There is a big demand for homes with two bedrooms and two baths, Roberts reports, even when an extra bath adds about \$1,000 to the cost. Older people, who used to be satisfied to stay on in the old homestead, now want new homes just like newlyweds, he says. The modern two-bedroom house with its time-saving dishwasher, washing machine and garbage disposal unit appeals to them.

Most construction in the Lone Star state is of brick or stone veneer. A new favorite is "antique" brick.

California Goes Contemporary

By RICHARD G. CUSHING

AP Staff Writer

Ground hugging, flat-roofed, radiant-heated houses with broad expanses of glass are catching on along the west coast as never before.

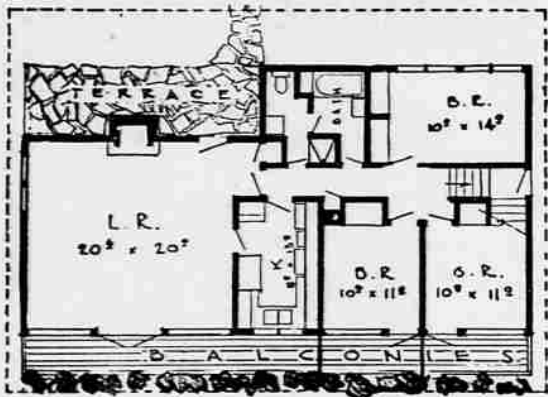
Banks and the FHA are coming to believe the so-called modern house is a safe risk, since it is more and more in demand.

People are going along with imaginative young architects in acceptance of the unconventional. And, encouraged by the trend in the west, architects with a flair for functionalism are migrating west in a steady stream.

What are these modern homes? Although they differ widely, they all use more glass, more wood inside and out, and—most noticeably—make full use of the outdoors in the form of patios and sundecks.

Many are built on concrete slabs, in which are buried networks of heating pipes. Most have flat roofs, with overhangs to furnish shade.

In general the modern houses of the west coast are warm creations of redwood, brick, stone



BUTTERFLY ROOF insures light on uphill side of this hillside house designed by Benjamin Polk, 659 Bay St., San Francisco.

BUTTERFLY HOUSE HANGS ON HILLSIDE

One trouble with building a house on the side of a hill is that the uphill side often suffers from lack of light.

In California where more and more houses are being built on hillsides, Benjamin Polk, of 659 Bay street, San Francisco, offers an answer to this problem. He has worked out a house with a roof that soars upward from the center line. Viewed from the end, the house looks like a butterfly.

The upward slant of the roof at the eaves lets in far more light on the uphill side, and on the downhill side it increases the window space that accents so many modern homes. Polk also has provided "fins" on his balcony which give the bedrooms on that side complete privacy.

Interior drains carry off water from the roof trough.

The living room fireplace is set in the uphill wall, next to the terrace, so that its reverse side may be used as an outdoor barbecue.

For both floors and ceilings, Polk uses a plank-and-beam construction principle instead of the conventional joist. He thereby gains still more space for high ceilings, and makes room underneath for an extra bedroom, bath, and a playroom if family needs require.

and glass, built with a great deal of casual outdoor living in mind. They hug the hillsides, taking advantage of views.

The trend is toward simplicity, easy maintenance, more light, better traffic patterns. The dining room has virtually disappeared in favor of a dining alcove, sometimes separated from the kitchen only by a counter. In areas of temperate climates the garage has largely vanished, a simple car shelter taking its place.

Generally speaking, architects in the San Francisco bay area pioneered this type of construction, fitting it to climate, spectacular views and vegetation. Houses in this section require less insulation, permit easier heating, and allow much glass and flat roofs, in the absence of snow.

Just as the California bungalow and the California ranch style swept the country, many architects and builders feel the California modern will become popular elsewhere, with modifications fitted to climatic conditions.

South Breaks With Tradition

By ED BERND

AP Staff Writer

Grandma's antiques may be out of place in ranch type houses, but that's where you'll find them in Dixie today.

The trend of new housing in the South is definitely modern. Not the extreme modern—but the people who are building houses around Atlanta, for instance, now lean toward the long, low house with all rooms on one floor, with large windows and overhanging eaves.

And, to take advantage of the moderate climate, new houses provide for plenty of outdoor living.

John W. Cherry, an Atlanta architect, says older people still like "old fashioned" houses. By old fashioned, he means with basements, two stories and an attic, and no extreme angles and lines.

But younger couples—and they're in the majority among home builders now—want modern, livable plans.

The most popular plans call for two or three bedrooms, two baths, a large combination living and dining room, usually in a "T" or "L" shape.

"Some young brides shudder when they think how the furniture they've inherited will look in a modern house," the architect says, "but they make it fit, somehow."

The wide eaves and the shape of the house serve double purpose. They help keep out the heat of the southern summer, and they provide sheltered terraces for outdoor living.

Building restrictions keep down the more extreme modern type. City and county restrictions are not so severe, but regulations imposed by private subdivisions block modernistic structures.

The Old South, Colonial house with the tall white columns is pre-war—pre-Civil war—because of building costs.

"The cost of mill work on the columns alone would be prohibitive now," Cherry says.

Flat-Rim Bowl Helps Make Bathroom Vanity

With a flat-rim lavatory bowl, making a combination vanity-lavatory is easy.

At either side of the lavatory and flush with the rim, a plastic-topped, water-resistant board is attached firmly to the wall, and joints around the bowl and at the wall are sealed with plastic cement. A well-lighted mirror is placed on the wall above.

Extra storage space can be provided by building a plastic-topped floor cabinet around the flat-rimmed sink. Plastic colors are available to harmonize with the bathroom fixtures, walls and floors.

Do not sow seeds indoors too early. In a greenhouse, 8 to 10 weeks before the plants can be set out in the garden is enough; in a hot-bed, 6 to 8 weeks, in a cold-frame, or box in the window, 4 to 6 weeks, will be early enough.

'DON'T BE AFRAID OF COLOR'

California's liberal use of color is spreading across the nation. A few years ago New York's staid Fifth Avenue was shocked by a yellow door. Today yellow doors, red doors, blue doors are just among many splashes of color that add individuality to homes everywhere.

One smart new one-and-a-half story rambling type of house has a roof of deep green asphalt shingles, a bedroom wing finished in dark brown stained wooden shingles with bright yellow shutters and yellow trim under the eaves. The living room wing is white painted brick with mortar extruding like frosting between the joints. A final flipp of color is a bright yellow flower box under a broad picture window planted with red geraniums.

Frederic H. Rahr, a professional color consultant who selected the exterior colors for 30,000 homes in 156 federal public housing projects, says "color is a convenient means of personalizing homes. The way to make a house stand out is to consider all the colors you can, then choose those you honestly like best. Don't be afraid to trust your own judgment. Use all your initiative and ingenuity."

Rahr advises beginning a color scheme with the roof, which is usually the largest unbroken mass that meets the eye. "The roof sets the color pace," he says, "just as the dress or suit determines the colors a woman will choose for hat, gloves and other accessories."

Modern roofing materials can be obtained in a variety of hues. It used to be that red tile or blue slate were the only alternatives to a weathered gray roof. However, today asphalt shingles which, according to the Department of Commerce, fill more than 80 per cent of the market, are being made in both solid and blended colors.