

"Using Design to Make the Home Whole": Meaning and the Model Home-Arizona in the 1950s

By

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have written much about home and meaning, yet they have said little about the professionally furnished model home viewed as a cultural artifact. Nor is there literature addressing how the home building industry uses these spaces to promote images of family life to increase sales. This research notes that not only do the structure, design, and layout of the model home formulate cultural identity but also the furnishings and materials within. Together, the model home and carefully selected artifacts placed therein help to express specific chosen lifestyles as that the homebuilder determines. This thesis considers the model home as constructed as well as builder's publications, descriptions, and advertisements. The research recognizes the many facets of merchandising, consumerism, and commercialism influencing the design and architecture of the suburban home. Historians of visual and cultural studies often investigate these issues as separate components. By contrast, this thesis offers an integrated framework of inquiry, drawing upon such disciplines as cultural history, anthropology, and material culture.

The research methodology employs two forms of content analysis – image and text. The study analyzes 36 model homes built in Phoenix, Arizona, during the period 1955-1956. The thesis explores how the builder sends a message, i.e. images, ideals, and aspirations, to the potential homebuyer through the design and decoration of the model home. It then speculates how the homebuyer responds to those messages. The symbiotic relationship between the sender and receiver, together, tells a story about the Phoenix lifestyle and the domestic ideals of the 1950s. Builders sent messages surrounding convenience, spaciousness, added luxury, and indoor-outdoor living to a growing and discriminating home buying market.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Model Home as a Cultural Artifact

A subject of study for writers, poets, philosophers as well as central to the minds of architects and designers is the idea of home. A home fulfills many needs: a place of personal expression, a space to house memories, an escape from the external world, and a nest to grow.

¹ The meanings that people attach to their homes evolve over time and change according to circumstance. Home may integrate different sides of self and is, after the body, the most powerful extension of the human psyche.² Humans respond to their surroundings on many levels: physical, emotional, and cognitive.

But what about a model home – a home professionally staged to promote new home sales? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term model as “a perfect exemplar of some excellence” or “an example for imitation or emulation.”³ Yet, there is a lack of agreement among the definitions of house, dwelling, and home. This study defines the house as a physical building; whereas home and dwelling embody meaning beyond the physical building itself. A home signifies a social environment, such as a house, that when personalized nurtures an attachment.⁴ The model home, therefore, is a staged setting that represents the perfect exemplar of the domestic environment and like a home, holds meaning. It demonstrates the lifestyle interiors of a targeted group based on market research and helps buyers begin to imagine themselves living in the new home (Figure 1).

¹ Clare Cooper Marcus, *House as a Mirror of Self*. (Berkeley: Conari Press, 1995), 4.

² Clare Cooper Marcus, “The House as Symbol of the Self,” *Design and Environment*, 3 (3) (1974): 30-37.

³ *Oxford English Dictionary* (1933, reprint, 1966, Oxford: Clarendon Press), s.v. *model*.

⁴ Richard W. Gibbs, “Identifying the Factors of Meaning in the Home,” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2007).

Scholars have written much about home and meaning, yet they have said little about these staged home environments as cultural artifacts. Nor is there literature addressing how the home building industry uses these spaces to promote images of family life to increase sales. The topic of sales and marketing has had a connection with such disciplines as fashion, industrial design, and graphic design for a long time, but the industry overlooks the study of sales and marketing in relation to interior design and often views it in negative terms—considering merchandising a substandard branch of the design profession.

Though there is obvious debate over the legitimacy of the home building industry in America, owning a single family home is a significant part of the American middle-class family lifestyle.⁵ The single-family home and its archetypical example, the model home, constitute cultural artifacts that document the beliefs and values of a particular culture or society at a given time.⁶ The study of a model home as a cultural artifact falls under the umbrella of material culture, a manner of investigation that uses objects as a foundation of data. Material culture constitutes a branch of cultural history or anthropology.

This research notes that not only do the structure, design, and layout of the model home formulate cultural identity but also the furnishings and materials within. Together, the model home and carefully selected artifacts placed therein help to express specific chosen lifestyles that the homebuilder determines. Through them, the builder shapes lifestyles and tells a story with the intention of attracting a target audience.

⁵ Even with our country's current economic conditions, the American single-family, detached home is still the overwhelming choice of this country's households and the envy of the world. The ideology home ownership is still widely promoted by state and local governments.

⁶ Jules D. Prown, "Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method," *Winterthur Portfolio* XVII (Spring, 1982): 1-19.

This study analyzes 20 model homes built in Arizona, during the period 1955-1956, to investigate the ways in which artifacts — such as the model home, its interiors, and furnishings — shape common perceptions of middle-class values.⁷

Purpose of Research

This thesis analyzes the messages and meanings offered to potential homebuyers by means of builder's model homes during the mid-nineteen fifties. It considers the model home as constructed as well as builder's publications, descriptions, and advertisements. This marks the period in which the single-family American suburban home and a consumer-based building culture enforced family values through home ownership.

Specifically, this research investigates the model home that surfaced during the post-1949 suburban housing boom in North America and concludes with a case study of 36 model homes located in Phoenix, Arizona featured in the 1955 March of the Models and 1956 Parade of Homes. This research focuses on the mid-1950s for several reasons. First, primary literature on this topic is available through the Arizona Historical Society and *Arizona Homes Magazine*. Both home tours were significant events. The first Parade of Homes took place in 1956 attracting more than 60,000 visitors in one month when the estimated population of Phoenix was only 120,000. The information from these highly publicized events provides the necessary documentation for the case study discussed in Chapter 4.

Additionally, this period is relevant from a sales perspective as it marked the beginning of major innovations in the design and merchandising of model homes. With the wartime housing shortage almost remedied, builders could no longer rely on the demand-driven market and therefore required a heightened level of advertising and merchandising standards.⁸ One such mode of publicity was the builder's show house.

⁷ Ellen Avitts, "Live the dream: The rhetoric of the furnished model home at the turn of the twenty-first century," *Proquest*, 20111109.

⁸ "What Lies Ahead for Homebuilding," *House & Home* (January 1952): 138-139.

This research recognizes the many facets of merchandising, consumerism, and commercialism influencing the design and architecture of the suburban home. Historians of visual and cultural studies often investigate these issues as separate components. By contrast, this thesis offers an integrated framework of inquiry, drawing upon such disciplines as cultural history, anthropology, and material culture.

Justification

Why study the 1950's model house? Simply stated, houses make up more than 75% of our built environment and provide a key to understanding social and cultural phenomena.⁹ By studying the single family home and its ideal counterpart, the model home, it is possible to take an up-close and intimate view of domestic living according to culture, time, and/or place.

For decades, the single-family detached home has been a symbol of the American Dream. The home building industry and model home complexes are significant to the architectural and social landscape of America; both represent the development of the suburb as well as embody the aspirations of generations of homebuyers.¹⁰

An examination of the architecture, interiors, and furnishings of these homes reveals a great deal of information about mid-century America and specifically Maricopa County, (the Phoenix area and its surrounding environments). As architectural historian Richard Cloues explains, the "mid-century house has mid-century stories to tell."¹¹

This thesis argues that the early examples of builder's model homes played a remarkable symbolic role in promoting the ideology of family and suburban life in America during the 1950s. It also demonstrates how these model homes became early examples of the way designers manipulate the built environment to sell a product physically and market an idea emotionally.

⁹ Rebecca Crawford, "The Ranch House in DeKalb County," *Times of DeKalb*, April 2010.

¹⁰ Rachel Simmons, "The renovation of post World War Two ranch house interiors: Case study--- Woods House c. 1947," *Proquest*, 20111108.

¹¹ Crawford, 1.

The publication of articles and conference presentations based upon this research will create awareness of the power of interior design as a marketing instrument worthy of future research. In terms of housing, people will continue to require multiple levels of needs and desires met through the design and decoration of their homes.

Organization

This investigation unfolds from a broad overview into a close analysis (Figure 3). Following the Introduction, Chapter 2 explores the conditions that encouraged the post-1949 housing boom. The chapter provides an overview of the housing market following the Second World War and traces the rise of the Federal Housing Administration, the development of the suburb, and the design of the ranch style house.

Chapter 3 examines the industry that built and marketed the single-family home, including the rise of the merchant builder, and the formation of the National Association of Home Builders. The Chapter reviews advancements in the house-marketing process as presented to builders in *House & Homes Magazine* (1952-1957) and includes a look at the 1950's buyer profile, the builder's sales process through advertising and promotional events, and the merchandising of model homes.

Chapter 4 presents a case study of model homes built in Phoenix, Arizona, during the mid-1950s. The section begins with a description of the 1950's Phoenix housing market, in order to place the March of the Models and Parade of Homes in their cultural and architectural-historical context. Promotional brochures, newspaper articles, and images collected from The Arizona Historical Society and *Arizona Home Magazine* supplied the primary documentation necessary for this research (Figure 4). Chapter 5 summarizes the major messages presented in these show houses to ascertain the relationship between the homes and the culture they serve.

Research Methodology

The research mythology employs two forms of content analysis – image and text. The study begins with a descriptive and deductive analysis of the images of the original model homes

featured in the 1955 March of the Models and the 1956 Parade of Homes. The study uses an empirical instrument modeled after Jules David Prown's (1982) article "Mind in Matter: an Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method." In his article, Prown outlines ways to extract information from "mute" objects such as the model home. His approach to object analysis moves through three sequential stages - description, deduction, and speculation. This study adapts and modifies his template to investigate the 1950's model homes featured at the two events.

The instruments introduced in Figures 4 through 7 evaluate the exteriors and interiors of the model homes featured in the 1955 March of the Models and the 1956 Parade of Homes (Figures 4-7). The first stage of analysis begins with descriptive observation and the recording of internal evidence. The analysis progresses from the largest, broadest observations to specific details. Description documents the home's physical dimensions, spatial definitions, and materials and considers the home's content or style. Next, through formal analysis, the investigation examines the home's visual character (i.e., scale, shape, color, pattern etc.)

The second stage of analysis, deduction, moves from object description to an analysis of the relationship between the object and the perceiver. According to Prown, it involves the "empathetic linking of the object [in this case, an image of a model home] with the perceiver's world of existence or experience."¹² Through sensory engagement, or in this case an image, the perceiver transports himself to a specific moment in time and views the object imaginatively or empathetically. For example, in approaching the front door of a model home, what would the perceiver see, hear, smell, taste, or feel? The second step in deductive analysis is the intellectual engagement – or how the viewer interacts with the object. In this case, does the perceiver tour the home or simply view the model from the curb or street? Finally, there is a matter of the

¹² Prown, 8.

viewer's emotional response to the model house. Does the perceiver experience joy, anticipation, fear, etc. when viewing or touring the structure?

Having progressed from descriptive to deductive analysis, the research moves to the mind of the perceiver and to speculative analysis. In this stage, the perceiver forms hypotheses and seeks to uncover the major messages communicated through the design, furnishings, and materials found in the builder show homes.

External evidence collected from the text found in builder's promotional literature and the media validates the hypothesis formulated through speculation. Using textual analysis, the research reveals six major themes surrounding the Phoenix home and lifestyle, namely convenience, luxury, spaciousness, customization, and indoor-outdoor living. Chapter 4 discusses each in detail (Figure 8).

The research revisits the text and images to confirm the presence of these themes in the model homes. The thesis, in short, explores how the builder sends a message, i.e. images, ideals, and aspirations, to the potential homebuyer through the design and decoration of the model home. It then speculates how the homebuyer responds to those messages. The symbiotic relationship between the sender and receiver, together, tells a story about the Phoenix lifestyle and the domestic ideals of the 1950s (Figure 9).

Literature Review

Three general topics are pertinent to this thesis. These resources provide background information on the areas of home and meaning, model home merchandising, and postwar housing. The following literature reviews, chronologically, the information found in books, articles, builders' promotional pamphlets, and scholarly literature.

Home and Meaning. Houses are an important object for study as they are the core of much of our everyday lives. The house is a cultural artifact that is meaningful to people, "and its

meanings are both privately experienced, and collectively determined.”¹³ In the 1977 article “Ideology in Everyday Life: The Meaning of the House,” Robert M. Rakoff describes a house as “a meaningful cultural object.”¹⁴ Designer-builders who conceptualize the product, households who inhabit and use the space, along with researchers, seek out its cultural role. As part of the ordered human world, houses express the feelings, lifestyles, and social order of a society as well as provide arenas for culturally defined activities.¹⁵ While each person, time, and place experiences the concept of home differently, research suggests that it is possible to categorize the concept of home in some way.

For the past three decades, sociologists have made several efforts to categorize the dimensions of home and meaning. D. Geoffrey Hayward proposed one of the first recognized attempts in 1978. Through his research, Hayward outlines nine dimensions of meaning, identifying the home as a set of relationships, personalized space, and a base of activities.¹⁶ Hayward developed his dimensions from a limited number of interviews with people of similar backgrounds, focusing primarily on middle income families living in urban apartments.

In 1986, Judith Sixsmith categorized 19 distinct home types. The types of homes classified by Sixsmith include such examples as the married home, parent’s home, and the friend’s house. Sixsmith bases her research on interviews collected from a group of 22

¹³ Robert M. Rakoff, “Ideology in Everyday Life: The Meaning of the House,” *Politics and Society*, 7 (1) (1977): 85-104.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 85.

¹⁶ D. Geoffrey Hayward, “Dimensions of Home,” In S. Weidemann & J. Anderson (eds.), *Priorities for Environmental Design Research*, EDRA 8 (1978): 418-419.

postgraduate students.¹⁷ Although it was a limited study, her research helped tie the concept of home to “place.”¹⁸

A 1991 study advanced the knowledge regarding home and meaning. The journal article “The Meaning of Home: Literature Review and Directions for Future Research and Theoretical Development” by Carole Despres reviews existing literature on the meaning of home published between 1974 and 1989.¹⁹ The body of the literature defines the meaning of house and home mainly from the viewpoint of traditional households living in single-family detached houses. This household epitomizes the 1955 buyer profile discussed in Chapter 3.

Despres begins her research by defining the concepts people use to communicate their ideas about home verbally. She describes the home as a meaningful cultural object and defines it as a place of residence, refuge, and comfort (Appendix 1). Additionally, Despres identifies four major behavioral interpretations of the meaning of home and its occupants. As outlined in Appendix 2, these four behavioral categories—territorial, psychological, socio-psychological, and phenomenological—interpret the ways in which individuals interact with their surroundings. Despres concludes her research by addressing the need for researchers to adopt a more integrative viewpoint on meaning and home environments.

A recent study (2007), by Richard W. Gibbs, further generalizes the broad aspects of home and meaning. His dissertation builds on the work of previous researchers testing their theories by combining existing data with quantitative and qualitative analysis. The outcome of Gibbs’

¹⁷ Judith Sixsmith, “The meaning of home: An exploratory study of environmental experience,” *Journal of environmental Psychology*, 6 (4) (1986): 281-296.

¹⁸ Chad W. Gibbs, “Designing ‘Home’ into the House,” *Implications Newsletter*, 06 (03), accessed July 10, 2012, www.informedesign.umn.edu.

¹⁹ Carole Despres “The Meaning of Home: Literature Review and Directions for Future Research and Theoretical Development,” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 8 (2) (1991): 96-114.

study is a list of four general categories of home—personal, temporal, social, and physical—with each category containing five specific factors (Appendix 2).²⁰

Homes provide more than shelter. Essential to investigating the model home as a cultural artifact is an understanding of the relationship people have to their homes and the values they attach to them. As real estate promotions became more sophisticated and the market more competitive in the 1950s, housing developers began applying marketing strategies based on psychological data uncovered in human psychology studies.

Material Culture: A variety of theories based on consumerism offer an understanding of the methods and images presented by the model home. The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective (1986), edited by Arjun Appadurai, presents significant research about the relationship between culture and the consumption of goods. Key articles focus on the intersection of merchandise with “temporal, cultural, and social elements.”²¹

More relevant to this thesis is the recent work of Daniel Miller. Miller’s publication, Home Possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors (2001) discusses the relationship between society and domestic objects. According to Miller, people bring artifacts into their homes as means of social and cultural expression.²² His method of research explores individual cultures to interpret the relationship between material culture and consumerism. Miller considers the home a dynamic, rather than a static, environment—“one that shapes and is shaped by its inhabitants.”²³

²⁰ Gibbs, 3.

²¹ Arjun Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²² Daniel Miller, ed., *Home Possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

²³ Ibid.

Material culture explores the beliefs, values, and attitudes of a culture or society through the study of artifacts.²⁴ This thesis considers the home and the model home in this context. While both the home and the model home are physically representations of domestic living, the model home represents the ideal.

Model Home Merchandising. This section draws upon research collected from two books written on the subject of model home merchandising, articles obtained from builder's literature, and scholarly publications.

Since the late 1940s, the professionally furnished, model home has been a primary marketing tool of the home building industry. Model merchandising became a subcategory of the interior design profession in the 1980s. At the turn of the twentieth-century, builders spent on average \$24 per square foot on the design and furnishing of their model homes.²⁵ By 2004, that amount escalated to \$27 per square foot or approximately 50% of the total cost of the home.

The first of only two books written on the subject of model home merchandising is How to Decorate Model Homes and Apartments (1974) written by Carole Eichen and edited by June R. Vollman. Professional homebuilders and interior designers view this book as the industry's first comprehensive, professional how-to guide on the art of model merchandising. Eichen was one of the first design professionals to recognize that model homes sell a "lifestyle" and not just furniture, art, or accessories.²⁶ Her book discusses the fundamentals of model home merchandising including chapters describing the buyer profile, the creation of themes, use of color, space planning, and accessories.

²⁴ Prown, 1-19.

²⁵ Robert H. Frank, *Luxury Fever: Why Money Fails to Satisfy in an Era of Excess* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 22.

²⁶ Carole Eichen, *How to Decorate Model Homes and Apartments* (New York: House & Home Press, 1974), 8.

The industry acknowledges Eichen for coining the terms “interior merchandising” and “buyer profile.” Her book offers insight in the crucial subliminal sales techniques used by the home building industry in the design of their model homes during the 1960s and 1970s. The discipline credits the book with developing model home merchandising and spearheading its acceptance as a profession.

The second book written on the subject of model home merchandising is Color it Home: a Builder’s Guide to Interior Design and Merchandising (1981) by Beverly Trupp. In this book, Trupp offers a systematic “how-to” on merchandising as it applies to interior design. Once again, this book directs its contents primarily to the builder/developer of new housing. The author describes how to merchandise new homes according to a specific target market and covers the areas of theme development, the use of color, built-ins, and accessories.

Chapter 1 explains the difference between decorating and merchandising. Trupp defines decorating as a singular art, aesthetic-oriented, while merchandising combines creativity and design with sophisticated marketing technique. In short, Trupp writes, “Its function is to sell.”²⁷

She believes the well-merchandised model has a sense of totality and excitement. Trupp outlines three important objectives builders should follow to create such homes: identify the target buyer, show the function or purpose of the product, and package it for optimum results in the identified market. Through her practice, she created five basic rules of successful merchandising.

The first rule of merchandising is “to know thy market.” This again considers the buyer demographic and includes such factors as the family’s income, occupation, number of children, interests, and hobbies. Trupp considers the second aspect of model home merchandising, to be the packaging or “wrapping” of the model homes. This excites and delights the buyer.²⁸

²⁷ Beverly Trupp, *Color it Home: A Builders Guide to Interior Design and Merchandising* (Boston: CBI Publishing Company, Inc., 1981), 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

Packaging examples include the wall coverings, floor coverings, window treatments, and materials. Trupp's third merchandising technique is to design the model home around a theme or story. She recommends building these themes around the potential buyers' identified "lifestyle."²⁹ Trupp titles the fourth rule is "accessorize it" and believes accessorization is what "breathes personality" into the interiors. She adds that it is the special touches, through accessorizing, that attach people to a space and create a sense of home.³⁰ Trupp considers the fifth rule "color it" as the most vital of all merchandising techniques as color appeals to the buyer's emotions.³¹ She regards the use of color the foundation of a successful, sales-generating model home. It is a way of communicating positive messages to would-be-buyers to influence sales.³² Beverly Trupp's Color It Home provides an overview of proven merchandising techniques, to entice the potential buyer and generate positive emotional responses with a goal of selling new homes.

Several articles published in contemporary builder publications and websites describe best model merchandising strategies. A few articles were especially helpful in preparing this research. The article "Ten Merchandising Do's and Don'ts" published in 2002 in *Builder* magazine, compares model home merchandising to the retail industry, which in the author's opinion, has mastered the art of creating ideal lifestyles through visual display. This author encourages builders to follow the retailer's lead, creating home environments that consumers can re-create in their own minds and homes, making them feel as if their dreams are within reach.³³

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 6.

³² Ibid., 7.

³³ "Ten Merchandising Do's and Don'ts," *Builder* (2002), retrieved from builderonline.com, December 2009.

"Nine Minutes and Counting" from *Builder* magazine (2009) stresses the importance of proper model home presentation and warns, "builders have just under nine minutes to make an impression on home shoppers in a model home" and advises this is "why [builders] have to start thinking more like retailers."³⁴

In an interview initially broadcasted on *Builder Radio*, merchandising specialist Mary DeWalt stresses the importance of the model home as an extension of the builder's marketing strategy. In her interview titled *The Marketing Value of Model Home Merchandising*, DeWalt defines model merchandising as "proper packaging" geared for a target audience. DeWalt reminds builders that typical customers look at 50 homes during a shopping cycle and will determine within six seconds if they like a particular home or not. Here again, DeWalt's discussion supports the idea of a physical space acting as a silent seller to promote domestic ideals.³⁵

There exists a handful of scholarly works written on the topic of model homes. Witold Rybczynski's *Home: a Short History of an Idea* (1987) presents several ideas centered on the concept of home. Chapter 2 focuses on how the media markets domestic lifestyles to the public.³⁶ In particular, Rybczynski discusses the concept of comfort in housing design in the late twentieth century by linking it to the historical precedent of comfort. His work presents theories showing how the media presents images of a domestic lifestyle to a middle-class audience and how consumers interpret those images.

The 1998 article "Mixed Messages in Suburbia: Reading the Suburban Model Home" by Clare Cooper Marcus, Carolyn Francis, and Colette Meunier views the suburban model home as an

³⁴ *Nine Minutes and Counting*, retrieved from builderonline.com, December 2009.

³⁵ Mary DeWalt, Interview. *The Marketing Value of Model Home Merchandising Originally, Aired on Builder Radio* (2002), retrieved from builderonline.com, December 2009.

³⁶ Witold Rybczynski, *Home: A Short History of an Idea* (New York: Penguin Books USA, 1987).

artifact of contemporary culture.³⁷ Their work centers on research collected from sales literature, floor plans, and furnishings of single-family model homes in the San Francisco Bay Area. The authors identify a series of recurring and sometimes conflicting messages. The research focuses on nine of these concepts, including attachment to nature, security, individuality, privacy, sex role cues, leisure, and children.

One of the few scholars to form a theory surrounding model homes and power is Kim Dovey. Dovey's book Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form (1999) includes a chapter, "Domestic Desires," that connects the dialog of advertising and the spatial arrangement of the suburban model home.³⁸ According to Dovey, model houses present a phenomenology of the future, an ideal world, packaged for consumption that entices the consumer. She writes, "The model home is a mirror which reflects and reproduces a suburban dream world." She concludes the chapter by stating that the experience of home is "the most primary of special meanings and ideologies."³⁹

In 2000, Ellen Avitts Menefee wrote a dissertation on model home merchandising called "The Stories Houses Tell: Model Homes and the Consumer Imagination." Menefee's research explores how model home merchandisers create and communicate "family mythologies" through the layout, design, and furnishings presented in model home interiors.⁴⁰ Her work focuses on the single-family detached house type that made up the largest percentage of new home starts in the late twentieth century. Menefee suggests that the model home, its surroundings, and its

³⁷ Clare Cooper Marcus et al, "Mixed Messages in Suburbia: Reading the Suburban Model Home," *Places* 4 (1) (1987): 24-37.

³⁸ Kim Dovey, *Framing Places: Mediating Power in Built Form* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴⁰ Ellen Avitts Menefee, "The Stories Houses Tell: Model Homes and the Consumer Imagination," (Ph.D. Dissertation, MIT, 2000).

furnishings are collections of culturally specific narratives “that situate community, familial, and individual identity” while shaping a cultural ideal of correct living.⁴¹

Her study traces the origins of house merchandising in the United States to place the model in a historical context. Menefee first examines the work of Andrew Jackson Downing (1840s). Menefee considers his books the original medium through which designers passed contemporary beliefs surrounding home and living to a wide audience.

Menefee states that the staged home is a physical representation of the “perceived cultural ideal” and as such becomes a “determinant of viewers’ perception of reality.”⁴² Menefee concludes her dissertation by arguing that the realities represented in the design and layout of model homes are “in fact artificial realities.”⁴³ Menefee believes popular magazines, television, and film determine the dominant cultural ideals introduced in model home presentation and are often in conflict with the realities of life. Menefee paraphrases the work of Jean Baudrillard and states, “The distinction between the real and the unreal is unobtainable, as the demarcations are blurred through the spectacle of presentation.”⁴⁴ Baudrillard views the product of discontent as “apathy”, believing that people are no longer self-determined, but rather influenced by mass media, conform and function as an “anonymous mass society.”⁴⁵

Menefee argues that discontent produces an “increased desire and longing for the ideal.” Such longing ultimately blurs the boundaries among meaning, media representation, reality, and

⁴¹ Ibid., 3.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London, New York: Verso, 1996). First published as *Le Système des objets* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1968).

presentation. The “model” therefore becomes the real, the expected, making concepts of home “mythological” in structure.⁴⁶

Model homes are one of the builder’s greatest sales tools. They represent two sides to buying psychology: logical and emotional. Tangible elements include for example price, location, schools, and square footage. However, the intangible elements connect buyers emotionally to the home. Creating attachment requires knowledge of the market and buyer psychographics.⁴⁷ Although buyers and product types vary across time and place, this literature review addresses a few of the hard and fast rules that pertain to model home merchandising.

The Nineteen Fifties: The following literature focuses on the historic and cultural events that took place in the United States and the Phoenix Metropolitan area in the middle of the 20th century. These issues are relevant when placing the Phoenix model home within a cultural context. The literature deals with issues that surround the impact of World War II, the American family, the economy, government policy, the suburbs, and housing. Chapter 1 further explores these topics.

The books The Emerging Metropolis: Phoenix 1944-1973 by William Collins and Phoenix: the History of a Southwestern Metropolis, by Bradford Luckingham (1917-2008), outline the development of production housing and the “boom years” in Phoenix, Arizona. Surprisingly, neither book discusses the 1955 National Builder’s Week or the 1956 Parade of Homes. The information surrounding these two events came from the clippings collected by members of the

⁴⁶ Menefee, 4.

⁴⁷Psychographics is a term that describes the psychological and emotional characteristics of certain segments of the population. Psychographics center on attitudes and values that define and influence lifestyle choices. Populations with similar demographics can have different values and belief systems. Industry professionals consider model home merchandising a direct application of psychographics with its ability to appeal to specific value and lifestyle profiles through the presentation and manipulation of space. By applying psychographics to model merchandising, many builders increased homes sales as much as 600 percent. A. Rice, “Subliminal Sell,” *Builder* (2002), retrieved from builderonline.com.

Central Arizona Housing Association. The association donated the scrapbook to the Arizona Historical Society in 2008; it is the foundation of this research.

While there are many sources that research American housing during the 1950s, few discuss housing as it pertains to the model home. Massey and Maxwell's article, "From Dark Times to Dream Houses," (1999) explains how the Depression and World War II affected architectural design and home construction. Ned Eicher's book The Merchant Builder (1982) discusses the conditions influencing the 1950s housing boom. Additionally, the book covers the promotion and merchandising of the 1950's model home from the merchant builder's perspective.

Gwendolyn Wright's Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America (1983) provided the majority of the information surrounding housing and specifically the middle-class, detached, single family home for this thesis. In each chapter, Wright documents the hopes created by new house designs and the resulting limitations of standardized house construction. Chapter 13, "The New Suburban Expansion and The American Dream," describes the rapid growth of housing and the suburbs during the 1950s and 1960s. In conclusion, Wright argues that the middle-class single-family dwelling institutionalized consumerism, encouraged a false sense of family life, created socially inadequate suburbs, and segregated Americans by class and race.

Summary

The resources found in this literature review set the groundwork for the central theme of this thesis, that is meaning and the model home in Arizona in the 1950s. Sources devoted to home and meaning established the relation between human psychology and model home merchandising. The material culture literature supplies a background on the nature of artifacts—such as the model home, furnishings, and accessories—and explains how such artifacts act as agents of social value. Historic literature identifies significant era events that shaped and fashioned home architecture, building, design, and the ideals of a generation.

This literature raises several important questions. First, what major marketing strategies did builders use in the presentation of the 1950's model home? What messages surrounding home and domesticity did builder's highlight in the 1955 March of the Models and 1956 Parade of Homes promotional literature? How do the design, furnishings, and materials presented in the show houses communicate messages? Finally, what does the model home say about the community and domestic ideals of buyers during the 1950s in Phoenix, Arizona? Chapters 4 and 5 seek to answer these questions.

Chapter 2

1950's HOUSING CULTURE

The Rise of the Federal Housing Administration

Historically, the United States government maintained a hands-off approach when it came to homeownership, leaving financial matters to the private sector. However, extreme consequences of the Great Depression forced Washington to intervene. The Depression saw limited housing production, with an average of only about 250,000 housing starts per year from 1930 to 1939 as opposed to 740,000 housing starts a decade earlier.⁴⁸ By 1933, 1,000 homes were being foreclosed upon every day. The government, under the leadership of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, created the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, an agency that worked to refinance short-term mortgages and replace them with long-term mortgages. The success of this program led to development of the 1934 National Housing Act. Under the 1934 Housing Act, Congress established the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) with the cornerstone of the policy to promote home ownership. The FHA worked to ensure long-term, low-interest loans to families to buy a house and to builders to finance construction. On June 28, 1934, Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed into law the National Housing Act (NHA). Hugh Potter, president of the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) called it "the most fundamental legislation ever enacted affecting real estate and home ownership."⁴⁹ Without assistance from the U.S. Government, large-scale, mass-produced housing would not have been possible.

With FHA backed loans, potential buyers could borrow 90% of the appraised value of the home, with the obligation to make only a 10% down payment. Buyers then had access to 25 to 30-year mortgages that substantially lowered their payments making homeownership affordable

⁴⁸ Ned Eichler, *The Merchant Builders* (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: MIT Press, 1982). During the previous decade, the number was higher and so was production, averaging about 740,000 per year.

⁴⁹ National Association of Realtors, "Biography: Hugh Potter, Presidents of the National Association of Realtors -1934," (Chicago: NAR, 1980), retrieved from <http://www.realtor.org/bios/hugh-potter>, January 30, 2012.

for millions of Americans (Figure 10). By the 1950s, additional government-financing programs made building homes more profitable to developers and by 1957, the FHA had financed 4.5 million suburban homes, representing approximately 30 percent of the new homes built in any one year.⁵⁰

The FHA was a major catalyst in the rejuvenating of the American housing market. In order for developers to receive the assistance provided in the FHA programs, they needed to comply with certain criteria. The FHA preferred new single-family home construction along with racially segregated subdivisions in suburban areas versus more complex and diverse urban development.⁵¹ Builders instituted government-required land use covenants⁵² as a means of maintaining property values that specified such things as minimum lot size, the house's distance from the street, and curvilinear street design. An FHA technical bulletin on "Planning Profitable Neighborhoods" encouraged developers to concentrate on a specific market based on age, income, and race. The agency refused to finance houses in areas threatened by "Negro invasion" in an effort to prevent future problems of racial violence or declining property values.⁵³ The Federal Housing Administration, 1947 Underwriting Manual openly stated: "If a mixture of user groups is found to exist, it must be determined whether the mixture will render the neighborhood less desirable to present and prospective occupants. Protective covenants are

⁵⁰ "Federal Housing Activities," *Housing Almanac* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Home Builders, 1957), 35-49.

⁵¹ Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (New York: MIT Press April 11, 1983), 248.

⁵² Covenants, which are private contracts between the developer and subsequent buyers, regulated land use and typically impose norms on subdivision property maintenance, architectural design and, sometimes, racial exclusion. Zoning controls also shaped the development of the suburbs, most of which were zoned solely for residential use.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

essential to the sound development of proposed residential areas, since they regulate the use of land and provide a basis for the development of harmonious, attractive neighborhoods.”⁵⁴

Up until 1968, FHA officials accepted the unwritten agreements and existing “traditions” of segregation. In the suburbs, the FHA encouraged the use of restrictive covenants to ensure neighborhood homogeneity by means of overt policies of ethnic and racial segregation.

Post War America

Between the years 1945 and 1946, the armed service released more than 10 million men and women from active duty. The United States experienced unprecedented growth in productivity, technology, and population. Jobs were abundant and family incomes were at their highest levels in history. Most households spent little during the war, and due to pent-up consumer demand, were eager to spend. As a result, the national economy prospered. The GNP rose from just over a \$100 billion in 1940, tripling to \$300 billion by 1955. Average Americans, with the Depression and of war behind them, enjoyed unparalleled economic security.⁵⁵ The post-World War II economic expansion, also known as the the long boom, and the Golden Age of Capitalism, was underway.

The economic boom and the baby boom went hand in hand. The baby “boom” began when U.S. births increased from 2.86 million in 1945 to 3.41 million in 1946 for an increase of 19.2%. An additional 33.94 million (or 44.8 of the total 77.3 million) babies were born between the years 1946-1954 and 41.86 million (or 55.2% of the total) were born between 1955 and

⁵⁴ Federal Housing Administration, *Underwriting Manual*, January 1947, cited in Charles Abrams, “The Segregation Threat in Housing,” in *Two-Thirds of a Nation: A Housing Program*, ed. Nathan Straus (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 219-23.

⁵⁵ Tyson Freeman, “The 1950s: Post-War America Hitches Up and Heads for the 'burbs,’” *National Real Estate Investor*, September 30, 1999, from nreionline.com, retrieved December 31, 2012.

1964.⁵⁶The largest number of births in any single year was in 1957 when 4.3 million babies were born. Researchers speculate that the reason for the 10-year delay stemmed from two factors. First, the government drafted students or they enlisted to serve in the War directly out of high school in the 1940s. Upon their return, veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill. Many Americans did not begin or resume college until they were in their twenties and waited to start families until after they had established their careers. By the time the original G.I. Bill expired in 1956, over seven million veterans took part in an education or training program.

Consumerism and Femeineered Design

Americans believed that purchasing new homes, cars, and new technologies was an act of patriotism and testimony that capitalism was - and would always be - the most successful type of government.⁵⁷ Consumer spending no longer meant the satisfying of a decadent desire but rather contributed to the ultimate success of the American lifestyle.⁵⁸ In mass numbers, Americans purchased items centered on home and family life including televisions, cars, washing machines, refrigerators, toasters, and vacuum cleaners. The acquisition of these items would help modernize their lives. Between 1945 and 1949, Americans bought 20 million refrigerators, 21.4 million cars, and 5.5 million stoves, a heightened level of consumerism that continued well into the 1950s.⁵⁹ Historian Elaine Tyler May observed, "The values associated with domestic spending upheld traditional American concerns with pragmatism and morality, rather than

⁵⁶ JekyllnHyde, "The Baby Boom Generation, Part I of III – The Wonder Years," from www.dailykos.com, retrieved December 31, 2012.

⁵⁷ Bill Yenne, *Going Home to the 50s* (San Francisco, CA: O.G. Publishing Corp., 2002), 8.

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage Books), 2003.

⁵⁹ Yenne, 60.

opulence and luxury. Purchasing for the home helped alleviate traditional American uneasiness with consumption: the fear that spending would lead to decadence."⁶⁰

In addition, May believes the U.S. government and the American population viewed consumerism as a way to deemphasize class differences and to stress traditional gender roles. She noted, with the material items that characterized "the good life" within economic reach, working-class people could achieve the upward mobility that they longed for.⁶¹

Corporations marketed their products to men and women separately, emphasizing underlining gender roles. During the 1950s, women were the primary consumers of home related products. Most advertisers geared ads towards them specifically. The 1950's magazines, brochures and catalogues promoted new appliances starring the "attractive and pleasant homemaker."⁶² Manufacturers of household products did not engineer appliances, but rather "femineered" their designs with the female user in mind. Consider a 1950's refrigerator advertisement that pictures a woman in a conservative dress and apron, standing next to her new kitchen appliance. The caption reads, "Women dreamed them, home economists planned them..." and then declares: the "New 1950 National Harvester Refrigerators...they're femineered" (Figure 11).⁶³ Manufacturers encouraged women to buy timesaving products because they would allow them to spend more time enjoying their husband's company.

⁶⁰ Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 158.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² *Dreams and Reality: Marketing, Design and Consumerism*, from <http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/collection/stoves9.cfm>, retrieved January 30, 2013.

⁶³ Advertisement for International Harvester Refrigerator, 1950, from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/retroarama/5640478873/>, retrieved January, 31 2013.

Advertisements were colorful renditions of the cheerful homemakers, husbands, and children taking pleasure in American prosperity.⁶⁴

The Housing Shortage

Despite the nation's desire to spend, Americans experienced an extreme housing shortage following the War. Gertrude Sipperly Fish pointed out in The Story of Housing that as early as 1943, the National Housing Agency, anticipating the impending housing shortage, began to develop staff recommendations for federal housing direction in postwar America.⁶⁵ The primary concern, for politicians and builders alike, was the housing of millions of projected returning veterans and their growing families.⁶⁶ In 1943, Max Mercer foresaw the postwar housing boom and wrote, "When this war is over, the United States probably will have the greatest building boom in its history."⁶⁷ Mercer attributed the boom to advances gained during wartime production — new materials, new methods, and new skills were waiting for consumers to utilize them.

Even with such foresight, the real estate industry, dedicating the majority of its attention to wartime efforts, was not equipped to respond to the post-war housing shortage. War rationings and shortages, as well as a lack of laborers, limited the country's housing stock, and by 1945, the nation was in need of 3.6 million new homes.⁶⁸ During the war, builders concentrated residential development in areas near defense-related plants and factories, resulting in very little private housing activity. As a result, the housing industry was fragmented and terribly

⁶⁴ Yenne, 60.

⁶⁵ Gertrude Fish, *The Story of Housing* (New York: MacMillan, 1979), 252.

⁶⁶ "What Lies Ahead for Homebuilding," *House & Home* (January 1952): 138-139.

⁶⁷ Max G. Mercer, "That Postwar Dream House," *The Antioch Review*, 3 (4) (1943): 558.

⁶⁸ James Massey and Shirley Maxwell, "After the War: How the Rush to House Returning Vets Recast Suburbia," *Old House Journal*, (March/April, 2004), 88.

inefficient. Instead of a steady growth in home construction following the war, the housing shortage created steeply rising home and apartment prices. As Gwendolyn Wright described it, since veterans had ready funds at their disposal, the problem was the housing crisis. Veterans had to wait until the industry built new homes, and then take out mortgages on what was available at the prices the builders set (Figure 13).⁶⁹

In responding to the crisis, the U.S. government initiated a new housing act in 1949, which guaranteed builders and bankers substantial profits on large residential developments. The authors of the act declared their primary objective to be "decent homes and a suitable living environment for every American family."⁷⁰ An advertisement by General Electric illustrates this promise (Figure 14). Developers took action and built large-scale tract subdivisions along cities' outskirts, and in the year 1950 alone, the industry built 1.5 million homes.⁷¹ Having lived through the economic collapse of the 1930s, the trauma of the war, and the housing crisis, Americans began to view home ownership as a means of stability and security.⁷² Men and women who had fought in the war abroad or supported it at home now felt entitled to a good job and a nice place to raise their families. To many families, this meant the suburbs.

The Suburbs

The returning veterans and their families did not want lease properties in the city; but rather they sought new homes located in the suburbs. Government programs such as the G.I Bill, subsidized low-cost mortgages for returning soldiers. This often made buying a new home in the suburbs cheaper than renting an apartment in the city.

⁶⁹ Wright, 243.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Massey and Maxwell, 93.

⁷² Crawford, 3.

Prior to the late 1940s, the suburbs were often residential areas that bordered a factory or manufacturing plant to house its employees. Following World War II, the suburbs evolved into residential neighborhoods that did not support factories, but instead offered communities with schools, libraries, parks, and public swimming pools.⁷³ The rural environment made these new residential havens more conducive to raising a family, owning a pet, and entertaining family and friends. The city became a place to work while the suburbs became a place to live.⁷⁴

Land was affordable along city outskirts, and with the price of housing escalating, the new suburbs were attractive to consumers. Following World War II, residential property size doubled and tripled. As Richard Longstreth states in his article for *The National Trust for Historic Preservation*, "Never before in the history of habitation in the United States or any other country was such a large share of the population able to afford quarters that were as convenient, as private, and as spacious – both indoors and out".⁷⁵ Young couples saw these new homes with large yards as "their own piece of heaven"⁷⁶ and by the 1950s, 40% of Americans made the move out of the cities and to the suburbs.⁷⁷

There was a distinct sociological pattern to the suburban households in the late 1940s and 1950s. With an average age of thirty-one in 1950, suburbanites were younger than the central city population. There were few single, widowed, elderly, or divorced adults. Young children abounded, and their numbers increased more rapidly, for the fertility rate in the suburbs was higher than it was in the cities. Only 9% of suburban women worked outside of the home in

⁷³ Yenne, 33.

⁷⁴ Yenne, 16.

⁷⁵ Richard Longstreth, "The Extraordinary Postwar Suburb," *Forum Journal –National Trust for Historic Preservation*, 1 (15) (Fall 2000), 17.

⁷⁶ Massey and Maxwell, 89.

⁷⁷ Crawford, 3.

1950, compared to 27 percent for the population as a whole.⁷⁸ Racially prejudiced real estate policies, including restrictive covenants, prevented minorities from moving out of segregated urban neighborhoods to the suburbs. As a result, the 1950's suburbs were predominately white.⁷⁹

As the suburbs began to emerge and commuting to work from residential suburbs became the accepted way of life, the government built more paved roads to accommodate increased traffic. The number of automobile owners doubled from 1935 to 1950. Federally sponsored highways provided better access to the suburbs changing business patterns as well. Shopping centers multiplied, rising from a mere eight at the end of World War II to 3,840 in 1960. Many industries followed, leaving the cities for less crowded sites. Between 1950 and 1960, 20 million people migrated to large-scale housing tracts on the outer reaches of America's cities.⁸⁰ In a movement that has continued to this day, cities were increasingly losing population to the more open areas of the suburbs.

A Housing Industry

In the seven years following the close of World War II, building new houses became a booming business. The home buying process-required support from real estate brokers, title companies, appraisers, and land surveyors, creating employment opportunities that bolstered the U.S. economy. In addition, consumer goods such as furnishings, appliances, and landscaping equipment stimulated the economy, enhanced the Gross National Product, and helped to pull America out of the pre-war Depression.

⁷⁸ Ernest R. Mowrer, "The Family in Suburbia," *The Suburban Community*, ed. William M. Dobriner (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1958), 158.

⁷⁹ On December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, activist Rosa Park refused to give up her seat in the colored section to a white passenger.

⁸⁰ *History of National Association of Home Builders, Through 1943*. Washington D.C.: National Association of Home Builders, 1958, from www.nahb.org/NAHB_History/index.html, retrieved April 15, 2013.

The industry of house building, under the leadership of the National Association of Home Building (NAHB,) grew in scale and professionalism. The NAHB grew out of a real estate association formed in the early years of the twentieth century. In 1908, the National Association of Real Estate Boards (NAREB) created thirty boards across the country and began publishing industry literature shortly thereafter. The first publication was *United Realty*. Beginning in June 26, 1908, *United Realty* accounted the first NAREB convention located in Chicago, Illinois.⁸¹ In addition to the publication, the association established a unified Code of Ethics in 1915 and in 1916 adopted the term “realtor” – a term that could only be used by members of the organization. Membership expanded to 17,504 members by 1923, represented by 745 local real estate boards. The increase in size of the association brought forth further divisions of specialties within the field. In reaction, The NAREB formed the Brokers Division, the Property Management Division, the Home Builders and Subdivides Division, the Mortgage Finance Division, the Industrial Property Division, the Farm Lands Division, and the Realtor Secretaries Division.⁸²

In 1920, the Home Builders and Sub Dividers Division merged. Membership grew to over 400 the first year and exceeded 1,500 during the 1920’s housing boom. Throughout the Depression years of the 1930s, membership plummeted to a low of a few hundred. The Division, then called the Home Builders Institute, separated from the NAREB and officially changed its name to the NAHB in 1942. The NAHB organized a minimum of one conference a year. Meetings focused on aspects of house building such as land development, construction, building technology, and sales.⁸³

⁸¹ Ibid., 8.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

During the war years, members of the NAHB focused their attention on housing for defense workers. The NAHB organization helped to establish industry standards for simplifying construction methods and researching developing materials. Following the war, builders went back to work, and by the 1950s, the organization boasted over 30,000 members.⁸⁴

The national trade journal that represented the NAHB was *House & Home*. Published for professionals in the real estate industry, *House & Home* reported on various NAHB conferences, decrees, and efforts in building, merchandising, and selling. The editors declared in the 1952 premier issue:

"You have great assets with which to work. You have all the resources of architecture, and they have never been greater. You have better, more varied, more specialized materials. You have liberal financing never before possible and far more knowledge than the master builders of the past. You are heirs to the wealth of new technology pouring from the laboratory. Above all, your industry stands finally on the threshold of its industrial revolution. The industrial revolution to which, in other fields, we owe every advance in living standards since colonial times."⁸⁵

If the postwar housing boom created a new industrial revolution, then the merchant builder was its captain. FHA loans dramatically expanded the role of the builder. Instead of constructing houses as independent entities, builders found it cheaper to purchase a large piece of land, make improvements and then cover it with tract housing. As the demand for "tract"⁸⁶ developments exploded, the new breed of house-building specialists, "the merchant", "volume",

⁸⁴ "Builders United in Efforts to Improve U.S. Housing," *The Washington Post and Times Herald* (September 12, 1954): H26.

⁸⁵ Mercer, 558.

⁸⁶ A tract house is defined as one of numerous houses of similar or complementary design constructed on a tract of land. From www.thefreedictionary.com, retrieved April 15, 2013.

“community,” or “operative” builder emerged. Between 1945 and 1952, private merchant-builders were responsible for the construction of nearly six million new homes.⁸⁷

The model for affordable, mass-produced housing techniques came from the Levitt brothers whose planned community in Nassau County, New York, paved the way for merchant-builders. Almost as soon as World War II ended, developer, William J. Levitt (1907-1994), purchased land on the outskirts of cities and used mass-production techniques to build modest, inexpensive tract homes.⁸⁸ His methods and approach to new construction building, when duplicated across the nation, would put the American dream within reach to millions of middle class families.

The Levitt and Sons were not new to the real estate industry. The Levitts worked for the United States government during the war, building nearly 2,400 housing units for the Navy. Unlike the private, luxury homes that the Levitts built during the 1930s and 1940s, these low-cost houses required a different approach to design and construction. The inexpensive, mass-building techniques used during wartime would soon restructure an entire industry.

Between 1946 and the early-1960s, the Levitt brothers built three residential communities in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, totaling more than 17,000 homes. These communities would later become some of the most famous images of suburban life in the 1950s. At the height of production, 30 houses were completed a day. Even so, the level of construction barely kept up with consumer demand; at its peak, Levitt signed 1,400 contracts in a single day. To speed up the house selling process, Levitt created “a sort of assembly-line buying process” that enabled a buyer to purchase a home and submit a contract in roughly three minutes (Figure 15).⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Wright, 242.

⁸⁸ William Levitt developed the first Levittown in a potato field only ten miles outside of New York City.

⁸⁹ “Levittown History,” Levittown Historical Society, 2012, from www.levittownhistoricalsociety.org, retrieved January 9, 2013.

Assembly line methods, first established at the turn of the century, made this level of production possible. The brothers became known as the "Henry Fords" of the housing business - using prefabricated house parts, to save time and cost and by breaking the process of construction down to twenty-six steps.⁹⁰ Instead of the product moving down an assembly line, the assembly line moved along to the next product. The Levitts built their houses at about 800 livable square feet with four to five rooms. Buyers had a choice of five different exteriors, which were based upon the same floor plan.

The Levitts went to great lengths to control costs. Despite their prudence, few critiques could point to substandard work in their developments. Instead of using inferior materials, the Levitts utilized unconventional methods for the more costly phases of the homebuilding process. The Levitt Brothers built homes on concrete slabs that did not have cellars. Other examples included: walls constructed with rock board instead of plaster, and floors built of concrete rather than expensive hardwood.

Despite the Levitts' efforts in providing housing, their communities brought criticism from all directions. Architects and sociologists believed the sameness, both aesthetic and social, would lead to the "slums of the future."⁹¹ In the early years, middle class veterans or professional families made up the community, and everyone was white. By the end of the 1950s, however, the first black family moved into a Levittown community. As original families moved out and new families relocated in, the homogenous nature of the town reflected "a more balanced population."⁹²

⁹⁰ Freeman.

⁹¹ The most frequent criticism of Levittown and most other developments like it, is that it is the "slum of the future." Bill Levitt replied to the criticism as "Nonsense." Many city planners agree with him, because they approve of Levittown's uncluttered plan and its plentiful recreational facilities. http://instruct.westvalley.edu/kelly/Distance_Learning/History_17B/Readings/Levittown.htm.

⁹² Ibid.

Between 1947 and 1951, Levittown grew to over 17,000 homes and critics considered it to be a successful suburban community. Developers in Phoenix and throughout the United States took notice of Levittown, and it would serve as the model suburban community for future developments.

The Ranch House

The symbol of the suburbs was the ranch house. During the early part of the 20th Century several architects including Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), Charles (1868-1957) and Henry Greene (1870-1954), and Cliff May (1909-1989) began experimenting with the design of single-story homes in naturalistic settings. Wright, who is the most prominent among them, designed approximately sixty middle-income "Usonian" homes beginning in 1936. Wright's primary goal was to design a modern and open shelter for ordinary people, at a low cost. The Usonian Homes were typically small; they consisted of a single-story built on a concrete slab, and connected to a carport (not a garage) with a strong visual connection between the interior and exterior spaces. The houses embodied the long, low, and horizontal characteristics that would become the key design features of the ranch house (Figure 16).

The Greene and Greene brothers moved the Arts And Crafts Movement West during the early 1900s. Like Wright, the Greenes linked their houses with nature and designed them on a horizontal plane, but in contrast, the southwest hacienda also influenced their designs. National design magazines featured the works of these architects and therefore, exhilarated the public's growing interest in the ranch.

The traditional ranch house began in California with the Bandini House, designed by Greene and Green in 1903. This house, in short, expressed and took advantage of the empty spaces and the easy California climate and lifestyle, "blending Hispanic traditions with traditional Japanese building methods" (Figure 17).⁹³ Cliff May became the first architect to design, and

⁹³ Greene and Greene Bandini House, from [tp://pc.blogspot.com/2010/04/bandini-house-greene-greene.html](http://pc.blogspot.com/2010/04/bandini-house-greene-greene.html), retrieved January 10, 2013.

then publicize the ranch house. He developed his own unique style, known as the California Ranch (Figure 18). This innovative house type became widely popular in the Southwest, and eventually migrated to the Eastern side of the country in the 1940s, and in 1949, William Levitt's firm, Levitt and Sons, introduced to ranch house to Levittown.

The exteriors of the 1955 ranch house emphasized the horizontal plane, were single story with an open floor plan, included large expanses of glass, vaulted ceilings, and exposed beams. Their exteriors combined materials such as stucco, brick, wood and glass, and typically featured large overhanging eaves with cross-gable, side-gable, or hip-roof styles.

The editors of *Woman's Home Companion* described the mid-century ranch house as "an advanced design for family living."⁹⁴ The social and cultural changes following the end of World War II are evident in the layout of the 1950's ranch house. As GIs returned home, millions of women who had joined the work force during the war were encouraged to leave their jobs to tend to housekeeping and childbearing. The ranch home offered the suburban family an open, free flowing floor plan that was much less formal than other architectural styles, especially when decorated simply. Architects based the open floor plan concept on a new premise of zoning the home, dividing the ranch house into two zones, the active zone, containing the kitchen and living areas, and the quiet zone, containing the bedrooms and bathrooms.⁹⁵

In the 1950s, Americans enjoyed a casual and relaxed lifestyle. Images from the era celebrated outdoor living, Dad at the barbeque, swimming pools, and backyard parties. Outdoor entertaining was more popular than ever, and new advances in technology increased the pleasure of the experience. Advancement in the production of glass promoted the ideal of indoor- outdoor living. Here was the barbeque pit, the jungle gym, the flower garden, the well-

⁹⁴ "Magazine Houses," *House & Home*, (1955): 145.

⁹⁵ Massey and Maxwell, 93.

moved lawn. A mother could watch her children outside through the outside picture window or inside, by virtue of the popular open floor plan.

Large porches and patios were necessary to promote outdoor living; easy flow from indoors to out was important. These patios may appear on the front façade or the back of the home. The back of the house designs drew families from the front porches to the back patios for more private enjoyment of their homes.

The ranch house ascended to enormous popularity.⁹⁶ By the 1950s, the California ranch house, by then simply called the ranch or “rambler house”, accounted for nine out of every ten new houses.⁹⁷ The style is often associated with production housing built during this period, particularly in the western United States. Ranch houses could be mass-produced and they were affordable. Streamlined and modern, the ranch house fit the image of what young families desired in a home, offering an alternative to the traditional revival-style houses.⁹⁸

Summary

There were many factors unique to the postwar period that influenced housing. Over a span of ten years, millions of people grew up, married, and had children. From 1945 to 1946, the armed forces demobilized over ten million service members creating a housing shortage.⁹⁹ The U.S. government responded to the crisis by arranging long-term, low interest rate financing to the public and to developers.

⁹⁶ The *Saturday Evening Post* reported in 1945 that only 14% of the population it had polled was willing to live in an apartment or a “used” house.

⁹⁷ Witold Rybcznski, “The Ranch House Anomaly – How America fell in and out of love with them,” from New York Times.com, posted Tuesday, April 17, 2007, retrieved January 22, 2013.

⁹⁸ Despite their mass appeal over traditional single-family homes, most ranch-style houses of the 1950s had less square footage than the average house of the 1920s.

⁹⁹ Eichler, 5.

Builders acted by producing large-scale housing tracts located on the outskirts of cities. Within existing cities, land was relatively expensive and scattered; the answer was development of the, then, urban fringe. Furthermore, most young families wanted to escape what they perceived as urban ills.

The growth of the suburbs required additional modes of transportation. By 1945, some cities already had local rail systems that the government could easily extend. Automobiles provided additional transportation to the suburbs but required interconnecting roads. Once again, the government intervened and enacted federal programs to join metropolitan areas with the suburbs.

New organizations such as the National Organization of Home Builders surfaced and helped to organize the production of post-war housing. Developers such as the Levitt Brothers created new methods of home construction. With one new home completed every fifteen minutes,¹⁰⁰ Levitt constructed 17,447 homes between the years of 1947 and 1951 and became the model of home construction to thousands of merchant builders.

The postwar consumer was extremely patriotic and wanted to support capitalism by buying American products. As most households could function on one income, women were able to leave the workforce and tend to the home and children while the husband was at work. This further clarified the roles each had in the household and sparked a new emphasis on family life.

The model of family life was the ranch house. The design of the ranch became more conducive to family interaction. This new housing type embodied American optimism and embraced the new materials, technologies, and furnishings that had advanced during wartime. Publisher's Idea houses not only promoted the ranch house and products but also expressed the domestic ideals of the time.

Phoenix shared locally many of the housing conditions experienced nationally. Like the rest of the country, tract-housing developments emerged on the outskirts of the city. The desert

¹⁰⁰ Massey and Maxwell, 94.

climate enticed many service members and retirees to move to the Phoenix area following the war. The ranch style house was the key residential housing type offered by local builders. Like other chapters of the NAHB, local chapters looked to popular shelter publications for inspiration and like other merchant builders, would need to heighten their marketing strategies to remain competitive in a consumer-driven market.

Chapter 3

POSTWAR HOUSING – MARKETING THE DREAM

“Mass building required mass advertising to appeal to a mass market,” wrote Ned Eichler in his book The Merchant Builder¹⁰¹ With the housing shortage remedied, builders sought to improve their marketing strategies to compete in the consumer-driven and builder saturated market. Home builders, who expected to share fully in the decade’s one-million houses-a-year market, would have to make their products more attractive and livable to impress the new “move-up” buyer.¹⁰² The following chapter discusses how the home building industry marketed the single family home to potential home buyers during the 1950s, presenting them as carefully designed modes of advertising.

House & Home Trade Journal

A key publication in the marketing of the 1950’s model home was *House & Home*. When it premiered in January 1952, the editors publicized the magazine as a new venture in journalism, whose primary goal was to provide Americans a better standing of living through affordable and thoughtful housing construction.¹⁰³

“If the goal is to bring the heritage of homeownership to every American we must build into our houses, from early design to closing finance, all the satisfactions that make a house a home. We must build in more space, more convenience in living, more enjoyment of the land, more security of tenure, more neighborhood advantages. We must so use design as to make the home whole and add pleasure to utility.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Eichler, 5.

¹⁰² “What Lies Ahead for Homebuilding,” 138-139.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

By May 1952, *House & Home* had over 100,000 subscribers, making it the primary trade journal for professional house construction and design.¹⁰⁵ *House & Home* became the voice of the National Association of Home Builders, providing awareness into the philosophies, interests, and beliefs of mid-century builders. The publication shared ideas about home and better living, as well as to the use of new materials and technologies in home construction. The editors of *House & Home* wrote, "The responsibility to raise the whole standard of American life falls on the shoulders of builders, architects, suppliers, realtors, and mortgage lenders."¹⁰⁶

Articles encompassed a broad range of subject matter, from construction and design issues, land-use, space planning, decoration, and materiality to sales and merchandising strategies. With the housing shortage remedied, merchant-builders strove to improve the quality of design, construction, and merchandising of their products. A primary goal of the builders was to determine which features raised the standard of American life, "or at least could be marketed as doing so."¹⁰⁷ Additionally, manufacturers of domestic products claimed that their products could improve the marketability of builder's houses. Venders repeatedly voiced such claims throughout the advertisements featured in *House & Home*.

The Sales Process

By the middle of the 1950s, changing circumstances in the market drove merchant-builders to improve both the quality of design and construction in their products. The market also required a heightened level of sales and marketing strategies. Drawing from the fields of advertising psychology, experiential marketing, and traditional industry methods builders developed new sales processes to promote their communities to the point where they eventually caught up with retailers in their merchandising abilities. By the mid-1950s, the home building

¹⁰⁵ "Dear Subscriber," *House & Home* (May 1952): 101.

¹⁰⁶ "How to Sell Houses like These to People Who Now Own Houses like These," *House & Home* (May 1955): 124.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel T. Dodd, "Merchandising the Postwar Model House at The Parade of Homes" (Masters Thesis), 2009.

industry had grown from “a small and scattered business to one that competes with the automobile and agriculture industries.”¹⁰⁸

The house-selling process became an organized and sequential procedure. Builders looked to industry journals like *House & Home* to guide them through the process. In addition, they hired outside consultants in the areas of sales, advertising, publicity, and display and sought the advice of architects, landscapers, decorators, and color consultants. As a result, builders improved their sales and merchandising tactics. Beginning with pre-sale public promotions and ending with the close in builders’ sales centers, marketing the single-family home evolved into a specialized methodology, one still employed by many builders today.¹⁰⁹

Like today, the mid-century builder began the sales process by determining the location of the development.¹¹⁰ Within the general category called location, the most important criterion is proximity to employment, except in the case of homes or lots developed for and sold to retirees or vacationers.¹¹¹ Next, merchant-builders manufactured a product, i.e., a house with a speculative plan that could be mass-produced. Stylish trends, architectural details, and spatial arrangements all complicated that process, but added to the marketability of the finished product. Once developers determined the location and product type, the next phase was to identify the buyer.

Builders began the marketing process by analyzing, in detail, the housing demographics for the community under development and considering the buyer profile. In the premier issue of *House & Home* in 1952, the editors explained that the “volume-built housing market” no longer

¹⁰⁸ JoCoHistory.org, retrieved January 30, 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Dodd, 26.

¹¹⁰ Eichler, 16.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

consisted of only first-time home buyers. Builders literally “built” themselves out of their easy market and by 1956 second-time buyers made over one third of total home sales.¹¹²

Although the home building industry did not coin the term “buyer profile” for another decade, *Better Homes & Gardens (BH&G)* considered the notion of a buyer profile in a 1955 article. The editors asked, “Who goes to see a model home and why?” From a survey from a National Idea House, the editors outline the following visitor profiles: “Not long out of service”, “Young couple married in June”, “The All Americans”, and “Just two in the family now” (Figure 21).

According to *BH&G*, the “Not long out of service” family consisted of a husband, wife, and two children. The publication suggested, “After military service the husband desires a home to entertain friends and enjoys indoor-outdoor living” and added that the wife is fond of the practical kitchen adjacent to the family room where she can “cook, do laundry, and still watch the youngsters.” The “Young couple, married in June” currently lives in an apartment but hopes to start a family in new home. “They came to dream and plan.”¹¹³ The editors referred to “The All Americans” as a “team” consisting of a married couple, two boys, a girl, and dog. This family desired additional square footage and a space to meet their growing needs. “The mother felt the modern home and materials could withstand the wear and tear of domestic life and the father recognized the value of a two car garage.”¹¹⁴ The profile “Just two in this family now” is similar to today’s empty-nester homebuyer. The publication stated that for this family the children have left the home and the space now seems too large for two people. The mother is looking for a house with easy upkeep (which later is termed universal design or aging in place),

¹¹² “One Third of 1956 Homes were Sold to Second-Time Buyers, Fed Reports,” *House & Home* (August 1957): 49.

¹¹³ Curtis Anderson and John Normile, “The Idea Home of the Year,” *Better Homes & Gardens* (1955): 61.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

space to entertain and for visiting grandchildren. The husband is looking for a shop for his hobbies.¹¹⁵

The annual income of the average home buyer in 1956 was \$5,640. Between the years, 1945 and 1960 the price for a lower quality tract house was usually under \$10,000.¹¹⁶ Builders priced the model homes discussed in this thesis at an average of \$13,000 in the March of the Models and in the low to mid \$20,000 range at the Parade of Homes. The price of homes featured at the Parade of Homes was nearly double the national average for 1956.

Builders used large-scale promotional events to sell new homes. "You've got to stir excitement if you want to sell a lot of houses," stated Joe Eichler, a successful mid-century west coast builder.¹¹⁷ By the 1950s, builders required 536 visitors to sell one new home. The more people who toured a house, the more sales the builder would make. Builders agreed the best method to get people to their developments was through promotional events. Merchant builders frequently exposed homebuyers to pre-selling techniques. Many builders prospected in communities through direct mailers and then targeted their clientele with promotional campaigns in local newspapers.

Appliance manufacturers and local industry partners often backed promotional events in order to advertise their products and services. Large-scale builders frequently supplemented newspaper, print, and billboard advertisements with radio and television commercials.

Local home shows helped builders publicize their product. An advertisement from the 1955 Phoenix Home Show provides visual evidence of the excitement stirred from the promotional

¹¹⁵ An empty-nester describes a parent whose children have grown and left home. Universal design refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to both people without disabilities and people with disabilities. The Center for Control defines aging in place "as the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level." From <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/terminology.htm>, retrieved April 13, 2013.

¹¹⁶ Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 234, 236, 371.

¹¹⁷ "How One Builder Sells 23 Houses a Day-Every Day," *House & Home* (October 1958): 106.

efforts of post-war builders (Figure 22).¹¹⁸ This building exposition was the largest ever seen in the southwest and was jointly sponsored by the Arizona Building Contractors and the Arizona Home Builders Association. 35,000 people visited this nine-day event. The show housed 150 exhibits including a 900 square foot den designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and featured in *House Beautiful Magazine*. Live performances from professional magicians, trapeze artists, recording artists, and TV personalities added to the excitement.

Post-war builders often used beauty pageants and similarly sexualized stunts for publicity and promotion.¹¹⁹ During the opening ceremonies of the Phoenix Home Show, judges crowned 17 year old Jeanie Stowe from West Phoenix High as queen.¹²⁰ In other promotions, female models displayed new home products and builder's designs. A photograph from the *Phoenix Gazette* shows a vender instructing a local model on the proper technique for operating some of the latest Delta power tools. Taking their lead from the Detroit auto shows, Phoenix builders hired models to showcase the tools at the Do-it-Yourself Exhibition at the Home Show. The photographs of these beauties became a stock merchandising device for many builder publicity events.

Selected by the sponsoring associations, the women themselves became living, sexualized emblems of the houses and products sold at the event. "The good details and proportions on display in the beauty queens" paralleled quality of design in homes and products.¹²¹ The women marketed something more than the products themselves: "a glamorized lifestyle available to a mass audience from the merchant-builder."¹²²

¹¹⁸ "The Greater 1955 Phoenix Home Show," *Phoenix Gazette*, February 11, 1955.

¹¹⁹ Dodd, 25.

¹²⁰ "West High Girl Chosen Queen," *Arizona Republic*, February 13, 1955.

¹²¹ Dodd, 25.

¹²² *Ibid.*

Builders also used promotional events such as National Builders Week, March of the Models, and the Parade of Homes as built forms of mass advertising. In 1948, the NAHB organized two: an annual housing event called National Home Week, and the Parade of Homes.¹²³ During National Builders Week, merchant builders opened their model homes throughout various points within the city limits. For the Parade of Homes, regional branch divisions of housing associations invited local builders to display a model house at a central location in cities across the country where prospective buyers could view several models at once.¹²⁴ In hundreds of cities, thousands of Americans visited the model houses displayed in the Parade of Homes events. Builders and architects converted entire streets into showrooms, displaying the best construction technology, design, and neighborhood planning that the house-building industry had to offer.

The Parade of Homes embodied a novel form of sales merchandising and publicity, orchestrated by the postwar merchant-builder in response to a new housing market. The model house, on display at the Parade of Homes, was a powerful advertising tool employed by postwar merchant-builders to sell modern design to a new market of informed consumers and second-time homeowners. They served as the largest display of modernized middle-class speculative houses: newly constructed, decorated, and presented to millions of American consumers with ready-to-move-in availability.

The Parade of Homes was one of the sales methods that highlighted the modern and livable qualities of the production-built house. Early home touring events featured demonstrations of modern house-building methods and staged model houses to create an overall marketing presentation. Builders turned to a collaborative relationship with local furniture retailers in an effort to incorporate up to date furnishings into their volume-built houses.

¹²³ *History of National Association of Home Builders, Through 1943*, (From: National Association of Home Builders, 1958).

¹²⁴ "National Home Week," *House & Home* (September 1952): 200.

Post-war builders could no longer rely on a "for sale" sign to drive home-sales stated one *House & Home* article on merchandising techniques.¹²⁵ Beginning in the 1950s, the model home complex became a professional sales-floor, intended to attract and entice potential shoppers. Successful merchandisers considered, with painstaking detail, every aspect that helped to make a good first impression. Colorful roadside billboards caught the attention of car-bound consumers. Builders placed model homes and sales centers at the front of their developments to increase visibility. Once the customers arrived at the model complex, builders sought to give the house curb appeal. One builder claimed, "fifty per cent of selling is done at the curb." Another builder added, "I want a model house that looks so good, that when people drive by, they jam on the breaks and say 'Wow! We've got to see that.'"¹²⁶ Once clients entered the facilities, builders guided customers through the home buying process using skillful sales techniques.

They utilized the empty space in the garages to set up sales centers, or often used trailers that allowed companies to move easily from one project to another. Inside the sales centers, associates staged photographs, floor plans, and large-scale models into housing displays. These displays not only showcased the product but helped customers envision themselves living in the potential home and community. Builders were encouraged to pair two-dimensional floor plans with professional photographs or hand renderings. This again helped consumers visualize the finished product.¹²⁷ Large scale models of the communities complete with schools, churches, and shopping centers became common sales tools.

¹²⁵ "How to Merchandise your House," *House & Home* (May 1953): 154.

¹²⁶ "How to Use the Model House for Home Merchandising," *House & Home* (April 1957): 112.

¹²⁷ "Are your Merchandising Methods Up-to-Date?" *House & Home* (April 1956): 168.

Mid-century builders linked visual displays to showmanship. "Of course, your displays should be interesting and inviting," said one consultant, "but they should also be exciting."¹²⁸ John F. Long, a 1950's Arizona homebuilder, incorporated impressive displays to market his communities. Long's master planned community, "Futurama," located in Maryvale, Arizona, featured a flag-decked courtyard that Long used to display the products that went into his houses. His model home complexes included large-scale "spectacular" billboards to promote the communities hidden values. Such signage advertised a new hospital and medical center, city golf course, a catholic church, parks, schools, and shopping (Figure 23).¹²⁹ According to *House and Home*, product displays got results for two reasons: first, they kept prospective buyers in the community longer, got them to ask questions, and gave the salesperson a chance to talk to them. Secondly, displays satisfied the concerns of skeptics who wanted to know what builders hid behind their walls. With the help of marketing professionals, beautiful women, and visual display, builders "orchestrated" a total house-buying experience.¹³⁰

The Model House

The main tool of home selling became the model house. Builders began acting as retailers and the model house was their display window. The model house possessed the highest quality of construction, a central location and landscaped site, and top choices of amenities and fixtures. Builders furnished and decorated the interiors, which allowed potential homebuyers to visualize their own furnishings in the spaces. While floor plans and photographs, or renderings, helped buyers conceptualize the finished product, staged models allowed them to physically experience the architectural features that may have otherwise been overlooked.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 159.

¹²⁹ "How to Use the Model House for Home Merchandising," 163.

¹³⁰ Dodd, 28.

In its fourth issue, *House & Home* published information on the usefulness of the model house and offered advice on how to stage, decorate, and design it.¹³¹ The editors believed that the model house provided a certain degree of fantasy where homebuyers could imagine their lives improved through homeownership¹³²

Merchant builders embraced the model house as a promotional and merchandising device that created a life-size shopping experience for American consumers. By the late 1950s, builders recognized that the model house was the primary selling tool for the home building industry.¹³³ As stated in the 1957 merchandising issue of *House & Home*, "today's builder knows that circus-like posters and give-away door prizes may draw a crowd, but they do not sell houses. Instead, smart builders based their selling on the "irresistible house."¹³⁴

The editors of *House & Home* devoted the entire April 1957 issue to topics encompassing the design and merchandising of the model house. Hundreds of architects, builders, realtors, decorators, dealers, and lenders in 103 cities and 35 states contributed their merchandising ideas and knowhow for this special issue. Discussion surrounded topics such as how to attract crowds, how to give the house curb appeal, how to "turn lookers into buyers." The issue concluded by highlighting nine success stories in model house merchandising (Figure 24).

The goal of the issue was to help builders make the model house a more effective sales tool. According to the article, the best way for builders to sell houses was to decorate and furnish their models. That was the conviction of over 75% of all model builders questioned by the editors of *House & Home* that year. According to the survey, the furnished model made

¹³¹ "Why and How the Furnished Model Helps Sell Builder's Houses," *House & Home* (April 1952): 135-137.

¹³² "How to Use the Model House for Home Merchandising," 111.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ "Are your Merchandising Methods Up to Date?" 166.

visitors feel at home in the setting. Research indicated that when visitors felt at home they began to identify themselves with the house. Such identification with the house is the tie "that binds the buyer."¹³⁵

The April 1957 issue guided builders through the merchandising process in an effort to create this "binding" effect. *House & Home* articles encouraged builders to hire a professional decorator. Beatrice West (1929-2012) was the nation's leading color consultant and decorator for merchant-builders. Developers hired decorators as subcontractors to colorize, stage, and furnish their model houses. West charged a fee for traveling, working time and based upon, the size of the house, and the scale of the project. The price to furnish and decorate a small Levitt model, for example, amounted to \$1,000 in 1952 or about 1/10th of the overall price.¹³⁶ West's goal was to create an atmosphere that appealed to shoppers, especially to women, without seeming too elite. "You have to make a woman feel that she can afford to get the same effect," affirmed West, "Otherwise, she's scared away because she thinks the house won't look as nice with what she can afford."¹³⁷

Simple ideas regarding materiality elevated the lived-in feel of the model home. Builders regarded paint color and wallpaper as visitor's potential memory-points.¹³⁸ Said one builder, "I have to make a good impression on visitors, get them to remember."¹³⁹ Consultants used pattern and color to manipulate or emphasize spatial configuration. Besides creating an appealing and comfortable atmosphere for the homebuyer, consultants used materials to hide or

¹³⁵ "How to Set the Scene," *House & Home* (April 1957): 117.

¹³⁶ "Why and How the Furnished Model Helps Sell Builder's Houses," 136.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ The article did not actually use the term "memory-point." Builders describe memory points as the thoughtful features that help potential buyers connect with a home. Eichen and Trupps both discuss the importance of memory points in their books on model home merchandising.

¹³⁹ "How to Set the Scene," 117.

deemphasize structural shortcomings, such as a small, cramped, or dark room. Consultants used cool colors, for instance, to make a small room look larger, applied dark colors at the end of a long living room to shorten its length, or used wide-striped wall paper to add height.¹⁴⁰

Builders offered new forms of floor and wall coverings to their buyers. Decorative materials, such as stone, parquet, vinyl, wood, and wallpaper, attempted to catch the attention of perusing shoppers and helped to create a dynamic and enticing atmosphere.¹⁴¹

Furnishings were significant factors in showcasing the 1950's model house. Through furnishings, visitors could envision the potential use and functionality of the space. Designers selected simple furniture, including open-backed chairs, tables with thin legs, and low-profile sofas, to delineate spatial configuration without overshadowing the homes' architectural features, i.e. sliding glass doors, picture windows, or hearths.¹⁴² In addition, visitors stayed longer in furnished houses, especially when builders did not rope off rooms and they were free roam.

Local retailers often sponsored the furnishing of a model, thereby transforming the model house into a satellite showroom.¹⁴³ Decorators used a variety of methods in the furnishing of model homes based on the goal of the builder and their probable buyer. One technique of model house decorators was to mix modern and traditional styles in order to appeal to a larger audience. Builders could also gear their interiors to target specific consumers; age, economic status, background, education, and former residence all became merchandising considerations. Former apartment dwellers, for instance, sought different things from a house than did second-time house buyers.

¹⁴⁰ "How to Set the Scene," 118.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁴² "Why and How the Furnished Model Helps Sell Builder's Houses," 136.

¹⁴³ Dodd, 35.

The editors of *House & Home* urged builders to give their model house a “homey touch” in order to “show people how they might live in your house.”¹⁴⁴ One technique was to furnish rooms with accessories that visitors were likely to have in their homes. Designer, Beatrice West, used toss pillows on chairs and floors, and added plants to create a lived in feeling. Furniture placed off-center added to the informal look.

Another merchandising strategy to make a model house seem like a home was to stage rooms according to their everyday uses. In the kitchen, builders could showcase a serving counter by setting out a plate of doughnuts, large drinking mugs, and a pitcher of milk, or called attention to the modern refrigerator by stocking it with food. One article even claimed that baking food in the oven made the model house smell like a real home.¹⁴⁵ Designers merchandised bathrooms with soap, towels, and throw rugs. Toys in children’s rooms, night clothes in the bedroom, a table set for dinner, and outdoor furnishings all worked to present a livable home.

The goal of the model house was to balance functionality with images representing the good life. Curtains and carpets were functional and added to the warmth and richness of the home.¹⁴⁶ Luxury items such as marbled vanities in the bathroom or a built-in refrigerator-freezer in the kitchen was a “sure-fire” way to sell a house.

By the end of the decade, the fully furnished model home became an accepted marketing tool utilized by professional merchant builders and in 1959, the Eichler Corporation of California invested, on average, \$10,000 to furnish and decorate a single model home. According to

¹⁴⁴ How to Set the Scene,” 126.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 128.

Eichler, these homes represented the “physical manifestation of fantasized lives. A fantasy of possibilities based upon perceived ideals of family life.”¹⁴⁷

Summary

Thousands of visitors attended the openings of new suburban developments to tour the model house. The competitive home-building market made it necessary for builders to incorporate sales techniques into the design of their model homes to entice potential buyers away from the competition.

A number of themes told how 1950s builders sought to publicize and merchandise their homes. Builders emphasized showmanship and spectacle to draw in crowds. They used displays, signs, demonstrations, and exhibits to educate and inform the consumer. These displays were especially important considering how many new features the merchant-builders were making available in their models. The staging and decorating of model homes appealed to the emotional side of the clients and were often gender specific. In the postwar market, house merchandising and selling became a modern profession.

The information in this chapter demonstrates how builders marketed the postwar model house in a competitive, consumer-based building culture. An increase in competition and a growing number of second-time home buyers required different sales efforts from merchant-builders. The industry developed several promotional events including the National Home Week and Parade of Homes to showcase their product. The following chapter research model homes featured in Phoenix, Arizona during the 1955 Builder’s Week and 1956 Parade Homes. Local builders looked to *House & Home* for advice on the publicizing and merchandising of their models. These model homes not only demonstrate the sales strategies utilized by the 1950’s builder, but also reflect the “model of living” during the era and the community in which houses were built.

¹⁴⁷ Eichler, 37.

Chapter 4

PHOENIX: THE 1950'S MODEL HOME

Development in Phoenix, Arizona

Conditions including climate, job opportunities, an abundance of land, and affordable housing made the Phoenix metro area favorable to individuals and families during the 1950s. The ease of attracting an affordable labor force and other low costs of doing business influenced employers to expand or relocate their businesses to the area. In turn, the accessibility of jobs made the Phoenix area even more amenable to workers. Young adults dominated the Valley's population growth during the fifties and remain the most important age group still today (Figures 26-27).¹⁴⁸

The development of the Arizona and Phoenix economies began with the military buildup for World War II.¹⁴⁹ In a campaign to connect the East Coast to the West Coast better, the federal government financed large amounts of infrastructure across the mid-section of the country, including Phoenix. Additionally, the government brought several aerospace companies to Arizona, away from the coasts, where they were vulnerable to enemy attacks.¹⁵⁰ Companies such as AiResearch Manufacturing Co. and Sperry Phoenix Co., which later became Sperry Aerospace Group, came to the area. According to Arizona State University economist Tom Rex,

¹⁴⁸ Since about 1960, retirees have been an important, but secondary, source of growth. "Development of Metropolitan Phoenix: Historical, Current and Future," August 2000, Prepared for the Morrison Institute for Public Policy, School of Public Affairs, College of Public Programs, Arizona State University, As part of the Brookings Growth Case Study Tom R. Rex Center for Business Research, L. William Seidman Research Institute, College of Business Arizona State University.

¹⁴⁹ Betty Beard, "Turning Points in Arizona's Economy," first published February 13, 2012, retrieved from <http://www.azcentral.com/business/articles/20120206biz-centennial-turning-points-in-arizonas-economy>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

by the 1950s, aerospace, defense, and electronics replaced agriculture and mining as the main propellants of the state's economy.¹⁵¹

New residents migrated to the larger Phoenix areas to live and work; yet, the summer heat impeded growth. The Federal Housing Authority, understanding this need, accepted the cost of refrigeration as part of home mortgages in 1957, and by 1960, 25% of all homes in America had central air-conditioning.¹⁵² The widespread use of air-conditioning in the 1950s dramatically increased the state's attractiveness and fueled an unprecedented building boom.

Mass-Produced Homes Get Their Start

According to a 1955 study by the Tile Council of America, the rapid growth of U.S. suburbs stimulated an estimated \$431 million dollar market in new home housing and modernization.¹⁵³ Based on population, the rate of home building per capita in the West was well over twice that for the Northeast, which was also behind the South and North Central regions.¹⁵⁴ In Maricopa County, building permits topped \$100 million in 1954, setting an all-time record or a 41.9% increase over the preceding year.¹⁵⁵

Phoenix homebuilders responded to the boom and by 1955, the expansion of the urban area was evident.¹⁵⁶ A growing number of out-of-state builders entered the local market. Large homebuilders such as Sam Hoffman of The F & S Construction Company Inc. (ranked the third

¹⁵¹ Formerly, the "5 Cs" characterized Arizona's economy: Cattle, Cotton, Citrus, Copper, and Climate.

¹⁵² "Turning Points in Arizona's Economy."

¹⁵³ "Growth of Phoenix Suburbs to Stimulate New Housing," *Arizona Republic*, February 6, 1955.

¹⁵⁴ "Home Construction at High Level in '54," *Gazette*, January 15, 1955.

¹⁵⁵ The *Gazette* guesstimated Maricopa County's population at 460,000.

¹⁵⁶ The CAP-LTER report shows that urban land use jumped to 2.7 percent of the total area, with expansion in all directions from central Phoenix. About five-sixths of the urban expansion between 1934 and 1955 occurred on farmland.

largest builder in the country) and Del E. Webb (ranked twelfth) developed faster and economical ways to build houses setting up the Phoenix area for explosive growth.¹⁵⁷

John F. Long (1920-2008) created the state's first large, post-war suburban development in, what the community then called, the North West Valley.¹⁵⁸ Taking the lessons of Levittown and applying his own innovations, Long filled a demand for housing that had become acute after years of limited home construction during the Depression. The target buyer for his 1954 Maryvale community were veterans, and shortly after opening the community, Long was selling up to 100 homes a week (Figure 28). Maryvale soon became the "popular" quarter for affordable homes for the working class.

Government lending policies also affected new home construction. In 1955, the Federal Housing association raised the average household cap from \$9,000 under the 1949 Wherry Plan to \$13,500 under the 1955 Capehart Plan. The \$13,500 home price soon proved too low, and Congress raised the limit to \$16,500 with the Housing Act of 1956.¹⁵⁹ To hold builders accountable against fraud, Congress set size limitations by the new act as well. FHA guidelines and loan caps are apparent in the pricing and square footage of the homes featured in the "March of the Models."

National Home Week or the March of the Models

Between September 1955 and January 1956, The Phoenix Association of Home Builders (PHAB), formerly Arizona Home Builders Association, conducted two separate and distinct events to promote new home sales in Maricopa County namely National Home Week and The

¹⁵⁷ "Arizona Builders Are Rated Among Americas Largest", *Republic*, January 16, 1955. In achieving third place, Hoffman's organization reported starting 2,858 houses in 1954, compared with 4,900 started Levitt and Sons in Levittown, Pennsylvania. During 1954, Hoffman said 80 percent of his houses were the Clayton model, three-bedroom and two-bath model that sold in Phoenix for \$7,600.

¹⁵⁸ The North West Valley was the area North of Van Buren and West of 19th Avenue.

¹⁵⁹ National Housing Act (1955), *Enotes*, from <http://www.enotes.com/national-housing-act-1955-reference/national-housing-act-1955>, retrieved January 22, 2013.

Parade of Homes.¹⁶⁰ Images and publications from these two events not only demonstrate mid-century merchandising examples but also illustrate the direct relationships among advertising, architecture, and design.

The 1955 National Home Week was the first of the two events. Known locally as the “March of the Models”, the observance placed on exhibit new homes produced by members of the PAHB located in builders’ subdivisions in various parts of the greater Phoenix area. That year, twenty-five model homes were open to the public.¹⁶¹

Local homebuilders publicized the event through newspaper, radio, and television. The principle promotional medium was a special section of *Arizona Homes* in the August 1955 issue (Figure 29). A 20-page special section included photographs and floor plans of each of the model homes with information as to their locations, square footage, pricing, financing, and features (Figure 30). The PAHB did not regulate or standardize the images builders submitted to the magazine and therefore, the photographs, floor plans, and information varied substantially between communities. Unedited, black and white photographs of the homes often included eyesores such as alleys, neighbors’ properties, and telephone lines - unlike today’s marketing practices where builders edit their photographs to eliminate unappealing sightlines. All builders photographed the exteriors with landscaping. Only those homes in former citrus fields housed mature trees.

The 25 model homes ranged in price, square footage, and lot size according to their location. Homes varied from \$8350 to \$26,000 in price, 1,056 to 2545 in square footage, and 6,000 - 43,560 sq. ft. in lot size. A large aerial-type map notes the geographic location of the 25 model homes (Figure 31). A spreadsheet based on the map and builder information shows

¹⁶⁰ Minutes of the Phoenix Association of Home Builders, (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona) August 24, 1955.

¹⁶¹ Appendix 3 lists the 1955 National Home Week “March of the Models” builder entrants along with addresses and contact information.

how square footage, lot size, and pricing substantially increased as the models progressed from the, then, Northwest to the Northeast Valley — moving from the first time homebuyer market to the move up buyer (Figure 32). In terms of spatial allocation, in all models, the living room was the largest room of the house followed by the master bedroom, and kitchen. Overall, builders published photographs of the home's front elevation, living room, dining room, and kitchen. Builders landscaped and fenced in their models. To capture the attention of drive-by traffic, builders incorporated signage and flags into their exterior merchandising (Figure 33).

The Association expected all participants to furnish their model homes fully. All builders but one, who designed and equipped the house himself, furnished their model homes through local furniture retailers (Appendix 3). Flooring, wall, and appliance colorizing “set the stage” for the model home while furnishings delineated space and showed how the house functioned. Furniture displays helped customers envision their own furniture within the space, and in turn, imagine themselves living in the home.

Models 1-3 located in the Northwest Valley, averaged \$8950 in price, 1152 square feet, and sat on 6,000 square foot lots (Figure 34).¹⁶² All homes were rectangular-shaped, single story homes oriented parallel to the street. Homebuilders in this area catered to veterans and first time homebuyers, keeping the costs of the homes under \$9,000 as specified by government financing programs. Developers advertised these homes as attractive, affordable housing options, offering both FHA and VA loans. VA financing included no down payments or closing costs, making homeownership an attractive and viable option.

The exteriors of the models were similar to those of a typical ranch-style house constructed of pumice block with long-low rooflines and minimal exterior decoration. The majority of the homes featured simple, low gable roofs with severe overhangs to serve as “added protection

¹⁶² Communities located North of Van Buren were termed “North.”

against the summer sun."¹⁶³ Each of the three exteriors modeled plans with a front living room, large picture window, and an attached single "cemented" carport. Northwest builders described their homes as "practical ranch styles,"¹⁶⁴ stating that the new house form "typified western living."¹⁶⁵

Promotional literature described the house plan as sound, and one that incorporated all the "ideas of modern living" including an open plan with a coordinating kitchen, breakfast/nook, and storage/utility area.¹⁶⁶ John F. Long commented on the open house plan of his Maryvale Terrace model stating "two solid walls have been completely eliminated to carry out this plan, one between the living-dining area and the kitchen, the other a half high partition between the breakfast nook and the utility room" (Figure 35).

Limited square footage sometimes caused the active and private zones of the homes to overlap. In the 1955 Coloramic Home, the master bedroom shared a wall with the living room and opened to the all-purpose room off of the carport. Size limitations also affected traffic patterns within the home where square footage restricted the number of hallways and foyers that builders could incorporate into the design of these homes. Models 1-3 included a living room, no family room, three bedrooms, with both a one and a three-quarter (sink, toilet, and shower) bath. The living/dining room accounted for the largest square footage followed by the master bedroom. Secondary bedrooms and kitchen were approximately the same size.

Builders selected interior photographs of the home's living room and kitchen area as marketing collateral. The living room interiors showed a variety of wall finishes including

¹⁶³ "1955 March of the Models," *Arizona Homes*, September-October 1955, 16.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

exposed block, smooth plastered walls, and wooden room dividers. Low room partitions supported the open plan concept while providing a decorative element to the room (Figure 35).

Designers furnished the living room in either a modern or a colonial style with few accessories. For example, the Globe Furniture Company supplied the "1955 Coloramic Home" with modern, small scale furniture that was appropriate for the size of the home and target market. Designers organized the living room furniture in an intimate conversational pattern, but did not include a coffee table, that would obstruct traffic as patrons passed through the living room to the kitchen. The furnishings emphasized the functionality of the space while highlighting key architectural features, i.e., the full picture window that provided "large amounts of natural light."¹⁶⁷

Models 1-3 situated the kitchens in the active zones of the homes. The kitchens were extremely utilitarian, catering to the domestic duties of the homemaker. For added convenience, the kitchen opened to the living area, carport, and multi-purpose room (figure 36). The kitchens boasted "ample" flush-door cabinets with counters topped in a colorful no-chip, burn, or peel product such as Formica – "the surface with a smile." Northwest builders incorporated the utility room into the kitchen or storage area of the home. An image from John F. Long's Maryvale Terrace shows a half-high partition wall that conceals the utility area. "Usually the 'step child' in a home, [the utility area] has been brought into the combination kitchen-nook."¹⁶⁸

The bedrooms varied little in size and shape. The master bedroom was only a few square feet larger than the other bedrooms and distinguished by a small, $\frac{3}{4}$ attached bath.

Homes were equipped with the basic amenities including central heating and resilient flooring. Per FHA financing, builders did not include appliances, central cooling, or carpeting in the price of the home, but rather offered them for an additional "monthly payment." Builders

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 16.

provided in-house colorizing services to help buyers coordinate their new home selections with their existing furnishings. Luxury points included “lavish” use of ceramic tile, rich mahogany flush-type doors, kitchen cutting board, kitchen exhaust fan, double sink, and a dinette light fixture.¹⁶⁹

These low cost homes introduced additional decorative elements including wallpaper, jewel-tone interior and exterior colors with confetti patterns in asphalt tile. According to builders, these elements gave families a “head start” in decorating. Free decorating advice helped the home owner “coordinate her colors with her furnishings in mind.”¹⁷⁰

The models located in the Northwest Valley were small in scale, utilitarian, and appealed to first time homebuyers who qualified for VA loans and other government financing. The emotional appeal of these homes was convenience of materials, an open floor plan concept, added space, and most importantly, the low cost of homeownership.

Moving East, models 6-11 increased 46% to \$13,064 in price, 23% to 1,413 in square footage, and 33% in lot size. Like the West Valley builders, the majority of the Central Valley builders offered both VA and FHA financing keeping the price just under the \$13,500 provisional cap of 1955. These homes appealed to both the first time homebuyer as well as the move up buyer who was looking for additional space and a closer proximity to the business and finance center of the central corridor.

All homes modeled were single story with a single-attached carport, and ran perpendicular to the street. Like the West models, builders constructed Central homes out of pumice block. Builders “dressed up the models” by adding additional exterior features including brick, wood siding, grill-work, shutters, planters, and board n’ batten siding. The homes boasted a variety of roof styles including Dutch, gabled, cross gabled, and hipped (Figure 37). According to builder

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 24.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Del E. Web, such facings lent “distinctiveness” to the exterior of the home.¹⁷¹ Homebuilders offered a variety of plans and elevations and designed the communities on curving streets to create a neighborhood with a “custom built look.” All front lots came fully landscaped.

The plans were open, with two specific zones for living and sleeping. The Highland Estates builder presented their plans as flexible and designed for “Arizona living.” Builders saw the home plans as ones that could be adapted to the needs of homeowners rather than dictating predetermined functions.¹⁷² With open-planning in mind, “spacious” foyers at the home’s entrance and additional hallways allowed easy access to the rest of the house and eliminated cross traffic through living areas (Figure 38).

The Central Phoenix models included three bedrooms, and either a one and three-quarters or two baths. The living room accounted for the largest square footage followed by the master bedroom, and kitchen. Designed for growing families, builders incorporated “urgently needed” storage space into the design of their homes. Models featured floor to ceiling linen closets, added built-ins, and an “abundance of cabinets.”¹⁷³

Central builders photographed the public or active areas of the home, i.e., the living room, dining room, and kitchen. Builders modeled either front or rear living rooms that highlighted large picture windows. All living rooms were rectilinear with flat ceilings, and painted plaster walls. In three of the models, the living room was located at the back of the house. An image from Cavalier Homes shows a living room facing a rear patio, with an entire wall “almost a complete expanse of glass” (Figure 39). This model was the only house both designed and furnished by the builder rather than a furniture retailer. Contractor, Hugh Evans, arranged modern furniture in a conversational pattern that emphasized the marketable architecture of the

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷² Ibid., 17.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

glass wall and patio. This image promoted the notion of indoor-outdoor living the literature states “with one wall almost a complete expanse of glass, the living-room seems to blend delightfully with the adjoining patio.”¹⁷⁴ The builder installed broadloom carpeting that would have been an addition to the mortgage. The contractor completely separated the kitchen from the living room with a floor to ceiling wall. Without accessories (i.e., television, game boards, martini glasses), it is difficult to determine the use and formality of the room. Potted plants provided a natural contrast to the hardness of the glass while pleated draperies made the room feel more lived-in.

Builders located the dining room adjacent to the living and kitchen area. Unlike the West models, the Central models provided both formal and informal eating areas. The “large” size dining room of the Cavalier model captured the feeling of “airiness” with the aid of a picture window (Figure 40).¹⁷⁵

Central builders deemed the kitchen as one of the most important rooms of the home; they planned it for ease of use as well as good looks. Designers arranged kitchens for convenience, allowing “adequate space for both a freestanding refrigerator and freezer.”¹⁷⁶ Kitchens included ceramic tile, and often featured built-ins such as a buffet to separate the kitchen and dining area. Such built-ins maintained the open plan concept while providing additional storage space. Builders added an “abundance” of kitchen cupboards believing that consumers “urgently needed” the storage space. Many of the designs offered new kitchen upgrades such as Pioneer Coppertone cabinets with birch wood fronts, color coordinated sinks, and built-in desks. Builders once again “conveniently” located the utility room off the kitchen, carport, and rear porch.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 16.

The 1950s ranch kitchen typically opened to other rooms of the house. The open floor plan allowed the homemaker to perform her daily chores while supervising her children. Even in moderate-cost houses, architects situated the utility room, a space for the new and automatic washer, next to the kitchen. Utility rooms most often opened onto the backyard, so that children could leave their dirty clothes by the washing machine as they came indoors.

The master bedrooms were slightly larger than those located in the Northwest Valley. Builders planned the master bedroom for convenience as well as beauty. Some included individual dressing tables topped with large mirrors. Designers intentionally placed clerestory bedroom windows high and wide to allow more privacy and flexibility of furniture placement.

Every home included central heating, and like the West Models offered, refrigeration or air conditioning, appliances, and carpeting for an additional cost. These homes were larger and more expensive than the West Valley models. Developers built the homes to accommodate the needs of growing families who sought additional space and modern convenience. The home's exteriors and interiors were moderately upgraded, creating a more custom-look that appealed to buyers. Homebuyers were still able to take advantage of VA and FHA loans as the builders kept the home's price, square footage, and amenities within FHA guidelines.

Model 13, Arcadia Villa, located near Camelback Mountain and model 19, Del Ray Estates, located within the Camelback Resort are examples of luxury-type model homes built in the Northeast Valley (Figure 41). From the Central models, the East models doubled in price to \$26,125, jumped 68% to 2380 square feet, and occupied half and one acre lots. Similar to all of the homes displayed during the March of the Models, the East Valley homes were single level, ranch-type houses with low roofs and strong overhangs. Unlike other models, the East models were set back from the street with curved or elongated driveways. None of the builders publicized VA or FHA financing and, therefore, included refrigeration and a built-in stove and oven in the standard price of the home.

The exteriors of the two homes took on a more custom look. With the emphasis on spaciousness and fine living, Model 19 stood on a full acre lot in the famed Camelback resort area. A wide, winding driveway approached the home through a large front yard leading to a double enclosed carport. The exterior mixed batten boards with used and painted brick to create an unusual exterior pattern. The hipped style roof was made of rigid asbestos, hugged the landscape, and offered protection from the desert sun. A wide, winding driveway approaches Model 19 through a large front yard. The exterior of model 21 combined “weeping mortars,” namely decorative mortars that appeared to ooze out between bricks and pumice block. A shingled roof blended well with the provincial feeling of the interior. The homebuyer had a choice of nine exteriors that added to the custom look for each home.

Designed for “spacious living” these attractive homes included wide hallways and foyers, generous closet and storage space, double carports and patios.¹⁷⁷ Model 19, by Allied Construction, was the only model on the tour that included a family room, while model 21 was the only home with four bedrooms. Both models included built-in oven and range tops in the kitchens. In both models, builders once again assigned the living room with the largest square footage followed by a large master bedroom, and kitchen.

Interior photographs included images of the living room, dining room, and kitchen area. In the living room of Model 19, designers imparted a feeling of comfortable luxury from the warm, hardwood paneling to the fireplace. Designers selected eclectic furniture in a variety of styles that appealed to the move-up, luxury buyer who collected personal belongings over time. The furnishings were slightly modernized historical forms – merchandising the best of both old and new.

The kitchens of these model homes were more than utilitarian. According to the Arizona Homes brochure, these kitchens not only saved steps, but also provided enough space for the

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 15.

entire family to enjoy. Ample cupboard space housed all necessities for everyday and entertaining.¹⁷⁸

During the postwar period, the Northeast area became the preferred sector for luxury homes intended for the move-up market. The development of Scottsdale as a tourist destination, golf clubs, resorts, and the opening of premiere shopping centers in the early 1960s (what is now Biltmore Fashion Park and Scottsdale Fashion Square) enhanced its appeal.

The Parade of Homes

The 1956 Parade of Homes (POH) was the second builder event and the first ever attempted in Phoenix, Arizona (Figure 42).¹⁷⁹ Where the March of the Models advertised new builder communities, the Parade of Homes advertised the latest in house-building advancements, construction techniques, material technologies, design standards, and aesthetic trends. The Phoenix Association of Home Builders (PAHB) organized the event and held members to the highest construction, advertising, and merchandising standards. According to the Association, "All outstanding builders involved are [vieing] feverishly to outdo each other in the quality and modern trend of their models."¹⁸⁰ The PAHB required builders to construct their model at minimum 1,200 square feet of livable floor space and named the theme of the parade "what is best for Southwestern living."¹⁸¹ The PAHB set no limitations on the price or the design of the homes.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Each regional division of the NAHB selected local builders, based on volume of production, reputation, and quality of work, to showcase a model home. By 1955, the Parade events had become a major part of the housing industry's fall merchandising scene. In 1955 alone, NAHB-sponsored builders, under the direction of their regional divisions, organized a record 200 Parade of Homes events, displaying nearly 10,000 model houses worth \$120 million. "Record 200 Cities Parade Homes in Bigger Show."

¹⁸⁰ "The Parade of Homes," Phoenix Association of Home Builders, Minutes, 1955.

¹⁸¹ "Parade of Homes is Expected to Be Most Elaborate; to be Grouped on One Street," by Henry Fuller, *Republic*, 1955.

The PAHB required builders to submit a unified rendered drawing of the exterior elevation and plan of each model home. The rendered exteriors enhanced the sales and marketing efforts of the POH, creating an overall look for the advertising campaigns. Additionally, the renderings showcased the model homes by placing them in “dream-like” pastoral landscapes. The renderings sent a more appealing visual message than those generated from a photograph.

The event was widely publicized in several of the local papers including the *Arizona Republic*, *Arizona Daily Star*, *Phoenix Gazette*, *Arizonian Scottsdale*, *Glendale News*, and *Mesa Daily Tribune*. A special section on the POH appeared in conjunction with the regular Sunday Republic Home Section. Over a span of 16 weeks, the editors highlighted a POH model house that included a rendering, floor plan, and description. One *Republic* advertisement read, “See the newest in home design, materials, and furnishings [where] 18 leading builders of Phoenix have completed 18 air conditioned dream homes - each designed to display the very newest in architecture, the most exciting new materials, and the latest in home furnishings. See the Parade of Homes, and then see your builder. He can make your dream home a reality - now.”¹⁸²

POH chairperson, Del Trailor, compared the event to a retail experience and stated, “Unfortunately, shoppers can’t go to a store and see homes lined up like clothes for easy selection.” Homebuyers had to depend on blueprints, pictures and lengthy trips between communities. The Parade of Homes comprised in effect, “a show window for home shoppers” where they could see in one convenient package, a varied selection of 18 homes and the latest features placed within.¹⁸³

The 1956 Phoenix Parade of Homes was located at the central location of 7th Street and Hayward. Builders constructed individual model homes side by side on a cul-de-sac. The

¹⁸² Parade of Homes Advertisement, *Arizona Press Clipping Bureau – Phoenix*, January 13, 1956.

¹⁸³ “Homes Styled for Arizona Living are Set to Go on Parade,” *Glendale News*, Arizona Press Clipping Bureau – Phoenix, January 5, 1956.

\$500,000 home-display was one of the biggest cooperative real estate ventures of its type to take place in the Southwest. Between January 15th and 29th, 18 full-furnished homes were open to the public. During the first three days of the two-week showing, about 20,000 people visited the homes — drawing nearly 60,000 visitors in total. 18 local builders took part with homes ranging in price from \$14,000 to over \$20,000 (Figure 43).¹⁸⁴

The model houses became microcosms of the larger show, with builders touting their individual innovations in each house. The event positioned model homes on quarter acre lots with a median \$21,367 asking price.¹⁸⁵ Most homes included three bedrooms, a family room, and two full baths. Like the March of the Models, contractors assigned the largest square footage to the living room, but this time, the family room and kitchen followed in hierarchy. Sixty-nine percent of the models introduced a family room or den, and a fireplace, and all of the models included large patio areas (Figure 44).

Most houses in the 1956 POH were variations on the typical American ranch aesthetic. Builders upgraded the local house form with added luxuries such as exterior siding, wood awnings, stacked stone, planters, atriums, and glass gables. The cleanliness, balanced proportion, and spatial organization visible in Home 13 by Modern Builders Inc. represent the high quality of house construction and design on tour (Figure 45).

The PAHB selected architectural landscape designer, Mrs. Penny Abel, to create the overall landscape design for the Parade of Homes, while Berridge Nursery handled an additional \$8,000 potted plant floral assignment. The local chapter arranged standardized house signage to display the builder's name and lot number. All participants on a prorated basis shared the cost of the landscaping projects.

¹⁸⁴ "Showmanship Makes Parade of Homes," *Arizona Homes*, January 1956.

¹⁸⁵ Only two of the 18 participants listed actual livable square footage.

The home plans emphasized the open floor plan concept and had clear private and public living zones. The home plans promoted the ideals of indoor living by designing into the plan of the home, open sightlines throughout, picture windows, and rear family rooms with adjoining patios that often featured barbeques, outdoor fireplaces, and swimming pools.

In an article "Distinctive Rooms Paraded," *Arizona Republic* editors described the event as "more than fancy construction" and added the "newest decorations will be seen in each of the Parade's 18 houses."¹⁸⁶ Many local stores and decorators cooperated to make this high-fashion home show.¹⁸⁷ Certain features, like the designed kitchen, skylights, wood paneling, floor to ceiling windows and sliding doors, and the electronic amenities made the house a showcase of modern ideas.

Builders usually highlighted other modernizing features, including built-in kitchens, electrical innovations in the interiors of their homes. An interior photograph provided evidence of the more marketable modernism on display in Home 3 designed by Qvale and Associates out of Los Angeles and built by Associated Builders. Home 3 was the only home designed by an outside architectural firm. The *Arizona Republic* described the home as a "luxurious patio-surrounded home" and "designed for year-around living."¹⁸⁸ The home boasted such added features as an intercom system, drying yard, and large picture windows. The home received the grand prize award titled "Living through Modern Applications of Electricity" a contest to "better Arizona living through modern applications of electricity." Homes were judged on certified adequate wiring, lighting, air conditioning, kitchen and laundry equipment and extra features of the home adding to the "comfort, convenience, and beauty of the structure" (Figure 46).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ "Distinctive Rooms Paraded," *Arizona Republic*, January 1956.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ "Homes on Parade: Luxurious Patio-Surrounded Home," *Arizona Republic*, October 16, 1955.

¹⁸⁹ Russell N. Colvin, JR. "Phoenix Parades its Homes," *Electricity in Building*, August 1956, 10.

All Parade of Home's structures featured a formal living room and most often showcased advancements in decorative upgrades including wood paneling, local stone masonry, and fireplaces. Home 3 by Associated Builders included a two-way stone fireplace and planter that divided the dining room from "spacious" living area.¹⁹⁰ The luminous paneled ceiling lit the fireplace area and helped the builder to win the grand prize award for "The best in Arizona Living." In Home 8 by A. T. LaPrade Jr. and Farmer & Godfrey Construction Co, a Shoji screen added "mood" lighting to the living and entry areas of the home. Designers furnished both homes in eclectic modernism.

The addition of the nook increased the square footage in the kitchen areas of the home. Unlike the kitchens on display during the March of the Models, POH kitchens were fully equipped with built-in ranges, refrigerators, ovens, freezers, dishwashers, and garbage disposers. Designers made food serving easy with the addition of the nook area or a pass-through counter to the dining room. The majority of the builders incorporated both informal and formal dining areas in the layout of their homes. The most notable change in POH kitchen design was that it became a center for family gathering rather than a space solely reserved for mother.

Over two-thirds of the homebuilders added a family room into the design of their homes. The family room of Home 3 featured a stone wall and charcoal broiler in the family room that according to the builder provided "outdoor living indoors."¹⁹¹ Sliding glass doors, full-length windows, and glass gables opened the space of the family room onto the terrace. Modern Age Furniture merchandised the den of the Ellis Suggs house with American contemporary furnishings that added "simplicity" to the den decoration (Figure 47).¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ "Parade of Homes Series," *Arizona Republic*, October 16, 1955.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² "Distinctive Rooms Paraded," *Arizona Republic*, (January, 1956) section 3, 1. 1956.

For the POH, builders increased the square footage of the master bedroom where it ranked second in the home's square footage allowances. A master bedroom representing the Frank E. Knoell collection and designed by Louis Knack of Lou Registers, featured "handsome Italian provincial décor."¹⁹³ Builders arranged bathroom facilities for convenient access to all rooms of the house. Large bathrooms off the master bedrooms featured sunken ceramic tubs, with a shower, double lavatory, and towel cabinets. Builders finished bathroom floors with ceramic tile, and often incorporated a glass wall overlooking the patio.

The Parade of Homes, which took place annually on a national level, was the first ever attempted by the Phoenix Association of Home Builders. The Parade was a widely publicized event that drew large crowds. Association members placed on display 18 model homes to show the "very best" in new home construction, modern innovations, and furnishings.

Summary

The Phoenix area was growing and in need of new dwellings. More and more families were trading in small homes for new and larger ones as their incomes increased. This forced builders to design and build better homes as they vied for the prospective home owners' dollar. Between September 1955 and January 1956, local consumers saw new trends in home construction and design through the display of builder's model home events. The March of the Models promoted numerous builder communities throughout the Valley where The Parade of Homes exhibited the designs of 18 local builders at a central location.

Local developers designed and merchandized the 1955 MOM according to specific buyer demographics such as age, household income, and family size. To qualify for government financing, the majority of MOM builders adhered to the FHA provisions. FHA backed loans did not include such features as central air conditioning, major appliances, or broadloom carpeting. Therefore, builders either offered these items for additional monthly payments or cleverly marketed FHA standard features as convenient. Builders also considered the lifestyles of

¹⁹³ Ibid.

potential homebuyers with an emphasis on convenience, family, and community. Homes located in the Northwest and North Central regions of Phoenix reflected the demographics and values of the first-time homebuyer while the homes positioned around the Camelback Resort exhibited the lifestyles of the move-up or luxury homebuyer. A statement from the MOM literature read, "These things are not a dream for the future but actually can be found in our own community, available to most income groups."¹⁹⁴ Local builders kept tab on the needs and aspirations of the modern family and designed their homes in accordance.

The second event, The Parade of Homes, not only sold houses but also communicated the "very best of Southwestern living" through home design and decoration. Since move-up buyers and "dreamers" wanted more than just a house, the organizers of the POH stressed the importance of the modern family lifestyle. Members worked with interior decorators and landscape architects to merchandise the model houses to appeal to a cross-section of their market. They showcased their model houses for a volume-built market but with added upgrades that would appeal to the second-time homeowner.

The 1955 March of the Models and the 1956 Parade of Homes mixed real estate, architecture, and spectacle. From ribbon cutting ceremonies to beauty pageants, the events represented postwar publicity marvels in the form of housing shows. Both home tour events displayed a language of residential modernism that fitted the Phoenix lifestyle. The open floor plans, horizontal profiles, glass walls, and patios captured the attention of consumers.

¹⁹⁴ "1955 March of the Models," 10.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

"Homes Styled for Arizona Living"

An upswing in the building market continued the demand for housing in America as a growing number of families sought modern homes, a closer contact with the community, and more room in which to live. During the 1950s, Maricopa County led the Southwest Region as a source for new middle-class housing. New families moving into the Valley, expanding families, and persons desiring to move out of rented quarters kept local homebuilders busy.

The American economy overall grew by 37% during the 1950s. At the end of the decade, the median American family had 30% more purchasing power than at the beginning. America moved from a production society that focused on meeting basic needs, to a consumption society, that emphasized customers' wants. Americans became "consumers."¹⁹⁵ Local economies such as that in Phoenix benefitted from steady growth in spending on new homes and domestic consumer goods (Figure 48).

Phoenix developers placed model homes at strategic points in new suburban neighborhoods. Builders promoted new home construction through large-scale home touring events where residents examined the exhibition homes room by room, detail by detail. Between September 1955 and January 1956, the PAHB hosted two home touring events The March of the Models and The Parade of Homes that, together, attracted more than 80,000 people. The PAHB advertised the events in local papers and on radio, declaring a "home of your own" was "the pathway to happiness."¹⁹⁶ Now, over fifty years later, these model homes have a story to tell about a community and a generation. Research revealed four major themes surrounding the

¹⁹⁵ <http://www.shmoop.com/1950s/economy.html>.

¹⁹⁶ "A Home of Your Own is Your 'Pathway to Happiness'." See: the 1955 March of the Models," Phoenix Association of Home Builders, National Home Week Advertisement, (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona), 1955.

Phoenix home and domestic lifestyle, namely convenience, spaciousness, indoor-outdoor living, and added luxury.

Convenience through Home Modernization

Based on information collected from the 1955 MOM and the 1956 POH, Phoenix builders publicized ideas surrounding convenience as the most notable improvements to the mid-century home. The conveniently designed floor plan of the ranch house improved the comforts of living. The social and cultural changes following the end of World War II are evident in the layout. As GIs returned home, millions of women who had joined the work force during the war were encouraged to leave their jobs to tend to housekeeping and childbearing. The open floor plans of overlapping rooms that flowed freely from one room to another allowed the homemaker to tend to her chores while supervising her children. Builders divided all Phoenix model homes into two zones, the active zone, incorporating the kitchen and living areas, and the quiet zone, containing the bedrooms and bathrooms. A Phoenix builder describing the open floor plan wrote: "With all work areas conveniently close, work steps can be considerable lessened."¹⁹⁷

The built-in kitchen and adjoining utility room were the essence of modern efficiency and organization featuring an array of modern appliances, including a dishwasher, garbage disposal, freezer, washer, and dryer. A popular shelter magazine described the ranch kitchen as a "model of efficiency" and one that supported the woman's role within the home.¹⁹⁸ From this "modern laboratory", the homemaker could run the home with "the flick of a switch," while she tended to the children who were playing in the adjoining living room or outside on the patio.¹⁹⁹ According to the MOM promotional literature, kitchen engineering saved steps, saved space, provided greater efficiency, and offered easier maintenance to the consumer. Although the MOM kitchens

¹⁹⁷ "The 1955 March of the Models," 35.

¹⁹⁸ "The Idea Home of the Year," 59.

¹⁹⁹ "A collaborative presentation of the history of Johnson County, Kansas," from www.jocohistory.net, retrieved January 22, 2013.

were smaller than those afforded at the POH, all kitchens offered a heightened level of functionality and aesthetics.

All 36-model homes included a living room area, conveniently designed for adults. Designers staged the room as a haven of serenity for adult leisure and entertaining – off limits to children. The living room often included a built-in radio, storage, and hi-fi unit that played throughout the activity area.

By the mid-1950s, builders produced special places to accommodate the needs of children. First labeled the “don’t-say-no” or the multipurpose room, the family room became a prominent feature in the design and decoration of publisher’s idea houses. Sometimes no more than an extension of the kitchen, the family room was usually accessible from the outside through a sliding glass door. It had durable surfaces, a table for games, and comfortable furniture for the new family pastime of watching television. Although the family room most often served as a place where children could do as they pleased under the supervision of a mother’s watchful eye, it also represented the “architectural expression of family togetherness.”²⁰⁰ In 1955, *House Beautiful* named the family room the most important room of the house, calling it a “place for fun and freedom for every member of the family. As conveyed in the design of the POH models, the den/family room gained favor among Phoenix homebuyer and soon become an “important part of everyday living in Arizona.”²⁰¹

Homebuyers were fervent about technology during the 1950s. New appliances, new materials, refrigeration, and other technological developments made homes more comfortable, livable, and more durable. Homebuyers visited builder’s home tours to see, firsthand, the latest in timesaving technology. Homes featured in the East and Central Valley offered limited lighting and electrical options while the POH tour displayed the newest applications in lighting and

²⁰⁰ Wright, 255.

²⁰¹ Wallace, Ralph. “Design trends of the 1956 subdivision house,” *Arizona Homes*, September-October, 1955, 58.

electrical research. Contractors positioned spectacular electrical features throughout the (POH) models. Decorative lighting details such as fluorescent lamps fitted into valances and illuminated walls attracted the move-up buyer. Future homeowners could operate lighting and temperature controls from remote panels positioned in the master bedroom, kitchen-laundry room, or living room. Designers hid built-in televisions behind slide-away panels located in the living and family areas of the home. Builders also introduced electrical upgrades to the backyard patio featuring speakers for outdoor entertainment.

MOM and POH model homes promoted the open floor plan associated with the new ranch house style. Open floor plans offered spacious, comfortable rooms, and central foyers that permitted easy access to any part of the house. MOM and POH showcased the latest in home modernization including new and durable materials, upgraded appliances, refrigeration, and built-ins. These two home touring events illustrated how consumers could achieve a life of convenience through the modern home. A local builder described his home: "Every cupboard, closet and room was planned to save steps, to add convenience, to make living more enjoyable."²⁰²

Spacious Living

Birth rates peaked in 1955, and households were growing. Convenience through added space was a primary selling point. Homes designed for "spacious living" with "large" rooms and "generous" storage space were reoccurring themes voiced throughout the campaigns.²⁰³ In general, houses became larger providing more adequate and comfortable living space for families. Homes featured at the MOM and POH averaged 1500 square feet - much larger than homes built during the postwar years and larger than the 1955 national standard.²⁰⁴ The MOM

²⁰² "March of the Models," 14.

²⁰³ Ibid.

home tour illustrated how square footage increased with household size. Northwest models catered to the first-time homebuyer, newly married couples or households with small children. Builders held the size of the homes under 1200 square feet and priced them at \$9,000, placing them below the \$10,950 national average. North Central and Northeast Valley homes catered to the move-up buyer, built at about 1500 square feet and priced at \$13,000, ranking them above the national average.

The houses on display during the POH were approximately the same size as the Central and East Valley homes, however, the POH incorporated many "added" and "extra" features such as patios, barbeques, intercom systems, wood paneling, fireplaces, and built-in kitchens that influenced home pricing. Catering to the move-up buyer, builders added additional square footage to the home by introducing new room types, most notably, the family and utility room. Rooms such as the kitchen and master suite also increased in size. The homes designed for the new move-up buyer foreshadowed the future of home design where between 1955 and 2008 homes increased 117% in size, despite declining birthrates. Everything about the home became bigger as builders continually added square foot to the home to accommodate the swelling needs of the consumer. This practice is quite different from 1955, where builders strove to design compact yet efficient homes.²⁰⁵

Indoor-Outdoor Living

In the 1950s, Americans enjoyed a casual and relaxed lifestyle. Outdoor entertaining was more popular than ever, and new advances in technology increased the pleasure of the experience. Large sliding glass doors created an easy flow from indoors to out. Back porches

²⁰⁴ In the 1950s, the size of the typical new home increased to 950 square feet, and "by the 60's 1,100 square feet was typical, and by the 70's, 1,350, from www.census.gov/const/C25Ann/sfttotalmedavgqft.pdf, retrieved April 19, 2013.

²⁰⁵ "Parade of Homes: Three-Bedroom Home Will Have Roofed Patio with Barbeque, Bar for Outdoor entertaining, Spacious Den-Guest Room," *Arizona Republic*, October 30, 1955.

and patio encouraged outdoor living, drawing families from the front porches to the back patios for more private enjoyment of their homes.

Phoenix builders integrated indoor-outdoor living into even the least expensive tract homes, incorporating living rooms with large picture windows or sliding glass doors. POH models took outdoor living and the backyard to a new and heightened level. Text and images from the POH celebrated outdoor living, highlighting home designs that featured barbecues, swimming pools, outdoor fireplaces, and large patios. *Republic* editors described a POH backyard and wrote: "The luxury feature of the house is a large, private roofed patio with built-in barbecue and bar for outdoor entertaining."²⁰⁶

Advancement in the production of glass and central refrigeration promoted the ideal of indoor-outdoor living as experienced from within. Large expanses of glass "opened-up" the space and brought the outdoors into the interiors of the home. The MOM Cavalier Home, designed by Hugh Evan, featured an open interior, described as "an artful blending of outdoors and in."

Several builders incorporated native materials and natural colors throughout the house that complemented the Arizona desert. Contractors faced the exteriors of the model home with native limestone and red cedar siding while others incorporated sandstone into the design of the fireplace.

Luxury and Home Customization

For most people, a home is more than a building: it is a state of mind and an expression of personality. The types of homes in which people lived reflected the tastes and priorities of the times. Research collected from the MOM and POH suggested that the 1950s homebuyer sought a certain amount customization and individuality in the design of their homes. Local builders offered a wide variety of options and upgrades that appealed to the discriminating homebuyer.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

In response to the backlash surrounding low-cost, look-alike tract houses, builders began planning subdivisions for “community pride.”²⁰⁷ Curving streets, variance of placement of homes on the lot, and landscaping beautified new homes and their surroundings. Homebuyers selected from a wide choice of exterior elevations with complementing materials. The variety of home elevations made low-priced homes look more expensive and customized.²⁰⁸

The trend towards the inclusion of built-ins, bathroom vanities, walk-in wardrobes, cemented patios, and double car garages added to the home’s custom look. In all POH kitchens, builders included built-in stoves and ovens that were normally only offered in “luxury” homes appealed to the move-up buyer.

Ideal vs. Reality

The 1950’s ranch transposed traditional gender-specific family roles onto a new floor plan. Most of the model homes located in Phoenix provided separate spaces for each member of the household. Designers centered the kitchen on women’s activities, the garage or a “putter room” accommodated men, while the family room provided an area for children. Room associations in the design of the ranch house reinforced specific concepts of family life and perpetuate the notion that a women’s place is in the home. These domestic themes are still widely utilized by home designers and interior merchandiser today.

Many of the new ideas introduced in the 1950s model home are standard features of today’s homes. As indicated in the POH models, the kitchen would become a more central part of the home; open interior spaces would allow easy access to the family or “public” areas. The multi-purpose living or family room, usually adjoining the kitchen and dining room, surfaced during the 1950s and led to the development of the “great room” concept.

²⁰⁷ “1955 March of the Models,” 10.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Many of the technological advancements advertised in the POH models homes are now standard features in middle-class homes. Interior decorative lighting, built-in appliances, remote-controlled temperature control, dishwashers, and clothes dryers are but a few “modern” conveniences that debuted in the 1950’s model home.

However, the dream of home ownership did not touch all Americans. Even as the nation prospered and while the middle class flourished, nearly 25% of citizens lived in poverty (then defined as an annual income under \$3,000 for a family of four). Much of this poverty affected blacks in urban neighborhoods and whites in depressed rural areas of the United States. In Phoenix, minority groups resided in residential neighborhoods located south of Van Buren. Only one builder, Reed Investment, offered a new home development located on Central and Baseline in South Phoenix. The editors of *Arizona Homes* did not provide information on the model home and builder in the MOM promotional brochure. Middle-class residents enjoying their new homes and swimming pools in the suburbs often spent a lifetime without ever seeing the other depressed segments of American society. The Phoenix MOM and POH exemplified the paradox of the 1950s - hardship in the midst of plenty.

Summary

Through the model house, Phoenix builders sold a “Pathway to Happiness” to a white middle class audience. Builders offered the best of standardized construction, home planning, electric amenities, and new postwar materials. The publicized result was an improved standard of living promoted through convenience, spaciousness, indoor-outdoor living, and customization.

That year the members of the NAHB showed approximately 10,000 houses seen by 10 million people throughout the country.²⁰⁹ In Phoenix, the 1955 March of the Models and 1956 Parade of Homes created a “participatory consumer spectacle.”²¹⁰ The events introduced visitors to a variety of architectural ideas, materials, and styles. The model house became a tool of the

²⁰⁹ “Record 200 Cities Parade Homes in Bigger Show,” *House & Home* (November 1955): 67.

²¹⁰ Dodd, 62.

merchant-builder. In their hands, the model house allowed prospective buyers to experience the spatial, sequential, and atmospheric qualities of the building. The model houses, displayed during builder home tours, became a built form of advertising, employed by merchant-builders to appeal to a new consumer. In the postwar period, a new market of consumers, including first time-home buyers and those already ready for an upgrade, created heightened merchandising standards from builders. The results were builder's home tours like the ones featured in Phoenix during the mid-nineteen fifties.

Today, exhibition home tours and model homes remain an essential part of the home building industry's marketing process. Model homes continue to serve as sources of ideas for interior design, new building technologies, and landscaping projects. These homes offer a glimpse into the domestic ideals of a new generation of homeowners. The themes presented in today's model homes are similar to those from the 1950s. Local builder, Maracay Homes, advertises their homes as "the choice for your new Arizona home ... building energy efficient, customizable new homes with Flex Design."²¹¹ Where the 1950's MOM and POH catered to middle-class white families with children, today's home builders attract a different kind of household including: DINKS (Dual Incomes No Kids), SINKS (Single Income No Kids), single parents, and the empty-nester. According to recent publications, these household types are set to overtake the traditional family home as the most common household type in America. These changes in household makeup will not only change the physicality of the house but also the way in which builders will market new homes. An emphasis on energy conservation and green design will also impact the design and marketing of new homes. Builders such as Meritage and Beazer Homes offer communities designed for "Energy-Efficient Living." Writes a blogger about Meritage Home's Green Living Product Line, "There's nothing more I love than being able to feel

²¹¹ Maracay Homes Website, from www.maracayhomes.com, retrieved April 7, 2013.

good about buying a product."²¹² Proximity to work and nature are also important to the new buyer demographic. Upgrades centered on entertaining, i.e., media centers, gourmet kitchens, pools and spas, are becoming modern essentials.

Like today's homebuilder the 1950's builders sold more than a home; they sold a lifestyle. Builders designed and furnished their model homes according to the current values and expectations set by the public. In turn, the Arizona builder designed ideal houses based on mid-century values: convenience, spaciousness, indoor-outdoor living, and added luxury.

²¹² "Green Living – Meritage Homes offers Solar," from <http://foundmyhome.wordpress.com/2013/04/04/green-living-meritage-homes-offerssolar>, retrieved April 4, 2013.

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APPENDIX 1

General Categories of Meaning: Depres

Category	Description
Home as Security and Control	This category of meaning refers to home as providing a sense of both physical and emotional security.
Home as Reflection of One's Values	This layer of meaning suggests people use the home as an agent of social value or how they see themselves and would like to be seen by others.
Home as Acting Upon and Modifying One's Dwelling	This meaning of home provides a sense of achievement and control and self expression through the manipulation of space.
Home as Permanence and Continuity	Home related to as a sense of belonging; a place to establish roots, grow and develop.
Home as a Relationship with Others	A powerful category; home is seen as place to nurture, strengthen and care for the relationships in one's life.
Home as a Center for Activities	This approach considers the home as a place to support basic human needs as well as a center for leisure activities.
Home as a Refuge from the Outside World	This meaning identifies the home as a haven or sanctuary from the chaos of the outside world.
Home as Indicator of Individual Status	This model views the home as a place to show personal, social and socio-economic position.
Home as a Place to Own	Home-ownership is often perceived as a freedom. Home-ownership is also perceived as supporting a positive family experience. Finally, homeownership is seen as an economic investment.

APPENDIX 2

General Categories of Meaning: Depres

Category	Description
Territorial Interpretation	Territorial boundaries of home, involves the personalization or marking of place and objects. Dwellers are able to exert control over the space and its content by claiming the space as owned by the occupant. Researchers also refer the physical and psychological control of one's space as the personalization or identification process.
Psychological Interpretation	The first psychological model defines the home as symbol of one's self where the home fills the desire to manipulate ones surroundings to express personal values. Scholars base second perspective on Maslow's theory of personality. In this theory, the home fulfills a hierarchy of basic human needs necessary to psychological well-being including shelter, comfort, privacy and human contact.
Socio-Psychological Interpretation	In social psychology, the home acts as symbol of one's individual social identity.
Phenomenological Interpretation	This model suggests that home and its meaning is an individual process defined through experience over a period time.

APPENDIX 3

List of Builders from Information Collected from the March of the Models

Builder	Number of Models	Model Location
Andersen Construction Co. 3602 N. 19 th Avenue, Phoenix	1	7307 North 19 th Avenue, Phoenix
Allied Construction Co., Inc. 2502 North 44 th Street, Phoenix	1	54 th Street & Exeter Blvd. Phoenix
Associated Builders, Inc. 816 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix	2	1647 West Frier Drive, Phoenix 7044 East Cypress, Scottsdale
Barer & Young Construction Co. 917 West Flower, Phoenix	1	64 th St. & East Monterosa, Phoenix
Bixby Construction Co. 5511 North 32 nd Street, Phoenix	1	5226 North 33 rd Street, Phoenix
D. D. Castleberry 40 West Illini, Phoenix	1	5601 East Wilshire Ave., Phoenix
Cavalier Homes, Inc. 2335 East Camelback Rd., Phoenix	1	4729 North 24 th Street, Phoenix
Darrow-Loftfield Constr. Co 3638 East Thomas Road, Phoenix	1	1908 East Campbell Ave., Phoenix
Del Monte Conruction Co. 313 Mayer-Hearld Bldg., Phoenix	1	3716 West Thomas Rd., Phoenix
T. C. Dennis – Builder 2047 North 16 th Street, Phoenix	1	3440 North 44 th Street, Phoenix
Frontier Builders, Inc. 5640 North 35 th Ave., Phoenix	1	5628 35 th Ave., Phoenix
Gilbert & Dolan Enterprises, Inc, 2639 North Central Ave., Phoenix	1	4402 East Mitchell Drive, Phoenix
Hallcraft Constrution Co. 1801 E. Bethany Home Rd., Phoenix	1	3121 East Turney, Phoenix

Frank E. Knoell Construction Co. 4052 E. Camelback Rd., Phoenix	1	4124 East Camelback Rd., Phoenix
John F. Long Home Builder, Inc. Route 1, Box 444, Glendale	1	47 th Ave. & W. Indian School Rd., Phoenix
Meredith Construction Co. 4807 North 3 rd ., Phoenix	1	1901 North 48 th Place, Phoenix
Peaceful Valley Development Co. P. O. Box 62, Scottsdale	1	Miller Road, Scottsdale Rd. Scottsdale
Reed Investment Co. 16 East LaMirada Drive, Phoenix	1	1 East LaMirada Drive, Phoenix
Siesta Homes, Inc. P. O. Box 7031, Phoenix	1	4521 West Indian School Road Phoenix
Staggs Realty Corp. 2314 North 32 nd Street, Phoenix	1	1819 West Highland Ave., Phoenix
Universal Homes 4033 North 24 th St., Phoenix	1	3442 North 51 st Street, Phoenix
Del E. Webb Construction Co. P. O. Box 4066, Phoenix	1	13 th Ave. & West Camelback Rd., Phoenix

1955 March of the Models, Participant List Continued. Phoenix Association of Home Builders, Meeting Minutes, Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection.

APPENDIX 4

1956 Parade of Homes Participants

<u>Lot</u>	<u>Firm</u>	<u>Representative</u>
7	D. D. Castleberry 40 West Illini, Phoenix	D. D. Castleberry
8	Del Monte Construction Co. 313 Mayer-Heard Bldg., Phoenix	Col. Louis Himelstein
9	Hallcraft Construction Co., Inc. 1801 E. Bethany Home Rd., Phoenix	Henry F. Kaestner
10	Joe T. Bailey Construction Co. 8237 North 7 th Street, Phoenix	Herman Meredith
11	Meredith Construction Co. 4807 North 3 rd Avenue, Phoenix	Herman Meredith (CR 4-0465)
12	Ellis Suggs Construction 1749 E. Medlock Drive, Phoenix	Ellis Suggs (AM 5-9217)
13	Frank E. Knoell Construction, Inc. 4052 E. Camelback Rd., Phoenix	Frank E. Knoell
14	Associated Builders, Inc. 816 E. Camelback Rd., Phoenix	Nate Rosenbaum
15	J. R. Sanderson Construction Co. 10 South 30 th Street, Phoenix	J. R. Sanderson
16	C. R. Holmes Construction 702 E. Desert Park Lane, Phoenix	C. Richard Holmes
17	Ackerman-Rich 303 Mayer-Heard Bldg., Phoenix	David Rich
19	Staggs-Bilt Homes 2314 N. 32 nd Street, Phoenix	Ralph E. Staggs
20	Universal Homes 4033 N. 24 th Street, Phoenix	W. E. Anderson
21	Siesta Homes, Inc. P. O. Box 7031, Phoenix	William H. Shafer
22	Allied Construction Co. 2502 N. 44 th Street, Phoenix	Dell Traylor
23	Bixby Construction Co. 5511 N. 32 nd Street, Phoenix	George D. Bixby
24	Arthur T. LaPrade, Jr. 823 Security Building, Phoenix	Arthur T. LaPrade, Jr.

1956 Parade of Homes, Participant List. Phoenix Association of Home Builders, Meeting Minutes, Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection.

APPENDIX 5

List of Furniture Retailers

Collected from Information from the 1955 March of the Models and 1956 Parade of Homes

March of the Models	
<p>Barrows Furniture Company</p> <p>Casa Décor</p> <p>Cavalier Homes, Inc.</p> <p>Country Store</p> <p>Del Webb Construction Company</p> <p>Globe Furniture Company</p> <p>Wagon Wheel Furniture Company</p>	
Parade of Homes	
<p>Barrows Furniture Company</p> <p>Casa Décor</p> <p>Coles Home Furnishings</p> <p>Country Store</p> <p>Doris Haymen, Gilbert & Dolan Enterprises, Inc.</p> <p>Lou Register</p> <p>Modern Age Furniture Company</p> <p>Sears Roebuck & Company</p> <p>Sunny Furniture Company</p> <p>Warner's Home Furnishings</p>	



Figure 1: Model home exterior, by Pardee Homes. Photographer unknown, from <http://www.pardeehomes.com>. (accessed: December 2, 2012).

Figure 1: Model Home Exterior

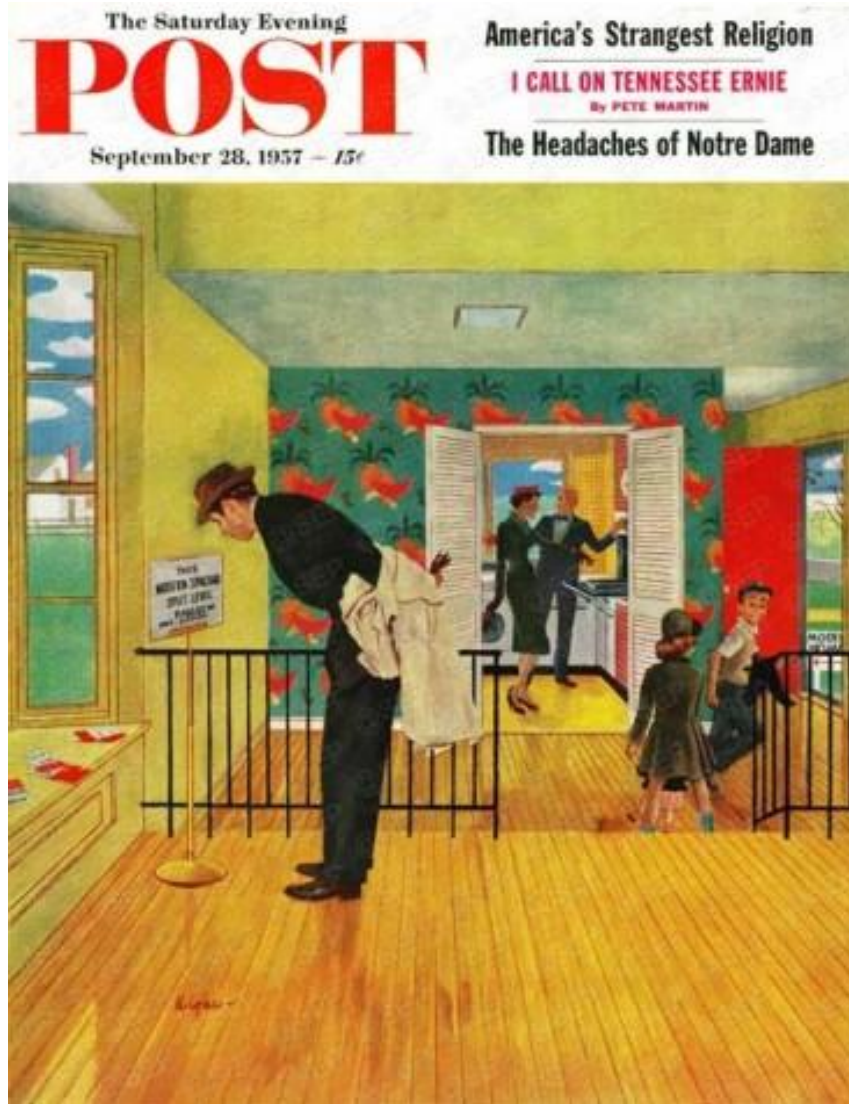


Figure 2: Cover illustration, by George Hughs, *The Saturday Evening Post*, September 1957. From www.saturdayeveningpost.com (accessed 10/16/2012).

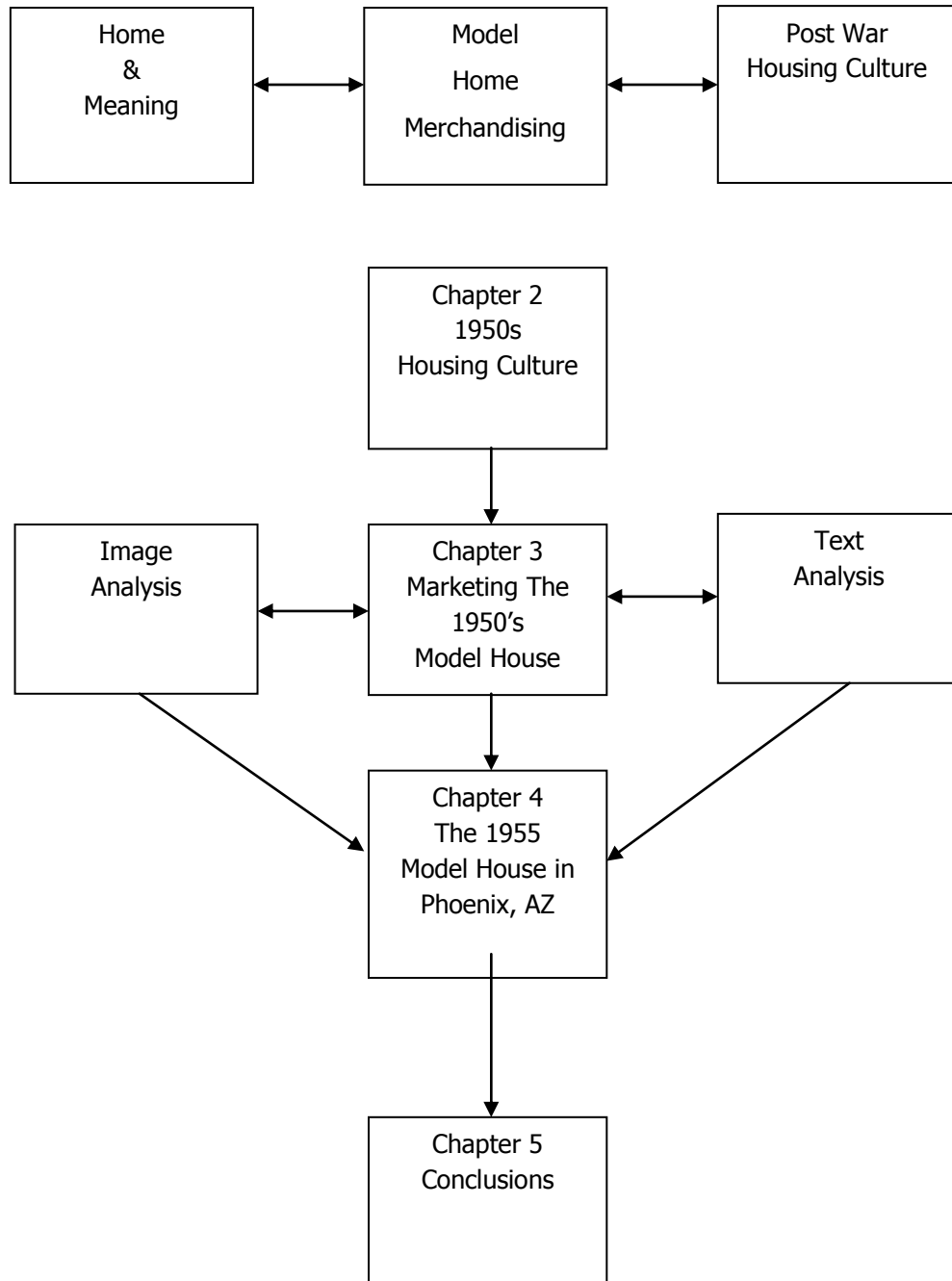


Figure 3: Flowchart, Thesis Organization. Coreen Golab, 2013.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION:	Builder:		Medium:		
	Publication:		Rendering Photograph		
	Plan:		Loan Type:		
	Year:		VA		
	Location:		FHA		
	Architect:		Unknown		
Substantial Analysis	Footprint				
	Square footage				
	Shape	Rectangular	Irregular		
	Street Orientation	Parallel	Perpendicular		
	Garage/Carport	Attached	Detached		
	Plat/Proximity to Neighbors	Near	Medium	Far	
	Spatial Definition				
		Height	Width		
		Depth			
	Front Elevation				
	Emphasis	Roof		Walls	
		Windows		Porch	
		Garage/Carport			
	Orientation	Horizontal		Vertical	
	Doors	1	2	3	
		Left	Center	Right	
	Windows	1	2	3	
Garage Carport	L		R		

Figure 4: Instrument, Exterior Descriptive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

Substantial Analysis Continued	Material Type	Brick 1/4	Pumice 1/4
		1/2	Block 1/2
	3/4	3/4	
	All	All	
		Wood 1/4	Stone 1/4
		Siding 1/2	1/2
		3/4	3/4
		All	All
	Roof Material	Shake	Asbestos Shingle
	Stories	Single	Two-Story
		Tri-Level	
Content Analysis	Front Elevation		
	Ranch Style	Colonial	Classical
		Contemporary	Swiss Chalet
		International	Cowboy/Southwest
		Provincial	Prairie Style
Other			
Formal Analysis	Front Elevation		
	Scale	Small	Medium
		Large	Grand
	Shape	Symmetrical	Asymmetrical
	Line	Horizontal	Vertical
		Angular	Curved
	Texture	Rough	Smooth
		Matt	Shiny
	Ornament	Applied	Integrated
	Pattern Type	Running	Bond/Brick
		Irregular	Stacked
		Cobble	Serpentine

Figure 4 Continued: Instrument, Exterior Descriptive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

Formal Analysis Continued	Front Elevation Continued		
	Light	Night	Day
		Sunny	Partial
		Cloudy	Rainy
	Color M – main S - secondary A - accent	Neutrals	Reds
		Oranges	Yellows
		Blues	Greens
Violets		Achromatic	

Figure 4 Continued: Instrument, Exterior Descriptive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

EXTERIOR DEDUCTION:				
Sensory Engagement	Front Elevation			
	See	<i>Art:</i>	<i>Diversions:</i>	
		Sculpture	Toys Games Barbeque Bikes Swing	
		<i>Modifications to Landscape:</i>	<i>Applied Arts:</i>	
		Landscaping Fence Post Mailbox Planters	Patio Furniture Receptacles	
		<i>Devices</i>	<i>Adornment</i>	
		Yard Tools Utensils Appliances Machines Vehicles Instruments Eyeglasses	Potted Plants Lattice Shutters Eaves Awnings Stone Brick Siding	
		Hear	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Artificial</i>
			Animals Birds People Trees Water	Vehicles Machines Appliances Tools
	Smell	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Artificial</i>	
Animals Grass Flowers Water		Exhaust Gas Smoke		

Figure 5: Instrument, Exterior Deductive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

Sensory Engagement Continued	Taste	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Artificial</i>
	Feel	Hot	Neutral
		Cold	Damp
		Dry	
	Intellectual Engagement	Front Elevation	
Viewer Position		Street	Driveway
		Entry	
Viewer Interaction		Driving	Walking
		Touring	Entering

Figure 5 Continued: Instrument, Exterior Deductive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION:	Builder: Publication: Plan: Year: Location: Designer:		
<i>Substantial Analysis</i>	Floor plan		
	Layout	Split	Adjacent
	Rooms	Kitchen	Bath ½ 1 2 3
		Living Room	Dining Room
		Utility	Bedrooms 1 2 3 4
		Other	
	Hierarchy of Rooms	Living 1 2 3 4 5	Dining 1 2 3 4 5
		Kitchen 1 2 3 4 5	Master Bedroom 1 2 3 4 5
		Secondary Rooms 1 2 3 4 5	Family 1 2 3 4 5
	Sequence of Space Zones	Living F B C	Dining F B C
		Kitchen F B C	Master F B C
	Zones		

Figure 6: Instrument, Interior Descriptive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION:	Builder: Publication: Plan: Year: Location: Architect:		
<i>Substantial Analysis</i>	Room:		
	Square Footage		
	Room Shape	Sq.	Rect.
		Curve	Irregular
	Ceiling Height	8	9
		10	Other
	Ceiling Shape	Flat	Vaulted
		Coffered	
		Other	
	Windows	Qty	Type
	Egress	Qty	Type
	Flooring Material	Carpet	Ceramic
		Vinyl	Stone
		Wood	Asbestos
	Wall	Block	Frame
	Wall Finish	Paint	Wallpaper
		Wood	Stone
		Other	
	Fireplace	Wall	Floating
		Corner	
	Storage		
Built-ins	Yes	No	
Traffic	Obstructed	Unobstructed	

Figure 6 Continued: Instrument, Interior Descriptive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

Content Analysis	Room:		
	Decorating Style Room Shape	Modern	Japanese
		International	Provincial
		Colonial	Classical
		Regional	Themed
Other			
Formal Analysis	Scale	Small	Medium
		Large	Grande
	Space	Positive	Negative
	Line	Horizontal	Vertical
		Angular	Curved
		Irregular	
	Texture	Rough	Smooth
		Matt	Shiny
	Ornament	Applied	Integrated
	Pattern	Solid	Geometric
		Floral/Nature	Conversational
	Light	Natural	Artificial
		Reflective	Non-Reflective
	Color M – main S - secondary A - accent	Neutrals Oranges Blues Violets	Reds Yellows Greens Blacks/Whites

Figure 6 Continued: Instrument, Interior Descriptive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

INTERIOR DEDUCTION:			
<i>Sensory Engagement</i>	Room:		
	See	<i>Art:</i>	<i>Diversions:</i>
		Paintings Drawings Sculpture Photography	Toys Games Book Meals Television
		<i>Modifications:</i>	<i>Applied Arts:</i>
		Beams Planters Built-ins Skylights	Furniture Furnishings Accessories Receptacles
		<i>Devices:</i>	<i>Adornment:</i>
		Machines Instruments Appliances	Window Coverings Wall Coverings Graphics
	Hear	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Artificial</i>
		People Animals Weather	Appliances Mechanical Vehicles
	Smell	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Artificial</i>
		Food Plants/Flowers Animals	
	Taste	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Artificial</i>
		Food Beverage	
	Feel	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Artificial</i>
Breeze Sunlight		Heating/Cooling	

Figure 7: Instrument, Interior Deductive Analysis. Coreen Golab, 2013.

INTERIOR DEDUCTION:			
<i>Intellectual Engagement</i>	Viewer Position		
	Viewer Interaction	Touring/Viewing	Participating
		Intruding	

Figure 7 Continued: Interior Deductive Analysis Continued. Golab, Coreen. *Instrument*

Text Analysis Category	Qty	Content	
Convenience			
• Convenience		Appliances	New Materials
• Ease			
• Handi		Built-ins, Cabinets	Space Planning
• Fitting			
• Suitability		Closets	Custom Selections
• Opportune			
• Well Situated			
Luxury			
• Luxury		Appliances	New Materials
• Comfort			
• Coziness		Built-ins, Cabinets	Space Planning
• Lavishness			
• Opulence		Closets	Custom Selections
• Sumptuous			
• Refinement			
• Pleasure			
		←	
Spaciousness			
• Spaciousness		Appliances	New Materials
• Additional			
• Roominess		Built-ins, Cabinets	Space Planning
• Generous			
• Ample			

Figure 8: Instrument, Text Analysis: March of the Models and the Parade of Homes. Coreen Golab, 2013.

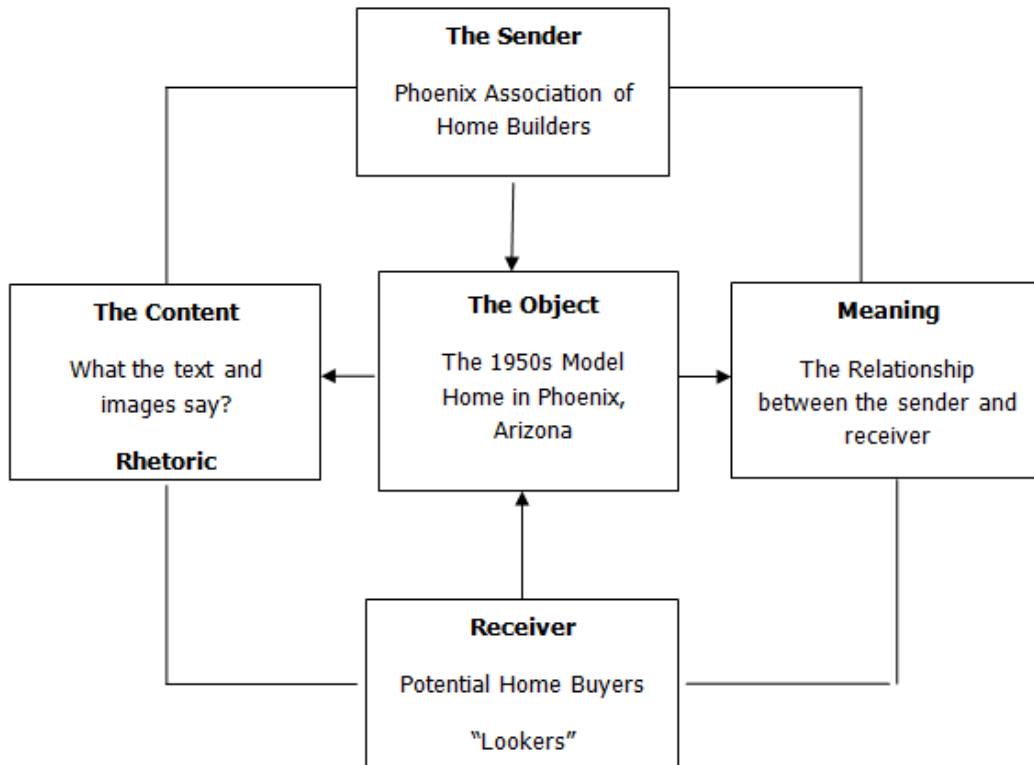


Figure 9: Diagram, Research Methodology. Coreen Golab, 2013.



Figure 10: Advertisement, for the Federal Housing Administration. *The New York Times*, c. 1950s. from http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/f/federal_housing_administration/index.html (accessed January 31, 2013).

THEY'RE *femineered!*
The NEW 1950
INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER
Refrigerators



**WOMEN DREAMED THEM ...
HOME ECONOMISTS PLANNED THEM**

You not only dreamed them—you actually created them! Because *you* needs inspired these new, improved, feature-full International Harvester Refrigerators. Because of *you*, experienced IH home economists planned with a purpose—to give *you* the space, storage and service *you've* dreamed of!

Your IH dealer will show you all *your femineered* new 1950 models—each with its own special utility features. And every feature has a function! No frills, no gadgets, no dust catchers. Every inch on active duty! Look for the bigger bottle areas ... extra shelf space ... flexible shelf arrangements ... cold clear to the floor ... plus the exclusive features shown below! All models have the economy "Tight-Wad" refrigerating unit with its 5-year warranty *permanently* attached to the cabinet.

See these spacious kitchen wonders—they're thrift-investments! Built of the finest materials money can buy, every inch a work of art ... to last, to serve, to save for you.

FEMINEERED FROM TOP TO BOTTOM
Yes! *Femineered* to fit into every apartment, home, or farm-kitchen ... giving added food space without taking extra floor space. Be sure to see these new 1950 International Harvester Refrigerators—

Figure 11: Advertisement, for International Harvester Refrigerator. c. 1950s. From <http://www.flickr.com/photos/retroarama/5640478873> (accessed January 31, 2013).

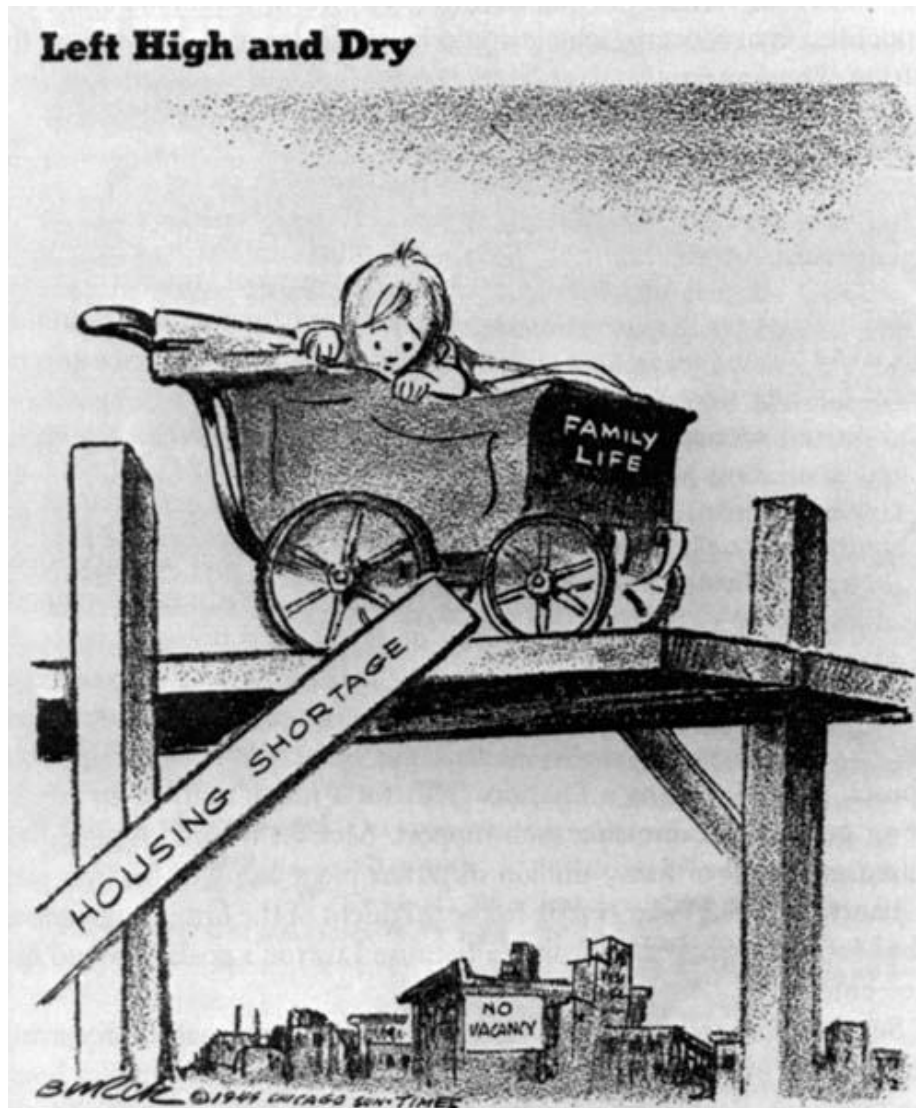


Figure 12: Cartoon, Stranded baby carriage. *Chicago Tribune*, 1947.
From <http://www.statemuseumpa.org/levittown/one/b.html> (accessed January 31, 2012).

It's a promise!

JIM'S going away tomorrow . . . and there will be long, lonely days before he comes back.

But that little home sketched there in the sand is a symbol of faith and hope and courage. It's a promise, too. A promise of gloriously happy days to come . . . when Victory is won.

Victory Homes of tomorrow will make up in part at least for all the sacrifices of today . . . and that's our promise!

They will have better living built by . . . electrical living with new comforts, new conveniences, new economies to make every day an adventure in happiness.

Plan for your Victory Home now . . . the one sure way is to buy War Bonds. Every Bond you buy is an investment in your future happiness and security . . . every dollar you put into Bonds helps bring our boys back sooner—and safer. Buy another Bond today.

The General Electric Consumers Institute at Bridgeport, Conn., is devoted to research on wartime home problems such as Nutrition • Food Preparation • Food Preservation • Appliance Care • Appliance Repair • Laundering • Home Heating and Air Conditioning. Helpful booklets are available from your G-E Appliance Dealer, or General Electric Consumers Institute, Dept. L-5.

APPLIANCE AND MERCHANTS DEPARTMENT, BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

GENERAL ELECTRIC

From top to bottom: Frigidaire, the New every Double, Thermostat, automatic settings over C.E.S., the Double night lamp in the "Star of Cheer" and N.R.C. The newspapers for time, station.

Figure 13: Advertisement for General Electric. (From: the State Museum of Pennsylvania), c. 1950s. From <http://www.statemuseumpa.org/levittown/one/b.html> (accessed January 31, 2013).

And this shall be our Victory:
In a free nation — as the birthright of every American
— each home shall be a shrine of freedom.

U S
VICTORY HIGHWAY
1

*...to the Home
of your Dreams!*

THERE'S a new home at the end of this Victory Highway, where it climbs to meet the horizon—*your home of tomorrow!*

It isn't built yet, and can't be until this war is won—'til peace. But you can plan for it today.

And what a home it will be! It's going to be friendly, inviting, chock-full of comfort—with electrical conveniences that will make it a far more livable home than you ever thought possible. Your Victory Home of tomorrow will have *better living built in!*

Take the shortest way there—the sure road to happiness and security for yourself, to peace and prosperity for your country—buy War Bonds!

DEDICATED TO THE SERVICE OF AMERICA'S HOMES
The General Electric Consumers Institute at Bridgeport, Conn., is devoted to research on such wartime home problems as: Nutrition • Food Preparation • Food Preservation • Appliance Care • Appliance Repair • Laundering • Home Heating and Air Conditioning. Bulletins and booklets are available through your G-E Appliance Dealer, or from G-E Consumers Institute, Dept. LK5-3.

Time in an Frasier Hour and the News every Tues., Thurs., Sat., evenings over C. B. S. On Sunday night listen to the "Hour of Charm," over N.B.C. See newspapers for time, station.

GENERAL ELECTRIC
CONSUMERS INSTITUTE

BUILD NEW VICTORY HOMES TOMORROW

Figure 14: Advertisement for General Electric. (From: Today's Inspiration Blog), c. 1950s. From <http://todaysinspiration.blogspot.com> (accessed January 10, 2013).



Figure 15: Photograph of Levittown family, photograph from New York, reproduced in *Life* magazine. (From State Museum of Pennsylvania), 1949. From statemuseumpa.org. (accessed January 10, 2012).




Figure 16: Usonian house, the Herbert Jacobs House in Madison, Wisconsin, by Frank Lloyd Wright, 1936–37. From <http://inceptor.mcs.suffolk.edu/~goldenth/hw5/frank1.html> (accessed January 10, 2013).




Figure 17: Bandini House, by Greene and Greene. 1903. From [tp://pc.blogspot.com/2010/04/bandini-house-greene-greene.html](http://pc.blogspot.com/2010/04/bandini-house-greene-greene.html) (accessed January 10, 2013).

CLIFF MAY *homes*



The Brentwood
2 Bedrooms — 2 Baths
1st fl. — Fireplace
1372 Sq. Ft.



“DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR the finest houses in California”
Built where you choose

BEAUTIFUL 2 AND 3 BEDROOM HOMES \$7,300 - \$16,000

These famous Cliff May Homes combine indoor-outdoor living in the real California manner and at a price to fit the most modest budget. You'll love their low rambling profile and the comfortable, up to the minute atmosphere they create.

Figure 18: Advertisement, The Brentwood Model, by Cliff May. c. 1950s. From <http://design2share.squarespace.com> (accessed January 10, 2013).



Figure 19: Photograph, The Idea Home of the Year, exterior. *Better Homes & Gardens*, September 1955, p.62.

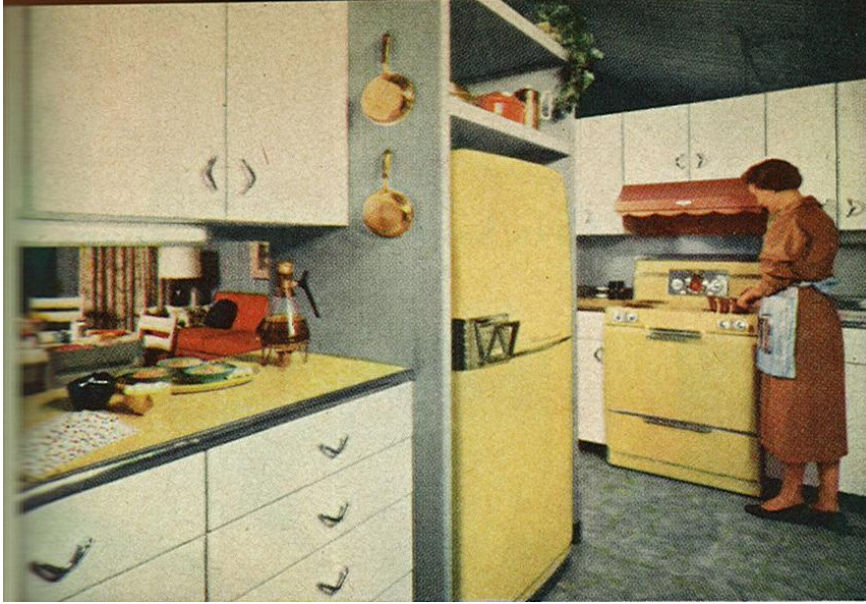


Figure 20: Photograph, The Idea Home of the Year, kitchen. *Better Homes & Gardens*, September 1955, p.59.

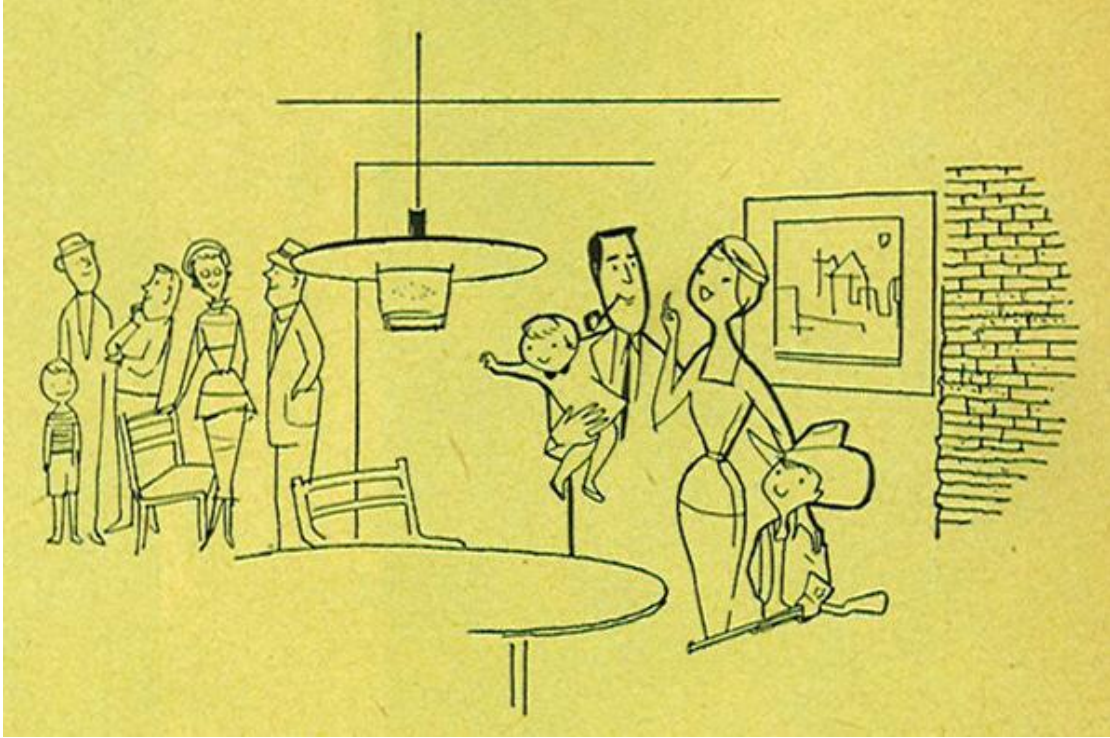


Figure 21: Illustration, "Who Comes to See the Idea Houses?" *Better Homes & Gardens*, September, 1955.

OPEN TOMORROW!

DOORS OPEN AT NOON

THE GREATER 1955 PHOENIX

HOME SHOW

featuring

JOHN CALVERT
AND HIS MERRY MAIDS OF MAGIC
\$25,000 to anyone who can equal his feats of magic



THE JUMPING JACKS
Trampoline artistry by Two Gals and a Guy

TONY LOVELLO
RCA-Victor Accordion Recording Artist

BOY FOY & CO.
Fresh from Ed Sullivan's Toast of the Town

PLAZA STAGE Matinees Sat. & Sun. 3:30 p.m. Every Evening 8:00 p.m.

* 150 EXHIBITORS

* 12 *Gorgeous* DECORATORS ROOMS
By Arizona's Leading Architects, Designers & Artists

* ARTS OF LIVING IN ARIZONA
Including the

* FABULOUS 900 sq. ft. DEN
Featured in House Beautiful Magazine

* DO IT-YOURSELF EXHIBITS
Do It Yourself - New Tools and Materials to help you build, create, repair your own house if you want - a real treat for the whole family

9 BIG DAYS

ADULTS 60¢ CHILDREN 25¢

ARIZONA STATE FAIRGROUNDS

Figure 22: Advertisement, Phoenix Home Show. *Gazette* (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection), February 11, 1955.



Figure 23: Photograph, John F. Long's Maryvale community. *Arizona Republic*. C. 1950s. From <http://www.azcentral.com/business/articles/2012/02/06/20120206biz-centennial-turning-points-in-arizonas-economy.html> (accessed March 10, 2013).



Figure 24: "How to Turn Lookers into Buyers." *House & Home*, April 1957, p. 143.



Figure 25. Ann Winkler Interior, photographed by Richard Averill Smith. *House & Home*, (April 1957): 125.





Figure 26: Photograph, "Valley National Bank Rising Out of the Ashes." c. 1950s. From <http://www.bradhallart.com/phoenix.htm>, (accessed December 30, 2012).



Figure 27: Photograph, "Valley National Bank Rising Out of the Ashes." c. 1950s.
From <http://www.bradhallart.com/phoenix.htm>, (accessed December 30, 2012).

VETERANS- WHY PAY RENT?
NOT ONE RED CENT
to Move In-

FULL PRICE ONLY \$7,550

NO DOWN PAYMENT
 NO CLOSING COSTS
 NO IMPOUNDMENTS

NO HIDDEN CHARGES

Long Home Builders now make it easy for you to own your own home . . . a beautiful 3-bedroom home with two baths and over 1200 square feet of living space.
 70,000 BTU Utility forced-air furnace . . . window over kitchen sink . . . Asphalt Tile floors throughout . . . wardrobe closets . . . carpet . . . lifetime plumbing . . . all slab doors . . . breakfast nook with French doors opening onto patio . . . school, shopping center, recreation area within walking distance.

Maryvale Terrace
 W. INDIAN SCHOOL RD.
 AT 47TH AVE.

Non-Vets

APPROXIMATELY
\$55⁰⁰
 PER MONTH

NO MONEY DOWN
\$130
 CLOSING COSTS
\$55
 PER MO. (Approx.)

JOHN F. Long HOME BUILDER, INC.
 J. HOWARD CHEUVRONT
 REAL ESTATE BROKER

Figure 28: Advertisement for John F. Long, Maryvale Terrace. (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection) 1955.



Figure 29: Cover, March of the Models, by Ted Warren. *Arizona Homes*, September-October 1955.

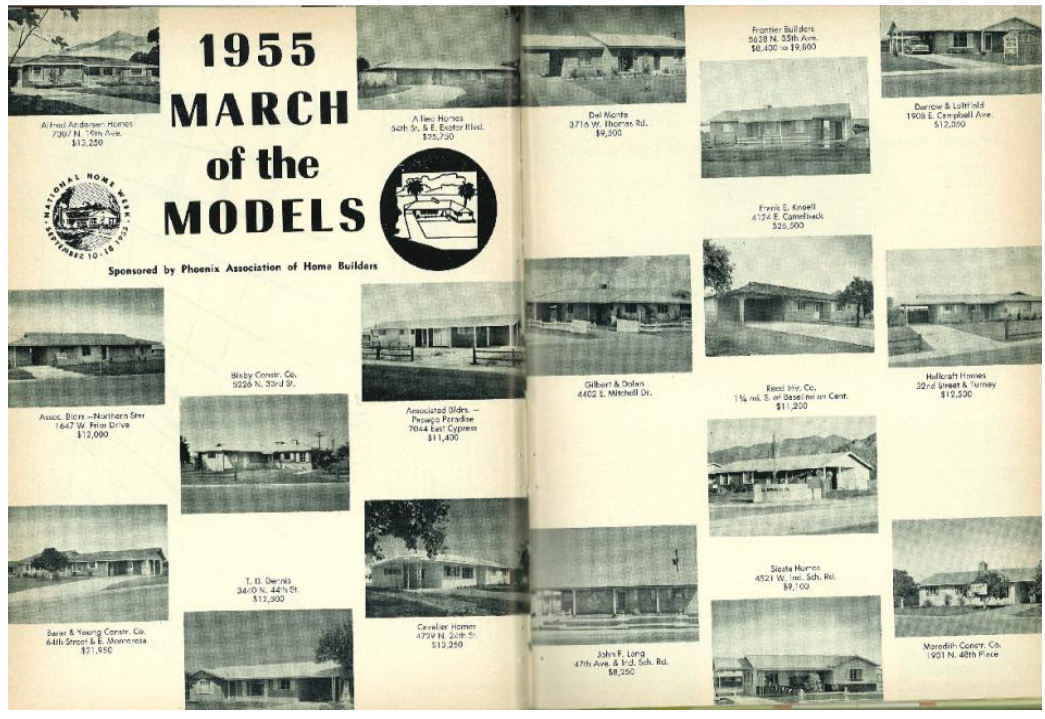


Figure 30: Brochure, March of the Models, by the Phoenix Association of Home Builders. *Arizona Homes*, September-October, 1955.

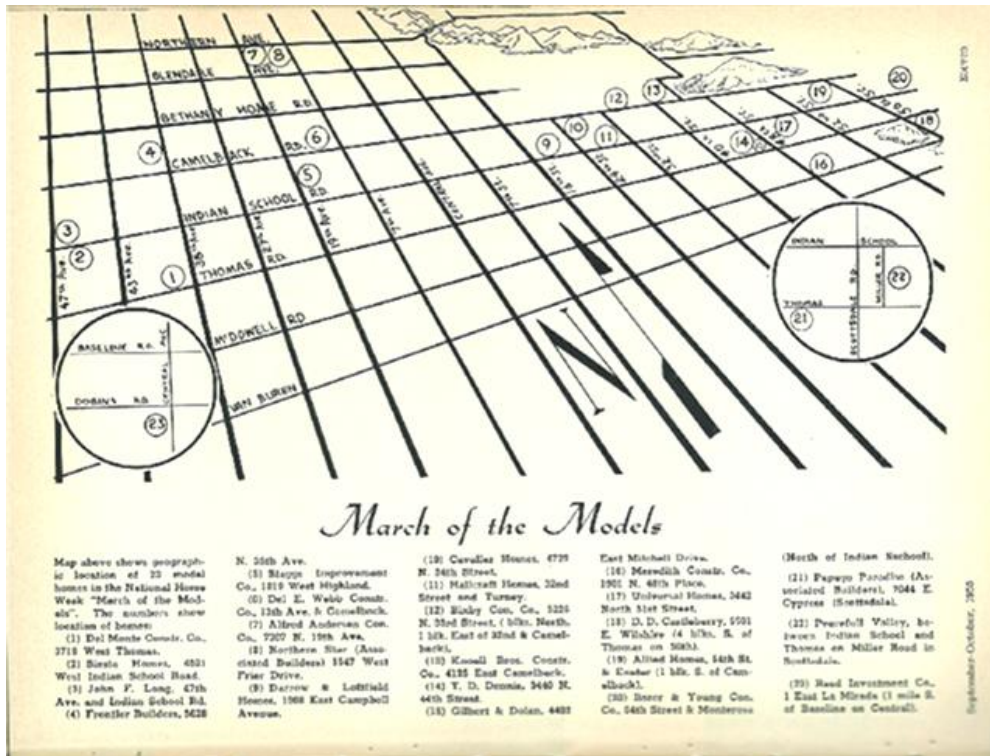


Figure 31: Map, March of the Models. *Arizona Homes*, (September-October, 1955): 9.

1955 March of the Models Spreadsheet						
Model	Location	Loan	Price	Sq. Ft.	Lot Size	A/C
1	Del Monte Construct. Co. 3716 West Thomas	VA	9,500	1200		No
2	Siesta Homes Inc. 4521 W. Indian School Rd.		9,100	1056	6,000	No
3	John F. Long 47 th Ave. and Indian School Rd.	VA	8,200	1200	6,500	No
6	Del E. Webb Construct. Co. 13 th Ave. and Camelback	VA/FHA	13,270	1367		No
7	Anderson Construct. Co. 7307 N. 19 th Avenue	FHA	13,350		9,200	Yes
9	Darrow & Lofffield Homes 1908 East Campbell	VA/FHA	13,000	1365	7500	Yes
10	Cavalier Homes Inc. 4729 N. 24 th Street	VA/FHA	13,200	1644	7,000	No
11	Hallcraft Homes 32 nd Street and Turney		12,500	1276	7500	Yes
13	Knoell Bros. Construct. Co. 4125 E. Camelback Rd.		26,500	2380		Yes
14	T.D Dennis 3440 N. 44 th Street	FHA	12, 500	1,500	10,000	No
19	Allied Construction Co. 54 th St. & Exeter.		25,750	2545	43,560 (acre)	Yes

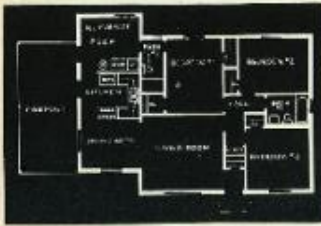
Figure 32: Spreadsheet, from information collected from the March of the Models, *Arizona Homes*, (September-October 1955): 10-27.



Figure 33: House #2, exterior, Santa Ana model, by Siesta Homes Inc., 4521 W. Indian School Rd. Phoenix, AZ. *Arizona Homes*, (September-October 1955): 15.



The full picture window provides large amounts of natural light to this Coloramic living room. A complete set of dining furniture fits the dining area comfortably.



march of the models

"1955 Coloramic Home"

"DEL MONTE VILLAGE No. 1"
3716 W. Thomas Road

Furnished Coloramic Home:

- Priced at \$3580
- 3 bedrooms, 2 baths
- 1500 sq. ft. under roof
- Central heating and cooling
- No down payment, no closing costs to veterans
- Furnished by Globe Furn. Co.
- Free decorator advice

Del Monte Construction Co.

FOR the first time in a low cost home the use of wallpaper, jewel-tone interior and exterior colors and new conflict patterns in asphalt tile are being combined for a head start in decorating. Free decorating advice helps the home owner coordinate her colors with her furnishings in mind.

At present the Coloramic homes are the only ones in Phoenix available with no down payment or closing costs to veterans.

To help the budget a Westinghouse Laundromat and Frost Free refrigerator, Harwick gas range and a Northwind evaporative cooler can be included for a very small monthly payment.

Construction features include fully plastered walls, copper lifetime plumbing and Consuelo counter tops.

An all-purpose room for an extra bedroom or den is included in addition to the three bedrooms.

Abundant window area gives this home a spacious feeling. There is a large choice of exterior colors.



Photo Robert Markow

Figure 34: House #1, 1955 Coloramic Home, by Del Monte Construction Co., 3716 West Thomas, Phoenix, AZ. Photographed by Robert Markow, *Arizona Homes*, (September-October 1955): 24.



Living room of the "Maryvale Terrace" home has tasteful wall finishes. One is exposed brick, another is a smooth, colored finish, and the third, a wooden louvered divider which provides a decorative feature for the room.

march of the models

"Maryvale Terrace"

EVERYONE likes the graceful yet practical "ranch style" home that has been developed in recent years as typical of western living, and John Long is featuring this type home in "Maryvale Terrace" (7th Avenue and West Indian School Road, Phoenix). Into a sound basic plan has been incorporated all the ideas of modern living . . . an open plan, combining

the kitchen, breakfast nook and utility area, no longer a hidden recess, but an integrated part of an overall attractive home for Arizona living. Two solid walls have been eliminated to carry out this plan, one between the breakfast area and the kitchen, the other a half-high partition between the breakfast nook and the utility room.

Drawing on his experience in the home building field, Mr. Long has provided his home with quality features such as louvered copper plumbing, a sound system consisting of a master radio with five speakers located in the living room, master bedroom and bath, kitchen and patio, all operated from a main switch in the kitchen.

Bedroom sizes are 11x11, 11x13 and 9'6" the latter doubling as a den. All are equipped with five foot floor to ceiling wardrobe closets with sliding doors. In addition there's an extra guest closet between the two larger bedrooms. In the master bath there's an automatic circulating fan, and in the 3/4 bath conveniently located between a kitchen and a bedroom, and handy to the back portion of the house, the shower stall has 6 foot ceramic tile.

Other features include: the location of the water heater and heating unit in a separate closet . . . a safety factor against bluish carbon-dioxide in the utility room, where these units are consistently located. Heating is provided through ducts, furnishing 7000 B.T.U.'s, thermostatically controlled. Floors are asphalt tile throughout, an easy maintenance factor, so important for Arizona living.



The utility room is concealed behind a half-high partition. Usually the "sink child" in a home it has been brought into the convenient kitchen area. (opposite page)

Sixteen

ARIZONA HOMES



"Maryvale Terrace" ranch style home at 47th Avenue and West Indian School Road. Construction is primarily brick, with dry wall (taped and finished) interior walls.



the builder
John F. Long

"MARYVALE TERRACE"

- Model Home: 47th Ave. & Indian School Road, Phoenix
- Price: \$13,500
- Average lot 35x100 ft., 10-foot alley in rear.
- VA financed on down payment.
- Shopping center, recreation area and grammar school in tract.
- John P. Long Home Builder, Inc.

"Maryvale Terrace" floor plan has 1,800 square feet under roof, 1,800 square foot living area, and a five foot overhang on the ranch style porch for added protection against the summer sun. Carpet is optional.



The kitchen boasts single sink-louvered cabinets. Countertops are topped in a colored marble, burn or gold product. Double french doors open to rear patio.

September-October, 1955

Seventeen

Figures 35 and 36: House #3, living room and kitchen, Maryvale Terrace, by John F. Long Home Builder Inc., 47th Ave. and Indian School Rd., Phoenix, AZ. *Arizona Homes*, (September-October 1955): 16, 17.



"Highland Estates" homes are built of brick at the bottom with Superflex garage blocks above, topped with a composition roof. Lot sizes are 70-80 x 110.

march of the models

"Highland Estates"

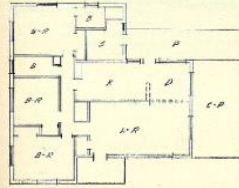
Buffalo budget sliders which equate the kitchen and dining room creates additional storage and sleep space in both. By placing the dining room on an "L" to the living room, it can be closed off by folding down if desired.



using the dining room as an "L" to the living room, it can be closed off by folding down if desired.

HOMES in "Highland Estates" present a flexible plan for Arizona living - extra space here and there that can be adapted to a home owner's needs, rather than a predetermined function. For instance, by conveniently locating a utility room off the rear porch, space is possibly a portable work table. By putting a door through this space, the room gains further use by entry from the kitchen.

This is but one of the many features offered in a "Highland Estates" home designed and built by Darrow and Loffield. Owners are outside wall sanitation, usually found in only the more expensive homes. Inside wall sanitation is of aluminum (al), said to insulate better than 5 feet of concrete. The kitchen has slabs of ceramic tile and a built-in divider between it and the dining room which provides additional open and closed shelving. Optional



Vascha Darrow B. F. Loffield

Floor plan of the 3 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath model which has 1,300 square feet of livable area, approximately 2,100 square feet overall, under roof. Closets and storage space have been provided for "point of use" areas. In the full bath, a built-in vanity equipped with ceramic tile has been provided, along with cabinets. Generate the other bedrooms' view feet around the table.

Sections for this room are the garbage disposal, an automatic dishwasher, and a slow Vent-a-hood. Heating is provided by a 25,000 B.T.U. forced air furnace, thermostatically controlled with ducts into each room. Refrigerator is optional.

The bedroom closets have butterfly doors which when equipped with full length mirrors give three-way vision for dressing. Windows are high and wide to allow privacy and more flexible furniture placement. A 1/2 bath off the master bedroom has a ceramic tiled step-down shower with glass door.

Location is a feature of the "Highland Estates" homes. Madison No. 2 grammar school is convenient, as are four churches, and a parochial school is only a block away. Walks are concrete and the low, 1/2 landscaped and wooded. City owners have been provided, although the houses are not in the city, and 8 and 8" water mains are adequate for fire hydrants.

Arranged for convenience, the kitchen has space for built-in refrigerator and freezer. Doors open to hold, allowing easy access to the rear of the furnace cabinet crossing the living room. Floor is ceramic tile. Cabinets are available in either Philadelphia mahogany or oak.



- HIGHLAND ESTATES**
 Model: 1208 E. Campbell Ave.
 • Price \$12,050, \$12,950, with all extras such as refrigeration, included
 • Maximum FHA and VA financing
 • 10 year guarantee hot water heater
 • Paved streets, curb, sidewalks
 • City sewer in and paid
 • City water
 • 18th St. S. Camelback shopping center
 • Noble and Lee Sales Agency
 • Darrow & Loffield Construction Co.

Figures 37 and 40: House #9, exterior and kitchen, Highland Estates, by Darrow & Loffield Homes, 1908 East Campbell, Phoenix, AZ. Photographed by Dan Zudell, *Arizona Homes*, (September-October 1955): 17-18.



With one wall almost a complete expanse of glass, the living room seems to blend delightfully with the adjoining patio and out-of-doors.

"Cavalier Homes"



the builder
Hugh Evans

IN this home of semi-open planning, partial partition and planter boxes are used for a decorating advantage. A telephone desk is conveniently placed beyond the partition separating the living and dining areas.

A master bathroom, planned for convenience as well as beauty, has an individual dressing table topped by a large mirror. Conveniently located, a floor-to-ceiling linen closet is also in the bathroom in addition to the built-in linen closet in the hall.

With cupboard space so urgently needed, the new home owner will appreciate the abundance of valuable kitchen cupboards. A breakfast nook, complete with a fiberglass filter and light, is installed over the stove.

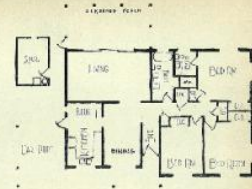
Included are Mercury oil-air switches, insulated exterior walls, adequate storage rooms, surfaced alleys and underground tiled irrigation. An extra wide overhang wards off the sun. All walls are plastered.

©1955 by Evans

ARIZONA HOMES



Bathroom walls about the rooming medicine cabinet as well as the full ceramic tiled vanity.



White pull-cock ports lend charm to this home's exterior. Built of sturdy pumice block, contrasting color shingles are added for style.

"CAVALIER HOMES"
Furnished Model Home:
5725 N. 24th Street
• Priced at \$12,500
• 3 bedrooms, 1 and 1/2 baths
• 70 x 100 ft. landscaped lots
• 2,007 sq. ft. under roof
• 1,644 sq. ft. liveable area
• Central Heating
• FHA and VA financing
• Near schools, shopping, transportation
Furnished and built by Cavalier Homes, Inc.

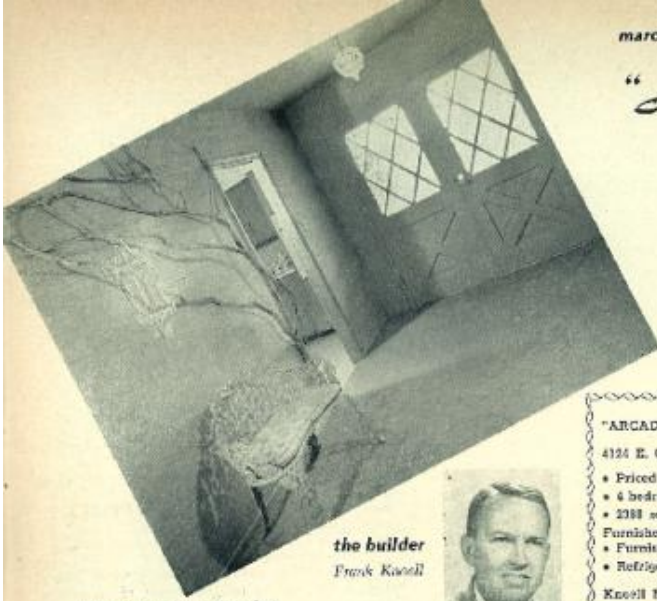


The feeling of airiness is also captured in the large size dining area with the aid of the picture window. To the left is the entry hall.

Figures 38 and 39: House #10, foyer/dining room and rear living room, Cavalier model, by Cavalier Homes Inc., Hugh Evans, 4729 N. 24th St. Phoenix, AZ. Photographed by Dan Zudell, *Arizona Homes*, (September-October 1955): 22-23.

march of the models

"Arcadia Villa"



the builder
Frank Knoell



"ARCADIA VILLA"

4124 E. Camelback Road

- Priced at \$26,500
- 4 bedrooms, 1 1/2 baths
- 2388 sq. ft. livable area

Furnished Model Home:

- Furnished by Barrows
- Refrigeration included

Knoell Bros. Construction Co.

This spacious foyer is a pleasant surprise as you enter through the double front doors.

DESIGNED for spacious living, this attractive home sets a provincial theme with a large fireplace separating the living room and dining areas. Wide hallways and large rooms give an open, comfortable air. Generous closet space and storage area behind the double carpet means there is a place for everything and then some.

Features include built in oven and range top in the kitchen, a garbage disposal, and a free form patio off the very large rear living room.



Plans: Dan Zudell



weeping moose on Superior plaster block, topped by a shake roof blends with interior's provincial feeling.

September-October, 1955 Fifteen

Figure 41: House #13, detail, Arcadia Villa, by Knoell Bros. Construction Co. and furnished by Barrows, 4124 E. Camelback Rd., Phoenix, Arizona. Photographed by Dan Zudell, *Arizona Homes*, (September-October 1955): 15.



Figure 42: Entrance, Parade of Homes, by Phoenix Association of Home Builders, Royal Crest Villa, 7th Street and Hayward Avenue, Phoenix Arizona. Photographed by Bob Markow, (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection: 1997), 1956.



Figure 43: Ground Breaking Ceremonies, Parade of Homes, by Phoenix Association of Home Builders, Royal Crest Villa, 7th Street and Hayward Avenue, Phoenix Arizona. Photographed by Bob Markow, (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection: 1997), 1956.

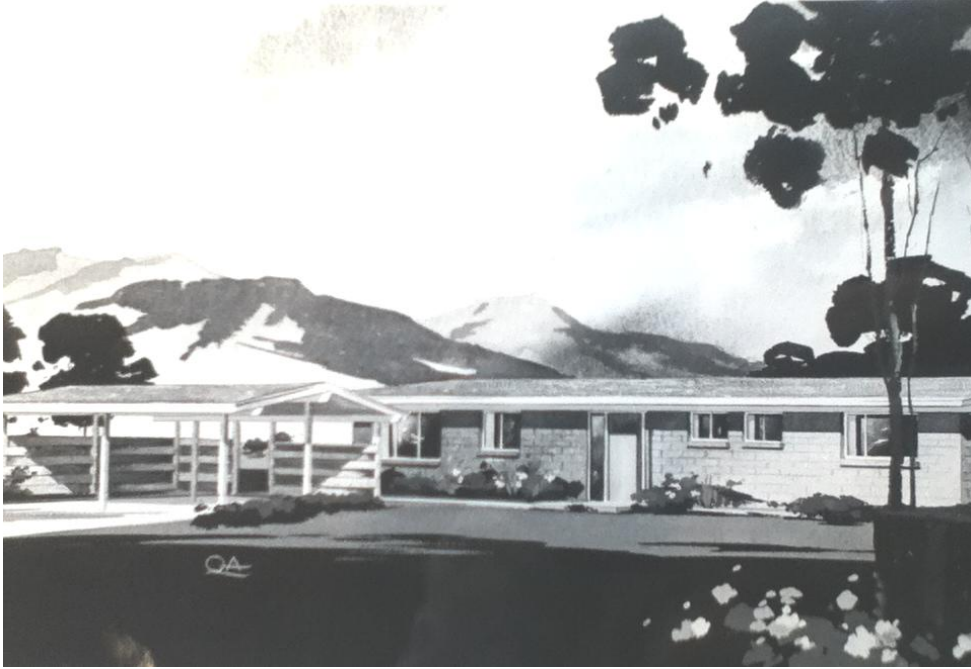


Figure 44: Parade of Homes #7, exterior, by Rich Construction Company, Lot 17. Rendering by Qvale and Associates, (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection: 1997), 1956.

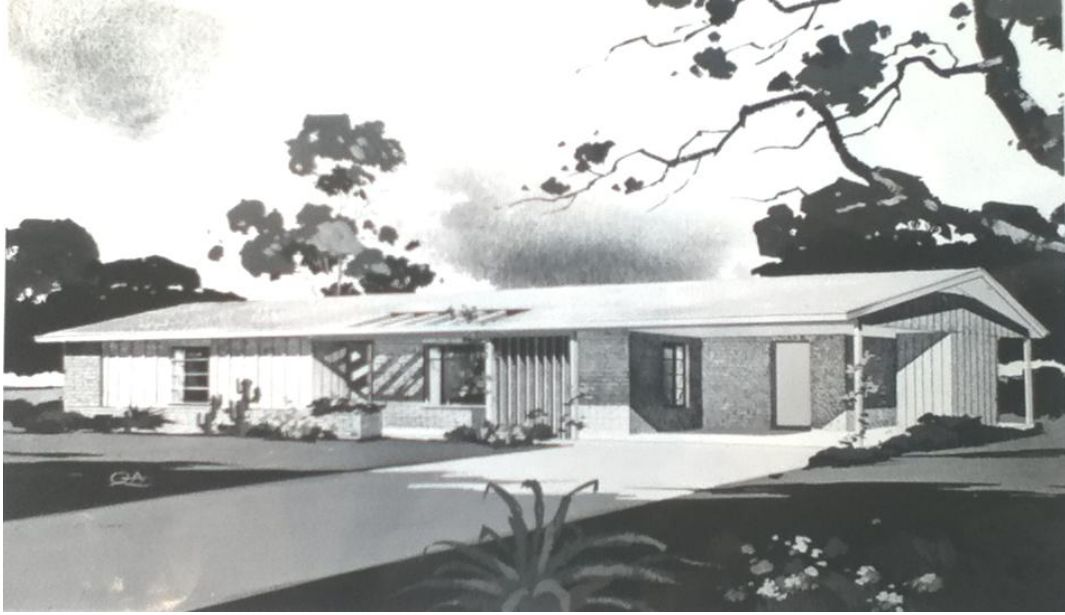
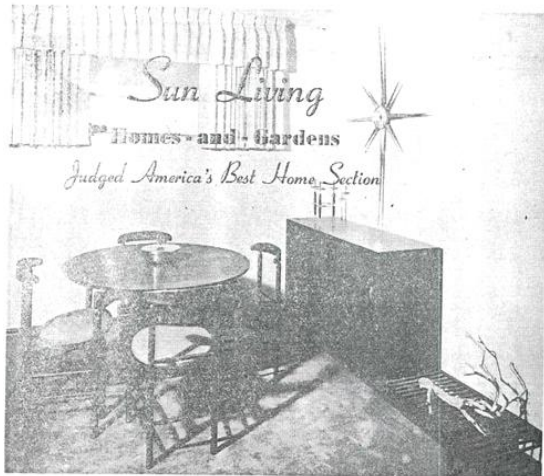


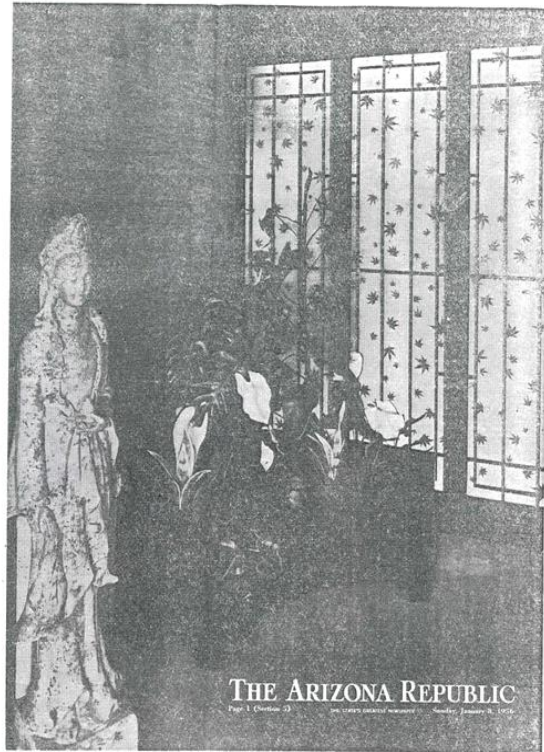
Figure 45: Parade of Homes #13, exterior, by Modern Builders Inc., Lot 8. Rendering by Qvale and Associates, (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection: 1997), 1956.



Figure 46: Parade of Homes #3, living room, by Associated Builders, Lot 14. *Practical Builder*, (August, 1956): 10.



Swedish modern dining grouping has smart, sleek lines.



Shoji screen, Chinese statue are distinctive in entry hall.

Distinctive Rooms Paraded

THE CITY'S first Parade of Homes, sponsored by the On this page are five representative interiors.

Figure 47: "Distinctive Rooms Paraded," *Arizona Republic*, (January 1956): (3) 1.



Figure 48: Ground Breaking Ceremonies, Parade of Homes, by Phoenix Association of Home Builders, Royal Crest Villa, 7th Street and Hayward Avenue, Phoenix Arizona. Photographed by Bob Markow, (Courtesy: Arizona Historical Society, Home Builders Association of Central Arizona Collection: 1997), 1955.

March of the Models Text Analysis	Percentage	Content	
Convenience	35%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience • Ease • Time-Saving • Flexibility • Accessibility • Enjoyment • Comfort 		Home Design 38%	Storage 26%
		New Materials 18%	Mechanical/Electrical 10%
		Kitchen design 4%	Location 4%
Luxury	32%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxury • Lavish/Rich • Specialization • Modernization • Unique • Inclusiveness • Customization • Expensive 		Ornamentation 37%	New Materials 16%
		Additional Features 13%	Storage 11%
		Home Design 10%	Community/Appearance 5%
		Mechanical/Electrical 3%	Appliances 3%
Added Space	14%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added • Ample/Plenty • Large • Roomy • Spaciousness 		Rooms 43%	Storage/Closets 37%
		Kitchen 13%	Home Design 7%
Indoor-Outdoor Living	8%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor/Outdoor • Overlook • Natural • Natural light • Overlooks • Openness 		Doors/Windows 53%	Patios 24%
		Home Design 24%	
Other	11%		

Figure 49: Findings, Text Analysis: March of the Models. Coreen Golab, 2013.

Parade of Homes Text Analysis	Percentage	Content	
Luxury	40%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luxury • Decoration • Specialization • Newness • Modernization • Added Features • Inclusiveness 		Mechanical/Electrical 24%	Ornamentation 18%
		Appliances 16%	Patio/Outdoor Living 15%
		Storage 15%	New Materials 7%
		Home Design 6%	
Indoor-Outdoor Living	21%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor/Outdoor • Overlook • Natural • Natural light • Openness 		Patio 44%	Doors/Windows 18%
		Home Design 13%	Natural Materials 13%
		BBQ/Outdoor Fireplace 10%	Pool 2%
Convenience	20%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience • Ease • Time-Saving • Flexibility • Accessibility 		Home Design 85%	Kitchen Design 8%
		Lighting 4%	Storage 4%
Added Space	17%		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added • Ample/Plenty • Large • Roomy • Spaciousness 		Storage/Closets 42%	Rooms 32%
		Patio 16%	Home 7%
		Other 3%	

Figure 50: Findings, Text Analysis: Parade of Homes. Coreen Golab, 2013.