

## **Pan Abode Buildings in Aspen: A Historic Context**



Prepared For:  
City of Aspen  
130 South Galena Street  
Aspen, Colorado 81611

Prepared By:  
TEC, Inc.  
1658 Cole Boulevard, Suite 190  
Golden, Colorado 80401

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## Table of Contents

Summary .....	2
The Pre-Manufactured Building in the U.S. ....	2
The <i>Pan Abode</i> Companies.....	7
Pan Abode Architecture.....	7
Purchasing and Construction Process .....	11
Pan Abode Building Types in Aspen.....	13
Historic Significance of Pan Abode Buildings in Aspen.....	16
Period of Historic Significance .....	17
References.....	19

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Classic Notch System, as shown by the Pan Abode Cedar Homes company .....	7
Figure 2. A 1951 building by the Pan Abode Company's sister-company in British Columbia, the Pan-Abode Company. ....	8
Figure 3. Recessed entrance at 630 Main Street, built in 1965.....	9
Figure 4. Curved brackets at the entrance of 1208/1210 Snowbunny Lane, built in 1965.....	9
Figure 5. A Chalet Style Pan Abode (demolished).....	10
Figure 6. The picture windows of Pan Abodes, as seen at 509 West Main Street, left, and 1355 Sage Court, right. ....	11
Figure 7. Picture windows, as seen in 300 West Hyman.....	11
Figure 8. Advertisement for Richard Wright, one of the Pan Abode contractors in Aspen, 1965 .....	13
Figure 9. 1970 Pan Abode single-family houses at 103 Ardmore (left) and 110 Ardmore (right). ....	14
Figure 10. Multiple family building at 403 and 404 Park Avenue, built in 1964.....	14

## **Summary**

This historic context statement on Pan Abode buildings has been prepared for the City of Aspen to determine the potential significance of the city's group of at least 50 buildings that were pre-manufactured by the Pan Abode Cedar Homes Company and built in and around Aspen in the 1950s and 1960s. The City retained TEC Inc. (TEC) to conduct primary and secondary research to expand upon the existing information compiled on Pan Abode buildings in Aspen. Historical research focused on the local, regional, and national historic context of Pan Abode buildings and relevant historical themes. Resources consulted included materials from the City of Aspen, Pitkin County Assessor, Denver Public Library, Prospector Interlibrary loan, and historic maps, photographs, and newspaper archives. TEC also conducted oral history interviews with current and past Aspen residents familiar with the history of Pan Abode buildings to supplement information available in the written record.

This historic context statement is an assessment of the significance of Pan Abode buildings in Aspen based on this research only. The project did not include fieldwork or evaluations of individual buildings; rather it assessed the significance of the Pan Abode building type using information compiled in this historic context. The City of Aspen provided the photographic illustrations included in this narrative.

Based on this information, TEC recommends that the 1950s and 1960s-era Pan Abode buildings have historic significance on the local level in Aspen. The following paper explains this recommendation and includes a description of the Character-Defining Features of Pan Abode buildings.

### **The Pre-Manufactured Building in the U.S.**

The historical origins of the Pan Abode buildings of the 1950s and 1960s begin with the factory-made balloon frame houses made popular by the Sears, Roebuck & Co. mail-order catalog introduced in 1908 and, to a lesser degree, the Aladdin Homes catalog introduced in 1910. These pre-manufactured “kit” houses were essentially packages of pre-cut, numbered wood parts that were delivered to the desired building site to be easily erected by any person unskilled in the building trades. Their affordability and easy do-it-yourself construction became most attractive during the nation’s most uncertain economic times. Pre-manufactured building’s first wave of popularity followed the end of World War I in 1918 when soldiers returning home sought affordable housing in which to start a family. While new building technologies emerged throughout the Depression years of the 1930s, advances in pre-manufactured materials and building methods skyrocketed during the World War II years between 1942 and 1945 when the United States (U.S.) military concentrated its building efforts on fast, efficient, and inexpensive construction techniques. The private sector applied these techniques to meet urgent building needs that followed the end of the war. Six million returning veterans found an inadequate supply of suitable buildings to house themselves and their new families and pre-manufactured ready-to-assemble buildings became especially attractive to the many people in need of decent housing during the nation’s postwar housing crisis. It was this dire and urgent need for housing that spurred the second wave of factory-made buildings to new heights of affordability and sophistication (Ebong 2005).

The population growth in the rest of the country boomed during the postwar years of the late 1940s and 1950s, but building activity was comparatively quiet in Aspen. The silver crash of 1893 deeply affected Aspen’s mining industries, and the town witnessed a dramatic decline that left it sparsely populated through the 1930s. Aspen struggled for the first three decades of the twentieth century until the commercial ski industry began to revive the town. The development of ski areas in and around Aspen in the 1930s and 1940s brought a renewed need for buildings and infrastructure. Although many of the nineteenth-century buildings were available for use, prospective buyers were required to pay back taxes on these properties, many of which carried unpaid property taxes since 1893. Thus by the early 1940s, buying property in Aspen became prohibitively expensive due to the accumulation of taxes owed on many of the existing properties. This circumstance made affordable building options an attractive feature of Pan Abode kit buildings, and for many it was the only way they could afford to live in Aspen during the early postwar years.

Although their low cost and easy construction was a critical factor, Pan Abode buildings also offered something more intangible than simply affordable shelter. Their log-frame architecture gave its inhabitants the romanticized rustic aesthetic that many sought in their mountain homes. The log cabin's symbolism is deeply rooted in the American identity for its associations with the American frontier and our national ideals of rugged individualism. This identity and mythology is particularly entrenched in the American West, including Aspen, Colorado, where the town's scenic mountainous surroundings became a backdrop for Rustic Style architecture as early as the 1930s. The Rustic Style developed in Colorado after 1905 and is identified through its log construction with battered walls, overhanging roofs, and small paned windows. The style grew out of the Pioneer Log structures found in Colorado which are often associated with the American west. After World War II, Americans extolled these ideals with even greater enthusiasm through popular culture and even children's toys such as the iconic "Lincoln Logs" blocks. The Pan Abode's cedar logs were grown, milled, and manufactured in a far-off location, but for many Americans these "log" buildings still resonated with their cultural past, even if they was a modern facsimile of a romanticized concept.

For people looking for adventure, the Pan Abode's self-built quality presented an opportunity for the "can-do" generation of the 1950s and 1960s to tackle a realistic project that reaped the rewards of an entirely new building. By the 1950s, "do-it-yourself" became a cultural phenomenon of the postwar generation. The attitude began as part of the postwar suburban ideal, but it undoubtedly carried into the vacation home. Many returning veterans welcomed the opportunity to apply technical skills they learned during the war toward realizing the postwar dream of a modern and comfortable new home (The National Building Museum 2003). In rural Colorado, people took this attitude one step farther in part due to the romanticized influence of the western frontier's spirit of hearty self-reliance.

Once Americans began establishing themselves as the well-off and burgeoning population of the middle class in the early 1950s, families began to enjoy recreational activities afforded by the nation's newfound economic prosperity. They also enjoyed more leisure time than ever before. The New Deal's Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 regulated a maximum 40-hour work-week, and after World War II the five-day work-week became typical. By 1950, leisure time accounted for over 34 percent of American's waking lives (Gilbert 1995). At the same time, increasing personal wealth and the dramatic rise of personal automobile ownership gave Americans the freedom and mobility to venture outside of their hometowns in search of weekend getaways. Improved roads and the nation's new interstate highway system provided access to areas not readily available before the war. Americans began traveling the highways and staying in motels

on Route 66 and at National Forest visitor cabins. As Americans discovered new communities, they sought modest vacation homes in their pursuit of outdoor leisure activities, such as skiing. Attracted to the town's picturesque Rocky Mountain setting as well as its three highly regarded ski areas established by 1958, vacationers found their way to Aspen for lodging or to establish second homes.

Kit buildings sold by the Pan Abode Cedar Homes company fulfilled many of these buyers' preferences for Rustic Style architecture in the mountain town. Pan Abodes were an affordable choice in addition to being easily transportable, and reflected the romanticized idea of a western log cabin. These buildings also interested buyers due to their simplicity and ease of construction. Pan Abodes were often viewed as a symbol of the do-it-yourself independence of the west. In 1947, 37,000 of kit homes built nationwide were constructed using prefabricated components, and by 1960 the number had grown to 126,000 houses, or nine percent of all homes built. Prefabricated techniques for permanent house construction in particular grew parallel with the increasing market for vacation homes (Randl 2004). This increasing need for vacation homes was especially visible in Aspen, where many of the Pan Abode buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s were used as second homes associated with the ski industry. Individuals and families from Denver, Texas, New York, and other areas around the country utilized the ease of construction and affordability associated with Pan Abode buildings in order to construct their vacation homes.

The increasing interest in Aspen's ski industry in the late 1950s is evidenced by an increase in the number of new homes constructed in the city between 1958 and 1959. According to the *Aspen Times*, eight new homes were constructed in 1958 while in 1959 that number increased to 19 (Aspen Times 1960a). During this era of second home growth, Pitkin County's population increased roughly 44 percent and Highway 82 leading into Aspen saw a traffic increase which was the highest of any road in Colorado. In 1960, the road experienced a 10.9 percent increase in traffic over the 1959 numbers (Aspen Times 1960b). Aspen's Pan Abode homes allowed many owners to purchase a second home when they might not otherwise have been able to afford the cost of building. On average new houses cost \$15.00 a square foot to build in 1960; however, the cost of a Pan Abode structure averaged between \$8.06 and \$13.67 a square foot around this time. Indeed, during the early 1960s, Pan Abode buildings constructed in Aspen cost roughly \$10.00 a square foot, significantly less than the national average (City of Aspen 2010).

Ski areas that were largely run by local ski clubs before the war and catered to locals as well as a handful of elite clientele transformed themselves into business ventures during this era. New ski areas were established and older slopes were improved to serve the new postwar consumer

culture. Backed by prominent financiers, the ski industry aimed to attract all types of visitors, from destination skiers to weekend visitors from Denver. In the process, Aspen became home to some of the earliest well-developed ski areas in the country. In 1946, the Denver Post magazine headlined with “Money Fever is Running in Aspen Again: Famed Silver Town Looks to Day When It Will Be World Ski Capital.” Although other ski areas had also been established in Colorado and other western states at the time, in 1950 Aspen was chosen to host the International Skiing Federation championships, the largest international competition of the year and one that had never before been held in the U.S. With thousands of people flocking to Aspen each year, Aspen distinguished itself from other ski areas early, and the flourishing postwar economy helped make this possible (Gilbert 1995).

While the Pan Abode served as an idealized version of the western log cabin for many, in Aspen Pan Abodes also served as an integral part of the fledgling American ski industry. Aspen’s ski industry created an immediate need for buildings and infrastructure, including single-family homes, rental properties for tourists, multi-family apartments, and commercial buildings. Due to the temporary nature of the industry’s employment, employees interested in buying a residence were unable to qualify for traditional home mortgages. However, if a buyer had purchase money for a parcel of land, he or she could buy an affordable Pan Abode kit. By Aspen’s standards, the cost of a pre-manufactured building was significantly less than the cost of purchasing an existing home or hiring a contractor to build a house by traditional building methods. Perhaps seizing upon Aspen’s postwar growth, the Pan Abode Cedar Homes company stationed a sales representative in Aspen to sell Pan Abode buildings. The sales representative was also able to answer potential buyer’s questions about financing and referred buyers to institutions providing mortgages.

By the 1960s, Pan Abode kit buildings became the most common type of Rustic Style architecture built in Aspen, with more than 50 Pan Abode buildings erected during the mid-1950s through the late 1960s. Prior to the construction of Pan Abode buildings in Aspen, the majority of buildings were constructed using an architect’s plan, making these pre-planned buildings a different resource within the city. Part of the rise of Pan Abodes’ popularity can be attributed to the fact that they offered an attractive, affordable alternative to costly architect- or builder-designed buildings. During the earliest postwar years of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the U.S. was still trying to adjust to a peacetime economy after four years of war. Adjustment to a non-military economy and demand for single-family homes expanded exponentially. The U.S. housing construction industry could not keep up with the demand due to scarcity of materials and adequate financing immediately after the war. Before pre-manufactured kit houses became available, buildings often took many months or even years to construct. The Pan Abode Cedar

Homes company's assortment of kit houses allowed these new homeowners to move into their houses within a few weeks instead of months.

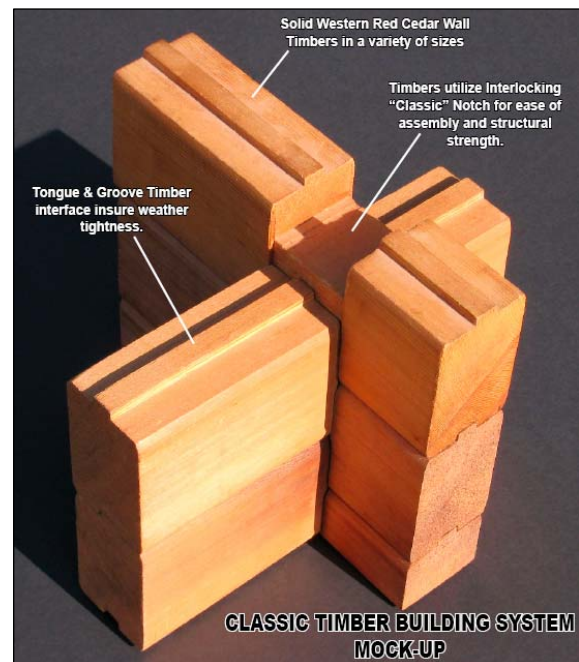
### **The Pan Abode Companies**

Aage Jensen, a Danish cabinetmaker, established the original Pan-Abode International, Ltd. in 1948 in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, to create pre-manufactured cedar log buildings. Jensen expanded his venture to the U.S. in 1952 with a second factory located in Renton, Washington, where the American company still operates today. The two companies became separate corporations: the American company assumed the name Pan Abode Cedar Homes, while the British Columbian company is distinguished by their hyphenated name, Pan-Abode. The main difference between the pre-manufactured buildings produced by the two companies lies in the British Columbian company's double tongue-and-groove system, while the Renton, Washington, factory produces a single tongue-and-groove interlocking system. Because the 1950s and 1960s Pan Abode buildings in Aspen were sold by the Pan Abode Cedar Homes company in Renton, each features this single tongue-and-groove construction.

### **Pan Abode Architecture**

Each Pan Abode was entirely constructed of milled logs made of Western Red Cedar. The company hailed cedar's low-expansion properties that include resistant to shrinking, swelling, and warping during drastic changes in temperature. Cedar timber also provides good insulation, an important feature in Pan Abode buildings since the only insulation came from the 3-inch thickness of the cedar logs themselves. The buildings included no insulation within the walls until much later. All of the Pan Abode logs manufactured between 1952 and 1970 in the Renton factory were milled in 3"x6" rectangular logs with flat edges to create a relatively flat exterior and interior wall surface.

The logs were joined on the top and bottom using a single tongue-and-groove design to create a tight seal that required no traditional chinking or any other interfacing (Figure 1). The ends of the logs formed overlapping, interlocking corners that



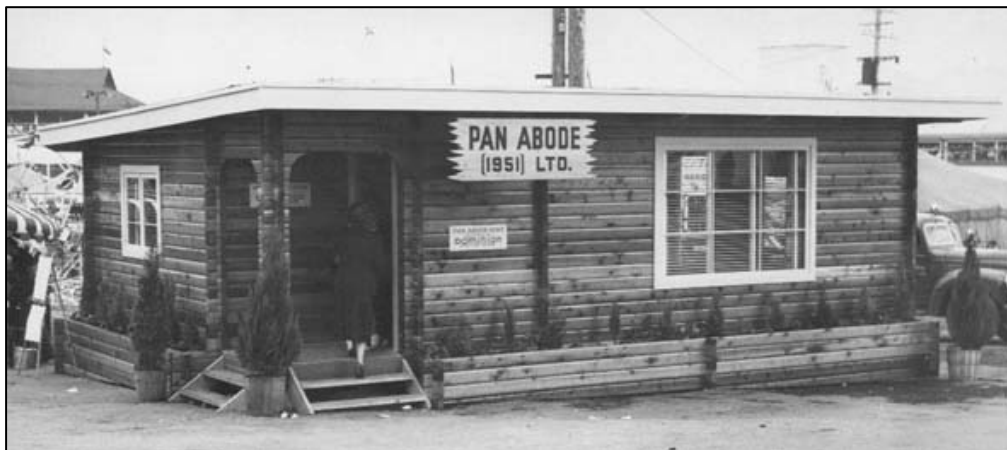
**Figure 1. Classic Notch System, as shown by the Pan Abode Cedar Homes company (Pan Abode Cedar Homes 2010)**



joined in a style the Pan Abode Cedar Homes company calls the “Classic Notch” solid wall system. The continuous vertical notch at all of the building’s corners thus became a distinguishing characteristic of the building. The overlapping corner notch was intended to strengthen the building and facilitate construction (Pan Abode Cedar Homes 2010). The length of the log timbers were cut to size depending on the Pan Abode model ordered through the company catalog. Window and door openings were wood-framed.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the majority of Pan Abode-manufactured buildings were one-story buildings between 1,000 and 2,000 square feet. The Pan Abode’s interior walls featured no additional finishes, leaving the cedar walls bare on the inside of the building. Electrical and plumbing infrastructure could be inserted through the walls, down joint seams, or inserted into the floor depending on local ordinances. Although the vast majority of the Pan Abode buildings sold were stock models advertised in the company catalog, a small portion of the company’s sales consisted of custom-designed buildings that were pre-manufactured and cut to size by request. These early custom-designed buildings also used 3”x6” timbers using the Classic Notch design.

Pan Abode buildings were typically covered by a low-pitched, gabled roof; however, some were covered by a low-pitched shed roof (Figure 2). Roofs almost always had open overhanging eaves with wood trim. As a result, the one-story Pan Abode buildings took on the form and appearance of a mid-century Ranch-style house. The fascia board at the end of the roof



**Figure 2. A 1951 building by the Pan Abode Company’s sister-company in British Columbia, the Pan-Abode Company.**

eaves was usually left flat with straight edges, but in a few cases the fascia was cut into a decorative cut-out vergeboard trim. Distinctive architectural features common to Pan Abode houses of the 1950s and 60s include recessed entrance porches that are framed at the edges by the building's log ends with curved corners (see Figures 3 and 4). The logs ends were used decoratively in a variety of ways in the Pan Abode. This is also seen in the supporting brackets for a Pan Abode house's entrance gable in Figure 4.



**Figure 3. Recessed entrance at 630 Main Street, built in 1965.**



**Figure 4. Curved brackets at the entrance of 1208/1210 Snowbunny Lane, built in 1965.**

Pan Abode buildings in Aspen were usually plain and lacked ornamentation. However, Aspen had at least one “Chalet Style” Pan Abode building that featured notched ends shaped into ornate scalloped curves, deep overhangs, vergeboard fascia, and cut-out patterns at the balustrade, window trim, and decorative shutters (Figure 5).



**Figure 5. A Chalet Style Pan Abode (demolished)**

A ca. 1950s and 60s Pan Abode buildings' fenestration typically featured at least one large multi-light picture window at the façade. The multi-light arrangement was divided into horizontally oriented rectangular lights, which formed the module by which all of the original Pan Abode windows were based. The size of the window was determined by the number of rectangular lights used. The house in Figure 3, above, has one large 12-light picture window, as does the house in Figure 6, below. The house at right in Figure 6 depicts a house with one 9-light window and one narrow three-light rectangular window. The building in Figure 7 includes two large 9-light windows, one in each of its two projecting wings. In the case of most Pan Abodes constructed during the 1950s and 1960s, the fenestration consisted of either fixed panes, such as in large multi-light windows or sliding as in the case of smaller single and double light windows. Occasionally large multi-light windows would made into sliding windows; however, these windows have a large bar affixed to the window's interior panes to ease their opening. Often these fixed windows are replaced with multi-light pivoting casement windows (Pan Abode Cedar Homes personal correspondence 2010).



**Figure 6.** The picture windows of Pan Abodes, as seen at 509 West Main Street, left, and 1355 Sage Court, right.



**Figure 7.** Picture windows, as seen in 300 West Hyman.

### **Purchasing and Construction Process**

One major selling point of the Pan Abode was its ease of construction from beginning to end. Once a customer selected a Pan Abode model, the company shipped the prefabricated building materials directly to the building site on a flatbed truck (Pan Abode Cedar Homes 2010).

The Renton Pan Abode Cedar Homes company estimates that roughly 100 kit homes were sold each year during the 1950s and 1960s (Pan Abode Cedar Homes 2010). Although there is little documentation of how many Pan Abodes were built nationwide, a company representative revealed that the company's largest clients during those years were ski companies across the Western U.S. The U.S. Forest Service also purchased numerous Pan Abode kits to erect small

cabins in national forests in the western U.S. The U.S. Forest Service documents that it began building small Pan Abode cabins along with A-frame cabins in Alaska at the Tongass National Forest in 1962 and in the Chugach National Forest in 1963 (Lantz 2009).

The Pan Abode Cedar Homes company advertised and sold their buildings through their company brochures and their home office in Renton, Washington, but perhaps most importantly through the Pan Abode company representatives located in strategic cities across the western U.S. One such sales representative named Jack Holst played a prominent role in Aspen during the 1950s and 1960s. Jack Holst's position with Pan Abode Cedar Homes Company lasted approximately 20 years in Aspen. During this time, his sales resulted in a substantial concentration of Pan Abode buildings in Aspen. Although all company representatives used a marketing brochure to show and describe the pre-designed kit plans to prospective buyers, representatives like Jack Holst built their own Pan Abode buildings to serve as models for selling Pan Abodes.<sup>1</sup> An interview with Magne Nostdahl revealed that Jack Holst was the only official Pan Abode representative in Aspen (Nostdahl personal correspondence 2010).

Pan Abode Representative Jack Holst handled all of the arrangements for new Pan Abode construction in Aspen from selling the building to ordering the structure, to the necessary transportation from Renton, Washington to Aspen, Colorado. Marthinsson and Nostdahl Construction Company worked alongside Holst constructing the new buildings for the owners. Nostdahl recalls that the majority of Pan Abodes he and his partner constructed measured between 3,000 and 4,000 square feet while only a few measured under 1,000 square feet. During the 1960s, the Marthinsson and Nostdahl Construction Company charged \$10 a square foot to construct the new Pan Abode buildings.

Marthinsson and Nostdahl Construction Company constructed Pan Abode buildings for roughly seven years before the market for these easy to assemble buildings began to fade. Nostdahl remarked that he believed Pan Abodes began to lose their popularity due to the lack of insulation in the structures. A city ordinance in Aspen required a level of insulation in each building and Pan Abodes did not conform to these needs. As a result, Jack Holst began ordering double walled Pan Abode buildings which increased the cost of the building and led to a decrease in buyer's interest in the buildings (Nostdahl personal correspondence 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> Like a number of Aspen's residents during the 1950s and 1960s, Holst continued to work several jobs in order to keep busy and afford the new postwar lifestyle. In addition to serving as the Pan Abode company representative in Aspen, Holst was also a commercial airline pilot and a ski instructor.

### **Pan Abode Building Types in Aspen**

Research suggests that Pan Abode buildings were primarily constructed throughout the western U.S. as small cabins for the U.S. Forest Service or as privately owned vacation homes (Pan Abode Cedar Homes 2010). In Aspen, Pan Abodes were used for a wider variety of purposes that were both unique and representative of Aspen's economic circumstances in the 1950s and 1960s. Although Pan Abode buildings were most often built as single-family primary and secondary dwellings in Aspen, there are examples of Pan Abodes used as multiple-family apartment buildings, commercial buildings, a church hall, and even for ticket sales, administration, ski patrol, and maintenance facilities at Highlands Ski Area.

City records indicate that the majority of the Pan Abodes in and around Aspen were built as modest-sized single-family dwellings. This was representative of the Pan Abode company sales during the 1950s and 60s, as most of the buildings sold consisted of smaller dwellings less than 2,000 square feet, with few custom plans (Pan Abode personal correspondence 2010). Building permits for known Pan Abodes in Aspen state they were constructed in Kennydale, Washington, a neighborhood in Renton. One building in Aspen, the Cortina Lodge may have been purchased from the Pan-Abode Company in Richmond, British Columbia due to its double tongue and groove construction.

In 1970, two entire subdivisions, Ardmore and East Meadow, were platted and developed by local Pan



**Figure 8. Advertisement for Richard Wright, one of the Pan Abode contractors in Aspen, 1965**

Abode Cedar Homes contractors in Aspen. It was a speculative venture whereby this group of Pan Abode developers built and sold the Pan Abode houses along with their lots as a residential subdivision. The Ardmore subdivision had eight Pan Abode houses, and the East Meadow subdivision contained five Pan Abode houses (Figure 9). Charles Brinkman was a developer of the Ardmore subdivision, and longtime company representative Jack Holst was at least one of the developers of the East Meadow subdivision of Pan Abodes.



**Figure 9. 1970 Pan Abode single-family houses at 103 Ardmore (left) and 110 Ardmore (right).**

Pan Abodes catered directly to the ski industry, which needed to house seasonal workers. At least one Pan Abode in Aspen served as a multiple-family residence. The apartment building at 403 and 404 Park Avenue consists of a raised two-story building with shallow overhanging eaves and decorative vergeboard at the side-gabled ends (Figure 10). This 10-unit multi-family building was developed in 1964 by Pan Abode contractors Arne Marthinsson and Magne Nostdahl. Both Marthinsson and Nostdahl were typical contractors who held multiple jobs. In the case of Marthinsson and Nostdahl, they were contractors during the summer months and ski instructors during the winter.

Ski industry pioneer and founder of the Aspen Highlands ski area, Whipple “Whip” Van Ness Jones utilized two Pan Abode buildings to help establish the ski mountain in 1956 and during its long tenure. When Jones first moved to Aspen in the early 1950s, he purchased a property on 2nd Street that included a Pan Abode building. He also purchased the property across the street that housed a stable that was also of Pan Abode construction. When Jones established a new ski resort on the outskirts of downtown Aspen, instead of contacting one of the two architects or two designers listed in town in 1955 to



**Figure 10. Multiple family building at 403 and 404 Park Avenue, built in 1964.**

construct new buildings, Jones determined it would be easier and more cost effective to relocate two Pan Abode buildings from his property in town up to the Aspen Highlands ski area (Doremus 2010). These two buildings became the ticket sales, administration, ski patrol, and maintenance buildings in 1957 and were used until the Aspen Highlands' ownership transferred in 1993.

When Jones needed a larger administration building, he ordered a new Pan Abode building to replace the old building because Pan Abodes were easy to assemble, inexpensive, functional, and fit into the aesthetic alpine environment with their cedar log materials and Rustic architectural style. After fire destroyed the Cloud 9 restaurant on the Aspen Highlands in the 1970s, the replacement restaurant consisted of a new Pan Abode building. The new building's erection took roughly 45 days from start to finish. Subsequent to the Aspen Skiing Company assuming ownership of Aspen Highlands in 1993, the Pan Abode buildings at Aspen Highlands were demolished with the exception of Cloud Nine (Doremus 2010). In addition to owning several Pan Abode buildings at the Aspen Highlands mountain, Whip Jones and his family also resided in a Pan Abode building in town. According to his stepson Andrew Doremus, the Jones family moved from his original Pan Abode on 2nd Street to a second Pan Abode house on Francis Street.

One of the more unusual uses for a Pan Abode building in the 1960s was for a church. The Messiah Lutheran Church erected a Pan Abode building in 1963 when the congregation relocated to its current site on Mountain View Drive. The church used the Pan Abode building for its services until 1985, when the Pan Abode was moved to Redstone for use as a private residence (Aspen Times 2004).

The energy crisis of the 1970s slightly changed the design of Pan Abode-manufactured buildings, as the company introduced wider cedar log dimensions of 4"x6" for improved insulation and greater energy efficiency (Pan Abode Cedar Homes 2010). The slightly wider style of the post-1970 design appears to be a distinguishing feature between the company's pre-1970 and post-1970 designs. Later designs also introduced a double-wall structural system in which two 3"x6" timbers were separated by a 4" gap that could be filled with rigid foam insulation (Log Home Living Magazine 1987).



### **Historic Significance of Pan Abode Buildings in Aspen**

Aspen's postwar-era Pan Abode buildings are significant under the City of Aspen's significance Criterion 2a as a representative building trend closely associated with Aspen's period of rise of the local international ski industry and tourism, both important historical events of the city's postwar history. In an emerging tourism town, Pan Abode buildings fulfilled a basic need for buildings and lodging. Their flexible design made them highly adaptable for a wide variety of functions, resulting in a diverse group of Pan Abode buildings in Aspen. Pan Abode's structural

**Aspen's Pan Abode buildings represent six important hallmarks of the postwar era:**

- The pre-manufactured building movement following World War II;
- Do-It-Yourself attitudes ;
- Rustic Style residential architecture
- Affordable construction attainable by many;
- Adaptable architecture to suit a wide variety of building functions; and
- Close associations with the rise of Aspen's international ski and tourism industries.

adaptability allowed them to serve in a variety of situations. They were also well-equipped for adaptive reuse; two were relocated to the Aspen Highlands ski area for nearly 40 years of continuous use. This architectural flexibility accommodated Aspen's changing needs like no other building could.

The Pan Abode Cedar Homes company sold at least 50 Pan Abode buildings in Aspen during the 1950s and 1960s. This may be considered a large collection of Pan Abode buildings at that time when the Pan Abode Cedar Homes company produced only about 100 per year nationwide. Aspen's group of contractors even developed two small speculative subdivisions consisting only of Pan Abode houses in the early 1970s. As a result, preliminary research suggests that Aspen's had a relatively high concentration of Pan Abode buildings when compared with similar cities in Colorado and possibly the Western U.S.

Aspen's postwar Pan Abode buildings are also significant under Criterion 2c for their building design. Pan Abode buildings' distinctive pre-manufactured method of construction was representative of the architectural technology available following World War II. They are also architecturally significant as unique representatives of national historical themes and attitudes of the postwar age. Their ability to be easily constructed by unskilled labor is evocative of the emerging "do-it-yourself" spirit that permeated the postwar generation of the 1950s and 60s nationwide. They also fulfilled the need for affordable construction, and their easy financing made them attainable to people who ordinarily would not qualify for traditional home mortgages or who could not afford Aspen's expensive back-taxes on the existing pre-World War II building stock. This was especially important for the temporary employees who worked in the seasonal

ski industry. Finally, the Pan Abode form as an entirely cedar-log-built building represents the popularity of Rustic Style architecture during the postwar years, particularly in the mountainous regions of Colorado.

In summary, Pan Abode buildings' historic significance in Aspen lies not simply in the fact that they are kit houses, but the manner in which they were ideally suited to Aspen's unique circumstances during the postwar years.

### **Period of Historic Significance**

Although Pan Abode buildings continue to be manufactured today in the company's Renton factory, their period of significance in Aspen began in 1956 when the first Pan Abodes were built, and ends in 1970. By 1970, the desire for a modest-sized vacation home in Aspen came to an end as development pressures increased in town. As land values steadily increased in connection to Aspen's population growth and tourism success, developers sought to maximize the capacity of their properties with larger and taller buildings that capitalize on the allowable square footage. In 1966, the city of Aspen adopted its Aspen Area Master Plan to control growth and development. As Aspen continued to grow in population and popularity as an internationally acclaimed ski resort through the 1970s and 1980s, the city sought to reduce the density and future population of Aspen and utilized growth management plans and ordinance restrictions to aid in achieving this goal. The Pan Abode buildings constructed between 1956 and 1970 represent the last generation of buildings prior to the institution of these regulations.

Character-Defining Features of Pan Abode Buildings are the physical characteristics of the buildings from their period of significance between 1956 and 1970. They are:

- 3"x6", single tongue-and-groove cedar log construction
- Overlapping notches at the corners
- Original wood-framed, multi-light picture window
- Low-pitched roof, usually gabled but occasionally shed
- Deep overhanging eaves
- Recessed entrance with rounded or squared corners

**Character-Defining Feature:**

*A prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a historic property that contributes significantly to its physical character. Structures, objects, vegetation, spatial relationships, views, furnishings, decorative details, and materials may be such features.*

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All or most of these character-defining features should be visible at the façade in order to convey the original appearance of the Pan Abode building. These character-defining features can be used as a guide for evaluating individual Pan Abodes; however, individual survey and an assessment of integrity of the individual known Pan Abode properties in Aspen will be required to determine whether a Pan Abode building continues to convey its historic significance to the 1956-1970 period of significance.

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