

City of Jacksonville *Historic Preservation Commission* SPRING 2006 NEWSLETTER

Advantages of Older Homes: Why save historic houses?



Older homes can offer many advantages that are often overlooked by societal views of “newer always being better.” Misconceptions about older homes abound: “They’re too hard to take care of,” “Older homes can’t be updated for needs of today’s family,” and the list goes on. However, older

homes offer many advantages and opportunities just waiting to be discovered and highlighted:

1. “They don’t make them like that anymore.” The character, craftsmanship, and quality of materials used in older homes are virtually impossible to find in new construction of today. Beautiful details are found in solid assembly, such as decorative molding, hardwood floors, built-in cabinetry, high ceilings, intricate hinges, leaded glass, ornate stairways, classic fixtures, and much more. Plaster walls and tile floors are just some of the materials often used in older structures that last a lifetime. Even the design of the homes themselves are distinctive, ensuring that no one else will have a home just like it, unlike many new “cookie cutter” subdivisions.

2. Older homes are usually a good value for the money when one considers the cost of replicating the unique features found within. Comparing apples to apples, the price for the established neighborhood, mature landscaping, craftsmanship, and quality of materials would more than double the cost of a comparably sized newer home. Even after updating electrical and mechanical systems, adding insulation, and kitchen amenities, most older homes provide an exceptional value.

3. Resources are available to assist in many of the renovations considered for older homes. The



Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission and Jacksonville Main Street have made several publications available at the Jacksonville Public Library that address various older home issues. For those within the Historic District, State and Federal tax incentives may be available for restoration projects. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency works with the local Commission to provide solutions to many issues that may arise during rehabilitation. Experienced area contractors and design professionals can also assist in addressing problems, often discovering unique ways to enhance the home’s original charm.

4. The design of many older homes can easily adapt to the needs of today’s family. Often, the large rooms and flow of space can work well for modern lifestyles with minimal modification. Multiple floors provide ample square footage, with additional space found in attics and basements. Gardens and porches, common elements to older structures, can add outdoor living space. The restoration process also enhances the character of the neighborhood, quality of life for occupants, and attractiveness of the community for visitors.

5. Phasing projects is easy on older homes, allowing for tight budgets and life-style changes. Finishing an attic, changing the use of a room, or adding a deck in the backyard can provide affordable modifications for changing family needs over many years.

6. Older homes offer history. Besides being located within an established neighborhood, the heritage associated with the structure itself is irreplaceable and often an integral part of the community’s past. Older homes provide a window to the times of yore, offering glimpses of life in a different era.

Visit us on the web

www.jacksonvilleil.org

Jacksonville Historic Preservation Commission
908 W. College Ave.
Jacksonville, Illinois 62650
217-245-0678

What Style Is Your House?



Greek Revival (1820-1850)

This symmetrical style was common for government buildings constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries, with important buildings of the day taking on this formal style inspired by Greek temples. Typically using the wide friezes and porticos in its design, Greek Revivals often had low rooflines, columns, and pediments. Simpler home variations retain the rectangular shape with fewer embellishments. Rectangular windows were common, and structures were routinely white paint to mimic marble.



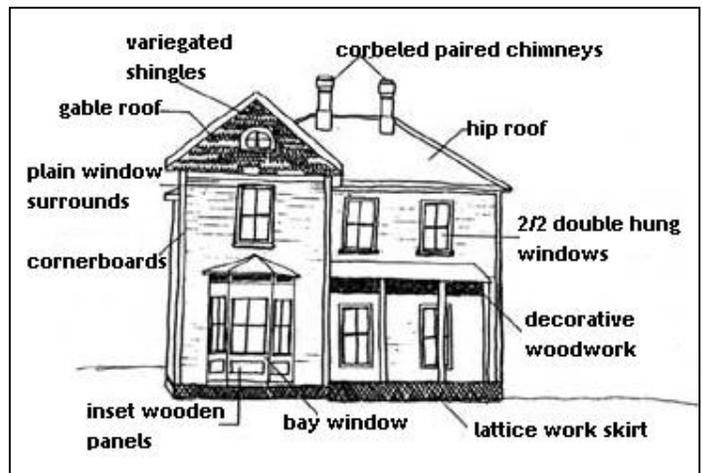
Italianate (1840-1890)

This style, one of the most popular during the Victorian Era, typically features two or three stories with a low-pitched hip roof and eave brackets, which are often rather ornate. Italianates typically had an asymmetrical façade with flat walls and an attached porch with columns. The structures, routinely seen in brick, were normally very square with the occasional extension. Bay windows and corner boards are also common. Windows frequently had curved or molded window caps and shutters. Some Italianates boast ornate cupolas or “Widow Walks.” Simpler versions of this style were common for commercial construction of the period.



Queen Anne (1880-1910)

This asymmetrical style was introduced to the United States at the 1876 Exposition and takes its name from the 18th century British queen. Wildly popular at the turn of the century, this style featured steeply pitched hip roofs with lower crossing gables. Gable ends and porches usually boasted ornate trim, turned woodwork, friezes, shingles, fish scales, inset panels, “gingerbread” or “bric-a-brac”. Porches typically wrapped around and often had lattice skirting below. Queen Anne style typically had irregular rooflines and several uneven wall surfaces clad with wood clapboard siding. Towers and recessed second story porches were sometimes evident, as was a belt course of vertical wood. At its peak of popularity, Queen Anne’s were frequently painted with five or six different colors of paint to accentuate the fanciful detail work and textures. Small square or diamond windows were also a common element.



The Farmhouse Queen Anne is a combination of Vernacular Farmhouse simplicity and form, mixed with Queen Anne ornamentation. Typically smaller than a traditional Queen Anne, these were usually less complex, but commonly found in this region. Often featuring a gable-roofed dormer or clipped gable roof, this style is often only 1½ story.

Save this sheet...
...more styles in the next edition!