

Fullerton Groves

Status: city-unrecognized potential Historic District

Between 1953 and 1957 three tracts of single-family residences, 286 altogether, were marketed with the name Fullerton Groves, located west of Richman Avenue and south of Valencia Drive on Adams, Ash, Elm, Maplewood, Oak, Rosslynn, Washington, and West Avenues. The local building firm of Pardee-Phillips, using an array of housing plans prepared by architects A. Quincy Jones and Frederick E. Emmons for Joseph Eichler, developed Fullerton Groves with the “Forever House”: a residence designed with an open floor plan built to be long-lasting, using materials of aluminum, glass, steel, and masonry.

The Forever Houses were the first California Modern residences constructed in Fullerton, and the dwellings sharply contrasted with the postwar tract and ranch-styled homes rapidly being built around the city. The Forever Homes in the Fullerton Groves development had covered carports, floor-to-ceiling windows, open-beam ceilings, flowing interiors, and a sense of openness not found in conventional cookie-cutter homes. Carports were situated front and center, an acknowledgement of the car as a symbol of social status. The fresh and innovative use of materials and technology reflected the new postwar lifestyle of Southern California residents.

Each phase of the Fullerton Groves development quickly sold out. The Forever House was the forerunner to the more elaborate floor plans that Jones and Emmons developed for Joseph Eichler in the late 1950s. By 1959, Jones and Emmons (along with two other architectural firms) provided Eichler with floor plans having atriums as a centerpiece of the house, more pronounced roof designs with exposed wood ceilings, and generally residences with larger footprints than those of the Forever House. While the Forever House exhibits all of the essential elements of an Eichler-commissioned design – open floor plans, lasting building materials, post-and-beam construction, and an indoor-outdoor transition – it represents a more modest design compared to residences that Eichler built later between 1959 and 1965.

This is one of the two neighborhoods that the city of Fullerton currently does not recognize as a potential Historic District.

