



WINCHESTER HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES

OWNING PROPERTY IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Winchester has a wealth of distinctive dwellings and structures in its historic district of approximately forty-five blocks containing 1,242 properties. From the late eighteenth through the early twentieth centuries, Winchester residents created a rich variety of houses, commercial structures and institutional buildings throughout the city and, in particular, in the historic core area. The district follows a gridiron plan and remains a densely built and compact area with many blocks of contiguous rowhouses and commercial structures. A large number of early log and stone structures remain scattered throughout the district. While various structures have been demolished and replaced over the years, many historic structures have been carefully preserved.

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Winchester has long been a leader in historic preservation in the Shenandoah Valley. Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc. was founded in 1964 as a local private non-profit organization to encourage preservation in the district. Among its many programs, PHW has created a nationally acclaimed revolving fund from which monies are used to buy and sell threatened properties. Historic easements and covenants are placed on the properties that are then resold.

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The Greek Revival styled Frederick County Courthouse (above) and the Romanesque Winchester City Hall (below) are two of the most significant structures within the historic district as shown in these historic photographs.



In 1967 the city created its first local historic district which was expanded in 1976. A handbook was created in 1985 for all property owners within the historic district. The commercial core of the historic district was designated a Virginia Main Street City in 1985 and the Old Town Development Board has played an important role in encouraging the reuse and rehabilitation of many of Winchester's historic commercial buildings.

These guidelines have been developed to provide detailed recommendations to further aid you, the property owner, and the Board of Architectural Review in the ongoing goal of historic preservation in Winchester. The intent of these guidelines is to guide design decisions within the district, not dictate them. These are a set of principles, not a set of strictly followed laws. The BAR and property owners should follow the intent of the guidelines as they continue to work together to preserve the unique and irreplaceable resources of the historic district.

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UNDERSTANDING YOUR BUILDING: DISTRICT CHARACTER

The Historic Winchester District was created by the City of Winchester. It encompasses the historic core of the city in which each generation has left its mark. The resulting historic district, while architecturally diverse, retains a high degree of cohesion and visual integrity. This district is densely built up and many buildings within it share similar scale, forms, materials and setting. Within this common architectural vocabulary there are several sub-areas.

Core Area: The Loudoun Street Mall and Surrounding Commercial Streets

This downtown area contains a majority of traditional commercial buildings. They are for the most part, two to three stories in height and have a three-part facade with a cornice, upper floors and storefront. Many are of masonry construction and have a very limited or nonexistent setback and are attached to the building next to them. Some have had the facade and the storefront remodeled through the years. Several early residences still remain in this sub-area.

Western Edge: Washington Street and Fairmont Avenue

Both of these tree-lined corridors contain some of the larger residences in the district and date from the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth century. Most domestic architectural styles are found in this sub-area where lots are ample and frequently contain large trees and a variety of plantings. Most dwellings have a deep setback from the sidewalk that is occasionally lined with a low stone wall or fence.

Western Corridor: Amherst Street

This corridor extends all the way to the house museum and gardens of Glen Burnie, the property of Winchester's founder, James Wood. Several other large nineteenth-century residences line the street which also has a large number of noncontributing commercial structures. Closer to downtown there are several blocks of medium-scaled, single-family dwellings on Amherst and neighboring side streets

Southern Entry: Cameron, Braddock and South Kent Streets

This residential neighborhood is characterized by a variety of mostly two-story smaller scaled rowhouses dating from the late-eighteenth through the early twentieth century. While most of the dwellings are frame, log, stone, and brick dwellings also are found in this sub-area. There is a high degree of cohesion in this area with similarly scaled houses containing minimal setbacks, raised basements, and stairs leading to a small entry porch.

Northern Area: West Piccadilly and Peyton Streets

Medium-scaled brick residences with shallow front yards dominate this sub-area. For the most part they date from the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century and many are executed in the American Foursquare style with square-like proportions, two-stories, a hipped roof with a large shed dormer, and a full-width front porch. A smaller number of Federal brick residences dating from early nineteenth century are also found in this area along with several twentieth-century bungalows.

Eastern Edge: Kent Street Corridor

This border of the district contains a mixture of elements including the Town Run and the CSX railroad line along with several industrial properties. The Kent Street corridor and neighboring Sharp Street contain a variety of small-scaled frame vernacular rowhouses interspersed with several newer commercial properties.

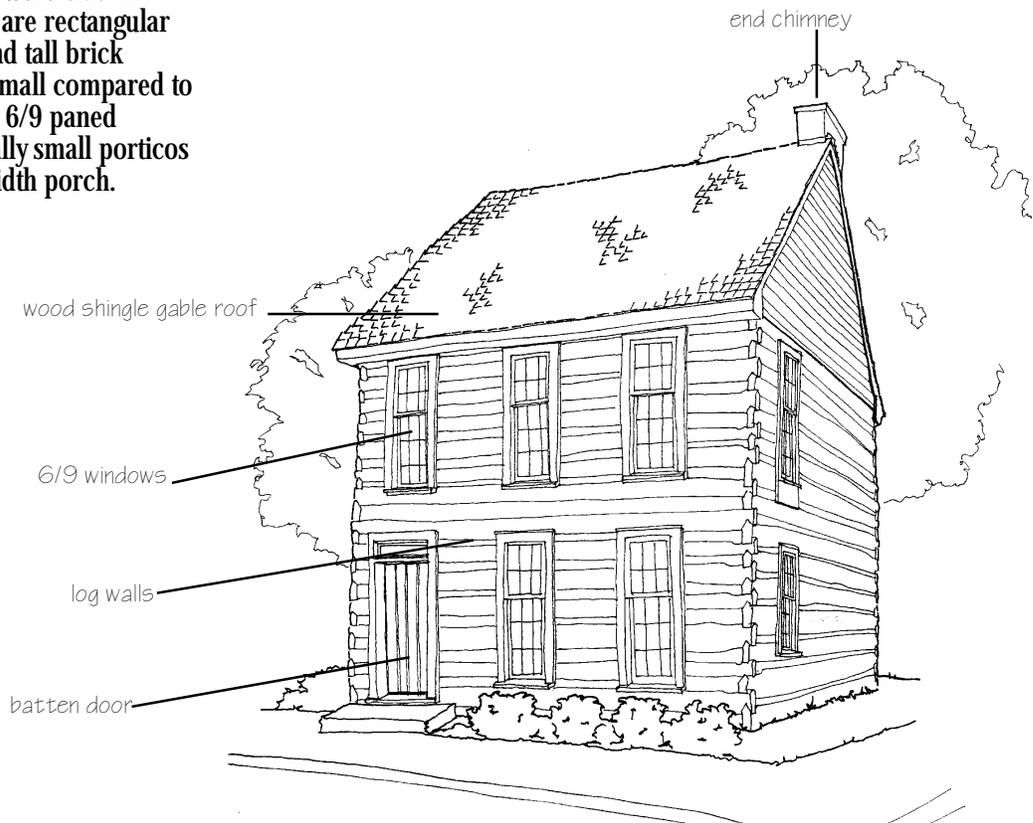
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ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

The following drawings and photographs illustrate the most common architectural styles in Winchester's historic district. They show the prototype of the style. Many of the buildings actually are simplified, or vernacular, versions of these more ornate styles. Some buildings exhibit elements from several styles. In other instances the style may be present in individual residences, rowhouses or in commercial structures. The stylistic features identified in these drawings and photographs are examples of the kinds of distinctive elements that should be preserved when you rehabilitate your building. Additional examples of commercial building styles may be found on page 4 of *Brochure 5: Guidelines for Commercial Buildings*.

Late 18th/Early 19th Century Vernacular (1790-1820)

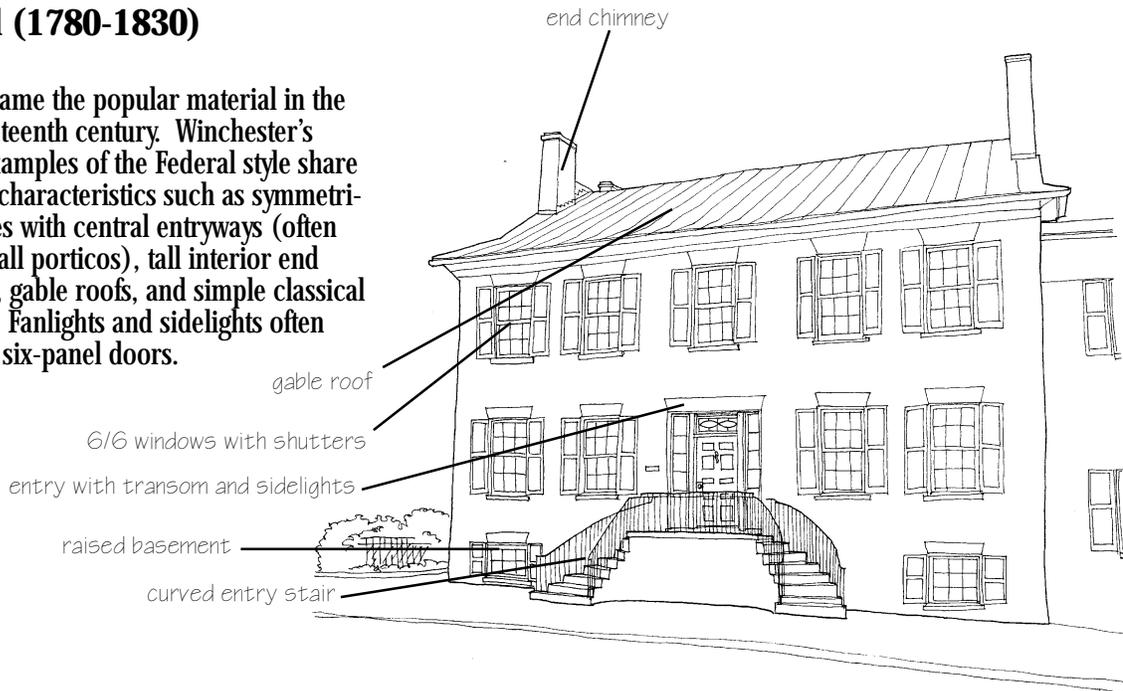
Many of the earliest dwellings in Winchester reflect the simple building traditions of the area. Houses were constructed frequently of log and then were clad in wood clapboards. Forms are rectangular with simple gable roofs and tall brick chimneys. Windows are small compared to wall area and were 6/6 or 6/9 paned patterns. Entries are usually small porticos with the occasional full-width porch.



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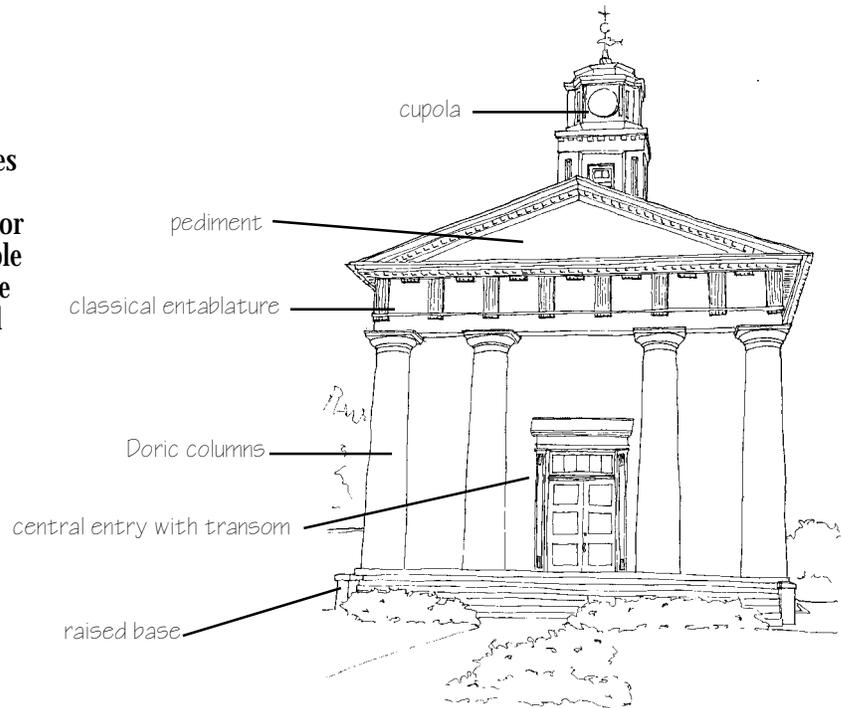
Federal (1780-1830)

Brick became the popular material in the early nineteenth century. Winchester's several examples of the Federal style share common characteristics such as symmetrical facades with central entryways (often under small porticos), tall interior end chimneys, gable roofs, and simple classical cornices. Fanlights and sidelights often surround six-panel doors.



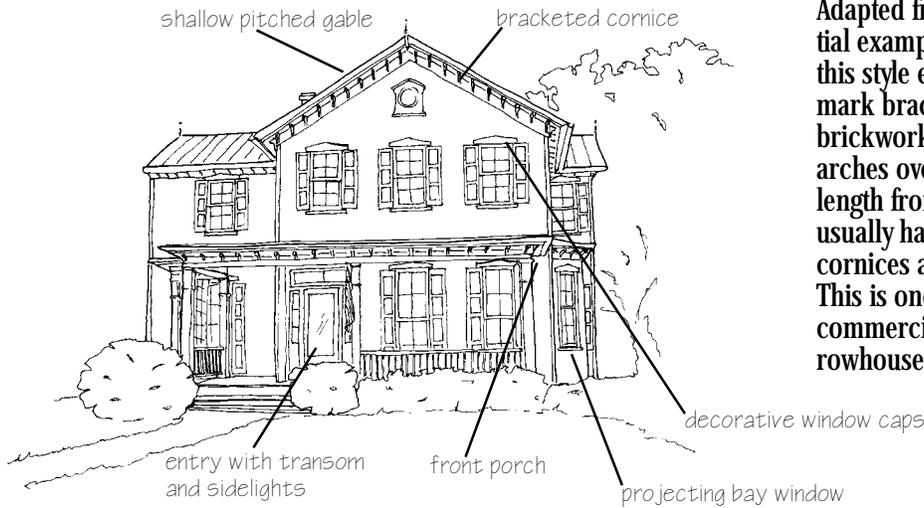
Greek Revival (1840-1860)

Although similar to the Federal style in overall appearance, Greek Revival-style structures introduced several new changes including paired windows, often with decorative surrounds. Roofs are hipped or gable and occasionally have a central gable or pediment in the entry bay. Porticos are usually one story and classically designed with pilasters and columns, although several examples have monumental two-story porticos gracing their facades.

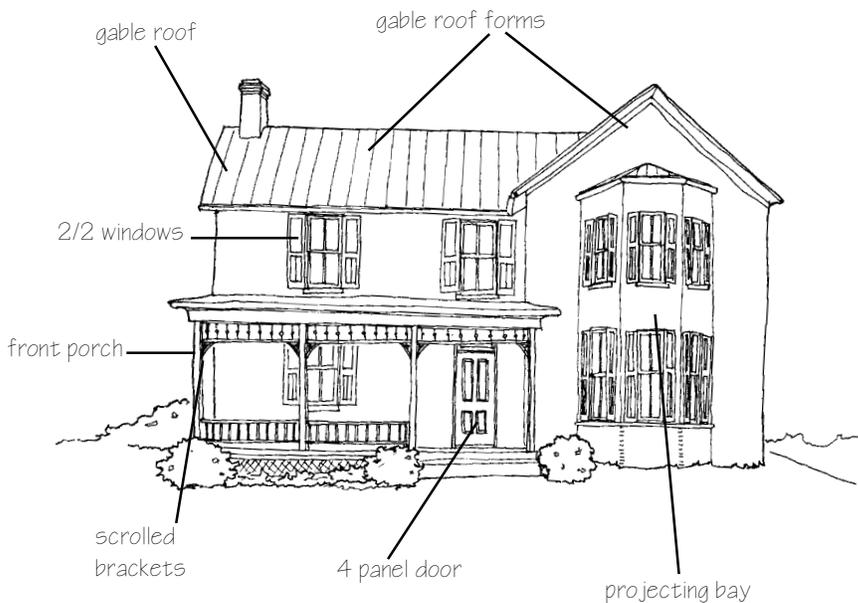


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Italianate (1860-1890)



Adapted from picturesque Italian residential examples, the Winchester derivation of this style exhibits gable roofs, the trademark bracketed cornice, and decorative brickwork, often in the form of segmental arches over openings. Partial- or full-length front porches dominate facades and usually have bracketed supports and cornices and sawn millwork balusters. This is one of the most popular styles for commercial architecture of the era and for rowhouses in Winchester.



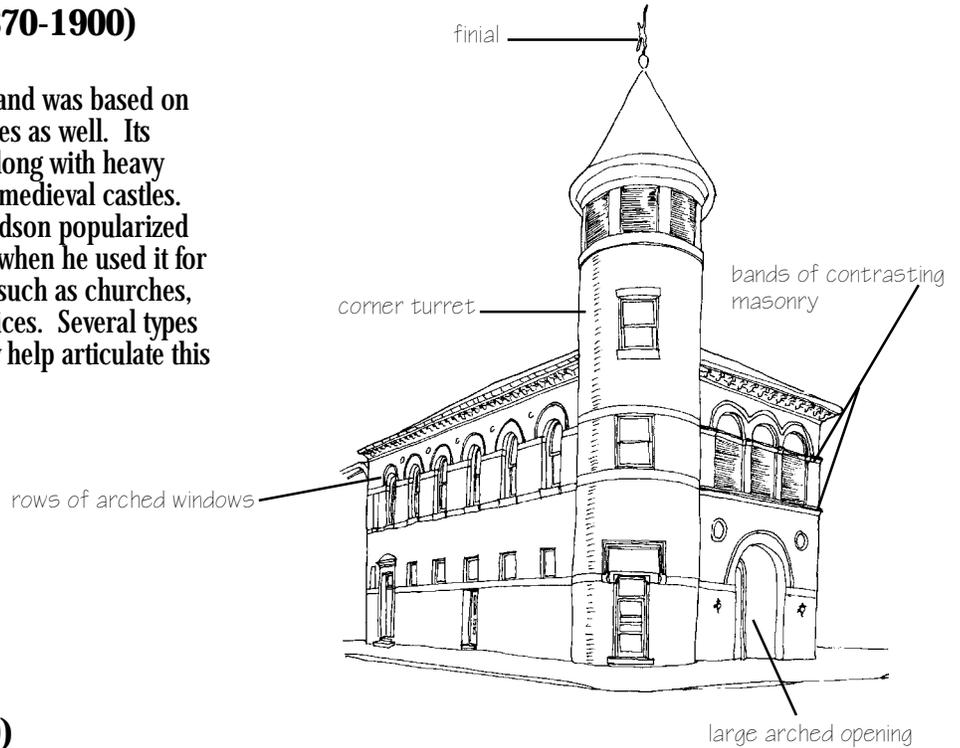
Folk Victorian (1870-1910)

Another of Winchester's dwelling forms, the Folk Victorian was popular because of its modest costs and simple construction using balloon framing. It had various plans, similar to the Italianate with a central-hall I-house form, an "L" or "T" shaped plan and a side-passage townhouse plan. Wood clapboards (often grooved German siding) sheathe these houses which are covered with metal gable roofs. Decoration is limited to sawn millwork on porches or occasionally in decorative gables or cornices.

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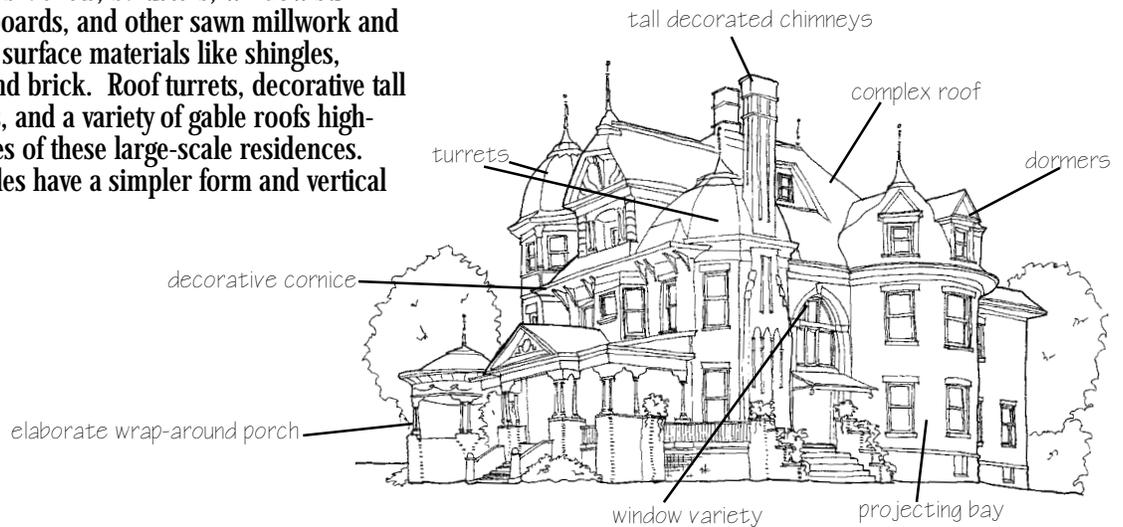
Romanesque Revival (1870-1900)

This was another romantic style and was based on the architecture of the middle ages as well. Its trademark was the round arch along with heavy masonry construction similar to medieval castles. American architect, H. H. Richardson popularized the style throughout the country when he used it for various public building projects such as churches, town halls, libraries and post offices. Several types or colors of contrasting masonry help articulate this style.



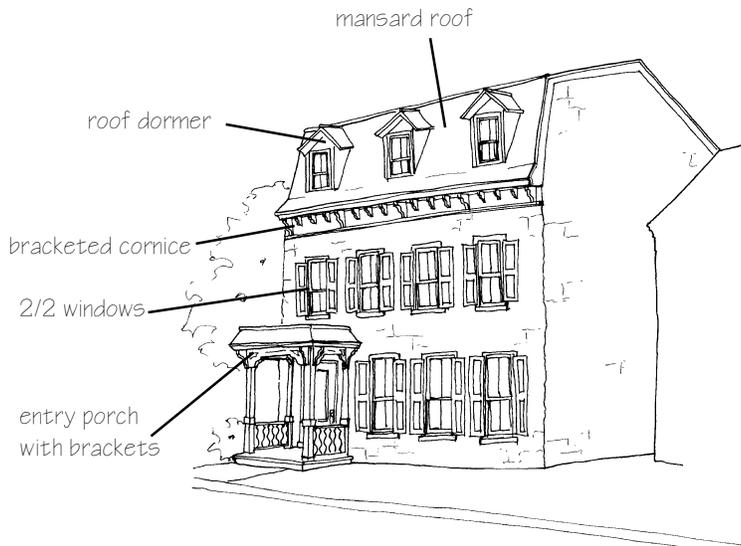
Queen Anne (1880-1900)

These dwellings, commonly known as “Victorian,” are characterized by a complex roof, vertical proportions, asymmetrical facades, and a wrap-around porch. More elaborate examples are richly decorated with brackets, balusters, window surrounds, bargeboards, and other sawn millwork and use a variety of surface materials like shingles, wood siding, and brick. Roof turrets, decorative tall brick chimneys, and a variety of gable roofs highlight the skylines of these large-scale residences. Smaller examples have a simpler form and vertical proportions.

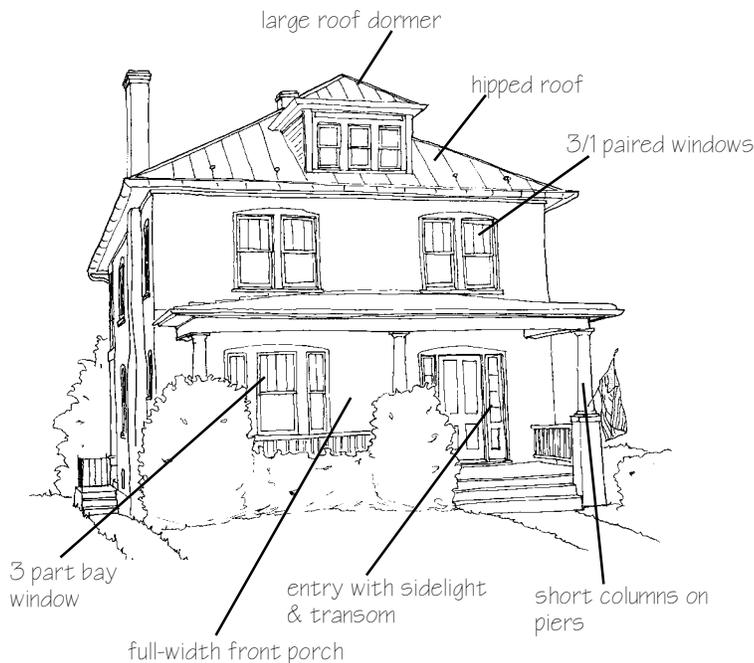


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French Second Empire or Mansard (1870-1900)



This Victorian era style is found in free-standing and rowhouse examples in the historic district. Its most distinguishing feature is its mansard roof which usually creates another complete level in the dwelling. The roof is frequently covered in slate shingles and may have contrasting patterns and colors. Other typical details include a bracketed cornice and porch, two-over-two windows often crowned with a decorative cap, and a double door entryway. More elaborate examples may contain a central pavilion tower in the facade.



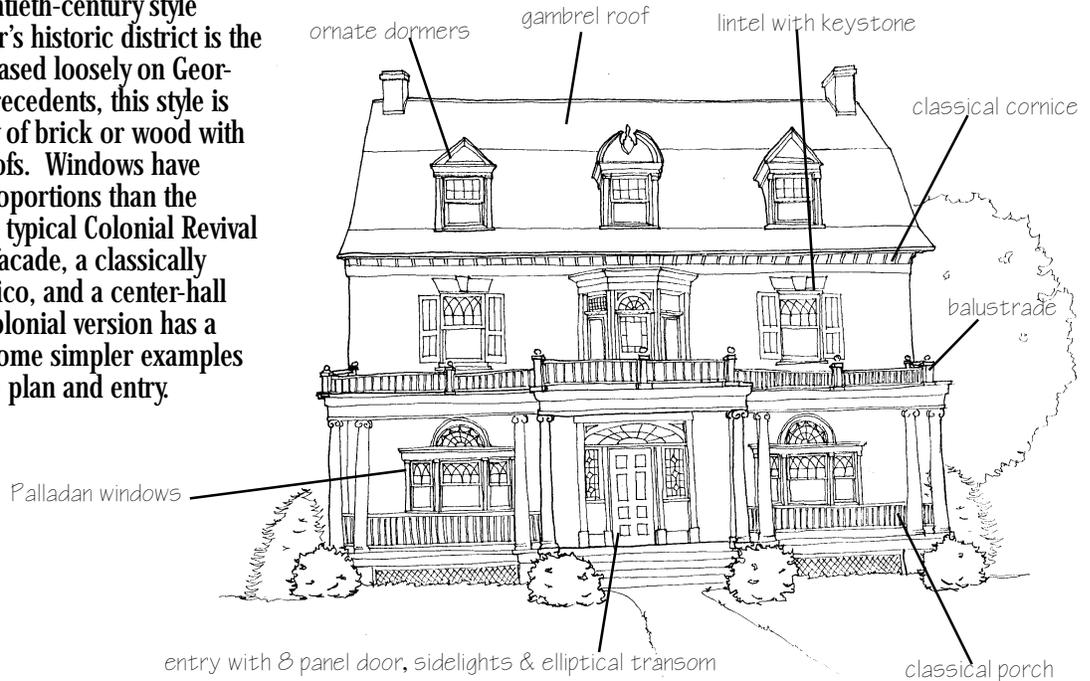
American Foursquare (1900-1930)

Another common form found in Winchester in both large-scale and smaller, simpler versions is the American Foursquare. It has a trademark hipped roof with a deep overhang, a dominant central dormer, and a full-width front porch, often with classical details. Its name comes from its square shape and four-room plan. The exterior materials may be brick, wood or stucco. Some versions of this house were sold in prefabricated form from companies like Sears and Roebuck.

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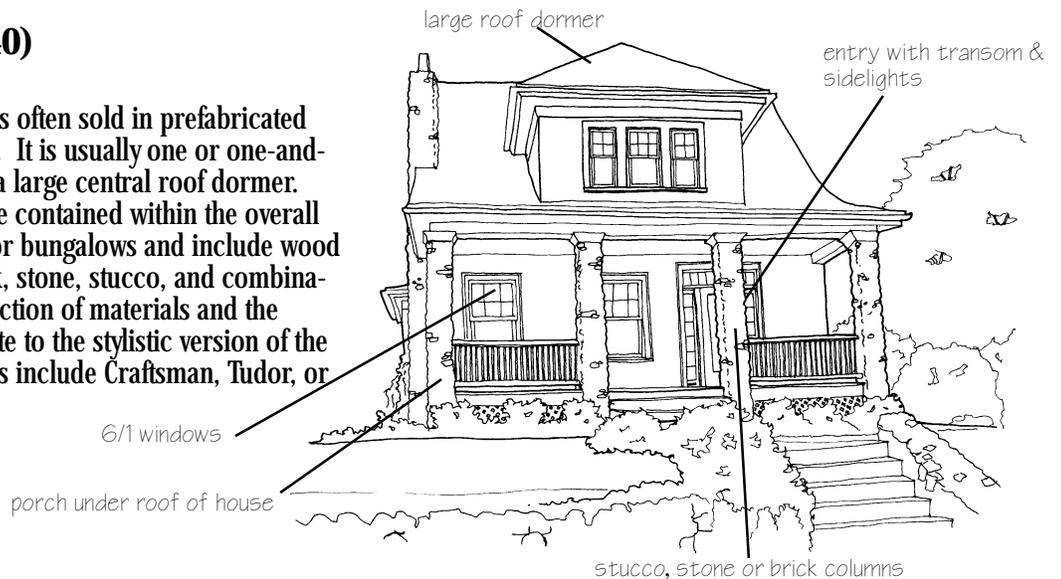
Colonial Revival (1900-1940)

A very popular twentieth-century style found in Winchester's historic district is the Colonial Revival. Based loosely on Georgian and Federal precedents, this style is constructed usually of brick or wood with gable or hipped roofs. Windows have more horizontal proportions than the original styles. The typical Colonial Revival has a symmetrical facade, a classically inspired small portico, and a center-hall plan. The Dutch Colonial version has a gambrel roof and some simpler examples have a side-passage plan and entry.



Bungalow (1920-1940)

Another house form that was often sold in prefabricated packages was the bungalow. It is usually one or one-and-one-half stories, often with a large central roof dormer. Front porches frequently are contained within the overall roof form. Materials vary for bungalows and include wood siding, wood shingles, brick, stone, stucco, and combinations of the above. The selection of materials and the decorative details often relate to the stylistic version of the bungalow design. Variations include Craftsman, Tudor, or simple vernacular.



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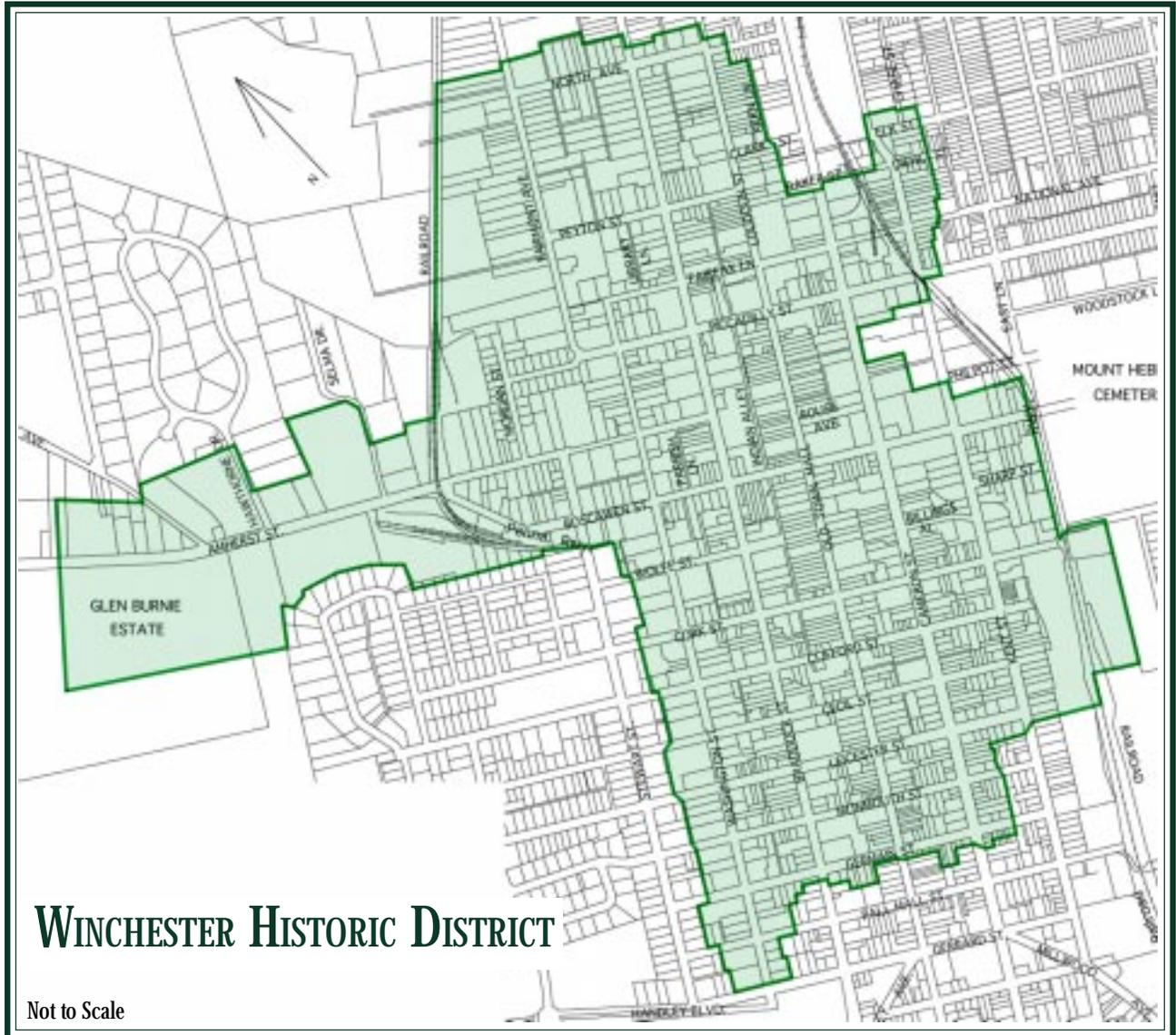
GOING BEFORE THE BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

Winchester has several historic district designations although the boundaries for all are nearly the same. The Historic Winchester District was first created in 1967 and has been expanded over the years. Its boundaries are shown on the map on the facing page. This designation by the City Council includes the design review process which property owners must go through before undertaking work on the exterior of their property as described below. The National Register Historic District was designated in 1980 by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources which at the same time put the district on the Virginia Landmarks Register. Both the state and federal listings allow for the use of state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation subject to various regulations.

Your first step is to determine if you need to go through the design review process and what type of approvals, permits and certificates are needed for your project. Contact the Winchester Planning Department, which takes all applications for the Board of Architectural Review. Minor actions such as routine maintenance and interior work may not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. These types of projects, however, may require a building permit depending on the scope of work.

Any other alterations (beyond routine maintenance), additions, paint color change, new construction, demolitions, or moving of buildings require review by the Board of Architectural Review. Changes to the site such as adding fences, walls, lighting or new outbuildings also may require review. A Certificate of Appropriateness may be required even though a building permit is not required. Portable signs and sidewalk cafes located within the Old Town primary and secondary assessment districts also require approval by the Old Town Development Board.

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WHAT TO SUBMIT

The Board of Architectural Review must receive enough information on which to base its decision. You will need to fill out an application provided by the Winchester Planning Department. In addition, you will be requested to provide photographs, drawings and plans or other documentation as required by the board. These submissions do not have to be prepared by professionals, but must be prepared in such a way as to be easily understood by the board members. The application spells out the requirements for each type of submission. There may be other types of permits or approvals required depending on the type of work involved. Examples could include zoning, sign permits, asbestos removal, etc. You are expected to be present at the BAR meeting to present your request and answer any questions that the board members may have.

Project Checklist

1. Look at your building to determine its style, age, and the elements that help define its special character. The previous section, "Architectural Styles" should be helpful.
2. Winchester's historic district qualifies for federal and state tax credits as well as for local tax abatement and loan programs. All of these incentives have different requirements. Check with the Winchester Planning Department, the Winchester Old Town Development Board or the Winchester Office of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to see if your project qualifies for these special financial incentives.
3. Check the zoning ordinance to make sure that your planned use is allowed. If you are changing the use or working outside of the existing walls, you may need to rezone your property or secure a variance from the zoning regulations.
4. Chances are you will need a building permit. Become familiar with the local building code as it applies to historic buildings and meet with your building inspector early on about your plans.
5. Seek advice on technical preservation issues from the Winchester Old Town Development Board, the Winchester Office of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources or Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc.
6. Use contractors with prior successful experience in working with historic buildings and materials. Some tasks, such as re-pointing or cleaning historic masonry, require special knowledge, techniques, and methods. Check with Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc. or the Winchester Office of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources for potential names of such contractors.
7. If your project is complicated or large scale, you should strongly consider employing an architect experienced in working with historic buildings.
8. Review the following Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. These ten standards **must** be followed if you are using federal or state tax credits. The BAR follows these standards when reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness.

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The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The guidelines in this publication are based on The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. They express a basic rehabilitation credo of "retain, repair, and replace." In other words, do not remove a historic element, do not replace an element if it can be repaired, and replace an element that has been removed or cannot be repaired.

First developed in 1979 and most recently revised in 1995, these guidelines have been continually expanded and refined. They are used by the National Park Service to determine if the rehabilitation of a historic building has been undertaken in a manner that is sensitive to its historic integrity. The guidelines are very broad by nature since they apply to the rehabilitation of any contributing building in any historic district throughout the United States.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectured features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Board of Architectural Review, c/o Planning Department
Rouss City Hall, 3rd Floor, Suite 318
15 North Cameron Street
Winchester, VA 22601
540/667-1815, Ext. 464
E-Mail: plngcity@shentel.net

Members:

Elizabeth Kellas, Chairwoman;
Beth Reader, Vice-Chairwoman
Jack Phillips
Marge Sheppard
Michael Butler
Scott Brooks-Miller
Richard Bell

Also: Mary Chastain, BAR Secretary
Timothy Youmans, Director of Planning
Mike Scholl, Planning Intern

Anna Thomson
Preservation of Historic Winchester, Inc.
2 North Cameron Street
Winchester, VA 22601
540/667-3577

Lise Sundrla (until September, 1999)
Old Town Development Board
Rouss City Hall, 1st Floor, Suite 103
15 North Cameron Street
Winchester, VA 22601
540/667-1815
E-Mail: otdbcity@shentel.net

David Edwards
Scott Brooks-Miller
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
Winchester Office
107 North Kent Street, Suite 206
Winchester, VA 22601
540/722-3428

Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society
1340 South Pleasant Valley Road
Winchester, VA 22601
540/662-6550

Additional historical information may be found at the
Handley Library Archives
100 West Piccadilly Street
Winchester, VA 22601
540/662-9041

All historic photos were obtained from Images of the Past, A Photographic Review of Winchester and Frederick County Virginia, The Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, 1980.

The above-named persons assisted with the production of this and six other brochures prepared by William T. Frazier, AICP of Frazier Associates, Staunton, VA. Thanks also goes to John Schroth (City Council representative), Judith Olmslaer (PHW Board representative) and Gary Kula (former BAR Chairman) and all others who participated in the public meetings held during this project.

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