

Appendix E: GLOSSARY

Antebellum – Dating before the Civil War (1861-1865)

Architrave – The lowest part of an entablature, sometimes used by itself around a window or door. Ornamental mouldings around doors, windows, or other openings are also called architraves.

Baluster – A lathe-turned or rectangular upright pillar supporting a handrail or coping.

Balustrade – A series of balusters connected on top by coping or handrail (sometimes known as a top rail) and occasionally on the bottom by a bottom rail, and used on staircases, balconies, porches, etc.

Bargeboard – Ornamental and decorative boards placed on the end of a gable roof to conceal the end rafters. Also known as “vergeboard” or “gableboard.”

Board and Batten – Siding constructed of boards installed vertically with narrow strips called battens covering the joined edges.

Bonds – The pattern in which bricks are laid.

Boxed Cornice – A simple projection along the top on exterior wall, formed by enclosing either the end of the ceiling joists, the plate, or the end of the roof rafters.

Bracket – A projecting support member, usually ornamental, set under eaves or other projecting elements of a structure.

Bungalow – An architectural style characterized by overall simplicity, small size, dormer windows, broad gables, exposed structural members, and porches with large square piers. The style varies greatly according to geographic location and date of construction.

Buttress – A decorative structural member of brick or stone which supports a wall.

Capital – The head of a column.

Clapboard – A type of siding consisting of boards which are thicker on one edge than the other, with the thick edge overlapping the thinner edge of the board below. Also known as “bevel” or “lap” siding.

Colonial Revival (1870-1950) – An architectural style characterized by a balanced facade, the use of decorative elements such as porticoes to emphasize the front entrance, double hung windows with multiple panes, and decorative cornices.

Corbel – A carved or molded projecting block which acts as a means of support for floor and roof beams and other structural members. In masonry, a corbel is a series of projections, each stepped progressively further than the one below it.

Corbelling - A series of corbels, often masonry, and usually found on walls and chimney stacks.

Cornice – The projection or ornamental moulding at the top of the wall, building, arch, etc.

Crown Moulding – The finished moulding often located in the area of transition between wall and ceiling, or on the top edge of an exterior wall.

Cupola – A small dome crowning a roof or turret.

Dormer – A vertical window projecting from the slope of a roof; usually provided with its own roof.

Double Hung Window - A window with two movable sashes.

Downspout – A pipe which carries water from the gutters to the ground or to a sewer connection.

Drop Siding – A type of cladding characterized by overlapping boards with either tongued and grooved or rabbeted top and bottom edges.

Dutch Lap – A method of applying shingles or slate in which each shingle overlaps one below and one to the side.

Eaves – The portion of the roof which projects beyond the walls.

Entablature – The part of the building carried by the columns, including the cornice, frieze, and architrave.

Fascia – The principal front face of a building.

Finial – An ornament located at the peak of a gable.

Flat Roof – A roof that has only enough pitch so that rain water or melting snow can drain.

French Door – A door design characterized by glass panes on the entire or on most of the entire surface. French doors are usually found in pairs.

Frieze – A band on the top of the wall immediately below the cornice, usually decorative.

Gambrel Roof – A roofing having a double slope on two sides of a building.

Gable – The triangular end of an exterior wall in a building with a pitched roof.

German Siding – Drop-siding with a concave upper edge which fits into a corresponding groove in the siding above.

Gothic Revival (1830-1880) – An architectural style characterized by the forms and ornament of medieval Europe, such as overall cottage or castle appearance, use of the pointed arch, and steeply pitched roofs with cross gables.

Handrail – A railing which serves as a hand support along a stairway; can also be known as “top rail.”

Hip Roof – An external angle formed by the meeting of two sloping roof surfaces.

Italianate (1840-1880) – An architectural style characterized by the use of heavy mouldings and brackets, arched openings, cupolas or towers, and narrow single pane double hung windows and double doors.

Lintel – A horizontal structural member bridging an opening.

Mansard Roof – A roof having two slopes on all four sides; the lower slope is much steeper than the upper.

Moulding (or Molding) – A continuous decorative band which serves as an ornamental device either on the interior or exterior of the building.

Newel – The post supporting the handrail or top rail at the top and bottom of the stairway.

Order – The style of the column and its entablature.

Parapet – A protective railing or low wall often used around a balcony or along the edge of a roof.

Pediment – A crowning element for doors and windows consisting of a triangular section framed by horizontal moulding on the base and sloping mouldings on each of its sides.

Pilaster – A decorative shallow pier or rectangular column attached to a wall.

Porte-cochere – A covered porch or entrance which projects across a driveway, and under which vehicles may pass.

Portico – A covered walk or porch supported by pillars or columns.

Queen Anne (1880-1910) – An architectural style characterized by the multiple steep roofs, frequent use of bay windows, irregularity of plan, variety of texture, and massing.

Rabbet Siding – A type of cladding characterized by beveled overlapping boards with rabbeted upper edges.

Returns – The continuation of wall cornices, at right angles, from one surface to an adjacent surface.

Scallop – A carved or molded ornament in the shape of segments of a circle or shells.

Second Empire (1855-1890) – An architectural style characterized by multiple story structures, mansard roofs with multicolored slate or metal shingles, dormer windows, and ornate mouldings and brackets.

Shakes – Hand cut wooden shingles, distinguished from traditional shingles in that they are not tapered and consist of more irregular surfaces.

Shed Roof – A roof consisting of one inclined plane. Unlike a lean to roof, a shed roof need not be carried by a higher wall.

Soffit – The exposed underside of the cornice, balcony, beam, and arch, etc.

Spandrel – The triangular space between the stairs and the floor or between the shoulder of an arch and the surrounding rectangular framework.

Terra Cotta – A fine grained clay product used on the exterior of buildings either in glazed or unglazed forms, and usually brownish red in color.

Transom Window – A small window or series of glass panes above either a door or a double hung or casement window.

Turned – Fashioned by use of a lathe, such as a porch post or baluster.

Turret – A small and slender tower, often located on the building corner and sometimes known as a “corner turret.”

Weatherboarding – Wooden siding consisting of overlapping boards which are thicker at one edge than the other.

For additional information and illustrations, refer to: Phillips, Steve J., Old House Dictionary