### Architectural Styles in Utah Background for Teachers

Neighborhoods are our most immediate communities. Neighborhoods are defined, as much as anything else, by the houses in them. And houses, in turn, are defined by their architectural styles. Different styles affect the way that people interact with, use, and feel about their houses.

# **Background**

At the outset, it's important to note that each period of architecture contains several different styles that share certain qualities and are associated with that period. For example, Queen Anne, Eastlake, Shingle, and Stick are all styles of the Victorian period. But for the sake of simplicity, the various styles of each period will be referred to collectively. So the term "style" in this lesson plan really refers to several styles associated with a given period. Students looking for further explorations may be encouraged to learn about the different styles associated with a particular period.

This lesson plan will cover eight styles of architecture commonly found in Utah houses:

Pioneer

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- Victorian
- Early Twentieth Century

- Period Revival
- Early Modern
- Post-War Modern

These different styles of architecture reflect different social, economic, and cultural trends and influences. So the design of houses, by reflecting prevailing trends and influences, has much to tell us about how people lived in various historical periods.

The architectural styles in this plan are differentiated by the following characteristics:

- <u>Shape:</u> (orientation, vertical v. horizontal): Does a house feel taller ("stretched up") or longer ("stretched out")?
- <u>Balance/Symmetry</u>: Does a house feel balanced (even) or imbalanced (uneven)? If you divided the façade in two, would the two sides match? Are they "mirror images"?
- <u>Lines</u> (straight v. curved): Are the lines of the house straight with right angles or are there a curves and different angles?
- <u>Materials</u>: Is the house constructed primarily of one material or is it made of several different materials?
- Roof: What shape is the roof? What is its "pitch": Is it steep or shallow or even flat?
- <u>Windows</u>: What shapes and sizes are the windows? Do they have lots of panes of glass (lights-)" or are they basically just glass?

- <u>Entry</u>: Where is the main entry located? In the middle of the façade or to the side? Is it plain or elaborate? Does it include any type of porch or stoop?
- <u>Ornamentation</u>: Is the ornamentation fancy and intricate or is there relatively little decoration (or none at all)?

Sometimes, discussions of style are complicated by the fact that many houses have been built in an "eclectic" style. That is, they incorporate design elements from different periods or from different styles within a period. For example, a house that is considered "Victorian Eclectic" may contain elements from Queen Anne, Eastlake, and other Victorian styles. And it's not unusual to see houses whose design bridges periods. For example, it's not uncommon to see a house that incorporates basic elements from the Pioneer Period with details from the Victorian Period. As you discuss architectural styles with students, make them aware that they may see "eclectic" homes in their neighborhood.

People who study architecture sometimes refer to "styles" and "types" of houses separately. "Style" refers to the architectural details and ornamentation applied to the outside of a house's basic structure. "Type" refers to the basic structure layout (floorplan). Certain house types (e.g. Cross Wing) can be constructed in different styles. This lesson plan focuses on "styles" common in Utah neighborhoods but will also refer to several important "types".

The following information outlines the primary styles found in Utah neighborhoods. The outline is organized by architectural period, from the oldest (Pioneer) to the newest (Post-War Modern). At the beginning of each period overview is a list of the primary styles associated with that period. Talking about architectural styles by period allows for connections to other history and social studies topics of the same general timeframes. For example, a discussion about Utah settlement in the late 1800s could include a discussion of architectural styles from that period and what those styles may say about how people lived.

# Pioneer Period (1847 – 1890)

# Common Styles of the Pioneer Period



Federal



Georgian



#### Greek Revival

#### About the Pioneer Style

- Pioneer styles were based on early Greek, Roman, and English architecture. Houses built in the Pioneer styles often told others that the owner was wealthy and of high social standing.
- This style was carried through from colonial America and was prevalent in the U.S. during the middle part of the nineteenth Century.
- Houses built in the Pioneer styles feel formal and austere.

#### The Pioneer Style in Utah

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- The Pioneer styles were brought to Utah by Mormon settlers and was prominent in Utah until the mid-late nineteenth Century.
- Because living conditions in Utah were more humble than in other parts of the country, Pioneer style houses in Utah often were often smaller and simpler than those found elsewhere.

- Builders' handbooks such as *The Practical House Carpenter*, published in 1841, may also have influenced builders and craftsmen in Utah to build in this style.
- Pioneer styles can also be found to have influence from other countries as early Utah settlers brought traditional building skills with them from their homelands.

#### What to Look For

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- Shape: The house feels stretched out. It's rectangular with one long side and one short side.
- Balance/Symmetry: The façade is commonly symmetrical. The front door is usually in the middle of the facade with evenly spaced windows on either side.
- Lines: Walls and details emphasize straight lines and right angles. If there are any curves, they're found in arches above the windows.
- Materials: There is little variety in materials—usually just masonry (brick, stone, or adobe) for the main house portion, and wood (window frames, doors, and trim) for the details.
- Roof: The roof has gables and a shallow pitch.
- Windows: The windows are tall with numerous "lights" (panes).
- Entries: The front door is on the long side of the house and is often highlighted by sidelights.
- Ornamentation: The front facade is relatively plain with little if any ornamentation.

# Victorian Period (1880-1910)

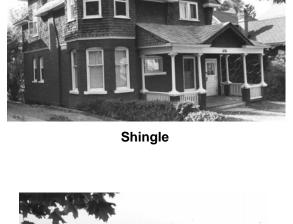
# Common Styles of the Victorian Period



Queen Anne



Eastlake



Victorian Gothic



Victorian Eclectic



Stick



# About the Victorian Style

- By the late nineteenth Century, the Pioneer styles came to be seen as artificial an unnatural. The Victorian style, by contrast, was considered to be more natural and more honest.
- Victorian architecture focused on the textures and forms of the materials, displaying high craftsmanship. The goal was to express a playfulness and spontaneity rather than austere control.
- Significant changes in architects' education affected the sophistication and quality of design, and numerous magazines and stylebooks helped make the Victorian style popular.
- In addition, the availability of mass-produced millwork and decorative ornamentation promoted the stylistic changes (the intricacy of detailing) emphasized in Victorian architecture.
- Houses built in the Victorian style feel exuberant—sometimes a little "over the top."

#### The Victorian Style in Utah

- As Utah became less isolated in the late nineteenth Century, the Victorian style popular in other parts of the country appeared in and around Salt Lake City and eventually spread to rural Utah, as materials and information became more widely disseminated.
- The proliferation of the Victorian style coincided with periods of great economic growth in Utah and a substantial increase in the state's population.
- During the Victorian period, the "Cross Wing" became the principle house type built in Utah. Cross Wing houses were built with two wings placed at right angles to form a "T" or an "L". Cross Wing houses were popular during the Victorian period, because they expressed asymmetry, and they were ornamented according to various Victorian styles.

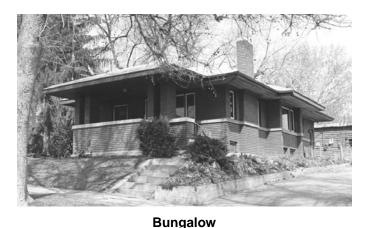
#### What to Look For

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- Shape: The house feels stretched up, often with towers or turrets pointing to the sky.
- Balance/Symmetry: The façade is asymmetrical.
- Lines: The lines are irregular, with lots of curves and variety of angles.
- Materials: Materials are often varied to create a diversity of textures.
- Roof: The roof has a steep pitch.
- Windows: Windows are commonly "double-hung" (one "sash" over one "sash") and have few lights.
- Entry: The main entry is usually to one side (as exemplified by the "Cross Wing" house type popular during this period).
- Ornamentation: The façade is highly textured and decorated with intricate ornamentation. (The term "gingerbread" is often associated with Victorian houses.) The house may be brightly colored and/or multi-colored.

# Early Twentieth Century Period (1900 – 1925)

# Common Styles of the Early Twentieth Century Period





Arts and Crafts



#### **Prairie School**

#### About the Early Twentieth Century Style

- At the turn of the Twentieth Century, houses with all of the ornamentation of the Victorian era fell out of favor with the public as they were perceived to look ungainly and old-fashioned. It became more fashionable to build houses that were less visible and less intrusive on the landscape. So houses became less ornamented.
- Houses built in early Twentieth Century styles feel simple and informal.

#### The Early Twentieth Century Style in Utah

- In the early Twentieth Century, communities along the Wasatch Front were growing fast. To accommodate the growth, house lots became smaller, so houses had to become smaller.
- The smaller houses were constructed primary in two types: the Bungalow (which is also a style of house) and the Foursquare Box.
  - Bungalows were low (usually one story) with low-pitched roofs and became the most popular house type in Utah in the early Twentieth



Century. Most Utah bungalows were built by local contractors following ideas contained in popular pattern books and home improvement magazines.

- Foursquare Box houses were cube-shaped and usually two stories, often with wide front porches and dormers facing the street. With their regular predictability, Foursquare houses represented the opposite to the irregularity and variation of Victorian houses.
- Early Twentieth Century styles became popular in Utah in part because several Utah architects had worked in Chicago where the styles originated and were constructed by the thousands. Between 1910 and 1920, a number of architects in Salt Lake City and Ogden specialized in the early Twentieth Century styles.

#### What to Look For

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- Shape: Even though it may be small, the house feels stretched out, primarily because it is often low to the ground.
- Balance/Symmetry: The façade may be symmetrical or asymmetrical.
- Lines: Walls and ornamentation emphasize straight lines and right angles.
- Materials: Materials are varied and often include brick, stucco, wood, and stone. Wood framing is often exposed (most visibly under the eaves). The foundation is often constructed of cobblestone or brick (sometimes of "clinker brick").
- Roof: The roof has a low pitch.
- Windows: Windows may vary quite a bit both in size and the number of lights.
- Entry: There is typically a wide front porch or veranda. The front door may be located in the middle of the façade or to one side.
- Ornamentation: There is relatively little ornamentation. The ornamentation that does exist is usually found in woodwork such as rafter framing that is exposed.

### Period Revival Period (1910 - 1955)

Common Styles of the Period Revival Period



**Colonial Revival** 



**Tudor Revival Cottage** 



**English Tudor** 

#### About the Period Revival Style

- The term Period Revival refers to a wide range of historically-based styles.
- Numerous articles in the architectural press on the "country house" reinforced a return to historicism in the teens and twenties. The proliferation of this style was enhanced by the rising popularity of photography.
- The outdoor living area appeared during this period, which in turn led to a lowering of the height of the first floor in relation to ground level. Unlike the usual Victorian practice of building the house several feet above "grade", the Period Revival house was built within twelve to eighteen inches of grade to allow the family's living patterns to extend onto a terrace.
- Period Revival houses imitate older styles: They look like something out of another time such as Colonial America or medieval England or Europe.





Neoclassical

• Houses in the Period Revival can also include influences from other styles such as Spanish Revival and the Classical Revival.

# The Period Revival Style in Utah

- The popularity of these styles in the U.S. (and Utah) was due to:
  - a surge in nationalistic pride following World War I and a corresponding interest in returning to the classical styles;
  - soldiers returning from the war and bringing with them historical styles that they had seen in Europe; and
  - the publication of early Twentieth Century "plan books" that contained numerous Period Revival designs.
- The architectural style of the "country house," which reflected the social aspirations of wellto-do or upper-middle-class owners in older neighborhoods, quickly migrated to the rapidly expanding suburbs and their spacious house sites.

#### What to Look For

There are two primary Period Revival styles in Utah: Colonial Revival and Tudor Revival. Although they share the characteristic that they look like something from long ago, they are very different from one another and are addressed separately here.

- <u>Colonial Revival</u>: Colonial Revival houses look like something out of Colonial America.
  - Shape: The house is maybe a little more stretched out than stretched up, but not in an obvious way.
  - Balance/Symmetry: The façade is symmetrical.
  - Lines: The walls and ornamentation emphasize straight lines and right angles.
  - Materials: There is generally little variety in materials—usually just masonry and wood.
  - Roof: The roof has a shallow pitch.
  - Windows: The windows are not large, but they generally have lots of lights. Some windows are arched with lights running through the arch (Palladian window).
  - Entry: There is usually a front porch, often with columns, that highlights the main entry. Even without a front porch, the main entry is often accented or highlighted with a decorative "crown" molding.
  - Ornamentation: Other than the front entry, there is little if any ornamentation.
- <u>Tudor Revival</u>: Tudor Revival houses look like something out of medieval England. A common variation are the English Tudor, commonly see as a two-story variety on a larger lot, and the English Cottage, a smaller version of the English Tudor house with many of the same characteristics.
  - Shape: The house itself generally feels more stretched out than stretched up, but the steep roof pitch gives it a "taller" feeling.
  - Balance/Symmetry: The façade is asymmetrical.
  - Lines: The walls generally emphasize straight lines, but the exposed woodwork may display curves.
  - Materials: Materials are varied and always include exposed wood (called "half timbering").
  - Roof: The roof has a steep pitch that often makes the house feel taller. Sometimes
    these roofs include multiple projections with dormers and curving slopes.



- Windows: Windows take a variety of sizes and shapes but are generally tall with lots of lights.
- Entry: The entry may be in the middle of the façade or to one side, but even if it's in the middle, the asymmetry of the façade makes it feel as if it's off to one side. The main entry is often highlighted with some form of masonry or stonework.
- Ornamentation: If brick or stone are used as the primary building material, they are often multi-colored. The walls display exposed wood framing, but it's fake—not actually part of the structure.

Variations of the Period Revival style extend to additional influences such as Spanish Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, Georgian Revival, Gothic Revival, Pueblo Revival, and others. A mix of these styles is most accurately referred to as an eclectic variation on a style.

#### Early Modern Period (1930 – 1955)

Common Styles of the Early Modern Period





International

Art Moderne (Streamline Moderne)



Art Deco

#### About the Early Modern Style

- "Modern" architecture first appeared in America in the 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower competition, which was a worldwide competition to design an early skyscraper.
- Architects first designing in the Early Modern styles came from Europe, which was the "breeding ground" for modern architectural thought through the Bauhaus School.
- By the end of the 1940s, American architectural education had incorporated teaching in the Early Modern styles, despite a good deal of protest by more traditionally trained architects.
- The Early Modern styles promoted the "machine aesthetic" which borrowed the appearance of machined surfaces and used machine-finished industrial products.
- Houses built in the Early Modern styles often look and feel like machines.



#### The Early Modern Style in Utah

The Early Modern styles were not very popular in Utah, so it's unusual to find houses in this style in residential neighborhoods, and those that do exist often find themselves surrounded by more traditional style houses.

#### What to Look For

- Shape: The house feels stretched out and often looks like blocks have been attached to each other.
- Balance/Symmetry: The façade is asymmetrical.
- Lines: Walls emphasize straight lines, although a corner of the house may be curved.
- Materials: Masonry is the primary material, often covered by stucco (for a smooth appearance).
- Roof: The roof is always flat.
- Windows: Windows are large with lots of lights. The window frames are made of metal. There are often corner windows where two separate windows meet at the corner and even some that follow the curve of the corner.
- Entry: The main entry is usually plain, although there may be an awning.
- Ornamentation: There is little if any extra ornamentation as the ornamentation was thought to come from the unique shape created by the design itself. If there is added ornamentation it is usually metal accents (e.g. steel pipe railings) that reinforces the straight lines of the house.

### Post-War Modern Period (1949 – 1970)

# Common Styles of the Post-War Modern Period





**Minimal Traditional** 

Post-War Modern



Ranch

#### About the Post-War Modern Styles

- As the Twentieth Century progressed, Modernism had an increasing influence on traditional housing types. Following the 1930s, residential architectural design began to combine modernism with historical allusion.
- Houses were now becoming pared down and much less ornamented rather that displaying lots of historically-based details.
- By the end of the 1930s a combination of events fostered the transition in design to smaller houses in a simpler, less ornate style:
  - The nation was recovering from the Great Depression, which forced a change in how buildings were designed—smaller and simpler with less embellishment.
  - European modernism influenced American architectural thought, and the sparseness of Modernism became more commonly applied to residential architectural styles.



- While houses generally were smaller during World War II, they grew in the 1950s. This change was due to several factors:
  - Post-war prosperity increased due to veterans receiving GI Bills and easier housefinancing terms.
  - As the number of marriages and size of families increased, the small World War II-eracottage type was becoming obsolete.
  - With greater prosperity, house lots grew larger, creating more space for larger houses.
- In response to the compact, tightly confined WWII-era cottages, these larger houses (often called "Ranch" houses) stretched the house and provided larger window openings to allow the outdoors in. The exterior appearance of these newer houses resembled that of houses built before and during World War II, only larger.
- As the period progressed, houses increasingly emphasized outdoor space—particularly in the backyard—so front entrances became less important.
- Houses built in World War II and Post-War styles look and feel very simple and basic almost plain.

# The Post-War Modern Styles in Utah

- During World War II, few new houses were constructed but those that were constructed were small and simple.
- After World War II, population growth moved to the suburbs, due to the following factors:
- Road construction and increased automobile ownership encouraged people live farther from urban centers.
- Suburban developments offered larger lot sizes that accommodated the increasing size of houses.
- As a result of suburban development, house sizes increased, but the style remained relatively simple.

# What to Look For

- Shape: The house may feel "boxy" (from early in this period) or it may feel stretched out (from later in this period).
- Balance/Symmetry: The façade is usually asymmetrical, and there is often a gable facing the street.
- Lines: Walls and ornamentation emphasize straight lines and right angles.
- Materials: There is little variety of materials. Brick is the primary material, although siding is sometimes used to cover the exterior walls.
- Roof: The roof has a shallow pitch.
- Windows: Windows are not large; however, there is often a picture window (large single pane window) in the façade. Windows typically have few lights and are often "sliders" (windows that open horizontally rather than vertically).
- Entry: The main entry may be in the center of the façade or to one side, but the asymmetry makes it feel as if it's off to one side.
- Ornamentation: There is little or no ornamentation.
- Ranch Style houses usually have an attached garage.

# Glossary

- Eave: The part of a roof that projects out past the house itself.
- Elevation: The side of a house (usually a term used in referring to an architectural drawing).
- Façade: The front or main side of a building.
- Gable: The gable is the triangle formed by the two sides of a roof and the main body of the house itself. (See picture.)
- Light: A single pane of glass in a window.
- Ornamentation: The decorative elements on a house.
- Pitch: Pitch is the slope of a roof—basically, how steep it is.
- Sash: The frame of a window.
- Symmetry: When two halves of a facade are the same. If you draw a line through the middle of the façade, the two halves are mirror images of each other.

