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The Original Restoration Magazine

Historic Houses for Sale

5 IDEAS for ADDING ON

Projects that Keep Character

Plus

Fitting Fixtures in Half-Baths

Skylights with Sensitivity

Working Relief

Accent Pieces

The Early Colonial Revival Style

Heirloom Roses

June 2004

A Restore Media Publication

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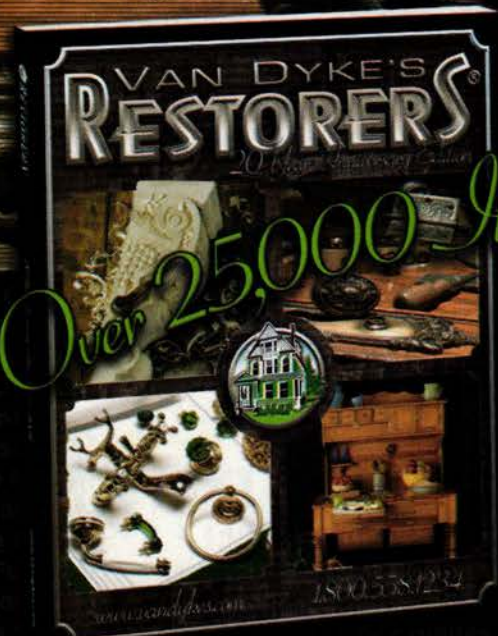
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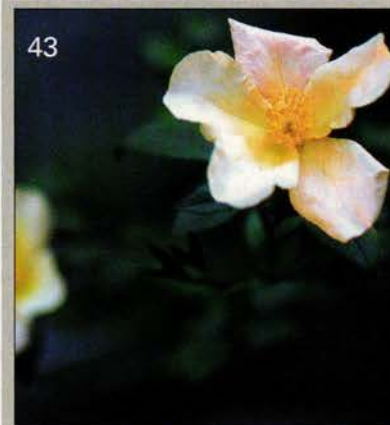
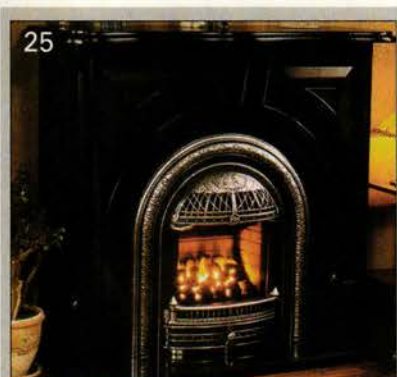
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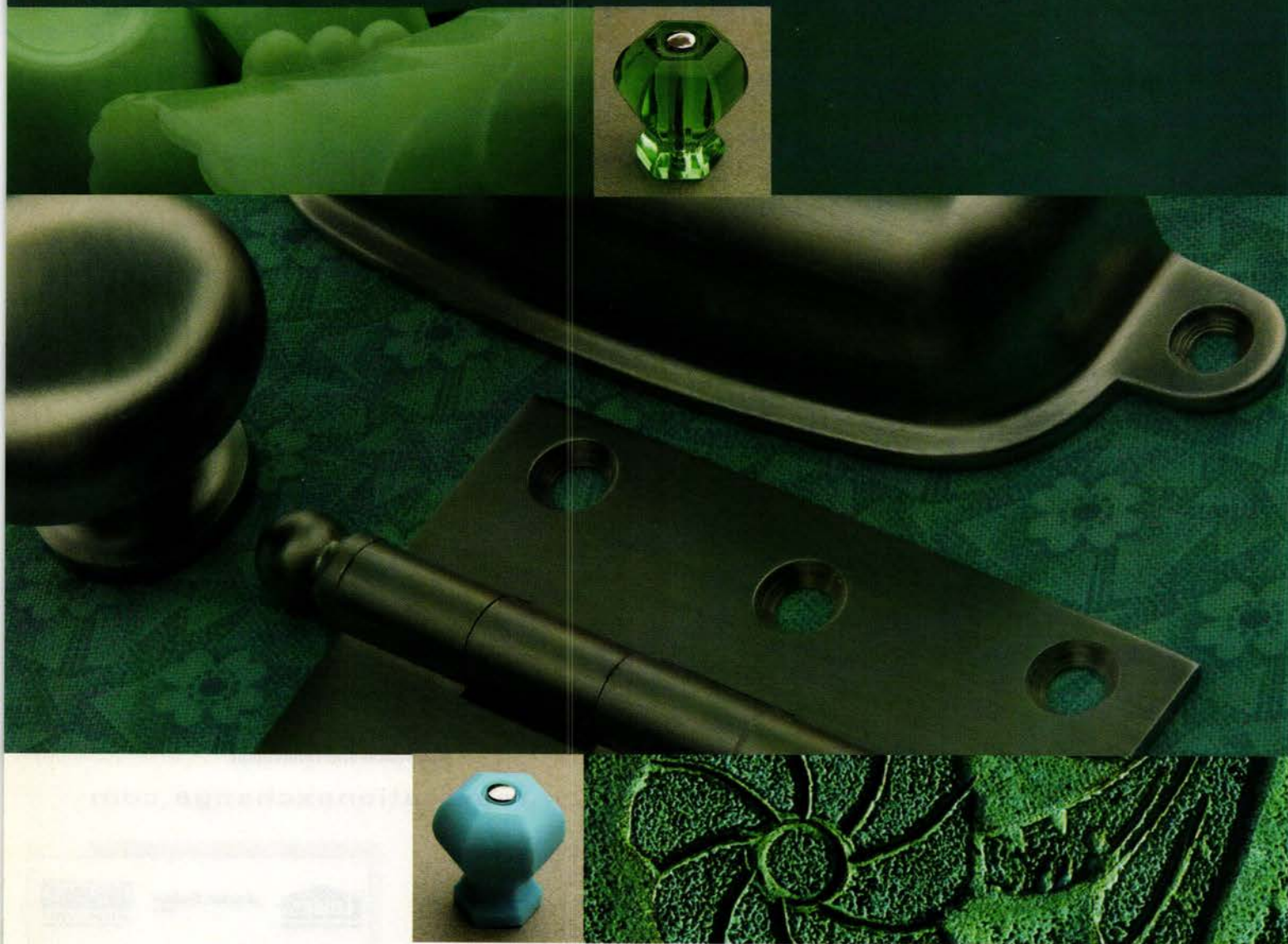
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Editor's Page

Dirty Words?

You'd have to be marooned on an island to not know that the United States is in the midst of a record housing construction boom that shows no signs of slowing. Whatever the explanation, it's hard to ignore the impact. Indeed, house construction has been one of the few bright spots in the national economy, a tide lifting many "boats" from big-box home centers to the equity in one's home. So the new-housing boom is good for business, but is it good for houses—particularly historic houses?

The answer is not so clear. Few would deny that what makes so many historic neighborhoods dating from before the 1940s so interesting is their mix of houses from different decades. The axiom "Good taste is timeless" rings as true in residential architecture as it does in other endeavors. Trouble is, in a superheated building environment good new design and sensitivity to existing good design are often given a backseat to maximizing space, speedy construction, or return on investment. The shortsighted results can be new construction built right to the lot line without traditional features such as porches, window bays, or even wall setbacks that add visual appeal, but don't contribute resellable floor space. "Bustle-back" dormers that deform a roof beyond any semblance to original pitch also fall into this category, as does the ultimate old-house insult: razing the entire structure to replace it with a much bigger house.

The subject of sensitively enlarging and altering historic houses—or for that matter, historic neighborhoods—is vast, and in this issue we present three articles that address only the most commonly asked-about concerns: bathrooms, skylights, and basic historical-addition guidelines. As part of this quick education, it's also worth getting up to speed on some of the new lexicon that has grown apace with this housing boom.

Pop-up Addition Similar to a camping trailer, a pop-up addition expands the living space within the existing footprint by adding a partial or full second storey. Since the subject is typically a single-storey or storey-and-a-half building like a ranch house or Cape Cod, the change is radical—often leaving the original building unrecognizable.

Scrape-off Complete razing of an existing building to make way for a new (usually larger) house on the same lot. Scrape-offs have been common for a while on waterfront properties, where land value has risen dramatically in recent years, but whole blocks and neighborhoods of earlier developments are now also being scraped-off in some regions.

Garage Mahal The house attached to the new automotive shelter standard: a three-car garage (preferably sized for SUVs). Large by necessity, Garage Mahals tend to accentuate their automotiveness by displaying their three or more bays of roll-up doors to the street.

Like "McMansion" in the 1990s, are these pseudoterms due to become the dirty words of this housing boom? Time will tell.



PRESTON STUART

Gordon H. Bock

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Coming of Age

I wanted to commend OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL for the excellent historical piece about 1950s housing in the March/April issue. One gets the impression reading many old-home magazines that housing stopped with the bungalow, so it was with great delight that I read Massey and Maxwell's description of ranches, Cape Cods, split levels, and Colonials that form the backdrop for much of our lives. The housing industry keeps churning out products year after year, and architectural historians are lagging far behind. Thank you for catching us up somewhat. I look forward to turning your microscope on the decades since the 50s in the decades to come.

Doug Walter
Denver, Colorado

First Family

I enjoyed the article "After the War" (March/April) by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell. As one of the first 100 families to move into Levittown on Long Island, we did appreciate the opportunity to have affordable housing. However, your research was not quite accurate. Each floor plan was basically the same, but exteriors were different. Also there were no fireplaces, televi-

sion sets, and not every model had a picture window.

Patricia Dooley
Bellingham, Washington

A Spring Thing

The article "Spring Balances Bounce Back" (March/April) offered a great option for window sash, but there was no information on current contacts for manufacturers.

Paul Semmler
Hawthorne, New Jersey

Try Pullman Manufacturing in Rochester, New York, (585) 334-1350, www.pullmanmfg.com, or Blaine Window Hardware in Hagerstown, Maryland, (800) 678-1919, www.blainewindow.com.

Haunting Squirrels

I enjoyed reading the essay "Ghosts" by Sue Senator (March/April), and noticed the author was also having trouble with squirrels. I read Rhonda Hart's book *Squirrel Proofing Your Home and Garden* and have become skilled in safely evicting them from my house.

William Earl
Norristown, Pennsylvania

Border Issue

We found "6 Ways to Survive a Wallpaper Project" (January/February) useful as we are about to redecorate our 1887 Victorian. However, it was a surprise to see that the Roosevelts' Campobello is in Maine. Last time we looked, Campobello was still a part of the old Loyalist province of New Brunswick, Canada.

Donald and Marie Lawson
Ridgetown, Ontario

You're right. Roosevelt Campobello International Park is in Canada. American tourists, however, can write to the U.S. address: PO Box 129, Lubec, ME 04652.—Eds.

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Letters

Appliance Puzzler

What is the vintage appliance under the clock on the first page of "Kitchen Creations" (March/April)? A colleague remembers his grandmother having one, but he can't remember what its use might have been.

Lauren Malinoff
Asheville, North Carolina



That appliance is a Nesco Broiler, a popular appliance in the 1940s when gas stoves had limited broiling capacities. The unit sits on its original storage cabinet. —Eds.

Reason to Feel Cocky

"Inlay Terms," your January/February article about linoleum designs, struck close to my heart. I spent seven months last year trying to get a red-and-white linoleum kitchen floor with inlaid designs for the first step in our retro kitchen. I dreamed of the fantastic old designs in 1940s and '50s magazine ads.

We live in a rural area with few showrooms and fewer installers who know anything beyond peel-n-stick vinyl squares. I spent hours searching the Internet for the right marbled red in traditional 9" squares. I found the perfect color in sheets from an installer 70 miles away. I wrangled with installers who wouldn't travel the distance. I was quoted ridiculously high installation estimates and was met with blank stares

when I mentioned inlays. I toyed with the ideas of settling for sheet installation with a simple white border or making rooster inlays myself.

Our saviors were Surbeck Waterjet Co., three hours away in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. I e-mailed them a photo I took of a rooster on a retro juice glass to use as a pattern, and they not only made us six white tiles with inlaid red roosters, but they cut red marbled sheet linoleum for the rest of the floor into the 9" squares we wanted. My husband and I were able to install these easily, and the overall cost was less than half of the estimates we received for installation with no inlays. I strongly recommend that anyone who wants out-of-the-ordinary designs get estimates from a waterjet cutting facility before attempting to do it themselves.

Carolyn R. Wolfe
Paxinos, Pennsylvania

Historic Paper

In the article "6 Ways to Survive a Wallpaper Project" (January/February), I knew I'd seen that paper on page 67 before. It was in Richard Nylander's book, *Wallpaper in New England*. Here's a picture of the installer working on that very hall.

Dick Dickson
Loda, Illinois



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National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Week

This year's theme is "New Frontiers in Preservation."

Go to www.nationaltrust.org for preservation events in your state.

PASADENA, CALIF.

May 8

Pasadena Walking Tour

Pasadena Heritage hosts tours of Pasadena's historic downtown. Tours begin at 9 a.m. and include a slide presentation and a 90-minute guided walk. The cost is \$10 per person. Reservations are required. Contact Pasadena Heritage at (626) 441-6333.

NEWPORT, R. I.

June 25-27

Ninth Annual Newport Flower Show

The Ninth Annual Newport Flower Show is held at Rosecliff, one of Newport's most elegant Gilded Age mansions. Adults \$13; children \$6. Visit www.newportmansions.org.

PORTSMOUTH, N.H.

June 27

The Name of the Rose Garden Tour

The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities offers tours of two historic Portsmouth gardens: the Governor John Langdon House and the Rundlet May House. Admission is \$10 for SPNEA members, \$12 non-members. For more information call (603) 436-3205.

Arts & Crafts in St. Louis

From June 17-20 the St. Louis Museum of Art will host the sixth New York University Arts & Crafts Conference entitled, "Meet Me at the Fair: The Louisiana Purchase Exposition and the Arts & Crafts Movement on Display."

The event will focus on Arts & Crafts at expositions, museums, and exhibits presented by Arts & Crafts guilds and societies and how these displays both promoted craft and art. Topics include the

World's Fairs from 1851 to 1915, in particular the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exhibition. This year's speakers include Edward R. Bosley, the James N. Gamble director of the Gamble House; Beverly Brandt, professor of design at Arizona State University; and David Cathers, author of *Furniture of the Arts & Crafts Movement* and *Stickley Style* among other books. Louis Sullivan's Wainwright Building, Bernard Maybeck's Principia College, and the Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian house in Ebsworth Park are just a few of the landmarks on tour. The conference costs \$495. For more information call (212) 998-7200 or visit www.scps.nyu.edu.



Left to right: Vases by Taxile Doat, 1912; Emile Diffloth, 1910; Frederick Hurten Rhead, 1911; Adelaide Alsop Robineau, 1910; and Taxile Doat, 1912.

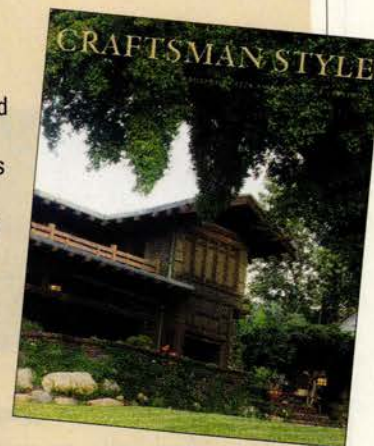
Reading the Craftsman Style

If you're a lover of all things Arts & Crafts, *Craftsman Style* by Robert Winter is a must-have for your book collection. One of the country's leading architectural historians and an expert on Arts & Crafts architecture, Winter yields insightful and delightful prose that make this much more than a beautifully photographed coffee-table book. Winter gives a historical perspective on the variations of the Craftsman style through visiting 27 houses and other structures from the Movement's inception in 1895 to its present-day revival.

Gustav Stickley's Craftsman Farms, Greene and Greene's Duncan-Irwin House, Henry Chapman Mercer's Fonthill, Arts & Crafts communities such as Pasadena's Bungalow Heaven and utopian Rose Valley in Pennsylvania, as well as modern-day buildings that exemplify the original Movement's spirit, such as Walt Disney's Californian Hotel, are all highlighted. Winter discusses the early influences of William Morris, the patron saint of Arts & Crafts, and other noted English architects, such as

C. F. Voysey, and America's Morris disciples like designer Gustav Stickley and architect Harvey Ellis. He also carefully examines the influence of Japanese and Swiss design on the Movement as well as its connection to Modernism.

Although Winter notes that the "Arts & Crafts Movement, always limited to a relatively small group, rarely affected mass culture," it left behind an impressive collection of houses. Throughout the book Winter sprinkles in wonderful tidbits from the Movement's heyday. His authoritative voice is refreshing in an ever-increasing sea of armchair historians. Harry Abrams publisher, 240 pages, \$50.



Trust in Mies

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House in Plano, Illinois, is considered by many to be one of the most important pieces of modern residential architecture. It was recently saved from alteration by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Landmark Preservation Council of Illinois (LPCI), and patrons who joined together and purchased the house at a Sotheby's auction for \$6.7 million. Never before has the National Trust purchased one of the 24 buildings under its care, but the significance of this building prompted many last-minute gifts to make the acquisition a reality.

There are only four residential buildings by Mies van der Rohe in the United States.

He designed this house, situated along the banks of the Fox River, southwest of Chicago, to be the weekend retreat of Edith Farnsworth. Completed in 1951, it is a striking example of Mies's aesthetic—stark lines, plate windows, and open plans that redefine the use of space.

The man who owned the house for almost 30 years, Sir Peter Palumbo, tried to sell it to the State of Illinois. When the sale fell through, he decided to sell it at auction at Sotheby's. The danger that it would be purchased and relocated to Pennsylvania prompted action from preservation groups. "It was a coming together of unique circumstances," says Richard Moe, president of the National Trust. At the same time

that the Trust was approving \$1 million to acquire the house, David Bahlman, president of LPCI, was

mobilizing that group's board to contribute \$1 million toward a purchase. Both Moe and Bahlman credit John Bryan, former chairman and CEO of Sara Lee, for his devotion to the cause. Bryan heads the Friends of the Farnsworth House organization, which rounded up support in the Chicago area. Within 24 hours the group raised another \$4 million. Richard Gray, a gallery owner in

Chicago, did the actual bidding. Gray was authorized to bid \$6.2 million and when that came and went, Gray kept bidding, putting in his own money to reach the \$6.7 million needed to save the house. The LPCI will run the house, which opens for tours on May 1. Visit www.farnsworthhousefriends.org; www.nationaltrust.org; www.landmarks.org.

—April Paffrath



The Farnsworth House bedroom.

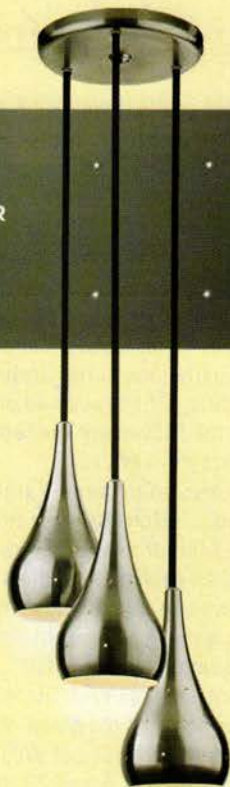
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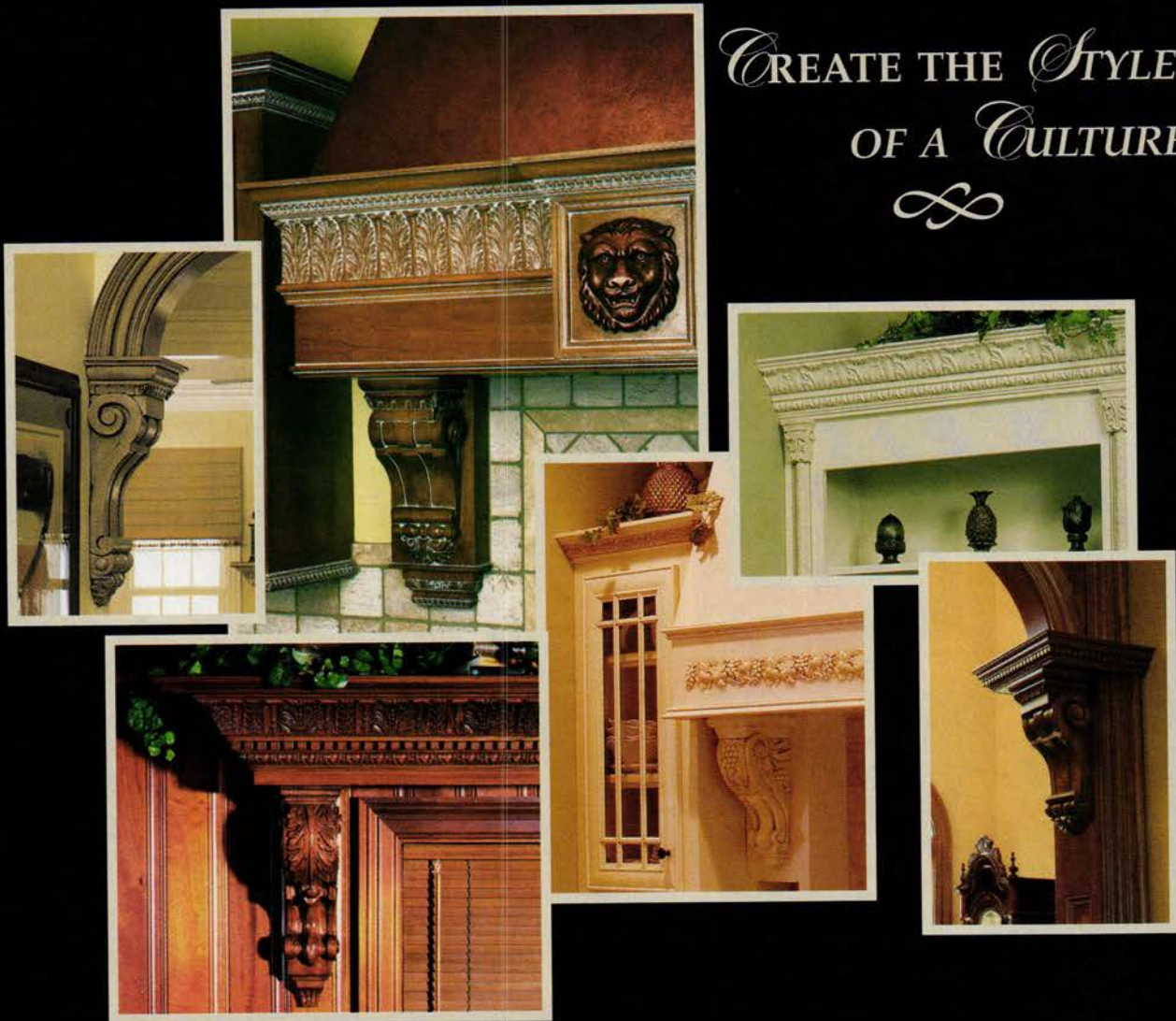
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Slim-Fireplace Pickin's

We live in an 1881 farmhouse with several very shallow fireplaces, presumably built to burn coal instead of wood. Would it be possible to upgrade them with gas-burning "coals" that operate similar to gas logs?

*Chris Sappey
West Chester, Pennsylvania*

If you are considering a traditional vented gas fireplace you'll need a working, sound flue to exhaust heat gasses. In an 1881 building, this may require adding a liner to bring the flue up to code. (See "Beating the Old Flue Blues," November/December 2003.)

Today, however, many manufacturers offer ventless gas fireplace inserts that come in a variety of styles, including some that make an effort to look like coals. Ventless gas fireplaces don't require a flue,

but there are some tradeoffs, such as lower BTU output and use that is limited to only a couple hours a day. You'll still need to provide adequate fresh-air intake for your ventless fireplace and, before you begin shopping, make sure that such units are legal where you live. Your best bet is to confer with a full-range professional who can both evaluate the condition of your chimney and tell you which of the various installation options is permissible in your area.



COURTESY OF THE VICTORIAN FIREPLACE SHOP

The "Windsor" direct vent fireplace from the Victorian Fireplace Shop offers a historically appropriate look.

Covered Barn

Our friends just bought a house in Pennsylvania with a stone barn that needs work on the exterior. They want to remove the rest of the cement coating to expose the original rough stonework. We say the stone was meant to be covered and they should repair it. Who's right?

*Steve and Mary Ford
Speonk, New York*

The answer will come to light only after investigating the history of your friends' barn both through documentary evidence (photos, letters, etc.) and physical evidence (examining the barn itself). However, the assumption that the "original" appearance of a masonry building was always bare stone or brick with exposed mortar joints is common



Parge covers the Lukens stone barn in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

and not always correct. Depending on the time and era, many stone or brick buildings were finished in parge, stucco, or other mortar coating to achieve a refined surface as well as to protect the masonry units, which may be relatively soft. For more on barn restoration, consult the National Park Service Preservation Brief # 20: The Preservation of Historic Barns (available in updated form at www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs).

COURTESY OF HABS

Sticking Some Tung Out

We love the glow of the floor with the tung-oil-based penetrating finish that opens the article "A Clearer View of Floor Finishes" (November/December 2003). Can you tell us more about using tung oil on floors?

*Kristine Annunziata
New York, New York*

The product used on that floor was McCloskey Gymseal for floors, a tung oil-and-varnish blend. Many manufacturers combine a hard-surface finish like varnish with a penetrating oil to offer some durability with the softer visual effects you like in the

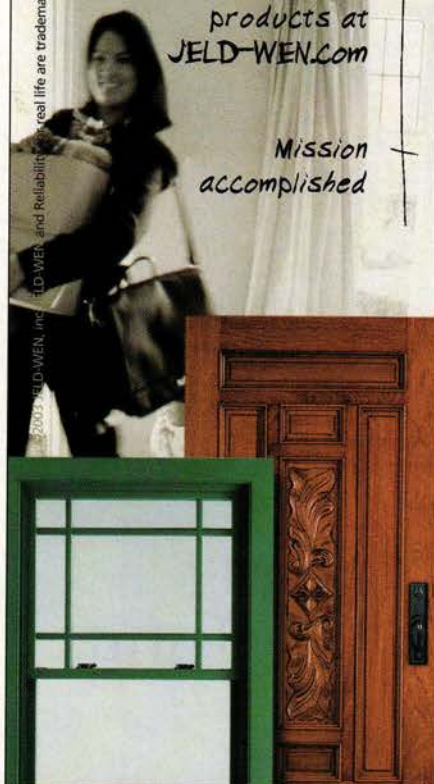
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tung oil. Beware though, that some products labeled tung oil contain no tung oil at all, but simply refer to a varnish that is wiped into rather than brushed on the wood.

Tung oil is extracted from the seeds of a tree native to China, *Aleurites fordii*, now also grown in South America. It wasn't used in the West until about a century ago. Since then tung oil has been prized primarily as a finish for fine furniture. Penetrating drying oil finishes like tung oil and linseed oil leave the wood flexible and natural looking and are easily touched up, but offer less protection than surface finishes like varnish.

Pure tung oil has a nutty smell and is slightly more water resistant than linseed oil while it darkens light woods less, but it does have some drawbacks when used on its own. You need to apply five or six coats, all of which dry slowly, in order to achieve water resistance and a satiny sheen. Tung oil can develop white blotches if applied too thickly. Some oils are polymerized (heated in an oxygen-free environment) so they dry glossier, harder, and faster, but they are expensive and cure too fast to be practical for large surfaces.

Fir Coats

Most of the wood floors in our 1928 Tudor Revival-style house are made from fir, along with all the doors, windows, and trimwork. Can you give us some tips on refinishing this wood?

Paul Kreemer
Seattle, Washington

Strong, attractive, lightweight, and knot-free, fir was an all-purpose wood through the first half of the 20th century. It was once the mainstay of the aircraft industry, as well as common for framing lumber into the 1960s.

Although you would pay a pretty



Handsome and knot-free, fir flooring is a popular choice for today's old-house restoration projects.

penny for fir mouldings today, in the past it was a standard offering in modest houses, such as Foursquares and bungalows, or in nonpublic areas such as bedrooms and third-storey spaces. A durable softwood with a warm, pleasing grain pattern—especially when quartersawn—fir takes stain well but doesn't really need it. As with all refinishing projects, if you are going to stain you should test it first in an inconspicuous place to see how the wood reacts. (If the staining comes out blotchy, use a stain controller first.)

Flooring is one of the most common uses of the wood, especially in the West where Douglas fir is still widely available. Carol Goodwin, of Goodwin Heart Pine in Micanopy, Florida, says fir compares in density with antique heart cypress. "Frank Lloyd Wright used the two interchangeably," she says. For finishing softwood floors she likes Loba Easy Start, a water-based sealant relatively new to this country that dries quickly and flows on bubble-free. When using penetrating finishes on fir, she says to expect any color changes to occur more quickly than they do with heart pine. 🏠

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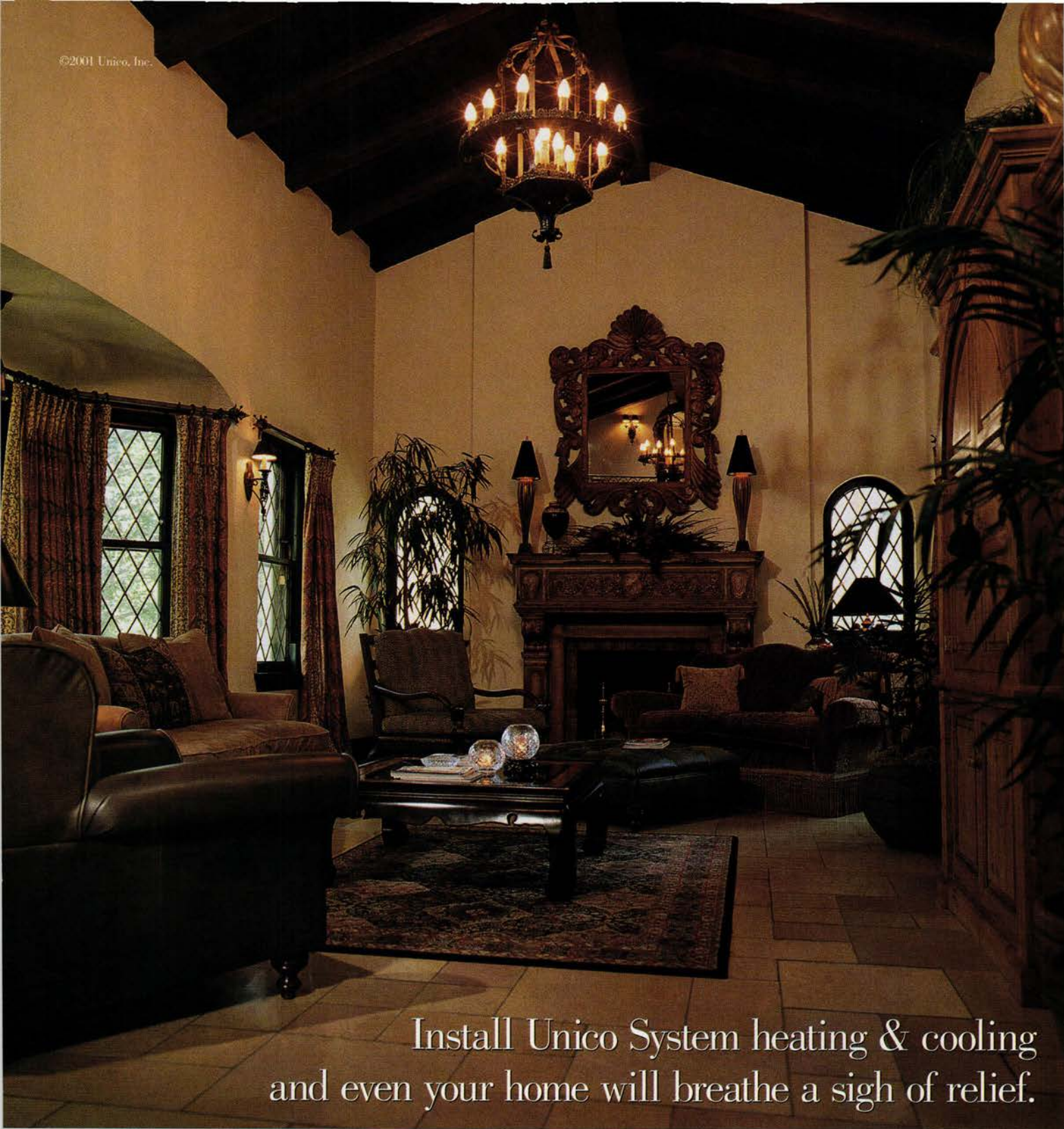
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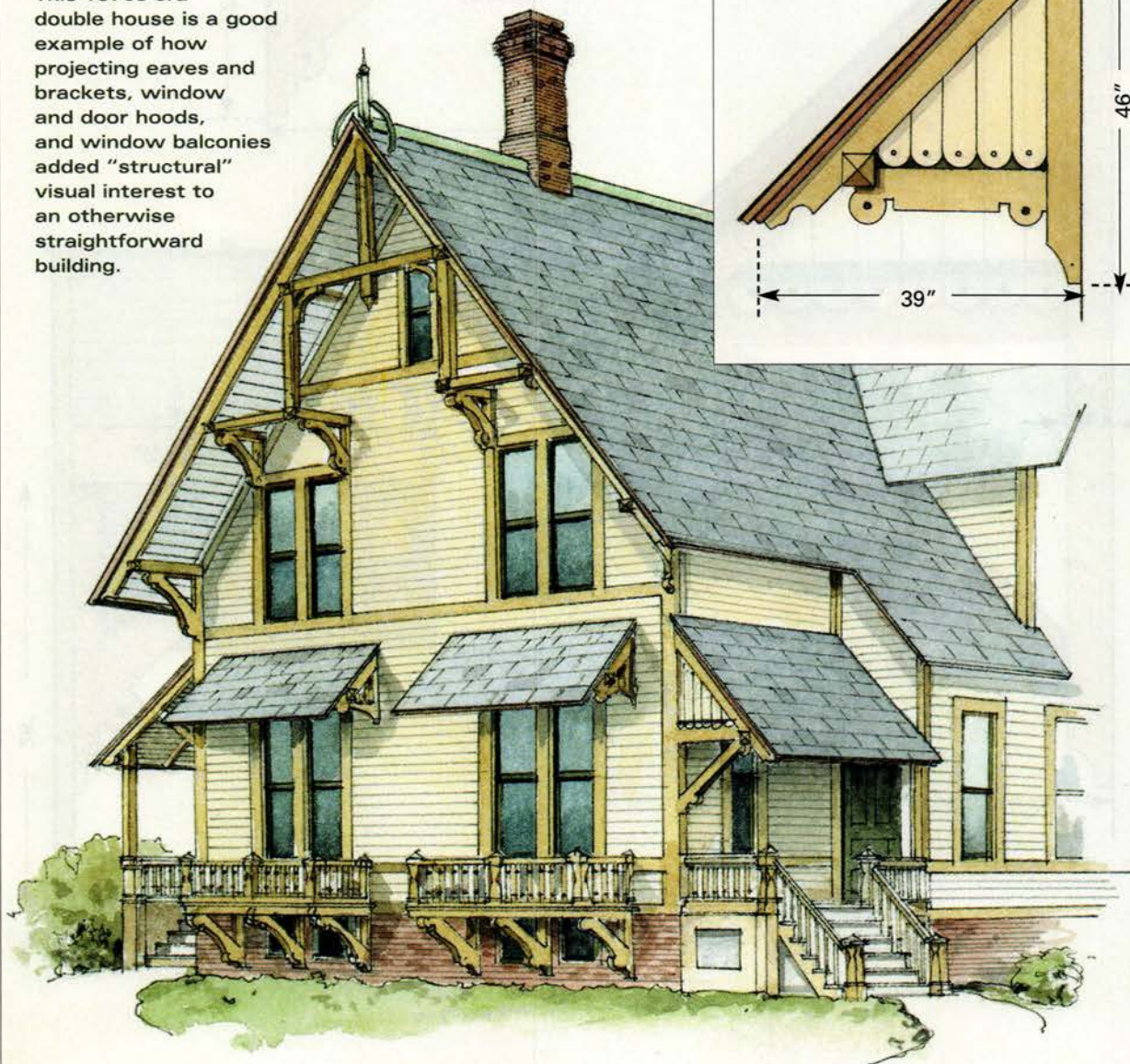
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Bracketed Details

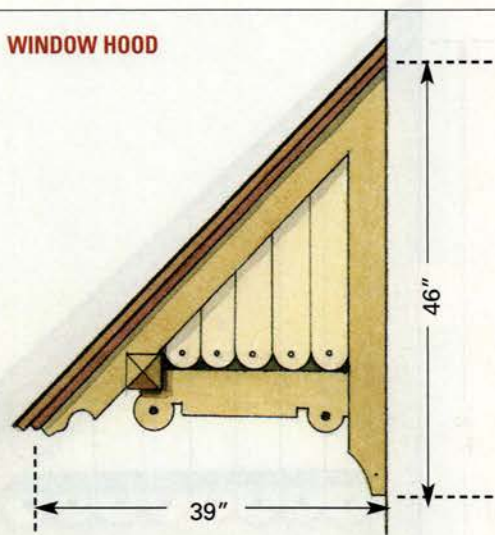
The architectural style we now call Stick became the fresh new face in houses by the 1860s and was widely popularized by the wave of building-plan books that took off at the same time. Stick-style design played up any surface treatment or building feature that looked structural, and prominent brackets supporting roof eaves and the like were a favorite effect. This collection of typical details includes two hoods and a balcony that project from the façade on brackets, as well as a gable-end bracket. All are the kinds of charming embellishments suitable for many Stick-influenced houses, and the ones often lost since they were originally built.

**Drawings by
Rob Leanna**

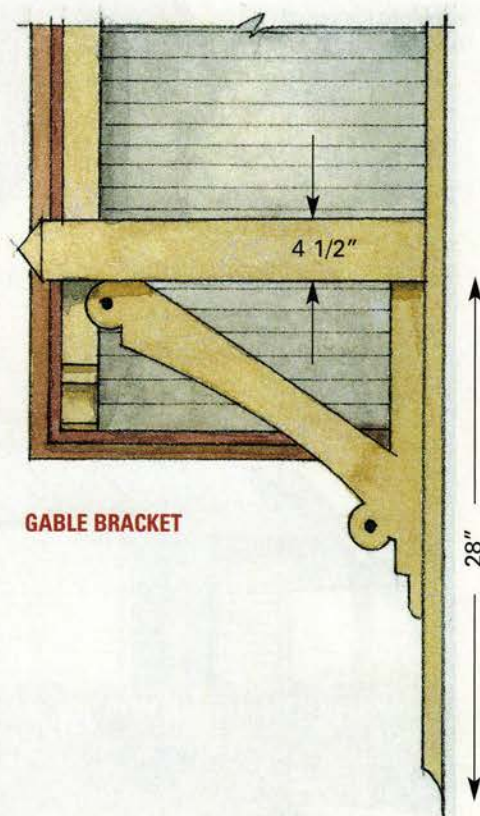
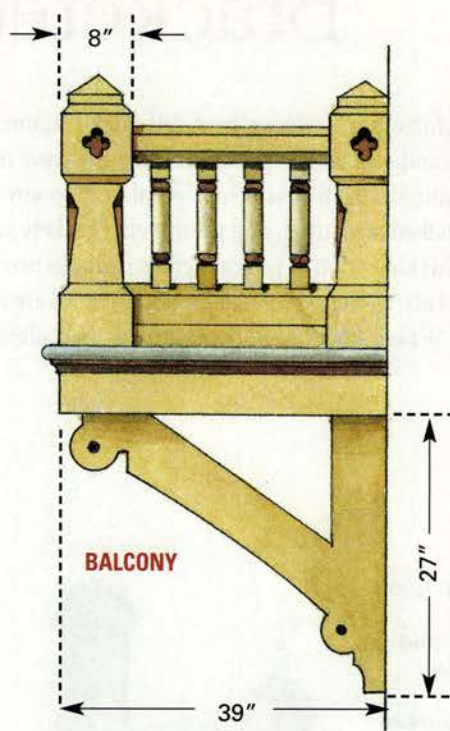
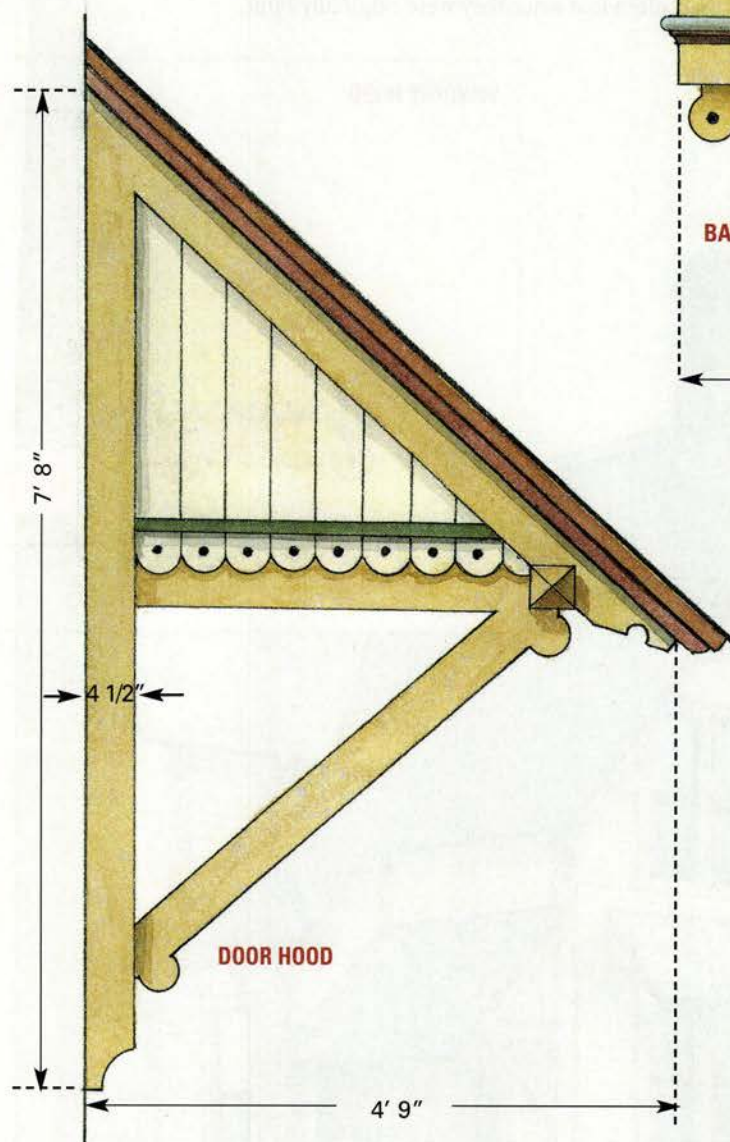
This 1870s-era double house is a good example of how projecting eaves and brackets, window and door hoods, and window balconies added "structural" visual interest to an otherwise straightforward building.



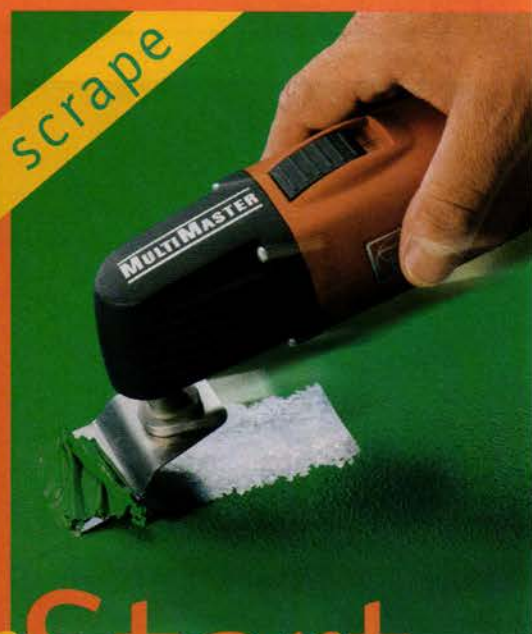
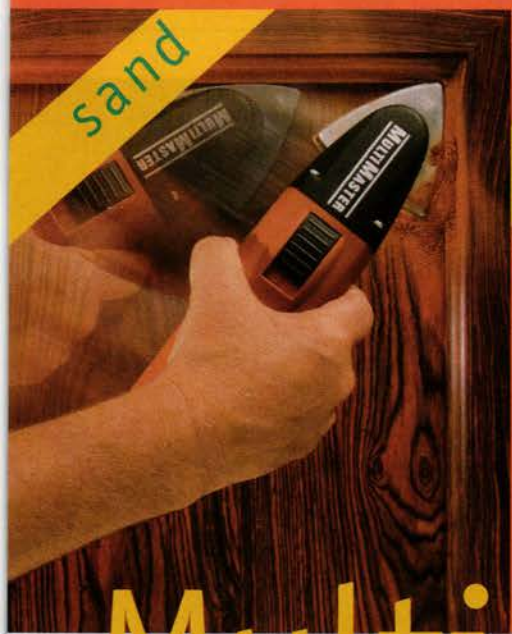
WINDOW HOOD



The actual construction and dimensions of these features are subject to the project and builder, but some general ideas of scale are indicated. Note that by the 1870s stock millwork in complex patterns was widely available, and modern Victorian-period millwork, such as balustrade parts or beaded boards, could be equally appropriate today.



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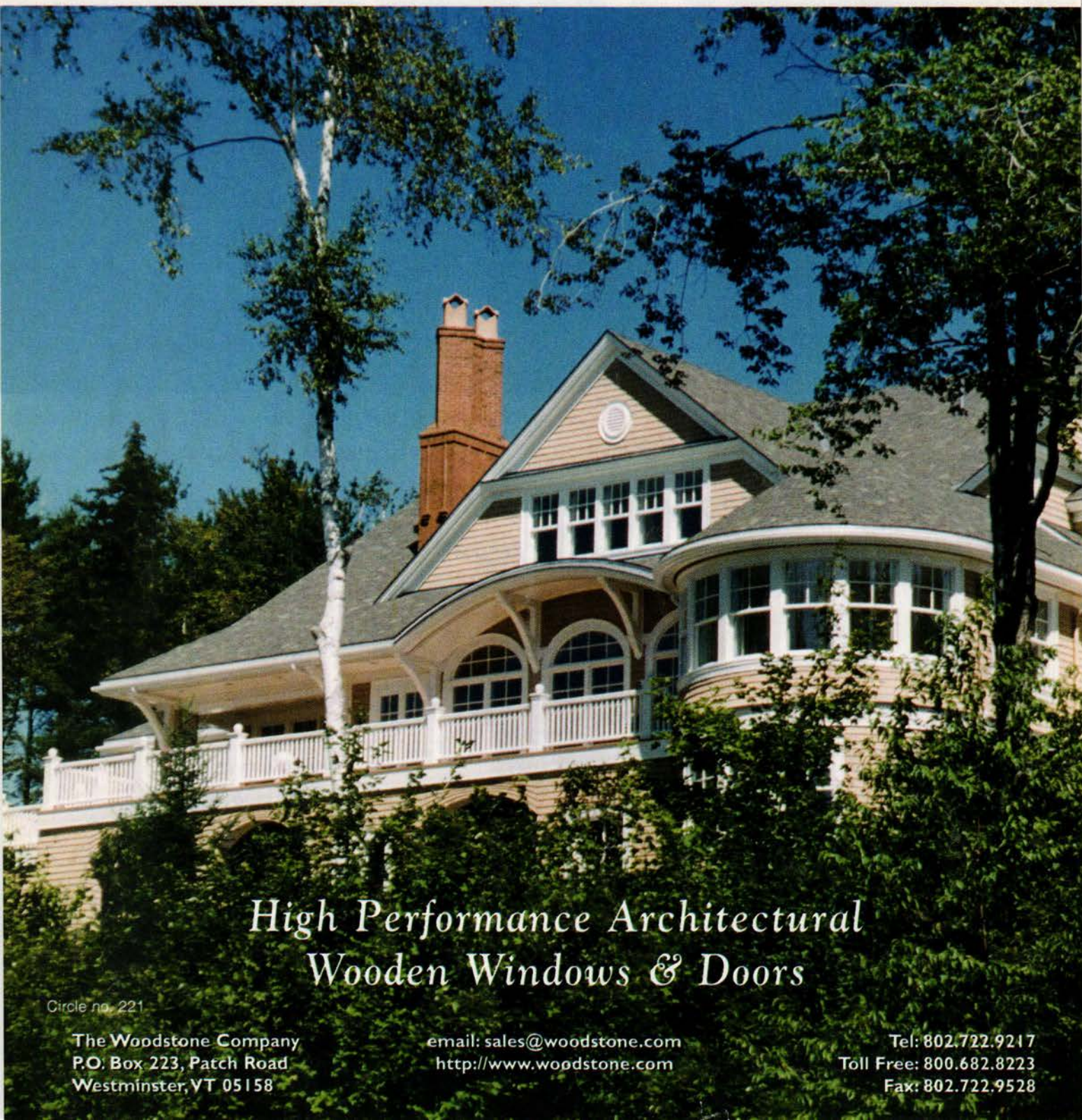
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When Historic Properties Are Threatened

Q: I want to save a historic farmhouse that a contractor plans to demolish for the lot. I only have 60 days until it's sold. The owners in Bermuda have no interest but to make money. What can I do?

Michele Moeller,
River Vale, New Jersey

What you describe is, unfortunately, an all too common preservation challenge. Across the country, hundreds of historic houses that stand in the path of development—particularly in areas of suburban sprawl—are demolished every year.

On the other hand, many others are saved and rehabilitated by the efforts of savvy, tenacious local advocates. While there is no single preservation strategy guaranteed to succeed, anyone who wants to save a historic property threatened by the wrecking ball should consider these points.

1) Know the facts. Gather as much pertinent information about the property as possible by researching these questions:

- Who owns the property? (Check the public records at the local recorder of deeds.)
- If the property is for sale, what are the asking price and other conditions of the sale? Is the property listed with a real estate agent?
- If the property is currently under an agreement of sale (a document that details the price and terms of the transaction), who is the prospective buyer and what conditions have been placed on the sale? When does the agreement expire? Since an agreement of sale is typically private, you may have to do some sleuthing to get this information.
- What is the historical significance of the property? Is it listed on a local, state, or federal register of historic places? Start by contacting your state's Historic Preservation Office (see www.ncshpo.org/stateinfolist/).
- Is there a local preservation ordinance, such as a demolition restriction, that protects the property up to some level?
- What is the current zoning classification for the property? Does it allow other uses, subdivision, or new construction on the property? Are there other restrictions—for example, covenants or environmental protections?
- Will the current owner or prospective buyer need local variances to develop the property or permits to demolish historic buildings?
- What is the physical condition of the historic building? If it is for sale, ask the real estate agent for a site visit. If the building is not accessible, ask someone who has recent first-hand information about its condition.

By J. RANDALL
COTTON

Standing in a national park, this Victorian Italianate villa was saved when the National Park Service allowed a developer to restore it, then develop it as a restaurant.



ALL PHOTOS J. RANDALL COTTON



Preservation Perspectives

2) Set Goals. Once you have collected the facts about the property, brainstorm possible preservation strategies. What is your ultimate goal for the property—private or public ownership by a preservation-friendly buyer? Is it okay if part of the property is developed while retaining the historic building? Can historic buildings be adaptively rehabilitated for new uses while retaining their historic character?

3) Realistically assess the challenges. Is there, or could there be, meaningful grassroots support for saving the historic property? Do local officials support preservation, or would they rather encourage new development?

No matter how significant, every historic property is ultimately still real estate with inherent economic value for its owner. Someone—be it a private individual, a governmental entity, or a nonprofit organization—will have to compensate the current owner for the property's fair value. There are also the costs of rehabilitation and property ownership (mortgage, taxes, utilities, maintenance) to consider.

4) Create alliances. Get the support of local and regional preservation and “smart-growth” organizations, civic groups, and politicians. More importantly, you might partner with an individual or organization that has the resources and desire to acquire, rehabilitate, and use all or part of the threatened historic property.

5) Engage in direct negotiations. When you have determined one or more viable preservation strategies, take your plan to the property owner. Start with the real estate agent if the property is for sale, but if the agent does not present your proposal fairly, contact the owner directly.

If you can present a compelling case for the property's historic significance and the viability of your preservation plan, the owner may be willing to give (or sell) you a purchase option wherein the property is taken off the open market for a specified period while you implement your preservation plan.

A purchase option (or agreement of sale) also gives you the right to assign ultimate ownership to another party. Numerous preservation organizations, such as the Historic Landmark Foundation of Indiana and Preservation North Carolina, which has saved more than 450 historic houses, rescue threatened properties in this manner.

If the property is already under an agreement of sale to another party, contact them. They may be willing to assign all or some of the purchase rights to you.

6) Gather public support. In many cases the property owner couldn't care less about preservation and simply wants



Although in a National Register Historic District, seven Philadelphia row houses were demolished for a parking structure—as yet unbuilt!—because they were not protected by inclusion in a local historic district.

When large mansions outlive their roles as single-family residences, they can be saved by finding new uses. “Grey Towers” (below) is now the main administrative building of Arcadia University.

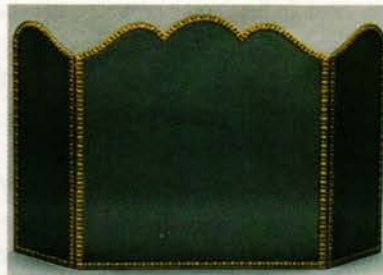
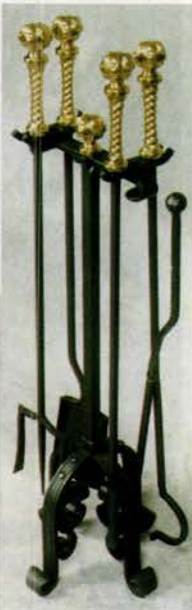




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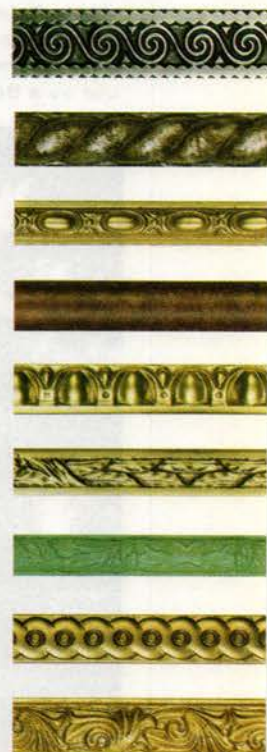
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Preservation Perspectives

the most money for the property—a figure that is often determined by the development potential of the land. In fact, some property owners think historic buildings have “negative value.” This may be the point at which preservationists rally public support for saving the property.

First, the public needs to know the historic value of the property—that is, why it should be saved. Take what you have learned about the history or significance of the property and present it to the public in a simple and compelling manner. Remember that local newspapers love to print this information.

Let local elected officials know you’re concerned about the preservation of the property. Advocates should speak out at planning and zoning hearings, especially if variances are needed to implement a development plan that would result in the demolition of the historic building. However, the same allies should also offer realistic alternatives at these meetings.

7) Be creative and be prepared to be flexible. Your best-case outcome may not be economically or politically feasible, so be prepared to consider some compromises.

- Protect the property by acquiring a preservation easement from the property owner. A typical preservation easement requires current and future owners to maintain the historic character of the property, but they retain all other property rights. Easements can be purchased from, or donated by, the current owner. (An easement donation may result in a tax deduction for the donor.)

- Allow limited development—say, new residential construction—on nonhistoric parts of the property.

- Adaptively re-use the historic building for income-producing tenants (a professional office, special-events rental facility, or restaurant) or publicly supported uses (maybe a community center or governmental offices).

- Exercise legal options. If you feel that demolition permits, zoning variances, or development approvals have been unfairly granted, use your citizens’ rights to appeal to the appropriate commissions and even the courts, if necessary. Legal battles can be nasty, expensive, and lengthy, but if you can’t arrive at amicable solutions, sometimes the law is your only recourse.

Whatever your strategy, remember that most historic resources are lost because local municipalities have not enacted protective preservation ordinances. The loss, or threatened loss, of a local landmark often becomes the catalyst for citizen calls to create governmental protection of historic properties in the public’s interests. Thus you may lose the battle, but still win the war. 🏠

J. Randall Cotton is associate director of the Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia.



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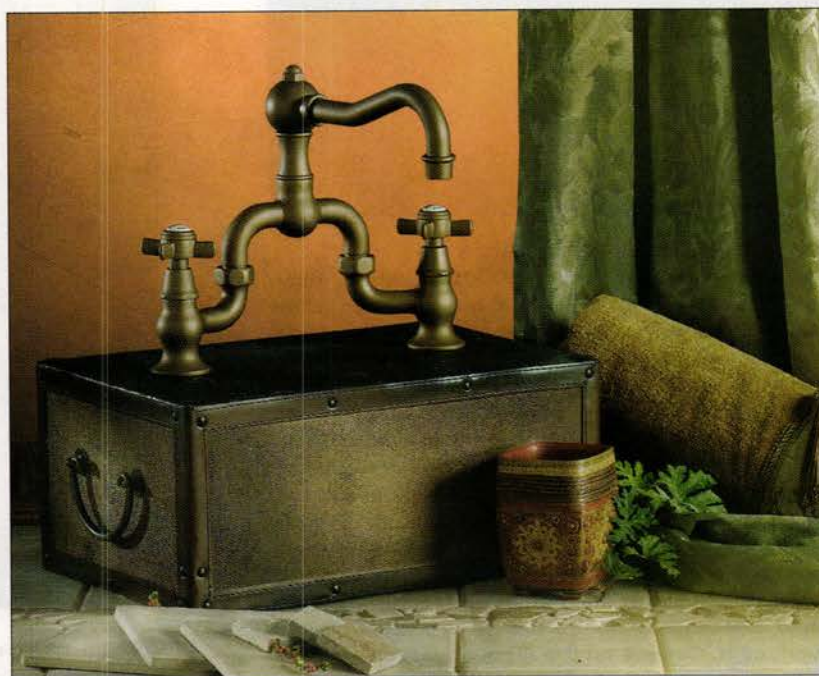


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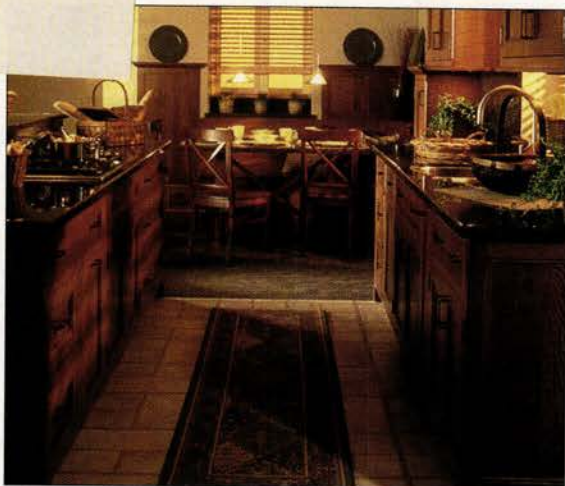
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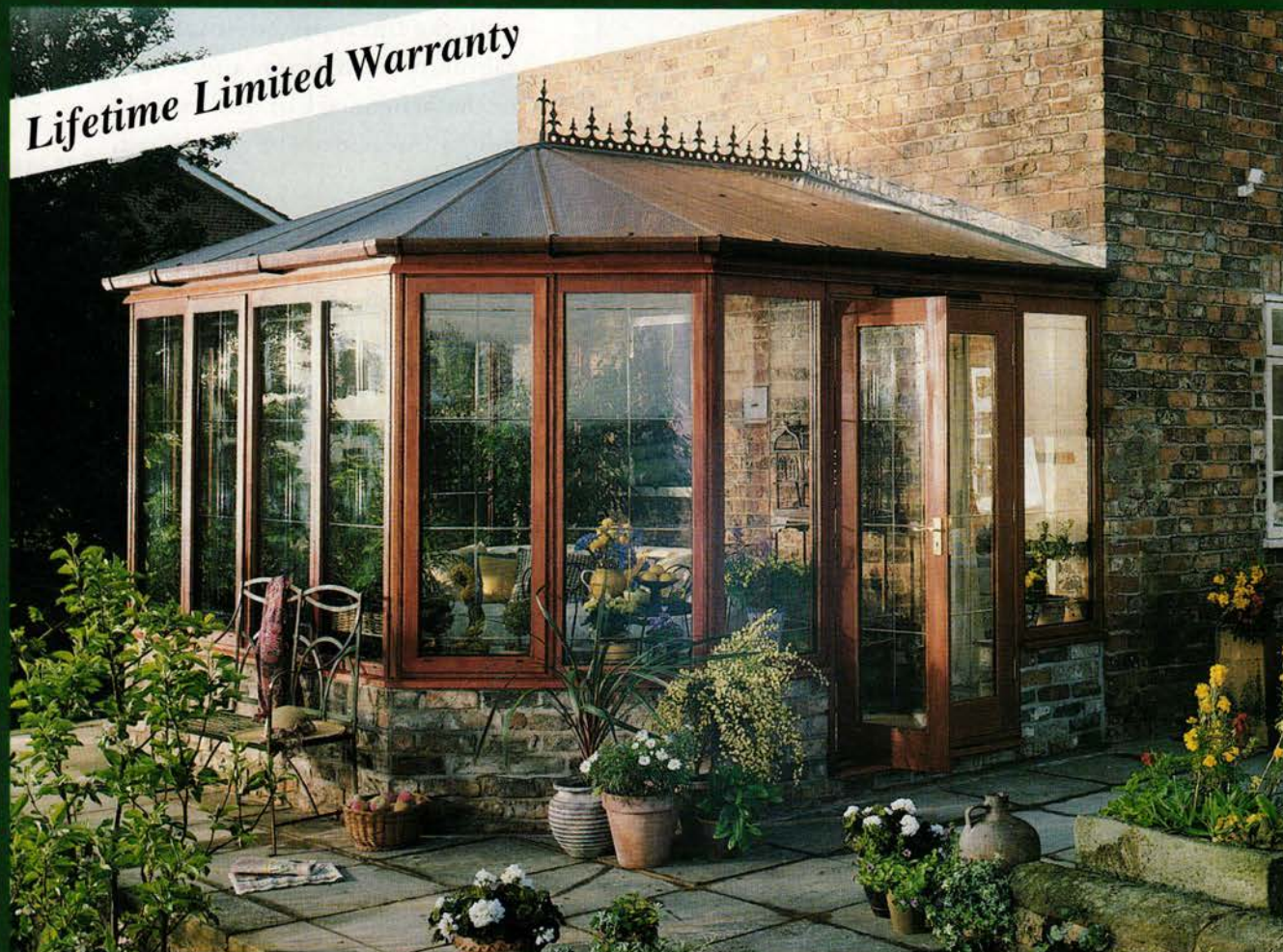
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Prettier Than Paint

Old roses bring a blush to the cheeks of a Southern Italianate.

BY DELILAH SMITTLE

ALL PHOTOS BY J. PAUL MOORE



Shade-tolerant 'Cecile Brunner' frosts the front of the Schaffner house with pink, while the rugosa 'Sara van Fleet' grows along the foundation and the fragrant white damask 'Madam Hardy' spills over the white picket fence.

Almost as soon as settlers came to North America, they brought roses to spread across the land as a living embellishment to the houses they built. The Oregon Trail is dotted with roses, planted from "slips," or cuttings, carried west in wagon trains 150 years ago. Brides took pieces of their mothers' rose bushes with them to perfume new doorways, and descendants of these roses still survive on homesteads and in cemeteries. This is especially true in the South, with its mild climate and easy access to shipping. So it's no wonder that Mary Martin Schaffner turned to old roses for her whitewashed Italianate in Nashville.

The candy-striped 'Rosamundi' is a sport or genetic mutation of the even older apothecary's rose, which may date to before 1600.

The Rose Garden

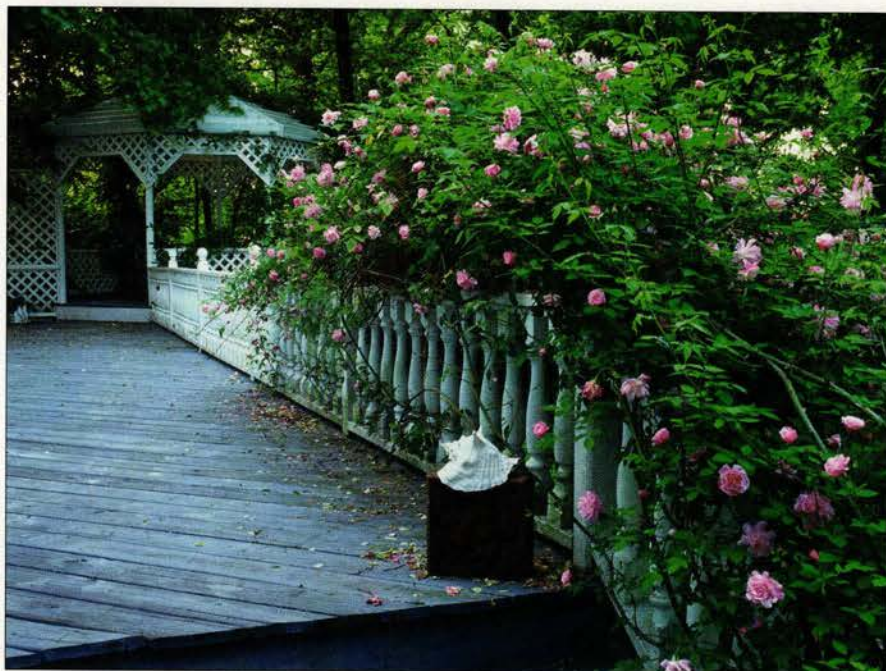
Mary was first entranced by her house's tall, arch-topped windows and red standing-seam roof when she was a student at nearby Vanderbilt University. Oral history holds that part of the house predates the Civil War. It's likely that sometime between the war's conclusion and the 1870s, the house received an addition with elegant country-house detailing. In the early

1970s, by which time she was married with a young family, two adjoining acres went up for sale, and Mary and her husband badgered the astonished property owner into including the house. She treasured the aged appearance of the brick and repeatedly turned down remodelers who wanted to paint or strip the exterior. Instead, she chose to enhance the warm, faded color with more than 20 varieties of old-fashioned climbing and shrub roses in shades of pink, cream, carmine, and coral.

Typical late Victorian gardens echoed the era's social structure: rigidly formal



Outside the Old House



Mary Schaffner created a transition from house to garden with a deck and gazebo. She selected ready-made, weather-resistant supports the approximate weight of the house's original porch posts and cut them to be used as balusters.

beds and over walls. She turned to old-rose varieties available from mail-order catalogs when the house was built—naturally insect- and disease-resistant so they largely fend for themselves, even in Nashville's humid climate.

The logical place for a rose garden was the double side yard. With only a lawn near the house and a few shade trees at the end of the property, it offered ample sun. Mary also liked the fact that the kitchen, dining room, sun porch, and adjoining rooms would open to the view and fragrance. She created a graceful transition from house to garden with a generously wide, traditional, white-painted Southern deck.

The biggest obstacle was finding spindles to approximate the visual weight of the house's original porch posts, without incurring the expense of custom-turned pieces. She solved the problem by buying ready-made, 12' long supports and cutting off the ends, using only the turned center portions for the low balustrade. She used more of the supports in their full lengths to create an adjoining gazebo and an arbor at the shady end of the garden. The arbor echoes the design of the deck, encloses the rose garden, and sets it apart from a smaller garden, where this former president of the Tennessee Wildflower Society grows native plants such as dwarf crested irises (*Iris cristata*) and bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), which might well have been collected and grown by pioneering gardeners.

Mary concedes that most old roses rarely rebloom, like modern varieties, but says that in early summer they're so smothered by fragrant flowers the sensation is worth the wait. Because they don't have to be segregated to avoid disease, she used old roses in her perennial beds, combining them with winter-blooming Lenten

with straight paths, geometrically balanced beds, trimmed hedges, restrained vines, and blocks of colorful annuals in "carpet bedding." But Mary took her design cue from the house's early Victorian styling and rural setting and planted an informal, cottage-style garden, with perennials and roses spilling exuberantly out of

The climbing form of 'Cecile Brunner' was introduced in 1894. The spice-scented "sweetheart rose" blooms heavily in summer then intermittently into fall.



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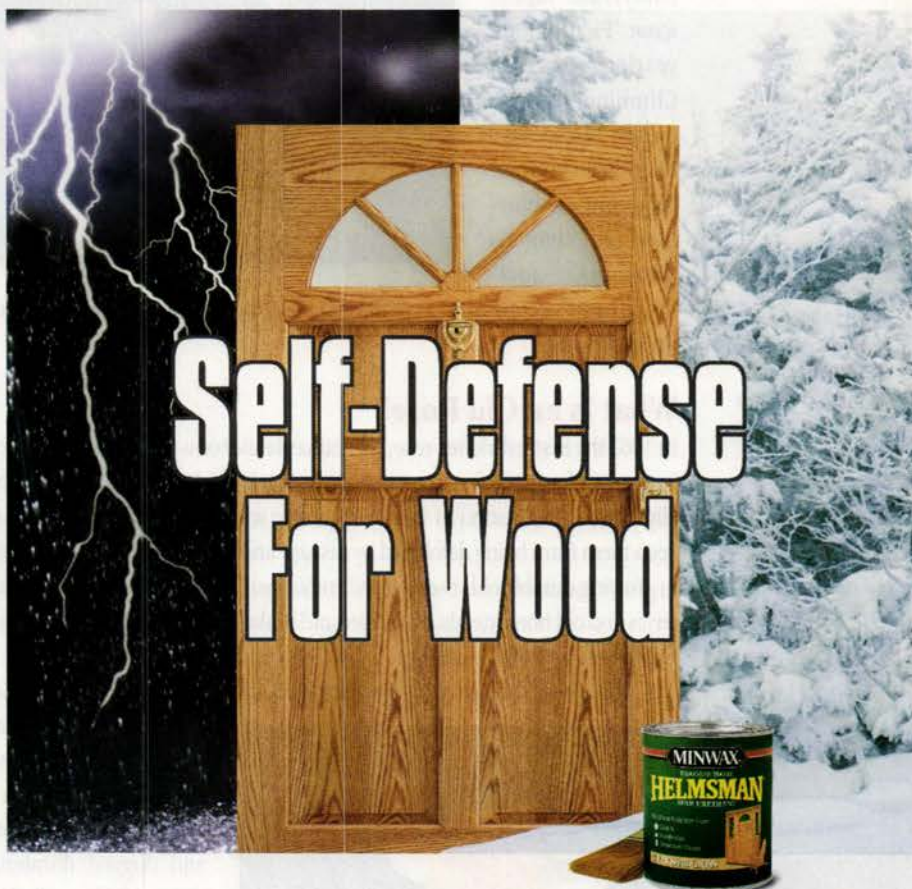
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roses (*Helleborus*) and summer-blooming daylilies, underplanted with glossy-leaved wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*) and silver-and-pink variegated Japanese painted ferns (*Athyrium niponicum* 'Pictum') for yearlong color. Climbing through pink-flowered roses are summer-blooming blue-flowered clematis (*Clematis jack-*



'Mutabilis', which dates to at least the 1890s, derives its name from the way it changes color from gold to deep pink before it falls. Its delicate shape gives it the nickname "butterfly rose."

What Is an Old Rose?

In 1867 the first hybrid tea rose, 'La France,' launched a fad that left the older, wilder-looking roses in the dust for more than a century. Although hybrid teas produce lovely cut flowers, they gradually earned a reputation as finicky, requiring winter protection and ongoing summer spraying to keep them from being defoliated by disease and insects. Within the past 20 years, revived interest in growing durable old roses has led enthusiasts dubbed "rose rustlers" to seek them out in cemeteries and old homesteads, propagate and make them available again through specialty nurseries, mail-order, and online catalogs.

Old roses come in an overwhelming variety—bourbon, damask, Gallica, moss, centifolia, and hybrid perpetuals. Mary reserves space for varieties of her favorite, the rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*). This shrubby species is famous for clusters of multipetaled flowers and dogged durability. Its plump red or orange fruits, called hips, brighten winter landscapes and are relished by birds. Rugosas survive winters as cold as -50°F (Zone 2), tolerate poor soil, and road or sea salt. Uniquely "quilted" leaves make rugosas nearly impenetrable to insects and disease.

Today Mary is more pleased than ever that she chose to grow carefree old roses, because grandchildren are now the focus of

her attention. She transformed a room overlooking the rose garden into a playroom for them, whom she laughingly calls "the flowers of my life." 🏡

Delilah Smittle is managing editor of Birder's World magazine. She lives in a WWII vintage Tudor cottage in Pennsylvania, where she grows old roses and gardens to attract birds.

'Old Blush', introduced from China in 1752, is worth growing not for beautiful individual flowers, but for a nonstop profusion of them and tolerance of heat and poor soil.





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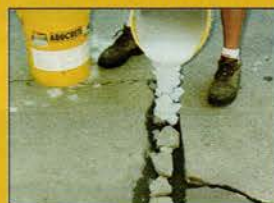
Antique window sash consolidated with **LiquidWood** and rebuilt with **WoodEpoxy**.



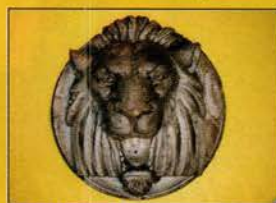
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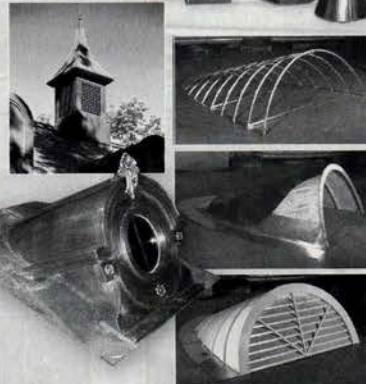
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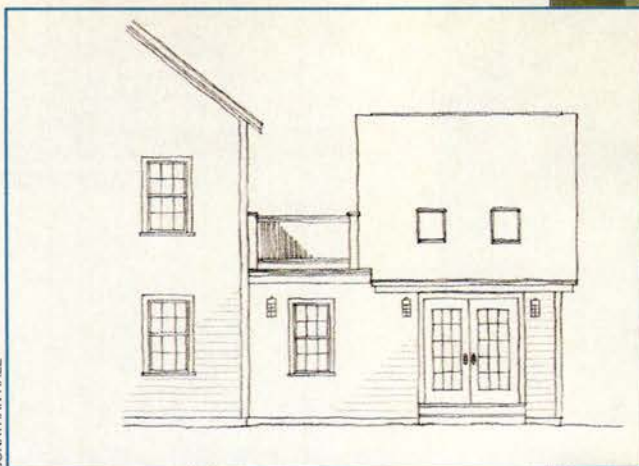
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Room to Grow

Traditional approaches help make additions to old houses more successful.

BY NANCY E. BERRY AND GORDON BOCK



We've all seen one: the old house that suddenly sprouts an obtuse room extension or overpowering wing addition, subverting the stylistic form and swallowing its original structure—all in the pursuit of increased space. Additions to old houses don't have to be incongruous appendages out of sync with the scale and details that give the building its character. Studying your house's historic plan, shapes, and materials—the architectural “genetics” that already exist—then applying some common-sense design principles and time-tested

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Homeowner Andrea Wald and architect Jonathan Hale created a modern, functional kitchen while maintaining a sense of the home's past. Andrea chose simple cabinetry, beadboard wainscoting, and 5"-wide maple floor boards to maintain an old-house feel.

ideas can help it grow in a way that fits both the building and your lifestyle needs. Here are five basic ideas to remember when considering additions to old houses and how they were used to successfully complete five widely varying projects.

1. Keep the Addition in the Background

"When we wanted to add on to our house," says Andrea Wald of Framingham, Massachusetts, "we looked at the only practical option: the back of the building." Andrea and her husband, Mark, didn't want the addition to disrupt the symmetry of the New England farmhouse or be

visible from the road. On top of this the original rear façade was a nearly perfect blank slate to build their addition.

"Placement is a key consideration when planning an addition," says architect Jonathan Hale, who designed the kitchen, mudroom, laundry, and bath addition for the Walds. Adding onto the back preserves the public façade of the house, thereby maintaining the historic character of the home and the context of the neighborhood. Moreover, building onto the rear is the most common growth pattern for a house in New England, as well as across the country. From late 16th-century Capes to vernacular farmhouses of the 19th cen-

A basic ell off the back of the house, the addition echoes the home's original form through roof pitch and window sizes.

1870 Farmhouse
Framingham,
Massachusetts
Architect:
Jonathan Hale
Interior Design:
Andrea Wald

To allow the historic portion of the 1828 house to remain visually distinct, the 700-square-foot garage addition was conceived as a detached summer kitchen. The addition was placed perpendicular to the house with a screened-porch connector. The new construction consists of wood framing with beaded lap siding, a false chimney of recycled brick, and a painted standing-seam terne metal roof.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE KATHRYN ORTH



1828 Farmhouse
Farmville, Virginia
Architect:
Chris Jenkins

tury, ell extensions—typically for a “modern” stove-equipped kitchen—were regularly added off the back, and on New England farms that room might also grow a winter passage to the barn. The local historic precedent for such an addition helps it look correct in a new project. “To work, the addition needs a sense of belonging,” says Hale. “Each individual house has a personality, so I ask, ‘What is the house telling me? What are the rhythms of the house?’”

Architect Chris Jenkins also believes in creating a vernacular narrative for a new addition. He looks at the history of similar houses in an area to discern how the house he is adding onto might have grown in the past. In the case of the garage addition beside an 1828 Virginia farm-

house, Jenkins gave the exterior of the addition the look of 19th-century summer kitchens attached to houses throughout the region. Jenkins is no less mindful of contemporary practices and he also looks at any existing property constraints. He recommends that you ask, “Is this a historic district? What are the set-back ordinances? Do I need to get a variance?”

2. Study Proportions

Whether it is the length and width of a porch, or the dimensions and placement of windows, when code allows do your best to maintain and emulate the original proportions of an old house in an addition. While the specific materials will be new and possibly different in their details, respecting orig-



JOHN GRANEN

1891 Carriage House
Port Townsend,
Washington
Designer:
Pat Durbin



COURTESY OF PAT DURBIN

When Pat and Frank Durbin bought a carriage house in Port Townsend, Washington, they wanted to add a master bath. Pat bought a \$30 3-D Architect computer software program and started noodling around with design ideas. She ended up with a seamless bath and porch addition to the house.

inal proportions will help avoid upsetting the overall historic character of the building—for example, the horizontal emphasis of Prairie-influenced houses—as well as bridge past and present.

“Southern structures were typically one-room deep to allow cross breezes that beat the South’s summer climate,” says Jenkins. “They were also built this way as a function of the timber construction; the length of timber determines room size.” An addition that ignores dimensional parameters of the house’s original structural system, or grafts an incompatible structural system, will look out of place and out of time.

When homeowner Pat Durbin wanted to build onto her Victorian-era carriage house-*cum*-home in Port Townsend, Washington, the original 10’-wide porch dictated the space that could be added to the building. They wrapped the porch around the right side of the house, using that 10’-wide dimension as a guide, without disrupting the house’s original scale. A master bathroom sits above the new porch extension. The Durbins also carried the original window measurements into the new structure.

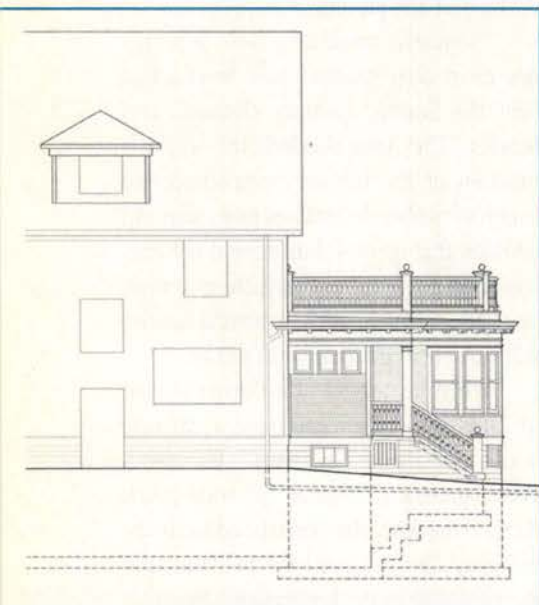
3. Size Matters; Keep Scale Subordinate

Many unappealing additions suffer from gigantism. When occupants want more space, they often concentrate on gaining more square footage on the interior, but overlook the impact on the exterior. Compared to public buildings, houses are small and consequently tricky to expand easily; small houses are even harder. What’s left of an 1,800-square-foot Foursquare if you try to append a 2,000-square-foot addition?

Most successful additions to old houses keep the size and scale smaller so that they “read” as secondary. “Allow the original structure to take center stage and let the addition be subordinate,” says designer David Heide. For a 1904 Queen Anne in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Heide chose to keep the addition to a single storey at the back.

Keep the dimensions small and spend your money on the details that will create a harmonious transition from the old to new space. This rule will help maintain the

Designer David Heide created an entryway with a semicircular family room—a form not found on this particular building but on other houses in the neighborhood—with an adjacent study.



overall character of the older structure. Building below the line of the original roof and setting back walls from primary façades are also key in subordinating an addition.

4. Respect Original Materials & Details

A new addition to an old house has the potential to damage its historic materials and features. Before you begin the project, get to know your house. “Study the original structure thoroughly, and then tread lightly,” says Jenkins. Document existing materials and take measurements of the floor plan, vertical heights, and the components of the house—its windows, doors, and

1904 Colonial Revival
Minneapolis,
Minnesota
Designer:
David Heide

cladding. With copious notes in hand, your designer or architect can replicate details from the original house into the new addition.

When designing additions to historic buildings, architects find creative ways to preserve as much of the original structure as possible. In the Wald House in Massachusetts, Hale created a hyphen (connector) between the addition and the original structure. This 6'-tall connector has the same ceiling height of the original house. The larger portion of the addition opens into the kitchen with a cathedral ceiling. In creating this compact access to the addition, Hale kept all the second-floor windows, saving precious natural light. For the Virginia farmhouse addition, Jenkins designed a small breezeway connector leading from the house to the garage. Again this smaller hyphen preserved much of the original wall.

When it comes to the new work, materials and finishes that follow the original details, even when not identical in composition, will echo its character and help the addition look of a piece. Many window companies today are introducing historic proportions in window shapes and muntin patterns. (You can even order windows with traditional pulley-and-chain or rope balances.) Energy-codes permitting, homeowners can opt for single-glazed windows with storms opposed to more modern-looking double-glazed units. Sometimes contemporary materials can be modified to historic dimensions, such as ripping clapboards on site to match originals. Another good way to maintain continuity between the old and new is to incorporate salvage materials. Jenkins used recycled brick for the new chimney on the

Farmville, Virginia, property. He also found a company to match the existing mortar. In his garage addition, Jenkins specified true divided-light 9/9 windows with restoration glass as well as beaded lap siding and a standing seam roof.

Heide replicated the columns on the front of the Colonial Revival onto the new back porch in a smaller size. Hale added windows in authentic Victorian-era proportions over the sink in the Wald kitchen—a reference to that period. When deciding on interior finishes for an addition, look at the original styling of the house for clues about how that new room should reflect the older structure.

From a historic preservation standpoint, it's worth noting that there's a limit to authentic details; in fact, well-done projects make sure to leave enough clues to let the next generation know where the original structure ends and the new one begins. Countless garden-variety old houses have



gone through alterations in the past—some seamless, some more obvious. Many architects agree that while it is important to create a felicitous pairing between the old and new, in harmony with the existing building in scale, proportion, materials, and color, the new structure should be identifiable in some way. Often this is achieved through the choice of building materials.



DAVID HEIDE

David Heide wanted to create a clear map of what was original and what was not. He delineated one period from another by using different materials from the original.

5. Treat Roofs with Care

Few features are as character-defining as the roof, and when a roof is compromised by an addition, the addition seldom looks right. Roof form, pitch, and eave/cornice lines are the critical parameters to watch. When the owners of a 1916 Arts & Crafts-influenced house in suburban Madison, New Jersey, began to think about addi-

tions, one of the design issues they had to wrestle with was the double-pitch roof.

"The original roof is distinctive," notes architect Mark Alan Hewitt, "and having it look right when finished was critical." Before addressing other concerns, Hewitt and his staff concentrated on carefully designing the geometry of the extended roof. Once the roof was worked

out successfully, much of the rest of the project, particularly the massing of the rear addition, fell into place underneath it.

The house, purchased in the late 1990s, was not in good condition, plus there was no access from the back of the building. Hewitt addressed the rear access problem first by relocating the garage to the opposite side of the lot, thereby providing access to the rear of the house through the new autoport and terrace. The owners were also determined to retain the existing staircase inside the building while gaining more space for the kitchen and master bedroom. "Circulation is always an issue," according to Hewitt, "and one of our challenges was how to keep the staircase without overcomplicating the living room-dining room-kitchen arrangement." Part of the solution involved adding a windowed gallery in a former solid wall that allowed them to open up the stairway. Adds Hewitt, "My mantra has always been that, with care, it's possible to design compatible additions without disrespecting the original house." 🏡

1916 Arts & Crafts
Madison,
New Jersey
Architect:
Mark Alan Hewitt

The rear addition was the last of three phases of work on the White residence in suburban New Jersey. A terrace (right side of photo) connects the new entrance with the relocated garage.



JERRY BRUNO

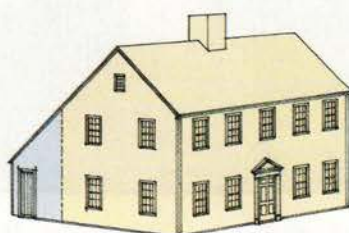
Below: The deep eaves and double-pitch of the roof are key components of the house's early 20th-century styling.



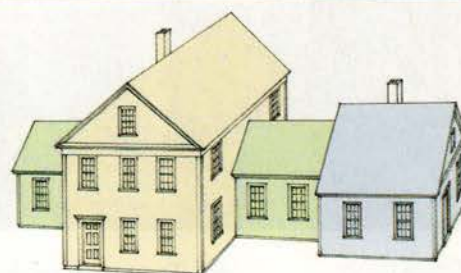
MARK ALAN HEWITT

HISTORIC EXPANSION PATTERNS

People have looked for ways to add more space to existing dwellings since the first houses appeared in North America. Many of the traditional expansion schemes worked out over the last 300 years not only offer time-tested solutions for some ageless problems—such as expanding living space without tampering with the present roofline—but they have also been used for generations across the continent, so they look "right" when used as the basis for designing an old-house addition today.



Shed Roof Extension The simplest addition is a room with a single-pitch roof. Usually reserved for service areas and outbuildings, placing it at the back of the house under a continuation of the main roof produces the traditional saltbox form.



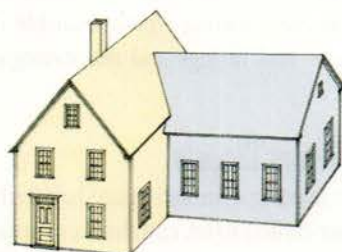
Wing-and-Hyphen Often used in classical mansions or villas based on a five-part plan, this expansion scheme uses linking structures called hyphens to connect the central house with subordinate wings or dependencies.



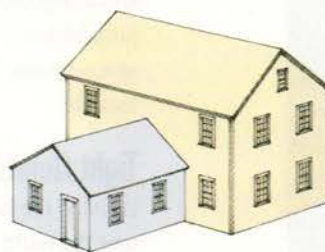
JAMES PRINCE



Unit Repetitions Especially before the industrial era, houses were often enlarged by repeating their fundamental construction or design units—the pens of a log house, the frames of a timber-framed house, or the dimensions of window bays.



Gabled Front and Ell In gable-front houses, attaching an ell to one side presented an ideal opportunity to run a front porch from the main house along the length of the ell.



Rear Ell A secondary extension at right angles to the main axis of the house, ells were often built off the back of side-gabled houses to create kitchens.

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**For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
see page 102.**



**Compact
equipment
can help
make petite
powder
rooms a
reality.**

Given that 21 percent of new houses are built with three or more bathrooms—some on the scale of the Baths of Caracalla—it's hard for anyone with an old house to avoid a little Biffy envy. Many houses dating from the 1890s and earlier were built before modern plumbing, and their bathrooms are invariably reworked closets and alcoves, or additions that came with the expansion of a room or wing long ago. Most houses built after 1910 have original bathrooms (building codes made them mandatory in the 1920s), but typically only on the second floor and seldom more than one. That makes adding a powder room on the first floor a common old-house project.

Finding felicitous room in an old house for a half-bath—that is, a bathroom *sans* tub or shower— isn't always easy, especially if you're trying to stay as small as possible, or work within the con-

Half-Baths & Tiny Toilets

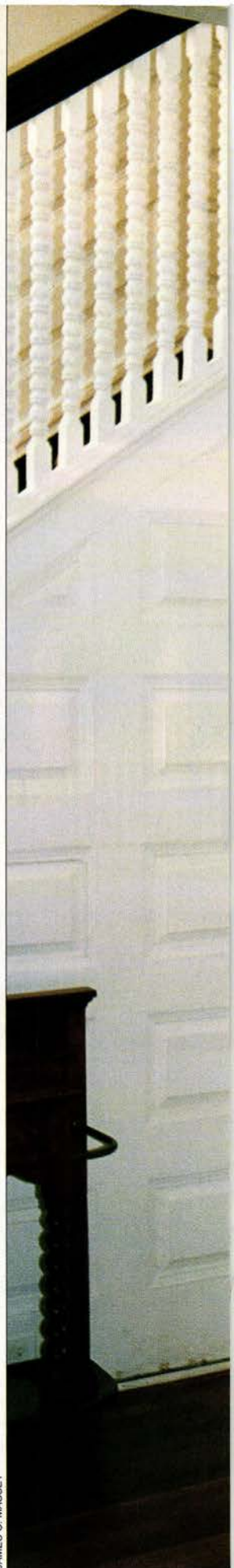
BY GORDON BOCK

fines of a former pantry or storage area. While creative thinking and design help from an architect or good contractor can open up possibilities, so too can knowing what's available in the way of space-saving fixtures and fittings and the strategies they make feasible.

Tight Quarters Water Closets

Perhaps the key to making a limited-space half-bath work is getting the water closet (toilet) to fit, and that key turns on two critical dimensions: the amount of space on either side of the fixture to a wall or cabinet, and the clearance directly in front between the bowl and the next object. Building codes and design recommendations vary, but common dimensions are 12" to 15" from the center of the fixture to either side, and 18" to 21" directly in front (see sidebar page 63). The idea behind these minimal clearances is, of course, to provide enough space for the toilet user to maneuver comfortably, as well as for working room at other features such as the lavatory and doorway.

JAMES C. MASSEY





In old houses, the classic hiding place for a pocket half-bath is under the stairs (often in a former closet)—a site where space-saving fixtures often make the space work.



COURTESY OF SUNRISE SPECIALTY CO.



COURTESY OF A-BALL PLUMBING

Above: Besides contributing period ambiance, reproduction high-tank toilets may add flexibility to limited-area installations, such as altering the tank position or locating the bowl in a corner. Left: Corner lavatories in period styles—even with pedestal bases—are widely available today.

In low-profile toilets, the tank is dropped and formed around the bowl—often as a single piece of porcelainware. Though they are popular for their streamlined styling, low-profile toilets also free up wall areas for shelves or cabinetry.



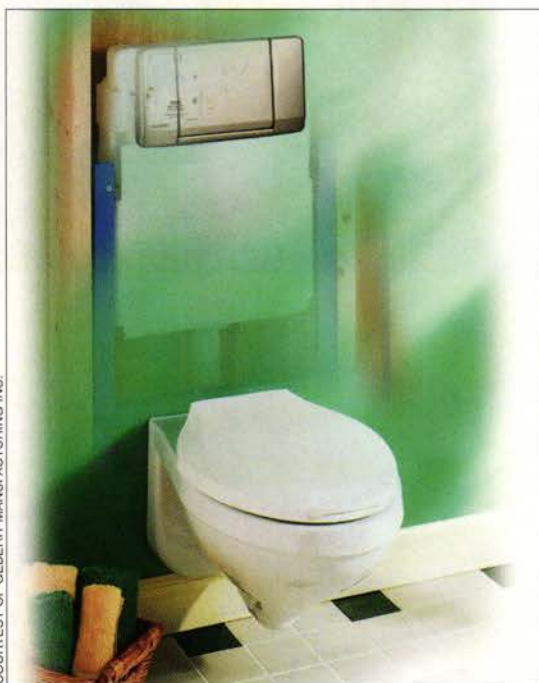
COURTESY OF KOHLER

Getting Cornered

Where space is precious, one place to consider siting the loo is a corner. This strategy not only takes advantage of some otherwise underutilized space, but with luck it buys extra inches of clearance at the sides and in front of the water closet, while freeing up the geometry in the rest of the layout. The essence of making a corner toilet work is dealing with the tank. While clever remodelers over the years have resorted to partially encasing the ends of a conventional tank in the stud space, a better approach is to investigate the creative use of specialized fixtures.

Tankless or high-tank toilets

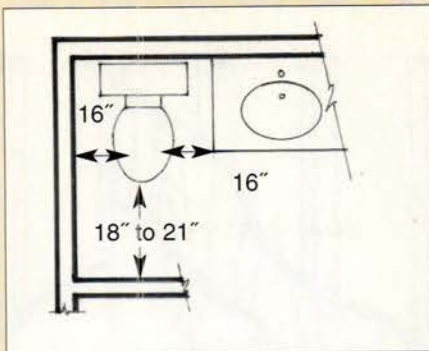
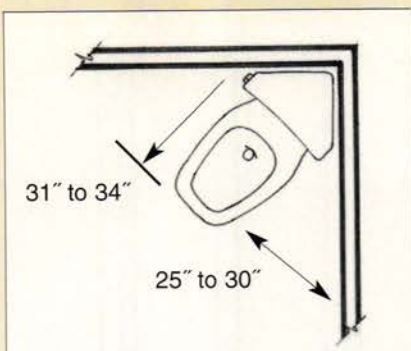
Institutional-type toilets that flush with a siphon jet have no tank, so the pear-shaped bowl may well be able to nestle deeper in the corner of a half-bath than a standard toilet. The catch is that such fixtures must be fed by a minimum 1" water supply for the flush valve to work. An alternate version of the same concept is using a reproduction, Victorian-style high-tank toilet that allows mounting the tank to one side of the



COURTESY OF GEBERIT MANUFACTURING INC.

Concealed-tank toilets move the tank inside the wall void by housing it within a special carrier (above). The result (right) is a bowl that hangs from the wall (making floor cleaning easier) and projects into the room some 6" less than a conventional toilet.





Codes & Commodes

Left: Building codes typically require a minimum clearance in front of 18" to 21" from the edge of the bowl to the nearest obstruction (wall, lavatory, etc.), and around 15" (measured from the center of the bowl) at either side. Far Left: In many installations, a corner-tank toilet can provide necessary clearances and even free up space.

corner. Though tank piping, which typically enters the bowl at its back, still has to be shoe-horned into the corner, removing the tank may buy valuable inches.

Corner-tank toilets The most straightforward way to berth a toilet in a corner is to buy a product made for this purpose. Here the tank is cast in a right triangle that fits efficiently in a corner while still being close-coupled to a conventional, floor-mounted bowl. While the installation requires a new rough-in, the potential benefit, of course, is more legroom.

Concealed-tank Toilets

As noted, buying enough clearance around the toilet can be a decisive issue, and in cases where you cannot raise the bridge, so to speak, it may be possible to lower the river by burying part of the toilet in the wall. Concealed-tank toilets are a European idea, intended to minimize the amount of porcelain for aesthetic and hygienic reasons (a wall-hung bowl is easily cleaned underneath). While increasingly popular for barrier-free universal design applications, concealed-tank toilets can have advantages for old-house owners too. Since an average toilet projects 27" to 30" from the wall concealing and thereby effectively eliminating the tank reduces the depth of the toilet to only 22 1/2" or so—a savings of around 6".

You don't get something for nothing, of course, and there are limitations to concealed-tank toilets. First, these units are generally not recommended for simple retrofits to an existing bathroom because they require a 6" stud wall (5 1/2" of depth) to accommodate the tank carrier, and this usually means building a new wall or par-

tition. Second, any potential for freezing makes them not ideal for installing on an outside wall. Third, these toilets are typically special-order items and more expensive than garden-variety toilets, but their costs can be worth it.

Reducing the Profile

Fortunately, you don't always have to resort to novel shapes or inventive engineering to make the most of confined bathrooms. As you shop among the profusion of toilets sold, you'll find that most manufacturers offer models and order options that solve common space problems.

Generally, toilet bowls come in two types: standard, round-front bowls or elongated (ovalish) bowls, preferred by some people for their ease of use. As you plan your powder room, note that in some (but not all) models, the latter style consumes 1/2" to 1 1/2" more room—not a monumental increase, but just enough to cause clearance problems with, say, an in-swinging door. Where this is an issue, shop for manufacturers that offer space-saving toilets—units that compress the tank enough to offer an elongated bowl in the same space as a round-front bowl.

If it's wall area that is precious, look into low-profile toilets. These compact, often one-piece fixtures can conserve space by permitting cabinetry, such as an extension of a vanity, to be built over the part of the toilet typically occupied by the tank. Simple models are the safest bet. Some remodelers report that ultra-fancy, low-water consumption designs can require double-flushing and, like bikinis, the smaller they are, the more expensive they seem to be.

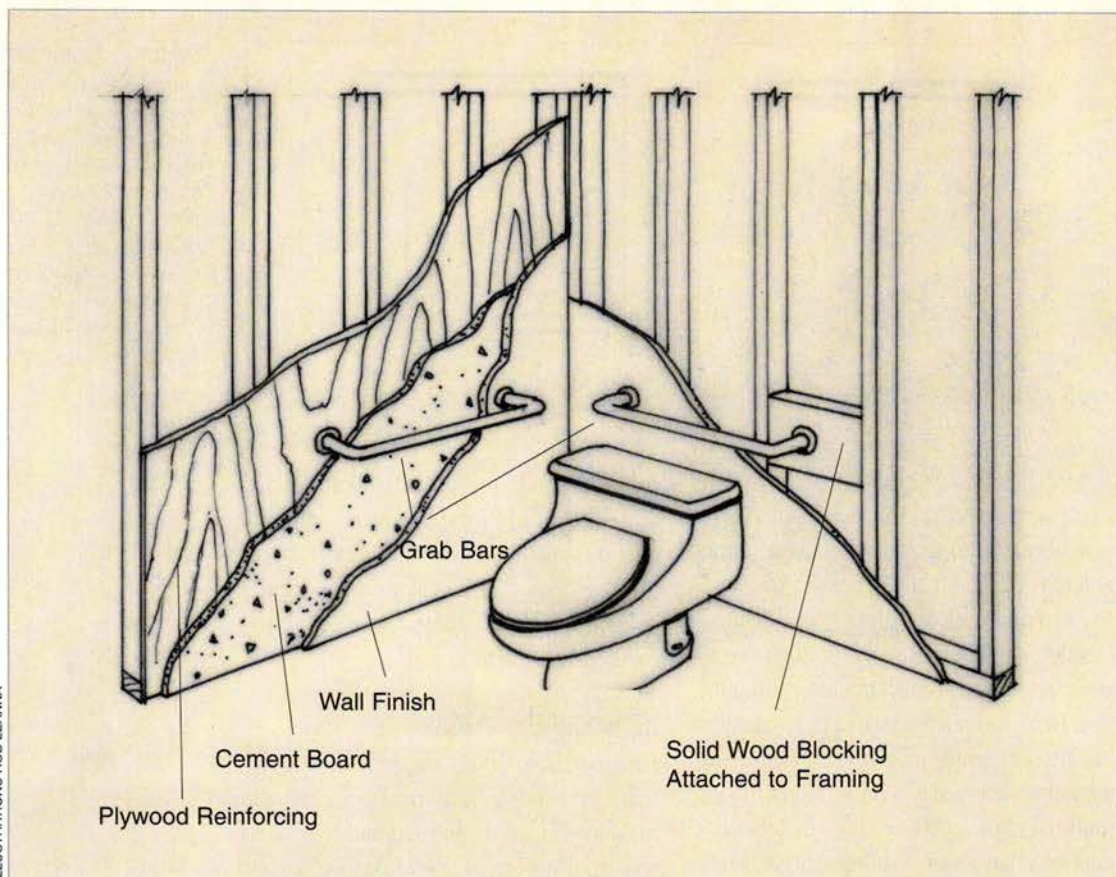


COURTESY OF ELJER

Like concealed-tank toilets, triangle-tank toilets are specialized products made by only one or two manufacturers, and therefore sometimes hard to find locally. However, because they are specifically designed to solve space problems they can be worth the search.

If creating a half-bath involves constructing or opening any stud walls, it pays to plan ahead for potential improvements. Add blocking between studs for later mounting of toilet grab bars—whether or not you need them now. Do the same for any possible shelves, towel bars, or light fixtures.

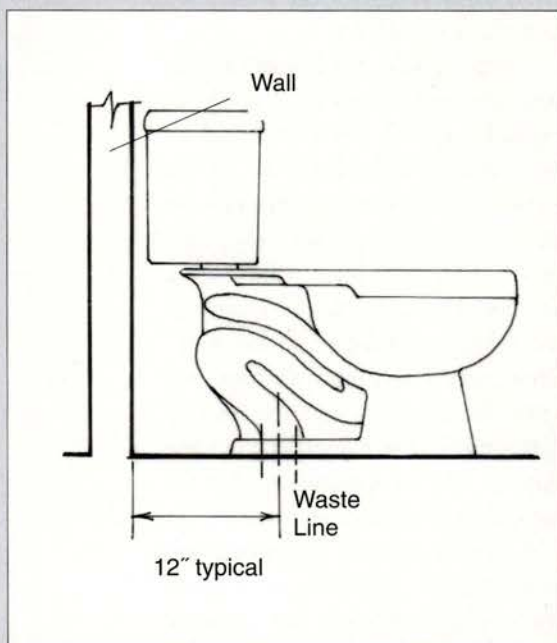
ILLUSTRATIONS ROB LEANNA



Remember the Rough-in

The toilet rough-in dimension is the distance from the wall to the center of the waste line in the floor and is important to note when talking to plumbers and buying fixtures. The typical rough-in today for fixtures and houses alike is 12", but the existing rough-in in old houses might be anywhere from 10" to 14". (Old-style toilets had wall-mounted

tanks, and the plumber could customize the piping to fit the rough-in.) The upshot is, if you install, say, a 12" toilet on a 14" rough-in you'll be wasting space behind the toilet, and if you do just manage to mount it to an 11" rough-in, you still won't get the lid on the tank. If you are doing all new plumbing, the rough-in is up to you, but don't forget to tell your plumber to account for the thickness of tile or wainscoting you may add to the basic wall after he or she is gone.



Leave Us Not Forget the Lav

To stay legal, most building codes require a lavatory (sink) in a half-bath, and certainly guests appreciate it. Fortunately, manufacturers have been making small and specialized sinks for tight spaces for a long time, and they are readily found on the antique and salvage market as well as in the catalogs of current product lines.

Corner Once again, getting in the corner often helps buy space for a good-sized lav bowl as well as clearance in front. If you can afford the space, a corner pedestal sink or single "peg-leg" model adds period ambiance as well as support.

Wall-hung In tight confines, lavatories that are supported solely by the wall are often the way to go because they are the most flexible to install (requiring neither cabinetry nor precise height dimensions) plus they open up knee space under the fixture.

Hardware More often than not, antique lavatories are built for a pair of single faucets (mixing faucets were not widely popular until the 1930s). This seldom poses problems if the fixture is otherwise uncramped, but where space is really tight, a lone single-handle faucet does

double-duty—and that is what the smallest, modern, single-hole sinks are designed to use. Fortunately such units today are also in-step with the ease-of-use goals of universal design, and available in understated models as well as period looks that blend with an old house.

Creature Considerations

Once you've conquered the spatial issues of getting all fixtures to fit, don't overlook some of the less visible, but equally important, aspects of creating a half-bath.

Ventilation Building codes require some form of ventilation for all bathrooms, and since windows that open are rare in a half-bath, that means a ventilation fan. Ceiling-mounted fans are fine, but also consider venting directly through an outside wall with a wall-mount fan.

Insulation Whenever possible, insulate the walls of your half-bath, especially where they border living spaces. The goal here is not a thermal barrier but sound-proofing and the privacy it enhances.

Storage It's easy to forget, but ultimately your half-bath will benefit from some form of storage space—even if only for backup bars of soap and paper products. Building shelves and storage within the stud space, similar to an in-wall medicine cabinet, is simple and effective.

Advance planning There's no better way to avoid costly measurement errors in building tricky service spaces like a half-bath than having all actual fixtures right at hand, so order them early. In fact, most plumbers, won't even stub-in lines until the equipment is on site.

Last, keep your half-bath as unobtrusive as possible. Though it's hard to imagine that the smallest room in the house will ever upstage any other area, the realities of its function add an important new dimension. When possible, avoid half-baths that open directly into major rooms; halls and back rooms make for more discrete entrances and exits. The door itself should open out, not into the bath, and clear other doors and traffic patterns. (Pocket doors can be ideal solutions here.) With a little care and creativity, people will think your new half-bath has always been there—or is not there at all. 🏠



LINDA SVENDSEN



If you go with one of the latest small, wall-mounted lavatories, it may be designed with only one hole for a single-lever faucet. Today it's possible to fit it with a single handle faucet that has a traditional look.

Above: Wall-hung, corner lavatories are a common sight in old buildings, and easy to obtain for a half-bath. Most antiques have double faucets, though three-hole basins made for mixing faucets do pop up.

COURTESY OF A-BALL

For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
see page 102.

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Getting So

Whether you're a restoration architect, builder, craftsman, or an old-house owner-restorer, you can take some of the mystery out of traditional materials by experimenting with a hands-on stoneworking project. You may be surprised to learn that stone is, perhaps, the most accessible of all building materials. Using readily available hand tools, you need only acquire some basic skills and grasp a few elementary principles for stone to reward you with excellent payoffs. So if you have had too much of factory-made look-alikes, but not enough hands-on experience in the workshop, try taking about 30 hours of bench time on a stone project. You will be delighted at the results.

Pick a Project

Since no one would want to work directly on a historic building before mastering some stoneworking skills, begin by making an architectural accent piece—an object that, in some way, reflects the architecture of your home or office and ties separate elements of the building together. Good examples of beginner accent pieces are a garden bench, a raised hearth, or a sundial surface. Then, using the architecture of the house as a basic theme, look for elements to repeat or reinterpret in Indiana limestone in a relief carving.

For your first project, select a simple, geometric line design; this will be easier to carve in relief than a flowing line. Research patterns in old tile books from the period matching your home, or, from a house from the Prairie-School era, pick up some leaded-glass designs (perhaps in the bold vein of George Elmslie rather than the complex motifs of Louis Sullivan). Or you can repeat the fine etchings in period



ALL PHOTOS SKOT WIEDEMANN



Steps to carving architectural accessories from stone.

BY JACOB ARNDT

The traditional tools of stone carving—such as a steel hammer and point chisel—may at first appear intimidating, but the process is as user-friendly as working wood.

hardware, but be careful to scale the design large enough to leave plenty of room for open spaces between lines. Indiana limestone has relatively large grains and lends itself to broader patterns, as opposed to marble, which can take tighter and sharper designs, but is more difficult to work.

After settling on a design, determine the size of the object and contact your masonry supply yard. Ask for Indiana limestone slab stock and see if the yard has

me Relief



The trick in stone carving is to enjoy the striking rhythm so that you can concentrate on the chisel angle, as if the blade were pushing through the stone rather than impacting it. A wooden mallet is lighter than a steel hammer and less likely to snap a chunk from the design, allowing you to focus more on how the material responds.

First-time stone projects, which reflect the house's overall architectural design, work best when they are accent pieces installed in walls or added to interiors such as this Prairie-motif fireplace bench.

it in 12" widths. Indiana limestone is used extensively for high-end work, such as sills and door thresholds, or for lintels and window surrounds and is therefore widely available. Look for fine-grain stone that contains some marbling or color to add interest. Avoid the slabs with quartz nodules in them. The stone arrives at the supply yard in slabs 2" to 3" thick by 6" to 12" wide in lengths up to 8', so you will need to saw it to size with a circular saw fitted with a diamond blade. Then set up a sturdy wood bench made of 2x4 stock, one you can walk entirely around to direct your chisel at any angle comfortably.



Start Carving

Think of carving in relief as akin to melting snow that gradually reveals an object. First you draw lines on the surface of the limestone—a leaded-glass design, say—then you bring out the image by taking away the surrounding material. Indiana limestone is very uniform and soft enough to work with regular shop tools.

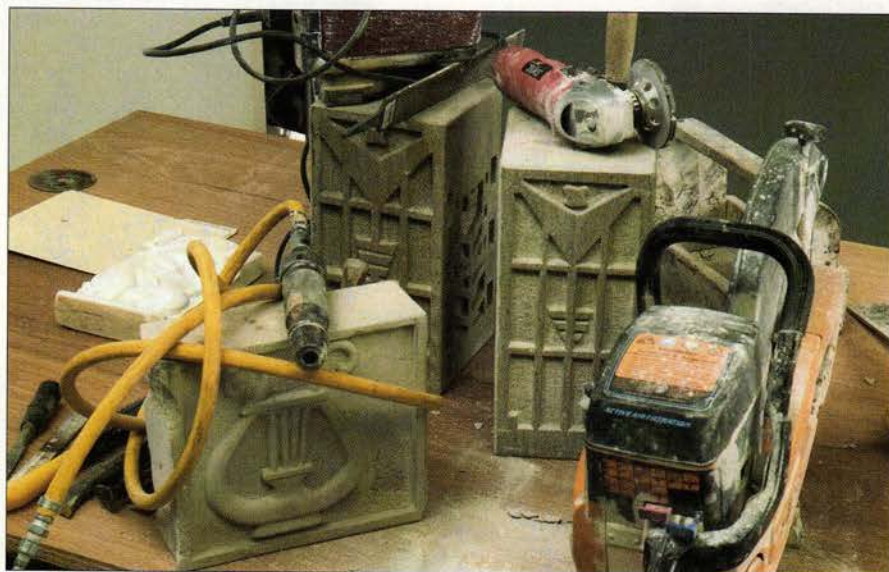
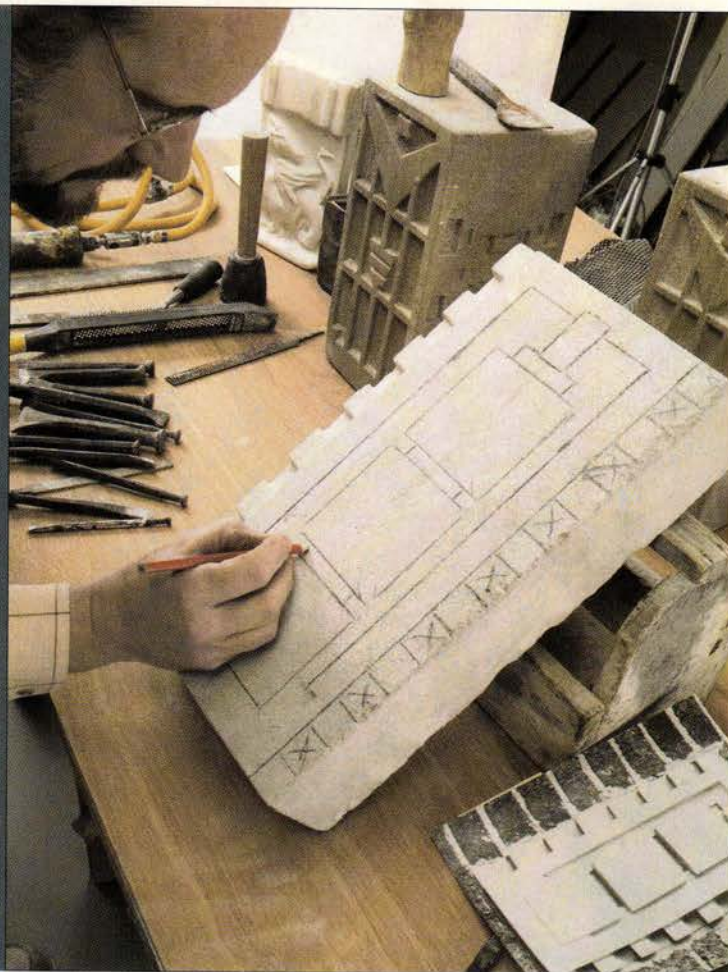
The best way to work stone is in a series of drafts. When sawing it to project size, set your blade depth to shallow-cut a 1/4" kerf, then follow with successively deeper cuts until you have the rectangular units that you need to assemble a fireplace surround, a bench, or medallion. Then apply your belt sander with 80-grit paper to clean up the sawed surfaces. Ease the edges of the stone for a smooth, chip-resistant edge that is ready for the line design.

Next, begin to remove stone so that you outline your design and make it stand out. Believe it or not, chisels used for wood are excellent for carving limestone—you just need to sharpen them more often. The only tool you'll require that is not common these days is a wooden mallet for hand carving (available in different sizes at art-supply shops). These mallets are lighter than the typical stone-carving hammer and excellent for an introduction to stonework on the bench. They are also more forgiving when it comes to mistakes—which you are bound to make at first. Mallets have the right balance for more comfortable chisel action, and they will not bruise deep into the stone if you use the wrong angle. In addition, with a mallet you'll adopt the repeated rocking action of carving with greater ease. Once you are comfortable with how the stone responds to different chisel angles, you can switch to the small iron hammers.

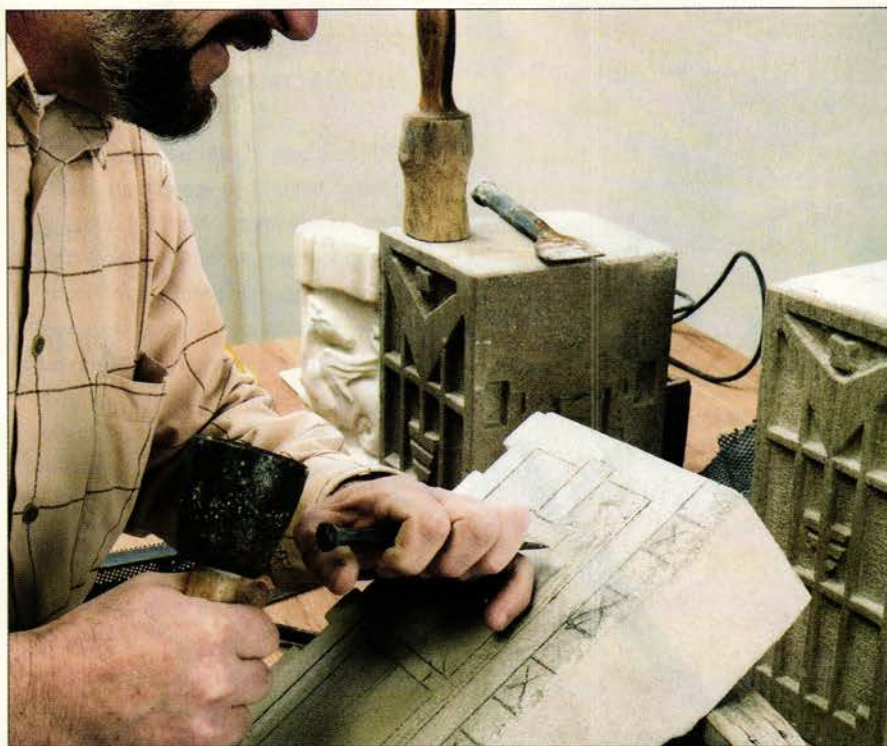
As with any building material, your approach is important. Work with the stone grain and avoid forcing tools or materials. To achieve a bold relief that makes your design stand out, remove stone to a depth of about 3/4". Your design lines should be at least 3/8" thick to give them some substance, and preferably they will be geometric and intersect at angles that are not too tight. Flowing lines and tight angles are for later projects. Keep it simple.

Phase 1

After selecting your pattern and cutting your stone slab to size, transfer your line design to the stone using a pencil. Make sure the lines have at least 3/8" of thickness to give them some body, and avoid the complexities of curved or intricate lines.



Power tools are good for finishing as well as cutting. For contrast, sand parts of the design to a polish. Begin with 80-grit paper and work up to as fine as 200-grit, taking care not to wear away crisp chiseled angles that give the work clarity.



Phase 2

Next, begin to take away the background stone with the point chisel, outlining the pattern lines so that they project from the carved surface, revealing the image of your design. Work in a series of shallow drafts, and think of the stone removal as snow slowly melting around an object.

Hone Chisel Skills

When you strike the stone you will direct shock waves into all adjacent areas, as well as cutting or slicing the stone you want to remove. Getting the desired effect all depends on the angle of the chisel, so remember these four basic rules.

1) As you approach a 90-degree angle to the stone surface, you will remove larger chunks, but you will have less control over how much stone you remove. The only time you want the chisel directly at 90 degrees is when you want to split the stone in two.

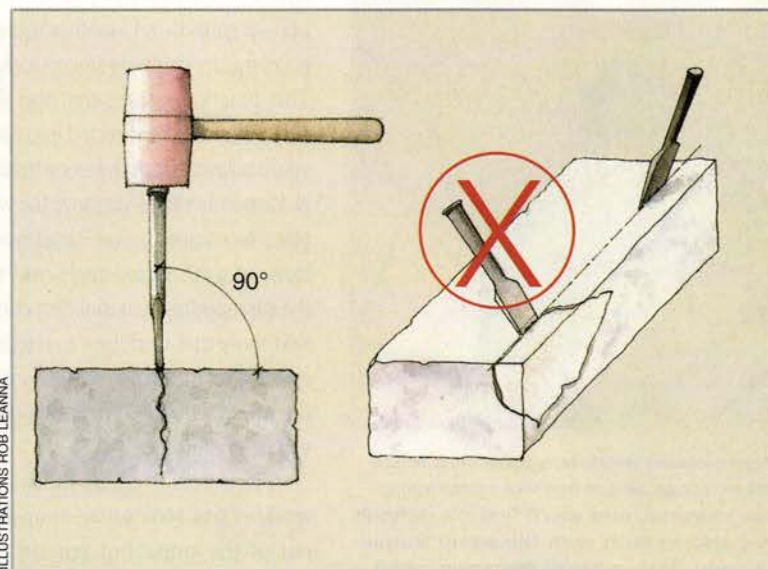
2) When you approach the edge of the block or cut near a corner, always direct your chisel into the body of the stone. Never direct your chisel into open space or it will spall stone you want to keep.

3) Always cut stone into a cavity. Give the excavated stone under the chisel a place to escape or you may bruise deep into the surrounding areas—stone you may want to have solid and crisp for an edge later on.

4) Finally, stay well away from your finish line until the material has been taken away in the field and you are ready to pay close attention to detail and fine work.



Your local masonry supply should have the point chisel, blade chisels, and tooth chisel you'll need, but you can also buy through the Internet. For carving, it's best to hone these tools down to a sharp edge.



Above left: Avoid a 90-degree angle, where you lose all control over impact and bruise the surrounding stone, making it crumbly. Above right: When near the edge of a block, chisel into the body of the stone. Angling the chisel into open space will spall the edge.

Phase 3

The chisel blade slices the stone at an angle, similar to a guillotine. Never work at 90 degrees, but don't pick too shallow of an angle either or the chisel will only slide along the surface. Always cut into the area you want to "waste away," never directly into the wall of the relief line.



Perspectives on Stone

With so much of the new construction industry being little more than assembling ready-made modular units in repeating combinations, there is often little room for the architect, craftsman, or even handy homeowner to exercise a little creativity. Fortunately, historic preservation work has a long tradition of maintaining and rediscovering the techniques for coaxing building materials into the beautiful forms that were common when people spent lifetimes working in wood or stone or plaster.

Although today's man-made versions of traditional building materials are getting almost indistinguishable from the natural originals, that misses part of their point. Many of the faux products now used to replace old architectural parts are not only like costume jewelry, eventually betraying their appearance of substance, they also convey our loss of ability to skillfully manipulate stone and wood. Naturally, market forces, like the need for massive quantities of building parts and reducing labor costs, drives the growth of factory-made decorative components, but there are still ways to deny its complete dominance of our environment and work. Once you work with the real McCoy—as in carving an architectural accent in stone—you'll never see the ersatz version the same way again.

—J.A.



Some chisel work is aggressive while other steps are more like massaging the material, and you'll find it's difficult to perform both with the same frame of mind. Take a break between initial rough work and the finer chiseling where you smooth out features of the design.

With these few rules in mind, begin excavating the recessed fields of the design with the point chisel by first cutting a channel—a gouged-out line that you subsequently enlarge by chipping stone, working it wider. This practice ensures that the shock of the chisel blow will be directed into the channel or void and away from the stone behind the chisel. Remember to always give the waste stone a place to escape. If you "dead head" into the stone at a 90-degree angle, you will weaken the surrounding material. Test chisel angles to find those that work best to remove sufficient chunks, yet maintain control as you approach the lines of the design. Soften your angle as you near your line.

It is tempting to hurry your chisel work as you start to see your design come out of the stone, but remain patient and concentrate on working in shallow drafts. Using a sharp-point chisel in even drafts, first cut out the surfaces to about 1/8" deep throughout the area, then repeat until you achieve the 3/4" depth. Remember to stay at least 1/4" away from the finish line while using the point. Once again, think of the carving as snow gradually melting around

Stonework Safety

Always wear eye protection when chiseling stone. When sawing with diamond blades, ear protection is a must, along with an appropriate respirator to protect lungs from dust. When moving stone, wear gloves and watch your fingers. As you carve with mallet or hammer, also watch out for the "new guy knuckles" that come from missing the chisel periodically.

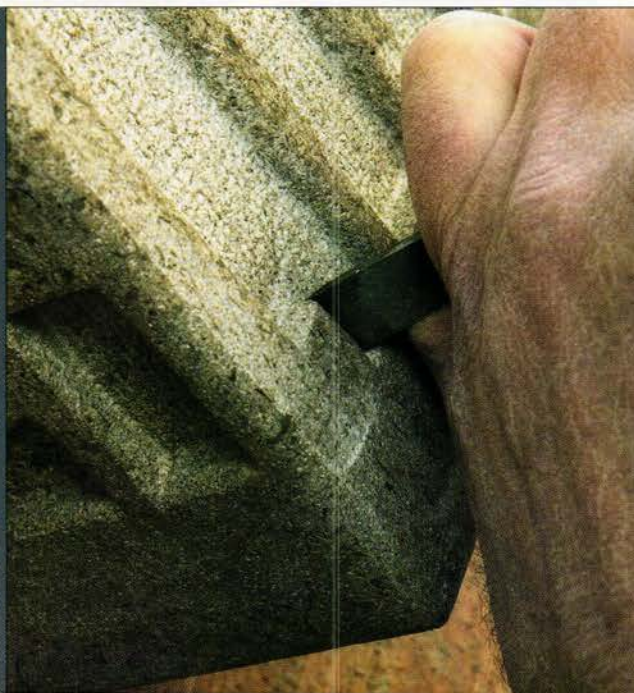
Use the tooth, or serrated, chisel to dress the rough peaks of stone left by the point chisel to a flatter, more uniform surface. Work patiently and remove only 1/8" or so of material at a time, looking for straight lines and good definition as your design comes alive.



For fine detail, the smaller the chisel the better. Arndt sometimes uses regular wood chisels to get the crisp, 90-degree angles needed in final drafts for excellent definition—you just have to keep a good metal file handy to sharpen the chisel.



Try focusing on the fine stone grains as they shift under the influence of the chisel and notice the textures produced by different applications. You can use the contrast between the frosty, stippled surface of the point chisel and the smooth, sanded surface to highlight the design.



an object. When you're done with the point chisel the stone surface will resemble hundreds of small mountain peaks outlining the contours of your design.

Next take up the tooth, or serrated, chisel and carefully flatten out the peaks in even strokes, taking care not to head your chisel directly into the walls of your design. The work will begin to come alive at this stage. The point produces a vague outline of a design, but the tooth chisel gives you far more control and precision, so you can approach your lines within 1/8" or so and give them better definition. At this point, the project begins to look like something, and you will be impressed at how you have created an image in stone—but beware—this is also the level when many people get discouraged. The piece becomes too precious and then every little chip of stone takes time, leading to frustration. Though some people will set the stone aside and call the project good enough after the initial tooth-chisel work, be patient and keep your sights on the rewards of a refined job.

Actually, there are about six more drafts to go before you have a finished piece. Define the design lines now with a straightedge to achieve clean and crisp definition, then use the sharp blade chisel to gradually carve the walls of the lines down to a 3/4" depth, taking care to create a sharp 90-degree angle. Try to "think flat" at the pan of the field, and crisp and straight at the angles. This phase will take perhaps three or four drafts or more.

Finally, clean up the lines with a medium wood file, gently easing off the sharp outside angles of your design and creating flat walls and surfaces. Then install your architectural accent in some featured place where others can admire a project that enhances your skills as well as your surroundings. 🏠

Jacob Arndt operates *Northwestern Masonry & Stone* (527 Mulberry St., Lake Mills, WI 53551).

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For the Love of **Lemma**

BY KATHLEEN FISHER

**A May/
December
bond
between
distant
cousins
grants a
reprieve
to a New
York
Queen
Anne.**

The garret of the Crabtree House still contains Lemma's favorite chairs, books, and clothing. In the background is a portrait of her grandfather, William, whose photos helped document the history of Montgomery.

ALL PHOTOS GRACE DAVIES EXCEPT WHERE NOTED





Left: In 1901 Lemma's father, John, walks toward the Crabtree House from his father's adjacent home. Below: Bob Williams and Heike Grigsby are still relandscaping the back lot, which in spring explodes with daffodils planted by the Crabtrees.



Most old-house stories are love stories. There's falling in love with the house, of course. But there's also confirming that you already have someone who will stick with you through the trials and tribulations of renovation. Or that you will find that someone along the way—spouse, sweetheart, friend, neighbor, or that pure-gold contractor. The tale of Crabtree House in Montgomery, New York, revolves around what we might call a ménage à quatre: its current owner, Bob Williams, who never met an old house he didn't like but who took years to decide this could be "the one;" Lemma Crabtree, descendant of the original owners, a never-married, no-nonsense octogenarian; Bob's blonde, blue-eyed German girlfriend, Heike Grigsby, who bravely bought into endless weekends of hard work; and D. J. Shugars, a cable executive who insisted on renting the house while it was still under repair.

Bob, a purchasing agent for a chemical company, served for 10 years as Montgomery's town historian and is passionately devoted to this tri-village area of about 20,000 an hour and a half northwest of New York City.

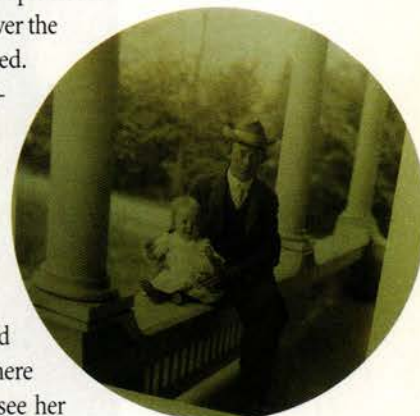
In 1994, putting together a book on the town's history, Bob phoned Lemma Crabtree, a distant cousin and last living descendant of a family who had owned the town's yarn mill. The gruff-voiced woman acknowledged that her garret held "a few photos," which turned out to be 320 negatives taken by her father and grandfather depicting life around the turn of the last



century. They ranged from construction of the house itself and shots of other structures in Montgomery to nature walks and ice-cream making by the Crabtree clan. Later, Bob would find that the Crabtrees also had detailed diaries dating from 1912 (with a reference to the *Titanic's* sinking) to 1997.

This archive and Lemma's memories were a treasure trove for any history buff, and Bob became a regular caller at the house of this spinster, then 85. Though Lemma usually made it subtly clear after a couple hours that she had tired of company, over the course of his visits, a bond formed. Bob's marriage was disintegrating, and he admired this tough woman who had graduated from Cornell, served for 30 years as city clerk of nearby Newburgh, was an avid golfer, adored the New York Mets and Laird's Applejack, and smoked like a chimney. "I told her there were two years that I couldn't see her for the smoke," Bob says.

John Crabtree poses on the front porch with Lemma's middle sister, Eleanor, who became a librarian. All three of the daughters were college graduates.



Top left: In the fall of 1899, John Crabtree hired a local contractor to begin work on a house near his father's residence. This photo appears in the book *Bob Williams* put together on Montgomery history.



Bottom left: Bob found more than 300 negatives in Lemma's attic. The home also held 85 years of journals—some beneath ceilings that were collapsing from a damaged roof.



As she aged, he helped her with book-keeping or ran her bath, and with Heike, took her on outings to her family's former lakeside cabin, nearby Mohonk Mountain House (where she climbed to the top of the lookout at age 92), and to the ocean for the second time in her life. "She was like a grandmother," he says, "but without all the aches and pains someone that age would normally have. She was also a friend when I needed one most, and I'm sure she would say the same."

Since she had no close relatives, Bob

became concerned about what would happen to the Crabtree House, a 1900 two-and-a-half-storey cross-gable Queen Anne, once Lemma was gone. It was so neglected he saw no future for it except demolition. So Bob hit on a triage plan. He would do some repairs and persuade Lemma to pay for others to keep the house from disintegrating.

As with many old houses, the most pressing issue was the roof. "Lemma couldn't afford to put on a whole new roof, but it was leaking into the wall structure. Where she could see it, her answer was pots and pans. If she hadn't patched it, I don't think the house would be here today."

Some repairs were entertaining for Lemma to watch, such as the chimney work that distracted her the day they had to bury her feisty big cat, Striper, and the pleasant crew that redid the 1911 knob-and-tube wiring. When she could, she helped in small ways, like holding open sash windows while Bob repaired broken weights. "That was the important thing—for her to see the house coming back to the way it was, and for her to be involved in it."

Not all projects were a hit with Lemma. The yard was so overgrown with shrubs and vines that the oil delivery truck was instructed to run its hose from the driveway next door. Rhododendrons tugged at the gutters. Bob thought such dense vegetation also posed crime concerns for a woman living alone. He hired a local man to clean it out gradually but knew he was in trouble the evening an earlier offhand comment to the yard man led to the disappearance of forsythia that had long grown along the road.

On the Dotted Line

In 1999 Bob and Lemma began to talk about a more serious commitment, though he wasn't in the market for a house. In 1989 Bob had bought and restored a slightly smaller 1895-96 Queen Anne in the heart of Montgomery, although his ultimate dream was to own a Greek Revival or Federal-style home. Nonetheless, Bob's buying the Crabtree House with a Life Estate arrangement for Lemma could both protect the house and guarantee her a home for the rest of her days.

Before Lemma died, she saw her house accepted by both the New York State and National Register of Historic Places.





The Crabtree House had a lot going for it. It retained many touches added before fires and floods at the mill and then the Great Depression wiped out the family fortune. A 1914 addition closed in the original back porch and added a second-storey sleeping porch and larger pantry. Another expansion in 1923 doubled the parlor and dining room and in the latter added a window-seat wall.

The house boasted stained-glass windows in the stairwell and parlor, much of the original door hardware (including decorative cast-iron hinges), and the original oak mantel with its carved oak fireplace cover surrounded by bronze plating.

The house has an open feel because the doors between entry, parlor, and dining room are either pocket doors that disappear or glass bifold doors that almost do. Yet there are also cozy nooks, like the tiny bookroom off the parlor.



Even after years of work, Bob was told that he was making a mistake by buying "this old barn."



Above: Renter D. J. Shugars took one look at the dining area and pictured herself relaxing on the window seat with a good book.



The bronze plating on the fireplace cover is thought to be from the American Bronze Powder Company in Bob's hometown of Verona, New Jersey.

So for both Lemma and the house, Bob signed the purchase agreement and he and Heike continued their work pretty much as usual. They did make a considerable investment, though, in a standing-seam copper roof and gutters, calling in a second contractor when the first round of work led to water damage on the porch.

Throughout the process, Bob applied lessons learned from his previous restoration. "You need to let a house speak to you," he says, and you also need to leave enough clues for new generations to interpret.

So in the Crabtree basement he left

the electric system's knobs and tubes, as well as a door into the former coal room, even though there is now only half a partition into that space. "The [dividing] wall had termite damage, and the room had no windows, and when I took it down I thought, 'I really like this.' But the door had notations in Lemma's father's hand about coal deliveries, and it seemed important to leave it." He and Heike left original Victorian wallpaper and border in a closet; the walls of most rooms shed plaster as newer wallpaper was removed, and Bob called in a pro for the bigger patching jobs.

When Lemma died in the fall of 2001, Bob and Heike began more interior work, including replacing tile ceilings with sheetrock, painting walls, and refinishing the parlor and dining-room floors, a total of about 4,000 square feet. "The finish was worn off because they had never had much carpet, but they had a nice patina that I didn't want to lose." He stripped them with a paste stripper and then pad sanded any stained areas, finishing with polyurethane. "It's a Herculean task, but you just do so much today, and so much the next time."

A New Resident

Those tasks completed, Bob thought it was time to move into the Crabtree House and put his other house up for rent (although his plumber several times commented, "I can't believe you're giving up that beautiful house for this old barn.")

After many weeks, though, the most promising response he got to his rental ad couldn't move in until spring—a wait that would be too big a strain on his budget. Then D. J. Shugars walked through his door. She was being transferred immediately by a cable network, but said that Bob's current house, with its quirky little doorways and corners, wouldn't give her any place for her long rows of bookshelves. "Well," admitted Bob reluctantly, "I do have this other house." He drove her to the house at night, stopped briefly, and asked, "Have you seen enough?" D. J. was not to be so easily put off. "It was a winter night," she recalls. "I didn't even see the outside until later." She loved the wraparound porch, the woodwork—especially the stairwell—and the dining room, where she could envision herself reading on the window seat.



Among the features that charmed D. J. on her first visit was the stairwell, which combines Victorian fillips with more straightforward Edwardian-style balusters.

Three years later D. J. shows no signs of moving out. She loves the combination of open and cozy spaces, and the large pantry that gives her space for canned tomatoes and cooking supplies. From the back porch she can view wildlife ranging from birds (including wild turkeys) to rabbits and deer. In spring the deep slope is spangled with

hundreds of naturalized daffodils planted by the Crabtrees. Thus D. J. has become yet another partner in this restoration, tolerating Bob and Heike and/or contractors almost every weekend, but also weighing in with what job should get next priority, and—not least—helping to keep the whole project afloat by renting the house.

Bob thinks Lemma's spirit still inhabits the place, perhaps with that of her parents and sisters. D. J., who never met Lemma, says she's never felt her presence. "But I think she would approve of another independent woman who loves to read and loves family and friends, living in her house." 🏠

Up on the Roof

From Jefferson to Wright, historical skylights offer bright ideas for old houses. BY NANCY E. BERRY

“Whether I retire to bed early or late,” wrote Thomas Jefferson, “I rise with the sun.” Jefferson did get up at dawn each day because his bedroom at Monticello had a skylight in the center of the ceiling. In fact, the use of natural light pervades this famous house. In the late 18th century, Jefferson was one of the first architects in this country to incorporate skylights—a total of 13—into his home. Skylights have been added to residential

rooftops ever since for light, ventilation, and even roof access in case of chimney fires. We’ll look at three centuries of America’s historic skylights and what you need to know about historically appropriate types when planning to introduce one to your old-house roof.

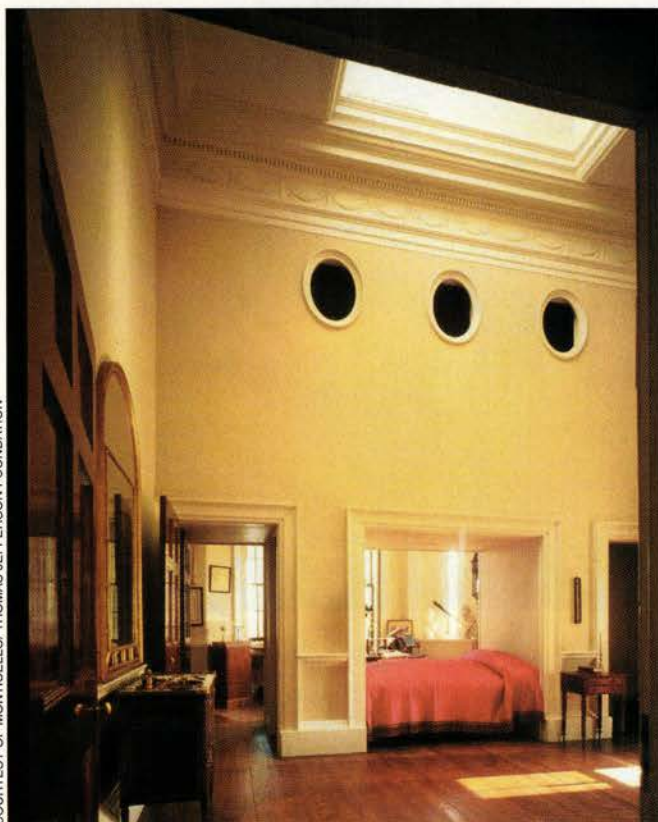
Revolutionary Roof Windows

Often called roof windows, early skylights were wood framed—constructed much like a window sash—typically 3’ x 3’ with three courses of glass panes that lapped anywhere from 3/4” to 2 1/2” at the bottom. Muntins were placed vertically so the rain could wash over the glass and not pool.

Many of America’s 18th-century classical houses incorporated skylights not only for the practical purposes of admitting air and light, but also to serve aesthetic or stylistic needs. Jefferson was enamored with the idea of rooms awash in natural light. In order to determine the amount of light needed in a space, he would calculate the volume of the room and take the square root of that number. This would tell Jefferson how much square footage of window openings he needed—which included skylights. All of the skylights at Monticello opened with a counterweight system. Today they have been restored to their original condition.

Boston architect Charles Bulfinch also included skylights in the roofs of his Federal-style town houses. Although a few original examples still exist, many of these early wooden skylights could not stand up to centuries of snow, rain, and wind, and have been lost through neglect or renovations.

The roof window at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities’ (SPNEA) 1785 Hamilton House in South Berwick, Maine, is an early example of a skylight. Original owner and West Indies merchant Jonathan Hamilton could watch the cargo boats coming down the Salmon Falls River from his rooftop “lookout,” explains Richard Nylander, chief curator at SPNEA.

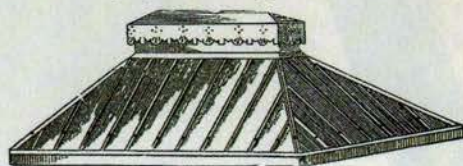


The skylights at Monticello, including the one in Thomas Jefferson’s bedroom, operated on a counterweight system. All 13 skylights have been restored to original function.

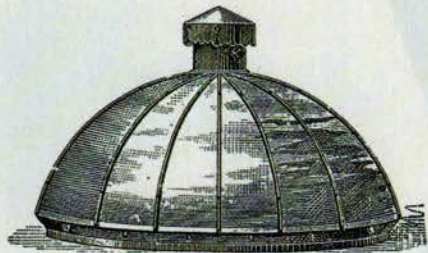
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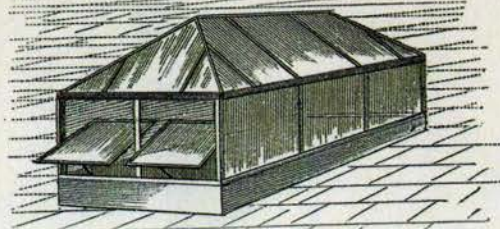
Metal Skylight Designs from the 1890s



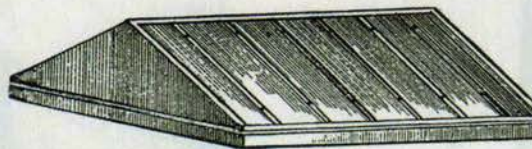
Hipped skylight with ventilator



Dome type



Lantern with operable windows



Gable-end type

Right: By 1900, stained glass was mass-produced and available to almost everyone.

This Tiffany stained-glass dome skylight is a major focal point in the 1899 Dunsmuir House in Oakland, California. Ten feet in diameter, it is made up of more than 7,000 pieces of glass.

The dome is protected by another skylight set on the center of the roof.

Victorian Metal

With sheet-metal shops popping up in every major U. S. city in the Victorian era, metal skylights became a standard roof feature on row houses, offering much needed daylight to enclosed stairwells decades before electricity. In its 1890 catalog, Bickelhaupt Sky-light Works advised that homeowners should replace their old wooden skylights with metal. Copper, galvanized steel, and wrought iron manufactured in myriad shapes—hipped, domed, and gabled—were commonly used on flat roofs, while flat skylights were placed on sloped roof surfaces.

Companies also offered custom skylights fabricated to a builder's specifications. Glass was typically fluted or rough, 1/8" to 1" thick, and embedded with wire to guard against falling branches, fruit, or hail. Many of these skylights were operable and also had vents. On steamy days, these vents allowed air to escape through the roof. Vents were equally important in winter months as one 1900 company noted, describing its skylights as "snow and water tight while admitting an escape for condensation in every case." Metal skylights were always set up on curbs (low walls built around a roof opening) that helped keep snow off the glass. By the 1910s skylights, increasingly mass-produced and sold by catalog, crowned many city dwellings.

Kaleidoscope of Color

In high-style houses of the 1880s, it was often fashionable to adorn ceilings with domed or oval panels of leaded-stained



Above: At the Winchester House in San Jose, California, a series of skylight dormers and roof lanterns set into a solid roof shelter the greenhouse below.



This copper, hipped skylight designed by Peter Hosmer of Charles River Restoration is a reproduction from a late 19th-century model. Note the skylight's curb.

For a list of
SUPPLIERS,
see page 102.



DOUG KEISTER

glass, often in an entry hall for dramatic effect. Some of the most noted stained-glass designers of the time created glorious skylights for upscale city houses—Louis Comfort Tiffany with naturalistic features, John LaFarge with linear Gothic motifs, and Charles Connick with Renaissance themes, to name just a few. Because leaded-stained glass cannot withstand weather in a horizontal position, these panels were always protected under a skylight or rooftop monitor that diffused the natural light into the house and spared the leaded glass from the elements. Frank Lloyd Wright also used stained-glass skylights in his houses. He designed entire ceilings in earth-toned geometric patterns of glass that cast subdued light throughout the living space.

Proper Placement

If you plan on adding a skylight to your old house, remember that it should blend in with the historic character of the roof, not compete with it. If a skylight did not exist originally, locate the new installation in an unobtrusive spot on the roof, typically on the secondary elevation or rear of the house, according to the National Park Service preservation guidelines. This limits the impact on the house's historic character. If you suspect that a skylight did exist on the house, check your attic ceiling for any ghosts of skylights past, such as rectangular patching in your roof's sheathing. Many skylights have been covered over, and finding an original location could help you decide where to install a new one.

Reproductions

Today there are several companies reproducing wood, metal, or stained-glass skylights that are appropriate for old houses. Pella Windows offers a wood-framed skylight rated for thermal efficiency. Although it doesn't stylistically replicate the roof windows of Jefferson's time, this skylight is an alternative to acrylic domes that notoriously leak.

Charles River Restoration in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, specializes in repairing, restoring, and reproducing metal skylights for Victorian-era and early 20th-century houses. Although much of owner Peter Hosmer's work focuses on reglazing or replacing parts for old row-house skylights, he has a treasure trove of antique sheet-metal catalogs to help him reproduce old patterns. He uses individual 18"-wide panes between copper comes. Unlike window makers of the past, he employs panes of insulated glass in his New England projects due to today's energy codes.

Peter Morava of Morava Studios in Oak Park, Illinois, specializes in Prairie-style and Arts & Crafts designs in stained glass for both windows and skylights. Morava has worked on several Frank Lloyd Wright restoration projects in the Chicago area. The Lyn Hovey Studio in Boston also specializes in restoration as well as new commissions. The studio has recently completed restoring the Tiffany skylight at the Ayer Mansion in Boston.

The Sky's the Limit

Before your contractor cuts into your roof, consider these points.

- How is your house handling moisture—should you reintroduce an operable skylight? If you do incorporate an operable skylight in a room, fire codes in many states require another exterior exit in that space.

- If you're in a coastal area prone to hurricanes, a skylight will require special safety glass (skylights should meet National Fenestration Rating Council criteria, www.nfrc.org).

- Don't cut into a roof truss and compromise your roof's integrity. Proper flashing is key to directing water away from the opening.

And remember to take into consideration the historic style of your home before opening your roof to the heavens. 🏡

Special thanks to Robert Self, architectural conservator for Monticello.



Right: Wheatland, designed by architect John P. Benson and built in 1896, is a remarkable early and accurate reproduction of the traditional three-storey Federal houses on Salem, Massachusetts's, famed Chestnut Street.

ALL PHOTOS JAMES C. MASSEY EXCEPT WHERE NOTED



The robust swan's-neck pediments capping the windows and dormers of this New Orleans house are typical early Colonial Revival flourishes. Note the pseudo-antique lozenge windows over the "modern" two-light sash in the dormers.

Early Colonial Revival

BY JAMES C. MASSEY AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

The wellspring of a neo-traditional style that is still running strong.

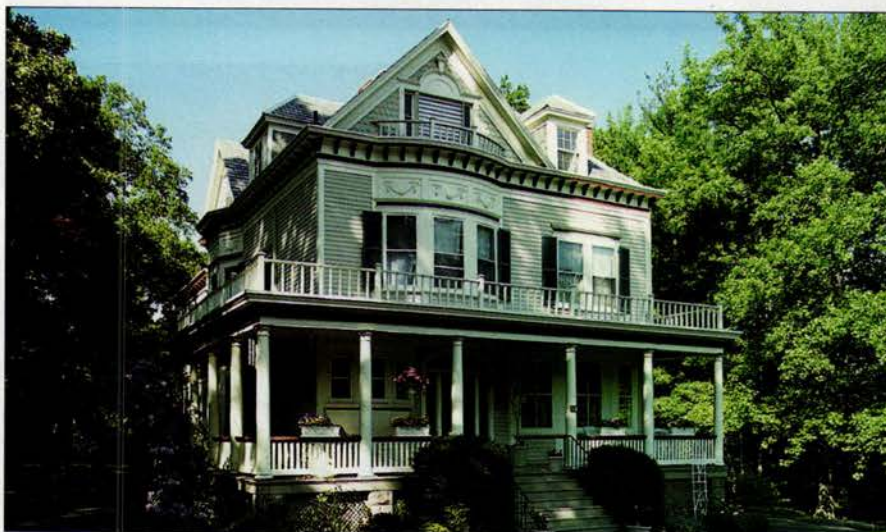
Was it a lingering note from the Victorian era or a prelude to modern building design? Any way you look at it, the American Colonial Revival style was a remarkable and lengthy architectural venture into nostalgia.

Based on Georgian and Federal (Adamesque) buildings constructed during the 18th century in England's North American colonies, the Colonial Revival was immensely popular from the late 19th century well into the middle of the 20th. The style's initial phase lasted from about 1890 through about 1910, and its roots go back even further.

As the United States began to put the bitterness of the Civil War behind it, the Colonial Revival movement provided a comforting backward look at the nation's founding and its successful struggle for independence. It was a reminder that Americans had a history to be proud of as well as a future worth pursuing.

The postwar decades bustled with big, patriotic exhibitions or

Along with the modillion cornice, the frieze over the bay window decorated in relief with Adamesque swags—applied ornament that is a common sign of early Colonial Revival influences—puts a colonial spin on this basically Queen Anne house.



RICHARD SEXTON

“fairs”—national, international, and local—each designed to boost American business and bolster a sense of national unity. The most influential of these early fairs was Philadelphia’s 1876 International Exhibition celebrating 100 years of American independence.

The centennial exhibition, as it is usually called, is often viewed as the kickoff event of the Colonial Revival movement. Visitors toured several buildings constructed in what was perceived to be “colonial” style. Erected solely for the purpose of the exhibition, the buildings were scattered about the exhibition grounds and housed exhibits of antique objects, tools,

and furnishings, as well as displays of modern equipment and processes. The hugely popular “New England Farmer’s Home and Modern Kitchen” exhibit, for example, contrasted a re-created “olde-tyme” (circa 1776) open-hearth kitchen to a vastly improved 1876 version equipped with running water, a cast-iron cookstove, and a copper hot-water boiler. An admiring public left the Philadelphia exhibition enamored with rosy scenes of a colonial era that was greatly enhanced by the distance of 100 years.

In fact, for a nation awash in technological advances and industrial growth and alarmed by the flood of



Above: This charming Charlotte, Michigan, house can’t decide whether it’s Colonial Revival or Queen Anne. Whatever the style, the angled porch entrance topped with a curving pediment is most distinctive.



Left: The Shingle style blends into Colonial Revival, in Ludlow Park, an 1890s picturesque suburb in Yonkers, near New York City. The high-pitched gable, with a Palladian window, bay windows, and paired porch columns, are Revival hallmarks.



Eastern European workers needed to man its new factories, the centennial seemed an opportunity to set aside the “recent unpleasantness” of the war and to celebrate present achievements while affirming (some would say creating) an idealized past—a past that was unified, mostly English, and decidedly unthreatening.

Rediscovering a Revolutionary Era

The homes of America’s founders presented concrete symbols of a perfect past, and the centennial spurred an upsurge of

interest in restoring old buildings. It was only a short step from there to building new ones that looked (sort of) like old ones, only larger, grander, and more comfortable. In places like Boston, New York, and Providence, wealthy patrons of architecture erected large Colonial Revival houses with super-sized Georgian and Federal features married to Queen Anne features, and with up-to-the-minute floor-plans and conveniences.

At the beginning of the Colonial Revival period, the approach to both buildings and objects was often an enthusiastic antiquari-

Early Colonial Revival houses tend to be big and overscaled, as is this one in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, which has a prominent porch and high roof with oversized dormers, as well as a good central pediment.



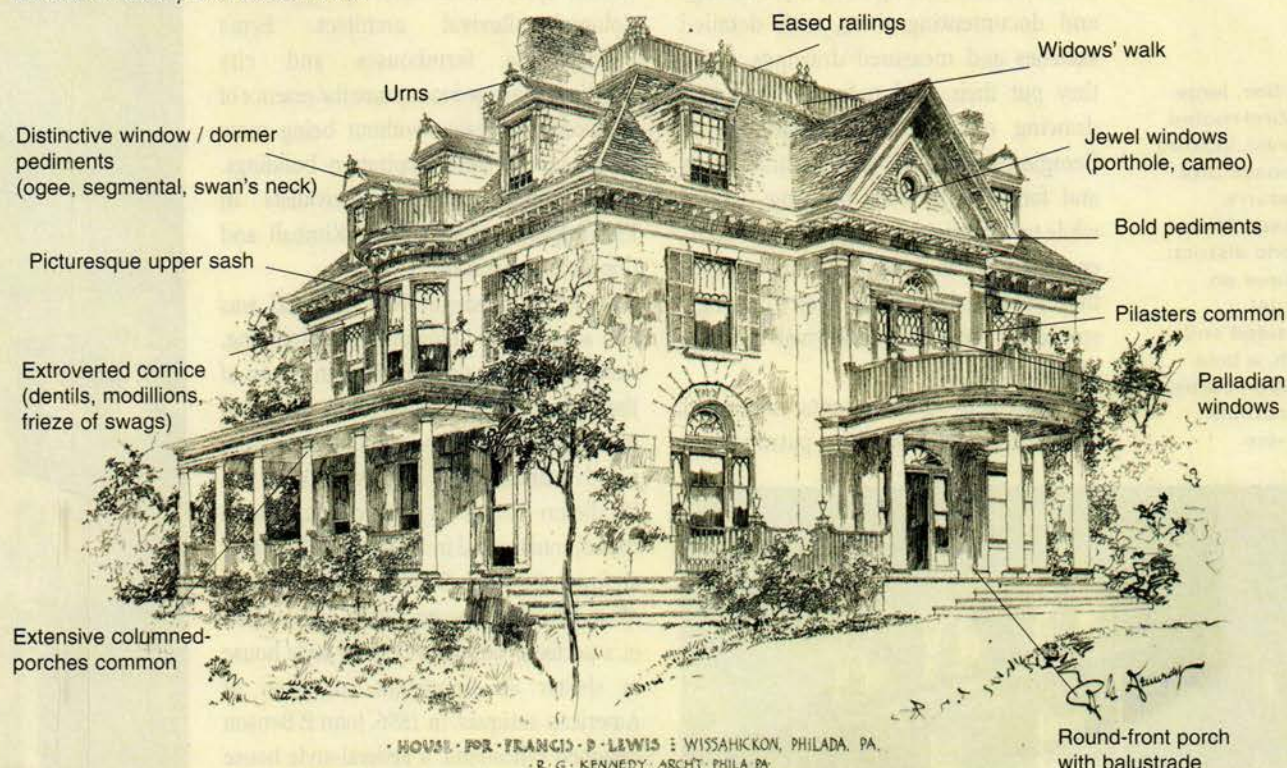
Above: While the massive classical pediment with swags supported on four columns is the most prominent feature of this house in the early Baltimore suburb of Roland Park, the shingled walls and wraparound porch look back in time to the Shingle style.



The 1904 Pendleton House in Providence, Rhode Island, designed by Stone, Carpenter and Willson, is built in a very correct Georgian interpretation to house the owner's collection of American antiques.

EARLY COLONIAL REVIVAL DETAILS

A cornucopia of Georgian/Federal classical elements often embellish a basically late-Victorian house.



anism that fell well short of archeological truth. At first, colonial features cropped up more or less randomly on Queen Anne-style Victorian houses. Georgian or Federal cornices with dentils and modillions, swan's-neck pediments, Palladian windows, and exaggerated dormers on multi-gabled roofs, towers, and porches.

Soon, however, the irregular shapes of the Queen Anne style gave way to square or rectangular forms that were closer to historical models. Symmetrical arrangements of windows, doors, dormers, and columns replaced the picturesque irregularity of the Queen Anne, bringing a semblance of 18th-century order to the façades. The buildings as a rule were still larger and taller than 18th-century houses, however, and the decorative features were bolder.

Over time, though, the details were more carefully researched and selected. Well-trained architects produced designs that were near-replicas of specific early buildings (or of conjectural "ideal" ones). Many made a point of incorporating accurate regional features into their new "colonial" buildings.

As it happened, the beginning years of the Colonial Revival movement coincided with the development of architecture as a profession in this country. During the post-Civil War decades, a growing number of American architects spent months or years studying in the architectural ateliers of Europe, particularly in those of France's *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. They came back to America as expert draftsmen who were also thoroughly grounded in the principles of classical architecture. And they couldn't wait to apply their training on home ground.

Serendipitously, this increase in classically trained architects met up with another great exhibition extolling America's colonial past. The World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893 (a belated celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery voyage), nudged the Colonial Revival even further upward in popularity. The Columbian Exposition reached a much larger and more varied audience than the centennial had. The 20 million visitors who flocked to the Columbian Exposition must have included many first-generation

Americans or recent immigrants, who found there a blueprint for Americanization. The exposition, billed as the "White City," was stage-managed by Daniel Burnham, a leader of the City Beautiful movement and its layout was dazzling and persuasive.

Thirty-nine temporary "state" buildings were erected to house displays of each state's products and modern machines, as well as exhibits relating to the state's history. Of those 39 structures, 21 were based (with widely varying degrees of accuracy) on actual historic buildings that had been erected during its state's colonial era. Since the buildings were meant to be temporary, they were flimsily constructed and perished in a fire not long after the exposition ended. Nonetheless, the public was impressed, and a generation of architects found an exciting direction for their talents. Using skills honed in Paris, they would design colonial buildings for America.

Colonial Models and Masters

To learn the ways of 18th-century construction, young Beaux-Arts-trained architects, such as William Follen McKim

This fine, large, gambrel-roofed Colonial, located in Kansas City, Missouri's, Janssen Place historic district, features an unusual five-sided end porch, a bold modillion cornice and notable dormers.



and Stanford White, toured the Northeast in the 1890s, scouting out early buildings and documenting them with detailed sketches and measured drawings. Later, they put their field notes to good use, drawing on first-hand knowledge of Georgian and Federal architectural details and forms to produce buildings which, while totally original, rang true to an earlier design spirit. Even more importantly, they published books of their drawings, spreading the Colonial Revival message across the nation.

Aided by governments, historical associations, and wealthy patrons, the

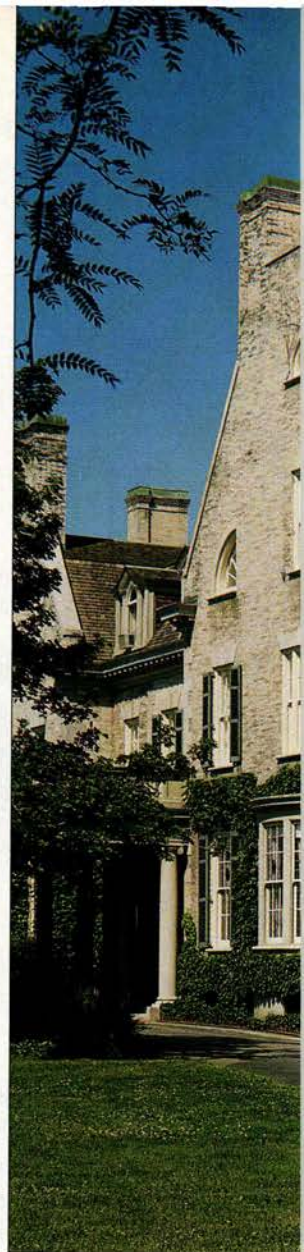
In and around Philadelphia, for instance, Wilson Eyre built a solid reputation as a Colonial Revival architect. Eyre's Pennsylvania farmhouses and city dwellings managed to capture the essence of 18th-century design without being mere imitations of their inspiration buildings. Other noted Colonial Revivalists in Philadelphia included Fiske Kimball and Cope and Stewardson.

Not surprisingly, New England was also a hotbed of Colonial Revival building, led by architects such as Norman Isham of Providence, Rhode Island. Frank Chouteau Brown and Joseph Everett Chandler were noted restorationists in Boston. With the Pendleton House in Providence, Rhode Island, constructed in 1904, the architectural firm of Stone, Carpenter and Willson offered their own, never-before-seen version of a perfectly designed Federal-style house to shelter an important collection of American antiques. In 1896, John P. Benson designed Wheatland, a Federal-style house in Salem, Massachusetts, that was indistinguishable from the century-old mansions on the city's famed Chestnut Street.

The South also furnished fertile grounds for Colonial Revival activity. Among the Colonial Revival architects practicing before 1910 were Waddy B. Wood and Leon Dessez of Washington,

restoration of old buildings played an important part in the Colonial Revival movement. The restoration of Independence Hall in 1898 was among the most important of these efforts, but there were many other smaller ones. In Washington, D.C., for example, the American Institute of Architects rescued a distinguished Federal-period mansion, the Octagon, and, under the leadership of architect Glenn Brown, restored it as its headquarters.

As the Colonial Revival evolved, it moved closer to its 18th-century roots. Because of the precision of scale and the careful attention to accurate decorative elements and massing, many buildings constructed in the second and third decade of the 20th century looked as if they could have been built a hundred or more years earlier.



Providence, Rhode Island, was a major center for Colonial Revival design, as exemplified by this double-door entrance done in 1904 by Martin and Hall, architects.



ANDY OLENICK

D.C., and Virginia; William Noland and Carneal & Johnston of Richmond, Virginia; and Neel Reid of Atlanta. And, of course, there were the architectural giants who arrived on the scene in its earliest days, McKim, Mead & White, whose Colonial Revival and Neoclassical buildings are scattered about the Northeast.

There were also many "colonializations" of older houses around the country. Inverness, a simple Virginia farmhouse in Nottaway County, originally built around 1800 and enlarged twice in the 19th century, was further enriched in 1907 when an unknown architect added an imposing two-storey Neoclassical portico.

The Colonial Revival spirit was everywhere in that enthusiastic era. Besides the great exhibitions, other influences swelling the Colonial Revival tide included the

many magazines, planbooks, and ready-built house catalogs that circulated throughout the period. Every month, for instance, Edward Bok's *Ladies' Home Journal* reminded a vast and eager readership of the charms of colonial-era architecture and furnishings.

The early Colonial Revival was the first of America's many rear-view glances toward a past that seemed, despite its hardships, simpler and better than the present. No doubt we'll keep looking—but it probably will never get any better. 🏡

MORE FROM OLDHOUSEJOURNAL.COM

For a related story online, see "Was the Colonial Revival for Real?" Just click to "The Magazine" section, and go to the alphabetical list of recent features.

A design worthy of an 18th-century English country house, the mansion built for photography magnate George Eastman in Rochester, New York, features a carefully detailed pedimented portico, but its early Colonial Revival date of 1902-1905 is suggested by an oversized roof. It was designed by J. Foster Warner and McKim, Mead & White.

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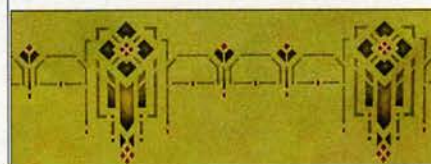
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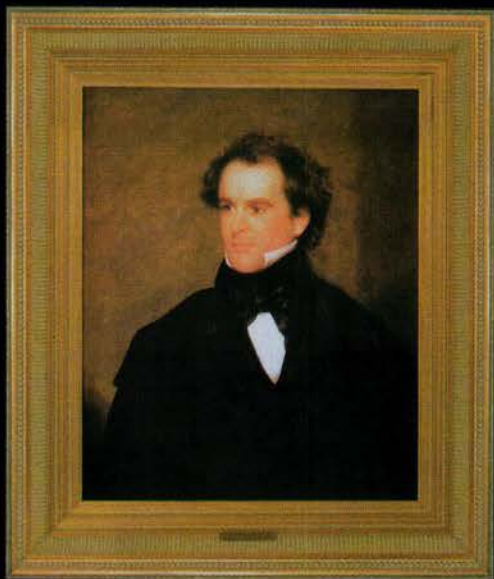


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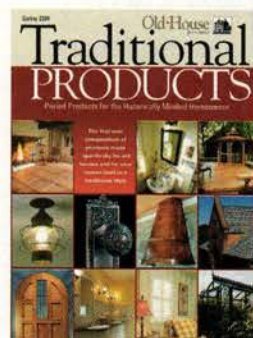
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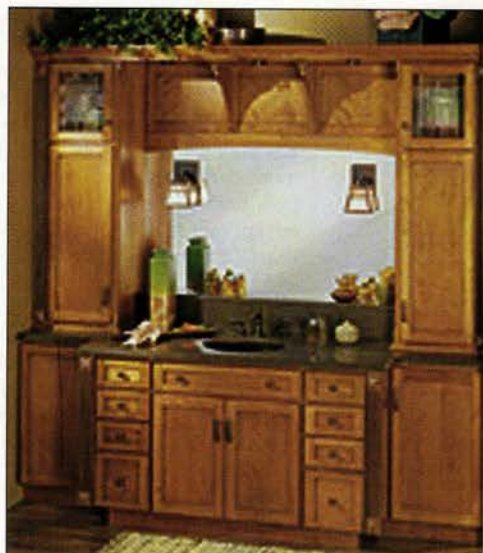
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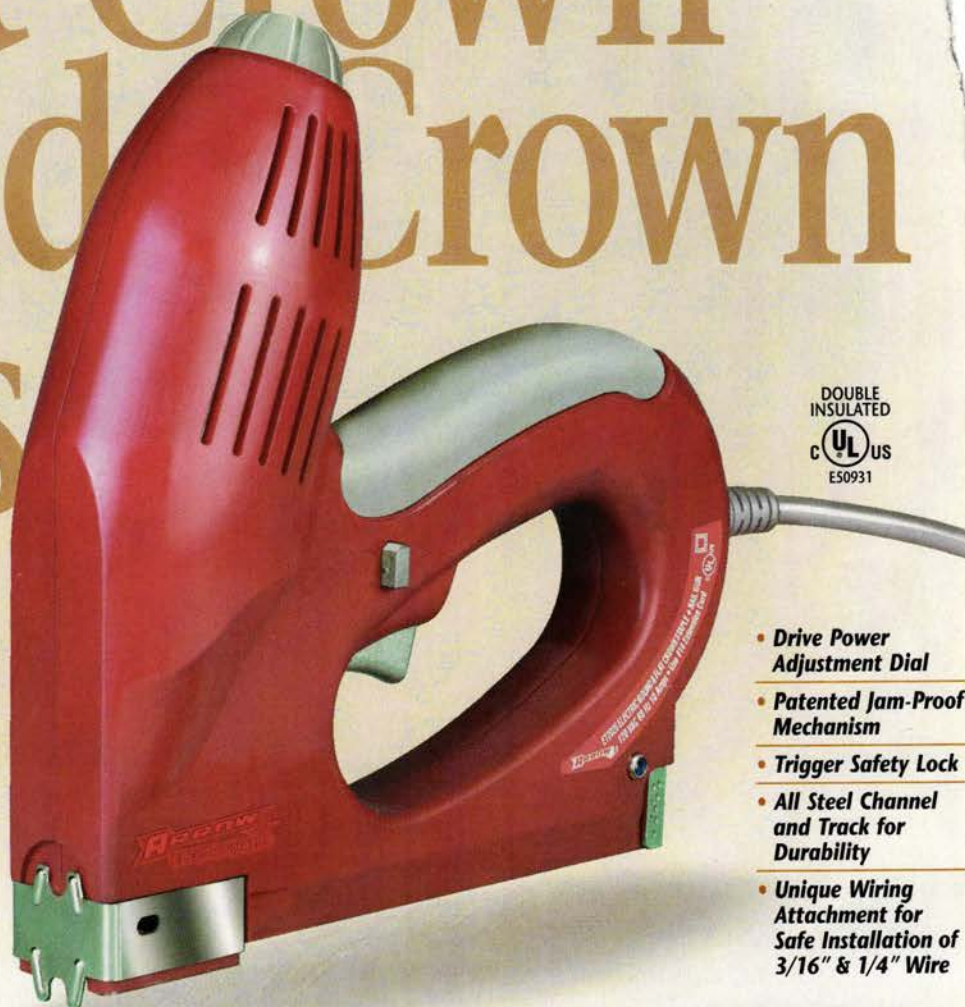
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Half-Baths & Tiny Toilets page 60

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Up on the Roof
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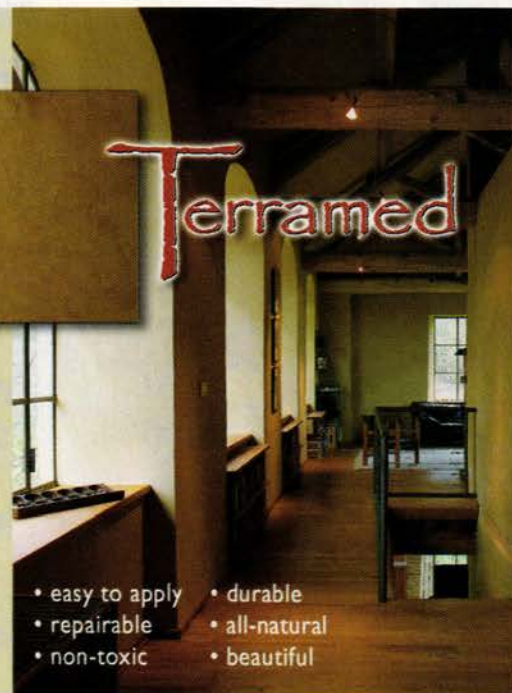


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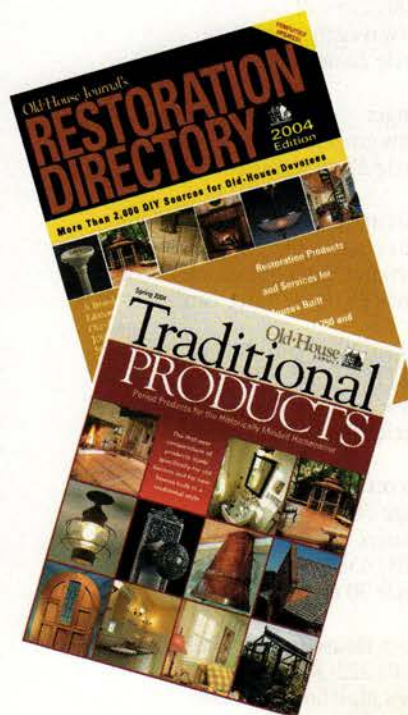
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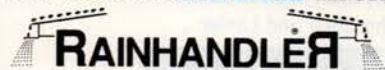
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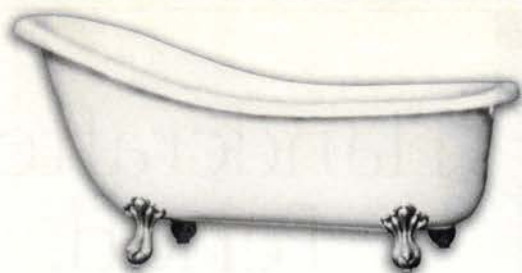
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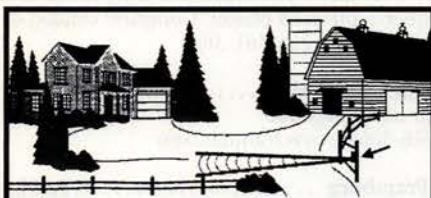


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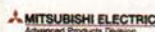
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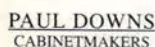
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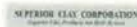
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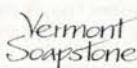
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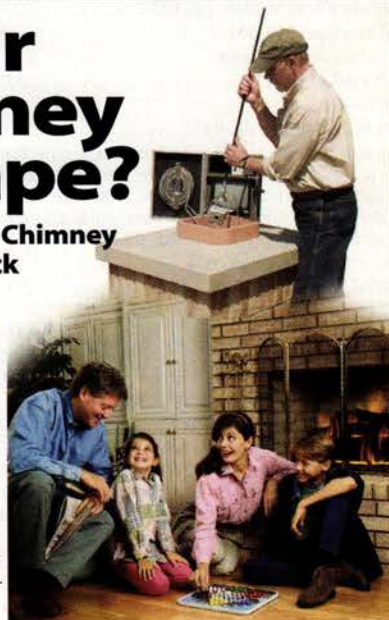
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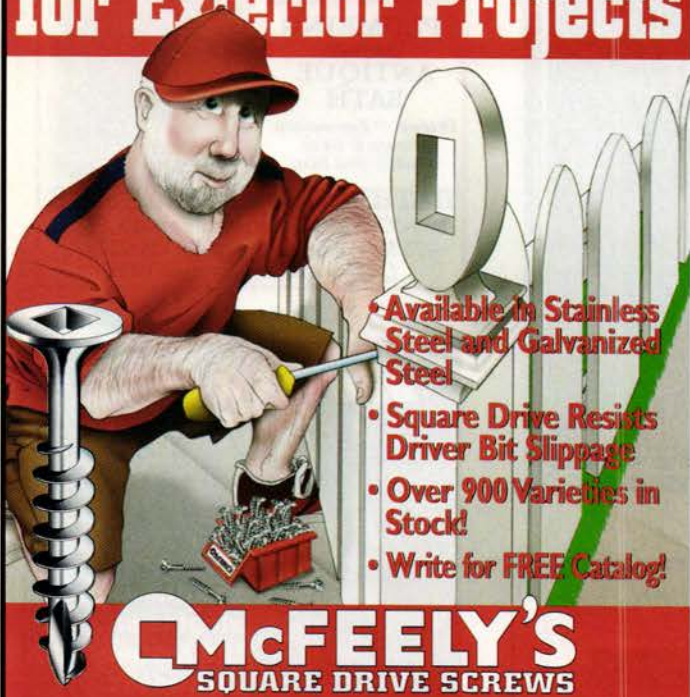


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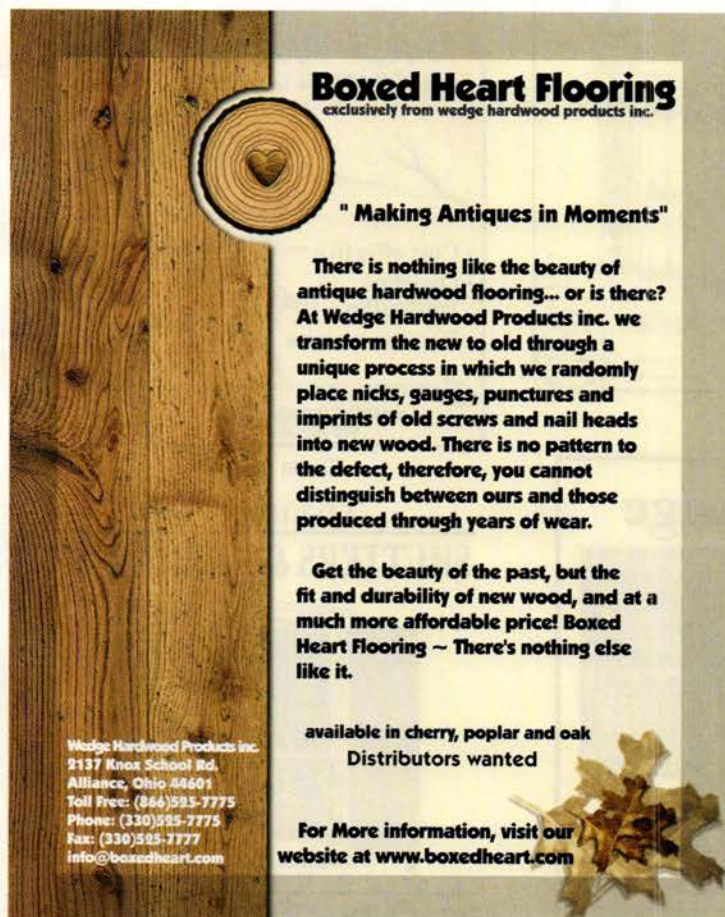
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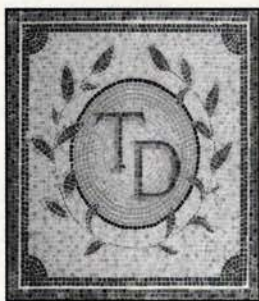
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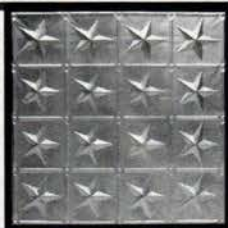
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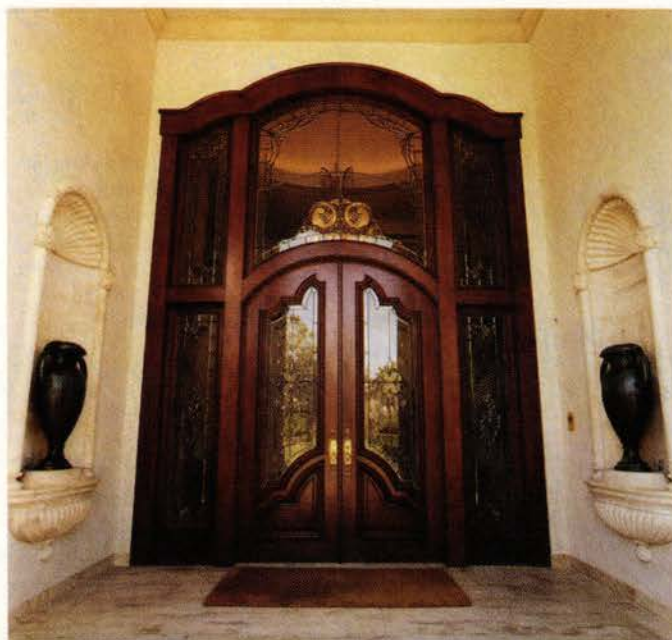
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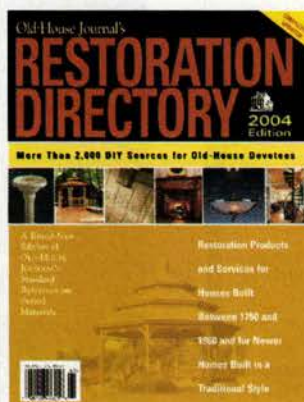
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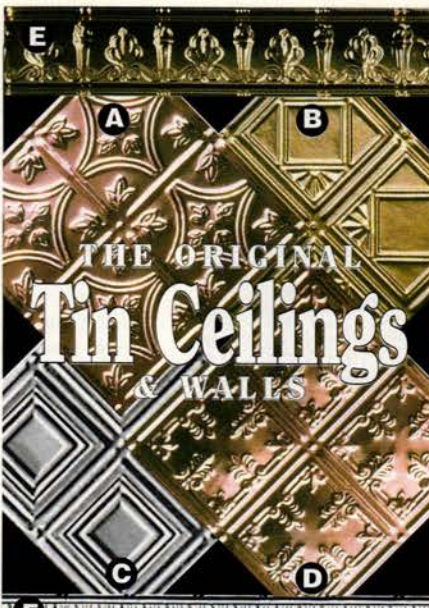


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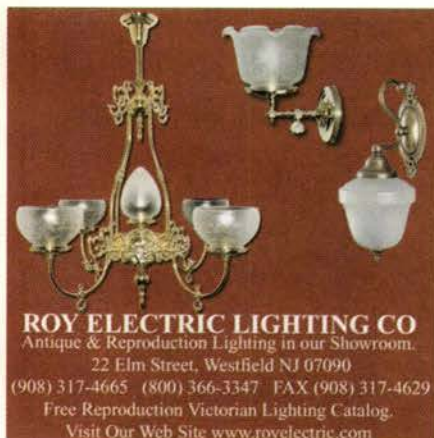
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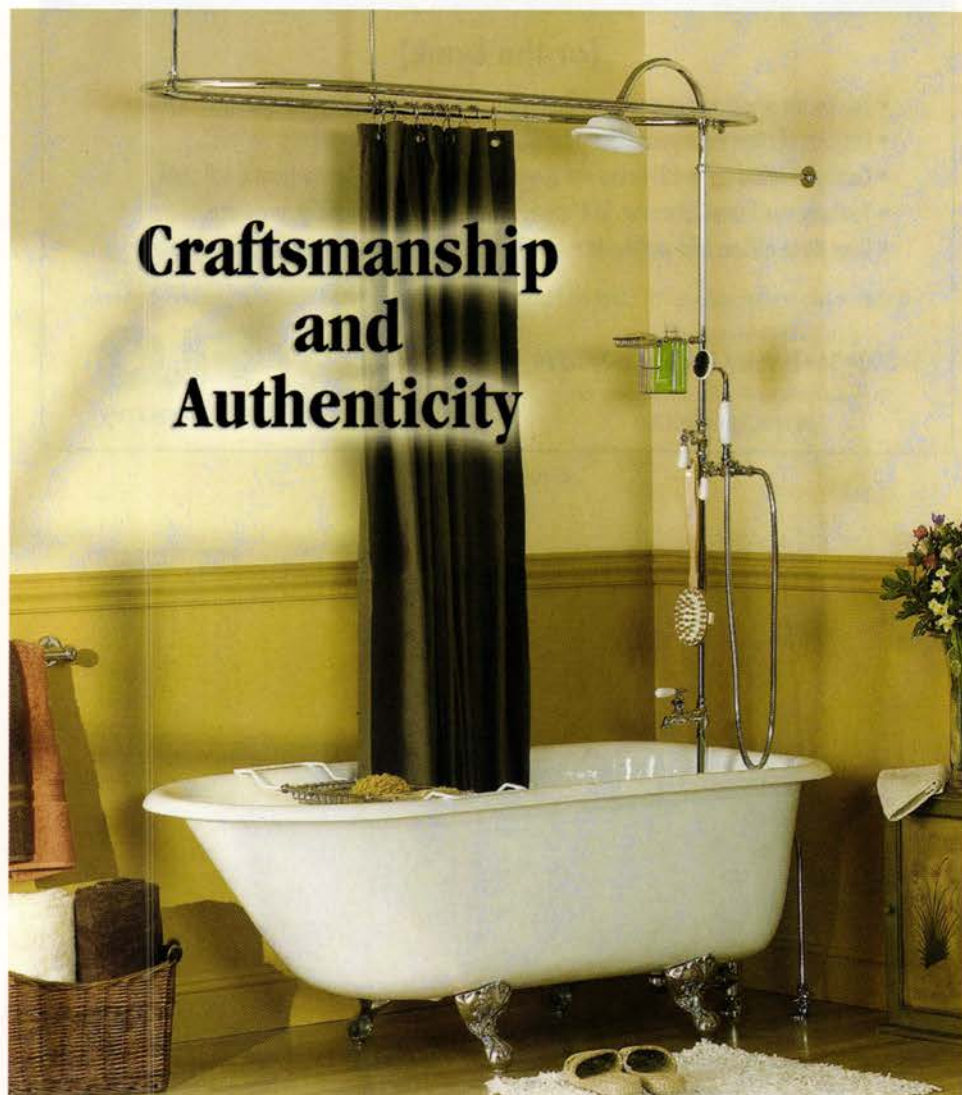


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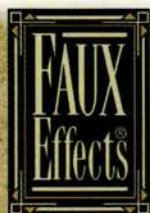
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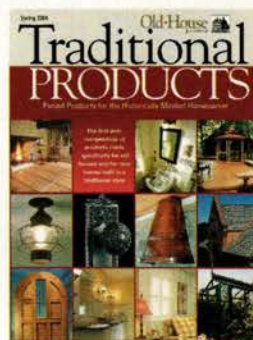
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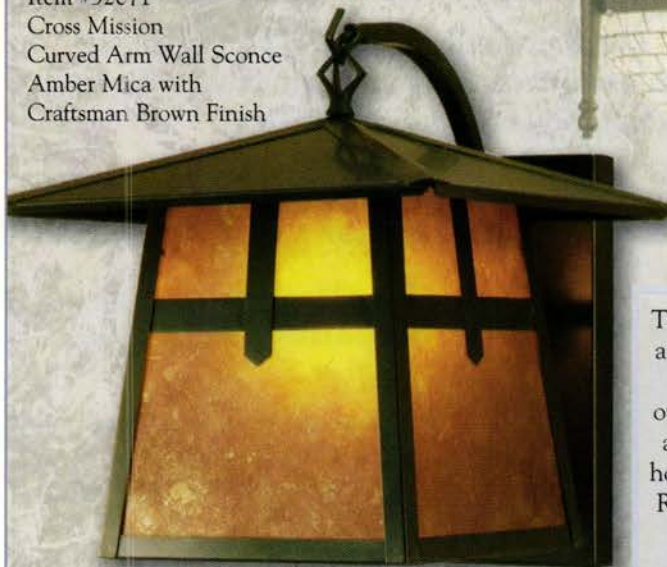
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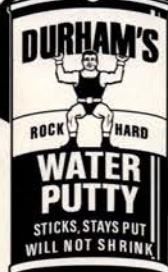
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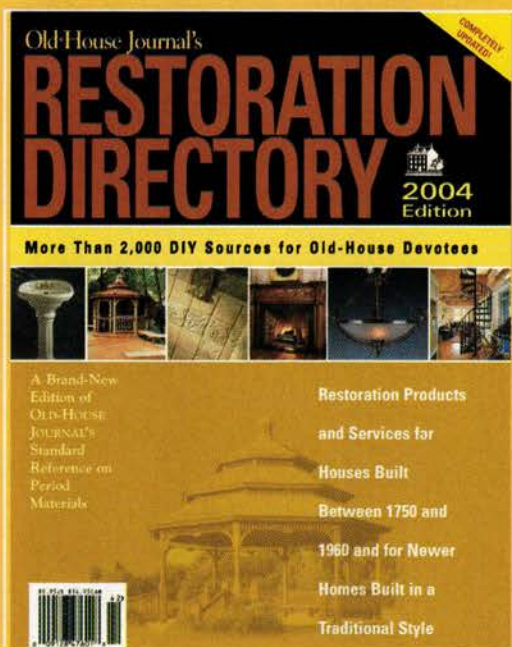
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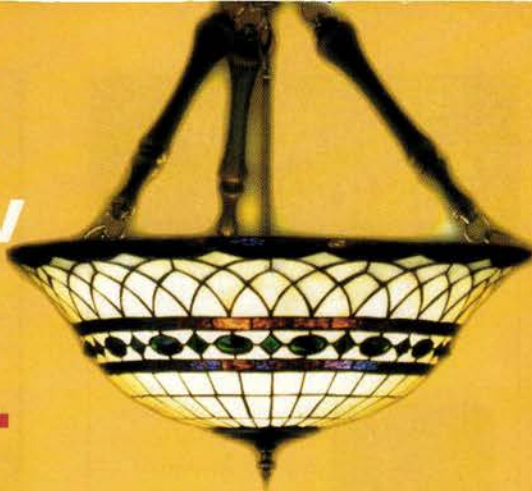
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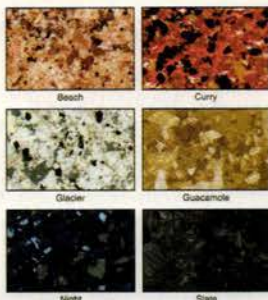
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AURORA, IN — 1864 Schoolhouse with ca. 1910 wing. Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Interior intact. Could be a home, duplex or office. Charming Ohio River Main Street community active in historic preservation. One block to major highway; 30 minutes to downtown Cincinnati. Neighborhood is primarily single family owner occupied. \$25,000. David Denman, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. 812-926-0983; www.HistoricProperties.com



SAVANNAH, GA — This 1890s single family home is part of Historic Savannah Foundation’s new preservation initiative and an important part of the historic streetscape in this reviving area. Property is protected by HSF preservation covenants. Other properties also available in the Lincoln Street Neighborhood. Rehabilitation planning and technical support is available through HSF’s design consulting service. Melissa Jest 912-233-7787.



CHESTERTOWN, MD — Meticulously restored mid-eighteenth century residence sensitively brought into the 21st century in 1994. Fine architectural details, several fireplaces, glass porch overlooks private garden. Located within the Historic District of charming and exciting Chestertown on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Off-street parking. Within walking distance of Chester River, Washington College and shops. Maryland Heritage Properties 410-778-9319. \$595,000.



NEW MARKET, MD — “The Antiques Capital.” Expanded from a 1790s Log House, this Main St. Brick Federal home, combined with a charming 2-story Carriage house offers over 4,000 sq.ft. with a potential for various uses; residential AND commercial! An oversized 2 Car Garage & a partially reconstructed log building are also included on the 1/2 acre corner site. Call Nancy Sponseller 301- 831-6755.



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LOUISVILLE, KY — The Stark House ca 1869. Secluded brick Greek revival on the National Register, less than 1 hour from Louisville and 10 minutes from Elizabethtown Business Park. More than 5 acres with barn/fencing set up for horses. Stocked pond with aerator. Surrounded by 1,000-acre farm. Meticulously restored, 10' ceilings, original poplar flooring, moldings and mantels. 5 bedrooms, 3-car garage, invisible fencing; \$399,000. Mary Key, 800-394-5059.



MENDHAM TOWNSHIP, NJ — Harmony House, ca. 1850. Charming bank house modernized through the years. View of stream and waterfall from eat-in-kitchen. Stone fireplace in family room. Ground level master bedroom suite. Sunny living/dining room w/fireplace, 2 additional bedrooms and a full bath. Gazebo is a fine place to watch town's annual 4th of July parade. \$595,000. Jane MacNeil, Coldwell Banker, jmaccb@aol.com, 973-543-3355.



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CHARLOTTE COUNTY, VA — Ca. 1934 home on 11 acres with huge oaks. Possible "B&B." Over 2,000 sq.ft. with 4 bedrooms. Porches and living areas on the first floor with the bedrooms upstairs. Unfinished attic with staircase. Separate large office and storage building. \$193,000. Floor plans & photos for Home #3700 at: www.davenport-realty.com. For color brochure, 888-333-3972 (24-hours). United Country Davenport Realty, Keysville, Virginia.



KEYSVILLE, VA — Ca. 1880 home 2,600 sq.ft. 3 Bedrooms, 3 Bathrooms, central air, oil FHA, glassed-in porch. 6 acres, several barns, old shrubs, trees. \$129,000. Floor plans & photos for Home #3590 at: www.davenport-realty.com. For color brochure, 888-333-3972 (24-hours). United Country Davenport Realty, Keysville, Virginia.

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CHESTERFIELD, VA — The Ragland House ca. 1910. Queen Anne and Georgian Revival period home, over 3,000 sq. ft. with fabulous original moldings, mantles and floorings, 10' + ceilings, 5 acres, less than 20 minutes to downtown Richmond. Huge old trees, beautiful grounds, great schools. \$399,000. Deborah James Dendler RE/MAX Commonwealth 800-394-5059 www.VirginiaAntiqueRealEstate.com.



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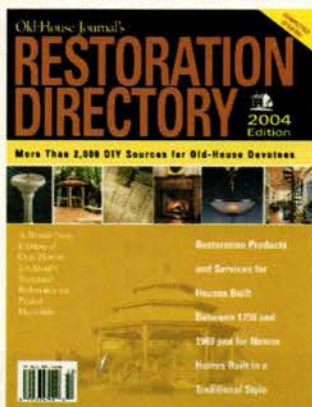
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