

[ANGLES ON ARCHITECTURE]

Avenel Housing

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Ledger Columnists



Just off Rowena Avenue near the intersection of Hyperion Avenue is Avenel Street, where in the late 1940s architect Gregory Ain designed "Avenel Housing."

Built after World War II as "starter housing," there are a total of 10 units; five each in two separate structures with a walkway in the middle.

The flat roof, pure rectilinear form, large expanses of glass and lack of adornment are all typical characteristics of the Mid-Century Modern style prevalent after World War II, especially in Southern California. The Avenel Housing was built as a solution to the housing shortage after World War II.

On the interiors, each unit is approximately 1,000 square feet with a large patio at the end. A glass wall draws the eye to the outdoors from the interior and visually (and physically) expands the space.

Ain used unique space-saving devices on the interiors. A sliding wall connected to a track above—similar to the way a sliding closet door works—is used to open up the bedroom space or close it off. A kitchen table-top placed between the kitchen and living room wall in lieu of a formal dining area,

opens up the kitchen to the living room and provides a permanent dining area. By using these devices, what would be considered by some to be a small space, has the feeling of something much larger.

Ain was born in Pennsylvania, but attended the University of Southern California. He worked with Rudolf Schindler, Richard Neutra and Charles Eames and others. He designed many single-



An example of "Avenel Housing"—big on design, short on space, by architect Gregory Ain.

family homes, but was known for low-cost housing tracts in Reseda, Alta Dena and most significantly Mar Vista. The Mar Vista Housing Tract of 1947 was designated a Historic Preservation Overlay Zone in 2003.

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