

Albany Architecture



Federal – this symmetrical, box-like style was very popular on the East Coast from 1776 to 1820 and was commonly used by early settlers here on the West Coast. The internal structure of these buildings was generally made of hand-hewn beams while exterior siding was often of locally milled lumber. Typical of this style are interior chimneys and symmetrically placed six over six pane doublehung windows.



Rural Vernacular – or Western Farmhouse style was widely used throughout the Mid-Willamette Valley from 1875 to 1910. These homes were built with thrift in mind and utilized materials, which were easily available. The Rural Vernacular floor plan was “T” or “L” shaped with rectangular rooms placed at right angles. These structures often began as one wing, with other areas being added as the family grew. Typical of these buildings are the gable roofs, corner boards, freeze boards at rooflines and shiplap siding. Variations built in the 1870’s have Classic Revival and Gothic Revival elements, while Queen Anne and Stick features are common on homes built in the 1880s and 1890s. Variations in 1900 and 1910 combine Colonial Revival and craftsman elements with the basic Rural Vernacular style.



Queen Anne – Variety is the hallmark of this style; mixed building materials, textures, patterns and colors prevail. The more obvious features of these houses include towers and turrets, combinations of different styles of windows and roofs, as well as tall-decorated chimneys and carved wooden panels. There is irregularity in the plan, facade and decoration of these buildings. The style was used in churches and commercial structures as well as houses. The popularity of Queen Anne can be traced back to the Centennial Exposition in 1876 and British government buildings. Queen Anne was the style used in America from 1880 through the first decade of the 20th century. The Queen Anne style can be either very exuberant or rather restrained, depending on the use of details.



Classic Revival – Greek Roman temples were the models for this style. Low pitched gable roofs with eave returns and pedimented gables were common. Classical columns or pilasters were also employed on the porch and front of the house. Six-over-six pane double-hung windows are usually found on the Classic Revival home popular in Oregon from the 1840s until the 1860s.



Italianate is an umbrella term that is used to describe the type of building, both residential and commercial, that was inspired by Italian Renaissance palaces and modest Italian Farm houses of the 16th and 17th centuries. Its most characteristic element is the low-hipped roof (flat on commercial buildings) with overhanging eaves that are supported by decorative scroll-like brackets. Italianate styles were popular in Oregon in the 1880s and 1890s. They usually have a vertical emphasis and often have the rounded or segmental “Roman” arch openings.



Craftsman Bungalow This truly American style evolved around 1890 and was used until about 1930. These small, well-built homes have trace elements of Spanish, Swiss, Japanese, Indian and English architecture. They feature low pitched gable or hipped roofs with wide overhanging eaves and exposed rafters as well as tapered porch posts. Porches, verandas, sunrooms and sleeping porches add to the Bungalow’s “cottage” effect. The name Bungalow comes from the word Bangla, which means belonging to Bengal. The style was popularized by the Craftsman, a monthly magazine published by Gustav Stickley from 1901 to 1916. Bungalow pattern books were published all over the United States and ready cut timber and patterns could be ordered and sent by rail and then constructed by local carpenters upon arrival.



Foursquare – Rather than a style, the Foursquare (also known as American Foursquare, Classic Box and Traditional Box) is more of a form which persisted from the 1890s until at least the 1930s. Typically two-stories in height with four rooms on both levels, Foursquares remained popular for an extended period because their detailing could easily be adapted to prevailing style trends. Thus we see Foursquare with Queen Anne elements, Classical or Colonial elements (often called Free Classical), or Craftsman detailing.



Stick & Eastlake Style Derived from the Gothic Revival style, the Stick Style was made popular by a British architect, Gervase Wheeler. Wheeler believed that wood-framed houses should look like wooden houses; thus the placement of “stickwork” simulating structural framing materials for exterior ornamentation. Porches and balconies are common and have many Eastlake elements such as turned columns, spools, spindles and round disks applied for decoration. Perhaps the most common Eastlake motif is the sunburst, which appears in every conceivable variation. Stick style homes are typically asymmetrical, vertically designed, and have projecting bay windows and large verandas. Most Eastlake-Stick style houses were built in the 20 years preceding 1890.



Colonial Revival – A revival of interest in the heritage of 18th century America began during the Centennial celebration of 1876. Colonial styles were studied and imitated by architects who disdained the eclectic, excessive decoration of Victorian architecture and who desired to establish a truly American style. Architects used historical buildings as models. Incorporating modern technology and new ideas to create a more ordered and simplistic design.



Gothic Revival – A revival of medieval styles began in the 18th century and was very popular in Britain in the early 19th century. America saw its first Gothic Revival structures in the 1830’s and the style was used widely for churches and schools as well as homes, until the 1890s. Most of Albany’s gothic houses were built in the 1870’s. The first use of this particular style found few builders who could afford the elaborately carved decorative detailing which was so much a part of these structures. But with the invention of the jigsaw came the ornate bargeboards, window tracery, hood molds, bay windows and foliated ornaments. Characteristic of Gothic Revival is the asymmetrical plan and façade as well as pointed arch windows.



French Second Empire architecture was developed in France during the rule of Napoleon III (1852-1870) and was popular in Europe throughout the latter half of the 19th century. In the United States it was adopted for museums, hotels, colleges and houses. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of this style is the Mansard roof, straight, concave or convex, usually with decorative shingles. Other features include classical ornamentation (belt courses, cornices, moldings, etc.), tall chimneys with decorative caps, dormer windows, and deep cornices supported by brackets. This style was popular in Oregon in the 1870s and 1880s. Albany has the largest concentration of French Second Empire structures in the state.



American Renaissance This architectural style illustrated a movement throughout America which stated to the world that the United States was no longer a frontier society, but one which had cultivated civic dignity and classical cultural ideals. The stimulus for the American Renaissance movement was the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 held in Chicago. Public building initiating Greek, Roman, Italian, French and English architecture were built in a vast number of cities throughout America until the country’s entry into the First World War.