

# Motels Go to the Moon



Lisa Michele Church & Susan Rugh

# Stages of Motel Development

1. Pre-war auto courts and tourist courts
2. Mid century modern motels, motor lodges, and motor inns
3. Chain motels

# Early Auto Camps



**Hall's Cabins, Washington, Utah**

Courtesy Lynne Clark Collection

# 1. From Tourist Courts to Motels

- Utah's first tourist courts were built in the 1930s as a refinement of the auto camp concept.
- Small family-owned courts featured U-shaped plans opening on to a central court.
- Designs ranged from Streamline Moderne, quirky stylized adobe stucco or quaint cottage motifs; poetic or simple names.
- Simple neon signs



# Early tourist courts



**Colonial Motor Court – Adobe, Stucco, Tile roofs, Filling Station  
St. George**

Courtesy LMC Postcard Collection



**Big D Motel – Streamline Moderne Motor Court, Garages  
St. George**

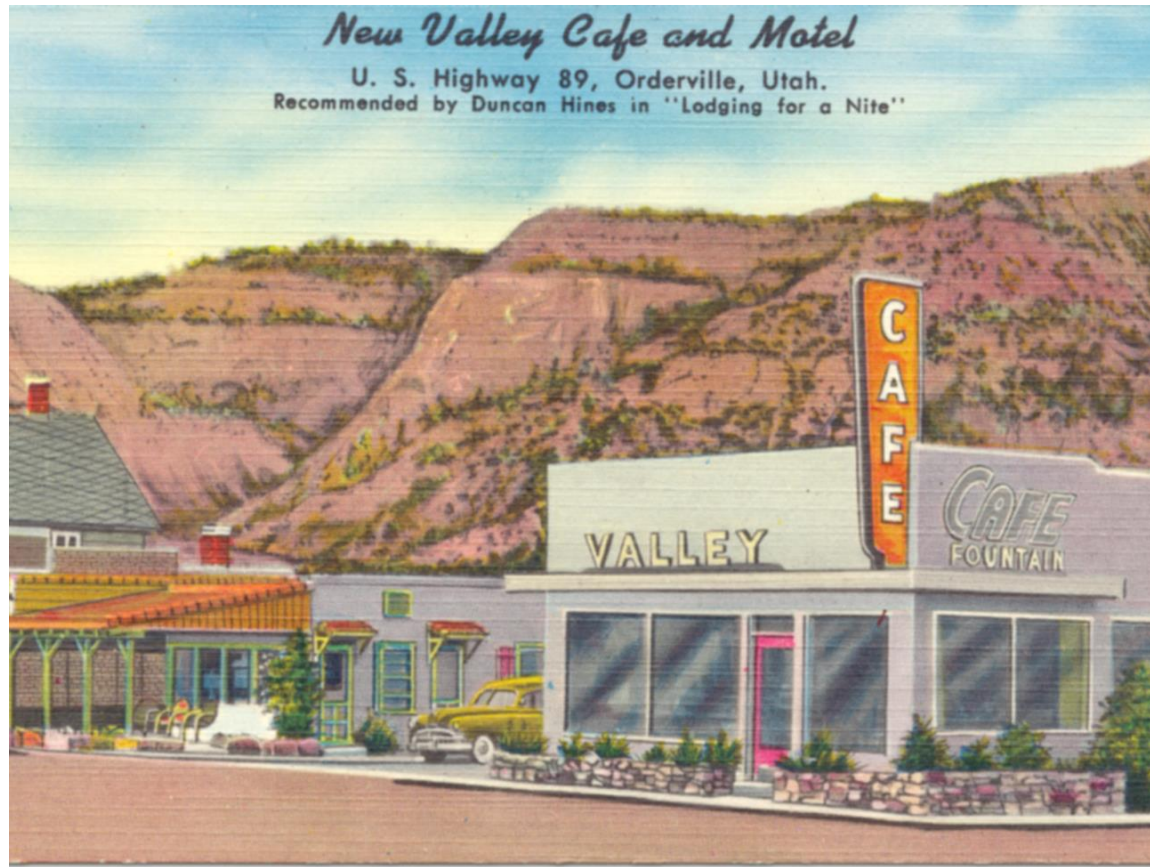
Courtesy LMC Postcard Collection





**The Haven Motel – Cottage style  
St. George**

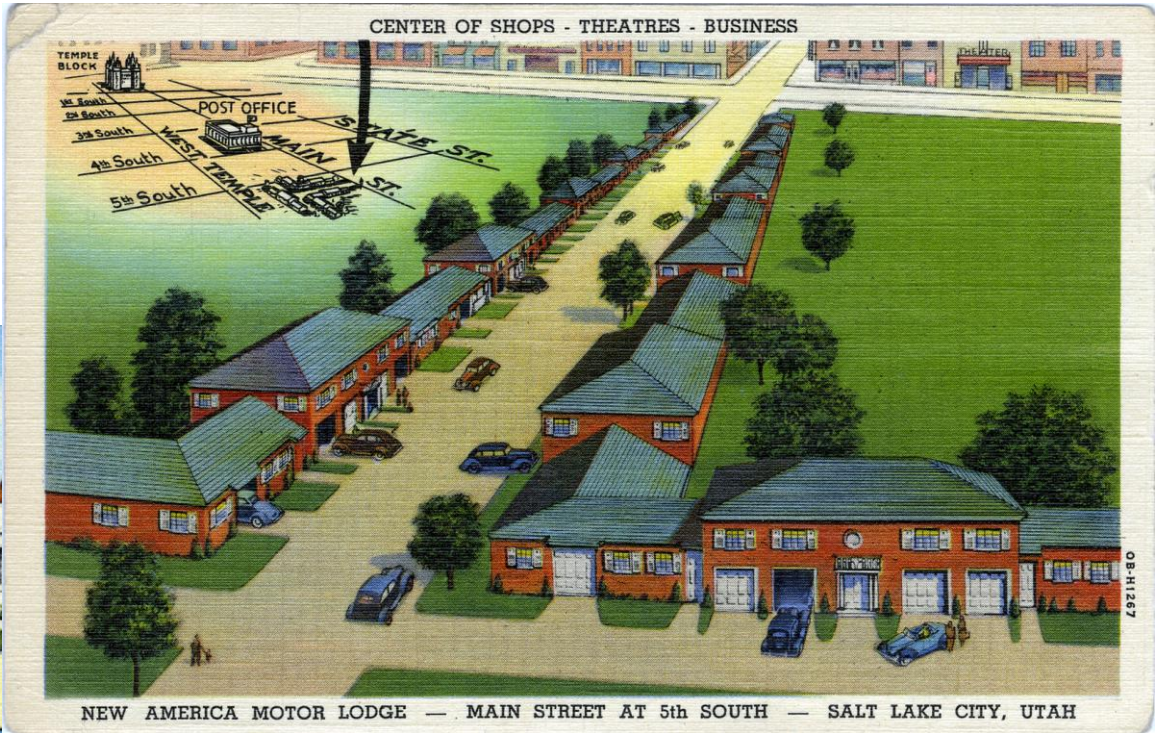
Courtesy LMC Postcard Collection



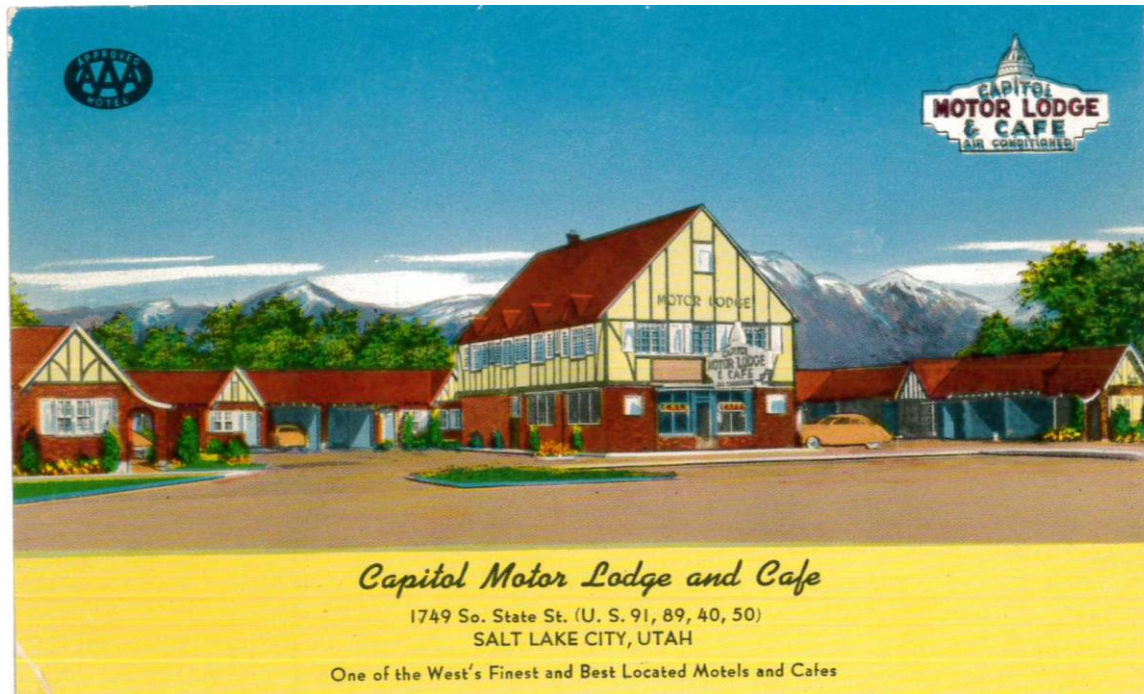
## **New Valley Café and Motel**

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections









## Capitol Motor Lodge and Cafe



## **Tourist Motel, 1829 South State St, 1939**

Salt Lake County (Utah). Assessor's Office, "Tourist Motel at 1829 South State Street in Salt Lake City, UT.," *Highway 89*, accessed March 11, 2015, <http://highway89.org/items/show/482>.

## 2. Mid-century Modern Vernacular

- Signage is one-of-a-kind neon
- The comforts of home
- Brick construction
- Second story with open balcony
- Swimming pools dominate landscape

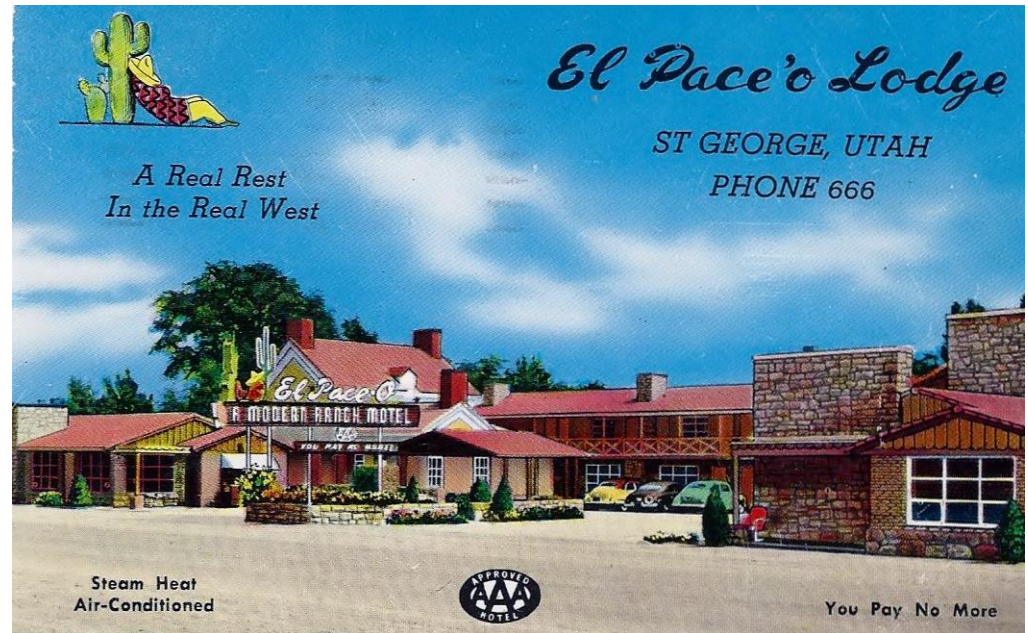


## Post War Building Boom

After World War II, Utah's motor court industry changed to a more sophisticated motel industry, featuring one or two story buildings, air conditioning, swimming pools and elaborate welcoming entrances. Stone or brick exteriors. They offered luxurious amenities like Beautyrest beds and wall-to-wall carpets that most consumers didn't yet have at home.

"The elements of the ensemble suggested an oasis to the traveler, a cool refuge from the hot and dusty roads." SSR

Motel names took on a more dramatic flair – "Sleepy Lagoon" "Spinning Wheel" "Robber's Roost" "Pillow Talk" "Coral Hills" "Tiki" – and mom-and-pop owners competed to create the most attractive curb appeal. What the buildings lacked in style, the signs and entrances compensated for!







**Spiking Tourist Lodge – Brick and ranch style with  
second story and balcony  
Salt Lake City**

Courtesy LMC Postcard Collection



## Hi-Way 89 Lodge, Panguitch

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections





**Robbers Roost  
Green River**



**Sleepy Lagoon  
Beaver**



**Spiking Tourist Lodge**

**Scenic Motel**

**SLC**





## Utah Motel, Moab

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections





## Hi-Way 89 Lodge, Panguitch

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections



**Atomic Motel  
Moab**





**Starlite Motel, Nephi**

**Western Safari**  
**St. George**  
Added an “atom motif”  
to its signage in the 1960s

**Stardust Motel**  
**St. George**  
Elegant star-studded neon sign







## Columbian Inn

### Provo

Googie style shown by the “atomic” motif of the star atop the sign and the boldly colored fencing, sharp angles.



**Galaxie Motel  
Brigham City**

Building featured stylish rooflines and angles  
Signage used space motif and arches





## **The Stag Motel, Beaver**

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections



**El Rey Motel, Cedar City**





## **Astro Motel**

### **Cedar City**

Bold arches, cinder block accents, colorful doors

Courtesy LMC Postcard Collection



**Red Cloud Lodge**  
**Vernal**

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections



Susan add Se Rancho/Romney Inn Pool



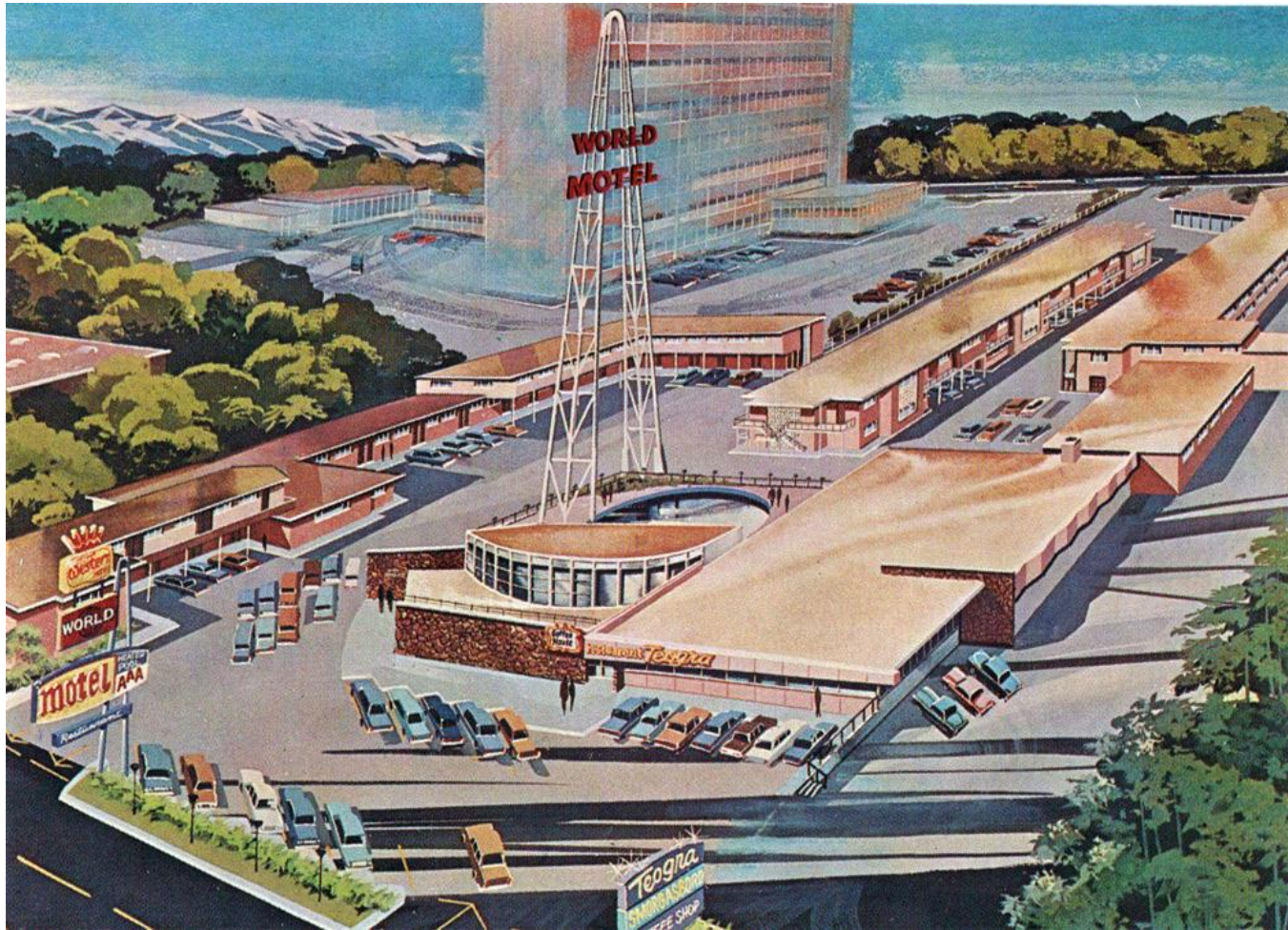
## **Imperial 400 Motel, Ogden**

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections

# Ultra Modern

- Big city lodging
- Odd angles and circular spaces
- The big entrance
- Coffee shops & restaurants
- Built for convention use





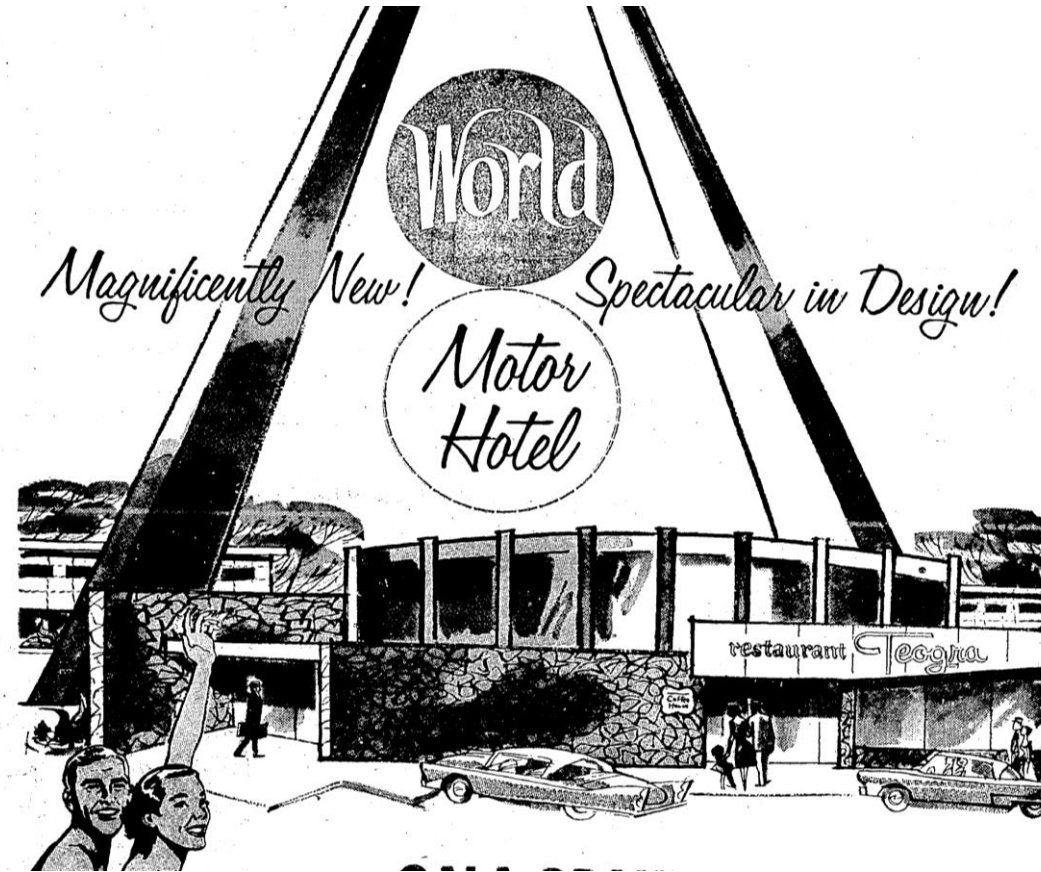
World Motel Utah Plan



## World Motor Hotel

Opened in 1960 to great fan fair. Elements of Googie style with enormous pylon and sign featuring the globe.





**This was the ultimate in modernizing...**

The World Motor Hotel was rolled out to wide acclaim with 10 full pages of a special insert to the Salt Lake Tribune, June 22, 1960.



## Hotel Utah Motor Lodge

Elements of Gooogie style such as boomerang arches.

Salt Lake City



**Continental Motel  
North Temple, Salt Lake City, 1962**



Central Utah's  
Most Luxurious Motor Hotel  
and Convention Center

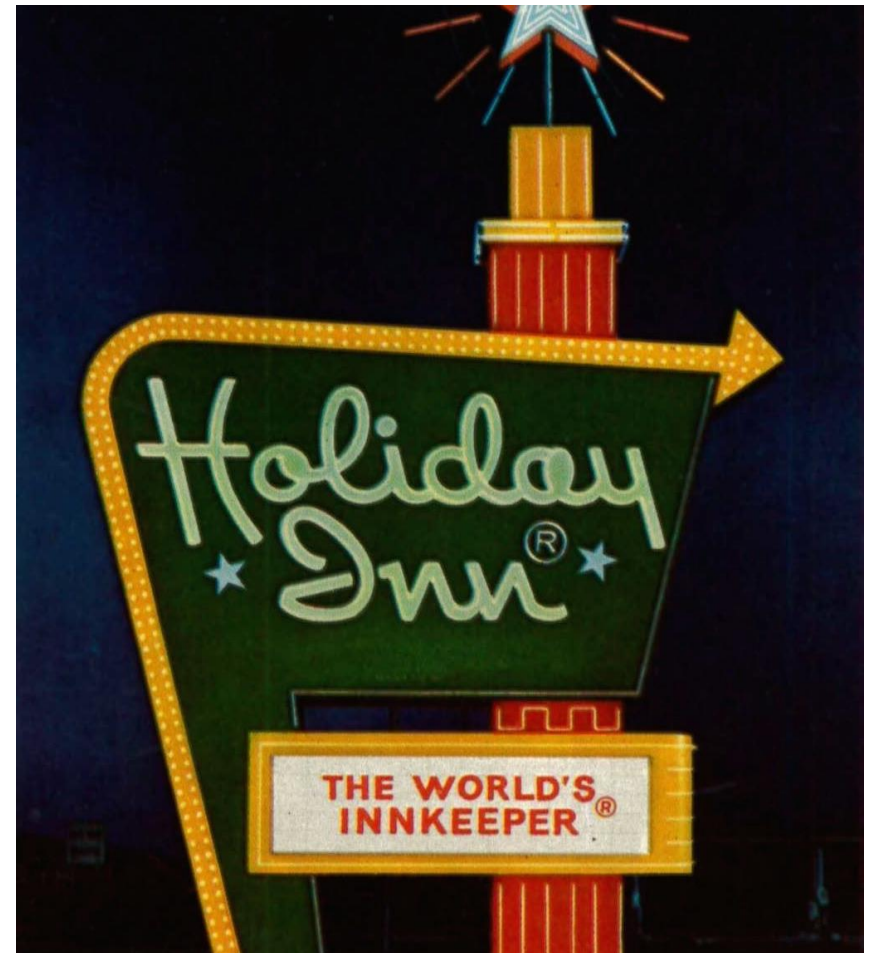


## Royal Inn Motel Provo

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections

# Lodging Chains

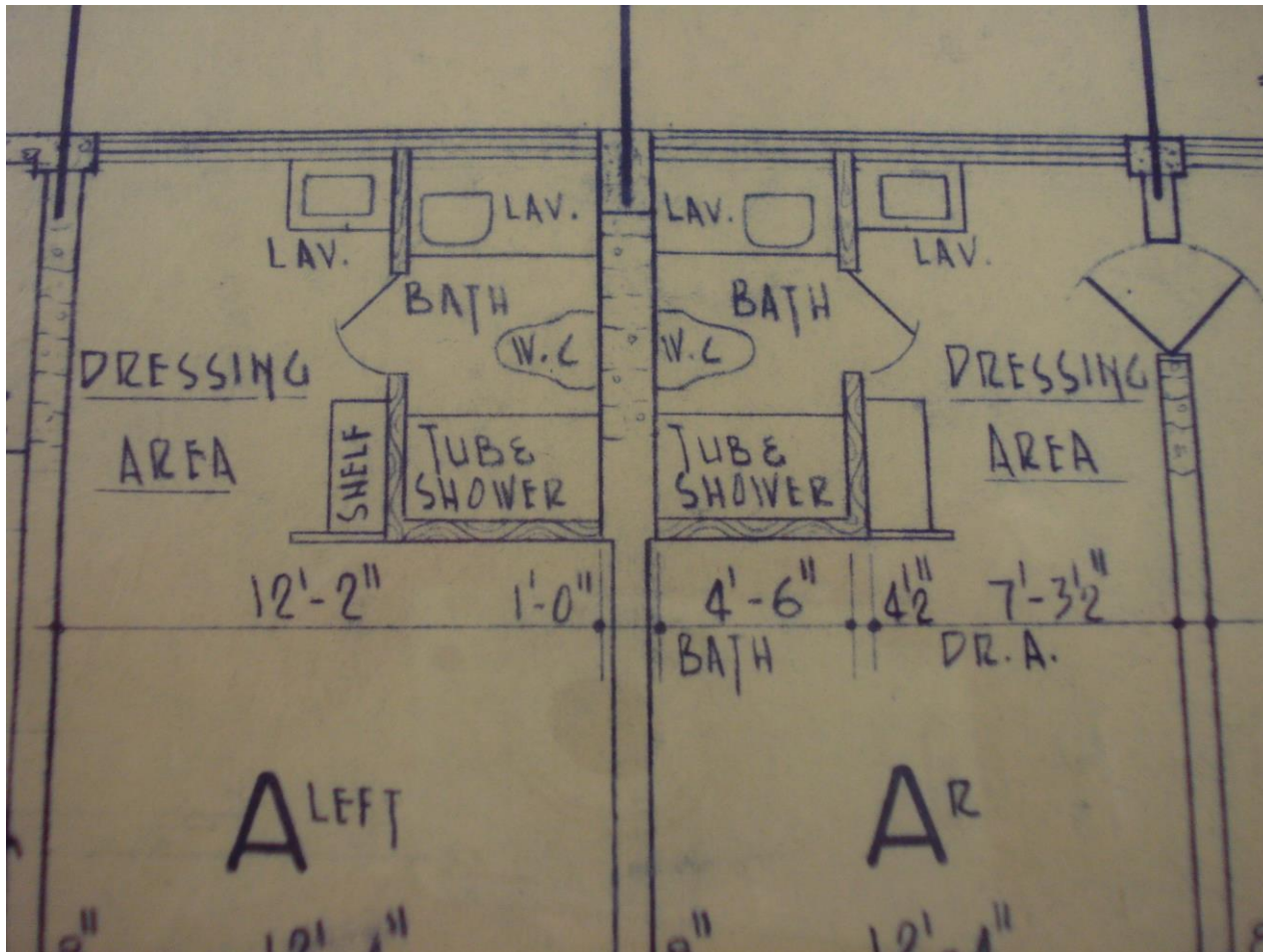
- Travelodge 1940
- Holiday Inn 1952
- Uniformity





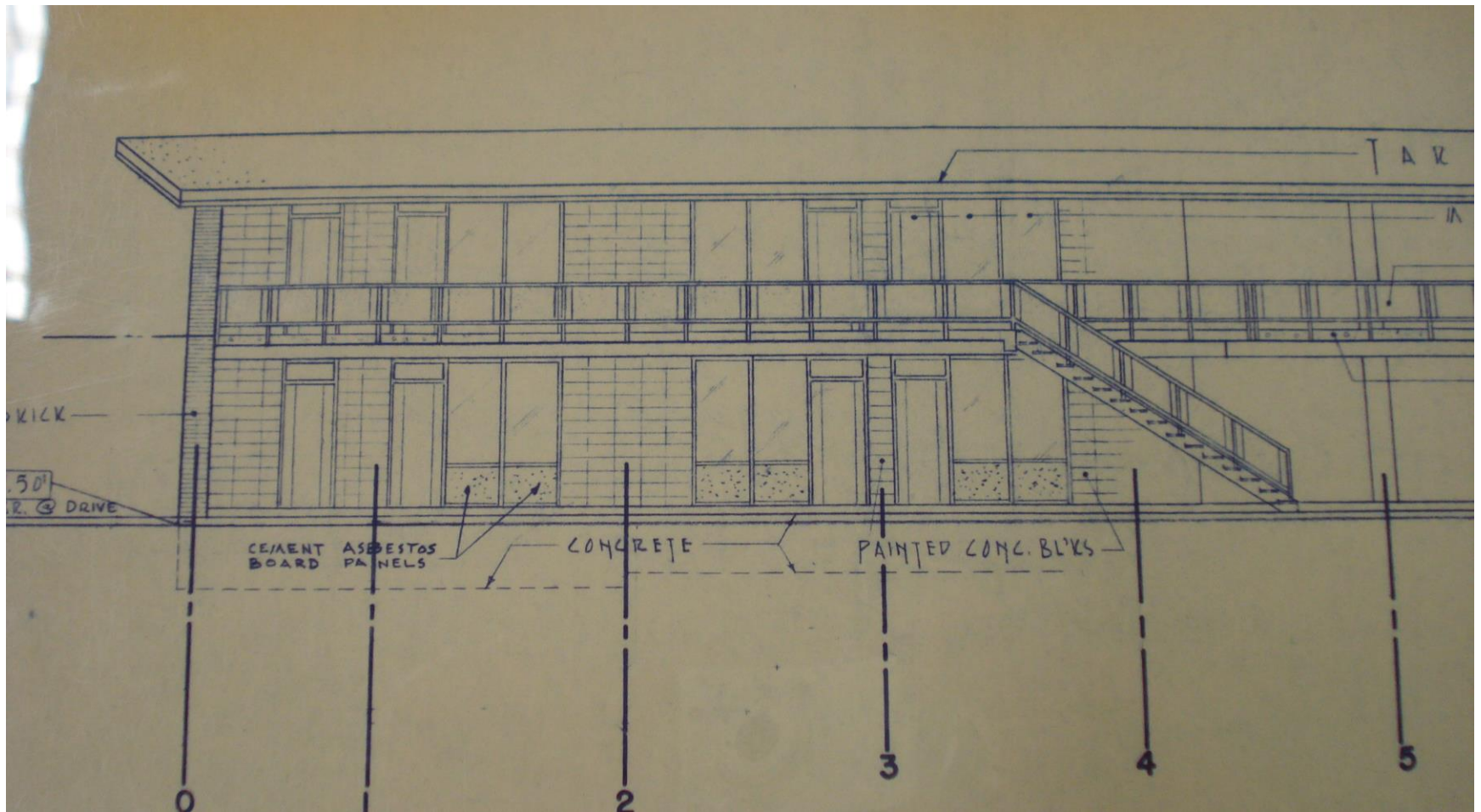


# H.J. Detail





# Second Story Open Balcony





## Travelodge

Courtesy Utah Postcard Collection, Marriott Library Special Collections





*Holiday Inn*<sup>®</sup>, Downtown  
**Salt Lake City, Utah**

# Revive Our Old Motels?

- Gone
  - Scenic Motel and Snyder's Covered Wagon
- Lost character
  - Colonial Village
- Public housing
  - Holiday Inn/Palmer Ct
- State Street
  - Spiking Inn
  - Temple City
  - Siesta Inn rebuilt
  - Capitol Inn







## Modern Revived, Stovall's Space Age

Los Angeles





## Holiday Motel, Las Vegas

[Johnballardphotographix.com](http://Johnballardphotographix.com)

# Neon Museum, Las Vegas



