

ARCHTECTURAL STYLES OF HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MONROE

Monroe's Historic Downtown area has been recognized by the National Register of Historic Places as a place worthy of preservation. There are many factors which act together to make this area special. Architecture in Monroe includes representations of many of the American Commercial styles from the 1870s through the 1940s, from the Italianate to mid-twentieth century commercial styles. A brief discussion of the architectural styles present in Downtown Monroe can help further explain the "special-ness" of the area.



ITALIANATE

This is the most common style found and was the dominate commercial style in the United States through the 1870s and 1880s. Italianate buildings have tall, narrow proportions. Favorite areas for embellishment are the cornice and window hoods. Windows are tall and narrow and can be topped with various arch forms in a variety of materials. Cornices are articulated through intricate brick patterns or with pressed metal Classical entablatures; brackets are commonly found on the cornice. Roof lines are enlivened with triangular pediments or shaped parapets. The building's edges are often emphasized with pilasters or quoins in brick or stone. With low roofs, wide eaves, and ornamental brackets, Italianate is sometimes called the *bracketed style* .



QUEEN ANNE

Although mostly used for residences, elements of the Queen Anne style also found their way to commercial buildings. Queen Anne commercial buildings can look like Italianate buildings, but a greater emphasis is placed on varied colors, textures and materials. Windows often have multi-paned upper sash; towers or turrets are added; oriel or bay windows further enliven the facade.



RICHARDSON ROMANESQUE

Architect Henry Hobson Richardson is often credited with popularizing these romantic buildings. Constructed of stone, they resemble small castles. Romanesque was used more often for large public buildings, but some private homes were also built in the imposing Romanesque style. The style is massive and heavy, often built of rusticated stone foundation and window trim combined with smooth brick walls. The rounded masonry arch is a hallmark of the style, as is prominent, complicated rooflines. Wall dormers and round turrets and/or towers are also frequently found elements.



VICTORIAN COMMERCIAL

What, exactly, is a Victorian? Many people use the term to describe an architectural style. However, *Victorian* is not really a style but a period in history. The Victorian era dates from about 1840 to 1900. During this time, industrialization brought many innovations in architecture. There are a variety of Victorian styles, each with its own distinctive features. The most popular Victorian styles spread quickly through widely published pattern books. Builders often borrowed characteristics from several different styles, creating unique, and sometimes quirky, mixes. Buildings constructed during the Victorian times usually have characteristics of one or more these styles.



NEO-GEORGIAN

Georgian architecture is characterized by its proportion and balance; simple mathematical ratios were used to determine the height of a window in relation to its width or the shape of a room as a double cube. "Regular" was a term of approval, implying symmetry and adherence to classical rules: the lack of symmetry, where Georgian additions were added to earlier structures, was deeply felt as a flaw. Georgian designs usually lay within the Classical orders of architecture and employed a decorative vocabulary derived from ancient Rome or Greece. The most common building materials used are brick or stone. Commonly used colors were red, tan, or white. However, modern day Georgian style homes use a variety of colors.



NEOCLASSICAL - GREEK REVIVAL

Neoclassical architecture was an architectural style produced by the neoclassical movement that began in the mid-18th century. In its purest form it is a style principally derived from the architecture of Classical Greece. It was popular throughout Europe and the USA in the early 19th century, especially for the design of public buildings. It later came to be seen as the most appropriate architectural style for the expression of civic virtues, and it was widely adopted for new urban-planning schemes and important public buildings during the first half of the 19th century.



GOTHIC - VICTORIAN GOTHIC

Gothic architecture is most familiar as the architecture of many of the great cathedrals, abbeys and parish churches of Europe. It is also the architecture of many castles, palaces, town halls, guild halls, universities, and to a less prominent extent, private dwellings.

It is in the great churches and cathedrals and in a number of civic buildings that the Gothic style was expressed most powerfully, its characteristics lending themselves to appeal to the emotions. For this reason a study of Gothic architecture is largely a study of cathedrals and churches.

Victorian Gothic buildings feature arches, pointed windows, and other details borrowed from the middle ages. Masonry Gothic Revival buildings were often close replicas of medieval cathedrals. Wood-frame Gothic Revival buildings often had lacy "gingerbread" trim and other playful details. Although less common than the other romantic styles of the late 19th century Victorian Gothic was sometimes used for commercial buildings.