



THE REVIVAL STYLES

1900-1945

◆ Nashville Old House Series ◆ Architectural Style and Sensitive Rehabilitation

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An assortment of revivals of past architectural styles, including Colonial, Tudor, and Spanish, provided an alternative to the Craftsman bungalow. The Colonial Revival features a number of variations, including Dutch, and draws inspiration from the Georgian and Adam styles that dominated Colonial America.



Local Dutch Colonial Revival

Although in use throughout the United States from the 1880s to the 1950s, revival houses were popular in Nashville beginning in the 1920s. These houses were rarely historic replicas, but were instead loose variations of the original styles.

Earlier Victorian styles, such as Queen Anne, often incorporated revival elements into their designs in order to remain current with architectural trends.

Both Colonial and Dutch Revival architecture reflected a patriotic nostalgia. America's centennial celebration in 1876 is credited in part to jumpstarting this revival of colonial styles. In addition, society experienced great changes including rapid industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. In her book *Building the Dream*, Gwendolyn Wright claimed the simplicity of the English Colonial Revival "evoked the moral tone of restraint and sound judgment," and was "an architectural expression of the entire country's common heritage of good



Local Transitional Colonial Revival

sense and egalitarian principles."

Tudor Revival styles emerged in the early 1900s and remained popular through 1940. This style draws loosely upon Medieval English architecture and freely mixes with various American styles. There are several variations of the Tudor Revival (including Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Norman) with an



Local Tudor Revival

assortment of façade materials-brick, stone, stucco, or wood.

Mediterranean and Spanish Revival houses were much less common in Nashville than Tudor and Colonial Revival styles. These houses, which typically feature stucco surfaces and red tile roofs, were much more common in California and the Southwest. A local example of this style is Little Hollywood, a small neighborhood in East Nashville with several small Spanish Revival houses.

Early twentieth century mail-order catalogs featured prefabricated houses with the various revival styles available. Companies like Sears, Roebuck and Company, Gordon-Van Tine Company, and Montgomery Ward and Company were successful mail-order businesses. Catalogues served the major demand for housing during the early twentieth century and popularized the revival styles.

A simple cross-gable design based loosely on the Tudor Revival emerged from the 1930s Depression era. This Minimal Traditional style, with its low roof pitch and flush eaves, generally lacked decorative detailing, but would occasionally feature Tudor or Colonial Revival elements. This style remained popular in Nashville through 1960.

Nashville neighborhoods mainly featured two types of revival styles: Tudor and Colonial. Colonial Revival architecture has endured and remains popular because of its simplicity in design and ornamentation, and its affordability. Examples of the revival styles can be found in many of Nashville's early suburban neighborhoods including Richland-West End, Cherokee Park, and Inglewood.



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IDENTIFYING THE STYLES

Several revival styles differing significantly from one another are featured within this pamphlet. They were especially popular after World War I, and are common within Nashville's historic suburbs. As with some Craftsman style houses, revival houses often featured garages. For the first time, domestic architecture reflected the importance of the automobile to the suburban resident.

English Colonial Revival

The solid, clean lines and symmetri-



Local Colonial Revival

cal patterns of Colonial Revival architecture were a welcome change from eclectic Victorian era designs. Construction materials included most



Local Tudor Revival

common supplies such as brick, stone, and weatherboard. Unlike original Colonial architecture, double-hung windows often featured multi-pane upper sashes and single-pane lower sashes.

This was the most common revival variation in Nashville and throughout the United States. This style typically included a rectangular plan, a symmetrical façade, an accentuated central entrance with a pediment supported by pilasters, and a door often surrounded by a fanlight and sidelights. These designs were typically larger than original Colonial domestic architecture, and featured either one or two stories with hipped or side-gabled roofs. The later Cape Cod variations were just one story. The popularity of traditional styles influenced by the Colonial Revival endures to the present.

Dutch Colonial Revival

Dutch Colonial Revival styles included either front or side-facing gambrel roofs with dormer windows and were typically one-and-one-half stories. Although original Dutch Colonial architecture never included dormers, the side-gabled roof examples typically featured a full-width shed dormer on the facade.



Local Tudor Revival

Tudor Revival

Tudor Revival houses featured a cross-gable layout with a steeply pitched roofs, tall narrow windows that were usually grouped together, massive chim-

neys, and half-timbering. Chimney pots often graced the tops of chimneys. A common element among Tudor Revival houses is the round-arched doorways.

Spanish Colonial Revival

This revival style is most common in the southern and western United States, but scattered examples exist in Nashville, especially in Little Hollywood. Common characteristics include brick or stucco walls, Spanish mission characteristics, round arched windows, terra cotta details, and flat or low-pitched roofs covered with red clay tile. In addition to residential design, this style was used in commercial and religious buildings. Variations of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture date from 1890 to the 1950s.



Local Spanish Revival



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SENSITIVE REHABILITATION

The general idea when rehabilitating a revival-style house, or any old house, is to create a comfortable, livable environment, compatible with the lifestyle of the present, while retaining its architectural character--that which makes it and its neighbors an important document of our past. The National Park Service defines rehabilitation as a "process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values." While the terms "restoration" and "reconstruction" imply a somewhat rigid depiction of a specific period, as with a historic house museum, rehabilitation simply suggests sensitivity to the historic integrity of the property.

For most people a period restoration is neither financially feasible nor practical. What makes sense in most cases is a sensitive, careful rehabilitation. Homeowners within historic and conservation zoning districts must apply for permits through the Metro Historical Commission and follow specified design guidelines.

In planning a rehabilitation, one must determine the architectural character of the house. This is largely a matter

of architectural style but goes beyond style alone. Character also involves the relationship of the house to the street, its yard, and to surrounding structures. These relationships combine with architectural style to create the character of the house. Together houses create the character of the street, and streets form the character of the entire neighborhood.

Key Terms

Restoration: act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period by means of the removal of features from other periods in history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

Reconstruction: act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and details of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period in its historic location.

Preservation: act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

In determining architectural character, it is helpful to look at a house as two layers. The first is the structure itself: the walls, openings for windows and doors, the configuration of the roof and chimneys. These constitute the basic form of the house. They form the core to which finish materials are applied. The final appearance of the house depends heavily on its basic form. In planning rehabilitation, priority should be given to maintaining the basic form or returning to the original form if alterations have been made.

The second layer consists of finish materials, both functional and decorative. This includes visible masonry, siding, roof materials, doors and window sashes, and all sorts of decorative trim. The porch, both functional and decorative, is also of paramount importance to the character of the house.

Finish materials are of secondary importance only in that they are applied to the basic form and are in that sense dependent upon it. If lost or altered, finish treatments can usually be returned to original configuration with a great deal less trouble and expense than can the basic form, yet their importance to the character of the house should not be underestimated.

Siding/Finish Materials

Wood

Lapped wood siding, often called clapboard or weatherboard, was commonly used on Colonial Revival style houses. Wood was also used in entryway features and decorative trim. As such, wood was painted. Colonial Revival houses were typically painted white, further reflecting their stylistic simplicity. The siding was of varying sizes, with earlier houses typically featuring narrower clapboard.



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CHARACTER, CONTINUED

Masonry

Brick was usually smooth-finished and dark red, laid with very narrow mortar joints. The mortar could be tinted red or left white. Buff brick also appeared during this period, usually with black mortar.

Stone was a fairly commonplace residential building material in Nashville. It was often rock-faced (left rough and random on the visible side) with narrow, beaded mortar joints. Details, such as

window and door lintels, were usually smooth-finished. However, Tudor styles often featured rough-cut stone surrounding doors or windows.

In 1929, construction companies began marketing simulated masonry, a variety of products created to imitate stone. These products included such items as concrete blocks cast to resemble rock-faced stone and Perma-Stone, a molded wall facing made of aggregates, cement, crushed quartz, mineral colors, and metallic hardeners. Simulated masonry was also used as a remodeling material.

Stucco was used as a surface material especially on Spanish and Mediterranean Revival houses. Also, it was frequently combined with wood for a half-timbered effect in Tudor-influenced styles.

Asphalt and asbestos shingles

These were becoming popular as a roofing material in the early twentieth century. They were also often used instead of wood shingles as siding.

Non-original surface finishes

Roll siding, aluminum and vinyl siding are not appropriate to revival style houses and should be removed. Paint on masonry is also generally inappropriate. Its removal, while desirable, should be carefully thought out.

Roof Materials

The vast majority of Nashville's revival style houses were roofed with asbestos or asphalt composition shingles. The visual effect was often quite similar to the composition shingles in use today. Less frequently roofs fea-

tured slate or terra cotta tiles. These materials most frequently appeared on Mediterranean and Spanish Revival houses. Although an entire roof of terra cotta tiles was only occasionally used in Nashville, decorative ridge caps of terra cotta tiles were commonly used on composition shingle roofs of various styles of houses.

Paint Colors

Colonial Revival houses with clapboard siding were typically painted white to reflect simplicity in design and ornamentation. Other revival style houses with clapboard siding typically featured a light, refined paint color.

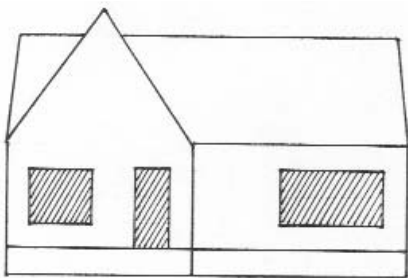
Brick and stone houses were not originally painted, as these materials were often used together for a decorative effect, especially on Tudor Revivals. For instance, round-arch doorways sometimes have cut stone projecting into the surrounding brick.

Setting

Revival style houses are generally located in Nashville's early automobile suburbs. Generally, these houses were built on deep, narrow suburban lots. The houses are meant to be seen primarily from the street, and thus the street façade is the most important. The side of a house was meant to be seen in detail only if the house was on a corner. Front yards were small, rear yards were somewhat larger, and side yards virtually non-existent. Houses built in this way tend to create a visual rhythm along the street. The rhythm is disturbed by vacant lots and modern infill, which stray too far from the norm in size or placement on the lot.

Two Views of the Same House

Basic Form



Finish Materials in Place





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REMOVAL OF MATERIALS

Removing features of a house that are not original is usually an appropriate treatment and often, but not always, a desirable course of action. Careful thought should be exercised before removing anything. Anything actively detrimental to the structure of the

house, like aluminum or vinyl siding, should be removed. Other additions to the house such as wrought iron porch columns or inappropriate window sash are generally replaced with something more appropriate during the course of the rehabilitation.

Other considerations, however, may enter into the decision. Consider, for example, rooms that have been

added to the rear of a house in recent years. The addition is not especially compatible with the style of the original house, but it is not visible from the street and does little to compromise the character of the house. If the space is needed inside and the addition is structurally sound, it would be foolish to remove it. Always think about it before removing anything.

REPLACING WHAT'S MISSING

Over the years, most old houses have lost something--bits and pieces of decorative trim, or a mantel or light fixture. It is always appropriate to restore missing parts of a house if two things are known: first, that the feature being restored was indeed there originally, and second, what the feature looked like. Ideally, everyone could have an old photograph or original architectural plans as a guide in replacing missing parts of the house. This is rarely the case, however, and some

degree of educated guesswork is often necessary in replacing what is missing. This is fine if carefully done, but regrets can arise if additional evidence proves the reconstruction of a missing feature to be inept or, worse, if the "restored" feature turns out never to have existed at all. Avoid expensive mistakes, and know what you are doing when replacing missing parts.

Any rehabilitation, no matter how careful, will involve not only changing the present appearance of the house but also making some changes from what is known or believed to be its original

appearance. This is fine if changes are made in a way that is sensitive to the architectural character of the house. Change is not inherently bad, but avoid insensitive change.

REMEMBER

Replace a feature if:

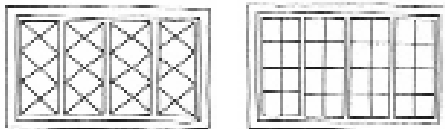
- ♦ It originally existed within the structure.
- ♦ It is known what the feature looked like.

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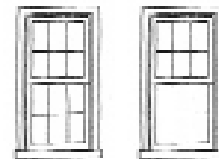
WINDOWS

Window styles differ as widely as the revival styles themselves. Often, they were installed in pairs or in groups of two or three, resulting in a square or horizontal window opening with vertical divisions between the individual window

Casement Windows



sashes. Most windows featured a double-hung sash (the type that slides up and down to open and shut) with multiple lights over one (meaning several panes of glass in the top half and a single pane in the bottom). Of course there were variations of the double hung window, but they were



invariably rectangular and taller than wide.

Unlike original Colonial architecture, the double-hung windows in Colonial Revival houses often included multi-pane upper sashes and single-pane lower sashes.

Tudor Revival houses sometimes featured casement windows, which



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WINDOWS, CONTINUED

have hinges and generally open outward.

As energy conservation becomes more important, many people feel the need to install storm windows. This addition can be handled so that it does

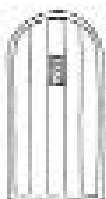
little damage to the integrity of an older house. There are two general rules to follow: first, the storm window should be made to fit in the original window opening exactly. It should not overlap onto the wall surface or be patched in to a larger opening. Second, the storm window should be an appropriate color match-

ing that of the sash behind it, and should never be left raw aluminum. Aluminum storm windows can be ordered in colors from the factory. Aluminum storms can also be painted if the factory film is removed or allowed to weather off.

ENTRYWAYS

Much like windows, the front doors in revival houses were varied. Most often they were largely wood with small panes of glass near the top at about eye level. Both Tudor and Spanish Revivals often had similar style entrances with heavy board-and-batten doors. Beyond this the decorative treatment varied so widely that it is difficult to encompass all the typical styles.

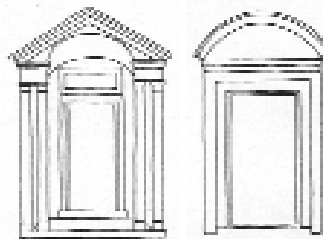
Much like windows, the front doors in revival houses were varied.



Typical Revival doors



As energy conservation becomes more important, many people feel the need to install storm windows. This addition can be handled so that it does little damage to the integrity of an older house. There are two general rules to follow: first, the storm window should be made to fit in the original window opening exactly. It should not overlap onto the wall surface or be patched in to a larger opening. Second, the storm window should be an appropriate color matching that of the sash behind it, and should never be left raw aluminum. Aluminum storm windows can be ordered in colors from the factory. Aluminum storms can also be painted if the factory film is removed or allowed to weather off.



Colonial Revival

Most Colonial Revival houses featured little more than an accentuated entrance with a decorative crown supported by

If an original door is missing, an effort should be made to find an appropriate replacement. Sometimes a new door must be used, but flush doors and inappropriate paneled doors should be avoided. An unfortunately

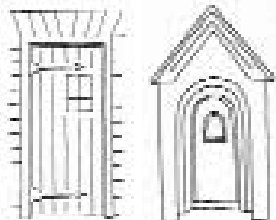
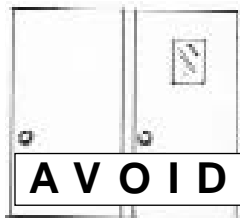
lier Adam and Federal styles. Most Colonial Revival houses featured little more than an accentuated entrance with a decorative crown supported by pilasters. A portico with a curved underside appeared on few originals, but is common during the Revival period. Often Colonial Revival entryways featured sidelights and curved or triangular pediments.

Tudor Revival houses featured similar small entryway porches, but with an English Medieval accent. Simple arched doorways with heavy board-and-batten doors were common entrances.

A feature common in Revival styles was the side porch. These one-story porches with flat roofs were not usually found on the original styles that the Revivals mimicked. They are either open or enclosed.

Porches

Revival style houses generally have small entryway porches rather than the large full-width porches featured on area bungalows and turn-of-the-century houses. Colonial Revival entrances reflect variations of the ear-



Tudor and Spanish



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GARAGES

Early twentieth century suburbs, such as Inglewood, Cherokee Park, and Richland-West End in Nashville, were originally designed to accommodate modern transportation needs. Neighborhoods included paved roads, curbing, sidewalks, and driveways. Automobiles became especially popular during the decade between 1910 and 1920, a period during which the Nashville suburbs were developing. Early designs usually incorporated garages for automobiles behind the residences, while later plans of the 1940s and 1950s integrated attached garages into the designs of houses. Often builders designed a garage in a similar style to the house. Some Dutch Colonial Revival houses, for example, feature a similarly constructed gambrel roof garage.

An historic garage is as important to the integrity of a property and neighborhood as the house itself, and steps should be taken to retain the historic character of the garage. Generally, the same ideas of rehabilitation apply to both houses and garages, especially if a garage is visible from the street.

ROOFS

Functionally the roof is one of the most important elements of the house and often the first to need rehab attention. Nothing much can be done to the rest of the house if the roof is not sound. Visually the roof is also of great significance. Its design is one of the basic visual elements that make up the style and architectural character of a house. Roof design involves roof pitch and contours, roofing materials, and decorative trim. All these things need careful consideration in rehab planning.

The plan, outline, pitch, and height of the roof make the framework to which roofing material is applied and are basic to the visual character of the entire house. In most cases, the roof configuration is original and should be retained. Any additions to the house or changes made in the roof itself should not seriously interfere with the roof configuration as seen from the street.

The overwhelming majority of revival houses were roofed with asbestos or asphalt shingles. These usually resembled the visual effect achieved with present-day composition shingles. Texture was relatively smooth, and the pattern was regular. Colors used varied widely. Most

revival houses have been re-roofed one or more times but usually with composition shingles not unlike the original roofing. Finding a proper roofing material is usually not a major problem in the rehabilitation of revival style houses.

A few Nashville revival style houses were originally roofed with slate or terra cotta tile. This is especially true with the Mediterranean and Spanish Revivals. Such roofing is extremely durable and is often in excellent shape fifty or sixty years after construction. Leaking can be difficult to locate and repair in such roofs, but it can be done. Since there is very little available in the way of visually appropriate substitutes for such roofs--especially for tile roofing--every effort should be made to save them.

When dealing with roofing or other surface materials, questions of a technical nature tend to arise. Detailed technical information is beyond the scope of this publication. Rather, the material here, like the rest of the pamphlet, is intended to present an overall approach to rehabilitation and the conservation of architectural character. More detailed technical information is available at the office of the Metropolitan Historical Commission.

WOOD

Exterior wood, whether used as sheathing for the entire house or as a porch and trim work on a masonry house, has both functional and decorative importance.

Functionally, wood serves either wholly or in part as the exterior shell of the house and must withstand the often-harsh assaults of wind, rain, sun, and changing temperatures. To this end, wood is painted. Eventually

weather will deteriorate paint, and seeing that this protective coating is renewed periodically is vital. Unpainted wood deteriorates very rapidly. Occasionally stain was used rather than paint. Stain alone was



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ADD-ON SIDING

Many people who are distressed by the idea of having to keep wood painted, an ongoing maintenance necessity, have had their wooden houses, or wooden portions of masonry houses, covered with "low maintenance" siding. These sidings range from the asbestos shingles and roll siding of some years ago to the aluminum or vinyl siding most often installed today. All such sidings damage the house. At the very least, even the most careful installation will damage the visual integrity of the house, and few installations are careful. Further, such sidings are prone to trap moisture behind them, which rots the wood underneath. Because the siding remains new looking for a time, moisture-related problems often go undetected and cause

WOOD, CONTINUED

often used on wooden shingles used as siding. Stain with a coating of varnish was often used on front doors.

As decorative treatment, wood was used in a variety of ways. Renovation should always preserve as much of the original fabric of the house as possible. If deterioration necessitates replacing wood, the form of the original should be duplicated. This might prove difficult in some cases, but preserving the character of the house is worth the effort.

Proper paint and stain colors also play a vital role in the architectural character of the revival-style house. The Metropolitan Historical Commission has at its office several excellent publications on proper paint colors, which are available for consultation.



Half-timbering is commonly found on Tudor Revivals.

serious structural damage.

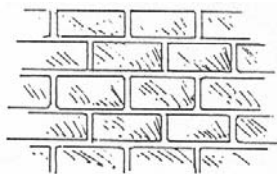
If such siding is already on a house, it should be removed now! Often the excuse is heard, "I don't want to take the siding off because I'm afraid of what I might find under-

neath." This excuse is the very reason to take the siding off. Any deterioration present under the siding is not getting better and is probably getting worse. Remove the siding and make necessary repairs as soon as possible.

BRICK

Brick is designed to withstand weather without paint or any other protective coating and to look good while doing it. As such, brick is a relatively maintenance free material. Unless it has been the victim of serious neglect or outright abuse, brick usually requires little attention in the rehab process.

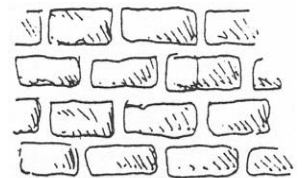
In this brief publication, it is not possible to get into a detailed discussion of the causes of brick and mortar deterioration. Very often it stems from excess water, either leaking from faulty gutters and downspouts or seeping upward from the ground. There are other possible causes as well, and the cause of the deterioration should be found and corrected before any time or money is spent on



Normal Mortar

repairs. When repairs are made, three important properties of the masonry should be carefully considered: softness/hardness, dimension, and color.

Old brick and old mortar are considerably softer than brick and mortar in general use today. Modern firing produces brick that is very hard, and modern mortar contains Portland cement, also very hard. Old, softer brick can be seriously damaged in the normal cycle of expansion and contraction caused by extremes of temperature if hard, inflexible, new masonry materials are placed against it. When a hole is patched or missing mortar replaced, the materials added to the wall should match the softness of those original to the wall.



Improper Repointing



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BRICK, CONTINUED

Difficulties in color matching arise in part from the vast variation in brick and mortar composition and manufacture over the years and in part from natural aging and the accumulation of grime that occurs over time. Bricks can often be found to approximate the color of original bricks. Mortar tinting can be more difficult and requires a good and willing mason. An exact color match on brick and mortar is hard but not impossible to achieve.

Brick used in revival style houses usually had sharp edges and corners, and was laid with relatively narrow mortar joints. When making repairs, carefully match the size and shape of original brick and mortar. Problems most frequently arise from improper replacement of missing mortar, called repointing or tuckpointing. Too often, repointed joints are much wider than original joints, drastically altering the appearance of the wall.

Paint and Brick

As previously stated, brick does not require a coating of paint to be functional or attractive. Very few brick historic houses were painted originally. Most builders liked

the way brick looked, often laying it in fancy patterns or combining it with stone for decorative effect. Over the years, some old houses were painted to disguise additions or to hide dirt or sloppy repair work. In very few cases, virtually none here in Nashville, was a brick house of any type painted to begin with. To paint such a building now, for the first time, is to detrimentally alter the architectural character of the house.

Aside from aesthetics, painting brick raises practical questions. Paint is an ongoing maintenance responsibility, expensive and a bother. Painting brick introduces a maintenance problem to a material that should be largely maintenance free. It rarely helps with moisture problems as many people have hoped it would. So why paint?

A painted house usually can be effectively and safely cleaned, but careful thought is in order before this is undertaken. It would be helpful to know why the house was painted in the first place. Was it to hide alterations and repairs? Was it to keep deteriorating mortar in place? If this is the case, cleaning could be disappointing or could necessitate further maintenance. Cleaning is usually a good idea and a positive step. But the process should not be undertaken lightly.



BRICK CLEANING

Brick can be cleaned of dirt and paint effectively with safe chemical methods in most cases. Under no circumstances should sandblasting or any other kind of abrasive cleaning be used. This kind of process does not really clean the brick. It removes the outer layer, exposing the rough, softer, more porous inner core of the brick. It also wreaks havoc on mortar. The appearance of the brick suffers as a result; but even more important, exposing the inner brick makes it much more vulnerable to the

extremes of the weather and, because it is very rough, likely to accumulate grime much more quickly than before. Clear sealers often recommended for sandblasted brick are rarely very effective and require frequent renewal. Sandblasting salesmen can be very persuasive, in spite of growing public skepticism of abrasive cleaning. Thus sandblasting sometimes masquerades under gentle-sounding names like dusting or feather blasting. It is all the same, and it should be steadfastly avoided. Sandblasting can cause serious damage, and the process is absolutely irreversible.



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ADDING ON

It is at times necessary to add on to an old house to create more space or to make existing space more usable. All through history, houses have grown in successive stages as changing needs demanded. Many old houses in Nashville already have one or more additions, some dating from early in the history of the house. There is nothing wrong with adding on if it is done with care and sensitivity to the architectural character of the original design.

There are two general rules to follow. First, the addition should not compromise the integrity of the principal façade of the house. The principal façade is architecturally the most important and is a vital component of the character of the entire street. It should be preserved if possible. In most cases, this means an addition should be at the rear of the house, not visible from the front. In the case of a corner house, an addition to the rear would of course be visible, but the principal façade need not be affected.

Second, the addition should be a contemporary design distinguishable from the original structure. Old buildings are expensive and very difficult to imitate successfully, and imitations of old architecture create problems with perception. Additions that imitate the design of the original house blur the line between old and new. Perceiving its successive stages can then be difficult. Being able to readily see the different stages of the house is important today and will become more so as those who come after us will study our

STONE



While stone and brick are quite different physically, similar rehab recommendations apply. Like brick and mortar, stone and mortar should be compatible. New mortar joints and replacement stone should match the old. Avoid abrasive cleaning, and instead clean with gentle chemicals. Painted stone looks even worse than painted brick. Stone should not be painted and should be cleaned of paint unless special problems exist that would make cleaning inadvisable.

Vines damage stone masonry as they do brick, and should be kept off stone walls and foundations. Most vines that grow on brick and stone, especially ivy, are harmful and should be removed. They may look romantic and lovely, but they cause two problems. First, they hold moisture that can damage the wall and seep through to the interior of the house. Second, the shoots they send out actually penetrate brick and mortar joints, wedging the wall apart. If allowed to continue long enough, this process can cause the wall to collapse.

ways of life by looking at our buildings. The historic value of an old house is best protected when the addition is readily distinguishable from the original. With the careful use of materials, scale, and color, such an addition can be a harmonious partner of the older parts of the house.

INTERIOR

The focus of this pamphlet has been on the exterior of revival houses. The exterior, especially the street façade, is the part that is seen by the public and that the owner, in a sense, shares with the public. It is generally held, therefore, that maintaining historical accuracy is much more important on the exterior of a house than on the interior, the private preserve of its occupants.

The interior of a house is where

adaptations to modern living usually become a serious issue. Everyone wants to be warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Adapting an old house for modern convenience is perfectly acceptable and, if done with care, will do little harm to the architectural character of the house.

As a general rule, do not do anything to a room that would seriously hamper a period restoration in that room should an owner desire one. This means retaining, or repairing if neces-



Cape Cod floor plan



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INTERIOR, CONTINUED

sary, original wall surfaces, doors, woodwork, mantels, floor surfaces, and hardware. All this may not be possible in a given room, but it should be the goal. This approach allows for any style of decorating, but retains the basic features of the room necessary for an accurate period restoration,

Tudor Revival floor plan



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

should that be desired in the future.

This approach discourages inappropriate treatments that are difficult to

reverse, such as lowered ceilings, obtrusive installation of climate control systems, inappropriate wall and ceiling treatments like sheet paneling and spray-on textures, and indiscriminate alteration of the floor plan.

Exceptions will sometimes need to be made. Each house must be considered as a separate case, and the needs of individual owners vary widely. Kitchens and bathrooms usually require a complete overhaul. Traffic patterns sometimes need adjusting, requiring the moving of a wall or door. All of this is perfectly acceptable if the goal of preserving the essential architecture character of the house is kept firmly in mind, and the new is made to fit unobtrusively with the old.

Saving Plaster

Often when rehabilitation of an old house begins, the owners find cracked and crumbling plaster; but cracks and holes do not necessarily mandate removal of the plaster. Plaster can be patched and repaired successfully, usually saving time, effort, and money in the process. Seriously deteriorated plaster should be removed; but all too often, renovators rush into plaster removal when it is not really necessary. Because of its low cost and ease of installation, dry wall is usually the choice for plaster replacement. However, dimensional problems can arise when fitting dry wall to original baseboards and other moldings because it is usually not as thick as the original plaster layer. Original plaster should be saved if possible.

Fireplaces and mantels

Most revival houses were built with central heating. Fireplaces were intended for pleasant wintertime fires and were usually in the living room only. Some larger houses also had fireplaces in the dining room or library. The mantel was usually of masonry (brick and/or stone) with a wooden mantel shelf. Designs varied but were simple in detail. Fireplaces were usually intended to burn wood, occasionally coal. In Colonial Revival houses, the mantel was often based on American Colonial or Federal designs.

The fireplace is one of the dominant visual features of a room and should be treated with respect for its visual importance. Few mantels of this period have been drastically altered or completely removed as in many older houses, but often they have been painted. This was presumably done to hide soot discoloration. Unpainted mantels should never be painted.

COMMON INTERIOR FEATURES

- ◆ Front entrance often leads directly into the living room.
- ◆ Bedrooms have built-in closets.
- ◆ Tudor Revival houses historically had dark interiors.
- ◆ Simple Colonial Revival furniture--both reproductions and variations--was popular in the 1920s and 1930s.



THE REVIVAL STYLES

1900-1945

LANDSCAPING

Though the average old house owner cannot logically be expected to maintain a period restoration of the grounds of his or her house, a few tips are in order.

The period during which revival styles flourished represents the most rapid suburban neighborhood development in Nashville's history. This early suburban growth represented an emerging interest in living near an urban center, but in a clean, refined, park-like setting away from the noise and activity of the city. These modern suburbs featured primarily

single-family dwellings situated along curvilinear roads. The planting of trees, shrubs, and other vegetation created the ruralness of the neighborhood. Sometimes the boundaries between properties were marked with fences or shrubs, and other times the lawns were free-flowing.

A lawn usually reflects the homeowner's tastes. Generally, lawns were mostly grass with occasional shrubs and shade trees. A low hedge or picket fence might be appropriate for a front yard. Privacy is often desirable in backyards, and high, solid fencing is acceptable there if not obtrusive from the street.

ADDITIONAL INFO

This pamphlet is designed to acquaint the owner of an old Nashville house with the basic considerations involved in a careful rehabilitation, rather than to provide detailed technical information on the rehabilitation process itself. The Metropolitan Historical Commission has in its library more detailed information on a long list of rehabilitation-related topics. The staff is willing to make site visits and offer additional advice. For further assistance, call (615) 862-7970.

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