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By JAMES A. McMASTER

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70 Style: Finding the French

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By JAMES C. MASSEY
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Cover:
Photo by Andy Olenick.
The restored porch on an 1838 Bluffland-style plantation home in Weyanoke, Louisiana, offers a welcome retreat from the summer heat. Story page 44.

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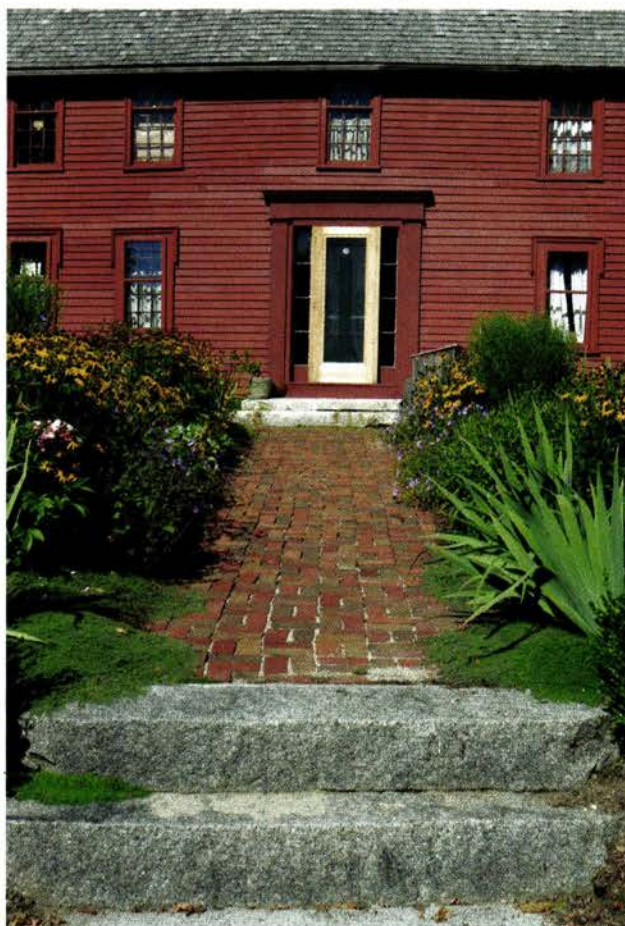
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Get Organized

Once you've whipped your old garden shed into shape (see page 52 for ideas), the best way to ensure that you'll get plenty of use out of it is by keeping it neat and tidy inside. Check out our gallery of organizational products for some classic ideas.

Plant a Piece of the Past

Searching for age-appropriate blooms to deck out a period-inspired garden like the colonial gem on page 32? Our directory of nurseries that stock heirloom plants will help you zero in on local resources.

Show Off Your Porch

Does your porch rehab rival the gingerbread-balustraded stunner on page 38? We want to see it! MyOldHouseJournal is hosting a contest to determine which OHJ reader has the most inspiring porch restoration. The winner will be announced—and see their porch pictured—in the next issue of OHJ. Details on how to enter (and vote!) are on MyOldHouseJournal.com.



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editor's note

Blooming Inspiration



MARK W. ABBOTT PHOTO

NOW THAT SUMMER'S IN FULL SWING and we're all enjoying the great outdoors, what better time to get focused on projects that punch up curb appeal? At my house, my favorite outdoor area is the brick walkway leading to my front door, and I remember well the project that installed it there. It was five years ago, I was pregnant "out to there" with my son (he was born in August), and each time I bent to peruse the bricks and direct my husband on where to place them, I almost fell over. But the wobbly director's dance was worth it; the resulting

walk, which we laid in a modified basketweave pattern, has spiked our yard's appeal. In this issue, we cover several exterior projects sure to spark new ideas for adding historic notes to your landscape.

Our look at an engineer's innovative solutions for re-creating his porch's elaborate balustrade can jump-start creative thinking on similarly exacting carpentry projects (see "New Designs on an Old Porch," page 38). If you have a decrepit outbuilding on your property, you'll want to bone up on author Susan E. Schnare's guidance for restoring (or designing anew) appropriate garden sheds (see "Superior Sheds," page 52). Owners of colonial-era homes won't want to miss the great advice on plants and hardscaping features for early houses in "Creating a Colonial Garden" on page 32. We also look at an important topic in this issue's Insider (page 56)—an era-appropriate, handicap-accessible addition. The story has applications not only for people with a special-needs child, like the family in our article, but also for those intending to age with their homes. And back to the subject of walkways, we didn't forget those in this issue, either. "Standing on First Impressions" (page 66) follows the step-by-step installation of a sandstone walkway in Rochester, New York—a process very similar to the one used at my house, but for the material (stone versus brick). Yet both of these surfaces are perfectly appropriate for a range of old houses, depending on the look you're after and the scope of your project.

Finally, I want to share some exciting news. The *Old-House Journal* family is growing with the recent acquisition of *Old-House Interiors* magazine. You may be already familiar with that name—OHI is known for its quality focus on era-appropriate décor, furnishings, fixtures, fabrics, and more. What you may not know is that OHI began as an offshoot of OHJ some years ago. Now our publications have joined forces again, published today out of the same editorial offices here in Chantilly, Virginia,

along with our related magazines: *Arts & Crafts Homes*, *Early Homes*, *New Old House*, and the *Design Center Sourcebook*. Look for this old-house merger to bring you fresh and far-reaching architectural inspiration in the months ahead.



OHJ and OHI, together again.

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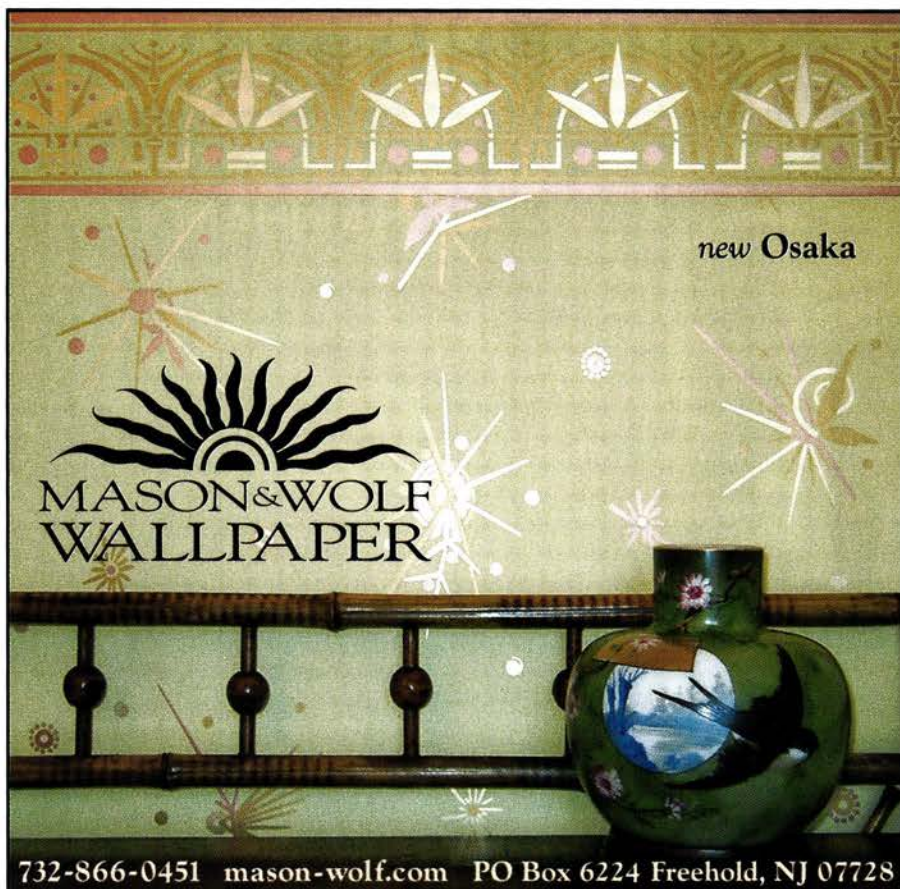
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letters

Window Watcher

I thoroughly enjoyed the May/June issue, especially the article on Pam Rodriguez's window rehabs ("Saving Sash Windows"). In 1962, I bought a two-story brick farmhouse built for an ancestor in 1840. Each one of the 20-plus windows had broken panes. One of my first priorities (after the bats were evicted) was to re-glaze many 6" x 8" and 8" x 10" panes.

I removed most sash, carefully took out the old glass to reuse it, scraped reveals, applied liberal brushfuls of linseed oil, re-glazed, and replaced the sash. It was a lot of work, but except for one window that was completely rotted and a few that were put in around 1900, all others are the original six-over-six windows with wavy, discolored glass. The glass is scratched on one window facing the road; I picture someone with a wedding ring wiping the pane to clean off frost and watch kids coming or going.

I'm interested to know how Pam was able to find someone to re-cut salvaged glass. Most of the time when I tried, it was a flop. Also, maybe in Texas you can re-glaze panes without glazing points, but in our climate, the putty doesn't last forever. That said, more power to her; her techniques are A-OK.

Sam Fairchild
West Chazy, New York



Found It!

Several readers wrote in to ask about the paint color of the Foursquare featured on our May/June cover. "My Foursquare home looks very similar," writes Claudia Moore. "I've been playing with the green palette and just can't seem to get it right. Please help!" We checked in with the homeowners, who reported that their siding was painted with New Salem flat (on the first and second floors) and Locust Inn flat (on the dormer) from Devoe (devoepaint.com). The painters also kept Harrisburg Green flat from Benjamin Moore's Historical Colors Collection (benjaminmoore.com) on hand as a backup. —Eds.



Eye for an "I"

Thanks, OHJ, for featuring the I house in your May/June issue (Style: "I Spy").

I purchased this unique circa-1840 I house [right] in southern Virginia a few years ago. It start-



ed as a one-room log cabin, but is now three full stories, and still has the original hand-planed wide-plank ceilings, walls, doors, and floors. Three of the four fireplaces retain their original mantels. In an old photo [below] from the descendants of the home's original owner, Major Christopher Columbus Worrell, you can just see a long-gone board-and-batten kitchen and dining room addition peeking out from behind the tree.

The house is still a work in progress; I've removed a dilapidated 1950s lean-to, and intend to replicate the home's double porch with the original materials. Thanks again for the best old-house magazine!

Mark Hawks
Hillsville, Virginia

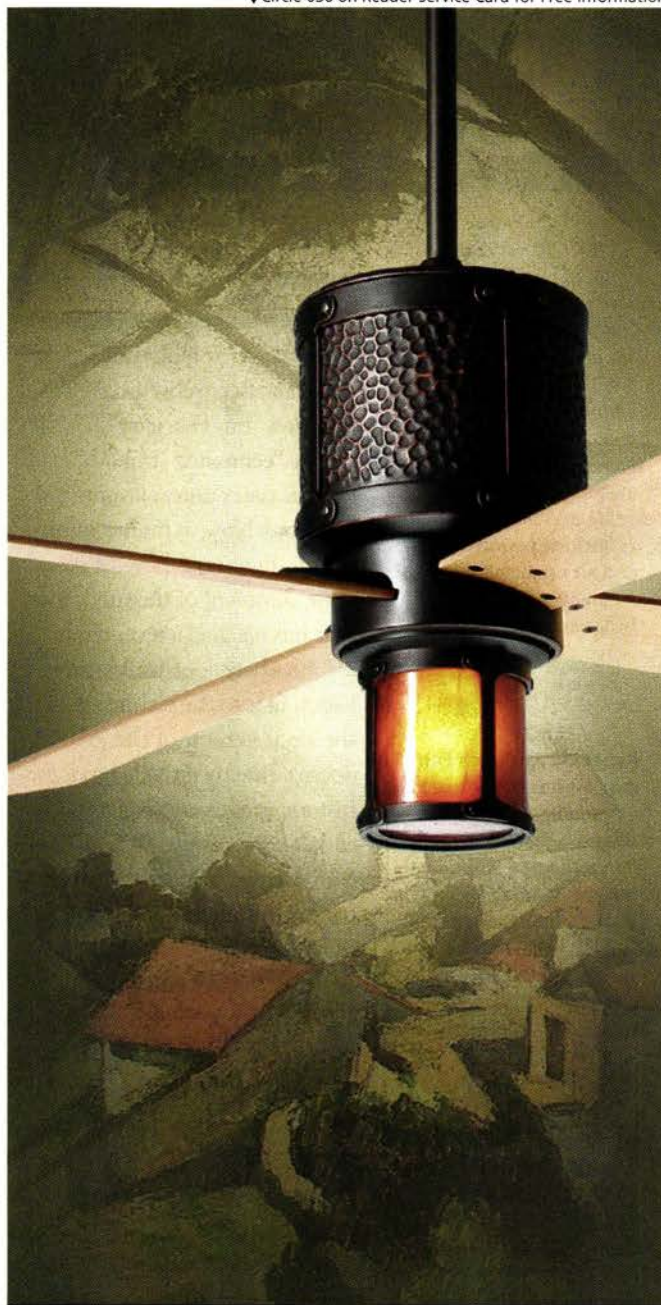
Reader Tip of the Month

While the Shade FX canopy from Walpole Woodworkers (Period Products, May/June) looks nice, a simple and inexpensive DIY version can easily be made with shade fabric from a nursery supply store. My local store sells a variety of densities from 30 to 80 percent, and a range of widths from 6 to 12 feet, so it's easy to order the size you need. I install the fabric over my pergola once summer really starts to heat up—it works well keeping leaves off in the fall, too. Plus, it costs less than \$100!

Jim Barrett
Dayton, Ohio

Got a great tip to share with other old-house lovers? Let us know at OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com.

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ON THE RADAR

Stimulating Historic Preservation

Even before President Obama signed the \$787 billion American Relief and Recovery Act (ARRA) into law on February 17, the phrase "economic stimulus" had become the country's favorite new buzzword. Now, as municipalities race to figure out how to spend their allotment of the fund, that buzz has reached a fever pitch.

So where does historic preservation fit into the picture? While the final version of the ARRA doesn't directly provide funds for historic preservation as it did in earlier incarnations (\$55 million earmarked specifically for historic preservation was trimmed from the bill in the Senate), many of the provisions of the new law can be targeted toward older structures or neighborhoods.

For example, the General Services Administration is receiving \$5.5 billion to "green" its buildings, and has pledged to spend half of this amount on its stable of 482 historic properties. The \$2 billion set aside for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (created under the previous stimulus bill and designed to help communities purchase and rehabilitate foreclosed homes) could be a boon for historic neighborhoods dealing with the impact of foreclosures. Ultimately, the onus for how to



JESSICA SALAS-ACHA PHOTO

The latest stimulus bill could provide help for historic neighborhoods.

spend the money falls to individual agencies and localities—and the need for fast-track projects that can show immediate results means historic preservation projects could get sidelined. To find out more about potential opportunities for historic preservation—including what you can do to help make them happen—check out the National Trust's stimulus tracker at preservation.nation.org/resources/public-policy/perfect-storm.

The ARRA does have some immediate good news

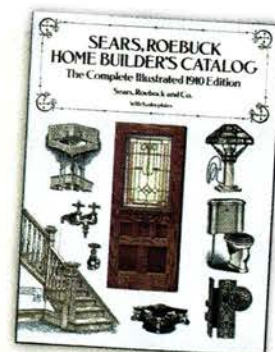
for homeowners, though—a line item mandating a 30-percent energy tax credit means that now is a great time to consider efficiency-minded restoration projects such as adding insulation or installing a geothermal heat pump. There's a \$1,500 cap on most projects, and they must meet guidelines set forth by the Department of Energy to qualify for the credit. For more details, see energystar.gov/taxcredits.

And if you're a first-time homebuyer (i.e., haven't owned a principal residence in at least three years), you can take advantage of an \$8,000 tax credit to purchase an old house, as long as you close by the end of the year and stay in it for more than three years.

OLD-HOUSE RESOURCE

The Historic Side of Sears

From 1908 until 1940, Sears & Roebuck sold as many as 100,000 homes (in nearly 500 different styles) through its mail-order catalog. Inexpensive and easily customizable, the simple designs were all the rage during the early 20th-century middle-class exodus to the suburbs. Wondering if your home was built from a Sears kit? Head over to the Sears Archives (searsarchives.com/homes), where you can browse their complete listing of homes by date, many of which have links to pictures and floor plans from the original catalogs. If you can't find your home, click the "contact a fellow enthusiast" link to get the e-mail address of a Sears Modern Homes aficionado in your neck of the woods, who may be able to provide more guidance. And even if your home didn't come from Sears, browsing through the old catalog pages can still provide plenty of inspiration for tracking down period details.



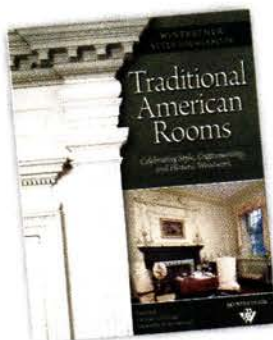
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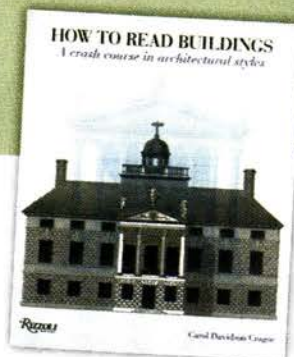
Even if your house was originally built so that the land around it properly slopes away from the foundation (1" per foot for 10' of run is a good rule of thumb), a lot can happen in a century or more—debris buildup can shift grades by more than a foot. If your basement was perpetually wet during spring rains, that's a sign that you need to reassess the grade of your soil, as it may be helping to funnel in water. A level taped lengthwise to a fairly long 2x4 will help you determine the slope of the ground. If the soil is level or slanted toward your house, you'll need to re-grade by adding soil near the foundation. (Be sure to keep soil at least 8" below siding.) For extra protection, add a layer of crushed rock near your foundation, which will help prevent mud from building up and splashing dirty water on your siding during storms.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

For architecture aficionados, the elements of a building function as a sort of map, guiding them toward identifying a structure's context and style. But even those who can spot a Palladian window at 500 paces need an occasional refresher, and if you can't remember the difference between Ionic and Doric columns, look no further than Carol Davidson Cragoe's *How to Read Buildings*. The diminutive tome (perfect for stashing in a purse or glove compartment for handy reference) walks readers through the basic architectural elements—from stairways to windows to roofs—and gives helpful hints on how to identify them within a range of styles, from ancient Greek to modern day. While the examples tend toward European churches, the basic principles can be applied to domestic house styles, too.



If you're mapping out new millwork for the interior of your home, you'll want to thumb through *Traditional American Rooms*, a new sourcebook from the folks at Winterthur. Gorgeous photographs lead the reader through 33 of the estate's 175 rooms; along the way, master craftsman Brent Hull and designer Christine G.H. Franck offer detailed measurements and profile sketches of the millwork in each one, creating a complete guide for those interested in replicating Winterthur's classic details.



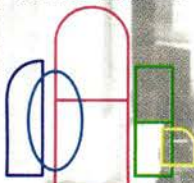
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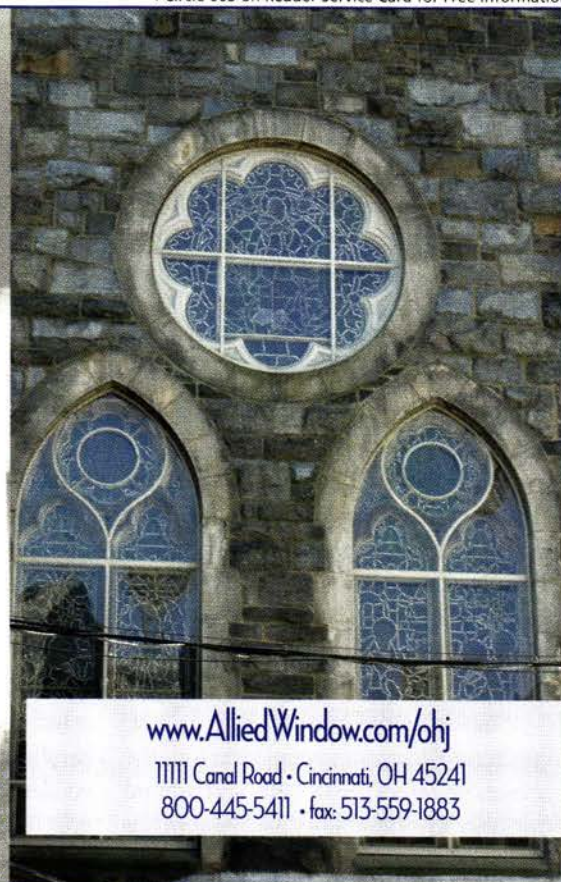
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The Best Paintbrush

They're often overlooked, but the right paintbrush can make all the difference on your next project.

BY STEVE JORDAN

Paintbrushes are the Rodney Dangerfield of hand tools—used and abused, they rarely get the respect they deserve.

But a well-chosen brush makes painting easier, can create a better-looking finished product, and can even shorten work time because it holds more paint.

Types of Brushes

The first thing you'll need to consider is what type of brush is appropriate for your project. Wall brushes are typically 3½" to 4" wide with a squared end, and are used to paint broad expanses of clapboards, shingles, plywood, or masonry. You might find brushes that are 5" or 6" wide, but when loaded with paint, they tend to be heavy and awkward, so the smaller size is usually best.

Similar to wall brushes, 3" to 3½" cut brushes are designed to maneuver into the corners of ceilings and walls and around trim prior to rolling. They are also good for painting doors, wainscoting, and wide trim.

Trim brushes are 1" to 2½" wide and come in two varieties. One is squared off at the bottom like the larger brushes (best for wide surfaces like baseboards and door casings), while the other is angled to help paint thin surfaces like window sash.

What to Look For

Brushes have three main parts: the handle, ferrule, and bristles. Handles can be painted or unpainted, wood or synthetic. The ferrule is the piece of rust-resistant metal attached to the handle to cover the connection of the bristles, which are embedded in epoxy to prevent them from coming loose into the paint.

A good brush should not be too light, too heavy, or too large or small for the job at hand. When choosing a brush, hold it in one hand, and grab the bristles in the other and bend them. They should resist bending and spring back into place when you let go. They should taper from the ferrule to the tips, and should be "flagged," meaning they resemble split ends of hair.

This feature allows the bristles to hold more paint, spread it evenly without drips, and cut sharply into difficult areas.

Chinese boar bristles are the standard for oil-based paints, and are either black or bleached white. The black bristles are stiffer and hold up best for painting trim or siding, while the softer bleached bristles are a good choice for varnishes, cabinets, or doors. For extra fine work, ox-hair and boar-bristle blends deliver the best possible finish. (Note: Never put a natural-bristle brush into water-based paint; the bristles will become waterlogged, limp, and ruined forever.)

Synthetic bristles are best for water-based paints such as latex or acrylics, but also can be used in oil paints. A brush labeled "extra firm" is best for window muntins, cutting straight lines, or anywhere precision is important. Brushes with no delineation should hold more paint and leave a smoother painted surface because the bristles are softer, but they can get floppy after hours of use.

Top-of-the-line brushes from major manufacturers are similar in quality and price. Ultimately, the brand you choose should be the one that works best for you. For a reliable recommendation, ask your painter or paint salesman which brushes the best painters in the area prefer. 🖌️



Contributing Editor Steve Jordan is the co-author of *Expert Paint: Painting Kitchens* (Quarry, 2004) and wrote about paint regulations in the J/F '06 OHJ.



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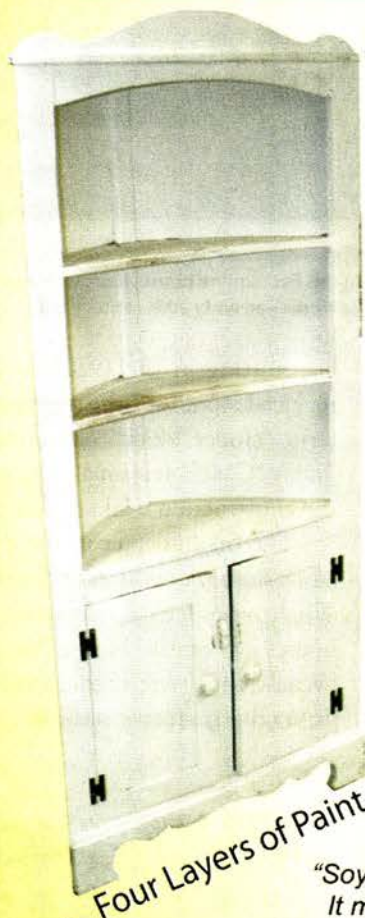
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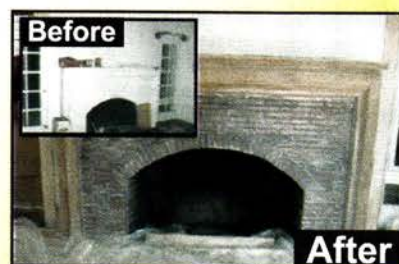
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Q Can you tell me what type of blocks make up my early 20th-century house? I remember reading about the material once in an OHJ article, which I've misplaced.

A **James C. Massey:** Your house is made of concrete blocks in a "rock-face" design, resembling rough stone. This popular pattern was one of more than a dozen available finishes, ranging from flat-tooled ashlar to cobblestone. Concrete blocks rapidly became a nationwide phenomenon after Harmon S. Palmer patented a simple iron casting machine in 1900 that was operable by a single person. The hand-powered device was loaded with a mixture of sand, cement, aggregate, and water, which was tamped into a mold. When the homeowner released the lever, the form opened, and out came a finished block that merely had to dry before use. Simple, easy, and cheap to make, the durable cement blocks were a bargain alternative to expensive cut stone and required no big, steam-powered factories. Concrete blocks soon became ubiquitous on the American and Canadian scenes, and within a few years more than a hundred firms were selling variations of the Palmer patent.

It wasn't just the device's simple operation that sold the nation on decorative blocks—its identification, beginning in 1905, with mega-retailer Sears & Roebuck's mail-order catalogs also

helped. "Buy one yourself," the catalogs hawked, "and make blocks after work to build your own new house—or to sell to other prospective builders." The device was available for a reasonable price (\$42.50 in the 1908 catalog), with a choice of more than a dozen different faux stone face patterns in varying sizes.

By 1910 Sears was also selling house plans (the famous Ready-Cut was still a few years away). Catalog write-ups for their concrete-block house designs naturally recommended the purchase of their own cast-iron machine. Sears also sold inexpensive, hand-operated mixing machines to prepare the concrete.

Concrete blocks were used for everything from garages and silos to large homes. A house might sport blocks in multiple patterns, sizes, and colors. Corner quoins were particularly popular. Fancier machines made column shafts, capitals, bases, railings, and banisters, too.

The blocks remained in wide use for three decades but largely disappeared with the Depression and the production of cheap, factory-made blocks.

The name "concrete block" was standard in the beginning,

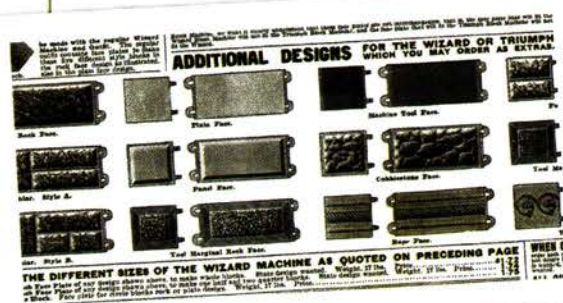
Era advertisements show the easy operation of the block-building machine (right) and the plethora of finish options to choose from (left).



The blocks comprising this Foursquare house are made of concrete fabricated to resemble stone—an early 20th-century fad.

but starting in the 1920s, as cinders replaced stones for the aggregate, the term "cinder block" came into use. Today "CMU" (cast-masonry units) is the construction world standard.

The final chapter in the concrete block story was written by Frank Lloyd Wright, whose genius led to several 1920s houses of "textile blocks," so named because they were ornamented in his distinctive geometric style.



Contributing editor and preservation consultant James C. Massey has led HABS and the National Trust's Historic Properties.

Have questions about your old house? We'd love to answer them in future issues. Please send your questions to **Ask OHJ**, 4125 Lafayette Center Dr., Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151 or by e-mail to OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com.



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historic retreats



Grand View Lodge

A 1919 Minnesota log lodge helps carry on the time-honored tradition of summers in the North Woods.

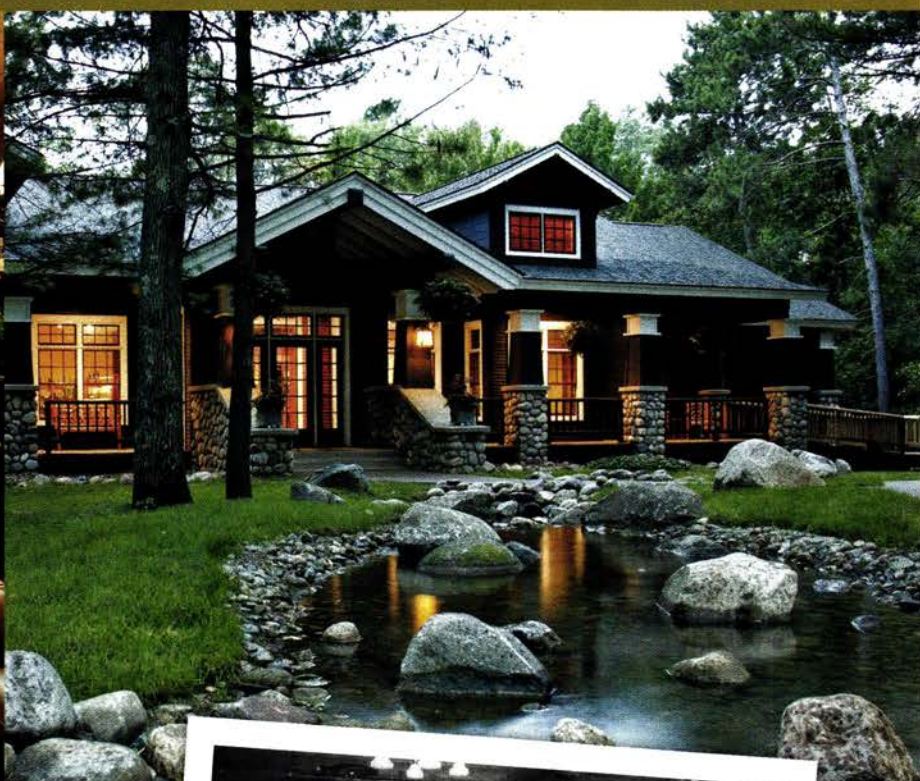
BY CLARE MARTIN

The Grand View Lodge was built almost as an afterthought: In 1916, real-estate developer M.V. Baker snapped up 3,000 feet of lakefront property along Nisswa, Minnesota's Gull Lake, planning to sell it to eager buyers for \$10 a foot. Soon, he had so many prospective clients clamoring for property that he needed a place to house them when they came to view the lots. So, in 1918, he assembled a team of horses and 15 men to construct the three-story Grand View Lodge from red pine logs, most of which were cut onsite. The logs were stained a dark brown and accented with white trim and natural materials like cedar siding. Inside, traditional lodge accoutrements (hunting trophies and wicker furniture) mingled with Arts & Crafts-inspired light fixtures.

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: The lodge's front façade reveals its Arts & Crafts influence in a cedar-shake-covered gable and exposed beams. The fieldstone hearth in the lobby remains virtually unchanged from the resort's early days, right down to the moose head and snowshoes. The new spa building takes its cues from the architecture of the lodge, boasting wide eaves and fieldstone-adorned columns.

As Baker's clients were settling into their new digs, another institution was taking shape at nearby Lake Hubert. In 1909, William Blake, a teacher at a private Minneapolis boys' school, founded an eponymous summer camp to reward his students' academic achievements. One of his counselors, Frederick Brownlee ("Brownie") Cote, became so impassioned with the camp experience that in 1924, he purchased the camp from Blake, changed its name to Camp Lincoln, and founded a sister camp for girls (Camp Lake Hubert) across the lake.

The two endeavors—camp and lodge—merged in 1937 when Brownie Cote, recognizing that parents needed a place to stay while visiting their camp-bound children, purchased the Grand View Lodge from Baker. The Cote family continues to manage the properties today, but the lodge has now evolved into a destination in itself,



offering a spa and four championship golf courses, as well as a spate of year-round activities, from horseback riding and bonfires in the summer to ice fishing and dog-sledding in the winter.

"With its beautiful south-facing beach, it's a natural environment for a family resort," notes Mark Ronnei, the lodge's general manager. Grand View Lodge began to pick up steam as a destination in the 1930s and '40s, he explains, when vacationers from places like Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas, eager to escape the oppressive heat of homes without central air, were lured to Minnesota by the cool North Woods climate. Once the automobile became a must-have for American families, weekenders from Minneapolis started making the trek, too, and over the years, the lodge evolved into an upscale resort.

Naturally, the resort has experienced a few growing pains over the course of its 90 years. Although the main lodge was added to the National Register (described as "an outstanding example of log construction") in 1980, "we went through a period where the architectural influences were a little too contemporary," says Mark of the other buildings on the property. That tide is turning, though, and Grand View is now committed to aligning all of its buildings with the Arts & Crafts aesthetic that permeates the main lodge. "We've taken the architecture of the main lodge and incorporated elements of that into everything else we do," says Mark. New buildings, such as the spa constructed in 2001, boast details like battered columns and low roof profiles, while efforts are underway to convert older



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRAND VIEW LODGE

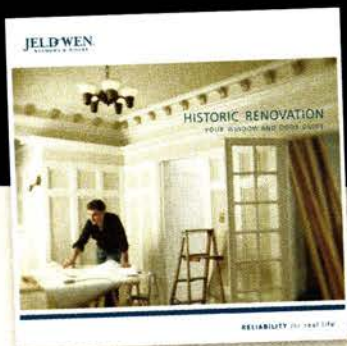


Early 20th-century photos show similar views of the lodge. "It has the same look now as you would have seen 70 years ago—or as close as we can get," says General Manager Mark Ronnei.

contemporary buildings—including some of the 60 guest cottages on the property—to the Arts & Crafts style by adding details such as natural stone and historically inspired paint colors.

Even though the main lodge has maintained most of its original features over the years (including the grand fieldstone fireplace that dominates the lobby), it also has been subject to some minor remuddles, which a recent restoration helped to correct: Carpet in

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historic retreats



Guest rooms are decorated in rich colors and textures that reflect the North Woods aesthetic.

many of the guest rooms was removed to expose the original maple floors, patched siding on the second-floor façade was replaced with cedar custom-milled to match the original cladding, and faux stone added during previous restorations was removed and replaced with locally sourced fieldstone. The second-floor guest rooms received new wood double-hung windows and updated balconies with twig railings, and were completely winterized to aid in the lodge's ongoing efforts to transition from a summer getaway to a year-round destination.

The latest restoration also reversed structural damage caused by previous repairs. "Modern repair methods had been applied without a complete understanding of how the structure was supposed to work," notes preservation specialist John Leeke, who was called in to perform an inspection of the historic structure. Several of the original 10" to 14" logs were replaced with carefully matched red pine substitutes, while a new foundation and footings, as well as vertical support beams, were installed to provide better support.

One thing that hasn't changed much over the years is the guests—in many families, the tradition of a classic North Woods vacation at the Grand View Lodge is passed down from generation to generation. "We have one woman from St. Louis who first came here with her grandfather, and who now brings her own grandchildren," says Mark. "That's the epitome of it right there." 🏡



The short path leading from Gull Lake to the main lodge is lined with Arts & Crafts-inspired light fixtures.

Grand View Lodge
23521 Nokomis Avenue
Nisswa, MN 56468
(866) 801-2951
grandviewlodge.com

Rates for rooms in the main lodge range from \$170 in the off-season to \$350 during the height of summer. Cabins near the main lodge (boasting anywhere from 1 to 9 bedrooms) go from \$240 to \$1,750.



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period products

By CLARE MARTIN

Traditional lighting and paving materials go green; plus, new products that replicate the look of old wood.



Finding Neo

Deriving inspiration from late 19th-century Neoclassicism, the Olympian Collection of garden vessels from Haddonstone takes well-known classic shapes and pares them down to their simplest form. The collection, conceived by award-winning architect and designer Robert A.M. Stern, includes a variety of urns and amphorae, as well as coordinating bases. Placed in the garden of a Classical Revival house, they'll connote a look that's both stately and streamlined. From \$650 to \$1,530. Call (856) 931-7011, or visit haddonstone.com.

Clever Clay

In the 19th century, quarried stone pavers called setts widely replaced rougher cobblestones, and can still be found underfoot in many historic districts in Europe and the U.S. Pine Hall Brick has put an eco-friendly spin on this classic walkway material with its new CityCobble bricks, reimagining the square and rectangular pavers in clay, a material that's both readily abundant and easily recyclable. The bricks come in two colors, reddish Siesta (shown) or dark-brown Mahogany, and are tumbled after firing to produce a distressed, well-worn appearance. From \$3.50 to \$5 per square foot. Call (800) 334-8689, or visit pinehallbrick.com.



Old World Wonder

When it comes to outfitting kitchens and bathrooms in 18th-century homes, making the right choice can be tough, as there's no historical precedent to guide decisions. Kohler has eased this dilemma with the introduction of their new Kelston faucet collection, which takes its inspiration from the lines of 18th-century European antiques. The tub, lavatory, and shower sets come in a range of finishes, from shiny polished chrome perfect for ornate, European-inspired homes to a sedate oil-rubbed bronze (shown at left) that fits well in simpler American Colonial interiors. Prices start at \$185. Call (800) 456-4537, or visit kohler.com.



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period products



Faux Sure

You can't beat the traditional style of all-wood garage doors when it comes to complementing an old house—but the expense and maintenance requirements that accompany wood doors make them less attractive to some homeowners. Amarr has eliminated this conundrum by offering a faux wood-grain option on several of its traditionally styled steel doors. The dark finish effectively mimics the look

of hardwood, and is embedded with a UV inhibitor to ensure the color won't fade. The finish is available on select models within the Classica, Oak Summit, and Stratford Collections. Prices start at \$650. Call (800) 503-3667, or visit amarr.com.



Great Slate

With its combination of beauty and durability, slate has long been a must-have outside the old house, on everything from roofs to garden paths. But Kichler Lighting is taking the traditional material in a new direction, using it as the basis for an Arts & Crafts-inspired path light. The box of variegated slate is encased in a frame of rich textured bronze, creating an aesthetic that celebrates the beauty of natural materials while displaying a variety of influences (from Prairie to Mission to Japonesque), making it an easy fit for a range of Arts & Crafts houses. \$348. Call (866) 558-5706, or visit landscape-lighting.com.

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Smoke It Out

Sometimes, the most perfect parts of an old house are its imperfections: windows with distorted old glass, hardware with a distinctive aged patina. This maxim holds especially true for floors—well-worn boards with nicks, dents, and discoloration have so much more character than uniform, fresh-from-the-factory hardwoods. That's the idea behind Homerwood's new Smoked Specialty flooring—the tongue-and-groove boards are wire-brushed and smoked by hand to give them the appearance of having been walked on for years. Available in widths from 3" to 6"; prices start at \$14 per square foot. Call (814) 827-3855, or visit homerwood.com.



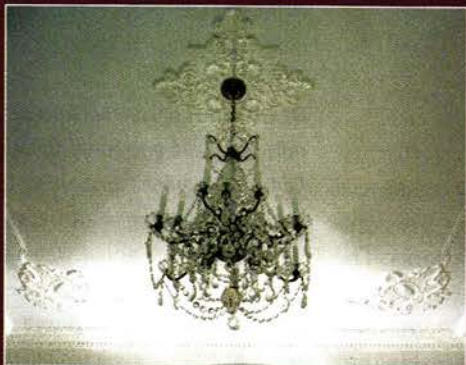
Green Light

Although rehabilitating a historic house may be an inherently sustainable practice, "green" decorating can still be a challenge, as most environmentally friendly products on the market have a decidedly contemporary bent. But more and more green products are adopting traditional silhouettes—the latest is the Americana Collection from WAC Lighting. The two pendant lights (the Franklin, left, and the Clinton, right) feature classic early 20th century lines, and are Energy Star certified, with self-ballasted, energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps. From \$126 to \$210. Call (800) 526-2588, or visit waclighting.com.



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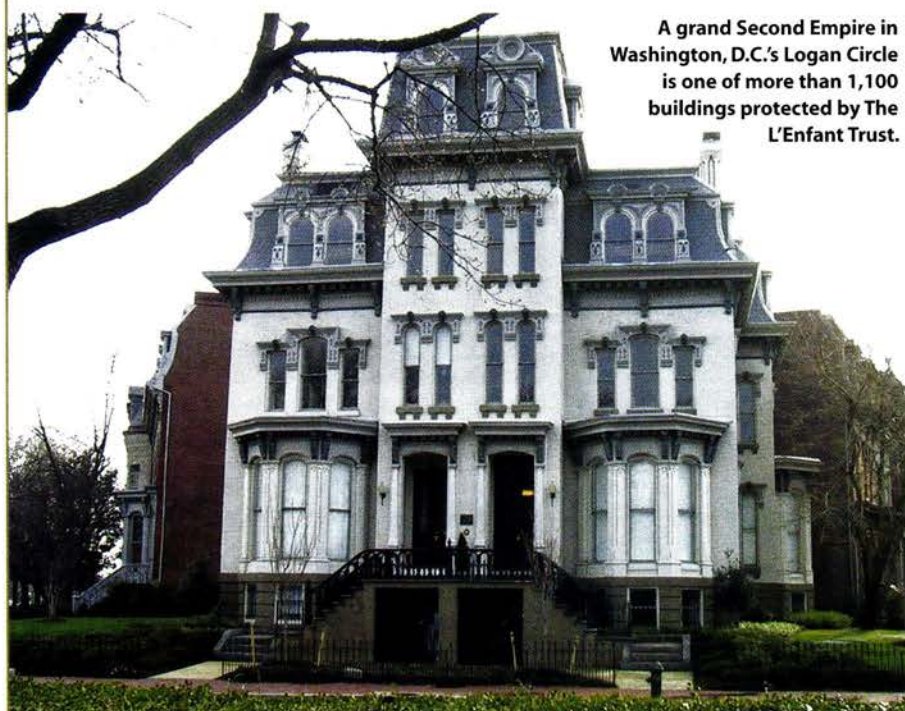
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preservation perspectives



A grand Second Empire in Washington, D.C.'s Logan Circle is one of more than 1,100 buildings protected by The L'Enfant Trust.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE L'ENFANT TRUST

Protection in Perpetuity



Washington, D.C. nonprofit The L'Enfant Trust has promoted preservation through conservation easements since 1978. We chatted with president Carol Goldman about the ins and outs of the program.

By DEMETRA APOSPOROS

DEMETRA APOSPOROS: The L'Enfant Trust was one of the pioneers in conservation easements—how did your program come about?

CAROL GOLDMAN: Our founders were tax lawyers, and they donated an easement on Washington's National Union Building to the National Trust for Historic Preservation—true easement pioneers in the U.S. Both believed local oversight for easements was important, so they founded The L'Enfant Trust as a nonprofit to hold local easements.

DA: What's the in-a-nutshell definition of how easements work?

CG: The owners of a building decide they

want to preserve their house or commercial property in perpetuity, so they give rights to the building's exterior to a charity. The charity then ensures that the building is properly maintained, and that future owners apply for permission before making any exterior changes. The nice thing about easement donation is that it's voluntary preservation. You don't have to do it, and you don't have to buy a building with an easement in place.

DA: Most people know there's a tax benefit to donating an easement—how is it determined?

CG: It's a complicated process, but in brief, an appraiser will look at the property and

estimate its value before and after the easement is put in place. The appraiser establishes the value of the property rights the owner is giving to charity (the non-profit). That amount gets submitted as a tax deduction by the owner. While the burden of the easement transfers to subsequent homeowners, the tax deduction happens only once.

DA: What types of buildings qualify?

CG: Any building 50 years old or older, located in a registered historic district that's received certification through the National Park Service, or buildings individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

DA: Do you enforce a strict set of guidelines?

CG: Guidelines are very dependent on the easement holder and the easement document being used. Because we're an organization that exists in perpetuity, we purposely don't have strict, unchangeable guidelines for owners—as time marches on, technologies and materials improve. We want our property owners to use the current best methods.

DA: In terms of new technology and materials, what are you running into?

CG: The newest thing we've dealt with is someone wanting to add a green roof. We were concerned about water and making sure it wouldn't endanger the building—and also that it would be out of the public sight line. After consultations with an architect, it was approved.

DA: How do you handle requests to back-date a property?

CG: We try to weigh an owner's request against what's best for the property. For example, we once dealt with a townhouse with a strip of architectural metal across the front. The metal was removed during masonry work on the building, and the owners decided they preferred the house

The nice thing about easement donation is that it's voluntary preservation. You don't have to do it, and you don't have to buy a building with an easement in place.

without it. So we did a lot of sleuthing and consulting, and ultimately determined that the metal wasn't original to the house, so we allowed the owner to keep it off.

DA: Is it common for buildings to change ownership after an easement has been placed on the property?

CG: Our Trust has been around long enough that it is common. Part of our work is in keeping an updated list of owners, which we monitor through tax rolls and by writing to owners at least once a year.

DA: Who notifies the new owners of the easement?

CG: Ideally, the property owner who donated

the easement will introduce the new owner to us at the time of a sale, but it sometimes falls through the cracks, and we end up with a new owner who wasn't aware of the easement until after purchasing the property. Those are the people we try to focus on and educate, to let them know that their building is protected, it's a good thing, and we're here to help them.

DA: What sorts of recourse do you have if people make inappropriate changes without permission?

CG: We try to avoid that by talking with people before any changes happen. For example, we get a copy of all building permits for D.C. historic districts every

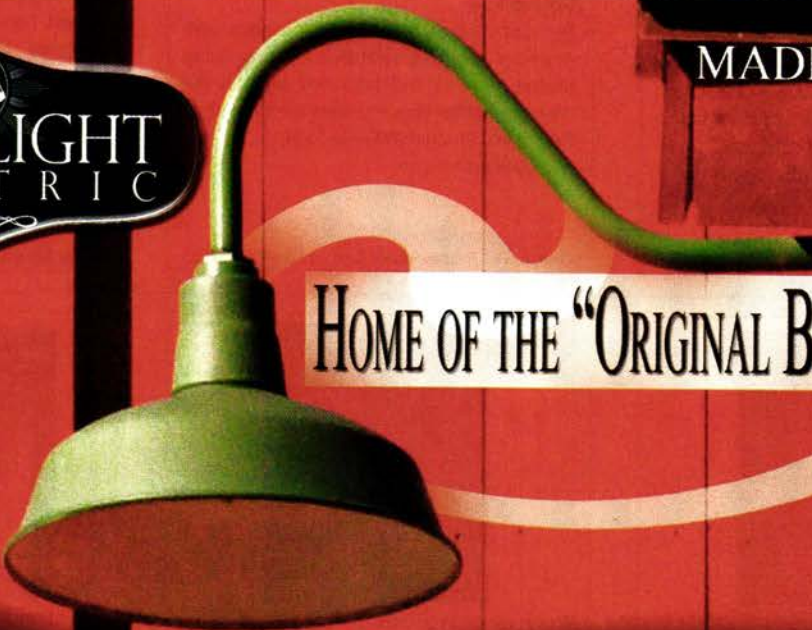


Buildings held in easement boast this 7" brass plaque on their front façade.

week—if one of our properties is on the list, we'll call the owners to discuss the work. We have had people do things, though, like change paint colors without approval. In one case, we ended up in court to enforce the easement, and the judge ruled the homeowner had to repaint the house and pay all of our associated legal fees. 🏠

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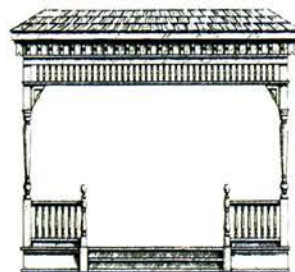
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CREATING A *Colonial Garden*

Spanning nearly three centuries, colonial gardens encompass a wide variety of styles—which means tailoring a period-appropriate aesthetic to fit your needs has never been easier.

BY LUCINDA BROCKWAY
PHOTOS BY JON CRISPIN

Colonial houses are easy to identify: They have a defined time period, and feature a specific set of architectural details. Colonial gardens, on the other hand, are a bit harder to pin down, as they cover a range of styles, attitudes, and design choices.

Running from each region of the country's first settlement until the mid-19th century, they cover a broad range of patterns, ethnic traditions, regional variations, and personal styles, which explains why, say, a Spanish colonial garden in San Antonio feels very different from its New England counterpart. Confusing matters further is the fact that the true colonial era is often

jumbled with the ideals of the Colonial Revival, the 20th century's romantic interpretation of our early history. So what is a colonial garden? How can we define its character and capture it to create an appropriate setting for an early home? A look at some of the elements of original colonial gardens can help shape period-appropriate garden designs.



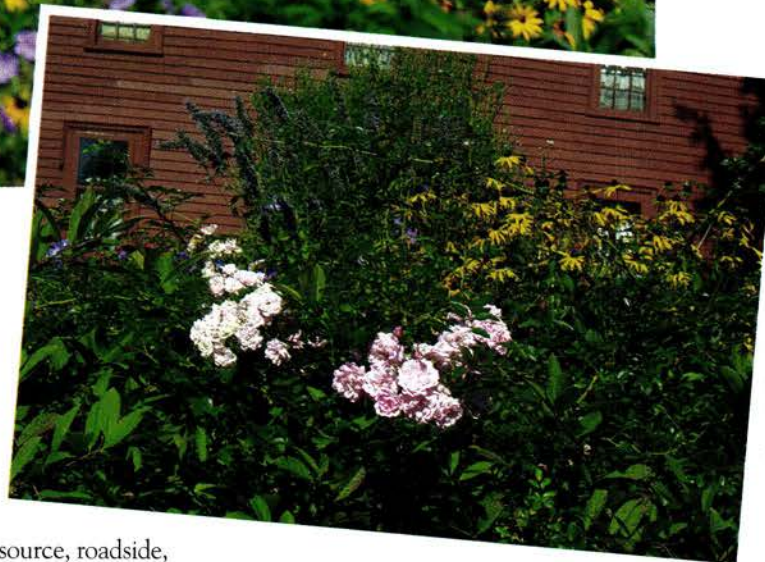
Dissecting the Colonial Garden

Despite regional variations, all colonial yards and gardens share some similarities. They are generally small spaces with carefully defined edges that delineate personal space from public sidewalks or an adjacent neighbor. They can seem cluttered and can be easily overloaded. By necessity, they often include the pretty and the practical: Walks and flowers surround mailboxes and trash containers. They are as organic and vernacular as the buildings they surround. They almost never have straight corners or perfect symmetry. Built in an era when time, money, plant availability, and even water were in short supply, they boast practical layouts dressed with the prettiest native plants and the hardiest plants from friends and family far away. Centuries of change have contributed to their unique character, as later design trends were infused into original gardens.

The design of original colonial gardens was heavily influenced by the restrictive size typical of colonial-era lots. Along the nar-

row, crooked streets of America's villages, early Colonial houses huddled shoulder to shoulder behind tiny front yards. These village properties were designed to give owners equal access to the riverfront, water source, roadside, or village center. Most lots were barely 40' or 50' wide, with little room for a horse to pass between buildings into the rear yard. Behind the houses, long, narrow spaces offered room for work yards, gardens, and sometimes a stable or barn, accessible from a narrow side drive, a rear alley, or from the next road. Double lots offered more flexibility—if one could afford them.

In the country, where space was more plentiful, larger acreage and deeper yards offered more opportunity for gardens, though the never-ending work of the farm or ranch offered little time for pleasure. In the village, garden borders guarded against



The slight setback of most Colonial homes presents a challenge in garden design, but bright perennials make the most of this space.

encroachment from the public or neighbors, whereas in the country, they kept out wandering livestock or errant chickens or geese. Paths were simple and direct, made of gravel or swept dirt, and covered with planks laid side by side on the surface of the ground for rainy or snowy seasons. Bricks, cobblestones, shells, bark, and other regional paving materials dressed up walks when they became available in surplus quantities. When times were good, or if homeowners were passionate about their gardens and had



TOP: Children's book authors Ed and Barbara Emberly sought to carve out special nooks within their colonial garden.

BOTTOM: Two varieties of thyme (*Thymus praecox* and *Thymus pseudolanuginosus*) ramble over the granite fieldstone path.

the room, an expanse of vegetables or herbs, or an overflow of pretty natives or hardy flowering plants, spilled over the dooryard, creating an exuberant seasonal display bordered by a hedge or fence. Sometimes, outdoor areas were carefully intertwined with the uses of their adjacent interior spaces—kitchen yards related to kitchen activities, nicer spaces sat next to parlors or sitting rooms, and yards for outdoor work activities were located behind houses and near barns. For most, the manicured gardens we've come to associate with the colonial era were not a reality. Instead, most colonial gardens were everyday spaces filled with simple practicality, growing at the whim of available water and good weather.

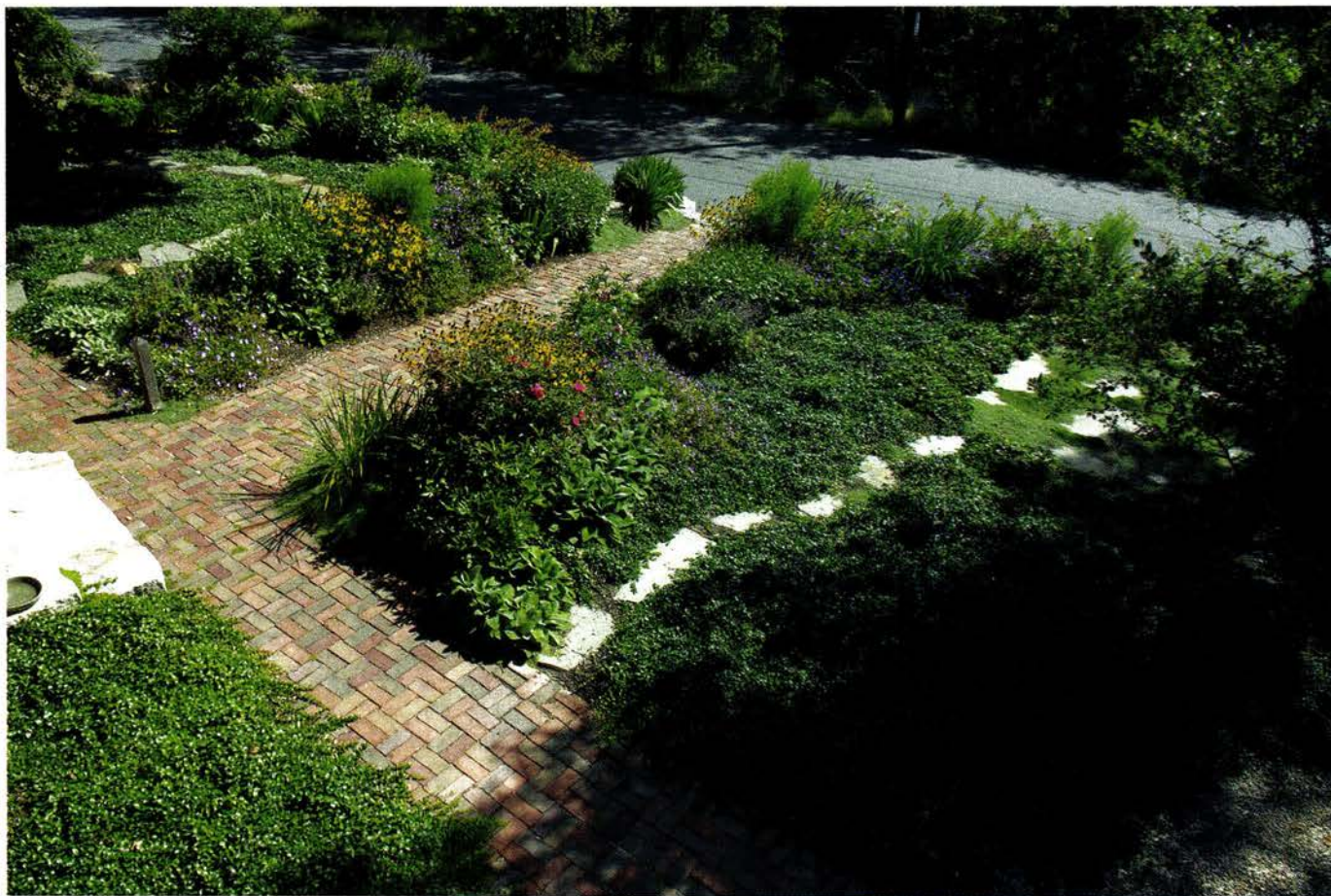
Merging Past and Present

How, in the modern era of decks, swing sets, patios, and multiple automobiles, can we create a yard that is respectful of a house's colonial heritage yet seasoned with our own gardening interests and daily needs?

Small, urban colonial yards offer sig-

nificant challenges in terms of space and privacy. Sometimes an entire yard is located at the front of the house, making it particularly difficult to gain privacy while still offering a welcome approach from the street. In the country, definition is necessary to create intimate spaces that feel more comfortable than open, windswept fields. Restoring the definition of the yard recaptures the scale and rhythm of its vernacular setting.

In one Ipswich, Massachusetts, garden, for instance, homeowners Ed and Barbara Emberly called on me to help tame the tangle of the past into a manageable, usable space. Less than 50' separated the façade of their 1690 house from the road fronting the Ipswich River. The site had kept its 18th-century scale: The long, narrow lot, the small spaces on each side of the central garden path, the irregular bends in the driveway, and the rambling house (added onto over several generations) were typical of early New England villages. The contents of the garden had changed to reflect the



planting fashions of three centuries.

Though charming, the site presented its own list of problems. Difficult grades coupled with dense clay soils created significant drainage problems, exacerbated by a three-century buildup of composted soils. Some of the existing trees were teetering on the threshold of mortality. The wooden stoop, a 20th-century addition, needed to be rebuilt, and the driveway, constricted by a cut-away in the hillside, was too narrow. The brick path that bisected the garden was misaligned, and the granite curbs and Victorian stone posts, added in the 19th century, didn't fit the period of the house.

After I had inventoried and measured the existing garden, I drafted designs that fit both the period of the house and the couple's personal desires. (As children's book authors, color, texture, and special codas within the garden were important to Ed and Barbara.) Although "weedy" species were common in colonial gardens, the couple wanted to stay away from these invasive plants in favor of hardy indigenous species

for their period-inspired design.

We removed one birch tree of questionable health, creating better site drainage along the driveway, but a large linden tree was simply pruned to accentuate views of the river. To widen the driveway, we cut into the hillside and planted the reshaped slope with lilacs, bearberry (a native groundcover), and daylilies. We lowered and reshaped grades to drain water away from the house. We also added compost everywhere to lighten the heavy clay soils, then we laid new walks using the old brick. We kept brick for the walkways because the Emberlys found the old brick walkway easy to shovel and more dependable footing than dirt or gravel. In the end, Ed and Barbara decided to keep the incongruous Victorian curb and stone posts as an acknowledgment that this house, too, experienced the 19th century, but they did replace the stoop with large fieldstones.

The new plan called for two open seating areas flanked by thick flower borders along the central walk and within a low



TOP: The new plan for the front yard flanks the brick walkway with a thick and constantly changing flower border.

BOTTOM: Victorian stone posts, which were a 19th-century addition to the garden, were kept intact.



Hefty fieldstones provide a sturdy new stoop, replacing the rickety wooden one.

sweetspire hedge (a less formal, indigenous alternative to box) planted along the street. Both the hedge and the rise in grade conferred a little more privacy on the garden. Instead of lawn, the space around the seating areas was planted with a carpet of myrtle (*Vinca minor*), another tough indigenous groundcover. The larger of the two seating areas was paved with brick, while the more intimate river overlook, on the other side of the garden, features granite fieldstone planted with thyme and pearlwort. The two areas weren't meant to be symmetrical or complementary to each other; instead, I designed them for their practicality of place and space. The informal siting of the seating areas and the juxtaposition of different paving materials adds to the quirky vernacular character of the house and its setting.

In bloom from early spring to late fall, the garden is ever-changing. In spring, sulfur-yellow basket-of-gold and waldsteinia, baby-blue forget-me-nots, white candytuft, and a range of tulips and daffodils wake up the garden. In summer, daisies, iris, peonies, roses, yarrow, and daylilies fill the garden with color, while blue cranesbill geraniums tumble through the borders. White and purple thyme, chives, and salvia reflect the blue and purple moods of the river. In autumn, black-eyed Susans, asters, late phlox, hyssop, and boltonia entice migrating butterflies to stop and visit amidst the

changing fall foliage. Most of the plants' genus dates to the early 18th century, though in some cases a cultivar was selected in favor of a longer bloom season or better resistance to pests and diseases.

Shaped by time, artistry, personalities, and the weather, this colonial garden has become home to another generation. For some owners of early homes, a faithful period garden might be the best choice. For others, careful research can offer insight into the regional vernacular character of colonial gardens and provide unlimited inspiration for period design. For all, the best colonial gardens celebrate the individuality of the site, the owners, and the region.



Antique granite surrounds a stone-lined well, which is usually topped with a wooden cover.

Perfection often takes second place to practicality. The struggle to work within small spaces, irregular alignments, and the quirky twists of time offer the best opportunities to capture the spirit and the personality of the colonial garden and tame it for another generation. 🏡

Landscape designer and preservationist Lucinda Brockway is the author of Gardens of the New Republic (Bright Sky, 2004).



Homeowner Ed Emberly admires the just-blooming boltonia along the garden's central path.



Plants for the garden were chosen to guarantee bursts of color throughout the seasons. In the late summer, boltonia, black-eyed Susans, 'Knockout' shrub roses, 'Rozanne' geraniums, and hyssop (clockwise from top left) take center stage.

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New Designs on an *Old* Porch

**An engineer puts his problem-solving skills to work to
rebuild the elaborate balustrade on his old-house porch
using modern materials.**

STORY BY JAMES A. McMASTER ♦ PHOTOS BY CAROLYN BATES

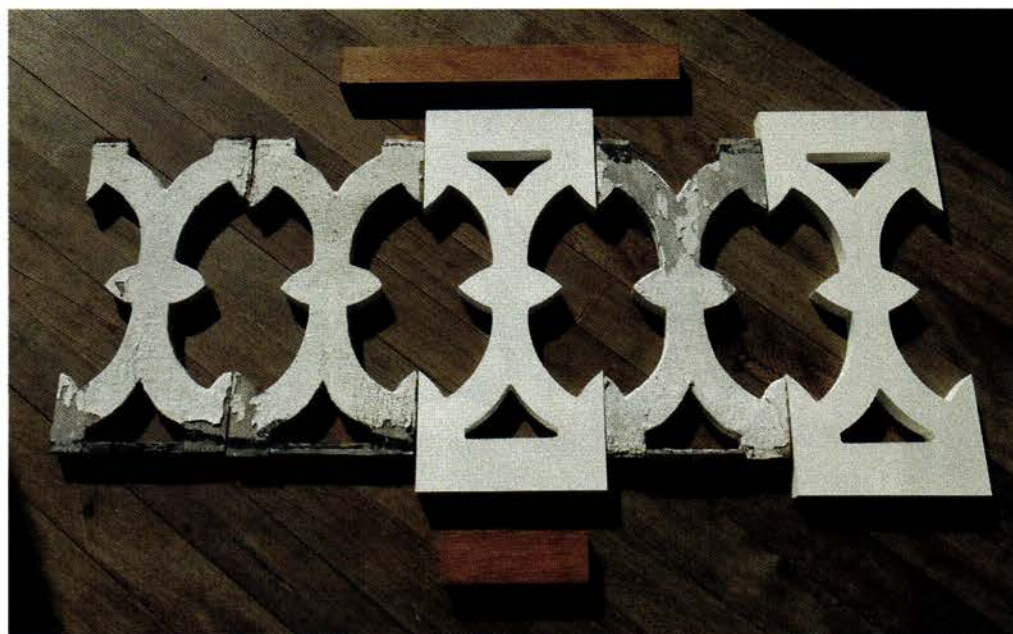
My wife, Trudie, and I have owned an 1880 Folk Victorian summer house on the shores of Lake George, New York, since 1986. Over two decades, we've undertaken dozens of repair and maintenance projects to arrest the home's slide toward collapse.

After we moved in full time in 2002, we stepped up work considerably. Our most recent job was a wholesale replacement of the large, elaborately balustraded 130-year-old wraparound porch, which was so deteriorated that replacement was the only real option. I put my engineering background to work to try to improve the structural design and to stem future water damage. I decided to re-create the ornate scroll-cut wood balustrade using a (hopefully) weather-resistant expanded PVC trim.

Original Conundrum

Duplicating the porch rail's intricate gingerbread balustrade was a challenge. The original 1880s railing consisted of many separate parts: a top and bottom rail, each measuring 2" x 3" with slots to secure individual baluster pieces; individual baluster sections cut in the shape of a narrow, stylized X, so that O's formed where two pieces met; and separate wood filler pieces fitted into the X's open top and bottom. The filler piece was intended to keep water out of the lower slot—but over 130 years, the paint had deteriorated and water had seeped into the bottom slot, causing the lower rail to rot.

I decided to tweak the structural design in an effort to solve the problem of water entrapment in the lower rail, so I extended the balusters and sandwiched them between two separate top and bottom rails, eliminating the filler piece and water-trapping slot. Because the balusters had originally been cut by hand, and many also had warped or shrunk over the years, determining the original dimensions took some trial and error. I started by tracing



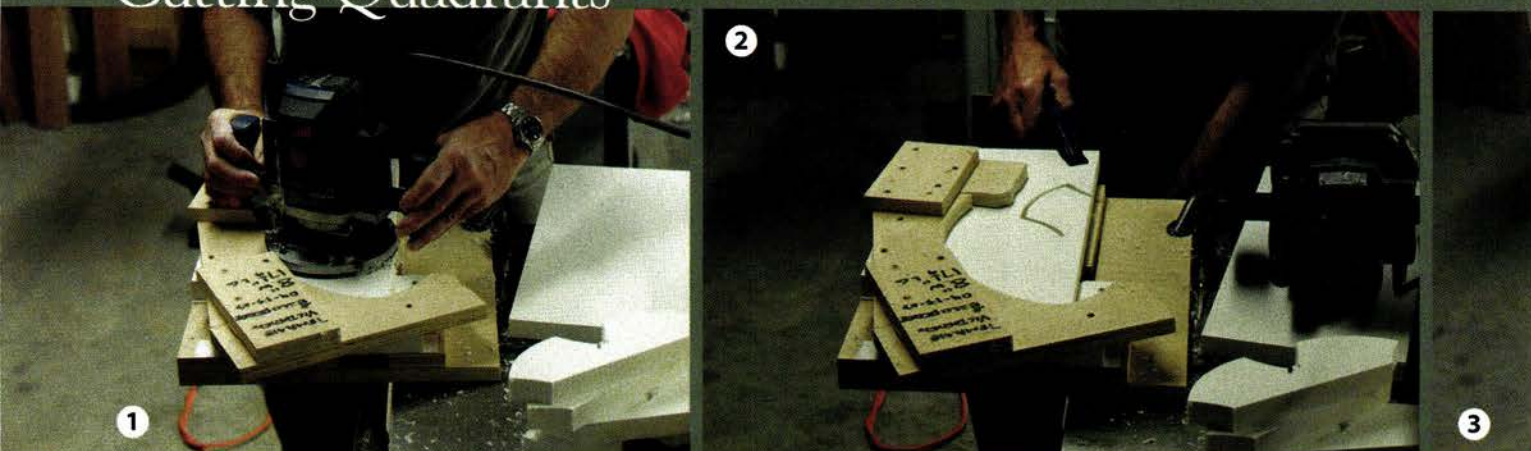
TOP: Jim's new baluster sections (at right and middle) are slightly longer than the originals—a design tweak intended to stave off water damage—but otherwise an exact match. **BOTTOM:** The array of tools he used includes a pneumatic nail gun, router, drill, clamp, and pocket screw jig. **OPPOSITE:** A finished section of the porch shows the warm, welcoming impact of the elegant original design, created from a simple pattern of curvaceous X's and O's.

the outline of several balusters onto vellum, but found there was no consistent shape. I tried to think how the original craftsmen might have created the shapes, and assumed they would have used simple radii with symmetrical placement. I drew several versions onto vellum and compared these to multiple original pieces, finally deciding that the design probably involved simple 4" radius arcs for all of the shapes. When I drew this up full size, it looked like a reasonable reproduction of the originals.

Material Decisions

Once I had finalized the design, I asked several companies for quotes on cutting the balusters for me using a waterjet cutter or a similar method. One company suggested using a production router, but the cost was prohibitive for a do-it-yourself budget—about \$20 for each of the 350 pieces (or close to \$7,000). That got me thinking that maybe I could make a simple plywood template and cut them from pine using my own 2-hp plunger router. I got some 1/4" down

Cutting Quadrants



Jim created templates to cut the design on baluster sections one quarter at a time. After each quarter's design was routed out (1), the section was flipped and clamped (2), then routed again (3).

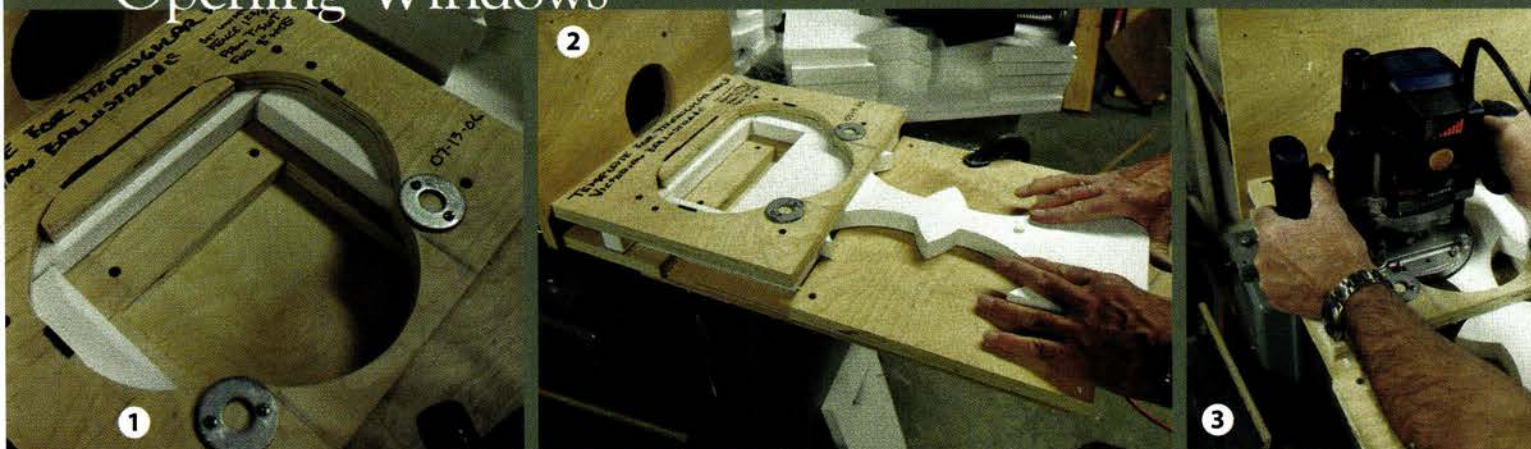
spiral router bits and tried some cuts on wood scraps. It took multiple passes to get the cut depth, and standard $\frac{3}{4}$ " or $1\frac{1}{8}$ " wood didn't match the existing balustrade thickness very well. I experimented with various composition trim boards, but they were heavy and didn't cut well with the router, and I was afraid the resins wouldn't survive the sun and dampness. I needed a better material, one that would be resistant to rot and warping, and one I could machine easily. I finally found it in expanded PVC trim boards, available through several local building stores.

I purchased a sample 20-foot length to see how well the material would cut with my router. I had to buy a 1x10 nominal size ($9\frac{1}{4}$ " actual width) in order to yield the full 8" width. The first step was to cut accurate 8" x 18" blanks (the basic baluster shape). The width was critical because 14 pieces would just meet the 112" post spacing. The material cut easily with normal carbide saw blades using both a table saw and a radial arm saw. I used stops to cut 14 blanks from the 20' length, which helped minimize waste. The smaller pieces were easier to control on the table saw, where I

cut away one side first, and then the second at exactly 8" so both sides would have the same cut edge (the as-manufactured edges were slightly cupped). These went back to the radial arm saw, where I used a production stop to get the exact length needed for each piece—precision was key to making the scroll templates work. Because there were a lot of cuts to be made, I spread the job out over several days.

To cut the balusters, I created a couple of simple templates. The first, for the main pattern, was designed to cut one quadrant of the baluster's side and consisted of $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Opening Windows



To re-create the triangular cutouts decorating each X's top and bottom breadth—formerly an open-ended element—Jim created a template (1) to cut the shape as a window. He slid the end of each individual baluster piece into tight-fitting bracing beneath the template (2).



The cuts aligned perfectly to form cutouts removable from the section's length (4). Finished baluster pieces stacked up precisely (5).

cabinet plywood with a shape that would guide around the outside of the router base plate. Each baluster was positioned in the template and securely clamped (so pieces couldn't slip and ruin the finished shape). The second template was designed to cut the triangular window inside the upper and lower portions of each section.

To get accurate radii, I used a home-made radius bar to guide the router for the larger one, then fastened a 2" steel washer to the wood for the smaller radius. I used a reciprocating spindle sander to make the wood conform to the steel washer. I secured

the separate pieces of the template with drive screws.

I experimented with various cutting depths to see how well I could do with two or three cuts, but found that I could cut the entire $\frac{7}{8}$ " thickness in a single pass. This was important, as there would be more than 2,000 separate cutting operations, and doubling or tripling that would have added significant time. There was minor chatter (roughness) in the cuts from time to time, but that gave the edge a look similar to the band saw cut on the original balusters.

Chips were a problem, as the router pro-

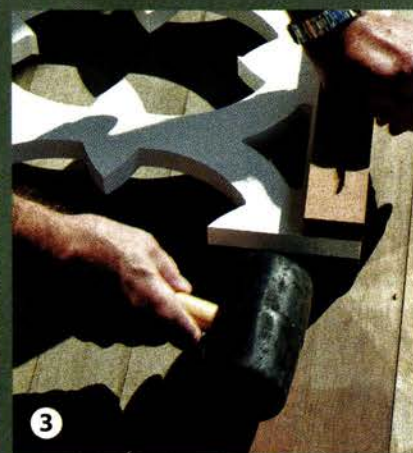
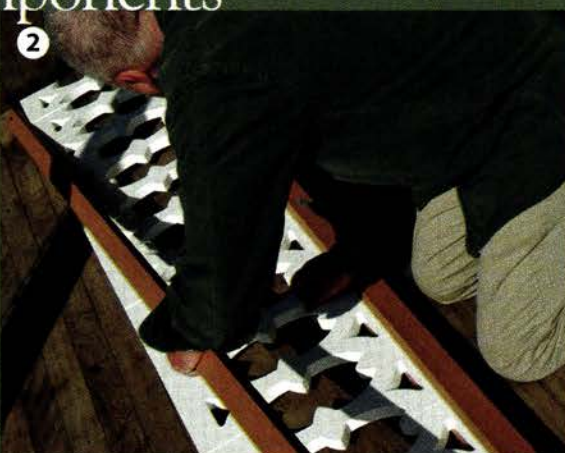
duces a fluffy, bulky waste. I set up my shop dust collector beneath the template for the four outside cuts with the downward spiral bit, using part of a standard blast gate as a hose connection. This was quite effective and produced very little fugitive dust. In addition, the air the dust collector passed around the cutting bit and through the cut slot helped take the chips out of the cut and cool the material and bit.

For the window cut—a triangular opening at the top and bottom of each baluster—I needed an up-feeding bit (the down spiral wouldn't allow the initial plunge through the



He then used his router to jog around the template's curves (3), which excised the triangle—and created a bit of dust (4). Finally, he popped out the triangle (5) and was left with a perfect window. He repeated the process on the top and bottom of each baluster piece.

Assembling Components



To assemble a length of balustrade, Jim set the top and bottom rails on the ground and spaced the balusters between them (1). Next, he placed the second set of top and bottom rails (2), and gently hammered all of the elements into place (3).

material). I used a dust hood near the cut, but it wasn't entirely effective in capturing the chips. (It might have been better to drill a starter hole and use the downward spiral bit and vacuum system for these as well.)

Being an engineer, I'm always interested in how my time compares with the cost of paying someone else to do the job. In all of the operations combined, I expended only 8 to 10 minutes creating each baluster.

Rail Reflections

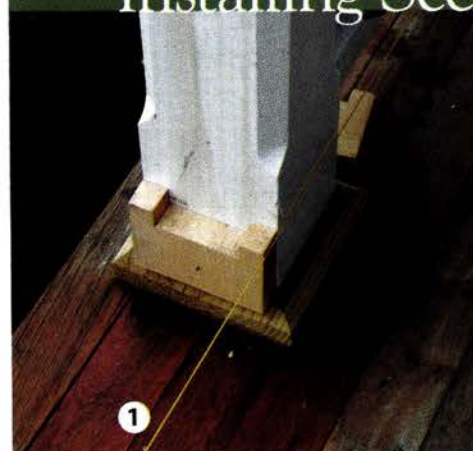
Next, I tackled the rails. In the original design, the slotted bottom rail was a water

trap vulnerable to rot. My design would consist of two top and two bottom rails. The top was composed of two 1" x 2" rectangular pieces. The bottom had the same overall dimensions, as well as a 15-degree slope to shed water. The rail material needed to be strong, stiff, and rot resistant. Since I had replaced the porch deck the previous year, I had leftover mahogany tongue-and-groove deck boards measuring $\frac{3}{4}$ " x $3\frac{1}{2}$ ". I used my table saw and jointer to cut some trial pieces to the 2" width, then assembled a couple of short sections to see how it worked and looked. When I

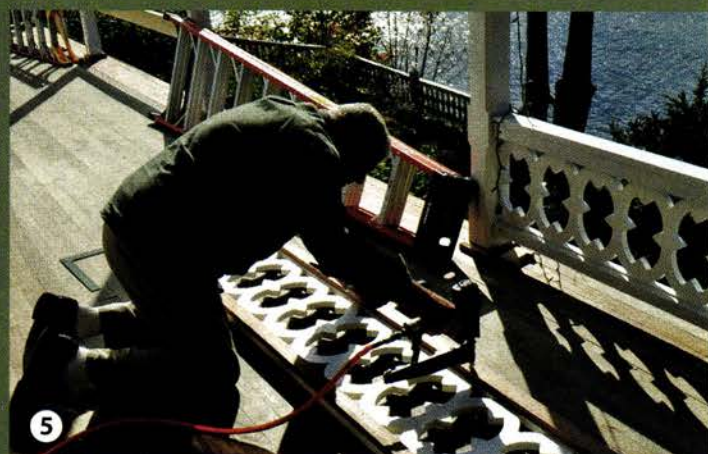
compared the cost of the deck material to several other alternatives, it was the least expensive option.

Assembly was simple. A top and bottom rail were placed on the floor, the balusters spaced along them, and the second rail set placed on top. I squared the loose assembly, and drove $2\frac{1}{2}$ " galvanized trim nails into each corner. Next, I tapped the balusters into vertical alignment and re-squared the assembly, then drove four nails into each baluster on opposite corners. Once I got the hang of it, it only took me 25 minutes to assemble a full-length section.

Installing Sections



Now ready to install an entire section of railing, Jim first used a string line to ensure that his support blocks were in square (1), then he carried the railing section into position and slid it into the grooves on the support blocks (2).



After checking to ensure that everything was squared up (4), Jim began securing individual elements. He drove 2½" galvanized trim nails into the four corners using a pneumatic nail gun, then placed four nails into each baluster piece (5).

I chose pocket screws to fasten the railing sections to the post, putting holes to place them in the top and bottom rails after I cut the rails to length in my shop. I made a spacer to position the pocket screw jig at exactly the same distance from the end of each rail. (My jig, from Kreg, comes with a special drill that produces the recess and pilot holes in one easy operation). After the rails were installed on the porch, I added additional pocket screws at the top inner rail to provide some extra strength for lateral loads. I figured each screw should be able to support 200 to 300

pounds in shear, so three screws atop each section gives an initial capacity of 600 to 900 pounds laterally at the ends, while the 10 screws in each 112" section could support 2,000 to 3,000 pounds vertically. We're still careful to limit the number of people sitting on the rail.

For the top rail, we chose to use a ¾" x 4" mahogany square-edge deck board. While these don't have the 15-degree water-shedding angle of the original rails, you can sit a wine glass or beer bottle on top—a useful feature.

After the sections were installed, I

primed the wood and filled the nail holes using wood filler, and the pocket screw holes with plugs made specifically for my jig. I also painted a base coat of soft gloss white on both the PVC and the mahogany. While we're still debating whether we want to paint the rails green, like the originals, we definitely enjoy having the balustrade up. The accent color can wait. 🏡

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Next, he used pocket screws to securely fasten the railing section to the posts at the top (3) and bottom (4). The finished sections, complete but for some paint and the installation of the ¾" top rail, are ready to weather another 100 years.



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AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN BREATHES
NEW LIFE INTO A 19TH-CENTURY PLANTER'S HOME.

STORY BY DEBORAH BURST ♦ PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK

As soon as David Floyd glanced across a country road in Louisiana's Point Coupe Parish and spotted Sunnyside Plantation's weathered façade peeking above a field of towering weeds, he knew the 1838 Bluffland-style home—once part of a cotton plantation—would forever be part of his life.

"It was in a time capsule, a pure state of preservation. It had never been tampered with, never been modernized to any great degree," says David, who serves as the executive director for Louisiana State University's Rural Life Museum. "The owners had built another, more prestigious house, and this one was left alone."

A scholar of architectural history, David immediately recognized the home's many original 19th-century features, from vintage double-wide doors with geometrically paned transoms to Baldwin solid cast hinges and Carpenter locks. Based on the design of the home—one and a half stories with a stairwell tucked inside the wall and an equal number of rooms flanking a center hall—he was able to date it to the 1830s. It was all in pristine condition—even the cypress floors, hand-planed tongue-and-groove ceilings, and original porch columns.

"It was an architectural treasure," David says. "As a museum director



ABOVE: Although Sunnyside Plantation was clearly in need of a major restoration, homeowner David Floyd could see its potential. After dismantling and moving the home, three months of rain delayed the restoration process. **BELOW:** Today, David and his wife, Marla, enjoy the home's graceful rehabilitation from its new location on a bluff of Bayou Sara in Wyanoke, Louisiana.

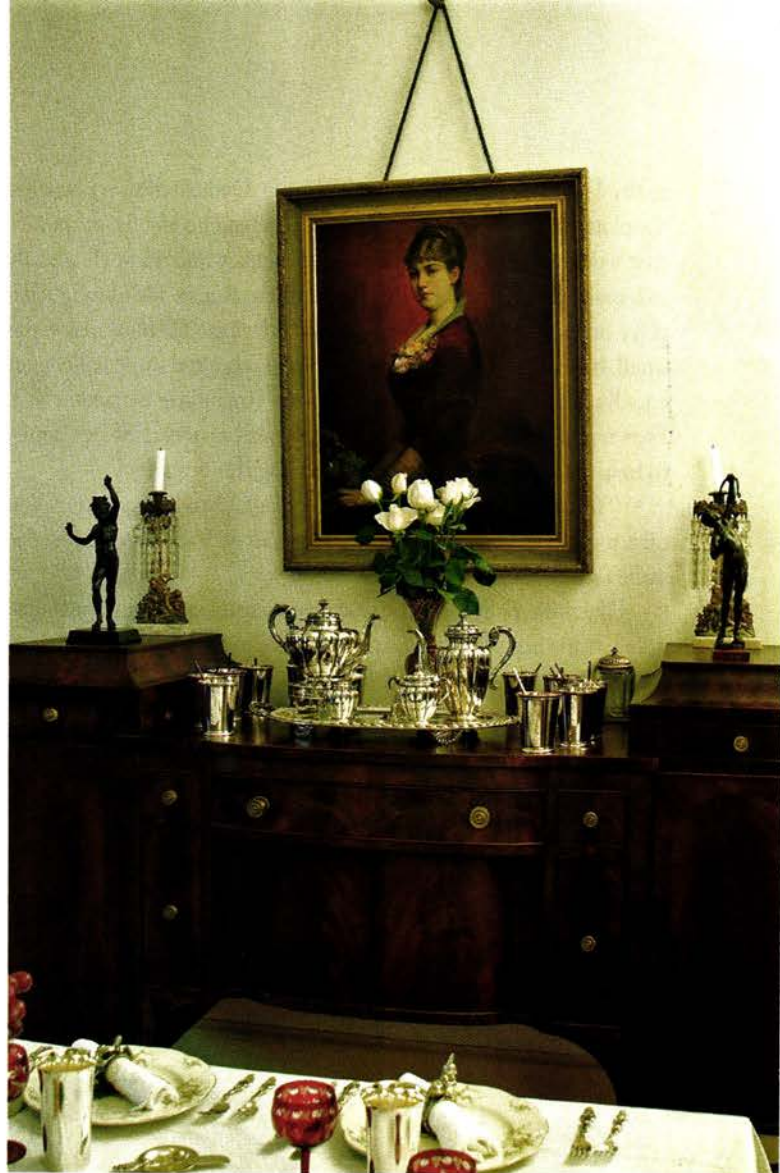




LEFT: The open kitchen was completely rebuilt after the move, but David embellished it with original details to help it blend with the rest of the structure. It's a popular gathering place during the couple's frequent gatherings (below).

RIGHT: A judicious blend of antiques steeps the formal dining room in history.

BELOW, RIGHT: The backyard kitchen garden, like all the other gardens on the property, was designed to evoke the charm of plantation life.



and a person who appreciates natural architecture, I wanted to own that house."

Upon researching the home's history, David discovered that Sunnyside had been built by Charles Tessier in 1838, who had lived there with his first wife, Laura Thomas, and their family until 1852. Sunnyside then housed the property overseer and later the adult Tessier children until 1912, when a huge flood left four feet of water inside the home. Everything survived except the plaster walls, which were replaced with cypress planks and eventually covered with wallpaper in the 1930s.

By the time David spotted the home in September 1997, it had been in the hands of another family, the Branch-Fosters, for more than 50 years. Owner Leila Branch Foster was understandably reluctant to let go of a home that carried generations of cherished memories, but after meeting David and his wife, Marla, and showing their children, Amanda and Hunter, around the house where she spent her childhood, Leila changed her mind. "Mr. Floyd, I want your children to have this home," she told David. "The children bought the house for us," Marla admits.

The Branch-Foster family wanted to keep the property, though,



so the Floyds decided to move the house. Dedicated to replicating the plantation's original homeland, David searched for a community that would both fit the house's historic legacy and allow the family to remain in proximity to their life in Baton Rouge. He found such a place on a 27-acre sweet potato farm bordering a 50' bluff inside the small, historic town of Weyanoke. David recruited some colleagues equally devoted to historic architecture (including carpenter W.J. Brown and contractor Don Robert), as well as a few LSU students, to help him with the task of dismantling the home.

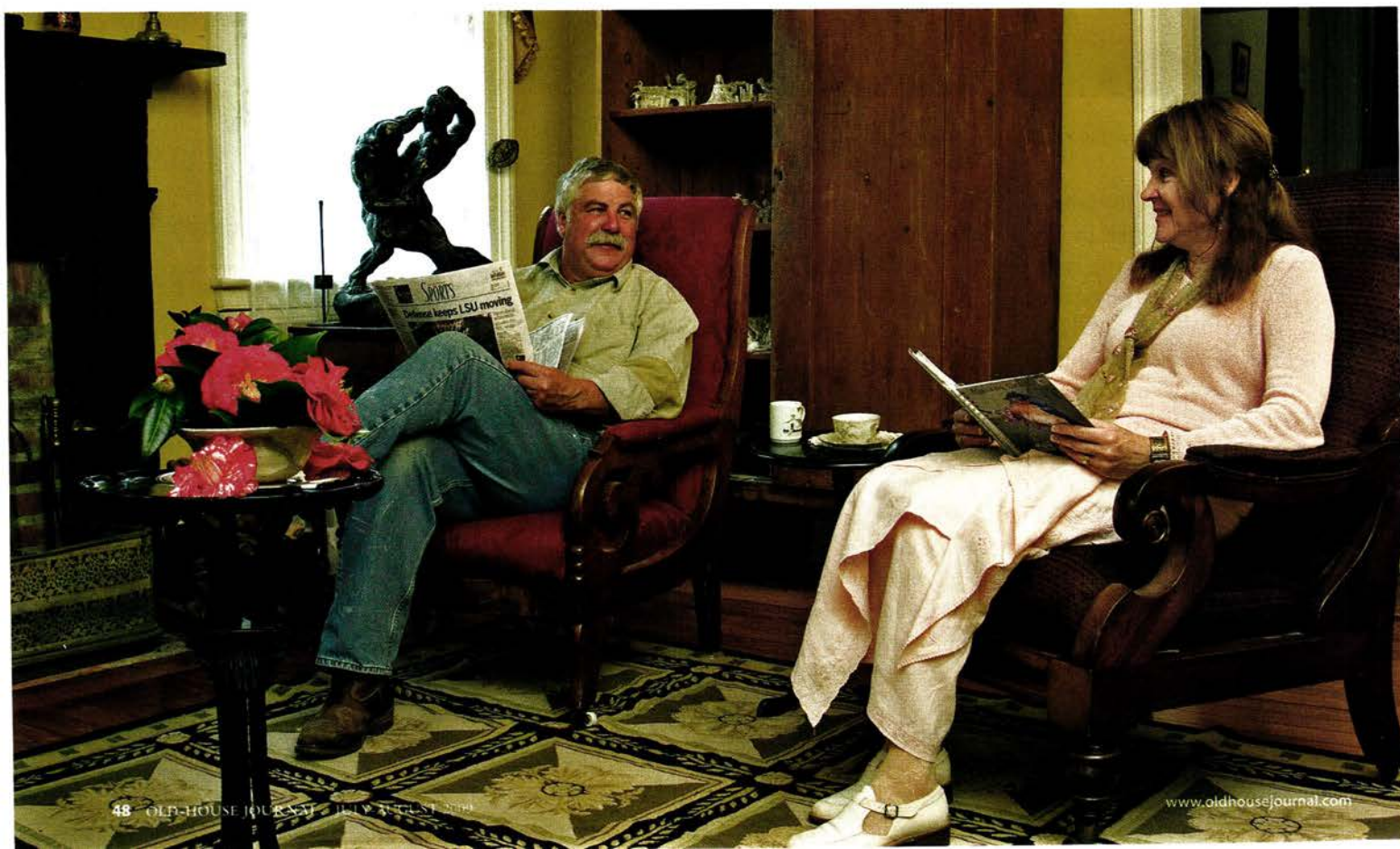
"You have to treat it like an artifact," David explains. "You take it apart in such a way that the pieces go back together in the same form."

Like skilled surgeons, the team meticulously removed the floors, doors, transoms, sidelights, and windows, and peeled off wallpaper (which had been destroyed by years of neglect) before popping hundreds of tacks off the cypress walls. Even the floor joists (connected by a simple lap joint) were lifted out. The rear part of the house, which comprised the kitchen and back porch, was a later addition that had experienced some rot, but the crew was able to salvage some lumber and the kitchen windows, which were original to the house.

Every piece was labeled, packaged, and thoroughly documented. Protecting this priceless jigsaw puzzle, David and the students moved all the boxes and piles of lumber. All that remained was a framed shell consisting of four beams. Two beams were cut to separate



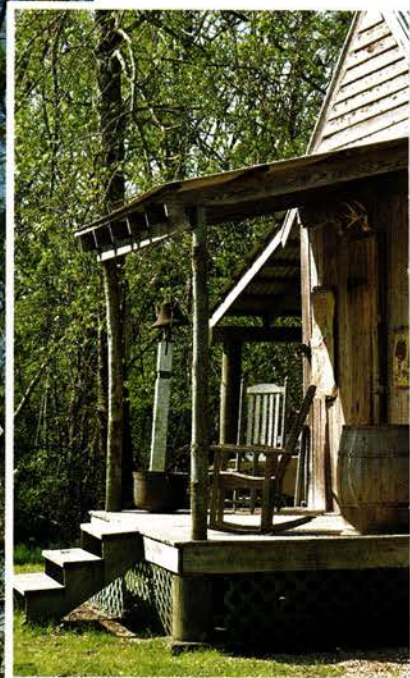
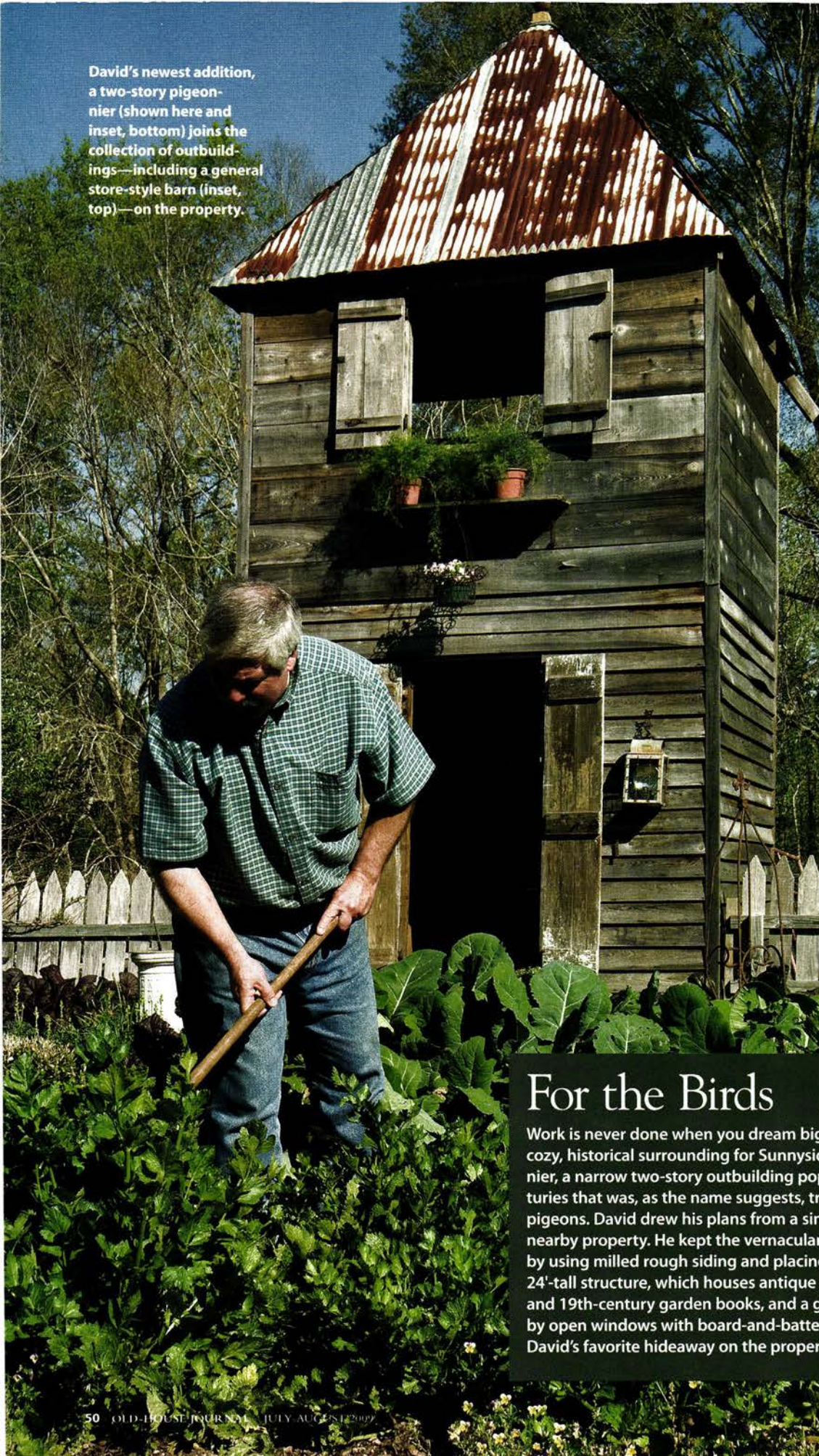
David was able to save the original millwork on the home's two deep-pitted wood-burning fireplaces, which take center stage in both the formal parlor above and the cozier one below, where many of the family's heirlooms and collections are displayed.





The double front door, bordered by the original transom and sidelights, helps to usher cooling breezes into the foyer.

David's newest addition, a two-story pigeonier (shown here and inset, bottom) joins the collection of outbuildings—including a general store-style barn (inset, top)—on the property.



For the Birds

Work is never done when you dream big, and David continues to build a cozy, historical surrounding for Sunnyside. His latest addition is a pigeonier, a narrow two-story outbuilding popular in the 17th and 18th centuries that was, as the name suggests, traditionally used as a roost for pigeons. David drew his plans from a similar building he spotted on a nearby property. He kept the vernacular motif, achieving a timeworn look by using milled rough siding and placing rusted tin sheets on the roof. The 24'-tall structure, which houses antique garden tools, a collection of 18th- and 19th-century garden books, and a garden journal, is cross-ventilated by open windows with board-and-batten shutters. It's quickly become David's favorite hideaway on the property.

the structure into two sections, and Sunnyside was loaded onto two flatbed trailers for the four-and-a-half hour trip to its new site.

Just minutes after the home reached the site on a December afternoon in 1997, it began to rain, and didn't let up for nearly three months. David and his helpers slipped a railroad jack beneath the trailers and tilted the shell of the building to help drain the water. They kept it like that until the first week of March, sidestepping major damage. However, the foul weather continued to postpone the restoration work. "At one point, I had a broom in one hand and a bourbon in the other, constantly pushing the water out the door," David says.

After the weather finally cleared, the house was put back together the same way it had been taken apart. While most of the original house remained intact, the kitchen and rear wing of the house had to be completely reproduced. David carefully replicated baseboards, window frames, and millwork from examples found elsewhere in the house (all cut with knives custom-made for the project), resulting in a seamless blend. "Since the window sash is original, many people believe the kitchen is original," he explains. Modern kitchen appliances, as well as central air/heat and satellite television, also were added, but David notes these new amenities can be removed easily. Less than a year after the move, on Labor Day weekend 1998, the Floyd family settled into their home.

Original mantels and millwork join deep-pitted wood-burning fireplaces inside the two parlors flanking the main foyer. One parlor, highlighted in silk drapes and antique furnishings, is dedicated to more formal entertaining, while the other holds a collage of comfortable furniture, along with a veritable museum of family heirlooms and rustic long-barreled rifles. The sense of history continues in the master bedroom, where an American Empire four-poster bed covered in an ivory silk comforter holds company with a closet filled with period clothing.

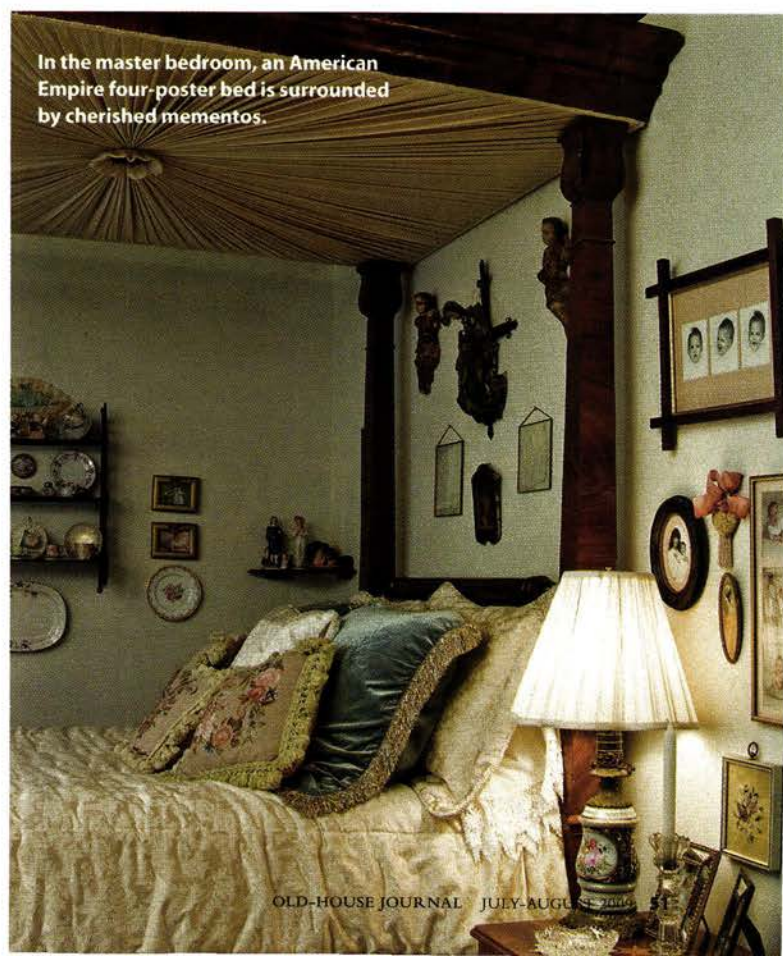
The second floor overlooks the flower-filled parterre that fronts the home and the backyard vegetable garden. Eighteenth- and 19th-century gardens are David's area of expertise, and he designed his own landscape to emulate the romance and charm of plantation life, adding a few period outbuildings—including a general store-style barn and a pigeonier—to the mix. Beyond the formal gardens, a small grove of pecan trees and a tunnel of flowering crape myrtles offer dappled shade, while hanging bottles and gourds sway in the breeze to guard against owls, crows, and chicken hawks.

Ever mindful of future stewards of the home, David kept meticulous records of Sunnyside's restoration, including samples of the original and reproduction millwork. As the director of a historic museum, who sits on historical boards and oversees high-profile restorations throughout Louisiana, he gains great satisfaction in having preserved the historical integrity of the building.

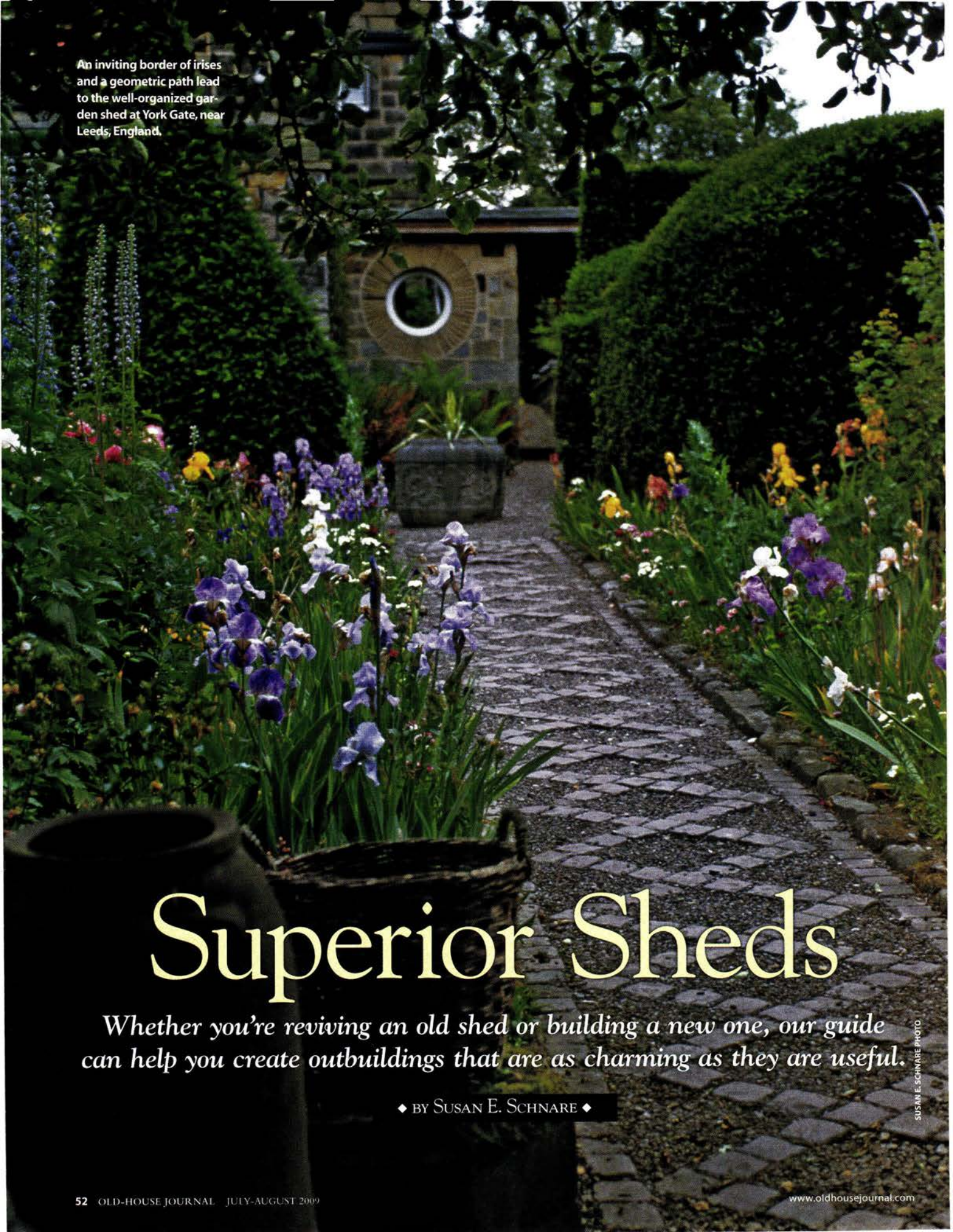
"We don't own homes; we're only caretakers of them," David explains. "And I'm just trying to be a good caretaker." 🏡



The master bath gets a touch of romance courtesy of the couple's collection of period clothing.



In the master bedroom, an American Empire four-poster bed is surrounded by cherished mementos.



An inviting border of irises
and a geometric path lead
to the well-organized gar-
den shed at York Gate, near
Leeds, England.

Superior Sheds

Whether you're reviving an old shed or building a new one, our guide can help you create outbuildings that are as charming as they are useful.

◆ BY SUSAN E. SCHNARE ◆

SUSAN E. SCHNARE PHOTO



LEFT: The garden shed at the Oldest House on Nantucket was constructed well after the 1686 home, but hews to its aesthetic by using weathered materials.

BELOW: A shed outside a San Diego cottage, photographed by the Historic American Buildings Survey, blends in perfectly with its surroundings, thanks to a tangle of vines encircling the roof.

BOTTOM: Despite a fresh coat of paint, a shed at Historic Williamsburg retains its old-fashioned look with a moss-covered roof.

It was a classic case of contractor doesn't know best: A few years ago, a carpenter who was estimating a few small repair jobs on my friends' 1905 Folk Victorian house informed them that their old garden shed wasn't worth saving and that the smart thing to do would be to replace it with a cheap, mass-produced utility shed.

My friends were aghast at the idea—although the shed was showing some wear and tear, it had charm and space they would never get from a pre-built shed. Today, the little shingled building, painted cream with a bright blue door and window box, provides a cheery focal point to a corner of their yard, fits right in with the architecture of the house and the surrounding neighborhood, and gives them a place to store compost, tools, and bikes.

The lesson? Though they may be tucked away in back yards, garden sheds are nevertheless major contributors to a home's overall character. Whether you're building new or rehabbing an existing shed, the same sense of historical integrity that governs restoration projects on your main house still applies.



WALTER SWALLING PHOTO COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS/HABS

Shedding Some Light

"Shed," an Old English word that dates from before the 12th century, means a slight structure built for shelter. The garden shed may well descend from the medieval herb house, which was filled with pungent aromas and shelves of medicinal tonics. In the U.S., the garden shed became an essential extension of the suburban home in the early 20th century.

Though their function may have shifted slightly, the structure of sheds hasn't changed much over the centuries. Garden sheds still tend to be small, simple outbuildings that serve as workshops or potting areas, and provide storage space for tools and other possessions that either don't belong or don't fit in the house.

Like other outbuildings, sheds are typically sited behind the house, preferably in a place that can't be seen from the street. The ideal location is one that's convenient for use but doesn't block the view of—or access to—the rest of the grounds. A corner of the yard generally works best to maximize these requirements.

A shed also can be a functional part of the garden layout. For instance, at York Gate, an intricately designed plantsman's garden near Leeds, England, both the iris garden and kitchen garden end at an attractive wall punctuated by a circular window and an arched walkway. What appears to be one common wall is actually two walls separated by a walk-through potting shed.



MELINDA FAULK PHOTO



A hexagonal potting shed with an underground root cellar sits near the kitchen of an 1891 Victorian farmhouse at the Heritage Farmstead Museum.



A weathered shed in Colonial Williamsburg is conveniently placed in the corner of a vegetable garden.

In keeping with their focus on utility, the interiors of garden sheds traditionally have unfinished framing with at least one window to let in light. Shelving, hooks, pegboards, and bins can hold tools and supplies, and workbenches should be positioned under a window where light is best.

Shed contents will vary depending on the intended use. Avid gardeners will consider items like string, plant labels, scissors, gloves, manuals, and work clothes necessities. Inside the York Gate potting shed, light filters through the circular windows to illuminate a tableau of old hand tools displayed on an aged, unpainted wooden workbench, along with stacks of clay pots and wicker baskets. Although there's nothing



The colors on this shed, which accompanies a sunny 1720s Cape, take inspiration from the garden rather than the house.

PAMELA DYSON PHOTO

wrong with storing the odd bicycle or mower in them, garden sheds shouldn't be mistaken for utility buildings, those metal or vinyl boxes made to contain the excesses of modern life.

New Life for Old Sheds

Even if your old house has been perfectly preserved, there's a good chance the old shed that came with it isn't in such pristine condition. Relegated to remote corners of the yard, garden sheds tend to be subject to the "out of sight, out of mind" principle. As updated kitchens and baths come and go, the garden shed settles deeper into the ground and looks progressively more dejected until, filled with unwanted possessions, cobwebs, and mice, it becomes a place to be avoided. Too often, this is the point at which repair costs are over-

emphasized; the shed's essential character, history, and potential are overlooked; and it is torn down.

Restoring an old shed, however, is often a fairly simple project. Start the process with a visual examination. A sagging roof or tilting or loose frame may indicate a danger of collapse, in which case a carpenter should be called in for further assessment. If the structure is reasonably straight, true, and sturdy, though, you can proceed with determining whether the shed can be repaired or rebuilt.

The traditional unfinished interior allows the structural components of wall framing, sills, and roof to be easily examined for rot, and a few jabs with a screwdriver will reveal if they have become soft. Even a person with no carpentry skills should be able to get an idea of how extensive the decay is and how much of the shed will need to be replaced to make it usable again. If you've determined that your shed can be repaired, see the "Shed Rehab Checklist" on the opposite page to get started.

Building New

If your house didn't come with a shed, or if the one you acquired is simply too deteriorated to be rebuilt, you can still stay true to the character of your house by building a new shed in a classic style. As a general

Further Reading

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's booklet *BARN AGAIN! A Guide to Rehabilitation of Older Farm Buildings* offers specific information on foundations, roofs, siding, and painting. The inexpensive pamphlet can be ordered online at barnagain.org.

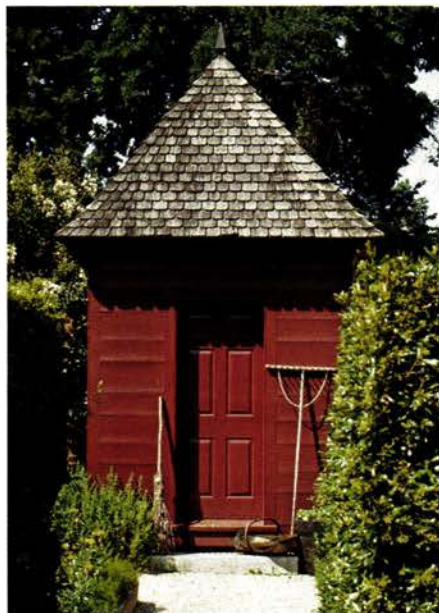
Plenty of books also offer practical advice on renovating existing outbuildings. Nick Engler's *Renovating Barns, Sheds, and Outbuildings* (Storey Publishing, 2001) tells how to preserve the original charm of any outbuilding while making it usable again, and includes such advice as how to strengthen the structure and replace the roofing.

LEFT: ANGIE CARROLL PHOTO; RIGHT: SUSAN E. SCHNARE PHOTO



CHRISTOPHER MAGARELLI PHOTO

The blue door of the potting shed at Historic Wainford adds an unexpected touch of color.



SUSAN E. SCHNARE PHOTO

A shed in the William Paca House garden in Annapolis, Maryland, mirrors bright blooms.

guideline, sheds should be built more simply and on a smaller scale than the house they accompany. A shed should have a footprint of at least 6' by 6', with a high enough roof to allow you to move around comfortably inside. While permits sometimes aren't required for small outbuildings, you will almost certainly need one if you plan to build a larger shed. Check with your local building department before beginning to see if you'll need a permit.

The best materials for constructing new old garden sheds are traditional ones like wood, brick, and stone—or, better still, recycled materials. When the shed is within the public view, it should adhere to, or at least honor, the architectural style and period of the house. You can achieve consistency by matching details such as the roof profile, trim, siding, and paint or stain of the house. Architectural elements found on the house (such as columns or brackets) can even be reproduced on a smaller scale for the shed.

If your shed is separated from the house visually by distance or plantings, strictly reflecting the style and age of the house isn't as important, but it still needs to be in keeping with its surroundings. For example, a simple shed is most fitting in a rural or agricultural setting, while an in-town garden shed should be more finished

and reflect the elegance of the house it accompanies.

While sheds aren't subject to the same aesthetic criteria as ornamental garden structures like gazebos or pergolas, an attractive outbuilding will boost the charm of your landscape. Consider replacing siding with cedar shingles, or adding a trellis and climbing vines. (If you choose the latter, be sure to leave several inches of space between a trellis and the structure to allow air circulation and prevent rot.)

Make your shed a joy to use by getting organized before moving in. List the items that will be stored there, and put up shelves and hooks. As a finishing touch, add a doorstep, lay out a walk, and plant shrubs, flowers, or small trees to anchor the building into your garden or yard. Whether strictly utilitarian or a whimsical entity, whether newly built or on its third or fourth incarnation, the garden shed can be an attractive asset to your grounds. 🏡

Susan E. Schnare lives in a 200-year-old home and works to preserve historic landscapes through her firm, Mountain Brook Consulting.

Check out our gallery of products for organizing your garden shed.

OldHouseJournal.com



BEFORE

The author's friends' old shed was still serviceable; it just needed a facelift (below).

Shed Rehab Checklist

If you've inherited an old garden shed that could use some TLC (and you've verified that it doesn't need any major structural repairs), here are a few steps you can take to fix it up:

- ◆ Empty the shed and remove plantings that touch it or its foundation.
- ◆ Clean the shed inside and out.
- ◆ Inspect the walls and roof for damage and leaks.
- ◆ Check local regulations to see if a permit is needed before performing major repairs.
- ◆ Check sills and posts for rot, and replace if necessary.
- ◆ Replace roof and roof covering or floorboards as needed.
- ◆ Check the tightness and condition of the windows. Do they need to be rehabbed, re-glazed, or simply repainted?
- ◆ Replace broken boards or siding, and remove rust or mold with a wire brush.
- ◆ Tighten loose screws.
- ◆ Paint exterior siding and trim, and oil hinges and latches.
- ◆ Wash the window(s), and install a window box or hang curtains if desired.



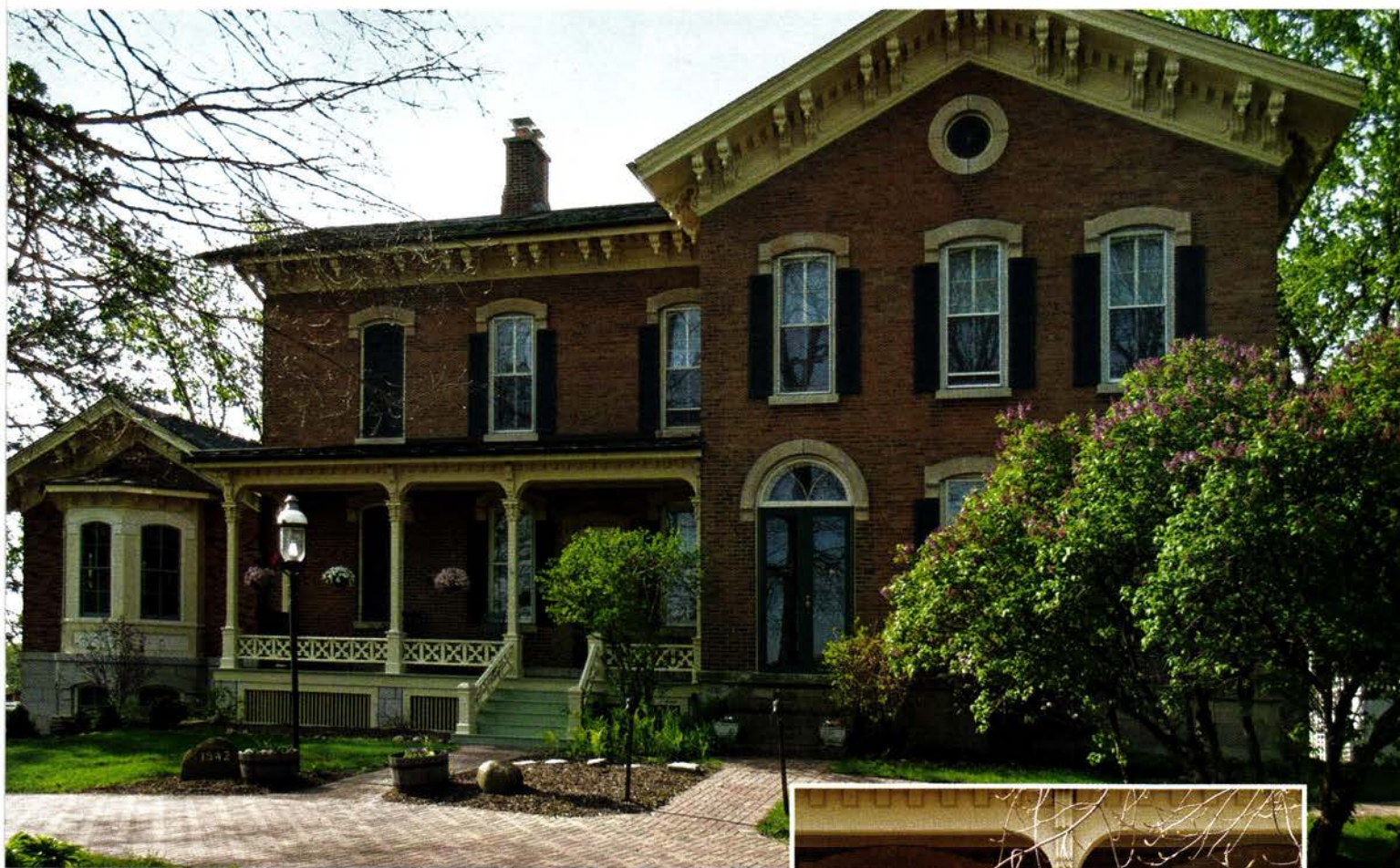
AFTER

SUSAN E. SCHNARE PHOTOS

Updating for Accessibility

An Italianate gets a sympathetic addition, and some thoughtful improvements, to make it more wheelchair-friendly.

STORY BY DEMETRA APOSPOROS ♦ PHOTOS BY LEE BEY



After years of trying to conceive, Candice Hadley and Bob Johnson discovered they were expecting the same day they made an offer to buy their dream house—a stately Italianate farmstead located an hour outside of Chicago. Longtime OHJ readers, they had found the house in the magazine’s pages. “I always loved looking at the historic property listings in the back and dreaming,” explains Candice.

By the time the couple closed on the home and were ready to move in, Candice was about 6 months along, so it was quite a surprise when their son, Sam, arrived just two weeks later. “We just figured he was excited to see his new house,” says Candice.

As Sam grew, it became apparent that he had some developmental challenges, so the Hadley-Johnsons began looking for ways to outfit their 1865 house to better accommodate their son’s needs. They sought an architect experienced in historic houses and disability access to help them, and found both in Michael A.

Lambert, of ARRIS Architects + Planners.

“As Sam’s grown into a young man, his desire for greater mobility and independence has been a challenge within the historic walls of his home,” says Michael, whose goal with the Hadley-Johnsons was to create a space friendly to Sam’s needs without compromising the integrity of the home’s historic architecture.

To begin with, Sam, who has cerebral palsy, needed a new, comfortable bed-



TOP: The new addition (at left) is understated. **ABOVE:** The porch was completely restored; its snowflake railing was modeled after one found on a similar house. **OPPOSITE:** The back entrance’s screened porch serves as a passageway for the homeowners’ son, Sam.



The new family room boasts many traditional architectural features, including windows and wainscoting, that perfectly match the home's originals. Most important, it offers plenty of open space for Sam to maneuver around.



At the rear of the home, the wide screened porch—easily accessible to Sam—connects to the family room via French doors.

room with his own wheelchair-accessible bathroom. The Hadley-Johnsons also wanted to create additional first-floor living space for Sam and, looking down the road, hoped to build him a separate living area, too. "I anticipate that one day he'll want to be close to us but have more independence and not be right under our noses," explains Candice.

In creating Sam's bedroom, the first

challenge was deciding where to put it. Two possible contenders emerged: the home's original parlor, which had been retrofitted as Candice's office during an earlier ARRIS project, and the dining room. "The parlor was basically square, so it allowed Sam a lot of maneuvering room, as well as space for friends and sleepovers," says Michael. Decision made—Candice's office would move to the attic.

PRODUCTS:

Exterior millwork, Spangler Construction; Architectural Stone sills, lintels, Gary Galassi Stone & Steel; PL-S-120 vertical platform lift, ThyssenKrupp; Pulls, hinges, House of Antique Hardware; Plumbing fixtures, Kohler; Window treatments, Smith & Noble; Driveway pavers, limestone retaining walls, Jim Phelps Landscape. Kitchen: Cabinetry, Dura Supreme by St. Joseph Cabinetry & Designs; Brightwood pen-

dant lights, Suncrest ceiling fixture with Opal Schoolhouse shade, Rejuvenation; Queen Victoria tin ceiling, M-Boss; Saicis mixed mosaic tile, Century Tile; Custom range hood, Chris Industries. **Family room:** St. Helen's classic sconces, Rejuvenation; 42" Montgomery mantel, Old World Stoneworks; Magnum double-hung windows, Marvin. **Dining room:** 36" Rothton mantel, Old World Stoneworks.



To facilitate an easy bedroom entryway for Sam, the parlor's single door was converted to double swinging doors with a ball latch at the top, which Sam can open and close himself (something he couldn't manage with pocket doors). "In this region, a lot of historic houses have double swinging doors, so it was sensitive to the period," says Michael. The original door was paired with an interior door removed in earlier decades, which was found on the premises.

The next obstacle was the bathroom. While the parlor adjoined a powder room, also accessible from the hallway, it wasn't big enough to contain a toilet, sink, and handicap-accessible shower. Michael came up with the idea of placing the sink just outside the bath in the bedroom itself, and designed a

cabinet-like piece of furniture to house it. "It works really well," says Candice, "because Sam can push his wheelchair right up under the cabinet's legs." Mindful of historic details, when the team sealed the old hall doorway off to build the shower, they encased the original door hardware behind the new shower wall. "The hardware's still there," says Michael, "so everything is completely reversible."

In order to give Sam easier access throughout the main floor, two doorways were widened from 2'8" to 3'4" to accommodate the 15-year-old's new adult-sized motorized wheelchair. He can now access every room on the first floor. The kitchen layout also was revised with Sam in mind. The Hadley-Johnsons felt it was important to keep the original



TOP: Built-in bookcases with storage beneath are trimmed in historic molding patterns.

ABOVE: Sam's elevator entrance sits beside the home's back door, where tile flooring provides good traction for his wheelchair.



ABOVE: In the dining room, a cast limestone mantel replaced a 1970s Colonial-themed addition to the house. A time capsule of previous homeowners' signatures is preserved behind the room's wallpaper (visible in the mirror). **LEFT:** A bay window bump-out creates an eating area in the new addition.



footprint, but in order to improve flow in the small space, Michael reoriented the kitchen, turning the old eating area into a path for accessing the new family room, creating a straight shot for Sam to travel from one space to another. The addition of a peninsula added a workspace with a view into the new family room, as well as a place where the family can grab a bite together. "Sam's wheelchair telescopes up so he can eat at the counter, too," says Candice. The kitchen boasts soapstone countertops, a copper range hood, and tin ceiling tiles painted a vibrant teal, an idea that was all Bob's. "At first Candice didn't want a tin ceiling, but I'd seen them in many old homes and liked the idea," says Bob. "The color was

another matter. In the beginning we were thinking about copper, then I suggested adding some color..."

Just off the kitchen, the new family room is bright and airy and accented with built-ins cased out in re-created historic moldings; it's a comfortable place where the family spends a lot of time. "I like the open space in the family room for my son to tool around in," Bob says. Easy movement is also facilitated by a new entrance for Sam, who now accesses the house via his own elevator, which begins at ground level and goes up one floor. The elevator, which actually is an enclosed porch lift, deposits Sam in a tiled room beside the home's back door, where his chair's wheels can be wiped clean without too much trouble. "It was really important to Candice and Bob that Sam's entrance be close to everybody else's," says Michael. As it turns out, this part of the project is one of Sam's favorite features. "Sam absolutely loves the elevator," says Candice.

A new basement apartment, added in consideration of Sam's future needs, sits directly beneath the family room. The apartment has tile floors for good traction and a full-sized handicap bathroom, as well as plenty of space where Sam can live more independently in the years to come.

Since Sam's new bedroom overtook Candice's old office, Michael designed her another workspace in the attic. "I loved the attic space I used to stay in at my grandma's house, but I didn't like that it felt closed in," says Candice. Consequently, a main objective for the office was keeping the space airy; custom built-ins and skylights help make it work.

Some original architectural elements also got a tune-up. One was the front porch, which had fallen off years earlier. Michael found ghosts on the front of the house, which enabled him to exactly re-create the posts and brackets. The balusters were a bit more of a guessing game—the pattern came from an original example Candice and Bob spotted on another Italianate house in Delavan, Wisconsin, driving back from a weekend road trip. "We photographed that porch



In the kitchen, the tin ceiling is painted a vibrant blue hue, which complements the tile backsplash. Sam can eat at the island thanks to a telescoping feature on his chair.



Sam moves through the doorway between the kitchen and the dining room, one of two that were widened to accommodate his new adult-sized chair.



at night, and Michael was able to take that concept and create the pattern," says Candice.

Michael's creativity also came into play in the dining room—a space Candice calls the most historic room in the house—where a fireplace added by previous owners needed help. "The old fireplace was a very 1970s vision of what a Colonial fireplace should be, and didn't match the house at all," says Michael. "So the question was: How do we at least make it sympathetic?" Michael found a cast limestone mantel that nearly matched the color of the foundation. "It's not historic by any means, but the overall character is appropriate to the house," he says. A surprise discovery in this room was a time capsule. "When we pulled the wallpaper down, we found that people who had lived here had penciled their names across the plaster," says Candice. "So we signed the walls, too, before we repapered them."

What the Hadley-Johnsons like best about their new addition is the way it lets their son move readily around the house, something they don't take at all for granted.

"As Sam's gotten older and larger, we can't easily go to other people's houses, so we really needed to be able to do more entertaining here," says Candice. "Now there's plenty of room for that."

"This is the only home Sam's ever had," she adds. "I want it to always be comfortable for him." 🐾



ABOVE: Sam's bedroom is accessed by in-swinging double doors, which provide him easy entry. Both doors are original to the house.

LEFT: Downstairs, the base-ment apartment's sink mimics the one inside Sam's bedroom—both house the lavatory in a custom cabinet. The design allows the arms of Sam's chair to fit right beneath the cabinet.

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In Candice's office, the area beneath the eaves is put to creative use displaying photographs.

INSET: Custom built-ins make the most of available space beside an original roundel window.

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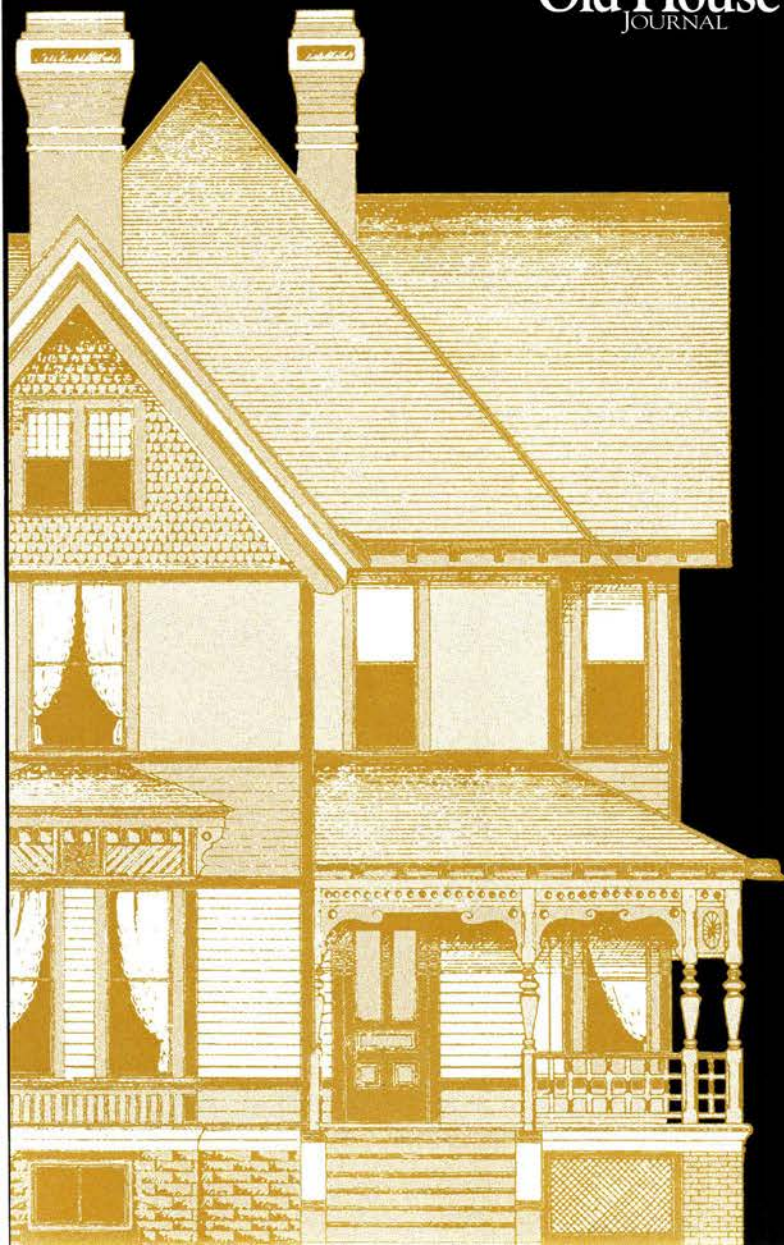
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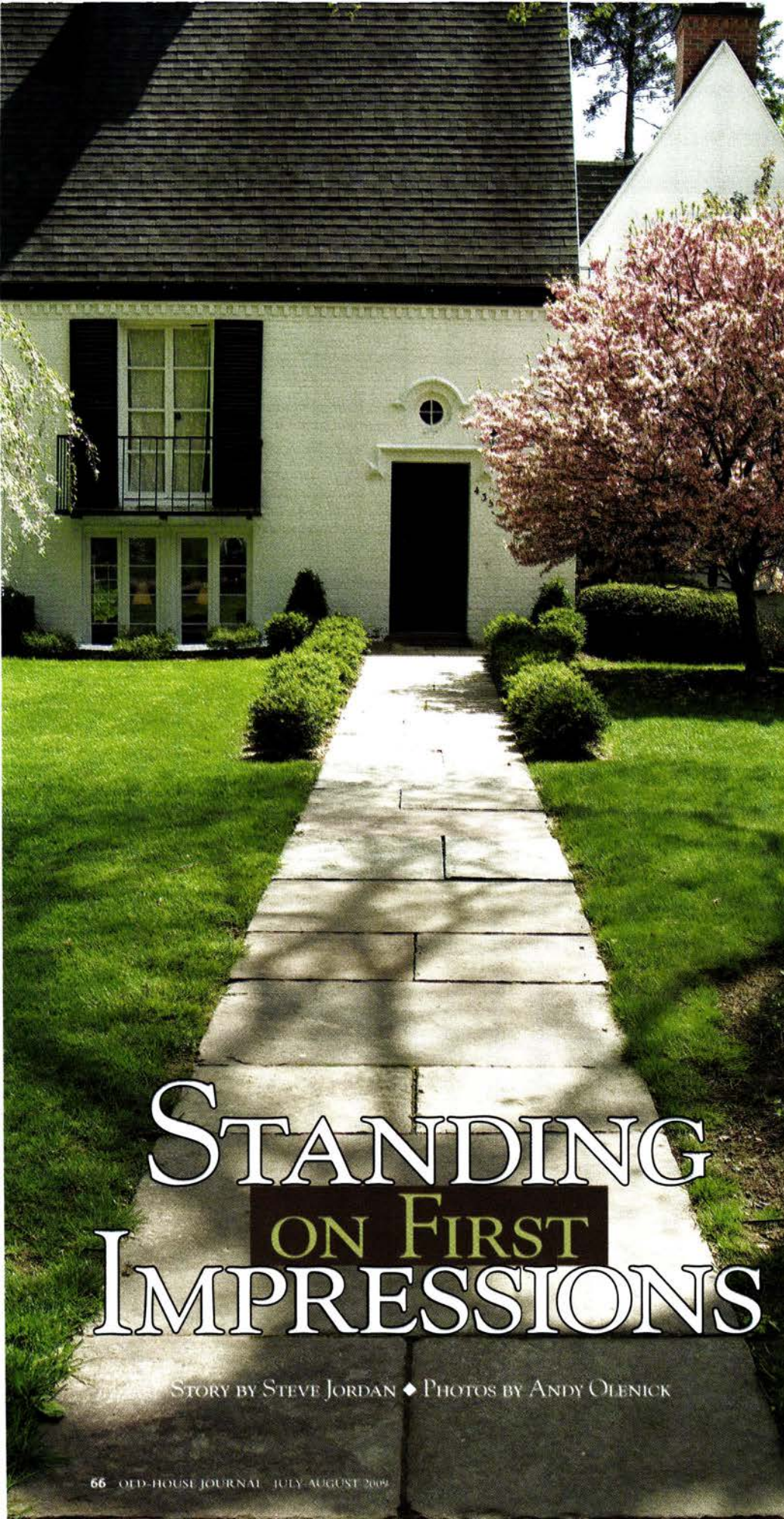
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An 80-year-old stone walkway gets a thorough makeover to become good as new again.

Nothing makes a statement like a walkway of substantial stone. Sure, bricks, pavers, and concrete—plain, stamped, or stained—are all appropriate outside-the-old-house materials, but quarried stone is the threshold for the best. Stone walkways aren't exactly common, however, because large stones are expensive, and working with them is difficult. Walks of large natural stones will outlast the alternatives by a mile, but despite their durability, they often require maintenance after decades of use—especially when located in parts of the country with severe weather. Case in point is this walkway in Rochester, New York, which needed a facelift after enduring decades of harsh winters.

STANDING ON FIRST IMPRESSIONS

STORY BY STEVE JORDAN ♦ PHOTOS BY ANDY OLENICK



Parts of the walkway were falling to pieces—especially in areas where thin slate flagstones had been used for repairs through the years. Grass poking through joints and cracks was also a problem.

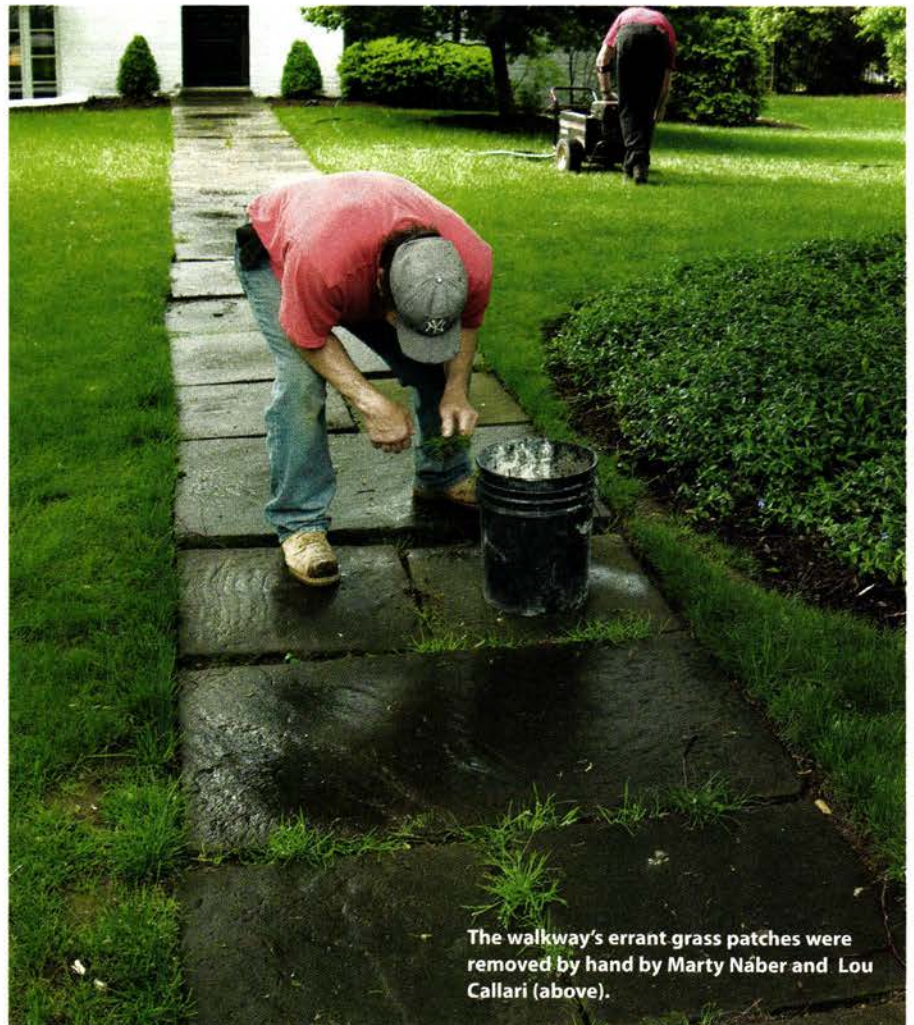


To clean away years of grime and better evaluate the condition of the original Medina stone, the team used a pressure washer to thoroughly scrub its surface and uncover the original reddish-brown hue.

Assessing the Damage

The walkway, which sits outside an 80-year-old Gothic Revival house, was mostly intact, but many of its unusually large stones were heaved, some were cracked, and some had even been replaced with inappropriate materials. When the homeowner asked Marty Naber, owner of Naberhood Restoration, to take on the project, Marty knew he had his work cut out for him. The original stones were all 5" to 6" thick, laid in a pattern of one 3' x 4' stone separated by two 1½' x 2' stones down the 4'-wide walk. Such hulking stones are very heavy, and thus more resistant to frost heaving and movement—the main reason big stones have always been the preferred material for steps and small porches. They are also, of course, difficult to quarry, difficult to transport, and difficult to maneuver into position. Consequently they aren't seen on walkways every day.

The heaved and damaged stones were a tripping hazard, and the grade around the walkway had shifted. (Leaves, grass clippings, and wind-blown particles can increase grades by as much as a foot over 100 years' time; for this reason, it's not uncommon for older houses to need grade work around



The walkway's errant grass patches were removed by hand by Marty Naber and Lou Callari (above).



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Marty (at left) and Lou carefully removed the weighty original stones. Next, they used shovels to dig out the base, and spread a 5" to 6" layer of crushed dolomite limestone, which was compacted with a plate tamper (in foreground).

foundations, driveways, and walks). Marty knew he would have to raise the grade and re-level the walkway, as well as repair any broken and mismatched stones.

To prepare the walkway for the task ahead, Marty pressure-washed its surface to remove moss and evaluate the condition of the original Medina stone (for more on Medina stone, see "Stone Significance" at right). Then he put the power washer down and pulled up any grass growing between the stones by hand, so as not to damage

the edges of the stones with the powerful water spray. Once the stones were cleaned, Marty examined them for damage. Stones with slight dings or missing corners could be reused, but stones with major cracks or damage would need to be replaced. Marty could then calculate how much replacement stone he needed, and went about color-matching the replacements to areas of the walkway that were too damaged to save. As it turned out, most of the stones in need of replacement weren't originals, but rather poor substitutes

patched in through the years—thin slate flagstones that didn't match the durability of the Medina.

The next step was to remove the stones. Marty and his associate, Lou Callari, used pry bars to lift the stones on edge, then rolled them (on their edges) out of the work area, opposite where they originally lay. After all the stones had been removed, the men installed datum posts and mason's string lines along the path to make sure their work would be straight and follow the original walk.

Stone Significance

Medina stone is a sedimentary sandstone named after the western New York town of Medina, in Orleans County, where it was first quarried in the early 19th century. The durable reddish to light-brown stone was widely shipped via the Erie Canal, and saw heavy use across western New York and as far away as Manhattan and Canada. Common uses for Medina stone included commercial and public buildings, residential architecture, sidewalk stones, curb stones, and bridges, although today it's no longer quarried in large amounts.

Prepping the Base

The key to walkway longevity is a proper base beneath the stone. The right base promotes appropriate drainage and minimizes heaving. The original walkway's base consisted of nothing more than a thin layer of sand over the soil, but the new base would dig deeper.

Marty and Lou used shovels to excavate a 9" to 10" base, staying within the string lines. When they encountered tree roots, they cut them away with the shovel, a hatchet, or an ax. (A benefit of stone walkways is that individual pieces can be lifted one at a time if roots encroach over the years.) Next, they added 5" to 6" of finely crushed dolomite limestone and compacted it with a plate tamper. Dolomite at this depth is a good base for a cold climate where frost heaving is a problem; a warmer climate could make do with a base around



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: To keep vegetation from penetrating the walk, the men laid a length of landscape fabric, which was covered by a layer of stone dust (also compacted). Next, they carefully re-positioned the stones, using a level to ensure their work was square. Finally, Marty used a dry saw to trim rough edges off of replacement stones for a perfect fit.

4" thick. In order to prevent weeds or grass from popping up between the cracks, Marty and Lou then covered the compacted stone with landscape fabric, a membrane that lets moisture pass through, but not plant growth. Over this they installed a 1"-thick layer of 1-pound stone dust, which they also compacted and leveled.

Setting the Stones

With the newly level base ready, it was time to reset the stone, a slow, tedious process.

Marty and Lou rolled the stones back into place one at a time, then laid them flat and shimmied them into position. They reset several stones as many ten times to achieve the proper level across the top, adding or removing stone dust from the base with a trowel. The men knew the stones were properly placed when they sat firmly in the base and were even with the surface of the soil.

Where stones were missing, Marty supplied replacements from the cache of

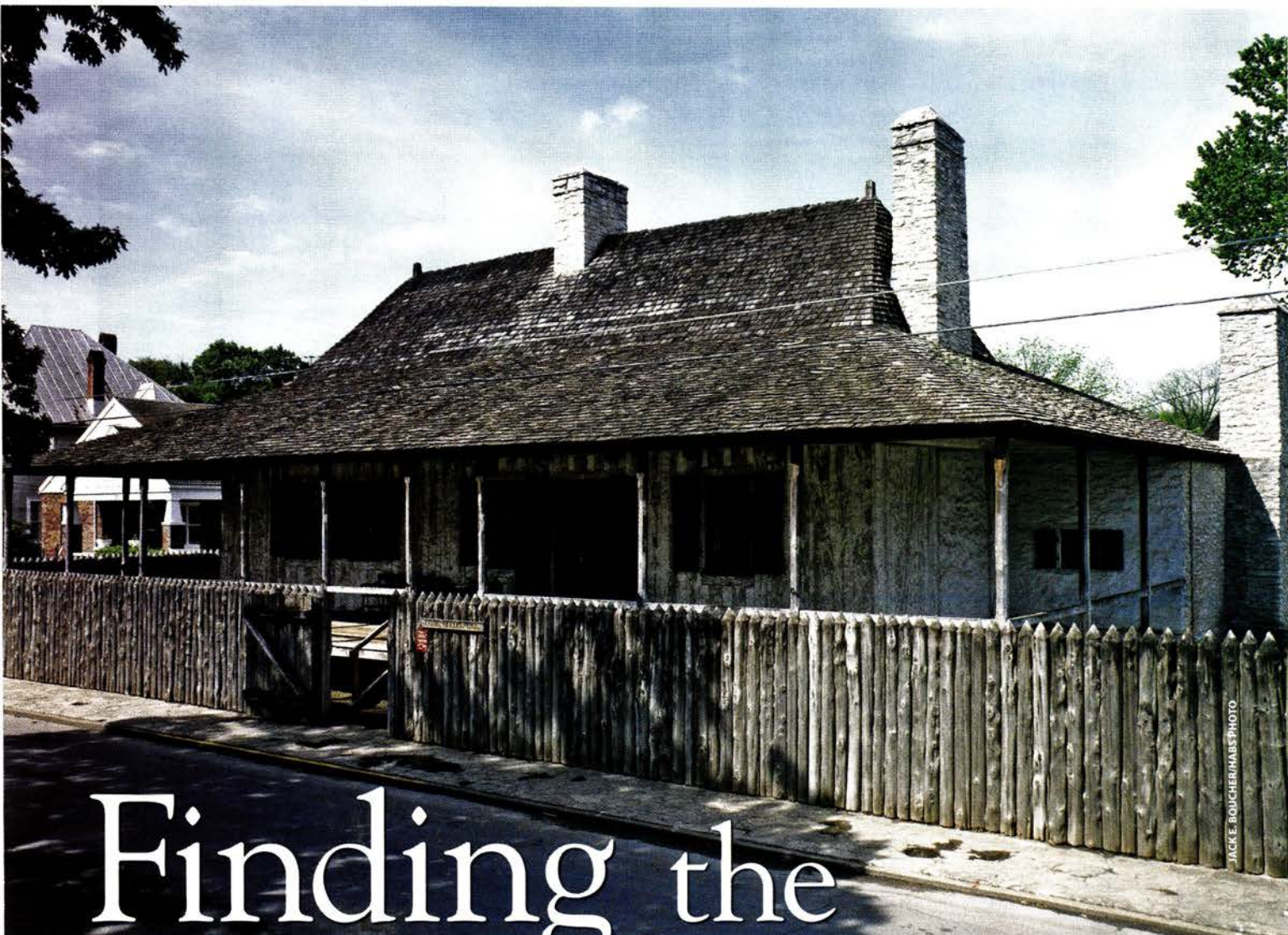
Medina stone he's salvaged from job sites and demolished buildings through the years. To keep the stones running squarely, Marty and Lou measured replacement stones and marked them to size (matching the dimensions of originals), then cut them down with a dry saw outfitted with a diamond blade.

After the walk was firm and level, the men swept 1-pound stone dust into the joints, then hosed the walkway down to nestle the dust into the cracks. To finish the job, they replaced the soil at the walk's edges, then spread grass seed over bare spots. In the spring, Marty will add more stone dust or polymeric sand to the joints as needed to help the walkway weather another 80 years. 🏡

Contributing Editor Steve Jordan is an old-house and preservation consultant in Rochester, New York. He's been writing for OHJ since 1989.

Base Ideas

It's important for water to traverse the cracks between stones and drain away, which is why joining walkway stones with mortar is a poor idea. Stone dust and sand, or proprietary blends of sand, dust, and polymers, allow moisture to move between the stones; they're also easily renewable. Mortar, on the other hand, can crack away over time in solid chunks, a process that sometimes damages the stone itself. If you want a mortared stone walk, you must first install a concrete base.



JACQUE BOUCHER/MAAS PHOTO

Finding the

BY JAMES C. MASSEY
AND SHIRLEY MAXWELL

French

A FEW EASY-TO-IDENTIFY CLUES
REVEAL THE FRENCH ACCENT ON
EARLY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE.

It's easy to spot old French buildings in the United States—they're distinctive and not hard to find once you know where to look. But learning to see beyond (and especially within) the familiar Gulf Coast or Creole raised cottage is a bit trickier.

Excellent examples of French architecture survive in present-day Louisiana and Mississippi, but there

are many others in Missouri, Illinois, and Michigan, too. Vernacular French houses in the New World were, as the saying goes, oddly alike, yet different somehow. That's because French architecture made its way to the United States from several different directions—from the south via the French West Indies, from the north by way of French Canada, and, least important in numbers and impact on the American landscape, directly from France. (The latter were often formal, high-style examples, such as New Orleans' 1745 Ursuline Convent or the long-demolished Robert Morris House in Philadelphia, designed by Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, the architect famous for planning the city of Washington, D.C.) Not surprisingly, America's French buildings also varied depending on where they were built—in hot and wet climates, or cold and damp ones.

Historic Influences

France's priorities in the New World were different from those of their 17th- and 18th-century rivals, Spain and England. The French left the quest for gold mostly to the Spaniards. The English were welcome to settle their own colonies with planters and farmers—as long as they stayed away from prime French fur-hunting and trading routes.

For the French, the issue was always trade, and consequently their houses were influenced by people and traditions encountered in prime trading locales. They forged a (mostly) friendly relationship with Native American tribes and allowed the Indians to roam their customary hunting grounds, encouraging them to bring their rich harvest of pelts to French settlements on the Missouri, Mississippi, Illinois, and Ohio Rivers for shipment to the European market.

In the West Indies, French sugar planters learned from slaves about African building methods, such as deep, encircling porches that provided shade and shelter for buildings and inhabitants alike. They quickly came to appreciate the usefulness of piers that lifted build-



ABOVE: This restored Creole cottage, with its paired front doors, sits in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, an early French settlement on the Gulf of Mexico.



LEFT: The French influence can be seen in this early 19th-century house in New Orleans' Faubourg Marigny neighborhood.

OPPOSITE: Accurately restored, the 1770-1785 Bolduc House, with its classic double-pitched roof, is the prime French museum house in Ste. Genevieve, Missouri.

ings above floods and helped with vital ventilation. In the humid, hot, and often water-logged southern reaches of French Louisiana, these were valuable architectural ideas indeed.

French buildings in North America were mostly modeled after the little buildings constructed in French Canadian and West Indian colonies. In Europe,

the French had long used heavy timber framing for steep-roofed, half-timbered *colombage* houses. With variations, such old-country techniques proved valuable in Canada, where snow and ice posed big problems, and, with further variations, equally helpful in combating the intense heat and rain that plagued the southern regions of the New World.

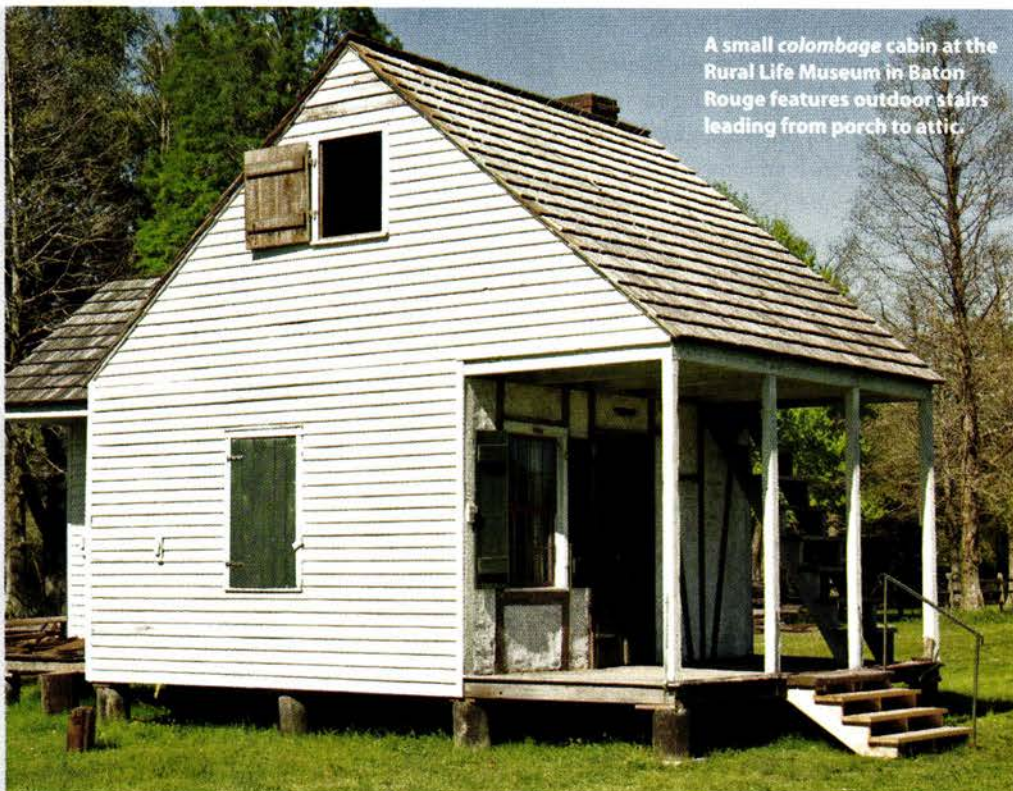
Speaking French Architecture

Poteaux-en-terre (literally “posts-in-the-earth”) involved inserting 6” to 8” posts directly into the ground, in a deep trench that was filled in around the posts. As you might guess, this was a chancy business in hot, wet, termite-infested climates; thus the long-term survival rate of *poteaux-en-terre* houses was quite low.

Poteaux-sur-sole (“posts-on-a-sill”) was an improvement quickly adopted for most construction. Like *poteaux-en-terre*, it employed 6” to 8” square vertical posts; however, in this case, the poles rested on a horizontal wooden sill, which, in turn, sat on wood or masonry piers or a full masonry foundation. Although rotted wooden piers and sills could be replaced in a pinch, masonry foundations were obviously much more durable.

Colombage, the half-timbered construction of medieval France, was used for more important buildings and houses. It, too, featured vertical timbers, but they were reinforced by horizontal and diagonal braces, with the spaces between the timbers filled with either bricks (*briques-entre-poteaux*), stones (*pierrotage*), or the old stand-by, *bousillage* (see below). Since the bricks were usually very soft, *colombage* also required a protective plaster finish.

Bousillage, the nearly universal infill of the early years, was a mixture of mud or clay with animal hair, Spanish moss, straw, or small sticks. Though invaluable as an insulating material, it had its limitations as a surface finish, given all that moist air and rain. A reasonably effective solution to staving off water and insect infiltration was a plaster or stucco coating applied over the timbers, *bousillage*, and even *colombage*. On smaller houses, broad *galeries* provided fragile *bousillage* an extra layer of protection.



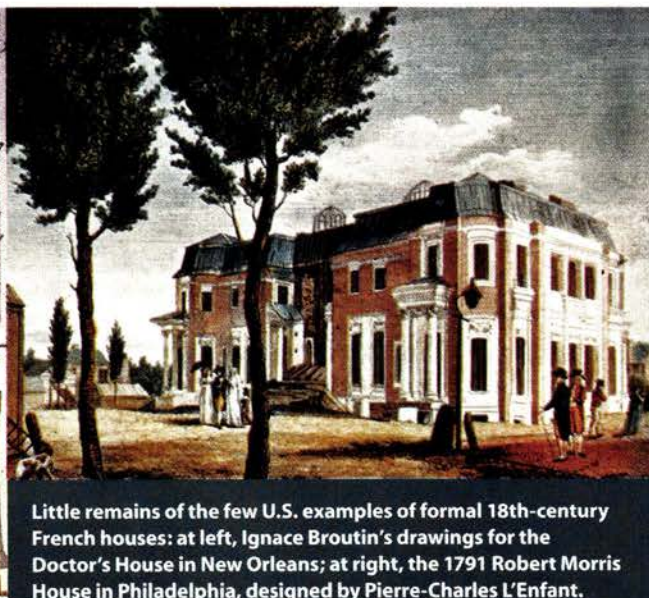
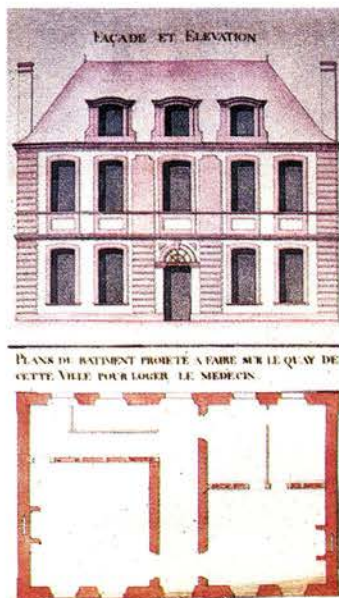
A small *colombage* cabin at the Rural Life Museum in Baton Rouge features outdoor stairs leading from porch to attic.

ANDY OLENICK PHOTO

Thus, when they built in North America—almost always along rivers or other waterfronts that offered transportation opportunities for their commercial enterprises—the French drew on a mixed bag of traditions: European, African, and probably American Indian as well. They used native materials—locust, cedar, or cypress in the South—and whatever filling materials were locally available.

House Details

In general, the early French house in America was a rather simple affair—rectangular in shape, one or two rooms deep, one and a half or two stories high, and usually containing no more than three rooms total per floor. The houses sat close to the ground or were raised a half-story to allow for air circulation around and under the building.



Little remains of the few U.S. examples of formal 18th-century French houses: at left, Ignace Broutin's drawings for the Doctor's House in New Orleans; at right, the 1791 Robert Morris House in Philadelphia, designed by Pierre-Charles L'Enfant.

JAMES C. MASSEY ARCHIVES

The floor plan was simple, too: No interior halls or stairways cluttered up the space. Access was handled by the ever-useful *galerie*, an outdoor living space offering multiple functions: living rooms, reception areas, offices, and even—when portions were walled in or curtained off—bedrooms. *Galleries* had separate doors to every room and often contained exterior staircases to the second floors. A centrally located chimney heated the entire house.

French doors (*mais oui!*) opened to the interior spaces, and casement windows, artfully aligned on opposite sides of the house, welcomed any passing breeze and encouraged cross-ventilation. The persistent use of casement windows rather than the double-hung sash favored by the English is one of the most prominent indicators of a dwelling's French origins.

For most people, the raised cottage is the image most strongly identified with the French house in America. It was certainly the most persistent house type used in French areas—even though most of the ones we see today date from the later Spanish or American eras.

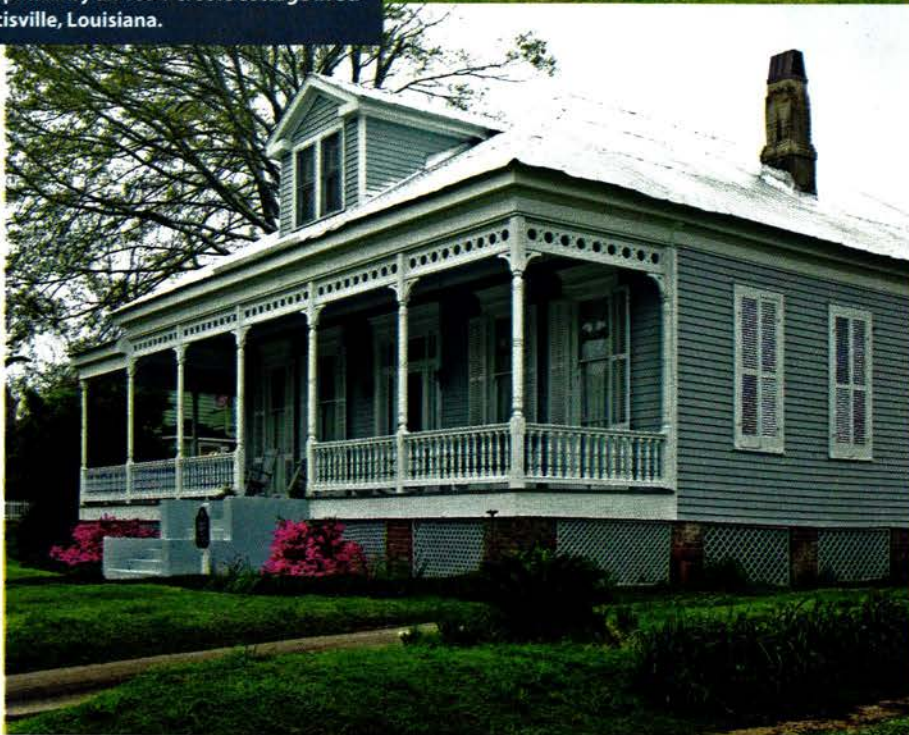
Eventually, even large plantation houses in Louisiana embraced the twin concepts of the raised basement and encircling *galerie*. In keeping with their status, however, these big houses were raised a full story above the ground and often supplied with elegantly columned two-story *galleries*. The ground floor held kitchens and service areas, while the family enjoyed the leisurely social life of the porch. Louisiana's famed River Road sugar plantations and houses in the Cane River National Heritage Area around Natchitoches offer ample evidence of the charm of such arrangements.

Steeply pitched hipped roofs, shingled on four sides, were universal in French houses from Quebec to New Orleans, as they easily shed both snow and rain. Single-slope roofs were common in northern areas, but elsewhere, spreading, double-pitched roofs (which look like a flat-topped witch's hat with a broad brim) both



ABOVE: Laura Plantation in Vachery, Louisiana (built by Guillaume Duparc in 1805) is raised over a ground-floor service level.

BELOW: The continuing French tradition is exemplified by an 1894 Creole cottage in St. Francisville, Louisiana.



ANDY OLENICK PHOTOS

accommodated the wraparound *galleries* and allowed high ceilings. While dormers are frequently found in the roofs, most are later additions.

The persistence of French architectural influence is apparent across North America—from Louisiana's Mississippi River plantations to Missouri's bustling St. Louis to northeastern Canada's Quebec and Acadia (whence the Cajuns sprang). If you're ready to hit the road in search of the genuine French article, you can take your pick of venues: New Orleans' Vieux

Carré; Pascagoula, Mississippi's Krebs House (revealing the kinship of French and Germanic architecture in America); the historic district of Ste. Genevieve, Missouri; Cahokia, Illinois' restored courthouse (originally a settler's home); Michigan's Fort Michilimackinac; Quebec's Iles d'Orleans; even New Paltz, New York, and South Carolina, both of which harbored Huguenot immigrants who built in the French style. Almost anywhere you land in the eastern U.S., you'll find reasons galore to celebrate our French connections. 🏡



Shutter Rescue

If time and the elements have left your exterior shutters hanging loose, use this step-by-step repair to set them right again.

BY RAY TSCHOEPE

CLARE MARTIN PHOTO



Even beaten-down shutters like the ones above can hang like new with a simple repair procedure.

For centuries, exterior wooden shutters protected homes—from Elizabethan cottages to 19th-century plantations—from the elements and added a measure of security. By the late 19th century, though, the arrival of storm windows reduced the role of shutters to architectural ornament. Today, even if you have operating shutters on your house, it's likely that you don't use them. But while exterior shutters no longer serve an essential function, they can still be vital to the overall aesthetic of a traditional house, and regular care will help them weather the years to come.

Wood maintenance is necessary, of course, but old shutters often need hardware repairs, too. Shutter hardware comes in three categories: hinges that hold a shutter to the window jamb or wall, allowing it to open and close; "shutter dogs" (or tie-backs) that hold shutters open; and interior latches that keep shutters closed. Homeowners commonly encounter problems with hardware in the first category—the hinges.

Shutter hinges often take the form of a strap hinge, made up

of a cylindrical opening (or "eye") and a pintle, a short piece of bar stock that is secured in a fire-welded iron strap and fastened to the jamb. (A variation on this puts the pintle in the hinge and the eye on the jamb mounting.) The pintle can be attached to the jamb either on a back plate, as an L-shaped lag screw that is turned into the woodwork, or, in its most common form, connected to a tapering length of iron (called a "tang") that is driven into woodwork or masonry joints.

Even when pintles have been securely installed, they can easily loosen due to wood rot, wear from years of opening and closing, or after banging around on windy days. While repairs can be as simple as adding a small wedge above or below the loosened iron tang and securing it with construction adhesive, this solution is difficult to reverse. The alternative—a Dutchman repair, which adds a new patch of wood into the worn, loose area—requires a few more steps, but is durable and will preserve the integrity of the building for years to come.

7 Steps to Repairing a Loose Pintle

1. Remove the shutter and investigate the loose pintle. It may slide out with just a slight tug; if it seems loose but resists removal, you may need to remove the interior window casing, as the tang may have been hammered over upon installation to keep it extra secure. You can try bending the flange back, but it's easier to simply cut the bent portion using an angle grinder or even the metal cutting wheel of a small rotary tool. (Be sure to wear safety gear and protect the surrounding area while doing this, as cutting the metal will generate sparks.)



A collection of shutter pintles shows the variety of shapes and sizes that can be found on old houses.



Use a drill with a spade bit to remove most of the deteriorated wood, then pare away the rest with a chisel or oscillating multi-tool.

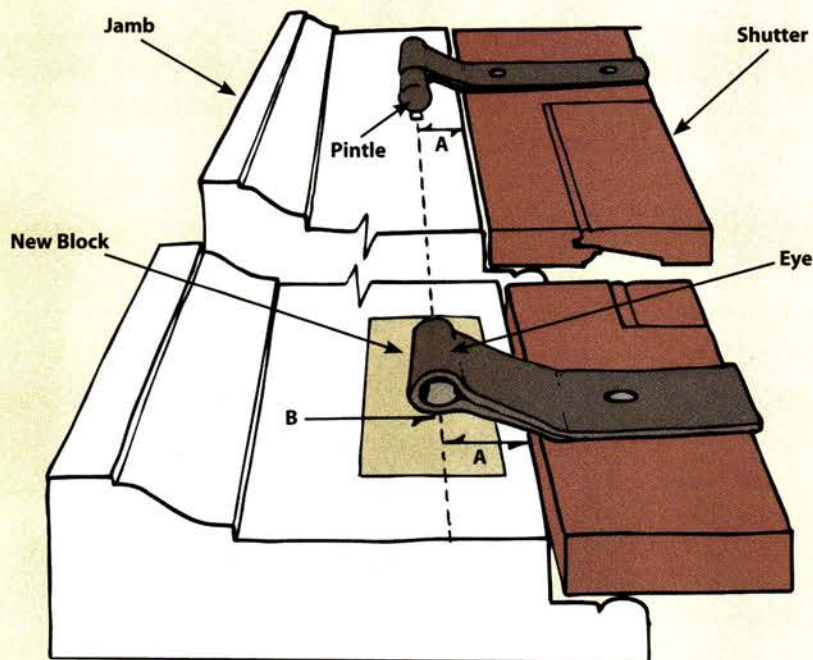


Fit the new block into the mortise, secure with epoxy, then mark the position of the tang with intersecting lines.



Cut a mortise for the tang into the new block, making sure it's the same width, but $\frac{1}{16}$ " shorter than the tang to ensure a snug fit.

Anatomy of a Shutter Repair



Line A: Distance from the jamb to the center of the pintle
Line B: Position of the bottom of the hinge

2. Once the pintle is extracted, remove any large rust flakes with a wire brush and coat the pintle with a rust converter (a special primer applied to rusty surfaces to inhibit oxidation and turn the rust into a durable coating), or use a wire brush followed by coarse steel wool and sandpaper to remove most of the rust from the iron before coating it with a rusty-metal primer. Carefully mark out a rectangle around the center of the enlarged or deteriorated opening in the jamb. If possible, leave at least 1" on each side of the opening for stability and at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ " above and below. (If the wood is rotted, you'll need to replace the entire lower portion of the jamb by cutting out the rotted jamb components and splicing in new wood, attaching it with epoxy and/or stainless steel fasteners.)

3. With a spade bit attached to a drill, remove most of the wood within the rectangle to a depth of about 2" to 3". Using a chisel or oscillating multi-tool, pare away

RAYTSCHOEPE ILLUSTRATION



RAY TSCHOEPE PHOTOS

After verifying that the tang fits securely in the new mortise, you can paint the jamb to create a virtually seamless repair.

the wood along the sides of the rectangle to produce a clean mortise.

4. Cut a block of wood from a similar species (see the chart at right for suggestions). Fit the new block tightly into the space, and orient it so the new grain matches up with the old for a more seamless repair. (It's OK if the patch protrudes from the mortise a bit, since you will plane it later.) Coat the block and the sides of the mortise with epoxy, and tap the block into the mortise. Once the epoxy has cured (typically overnight, but check your epoxy for specific curing times), plane the block so that it's flush with the surface, and prepare to mark the new position of the tang.

5. Begin by marking a vertical line on the new block that measures the same distance from the inside of the jamb as the upper or remaining pintle (line A on the diagram oppo-

site). Next, hang the shutter on the remaining hinge and place it in the closed position. Mark the position of the bottom of the hinge (line B on the diagram) where it intersects with the vertical line. This new mark represents the shoulder point at the base of the pintle, which is often the top of the tang. Measure the projection of the remaining pintle to determine how deep to drive the tang, scribing a line on the tang to mark the spot. (Usually, there will be significant paint buildup that clearly indicates the previous depth.) Measure the length and width of the tang, and transfer these measurements to the block.

6. Using a long drill bit that's the same width as the tang, drill a hole at the cross section of your markings for the tang. Then drill two holes at the top and bottom of the same markings to mimic the angle of the tang. Use the drill and bit to clear away as much wood as possible, then use a small chisel to clean out the remainder of the mortise until it is as wide as the tang but about $\frac{1}{16}$ " shorter. Shaping the mortise in this way ensures that the wood fibers will hold securely against the top and bottom edge of the tang. The sides merely help the pintle resist rotation; they don't contribute significantly to the holding power of the hinge, and wedging the tang at the sides could cause the jamb and the new block to split.

7. Reinstall the hardware, then hang the shutter and test fit. If there is still a gap between the bottom of one strap hinge and the shoulder of the pintle, it can be bridged with bronze bushings, which are available at hardware stores and some home centers. After it's been painted, the new Dutchman repair will be virtually invisible and will support the shutter for another century or more. 🏠

Matching Repairs


Ideally, Dutchman patches should be made with wood of the same species, grain pattern/density, and age as the original—but this often isn't possible. The more similarities the new wood has to the old, however, the greater the longevity of the patch and the less stress (from differential contraction and expansion) on the materials. If you can't repair woodwork with wood of the same species, use the chart below to find a close match based on specific gravity, or the density of the wood compared to water.

Suitable matches have a specific gravity within 5 points, in either direction, of the original wood. Always match up the grain direction, and use heartwood whenever possible for maximum decay resistance.

Softwood	Specific Gravity
W. Red Cedar	.32
E. White Pine	.35
W. Fir (true fir)	.35
Redwood	.37
E. Spruce	.40
Bald Cypress	.46
E. Red Cedar	.47
S. Yellow Pine	.48
Douglas Fir	.48

Hardwood	Specific Gravity
Cent. Am. Mahogany	.40-.83
American Chestnut	.43
Spanish Cedar	.44
White Meranti (lauan)	.46
Yellow Meranti (lauan)	.50
Black Walnut	.55
White Oak	.67


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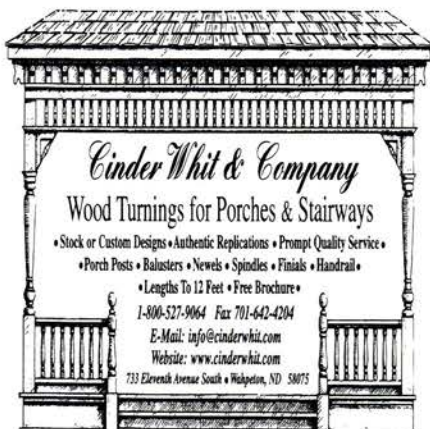


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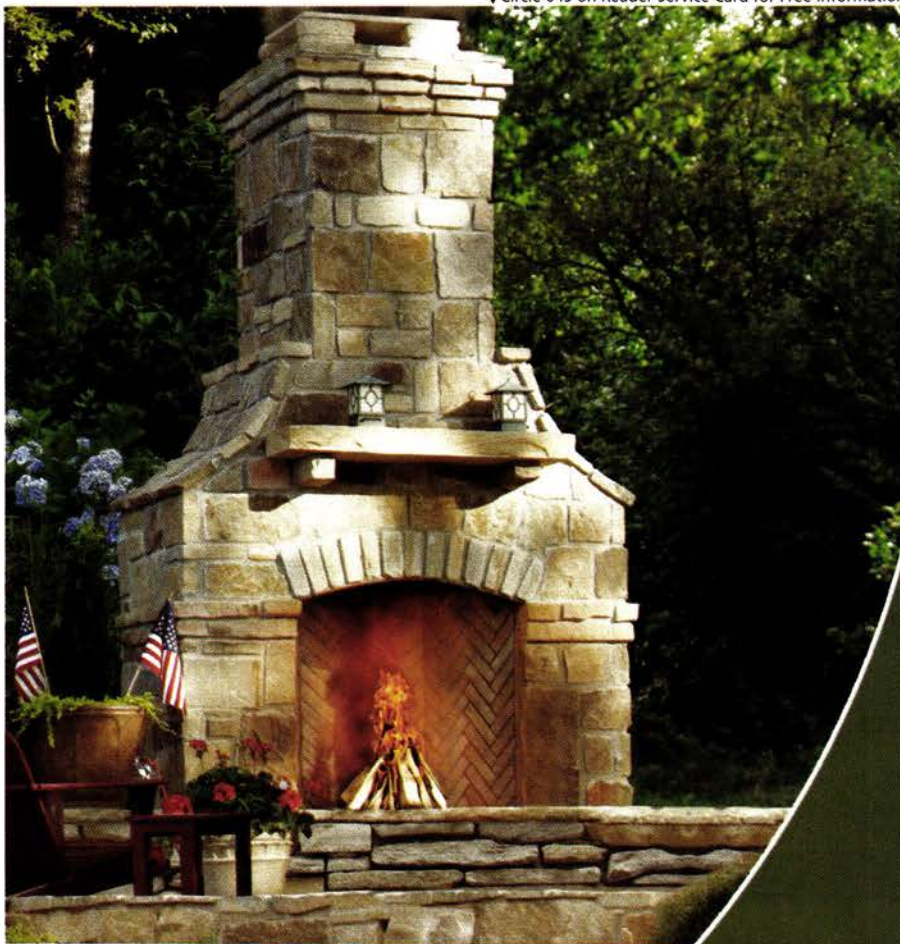
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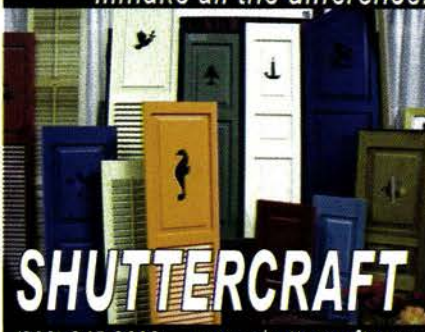
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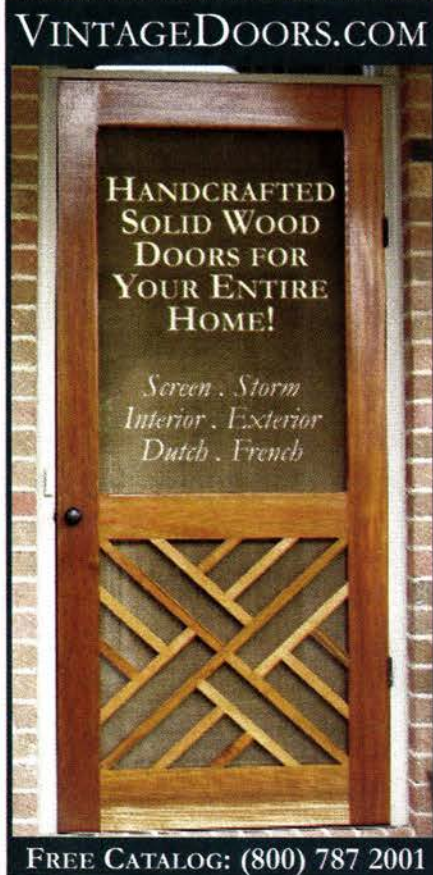
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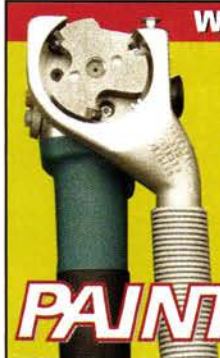
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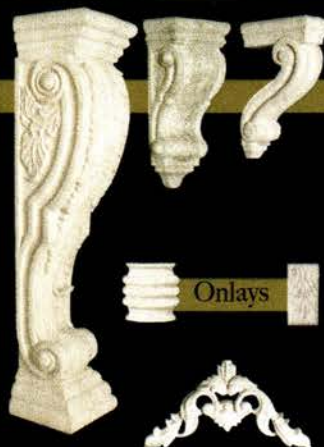
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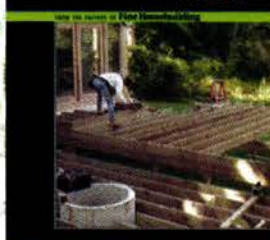
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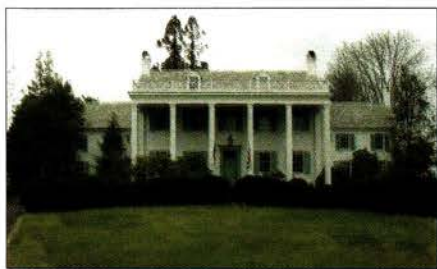
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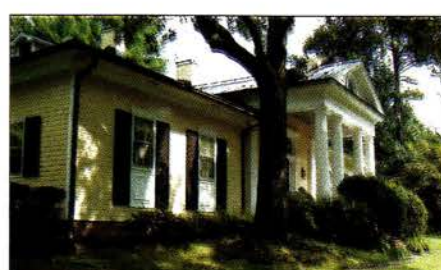
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“The house on the right seems to have a black eye—or is it glowering at us?” says our contributor. We think that in old houses as well as humans, unspoken gestures can speak volumes. 🏠

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