

III. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DWELLINGS

This chapter will continue the discussion of physical property types as they apply to individual dwellings. As was the pattern with subdivisions, there were a number of national architectural trends that affected the residential housing constructed in the Wilmington vicinity between 1880 and 1950. Dwellings play a dual role in any consideration of the process of suburbanization. They are part of the subdivision and the architectural variety among a subdivision's houses is an important aspect of assigning a property type designation to the subdivision. In addition, dwellings themselves represent significant cultural trends such as the ideal of "home". This chapter discusses each of the architectural styles that appeared in the suburbs of Wilmington between 1880 and 1950 as well as criteria for the evaluation of significance and integrity of resources that are potentially eligible for inclusion in the property types established for suburban dwellings.

Architectural Trends

In the early twentieth century, writers reflecting on the demand for housing repeatedly remarked on the popularity of small homes for the growing class of buyers of limited means. Comments accompanying a floor plan for "A Suburban Home, Costing \$5,000," noted in 1911 that "A 'home in the suburbs,' away from the noise and dust of the city, with plenty of room and fresh air, this does not necessarily call for a large expensive house. Many people of small means are seeking homes out of the city."⁵⁷ Bungalow plans were published by Jud Yoho in 1913 because of what he recognized as "the certain popular demand now being felt for smaller and more convenient houses."⁵⁸

Paint manufacturer Sherwin-Williams saw a market among people with modest incomes when the company published *Cottage-Bungalow* in 1910. The decorating advice offered was "by no means intended only for expensive homes"⁵⁹ and emphasized ideas for creating attractive rooms inexpensively. A decade later, *Shrewsbury's House Plans* introduced a wide variety of house styles--Colonial and Dutch Colonial houses, English Cottages, and "Square-Type Houses," as well as an extensive range of bungalows--with a testimonial from a satisfied customer. "We studied a book of home designs such as this; designs for houses suitable for average families such as we are, families of moderate means, who want attractive, substantial, comfortable homes that do not cost a large amount of money."⁶⁰

⁵⁷*Sunday Morning Star*, 31 December 1911, 23.

⁵⁸Yoho, introduction n.p.

⁵⁹*Cottage-Bungalow*, 2.

⁶⁰*Shrewsbury's House Plans*, 4.

It has been suggested that "In post-Civil War America, the variety of styles, forms, colors, and building materials demonstrated America's vitality, inventiveness, restlessness, and eclectic nature. As the twentieth century began, many Americans longed for the quieter, less hectic eras of the past and preferred versions of the colonial and cottage styles."⁶¹ Certainly American homeowners turned away from the large, ornate dwellings of the nineteenth century, but, as has been suggested, they may well have turned toward the smaller, more restrained houses of the twentieth century for economic reasons as much as for reasons of taste.

This national trend was replicated in Wilmington's subdivisions. There was a steady refrain endorsing small houses for buyers of modest means. In 1905, the local paper reported "there is a general demand for small houses at present but the real estate men have been unable to meet the demands, accordingly more suburban residences will be built."⁶² Two years later, the real estate column of the Sunday paper reported that "all the suburban companies have been very successful within the past two years, and many people of moderate means are preferring to build their homes along the trolley lines."⁶³

During the following decade, developer Earnest B. MacNair sought to encourage the construction of bungalows in his developments by offering to sell an Aladdin bungalow for \$100. "We Have at Hillcrest and Gordon Heights 30 Plots of Land on which we want Bungalows built," his advertisement declared. "To encourage building we are going to sell this Up-to-Date Alladin (sic) Bungalow for \$100. Five rooms and bath."⁶⁴ The preference for small dwellings continued into the 1920s. *One-Two-One-Four*, a lumber company newsletter for Wilmington's building trades, reported in 1923 that "There is quite a bit of bungalow and small house construction in the suburbs."⁶⁵ The same publication reiterated the theme in 1930, declaring "Small Houses are Popular" and the writer explained the trend by asserting that "the vogue for small houses, (was) in keeping with small families and higher cost of building."⁶⁶

Dwelling styles were conveyed to the public by a number of methods. Plan books, such as Jud Yoho's *The Bungalow Craftsman or Shrewesbury's House Plans*, provided lumber yards, developers, contractors, and prospective homeowners with a sense of the range of choices easily available and with an idea of the cost of building each of the dwellings displayed. While the Shrewesbury book opens with the caveat "It is impossible for anyone to estimate the cost of a building and have the figures hold good in all

⁶¹Howe et al., 81-2.

⁶²*Sunday Morning Star*, 23 July 1905, 7.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 1 September 1907, 6.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 14 September 1913, 12.

⁶⁵*One-Two-One-Four*, July, 1923, 2. The publication took its name from the company telephone number. When the telephone number was changed to 4121 in July, 1929, the newsletter was renamed *Four-One-Two-One*.

⁶⁶*Four-One-Two-One*, June, 1930, 7.

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sections of the country," the publisher nevertheless predicts for each model the total cost "based on the most favorable conditions . . . and includes everything but the plumbing and heating."⁶⁷

Popular literature also provided ready access to information on architectural styles. The *Ladies Home Journal* initiated a house-plan service in 1919 through which readers could purchase for one dollar the working drawings, details, and elevations necessary to create a complete set of blueprints.⁶⁸ The magazine published various housing styles, including several plans by Frank Lloyd Wright. As early as 1908, *House Beautiful* carried advertisements for booklets of bungalow plans that could be ordered by mail, again for one dollar.⁶⁹

House plans and building materials were also available from companies selling mail-order houses. Chicago's Sears, Roebuck and Company was perhaps the best known among the catalogue companies, but Sears shared a market with at least five other competitors from the Midwest: the Aladdin Company, Gordon-VanTine Company, Montgomery Ward and Company, Lewis Manufacturing Company, and Sterling Homes.⁷⁰ The catalogues of these manufacturers displayed a broad range of styles, including substantial houses as well as modest dwellings. The mass media, newspapers and popular magazines, plus the mass marketing of ready-made houses combined to make the public aware of the choices available in housing.

Real estate advertisements for Wilmington subdivisions reflected the same wide selection. Developers occasionally included sketches of dwellings which they imagined suitable for their developments and attractive to potential buyers. A 1909 ad for Ashley (Christiana Hundred) offered to "furnish free of charge complete plans and specifications for over sixty different plans of Modern Houses . . . ranging in price from \$1,500 to \$5,000."⁷¹ The accompanying drawings show four versions of four-square style houses, a gambrel-roofed Dutch colonial, a front-gable dwelling with a substantial cross-gable wing, and a plain one-and-a-half story front-gable house. Two years later, the Ashley developers added bungalows to their list of suitable housing styles when they declared that "Bungalow hill . . . is an ideal place to build."⁷² An interest in residential construction was at least partially sustained by a series of dwelling floor plans published in Wilmington's *Sunday Morning Star* beginning in 1910. The plans covered the full range of styles from the simplest of frame bungalows through several interpretations of the "cement block cottage," a substantial "square house," and a "seven-room gambriel (sic) roof cottage."

⁶⁷Shrewesbury's *House Plans*, 3.

⁶⁸Gowans, 67.

⁶⁹Lancaster, 148.

⁷⁰Schweitzer and Davis, 63.

⁷¹*Sunday Morning Star*, 10 October 1909, 6.

⁷²ibid., 21 May 1911, 15.

Each successive decade after the turn of the century yielded new architectural styles. There was no sharp break between one style and its successor. Rather, the styles overlapped and one gave way gradually to the next. The dissemination of what was current fashion in housing at any particular moment was facilitated by both the ready availability of plans and the modest cost of construction associated with several of the styles.

Property Types Related to Architectural Trends

At least eleven styles that were popular nationally can be easily identified as "suburban" for the period from 1880 to 1950. Each had its own distinct characteristics and presented its own unique image. Ten of the eleven, plus a suburban version of the rowhouse, can be found in Wilmington's subdivisions. The time line in Figure 9 illustrates the manner in which architectural style in Wilmington reflected the national trends. The time line is followed by a brief description of each of the architectural style property types and their distribution patterns in the vicinity of Wilmington. Each of the styles is also accompanied by illustrations from local subdivisions that show exterior appearance.

The Bungalow

The bungalow is easily identified based on its distinctive characteristics (Figure 10). A one- or one-and-a-half story house with ground-hugging outline, it may be constructed of any material--frame, brick, stone, concrete block -- and may be clad in wood siding, brick, or stone, or any combination of these materials. The low-pitched roof may be a side-gable with the line of the roof oriented parallel to the street, a front-gable roof with the line of the roof perpendicular to the street, or a hipped roof. Regardless of the roof style, it will have deep, over-hanging eaves usually supported by simple, substantial brackets. The bungalow characteristically is graced by a broad porch across the front facade and anchored by corner pillars. The porch roof may be shed, cross-gable, or hipped. Most bungalows are three-bay buildings and, while fenestration and door placement vary among structures, central placement of the entry door is most common. In addition, bay windows are often used to add light and interest to the design.

Characterized as "by far the most popular home style of the 1910s extending into the 1920s and even the 1930s,"⁷³ the bungalow was built primarily in newly developing suburbs, although examples may also be found in small towns and in rural settings. The proliferation of the style is partly due to its wide marketing by companies selling plans and pre-fabricated versions of the houses. The low cost of bungalow construction and the style's great versatility added to its popularity.

Bungalows are found in virtually every Wilmington subdivision laid out prior to 1930, a favorite house style for the early suburban dwellers. The Wilmington versions of the bungalow include a large number of variations in material, roof shape, and details. Gwinhurst (Brandywine Hundred in 1919),

⁷³Schweitzer and Davis, 24.

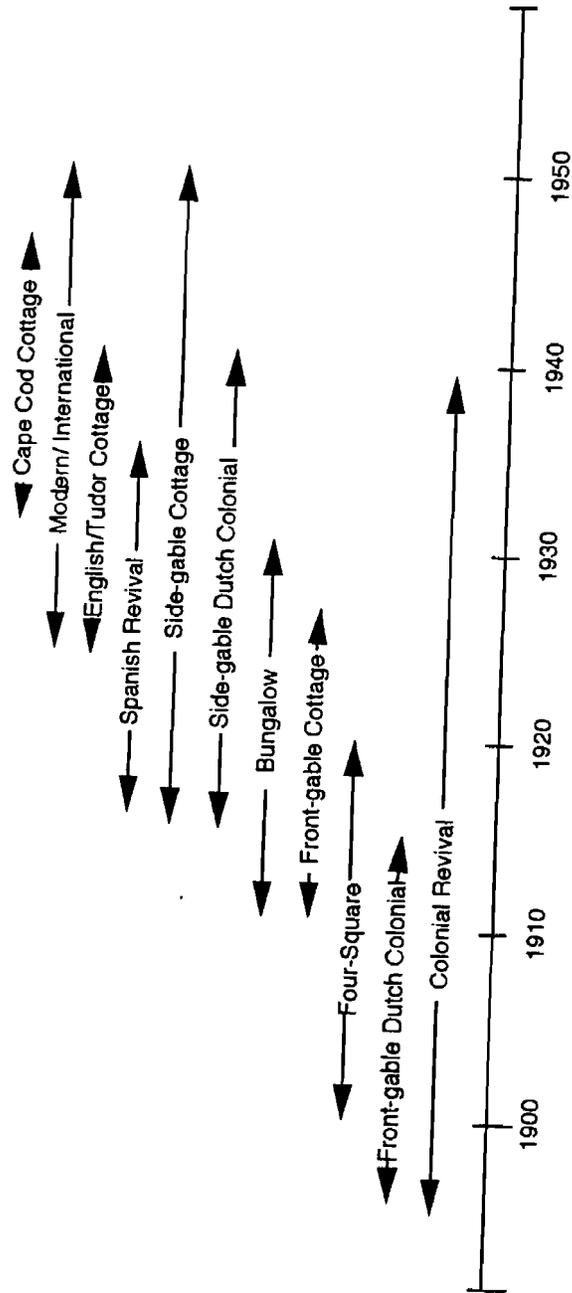


Figure 9: Time Line for the Appearance of Architectural Styles in Wilmington Subdivisions

noteworthy for its bungalows, has a number of streets on which several copies of the same style stand side-by-side. In Richardson Park (Christiana Hundred, 1904), builder Frank A. Levering erected between 50 and 75 identical bungalows using two plans repeatedly. Although the houses were not built to fill an entire block, there are several streets on which two or three of Levering's houses stand next to one another.

The Four-Square

The style that is now commonly known as the four-square enjoyed its greatest popularity between 1900 and 1920 and at the time it was called simply a square two-story house⁷⁴ or a square type house (Figure 11).⁷⁵ As was the case with the bungalow, the four-square was widely marketed both via plan books and by catalogue sales and is found not only in suburban areas but in urban and rural districts as well.

The two or two-and-a-half story house may be three or five bays wide and is a simple square or nearly-square box, described variously as "good, plain, substantial"⁷⁶ and "simple, strong, substantial."⁷⁷ The style's solid mass may be of any material or combinations of materials. The hipped or pyramidal roof often, though not always, is pierced with dormers admitting light to the attic and often has deep, overhanging eaves. The front of the dwelling usually has a porch across the entire front of the first floor and most commonly the porch roof repeats the hipped style of the dwelling roof. Piers or columns supporting the porch roof will be heavy in proportion with the rest of the structure. The fenestration and placement of the entry door may be symmetrical or asymmetrical.

Several Wilmington subdivisions from the earliest decades of the century have versions of the four-square style. Three nearly identical frame four-square dwellings stand on one side of Woodward Avenue in the area developed as Fredericks Property (Christiana Hundred, 1911). Roselle Terrace on the Kirkwood Highway (1911) also has several examples of the style which vary from one another and demonstrate the creativity that was applied to the basic box plan.

Colonial Revival

Referred to at the time of its greatest popularity as simply the "colonial" house,⁷⁸ the style now called colonial revival presents a balanced, proportioned, and restrained impression (Figure 12). A 1924

⁷⁴*Sunday Morning Star*, 25 July 1915, 16.

⁷⁵*Shrewesbury's House Plans*, 92.

⁷⁶*Sunday Morning Star*, 25 July 1915, 16.

⁷⁷Schweitzer and Davis, Plate 3.

⁷⁸*Shrewesbury's House Plans*, 98; see also Stevenson and Jandl, 178-188.



Figure 10: Bungalow, Richardson Park.



Figure 11: Four-Square, Roselle Terrace.



Figure 12: Colonial Revival, Wier Avenue.

plan book characterized the style, which Virginia McAlester and Lee McAlester suggest originated around 1880, as "simple, hospitable."⁷⁹ It was marketed by catalogue companies as early as 1918⁸⁰ and as late as 1941.⁸¹ According to Gwendolyn Wright, the style was encouraged by the advent of government financing during the New Deal. "Traditional design, particularly colonial styles, prevailed," she asserts, "as FHA officials were quite conservative when considering potential resale values."⁸²

The side-gable, five-bay dwelling frequently has a one-story wing or porch on one or both gable ends and may also have dormers which admit light to the top floor. Two or two-and-a-half stories in height, the style can be constructed of any material—frame, brick, stucco, or stone or of a combination of materials. Similarly, the exterior may be of any material or combination of materials. The fenestration is nearly always symmetrical, with the front door clearly emphasized by a decorative pediment and pilasters, usually of classical design, or by an entry-door porch whose flat or gabled roof is supported by classical pillars. The door may be further ornamented by a fan light and/or side lights. Traditionally, the clapboard versions of the style were painted white and were accented by dark green shutters.

If the bungalow was the favorite dwelling style for the opening decades of the twentieth century, the colonial revival style was the favorite during the late 1920s and the 1930s. Several of Wilmington's subdivisions planned and occupied during that period have good collections of the style in a remarkable variety of materials and interpretations. Among the most popular of the building materials for the colonial revival was local stone, used either alone for the entire structure or in combination with some other material, frequently brick or clapboard. Often stone dressed the front facade of a dwelling that was constructed of another material. North Hills (1930) and Wier Avenue (1931), both in Brandywine Hundred, provide excellent examples of the style. Built by James and Robert Conly between 1931 and 1936, the houses on Wier Avenue in particular demonstrate how the same basic plan can be modified by varying materials and finishing details like door pediments and pilasters. The colonial revival style is found in other subdivisions as well where it was more often built in multiples rather than as an isolated dwelling.

Dutch Colonial

The Dutch colonial style, a picture of "simplicity and dignity"⁸³ according to an early plan book, presents the impression of a solid, safe home (Figure 13). The two-story, gambrel-roofed dwelling may be roughly dated by the orientation of the roof line in relation to the street. McAlester and McAlester assert that during the early period of the style's popularity, 1895 to 1915, houses were constructed as front-

⁷⁹Shrewesbury's *House Plans*, 98.

⁸⁰Stevenson and Jandl, "The Preston," 174.

⁸¹Schweitzer and Davis, Aladdin's "Edgewood," 24.

⁸²Wright, 242.

⁸³Shrewesbury's *House Plans*, 110.



Figure 13: Dutch Colonial, Gordon Heights.

gable structures and, that during the 1920s and 1930s, the houses were built with the gables to the sides.

In the side-gable version of the style, the long gambrel roof, which gives the building an impression of lowness, occasionally sweeps down and is supported by columns to form a porch across the entire front facade. There is frequently a continuous shed dormer across the entire width of the dwelling. The fenestration of the three- or five-bay house is usually symmetrical with the centrally-placed entry door sheltered by a hood roof over the stoop. The porch roof may also extend out from the front, to rest on supporting columns. Although the Dutch colonial may be of any material, in classic versions, it is frame, clad in white-painted clapboard, and decorated with dark green shutters and window boxes.

While the colonial revival style most frequently is found in multiples, the Dutch colonial houses are usually found as isolated examples. Individual houses of the style can be found in many of Wilmington's subdivisions, including Cragmere (1917) and Holly Oak (1918) in Brandywine Hundred and Boxwood (1910) in Christiana Hundred. All the examples are oriented so that the dwelling's roof line lies parallel to the street. These subdivisions, from a span of nearly 20 years, demonstrate a high degree of architectural variety and it is not uncommon for houses built during different decades to be found standing next to one another. This is the usual setting in which the Dutch colonial is found. However, Gordon Heights (Brandywine Hundred, 1905) is an exception to this pattern. There two groups of three Dutch colonial houses are found. One trio is on Hillcrest Avenue and, according to the building trade journal, *Four-One-Two-One*, the dwellings were built by Jacob Wagner for James Conly in 1931.⁸⁴ The second group of three is nearby on Brandywine Boulevard.

Side-Gable Cottage

The inexpensive and simply-designed side-gable cottage provided the basis for later adaptation as the Cape Cod (Figure 14). So plain that the style lacks a distinctive name, it was nonetheless marketed by catalogue for approximately ten years, between 1915 and 1925. Sears, Roebuck and Company sold plans for one interpretation of the style from 1917 to 1922. Called "The Almo," the four-room house (no bath) was described as appealing "to the practical man of limited means."⁸⁵ It was priced between \$463 and \$1,052. The simplicity and modest expense associated with the style insured that its popularity would be rekindled and the style re-emerged as a frequently-built type in the 1940s. The publishers of *Your Home Planned for Today and Tomorrow* prefaced their 1947 book of plans for side-gable houses by proclaiming the dwellings' "modest cost, yet delightful livability."⁸⁶

⁸⁴*Four-One-Two-One*, April, 1931, 5.

⁸⁵Stevenson and Jandl, 89.

⁸⁶*Your Home Planned for Today and Tomorrow*, introduction n.p.



Figure 14: Side-gable Cottage, Idela.

Built most often with three-bays, the one-story dwelling is generally of frame with clapboard siding. The roof has an average pitch, lacks any exaggerated over-hanging eaves, and is unadorned by dormers. Fenestration may be either symmetrical or asymmetrical and the ornamentation of the entry door varies. In some versions, there is no porch or roof protecting the door. In other cases, a shed- or flat-roofed porch with columns or a cross-gable hood shelters the front stoop. The style also was produced in a two-story adaptation around the same time. Like the more common one-story version, it is notable for simplicity of style and lack of decoration. It follows the same pattern of design, with three bays, plain roof, and frame construction.

The side-gable cottage is found in many of Wilmington's subdivisions, but its appearance in Idela along Maryland Avenue (1924) warrants notice. There three frame versions of the style were built side-by-side. The houses are remarkably similar in their size and massing, but each is quite individual in detail. One is a plain, three-bay version of the style with shutters at the windows and a centrally-placed cross-gable extension in which the entry door is located. The second is a four-bay interpretation, asymmetrical in design, with minimal decoration. The third is the same size as its fellows but has been divided into five bays with a central entry door flanked by pairs of evenly-spaced windows, that are decorated with shutters and window boxes. The same style appears in Swanwyck (Christiana Hundred, 1938) in two versions, one in brick and the other frame with brick facing on the lower part of the front facade. Identical copies of each version are constructed along entire streets.

Cape Cod Cottage

The Cape Cod Cottage, often called Cape Cod Colonial⁸⁷ during its greatest popularity in the 1930s, is a transformation of the side-gable cottage (Figure 15). The one-and-a-half story dwelling is most often three-bays wide and is made distinctive by two, sometimes three, gable dormers that pierce the fairly steeply-pitched roof. Usually the Cape Cod is of frame construction with clapboard exterior, although brick or stucco are also used. The dwelling is generally symmetrical, with the central entry flanked by a pair of windows on either side. The entry door itself is ornamented with pediment and pilasters and occasionally with a transom light above and side lights. Traditionally, the style is painted white with shutters of a contrasting color.

Individual examples of the Cape Cod constructed of a variety of materials are found in many Wilmington subdivisions. Introduced in the 1930s, it remained popular into the 1940s and several versions from that decade survive. In Bellemoor (Christiana Hundred, 1911), there are six identical Cape Cod style houses on Reemer Road. According to the Sanborn maps of the period, the dwellings were built between 1937 and 1942. They are of frame construction and one of the three bays of the lower story is used as a built-in garage rather than for living space. Elmhurst (1918) and Lyndalia (1920), both in

⁸⁷Schweitzer and Davis, Plate 9; Stevenson and Jandl, "The Gordon," 149.



Figure 15: Cape Cod Cottage, Edgemoor Terrace.

Christiana Hundred along Maryland Avenue, have multiple copies of the same brick Cape Cod house built probably in the 1940s.

However, the most intense use of the style was in Brandywine Hundred's Edgemoor Terrace (1939) where a brick version of the Cape Cod was used for a large number of dwellings. Designed with the traditional three bays and two gable dormers in the roof, the house also had an attached single-car garage. To vary the appearance along a block of houses, the developer rotated some of the buildings by 90° so that the dwelling design was transformed from a side-gable to a front-gable plan and the dormers, rather than looking out over the front of the house, were oriented toward the neighboring house to the side.

Front-Gable Cottage

The front-gable cottage was another plain, inexpensive dwelling style popular in the early years of the twentieth century (Figure 16). Marketed by Sears between 1908 and 1916,⁸⁸ the one-and-a-half-story dwelling has two or three bays. The roof, which has an average pitch, is occasionally broken by a modest cross-gable dormer. Most commonly of frame construction with a clapboard exterior, the house also may be of concrete masonry with stucco or brick exterior. The entry door is often sheltered by a porch that may extend across part or all of the front facade.

The earliest versions of the style are noteworthy for their lack of decoration. In the 1920s, Sears marketed a larger version of the style. The later adaptation is two stories in height, has over-hanging eaves supported by brackets, and is more highly decorated, using ornamental shingles on the exterior and classical columns as porch supports. These later interpretations of the style also occasionally have substantial cross-gables which intersect the main block of the dwelling creating an "X" configuration.

Many Wilmington subdivisions have interpretations of the front-gable cottage, but almost all are the more modest one-and-a-half-story version. Richardson Park (1904) and Ashley (1909), on opposite sides of Maryland Avenue, have a number of the dwellings in their simplest form. On Elsmere Street in Richardson Park, for example, there are five identical versions of the style, each with a double window in the gable end of the upper story and a shed-roofed porch across the front. Minquadale (New Castle Hundred, 1917) also has a rich collection of the front-gable houses.

English Cottage/Tudor Cottage

Popular from the mid-1920s through the 1930s, the versatile English cottage or Tudor cottage style has been described as "suggesting substantial, comfortable living."⁸⁹ The irregularly massed houses appear in one-story, one-and-a-half-story, and two-story versions but all present the same basic image (Figure 17). The front of the side-gable dwelling displays a substantial cross-gable with a steeply-

⁸⁸Stevenson and Jandl, 56-59.

⁸⁹*Shrewsbury's House Plans*, 120.



Figure 16: Front-Gable Cottage, Minquadale.



Figure 17: English/Tudor Cottage, Edgewood Hills.

pitched, asymmetric roof that extends toward the center line of the building. The entry door is located within the cross-gable under the shelter of the sweeping roof. There is rarely a porch or hood over the entry door, although occasionally the door may be recessed so that it nestles in a protective niche. Frequently, the exterior chimney for the house's fireplace is also placed at the front of the dwelling adjacent to the cross-gable.

The high, steep roof of the dwelling itself matches the pitch of the cross-gable. Dormers of a variety of styles--gable, hipped, shed--are frequently provide light to the upper floor. Various materials are used in the construction and exterior of the English/Tudor cottage and the exterior materials themselves often serve as important decoration. Frame versions of the style may be clad in ornamental shingle, brick versions may have stucco and half-timbering to highlight the second floor, and brick and stucco have been used to achieve other interpretations.

As appears to be the case with the Cape Cod style, the English/Tudor cottage continued to be popular long after it was first introduced in the 1920s. Fredericks Property (Christiana Hundred, 1911), Fern Hook (New Castle Hundred, 1920), and Glen Berne Estates (Christiana Hundred, 1946) all have small, single editions of the dwelling. Blue Rock Manor (1940) on Concord Pike presents a unique interpretation of the design. The sideways sweep of the cross-gable roof is truncated by the roof of the dwelling which pushes forward and down toward the front of the building. The chimney is on the front facade of the dwelling but in the middle of the cross gable, rather than next to it. The interesting building lines give the street a lively appearance as the design is repeated in approximately a dozen houses.

Spanish Revival

Found in a variety of forms, this style is known by a variety of names: Pueblo style,⁹⁰ Mission style,⁹¹ Spanish Revival,⁹² Mission Revival,⁹³ and Spanish Eclectic.⁹⁴ Its popularity comes from substantial favorable attention in the 1920s, not the least of which was supplied when the Santa Fe Railroad adopted the style as the company's official architecture.⁹⁵

One or one-and-a-half stories in height, the Spanish revival dwelling is irregularly massed and has a red tile roof that is either flat or has only a shallow pitch (Figure 18). Of concrete masonry construction and clad in stucco, the house may be either a side-gable or front-gable structure and often has arched rather than squared doorways, irregularly placed windows, and visible, heavy beams. Frequently the

⁹⁰Howard, 142.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Schweitzer and Davis, 218.

⁹³Ibid., 219.

⁹⁴McAlester and McAlester, 417.

⁹⁵Schweitzer and Davis, 219.



Figure 18: Spanish Revival, Villa Monterey.

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sheer massing and shape of the house serves as its decoration, although decorative wrought iron is frequently applied for ornamentation.

While an isolated example of the Spanish revival style can be found in Eastlawn (Brandywine Hundred, 1917), it is found in the greatest concentration in Villa Monterey. Claude Banta laid out the subdivision in 1923 with the hope of building 350 houses in the style. Only twelve of the dwellings were ever built. Arranged around a grassy court, they were constructed of concrete block, finished with stucco and painted different pastel colors (Figure 19). While the editors of *One-Two-One-Four* admitted that Banta had a good location on Philadelphia Pike and that his work was well done, they also warned that "it takes courage to do anything different in Delaware."⁹⁶ After the initial dwellings were in place, the balance of the subdivision was given over to architecture more traditional to Wilmington subdivisions, primarily bungalows and colonial revival houses.

Modern/International

Dating from the 1920s, the modern/international style gives the visual impression of a solid, starkly plain, irregularly massed box studded with generous amount of glass (Figure 20). The dwelling may be one or two stories in height, although two stories is more common. Constructed of concrete masonry clad in stucco, the house has a flat roof and asymmetrical design. It is unusual for the modern/international style house to have a porch, but shelter over the entry door is often provided by the upper story projecting over the lower story. Casement windows, flush with the outside wall, are frequently installed at the corners of the building to form a corner of glass.

The construction of the modern/international style in Wilmington subdivisions is similar to the construction of Spanish revival architecture. There are a few isolated examples but only one concentration of the style. Delwood (1941) in Brandywine Hundred is a subdivision built along a single, dead-end street. Of the 20 dwellings on the street, 19 are identical renditions of a diminutive international style house. Built of coursed stone, one-story in height, and with a flat roof, each dwelling has a single-car attached garage and casement windows, both in the front facade and forming one of the front corners of the structure. While some of the buildings have had casement windows replaced by other styles, the overall appearance of the street is one of uniform, low-lying houses.

Ranch Style

The ranch style originated in California in the 1930s and became increasingly popular during the 1940s, particularly in the western United States. The one-story dwelling has strong horizontal lines and is laid out most often like an "L", with two-thirds of the structure made up of a long block parallel to the street and the balance consisting of an extension which is the short arm of the "L", reaching toward the street at one end. The asymmetrically massed dwelling may include one or more picture windows and often also

⁹⁶*One-Two-One-Four*, November, 1925, 1.



Figure 19: Corinne Court, Villa Monterey.

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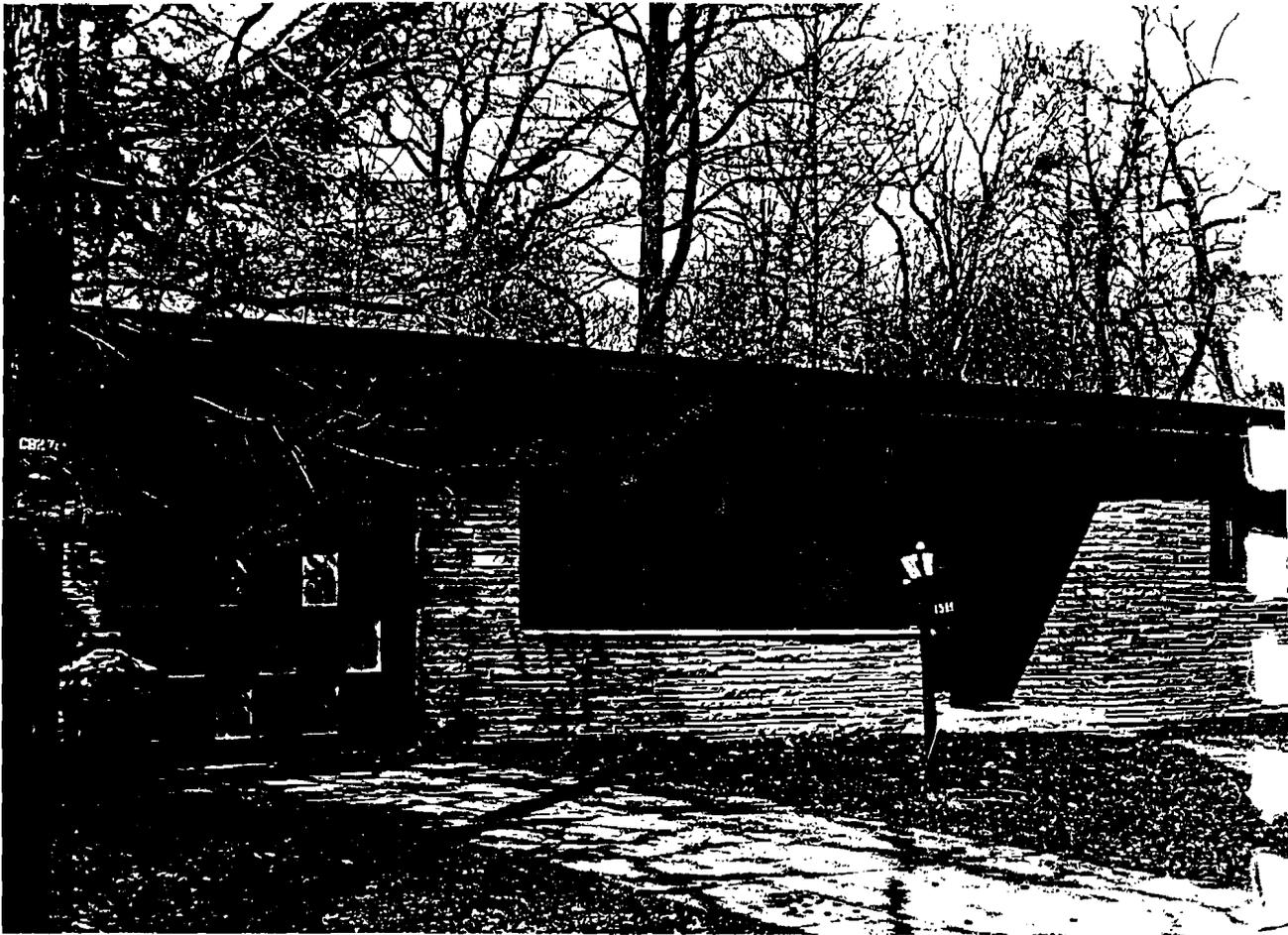


Figure 20: Modern/International, Delwood.

has a porch or patio area at the rear of the house, a carry-over from the style's western/Spanish origins. The low-pitched roof, which may be hipped or gable, generally has noticeably overhanging eaves. The dwelling usually provides for automobile storage in a built-in garage or a carport.

Although the ranch style enjoyed great popularity in western areas of the country prior to mid-century, it was not widely built in Delaware until after 1950. The earliest examples found in Wilmington subdivisions date from the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Wilmington's "Special" Styles

An examination of the literature on suburban housing styles does not encompass all the housing found in Wilmington's subdivisions. Aside from the anticipated dwellings that are so unique that they defy classification, there are styles which occur in sufficient numbers to require comment.

Building on Wilmington's long experience with and tradition of rowhouses, some early developers carried the urban style to the suburbs. Penn-Rose (Brandywine Hundred, 1903), for example, has two blocks that are occupied by rows of contiguous dwellings. The urban duplex, made up of paired narrow, deep structures suitable for a narrow city building lot, is found in Brandywine Hundred's Montrose (1902, now Bellefonte) and Ashley (Christiana Hundred, 1909). Later versions of the double house were built in Lancaster Village (1938) and Pleasant Hills (1940), both in Christiana Hundred. While the majority of suburban housing adheres to the expected pattern of the single-family, detached dwelling, there are examples of suburban houses that are semi-detached dwellings.

Location Patterns for Property Types Related to Architectural Style

Several property types are widely distributed in substantial numbers throughout the Wilmington subdivisions. The early twentieth century subdivisions all have versions of the bungalow and most have adaptations of the four-square style house. In both cases, the plans or materials for the houses were easily accessible. With the case of the **bungalow**, the modest price of the dwelling added to its attraction as did the flexibility of its design. It is reasonable to expect that in any subdivision planned from 1880 through 1930, that some interpretations of the bungalow style would be found.

While the **four-square** was more expensive than the bungalow, its efficient use of space and solid, safe appearance made it attractive to larger families. The ready availability of plans for the houses coupled with the availability of milled lumber to add decorative details to the plain facade insured that the style would appeal to certain suburban home buyers. As with the bungalow, one can expect to find four-square dwellings widely distributed in the Wilmington subdivisions from 1880 to 1920, although not in as great numbers as the bungalows.

Some houses in the **colonial revival** style will be found in these same early subdivisions, because the construction of housing in the developments from the first years of the century took place

Physical Characteristics of Dwellings

over several decades. In the older subdivisions, the design may be expected to occur in individual dwellings, but in subdivisions from the 1920s and 1930s one can expect to find multiple versions of the colonial revival house. As the style replaced the bungalow and four-square as the most popular design, it was built in large numbers. Thus a subdivision like North Hills, laid out in 1930, became the site of several variations of the style.

Much the same may be said of the Cape Cod design. Although the simple, inexpensive style will be found in older areas, it is more likely to be found in later subdivisions which were being built during the 1920s and 1930s. The traditional style represented by the colonial revival and the Cape Cod enjoyed the favor of the FHA officials responsible for assisting in financing house building in the 1930s.⁹⁷ The agreeable appearance of the two styles linked to the availability of funding made it likely that they would flourish.

The side-gable and front-gable cottages were built in many suburban areas around Wilmington, but they are most likely to be found in subdivisions at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale. Different versions of both styles have been constructed during every decade from the turn of the century, sometimes in frame and sometimes in brick. The simple, unadorned dwelling has continued to be a mainstay of the building market because of the ease and relative cheapness of construction. The Minquadale is one of the subdivisions where the front-gable cottage is found in large numbers. This subdivision has very diverse architecture, partly due to the fact that it was opened for development in 1917. An examination of the types of dwellings constructed over each of the decades is likely to show that in each time period, the dwellings built were the styles that were least expensive to erect.

The Dutch colonial style and the English/Tudor cottage are not as prevalent as the others already discussed. In part, this is due to the impact of traditional taste in what homeowners were willing to buy. The case of Dutch colonial in Gordon Heights also suggests that one builder's decision to construct one or two houses of a style may have had an important influence. While most subdivisions have isolated examples of Dutch Colonial houses, within approximately six square blocks in Gordon Heights there are one set of three Dutch colonial houses on Hillcrest Avenue, a second set of three on Brandywine Boulevard, a pair of houses on Hillcrest Avenue, and a single house in the style on Lore Avenue. It is possible that a single builder provided the example necessary to prompt other contractors into using the style as well. While fieldwork has revealed only isolated individual examples of the English/Tudor cottage but it is possible that a similar pattern will be found for the construction of multiples of that style as well based on the initial impulse of a single builder.

The examples of Spanish revival and international style architecture remain few in number partly because the styles themselves were too radical for conservative Delaware tastes, as the editors of *One-Two-One-Four* suggested. In addition, the impracticality of a flat roof in Wilmington's climate certainly

⁹⁷Wright, 242.

had to have militated against the style as well. Although additional interpretations of both styles may be found, it is likely that they will be isolated and rare.

Criteria for Evaluation of Significance: Dwellings

The primary criterion for determining a dwelling's eligibility for inclusion in the historic context for suburbanization is that the building was constructed in an area that meets the definition of subdivision as established by the context. To satisfy the definition, a subdivision must be a residential community established during the specified time period, distant from the center of Wilmington, but tied to it by employment. This bars from consideration worker housing built for employees of firms whose manufacturing sites also had a suburban location. Likewise, it excludes isolated dwellings that were built in a geographic location that was distant from the city but which were not part of a specifically planned set of streets and building lots. A dwelling may be eligible for inclusion as part of an historic district or as one building in a multiple property nomination, but in either case it must be located in a subdivision.

The physical characteristics for each suburban dwelling style have been itemized above. To be eligible for consideration, a house must have most of the basic features of the style:

- A **bungalow** must be a one- or one-and-a-half story house with a low pitched roof, deep, over-hanging eaves, and a broad porch dressing the front facade. The consideration of such a dwelling is further strengthened if the eaves are supported by brackets and if there are bay windows included in the design.

- A **four-square house** must be a two- or two-and-a-half story, hipped-roof house of a simple square or nearly-square both in plan and elevation. It should be a plain, substantial building with a porch across the front. Its eligibility is strengthened if it has dormers as an additional feature.

- To be considered eligible, a **colonial revival house** should present a balanced impression. It should be a two- or two-and-a-half story, five-bay side-gable dwelling, usually with symmetrical fenestration. While the materials may vary, a colonial revival dwelling's eligibility will be strengthened if it follows traditional decorating conventions with classically-designed ornamentation around the entry door and window shutters.

- The **Dutch colonial** must be a three- or five-bay, gambrel-roofed dwelling of two stories. While the house may be either side- or front-gabled in design, the style should display the typical shed dormer across the width of the building. The Dutch colonial should have a solid, substantial profile.

- The **side-gable cottage** must be a simple, modest dwelling of one- or one-and-a-half stories and generally three bays. The building should be oriented, as the name suggests, so the roof line runs parallel to the street and the gables are on the sides. The roof must be of average pitch and the projections of the eaves shallow. If there are dormers into the upper floor, they must be of the simplest style as must any porch used to ornament the front of the dwelling.

• The **Cape Cod cottage** is a more complex version of the side-gable cottage. The simplicity of the side-gable cottage must show increased ornamentation with the Cape Cod, most notably supplied by two or three gable dormers in the steeply-pitched roof. The eligibility of a house of this style is strengthened if the dwelling is symmetrical in design, has traditional classical decoration around the door, and has shutters at the windows.

• To be considered eligible, the **front-gable cottage** must adhere to standards of simplicity similar to the side-gable cottage. It must be one- or one-and-a-half stories in height and constructed with two or three bays. It should be oriented so that the roof line is perpendicular to the street and the gable forms the front facade of the building. The roof must have an average pitch and may be broken with a modest cross-gable dormer. The entry door should be sheltered by a front porch.

• The **English/Tudor cottage** allows for substantial variety in design, but to be eligible for consideration must meet certain basic criteria. The dwelling should be irregularly massed and may be one-, one-and-a-half-, or two-story in elevation. Side-gable in orientation, the style has a substantial cross-gable with a steeply-pitched roof which extends from the central block of the building. The entry door should be located in the cross-gable; the exterior chimney for the dwelling's fireplace is frequently placed next to the cross-gable. The house itself should have a steep roof, often pierced by dormers.

• The **Spanish revival** house must be an irregularly-massed dwelling of concrete masonry construction clad in stucco. It may be one or one-and-a-half stories with a flat or shallow roof of red tile. The building may have either a side-gable or front-gable orientation, but its eligibility is strengthened if it has irregularly placed windows, arched rather than square doorways, and visible, heavy beams.

• To be eligible as an example of the **modern/international style**, a house must present a visual impression of a solid, plain box with ribbons of windows in bands around the structure. The concrete masonry building may be one or two stories in height and must have a flat roof and asymmetrical design. The casement windows must be flush with the outside wall; the dwelling's eligibility is strengthened if windows are joined in such a way as to give the building corners of glass.

Once a house is determined eligible under the physical criteria, it must also be evaluated for integrity and significance under the criteria established by the Secretary of the Interior. As noted in Chapter I, to be considered eligible for consideration for listing on the National Register, an historic resource must have not only the physical attributes discussed in Chapters II and III, but should also have at least one associative characteristic as identified in Chapters IV and V.

Criteria for Evaluation of Integrity: Dwellings

The Secretary's Standards specify seven areas to be considered when integrity is evaluated: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To be eligible for the National

Register under this context, a suburban dwelling must possess integrity in at least three of the seven categories:

1. Integrity of location means that the dwelling being considered is within a subdivision as defined by the context and that the dwelling sits where it was originally built. If it has been moved to its current site from elsewhere, it lacks integrity of location.

2. Integrity of design means that the dwelling adheres to the design standards identified with that particular dwelling style. It must follow the expected pattern in terms of size, number of stories, construction materials, massing of the building, shape and orientation of roof, and general appearance.

3. Integrity of setting means that the dwelling plays a significant role in illustrating the character of the subdivision at the time the dwelling was built.

4. Integrity of materials means that the original condition of a dwelling has remained largely unchanged. If massive alteration of the structure has occurred, such as replacing all the original windows with a markedly different style, the fabric of the dwelling may have been so changed that little integrity remains. Any apparent loss of integrity must be assessed in light of whether changes can be reversed. If original clapboard siding has been covered with vinyl siding, for example, and the original siding could be uncovered, the dwelling's integrity may not be irrevocably compromised.

5. Integrity of workmanship means that the building provides physical evidence of the crafts or techniques current at the time of its construction. In the case of suburban residential construction, this category may involve an examination of stone or brick work, of the application of pre-fabricated mill work, or of use of rough-cast concrete block in residential construction.

6. Integrity of feeling means that the dwelling is evocative of the period of which it was a part. A colonial revival house, for example, will have integrity of feeling if it calls to mind, by its balanced design and traditional appearance, the time during which it was built.

7. Integrity of association means that a direct and tangible link exists between the dwelling and some event or trend of events. A side-gable cottage, for instance, will have integrity of association if its construction and character can be linked to an important demographic trend such as the exodus of lower income workers from the city to a particular suburban development.