

PRESERVATION SNAPSHOT

This monthly feature highlights recent and fascinating National Register listings and eligible properties, tax act projects, compliance review success stories, as well as outstanding local efforts in New Jersey's historic preservation.

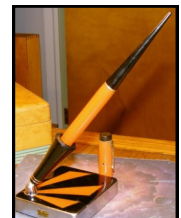
Art Deco & Art Moderne Architecture in New Jersey



Altenburg Piano House, Elizabeth, NJ, 1929 Credit: roadarch.com

Architecture in America during the 1920s & 1930s witnessed a conscious and bold change in style from anything that preceded it. Art Deco, and then Art Moderne – aka Streamline Moderne – were dramatic and audacious.

But, the public enthusiastically embraced the new designs, and its influence quickly stretched from buildings to ocean liners, automobiles, appliances, home furnishings, clothing and jewelry.



*Right: Cloche hat, 1925 Credit: V&A Museum
Far Right: Parker Duofold Desk Set, c.1930 Credit: Wikipedia*

ART DECO

Art Deco designs originated in France just prior to World War I, and flourished around the world throughout the 1920s and beyond. The style was first brought to the U.S. in 1922 when Finnish architect, Eliel Saarinen placed second in the Chicago Tribune Tower design contest. His Deco design for the proposed tower was broadly shown and touted as an exciting new style.

But, it was in 1925 when the renowned “Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes” occurred in Paris, that Art Deco leapt onto the scene. The international exhibition showcased new ideas in the applied arts, and literally forbid historical references in its submissions. The energy displayed by the new Deco designs created an international sensation. The United States was notably absent from the Paris Exhibition, declining to participate on the grounds that ‘there was no modern design in America’.

Contrary to the preceding revival styles in U.S. architecture, Art Deco was the first to look forward rather than back for its influences. Current popular interest in archaeology (ongoing excavations at Pompeii & Tutankhamun’s tomb) contributed ancient cultural motifs that were combined with the urban, modern elements of the time. Popular art trends such as Cubism, Modernism and Futurism also influenced the use of decorative geometric shapes.



*Paris Exhibition Poster, 1925
Designed by Robert Bonfils*

Art Deco’s embrace of technology distinguishes it from the organic motifs of its immediate predecessor, Art Nouveau. Deco is characterized by strong geometric forms – spheres, rectangles, zigzags, chevron & sunburst motifs – typically arranged in symmetrical patterns. Buildings have a vertical emphasis, with vivid, polychrome highlights and embellishment. Modern new construction materials were used, defining the sleek look by incorporating aluminum, stainless steel and plastics such as Bakelite. To quote Wikipedia, “Art Deco represented luxury, glamour, exuberance and faith...”



*JCP&L terra cotta w/
polychrome
Keyport, NJ c.1930
Credit: roadarch.com*

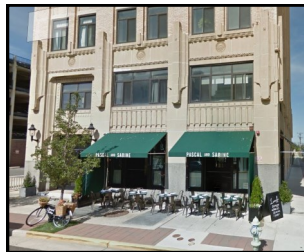
Art Deco Examples in New Jersey

- ◆ Electric Company Building, Asbury Park – 1922
- ◆ Altenburg Piano House, Elizabeth – 1929
- ◆ Fort Lee Memorial Municipal Building, Fort Lee – 1929
- ◆ Temple Emanuel, Paterson – 1929
- ◆ Sears Building, Hackensack – c.1930
- ◆ Jersey Central Power & Light, Keyport – c.1930 (Deco façade added to older brick building)
- ◆ Hersh Tower, Elizabeth – 1931
- ◆ Jersey City Medical Center, Jersey City – 1934-38
- ◆ Penn Station, Newark – 1935
- ◆ Newark Airport Administration Building, Newark – 1935

ART DECO IN NEW JERSEY

1922

Electric Company Building
Asbury Park



1929

Altenburg Piano House
Elizabeth



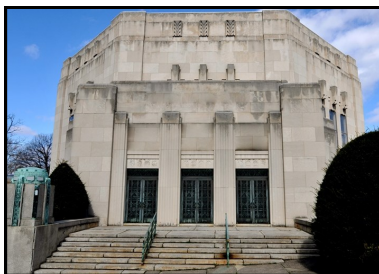
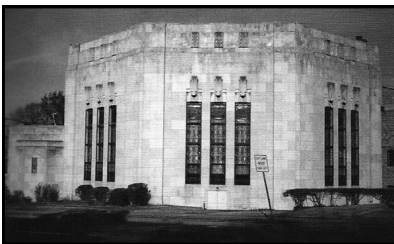
1929

Memorial Municipal Building
Fort Lee



1929

Temple Emanuel
Paterson



c.1930

Jersey Central Power & Light
Keyport



c.1930

Sears & Roebuck Building
Hackensack

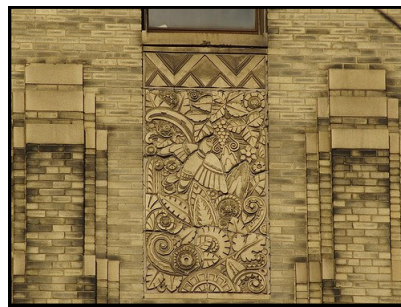


ART DECO IN NEW JERSEY

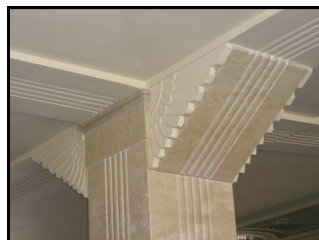
1931
Hersh Tower
Elizabeth



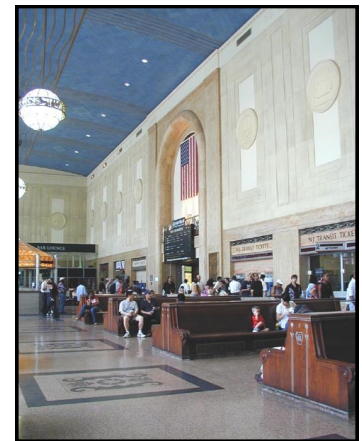
1934-38
Jersey City Medical Center
Jersey City



1935
Administration Building
Newark Airport



1935
Penn Station
Newark



ART MODERNE

Art Moderne/Streamline Moderne followed Art Deco in the late 1930s. The style stripped Deco design of its ornamentation in favor of an emphasized horizontal, aerodynamic concept of motion and speed, using more subdued colors. Streamline's smooth walls contained rounded corners, curved canopies, flat roofs and bands of windows with a linear emphasis accentuated by aluminum or stainless steel details. It truly reflected the country's growing excitement about technological advancements and high speed transportation.



Hunts Casino, Wildwood, NJ, 1940 Credit: Allan Weitz

Originating in the German Bauhaus movement, streamlining was associated in the U.S. with prosperity and an exciting future. The style quickly spread to cars, locomotives, and many household appliances. As Alaska's historic preservation office describes it, "Zoom and speed are embodied in the design of the buildings."



Toaster Credit: Wikipedia

Notable examples of bold Art Moderne design include the 1939 New York World's Fair, and the interior set and costumes of the "Emerald City" in the 1939 movie, *The Wizard of Oz*.



*1939 New York World's Fair
Vintage Postcard*



*Wizard of Oz, Emerald City Set
Credit: Pinterest*

With the onset of World War II, construction in the U.S. slowed significantly when material shortages curtailed all non-war related production. As a result, Moderne began to fade. What emerged after were buildings in the International Style, whose austere tone reflected an absolute absence of decoration, with an increased use of glass and steel. The dynamic design era of the 1920s & 30s had come to a close.

Art Moderne Examples in New Jersey

- ◆ Deal Lake Court Apartments, Asbury Park – 1930s
- ◆ Landis Theater, Vineland – 1937
- ◆ 22 5 Larch Road, Teaneck – c.1938
- ◆ WMCA Transmitter Building, Kearny – 1940
- ◆ Hunts Casino, Wildwood – 1940

ART MODERNE IN NEW JERSEY

1930s

Deal Lake Court Apts.
Asbury Park



1937

Landis Theater
Vineland



c. 1938

Private Residence
Teaneck



1940

Hunts Casino
Wildwood



1940

WMCA Radio Transmitter
Kearny



20th Century Limited Train, 1938

Credit: Henry Dreyfuss, Library of Congress

Photo Credits | Art Deco in NJ: Google; Roadside Architecture; furtleehistoryarchive.blogspot.com; preservationnj.files.wordpress.com; kehilalinks.jewishgen.org; s.inimg.com; NJSHPO; MG New York Architects; Pinterest; ie.picclick.com; newarkbusiness.org.

Photo Credits | Art Moderne in NJ: NJSHPO; Google; Pinterest; heritageconsultinginc.com; Barry Winiker, Getty Images; Roadside Architecture; fybush.com; Allan Weitz.

Additional Sources: US Department of the Interior, National Historic Landmark Nomination, "Asbury Park Commercial Historic District;" "1925: Selling Art Deco to the World, Design, Politics & Commerce, International Exhibitions 1851-1951," University of Glasgow Library; "Art Deco: the 1925 Paris Exhibition," Victoria & Albert Museum; "Ten Most Endangered List, 2010," Preservation New Jersey.



Sir Edward Maufe Desk, 1925 Credit: V&A Museum

(Preservation Snapshot Archives con't on next page.)

PRESERVATION SNAPSHOT ARCHIVES

2016

- Trenton's Pottery Industry, Trenton, NJ February 2016
- Art Deco & Art Moderne Architecture in NJ January 2016

2015

- Buildings in the Battles of Trenton, Trenton, NJ December 2015
- Hinchliffe Stadium in The Silk City, Paterson, NJ November 2015
- Harleigh Cemetery and its Famous "Residents," Camden, NJ October 2015
- School's Out at the Boylan Street School, Newark, NJ September 2015
- Catboats ... Jersey Cats ... A-Cats, Barnegat Bay, NJ August 2015
- Lucy, the Elephant, Margate, NJ July 2015
- Mount Tabor Historic District, Parsippany-Troy Hills, NJ June 2015

If you enjoy Preservation Snapshot, you may also enjoy:

New Jersey 350 Archives

