

Preserving Truman's heritage by preserving the character of his legendary, turn-of-the-century, Midwestern neighborhood begins with understanding the significance of its historic architecture. The quality and diversity of the buildings concentrated within the Truman District have been identified as defining elements of the area, both as the Harry S Truman National Historic Landmark District and the locally designated Truman Heritage District. Maintaining the integrity of this historic architecture, both individually and as a whole, is key to maintaining the integrity of the entire neighborhood.

The following list identifies those architectural styles most frequently represented in the Truman neighborhood, and the period in history during which these styles were most popular. The discussion of each style is meant to provide a brief historical sketch and to serve as a general guide for determining the built history of your property. Familiarity with the defining characteristics of each style will help property owners understand what design and material considerations are appropriate for a particular home or building based on its individual historic character.

Unfortunately, not every structure will fall neatly into one of the identified architectural style types. Historically it has been commonplace for a house's design to change along with the current fashion, and to hide or alter the predominant architectural style of older homes and buildings. Sometimes the only indications of a building's original style are in the floor plan, roof type, and minor decorative detailing. Sometimes elements of two or more styles have been combined, either originally or over a period of time, resulting in a confusing combination of architectural designs. If you find that you require additional help to identify the style of your historic home or building, City Historic Preservation Staff are available to assist you.

Italianate (1850-1885)



304 N. Delaware, c. 1853

Originating in England during the 18th century, the Italianate style belongs to a period in architectural history known as the Picturesque Movement. The primary focus of this movement was the creation of buildings and landscapes that enjoyed a certain artistic or picture-like quality. Italian farmhouses and country villas served as models for the movement, favored for their traditional display of square towers, rounded arch windows, low pitched roofs, and decorative eave brackets and cornice ornamentation. Largely popularized by the influential pattern books of Andrew Jackson Downing, by the mid-nineteenth century the Italianate style had become a fashionable residential and commercial style in America. In the Truman Heritage District many property owners discovered that these stylish, Italianate designs could easily be modified and adapted to suit their own personal tastes and construction budgets. A wide-range of interpretations of the Italianate style still exists throughout the neighborhood.

Defining Characteristics

- *Low-pitched, hipped roofs with wide eave overhangs*
- *Ornamental cornice and eave brackets*
- *Tall, narrow windows, commonly arched or curved at the top*
- *Decorative lintels above windows and doors*
- *Simple one story porches,*
- *Sometimes a square cupola or tower*

Queen Anne (1880-1910)



510 N. Delaware, c. 1885

Defining Characteristics

- *Asymmetrical facades and irregular floor-plans*
- *Steeply pitched, complex roof configuration, usually with front-facing gable*
- *Decorative wall surfaces created with patterned shingles & masonry*
- *Bay windows, towers, overhangs and wall projections used to avoid smooth wall surfaces*
- *Extensive one-story porches that usually wrap around at least one side wall*
- *Stained and leaded glass windows*

The Queen Anne style first reached America in the mid 1870s. Inspired by the late medieval manor houses of 15th, 16th and 17th century England, the first American interpretations of the Queen Anne used half-timbering and patterned masonry in the English Tudor tradition. By the 1880s however, the influence of American spindle work was dominating Queen Anne design. Pattern books and railroad delivery of pre-cut ornamental details were responsible for popularizing the style through the turn-of-the-century. A period of free-classic adaptation in the 1890's revived the use of classical detailing, and wall surfaces began to take on smoother appearances that used fewer types of materials and less pattern work. The Victorian era experienced during the late 1800s brought times of great prosperity to many parts of the country. A large number of spectacular Queen Anne homes were constructed in Independence, giving it the name of "the Royal Suburb" (to Kansas City). Some of the most notable examples that have survived are located within the Truman Neighborhood.

American Foursquare (1905-1920)



618 N. Union, c. 1905

Defining Characteristics

- *Boxlike, two-story rectangular plan*
- *Hipped roof with wide-eave overhangs*
- *Front-facing dormer usually incorporated into roof structure*
- *Full-width, one-story front porch supported by simple round columns or square posts*
- *Upper and lower stories usually clad with different types of materials*

The American Foursquare developed as a popular house design during the post-Victorian era that began c. 1905. This period in architectural history, which was popularized by Frank Lloyd Wright and a group of Chicago architects known as the Prairie School, is characterized by an appreciation for simplicity, functionality and economy of building. The Foursquare, which is the most common vernacular form of the Prairie Style, was designed to appeal to the practical but stylish tastes of middle-class homeowners. In the Truman Neighborhood, the popularity experienced by the American Foursquare style just after the turn-of-the-century is evident. Existing examples range from modest, unadorned frame boxes; to more elaborate interpretations like the “Kansas City Shirtwaist”, which used brick or stone cladding on the first story and wood shingles or clapboard on the second.

Craftsman Bungalow (c. 1905-1940)



403 N. River, c. 1920

As early as 1880 the 19th century European term “bungalow”, meaning a simple one-story dwelling with a wide porch suitable for use as a retreat, was being used in the U.S. to discuss architectural style, economical building and the aspiration of Americans to return to a simpler life. It was not until c. 1905 however, when introduced as a new house type of the Craftsman-style, that the bungalow began its period of widespread growth. The Craftsman tradition emphasized the appeal of artistic yet respectable houses that are both cozy and informal, yet modern and efficient in their built-in conveniences. The bungalow was chosen as a fitting model for conveying these Craftsman principles, and at the same time emerged as a symbol of the American dream. Craftsman bungalows became the first stylized architecture in the U.S. to be designed specifically with the middle-class in mind and were successfully marketed as an ideal starter home for the ambitious American family. Popular publications like *The Craftsman*, *Bungalow Magazine* and the Sears, Roebuck and Co. mail order catalogues led the way during a building boom that lasted into the 1930s, and resulted in both the platting and construction of bungalow subdivisions, and the sporadic infill of older neighborhoods like the Truman District.

Defining Characteristics

- Usually 1 or 1 1/2 stories in height
- Commonly clad with stone, brick or stucco
- Low-pitched, front or side-gabled roofs
- Wide eave overhangs, typically with exposed rafters and triangular knee braces
- Full-width porches have heavy, square tapered columns and piers that extend to the ground

Spanish Eclectic (c. 1915-1940)



310 N. Delaware, c. 1930

The California-Pacific Exposition of 1915, celebrated in San Diego to mark the instatement of the Panama Canal, has been credited with providing the inspiration for revival of Spanish architecture in America. After the exposition ended, enlivened architects across the country began to draw from Spain's broad range of rich architectural traditions, beginning what is referred to as the Spanish Eclectic period. Although most common in the southwestern section of the U.S. and Florida, examples of these early Spanish style homes and buildings can be found scattered throughout the States. The Truman neighborhood boasts three outstanding examples of Spanish Eclectic designs, one of which has been recognized in *The Field Guide to American Houses*, written by Virginia & Lee McAlester.

Defining Characteristics

- *Low-pitched roof with little or no eave overhang*
- *Red tile roof covering is typical*
- *One or more arches placed above entry and prominent windows*
- *Walls are often stuccoed and sometimes textured*
- *Decorative window grills*

Architectural Styles (cont.)

Colonial Revival (1890-1955)



632 N. Union, c. 1910

Defining Characteristics

- *generally two stories, with symmetrical facade*
- *typically have side-gable or gambrel roofs*
- *dominant entrance, usually with a decorative pediment supported by slender columns or pilasters*
- *sidelights and fanlight surround entry*
- *windows are often paired and have double-hung, multi-pane sashes*

Beginning with Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition of 1876, Americans began to experience a renewed interest in their Colonial heritage. Trends in modern building design fell under the influence of early American English and Dutch houses constructed in the Colonies during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Recognized as the New World interpretation's of Georgian and Adam style architecture brought from Europe, Colonial buildings provided the logical design for displaying America's revived sense of patriotism. The first attempts at Colonial Revival architecture merely adapted decorative elements and design characteristics from Colonial structures to fit the size and scale of the still popular Victorian era. It was not until the first decade of the twentieth century, with the widespread distribution of photographs, pattern books and periodicals, that the revival began to encourage historically accurate copies using correct proportions and details of Colonial architecture. The depression of the 1930s and post World War II fashion resulted in new designs that barely hinted at their Colonial influences. In the Truman Heritage District, Colonial Revival architecture was influential both after the turn-of-the-century, and during the postwar period.

Tudor Revival (1900-1950)



615 N. Union, c. 1940

Defining Characteristics

- Steeply pitched roof, usually side-gabled
- Facade dominated by one or more prominent gables
- Brick, stone and stucco veneers and decorative half-timbering common
- Tall narrow windows, grouped with multi-pane glazing
- Massive chimneys, with decorative chimney pots on each flue

The first American houses to be constructed in the Tudor Revival style were patterned closely after elaborate late Medieval and Renaissance architecture popular in 15th, 16th and early 17th century England. Favored for its association with the tastes of England's wealthiest class of citizens, Americans found that solid masonry construction and the unique detailing of the Tudor Revival were ideal for creating the picturesque qualities and magnificent spaces demanded by the Victorian life-style of the late 1800s. After the turn of the century, the return of Americans to a simpler life resulted in modest interpretations of the Tudor style that incorporated characteristic details like steeply pitched gables and half-timbering with more traditional frame house forms. Examples of the Tudor Revival that exist in the Truman Neighborhood were primarily constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, during the height of the style's popularity. Previously a style enjoyed by only well-to-do families, new technologies in brick and stone veneering made the traditional Tudor Revival home feasible for middle-class Americans as well. The charm of Tudor architecture has remained timeless since the 1930s and continues to experience periods of revival in modern home building even today.

Architectural Styles (cont.)

Modern Movement (c. 1935-Present)

The Modern Movement first appeared in the late 1930s with the Minimal Traditionalist house. This style, which has been characterized as a loose interpretation of Tudor architecture, can be recognized by dominant front facing gables, massive chimneys, low pitched roofs with very little overhang and a lack of detailing. Minimal Traditionalist remained the dominant Postwar trend until it was replaced by the Ranch style in the 1950s.

The “rambling” ranch house is a one-story broad faced building, with a low pitched roof structure, whose widespread development has been attributed in part to our increasing reliance on the automobile. During the 50s and 60s towns that once relied primarily on streetcars and buses for their transportation needs traded in their traditional compact city lots and houses for sprawling Ranch designs situated on generous pieces of land. The appeal of the Ranch house was further enhanced by the convenience of having the trademark built-in garage.

Split-level houses were also popular during the 1950s as a multistory alternative to the one-story ranch. Easily recognized as having three levels of interior space, the Split-level home answered a perceived need for American’s to have three types of living space: noisy living space for the garage and TV room is provided on the lower level, quiet living space is provided on a mid-level wing, and sleeping space is located on the upper level.

While other architectural designs have since been constructed within the Truman neighborhood, the Minimal Traditionalist, Ranch and Split-level represent the dominant Modern styles used for infill during the Truman era. Although the value of these young buildings is sometimes not easily recognized, it is important to acknowledge that they also contribute to the significance of the neighborhood because of their association with the life and times of our former President.

Minimal Traditionalist



Ranch Style



Split-Level