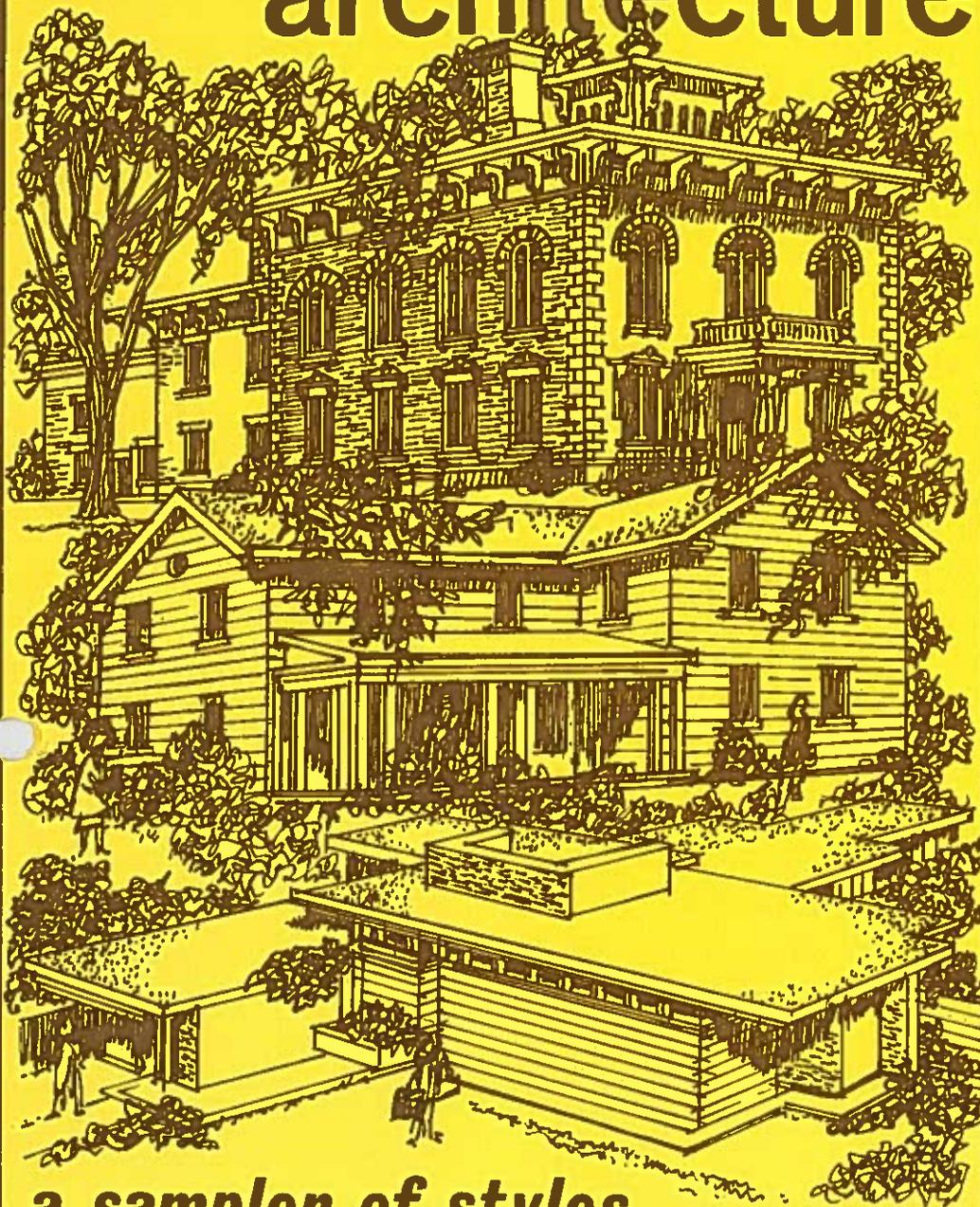


J.O. McWilliams

evanston architecture



a sampler of styles

Prepared by the Evanston Preservation Commission in conjunction with the Evanston Planning Department.

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EVANSTON ARCHITECTURE

A SAMPLER OF STYLES

Prepared by
Jeanne Kamps Lindwall, Preservation Coordinator
Evanston Planning Department
1976

Cover by: Alfred Tyler
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FORWARD

I believe you will find this slim volume on Evanston architectural styles as rich in detail and variety as the community itself. For those who love houses and just enjoy looking at them this publication will add immensely to your pleasure, and your knowledge. It will help you move beyond the cliché of "Evanston's fine homes" to a sharper definition of just what gives these homes their character and variety.

The booklet was originally assembled to help instruct volunteers in the identification of architectural styles in preparation for a survey of potential preservation districts. It was soon recognized that these materials would have an even greater appeal beyond the special interest of the survey volunteers. Some seventeen different styles are described and illustrated with photographs, not only of the buildings themselves, but of the details that give the houses their special character. Each style is concisely described and although technical terms are necessarily used, these terms are clearly described in an illustrated glossary. So if you don't know an "Italianate" from a pizza parlor or a pilaster from plaster, read on and enjoy.

There is also a helpful bibliography listing books dealing with special styles of architecture, particular architectural periods and more general literature on American architecture.

By no means a complete catalogue of Evanston styles, it is, as its title admits, a sampler. However, I am certain that the appeal of this little book will be lasting and widespread. I expect it to be around and in demand for years to come.

Richard E. Carter
Planning Director

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INTRODUCTION

Diversity, character and harmony best describe the spirit of the architectural heritage which Evanston so proudly boasts. Nestled among Evanston's tree-lined streets is a rich blend of architectural styles. Homes built by farmers, tradespeople and wealthy residents, churches and commercial structures testify to both the diversity and continuity of the community.

Unlike cities such as Savannah and Williamsburg which enjoy importance because they represent a particular epoch of building, Evanston's architecture derives its special character from its unique blend of both the historic styles of the past and the contemporary styles of the present. Examples of the vernacular buildings of early Evanston residents can still be found, some of them substantially the same as when they were first constructed. Also in existence are fine examples of many of the popular architectural styles dating from the last half of 19th century and continuing through the contemporary styles of the 1970's.

The pages which follow outline the distinguishing features of the architectural styles which have been popular in Evanston and throughout the Midwest. An illustrated glossary has been included to provide the reader with descriptions of unfamiliar architectural terms. We have also indicated the period during which each style was popular in Evanston. Finally, a bibliography has been included to guide the reader to more detailed literature on the subject.

The earliest examples of Midwestern architecture generally did not represent any particular developed style. Built by pioneer farmers, relying upon sometimes rudimentary building skills, most of these early homes were simple frame structures with little or no ornamentation. As life became easier, more elaborate structures were built by carpenters using designs from architectural pattern books of the day. As the region grew in prestige and importance so too did the reputation of local architects, who went on to gain both national and international prominence.

Several of the earliest architectural styles which were used in Evanston represent the ideals of the Picturesque Movement. Proponents of this philosophy of architecture and landscape design believed that landscapes and buildings should exhibit the qualities seen in the pictures of the most admired landscape painters of the day. The movement, which originated in England during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, was a reaction against the formalism of Renaissance styles. Pastoral settings and romantic views of the world were very much in vogue. Victorian Gothic, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Chateausque styles are all expressions of the philosophy of this movement.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and continuing into the twentieth, there began a reaction against the qualities which had been so admired by proponents of the Picturesque. The result was a return to the formalism of

Classical and Renaissance architecture. Evanston's examples of the renewed formalism can be seen in Classical Georgian, and Federal Revival homes and public buildings of the period.

Not all architectural styles which are found in Evanston are revivals of historic styles. Prairie School architecture was developed in the Chicago area and represented a rejection of the use of historic styles. In Europe, other architects were also beginning to reject the use of stylistic revivals, in favor of clean and unadorned architectural forms which found their expression in the use of modern building materials.

As the twentieth century has progressed these modern expressions of architectural forms have laid the foundation for current contemporary styles. At the same time there has been continued interest in historic styles, this time with the emphasis largely on early American building forms as models.

Among the many architects who have been responsible for shaping the visual character of Evanston, several deserve special mention. Daniel Burnham not only designed a number of fine Evanston buildings, but was also one of the most influential architects and earliest city planners in the country. Thomas Tallmadge was responsible for the designs of several Evanston churches and in addition was the chairman of Evanston's first Plan Commission. William Holabird, an Evanston resident, along with his partner, Martin Roche, was responsible for a number of Chicago's finest commercial structures of the day. Among the other notable architects who have practiced in Evanston are: S. A. Jennings, Walter Burley Griffin, Robert Spencer, George Maher, Myron Hunt and Dwight Perkins. The styles which are described in this booklet were used for a variety of building types. Not only were homes built which employed the characteristic elements of a particular style, but churches, public buildings and commercial structures as well. While the plan and structural elements may differ substantially from the descriptions which follow, the architectural styles of religious, commercial, public, and apartment buildings can still be distinguished by an examination of the decorative elements of the structure.

VERNACULAR (19th Century)

Built by early settlers in the Evanston area, these houses are simple frame structures and farmhouses. These early buildings generally do not fall into any distinct historic style and although many have been altered it is still possible to find good examples. They generally are sheathed with wooden clapboard siding, have gently sloping uncomplicated roofs and little or no ornamentation. The early farmhouses of the area, built by immigrant farmers from Germany or Luxembourg, often featured a first story which was built of brick with the second floor having a wooden clapboard exterior.



VICTORIAN GOTHIC (1866-1870)

Built by early settlers soon after the Civil War from designs in carpenter pattern books, particularly those by Andrew Jackson Downing, homes were loosely based on characteristics of Gothic architecture. The style is part of the picturesque movement which was prevalent in the 19th century. This movement stressed the qualities of "truth," "reality" and "character" as opposed to the abstract "beauty" of the classical architecture of Greece and Rome. The most important example of this style in Evanston is the Frances Willard Rest Cottage.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

asymmetrical, picturesque and irregular massing; entrance usually located on one side of the front facade.

ROOF:

steep sloping roofs; a prominent central gable often with elaborately carved and decorated "gingerbread" bargeboards and eaves.

WINDOWS:

pointed windows and bay windows are common.

MATERIALS:

wooden clapboard siding or most typically vertical board and batten siding.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

bargeboards; details that tend to hang 'down or stand up.



FRANCES WILLARD REST COTTAGE



ITALIANATE (1860-1874)

Italianate architecture borrowed heavily upon the Italian country home as its model. Italianate homes were the first residences in Evanston of any size and ornamentation. A part of the picturesque movement, this was the practical style of the day. It was not an ecclesiastical or governmental style, but a domestic and a commercial one.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

generally symmetrical, but can also sometimes be L-shaped and wrapped around a square three story tower; balustraded balconies are common.

ROOF:

gently sloping hipped or gabled roofs; distinctive wide eaves with brackets sometimes grouped in pairs around the roof overhang, frequent use of polygonal or square belvederes or cupolas atop the roof.

WINDOWS:

frequently windows have hoodmolds or pediments and sometimes they are rounded at the top; bay windows are common.

MATERIALS:

clapboard, brick, stone or smooth stucco.

DECORATIVE DETAILS:

eaves and cornices are decorated with over-scaled brackets; there are often columns or pilasters (flat representations of columns) which appear to support an entablature (a group of horizontal beam-like elements).



QUEEN ANNE (1882-1900)

The popular success of the Queen Anne style in America dates from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876, at which the British government erected two Queen Anne buildings to provide living quarters and offices for the British Executive Commissioner and his staff. Richard Norman Shaw was the English architect credited with first developing the Queen Anne style which dates from 1868 in England. Another of the picturesque styles, the Queen Anne style was popular in Evanston and the Midwest through the 1890's.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

very asymmetrical or irregular plan with elaborate turrets, towers and multiple gables; a variety of surface textures, roofs and wall projections.

ROOF:

roofs are steep and multiple with many intersecting gables; hipped roofs are uncommon, making the open gable end the main contribution to the overall effect; may have turrets with "candle snuffer" roofs.

WINDOWS:

windows are of many shapes and sizes; bay windows are frequently employed as are rounded or polygonal corner towers.

MATERIALS:

wood, brick or stone, often in combination which contributes to an overall variety of surface textures.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

details are frequently classical and tend to be small in scale, overwhelmed by the building itself; tall thin chimneys with brick and occasionally tile are used in unusual and intricate design patterns making them an outstanding design feature.



SHINGLE (1885-1895)

The Shingle style evolved from the Queen Anne style. Sheathed with shingles, the overall effect is simpler, quieter and more strikingly geometrical than the Queen Anne. There is more horizontal emphasis, and less variety in color and materials. The Shingle style was developed in New England, New York and Pennsylvania. Eastern architects were among the leaders in its development.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

asymmetrical with a horizontal emphasis; shingles emphasized the continuity of the exterior surface as a skin stretched over the underlying wooden skeleton.

ROOF:

roofs may be hipped, unlike the Queen Anne, gabled or both, and can also be gambrel; often described as rambling in appearance; the pitch of the roof is more moderate than that of the Queen Anne style with broad gable ends; emphasis on long sweeping uninterrupted roof surfaces.

WINDOWS:

windows are small paned, often grouped in horizontal bands.

MATERIALS:

the exterior walls of the upper story, and often the ground story, have a uniform covering of shingles; where the lowest story is not shingled, it is normally of stone although sometimes of brick.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

little or none; very subtle.



CHATEAUESQUE "FRANCOIS I" (1890-1900)

This style is derived from European castles, manors and chateaus, especially those in France and England. The Chateausque, whose special character resulted from the adroit mixing of Renaissance and Late Gothic details, was rather tricky for all but the best architects and builders to undertake successfully. By the 1800's architects were generally more wary about taking liberties with the elements of the earlier medieval styles upon which the Chateausque was based. However, countless houses were still given something of a chateausque air with high roofs, wall dormers, and ornamental cresting, when other features did little or nothing to support the effect.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

asymmetrical plan, often with round turrets, corbeled out from the walls at the second floor level with conical "candle snuffer" roofs.

ROOF:

usually steep-sided hip roofs rising to a ridge or flat top, with many dormers; roofs are often surmounted by metal railings and openwork metal cresting.

WINDOWS:

may be either linteled or arched with a type of arch called the ogee arch, in either case the openings are crossed by masonry mullions and transoms, forming what the French call "croisettes."

MATERIALS:

always masonry construction.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

chimneys are usually elaborate; the ogee arch is often used for doorways as well as windows.



CLASSICAL REVIVAL (1895 -1910)

Classical Revival architecture did not pretend to copy ancient Greek buildings, but rather to accurately use certain details. The revival of interest in classical architecture in this area was largely due to the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 held in Chicago. Examples of this style are seen in many important public and commercial buildings of the period.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

symmetrical, formal and orderly, pedimented porticos are a central feature; sometimes porticos are eliminated and decorative pilasters are applied to the faces of buildings.

ROOF:

roofs are gently pitched, heavy looking and simple compared to later styles, often having simple gable roofs without projections; eaves are detailed as elaborate and heavy classical cornices.

WINDOWS:

windows and doorways are not arched.

MATERIALS:

almost always white, most commonly of masonry construction.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

prominent gables (pediments) framed with heavy moldings (cornices); Doric, Ionic and Corinthian columns were used.



GEORGIAN AND FEDERAL REVIVALS (1898-1930)

Most Georgian and Federal Revival houses in Evanston were built between 1910 and 1930. They are derived from 18th century houses in England and in the original American colonies. The Georgian and Federal Revivals were motivated by a desire to restore order to the architectural scene and recapture a sense of tradition. These stylistic movements have continued into the present as evidenced by the many houses and apartment buildings of the so-called "Williamsburg-style" which is so prevalent in modern subdivisions.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

strictly symmetrical facade; the central part of the facade usually projects slightly and is crowned with a pediment, with or without supporting pilasters; occasionally a portico with free-standing columns may form the central feature, chimneys are placed to contribute to the overall symmetry.

ROOF:

roofs are hipped, gable or gambrel; hipped roofs are often topped with a flat deck and balustrade; eaves are detailed as classical cornices with all of the features including dentils (protruding rectangular blocks) associated with classical forms; dormers are common in the sloping roof.

WINDOWS:

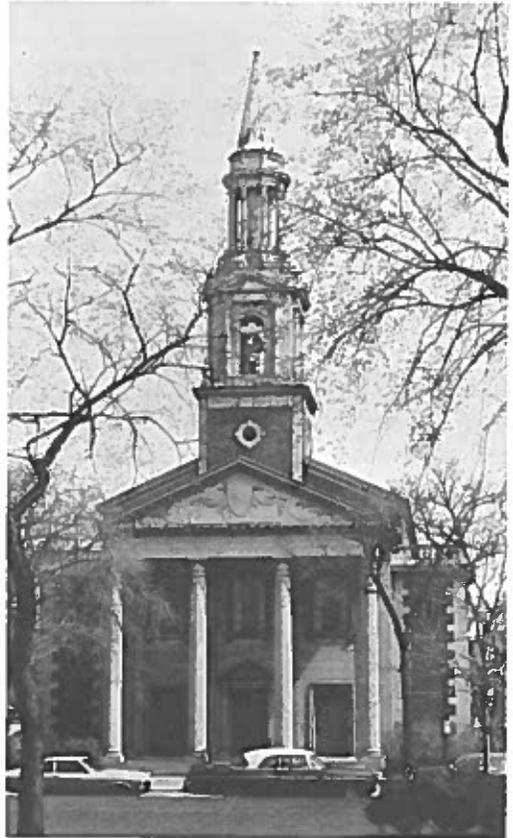
the standard window is the rectangular double-hung; the palladian window is sometimes used as a focal point.

MATERIALS:

usually red brick with white trim.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

doorways have fan lights and are often set in elaborate churchlike frames.



PRAIRIE (1897-1914)

The Prairie style was the first American architectural style which did not consciously emulate European sources. The use of historic styles as models for domestic architecture was rejected by the Prairie School architects. They believed that they were living in a new cultural age whose architecture deserved an aesthetic expression of its own. In freeing themselves of the stylistic trappings of historic architecture, the Prairie architects created an architectural style which was based on the reduction of architectural masses, shapes and forms to their most essential forms and the open expression of materials. Frank Lloyd Wright was the central figure of the Prairie School. While Evanston boasts only one house designed by Wright himself (2420 Harrison), numerous Prairie school examples exist by architects such as George Maher, Walter Burley Griffin, Robert Spencer, Myron Hunt, John Van Bergen, and Tallmadge & Watson.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

two stories and sometimes three, with single story wings in more than one direction; cruciform floor plans often are used to spread the house out in four directions; strong overall horizontal emphasis.

ROOF:

low roofs, often hipped, with extremely large eave projections; porches or carports at the ends of wings often have roofs that are an extension of the main house roof.

WINDOWS:

horizontal bands of windows with wooden casements are common as is the use of stylized geometric patterns in leaded-glass windows.

MATERIALS:

often built as a wood frame house, commonly with plaster and heavy bands of horizontal wood trim on the exterior. Sometimes brick exteriors or horizontal board and batten (wood strips) were used.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

applied ornament is minimal, and when used is integrated into the overall design of the structure, chimneys are low massive features.



BUNGALOW (1900-1925)

The bungalow had its heyday here between 1910 and 1920, although tens of thousands of later houses were built in this style. A flood of literature on the Bungalow style emanated from California after the turn of the century in the form of magazines and catalogues of plans. Sets of working drawings for bungalows could be bought for as little as five dollars, resulting in identical bungalows being found in widely separated locations. The bungalow filled the need for smaller homes. Although less important aesthetically than the Prairie School, the style was far more pervasive nationally.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

small modest dwelling with simple horizontal lines; if a second story was provided, it was generally a half story to give the house a one-story look; entrances on the side of the front facade, enclosed "sun-rooms" and porches are often featured.

ROOF:

wide projecting roofs, usually showing exposed rafters ends (parallel beams supporting the roof).

WINDOWS:

not a distinguishing feature.

MATERIALS:

usually built of ordinary wood siding either horizontal or vertical, with logs, stones, brick or stucco veneer used to give a rustic character to the structure.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

a massive chimney is a common feature and protruding brackets are frequently used as decorative features.



TUDOR (1895-1925)

During the beginning of the 20th century many American architects began to develop a new spirit of Eclecticism. Architects began to borrow from and copy the historic styles of the Tudor period (16th century England). These houses were fairly accurate reproductions of their English models, but equipped with modern plumbing and mechanical conveniences.

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

irregular with wings sometimes going off at oblique angles, usually two stories, may also have towers and turrets.

ROOF:

roofs are generally very steep.

WINDOWS:

windows are divided into vertical rectangular sections by stone dividers, larger windows may have horizontal dividers; bay windows are frequent.

MATERIALS:

half-timber (exposed framing) is the prominent feature on exterior walls; exterior materials can also be brick with cut stone trim.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

Tudor arches are common over entries and sometimes over first floor windows; chimneys are frequently decorated with patterned brickwork with decorative flues (chimney pots) extending above the chimney.



OTHER DERIVATIVE STYLES (1900-present)

In contrast to the innovative designs of Prairie School architects, many other architects and builders found it fashionable to continue to borrow from the various styles of the past. These stylistic revivals have continued in parallel with the development of the Prairie School and other contemporary styles. A number of revival styles have continued to be employed in Evanston including:

SPANISH COLONIAL REVIVAL

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

generally asymmetrical, porches are common and may be post and lintel or arched.

ROOF:

red tile roofs which are either flat or of low pitch.

WINDOWS:

curved windows (and doors).

MATERIALS:

white plaster or painted white brick.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

doorways may be flanked with columns or pilasters; balconies with wrought iron or wooden railings are common as are window grills also of iron and wood.



DUTCH COLONIAL REVIVAL

(A vernacular style)

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

one and a half or two stories.

ROOF:

gambrel roof is the most distinctive feature.

WINDOWS:

often have shutters.

MATERIALS:

wood shingle, clapboard or brick.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

not a distinguishing feature.



ENGLISH COTTAGE

(a vernacular style)

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

one and a half or two stories; steep gable in front but otherwise low in profile.

ROOF:

gable

WINDOWS:

possibly shutters.

MATERIALS:

commonly brick.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

not a distinguishing feature.



FRENCH PROVINCIAL

(a vernacular style)

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

one and a half or two stories, low in profile.

ROOF:

steep gable roof with dormers.

WINDOWS:

possibly shutters.

MATERIALS:

usually brick.

DECORATIVE DETAIL:

not a distinguishing feature.



NEW ENGLAND COLONIAL

(a vernacular style)

CHARACTERISTICS

PLAN:

two stories, often with the second story overhanging the first; with or without dormers.

ROOF:

gable roofs of moderate slope, with or without dormers.

WINDOWS:

often have shutters.

MATERIALS:

clapboard exteriors, shingle, or a combination of clapboard and brick or clapboard and stone.

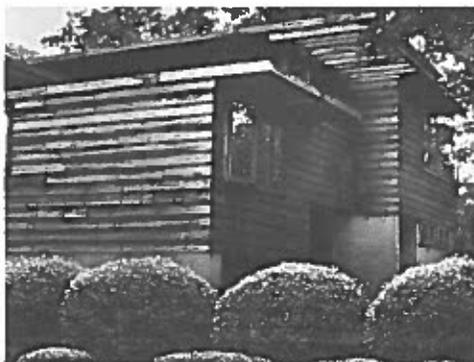
DECORATIVE DETAIL:

ornamentation is simple.



CONTEMPORARY (1935-present)

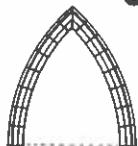
Dating from about 1935 a number of stylistic developments have emerged, especially in domestic architecture. Many of these homes have antecedents in the earlier Prairie School or are derived from the work of recent European architects. Among the most common of these building types have been the ranch house and the split-level. It is still too early to assess what impact these current developments will have on the architecture of the future or the place they will carve for themselves in architectural history. However, they add an important element to the diversity of Evanston's architectural heritage.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ARCH TYPES

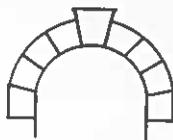
Gothic:



Ogee:



Keystone:



Tudor:



BALUSTRADED BALCONY

A balcony which is enclosed by a series of columns or pillars supporting a hand-rail.



BARGEBOARD (Gingerbread)

A decorative board covering the projecting rafter of the gable end of a roof.



BELVEDERE

A roofed but open-sided tower or turret built for the sake of the view.



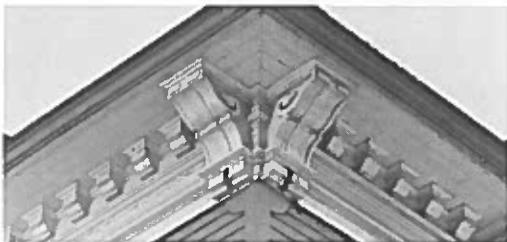
BRACKETS

Small projections built out from the wall to support the eaves of a roof – can be highly ornamental.



CORNICE

A decorative molding usually placed at or near the top of an exterior wall.



CRESTING

A light repeated ornament, incised or perforated, which is carried along the top of a wall or roof.



CUPOLA

A small domed structure rising from a roof or tower.



DENTIL

Tooth-like blocks which are often features of classical cornices.



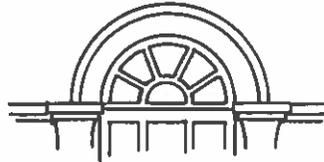
DORMER

A structure built into and projecting from a pitched roof which contains an upright window lighting the space in a roof.



FAN LIGHTS

A semicircular or semielliptical window above a door.



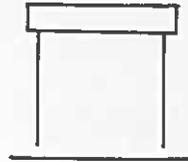
HOODMOLDS

The projecting molding over the heads of doorway windows and archways to throw off rain.



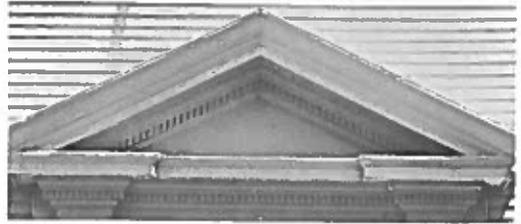
LINTEL

A horizontal structural member which spans an opening.



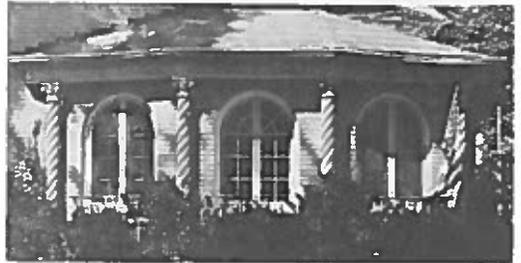
PEDIMENT

The gable end of the roof of a Greek or Roman temple.



PILASTER

A flat-faced representation of a column, in relief against a wall.



PORTE-COCHERE

A porch at the door of a building for sheltering persons entering and leaving carriages.



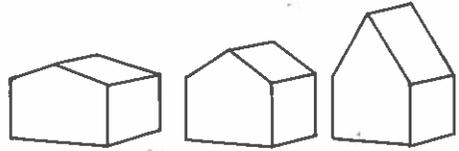
PORTICO

A large porch having a roof supported by columns or pillars, often with a pediment.

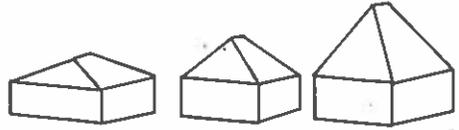


ROOF TYPES

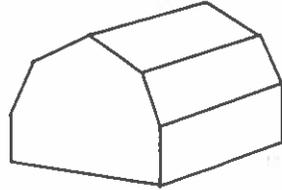
Gable: *the upper part of a terminal wall under the ridge of a pitched roof.*



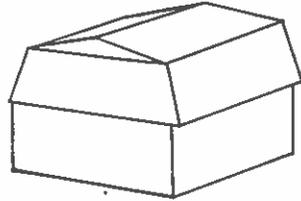
Hipped: *a roof with slopes on all four sides. The hips are formed where the slopes meet at the corners.*



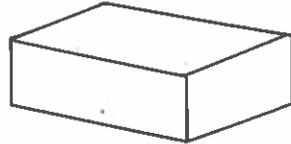
Gambrel: *a roof with two slopes of different pitch on either side of the ridge.*



Mansard: *a roof with two slopes on all four sides, the lower one being much steeper than the upper.*



Flat: *a roof with no slope.*



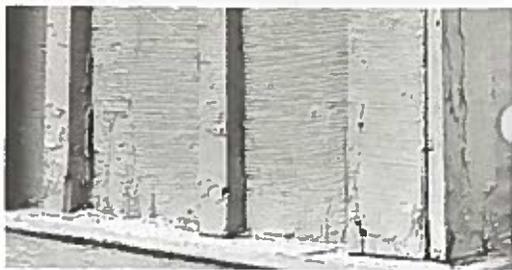
TURRETS

Small towers often containing stairs which are located at the corners or sides of buildings.



WALL MATERIALS

Board and Batten: flush-mounted boards with narrow strips of wood (batten) used to cover joints; may be either vertical or horizontal.



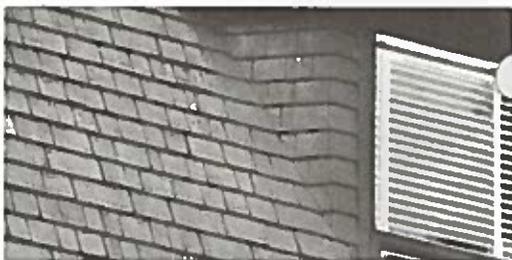
Clapboard: narrow, horizontal, overhanging wooden siding; boards are usually 4 to 6 inches wide.



Half-Timber: wooden framing members (which may or may not be structural elements) that are exposed on the outside of the wall, which is usually plaster.



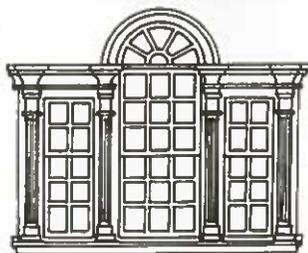
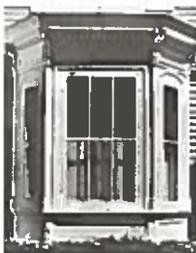
Shingle: wooden shingles; edges may be cut in a variety of patterns.



WINDOW TYPES

Bay: projecting window.

Palladian: a window type where three openings are treated as one; the center section is arched with two linteled side sections.



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NOTE

The buildings pictured in this booklet are all located in Evanston. Since this publication is intended to serve as a guide to the characteristic elements of the architectural styles which have been popular throughout Evanston's history, we have chosen not to include addresses for these buildings. A walk through nearly any neighborhood in the city will reveal equally fine examples of building styles. For those interested in self-guided tours of Evanston's architecture, two additional publications are available from the City of Evanston.

Evanston Architecture: A Sampler of Self-Guided Tours
Our Bicentennial Trees and Significant Homes