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Top 10 Bungalows

Bungalows have seen a surge in popularity among old-house enthusiasts in recent years—so it stands to reason that the editors of Old-House Journal (and our sister publication, Old-House Interiors) have seen plenty of amazing transformations grace our pages. It was a difficult feat to choose 10 favorites from so many worthy contenders (including the one above—read about it on page 52), but we managed to narrow the field. Now it’s your turn to feast your eyes on this bounty of inspiration!

Places to Go in Portland

If there were ever a city designed with old-house lovers in mind, it would probably look a lot like Portland, Oregon. Not only does it have a wealth of vintage housing stock (see page 16), but it’s also home to a bevy of stores selling original and reproduction house parts. Check out our local authority’s recommendations for the best places to shop while you’re there.

Share Your Home’s Secrets

The owners of the Gothic Revival home spotlighted in this month’s Old-House Living (page 44) spent plenty of time uncovering its secrets, but they also added one of their own—each of the slate tiles on the tower has a message on its underside, written by the couple and their friends. We love the idea of embellishing a house’s history with a surreptitious time capsule—if you’ve done it, we want to hear your story! Visit our special forum on MyOldHouseOnline.com.
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Midwestern Inspiration

SINCE WE LAST MET, I have successfully purchased—and moved into—a beautiful 1929 Colonial Revival house in southeastern Michigan. While this state has taken a hard economic hit over the past two decades, I'm impressed with the rich array of housing stock that remains in places like Detroit and Flint, which blossomed during the early years of the automobile industry. Just down my street, for example, are fantastic Tudor, French Eclectic, Dutch Colonial Revival, and Neoclassical houses. The elaborate detailing on these finely crafted buildings reminds me of why OHJ's mission is so important—these houses need to be preserved for future generations. I wish I could adopt them all, but it's clear that the one I've got is going to keep me plenty busy. I can't wait to start unearthing the beneath-the-surface stories of my house, my neighborhood, and my new town, because I know there are some remarkable tales to be found here, as is usually the case where old houses are involved.

The home in this issue's Old-House Living is a good example. It was hiding plenty of secrets about its original kitchen and exterior appearance. Those mysteries began revealing themselves through the present owners' clever detective work and unexpected finds, and their story is one you won't want to miss (see "Historical Detectives," page 44). A mystery of a different sort greeted author Tony Seideman the first time he turned on the dining room light in his transitional Victorian home and experienced a scary electrical arcing. His journey toward up-to-speed wiring, and the pitfalls he's encountered along the way, can help guide you to sound electrical choices that won't sacrifice the historic fabric of your home (see "Electrifying Decisions," page 40).

Preserving original materials while updating is hugely important, of course. In my own new place, an irksome detail is that previous owners screwed wooden curtain rod brackets directly into the original 6"-wide casing of nearly every window. I hope you'll find a less damaging way to install window coverings in your own home—see page 30 for our roundup of five classic window treatments suitable for a variety of house styles. This issue also marks our annual tribute to the ongoing revival of interest in the Arts & Crafts movement, bringing you stories that explore the evolution of Arts & Crafts wallpaper patterns (page 22) and iconic furnishings no bungalow should be without (page 34). Though I don't own an Arts & Crafts house, I still love reading about them. Of course, there really isn't an old-house style that I don't enjoy reading up on...

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In Search of Inserts

"Fireplace Fixes" [January 2011] has some great info—especially about installing a liner in chimneys that have deteriorated masonry. Our home has a Rumford fireplace that we rarely use. We want to install a gas insert similar to the picture in the article, but we can’t find any that fit the dimensions of a traditional Rumford box. Do you have any suggestions?

Chris
Via Old-House Online

We checked with contractor Charlie Allen, who replied: “I would need the specific measurements in order to recommend one for your exact conditions, and I strongly believe that an experienced chimney or fireplace professional should inspect the existing flue prior to installing an insert of any kind. That said, I think Miles Industries [valorfireplaces.com] has a wide variety of options that work well in traditional homes. One thing we have had success with in the past is replacing the existing firebox with a new one that has dimensions that are more amenable to an insert.” —Eds.

Wood-Floor Wisdom

Your article about repairing wood floors [“A Brand New Coat,” January 2011] mentions filling nail holes with wood putty. Your readers might want to use a putty that accepts stain, pick a color that matches the old floor, and then mix a small batch of stained putty right before use. Otherwise the filled holes will look like bright spots against the darker color of the old floor.

Wood putties are also available in a range of colors to match various wood types. If the wood grain is noticeable and the nail hole is in a particularly obvious location (and one is forced to look at it daily), it can be filled with a stained putty, and the existing grain pattern can be approximated with a very fine art brush. For the same reasons the author cautions about putting a new finish over a waxed surface, do not use waxy wood fillers (commonly sold as pencils) intended to hide surface scratches on furniture.

Rick Otis
Washington, D.C.

Reader Tip of the Month

To seal off an open tube of caulk, I use a piece of foil tape (the kind used for ductwork, with a thick butyl rubber adhesive backing—not duct tape) folded over the open tip and onto itself. It’s such a good seal that it takes a utility knife to remove the tape. It will never slide off, and you should see glue/rubber remnants on the nozzle if you did it right. For even longer-term storage, place the sealed tube in a large zip-top bag.

John Kieken
Via MyOldHouseOnline.com

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

Your article on restoring wood floors didn’t mention the difference between polyurethanes and old-fashioned oil varnishes. To me, polyurethane looks like plastic, so I always choose varnish made with linseed oil. That’s what you usually find on old floors, and a new coat of the same thing not only looks better than polyurethane but also is easier to repair. I recommend Petri spar varnish, which is perfect for floors. (Spar is the only oil varnish you can legally get these days, but I find that most spar varnishes are too sticky.)

Evan Johnson
Edgewater, New Jersey

Send your letters to OHJEditorial@homebuyerpubs.com, or Old-House Journal, 4125 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151. We reserve the right to edit letters for content and clarity.
Q: The basement in my 1870 Victorian has a 3½’ circular patch in the concrete floor, and I suspect the house may have had an octopus gravity furnace. When were they first installed in houses, when were they phased out, and how did they function?

A: Dan Holohan: Just after the Civil War, Lewis Leeds, who was in charge of ventilating government hospitals during the war, wrote a book called Leeds on Ventilation, which discussed the "national poison" derived from the air in closed-off rooms. He convinced abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe to go on the lecture circuit with him, and together they made many people afraid of closed windows, which helped propel the desire for heating systems that allowed for open windows during cold weather.

Central heating was in its infancy, and the gravity octopus furnace was one of the first warm air units to arrive circa 1880. It was large, usually round, and burned coal—a monster with multiple upturned metal arms that resembled an octopus. The hot gases from the coal fire rose by gravity draft up the chimney, and on the way, they caressed a cast iron (or steel) radiator inside the furnace. This radiator was a large, round reservoir filled with air destined for the rooms above. The gases from the fire and the air going to the rooms never mixed directly; the radiator was a heat exchanger.

Cold air coming into the furnace traveled through either a wooden or galvanized steel duct (called a cold-air box) that had one end outside the house, screened to keep critters out. The other side of the duct ended at the base of the furnace. At first, prodded by fear of the air in closed rooms, people would leave their bedroom windows open at night, which served as an escape hatch though which heated air could leave the house. Later, once people became more conscious of how much coal they were wasting with this new-fangled central heating system, they often cut a return register into the top of the cold-air box and fitted a hinged door inside the duct, which gave them a choice of either fresh air or recirculated room air.

Hot air from the octopus furnace usually traveled just a few feet to the basement ceiling, where it entered a large grate on the first floor and exited (because hot air rises) up into the house. Cold air flowed into the cold-air box to take its place. The supply grate was usually near the bottom of the stairs, to get some heat up in the bedrooms. Steam and hot-water heating was so much easier to control and balance that these systems replaced many gravity furnaces by the 1930s. Some octopuses survive, however, and now burn oil or gas. They are wonders of inefficiency.

ABOVE: Octopus furnaces were multi-armed monstrosities that delivered warm air to strategic locations throughout the house. BELOW: Cold air entered the system through an external inlet, called a cold-air box.

Fig. 13.—General arrangement of furnace system. (Courtesy of Waterman-Waterbury Company.)

Fig 9. Common Method of Connecting Return Duct to Cold-Air Box.

Dan Holohan, a longtime contributor to OHJ, runs the website HeatingHelp.com and is the author of the book The Lost Art of Steam Heating.
ON THE RADAR

Going Google

By Clare Martin

By now, you're probably aware that Google is way more than just a search engine—it offers everything from e-mail to photo storage to foreign-language translation. But you might not know that the Google arsenal also contains tools to help historic districts showcase their resources. More and more communities are taking advantage of Google's interactive mapping and design products to present sophisticated virtual tours and a bounty of information on their historic properties. That means lovers of historic buildings can take it in the vintage architecture of far-away cities from the comfort of home—or print out quick guides for on-the-ground exploration. Here's an overview of what's out there:

Google Maps: Google's basic mapping software—the same one you use to look up point-to-point directions—allows users to create free maps that pinpoint sites of interest, then share photos and background information on them. In the case of historic societies, these maps can either encompass entire cities (such as the Utah Heritage Foundation's map cataloging more than 100 historic buildings and sites in Provo), or be targeted to specific areas of interest (as with the L.A. Conservancy's map highlighting the hotspots of East L.A.'s 1960s music scene). On certain maps, viewers can even add their own points of interest—the National Trust's "This Place Matters" map, for example, is entirely generated by viewer suggestions.

OLD-HOUSE RESOURCE

Heating Help on the Go

Ever wish you could keep an OHJ expert in your pocket so you could ask questions as they come up on the job? Well, now you can—virtually speaking, that is. Regular contributor and radiator guru Dan Holohan has launched an iPhone app spinoff of his popular website, HeatingHelp.com. The "Pocketful of Steam Problems" application contains an encyclopedic list of possible radiator problems—simply scroll through the issues until you find yours, then scan the list of possible causes to get the fix. You can even mark your favorite answers or e-mail them to yourself just in case you need a refresher course later. For more information, see heatinghelp.com.
If you're looking for authentic pieces to furnish an Arts & Crafts interior, you could do a lot worse than to turn to two of the movement's finest examples of craftsmanship. The legendary Grove Park Inn—and the furniture within—is the subject of Bruce Johnson's authoritative tome Grove Park Inn Arts & Crafts Furniture. Drawing on his intimate relationship with the Inn (he's run the popular Arts & Crafts Conference there each winter for more than two decades), Johnson leads a tour through its awe-inspiring array of Arts & Crafts furnishings, describing in delicious detail both the pieces originally designed for the Inn by Elbert Hubbard's Roycrofters, as well as later acquisitions by makers like Stickley, Limbert, and Lifetime. If you've ever wished you could take home some of Grove Park's priceless A&C artifacts, this is the next best thing.

A much less trafficked—but no less celebrated—Arts & Crafts interior is that of Crab Tree Farm, a 1910 complex in rural Illinois that houses an impressive private collection of Stickley furnishings. In Arts & Crafts Rugs for Craftsman Interiors, authors David Cathers and Linda Parry use Crab Tree Farm's elegantly appointed rooms, along with Stickley's own recommendations published in The Craftsman, to reveal the full spectrum of Arts & Crafts-appropriate floor coverings out there—everything from William Morris-designed rugs to Indian druggets and Navajo blankets. Devoted to a subject that's often overlooked in Arts & Crafts literature, it's an essential guide for those seeking to cover bare bungalow floors.
Miter Clamps
These simple pieces of bent wire help keep mitered moldings together.

By Brian Campbell

A sign of good carpentry is miters (the 90-degree joints formed at the intersection of two pieces of trim) that fit together nicely. For a good fit, mitered moldings must be cleanly and accurately cut, then secured with glue and finish nails. Miter clamps are a handy tool to have at your disposal when assembling pieces of mitered molding.

Miter clamps are made from spring steel, which has a powerful memory; when opened with pliers, the clamps work hard to push their way back to a closed position. When applied to the two pieces of trim that make up a mitered joint, these clamps function as a third hand, exerting pressure to hold the molding tightly together. Using the clamps can take some getting used to, but the learning curve is short.

Where to Use Them
Miter clamps can be used to "dry fit" pieces of molding to see how well they go together before committing to glue and nails. They’re also a boon for small pieces of trim (known as returns), which like to split when nailed (though pre-drilling holes or using small-gauge air nailers will minimize splitting). Miter clamps can hold these small pieces in place while the glue sets (with or without nails across the joint). Pressure applied by the clamps makes glued joints stronger and less likely to open up. The clamps also help to keep fingers out of harm’s way when using a nail gun on small return pieces.

Miter clamps also can be used to pre-assemble “picture frame” sets of window trim on a work table so the casing can be installed around the window as a single unit, rather than tacking four separate pieces of trim to the window jamb.

What to Look For
Miter clamps come in “spring clamp” and “clam clamp” varieties. Spring clamps can either be light-duty pinch clamps or hefty ring clamps, which are often sold in kits containing various sizes. Ring clamps are generally stronger, but the additional force leaves larger marks on the wood. Spring clamps can be used to assemble a wide variety of projects: door and window casings, molding, even picture frames. Keep in mind that you’ll need a pair of specialty pliers to open most spring clamps safely. Don’t fool yourself into thinking you can save money by opening the clamps with your hands—after a few times of getting “bitten” by the clamps, you’ll end up buying the pliers anyway. Spring clamps vary in price from about $30 for a set of four Collins pinch clamps and pliers to $200 for a kit with 24 high-quality Ulmia ring clamps and pliers.

Clam clamps can only be used on large door and window casings and large picture frames—they don’t work for small casings or molding returns. They’re also expensive ($240 for a set of four pinch pliers), but despite their limited use and price, clam clamps are outstanding tools for large (5" or more) casing miters.

The Bottom Line
Can you miter trim without using clamps? Yes—but the process will be awkward, and the finished product won’t look nearly as nice. For a reasonable price, this simple, helpful tool can elevate your finish carpentry work.

Brian Campbell restores historic homes as the owner of Basswood Architectural Carpentry in Winona, Minnesota.
Brighten up your kitchen, bathroom, or bedroom with new finds reminiscent of the whimsical styles of the 1920s and ’30s.

In Hot Water
Showers might have been considered a luxurious amenity by the early 20th century, but they weren’t exactly sleek. Today, though, that oh-so-functional pipework is exactly what makes them appealing. Sunrise Specialty’s new exposed thermostatic showers blend the pragmatic charm of vintage styling with modern thermostatic technology to ensure that water temperature is always consistent—a feat those original showers couldn’t lay claim to. Available in six finishes with a variety of handle designs, from $1,500. Call (510) 729-7277, or visit sunrisespecialty.com.

Jazz It Up
Mention the 1920s, and entertainment usually springs to mind: hot jazz, smoky speakeasies, silver-screen stars. The new Jazz Age Suite fabric collection from Upper South Studio calls upon the era’s glamorous diversions as inspiration for seven distinctive patterns. Offerings range from the Deco skyscraper-esque geometrics of Tuxedo Royale (above left) to the stylized florals of Storyville (above right), named after the New Orleans neighborhood often referred to as the birthplace of jazz. The fabrics, made from durable polyester and rayon, retail for $184 per yard. Call (336) 724-5480, or visit uppersouthstudio.com.

Punchy Pattern
Certainly the Great Depression was one of the bleaker chapters in American history, but you’d never know it by looking at the wallpaper of the day. In the kitchen especially, there was an overwhelming trend toward colorful papers printed with pretty drawings of flowers and fruit. With its climbing vines and lilt- ing butterflies, the Alessa pattern from Antonina Vella’s Dolce Vita wallpaper collection calls to mind that sweet simplicity, making it a fine accompaniment to a retro kitchen. It’s available in six colorways, but for period style, you can’t beat the springlike blues, greens, and yellows shown here. $55 per roll. Call (800) 375-9675, or visit yorkwall.com.

Industrial Beauty
At the beginning of the 20th century, a new DIY domestic culture was just beginning to take shape in American households, and kitchens were starting to shed their utilitarian image. Hudson Valley Lighting’s Pelham sconce offers a period aesthetic that perfectly straddles the line between serviceable and sophisticated, pairing a refined opal shade with an exposed-turn-key fitter. (If you’re after a purely industrial look, the collection also offers sconces and pendants with factory-esque metal shades sporting exposed diffuser clamps.) Available in four finishes, from $388.50. Visit hudsonvalleylighting.com.
my town

Portland, Oregon

A local history buff walks us through a few distinctive Eastside neighborhoods in the City of Roses.

By Bo Sullivan

Portland, Oregon, isn't a city known for extremes. Our mild-mannered climate gently swings between cool summers and damp winters, our history is rich but lacks dramatic booms of wealth and industry, and our inhabitants are so easygoing that we actually stop our cars to let pedestrians cross the street.

Our architecture follows the same script. You won't find boulevards peppered with gated estates of the super-rich here, or severely blighted areas of urban decay. We have no big-name architects' masterworks, nor acres of bland, no-name development. What Portland does have—perhaps its greatest asset—is a living mosaic of inner-city neighborhoods filled with tens of thousands of charming and well-preserved early 20th-century homes.

Divided right up the middle by the Willamette River, Portland has an East/West split that defines more than the city's geography and address system. On the Westside is the city's urban center, which quickly rises into the 1,000'-high West Hills, where winding streets and forested canyons play host to view-blessed homes of the affluent. On the flatter Eastside, an endless grid spreads across a gently rolling landscape, where more modest middle- and working-class houses are woven into a patchwork quilt of neighborhoods both funky and elegant, sewn together by vibrant commercial streets, busy public schools, and beautiful city parks.

For the old-house explorer, Portland has treasures on both sides of the river, and seeing them will have a lot to do with how you plan to get around. The complicated and curving switchbacks of the West Hills can be a navigational challenge even for natives, and are more amenable to GPS-enabled automobile outings. The Eastside, on the other hand, offers a welcoming terrain that can be walked or biked with ease, and rewards adventurous wandering—so that's where I recommend starting. From dozens of great neighborhoods on the Eastside, here are four of my favorites.

Irvington

Platted in the late 1880s and recently named a National Register Historic District (Oregon's largest), the 583-acre Irvington neighborhood is like a walk back in time. More than 90 percent of the 2,800 homes here were built between 1890 and 1950, and the vast majority still retain their original historic appearance. The state's earliest use of restrictive development covenants resulted in a concentration of exceptional houses...
set well back on oversized lots in the heart of this lovely neighborhood. You’ll find perhaps the broadest range of house styles here, from Queen Annes and Colonial Revivals to Arts & Crafts and English Tudors. Many of Portland’s most talented early 20th-century architects built projects in Irvington, and dozens still survive.

**Ladd’s Addition**
Smaller, but perhaps better known, Ladd’s Addition was Portland’s first planned community and is also a National Historic District. In 1891, William S. Ladd subdivided a close-in 126-acre farm for a “modern” development with amenities like gas and electric lighting, paved streets, sidewalks, and a sewer system. Departing dramatically from the city’s strict orthogonal grid, his neighborhood was laid out in a distinctive L’Enfant-inspired radial street pattern, like a baseball diamond of four small public squares around a large central traffic circle. With most of its homes built between 1905 and 1930, Ladd’s has a diverse mix of classic house styles, features formal rose gardens maintained by
the community in the four squares, and is shaded by some of the tallest and most stately elms in the city. This neighborhood is one of the few in Portland with alleys, which makes for a fully rounded old-house gawking experience during which I can play my favorite game: "spot the closed-in sleeping porch."

**Laurelhurst**

Between 1900 and 1930, partly fueled by exposure during the 1905 Lewis & Clark Exposition, Portland saw its population grow from 90,000 to 300,000—and those newcomers needed homes. Platted in 1909 from Hazel Fern Farm (another Ladd property), Laurelhurst was intended from the start to be a "high-class residence park" with some of the most restrictive building covenants ever enacted in the city. Only single-family homes were allowed, and these were required to meet minimum building costs. The firm of Olmstead Brothers was hired to lay out the 400+ acres, and in yet another dramatic break from the city's traditional planning, a series of concentric, radial, and gently curving streets were created that still consternate Portland's grid-conditioned drivers today. While the same broad array of early 20th-century home styles can be found in Laurelhurst as other areas, this district has an especially nice concentration of fine Craftsman bungalows.

**Alameda Ridge/Dolph Park**

Alameda and Grant Park are adjacent neighborhoods with similar early roots in the 1910s. However, each of these areas contains a smaller district with a stellar collection of large, romantic Historic Revival-style houses built in the 1920s and '30s. Alameda Ridge is the mini-West Hills of the Eastside, where fine (and expensive) homes meander along a prominent crest that offers stunning views over the city. Within Grant Park, Dolph Park is like a trip to Disneyland for grown-ups, a tidy grid of remarkable Storybook "cottages" on immaculate lawns. Between the two, you'll find some of Portland's most substantial and imaginative Old English manses, Norman castles, and Mediterranean villas, sporting wrought iron balconies, stuccoed half-timber facades, faux-thatch rolled roofs, and massive chimneys of river rock and clinker brick.

Bo Sullivan is the historian for Rejuvenation and the owner of Arcalus Period Design in Portland, Oregon.
house helpers

Our editors pick the best new products to make your old-house projects easier.

Grinder Find

If your restoration projects involve cuts through concrete or metal (perhaps to remove a non-original handrail), an angle grinder can help. Metabo’s new 5” version is loaded with helpful features, from a tool-less wheel change system and 26.9 inch-pounds of torque to a no-load speed of 10,000 rpms. It also includes improved safety features like a safety-slip clutch to protect against kickback during snags, a seven-position burst-proof guard, and a “dead man” function that immediately stops the grinder if the tool is dropped. Pricing starts at $189. Call (800) 638-2264, or visit metabo.com.

Clean Sweep

For quick and easy cleanup of nails, screws, bolts, and other metal items around the shop or in the yard—like after a roofing repair project—the Magnetic Sweep from Veritas can be your best friend. The strong 9½"-wide magnet easily attracts up to 2 pounds of metal per sweep. Its low profile and flexible neck help it fit easily under cars, bushes, or shelves, and it also boasts an extendable handle that adjusts from 21” to 47”. $21.50. Call (800) 871-8158, or visit leevalley.com.

Bright Spot

Anyone who’s struggled to hold a flashlight while working in a crawlspace will appreciate the new Gorillatorch Blade, which stands on articulating ball-and-socket tripod legs that bend to wrap around just about anything—and what they can’t wrap around, they usually can stick to thanks to strong magnets in their feet. With 130 lumens and features like an adjustable wide- to spot-beam, the Blade makes getting targeted lighting where you need it a snap. Its lithium-ion battery also easily recharges through either an AC adapter or the USB port on your computer. $59.95. Call (888) 569-5629, or visit joby.com.
A Historic Haven

At Gary's House in Portland, Maine, the families of seriously ill patients find a welcoming way station in a Federal-era home. Operations Manager Mary Irace explains how it works.

**DEMETRA APOSOROS:** What is Gary's House?

**MARY IRACE:** It's a home away from home for the families of seriously ill patients who have come to get treatments in Portland-area hospitals. Our goal is to provide a safe, comfortable, affordable haven that offers solace for people who are far from home in a tragic or anxiety-provoking situation involving an illness or an accident. We're a self-funding affiliate of Mercy Hospital.

**DA: How did it get started?**

**MI:** It's the legacy of Gary Pike, who was diagnosed with cancer as a teenager in 1989. During his two-year battle with the disease, he saw firsthand the financial hardship and stress his family endured—they spent many nights sleeping in their car or on the hospital-room floor because medical bills were mounting. In the end, Gary's family lost everything—their business, their home, and their son. His dying wish was for other families to have a place to stay when someone they loved was in the hospital. Gary's mom, Trudy McNeal, found a way to make that wish a reality.

**DA: Where did she begin?**

**MI:** She started with garage sales, dances, and similar fundraising events, and then an acquaintance who happened to be a neighbor of the Bush family suggested they try a golf tournament. The tournament—with celebrity guests like George Bush, Sr. and Bill Clinton—was an instant success, and was instrumental in making the purchase of the house a reality. Today the tournament, The George Bush Cape Arundel Celebrity Classic, remains our biggest fundraiser.

**DA: What other restoration projects have you done?**

**MI:** We just put a new slate roof on the house, one that's historical and correct. The old roof had lost some slates during a storm, and had others that were hanging precariously. We had a generous donation from a woman who stayed here and left everything to Gary's House when she passed away. Her generosity paid for the $75,000 slate roof. We've had lots of people donate services, too, like the retired teacher who stayed here when his wife was ill.
[We] wanted to create a warm, homelike place where people could settle in and get an instant sense of community.

He was a part-time professional plasterer and painter, and ended up completely re-plastering our laundry room.

DA: How much does it cost to stay?
MI: People can stay here for as little as $15 a night, but we also have a Hope and Encouragement Fund that covers room rates for anybody who can't afford to pay. No one has ever been turned away.

DA: Who started the fund?
MI: It's the result of a conversation I had with small-business owner Eddie Woodin about how a lot of people in Maine aren't used to asking for anything, and don't know what to do if they can't cover the bill. He established the fund; the goal was to take some of the stress away during an uncertain time.

DA: Is that the same thinking behind having meals in the kitchen?
MI: Yes, we have a fully stocked kitchen and laundry room and urge people to make themselves at home, but we'll also often have a pot of soup on the stove so nobody goes hungry while they're here.

DA: Do people find out about you through word-of-mouth?
MI: They are generally referred to us from social workers and patient-care workers at Portland-area hospitals, or from doctors' offices. Since we opened our doors in 1998, 11,000 people have stayed here.

For more information about Gary's House, visit mercyhospital.org/content/garyshouse.htm.
William Morris, the patriarch of the English Arts & Crafts movement, was responsible for many of the enduring patterns that bear his name. Here, his “Marigold,” printed in organic colors more befitting an American interior circa 1900, embellishes a room filled with Craftsman-style furnishings.

Arts & Crafts Walls

Today’s Arts & Crafts wallpapers are rooted in simplified, naturalistic designs.

By Dan Cooper
The term “Arts & Crafts wallpaper” covers a range of wallcoverings designed between 1860 and 1910, which originated in several countries—papers that were ultimately produced in various calibers of design and production methods.

Consequently, the moniker is as all-encompassing as the phrase “classical architecture.” You can’t pinpoint Arts & Crafts to a specific moment in time as you might French Art Nouveau or 1970s silver mylar—it’s a topic that reaches far beyond the usual decade or so typically allotted to a specific style.

In the Beginning
The father of the Arts & Crafts movement, which began in England in 1860, is considered to be William Morris, whose designs for wallpaper, fabric, and carpeting revolutionized interior design, and remain iconic more than a century after his death.

Morris and his contemporary Charles Locke Eastlake, who published the ubiquitous design tome Hints on Household Taste, sought to reverse the encroaching industrialism they found dehumanizing, and return design of the built environment to a more naturalistic concept. Stylistically, Arts & Crafts was a revival of medievalism, and its ornamentation, while appearing fancy to those of us living in the present day, was considered simplified compared to the sinewy overlapping curves and deep carvings of the
Favorite motifs of Arts & Crafts wallpaper designers, especially the British, were animals in highly stylized renderings. Birds appeared frequently, while unusual creatures such as bats and fairytale characters could also be incorporated into both friezes and fills.

era’s immensely popular Rococo Revival. Arts & Crafts arose in defiance to this curvilinear style, which was regarded as French in nature—almost as though the perpetual rivalry between England and France had shifted from the battlefield to the drawing room.

Arts & Crafts proponents stressed an honesty of construction and material, meaning that items resembled what they were meant to represent, and assembly methods were evident. For example, a table would be constructed so that the timbers and joints were obvious, and not concealed under an excess of applied carvings shaped like roses, grapes, or animals.

In the case of wallpaper, this meant that patterns never misrepresented themselves as low- or high-relief architectural ornament, a concept that flew in the face of French Rococo wallpaper, which typically had large floral sprays and scenes of exotic lands adorned with ruined columns and architraves that were intended to appear as if three dimensional. These papers appeared in bold palettes, too: colors that were bright and jewel-toned in clear, primary hues.

By contrast, Morris’s patterns bore undulating leaves and sprays of flowers, each set deftly into repeat. Together with his colleagues, Morris stylized the botanical motifs and flattened them out; they would never be mistaken for the more sculptural papers that preceded them—the Arts & Crafts design elements showed no trace of relief or artifice. Their palettes were a radical departure as well: The designers softened them by selecting tertiary colors, so that green became olive, red became terracotta, yellow became ochre, and so on. While the occasional blue shows up, at least in English Arts & Crafts, it is far outweighed by the use of greens.

Technological Breakthroughs
In his pursuit of handcrafted materials, Morris used block printing to produce his wallpapers. In block printing, each color of a design requires that a separate slab of wood be painstakingly carved. For
American Arts & Crafts wallpapers often reflected the growing popularity of the emerging Midwestern Prairie School of architecture and the Japanese influences of the West Coast.
Floral patterns were also perennial favorites, and continued the naturalistic themes that were the central tenet of both the English and American Arts & Crafts movements. Designers were mindful of the vertical and horizontal repeats of their patterns, and would often lay out floral patterns in trellised arrangements to create a cozy environment.

example, there would be one block for the leaves and another for the shading inside the leaves, one for a flower petal and another for the petal's edges, resulting in easily a dozen or more blocks per pattern. Each block also required careful calibration to align with the others, a process known as registration. As the ink was transferred from the block onto the paper (think of the potato prints you made as a kid in art class), the resultant print offered a rich, textured appearance. Block printing was (and remains) time-consuming both in preparation and production, and therefore expensive.

But the 19th century was a time of fantastic technological progress. Cast iron foundries allowed members of the middle class to possess intricate metalwork that previously could only be forged by hand, duplicating lathes could create dozens of identical turnings at a time, and wallpaper soon could be churned out by roller printing, which permitted unlimited numbers of different patterns to be produced quickly and in vast quantities. This also allowed designers and manufacturers to change styles at will to suit fashion. Morris himself preferred the integrity of block-printed papers, although eventually, even he machine-printed some patterns as an economic concession.

Mass production reduced the cost of wallpaper to the point where it competed with paint. And unlike paint, which required a wait of several months for plaster to cure, wallpaper could be hung over a freshly plastered wall. Compared to block printing, there was also more consistency to the registration and an evenness to the print, which, depending on one's point of view, was either desirable or lacked the charm of a handcrafted product. In an ironic twist, Arts & Crafts designs were completely overtaken by the very principles the movement rebelled against—cheap, market-driven goods.

When William Morris died in 1896,
Today, Arts & Crafts wallpaper continues to be produced by a small number of firms that are passionately devoted to maintaining the art and the craft of this style. Some of their collections use new technology, and have adapted digital production techniques to permit the instant modification of scale and color to suit a client's wishes, thereby allowing the creation of colors and compositions that would be prohibitively expensive in more traditional production methods. Other firms steadfastly continue in the time-honored wood-block method; there is no shortage of options for the homeowner.

- **Aesthetic Interiors** creates late Aesthetic and Edwardian papers, some of which are certainly compatible in Craftsman homes.
- **Arthur Sanderson and Sons** have been producing machine- and block-printed William Morris wallpapers for decades.
- **Bradbury & Bradbury** offers both English and American designs, including some William Morris. The firm has developed an extensive line of American Arts & Crafts papers in several colorways, along with coordinated borders, fills, and friezes.
- **Carol Mead Design** produces a line of wallpapers and friezes of both English and American origins.
- **Carter and Company/Mount Diablo Handprints** has a large archive of Late Victorian and Art & Crafts wallpapers.
- **Charles Rupert/Historic Style** of Victoria, British Columbia, is perhaps the leading North American importer of William Morris and other English Arts & Crafts wallpapers.
- **J.R. Burrows & Co.** sells late Aesthetic and Colonial Revival papers interspersed with Arts & Crafts patterns.
- **Mason and Wolf Wallpaper** creates late-Victorian, Arts & Crafts, and Aesthetic Movement period wallpapers that are hand-screened in authentic colors.
- **Trustworth Studios** is the leader in reproducing the works of C.F.A. Voysey in a line that includes many colorful and whimsical patterns drawn by this notable figure.

a new generation of British designers continued in the Arts & Crafts tradition. Most notable was C.F.A. Voysey, an architect and designer who created a large archive of animal and foliate patterns for fabrics and wallpapers. His designs are playful and often based on fairytales—with cats, birds, and rabbits scampering about—and they are also more stylized and less detailed than Morris's work, bridging the eras between Victorian and Modernism.

**Craftsman Connection**

If you're wondering what William Morris has to do with your own bungalow,
The late 19th-century Aesthetic Movement was often blended with the Arts & Crafts, as in this design of distinctive cattails and dragonflies on a stylized background.

Groves of trees—like the ones in the frieze encircling this room—are an iconic, enduring Arts & Crafts image.

TOP: The late 19th-century Aesthetic Movement was often blended with the Arts & Crafts, as in this design of distinctive cattails and dragonflies on a stylized background.

BOTTOM: Groves of trees—like the ones in the frieze encircling this room—are an iconic, enduring Arts & Crafts image.

ABOVE: English architect C.F.A. Voysey was the successor to William Morris, producing designs for wallpaper, textiles, and carpets. His scenic pattern "The Stag" dates from the turn of the century.

America's Mission or Craftsman style drew much of its inspiration from the English Arts & Crafts movement's reduction of ornament and the "flattening out" of elements. Led by Gustav Stickley, who was famous for his simple, straightforward furniture designs, this approach translated to wallpaper with patterns evolved from naturalistic elements that incorporated geometrics and stripes in their vocabulary. The palettes of these wallcoverings were even more organic and simplified than those of their earlier English cousins; brown, greens, and golds were pervasive, with simple flashes of brighter accent colors on occasion.

While the first generation of English Arts & Crafts was more "Victorian" in feel, the second generation, concurrent to the American Craftsman style, could be more Art Nouveau in appearance. The same applied to American papers, but these also revealed the robust influences of the Prairie School and the works of Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan. At this time, Americans were beginning to develop their own design vocabulary that drew from Native American and Western motifs.

One of the features that became popular in the late 19th century was the use of an embellishing element called a
frieze or border. These could range from simple, 3"-wide strips to massive bands that were architectural in appearance and exceeded 2' in height. They were usually placed at the upper extreme of a wall, but also could be used to frame a section of wall fill, or around door and window casing. Popular motifs for friezes were forest scenes, seaside vistas, and repeating patterns of flowers or leaves that were highly stylized and linked with geometric ornament. In addition to adding visual interest to a room, the use of borders also helped anchor the wall to the ceiling and was compatible with the thick, dark oak timbering found in new Craftsman-style homes.

It's important to note that while the Craftsman style was indeed on the cusp of 20th-century Modernism, it continued to have one foot firmly planted in the 19th century. And nowhere did the love of ornament survive more than on the walls of bungalows and Mission-style homes. 

Author Dan Cooper owns Cooper's Cottage Lace, which specializes in Arts & Crafts designs.

ABOVE: The 1910s witnessed the waning of ceiling papers, but American Arts & Crafts papers were, and are, offered in complete roomsets of fill, frieze, and ceiling paper. Naturalistic themes—including leaf and flower designs like this sample—remain popular.
Dressing Up the WINDOWS

Window treatments confer privacy while giving rooms a décor-boost. Here’s our guide to the best window embellishments for old houses.

By the OHJ Editorial Staff
No matter how proud you are of your refurbished old house, we're willing to bet you don't want passers-by to be able to constantly peer into your windows.

Enter the window treatment. Whether solid interior shutters or delicate lace panels, window coverings help protect the privacy of your interior spaces by obscuring the view from outside. They also can boost energy efficiency by blocking drafts from leaky windows in the winter, or full-on sun at the height of summer.

And then there's their impact on décor—like rugs, pillows, and other soft furnishings, window coverings are a seemingly inconsequential detail with surprisingly hefty influence. In his landmark 1850 book The Architecture of Country Houses, tastemaker A.J. Downing enthusiastically recommended embellishing the window, saying, "Nothing 'furnishes' a room so much as curtains to the window...not merely because they take away from the bareness of plain casings and subdue the glare of light, but because there are always pleasing and graceful lines in the folds of hanging drapery—even of the plainest material."

A well-chosen window treatment can seamlessly tie together a period-inspired room; the wrong one can put it subtly off-kilter. Read on to find options for homes of every vintage.

**Interior Shutters**

Shutters were the original window treatment, used since the days of ancient Greece to simultaneously block unwanted sunlight, protect interiors, and provide ventilation. Most commonly used in warmer climates, louvered shutters with wide blades, opened and closed via a central rod, were particularly popular in the deep South. (These "plantation shutters" have experienced somewhat of a renaissance in recent years, and now are readily available from many manufacturers.)

Interior shutters were also popular in the colonial-era homes of New England, but in this case they were solid, designed to keep winter drafts at bay. Board-and-batten shutters were the norm in country dwellings, while interior shutters in finer houses featured raised panels. The latter could either be bifold, or slide into special pockets (called embrasures) built into deep window wells.

Unlike other window treatments, which were often combined to enhance their effects, interior shutters typically stood alone. "In all the finest rooms of the 17th and 18th centuries," writes Edith Wharton in the 1902 guide The Decoration of Houses, "the inside shutters and embrasures of the windows were decorated with a care which proves that they were not meant to be concealed by curtains."

**Curtains**

In their earliest incarnations in American homes, curtains were used more for protection from drafts than for décor—if they existed at all, they were typically plain, tab-topped panels or basic shirred valances. By the Georgian period, however, European influence was beginning to creep into the homes of the well-to-do, where understated swags and cascades made the most of expensive imported damasks, brocades, and velvets.

As American textile production increased in the latter half of the 18th century, so too did the length of curtains. These newly floor-length models were
Blinds

Thanks to their association with the mini-blind craze of the 1980s, blinds have gotten a bad rap for historic homes. But they actually have a rich history in interior decoration, stretching from the days of ancient Egypt, when they were formed from reeds plucked from the Nile.

In American interiors, wooden "Venetian blinds" (so-called because they’re said to have been adapted by Venetian traders who witnessed them in Persia) were introduced to the U.S. in the mid-18th century. These wooden slats—anywhere from 1" to 3" wide—were connected via a long, flat strip of cloth. They could be painted or stained any color. Dark cherry and walnut stains were popular during the Georgian period, whereas Federal interiors often featured blinds painted white or gray to match window casings.

Wooden blinds waned a bit during the decorative frenzy of the Victorian era, but remained relatively popular until the 1940s, when they were superseded by the latest technology: aluminum. Aluminum blinds were used frequently in mid-century homes, in a range of groovy colors. Vertical and woven blinds were also popular during this time frame, until they were washed out of fashion by the ubiquitous mini-blind.

Lace

Although lace has been used in interior decoration for centuries, it only achieved its status as a window dressing in the 19th century, when the Industrial Revolution brought about manmade lace (known as Nottingham lace, after the city where it was widely produced). No longer concerned with exposing expensive handmade laces to direct light, lace became a symbol of sophistication and refinement during the Victorian era, often draped around windows or tied back with tassels.

Topped by painted or gilded wooden cornices and adorned with more elaborate embellishment in the form of tiebacks, tassels, and fringe—trends that continued into the subsequent Federal era. Federal and Greek Revival homes did away with the wooden cornice, however, in favor of swagged valances that paid homage to the diaphanous robes worn by mythological goddesses. Beginning in the mid-19th century and continuing for several more decades, curtain arrangements were often accented with lambrequins—flat, stiff panels of fabric with a curvaceous border that artfully framed the window opening.

By the time the Victorian era rolled around, curtain options had all but exploded, drawing on dozens of different influences and available in several different fabrics (velvet, silk, rayon, lace, chintz). Mixed liberally and held in place with fringed, braided, or metal tiebacks, curtains were perhaps the most prominent symbol of Victorian excess—no wonder, then, that the following eras (Arts & Crafts, early Modern) largely eschewed curtains in favor of showcasing decorative windows. When curtains were used in early and mid-20th-century homes, they were likely to be basic floor- or sill-length panels that hung straight down or were contained by simple tiebacks.

**ABOVE:** A swagged valance atop full-length curtains was a popular treatment during the Federal and Greek Revival periods. **BELOW:** A Georgian home displays one of the era's favorite arrangements: richly stained wood blinds framed by cornice-topped floor-length curtains.
sunlight, the Victorians began piling lace around the windows. Popular forms included swags and jabots, panels, and full-length curtains—even lace tiebacks.

The popularity of such frilly lace curtains was intense but relatively short-lived. Around the turn of the century, as they began creeping into mainstream outlets such as the Montgomery Ward catalog, domestic authorities of the day derided manmade lace curtains as a symptom of Victorian showiness without substance.

And yet, the use of lace as a window covering continued through the early 20th century, albeit in a much more simplified form. Arts & Crafts homes tended to favor Madras laces—Gustav Stickley recommended these sheer panels embellished with simple geometric borders in the pages of The Craftsman. Even more popular during this period were “glass curtains”—sheer fabrics like muslin that were colored or patterned.

Shades

The first spring-type roller shades were brought to the American colonies by German and Dutch settlers, but they didn't really become popular in the States until after the War of 1812—but once they did, they never really fell out of fashion. Early roller shades were made of a thick cotton or linen—often oiled or glazed—called Holland cloth, which remained the preferred fabric until the 1950s, when it was usurped by cheaper vinyl. The only real technological advancement for roller shades came about in the late 19th century, when a counterbalancing mechanism and built-in stop allowed for the “automatic” spring shades we know today.

Throughout the eras, people have sought to dress up plain-Jane roller shades. In the early 19th century, semi-translucent shades were often painted with landscape scenes to add decorative panache. (Though a popular practice, it wasn't for everyone; in The Architecture of Country Houses, Downing complained that such treatments “only hide, nine times in ten, a more interesting view of the real landscape without.”)

Roller shades were often used in concert with other window treatments, such as curtains and lace panels. Stenciling—historically used to decorate the wall around the window jamb—has been adapted as a decorative treatment on many a reproduction roller shade.

By contrast, Roman shades—although immensely popular today for both contemporary and historic interiors—have a much briefer history. Though they're said to have underpinnings in ancient Rome, they didn't really appear on the window-treatment scene until the mid-20th century. However, they're a close cousin of the festoon, a pull-up shade immensely popular in colonial interiors. Most festoons were homemade, unfinished affairs; Roman shades can mimic their appearance while conferring a more tailored aesthetic.

www.oldhouseonline.com
The Essential Six

Furnishing an Arts & Crafts home? These iconic pieces are at the top of every collector's list.

By Barbara Rhines
Morris Chair

What could be more artsy-craftsy than lounging by the fire with a mug of tea perched on the Morris chair's wide paddle arm? Introduced around 1865 by Morris & Co., the chair's adjustable-back design—based on a Sussex carpenter's pattern—was configured for cozy comfort. Gustav Stickley later took William Morris' concept and refined the chair's styling; his slats-to-the-floor design is a now considered an Arts & Crafts classic.

With their turned spindles and claw feet, pre-Stickley-era Morris chairs are usually deemed too fussy by collectors. But even among the pared-down Stickley-designed chairs, there is variety. An open-arm chair (no side slats) is the most affordable, and is still robust and attractive. My early L. & J.G. Stickley open-arm Morris chair has been my husband's preferred TV viewing seat for more than 15 years. Next in desirability comes the side-slats-to-the-seat model; the aforementioned slats-to-the-floor style is at the top of the desirability scale. From there, even more rarified designs by Stickley can be found, including the bent-arm Morris chair, bow-arm Morris chair, and a design that incorporates slender squared spindles rather than broad slats.

SHOP

What's Out There

"If you aspire to a slats-to-the-floor Morris chair, an affordable option is the Morris chair produced by J.M. Young," advises Messineo. "These can be found in the $2,000 range, whereas a similar Gustav Stickley-designed chair is currently in the $8,000 range." Good-quality reproductions are also available from Warren Hile Studio and Stickley Audi & Co.

Whether you approach American Arts & Crafts furniture with a design-trained eye or a sentimental heart, its appeal is undeniable. The period's best pieces stand boldly at the threshold of Modernism. At the same time, the furniture evokes nostalgia for a pre-industrial era.

One well-designed piece can be enough to make a statement in a contemporary interior, or you can assemble an entire collection to re-create the warmth of a turn-of-the-century living room.

Although furniture-makers at the dawn of the 20th century produced a wide array of Arts & Crafts-style furnishings, the following pieces have become must-have items for the Arts & Crafts enthusiast. Some forms are easy to find and offer a terrific bang for the buck. Others are what we all aspire to own. Jim Messineo, owner of the JMW Gallery in Boston, offers some advice on pricing and what to look for in a great piece of Arts & Crafts furniture.
This is the perfect accompaniment to a Morris chair, and period examples are relatively plentiful. Library tables are sturdy rectangular tables with a lower shelf on which to pile books. Some have end shelves as well, and generic types are still widely available in antiques shops. People misunderstand the purpose of library tables and assume they are small, uncomfortable desks (“Where do I put my feet with that shelf going across?”), but don’t dismiss them. Find a well-made example (solid oak, through tenons, hefty legs), pile it up with interesting books, and place it away from the wall to make a strong statement in a room.

Library Table

ABOVE: Quarter-sawn oak, corbels, and great hardware enhance the common form of this L. & J.G. Stickley library table.

BELOW, LEFT: The arched stretchers and raised tenons of this L. & J.G. Stickley tabouret are its only decoration—an embodiment of Arts & Crafts ideals.

BELOW, RIGHT: A Stickley even-arm crib settle is bold in design, yet deep and comfortable.

Tabourets

Perhaps the most beloved piece of furniture of the 20th century and beyond is the highly useful coffee table. Unfortunately, it didn’t exist during the Arts & Crafts period. If you’d like to be true to the period but still have a convenient place to set your glass down, consider a tabouret—a low round or octagonal table. Place a pair of tabourets together in front of your settle for a charming, period-inspired alternative to the ubiquitous coffee table.

SHOP What’s Out There

Period library tables range from $300 to $3,000, depending on quality, maker, and rarity. Library tables from the A&C era were made in large quantities. Unsigned tables that are not quarter-sawn oak, have end shelves, and are nailed together rather than pinned crowd the low end of the price range. Higher-end tables are quarter-sawn oak, and have pegged through tenons and subtle design details, such as corbels on the inner side of the legs.

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SHOP What’s Out There

Tabourets are easily found in antiques stores, for anywhere from $150 to $2,000. They range in quality from turn-of-the-20th-century high-school shop projects to small gems of Arts & Crafts joinery created by Stickley and other fine furniture-makers of the period. The high-end examples have through tenons and gently arched stretchers, and the best have inlaid tiles from period manufacturers like Grueby.
Along with the Morris chair, the even-arm settle (also called a box settle) is the quintessential piece of seating for the Arts & Crafts collector. To the uninitiated, the even-arm settle may appear severe and uncomfortable, but the opposite is true if you pile it with comfy cushions and nestle into the corner. Reserve the discomfort rap for those Arts & Crafts settles with high backs and low arms (sort of an indoor park bench). These are better used in entryways or as visual focal points.

Period examples of box settles can be delightfully light and airy, such as L. & J.G.'s Model #232, with its carefully spaced back slats. Or you may prefer a beefy, deep "crib" settle that envelops the sitter in a sort of room-within-a room.

Butterscotch-colored leather upholstery ties together this Los Angeles bungalow's suite of Arts & Crafts seating, which includes two Morris rockers and a slats-to-the-floor Morris chair. A tabouret (at right) and library table (at left) provide space to display the owners' collection of art pottery.

Even-Arm Settle

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SHOP

What's Out There

Even-arm settles were made by all of the major Arts & Crafts furniture companies and range from $2,000 to $10,000. Higher prices reflect construction, maker, heft, proportion, and comfort, with deeper seats being more comfortable and therefore more desirable.
Rarest of the Rare

The pieces listed here are ones that the interested collector has a good opportunity to discover at shows, shops, or auction. The scale of rarity and desirability for Arts & Crafts furniture can always ratchet higher. For example, a tall Roycroft magazine stand is currently in the $20,000 range. Then there's the one-of-a-kind art furniture by Charles Rohlfs, who took the basic tenets of the movement to creative new heights with his inventive shapes and intricate carvings. If you covet museum-quality forms but don't strive for original finishes and their attendant value, you may want to consider reproductions or handcrafted interpretations by modern-day craftspeople. As interest in the Arts & Crafts movement has grown over the last two decades, handmade artisan furniture has experienced something of a boom—much of the work displays the same hallmarks of quality and creativity as the movement's original pieces.

But if you've got your heart set on antiques, you're in luck. Says Jim Messineo: "With prices stabilized in the middle range, now is the time to trade up or even begin collecting original Arts & Crafts furniture."

ABOVE: A pair of Stickley settles, accompanied by a Roycroft tabouret and bookcase, set an inviting scene in a reconstructed Arts & Crafts living room in Berkeley.

RIGHT: The quaint cutouts of a Limbert single-oval occasional table soften the typical library table form.
Bookcase or China Cabinet

Storage is a priority for everyone, and there's no better way to store books or breakables than in a beautiful Arts & Crafts case piece like a bookcase or china cabinet. (The latter has glass sides as well as glass doors to better display china or pottery.) Through tenons on the plank ends are desirable; keyed tenons are even better. Also look for true divided lights on the doors and the use of quarter-sawn oak on the mullions themselves as well as the rest of the piece. Lifetime produced lesser-quality bookcases with a mullion grid laid over a single pane of glass; they are still attractive and desirable, but the price should reflect this cost-cutting production technique.

SHOP What's Out There

A bookcase or china cabinet—whether from the period or a reproduction—is an investment. Any high-quality reproduction in solid quarter-sawn oak will still run in the thousands of dollars. All of the period pieces are rare in the marketplace, so any attractive bookcase should be considered. Prices range from $1,000 to $10,000 for antiques, depending on the aforementioned construction details. The low-end pricing includes bookcases with plain glass doors with no mullions. These were produced by all of the Arts & Crafts furniture-makers, and while they don't have the same look, they do offer an attractive, unobstructed display space for your art pottery collection.

ABOVE: Lifetime bookcases (which were manufactured by the Grand Rapids Bookcase and Chair Company in Hastings, Michigan) offer a fine look at a lower price than period Stickley.

Limbert Occasional Table

Arts & Crafts collectors naturally focus on the Stickleys: Gustav, L. & J.G., and Stickley Bros. But every collector should aspire to a Limbert piece. This Grand Rapids-based manufacturer successfully brought English and Northern European influences into its designs, and Limbert pieces can have interesting cutouts and subtle curves. An exquisite example is the single-oval occasional table, which adds grace to a room with its canted legs, trapezoidal cutouts, and curved top. Place an art pottery vase filled with forced forsythia stems on this table, and your room will become an artistic revelation.

SHOP What's Out There

Expect to pay around $2,000 for a refinished Limbert single-oval occasional table (perhaps subject to too many water stains from flower-filled vases over the years) to $5,000 for one with its original finish. The rare Limbert double-oval occasional table evokes the work of Scottish master Charles Rennie Mackintosh and is in the $10,000 range. Both forms are being reproduced if you can't wait to locate an original. Stickley Audi calls its single-oval table the Limbert Library Table, and the Warren Hile Studio produces a well-crafted example that would be a beautiful addition to any collection.

Massachusetts-based writer Barbara Rhines is a longtime collector of Arts & Crafts furniture and pottery.
Electrifying Decisions

What you need to know to get an old house rewired properly, with minimal damage to the building.

By Tony Seideman

Computers, blenders, TVs, radios, even refrigerators—none of these existed when many historic homes were built and first wired. So upgrading electrical systems is an essential task for a lot of old houses. Yet efforts to update electrical systems can often result in damage to historic buildings.

Old houses often need updates to electrical systems; the author’s 1903 home (above) was no exception. Follow these tips to get it done without causing undue—or irreparable—damage to your building.
Grounding is one of the most important issues to be dealt with in rewiring a house. Electricity likes to follow the path of least resistance. Having a good ground means having a path that leads to the ground—or to some inconsequential area the electrician has designated as a ground. Having a poor ground means that electricity will follow whatever path provides the least resistance, which can include vulnerable steel beams, sensitive equipment, and people. For example: If a garbage disposal isn’t grounded, you will be hit with current if you turn on the disposal while holding the faucet handle with the water running. If it is grounded, the short circuit should go to the ground.

We certainly learned the hard way with our 1903 transitional Victorian, which has taken quite a beating because of our lack of knowledge about how to get the job done right. The house had a “dual” system when it was built—gas pipes and electrical lines. A knob-andtube wiring system led to one outlet in each room. Right before we bought our house, my wife and I saw a movie called Little Voice, in which a record store was consumed by a fire caused by old, inadequate wiring. Thus when we turned the lights on for the first time in our dining room and a short circuit arced so brightly we could see it through the ceiling medallion, getting new wiring into our seven-bedroom, three-story house became a top priority.

Most rewiring jobs aren’t prompted by art films. According to one of the experts we consulted, Michigan-based master electrician Pat Bohnet, houses will often give telltale signs it’s time to rewire, including blowing fuses or tripping breakers regularly, wire case or coating deteriorated to the point where bare wires are visible, and arcing or shorting like we experienced.

Modern Demands

The demands of modern technology can exacerbate the situation, and they’re at risk of doing so all the time. Older houses were built at a time when 60 amps was considered plenty of electricity for a single residence. By contrast, most new homes are built with 150- or 200-amp service, but 100 amps was the standard for many years—and most experts agree that anything less than 100 amps is unlikely to meet the electrical needs of a
Creating a clean cut (above) via a hole saw or careful work will make it easier to make walls or ceilings whole again. Uneven access holes, like this one punched in the author's house (left), prove difficult to patch.

Minimize Destruction

◆ Talk with your contractors about preventing damage to your house. If you don’t make it a priority, they won’t either.

◆ On two-story houses, wire the first floor from below, through the basement, and the second floor from above, through the attic. If you have three stories, plan carefully how to address the middle floor before allowing any holes to be cut.

◆ Watch out for decorative moldings; they are very vulnerable to damage—make sure your contractors understand this.

◆ Don’t let anyone hammer holes in walls; make sure a hole saw is used, even if it has to be 4” or 5” in diameter. This simplifies repairs—it’s possible to cut out and pop in a new piece.

◆ Make repairs a condition of the work. This motivates tradespeople to avoid doing damage.

◆ Never let anyone cut through a structural beam to add wiring.

New wiring systems often can be run near the old—as in this vintage house that’s been successfully rewired, with a new box placed near now-defunct ceramic knobs on the basement ceiling.

contemporary household.

I can attest to that—my house has 100 amps, and it definitely isn’t enough.

The service is split between a main panel in the basement and a sub-panel on the third floor. The panel on the basement is so fully loaded that we’ll have to do an upgrade when it comes time to finish the kitchen. And our electrical work to date has left uneven holes punched in our walls and ceilings, which have proved difficult to repair.

Conversations with top electricians have provided us with a dozen steps on how to get rewiring done right. Our research showed that, although rewiring will always be a big, challenging job that should be undertaken by professionals, aggressive negotiation and smart planning can mitigate the damage.

We’ve put together a list of steps to take in order to make rewiring proceed more smoothly, with fewer holes punched in the walls, floors, and ceilings—or, heaven forbid, a structural beam.

Prevention is Key

First and foremost, it’s critical to understand that you’re dealing with an older building—and if keeping the structure of that building relatively intact is your top priority, you need to say so up front. Chances are you may have to pay a little extra to protect your building, but a few preventive dollars and hours can save big
10 Tips for Rewiring Success

1. Do an "electrical inventory," creating a list of all the devices you'll be using in the house, and where. Your electrical system needs to match your needs; figuring out where and how you'll be using power makes it easier to frame the parameters of the job.

2. Check out local codes and pull permits. Codes set standards for everything from how many outlets you'll put in each room to what kind of wire you'll be using. Failing to get permits can result in having to pull out finished work.

3. Decide whether you want to run just electrical, or data, fire, and security as well. Modern wiring doesn't just carry electricity, and wireless systems are getting increasingly cheaper and more sophisticated.

4. Use your list to create a detailed plan of action. Once you've done your initial homework, sit down and create a punch list that focuses on what you want done and when you want it completed; the list should be the basis of your relationship with your electrician.

5. Watch for existing infrastructure. Part of avoiding damage is making sure nobody punches holes in plumbing or existing wiring. This kind of awareness needs to be a top priority in any rewiring job. "Ask twice, drill once"—one historic electrician's credo—are words to live by.

6. Always put things in writing, but leave flexibility. Surprises invariably show up, especially when you're digging deep into a building's structure.

7. Find an electrician who knows and understands older buildings. Working in older buildings is a complex, demanding, and difficult process.

8. Make demolition and reconstruction an integral part of the job. If dealing with the damage done by rewiring isn't at or near the top of your list, you're asking for trouble. Make cleanup and restoration as important as the wiring itself.

9. Aim for "home runs" for key areas and appliances—these are when a wire runs directly from a circuit breaker to an outlet, with no other devices on that breaker. That can reduce loads on the power system and keep popped breakers to a minimum. Additionally, it's important to keep track of which areas feed to which breakers where more than one outlet is involved. Creating a "balanced" system will make life easier as your load expands and you put new wiring to use.

10. Integrate switches and plates into the historic look and feel of the house. Numerous companies offer hardware that matches the appearance and the feel of almost any era, while providing a far greater margin of safety than older equipment does.

"Most efforts tend to be heavy-handed and replace more than what is truly necessary to an older system. Many parts of an older wiring system, if they have been undisturbed, are still quite usable and reasonably safe," he says. "Bottom line, after inspection by a competent and qualified electrician, leave much of what you find in place and working. There are many houses with electrical systems from the 1920s still delivering power in a safe and efficient manner."
OPPOSITE: The iron fence around the home is original; it was shipped to Denver from Pittsburgh via train and oxcart. THIS PAGE: Homeowners Dylan Williams and Kate Remley were meticulous in their restoration of the 1877 house—they replicated the original multicolored slate tiles on the tower’s mansard roof (a bit of Second Empire detailing that hints at the house’s age) and even added back the miniature gilded horses on each corner (described in an 1877 Boulder News article).

Historical Detectives

Some amateur sleuthing leads a Colorado couple to restore a Gothic Revival house to its frontier glory days.

 STORY BY CHARLES BEVIER ♦ PHOTOS BY JOE HILLIARD

By day, they’re engineers at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, but in their off-hours, Kate Remley and Dylan Williams are such passionate history buffs that they chose a restored train car as the site for their wedding ceremony. So perhaps it was fate that brought their house-hunting journey to one of the most historic homes in Boulder, Colorado.

“We spent quite a few months not finding anything that we really liked,” recalls Kate. “One evening we visited a house for sale and decided it wasn’t what we were looking for. So we decided to go for a walk. We walked up to what is now our home and saw the ‘For Sale’ sign and thought, ‘Well, this is just lovely.’”

Taking in the graceful lines of the Gothic Revival—its lacy trim, high arched windows, and imposing mansard tower—Kate and Dylan were immediately smitten. “It was more than we wanted to spend, but we made it work,” recalls Kate.

Dylan says he was drawn to the home’s history. “When they built this home, Boulder was a frontier town,” he observes. “What they were able to accomplish in construction during that time is just extraordinary. They set up their own horse-drawn mill in the backyard. All the carpentry and millwork was cut by hand, right on the site.”

Past Life
The house was built by Willamette
Arnett in 1877. His father, Anthony, who emigrated from France in 1859, amassed a fortune from freight, mining, and real estate ventures. He owned the Boulder House and Brainard Hotel. He also donated land and money to help build the University of Colorado.

When Willamette came of age, he was a wealthy man—and he liked to make a point of it by wearing $10 gold pieces instead of buttons on his tailored suits. In a time when most couldn’t afford many pairs of socks, Willamette wore wool socks on the outside of his shoes as he stalked the dusty streets—just to prove that he could. Few laughed openly at his wardrobe choices, however, since he enjoyed a fierce reputation for combat. “He was known as Fightin' Will, because he liked to pick fights,” says Kate. “He definitely was an eccentric.”

When Fightin' Will set out to build himself a home near the banks of Boulder Creek, he hired a 27-year-old British architect named George E. King. Despite his youth, King was well-traveled and well-trained in design. In addition to his own small but elegant cottage in nearby Leadville, King's lengthy resume also boasted the Leadville Post Office, the Tabor Grand Hotel, Denver's Central High School, and the Delaware Hotel.

With King's design skills and Fightin' Will's deep pockets, the two created a Gothic Revival with Second Empire overtones. Not large by today's standards at only 1,800 square feet, it was lavish for the times, costing $4,000 to build—more than twice the price of surrounding homes. Also commissioned was an ornate cast iron fence, which still encircles the home. Manufactured by a Pittsburgh company, the fence was shipped by rail to Omaha, Nebraska, then traveled by oxcart to Boulder. The fence cost another $1,500—more than a third of the cost of the house.
Fightin' Will didn't live out his golden years in his fancy house. He sought adventure in the Klondike Gold Rush in Alaska, dying there in 1900. The Victorian was purchased by Eliza Fullen in 1914, and remained in her family until it was bought at public auction by Historic Boulder in 1993.

Restoring History

From the start, Kate and Dylan were united in their motivation to return the home to the days of horse and carriage. “We definitely wanted to restore rather than renovate,” Kate says. “We’re installing modern conveniences, but doing it such a way that you really get a sense of how it was to live when Boulder was a frontier town.”

Continuing the restoration started by Historic Boulder, who had done some basic rewiring and other small upgrades, the couple diligently researched old photos and historical documents. An 1877 newspaper account of the construction of the home, unearthed in the attic of the tower, provided detailed descriptions of each room and its furnishings, including how the tower was surmounted by gilded horses. The couple has used these clues to restore the home to the owner’s original vision.

They started with the flooring on the first story. After removing carpeting and a layer of linoleum, Kate and Dylan were delighted to discover the original wood floors, which they refinshed. “The wood is this gorgeous, old-growth spruce with a really tight grain. It was our first discovery, and it was really exciting,” Kate says.

A two-day-long blizzard in 2005 dictated the next project: storm windows to increase energy efficiency. “We had two weeks of 10-degree weather. Even with the boiler running 24-7, it never got above 55 degrees. They closed our work for two weeks, so we set up in the yard and starting building windows,” recalls Kate. “We installed new weatherstripping and a combination boiler/hot-water heater. That warmed things up considerably.”

They turned their attention to the 1950s-era kitchen next. Their goal was to re-create an 1880s scullery. They removed drywall to expose brick, and, with the help of local carpenter Dean Mirabassi, peeled back two false ceilings to reveal the original wood-paneled ceiling (once damaged by fire), increasing the height of the room from 8' to 12'. They dismantled
The narrow, curving staircase is a fine example of the quality craftsmanship Arnett insisted on for his home. INSET: Finding a piece of original slate in the garden led Dylan to replace the asphalt shingles on the mansard tower with slate tiles that he cut and installed himself.
and rebuilt the ceiling, salvaging and reusing as much of the original wood as possible. Instead of kitchen cabinets, antique hutches and sideboards now house their plates, flatware, and cooking implements. A restored vintage stove, outfitted with electric burners, completes the time-travel transformation.

The couple continued their detective work outside the house. The heavily ornamented stables, described in newspaper articles, are no more. But an original tack house remains—now used as a storage shed—with room for gear on one side and the other devoted to what was once a privy. A well and cistern were reportedly once on the grounds of the double-lot site, but not even ground-penetrating radar, wielded by a local university history professor, has been able to reveal their location.

Digging in the garden one day, Dylan made a discovery—a small piece of slate. Knowing slate isn’t native to Colorado,
Many of the original trees planted in the garden in the 1880s are still producing fruit today; Kate jokes that many of the weeds in the garden also have roots that date back to the 1880s.

He played a hunch. The couple ran it through the dishwasher, and discovered it was pierced with one small, perfect circular hole. "I knew immediately it must have come from the roof," Dylan says.

Indeed, when Dylan located an old photo of the home in the Boulder Carnegie historical library, he discovered that the mansard tower, since covered in asphalt shingles, had once been wreathed in decorative slate. Determined to restore it, Kate combed the gardens for more samples. Her CSI-like work paid off, yielding multiple examples of three slate colors.

"We started sending samples around to different slate producers," Dylan says. It soon became clear that one form of slate they'd found, called "unfading red," is extremely rare, costing three times more than other kinds of slate. They also discovered that particular color was limited to one valley that runs from Pennsylvania to Vermont. "We went to the oldest slate producer in that valley," says Dylan, "and that's where we found it."

Change in Plans
Installing slate is a specialty that few roofers have experience with. Kate and Dylan discovered that even contractors who had the know-how found the tower dimensions difficult to work with. Some proposed extensive scaffolding; others, cranes. Prices for installing the slate tile on the relatively small tower ranged as high as $40,000.

Finally, the couple located Octavio Sergio Libman, owner of Sergio's Roofing. "Sergio agreed to do it for $12,000. He was an honest guy who really understood our desire to do this right," Dylan recalls. But then tragedy struck: Two carjackers shot Sergio to death when stealing his
gray Porsche in December 2006.

Rocked by the news, the couple held off on the project. Dylan spent the winter reading Joseph Jenkins' *The Slate Roof Bible*. By spring, he had decided to tackle the project himself. "I used to be a rock climber, so heights don't bother me," he says. It took him all summer, working at night and on weekends, painstakingly installing each tile. "Being up on that tower, dangling from a rope and harness, realizing that people did it this way in 1877, only reinforced my connection to the house and the past."

Future restoration plans include returning the pantry to the original porch near the scullery and restoring the bedrooms on the second floor. "We're trying to make it like a living museum," Kate says. "It's rewarding to re-create how these people lived back in the 1880s," Dylan adds. "Our work on the home will long outlast us, which is really gratifying."

RIGHT: This bathroom, which once boasted a clawfoot tub complete with a circular shower and its own stove for heating water, was at one time the only indoor bathroom in Boulder. BELOW: Kate and Dylan’s first-floor bedroom features a vintage stove restored by the couple. Purely decorative, it’s similar to ones that would have originally heated each room, venting through the chimney.
ABOVE: A built-in bench on the second floor is flanked by bookcases and a pair of sconces with lustre glass shades.

OPPOSITE: Structural upgrades to the bungalow included seismic reinforcement, plus a new garage that created a sunny deck on the side of the house.
By his own admission, Nick Khoury didn't know much about the Arts & Crafts movement when he embarked upon a two-year journey to fix up the 1912 bungalow that he and his wife, Dina, own in Portland, Oregon. But he recognized that a successful project would hinge on being able to peel back the layers of the home's history, “I knew I had a knowledge gap and needed to fill it somehow,” he says. “I was the general contractor, and I had all the subcontractors lined up, but I didn't have anyone on the project who really understood the history of the house.”
By luck, fate, or some combination of the two, Nick happened upon C.J. Hurley and Barbara Pierce—the duo behind the period-design firm C.J. Hurley Century Arts—as they were completing some exterior paint work on their home. “He kept asking us all these questions,” C.J. remembers, “and finally said, I’m working on my house in another part of the neighborhood—would you guys like to come over and take a look?”

C.J. and Barbara arrived on the scene just in time: The Khourys’ carpenter was recommending removal of the distinctive flared skirting above the home’s belt course. “Barbara and I were like, ‘Why are you doing that? This is what makes your house unique,’” C.J. recalls. Nick and Dina hadn’t given a second thought to the feature—but they caught on to its value as C.J. and Barbara explained its original function (its flared edge appears to have been designed to shed rainwater) and its Eastern-influenced Arts & Crafts underpinnings.

The skirting stayed, and the contractor who had suggested its removal was dropped from the project. Soon, work on the house began to move in an entirely new direction. “C.J. and Barbara really educated us,” Nick acknowledges. “They put us on a path of preserving as many of the original architectural elements as possible.”

**Strategic Save**

Those original elements include one of the home’s most distinctive features, a brick fireplace that had been partially covered by a wall when the home was converted to a boarding house in the 1920s. “We had no idea what was back there until we tore out that wall,” Nick says. “We uncovered all of this old yellow brick that stairstepped up on the sides.”

Nick and Dina’s original plan for the fireplace was to demolish it and build a replacement in a less conspicuous location to open up the room, but C.J. and Barbara urged them to keep the fireplace intact. “C.J. was emphatic,” Nick says. “He told us, ‘You can’t find brick like this anymore.”

Unfortunately, the home’s past (after the boarding house closed, it was a rental unit for several decades) had left the fireplace in pretty bad shape. The original brick mantel had been removed to make room for that boarding-house wall, and apparent fire damage had left many of the bricks around the firebox pitted and stained. “We brought in the guy who restored all of the bricks on Portland’s Union Station, but even he couldn’t bring them back,” C.J. says.

So he came up with a period-appropriate solution, covering the lower section of the fireplace with classic Arts & Crafts-style green tile, and designing a new wood mantel that incorporates elements from the home’s moldings (all of which he also designed, based on period conventions and a few remaining original pieces). The original brick is still visible above the mantel. “The fireplace is now the centerpiece of the home,” Nick says.

**Detail Oriented**

Their work on the fireplace typifies C.J. and Barbara’s approach toward the home’s restoration—where original material was missing or too damaged to save, they came

**Products: Paint Colors: Consultation by C.J. Hurley Century Arts. Living Room: Woodwork design, C.J. Hurley Century Arts; Woodwork fabrication, Mason Brothers (now out of business); Tile on fireplace, custom. Dining Room: Buffet construction, David Hoffer Construction, LLC; Chandelier, Lumen Essence. Second Floor: Emory single sconces with pull switch, Schoolhouse Electric; Magnolia Tulip shades, Lundberg Studios; Berkeley shower chandelier (above stairs), Schoolhouse Electric. Foyer: Restored vintage pendant light, Rejuvenation.**
LEFT: C.J. designed the dining-room buffet to house Nick and Dina's wedding china. The couple had originally envisioned hanging sconces on the wall, but once C.J. realized that would trap the light, he advocated hanging box-beam pendants from the buffet instead. ABOVE: Because the original banister ends halfway up the stairs, C.J. had to find a creative solution to meet code requirements—and the iron handrail was born. It incorporates the diamond motif from the upstairs balusters (which are original to the house, but were replicated by C.J. to meet code height requirements).

Need more Arts & Crafts inspiration? Check out our Top 10 Bungalow Restorations.

www.oldhouseonline.com

up with new designs based on historical precedents. "We respect the past of the house, but we also like to give the homeowners their own meaningful layer of history," says Barbara.

For Nick and Dina, much of that layer comes in the form of artistic details designed by C.J., many of which were solutions to problems that popped up during the course of the project. The iron railing on the interior stairs, for example, was originally conceived as a way to get around a code issue. "We wanted to retain the original banister," C.J. explains, "but the way it dies into the ceiling didn't meet code, which specifies that the banister has to be continuous." So, incorporating diamond details from the original balusters and adding a bit of an Art Nouveau flourish, C.J. designed a new handrail and brought in blacksmith Van Kellems to forge it in iron.

Other new-but-period-inspired details came courtesy of the Khourys themselves. Armed with vintage examples from C.J. and Barbara, they delved into Portland's extensive market of old-house parts to search for light fixtures. "We hadn't placed lighting high on the list of things we would fret over, but the more we got into it, we realized that if we didn't do it right, it would affect the whole house," says Nick. Their careful hunting yielded an eclectic mix of vintage and reproduction fixtures—an eye-catching mélange that, says Barbara, perfectly represents what an average bungalow would have looked like in the early 20th century. "People often get it stuck in their head that just because it's an Arts & Crafts bungalow, it has to look like a picture book with everything matching," she says. "But that wasn't really the case back in the day—things were a lot more diverse."

The couple's most prized antique lighting finds grace the downstairs rooms, while more basic reproduction fixtures were hung upstairs. This same public/private division is echoed in other details as well—namely, the countless yards of molding C.J. designed to replace long-gone originals. In the living and dining rooms, dark-stained trim with complex profiles and graceful curves confers a more formal atmosphere; upstairs, the more simplified molding is painted. "When you walk into the house, you see this integrated molding system that makes the home look all tied together," says Nick. "You'd think it's all original, but it's not."
By the end of the two-year project, the Khourys not only had a house they loved and newfound friends in C.J. and Barbara, but also a budding appreciation for the Arts & Crafts movement. "I've learned a bit about how they did things back in the day, and there's a lot to be said for it," says Nick. "I never imagined myself living in an Arts & Crafts home 10 years ago, but I love it."

He gives credit for his change of heart—and the project's change in direction—to C.J. and Barbara. "The house would have looked very different without them," he says, "and not in a good way."

Although the end result was quite a departure from the contemporary renovation the Khourys had originally envisioned, Nick wouldn't have it any other way. "I had the feeling that this was going to be the last time someone was going to restore this house for the next 100 years," he says. "I wanted to do it right."
Working Class

A development of World War I worker's cottages in tidewater Virginia reveals the Arts & Crafts era's unwavering dedication to quality dwellings.

Story and Photos by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell

Hilton Village, a cluster of more than 300 modest Arts & Crafts-era houses located near the James River in Newport News, Virginia, is more than a quaintly appealing place to live or visit. It is also a seriously historic site.

Built between 1918 and 1920 in response to the urgent need to bring skilled workers to Newport News' shipyard during World War I, Hilton Village was the first—and possibly the best—federally funded housing development in American history.

Unlike most wartime workmen's quarters, though, Hilton Village was no shoddy, temporary tenement meant to be abandoned when the war ended. These houses, and their community, were built to last. And last they have.

Decisively Planned

Led by Henry Vincent Hubbard, a prominent Harvard University planner, a team of architects, landscape architects, and sanitary engineers put together a scheme for a new suburb that would continue to
THIS PAGE: Designs reminiscent of Old English cottages dignify many of the houses, especially in the complex rooflines and varied materials.

OPPOSITE: As designed by Hilton Village architect Francis Y. Joannes, the Warwick Boulevard commercial area, with apartments above the shops, remains a vital focal point of the community.
All the houses are of frame construction, but they are variously sheathed in clapboards, shingles, or stucco. Despite their relatively small size, the houses have mostly retained their early character, thanks in part to their narrow lots (25' to 40' wide), which have caused most additions to be placed behind originals. Windows were originally six-over-six double-hung or casement sash; many have today been replaced with modern low-E varieties.
be attractive, permanent, and profitable even after the war ended.

Hubbard’s “village” was laid out to suggest a neighborly little English country town, in keeping with the “New Town” or “Garden City” concept espoused by British planners Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin in the late 19th century. As a fully planned community in a previously undeveloped place, it provided enough commercial activity along bordering Warwick Boulevard to satisfy residents’ daily needs, while electric trolley service connected them to the wider world of downtown Newport News, about three miles away at the time. Neighborhood schools, churches, and parks kept wives and children happy at home, while the trolley sped the men to their shipyard jobs and brought them home again in time for dinner at the end of the day—an idyllic suburban life.

Friendly old trees shade the houses, which are arrayed along a grid of straight but narrow streets meant, even back then, to discourage automobile traffic. An engaging optical illusion is achieved by occasional widening, the green street-front verges in the middle of the block to form semicircles on both sides of the street. On Main Street, a somewhat broader thoroughfare that runs from Warwick Boulevard to River Avenue, a number of houses retain their original detached garages at the back of the lots—too small for today’s cars, but offering valuable storage space.

These days, the English village concept is most apparent in the mixed commercial and residential blocks of Warwick Boulevard, the broad, divided street at the leading, western edge of Hilton Village, where the trolley once ran. The trolley tracks are long gone, and the median has recently been landscaped and beautified in hopes of restoring the vitality of the commercial area. Shops, restaurants, and even an old movie theater (now converted to a playhouse) are still here, making this an excellent starting point for a Hilton Village walkabout. The extensive size of the suburb may suggest driving at least part of the way, however.

A Movement’s Ideals

The Arts & Crafts movement—the great popular swing toward simplicity in life, art, and architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries—followed a long period of fussy Victorian design and ever-increasing materialism. Although it had already passed its peak by the late 1910s and early ‘20s, its appeal was still strong. In England and Europe, the movement idealized the church-building era of the Middle Ages, with its tradition of artistry and craftsmanship, and its intimate sense of community. The Arts & Crafts goal was to re-create a more “spiritual” connection between work and daily life. While the handcrafted object ruled in Great Britain, the U.S. movement, led by people like publisher and furniture-maker Gustav Stickley, managed to embrace machine-made objects as well. Its social emphasis lay heavily on home and family life.

Choice Offerings

The buildings themselves presented a wide range of housing opportunities. Most were one-and-a-half- or two-story detached or semi-attached single-family dwellings. A few apartments built above the shops on Warwick Boulevard accommodated bachelors and childless couples. The houses also were carefully thought out before building began. Hubbard’s team interviewed the housewives who would move into the development, and
their wish list determined many of the homes' signature features. Since these were solidly middle-class families headed by skilled mechanics, they asked for quite a lot: hardwood floors, modern kitchens with coal ranges, built-in storage in the bedrooms and dining room, Murphy beds, and efficient heating systems that included both floor heaters and fireplaces. The women also requested big back yards with room for gardening, and safe, quiet streets and sidewalks for their children. Needless to say, these amenities didn't come cheap—the average house cost $3,200.

As for architecture, picturesque simplicity in the Arts & Crafts manner was the overriding quality that distinguished Hilton Village. Old English (Tudor) features such as half-timbering (simulated by dark-stained wood "timbers" laid diagonally and horizontally over white stucco walls) were prominent on small "Cotswold" cottages. Simplified Georgian and Dutch Colonial styling lent an air of Early American dignity to many of the homes.

To avoid monotony, these three basic styles were decked out in 14 variations, randomly distributed throughout the district. Almost every street contains a combination of detached houses, double houses, and multi-family houses.

It takes a bit of looking to realize that the greatest distinctions are found in the roof shapes. Except for the Old English houses, which often have projecting entries, the footprints are standard rectangles or near-squares. The roofs, however, may have front or side gables, jerkin-headed (clipped) gables, or gambrel or hip shapes of steep or shallow pitch. Some of the most fetching designs showcase Gothic-infused Old English details such as projecting entries with improbably steep one-sided catslide roofs. Abetted by differences in the basic plans and materials, these varied rooflines—and the canny placement of buildings on their narrow lots—produce the illusion of exceptional variety.

Though it was the first of a hundred or so federally funded housing developments, Hilton Village today is a stellar example of private ownership—a little gem in a large and rapidly growing urban setting. 

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ENTERPRISE, MS—Pilgrim's Rest. This early 1800s antebellum home is an extensive, well-maintained house on 20 acres, including a 5-acre lake. Greek Revival columns, beveled glass doors, and soaring ceilings accentuate this 2,600 sq. ft. home. This 3 bedroom, 2 bath home boasts 3 fireplaces, a well-lit kitchen and stately living, family, and dining rooms. Spectacularly landscaped, Pilgrim's Rest is the perfect refuge. $485,000. pilgrimsrestms@gmail.com or 202-255-4947.

CAPE CHARLES, VA—Tower Hill. Exquisite waterfront home, circa 1746. Completely restored in 2001. Formerly a B&B with 5 bedrooms, 6 1/2 baths, and numerous fireplaces. 3 stories with 5,500 sq ft., extended porches, 2nd floor balconies. All the bells and whistles. Lush landscaping, huge towering trees, boat dock, sunset views. Minutes to Chesapeake Bay. $1,495,000. Blue Heron Realty Co., 757-678-5200. www.BlueHeronVa.com

PRESCOTT, WI—1906 Victorian masterpiece! Stunning Victorian set up to be run as a B&B or single family home. Boasts a very large kitchen, parlor, greeting room, library, living and dining rooms, Queen Anne porch, 6 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, 6 fireplaces, 5 spa tubs, and owners' living quarters, and extra carriage home. Located in beautiful St. Croix River Valley only 3 blocks from Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers. $497,450. Owner, 612-419-1085. www.youtube.com/watch?v=x83LOn8440
Perplexing in Pink

Arts & Crafts tastemakers were fond of spouting off rules for living by the movement's maxims, so their own houses must have been pictures of perfection, right? While not as well-known as giants like Gustav Stickley and Elbert Hubbard, William B. Brown was no less prolific—from a factory in Bluffton, Indiana, he produced thousands of his patented all-wood lighting fixtures, along with handcrafted furniture, art glass windows, and complete store interiors in the Craftsman style. Brown's creative confidence was so high that he took the unusual step of including full-color views of his own home in the company's 1912 catalog.

In the intimate vignette above, Brown's wife, Clara, entertains young Will Jr., while older sons Harry and Norman read by one of his distinctive table lamps. The room is chock-a-block with W.B. Brown fixtures and furniture, as well as Native American artifacts, hand-woven rugs, and even—behind custom monogrammed leaded-glass doors—a cabinet full of player piano rolls (the mp3s of their day).

So in this haven of Arts & Crafts hipness, what's up with the hot pink wallpaper? Exuberant in both pattern and palette, it challenges our notions of "restrained response to Victorian excess" and begs the question: Are we bumping up against the limitations of color printing in 1912, or just our own prejudices about what constituted good taste during the Arts & Crafts era?

Bo Sullivan is the historian for Rejuvenation and the owner of Arcalus Period Design in Portland, Oregon. He is an avid collector and researcher of original trade catalogs.
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MAGAZINES BROUGHT TO LIFE
Survival of the Biggest

LIKE ANIMALS that puff up their chests in an attempt to intimidate opponents, old houses seeking to defend their territory in crowded neighborhoods can sometimes become overly inflated. Take this semi-detached row house, for example: While its Colonial Revival neighbors stand by calmly with classic running-bond brickwork, sheltered full-width front porches, and flat roofs with dentilia ted cornices, it attempts to assert its dominance via conspicuous herringbone bricks, a cantilevered balcony, and a towering mansard roof.

Its aggression caused our contributor to do a double take: “I thought it might be a teardown,” he says, “but the windows line up, the front door is in the identical spot, and the footprint is basically the same.” We think that, as in the animal kingdom, when old houses start to swell in size, trouble can’t be far behind. 

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