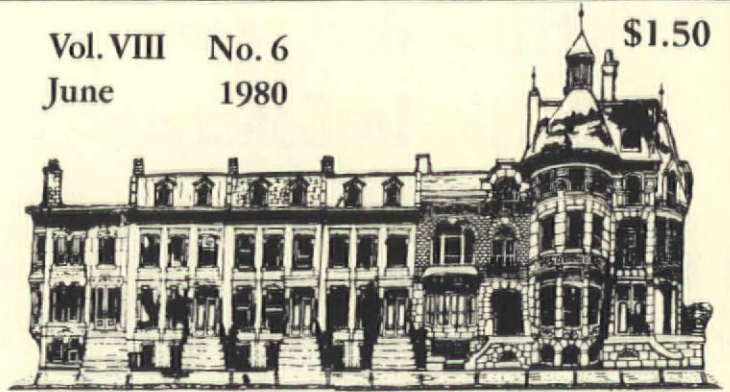


THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

Vol. VIII No. 6
June 1980

\$1.50



Restoration And Maintenance Techniques For The Antique House

Front Gardens In The City

By Dan Maciejak

ONCE STRUCTURAL AND AESTHETIC RESTORATION of a city house is completed, the next challenge to be met is often the renovation of the front and rear yards. Some frequent concerns that arise are: Retaining visibility of the front of the house from the street for security purposes; using low maintenance plant materials, or those which may grow slowly; using plants resistant to insect blight and disease and unattractive to wandering animals. They might provide interesting seasonal variation, or look good at any time by changing little; resist burning by winter sun and wind, be drought resistant, provide non-poisonous fruit for inquisitive children to eat; and resist vandalism with thorns or resilient stems.

THERE ARE NO PLANTS that can do all of the above; there are, however, plants which would fulfill much of the criteria: Providing the homeowner with an opportunity to complete a project which will not cry out for renewed effort and care, but will remain aesthetically pleasing for a number of years.

PLANTINGS are expressive of individual taste. They may provide a unique setting for each house in a row of similar facades. They will reinforce architectural stonework with compatible massing or lighten its aspect with fragile branching and transient color. Fine textured leaves of Winged Euonymus may enhance the informality of a wood frame structure. A Pachysandra ground cover would provide a textured base for clumps of



In This Issue

Setting Tiles In Mud.....	62
A Slate Roof In Washington, D.C.....	64
Restorer's Notebook.....	70
Restoration Design File #3.....	71
Free Ads For Subscribers.....	72

Coming Next Month

CREATING AN OLD-FASHIONED PANTRY

Hosta, in which are set groupings of ferns. Behind these a mass of Catawba Rhododendron would complete the mood of relaxed elegance.

BUGLEWEED WITH DEEP BRONZE foliage and striking blue flower accents the grey green of a group of Creeping Juniper. A stand of Yucca could highlight a portion of this planting. Soft white Yucca flowers on tall spikes appear later in the summer leaving a decorative seed pod. This is a hardy sun-baked mood working well with light painted stone or wood.

THE SENTIMENTAL GARDEN set on a precious little lawn could contain from back to front Sweet Brier Rose, (scented foliage following a rain) Day Lily clumps and Peonies surrounded by a protective hedge of Barberry.

A SMOKETREE, large Hibiscus or group of Hercules Club of large size might be placed in a central location to immediately dominate a space covered for easy maintenance with English Ivy. Here competition is absent, and decisiveness exemplified.

QUICK SEASONAL EFFECTS may be obtained with Ornamental Corn planted as a screen in front of which may be grown quickly a few broad leaved Castor-oil plants set on a small lawn.

(Continued on pg. 66)

Setting Bathroom Wall Tile In Concrete

AROUND THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, it was common practice to line bathroom walls with white ceramic tile. These tiles were set in concrete--which made for a solid and long-lasting job. In today's jargon, the setting of tiles in concrete is often called a "mud job."

WHEN TILES ARE INSTALLED TODAY, most often they are affixed to a plywood backing with adhesive (sometimes called a "glue job"). In fact, many tile installers no longer know how to install tiles in concrete. And most do-it-yourself books ignore the subject entirely.

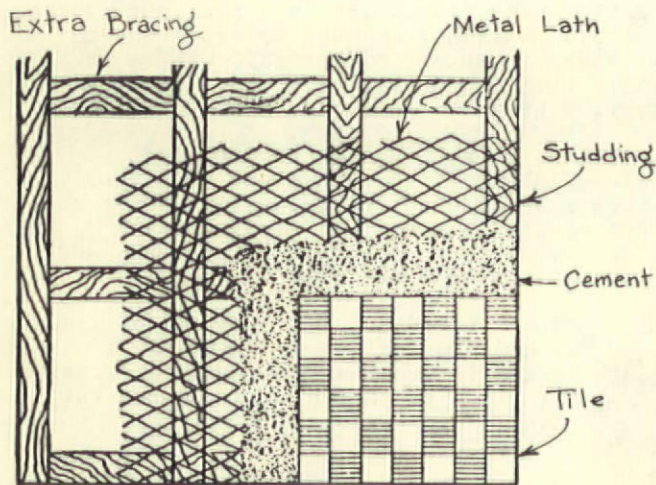
FOR THOSE READERS who are re-creating that type of tiled bathroom wall--or who are supervising a mason--we are reproducing here directions for installing tiles in concrete. The instructions come from a 1906 text "Concretes, Cements, Mortars, Plasters & Stucco," by Fred T. Hodgson.

Preparing The Wall

WHEN TILES are to be placed on studding, the studding should be well braced by filling in between the studding with brick set in mortar to the height of the tile work. Or the brick work may be omitted, and extra studding put in and thoroughly bridged. The object is to have as little spring in the wall as possible. This studding is then covered with metal lathing.

THE LATH IS COVERED with a rough coating of cement mortar, composed of one part Portland cement and two parts sharp clean sand. Hair should be mixed with the cement mortar to make it adhere more closely to the lath. The cement mortar should be ½-in. thick, or sufficient to make an even and true surface to within one inch of the intended finish surface of the

Fig. 1--Brace Studding & Apply Metal Lath



THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL®

Published Monthly For People Who Love Old Houses

Editor Clem Labine
 Decorative Arts Editor Carolyn Flaherty
 Assistant Editor Patricia Poore
 Production Manager Michael Carew
 Circulation Director Paul T. McLoughlin
 Circulation Supervisor Joan O'Reilly
 Circulation Assistant Charles Johnson
 Research Assistant Katharine M. Conley
 Technical Consultant Alan D. Keiser
 Midwest Editor Tom H. Gerhardt
 Contributing Editor R.A. Labine, Sr.

Published by The Old-House Journal Corporation, 69A Seventh Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217. Tel. (212) 636-4514. Subscriptions \$16/yr. in U.S.; \$18 in Canada (U.S. funds). Not available elsewhere. Printed at Royal Offset Co., 34 West 15th St., NYC 10011. Contents of The Old-House Journal® are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without specific permission in writing from The Editor.

tile. This assumes a ½-in. tile and ½-in. of final bedding mortar.

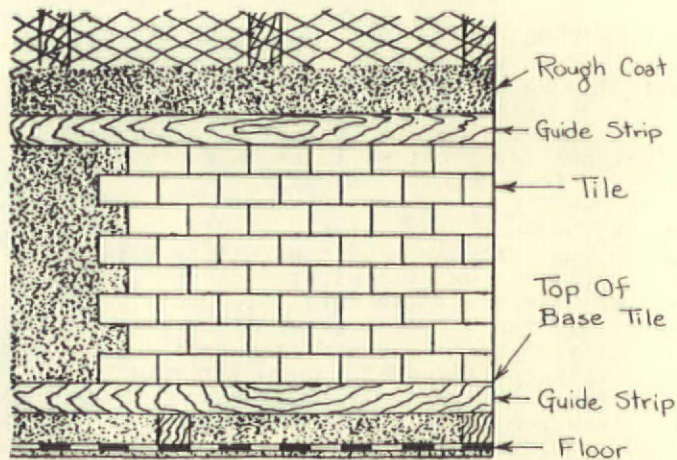
THE FACE OF THE ROUGH CEMENT COAT should be roughly scratched and allowed to harden for at least one day before starting to lay the tile.

Preparing The Mortar

MORTAR for bedding the tiles should be of the same cement/sand composition as used for rough coating of the lath. If any lime is mixed with the cement mortar for setting the tiles, it should never exceed 10%. Great care must be used to have the lime well slaked, and made free from all lumps by running through a coarse sieve, in order to guard against "heaving" or "swelling," and thus loosening or lifting the tiles.

THE ROUGH CEMENT COAT should be thoroughly brushed to remove all dust and small particles

Fig. 2--Using Wood Guide Strips To Align Wall Tile Before Base Tile Has Been Set



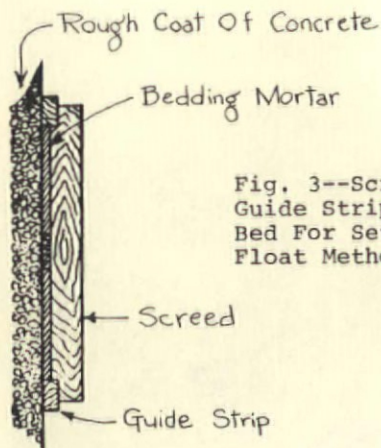


Fig. 3--Screed Running on Wood Guide Strips Makes Level Mortar Bed For Setting Tiles Via The Float Method

adhering to it, then wet well before putting on the cement mortar. To ensure a perfect bond, it is best to coat the foundation by brushing over it pure cement mixed in water.

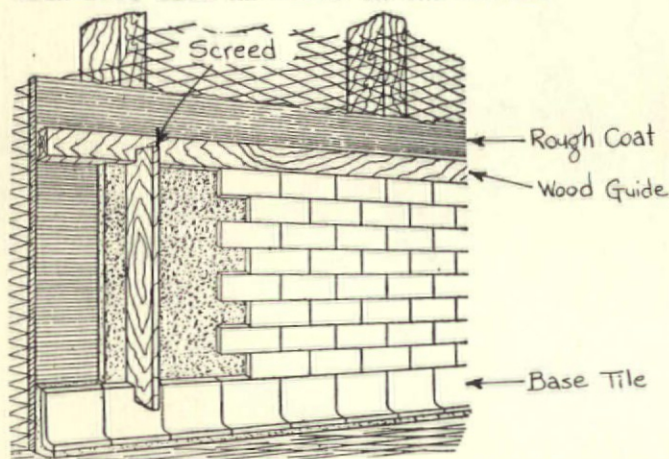
MORTAR should not be too wet, but should be rather stiff, and should always be used fresh, as mortar, when allowed to set before using, loses a portion of its strength. Tiles must always be thoroughly soaked in water before setting, which makes the cement unite to the tiles.

Setting The Tile

TILES FOR THE WALL are first laid out and compared with the plan provided for setting them. Guide strips are then placed on the wall parallel and about two feet apart, the bottom one being so arranged as to allow the base to be set after the body is in place (see Fig. 2). When a cove base is used, it may be necessary to set it first, but in all cases it must be well supported on the concrete. The strips must be placed plumb and even with the intended finished wall line.

THERE ARE TWO different ways to set the wall tile: Floating or buttering. The floating method involves applying the mortar to the foundation coating, and then setting the tile

Fig. 4--Using Screed To Level Bedding Mortar With Base Tile As Guide On The Bottom



into the mortar bed. In the buttering method, the mortar is applied to the individual tile, which is then pressed against the rough cement base coat. Either method gives satisfactory results; the choice depends mainly on the preferences of the person doing the work.

TO FLOAT WALL TILE, the mortar is spread between the guide strips for about five feet at a time, and levelled with a screed notched at each end to allow for the thickness of the tile (Fig. 3). The tiles are placed in position and tamped until they are firmly united to the cement and level with the strips. When the space between the strips is completed (which normally is one side of the room), the strips are removed, and the work is continued in the same manner until complete.

WHEN THE TILES are all set, the joints must be carefully washed out and neatly filled with thinly mixed pure Keene's Cement, and all cement remaining on the tile carefully wiped off.

TO BUTTER WALL TILE, the cement mortar is placed on the back of each tile, and the tile is placed on the wall, and tapped gently until firmly united to the wall and plumb with the guide strips. When the tiles are all set, the joints must be carefully washed out and filled with Keene's Cement, as described above.

Allowing For Fixtures

IF SINKS or other fixtures are to be placed on the wall, provision should be made for them by fastening wood strips on the wall before the first coating of rough cement mortar is put on. The wood strips should be the same thickness as the rough coat. The tiles can be placed over the wood strips by covering them with cement mortar. When the mortar and tiles have thoroughly set, holes can be bored in the tiles for fastening the fixtures, without injury to the tiling. 🏠

Sources For Tile

A number of large tile outlets still carry the 6 in. x 3 in. white tiles that were often used for bathroom wainscoting. Among the sources:

- American Olean, which distributes nationally, makes a 6 x 3 milky white glazed tile called "Caribbean."
- Brooklyn Tile Supply, 184 4th Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217. (212) 875-1789. Store carries 6 x 3 white tile, but does not ship.
- Tile Distributors, Inc., 7 Kings Highway, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801. (914) 633-7200. Carries 6 x 3 white tile in store. Will also ship. Call or write for prices and shipping information.

SOURCES for the small white hexagonal floor tiles will be found in the 1980 Old-House Journal Catalog.

Slated For Recovery

By C. M. Giordano
Washington, D.C.

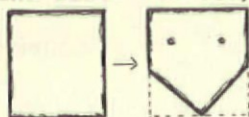


THE HOUSE RESTORED, 1979. Mr. Giordano is hand-scraping the brick to gradually remove paint.

WHEN I BOUGHT this house on Q Street in Washington, D.C., the Mansard roof was in terrible shape. Flashings were deteriorated. The cornice had been ripped off, and the eave covered with tar paper. The slates must have been inferior, because they were flaky and needed to be replaced.

I TOOK IT UPON MYSELF to do the whole job, because I couldn't find a roofer who would do slating. I had the existing slates, as well as the original cornice on the attached house, to use as models for my restoration.

ALL 465 pieces of slate were replaced. I had to both cut and punch the slate I bought from a nearby stone distributor. I cut a point on the exposed end of each 10-in.x12-in. slate, using a slate cutter rented from the stone company. To my surprise, the slate was very easy to cut--you need no experience. After I cut all the slate, I punched two nail holes in each piece--this too was easy. My trial-and-error method was to use an 8-penny nail, a hammer, and two 2x4's about 10 inches long. I'd lay the slate over the 2x4's with a space of 3 inches between them. Then I'd strike the nail sharply, and punch 2 holes about 4 inches from the top of the slate.



Up On The Scaffold

IDID HALF THE ROOF at a time so I could use the intact half as a pattern. First I covered the boards with 30-lb. roofing felt. Next came the starting row of slates, then the first full uncut row at the eave. These overlaid the metal flashing. (See sketch.) I laid the slate with a 2-inch lap, since the slope is so steep. [Normal lap is 3 inches. Lap refers to the part of the slate overlaying the slate two courses below.] In each subsequent row, the point of every slate was placed over the joint in the row below.

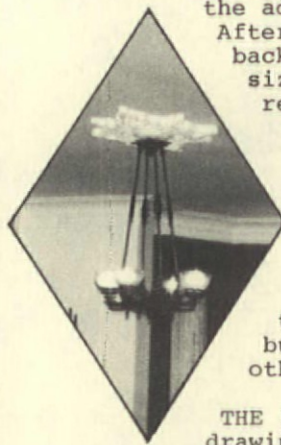
BEFORE THE JOB, I was scared of heights. After I erected the rented scaffold, I climbed out on the scaffold and just sat there for about an hour each day until I got used to being up that high--30 feet.

THE SLATE, roofing paper, galvanized sheet metal, nails, and scaffold rental altogether came out cheaper than hiring a roofer to replace the roof with asphalt shingles. And though I do not proclaim to be a carpenter, replacing the slate roof and the overhanging cornice did not require that much skill. 🏠

REPLACEMENT of the slates and cornice took about four weeks, working only in the evenings and on weekends. Much more extensive was the removal of the porch and then rebuilding the original bay.

THE INTERIOR of this house needed a lot of help too. The first thing to do was to tear out three apartments, one on each floor. This called for removing stoves, plumbing, and all the added partitions.

After the rooms were back to their original sizes and shapes, the rebuilding could begin.



MUCH of the interior was salvaged from other buildings in the area...the mantel, panel doors, an entire stairway, wainscot. On the outside, the railing and the rebuilt bay came from another house in the city.

THE PRETTY GAS LIGHT in the drawing room was found in the alley.

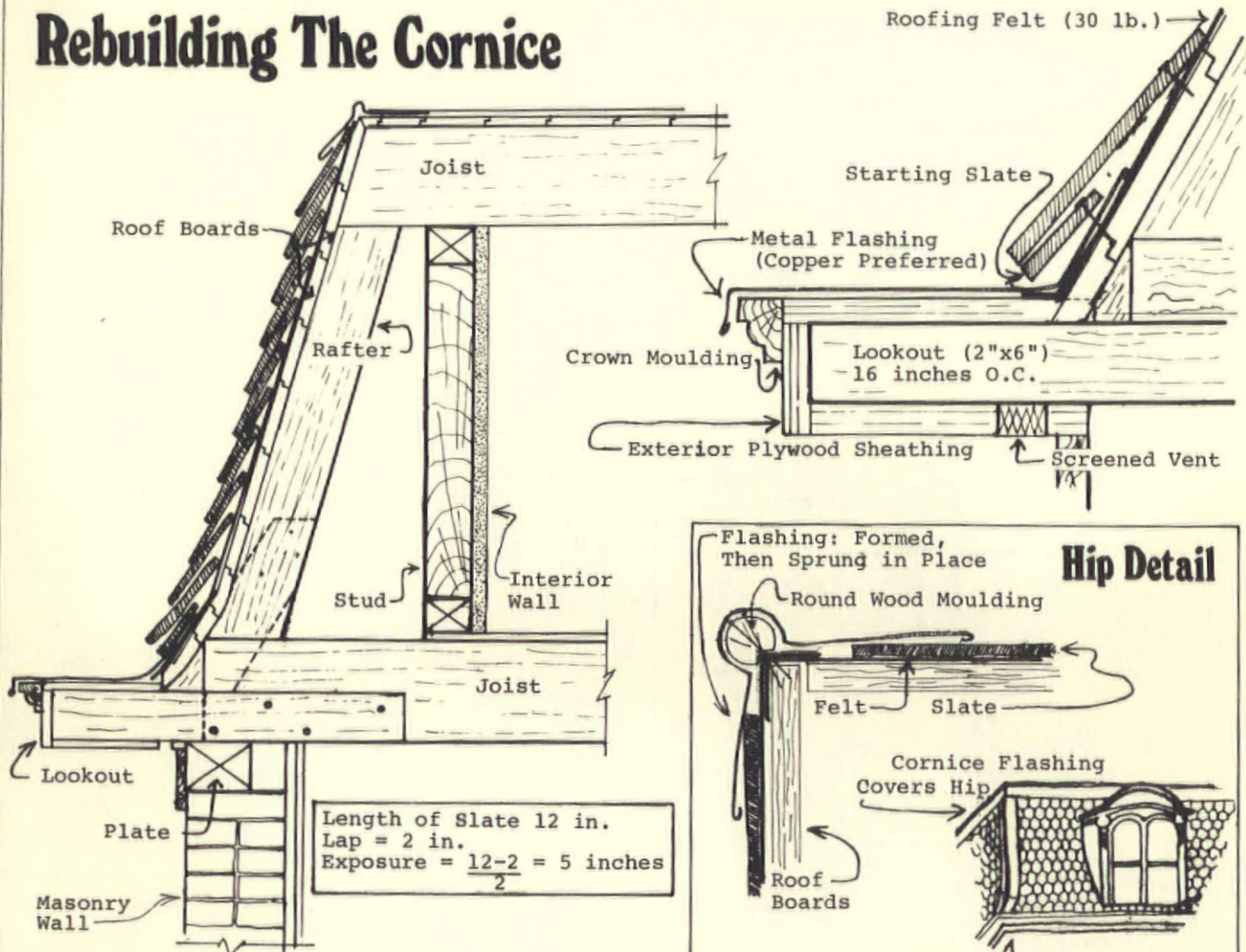


THE HOUSE as purchased in 1977. Porch and tar paper cornice were added later.



1978, and both the Giordano's porch and the porch on the attached house are off.

Rebuilding The Cornice



Charles Burchfield recreated this sort of scene in his mysterious watercolors of woodframe houses in Buffalo, New York.

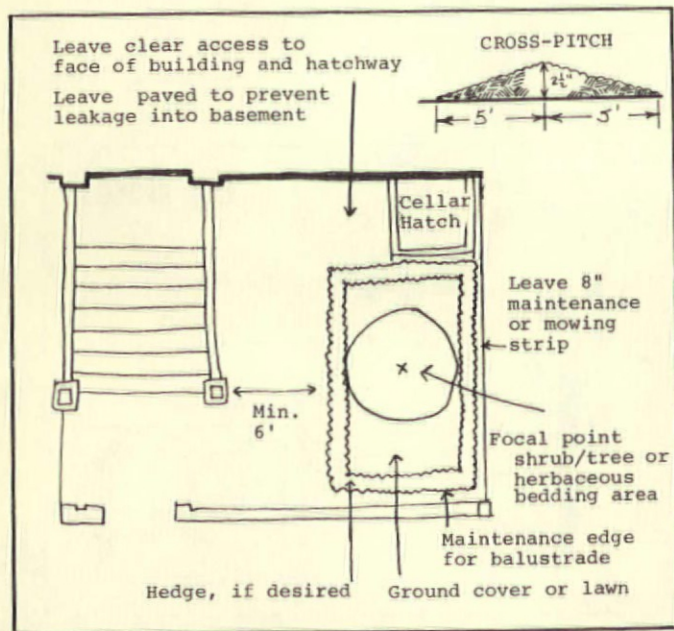
Soil Conditions

APPROACH THE PROJECT from the ground up. The growing medium of the front yard suffers from the usual host of urban ills: Highly acid soils, highly compacted soils, no soil at all. Highly acid soil should be treated with lime until the pH reaches at least 5.5 to 6.7. A measurable change in pH may not be attainable during the first year after lime treatment. If existing soil pH is 4.5 or below, replacement of topsoil becomes necessary. Compacted soils should be loosened with pitchfork and lime, peat moss, leaves, compost or other organic material should be turned under and incorporated into the first foot of soil.

THE REMOVAL OF CONCRETE may reveal a crushed stone or coal ash base which should be excavated to a total depth of one foot and replaced with good quality topsoil. This usually results immediately in a fairly well-drained growing medium, which, when it settles, should be only slightly higher above the surrounding pavement at its highest point. One-half in. per ft. cross-pitch after settling will provide adequate surface drainage. You are now ready to consider planting.

Ground Covers

ESTABLISHING GROUND COVER is an important first step. Ground cover plants generally adapt to all but the hottest or driest street environments. After planting they should be mulched with medium bark chips to a depth of 1-1/2 in. Ground covers improve soil friability by penetrating it with roots, and shield the ground from rain compaction with foliage.



GROUND COVERS should only be planted in the early spring and in the northeast and mid-Atlantic states should be shaded after December 30th with straw or Christmas tree boughs for their first winter to avoid damaging (and unsightly) leaf burn. Once the ground cover is established, winter mulching is not necessary. Some useful ground covers for shade and bright sun commonly used between 1850 and 1900 are mentioned in the plant list.

Hedges

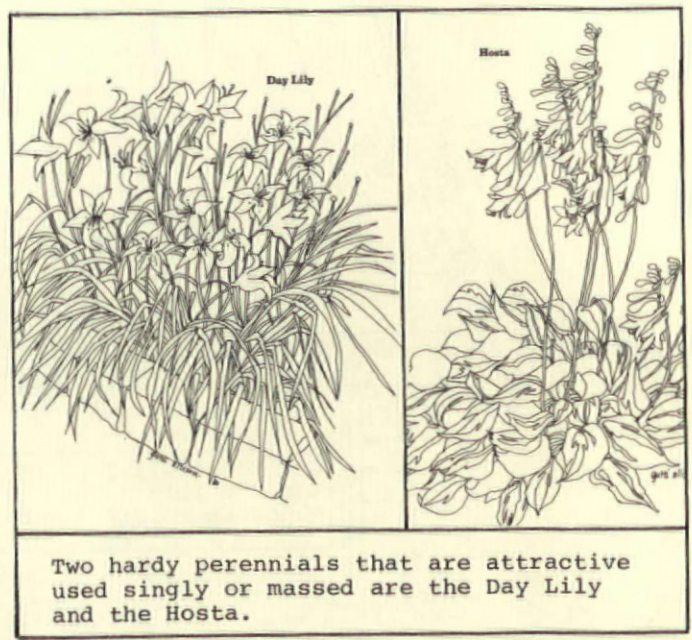
HAVING SELECTED and planted ground cover for the area, the owner may wish to add further plantings. At this time a hedge may be an important consideration or a small tree, flowers or flowering shrubs. Compact and slow growing hedge material may prove best.

WHEN AN IMMEDIATE EFFECT is required, hedge shrubs should be 18-24 in. tall to begin with and spaced 12-21 in. on center along the edge of the planted area. Evergreen hedges tend to disfigure if site conditions vary as they might in south facing yards where day and night temperatures and humidity fluctuate wildly.

Location Factors

BEAR IN MIND, though, that the area in the shelter of the stoop will provide more stable humidity and protection for evergreen plantings. Deciduous materials and evergreens such as Juniper and Yew are more durable under stress conditions, while broad-leaved evergreens usually thrive in the north facing yard, due in part to the comparative coolness, shallower range of temperatures, and higher soil moisture.

THE NORTH AND SOUTH SITUATIONS are similar respectively (in their most moderate) to east and west locations, but these show a greater variation of seasonal light. The winter sun rises later and sets earlier in the east and



Two hardy perennials that are attractive used singly or massed are the Day Lily and the Hosta.

west quadrants of the sky making both these orientations cooler than southern exposures. Western exposures in the Mid-Atlantic and New England states may be dry as well as cool when winds come out of the West. Eastern exposures may remain wetter after summer storms, and show freezing characteristics similar to northern exposures. Plants in the list that tolerate or enjoy greater sunlight will adapt to western exposure. Plants favoring shade usually adapt to the damper conditions associated with the eastern exposure.

Trees And Shrubs

EVERGREENS, which usually prefer acid soil, are adversely affected by alkalinity in soil (derived from acid rain which causes leaching of nearby concrete pavements and may raise soil pH temporarily). The yearly spring-time application of an acid-reaction fertilizer prepared for evergreens usually controls this problem.

THE HEDGE SURROUNDING a ground cover planting adheres to the basic Victorian symmetrical scheme. The focal point of this space was often sculptural, utilizing an urn or a mound on which decorative perennial or tender herbaceous plants were grown. Bold leafed plants or exotic annuals with bizarre flowers were often used..

SMALL TREES and numerous exotics were used, but often grew too large, or suffered from storm damage and urban pollution, eventually succumbing.

IN LOCATING TREES AND SHRUBS, be careful to avoid all underground utility lines so as not to damage them with tools or disturb them with moisture-seeking roots. The small trees and shrubs in the plant list generally have shallow and spreading roots and won't be a nuisance. All trees should have their trunks wrapped in burlap or paper to protect them from sunscald.

FERTILIZERS are useful, but should not be applied except as stated on the packaging. Even then, fertilizers may encourage excessive growth requiring pruning, or excessive tender growth which could be burned back by cold and sunny winter weather. After plants are well-established only minimal amounts of fertilizer are needed.

RHODODENDRONS AND EVERGREENS require an acid reaction fertilizer, high in nitrogen. The first figure on the bag should be about twice the sum of the other two digits such as 10-6-4. The components of fertilizer are, in order, nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and water-soluble potash. For deciduous plants a fertilizer of 5-10-5 or any high in phosphoric acid is suitable.

FERTILIZERS do not produce results in highly acid soils, subsoils or clay soils where soil nutrients are unavailable to plants. It is better, therefore, to concentrate efforts on soil improvement (by increasing moisture-holding capacity with the addition of organic matter) than to attempt to boost soil productivity with fertilizers.



The Victorian love for bizarre plants in front yards is represented in this 1896 photo of the McBurney cottage in Atlanta, Georgia. A spectacular growth of elephant

ear caladium plants is surrounded by an undulating hedge. Atlanta architect W.T. Downing designed the shingle-style cottage. Photo courtesy of The Atlanta Hist. Society.

Lawns

LAWS ARE A TRADITIONAL PART of front yard gardens. They require a relatively large amount of care concentrated into a small area if they are to have the desired tight and even growth which makes them attractive. Sod often yields disappointing results unless it has a thick root mass (between 1 to 1-1/2 in.) and is grown from fescue (tough meadow grasses) seeds. (Sod of this type is very rare, however.) These grasses will tolerate (better than bluegrass) shade, dryness and unseasonably warm spring weather.

PROVIDE GOOD SURFACE DRAINAGE with a cross pitch to prevent ponding of sod areas. Excessive moisture encourages fungus diseases, often damaging and discoloring the grass. It is almost impossible to establish any type of lawn on the north side of a building where there is less than five hours of direct sunlight a day.

SOIL PREPARATION is again essential. Liberal application of peat moss and humus must be incorporated into the soil to hold moisture without letting soil become soggy. Soil should be made free of clods and raked smooth. Lawns may be seeded in the spring as soon as the ground can be worked.

A LIGHT COVERING OF HAY MULCH or tobacco cloth following seeding and adequate water is essential. (Hay mulch and tobacco cloth are probably only available in rural or suburban garden centers. Pine branches, while not as effective, can be substituted.) Liming and fertilizing should be done at the time of planting, and according to the directions on the seed package. Shade mixes are preferable but if the site is large and has a variety of light conditions, both standard and shade mixes are useful.

ALLOW THE LAWN to grow up to at least 2 in. in height before the first cut. Cut the new lawn to no less than 1-1/2 in. above the ground. Frequent cutting and adequate watering help to establish a strong root system to compete with the weeds.

SHAGGY LAWNS (3 in. or more in height) were common prior to about 1865, losing favor when home mowing equipment became available, popularizing the fashion in close cropped lawns after that date.



YOUR LAWN may need less care once it is established, but any small lawn (under 100 sq. ft.) will suffer from drought and from heat reflected from nearby masonry surfaces as well as directly from the sun. This will usually happen in summertime when you are away from home for several days. It is generally advisable to let your lawn grow to 3-4 in. in the late spring so it can protect itself from dryness in much the same way as ground covers do by shading its roots, thereby better holding soil moisture. Grasses grow best during cool spring and fall weather.



In this city garden a Hibiscus shrub provides a focal point. Spring bulbs are growing surrounded by a ground cover of English Ivy.



All too often, city front gardens are left untended, marring the Victorian streetscape.

IT IS BEST TO PREPARE carefully and pragmatically before you make your purchases, so inspect the plantings along your street. Find out what plants have been used and determine for yourself how vigorous or appropriate they are. Observe your own home site and compare it to other similar locations in terms of summer and winter wind, sun, direction of storms, hottest days, and patterns of rainfall and drainage. These observations are invaluable. The information you gather about your site will help you formulate a sound plan. 🏡

Dan Maciejak is a native New Yorker. He was trained as a Landscape Architect at the State University College of Forestry, and is the Senior Landscape Architect for the New York City Region of the State Park System. His work for the State includes a Brooklyn waterfront park and a nature preserve and environmental study center in Staten Island, New York. As a consultant he has designed historic gardens and a wide range of residential gardens from row house to estate. Dan lives with his wife, Lisa, son Rafael, and two cats in a 1874 brownstone in Brooklyn.

Patti Allison is a freelance illustrator. She lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn.

PLANT LIST

GROUND COVERS

Prefer Type of Site	Latin Name	Common Name	Compatible With	Notes
shade	<i>Vinca minor</i>	Trailing Vinca	D	
part. shade	<i>Pachysandra terminalis</i>	Japanese Spurge	G A I	used after 1882
full sun	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>	Bugleweed	E	
full sun	<i>Juniperus horizontalis</i>	Creeping Juniper	E I	
part. shade	<i>Hedera helix</i>	English Ivy	H B F	attaches to masonry walls

HEDGES

full sun	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Japanese Barberry	H A	plant 18" apart 24" high installed
sun	<i>Berb. thun. var. atropurpurea</i>	Purple Barberry	G	plant 18" apart 24" high installed
sun or shade	<i>Euonymus alatus compactus</i>	Compact Winged Euon.		
sun or shade	<i>Taxus cuspidata</i>	Japanese Yew	D B I	plant 24" apart
part. shade	<i>Ilex crenata</i>	Japanese Holly	D	slow grower

SMALL ORNAMENTAL TREES

sun or shade	<i>Acer palmatum</i>	Japanese Maple	A	slow growing
shade	<i>Cercis chinensis</i>	Chinese Redbud	B	
part. shade	<i>Cotinus coggyria</i>	Smoketree		may be pruned to tree form
full sun	<i>Malus Ioensis plena</i>	Bechtel Crab Apple	G	after 1888
sun	<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	Hercules Club	I	best as small group

ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS

full sun	<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>	Hibiscus, Althea		
shade	<i>Rhododendron catawbiense</i>	Catawba Rhododendron	B D	
sun/shade	<i>Rhododendron nudiflorum</i>	Pinxterbloom Azalea	D	
sun	<i>Hydrangea cuercifolia</i>	Oak leaved Hydrangea		may die to ground ea. winter
sun	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>	Winter Honeysuckle	H	fragrant
sun	<i>Rosa eglanteria</i>	Sweetbrier	H	fragrant leaves when wet

FOCAL PLANTS FOR GROUPINGS, FOR LEAVES

shade	<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	Royal Fern	B D	
part. shade	<i>Caladium bicolor</i>	Caladium	C	multicolor leaves not winter-hardy
sun	<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Caster-oil plant	C	beans poisonous not winter-hardy
shade	<i>Hosta sieboldi</i>	Plantain Lily	D F	flowering- see illustration
full sun	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	Yucca	E	has flower interest as well
sun	<i>Verbascum olympicum</i>	Mullien		felt-like leaves
sun	<i>Zea mays</i>	Ornamental corn	C	

FOCAL PLANTS FOR GROUPINGS, FOR FLOWERS

part. shade	<i>Astilbe japonica</i>	Japanese Astilbe	D	
sun	<i>Hemerocallis flava</i>	Lemon Day Lily	G F	sweet scent
part. shade	<i>Lilium candidum</i>	Madonna Lily		
part. shade	<i>Paeonia lactifolia</i>	Peony 'Festiva Maxima'	H G	

Note: The Letter Code is a suggested way to aid in grouping plants that are compatible together and share environmental requirements. However, many other combinations are acceptable.

Restorer's Notebook

Wood Filler For Outdoors

I RECENTLY NEEDED a small quantity of good, weatherproof wood filler to repair a piece of redwood from my front porch. After running the piece through my planer to remove 85 years' worth of paint, I formulated the special filler as follows:

I MIXED some "Envirotext" (a two-part epoxy material used as a surface finish) according to directions, but with the addition of enough redwood sawdust to create a thick paste. I pressed this into the pitted and rotted areas around nail holes, etc., and allowed it to set up overnight. Careful sanding with a disc sander the next morning gave me a perfect surface, tightly bonded to the old wood, which took primer well. The patch is absolutely water-tight.

SIMILAR formulations can be procured ready-mixed, but they're expensive. On the other hand, I never run out of sawdust, and Envirotext can be used for other applications.

James B. Tyler
San Francisco, Cal.



Scrapers With Finesse

IF YOU'VE EVER tried to scrape loose paint from an ornate plaster moulding, you know the meaning of frustration. That tantalizing crust of paint is loose, crackled, and waiting to come down--all you have to do is run a thin, flexible blade under it. But conventional tools--putty knife, wallpaper scraper, screwdriver, ice pick--are overkill. They dig into the plaster and cause nasty gouges that require time-consuming patching.

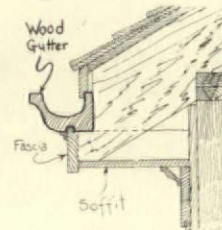
IF ONLY YOUR FINGERNAILS were long enough and strong enough--you could create ten custom-shaped flexible scrapers, each with the correct contour and finesse to lift the paint without harming the plaster.

THERE IS AN ANSWER. Buy several inexpensive artist's palette knives, in different shapes and sizes. They can be further ground or cut to specialized shapes. I assure you, these knives will quickly bring down that paint.

Gary Silver
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Oil Your Gutters

I READ in the article "Maintenance of Gutters" (Oct. 1979) that painting solid wood gutters would help protect and preserve them. We certainly paint them up here on the outside. But I got it from an old timer many years ago that the best preservation technique is to clean out the gutter at least once a year, let it dry, and then treat it with linseed oil. This treatment prevents moisture saturation, while it also permits the wood to pass off all moisture after wet weather.



THE KEY, whether you use paint or linseed oil, is the yearly attention. Since you normally don't see the inside of gutters, all too often the annual cleanout--and the renewal of the protective coating--is neglected.

J. Edward Foley
Union River Realty
Brewer, Maine

Paint-On Vapor Barrier

BLOWING an insulating material into exterior walls without a vapor barrier can cause paint peeling on the outside of the house. (This is the moisture problem mentioned by the Giffens in their article, "Rejuvenating a Queen Anne..!" Feb. 1980 OHJ.)

THIS CAN BE prevented by priming the inside of all exterior walls and ceilings with INSUL-AID, a Glidden product. This latex primer is formulated to prevent moisture migration as effectively as a two mil thick plastic sheet. (It prevents water vapor from getting into the wall and into the insulation.) INSUL-AID is easy to apply and forms a good base coat for interior finish paints. As a bonus, purchase of INSUL-AID qualifies for federal energy credits.

Todd Dickinson
Dickinson Restorations
Durham, N.C.

[Ed.'s Note: Of course, you must also seal gaps by caulking around windows and doors, baseboards, and electrical outlets. This problem of moisture migration is one of the reasons that blown-in side wall insulation isn't recommended. ANY paint acts as a vapor barrier to an extent, particularly aluminum paint and glossy oil-based paint.]

Got Any Tips?

Do you have any hints or short cuts that might help other old-house owners? We'll pay \$15 for any short how-to items that are used in this "Restorer's Notebook" column. Send your hints to: Notebook Editor, The Old-House Journal, 69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217.

GUTTER EXPANSION JOINT

FOR METAL LINING IN BUILT-IN WOOD GUTTER

NOTE:

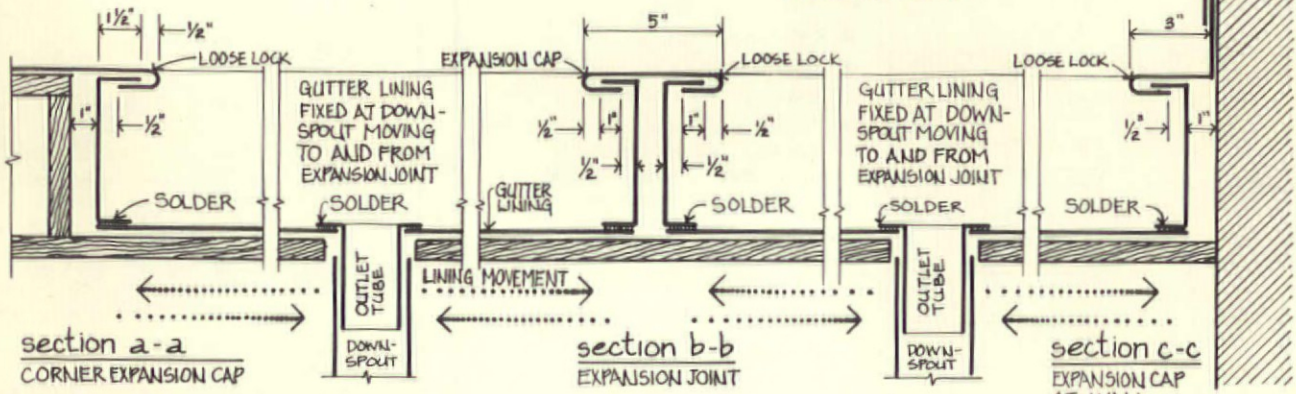
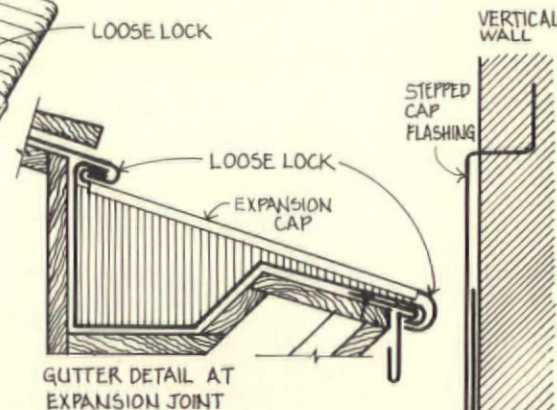
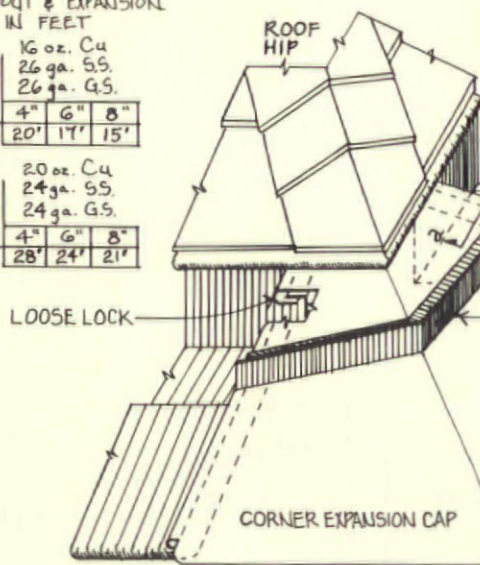
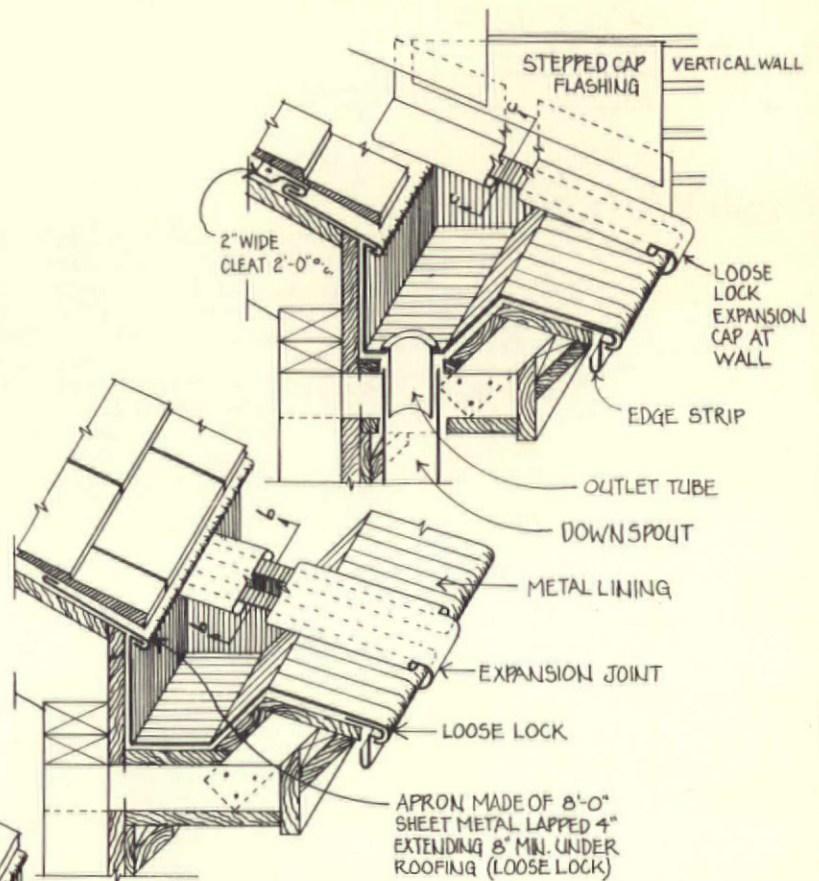
DETAILS AND DIMENSIONS APPROPRIATE FOR:

- 16-20 oz. SHEET COPPER
- 26-24 GAUGE STAINLESS STEEL
- 26-24 GAUGE GALVANIZED STEEL

MAX. DISTANCE BETWEEN DOWNSPOUT & EXPANSION JOINT IN FEET

GUTTER BOTTOM WIDTH	16 oz. Cu	20'	17'	15'
	26 ga. SS	4"	6"	8"
	26 ga. G.S.	4"	6"	8"

GUTTER BOTTOM WIDTH	20 oz. Cu	28'	24'	21'
	24 ga. SS	4"	6"	8"
	24 ga. G.S.	4"	6"	8"



Restoration Design File #3

Jonathan Pease 4/80

Products For The Old House

Sash With Style

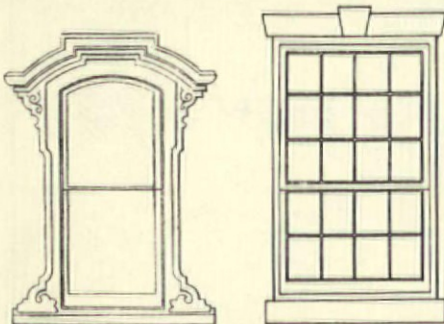
REPLACING WINDOWS on an old house is a problem that merits serious consideration. Sash or storm windows that are inappropriate in style or material will destroy the architectural character of an old building.

PRESERVATION RESOURCE CENTER handcrafts Early American sash based on Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival architecture. The sash is either stock or can be custom made. Because of the great variety in design, Victorian sash is all custom reproduced, and includes arch and round heads. Storm sash also has an optional screen.

THERE ARE CASES in which an exterior storm window is not aesthetically pleasing. To solve this problem, Preservation Resource Center has come up with an interior storm sash. They have the advantage of being easier to open and close.

BECAUSE MANY restorers have to cope with replacing windows in large numbers, the cost can be quite high when buying handmade sash. This company now carries a stock line of wood sash manufactured in a modern manner (less sturdy than handcrafted) but in period styles.

LITERATURE PACKET contains an estimator for ordering standard stock as well as information on their stock and custom millwork. Send \$2.00 to: Preservation Resource Center, Dept. OHJ, Lake Shore Road, Essex, New York 12936.



New: Free Ads For Subscribers

STARTING with the August 1980 issue, there will be several changes in The Old-House Journal--all of which will make the Journal bigger and better.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHANGES involve the Emporium Section. Starting with the August issue, the Emporium will no longer carry paid advertising for commercial products. But we will continue to carry classified ads from subscribers. The Emporium will also continue to carry the special OHJ announcements--especially that for the heat gun, which has proved enormously popular.

BEST OF ALL, the classified ads will be FREE to current subscribers. Since they're free, of course, the ads will be subject to editorial selection and space availability. The free ads will be limited to one-of-a-kind opportunities and small-lot sales. In other words, standard commercial products will not be eligible.

AMONG THE TYPES of ads that will be eligible for free insertion:

- Interesting old houses for sale
- Architectural salvage and old-house parts for sale

- Restoration positions wanted and vacant
- Hard-to-find items that you are looking for
- Trades and swaps
- Restoration and old-house services
- Meetings and events

PHOTOS of items for sale will also be printed free--space permitting. Just submit a clear black & white photo along with your ad copy. Free ads will be limited to a maximum of 50 words. The only payment required is your current OHJ mailing label to verify your subscriber status.

FOR YOUR LISTING to run in the August issue, we'll need your ad copy by July 1. Mail to:

Emporium Editor
Old-House Journal
69A Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217

AMONG THE OTHER CHANGES you will see in your August issue will be a 67% increase in the number of editorial pages. This will enable the editors to provide some of the extra features you've been asking for.

--Clem Labine

All-New, Bigger and Better! 1980 Catalog

- The complete source book for 8,717 products and services for the old house
- 830 Companies listed
- 258 brand new companies not listed in previous editions
- Helpful new features--state locations after each listing in Product Directory; an Advertiser's Index; expanded product descriptions.

Single copies: \$8.95,
Only \$5.95 to subscribers
(\$1.00 additional for
postage and handling)

The Old-House Journal
69A Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217

Subscriptions: The Old-House Journal

Enclosed is:

- \$16 for one-year subscription
 \$22.95 for subscription + 1980 Catalog

Subscription is: Gift Personal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Donor's Name _____

Mail to: The Old-House Journal, Dept. 7,
69A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217