

The  
**E L E M E N T S**  
**O F** *S* **T Y L E**

**A PRACTICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS  
FROM 1485 TO THE PRESENT**



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FOREWORD BY J. JACKSON WALTER PRESIDENT, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

SIMON AND SCHUSTER  
NEW YORK · LONDON · TORONTO · SYDNEY · TOKYO · SINGAPORE

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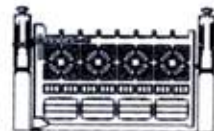
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# AMERICAN VICTORIAN

1840–1910



① Broad gables and a well-integrated porch are key elements of many American late Victorian houses. This example, with overtones of half-timbering, is in Newport, Rhode Island, 1875. SAL



② The Hale House, Los Angeles, 1888: a sophisticated essay in wood and paint. This is an elaborate example of the Queen Anne style. The original colours have been restored, following meticulous paint research. HA



③ A terrace/row in the Italianate style, in Philadelphia, with roof pediments, elegant porches and ornate eave brackets. Italianate was probably the most prominent townhouse style from the 1850s to the 1880s. WT

During the second half of the 19th century, architects in the United States began to lose interest in Greco-Roman Classicism, and to adopt new domestic styles based loosely on medieval and other non-classical forms of building. While continuing to be inspired by foreign models both old and new, they developed a robust inventiveness of their own. This was made possible by a combination of new building technologies, an abundance of raw materials, a plethora of architectural and housekeeping publications, and the financial wherewithal of many Americans to build their own homes.

One of the most important technological developments was the advent of balloon framing, whereby the framework of a house could be made out of uniform lumber; this was becoming increasingly available from commercial mills. The framing system comprised inexpensive two-by-four-inch boards, combined as upright studs and cross-members and held together by cheap, mass-produced nails.

Eventually, by the turn of the century, balloon framing replaced traditional hewn timber construction and simplified the making of more complex architectural features, such as overhangs, bay windows and towers.

Advanced manufacturing techniques were also employed to mass-produce finished windows, doors, brackets and decorative turnings, often more elaborate and sometimes less expensive than their handmade counterparts. Along with plentiful building materials,

there was also access to an increasing variety of publications on house building: trade catalogues, pattern books and architectural periodicals.

Industrialization meant that for the first time in the United States, very large houses could be built on a wide scale. Tenements and, later, apartment houses went up in increasing numbers, as the population shifted from country to town and newly arrived foreign immigrants sought accommodation.

At least eight distinct architectural styles developed, along with numerous secondary styles and movements, all of which are now incorporated under the broad heading of "Victorian". These styles overlapped in date and none had a specific beginning or end. To further complicate the analysis of 19th-century American houses, many were built in a combination of styles.

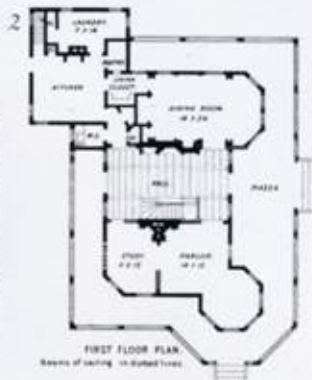
The first post-classical styles, beginning in the 1830s, were the Gothic Revival and the Italianate. The Stick style followed in the 1860s and 1870s, and the late 19th century produced American Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque, Shingle and Colonial Revival styles. At the same time Egyptian and Oriental elements were incorporated into American houses, imitations of Swiss chalets were built, and the octagonal building plan enjoyed renewed interest.

The Gothic Revival and Italianate styles were loosely based on English Regency prototypes, and grew out of an increasing interest in historical architecture. Early





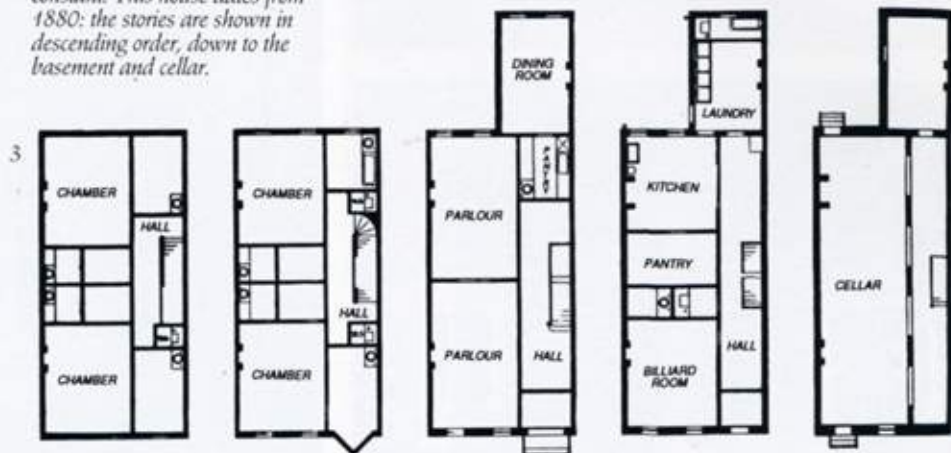
① The J. J. Glessner House, Chicago, 1885, by H.H. Richardson. The Romanesque style depends on mass and volumes, rather than applied details. CAF



② This plan for a cottage of 1881 makes an instructive comparison with the symmetrical Greek Revival plans of forty years before. The rooms are grouped informally. Other common elements of the period are the living hall, and the wrap-around veranda. CK

constant. This house dates from 1880: the stories are shown in descending order, down to the basement and cellar.

③ Terraced/row townhouse plans, with their parallel party walls, remained fairly static compared with their freestanding counterparts. The major innovations were the introduction of sinks, water closets and baths. Double parlours, or a parlour and dining room, remained a



④ The Gothic Revival style is characterized by steeply pitched roofs, dormer windows, and a curvilinear "gingerbread" trim along the eaves and gable edges. Gothic was greatly popularized by the architectural writings of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-52). In The Architecture of Country

Houses (1850) he suggests an interesting geographical basis for the decision between Gothic and Italian: "The former, generally speaking, is best suited to our Northern, broken country; the latter, to the plain and valley surface of the Middle and Southern States - though sites may be found for



⑤ The Shingle style, notable for its plain shingled surfaces, evolved in New England before being disseminated to the rest of the country. It flourished from the 1880s to c.1900. This is a Shingle-style house in Newport, Rhode Island, by

McKim, Mead and White, 1881-2. Note the veranda on its turned supports, and the two-story open pavilion, which balances the round tower (on the left in this view) containing a study. Asymmetrical planning of this kind is characteristic of the style. SAL





① A detail of a Los Angeles Queen Anne house of 1894, showing exuberant use of mass-produced millwork. JBE

carpentry. Note the Eastlake-style spindle screen on the porch. JBE

② A San Francisco house of 1885, again with elaborate

Italianate houses often have a sense of formality, even if planned asymmetrically. WT

2



3

Gothic Revival houses are characterized by irregular, picturesque massings and plans, sharply pitched roofs and gables, castellated parapets and multi-paned windows sometimes capped with Gothic arches. To enhance their perpendicular appearance, the walls of modestly priced houses were often made with vertical boards and battens. Compared with building in wood, stone or brick construction was always more expensive, and therefore less common.

Italianate houses, somewhat inspired by the northern Italian farm house, feature low-pitched roofs with broad eaves supported by brackets, and windows with tall, narrow proportions. The windows are often surrounded by classically inspired architraves. In the 1850s, Italianate became the most important town house style. Its success was partly due to the fact that it could be successfully applied to a square volume, whereas Gothic demands an irregular volume for full effect.

The Italianate style continued to be used through the rest of the century, while at the same time fashionable circles adopted the Second Empire style, identifiable by the mansard roofs, derived from the 17th-century designs of François Mansart, a Court architect of Louis

XIV. The mansard roof was popular both because it had connections with stylish contemporary France, where it was undergoing a revival at the hands of Second Empire architects, and because its generous width allowed for a large attic story of usable space. Mansard roofs were often used on Italianate houses.

There was also continuing interest in medieval styles, which not only furthered the Gothic Revival but also inspired the Stick and Queen Anne styles. Stick-style houses were loosely based on English half-timbered buildings. Like Gothic houses, they reflected Picturesque philosophies, with their steep gabled roofs and overhanging eaves. However, for decoration the Stick style relied on exposed roof trusses, rafters, and a raised "stick work" pattern on the walls, made by vertical and diagonal arrangements of boards.

Stick, along with elements from Gothic and Italianate, provided the prototypes for the American Queen Anne style. Lasting from the 1880s until 1910, American Queen Anne derived from the style developed by British architect Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912) and his followers. However, the half-timbered and patterned masonry buildings of the English Queen Anne move-





① A middle class late Victorian interior: the Villa Montezuma, San Diego, California, 1887. Notable are the lavish use of wood panelling and the rich ceiling. JBE



② An early Victorian interior, within an Empire house. The carpet is a reproduction (by Scalamantré) of a tapestry-woven design dating from c.1850. SCA

ment are only one feature of the American version. American architects added a rich vocabulary of decorative woodwork, enriching the established styles with more complex designs. Roofs, for example, grew even steeper than on Gothic and Stick buildings, and more complicated in shape. The comparatively simple plans and volumes of mid-century houses were compounded by additional projections, overhanging stories, gables and towers. The exterior walls were decorated with wooden shingles, fancy brickwork and terracotta insets.

Some houses in the Stick and Queen Anne styles used elements of the "Eastlake" manner, named after the English designer and critic Charles Locke Eastlake (1833-1906), whose taste in ornament was adopted by Americans for exteriors. Elements in the Eastlake style include robust porch posts, balusters and pendants, as well as the extensive use of spindles for friezes and balustrades.

The Richardsonian Romanesque style, named after its most notable exponent H.H. Richardson (1838-86), began in the late 1880s and continued until the end of the century. This idiom is based on the use of rough-hewn stone facing, composed in asymmetrical volumes and marked by round-arched openings for porches, doors and windows, along with simple details derived from Romanesque, Syrian and Byzantine sources.

The Shingle style, dating from the 1880s to about 1900, contrasts sharply with the rich detailing of the Queen Anne and relates to the Romanesque in its use of continuous, relatively unadorned surfaces. Wooden shingles, usually in plain rows, form a uniform skin for the roof and walls. Ornamental details are simple and based on a modest range of Neo-classical elements taken from American Colonial and Federal houses, such as Doric columns and Venetian (Palladian) windows. Asymmetry is favoured in the planning.

The study of early American buildings from before the Greek Revival led to the construction of houses labelled "Colonial" by their builders. Initially these took the form of Queen Anne houses with generous applications of Neo-classical details. Later, houses more accurately copied from 18th-century models were built.

As all parts of the nation used the same published design sources and similar mass-produced building parts, regional distinctions became subtle. By the 1890s prefabricated Queen Anne houses were transported by rail across the United States. But the relative lack of vernacular distinctions by no means spells a dearth of architectural interest. American Victorian houses are eclectic in their stylistic elements and rich in individual interpretation.



## Doors



*The main entrance of the Hale House, Los Angeles, 1888. The relatively simple front doors are set within a remarkable portico, featuring an American emblem inside the pediment. The balancing of simple and elaborate elements is characteristic of late Victorian styles. HA*

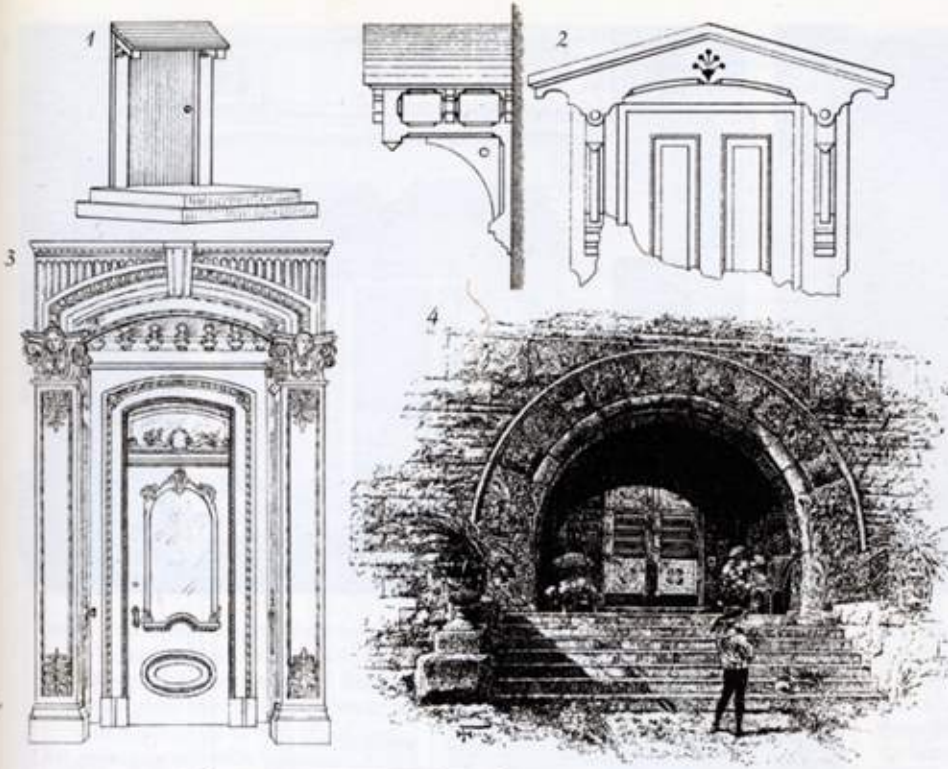
Doors continued to be made as an exterior frame holding thinner panels. This provided strong, lightweight doors receptive to many styles of decoration. For example, Gothic Revival doors supported elements of Gothic tracery, Italianate doors held applied Renaissance-style panels and Colonial Revival doors bore Neo-classical motifs. However, many houses had plain doors, the style of the building being conveyed either by the shape of the door opening or by the portico or porch. Italianate doors were made Italian by their arched openings. Even a worker's cottage door could be Gothicized with a simple bolection moulding or hood.

Wherever feasible, double doors were preferred.

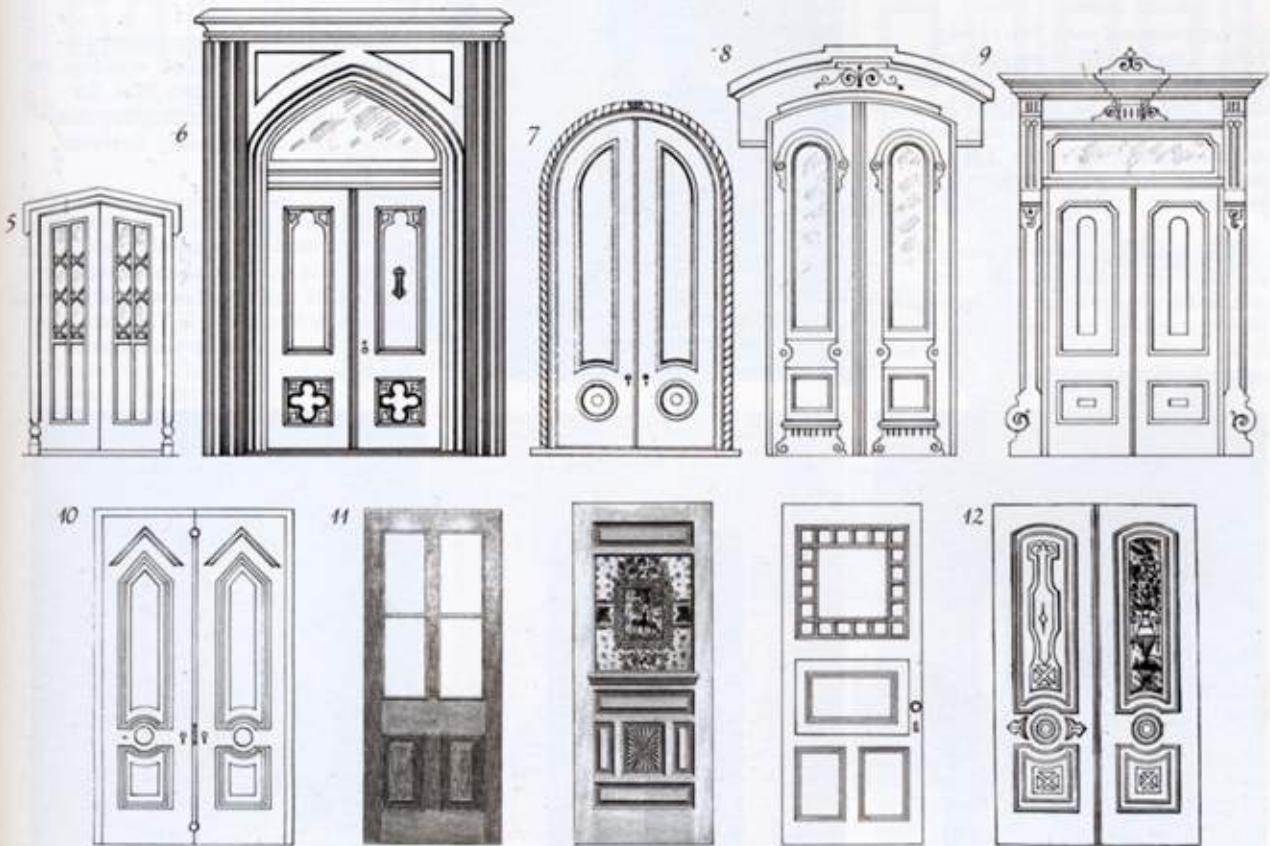
Double front doors first appeared on Gothic houses and continued to be widely used on later styles, often matched with a second pair, forming a vestibule. With the advent of inexpensive glass, more doors were glazed. Fanlights/transom lights over exterior and interior doors were also popular; clear glass in the 1850s, followed by coloured glass and, later, leaded glass panels.

Interior doors, in simple configurations of panels, usually matched the other finished wood in the room. Sometimes simple doors were embellished with decorative carving or paint. Almost every grand house featured a pair of sliding doors between double parlours, or between parlour and dining room.





- ① A plain hood design for the front door of a working man's cottage, commended by A. J. Downing in *The Architecture of Country Houses*, 1850.
- ② An Italianate door canopy, in profile and face-on. From Woodward's *National Architect*, New York, 1869. WD
- ③ An elaborate example of Southern Rococo Revival, this doorway in New Orleans is adorned with carved heads and other ornament in wood. The recessed panels at the sides are shutters which could be closed for protection against rain.
- ④ In the second half of the 19th century emphasis could fall on the door or the porch; this Richardsonian Romanesque porch, with its elaborate Syrian-style arch, contains fairly narrow double doors.
- ⑤ A pair of Gothic entrance doors, published by A. J. Downing in *Victorian Cottage Residences*, 1842.
- ⑥ This grander Gothic doorway has a fanlight/transom light. From Oakland, California.



- ⑦ An Italianate double front door, 1878: the round-arched form is typical.
- ⑧ A more elaborate version of the Italianate style, 1873.
- ⑨ A transom light integrated

- into a classical design, 1873.
- ⑩ This door would be suitable for an Italianate or, with less accuracy, a Gothic house, but it actually appears on a Second Empire design of 1878.

- ⑪ Three glazed doors. The second example has an elaborate etched design. The last is a type used in Queen Anne and Shingle houses. UD
- ⑫ A Renaissance-inspired

- group found in Italianate and Queen Anne houses, sold by C.B. Keogh and Co. This illustration combines the front door design (left) and glazed vestibule door (right).





① An ironwork porch with fairly naturalistic grapevine ornament gives added importance to a relatively simple doorway. With the advent of inexpensive glass, more and more doors were glazed. The screen door first made its appearance during the Victorian period. CE

② A doorway and porch from Hanley House, Oregon, 1875. Some builders combined elements from earlier styles with current taste. Here, the type of door lights first used in the Federal period are combined with an Italianate door and portico. The balustrade above gives importance to the front door. PD

③ Classical porticoes were the principal decoration of townhouse facades. Here, outside doors lead to an identical pair inside, forming a vestibule between. The use of a house number emblazoned on the glass was a popular Victorian practice. CE

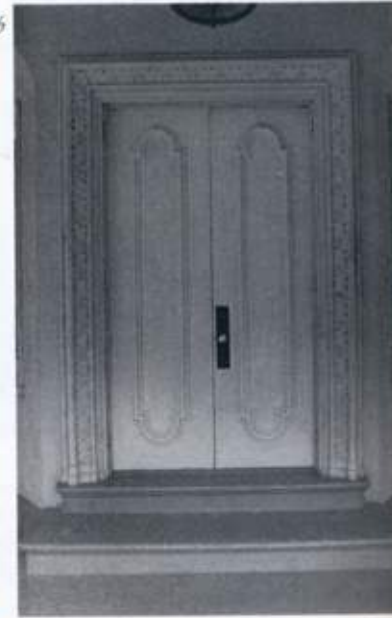


④ A beautifully grained interior door paired with a Victorian version of a classical doorcase. The elongated upper panels contribute to an impression of elegance. Corner blocks such as these would often feature roundels or other ornamentation. HA

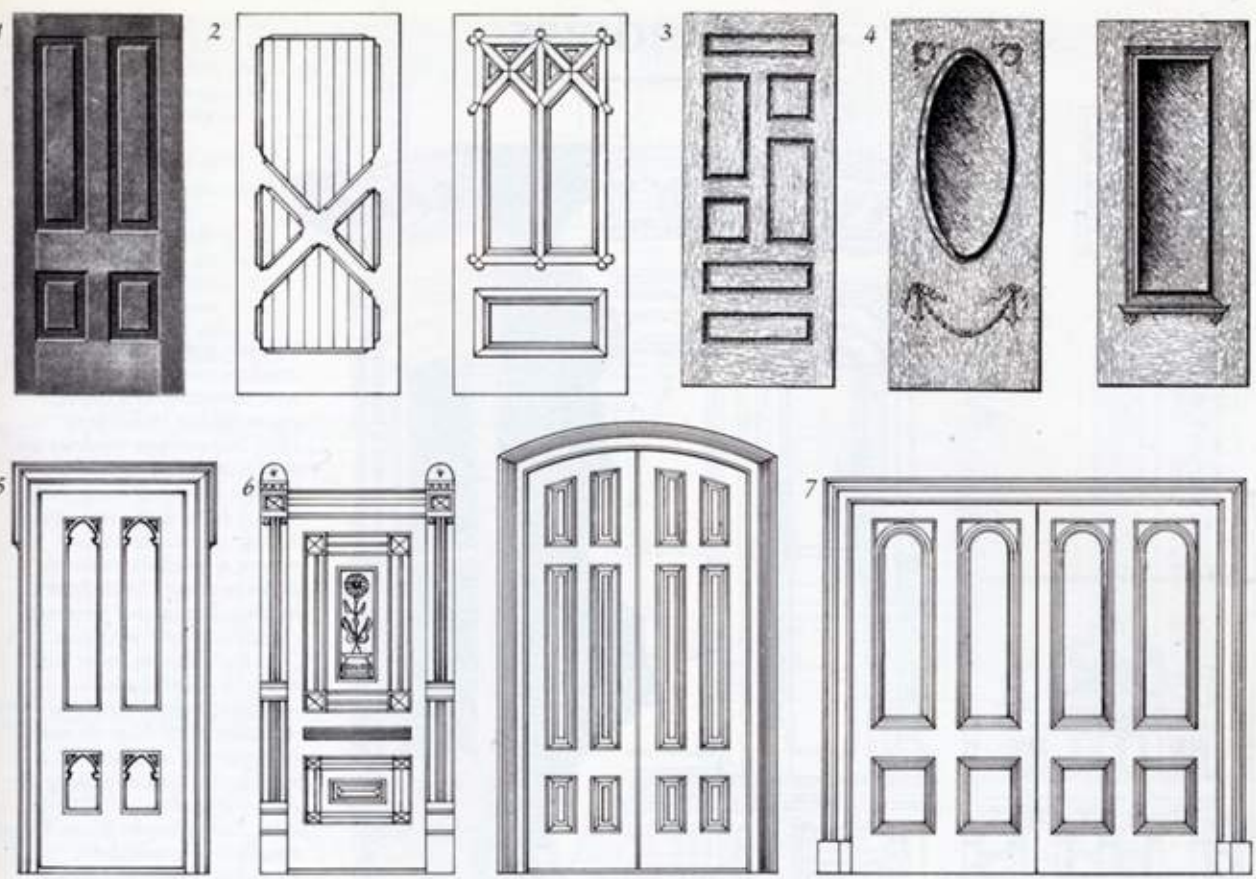


⑤ Another interior doorway, featuring a lugged architrave and multiple mouldings on the overdoor. For a decorative finish, flat paint was the least expensive option, then graining (as used on this door); hardwood doors were costly. BO

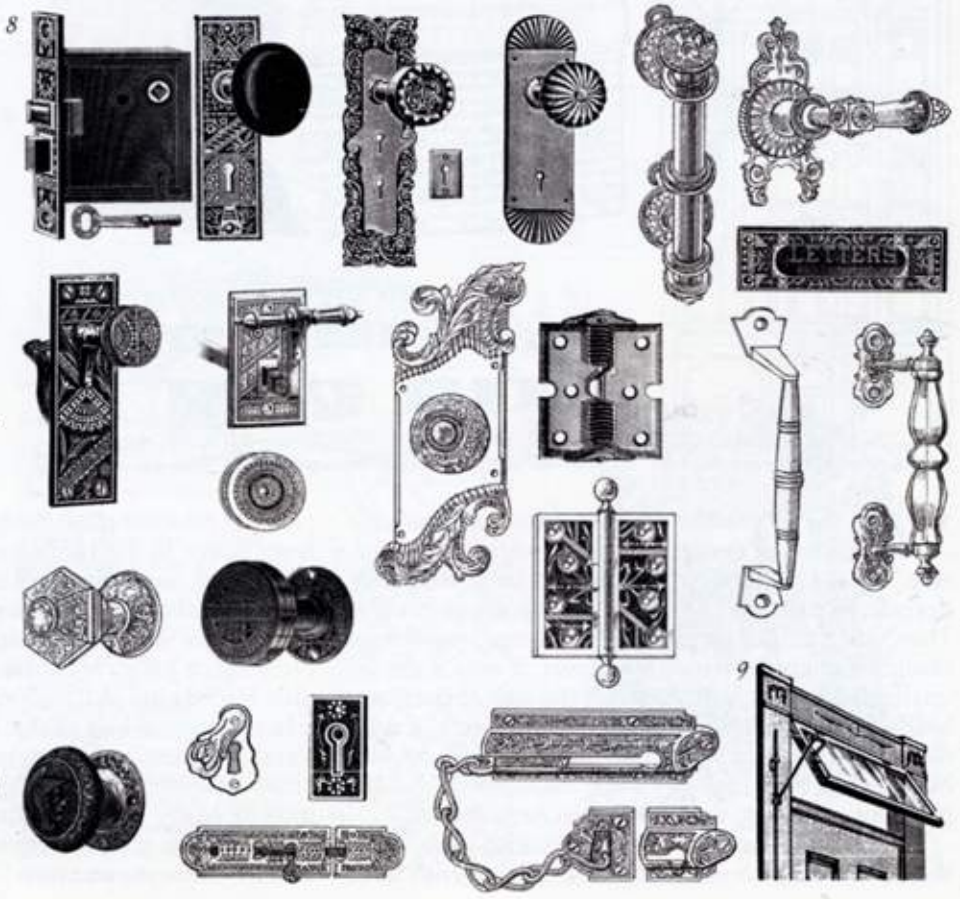
⑥ Front doors from mid-century were often made with mouldings or raised panels reminiscent of Italian Renaissance models. Better houses would have carved door surrounds in Renaissance leaf or rope designs. This example has more abstract decoration. CE





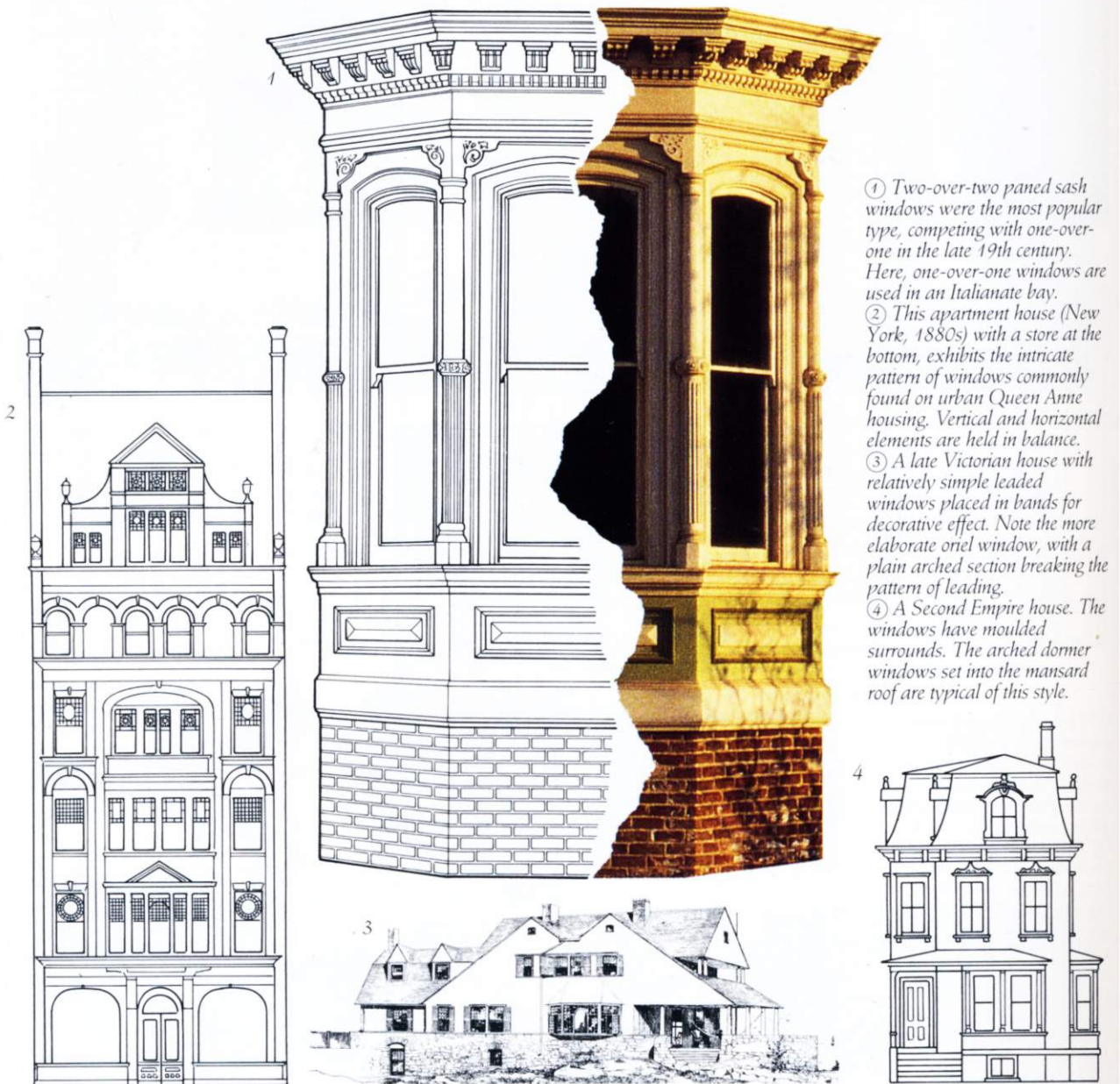


- ① This type of simple paneled interior door was made to order, in solid pine or hardwood or veneered in hardwoods. It is typical of the last quarter of the 19th century. UD
- ② Two interior doors in the Stick style, from Woodward's National Architect, 1869.
- ③ This somewhat whimsical arrangement of panels is sometimes seen inside Shingle and late Queen Anne houses. UD
- ④ Glazed front doors, used on Colonial Revival and late Queen Anne houses. UD
- ⑤ A Gothic-style dining room door, with restrained tracery.
- ⑥ A door showing Aesthetic influence. It would also be apt for a Queen Anne house.
- ⑦ Double panelled doors for interior use were often imposing but nonetheless simple in design.
- ⑧ A range of door fittings: doorknobs, locks, key escutcheons, handles, bell pulls (including second row, near left, Venetian and Gothic), hinges (including a screen door hinge), a door chain (1895), a barrel bolt (1895) and a letterbox/maillslot.
- ⑨ A transom light, with an adjustable opening.





# Windows



- ① Two-over-two paned sash windows were the most popular type, competing with one-over-one in the late 19th century. Here, one-over-one windows are used in an Italianate bay.
- ② This apartment house (New York, 1880s) with a store at the bottom, exhibits the intricate pattern of windows commonly found on urban Queen Anne housing. Vertical and horizontal elements are held in balance.
- ③ A late Victorian house with relatively simple leaded windows placed in bands for decorative effect. Note the more elaborate oriel window, with a plain arched section breaking the pattern of leading.
- ④ A Second Empire house. The windows have moulded surrounds. The arched dormer windows set into the mansard roof are typical of this style.

With the perfection of plate glass making, huge expanses of undivided glazing were now affordable. The use and design of glazing bars became a purely decorative decision, with few technical constraints. Thus, when the designers of Gothic Revival houses reintroduced diamond-paned windows, it was a design unaffected by any limitations on the size of the glass. Millwork catalogues offered vast assortments of windows. The simplest were plain, single-paned, double-hung types; the fanciest, with elaborately divided polygons of glazing, were for Queen Anne houses.

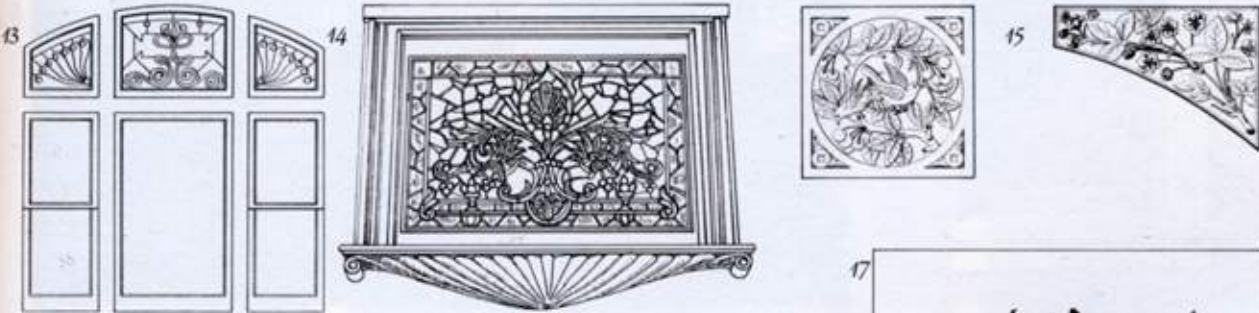
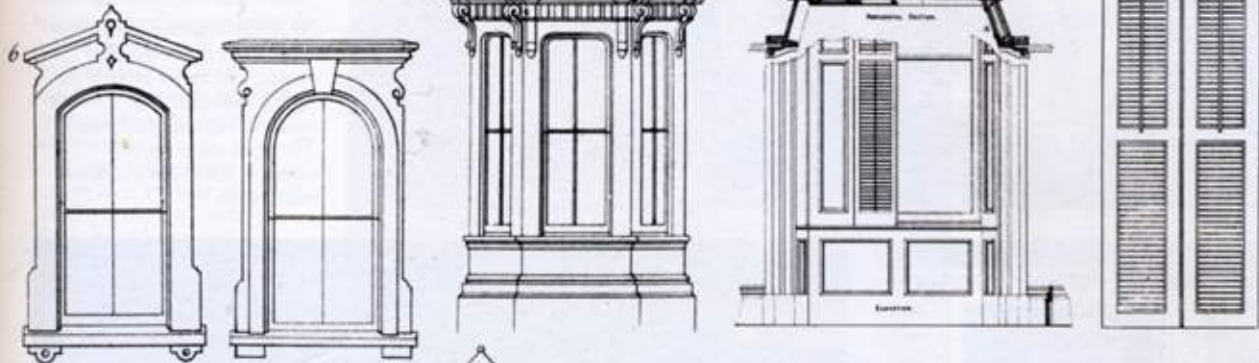
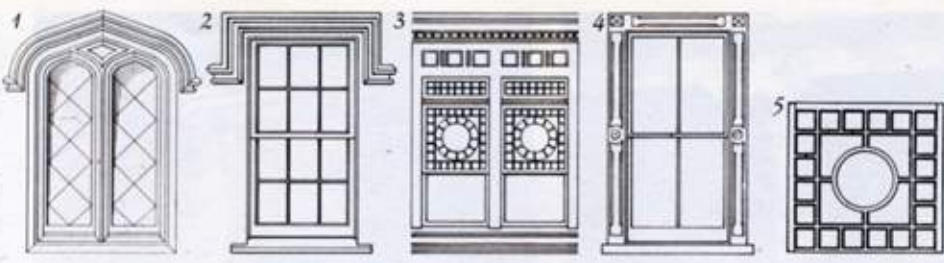
There was a renewed interest in stained glass. From the 1840s some houses featured windows with solid

panes of coloured glass, particularly in the lights around front doors. In the 1850s leaded glass windows were introduced, continuing until the first decades of the 20th century. Elaborate leaded designs were popular on fireplace walls, in dining rooms, and on stair landings. Etched glass panels and glass decoration painted to simulate leaded glass also enjoyed a vogue.

In the second half of the 19th century, louvered or Venetian exterior shutters became standard, although canvas awnings or bonnet blinds were sometimes used instead. Many houses continued to have solid interior shutters. Wire mesh window screens for insect protection were introduced in the 1880s.

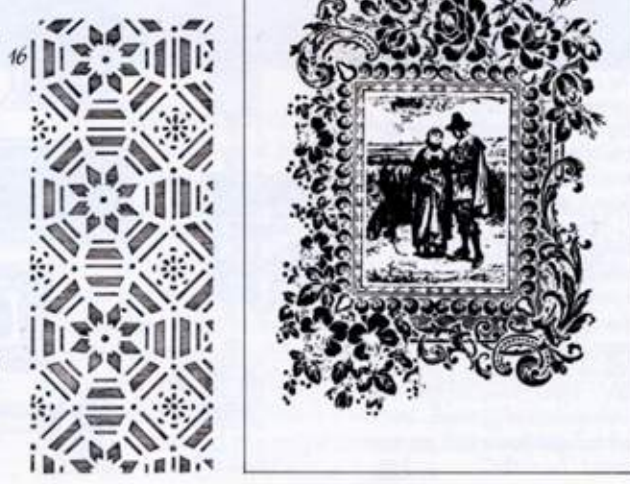


- ① A Gothic casement window, with hood moulding, 1852. SN
- ② A mid-century Gothic sash.
- ③ Queen Anne sash windows, 1880s. The circle within a square is typical.
- ④ A sash window of 1878.
- ⑤ A sash window section in the Queen Anne style. CK
- ⑥ Two windows of 1869, one with a pediment, the other with a flat cornice and keystone. WD
- ⑦ Bay windows became common after c.1850, often used to update older houses. CG



- ⑧ An interior partial elevation, with cross-section above, of a window with inside shutters (shown half closed). UD
- ⑨ One of a pair of exterior shutters, with stationary slats above rolling slats. UD
- ⑩ Three examples of dormer windows, 1869. The first two are in the Second Empire manner, the third is typical Queen Anne. Dormers helped to elaborate the roof lines of even the simplest structures. WD
- ⑪ A semi-circular gable window (interior, left, exterior, right), dressed with stone in the context of a brick-built house.
- ⑫ Neo-classical window shapes gave Colonial Revival

- houses much of their style. UD
- ⑬ A triple-fronted window with upper panes in leaded and coloured glass. It dates from the turn of the century. UD
- ⑭ This leaded and coloured glass design is from a Queen Anne-style house in San Francisco.
- ⑮ Designs for stained glass window sections in a loosely Aesthetic style.
- ⑯ A section of etched glass: various geometric designs were popular. UD
- ⑰ This sandblasted glass panel showing 17th-century pilgrims would have appealed to Colonial Revivalists. A turn-of-the-century design. UD







① Tall sash windows with exterior shutters. In this example, note the decorative use of shutters even where shade is provided by a deep veranda. WT



② Bay windows enjoyed great popularity in the Italianate style, and again in the Shingle and Colonial Revival styles. This is an Italianate example from Los Angeles.

③ A late Victorian upper-floor window set into a shingled facade. The upper pane of the sash is enlivened with a simple border of stained-glass panels. The paint colours in this example have been accurately restored. HA



④ Stained glass, Villa Montezuma, San Diego, 1887. The central panel depicts Sappho, the ancient Greek poetess who tutored girls in the Arts of music and poetry – apt for a room where music was played. JBE

⑤ Miscellaneous window fittings, late 19th century, including espagnolette bars for French doors (left), sash pull plates, sash lifts, and a shutter hinge (bottom right). Cast fittings with relief decoration were used from c.1860. Most designs were combinations of geometric and stylized decoration that are now termed "Eastlake".





# Walls

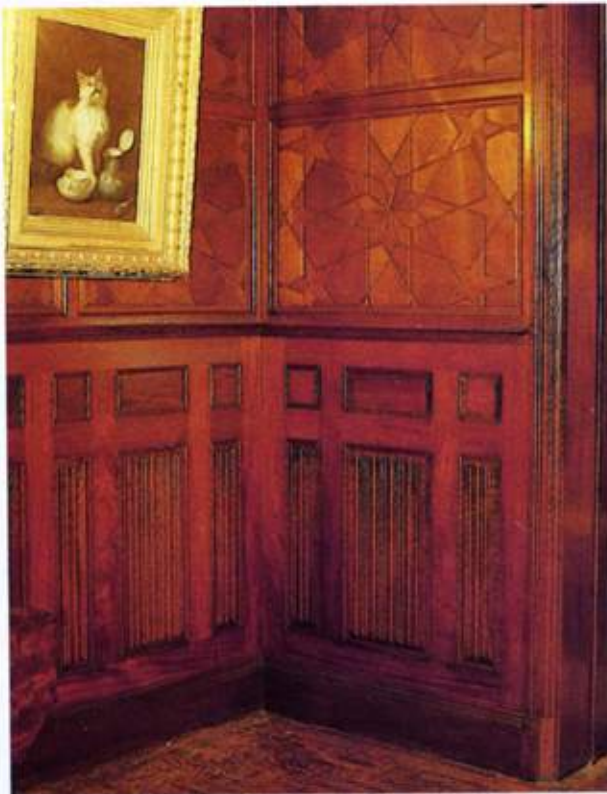
① Fully panelled walls, often of American hardwood, were popular among the well-to-do in the late 19th century. This example, with a linenfold dado and star motifs above, dates from the 1880s. SAJ

② A frieze beneath a papered ceiling. The design is made up of individual wallpaper strips: note how the flower sprigs overlap the strip below. HA

③ Floral wallpapers were popular: in some the botanical representation was highly naturalistic. GE

④ Papers with a dense all-over pattern were popular in the last decades of the 19th century. Typically, this example is restricted to the field of the wall, above a panelled dado with fine carved mouldings. CW

⑤ A William Morris wallpaper, in the "Chrysanthemum" pattern, above a panelled dado with echoing floral motifs. This wallpaper design was produced from 1877. Morris aimed to convey the vigour of plant growth without directly imitating nature. HA



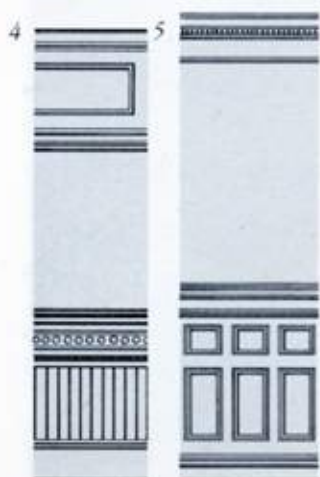
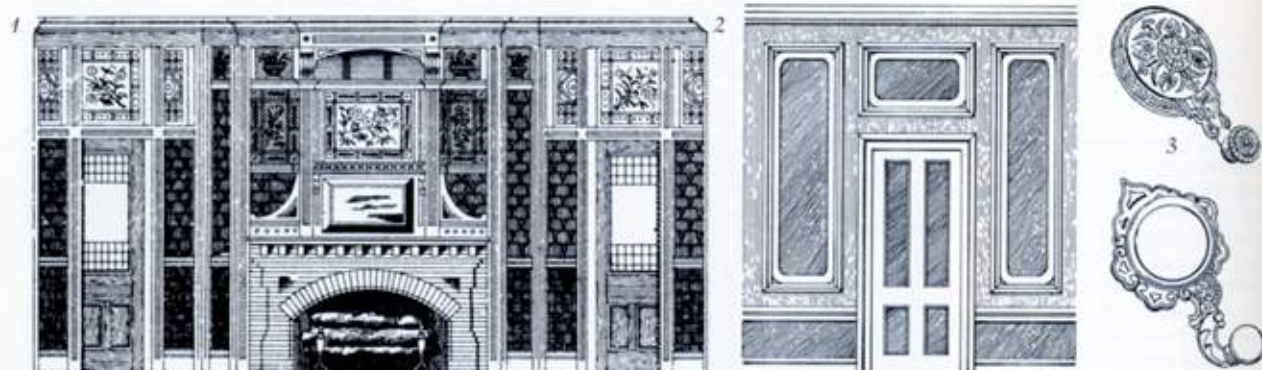
Almost every domestic room had a base moulding (skirting board/baseboard), and many had cornices (crown mouldings) of some type. After the 1860s wainscot and chair rails once more became regular features. In the 1870s, the dado frieze enjoyed a vogue.

It was recommended that walls be painted darker than the ceiling and that the trim work should be darker or lighter than the walls. Oil paints and distemper colours (calcimine) were both used. White or light-coloured walls were popular, although some writers argued for more adventurous choices. A. J. Downing felt that entrance halls should be painted in sober colours, or to resemble stone; parlours should be cheerful and bright.

After 1850, wallpaper was an affordable alternative to paint. Rococo Revival papers in the mid-century usually featured large leaf designs and architectural panels of scroll ornament, applied from skirting board/baseboard to ceiling. In the 1870s popular taste shifted to bands or friezes of paper above painted walls or wainscot. Lifelike organic designs were favoured.

In the late Victorian period hardwoods were recommended for trim moulding and wainscotting. Critics felt that native American wood species were most suitable, treated with a clear finish. However, pine grained or flat-painted remained the most common finish of wood for most late 19th-century house builders.





① The Aesthetic influence in a drawing room wall, with three kinds of wallpaper. CK  
 ② A. J. Downing recommended this design for drawing room walls. It uses three woods – black walnut, oak and yellow pine. The panels would be filled

with an embroidered material.  
 ③ Two parlour bell levers, for summoning a servant.  
 ④ A wall with a dado frieze above the wainscot.  
 ⑤ Later Queen Anne and Shingle houses could have walls like this, with a simple skirting

board/baseboard, panelled wainscot and cornice.  
 ⑥ Italianate wainscot, 1873. CC  
 ⑦ A wainscot with allowance for a frieze of tiles, 1880s. CK  
 ⑧ Two skirting board/baseboard profiles, 1869. WD  
 ⑨ Two hallway arches, 1869.



⑩ These Greek-based designs, equally suitable for wallpaper friezes or for vertical pilaster bands of decoration, were published in *The Practical Decorator and Ornamentist*, 1892, by G.A. and M.A. Audsley. DO  
 ⑪ A design for alternating bulrush and lily decoration, with an appropriately wavy base, from the same source. DO  
 ⑫ A Rococo Revival wallpaper, c.1847 (reproduced today by Scalamantré).  
 ⑬ Two more wallpaper designs from *The Practical Decorator and Ornamentist*, 1892. DO





# Ceilings



① A grand Italianate stairwell skylight, with classical plaster mouldings, c.1847. BO

② Ceiling roses/medallions were carried on from the Federal

period. This version would be appropriate to a Gothic or Italianate house. CE

③ A panelled ceiling of c.1870, with wooden bosses. The use of

stencilled stars to represent the night sky was a not uncommon conceit. NA

④ Authors on design in c.1870 often focused on ceilings as an

under-used vehicle for decoration. This example, combining stencilling with painted and gilded plaster, is especially exuberant. CW

Decorated ceilings were favoured in American Victorian houses. Taste-makers decreed that even the simplest rooms required cornices (crown mouldings); 14 inches (36cm) was held by some to be the ideal depth. Some critics advocated coloured or patterned ceilings, but plain white remained the habitual choice.

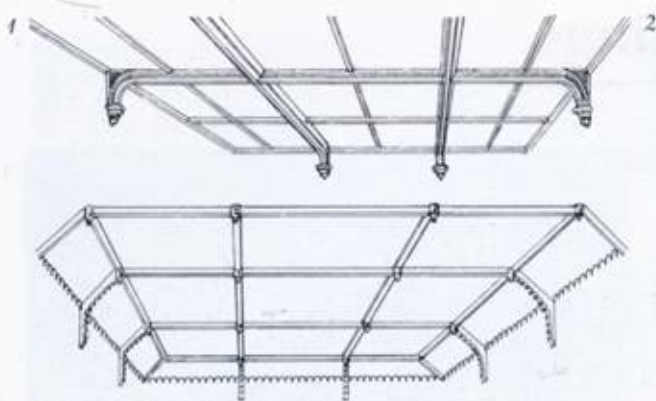
Plaster roses/medallions continued from the Neo-classical period, adapted to suit the various revival tastes. Thus, Rococo Revival roses/medallions gave way to Renaissance models later in the century. Other types of recommended plasterwork included panel mouldings, as well as, for the rich, various types of medievalized coffers and panels.

The post-Civil War period brought rich cycles of painted and papered ceiling decorations, ranging from cloud-borne cherubs to elaborate, interlocking geometric patterns and naturalistic borders. Less expensive papers, introduced after c.1850, were used to produce whole ceiling designs as well as borders and central panels. Stencilling was also used to decorate ceilings.

In the last decade of the century, some critics called for simpler ceiling design, using all-over papers in reticent patterns, with plain borders en suite with the designs on the walls below.

Ceilings could also be of tongue-and-groove boards, or of tin in secondary areas of the house.

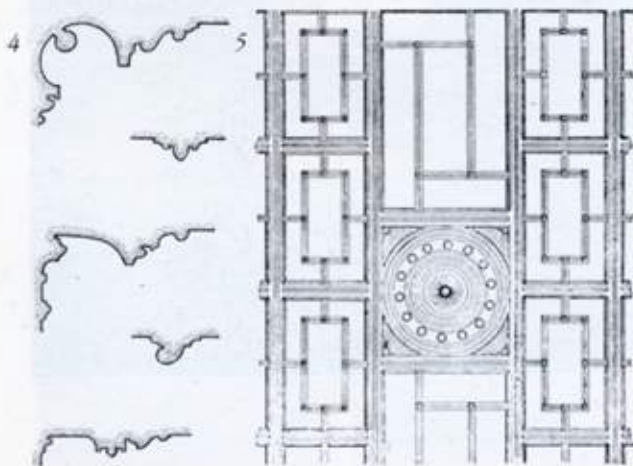




① Two wood-ribbed ceilings: one Gothic and one in what A.J. Downing describes in *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850) as the Bracketed style. The brackets are designed to give an illusion of perpendicular support.

② An 1850s design for a highly elaborate plaster ceiling (only half is shown). The arrangement of parts owes a debt to earlier Greek Revival models, but the density of the decoration fits the Italianate taste. SN

③ A detail of a metal Queen Anne parlour ceiling, 1883.



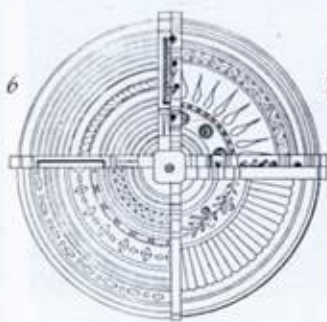
④ Plaster moulding profiles, which would be suitable for either Gothic or Italianate houses.

⑤ Ceilings in Queen Anne houses were often divided into squares and rectangles, with a complex array of wooden mouldings, wallpaper and painted borders. This is a high-style example of the 1880s. PA

⑥ Four alternative patterns for a central rose/medallion, 1880s. PA

⑦ An Aesthetic corner treatment, reminiscent of a Tudor doorway spandrel. DO

⑧ A Greek-style design, which could be stencilled. The corners are intended to be widely separated from the central motif. The illustration is taken from a



British pattern book which was widely used in the United States – *The Practical Decorator and Ornamentist* by George Ashdown Audsley and Maurice Ashdown Audsley, 1892. Decorators continued to develop stencilling



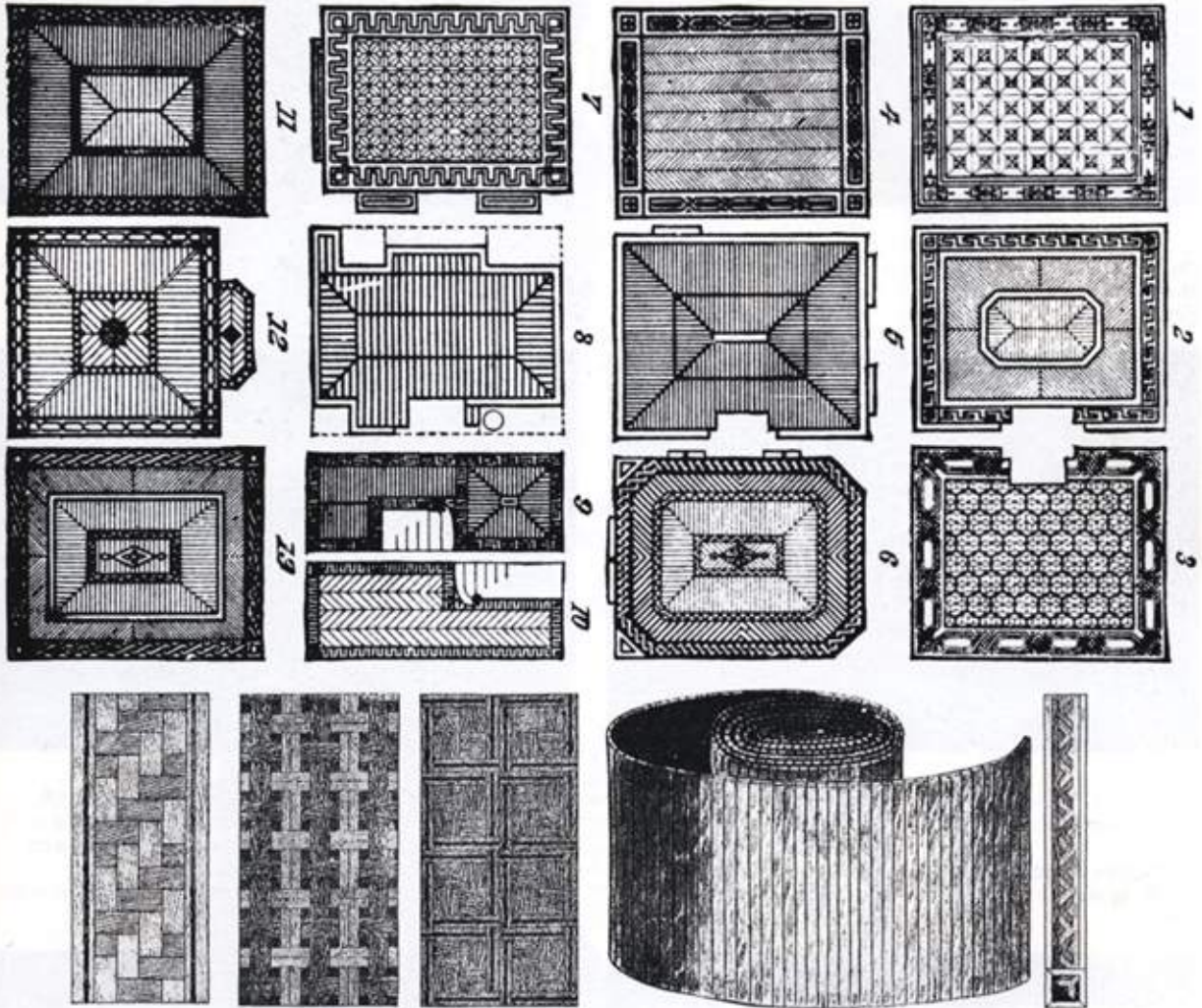
throughout the last quarter of the 19th century, in many cases achieving a high degree of aptitude and inventiveness. DO

⑨ Medievalized ceiling ornamentation: a ribbed design for intricate paintwork. DO





# Floors



A range of prefabricated parquet patterns, produced by a Philadelphia company, John W. Boughton (top). The wood blocks were sold ready-laid onto pieces

of flexible cloth to make up the pattern. Parquet and "wood carpet" floors (bottom right) could also be bought in strips by the yard.

The most common floors throughout the 19th century were plain, unfinished, bleached pine boards. From the mid-century, darker stained and polished floors gained in popularity. As the century progressed, these softwood floors were often treated as sub-floors for decorative coverings, such as parquet.

Most home owners chose the flooring that best suited specific rooms. Thus, tiles were used for entrance halls because they were durable and decorative, while pile carpets were kept for the best rooms of a house.

Early in the period carpets in Rococo and stylized naturalistic designs were favoured. Oriental motifs were later preferred. Critics, however, argued for subtler

designs that would set off walls and furniture, and by the end of the century pile carpets could be had in solid colours. Straw, coconut or cloth matting was used in most houses. Mats dressed up houses in summer, when rugs were taken up, and in more modest houses served all year round in place of carpets. They were used in bedrooms by all classes.

Floorcloths continued in use, especially in halls and kitchens. A newer option was linoleum (introduced c.1860) – a mixture of ground cork, ground wood and linseed oil laid on burlap or canvas backing. The well-to-do installed it in service areas, while poorer people used linoleum to imitate carpets and hardwoods.





① A fireplace hearth of glazed tiles, set into the plain boards that were standard for the Victorian house. Glazed tiles

with relief decoration were made in American factories from the 1870s. HA  
② Durable encaustic tiles, of



inlaid earthenware, usually decorated with geometric designs based on their Romanesque prototypes, were

popular in all styles of houses. There were two major encaustic tile companies based at Zanesville, Ohio. CW



③ and ④ Two fine parquetry floors, in light and dark woods. NA

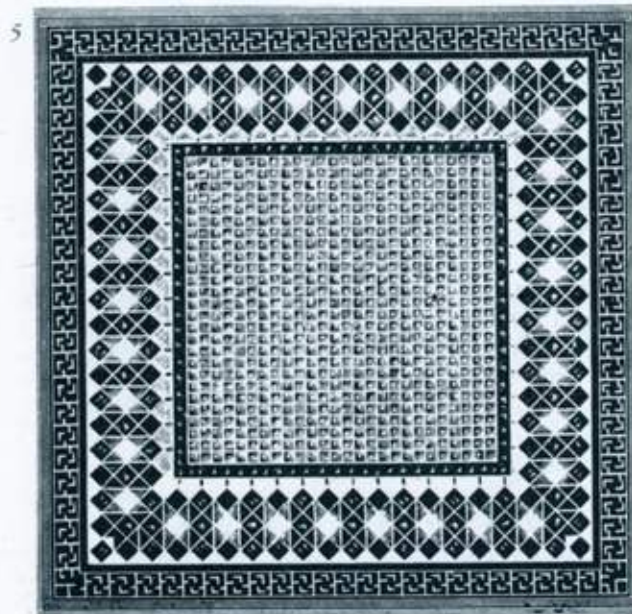
⑤ A square of patterned oilcloth, on which a stove would stand.

⑥ and ⑦ In 1839 Erastus B. Bigelow, based in Clinton, Massachusetts, patented power-driven looms for the manufacture of ingrain carpets, and during the 1850s he



developed similar technology for Brussels carpets. The centre of American carpet production shifted from Philadelphia to New England. Organic designs were most fashionable from the

1840s to the 1860s. Later, Oriental carpets enjoyed a vogue, and "Persians" were made by all the major American manufacturers of the 1880s.



⑥ An American Wilton carpet typifying the taste of the last quarter of the 19th century. (A reproduction by Scalamantré.) SCA



⑦ This detail of a naturalistic carpet owes much to the influence of French designs.



# Fireplaces



Many late Victorian fireplaces had built-in cupboards, but this one, with its wealth of gilding

and intricate carpentry, is exceptionally ornate. An effective feature of the design is

the contrasting plain marble slip. Mary Gay Humphreys, the prolific writer on household taste,

wrote: "The fireplace is really the domestic altar, the true rallying point of the household." SAJ.

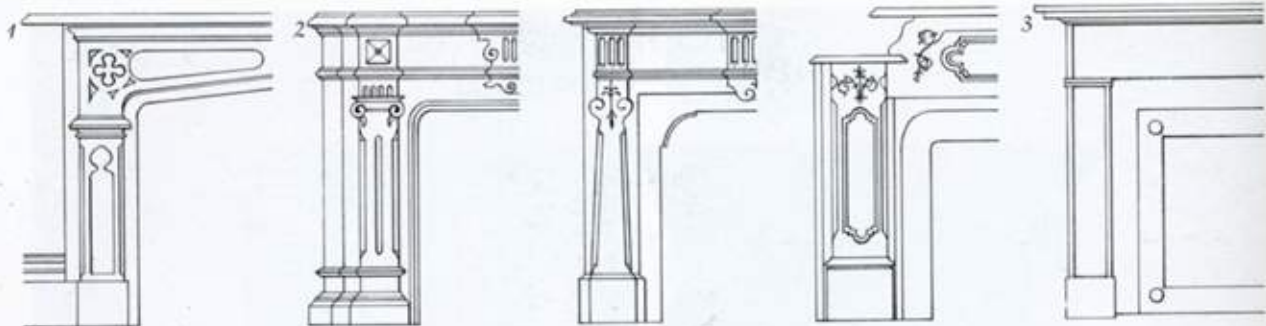
Heating was an important issue for 19th-century Americans: surviving the winter in a wood house in a climate more severe than Europe's was a major conversational topic. Even after the fireplace was made technically obsolete by the widespread use of the stove and by central heating, it retained a symbolic and decorative importance. Stoves eliminated draughts, and thus made rooms seem stuffy, and therefore, to some critics, unhealthy. Moreover, an open fire was a sign of wealth, as it was more expensive to fuel than a stove, and implied servants to tend it. So the fireplace was not readily abandoned.

The most stylish fireplaces of the mid-century were

Rococo Revival models in marble and Renaissance Revival designs with incised decoration on marble or wood. Later fireplaces followed Arts and Crafts models. Neo-classical types were reintroduced with Shingle-style houses.

Fireplaces held pride of place in the living halls of later Victorian houses, evoking the medieval spirit that architects tried so hard to foster. The seductive notion of the cosy hearth and the open fire was strengthened in some rooms by the addition of overmantels and robust combinations of display shelves, seats, decorative panels and works of art, making a complex ensemble that served as a focal point for the room.





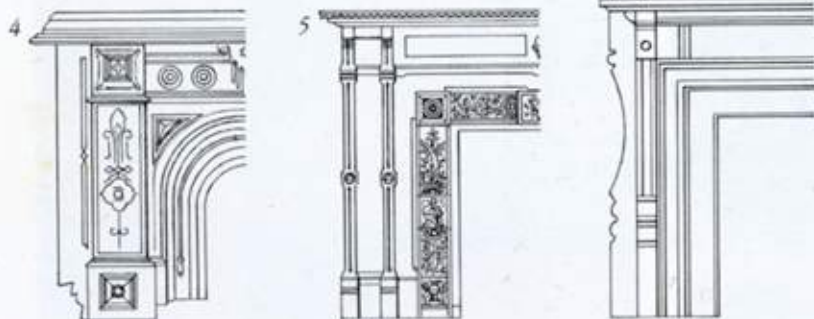
① A Gothic-style fireplace, with typical quatrefoil corners. The angle at which the arch is sloped is also characteristic.

② Three Renaissance Revival examples, with typical decorative details. The first is illustrated in Cummings' *Architectural Details*, published in New York in 1873. The second dates from 1869. The last of the

three, dating from the same period, is from a parlour in Batavia, New York.

③ Stone fireplaces of marble or slate were the first choice for the well-to-do. Simpler

houses could have plain stone surrounds of almost Neo-classical severity, like the example illustrated here, which is from a parlour of the 1860s.

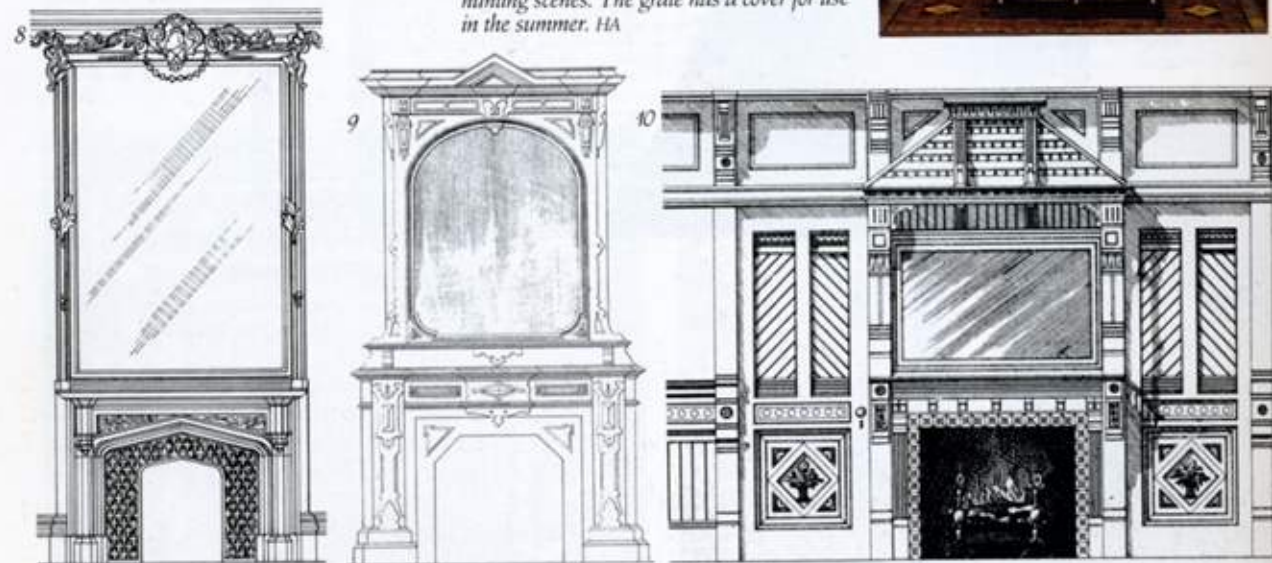


④ An elaborate slate fireplace, advertised by T.B. Stewart and Company of New York.

⑤ This fireplace features a slip of decorative tiles imported from the British firm Minton's.

⑥ A Queen Anne fireplace in pine featuring a pulvinate (convex) frieze.

⑦ A wooden chimneypiece from a late Victorian house. The tiles, in relief, depict hunting scenes. The grate has a cover for use in the summer. HA



⑧ The pairing of a fireplace with an overmantel mirror was an 18th-century idea that became readily affordable after the 1850s. The combination of fireplace and mirror featured in every Victorian revival style except Shingle. This is a Gothic Revival

example of the 1850s; the mirror is framed by gilded wood.

⑨ An Italianate-style fireplace with overmantel mirror. From Woodward's *National Architect*, 1869. WD

⑩ An ambitious fireplace, with overmantel

mirror, designed for the hall of an opulent house in the Stick or Queen Anne style, 1880s. To the left is a closet door, to the right, a solid wood panel, matching the closet door in every detail except the handle and keyhole escutcheon plate. CK





① Pattern books of the period illustrate richly bracketed overmantel fireplaces like this one. The vast mirror spread the lighting. CW



② Plain fireplaces, of almost Grecian simplicity, were produced throughout the period in wood, slate and marble. This is a marble example, dating from c.1850. CE

③ A grand overmantel fireplace, integral with wooden panelling of the room. Four small rectangular panels along the frieze illustrate polychrome scenes of chariots and other antiquarian motifs. Note the tiled hearth, in a checked pattern. NA



④ A Renaissance Revival fireplace with an overmantel mirror in a typical style. The flanking double columns and entablature



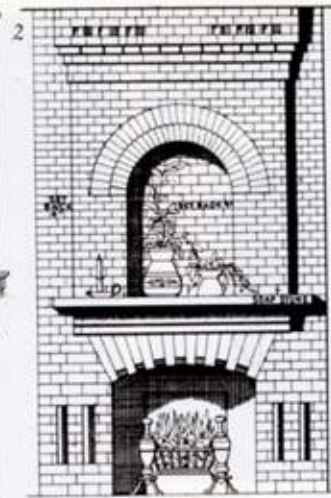
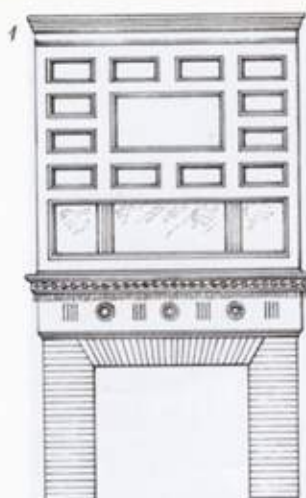
produce an effect of grandeur. An unusual feature is the dogs' heads in the spandrels of the arched recess. NA

⑤ Decorative tiles contrast with a wooden surround in this fireplace of the 1870s. On many such fireplaces the tiles would be pictorial, each one representing a different scene, as here. Fender benches like this were uncommon in 19th-century American houses. CW

⑥ An especially elaborate example of a Rococo Revival fireplace, suitable for an Italianate house. Simpler versions were more common; many were imported from Europe, although some were also made in the United States. BO







① A typical Queen Anne fireplace of the 1870s or 80s. A wooden overmantel, with mirrors and a space for a picture, surmounts the glazed brick surround.

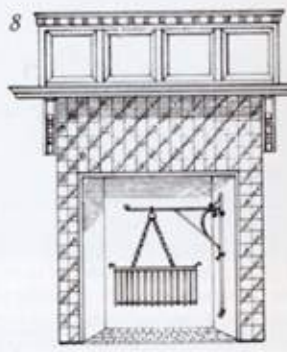
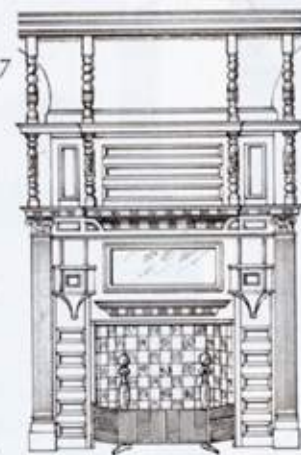
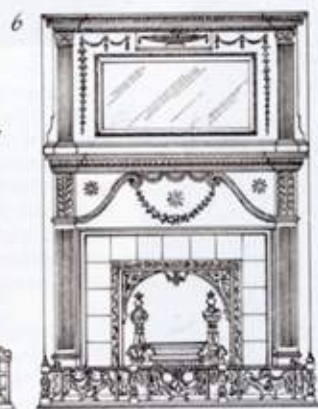
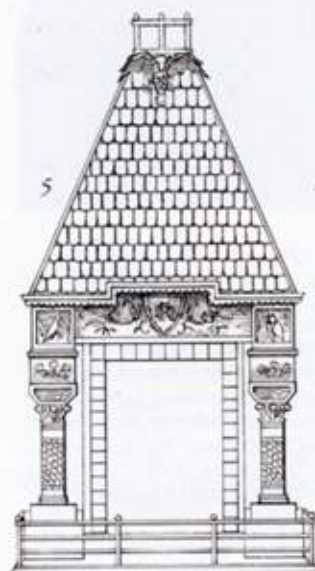
② Another Queen Anne fireplace, 1881. The alcove has a recess depth of 8 inches

(20cm). The mantel shelf is soapstone. CK

③ This elaborate fireplace with arched masonry below and a tiered overmantel culminates in a cresting of spindles. The shelves, for the display of

ornaments, are a typical feature of the later Victorian period.

④ Reflecting the taste of the American Queen Anne style, this grand fireplace combines a glazed display cabinet, mirrors and shelves, with an elegant spindle gallery surmounting the composition.



⑤ Designed to dwarf the onlooker: a gargantuan fireplace dating from the 1870s. The Romanesque columns support an elaborate shingled hood.

⑥ A more refined fireplace of the 1870s or 80s, with Neoclassical swags, acanthus leaves and other motifs, and an urn above the overmantel mirror.

⑦ The generous display shelves on this example owe much to the Arts and Crafts movement.

⑧ A simpler, Arts and Crafts-inspired fireplace, 1881: a reinterpretation of earlier designs.

⑨ A fireplace heater of the 1880s. Its openwork domed top could be removed and replaced with a tin plate, upon which kettles could be boiled.



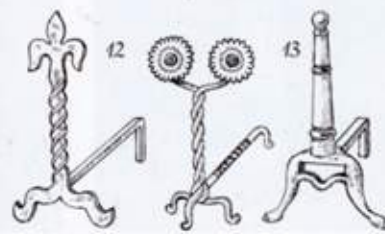
⑩ Another fireplace heater, manufactured by Floyd, Wells and Company, Royersford, Pennsylvania, and illustrated in their catalogue of c.1900. It went under the trade name "Grand Social" and came in three sizes.

As an alternative to the plain iron version, it was sold with nickel plates set in the sides and a nickel plate across the top. The sliding fire doors, when pushed back, convert the stove to an open grate. FI

⑪ An ornately ornamented fireplace heater, with a classical head design in the central cartouche.

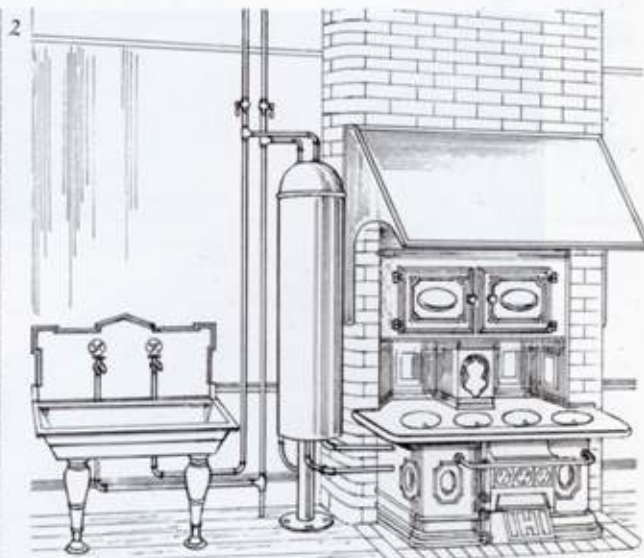
⑫ Two designs for iron andirons, both dating from the 1880s, showing Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic influences.

⑬ A Colonial Revival-style andiron.





# Kitchen stoves

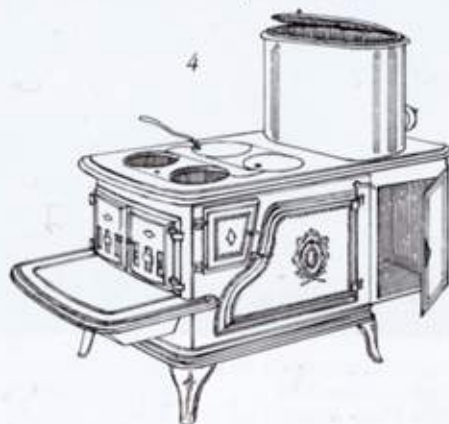


① A built-in range, 1870s. Few survive in the United States, perhaps because they were more expensive to install and difficult to accommodate when buildings were modernized. Trade catalogues tend to show built-in and freestanding stoves in equal numbers.

② A sophisticated though cumbersome stove of the 1870s, used not only for cooking but also to heat water. The hood over the stove is a typical feature.

③ In 1902 Sears, Roebuck and Company offered this Acme American Range with the latest Rococo-style mouldings. Made of cast iron with nickel hinges and knobs, it has a tin-lined oven door and a porcelain-lined reservoir, or warming cabinet. It was suitable for burning hard or soft coal, or wood. By this period gas stoves were also very popular: they tended to be box-shaped, with two or four top burners. Some models had a tank for heating water.

④ Earlier Victorian stoves like this one of 1867 had less surface decoration, merely providing a flat cooking surface over a fire box.



By the mid-19th century the cooking range had been adopted into the American kitchen. Hearth cookery was becoming a lost art. However, acceptance of the cooking stove was hesitant, as the temperatures were at first difficult to gauge. Early Victorian designs followed early 19th-century prototypes: simple raised fire boxes with a flat cooking top next to a side oven. Mid-century improvements are documented in the 1869 edition of Beecher and Stowe's *American Woman's Home*, which describes a range that kept 17 gallons (64 litres) of water hot at all times, baked pies and puddings in a warm closet, heated flat irons under the back cover, boiled a tea-kettle and a pot under its front cover, baked

bread in the oven and cooked a turkey in the tin roaster, as well as providing a flat surface for cooking in pans.

By the 1880s gas stoves were being widely used. Together with oil stoves, they were recommended for hot weather cookery, as they needed to be lit only during the cooking period. Fuel costs made extended use of gas stoves expensive.

More decorative attention was given to stoves as the century progressed. Models began to mirror furniture design, featuring motifs such as Queen Anne legs and Rococo Revival cartouches. These decorations can be viewed as an attempt to make the new stove technology familiar to the homemaker.



## Staircases



*A grand paneled staircase from a Shingle-style house in Newport, Rhode Island. A sober*

*design, with fine carpentry: much depends on the grain of the wood. SAJ.*

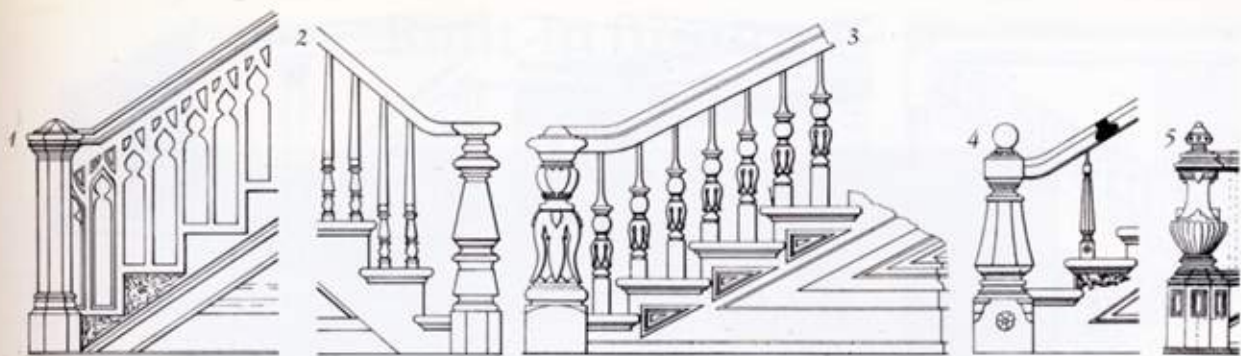
Much was done, particularly late in the 19th century, to exploit the architectural and decorative value of stairs. Until the mid-century central stair halls were typical. This changed with the freedom in planning introduced with the Gothic and Italianate Revivals. Stairs were located asymmetrically near the front door and usually near the principal parlour. Gothic and Italianate stairs tend to be a single flight from floor to floor. The balusters were complex, round turnings and the newels were turned, faceted and chamfered. In simpler dwellings the newel could be the most elaborate piece of woodwork in the house.

With the adoption of combination living spaces and

stair halls late in the period, stairs became the focus of further experiments, and more elaborate series of flights and landings were contrived. Often the principal landing between the entrance floor and the floor above featured a stained-glass window. The richest windows were pictorial, while the more modest ones were geometric. Stair halls were regularly lit by skylights, either with plain glazing or stair glass, sometimes with elaborate designs.

Carpet was the preferred stair covering, but floor cloths and matting were also used. Brass was a popular material for the stair rods, but iron and even, occasionally, silver are also found.





① A Gothic oak staircase of the mid-19th century. The solid chamfered newel and the tracery of the balustrade are typical.

② This staircase of the same period is in the Italianate style. Note the turned balusters and the more elaborate form of the newel post.

③ The newel in this example of the 1870s has a carved foliate design echoed in the balusters. The stair-ends have moulded

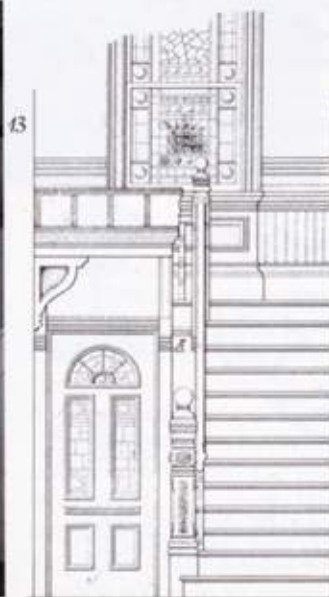
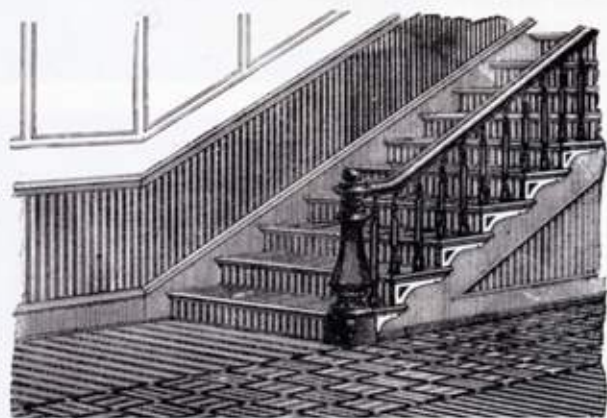
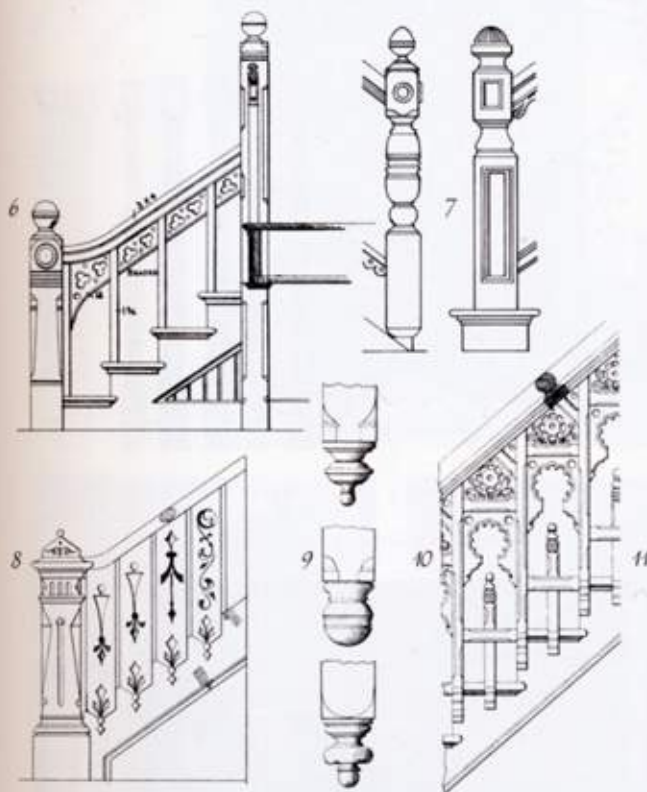
decoration.

④ This staircase, in the Italianate style, dates from the 1870s. BI

⑤ An Italianate baluster-shaped newel, with ribbed base. The balusters themselves would echo the newel, in miniature. From Woodward's National Architect, 1869. WD

⑥ A staircase from a Shingle house, 1881. CX

⑦ Two newel designs, 1881, suitable for Queen Anne houses.



⑧ This Queen Anne design of the 1870s shows alternative treatments for cut-out designs.

⑨ Drops, or pendants, sometimes added interest to the underside of the staircase. CX

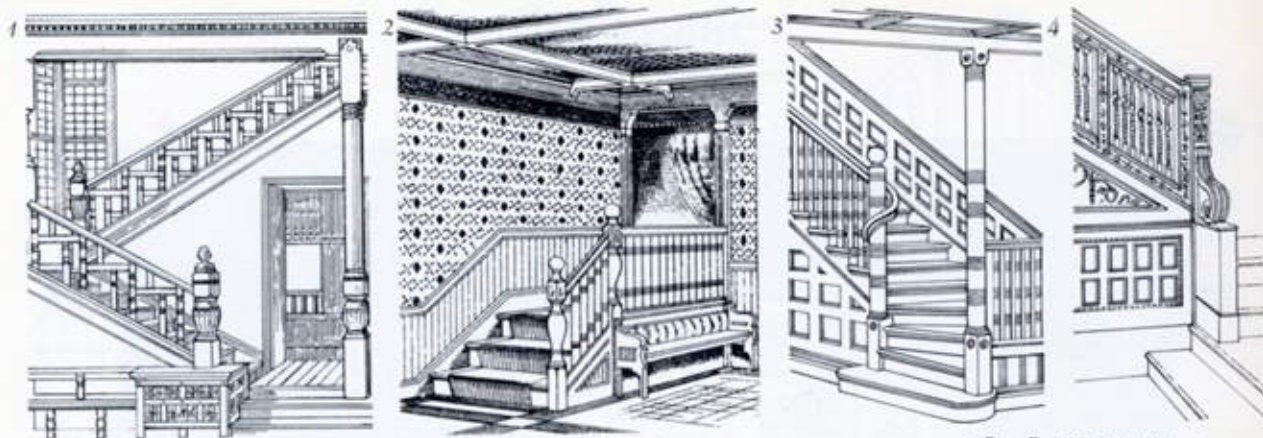
⑩ Exotic motifs, such as Islamic arches, were reserved for the grander houses.

⑪ A typical Italianate staircase with a single flight between stories, c.1870. The wainscoting that follows the line of the stair was sold in flexible strips.

⑫ Newel posts with a turned knob and faceted shaft were popular from the 1850s into the 1870s. WT

⑬ The Queen Anne staircase with stained glass in the landing window was a typical formula. Newel posts frequently featured a rosette motif.



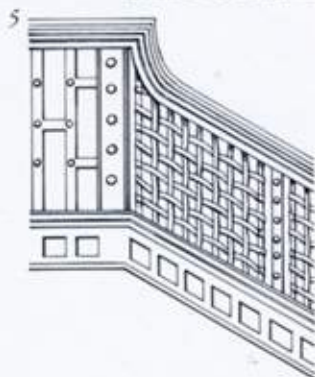


① Architects of the Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romanesque and Shingle styles experimented with the length of flights and the number of landings. This example is from a combined staircase and living hall. The landing continues a little way to the left (not shown), forming a gallery from which to look down into the room or admire the view through the tall leaded windows.

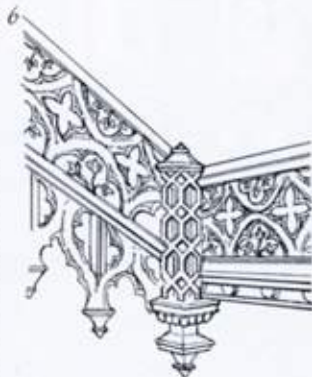
② Another living hall staircase, with well-placed bench, 1880s.

CK

③ This staircase, of the same period, turns to make room for a fireplace. CK

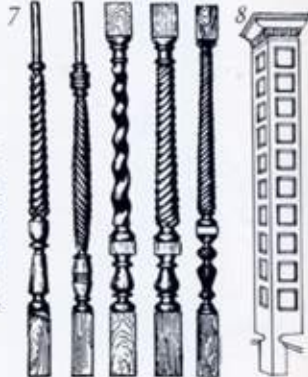


④ A staircase with carved Neoclassical decoration, including swags, festoons and scrolls.

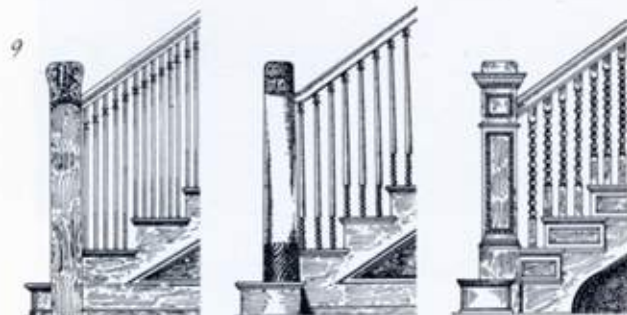


⑤ A "woven" balustrade, Shingle style, c.1880.

⑥ Enormous drops (pendants)



combine with a foliate balustrade in this carved Gothic stair.



⑦ Victorian manufacturers produced balusters based on 18th-century originals. These ones are c.1900. UD

⑧ A box-like newel, 1880s.

⑨ Three designs of 1903. UD

⑩ String decoration, 1903, showing the elaboration of the



millworker's art. Available in yellow pine or oak. UD

⑪ Typical handrail profiles, late 19th century.

⑫ Later Victorian stairs tend to have more square elements and to be heavier in scale. This example is from the 1880s. HA



## Built-in furniture



① A superbly panelled library from a house in the Queen Anne style. The glazed cabinets are inventively integrated into simple bookshelves. The gilded glazing bars, mouldings and pediments and the contrasting green painted woodwork are authentic. SAJ

② This bookcase of the 1870s has Gothic carved detailing – for example, quatrefoils in the spandrels of the arches. The Gothic style was thought to be particularly appropriate for libraries. CW

③ This built-in pedimented china cabinet in the alcove formed between a fireplace and a wall has subtle gilding on the drawers and on the vertical mouldings at the sides. HJA

Although freestanding furniture remained the more popular option, many Americans turned to built-in furniture in the last decades of the 19th century. Revival-style houses provided plenty of opportunities.

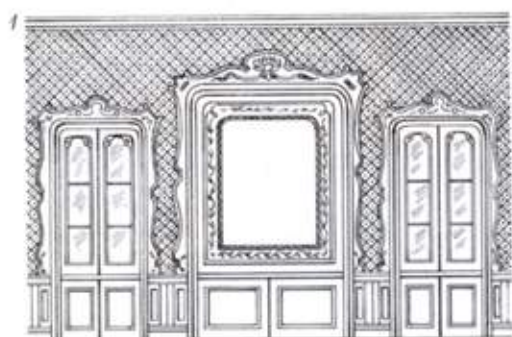
Closets became common in the 1870s, as people acquired more clothing than could be stored in chests and armoires. The number of books published in the United States also multiplied, and accordingly libraries with permanent shelves became common features in middle-class houses, while continuing to be built on an increasingly grand scale by the rich.

The introduction of the combined living and stair hall created ideal spaces for settles, below stairs and

on landings. Also below stairs, or at the end of a range of public rooms, were Turkish or “cozy corners”: luxuriously cushioned exotic spaces that played to the Victorian need for domestic sanctuary from the industrialized world. Benches and inglenooks were built to flank fireplaces. Window seats were popular in Shingle and Colonial Revival houses.

Most American kitchens housed only freestanding components, with the exception of some fixed sink enclosures. However, later in the century, built-in cabinets and appliances began to appear in kitchens, as well as in the pantries and sewing rooms of larger houses.



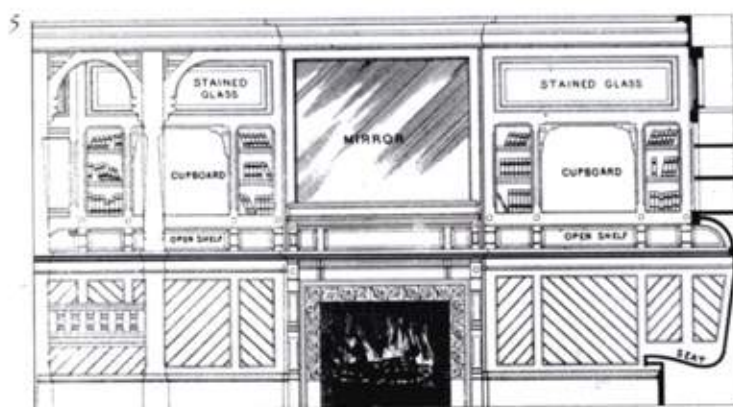
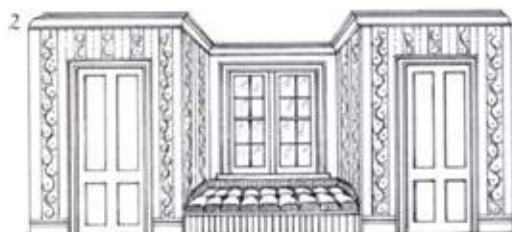


① A library wall, with bookcases, based on a drawing published by A. J. Downing. For the sake of symmetry and harmony of design, Downing suggested that one of the doors

into the library could be disguised as a bookcase, with false book spines to complete the illusion.

② This recessed bay with button-upholstered seat is positioned between a pair of bedroom closets.

③ A design for a glazed bookcase in a Gothic villa, with linenfold panelling on the closet doors beneath. A. J. Downing wrote: "The spaces below afford excellent closets for pamphlets and manuscripts, and the busts of distinguished men, in different departments of letters, may be so placed along the top as to designate to what particular class of books the space directly below is allotted." Downing also recommended hanging bookshelves.



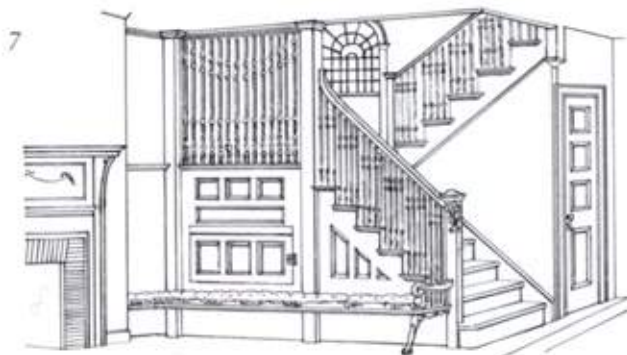
④ A simple library bookcase. This could have been made any time between 1840 and 1900, but only for the well-to-do. Most Victorians kept books in freestanding furniture. CK

⑤ This Queen Anne wall design features an array of shelves and cupboards, all framing a fireplace overmantel. Intricacy of design was held to be a primary virtue. CK

⑥ A built-in settle with an arched canopy, and cupboards and shelving at either side. Suitable for a Shingle-style or Queen Anne house.

⑦ A staircase and built-in upholstered bench, with overtones of the Colonial Revival and Shingle styles. Note the typical window illuminating the landing at the turn in the stairs.

⑧ A built-in kitchen china closet, with an adjacent sink forming an L-shape. This example (1903) typifies late Victorian utility furniture with its simple panels and modest decorations. RO



⑨ An exotic, Moorish-type arch forms the entrance to a "cozy corner" with comfortable divans, on a half-stair landing. A hanging lamp and Oriental rugs were necessary parts of the overall effect. Such arrangements were a popular feature of the fashionable Victorian interior.

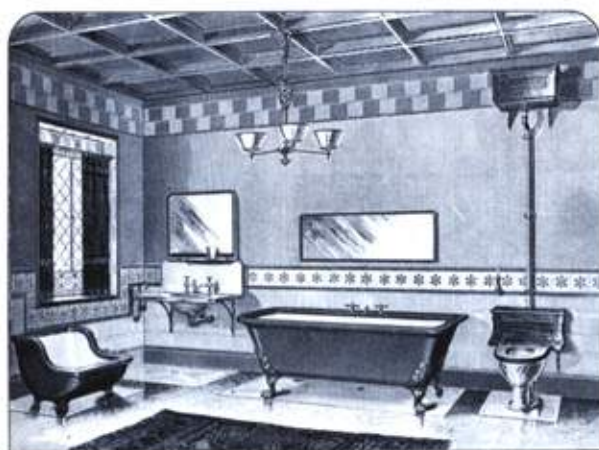


## Services



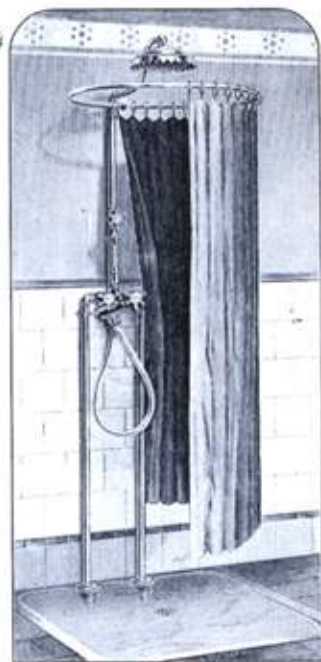
1 The early Victorian practice of enclosing plumbing fixtures in wooden cabinets built to match

the wainscot eventually acquired more fashionable overtones. 1888. MOT

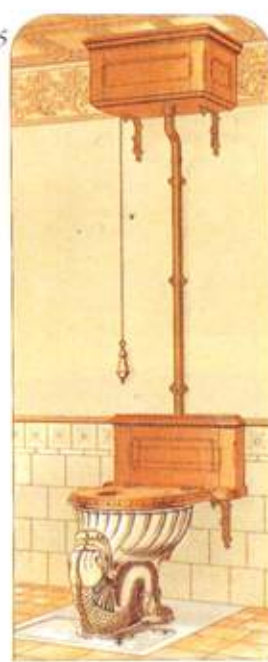


2 An Imperial porcelain bathtub with marble rim and legs, and inlaid around the rim with tiles. All-porcelain tubs were produced from the 1870s.

but they were expensive to transport and install. MOT  
3 A bathroom for those who preferred to dispense with cabinet work. It contains a



4 Showers were introduced in the 1870s. MOT



5 Water closets could take on attractive forms such as this dolphin. The water tank above the seat was the standard design. MOT

The first American bathrooms were installed in what had previously been storerooms or small bedrooms. Bathtubs, wash basins and water closets were not necessarily placed in the same room, or even close to each other. However, toward the turn of the century, architects began to designate specific spaces for bathrooms.

The first bathtubs affixed to the floor appeared at the time of the Civil War and were individually fabricated from sheet metal – lead, copper or zinc – encased in a wood frame. Painted iron baths stood several inches off the floor on feet cast in ball and claw shapes, or as scrolls with leaf patterns. The Mott Iron Works produced the first porcelain enamelled baths in 1873, and other manu-

facturers such as Kohler followed suit. Porcelain had long been used for chamber pots, and was easily adapted for the fixed water closet, which at first was encased in a wooden box for concealment. From the 1830s inventors experimented with gravity-fed water systems which allowed for a sanitary flush. These devices were fully perfected in the 1890s, culminating in the self-washing bowl and siphon jet we use today.

The wooden roof gutters of the first half of the century were gradually replaced, first by cast iron and then by sheet-metal versions. Later Victorian house builders, following historic prototypes, sometimes used whimsical spouts and gargoyles to carry off rainwater.



① An expensive washstand, in the "Eastlake" style, 1888. The marble top is set into a black

walnut, ash, cherry or ebonized cherry cabinet. MOT

designed to fit into a corner, 1888. MOT

porcelain-lined, with bronzed, marbled or painted exterior, 1888. MOT

② An enamelled wash basin,

③ A folding wash basin,



④ English ceramic basins with bands of decoration were imported. The less well-off used American-made versions in enamelled metal. MOT

⑤ The Victorian perfection of the metal tap/faucet made modern water systems possible.

⑥ A porcelain water closet with a self-raising seat. MOT

⑦ An all-porcelain bidet, 1888, in white or a subtle tint of ivory. MOT

⑧ Sinks with deep basins evolved from the wooden washtub. MOT

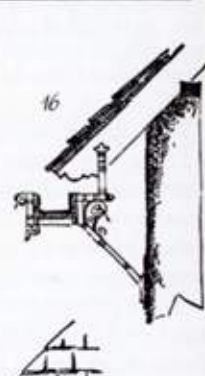
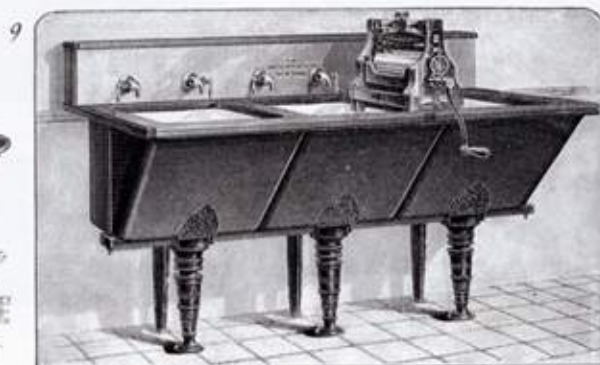


⑨ The "Imperial" porcelain-lined washtub, with a wringer. The positioning of taps/faucets above the tub was an improvement on early designs, in which they were set inside. MOT

⑩ A slop sink, for emptying chamber pots, 1888. MOT

⑪ The "Rosemont" radiator (c. 1898) (on the right), attached to an ornate heating stove. FL

⑫ The "pot belly" design became the classic 19th-century model for less formal rooms. FL



⑬ A boiler, available in copper or galvanized iron. MOT

⑭ A detail of a cast-iron down pipe/downspout, with an ornamental bracket for fastening to the wall. MOT

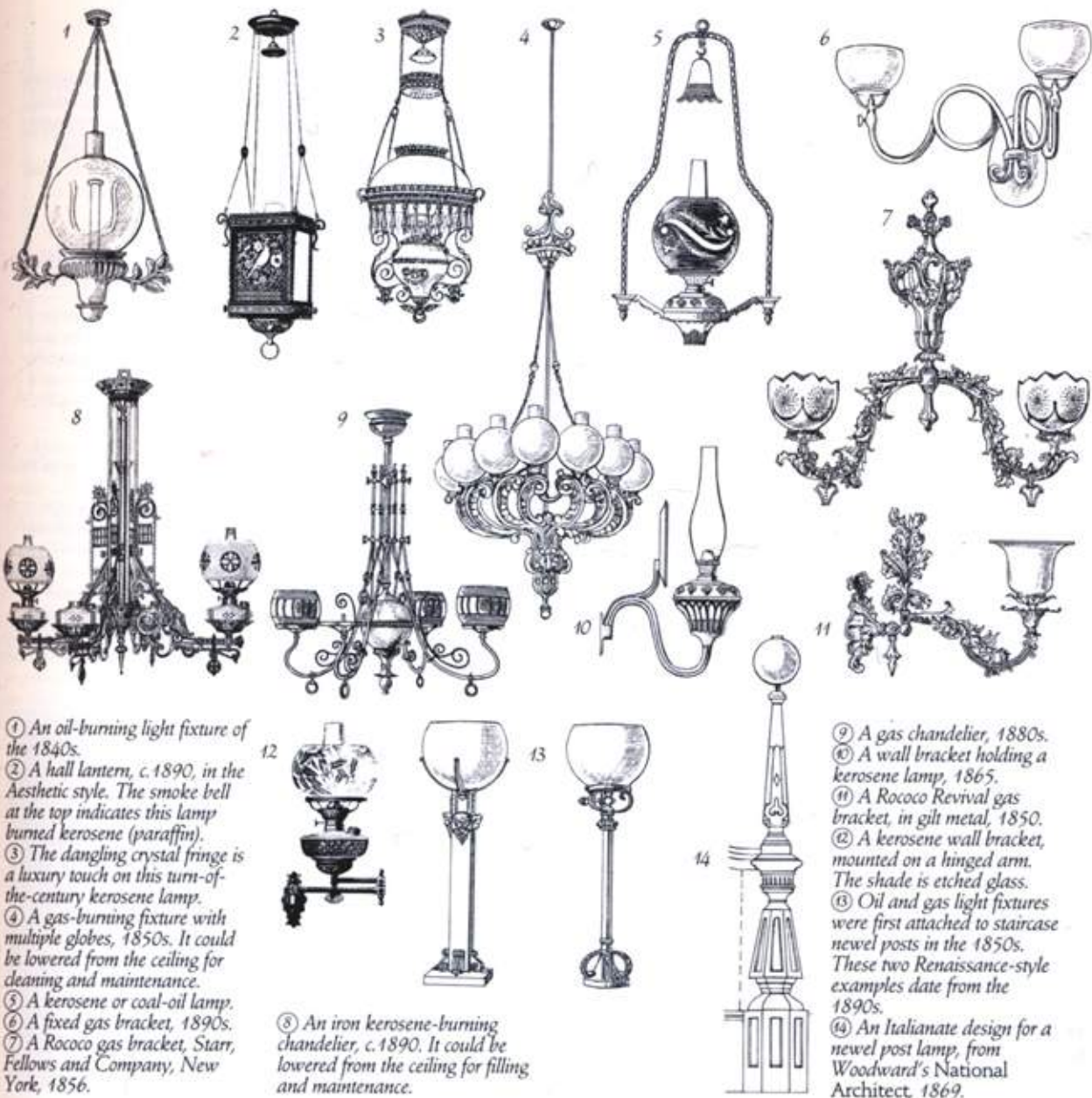
⑮ An eaves gutter, in cross-section.

⑯ Gargoyle water spouts often appear on Romanesque houses.





# Lighting



Between c. 1850 and the century's end, life evolved dramatically from the sparing use of a modestly lit family room to a more general and constant form of illumination. This change was accomplished by combined use of candles, oil lamps, kerosene (paraffin) and, ultimately, electricity.

The most advanced lighting by 1850 was still gravity-fed oil and fluid-burning lamps. Popular in Gothic and Italianate interiors, they were improved by means of new burners and chimney designs. This type was superseded by gas light; shades and scrubbers made the light gentler and minimized the smell.

Kerosene, perfected in the 1850s, did not require

installation of the complex and costly piping needed for gas. Also, kerosene fixtures could be moved for specific tasks. Gas, however, continued to be popular, as it did not require manual refilling of fixtures, and burned cleaner than kerosene. The use of kerosene with piped gas and, eventually, electricity provided a fail-safe for convenient but sometimes unreliable lighting systems.

The Edison system of electric lighting included an inexpensive carbon-filament lamp which gave a pleasant light and could be turned on and off like a gas jet. But as electricity became popular with the late Victorians, at the same time flattering candlelight gained renewed favour for evening entertainments.



## Metalwork

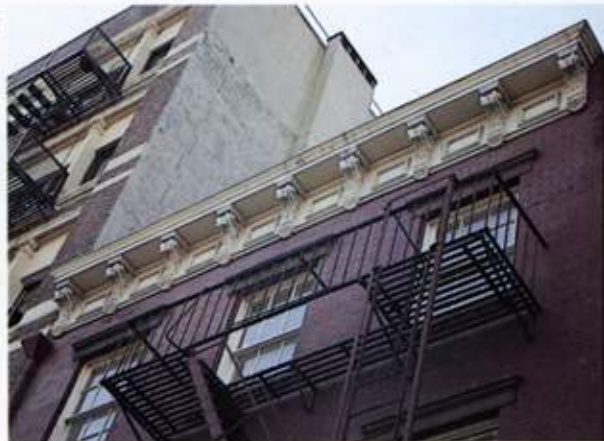


① A detail of an ironwork veranda cresting, from the Hale House, Heritage Square, Los Angeles. HA

② This New York terraced/row house has especially fine cast-iron work, in the robust style that is typical of the period. The railings delineate a private area in front of the main facade. Cast iron often acquires a patina, which inhibits rust; it has a pleasing grainy quality, caused by the coarse sand employed in the mould, although this is often covered by successive repaintings. KT

③ A simple, functional cast-iron gate with spear-heads and spiked balls. A ubiquitous design. WT

④ Sheet-metal cornices, such as this one, are a common feature of Victorian facades in New York and other American cities. KT



Mass-produced metalwares were an everyday aspect of American Victorian life. Everything from nails to decorative finials could be made in factories by casting, and roller and extrusion processes, rather than at a hand forge. This factory-made metal-work was of high quality, richer in detail and in most cases less expensive than its early American prototypes.

By mid-century manufacturers had perfected the casting of hardware by the "lost wax" process. This was a boon to builders, as it meant that many pieces of door furniture/hardware that previously had to be handmade could now be cast with decorative designs. A range of metals was used, from inexpensive white

metal to brass and bronze.

The increased use of decorative sheet metal is evidenced by sheet-metal cornices on town houses built in the second half of the 19th century. Sheet metal was also popular for weather vanes – one of the most inventive aspects of American building decoration. Designs ranged from simple directional arrows to cod fish and running deer.

At the end of the century, blacksmith work was revived as part of the nostalgia for Colonial designs. A particular highlight of the period is the decorative crestings used on Second Empire and Queen Anne houses.



① Decorative railings for balconies were made in an infinite variety of designs. They

were used throughout the country, although iron balconies are most usually associated with

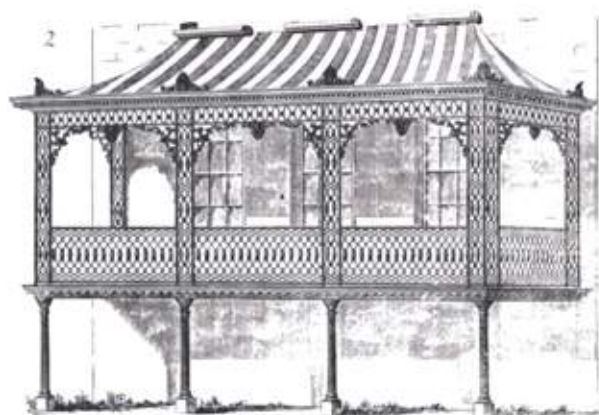
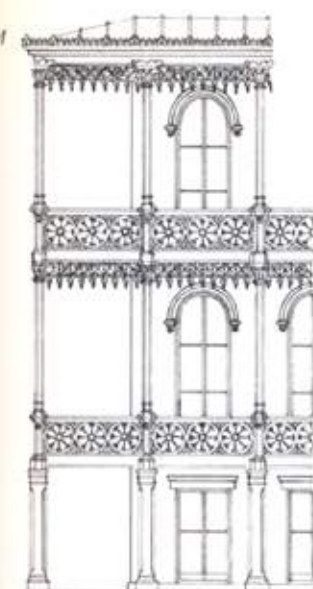
the South. This example is from New York, and dates from the 1850s. The pendant ironwork decoration at the upper levels helps to unify the design.

② Cast-iron columns support a wire railing veranda. The wire used is of 1/2-inch (0.6cm) thickness. The columns could be dispensed with, and brackets substituted, provided that the veranda did not extend too far from the exterior wall of the house. Verandas of this design could also be used at ground level, in which case the columns would not be necessary.

③ An ironwork stoop, from an 1857 catalogue. This example has a sober gravity, but more florid Rococo Revival designs were also popular at this period.

④ Cast-iron grilles like this were unusual on all but the fanciest Gothic-style Victorian houses. Cast-iron gates were more common.

⑤ Metal heating vents such as these became necessary when central heating was introduced in the 1830s. These designs date from the 1870s.



⑥ Metal urns and vases were used as garden ornaments, but could also be employed as finials to gate piers.

⑦ to ⑩ In the 1870s and 80s, wrought- and cast-iron garden railings grew in popularity.

⑪ A Gothic-style finial, suitable as roof decoration.

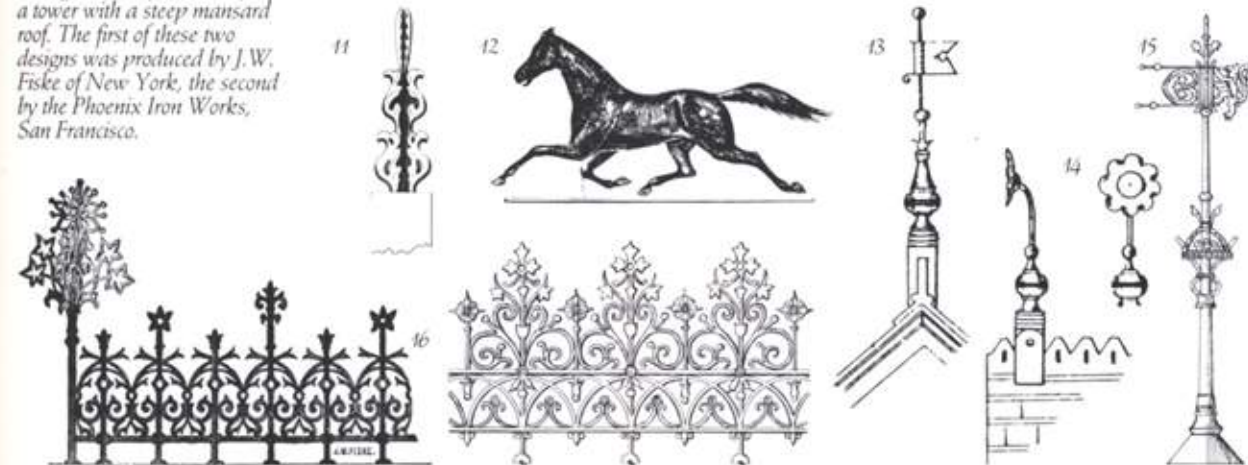
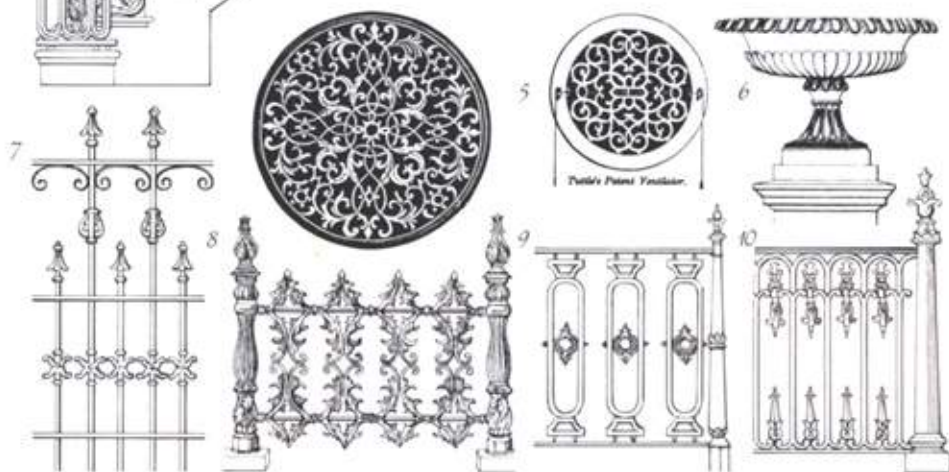
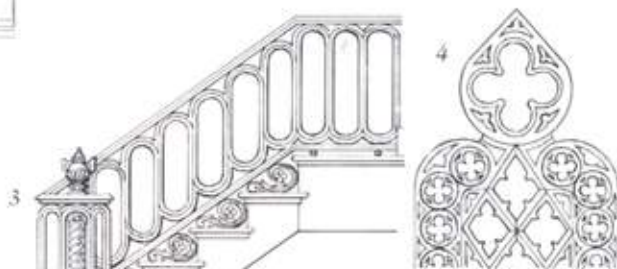
⑫ The motif of the galloping horse was a particularly popular weather vane design for the roofs of carriage houses and stables.

⑬ The complexity of Second Empire and Queen Anne houses was enhanced, at the roofline, by metal crestings and finials. The finial pictured here has a pennant at its tip, serving as a weather vane.

⑭ A profile and face-on view of a flower-shaped finial.

⑮ An iron finial with pennant, 1880s.

⑯ Iron roof crestings, from the 1870s. Second Empire houses often have such crestings arranged in a square on top of a tower with a steep mansard roof. The first of these two designs was produced by J.W. Fiske of New York, the second by the Phoenix Iron Works, San Francisco.





# Woodwork

Woodwork was an essential medium for conveying the essence of a particular style, as demonstrated by all five examples on this page.

① Octagonal houses were built in all the mid-century styles. Many have minimal ornamental detailing, but the encircling veranda could be ornate. This Oriental version was designed by the Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan.

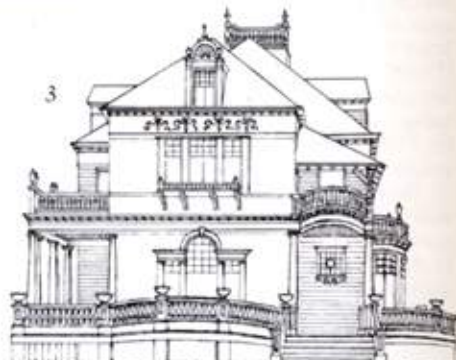


② A literal interpretation of the English half-timbered tradition which was very important to the American Victorian styles, particularly the Stick style. The last is characterized by patterns of vertical, horizontal and diagonal boards which make a highly decorative effect. Structural elements such as corner posts, brackets and railings tend to be large on Stick-style houses and without the elaborate ornamentation found on, for example, Queen Anne houses. NA

③ Colonial Revival houses, like this one from Santa Monica, California, were built in great numbers from c.1890 to c.1910.

④ Wavy-edged bargeboards (vergeboards) on gables and dormers denote the Gothic Revival. Note how the finials complete the composition.

⑤ A variant of the Stick style, with wooden struts forming a decorative lattice beneath the deeply overhanging gabled eaves.



Many American houses in the period relied exclusively on woodwork for their rich decoration. Spectacular facades testify to an infinite number of decorative permutations. Most Gothic elements were carpenter-made. In the Queen Anne and Stick styles, millwork runs riot as a rich assortment of prefabricated items. Sometimes woodwork was patterned after European masonry prototypes.

Such elaboration was possible because of the abundance of wood in the United States and the development of specialized mills throughout the country. Firms offered scores of options, and there was infinite choice within the confines of the prevailing styles.

The role of decorative woodwork can be seen in the development of porches and verandas (piazzas). Because these were highly visible, appended features, their ornamentation was especially lavish. The posts could be elaborately turned or chamfered, there was space for repeated brackets, and the balustrade lent itself to further turnings or even pierced decorations, such as moon and stars motifs.

The richness of woodwork was highlighted by carefully conceived paint schemes. At least three colours were recommended for the exterior, and often many more (up to seven for Queen Anne). Shingle houses often used stained wood, with painted trim.



① In the Gothic Revival and Queen Anne styles, gables and dormer windows typically have bargeboards (vergeboards) and spire-like finials. Often finials continue to form a pendant.

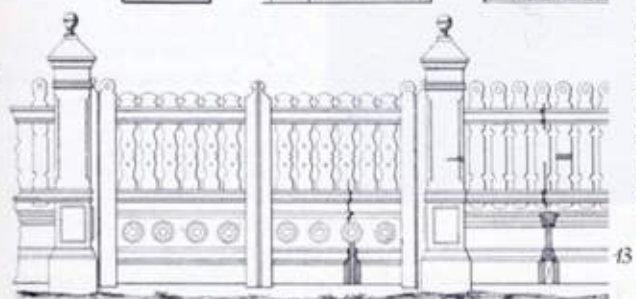
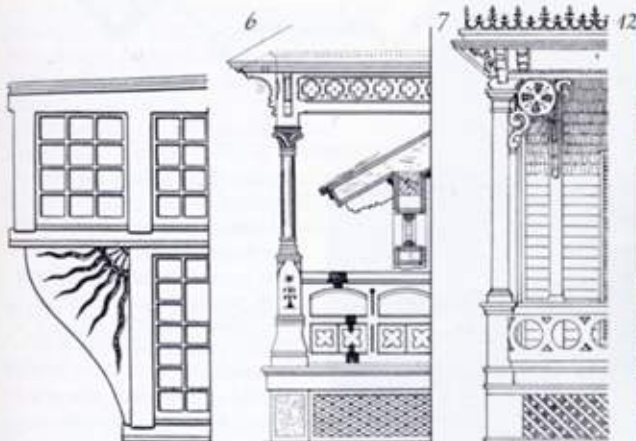
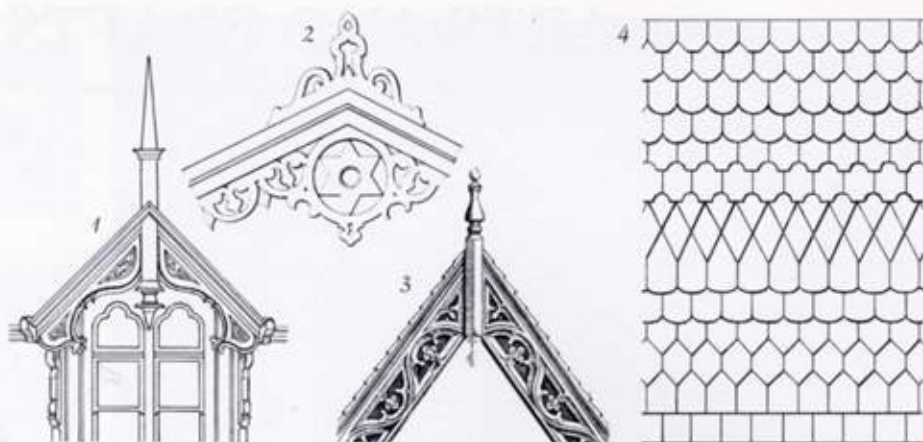
② A gable ornament, 1873. CG

③ A Gothic bargeboard suitable for a porch gable on a cottage, 1873; also popular earlier. AD

④ An array of different shingle shapes (6 inches/15cm wide).

Often the shingles would be restricted to the upper levels of the house, with plain clapboarding below.

⑤ A wing-like sunburst bracket was a popular applied motif.



⑫ Spindles along the eaves of a rich veranda echo the balustrade of this 1880s house in New York. The architectural critic A.J. Downing wrote of verandas: "The unclouded splendor and fierce heat of our summer sun render this very general appendage a source of real comfort and enjoyment". JBE

⑬ An elaborate scrolled gable on a Queen Anne house, Los Angeles, 1894. Fanciful woodwork of this character is found on many West Coast Victorian houses. JBE

⑥ A piazza, or veranda, with incised, sawn and turned decoration, 1881. CK

⑦ Another piazza design, of about the same period.

⑧ An attractive double gate. In the Queen Anne style, the straight sawn boards and simple turnings of earlier idioms gave way to more complex designs. CK

⑨ A fence with relatively simple cut-out motifs. CK

⑩ Two decorative wooden door panels, 1881. CK

⑪ An example of interior woodwork: a screen used to make an arch in hallways, or to frame a "cozy corner", 1880-1910. Spindled and Moorish designs were also available.

