

Living With History

A guide to the
preservation
standards for
historically
designated houses
in Milwaukee



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A guide to the preservation standards for historically designated houses in Milwaukee



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*Cover photo: Terra cotta detail on the Victor Schlitz house,
2004 West Highland Boulevard.*

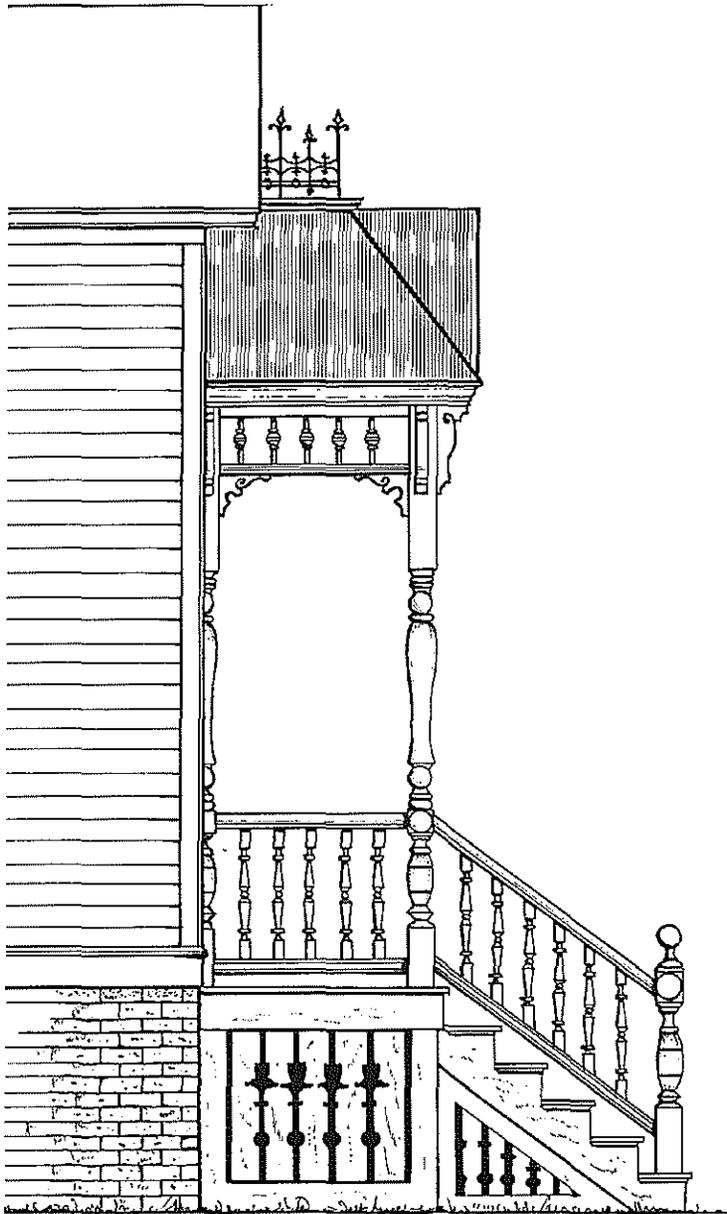
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Introduction



Since 1982, the City of Milwaukee has designated buildings and districts as local historic landmarks. The purpose of this program is to preserve the best of Milwaukee's rich architectural heritage. Over two-thirds of the designated buildings are houses. Once designated, alterations to the exteriors of these houses are subject to review and approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. In conducting its reviews, the Commission attempts to ensure that the historic integrity of a house is preserved as changes are made.

This publication is intended to help property owners better understand the Commission's preservation guidelines for locally-designated houses by illustrating the do's and don'ts for some of the more common exterior rehabilitation projects. It should be used as a general guide to understanding the preservation guidelines because the commission reviews each project on its own merits on a case-by-case basis. This book is not intended to be totally comprehensive, since there are other types of exterior alterations that are not illustrated here. For a more in-depth look at how to go about rehabilitating the exterior of any older house, you might want to refer to Milwaukee's publication *As Good as New: A Guide to Rehabilitating the Exterior of Your Old Milwaukee Home* which is available for sale at local bookstores or from the Historic Preservation Commission by calling (414) 286-5705. If you have a locally-designated house and need advice or guidance on the best way to make exterior changes within the Commission's guidelines, please feel free to call the staff at 286-5705. Remember, you should always call the Commission to find out if you need its approval before undertaking any exterior alteration other than repainting a previously painted surface or minor landscaping.

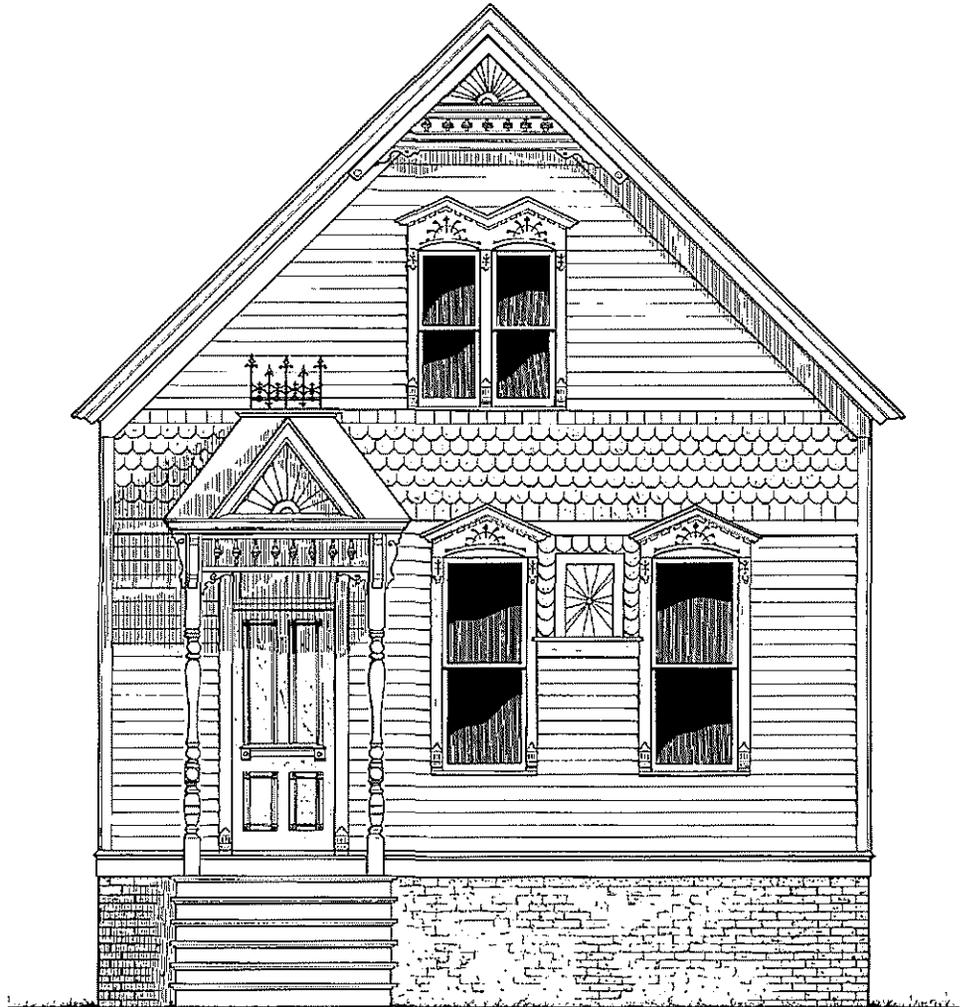
Exterior Finishes and Trim

- *Original exterior finish and trim materials made of wood, stone, brick and stucco should be preserved and repaired.*
- *Substitute sidings made of aluminum, steel or vinyl are not appropriate for residing older houses.*
- *Old wood is inherently superior in quality to most of today's construction lumber.*
- *Synthetic stucco (EIFS) may not be used in place of traditional stucco.*

The city's preservation guidelines emphasize the importance of retaining and repairing original exterior finish and trim materials made of wood, brick, stone and stucco. Many unnecessary, character-robbing alterations have been made to the exteriors of older houses simply because the aesthetic and economic values of these materials were overlooked.

The use of modern siding and trim materials such as aluminum, steel and vinyl generally is not permitted in a City Historic District. Details such as gable ornaments, decorative window caps and porch trim add immensely to the character of a house, and should be preserved if at all possible. The use of modern, high quality wood epoxies is strongly encouraged as a means to permanently repair even damaged or decayed ornamental wood trim at a fraction of the cost of total replacement. Missing trim should be replaced so that it replicates the size, design and detail of the original trim. One of the most common mistakes in rehabbing an older house is replacing historic architectural trim with new trim of inappropriate design.

The installation of vinyl siding over brick or stucco exterior walls is not allowed in the city's historic districts. Brick walls should be repaired by replacing deteriorated brick and/or stucco mortar. Brick may be cleaned, if necessary, only with approved chemicals but never by using any of today's numerous abrasive cleaning techniques. Traditional stucco may not be replaced with synthetic stucco.



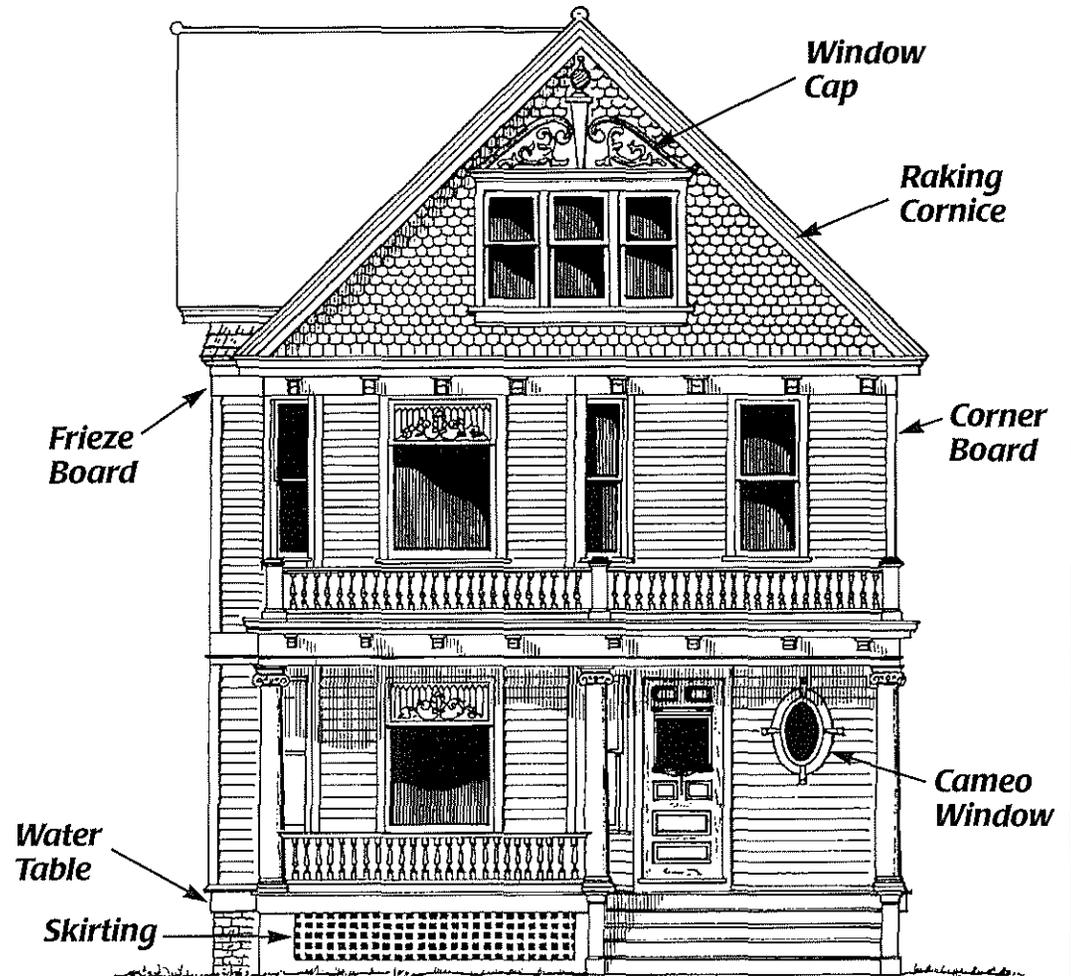
Exterior Finishes and Trim



Retain Original Siding and Trim

The original wooden siding trim, windows and doors on an older house were made from high quality old growth wood that is inherently superior in decay resistance and durability to today's construction lumber which is cut from much younger trees. By retaining and repairing original wooden siding and trim, you will enhance both the appearance and value of your house. Keep the following guidelines in mind whenever you consider any exterior alteration or repair:

- Replace severely damaged or missing siding and trim with wood that matches the size and design of the original features.
- Try to use top-quality, decay-resistant lumber for all replacement work.
- Use modern structural wood epoxies to make permanent repairs to difficult to replace rotted wooden trim, window units, doors and porch columns.
- Do not remove, simplify or change the style of original features.



A typical turn-of-the-century Milwaukee house with its original wooden siding and trim intact.

Exterior Finishes and Trim



Do Not Remove or Cover Original Siding and Trim



After an insensitive remodeling with modern substitute siding, the house is robbed of its original character.

One of the most common objectives of a rehabilitation project is to create a maintenance free exterior by applying modern substitute siding systems. Substitute sidings made of aluminum, steel or vinyl should never be installed over wooden siding, brick, stucco or stone. The application of substitute siding deprives an older house of much of its valuable, original character. This drawing illustrates some of the most common, character-robbing changes made to an older house when it is covered with a so-called maintenance-free exterior and fitted with new windows and doors.

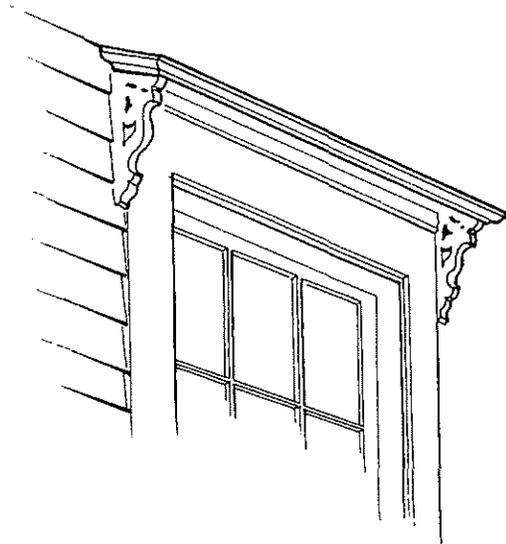
In this example the following original features have been obscured or removed:

- Wooden siding with a narrower exposure on the second story than on the first story has been covered with uniform width siding over the entire house
- Wooden shingling in the gable
- Carved, ornamental top over the attic windows removed.
- Eaves, brackets and molded raking cornice at the gable obscured
- Corner board trim covered
- Water table removed
- Leaded glass transom windows removed
- Paneled front door replaced with shorter, modern door
- Cameo window that flanked the front door
- Second story window covered
- The trim board that separates the first and second stories removed
- Wooden cornice on the porch covered
- Porch posts, railings, skirting and brackets removed

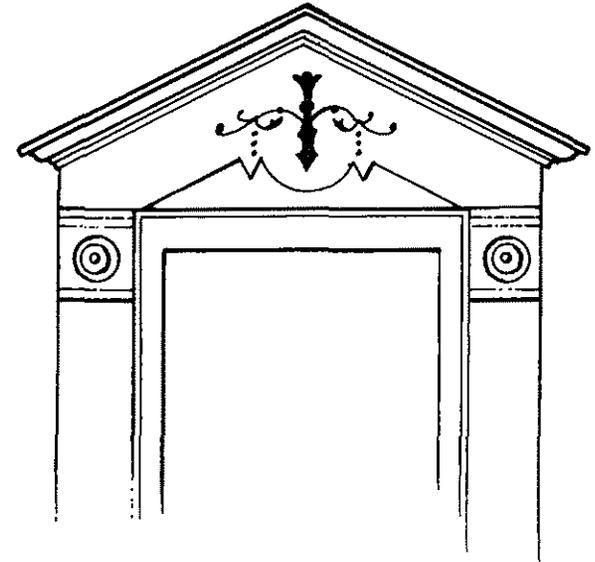
Exterior Finishes and Trim



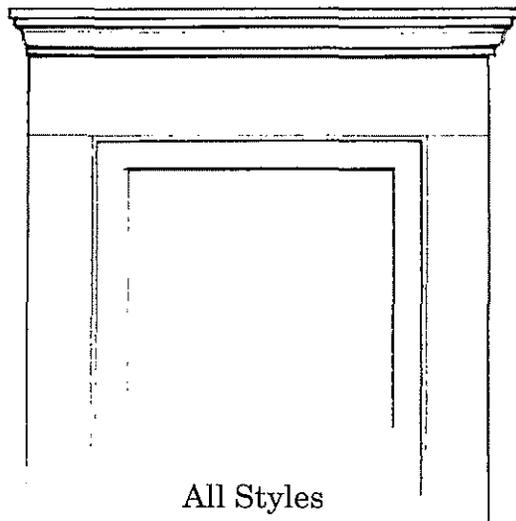
Window Cap Designs



Victorian Gothic window hood
1875-1885

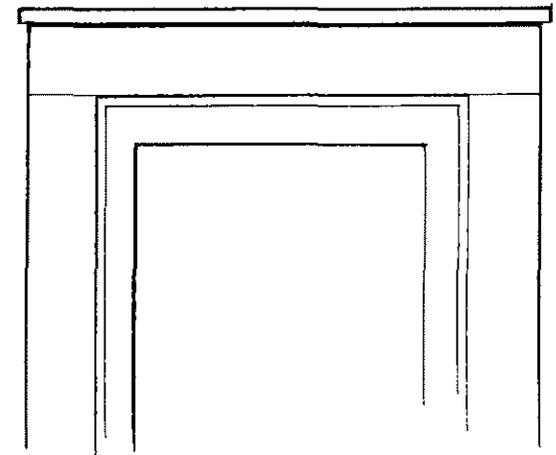


Victorian Gothic/Queen Anne
1880-1890



All Styles
1860-1930

These designs are intended to show a few of the historic window cap styles that were common in Milwaukee. Use them as a guide when replacing a missing window cap or repairing one that has been damaged or insensitively altered.

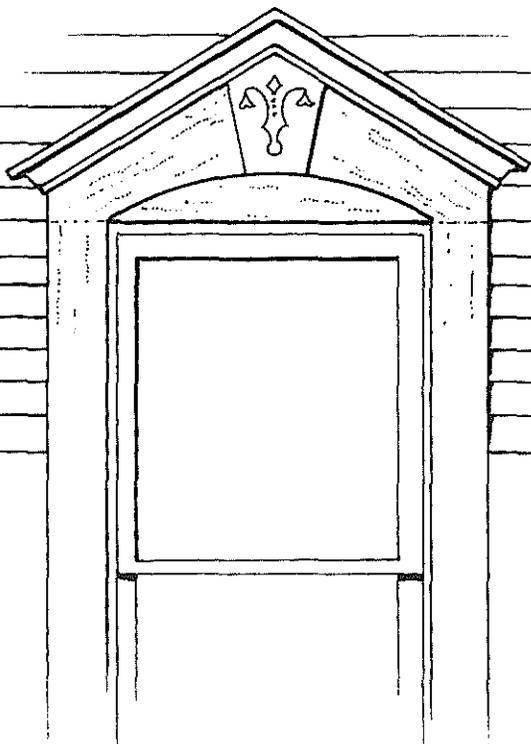


Craftsman/bungalow
1910-1935

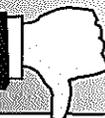
Exterior Finishes and Trim

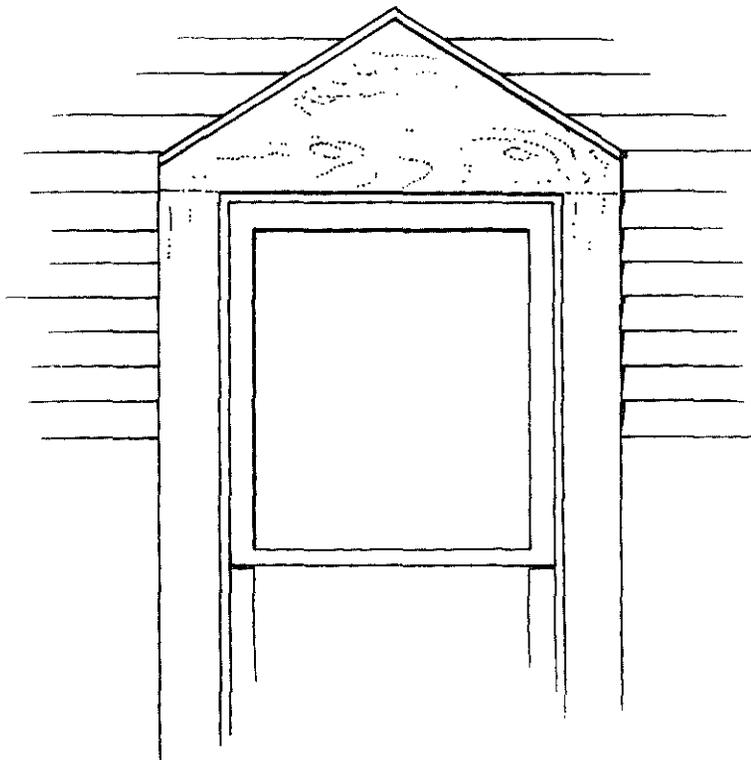
Yes! 

Window Caps



Ornamental wooden window caps should be retained and repaired whenever possible. Many rehabbers encounter the ghost profile of a missing window cap after they remove substitute siding and expose the original clapboarding. Missing window caps should be carefully reconstructed to duplicate the size and detail of the original.

No! 



A simple peaked flat board topped with a small molding strip or flashing is not an acceptable substitute for a traditional molded window cap.

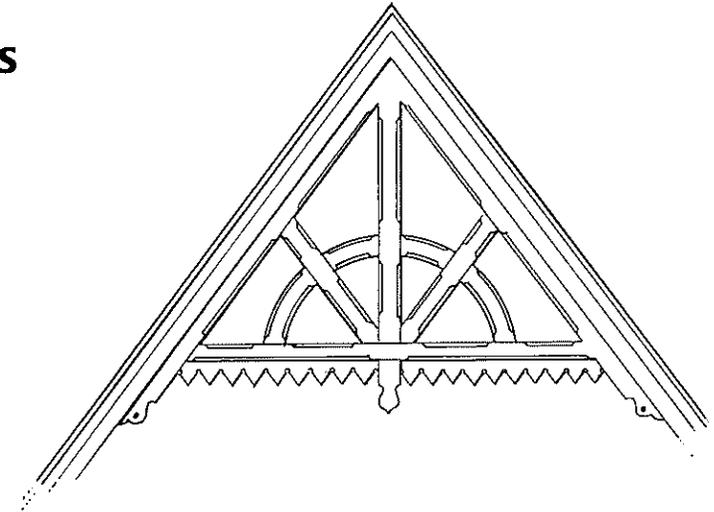
Exterior Finishes and Trim



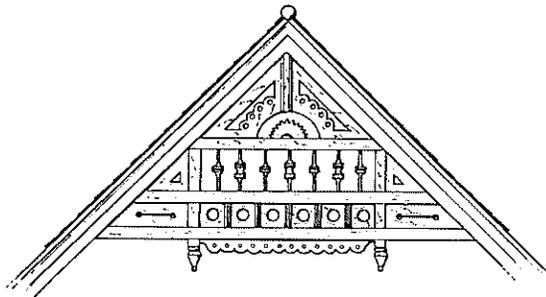
Gable Ornaments

Many houses built in Milwaukee between about 1875 and 1895 were embellished with a front gable ornament. Original gable ornament should be repaired or duplicated. The decision to replace a missing gable ornament should be made carefully because it is generally not appropriate to install a new gable ornament where one never existed. To avoid mistakes, keep these three points in mind:

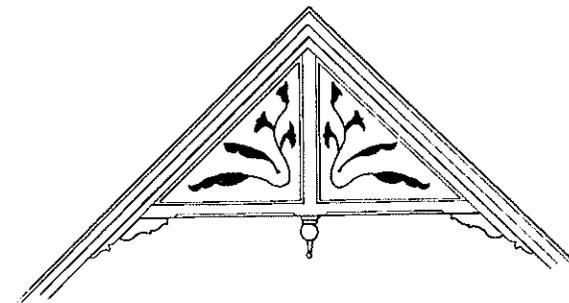
- Look first for physical evidence such as nail holes and “ghosts” in the paint film that might reveal the location and size of an historic gable ornament.
- A replacement gable ornament should match the style of the house.
- Avoid installing one of the new, off-the-shelf gable ornaments because they are generally too small and flimsy to convincingly duplicate the appearance of most traditional wooden gable ornaments.



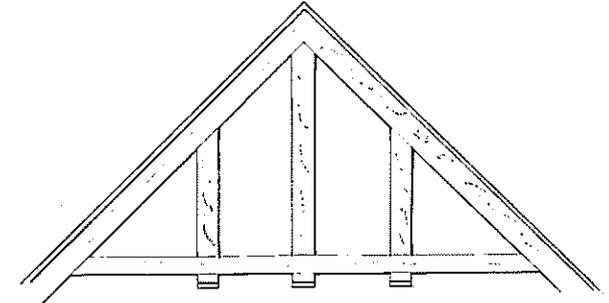
Victorian Gothic/Stick Style
Timbered design
1880-1890



Queen Anne
Fret work and panel design
1885-1895



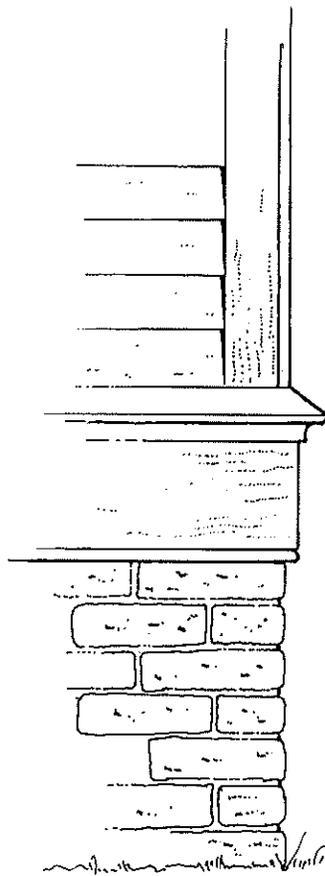
Queen Anne
Jig-sawn panel design
1885-1895



Craftsman
Timber design
1905-1915

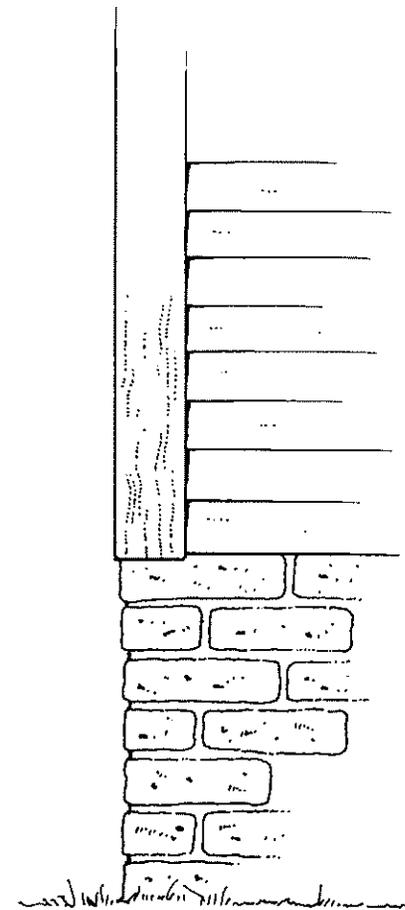
Exterior Finishes and Trim

Yes!



Water Tables

No!

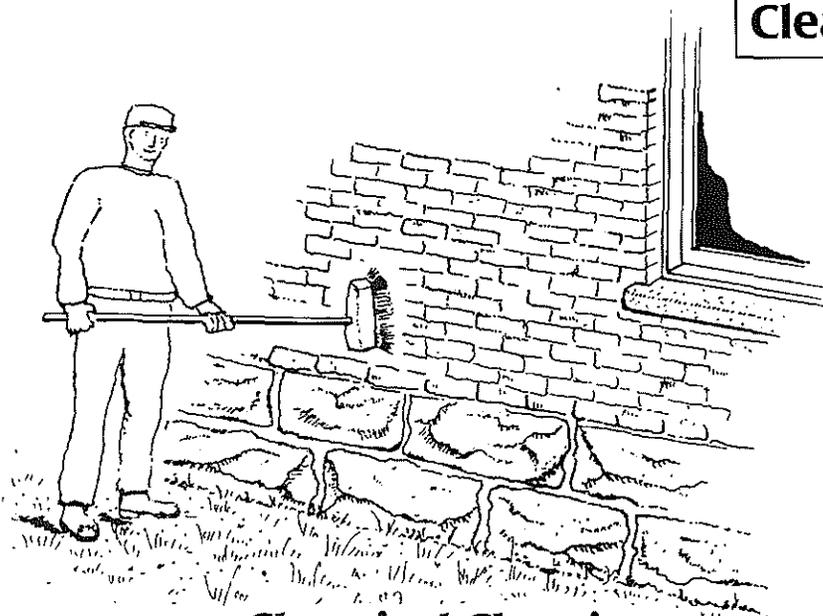


The water table is an, angled, projecting piece of trim located where a wall meets the foundation that is designed to shed water away from the foundation. It is a highly visible, character-giving architectural element that serves a practical purpose.

Do not remove the water table and extend the siding down to meet the foundation. An older house without a water table does not look properly finished.

Exterior Finishes and Trim

Yes! 



Chemical Cleaning

Cleaning dirt or paint from exterior masonry must be undertaken with the gentlest possible means. If you strip paint or dirt from masonry, use detergent or chemical cleaners that are brushed or sprayed on and then washed off with water. If done properly, chemical cleaning will not permanently damage masonry or wood.

Before undertaking any masonry cleaning project, however, always test the chemical first on an inconspicuous part of the building. Chemical cleaning requires not only the approval of the commission but also a permit from the Health Department.

Cleaning Masonry

No! 



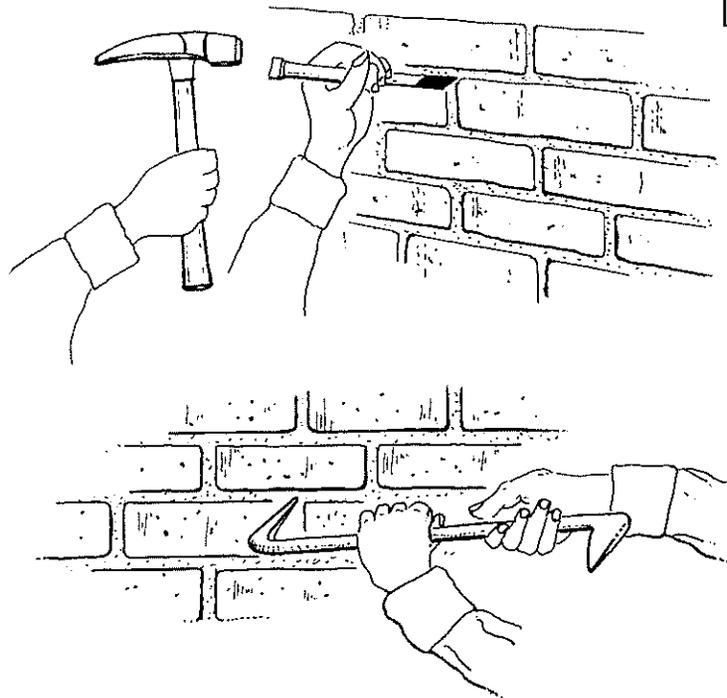
Abrasive Blasting

According to Wisconsin state law, it is illegal to sandblast or use any other high pressure abrasive blasting technique to "clean" the exterior of a structure that is designated a local, state or national landmark. The main reason for this is that abrasive cleaners actually accelerate the deterioration of a masonry wall by wearing away its hard outer weathering surface in order to expose "clean" layers underneath. Abrasive blasting is also a potential health hazard because the process can scatter lead-based paint and fine dust into the air we breath. Using an electric grinder to remove paint and dirt from masonry is not permitted for the same reasons. Abrasive blasting methods that are not permitted include but are not limited to the following:

- Sand mixed with water
- Baking soda
- Glass beads
- Walnut shells
- Ground fly ash
- Rice husks
- Water propelled at high pressure.

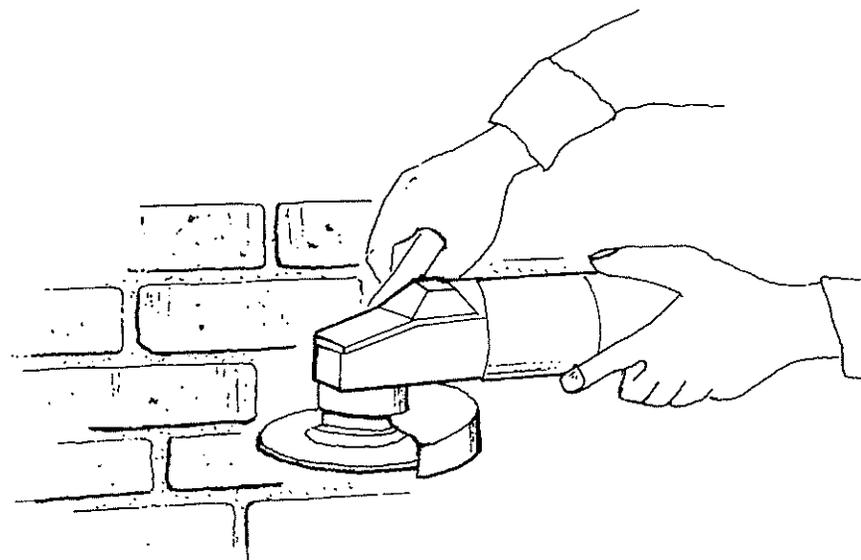
Exterior Finishes and Trim

Yes!



Tuckpointing

Maybe?



Deteriorated mortar joints should be tuckpointed by removing the deteriorated mortar and repacking the joints with fresh mortar. Tuckpointing with mortar that does not match the old mortar in color or is installed so that it overlaps the face of the brick results in a sloppy appearance.

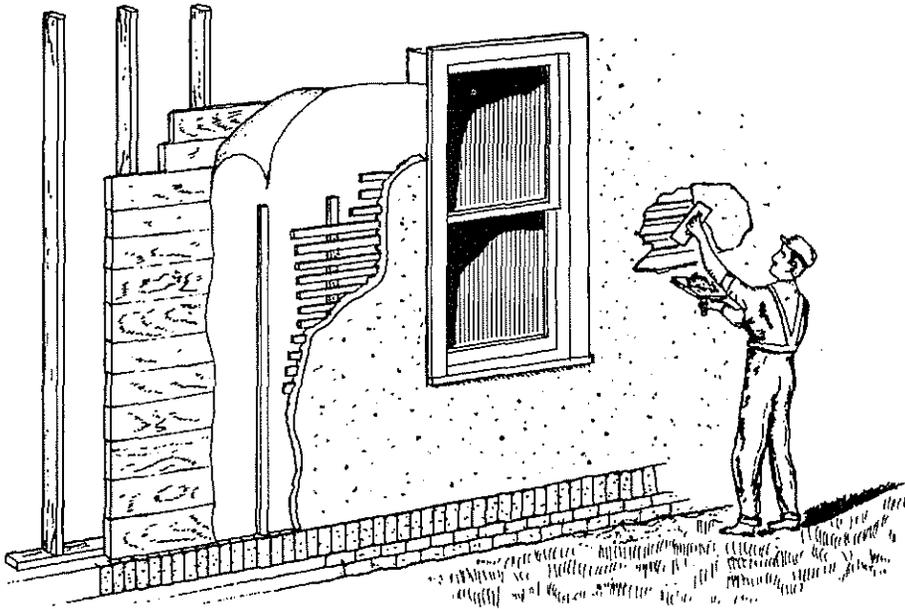
It is preferable to use a hammer and chisel (top illustration) or a tuck point rake (lower) to remove deteriorated mortar because these methods minimize the potential for damage to the edges of brick and stone.

Removing deteriorated mortar with grinders and electric saws greatly increases the risk of damaging the edges of brick or stone and so these tools should be used when hand tool methods are not practical.

Exterior Finishes and Trim

Yes! 

Repairing Stucco

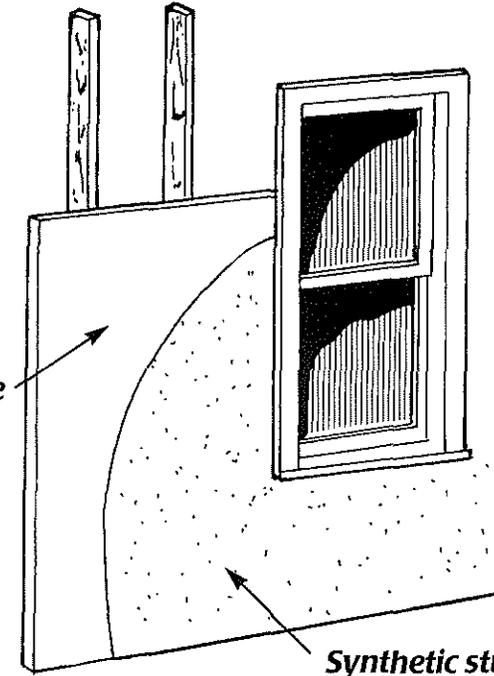


Traditional Stucco

Retain and repair traditional stucco systems of cement mortar applied over wooden or metal lath. Patched areas should match the original wall texture as closely as possible.

No! 

Rigid foam base



Synthetic stucco topcoat

Modern Synthetic Stucco

Do not repair or replace traditional stucco with modern synthetic stucco, called EIFS (exterior insulation and finish system) which is composed of a thin layer of synthetic stucco material applied over a sheet of foam board insulation. These finishes cannot duplicate the texture and appearance of traditional, Portland cement stucco. In a city historic district it is forbidden to cover or replace stucco with substitute siding made of vinyl, metal or any other material.

Roofs and Chimneys

- *Roofs are a major design feature of a house.*
- *Color and texture are of key importance.*
- *Retain high quality roofing materials such as slate and clay tile.*

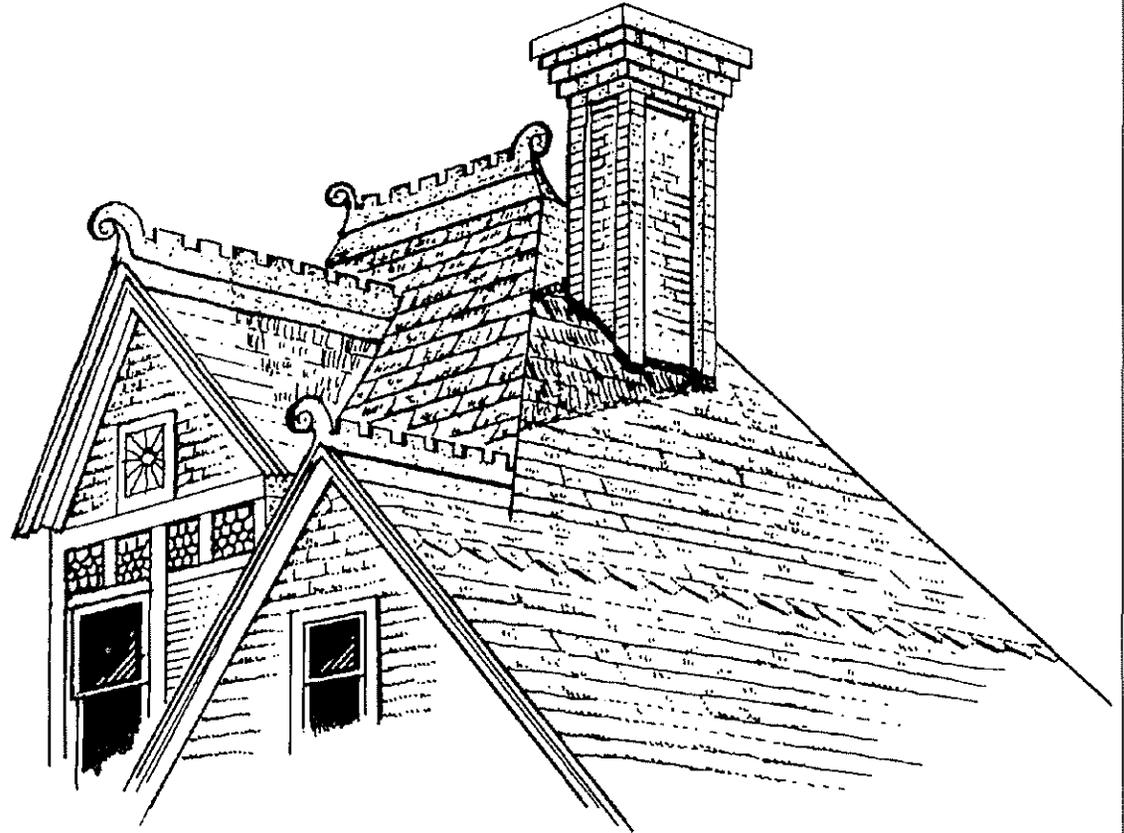
Roofs are not just functional, they are also important architectural features. If you stand back from a house, as much as one-third of what you see will be the roof. In order to maintain the traditional appearance of an older house, original roofing materials, chimneys and any other decorative or structural features should be retained or replaced in kind when ever possible. Avoid using new roofing materials that are inappropriate to the style and period of the building. Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials that match the original roofing (if known) in size, shape, color and texture.

Many roofs sheathed with high quality, long-lasting material such as slate or terra cotta have been needlessly replaced with inferior materials when it was actually only the metal roof flashings around the chimneys, dormers or in the valleys of the roof, that were defective.

Other points to keep in mind:

- Retain the original roof shape.
- If you must install new dormers or skylights, add them to roof surfaces that are not visible from the public right-of-way.
- Avoid making changes to the roof shape which would alter the building height, roof line, pitch or gable orientation.

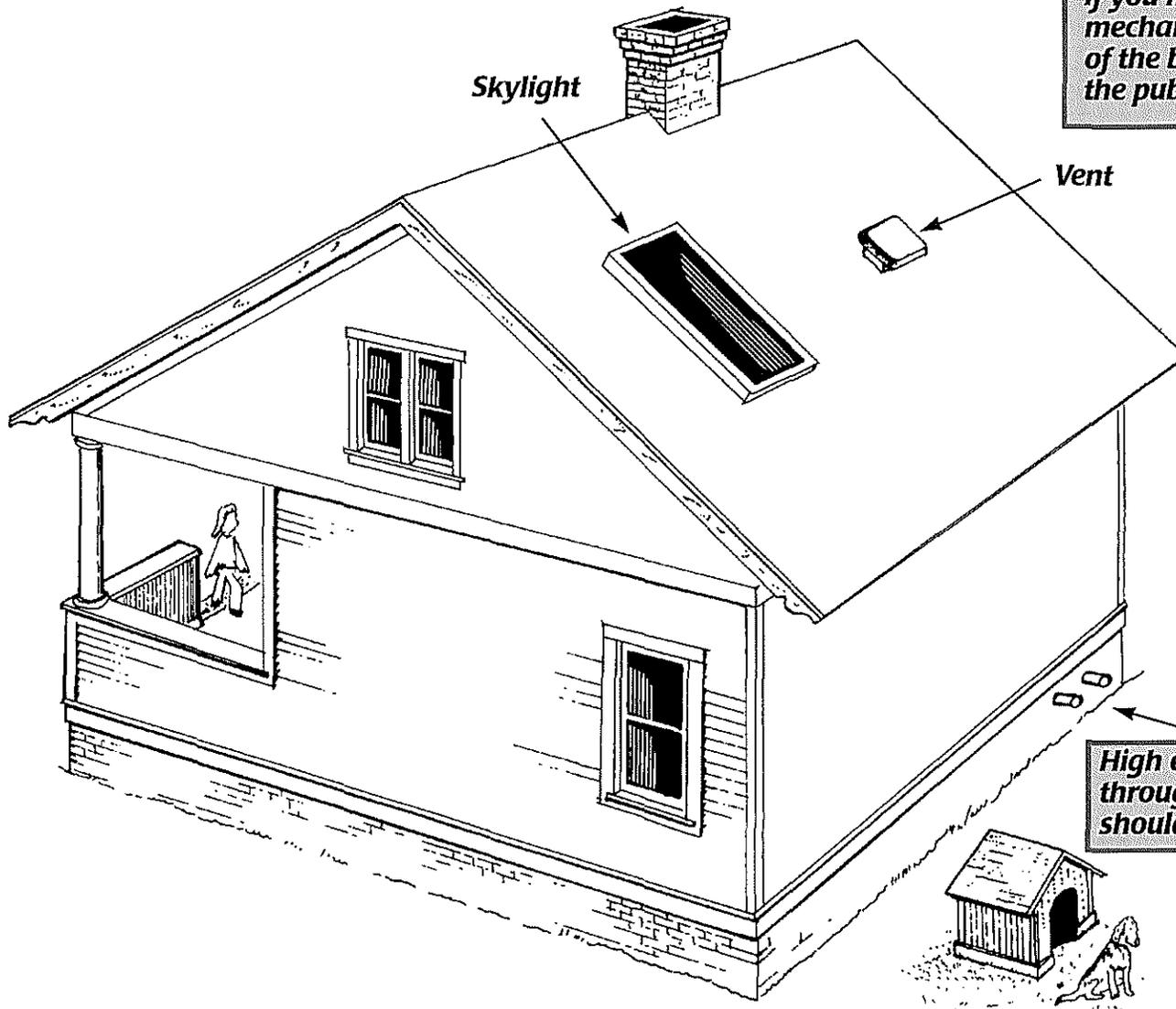
This chapter contains suggestions for maintaining and enhancing the roof of your older house.



A roof not only protects a building from the weather, it is also an important character-giving element that can either greatly enhance or detract from the appearance of a house.

Roofs and Chimneys

Yes! 



If you must install skylights, vents and modern mechanical equipment, place them on the rear of the building so they will not be visible from the public right of way.

High efficiency heating equipment vents and through-the-wall, prefabricated fireplace vents should also be installed on the rear elevation.

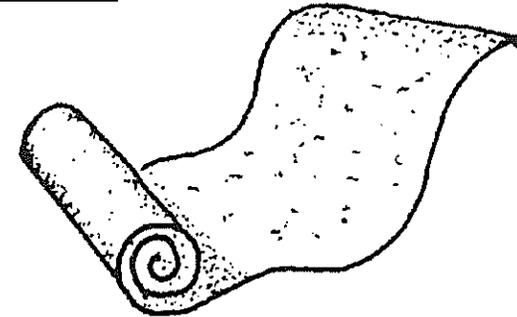
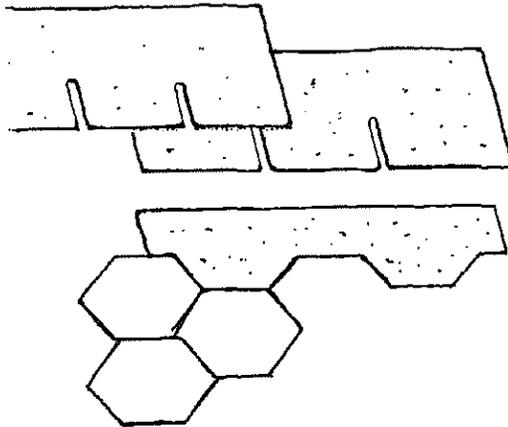
Roofs and Chimneys



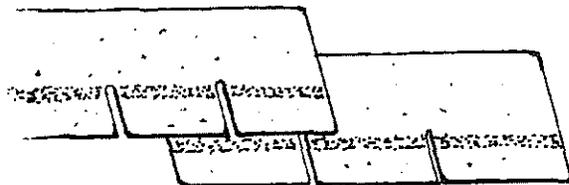
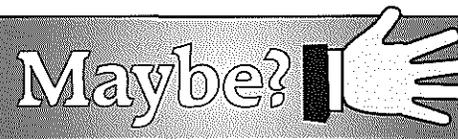
Modern Asphalt Roof Materials

Three tab asphalt or fiberglass shingles are the most common roofing materials today. Do not use light colors such as white, light green, or beige.

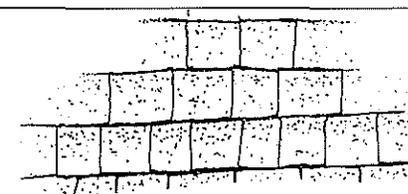
Hexagonal shingles, if they are available, are a good choice for bungalows and Craftsman style houses.



Rolled roofing should never be used as a primary roof covering. It can be used as a flashing material in valleys, although metal is a preferable material.



"Shadow line" asphalt or fiberglass shingles feature a black stripe that mimics the shadow line that would be cast by the edge of a wooden or slate shingle. For the best results, however, the shadow line must be continuous and not exceed about 1" in thickness.

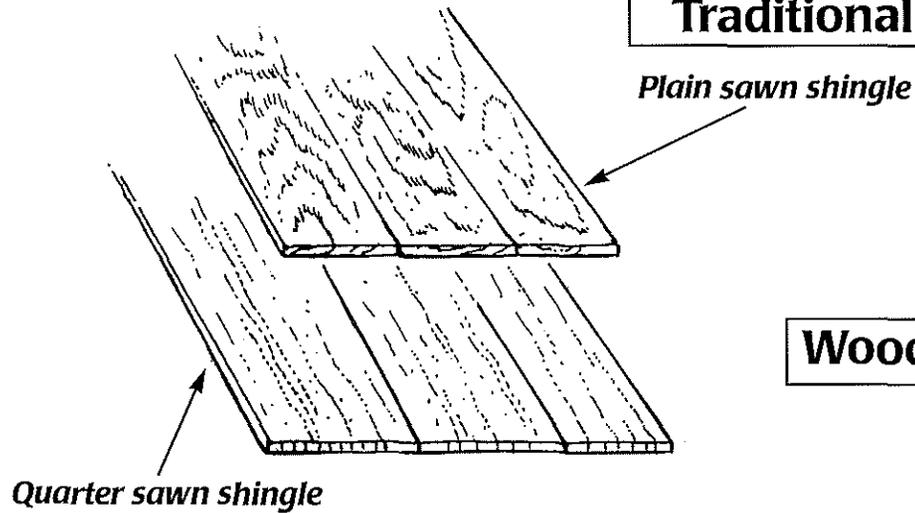


The latest trend in roofing is the so-called "architectural" shingle, which is made to simulate wood and slate. Some of these shingles, however, are poor substitutes for the materials they are supposed to look like. Architectural shingles that produce a very rustic effect should never be used because Milwaukee roofs historically had a highly finished appearance.

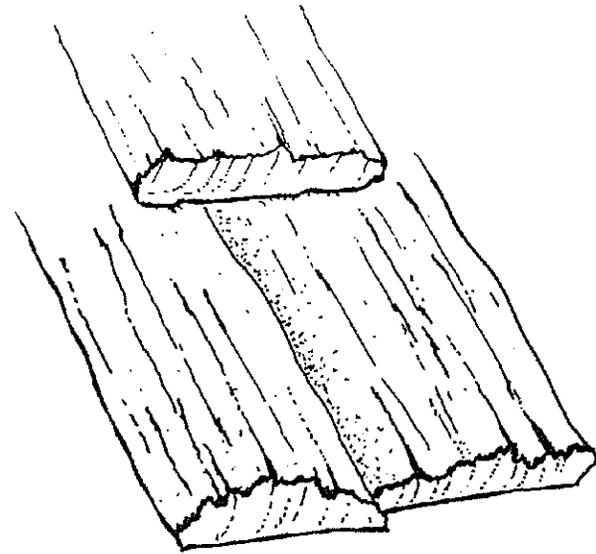
Roofs and Chimneys



Traditional Roof Materials



Wooden Roofs



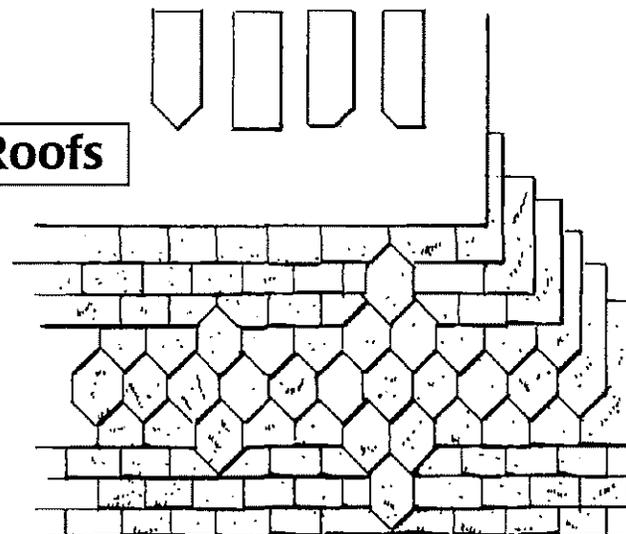
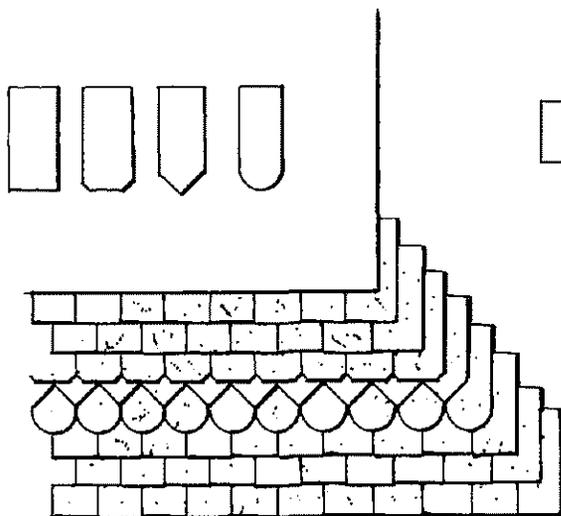
Wooden shingles, which are smooth-sawn on both sides, were widely used as a residential roofing material on all styles of houses until the early 1930s. Today, many homeowners are again installing this historic material on their roofs with excellent results. It is recommended to treat the shingles with a preservative stain before installation in order to extend the service life of the roof. Only decay resistant wood such as cedar or white oak should be used. If possible, select quarter-sawn shingles which are less likely to warp and will last much longer than plain-sawn shingles which have a leafy, swirling grain pattern.

Wooden shakes, which are split from a log, have a rustic appearance which is not appropriate for Milwaukee houses. Shakes were used primarily on rural farm buildings and the log cabins built by early pioneers. They have no place on older houses in Milwaukee.

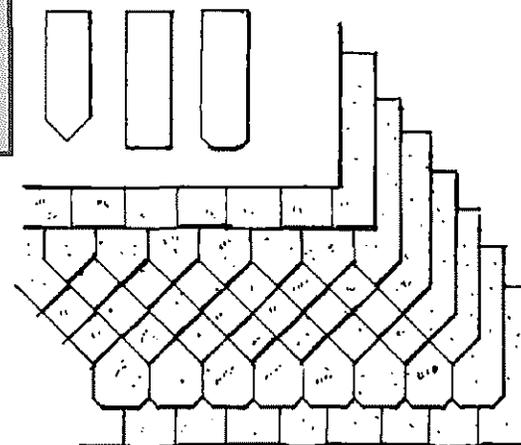
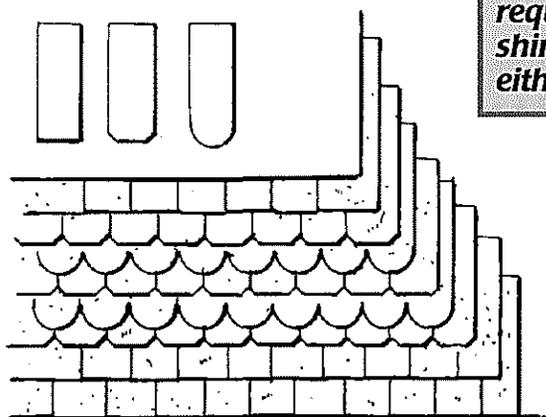
Roofs and Chimneys

Yes! 

Patterned Shingle Roofs



Patterned shingling was a popular embellishment for roofs between about 1875 and 1895. A decorative band is easy to recreate. These designs, which require only three or four different shingle shapes, are suitable for use on either wooden shingle or slate roofs.

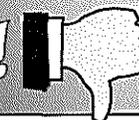


Roofs and Chimneys

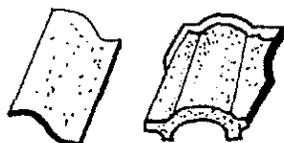
Yes!



No!



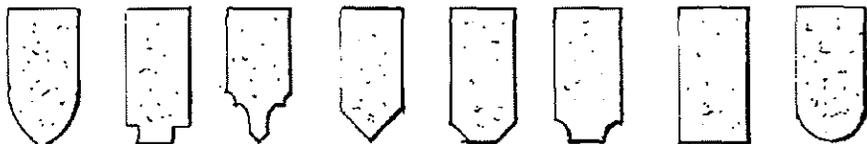
Terra cotta, slate and molded concrete tiles



Roman and Spanish style tiles



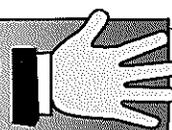
Pan Tile



Flat shingle tiles made in terra cotta, slate and fiber cement

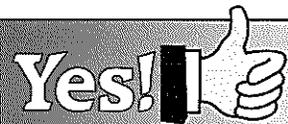
- *Do not remove original tile, slate or historic molded concrete roofs.*
- *Do not substitute molded concrete tiles in place of original terra cotta tiles or slate.*
- *Do not use half-round or Spanish style tiles in place of flat shingles or slate roofing.*

Maybe?

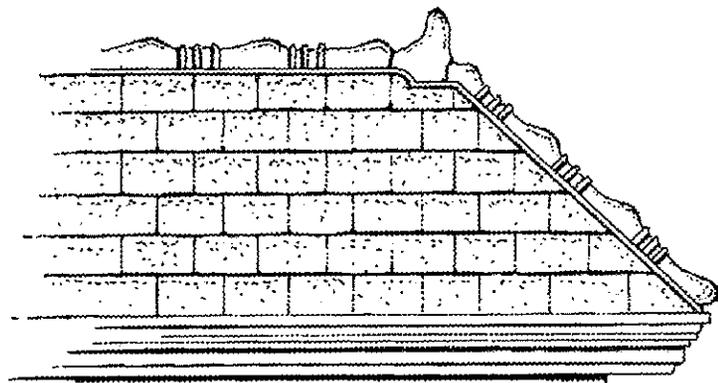


- *If you cannot retain the original slate or tile roofing on your entire roof, it may be acceptable to retain tile or slate only on the publicly visible roof slopes.*
- *Thin shingles made of fiber cement may, in certain instances, be an acceptable substitute for historic slate or flat terra cotta shingle tiles.*
- *Molded concrete tiles may be an acceptable substitute for molded terra cotta tiles, but the new material must match the old in terms of texture, color and size.*

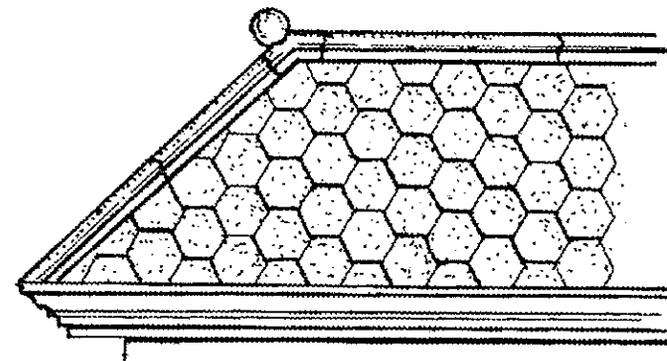
Roofs and Chimneys



Metal Roof Trim

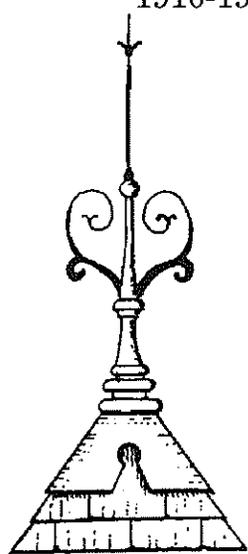


Serpentine metal ridge and horn finial,
1910-1940

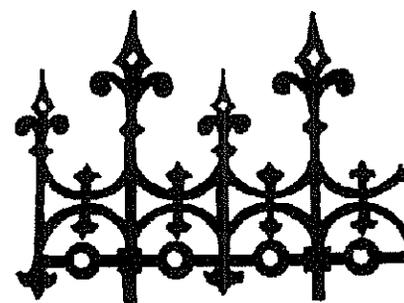
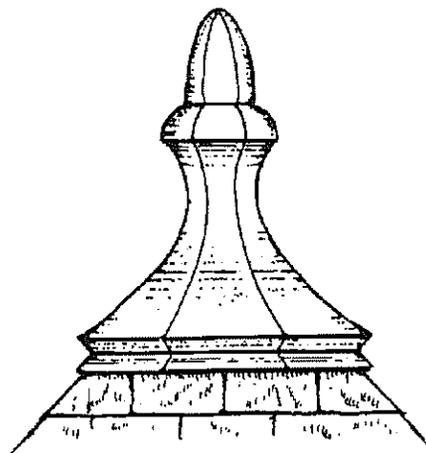


Rolled metal ridge and ball finial,
1875-1940

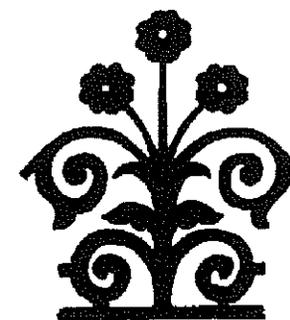
An appropriate metal trim applied to the ridge or peak of a roof is an excellent way to enhance the period character of a house. Metal roof ridge trim was common until the 1930s



Sheet metal tower finial,
1880-1910

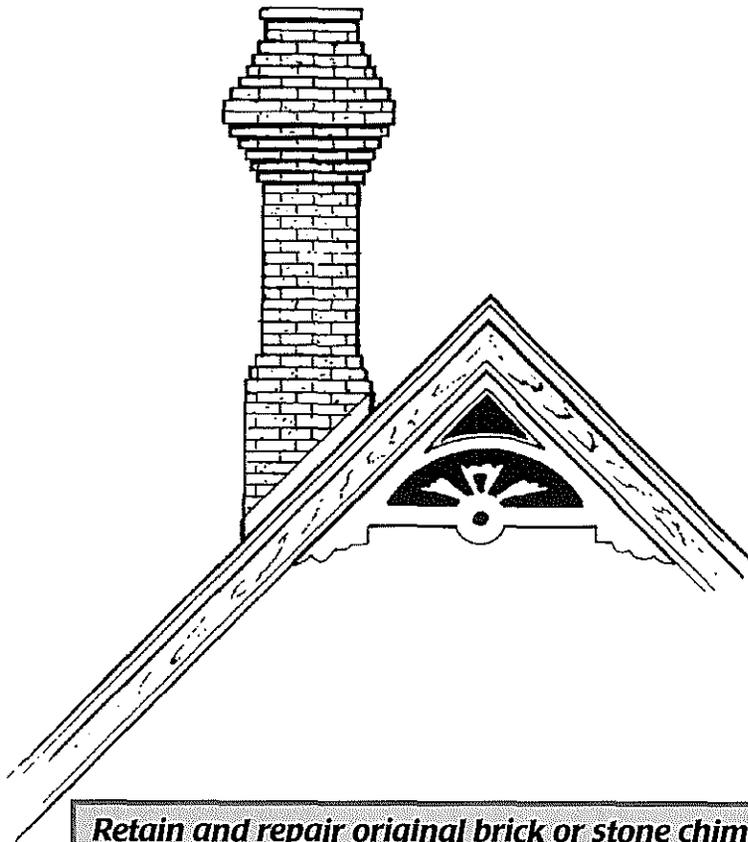


Cast iron ridge cresting,
1875-1890



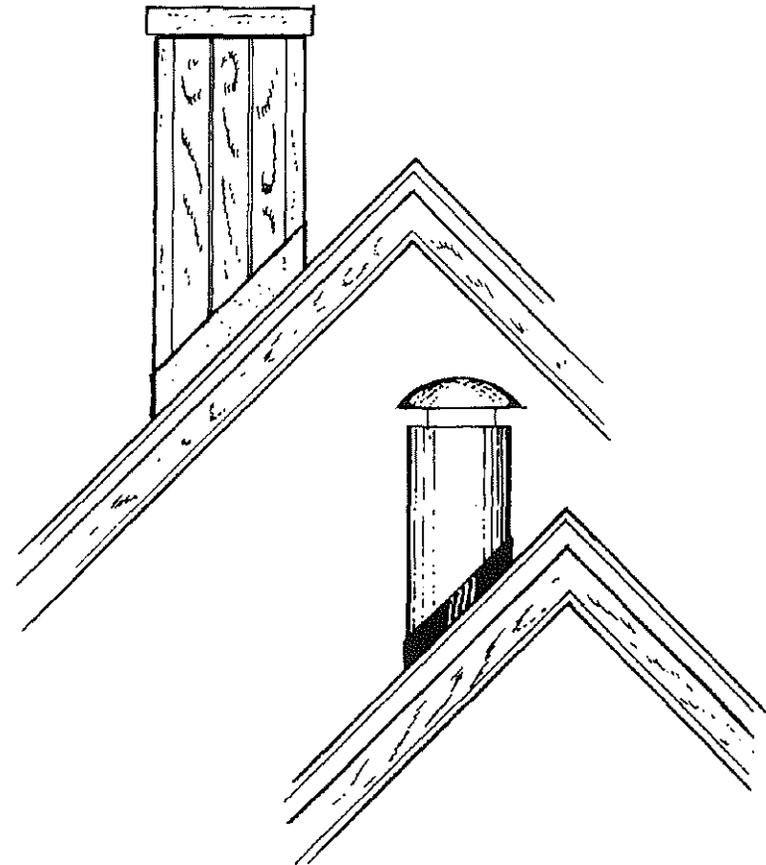
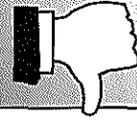
Roofs and Chimneys

Yes!



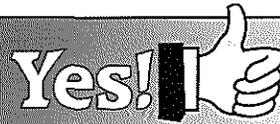
Retain and repair original brick or stone chimneys. In some cases, it may be acceptable to remove an unused chimney if it is not an important visual element. In a local historic district, however, this alteration requires the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission. If approval is granted, chimneys should be removed to below the surface of the roof.

No!

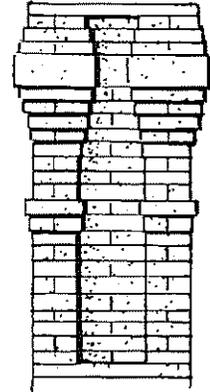
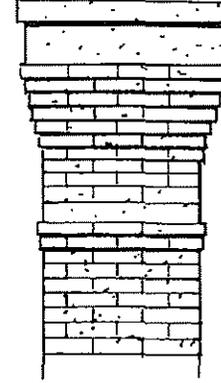
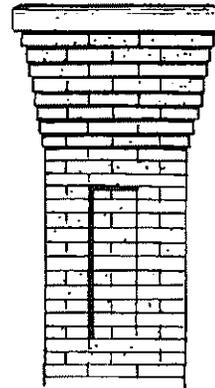
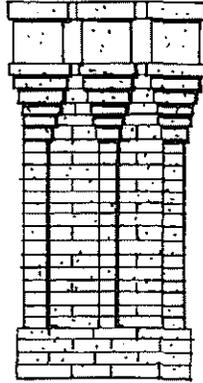
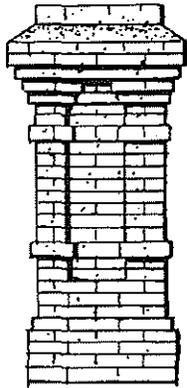


Do not install an exposed metal, prefabricated chimney flue or enclose a metal flue in a wooden box. A traditional brick or stone chimney contributes to the architectural character of an older house and lasts much longer than a metal or wooden flue.

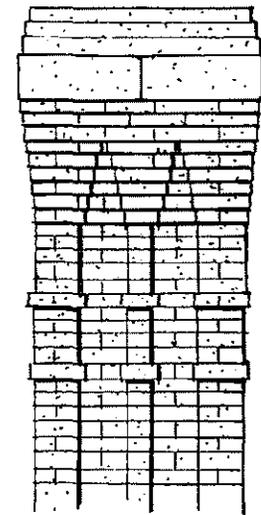
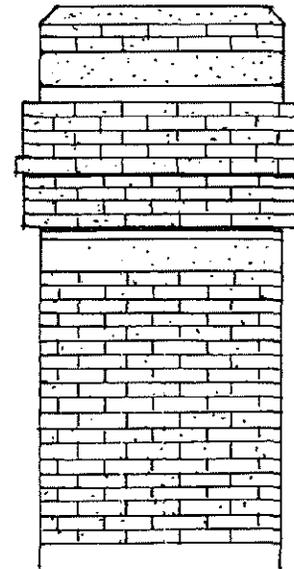
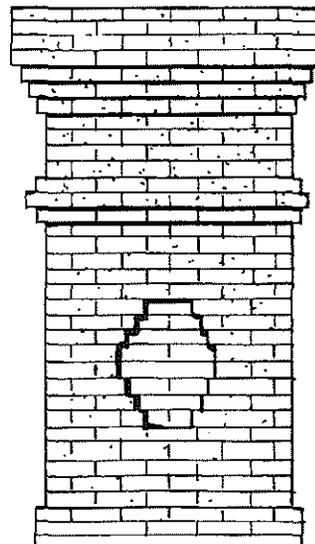
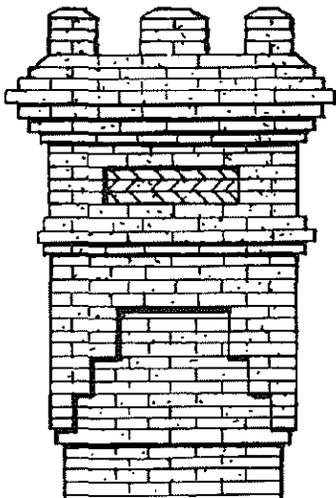
Roofs and Chimneys



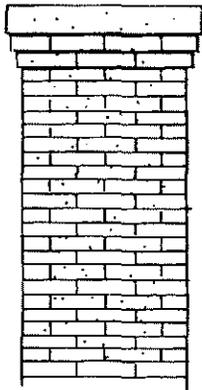
If you are building a new chimney, consider a design that will complement the architecture of your house.



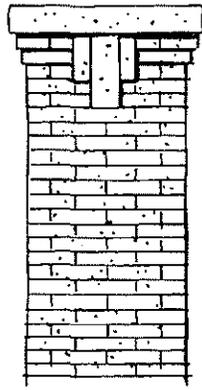
These designs are compatible with most houses built between about 1870 and 1900.



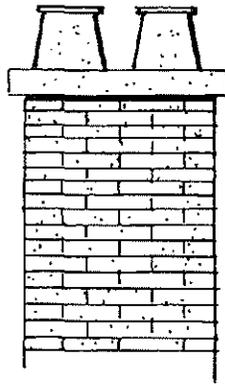
Roofs and Chimneys



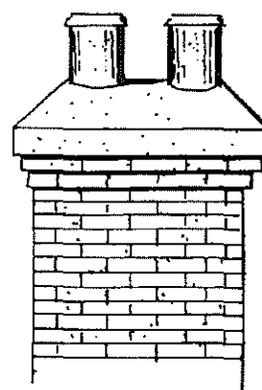
Basic design suitable for all styles, 1900-1940



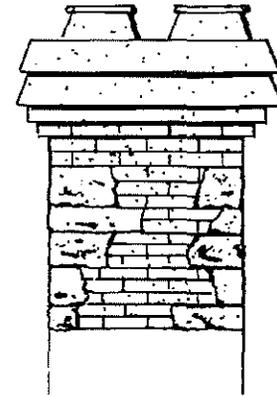
Craftsman/Bungalow, 1910-1930



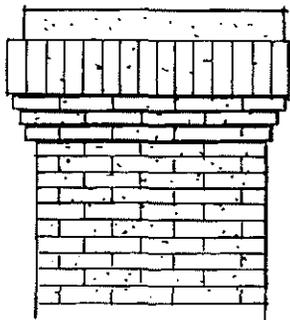
Prairie/Craftsman, 1910-1925



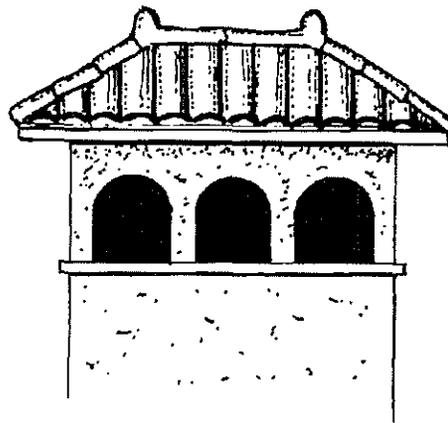
Basic period revival, 1920-1940



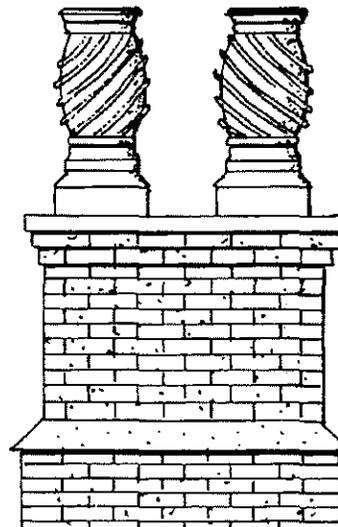
Tudor Revival, 1925-1940



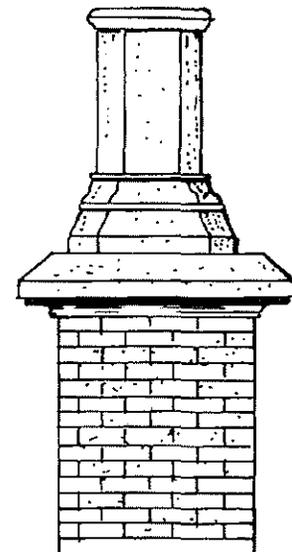
Colonial, 1920-1940



Mediterranean, 1920-1935



Traditional chimney with Tudor chimney pots, 1920-1935



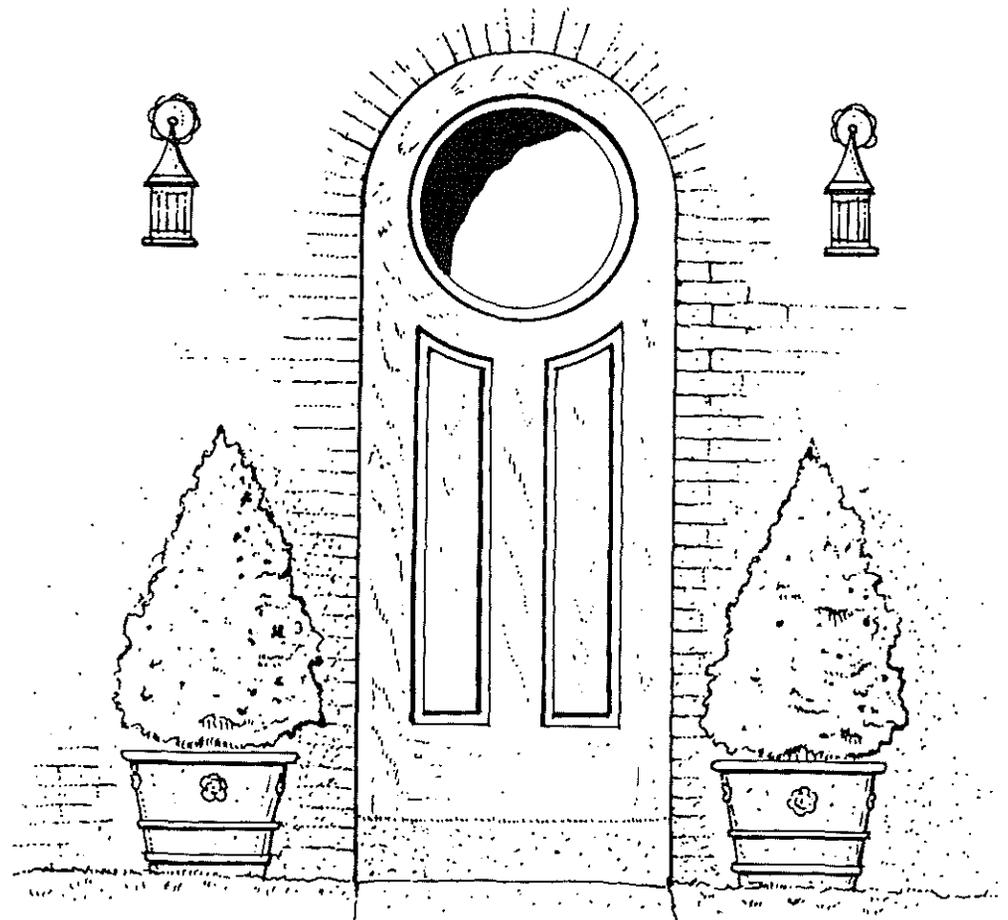
Basic chimney with shaped chimney pot, 1920-1935

Doors

- *Original historic doors contribute to the curb appeal of a house.*
- *Original historic doors can last for centuries.*
- *Original historic doors are repairable unlike many modern doors.*

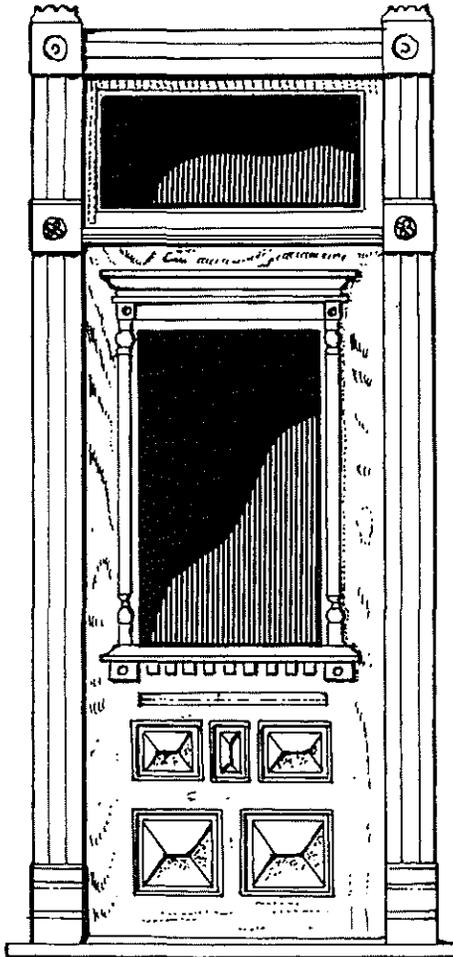
Years ago, front doors were built as enduring works of the woodworker's craft. They were designed to complement the architecture of a house and to last for centuries. Unfortunately, far too many repairable, historic doors have been needlessly removed and replaced with new doors that actually detract from the character of an older house. Historic doors, especially front doors, should be retained and repaired whenever possible. In fact, by using modern wood epoxies, even severely damaged and decayed wooden doors can be successfully and cost-effectively rehabilitated. Old doors can be made energy efficient by the addition of an appropriately designed storm door. Within a local Historic District it is generally not allowed to replace an original front door.

If an original door is missing it can be replaced with an appropriate reproduction door or a salvaged antique door, although it may be difficult to find a salvaged door of the exact size and style required. Today it is much easier to buy a quality, reproduction door or to have a door made-to-order by a millwork manufacturer. These options are not all that costly when compared with the cost of purchasing a high quality, off-the-shelf modern door from the local home building supply store.

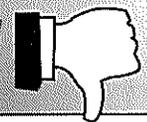


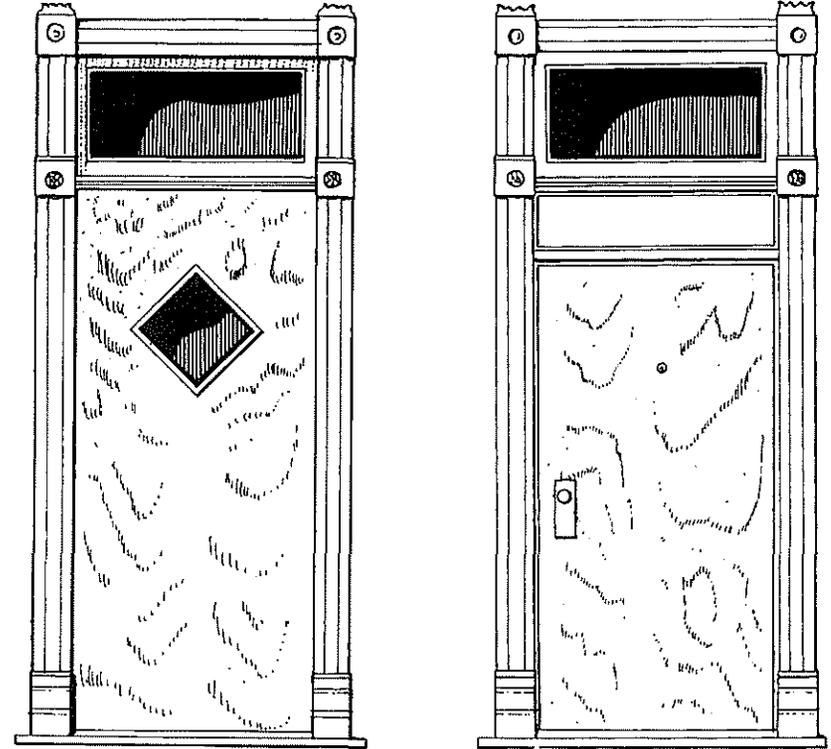
Doors

Yes! 



Retain and repair original wooden doors. Modern wood epoxies can work wonders in restoring older doors.

No! 

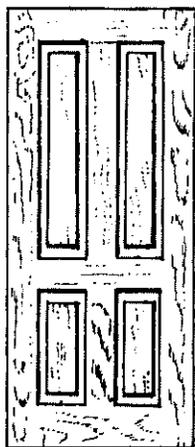


Do not replace original wooden doors with inappropriate modern substitutes that are out of character with the period and style of a house. Never "block down" the original size of a door opening in order to accommodate a new, smaller, stock-size door. Do not alter or cover transom windows, trim or other features that complement historic entry doors.

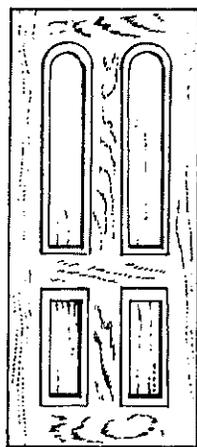
Doors



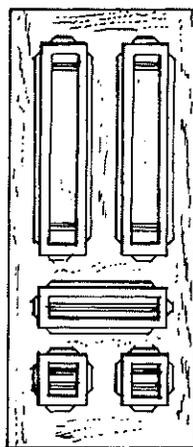
Traditional door designs such as these are appropriate for use on older houses.



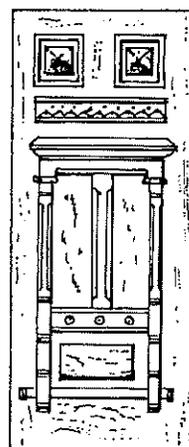
All styles
1860-1910



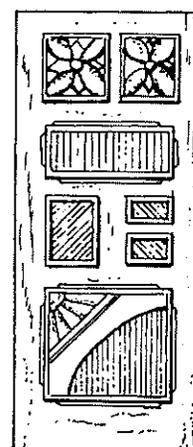
Italianate
1860-1875



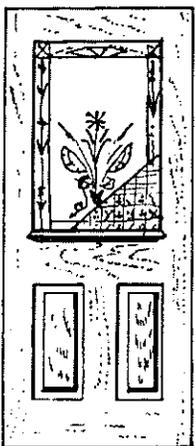
Victorian Gothic
1875-1885



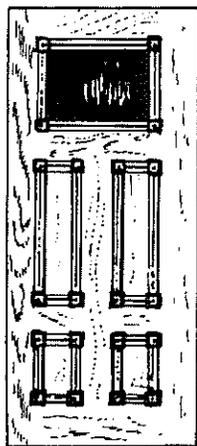
Victorian Gothic,
Queen Anne
1875-1885



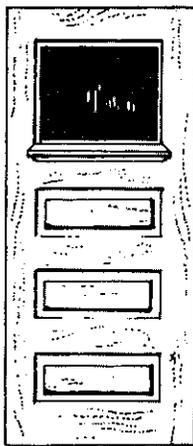
Queen Anne
1885-1895



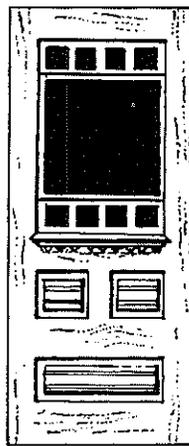
All styles
1860-1910



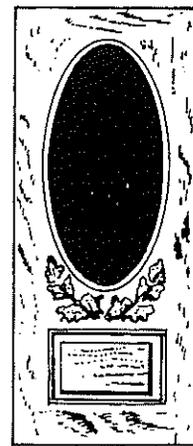
Victorian Gothic
1875-1885



Queen Anne
1885-1895



Queen Anne,
Colonial Revival
1885-1910

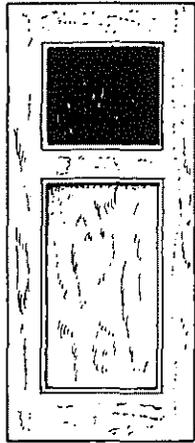


Colonial Revival
1895-1910

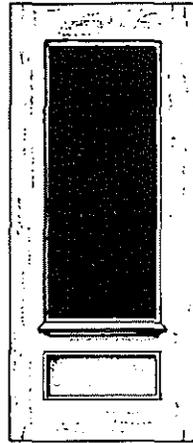
Doors



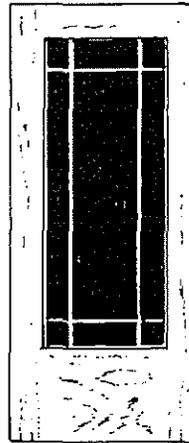
It is important to choose the right door for the age and style of your house.



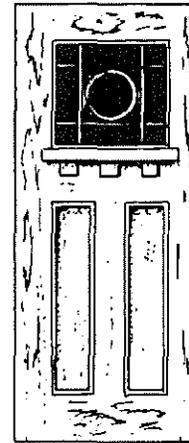
Craftsman
1905-1935



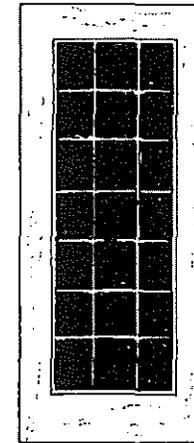
All Styles
1895-1915



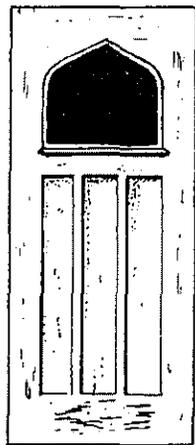
Craftsman
1910-1935



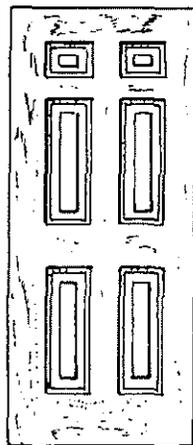
Craftsman
1905-1935



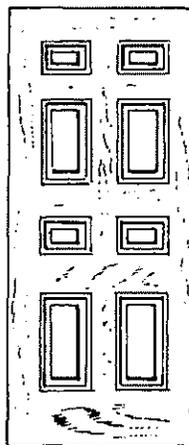
All Styles
1920-1940



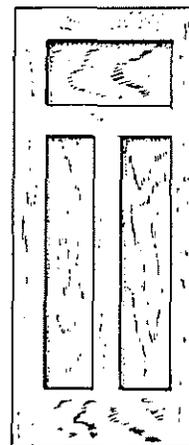
Tudor Revival
1920-1940



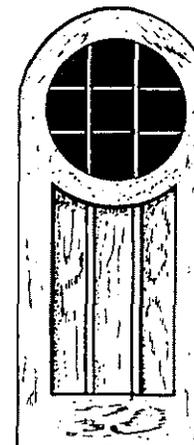
Colonial Revival
1915-1940



Colonial Revival
1915-1940



Craftsman
1905-1935

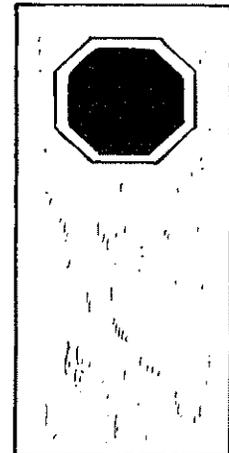
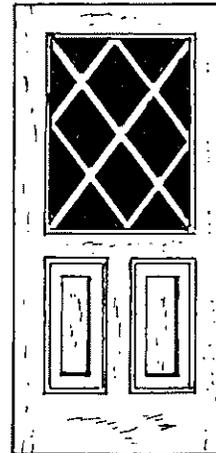
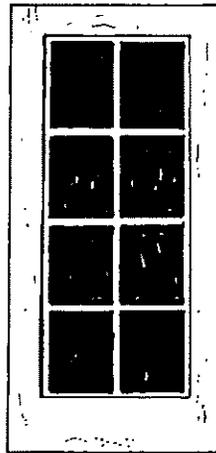
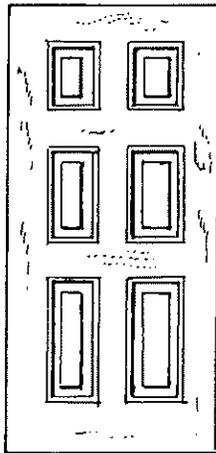
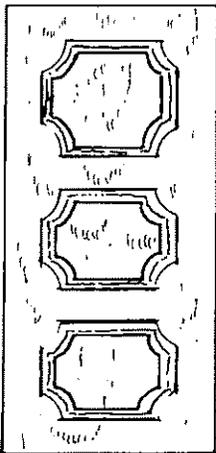
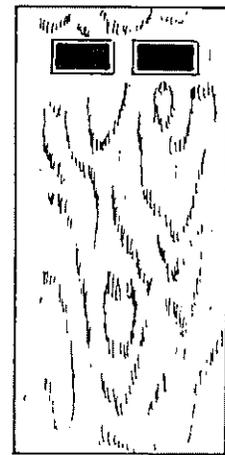
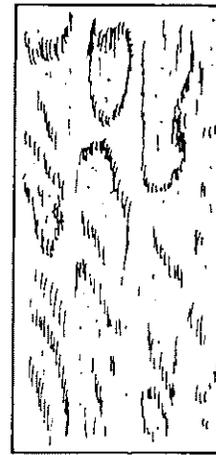
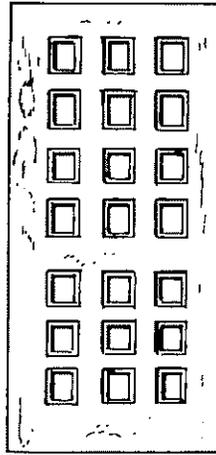
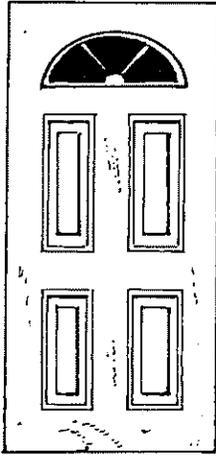
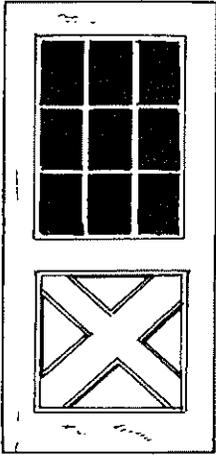


Craftsman
1915-1940

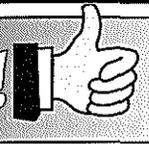
Doors

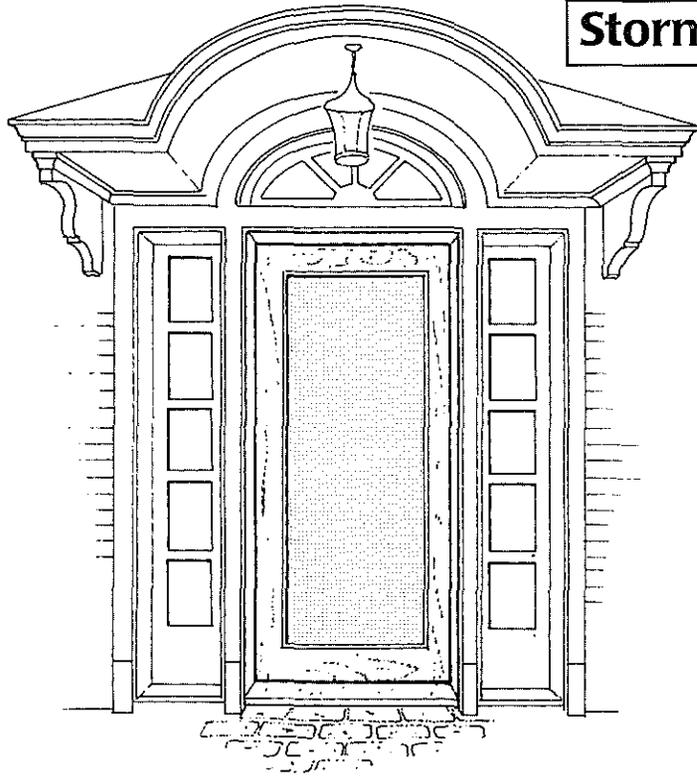


Doors such as these are not compatible with the architecture of older houses and would not be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission

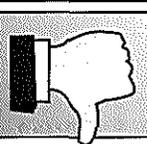


Doors

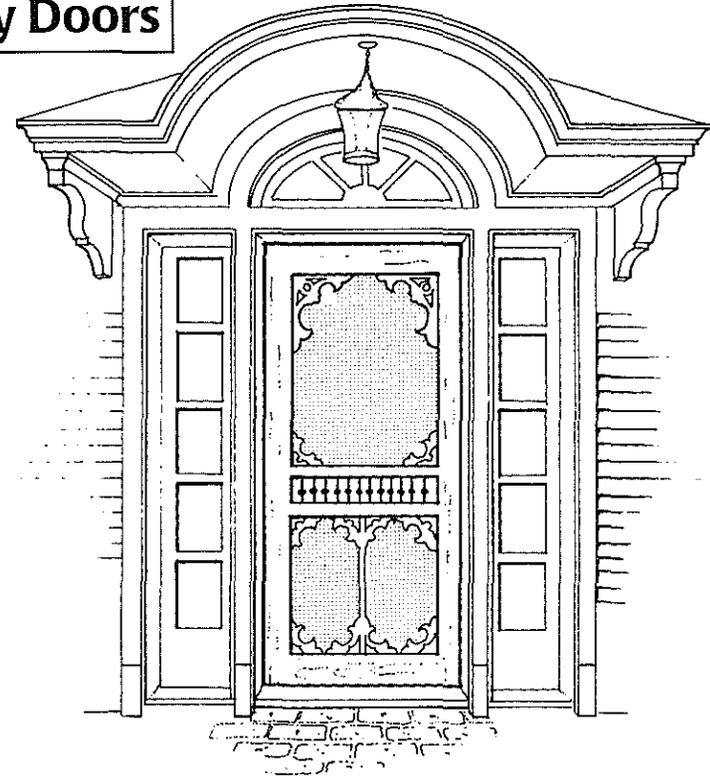
Yes! 



Older houses were fitted with finely crafted front doors that were meant to be seen and not covered with a storm or security door. However, if you need a storm or screen door it should match the style of the house or at least obscure the view of the prime door as little as possible without calling attention to itself. The full view combination storm and screen door shown here is the most versatile and will go with nearly any style of house.

No! 

Storm and Security Doors

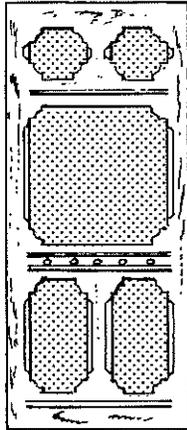


Do not install an inappropriate style door, such as putting a Victorian style storm/screen door on a colonial style house.

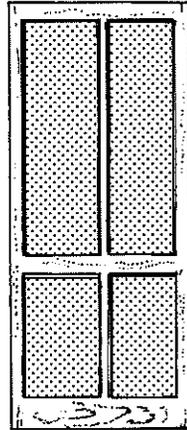
Doors



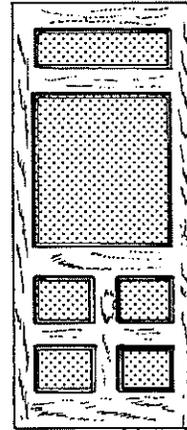
Storm and screen door styles, 1860-1940



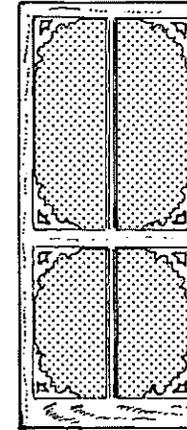
Victorian Gothic,
Queen Anne
1870-1890



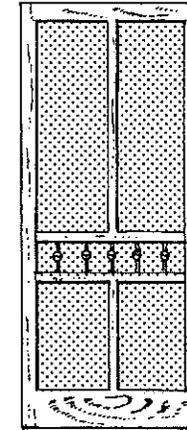
All Styles
1860-1920



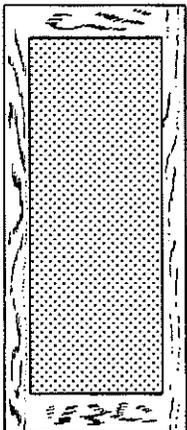
Queen Anne
1885-1905



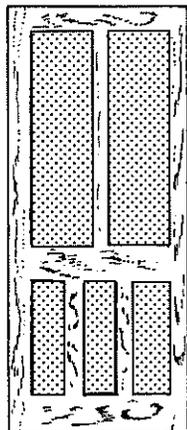
Queen Anne
1885-1905



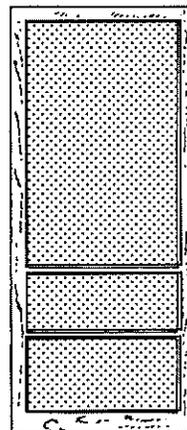
Queen Anne
1885-1905



Full View, All Styles
1860-1940

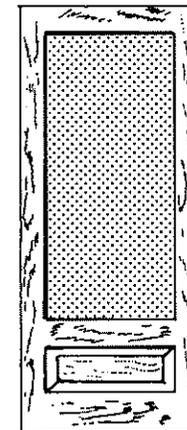


Craftsman
1905-1935

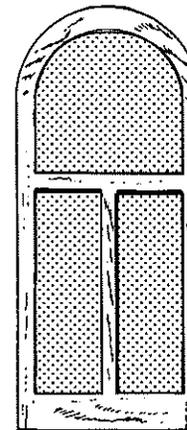


All Styles
1860-1940

(Often used on rear or side doors)



All Styles
1915-1940

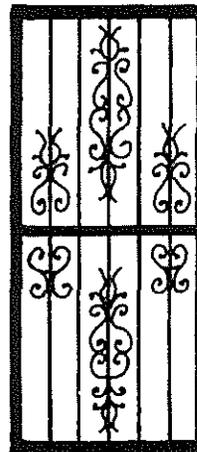
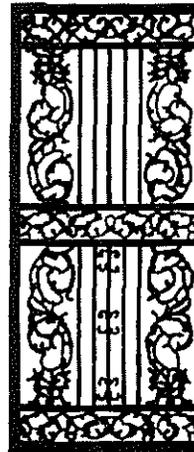
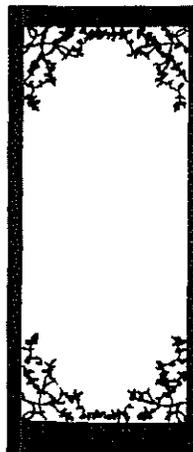
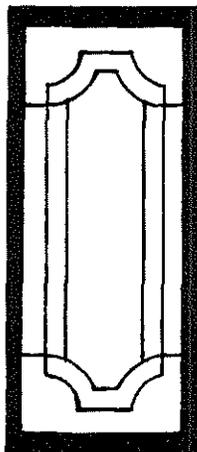
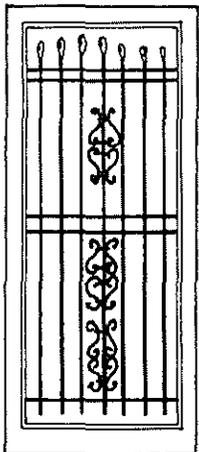
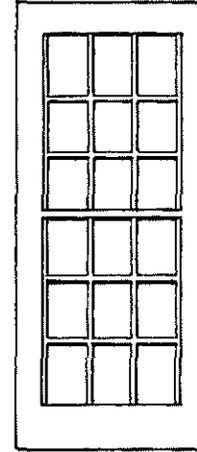
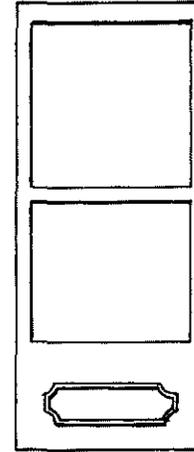
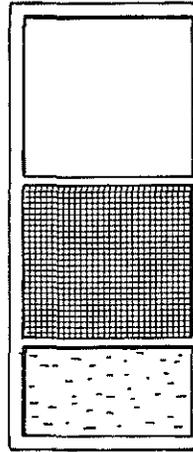
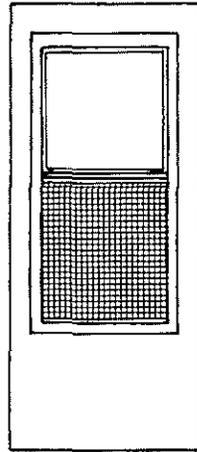
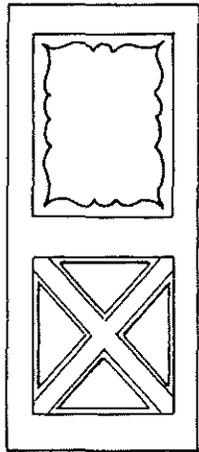


Craftsman,
Period Revival
1905-1940

Doors



These storm and screen doors and security doors are generally not compatible with the architecture of older houses and should be avoided



Windows

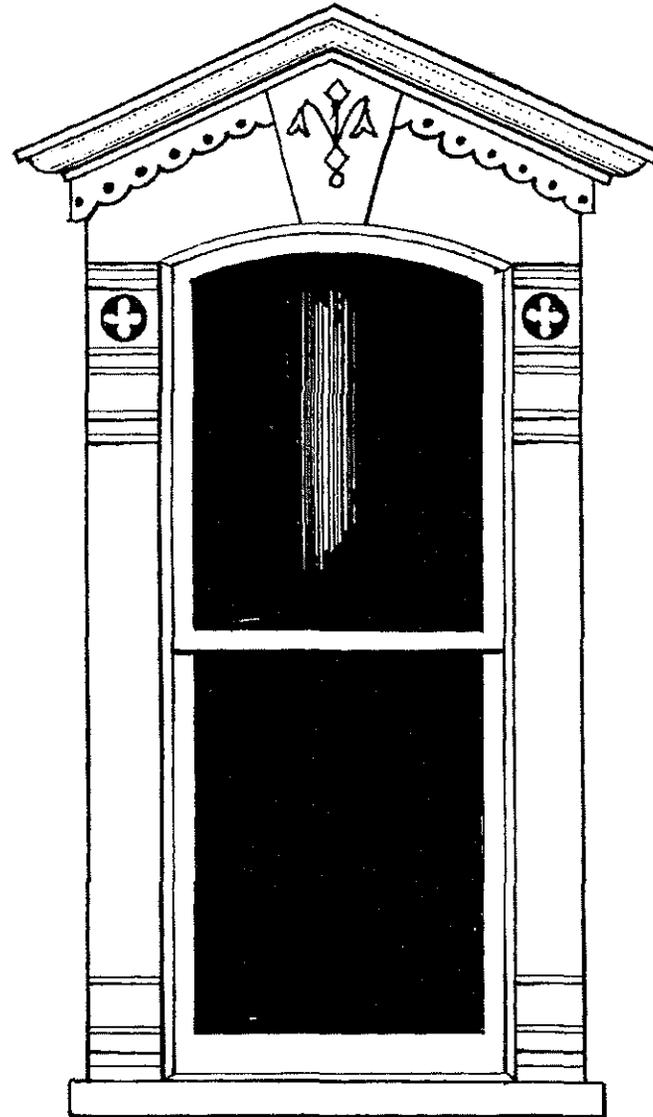
- *Windows can last for more than a century and can be energy efficient.*
- *Windows may not be replaced with vinyl and metal units.*
- *Windows are important design features that contribute to the historic appearance of your home.*

Older wooden windows, made of durable and nearly irreplaceable old-growth lumber were made to last for the life of a building. Because replacing windows is very expensive, it makes good economic sense to retain and repair original wooden windows. Easy-to-use wood epoxies can permanently repair window units that were previously thought to be not salvageable. Remember that replacing windows takes a huge bite out of your pocket book but generally adds little or no resale value to an older house. For these reasons and others it makes sense to stick with the original windows if at all possible.

Older iron or steel windows were also used for residential designs in rare instances. These windows require periodic repair and priming to remain operational and corrosion free.

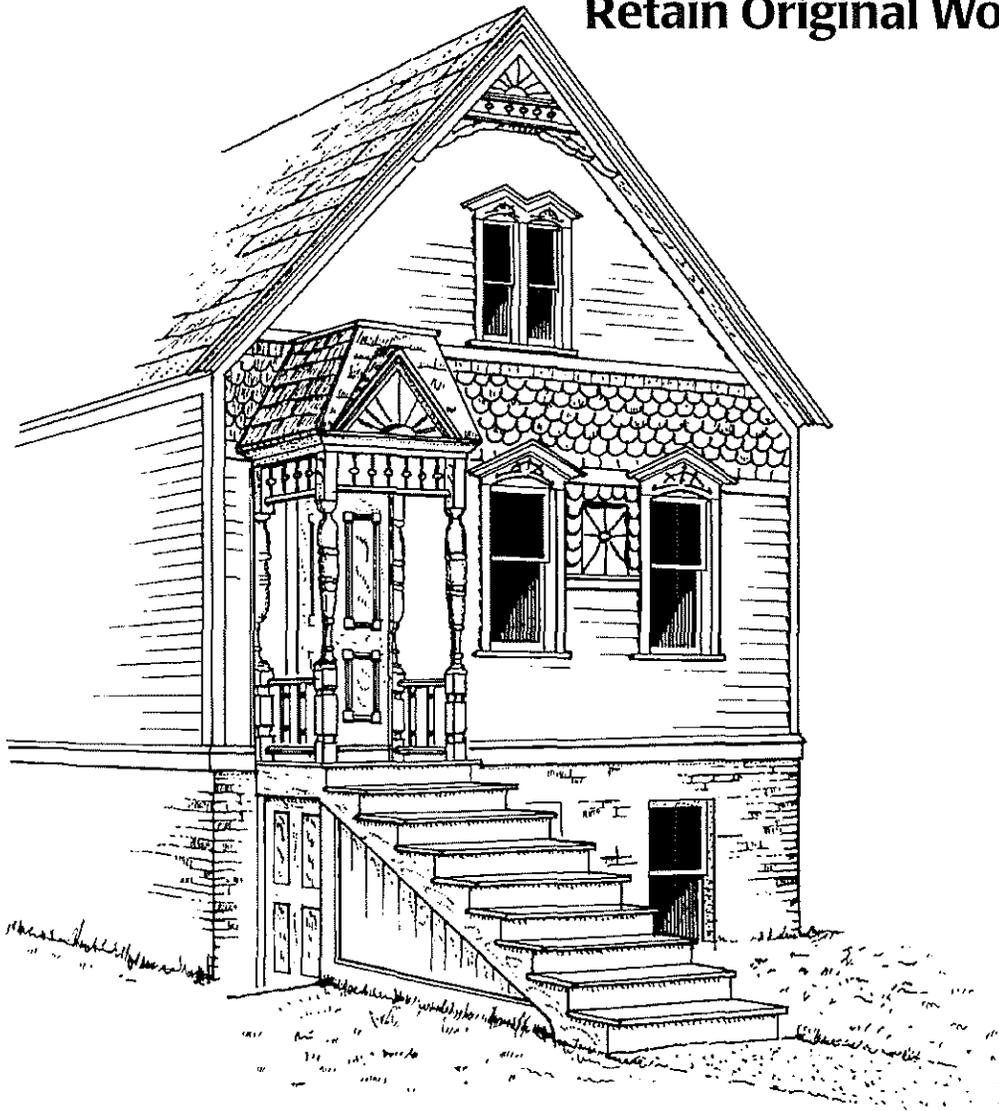
Keep in mind that using vinyl or aluminum replacement units detracts from the historic appearance of a house and limits the opportunities for an eye-catching historically-correct paint scheme. That is why the Historic Preservation Commission generally prohibits the use of solid vinyl, aluminum or clad windows on historic buildings.

Like cars, windows need a periodic "tuning" in order to maintain their peak efficiency. Sash locks must be in good working order and there should be no gaps or holes in the exterior trim around the window. The addition of an inside or outside mounted storm window can often boost the energy efficiency of an average 100-year-old wooden window unit to about the same level as a modern, insulating glass unit.





Retain Original Wooden Windows



Note: Handrails on steps omitted for clarity

Windows are pivotal to establishing the architectural character of a house. The original window units should always be retained and repaired whenever possible. In the rare event that the windows are missing or damaged beyond repair, they should be replaced with new units that match the old ones in size, material, shape and trim. Wooden windows may not be replaced with aluminum or vinyl window units.

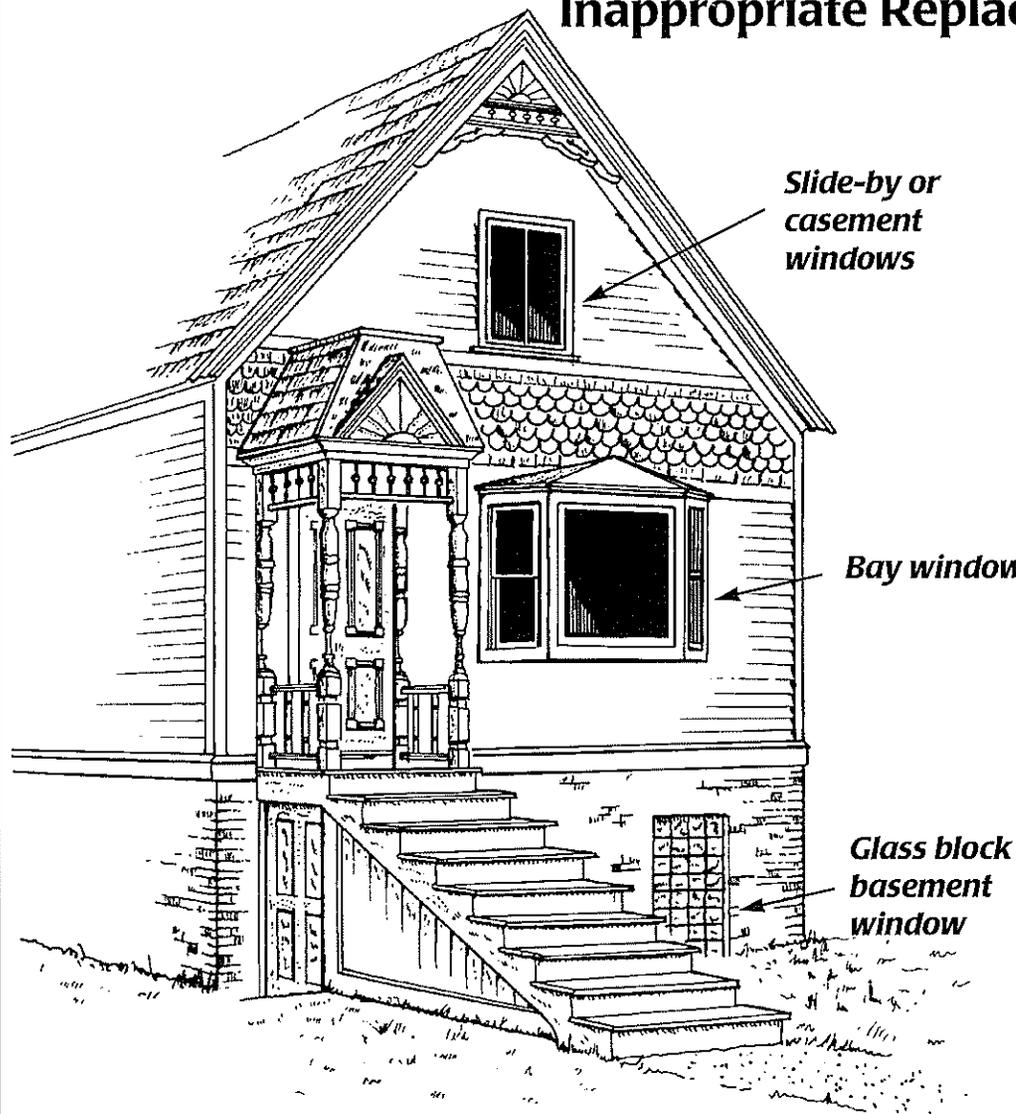
Retaining original windows makes sense because:

- Repair of older wooden windows is generally far less costly than replacement
- Replacement windows especially solid vinyl, aluminum or clad ones will not look the same as wooden windows.
- Wooden windows can be repaired and painted interesting colors. Vinyl or aluminum windows come in a limited range of colors and cannot be easily repaired. Often the whole vinyl or metal window unit must be replaced if the frames break. A matching replacement may not be available if the units are more than a few years old. Non-matching window units will be very obvious on your house.
- A good storm window can make older wooden windows energy efficient at far less cost than installing new window units.

Windows



Inappropriate Replacement Windows



Alterations to the size and style of the windows have robbed this house of much of its original character. The replacement windows illustrated here look out of place on an older house and drastically alter the proportions and scale of the original design. They would not be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission

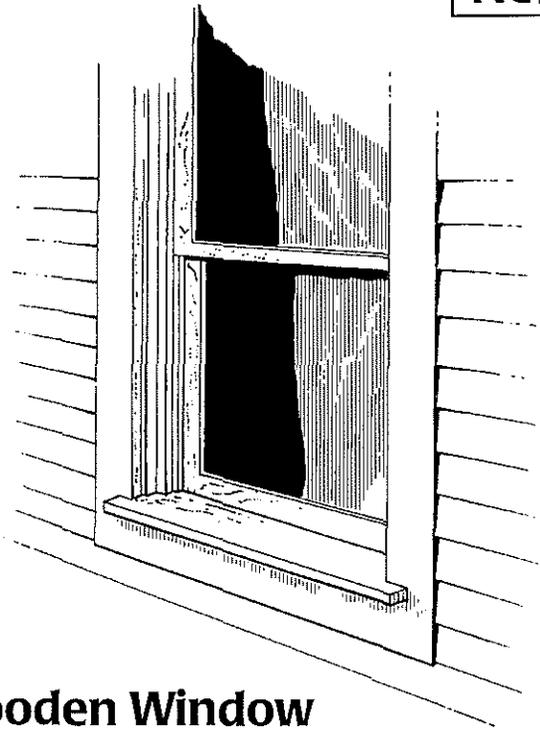
Other points to keep in mind:

- Casement windows are not acceptable substitutes for double-hung windows
- Modern prefabricated bay windows are not appropriate substitutes for double hung windows.
- Do not install glass block basement windows where they will be visible from the public right-of-way.

Note: Handrails on steps omitted for clarity

Windows

Yes! 

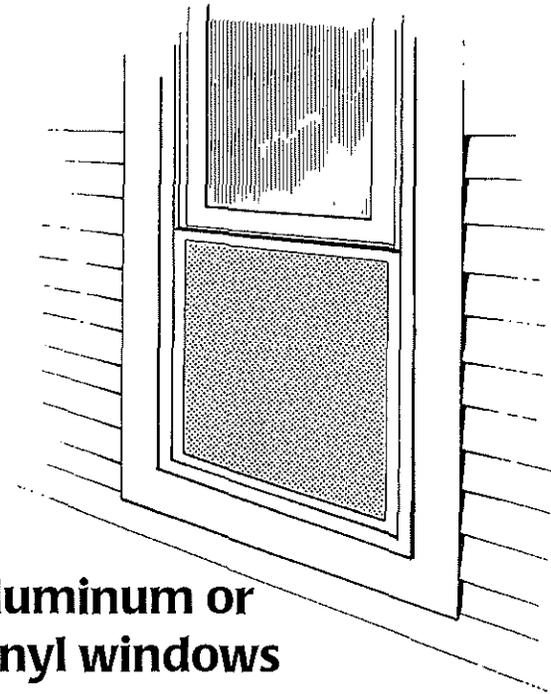


Wooden Window

It is important to retain traditional wooden windows because they have distinct architectural character that can not be matched by most modern vinyl or metal replacement window units.

No! 

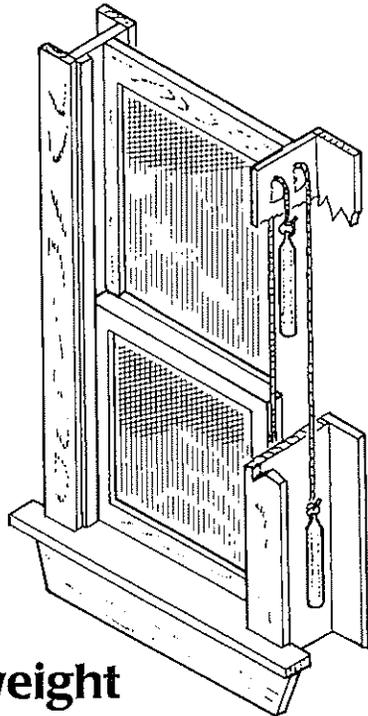
New Windows Look Different



Aluminum or vinyl windows

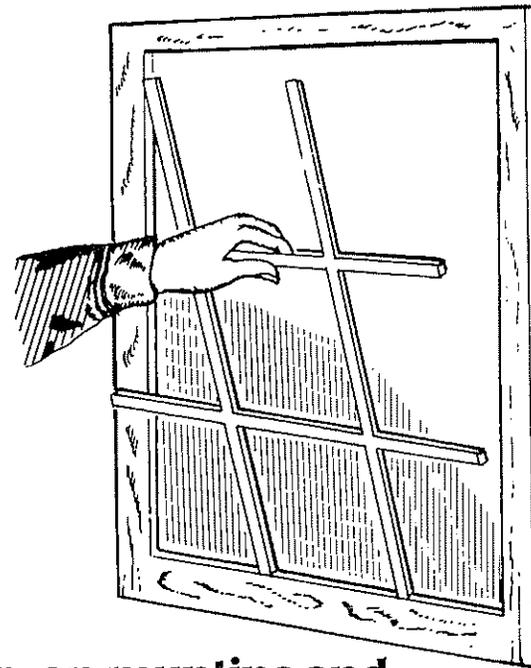
Solid vinyl or metal replacement windows may not be installed on historically designated houses. Because of the way they are made and operate, vinyl and metal replacement window units have a significantly different appearance than traditional double hung wooden windows and will greatly alter the way a house looks. In addition, vinyl and metal window units are not home-owner repairable, and will eventually need painting to keep them looking good.

Windows



Retain weight and pulley windows

Old windows are raised and lowered by a weight and pulley system that is remarkably durable and easy to repair. Although not forbidden by the Historic Preservation Commission, it is not recommended to replace a weight and pulley system with modern compression sash guides because the new systems do not last as long and must be periodically replaced since it is nearly impossible to repair them.



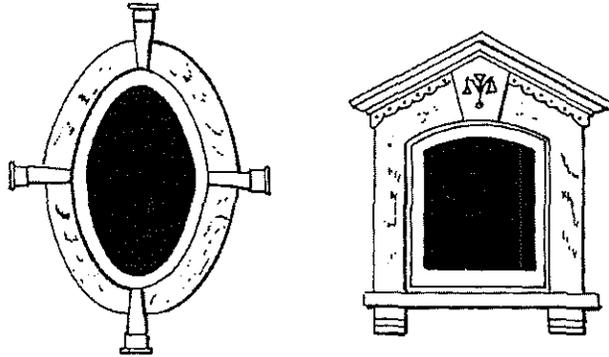
Snap-on muntins and interior tape muntins

The Historic Preservation Commission does not permit the installation of removable grillwork to simulate the muntins in a traditional, true divided-light window. Only true divided-light windows or windows with permanently fixed-in-place exterior muntins are permitted for use in replacement windows in historic districts.

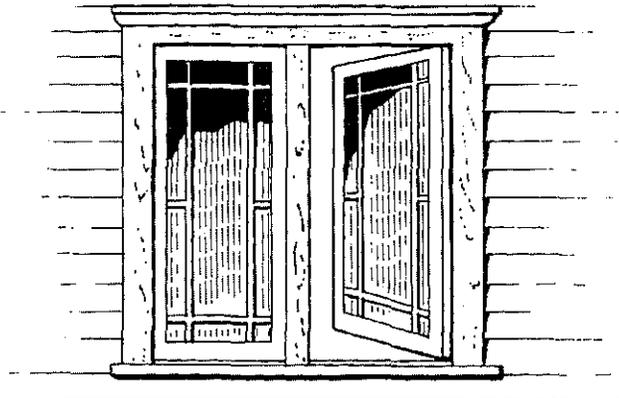
Windows

Yes! 

Maintaining Original Character

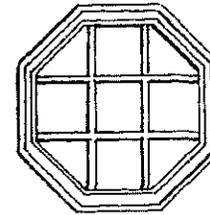


An original gable window and trim should always be preserved or else be replaced with a new, matching unit

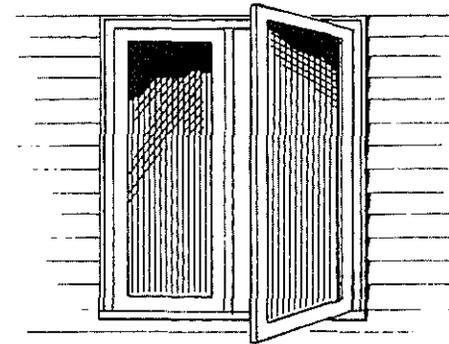


Retain original casement windows and trim

No! 



A modern octagonal window should never be substituted for a traditional gable window



An old casement window should never be replaced with a modern vinyl or aluminum clad casement window because it does not have the same character and also may not swing in the same direction as the old unit. If a new casement is installed, it must be wood and match the old one in style and configuration of window panes. The exterior window casing trim must be retained.

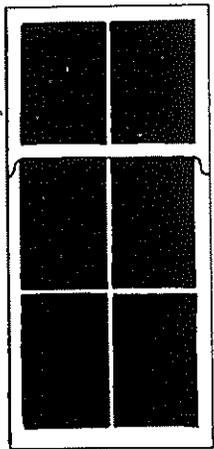
Windows



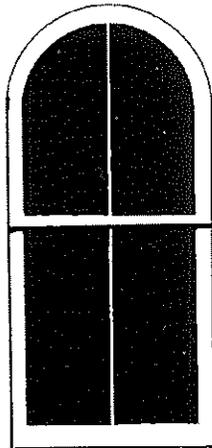
Double Hung Window Design

The most common type of window, the double hung, is composed of two movable frames called sash that slide up and down in wooden channels. The double hung window can easily last for centuries. Because windows are one of the most important character-giving elements of the exterior of a

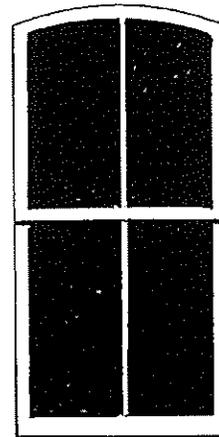
house, it is vital that the original windows be retained if possible. These wooden windows were among the most popular styles in Milwaukee between 1855 and 1940. If you must replace a window unit, get a new one made to match the original in size and configuration of window panes.



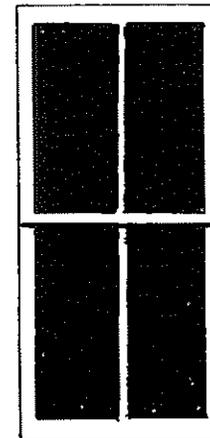
2 over 4
1855-1875



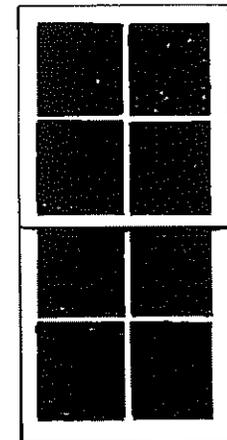
2 over 2
Round Top
Italianate
1855-1875



2 over 2
Segmental Top
All Styles
1870-1890



2 over 2
All Styles
1870-1890

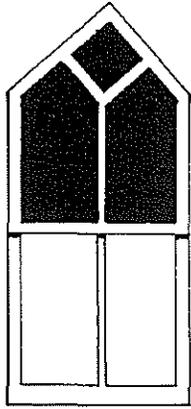


4 over 4
All Styles
1860-1875

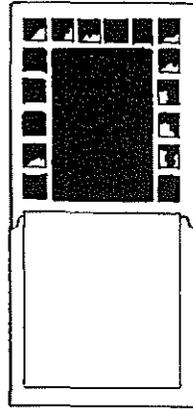
Windows



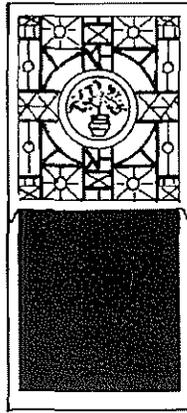
Double Hung Window Sash Designs



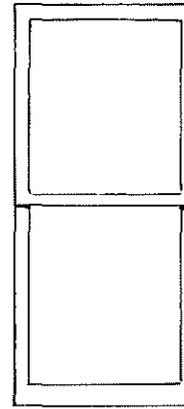
Victorian Gothic
1875-1885



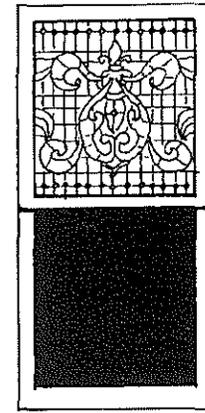
Queen Anne
1880-1895



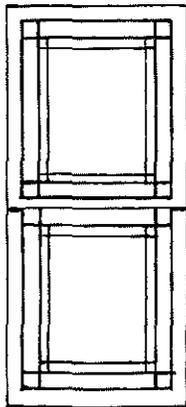
Queen Anne
1880-1895



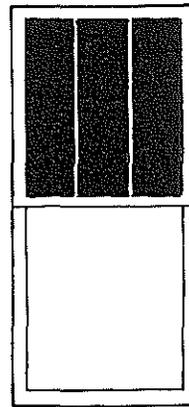
1 over 1
All Styles
1870-1940



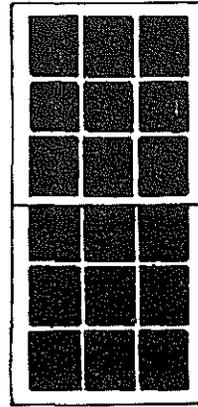
Victorian
1895-1905



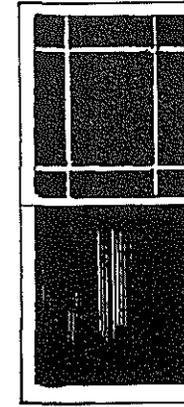
Prairie Style
1905-1925



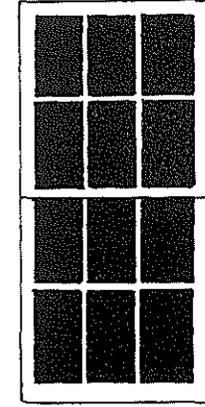
3 over 1
Craftsman
1905-1935



9 over 9
Colonial
1910-1940



Craftsman
1910-1935

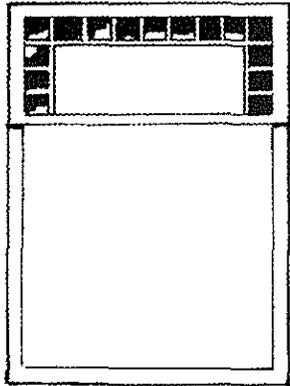


6 over 6 Colonial
1840-1865 and
1915-1940

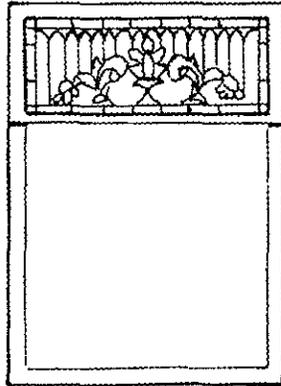
Windows



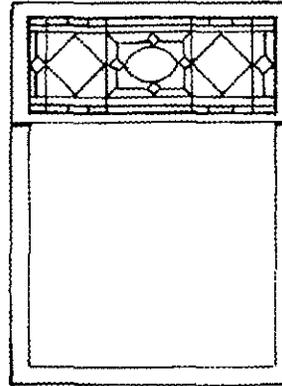
Landscape Sash Designs



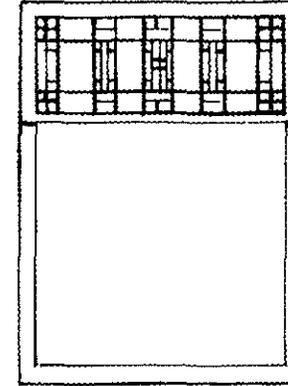
Queen Anne
1880-1890



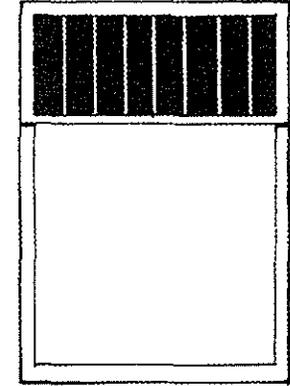
Queen Anne
1885-1905



Colonial Revival
1895-1910



Prairie Style
1905-1920



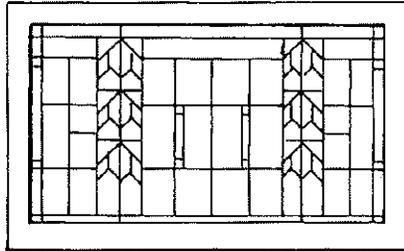
Craftsman
1910-1925

The landscape sash was the Victorian version of the modern picture window. It has a very large, single pane bottom sash that was designed to allow an unobstructed view of the outdoors. The narrow top sash, or transom was intended to be decorative and often had fancy glazing with colored or leaded glass. It would be a mistake to replace a landscape sash with a large "picture window," a modern projecting bay window, or a group of double hung or casement window units.

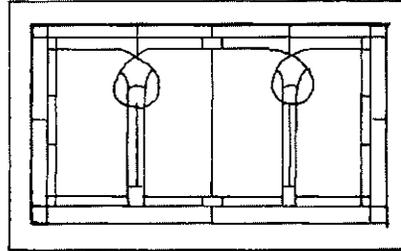
Windows



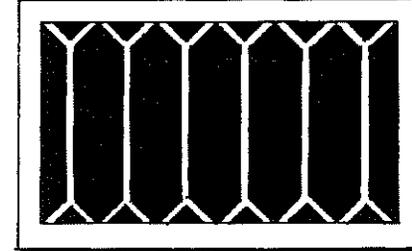
Piano Windows



Prairie Style
1905-1920



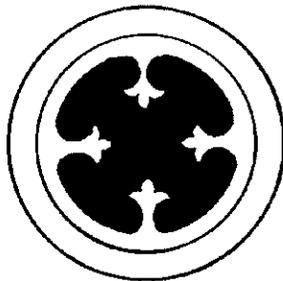
Craftsman/Bungalow
1910-1935



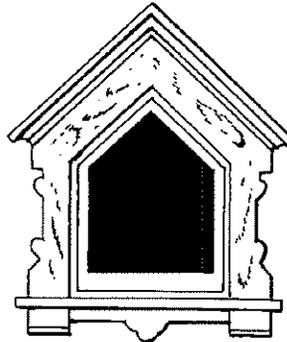
Colonial Revival with wooden or
leaded muntins 1905-1940

Located high on a wall, piano windows were popular ornamental features that usually had some type of fancy glazing, often leaded glass.

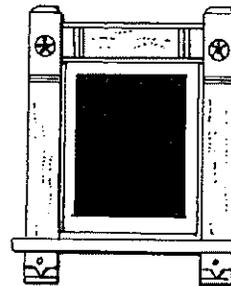
Gable Windows With Trim



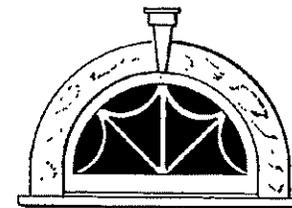
Gothic Revival/Italianate
1855-1875



Victorian Gothic
1875-1885



Queen Anne
1885-1895



Colonial Revival
1895-1940

Front windows in the attic gables of houses were often the fanciest windows on a house. They must be retained.

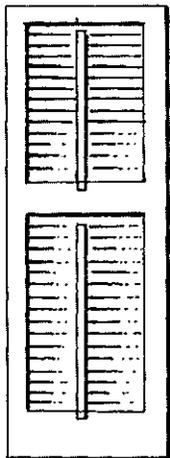
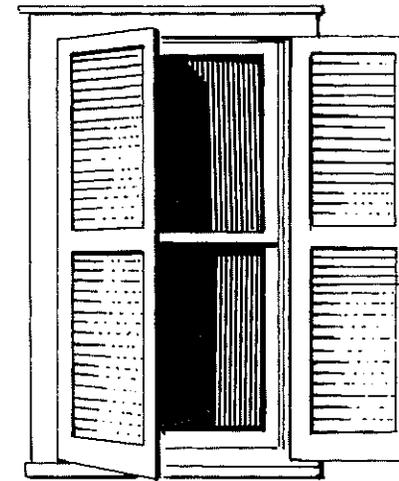
Windows



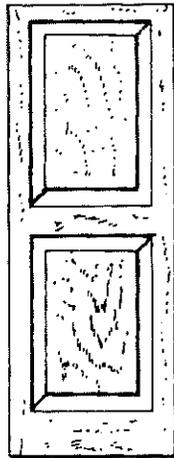
Appropriate Shutters and Outside Blinds

A shutter is a solid, paneled door made to close over a window. When a shutter has fixed or movable slats or louvers it is technically called an exterior blind. Most people today call exterior blinds shutters.

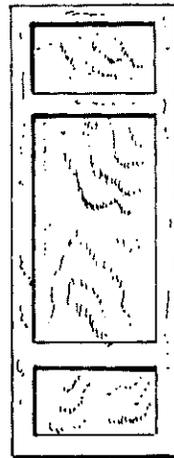
In the nineteenth century shutters and exterior blinds were always installed so that they could be opened and closed. It was not until the 1920s that shutters were installed merely for decoration by nailing or screwing them in place on either side of a window. Even if the shutters are merely decorative, they must be sized and mounted on the wall so that they appear as though they would actually close over the window opening. The decision to install shutters or exterior blinds should be made carefully because many older houses never had them. It is inappropriate to install stock items, wood-grained plastic shutters or wooden shutters that are not sized to fit the window opening or are the wrong style for their period of your house.



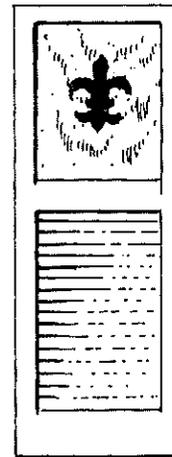
Fixed or Movable
Louvers
1855-1940



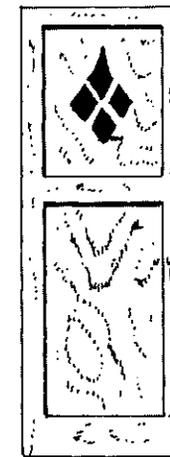
Raised Panel
1910-1940



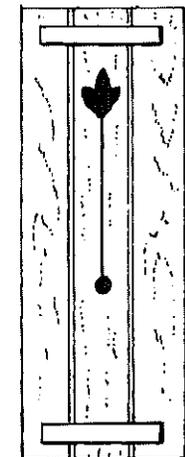
Flat Panel
Craftsman
1905-1930



Cut-Out Panel with
louvers-Period Revival
1920-1940



Cut-Out Panel
Period Revival
1915-1940

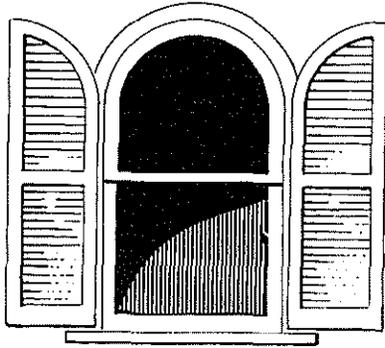


Cleat and Board
Period Revival
1920-1940

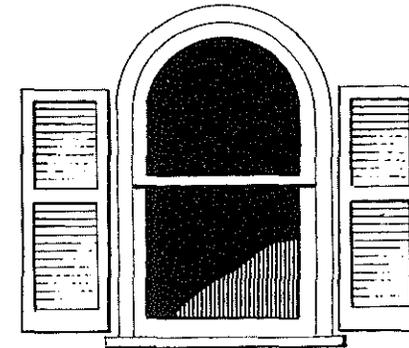
Windows



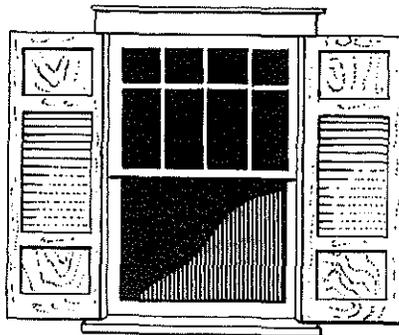
Shutter and Exterior Blind Design Tips



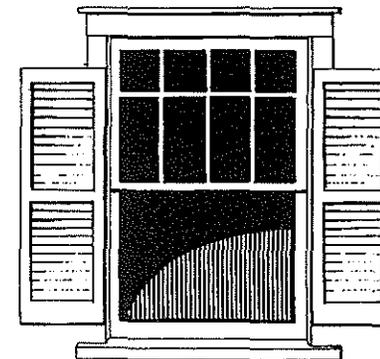
Round-arched window openings must be fitted with round-top shutters or exterior blinds.



Do not install rectangular shutters or exterior blinds on a round-arched window opening.



Even if they are merely decorative; shutters and exterior blinds must conform to the size and shape of the window opening. They should be mounted on the window frame so that they look like they could close over the window.



Do not install shutters or exterior blinds that are too short, too narrow or too tall to cover the window opening.

Porches

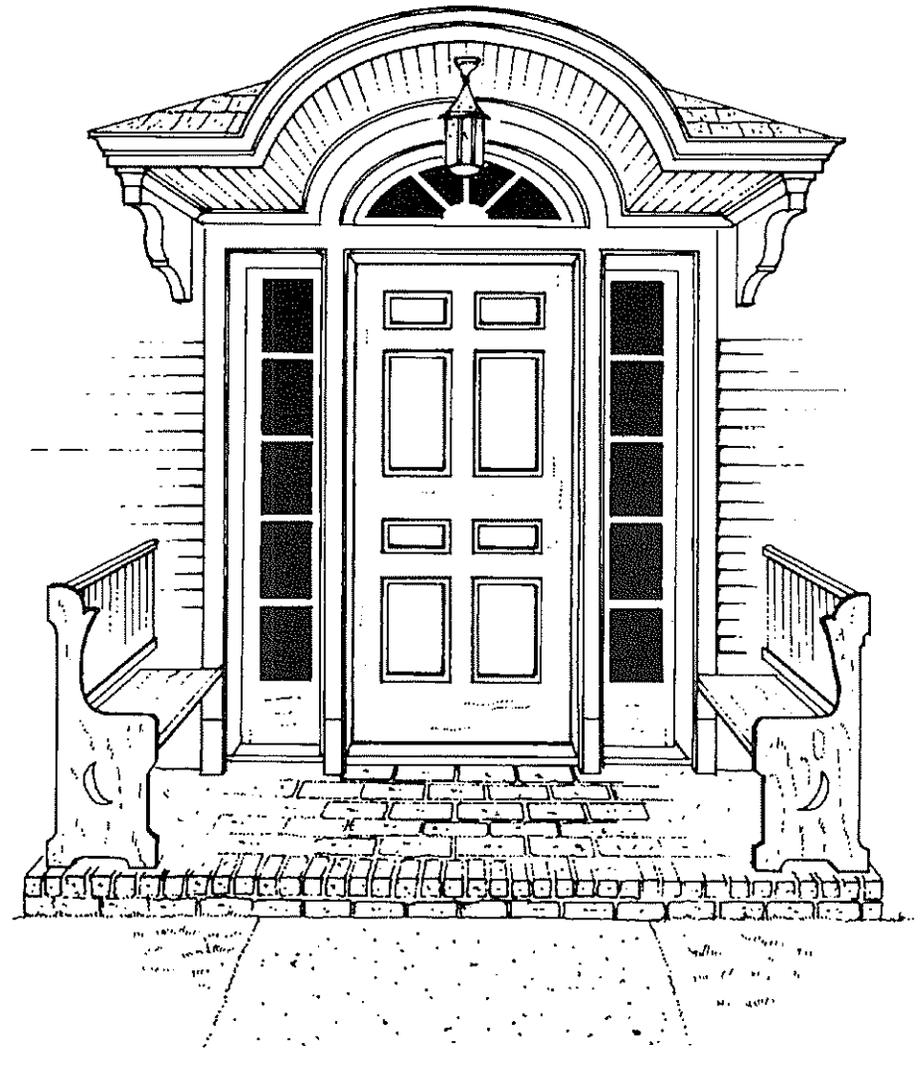
- *A front porch is often the single most important architectural feature of an older house.*
- *A traditional roofed porch must not be replaced with a modern, roofless deck.*
- *Careful attention to detail and retention of original architectural elements and proportions are key to successfully rehabbing or rebuilding a porch.*

Historically, more architectural embellishment and craftsmanship were lavished upon the front porch than on any other single exterior feature of a house. Because a front porch is such an important, character-giving feature of an older house, it cannot be stressed enough that the rehabilitation of a porch must be planned very carefully. Keep in mind that one of the most drastic alterations that can be made to the exterior of an older house is to remove an original front porch and replace it with a poorly designed modern substitute or a roofless deck.

Depending upon its condition, there are three distinct categories of work that can be done to a porch, all of which require prior approval by the Historic Preservation Commission:

- Repairing damage or correcting insensitive alterations to an otherwise structurally sound porch
- Rebuilding an existing, deteriorated porch with a combination of new and original materials
- Building an entirely new porch to replace a missing original porch

The guidelines for dealing with the repair or reconstruction of a porch are the same as for any other exterior feature of an older house. Original ornamental woodwork such as posts, brackets, fretwork, spindles and molding should always be saved and rehabilitated if at all possible. The use of modern structural wood epoxies can work wonders in permanently rehabilitating even severely damaged or decayed wood that might otherwise be prohibitively expensive to replace. A completely new porch must be designed so that it is compatible with the architectural style of the house.



Colonial Revival style porch, ca. 1920s

Porches



Retain Original Open Porches



An original front porch is an essential architectural feature of an older house and it must not be removed, enclosed, modernized or otherwise insensitively altered. An existing, historic porch should always be retained and repaired if at all possible. Removing an old porch and constructing a completely new one to match is a substantial task that should be undertaken only as a last resort. If a new porch is to be built in place of an old one, all extant original decorative woodwork including porch posts, fretwork, brackets and railings, should be retained and repaired before being reused. All replacement parts should match the originals in size and design.

Ca. 1900 house with its original front porch
(Note: Handrail on steps omitted for clarity)

Porches



Enclosing a Front Porch



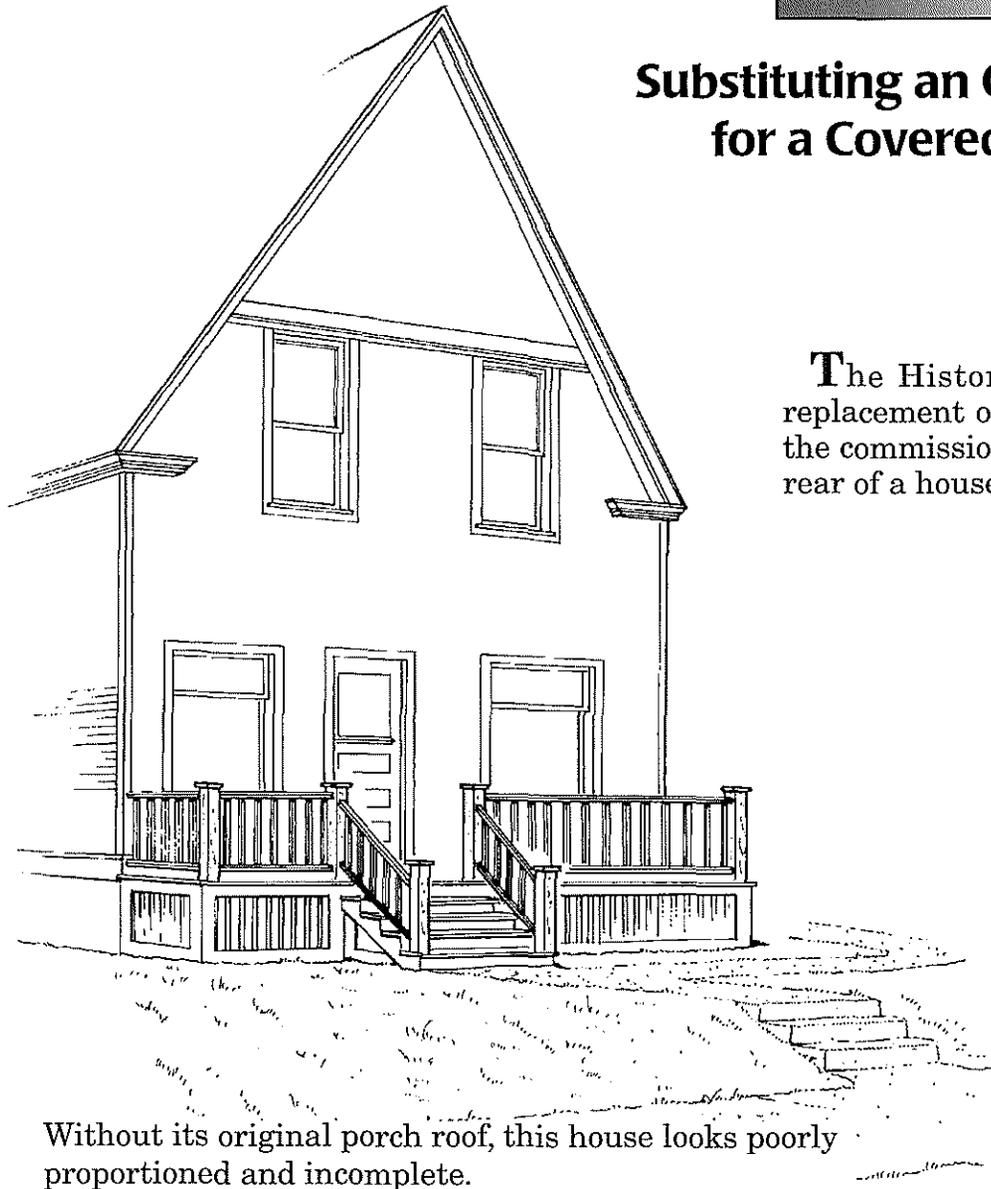
The Historic Preservation Commission will not approve a request to enclose an original, open front porch because such an alteration can result in a dramatic loss of architectural integrity.

Enclosing the front porch drastically altered the character of this older house.

Porches



Substituting an Open Deck for a Covered Porch



The Historic Preservation Commission will not permit the replacement of a covered porch with a roofless deck. In most cases, the commission will approve the construction of an open deck at the rear of a house as long as it is not visible from the street.

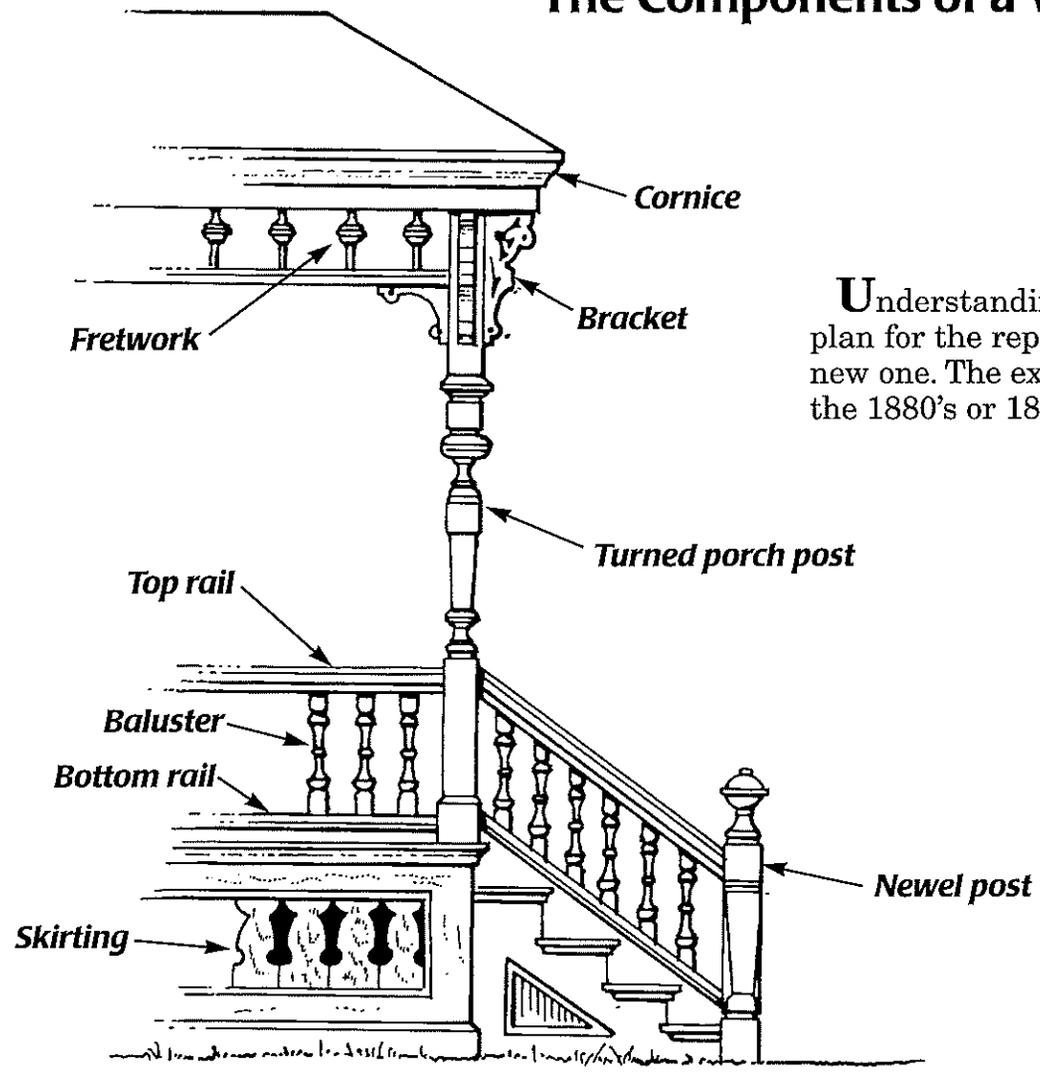
Without its original porch roof, this house looks poorly proportioned and incomplete.

Porches



The Components of a Victorian Porch

Understanding the components of a traditional porch can help you plan for the repair of an existing porch or the construction of an entirely new one. The example depicts the parts of a typical Queen Anne porch of the 1880's or 1890's.

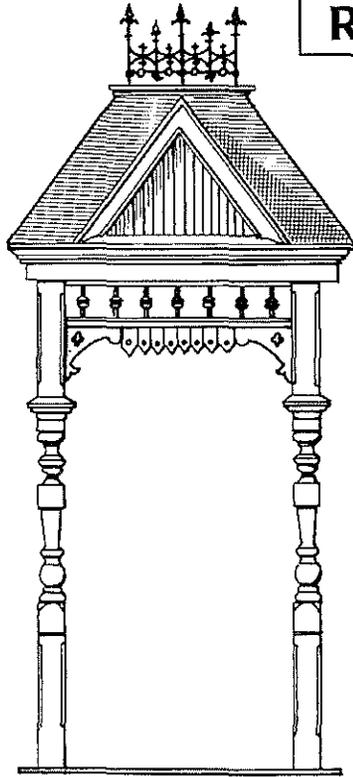


Porches

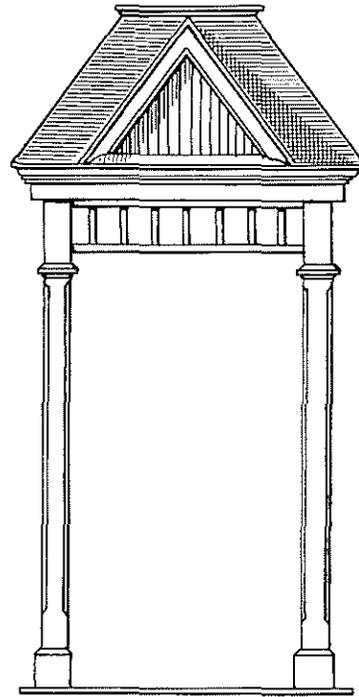
Yes! 

No! 

Repairing an Old Porch that has Missing Components

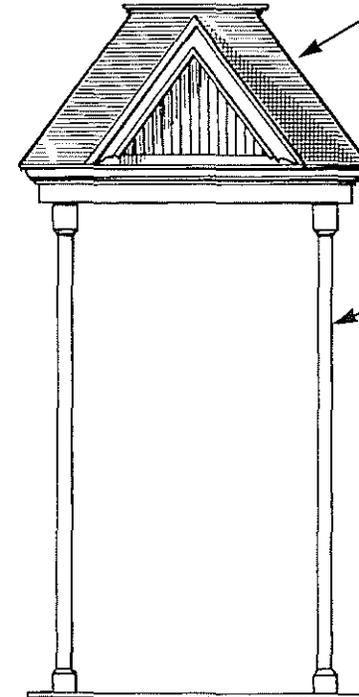


Original porch



Minimum standard for replacing missing original posts and other woodwork

If it is necessary to build a completely new porch, or to replace missing parts such as the posts, fretwork and railings, the new work should replicate the original treatment if known, or, at the very minimum, reflect the proportions, scale and general detail of the original porch or of a similar porch that would be appropriate for the style of the house.



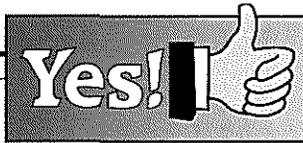
Original porch roof

4" X 4" Replacement porch post

Unacceptable replacement

Do not change the dimensions of original porch posts or delete important architectural elements when rebuilding or repairing an original porch. The replacement porch posts in this illustration are too thin and the original band of fretwork was not replicated resulting in a porch that look spindly and top-heavy.

Porches

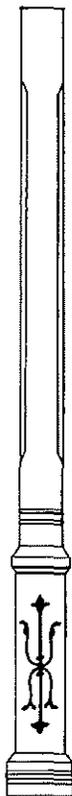


Porch Posts

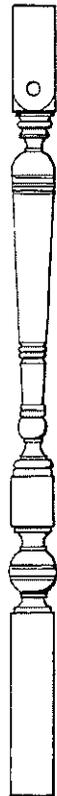
Porch posts should be compatible with the style of the house. These posts are representative of the many styles used before 1935.



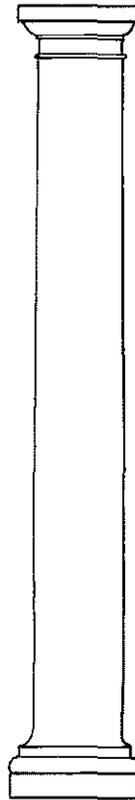
Italianate
1855-1875



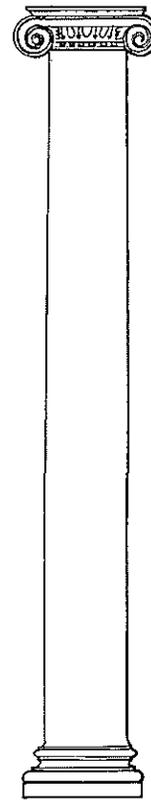
Victorian
Gothic
1875-1885



Queen
Anne
1880-1905



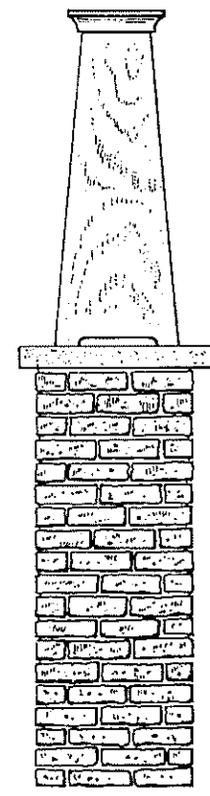
Doric



Ionic



Corinthian



Craftsman
1910-1935

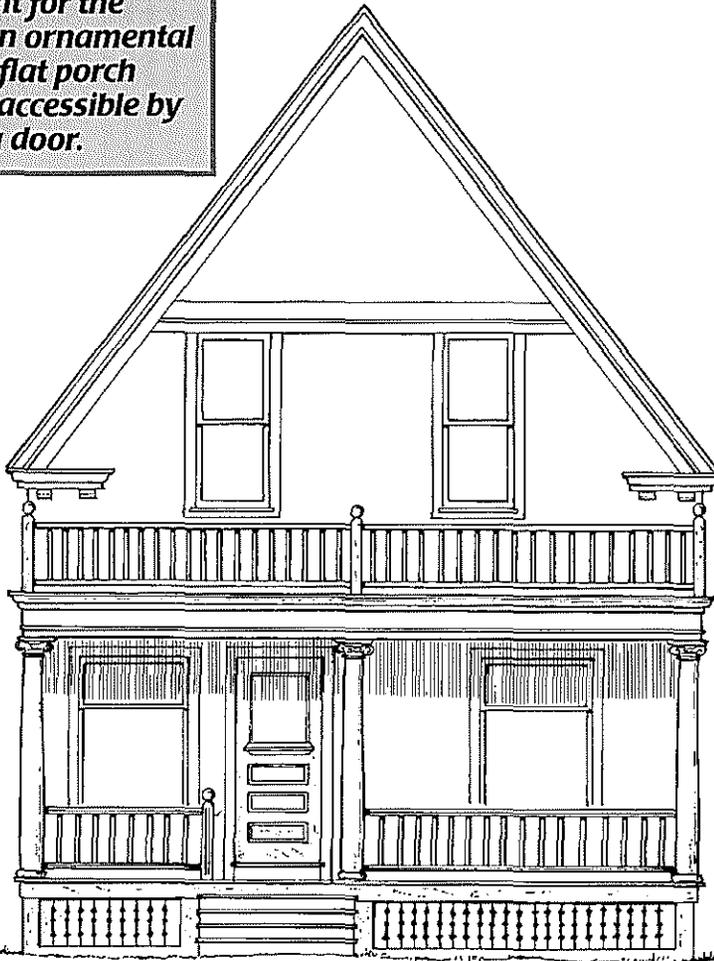
Classic porch columns were used extensively on late Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival style houses built between 1895 and 1935.

Porches



Building Code Requirement for Porch Railings

There is no code requirement for the height of an ornamental railing if a flat porch roof is not accessible by means of a door.



New porch railings must be a minimum of 36" high.

For a private residence, the building code requires a minimum height of 36 inches for new porch railings. A staircase handrail must not be less than 30 inches nor more than 34 inches in height when measured from the front edge of the step. Building a railing more than 36" tall is generally not recommended for an older porch because it will look out of proportion with the house. Keep in mind that it is not necessary to change an existing railing that does not meet the current height code unless the entire railing or the entire porch is replaced.

A railing around the perimeter of a porch roof is not required by the building code unless the rooftop is accessible by means of a door. Historically, however, a flat porch roof was often fitted with a low wooden railing for decorative purposes.

Other code requirements to keep in mind:

- Variations in height between porch steps should not exceed 3/16 of an inch
- Balusters can not be spaced more than 6" apart according to the code, but to look historically appropriate 1-1/2" square balusters should generally be spaced no more than 3-1/2" on center. (See pages 53 and 56 for more information on correct baluster spacing)
- A railing must be constructed so that it will resist a lateral force of 200 pounds exerted against it

Porches



**New Railings Should Not Exceed
36" in Height**



Railing height is pivotal to the proper appearance of an older porch. Historically, porch railings were designed to be fairly low in order to make the house look bigger. Preserve the traditional, historic appearance of an older porch by limiting the height of a replacement railing to 36", which is the minimum height required by the building code. Retain your historic railing at its original height if at all possible.



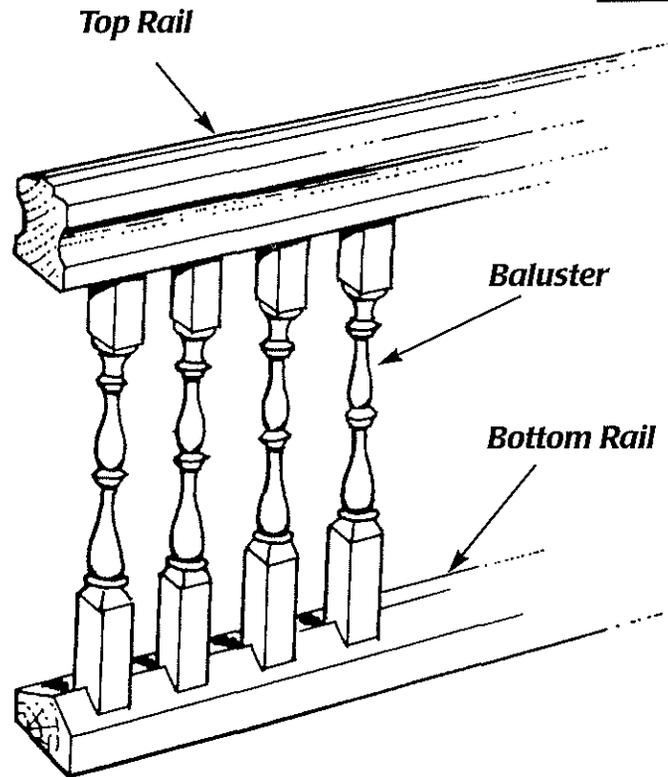
Railings That are Too Tall



A railing that is more than 36" in height can result in a caged-in appearance that detracts from the pleasing, original proportions of a porch. In addition, balusters tend to look too skinny when they exceed 30" in length.

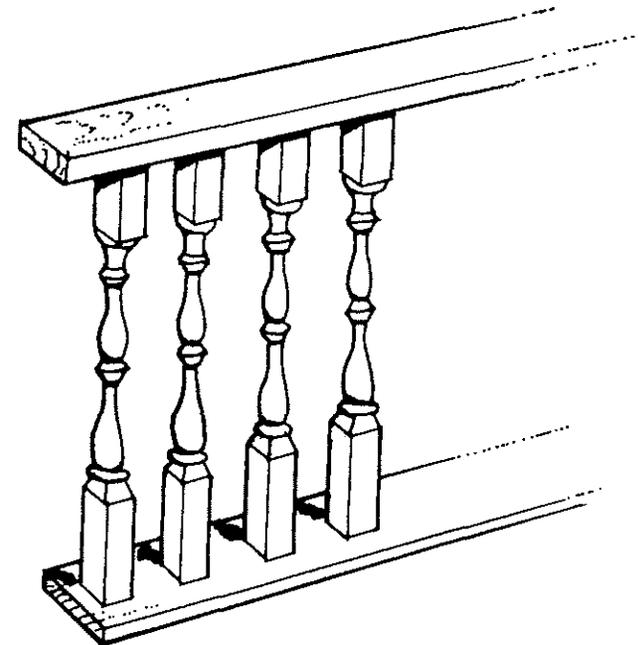
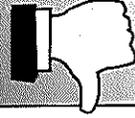
Porches

Yes!



Most older porches had wooden railings with thick molded top and bottom rails that gave the balustrade a solid appearance. This was an important feature of the overall design of the porch. Wooden railings may not be replaced with metal railings.

No!

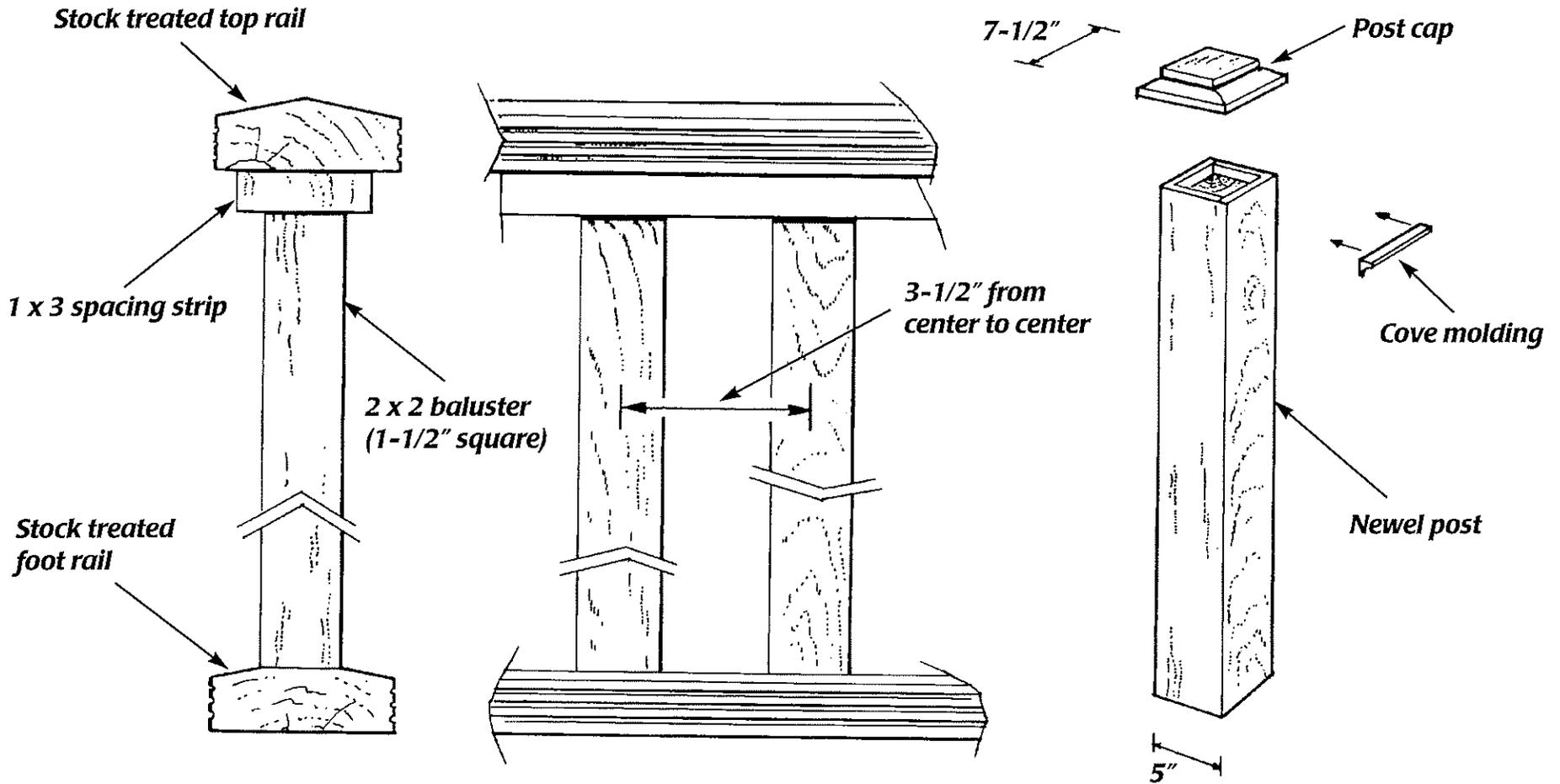


Do not use flat boards or a single 2 x 4 for the top rail. The bottom rail should not be less than 1-1/2 inches thick. Even if you use handsome, properly-spaced, balusters, skimpy top and bottom rails will make your railings look awkward.

Porches



Basic Railing and Newel Post Design



The number of historic handrail and newel post designs is literally endless. The above designs are appropriate for many houses built before 1940 and would be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission for most homes.

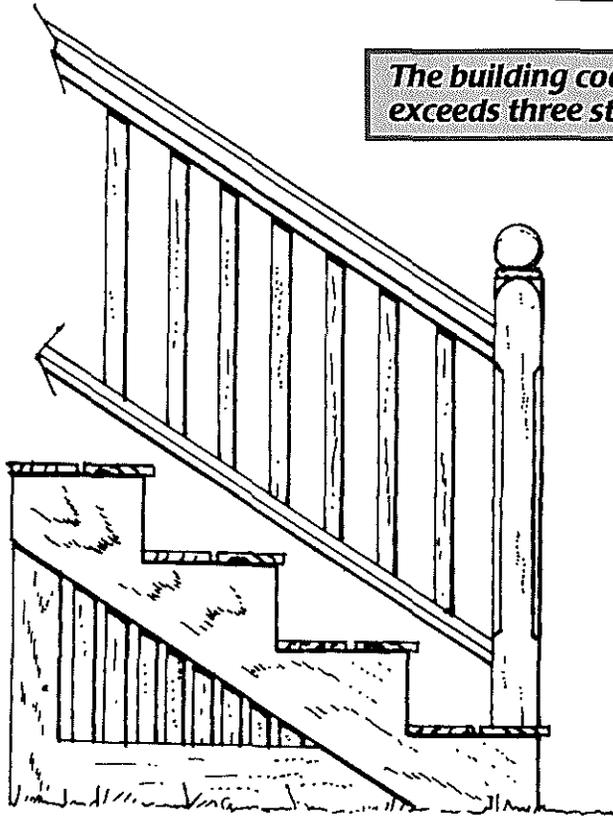
Porches

Yes!



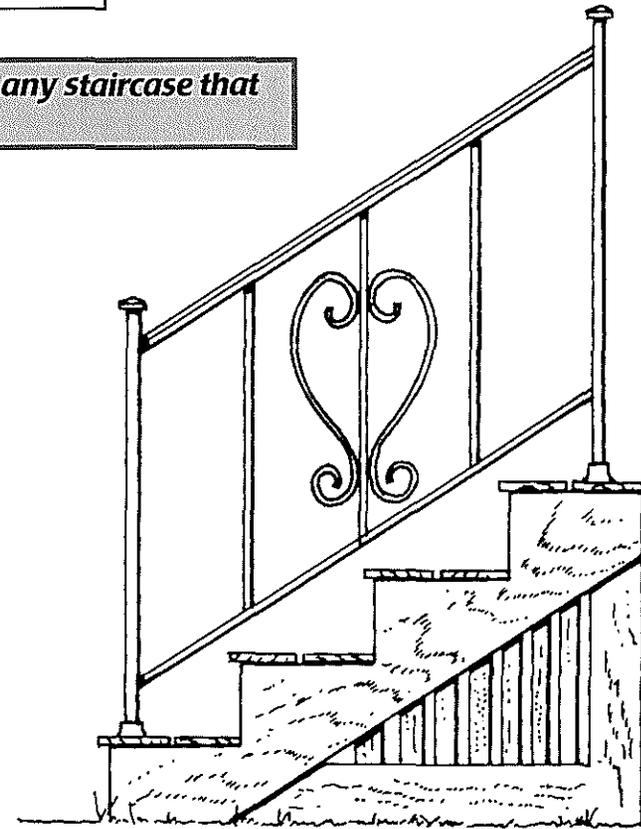
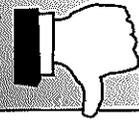
Handrail Design Tips For Porch Staircases

The building code requires a handrail on any staircase that exceeds three steps in height.



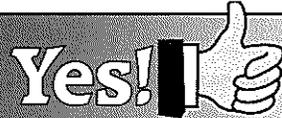
The design of a staircase handrail should match the railing around the porch deck.

No!



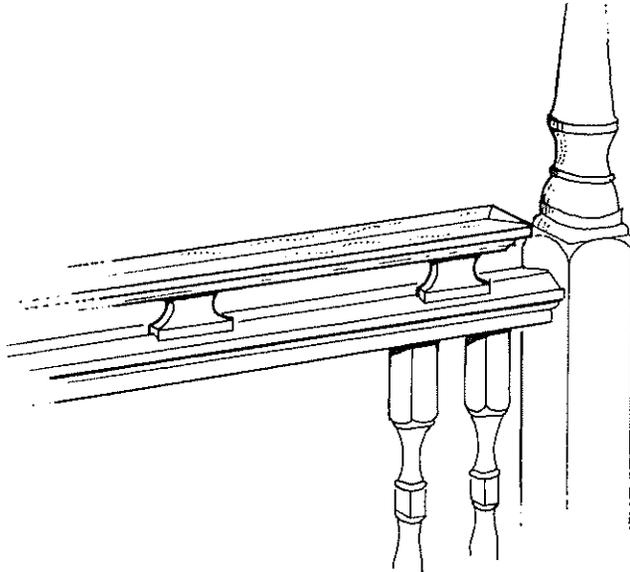
A modern metal railing on a wooden porch is generally not compatible with the architecture of an older house and probably would not be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

Porches

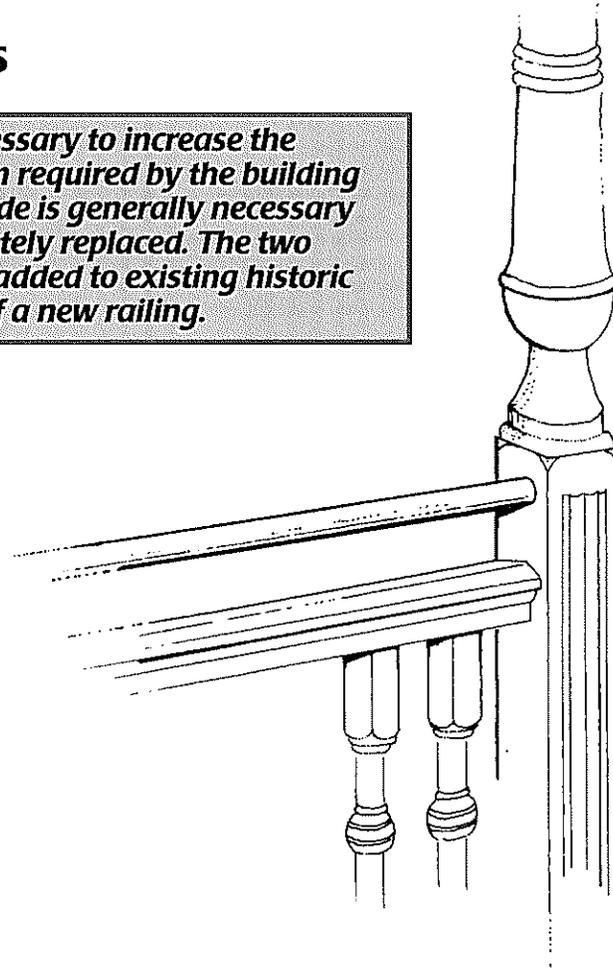


Booster Rails

Consider installing a booster rail when it is necessary to increase the height of an original railing to the 36" minimum required by the building code. Keep in mind that compliance with this code is generally necessary only if an old, non-conforming railing is completely replaced. The two designs for booster rails presented here can be added to existing historic porch railings or incorporated into the design of a new railing.



Where attaching a booster rail between porch posts is not feasible, consider attaching the booster rail directly to the top of the existing hand rail. In some cases it may be possible to add the booster rail in such a way that it appears to be part of the original railing design rather than as an added feature.

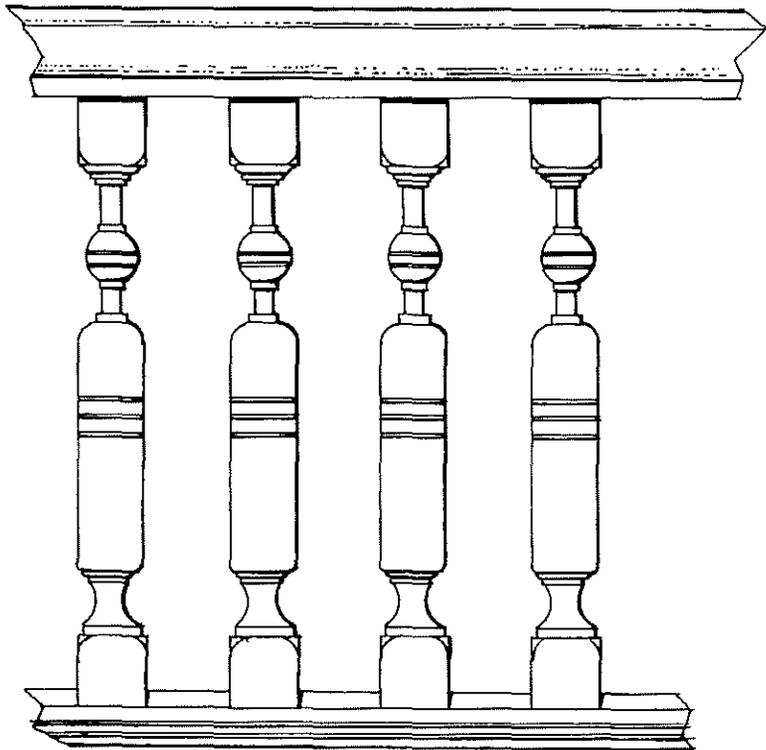


It may be possible to attach a steel pipe or wooden dowel between the porch posts above the old railing to bring it up to 36 inches. Such an extension could also be added to a top rail by using brackets mounted to the top rail.

Porches

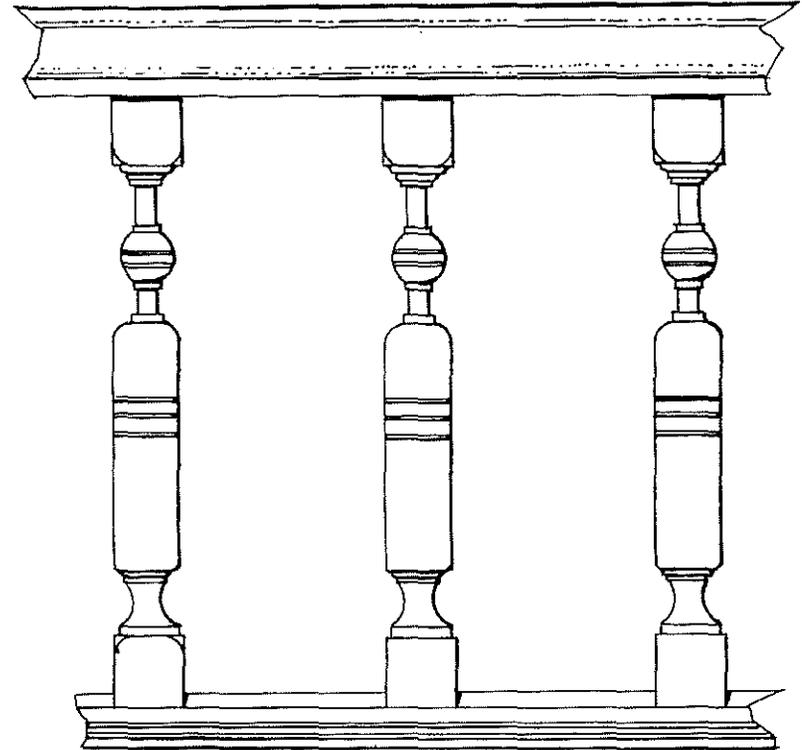
Yes! 

Baluster Spacing



Balusters that are two inches or less in diameter should typically be spaced a maximum of 3-1/2 inches apart.

No! 



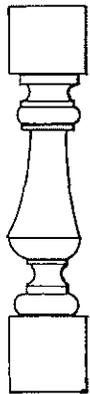
Balusters that are spaced too far apart will make the railing look flimsy and cheap.

Porches

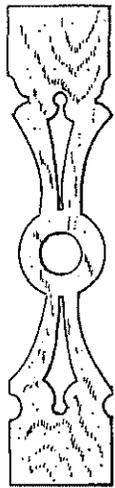


Balusters

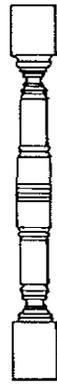
In designing a wooden handrail, it is important to select balusters compatible with the style and age of the house. These designs for balusters are representative of porch construction in Milwaukee before 1940.



Italianate
1855-1875



Italianate/
Victorian
Gothic
sawn baluster
board
1855-1885



Queen
Anne
1880-1895



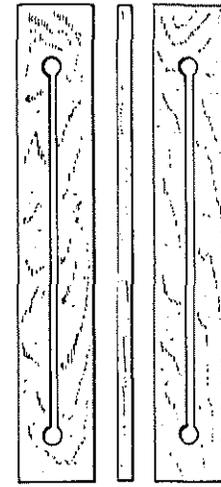
Victorian
Gothic
1875-1885



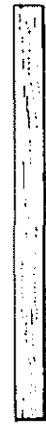
Queen Anne/
Colonial Revival
1885-1920



Colonial
Revival
1895-1920



Craftsman
baluster boarding
1905-1935



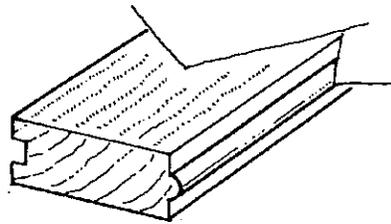
Most Styles
2 x 2 baluster
1855-1940

Porches



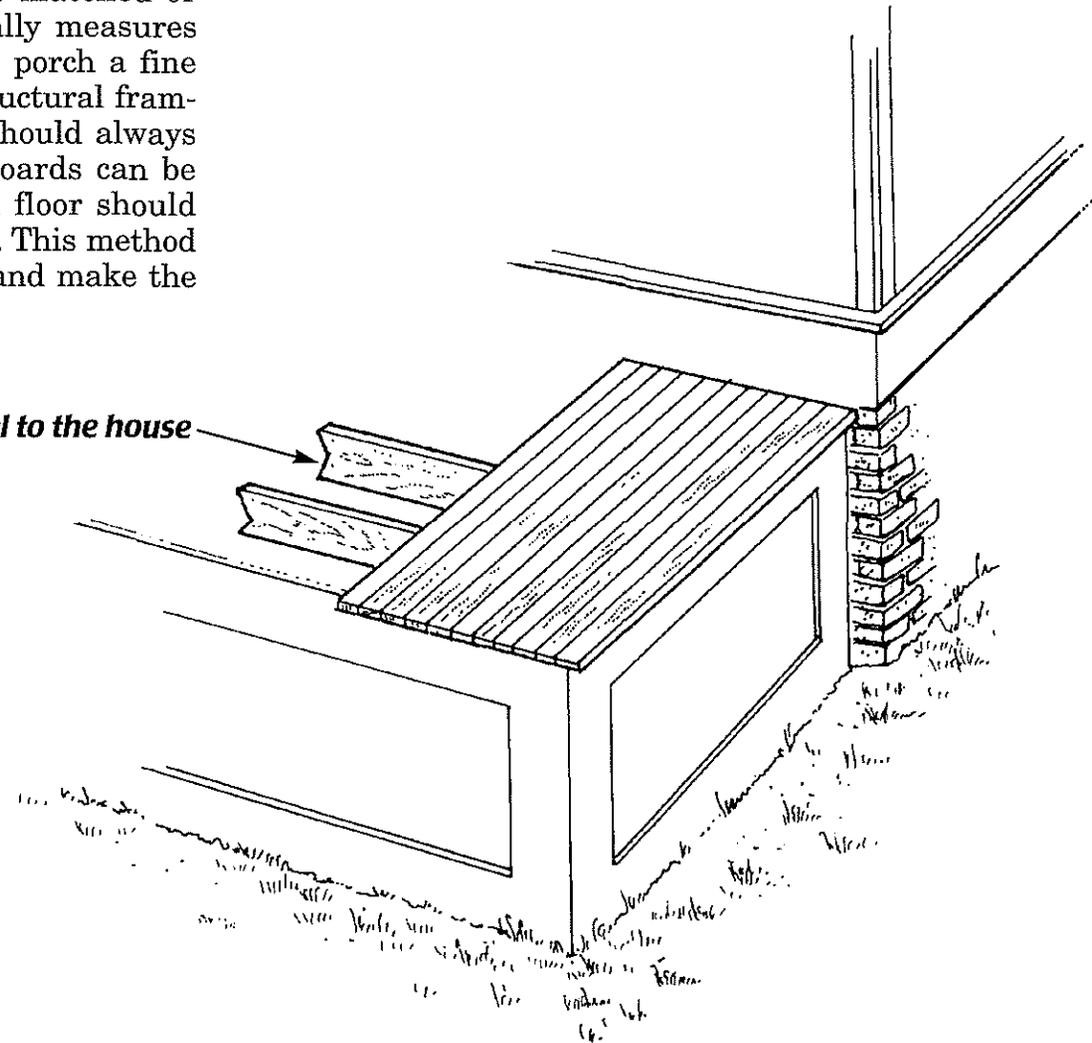
Traditional Porch Floors

Porch floors should be constructed of center matched or tongue-and-groove wooden flooring, which typically measures 2-1/4" wide by 3/4" thick. This flooring gives the porch a fine finished appearance. The joists, which are the structural framing members to which the flooring is attached, should always be run parallel to the house so that the floor boards can be installed perpendicular to the house. The porch floor should also be very slightly pitched away from the house. This method of construction for a porch floor will shed water and make the porch last longer.



Center match or tongue-and-groove flooring

Joists parallel to the house

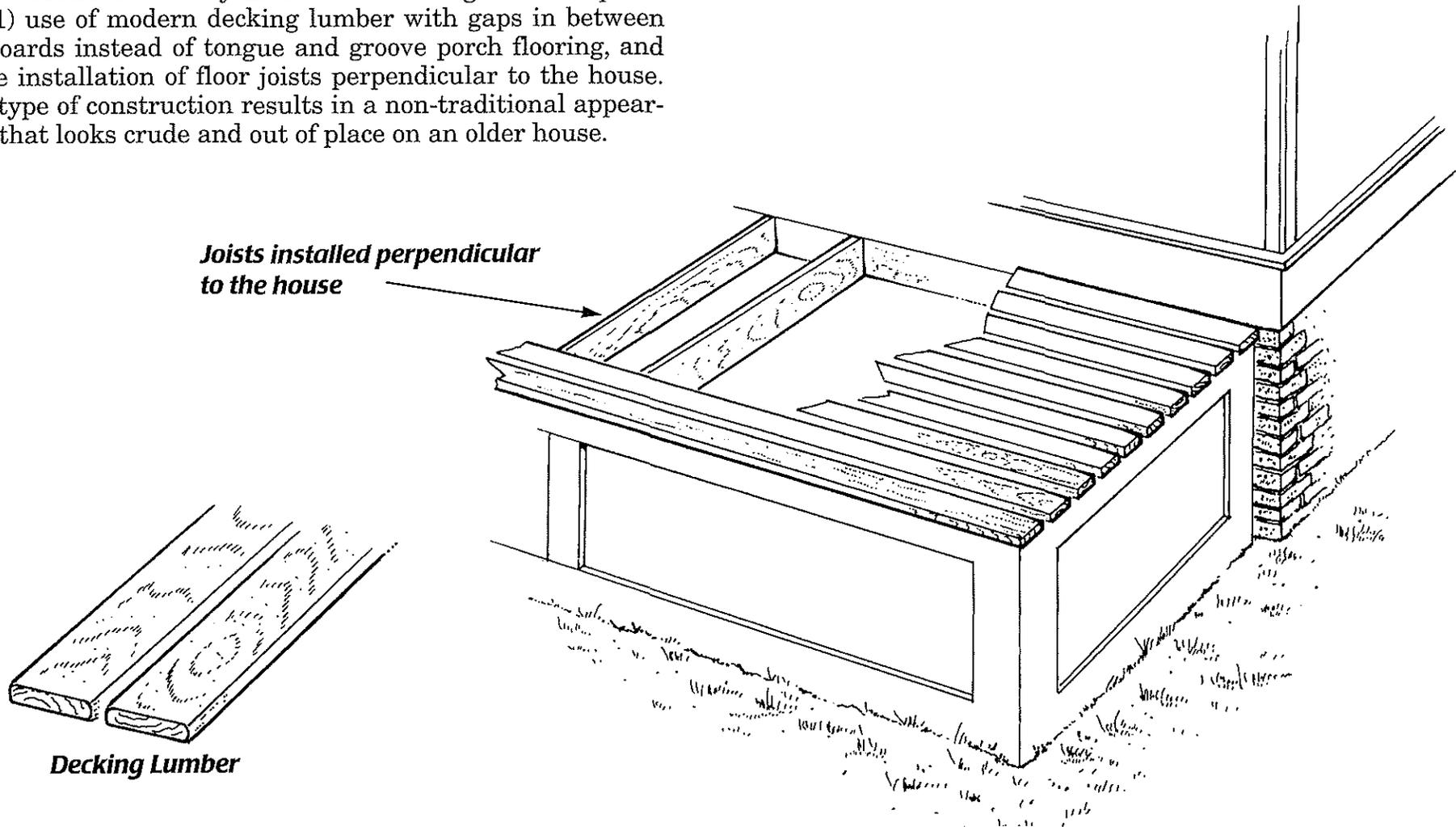


Porches



Deck Lumber Floors: Joists Not Parallel to the House

Two errors commonly made in rebuilding an older porch are: 1) use of modern decking lumber with gaps in between the boards instead of tongue and groove porch flooring, and 2) the installation of floor joists perpendicular to the house. This type of construction results in a non-traditional appearance that looks crude and out of place on an older house.



Joists installed perpendicular to the house

Decking Lumber

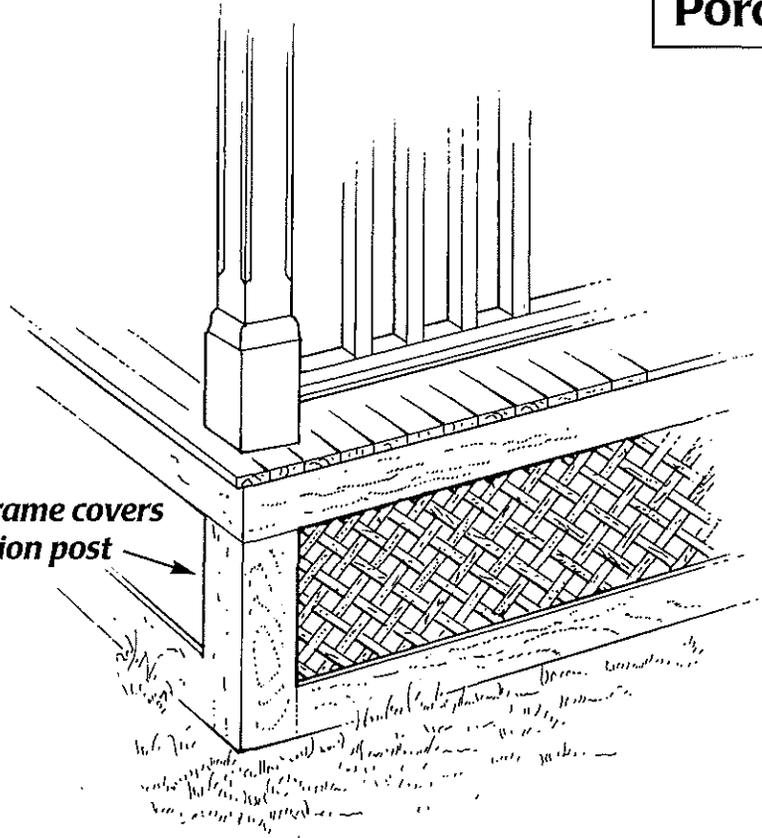
Porches

Yes!



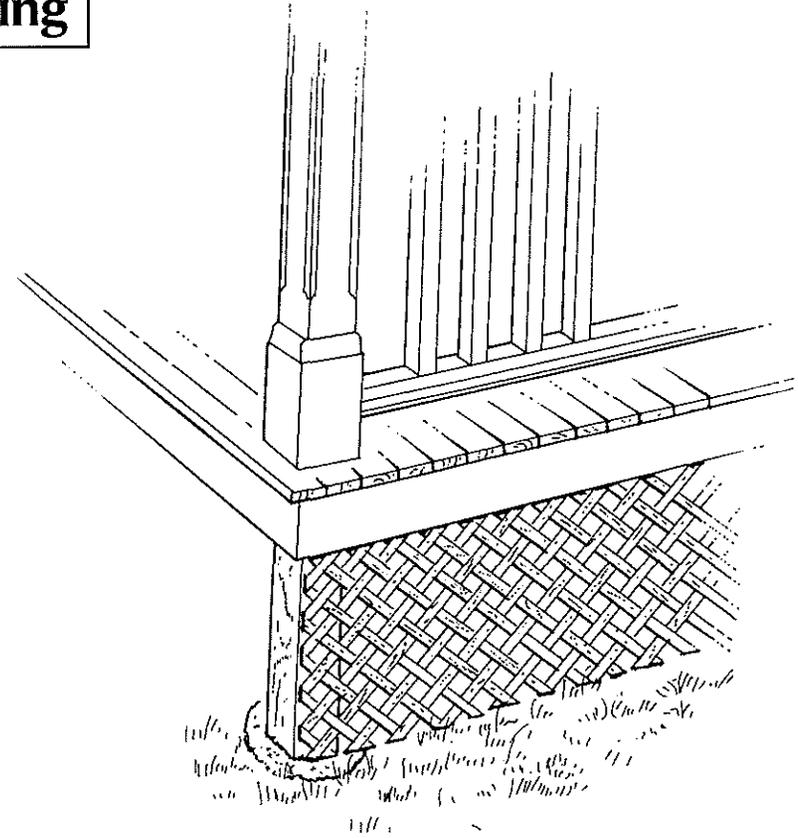
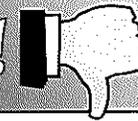
Porch Skirting

Board frame covers foundation post



Skirting, such as this lattice panel, enclosed the area beneath the porch floor. It should always be installed with a continuous board frame around it that is wide enough to cover the rough framing lumber that supports the porch deck.

No!

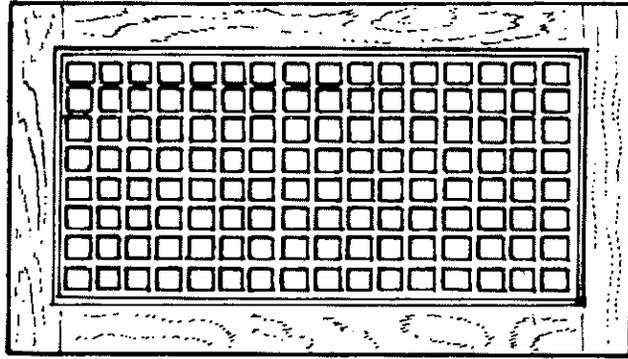


Do not install a lattice skirting without a frame around it. The rough framing lumber that supports the porch will show through and the raw edges of the lattice look unfinished.

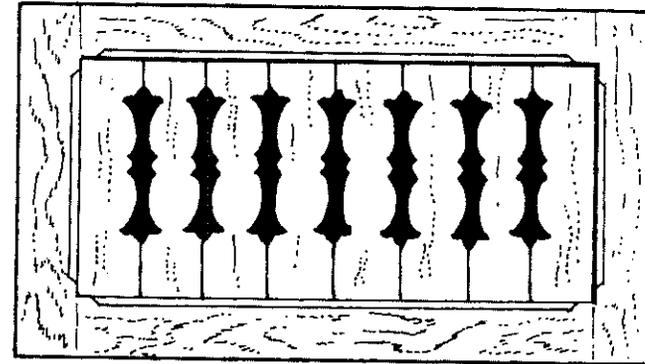
Porches



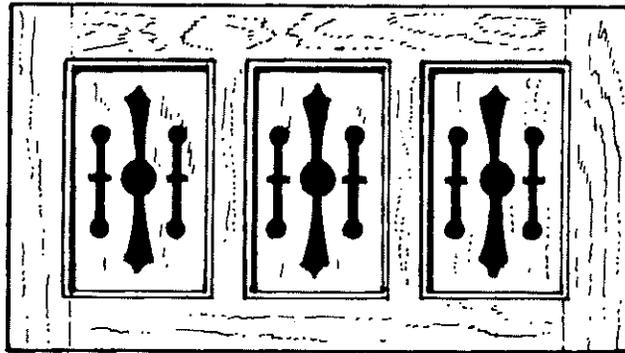
Porch Skirting Designs



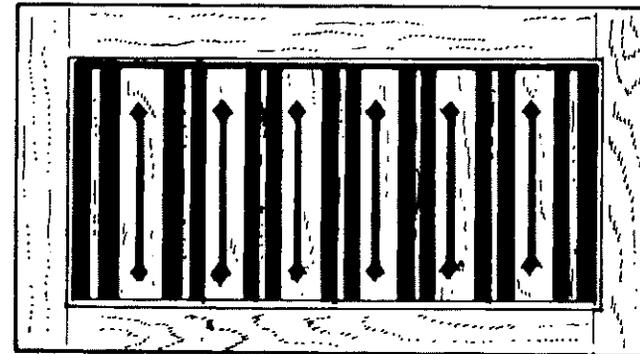
Rectangular Lattice, All Styles, 1855-1935



Sawn Skirting Boards, All Styles, 1865-1900



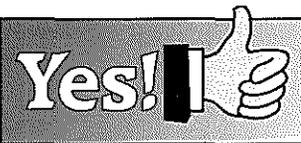
Cut-Out Panels, All Styles, 1875-1900



Craftsman, 1905-1935

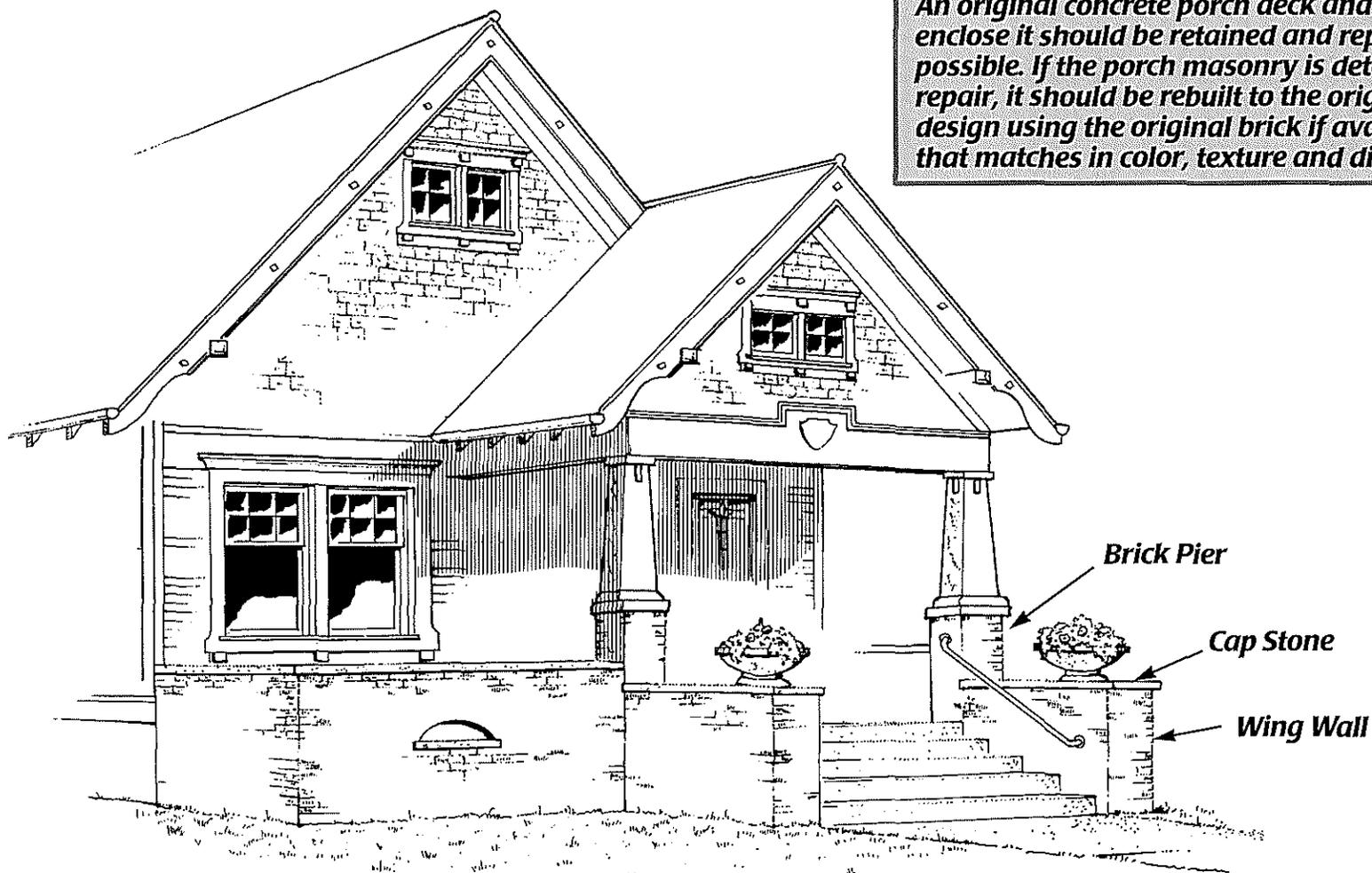
Because skirting is a major decorative feature of a front porch, it is important to select a skirting design that will complement the architecture of the house.

Porches



Retain and Repair Original Masonry Porches

An original concrete porch deck and the brick walls that enclose it should be retained and repaired whenever possible. If the porch masonry is deteriorated beyond repair, it should be rebuilt to the original dimensions and design using the original brick if available or with brick that matches in color, texture and dimension.



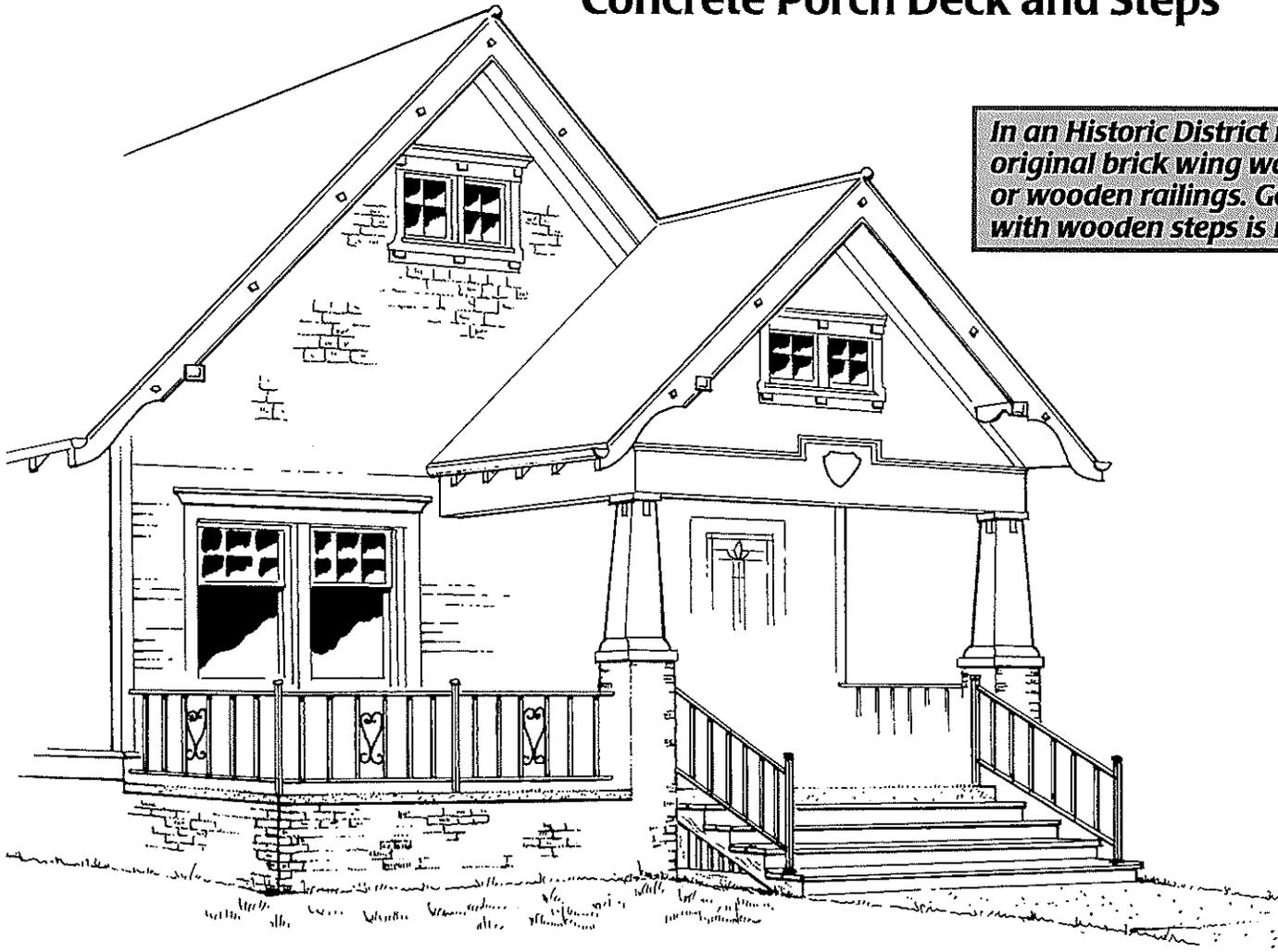
A bungalow that retains its original concrete porch deck, stairs and brick wing walls.

Porches

No! 

Do Not Remove the Brick Walls That Enclose a Concrete Porch Deck and Steps

In an Historic District it is not permitted to replace the original brick wing walls attached to the porch with metal or wooden railings. Generally, replacing concrete stairs with wooden steps is not considered appropriate.



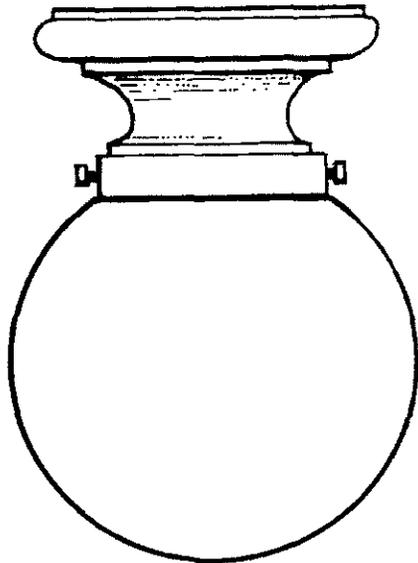
Replacing the original, brick walls on a porch with metal railings detracts from the original character of the house.

Porches

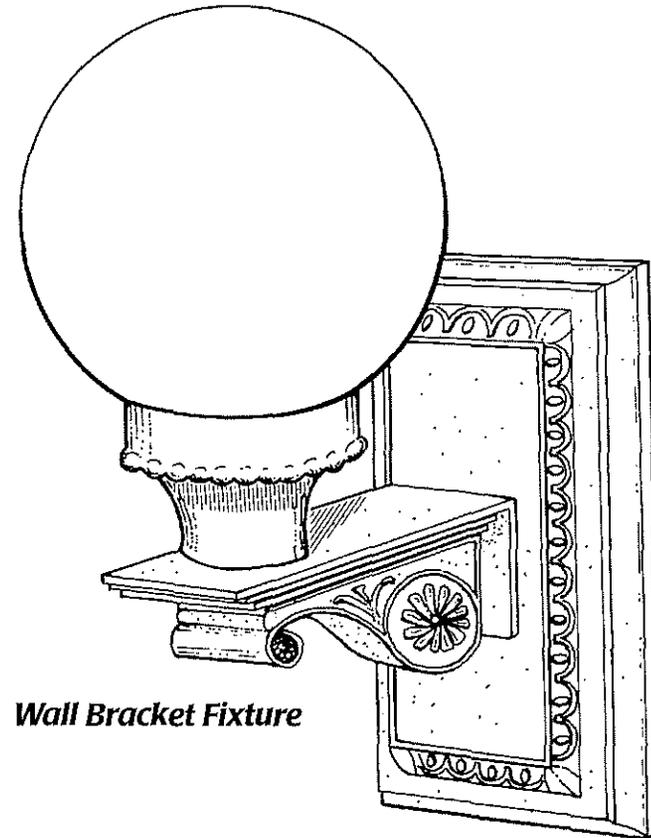


Porch Lighting

Most houses built before 1900 were not originally fitted with porch lights. When installing a light today, it is important to select a design that is in keeping with the design of the house.



Ceiling-Mounted Globe Fixture



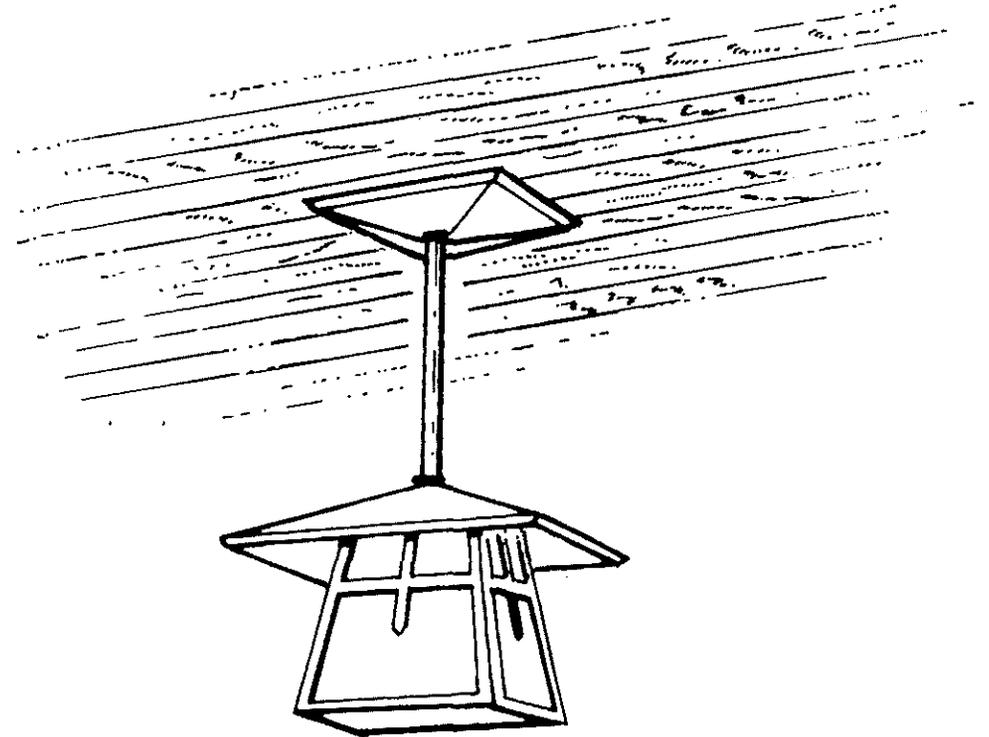
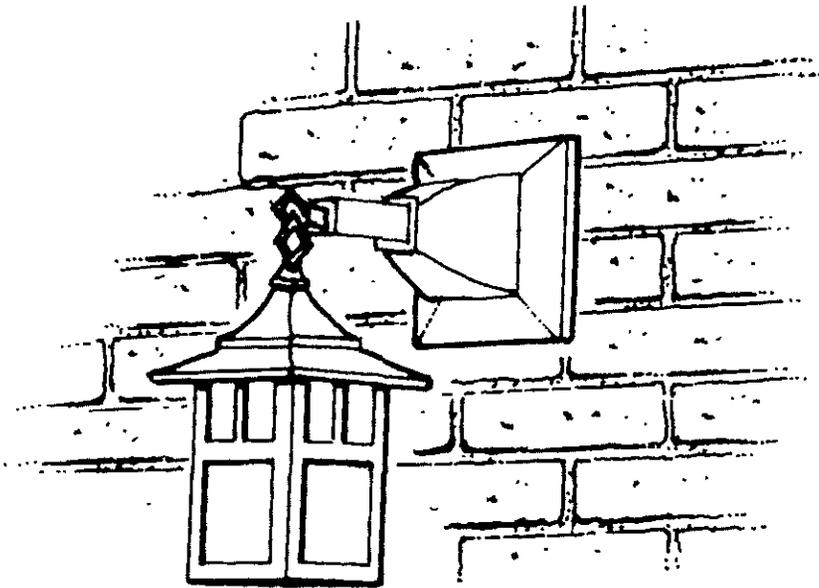
Wall Bracket Fixture

The basic porch wall bracket shown here is suitable for use on most styles of houses built between 1855 and 1935. The porch ceiling-mounted globe illustrated here is also a good choice for most houses built before 1940.

Porches



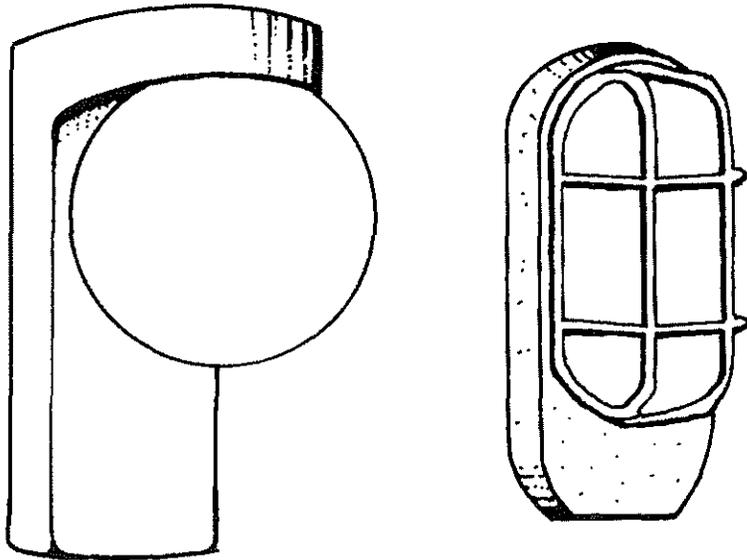
Twentieth Century Porch Lighting



Porch lighting became more common during the early twentieth century. Today there are many fine reproduction fixtures available such as these Craftsman style fixtures suitable for use on bungalows and Craftsman style houses built between 1905 and 1940.

Porches

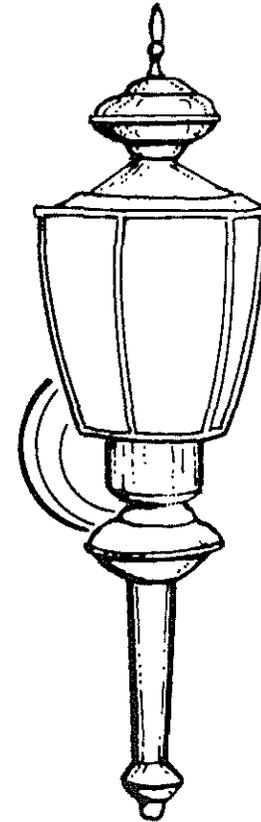
No! 



Most modern style light fixtures are not compatible with the architecture of older houses.

Porch Lighting

Maybe? 



Colonial style fixtures, such as this one, may be suitable for use on some Colonial Revival style houses built during the 1920s and 1930s. These fixtures, however, should not be used on other types of early 20th century or Victorian-era houses.

Garages and Additions

- *Should be compatible with the style, scale and exterior materials of a house.*
- *Should be located so that they will have as little effect as possible on the appearance of the property when seen from the street.*

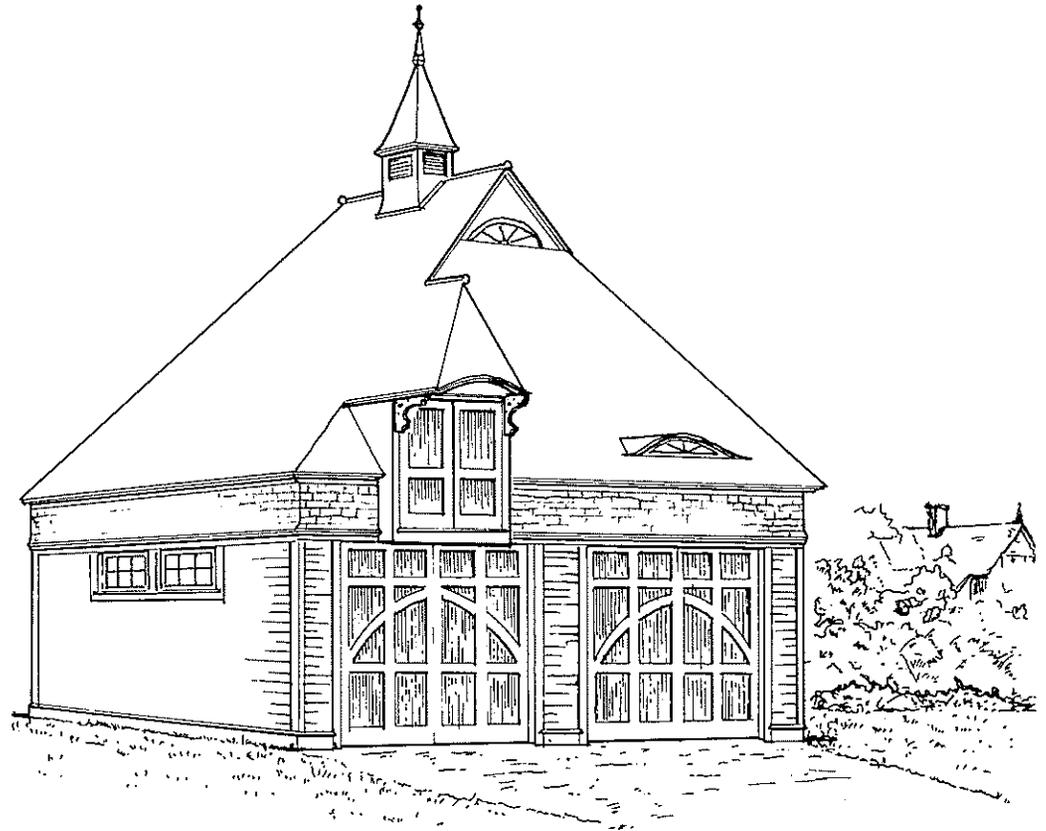
A new addition or garage should be constructed so that it is compatible with the proportions, design and materials of the house.

An addition should be as inconspicuous as possible so that the public view of the original structure will remain unchanged. A new addition should generally be designed to match the house in terms of foundation material, wall material, roof material, massing, color, and window type, proportion and window muntin design.

An addition that is visibly different from the character of an older building or has a significant impact on neighboring properties will not be approved.

A new garage should be built at a rear corner of the property, preferably directly behind the house to reduce its visibility. If the house was built before 1905 it would be appropriate to build a new garage that is designed to look like a carriage barn with high side-walls and a steeply pitched roof.

For a house built after 1905 a compatible garage would generally reflect the overall style, detailing and color of the house. In historic districts the building code allows new garages to be built up to 25 feet high in order to accommodate the dimensions of a traditional carriage barn.



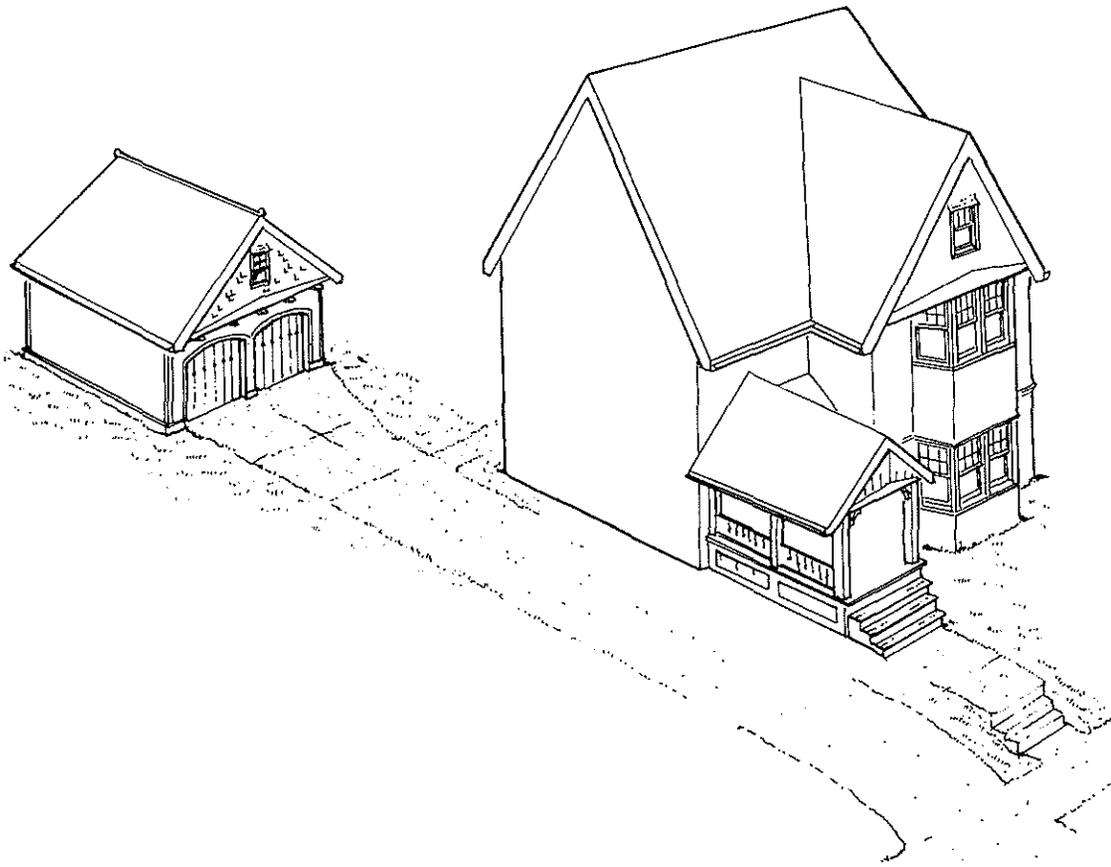
A 2-car garage designed in the style of a carriage barn.

Garages and Additions



Garages should be:

- **Compatible with the style of the house**
- **Located at the rear of a property**



A ca. 1910 Milwaukee house with a new, matching detached garage

A new garage should be built at the rear corner of the lot. If it is visible to the public, the style must be compatible with the architecture of the house. The architecture of a new garage in a historic district is more important when it can be seen from the street rather than when it is tucked away on the lot out of the public view.

Designing a new garage to look like a carriage barn is encouraged for most historic houses built before 1905. The basic massing of a carriage barn is characterized by a steeply pitched roof resting on sidewalls that measure 9-10 feet high. Although the city building code limits the overall height of a new garage to no more than 17 feet, in a city historic district it is permitted to construct a garage as tall as 25 feet in order to make it possible to replicate the proportions of a traditional carriage barn.

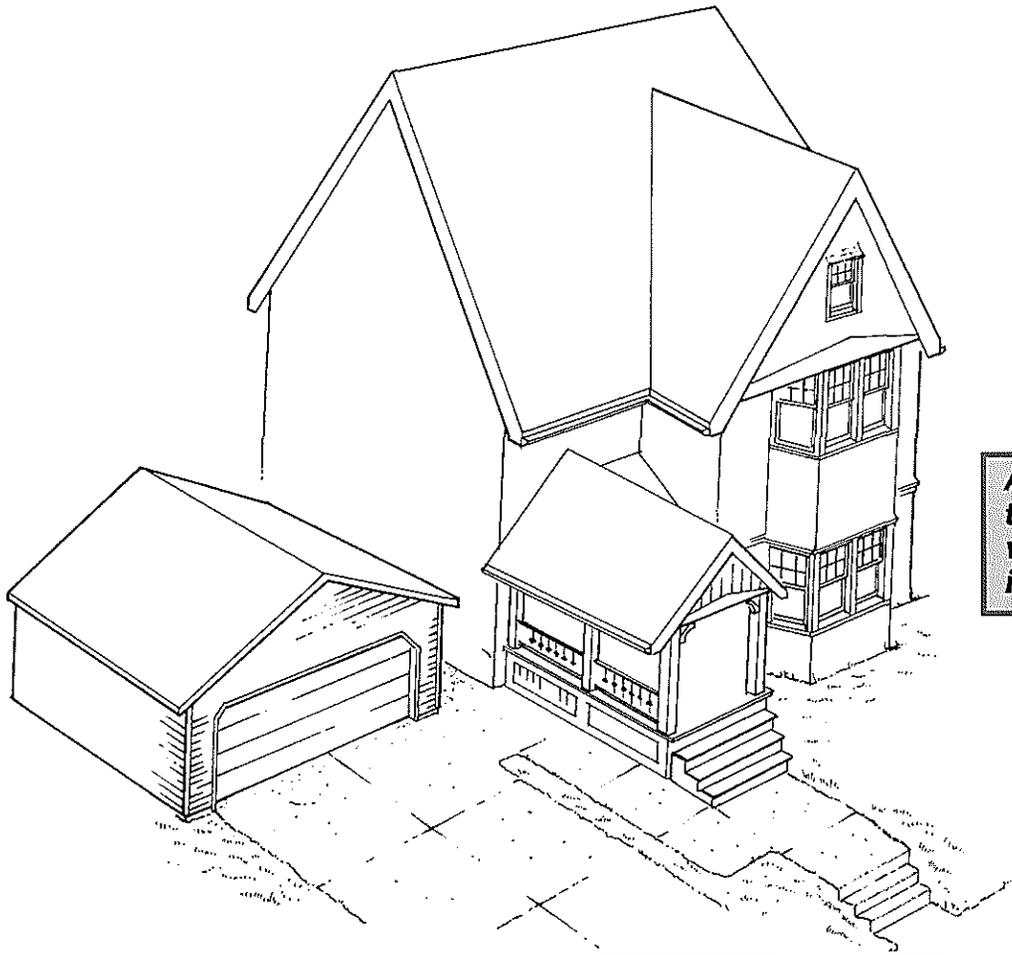
For a house built after 1905, a period style garage can be built with 8 foot tall sidewalls but the design should reflect the architecture of the house.

Garages and Additions



Do not build garages that are:

- In line with the front of a house
- Incompatible with the style of the house



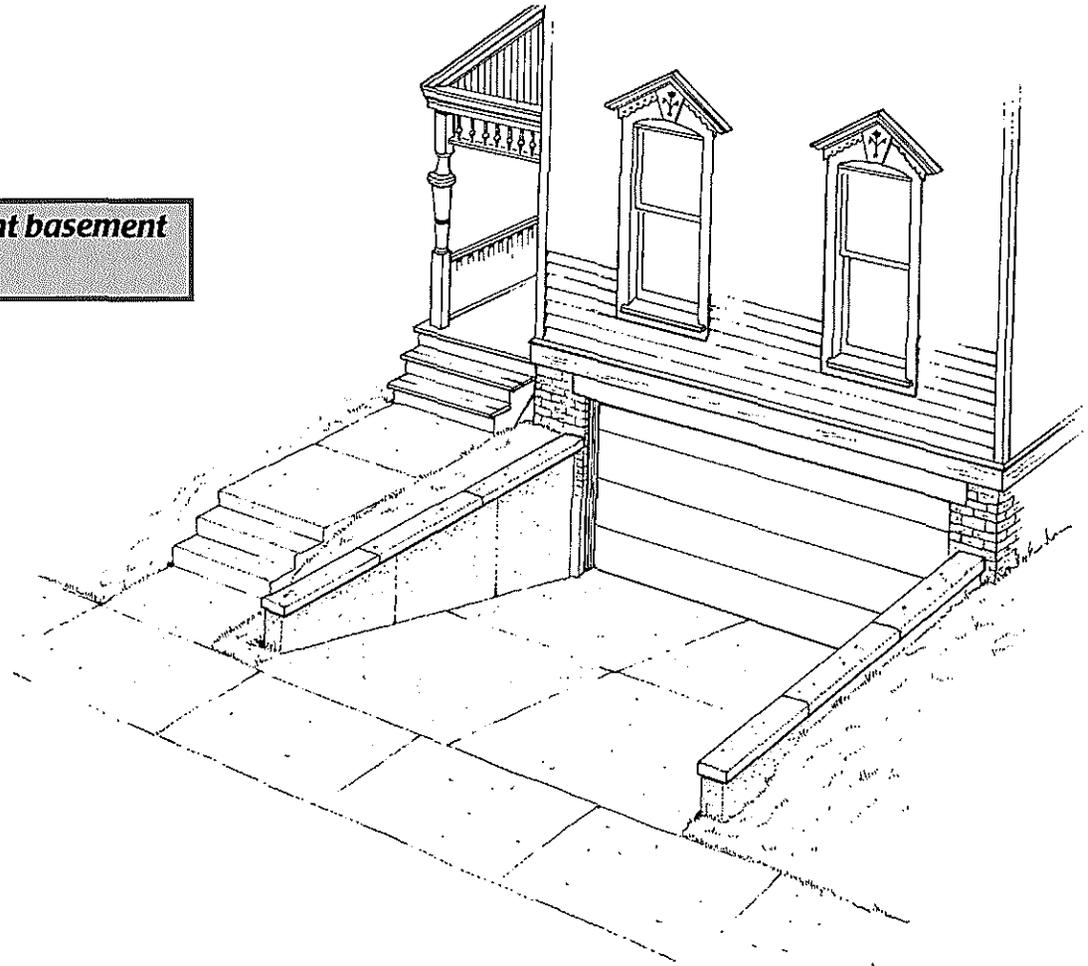
A garage should never be built in front of, or in line with the front elevation of a house, nor should a garage that is visible from the street be designed in a manner that is incompatible with the architecture of the house.

Garages and Additions



Garages dug into the basement of a house

It is not allowed to build a garage into the front basement wall of an historically designated house.



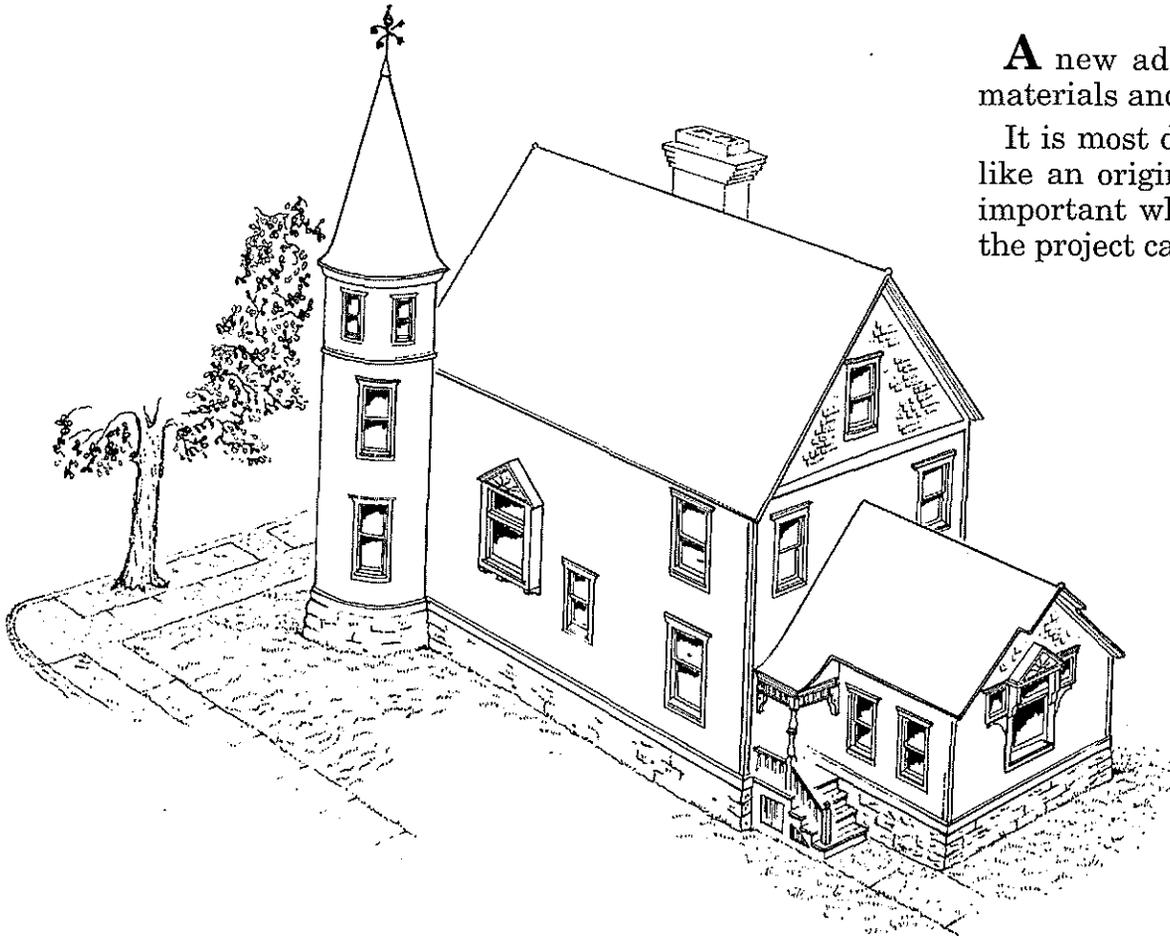
Garages and Additions



Additions that are compatible with the design of the house

A new addition should be compatible with the style, materials and massing of a historically designated house.

It is most desirable to design an addition so that it looks like an original part of the house. Aesthetics is especially important when construction occurs on a corner lot where the project can be seen easily from the street.



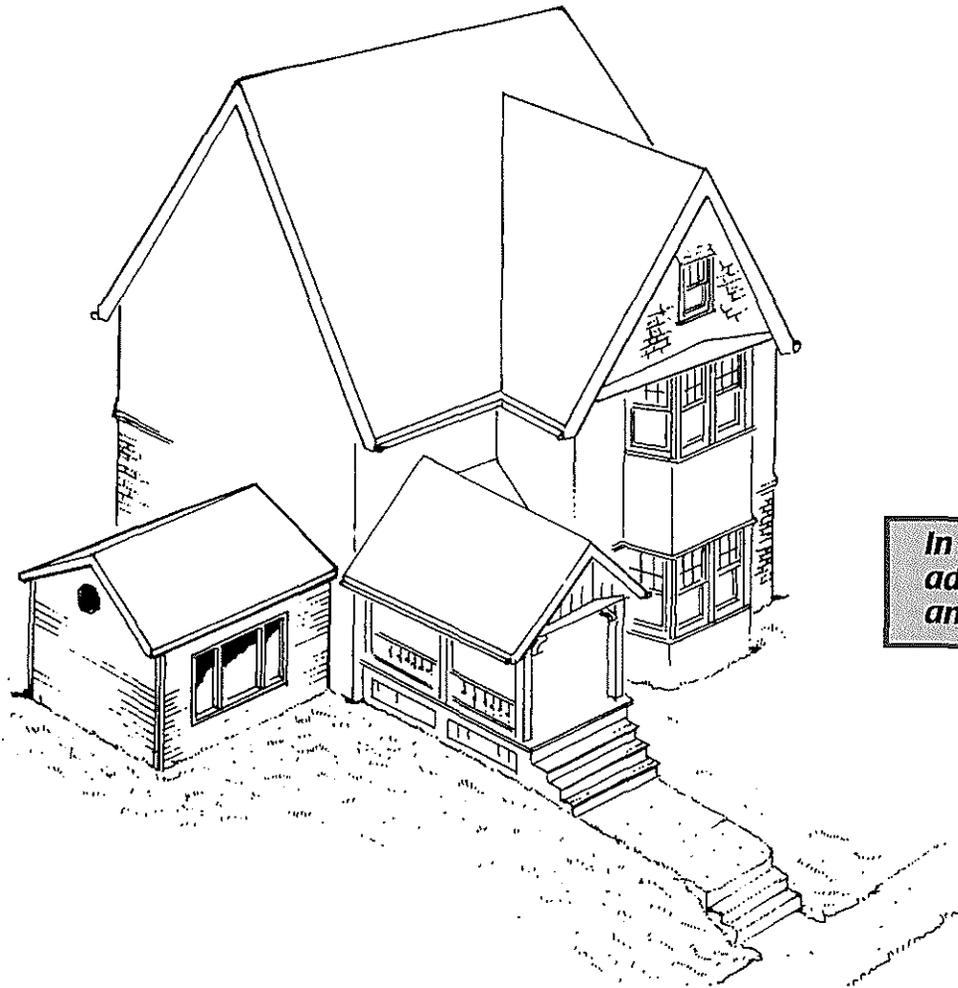
New rear addition

Garages and Additions



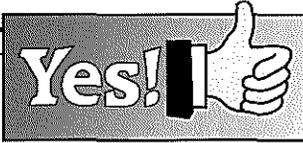
Do not build additions that are:

- **Incompatible with the style of the house**
- **Located near the front of the house**



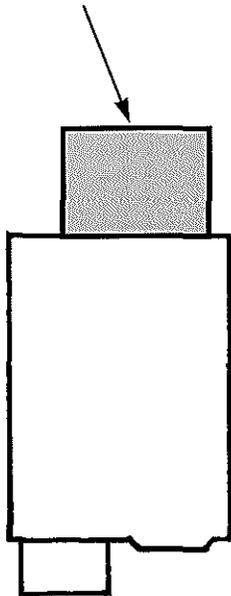
In historic districts it is generally not permitted to build an addition that is incompatible with the design of the house and/or located near the front of the house.

Garages and Additions



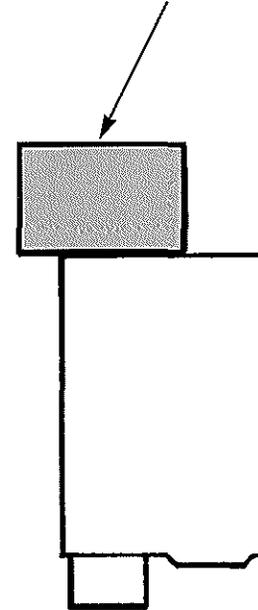
Preferable locations for an addition

In-line rear addition

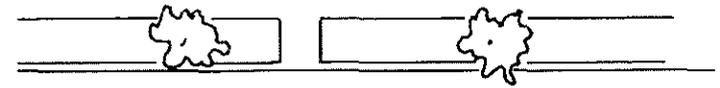
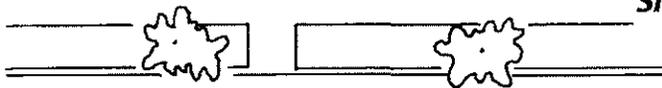


An addition should generally be constructed on the rear elevation of a house, either tucked directly behind the main block of the original house or slightly offset. Keep in mind that building code requirements for sideyard setbacks can often limit the extent to which an addition can protrude from the main block of the house.

Offset rear addition



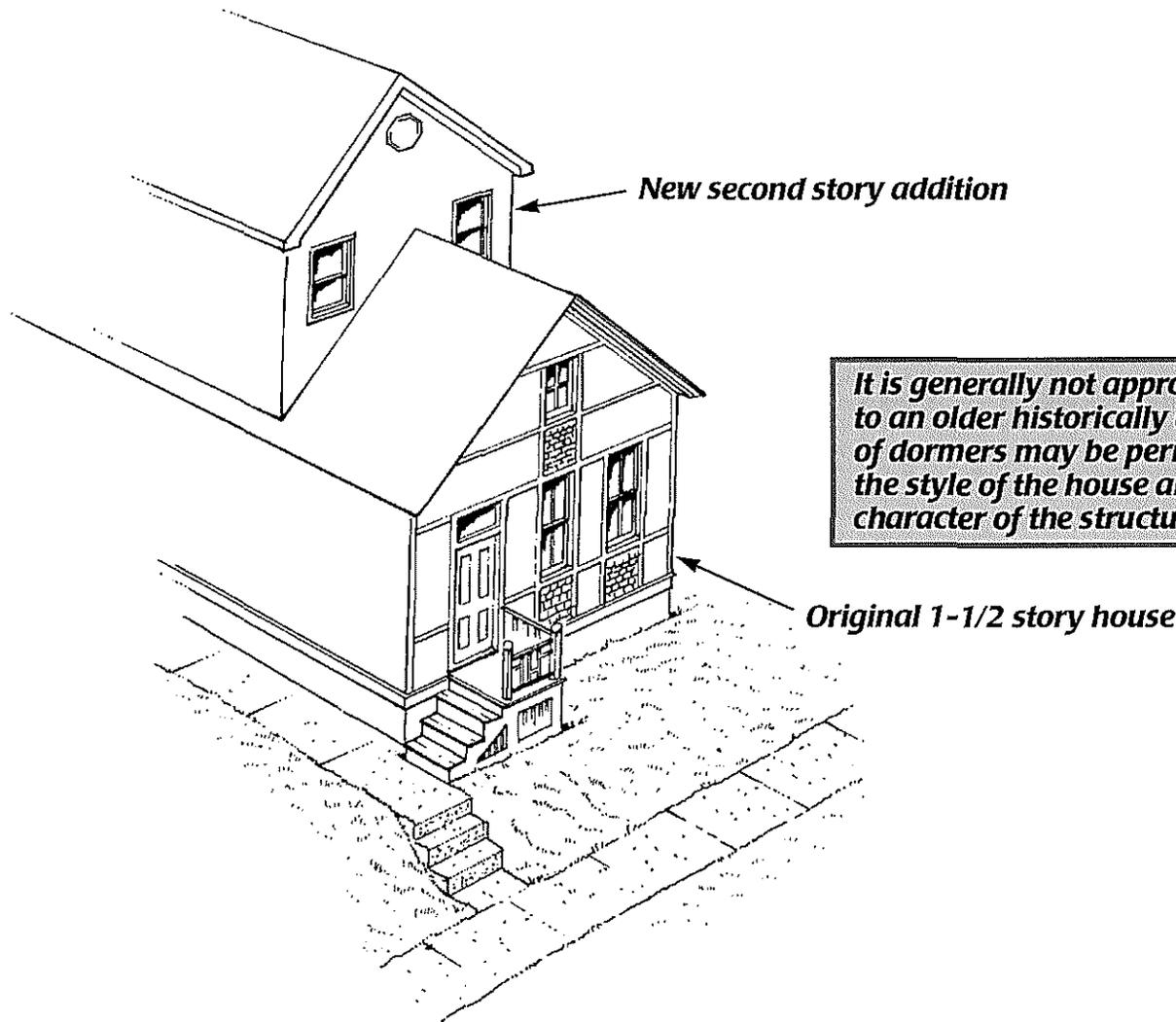
Sidewalk



Garages and Additions



Do not add a new story to an existing structure



It is generally not appropriate to add an additional story to an older historically designated house. The construction of dormers may be permitted if they are compatible with the style of the house and do not significantly alter the character of the structure.

Security

- *Efforts to enhance home security should not result in the alteration or obscuring of original exterior architectural features.*
- *Publicly-visible security features should be as unobtrusive as possible.*
- *Do not make your house or your neighborhood look unsafe by putting bars on the windows and doors.*

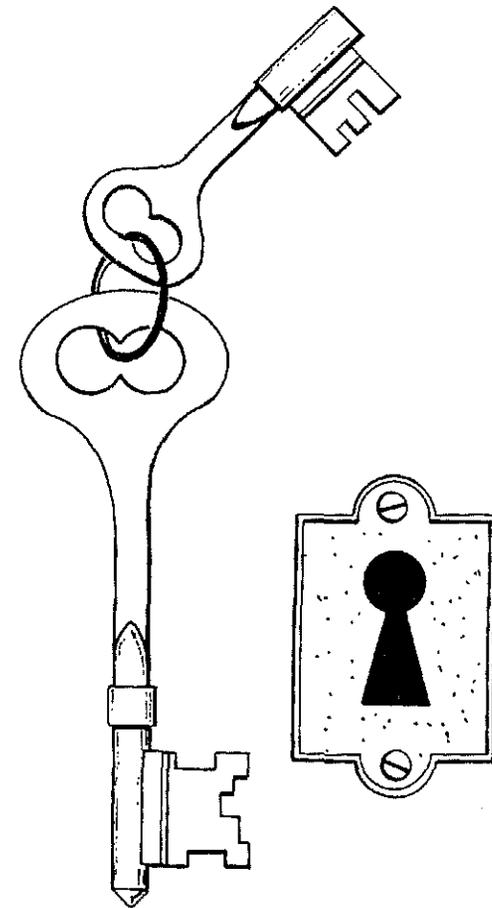
One of the inherent assets of an older house is its solid, well-built character that conveys a sense of security and safety. It may be necessary in today's world to employ greater security measures than in the past, but it is important not to go overboard and run the risk of having the house look and feel like a prison.

The main problem with many exterior architectural security products in use today, such as steel security doors and glass block windows, is that they detract from the historic character of a house and contribute to a feeling that a neighborhood is unsafe. Consider the following low-tech means of enhancing security before you install expensive security products that may drastically alter the appearance of your house:

- Install storm windows with interior-mounted hardware or non-removable screws if they are fastened from the exterior
- Install a good lock on an existing wooden storm door
- Keep bushes and shrubs around the foundation trimmed so that they will not hide an intruder
- Do not leave first story windows open at night
- Keep porch lights on at night

Remember that the following devices are generally not permitted by the Historic Preservation Commission:

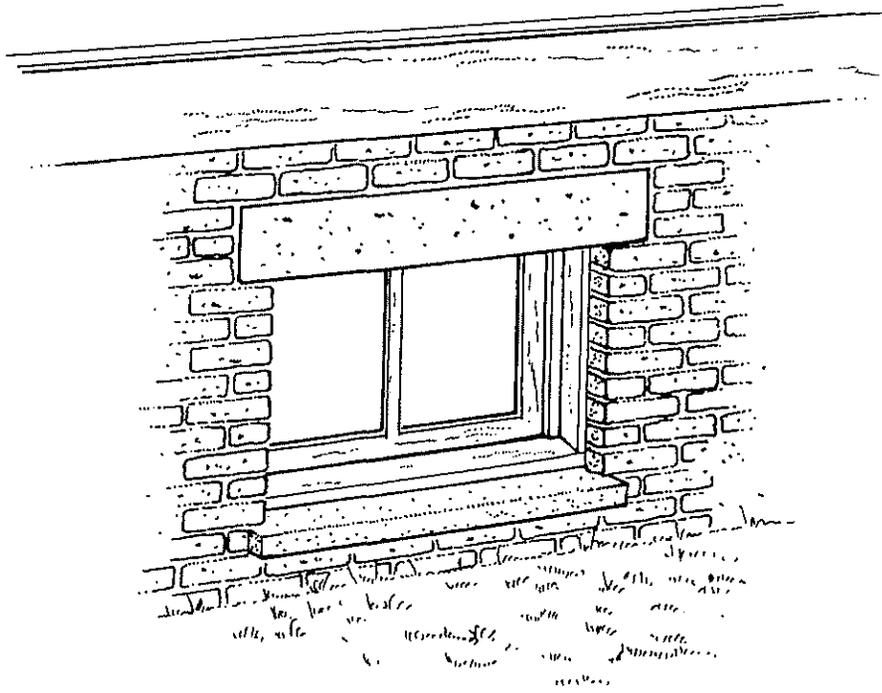
- Glass block windows
- Metal grates or bars over the main windows
- Excessively ornamented steel security doors
- A metal clad door in place of an original wooden front door



Security

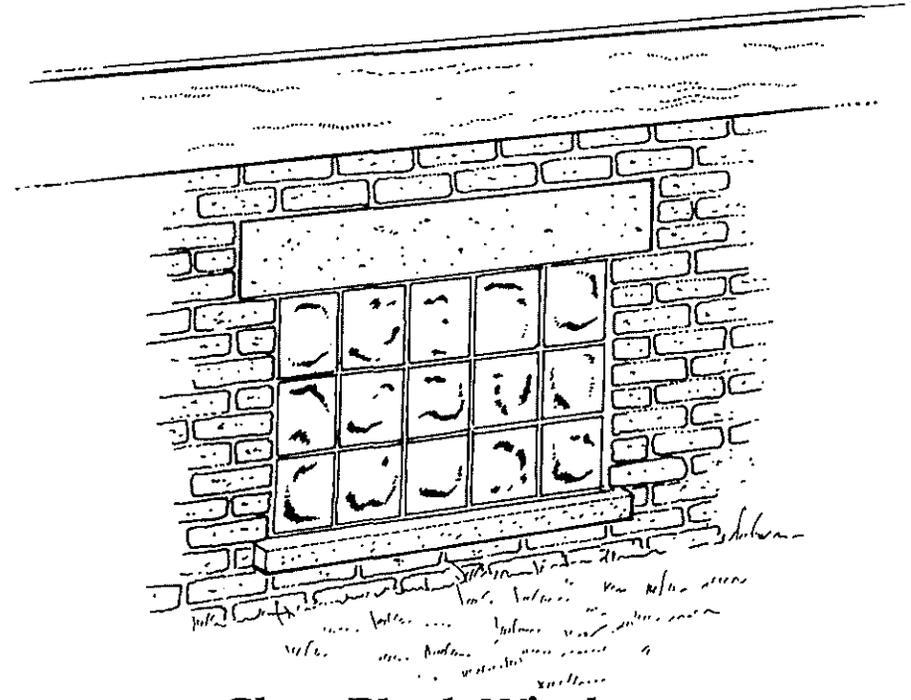


Basement Windows



Maintain Original Basement Window Sash

Original wooden basement window units are an important part of the architectural character of an older house and should be maintained rather than blocked-up or otherwise altered.



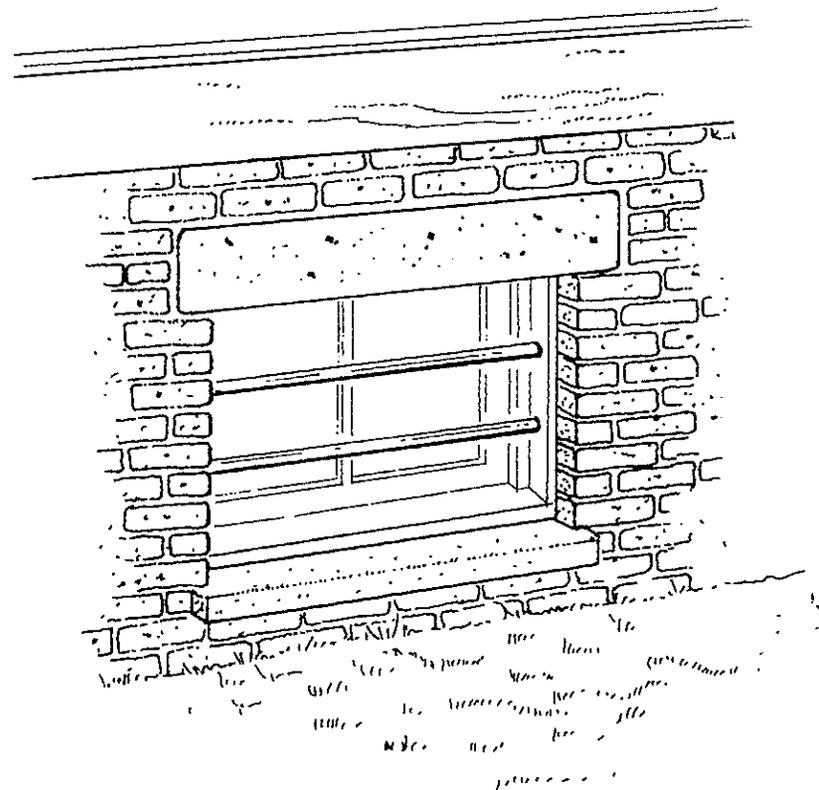
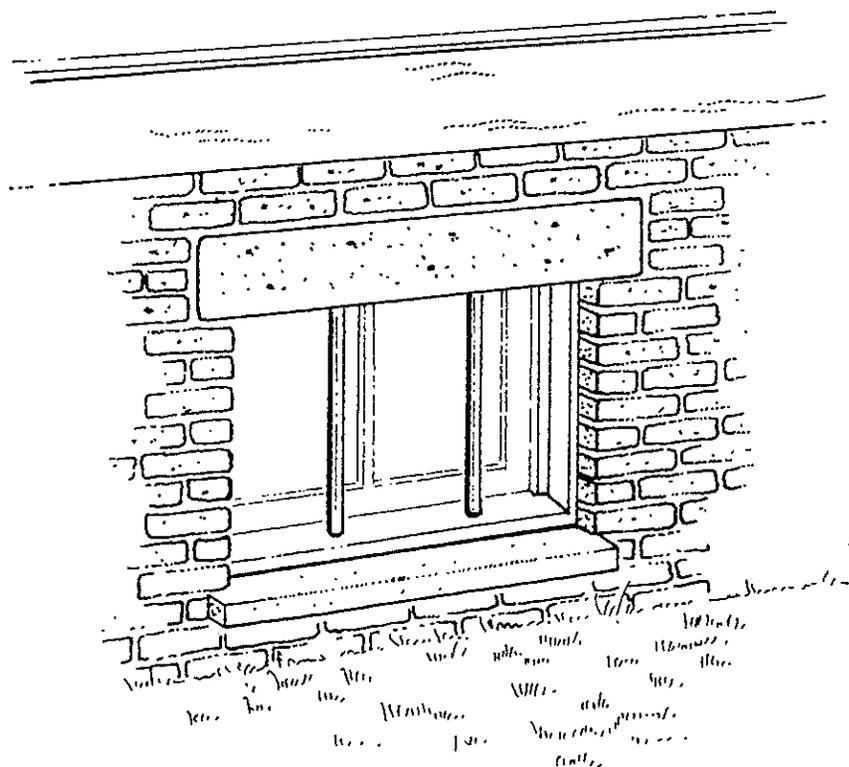
Glass Block Windows

The Historic Preservation Commission does not permit the installation of glass block in place of a traditional basement window unit on publicly visible elevations. Glass block does not complement the architecture of an older house and has the added drawbacks of being difficult and expensive to repair.

Maybe?



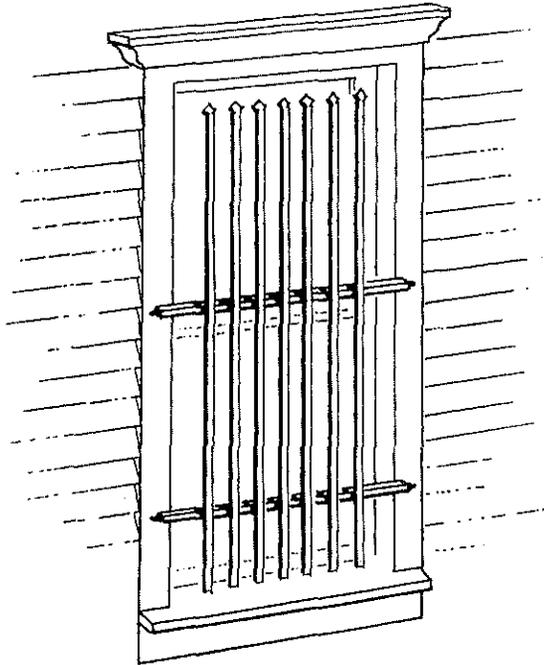
Basement Window Security Bars



If necessary, it is permissible to install two or three steel rods set either vertically or horizontally into the wooden window frame of a basement window unit. The bars are the least conspicuous when they are installed between a storm window and the prime window. It is generally recommended, however, to refrain from installing these bars on windows that are visible from the public right-of-way if at all possible.

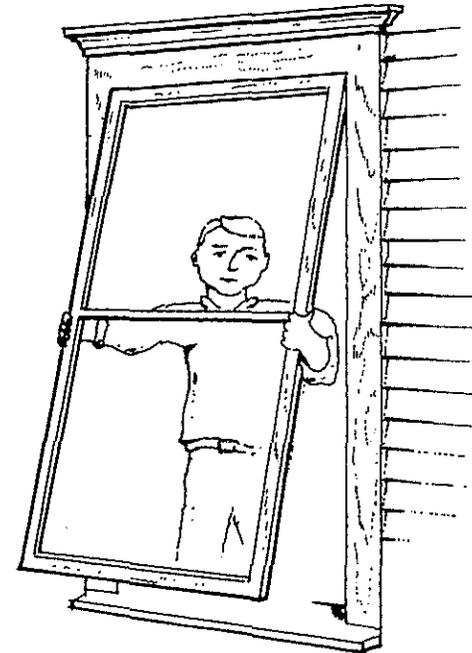
Security

No!



Window Security

Yes!



Window Grates and Pickets

Exterior metal bars such as these are not permitted in historic districts. In addition to the drawback of their non-traditional appearance, these bars also present a real danger to occupants in the event of a fire because they make escape through the window nearly impossible. They also make it difficult to clean and repair the window.

Plastic-glazed Storm Windows

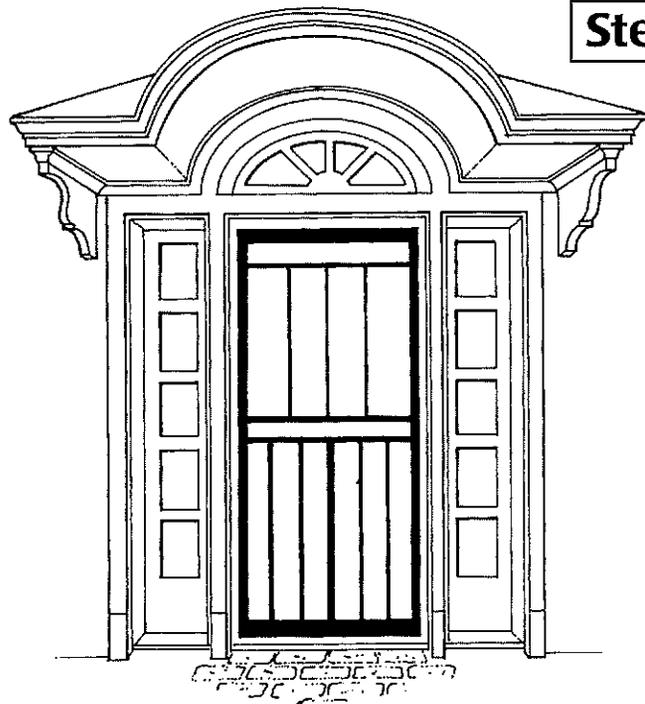
A good way to increase window security is by installing a wooden combination storm and screen unit that is glazed with unbreakable plastic and secured to the house with hardware on the inside of the window. This "safety storm" window will increase security without sacrificing historic character and as a bonus, will boost energy efficiency too.

Security

Yes!



Steel Security Doors

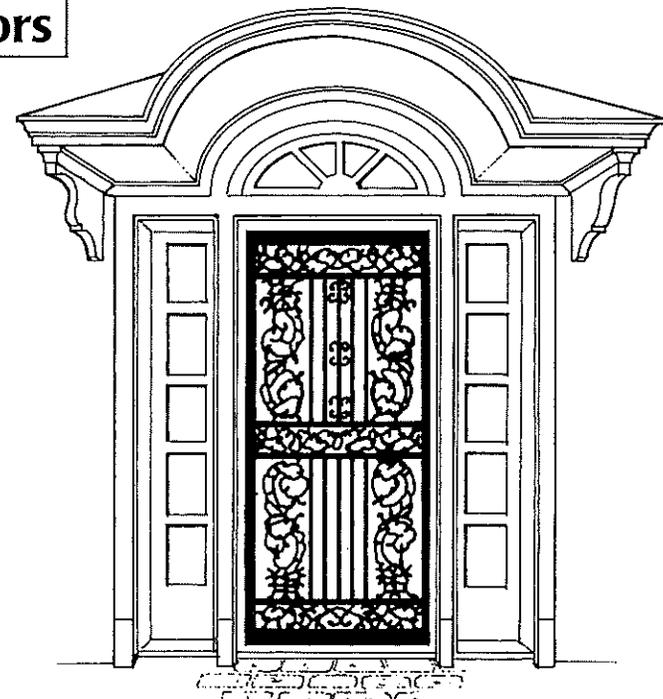


Plain Designs are Preferable

Traditionally, houses were fitted with finely crafted front doors that were meant to be seen and not covered with a storm or security door. However, the commission may approve a steel security door if it:

- *Is simple in design*
- *Fits the original opening*
- *Obscures the view of the prime door as little as possible*
- *Is painted the same color as the prime door*

No!



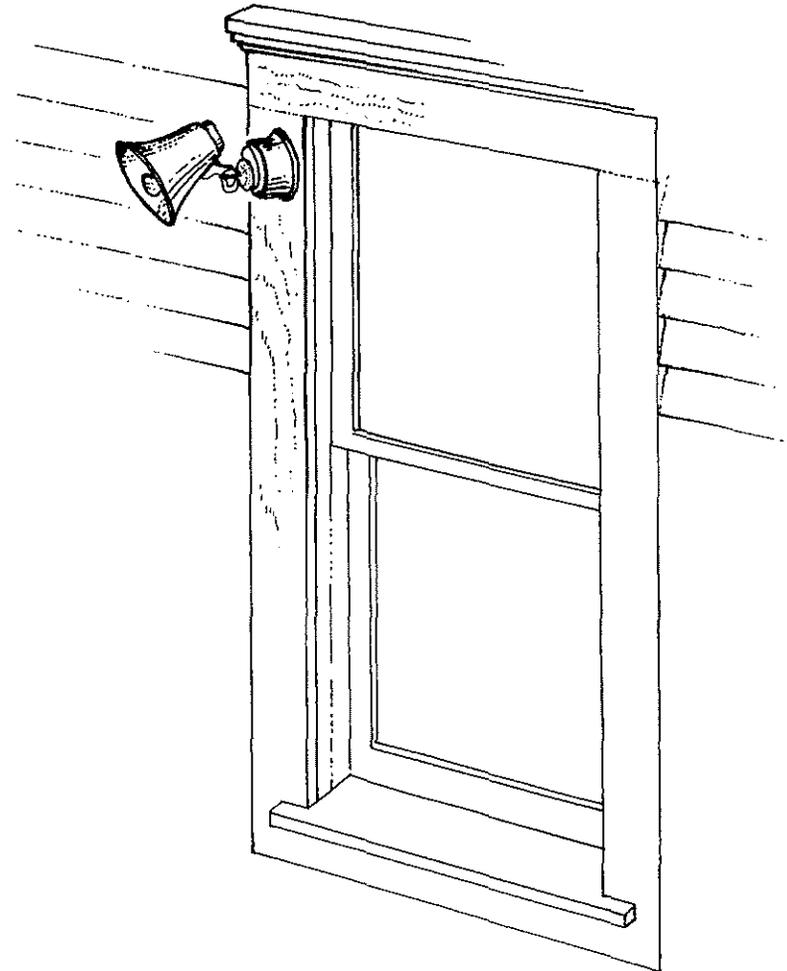
Ornamental Steel Security Doors

On front entrances of a house in a locally-designated historic district, it is generally not permitted to install a highly ornamented security door, such as this design, because it obscures the view of the prime door and is not compatible with the architecture of older houses.



Alarm Horns on Publicly Visible Elevations

Do not install a home security alarm horn where it will be readily visible to passers-by on the street. Even when a horn is installed in an inconspicuous area, it is advisable to paint it the same color as the surface it is mounted against to reduce its visibility.



Fences

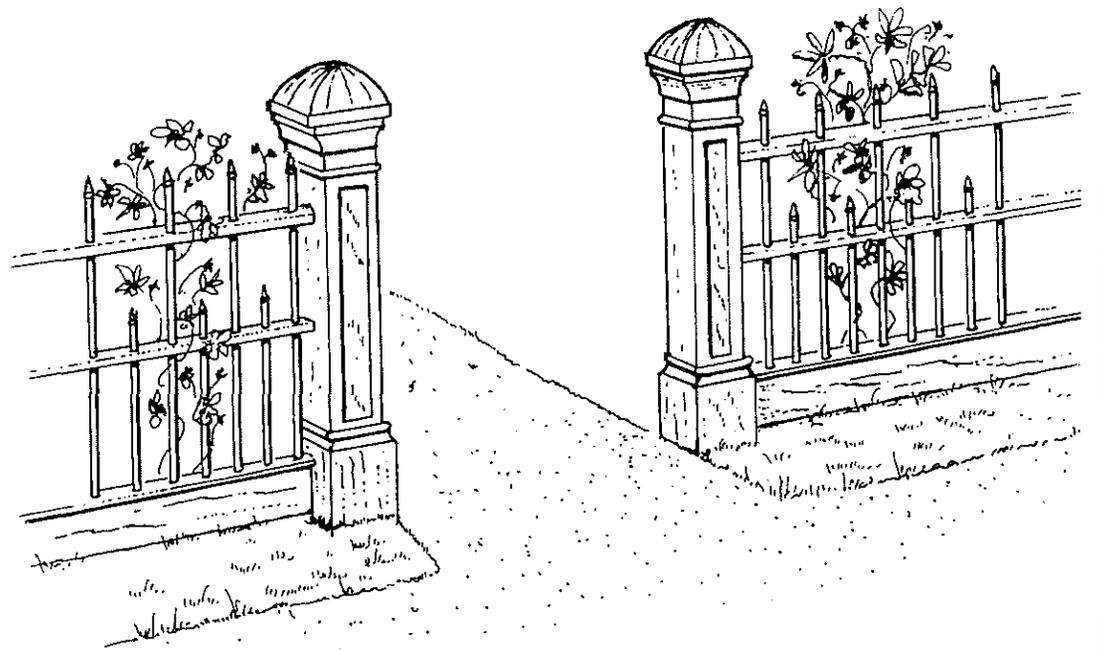
- *Fences greatly enhance or detract from the appearance of a house and neighborhood.*
- *The material, height and spacing of pickets are key elements in fence design.*
- *The design should be compatible with the architectural style and period of the house.*

Building a fence is a serious matter that should be undertaken carefully because of the visual and economic impact it can have on a property. A fence that is too tall, the wrong style, or made of an inappropriate material is almost certain to be a poor investment that will detract from the appeal of the house and the neighborhood.

In a local historic district, you should keep the following points in mind when planning to build a fence:

- The fence should complement the style of the house
- It should respect all applicable height and setback restrictions
- The best side of the fence must face out from the property
- All fences require the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission and a permit from the Department of Building Inspection

This chapter is intended as a general guide to what types of fences are appropriate for use in a local historic district. There may be other types of fences that would be suitable as well. You should always contact the Historic Preservation Commission staff to get the necessary approvals before you start building your fence or enter into a contract with a fence company. If you are replacing an existing fence, do not assume that you can automatically replace it with a new fence of the same design. In the long run, respecting these parameters will result in a fence that will increase the value of your house and be an asset to its neighborhood.



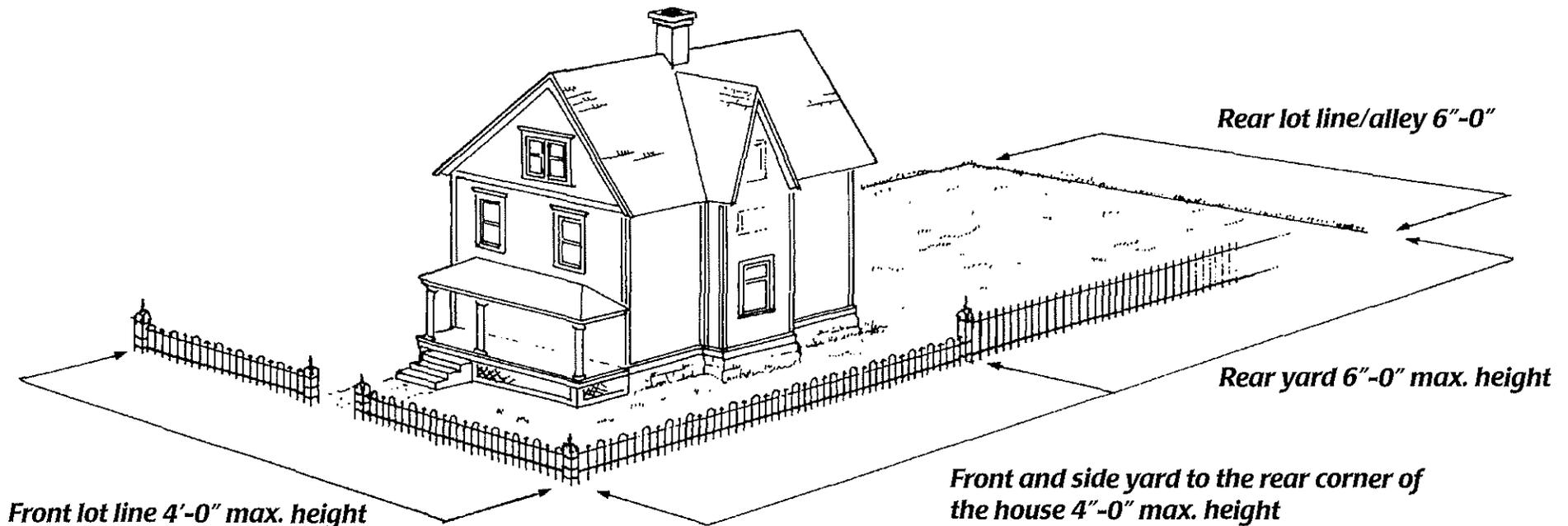
Picket fence, 1850-1900

Fences



Respect all applicable Milwaukee building codes for fences

- *First, get a formal letter of approval from the Historic Preservation Commission.*
- *Next, obtain a fence construction permit from the Department of Building Inspection.*
- *Fences must conform to city height restrictions.*
- *The finished side of a fence must face the neighboring property or the public right of way.*

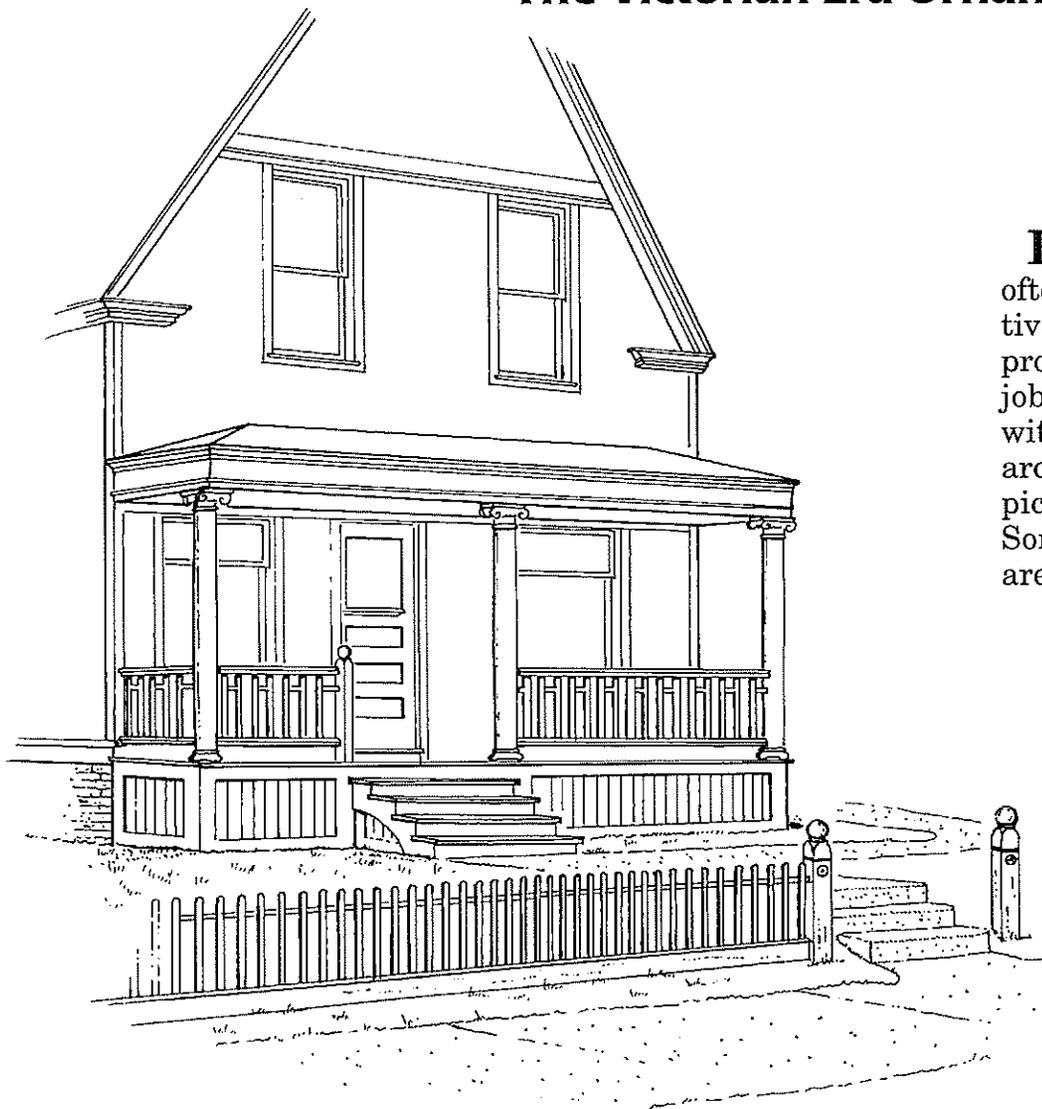


Height restrictions for residential fences in Milwaukee



The Victorian Era Ornamental Fence

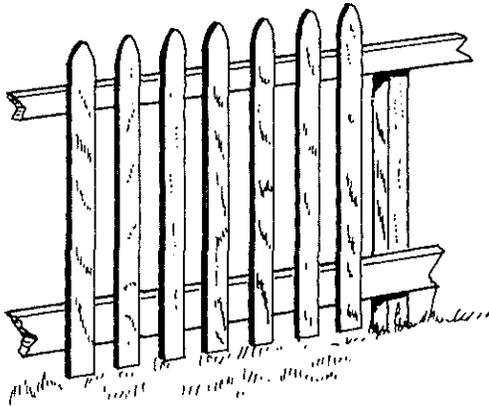
Before 1905, a small ornamental wooden or iron fence, often only about 2-1/2 feet tall, was a popular and attractive means to border the front lot line of a residential property. Despite its low height, such a fence does a fine job of visually defining the front yard and, compared with taller fences, does not draw attention away from the architecture of the house. This type of fence was often a picket fence and was sometimes built without a gate. Some typical designs for ornamental front yard fences are featured on the next pages.



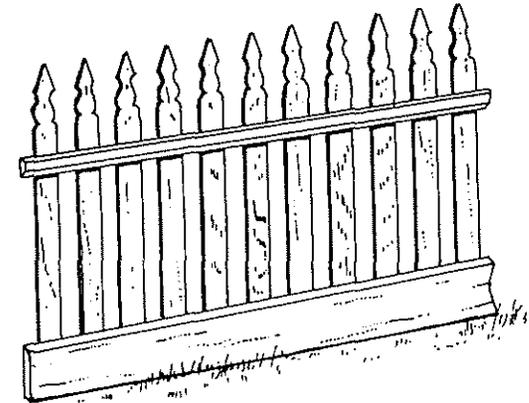
Fences



Wooden Picket Fences

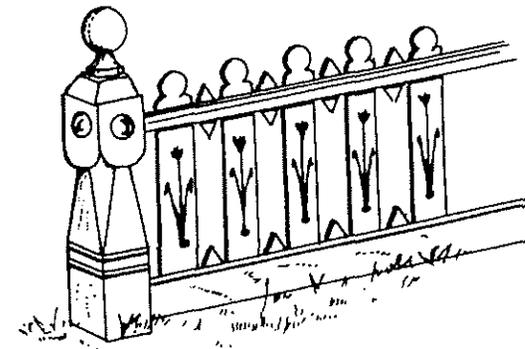
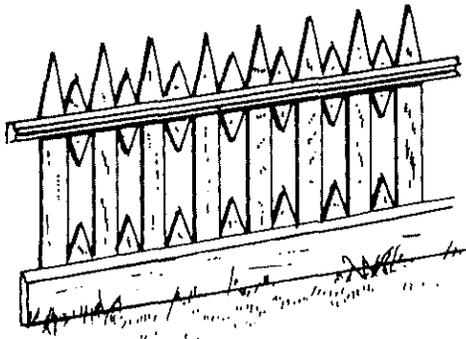


Basic Picket Fence
1860-1940



Basic Picket Fence with a Baseboard
1860-1940

Picket fences have traditionally been the most popular type of front yard fence. There is a picket fence design that is compatible with nearly every budget, taste and style of house.

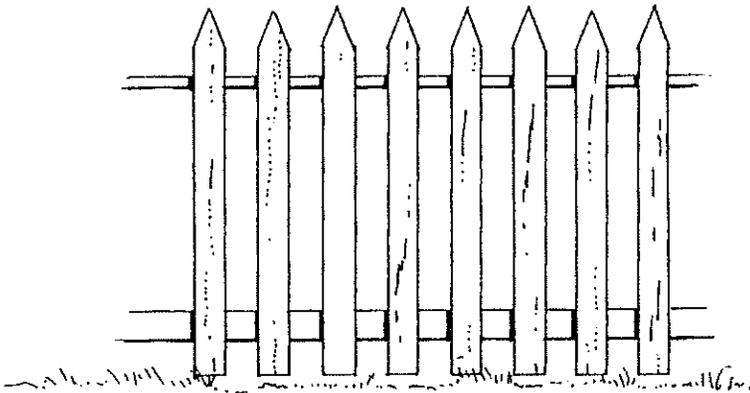


Two Ornamental Victorian Picket Fences
1870-1895

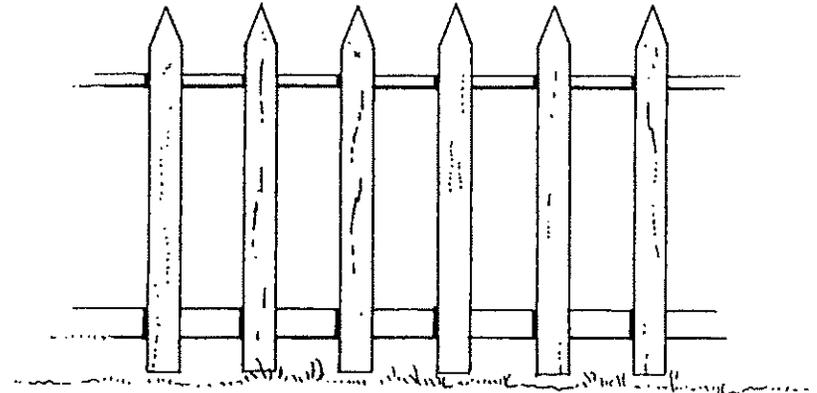
Fences



Spacing of Pickets

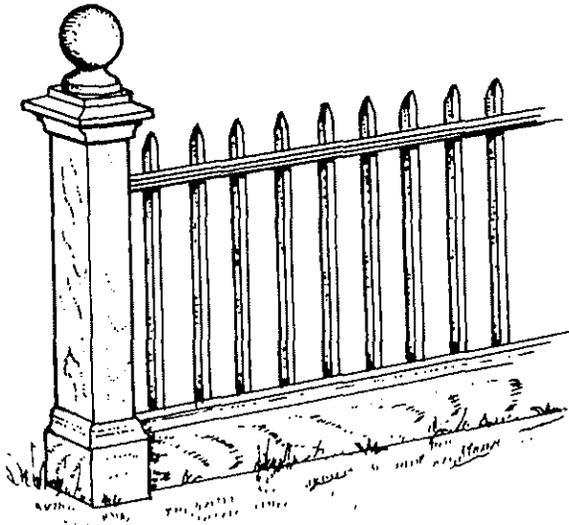


Standard fence pickets should generally be spaced no more than about 3-1/2" apart for the best visual effect.



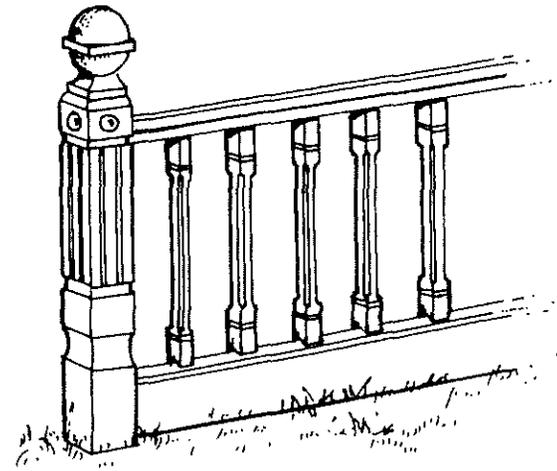
Spacing pickets more than 4" apart results in a flimsy-looking fence that is generally not appropriate in historic districts.

Fences



Colonial Revival
1895-1940

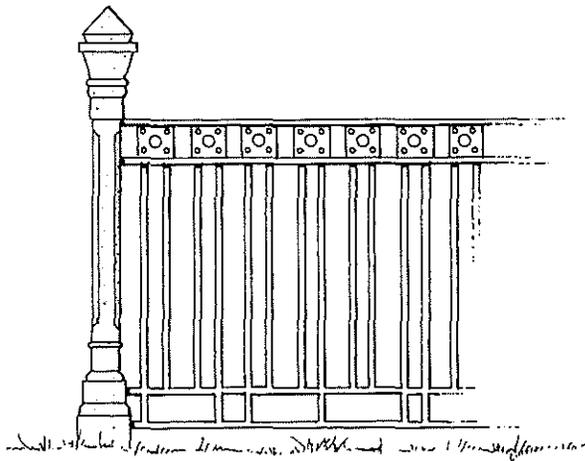
Baluster Fences



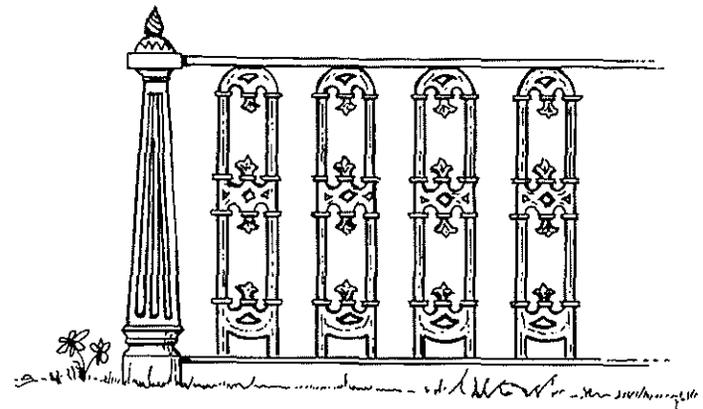
Baluster Fence
1875-1900

Two wooden baluster type fences

Metal Fences



A simple geometric Queen Anne style
iron fence, 1870-1900



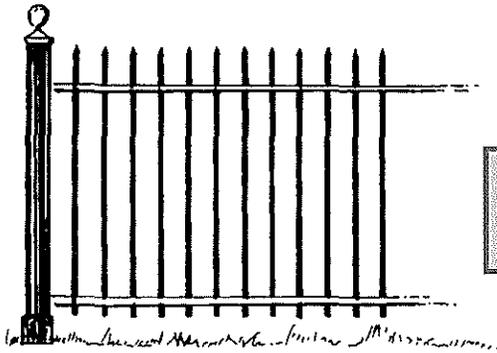
A cast iron reproduction fence in the
Italianate/Victorian Gothic Style, 1855-1875

Traditional metal fences have made a comeback and these are two of the many designs now possible.

Fences

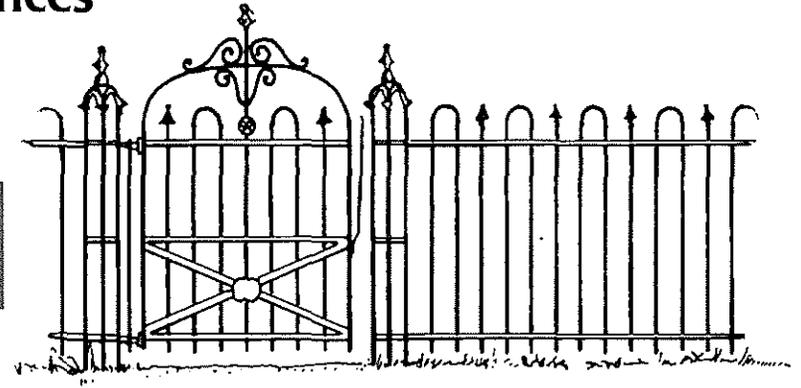


Metal Picket Fences

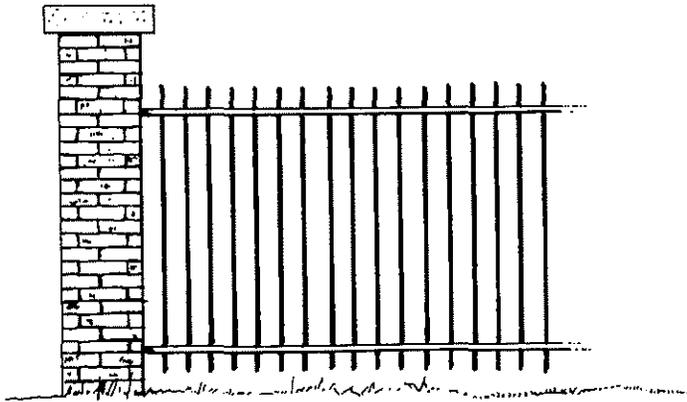


A basic metal picket fence
1880-1900

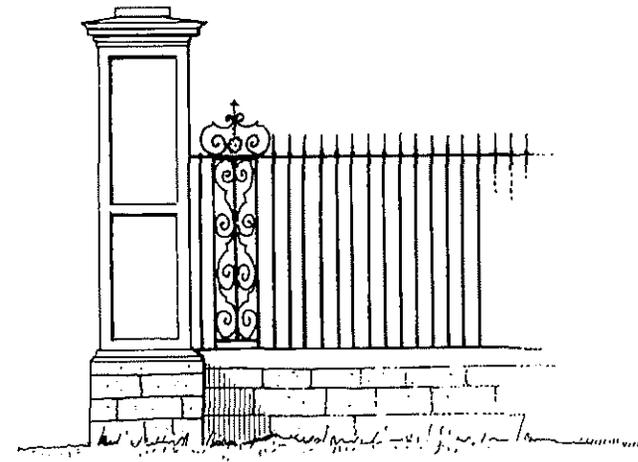
The key to designing a successful metal picket fence is not to space the pickets too far apart.



A Victorian reproduction front yard fence
1880-1900



A basic tall estate type picket fence
with masonry piers
1880-1940



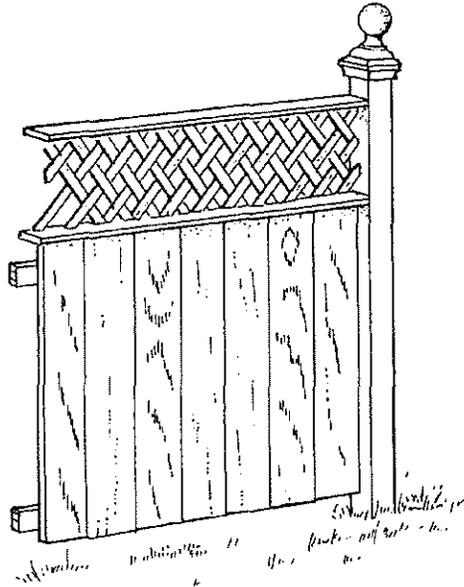
A tall ornamental estate type
picket fence
1900-1940

Estate type metal picket fences are generally suitable only for very grand houses built between about 1910- and 1940.

Fences

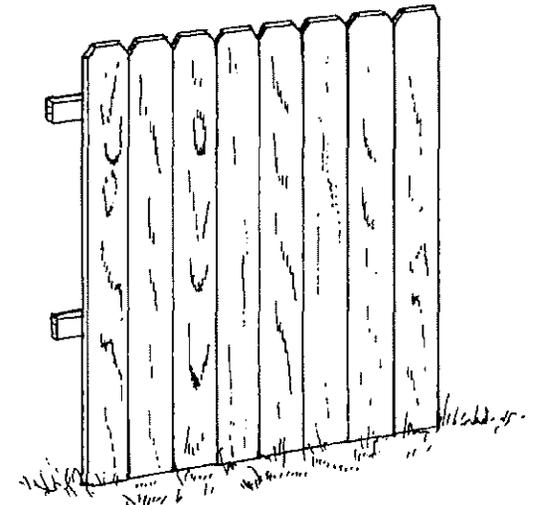


Common Privacy Fences

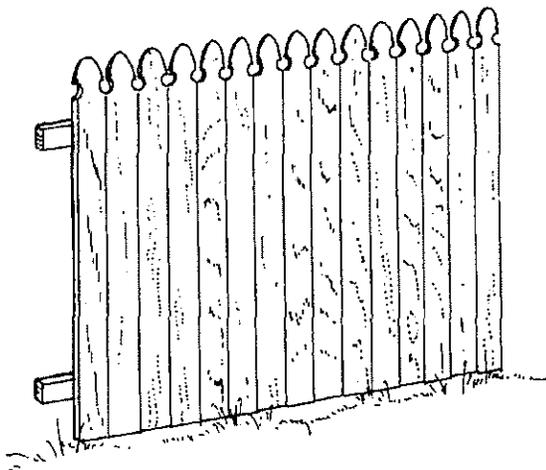


Board and lattice, also called a "treillage fence"

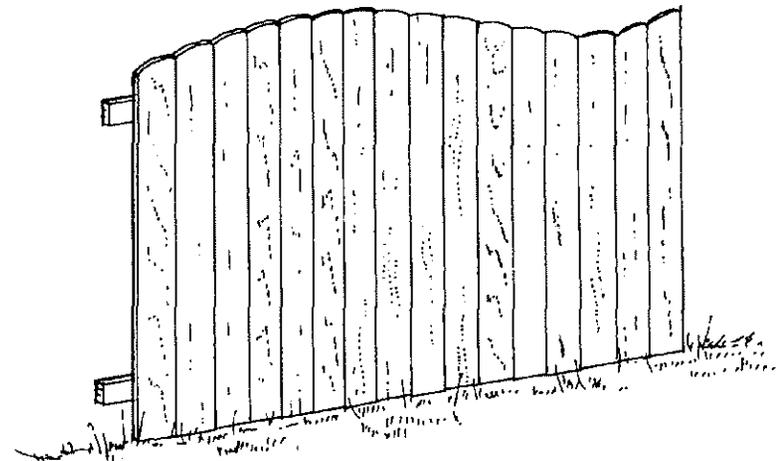
A privacy fence, which is intended to obstruct the view into a yard, should only be built in rear yards. The privacy fences on this page are compatible with most houses built before 1940. Most of these styles are available at building supply stores in ready-made sections or can be built from stock lumber. The finished side of a privacy fence must always face out to the public right-of-way or the neighboring property.



Dog Ear Vertical Board



French Gothic Vertical Board



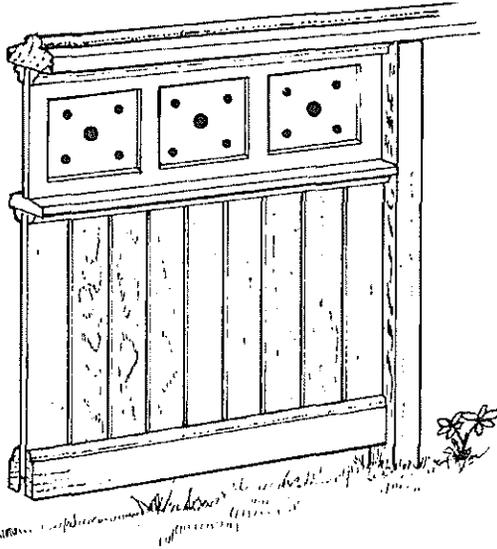
Sunburst or Scalloped Vertical Board

Fences

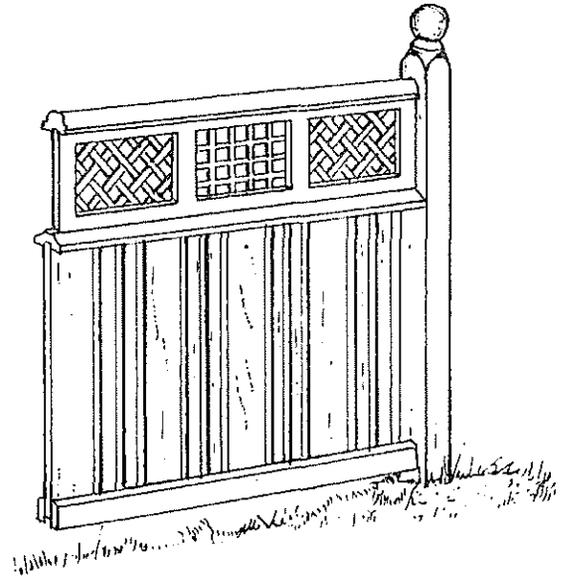


Custom Privacy Fences

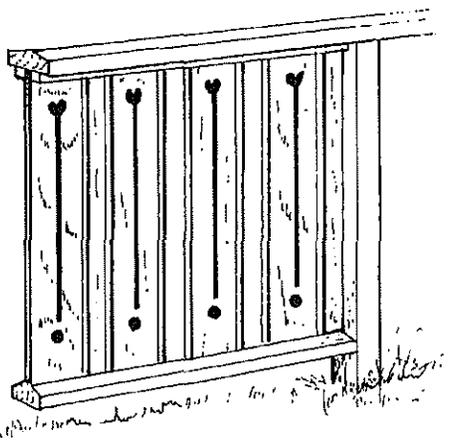
Building a custom privacy fence is not required by the preservation ordinance, but these designs are intended to show a few of the many alternatives to the standard, off-the-shelf, privacy fences usually built today. Years ago, fences were often individually designed to reflect the architecture of the house and this is still possible today.



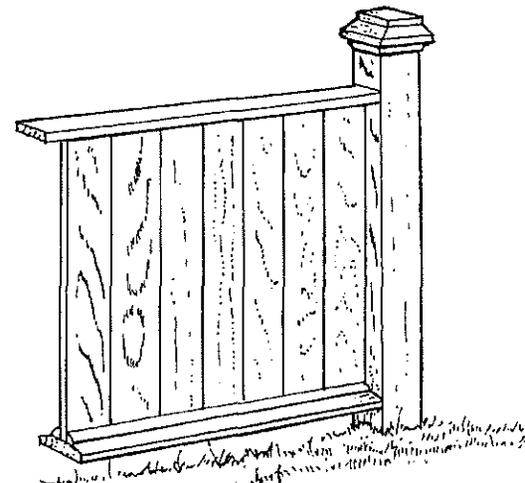
Victorian/Arts and Crafts, 1870-1900



All Styles, 1870-1930



Craftsman/Bungalow, 1910-1935

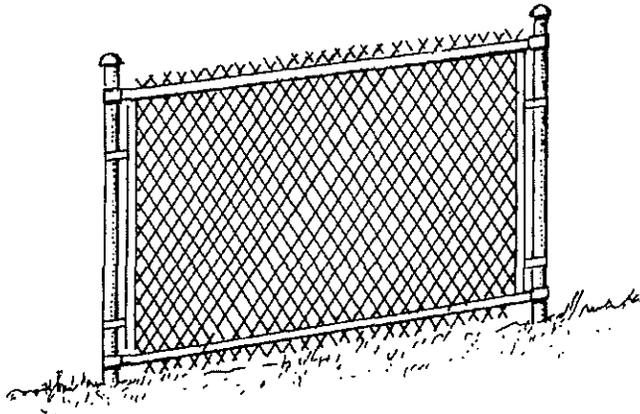


All Styles, 1860-1935

Fences

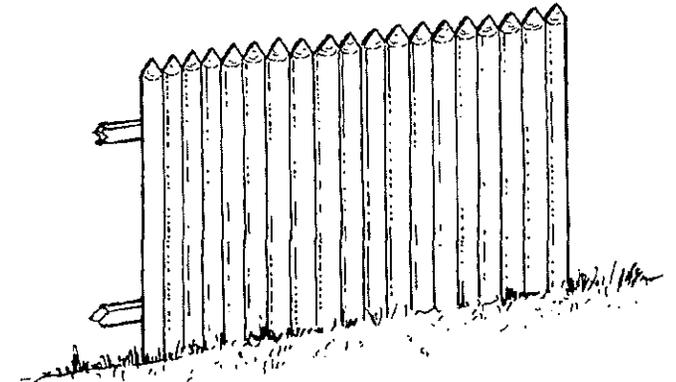


Fences that are incompatible with the style of the house

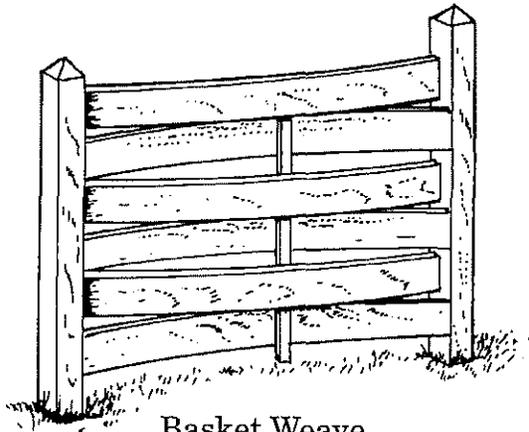


Chain Link

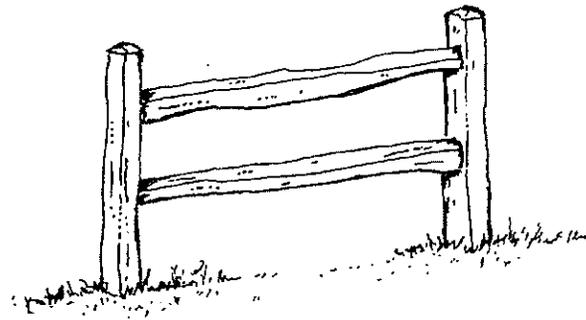
These fence styles are not compatible with the architecture of houses built before 1940 and are not permitted in residential historic districts.



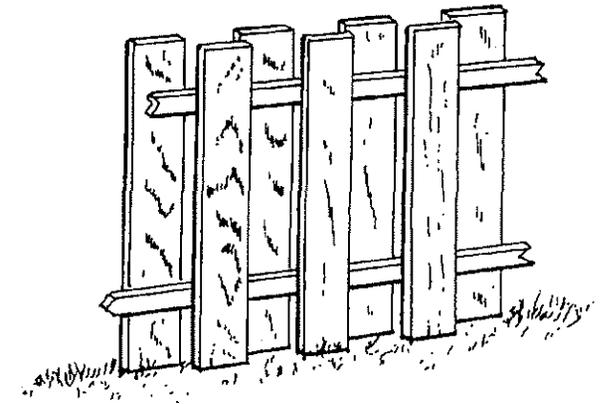
Stockade



Basket Weave



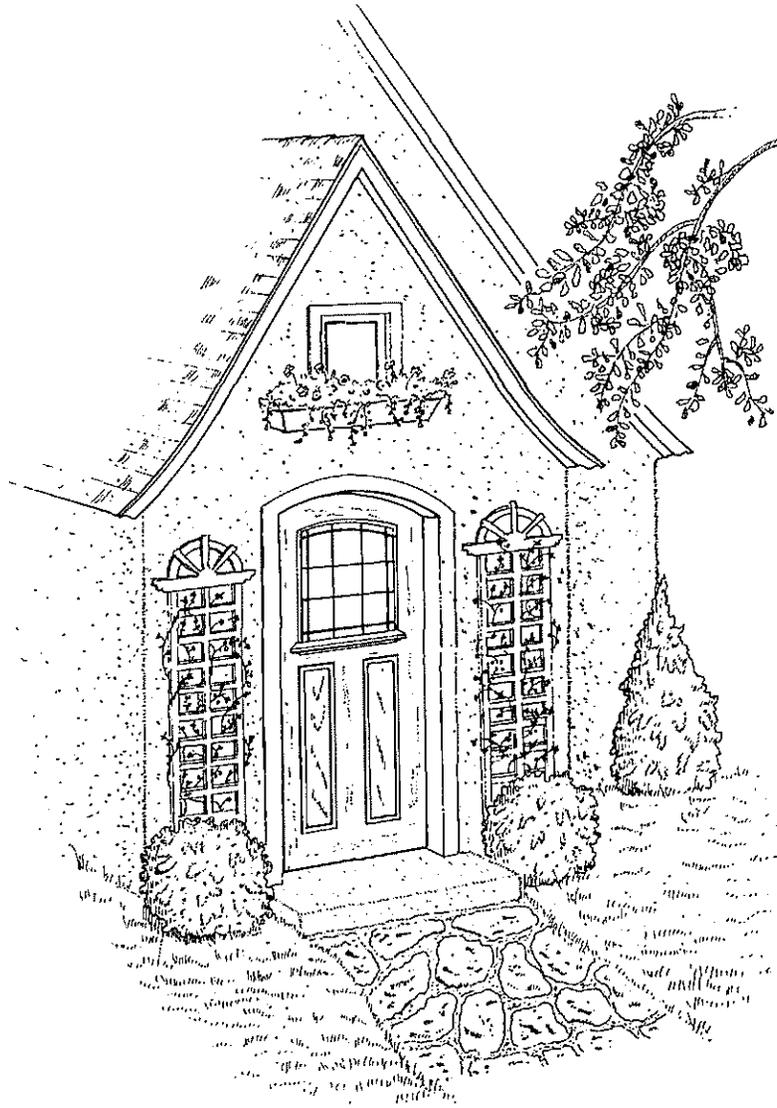
Split Rail



Board-on-Board

Landscaping

- *Landscaping should complement the style and period of the house.*
- *Bermed front lawns should be retained.*
- *Some modern landscaping practices are incompatible with traditional architecture.*



There are only a few aspects of landscaping, including the construction of decks, retaining walls and fences and the pouring of new driveways and patios that require written approval by the Historic Preservation Commission. The removal or installation of shrubs and trees generally does not require formal approval unless the proposed scheme will have a dramatically adverse effect upon the house or the historic district, such as the replacement of a traditional grass lawn with either gravel or a naturalistic wildflower meadow. However, it is important to keep in mind that the purpose of all landscaping is to enhance the architecture of a house. Landscaping that detracts from the appearance of a house ultimately has a negative impact on the value of a property. Today, perhaps the best way to landscape an older property is simply to follow the landscape practices that were popular at the time the house was built.

It's important to understand that landscape design has changed over the years along with architectural tastes. As a result, the landscaping practices of the Victorian era were quite different from those of the early twentieth century. Both periods, however, shared the notion that a grassy, open front lawn was the most important landscape element of a city lot. Because that is still true today, constructing a retaining wall to eliminate a small bank or slope on a front lawn is strongly discouraged. It is also a good idea to avoid some post-World War II landscape practices such as the use of large, free-form bands of shredded bark or colored rocks around plantings.

Landscaping

The Victorian Era

Landscaping in the Victorian era tended to complement the formality and fine detail that characterized the architecture of the period. Shrubs and bushes were not planted around the foundation of a Victorian house so that architectural features such as ornamental porch skirting and finished masonry foundation work could be easily seen. These houses were intended to stand out from their surroundings, not blend with natural landscaping. The general effect was quite severe. In fact, a plain grass lawn largely devoid of shrubs is a perfectly acceptable, as well as inexpensive, way to provide an authentic landscape design for a late nineteenth century house.

A small earthen mound planted with neat, concentric rings of flowers was a very typical means of "dressing up" the front lawn of a Victorian house. In place of a raised bed of flowers, some homeowners during the Victorian era preferred to place a specimen planting, such as a lilac bush, out by itself on the lawn. It was also not unusual to see a decorative cast iron urn filled with colorful flowers at the center of a planting mound or on a pedestal out in the front yard. Urns were also used in pairs to frame the front porch steps.

The sparsely landscaped yards of many Milwaukee houses of the late nineteenth century were encircled with a small ornamental wooden or iron fence, often no more than about 2-1/2 feet tall. See the Fences chapter for more information on this type of fence.

Although bushes were sparingly used, vines were very popular. Vines were often planted so that they climbed the porch posts and trailed along the porch eaves. At maturity they gave the visual effect that the porch roof was floating on a cushion of soft, green, leafy foliage. Vines were also often planted on

trellises or wires so they would climb up the sides of a house. Today, the planting of vines directly against the walls of a house is not highly recommended because the vines can damage the wood siding and masonry to which they attached themselves.

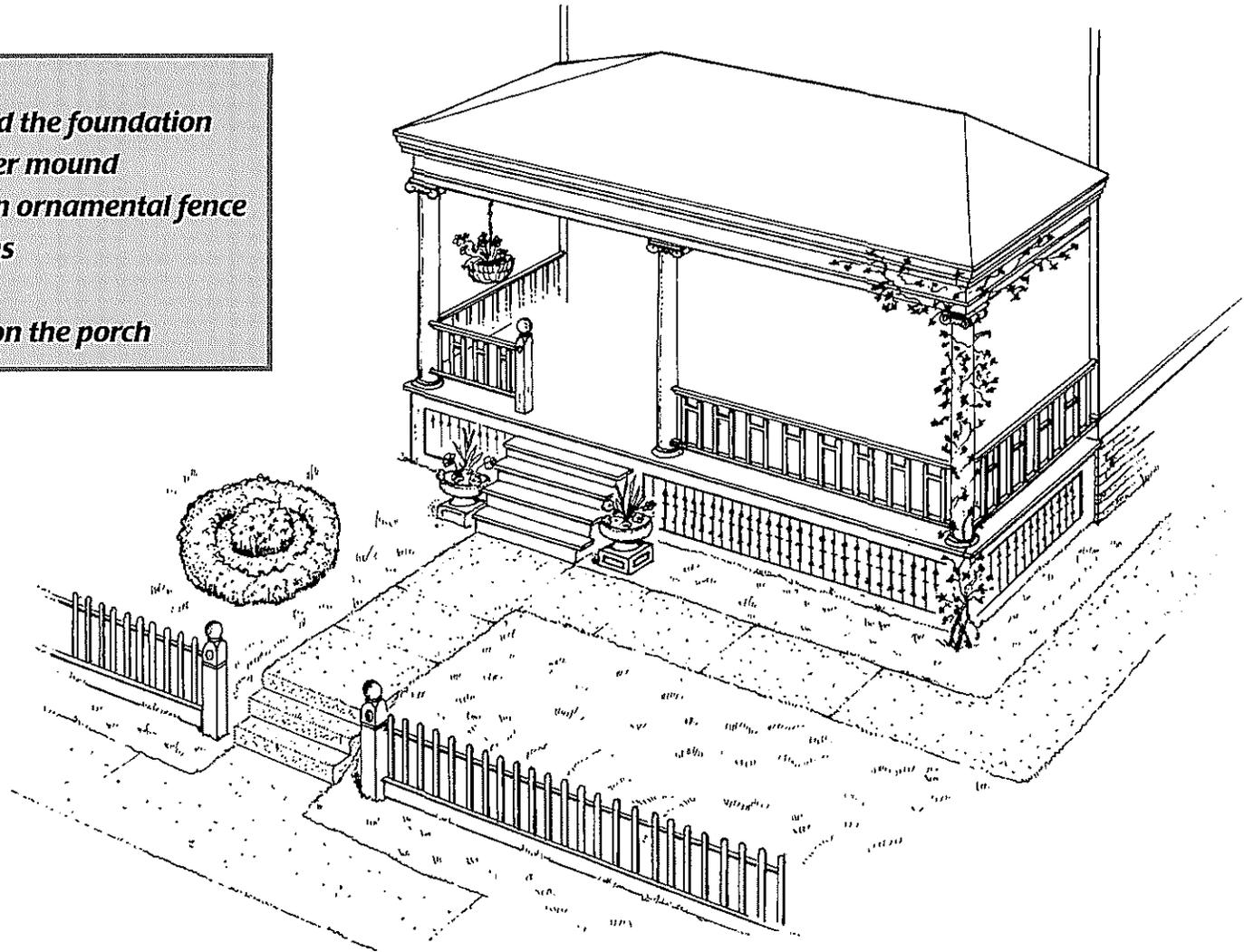
Of course, it is not necessary to incorporate all of these landscape features into the yard of a Victorian house. By respecting the major stylistic conventions of the period, however, such as minimizing or eliminating foundation plantings and building the correct type of fencing, a homeowner can go a long way towards creating an authentic period landscape setting for a Victorian house.

Landscaping



Landscaping That is Compatible With a Victorian Era House

- *Grass lawns*
- *No plantings around the foundation*
- *Small, circular flower mound*
- *Low, wooden or iron ornamental fence*
- *Cast iron flower urns*
- *Hanging baskets*
- *Vines, particularly on the porch*



Landscaping

The Early 20th Century

Landscaping practices during the early twentieth century were very different from those of the Victorian period. Some of the new ideas that appeared between 1910 and 1940 include the use of plantings around the foundation, lawns bordered by meticulously-pruned hedges, window boxes and trellises designed to complement the architecture of the house.

In a dramatic departure from the stand-apart-from-nature houses of the Victorian era, during the early 20th century, shrubs were planted to integrate the house with nature by concentrating bushes around the foundation to blur the transition from the man-made to the natural environment. It was a frequent practice to concentrate the largest groups of shrubs, including upright evergreen bushes, at the corners of a house and to use smaller clumps of bushes to accent the entry. Architecturally designed trellises that supported climbing plants were an effective means to frame an entrance or to use greenery to accent a chimney or a blank wall. Window boxes planted with bright flowers and trailing vines were a popular and attractive means to highlight a window and add a romantic naturalistic touch.

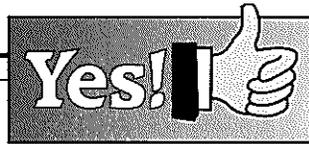
A secondary, but very important use of shrubs was as a border along lot lines. Fences, which were relatively common in front yards during the Victorian era, were seldom employed in landscaping the front lawns of houses built between about 1910 and 1950 because of the desire to give neighborhoods a spacious, park-like appearance. If some kind of a barrier was desired, often a hedge was used instead of a fence.

As a rule of thumb, landscaping professionals before World War II often recommended that trees not be planted on a

front lawn if the house stood closer than 30 feet from the public sidewalk. That is still a good rule to follow today.

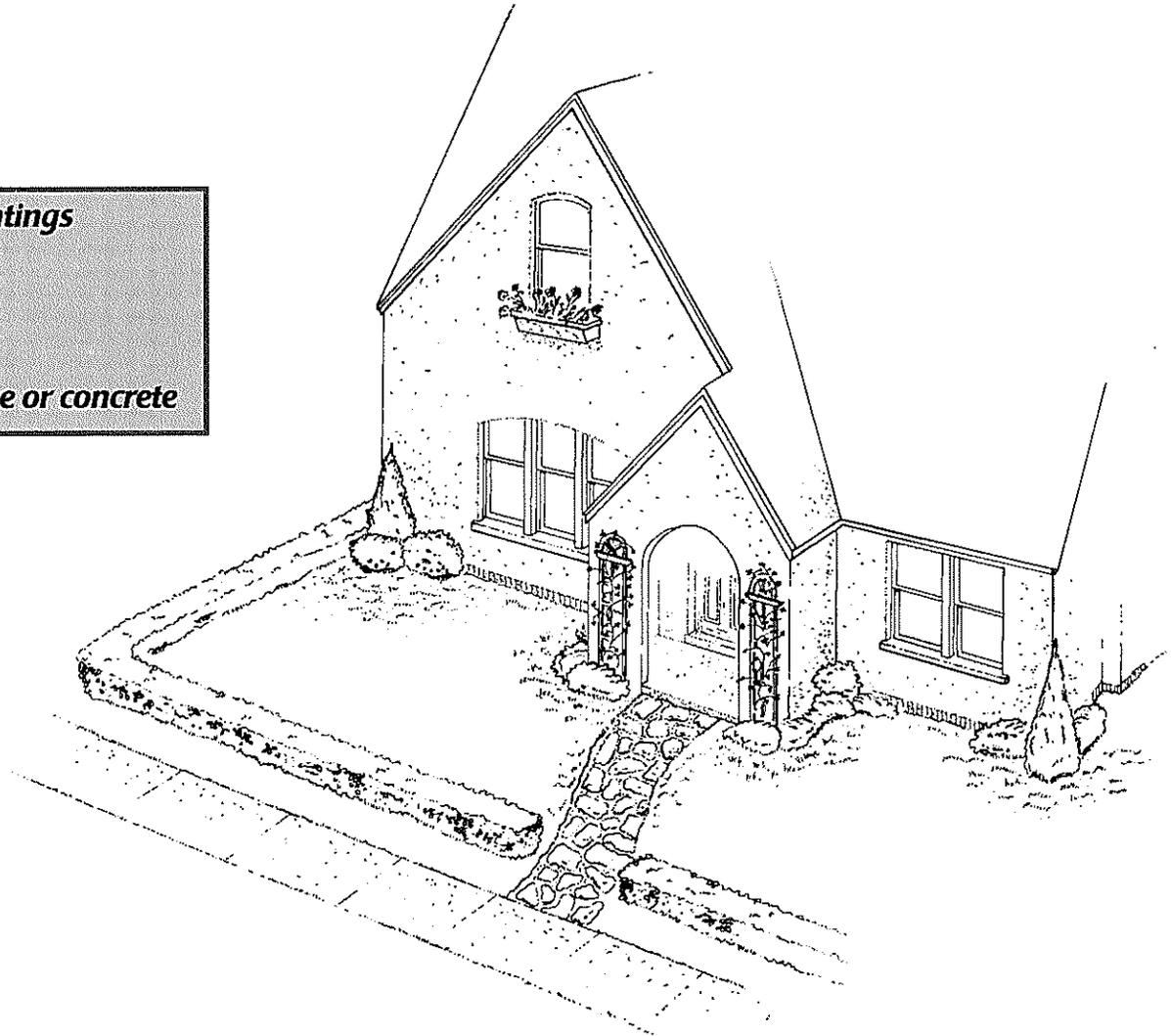
Curved walkways were a popular way to add to the naturalistic appearance of a lot, particularly for the English Tudor and French Norman style houses that were in vogue between the two World Wars.

Landscaping



Landscaping That is Compatible With an Early 20th Century House

- *Shrubs and foundation plantings*
- *Trellis work*
- *Window boxes*
- *Carefully pruned hedges*
- *Curving walks of brick, stone or concrete*



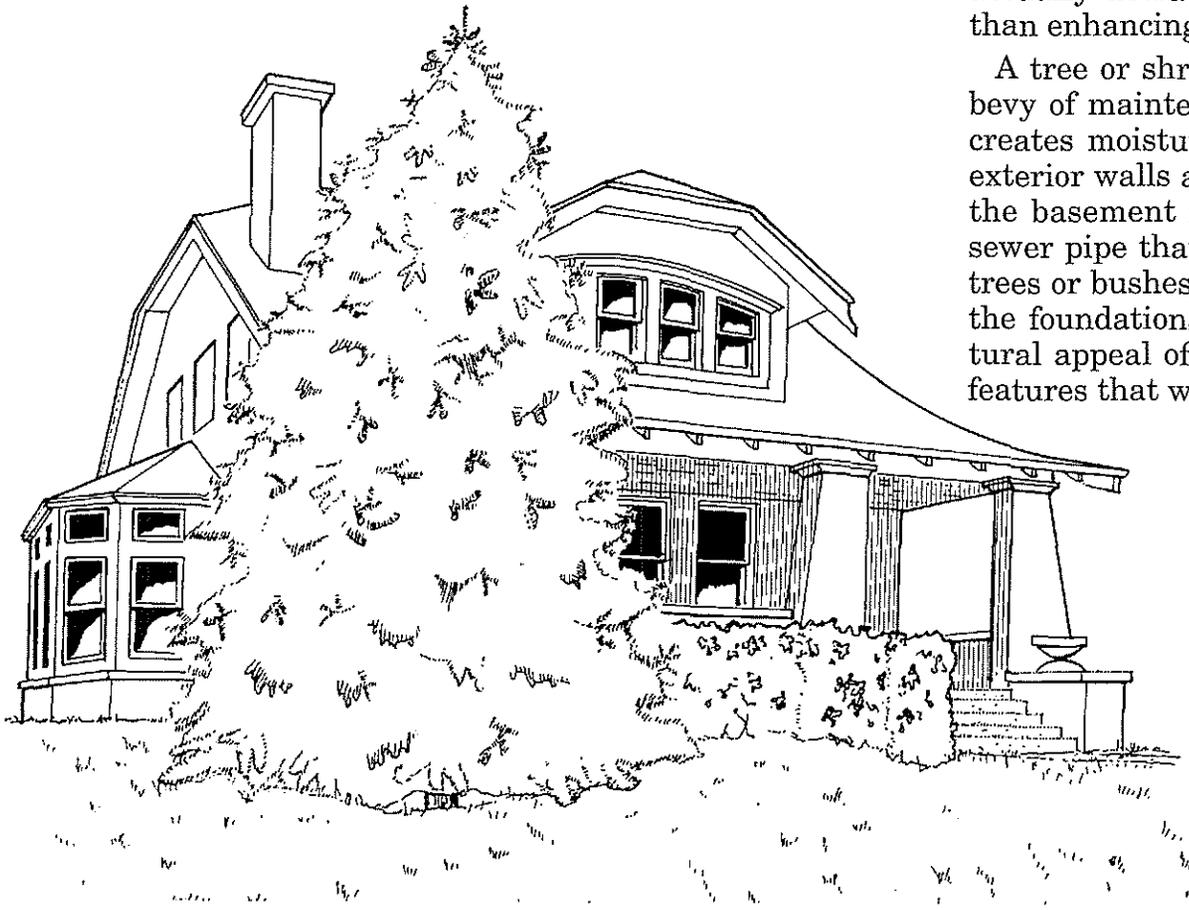


Out-of-control Evergreens and Bushes

One of the hardest decisions a homeowner has to make is to decide to cut down a mature shrub or tree. It should be kept in mind that as beautiful as a fully mature shrub or tree may be in and of itself, its contribution to the total landscape

scheme of your house must also be considered. It is often difficult for homeowners to accept that all landscaping has a life span and must eventually be replaced. If this is not done, the property will become overgrown and the landscaping will actually detract from the appearance of your house rather than enhancing it as originally intended.

A tree or shrub planted too close to a house can promote a bevy of maintenance headaches for a homeowner. Vegetation creates moisture problems such as the growth of mildew on exterior walls and moss on the roof. Sewage may back-up into the basement if tree roots creep into and clog the sanitary sewer pipe that is buried beneath the front lawn. Overgrown trees or bushes planted too near a house can not only damage the foundations but they will also detract from the architectural appeal of a fine, older house by obscuring architectural features that were meant to be seen.



Landscaping



The Controlled Landscape

The architecture of an older house should be complemented rather than hidden by trees and foundation plantings. The removal of overly mature landscaping can greatly enhance the appearance of a house. Shrubs and bushes planted next to the foundation should be pruned regularly while certain specimen plantings may need to be replaced every several decades.

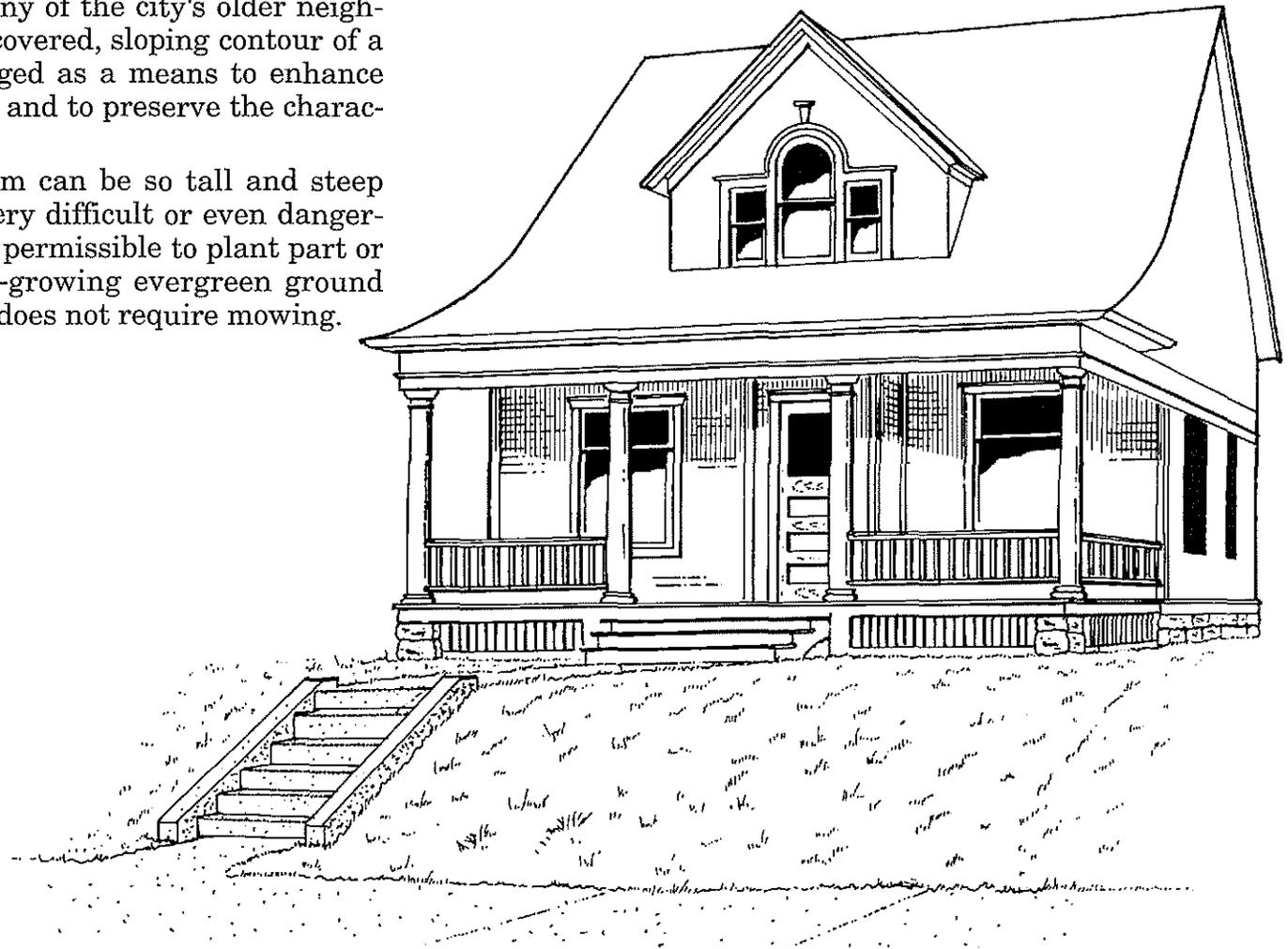




Retain Original Bermed Front Lawns

A small, grassy bank, called a berm, is a traditional landscape feature that is found in many of the city's older neighborhoods. Maintaining the grass-covered, sloping contour of a bermed lawn is strongly encouraged as a means to enhance the architecture of an older house and to preserve the character of a traditional neighborhood.

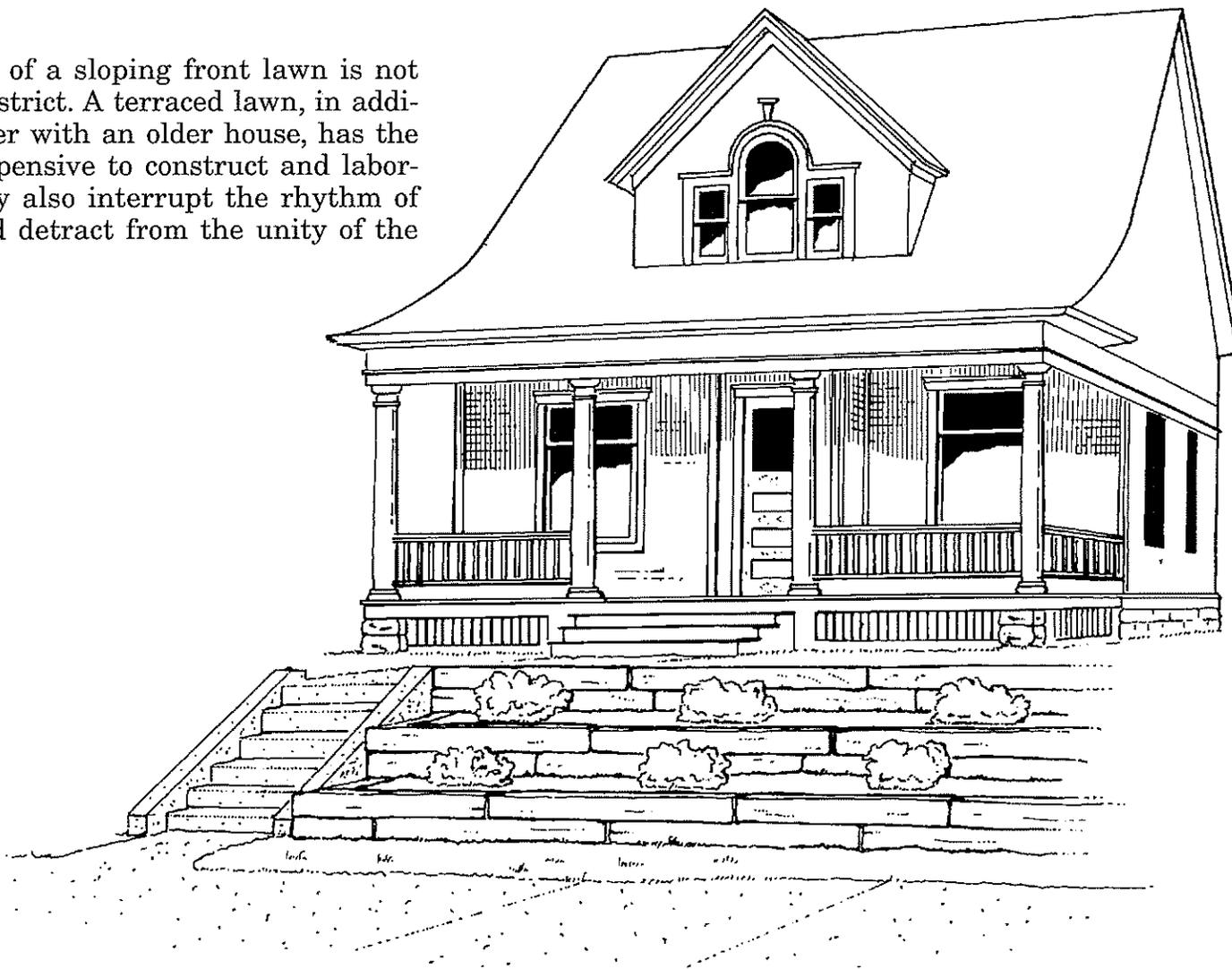
In some rare instances the berm can be so tall and steep that cutting the grass can be a very difficult or even dangerous task. In those cases it may be permissible to plant part or all of the steep slope with a low-growing evergreen ground cover such as pachysandra which does not require mowing.





Terraced Front Lawns

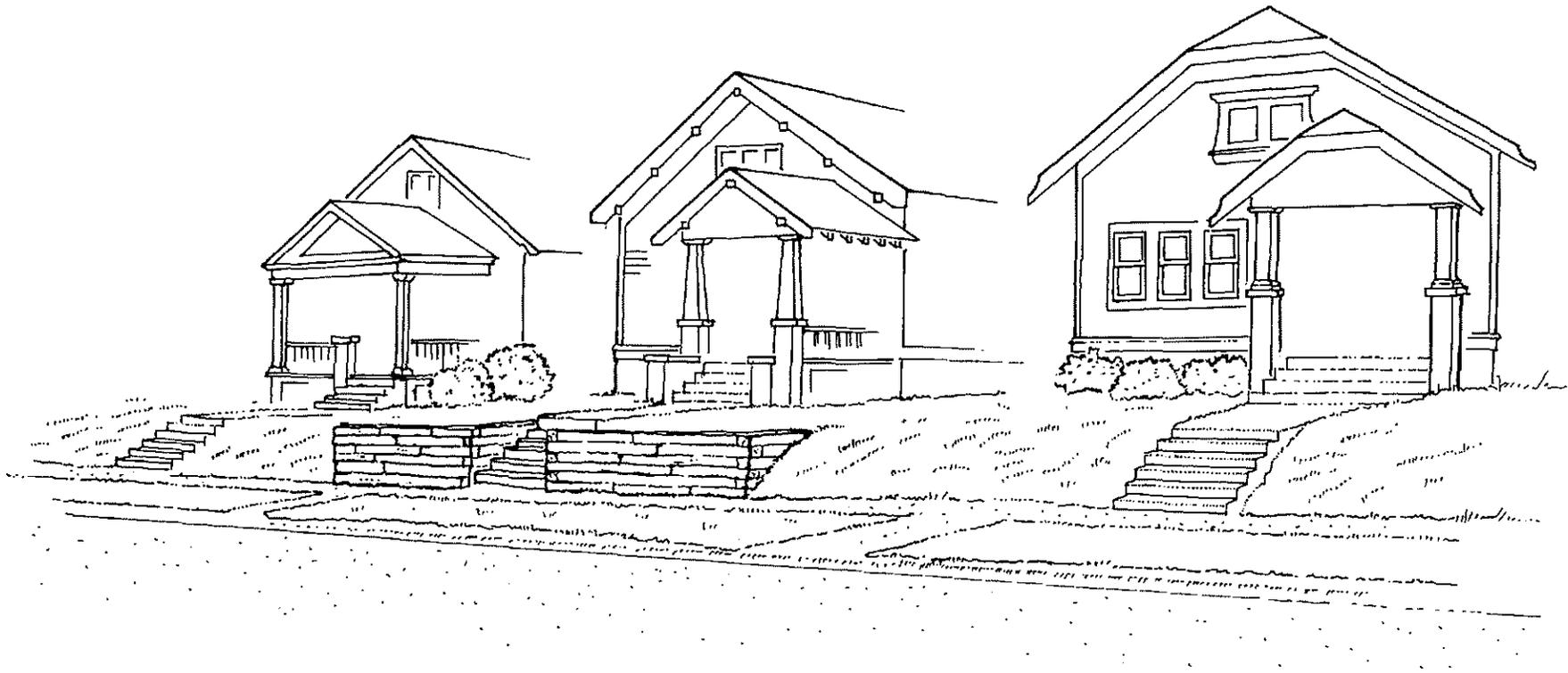
Building terraces in place of a sloping front lawn is not permitted in a city historic district. A terraced lawn, in addition to looking out-of character with an older house, has the added drawbacks of being expensive to construct and labor-intensive to maintain. It may also interrupt the rhythm of bermed lawns on a block and detract from the unity of the entire streetscape.





Retaining Walls

In a city historic district, it is not permissible to interrupt the continuity of rolling, park-like front lawns by building a retaining wall. In reality, there are relatively few places in the urban landscape where a retaining wall is necessary or worth the expense to build. It is easy to see from this illustration that the retaining wall looks out of place and detracts from the unity of the entire streetscape.

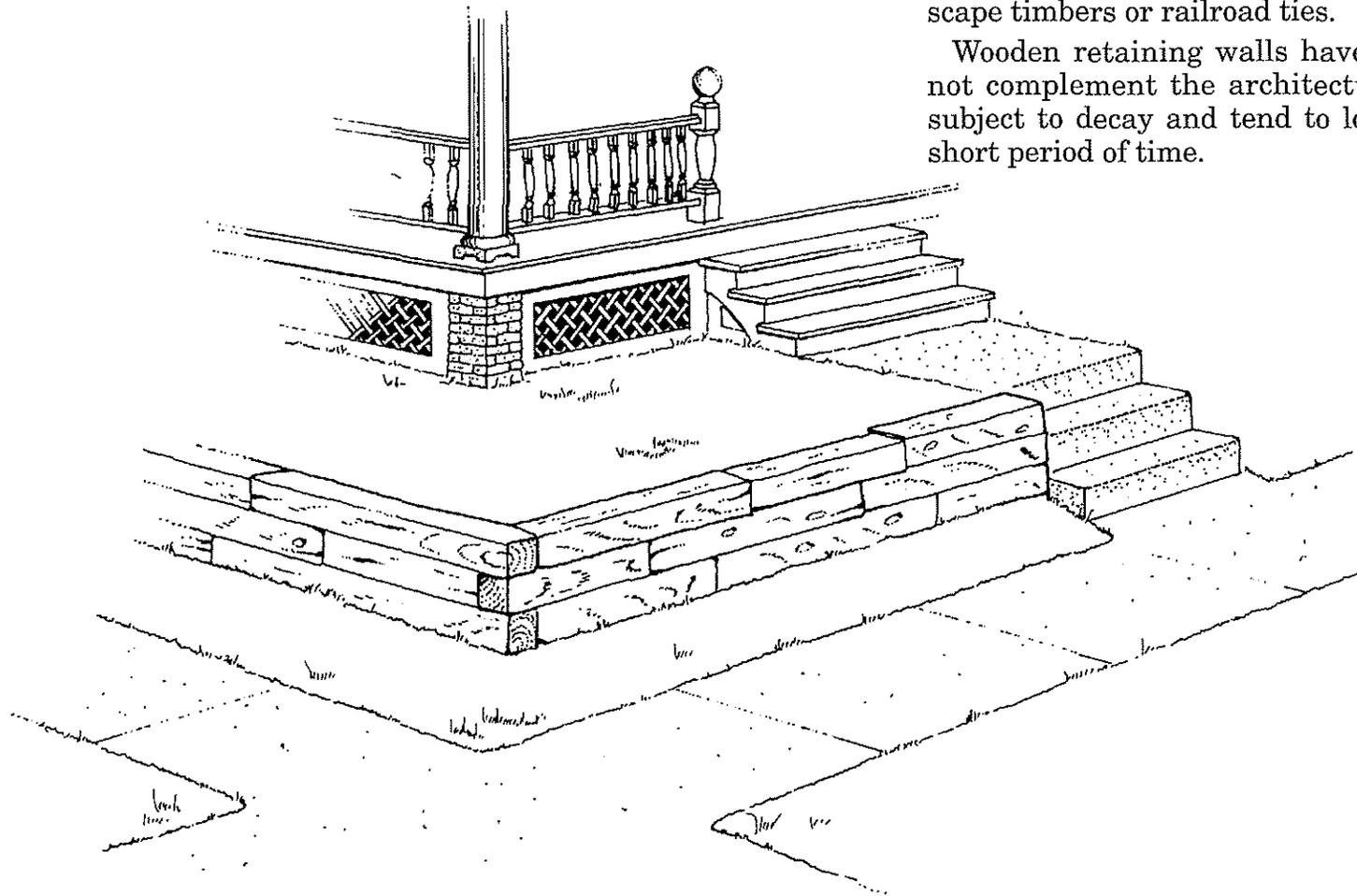




Landscape Timber Retaining Wall

In the rare event that approval is granted to build a new retaining wall in a city historic district, keep in mind that it will never be permissible to construct a wall made of landscape timbers or railroad ties.

Wooden retaining walls have a rustic character that does not complement the architecture of older houses. They are subject to decay and tend to look dilapidated in a relatively short period of time.



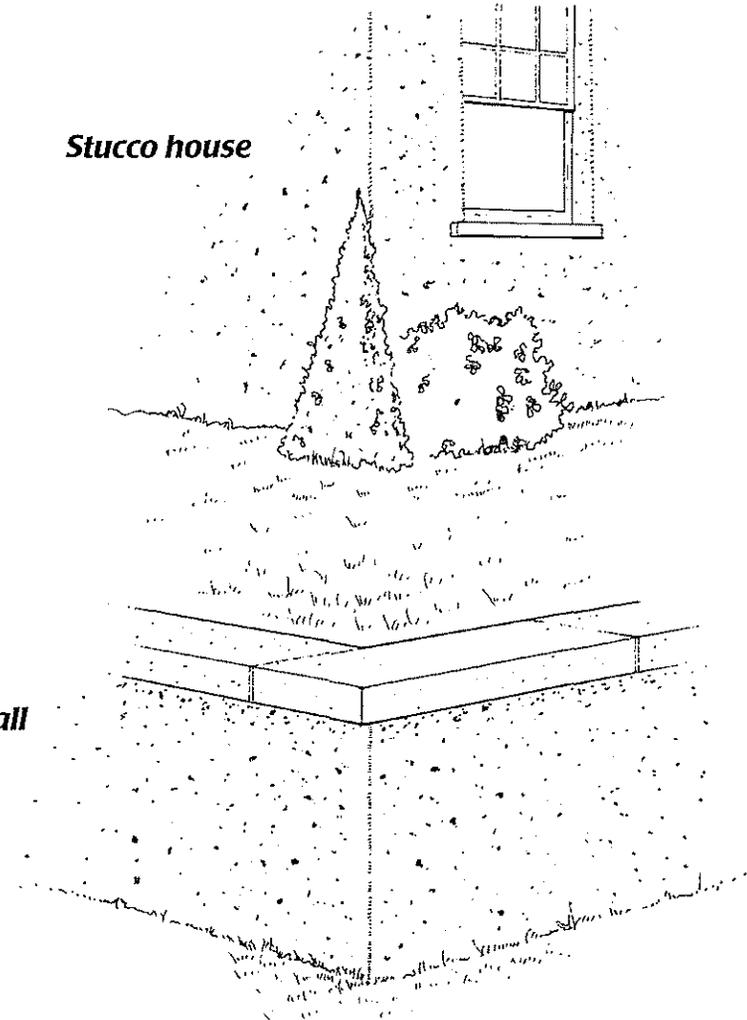


Compatible Masonry Retaining Walls

Building a retaining wall where none ever existed is generally discouraged. However, in some instances, it may be permissible. If you build a new retaining wall in a historic district, it must be masonry and the design and materials must be compatible with the style and materials of the house.

For example, a stucco-clad retaining wall is the logical choice to go with a stuccoed house while a compatible retaining wall for a frame house would generally match the masonry foundation of the building. The do's and don'ts of designing traditional retaining walls for older properties are highlighted on the next three pages.

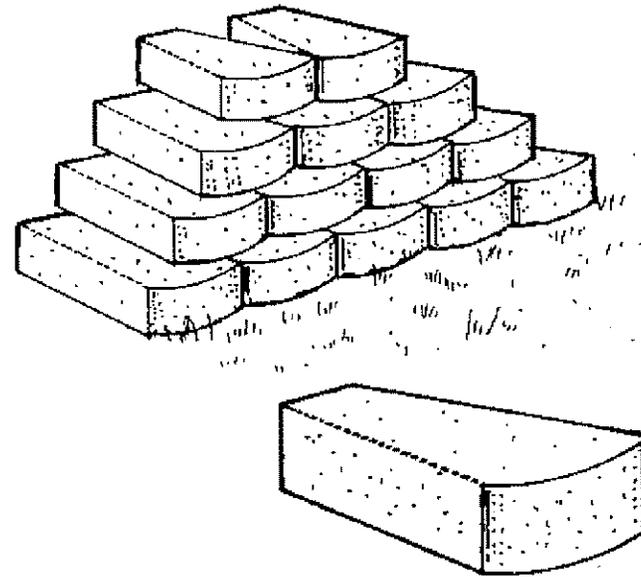
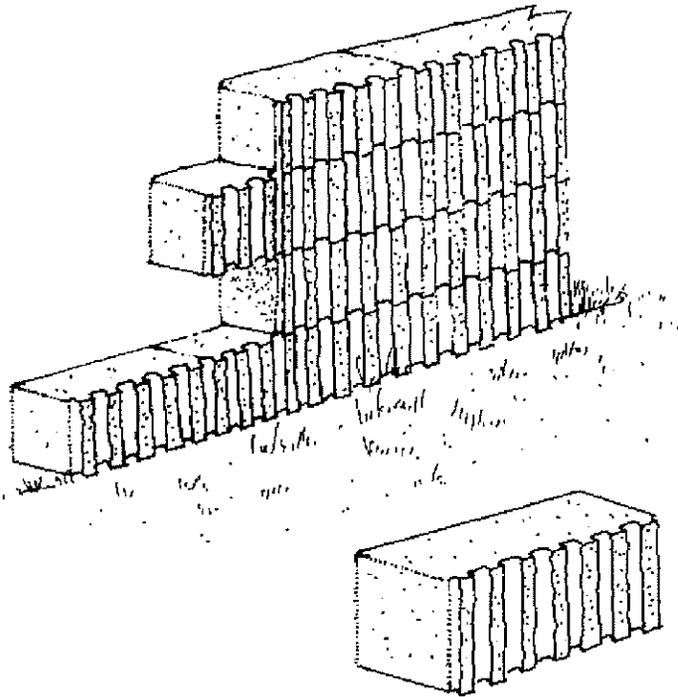
Stucco house



Stucco-clad masonry retaining wall



Interlocking Concrete Block Retaining Walls

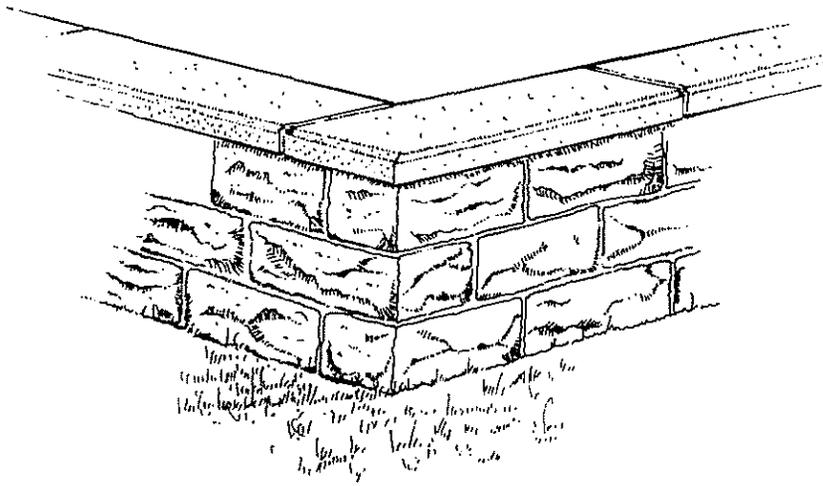


Interlocking concrete blocks are a modern landscape innovation that is not compatible with the architecture of houses built before 1940. Their use is generally not permitted in historic districts now, but as new products are developed it is possible that a type of interlocking block system could appear that might be permitted.

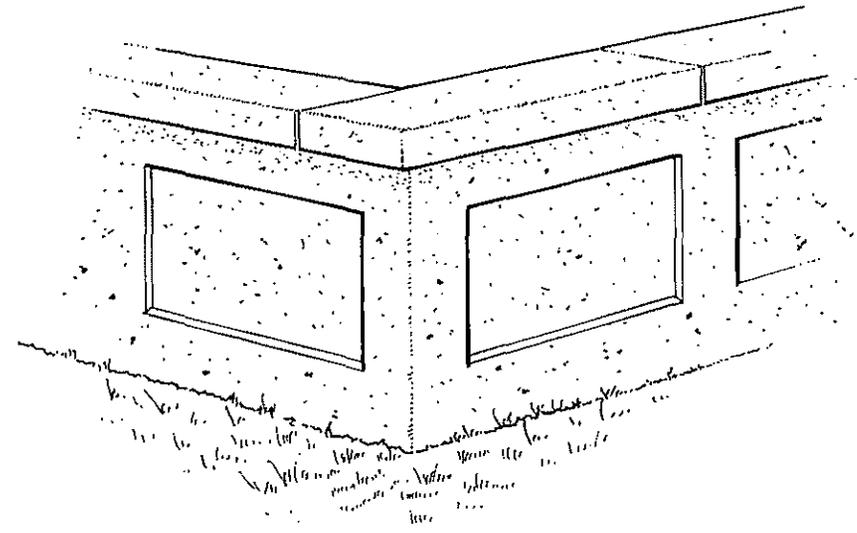


Masonry Retaining Walls

The following designs illustrate several types of retaining walls that are compatible with the architecture of houses built before 1940. Remember, however, that the decision to build a retaining wall should be made carefully because of the cost involved and the potential negative impact on the character of a neighborhood.



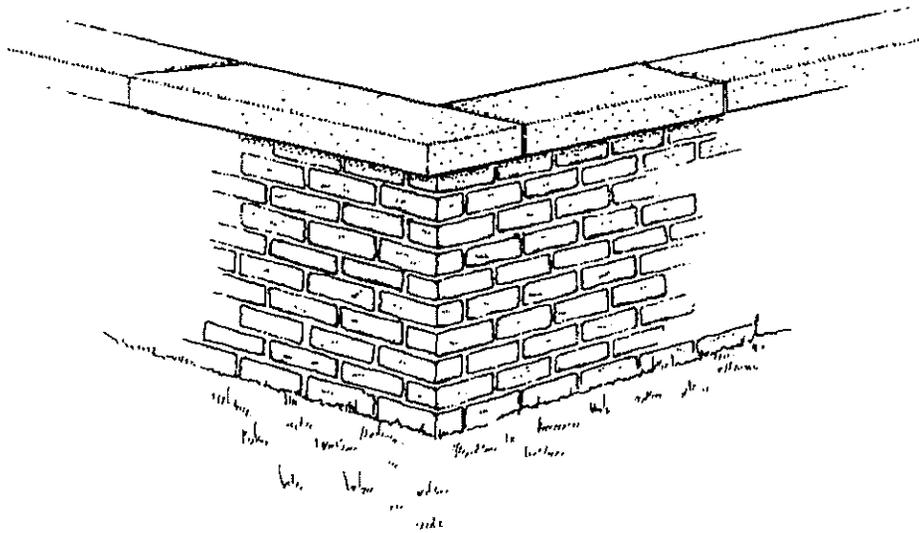
Rusticated Limestone
1860-1900



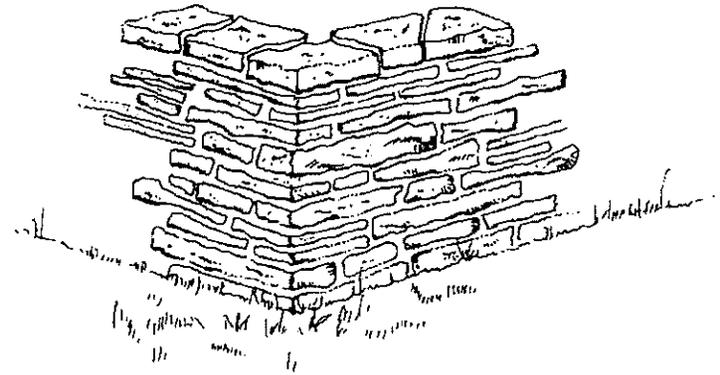
Poured Concrete or Concrete with a Stucco Finish
1900-1940



Masonry Retaining Walls



Brick wall with stone coping
1890-1940



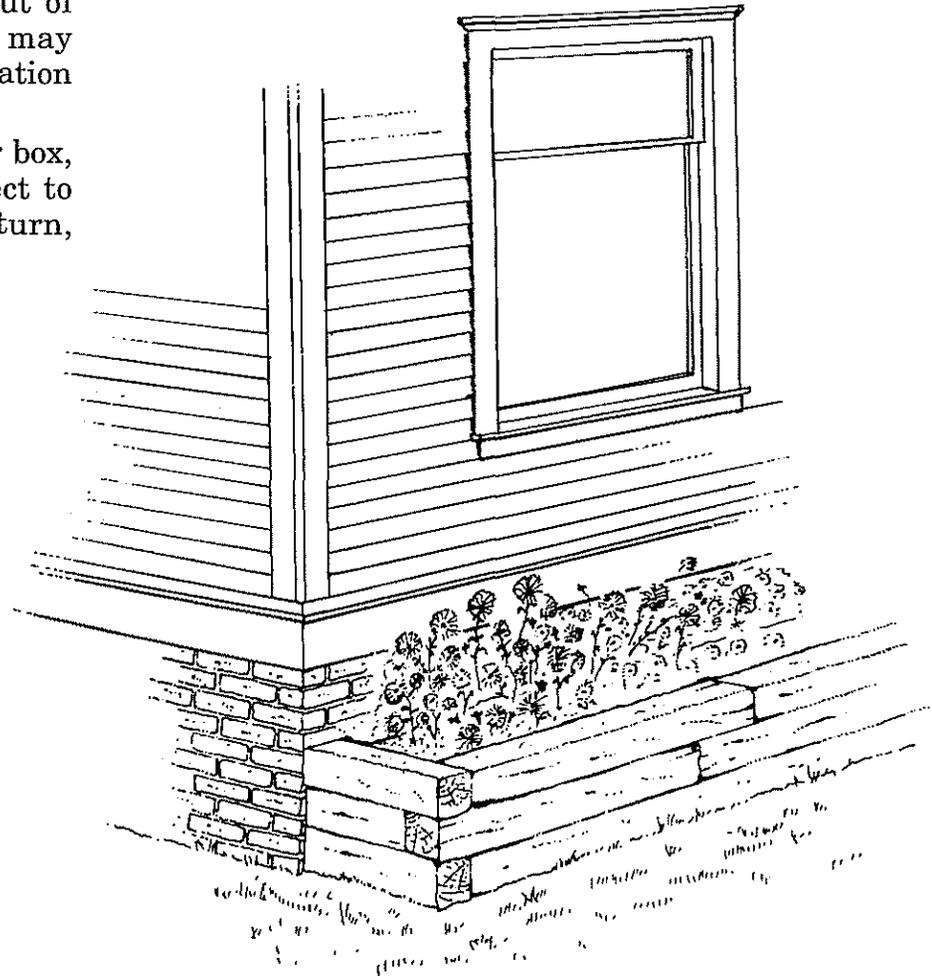
Random Rubble
Early 20th century Period Revival Styles



Planter Boxes

Do not build a planter box against the foundation of an older house. Not only does this type of planter look out of place with the architecture of an older house, but it may cause moisture and water damage to the adjacent foundation walls.

Another drawback is that a wooden foundation planter box, even if it is made of pressure-treated lumber, is subject to decay which can attract carpenter ants that will, in turn, invade the house.

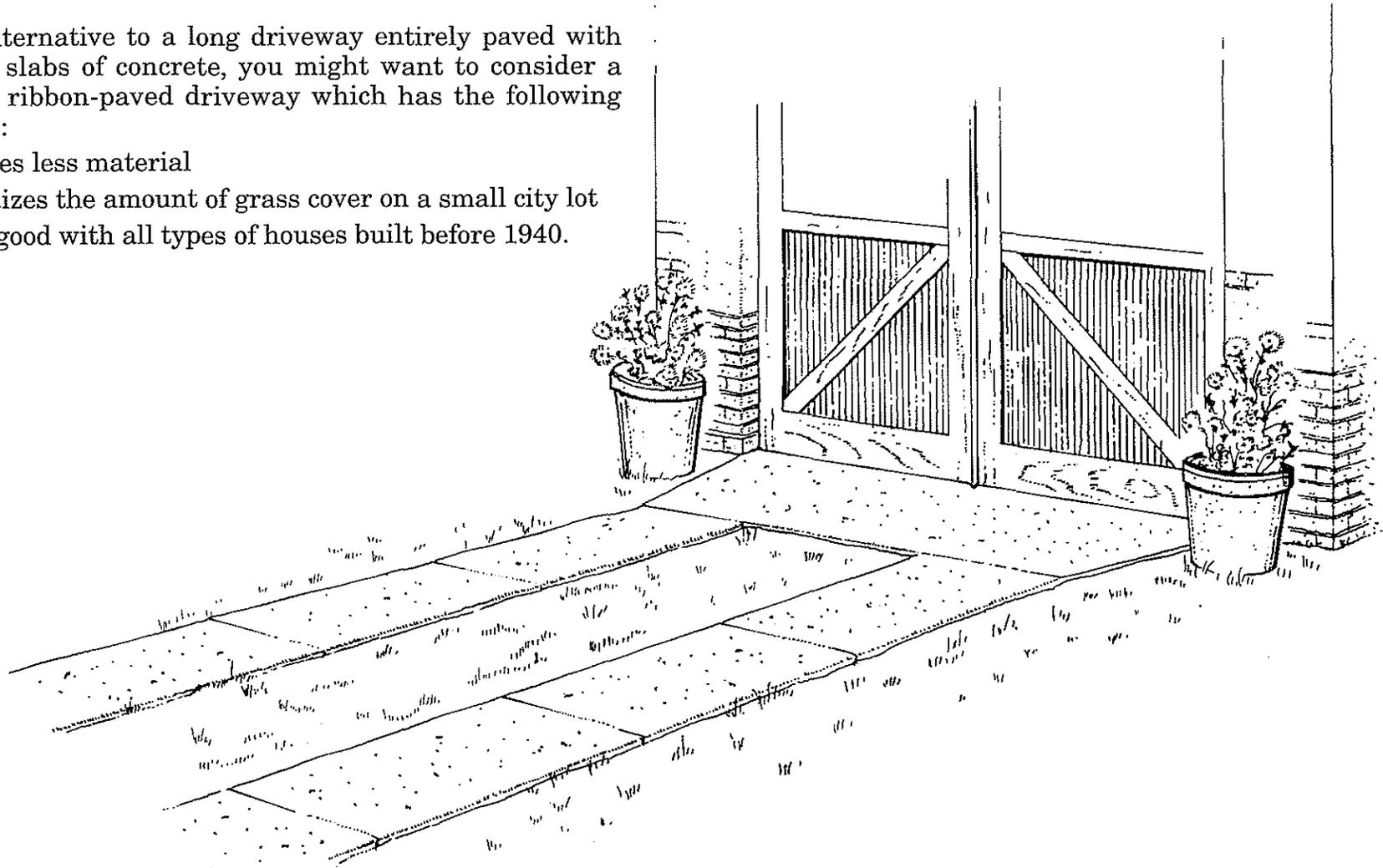




Ribbon-Paved Side Driveways

As an alternative to a long driveway entirely paved with monolithic slabs of concrete, you might want to consider a traditional ribbon-paved driveway which has the following advantages:

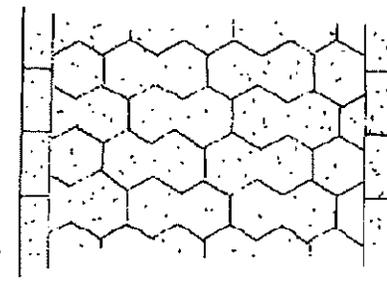
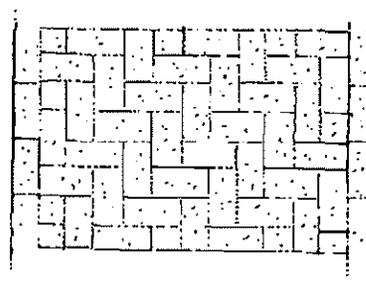
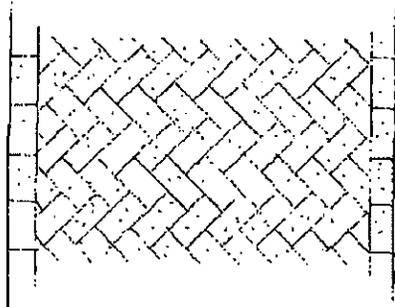
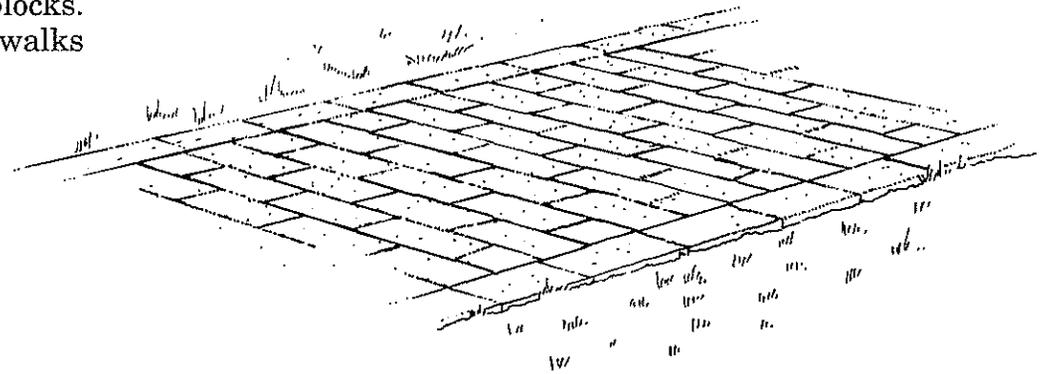
- Requires less material
- Maximizes the amount of grass cover on a small city lot
- Looks good with all types of houses built before 1940.





Brick Paved Walks and Drives

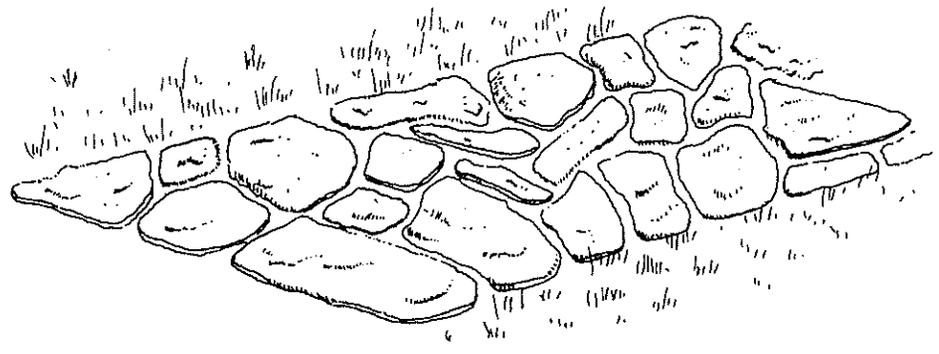
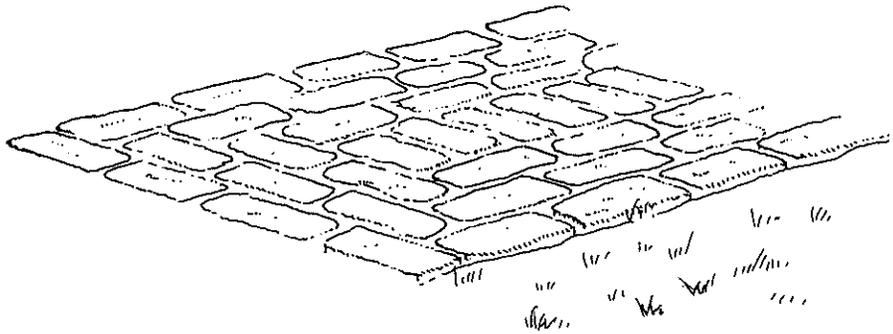
Walks and drives paved with modular bricks are an excellent alternative to the monotony of large slabs of concrete. These designs are compatible with most older houses in the city built before 1940. A recent innovation is the development of colored concrete stamped to imitate brick or paving blocks. In some cases this may be an acceptable treatment for walks and driveways in historic districts.





Stone Paved Walks and Drives

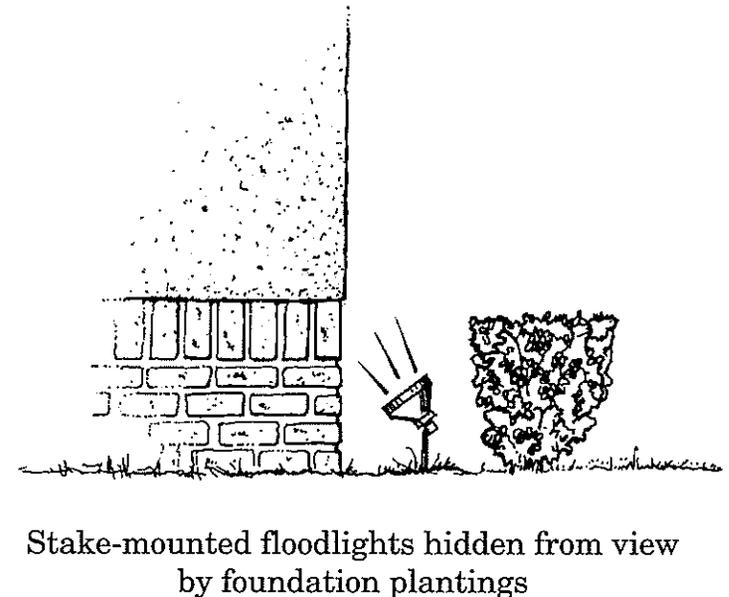
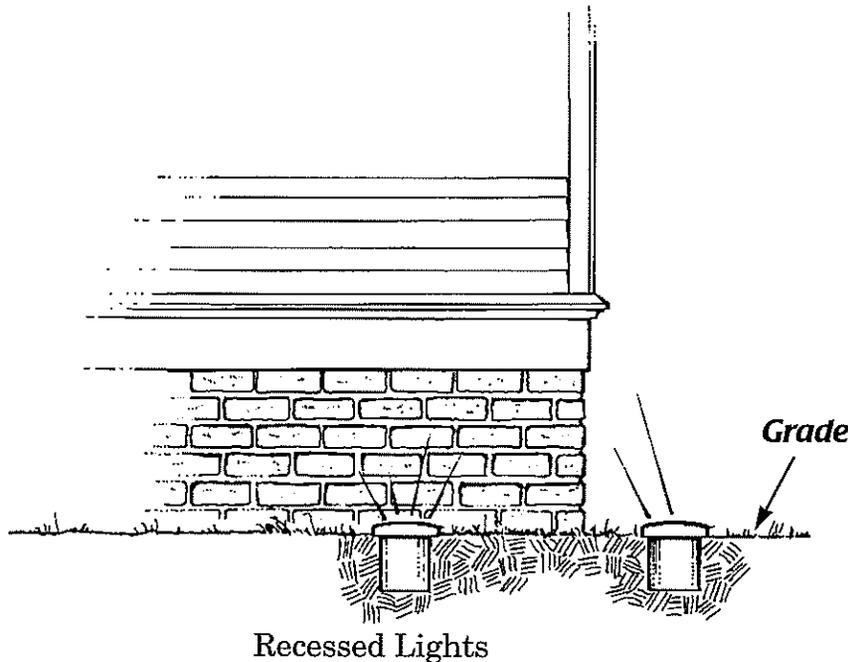
Stone paving is another effective means to add character to publicly visible walks and drives. Thick rectangular paving stones or slates are compatible with houses built before 1910. Large, rustic, irregular slabs of limestone generally look best with early twentieth century period revival style houses. In some cases, colored concrete stamped to imitate slate or stone may be acceptable for use in historic districts.





Foundation Lights

Architectural lighting is a modern innovation that can highlight the appearance of an older house at night. The light fixtures should be installed near the foundation and be hidden from view whenever possible. Recessed floodlights are the most versatile and inconspicuous type of architectural floodlighting. Stake-mounted, above-ground fixtures should be installed where they can be hidden by shrubs or other foundation plantings.





Garden Lights

Garden lights, a modern type of outdoor accent lighting, do not complement the landscapes of older houses and therefore should not be installed where they would be visible from the street. They look particularly out-of-place when they are used to line a front walk or placed in front of foundation plantings.

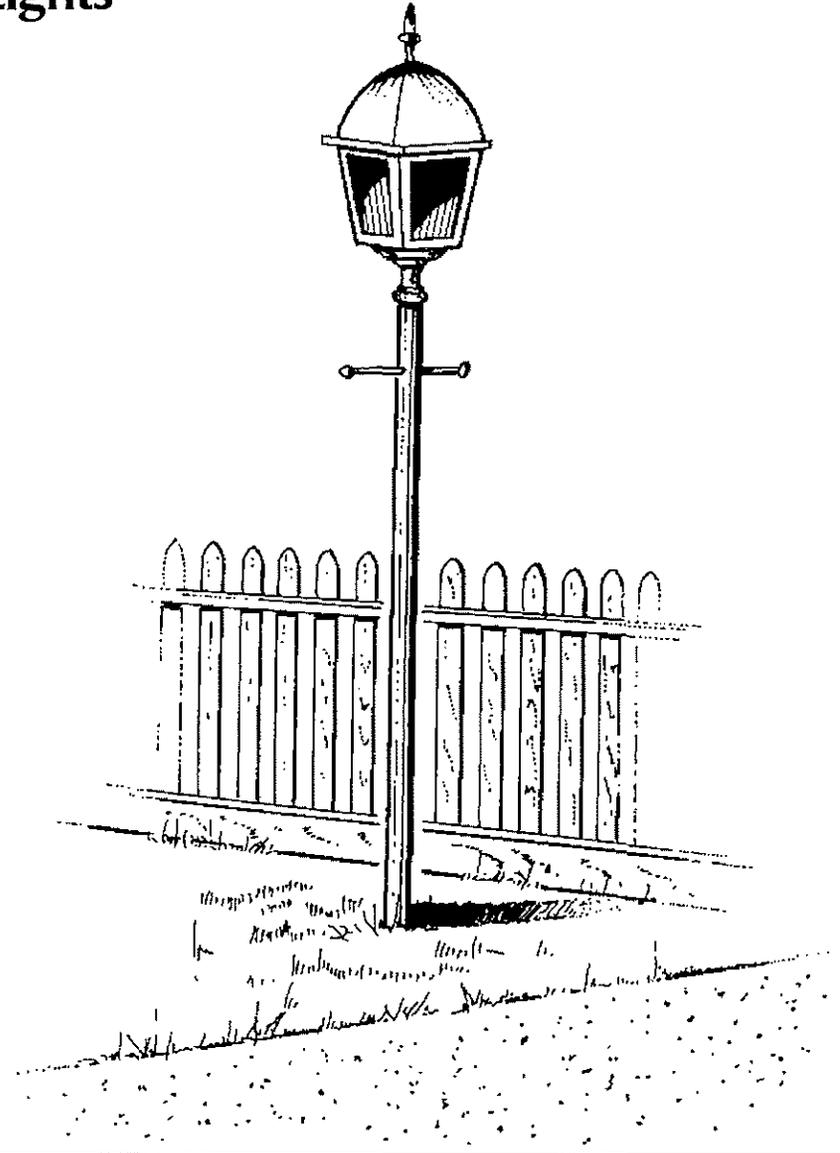


Landscaping



Post Lights

Front yard post lights, even those of traditional design, are generally associated with houses built after World War II and should not be installed in the publicly-visible yards of pre-1940 houses.



Appendix

Nine Commonly Asked Questions about the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission

On June 16, 1981, the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee created Section 308-81 of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances establishing the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission. The Historic Preservation Commission consists of nine, unpaid members and is staffed by the Department of City Development.

The Commission is charged with the responsibility of assisting in the preservation of the city's historic and cultural heritage by identifying buildings, sites, objects and districts which reflect elements of Milwaukee's cultural, social, economic, political or architectural history. The Commission aids in safeguarding this historic legacy by recommending that the Common Council designate eligible properties as local historic sites and districts. After designation, all exterior alterations to these buildings are subject to Commission approval.

1. What properties are eligible for designation?

Any structure, site or district which possesses architectural, cultural or historical significance to the City of Milwaukee may be considered for designation. Age alone is not a criterion for designation. In general, a structure, site or district is considered to possess significance if it:

- (1) Exemplifies the development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin or of the United States.
- (2) Was the site of a significant historic event.
- (3) Is identified with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture or development of the City of



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Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin, or of the United States.

- (4) Portrays the buildings in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
- (5) Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.
- (6) Is the work of an artist, architect, craftsman, or master builder whose individual works have influenced the development of the City of Milwaukee, State of Wisconsin, or of the United States.
- (7) Embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant architectural innovation.
- (8) Is related to other structures which taken together are eligible for historic designation as an historic district.
- (9) Is such a well established feature of a neighborhood, that it constitutes a visual landmark.

2. How are sites designated?

Anyone may petition the Historic Preservation Commission to consider the designation of a site by obtaining an application from the Commission staff. Applications are reviewed by the staff for completeness and accuracy before being presented to the Commission. Upon reaching the preliminary conclusion that a site appears to satisfy the criteria for designation, the Commission instructs the staff to prepare a Historic Designation Study Report and to contact the owner or owners of the affected property and inform them of the justification for, and probable effects of, the proposed designation. A minimum of twenty-five days after the notification letters are mailed, a public hearing is held. At the public hearing, the Commission decides whether or not to recommend the site for designation by the Common Council and informs the property

owners of their recommendation by letter. After a hearing by the City Plan Commission, the Common Council votes to either approve or deny the designation. If the designation is approved, staff notifies the owners of the affected property and files a notice of the designation with the Milwaukee County Register of Deeds to be recorded with the deeds for the properties. Once notified of the designation, the Commissioner of Building Inspection will not issue a building permit for exterior work on a designated individual historic building, or a structure within an historic district, without first obtaining written approval from the Historic Preservation Commission in the form of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

3. What are the advantages of having a site declared historic by the City of Milwaukee?

Other than the prestige and honor associated with having your building officially recognized as an important element of the City's cultural heritage, designation affords property owners the opportunity to exercise a greater measure of control over the future of their properties and neighborhoods than would otherwise be the case. By requiring that proposed new construction and exterior alterations be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission, the architectural integrity of Milwaukee's historic buildings and neighborhoods can be safeguarded against unsympathetic projects that would destroy the qualities that have made some buildings visual landmarks to generations of city residents and have given some neighborhoods their special character and identity. In addition, city designation makes property owners eligible to use the State Historic Building Code, Chapter ILHR 70 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. This alternative code is intended to make it easier to rehabilitate historic buildings up to building code standards while still retaining important

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historic features that might not be allowed under the regular building code. Only owners of designated historic buildings are eligible to use the Historic Building Code.

4. *What is the purpose of the Commission's design review responsibility and how does the review process work?*

When a property is designated as a local historic site, it is protected from unsympathetic exterior alteration. Inappropriate exterior remodeling is the most common cause of loss of historic character. Although often well-intentioned, such alterations as the replacement of original window sash with modern units of unsympathetic design, the installation of vinyl or aluminum siding, or the removal of architectural features such as eaves brackets, bargeboards, window caps or porches destroy the architectural integrity of an old building and may actually lessen its resale value. Some alterations may even result in irreversible structural deterioration. To prevent these unfortunate consequences from occurring, property owners are required to submit for review any projects they wish to undertake which will affect the exterior appearance of their designated historic building. If the project is consistent with the historic character of the building or historic district, the Commission will issue a Certificate of Appropriateness and no further historical review would be required. In the event that the Commission finds that a proposed project will violate the historic integrity of the building or the district in which it is located, it will not grant approval for the work and will schedule a public hearing within thirty days. In the period between hearings, the Commission will attempt to negotiate changes to the project that will render it acceptable. If no acceptable compromise can be reached prior to or during the public hearing, the Commission will refuse to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, with the result that the project cannot go forward. The aggrieved applicant may appeal to the Common Council, which may reverse or modify

the decision of the Commission, although this rarely happens.

More detailed information on how to go about getting a project reviewed can be obtained by contacting the Historic Preservation Commission staff at 286-5705.

5. *Can designated historic properties be demolished?*

Applications for demolition are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission in the same manner as applications for alterations. In reviewing a demolition request, the Commission takes into consideration the effect that the proposed demolition would have upon the historic district in which the building is located or, in the case of an individually designated structure, the value of the resource to the cultural heritage of Milwaukee. It weighs these considerations against the owner's right to a reasonable use of the property, the potential public benefit of the proposed project requiring the demolition, and the severity of the hardship that would be inflicted upon the owner should the request be denied. After taking into account these factors, the Commission may either grant or deny the request or defer making a determination for a period of up to one year while it attempts to find a method to save the endangered structure. During the period the Commission is considering a demolition request, the owner is enjoined from taking any action that would damage or lead to further deterioration of the building. In the event that the Commission denies a demolition request, the owner can appeal to the Common Council, which may reverse or modify the Commission's decision by a two-thirds vote.

6. *Will owners be forced to restore or improve their historic properties if they are designated?*

Designation of a structure, site or district is not intended to force property owners to recreate the original appearance of a building or neighborhood or to make it like a museum.

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Property owners will not be forced to improve their buildings, nor will they be required to restore them to their exact original appearance or recreate missing architectural features. Instead, property owners will be encouraged to properly maintain their buildings and take pride in their neighborhood. When an owner contemplates making improvements to a building, the Commission will attempt to ensure that the work is done in a manner sympathetic to the structure's historic character and in conformance with good construction practices. The Commission staff includes trained professionals with expertise in historic preservation who stand ready to assist Milwaukee residents with advice on the proper way to maintain and restore older buildings.

7. Will new construction be prevented at historic sites?

In designating a historic site or district, the Historic Preservation Commission is seeking to give recognition to a cultural resource that is still a viable asset to the community. The Commission does not want an area to stop growing and improving just because it has been designated as historic. As a result, new construction that is sympathetic to its surroundings in style, size, scale, materials and color will be allowed. A new building or an addition should be designed to respect the architectural integrity of the major publicly visible elevations of the older buildings around it or should be located completely out of sight.

8. Will property taxes be increased as a result of historic designation?

The City of Milwaukee Tax Assessor's office does not consider historic designation as a factor when computing property tax assessments. It is sometimes the case that historic designation coincides with a general increase in property values in a neighborhood, but historic designation alone does not

increase taxes. Property is revalued for tax purposes only as a result of an increase or decrease in what buildings in a particular area are selling for or, in the case of some commercial property, are renting for.

9. How does one obtain an application to have a building or neighborhood declared historic or request permission to make changes to an already designated property?

To obtain either type of application or for any other information about the Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission and its programs, please contact the Commission staff.

Historic Preservation Commission

Department of City Development

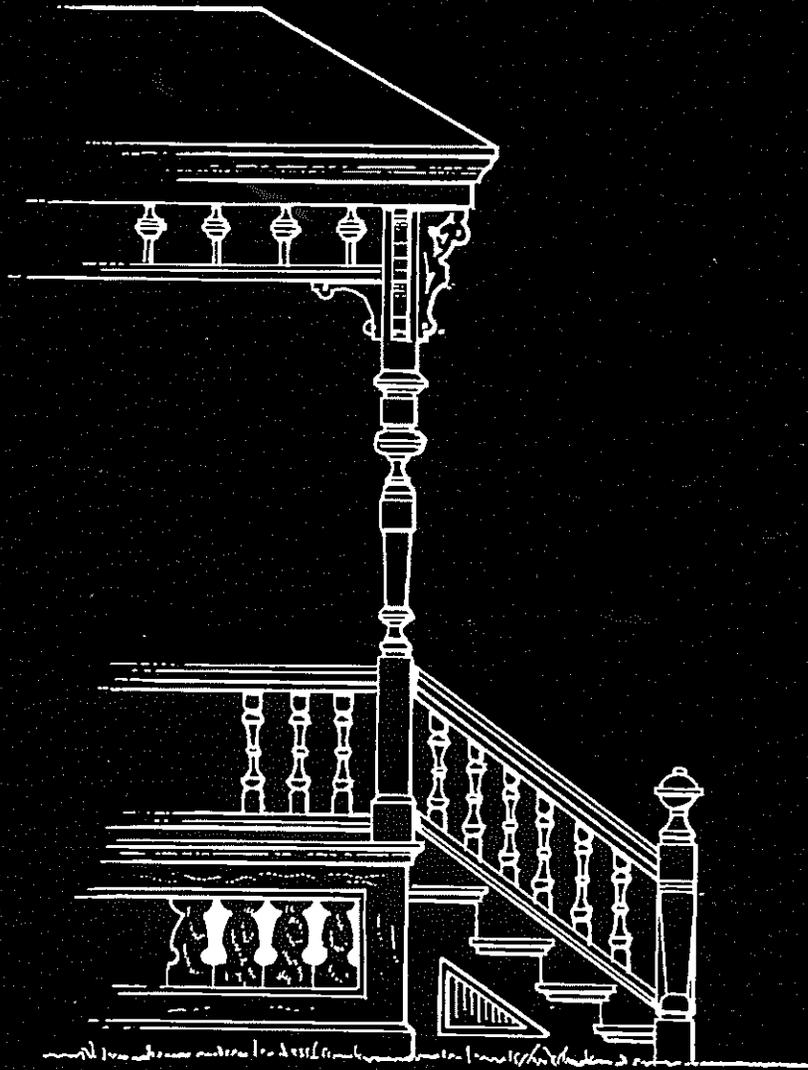
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