

Styles of Rochester's Residential Architecture¹

Knowing the age and style of your house and learning about the period when it was constructed will enable you to make better maintenance, repair, and rehab decisions. Ideally, we want to enhance the appearance of our homes in a way that will increase their value, complement our neighborhoods, and retain the historic integrity of the properties. Whether a house is simple and unadorned or replete with Queen Anne detailing, its design and the elements that comprise this design were carefully chosen to conform to styles that often developed over decades and even centuries. It is important to understand your house well enough to avoid compromising the design with inappropriate additions, subtractions, or repairs.

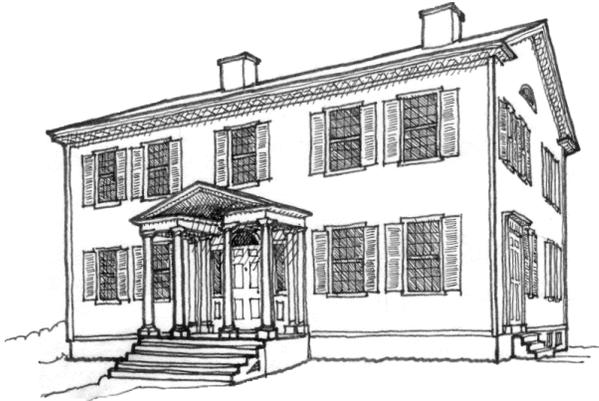
Your house might not easily fall within any of the following categories, or it might have details from two or more architectural periods. Don't worry if you can't place it in a particular slot; some houses simply cannot be identified by a particular style. It's perfectly acceptable, and sometimes preferable, to describe your house by its layout and details and forget about the style.

¹ The information on styles comes from *Rehab Rochester: A Sensible Guide for Old-House Maintenance, Repair and Rehabilitation*, published by the Landmark Society of Western New York with support of the City of Rochester, and available in full text at www.landmarksociety.org.

A.1 Residential Architectural Styles

Federal (1780s-1820s)

This style, found in only a handful of houses in the city of Rochester, was inspired by English interpretations of classical motifs. It is characterized by delicate, attenuated details and rigorous symmetry.



Characteristic features include:

- Vertical emphasis
- Low-pitched roofline
- Narrow cornice that barely projects beyond eaves
- Delicate, slender details
- Fan-shaped gable windows
- Elaborate entryway, typically with fan window, flanking sidelights, small porch
- Symmetry
- Six-over-six windows with thin muntins

Greek Revival (1820s-50s)

Architecture inspired by classical Greece is prevalent in the Corn Hill neighborhood. The typical Greek Revival house was designed to resemble a classical temple, with its evenly spaced columns supporting a triangular pediment.



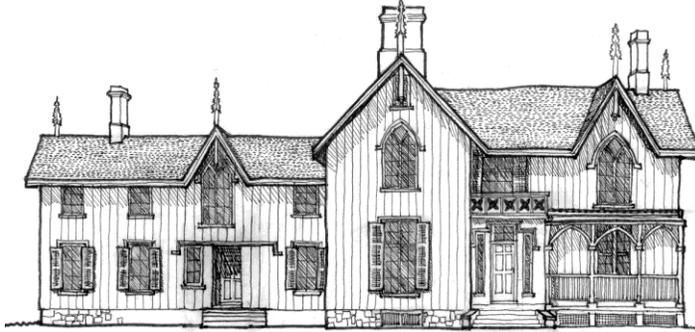
Characteristic features include:

- Low-pitched gable roof, often with gable facing the street
- Gable roof is either pedimented or has broad gable returns
- Classical columns or pilasters
- Doorway embellished by sidelights and transom
- Six-over-six windows
- Short frieze windows set just below the eaves
- Ornamentation is robust and "heavy," although usually simple in design

A.2 Residential Architecture Styles continued

Gothic Revival (1840s-1870s)

The soaring architecture of medieval cathedrals inspired the picturesque Gothic Revival style. A few examples can be seen in the Mt. Hope, Susan B. Anthony, East Avenue, and Corn Hill districts.



Characteristic features include:

- Vertical board-and-batten wood siding
- Strong vertical emphasis
- Pointed arches, especially at windows
- Prominent chimneys, often grouped and decorated
- Steeply pitched cross gables and wall dormers
- Steep roof pitch
- Eaves decorated with "gingerbread" trim
- Tall windows
- Irregular, asymmetrical plan and elevation
- Casement windows, often with leaded diamond panes, or double-hung windows

Italianate (1840s-1880s)

The Italianate, or Italian Villa, style was loosely based on the model of a Tuscan villa. Several prominent examples exist in the Mt. Hope, Corn Hill, East Avenue, and Susan B. Anthony districts, as well as many ordinary, or vernacular, houses that display some Italianate-inspired features.



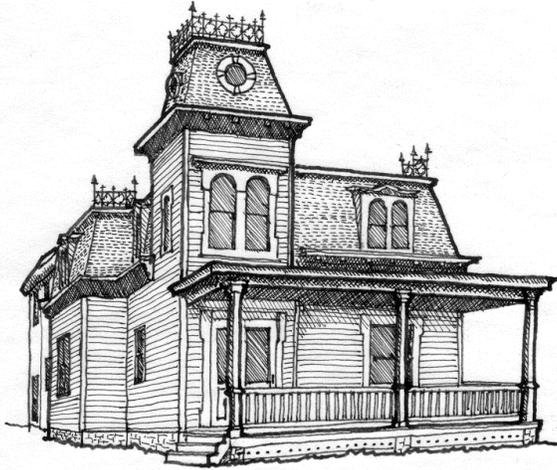
Characteristic features include:

- Three- or four-story tower with arched openings, or a cupola
- Low hipped roof
- Deep roof overhang with brackets
- Window openings are either flat or round-arched, and taller on the first story than upper stories
- Double-leafed door with heavy applied moldings
- Six-over-six or two-over-two windows, sometimes paired
- Small front entrance porch

A.3 Residential Architectural Styles *continued*

Second Empire (1860s-1880s)

This style is similar to Italianate, but employs decorative details inspired by French design. The term is used almost exclusively to describe buildings with a mansard roof. Some examples are seen in the East Avenue and Corn Hill districts.

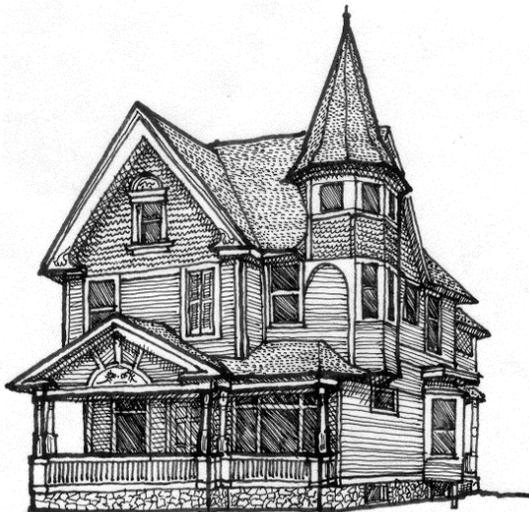


Characteristic features include:

- Mansard roof (steeply sloping sides with a flat or shallow roof above)
- Ornamental polychrome slate
- Arched window openings with prominent hoods
- Decorative roof cresting
- Small dormers

Queen Anne (1870s-1890s)

Houses of this style combine a variety of shapes and textures into a picturesque, asymmetrical composition. The most elaborate examples are highly inventive and lively; more common are the ordinary houses that incorporate a few delicate details such as "gingerbread" woodwork on porches or gables. This style is common in most districts.



Characteristic features include:

- Rambling, irregular floor plan
- Asymmetrical design
- Mixture of materials – brick or stone in combination with shingles and clapboard
- Decorative exterior woodwork
- Steep gables
- Large, elaborate chimneys
- Round towers and turrets
- Porches – often wraparound
- Stained-glass windows
- Complex roofline

A.4 Residential Architectural Styles continued

Eastlake (1870s-1880s)

The term "Eastlake" refers to a distinctive type of ornament, popularized by author and architect Charles Eastlake. Eastlake details such as knobs, spindles, circular motifs, and cut-out forms were applied to gable trim, porches, and verandas. There are several examples in the Corn Hill/Third Ward, Susan B. Anthony, and East Avenue districts.



Characteristic features include:

- "Gingerbread" trim, with incised and/or cut-out designs
- Floral and/or geometric motifs
- Heavily ornamented gables and porches
- Knobs, spindles, and circular motifs

Colonial Revival (1880s-present)

The Colonial Revival style, an outgrowth of widespread interest in American history in the late 19th/early 20th century, is ubiquitous in the Beach Avenue, Mt. Hope/Highland Avenue, and East Avenue historic districts. Colonial Revival-style houses feature symmetrical organization and classical details.



Characteristic features include:

- Stacked placement of windows
- Dormers
- Centered entrance (entrance to one side is also common)
- Dentil molding
- Fanlights
- Little or no cornice overhang
- Columns, pilasters, Palladian windows, and other elements borrowed from classical era
- Hipped, gable, or gambrel roof
- Six-over-one double-hung windows
- Porches have simple classical columns

A.5 Residential Architectural Styles continued

Bungalow/Craftsman (1905-1920s)

"Bungalow" describes a form, while "Craftsman" is a decorative style. The low, sloping bungalow form was based on the architecture of the Bengal region of India. The Craftsman style sought an organic approach to architecture, emphasizing the natural qualities of materials. Most, but not all, bungalows are in the Craftsman style, and vice versa. There are several examples in the East Avenue, Mt. Hope/Highland, and Beach Avenue districts.



Characteristic features include:

- Low-pitched roofline
- Horizontal emphasis
- One-and-a-half stories
- Porch, usually along entire front
- Prominent central dormer
- Shingles
- Paired or grouped windows
- Wide overhanging eaves
- Exposed rafters and support beams
- Tapered columns
- Two-over-one double-hung windows are common, as are casement windows

American Foursquare (1900-1920s)

Like the bungalow, the American Foursquare is a form rather than a style. Most Foursquare houses reflect the Colonial Revival style, often with Craftsman influence. American Foursquares were both practical and extremely popular, and are ubiquitous citywide, especially along side streets in the East Avenue and Mount Hope/Highland districts.



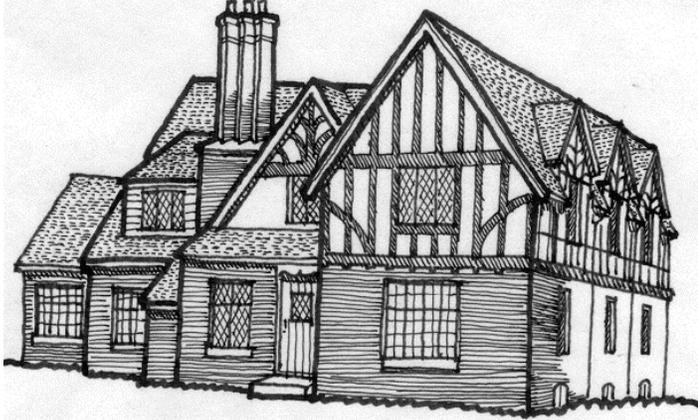
Characteristic features include:

- Boxy form
- Hipped roof, often with flared eaves
- Dormers, typically one on each side
- Front porches, usually the full width of the house
- Deep overhangs
- Simple details such as square porch columns
- Six-over-one double hung windows are common
- Shingle or clapboard exterior
- Two full stories

A.6 Residential Architectural Styles

Tudor Revival (1890s-1930s)

This style was derived from late-medieval English architecture, with decorative half-timbering the most readily identified feature. The East Avenue district has many excellent examples, particularly on and near East Avenue itself.

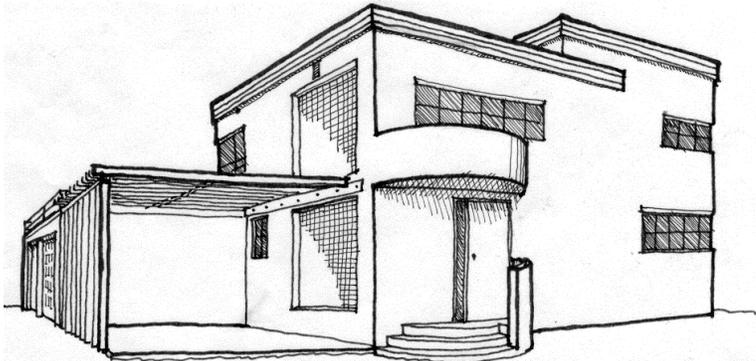


Characteristic features include:

- Steeply pitched roof
- Decorative half-timbering
- Casement windows, usually leaded-glass with small panes
- Brick, stucco, or (less commonly) stone exterior
- Cross gables

International Style/ Streamline Moderne (1930s-40s)

In the early 20th century, while most homebuyers preferred traditional designs, some avant-garde architects sought new styles devoid of historical references. These two related styles emphasized geometry, functionality, and modern materials. The International Style generally refers to buildings that are more rectilinear, while Moderne buildings incorporate curving wall shapes. There are only a few examples in the city.



Characteristic features include:

- Low profile
- Strong horizontal emphasis
- Flat roofline
- Glass block
- Smooth exterior surface (smooth stucco or concrete)
- No traditional ornament
- Attention to surface, texture, and expression of structure
- Windows grouped in bands
- Curved forms are common (Moderne)
- Metal-framed fixed or casement windows without trim
- Cantilevered roofs or porches
- Decoration (if any) limited to horizontal bands