

## Our Architectural Heritage – Eclectic Houses

### Installment 1 of 3

by Patrick Jarosinski

The Victorian Period from 1860-1900 was the focus of the spring 2016 *Neighborhood NEWS* article about architectural styles in our neighborhoods. I will now begin my review of Eclectic houses, dating between 1880-1940, which feature traditional details and relatively pure copies of houses built in different European countries as well as in the Americas. There are many design styles during this period, so I will divide my article into multiple installments so as not to cause architectural fatigue.

Recall that I am relying on the main architectural categories listed in "A Field Guide to American Houses" by Virginia & Lee McAlester. The book describes the different styles and provides clear diagrams of the designs and design elements as well as photographs. The categories include: Folk houses (the earliest houses ca. 1920), Colonial houses (1600-1820), Romantic houses (1820-1880), Victorian houses (1860-1900), Eclectic houses (1880-1940) and Post-1940 houses.

The Eclectic Period includes Anglo-American, English, French and Mediterranean styles. The English, Anglo-American and French houses include Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Tudor, Chateausque, Beaux Arts and French Eclectic. The Mediterranean and Spanish houses include Italian Renaissance, Mission, Spanish Eclectic, Monterey and Pueblo Revival. These fashionable designs gained momentum in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Both frame and masonry construction methods were used. Inexpensive techniques were developed for creating thin veneer brick or stone, allowing these materials to be added to frame construction, imitating some of the most elegant and elaborate façades of Europe.

The Colonial Revival house is one of the most common within our neighborhoods. Colonial Revival



Photo #1

Colonial Revival home



Photo #2



Photo #3

refers to the rebirth of interest in early English and Dutch houses of the Atlantic seaboard, focusing on Georgian and Adam styles. Details of each are typically combined, hence the term 'eclectic.' A great example is the house in Photo #1, ca.1927, showcasing some of the most common identifying features: a symmetrical façade with a centered front door accentuated with a pediment supported by slender columns or pilasters, as seen in Photo #2, and double hung window sashes with multi-paned glazing balanced on either side, as seen in Photo #3. The gambrel roof, one of the most distinguishable roof types, has a rebirth (see page 9 of "Our Architectural Heritage — The Colonial Style" in the spring 2014 issue of *Neighborhood NEWS*). It is viewed as both an attractive and efficient design, using the full footprint of the second story.

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Photo #4

Other details of Colonial Revival houses include multiple hipped roof lines with exaggerated details, as seen on the house in Photos #4 and #5, ca.1927, and ganged or grouped windows (paired, tripled or bay-type). Ganged windows are seen in many, if not all, of the Eclectic design styles. Continuous roof dormers are also popular, as seen in Photo #6, as they serve to maximize the usable footprint on the second floor of a structure.



Photo #7



Photo #5



Photo #6

Four other Eclectic architectural styles (more commonly found in Guilford or Roland Park) are Chateausque 1880-1910, Beaux Arts 1885-1930, Tudor 1890-1940 and Neoclassical 1895-1950. The Chateausque house has steeply pitched roofs with many vertical elements such as spires and tur-



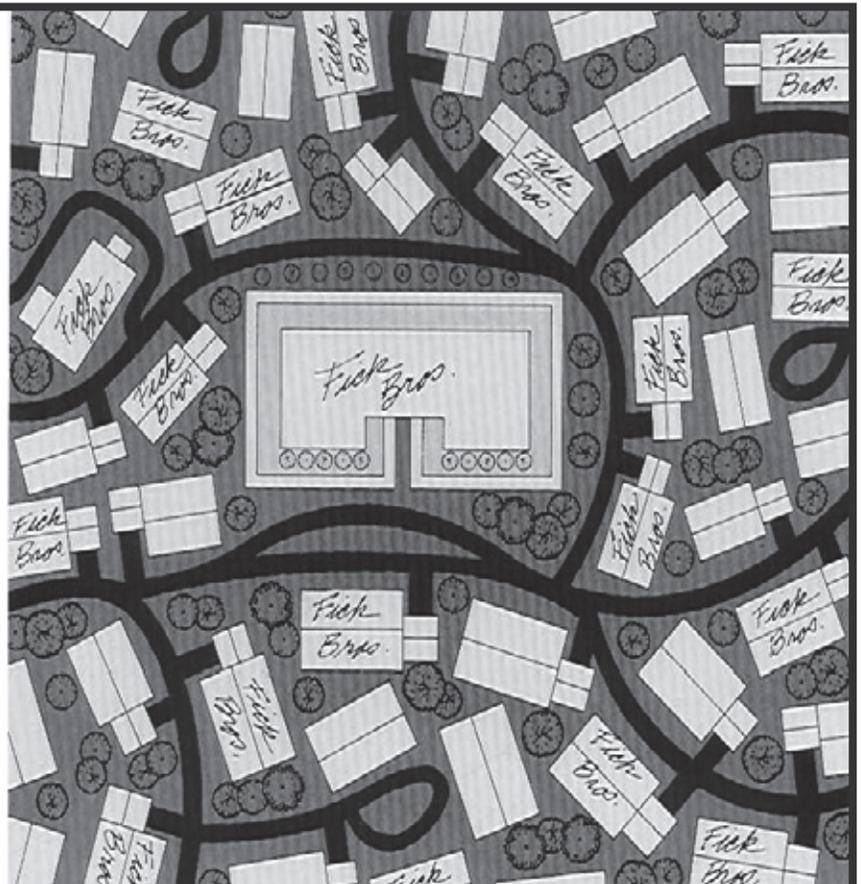
Photo #9

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Photo #8



Photo #10

rets and intricately shaped chimneys. The Beaux Arts house has a shallow pitched or flat roof, masonry walls, full symmetry and fanciful decorations,

typically in light-colored stone. The Neoclassical house has a full-height two-story porch with a roof supported by classical columns and full symmetry of door and windows on the façade. The Tudor house has steeply pitched roofs, gables on both the front and sides and decorative timber ornamentation, its most notable distinguishing feature. Although stucco, brick and stone cladding were prevalent in all of these houses, earlier structures were also built with wooden cladding.

The next style I will discuss in detail is the French Eclectic style, dating between 1915-1945. The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland area has some great examples as seen in the article's photographs. Like some of the other Eclectic styles, French Eclectic homes typically have tall, steeply-pitched roofs, but always hip-shaped without a dominant front-facing cross gable (a gable roof perpendicular to the main roof) as seen in Photo #7, ca.1923. The façade of this style, as seen in Photo #10, ca. 1933, can either be symmetrical (with or without wings on either side) or asymmetrical. These homes are always stone, brick, stucco or a combination. Please notice that the eaves (or roof overhangs) flare up as seen in Photo #12. This is very indicative of a French Eclectic house. You may also find, less frequently, this style featuring a tower at the intersection of two wings of the house.

The stately French Eclectic house boasts formal detailing such as the front door set in a simple but decorative limestone arched opening, as seen in Photo #8. Windows are typically casement style and constructed of metal, called leaded windows. You will at times find double hung windows resembling the English Georgian. The windows are either double wide (or in pairs 'French' style) as seen in Photo #12 or ganged in sets of three as seen in Photo #9. Full length casement windows (French doors) are often used as seen in Photo #10. These have become popular in all types of architecture today. The dormer window can either be circular, hipped, gabled or arched, as seen in Photo #12. This dormer is called a 'through-the-cornice' type, which creates a break of the roof line. What a great example of mixing two masonry types (stone and brick). Fanciful chimneys are also an identifying element. Notice the quoining detail (masonry blocks at the corner of a wall) at different intervals on the chimney as seen in Photo #11.



Photo #11



Photo #12

I hope you enjoyed this installment of our tour of Eclectic houses in our neighborhoods. We thank our members who have allowed us to showcase their houses. You can see most of these styles in the RRLR neighborhoods and surrounding areas. The next installment in this series will feature Mediterranean and Spanish houses from this period.

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