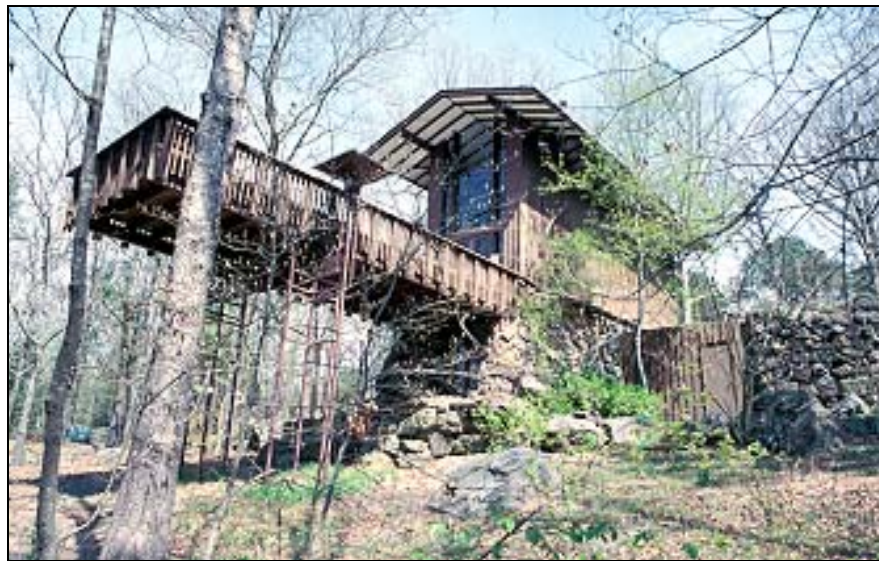


A Reference Guide to the Architectural Styles of Arkansas

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Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program



Introduction

For well over two hundred years, Arkansas has had a rich architectural legacy. Since the time of the first settlements in the state in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a wide variety of architectural styles have been used to construct the buildings around the state. From the simple log structures of the early settlers to the exuberant Victorian styles of the 1800s, the styles used in Arkansas's architecture reflect the architectural trends of the rest of the country.

The architectural styles are also a reflection of the mood of the nation at a particular time. The Greek Revival style, for example, illustrates a growing interest in things related to Classical Greece, and a trend moving away from things that were considered British due to the War of 1812. Styles such as the Gothic Revival and Italianate were popular during the period when people were reacting against formal classical ideas in art and architecture, and emphasizing the picturesque. By the early twentieth century, many popular architectural styles revived European styles. This was extremely popular after World War I when returning soldiers designed homes after the buildings that they had seen in Europe. After World War II, however, many homes abandoned styles of historical precedents, and became loosely based upon the modern pre-war styles. Other homes after World War II, specifically Contemporary Folk homes (i.e., Mobile Homes, Quonset Huts, A-Frames, and Geodesic Domes), were more concerned with providing basic economical shelter, and therefore did not follow any historical precedents with respect to style.

This guide is meant to acquaint its readers with the major architectural styles that have been used in Arkansas over the past two centuries. It is intended for people with little or no familiarity with architectural styles or terms. Each style is named and dates are given for when it was most popular. Keep in mind, however, that although it was most popular during the period given, examples of the style could pre- or post-date the span of dates listed. A brief description of the major characteristics of each style is also given. Finally, the guide has photographs of good examples of the style that are found in Arkansas. A glossary is also included at the end of the guide to define those terms that may be unfamiliar to the general public.

Hopefully, this guide will be useful in helping one learn about the various architectural styles that have been popular in Arkansas, and also allow readers to become more familiar with the built environment around them. Also, it is hoped that this guide will help people to develop a greater knowledge and appreciation for the historic architecture that exists around the state.

Log Construction

Dates: Normally prior to 1890

Characteristics:

- Log construction.
- Usually one or one and one-half stories tall with a sleeping loft, although two-story examples exist.
- Rectangular in plan with each room or unit called a “pen.”
- They were usually expanded with frame additions as milled lumber became available.
- Sometimes they were covered with clapboards at a later date to update their look.
- Types of log forms include: single pen (one room), dogtrot (two rooms separated by an open breezeway), and double pen (two rooms without the open breezeway).



Figure 1: Single Pen Log Cabin, Little Red vic., White County (nineteenth-century)



Figure 2: Jacob Wolf House, Norfolk, Baxter County (c.1825)

French Colonial

Dates: 1800-1860

Characteristics:

- Hipped roof main house surrounded by a porch with gently sloping roof forming a double pitched hipped roof.
- Built on brick walls or piers in wet areas, which raises the main floor 6-8' above grade.
- Walls are stuccoed, usually over a half-timbered frame.
- Usually have many narrow window and door openings, and they are usually shuttered.



Figure 3: Estevan Hall, Helena, Phillips County (c.1826)

Federal

Dates: c.1790-1840

Characteristics:

- Brick construction for high-style urban examples; overlapping clapboards for frame dwellings.
- Small windows over the front door, usually of a semi-circular or elliptical shape.
- Windows normally have six panes per sash which are divided by thin wooden supports (muntins).
- Windows are aligned horizontally and vertically in symmetrical rows.
- Ornamentation is characterized by being elegant and delicate.
- Overall, the design is balanced and symmetrical.



Figure 4: Confederate State Capitol, Washington, Hempstead County (1836)



Figure 5: Absalom Fowler House, Little Rock, Pulaski County (c.1840)

Greek Revival

Dates: c.1820-1875

Characteristics:

- Gabled or hipped roof, usually low in pitch.
- Cornice line of the roof is emphasized with a wide band of trim.
- Most examples have some kind of columns, either free-standing or applied to the façade.
- Front door is usually surrounded by a narrow band of sidelights and a rectangular line of transom lights above.
- Front door and surrounding lights are usually incorporated into a more elaborate door surround.
- Can be built out of a wide variety of materials (wood, brick, or stone).



Figure 6: Frog Level Plantation, Bussey vic., Columbia County (1854)



Figure 7: Leake-Ingham Building, Camden, Ouachita County (c.1850)

Gothic Revival

Dates: c.1840-1900

Characteristics:

- Steeply pitched roofs with finials at the gable peaks.
- Roof edges are decorated with fanciful bargeboard or vergeboard.
- Windows often have pointed arched tops (lancet windows).
- Windows often extend into the gable peaks.
- Often sided with board and batten siding where the boards are laid vertically and the joints are covered with narrow wood strips.
- One-story porches are common, either at the entry or along the entire façade.



Figure 8: Edward Dickinson House, Batesville, Independence County (c.1875)



Figure 9: Trinity Episcopal Church, Pine Bluff, Jefferson County (1866-1871)

Italianate

Dates: c.1840-1890

Characteristics:

- Low pitched or hipped roofs that appear to be almost flat.
- Large supporting brackets under the eaves, and the eaves often overhang greatly.
- Square or rectangular towers or cupolas are sometimes present.
- Tall, narrow windows with hoods or eyebrows above them.
- Usually two or three stories tall; rarely one story.



Figure 10: Bonneville House, Fort Smith, Sebastian County (c.1870)



Figure 11: Capital Hotel, Little Rock, Pulaski County (1873, postcard c.1908)

Second Empire

Dates: c.1855-1890

Characteristics:

- Mansard roofs, which are hipped roofs with dual pitches.
- Dormer windows are often present on the steep lower pitch of the roof.
- Decorative brackets are usually present below the eaves, although they are not as large as Italianate brackets.
- Shape is usually square or rectangular, although some examples have towers.
- Roofs often have colored tilework and ironwork cresting on the top.



Figure 12: Villa Marre, Little Rock, Pulaski County (c.1882)



Figure 13: Old Jackson County Courthouse, Jacksonport, Jackson County (1869-1872)

Romanesque Revival (Richardsonian Romanesque)

Dates: c.1880-1900

Characteristics:

- Round-topped arches occurring over windows, porch supports, or the entrance.
- Constructed of masonry, usually rough-faced stonework, although brick is somewhat common.
- Normally, they have round towers that are topped with conical roofs.
- The façade is usually asymmetrical.



Figure 14: James K. Barnes House, Fort Smith, Sebastian County (c.1893)



Figure 15: First United Methodist Church, Little Rock, Pulaski County (c.1900)

Queen Anne

Dates: 1870-1910

Characteristics:

- Buildings are irregularly shaped.
- Walls have multiple projections, which can include bay windows, towers, turrets, and balconies.
- Usually have a lot of decorative trim such as brackets and patterned shingles.
- The façade is usually asymmetrical.
- Normally, they have one-story porches that are partial or full-width along the front façade and also extend along one or both side walls.



Figure 16: Pillow-Thompson House, Helena, Phillips County (c.1897)



Figure 17: Vinson House, Rogers, Benton County (c.1900)

Colonial Revival

Dates: c.1880-1955

Characteristics:

- Accentuated front door with a decorative pediment supported by pilasters or with a small entrance porch supported by columns.
- Doors often have an overhead fanlight or are flanked by sidelights.
- Cornices are usually heavy and supported by dentils.
- Facades are normally symmetrical with a central front door, although the front door can be off-center.
- Windows frequently have multi-paned glazing, and windows are often in adjacent pairs.



Figure 18: Bishop-Brookes House, De Queen, Sevier County (c.1925)



Figure 19: Lake Village Post Office, Lake Village, Chicot County (1938)

Neoclassical or Classical Revival

Dates: c.1895-1950

Characteristics:

- Buildings tend to be massive in scale and meticulously detailed.
- Most examples use classical elements such as columned porches, keystones, and dentils along the cornice.
- Porches are usually full-height and supported by classically detailed columns.
- Facades are symmetrical with symmetrical window placement and a central door.
- Style is most commonly used for large-scale public or commercial buildings.
Residential examples are large and usually built for wealthy, educated families.



Figure 20: Galloway House, Clarendon, Monroe County (1910)



Figure 21: Lonoke County Courthouse, Lonoke, Lonoke County (1929)

Prairie

Dates: 1900-1930

Characteristics:

- Prairie style homes emphasized the horizontality of their architecture through low-pitched hipped roofs with extremely wide eaves, and wide projecting porches.
- Prairie style homes often have bands of casement windows which further emphasize the horizontal nature.
- Facades are usually constructed out of brick, stucco, or rough-sawn wood.



Figure 22: MacMillan House, Pine Bluff, Jefferson County (c.1903)



Figure 23: Naff House, Portland, Ashley County (c.1919)

Craftsman

Dates: 1900-1945

Characteristics:

- Craftsman style homes give the impression of human craftsmanship.
- Most popular forms of the Craftsman style are Bungalows and American Foursquares.
- American Foursquares feature a simple box shape and usually have four rooms per floor, and are also sometimes referred to as Cornbelt Cubes.
- Craftsman style homes usually have full or partial-width porches supported by square columns.
- False decorative beams or braces are often present under the eaves.



Figure 24: Marshall House (American Foursquare), Little Rock, Pulaski County (c.1902)



Figure 25: Russell House (Bungalow), Fordyce, Dallas County (c.1925)

Rustic

Dates: 1900-1945

Characteristics:

- Popular for “modern” buildings right after the turn of the twentieth century.
- Most often the buildings are constructed out of logs.
- They often have large porches, and branches are often used for detailing porch posts, railings, and balustrades.
- Interior and exterior materials tend to be natural – wood and fieldstone.
- Popular style for resorts, American Legion huts, and Civilian Conservation Corps-built structures.



Figure 26: Cabin #14, Devil's Den State Park, Washington County (c.1935)



Figure 27: Fordyce-Ricks House, Hot Springs vic., Garland County (c.1909)

Spanish/Mediterranean Revival

Dates: c.1900-1940

Characteristics:

- In early twentieth-century revival styles, details of the various styles are studied carefully, but applied freely to the buildings.
- Popularity reached its height in the 1920s when World War I soldiers wanted to pattern their homes after the picturesque European buildings they had seen.
- Roofs are typically covered with ceramic tiles.
- Upper-story windows are usually less elaborate than first-floor windows.
- First-floor windows and doors are typically arched.



Figure 28: Hotel Seville, Harrison, Boone County (1929)



Figure 29: McWilliams House, El Dorado, Union County (1925)

Tudor Revival

Dates: c.1900-1940

Characteristics:

- Roofs usually have a steep pitch and side gables.
- Front façades usually have one or more steeply-pitched cross gables.
- Decorative half-timbering is sometimes present.
- Windows are usually tall and narrow, and found in groups
- Chimneys are likely to be massive, and are sometimes topped by decorative chimney pots.



Figure 30: Wood Freeman House, Searcy, White County (c.1934)



Figure 31: Charles H. Murphy, Sr., House, El Dorado, Union County (1925-1926)

Art Moderne

Dates: 1920-1950

Characteristics:

- Smooth wall surfaces, usually stucco.
- Flat roof, usually with a small ledge at the roofline.
- Soft or rounded corners.
- Aluminum and stainless steel are often used for door and window trim, railings and balustrades.



Figure 32: Greyhound Bus Station, Blytheville, Mississippi County (c.1936)



Figure 33: Studebaker Showroom, Mena, Polk County (1948)

Art Deco

Dates: c.1920-1945

Characteristics:

- Wall surfaces tend to be smooth, and usually stuccoed.
- Decorative elements on the façades include zigzags, chevrons, and other stylized and geometric motifs.
- Buildings have a vertical emphasis because of tower and other vertical projections above the roofline.
- Art Deco examples are normally public and commercial buildings, theatres, and skyscrapers. Residential examples are rare.



Figure 34: UARK Building, Fayetteville, Washington County (1940)



Figure 35: Medical Arts Building, Hot Springs, Garland County (1929)

International

Dates: 1925-present

Characteristics:

- Flat roof, usually without the ledge at the roofline
- Windows are set flush with the outer wall and are usually metal casement windows.
- Wall surfaces are smooth and unornamented.
- Facades are generally asymmetrical.



Figure 36: Arkansas Power and Light Building, Little Rock, Pulaski County (c.1955)



Figure 37: Matthews House, North Little Rock, Pulaski County (c.1930)

Modern

Dates: c.1935-present

Characteristics:

- Types of homes under this category include: Minimal Traditional, Ranch, Split-Level, and Contemporary.
- Some of these home types are loosely based on colonial precedents or have traditional detailing.
- Some of these types, such as Ranch and Split-Level, have been the most popular house types following World War II.

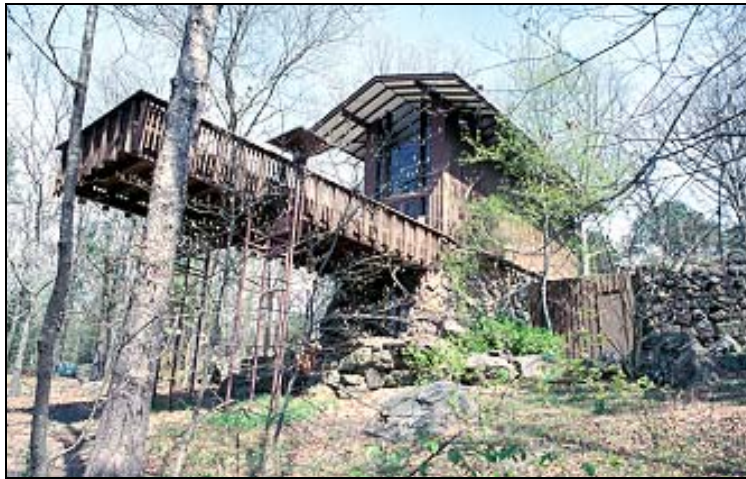


Figure 38: "Stoneflower," Eden Isle, Cleburne County (1965)



Figure 39: Minimal Traditional House, Eureka Springs, Carroll County (c.1940)



Figure 40: Ranch House, Eureka Springs, Carroll County (c.1978)

Contemporary Folk

Dates: c.1940-present

Characteristics:

- Types of homes under this category include: Mobile Homes, Quonset Huts, A-Frames, and Geodesic Domes.
- These house types are not normally concerned with stylistic design or detailing, rather the need for basic economical shelter.



Figure 41: A-Frame, Paragould, Greene County (twentieth-century)



Figure 42: Mobile Home, Eureka Springs, Carroll County (c.1970)



Figure 43: Burdette School Gym (Quonset Hut), Burdette, Mississippi County (c.1948)

Neoelectic

Dates: c.1965-present

Characteristics:

- Types of homes under this style include: Mansard, Neocolonial, Neo-French, Neo-Tudor, Neo-Mediterranean, Neoclassical Revival, and Neo-Victorian.
- Very loosely based on traditional architectural shapes and detailing.
- Appears to have been initiated by builders of modest homes sensing the public's desire for traditional designs.



Figure 44: Neo-Victorian House, Eureka Springs, Carroll County (c.1989)



Figure 45: Neo-Mediterranean House, Eureka Springs, Carroll County (c.1990)

Common Vernacular House Forms

Dates: Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries.

Types and Characteristics:

- All of the house types below can be constructed using various architectural styles.
- *Shotgun* – Long, linear house that is several rooms deep but only one room wide.
- *I-House* – House type that is usually two rooms wide and one room deep.
- *Saddlebag* – House type that is usually two rooms wide and one room deep with a central chimney.
- *Double Pile* – House type that is usually two rooms wide and two rooms deep.



Figure 46: Shotgun House, Van Buren, Crawford County (c.1940)



Figure 47: Thomas Hess House (I-House), Marcella, Stone County (1900)



Figure 48: Williams House (Saddlebag), Duff vic., Searcy County (c.1885)



Figure 49: Lakeport Plantation (Double Pile), Lakeport, Chicot County (c.1850, photograph c.1920)

Bridges (concrete, metal, wood, and stone)

Dates: Nineteenth-century to the present.

Comments:

Bridges are sometimes overlooked as historic resources. Almost everybody recognizes the significance of covered bridges, but not everyone realizes the growing significance of concrete, metal, wood, and stone bridges. As these types of bridges are replaced due to deterioration or inadequate designs to handle the needs of modern-day traffic, they are becoming more and more significant. Furthermore, stone bridges, which were built in both the nineteenth and twentieth-centuries, are often not as common as concrete or metal bridges, because of the time, skills, and materials involved. As a result, they can be significant in their own right.



Figure 50: Fourche LaFave Bridge, Hollis, Perry County (1941)



Figure 51: Little Missouri River Bridge, Prescott vic., Clark County (c.1910)



Figure 52: Union Pacific Railroad Overpass, Okolona, Clark County (twentieth-century)



Figure 53: Cedar Creek Bridge, Petit Jean State Park, Conway County (1934)

Outbuildings

Comments:

Farms often had a wide variety of outbuildings to support the activities and needs of the farmer. The most common of these outbuildings was the barn, which housed cattle, and was also used for the storage of grain, hay, and machinery. However, farmers also required many other types of outbuildings, depending on the size of their farms, that could include summer kitchens, springhouses, smokehouses, icehouses, corncribs, granaries, silos, sheds, greenhouses, and chicken houses, just to name a few. Some prosperous farmers would even have a farm office from which the business of the farm could be attended to. Outbuildings, though, were not limited to the country. Even homes in towns and cities in the nineteenth-century required outbuildings such as carriage houses, sheds to store wood, and outhouses for the family. Although most outbuildings served a utilitarian purpose, some, such as summerhouses and gazebos, were meant more for recreational purposes. The vast majority of outbuildings do not have any stylistic character, and are not architect-designed. Outbuildings are important in supplementing a farmhouse, and in helping to convey the functions of a farmstead as well as giving a fuller picture of a property's former purposes.



Figure 54: Newton Sutterfield Farm outbuildings, Alco vic., Stone County (twentieth-century)



Figure 55: Terpening Barn and Silo, unknown location (twentieth-century)

Words of Caution

Just as architects and builders in the past borrowed styles and architectural elements from history, builders and architects today are doing the same thing. In recent decades, there has been an increasing popularity in building homes and commercial buildings that are loosely based on historical styles. Architectural style books sometimes refer to this movement as Neoelecticism. One of the most popular of these Neoelectic styles is New-Victorian, where the homes hark back to the Victorian styles of the late nineteenth-century. However, unlike the revival styles that were prevalent in the period between World War I and World War II, the modern interpretations make little effort to closely copy the historical prototypes. Rather, they use popular historical details, and freely adapt them to fit modern house forms and building materials. Even so, in the last few years, some of the interpretations have become more interested in being historically correct, and one could be fooled into thinking that a building is older than it actually is.



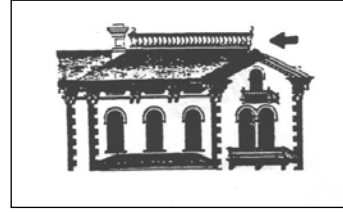
Figure 56: Flatiron Building, Eureka Springs, Carroll County (1985)



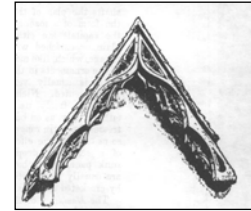
Figure 57: Commercial Building, Eureka Springs, Carroll County (1994)

Glossary

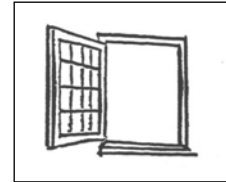
Balustrade – A line of pillars with a rail on top, usually found on top of a building or porch, that forms a railing or enclosure.



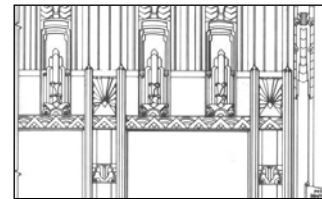
Bargeboard (vergeboard) – A decorative board, usually used in the peak of a gable, where the roof projects beyond the wall. It usually covers the rafter, which would be exposed, or takes the place of a rafter.



Casement window – A window with hinges that allow it to open and shut like a door.

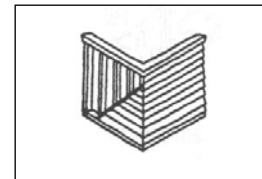


Chevron - A V-shaped stripe pointing up or down, used singly or in groups; or a molding showing a zigzag sequence of these ornaments in architecture.

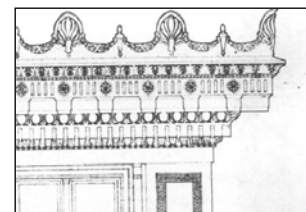


Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) – The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a public works program created under the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt that put over three million young men and adults to work in the United States during the Great Depression of the 1930s and 1940s.

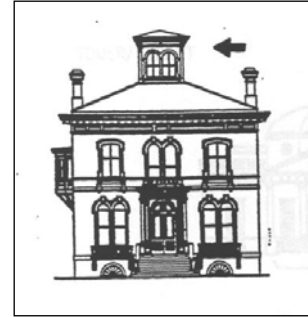
Clapboards – Overlapping horizontal boards that cover the framed wall of a house.



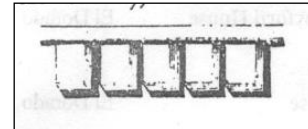
Cornice – The horizontal molded projection encircling the top of a building.



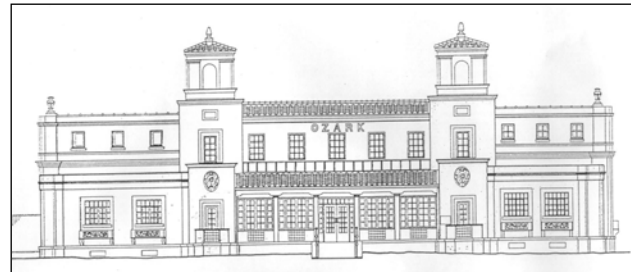
Cupola - A small dome or room crowning a roof or turret. Usually only decorative in modern homes. Older cupolas can be reached by stairs.



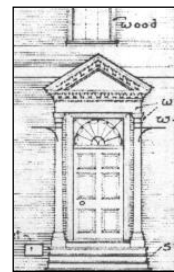
Dentils – Ornaments resembling teeth that are used in decorating cornices.



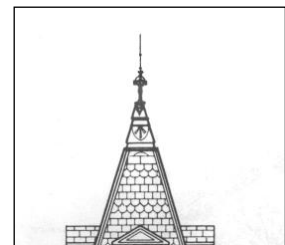
Façade – The exterior side of a building.



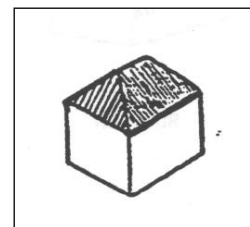
Fanlight – A semi-circular or elliptical window arrangement over an entrance door; named for its resemblance to a spread out fan.



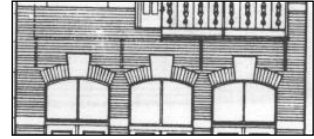
Finial - A formal ornament at the top of a canopy, gable, pinnacle, etc., usually in the general shape of a fleur-de-lis.



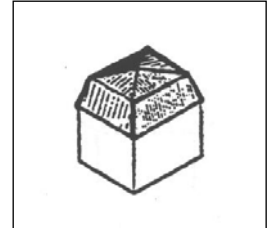
Hip Roof – A roof comprised of four sloping surfaces.



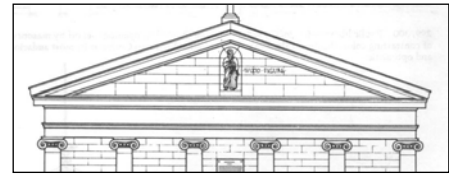
Keystone – The central stone at the top of an arch.



Mansard Roof – A dual-pitched hipped roof that has lower slopes that are steeper than the upper slopes.



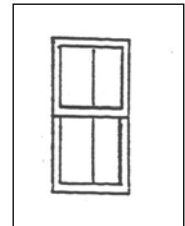
Pediment – The triangular area under the roof line at the ends of a building. Pediments can either be on the gable of the main building, or over a porch.



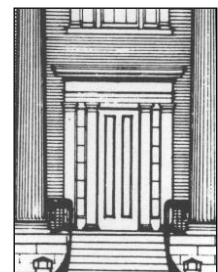
Pilasters – A square column or pillar, generally attached to a wall and projecting from it.



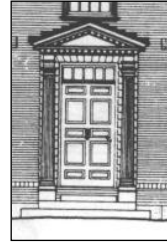
Sash – The portion of the window consisting of the window panes and frame.



Sidelights – Windows appearing beside an entrance door, usually incorporated as part of a larger elaborate door surround.



Transom – Windows appearing above an entrance door, usually incorporated as part of a larger elaborate door surround.



Turret – A small tower.

