

# The Bungalow: uniquely ours

*"Bungalow: A simple one-story home with wooden siding; a low-pitched, gabled roof; wide eaves; a front porch; and an airy interior."*



Over a century after the bungalow first appeared in the fledgling neighborhoods of Los Angeles and Pasadena, it's a major star of historic architecture in LA. But of all the places in the country, why did it spread here first? Quite simply, it was the right house at the right time.

The dawn of the 1900s brought a boom in the local middle class — and a growing move from city apartments to new suburbs. People needed houses fast, and builders soon found the perfect solution. One writer described it as “a small, single-family, simple but artistic dwelling; inexpensive, easily built, yet attractive to the new middle-class buyer.” No one imagined this new arrival called the “bungalow” would become the most popular house style the country had ever seen.

Inspired by the thatch-roofed huts of Bengal, India, the bungalow's deep eaves, porches, patios and rambling interior were ideal for the LA climate. The home quickly took on a California personality, eventually coming in a wide range of styles, from Mission and Tudor to Cape Cod and Swiss Chalet. The rising popularity of the Arts & Crafts movement further enhanced its appeal; it paralleled the bungalow's emphasis on simplicity, harmony with nature and craftsmanship. A great example is this exquisitely restored gem at 1521 N. Sierra Bonita Avenue, listed at \$1,599,000 by Bill Lustig and Wendy Kneeder of our Sunset Strip office. A stunner inside and out, this Japanese-Swiss influenced airplane bungalow anchors Sunset Square's Craftsman Row.

By the '20s, a Bungalow Boom was in full swing, emanating from the Pasadena neighborhood now called Bungalow Heaven and spreading across California and the nation. Eventually, ready-to-build bungalow kits could be ordered from Sears. By the end of the decade, the spectrum of local examples ranged from Greene & Greene's grand 1908 Gamble House to mini editions set around central courtyards.

The area's unprecedented suburban growth kept the bungalow's popularity strong through the late '20s; then its star began to fade. At the end of World War II, faced with a sharp new demand for affordable family housing, many developers chose to raze bungalow neighborhoods in favor of cheap, mass-produced tract houses and apartments.

In the late 1980s, renewed interest in the Arts & Crafts movement led to a fresh appreciation for the comfort, warmth and simplicity of bungalow architecture. Today the renaissance is complete, and our local treasure trove of bungalows, now among the most famous examples in the country, is sought after and treasured by a passionate new generation of fans.



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