

American Architecture Study Guide

COLONIAL/REVIVAL STYLES

GEORGIAN

The Georgian style gets its name from the several kings named George who ruled the British Empire when America was still a colony. This style was imported from England and original Georgian houses exist only in the thirteen colonies. It usually features a widow's walk, dormer windows, a hip or gable roof, symmetric windows and structure. Dentil cornice, relieving arches and small pane windows are also common.



FEDERAL

The Federal style was first popular in America shortly after the Revolutionary War. Thomas Jefferson declared his strong feeling that America should create a style of its own and break away from copying English houses. There are definite ties to Rome. These houses commonly have a pediment, fanlight and column surrounding the off center door. These homes are usually rectangular and 2-3 stories high with a low pitched gable roof.



GREEK REVIVAL

The heart and soul of the Greek Revival style belong to the South. This style reached the height of its popularity in the years just before the Civil War, a time when Americans romanticized the past, particularly the ancient classical world. Greek Revival homes are usually white with a pedimented portico, often two stories tall. There are often sidelights and a transom (flat bar of windows) atop the door. The home is usually symmetric in structure.



CAPE COD

The Cape Cod is a colonial style that originated in the Massachusetts village of the same name. This became one of the most popular house styles in America from the 1920's through the 1950's and is still popular today. This style was common after WWII when returning veterans used V.A. loans to finance their first homes. Cape Cod homes are 1½ stories with a gabled roof and dormer windows, and are usually finished with clapboard. Originally they had a central chimney and functional shutters.



GARRISON

The jetty overhang was a common feature in English medieval construction as well as in early forts or “garrisons” in America. It is common to find ornamental drops shaped like cannon balls under the jetty, no doubt a reference to its garrison origins. These homes have a central chimney, are traditionally clapboard and have, of course, a jetty or overhang.



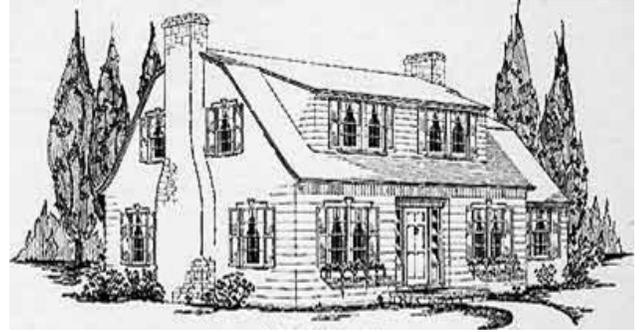
SALT BOX

The shape of this roof is similar to an early Colonial salt container, hence the name. This style originated in the Colonial era around New England. It spread across America through mail-order plans and was particularly popular from 1920-1970. This style has a long rear roof, has a central chimney and is traditionally finished in clapboard. The home is usually 2-3 stories high and has shutters.



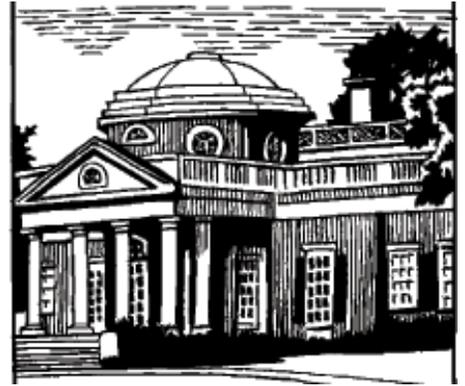
DUTCH COLONIAL

This style originated in homes built by German, or “Deutsch” settlers in Upper New York & Pennsylvania in the late 1600’s through early 1700’s. A hallmark of the style is a broad gambrel roof with flaring eaves creating a barn-like effect. Early homes were a single room, and additions were added to each end, creating a distinctive linear floor plan. End walls are generally of stone, and the chimney is usually located on one or both ends. Double-hung sash windows, dormers with shed-like overhangs, and a central Dutch double doorway are also common.



JEFFERSONIAN

This style was popular about the same time the more mainstream Greek Revival architecture was in vogue (1790s-1830s). Most heavily influenced by the Italian revivalist architect, Andrea Palladio, Jefferson was also influenced by French Neo-classical buildings. While the Jeffersonian style incorporates Palladian proportions and themes such as palladian windows, it is at the same time unique to Jefferson's own personal sensibility and the materials available to him in early republican Virginia. One characteristic is the use of the octagon and octagonal forms in his designs. There is also typically a Greek style entrance with a pedimented portico.



VICTORIAN

QUEEN ANNE

These home sprang up like mushrooms in small towns and cities across America from 1880 to 1900. The style was popularized through magazines and mail order house plans. Queen Anne homes have wrap around porches, and most often a tower. The exterior is usually various styles of wood and there is a considerable amount of decorative trim.



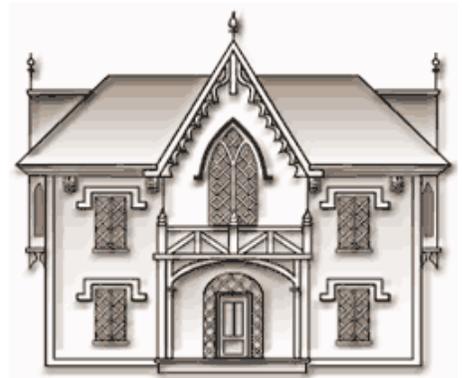
SECOND EMPIRE

The mansard roof was the height of fashion during the Second Empire period in mid 19th century France. The Louvre in Paris is perhaps the most famous example of this style. This became a favorite style for public buildings during the Grant administration. Second Empire came to be associated with haunted houses and was used in movies such as "Psycho". It has a mansard roof and French influence. It is traditionally brick with corner quoins and hooded windows.



GOTHIC

The relatively simple gothic revival style was the first departure from the rectangular footprints of the 18th century. Its irregular shape, arched windows and steeply pitched roof, elaborate vergeboard trim along roof edges, high dormers, the use of lancet windows and other Gothic details.



FAMILIAR AMERICAN

RANCH

This style originated in California in the 1930's. The Ranch is one of the most common American house styles. It reached the height of its popularity during the Eisenhower presidency and was still peaking in the 1970's. This style is usually long and low and constructed of brick or clapboard. There is an attached garage or carport and a back patio.



SPLIT LEVEL

The Split Level is an innovative spin off of the Ranch Style. The exterior is similar to the Ranch except that it has a two story wing. It is usually constructed of brick or brick and wood combination. On the interior space is split into three levels: On the lowest level is the utility room and den; in the middle are the kitchen and living room; and the bedrooms are upstairs.



FARMHOUSE

This style is an informal, rambling, two story home with a one story front porch. Gable roofs and dormer windows are common. Colonial and Victorian features are often mixed. As the rural farm family became a vanishing way of life, suburban homes in the late 20th century sought to recreate the homey feel of the country farmhouse.



BUNGALOW

The Craftsman Movement in America developed as a reaction against the machine-made ornamental excess of the Victorian era. This was a back-to-nature movement when craftsmen worked with their hands and took pride in detail. The bungalow has its roots in California and spread across the country to become one of the most common middle-class house designs from 1910 through the 1930's. There are many styles of Bungalow homes, but most have a fairly deep porch and wide overhangs. They are made mostly of wood and stone.



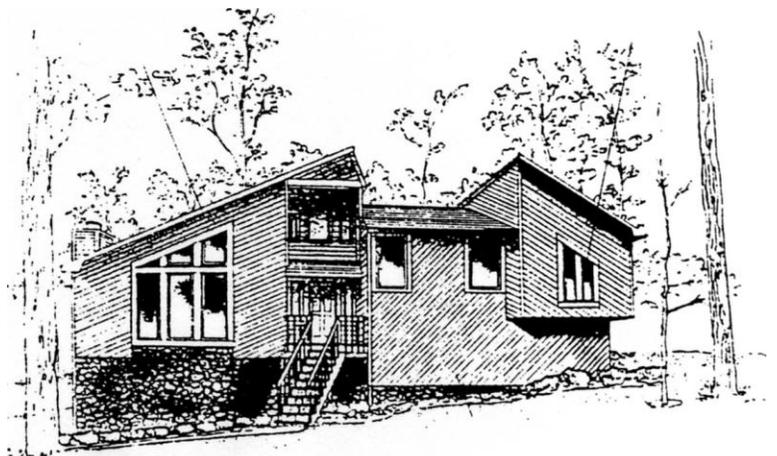
PRAIRIE

Prairie style houses are very much a product of the vision of Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright's philosophy was that a building should grow naturally from its site and harmonize with its surroundings. It was popular from about 1900 through the 1920's. This style commonly has a hipped roof, French doors, wide eaves and Craftsman windows and columns.



CONTEMPORARY RUSTIC

This style is the architectural expression of the nature movement of the 1960's. The Contemporary Rustic style was born and bred in California. It spread across the country in the '60's-'70's. This style has many different angles in the roof and wood siding, sometimes diagonally placed. Windows are grouped into geometric compositions and come in various geometric shapes. The deck sprung from this style.



EUROPEAN REVIVAL STYLES

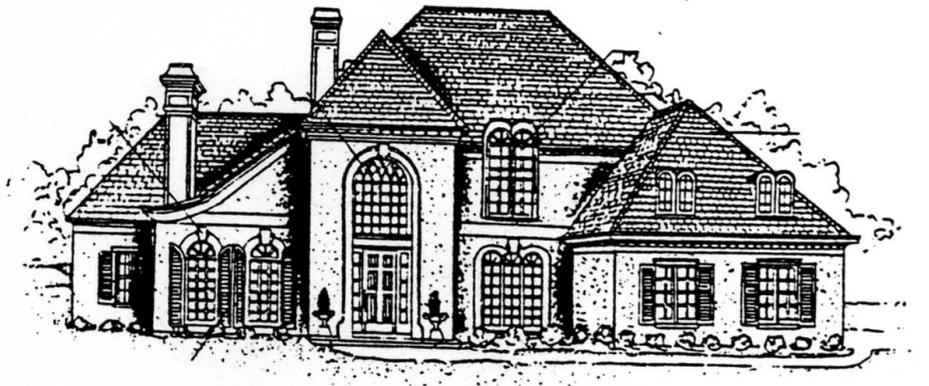
BAROQUE

Baroque refers to the architecture of the late Renaissance period in Italy. The suburban villas of wealthy Americans began to display Baroque embellishments in the early years of the 20th century. It is a very popular style with builders today. This style has classic ornamentation with keystones or pediments over the windows and balustrades on the roof, balconies and patios. The façade is often stucco and corner quoins are common. It has a bellcast hip roof that is flared at the eaves.



CHATEAUESQUE

This style was popular among the wealthy at the turn of the 20th century and is again enjoying popularity. The entry is often a formal arch. There are keystones over the windows and it will have a hipped roof. It may also have demi-dormer windows (break through the roof line).



ROMANESQUE

These buildings are called "Romanesque" because they have wide, rounded arches like buildings in ancient Rome. The heavy Romanesque style was especially suited for grand public buildings. However, Romanesque buildings, with massive stone walls, were expensive to construct. Only the wealthy adopted the Richardsonian Romanesque style for private homes. They are often called "urban castles." Henry Hobson Richardson became so famous for his Romanesque designs that the style is often called *Richardsonian Romanesque*.



MEDITERRANEAN

This style has its roots in Florida and California, where Spanish colonists built stucco houses with tile roofs and arched openings. This style was very popular from the 1920's through the 1940's. It was widely used in Hollywood during this period. The roof is made of barrel tile. The exterior is stucco and there is often wrought iron work. Traditional homes would include an arcade.



TUDOR

The half-timbering in this style is designed to look like a distinctive construction technique that came to characterize the Tudor period (1485-1605). This "Olde English" style has been enduring, and has enjoyed a revival since the 1970's. Today's homes have strips of wood nailed onto stucco surfaces. The home may also have brick and or stone on the exterior. The windows panes are typically small and diamond shaped.

